

DARK Christmas

December 24- Death of the Innocent

The gritty reality of redemption's arrival



Thinking for Meaning and with Emotion

"BELIEVISM"
and
SKEPTICISM

Is the Nativity
(and the earth)
a providential mess?

Or are we prone to jumping to the
conclusions of Believism and Skepticism



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Christmas

December 24 - Death of the Innocent

The gritty reality of redemption's arrival



"Herod is best known for slaughtering every male infant in Bethlehem in an attempt to kill Jesus. He is almost certainly innocent of this crime."
National Geographic, 2006

Martyrdom of St. Matthew	3,000
Byzantine Tradition	14,000
Syrian Tradition	64,000

Thinking for Meaning and with Emotion

"BELIEVISM"

Is the Nativity

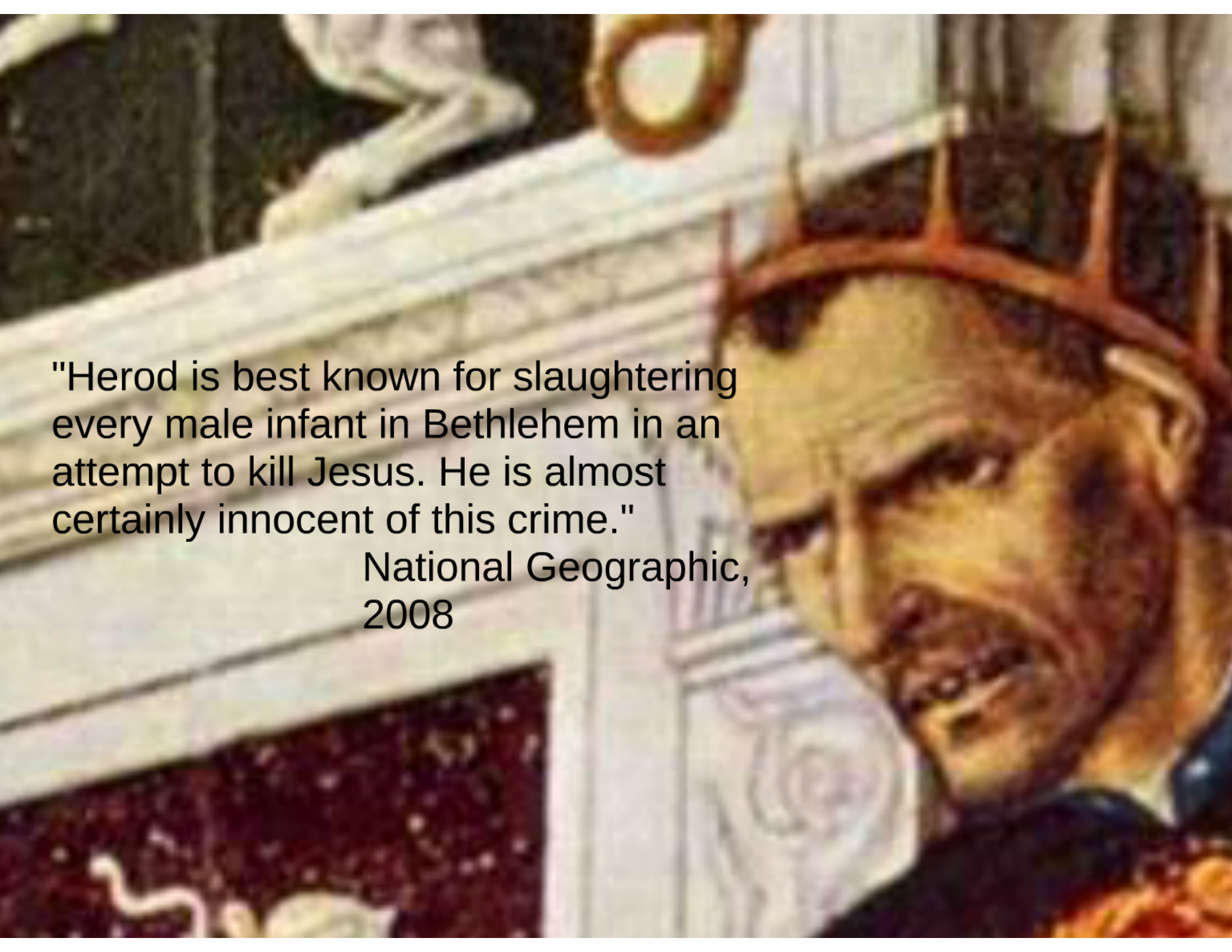
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"BELIEVISM"

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View it 2,000 or 64,000?

and

SKEPTICISM

Skeptical Equations
List of Editors
Percent of Total's Information
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Misguided piety:

Is it faith to honor something so much that you destroy its integrity?

Was it 3,000 or 64,000?

Population of Bethlehem in 5 B.C.: ~ 300
Population of 'surrounding area': ~ 200

Estimated number of children 2 and under: ~30-40
Number that were male: 15-20

Is it the right 'kind' of faith to make 15-20
children 2,000-64,000?

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**Is it the right 'kind' of faith to make 15-20
children 3,000-64,000?**

Skepticism Equation:

Lots of Children

+

Record of Herod's Wickedness

=

We would have heard about this.

Historical Reality:

Not that many kids in rural town

+

Herod is way crazier than you think

=

there's no reason you'd have heard about this
outside the Bible

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Estimating the meaning of reality...

Remember the Flood (Genesis 6:11-12)

Isn't estimating deceptively hard?

- Things that are hard to estimate:
1. when the weather is going to be "bad"
 2. how much rain tomorrow will be

3. how long it will take to get to the store
4. how many people will be at the store
5. how many people will be at the store
6. how many people will be at the store

7. The number of people who will be at the store
8. how many people will be at the store
9. how many people will be at the store
10. how many people will be at the store
11. how many people will be at the store

"The Lord will visit them and will bring down their iniquity, and will cut them off from the earth, and will blot out their name from under heaven."

Maybe we need to know a little more about the Flood. Maybe we need to know a little more about the Flood. Maybe we need to know a little more about the Flood.

1234567890



Skepticism- if God were good and in control, this kind of mess wouldn't happen


Believism- everything happens for a reason and leads to heaven, good things and happy endings



Estimating the meaning of reality...

Remember the Herod Skeptic equation

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Things that are hard to estimate:

1. what the weather is going to do- really

2. how much pain someone else is in

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4. the tempering temperature of chocolate

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3. how your priorities will change over the course of your life
4. the tempering temperature of chocolate without using a thermometer
5. how many dry spaghetti noodles does it

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3. how your priorities will change over the course of your life

4. the tempering temperature of chocolate without using a thermometer

5. how many dry spaghetti noodles does it take to feed this many people?

6. When the UPS guy will deliver your kids

course of your life

4. the tempering temperature of chocolate without using a thermometer
5. how many dry spaghetti noodles does it take to feed this many people?
6. When the UPS guy will deliver your kids presents so you can pretend they aren't from you.

without using a thermometer

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6. When the UPS guy will deliver your kids presents so you can pretend they aren't from you.

7. The number of M&Ms or jellybeans in a jar

8. how long a home project will take and how

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8. how long a home project will take and how much more it will cost you than you think, and how fast your excitement to do that project will dissipate

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7. The number of M&Ms or jellybeans in a jar

8. how long a home project will take and how much more it will cost you than you think, and how fast your excitement to do that project will dissipate

9. a woman's age...or weight (from a physical therapist)

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9. a woman's age...or weight (from a physical therapist)

10. the toll parenting will take on an otherwise competent adult

11. how many people were at "that event" last

dissipate

9. a woman's age...or weight (from a physical therapist)

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11. how many people were at "that event" last night

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"we can't estimate these things accurately, and yet, we seem to think we can try to estimate something infinitely more complex: what God is doing in the universe through his providence. If this reliable reason, or a less reliable impulse that seems reasonable?"

Maybe we need to have a much healthier doubt concerning our theological abilities of estimation rather than in God's purposes in his own providence- even in our inexplicable loss and tragedy."

What we put our doubt in is almost as important as what we put our faith in.

Sometimes a new doubt needs to come before new faith.

A Hint:

Psalm 73

Isaiah 57:1

Genesis 22:2

Hebrews 11:17-19

So what is God doing?

is there any ground for trust?

Specific, limited knowledge:

God speaks and shows himself,
but rarely explains himself

Judgment



Salvation



Choice

God has offered us
freedom to welcome the
resurrection and
salvation of the true King



Specific, limited knowledge:

God speaks and shows himself,
but rarely explains himself

Judgement

God has chose to allow and confirm the choices of damnation



Salvation

God has chosen to protect and establish his way of redemption



Choice

God has offered an invitation to embrace the redemption and salvation of the true king



Jeremiah 31:15

This is what the LORD says: "A voice is heard in Ramah, mourning and great weeping, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because her children are no more."

Rejection brings disaster...but

The VERY NEXT verse

The VERY NEXT verse...

Jeremiah 31:16-17

This is what the LORD says: "Restrain your voice from weeping and your eyes from tears, for your work will be rewarded," declares the LORD. "They will return from the land of the enemy. 17 So there is hope for your future," declares the LORD. "Your children will return to their own land."

But at what cost?

But at what cost?

And Jacob waved the stump
of his right arm. "We're in a
slump right now. Got lots of
time to think and talk. Come
sit and have a drink from
Jacob's well!" he laughed.



YouTube