

Just What I Need

Ponder: God's providence

Scripture: "And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh" (Matt. 2:11b, NKJV).

Well-intentioned but misinformed people picture the "three" wise men arriving at the "manger" along with the shepherds to see the "baby" Jesus (on December 25, of course). It's ok to gently point out and correct these mistakes, but let us not become so preoccupied with them that we miss more substantial matters.

The wise men, however many there were, presented three gifts to the young child Jesus at the house in Bethlehem. Matthew says the gifts came from their "treasures." It's easy to see gold as treasure, but frankincense and myrrh commanded a hefty price as well. How much of these items did they give? Only the Lord knows exactly, but we doubt they would have gone to all the trouble of locating one they recognized as a king only to give Him a pittance.

Jesus was born into what we would call a working class family. Joseph supported his family working as a carpenter. Even so, they could afford only the least expensive sacrifice required by the Law of Moses for ritual cleansing after childbirth: "A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons" (Lk. 2:24, compare Lev. 12:6-8). So, when God's angel warned Joseph to flee with his family from Herod's murderous plot, financing the journey to Egypt (400+ miles) may have presented a serious challenge.

Did they use any of the wise men's gifts for expenses along the way? Scripture doesn't say one way or the other. It's worth noting, though, that the gifts arrived just in time for the unexpected expense. God used a star to guide the wise men to the right location at precisely the right time.

Jesus Himself would later exhort His disciples, "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (Matt. 6:33). You may not have everything you want, but God will provide what you need.

Hymn: "He Knows Just What I Need"

Prayer: Father, we thank You for Your faithfulness in caring for Your children. Help us to trust you, assured that You will provide. In Jesus' name, Amen.