



Hey, It's Christmas

Matt 2:1-12

Wise Men Quiz

- 1. Where did the wise men go to ask directions?**
 - the police station
 - Jerusalem
 - a motorway service station

- 2. Who did Herod ask for help?**
 - the AA
 - NHS Direct
 - chief priests and teachers of the law

- 3. How did they know where Jesus was born?**
 - it was in the Bible
 - it was in the births section of the newspaper
 - they looked Mary and Joseph up in the phone book

- 4. What did the wise men do when they found Jesus?**
 - they knelt and worshipped Him
 - they threw a party
 - they offered Him a ride on their camel

- 5. What did the wise men bring Jesus as gifts?**
 - gold, silver and bronze
 - gold, frankincense and myrrh
 - gold, frankenstein and marzipan

- 6. How did the wise men return home?**
 - on the bus
 - on a different road
 - on their camels

- 7. How many Wise Men were there?**
 - 3
 - 4
 - haven't got a clue

3 Gifts – gold, underarm deodorant, air freshener - Bling, Bouquet & Bleach

Over this Christmas period we've looked at a number of people who were associated with the nativity story. There were the shepherds, Mary and Joseph who I must say seem to have found the whole thing a bit of a surprise, and then there was Simeon to whom God had revealed the plot.

There were then the wise men – magi – Persian astrologers who had some idea of what was going on. God has a real sense of humour. Jerusalem was full of religious experts who should have seen it all coming, yet it was a load of dodgy magicians that actually knew more than them what was going on.

The Wise Men had some idea of plot and brought gifts that were appropriate for a king. They had some idea of who they were dealing with but I guess they were surprised to find Him as part of an ordinary family living in an ordinary house.

Actually, I guess they were pretty useless gifts for a baby. I mean it would have been better to have brought him some baby clothes, maybe a bottle, some spare nappies and whatnot. And all he gets is gold, frankincense and myrrh. Something that shone, some perfume and something to cover up bad smells – bling – bouquet and bleach! Strange gifts, but little did they probably know that they spoke so strongly of what Jesus was about.

So let's have a look at our bling, bouquet and bleach!

BLING They give Jesus gold. Gold for centuries has been one of the most precious metals. People who have lots of gold bling are usually rich. Kings are plenty rich. It was common for kings to receive gifts of gold from others to show their mark of respect. It signified that Jesus was one who was going to have authority. Who has authority in your life this morning? Who's the boss? Your wife, your husband, parents, friends, things, jobs. Things change when we decide to put Jesus in charge of our lives.

BOUQUET They gave Jesus frankincense. Incense is a kind of perfume that you burn to release the fragrance. In churches where they burn the stuff, it usually signifies that their desire is that they wish their words and worship to be holy and rise to the presence of God.

Why have we come here to worship this morning? I'm not even going to speculate on the different reasons that there might be, but what I will say is that God deserves our worship and desires to hear our voices speaking to Him. Why? Because He loves us and desires our presence and friendship. The bottom line is that this is what Christmas is about. As a race we are separated from God. So God made the first move and became a human being – Jesus. What was the significance of that – lets go to gift three.

BLEACH They gave Him myrrh. Myrrh was used when people were buried. It covered all the nasty niffs that start when the body rots. It has the same effect as putting Harpic or Toilet Duck down your toilet. For people at that time; think of myrrh, think of death. What a weird gift for a newborn – but this baby was born to die. How did God find a way of getting us back? By the death of Jesus on the cross. When Jesus died He opened a way by which the wrong things we have done in our life and which separate us from God (God calls them sin), can be forgiven.

So God has gone to a lot of trouble to get to know us. How can we get to know Him? Have you tried asking? We need to accept that we are separated from God and that it's our unbelief and our actions that have made that happen. We need to accept that Jesus has died for us and opens a way for our sins to be forgiven. God offers us a gift this morning – an eternal relationship with Him which starts now.

What do I have to do? Well, today is about gifts. A gift becomes mine when I receive it from the giver. All we have to do is accept that gift – accept we are sinners, ask for forgiveness and receive that gift.

Maybe you have done that at some point in your life already but then walked away. The great thing about God is that we may walk away but He always wants to welcome us back. Jesus still died for you. Come back, find forgiveness afresh and see all the things that God wants to do in your life.

Prayer

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