

We Two Kings - Matthew 2

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[0 : 0 0] Matthew chapter 2. So we have come through the Christmas story. We've started with Zacharias and Elizabeth at the temple when Gabriel came and announced John the Baptist's birth. Zacharias didn't believe, but by the end of that chapter, he was prophesying and he had been awakened to the season that he was in. And then we looked at Mary and Joseph, two very different responses.

Mary, one of faith and acceptance and surrender to the Lord, understanding what God was doing in that season, not fully, but knew that Messiah was coming and that she had a part in that. And then with Joseph, who was willing to distance himself from all that, a little too crazy for him, a little outside of what he was used to. And then God spoke to him, as God will so often, through his word to steady us, to stabilize us, and to redirect us into his plans. And we looked at the shepherds. They kind of overlapped before Messiah came and then Messiah was here that season, and how God came to faithful shepherds, tending their flock, a small flock in the dark, in a dark season, willing to go and find the Messiah. And then, of course, Jesus coming. So today we'll look at, and we'll finish out kind of this series, we'll look at the wise men and Herod. So today's title is We Two Kings, not Three Kings, Two Kings. And we'll see that as we go through the text. We're going to read the whole chapter, and then we'll go through and we'll touch on parts of it, but we're going to read all of

Matthew chapter 2 to give context here to this. There's a lot, Matthew doesn't tell us that Luke does, and vice versa. Matthew's writing to the Jews predominantly, and so he's trying to emphasize that Jesus the Messiah is their king, where Luke is writing to the Greek world, to the Romans, and so he's emphasizing more that Jesus the perfect man has come, but he's not quite what they expected, but he meets all those qualifications. So Matthew chapter 2, Herod is put before us in Matthew, and so he is one of the kings. Today we're going to see two kings, two groups of wise men, and two completely different responses to the Messiah's coming in the text today. The first king we have is Jesus, isn't he? In verse 1, now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, two kings, Jesus and Herod, the wise men were not kings. We three kings of Orient, they weren't kings. It makes for a great Christmas carol, but there's nothing to say they were kings.

These three wise, not three wise men, that's taking from the song, this group of wise men. But in the days of Herod, they were come. Herod, who was Herod? So Herod the Great, he was an Idumean, he was partly Samaritan, but he was not Jewish. The Jews hated him, but they put up with him. Rome tolerated him because he got them taxes and he did what he needed to do.

He was desperate for the Jews' favor, but he never got it. And he was a slightly insecure man too. He built extremely large structures, that's what he's known for. He turned Israel into the most well-known country of the east, the far east at that time for Rome. He built the port in Caesarea, which opened up trade coming through Israel, through Caesarea in the north there of Israel, which allowed Israel to flourish at that time. He built the temple. The temple that Jesus will spend so much time in was Herod's temple. Herod built that. But the Jews hated him. He was a wicked and cruel man. It was said it was better to be Herod's dog than Herod's relative. He killed his mother-in-law, one of his ten wives, and multiple of his sons because he was so paranoid about his being taken out, his dynasty. And he had an unhealthy fascination with the dead. He tried to communicate with his dead mother. So not a good dude. But this is who God put there. This is who God used to build the temple that Jesus would come in and say, my house, wait, Herod built it. Yes. And Jesus is claiming that as his house. He's saying, my house shall be a house of prayer, but you've made it a den of thieves. And so when Jesus was born in Bethlehem, Jesus, the name Jesus, we know, means

[4 : 26] Jehovah is salvation. So right here in this first verse, talking about when Jesus is born, Matthew, if you remember, he's front-loading this heavily to his Jewish audience. So we have Jesus, meaning Jehovah is salvation. Bethlehem means the house of bread. Judea means he shall be praised. And Jerusalem is a city of peace, or literally double peace. So now when Jehovah is salvation, was born in the house of bread, of he shall be praised, there came these wise men to the city of peace.

And so it's just speaking to this Jewish culture that Jehovah has come, Messiah has come. Jehovah is salvation, and he shall be praised. We have looked at this kind of as our bookend. Every week, we've gone through this narrative leading up to the Messiah's coming, saying, when did the Messiah come? He came at an inconvenient time, at a time of great darkness, at a time when many were asleep, at a time of rejection, and a time when only a few were watching. We're going to see that today as we go through this text. It's a very inconvenient time. Herod doesn't need this in his life right now.

He's got Rome on this side, he's got the Jews on this side, and now this whole entourage of people from the east show up and say, well, we're here to see your king was born. Where is he? Right?

It was a great, there's great darkness, great darkness. And men from the east have come to worship Messiah in a land where they wouldn't even recognize their king. People are blind. It's dark, they're asleep, a time of rejection. We're going to see the second group of wise men. The first group is here in verse one. The second group will be in verse four. They'll know all about the coming king, but they have no desire to know who he is. And only a few are watching. Only a very few see the signs of the times. But who are these wise men? It says they were from the east. What does that mean? Well, when I think of east, I think of Israel. Israel's over in the east. How much further east are we talking?

Did they come from like China? From Asia? I think they came from Babylon. Same place that Abraham came from. Ur of the Chaldees, right? If they did come from Babylon, we're talking 900 miles, about 120 days, a quarter of the year. If they had a big caravan, you're adding days to that. We're going to see in here that they saw his star. And then Herod will make, he'll be very diligent to point out that he wants to know when that star appeared so that I can gauge what's going on here. And then he's going to kill all the babies two years old and under. It gives us a kind of a time stamp of how long it took them to come when they first saw the star at Jesus's birth, how long it took to get here, and then the age that Jesus would be at this time. So again, not exactly like our Christmas story where the wise men are right there at Jesus's birth. Turn with me to Ezra chapter 1, if you would.

[7 : 31] I think we're going to see who these wise men are. So Ezra, the books of the captivity, right? Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther. So it's the return of God's chosen people out of captivity. They've been taken captive by the Assyrians and then the Babylonians and those that are in captive in Babylon. Ezra, under Cyrus, king of Persia, we'll pick up in verse 2 of Ezra chapter 1. Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, right before Psalms. In verse 2, we'll read through verse 6. It says this, thus says Cyrus, king of Persia, so Cyrus is writing this. The Lord God of heaven has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Again, in the city of peace, which is in the land of he shall be praised. He's charged Cyrus, again, a Gentile ruler to build God a house. How interesting. What's happening today? The Gentiles have built God a house. God does not dwell in that which is made with hands, but he dwells in us. We are his tabernacle. We are the temple of the Holy

Spirit. And so you see this, God using these Gentiles. But he says in verse 3, who is there among you of all his people? Speaking of the Jews, those in captivity, his God be with him and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the God of Israel. He is the God, which is in Jerusalem. Go back and build your house. Go back and build God's house. I'm sorry. God's people.

Everybody in Babylon who's a Jew, go. And then he says this, and this is who I think our wise men are. And whosoever, what, remains in any place where he sojourns, let the men of his place help him with silver and with gold and with goods and with beasts, besides the freewill offering for the house of God that is in Jerusalem. Then rose up the chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin and the priests and the Levites with all them whose spirit God had raised to go up to build the house of the Lord, which is in Jerusalem. And all they that were about them strengthened their hands with vessels of silver, with gold, with goods, and with beasts and with precious things besides all that was willingly offered. You can turn back over to Matthew 2 when you like. But there we see those that remained.

When Ezra gives his account of those that returned with him to Israel, it's so few in comparative to those who were taken captive. Now many of those would have been too old. They're in captivity 70 years. And there are those who just stayed there. So you have this remnant population. How do we know they stayed there? Well, because Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther. Esther was either at about the time of Nehemiah.

It's very possible, Nehemiah, when he goes into Artaxerxes, that Esther is actually there with Artaxerxes at that time, but that would have been her son, that she is still alive when Nehemiah is going and saying, hey, I need to go back and build the walls. And that's when the decree goes forth to build the walls, that then this clock starts ticking for the Messiah's first coming. But anyway, so Esther at that time is long after Ezra, or a ways after, not long after. And Haman wants to kill all the Jews. They're still in Babylon. They're in Shushan, right? So this is after the return.

[11 : 05] And he says, let's kill them all at this point. So there's a lot of Jews that stayed and continued to live there. And it seems like the men of the east would fit that they're coming from a place where Israel, those living in Jerusalem, would look and go, oh, these are the people of the east.

And the east they knew about at that time would have been Babylon. And so they're coming, having seen the star, having some remnant left of the coming of Messiah, knowing these times and seasons. So that's who I think these wise men are. Now, the word used here for wise men is the same if you look in Acts 13. If you remember when Peter, he is, I'm sorry, not Peter, Paul at this point.

So when they had gone through the island of Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer. That word sorcerer is the same word used for wise men, magi, those that practice magic or those that are considered of secret knowledge or of higher knowledge. A false prophet, a Jew whose name was Bar-Jesus, which was the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man who was with him, I'm sorry, who called for Barnabas and Saul and desired to hear the word of God. But Eliamis, the sorcerer, for so is his name by interpretation, withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith. So that's the same word, that word sorcerer. You think, oh, the wise men. Well, it's a word that just means those that could be wisdom or could be those who think they have some type of wisdom, looking into things of higher knowledge or forbidden knowledge.

And then as we move on into verse two, saying, what did they come? They came and said, where is he that's born king of the Jews? For we've seen a star in the east and have come to worship him.

So this whole entourage shows up. It doesn't say how many. It says wise men, plural. The reason people say three is because the three gifts are eventually going to give, gold, frankincense, and myrrh, right? How many presents did you get for Christmas? Right? Did you only get one from each person?

[13 : 14] Right? And that determined, so let's say, say you got 20 presents from, and would you then infer, well, that means I had 20 people give me gifts because I only get one gift from each person and that's it. You know, did you have any joint gifts from somebody? Like, hey, this is from mom and dad.

You know, no, no, no. I only accept gifts from a single person. You know, it's scriptural. Gold, frankincense, and myrrh means one wise man, two wise men, three wise men. It doesn't mean that at all, right? So I just apply a little common sense here. Most likely, this would have been a pretty big entourage. We're going to see that Herod was troubled in all Jerusalem with him. Well, when Herod's troubled, there's going to be trouble, right? But it also could just be that a very large entourage just showed up from the east. Is this war? Is this a delegation? What's going on here? But where did the wise men come? Did they go to Bethlehem? No. What does the scripture say? They came to Jerusalem.

The wise men expected to find a king where? In the palace. That's where they thought he would be. Their expectation was that Israel would have known and also been watching for the same signs that they saw for the arrival of the king. So they show up and they say to Herod, where's your son, right? Or it must be. He's in the palace. Where's your king? Barclay, William Barclay, he has a, he wrote a study Bible and some commentaries, and he says this, and he quotes this in one of his commentaries.

He says, at this time, there was a general expectation of a Messiah or great man from Judea. Not very long after Jesus was born, or not very long after Jesus was born, the Roman historian Suetonius wrote, there had spread all over the Orient an old and established belief that it was fated at that time for men coming from Judea to rule the world. Tacitus, another Roman historian of the general period, wrote, there was a firm persuasion that at this very time, the east was to grow powerful and rulers coming from Judea or to acquire universal empire. So there's this thought that something's going to happen. Some type of ruler will come. The Messiah will come and will reestablish Israel. Remember, Herod has kind of paved the way a little bit. Israel's on its ascendancy. He's given them a name again. And so they're thinking, well, now's the time that someone will rise up out of Judea and will take the throne. That thinking, unfortunately, is in the church today a little bit.

There's people thinking that the church will take over the world, will take over society, and then will become powerful enough that then Jesus will come and will say, here it is, Lord.

[15 : 58] You can now rule this. We did it. Not exactly scriptural, but there is that idea. And they came and they said, where is his star? Very specific. They didn't say, where is a star?

Where is the star? Or I'm sorry, we saw his star. Where is the king? For we saw his star. It's very specific here. Numbers 24, 17 has this prophecy. It says, there shall come a star out of Jacob and a scepter shall rise out of Israel. There shall come a star. There shall be a rule in Israel. And then Isaiah 60, verse 3, which I think is really interesting, speaking of the Gentiles and these kings, we don't know for sure who they are. Are they some mixture of Jews from Shushan? Are they those that have heard of the Messiah because of what has been passed down from Esther? But Isaiah 60, verse 3 says, and the Gentiles shall come to thy light and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Man, isn't that just what happened? That these men have come. The Messiah, his coming, and this is the first of a few things we're going to see about the Messiah's coming. The Messiah's coming inspired wise men to seek and to worship. Wise men will seek and worship the Messiah at his coming. But Herod, he's not too excited about this. In verse 3, when Herod the king heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And I think here it's not so much that Herod was worried about these men and what they brought. I think it's just that Messiah's coming, the idea of the Messiah coming, of one coming more powerful than him, terrified the man. He had spent his whole life making sure that he was the most powerful thing in his life. And now there was something that he had no control over.

Proverbs 14 34 says, Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people. And here we see a man who has lived in sin, has ruled in sin, and is bringing trouble to his nation as he is troubled. Messiah's coming troubles the already troubled, doesn't it? Think of Revelation where he says, hey, he who is just, let him remain just. He who is unholy, let him be unholy. The idea being that when Messiah comes, when Jesus comes a second time, you're not going to have a chance to change your mind. Like, he's here. Okay, I'm sorry. At that point, it's over. When he comes, and he comes to this world again to step foot on this earth, it's over. At the valley of the battle of Armageddon, he's not going to say, now, who of you, now that you see me, wants to believe me? They're all going to believe in him, but their hearts are already set and hardened against him.

And when he had gathered, so now Herod decides he needs to find out more about this. And when he had gathered, that word there in the Greek is synagogue, or synago, it's the same word used for synagogue, when you see synagogue in the New Testament, like a gathering. All the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded, it's very strong there, but it just means inquired, he inquired of them where Christ should be born.

And they said unto him, in Bethlehem of Judea, and thus it is written by the prophet, and thou Bethlehem in the land of Judah are not the least among the princes of Judah, for out of thee shall come a governor that shall rule my people Israel.

[19:17] The when and the where of Messiah's coming is according to God's word, isn't it? Here these priests come and the scribes, and they say, well, we know when, and we know where, because we have the word that tells us, we know the season we're in. You see, the priests and the scribes, they knew where to find Messiah. Oh, Bethlehem in Judea, because of the prophecy. But they were not willing to go themselves, were they? They're happy to tell where he's coming, but they're not willing to go themselves. And I see them as just this other picture of these wise men, these two groups of wise men. We have our two kings, Jesus and Herod, and then we have our two groups of wise men.

Those that have come all the way from the east, 900 miles, and yet these guys who are, what, nine miles, 20 miles from Bethlehem, they're in Jerusalem. You think they would go, you know what, maybe we'll go with them. Maybe we'll go, I mean, this seems like if these guys traveled all the way from Babylon, maybe we'll just go and see if this is anything. But that's religion. Religion loves to talk about what it will never actually do. It will talk all the time, all about what should be done, how we should live, but religion will never do it, because there's no power to do it, and there's no desire to do it. It will always want you to do that. You always know if it's religion, because it will always be put upon you to do something. You do that. Oh, no, I won't do that. I'm the one who just, you know, disseminates the information, but I'm not going to do that.

The when and the where are according to God's word. And then what we see in verse six there, where it says, and thou, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are not the least among the princes of Judah, for out of thee shall come a governor that shall rule my people. What does that mean? Well, there's two different, the words there are the same root, but slightly different. Princes mean those who will rule. That's all it means. But then the governor who will come out of you is the one who rules with authority. So there are those who rule, but then there's one very specific one who will come, and he will have the authority to rule. And that word rule means to feed or to tend his flock.

So there's an idea in there of shepherding. But a true ruler uses his authority for the benefit of those that his position serves, doesn't it? Herod did not. He was not a true ruler. But out of you shall come forth one who will care for and feed the flock. Verse seven, then Herod, when he had privily or secretly, is what it means, privately, when he had secretly called the wise men, he inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared. He said, hey, when did it appear? I mean, how long have you been traveling? Okay. When? Okay. So it was last year. At what time? Oh, in the fall, when the shepherds were in their fields around Israel. Okay. About them, yeah. He wanted to know how much time he had. How much time do I have to work with here? Interesting thing is, not enough, was it? Herod, you don't have enough time. You never have enough time. How much time do I got to work with before I have to deal with the Messiah? How much time before I have to figure out what I'm going to do with him? There's never enough time. Today is the day of salvation. Let's move on to verse eight.

And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, go and search diligently for the young child. And when you found him, bring him to me, bring word, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also. Both Herod and the wise men inquired after Jesus. Both Herod and the wise men said they desired to worship Jesus. But Herod's was not one of sincerity, wasn't it? Messiah's coming is not going to be used for political gain. The coming Messiah cannot be used for political gain. And that's what Herod's like. How can I use this for my benefit? You know, I want to go worship him too. Today, we cannot use Messiah's soon return. We cannot use our Messiah for political gain. It doesn't work, guys.

[23 : 17] In Psalm 2, verse 1 through 6, why do the heathen rage and the people imagine a vain thing? Is that Herod or what? The kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against his anointed, against his Messiah, against Christ, saying, let us break their bands asunder and cast away their cords from us. He that sits in the heavens shall laugh. The Lord shall have them in derision. Do you know that's what God does to every political entity that would take a hold of his Messiah, his anointed one, and say, hey, I got an idea of what we can do with this?

That God sits in the heavens and laughs. He has them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath and vex them in sore displeasure and say, inferring here, yet have I set my king upon the holy hill of Zion. My king is upon the holy hill of Zion. You can put out whatever mosque you want there.

You can put out whatever political leader. When the Antichrist walks someday into the newly rebuilt temple and says, worship me, God has still set his king upon the holy hill of Zion, and that will be manifested in its time. And when they heard the king, the wise men did, they departed, and lo, the star which they saw in the east went before them. So a star did not lead them as they were traveling. They didn't follow a star. They saw the sign. They saw the sign of Jesus's birth, that the Messiah had come.

Do you know what that means? That means anybody could have seen that sign. Anybody could have seen that star in the heavens. And they recognized what it was. Now that they're there, some type of star appears here. I've heard all kinds of different commentators, and you know, it was a star, it was a meteor, it was an angel. It was, I don't know what it was. It was some type of luminous substance that God specifically wanted to direct them. But I think the application is the wisest of men cannot find Jesus without divine direction. No matter how wise these men were, they were not going to find him. No amount of wisdom and no amount of searching can bring us to Jesus without God's revelation, without the word, without the word becoming flesh, without God reaching out to us.

You can desire, you can try in your own knowledge and wisdom, but without God's intervention, we will not find the Messiah. No man comes unto the Father but by me, says Jesus. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother and fell down and worshiped him. And when they'd opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts, gold, frankincense, and myrrh. How different this was than what they expected, wasn't it? They came to the palace, to the capital of Jerusalem and said, where is your king? And then they're told to go to Bethlehem. They don't know where Bethlehem is. As they're heading out towards Bethlehem, the star appears and leads them. They're like, here it is. This is the star. That leads them to a little podunk town, the little town of Bethlehem.

[26 : 18] Interesting thing also is we have no indication this is at night. It's just that the star was there where they could see it and they were led there. And when they were come, they presented them gifts, gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Gold for a king, frankincense for the anointing of the priests, and then myrrh for burial. So all of these things for Jesus and speaking forth unto him. And what did they do? They fell down and worshiped him. Who did they worship? Well, they worshiped a king. Are kings born kings? No, they're born princes, aren't they? And they grew up to be kings, but not this king. He was born a king, and they recognized that, and they bow down before their king. Right from the start, Jesus, the young child, a king. So it just says it's Mary. Mary is there with the young child. Joseph is not. Almost indicates that he's probably out working. So this is in the daytime. He comes, and where did they find him? Not in a stable, not in a cave. They came and found him where? Into the house. Now, what we're not told here is what Luke will tell us. That at eight days old, Jesus was circumcised according to custom, and he was given the name Jesus. Just like when John the Baptist was circumcised at eight days, and they said, well, we'll call his name Zacharias. And Elizabeth said, no, his name will be John.

So at eight days old, you were given, the male was given his name. And so Jesus was given the name Jesus. It says right after that in Luke, and when the days of her purification were accomplished, meaning Mary. So in the law, when a woman would give birth, she would have, depending on if it was a girl or a boy, and I can't remember now if it's longer for a girl or shorter, but either way, for a male, when you gave birth, you'd have 30 days of purification. For a firstborn male, you had to go and offer a sacrifice, especially. And so she would come to offer a sacrifice.

If they were poor, they would offer a couple of doves. If they weren't, you'd offer a lamb and then a dove. So Joseph and Mary and Luke, we find, offer two doves, which indicates the state of their finances. But anyway, so we know we're at least 38 days after, right? Because we've got eight days to his circumcision, 30 days then of purification. And that's in Jerusalem, because that's where they meet Simeon and Anna, and they prophesy over him. And from there, what happens? Well, it seems like then they go back to Bethlehem, and they're living in this house, this rented house. The word there for young child is the same one used throughout the New Testament. It can mean a young child, a young person.

And if you look in Mark, where Jesus goes to heal the young girl who has died, it's when, I think it's a Jairus, he comes and he says, hey, my daughter lies sick. And the crowd presses around, and the woman with the issue of blood touches him. And then as he's talking with her, a servant comes and says to Jairus, hey, your daughter's died. And Jesus turns to him and said, do not fear, only believe.

And they go, and he raises her up. And this is what it says about her in verse 42 there. It says, and straightway the damsel arose and walked, for she was of the age of 12, 12 years old. She wasn't a newborn baby, still wrapped in swaddling clothes. And then again, in Matthew 18, when Jesus says to the disciples, he said, who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? Well, they said that to him, I'm sorry. And Jesus called a little child unto him and set him in the midst of them and said, truly, I say unto you, except you be converted, become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. He wasn't talking about an infant then. He was talking about a young child.

[29 : 57] It would change that completely, wouldn't it? We recognize we need childlike faith. We don't need infant faith, right? We need faith like a child that accepts what, um, accepts what mom and dad tells them, recognizes their life is secure and cared for, and lives without, um, all the weight upon them that we take on us as adults. And our faith then takes on us. So Jesus, most likely at this time, is anywhere from one to two years old. How do we know that? Well, because Herod eventually is going to kill all the kids from two years and under. Gold, frankincense, and myrrh. So the setting and situation did not lessen or diminish the king's nobility, didn't? He was in Jerusalem. He's in the palace.

No, he's in the little town and just in a house. But still these men come and they don't go, this isn't what we were looking. We didn't expect this. Let's go home. No, the king was still worthy of worship. So how do wise men worship? Well, from these wise men, I think we can see that there's a few things that we can take to ourselves about how to worship our Messiah. Wise men worship in the king's presence. They were going to find the king and they were going to worship him. They didn't get to Herod and say, well, we know he's here somewhere. So here, pass these gifts off onto him. They worship and surrender. They fell down and worshiped him. Imagine Mary, you know, she opens the door and it's like, whoa. Imagine Bethlehem all in a stir as this entire entourage comes and stops before Mary and Joseph's house. Yeah, the one who had the kid out of wedlock and things that got, you know, and here they're bowing before this child and worshiping him. They came with urgency. They recognized that when this star appeared to them, that man, they needed to get there. They didn't say, well, thank you, Herod. We'll check back another time. They did not come empty-handed. They came with their gifts because God was worthy. We see a wonderful pattern here, quoting Spurgeon, those who look for Jesus will see him. Those who truly see him will worship him, and those who worship him will consecrate their substance to him. Spurgeon is very good with his words. But wise men, how do they worship and surrender in the king's presence with urgency and they do not come empty-handed? Our other group of wise men, they didn't think it worth following the signs. They didn't think it worth checking to see if Messiah was coming. They decided just to stay where they were. Knowledge, yes. But what is wisdom? Wisdom is the application of knowledge. A lot of knowledge, but no wisdom to apply it. And so then, Joseph here,

I'm sorry, not Joseph, wrong dream. Then the wise men, being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way. They've come, they've worshipped, and now they go back home. They go back home to tell everybody back there, he has come, the Messiah has come.

And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appears to Joseph in a dream, saying, rise and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word, for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him. So Joseph comes home, maybe he comes when they're there, either way, and Mary's like, you wouldn't believe what happened today. This is getting stranger and stranger. I really do think that Jesus is the Messiah. You mean the one over there playing in his food dish? Yes, like he's the king. Look, he's got gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

God's direction is very direct, isn't it? We've said that when we've looked at the life of Abraham. God directs very directly. I don't think there's anywhere in scripture where you can find a vague direction of the Lord. He's very direct when he gives his leading in direction. And there we see him giving Joseph very clear direction. And when he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night and departed into Egypt, and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, out of Egypt I have called my son. And so the world is what? Simply a tool. It's simply leverage for God. God takes the world and uses them as a tool of his word. Because there was a prophecy that needed to be fulfilled, and it was going to be fulfilled, and God was going to use the world, Egypt. Just like he did with Pharaoh when he took Israel out of Egypt. Pharaoh was simply a tool. Verse 16, we're going to go kind of quickly through this with Mary and Joseph here in Egypt, so we can get back to wrap it up with

[34 : 30] Jesus coming back into Israel. Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked, that literally means to be played with, to be trifled with, when he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wrath, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coast thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men. Did the wise men mock him? Did they play with him? Were they trifling with him? Not at all. No way. They were following God's direction. Herod took that as a mockery to himself. The world we live in today, if you follow God's direction, they will think that you are mocking them when you're simply trying to follow the Lord. And so Herod here, he's upset. He's frustrated. He thinks they're mocking him.

But who's the one doing the mocking? Herod. Galatians 6, 7, and 8, be not deceived. God is not mocked. For whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap. And if we sow to the flesh, we shall have the flesh reap corruption. And Herod is doing that. And the Messiah's coming exposes the world system for what it truly is, doesn't it? A mockery. The world system is just a mockery of the things of God.

Messiah has come. All the lip service that Herod could give, that, oh, he's going to build a temple for the Jews because he worships Yahweh. Whatever lip service these religious men get, the scribes and the priests give. It's just a mockery. And Messiah's coming reveals that. And another thing I think we see here, wicked men blame their wicked deeds on those who stand against their wickedness.

Well, Herod, you killed all those babies. I didn't want to kill them. It wasn't my choice. I just wanted to get the one kid. But no, you know, those wise men mocked me and left. Did they? Not at all.

They stood for truth and righteousness. They were standing against his wickedness, and he blames them, essentially. You see that all the time today in our victim mentality in this culture.

[36 : 36] Well, is it my fault? I had to react that way. And you see that here, that mentality with Herod. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah, saying, in Ramah was there a voice heard, lamentation, that's to cry out with a noise, and weeping, that's the tears, and great mourning, that's a moaning, an inward. Rachel weeping for her children who would not be comforted, because they are not. Messiah's coming fulfills all prophecy, but not all prophecy is that pretty.

Messiah's first coming was with blood, wasn't it? The blood of the innocent. The blood of the innocent children, and then eventually the blood of the innocent Messiah. But his second coming will also be with blood, won't it? But it'll be the blood of justice this time, this next time.

You know, wicked men in the world think that the best solution is death. I got a problem, I'll kill it. That's what I'll do. I'll kill it. And we can see a world that mocks God eventually thinks that killing children is a good solution. And here the prophecy says that this is God's heart, you know, speaking through this prophecy about Rachel weeping for her children. She would not be comforted, because they are not. And if you've heard stories of people who have had abortions, there's not a lot of comfort for that. Yes, the Lord heals that and uses that, but there's always that void.

And it's interesting, it says, not that her children never were, but that they are not any longer. And there's a difference there. It's not that she didn't have the children, but that that which was is not any longer. But then when Herod was dead, Herod's life, we went from this whole story about Herod being involved in this to then all of a sudden when Herod was dead, does his life have no value? Just this vapor? The value of Herod's life was measured in his response to Jesus.

Herod's life only mattered in how he responded to and interacted with Jesus. Outside of that, there was no true value, because it didn't last. It's the same for us. Our lives is, it's what we do with Jesus. It's how we interact with Jesus. It's how we respond to Jesus. That's the thing that will last. In eternity, you're not going to get a reward because, you know, you kept a really clean house, or you rebuilt that engine, or you made a lot of money in your job. Now, if you do those things as unto the Lord, and it's the Holy Spirit in you and through you that he's giving glory to God, and that's just fruit, then yes, that will last through eternity. But to do something for the sake of doing it because you just enjoy it outside of Christ, where is the value? Solomon would say, eat, drink, and be merry.

[39 : 28] You know, I'm sorry, Paul would say, eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow we die. That was a Greek saying. But Solomon would say, what value is there under the sun, you know, except to enjoy our labors now because they don't last. But they do in Christ. We can send them on ahead as our inheritance.

For they are dead which sought the young child's life, and all that are dead, all that seek the Messiah are dead. They are, but not all need to remain dead. For they are dead which sought the young child's life. They are dead that seek Messiah. We all come to the Messiah dead, but we don't need to stay that way. Ephesians 2 verse 1 and Colossians 3, 3 to 4, and you have he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins. For you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then you shall also appear with him in glory. So they that sought the young child's life, they're dead in the story. But they that seek the life that's found in the young child, the life that's in Christ, that new life, they come dead to seek life. Jesus said, I did not come for the righteous, but for the sinners. And he arose, verse 21, and he took the young child and his mother and came into the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judea in the room of his father Herod, who's afraid to go thither, notwithstanding, being warned of God, I'm sorry, yes, notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee. And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, he shall be called a Nazarene. Where it says there that notwithstanding being warned of God, it means to be revealed, to called, that God is revealing a calling to Joseph in this dream. He turns aside from, and goes into Galilee and dwells in Nazareth. The way that's worded there, where it says, and he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, and the fact that they were staying in Bethlehem and only left because of the threat, makes me think that Nazareth was not Joseph's town of residence, but that he was there because of Mary, which was her town of residence. And then they go back to his town in Bethlehem for the census, and they end up living there until they have to leave.

Again, there was prophecy that needed to be fulfilled, and God was going to move them to there. Nazarene. Real quick, I want to touch on this. What does that mean? There's actually no prophecy that says, and he shall be called a Nazarene. There's not a specific prophecy. The closest one seems to be Isaiah 11.1, and there shall come forth a rod of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. That doesn't say anything about a Nazarene. No, but the word there for the branch, it like rhymes with the word for Nazarene as well. So there's not a specific prophecy that would say Jesus shall be a Nazarene, but at this time, a Nazarene was one that was considered like those that were rejected, one that was despised. And Jesus would become, came to be known as Jesus of Nazareth. So he would be called a Nazarene. So Messiah is coming. What did we see about Messiah is coming? It was announced with signs and wonders. It stirred up kings and mighty men of the earth.

It was witnessed by the high and the low, and it drew together the most unlikely. There were signs and wonders that anybody could have seen, but they didn't. The kings and mighty men of the earth were stirred up. Well, at the Messiah's second coming, who's soon returned, we're going to see the same thing. It's announced with signs and wonders. It will stir up kings and mighty men of the earth.

It will be witnessed by the high and the low, and it will draw together the most unlikely. And it sure has already his first coming, hasn't it? We are the most unlikely. I love all of you dearly, but outside of Christ, I probably wouldn't have met you. I wouldn't even have met my wife.

[43 : 25] Two groups of wise men, two kings, two completely different responses to Messiah's coming. How do wise men worship him? They worship him by being doers as well as hearers of the word, right? They worship him, not with empty hands, but they bring something. Do you have gold, frankincense, and myrrh? I don't know, maybe been hoarding up gold because of the economy. I don't got gold. I don't got frankincense or myrrh.

Oh, not sure what this is. It could be frankincense or myrrh. But is the Lord going to be pleased with that if you showed up at church and you're like, Lord, I got gold, frankincense, and myrrh, and you know. No, what do we bring? What do we bring in worship? We bring the surrender of our lives, right? We bring what is a sweet aroma unto him, is what we bring to our king, our true king. In Revelation, I like this verse because it kind of speaks to that idea of Jesus is the branch, the Nazarene, the one that was rejected, just the root. You know, nothing much there in a root. You can give someone a bulb, right, like a flower. You can take a cutting. It doesn't look like much. But Jesus says, I, Jesus, have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David. I am the beginning and the end. I am the root and I am the full-grown plant. I am the root and I am the offspring of David.

And the bright and morning star, and the spirit and the bride say, come. And let him that hears say, come. And let him that is a thirst, come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. He which testifies these things says, surely I come quickly. The Messiah is coming quickly. That doesn't mean like he's running super fast. It just means that when it happens, it's here. There's no time to decide. For Herod, there wasn't any time. For those priests and those scribes, their time was then. Guess what? They didn't have any time after that, did they?

Herod dies. It says he died. He didn't accept the Messiah. The scribes and the priests will go on to be those who reject Jesus. How many of them were alive 30 years later when Jesus started his ministry?

That was their time. They could have been there worshipping the Messiah. Even so, we say today, come, Lord Jesus, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen. And Father, as we end now in song, Lord, just to worship you and Lord, to recognize that the King has come and he didn't come as we expected. We're not going to find him in the palace. Today, we're still not going to find him in the palace. You're not going to find Jesus hobnobbing with the rulers of this world. What we're going to find is a mockery that this world still is mocking the true King. But we saw, Lord, that the setting and the scenario does not change the worthiness of the King. So, Lord, we can come, Lord. We can come to our King no matter what the setting. Lord, you are not looking down upon us because of where we're meeting. Well, that's not as posh as I would like. It's not a king. It's not a castle or throne room.

[46 : 51] No, Lord, you came rejected. And you came, Lord, in an off-the-side, out-of-the-way place is where you were born. The signs were there and nobody wanted to recognize them. Lord, thank you for the example of these men who took such pains to travel so far to see their King. And then what faith they had when he didn't look like what they thought, he didn't appear where they thought, but how they loved him and worshiped him. Lord, today we want to recognize that you are in this world still, Lord, calling the dead to come to the Son that they might receive of his life. And Lord, that you would use us as ambassadors for Christ to call others, Lord. We thank you for your word. We thank you that we are in the season of the coming Messiah, just like Zacharias and Elizabeth, just like Mary and Joseph, just like the shepherds, just like Herod and the wise men. We are in the season of the coming Messiah.

And maybe someday it'll be written in heaven about us. Oh, they saw the signs. They responded and they came and they welcomed and worshiped the Messiah at his return. So come quickly, Lord.

Come for your church, Lord, that we may meet you in the air. Lord, it's not in a king, it's not a quite where we would expect if I was writing the story that I'm going to meet my king in the air. But Lord, that's where I want to be, that I may fall down and worship you. And so we do that now, Lord. We worship you in Jesus' name. Amen.