

# “A King Defeated By a Baby!”

## Matthew 2:1-12

**Intro.** – A Halford Luccock tells of the time he accidentally bumped into a “department store Santa Claus.” This particular “man in the red suit,” had no whiskers, no boots, no belly of jelly etc. not even a red suit. In fact, this he said was a she, a mother overloaded with presents for the kids, relatives and just about everybody else. Luccock bent over picking up the packages and offering his apologies when he heard this ambassador from home say, “I hate Christmas. It turns everything upside down.”

Do you agree? Do you think the coming of Jesus has turned everything “upside down?” Certainly, the news of Christ’s birth evoked mixed reactions, as it does even now. There were those who rejoiced and those who were indifferent. There are those who rejoice today and those who can take or leave the coming of Jesus.

What I want to focus on in this message is the extreme reaction to Christ’s coming given by King Herod. Our text says Herod was so troubled at the announcement of Christ’s coming, this big-tough-got-it-all-together-king sought to destroy baby Jesus. The outcome is fact. Herod, a king who was often referred to as “Herod the Great,” was utterly defeated by a baby. Here is a case where a throne is overthrown by a baby bed; power/might is overshadowed by truth; craftiness is outsmarted by innocence; and selfish ambition is annihilated by selflessness. The defeat of King Herod is worthy of our study. It was no ordinary baby that defeated this king!

*Purpose: to reaffirm the baby Jesus came already as King of kings and Lord of lords*

### I MAGI – the Wise Men

- it is imperative that in this study, we look first at the “magi” from the East:

#### A. What We Know of These Men

1. The cherished traditional story circulated and perpetuated this time of the year differs markedly from God’s Word...
2. In short, we know very little about these men, but by their actions recorded here we know this much, they are deserving of the name “wise men.”
3. Their sudden appearance in Jerusalem and what they were asking caused quite a stir:
  - a. not for a moment is there a question to *the fact* of the birth of One they called “King of Jews”.
  - b. the question they asked: “Where is He?”
  - c. unless they receive this information, the purpose of their long journey not completed...

#### B. Why These Men Came

1. They came following a star they called “His”
2. We’re not told how magi connected this star with His birth – only detail is fact star miraculous.
3. Note again how little detail given of magi – how many there were... how dressed... how died...
4. All this and more is purposely left in the shadows so that the *light* (reason for coming) is seen.
5. These wise men, whoever and from wherever they came, came for one reason – to *worship* Him!
  - a. worship (προσκυνεω) = where we get our word “*prostrate*” = adore, give due praise.
  - b. v. 11, when came into His presence “*they fell down and WORSHIPED him...*” = due reverence and praise demonstrating a depth of understanding... they knew what worship was!
  - c. note the gifts – now gifts aren’t everything: Illus. – two good friends visiting. “How did you and your wife like those back scratchers we sent you for Xmas?” “That’s what those were. She’s been making me eat salad with them.”
  - d. gifts given with emphasis on *worship* – note: worship is a verb, it’s not something done to or for us, but is something done by us to Him and to Him alone!!!

In summary, these men weren’t kings, probably were more than three, and they came to *worship* the King of kings – Indeed these men are deserving of the term “wise men.”

### II HEROD – the Puppet King

- this account gives a record of a conflict of cosmic proportions of which no thinking person can ignore:

#### A. How He Became a King

1. Herod was given his throne by the Roman Emperor – as long as he satisfied the Emperor, Herod was permitted to be “king” over the Jews.
2. As a result, Herod simply did whatever pleased the Emperor. Why? Such had total bearing on his throne – put nicely, Herod was nothing more than a “puppet king.”

#### B. What Kind of a King He Was

1. As far as being a shrewd politician – there was none better.
2. Maneuvering in his position, though nothing more than puppet king, Herod was feared and hated.
3. He had no scruples – e.g. murdered his own flesh/blood to preserve his throne...
4. This Herod was = a disturbed BUT determined old man:
  - a. slaughter of male 2 yr olds and under in text is totally in character.
  - b. such was the normal way of “protecting” his puppet throne.
5. Herod was not unique in history:
  - a. Stalin, Hitler, Bin Ladin, Sadam etc.
  - b. today we have husbands and wives murdering each other... and kids physically/emotionally abused in unthinkable manners. Illus. - Fayette Co. Fair – girl being kicked by her husband...
  - c. many defying any form of authority – Illus. – kid telling mother to “shut-up”
  - d. politicians promising everything and delivering little if anything...
6. This old tyrant plots his strategy – summons wise men saying, “I too want to worship Him.”
  - he’s not about to bow down to anyone else, except the Emperor of Rome!

#### C. The End Result of This King

1. This disturbed, determined and demented old man was **OVERULED!**
2. Some view “stubbornness” as an asset... but not always:
  - Illus. – husband/wife had traveled several miles down the highway in utter silence. An earlier argument left both unwilling to concede their positions. Passing a barnyard full of mules, the husband broke the silence by saying, “Are those mules relatives of yours?” “Yes,” replied the wife, “I married into the family.”
3. One can be as stubborn as one wants, but when that stubbornness is against the will of God, you can bank on one thing – ultimately you loose!
4. Secular history tells us the final days of stubborn King Herod went as follows: Herod ordered several city leaders arrested and jailed. Those in charge of them were told, “the moment King Herod died, they too would be executed.” Herod wanted to be sure tears would be present at the time of his death.

Here was a king defeated by a baby!

### **III JESUS – the Real King**

#### A. Jesus is Declared King

1. Prophets of old foretold His coming and that He would reign “forever and ever!”
2. Wise men’s gifts tell much:
  - a. gold = always appropriate gift for a king
  - b. frankincense = sweet smelling incense used for worship in the Temple
  - c. myrrh = ointment used for preparing body for burial
  - i.e. these gifts were more than appropriate – demonstrative and prophetic
3. X is K of k & L of l = means He did not become these because He was, is and always will be God!

#### B. What Kind of a King He Is

1. Herod represents the very worst while Christ IS the very best!
2. Even at birth, His “being” divided people – righteous from the unrighteous... sheep from goats, God lovers from God haters...

3. Jesus wasn't and will never be another Herod, a king clutching his throne at all costs – Jesus would not even do this with the glories of heaven! (Philippians 2:5ff)
4. Kings of contrasts:
  - a. Herod slaughtered babies... this baby King (Jesus) grew up to be Savior for whosoever will
  - b. Herod = “You die so I can live...” Jesus instead said, “I’ll die so you can live.”
  - c. Herod always grasping and taking – Jesus keeps giving and giving!

C. The End Result of This King

1. He was forsaken, taken under false pretenses, jokingly given “a trial,” beaten, then crucified upon a cross – all of which was according to Scripture.
2. He was buried, and rose bodily again the third day all according to Scripture
3. All of which attests and confirms EVERYTHING Jesus said and promised
4. He comes again, to reign forever and ever Amen!
5. Determined by each of us – He is either Lord of our lives or He is Judge!

**Conclusion:** Read this past week – “What if the three wise men had been three wise women?” They would have done the following: 1) asked for directions 2) arrived on time 3) help deliver the baby 4) cleaned the stable 5) brought more practical gifts 6) and there would be peace on earth.”

Duane Good (of the Good Twins) wrote a song several years ago that will summarize this message. It is entitled: “Wise Men Still Adore Him”

Wise men still adore Him,  
This One born in Bethlehem  
Lay your gifts before Him,  
In your heart He'll be born again.

Angels heard on high, His praises did sing,  
Shepherds came by night to worship the King.  
Wise men from afar, rich offerings did bring.  
To lay before the feet of the Lord.