

## Sermon Text Discussion Notes 12/22/2019

Matthew 2:1-23 – “Herod and the Conflict of Christmas” by Drew Hunter

### Overview

Herod expresses in extreme what is true of the natural man in all of us: our self-rule is threatened by the rule of Christ. Yet it is in Christ's rule that our only hope lies.

1. The Christmas Conflict
2. The Cosmic Conflict
3. The Continuing Conflict

### Quotations

“When Jesus shows up in the world, many view him as a threat; not a savior.” Drew Hunter

“One of the keys to understanding the meaning of Advent is this: Jesus' birth is very much like his death.” Drew Hunter

“Herod is not fundamentally different than us; he's just further down the road.” Drew Hunter

“Half the harm that is done in this world is due to people who want to feel important. They don't mean to do harm—but the harm does not interest them. Or they do not see it, or they justify it because they are absorbed in the endless struggle to think well of themselves.” T. S. Eliot, “The Cocktail Party”

### Understanding & Application

- 1) Have you ever thought of Christmas as a story of conflict before? Why can the story of Christmas not be the great event that it is without conflict?
- 2) Read Revelation 12:1-5 as a symbolic telling of Jesus's birth. Keep in mind Genesis 3:15. How does Jesus's birth move the cosmic conflict toward its climax?
- 3) Consider the second quote above. In what ways is this true?
- 4) Matthew quotes from Jeremiah 31:15. Read Jeremiah 31:15-17 and 31-34. How is it that conflict and tragedy are necessary for the promise of the New Covenant to be fulfilled?
- 5) Drew noted that we tend to view the Herods (and Hitlers and Pol Pots) of this world as strange monsters among human beings. Consider, though, the third quote above. Do you believe this? How does it move us to include a time of confession in our celebration of Christmas?