



Sermon Discussion Guide

12.15.24 Message | Keith Ehresman | Matthew 2:1-16

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 saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him." When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: '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.'" Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him." After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way. Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, "Out of Egypt I called my son." Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men.

- Matthew 2:1-16

Message Highlights

- The condition of our hearts is revealed when life "bumps" us.
- Herod's insecurities led him to choose control over trust in God's plan.
- Christmas magnifies both the joys and struggles in our relationships and hearts.
- A growing heart reflects the love, joy and peace that come from Christ.

Conversation Starter

What is your favorite Christmas memory? How does it reflect the "heart" of the season?



Discuss the Message

- How does the idea of being “bumped” resonate with your own life experiences during challenging seasons?
- What can we learn from Herod’s reaction to feeling threatened by Jesus’ birth?
- How does the concept of receiving a new heart through Christ shape the way we respond to difficulties?
- In what ways can the example of the wise men’s search for Jesus encourage us in our own spiritual journeys?

Think Deeper (Does your group understand the passage?)

- What stands out about the contrast between Herod’s reaction and the wise men’s response to Jesus’ birth?
- How does the prophecy fulfilled in Jesus’ life deepen our understanding of God’s faithfulness?
- What does it mean for you personally to “rejoice exceedingly with great joy,” as the wise men did?
- How does Herod’s fear of being replaced reflect the human struggle with control and surrender?
- What does the story of the wise men and Herod teach us about the importance of worshipping Jesus with a whole heart?

Think Life Change (Does your group recognize the personal implications for them as individuals?)

- How can you address areas in your life where your heart feels “two sizes too small”?
- What practical steps can you take to reflect gratitude and joy this Christmas season?
- How can surrendering control to God lead to more peace in your daily life?

Think Engage (Does your group know how to apply the challenge?)

- Who in your life needs to see the love of Christ reflected through your actions this week?
- How can you share the hope of a “new heart” with someone struggling this Christmas?
- What does it look like to be a light amid someone else’s darkness?

Think Kingdom (Does your group understand the overarching Kingdom, that the work we do is bigger than ourselves?)

- How does this message challenge you to view your life through the lens of God’s eternal plan?
- What does living with a “heart-strong” perspective in a world focused on self-preservation mean?