

# The Sunday School Lesson

BY JOHN R. BRAYBOY  
SALEM MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

## God's Great Gift (Matthew 2:1-12)

- I. Wise Men (2:1-2)
- II. Troubled Man (2:3-6)
- III. Deceptive Plan (2:7-8)
- IV. Joyful Worship (2:9-12)

### I. Wise Men (Matthew 2:1-2)

The wise men came from the East looking for Jesus. Bible scholars say that these wise men were probably astrologers, and that they lived in Persia (present day Iran). They saw the star in the East and came to worship Jesus. They must have had some knowledge about Bible prophecy because they recognized the star as that of Jesus. Apparently they were looking for the Messiah that the prophets had foretold. They came to seek out the one who was born King of the Jews.

### II. Troubled Man

Herod was King of Israel at the time of Jesus' birth. When the wise men asked about where the King of the Jews was, the news got to Herod and he got very upset. Herod was disturbed mainly because he was insecure. He loved being King and did not want to give up his throne. When he heard the wise men asking about the King of the Jews, he thought Jesus was coming to take his throne. Herod was like many people today, they love their social standing, wealth, etc. more than having the peace that Jesus can give.

In other words, Jesus is a threat to their life, as they see it. In Herod's anxiety he called for the Scribes and Chief Priests to find out where Jesus would be born. It is like the natural man when he gets disturbed about something, he asks advice from a man of God to get an answer to his problem. Sometimes the answer is not what they want to hear, but it may also soothe things over for a while. The Chief Priests and Scribes told Herod what he wanted to know. Sometimes lost

people know what they need to do when under conviction, but they want to work it out some other way. Herod found out that Jesus was to be born in Bethlehem of Judea, the first of the princes.

### III. Deceptive Plan (2:7-9)

Herod sent for the wise men and asked them when they saw the star. After talking to them, he told them to find Jesus and come back to let him know where he was. Herod told them that he wanted to go and worship him. Of course, Herod's plan was to find Jesus and kill him. Many people today would like to rid the world of Jesus because like Herod he is a threat to their life style. Sometimes like Herod they use deception in the name of religion to try to thwart the gospel of Jesus Christ. They cannot see that Christ offers them eternal life and peace that passes all understanding.

### IV. Joyful Noise (2:9-12)

The star led the wise men to the house where Jesus was. They rejoiced at seeing the star. The star stopped over the house where Jesus was and they went in to worship him. They had brought gifts of myrrh, gold and frankincense. The myrrh was symbolic of the death of Christ because it was used in the preparation of deceased bodies. The gold was a symbol of the purity of the Son of God. The frankincense was symbolic of Jesus' authority, after worshipping Jesus, the wise men left, but God warned them in a dream to go home another direction. God let them know of Herod's deceptive plan to kill Jesus. Many times we are faced with people who try to deceive us, but if we listen to the Lord, He will reveal it to us. When we are in God's will, we will be able to see deception of others. The day that we live in we definitely need the wisdom of God more than ever to know when people are being deceitful or are for real. In today's world, people will use other people in the name of Jesus and think nothing of it. If you have not found the Lord's will for your life, first of all God's will for your life is to save you for Christ's sake. If you don't know Jesus as personal savior, why don't you accept God's greatest gift to the world right now and find out the real meaning of Christmas.

God bless you until next week.

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