

# WESTERN WISDOM BIBLE STUDY

## The Visit of the Magi

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem. Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews: for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, enquired of them diligently what time the star appeared.

And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, "Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also."

When they heard the king, they departed; and lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.

And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, frankincense, and myrrh. - Matthew 2:1-11

This beautiful story symbolizes the unifying influence of the Christ. Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar are the representatives of the white, yellow, and black races, and symbolize the people of Europe, Asia, and Africa, who are all led by the Star to the World Savior to Whom eventually "every knee shall bow and Whom every tongue shall confess;" Who shall unite all the scattered nations under the Banner of Peace and Goodwill; Who shall cause men to "beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks."

Another message brought to the spiritual aspirant by this story is that of the necessity of a complete sacrifice of the spirit, soul, and body to the higher life. This is indicated by the three Wise Men bringing gifts to the new-born Babe: gold, frankincense, and myrrh, and laying them reverently at His feet.

Gold is always mentioned in symbology as the emblem of the spirit. It is symbol-

ized thus in the Ring of the Niebelung, for instance. The river Rhine is considered an emblem of the water, and there the gold is seen shining on the rock, symbolizing the universal spirit in its perfect purity. Later it was stolen and made into a ring by Alberich, representing mankind in the middle of Atlantis, when the individualized spirit had drawn into the body. Then the gold became debased, was lost, and was the cause of all the sorrow in the world. Later we hear of the alchemists who tried to transmute base metal into gold. That is the spiritual way of saying that they wanted to purify the dense body — to refine it and extract the spiritual essence. Thus the gift of one wise man indicates that the spirit, the real man, must be offered wholly to the Higher Self.

Another wise man brought myrrh, the extract of an aromatic plant that grows in Arabia. This plant is very, very rare, symbolizing the soul essence that man extracts as he lives the life of purity and service. Through the experiences of daily life he extracts this food for the spirit: the soul. This, too, must be presented whole-heartedly to the Christ Child.

The third wise man presented incense to the newborn Babe. Incense is a physical substance of a very light nature, symbolizing the dense body. The body, also, must be presented, "a living sacrifice," to the higher life, the daily actions being motivated by the ideal of service.

Herein is given the key to the gifts of the three Wise Men — the spirit, the soul, and the body. As Christ Jesus said, "If you want to follow me, you must sell all you have. You are not to keep anything for yourself!" The spiritual aspirant must be ready to give up everything for the higher life — for the Christ within.