

S E R M O N O U T L I N E

How They Missed It

A B R I G H T O N C H R I S T M A S S E R I E S

B R I G H T O N C O M M U N I T Y C H U R C H

HOW THEY MISSED IT

3. FEAR OF LOSING CONTROL

REV DR. WILLIAM WAN
15 DECEMBER 2024

¹ After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem ² and 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.'

³ When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴ When 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."

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

⁹ After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. ¹¹ On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshipped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. ¹² And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

¹³ When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. 'Get up,' he said, 'take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.'

¹⁴ So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, ¹⁵ where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: 'Out of Egypt I called my son.'

¹⁶ When Herod realised 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. ¹⁷ Then 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.'

MATTHEW 2

#1.

THE MANIPULATOR

2 Failed Attempts to Kill Jesus.

a. Foiled by a Dream

⁸ He 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.'

¹² And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

MATTHEW 2

¹⁶ When Herod realised 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.

MATTHEW 2

b. Foiled by an Angel

¹³ When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. ‘Get up,’ he said, ‘take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.’

¹⁴ So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, ¹⁵ where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: ‘Out of Egypt I called my son.’

MATTHEW 2

²⁵ Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him. ²⁶ It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. ²⁷ Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, ²⁸ Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying:

²⁹ ‘Sovereign Lord, as you have promised,
you may now dismiss your servant in peace.

³⁰ For my eyes have seen your salvation,

³¹ which you have prepared in the sight of all nations:

³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles,
and the glory of your people Israel.’

LUKE 2

#2.

THE MISERABLE

- a. **Self-centred.** Herod was so wrapped up in himself that nobody else mattered.
- b. **Self-deceived.** Herod’s heart had become so hardened that he couldn't respond to others

God is in control. It is miserable to fight against God.

- a. Birth in Bethlehem prophesied
- b. Exile in Egypt foretold
- c. Slaughter in Bethlehem predicted

² ... O Bethlehem Ephrathah,
who are too little to be among the clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for me
one who is to be ruler in Israel,
whose coming forth is from of old,
from ancient days.

MICAH 5 (ESV)

¹ ... out of Egypt I called my son.

HOSEA 11

¹⁵ ...Rachel weeping for her children
and refusing to be comforted,
because they are no more.'

JEREMIAH 31

#3.

THE MANIFESTATION

1. Christmas is the Manifestation of God's Love.

¹⁶ For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

JOHN 3

2. Christmas is the Manifestation of God's Lordship.

⁹ If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

¹⁰ For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified,

and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.

ROMANS 10

¹ Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. ² Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”

ROMANS 12

³⁰ Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.”³¹ The second is this: “Love your neighbour as yourself.” There is no commandment greater than these.’

MARK 12

Conclusion

ACKNOWLEDGE your sin and the fear of losing control.

BELIEVE that Jesus came to be the Lord and Saviour by dying for you.

COMMIT yourself to letting go of your own control and letting God lead your lives.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. “Christmas is about Christ but so much of Christmas is Christless”. Discuss how this statement is true in the way Christmas is celebrated in our society today.**
- 2. Is there anyone or thing you find it hard to let go? Why do you think it is hard to let go? What do you fear most about letting go?**
- 3. If God is fully in control of your life, what might your purpose and mission in life be? How would you steward your resources and spend your life?**