

**IF SOMEONE ASKED YOU WHAT IT IS WE ARE CELEBRATING TODAY, WHAT WOULD YOU TELL THEM?**

**MAYBE IT MIGHT GO LIKE THIS: AFTER JESUS WAS BORN THREE KINGS FROM THE EAST FOLLOWED A STAR TO BETHLEHEM AND WHEN THEY ARRIVED AT THE MANGER THEY GAVE THREE GIFTS TO JESUS. DOES THAT SOUND ABOUT RIGHT?.....**

**WELL, THERE IS A LOT THAT IS WRONG IN THAT PICTURE. AND THE REASON WHY IT IS SO WRONG IS BECAUSE WE DON'T READ OR LISTEN TO THE SCRIPTURES RIGHT.**

**WE ARE CARRIED ALONG BY TRADITIONS AND MIS-READINGS WITHOUT LOOKING AT IT FOR OURSELVES. WE MIGHT ASK OURSELVES: DOES IT REALLY MATTER, ANYWAY? SUCH A QUESTION DOESN'T DESERVE AN ANSWER. DOES IT MATTER? THAT QUESTION IS REALLY ASKING: HOW IMPORTANT IS GOD'S WORD TO US.**

**WHAT REALLY HAPPENS? .... SOME WISE MEN CAME FROM THE EAST. THEY DIDN'T FOLLOW A STAR: THEY SAW A STAR AS IT ROSE. THEY ARRIVE AT JERUSALEM SOME TIME ABOUT TWO**

**YEARS AFTER JESUS WAS BORN. THEY ASK HEROD WHERE THE NEW BORN KING OF THE JEWS WAS. HEROD CONSULTS HIS PRIESTS WHO STUDY THEIR OLD TEXTS AND LEARN THAT THIS BIRTH WAS TO OCCUR IN BETHLEHEM. SO THESE WISE MEN SET OFF. THE STAR RE-APPEARS AND GOES FORWARD AND STOPS OVER THE PLACE WHERE THE CHILD IS. THE CHILD IS IN A HOUSE WITH HIS MOTHER MARY. THERE IS NO MENTION OF JOSEPH. THERE, IN THE HOUSE THEY OFFER THREE GIFTS TO JESUS: GOLD, FRANKINCENSE AND MYRRH. THEN THEY GO BACK HOME BY A DIFFERENT ROUTE.**

**THE REAL STORY OF THIS EVENT IS FULL OF SYMBOLISM AND DEEP MEANING.**

**THE MEANING IS DISCOVERED IN OUR FIRST TWO READINGS TODAY. ISAIAH PROPHESES ABOUT JERUSALEM: IT IS THE PLACE TO WHICH ALL THE NATIONS WILL COME BRINGING GOLD AND INCENSE. PAUL TELLS US THAT IT MEANS THAT PAGANS NOW SHARE THE SAME INHERITANCE, THE SAME PROMISE HAS BEEN MADE TO THEM, IN CHRIST JESUS, THROUGH THE GOSPEL.**

**THE FOCUS IS ON JESUS, WHO IS NOT ONLY THE GIFT OF GOD TO THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL, BUT TO THE WHOLE WORLD: TO US WHO ARE THE GENTILES. IT IS THE REVELATION TO US OF WHO JESUS IS. THE GIFTS PRESENTED ARE SYMBOLS OF WHO JESUS REALLY IS: THE WISE MEN ASK WHERE IS THE INFANT KING. THEY OFFER GOLD, A GIFT FOR A KING. THEY OFFER FRANKINCENSE USED IN THE WORSHIP OF GOD. SO THIS INFANT IS A GOD/KING.**

**THEY OFFER MYRRH WHICH IS USED TO EMBALM A DEAD BODY.**

**SO THIS INFANT IS A GOD/KING WHO IS GOING TO DIE.**

**WE NON-JEWS HAVE BEEN BROUGHT INTO THE AGE-OLD PROMISES OF GOD TO THE ISRAELITES.**

**THERE ARE VITALLY IMPORTANT ELEMENTS IN THIS MOMENT FOR US TO FIND. THE FIRST IS THAT WE ARE PEOPLE CHOSEN BY GOD, AS WERE THE ISRAELITES. THAT SAYS SO MUCH ABOUT US. CHOSEN BY GOD.**

**SECONDLY, WHEN THE WISE MEN ENQUIRE ABOUT THIS INFANT KING THE PRIESTS AND THE SCRIBES WENT TO THEIR SACRED BOOKS TO FIND THE ANSWER. THEY READ THE PAGES OF THE**

**OLD TESTAMENT. AND HAVING FOUND THE ANSWER, THEY DO NOTHING!!! IT DOESN'T AFFECT THEM IN ANY WAY. AS A PEOPLE WHO HAVE WAITED THOUSANDS OF YEARS FOR THIS MOMENT, WHEN THEY LEARN THAT IT MIGHT JUST HAVE HAPPENED, INSTEAD OF BEING OVERCOME WITH EMOTION AND JOY AND EXCITEMENT...THERE IS .....NOTHING.**

**THERE ARE THE TWO VITAL THINGS FOR US TODAY: WE ARE A PEOPLE CHOSEN BY GOD. IS THAT HOW I LIVE? SOME-ONE ACTUALLY CHOSEN BY GOD FOR A REASON: TO LIVE AS ONE OF HIS CHOSEN.**

**HOW IMPORTANT IS GOD'S WORD TO ME? DO I KNOW IT, READ IT, PONDER IT? IS IT THE FOUNDATION OF MY LIFE? OR SOMETHING THAT IS LIKE A FAIRYSTORY, FULL OF NICE THINGS AND GREAT PROMISES, BUT REALLY NOT THAT IMPORTANT?**

**WE MUST TAKE THESE TWO THINGS FROM OUR FEAST TODAY.**