

## The Significance of Gifts

### Question:

I have heard that the gifts brought by the wise men to Jesus had a special purpose and significance. However, I cannot find that in the scriptures. Have you heard this and if so what purpose did these gifts have?

### Our Answer:

The book of Matthew is the only gospel that records the visit of the magi to the Messiah and the presentation of their gifts to him. The specific gifts were gold, frankincense and myrrh (Mt. 2:11). Furthermore, Matthew does not indicate why the Magi brought these particular items. However, it is interesting to note that tradition suggests that each gift carried a great deal of significance. According to many scholars gold is a gift given to a king, frankincense a gift given to a priest and myrrh a gift given to a condemned man. If nothing else, it was common to bring gifts to a dignitary, which is who they were seeking out. It has also been suggested that God may have inspired these particular gifts because they could be used to help finance Joseph and Mary's later trip to Egypt (Mt 2:13-14).