

SCENE 2
THE TEMPLE IN JERUSALEM

A horn blows as the GROUP approaches the temple. People mill around the outer court talking loudly, and chanting prayers. Others stand in lines to exchange money and buy animals. There are sounds of money hitting metal and animal bells ringing. The HIGH PRIEST stands behind the alter attending to the sacrificial offering fire and controls the lights. Worshipers approach MONEY CHANGER stage right beside the alter, noisily drop coins into the metal container and walk across to ANIMAL SELLER and drop more coins into the metal container and go stand next to pillars while GUIDE and WISEMEN talk.

GUIDE

Oh, good. Here we are at the Temple. It sounds like it is time for a sacrifice.

GUIDE encourages GROUP to come up to the second pillar of the Temple.

**ASSISTANT GUIDE encourages GROUP to crowd together to allow everyone to be able to see and hear. Wheelchairs, strollers, and the little ones are ushered to the front of the group. ASSISTANT GUIDE signals GUIDE with light when everyone is in place.*

GUIDE

This is our beloved Temple, where we come to worship the one true God.

WISEMAN 2

Would there be any scholars here who could interpret the scrolls and answer our questions?

GUIDE

Why yes, there are priests and teachers here who could help you.

WISEMAN 3

Wonderful! Perhaps they can help us find this new born king.

GUIDE

Pointing to MONEY CHANGER

Here is a Priest, perhaps he can help you.

MONEY CHANGER stands upstage right behind a table. MAN 1 stands in the front of a line of people waiting to exchange coins.

MONEY CHANGER

Come! Exchange your money for a temple shekel.

MAN 1

Here are two Drachmas for a temple shekel.

MONEY CHANGER

Counts the two coins with a look of disgust.
But you must now pay four Drachmas.

MAN 1

But this is all I have!

MONEY CHANGER

A temple shekel is all that is acceptable to the Most High. You must pay the price! Now move on, there are people waiting!

MAN 1 crosses to the opposite side of the courtyard in great distress. WISEMEN walk forward to speak with MONEY CHANGER.

WISEMAN 1

We have come seeking the child born king. Can you help us?

MONEY CHANGER

Standing
Child born king? I know of no new king. Just who are you?

WISEMAN 1

We are Magi from the east.
Gestures to the other WISEMEN standing with him.

WISEMAN 2

Shows an open scroll.
We have read from your prophets and feel that the time is now for the Messiah to come! We have followed his star and-

MONEY CHANGER

Interrupts
Ah yes! The Messiah! Yes. He is coming, someday. But you Gentiles must be confused. But then how would you know? Our Messiah will come, but with power and majesty. He will rule and break the bondage of the Romans and we will be a great nation again. People will look at us in awe, as it should be! Now excuse me, I must go back to my appointed work.

MONEY CHANGER returns to exchanging money.

RICH MAN enters downstage right and walks to stage right. HIGH PRIEST, standing centerstage watches RICH MAN as he prays.

RICH MAN

O Lord, I thank you that my sacrifice is acceptable in your sight. Out of my great abundance this perfect lamb is provided, and given up to you oh Lord, to atone for my "occasional" sin. Oh Lord, I am grateful that you have seen fit to bless ME, and that I am not like these poor miserable peasants.

Motions to the GROUP in the courtyard.

I fast twice a week and give a tenth of my sizeable income to you.

EXITS praying loudly about his greatness

I give generously and yet look at all I am still blessed with! Gold, jewels, sheep, goats...

WISEMEN shake their heads in disbelief and approach HIGH PRIEST.

WISEMAN 3

Excuse me, can you tell us where we might find the one born king?

HIGH PRIEST

Startled

What's this? You are looking for a new king? I wish we had a new king, but unfortunately we're stuck with Herod, if you can call him a king.

Shakes head

WISEMAN 3

Are you sure? From what we have studied, we are certain that-

HIGH PRIEST

Interrupts

I'm sorry, but you must be mistaken. There is no new king! Now please go! I must prepare for the next sacrifice.

Gestures to the alter and moves upstage.

WISEMEN look confused and look to GUIDE, who shrugs and points to ANIMAL SELLER stage left, where two worshipers have brought out lambs and stand next to ANIMAL SELLER

GUIDE

Perhaps this priest can help you.

Guides group over to ANIMAL SELLER

ANIMAL SELLER

Yelling like a salesman

Animals for sacrifice! Come and get your sacrificial lamb. Perfect, spotless, without blemish. The best you will find for all your needs.

POOR MAN

Approaches meekly through the crowd

Allow me to buy a lamb to sacrifice for myself and my family. This is all I can give.

ANIMAL SELLER

Counts the coins and looks disdainfully at POOR MAN
Is this all you have? This is not nearly enough to buy such fine lambs as these.

POOR MAN

Will it buy a goat?

ANIMAL SELLER

Not a goat. Not even two doves! (*Scoffs*) Nothing that is worthy!

POOR MAN

Falls to the ground pleading
How then can I atone for the sins of my household and receive the blessings of the Lord?

ANIMAL SELLER

Disdainfully
That is not my concern. You must work it out for yourself! Now go!
Throws coins to the ground

POOR MAN scrambles for the coins, moaning and walks away in distress

WISEMAN 1

Addresses GROUP and GUIDE
What will this poor man do? Is there no mercy here?
Looks at ANIMAL SELLER and starts to walk away

SIMEON, leaning heavily on his staff, hobbles towards the WISEMEN from downstage right.

SIMEON

Greetings! My name is Simeon. I have heard you asking questions about a new king, I too am looking for Him. The Lord God Almighty has revealed to me that I will not die until my eyes have seen Him. And I know the time is now.

WISEMAN 1

You are looking for Him too? Can you help us?

SIMEON

Yes, but you must look for the right one.

Gesturing to PRIESTS

They are looking for a king for the Jews. The Messiah will bring hope and salvation to all people.

Anna Enters upstage right and walks slowly to SIMEON

ANNA

Looks at WISEMEN and GROUP with puzzlement
Simeon, who are all these people?
Gestures towards WISEMEN and GROUP.

SIMEON

Oh, Anna, these people are looking for the Messiah too! I have told them, he will come to save!

ANNA

With great joy
You are looking for the Messiah?

WISEMEN & GUIDE

Yes, we are!

ANNA

Oh, bless you all! You must keep looking!

Gesturing to the PRIESTS

These people who are giving up animals for sacrifices are depending on that sacrifice to save them, but it can't. It only points to the one who comes to bring us redemption and true forgiveness. If you look with all of your heart, you will find Him.

TEMPLE GUARD enters downstage left behind GROUP

TEMPLE GUARD

Shouting and pointing to the WISEMEN

You! Come! king Herod wants to speak with you, now! Follow me! And be quick about it!

WISEMAN 1

To GROUP

I don't know what we have done, but we better follow him!

GUIDE clears the way for WISEMEN, wheelchairs, and strollers to leave first.

GUIDE

Let the chariots go first. We should follow that soldier and the Wisemen. Come quickly and stay together! Hurry! Hurry!

ANNA & SIMEON

With urgency
Be careful! God be with you!

TEMPLE GUARD leads the group up to Herod's Palace.