



Christmas Under Wraps

Choose Your King

Matthew 2:1-3, 7-8, 11-16, 22-23

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After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem ² and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."
³ When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him...

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⁷ Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. ⁸ He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him..."

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Christmas Under Wraps



¹¹ On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. ¹² And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route."

Matthew 2:1-3, 7-8, 11-16, 22-23

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¹³ When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him." ¹⁴ So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, ¹⁵ where he stayed until the death of Herod...

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¹⁶ When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi...

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²² But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Having been warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee, ²³ and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth.

"If you have two quarterbacks,
you actually have none."





"If you have two quarterbacks,
you actually have none."



"Can you show us the way to the king?"



Herod used other people for his own selfish purposes.



Herod used other people for his own selfish purposes.

Herod blatantly lied about his intentions.



Herod used other people for his own selfish purposes.

Herod blatantly lied about his intentions.

Herod allowed, and acted from, furious rage.



Herod was willing to do anything to eliminate threats and retain his power.





"From what we know about the population of villages such as Bethlehem at the time, this would have been about twenty or thirty children. While we find this shocking, such atrocities were so commonplace in Herod's reign that it didn't even merit any other historical mention."

(Tim Keller)

Herod was willing to do anything to eliminate threats and retain his power.

Herod treated relationships, and people, as disposable tokens to be discarded when they were no longer valuable.



Herod saw threats everywhere.



Herod saw threats everywhere.

Herod was far more concerned with his many colossal building projects than he was with ruling the people wisely.



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Temple for Caesar Augustus and Kore



Herod tried to cultivate an image as a faithful adherent to Judaism, but his words and actions made it clear that his devotion was to himself and to Rome.



Herod wasn't just willing to sacrifice children from Bethlehem to protect his power, he sacrificed his own sons as well.





"It is better to be Herod's pig than his son."

(Emperor Augustus)



Jesus was an unplanned pregnancy, born in a small town, to parents of humble means, and laid in a borrowed bed in the form of a manger.





Jesus was an unplanned pregnancy, born in a small town, to parents of humble means, and laid in a borrowed bed in the form of a manger.

Jesus had to suffer, and adapt, under the rule of the powerful and cruel.





Jesus grew up with a reputation that could be easily dismissed and ignored.





⁴⁵ Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." ⁴⁶ "Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" Nathanael asked.



"Nothing much came from Nazareth, an obscure village tucked away in the hills of Galilee. We have lots of names for places like that. Backwoods. Boondocks. Hicksville. Illiterate. Backwards. Behind the times. Dead end. And, those are the nice names.



Every country and state and province has a place like Nazareth. It's a place so remote that nothing ever happens there, no one of distinction lives there, and no one of importance comes from there."

(Dr. Ray Pritchard)



"The world insists if anybody has the answers, they have to come from certain places. They have to come from people with certain credentials... Not only does God *not* operate like that, he habitually operates in the very *opposite* way...



Over and over and over again God says, 'I will choose Nazareth, not Jerusalem. I will choose the girl nobody wants. I will choose the boy everybody has forgotten.'"

(Tim Keller)



Jesus considered people, and relationships, as the most valuable things—treating no one as disposable.





Jesus considered people, and relationships, as the most valuable things—treating no one as disposable.

Jesus told the truth about himself and his intentions, even when it meant people would stop following him or actively try to thwart his ministry.





Jesus displayed anger on very rare occasions, and never acted from a place of rage.





Jesus displayed anger on very rare occasions, and never acted from a place of rage.

Jesus never built a single structure to celebrate his legacy... he never even had an earthly home of his own.





Jesus was truly faithful to the heart of Jewish law, but also called people toward faithfulness to God above legal traditions.





Jesus never sacrificed anyone to eliminate threats or retain his power. Instead, he would set aside his power, and sacrifice his own life, to save us from the threat of sin.



It is through the person and ways of Jesus that God has chosen, and still chooses, to reconcile us to himself and transform his world.





"In every heart, there is a 'little King Herod' that wants to rule with total sovereignty. The impulse that says, 'No one tells me what to do!' This dark episode of King Herod's violent lust for power shows us one of the hidden truths of Christmas.



It points to our natural resistance to the claims of God on our lives. 'Where's the true King?' That question is the most disturbing question possible to a human heart, since we want at all costs to remain on the throne of our own lives."

(Tim Keller)



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