

Hope Bumper

Merry Christmas. Today is December 25th 2016. Thank you for joining us in worship here at Redemption Church in Plano Tx.

My name is Chris Fluitt and I greet you in the name of our savior Jesus Christ.

Messiah has come! Immanuel, God is with us!

We are in the 4th and final week of the Hope 4 the Holidays series.

- Week 1 – Hope shows up
- Week 2 – Hope speaks up
- Week 3 – Hope holds us up

And today, Week 4 – **Hope delivers himself up**

Let's look one more time at our memory verse for December. Do you have it memorized?

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.(NIV)

John 1:14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.(NIV)

Jesus, the Word, is the baby in a manger.

Who He is, why He came, and what He would do was a surprise to most. The mysterious magi, men from the east seemed to understand who, why, and what they were about to encounter. These Magi came bringing gifts that show they understood.

Matthew 2:1 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem(NIV)

It never says there were three wise men, it simply says Magi. It does say that three gifts were given, and tradition jumped to the conclusion that there were three wise men/magi. During the Middle Ages legend developed that they were kings, that they were three in number, and that their names were Casper, Balthazar, and Melchior. Probably not true. A twelfth-century bishop of Cologne even claimed to have found their skulls. Bizarre claim.

They came from the east, which means “from the rising of the sun.” This could infer that they were from the orient, but there is no way of knowing.

There is so much we don't know about them. We are not told their number, their names, their means of transportation, or the specific countries from which they came. That knowledge must not have been what made their part in the story important.

The story only gives one specific..

Matthew 2:11 On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh.(NIV)

The one specific is the 3 gifts they brought in worship.

Today I want to you to pay close attention to these specific gifts. These gifts given to a baby are prophetic and point us to the cross.

Gold

The Magi brought a child gold.

Gold is a precious metal and as such was a very valuable commodity. Its value could very well have financed Joseph and Mary's trip to Egypt, where they escaped Herod's plan to slay the child.

Gold is symbolic of Kingship in scripture. The gift of gold, was a gift fit for a king.

Also, Gold is a symbol of divinity/deity. The gift of gold to the Christ child was symbolic to His divine nature—God in flesh.

These men from a far worshipped the child as God & King. This was their gift.

Here is God's gift to us.

This child, although he deserved a royal crown, was crowned with thorns. He was mockingly called the king of the Jews. The infinite became an infant that would experience death to gift us a crown of life (James 1:12).

The King delivered himself up for us.

Frankincense

They brought a child Frankincense.

Frankincense is a sweet smelling incense. It is a white resin or gum. Frankincense is a symbol of holiness and righteousness. It was used in the temple as a burnt offering and to anoint the High Priest.

These men from a far worshipped the child as a holy anointed high priest. This was their gift.

Here is God's gift to us.

This holy & righteous child would become our High Priest forever (Hebrews 7:17).

A natural high priest would serve both God and the people.

- He would bring the sacrifice into the temple, serving the people.
- He would offer the sacrifice to the Lord, Serving God.

Our supernatural High Priest would mediate between the People and their God (1 Timothy 2:5). Hebrews 7:25 says that this High Priest LIVES FOREVER TO MAKE INTERCESSION FOR US. He serves us even now. He is a continual offering for us before the Lord (Numbers 28:6). The aroma of His sacrifice changes the room from the smell of death to a sweet smelling incense.

Our High Priest delivered himself up for us.

Myrrh

The Magi brought a child Myrrh

Myrrh was obtained from a tree in the same manner as frankincense. It is obtained from a tree by making incisions in the bark and allowing the gum to flow out. It was a spice and was used in embalming a dead body. It was also sometimes mingled with wine to form a pain deadening drink. Such a drink was given to our Savior when He was about to be crucified. (Mark 15:23) He refused the drink and took the full pain and suffering of the cross.

Myrrh symbolizes bitterness, suffering, and affliction.

These men from a far worshipped the child as one who would die. This was their gift.

Here is God's gift to us.

On the Cross, a roman soldier pierced His side and water & blood flowed from this tree of life (John 19:34, 1 John 5:6) much like the myrrh flows from the incision of a natural tree. The lifeless body of this child was taken from the cross, and scripture tells us that Nicodemus came with Myrrh to prepare Jesus for burial (John 19:39).

Jesus died, but just as you embalm a body with myrrh to stop the decay of the body, Scripture says..

Acts 13:34 The fact that God raised him from the dead, never to decay, is stated in these words: "I will give you the holy and sure blessings promised to David."(NIV)

Acts 13:35 So it is stated elsewhere: "You will not let your Holy One see decay."(NIV) [Psalm 16:10]

They brought 3 gifts. These gifts were not random. They were prophetic of the gift that God bestows upon us.

No gift you wrapped or opened this Christmas morning holds the meaning of God's gift. His gift is self-sacrificial love on the cross.

The Cross and the Manger are intertwined. He couldn't go to the cross without the manger. Without the cross then his manger holds no meaning.

Musician (Jesus Messiah)

Before Jesus was taken to the Cross He opened a treasure to His disciples. You may not have ever heard communion described as a treasure. It definitely is a treasure.

We usually only think about communion in connection with the Cross. Today I want to connect the INCARNATION with COMMUNION. Communion is remembering the Flesh & Blood of Jesus. The Incarnation is when our God became Flesh & Blood.

Incarnation & Communion

I want us to receive communion together. We will be passing the elements as we look at these scriptures together.

Luke 22:19 And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me."(NIV)

The gift of His body. He took it. He broke it. He gave it. There could be no body without the incarnation. God thank you for coming to earth in the flesh.

{Receive the body}

Luke 22:20 In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.(NIV)

The gift of His blood. His blood was innocently shed on the cross. His poured out blood is the New Covenant. His blood is forgiveness of sin (Hebrews 9:22). There could be no blood without the incarnation. God thank you for coming to earth in the flesh.

{Receive the blood}

Let's take time to worship.

As the Magi worshipped their treasures were opened to the Lord. You ought to experience an opening in your heart as we worship.

As Jesus communed with His disciples He opened His treasure to them. You ought to receive God's reassured presence as we draw near in worship.

Come to the altar today.

There is hope here today.