

Wise men still seek Him**Matthew 2:1-11**

A few years ago American Express did a survey related to Christmas gift giving & found that the fruitcake was most often chosen 31% from a list of 'worst' holiday gifts. It even finished ahead of 'no gift at all' which finished second worst. When asked what people would do w/ a bad gift, 30% said they would hide it in the closet, 21% said they would return it, 19% said they would re-gift it. So **Christmas fruitcake** likely to show up at NYE party

If you had to shop for the likes of Elon Musk, Warrant Buffet, Billionaires or even President elect Donald Trump what would you get them? What Christmas gift do you give someone who seemingly has everything?

Take it a step farther; what gift do you give to the creator of the universe? Who owns everything anyway **Ps 50:11-12** *"I know every bird of the mountains, and everything that moves in the field is Mine. "If I were hungry, I would not tell you; for the world is Mine, and all it contains."*

"I got her a beautiful card, but actually I had a number of them picked & I picked the nicest one," he said. "A lot of love & we love our family & we love each other, & we have a great relationship, like you do, hopefully, with your spouses. We have a great relationship."

Three gifts given to Jesus--Gold, Frankincense & myrrh. When you were a child are these gifts you'd want for Christmas? What's their significance? Christmas cards & manger scene is more tradition than bible as we'll see.

Matt 2:1-11 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, 2 "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east, and have come to worship Him."

Matt written to Jews--Jesus the Messiah, King of the Jews. The cast of characters –Jesus Herod–Magi wise men in science, astrology, astronomy Herod-The Roman General Mark Anthony in 37 AD declared Herod king of Judea. Herod stood 4'11" tall—insecure, cruel & extremely paranoid but extremely talented as a builder--Masada, Caesarea, Aqueduct, Herodium fortress, Temple. Obsessed w/ power, always imagining plots against him.

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Suspicion drove Herod to put to death his favorite wife, Miriam, & three of his sons. Later regreted it & built a massive monument to her.

A saying *'it is safer to be Herods pig than his son'*. Prided himself on being an Idumean (Esau) w/ Jewish roots so he didn't eat pork.

Died at age 69 on his death bed he gave orders to round up 100 prominent citizens. He knew no one would mourn for him when he died but he wanted to there to be mourning at his breath so he orderd these 100 citizens executed so there would be sadness in the city upon his death.

So imagine what went thru this **little paranoid kings' mind** when the maji brought word of another king being born. Maji from the east, possibly Babylon, were influential men of their day. Experts in astrology, astronomy, dreams, interpretations, occult practices, divination. The name Maji Grk for magical or magician. Likely not traveling alone but w/ personal assistants.

Three gifts but could have been a dozens of maji and associates. The traveling time would have been months. The star? Many theories—conjunction of planets, contellations aligned. Influenced by Daniel 500 year earlier? *Ch 7 Ancient of Days to come whose dominion is Everlasting. Ch 9 70 weeks M come and be cut off.*

Maji familiar w/ stars so God supernaturally, gave a star to lead them to the SON. God takes us as we are. If heart open He will lead you. God spoke to **David** tending sheep-you'll tend my flock Israel. **Peter** in a boat-to fisherman, you'll be fishers of men. **Zacharias** in temple doing his duty-John Baptist. ***"All things to all men that I may save some" 1 Co 9:22***

I love the words of these lost but seeking maji *'we've come to worship Him'*. With the little knowledge they had they were **pure of heart** when it came to worship.

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Not for what they could get out of it, personal gain, feel good but **purely** because the **object** of worship deserves it, is worthy of it, the **person** Jesus Christ being worshiped not the **doer**, doing the worship.

3 And when Herod the king heard it, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. 4 And gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he began to inquire of them where the Christ was to be born. 5 And they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it has been written by the prophet, 6 'And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, are by no means least among the leaders of Judah; for out of you shall come forth a Ruler, who will shepherd My people Israel.'"

They knew the prophecies but didn't immediately go to Bethlehem 6 mi. away. The hardest people to reach are religious people, those who have the bible but don't do what's in it. They think owning a bible is enough, going to church is enough, being religious is enough--they contend w/ those seeking to bring them deeper in faith, farther in personal experience w/ God.

The wise men who were **novices**, journeyed for months tho they didn't know the Bible, those w/ the Bible didn't take the time to travel a few hours to see the fulfillment of the long awaited prophecy. **Signs of the Last Days**

7 Then Herod secretly called the magi, and ascertained from them the time the star appeared. 8 And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, "Go and make careful search for the Child; and when you have found Him, report to me, that I too may come and worship Him." 9 And having heard the king, they went their way; and lo, the star, which they had seen in the east, went on before them, until it came and stood over where the Child was. 10 And when they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. 11 And they came into the house and saw the Child with Mary His mother; and they fell down and worshiped Him; and opening their treasures they presented to Him gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh.

Notice they see the **child** Jesus not the **baby** & they come to the **house** not the **stable**. This is the reality of Christmas tradition—no wise men at the stable w/ baby Jesus. He is probably 1 1/2 years old by now & Mary & Joseph have moved into a house by this time.

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So if you have a manger scene at your house w/ wise men you might want to move them to Nanakuli to a friend yard because it'll takes months after Jesus is born for them to arrive.

Note the gifts--**Gold** was a gift for royalty. Considered the most precious of metals of the day, it was a gift for kings. 1st C philosopher & political leader *Seneca* said *'In Parthia it was the custom when approaching the king to do so w/ a gift. And gold the king of metals is a fit gift for a king of men'*. When queen of Sheba traveled to hear the wisdom of Solomon she came w/ a very large entourage...*and very much gold..'* 2 Ki 10:2

The reign of Christ did not begin in a cradle but from the cross. He surrendered His life as an offering for the sins of the world. After that **God highly exalted Him giving Him a name that is above every name that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God. He is now called the King of kings and Lord of Lords.**

To be His friend He must first be our King. We can never meet Him as an equal. He is **Master** and we are His **servants**. Notice the Maji w/ all the respect & honor they were accustom to, fell down & worshiped, only then did they give their gifts to the Child.

Lord Horatio Nelson, 18th C Vice-Admiral in British Navy, lost life battle Trafalgar 1805, was well know for his kind and courteous treatment of conquered opponents. After one of his naval victories, the defeated commander was brought aboard Nelson's flagship & onto Nelson's quarter-deck. Knowing the Admirals reputation for benevolence and kindness and thinking to take advantage of it, the defeated foe advanced across the quarter-deck w/ hand outstretched as if advancing to shake hands w/ an equal. Lord Nelson's hand stayed fixed by his side, declared *'Your sword first, & then your hand.'*

Before we make Jesus a friend, we must first surrender to Him as Lord & King.

Frankincense is a gift for priests – A costly, sweet smelling aromatic compound used in the temple service as an offering to God.

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By cutting deep into the bark of the shrub tree causing yellowish tears of pungent resin to flow. *Ps 22:16...they pierced my hands and my feet.*

When burned the gum releases a fragrant sweet smelling incense. A symbol of prayer. *Heb 5:7 In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety.*

Pierced thru for our transgressions...He ever lives to make intercession for us

Myrrh used in burial. Brought by Nico to embalm Jesus body. The 'rock rose' on mts of Palestine w/ pink & white petals—myrrh collected by **flailing** the plant and scraping the sticky mass and rolling it into small black balls *only when crushed is fragrance released.*

Isa 53:5-6...He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His stripes/flailing we are healed. All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; but the LORD has laid upon Him the iniquity of us all.

Myrrh for prophet...prophecied his death...**destroy & three days raise**. So Jesus is a mighty king, ministering priest and martyred prophet. Rejected by the world and received by all who repent of sin, open their heart to receive Jesus as Lord and savior....because wise men and women still seek Him today.

Won't you give God the greatest gift of all one He's already paid for.....your heart & a decision to follow Him...and receive forgiveness of sin & a home in Heaven.