

III. Advent in Biblical Perspective  
*The Kings of Christmas*  
“Herod the Great—The Real War on Christmas”  
Matthew 2:1–18  
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December 20, 2020 • Sunday Sermon

Let’s look at God’s Word that is true, inerrant, infallible and sufficient. Matthew 2:1–12 says [1] *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.’”* (from Micah 5:2)

[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, saying, “Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him.” [14] When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt, [15] and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, “Out of Egypt I called My Son.”*

[16] *Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men. [17] Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying:*

[18] *“A voice was heard in Ramah, Lamentation, weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, Refusing to be comforted, Because they are no more.”* Then Herod died...

The grass withers, the flower fades, the Word of God abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

The spirit of Christmas is one of joy – joy to the world, O come all ye faithful, the uplifting Christmas carols, the great statements of the Incarnation bidding us the joy that is ever

there. This incessant call to joy is built on something absolutely astonishing. That is the humiliation of Christ to save His people and the exaltation of our salvation. The King of Kings comes into this world, not in a royal bassinet, but in a manger, a trough, not in a palace but in a stable, not in Rome but Bethlehem that was considered least and lowly but onlookers of the age but not in the economy of God. He is One not born of fame but of a forgotten line of kings – Mary and Joseph. Here is One who is not attended with festivals that should have accompanied the birth of a king seemingly in our mind. No, it one of humiliation but not just of His birth but continues in His life despised and rejected.

It will continue all the way to the cross where even the One who declared ‘this is My Son in whom I am well pleased’ will remove His presence as the wrath of God for all the sins of all of His people for all of eternity was poured out upon Him and then in humiliation was buried. Here is the humiliation of Christ, not by subtracting deity but by the addition of humanity and the imputation of our sins against Him, who received them to pay for them in our stead. This Savior so humbled to redeem us that we might be exalted by His grace through His cleansing blood and perfect righteousness, thus joy to the world, the Lord has come.

There’s something else that’s sobering underneath it that is captivating, can be frightening but it must be heard. Christmas is a Divine declaration of war and response to war. Christmas is life and death, not only the life here but the life to come, not only death here but the eternal death of hell. Christmas is war. Many times I hear, yet not so much this year interestingly, but in years past – it’s the war on Christmas. I understand the discussion around this statement but the real thing we should know from a Biblical world and life view is the war on Christmas should not surprise us because Christmas is war. Perhaps we can see it clearly to what we come to in this study and not just from this text but how it runs through all of Scripture.

During this Advent season we are looking at some of the kings mentioned during the nativity of Christ in Matthew and Luke. So the first one we looked at was Caesar Augustus and he is also known as Gaius Octavius and considered perhaps the greatest emperor of Rome. He was known for Pax Romana, the road systems and various other things but one of the things the Bible records that he did that is affirmed in history is the administration of a census, a registration, a taxation for military, administrative and information purposes. It would rotate every 14 years and another one of these was mentioned in the Bible where a rebellion broke out.

What did this census create? It created a moment where at the conclusion of Mary’s pregnancy this need for Joseph to go and register arrived for Joseph. Joseph could have gone by himself in terms of how this was administered but he decided not to, likely out of his compassion and to avoid all the ridicule and mockery that might be there in his absence. There is nothing coincidental about the fact that Mary will give birth at the time they arrive in Bethlehem for this census for this is the sovereign hand of God at work using the decree of Gaius Octavius, using the decision making of a carpenter that loved his wife to bring her with him to the fulfillment of Micah 5:2. Not only would the Messiah be from God’s covenant people, the seed of Abraham, by way of the tribe of Judah, through the family of Jesse through David, but that this Messiah would be born in the city of David – Bethlehem. This is why Matthew says in his account time and time again, ‘as it was written’ or ‘to fulfill what was spoken by the prophets.’ Here is the hand of God fulfilling all His promises and all His promises are yes and amen in Christ.

It’s interesting to note, that here is arguably the most powerful king that has ever existed but the King of Kings superintends, rules and overrules in and through even his decrees. It’s not because Octavius is a pawn, no he is a king. You don’t have to diminish a person’s personhood or position for God to be sovereign for He uses carpenters and kings. And the heart of the king

is in His hands and He directs it where so ever He wishes even as He directs the waters to the sea (Proverbs 21:1).

So we learn that the birth of Jesus is real history. This and the events surrounding His birth can be confirmed with extra Biblical sources and history books. We also see that real history is really His story. This is why prophecy is nothing more than prewritten history. The same God who promised He would come has also promised He is coming again that also will be history one day for God always fulfills His Word.

We also looked at another king – a king from the east – and his emissaries show up, his magi. We do sing ‘we three kings of orient are’ but we really don’t know that they were kings and likely not because magi is not usually used to refer to a king but if it was there probably would have been a full entourage. There was likely an entourage anyway because I think what magi means is exactly that guild that Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego had been a part of by the same area. These magi were known as regal scholars, philosophers, historians, astronomers, and astrologers and the likely the same library they had access to, was the same library Daniel contributed to. They had massive libraries. There were known as royal emissaries like our President’s cabinet.

Here come these magi with a specific question. They go to the capital of Israel, Jerusalem and because of their question we know why they come to the capital of Israel. Their question is ‘where is He that is born King of the Jews?’ Where would that question have come from? I would suggest the Pentateuch that Daniel would have brought with him into that library they would have had access to. Now this is some speculation but Daniel served through two empires and five dynasties. In the Pentateuch they would have read Numbers 24:17 which would tell them a star from Israel would affirm the scepter of Judah. That is when the King was born there would be a star and they saw this star.

What about that star? There are seven possibilities and I won’t go into all those possibilities but I will tell you about three of them because they are the most likely. One is they will call upon the history we do have from the Far East, mostly from Chinese history of the presence of comets all around that time at the year 12, 10, 7, 6 and 4. My only problem with this possibility is that there is a word they would use for comet and the word they are using for star is not that word that would have been used back then for comet.

A second possibility is something that we are about to witness in the sky that could have likely been seen at that time, because in the year 8 and 6, there was this confluence of Jupiter and Saturn. In fact, in the next day when we can witness this it will be the brightest presentation of it since the 13<sup>th</sup> century. It occurs regularly this time of year throughout the years. So some think the star in the text is referring to this, but I don’t think it was this one.

Thirdly, I think it was the star that God made specifically for this purpose. I think it’s a miracle just like He made the fish for Jonah. God used it to get their attention. The Word of God is what led them to that place. Not only who they were but the question they were asking is what got Herod’s attention pretty quickly which caused a stir. So Herod then calls for his scholars to ask them about it and they give the same answer we find in Luke and they confirm the Micah 5:2 prophecy that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. Then Herod brings the magi into his secret chambers to tell them to report back to him when they find out where exactly He is so that he can go worship Him too. They hear Herod out and nodded in agreement as they left. Having heard Micah 5:2 the star appears again to affirm what they had heard.

Please notice that it is not the star that is the focus but it’s the Word of God and then God’s providential affirmation. God uses providential affirmations and assurances but it’s God’s

Word that led them and leads us. Micah 5:2 leads them to Bethlehem and then they saw the star again. If this is a regular star this would have an amazing orbit as it appears and disappears and then it will lead them down to a house in Bethlehem. When the magi arrive they saw two things – Mary and the Baby – but note the specificity – they worshipped Him, not Mary. Then they gave their gifts to Him. They didn't worship Mary, or worship or their gifts – they worshipped Him, although the gifts are significant for gold represents regal, incense represents priests and myrrh represents prophets. These represent Prophet, Priest and King – the Messiah, the Christ. These gifts will be helpful for they will need them when they have to go to Egypt and back and over the years until Joseph gets his business reestablished.

There are two marks when people come to Christ. They come on their way and when they meet Him who is the Way, the Truth and the Life, then they go a different way. The two things that mark out a believer is the love of the praise and worship of God (God-centered worship) with the people of God gathered with gifts of praise to their God – sacrificially and joyfully given. This doesn't make them God's people but it marks out God's people. Then their loving obedience when they meet Him – they praise God for the way they were brought but they go a different way because they are marked by loving obedience. This isn't the only King we'll look at in this study for in our text we read about Herod the Great.

We don't know a lot about him but we know some things about him. Why is he called Herod the Great? It's not because he is some benevolent ruler that people remember with fondness. On the contrary, for he is great for a number of reasons. First of all, he is not even a Jew. He is from the nation of Edom. He is only known as king of the Jews because Caesar Augustus had appointed him for various political reasons. He has a number of sons. He has a wife named Mariamne. He was the original inventor of stimulus programs. When you go to Israel almost everywhere you go they will say Herod built that. The Herodian where he is buried he also built. He built palaces all over the place. In fact, he built a whole city. He went over to the Mediterranean and built a port city named Caesarea by the Sea. That was pretty smart of him to build a city and then name it after the man who put him in power. That's called job security. He built himself a palace at that port city and two more palaces in Jericho with these big gardens. He built a palace for his mother, his mother in law and his wife. He built Masada. I could go on and on with the things he built. He was a great builder.

His evil was great as well. He killed all the children in Bethlehem under 2 years of age, not to be irreverent or inappropriate for that was nothing for him. He had already killed three of his sons who he thought was conspiring against him. He killed his wife Mariamne because he thought she was helping them. He was known to have killed generals, officials and large groups of people particularly in the region of Galilee. When he killed his sons Caesar Augustus made this remark; 'It's better to be a pig in the household of Herod than one of his sons.' That's not all that we know about him.

We know he was a narcissist, self-absorbed and what we read in the text we know about the year he died which was probably a year or two after the birth of Jesus. We know that when he told the wise men/magi that he wanted to worship Him as well that he was not telling the truth and that likely he not only wanted to destroy Him but the magi as well. But the Lord protected the magi and sent them on a different way. Herod soon knows he was tricked and realizes the date they had given him and tries to stay on top of it by killing all those under the age of 2 to try and destroy the Messiah. That was Herod's purpose – to destroy the Messiah – war, casualties and violence surrounds the moment.

When he dies he wants to make sure no one rivals him after he dies so he with Augustus made sure with his three living sons the kingdom would be divided between the three. So his son Herod Archelaus took over Jerusalem, Judea and Bethlehem. He perhaps was even worse than his father. Joseph and Mary were thinking about coming back to Bethlehem but they did not and I think it might have been because Archelaus was there. They went up to Galilee where Herod Antipas ruled and then there was a third son who ruled in the northern part of Israel whose name was Herod Philip. He learned from his daddy also because he built a city and named it after the Caesar (Tiberius) that allowed him to stay in power called Caesarea Philippi around Mount Hermon.

Then when Herod Antipas is at Galilee he actually builds a city for Tiberius and actually calls it Tiberias. It was built during the days of Jesus. So all of this is working out of this evil rule and the three tetrarchs after Herod the Great. It's in that context that Jesus will grow. Something else happens. Herod Archelaus was so evil that even Caesar Augustus could not tolerate him. So he sacked him and decides not to give Jerusalem and Judea to the other two. Caesar wants to keep control of it so he puts a procurator and governor there and his name is Pontius Pilate who will occupy the palaces of Herod. The secret chamber that Herod built is likely 33 years later where Jesus was brought to stand trial by Pontius Pilate.

So as all these things come together what is it that is abundantly clear? Joy to the world the Lord has come, see His humiliation to save us from our sins and our exaltation for His glory. Then His exaltation as He is risen from the dead and ascended into heaven. He will come again to judge the living and the dead but none of this is new. Herod the Great is just another one in the line so I want to give you a takeaway from all this.

The takeaway is the real war on Christmas is the war at the first Christmas which began before Christmas which continues after Christmas until Christ returns. This is a war that is a result. Christmas is the fulfillment of a Divine declaration of war against the cosmic rebellion of Satan, the fallen angels and all who follow him in opposition to the God of glory, who say 'we don't live to glorify and enjoy Him forever for everything exists for our glory as we do as we please and He will not reign over us.' That's the war that Jesus came to deal with. It's the war with His enemies and our enemies – Satan, sin, death, hell and the grave. He has already come to defeat those enemies and that is abundantly clear in the expanse of Scripture.

I want to look at Revelation 12 which is a summation of the history of the world through the apocalyptic literature and language. When Satan makes his appearances he appears as a serpent in the Garden but in the apocalyptic literature his rebellion is cast beyond the serpent but as the red dragon. Revelation 12:1–6 says [1] *And a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars.* [2] *She was pregnant and was crying out in birth pains and the agony of giving birth.* [3] *And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven diadems.* [4] *His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven (probably referring to the fallen angels who followed Satan) and cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she bore her child he might devour it.* [5] *She gave birth to a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and to his throne (referring to the death and resurrection of Jesus),* [6] *and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, in which she is to be nourished for 1,260 days.*

Here is the scope of history. Satan comes in the Garden as a serpent and has three snares he uses – lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life. The Tempter Satan also

lies about God's Word, lies about what eating the forbidden fruit would do and then comes the temptation for when she saw that the tree was good for food (lust of the flesh, appetites), a delight to her eyes (lust of the eyes) and desirable to make her wise to be like God (boastful pride of life) then she took from its fruit and ate as she gave to her husband with her and he ate. Then comes the curse of sin. As the curse falls upon Adam, upon Eve, upon the creation and then in Genesis 3:14–15 it falls to the serpent (Satan).

Genesis 3:14–15 says [14] *The LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. [15] I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."*

As God tells the serpent that he will crawl on his belly we see that the sovereign hand of God will be upon Satan. We also see here that the woman will have a seed. The seed of the serpent and the Seed of the woman will be in conflict. The woman's Seed is the anticipation of the virgin birth because women don't have seed and here is the promise of a Seed to a woman who will give birth. Her Seed will crush the head of the serpent while His heel will be bruised which refers to the humiliation of Christ but that's not a lethal blow. The lethal blow is delivered to Satan that he will be defeated and then ultimately destroyed.

So what does Satan do with that curse? God has declared war. Satan in his rebellion does not surrender and we see life and death in the very next chapter, Genesis 4. Here comes Cain who was birthed through Eve, having seen the promise of God and you can almost see her hope in the naming of her first born. Cain means 'a man child from the Lord.' She is probably thinking 'Is this the Promised One?' Satan is not omniscient. So in worship Abel is affirmed and Cain rises up and slays Abel. The war is on.

I don't have time to take you through the Old Testament because not only will this woman be understood as one woman chosen through which will come the virgin but it is also referring to God's covenant people. His covenant people are His bride so He is going to bring His Messiah through His covenant people of a particular tribe, Judah, through a particular family, the line of David. What will Satan do? He makes war to devour the Child and makes war against the woman. So you don't have to wait until Herod to see there for it starts with Cain. This will be seen time and time again in the Old Covenant.

Another example of this is you see the stirring of God's hand to deliver His people from the bondage of Egypt as He raises up a mediator named Moses but interestingly as the moments are coming to this deliverer comes a genocidal decree from Pharaoh to kill all the first born male children. Then comes a genocidal assault against male children. Things like this can be seen all throughout the history of Israel time and time again.

We wage war against principalities, powers and forces of darkness. Now we see it in the days of Herod as he would become again in a line of apostate rulers that would seek to destroy Him. Herod died. Jesus lives, ascended, King of Kings and Lord of Lords. I love Christmas, the Hallelujah chorus, O Come all Ye Faithful and all those Christmas hymns but we're in a war. People tend to wonder when I talk about leaders that I don't really use business leaders in my examples and I think there are great things to learn from them but I gravitate toward military leaders because I want people to understand that we're in a war.

When Herod struck out he really struck out. Herod dies and Jesus lives. Jesus died for our sins and rises again. The One who humbled Himself is highly exalted and sits at the right hand of God the Father. So this One who is exalted is the One who exalts us from the

humiliation of our sin through His redeeming work and His humiliation that we might be exalted with Him when we put our trust in Him. Until we go to be with Him, Satan, death, hell and the grave was defeated at the cross but not yet destroyed. Satan, sin, death, hell and the grave will be destroyed at the second coming of Christ which is one more reason to say 'Come quickly Lord Jesus.'

Just as God's people in the Old Covenant were delivered with the on slot of Pharaoh against the children, He had Moses lead the people out into a wilderness so we the people of God have One greater than Moses who was just pointing to this. Jesus takes us not just from the bondage of slavery but from the slavery to our sin and delivers us from its persuasion, penalty, power and is delivering us from its practice and will deliver us from its presence. We are now still in a sin cursed world so we're in a wilderness but just as they went through a wilderness sustained by the presence of God to a Promised Land, we go through this world as we are in the world but not of the world.

Jesus said in John 16:33 [33] *These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.* He does not cause the war to dissipate He just makes you more than conquerors through Him who loves us (Romans 8:37). He is the One who sustains us. If you're a believer you're in a war. If you're a parent trying to raise a child for Jesus, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord then you're in Satan's crosshairs. If you're not trying to raise them that way then he'll leave you alone. If you want your business to honor Christ you're in Satan's crosshairs. If you want to be a witness for Christ in your life you are in his crosshairs and it's a war.

I want you to remember that the war has been won, but get in the battle. Stay in the fight. Don't abandon the fight. Yes you will get wounded but stay in the fight. Satan has servants and he loves to use rulers who are intoxicated with power like Herod and Pharaoh. I could start naming a whole bunch who are like them. Satan loves to use the doctrine of demons and the demonic world. He loves to use false teacher, false religious leaders, false preachers, etc. teaching a false message. Satan also has strategies. He loves to intimidate, imitate and infiltrate.

We can see how Satan does this in Herod. Herod wants to infiltrate by saying he is worshipper. Herod wants to imitate by saying he wants to go give gifts in worship. Lies! He wanted to destroy Him. He intimidates also by decreeing death. Satan loves to infiltrate the fellowship of a church with gossip, slander, chaos and ungodly divisions. He loves to infiltrate the leaders of a church with false teachers, preachers and leaders. He loves to imitate the tares instead of the wheat. He also loves to intimidate because he knows if he can make you afraid he will stop you. That's why Satan roars like a lion.

Do you remember when Jesus got in a boat with His Disciples and went across to a place known as Galilee of the Gentiles that was infested with demonic activity? They meet up with two demons and Jesus casts a legion of demons out of them that are sent into the pigs (Mark 5 and Matthew 8). Do you know what happens before they get to the other side of the sea? There is a storm that takes place that is so unbelievable that even these veteran fishermen (His Disciples) are scared they are going to perish. They say "Jesus don't you care" and Jesus commands the wind and the waves to calm and they say 'what kind of Man is this?' They are about to find out that He will command the demons of darkness to go over the cliff into the abyss. Satan is not omniscient for he certainly can sense things. Jesus is headed to where Satan is welcome in this Hellenistic place, previously a Jewish place now paganism rules and all the wind and waves would seek to stop Him. He is sovereign and He commands them to stop. He

brings peace to His people who stay in the boat and trust Him. He tells them they won't perish for He is with them.

Even though you die yet shall you live – He says. Jesus says, 'I have won the victory and I am the One you put your trust in.' Jesus has given His church the message and the mission and we're on the march and Satan wants to infiltrate and bring division, mistrust and all these things that would cause us to get off the mission, away from the fight and the battle. Satan is constantly trying to infiltrate His church through false leaders/teachers and false messages to bring people away from Jesus and not to Jesus. Satan is constantly at work and works in the world through apostate religious leaders and arrogant rulers.

You can get fearful or walk carefully, courageously with conviction for your Savior has already won the victory. He says to His Disciples that He will build His church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it so why would He tell us that if Satan isn't going to try and prevail? But He has assured us of the victory and one of the best examples I have on this goes all the way back to WWII. It was a two front war.

In my study of WWII there were two moments that strike me as comparable to the Christian life in this matter. One were the men who landed on that beach and got up on the heights of Normandy. Militarily and strategically once they got on that beach and up those cliffs Hitler was done. That doesn't mean there weren't going to be fights village by village, casualties, medals of honor and everything, but that war was won right then. We get to sign the armistice later but the implications of it would be fought out. When Jesus came out of that grave and ascended into heaven we win and now we have to go nation by nation and rescue the perishing and care for the dying. Satan wants to stop you from doing this with intimidation, infiltration and imitation. Just like Herod Satan is certainly willing to lie. Satan is constantly using deceit and discouragement and it started in the Garden.

You have to constantly keep your eyes fixed on Jesus, filled with the Word of God, surrendered to the Spirit of God and you need to stay in the fight. Don't even let pandemics paralyze you. I have attempted to walk prudently before the Lord but I absolutely refuse to live in fear because with fear comes paralysis and then we're off mission, off message and out of ministry. So whether it is the diseases, demonic activity, the declination of the culture in this world the battlefields are all around us but Christ has won the war and He has called you into the battle. He has given you a mission to evangelize, disciple, train up God's people and send them into the battle and don't retreat.

One of the movies I have watched time and time again is called Lone Survivor. I like to learn the principles that are there both positively and negatively. I don't necessarily recommend it because you have to be very careful with it for various reasons. To fulfill their mission which they were resolutely committed to do, there was going to be a battle after battle and everybody gets hit, even lone survivor but every time they are in that battle and get hit there are two questions asked – are you hit and are you still in the fight. We stay in the fight even when we get hit and we don't stop when we face Satan's intimidation. We are aware of his infiltration and we're not fooled by his imitation. Our eyes are fixed on Jesus, the Victor. Satan is defeated. Herod is dead. Jesus lives. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, I thank You that even in the midst of a narrative of Scripture that it's filled with amazing grace and humiliation of Christ who achieved and secured our salvation and exaltation and even with all the resounding notes and fervor of joy, You also let us know that the Christian life is



war. We thank You for that. This notice of being in spiritual warfare is actually our life for in the world we'll have tribulation. If there is an absence of warfare then that's just a moment of respite so would You please help Your people put on the armor of Christ, grab hold of the weapons of the Spirit and keep their eyes fixed on their King Jesus who is victorious, who will rule and reign forever. Jesus we praise You that You have defeated Your enemies, even when we were Your enemies You defeated us and brought us from the chains of oppression of our sin to the liberty of salvation in Christ for while we were yet enemies Jesus saved us. Father, I thank You that You use us to save others and You call Your people and Your church to resolutely in the midst of the battle to not shrink or go to the sidelines or retreat or go fight in the locker room, but You call us to the field of battle knowing the war is won in Jesus. So help Your people. Help me as a pastor. Help us as leaders to set the pace. Equip Your people and lead on O King victorious for the day of march, not retreat, has come, in Jesus' Name, Amen.

### Power Point

#### 1. Caesar Augustus—Gaius Octavius

The Birth of Christ is "real history;" but "real history" is really "His story."

#### 2. The Magi and a King from the East

The unmistakable reality is that we who come to Christ will be marked by God-centered worship and loving obedience to the King of kings, who not only came to save us, but who by Sovereign grace brought us to come to Him alone as our Lord and Savior.

#### Life Takeaway

*The Real War on Christmas is the War at the first Christmas, which began before Christmas and continues after Christmas until Christ Returns.*

*Christmas is the fulfillment of a Divine Declaration of War.*

*Furthermore, the first Christmas affirms Satan's Snares—Servants—Strategies—Schemes.*