



**HERE COMES
HEAVEN**

Week 2 - "When God Takes the Throne" - Pastor Jeremy Bates

Sermon Notes, December 12, 2021

Text: Luke 1:30-33 / Matthew 2:1-19

Introduction

Christmas can become competitive. The stress and chaos we create for ourselves to have the “perfect Christmas” and find the “perfect gift” and scratch off our never-ending to-do lists can leave us feeling frazzled, with our nerves frayed and our patience shot. We're competing against each other for that last mall parking spot, competing with our budget to make our list fit, competing with ourselves to top the gifts we gave last year and competing against the clock to get everything done. The competition of Christmas isn't only a modern day phenomenon though, the very first Christmas was surrounded in controversy and competition.

Luke 1:30-33

Matthew 2:1-19

Q- "How should I respond to God wanting to take the throne?"

Humanity has always competed with God's claim to the throne:

Genesis 1:27,28 - made to rule reign as God's emissaries

Genesis 22 - God creates Israel to illustrate to the world what following God as king is like

Exodus 14:31, 15:31 - after periods of slavery Israel follows God

1 Samuel 8:4-9 - a call for a king like everyone else around them

BROKEN RULERS perpetuate brokenness on others,
God alone wants to be our PERFECT & JUST KING

“Proximity to the things of God, doesn't necessitate a heart for God” - Kevin Shepherd

Conclusion:

How do we respond when God wants to sit on the throne of our lives?

- *STAND OFF – unrelenting in pride & fear like Herod*
- *STANDOFFISH – keeping our distance, indifferent like the Religious leaders*
- *SEEK OUT Jesus, pursue and worship him as Lord & King like the wisemen*



Life Group Discussion

Warm-Up:

How "into the Christmas spirit" do you get?

How soon is too soon to put up decorations and listen to Christmas music?

What's the one tradition you look forward to the most each Christmas?

Study & Discussion:

1) What resonated with you from the sermon? What challenged or surprised you? What questions do you have?

2) You'll often hear people say they think the world is getting worse, that darkness and evil are prevalent - would you agree or do you think it is a matter of history repeating itself? (Romans 1:28,29)

3) Read Luke 1:30-33 & Matthew 2:1-19. What stands out most to you from this story? How do you see yourself in contrast to Herod? The religious leaders? The wisemen?

4) If you've already become a Christian, share what the process was like for you to "surrender" your life to Jesus. Was it instant or a process? What areas of your life did you hesitate to yield control of. If you haven't fully made that commitment, and feel comfortable sharing, what holds you back from giving the throne of your heart to Jesus?

5) The religious leaders were familiar with the prophecy; they knew the answers, and yet they didn't look for Jesus or help anyone else look for him either. They were so close yet so far away! How can this challenge us today?

6) Why do you agree or disagree with this statement: "*Proximity to the things of God does not necessitate a heart for God.*"

Practicing the Way of Jesus: Following

1) Take some time this week to reflect on what it means for Jesus to sit on the throne of your heart. Are there any areas unyielded? Any areas you've taken over control of? When you think of your Christian life lately, have you been standoffish in your pursuit of Jesus or have you sought him out like the wisemen did?

Prayer:

