

Grace mercy and peace are yours because a child has been born to us, he is Christ the Lord!

NIV Matthew 2:13 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. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: "Out of Egypt I called my son." 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. 17 Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled: 18 "A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more."

We pray: Lord God Almighty, our heavenly Father, by sending your son to earth you proved your faithfulness, by directing the affairs of the world leaders you proved your power, send your Holy Spirit into our hearts this morning to submit our lives to Jesus Christ the Savior born for us.

Introduction: Throughout my life different things have driven me from fun with my brothers, goals in sports, money for cars and toys, love of a woman, and love for my children. All of those things took over my life for a period of time and at different levels of control. Especially babies. When a child is born, it is a full time job that demands your energy, time and focus. As strange as it may sound but this helpless little baby is in control of my life. Everything I do must be checked with baby Gabriel, my work, my sleep, my free time, my exercise, my budget, my vacation and on and on. Why do I do it? It's not because of some forced law or rule, but because I want to, I love him. Let us celebrate the Babe of Bethlehem as King who has come to take over our lives. Herod moved to stay in charge. God moved to establish His Messiah. Now it is our move.

1) Herod moved to stay in charge

The powerful peaceful Christmas story of the Babe of Bethlehem takes a shocking dramatic abrupt turn for the worse. Matthew turns our attention away from the Magi and their marvelous gifts to a mad man and his premeditated plan for murder. Matthew hinted at King Herod's authority problem in chapter 2: "When King Herod heard that the king had been born in Bethlehem he was disturbed and all Jerusalem with him. King Herod was disturbed because well in his opinion the Jews already had a king – himself. But he was a usurper a fake. He wasn't from David's line a Jew- he was instead an Edo mite. And he wasn't born a king – he politicked and murdered his way to his position of authority and control. The Magi revealed to him that God had now brought the rightful King to David's throne!

All Jerusalem was disturbed with King Herod because when Herod is afraid of losing control and power bad things happened. He murdered one of his wives and a couple of his sons as well as countless other people that were a threat to his plan, power, authority and position.

2) God moved to establish His Son

Even as Herod was plotting his scheme to murder the baby who had been born the rightful king of the Jews, God was a hundred steps ahead of him. The Lord knew all along Herod's plan and he sent the Magi home in a different direction so that they would not report back to Herod the location of our Savior and King from David's line born in Bethlehem.

When Herod found out that the Magi had gone home without reporting back to him, he was furious and hatched his plan to kill all the baby boys in Bethlehem 2 years and younger. But God's plans cannot be canceled by the Devil, demons, weather and of course not by some government and King with physical weapons like guns or swords. The Lord in his omniscience (knowing all things) and omnipotence (power over all things) sent the angel to direct Joseph to take his family to Egypt even before Herod had hatched the Infanticide in his evil brain.

Matthew tells us that in Hosea 11:1 God revealed his plan and power for His Son and for all His people. Just as God sent Jacob and his family to Egypt to be protected during famines and wars so also God would protect His one and Only Son from the murderous plans of King Herod by sending Him to Egypt.

There is a psalm that brings a smile to my face as I remember the foolishness of Kings and mortal men fighting against God. It's as if a bunch of spoiled little kids armed with sticks and stones are trying to sink an aircraft carrier. It just isn't going to happen. I can imagine the sailors all laughing at the "attack". Listen to Psalm 2:2-4 and laugh with me at all of the Lord's enemies.

NIV Psalm 2:2 The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the LORD and against his Anointed One. 3 "Let us break their chains," they say, "and throw off their fetters." 4 The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them.

I wish we would be able to laugh at all the Lord's enemies every day. Turn back and look again at the evil plans of King Herod. He did not succeed in killing the baby who had been born King of the Jews our Savior, but he did succeed he killing many young baby boys in Bethlehem that day. Historians estimate anywhere between 15-30 boys from previous population numbers. Those mothers and fathers were not laughing that day. Matthew quotes from the prophecy of Jeremiah stating that those words were fulfilled that day in Bethlehem with the Slaughter of those baby boys.

NIV Jeremiah 31:15 This is what the LORD says: "A voice is heard in Ramah, mourning and great weeping, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because her children are no more."

At the time of Jeremiah God's people had fallen away from the Lord and put their trust and hope in the foreign nations for their protection and the foreign gods from Egypt and Babylon. But those nations and gods could not save them or protect them from the one immortal and true God. Because of the nation of Israel's unfaithfulness to the Lord they were carried off into captivity. Rachel represented the nation of Israel, as the nation cried because their sons and daughters were taken away, never to grow up in the Promised Land. The point of Matthew's quoting the passage is that the children of Bethlehem are no more because of the wicked sin of King Herod rebelling against God's plan.

When sinfulness and the wicked plans of evil men seeming succeed it is hard for us who suffer to laugh at the results and put our trust in our omniscient and omnipotent creator and Savior. We cry at the suffering God's people must endure. We mourn the loss of loved ones separated from us because of sinfulness, sickness and disease. Yet in the midst of this sinful cursed world the light of faith shines in rhythm with the heart beat of our living Savior, the babe of Bethlehem the King of the Jews hung on the cross the Risen Lord from Joseph of Armimethea's tomb! He lives. All believers live even though they die. With our faith in Christ our King we are able to smile and laugh at all the enemies of God, even death! Because we are convinced nothing can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus, neither angels or demons, height or depth nor anything in all creation!

Now it is your move. Our move! Who will be the King of your life? Everyday I make decisions based on my love for family, all my children, my wife, my enjoyment, my work as pastor. Do I acknowledge Jesus Christ as calling the shots in my life? Not enough times. Let us all repent of our sins, turn away from calling our own shots and submit our plans, our goals, our families and all our decisions to God Almighty, the rightful King of the world, the King who lived and died for us. Herod moved to call the shots. God moved to establish hi son. It's your move.