

GIFTS FOR A KING – PART 3

Matthew 2:1-12 Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod **the king**, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, Saying, Where is he that is born **King of the Jews**? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. When Herod **the king** had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where **Christ** should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come **a Governor, that shall rule** my people Israel. Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, enquired of them diligently what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also. When they had heard **the king**, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him **gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh**. And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country **another way**.

Just like the wise men, there's a battle to the death between two KINGS in our lives. One king must DIE for the other king to REIGN.

We don't know how many wise men there were, or even where they came from – but we do know the GIFTS that wise men give to a KING! The Queen of Sheba brought similar gifts to Solomon (2 Chron. 9:1), and behold, a greater than Solomon is here! (Matthew 12:42)

MYRRH was an aromatic gum produced from a thorny tree that grew in the Middle East and Africa, and was obtained from the tree in the same manner as frankincense. When the sap oozed from a cut in the shrub, it was a pale yellow color at first, but as it hardened, it changed to dark red or even a black color. Myrrh was so valuable in ancient times that it could have the same “weight worth” as gold! It was used in perfumes and incense, and as an embalming compound for dead bodies (i.e. Egyptian mummies). It had medicinal properties, and could be ingested by mixing it with wine. Just like frankincense was known for its sweet smell, myrrh was known for its bitter taste. In fact, the name itself means great bitterness – and that's why myrrh came to be associated with DEATH.

Myrrh is referred to several times in the Scripture, most often in the sense of its fragrance. It was an ingredient in the incense and the anointing oil used so frequently in the Tabernacle and Temple throughout the Old Testament. But we also see several places where the word is used symbolically to represent death and bitterness ...

Exodus 15:23-25 And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah. And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink? And he cried unto the LORD; and the LORD shewed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them,

In their first experience after passing through the Red Sea, the Israelites encounter waters that are bitter (“mar”) at a place called Marah. It was a TREE cast into the bitter waters that made them sweet. It was Calvary, thrust into the bitterness of our lives, that changed everything!

Ruth 1:19-22 So they two went until they came to Bethlehem. And it came to pass, when they were come to Bethlehem, that all the city was moved about them, and they said, Is this Naomi? And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, and the LORD hath brought me home again empty: why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the LORD hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me? So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter in law, with her, which returned out of the country of Moab: and they came to Bethlehem in the beginning of barley harvest.

When Naomi returns to Bethlehem after a long time in Moab, she says “Don't call me Naomi ('pleasant') – call me Mara ('bitter')!” She left the “House of Bread” because there was a famine in Israel (Ruth 1:1), but she ended up trading a famine for three funerals (her husband and two sons)! She blames God for her heartache, but it was it was her family's own decision to leave Bethlehem.

But look at the mercy of God! Her daughter-in-law Ruth comes back with her, and despite the prohibition of the Law against Moabites, Ruth becomes the great-grandmother of King David, and is placed in the ancestry of Jesus Christ!

Deuteronomy 23:3 An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD; even to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of the LORD for ever:

Matthew 1:5-6 And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse; And Jesse begat David the king; and David the king begat Solomon of her that had been the wife of Urias;

Look at the dysfunction in the lineage of Jesus! Rahab, the harlot. Ruth, the Moabitess. Bathsheba, the adulteress. David, the murderer. Solomon, the adulterer. His family tree is full of failures, but that didn't prevent the SAVIOR from being born!

Naomi and Ruth arrived back home at the perfect time – it was the beginning of barley harvest, when food was plentiful. No more famine! The end of the year is the perfect time to leave the past in the past, and step forward into a brand new future in God. It doesn't matter what mistakes you've made, it only matters what decision you will make.

MYRRH is the only one of the three gifts that Jesus was given both at the beginning of His life and at the end of His life.

Matthew 2:11 And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

Mark 15:22-23 And they bring him unto the place Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, The place of a skull. And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh: but he received it not.

John 19:39-40 And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of 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.

Jesus took the bitterness of the cross and the grave so you wouldn't have to die for your own sins. He was literally born to die for you and me!

Revelation 2:8-11 And unto the angel of the church in **Smyrna (ancient Greek word for MYRRH)** write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive; I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

Life hurts. But God heals. And Heaven is forever!