

THE COMING OF CHRIST

Matthew chapter 2

Sermon Outline Notes

All scriptures are quoted from the New International Version (NIV)

INTRODUCTION

Non-confrontational Christmas celebrations:

What could be less confrontational than a baby in a manger and yet the reality of the coming of the Son of God into the world is quite different.

Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too."

Luke 2:34-35

Jesus' ministry was confrontational from the start.

From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near."

Matt.4:17

Our challenge: To progress from non-confrontational bridge-building to exposing people to the full claims of Christ.

THE COSMIC CHRIST

2:1 "After Jesus was born." Still in Bethlehem, but maybe 2 years later.

Bethlehem had quite a history, involving Jacob & Rachel, Ruth and David

The Magi: astronomers, astrologers, or both, or something else?

God clearly used their knowledge and constant watching of the planetary systems to announce the birth of His King. Does this legitimise the popularity of astrology today? No, there is a clear difference namely,

Astrology says, "What happens in the stars causes events on earth."

Whereas, God announced with a star, what he had done on earth..

Jesus is the only sign we need. (Luke 2:12, 35)

Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Colossians 2:3

The supremacy of Christ:

The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. ¹⁷ He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. Colossians 1:15-17

(See also John 1:1-3, Hebrews 1:3)

The Magi had not come to further their careers, but to worship, not just a king for the Jews, but God who would be a "light to the Gentiles."

Luke 2:32)

RUTHLESS AND PERILOUS TIMES

Although Herod had accomplished much during his reign and was not called "Great" for nothing, he was ruthless towards potential rivals. His victims included his wife, his mother-in-law and three of his sons. Therefore, his reaction to the news of the birth of a baby born to be king was not surprising.

Herod feels threatened and all Jerusalem knows it. Matt. 2:3

Fear and insecurity caused Herod to disregard the true significance of the birth namely:

The cosmos announced it. 2:2

Herod knew he was the Christ, the promised Messiah. 2:4

To oppose what God was doing was utter foolishness. 2:13

Innocent children suffer at Herod's hand

Bethlehem's population was around 1,000 at the time. It is estimated that 20 – 30 babies would have been killed. Not a major incident for those days, but still tragic.

THE PROBLEMS OF FEAR AND INSECURITY

The history of Israel's kings is riddled with treachery and murder.

The lust for power overrules all moral and spiritual judgements.

There are many modern examples: Hitler, Stalin, Mao Tse-tung, Pol Pot, Idi Armin, Nicolae Ceausescu, Robert Mugabe and Saddam Hussein.

WE SEE THREE POSSIBLE RESPONSES TO JESUS CHRIST

1. **Herod.** Hatred and hostility.
Jesus is still hated and persecuted through His church around the world.
2. **Chief Priests and Teachers of the Law.** Indifference.

You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life. John 5:39-40

3. **The Magi.** Adoring worship.

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.

Romans 12:1

~oOo~