

## Celebrate-Advent 4

There is a time to fast & a time to feast

- New Year 21 Day Fast: January 4-24
- Now is the time to feast. We are preparing for the greatest feast ever. In Advent we celebrate Christ who is come and is coming again.
- **Ecclesiastes 5:18-20 {NLT}**
- **Isaiah 25:6-8 {NLT}**
  - Rich food
  - Good drink
  - In the tradition of the magi, we give gifts!

### Matthew 2:1-11

#### Bethlehem = House of Bread

Jesus called Himself

- Bread of Life
- Living Bread
- Bread which came down from heaven

#### Wise Men offered gifts & worshipped Him

We should give gifts with the receiver in mind. Magi brought gifts befitting the Christ child

- Myrrh
  - Gift for one who would die
  - Perfume used in embalming
  - Jesus was born so that he could die. Jesus died so we could live.
  - Without his death & resurrection we have no reason to celebrate his birth!
- Frankincense
  - Gift suited for a priest
  - Priest offered up frankincense with the sacrifices at the golden altar of incense in the Holy Place
  - **Hebrews 8:1-6; 9:11-12**
  - Latin-priest-bridge builder
  - As our priest Christ builds a bridge connecting us with our Heavenly Father
- Gold
  - Gift for a king
  - The wise men sought the one who was "born king of the Jews"
  - **Revelation 11:15; 19:16**

#### Conclusion

Myrrh spoke of his death. We honor him for he died for us.

Frankincense spoke of his priesthood. We honor him for building us a bridge to our Heavenly Father.

God spoke of his royalty. We honor him as the one who rules in our hearts and who established his kingdom on the earth. We remember he is coming again to rule as King of kings and Lord of lords.

The magi, Gentiles, in the Christmas story assures that all have access to Christ-death, burial, resurrection, priesthood and his kingdom.

**Celebrate!**

## Advent Prayer:

Lord, our God, we praise You for Your Son, Jesus Christ, for He is Emmanuel, the Hope of all people. He is the Wisdom that teaches and guides us. He is the Savior of us all. O Lord, let your blessing come upon us as we light all candles of this wreath. May the wreath and its light be a sign of Christ's promise of salvation. May He come quickly and not delay. We ask this in His holy name. Amen.

Therefore the Lord himself will give you this sign: the virgin shall be with child and bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel (Isaiah 7:14). Look around you for a sign of God's presence. When you find it, share it with someone. As soon as Jesus was born, visitors began to come. First it was the shepherds. Then the wise men. Then Simeon and Anna. Then even the soldiers of Herod were sent to find Him. Together these visitors represent the people of every nation, coming by every possible path and conveyance to see Christ. Through Jesus, He "visited" and "brought redemption" to us. He continues through Jesus and through us to dwell in our world today.

## Questions:

As we anticipate the celebration of Christmas, let us look around us. Are those around us anticipating joy and happiness or loneliness and depression?

When people look at us, do they think of Jesus?

Have I "prepared the way" in the heart of a loved one or acquaintance for Jesus' coming?