

## Matthew 2:1-15

- 2 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, **behold!**, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, 2 saying, “Where is he **who HAS been born king of the Jews**? For we **saw** his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” 3 **When Herod the king *heard this*, he was troubled**, and **all Jerusalem with him**; 4 and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he **inquired** of them where the Christ was to be born. 5 They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for *so it is written* by the prophet: 6 “ ‘And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall ***come a ruler*** who **will shepherd** my people Israel.’ ”
- 7 Then Herod **summoned** the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. 8 And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and ***search diligently*** for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him.

- 9 After listening to the king, they went on their way. **And behold**, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. 10 When they **saw** the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. 11 And going into the house, **they saw the child** with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. 12 And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.
- 13 Now when they had departed, **behold**, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, **for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.**” 14 And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt 15 and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, “Out of Egypt I called my son.”

## Background on Herod

- **He always feared potential rivals.**
- He had his wife's brother the high priest, drowned in the swimming pool in his palace.
- He put to death 46 members of the Sanhedrin.
- He killed his mother-in-law.
- He also had his wife murdered
- He had his two sons murdered because he considered them a threat and rivals to his throne.
- Augustus Caesar is reported to have said, ***"It is better to be Herod's dog than one of his children."***

- **What do we learn from this?** Herod did not want rivals. Herod was self consumed. He always had a WATCHFUL, COVETOUS EYE on any perceived threat.
- **How does the Holy Spirit guide Matthew's writing in giving us a clue as to why Herod missed Christmas?**

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Why did Herod miss  
Christmas....

He was searching for all  
the wrong things.

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- ***What are some evidences that Herod was searching for all the wrong things?***



# 1. He forgot that God is God and HEROD is not!

## What did Herod ignore?

- (1) In Matthew 1:22-23 we find Isaiah 7:14 quoted: “All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: *‘The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel’ (which means ‘God with us’)*.” This would take 600 years to fulfill. This King shall be none other than God with us!!

## What did Herod ignore?

- (2) In Matthew 2:2, 5-6 – The emphasis is on the fact that the Magi focuses on “***Where is he who HAS been born king of the Jews*** – And Herod had Scripture read to him from Micah 5:2 - “....from you (out of Bethlehem) **shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people** Israel.
- There is NO mistake that Herod understood this passage as meaning there IS a rival king in his midst



## What did Herod ignore?

(3) Matthew 2:15: ‘*This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, “Out of Egypt I have called my son.”*’

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- The eighth-century B.C. prophet Hosea (11:1) reflected on God’s great saving act, the Exodus. When Hosea speaks of Egypt, he is looking into the past when God’s son, Israel, was brought out of Egypt during the Exodus. ***Matthew is arguing that Jesus fulfills in a greater way Israel’s experiences with God.***

## How was Herod searching for the wrong things?

**2. He refused to look vertically to God but remain focused horizontally on his own agenda.**

“...wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, 2 saying, “Where is he who has *been born king of the Jews*? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him (Matthew 2:1-3)

- “Matthew’s reader would have likely identified the magi as royal servants (e.g., Dan. 2:1–12, with *magos* used in the LXX at 2:2, 10).<sup>3</sup> If so, the magi in Matthew 2 would have provided a contrast to King Herod. While kings should be expected to pay homage to the Messiah (see Ps. 72:10–11), Matthew instead portrays royal servants (and Gentiles, at that) doing so. ***These Gentile worshipers provide a stark contrast to Herod, who claims an intention to worship Jesus but plots his demise instead.***    *Jeanne Brown*

- **Herod focused his attention horizontally on his own agenda, not vertically on God's agenda!**
- Isaiah 57:15 – God dwells in the most high...but He also dwells with those who are humble and contrite, broken and humble in attitude.
- Psalm 53:2 – God looks down from heaven on the entire human race; he looks to see if anyone is truly wise, if anyone seeks God.

How do we know that Herod searched for the wrong things?

### **3. Because of Coveting power and position**

“When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled...” Matthew 2:3

The verb ‘troubled’ means “an inner perplexity (emotional agitation) from getting too stirred up inside.” “...to be deeply disturbed in the mind.” “To cause deep anxiety and grief”. Herod was not simply mildly put out, he was DEEPLY frantic, losing his mind.

This is an anxiety and trouble that cuts to the CORE and SOUL of a person, in the depth of their being.

How do we know Herod searched for the wrong things?

4. He missed the right Person. He missed the 'Christ' in Christmas and of Christmas.

- Herod missed the significance of the
- (1) ***A specific prophecy by divine inspiration:*** It has been written” (γέγραπται) is perfect passive (a divine passive emphasizing inspiration) with stative force and emphasizing “completed action” with “existing results” (Wallace

- Herod missed the significance of the

(2) ***An Exact Location:*** Bethlehem 9km South of Jerusalem. 700 years before, God is very precise!

## *Herod was missing the significance of*

**(3) An insignificant town for a king to be born:** Bethlehem was considered a tiny, insignificant town.

- Instead of choosing the holy city of Jerusalem as Jesus, the King of Kings, birthplace, God selected *a town so small that it wasn't even listed in the registry of towns in Joshua 15 or Nehemiah 11.*
- Not only was this unusual act the fulfillment of messianic prophecy (Micah 5:2, Matthew 2:6), but **the Savior's humble birthplace demonstrates God's greatness.** *As John Piper explains, "God chose something small, quiet, out of the way, and did something there that changes the course of history and eternity."* "Matthew is interpreting the text to emphasize that the insignificant village of Bethlehem has become truly great because the Messiah was born there".



Herod missed the significance of

***(4) A specific city Bethlehem is known as the City of David.***

- The city of Bethlehem would eventually bear the title of the new king. The prophets foretold that another King would rule and reign forever from David's line. After 400 years of silence, God held true to His promise and sent His son, Jesus Christ, the King of Kings, to be born in the same town as His servant David. "He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing it and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever" (Isaiah. 9:7)

# Herod missed the significance of

**(5) A Savior who will satisfy Spiritual hunger:** Bethlehem means “house of bread.” In His divine sovereignty, God would later appoint this town as the birthplace of His Son who would declare, “***I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.***” (John 6:35). Jesus would become our ultimate sustenance.

Herod missed the significance of

- **(6) Bethlehem as the place where lambs were raised for temple sacrifice**
- Because the fields surrounding Bethlehem were a short distance from the Temple, they were designated as holy pastures for raising sacrificial lambs. According to Exodus 29:38-46, two lambs had to be sacrificed every day. Before David was king, he raised sheep in the same Bethlehem pastures that were likely home to the shepherds from Luke 2.
- In fact, the reason Mary and Joseph had to travel to Bethlehem was that they were required to pay taxes in their ancestral hometown and Joseph was a descendent of King David. Is it any wonder that God chose Bethlehem as the birthplace of Jesus, our Savior? ***He is “the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29)***

# Herod missed the ultimate significance that

- (7) *Jesus would be THE true Shepherd* – “Ruler and Shepherd” referred to today’s Servant Leader.
- Ezekiel 34:2-13 with John 10:11-18

**Why does the fact that Herod missed Christmas  
matter to us today?**

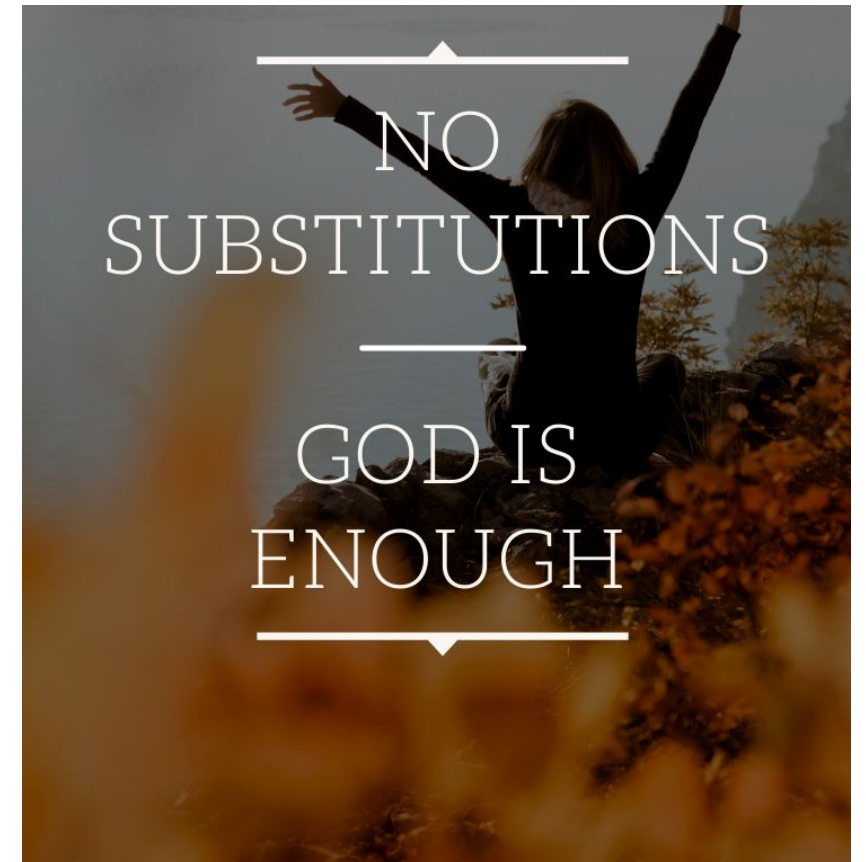
*What are some evidences that we are searching for all the  
wrong things this Christmas?*

# 1. We can miss Christmas because we forget who God is.

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Instead of a search for God we substitute God for

- The cost of Christmas
- The pain of Christmas
- The loneliness of Christmas
- The surface compliance at Christmas
- The gluttony of Christmas
- The consumption at Christmas



## 2. We can miss Christmas because we refuse to focus vertically on whose we are in Christ. Rather we focus on the horizontal – particularly our own agendas

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- Mark 4:18-19 Jesus warns us: “18 The seed that fell among the thorns represents others who hear God’s word, 19 but all too quickly the message is ***crowded out*** by the worries of this life, the lure of wealth, and the desire for other things, so no fruit is produced”



# What can consume us?

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- Money
- Relationships
- Our Future
- Our insecurities
- Our health
- Our Distorted Thinking
- Our Shame
- Our Achievements
- Our Image Management –inauthenticity,





- We can spend a lifetime searching for all the wrong things:
- Ecclesiastes 4:4 – I saw that ALL of a person striving comes out of their envy of their neighbor. We become consumed with what others have. We compare and covet.
- Ecclesiastes 2:1-11 10 Strategies to make life work based on coveting and comparing. His conclusion?
- 11 But as I looked at everything I had worked so hard to accomplish, it was all so meaningless—like chasing the wind. There was nothing really worthwhile anywhere (a part from a reference to God- or if God is not at the center of it!)

### **3. We can miss Christmas because we covet what others may have...only to pursue vapor!**



#### ***4. Finally, we miss Christmas when we never really wanted to search for THE Christ of Christmas in the first place***

- We think it is WHAT we are searching for when in fact it is WHO we are searching for.
- Jeremiah 29:23 - You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.
- Deuteronomy 4:29 - But if from there you will **seek** the LORD your God, you will find Him **if** you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul.
- Luke 19:10 – “For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”
- Are you missing Christmas because you are searching for all the wrong things?



# The Danger Of

- Consume
  - Covet
- Compare
- Critical