DAY 20

MATTHEW 2:3–6

When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born.

"In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written:

"'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.'"

Yesterday we read about the Magi from the east, who, upon noticing the first Christmas star ornamenting the night sky, set out on a journey to seek the Messiah and worship Him. In stark contrast, today we read that when King Herod and "all Jerusalem" heard about Jesus' birth, they were disturbed.

Disturbed! In the original Greek that word can mean "agitated," "stirred-up," "troubled," or "afraid." Isn't it interesting that you don't have to look far to see the same wide spectrum of responses to Jesus' birth today? You may not even have to look past your own family or group of friends to see such different reactions to Jesus.

And yet, nobody could argue with Micah's prophecy, written some 700 years earlier. Herod demanded answers, and a voice from the past echoed truth down long corridors of time. Maybe if Herod had not been so worried about losing his status, his position, his perceived control, he might have noticed something sweetly significant in that last prophetic sentence.

"A ruler who will shepherd my people Israel."

This ruler is different. He's come to lead, but in the humblest way. On the list of dirty jobs, it doesn't get much worse than shepherding. This was not a glamorous position for a king to take. What kind of ruler loves like this? What are we so worried about losing that we'd let it keep us from seeking our Messiah and worshiping Him?

REFLECT

What are you holding onto so hard that the idea of Jesus ruling your life is, frankly, unsettling? Disturbing? Just like a shepherd tending to his flock, Jesus wants to lead you, love you and tenderly care for you. Will you let Him?

PRAY

Lord Jesus, help me to let go of anything that is coming between me and you. You deserve my wholehearted worship! Break down any walls that are keeping me from you. Amen.