

Why Christians Act More Like King Herod Than They Would Like to Admit

The Magi specialized in astronomy, which is the study of the stars. These learned, cerebral men were not Jews but were pagan astrologers from the East. Today we might call these wise men “diviners” or “magicians.” They were certainly wise in the way of secular science. The Magi are probably the types of people that you and I would stay away from today. Perhaps, in the 21st century, we would label them as “humanists” or on “the left side of academia,” while internally we might be calling them “weirdos.” Quite frankly, these wealthy, esteemed men were little more than academic nuts.

These magic men came to King Herod asking where they could find the new king; it was their ultimate plan to worship and revere Him Who was born King of the Jews.

King Herod was perturbed at this news and gathered the scribes and priests to figure out where the Messiah was to be born. These leading church scholars of the day were able to quote to King Herod a prophetic word from Micah that confirmed that the heaven-sent ruler would be born in Bethlehem.

King Herod then called for a second meeting with the Magi and sent them to Bethlehem, telling them to let him know when the Messiah was found because, he proclaimed that he, too, desired to come and worship this newborn King.

King Herod was actually plotting to kill the baby who had come to bring peace on earth! The worship that King Herod intended was mere lip service. His heart had no intent of worshipping the Christ child, although his mouth construed a thoughtless and irreverent lie with the desire of manipulating the plans of the Magi.

What is your plan this Christmas? Will you only give him your lip service? Will you say that He is Lord while acting in quite a different manner? Will you worship Him with only your mouth, or will your heart and your life join in the high praise He deserves?

The star led the Magi to the light of the world! The wise men did not need the advice or navigation powers of King Herod and his best men; they just needed to follow the Light of the World.

When the magnificent star stopped the Magi in their wealthy tracks, the Bible says that these learned men, “rejoiced with exceedingly great joy” (Matt. 2:10b, NKJV). And what a celebration began that night!

Only five words: “rejoiced with exceedingly great joy,” yet what richness their brevity holds. These five simple words are some of the most expressive words in all of Scripture.

“Rejoiced” is translated as “let the hope of future blessedness give you joy!” This word communicates to all of us, from every generation and at every moment in all of recorded history, that because of the baby born in the manger, we can look ahead not with dread and worry but with hope and expectation. When you encounter Jesus, there is reason to rejoice because of the many blessings headed in your direction.

“Exceedingly” is defined as “greatly” or even “violently” or “vehemently.”

These first-century professorial types did not just quietly bow down with their scholarly hands clasped in front of their wise faces. The joy that they experienced in the presence of Jesus was an explosion of joy that knocked their mortarboards off their wizened heads!

The joy of Jesus rocked their academic world. These men were

jumping up and down because after years of study, after decades of hitting dead-ends as to the meaning of life, after a lifetime of frustrating nothingness, they had found the Creator of this miraculous universe. They had at long last discovered the answer to all of their unanswerable questions, and they had now been able to discern the wisdom of the ages in a toddler's sweet babble.

These erudite men were participating in a violent explosion of joy. The joy that Jesus delivers into your life should shake some things up a bit.

"Great" in this sentence means "with great effort of the affections and emotions of the mind." It is significant that this particular definition of the word "great" includes the word for "mind." The Magi were men of scrolls and cerebral intensity; at the moment this star stopped in the presence of Jesus, all they had ever learned or studied paled in comparison to this one momentous event.

And finally, but far from least in meaning, the word "joy" is rich in depth and in texture because it is defined as "the blessedness that the Lord enjoys." When these pedantic men discovered the location of the baby boy, they also tapped into the mother lode of joy. They hit a vein so rich and generous in joy that it changed every detail, both large and small, concerning their impressive lives.

Every blessing that the Lord has, the Magi had, and now you have—because of Christmas. {eo}

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Seasons; Let There Be Joy!; Pass the Joy, Please!; Guide Your Mind, Guard Your Heart, Grace Your Tongue; and Stormproof, which releases on March 1, 2019. Her teaching DVD, The Rooms of a Woman's Heart, won the Telly Award, a prestigious industry award for excellence in religious programming. You can also listen to Carol's "Jolt of Joy" program daily on the Charisma Podcast Network. Connect with Carol or inquire about her speaking to your group at .