

## Christmas Eve 6<sup>th</sup> Jan We three Kings?

Let's have a little Christmas quiz (or strictly speaking an Epiphany quiz). Today learn about Matt 2. MAGI. Hands up if you think this is true.

- [There were 3 kings who brought gifts to baby Jesus?](#)

Actually they weren't kings. They are described as magi v1- wise men from the East, perhaps from Babylon. **Stand up those who got it right.**

OK next question. Hands up if you think this is true

- [There were 3 wise men who brought gifts to baby Jesus?](#)

Actually we don't know if there were 3. There were 3 in our story, but the Bible doesn't actually say that. It just says there were **three gifts** in v11. So there could have been a lot more.

**"We seven wise men from orient are"**. It doesn't sound so good does it?

OK last question, now is this true? Hands up.

- [There were \(not 3 kings but\) a number of wise men who brought gifts to the baby Jesus?](#)

No it doesn't say that they came on the night he was born. You have to read your bibles. It just says after Jesus was born in Bethlehem v1. It could have been straight away, or it could well have been several months after Jesus was born, perhaps he was up to 2 years old (that was the age of the boys that Herod had killed).

Here's how the beginners Bible shows it ([keep final picture on the screen](#)). He could be a little boy by now.

Sorry trick questions!

Thanks for that reading.

Ok let's talk it through in two halves, and let's look at:

### 1) The king

Now this whole passage focuses on King Jesus, but in particular it focuses on how 2 different groups of people responded to him. The first one is **the earthly king who was troubled: king Herod.**

#### **Recap verses 1-8**

Introduce you to [Herod the Great](#), and although he built lots of things (a Temple, a port, some fortresses), he was a nasty piece of work who killed one of his wives, and some of his sons.

Shall we give him a boo? **BOO.**

Now the particular thing that I would like you to focus on in verse 3 is what he felt when he heard that there was another King. He was **DISTURBED!**

He was troubled. He was grumpy. He was cross. He was worried. One translation frightened.

*Can you give us a face?*

Now I wouldn't have liked to have been near Herod when he was grumpy.

Look at verse 3. When Herod was in a bad mood, all of Jerusalem was in a bad mood with him too.

#### **Why do you think that was?**

It's because a new King means he might no longer be King. I guess he rather liked being the boss. Sitting on that throne.

▲ Have any of you ever been top of the class? Or the captain of your football team? You are number 1. Well if a new kid comes into your class in the new term who is really clever, or brilliant at football, they are going to take your place. You won't be on the top spot any more.

Herod. Would you be happy to give up your throne for another King?

## **The King who was troubled by the King**

I think he rather likes it there. Ruling over all the people, being the boss of everyone. Everyone likes to be important and powerful. No-one likes to be humble.

Now it's funny. Herod asks the chief priests and the teachers of the law about this new King.

And it turns out that he's mentioned in the Bible exactly where he is going to be born. Answer Bethlehem- that's where David was from, that's where David's descendent, the Messiah, God's King would be from.

Sword drill! Who can find Micah. p933.

It's on page 933 of your bibles. **Someone read it out?** Micah 5:2 and 4. A King from Bethlehem who will shepherd God's people.

Now when you think about it- Herod should have realised that if God had predicted the birth of his son all those years ago, it would be foolish to stand in the way of God's plans.

But Herod thought he was so important that he could even overrule God's plans, so he tried to get rid of this King.

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But for now, let's think about how Jesus may have the same effect on us.

I wonder if we all like the fact that Jesus, the baby born in Bethlehem is the true King.

Not just a king for Christmas and then we put him back in the box with the Christmas decorations and forget about him for a year. But the one who should rule over our lives- whether we tell the truth, how we decide how to live, how we treat our little brother or sister. Jesus is the King to rule the throne of our lives.

We know he is the King. Because he does exactly what the OT promised- in his birth, in his life in his death. There's no doubt that God has sent him. Not just to be any human King, but the king we should worship.

But if not careful we can feel threatened/ Troubled frightened by J.

I wonder if someone here today, been thinking about following Jesus, but can't.

But because they too have to give up their throne.

▲ Heard of a young lad. Frightened what friends in rugby club would say. Big lad! Want to still be boss.

This is the real reason why people don't become Christians. Because they are proud. They want to be boss. They don't want someone else telling them how to live.

But we won't win!

You see Herod didn't last much longer after this. In fact his death is recorded in verse 19, and now we only learn about him in history books, and on Wikipedia pages.

Jesus on the other hand is King of billions of people around the world, including many of us today.

But even Christians can ask Jesus into their lives, but have "no go areas".

Once said in this town no go areas.

Jesus not allowed. Private life/ work life/

Let's make sure Jesus is not a king who troubles us.

**We three Kings- OK so not kings, wise men, could be more! Let's sing.**

OK we're going to think about the second part of the story from v9 now:

**1) The king who was *troubled***

**2) The King who was worshipped. (capital K!)**

OK so there may have been more than 3 wise men, and they weren't kings, and they didn't necessarily when Jesus was tiny (though he is in our story), but what did they do?

Aha. Well let's act out the second half. I've called this "The King who was worshipped".

If Herod shows us how not to treat King Jesus, the wise men show us how to treat him. [verses 9-12](#).

**The King who was worshipped.** Now this is amazing.

These guys have come from miles away, being guided by the star.

- It's not that far from Jerusalem to Bethlehem, Google maps says it takes about [1 hour 47 by foot](#), around the same distance from [Huntingdon to St Ives](#). I assume same time on a camel.

And when they see the star guiding the way to Bethlehem, they are overjoyed.

- Do you know there's a scientist in the Earth Science and Engineering at Imperial College London, Adrian Umpleby, who has done some research on the timing of the stars and comets around this time, and I heard him do a fascinating talk about how the star may have been a comet that pointed right over Bethlehem at this time. Here we go [Photos](#).

But the point is that when they arrived they worshipped Jesus. Unlike Herod, Jesus wasn't bad news- a threat to their importance. He is good news. They rejoiced to see him.

I don't know how much they understood about Jesus, or how much they realised that their gifts were full of symbolism.

1. Gold to speak of a king
2. Frankincense to speak of God's holiness
3. Myrrh to speak of his sacrifice. (It was what Nicodemus embalmed him with after his death).

But they knew that here was God's King. Not just any King, because you don't normally worship a King (though no doubt Herod would have liked that).

But they worship King Jesus. They realised that he was a King who was from God. The Saviour- the Messiah- the one who God has sent to save us.

God's answer to all our problems.

I don't see the teachers of the law coming to worship Jesus, even though they knew about him. I don't see other Jews from Jerusalem coming to see him. But magi- foreigners from a distant land. A reminder that Jesus is for everyone, no matter what country we are from, no matter if we have never stepped foot in church before.

How do you see Jesus this Christmas? The real King to worship, or someone who gets in the way of getting where you want to get.

What gifts have we been given?

- Sport?
- Brain?
- Money?

Lay them at his feet.

O Come all ye faithful.

Let's pray.