

## “Where is the newborn King of the Jews?”

Lesson 03 in the series: “Christmas Greetings”

### I. The wisemen greeted King Herod with a question that deeply disturbed him.

“Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the reign of King Herod. About that time some wise men from eastern lands arrived in Jerusalem, asking, ‘Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star as it rose, and we have come to worship him.’ King Herod was deeply disturbed when he heard this, as was everyone in Jerusalem.” Matthew 2:1-3 (NLT)

*Note:* King Herod was disturbed because he was a pretentious, paranoid, murderous, megalomaniac.

“(Herod) called a meeting of the leading priests and teachers of religious law and asked, ‘Where is the Messiah supposed to be born?’ ‘In Bethlehem in Judea,’ they said, ‘for this is what the prophet wrote: “And you, O Bethlehem in the land of Judah, are not least among the ruling cities of Judah, for a ruler will come from you who will be the shepherd for my people Israel.”’ Then Herod called for a private meeting with the wise men, and he learned from them the time when the star first appeared. Then he told them, ‘Go to Bethlehem and search carefully for the child. And when you find him, come back and tell me so that I can go and worship him, too!’ After this interview the wise men went their way.” Matthew 2:4-8 (NLT)

*Note:* Jesus’ birth in Bethlehem had been foretold by the OT prophet Micah more than 700 years earlier.

“But you, O Bethlehem... are only a small village among all the people of Judah. Yet a ruler of Israel will come from you, one whose origins are from the distant past.” Micah 5:2 (NLT)

*Merry Christmas!* God has loved us since before the beginning of time.

“Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure.” Ephesians 1:4-5 (NLT)

### II. The wisemen greeted Jesus with gifts and worshiped him.

“And the star they had seen in the east guided them to Bethlehem. It went ahead of them and stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were filled with joy! They entered the house and saw the child with his mother, Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasure chests and gave him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.” Matthew 2:9-12 (NLT)

*Note:* The worship and the gifts of the wisemen had more significance than they could have known.

- Gold was a gift fit for a king. (1 Kings 10:25)
- Frankincense was an ingredient used in making holy incense burned before God. (Exodus 30:34)
- Myrrh was a fragrant resin used to embalm Jesus’ body after he died. (John 19:39)
- God wants the whole world to know Him and worship Him. (Psalm 72:11, Isaiah 49:6, John 3:16)

*Merry Christmas!* If we sincerely seek God, we will find Him.

“You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.” Jeremiah 29:13 (NIV)

“Everyone the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will never drive away.”

John 6:37 (BSB)

### III. An angel greeted Joseph in a dream warning him to wake up his family and run!

“After the wise men were gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. ‘Get up! Flee to Egypt with the child and his mother,’ the angel said. ‘Stay there until I tell you to return, because Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.’ That night Joseph left for Egypt with the child and Mary, his mother, and they stayed there until Herod’s death... Herod was furious when he realized that the wise men had outwitted him. He sent soldiers to kill all the boys in and around Bethlehem who were two years old and under, based on the wise men’s report of the star’s first appearance... When Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt. ‘Get up!’ the angel said. ‘Take the child and his mother back to the land of Israel, because those who were trying to kill the child are dead.’” Matthew 2:13-16, 19-20 (NLT)

*Merry Christmas!* The Lord is working all around us in unexpected ways.

“Oh, how great are God’s riches and wisdom and knowledge! How impossible it is for us to understand his decisions and his ways!” Romans 11:33 (NLT)

*Merry Christmas!* God is infinitely smarter/stronger than any evil we will ever face.

“If you make the LORD your refuge, if you make the Most High your shelter, no evil will conquer you; no plague will come near your home. For he will order his angels to protect you wherever you go.”

Psalm 91:9-11 (NLT)

“He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.” 1 John 4:4 (NKJV)

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## Connect Group Questions

1. What is the biggest surprise you’ve ever experienced at Christmas? How did you respond to it?
2. Have someone in your group read Matthew 2 out loud. Who can you most relate to in the story of the wisemen? Why?
3. Read Psalm 2:1-5. Why do you think God laughs when people and nations oppose Him?
4. In Ephesians 1:4-5 the apostle Paul said, “Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure.” How might these verses impact our understanding of Christmas? ...our celebration of Christmas?
5. The worship and the gifts of the wisemen had more significance than they could have known.
  - Gold was a gift fit for a king. (1 Kings 10:25)
  - Frankincense was an ingredient used in making holy incense burned before God. (Exodus 30:34)
  - Myrrh was a fragrant resin used to embalm Jesus’ body after he died. (John 19:39)
  - God wants the whole world to know Him and worship Him. (Psalm 72:11, Isaiah 49:6, John 3:16)

Share an experience in your life that, years later, turned out to be much more significant than you thought at the time.

6. Read Psalm 91:9-11. What does it look like to make the Lord our refuge? Why do we often try to handle things on our own?