

Matthew 2:1-12 – Two Visions of the Christ Child

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: There were 2 remarkably different views of the Christ-Child, the views of the Wise Men, the foreigners, and the view of Herod, the pretend-Jew.

And as always, your view of someone influences how you respond. Today you will see the views of the Wise Men and Herod.

Our headings are:

A Plan to Adore

A Plan to Annihilate

Our goals are: **That seeing all the riches God intended for you in the Christ-Child, that you will fall on your knees in adoration and that you will work to stifle the work of the Sneaky Snake who is trying to silence the spread of this Good News!**

A Plan to Adore

1 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, **wise men from the East came to Jerusalem**, 2 saying, "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.**"

1. Wise men, we don't know how many wise men there were, tradition says they were 12, came from the east to worship.

God revealed to them, through the star in the West, the birth of Jesus.

2. God put in these wise men's hearts the desire to worship him.

They traveled many miles and many days to see Jesus, so strong was the desire.

Surely they were believers as non-believers are not able to worship.

Remember, **no one can worship without faith!** There is no faith without Christ's blood.

This testified that Jesus was God! Only God is to be worshipped.

This was the **ultimate wisdom!** Wise people worship the true God.

3. These wise men did not go to the stable with the ox and donkey like you see on postcards, but they went to Joseph's house.

Matthew 2:11 And when they **had come into the house**, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

4. These wise men brought gold, frankincense, and myrrh, gifts that picture Christ's work.

Gold. Kings usually had a crown of gold...and a golden scepter. A picture of Christ's rule of his people.

Frankincense. This was a gum-like substance that when burned, produced a fragrant

smoke. A picture of Christ's spreading influence of the Gospel. He spread the Gospel abroad as a prophet.

Myrrh. This was an expensive spice used in funerals for preserving the body. A picture of Christ's sacrificial death for sinners.

These were gifts like the Queen of Sheba brought. 1Kings 10. Psalm 72.

5. Why did God want foreigners to confirm who Christ was and that he had be worshipped?

- a. This would have confirmed to the Jews that indeed Messiah had come. It wasn't their own people faking a prophecy!
- b. This would have confirmed to Herod there was someone greater than he.
- c. This would have allowed the message to spread by many witnesses in faraway places.

6. Lessons:

a. God had already spoken to Mary and Joseph, he confirmed it through the wise men, so you must not doubt that God's Words are true. Christ came in human flesh to be your Prophet, Priest, and King to redeem you.

b. Fall before him in adoration. You now are no longer in spiritual rags, but you are covered with clothes of righteousness...with a new heart, record, and life!

c. Give your gifts to him...not just your tithes, but your whole self, as a living sacrifice. Give your life to his service. It is your only rational thing!

A Plan to Annihilate

3 When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

1. Herod, on the other hand, did not want to worship, he wanted to kill the Christ-Child.

So Advent was also a bloody time in Israel as the Sneaky Snake tried to destroy the line of promise. Satan found a great companion in Herod...and man who greatly lusted for power and would do anything to preserve his power. Herod learned that the power that he had was being threatened by a new king – the Christ.

2. Who was this Herod?

Herod was not a true Jew. He was not a good king (he wasn't a true king of Israel). Herod's father was an Edomite who supported Caesar's invasions. **His father adopted Judaism and usurped the throne;** Herod tried to appease the Jews by rebuilding the temple and decorating it, but he tried harder to please Rome. He started Olympic-style games in honor of Caesar. He executed his wife and 2 sons earlier in his life. Shortly before his death, he executed his son who was trying to kill him. He was survived by his 2 sons Herod Philip and Herod Antipas, who executed John the Baptist. He destroyed the whole

Sanhedrim – the judges of Judea. He was a bloody man. He was “blood-thirsty.” It was better to be Herod’s (sow) hog than his son.

4 And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, **he inquired of them** where the Christ was to be born. 5 So they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet: 6 'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, Are not the least among the rulers of Judah; For out of you shall come a Ruler Who will shepherd My people Israel.'"

3. Herod planned for the destruction of the Christ-Child using the local leaders.

Most truly wicked men plan...they are not impulsive.

So he gathered the religious leaders of Israel to ask them where this extraordinary King, **a King that had to be worshipped, was to be born.** They told him.

Micah 5:2 "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, *Though* you are little among the thousands of Judah, *Yet* out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth *are* from of old, **From everlasting.**"

This Messiah would be a man and yet he would be an everlasting Being. Only God is everlasting.

7 Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared. 8 And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found Him, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also."

4. Herod planned for the destruction of the Christ-Child using foreign leaders.

Herod secretly called back the wise men to find out when the star had appeared...which was possibly about two years earlier. We conclude this based on what Herod would do next.

Herod used these men as unwitting participants in his plan to find and kill this God-King whom the wise men had come to worship.

Herod lied about his own intention – pretending that he was interested in worshipping this new King – the Messiah.

5. Herod’s work was really the work of the Sneaky Snake, something he started in heaven.

He thought if he could abort the work of Jesus and negate God’s prophesies by killing him.

Revelation 12:4 His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, **to devour her Child as soon as it was born.**

The Devil caused 1/3 of the stars in heaven (angels were called stars) by leading them in rebellion against Jesus. Now Herod was Satan’s agent.

6. After creation of man, the Devil continued that attempt to destroy the godly seed through whom the Saving Seed would come.

Let's consider some of the examples of his attempts:

a. Under the inspiration of the Dragon, Cain killed Abel. The attack was an attempt to destroy the godly Seed. God had already promised that the Seed of the woman – Jesus Christ – would crush the head of the Serpent – Satan- and he knew it. (Genesis 3) But Eve then **gave birth to Seth, the Appointed One**, to replace Abel. Genesis 4:25.

b. Under the inspiration of the Dragon, the godly line of Seth intermarried with the Dragon's followers. But **God preserved the line of the Seed with 8 people in the ark** by destroying the Devil's seed. Genesis 6.

c. Under the inspiration of the Dragon, 2 foreign kings, Abimelech and Pharaoh (with the complacency of Abram) attempted to pollute Sarah - . But the **Lord himself interrupted them**. Gen. 12:10-20; 20:1-18.

d. Under the inspiration of the Dragon, a foreign king - Abimelech (with the complacency of Isaac) tried to commit adultery with Rebekah as well. Genesis 26:1-11. **But God preserved Rebekah.**

e. Under the inspiration of the Dragon, Isaac attempted to cheat Jacob of his Divine inheritance and disrupt the line of the Seed, but God stopped it. Genesis 27. **But God stopped it.**

f. Under the inspiration of the Dragon, Pharaoh tried to destroy the line of the Seed by destroying all the male children of Israel, but was stopped by God when God killed Pharaoh's son and let his people go. Canaan. Ex 1-14.

g. Under the inspiration of the Dragon, about 500 years later, King Saul tried to kill David and block the Seed of Promise. In fact, most of his kingdom was dedicated to this job of trying to kill young David through whom the Seed would come. I Samuel. **God saved David.**

h. Under the inspiration of the Dragon, Queen Athaliah “destroyed all the royal seed of the House of Judah.” 2 Chron 22: 10.

But **God preserved young Joash who would preserve the line of promise.**

i. Under the inspiration of the Dragon, Haman, Prime Minister of Persia, attempted to destroy the Seed of Promise by killing all Jews. But **God saved the Seed's line through a woman standing in the gap for God's people.**

j. Under the inspiration of the Dragon many kings, like Manasseh, killed their sons in fire. They tried to destroy the line of promise **but God always kept the line going.**

7. Then throughout the life of Christ, the Dragon tempted the Seed of promise, Jesus, and

when he failed, he tried to murder him.

Then he finally, **crucified Jesus** but only on God's timing.

Luke 4: 28 So all those in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, **29** and rose up and thrust Him out of the city; and **they led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw Him down over the cliff.**

What the Dragon didn't know was after wounding the Seed's heel (temporary death), his head would be crushed (permanent condemnation).

Yes, the **red** at Christmas was the blood.

The **green** was the green tree on which he died.

The **white** reminds you that you are made clean!

8. In order to kill Jesus, Herod ordered the murder (this was not a lawful execution) of all male children under 2 years of age, using his soldiers.

Lust for his own power drove Herod. And the mourning cries of the people went up to God.

Matthew 2:17 Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying: **18** "A voice was heard in Ramah, Lamentation, weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, Refusing to be comforted, Because they are no more."

Rachel was the **spiritual mother of Israel** so her name is used to represent the women. She cried bitterly because **she had no children** and was barren until later in life. Rachel **died near Bethlehem** and was buried there. And **Ramah was a town belonging to Benjamin, the last son of Rachel.** When Benjamin was born **she died, crying a gain.**

9. Lessons:

a. The greatest wickedness often conceals itself under a mask of piety. Learn of the wickedness many of the Anglican church leaders: They include **false worshippers from other religions to lead in their worship.** They **re-baptize those who have changed their genders.** Other church leaders are **asking God to bless abortion clinics.** Some **preachers tickle people's ears** so they would make him rich! **People's Church: Jesus came to save you from your hard life!** How deceitful! That is not the Gospel! Even truth can be a lie. **Jesus came to save you from your sins! These are more dangerous than Herod.** They are trying to **kill Jesus by destroying his teaching.** This is fraud.

b. Then there is the state that is still trying to kill Jesus by killing his message.

Everything Christ calls evil and perverted, they call good and financially support. The people therefore see no need to repent...and fall before Christ in worship!

c. The world will not leave Christians alone. The world wants to **force** you to **conform to their ideas and support them.** These people want to remove any vestige of Christianity.

(Two women will go to jail because they won't write perverse message on cakes. But the world will lose in the end.

d. So you must learn to fight – fight hard – fight with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Don't let them kill Messiah's message! Be a true disciple.

Conclusion:

The wise men came, **knowing who Jesus was, and believing in him**, offered their **gifts and gratitude** to the Christ-Child. Herod, the wicked son of Satan, **believing in himself and hating Jesus**, declared war on him, and used **fraud and force** to try to accomplish his evil goals.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. Nothing could stop the Christ-Child from being born and accomplishing his purpose. God would save the world from sins! He was willing and able to do it!

2. Advent is a call to worship! You know who Jesus is. You know what he has done on the cross. **Rejoice. Long to worship each Sabbath? Do you worship in your home? This is what Advent is about.** It doesn't matter if CBC doesn't want to play "Baby, it's cold outside." It doesn't even matter if people don't want to say "Merry Christmas" at Walmart. It's about worship!

3. Advent is a call to fight! It is a military call. Fight to promote Christ's message around the world. Fight those who are killing it!

Finally, if you are not a Christian, you can't worship God, though you must. You will be able to worship him if you ask God to make you his child by counting Christ's death as your death. Do this today.