

Why Jesus?

JESUS IS THE REASON FOR THE SEASON.

WHY JESUS?

If you've been coming here the last couple of weeks you'll know that we looked at where, Jesus was born two weeks ago, then on Sunday we looked at who Jesus was and is.

But why. Why is Jesus the reason for the season? The Christmas story itself gives us that information, through the gifts the wise men gave Jesus.

So who were these guys? Tradition always portrays them as wearing turbans or crowns, riding camels, there's three of them, they are kings and usually one of them is black. The Bible doesn't say that much – it doesn't say if they were kings, it doesn't say how many of them there actually were and doesn't even say they were wise! The only thing we know for sure is they came to worship the new born King and present Him with gifts.

They are described as magi – in fact that's the word used in Greek and is derived from a Persian word magus (Latin's the same) (from which we get the word magic). They were probably zoroastrians – which leaned strongly on astrologers.

It's one of the most amazing parts of the Christmas story. God announced the coming of the Messiah to people who worshipped a false religion. It's the only time that astrology has been ever known to work – because God intervened.

Why would God want to break into the world of a false religion? Because the messiah was going to reach all people, whatever their race, creed or whatever – and He was going to change them and bring them to Himself. The Good News about Jesus is for everyone!

Why gold frankincense and myrrh? What do they represent?

GOLD

Gold has always been seen as the most sought after metal. It isn't the rarest or the most valuable. But it is plentiful enough and its value high enough to be seen as a source of wealth. Even though it's soft and easily worn away, if it's kept safely in a vault, it will acquire value.

God has always been associated with royalty. Here's a picture of the queen visiting the Bank of England recently. She found out is that not all the bars there belonged to Britain. When the Queen saw George Osborne she said:

"I saw all the gold bars, which, regrettably, somebody said don't belong to us."

A smiling Osborne replied: "Some of them were sold, but we've still got some left."

I wonder how many?

Gold was a GIFT FIT FOR A KING. It signified to all around the Jesus was born to rule, to have authority. Any leader will tell you that rule is only effective when people have allegiance to you. The kingdom that Jesus is establishing isn't one of territory right now, but one of allegiance and consent. Because its only that way the king can bring all the benefits and protection of the of the kingdom into people's lives.

Those that follow Jesus, are people who pledge allegiance to Him and come under His authority. Following Jesus is a life-changing experience and that's why Jesus came: to bring life and hope to people.

FRANKINCENSE

Incense is a perfume you burn to create a nice smell. It's invariably used in religion. In Orthodox and Catholic Churches, priests burn it as a symbol of life. It signifies that Jesus wasn't just a king but a priest.

Frankincense was A GIFT FIT FOR A PRIEST. What does a priest do? He's an intermediary between God and people. That's the role Jesus has – and the frankincense indicates that Jesus brings life, eternal life to us.

And that's what our Great High priest, Jesus offers us today. Have you accepted His offer of life.?

MYRRH

Finally, they brought Myrrh. Myrrh was a spice used to embalm bodies. I thought on a Christmas Day, I'd put a happy picture of a hearse up for you. But the truth is that Jesus came to this world for a purpose – to die. So it was a gift FIT FOR SOMEONE WHO WAS TO DIE.

The long and short of the birth of Jesus Christ was that He was going to die. The Immortal God placed Himself in a position where He was mortal. He could die. He was going to die. And by surrendering Himself to die on the cross, he took the punishment for the sins that separated us from God so that we might have a way open to find God, to find life, to find hope. That's the meaning of Christmas. That's why God became human – so that He might be able to redeem a world that had walked away from Him and continues to do so.

WISE MEN SEEK HIM STILL

The Jesus who was a baby, who died is now alive and who now builds His kingdom, invites each of us to be a part of it today. Are we ready to follow Him?

Prayer

*Preached by Mark Reid
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Matt 2:1-11

2 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."

3 When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. 4 When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born.

5 "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written:

6 "But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for out of you will come a ruler
who will shepherd my people Israel."

7 Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. 8 He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him."

9 After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. 10 When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. 11 On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshipped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.