

Sorrow Not

Matthew 2:1-12 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, ² saying, "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." ³ When Herod the king heard *this*, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴ And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. ⁵ So they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet: ⁶ '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.'" ⁷ Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared. ⁸ And he sent them to Bethlehem and 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." ⁹ When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. ¹¹ And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹² Then, being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way.

^{NKJ} Proverbs 29:4 The king establishes the land by justice, But he who receives bribes overthrows it.

When the true king reigns, the people rejoice.

It seems like for the past 15 years the news is constantly talking about refugees. Libya, Sudan, Syria, south America, eastern Europe, half the world is trying to get away from their own land and find a different nation with a different king. They are discontent with their leaders, and they have good reason to be. They are seeking a better land.

It is easy for us to be unappreciative and discontent with our leaders over little things. It's easy for us to forget how lucky we are. It is easy to forget how many blessings come from the Lord through our government even if they are not exactly righteous people. Our land is not without its problem to be sure but so much better than the lands these people are fleeing from. These leave behind lands filled with war and violence and rejoice if they are able to find their way to Europe or America or Canada. They rejoice to find a better "king."

In the same way we might forget and be unappreciative of the joy that is ours because Jesus is our King. The wisemen left their land and traveled far to find a newborn king and when they did, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. We often forget to rejoice that this king is ours and has been ours since birth.

Psalm 72:2-3 ² He will judge Your people with righteousness, And Your poor with justice. ³ The mountains will bring peace to the people, And the little hills, by righteousness.

Sorrow Not, Rejoice, Jesus is your king.

In our text the people of Jerusalem trembled with fear because their king was Herod. But the wisemen rejoiced with exceedingly great joy because their king was Jesus.

King Herod was an Edomite, a descendant of Esau not of Jacob. He was a cousin to the people of Jacob, the people of Israel, but was not himself an Israelite. He was not an Israelite much less a descendant of David. He had no right to rule Israel but gained the throne by force and cunning. Having gained the throne he tried to win the people over with bribes and with force. Having gained the throne by the sword, he ruled by the sword. He did not have the hearts of the people, therefore there was much sorrow.

Jesus was of the line of David the true king. He was born in the city of David, Bethlehem. Testimony was given, by the star, that he was the true king. He was the son of Mary and the adopted son of Joseph.

Being the true king, chosen by the Father, of the line of David Jesus did not and does not rule by force or fear. The wisemen didn't just give presents to Jesus, they gave their hearts to Jesus. He rules in the hearts of his people and thus there is great rejoicing for God's people when Jesus rules as king.

Sorrow Not, Rejoice, Jesus is your king.

Herod gave them everything they could ask for. A great grand temple, a strong fortified land, with a well-trained army, prosperity and wealth. By all accounts outwardly he was a great king and Israel prospered under his hand.

What does Jesus offer? Forgiveness of sins, eternal life, the knowledge of truth. Yet the wisemen rejoiced greatly and the people of Jerusalem trembled with fear.

The same is true in our day. Our government gives welfare, and riches and prosperity such as no nation in the world has ever known. Yet suicide and depression and violence and discontent grow and increase like a disease in our nation. Everything that people could think that they want from a government or a king our nation gives. Yet it is never enough. If you seek joy in earthly prosperity, you will never be satisfied.

Ecc 5:10 He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves abundance with its income.

Even though they hated Herod, even though they knew the place of Jesus birth, even though they heard about the star announcing his birth, still the people of Jerusalem did not seek out Jesus. If they did not want Herod, they did want his wealth, and there was no room in their hearts for another King.

But the wisemen desired nothing but Jesus as their king. They searched him out from a much greater distance. Jesus offers the forgiveness of sins and eternal life, these are the things that make for our joy.

Sorrow Not, Rejoice Jesus is your king.

There are different kinds of joy. There is the joy of falling in love. The joy of pie or cheesecake. Or the joy of a sunny summer day by the lake. There is also the more subtle and long-lasting joy of living in a land with a good king in days of peace.

Jesus is the true king, the king who rules in our hearts through love not by force, the king who gives peace and everlasting life and eternal joy. Sorrow Not, Jesus comes to rule in peace. Sorrow Not, Rejoice Jesus is your king.

⁵ "Behold, *the* days are coming," says the LORD, "That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; A King shall reign and prosper, And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. ⁶ In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell safely; Now this *is* His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. (Jer. 23:5-6 NKJ)