

DON'T BE AFRAID

You Can Trust God With Your Fears

**A look at God's message
to those participating in
the birth of our Lord.**

Lesson 5

Mission Arlington • Mission Metroplex Christmas Curriculum • 2010

5

What's Going to Happen?

Matthew 2:1-23

Flight to Egypt

Scriptures

Nahum 1:7-8
Psalm 139
Romans 8:28
Jeremiah 17:7

Memory Verse

So we say with confidence,
"The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid.
What can man do to me?"
(Hebrews 13:6 NIV)

Have you ever been afraid just because the people around you were afraid? How do you feel when you receive bad news? Do you worry about what might happen? Well, as we have said, fear and uncertainty surrounded the events of that first Christmas so long ago. The fear and uncertainty didn't end with Jesus' birth. Let's see what happened.

We have learned that Jesus was born in the town of Bethlehem in the region of Judea. Herod the Great was king of all Judea at this time. He had been appointed by the Roman rulers and was called the King of the Jews because many Jews lived in Judea.

"After Jesus' birth, Wise Men from the east came to Jerusalem. They asked, 'Where is the child who has been born to be king of the Jews? When we were in the east, we saw His star. Now we have come to worship Him.'" (Matthew 2:1b-2 NIV)

This news upset King Herod. King Herod was a mean, violent man. And when King Herod was upset, everyone in Jerusalem was upset! King Herod wanted to know as much as he could about this birth, so he called the Jewish leaders to come to him. "He asked them where the Christ was going to be born." (Matthew 2:4b NIV)

They knew exactly what the Scriptures said about the birth of the Christ. These leaders, as well as all the other Jews, had been waiting many years for the Christ, the One God had promised to send. The leaders quoted the prophet Micah (5:2) when they told Herod that the Christ would be born in Bethlehem.

Then, King Herod came up with a plan. He "called for the Wise Men secretly. He found out from them exactly when the star appeared." (Matthew 2:7 NIV) He sent the Wise Men on to Bethlehem to find the Child they were looking for, Jesus. Herod wanted a report from them once this happened. He pretended to want to worship the Child, too.

The Wise Men left Jerusalem. "The star they had seen when they were in the east went ahead of them. It finally stopped over the place where the Child was." (Matthew 2:9 NIV) The Wise Men were excited to have found the place. By this time, Joseph, Mary, and Jesus were living in a house in Bethlehem and it was this house that the Wise Men entered. They saw Jesus there with His mother, Mary. They bowed down and worshipped Him. Then, they opened their treasures and they gave Him gifts. The gifts were gold, frankincense (incense), and myrrh.

Application

Just as Herod set himself up as an enemy of the young Jesus, you have an enemy as well. 1 Peter 5:8 tells us that our enemy, the devil, is like a roaring lion. He's vicious. He wants to destroy you. Scripture also tells us that, when we choose to follow Jesus, God in us is greater than the devil.

Our memory verse says that if God helps us what could we possibly have to be afraid of. In our lesson, we saw Joseph and Mary's earlier fears replaced by a confidence in God. Do you trust God? Have you chosen to follow Him? If not, what's stopping you? Take that step of faith today. And if you have chosen to follow God, won't you walk in faith, trusting Him, even when you don't understand?

The Wise Men had done exactly what they came to do, so they headed back. "But God warned them in a dream not to go back to Herod. So they returned to their country on a different road." (Matthew 2:11 NIV) The Wise Men weren't the only ones who had dreams. God warned Joseph in a dream as well. God sent an "angel of the Lord" who told him to get up and take Jesus and His mother to Egypt. They were to stay there until God told them to return. God even told Joseph why he needed to escape. The angel said, "Herod is going to search for the Child. He wants to kill Him." (Matthew 2:13b NIV)

Joseph obeyed God. He got up from his dream and that very night he escaped with Jesus and His mother Mary. They left for Egypt and stayed there until King Herod died, because when Herod realized that the Wise Men were not coming back to report to him, he was furious. Herod gave orders to kill all the boys two years old and under in Bethlehem and the surrounding area.

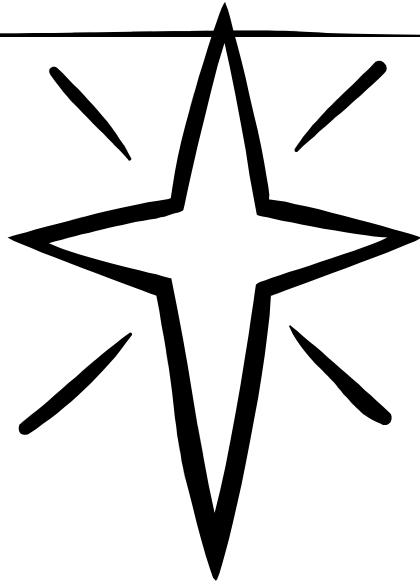
"After Herod died, Joseph had a dream while he was still in Egypt." (Matthew 2:19a NIV) An angel of the Lord told Joseph that it was okay to go back to the "land of Israel," but because Herod's son was ruling in Judea, they went back to the land of Galilee where Joseph and Mary had lived before Jesus' birth. That is why Jesus grew up in Nazareth.

Over the last few weeks, we have been talking about fear and uncertainty. What's amazing about this lesson, though, is that the fear and uncertainty here can't be seen in Joseph or Mary. They have seen God work in their lives in ways they never imagined possible. The fear in this lesson is Herod's. He's afraid of a new ruler, afraid of losing power and control.

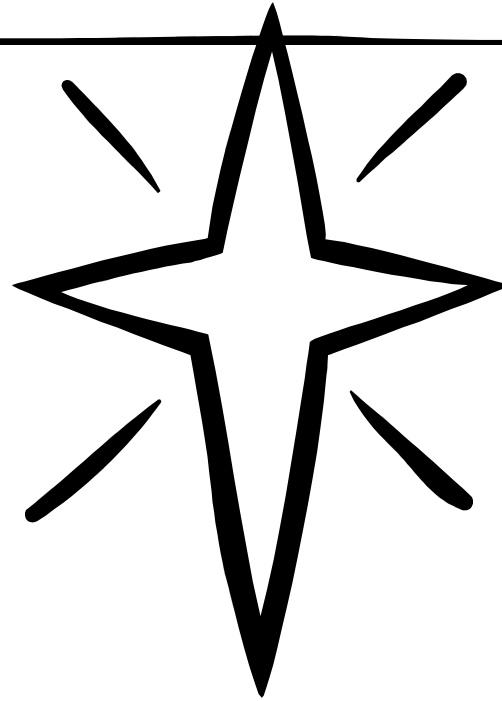
Can you see God's hand of protection on those who are being obedient? When you love God and choose to obey Him, you don't have to fear what the future may or may not hold. God is aware of everything that happens to us, before it happens. If, like the Wise Men, you will worship God and if, like Joseph, you will put your trust in the One who holds the future, who sees the first from the last, and who is worthy of your trust and confidence, you will also experience God's hand of protection on your life. That doesn't mean that nothing bad will ever happen to you. It does mean that there is the reward of blessings for an obedient life. Will you choose to trust God to redeem your past (Romans 8:28) and to direct your future (Psalm 139)? He alone is worthy of that trust.

Activities

- **Memory Verse Activity:** Repeat the memory verse like a chant. Choose someone to say a phrase of the verse at a time with the class repeating the phrase loudly. Chant the verse several times. Change leaders and repeat.
- Sing or listen to Babbie Mason's song "Trust His Heart." It talks about trusting God's plan, even when we can't see how it will work out. Discuss this in light of the lesson.
- Make 3-D stars or other star crafts as a reminder of the star that led the Wise Men to Jesus.
- Make small houses out of boxes. Play act the arrival of the Wise Men and their worship of Jesus.
- Make Egyptian bracelets or other Egyptian crafts to remember the time Jesus spent there.
- **Dig Deeper:** Why did King Herod choose to kill all the babies from birth to two years old? Read Matthew 2:7, 16. Herod made this choice based on information from the Wise Men about when they saw the star. If the Child's birth coincided with the appearance of the star, then Jesus could have been two years old by this time.
- **Dig Even Deeper:** Read through Matthew 2 and make a note of the times when the Scripture states "what the prophet has written" or "in this way, the words of the prophet came true." Talk about God's faithfulness to complete what He promises. Talk about His trustworthiness.



**So we say with confidence,
"The Lord is my helper;
I will not be afraid.
What can man do to me?"
Hebrews 13:6**



**The Lord is my helper;
I will not be afraid.
What can man do to me?
Hebrews 13:6**

Word Search

s d t p y g e o t e p a c s e
a i m e h e l h h e b l r r e
f r a n k i n c e n s e e r p
i e p r u z t d y n i g e m n
a p o l s a e o w u n z h c e
g o o d n h w r o o r a l l m
f a y a r e h e r n a p e r e
a g b r c t n h s n e l y o s
e r y y a h n g h a e r a f i
b m a e r d a n i d e n r a w
t y o z s l h i p l a h p o v
o t a u f o r k p e m p l r a
n e s a d g a g e g o p l o d
o j e s u s a n d m a r y o g
j h p e s o j d n a y r a m p

Wise Men

King Herod

Jesus and Mary

they worshipped

gold

frankincense

myrrh

warned in dream

escape to Egypt

Word Search

s d t p y g e o t e p a c s e
 a i m e h e l h h e b l r r e
 f r a n k i n c e n s e e r p
 i e p r u z t d y n i g e m n
 a p o l s a e o w u n z h c e
 g o o d n h w r o o r a l l m
 f a y a r e h e r n a p e r e
 a g b r c t n h s n e l y o s
 e r y y a h n g h a e r a f i
 b m a e r d a n i d e n r a w
 t y o z s l h i p l a h p o v
 o t a u f o r k p e m p l r a
 n e s a d g a g e g o p l o d
 o j e s u s a n d m a r y o g
 j h p e s o j d n a y r a m p

Wise Men

King Herod

Jesus and Mary

they worshipped

gold

frankincense

myrrh

warned in dream

escape to Egypt

Word Search

b e t w o r s h i p
y o b e a i d r u y
r g o l d i f i e d
e y o m y r r h e r
h e a r a i a m i d
s h w i s e m e n a
y o u r y p r a e r
d o n i n c e n s e
b a y o u r g o d h
j e s u s e a r d e

Wise Men

worship

Jesus

gold

incense

myrrh

Word Search

b e t w o r s h i p
y o b e a i d r u y
r g o l d i f i e d
e y o m y r r h e r
h e a r a i a m i d
s h w i s e m e n a
y o u r y p r a e r
d o n i n c e n s e
b a y o u r g o d h
j e s u s e a r d e

Wise Men

worship

Jesus

gold

incense

myrrh