

December 17 – Cheryl Bray

Read Matthew 2:7-8

After reading Matthew 2:7-8 the Scripture spoke about one small look at King Herod calling the Magi about the exact time the star had appeared. Herod asked the Magi to go to Bethlehem and seek out where the child was and report back to him so he would be able to worship the child.

King Herod was also known as the puppet king of Israel in the time of 4 B.C. King Herod sought to maintain his power sustaining despair and oppression of the people he ruled. Herod's people lived in a time of high unemployment and high taxes for those who could find work. Beggars were at the gates of every city. Herod's people were starving accompanied by crime and violence widespread throughout the land. The life for people, the king of the Jews, was one leading to torn families and desolation.

The Magi travelled to Bethlehem finding the child but did not return to Herod to provide information to him. Instead, the Magi chose to follow God's word and returned home a different route. Herod realized the Magi did not follow his command and became incensed with rage at the disobedience. Herod committed heinous acts due to the betrayal of the Magi.

Advent is the arrival of a notable person, thing or event. Advent season represents the beginning of the Christian year with the celebration of the birth of Jesus. The decision of the Magi to return to their homeland and not to Herod represents the free thinking God allows a people to decide if they are going to follow the word of God or follow the word of man.

Jesus was born in a time of terrorism and violence throughout the land of Israel. Not so different from what we are seeing again today. As we celebrate Advent and Christmas we need to stop and see what we are doing as current day people of choosing to follow God or society in our everyday thoughts, actions, and beliefs. Matthew 2:7-8 represents the demands made by someone in power and the choices of people to follow God and do the right thing. Through the birth of Jesus hope is emerged then and can emerge again today. Following our heart entrenched in the word of God will lead us to forsake all others. Society and God do not always agree and we must decide the path we will take. It is up to us.

*Heavenly Father, please continue to speak your word to all of us as we can decide to be a follower of scripture. Please help each of us to choose the right path when faced with struggles of society and your teachings. Let our path be illuminated so we are able to discern your guidance. Amen.*