

Matthew 2:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men.

Analysis

Herod's infanticide reveals the depth of human depravity and the hatred earthly kingdoms have for God's kingdom. This massacre demonstrates how sin, unchecked, leads to monstrous evil—even murdering innocent children to preserve power. Yet God's sovereign purposes prevailed; Christ was preserved. This atrocity also prefigures the world's ongoing hostility to Christ and His people.

Historical Context

Bethlehem was a small village, so the number killed (likely 20-30 infants) wasn't massive by ancient standards, explaining why secular historians didn't record it. However, it was characteristic of Herod's paranoid brutality. He died shortly after this atrocity.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. What does Herod's massacre reveal about the human heart apart from God's restraining grace?
2. How does this passage illustrate the world's ongoing hostility toward Christ and His people?

Interlinear Text

Τότε Ἡρώδης οἶδὼν ὅτι ἐνεπαίχθη ὑπὸ τῶν
Then Herod when he saw that he was mocked of G3588
G5119 G2264 G1492 G3754 G1702 G5259 G3588

μάγων ἐθυμώθη λίαν καὶ ἀποστείλας ἀνεῖλεν
the wise men wroth was exceeding and sent forth and slew
G3097 G2373 G3029 G2532 G649 G337

πᾶσιν τοὺς παῖδας τοὺς ἐν Βηθλεὲμ καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν
all the children in Bethlehem and in all
G3956 G3588 G3816 G3588 G1722 G965 G2532 G1722 G3956

τοῖς ὄριοις αὐτῆς ἀπὸ διετοῦς καὶ κατωτέρω κατὰ
the coasts thereof from two years old and under according
G3588 G3725 G846 G575 G1332 G2532 G2736 G2596

τὸν χρόνον ὃν ἡκρίβωσεν παρὰ τῶν μάγων
to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men
G3588 G5550 G3739 G198 G3844 G3588 G3097

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 59:7 (Parallel theme): Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood: their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction are in their paths.

Revelation 17:6 (Parallel theme): And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.

Isaiah 26:21 (Parallel theme): For, behold, the LORD cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.

Proverbs 28:15 (Parallel theme): As a roaring lion, and a ranging bear; so is a wicked ruler over the poor people.

Genesis 49:7 (Parallel theme): Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.

Hosea 10:14 (Parallel theme): Therefore shall a tumult arise among thy people, and all thy fortresses shall be spoiled, as Shalman spoiled Beth-arbel in the day of battle: the mother was dashed in pieces upon her children.

2 Kings 8:12 (Parallel theme): And Hazael said, Why weepeth my lord? And he answered, Because I know the evil that thou wilt do unto the children of Israel: their strong holds wilt thou set on fire, and their young men wilt thou slay with the sword, and wilt dash their children, and rip up their women with child.

Daniel 3:13 (Parallel theme): Then Nebuchadnezzar in his rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. Then they brought these men before the king.

Judges 16:10 (Parallel theme): And Delilah said unto Samson, Behold, thou hast mocked me, and told me lies: now tell me, I pray thee, wherewith thou mightest be bound.