

December 9, 2018
UNWRAPPED - Part 3

"Gifts"

We are unwrapping the why behind the what, so our celebrations will reflect our faith.
Though (Jesus) was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. ...he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on a cross. Therefore, God elevated him to the place of highest honor and gave him the name above all other names, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow...and every tongue declare that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
Philippians 2:6-11 (NLT)

I. Gifts for a King:

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, saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him...." And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.
Matthew 2:1-2,11 (ESV)

- **Gold** - precious metal for a king.
- **Frankincense** - perfume or incense for a priest.
- **Myrrh** - anointing oil for a savior.

II. Evolution of Gifting:

They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall bring good news, the praises of the Lord.
Isaiah 60:6 (ESV)

- **Before Christ:** Winter Solstice traditions
 - **Middle Ages:** Giving to the poor
 - Saint Nicholas of Myra (270 - 343), an early Christian bishop in Asia Minor
 - Good King Wenceslas (907 - 935), a Bohemian Duke
 - William the Conqueror (1028 - 1087), first Norman King of England
- Jesus said, "Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."*
- Matthew 25:40 (NIV)
- **Martin Luther's era (1483 - 1546):**
 - Anonymity
 - Puritans - Who's birthday is it, anyway?
 - Epiphany - Celebrating the wise men's arrival

- **In the 1820s:** Clement Moore's "The Night Before Christmas" changed everything.
- **In the 1900s:** World War II prolonged the season.

III. Today's Gifts:

- Conceive of a Christ-centered Christmas.

- Be intentional.

- Believe in the goodness of God's gifts.

- Sometimes gifts don't come in the wrapping we want or expect.

If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him! Matthew 7:11

Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

2 Corinthians 9:15 (NIV)

- Receive what God is giving you.

- We have a choice – to receive or reject God's gifts.

- Receive to give.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16 (ESV)

Recommended Reading

Sacred Holidays by Becky Kiser

The Case for Christmas by Lee Strobel

Get the *Life Journal* Bible Reading Plan at gateway-community.org/Find-it

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