



**Messengers**  
**Mason Stewart**  
**“When the Message Has an RSVP”**  
**12/18/22**

**Key Verses:** Matthew 1:18-2:18

**Key Thought:** The Christmas message is about God’s ultimate “proposal” to us— an invitation into a covenant relationship in which he can bless us; instead of responding “no” (like Herod), let us respond “yes” (with the magi) to enjoy God and God’s blessing now and forevermore!

**Points to Consider:**

- **The Christmas message is about God’s supreme invitation to us in Jesus Messiah:**
  - i. 1:21: The angel’s message about the naming of Jesus implies that the core mission of Jesus is to deliver us from our sins.
  - ii. 2:6: God’s desire to bless us through Jesus is captured in describing the reign of Jesus as “shepherding.”
  - iii. 1:23: God’s message through Isaiah about the birth of Jesus implies that Jesus is God— *himself*— come to deliver us!
- **We can respond “no” (like Herod):** • 2:4-6, 16: While a “no” might believe, it does not *trust*. • The characteristic emotion is anxiety. • 1:21: “No” is the way of sin.
- **Or we can respond “yes” (with the magi):** • 2:10-11: A “yes” believes *and* trusts. ← The magi value Jesus *above* their treasures (cf. 13:44). Moreover, their gift— a voluntary tribute— suggests that they are longing for the reign of the Shepherd. • The characteristic emotion is joy. • 1:21: “Yes” is the way of salvation.
- The thick irony in the account of Herod and the magi implies that it is our response which determines whether or not we are “his people” (see 1:21).
- God has “proposed,” and the time to respond is NOW. → A “yes” in the present enables us to enjoy God and God’s blessing (as well as gives shape to our future destiny).

**Discussion Prompts:**

- What stands out to you about the response of Herod or the magi?
- How can we reconcile the truth that the Shepherd does bless his sheep and give them joy with the reality, on the other hand, that the sheep are not immune from the brokenness of this world? (\*Hint: The blessing and joy run deeper than we might think.)
- Have you been more of an *unwelcoming* or *welcoming* environment for the Shepherd?
- How do you *want* to respond to God’s proposal?
- What would it look like for you to live out a “yes” in the coming days and weeks?