

THE WAY OF JESUS AND THE WAY OF HEROD

POWER IN PREPARATION [MATTHEW, PART 2] · JOHN 14:6; MATTHEW 1:20-25; 2:1-8, 12, 16-18; JOHN 1:14 · JANUARY 3, 2021 · PASTOR MATT ERICKSON

SERMON OUTLINE:

"When Herod realized 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."
(Matthew 2:16)

A Conversation about Ways

- What it means to choose a "way"
- The consequences of certain ways (Proverbs 14:12)
- Jesus: "I am the way..." (John 14:6)

The Way of Herod

- disturbing power (2:1-8)
- knowledge and deception (2:4-8)
- controlling through violence (2:16-18)

The Way of Jesus

- incarnate power (1:28, 20)
- grace and truth (John 1:14)
- saving through humility (1:21)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. When have you seen or experienced someone using power or position in ways that were destructive?
2. This week we begin a new series, "Power in Preparation," which explores the early years and ministry preparation of Jesus. This week, we study the contrast between Jesus and Herod in Matthew 1 and 2. Begin your study in prayer, asking God to speak to you through His Word, and then read Matthew 2:1-12 before continuing with the questions below.
3. *Background: The "Herod" of this passage is Herod the Great (72-4 BC), who, although Idumean (not Jewish), became King of Jews in 40 BC based on his family's allegiance to the Roman authorities since the time of Marc Antony. While viewed as Jewish by the Romans, the Jewish people never fully recognized Herod as their king. Herod instituted many significant building projects, including a massive remodeling of the Jerusalem Temple, but became increasingly paranoid and violent near the end of his life.*
4. While there are many characters here, including the magi, we want to focus exclusively on Herod this week. Why do you think Herod was "disturbed" by the news brought by the arrival of the Magi?
5. What do you think might have been the purpose of Herod consulting with the chief priests and the teachers of the law? What would their quotations from the prophets have meant to Herod and all those present?
6. Now Read Matthew 2:13-18. Why did Herod do this terrible thing?
7. How would you describe Herod's character and use of power based on what we have read so far?
8. Now read Matthew 1:18-25 and John 1:14. What stands out to you about Jesus' identity and calling from these verses?
9. How would you say the way of Jesus stands in contrast to the way of Herod that we explored earlier?
10. What do you think it might mean for you to live your life in the way of Jesus instead of the way of Herod?
11. What is one thing God is speaking to you through this study of contrasts between Jesus and Herod? If you're on your own, write that down and pray over that this week. If you are with a small group, share your answers with one another before closing in prayer.

DIG DEEPER:

This week dig deeper into the contrast between Jesus and Herod:

- Memorize the angel's words about Jesus in Matthew 1:20-21
- Set aside some time to read and reflect upon Philippians 2:1-11 this week. Read the passage. Then write, draw, paint, or pray aloud your response to the way of Jesus described in this passage and what it means for our lives.
- If you really want to dig deeper into the way of Jesus, consider reading Eugene Peterson's book *The Jesus Way: Conversations on the Ways That Jesus is the Way*.
- Consider reading more about Herod the Great here:
bibleodyssey.org/en/people/main-articles/herod-the-great