

SCENE 3
HEROD'S PALACE

PALACE SOLDIER stands downstage right at the entrance to the palace. WISEMEN stand on the ramp behind TEMPLE GUARD.

**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 PALACE SOLDIER with light when everyone is in place and PALACE SOLDIER approaches the GROUP.*

TEMPLE GUARD
Hits heart with closed right fist in Salute to PALACE SOLDIER
Sir! Here are the men King Herod requested. Watch out for this one.
Points to someone near the front
He/She looks like a trouble maker.

PALACE SOLDIER
Very Good. You are dismissed.
TEMPLE GUARD salutes and EXITS
To WISEMEN
And just what have you done to stir up the king?

WISEMAN 2
We don't know. We were just told that the king wants to see us.

PALACE SOLDIER
You're the ones looking for a new king?

WISEMAN 1
Well yes-

PALACE SOLDIER
Interrupting
What took you so long to get here? The king is furious! Looking for a new king? You know heads have rolled for less than this! Wait here! I will announce you to the king at once.
PALACE SOLDIER crosses to THRONE SOLDIER standing to the right of the throne. THRONE SOLDIER moves to center stage to meet PALACE SOLDIER
Go tell the king the men you wanted to see are here.
THRONE SOLDIER salutes and EXITS behind the curtain.
PALACE SOLDIER turns to the group and stands at attention.
THRONE SOLDIER returns and whispers to PALACE SOLDIER and then returns to stand beside the throne.
The king will see you now, but watch yourselves! The king doesn't usually allow such rabble (*Pointing to the group*) into his presence.

(ominously) You saw the prison just outside the palace? It's real easy to end up there. Now come! The king is very interested in what you have to say.

Turns and scoffs loudly to himself

A new king? Ha! This should be interesting.

PALACE SOLDIER brings WISEMEN and GUIDE to the throne.

WISEMEN stand to the left of the throne. GUIDE stands left of them, behind the red curtain. PALACE SOLDIER brings GROUP to stand in front of the throne. THRONE SOLDIER leaves to bring in HEROD.

WISEMAN 3

I'm a little nervous about all this. Did you hear the guard? Furious, he said the king was! I don't want to offend this king. I'm not ready to die!

WISEMAN 2

Oh, don't worry. The guard is probably just overreacting. This is the king of the Jews. He must know the Messiah is coming.

WISEMAN 1

Once he knows we're looking for the Messiah, I'm sure he'll be helpful. Maybe he'll even have information that will help us find the newborn king! You just wait and see.

WISEMAN 3

I don't know. I hope you are right.

THRONE SOLDIER

Returns and announces

King Herod of Judea!

ALL bow before HEROD.

HEROD

Enters and takes a seat at his throne

I have been told by trustworthy people that you are looking for a new king. Just what is this all about?

WISEMAN 1

We have learned of the one born king, and have come to find Him. Perhaps you know of Him too and could help us.

HEROD

Stands, turns abruptly and paces the floor

Just who are you, and where are you from?

WISEMAN 2

We are Magi and have come far from the East. We have followed His star for many nights and have come to worship Him.

HEROD

Magi? Humph, as you can see, I am the king in Israel. Tell me, where did you hear of this, this king?

WISEMAN 1

We have studied from the scrolls of your prophets, O King, and found that the time was near for Him, the Messiah, to come. Then we saw the star.

HEROD

Oh yes, the prophets! Of course. I too have been looking for Him. Wait here!

Walks back to THRONE SOLDIER and whispers loudly.

Get me the priests and teachers, now! And have them bring the scrolls of the prophets.

THRONE SOLDIER walks behind the sheer curtain upstage right and addresses someone through the doorway.

THRONE SOLDIER

The king demands to see the priests and teachers. And bring the scrolls of your prophets! Quickly!

HEROD walks around the curtain to the back room behind a sheer curtain. THRONE SOLDIER comes back with the PRIEST and TEACHERS holding scrolls which they lay out on the table.

HEROD

What do you know about this, this child born king?

PRIEST

O King, we know nothing of what you speak.

HEROD

Don't you teach of a coming Messiah? You must know something! Don't play me for a fool! Just tell me. Don't you know when he is to be born?

PRIEST

Well, yes. According to the prophet Daniel the time of His coming is at hand. But I don't know. A baby?

HEROD

You call yourselves teachers? Where is this Messiah to be born?

TEACHER 1

Feverishly looking through scrolls
In Bethlehem of Judea, O King.

HEROD

How do you know this?

TEACHER 2

Here. It is written by the prophet Micah: "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 to shepherd my people Israel."

HEROD

Are you sure of this?

TEACHERS 1 and 2 look to PRIEST.

PRIEST

Yes, O King. It is right from the ancient prophets.

HEROD

Leave!

PRIEST and TEACHERS scramble to gather scrolls and leave.

HEROD

Stands alone, rubbing his beard. Then, shouting

I am the king of the Jews!

HEROD composes himself and walks back to his throne and addresses the WISEMEN

Magi, I am so glad you have brought this to my attention. I have learned that this king will be born in Bethlehem of Judea.

WISEMEN 1

Oh! Really?

HEROD

Yes, do you have someone who can show you the way?

GUIDE

Yes! I know the way. I can show them!

HEROD

Very good. Please, go there and look carefully for the child. And when you have found him, come quickly and tell me for I too am anxious to go and (beat) worship Him. Go now, and hurry!

GUIDE

Make way for the Wisemen.

GUIDE creates an exit for the WISEMEN through the GROUP. Once WISEMEN have made their way out, GUIDE motions the GROUP to follow. GUARDS helps move GROUP out.

GUARDS

Move along! Everyone out. Your audience with Herod has ended.

WISEMAN 3

Let's hurry to Bethlehem. This way! Come!

Motions down pathway leading out of HEROD'S PALACE.

*WISEMEN gather GROUP at the bottom of the walkway.
ASSISTANT GUIDE signals WISEMEN with light when everyone
is in place.*

WISEMAN 2

Look! There's the star again. We must follow that star!

*WISEMEN and GUIDE walk up the path to the PLATFORM on the
right side of the road. WISEMEN step onto the PLATFORM.*

WISEMAN 1

One moment _____(guide). We need to talk something over.

*GUIDE and ASSISTANT GUIDE usher GROUP to stand around the
PLATFORM.*

WISEMAN 1

I must tell you, last night I had a very troubling dream. It was
about King Herod.

WISEMAN 3

I too have had a dream about the king! And after meeting him, it's
beginning to make sense.

WISEMAN 1

Yes, it is! I was warned that we must not go back to King Herod
again. Were you also warned?

WISEMAN 3

Yes, I was!

WISEMAN 1

After hearing the way he talked about the new king, something just
wasn't right. I don't trust him at all!

WISEMAN 2

This is not just a coincidence! Surely we are being lead by the God
of Heaven. We must not come back this way as he has warned. Agreed?

WISEMAN 1 & 2

Agreed.

GUIDE

Very well. Let's be on our way to Bethlehem!