

# CELL NOTES 10/12/07

## ICE BREAKER

What family traditions do you observe at Christmas time?

## THEME

Jews and Romans

Readings Mat 2 : 3-8 & 13-20, Luke 2 : 1-7.

## SERMON SUMMARY

- 1) The Roman occupation of Israel brought some benefits (a measure of peace etc.) but was also much resented, as any foreign occupier would be.
- 2) The arrival of the magi at Herod's (A half-Jewish ruler, installed by the Romans) palace. Looking for a new king unnerved him. He sent for Jewish advisers to respond to this.
- 3) The OT (in Micah) predicted the birth of the messiah in Bethlehem. They had been waiting a long time! - but neither the Sadducees (Keen to maintain outward religious tradition) or Pharisees (Lawyers) took the trouble to visit Bethlehem to see for themselves.
- 4) Herod tried to manipulate the magi so that they would tell him what was going on – a cunning plan that failed when they returned home by a different route. Herod reacted with fury – wanted to eliminate, not get to know Jesus.
- 5) Three different reactions are on view :-
  - i) Herod – fear, jealousy and dismissal, expressed very harshly.
  - ii) Jewish leaders – apathy
  - iii) Magi – wanting to worship Him,

What is ours?

- 6) The Christmas season gives us opportunities:-
  - i) To share with people who have no knowledge of Jesus what He can do in our lives.
  - ii) To adopt the same heart attitude as the magi – to worship, to go where He leads, and to leave our burdens with Him.

## QUESTIONS OF APPLICATION

- 1) In what ways are you like, or have been like, Herod, the Jewish leaders, or the magi?
- 2) The magi left homeland to find Jesus. Have you had to leave anything, to find or follow Him?
- 3) What makes you feel threatened? Do you feel threatened or intimidated by Jesus' kingship in any way?
- 4) How can you use the season to be a witness? How can you avoid getting sucked into a spiritually suffocating whirl of secular Christmas activities?