

Sermon Bible Study Series

Title: A Shepherd Among Tyrants

Primary Text: Matthew 2:1-18

Expanded Reading: Psalm 23; Isaiah 49:6-7; Micah 5:2; Mark 6:14-34; John 10:1-18.

Big Idea: Jesus, the Shepherd King, has come to overthrow tyrants.

Engage

What is your favourite Christmas movie, and why?

This question shouldn't take too much time, but should open people to conversation. Validate people's stories and gently invite responses.

- a. **Have someone briefly review what they remembered from the sermon?** (You may want to be pre-prepared with the main points to supplement if your group is not able to)
- b. **What stood out to you/challenged you/ made you think in the sermon?** (this question could be moved to the deepen section)

Learn

Read the Primary Text

1. The Magi came to Jerusalem seeking the one who had been born king. God chose to reveal Himself where the Magi had been looking—among the stars. And yet, the stars was not the primary place God had revealed these plans; the Old Testament Scriptures are filled with promises of the King to come.

Read Genesis 49:10, Isaiah 9:6-7, and Micah 5:2; what do the Scriptures tell us about the coming King?

2. Matthew develops a number of key themes throughout his Gospel, one of which centres around Jesus as the “new Moses,” and Deliverer. Given the context of Matthew 2, Jesus' life—like Moses'—is threatened by a Tyrant King (Herod and Pharaoh, respectively), and Jesus is led out of Egypt to deliver God's people (Mt. 2:15 quotes Hosea 11:1). But Matthew's story reveals Jesus to be more than a regional saviour (Israel); He is the saviour of the world.

One scholar writes, “A further effect of including Egypt in the story of Jesus' infancy is to add an important extra dimension to the geographical area which is involved in preparing for the coming of the Messiah. Not only is he the Galilean Messiah born in Judea, but he is honoured by Magi from the East, who bring gifts particularly associated with Arabia, and part of his childhood is spent in safety in Egypt. All the main elements of Israel's surrounding world as we

know them from the Old Testament are involved in welcoming God's Messiah, who, as the story unfolds, will prove to be much more than only the deliverer of Israel.”¹

Which is to say, Jesus' birth, the coming of the Magi, His flight into Egypt, and His return, all speak to the mission of God in the world. *Read Isaiah 49:6-7, a messianic prophecy, and discuss the following question—where do you see God's mission working itself out locally and globally?*

3. We cannot help but compare the kings mentioned in Matthew's story—Herod “the Great” and Jesus. Read Mark 6:14-34, comparing and contrasting the leadership of Herod and Jesus. What do you notice?

4. In Mark's sermon, Herod was described as a tyrant king and Jesus as a Shepherd King. In what have you experienced Jesus as Shepherd (you can read Psalm 23 and John 10:1-18 for hints)?

Deepen

What questions did you want to ask when listening to the sermon?

Leaders, allow people to wrestle with the text. Don't feel like you need to have all the answers, but in your preparation think about the questions that will arise and be prepared to point toward Jesus and the Scriptures for answers.

What Scripture passages might inform these unanswered questions?

Live

Question #4 asked how people have experienced Jesus as Shepherd in the past; take time as a group to share where/how we might Jesus to Shepherd us in this unique moment of our lives—then pray for one another.

¹ France, 78.