THE GIFTS OF THE WISE MEN AND OUR GIFTS TO JESUS

Adrian Rogers

MATTHEW 2:1-12

Take God's word and turn with me, if you would please to Matthew Chapter 2. There we have the story of the visit of the wise men and gifts that they brought to the Lord Jesus. Do you have difficulty finding just the right gift for just the right person? Have you ever thought about the gift that you may give to the Lord Jesus this Christmas season? I think we can take a lesson from the wise men. And today we're thinking of this subject, "The Gifts of the Wise Men and Our Gifts to Jesus." [read Matthew 2:1-12]

Now we all know the story of the wise men, but there is much about these wise men that we do not know. For example, we're not certain that there were three wise men; there may have been more. There may
Three Kings of Orient Are," but there may be have been more. We know that there were three categories of gifts that are listed; there may have been more gifts. We don't know, really, what country these wise men came from. They came from the east. I think, most likely, they came from Babylon, and I'll tell you why I believe that they came from Babylon. In Babylon there was a great prophet, a man of God whose name was Daniel. And Babylon, of course, is to the east; it's our modern Iraq. It was there that young Daniel was taken captive, and it was there that Daniel taught, and in Babylon, there were wise men, Magi. As a matter of fact, the book of Daniel tells about them and these Magi had their lives saved by Daniel. And obviously they would have listened to the teaching and the preaching of Daniel and it was Daniel who prophesied a coming Messiah.

There's a lot that we do not know. We don't know, for example, what the star was that led them. The Bible says that there was a star, but the word star isn't used in a literal sense; it's used in a symbolic sense. And it has the idea of something bright and shining, not necessarily used in the definite sense that we use the word today. I personally believe that
it was not a star, like the stars that you will see tonight, when you go out and look. I believe it was the shining glory of God in the heavens. I believe it was the same kind of shining glory that shown round about those shepherds in the field, where the Bible says, "And the glory of the Lord shown round about them." I believe it was just God's great shining glory that was there in the sky, leading these wise men. But I wouldn't argue with you about it. If you want to argue something else, that's your privilege. What I'm simply saying is there's a lot that we do not know, but there's some things that we wonderfully, wonderfully know. And we know this that these men were called wise men. And they were wise because they sought the Lord Jesus to worship Him.

I think there's not a one of us who has not heard that slogan, "Wise men still worship Him." And may I say, it wasn't easy for them to worship Him. They had a lot of barriers to overcome. For example, there was the barrier of distance. If you'll look in verse 1, the Bible says they were wise men from the east. Now if indeed they came from Iraq, modern Iraq, to Jerusalem, even today that would be great trip. But these are men who have come a great distance, perhaps about 300 miles just to worship the King of kings, the
Lord Jesus Christ.

Not only was there the barrier of distance, there was the barrier of difficulty. I want to remind you in this day there were no planes, no trains, no automobiles. There were no hotels, there no restaurants, there were super highways. Over rough terrain they came.

Not only was there distance and not only was there difficulty, there was literal danger. When they got there, they faced ol' King Herod. Herod was a murderous old man, and he loved to kill people. He was the one who killed all of the little babies. But before he killed those little babies, he already murdered his wife. He had already murdered his mother. He had already murdered his sons. He was the one who murdered all the little babies under two years of age. And as a matter of fact, when Herod died, he knew he was going to die, and just before he died, he said, "Get some of the best known citizens of our land, and when I die, put them to death because," he said, "if they don't shed any tears for me, maybe they'll shed some tears form them. And I want there to be some tears when I die." And so he had people killed just because he himself had died. He was a hateful,
hellish, murderous old man. And these wise men were in danger from Herod himself.

So what I'm trying to say is that with great, great difficulty, they came to worship the Christ child. You see, the word worship means worth-ship. Why are you here? Why did you come? Because you felt it was worth it to give honor and glory to the son of God. I cannot imagine these who have a take it or leave it attitude toward worshiping the Lord Jesus Christ. In America today, I think the biggest cult is the cult of the comfortable. Those who don't want to be disturbed if the weather is not right, or if guests come, or if there is some other problem, why then they don't seem to be able to make it to worship. And I don't want to brag on you being here, because dear friend, it's a privilege that you could be here. It's a privilege that I can be here. Thank God for the joy of worshipping Him.

These wise men sought the Lord Jesus Christ out; in spite of distance and danger and difficulty, they came to worship Him. Now when they worshiped the Lord Jesus, and we're going to get into the heart of the message, the gifts of the wise men, they brought Him three kinds of gifts. I want you to look at it right
here in the word of God. In Matthew Chapter 2, the Bible says that they brought to the Lord Jesus very special gifts. Verse 11, "And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary His mother and fell down and worshiped Him and when they had opened their treasures they presented unto Him gifts," first of all "gold," secondly, "frankincense," and thirdly, "myrrh."

I want to ask you a question. If God, the Holy Spirit engineered the entire thing, and He did, and if God wrote the Bible, and He did, and there's only so much that can be put in the Bible, do you think that it is just by happenstance that it is recorded in God's word that gold and frankincense and myrrh were brought to the baby Jesus? Not at all. As a matter of fact, there is an incredible thought that is given here, and a great inference as to what Adrian should bring to Jesus this Christmas season. And what you should bring to the Lord Jesus. My gifts and your gifts must be like the gifts of the wise men of old.

Now I want us to see what these gifts are and what they represent and what they speak of. For example, they brought to Him gold, and gold is a gift that would be presented to a king. Gold was the most
precious metal of that day. And in Bible times, and even today, gold is symbolic of royalty. And you see, when these wise men came to the Lord Jesus Christ and presented to Him gold, what they were saying is that He is a king. I believe that they had learned that the baby that would be born was a king. They learned it from the prophet Daniel. In Daniel 9:25, Daniel had called the baby that would be born, "Messiah, the Prince, Messiah the Prince." And the word prince means king, ruler, sovereign. And when they brought gold, they said, "We recognize His sovereign dominion."

Have you done that? Have you recognized His sovereign dominion. Isaiah 9:7: "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever." This child, this baby that we're talking about he is King of kings. He is Lord of lords. Now the question comes, this Christmas, will you offer to the Lord the submission that is due to Him because He is your king? It is not enough for you to tip your hat. You must bow your knee.

When these kings came to the baby Jesus, they did not cuddle Him. They did not play games with Him.
These powerful kings from the East bowed the knee in reverence to Him, and they recognized that indeed He is a King. Look in verse 2, they said where is he that is born King of the Jews. Look in verse 6, "For out of thee shall come a governor that shall rule my people Israel." We worship, my dear friend, heaven's king. Have you given Him the submission that is due to Him as a King? Have you?

I have a preacher friend out in Arizona. He thought one day that he would make a lesson to his congregation. So he said to them, "You know we've had some Secret Service men from Washington, from the state house, they've been here to talk with me. And they've told me that the President of the United States is going to be in our city. And because the President of the United States is going to be in our city on a weekend, he's going to be in a church to worship. And they have chosen our church. And the President of the United States is going to come and worship with us next Sunday. And," he said, "because of that, we want to be ready." So he said to the choir director, he said, "I want you and the choir to practice. I want you to have the very best musical rendition that you can possibly have." Then he said to the custodian and to the ushers, he said, "We want
this place to be spotless. We want it to be immaculate next Sunday. We've got some places in the carpet that need to be patched and cleaned. I'm going to ask that all of us be dressed and on our best behavior this Lord's Day." And he gave the ushers very special instructions. And he gave the custodial staff very special instructions. Then he spoke to the church hostess and said, "We want to have the flowers just right," and so forth. Oh what a rush of excitement was going through the congregation as he described all of the things they were going to do because the next Sunday the President of the United States was going to be there to worship with them. The people were thrilled. And then he said, "Now folks, I want to tell you something. The President of the United States is not coming. He is not coming. I made all of that up. There've been no representatives of the White House here to see me. We're going to have services as usual next Sunday." But then he said this. "Why would the choir sing such a special number if the President is going to come? Why would we try to have the house so clean and all of us be so alert if the President is going to come, and yet Sunday by Sunday we do not do our very best because the King of kings is here?" Do you see what he was saying to them? See what he taught them? He said, "You know Jesus Christ is here every
Lord's Day. 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.' Isn't it strange that we do not recognize and reverence His kingdom and His right and authority to rule over us?

You know after that pastor made that disclaimer, there were many people who did not hear the rest of it; all they heard was the President was coming. When he said, "That's just an illustration. I was just... that's not really going to happen," they never heard that. All week long, the phone was ringing. "When is the President going to be there? Are there going to be reserved seats?" People who had been away from church for months and some for years showed up that next Sunday because the President was going to be there. How we hold in rank and how we hold in esteem men rather than the King of kings.

I was in Washington a while back, and had the opportunity to go in and speak with the President for a while, and what a great honor that is when that might happen. And it was the time when the President was coming the next day to Memphis, Tennessee, for a program here, called "A Thousand Points of Light." I spoke with him for a few moments in his office, and I said, "You're going to my city tomorrow." He said,
"That's right, I am." He said, "Why don't you come and ride to Memphis with me on Air Force One?" Why I said, "Mr. President, that would be a thrill, that would be an honor, I would love to do that." But I said, "I didn't come prepared to spend the night; I have a plane that's going back this afternoon." Well he said, "If you can arrange it, I'd love to have you," and gave me a card, and said, "If you can go, call this particular person." I put that card in my pocket. You know what I did folks. I went to Holiday Inn and made a reservation. I went out a bought a toothbrush, and I'll tell you why. You don't get those kinds of invitations every day. I don't. You may. I don't. And that was one of the great thrills of my life. To ride in that airplane, to sit in the office with and talk with and fellowship with the President of the United States. But you know I thought to myself after that. And I said, "Adrian, you called home. You canceled appointments. You made another reservation. You went out and bought some toiletries and everything, just so you could spend a few moments with that man." And friend, I'd do it again, but that's not the point. I thought to myself, "Adrian, how much difficulty are you willing to go through? How much are you going to rearrange your schedule? How much time do you set aside? How much time do you make, Adrian, for the King
of kings, and the Lord of lords." And my heart smote me, that I am more impressed sometime with the men of this world than I am with heaven's king. My dear friend, He is King of kings. He is Lord of lords. And one day, Ronald Reagan, and George Bush and Johnny Carson and Madonna and Bob Sorrell and Scotty Shows and Adrian Rogers and every human being who ever lived will bow their knee to Jesus Christ. He is king. He is king.

And they said, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews? We have come to worship Him." Worship Him. What can I give Him today? My dear friend, I can recognize His sovereign dominion. The gold represents that sovereign dominion.

But what about the frankincense? If the gold represents His sovereign dominion, the frankincense represents His sinless deity, His sinless deity. Well, you say, "Pastor Rogers, I don't see anything there about deity, it just simply says, 'frankincense.'" May I tell you, dear friend, that if gold was a gift fit for a king, frankincense was used to worship almighty God? I want you to take your Bible now, and I want you to turn with me to the book of Exodus. And look with me in Exodus Chapter 30. Exodus Chapter 30 and we're
going to begin in verse 34. Now you'll see that it was
not by happenstance that frankincense was given to the
Christ child. "And the Lord said unto Moses," this is
verse 34, "And the LORD said unto Moses, Take unto
thee sweet spices, stacte, and onycha, and galbanum;
these sweet spices," now watch this, "with pure
frankincense:" that's underscored in my Bible, "pure
frankincense: of each shall there be a like weight:
And thou shalt make it a perfume, a confection after
the art of the apothecary, tempered together, pure,"
now watch this next phrase, "and holy: And thou shalt
beat some of it very small, and put of it before the
testimony in the tabernacle of the congregation, where
I will meet with thee: it shall be unto you," now
notice this phrase, "most holy. And as for the perfume
which thou shalt make, ye shall not make to yourselves
according to the composition thereof: it shall be unto
thee holy for the LORD. Whosoever shall make like unto
that, to smell thereto, shall even be cut off from his
people."

What is God saying? God is saying that
frankincense is the base of this holy incense that is
most holy. It is to be given to God. And that incense
that as it would rise up out of the tabernacle in the
Old Testament and the Temple, speaks of the prayers,
the worship of the saints that goes to Almighty God.

What did these wise men recognize? Why were they indeed wise as they were wise? They brought gold, and they recognized His sovereign dominion. And then they brought frankincense. They recognized His sinless deity. Jesus Christ is God of very God.

May I say, dear friend, that they worshiped the Lord Jesus? I want you to look, if you will, in verse 11. Go back now to Matthew Chapter 2 and look with me in verse 11. I want you to see something very significant. There are many today who do not give to the Lord Jesus the worship that is due to His name. They do not worship Him. But look, if you will, in verse eleven, Matthew Chapter 2 and verse 11. The Bible says, "After they brought these gifts that they worshiped them." Do you see it? They worshiped Him. Underscore that. They worshiped Him. Well, you say what's important about that? The Bible says, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and Him only," Him only, Him only. Now friend, if Jesus is not the Lord God, this is the ultimate blaspheme. Nobody should worship anything or anybody except God Himself. They worshiped Him. Why? Because this baby was God. The Bible says in 1 Timothy 3:16, "And without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God
was manifest in the flesh." Isaiah 9:6 says it clearly, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder," that's the gold, that's the gold. "The government shall be upon His shoulder," that's His sovereign dominion, but it goes on to say, "and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God," that's frankincense, that's the frankincense. You see my dear friend, He's not only born a king. He was God, and very God in human flesh.

How wise were these wise men? Now whether they understood all of this or not, I don't know. But I do know that God, the Holy Spirit impelled them to make these gifts and God, the Holy Spirit, recorded these gifts. Now you say, "Well I don't believe that Jesus Christ is God but I do believe that He was a good man." Well Jesus Christ said, "There's none good but one, that's God." And if Jesus Christ is not God, Jesus Christ is not good by His own words. Somebody wrote these words, if Jesus Christ is a man, and only a man I say, then of all mankind, I will cleave to Him and cleave to Him alway. If Jesus Christ is God and the only God, I swear I will follow Him through heaven and hell, the earth, the sea, and the air. Those are good words, they sound good. But my dear friend, if
Jesus Christ is a man and only a man, I won't cleave to Him. I will repudiate Him. I will disown Him. I will not worship Him. I will not honor Him. Because if Jesus Christ is a man and only a man, He is a fake, a fraud, and an imposter for He Himself is claiming to be God. Jesus Christ Himself said of Himself, "Before Abraham was, I Am." And that's the most sacred name for deity, and Jesus claimed it for Himself.

What shall I give the Lord Jesus this morning? What shall I give the Lord Jesus? Because He is sovereign dominion, I give Him my will. Because He is sinless deity, I give Him my worship. I give Him my worship. Worship Him. Worship Him. Fall down. Fall on your face. I hadn't intended to say this, but I've not been on my knees before my Lord this morning, I've been on my face before Him. And I don't say that to say, "Well big deal!" I'm just saying dear friend, He, He's God. He is God. You want to say, "What shall I bring my Lord today?" Oh my dear friend, bring Him gold, His sovereign dominion. Bring Him frankincense, His sinless deity; He is God of very God. Fall down and worship Him. Wise men did a long time ago. They didn't cuddle Him under the chin or chuck Him under the chin and cuddle Him in their arms or play games with Him. They fell on their faces before Him.
There's never been another like the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus was the God man. Have you ever thought how unique the life of the Lord Jesus is? How absolutely unique? And you know Jesus never withdrew or modified anything that He ever said. Many things He said were hard to understand but He never said, "I made a mistake. I'd like to restate that." Jesus never ever apologized for any of His actions. Many things they didn't understand, and some people got angry with Him, but He never one time apologized. Jesus Christ never ever sought advice from anybody. Moses had his seventy elders. Solomon, the wisest man that ever lived had his advisors. Jesus never asked advice from anyone. Jesus Christ never justified anything that He did. When He was late (seeming late) when Lazarus died, He never gave any explanation. When He was asleep on the back of a ship, when the ship was about to sink, He never did justify His actions to anybody. Jesus Christ never asked forgiveness, not one time did He ask for anybody ever to forgive Him or for God ever to forgive Him. Why? Because He was sinless. Jesus Christ never asked anyone to pray for Him. He asked the disciples to watch and pray, and he told them to pray, "lest ye enter into temptation." But He never asked anyone to forgive Him. He never corrected
Himself. And yet, He was not arrogant; He was meek and mild. Jesus Christ did not have any strong points. In order to have strong points, you have to have weak points. He had no strong points or weak points. He was the most perfectly balanced individual who ever lived. Robert Clark has rightly given this assessment of Jesus' character. He says, "There was meekness without weakness, tenderness without feebleness, firmness without coarseness, love without sentimentality, holiness without sanctimoniousness, lowliness without lowness, truth without error, enthusiasm without fanaticism, passion without prejudice, heavenly mindedness without forgetfulness, carefreeness without carelessness, service without servility, self-exaltation without egotism, judgment without harshness, seriousness without somberness, and mercy without softness." I love that. That's the Lord Jesus. No strong points, no weak points. He is God of very God and yet God in human flesh.

Now they brought Him a third thing. Not only did they bring Him gold, His sovereign dominion. Not only did they bring Him frankincense, His sinless deity. But they also brought Him myrrh, myrrh. Now what was myrrh? Myrrh was also a gum-like substance that was very valuable. And it was used to embalm the dead. It
was used to embalm the dead. Can you imagine bringing
to a little baby something that would be used to
embalm the dead? Why? Because not only did they
recognize His sovereign dominion, not only did they
recognize His sinless deity, but my dear friend, they
recognized His sacrificial death. They recognized that
this little baby was born to die.

Let me give you some scriptures. Turn to Mark
15:23. You're in Matthew; just fast forward to Mark
Chapter 15 for a moment and see what happened when the
Lord Jesus Christ is on the cross. Mark 15:22: "And
they bring him unto the place Golgotha, which is,
being interpreted, The place of a skull." That's where
Christ, bloody Golgotha, that's where Jesus died. "And
they gave Him to drink wine mingled with" what?
"myrrh: but he received it not. And when they had
crucified him, they parted his garments, casting lots
upon them, what every man should take." Myrrh was used
as a narcotic, to dull pain. But Jesus that He might
taste of death for every man refused the taste of that
myrrh, there upon the cross.

But I want you to look now in John. Just keep on
going to the gospel of John. John Chapter 19. Turn to
John Chapter 19 and look with me in verse 38, "And
after this Joseph of Arimathaea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus. And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night," now watch it, "and brought a mixture of" what? "myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight. Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury." This was the manner of the Jews to bury someone. What did they use to bury someone? It was their manner, it was their custom to bring myrrh. Now I don't know whether the wise men understood all of this or not, but I know the Holy Spirit knew it. I know this is not by accident in the word of God. I know that of everything that could be listed, here is gold and frankincense and myrrh, Sovereign dominion, sacred deity, sacrificial death. That's what they brought to the Lord Jesus.

Do you know that the Bible never record the early church celebrating the birth of Jesus? Did you know that? I don't think it's wrong to celebrate the birth of Jesus. The Holy Spirit of God recorded it in the Bible. And I mean we have all of this scripture, the birth of Jesus is very important. It gives us an
opportunity to preach and to teach and to worship.

That's fine. But we don't ever have any record that the early church was told to remember His birth. We're told to remember what? His death, His death. The real Christmas tree is this: He in His own body bore our sins on the tree; that tree a bloody cross, not decorated, but stained with the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. And the more carnal a Christian is, the more that Christian will make of the birth of Jesus and the less he'll make of the death of Jesus. I'm not against remembering His birth, because He had to be born in order to die. The Bible records the birth of the Lord Jesus. But these wise men at His birth were there remembering that one day, He would die upon the tree. No wonder heaven's choir came down to sing with heaven's king came down to save. He was born to die. And how clever of the devil to substitute the celebration of His birth for the memorial of His death.

What will I give Jesus this Christmas season? I must close. Because of His sovereign dominion, I'll give Him my wealth. All that I have belongs to Him. Because of His sinless deity, I'll give Him my worship. I'll fall on my face before Him. And because of His sacrificial death, I'll give Him my witness. I
want the world to know that He died for me. My wealth, my worship, and my witness belong to my Lord this Christmas season. And so does yours.

Let's pray. Lord God, if there are any here today who are holding anything that they call wealth in their hand, may they release it to Heaven's Sovereign. Lord if there's any man, woman, boy or girl here today who has not bowed the knee in absolute worship, may they today bow before heaven's Lord and heaven's King. And Lord if we have not received what Jesus did for us on the cross, and if we're not committed to telling it, help us Lord this Christmas season to say, Lord Jesus, I'll give you my witness. I'll go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born. In His holy name, amen.