

# December 2000: A Christmas Twist

by Aaron Greenway

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## Outside the Palace Walls

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“What do you want?” the palace guard shouted as he peered at three strangers through the tiny hole in the palace gate.

“We are here to see the King,” one of them shouted back.

“Who are you?” responded the guard.

The second one stepped forward. “We are from the East. And we have some information that the King might be interested in.”

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## Inside the Palace

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“What’s for dinner?” the King asked. He had finally started reading the Judean Daily News that day. “Oh brother, another story on that star!” he said, “My astrologers have tried to come up with every possible explanation . . . and nothing.”

“Sugar with your coffee, sir?”

“Just put it right here. I’ll put it in myself.”

At that moment, the palace guard came running in. “Your highness. Your highness. I beg your forgiveness, but—”

“What have I told you about intruding on my dinner?! Huh?!” the King shot back, “I ought to have you hanged.”

“Please forgive me, His Royal Excellency, but there are three rich foreigners outside the gates who have information about that star you’ve been so interested in.”

At that moment, the King who had reached down to take a sip of his coffee stopped. A sly, thoughtful grin formed in the creases of his lips. “Is this some sort of joke?” he asked.

The guard, face down on the ground, in a muffled whisper, said, "I would never joke, sir! They have come a long way and wish to speak with you about the matter of this star."

"What could three idiots from the East have to say about this star. We've studied it and have come up with nothing. They best just go right back where they came from," the King said taking a careful sip of his coffee.

"I will be sure to tell them that and send them on their way then, His Royal Highness." The guard added, "Besides, perhaps the mighty Caesar would be more interested in learning the meaning of this star, the coming of a new king. I can send them to Rome."

At that moment, King Herod almost slipped out of his chair, "What! Bring them in! Bring them in!"

"Yes sir!" The palace guard answered as he ran off to bring in the three Asian foreigners.

A moment later, the three stepped into the presence of the King. They were wet from the evening rain as they had walked many miles. As they dried themselves off, they said "We've come a long way, your Highness."

"For what? A star?" the King mocked, "Our magicians and astrologers have been on top of this thing from day one. What information could you possibly have?"

The Easterners answered with a question, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him."

The King fell silent at that moment and looked at the three men in disbelief. After a pause, the King instructed that the Wise Men be put in the guest room and fed while he consulted with the chief priests and scribes that he had on hand.

"Where is this King to be born?" he asked frantically.

"In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet, 'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, Are not the least among the rulers of Judah; For out of you shall come a Ruler who will shepherd My people Israel.'"

The King thought for a moment. He was filled with fear, knowing that he had to do something to put an end to this threat to his throne. So he called back the visitors, asked them what time the star had appeared and then, with his biggest, warmest smile, said, "Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found Him, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also."

The three bowed low to the ground and then departed. Once they were outside the palace

gate, the King's fake smile turned to a sneer. He threw his coffee across the room, smashing the cup, and screamed, "NO ONE THREATENS ME! NO ONE! I WANT THAT CHILD DEAD!!"

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Two Weeks Later

The King was pacing the floor when the captain of the guard came in. "What's the news?" the King asked.

"There's no sign of the child or the three men. They have disappeared into nothing, Sir."

"WHAT! You bumbling Idiot! I cannot get you to do anything right, can I?!" Herod stormed, "Alright! Time for Plan B. If you hope to save your neck, you are to go out and put to death all males age two and under."

"Right away, Sir!" the guard trembled.

The King got up and got in the guard's face, "Remember!....It's your neck!"

The guard ran off stumbling as he went.

And so, children all over Judean, under the age of two, were slaughtered. But the King of the Jews, Jesus Christ, had been taken by his parents to Egypt until the King was dead.

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In this story sketch of the Matthew 2:1-19 we have seen King Herod threatened by the birth of our Savior. He tried to have Jesus murdered and yet God, in His providence, would not allow it.

If we are righteous, we have the assurance that God will have the final word and any attack from the Enemy can be overcome by the power of the Spirit of God. We can take comfort in knowing that God will not be mocked, fooled or manipulated.

If we are in Herod's camp, challenging and defying the God of this universe, then it is just a matter of time before we are exposed and defeated. The Kingdom of God came right under the nose of the King, right under the nose of Jesus' enemies. Not even Herod could squelch God's redemption plan. Jesus Christ would be victorious.

In summary, no matter how the circumstances look, we do not have to defend ourselves when God said that He would fight for us (Exodus 14:14). We can lean on the truth that God's sovereign will not be thwarted but rather be carried out in the present and for all eternity.