

## HEROD

I am Herod -- the KING!

I have done great things for Israel. My Temple is larger than Solomon's! My court is more glorious than the nation has seen for a thousand years and I keep the peace with Rome.

Yet there are enemies everywhere who question my authority and threaten my throne. I must constantly be on the alert for plots and schemes. Even my own flesh and blood -- some of my misbegotten sons -- have turned against me and had to be dealt with.

Some think me cruel, but I truly had no choice. For the good of the kingdom, I must overcome personal desires. There is no doubt that my dynasty will survive, but the immaturity and shallowness of the would-be assassins proved that their reign would end in disaster. My presence is essential to the accomplishment of the goal, to restore Israel to its glory. All that remains is to enlarge the borders.

And this is not an easy task or one for the simple or unsophisticated. Rome has the power and must be placated, but the world is a complex and dangerous place. Given the right circumstances, a deal can be struck with some other powerful nation and thus be justly rewarded with more territory. Only a shrewd and experienced ruler like myself would have the vision to see such an opportunity and the intelligence to carry out such a plan.

Some question the authority of my throne. They say I am not of royal blood. But David was not of royal blood! They say I was chosen by Caesar and David was chosen by the prophet. But there are no prophets now. They say I do not follow the law. But David did not follow the law, and he was beloved by God.

The Magi are not to be ignored for they are privy to secret knowledge, but they are not politicians. Descendants of David are as common as the sands of the sea and even if one is born to be king, this is not the right time. An infant king would be under the control of guardians who surely do not know how to rule with the subtlety required. Yet, the people are sheep and would accept a child king to their detriment should one be declared. And Rome would surely crush any they do not trust.

Thus my duty is clear, to my kingdom, my dynasty and the return of the glory to Israel. Small minds will misunderstand, but my place in history is secure. All will someday know and recognize me for the key role I played in the future of the world.