

Birthday Presents

by Bryan Matthew Dockens

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and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh" (Matthew 2:11). Although these gifts honored Christ's entrance into the world (Matthew 2:1-2), they were not presented on his birthday as is so commonly depicted in "Christmas" imagery. Notice this occurred *"when they had come into the house,"* not the stable. In fact, Jesus had aged as much as two years by the time of the wise men's visit (Matthew 2:16). The errors of human tradition notwithstanding, these belated birthday presents emphasize the greatness of Christ Jesus. That the child of an obscure couple would receive such treasure from so far indicates how wise those men were. Wise men today still honor the Lord.

Christians

Christians gain salvation on their birthdays. Jesus told Nicodemus, *"Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God"* (John 3:3), to which Nicodemus replied, *"How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?"* (John 3:4). *"Jesus answered, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'"* (John 3:5-7). The greatest gift of all, *"the gift of God," "eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord"* (Romans 6:23), is not a birthday present, but a **re-birthday present**. In order to be saved, one must be *born anew in water*, a reference to baptism (Acts 8:36, 38; 10:47), wherein *"newness of life"* is gained (Romans 6:3-4), and spiritually reborn, indicating the need for inward change. *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new"* (2 Corinthians 5:17).

