



EMMANUEL: WE THREE KINGS DEVOTION AND DISCUSSION GUIDE

Matthew 2:1-6 ESV

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men^[a] from the east came to Jerusalem, ² saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose^[b] and have come to worship him.” ³ When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴ and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. ⁵ They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: ⁶ “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.””

Opening Thoughts:

- What did you learn about the reign of king Herod as a backdrop to the Christmas story?
- Read Matthew 2:1-21, why do you think Herod was troubled (verse 3)?
- Emmanuel is always a threat to the status quo. If the Messiah had truly arrived, what threats did his arrival pose to Herod personally?
- Once Emmanuel arrives, nothing can remain the same.

Key Takeaway: Emmanuel didn't just come to change the world, he came to change you!

- We may welcome change around us, but will we truly welcome change within us?

1) Emmanuel Was a Threat to His Territory (accomplishments)

- Read Matthew 2:16. Herod displayed his cruelty by killing innocent children. How has our culture demonstrated this same cruelty?
- What does the Scripture say about the life of a child still in his/her mother's womb (see Luke 1:39-45, Psalm 139:14, Jeremiah 1:5)? Do you think the world knows that the church is unapologetically pro-life? How can and should this be made known to the world?
- Christmas is a reminder of the potential found in an unplanned pregnancy. Though a child may be preceded by an incident, no child is ever an accident. How would you minister to someone who had an unplanned pregnancy? How could the story of Mary and Herod help you as you minister?

- Herod tried to abort Truth. When presented with unsettling truth, what is your initial reaction? To deny it and hope it goes away? To destroy it by just deleting the thought or person from your life? Or do you delight in it, receive it, accept it, embrace it?
- It is the height of pride and selfishness to destroy an innocent life in an effort to protect our temporary territory.

2) Emmanuel Was a Threat to His Title (identity)

- Read verse 2. Can you imagine what Herod thought when he was asked where is the king, since he *was* the king?
- Read Matthew 24:1-2. The people may have been impressed with Herod, but Jesus wasn't. Herod was about to see his entire legacy be ruined. He saw himself as a great king, yet in the end he was simply the set designer for the greatest story in history.
- Herod spent so much time on temporary things and finding his identity in them (his title and his territory), but these are to be tools in the hands of Jesus, our King. Has there been an area in your life that you have spent too much time, attention, and energy building, only to reach the top and discover that you were pursuing the temporary instead of the eternal?
- "If the ladder is not leaning against the right wall, every step we take just gets us to the wrong place faster." Stephen R. Covey

3) Emmanuel Was a Threat to His Throne (kingdom)

- Read Matthew 2:13. Emmanuel was a threat to Herod's kingdom, he would not have this king displace his throne. For 2 years, Herod missed the sign in the sky pointing to the place where Emmanuel was to be born.
- Travelers from 400 miles away followed the sign in the sky for two years until they arrived in Bethlehem, where they took front row and worshiped the King.
- Herod the Great could have been the king who welcomed the Great King of kings. He could have been the first king to worship Emmanuel. Rather than embrace, he let his pride lead him to reject Emmanuel.
- Those who were furthest away got to worship the closest, while those who were the closest missed what was right in front of them. Which are you?
- We miss what is before us because we refuse to see anything beyond us. Emmanuel is within you. Do you have spiritual eyes to see and ears to hear what He is doing within you? Adoration requires humility, which provides the fuel for an Emmanuel moment.

Application:

- **Key Takeaway:** Emmanuel didn't just come to change the world, he came to change you!
- Has 2020 threatened your territory (what you have accomplished, amassed), titles (your identity), and thrones (your kingdom)?
- Don't miss the moment, Emmanuel wants to change you! What do you need to lay on the altar of sacrifice? Ask the Lord, don't just sit around and wait for 2021 hoping the fire will sovereignly fall from heaven. Offer your life as a living sacrifice. Let Him speak to you today.
- "Fire doesn't fall upon empty altars. There has to be a sacrifice on the altar for the fire to fall. If you want the fire of God, you must become the fuel of God." Tommy Tenney