

Renewing the Old Conflict, Matthew Ch.2

Though not much is made of Herod in the Biblical text, his impact on Judea and Judaism was pivotal in bringing about the corruption of the culture and faith. He was the first non-Jewish king, being of Idumean (Edomite) descent. He was appointed king by the Roman emperor Augustus, and one of his first acts was to replace the Jewish high priest with another of his choosing, whom he later had assassinated. He bought his way into favor with the Pharisees, and replaced the old second Temple with an elaborate new one, and then proceeded to further corrupt it by placing a golden eagle statue over the main gate. His plan was to outdo God, and when confronted by Messianic prophecy told him by the Magi, he then attempted to have him or his new king killed.

Visit of the Magi, 2:1-12.

- The wise and learned of the Persian culture.
 - Obviously saw something great in the stars. _____
 - Zoroastrianism: dualism and its theological proximity to the Judeo-Christian faith. _____
 - Missed the boat on “redemption,” but got a glimpse of it. _____
- The priests and scribes accurately state the prophecy.
 - Micah 5:2. _____
 - But Nazareth fooled them. _____
- Herod enlists the Magi.
 - To find the new king. _____
 - They visit the Child and worship him. _____

Joseph warned by an angel of Herod’s plot, 2:13-15.

- Herod’s intent revealed. _____
- The unexpected fulfillment of Hosea 11:1, *Out of Egypt . . .* _____

Herod’s brutal rage, 2:16-18.

- Matthew’s sole record. _____
- Herod’s tortured death. _____

Return from Egypt, 2:19-22.

- Again, the sole record in Matthew. _____
- Joseph’s warning regarding danger in and around Judea. _____
- Political turmoil surrounding the seating of Herod’s 3 sons as tetrarchs. _____

Settled in Nazareth, 2:23.

- John 1:46. _____
- Luke 2:39. _____
- John 7:41&52, The Pharisees dispute Nicodemus regarding prophets arising from the region of Galilee. _____

Light from darkness: Isaiah 9:1-7.

- The “dark land” will be the source of first light. _____
- The light of the world. _____

Yet the darkness did not comprehend it, John 1:5.

- Jesus was later rejected by his own townspeople, then his own countrymen. _____
- Without that rejection, though.
 - Jesus, and Paul who followed proclaiming Him, both spoke first to the Jews, then ultimately to Gentiles. _____
 - The world received the message of redemption because it was first rejected by God’s original chosen. _____

The ancient prophets of God have been hunted and killed, and the promised Messiah and his followers have been executed. Throughout our recorded history, the spokesmen for redemption have been persecuted, executed, and judged as unfit to speak. Yet the message of the Gospel offers no violence. The world, somehow, sees it as offensive and even stupid. But it goes on and on, and cannot be quenched.