

A Wise Anointing

Preparing Jesus for the Cross

December 20, 2015



What did you get for Christmas ... *originally*? A Savior, King, Bridegroom, and Sacrifice, all wrapped up in One tiny package! And thanks to Him, **we've been entrusted with a treasure map.**

In Revelation, (5:1-14) John sees the Lion, who becomes a slain Lamb, standing alive on the throne holding God's scroll ... *to the treasure!*



And, John begins to weep, because no one is *worthy* to *discover* it. But, then he's shown that the Lamb *is*, and the Lion *has!* **Jesus was faithful with what was entrusted**, so that **we'd be able to seek and find our Father's treasures through the lens of the Lamb!**

Now, **He waits on the shore to seek *with us***, to speak to us as we turn over rocks and dig in, and to teach us to swim, and then to *dive in*. If we'll meet Him on the shore.



Are you being faithful with what was entrusted? Those Wise Men sure were. Last Christmas, I made the case that Daniel, the lion's-den prophet given charge of all the wise men of the east, (Dan 2:46-48) left instructions 500 years earlier to fulfill the prophecies.

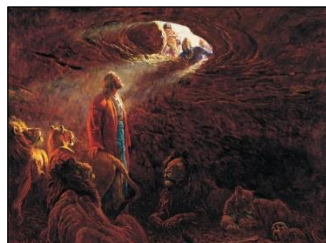


[Isaiah had prophesied that] **Nations will come** ["Magi from the east came to Jerusalem" (Mat 2:1c)] **to your light** ["When they saw the star, they were overjoyed" (Mat 2:10)] ... **sons come from afar** ["We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him." (Mat 2:2b)] ... **bearing gold and incense and proclaiming the praise of the Lord.** ["they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh" (Mat 2:11b)] – Isaiah 60:3-6 NIV



They were faithful with what was entrusted. And, they knew that **they didn't bring the treasure; they found it!**

Daniel saw it all and sealed it in symbolism in the scroll, (12:4) which eluded the scribes ... though Jesus tried to tell 'em: ***"These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life."*** (John 5:39-40)



So, ***why frankincense and myrrh?*** It's a clue to a *Christmas treasure hunt!* So, **let's hit the beach and follow the scent.**



Who is this coming out of the wilderness **like pillars of smoke**, [That's how God led His wandering children home to the Promised Land] **perfumed with myrrh and frankincense**, with all the merchant's fragrant powders? – Song of Songs 3:6 NKJ

It's the Bridegroom-King *and his cologne!* But, **why would He smell like myrrh and frankincense on His wedding day?** *It's a clue! And it leads us to ... two fragrant formulas God commanded for holiness and sacrifice.*



Then the Lord said to Moses, "Take the following fine spices: **500 shekels of liquid myrrh**, [16 lbs.] half as much (that is, 250 shekels) of fragrant cinnamon, 250 shekels of fragrant cane, 500 shekels of cassia ... and a **hin** [1.5 gal.] of olive oil. Make these into **a sacred anointing oil**, a fragrant blend, the work of a perfumer." – Exodus 30:23-25 NIV



The sacred myrrh-oil mixture was used to anoint God's tabernacle (and later temple), altar, utensils, and Priests. (Ex 30:26-30)

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Take fragrant spices — gum resin, onycha [ON-ee-kuh] and galbanum [GAL-buh-num] — and **pure frankincense**, all in equal amounts, and make a fragrant blend of incense, the work of a perfumer ... It shall be most holy to you." – Exodus 30:34-36 NIV



The frankincense formula was a perpetual offering inside God's House, (Ex 30:7-8) **a sin sacrifice outside God's House,** (Lev 2:1-2) **that made atonement for man** (Num 16:46-48) **and a sweet aroma to God.** (Lev 2:2)

Myrrh is God's symbol of holiness, and frankincense of offering. So, why's the Bridegroom-King smell like myrrh *and* frankincense? **It's the combined scent of High Priest and sweet sacrifice.**

Until the day breaks and the shadows flee away, I will go my way to the mountain of myrrh [Holiness] and to the hill of frankincense. [Sacrifice] You are all fair, my love, and there is no spot in you. – Song of Songs 4:6-7 NKJ

Just as there is no spot of sin in those who receive Christ's sweet sacrifice on the holy hill. Calvary. (Eph 5:27) But, there's more to our King's "cologne".

Who is this ... perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, [and] with all the merchant's fragrant powders? – Song of Songs 3:6 NKJ



Did you know that the term, "**Lebanon**" (i.e. **whiteness; purity**) **is used by the prophets as a synonym for God's Garden in Eden?**

[For instance, Ezekiel says] Consider Assyria, once a cedar in Lebanon ... no tree in the garden of God could match its beauty. I made it beautiful with abundant branches, the envy of all the trees of Eden in the garden of God. – Ezekiel 31:3-9 NIV *condensed*

Now, listen to the Bridegroom-King as he describes His bride:

The fragrance of your garments is like the fragrance of Lebanon. A **garden** [*gan: garden; Eden; bride*] **enclosed** [*na'al: locked; bolted*] is my sister, my spouse, a **spring shut up**, a **fountain sealed**. Your plants are an orchard of pomegranates with pleasant fruits, fragrant henna with **spikenard, spikenard** and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense, myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices [*Spikenard is mentioned twice for emphasis; so, this can be called a spikenard mixture*] — a fountain of gardens, **a well of living waters**, [*Isn't that what Jesus promised the woman at the well? (John 4:7-10)*] and streams from Lebanon. — Song of Songs 4:11b-15 NKJ

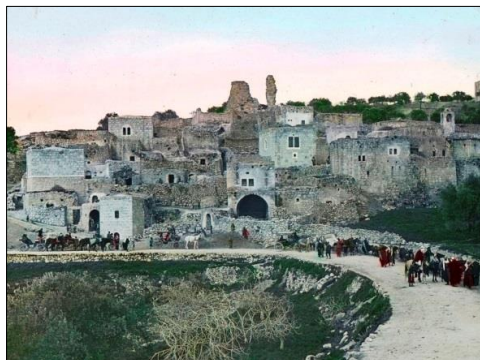


His spotless bride smells like His unspoiled Garden. Home. He's leading. You following? **Are You being faithful with what He's entrusted to you? Family. Friends. Time. Talents. Treasure.**

The problem isn't too little time or too much to do. It's losing sight of the significant; and, seeing the shore as a chore. Know where she got her spikenard? *From the King. She says ...*

Because of the fragrance of your good ointments, Your name is ointment [*Healing*] poured forth [*Poured Out*] ... While the king is at his table, my spikenard sends forth its fragrance. — Song of Songs 1:3a, 12 NKJ

Sound familiar? **Spikenard is mentioned only twice in scripture: the Song of the Bridegroom-King and just before Jesus' crucifixion.**



The hillside city of Bethany c. 1890

And being in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, as He sat at the table, **Mary took a pound of very costly** [*"more than a year's wages" (Mark 14:5)*] **oil** [*lit. myrrh-oil*] **of spikenard**, [*Costly in part because it comes from the far east. Hmm ... Far East, eh?*] **Then she broke the flask** [*its seal*] **and poured it on His head.** [*The way God commands Moses to anoint the High Priest (Ex 29:7); John says she also*] **anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil.** — Mark 14:3 NKJ; John 12:3 NKJ

There's a wedding Psalm that describes this moment. Know how I know? Hebrews (1:8-9) says that *this Psalm* was written *about Jesus*.

Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever ... You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy. All your robes are fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia ... The Daughter of Tyre [*Tsor: the Rock*] will come with a gift ... [*and*] I will perpetuate your memory through all generations ... — Psalm 45:6-8a, 12a, 17a NIV *condensed*

And, when Jesus gets after those who harshly rebuke Mary for wasting the perfume that was worth a King's ransom, Jesus says:

“I tell you the truth, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her.” – Mark 14:9 NIV

She was faithful with what was entrusted.

“Leave her alone,” said Jesus. “Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing [ergon: deed, work, or employment] to [or: for] me. It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial. She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand ...” – Mark 14:6, 8a; John 12:7b NIV

Every translator makes it sound like Mary knew His death was approaching. But, how could she; *unless* ... she was chosen, and entrusted, to save this, as a favor, to Jesus, for this day. But, **where would Jesus get a \$40,000 alabaster jar of spikenard-myrrh-oil mixture that His own disciples, and His treasurer, weren't even aware of?** (Mat 26:8; John 12:4-6) *Hmm ... Far East, eh?*

Three years earlier, as His ministry began, Jesus had dinner at Simon the Pharisee's house, and a sinful woman wiped His feet with her tears, and hair, and an alabaster box of myrrh-oil. Sure seems like the type of person that Jesus would enlist! **If we're faithful with little, we're rewarded with much. Can you imagine what it'd be like to be so undeserving and then so entrusted with such a treasure?!** You don't have to imagine. ***You have been.***

Question is: **Do your priorities keep the beach out'a reach?** That dinner at Simon's was close to the time, a few days before Passover, when the Jews had first asked Jesus for a sign.

Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.” [I don't think that's the sign; I think this is:] The Jews replied, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?” – John 2:19-20 NIV

Now, I don't claim to comprehend Daniel's sealed symbols; *but* ...

Know and understand this: From the issuing of **the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem** until **the Anointed One**, the ruler, comes, there will be **seven 'sevens,'** ...
– Daniel 9:25a NIV

He says a lot more; but, look at those seven sevens. Theologians pretty much universally regard 'em as 49 years. And, three years, maybe to the day, after the Jews say: “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple”, Mary anoints Jesus. *That's 49 years from an announcement to restore and rebuild. I got'a be honest: I not only think Daniel was entrusted with the time of the anointing, I think he was faithful to supply it!*

We've been entrusted with so much; are you being faithful? Don't lose sight of the significant.

Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. – Ephesians 5:1-2 NIV

Take some time to stop and smell the Kingdom.