

December Lessons:

What We Bring to God

Quarter Theme: Sacred Gifts and Holy Gatherings

The subject for this quarter's lessons spans the sacred gifts and holy gatherings prescribed in Scripture, especially for Israel. We seek to learn the valuable lessons they hold for Christians today.

The first four lessons relate to gifts we bring to God. One of these is the weekly day of rest and worship the Lord has commanded. A second is the peace offerings the Israelites brought to the Lord of their own free will. A third is the dedication of the firstborn son, with special application to its role in the life of the infant Jesus. The fourth lesson is a study in sincere giving, as seen in the example of the widow who gave her last two mites to God.



See you in
Sunday School

Scriptures of the Month

*"I will praise Thee oh Lord my God, with all my heart: and I will glorify Thy name for evermore."
– Psalm 86:12*

*"He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God."
– Micah 6:8*

*"So whatever you eat, drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."
– 1 Corinthians 10:31*

Cheerful Giving

The Bible is very clear about the importance of giving. While giving may have gone down some in recent years, Christians are still the most generous group of people. For the most part, Christians—like members of other religions—are generous with their personal giving.

This theme of giving appears repeatedly in the Scriptures. It is interesting that Scripture puts so much emphasis on giving. Throughout the Old and New Testaments there are instructions to give to the church and to the poor. God promises to repay the giver. The Scriptures are clear that whenever we give, we are giving to God.

While the Bible is clear that God wants us to give, God also wants our giving to be done with the right attitude and for the right reasons. Obviously, God does not "need" our gifts or sacrifices. God is more concerned about the attitude of the heart than He is with the amount of giving.

As you give your tithes and offerings, remember to give with the right attitude. When we give, we are giving up a thank you offering to the Father Himself (Matthew 6:3-4). So, we must all give "as unto the Lord." Our ultimate goal in giving is to please Him.

Oh, Wasn't That a Miracle!



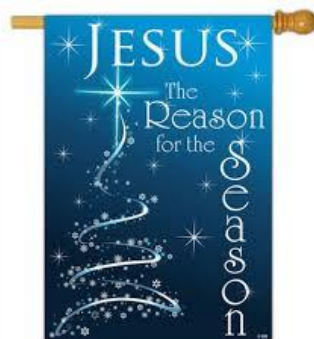
What is a miracle? A proclamation of "cancer-free" after a stage IV diagnosis? A six-car pileup on the highway—in which no one is hurt? In short, a miracle is something incredible, inexplicable, wondrous—something only God can do.

Luke 2:7 tells us about the Christmas Miracle God sent to earth, the Miracle in the manger: Jesus Christ, our Savior: "*She gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger.*"

The Christmas linens worn by Jesus remind us of the clothing worn by household servants and slaves. In this sense, Jesus' first clothing tells us that he came into our world to be a servant. And serve he did! Think about the miracle here! The God of the universe served us! He served by miraculously feeding the hungry. He served by miraculously healing atrophied limbs. He served by proclaiming the truth—a miraculous, marvelous truth, the truth of God's love and forgiveness for sinners! Then, in the most profound act of service imaginable, Jesus gave up his innocent life in payment for human sin—for your sin and mine. An only-God-could-do-it miracle of love!

God had sent his Son into the world and watched as Mary wrapped that Son in the clothing of a servant. Some thirty years later, God had watched Joseph wrap that Son's body in a linen shroud and place it in a tomb. Three days later, the Father raised his Son from death. Jesus folded the linens of servitude and poverty and laid them aside. In their place, our victorious Savior donned a robe of resurrected majesty!

Christ put on rags so that you can be clothed in his very own righteousness. God's miracle Child was wrapped in rags so that you can one day be wrapped in glory. Miraculously clothed in Christ, we wear the splendor of his resurrected glory. And we display to others Christ's own righteousness, his love, compassion, peace, and life.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE



It's Christmas!

1. How did the shepherds know where to find Baby Jesus?
2. How did the Magi know where to find Baby Jesus?
3. Why did Joseph take Mary and Baby Jesus to Egypt?
4. Where did the Magi stop along the way to worship Jesus?
5. How much younger was Jesus than his cousin John the Baptist?
6. Why did the wise men return to their own country by a different route than they had come?
7. What were the shepherds doing when they heard the good news?
8. How did Mary first find out she would become the mother of the Messiah?
9. How did Joseph find out that Mary would be the mother of Jesus?
10. Why did Mary and Joseph travel from Nazareth to Bethlehem before Jesus was born?

GOT JOKES!



You do know what would have happened if it had been three wise WOMEN instead of men, don't you? They would have asked for directions, arrived on time, helped deliver the baby, cleaned the stable, made a casserole, and brought disposable diapers as gifts!

"Thanks for the electric guitar you gave me for Christmas," little Chris Cody said to his uncle the first time he saw him after the holidays. "It's the best present I ever got."

"That's great," said his uncle. "Do you know how to play it?"

"Oh, I don't play it," the little fellow said. "My mom gives me a dollar a day not to play it during the day and my dad gives me five dollars a week not to play it at night."

Test Your Knowledge Answers

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| 1. Luke 2:8-20 | 6. Matthew 2:12 |
| 2. Matthew 2:1-10 | 7. Luke 2:8 |
| 3. Matthew 2:13-15 | 8. Luke 1:26-38 |
| 4. Matthew 2:1-8 | 9. Matthew 1:18-25 |
| 5. Luke 1:36 | 10. Luke 2:1-4 |