

IT'S BEGINNING TO LOOK a lot like CHRISTMAS?

DID IT LOOK LIKE THIS THEN? YES!

WHAT IT LOOKED LIKE AND WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM IT TODAY

1. **WHAT IT LOOKED LIKE:** The political powers were _____ and _____.

- **A Couple of First Century Political Similarities:**

A selfish leader who _____ and refuses to _____ is in power.

*Jesus was born ... during the reign of King Herod. After Jesus' birth a group of spiritual priests from the East came to Jerusalem² and inquired of the people, "Where is the child who is born king of the Jewish people? We observed his star rising in the sky and we've come to bow before him in worship." King Herod was shaken to the core when he heard this... **Matthew 2:1-3** (TPT)*

*The wise men came to the house where the child was with his mother Mary. They bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened the boxes of gifts they had brought for him. They gave him treasures of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.¹² But God warned the wise men in a dream not to go back to Herod. So they went home to their own country a different way. **Matthew 2:11a-12** (ERV)*

A selfish leader who _____ and kills _____ to secure his position is in power.

*Herod saw that the wise men had fooled him, and he was very angry. So he gave an order to kill all the baby boys in Bethlehem and the whole area around Bethlehem. Herod had learned from the wise men the time the baby was born. It was now two years from that time. So he said to kill all the boys who were two years old and younger.¹⁷ This gave full meaning to what God said through the prophet Jeremiah:¹⁸ "A sound was heard in Ramah—bitter crying and great sadness. Rachel cries for her children, and she cannot be comforted, because her children are gone." **Matthew 2:16-18** (ERV)*

- **WHAT WE CAN LEARN:** Evil does not trump God's power and goodness.

2. **WHAT IT LOOKED LIKE:** The poor were _____ and _____.

*Her first son was born. She ... laid Him in a place where cattle are fed. There was no room for them in the place where people stay for the night. **Luke 2:7** (NLV)*

The time came for Joseph and Mary to perform the ceremony of purification, as the Law of Moses commanded. So they took the child to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord,²³ as it is written in the law of the Lord: "Every first-born male is to be dedicated to the Lord."²⁴ They also went to offer a sacrifice of a pair of doves or two young pigeons, as required by the law of the Lord. **Luke 2:22, 24** (GNB)

When the time of her purification is completed, whether for a son or daughter, she shall bring to the priest at the entrance of the Tent of the Lord's presence a one-year-old lamb for a burnt offering and a pigeon or a dove for a sin offering...⁸ If the woman cannot afford a lamb, she shall bring two doves or two pigeons, ... take away her impurity, and she will be ritually clean. **Leviticus 12:6, 8a** (GNB)

- **WHAT WE CAN LEARN:** God _____ me and _____.

As for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, seemingly insignificant among the clans of Judah—from you a king will emerge who will rule over Israel on my behalf, one whose origins are in the distant past. **Micah 5:2** (NET) **Matthew 2:6**

The angel...said, "You are honored very much. You are a favored woman. The Lord is with you. You are chosen from among many women." **Luke 1:28** (NLV)

Look carefully at your call, brothers and sisters. By human standards, not many of you are deemed to be wise. Not many are considered powerful. Not many of you come from royalty, right?²⁷ **But celebrate this:** God selected the world's foolish to bring shame upon those who think they are wise; likewise, He selected the world's weak to bring disgrace upon those who think they are strong.²⁸ God selected the common and the castoff, whatever lacks status, so He could invalidate the claims of those who think those things are significant. **1 Corinthians 1:25-28** (VOICE)

- 3. **WHAT IT LOOKED LIKE:** People celebrate the _____ but miss the _____.

Shepherds living out in the fields nearby. It was night, and they were looking after their sheep.⁹ An angel of the Lord appeared to them. And the glory of the Lord shone around them. They were terrified.¹⁰ But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy. It is for all the people."¹¹ ...Then the shepherds said r, "Let's go see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."¹⁶ So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph and the baby. The baby was lying in the manger.¹⁷ After the shepherds had seen him, they told everyone. They reported what the angel had said about this child...¹⁹ **But Mary** kept all these things like a secret treasure in her heart. She thought about them over and over. **Luke 2:8-19** (NIV)

- **WHAT WE CAN LEARN:** For God to change my _____ he must change my _____.

These people think they can draw near to Me by saying the right things, by honoring Me with their lips, but their hearts are far away from Me. Their worship of Me consists of man-made traditions...; it is a meaningless sham! **Isaiah 29:13** (VICE)

God's love has reached its goal in us. ...While we are in this world, we are like him...¹⁹ We love because God loved us first. **1 John 4:18-19** (GW)

A thief is only there to steal and kill and destroy. I came so they can have real and eternal life, more and better life than they ever dreamed of. **John 10:10** (MP)