

When There is No Peace on Earth

Matthew 2; Coast Community Church; Pastor Earl Miles; 12-25-2022

Introduction

Our purpose in life is to glorify and enjoy God through trust and love. We trust God by resting in Jesus for pardon and perfection and by hoping in God for help and happiness. We love God and others by submitting to God's Word and to God's will. We want to see how God calls us to trust and love in light of Matthew 2 and the story of Christmas. Matthew 2 is, in one sense, about religion and politics.

1. The Birth of the King (1-12)

Herod the Great was king of the Jews from 37-4 BC. The magi (also called wise men) likely were astrologer/philosophers who gave counsel to kings either in Persia or Babylonia, but they were not kings themselves. Evidently an unusual star came into view and they associated it with the birth of the Jewish Messiah, possibly because of the testimony of Daniel and other believing Jews. Micah 5:2 indicates that the Messiah would come from Bethlehem (about 5 miles south of Jerusalem) and 2 Samuel 5:2 indicates that the Messiah/Ruler to come would be a ruling shepherd like his ancestor King David. It is clear that the star that the Magi saw and that reappeared to them was an unusual one that guided them to the very house where the Child Jesus was, just like the cloud and fire guided the people of Israel in the wilderness. The fact that Jesus was now in a house is a further indication that the Magi saw His star when He was born and traveled to see him (over 2-3 months possibly) and by the time they arrived, Mary and Joseph and the baby Jesus had moved from the stable to a house. The Magi worshiped Jesus when they saw Him and gave Him gifts that indicate something special about Him: gold for a King, incense for God and myrrh for Man. Amazingly and providentially, no one followed the Magi to see Jesus; neither assassins from King Herod or religious leaders from the chief priests and scribes or troubled citizens who heard the questions from the Magi! In this passage, we immediately see the clash between the current 'king of the Jews' and the 'newborn King of the Jews'! We also see that the promised King was the promised Messiah, the One who would bring salvation and happiness to God's people. Finally, we see that some of those who claim to want to worship the King may simply be pretenders and actually contenders for His throne! The war that is shaping the world is between two kingdoms: the domain of darkness and the kingdom of the beloved Son.

- The Universe is a Monarchy not a Democracy as Needed as It May Be – Psalm 29:10
- The Monarchy and the Good – 1 Samuel 8:19-20; 1 Kings 8:66; Hosea 3:5; Acts 8:12
- The Monarchy and Love – 2 Chronicles 9:8
- Resistance to Monarchy

2. The Rejection of the King (13-18)

The Lord warned Joseph and Mary to flee from Herod and they went to Egypt. Egypt was close, there were many Jews living there, it was outside of Herod's jurisdiction and it fulfilled Scripture. Jesus recapitulates the history of Israel in various ways as the true Israel of God.

(Hendriksen) Herod was capable, deceitful and murderous. He had already murdered two of his wives and two of his sons and others who appeared to be a threat to his throne. He asked the Magi when they first saw the star in order to determine how long it had been since the Messiah had been born. He decided to kill all baby boys 2 years and under in and around Bethlehem, not because it had been two years since the birth but because he, in his madness and cruelty and rage, wanted to make sure the threat to his throne was dead. The baby Jesus could have been as young as 2 months old but probably not much more than a year old. Bethlehem, at this time, was a small village of a 100 or so (maybe more according to some estimates), so the death toll, though a horrendous atrocity still, was probably in the 15-20 range for the number of boys that young that would have been killed. Rachel, the wife of Jacob, obviously wasn't alive, but she represents the nation of Israel weeping for those who went into exile under the Assyrians and Babylonians and this mourning is ultimately fulfilled in Jesus going into temporary exile in Egypt because of another pagan ruler. This passage references two fulfillments of Scripture. It teaches us two important truths: God fulfills His good Word to His people through trials and through the sinful rage of others. We need to understand that the evil and suffering in the world is the collateral damage from the insurrection of the devil and fallen man against the divine monarchy, not the result of a divine deficiency as if He were not all good and all loving.

- Human Opposition to the Divine Monarchy - Psalm 2
- Satanic Opposition to the Divine Monarchy - Revelation 12:1-12
- Political Opposition to the Divine Monarchy – Acts 17:6-8
- Current Opposition to the Divine Monarchy
- The Pride of Such Opposition

3. The Triumph of the King (19-23)

Herod the Great died on April 4, 4 BC. Joseph and Mary and baby Jesus returned from Egypt after his death. They thought about living in Bethlehem again but chose not to do so through a healthy fear of the son of Herod who also was a cruel tyrant and through divine direction. They settled back in Nazareth, their hometown. This is why Jesus was called a Nazarene instead of a Bethlehemite. This typically was considered a name of derision and is part of the fulfillment that the Messiah would be despised (Isaiah 53).

- The Lion Lamb King – Revelation 5:1-8; 17:14
- The Heart of the King
Life and death are in the hands of the King whose heart it is to bring heaven to earth one day and to give us His joy. – Proverbs 16:14-15; John 15:10-11; Romans 14:17; Revelation 22:1-5
- Let Earth Receive Her King
- The Golden Scepter is Extended – Esther 4:10-11; 5:1-2; Matthew 11:28-30

Conclusion

Christmas is about religion and politics; it's about a King who saves! Is Jesus your King?