

New Testament Life Lesson 4
The Wise Men and the Flight to Egypt
Text: Matthew 2

Introduction

God told the shepherds the wonderful news that the Messiah, Jesus, was born. God's Holy Spirit told Simeon and Anna in the temple that Jesus was the child promised from the foundation of the world. Soon another group of people appeared on the scene to give honor to Jesus. They saw the news in the sky and came to worship the newborn king, and wound up causing trouble for lots of people in the process!

The Story

Wise men from the east studied the stars and saw a message there. A new king would be born in Israel. They saw a special star which led them to the land where Jesus lived, the land of Israel.

It was natural for them to assume that a king would be born in the palace, so they went first to Jerusalem where the king lived.

“Where is the newborn king of the Jews?” they asked King Herod. “We have seen his star in the east and are here to worship him.”

This was not good news to Herod! HE was the king and wasn't eager to hear about someone being born who would take his place.

Herod gathered the chief priests and scribes together and demanded that they tell him where Christ should be born.

“In Bethlehem,” they answered. “The prophet said, “And thou Bethlehem in the land of Judah art not the least among the princes of Judah for out of thee shall come a governor, that shall rule my people Israel.”

So Herod sent the wise men to Bethlehem. He said, “Go and search diligently for the young child. When you find him, come and tell me so I can worship him, too.”

Do you think Herod really wanted to worship Jesus? No, he planned to get rid of him as soon as he found him.

The wise men followed the star until it came and stood over where the child was. They were so happy, and rejoiced with great joy!

They came to the house where Mary and Jesus were. When they saw Jesus, they fell down and worshipped him. They gave him the wonderful treasures they brought for him. They gave him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

God warned them in a dream not to go back to Herod, so they went home another way.

Herod was on the warpath, now, though. When he saw that the wise men tricked him and didn't come back, he was really mad – and he did something horrible. He sent out his soldiers to kill all the children in Bethlehem and everywhere around there who were two years old or younger.

Jeremiah the prophet had foretold this sorrow. He said, “In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation and weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children. She would not be comforted, because they were gone.”

The angel, meanwhile, had delivered another message to Joseph in a dream. This time he said, “Get up and take the child and his mother and flee to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you to come home, because Herod is going to try to kill the child.”

Joseph got up and they left by night to go to Egypt. They stayed there where it was safe while the babies were being killed around Bethlehem.

Then the angel told them that Herod was dead and it was safe to go home. They packed up and went back to Israel.

That fulfilled another prophecy, which said, “Out of Egypt have I called my son.”

When they got to the land of Judah, they learned that though Herod was dead, his son Archelaus was the new king. Archelaus was just about as bad as his father. Jesus still wouldn't be safe in Bethlehem. The angel gave him directions and he went instead to the land of Galilee to their own city of Nazareth.

Jesus lived there with his parents. They were poor, but Jesus lived the life of most Jewish boys of the time. He probably helped Joseph in the carpenter shop and went to Hebrew school in the synagogue. (Sort of like a church.) The Bible says the child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon Him.

The Life Lesson

Lots of people tried to kill Jesus from the very first, but God wasn't worried. He was able to take care of his Son with no problem. You don't need to worry, either, because God who runs the universe is able to take care of you, too!

Review Questions

Who were some of the first people to recognize Jesus as the Messiah?

The shepherds, Simeon, Anna

Who saw it announced in the stars that Jesus was born?

The wise men

From where did the wise men come?

From the east

Where did they go first to look for the newborn king?

At the king's palace

Was Herod happy about the news?

No -- He was the king and didn't want anyone to take his place.

Why didn't the wise men go back to tell Herod that they found Jesus?

Because God warned them in a dream to avoid Herod and go home another way.

What dreadful thing did Herod do in order to kill the newborn king?

He had all the boy babies under two years old killed.

How did God protect Jesus?

He told Joseph in a dream to take Jesus and Mary and go to Egypt.

Where did Joseph, Mary and Jesus live when they came back from Egypt?

They lived in Galilee in the city of Nazareth.

Did God take care of baby Jesus?

Yes

Will He take care of you?

Yes