

3 Gifts For Christmass

Contributed by Administrator
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About ten years ago I worked in the country of Yemen, near Saudi Arabia. After two months it was almost time to return home, and I had been thinking for several days about what I could get my wife for a present. Plus, it was near Christmas, so I wanted to find her something that would be really special.

As it turned out, the Christmas story became the key to what I decided to get for her. There we were in a Suburban, bumping along in a dry wadi (stream bed) towards a remote farm, when it hit me - I'm in the land of the Queen of Sheba...the land of gold, frankincense, and myrrh! That's what I'll give her for a present!

Now I was really motivated.

I looked up the word for frankincense in the Arabic dictionary ('bakor') and headed for the soukh (open market) in Taiz, a town in the southern part of the country, not too far from Aden. One of my Yemeni counterparts came with me to help. We both looked and looked until, at last, we found a shop that sold both frankincense and myrrh.

The shop was full of exotic, pleasant aromas and was stuffed with bags of fragrant spices. The shopkeeper measured out about two cups of frankincense and two more of myrrh, wrapped them in plain newspaper, then put the bundles in a plastic carry sack.

Suddenly, I realized that I would need something nice to put the presents in, so we started looking around until we finally found the perfect thing - three shiny brass bowls from India with threaded lids. Now, only one more present remained to be found - the gold.

The next day we went to the gold market in Sanaa, the ancient capital of Yemen, where gold jewelry is sold by weight. Again, I looked and looked for just the right thing, until I found her a beautiful, delicate necklace. Lovely and very unique, just like her. I was so excited, I could hardly wait to give them to her.

I put everything inside the brass bowls, wrapped them up in the newspaper, and packed them away for the trip back home.

On Christmas day, I casually read the story of the Wise Men who presented Jesus with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh, then gave the three packages to Francesca, wrapped up in the same plain newspaper that the shopkeeper had used. She unwrapped the first one, then the second, and then the third one. The brass bowls were bright and shiny, and seemed even more so in contrast to the plain newspaper, but she hadn't quite realized that there might be something more inside each one...

So I told her, 'Go ahead and open them,' and she did. First she opened the one with frankincense, which smelled wonderful, then she opened the one with myrrh. At this point she realized that the last one might have something made of gold inside, so she slowly opened it, and found the beautiful necklace inside. It is made of pure gold, and to this day she still considers it one of the

most beautiful gifts I have ever given her. Beautiful not only because of its appearance, but because of the story and the thought behind it.