

## 2009 ADVENT #3 OPEN YOUR HANDS –MAGI

### Matthew 2:1-12

Today were looking at OPEN YOUR HANDS  
The last of our Christmas series.

Legend had it there were three wise men,  
because of the three gifts mentioned in scripture.  
So it's appropriate we are challenged as well  
to open our hands as we begin  
This new year.

Tradition or legend names the three Magi,  
Melchoir, Gaspar, and Balthazar,  
They were not kings as the song says,  
But magi, Gentile Astrologers from the East,  
Wise men from Persia, Arabia, or Ethiopia.

**<sup>1</sup>After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi<sup>ES</sup> from the east came to Jerusalem Matthew 2:1**

They come to see the baby Jesus.  
And presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.  
Gifts that were desperately needed in helping this poor family.  
To not only take care of the baby, but traveling money  
As Herod's wrath caused them to flee to Egypt.

Now as we analyze Matthew's account,  
We observe an overlooked theological fact,  
That there is no mention of wrapping paper.  
They presented him with gifts.  
If there had been wrapping paper,  
Matthew would have said so:  
"And lo, the gifts were insideth 600 square cubits of paper.  
And the paper was festooned with pictures of Frosty, and snowflakes.  
And Joseph was going to throweth it away,  
but Mary saideth unto him... she saideth, 'Holdeth it!  
That is nice paper! Saveth it for next year!' And Joseph did rolleth his eyeballs.  
And the baby Jesus was more interested in the paper than the frankincense."

But there is no mention of wrapped gifts,  
So they were probably not wrapped,  
Because the magi had two important characteristics.

1. They were wise.
2. They were men.

Men are not big gift wrappers.  
We men do not understand the point of putting paper on a gift  
just so somebody else can tear it off.  
This is not just my opinion.  
This is a scientific fact based on a statistical survey  
I made of two members of our church.  
One is Ron, who said the only time he ever wraps a gift is

"if it's such a poor gift that I don't want to be there when the person opens it."  
 The other is Larry, who told me he does wrap gifts, but as a matter of principle never takes more than 15 seconds per gift.  
 I can relate no one every wondered at my house which gift Eldon's wrapped.  
 "They were the ones that looked like enormous spitballs."

Now I'm not defective in motor skills.  
 But why is it you can take a gift the size of a deck of cards and  
 Put it in the exact center of a piece of wrapping paper the size of a volley ball court  
 And when you're done folding and taping  
 You can see the edge of the gift peeking out.  
 Oh, that's usually where I put the bow.

My wife Donna is the gift wrapper.  
 You give her a 12 inch square of wrapping paper and  
 she can wrap a Humve.  
 Gift wrapping just comes more natural to women than men,  
 It's like having babies.

**The first advice from the wise men is to .**

Give our best, most precious gifts of - money, time,  
 hope and healing. welcome and friendship  
 Will you like the Magi, give your 2010 checkbooks and calendars  
 to god and His Kingdom.

**The magi were wise because they opened their hands and  
 I CAME TO WORSHIP THE KING**

**<sup>1</sup>After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod,  
 Magi<sup>ES</sup> from the east came to Jerusalem <sup>2</sup>and asked, "Where is the one who has  
 been born king of the Jews? Matthew 2:1-2a**

Notice that they came to worship  
**Jesus who was born king**

Jesus wasn't appointed king,  
 He wasn't anointed king.  
 His was no vote or election  
 He was born a king.  
 There is no question about his birth certificate.

Matthew wants to show us that Jesus  
 Preexisted in heaven as the King of Kings.  
 The Lord of Lords.  
 John writes later to say:"

**In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was  
 God. 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. John 1:1, 14**

John shows us Jesus came full of Glory.  
 The One and Only  
 full of Grace and truth.

King of the universe.  
 Matthew also wanted to show us that  
 That this King of the Jews,  
 Was born not just for Jews,  
 But for Gentiles as well.

**"Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him." Matthew 2:2**

God sent a Physical manifestation, a star not to Jewish magi, Pharisees or Rabbi,  
 But to Gentiles, Eastern Persionites.  
 To show them that the loved them.  
 And provided a king for them as well.

**That all who believe should not perish but have everlasting life. John 3:16**

I believe that if there is a heart that searching,  
 A mind that contemplating,  
 A soul that's seeking.  
 God will send the sign,  
 And confirm that a savior has been born for you.

Perhaps you have been one who has been holding back,  
 You have been rationing your commitment to Christ,  
 Waiting for a perfect time to complete confirmation of your faith.  
 But it doesn't work that way.  
 We never get to Bethlehem unless we leave Persia.  
 we can't ride half on and off a camel.

**Once the eminent philosopher John Dewey found his son in the bathroom. The floor was flooded and he was mopping furiously trying to contain the water in that room, keeping the damage to a minimum. The professor began thinking, trying to understand the deeper ramifications of the situation. After a few moments, the son said, "Dad, this is not the time to philosophize. It is time to mop!"**

For the Magi, this was not a time to philosophize,  
 This was a time to follow the star and see where the baby was born.

**<sup>9</sup>After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east<sup>F9</sup> went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was.**

**<sup>10</sup>When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. Matthew 2:9-10**

The greatest gift they brought the baby,  
 Was not gold, frankincense or Myrrh,  
 But a heart in worship.

**On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him.**

The word worship here means to pay homage:  
 It means, to prostrate oneself to another,

In Hindostan, religious homage is paid by prostrating the body at full length, so that the two knees, the two hands, forehead, nose, and cheeks all touch the earth at the same time.

**They bowed down and worshiped him**

They laid down their all.

The Magi opened their hands because

**II. THEIR HEART WAS CHANGED.**

**Now notice it says then**

**Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh. Matthew 2:11**

Friends when our hearts are touched,  
Our hands are opened.

We have never seen such an outpouring of gifts for babies  
Than what has come in this year in our Baby Shower for Jesus.  
Baby food, diapers, little booties and socks,  
Blankets and clothes.

We have made numerous trips to

The Salvation army,

The Women shelter, Safe Harbor,

Birthright (A right to Life Center)

We took shoe boxes of Christmas gifts for Samaritan's Purse,

The Angel tree response was enormous for children whose parents are in prison..

We had to reorder names for those to give.

Our hands were open

We gave because in giving we give to Christ.

We gave out of our medical fund to help people.

The plague of cancers and disease is immense

We gave because he gave to us.

Sometimes we must give because others don't even

Know their need.

I like the story of a **friend who always seemed to lean slightly to the left all the time.**

**His friend** suggested he see a doctor, and have his legs checked out.

For years, he refused... told him he was crazy.

But last week, he finally went, and sure enough,

the doctor discovered his left leg was 1/4 of an inch shorter than his right.

A quick bit of orthopedic surgery later, he was cured,

and both legs were exactly the same length now, and he no longer leans.

"So," his friend said, "You didn't believe me when I told you a doctor could fix your leg."

He just looked ahead and said, "I, stand corrected."

Do we need to stand corrected in our giving?

If we're more concerned about what we have left,

Than about what we can give.

Then we need to stand corrected.

Our hearts need to stand corrected.

Is our heart really right?

**During a sermon a preacher stated that money wasn't important in the afterlife,** because in heaven, there is no money. A woman overheard one parishioner whisper to her mother, "Did you hear that, Mom? we're already in heaven."

The Magi gave the gifts to Jesus  
Because Joseph and Mary needed them to do  
the ministry of bringing Jesus to the world.

The church needs your gifts for the same reason,  
We are the caretakers of the word of God.  
We are the bearers of the Good news in our community.

If we fail in our work,  
People will fail to hear.  
Did you know that God knows about your giving?  
When the Angel appeared to Cornelius the Italian Gentile Commander,  
**He said: Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God. Matthew 10:4**  
Are you happy that God knows about your giving?  
And records it?  
When we as Christians fail in our giving,  
The church fails in its ministry.  
We challenged you to step up one percent last year,  
Or to give an additional \$20. to the church a month.  
Because of your commitment to this last year,  
We were able this year to end in the black.  
With over an additional 100,000 came in from that challenge  
To meet our ministry needs.  
We need to be in the business of providing the donkey,  
To take Baby Jesus to Egypt,  
Or Africa, or Indonesia, or rural Brown county.  
Or our neighbor next door.  
It takes our financial resources.

Finally, the Magi opened their hands because  
**III. THEY CARED FOR THE REST OF THE WORLD**  
**<sup>12</sup>And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route. Matthew 2:12**

How many ways were there back to Persia?  
How many additional miles were they to travel,  
Deserts were there to cross?  
But when we find Jesus ,  
We can't go back the same way.  
We can't go to work the same way,  
We can't go to our home and marriage the same way.  
We can't foul language, pettiness and worldly habits,  
It doesn't have to take a Psychotic King Herod  
To threaten us to a new path,  
Just the love for a Savior.

They returned another way  
Painful and costly,  
But ever rewarding and renewing.

This Last Sunday in the Year  
God is asking you to come to Him.  
With all your failures, your sins, your problems,  
Your fears, your uncertainties,.

You See God came to us and gave himself.  
Now he asks you to come to Him, and give yourself.  
That's what Christmas is all about.

The Christmas Carol say it best:  
(In the Bleak Midwinter)  
What can I give him,  
Poor as I am?  
If I were a shepherd,  
I would bring a lamb.  
If I were a Wise Man,  
I would do my part,  
Yet, What can I give him?  
I Give Him my heart.

Lets bow before the one who changed the course of history.  
Lets open our hands in this New Year and together make a difference.  
I promise you: it will change your life.