

The King has come

Announcer: Good morning and welcome to 'What's up Bethlehem!' – the greater Bethlehem area's number two cable morning show. (I swear someday we'll take over from BNN). You're going to want to stay tuned to our program because later on, we're going to give you five mind-blowing tips for making your unleavened bread pudding really pop this holiday season. But first, our top story. Citizens of Bethlehem awoke to a surprise on Monday morning when an entourage of kings and retainers appeared on the main streets of our fair city. Bethlehem has never seen such a display of wealth and power – they have gold and diamonds and camels and servants. The people of our fair city are absolutely star-struck by these impressive looking royals. For more information, we go now to 'What's up Bethlehem!' correspondent Wif Wilbur, live on the scene. Wif, what's it like out there?

Wif – Absolutely amazing Joe. The buzz in the air is absolutely electric. Nobody's gonna call us 'Sleepy Bethlehem' any more!

Announcer – That's amazing Wif. It truly is. It looks like a magnificent spectacle down there. Now, I understand that you've been able to arrange an interview with one of the kings; are they able to speak with you now.

Wif – Yes, just a moment (*calling off camera*) – Your Majesty, Your Majesty! We're ready for you now.

Magi – (*appearing on camera*) – Well, you really don't have to call my majesty – I'm actually more of a philosopher than a king. Just call me Melky (*'short for Melchior'*).

Wif – You got it, King Melky! And I just have to say, thank you so much for taking time out of your very busy schedule to talk to me today. I know that you have very important things that you need to get to on your royal schedule. So tell me, what brings you to our fair city of Bethlehem?

Magi – Well, as I say, I'm not a king, I'm more of a scientist and my colleagues and I have been interested in what the stars can tell us about the things that are happening on earth. We've been watching the sky for some time now and about two years back, we saw a magnificent star in the sky. We believe that this star is the star belonging to the new king of Israel.

Wif – The king, you say? So this is a royal visit?

Magi – Yes, I suppose so. We've come from our nation to honour this newborn king whom the heavens have announced.

Wif – (*looking confused*) That's incredible, but, why Bethlehem? Wouldn't the king be born in Jerusalem?

Magi – Well, that's what we thought too and so when we first arrived, we went straight to Jerusalem for an audience with your king Herod. We went to him and said - "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him." (Mat 2:2 NIV). Herod seemed a little surprised, a little confused by that, but being the magnanimous ruler that he is, he quickly put his people to work finding the baby. The chief

priests and teachers of the Law looked into the holy books and found that the prophet had written - " 'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, ... out of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel.' " (Mat 2:6 NIV).

Wif – (*looking a little stunned*) Bethlehem, hunh? A king... from Bethlehem?

Magi – Yes, indeed. So with Herod’s blessing, we left Jerusalem and came here to Bethlehem. When we arrived here in Bethlehem, we could find no room in the inns – but fortunately, we brought our own pavilions with us.

Wif – (*inwardly, as if agreeing to himself*) No room in the inn, hunh? Yeah, city council should really do something about that. (*Attention back to camera*) So, now that you are here, your majesty, what exactly do you plan to do? Are you planning to form an alliance with this newborn king? Are you going to make him a puppet ruler under your superior lordship?

Magi – Oh! Heavens no! This is the KING we’re talking about here. We have come to worship HIM! All of these riches you see, they are for Him, to honour one so marvellous as Him.

Wif – (*Looking confused*) – For Him? All this for the baby? But you guys are KINGS – legit Kings! You’re rich, you’re famous, you’ve got wealth and power and status – and you’re giving it over to him? A baby?

Magi – This is not just any king – this is the king God promised. He has come to rescue His people, to give life to His people. He deserves all this and more. Now, if you’ll excuse me, we really need to go find him.

Wif – Yes, certainly, your Majesty. Thank you. I wish you all the best with your endeavour! You heard it here first folks – Kings have come to Bethlehem! Back to you Joe!

Announcer – Yes, thank you Wif! What an amazing story. Kings come to Bethlehem! All those riches in the world in our little town. Wow. Now, to get another angle on the story, we’ve sent another of our correspondents to the palace in Jerusalem to see how King Herod is reacting to the news. Martha Merriwether, are you there?

Martha – Yes, indeed, I am, thanks Joe!

Announcer – Great, thanks Martha. Martha, what’s the mood like at the palace there? It must be very exciting for Herod to have these royal dignitaries coming to see him.

Martha – Yes, one would think that Joe and yet Herod does not seem too pleased. I’ve got him right here for comment. Your majesty, your majesty – Martha Merriwether, What’s up Bethlehem – would you care to comment on the arrival of kings in Jerusalem?

Herod – (*looking sourly at her and the camera*) I am NOT happy.

Martha – But sir, this visit from royals will surely increase your prestige in Rome?

Herod – (*shaking his head*) – No, fake news. This is nothing but trouble.

Martha – what do you mean, sir?

Herod – Look, my grasp on power is tenuous enough – and then these ... (*looking for the word*) ... magi! Show up and overshadow me in a moment! All that gold and incense and myrrh – that should be mine!

Martha – Yes, your majesty – it does seem a little strange that the king was not born in *your* palace.

Herod – A *little* strange!? You think? I don't know where these foreign hippies get off thinking they can just waltz in a crown a new king. I'M the king here. I'VE spent a lot just to get here. There's no way I'm giving that up to some – nobody! The only king worthy of honour is me!

Martha – (*looking a little nervous*) – Yes sir. So what do you plan to do about it?

Herod – (*looking devious, rubbing his hands*) Well, I told those 'wise men' to go to find the child and then bring back news to me, so that I could go and 'worship' him. But I'm telling you – I'm going to go and put an end to this problem once and for all. (*getting increasingly worked up*) Nip it in the bud. Crack the egg before it hatches. (*grasping for a proverb*) A stitch in time saves nine. There's only one king worthy of honour in Jerusalem and that's ME, king Herod! And I'll tell you another thing – no foreigners are going to tell me who can rule and who can't! When I get my hands on that child... (*keep mouthing words as ANNOUNCER mutes HEROD*).

Announcer – Ok, that's just about enough from King Herod. And while we have this break in the action, let me just remind you to like and subscribe to What's up Bethlehem and if you hang a bell outside your home, we will come around and ring it to notify you every time we post more news. It's a very modern system. (*holding his ear, as if hearing through an earpiece*) Oh, this just in, the kings have found the baby and Wif Wilbur is there on the scene to tell us what the kings are going to do. Wif, what's going on down there?

Wif – Well, Joe, it's unlike anything I've ever seen. These powerful, rich and influential men are getting down on one knee and bowing to a baby. This just doesn't make any sense to me! Hold on, I see King Melky coming out – I'll see if I can get a word from him. King Melky, King Melky! Just a moment of your time?

Magi – (*clearly awestruck from being in Jesus' presence*) Not king, just Melchior.

Wif – Sorry, your majesty, sir. What's going on in there?

Magi – (*a little introspective*) That's the king in there. THE king. The Messiah that YHWH promised to His people. The ruler who will lead His land with justice and grace. The King who will rescue His people from sin. (*pointing*) That's Him!

Wif – I'm sorry, I don't follow. You're the king here! Herod maybe. But that? That's just a baby!

Magi – (*exasperated*) That's not just a baby. That's the King of all Creation.

Wif – Right (*as in ‘yeah right’*), and you just gave Him all of your possessions? Gold and incense and myrrh? That’s a fortune! A fortune fit for a king, not a baby! He needs a blankie, not a crown! You’re the most important one here!

Magi – You’re missing the point. The big news here is not that (*playing along*) ‘we kings’ have come; the big news is that THE KING has come. Not that ‘the kings’ have arrived; THE KING has arrived. The Messiah, Jesus, God with us.

Wif – I...I... (*at a loss for words*)

Magi – Go see for yourself. That baby is the King that deserves your attention.

Wif – (*back to camera*) – Joe, I need a minute to go see what’s up. This is Wif Wilbur from What’s up Bethlehem signing off. Back to you Joe.

We can be kind of like the news people, can’t we? We get distracted by impressive things – riches, power, influence, celebrity. We start to look at the world according to the world’s values. But Jesus’ birth – His practically anonymous unimpressive appearance in a backwater town – reminds us that the world’s values are not God’s. Glory and honour and strength are not found in power but in weakness. The first shall be last and the last shall be first and the High King of Heaven laid down His life to lie in a manger, to die on the Cross, to rise again – the High King of Heaven came to be the servant of all.

*6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,  
7 but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.  
8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death-- even death on a cross! (Phi 2:6-8 NIV).*

These are God’s values ... at play in Jesus’ birth. These are God’s values and we need to make them our own.

I’ll never forget the first time I read Romans 12:15&16 in my little Living Bible - 15 When others are happy, be happy with them. If they are sad, share their sorrow. 16 *Work happily together. Don’t try to act big. Don’t try to get into the good graces of important people, but enjoy the company of ordinary folks. And don’t think you know it all!*

That really challenged me. ‘Don’t try to get into the good graces of important people, but enjoy the company of ordinary folk.’ Don’t be impressed by power and appearance and wealth. Don’t get hung up on celebrity and popularity. Instead, look in the manger; look at the Cross; let God’s Nativity values become your own and judge the world by HIS standards.

The Humble King deserves our attention.