

# THE MAN WHO TRIED TO KILL THE NEWBORN KING

1. **A child with only 33 years to live is being hunted...**
    - armed soldiers are marching to Bethlehem with orders to kill...
    - a. The child's name, unknown to them, is Jesus—A child hunted as an enemy of the state...
  2. **The Murderous Man who wants Jesus dead—wants to be the King of the Jews**
    - a. He's so Obsessed With His power — He will even kill children to Keep It
    - b. And orders every male child 2 yrs & younger in Bethlehem to be killed.
  3. **Back in Jerusalem, Herod is furious that the foreign wise-men, Magi from the east defied his order to report back to him where this newborn king is.**
    - a. So Herod stands on his balcony overlooking Jerusalem and awaits confirmation that this newborn king is dead
    - b. Why is This Child a Threat? Why are Assassins Hunting down a Child?
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## I. THE MAN WHO TRIED TO KILL THE NEWBORN KING

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### A. HEROD IS TROUBLED BY NEWS OF A NEWBORN KING (v.1-6)

1. **Wise-men from the East are asking about a child who is king of the Jews**
  - a) Herod is startled—these are not ordinary men, they are scholars, astronomers, wise-men asking where the newborn king will be born
2. **Herod is Troubled and All of Jerusalem is now Troubled...**
  - a) They know how savage King Herod is... No one is safe from His Cruelty
  - b) Herod has ordered deaths by Hanging, Stoning, Strangulation, Fire, Sword,
  - c) Death by Live Animal predators, serpents, beatings, and a type of public suicide in which victims are thrown off Tall Buildings.
  - d) Only Crucifixion is reserved for Roman Rulers—the slow death on a cross

### B. HEROD WAS A GREAT BUILDER AND RUTHLESS LEADER...

#### —BUT HE HAD AN ALMOST INSANELY SUSPICIOUS MIND

1. **He had always been suspicious, but the older he grew, the more suspicious he grew...**
  - a) In 47 B.C. He was only 25 When Made Governor of Galilee, a High Position for such a young man
  - b) He is Half Jewish, Half Edomite and the Roman Senate Named Him “King of the Jews” and they Hope He Can Pacify the Jews
  - c) At First He Does, He Has Some Jewish Leaders Executed and He Marries Into the Leading Jewish Family, the Hasmonian Dynasty, His Wife is Mariamne.
2. **But Over the Years He Becomes More Clever and More Cruel**
  - a) He Had Members of the Sanhedrin Counsel Assassinated
  - b) He Became Suspicious and Had His Brother-in-law Murdered
  - c) His Mother-in-law Murdered
  - d) And then He Had His Favorite Wife Murdered (Mariamne, first of 10 wives).

- e) But it was the murder of his wife that drove him over the edge.
- f) He had her killed because he thought she was a threat to his power.
- g) But he never got over her—Even though he was only 44 when he killed her...

And He lived to be 70, He went Downhill From There...

### **3. Herod's Lust for Power was so strong he was willing to kill his own family**

- a) In 7 B.C. he hears rumors of his two sons from the wife he killed, plotting against him and he has them murdered by strangulation.

*b) Caesar Augustus famously said, "It is safer to be Herod's Sow than his Son."*

- c) Because Herod had nothing to do with Pork and would not kill a pig, —but he would kill his own sons.

### **4. Herod's Savage and Bitter Nature Was Seen when he was 70...**

- a) When he was seventy, he knew that he must die.
- b) He gave orders that the most distinguished citizens of Jerusalem should be arrested on trumped-up charges and imprisoned.
- c) And he ordered that the moment he died, they should all be killed.
- d) He said that he knew no one would mourn for his death, but he was determined that some tears should be shed when he died. (Barclay)

### **5. Herod the Great is Slowly Dying—But He is Still King—**

- a) He has beaten his rivals — He has murdered his enemies
- b) And then he hears the Magi are searching for a new king called 'King of the Jews'

## **C. HEROD IS MANIPULATIVE—HE TRIES TO TRICK THE MAGI (v.7-12)**

### **1. Herod doesn't want to Worship the King He wants to kill the king**

- a) Notice Herod uses: –Plotting (v.4) –Flattery (v.7) –Deception (v.8)  
–Conspiring (v.8) –Spying (v.8)
- b) He is Plotting the Murder of the Infant Jesus
- c) This Baby who Simeon Took in His Arms and Prophesied to Mary: This Child is Destined for the Rise and Fall of Many in Israel (**Luke 2:34–35**)

### **2. The Magi Are Warned to Go Back Another Way to Avoid this Tyrant**

## **D. JOSEPH IS WARNED IN A DREAM (v.13-15)**

### **1. God gives Joseph a warning in a Dream!**

— Joseph does Not Hesitate—they Leave that very night!

- 2. Imagine Joseph and Mary having to flee under cover of darkness...—  
Carrying the Savior of the World in their arms!

## **E. NOT ONLY IS HEROD SUSPICIOUS AND MANIPULATIVE, HE WAS OBSESSED WITH MAINTAINING HIS STATUS OF POWER (v.16-18)**

- 1. And He Gives the Order to Kill every newborn male child 2 yrs and under
- 2. Herod is the most powerful ruler in the Eastern Empire—but...

*"No man is free who is a slave to the flesh." (Seneca)*

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## II. LESSONS FOR US

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### A. WE SEE THREE RESPONSES TO THE ARRIVAL OF THE KING

#### 1. **WORSHIP:** We See Wise Men Who have Traveled From a Far Land to worship the King and Bring Gifts...

a) It Was Not an Easy Journey Across the Middle East...

Think of What it Cost in Money, in Time, and in Danger

b) And the gifts the brought for Jesus were precious and expensive

(1) GOLD — a Gift fitting for a KING...

(2) FRANKENSENCE—a Gift fitting for a PRIEST...

(3) MYRRH—a Fragrant Gift for SACRIFICE, that was also used at Jesus BURIAL

c) True Worship for God Requires Some Sacrifice

Costs us Time, Inconvenience, Money, and maybe even Danger

#### 2. **FEAR & HATRED:** Herod was Troubled by the News of a Newborn King

a) Herod Feared Loosing His Status of Power...

b) And His Hatred was Unleashed on Innocent Children to Kill an Infant Jesus

c) There Are Many Who Fear Loosing Status and Power...

and They Refuse to Bow to Anyone Other Than Themselves

#### 3. **INDIFFERENCE:** The chief priests and scribes were quick to give Herod an answer from scripture where the Messiah was to be born...

a) They Knew the Scripture but They Didn't Act on it—

We don't see them searching for the Messiah

b) And Even Later, Many of them Did NOT Accept Jesus as King

c) They Claimed to Know the Scriptures Better than the Author of the Scriptures: God

d) A Lot of People Think They're Saved By Knowledge—

Thier Smarter than Everyone Else, want to be called Rabbi, PhD, Doctor but They're Indifferent to the Only One Who Saves—Christ

### B. WE SEE TWO OPPOSING PRINCIPLES —> FLESH AND SPIRIT

#### 1. The Invisible War is Waged Through This Battle Ground...

a) The Flesh is SELF Focused — the Spirit is GOD Focused

b) The Flesh Leads to DEATH — the Spirit Leads to LIFE

c) The Flesh produces Corruption & Death —The Spirit Righteousness and Peace

d) The Flesh is Led by SELFISHNESS—The Spirit is Led by RIGHTEOUSNESS

#### 2. Both Are Seen At Work Here...

a) Herod and His advisors & soldiers led by the flesh: Selfish Human Nature

b) The Magi and Mary and Joseph are led by the Spirit

#### 3. **(Romans 8:5–8 NIV)** This is the Beach-head Satan Uses to Launch Attacks

a) The Flesh is the Mind Centered on Selfish Sinful Desires

b) The Spirit is referring to the Mind Set on Things Above, not the Works of Flesh

### **C. SATAN USES THOSE CONTROLLED BY THE FLESH**

1. Herod is the most powerful ruler in the Eastern Empire—but He is Not Free  
*“No man is free who is a slave to the flesh.” (Seneca)*
2. Satan uses those led by the flesh to accomplish his diabolical schemes  
Just as we read last week... (Revelation 12:1-6)
3. (Revelation 12:17) HOW? By Using Rulers who are controlled by the Flesh
4. Which Beggars the Question—WHO IS USING WHO?
  - a) Herod is the richest most powerful man in Palestine and he thinks he’s using others for His Own Plans—but Satan is actually using Him!
5. If You Are Controlled by the Flesh You’re a Tool—Being Used by the Enemy
  - a) To Destroy Your Marriage... To Destroy Your Family
  - b) To Divide the Church... To Destroy Your Life on Earth and Your Soul for Eternity

### **D. GOD HELPS AND DIRECTS THOSE WHO ARE LED BY THE SPIRIT**

1. While Satan uses people controlled by the Flesh  
— God uses those led by the Spirit for His Divine purposes
2. Notice How God Helps and Directs Those Led by the Spirit...
  - a) God Warned the Magi in a Dream to Go back a different Way
  - b) God wanted Joseph in a Dream to Flee Just Before Soldiers Arrive in Bethlehem
  - c) God Spoke to Joseph in a Dream when it was safe to Return
  - d) And Again to direct them away from Herod’s son and up to Nazareth in Galilee
3. When You Are Led by the Spirit you are in God’s Hands—  
—and when you are controlled by the Flesh you are in the Enemies Hands

### **E. YOU WILL REAP WHAT YOU SOW**

1. This is a Spiritual Principle (Galatians 6:7–8)
  - a) This is what Jesus meant when He said: A Tree is Known By its Fruit...
2. If You Live For SELF and Your Focus is on SELF  
—Your Fruit is Selfishness and You Reap Corruption
3. If You Live for the SPIRIT and Led by the SPIRIT  
—Your Fruit is Righteousness & Peace and You Reap Everlasting Life

### **CONCLUSION:**

1. Fascinating that When Jesus entered this world—
  - a) people from far parts of the world were there to worship Him
  - b) And People From Other Parts of the World wanted to Kill Him
2. Jesus Ultimately Went to the Cross so We Can Be Saved by Grace
  - a) So We Can Be Led By the Spirit and Set Free from Control of the Flesh
3. We Can Win the War in Christ (Romans 8:5–6 NIV)  
(Romans 8:1-2 NKJ)