

***A merry and blessed Christmas
and a happy New Year***



Go on with a click into the pictures.

Matthew 2, 1-12

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, in the time of King Herod, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem saying, "Where is the one who is born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him." When King Herod heard this he was alarmed, and all Jerusalem with him. After assembling all the chief priests and experts in the law, he asked them where the Christ was to be born. "In Bethlehem of Judea," they said, "for it is written this way by the prophet:

***'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are in no way least among the rulers of Judah,
for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people
Israel.'***

Then Herod privately summoned the wise men and determined from them when the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and look carefully for the child. When you find him, inform me so that I can go and worship him as well." After listening to the king they left, and once again the star they saw when it rose led them until it stopped above the place where the child was. When they saw the star they shouted joyfully. As they came into the house and saw the child with Mary his mother, they bowed down and worshiped him. They opened their treasure boxes and gave him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. After being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they went back by another route to their own country.

Wise men from the east followed the star which led them to Bethlehem. They brought treasures as presents to Jesus, the new-born King, they wanted to give him gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.



Wise men brought presents to Jesus as a mark of honour. - Today Christmas degenerates into an event of rampant consumerism as this advertisement shows us. The question isn't about what can I give Jesus but what valuable things can I give anyone else. To support consumerism pictures from the Bible are used very often.



... but nevertheless ...

Enjoy Christmas and
all the presents given
to you
whole-heartedly!

Well, what do you think is the right present for Jesus?

Read the following Christmas story. It's from an English-textbook.

The Bells



This happened a long time ago, some people say; others say that it didn't happen at all. What do you think?

It was Christmas again, and the townspeople were on their way to the church. It was a beautiful building. The only thing that was more beautiful, everybody said, was the sound of its bells. Only they never rang now.

"But a long time ago they did," the old people said. "Our grandparents told us. And they will ring again when someone gives Jesus the right present for his birthday." That was why everyone was excited. Perhaps this year ...

"Yes, this is the year! This time the bells will ring again," many of the important townspeople said. "Our presents this year are more expensive than ever."

"Hurry, Eddy. We're late," Don, already 16, said to his little brother. It was dark and the road was bad. "We must put our present on the altar." They were poor boys, and the three small coins in Don's hand were a lot of money for them. "Yes, Don. Our present to Jesus," the little brother said. And then it happened: Don fell over a stone. "Ouch! My leg!" he cried. "Now I can't walk very fast. Eddy, you must go on alone and put the coins on the altar. Promise." "Yes, Don, I promise," Eddy said and hurried on.

Inside the church, the townspeople – one by one – went to the altar with their expensive presents, and waited ... but the bells did not ring.

30

Eddy was out of breath when he arrived at the church. He hoped he was not too late and ran towards the big door with the three coins in his hand. Suddenly he heard a voice. "Please help us," it cried. Eddy stopped.

35

He turned and saw a woman in rags. She held a small child in her arms.

"My child is hungry," she said, "and I've nothing to give him." Eddy looked at the child. Then he thought of his promise. For a moment he did not know what to do.

40

"Here." Eddy gave her the three coins and she thanked him with her eyes.

Eddy did not go to the front door then.

"I promised, and now Don will be very angry with me," he thought.

45

Inside the church it was quiet. Then, suddenly, there was a sound. The bells? Yes, they began to ring, and their sound *was* more beautiful than anything in the world. The people looked up. They wanted to see who was in front of the altar, but there was no one. They only saw a small boy, as he hurried in through the side door.

50