



Pastor Scott Archer 12.06.2015*
Central Congregational Church
"For the Glory of God and the Good of our Neighbors"
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The Dark Side of Christmas

Matthew Chapter 2

Advent Series: The Promise of Christmas Future

Central Passage

Matthew 2:16–18 (ESV) — **16** Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men. **17** Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah: **18** "A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be comforted, because they are no more."

Central Thought: King Herod's slaughter of the children reminds us that we are in a spiritual battle – celebrating the joy of Christmas while we wait for and work towards its final fulfillment in the second Advent of Christ.

Lessons From the Dark Side of Christmas

- ❖ We exist in the context of a cosmic, spiritual battle.

Revelation 12:1–6 (ESV) — **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 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, **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.

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Ephesians 6:10–12 (ESV) — **10** Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. **11** Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. **12** For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

- ❖ God is never taken by surprise and his plans cannot be thwarted.
- ❖ We are equipped for the battle by the word of God and the leading of his Spirit.

Matthew 2:12 (ESV) — **12** And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

Matthew 2:13 (ESV) — **13** Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him."

- ❖ Our victory through Christ is assured!

Revelation 12:7–11 (ESV) — **7** Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, **8** but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. **9** And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. **10** And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. **11** And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death..."

Homework

- ❖ Read and reflect on Ephesians 6:10-20 and Revelation 12.
- ❖ If you haven't yet, begin a new habit of regular devotional reading of the scriptures and prayer.

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