

The Gift: Jesus our High Priest

Welcome to Christmas at LifeGate! Christmas Fest is tonight!!

CONTEXT:

- Wisemen from the East traveled 9 months to worship Jesus after His birth.
- How many wise men? 3? But probably many more.
- Highly Educated, Very Wealthy #blessed
- Persian (influenced by Daniel and stories of Babylon)

JOKE: Had there been 3 Wise WOMEN they would have...

- Asked for directions, arrived on time, Birthed the baby, baked a casserole, and there would be peace on earth.

Matthew 2:10-11 NLT

¹⁰ When they saw the star, they were filled with joy! ¹¹ They 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.

- First Thing: Notice that when Jesus came into the world, people began to worship Him. It's the only correct response when God shows up.
- Gifts: Very expensive, practical uses, spiritual significance

- **According to "Essential Oil Advisors":**

Frankincense: *Possesses antiseptic, astringent, carminative, diuretic, digestive, sedative, uterine, and vulnerary therapeutic properties. Help heal physically.*

- **According to the Bible:**

Frankincense Symbolized **Jesus as our High Priest**

- The function of a priest might be confusing unless you were raised Catholic
 - **Represented the people to God!** (Functions)
 - **Priests made sacrifices for the forgiveness of sins.**
 - **Priests prayed prayers on behalf of the people to God.** (representative)

- **Jesus Our High Priest!**

- Since the moment sin entered the world with Adam and Eve, there have been 2 opposing forces: **Holiness of God-Sinfulness of Man**
- Sacrifice for Sin- "Sin" isn't a popular concept: Anything less than God's best. (All fall short of His glory)
 - Who's to tell me?
 - Bone this way, just the way I am.
 - It's okay if it feels good.

- It's my truth. You do "you"
- When sin is recognized, it's called "shaming" (Jesus calls it saving)
- Outdated concept used scare children into being good "You better be good for goodness sakes"

When we understand the Holiness of God, we won't approach sin casually.

Holy: *set apart, transcendentally separate, perfect, flawless, pure, no fault.*

- Holiness isn't just an attribute of God. It's the perfection of all His attributes.
- His love is Holy, His mercy is Holy, His power is Holy, His peace is Holy, His justice is Holy, His glory is Holy...He's worthy of our praise! *Psalm 96:9 Worship the Lord in the splendor of His holiness!*

PROBLEM: He is holy, and we are not. (Not you, not me, not the nice person at work.)

- Sin breaks our intimacy with God. He hates sin because it breaks relationship with us.
- He is separate from it because it is everything He is not.
- He has not, nor will he ever change His mind about sin because He will never change His mind about how much He desperately loves you.
- OT Sacrifice:
 - Priests would sacrifice the best animals once a year as a temporary pardon for sin (Day of Atonement, Yon Kippur)
 - Burn Frankincense to represent the prayers of the people
 - Enter the Holy Place behind the veil and sprinkle the blood on the mercy seat.
 - The innocent animal died in place of guilty people
 - Scapegoat: priest would confess the sins of the people and then sent into the desert
 - Bloody, extreme, gross, unfair, innocent animals?
 - The Sacrifice satisfies God's justice and at the same time extends His mercy **God is just, but equally merciful.**
 - Temporary arrangement but God had a permanent plan!
- **A Better Sacrifice!**

Hebrews 10:10-12 NLT

¹⁰ For God's will was for us to be made holy by the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all time. ¹¹ Under the old covenant, the priest stands and ministers before the altar day after day, offering the same sacrifices again and again, which can never take away sins. ¹² But our High Priest offered himself to God as a single sacrifice for sins, good for all time.

Our High Priest became the once-for-all sacrifice for sin.

Illustration: "Smells like onion." Exchanged our robe of sin for His robe of holiness.

Colossians 1:22 (NLT)

² Yet now he has reconciled you to himself through the death of Christ in his physical body. As a result, he has brought you into his own presence, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before him without a single fault.

- No longer on opposite sides. Team Jesus!
 - We've been gifted the holiness of God through Jesus
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Hebrews 4:14-15

¹⁴ So then, since we have a great High Priest who has entered heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to what we believe. ¹⁵ This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all the same testings we do, yet he did not sin.

Our High Priest understands and cares.

- Whatever you're going through, Jesus understands. He sympathizes.
- Jesus dealt with crazy people (1-3 are crazy)
- He's not sitting in Heaven saying, "It stinks to be you."
 - o Conceived out of wedlock to teenage mom.
 - o Growing up very small town- known as illegitimate
 - o Criticized, ridiculed, bullied.
 - o Tempted over and over again by the devil attacking his most vulnerable.
 - o Had a close friend die- Grieved loss of family members.
 - o Accused of things he didn't do- Friends betrayed him.
 - o Worst all, felt abandoned & deserted God, He wasn't but it felt that way.

Why? Because Jesus took on the sin of the world. "He who knew no sin became sin..." He became our Scapegoat and God looked away because He is Holy.

- If you ever felt unclean or like you couldn't reach the presence of God, Jesus understands!
- What you feel, He felt. Where you hurt, He hurt. He is our great High Priest who understands and cares.
- Imagine the details of God: The Word was there in the beginning, Word became flesh, born into the world He created. Then through God's divine work, wisemen followed a star bringing gifts that prophetically speak to who Jesus is and what He would do. Gold: He is our King, Myrrh: He is our Suffering Servant, and Frankincense: He is our Priest

When we understand the Holiness of God, we will approach His presence boldly.

- His holiness makes me whole again.

- Mercy and “Working” Grace (the Hand of God moving on your life)

Verse 16

¹⁶ So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most.