

## 12-27-20 After Jesus Birth

### Matthew 2:1-23

How was everyone's Christmas? (quiet, hectic, early morning, relaxing, busy, homemade food, take out?)

How about the day after Christmas? Most of the radio/TV stations have switched back to their normal play list. Everything Christmas is moved to the clearance aisle.

Now enters the time of uncertainty, a new year, yet so many variables, the anxiety of 2021 looms ahead. Who will be in government? Will schools be open? What about the vaccine? Will we get shut down again and be home bound? Will we get some decent snow so we can play?

The days, months and years after Jesus birth were dangerous, and dark times. In the dangerous and dark times is when God's light can shine brightest. It's also in these times we must be sanctified, set apart for His work. The days of sitting on the sidelines while others are in the game are ending.

### Read Matthew 2:1-6

By this time Herod had been King for 35 years.

Herod was not the rightful king from the line of David. In fact, he was not even a descendant of Jacob, but was descended from Esau and thus was an Edomite. He reigned over Palestine from 37 B.C. to 4 B.C.

This fact caused most of the Jews to hate him and never truly to accept him as king, even though he did much for the country. If someone had been rightfully born king, then Herod's job was in jeopardy

In walks wise men (Magi) from the east, Persia (Gentiles). Persians were known for magic, sorcery, and unlawful arts. These weren't the types you would ever pick to be searching for a King.

They ask, **"Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen HIS star in the East and have come to worship Him."** They didn't ask, is this true or could this be? They knew the King was born and sought to worship him.

**Verse 3-4** says SO much! Herod was troubled... a King born?! A legitimate King?! **"...and all Jerusalem with him."** It was believed that Herod had killed some of his own kids and wives over sedition, I am sure he was losing his mind.

Who does he go to for counsel? Religious leaders in Jerusalem. These religious leaders fit the description found in **2 Chronicles 36:14**, **"Moreover all the leaders of the priests and the people transgressed more and more, according to all the abominations of the nations, and defiled the house of the Lord which He had consecrated in Jerusalem."**

Three Gentiles enter the Kings court asking about the newborn King of the Jews and the "King" has no idea. Gentiles asking a Jew about Jewish tradition/prophecy and the Jew has no idea. Herod asks his priests and scribes, and they know the answer. They quote **Micah 5:2**.

- ❖ Herod didn't know God's word or will. His religious leaders knew God's word, but didn't care, or believe it to be true. Then we see Magi, Gentiles, somehow knowing God's word, seeking for His will. They were not only hearers but doers of God's Word!

### Read Matthew 2:7

Herod **“secretly”** called the wise men aside to get a better time frame of when the baby could have been born. “Go and search carefully...bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also.”

Notice the word in **verse 7, “determined”** that is the word I would use to best describe Satan and his attacks against God, His people, His will, and His church.

- ❖ God knows all the cruel projects and purposes of the enemies of HIS church. God alone will protect and guide HIS church and HIS people. Enemies of the church might think they can destroy it, even mock it, but God will get the last laugh.
- ❖ Sennecherib thought he could destroy Jerusalem, he even mocked and proclaimed God would not stop him, just like all the other cities gods he took over before. King Hezekiah’s prayer revealed the truth, these previous cities were “protected” by false gods, made by the hands of man.
- ❖ God says to HIS enemies in

**Isaiah 37:28, “But I know your dwelling place, Your going out and your coming in, And your rage against Me. 29 Because your rage against Me and your tumult Have come up to My ears, Therefore I will put My hook in your nose And My bridle in your lips, And I will turn you back By the way which you came.”**

**Read Matthew 2:9-12**

The Persian, Magi, Gentiles demonstrate how to find God’s will.

- ❖ They followed the light God gave them.
- ❖ They confirmed their steps by the Word of God.
- ❖ They obeyed God without question, and He led them each step of the way.

We can also see the gospel in their story.

- ❖ They were investigating what God revealed to them. (didn’t dismiss or ignore)
- ❖ When they found the young child (Jesus) they **“fell down and worshipped Him.”** (didn’t do this with Herod, there was something different, that caused their knees to buckle)
- ❖ They **“opened their treasures and presented gifts to Him:”** They came prepared for the heart transformation. They gave Jesus their best.
- ❖ They went home **“another way” (v.12)** Anyone who comes to Christ will go home another way and be a new creature.

**2 Corinthians 5:17, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”**

**Read Matthew 2:13-15**

Joseph is warned through a dream (2<sup>nd</sup> time) that danger was coming. God knew Herod’s heart before he did. “Herod will seek the young child to destroy Him.

Joseph was obedient to God and left for Egypt. Their travels to Egypt would be between 40-400 miles. 40 miles south west was territory controlled by Egypt, or they could have gone to the closest village into Egypt.

- ❖ God, when he pleases, can make the worst of places serve the best of purposes. (the earth is the Lord's; He makes what he pleases of it.)

### **Read Matthew 2:16-18**

Herod realized he was deceived and was exceedingly angry. He ordered the death of all boys under age two and under, in and around Bethlehem. What madness!

Thomas Jefferson said, "the measure of society is how it treats the weakest members"

### **Read Matthew 2:19-23**

Scholars speculate Herod's death happens a few months to a year or two after Jesus, Mary and Joseph escaped to Egypt.

Joseph has two more dreams; one directs him to head back to Israel. The second dream warned him that one of Herod's more eviler sons rule over Jerusalem, so they went farther north, to Nazareth.

Nazareth is 80 miles north of Bethlehem, so this was another big journey. But again, Joseph was found obedient.

### **Application:**

Those that are against God can be, wicked, desperate, troubled and make trouble for others, sneaky, deceptive, don't like the taste of their own medicine and unless God changes their hearts won't change. In fact, their hearts can grow colder and darker, taking them down paths that they never would have thought they would go before.

Those that are used of God for His purpose can or will find it, complicated, hard, inconvenient, times of uncertainty, used, not liked, judged, often mistreated, hurt, with little vindication on this side of heaven. They must be determined, just as Satan, but for God's purpose to be done. They must be people that are obedient to the calling, humble, knowing they can easily fall into sin, ready, actively serving wherever they can, whether in the promised land or Egypt.

Though Joseph and Mary were far from the temple of the Lord, they had with them the Lord of the temple. A forced absence from God's ordinances, and a forced presence with wicked people, where this might seem to be a lot, are not sin, yet cannot but be the grief, of good people. They must continue!