

Morning After Midnight

On Christmas Day two thousand years ago, the birth of a tiny baby in an obscure village in the Middle East was God's supreme triumph of good over evil.

(Charles Colson)

Although King Herod the Great was a remarkable builder and Israel enjoyed times of prosperity under his leadership; he was a ruthless and cruel leader. When the three Magi (Wise Men) arrived in Jerusalem, announcing the fact that they had seen the star of Israel's newborn king, the Jews were greatly distressed (Matthew 2:1-12). They knew this proclamation would result in misfortune. There was no reason for them to think otherwise. Herod had murdered Mariamne, a Jew who was the favorite of his ten wives. He also killed the two sons he conceived with her. Herod executed Mariamne's brother, her grandfather, her mother and his first born son, Antipater. This evil king possessed an unquenchable thirst for blood and multitudes had been slaughtered by him. Remaining true to his character, Herod put to death all the children (two years old and under) of Bethlehem. This horrible atrocity was the king's futile attempt to destroy Jesus Christ, the incarnate son of God (Matthew 2:16-18).

Herod was a dark spot in the history of Israel and he personifies the enemy of our souls; the Prince of Darkness. Satan's perverse influence is behind the chaos prevalent in our world today. There are times when most of us experience more sorrow and pain than it seems we can bear, but as the old saying goes, "There is a silver lining behind every dark cloud." Chill and darkness may precede the dawn, but there is always a morning after midnight. John Calvin said, "Whatever sort of tribulation we suffer, we should always remember that its purpose is to make us spurn the present and reach out to the future."

The prophet Moses described Christ as being a light in darkness (Numbers 24:17), "A Star shall come out of Jacob; a Scepter shall rise out of Israel." Adversity will not last forever. The sword of the Spirit, the shield of faith and prayer are effective weapons against all that threatens our relationship with God (Ephesians 6:10-18). Don't be afraid of the dark—be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

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