



December 21, 2025

The Promise: Foretold & Fulfilled

Christ

Matthew 2:4-8



1. **Opening Discussion:** (You will probably want to use only one of these openers)

- a. Have you ever searched for something and, after giving up, learned later that you had been amazingly close to what you sought, perhaps an address in a strange city? How did you feel when you learned how close you had come before giving up? How would things have been different if you had just pressed on?
- b. If you could give any physical gift to anyone, what would you give, to whom, and why?

2. **Prayer:**

- a. Consider this beautiful prayer by John Calvin (1509-1564) as a model for opening this Advent devotional study focused on the *Christ*

*Grant, Almighty God,
that since you have been pleased to perform to the Jews what you
promised, by sending the Savior,
and have also designed, by pulling down the middle wall of partition, to
make us partakers of the same invaluable blessing,
O grant that we may embrace Him with true faith,
and constantly abide in Him,
and so know you as our Father,
so that, being renewed by the Spirit of your Son,
we may wholly devote ourselves to you,
and consecrate ourselves to your service,
until at length that which is begun in us is completed,
and we are filled with that glory to which your Son, our Lord, daily invites
us.
Amen.*

- b. Least Reached People Group: **Zakhrin of India** (from the IMB “Loving the Lost Through Prayer” guide.)

“Among the hills of northeast India, a small group of people called the Zakhrin (ZAHK-rin) make their home. They are very hard to reach. The limited roads and hilly terrain contribute to this people being unengaged and unreached with the gospel. The Zakhrin are mainly animistic, but they also blend traditional Buddhist practices with magic and superstition. When they need help, they hope in those unbiblical customs to save them. Anthropologists claim the Zakhrin are on the verge of extinction. But God has a place for them before His throne and will be their help. Pray for the Zakhrin to find their help in the Lord, to understand that God is the One who holds all things together and is the only One worthy of their worship. Ask God to send believers from nearby villages to share the gospel. Ask for open hearts to receive it.”

3. Sermon Key Points:

- a. Herod Understood that Jesus Was the Long-Promised Christ.
 - i. God had long promised that a Christ would come.
 - ii. Herod immediately knew that the Christ had come.
- b. Jesus Fulfilled Everything Expected of the Christ.
 - i. Three kinds of people were anointed in ancient Israel - prophets, kings, and priests - the three "offices" Jesus fulfilled.
 - ii. Jesus is the ultimate anointed prophet.
 - iii. Jesus is the ultimate anointed king.
 - iv. Jesus is the ultimate anointed priest.

4. Bible Study: Since Christmas is this week and many will have significant commitments with family and friends, the format will be different. Instead of daily studies, the devotional is arranged into four shorter segments that you can complete as your schedule allows.

- a. *After the Sermon* – As soon as possible, set aside some time to consider:
 - i. What stood out to you the most in Brian's message?
 - ii. What new truth did you learn, or what truth were you reminded of?
 - iii. Is there a particular Scripture passage you feel God is leading you to meditate on or commit to memory?
 - iv. Is there something you feel God is leading you to do after hearing this message?
 - v. Did God convict you of a need to make any changes in your life and walk with Him?
- b. *Herod's inquiry*:
 - i. Read Matthew 2:1-8, focusing your meditation on verse 4.
 - ii. What was Herod's response to the troubling news that a new king had been born?
 1. What were the two groups Herod sought answers from?
 2. What does Acts 5:17 tell us about the identity of the first group?
 3. What do Matthew 5:20, 12:23, & 23:2 and Acts 23:9 tell us about the identity of the second group?
 4. What kind of relationship existed between the Sadducees and the Pharisees (see Acts 23:6-7)? What would be a modern American political comparison?
 5. Why would Herod have wanted both opposing political parties to be present to answer his question?

- iii. What does the fact that Herod asked about the birthplace of “the Christ” or “the Messiah” suggest about Herod?
 - 1. What enabled him to make the leap from the wise men’s inquiry about a newborn king to where the Old Testament said the Christ/Messiah would be born?
 - 2. What does it suggest about his belief in the Old Testament scriptures?

c. *The Answer:*

- i. Read Matthew 2:1-8, focusing your meditation on verses 5-8.
- ii. What answer did the Sadducees and Pharisees give? On what did they base their answer?
- iii. The quotation given in verse 6 actually seems to be a paraphrase of two Old Testament passages: Micah 5:2 & 4 and 2 Samuel 5:2. Read these passages.
 - 1. Knowing that Herod was extremely paranoid (he executed one of his wives and two of his sons), what might have been a more prudent response?
 - 2. By quoting scripture and emphasizing “ruler,” how might they have expected Herod to respond?
 - 3. What might that suggest about the Sadducees' and Pharisees' motives? How would such motives play out later in Jesus' life?
- iv. For comparison, how common do you think the knowledge of the Messiah’s birthplace was (see John 7:40-42)? If the wise men had come asking for “the Christ” / “the Messiah”, who might have answered their question? What application is there to our lives as Christians?
- v. What did Herod do with this new information?
 - 1. Why do you think Herod called the wisemen back “secretly”?
 - 2. Why do you think he asked about the exact time of the star's appearance?
 - 3. If you had just learned that the long-awaited Messiah had arrived and was only 6-7 miles away, what would you do?

d. *Christ/Messiah:*

- i. Herod was clearly concerned about someone replacing him as king, and during Jesus' ministry, it was clear the people expected a Messiah who would free them of Roman rule. How did John the Baptist describe the actual reason He came right at the very start of Jesus’ public ministry (see John 1:29)?
- ii. Throughout the four Gospels, Jesus demonstrates conclusively that he is God’s Chosen One, the Messiah. As described in the sermon, the Messiah fulfills three distinct offices carried forward from the Old Testament:
 - 1. He is a Prophet. Read these passages and meditate on what it means that He is a prophet: Deuteronomy 18:17-19, John 6:14, Acts 3:22-23, and Hebrews 1:1-2.

- a. A prophet is someone who reveals God’s Word. Why then is Christ the perfect prophet (see John 1:1 & 14)?
 - b. Why might the four Gospels be considered the primary record of Christ’s Prophetic role (see John 14:8-11)?
 2. He is the King. Read Matthew 4:17, Luke 19:38-40, John 1:49-51, Ephesians 1:20-22, and Revelation 19:16. How do Philippians 2:9-11 and Matthew 28:18 establish the extent of His Kingdom?
 3. He is our Priest. As our High Priest, Christ offered the perfect sacrifice for sin (Hebrews 9:26), continually brings us near to God (Hebrews 10:19-22), and continually prays for us (Hebrews 7:25, Romans 8:24, and 1 Timothy 2:5).
 - a. Read these verses and discuss/meditate on the importance of Christ’s role as our Priest.
 - b. How does Christ’s function as Priest help you personally?
- e. Only Appropriate Response:*
- i. Read Matthew 2:9-12 (these verses will be the text for the Christmas Eve message).
 - ii. As you meditate on these four verses, what do you find most significant about the passage?
 - iii. Why do you think the star didn’t just lead the wise men directly to Jesus, avoiding the stop in Jerusalem? How does it demonstrate who is really controlling all of the events described in Matthew 2:1-12?
 - iv. What was the Wise Men’s immediate response when they found Jesus? When we’ve found Him personally, what should our immediate and continuing response be? Discuss/meditate on what it means to worship Jesus.
 - v. Why were the gifts (gold, frankincense, and myrrh) of secondary importance, perhaps even insignificant (see Psalm 50:9-12, Job 41:11, and Acts 17:24-25)?

5. Application:

- a. Confession. If you have not already done so, this Christmas season would be the perfect time to follow Peter’s example in Matthew 16:16 and confess your belief in who Jesus truly is. But this confession cannot just be an intellectual acknowledgement that He was born, Herod did that, but then he tried to kill Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10 and follow these simple instructions. If you don’t understand them, or have lingering doubts, meet with one of the pastors or a Christian friend – just don’t put it off!
- b. Worship. God created us to worship and glorify Him. Advent and Christmas should focus our attention on such worship. It was the first act of the Wise Men and should be ours as well. As you spend time with family and friends this Christmas season, make sure to include time dedicated to truly worshipping the One whose birth (incarnation) we celebrate.