

In the Name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

By Divine direction, led by a symbol of the presence of Christ, the Magi, Eastern Sages, Diviners from afar, seek the newborn King. They come bringing gifts. When the star leads them to the Child, they fall down and worship before Him. And they present Him gifts, gold, frankincense and myrrh, gifts which testify to Who the Child is.

Gold is the stuff of Kings. It is the royal metal, the only precious metal that doesn't tarnish. It is of great value. To lay gold before the king is simply to bring him what he is due. His crown designates him as ruler, gold marks him as worthy of the adoration and tribute of his subjects. So in the Tabernacle and Temple, the places that God dwelt physically among His people, many of the furnishings were fashioned of gold. For there in that magnificent Holy Place, as here in this lowly house, the True King was present.

Frankincense is the stuff of worship and of sacrifice, of drawing nigh unto God. By Divine command, by Law, the sacrifices of Old were mixed with incense, that as they were burned a pleasing aroma ascended to the God who is alone worthy to receive sacrifice, the God who demanded sacrifice. Moses was commanded to beat Frankincense into a fine powder, cast it upon the coals, and use the thick fragrant cloud to protect himself from the Presence of God in the Tabernacle.

On the gold table in the Holy Place that held the showbread in the Tabernacle, Frankincense was sprinkled upon the rows of bread to designate it as a sacrifice set apart for God, and that at God's command.

Myrrh is the stuff of healing, of redemption, and of death. It was an ingredient in the Balm of Gilead. Myrrh was used in an effort to buy captive Benjamin, the Son of the Right Hand, back from the Egyptians. Myrrh was used in the holy anointing oil of the Priesthood. Brides were perfumed with myrrh, and so myrrh occurs more in the Song of Songs as a mark of the Beloved Bride than in any other Book of Scripture.

It is myrrh that was offered to the dying Messiah on the cross to dull the pain, a comfort He rejected. There He died your death. There He paid for your sins. And it was myrrh that Nicodemus brought to prepare the lifeless body of the Teacher at Whose feet he sat at night.

The gifts testify. As the Eastern Sages bow down to worship before the young Child of Bethlehem, their worship proclaims Him to be the True King. By the Prophet's Word and the sign of the star they were converted from paganism to faith in the One True God, the Child before whom they now kneel.

Through Him were the sun and moon and stars placed, now a new star shows its worship by leading men to Him and marking His presence, the physical presence of the eternal God, He who is the Root and Seed of David now in David's City, the Bright Morning Star.

And the gifts they bring cry out, indeed prophesy, of the Child they bow before. For in that humble house dwelt the King of heaven and earth. The gold planted in the hills is His, for it was

placed by His hand. The gold they bring Him is already His, as are the offerings you bring to the same Lord. We give Him but His own, whate'er the gift may be. For all we have is His alone.

It is He who dwelt between the Cherubim, in the gold-gilt Holy of Holies, before Whom was the gold table for the showbread. So for a time this small house in Bethlehem is the Holy of Holies. And at the feet of this Toddler King earthly sages from afar lay the stuff of kings. And He will be called a King again, as Pilate's epithet rightly testifies that He is King of the Jews.

It is He, David's Son and David's Lord, the Bread of Life, the True Bread that came down from heaven, that makes that humble house in Judea the true House of Bread, the true Bethlehem. Whoever eats this Bread will live forever.

He is the New and Better Showbread, and so they bring Him Frankincense, for He is to be laid out before God as the perfect Bread Offering, the Bread covered with Scarlet cloth and borne on a pole. He is the New and Better Showbread, eaten by you who are declared a royal priesthood, a holy nation, in Him.

They bring Him Frankincense, for He truly worthy of your worship. He is the True, Perfect Sacrifice. It is He that is the Aroma pleasing to God the Father, the Atoning Sacrifice acceptable for the fulfillment of the Holy Law.

It is this Child, not a cloud of smoke, although He came in a pillar of smoke, it is this Child that goes between God the Father and fallen men, between you and God, He that stands in the breach, He that leads God's people through the desert of this life and into the true Promised Land, He that by His physical Presence protects sinners from the consuming holiness of God, He by whom men may draw nigh unto God. Not covered in smoke, but covered in His Blood, you are pleasing and acceptable, you are reconciled to God.

They bring Him myrrh, for He is the true Balm of Gilead, the true Physician, eternal recovery for the health of the daughter of the people of God, the Holy Church. He is the true Anointed One, perfumed by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and marked as the Lamb of God. It is He that heals you, He that redeems you, and He that dies for you, His Holy Flesh torn and anointed with myrrh before being wrapped in gravecloths.

He is the New and Better Benjamin, the True Son of the Right Hand, the Right Hand of God the Father, to whom He ascended after He emptied the gravecloths, broke the gates of hell, and took the celestial throne that was rightly His all the while.

So hear, dear Christian, the testimony of the gifts the Magi bring. The heavens bow down to this Child. He is your Christ, your Redeemer, your Shepherd. Fall down and worship Him as did those eastern diviners, for He is your Lord, your King, your God. He is God of Jew and Gentile.

Come, worship the King. Do as the Magi did. Kneel before Him. But as you kneel at this rail, it is He that brings Gifts. It is He that bestows upon you forgiveness, salvation and life. It is He that gives you to eat, marking His Presence not by star but by bread and wine.

It is the saving Proclamation of Him, revealed by the Holy Spirit to His holy Apostles and Prophets, that He is the Child of Mary, the Child of Bethlehem, the Newborn King, the Son of

God, that brings salvation to the ends of the earth. Gentiles shall come to His Light, and Kings to the Brightness of His Rising. Behold, the Lord, the Ruler has come, and the Kingdom and the Power and the Glory are in His Hand.

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