

## Problem

Read Luke 2:13-14 and then read this article:

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/early-lead/wp/2013/07/07/soccer-referee-beheaded-after-stabbing-player-to-death-in-brazil/>

Read Matthew 10:34-39. What does Baby Jesus represent and how might this relate to peace on earth?

Here is the Central Proposition of the Text:

You cannot ignore Jesus. Choose to adore Him or choose to abhor Him, there is no in between.

## **You cannot ignore Jesus (Matthew 2:1-6)**

These wise men refer to a star and a prophecy likely referring to Numbers 24:17.

Read Daniel 5:11. Where might they have heard this prophecy?

Read Numbers 24:10-19. How do these pagan wise men contrast with the chief priests and scribes of Israel?

Read Micah 5:1-5. It says that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem, meaning house of Bread (John 6:48 shows Jesus is the Bread of Life). Notice also that Micah tells us that the Savior would be their peace. How does this contrast with Matthew 2:3?

Why do you think that the chief priests and scribes did not run to Bethlehem, which was only 5 miles away?

How does Matthew's mention of this fact contrast with the pagan men from the east?

One group knew what the Bible said and ignored it, the other knew a bit and totally acted on it. Don't be too quick to feel supreme. When we wonder about their attempt to ignore Jesus we must first see ourselves. In what ways do you ignore Jesus and refuse to seek Him going your own way?

## **Choose to adore Him (Matthew 2:7-12)**

*One atheist on a forum wrote: jesus never walked on water, was not divine, did not raise from the dead, was married, had children and most important was just a simple, humble man like most of us yet he was still the greatest man that ever lived and a example to us all and organized religions are just profit making cooperations who make him divine to enforce to us how weak and worthless we are so they can brain wash and control us to become their money making puppets while they fulfil all their perverted desires and live*

*a lazy,unproductive life,show me one christ like christian and i will show you a ten headed dog,(<http://www.godlikeproductions.com/forum1/message1894701/pg1>)*

What does it look like to adore Jesus? Read Matthew 14:33; 28:9, 17; John 9:24-38.

Read Revelation 19:10. If Jesus was not God what would it mean if He accepted worship? Could a good person receive the worship of others if he was not God? Could Jesus be simply a good moral teacher as the above quote implied?

Read Revelation 22:3. Did the wise men have the right response?

### **Or choose to abhor Him (Matthew 2:13-23)**

Matthew relates Herod's rage against Jesus to the rage against the Jewish people from the beginning (Matthew 2:15 reminds us of Exodus 14:1-4 and Israel's deliverance from persecution).

Read Ester 3:1-6. Why does everybody hate the Jews? Then read the following article: <http://www.gotquestions.org/anti-Semitism.html>

Mark Twain wrote:

*"The Egyptian, the Babylonian, and the Persian rose, filled the planet with sound and splendor, then faded to dream-stuff and passed away; the Greek and the Roman followed, and made a vast noise, and they are gone; other peoples have sprung up and held their torch high for a time, but it burned out, and they sit in twilight now, or have vanished. The Jew saw them all, beat them all, and is now what he always was, exhibiting no decadence, no infirmities of age, no weakening of his parts, no slowing of his energies, no dulling of his alert and aggressive mind. All things are mortal but the Jew; all other forces pass, but he remains. What is the secret of his immortality?" - Mark Twain, "Concerning the Jews", Harper's Magazine, March, 1898*

How does Jeremiah 31:1-17, quoted by Matthew (2:18), answer Twain?

Notice at this point you have one group trying to ignore Him, one group trying to worship Him and one Guy trying to murder Him. How would Matthew's use of Jeremiah here offer them hope? (Matthew is drawing out God's deliverance of Jesus, His control even in this present darkness.)

### **There is no in between (Matthew 2:19-23)**

Regarding Jesus being called a Nazarene read the following statement:

*Jesus lived in Nazareth in order to fulfill the prophets; and the evidential reason by which we ourselves can see that his living in Nazareth fulfilled the prophets, is that afterward, due to his having lived there, he was called "the Nazarene." We may add that even his followers were called "Nazarenes." Matthew writes nothing occult or difficult. A Nazarene is one who hails from Nazareth. Matthew counts on the ordinary intelligence*

*of his readers, who will certainly know that the enemies of Jesus branded him the "Nazarene," that this was the name that marked his Jewish rejection and would continue to do so among the Jews. They put into it all the hate and odium possible, extending it, as stated, to his followers. And this is "what was spoken through the prophets." One and all told how the Jews would despise the Messiah, Ps. 22:6; Isa. 49:7; 53:3; Dan. 9:26; every prophecy of the suffering Messiah, and every reference to those who would not hear him, like Deut. 18:18. The Talmud calls Jesus Yeshu Hannotzri (the Nazarene); Jerome reports the synagogue prayer in which the Christians are cursed as Nazarenes.... Compare Acts 24:5, "sect of the Nazarene," and Paul's characterization. If Jesus had been reared in Jerusalem, he could not have been vilified as the Nazarene. It was God who let him grow up in Nazareth and thus furnished the title of reproach to the Jews in fulfillment of all the reproach God had prophesied for the Messiah through the prophets (Lenski, R.C.H. (1943), The Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 88-89).*

Keeping that in mind, read the following verses John 1:11, 46; 11:38-53; 12:9-11; 36-43;; and Acts 24:5.

Finally read John 19:14-22. Notice the term on the sign above Jesus' name. In the end the Jewish people were on the side of Herod (Matthew 2:3). Herod tried to murder Jesus and the chief priests and scribes finished the job. They could not simply ignore Him after all.

This brings us to the Main Idea:

**You can hate Him or worship Him but you cannot ignore Him. Jesus is either everything or nothing but He is nothing in between.**

Discuss the following quotes:

*Buddha never claimed to be God. Moses never claimed to be Jehovah. Mohammed never claimed to be Allah. Yet Jesus Christ claimed to be the true and living God. Buddha simply said, "I am a teacher in search of the truth." Jesus said, "I am the Truth." Confucius said, "I never claimed to be holy." Jesus said, "Who convicts me of sin?" Mohammed said, "Unless God throws his cloak of mercy over me, I have no hope." Jesus said, "Unless you believe in me, you will die in your sins." --Unknown*

*A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic – on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg – or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God; or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.--C.S. Lewis*

Sermon Study - Matthew 2 - Division on Earth

You began discussing Luke 2:13-14 and Peace on earth. Read John 14:27 and 16:31-33.

Peace came to this earth on Christmas day. Peace was crucified and murdered. But Peace rose again. You must choose where you will find peace. The world or Christ. Right now in the midst of your trouble God offers peace.

Discuss how to specifically apply this in your midst. Do not be hearers of the Word only but take the time to apply this specifically.

*But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing. (James 1:22-25)*