

Rival Ruler

(Isaiah 63:7-9; **Matthew 2:13-23**)

10:30 am, Sunday, December 26, 2010; Windsor UBC; J G White

Jesus, your King is born, Jesus is born, *in excelsis gloria*.

The songs of the season continue to be heard everywhere, on every radio and TV station, in the malls and marketplaces.

So many Christmas carols, and they speak powerful things about this new-born King.

The songs get sung, but what is meant by the singing? He is not King of everyone who sings, that's for sure!

Today's story from Matthew is the flight into Egypt.

What a contrast: the three kings worship the child, Herod the local ruler is totally threatened and commands a massacre.

This Jesus, this figure of history, finds Himself Lord of some and enemy of others.

Some kings worshipped Him: the Magi.

One ruler was threatened by Him and sought His death: Herod.

Who are the kings in your life?

What do the kings in your life do?

Bow to Christ, or threatened by Him?

GIFTS: Cook Book, Fact & Fokelore Book – we like to think we can care for ourselves, run our own lives, become intelligent people. Are **we** our nearest rival to Jesus?

Come, adore on bended knee,

Christ the Lord, the new-born King.

Jesus, the Ruler of humans.

This babe is the One who is a rival for ourselves & others.

Christ is a rival of every sort of person, no matter how strong or weak, how influential or oppressed, how intellectual or ordinary.

Jesus, Ruler of every sort of person.

So, bring Him incense, gold, and myrrh,

come, peasant, king to own Him,

That verse goes on to say:

*the King of kings salvation brings,
let loving hearts enthrone Him.*

Jesus, for all of your salvific needs!

We, believers, claim to be those who have received salvation from God, and are thus the ones to share this good news. But we still easily rely upon ourselves and other people or things to save us in many circumstances.

From what are we saved? From whom are we saved?

Is Jesus Saviour in all these circumstances?

GIFT: stone oil lamp. We light our own candle, decide for ourselves what is wisdom and insight, what is real spiritual power and guidance? Jesus rivals all these things.

Jesus, Lord of the spiritual realm, the spirit world.

Come, and behold Him, born the King of angels.

This past season I have been going back again and again to Hebrews 1. Christ is far superior to angels. In this season of beautiful, feminine angels, the world needs to hear of the One who is far more powerful and important!

Are there rivals to Jesus for you when you face the spiritual battles of your life? Do other powers take your attention and influence you? Do you trust tools and resources other than the Lord? Christ is yet greater.

GIFT: Bird-opoly. Creation around us – some of which we appreciate, some of which we do not. We live like we are the top of the heap in all of nature and the universe. Jesus rivals us as the god of matter and energy.

Jesus, First-born and God of all creation.

*Though wise men who found Him laid rich gifts around Him,
Yet oxen they gave Him their hay.*

Ox and ass before Him bow, and He is in the manger now.

So many Christmas legends tell of signs in nature of the saviour. Plants and trees and animals, not to mention the biblical guiding star.

Is Jesus your Lord when you take your place in creation, in nature, in the environment? When you consider the whole

environmental movement, what is your conversation with the Holy Spirit like? As you observe and study the world around you, where does Christ stand?

GIFT: Musical Tie – we tend to make our own joy and happiness, or leave our God outside the door when we want to have fun and pleasure, or devote ourselves to what interests us.

Jesus, the King of inner, personal transformation and beauty.

Come, kneel before the radiant boy,

Who brings you beauty, peace, and joy.

Beauty, peace, and joy.

Where is God when you seek things that are beautiful to you?

As you seek peace – peace in your relationships, inner peace with yourself, making peace with things that happened in your past – do you rely upon Christ as the Prince of peace, or is He merely our mascot of peace?

And is our joy founded upon the goodness of God and the presence of the living Spirit of God here and now? Or do we pursue happiness as if we can find and achieve it ourselves?

Jesus is prepared to be the King of our joy, the King of peace, the Lord of beauty. He is all in all!

This is the One we have waited for, all our lives. He really has come to us. Rejoice!

Let us pray.