

GIFTS OF
THE WISE
MEN

THE VISIT OF THE WISE MEN

Story: Matthew 2v1-12

Tell/act out the story together

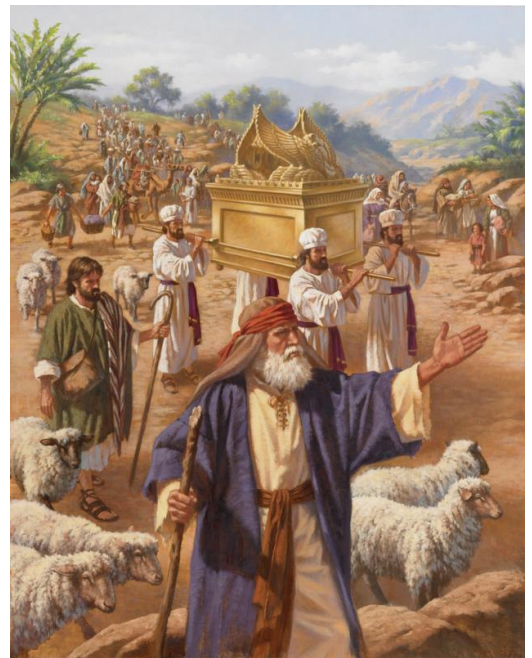
The wise men brought gifts and each of them had a special prophetic/symbolic meaning which we will learn about.

(Footsteps skip to page 7)

These 3 special gifts also relate to 3 special people in the Old Testament. The name that we pronounce “Jesus” in English, is the name “Yeshua” in Hebrew and there are three other Yeshua’s in the Old Testament. These three Yeshuas are usually written as Joshua in our Bibles which makes things confusing! But Yeshua, Joshua and Jesus are all the same name. It means God saves.

We are going to be detectives, exploring the three Yeshuas (Joshuas) of the Old Testament and the three gifts of the wise men. See if you can match them up and work out what the three gifts tell us about the fourth Yeshua... Jesus!

{YESHUA} JOSHUA THE CONQUEROR



Very early in the story of the people of Israel, they became enslaved in Egypt and God had to rescue them from slavery through His servant Moses. When they left Egypt, the Egyptians gave them lots of gold and jewellery.

Joshua (Yeshua) was the military commander of Israel and Moses' helper. He fought battles for Israel while Moses prayed. He also went up the Mountain with Moses into the presence of God. When Moses died, Joshua became the leader of Israel and led the Israelites into the promised land, where they defeated the enemies of God's people.

Joshua loved the scriptures and ruled the people with justice and righteousness. He was a good and wise ruler of Israel, who led the people from slavery into freedom and the promises of God. Although Joshua was not called a king, because God was the king of Israel, he acted a bit like a king. He was a faithful ruler who honoured God and led the people into a rich land, flowing with milk and honey.

(YESHUA) JOSHUA AND THE ARK OF THE COVENANT



After the Israelites entered the promised land, they turned away from God and God allowed their enemies, the Philistines to defeat the Israelites in battle and capture the Ark of the Covenant, the special box where God was present in a very powerful way.

The Philistines thought that their god Dagon must be greater than the God of Israel, because they had won the battle, so they put the Ark of the Covenant in Dagon's temple. The statue of Dagon could not stand in the presence of the God of Israel, so it fell over and Dagon's arms and head fell off. Plagues came on the Philistines in the city while the Ark of the Covenant was there. The Philistines realised that they needed to return the Ark of the Covenant to Israel, so they sent it back loaded on a cart pulled by two cows and watched to see if it would go back to Israel by itself.

It did! The person who received it was a man called Yeshua, Joshua, in the land of Judah. We don't know much about this man, but it is significant that God's presence returned to Israel in the field of Joshua.

{YESHUA} JOSHUA THE HIGH PRIEST



After the Ark of the Covenant returned to Israel, the people asked for a King and they had a string of kings. A few were good like the first Joshua, but most led the people away from God. A temple was built in Jerusalem by King Solomon, but he also worshipped idols and the people turned away from God again. The kingdom of Israel was torn in two and, after years of patiently warning the people to return to God, they were eventually taken into exile and the temple in Jerusalem was destroyed.

After 70 years of exile in Babylon, some of the people of Judah were able to return to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple. The High Priest who helped the people rebuild the temple, worship God again, offered sacrifices to cover over the sins of the people and prayed for the people was called... guess what? Yeshua! Joshua!

THE THREE GIFTS

Hundreds of years later, wise men brought three gifts to a new Yeshua, Jesus. Can you remember what they were?

Gold speaks of kingly authority, wealth and rule

Frankincense was burnt as part of a beautiful smelling offering in front of the Ark of the Covenant in the tabernacle and temple. It was used in the presence of God and represented prayers going up to God.

Myrrh was used to anoint the temple/tabernacle and the priests that offered the sacrifices to set them aside as holy to God.

Can you match each gift to one of the Joshua's (Yeshua's) of the Old Testament?

{YESHUA} JESUS SON OF GOD

Footsteps:

Gold is for a king

In what way is Jesus a good king?

Trailblazers:

Frankincense is for the presence of God

In what way does Jesus bring us into God's presence/make us friends with God, able to talk with Him?

Climbers:

Myrrh is for the priest, temple and sacrifice. (Jesus was anointed with myrrh as He was laid in the tomb)

In what way is Jesus a priest and sacrifice?

BIG ART

Can you work together in your groups to make some big pieces of art to share with the church at the Christmas Eve service?

Footsteps: decorate the gold box

Trailblazers: Wrap the giant box to make an Ark of the Covenant and decorate bowls which we will fill with the smell of frankincense

Climbers: Wrap the plates to make a base and decorate the bowls which we will fill with the smell of myrrh

GOLD

Gold speaks of kingly authority, wealth and rule



FRANKINCENSE

Frankincense was burnt as part of a beautiful smelling offering in front of the Ark of the Covenant in the tabernacle and temple. It was used in the presence of God and represented prayers going up to God.



MYRRH

Myrrh was used to anoint the temple/tabernacle and the priests that offered the sacrifices to set them aside as holy to God.

