

MESSAGE SUMMARY

In Matthew 2:1–8, you see two very different responses to the news of Jesus' birth. Herod hears about a newborn King and responds with fear, control, and hostility. The Wise Men hear the same message and respond with humility, joy, and worship. Their reactions show you something important: the struggle for peace isn't new. It has always been part of the human story.

Real peace, biblical shalom, doesn't come from having a calm life, a perfect Christmas, or everything under control. Peace comes when Jesus rules in your heart as King. When you stop fighting for your own kingdom and start surrendering to His, His peace begins to shape your thoughts, emotions, and choices. Jesus didn't come to decorate your holiday; He came to direct your life.

MAIN POINTS

Big Idea: Jesus should direct your life, not just decorate your holiday.
(Real peace comes when Jesus rules your heart.)

1. Peace is not the absence of conflict, but rather, peace is the presence of Christ expressed in and through the life of a believer. (John 14:26–27; Colossians 3:15; Romans 5:1)
2. Herod tried to sustain his personal kingdom and experienced panic. The wise men surrendered to the true King, Jesus and experienced peace. (Matthew 2:1–8,10,11,16; James 4:6; Psalm 2:1-12)

Category	Herod's Response	Wise Men's Response
Heart:	Hostile	Humble
Motivation:	Self-preservation	Surrender
Attitude:	Jealousy	Joy
Action:	Fight for Control	Follow the Star
Posture:	War	Worship
Outcome:	Panic	Peace

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Where are you most tempted to act like Herod and try to stay in control? Possible Answer: you may try to control your schedule, relationships, image, or outcomes because you fear losing something important. The Lord invites you to trust Him instead (Proverbs 3:5–6).

2. What is one area of your life where you need to surrender to Jesus this Christmas season? Possible Answer: You may need to surrender your worry, your time, your expectations, or a specific sin. Surrender leads to peace because Jesus is your peace (Ephesians 2:14).

3. How can you intentionally seek Christ instead of seeking control or comfort this week? Possible Answer: You might spend time in Scripture, pray before making decisions, repent of a controlling attitude, or worship with focus and gratitude. When you seek Christ first, peace follows (Matthew 6:33).

GOSPEL CONNECTION

The Christmas story reminds you that Jesus came not just to inspire you but to save you. Herod fought to keep his throne, but the Wise Men bowed before the One who truly deserves it. You face the same choice every day: resist Jesus or surrender to Him.

If you are already a believer, you are invited again to repent of the areas where you cling to control, fear, or self-reliance. Jesus is your peace, and His Spirit will help you follow Him with trust and joy.

If you are not yet a believer, Jesus invites you to turn from your sin, lay down your attempts to rule your own life, and trust Him as Savior and King. He lived the perfect life you couldn't live, died the death you deserved, and rose again to give you peace with God forever (Rom. 5:1).

This Christmas, you are called to surrender to the One who came for you. When Jesus rules your heart, His peace fills your life.

DAILY DEVOTIONS

Please see our **Advent Devotionals** through December 25, 2025.