

# *Christmas ~ 2025*

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*“The Only Present God wants for Christmas”*

(12-25-25)

Today is Christmas, December 25<sup>th</sup>—the day we celebrate the birthday of Jesus Christ.

We all know it's customary to give someone a gift on their birthday.

What do you get the person who has everything?

If you were invited to a birthday party for Elon Musk, do you think you'd have a hard time finding him a present?

He's a multi-billionaire (about to become the first trillionaire)—what could you possibly get him that he doesn't already have or even remotely wants?

And even if you could find something he didn't have and really wanted—could you even afford it?

I bet that there are some things that you definitely would *not* give him.

For instance, you wouldn't wrap up an old pair of gym shoes and offer them as a present, and neither would you take an old ripped up, stained, recliner and put a bow on it and offer it as a token of your esteem.

I'm sure whatever you gave him would be brand new, and something that you put a fair amount of thought into, because after all—it's Elon Musk!

Alright, let's apply this to the Lord—talk about the Person Who has everything!

What could you give to God that He really wants—gold, silver, or precious stones?

There could be whole planets somewhere in the universe that are made of gold, silver and precious stones.

We know that gold isn't precious to God, He uses gold like asphalt in heaven—He paves the streets with it!

I'm sure you wouldn't give Him used or broken junk—or like Israel who offered God defective animals as an offering—the blind, lame, diseased, and torn—what we would call 'road-kill' for a sacrifice intended to honor Him (Malachi 1:7-8).

So, what could you give God that He really wants [the title of this message is: "*The Only Present God Wants for Christmas*"], something that would properly honor Him as He deserves—well Jesus told us in John 4:

**John 4:23 (NKJV)**

<sup>23</sup> But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him..."

This is what God wants, this is the gift He truly desires, but I'll warn you it isn't cheap, in fact—true worship is very costly.

Before we look at that, let's see how the subject of worship is woven into the story of Christmas by the Holy Spirit:

**Matthew 2:1 (NKJV)**

**1 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem...**

The term “**wise men**” is the Greek word “*magoi*” from which we get the word “*magi*.”

Few biblical stories are as well known, yet so clouded by myth, legend and tradition, as that of the *magi*, or ‘*wisemen*’ mentioned by Matthew.

During the Middle Ages legend developed that they were kings and that there were three of them, and that their names were: Casper, Balthazar, and Melchior.

Because they were thought to represent the three sons of Noah—one of them is often pictured as an Ethiopian.

However, they are never called ‘*kings*’ in the NT—but rather they are simply referred to as “*magi*” (a word we get the word *magician* from).

We don’t know how many *magi* there were—from the three gifts listed in Matthew 2:11 (gold, frankincense, and myrrh), people have assumed there were three of them.

And yet, when their caravan arrived in Jerusalem, there were enough of them to trouble the whole city!

**So, who were they?**

Well, Herodotus the Greek historian, says that they were Medes—the Medes were part of the Persian Empire.

Many believe that these magi were Persian wisemen—scholars, who were skilled in philosophy, medicine and natural science, and that they were also soothsayers and interpreters of dreams.

Their title connects them with *magic*, but they were probably more like *astrologers* (sometimes called ‘stargazers’—those that studied the stars to gain knowledge)—however, their presence in the biblical record is not a divine endorsement of *astrology*.

The magi were teachers and instructors of the Persian kings and were looked upon as men of holiness and wisdom.

**Matthew 2:2 (NKJV)**

**2..."Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East..."**

Actually, what they’re saying is that—while *they* were in the East (Persia) they saw His star in the West—which is obvious because they traveled west from Persia to Jerusalem.

**“What was this star?** (the Greek is ‘*light source*’ or ‘*light-bearer*’)

There’s been a lot of speculation about this *star* over the centuries.

Was it a *real* star; was it a *supernatural* star created by God just for these wisemen—or was it really an *angel* sent by God to direct these wisemen to Jesus (angels are sometimes called ‘stars’ in the Bible—Rev.12:4)?

I personally think that this star was no ordinary star—I believe it was something miraculous, something created by God for this occasion—but it really doesn’t matter.

It doesn't matter what kind of '*light-source*' God uses to lead you to Jesus—it could be a friend who verbally witnesses to you; or a stranger whom God uses to give you a gospel tract. The gospel could be presented to you by listening to a radio program or by watching a TV show (especially at this time of year).

It's not important what source of *light* God uses to bring you the good news of Jesus' coming to the earth to save you—it's only important that you follow that light—all the way to Jesus!

How did these Persian '*wise guys*' know it was "**His star—the King of the Jews**"?

Remember that these "*wisemen*" were a group of scholars who studied the stars.

But how did they come to associate a star with the coming of the Jewish Messiah in the first place—in fact, how did these Persian wisemen even know about the Messiah of Israel?

**Well, if you remember that 600 years earlier** Daniel was taken captive to Babylon where he was assigned a place with the wise men of the Babylonian court.

Later Babylon was overthrown by the Medes and the Persians where he once again rose to a place of prominence among the wisemen of the Persian court.

Because of Daniel's high position and great respect among them, it seems certain that the magi learned much from him about the one true God—the God of Israel.

That teaching would have no doubt included God's plan of redemption for mankind and the prophecies He had given in the Scriptures about this coming King and Savior.

Because many Jews remained in Babylon after the exile ended and intermarried with the people of the East—it is likely that Jewish Messianic influence remained strong in that region even until New Testament times.

God must have supernaturally revealed to the magi that the star in the western sky was the very star that God had predicted would point to the birth of the Messiah—

**Numbers 24:17**

"I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near; a Star shall come out of Jacob; A Scepter shall rise out of Israel..."

**Matthew 2:2**

**..."Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come..."**

God can give you all the light in the world to point you to Jesus—but it will do you absolutely no good—if you don't respond and come to Him!

This time of year, even though it has been tainted by so much commercialism, is still a time that reflects the message of God sending His Son into the world, so much so that even atheists are forced to hear the message of Christmas—whether they like it or not!

And yet, even though the *message* of Christmas is everywhere, and most of the people in our country *celebrate* Christmas—many never come to the '*Christ of Christmas*' for salvation.

**Now even though tradition says** that the wisemen arrived at the stable just shortly after Jesus was born to present their gifts to Him—the events described in Matthew chapter 2, probably occurred anywhere from 12 to 18 months *after* Jesus was born.

In other words, they didn't get there at the same time the shepherds did because we see from Matt. 2:11 that Jesus' family was now staying in a *house* rather than the *stable* where He had been born (Luke 2:7).

But look, it doesn't matter that these wisemen didn't come to Jesus at the same time the shepherds did—it only matters that they did eventually came to Jesus!

We don't all come to Christ at the same time, some come to Jesus in their youth, others come later in life—again, it really doesn't matter, the only thing that matters is that you come to Jesus before it's too late!

**Matthew 2:2**

**[the wisemen said] "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him."**

Of all the places in the Bible where worship is talked about—the only place in Scripture, that I can think of, where someone actually *exemplified* it, was when Mary of Bethany took that alabaster flask of precious oil of spikenard and poured it upon Jesus preparing His body for burial.

When she did that, she became a living illustration of what a life of worship truly means.

Why is it so important that we understand what a life of worship is all about? Because Jesus told us in John 4, that the Father is seeking *true* worshippers who worship Him in Spirit and in Truth—which is in fact the goal of all of redemptive history (Revelation 5:8-14).

Mary of Bethany was a true worshipper—therefore what can we learn from her as to the nature of true worship?

Well, first and foremost, she teaches us that true worship is often costly!

**John 12:3 (NKJV)**

**<sup>3</sup> Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair...**

It cost Mary something very precious to worship her Lord in this way—in fact, we are told in verse 5 that this pound of spikenard was worth 300 denarii—almost a year's wage back then.

The first lesson we learn from Mary's act of worship is that worship involves sacrifice by giving to God what's most precious to us—not the leftovers of our time, our energy or our possessions. Mary gave the most precious thing she owned to her Lord in worship—oil of spikenard. Spikenard was made from something called '*nard*' which came from a flowering plant that grew up in the Himalayan Mountains between China and Tibet.

It had to be brought out on the backs of camels down the Himalayas all the way to Israel where it was made into a costly perfumed oil and placed in an alabaster flask.

Needless to say, it was a very costly procedure which yielded a very precious commodity—as we said this pound of spikenard was worth almost a year's wage!

There's something else you might not realize from this—this oil of spikenard was probably Mary's dowry.

In those days if they wanted to make an investment for the future, there weren't any stocks or bonds or IRA's, so instead they would invest in gold, silver, precious stones—or even in precious ointments or perfumes.

This is apparently what Mary had done—she made a very costly investment in this spikenard to be saved as a dowry (her father was obviously dead by this time)—but in an act of true love and worship she poured it out on Jesus anointing Him for burial.

To the world (or even to the average Christian) her worship seemed *extravagant* in the extreme, but when you're talking about worshiping Jesus—nothing is too costly to give to Him in light of what He gave for us!

If this was her dowry then culturally speaking—it meant she was pretty much giving up any hope of ever getting married and having a family.

In that culture a woman without a dowry wasn't likely to find a man willing to marry her.

What a tremendous sacrifice Mary made to worship Jesus—look at what it cost her!

Because she sat at Jesus' feet and listened to Him speak (she had no agenda like His apostles) she knew what He was about to do for her—and she responded by anointing Him for burial.

This was a sacrificial offering of true worship demonstrated by giving to Jesus what was most precious to her.

It seemed that Mary understood well what King David had expressed so many years earlier when he said that he wouldn't give the Lord an offering (as an act of worship) from that which cost him nothing (1Chron. 21:24).

**And notice** that Mary didn't open the bottle, *dab* a little of the perfumed oil on Jesus, and then closed it back up, saving the rest for herself.

No, because Mary knew that once those alabaster flasks were filled, they were *sealed* shut and the only way to open them was to—break them open!

That meant that once they were opened, the contents had to be completely used or else it would go bad—you had to use it all.

In other words, it spoke of *total* commitment—not holding anything back but giving up all that was precious for Jesus.

When I think how valuable our time is today and how we often measure out a small amount to give to God each week (church and devotions) but the rest of our time we lavishly spend on

ourselves—it makes me wonder if *we* really understand what it means to worship the Lord through a life of total surrender, devotion, and commitment—giving to God our best!

Worship is costly, which means it often requires sacrifice—sometimes the sacrifice of your very life!

Let's not forget that for centuries under Roman persecution it cost Christians the sacrifice of their lives to serve (and worship) the Lord.

Or today those living under Communism or in Islamic countries... (Read Fox's Book of Martyrs)

And so, worshipping God is a precious gift to Him, one that truly blesses the heart of God (which should be our passion).

This is especially true when it comes to supporting the ministries of those out on the mission field or the work of the church in our own communities.

True worship is giving to God by sharing with others—sharing your love, the gospel, and your resources.

God considers it worshipping Him because by your example of giving Him these things you are putting Him on display in your life—you are glorifying Him by representing His heart to this world.

Again, the whole purpose for Jesus coming to the earth the first time (our Christmas) was so that the Father could receive the gift of true worshippers. (John 4:23)

Jesus came to save us, but that was only a necessary prerequisite to God's ultimate goal which was to gather to Himself a community of true worshippers who would worship Him in spirit and in truth—for all eternity!

The Holy Spirit is using these wisemen to be the forerunners of this worshipping community.

These wisemen from Persia desired to fulfill this purpose when they said, **“Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star...and have come to worship Him!”**

**What about you?**—as someone has said, *“Wise men still seek Him!”*

**This is the real message of Christmas**—God gave to the world the gift of His Son so that we, in turn, could give to Him the gift of worship!

And listen, true worship isn't any one activity as so many think such as singing to God—nor does it happen in any one given place such as at church.

It is the sum total of your whole life—how you think, how you live and what you say—and it should happen everywhere you are—

**Romans 12:1 (NIV)**

<sup>1</sup> Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies [*the sum total of your life*] as living sacrifices [*the burnt offering—the offering of total commitment and consecration*], holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship.

This Christmas don't shut Jesus out of your heart like the innkeeper did from his inn two-thousand years ago.

Instead come to Him, fall on your knees before Him and say, “*Forgive me Lord for my sins. Come into my heart to be my Savior and King. I want to live my life from this moment on to worship You!*”

If you do this—you too will be considered a wise man or woman!