

Rejoicing With Exceedingly Great Joy – Matthew 2:1-12 - Sunday, December 22nd, 2019

Matthew 2:1–12 - 1 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, 2 saying, “Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him.” 3 When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. 4 And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. 5 So they said to him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet: 6 ‘But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, Are not the least among the rulers of Judah; For out of you shall come a Ruler Who will shepherd My people Israel.’ ” 7 Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared. 8 And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found Him, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also.” 9 When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. 10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. 11 And when they had come 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 gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. 12 Then, being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way.

- Every year at Christmas I'm always reminded of just how stressful and busy we've made our celebration of the Savior's birth.
- Sadly, what should be a time of "rejoicing with exceedingly great joy" has become for many a time of exceedingly great stress.
- Thankfully, this need not be by virtue of what the birth of the Savior of the world means to us both here on earth and in heaven.

- After seeking the Lord I sensed that He would have us revisit this account of the wise men and the gifts they brought to Jesus.
- The reason being is that of the significance of what these gifts symbolized for Jesus then, and for us as believers in Jesus now.
- As such, I want to talk about these three gifts and the reason as to why we too should be rejoicing with exceedingly great joy.

1. Gold

- In the ancient world, gold was very scarce making it extremely valuable, and it was customary to give gold to a king as royalty.
- This gold speaks of the birth of the King of kings and Lord of lords fulfilling all the prophecies and types in the Old Testament.
- It's important to understand these gifts were of great value, which Joseph and Mary needed especially in order to get to Egypt.

2. Frankincense

- Frankincense is a very fragrant resin that comes by cutting the tree and then letting the resin bleed out to dry then be burned.
- The gift of frankincense speaks of Jesus being our High Priest and fulfills the Old Testament types as it relates to the Temple.
- According to Exodus 30, a mix of spices with "pure frankincense" was the only incense permitted at the altar used for worship.

3. Myrrh

- Myrrh, like frankincense is a very fragrant spice that comes from the sap of a tree, only instead of incense this was used as oil.
- Specifically, anointing oil that would only be fragrant after it was crushed as a bitter herb, which speaks to the Savior's death.
- This because myrrh was the key ingredient in a mixture of spices that they used to prepare someone's body for their burial.

- Here's what it means, gold speaks to His birth as my King, frankincense His life as my Priest and Myrrh His death as my Savior.
- If Jesus is my King, my Priest and my Savior, then it would stand to reason that He is also the answer to everything in my life.

- Jesus is "THE" answer to fear, worry, hopelessness, loneliness, depression, despair, sickness, disease and everything else.
- Simply put, the birth of the Savior is good news because He was born to die so we could be born again to live for all eternity.
- It's for this reason that during this season, we celebrate the Savior's birth, and in so doing, we also celebrate the Savior's death.

- Were it not for His death and resurrection, His work here, to bring peace and good will toward men would've been incomplete.
- The first time He came it was through a virgin's womb, and in death He left through an empty tomb, and finally defeated death.
- The way He entered this world would be similar to how He left this world in that His death is woven into the fabric of his birth.

- His body was wrapped in cloth in a stone manger at His birth, and His body was wrapped in cloth in a stone tomb at His death!
- As one aptly quipped, Jesus entered our world through a door marked No Entrance, and left it through a door marked No Exit.
- The question for all mankind becomes will we allow Him entrance into the door of our life for eternal life, when we exit this life?

- This is why the Saviors birth is good news of glad tidings and exceedingly great joy to the world that's in sin and error pining.
- The Gospel, or good news is that Jesus was crucified, buried, rose again on the third day, and is coming back for us one day.
- That's the Gospel, and the ABC's of Salvation is a simple childlike explanation of how to respond to the Gospel and be saved.

The ABC's of Salvation

- The A is for Admit you're a sinner and your need for the Savior, (Romans 3:10, 23 – 6:23).
- The B is for Believe in your heart that Jesus is Lord and God raised Him from the dead, (Romans 10:9-10).
- The C is for Call upon the name of the Lord and confess with your mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord, (Romans 10:9-10, 13).