

Gifts of the Magi

Matthew is the only Gospel that mentions the mysterious Magi, and he gives only scant details, simply calling them “wise men” and describing the gifts they brought: gold, frankincense and myrrh.

[The wise men] entered the house and saw the child with his mother, Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasure chests and gave him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. (Matthew 2:11)

The gift of gold signified Jesus’ royalty. Gold is mentioned frequently in the Old Testament, starting with many parts of the temple including the Menorah and the golden altar. The Book of Revelation 21:21 describes the city of New Jerusalem as having streets “made of pure gold, clear as crystal”.



The gift of frankincense signified His divinity. It was an aromatic resin from which incense and perfume fit for kings were made.

The Jews used frankincense and myrrh in the blend of resins and herbs that they burned on the incense altar in the temple. That blend was so special to God that any Jew burning it in his home was to be exiled. There is indeed significance that incense used in the worship of God in the temple would have been offered by the worshipping wise men.



Myrrh, the third gift, was another aromatic resin, from which perfume was made to embalm the dead. This signified Jesus' humanity and that He would die for us.

Joseph of Arimathea, who had been a secret disciple of Jesus (because he feared the Jewish leaders), asked Pilate for permission to take down Jesus' body. When Pilate gave permission, Joseph came and took the body away. With him came Nicodemus, the man who had come to Jesus at night. He brought about seventy-five pounds of perfumed ointment made from myrrh and aloes. Following Jewish burial custom, they wrapped Jesus' body with the spices in long sheets of linen cloth. (John 19:38-39)



What Will You Give?

What can you give Me, the King of kings and Lord of lords, whose throne is heaven and whose footstool is earth? What could you possibly give Me, the One who has everything? What could I possibly need?— Gifts from the heart. Any gift from the heart is a gift that I will treasure.

Dear Jesus, the shepherds brought their wonder and worship; the wise men brought their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh to honor You. I bring love and gratitude.

