

## And Then There Was Wisemen – Matthew 2.1-6

<sup>1</sup> 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, <sup>2</sup> saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” <sup>3</sup> When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; <sup>4</sup> and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. <sup>5</sup> They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: <sup>6</sup> “‘And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel’” (Matthew 2.1-6, ESV).<sup>1</sup>

### Memory Verse – Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” – Matthew 2.2

Every time we read or study something, we need to pay attention to all the information given to us. Many times, the most important clues to help us understand a passage of scripture is in the smallest of words. This passage in Matthew two is no different, for we see many things today concerning the wiseman and Christ’s birth which are just not true.

What do we mean? Look at the first verse of this chapter, “Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea...” (vs. 1). Out of these nine short words what one word would stand out to be the most important to help us understand more about the events of Jesus Christ’s birth?

If we chose the word “after” then we are all correct. Matthew records these events are ‘after’ Christ’s birth. Meaning, He was born and gone from the stable by this time. Think of it like this, when a baby is born today how long do they stay in the hospital? One, two, three days at most, most of the time. It would not be long before most of the people who had come to register for the censuses went home and Mary and Joseph would find some place to live and work.

So, we know Jesus has been around a little while, and it was during the reign of Herod the king. Now Herod was not a Jew, he was made king of Judea by the Romans in 40 B.C and is thought to have died in 4 B.C. “He was an unscrupulous tyrant, but his achievements were such that he merited the epithet “the Great.” He was a great builder and was responsible for the erection of the temple in Jerusalem, the rebuilding of Samaria (which he called Sebaste in honor of the emperor), and other significant works. And, in the words of Barclay, “He was the only ruler of Palestine who ever succeeded in keeping the peace and in bringing order into disorder.”<sup>2</sup>

‘Behold,’ watch-out, look at and pay attention to what is about to happen next. Wise men from the east have come looking for Him who has been born King of the Jews? These wise men were not super smart people nor people which had great wisdom, but students of the stars. They were experts in astrology, interpretation of dreams and various other secret arts.<sup>3</sup> Tradition says there were three, but Matthew never gives us a number, however, tradition might have gotten its number from the number of gifts.

These wise men came looking for the “king of the Jews” they asked, “Where is he that is born King of the Jews?” (Matthew 2.2, ASV).<sup>4</sup> They were not looking for someone who would be come a king, but someone who had been born “KING!” Jesus Christ Son of God the Most High, was born King of all, Immanuel—God is with us.

This did not sit well with Herod, he was king and now the wise men are saying there is one

<sup>1</sup> *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*. (2016). (Mt 2:1–6). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

<sup>2</sup> Morris, L. (1992). *The Gospel according to Matthew* (p. 35). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, (p. 36).

<sup>4</sup> *American Standard Version*. (1995). (Mt 2:2). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

born who is king already, who does not need to be anointed, or coronated, He does not need to go through a training process or marry into the family somehow. NO, He is the King, now, He can sit on the throne and take control this very moment.

This is the same when we ask Christ into our lives, He is the King that very moment, He must have control of everything in our lives. So, we have a couple of choices, we can be like a Joseph and Mary who took all things in stride and allowed God to use them in a powerful way. To bring baby Jesus into the world, to care for Him, raise Him, train Him, and then see Him head out into ministry and watch Him die on the cross.

Or, we can be like Herod, and say, “No, No, No, I will not let this baby King, take my throne. I will run my own life and control my world my way.’ Problem is we have no idea how to run anything, control anything so all we can really do is mess things up, which is our way. But God is gracious and will allow us to have our way, but remember it will lead to destruction.

So, choices need to be made, right decision, choose the right path, what will we do? Herod, seems like he is making good choices and decision, he calls in his spiritual advisors to inquire about the birth of Christ, where He should be born. Problem is they were not excited, nor were they wanting to verify what the wise man had told them.

They wanted to know for a far more devious plan, one which would ruin the lives of many and set another aspect of God’s plan in motion. Herod was trouble, threatened for his power, position, prestige; just like many of us are, this is why we do not allow others into our own domains, nor are we encouraged when someone comes along that knows a little more than we do. We are threatened by them and will do what is necessary to protect our territory just as Herod and all Jerusalem were about to do.

## **Application**

1. Have you ever felt threatened (they knew more, or tried to take your authority) by someone else? How did it make you feel? How did you respond? Please explain.
2. Have you been the aggressor, the person someone else felt threatened by because we knew more, or had more authority than they did? Please Explain
3. Deeper Thinking: Read Matthew 2.1-6 again and see if you can find any other hidden words that will unlock additional deeper meaning to the Christmas event. You can use other scripture to support your explanation.
4. Commit to learning Matthew 2.2 and find one person to share the Biblical Christmas Story with.

## **Prayer**

Praise the name of our Lord God Almighty, Maker of the Universe and Lover of our Souls. All hail, “Jesus, hail! enthroned in glory, There forever to abide; All the heavenly hosts adore Thee, Seated at Thy Father’s side: There for sinners Thou art pleading; There Thou dost our place prepare: Ever for us interceding Till in glory we appear. Worship, honour, power, and blessing, Thou art worthy to receive; Loudest praises, without ceasing, Meet it is for us to give: Help, ye bright angelic spirits! Bring your sweetest, noblest lays! Help to sing our Saviour’s merits: Help to chant Immanuel’s praise,”<sup>5</sup> I pray Lord, I will live a life worthy of Your Son’s free gift, and that I will share it today and every day until Christ returns. I pray all this in Jesus Christ’s Name, Amen.

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<sup>5</sup> Spurgeon, C. H. (1883). *Our Own Hymn Book: A Collection of Psalms and Hymns for Public, Social and Private Worship*. London: Passmore & Alabaster.