



PROPHECY WATCHERS

There Were More Than Three Kings

Prophecy Watchers Magazine Article

Gary Stearman

[12.2015]



PROPHECY WATCHERS

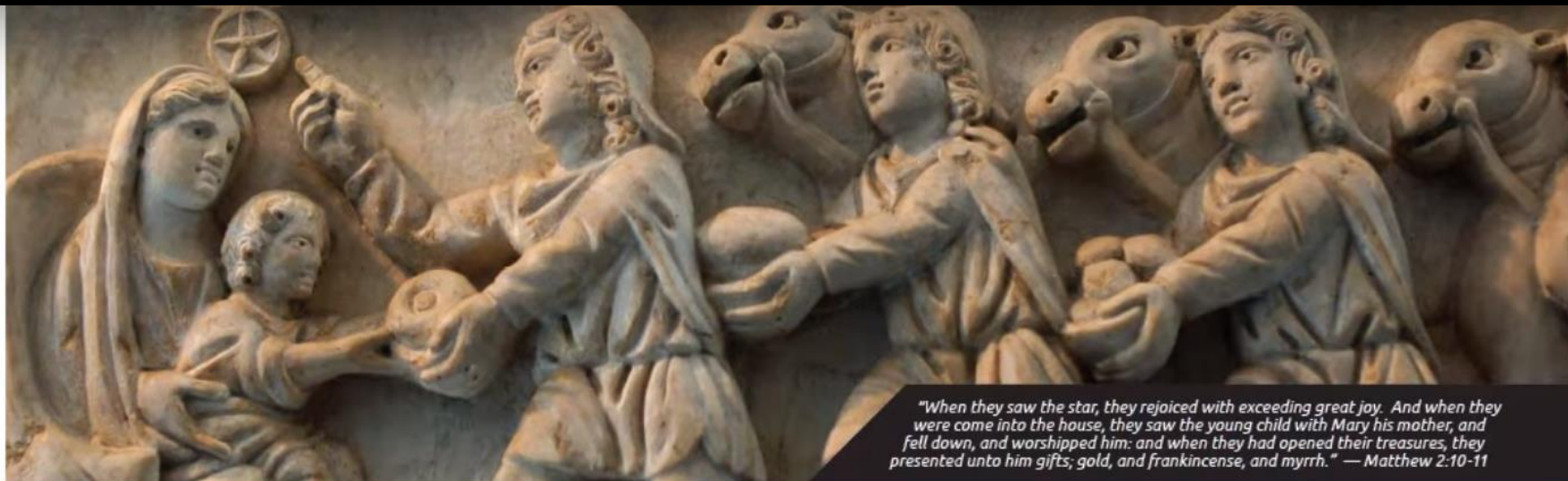
Luke 2:2

Playing preview

Tom Hughes: We Three Kings
There are a series of great stories hidden
4,000+ views • 12/22/2015

YouTube / Prophecy Watchers

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"When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh." — Matthew 2:10-11

THERE WERE MORE THAN THREE KINGS

by Gary Stearman

At Christmas time, homes across the land are decorated with various memorial backdrops — scenes that commemorate the birth of Christ. The Bethlehem star, various statues, animals, buildings and even palm and cedar trees bring to mind the virgin birth of Christ. This, the humble beginning of history's most important man annually reminds the world that the most significant event in history was not measured by wealth but by God's love. Mary, Joseph, the Christ Child,

various animals and perhaps a few shepherds are present to witness the event. But also present in most of these images are three striking characters who followed the Star that brought them from the East. Manger scenes often show them, either mounted on camels, or standing before the Child with their camels nearby.

Among Christians in America, it is common to recall their long trip from the East in lyrics of a beautiful hymn for the season, written in 1857

by John Henry Hopkins:

*"We three kings of Orient are
"Bearing gifts we traverse afar
"Field and fountain,
"Moor and mountain
"Following yonder star..."*

Sometimes, they are referred to as the "three wise men." Dressed in kingly robes, dyed in royal tints and trimmed with gold and jewels, they wear turbans and carry three small treasure boxes filled, respectively, with gold, frankincense and myrrh. On their camels, they have traveled

the trade routes through the fertile crescent, from the land of the Chaldeans, to their final arrival in Jerusalem. There, they hold private council with King Herod, inquiring about the birth of a special child who was, they said, the King of the Jews. They have been guided by an astronomical phenomenon—a star that is mysteriously able to direct them southward to a specific location in Bethlehem.

There, they find the baby Jesus in a humble stable, lying in a cattle feed trough and surrounded by

cows, sheep and chickens. They present their gifts to Him, then ride into obscurity, taking a circuitous route to avoid Herod's troops, as instructed by God.

This is the story, told over and over again, that is deeply ingrained into the lore of the faithful. To believers and unbelievers alike, it has become part of our culture. There is no more expressive picture of love, family and hope than this scene of a humble birth that will save the world. How amazing that the Great

Shepherd chose to be born among shepherds in the place where David once led his sheep.

BETHLEHEM - SCENE ONE

This, the manger scene, has long been venerated in churches around the world. Unfortunately, there are several things wrong with it.

First, the wise men wouldn't have worn royal robes of purple, scarlet, blue and gold thread. Nor would they have worn turbans. Further-

There Were More Than Three Kings - CHRISTMAS NATIVITY

We three kings of
Orient are
Bearing gifts we
traverse afar
Field and fountain,
moor and mountain
Following yonder star
:

--- Christmas Carol

• Three Kings - The Christmas Story

- Sometimes referred to as the “Three Wise Men”
- Usually dressed in kingly robes, dyed in royal tints and trimmed with gold and jewels
- They are usually depicted wearing turbans and carrying three small treasure boxes filled with gold, frankincense and myrrh
- They travel on camels via the trade routes through the fertile crescent, from the land of the Chaldeans, to their final arrival in Jerusalem.
- They come to King Herod inquiring about the birth of a special child who was born king of the Jews.
- They have been guided by a special star.
- They arrive in Bethlehem and find the baby Jesus in a humble stable.
- They present Him their gifts and return back home.





There Were More Than Three Kings - CHRISTMAS NATIVITY

We three kings of
Orient are
Bearing gifts we
traverse afar
Field and fountain,
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Following yonder star

:

--- Christmas Carol

• Three Kings - The Christmas Story

- This is the **basic story** told over and over again, to **believers** and **unbelievers** alike.
- It has become **part** of **our culture**.
- **We** find expressive pictures or **love**, **family** and **hope** in the **scene** of the **humble birth** that will **save the world**.
- **We cherish** the **Nativity manger scene**.
- **We display** our **Nativity figurines** with **pride**.
- However, truth be told, there are a **few inaccuracies** associated with the **story**, as told and **memorialized** with **our figurine sets**, **Christmas cards** and **songs**.



There Were More Than Three Kings - CHRISTMAS NATIVITY

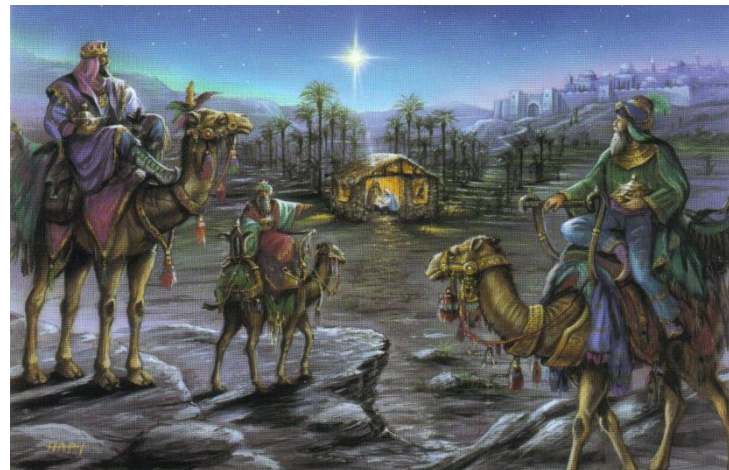
2 And it came to pass in those days *that* a **decree** went out from **Caesar Augustus** that **all** the world should be **registered**. **2** This **census** first took place while **Quirinius** was governing **Syria**. **3** So **all** went to be **registered**, **everyone** to **his** own city. **4** **Joseph** also went up from **Galilee**, out of the **city of Nazareth**, into **Judea**, to the **city of David**, which is called **Bethlehem**, because **he** was of the **house** and **lineage** of **David**, **5** to be **registered** with **Mary**, **his betrothed wife**, who was with **child**. **6** So it was, that while **they** were there, the **days** were **completed** for **her** to be **delivered**. **7** And **she** brought forth **her firstborn Son**, and **wrapped Him** in **swaddling cloths**, and **laid Him** in a **manger**, because there was **no room** for **them** in the **inn**.

--- Luke 2:1-7 ... NKJV

• Three Kings - The Nativity Manger Scene

- The **Nativity Manger scene** has long been **venerated** in churches around the world.
- There are a **few corrective observations** to be made.

1. The **wise men** would **NOT** have **worn royal robes of purple, scarlet, blue and gold thread**. **NOR** would **they** have **worn turbans**.
2. **They** would **NOT** have **ridden on camels**.
3. There were certainly **MORE THAN THREE** of **them**.
4. **Their gifts** would have been **delivered** as part of a **FAR LARGER TRIBUTE**.



There Were More Than Three Kings - CHRISTMAS NATIVITY

⁸ Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. ¹⁰ Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. ¹¹ For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger."

--- Luke 2:8-12 ... NKJV

• Three Kings - The Persian Connection

- The wise men lived in the east, in Mesopotamia.
- They were part of a hereditary priesthood.
- The term "Wise Men" (Matthew 2:1) is translated from the Greek *Magoi* - derived from the Persian proper noun, which was the name of their caste.
- In English we call them Magi, which has NOTHING to do with magic or the office of magician.
- They were astronomers. They watched planetary motions, movements of the Sun and Moon through regions in the heavens.
- The Magi were invested with great political power throughout a declining succession of powers - Babylon, Medo-Persian, Greek and Parthian.
- The Magi would neither acknowledge nor allow the worship of personal gods. They absolutely forbade the veneration of any sort of image.

There Were More Than Three Kings - CHRISTMAS NATIVITY

¹³ And suddenly there was with the **angel** a **multitude** of the **heavenly host** **praising** **God** and saying: ¹⁴ "Glory to **God** in the **highest**, And on **earth** **peace**, **goodwill toward men**!" ¹⁵ So it was, when the **angels** had **gone away** from **them** into **heaven**, that the **shepherds** said to **one another**, "Let **us** now go to **Bethlehem** and **see** this thing that has **come to pass**, which the **Lord** has **made known** to **us**." ¹⁶ And **they** **came** with **haste** and **found** **Mary** and **Joseph**, and the **Babe** lying in a **manger**. ¹⁷ Now when **they** had **seen** **Him**, **they** **made** **widely known** the **saying** which was told **them** concerning this **Child**. ¹⁸ And **all** those who **heard it** **marveled** at **those things** which were told **them** by the **shepherds**. ¹⁹ But **Mary** kept all **these things** and **pondered** **them** in **her** heart. ²⁰ Then the **shepherds** **returned**, **glorifying** and **praising** **God** for **all the things** that **they** had **heard** and **seen**, as it was **told** **them**. --- Luke 2:13-20 ... NKJV

• Three Kings - The Persian Connection

- From the **earliest beginnings** in the **7TH century BC**, **they** were known to have **centered** their **worship** about an **altar**, upon which **burned** some sort of "**eternal flame**". **They** **envisioned** **God** as a **fiery reality**, and the **heavenly host** of **stars** and **planets** as **extensions**.
- The **Magi** were said to **possess** an **ethereal quality**, exuding an **atmosphere** of **great spiritual knowledge** and **power**.
- **Their mystical spirituality** carried **overtones** of the **occult ... of hidden knowledge**.
- **They** carried bundles of **thin rods** (*barsoms*), which were used for **divining**, **forecasting** and **propheying**.
 - **They** were dropped onto a **mat** (*think pick-up-sticks*).
 - By reading the **patterns** **they** displayed **they** were apparently able to reveal hidden knowledge.

There Were More Than Three Kings - CHRISTMAS NATIVITY

2 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, ² saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him." ³ When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴ And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.

⁵ So they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet: ⁶ 'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, Are not the least among the rulers of Judah; For out of you shall come a Ruler Who will shepherd My people Israel.'"

--- Matthew 2:1-6 ... NKJV

• Three Kings - The Persian Connection

- By the mid 6TH century BC, in the reign of Cyrus the Great, they began to be associated with Zoroastrian faith, honoring a single, self-created "god of light" whom they addressed as Ahura Mazda.
- They were monotheistic, hereditary priests, regarded as mediators between god and man.
- Upon flaming altars, they made blood sacrifices to their god.
- Thanks to a historical encounter with the Jews in captivity, the Magi became extremely close to ancient Jewish worship and prophecy.



There Were More Than Three Kings - CHRISTMAS NATIVITY

DUALISM IN ZOROASTRIANISM

- Existence of good and evil
- Cosmically: opposing forces within universe
- Ongoing battle between Ahura Mazda and Angra Mainyu (evil)
- Morally: opposing forces within mind
- Man has the choice of good and evil- evil leads to hell; good leads to heaven

PERSIAN GODS &
GODDESSES

S03:HM07:L01



There Were More Than Three Kings - CHRISTMAS NATIVITY

⁷ Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared. ⁸ And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found Him, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also."

⁹ When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. ¹¹ And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹² Then, being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way.

--- Matthew 2:7-12 ... NKJV

• Three Kings - The Persian Connection

- At the close of the Babylon exile, the prophet Daniel lived among them as a respected spiritual authority.
- Daniel's last recorded vision took place in the 3RD year of the reign of Cyrus (536 BC) and dealt with the angelic battle between Michael and the dark posers of the heavens.
- Some time later, Daniel died. He was probably close to his mid-to-late eighties. With great ceremony, he was buried in the territory of ancient Persia.
- Soon the captivity ended and the Jews returned to Israel. But Daniel's work and spiritual influence intersected the lives of the Magi with powerful historical effects.
- Through him, they knew of the coming Messiah.

There Were More Than Three Kings - CHRISTMAS NATIVITY

⁶ For unto **us** a **Child** is **born**,
Unto **us** a **Son** is **given**;
And the **government** will be
upon **His** **shoulder**.
And **His** **name** will be called
Wonderful, **Counselor**, **Mighty**
God, **Everlasting Father**, **Prince**
of **Peace**. ⁷ Of the **increase**
of **His** **government** and **peace**
There will be no end, Upon
the **throne** of **David** and over
His **kingdom**, To **order** it and
establish it with **judgment** and
justice From **that** **time**
forward, **even** **forever**. The
zeal of the **LORD** of **hosts** will
perform this.

--- Isaiah 9:6-7 ... NKJV

• Three Kings - The Persian Connection

- By the **beginning** of the **4TH century BC**, the **system of worship** observed by the **Magi** was **heavily influenced** by **Judaism**. **Their monotheism** had most probably begun to **incorporate** the **teaching of Israel's prophets**, laying the **groundwork** for **their** later **appearance** in **Israel** to **herald the coming of the King**.
- At the **beginning** of the **3RD Century BC**, **Magian Zoroastrianism** was the **state religion of Persia**.
- Down through the days of **Seleucid rule**, to the time of **Christ**, **they** **retained their power**.



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• Three Kings - The Persian Connection

- The **upper council** of the **Magi** were called *Megistanes*.
- They carried **enormous political** and **religious power**.
- They were the **kingmakers** of the **ancient world**.
- When they met to **declare God's will** to the **authorities** of the **state**, **their decision** was **considered to be binding**.
- They combined **wealth**, **power** and a **mystical connection** to the **God** of the **universe** that **no one** else could touch.
- With all this in mind, **consider** the **effect** they must have had **when they entered Jerusalem**.



2 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, **2** saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him." **3 When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.** **4** And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. --- Matthew 2:1-4 ... NKJV

There Were More Than Three Kings - CHRISTMAS NATIVITY

- **Three Kings** - What Would They Have Worn?

1. The **traditional costume** of the **Magi** emanated an air of **spiritual authority**. They wore **conical hat of pure white**, with **side flaps** that **covered the sides** of **their heads**, which were apparently **tied beneath their chins**. **Their robes** were also **pure white**.



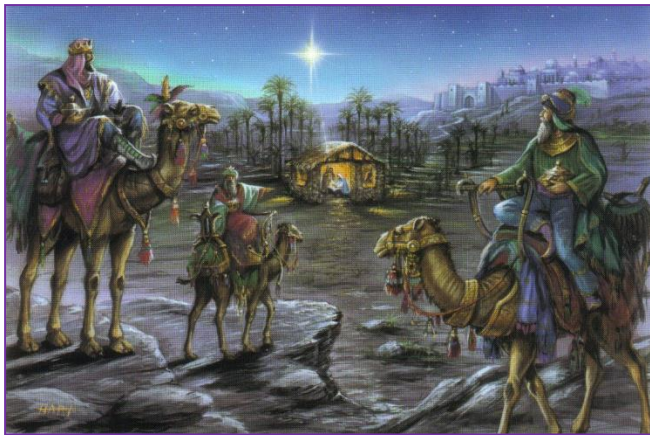
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Three Kings - What Would They Have Ridden?

2. When the **Magi** traveled they were regally mounted on the **most excellent horses**, outfitted with the **finest accessories**. The **Magi** bred the **steeds** that became the **forerunners** of today's magnificent **Arabians**. They are said to have **despised camels**.

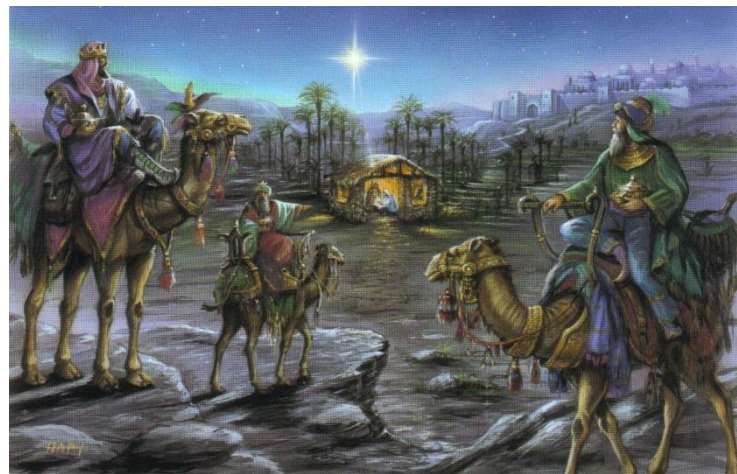
The **Magi** travelled with an **armed cavalry**, **attendants**, **cooks**, **soldiers**, **wagons** and **servants**.



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- **Three Kings** - How Many Were There, Actually?

3. The **delegates** of the **Megistanes** would have included **many Magi** (*some estimate over 100 men*). **Their company** could have **numbered** in the **hundreds**, and would have **presented** one of the most **imposing spectacles** in the **ancient world**



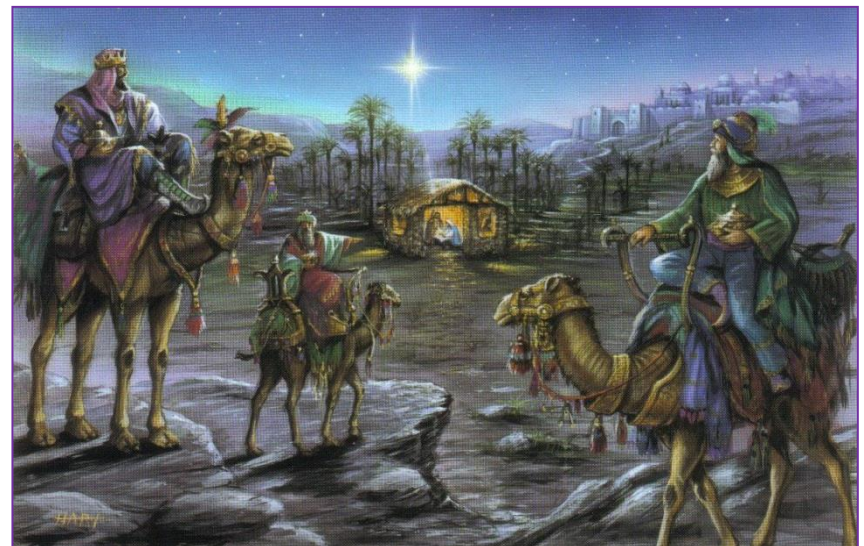
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- **Three Kings** - What About The Gifts They Brought?

4. The **Magi** did **NOT** appear in **Bethlehem** at the **manger**, but in **Bethlehem home** where **Jesus** was **living** as a **young child** (*probably around 1-2 years old*).

The **Bible** is **silent** on **why Mary** and **Joseph** were in **Bethlehem** after **Jesus'** birth.

Since the **Magi** were **honoring** a **king**, **their gifts** would have been **delivered** as part of a **far larger tribute** than **simple three little boxes**. **Their wealth** was **legendary**.



There Were More Than Three Kings - CHRISTMAS NATIVITY

• Three Kings - What About The Gifts They Brought?

4. The gifts of **gold**, **frankincense**, and **myrrh** were also **prophetic**, speaking of our **Lord's** offices of **king**, **priest**, and **savior**.

Gold speaks of **His** kingship; **frankincense** was a spice used in the priestly duties; and **myrrh** was an embalming ointment anticipating **His** death.

In the **Millennium**, **He** will also receive the gifts of **gold** and **frankincense**;" but **NO myrrh**: **His** death was once and for **all**.

⁶ The **multitude** of **camels** shall **cover your land**,
The **dromedaries** of **Midian** and **Ephah**;
All **those** from **Sheba** shall come;
They shall bring **gold** and **incense**,
And **they** shall **proclaim** the **praises** of the **LORD**.

--- Isaiah 60:6 ... NKJV

young male camel



WHAT GIFTS ARE YOU GOING TO GIVE HIM THIS YEAR?

DISCUSS IT WITH HIM.

