

The Heart of the Grinch and Herod - Erasing Any Sign of Christmas

Cornerstone Community Church – Pastor Jerry Ernst
December 1, 2024 (Advent #1)

Scripture: Matthew 2:1-12, John 10:9-10, Mark 8:35

Key “Whosoever” verses: Mark 8:35, Acts 2:21, Luke 1:49

The birth of Christ creates animosity in Secular Society

Today, Christmas is hated by the *ACLU, Freedom from Religion, Human Rights Commission, and even schools*. Lawsuits are threatened if Jesus is mentioned in the public square. Even though 93% of Americans celebrate Christmas, the very word “Christmas” has been replaced by “*Happy Holidays*.”

The Heart of the Grinch and Herod - Erasing Any Sign of Christmas

(Matt 2:1-12, John 10:10, Mark 8:35)

1) The Grinch and King Herod: *They both wanted to stop Christmas from coming!*

Dr. Suess – “The Grinch”: Every Who down in Who-ville liked a Christmas a lot...
But the Grinch, who lived just north of Who-ville did NOT!
The Grinch hated Christmas! The whole Christmas season!
Now, please don’t ask why. No one quite knows the reason.
“Tomorrow is Christmas! It’s practically here!”
Then he growled, with his Grinch fingers nervously drumming
“I MUST find some way to stop Christmas coming!”

The Magi Visit the Messiah (Matthew 2:1-12)

“(1) After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during **the time of King Herod**, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem (2) and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.”

(3) When **King Herod heard this he was disturbed**, and all Jerusalem with him. (4) When he had called together all the people’s chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. (5) “In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written: (6) “ ‘But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.’ ”

(7) Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. (8) He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.”

... (12) **And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod**, they returned to their country by another route.”

DISTURBED: (Gk: *tarassó*): “**To disturb, to trouble, stir up, to agitate.**”

Usage: It conveys a sense of inner turmoil or emotional disturbance.

2) The Grinch and King Herod: *Without God’s love they were left to their own evil thoughts & desires!*

John 10:9-10 - “(9) *I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved...* (10) **The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.**”

- **Lies** – Herod lied to the Wise Men (Matt. 2:8); Grinch lied to Cindy Lou.
- **Steals** – Herod was paranoid of power lost – and will kill to keep it (Matt.2:16); Grinch cannot stand the “Who’s” – tries to steal it by stealing Christmas in Whosville.
- **Destroys** – Herod *tried to destroy Jesus*; Grinch tries to use his “Awful idea – to stop Christmas.”

The Escape to Egypt (Matthew 2:13, 16)

"(13) When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him."

(16) When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi."

Why would King Herod be so upset to kill a baby born in Bethlehem?

3) The Grinch and King Herod: Their "Heart Problem" is why people reject Jesus.

The Grinch' heart? His heart was two sizes too small.

Herod's heart? Herod would destroy whatever endangered his power.

What changed the Grinch' heart? It came from something that couldn't be erased, bought, or taken.

He HADN'T stopped Christmas from coming! IT CAME

Somehow or other, it came just the same!

"It came without ribbons! It came without tags!

"It came without packages, boxes or bags!"

"Maybe Christmas," he thought, "Doesn't come from a store.

"Maybe Christmas... perhaps... means a little bit more!"

And what happened then...?

- Well... **in Who-ville** they say that **the Grinch's small heart grew 3 sizes that day!**

Jesus can Change a Hardened Heart

Humility – Come and lay your life before Jesus Christ the King.

Mark 8:35 - *"(35) For **whosoever** will save his life shall lose it; but **whosoever** shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it."*

Acceptance – Invite Jesus into your life to save you and make Him your Lord.

Acts 2:21 - *"(21) And it shall come to pass, that **whosoever** shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved."*

Proclamation – Live your life dedicated to bringing glory to Jesus.

Luke 1:49 – *"(49) For He **who** is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name."*