

Matthew 2:1-12 – Man's plan for The Christ-child: Adore and Annihilate

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: You probably saw the video recently of a father and grandfather in India trying to bury a little baby girl who was still living. To them, that girl baby would cause the family much hardship and trouble. In India, that is likely true. But they were wrong, of course, to try to murder the baby.

Two thousand years ago there was another baby, a wonderful baby. He came to save the world from eternal damnation. His birth was marked by remarkable prophecies, by an immaculate conception, by angels singing in a heavenly choir, by shepherds getting a heavenly message, and by a great guiding star in the heavens. Surely all people would rejoice at the news of this baby! He wasn't a burden. Well, not really. Some did, but one in particular did not. You will hear about 2 responses to the birth of this remarkable Baby.

Our headings are:

Wise Men planned to Adore the Christ-child

Herod's planned to Annihilate the Christ-child

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

Wise Men Plan to Adore the Christ-child

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 Gentile men there were but tradition says they were 12) came from the east to worship the Christ-child.

God revealed to them through the star in the West the birth of Jesus, whom they were told would be the King of the Jews.

2. The wise men came many miles to worship the Christ-child, so strong was their desire.

These wise men were believers as non-believers are not able to worship. No one can worship without faith! There is no faith without Christ's blood.

Further, their desire to worship proves Jesus' Deity, as only God is to be worshipped. Further still, these foreigners from faraway lands proved this was not a fake attempt by the Jews to get Messiah.

3. These wise men did not go to the stable with the ox and donkey, like you see on postcards, but they were led 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...

Their faith was strong and they weren't bothered with the Lord's humble condition. They did not walk by sight but by faith.

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

Gold. Kings usually had crowns of gold...and a golden. This pictured 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 and sent his disciples to do the same. He was a prophet.

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

These were gifts like the Queen of Sheba brought to Solomon – who name meant “peace.”

6. Lessons:

a. The coming of the wise men from the east confirmed the OT prophecies that God would dwell among his people and take on a human body (Immanuel) that would die for the sins of men. This would prove the Word of God is true!

b. Since Jesus is God, fall down and adore him. You are no longer in spiritual rags, but you are covered with 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! (Romans 12:1)

d. Faith will overcome all obstacles to receive Christ. Faith will make people abandon big business...even family and friends...in order to worship the Lord!

e. These multiple wise men caused the message of Messiah to spread in faraway places – and quickly. Do this too!

Herod plans to annihilate the Christ-child

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

1. Herod, picturing the Devil, did not want to worship, but wanted to kill the Christ-child.

Satan found a great companion in Herod...and man who greatly lusted for power and would do anything to preserve his power.

2. Who was this Herod?

Herod the Great was not a true Jew. He was not a good king. 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 and when he was tricked by another son, Antipater, just before his death, he executed him. He was survived by his 3 sons: Herod Archelaus, who ruled over ½ of his dominion and Herod Philip and Herod Antipas who ruled over ¼ each. Antipas executed John the Baptist. Herod the Great destroyed the whole Sanhedrim – the judges of Judea. He was “blood-thirsty.”

It was better to be Herod's swine 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 local leaders.

Most truly wicked men plan...they are not impulsive. So he gathered the religious leaders of Israel to ask 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. (More proof of Christ's Deity.) The humble place of birth did not matter. Christ's presence dignifies the place.

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 1-2 years earlier. We conclude this based on what Herod did 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 he was interested in worshipping this new King.

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

Herod thought 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.**

Earlier the Devil caused 1/3 of the angels to be evicted from heaven by leading them in rebellion against Jesus. After creation Satan continued to attempt to destroy the godly seed through whom the Saving Seed would come. Now Herod was Satan's agent.

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 – 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 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 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. 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 God stopped him** when God killed Pharaoh's son and let his people go. Canaan. Ex 1-14.
- g. Under the inspiration of the Dragon, 500 years later, **King Saul** tried to kill David and block the Seed of Promise. Most of his kingdom was dedicated to trying to kill 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. 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!

6. In order to kill Jesus, Herod ordered the murder (not a lawful execution) of all male children under 2 years, 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."

Earlier, Rachel 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 again in pain (naming her son, Ben Oni – son of my sorrow).

7. Lessons:

a. The greatest wickedness often conceals itself under a mask of piety. Let me illustrate: Anglican church leaders now include false worshippers from other religions to lead 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 them rich! People's Church: Jesus came to save you from your hard life! That is not the Gospel! Jesus came to save you from your sins! These lies are more dangerous than Herod's. They are trying to kill Jesus by destroying his teaching.

b. The state is trying to kill Jesus by killing his message. Many things Christ calls evil and perverted, they call good and financially support. (And they take away your money to do these wicked things!) When the state becomes the savior, people see no need to repent and worship the Lord!

c. The world will not leave Christians alone but will try to terrify you. The world wants to force you to conform to their ideas and support their wickedness. If you say you oppose abortions, they will accuse you of hating women! (To disagree with them is evidence of hate to them!) These people want to remove any vestige of Christianity. (Two women will likely go to jail because they won't write perverse messages on cakes. But the world will lose in the end.

d. So fight hard with the Good News of Jesus. Don't let them kill Messiah's message! Promote this message on Facebook. Tell your friends about it. Challenge those who oppose it. This message is life!

e. Don't ever think you are too small to be used by God. It is God who makes the difference. He used small Bethlehem, he could use small New Horizon...he could use you, a child, to spread the Gospel.

Conclusion:

The wise men came, knowing who Jesus was, and believing in him, and offered their gifts and gratitude to the Christ-Child and worshipped him. Herod, the wicked son of Satan, believing in himself and hating Jesus, declared war on Jesus, 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 said he would save the world from sins! He was willing and able to do it!

2. So Advent is a call to worship! You know who Jesus is. You know what he did on the cross. Rejoice. Long to worship each Sabbath! Worship in your home! It doesn't even matter if people don't want to say "Merry Christmas" (What does that even mean?) at Walmart. It's about worship! Lead men to worship!

3. For men to worship, you have to carry the Advent message everywhere! It is a military call. Fight those who are killing the message!

Finally, if you are not a Christian, you can't worship God, though you must. If you want to worship him (and wise men still seek him) he will lead you to himself and count his death as your death and make you his child.