

A Just King Is Born – Student Outline

Aim for Change:

1. EXPLAIN how wise men point to the inclusion of the marginalized
2. GRIEVE those who suffer innocently due to the world's brokenness and sin
3. IDENTIFY with the wise men's decision to perform an act of civil disobedience

Background:

- King Herod governed Judea for approximately 33 years from 37 BC – 4 BC (same amount of years Jesus was on Earth)

The People, Places, and Times:

- Wise men, highly educated and wealthy, came from the East (possibly the Parthia Empire – between Iran and Iraq)
- Even though study of horoscopes is wrong, God used nature (the stars as they have been mentioned throughout scriptures almost 70 times) to guide these Magi (*Numbers 24:17*)
- God called these men from afar to indicate that Christ came for us ALL and not just for the Jews
- These men were of high status, yet found it necessary to bring gifts (the best) to a new king, Jesus (Psalm 72:10-11; Isaiah 60:6; 1 Kings 9:28, 10:2)

Focal Verses:

Revelation from Outsiders (Matthew 2:1-3)

- Bethlehem also means “house of bread” because of its agricultural bounty, but is also a fitting birthplace for the Bread of Life
- Herod was psychologically troubled (ran in his bloodline) and killed a wife and two (2) sons (Luke 13:31-32, 23:6-12; Acts 4:27)

Have you gone out of your way to learn more about Jesus? Is your walk with God influencing those around you? Is it in a positive or negative manner?

- Regardless of their status or spiritual knowledge, they knew enough about Jesus, that He is to be worshiped (to prostrate oneself in homage)

How can someone's rules, assumptions, and behaviors keep other people from encountering Jesus?

- Herod was agitated upon hearing the news of Jesus as Herod represented the resistance of the world and Jesus represented divine kingship
- Both Herod and the people of Jerusalem were afraid but for distinct reasons

Why do we allow fear/guilt to hinder our walk with Jesus?

Information from Insiders (Matthew 9:4-8)

- The news of a newborn King was good for the world, as Jesus brings salvation, but for Herod and the elite, Jesus's birth was bad
- Herod called in the religious experts

Do you understand God's word enough that when given direction, it's received with joy? Does your lack of God's word in your life make you fearful instead of confident?

- (v. 5) Those who meticulously study God's word receive revelation and have a ready answer how to manage life

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- Remember that scripture is the inspired Word of God, not poetic verses, but divine insight into the future (John 1:1)
- (v. 6) Paraphrase of Micah 5:2; hope that the promises made to their ancestors via the prophets would be fulfilled (Ezekiel 34:23)
- Herod tried to use his influence to get The Wise Men to find baby Jesus to undermine the will of God

The Savior at His Mother's Side (Matthew 2:9-12)

- The Magi were influential outsiders who recognized, and humbled themselves to worship the King of Israel; led by divine light, not by their own understanding (Proverbs 3:5)
- Didn't have the same religious background as the Jews, but they were able to hear from God due to their humility
- These gifts were saved treasures, so they were able to give

Have you ever had an experience like the Magi where God revealed something to you that you weren't expecting? What gifts did you bring to God to show worship (thanksgiving)?

- God's divine intervention saved The Wise Men from falling into Herod's trap
- We always have a choice to obey and chose righteousness even in unjust contradictory situations

Liberating Lesson:

- Jesus, our Savior, decided to come as an innocent baby instead of descending from heaven with an army of angels
- With all His glory, He chose to be the Son of Man and be rejected by those same people
- He chose to give up heaven to live and love us here on earth

Will you give up or use your position, your influence, your resources, your time, your reputation to worship God and protect the vulnerable?

Application for Activation:

- Make seeking God a top priority for not just the New Year, but every day of your life
- Seek new ways you can worship Him and have that intimate relationship as a child has with his father
- Get a partner in the church, hold each other accountable, and watch your faith flourish
 - Hebrews 13:17; Romans 14:12-13; Matthew 12:36-37