

## **The Battle over His Birth**

### **Matthew 2:1-18**

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." 3 When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. 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.'" 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." 9 When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. 10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. 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, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. 12 Then, being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way. 13 Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him." 14 When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt, 15 and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt I called My Son." 16 Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men. 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."

The Christmas story is such a great story. It tells of God's great love for us. It tells us how that the Son of God laid aside His glory and came to earth as a baby. How that lowly shepherds came to see the greatest event since the creation. In our text it tells us how that even rich very important men came to worship Him and give Him very impressive presents.

But it also tells us of man's darker side. As the religious leaders have no interest in this newborn king and as Herod plots to kill Him, we see that not everyone loves Jesus. Regardless of what they say and promise. Herod pretended to want to worship this baby king while in truth he wanted only to keep his position and destroy all that might threaten him.

So let us see the battle over the birth of Jesus.

I. By the people of His home town Nazareth

- A. He was too familiar
  - B. Matt 53 ¶ Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these parables, that He departed from there. 54 And when He had come to His own country, He taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished and said, "Where did this Man get this wisdom and these mighty works? 55 "Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas? 56 "And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this Man get all these things?" 57 So they were offended at Him. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house." 58 Now He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief. NKJV
- II. Jesus was rejected by His own nation
- A. They always rebelled against God
  - B. John 1:11-12 (NKJV) 11 He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. 12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:
  - C. Acts 7:51 "You stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you. 52 "Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers, 53 "who have received the law by the direction of angels and have not kept it."
- III. Rejected by the political leaders
- A. By Herod
    - 1. Herod must be superior to Jesus
  - B. By Pilate
    - 1. Pilate had to go along with the crowd
- IV. Rejected by the religious leaders
- A. The Priests
    - 1. They were politically connected and could not give up their position.
  - B. The Pharisees
    - 1. They were too religious for Jesus.
    - 2. Mt 21:32 "For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him; but tax collectors and harlots believed him; and when you saw it, you did not afterward relent and believe him.
- V. Rejected by those among whom He had done His mightiest miracles
- A. He would not be the Jesus that they wanted

- B. John 6:65 And He said, "Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father." 66 From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more. 67 Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also want to go away?" 68 But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.
- C. Matt 11: 20 Then He began to rebuke the cities in which most of His mighty works had been done, because they did not repent: 21 "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. 22 "But I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. 23 "And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. 24 "But I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you."
- D. John 12: 37 ¶ But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him, 38 that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke: "Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?" 39 Therefore they could not believe, because Isaiah said again: 40 "He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, Lest they should see with their eyes, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them." 41 These things Isaiah said when he saw His glory and spoke of Him.

## VI. Rejected by His own family

- A. Jealousy and envy controlled them
- B. John 7: 2 Now the Jews' Feast of Tabernacles was at hand. 3 His brothers therefore said to Him, "Depart from here and go into Judea, that Your disciples also may see the works that You are doing. 4 "For no one does anything in secret while he himself seeks to be known openly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world." 5 For even His brothers did not believe in Him.

The battle over the birth of Jesus is far from over. Every year anti-Christian groups try to remove Jesus from the Christmas scene.

And it is becoming easier as Christmas becomes more and more simply a secular holiday.

Fewer and fewer of supposed Christians go to worship services each year.

That does not mean we should give up. It means that we should see where we are and determine to give Him the glory and honor due Him with our own lives and in the lives of our children and grand-children.

You know Jesus once said, "when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?"  
Luke 18:8