

KING HEROD the GREAT – a very nasty piece of work

King Herod ruled Jerusalem, and iron was his rod;

He thought of no one but himself – behaved like he was God.

He murdered relatives and friends, and even his own wife,

Because he thought they sought his throne, or even worse, his life.

So when one day three wise men came from foreign lands afar,

Saying they were looking for a king and following his star;

King Herod went bananas, called his teachers and his seers,

And roared, *“A new King’s coming? What on earth is this I hear?”*

*These wise men want to “worship” him, they say that’s why they’ve come.*

*I thought you lot knew what was what, how can you be so dumb?”*

The teachers of the law, alarmed, searched all the scriptures through;

Discovered ancient prophecies, of a King both good and true

Whose birthplace would be Bethlehem, that was his destination.

Then Herod planned a cunning plot to use this information.

*“ Pray go, find this new “King for me, I entrust the task to you;*

*Make haste, and tell me where he is, so I may “worship” too.”*

The wise men left Jerusalem and continued on their way,

In Bethlehem the star stopped still above where Jesus lay.

Entering the poor and lowly place in which the family were,

They gave their gifts of frankincense, of gold and precious myrrh.

That night they dreamed the self-same dream – it was a solemn warning:

*“Don’t trust King Herod – go home now – start travelling in the morning!”*

They left along a different road; then Joseph had a dream:

“Your baby’s in grave danger now, for Herod has a scheme;

He plans to kill him, so hurry now, and off to Egypt go.

Stay there a while; when Herod’s dead, then I will let you know.”

So Mary, Joseph and the babe, left in the dead of night,

And it was good they did, because the angel had been right.

When he heard he’d been outwitted, Herod flew into a rage;

Sent soldiers out to search and kill – they went on the rampage,

And all the boys in Bethlehem aged two years old or younger

Were slaughtered in a single day because of Herod’s anger.

His jealousy caused suffering, great sorrow, grief, and woe,

And we still remember what he did that day so long ago.

We shouldn’t be like Herod, mean, arrogant and cruel,

He treated people worse than dirt, but he was just a fool;

He lived for power and splendour, and mistrusted one and all,

Feared the little child of Bethlehem would cause his throne to fall.

But God saved the little Jesus from King Herod’s hate and strife

So he could become our Saviour and bring us eternal life.