

Calvary Chapel  Philadelphia



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY
TEACHER'S PACKET

4s-2nd grade

Christmas Eve

The True King

The True King

The Objective is the key concept for this week's lesson. It should be the main focus of the study.

These are the key verses that you will find helpful in teaching your study this week. The "Main passage" is the basis of the study, where the other verses support the objective of the lesson.

There is a memory verse for the students that relates to every study. If a student can memorize the verse for the following week you may give them a prize from the "reward box" found on your cart.

An introductory activity or question that will settle the class, draw their attention to the study and prepare their hearts for God's Word.

Objective This lesson will look at the Christmas story to show how Jesus is the True King and give the students an opportunity to make Jesus their King.

Key Verses

Matthew 1:18-2:12—Main Teaching Passage

Matthew 1:1-17

2 Samuel 7:12-16

Isaiah 9:6-7

Micah 5:2

Memory Verse - Matthew 2:6

"But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
Are not the least among the rulers of Judah;
For out of you shall come a Ruler
Who will shepherd My people Israel."

Hook

Ask the students to list what kind of things they think of when they think of a king. They will probably list things like a crown, a palace, money, etc. List or draw their answers on the board. Then ask if kings are usually poor. Do they live in small houses? Are they usually young children?

Today, we are going to look at a King who doesn't fit our typical ideas of a king. He wasn't rich and didn't live in a palace. But this King is the greatest king who ever lived!

What does the Bible say? This is where we will read a passage or series of passages that teach on the subject of the day.

BOOK

In Matthew 1, we meet Joseph, who comes from the line of kings going all the way back to King David according to verses 1-17. Joseph was engaged to be married to Mary, but was unsure what to do when he found out she was with child. The Lord sent an angel to Joseph and told him that this Child was from the Lord. He would be the Savior, the Son of God, the promised King of Israel. Joseph listened to the angel and married Mary, and she gave birth to Jesus in the town of Bethlehem.

After Jesus was born, some wise men in the east saw an unusual star, and they believed it was a sign that the King of the Jews had been born and decided to go worship Him. They went to Jerusalem, the ancient capital of Israel, looking for this King, but there they did not find the newborn King, but Herod, the current king. The wise men asked where they could find the new King, but Herod was not happy to hear that there was another King besides him. He asked the religious leaders, who told him that the Scriptures said the King would be born in Bethlehem. He then sent the wise men on their way, asking them to return later and tell him where they found the Child.

As the wise men traveled to Bethlehem, the star appeared again and led them to the place where Jesus and His family were staying. The wise men entered the house and worshipped Jesus, giving Him expensive gifts. They had found the true King! As they left, the Lord told them not to go back to Herod, and so they returned home a different way.

LOOK

Throughout the Old Testament, God had promised to send Israel a King (2 Samuel 7:12-16; Isaiah 9:6-7; Micah 5:2). This King would rule not just Israel, but the whole world. He would make all things right and fix the world's problems, and He would rule forever. For hundreds of years and through many times of great difficulty, the Israelites looked forward to this King. They waited and waited for Him to come. After all that time, in Matthew 1-2 we read about His arrival on earth.

Evidently the wise men had heard about this promised King, and when they saw the star in the sky, they went to find Him. They began their search in Jerusalem, the ancient capital of Israel. Surely they would find this new King in the palace, they must have thought. And there they did find a king: Herod. Herod did have a crown, a throne, wealth, power, an army, and a kingdom, but the wise men soon discovered that he was not the King they were looking for. The true King, King Jesus, didn't have any

The interpretation/exegesis of the passage. What does this passage mean? How does this passage apply to my life?

LOOK (Continued)

of those things that Herod had... at least not on earth. He was a child from a poor family living in Bethlehem. But this Child was the Son of God, the Creator of the Universe. He was the King who would later die on the cross and then rise again to save us from our sins. He then went up to heaven and promised to come back one day and destroy evil and make all things right. Like the Israelites, we are waiting for the coming King. We are waiting for the day that Jesus comes back and fixes all the problems we see around us. When that day comes, the whole world will know that Jesus is King.

Jesus is the King of everything and everyone. He is the King of you and me. But many people have not made the choice to follow and obey Him as King. Some of them don't know that He is King. Others don't want to have to listen to Him and obey what He says. All of us have to make the choice of whether or not we want to follow and obey King Jesus. Have you made that choice? If not, you can do that today! Tell Him that you believe that He died on the cross and rose again to save us from our sin. Ask Him to forgive your sin and be your Savior. Tell Him that you want to follow and obey Him as your King. When you do that, you will get to spend eternity living with and being loved by King Jesus!

What is my response to this passage of Scripture? How should my life change according to what this passage teaches me? What are the practical things I can do throughout the week to make this true in my life?

TOOK

Present the Gospel to the kids and offer them a chance to respond.

As a class, memorize Matthew 2:6.

Review the lesson by going over the events of the story.

Pray: Thank God for sending King Jesus into the world. Ask Him to help you obey King Jesus.

Parent Question: What will happen when King Jesus returns to earth?

FURTHER STUDY

Commentary on Matthew 2:1-12 by David Guzik

A. Wise men from the East come to honor Jesus.

1. ([Mat 2:1-2](#)) The wise men arrive in Jerusalem.

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, saying, “Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him.”

a. **After Jesus was born in Bethlehem:** Matthew actually tells us little about the birth of Jesus; [Luke 2](#) records these familiar details. What Matthew tells us regards something that happened **after Jesus was born in Bethlehem**.

i. **Bethlehem** was the ancestral home of David, the great king of Israel and founder of their royal dynasty; however, it was not a large or significant town. “Bethlehem was quite a little town six miles to the south of Jerusalem. In the olden days it had been called Ephrath or Ephratah.” (Barclay)

ii. “A stir begins as soon as Christ is born. He has not spoken a word; he has not wrought a miracle; he has not proclaimed a single doctrine; but ‘when Jesus was born,’ at the very first, while as yet you hear nothing but infant cries, and can see nothing but infant weakness, still his influence upon the world is manifest. ‘When Jesus was born, there came wise men from the east,’ and so on. There is infinite power even in an infant Savior.” (Spurgeon)

b. **In the days of Herod the king:** This was the one known as *Herod the Great*. Herod was indeed great; in some ways great as a ruler, builder and administrator; in other ways great in politics and cruelty.

i. “He was wealthy, politically gifted, intensely loyal, an excellent administrator, and clever enough to remain in the good graces of successive Roman emperors. His famine relief was superb and his building projects (including the temple, begun 20 b.c.) were admired even by his foes. But he loved power, inflicted incredibly heavy taxes on the people, and resented the fact that many Jews considered him a usurper. In his last years, suffering an illness that compounded his paranoia, he turned to cruelty and in fits of rage and jealousy killed close associates.” (Carson)

ii. “Augustus, the Roman Emperor, had said, bitterly, that it was safer to be Herod’s pig than Herod’s son. (The saying is even more epigrammatic in Greek, for in Greek *hus* is the word for a *pig*, and *huios* is the word for a *son*).” (Barclay)

iii. The reign of Herod also gives us a chronological marking point. “*Jesus was born* before the death of *Herod the Great*, which is probably to be dated in 4 bc; the exact date of Jesus’ birth is unknown.” (France)

c. **Wise men from the East came:** These travelers are called **wise men**, which in the ancient Greek is *magoi*. Misconceptions and legends abound about these wise men. They were not kings but **wise men**, which means they were astronomers. There were not only three, but probably a great company. They seem to have come not on the birth night, but probably several months later.

i. “In later centuries down to New Testament times, the term [*magoi*] loosely covered a wide variety of men

interested in dreams, astrology, magic, books thought to contain mysterious references to the future, and the like.” (Carson)

ii. Being **from the East**, they would have been among Jews who were exiled from Judah and Israel centuries before. “That many Jews were mixed with this people there is little doubt; and that these eastern *magi*, or philosophers, astrologers, or whatever else they were, might have been *originally* of that class, there is room to believe. These, knowing the promise of the Messiah, were now, probably, like other believing Jews, waiting for the consolation of Israel.” (Clarke)

iii. There was a general expectation of a messiah or great man from Judea. Not very long after Jesus was born, the Roman historian Seutonius wrote: “There had spread over all 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 were to acquire universal empire.” (Cited in Barclay)

iv. “The tradition that the Magi were kings can be traced as far back as Tertullian (died c. 225). It probably developed under the influence of Old Testament passages that say kings will come and worship the Messiah (cf. [Psalms 68:29, 31](#); [72:10-11](#); [Isaiah 49:7](#); [60:1-6](#)).” (Carson)

v. Church traditions even tell us their names – supposedly Melchior, Caspar, and Balthasar. You can see their supposed skulls in the great cathedral at Cologne, Germany.

d. **Came to Jerusalem:** Guided by the astronomical phenomenon mentioned following, they came to the area and expected to find answers in **Jerusalem**. They expected that the leaders and people of this capital city of the Jews would be even more interested than they were. Matthew does not tell us specifically that the star guided them to Jerusalem.

i. “A comparable visit by eastern Magi to Nero in ad 66 vouches for the probability of this story.” (France)
“There is not the slightest need to think that the story of the coming of the Magi to the cradle of Christ is only a lovely legend. It is exactly the kind of thing that could easily have happened in the ancient world.” (Barclay)

ii. “It has been truly remarked that the shepherds did not miss their way; they came to Christ at once, while the wise men, even with a star to guide them, yet missed their way, and went to Jerusalem instead of to Bethlehem, and enquired at the palace of Herod, instead of at the stable where the Christ was born.” (Spurgeon)

e. **Where is He who has been born King of the Jews?** They traveled this great distance to honor a **King**; yet there is a little irony in their great effort to honor the **King of the Jews**. At that time the Jewish people were often despised and dishonored because of their unique customs and beliefs, and also often because of their success and prosperity. They were often thought of as a low, troublesome, and conquered race. It was remarkable that they would trouble themselves so much to honor an infant **King**, but even more so a **King of the Jews**.

i. “They said, ‘Where is he that is born King of the Jews?’ ‘Jews?’ Who cared for Jews? Even in those days, Jews were the subject of contempt, for they had aforetime been carried captive into the east. Although they are the very aristocracy of God, his chosen people, yet the nations looked down upon the Jews.” (Spurgeon)

ii. Significantly, they say this one **has been born King of the Jews**. It is a strange thing for a baby to be born a king. Usually they are princes for a long time before they are kings. “His kingly status was not conferred on him later on; it was from birth.” (Carson)

f. **For we have seen His star in the East:** There are many different suggestions for the natural origin of this remarkable star. Some say it was a conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn; some, other planetary conjunctions; others suggest a supernova; and some think of comets or a specifically created unique star or sign.

i. Whatever it was, it is significant that God met them in their own medium: He guided the astronomers by a star. This was also in fulfillment of [Numbers 24:17](#): *A Star shall come out of Jacob; a Scepter shall rise out of Israel*. This was widely regarded by ancient Jewish scholars as a Messianic prediction.

ii. Notice, it was **His star**: “The star was Christ’s star itself, but it also led others to Christ. It did this very much because it moved in that direction. It is a sad thing when a preacher is like a sign-post pointing the way but never following it, on his own account. Such were those chief priests at Jerusalem: they could tell where Christ was born, but they never went to worship him; they were indifferent altogether to him and to his birth.” (Spurgeon)

g. **And have come to worship Him**: The wise men came first to Jerusalem, assuming that the leaders of the Jews would be aware and excited about the birth of their Messiah. The wise men are about to find that this wasn’t the case at all.

2. ([Mat 2:3](#)) Herod is troubled at the news brought by the wise men.

When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

a. **When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled**: Herod was constantly on guard against threats to his rule, especially from his own family. He assassinated many family members whom he suspected of disloyalty. His being **troubled** is completely in character.

i. Herod, who wanted to be accepted by the Jews whom he ruled, was not a Jew at all but an Edomite, and Rome recognized him as a vassal king over Judea. The Jews tempered their great hatred of him with admiration for his building projects, such as the magnificent improvements made to the second temple.

ii. Barclay reminds us of what a bloody, violent ruler Herod was: “He had no sooner come to the throne than he began by annihilating the Sanhedrin...he slaughtered three hundred court officers...he murdered his wife Mariamne, and her mother Alexandra, his eldest son Antipater, and two other sons, Alexander and Arisobulus.”

b. **He was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him**: The fact that **all Jerusalem** was **troubled** with Herod is significant. This was due either to the fact that the people of Jerusalem rightly feared what sort of paranoid outburst might come from Herod upon hearing of a rival king being born, or because of the size and dignity of this caravan from the East.

i. This trouble is again testimony to the greatness of Jesus, even as a young child. “Jesus of Nazareth is so potent a factor in the world of mind that, no sooner is he there in his utmost weakness, a now-born King, than he begins to reign. Before he mounts the throne, friends bring him presents, and his enemies compass his death.” (Spurgeon)

3. ([Mat 2:4-6](#)) Herod is instructed regarding the Messiah’s coming by the chief priests and scribes.

And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. So they said to him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet: ‘But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are not the least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you shall come a Ruler who will shepherd My people Israel.’”

a. **All the chief priests and the scribes**: This was the first contact the religious leaders had with Jesus. They understood the Biblical information correctly, but failed in application to their lives.

i. **Chief priests** would especially include those who once held the office of High Priest; Herod changed the High Priest often because it was largely a political appointment.

ii. **Scribes:** “The ‘teachers of the law,’ or ‘scribes’ as other English versions call them, were experts in the Old Testament and in its copious oral tradition. Their work was not so much copying out Old Testament manuscripts (as the word ‘scribes’ suggests) as teaching the Old Testament.” (Carson)

b. **So they said to him, “In Bethlehem of Judea”:** Quoting [Micah 5:2](#), the chief priests and scribes understood that the Messiah would be born in **Bethlehem of Judea**, distinguishing it from another town of the same name further north.

i. From this passage in Micah, they understood not only that the Messiah would be born in **Bethlehem**, but also that He would be **a Ruler who will shepherd My people Israel**.

ii. Sadly, these experts had the right information but seem personally uninterested in meeting the Messiah for themselves.

iii. “Had they met with the shepherds of Bethlehem, they had received better intelligence than they could from the learned scribes of Jerusalem.” (Trapp)

4. ([Mat 2:7-8](#)) True to character, Herod attempts to use wise men to find the child that he may kill Him.

Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found Him, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also.”

a. **Determined from them what time the star appeared:** Because Herod later commanded that all boys two and younger be killed in the area, we can assume that the wise men first saw the star a year or so previously (on the night Jesus was born). Their journey from the East to Judea was not quick, and they may have left as soon as logistics allowed.

i. Herod heard a good Bible study about the birthplace of the Messiah, but it did him no good. “When the earth-king dabbles in theology, it bodes no good to truth. Herod among the priests and scribes is Herod still. Some men may be well instructed in their Bibles and yet be all the worse for what they have discovered.” (Spurgeon)

b. **Bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also:** The irony is strong. Herod claimed a desire to **worship** Jesus, when he really wanted to kill Him.

i. “Mark that the wise men never promised to return to Herod; they probably guessed that all this eager zeal was not quite so pure as it seemed to be, and their silence did not mean consent.” (Spurgeon)

5. ([Mat 2:9-12](#)) The wise men present gifts to Jesus and leave without informing Herod.

When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Then, being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way.

a. **Behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them:** The star continued to guide them, apparently re-appearing. We can surmise that the star appeared some months before, guiding them to the general area, and then they visited Jerusalem to gain more information. Then the **star** appeared again to specifically guide them. This was an obviously supernatural phenomenon.

i. "We believe it to have been a luminous appearance in mid-air; probably akin to that which led the children of Israel through the wilderness, which was a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. Whether it was seen in the daylight or not we cannot tell." (Spurgeon)

ii. **And stood over where the young Child was:** Adam Clarke says that this is more literally, *stood over the head of the child*. In his thinking, it was some kind of meteor that guided them to the very house where Jesus was. He goes on to say that this idea of a star-like shine associated with the head of Jesus gave rise to the idea of the *halo* in ancient and medieval art.

iii. "The words *came to rest* mean literally 'came and stood', and can mean only that the star itself moved to guide the Magi." (France)

b. **They saw the young Child with Mary His mother:** We notice that Jesus here is called a **young Child**, likely being between 6 and 18 months old. We also notice that (against custom) the **Child** is mentioned before the **mother**.

i. "Joseph haply was at work, or otherwise absent, lest the wise men should mistake him for the true father of the child." (Trapp)

c. **When they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh:** It was common – especially in the East – that one would never appear before royalty or a person of importance without bringing **gifts**. Considering who these wise men believed the **young Child** to be, it is not surprising that they gave such lavish gifts.

i. The idea that there were three wise men comes from the fact that there were three gifts. We may say that gold speaks of royalty, incense speaks of divinity, and myrrh speaks of death. Yet it is almost certain that the Magi did this unawares; they simply wanted to honor the King of the Jews.

d. **They presented gifts to Him:** The precious gifts were not presented to Mary or Joseph, but to Jesus Himself. Yet undeniably, the infant Jesus did not use or spend any of these precious gifts, but His parents used them, hopefully wisely, on His behalf and benefit.

i. In the same way, when we give to Jesus today, we do not give to Him directly, but to His people, who use those gifts on His behalf and benefit – and hopefully wisely.

ii. "How useful this gold was to Joseph in the following months! It helped him to defray the cost of the journey into Egypt and back, and to maintain his precious charges there. The Heavenly Father knew what those needs would be, and met them by anticipation." (Meyer)

e. **Fell down and worshipped Him:** More important than their gifts is the fact that they worshipped Jesus. It must have been a curious sight to see these impressive dignitaries bowing before a young child.

i. We see here three different responses to Jesus; one may say that all people respond in one of these three ways.

- Herod displayed an open hatred and hostility toward Jesus.

- The chief priests and the scribes were indifferent toward Jesus, all the while retaining their religious respectability.

- The wise men sought out Jesus and worshipped Him – even at great cost.

ii. In comparing the visit of the wise men to the earlier visit of the shepherds ([Luke 2:15-20](#)), we see:

- Jesus came to the Jew first, then to the Gentile.

- Jesus came to the humble and ignorant first, then the honorable and learned.
- Jesus came to the poor first, then the rich.

iii. We should learn from the wisdom of these wise men.

- They were not satisfied with looking at the star and admiring it; they *did* something about the star, and set out and followed it.
- They persevered in their search and in following after the star.
- They were not discouraged in the search by clergy and doubtful religious leaders.
- They rejoiced at the star.
- When they arrived at the destination the star led them to, they entered in.
- When they entered in, they worshipped.
- They sensed an urgency to worship Him *now* and not wait until later.
- When they worshipped, it was to give something – not empty-handed adoration.

iv. We see a wonderful pattern: “Those who look for Jesus will see him: those who truly see him will worship him: those who worship him will consecrate their substance to him.” (Spurgeon)

f. **Being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way:** Their worship is also manifested in obedience. They are obedient to the heavenly dream and leave without serving as Herod’s informants.