

A script from



“The King of the Jews”

by
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- What** After hearing from the Magi about the immanent birth of the King of the Jews, Herod plots to retain his own claim to that title. Pride and a desperate need to remain in control challenge everyone, not just Bible bad guys—there’s a bit of Herod in each of us. **Themes:** Drama, Christmas, Herod, Magi, Wise Men, Pride, Control, Power, King, Lordship of Christ
- Who** Herod the Great – Has a certain charm, but is unpredictable and prone to sudden outbursts. In near-constant pain from an incurable disease.
- Ten – Herod’s tenth wife. A flippant Greek-born agnostic; a survivor.
- Eliyahu – A rabbi and advisor to Herod. Ashamed of his own former timidity.
- When** Bible Times
- Wear (Props)** A throne-like chair is useful but not mandatory. Likewise biblical costuming, though this piece may also be done in contemporary dress (upscale for Herod and Ten, clerical for Eliyahu).
- Why** Matthew 2:1-8, 16; Proverbs 16:18; James 4:6-10
- How** It would be very easy to be melodramatic with this script, but that would draw away from the weight of the message. Be sure that you immerse yourself into these characters. Just because someone is angry, doesn't mean that they yell. Anger can be spoken through a clenched jaw and with emphasis as well as volume of voice. It's best to have someone directing this piece.
- Time** Approximately 4-6 minutes

The wise men have just left Herod's throne room. Herod, his hand raised in salutation, calls after them.

- Herod:** The God of Abraham guide you, noble Magi! As soon as you find this King of the Jews, tell me, so that I too may go and worship him!
- Ten:** Jupiter be praised.
- Eliyahu:** Blasphemy.
- Ten:** Yes, but useful blasphemy. Jupiter is *Caesar's* god.
- Herod:** Cease! Ten, be civil. *(Tosses a gold coin to Eliyahu)* Here, rabbi, buy her a sin offering at the Temple. In fact, buy one for each of my wives. *(Doubles over in pain.)*
- Ten:** *(Rushing to him)* My lord husband!
- Herod:** *(Wincing)* You're not as beautiful as Mariamne, but you're twice as devious. I like that in a wife. Never use it on me. *(Rallying)* So what do you think, Eliyahu? What is the soul of this matter.
- Elyahu:** My lord?
- Herod:** This "King of the Jews" business. Who is this King of the Jews?
- Elyahu:** Caesar Augustus and his Senate say you are, my lord.
- Herod:** But what do the Jews say?
- Elyahu:** *(Hiking up his courage)* They say you are not a true Jew, that you are an Edomite, a son of Esau, who sold his birthright—
- Herod:** Who rebuilt your Temple for you!
- Elyahu:** Over the entrance of which you placed an eagle, the symbol of Jupiter!
- Ten:** The symbol of Augustus Caesar.
- Herod:** True, and if Caesar's symbol were a pig, I would have—
- Elyahu:** No! No true Jew would say such a thing, or burn to death the ones who tore down that abomination! A true son of David—
- Herod:** I am the truest Jew that ever was. I rebuilt the Temple of Solomon, rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem, fed the people when famine came—twice! What more can they want?

*To read the rest of this script and perform it, download the full version at
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ENDING:

Elyahu: My lord, I—

Herod: "My lord *king!*" Say it! Say "thank you, my lord King of the *Jews!*"

Silence.

Herod: No matter. (*Darkly*) I insist that you receive all you deserve, rabboni. And tonight you shall.

Elyahu: But...

Herod turns his back on him. Eliyahu leaves slowly, guessing what this means.

Ten: Why? He's just a harmless believer.

Herod: No. Religion is harmless. Believers are dangerous. They change things.

Ten: I don't know, he—

Herod: What? I'm arranging for him to meet his King. You see how "merciful" I am? "Surrender control!" I surrender to no one! (*Crumples*)

Ten: My lord husband, by now the doctors must have found a cure for—

Herod: "Gangrenous loins?" They will. If they don't, I'll... (*Sarcastically*) Well, if they don't at least I'll die King of the Jews.

Lights fade.