

Herod - Worship in Spirit and in Truth

Foundation

Bible passage: Mtt 2.1-18, Jn 4.24

Herod and the Wise Men

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem wise men came to visit him. Thinking to find a new child who had been born a king they naturally went to see King Herod. The King was troubled by what he heard, though initially we are not told why. However, the wise men were advised, from the Scriptures, that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem so they went on their way.

Before they left Herod met them secretly and discovers when the child might have been born but deceitfully said: *“Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring word that I too may come and worship him.”* The wise men don’t seem to see this secret meeting as suspicious and take at face value what Herod said to them. But we discover Herod’s true motive in this, he wanted to kill the child, presumably to remove any threat to his reign and that of his family. He was prepared to kill all the baby boys to achieve his aim.

Herod was seeking to gain by his deception and was prepared not only to lie but to kill. The wise men were apparently fooled by what he said but God could not be fooled and warned the wise men so that they did not return to Herod. When Joseph was also warned the family was able to escape to Egypt and Jesus was protected.

This is difficult in a way because Herod did kill several other babies and we might wonder why God did not rescue them. But Herod had a reputation for such things and even killed some of his own children at another time. In general



Kelsey Grammer as Herod in the film “Killing Jesus”.

God does not intervene to prevent human sin and its consequences.

Worship in Spirit and Truth

Years later when talking to a Samaritan woman Jesus would say to her: *“God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”* Herod said he wanted to worship the child but was lying and really wanted to kill Him.

To worship in Spirit seems to mean first to worship through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus promised to give the Holy Spirit to those who believe in Him and the Spirit helps us to worship. To worship in Truth seems to mean to be truthful in what we say and

to speak the truth to God in worship. Therefore, we should be sincere, honest with ourselves and with God. In addition what we say and sing in worship should be true and therefore Christians have wanted, or should want, to make sure that their songs and liturgy fit with what the Bible teaches. Partly for this reason songs and prayers will often use expressions from the Bible itself.

“...worship in spirit and truth”



We are told to worship God in truth whilst Herod lied when he said he wanted to worship the baby King.