

GROUP DISCUSSION

Questions for facilitating dynamic discussion

The Villain of Christmas Week 1: Herod's Counterfeit Faith Matthew 2:1-8

November 26, 2023
Pastor Jeff Griffin

The first Christmas was almost ruined by an evil king, but God had other plans. Join us in a study of the biblical events surrounding the infamous Herod and his attempt to dethrone the King of Kings.

Kicking It Off: If you were to commission an epic structure named after someone you admire, where would you build it? And in whose honor?

Discussion:

1. Set the scene. Based on the message and Matthew 2, what were some highlights you remember learning about King Herod? What was his connection to Rome and Julius Caesar?

"After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, 'Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.' When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him." (Matthew 2:1-3, NIV)

2. Scripture and Pastor Jeff affirmed that King Herod was a paranoid madman. What did Herod think of Jesus when he learned of His existence from the Magi?
3. This week, we learned how Jesus came to earth to take authority of the Universe and run Herod's life — and ours. How do you feel about that? Why do you think we humans might struggle to completely trust Jesus on the throne of our lives? In what ways do *you* find it challenging?
4. On the other hand, how is it a potential gift to have someone else bear the weight and responsibility of running the world, as shown in Isaiah 9:6?

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." (NIV)

5. How could the descriptors of having a wonderful counselor, a mighty God, an everlasting Father, and a Prince of Peace bring us confidence that God can empower us to keep doing whatever He's asked of us?
6. If you were to encourage a friend to "resign" as the manager of the Universe this week, what might look different in their life? How can this new role potentially bring out joy?

Wrapping Up: Giving God control doesn't always come naturally. But it can yield huge benefits. What's one area of your life that could use help in navigating the burdens of responsibility you're facing? How can your group support and pray for you in order to help release some of that stress?

"But the people who know their God shall be strong and do great things." (Daniel 11:32b, TLB)