

BEHOLD
THE
King
Christmas Through the
Eyes of Herod's Servant

Written by
LINDSAY FINLEY
with
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Table of Contents

Foreword.....	4
From the Author.....	5
Characters	7
Behold the King	8
Song Suggestions	42
Props List	43
Production Notes	44
Actor’s Script and Other Materials to Download	47
Background Notes	48

Foreword

A Christmas play about . . . King Herod?

You've probably never seen a church or school Christmas play that focuses on the evil, treacherous King Herod, the very king who sought to end Jesus' life shortly after his birth in Bethlehem. And yet even this more sober facet of the Christmas account (told in a family-friendly way and with some humor!) showcases God's glory, sovereignty, and authority over all things—even wicked kings.

In *Behold the King*, you'll see that Jesus is the true King, prophesied from the Old Testament and appointed to rule and reign for all eternity. You'll see him worshipped by the unlikeliest of people—a group of excited shepherds; wealthy, powerful wise men from the East; God's faithful people in the temple; and—well, I won't give away the ending.

As with every Christmas play written and produced by our talented Answers Academy staff, this play takes you from the Old Testament to the New Testament, helping you clearly and fully see Jesus and why he came to this earth. It's a wonderful encouragement for believers and a challenge for unbelievers.

Yes, Christmas is about Christ and, ultimately, why he came to this earth in fulfillment of all of God's precious promises. We pray that this production is a blessing to you and your group and that many hearts are touched this Christmas with that gospel message.

In Christ,



KEN HAM

Founder CEO of Answers in Genesis, Ark Encounter, and Creation Museum

From the Author

LINDSAY FINLEY

Fine Arts Teacher, Answers Academy

When I was first approached by Renee Hodge, our administrator, about our school producing a Christmas play from the perspective of Herod, I was a little apprehensive, to say the least. Honestly, “apprehensive” is a bit of an understatement! Why would we want to write a children’s play about King Herod, the very man who ordered the slaughter of children in Bethlehem? Why would we want children to know anything about the treacherous man who plagues the Christmas account with such unbelievable acts of evil?

As I pondered these questions, God, in his patience and grace, laid on my heart the very answer that I needed.

“Why not?”

Yes, Lord, why not? Our children are exposed to so much evil in today’s world. We see it everywhere—on the news and even right outside our own doors. How can we, as parents, teachers, pastors, and mentors, protect our children from these evils? Sadly, the answer is that we can’t.

Evil and darkness are all around us, but there’s also something else there. It may be dim at times or as bright as the sun, but it is there. It is the light. First John says it so eloquently in chapter one verse five: “This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.”

God is light, the eternal and everlasting light. He is always there, even when it seems the dark has won. The light has overcome the darkness, and it still does today. I hope this play is a reminder to us all that on that wonderful Christmas morn, God brought light into the world in the form of his perfect Son.

Included with this script is additional historical content that brings us into the daily workings of the first-century palace of Herod the Great and provides a historical background for King Herod himself. This information is a great teaching tool for your performers—and yourself!

Along with the historical information included with this product, there is also supplemental material available online. This material includes printable actors' scripts, editable program templates, and a recording of Answers Academy's performance on the Ark Encounter stage!

Throughout the script are song suggestions. Please note that these songs are merely suggestions, not requirements. Many songs (including hymns) will work within the context of the script. As a music teacher, I truly believe that songs can enhance the message of the program and can be a wonderful way to further engage your performers and audience. One of my favorite Scripture verses is Psalm 96:1, which says, "Oh sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all the earth!"

My prayer is that this program will be a blessing to you, the performers, and the audience, and that the gospel message and gift of salvation will be shared and spread.

May we always give God all the praise and glory!

LINDSAY FINLEY

Characters

All characters are dressed in traditional first-century clothing unless otherwise noted.

NARRATOR
dressed in modern-day attire

JORIM
the head servant of King Herod, dressed in plain servant attire

KING HEROD
dressed in royal robes

SERVANT #1
dressed in plain servant attire

SERVANT #2
dressed in plain servant attire

VARIOUS SERVANTS
(nonspeaking roles)
dressed in plain servant attire

SHEPHERD #1

SHEPHERD #2

SHEPHERD #3

MARY
a young Jewish woman

JOSEPH
a young Jewish man

ANNA
an elderly Jewish woman

SIMEON
an elderly Jewish man

MAGI #1
dressed in royal Persian attire

MAGI #2
dressed in royal Persian attire

MAGI #3
dressed in royal Persian attire

MAGI #4
dressed in royal Persian attire

CHIEF PRIEST

SCRIBE

CERES
a Roman soldier

LUCIUS
a Roman soldier

ROMAN SOLDIER
(nonspeaking role)

PRISON GUARD

JOHN THE BAPTIST
dressed in “camel hair”

TOWNSPERSON #1

VARIOUS TOWNSPEOPLE
(nonspeaking roles)

WIVES
(nine total, nonspeaking roles)

CHORUS SPEAKERS
(up to six)

Behold the King

PROLOGUE

CHOIR is positioned onstage. NARRATOR and JORIM are located center stage. HEROD is somehow hidden (by darkness or offstage). If HEROD is onstage, he should be sitting on his throne. STUDENTS, NARRATOR, JORIM, and HEROD begin onstage.

STUDENTS: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it” (John 1:1-5).

NARRATOR: It has been 400 years since the Israelites heard the voice of our Lord through a living prophet—400 years of silence and turmoil. Kingdoms have come, and kingdoms have gone, leaving a trail of confusion and despair in their wake. We have been passed off from one empire to the next, just as Daniel prophesied—from Babylon to Persia to the Greeks and now to the Romans. We have been persecuted, taxed, and despised by the Romans, and now we are under the forceful grip of a subservient king appointed by Rome. He is . . .

JORIM: Herod . . . the Great. The greatest king since Solomon himself. The king who has modernized Jerusalem since his reign began over 30 years ago. Herod . . . the king who expanded the temple, brought the Roman aqueduct system to those in need, brought the arts to Jewish people with theaters! Herod, the friend of Caesar himself!

JORIM pauses. He has run out of attributes to say.

HEROD: *(from the darkness/backstage)* Go on.

JORIM, fearful, now begins to stutter slightly.

JORIM: Herod . . . the king who was appointed by Rome to rule over his own as the king of Judea. The king who will defeat anyone who defies him. The king who is willing to kill his own kin to secure his throne—who killed even my own father—then took my mother as another wife . . .

HEROD is revealed, either by spotlight or coming onstage.

HEROD: *(coldly)* And I would do it again. Your father was a simple, worthless fool. Never forget that I saved you from his fate and allowed you and your siblings to become servants in my household and I took your mother as a wife. That is all. Now get out of my sight! I am ready for bed.

JORIM: Yes, Your Majesty. *(calls offstage)* The king is ready for bed!

JORIM exits. HEROD storms off.

SERVANTS enter with robes (bed clothes) and blankets. They see HEROD is walking away, and they quickly and feverishly follow.

NARRATOR: As the king prepared for bed that night, little did he know that just a little ways away, in the small town of Bethlehem, a birth was about to occur that would change his life—and the world—forever.

NARRATOR exits.

SCENE 1

THE NATIVITY

Throne is removed from the stage or put to the side. Manger is brought out with hay bales or stools for MARY and JOSEPH.

Song Suggestion: “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

MARY, JOSEPH, and SHEPHERDS enter and take their places at the nativity set as the SPEAKERS read or quote Luke 2:1–20.

CHORUS SPEAKER #1: “In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the [guest room].”

CHORUS SPEAKER #2: “And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. And the angel said to them, ‘Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.’ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!’”

CHORUS SPEAKER #3: “When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, ‘Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.’ And they

went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them.”

SHEPHERDS spend time with MARY and JOSEPH, then leave.

CHORUS SPEAKER #3: “But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.”

MARY and JOSEPH exit. CHOIR may stay onstage or exit.



SCENE 2

SHOPPING IN BETHLEHEM

In the town of Bethlehem.

TOWNSPEOPLE begin to enter the marketplace. JORIM and SERVANT #1 enter separately from the TOWNSPEOPLE. All are talking. NARRATOR enters.

NARRATOR: King Herod loves his gold. Almost as much as he loves himself. He wants his palace filled with it.

JORIM steps toward the audience. Scene freezes.

JORIM: Last night, he wanted to wake up with flowers by his bed. He wanted the flowers in a round gold vase, and he demanded I find one. When I couldn't find the exact one he wanted in Jerusalem, he sent me out to find one this morning while he lies in bed eating breakfast. So, here I am in Bethlehem, a small insignificant town south of Jerusalem.

Scene resumes. JORIM turns and fades into the group of TOWNSPEOPLE. SHEPHERDS come running, excited and out of breath.

SHEPHERD #1: People of Bethlehem, he's here. Our Savior! The one who has been promised to us. Come see!

SHEPHERD #2: Come! Come!

SHEPHERD #3: It's a miracle! A true miracle! Come and see! Please! Our King has come!

TOWNSPERSON: Has our Savior truly come? How do you know this?

TOWNSPEOPLE murmur and some approach the SHEPHERDS with curiosity.

SHEPHERD #1: We were just out in the field last night and suddenly—

JORIM: *(loudly)* What is this blasphemy?

JORIM and SERVANT #1 step out from the crowd.

SHEPHERD #2: It's not blasphemy, good sir. It's the truth!
My brothers and I saw a miracle in front of our very eyes.
Angels appeared to us in multitude in the sky! It was
blinding!

TOWNSPEOPLE gasp and whisper.

JORIM: Angels? Are you mad? Did anyone else see this
blinding light of angels? *(looks around)* Anyone?

No response from the crowd.

JORIM: I should have you arrested for the lies you speak!
How dare you speak of such things? You have a king
already. A savior to protect you with the power of the
Romans. The king of peace and prosperity, King Herod!

Still no response from the crowd.

*JORIM elbows SERVANT #1 next to him, annoyed with the lack
of respect.*

SERVANT #1: Oh! All hail, King Herod!

TOWNSPEOPLE: *(unexcitedly)* All hail, King Herod!

JORIM: The talk of a Savior stops here. Anyone that
continues this nonsense will be dealt with by severe
punishment at the hands of Herod's guards. Mark my
words, the talk will stop now!

*JORIM and SERVANT #1 exit with an authoritative stride.
The crowd watches them leave, then joins the SHEPHERDS with
curious excitement.*

Song Suggestion: "The World's Smallest Shepherd"

