

The Tale of Two Seeds

"Epiphany"

Matthew 2:1ff

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Prayer:

O God, who by the leading of a star did manifest your only-begotten Son to the peoples of the earth: Lead us, who know you now by faith, to your presence, where we may behold your glory face to face; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.* <http://www.bcponline.org/>

Read: Matthew 2:1-18



Luke speaks to the events surrounding our Lord's birth, His circumcision and the purifying sacrifice forty days later for ceremonial uncleanness associated with giving birth to a male child. Matthew picks up the narrative inside of a two year window. We can assume life was uneventful for the family of Joseph. There were mysteries pondered and events processed whose full gestation would still elude them, but life had to be lived. Although having the eternal word assuming human nature is anything but typical or ordinary, there was still normality to this young family's existence.

What Matthew endeavors to do is keep his audience in the Story. He will show various aspects of the Story, but primarily he speaks to the tale of two seeds representing two conflicting kingdoms. Let us not forget the wording of Genesis 3:15.

"And I will put enmity between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel" (Gen. 3:15).

This element is shadowed throughout Israel's history and here it will once more be repeated. In the writing of His Story, He placed His people in Babylon. He returned them from where they came (i.e. the East). While there, although slaves, many rose to positions of prominence (i.e. Esther, Daniel, etc.). Their influence was felt and many within the pagan empire sought the one true God (Dan. 4:34, 35). Now from the East come travelers who seek the Christ child in fulfillment of promises and prophecies. The magi fully expected God's own people to be wholly aware of what they asked, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews (v. 2)?" Tragically, He came unto His own and His own did not receive Him (John 1:11). In the absence of any reception, they go to the governing power and ask of him their questions, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews (v. 2)?"

It was the serpent's seed that sat on David's throne. This alien and illegitimate power found the prophecy and questions a threat to his "dynasty". He met their questions with dishonesty and secrecy (vv. 7, 8). His interest peaked and he sought answers through the keepers of the promise (v. 4). They were equally aware of the ancient promise. They knew of what and

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whom the promise spoke (vv. 4-6). The enthusiasm of the magi contrasts with the anxiety of the religious and political establishment. Thrones would topple; humanity would choose. The king's façade was enough to make the magi believe and they went on their holy pursuit accepting the king's kind intentions (vv. 8, 9).

Although they expected all to receive and respond with great joy to the child's arrival, instead they found Him in a context of routine and normal. There was nothing spectacular and extravagant in the young family's existence (v. 11). Yet they bowed before Him and gave Him the worship He deserved. Every action expressed communicated His worth and kingship. After their communications and affection, they were to return to King Herod and give him their report, such was the extent of his cunning wickedness. God, however, directed them otherwise (v. 12). Likewise, the young family was told to leave Bethlehem and flee to Egypt (v. 13). No matter how wicked the intent of the serpent's seed, God knows and He will always win. In time, Herod heard of their reciprocal trickery and was enraged. The magi must have grieved at the non-reception given the Christ child. Although not understanding, they obeyed and did exactly what God directed. His rage caused all to tremble. All would wish that such narratives would be exceptions and not the rule, yet the depravity of our hearts is great. We are no better or worse than this wicked king. He destroyed "all the male children who were in Bethlehem and all its vicinity, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the magi (v. 16)." Whose heart can go so cold and indifferent that they can take the lives of children? Consider the agony of their families at the destruction of these young male children. The cry of mourning would echo forever as a testament to the intent of the serpent's seed. Some of the soldiers were past feeling, but others would forever be plagued by the blood of innocent life. Some of those present would still be alive when Christ began His formal presentation and deliverance of His people from their sins. Some of those soldiers would remember, and in remembering live hollow lives. Others would have found repentance and forgiveness for their crimes against God and would know of His healing touch and restoring embrace.

I believe throughout His life Jesus would be hunted by the serpent's seed, but God the Father and Holy Spirit would keep Him from harm's way until the moment of the great offering. Even after this historical event, I believe the serpent's seed continues to wage war against the seed of the woman. Let us be ever vigilant in our pursuit of Christ and His kingdom.

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