



Part 2: A Tale of Two Kings

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The villain of the Christmas story: Herod the Great

In the time of Herod king of Judea... (*Luke 1:5*)

Herod built a kingdom to himself

Herod was ascending through corruption and deal-making

Herod wanted people to behave and do what they were told

Matthew 2:1-8

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem ²and 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."

In the middle of Herod's kingdom, God announces, "Change of plans!"

³When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵"In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written:

⁶"But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel."

Herod was marked by suspicion, paranoia, frustration and anger

⁷Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. ⁸He 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."

Herod wanted to "worship" on his own terms

Matthew 2:16-18

¹⁶When 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. ¹⁷Then 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."

Herod's drive to be recognized as king drove him to murder and destroy

Narcissistic Eisegesis: I see myself as the hero in every biblical story

Honest Eisegesis: I am Herod

The hero of the Christmas story: Jesus the Christ

A Tale of Two Kings (*notice the contrast to King Herod*)

Jesus builds a kingdom for the glory of God

Jesus descends from heaven into a world he created

Jesus wants people to be transformed and truly live

Jesus was marked by humility, mercy, grace and generosity

Jesus desires worship that is pure, passionate and holy

Jesus' drive to be recognized as King drove him to sacrifice himself

***While you're building the kingdom of your life,
are you open to a better plan?
Or a change of plans?***

Next Steps

Christmas Eve invitations are available in the Commons today. Pick up one or two and prayerfully ask God this week, "Who do you want me to bring to Christmas Eve?" When you sense that God has answered, write that name in the "To" blank and your name in the "From" blank, and hand deliver the invitation. There's room to write a note inside the enclosure, so feel free to do that.

Small Group Questions

- 1) What part of Christmas are you looking forward to? What are you dreading?
- 2) In what ways are we all building kingdoms to ourselves?
- 3) Being as honest as you can, in what ways are you like Herod? What have you "killed" in order to do your own thing? In what ways does following Jesus break this cycle and build instead of destroy?
- 4) How does the incarnation of Jesus change your priorities, plans and purpose?
- 5) How can we pray for you right now and through the week?

**OUR
MISSION**

To create an authentic Christian community that effectively reaches out to unchurched people in love, acceptance and forgiveness so that they may experience the joy of salvation and a purposeful life of discipleship.