

**Introduction:** Human beings are capable of anything and everything – both good and bad; the events after Jesus' birth illustrate this. \*\*\* Although He had the appearance of an ordinary human baby born to poor parents, God had revealed to some unlikely foreigners from far away that He was the long awaited King of the Jews. As a result, astrologers, or wise men, from the far east came to the capital city of Jerusalem to worship this new king. \*\*\* However, when word of their arrival reached Herod the ruler of Judea, he was agitated, and the whole city with him. Under the pretext of desiring to worship the newborn king, he asked the visiting foreigners to tell him where the small child was located. But he planned to kill his rival ruler. \*\*\* Through a series of dreams, God protected His Son, The King of kings who will eventually judge the world. Joseph took the child and his mother to Egypt, and the wise men did not tell Herod where they had been. However, all boys under the age of two in the vicinity of Bethlehem were slain by Herod. \*\*\* Eventually Joseph, Jesus and Mary settled in Nazareth by the Sea of Galilee. \*\*\* Even today, as followers of Jesus await His return as THE Great King and Judge who will bring great joy by putting all things right, the people of the world are somewhere along a line stretched between extreme agitation towards Jesus to worship of Him. \*\*\* Only those who worship Him will experience great joy when He comes to judge in righteousness and truth. \*\*\* Now, let's look at our Gospel and Psalm passages.

**I. Wise men come to Jerusalem, Herod is agitated and meets the wise men, he asks them to tell him where the child is; they leave, rejoice when seeing the star and worship the child. (Matthew 2:1-12)**

A. Wise men came to Jerusalem from the east saying where is the one having been born king of the Jews; Herod was agitated and gathered together all the chief priests and scribes. (Verses 1-6)

1. Jesus having been born, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem ... (Verse 1)

**Wise men:** They have been called wise men and astrologers, but they could be called sorcerers.

2. ... saying, 'Where is the one having been born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east and have come to worship him'. (Verse 2)

**Born king:** Even though His earthly parents were ordinary, Jesus was born The King.

**Worship:** These foreigners from far away, with their own religion, have a desire to worship Him.

3. But, having heard, king Herod was agitated and all Jerusalem with him; having gathered together all the chief priests and scribes, he kept inquiring from them where the Christ is to be born. (Verses 3-4)

**Herod agitated:** His mind was stirred up, he was troubled and disturbed.

**Gathers priests and scribes:** He gathered together all Jewish experts in God's Word and ways.

**Where:** He wanted no rival kings and desired to know where this young child was to be rid of him.

**People are capable of worship and agitation towards Jesus**

4. They said to him: In Bethlehem for this was written through Micah the prophet: You Bethlehem are not least in Judah for out of you will come the prince who will shepherd My people. (Verses 5-6)

**Bethlehem:** Bethlehem had only a few hundred people living in it, but in 720 BC Micah predicted someone big would come out of there (Micah 5:2).

**Prince-Shepherd:** He would be THE One who would be both Prince and Shepherd of all God's people.

B. Herod talked with the wise men and said when you have found the young child bring me word; they departed, saw the star, felt great joy, came to the house and worshipped the young child. (Verses 7-12)

1. Then Herod having secretly called the wise men found out from them the exact time the star appeared. (Verse 7)

**Secret:** Herod did not want to involve many people in his evil plan.

**Careful questioning:** He wanted to know the exact age of his rival child-king.

2. Having sent them into Bethlehem he said: Having gone, search exactly for the young child; when you have found him, bring me word that I also, having come may worship him. (Verse 8)

**Search:** He wants them to do his work to discover exactly where his rival is located.

**Big lie:** He wants to sound good, but rather than worshipping him, he wants to kill him.

3. Having heard the king, they departed and behold, the star they had seen in the east was going before them until it stood over where the young child was. (Verse 9)

**Led by star:** This was no ordinary star, it was a miraculous guide given by God Almighty!

4. Having seen the star, they were made joyful: joy exceedingly great. (Verse 10)

**Extreme rejoicing:** The joy they were given at finding the star again was more than the greatest superlatives can describe!

5. Having come to the house, they saw the young child with his mother Mary; having fallen down, they worshipped him; having opened their treasures they presented to him gold, frankincense and myrrh. (Verse 11)

**Saw child:** They were more interested in the child king of the Jews than his mother.

**Gave treasures:** They gave to him from out of their richest treasured possessions.

**Worshipped:** They worshipped him while on their faces on the dirt floor of the house.

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6. Having been warned in a dream to not return to Herod, through another way they returned to their own country. (Verse 12)

**Dream warning:** The giver of this warning could be none other than God, The Father of the newborn King of the Jews.

**II. Joseph is commanded in a dream to take the child to Egypt and wait; Herod is furious and kills all the boys under age two; when Herod dies Joseph is commanded to return, and being warned settles in Galilee. (Matthew 2:13-23)**

A. An angel of The Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream commanding him to take the child and his mother to Egypt, and to stay there because Herod is searching to destroy the child. (Verses 13-15)

1. After they returned, behold, an angel of The Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph: Having risen, take the child and his mother and flee to Egypt and stay until I speak; for Herod searches the child to destroy. (Verse 13)

**Dream command:** Again, God directs Joseph through a dream concerning His Son. (The first time was to take Mary as his wife because she has conceived by the Holy Spirit, *Matthew 1:19-21*.)

**Destroy:** Herod's one desire is to destroy his rival through death.

2. Having risen, he took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt, and was being there until the death of Herod. (*Verses 14-15a*)

**Obedience:** Again, we see Joseph's prompt and complete obedience to the will of God.

3. That it may be fulfilled what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet Hosea: Out of Egypt I called My Son. (*Verses 15b-c*)

**Hosea:** In 750 BC Yahweh spoke through Hosea to remind His people Israel that He had called them out of slavery in Egypt (*Hosea 11:1*). Jesus is now fulfilling perfectly what the descendants of the man Israel were called to do.

- B. Having seen he was tricked by the wise men, Herod was furious and killed all the boys around Bethlehem under age two; there was weeping to fulfill what was spoken through Jeremiah. (*Verses 16-18*)

1. Then Herod, having seen he was tricked by the wise men, was made very furious; and, having sent, he killed all the male children in Bethlehem and vicinity age two and under, from the time he found out from the wise men. (*Verse 16*)

**Slaughter:** He killed every young male in a twenty mile radius, maybe as many as one hundred.

**Furious:** Herod was incensed and provoked to hot anger – agitated.

**Homiletical Idea: People are capable of worship and agitation towards Jesus. (#3)**

2. Then was fulfilled what was spoken through the prophet Jeremiah: A voice has been heard in Ramah weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and she was not desiring to be comforted because they are no longer being. (*Verses 17-18*)

**Jeremiah:** This quote (*Jeremiah 31:15*) is from a long chapter in which Yahweh says all His people will be united under Him under a New Covenant.

**Rachel:** Ramah meaning 'hill' is a few miles north of Bethlehem where Rachel died giving birth to Benjamin, whom she originally named 'son of my trouble' (*Genesis 35:16-19*).

- C. An angel appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying take the child to Israel for those seeking his life are dead; having been warned in a dream, he departed to Galilee and they dwelt in Nazareth. (*Verses 19-23*)

1. Herod having died, behold, an angel of The Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt: Having risen, take the child and his mother and go into the land of Israel, for they have died, those seeking the child's life. (*Verses 19-20*)

**Dream command:** The time has come. Joseph is commanded to take the family home.

**Died:** They waited for the word of The Lord. It has come. Those seeking the young child's death have died.

2. Having risen, he took the child and his mother and came to the land of Israel, and having heard Herod's son was ruling Judea, he was afraid to go there. (*Verses 21-22b*)

**Obedience:** Again, though unnamed, Joseph obeys The Lord's command.

**Fear:** However, he has a fear of Herod's son: Archelaus – a mere man.

3. Having been warned in a dream, he returned to the parts of Galilee; having come, he dwelt in a city called Nazareth ('guarded one') to fulfill the prophets: He will be called a Nazarene. (*Verses 22c-23*)

**Dream warning:** For the fourth time after Jesus' birth, Joseph gets direction from God in a dream.

**Nazareth:** 'Netzer' means 'branch'. This could be a reference to 'the righteous branch' from David of Jeremiah (23:5; 33:15) and the a 'branch growing out of [Jesse's – David's father's] root' (*Isaiah 11:1*).

**III. Say among the nations, Yahweh is king and will judge in uprightness and all will be glad, rejoice and sing for joy because He will judge in righteousness and truth. (Psalm 96:10-13)**

- A. Tell all Yahweh is king, has established the world and will judge the people; creation and creatures will be glad and rejoice. (*Verses 10-11*)

1. Say in the nations, Yahweh reigns! Yea the world will be established, never moved; He will judge peoples in uprightness. (*Verse 10*)

**King:** The Covenant God IS The Sovereign King of everything.

**Uprightness:** He will judge everyone in perfect uprightness, that which is straight, level and even.

2. The heavens will be glad and the earth will rejoice; the sea will thunder and its fullness. (*Verse 11*)

**All will rejoice:** All creation will have great joy because The King judges uprightly.

- B. Land and animals will sing for joy before Yahweh because He is coming to judge in righteousness and truth. (*Verses 12-13*)

1. The field will sing for loud joy and all in it, then all the forest trees will give a ringing cry of joy ... (*Verse 12*)

**Sing for joy:** All the grazing creatures, as well as people farming the fields will shout for joy.

2. ... before Yahweh, for He has come to judge the earth; He will judge the world in Righteousness, and the peoples in His Truth. (*Verse 13*)

**Righteousness and Truth:** Only God is Righteous and True. Joy is knowing He will judge according to His perfect character. May this motivate us to walk in His Righteousness and Truth, because ...

*The King will judge in righteousness*

**Conclusion:** Sorcerers from the far east came to worship Jesus as the King of the Jews; but, Herod the governor of Judea wanted to kill Him. Because of a dream, Joseph takes the family to Egypt until it is safe to return to Nazareth on the Sea of Galilee.

And, Jesus will come a second time to judge the world and bring joy to all creation in His Righteousness and Truth.

**People are capable of worship and agitation towards Jesus**