

~HEROD 1 (710)

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• Herod **the Great**, the second son of Antipater or Antipas II by his wife Cypros. History bears out the truth of the Bible's brief glimpse of this man's character as unscrupulous, crafty, suspicious, immoral, cruel, and murderous.

• He possessed his father's ability as a diplomat and an opportunist. It must be said, however, that he showed ability as an organizer and a military commander.

• He is described by Josephus as a man of great physical strength, having skill in horsemanship and in the use of the javelin and the bow. [The Jewish War, I, 429,430, xxi, 13]

• Probably his most outstanding beneficial trait was his ability as a builder.

• He first distinguished himself in his governorship of Galilee by ridding his territory of robber bands. However, certain Jews were envious and, together with the mothers of the slain robbers, stirred up Hyrcanus II, then High Priest to summon Herod before the Sanhedrin on the charge that he ran ahead of that body by executing the robbers summarily instead of bringing them first to trial.

• Herod complied but boldly and disrespectfully appeared before them with a bodyguard, though as a professed proselyte he was subject to that court. For this insult to the Jewish high court he incurred the anger of the judges.

• According to Josephus, one judge, named Samaias or Simeon, was bold enough to stand up and speak, predicting that if Herod escaped punishment, he would in time kill those there sitting in judgment.

- But Hyrcanus was a passive, weak-willed man. Under pressure of Herod's intimidation, coupled with a letter from Sextus Caesar, a relative of Julius Caesar and then president of Syria, threatening Hyrcanus if he did not dismiss the charges, Hyrcanus capitulated.

[Jewish Antiquities, XIV, 168-176 (ix, 4)]

•• King Of Judea

- **Herod** succeeded his father and, about 39 B.C.E, was made king of greater Judea by appointment of the Roman senate, but he was not able to establish himself as de facto king until three years later when he took Jerusalem and deposed Antigonus, son of Aristobulus.
- After this victory Herod took steps to maintain his position by persuading the Roman Mark Antony to kill Antigonus and by seeking out the principal members of Antigonus party, 45 men in all, and putting them to death.
- Of the principal Pharisees, he spared only Samaias and Pollio, for he finally killed even John Hyrcanus II some years later. By thus slaughtering those who had sat in judgment upon him, he fulfilled the prediction of Samaias.
- Ever an astute politician, **Herod** believed that his best interests lay in supporting Rome. But he had to be very diplomatic, frequently changing sides to keep pace with the shifting fortunes of the Roman rulers.
- Being a close friend of Sextus, **Herod** first supported Julius Caesar, then aligned himself with Caesars assassin Cassius. He was able to get the favor of Mark Antony, the enemy of Cassius and avenger of Caesar, partly by means of large bribes.
- Later, when Octavius or Augustus Caesar, defeated Antony at the battle of Actium, **Herod** adroitly obtained Augustus forgiveness for supporting Antony, and thereafter he retained the friendship of Augustus.
- Because of his support of Rome and his free use of money as gifts to the Caesars, along with his smoothness of speech, Herod always won out when complaints or charges against him were taken to Rome by the Jews or others, sometimes members of his own household.

- The governorship of Galilee had been **Herod's** first dominion. Cassius had made him governor of Coele-Syria. Later, the Roman senate, at Antony's recommendation, had made him king of Judea.

- To this, Emperor Augustus now added Samaria, Gadara, Gaza, and Joppa, then the regions of Trachonitis, Batanaea, Auranitis, and Perea, an area east of the Jordan roughly corresponding to Gilead. Idumea was also under his dominion.

• Temple And Other Building Works

- As to **Herod's** building works, the rebuilding of the temple of Zerubbabel at Jerusalem is most noteworthy, particularly from a Biblical standpoint.

- It was constructed at tremendous cost and is described by Josephus as truly magnificent. [*Jewish Antiquities*, XV, 395,396 [xi, 3]]

- The Jews, because of their hatred and suspicion of **Herod**, would not permit him to tear down the existing temple beforehand, but he had to gather the building materials and have them on the ground before he could start any demolition.

- The temple sanctuary was rebuilt, according to Josephus, in 18 months. [*Jewish Antiquities*, XV, 421, xi, 6]

- Other main structures were erected in eight years. But in **30 C.E.** the Jews stated that the temple was built in 46 years. This statement was made during a conversation with Jesus Christ near the time of the first Passover after Jesus baptism.

- Now the Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. (*John 2:13*)

- And he found in the temple those selling cattle and sheep and doves and the money brokers in their seats. (*John 2:14*)

- So, after making a whip of ropes, he drove all those with the sheep and cattle out of the temple, and he poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. (*John 2:15*)

- And he said to those selling the doves; Take these things away from here! Stop making the house of my Father a house of

merchandise! (John 2:16)

- His disciples called to mind that it is written: The zeal for your house will eat me up. (John 2:17)
- Therefore, in answer, the Jews said to him; What sign have you to show us, since you are doing these things? (John 2:18)
- In answer Jesus said to them; Break down this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. (John 2:19)
- Therefore the Jews said; This temple was built in forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days? (John 2:20)
- According to Josephus [Jewish Antiquities, XV, 380, xi, 1], that work began in the 18th year of Herod's reign. If counted in the way that the Jews had viewed the regnal years of their kings, that could mean 18/17 B.C.E. Actually, work continued on the temple in the form of additions, and so forth, until six years before its destruction in 70 C.E.
- Herod also was responsible for the construction of theaters, amphitheaters, hippodromes, citadels, fortresses, palaces, gardens, temples in honor of Caesar, aqueducts, monuments, and even cities.
- These cities he named after himself, his relatives, or the emperors of Rome. He built an artificial harbor at Caesarea that rivaled the seaport of Tyre.
- According to Josephus tremendous stones were laid in 20 fathoms (36 meters)(120 feet) of water to make a mole about 60 meters (200 feet) wide. [Jewish Antiquities, XV, 334,335, ix, 6]
- Herod reconstructed the fortresses of Antonia and Masada, the latter being made most magnificent. His building achievements were spread to cities as far removed as Antioch in Syria and Rhodes, on the island of the same name.
- Herod was extremely lavish in his entertainment and was free with gifts, particularly to Roman dignitaries. One of the chief complaints against him by the Jews was his building of amphitheaters such as the one at Caesarea, where he held Grecian and Roman games, including chariot races, gladiatorial fights, men fighting wild beasts, and other pagan festivities.

- So interested was he in keeping alive the Olympic Games that, while in Greece on a trip to Rome, he even became one of the combatants.
- Then he donated a great sum of money to perpetuate the games, as well as, incidentally, his own name. Being nominally a Jew, he called the Jews my countrymen and those who had returned from Babylon to build Zerubbabel's temple my fathers. Nonetheless, his course of life was a complete denial of his claim to be a servant of Yehowah God.

•• Trouble In Family

- Practically the entire family of the **Herod's** was ambitious, suspicious, grossly immoral, and troublesome. **Herod** found his greatest difficulties and sorrows in his own family.
- His mother Cypros and his sister Salome constantly aggravated the situation. Herod had married Mariamne I, the granddaughter of Hyrcanus II and daughter of Alexander who was son of Aristobulus. She was a strikingly beautiful woman, and **Herod** greatly loved her, but hatred developed between her and **Herod's** mother and sister.
- **Herod** was constantly envious, and he was suspicious that members of his family, particularly his sons, were plotting against him, in some cases his suspicions were justified.
- His greed for power and his suspicions now moved him to cause the murder of his wife Mariamne, three of his sons, his wife's brother and grandfather Hyrcanus, several who had been his best friends, and many others.
- He employed torture to wring confessions from whomever he suspected of having information that would confirm his suspicions.

•• Relationship With The Jews

- **Herod** tried to pacify the Jews by temple rebuilding and by giving them needed things in times of famine. At times he eased the taxes of some of his subjects.
- He even managed to get Augustus to grant the Jews privileges in various parts of the world. Yet his tyranny and cruelty outweighed this, and during most of his rule he had trouble with the Jews.

· His Sickness And Death

- Very possibly because of his licentious living, **Herod** was eventually afflicted with a loathsome disease accompanied by fever and, to quote Josephus, an intolerable itching of the whole skin, continuous pains in the intestines, tumors in the feet as in dropsy, inflammation of the abdomen and gangrene of the privy parts, engendering worms, in addition to asthma, with great difficulty in breathing, and convulsions in all his limbs. [The Jewish War, I, 656, xxxiii, 5]

- It was during his fatal sickness that he ordered the slaughter of his scheming son Antipater. Also, knowing that the Jews would rejoice upon hearing of his own death, **Herod** commanded the most illustrious men of the Jewish nation to gather at a place called the Hippodrome, at Jericho, and there had them shut in.

- He then gave a command to those near him that, when he died, the news of his death should not be announced until these Jewish leaders were first killed.

- Then, said he, every family in Judea would certainly weep at his funeral. This order was never carried out. **Herod's** sister Salome and her husband Alexas freed these men and sent them to their homes.

- **Herod** died at the age of about 70 years. He had made a will designating his son Antipas as his successor, but shortly before his death he added a codicil, or made a new will, appointing Archelaus to that position.

- Archelaus was acknowledged by the people and the army as king, the Bible says that Jesus adoptive father Joseph heard that Archelaus ruled as king of Judea instead of his father **Herod**;

- But hearing that Archelaus ruled as king of Judea instead of his father **Herod**, he became afraid to depart for there. Moreover, being given divine warning in a dream, he withdrew into the territory of Galilee. (Matthew 2:22)

- But the action was contested by Antipas. After a hearing of the matter in Rome, Augustus Caesar upheld Archelaus. However, he constituted Archelaus an ethnarch and divided the territory formerly ruled over by **Herod**, half went to Archelaus, Antipas and Philip, two of Herod's other sons, were granted a share each in the other half.

· Slaughter Of Children

- The Bible account of **Herod's** slaughter of all the boys two years of age and under in Bethlehem and its districts is in harmony with the other historical accounts of Herod and his wicked disposition.
- This occurred not long before **Herod's** death, for Jesus escaped by being taken down into Egypt by his parents, but they returned and settled in Galilee after **Herod** died. These two events were foretold by Yehowah through his prophets Jeremiah and Hosea.
- After Jesus had been born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of **Herod** the king, look! Astrologers from eastern parts came to Jerusalem. (**Matthew 2:1**)
- Saying; Where is the one born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when we were in the east, and we have come to do him obeisance. (**Matthew 2:2**)
- At hearing this King **Herod** was agitated, and all Jerusalem along with him. (**Matthew 2:3**)
- And on gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people he began to inquire of them where the Christ was to be born. (**Matthew 2:4**)
- They said to him; In Bethlehem of Judea, for this is how it has been written through the prophet. (**Matthew 2:5**)
- And you, O Bethlehem of the land of Judah, are by no means the most insignificant city among the governor's of Judah, for out of you will come forth a governing one, who will shepherd my people, Israel. (**Matthew 2:6**)
- Then **Herod** secretly summoned the astrologers and carefully ascertained from them the time of the stars appearing. (**Matthew 2:7**)
- And, when sending them to Bethlehem, he said; Go make a careful search for the young child, and when you have found it report back to me, that I too may go and do it obeisance. (**Matthew 2:8**)

- When they had heard the king, they went their way, and, look! The star they had seen when they were in the east went ahead of them, until it came to a stop above where the young child was. (Matthew 2:9)
- On seeing the star they rejoiced very much indeed. (Matthew 2:10)
- And when they went into the house they saw the young child with Mary its mother, and, falling down, they did obeisance to it. They also opened their treasures and presented it with gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. (Matthew 2:11)
- However, because they were given divine warning in a dream not to return to Herod, they withdrew to their country by another way. (Matthew 2:12)
- After they had withdrawn, look! Yehowah's angel appeared in a dream to Joseph, saying; Get up, take the young child and its mother and flee into Egypt, and stay there until I give you word, for Herod is about to search for the young child to destroy it. (Matthew 2:13)
- So he got up and took along the young child and its mother by night and withdrew into Egypt. (Matthew 2:14)
- And he stayed there until the decease of Herod, for that to be fulfilled which was spoken by Yehowah through his prophet, saying; Out of Egypt I called my son. (Matthew 2:15)
- Then Herod, seeing he had been outwitted by the astrologers, fell into a great rage, and he sent out and had all the boys in Bethlehem and in all its districts done away with, from two years of age and under, according to the time that he had carefully ascertained from the astrologers. (Matthew 2:16)
- Then that was fulfilled which was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet, saying; (Matthew 2:17)
- A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and much wailing, it was Rachel weeping for her children, and she was unwilling to take comfort, because they are no more. (Matthew 2:18)
- When Herod had deceased, look! Yehowah's angel appeared in a

dream to Joseph in Egypt (**Matthew 2:19**)

- And said; Get up, take the young child and its mother and be on your way into the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the soul of the young child are dead. (**Matthew 2:20**)
- So he got up and took the young child and its mother and entered into the land of Israel. (**Matthew 2:21**)
- But hearing that Archelaus ruled as king of Judea instead of his father **Herod**, he became afraid to depart for there. Moreover, being given divine warning in a dream, he withdrew into the territory of Galilee. (**Matthew 2:22**)
- And came and dwelt in a city named Nazareth, that there might be fulfilled what was spoken through the prophets; He will be called a Nazarene. (**Matthew 2:23**)
- This is what Yehowah has said; In Ramah a voice is being heard, lamentation and bitter weeping, Rachel weeping over her sons. She has refused to be comforted over her sons, because they are no more. (**Jeremiah 31:15**)
- When Israel was a boy, then I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son. (**Hosea 11:1**)

.. Date Of His Death

- A problem arises with regard to the time of **Herod's** death. Some chronologers hold that he died in the year **5 B.C.E. or 4 B.C.E.** Their chronology is based to a large extent on Josephus history. In dating the time that **Herod** was appointed king by Rome, Josephus uses a consular dating, that is, he locates the event as occurring during the rule of certain Roman consuls.
- According to this, **Herod's** appointment as king would be in **40 B.C.E.**, but the data of another historian, Appianos, would place the event in **39 B.C.E.** By the same method Josephus places **Herod's** capture of Jerusalem in **37 B.C.E.**, but he also says that this occurred 27 years after the capture of the city by Pompey which was in **63 B.C.E.** [**Jewish Antiquities, XIV, 487,488, xvi, 4**]
- His reference to that latter event would make the date of Herod's taking the city of Jerusalem **36 B.C.E.** Now, Josephus says that Herod

died 37 years from the time that he was appointed king by the Romans, and 34 years after he took Jerusalem. [Jewish Antiquities, XVII, 190,191, viii, 1]

- This might indicate that the date of his death was 2 B.C.E. or perhaps 1 B.C.E.
- It may be that the Jewish historian Josephus counted the reigns of the kings of Judea by the accession-year method, as had been done with the kings of the line of David.
- If Herod was appointed king by Rome in 40 B.C.E, his first regnal year could run from Nisan of 39 to Nisan of 38 B.C.E., similarly, if counted from his capture of Jerusalem in 37 B.C.E. or 36 B.C.E, his first regnal year could start in Nisan 36 B.C.E. or 35 B.C.E.
- So if, as Josephus says, Herod died 37 years after his appointment by Rome and 34 years after his capture of Jerusalem, and if those years are counted in each case according to the regnal year, his death could have been in 1 B.C.E.
- Presenting an argument to this effect in The Journal of Theological Studies, W. E. Filmer writes that evidence from Jewish tradition indicates that Herod's death occurred on Shebat 2, the month of Shebat falls in January-February of our calendar. [Edited by H. Chadwick and H. Sparks, Oxford, 1966, Vol. XVII, p. 284]
- According to Josephus, Herod died not long after an eclipse of the moon and before a Passover. [Jewish Antiquities, XVII, 167, vi, 4][Jewish Antiquities, XVII, 167, vi, 213, ix, 3]
- Since there was an eclipse on March 11,4 B.C.E, March 13, Julian Calendar, some have concluded that this was the eclipse referred to by Josephus.
- On the other hand, there was a total eclipse of the moon in 1 B.C.E, about three months before Passover, while the one in 4 B.C.E. was only partial. The total eclipse in 1 B.C.E. was on January 8; January 10, Julian, 18 days before Shebat 2, the traditional day of Herod's death.
- Another partial eclipse occurred on December 27 of 1 B.C.E, December 29, Julian.

See Also CHRONOLOGY (Lunar eclipses)

- Another line of calculation centers around the age of **Herod** at the time of his death. Josephus says that he was about 70 years old. He says that at the time Herod received his appointment as governor of Galilee, which is generally dated **47 B.C.E.**, he was 15 years old, but this has been understood by scholars to be an error, 25 years evidently being intended. [*Jewish Antiquities*, XVII, 148, vi, 1, XIV, 158, ix, 2]

- Accordingly, **Herod's** death occurred in **2 B.C.E. or 1 B.C.E.** We must bear in mind, however, that Josephus has many inconsistencies in his dating of events and is therefore not the most reliable source. For the most reliable evidence, we must look to the Bible.

- The available evidence indicates that **Herod** died likely in the year **1 B.C.E.** The Bible historian Luke tells us that John came baptizing in the 15th year of Tiberius Caesar.

- In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and **Herod** was district ruler of Galilee, but Philip his brother was district ruler of the country of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias was district ruler of Abilene. (**Luke 3:1**)

- In the days of chief priest Annas and of Caiaphas, God's declaration came to John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness. (**Luke 3:2**)

- So he came into all the country around the Jordan, preaching baptism in symbol of repentance for forgiveness of sins. (**Luke 3:3**)

- Augustus died on **August 17, 14 C.E.** On September 15, Tiberius was named emperor by the Roman Senate. The Romans did not use the accession-year system, consequently, the 15th year would run from the latter part of **28 C.E.** to the latter part of **29 C.E.** John was six months older than Jesus and began his ministry, evidently in the spring of the year ahead of Jesus as Jesus forerunner, preparing the way.

- In answer the angel said to her; Holy spirit will come upon you, and power of the Most High will overshadow you. For that reason also what is born will be called holy, God's Son. (**Luke 1:35**)

- And, look! Elizabeth your relative has also herself conceived a

son, in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her, the so-called barren woman. ([Luke 1:36](#))

- **Jesus, whom the Bible indicates was born in the fall of the year, was about 30 years old when he came to John to be baptized.**
- **Now when all the people were baptized, Jesus also was baptized and, as he was praying, the heaven was opened up ([Luke 3:21](#))**
- **And the Holy Spirit in bodily shape like a dove came down upon him, and a voice came out of heaven; You are my Son, the beloved. I have approved you. ([Luke 3:22](#))**
- **Furthermore, Jesus himself, when he commenced his work, was about thirty years old, being the son, as the opinion was, of Joseph, son of Heli. ([Luke 3:23](#))**
- **Therefore he was baptized, most likely, in the fall, about October of 29 C.E. Counting back 30 years would bring us to the fall of 2 B.C.E. as the time of the human birth of the Son of God.**
- **Furthermore, Jesus himself, when he commenced his work, was about thirty years old, being the son, as the opinion was, of Joseph, son of Heli. ([Luke 3:23](#))**
- **Furthermore, Jesus himself, when he commenced his work, was about thirty years old, being the son, as the opinion was, of Joseph, son of Heli. ([Luke 3:23](#))**
- **With Daniel's prophecy of the seventy weeks at;**
- **There are seventy weeks that have been determined upon your people and upon your holy city, in order to terminate the transgression, and to finish off sin, and to make atonement for error, and to bring in righteousness for times indefinite, and to imprint a seal upon vision and prophet, and to anoint the Holy of Holies. ([Daniel 9:24](#))**
- **And you should know and have the insight that from the going forth of the word to restore and to rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Leader, there will be seven weeks, also sixty-two weeks. She will return and be actually rebuilt, with a public square and moat, but in the straits of the times. ([Daniel 9:25](#))**

- And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah will be cut off, with nothing for himself. And the city and the holy place the people of a leader that is coming will bring to their ruin. And the end of it will be by the flood. And until the end there will be war, what is decided upon is desolations. ([Daniel 9:26](#))
- And he must keep the covenant in force for the many for one week, and at the half of the week he will cause sacrifice and gift offering to cease. And upon the wing of disgusting things there will be the one causing desolation, and until an extermination, the very thing decided upon will go pouring out also upon the one lying desolate. ([Daniel 9:27](#))

See Also SEVENTY WEEKS

.. The Astrologers Who Visited Jesus

- The apostle Matthew tells us that after Jesus had been born in Bethlehem **in the days of Herod the king**, astrologers from eastern parts came to Jerusalem, saying that they saw his star when they were in the east.
- **Herod's** fears and suspicions were immediately aroused, and he determined from the chief priests and scribes that the Christ was to be born in Bethlehem. Then he called in the astrologers and ascertained from them the time of the stars appearing.
- After Jesus had been born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of **Herod** the king, look! Astrologers from eastern parts came to Jerusalem. ([Matthew 2:1](#))
- Saying; Where is the one born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when we were in the east, and we have come to do him obeisance. ([Matthew 2:2](#))
- At hearing this King **Herod** was agitated, and all Jerusalem along with him. ([Matthew 2:3](#))
- And on gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people he began to inquire of them where the Christ was to be born. ([Matthew 2:4](#))
- They said to him; In Bethlehem of Judea. For this is how it has been written through the prophet. ([Matthew 2:5](#))

- And you, O Bethlehem of the land of Judah, are by no means the most insignificant city among the governor's of Judah, for out of you will come forth a governing one, who will shepherd my people, Israel. ([Matthew 2:6](#))
- Then **Herod** secretly summoned the astrologers and carefully ascertained from them the time of the star's appearing. ([Matthew 2:7](#))
- We note that this was sometime after Jesus birth, for he was now not in the manger but with his parents in a house.
- And when they went into the house they saw the young child with Mary its mother, and, falling down, they did obeisance to it. They also opened their treasures and presented it with gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. ([Matthew 2:11](#))
- Of course, Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to David's city, which is called Bethlehem, because of his being a member of the house and family of David. ([Luke 2:4](#))
- To get registered with Mary, who had been given him in marriage as promised, at present heavy with child. ([Luke 2:5](#))
- While they were there, the days came to the full for her to give birth. ([Luke 2:6](#))
- And she gave birth to her son, the firstborn, and she bound him with cloth bands and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the lodging room. ([Luke 2:7](#))
- After the astrologers failed to return to **Herod** with news of the young child's whereabouts, the king ordered the slaughter of all the children two years of age and under throughout Bethlehem and its districts. Jesus, in the meantime, was taken to Egypt by his parents because of God's warning.
- However, because they were given divine warning in a dream not to return to **Herod**, they withdrew to their country by another way. ([Matthew 2:12](#))
- After they had withdrawn, look! Yehowah's angel appeared in a

- dream to Joseph, saying; Get up, take the young child and its mother and flee into Egypt, and stay there until I give you word, for **Herod** is about to search for the young child to destroy it. (**Matthew 2:13**)
- So he got up and took along the young child and its mother by night and withdrew into Egypt. (**Matthew 2:14**)
 - And he stayed there until the decease of **Herod**, for that to be fulfilled which was spoken by Yehowah through his prophet, saying; Out of Egypt I called my son. (**Matthew 2:15**)
 - Then **Herod**, seeing he had been outwitted by the astrologers, fell into a great rage, and he sent out and had all the boys in Bethlehem and in all its districts done away with, from two years of age and under, according to the time that he had carefully ascertained from the astrologers. (**Matthew 2:16**)
 - Then that was fulfilled which was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet, saying; (**Matthew 2:17**)
 - A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and much wailing, it was Rachel weeping for her children, and she was unwilling to take comfort, because they are no more. (**Matthew 2:18**)
 - The death of **Herod** could hardly have taken place before **1 B.C.E.**, for, in that case, Jesus, born about **October 1,2 B.C.E.**, would have been less than three months old.
 - On the other hand, it would not be necessary for Jesus to be two years old when the killing of the children occurred, he could even have been less than a year old, for **Herod** calculated from the time that the star appeared to the astrologers while they were **in the east**.
 - After Jesus had been born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of **Herod** the king, look! Astrologers from eastern parts came to Jerusalem. (**Matthew 2:1**)
 - Saying; Where is the one born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when we were in the east, and we have come to do him obeisance. (**Matthew 2:2**)
 - Then **Herod** secretly summoned the astrologers and carefully ascertained from them the time of the star's appearing.

(Matthew 2:7)

- And, when sending them to Bethlehem, he said; Go make a careful search for the young child, and when you have found it report back to me, that I too may go and do it obeisance.
(Matthew 2:8)
- When they had heard the king, they went their way, and, look! The star they had seen when they were in the east went ahead of them, until it came to a stop above where the young child was.
(Matthew 2:9)
- This may well have been a period of some months, for if the astrologers came from the age-old center of astrology, Babylon or Mesopotamia, as is likely the case, it was a very long journey.
- It had taken the Israelites at least four months to make the trip when they were repatriated from Babylon in **537 B.C.E.** **Herod** evidently concluded that by killing all babies up to two years of age he would be sure to get this one who was born king of the Jews.
- Saying; Where is the one born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when we were in the east, and we have come to do him obeisance. **(Matthew 2:2)**
- That **Herod** died not long after these things took place is indicated by the fact that Jesus apparently did not stay in Egypt very long.
- When **Herod** had deceased, look! Yehowah's angel appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt **(Matthew 2:19)**
- And said; Get up, take the young child and its mother and be on your way into the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the soul of the young child are dead. **(Matthew 2:20)**
- So he got up and took the young child and its mother and entered into the land of Israel. **(Matthew 2:21)**
- We may conclude, therefore, that Bible chronology, astronomical data, and available historical records seem to point to the time of **Herod's** death as **1 B.C.E.**, or possibly even early in **1 C.E.**