

King Herod: Murderer of Children

Matthew 2:1-23

Last week we went over the birth of Jesus Christ. Joseph and Mary took a difficult trip, while Mary was pregnant, to go pay their taxes. They went from Nazareth to Bethlehem.

Jesus was born there in Bethlehem in a manger. There was no room for them in the inn. Jesus, the Almighty God Creator of all things, was born in a manger where animals feed. The birth of Jesus Christ, God in the flesh, shows you he is a humble God.

King Herod = An Evil Man

We read the entire chapter this morning because I want to focus on an evil man named king Herod in Matthew Chapter 2.

""Matthew 2:1-2

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, 2 Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.""

Jesus was born in Bethlehem in the days of king Herod. Wise men came from the east to Jerusalem. Where exactly did they come from? We only know they came from the east. We know they believed in a Savior. They were wise men.

They come to Jerusalem, where king Herod reigned as king under Roman control, and begin asking where is he that is born King of the Jews? Is Jesus King of the Jews? Yes He is the King of the Jews. And who is a Jew?

""Romans 2:28-29

For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: 29 But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.""

Real Jews Have Believed In Jesus Christ

The real Jews are the ones who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Not the ones in the man-made nation of Israel over there today who practice Judaism and hate the Lord Jesus Christ. He is not their King. He is King to all those who believe in Him. God's chosen people understand that.

Physical Jews are not the children of God unless they have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible clearly says a Jew is not one outwardly. A Jew is one inwardly. If you have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, you are a child of God. You are a spiritual Jew just as the Bible says.

The wise men come to Jerusalem asking where the King of the Jews happens to be? "For we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him." Notice they have not come to worship king Herod who ruled over Judaea. They have come to worship Jesus Christ.

""Matthew 2:3

When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.""

The wise men said: 1) They had seen his star in the east. 2) That he was just born King of the Jews. 3) They are come to worship him.

King Herod is troubled. But not just king Herod was troubled. All of Jerusalem was troubled. Hey, a good King is coming. Herod and Jerusalem didn't like that. This should tell you the state of Herod and Jerusalem at this time.

Herod Starts Asking Questions & Coming Up With His Dark Plan

Now, I want you to see something in these next Scriptures. This is very important. Herod is troubled so what does he do? He starts asking questions and trying to figure things out. Watch what he knows, though.

""Matthew 2:4

And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born.""

King Herod gathers all the chief priests and scribes of the Jews together. These are the people who should know the Scriptures. King Herod knows that the Scriptures will tell him where the Christ or anointed one or Savior of the world should be born.

He demands, "Where will Christ be born?" He knows this is the Christ that he's looking for. And Herod is looking to kill the Christ. He doesn't want him. He's king. He's got everything he wants. And he wants the real King of the Jews killed.

But he doesn't understand that Jesus isn't coming to take over a physical kingdom at this time. He came to be the Savior of the world. He's not looking to take over as King of the physical Jews.

Watch what the chief priests and scribes tell king Herod. Remember that he asked where the Christ would be born. The Bible tells us where Christ would be born long before he was born.

""Matthew 2:5-6

And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet, 6 And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.""

Christ Comes From Bethlehem

They know the Scriptures. They know that the Christ, the Savior of the world, will come out of Bethlehem in the land of Juda. This was written about 700 years earlier than the birth of Jesus Christ. We see this written in Micah Chapter 5. This means we know the chief priests and the scribes had the word of God. They used it here to tell king Herod where Christ would be born.

Matthew 2:6	Micah 5:2
And thou Bethlehem , in the land of Juda , art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor , that shall rule my people Israel.	But thou, Beth-lehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah , yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.

We see that the quote from the Old Testament matches very well with the New Testament quote. We see Bethlehem, Judah, and the city of Bethlehem is little or the least among Judah. Again, this shows you Jesus is humble. He's born in the least.

We see out of thee shall come a Governor and a ruler in Israel. The only thing we don't see in Matthew that king Herod needed to see in Micah is "whose goings forth have been from old, from everlasting."

He needed to know that Jesus is God. That baby born is God in the flesh. He is from everlasting. He existed from everlasting. He's simply coming in the flesh to be the King of the Jews, which is a spiritual nation of saved people. If you have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, you are a citizen in this spiritual nation of God and of Jesus Christ.

Micah 5:2 says a ruler in Israel. Matthew 2:6 says a Governor that shall rule my people Israel. We are the spiritual nation of Israel because we believe in Jesus Christ. It's not a physical nation on this earth called Israel.

King Herod Didn't Know the Scriptures Himself

Herod knows the place where Jesus was born. Notice that he didn't know the Scriptures himself. He had to ask. You need to know the Scriptures. Don't be like this evil king Herod. That's why this church is here.

Come here, and you will learn the Scriptures and you will be wise. You gain knowledge and wisdom, greater than any other wisdom in this world, right here in this church from the Scriptures. I love the Scriptures, and I love to teach the Scriptures.

Now that Herod knows the place of the birth of Jesus, he now needs more information. He calls the wise men.

""**Matthew 2:7**

Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared.""

Herod does this privately. We see in the Gospels that the chief priests and scribes do things with subtilty and in private. Why? Because they know they are doing wrong. They do things in darkness because they are children of the devil. Herod is a child of the devil. He's hiding his plan.

He asks the wise men diligently. He really wants to know what time the star appeared.

""**Matthew 2:8**

And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.""

Herod gives these wise men from the east a commandment. He isn't their king. But you can see he likes to command people what to do. There's many people out there that enjoy giving commandments to people when they have no authority over them in that aspect of their life. This will back fire on Herod later.

King Herod Isn't the King of the Wise Men

He commands the wise men, keep in mind he isn't their king, to go and search diligently for the young child. They were already doing that. Herod commands them that when they have found him to bring word that he may come and worship him also.

This is king Herod. Lazy. If it were so important to him, why didn't he get up and make the short trip himself? The trip was about 6 miles. You can see king Herod, an evil man, is too lazy to make the trip. A couple hours of walking and he would be there himself. But he sends men he has no authority over.

Those wise men had come a long way already. They were diligently seeking Jesus Christ. King Herod lies to them. He says that he wants to come worship Jesus. And please understand that the name of Jesus wasn't known by king Herod at this time or the wise men.

King Herod now knows where the Christ was born and about what time the star appeared. He got this information from the chief priests and scribes and now the wise men. He has a place and a time.

We know that Jesus is a young child at this time. He wasn't just born when the wise men are searching for him. It took them time to journey. The wise men do not show up at the manger at the time Jesus was born. It's some time later. Months later. Possibly two years later. We'll see this in this chapter.

""Matthew 2:9-10

When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. 10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.""

The star that had appeared to them when they were in the east shows up again. That star went before them until it came and stood over the exact location of the child Jesus. The wise men rejoiced with exceeding great joy! They were exceedingly joyful to find Jesus! King Herod is the opposite. Jerusalem is the opposite. They were troubled to hear about the Christ.

They Rejoiced to See the Christ and Worship Him!

Jesus says that Abraham rejoiced to see the day of Jesus. Abraham was glad. We're like Abraham. We can't wait to see Jesus. We're like those wise men. We are not like Herod or the Pharisees or the chief priests or the scribes.

""Matthew 2:11-12

And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh. 12 And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.""

The wise men come into the house. They aren't in a manger so this didn't happen when Jesus was born. They saw the young child with Mary his mother. They fell down and worshipped him. They open their treasures and present gifts to Jesus.

God then warns them in a dream to not return to king Herod as he had commanded them to do. They left and went into their own country a different way.

""Matthew 2:13

And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.""

God already knew the thoughts and intents of king Herod. Many people want to go up against God. They believe their schemes will work. They believe their secret plans are secret. But they aren't to God. God knows your plans. You can't outsmart God. He knew what you're going to do tomorrow 1 billion years ago.

God Already Knew the Secret Plans of Herod

Because God knew the plans of king Herod, the angel of the Lord appears to Joseph in a dream. "Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt." God tells Joseph to stay there with Mary and Jesus until he brings him word.

God knows that king Herod is seeking the child to destroy him. Herod lied to the wise men and told them he was going to come worship him. Herod knows this is the Christ. He knows this is God's chosen Savior. The wise men were coming to worship him. That should tell him that this is God in the flesh.

And yet, he's so evil that he's going to try to destroy the child.

Jesus is born in Bethlehem. He is presented in Jerusalem. He is back in Bethlehem as a young child. Now he's going into Egypt with Joseph and Mary as a young child.

""Matthew 2:14-15

When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: 15 And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.""

Joseph goes by night. He departs into Egypt. Joseph, Mary, and Jesus stay in Egypt until the death of Herod. And this fulfills prophecy from hundreds of years prior.

""Hosea 11:1

When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.""

The Physical Nation of Israel Isn't the Spiritual Seed of Christ

Jesus is the King of the Jews. He is the King of Israel. Israel is the spiritual seed of Jesus Christ. God called his children out of Egypt. God called Jesus out of Egypt. God called you and I out of a life of sin and into everlasting life so that we should follow him.

Herod doesn't know that the Christ is in Egypt. He still believes Jesus is in Bethlehem.

""Matthew 2:16

Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men.""

Herod finds out the wise men left and didn't come telling him what he wanted. He was mocked of the wise men. He gets exceeding wroth or very, very angry. What does he do? He takes it out on all the children. He's an evil, evil murderer.

He sends people forth to slay or kill all the children that were in Bethlehem and in all the coasts thereof. Every child 2 years old and under was killed by king Herod. So we know that Jesus was 2 years old or younger at this time because the wise men told Herod when the star had appeared to them. When the wise men saw Jesus, he wasn't a new born baby.

Herod was trying to kill the Savior of the world, but it wasn't his time to die.

When God isn't ready for someone to die, they won't die. When it's time, it's time. And the time of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ was already set from eternity. There's no way king Herod's plan would work. Jesus would 30 years or more later become the Passover Lamb and pay for the sins of the whole world.

God Knew Herod's Plans A Long Time Ago

God already knew what king Herod would do. It is written in the prophets as well and is fulfilled when king Herod kills all the children 2 years old and under in Bethlehem and the surrounding areas.

""Matthew 2:17-18

Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, 18 In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.""

This comes from the prophet Jeremiah about 600 years prior to this happening. Rachel, the mother of Joseph and Benjamin, of Jacob or Israel, died and was buried in the way to Ephrath which is Bethlehem the Bible says.

This occurred back then, a slaughter, and now it happens again, a slaughtering of children by king Herod. In the city of Rama, they were weeping. Rama, from the North, is on the way to Bethlehem.

What an evil and unthinkable thing. There's not much more evil that can ever be done than murdering children. King Herod is a picture of the antichrist. I believe he is a type of antichrist. He's a child of the devil and he does the deeds of his father the devil. Herod is a foreshadowing of the antichrist who will come in the future.

Herod is a Type of Antichrist

Herod is the king at the first coming of Jesus Christ. He's the last king before Jesus comes at his first coming. The antichrist will be the king of this world when Jesus comes back at his second coming.

The antichrist will act like Herod. "I want to worship him also." And then we find out what he truly happens to be. People will believe the antichrist to be a great man. And then they will find out they were wrong.

Same thing with politicians. They put on this righteous mask when they look you in the eye and tell you lies. They take that mask off and they are similar to king Herod. They simply want money and power. Herod didn't want to lose his power.

""**Matthew 2:19-20**

But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, 20 Saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child's life.""

Herod lost his power. He lost his life. The antichrist will lose his power and be cast into hell fire. Don't ever be on that side. Get as far away from that side as you can.

I hope you learned many things in this lesson today. You're seeing the word of God. You're learning from the word of God. Your faith in God is increasing. You are gaining wisdom and knowledge that others don't have and will never have. Your life is changing.

Let's pray.