



# The Wise Men Worship Jesus

*Matthew 2:1-18*



## LESSON GOAL

Students will worship Jesus as the promised King.

## BIBLE TRUTHS

- God sent His Son, just as He promised.
- Wise men worshiped Jesus and gave Him gifts.
- Herod did not want there to be another king.
- Herod tried to have Jesus killed.
- God protected Jesus.

## KEY VERSE

“And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him” (Matthew 2:11).

## APPLICATION

- Believe that Jesus is the Son of God and the Savior.
- Trust God to do what He has promised.
- Worship Jesus by being humble and giving to others.

### Symbol Key



Craft



Finger Play



Memory Verse



Object Lesson



Game



Visual Aid



Center



Activity



Q & A



Age Group



## PREPARE WITH THE TRUTH

*“Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul,... You shall teach them to your children” (Deuteronomy 11:18–19).*

Please take time to prepare your mind and heart to accurately handle the truths of God’s Word (2 Tim. 2:15). Read through the Bible background and study the truths contained in this lesson. Crucial background information is included here to aid you in understanding the Scripture.

### Bible Background

In 2 Samuel 7:8–16, God promised David that one of his descendants would reign on the throne of Israel forever. This promise would start with his son, Solomon. However, David’s descendants lost the throne to the Babylonians and never fully regained it. After Babylon, other countries ruled over the region of Israel. The promise given to David had never been fulfilled. The people of Israel waited for a king from the tribe of Judah and the house of David to deliver them. The name they gave to this promised king was “Messiah” or “Anointed One.” In Greek, the word was “Christ.” The people had been waiting for a Messiah for over 400 years. Matthew the apostle wrote a book about the life of Christ the King that we know as the Gospel of Matthew. Because many Jews did not believe that Jesus was the Christ, Matthew had to prove to them that Jesus was the promised King.

There was another group who also were waiting for the Messiah. These were the Jews who lived in Babylon. Most Israelites did not go back to Israel at the end of the captivity. They stayed in Babylon and other cities. Many of these Jews had a strong influence on the people around them. Many of the scholars and elders in Babylon learned about the true God. Not all of them followed Him, but some looked to the Bible as a source of true wisdom. These men often are called “magi.” They thought that they could get messages from the stars and the Bible. They became wealthy and influential men. It is unlikely that any of these men exercised true faith. But God had mercy on them and led a few of them to visit and worship the Messiah when he was born.

#### Matthew 1:18–23

The time had indeed come. Rome was ruling the known world, and Israel was occupied by a Roman king. The Messiah came from an unlikely place in unlikely circumstances. Joseph, a descendant of David, was living in Nazareth. He was legally engaged to a woman named Mary. Mary became pregnant, and Joseph knew that the baby was not his. So he decided to quietly divorce her. However, before he went through with it, an angel came to him and said in Matthew 1:20, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.” He called Joseph “son of David,” which referred to him as being in the royal line. Jesus then, though not the biological son of Joseph, was his legal son and therefore was worthy to be a king.

Jesus was not going to be an ordinary king. In Matthew 1:21, the angel said of Mary, “And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.” This was not going to be just a political king, but a Savior as well. This was not going to be any ordinary king.

#### Matthew 2:1–12

After Jesus was born, a group of men from the east came to visit Jesus. These men were called wise men. They probably came from Persia, an area the Romans did not

### Additional Reference Materials

*The MacArthur Study Bible* by John MacArthur

For further study concerning the possible origin and history the wise men, refer to pages 99–114 of *The Miracle of Christmas* by John MacArthur.

control. They were wealthy traders and probably had great political influence in Persia. They believed that they could get messages from God through the stars. Most likely, they were also descendants from the Jews in Daniel's day. They were considered the wise men of the East. Using the stars to get messages from God was never endorsed by God, but God was gracious and gave the wise men one message. They saw a star from the east and somehow knew that the King of Israel had been born. Possibly, they knew of the prophecy of Numbers 24:17, which said that the Messiah star would appear. They set out to give gifts and respect to this new king. This process took them some time, and while they were on their way, the star disappeared and they went to Jerusalem, where King Herod was ruler. They expected to find Jesus in a palace, but they did not find Him there. They asked where the promised King of the Jews would be.

Herod was a minor king who had been appointed by Caesar. He did have significant power, however, and did not want to lose it to a local Jewish leader. Herod asked the priests where the Messiah was to have been born and secretly planned to kill Him. He asked the wise men at what time the star had appeared and then sent them to Bethlehem, the City of David.

The wise men began the short trip to Bethlehem. As soon as they set out again, the star appeared over Bethlehem and rested over the house where Jesus now lived. Jesus was a toddler by now and was not living in a great mansion or palace but in a house. When the wise men went into the house where Jesus was, they fell down and worshiped Him. They gave Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

### **Matthew 2:13–23**

The wise men had been warned in a dream to not tell Herod anything about the child, Jesus, and they returned to their own country by another route. Herod was furious and ordered all babies two years old and under to be killed. God warned Joseph in a dream to take Mary and Jesus to Egypt, where they could escape Herod's wrath. After Herod's death, they returned to Israel and eventually moved back to Joseph's hometown of Nazareth.

Jesus was the promised Messiah. He was from the line of David and came to earth to bring about a new kingdom. He was no ordinary king. He came from a humble family and was forced into exile when He was a toddler. His kingdom was not merely political, but was also spiritual. He fulfilled a promise to Abraham and David. His death and resurrection would pay the penalty for our sins and establish Him as the King of the universe. He will come back to rule the earth and finish the promise that He started.

Worship the King of heaven and earth. Just as the wise men bowed down to worship, we need to give humble praise and worship to God. Through our words, actions, and attitudes.

Trust the promises of God. The promise to Abraham took nearly 2,000 years to fulfill. We know that God will work things out in His timing. Jesus came to save us from our sin. We can be assured that He will come back to fulfill His promises and rule over all the earth.

## POINT TO THE TRUTH

*“Give ear, O my people, to my law; incline your ears to the words of my mouth”  
(Psalm 78:1).*

This section includes questions to review last week’s lesson and ideas to prepare students for this week’s lesson. Choose from the following ideas to point to the truths of this lesson.



### Review Questions

*Use these questions to review and reinforce key truths.*

Who were Zacharias and Elizabeth?

*Zacharias was a priest who served in the temple. Elizabeth was his wife. They were both old and could not have babies.*

An angel visited Zacharias in the temple. What did he say?

*He said that Elizabeth was going to have a baby. That baby would tell people about the Messiah.*

How did Zacharias respond, and why?

*He did not believe the angel. He thought he and his wife were too old to have a baby.*

What did the angel do to Zacharias?

*He made Zacharias unable to speak.*

What did they name the baby when he finally was born?

*John.*

What was John supposed to do?

*One day, he would tell the people to get ready for the Messiah.*



### Nativity Scene

It is always fun for the students to play with nativity figures. Bring in several sets, and let them act out what they will be hearing in the Bible lesson.



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### Gift Rolls

Roll a cardboard tube (or toilet-paper roll) with wrapping paper. Next, gather one end of the paper and tie it together with a ribbon. Fill the tube with candy, and then gather the other end of the wrapping paper and tie it with a ribbon. Add a tag. In today’s Bible lesson, some rich wise men traveled a long distance to bring gifts to the promised King of Israel. They brought their gifts to Jesus.



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### Smelling Center

In small plastic containers, place scented items or cotton balls soaked with scented liquids. Set five or six items on the table and have the students walk around and smell each item. Let students take turns smelling and identifying the smells. Let them vote on which smells they like best. If they like the smell, they can vote by placing a piece of paper in a cup above that item. Some suggestions



include: perfume or cologne, vanilla, peppermint, spices, chocolate, a sliced orange, bubble bath, soap, and leather. In today's Bible lesson, some wise men travel from far away to bring the King of the Jews gifts of sweet-smelling oils and incense. Jesus was the King of the Jews.

### Follow the Star

Stick some glow-in-the-dark stars securely to the floor so that they do not move. Lay several strands of Christmas lights along the outside of the stars, like a path. Turn the lights off in the classroom. Line up the students, with the first student using a flashlight to guide the others along the trail of stars. Have the students sing any of this week's songs as they pretend to be wise men following the path of stars. Alternate the leader so that all have the opportunity to use the flashlight and guide the line of happy wise-men singers.



### Gift-Wrap Star

Cut a large star from a piece of poster board. Help each student choose a handful of colored shapes cut from wrapping paper. Apply glue over a small portion of the star, and show the students how to press the wrapping-paper shapes onto the glue. Repeat until the star is covered on both sides with wrapping-paper shapes. When the students have finished, trim around the edges of the poster board to remove any wrapping paper that extends beyond the edges of the star. Punch a hole through the top of the star, and insert a yarn loop for hanging. The memory verse can be glued over the wrapping paper. Ask the students why there might be a star in today's lesson. Ask them to listen to see if they are correct.



### Christmas Music

Play a tape of Christmas songs while the students do one of the activities in this section.

## PROCLAIM THE TRUTH

*"Telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and His strength and His wonderful works that He has done" (Psalm 78:4).*

This section includes the Bible lesson, lesson questions, and praise and worship ideas. Song suggestions are included to use during worship time. Use the lesson questions to check the students' understanding. This section also includes various presentation ideas to use during the teaching time. Read the Bible passage several times before you read these pages. All teaching should be done directly from the Bible.

### Bible Lesson

God promised King David that his dynasty and his kingdom would last forever. King David died, and his son Solomon became king. If you look in the first chapter of Matthew, right here in the New Testament part of the Bible, it says, "David was the father of Solomon, and Solomon was the father of Rehoboam, and...Joseph was the husband of Mary, the mother of Jesus." God promised King David that the perfect, eternal King would come to Israel, and God kept His promise. That is why we celebrate Christmas.

Do you remember that an angel appeared to Joseph in a dream? He said, "Joseph, do not be afraid. Take Mary as your wife. She is going to have a son. You are to name Him Jesus because He will save His people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21). When Joseph woke up, he obeyed the angel's words and took Mary as his wife. Joseph and Mary trusted God and believed that He would keep His promise. God was going to send Jesus to be the king of His people, Israel. The special baby, the Son of God, was born one night in the town of Bethlehem, and the angels announced the good news to the shepherds who were taking care of their sheep in the fields.

God put a bright star in the sky as a sign that King Jesus had been born in Bethlehem. A long way from Bethlehem, in a town to the east of Israel, some men called wise men saw the bright star in the sky. These wise men knew all about stars, and they knew that this was a special star that meant something wonderful had happened. The wise men packed their bags, put on their best sandals, threw their packs on their camels, and rode toward the star. They traveled for days and months in the hot sun. They went through valleys and over rocky, sandy roads. They were excited because they knew that the star meant a king had been born in Israel. The wise men wanted to find the king and worship Him.

When the wise men arrived in Jerusalem, they went right to King Herod's palace because that is where they thought a king would be living. They found King Herod and said, "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" (Matt. 2:2). King Herod did not like what he was hearing. King Herod was a jealous king and wanted to know all about this new king. He called in the Bible teachers and asked them, "Where does it say in the Bible that the promised, eternal King will be born?"

The Bible teachers looked in the Old Testament book of Micah. They said to King Herod, "It says in the book of Micah that the promised King will be born in Bethlehem." The wise men went off to Bethlehem, a few miles away. The star led them right to Jesus' house. Mary and Joseph welcomed the wise men into their home. The wise men bowed down before young Jesus and worshiped the promised King of the Jews. The men opened the bags they had brought with them and gave Jesus their best gifts. They gave him treasures of gold and sweet-smelling incense. They knew He was the holy King of Israel. They wanted to give Him their best.

We can give our best to Jesus, too. First, we can give ourselves to Jesus and thank Him for coming to save us from our sins. We can worship Him by learning about Him in the Bible and by singing songs to Him. We can worship Jesus by obeying our parents and having a good attitude. We can worship Jesus by thanking Him for all the good things we have. We can tell our friends and neighbors about Jesus.

After the wise men left, an angel spoke to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up and take the Child and his mother to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you it is safe to come back. King Herod is going to search for the child and try to kill Him." God protected His son, Jesus, the promised King. Joseph and Mary obeyed God and traveled the many miles to Egypt. They stayed there until God sent an angel to tell them it was time to go back to Nazareth, where Jesus grew up.



## Lesson Questions

What promise did God keep when baby Jesus was born?

*God kept His promise to send a perfect King whose kingdom would last forever.*

Who came to worship King Jesus? Why did they come?

*Wise men came, following a star that appeared in the east.*

What did they offer Jesus when they got to His house?  
*They offered Him worship, along with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.*

Why did the angel tell Joseph to leave Bethlehem and take his family to Egypt?  
*The angel sent Jesus to Egypt because King Herod wanted to kill Him.*

How can we be like the wise men this Christmas?  
*By giving Jesus our worship and obedience, and by giving to others who are in need.*

## Presentation Ideas



### A Beka Book Flash-A-Cards

Use appropriate A Beka Book Flash-A-Cards with the lesson.



### Betty Lukens Flannelgraph

Use appropriate flannelgraph pieces with the lesson. Allow the students to play with the flannel board and all the characters they will hear about or have heard about in the lesson. Talk about what the different animals are, who the people are, and where they are. Encourage students to share the flannel pieces while working together to put the pieces on the flannel board.



### Wise Men in Robes

Select a number of students to play different parts in today's Bible lesson. Use sheets and robes for the costumes. Give each wise man a gift to leave with the baby Jesus when he visits. Narrate the lesson, and help the students act out the story. You may wish to tell a part of the story several times so that many students can participate.



### Gifts from the Wise Men

Put the following items inside a box: gold-foil-covered chocolates, a jar of sweet spice (frankincense), a bottle of perfume (myrrh), and slips of paper labeled "obedience," "praise," "adoration," "prayer," and "learning God's Word." Wrap the box as you would a present. Ask the students what they think is inside the present. Tell them that you have wrapped a gift for Jesus. Then, open the present and describe the gifts that the magi brought to Jesus, using the chocolates, perfume bottle, and spice jar to illustrate. Explain that in today's lesson, they will learn more about the wise men from the East and how they worshiped Jesus. At the end of the lesson, pull out the labeled slips one at a time and talk with the students about the things they can do to make Jesus happy.

## Praise and Worship

*Away in a Manger*

*Go, Tell It on the Mountain*

*The Little Drummer Boy*

*Trust and Obey*

*Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star*





## Wise Men Worship Jesus

Wise men from the east discovered a star.  
(Point to temple; then hold hand overhead and open and close fingers.)

They left their country and traveled afar.  
(Move arms and body in riding motion.)

The wise men found Jesus in Bethlehem town.  
(Hold hand over eyes as if looking into the distance; then point forward.)

And in joyful, humble worship bowed down.  
(Fold hands, close eyes, and bow head and body.)

Gifts they brought—gold, myrrh, and frankincense,  
(Pretend to tie a bow.)

To give to King Jesus as worshipful presents.  
(Pretend to hold box; extend hands forward.)

## PRACTICE THE TRUTH

*“That they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments” (Psalm 78:7).*

Choose ideas from this section to review and apply the truths of the Bible lesson.



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### A Gift for God

Materials: small boxes, scissors, tape, wrapping paper, curling ribbon, bows, large labels or tags reading “To: Jesus the King, Worthy of Worship.”

Directions: Make obedience coupons with the following sayings: “I will obey Mom,” “I will obey Dad,” “I will make my bed,” “I will clean my room,” “I will be kind to my brothers and sisters,” and “I will sing to Jesus.” Have the students put these coupons into boxes. Then allow each student to gift-wrap his box with paper, tape, ribbon, and bows. Attach a tag to remind them of today’s lesson.



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### Star of Wonder

Copy the star outline at the back of this lesson onto yellow cardstock. Have each student decorate a star with crayons or markers and star stickers, and then cut it out. Allow each student to punch several holes all over his star. Then hang it on a window or hold it up to a lamp to see the star light up from behind. The sun is a star. The other stars give light to us at night. This star reminds of two things. First, Jesus is the light of the world. Second, in today’s lesson, the wise men followed a star to Bethlehem to look for Jesus.



### Pin the Star on the Village

Tape a large piece of blue poster board (with the picture of a star glued on it) to the wall at a child’s eye-level. Give each student a large star sticker to glue or tape to the poster board. Have students recite the verse before they put the stars on the poster board.

## **Coloring Sheets**

Give each student a copy of the coloring sheets at the back of the lesson. The students can color the pages in class or at home.



## **MEMORY VERSE**

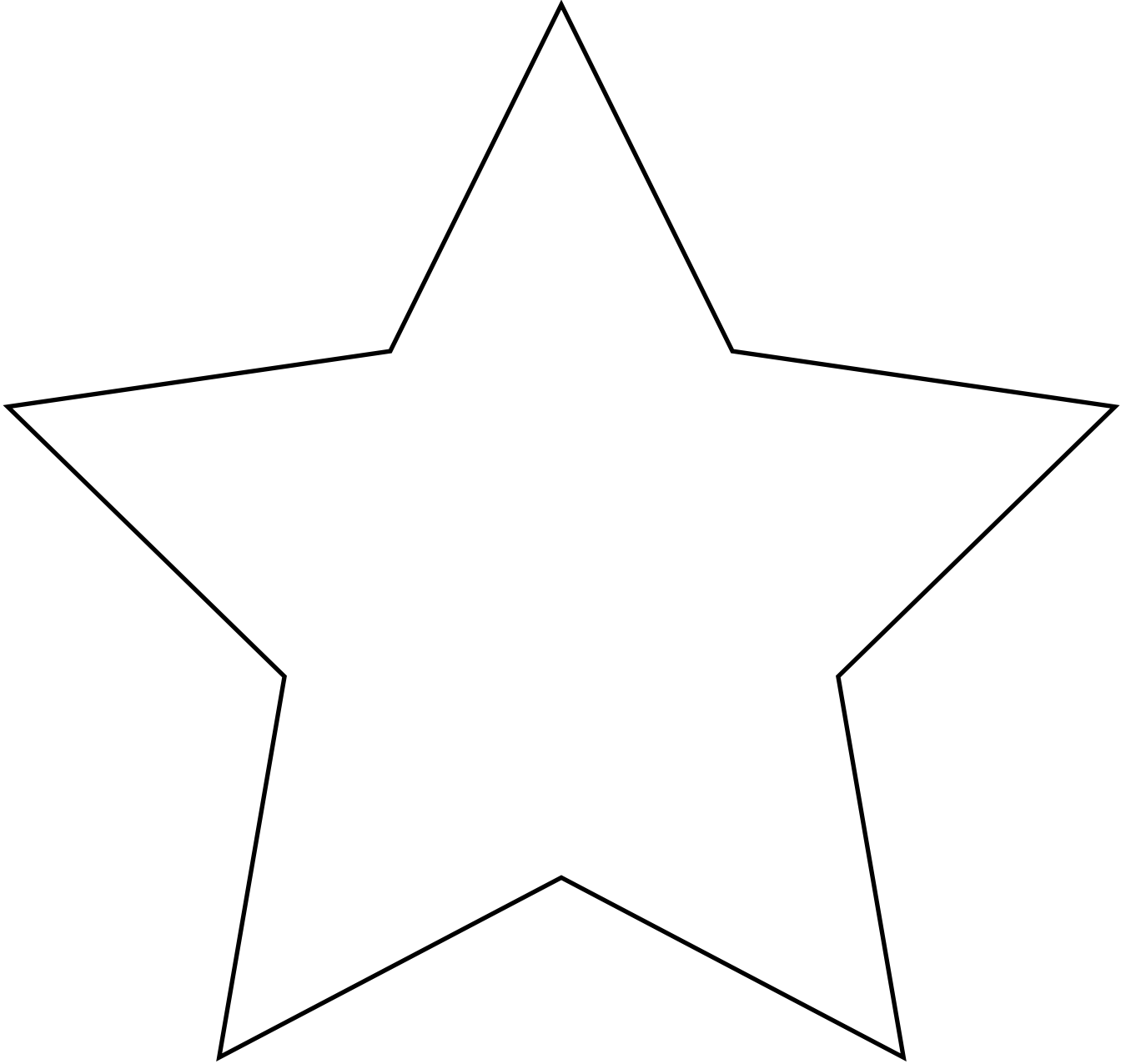
“And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him” (Matthew 2:11).



## **Wise Men Memory-Verse Stomp**

Place a large star on a wall. Cut shoe soles or foot patterns out of paper sacks. Tape these in a trail winding around the room and among the furniture, going near the star. Place the students on the trail with each foot on a paper-sack foot. Practice saying the verse several times. Pretend to be the wise men with their backpacks. After you say the verse as a class, have the students move along the trail two steps. Repeat until every student has been near the star.

# Star of Wonder



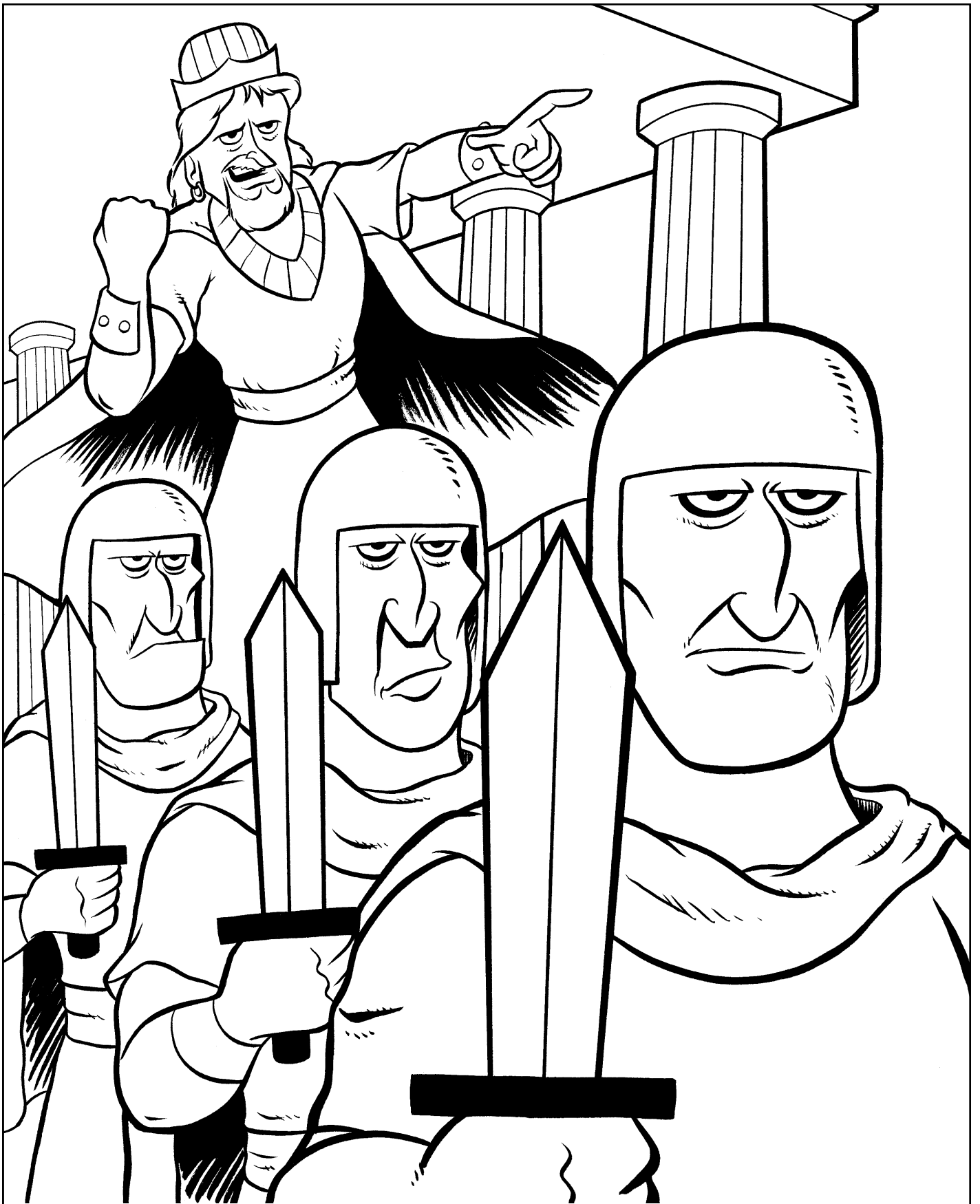




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**“And when they [the wise men] had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh” (Matthew 2:11).**





**“When Herod, saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was very angry; and had put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem who were two years old and under” (Matthew 2:16).**

