



INTRODUCTION

Christmas Portraits—Part 1

The Christmas story is full of wonder—a virgin birth, angelic messengers, and mysterious visitors that travel hundreds of miles to worship a newborn baby. Amidst all of the unusual details of that night, some people simply didn't care. Some even became hostile. The news of Jesus' birth should've brought joy for everyone but, surprisingly, it didn't.

Together, we'll gain insight and learn lessons from the perplexing reactions by some key characters in the Bible's most well-known story. Join us as we explore Christmas Portraits.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What was Christmas like for you growing up? What did you like best about it? What did you like least?
2. Read Matthew 2:1-9, 12-18. How would you describe Herod's response to the announcement of the birth of a king? Why do you think he responded the way he did?
3. Read Matthew 5:11-12 and 1 John 3:11-15 Why do you think some people are so opposed to Christians or to Christ?
4. Have you experienced people in your life who you would describe as being hostile to the faith? Read Matthew 5:43-45. Why is it important that we follow Jesus's teaching concerning those who oppose us? What are some things we can do to win people over to Christ?
5. How might you apply this lesson to your life?

APPLICATION

People have different responses to Christ and the gospel. Some are enthusiastic, some are indifferent, and others express anger towards these topics. Recognizing the right of Christ to rule in our lives can be a big issue. Today's story of King Herod depicts how, even in biblical times, others were threatened by the news of a new king.

As Christians, we know that Christ is the king in our lives. Sometimes it's difficult to accept that He has control over our journeys, which means we cannot be the king in our own lives. We also know that we stand before God as sinners because Jesus came to save us from the penalty of sin. He paid for the price for what we do wrong—as long as we believe in Him. Knowing this, we can proudly identify Him as the ruler of our lives.

KEY VERSES (HCSB)

Philippians 3:18
Philippians 3:19a
Matthew 2:1-18
Luke 2:10-11
Matthew 5:43-45
Matthew 5:11-12
1 John 3:11-15