

"What will you do with God's Gift?"

Matthew 2:1-11

Introduction: Today we come to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ into this world. The birth of Jesus is so important to mankind for this baby that was born of a virgin some 2000 years ago was God in the flesh. God took upon Himself a human body and chose to come into this world so that all of us could have eternal life.

Luke 2:10-11

¹⁰And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

¹¹For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

Purpose of His Birth

Luke 10:10

¹⁰ For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

Jesus came into the world to be the Savior of the world. He came here to suffer and die to pay our sin debt. You see we are all sinners and our greatest need is the forgiveness of sin. God is the One who has been offended by our sin and for that reason it is God who determines how sin is to be paid for.

Romans 6:23

²³ For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The word "WAGES" means "PAYMENT" and it means that every sin that we have ever committed must be paid for before we die and if not we will spend all eternity in the Lake of Fire as the payment for sin.

Revelation 20:14-15

¹⁴ And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

¹⁵ And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

Jesus came into the world to satisfy the righteous requirements of God on our behalf. You see, God required that sin must be paid for by a blood sacrifice.

Hebrews 9:22

²² *And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.*

God took upon Himself a human body so that we could be forgiven and so that we could enter into a personal relationship with Him.

John 17:3

³*And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.*

This verse takes the thought even deeper and tells us that God came into a world full of sin and darkness to provide a way for us to be forgiven and to know Him personally. There has never been a greater demonstration of love than the love of God as seen in His Son.

Picture it this way - the birth of Jesus Christ was the loving hand of God reaching out to a wicked and corrupt world offering to us the forgiveness of sin and the great privilege of knowing Him.

But not all see the birth of Jesus in that way. Today we are going to go through the account of Jesus birth as recorded by Matthew and in this text we will see the different attitudes of the people toward Jesus Christ.

I. Herod

Notice Matthew 2:1

Here we see that Jesus was born during the days of Herod the king. This Herod was known as "Herod the Great". He was what many considered to be a mad man.

He had a great desire for building and was responsible for the construction of many architectural wonders. The most amazing building he was known for was the Temple. I don't want to spend much time on his works but more on his attitude, but just to give you an idea as to the size of the projects the retaining wall around the Temple was under construction for 10 years and there were 10,000 workers involved. The wall was 500

meters long. When it was done there was a platform above the retaining wall that could have held 24 football fields.

Herod was also a man that was paranoid about losing his position as king. He had been placed in the position by the Romans when in reality he did not qualify to be the king because he was not of the line of David.

Herod had his own sons put to death because he became jealous of them and in a fit of rage he had his wife executed.

Augustus said of him: "It is better to be Herod's dog than one of his children."

That is a quick look as to what Herod was like.

Notice Matthew 2:2-3

When the wise men came they began to inquire where the King of the Jews was to be found. When Herod heard there was born a Jew that was to become King he was troubled. You see he loved his position and the word there was now another King was of great concern to him because he did not want to lose his position.

We are also told that all of Jerusalem was troubled with him. Why? Because they knew this man was a mad man. When he was troubled they never knew how he was going to react and they had seen his anger before. So in verse 3 we can understand that the city is on edge at this time.

Notice Matthew 2:4-5

In an attempt to find this new King Herod called the religious leaders and inquired of them where Christ should be born. They reported that He was to be born in Bethlehem.

This question that Herod raises is very interesting for the question tells us that he knew of the promise of the Messiah. There was in the area an expectation of the Messiah's arrival.

Notice Matthew 2:7-8

Herod next called the wise men to find out when the star had appeared. He lied and said that he desired to worship Him. He had no intentions of worshipping Jesus but his desire was to destroy Him.

Notice Matthew 2:12,13, 16

Herod wanted nothing to do with Jesus because he loved his position as the king and he loved his power as the king and he loved the pleasures that were at his finger tips as king. Herod felt threatened by the presence of Jesus.

Application:

Let us consider what Herod would be like if he existed today and by the way there are many people just like Herod today.

If Herod existed today he would be a very successful business man. He would have great wealth and power. There would be pleasures to enjoy at his finger tips. He would be the type of man that would do whatever it took to keep his business. He would walk away from his wife, his children, and his friends if he needed to just to maintain his position and his power.

He would be a man that has heard of Jesus Christ but wants nothing to do with him. If someone were to approach him or his family with the gospel message he would become very angry. This man wants nothing to do with Jesus because he has heard about others that have come to Jesus and their lives were changed and he loves the sin in his life so he will do all he can to stop the spread of the gospel.

Maybe you are like Herod and you will not come to Jesus because there are things in your life that are sin and you will not part with them.

Let me tell you there will come a day when you will let them go and that will be when you die.

II. The Religious Leaders

Notice Matthew 2:4-6

This is so sad. The religious leaders knew exactly what the Prophet Micah had foretold about the birth of Jesus. Now listen to me! These men knew where He would be born and it was only about a 5 mile journey from where they were at the present time.

No doubt they also were able to see the star in the sky but they would not walk 5 miles to see the Son of God.

Notice Matthew 2:4

Maybe there had been false reports before this and they just brushed it off as another one of those. They were looking for a King that would free them from the Romans not One that would free them from their sin.

Application:

Let us consider what these people would look like today because there are many that fall into this group.

These people today would be very religious. They would dress very proper and they would never miss a Christmas or an Easter service. They would attend church when it was convenient for them and they would consider their church attendance their "good deed" that pleased God for the week. They are like the religious leaders in that they believe they are good enough to please God by the way they live. They believe with the mind that Jesus died for the sins of the world but they do not believe with the heart. They have the head knowledge but not the heart knowledge. They have never come to the place where they see how sinful they are in the sight of God. You see the religious leaders prided themselves in their practice of the Law. What they were blind to was that they could not keep the Law. But they compared themselves to other who seemed to be worse than they were and so that made them feel righteous.

Just in case that describes you let me show you some verses.

Romans 3:10

¹⁰As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:

Romans 3:19-20

¹⁹Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

²⁰Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

III. The Wise Men

Notice Matthew 2:1-2

These men were separated from all the others in that they were focused upon getting to the Savior. It is believed these men traveled from Babylon. They were experts in the

study of the stars. They most likely knew about the coming of the Messiah from what Daniel taught in Babylon.

Daniel 2:48

⁴⁸ Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon.

Somehow God had revealed to these men the star in the sky was connected with The Messiah. The journey for these men if they came from Babylon would have been about 2 months long.

They were determined to worship the King before they would go back to their home land.

The question they ask in verse 2 is very important. It tells me they were not in any way intimidated by Herod. They had come to worship a King but it was not Herod!

Notice Matthew 2:7-11

They had brought to Jesus very expensive gifts. The gifts are symbolic in meaning.

Gold - Deity.

Frankincense - Purity.

Myrrh - His death.

Application:

These men are a picture of the true believer. Let me show you their characteristics:

1. Determined to worship the Savior at any cost. (The trip was long and dry)
2. Willing to give to Him the best they had.
3. Full of joy because they had found the Savior. (Joy was not in circumstances)
4. Attentive to God's guidance. (2:12)

Conclusion: Which one of these groups do you fit into?

Luke 14:16-20

¹⁶ Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many:

¹⁷ And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready.

¹⁸ And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused.

¹⁹ And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused.

²⁰ And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.