

CHRISTMAS IS A GIFT

Then came that night of nights when the shepherds were abiding in the fields and the angel of the Lord appeared to them, announcing: Fear not: for, behold I bring you good tidings of great Joy... For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

The shepherd with haste went to the manger to pay honour to Christ the Lord. Later, wise men journeyed from the East to Jerusalem, saying, where is he that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east, and have come to worship him.



The Magi presenting gifts to Baby Jesus

When they saw the star they rejoiced with exceeding joy. And when they came into the house they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshiped him and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, frankincense and myrrh. Since that time, the spirit of giving gifts has been present in the mind of each Christian as he or she commemorates the Christmas Season.

Our Heavenly Father gave us His life, the atonement and victory over the grave. What will you and I give for Christmas this year? Let us in our lives give to our Lord and Saviour the gift of gratitude by living His teachings and following in his footsteps. It was said of Him that He, "went about doing good." As we do likewise, the Christian spirit will be ours. Let us Praise and worship him each day of our lives, may it be our daily gift to our Saviour.

THE MEANING OF THE GIFTS BY THE MAGI

The gift of gold was often reserved for royalty. The Magi told King Herod that they had come to see the one born King of the Jews. It is clear that they recognized Jesus as being Royal but the question is why? The issue is the star of Bethlehem. The Magi had seen the star and they recognized the importance of the star in the sky as a sign of a spectacular birth. The Magi brought gold in some form, whether it was jewelry, coins, or just pieces, we are not told. The

importance of the gift was that it represented the fact that Jesus was Royal.

The gift of frankincense is somewhat unusual. Frankincense was a highly valued commodity and somewhat rare. The Jewish people had a common use for frankincense that was directly connected to the worship of God. In the Temple, the Jews prayed before the Altar of Incense which was always kept burning. The substance burned on that altar was frankincense. When frankincense is burned it gives off a sweet smelling white smoke. The smoke rising from the altar of incense represented the prayers of the people rising to God in heaven. The only use of frankincense for Jews was at this altar and it was reserved for the worship of God. The Magi presenting this gift to Jesus represents the fact that He was indeed divine.

The gift of myrrh seems the most odd of the gifts. Myrrh was extremely valuable and had a number of uses. The most common use was a perfume. Sometimes myrrh might be used in the homes of the wealthy to create a pleasant fragrance but was normally reserved for special instances. The major use of myrrh was for burials. Myrrh was placed on the cloths used to wrap bodies for burial to help prevent the smell of decay following death. The Magi presented this gift to Jesus as a representation that He would one day die. The gift almost seems to convey the fact that Jesus would die. (spiritualliving360.com).

OUR THIRD YEAR PHILOSOPHERS



From Left: Julius Musonda, Fr. Kangwa, Rogers Mwansa and Peter Mutasha.

Our three third year philosophers from Balaka have just come back for their Christmas holidays. Third years are usually given the chance to come back home for two weeks of holidays, just in case they are appointed to Burkina Faso for the French speaking novitiate and thus would have no time to come back home before they leave for the novitiate at the end of the academic year. We wish them quality time and the best of holidays with their families.