

The First Plot to Destroy Christ

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[0 : 00] Can we turn again to the Word of God that we read together? Matthew chapter 2.

And although we will be looking at much of the chapter as a whole, we will take as our text today, as we consider the lead-up to the events that we have in verse 16, and what took place before this verse and what took place after this verse.

Matthew chapter 2 at verse 16. Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem, and in all that region who were two years old and under.

We sometimes come to the Word of God, and we come across texts such as this, and we read them and we think, did this really happen?

The brutality of man and man's inhumanity towards man. And these are texts which are easily avoided, but they are in the Word, and we must bring them to our people's attention.

[1 : 52] And I wonder how many times if there's anybody here who has read of this chapter and never really stopped to think of what is actually taking place in verse 16, where so many children under the age of two years are put to death.

I want to look at this portion of Scripture as the Lord will enable me under three simple headings. We shall look first of all at the wise men worshipping, which we have in verses 1 to 12 of this chapter.

And then we shall look secondly at Joseph's warning, which we have from verses 13 to 15. And then finally, King Herod's wrath in 16 to 18.

So we shall look at worship, warning, and wrath. And as we do that, I do want to make it perfectly clear that despite the fact that we spoke to the children about Christmas a few moments ago, this is not in any way meant to be a pre-Christmas address.

We should be able to come and speak about the birth of Christ and the resurrection of Christ at any given time of the year. So when we speak just now about the wise men, I'm not trying to tie it in in any way with Christmas.

[3 : 40] But nevertheless, there may be things that we can look at today that we can carry with us throughout the month of December and into the new year and into next year, as the Lord enables.

So let's look at then our first heading then today, as we consider the wise men worshipping. This account is given to us in verses 1 to 12 of this chapter.

What's really interesting in the Gospel of Matthew is that there is no real account, there's no hint of a manger scene here.

There's no hint, as it were, of the shepherds. There's no hint of these things. What you have in the book of Matthew is in chapter 1, the genealogy of Christ up until verse 17.

And then you have the birth of Christ, which is really telling us, in a sense, how the Lord dealt with Joseph when Joseph discovered that the woman that he was betrothed to, engaged to, was with child.

[4 : 55] And how the Lord dealt with him and gave him the privilege of naming the baby Jesus. And he shall be called Jesus.

And then we find that some time has elapsed and then we have the visit of the wise men here. And I wish I could come to you and tell you a little bit about the wise men today. I wish I had some facts to tell you, but there's absolutely nothing I can tell you.

All we are told is that they have come from the East. There are a few things that I can tell you that we don't know about them.

Some things that maybe we can stop and think about for a moment. For example, we don't even know for sure how many wise men there were.

Everybody assumes there were three wise men because there were three gifts. I remember speaking to an old Christian a few years ago with regard to this and he had been a Christian for 50 years and he was thoroughly convinced that it said somewhere in Scripture that there were three wise men.

[6 : 14] But it doesn't. There might have been two, there might have been four, there might have been half a dozen. We only know of the three gifts. The Christmas cards that you will get this year, God willing, and have got in the past will always show three men and three gifts.

But that's not revealed to us in Scripture. Neither is it revealed to us where they traveled from, what city, what town, what region. All we're told about is that they have come and that they have come to worship from the east.

We don't know much about their profession. We don't know about their age. We don't know anything really about them. We don't know. It's not revealed to us how this star was significant to them and how they realized and recognized that it represented the birth of the Messiah.

That's not revealed to us either. And neither, interestingly, is it revealed to us exactly how old Christ the baby is at this moment in time.

Perhaps a few days. Perhaps a few weeks. Perhaps even maybe a few months. The wise men are well worth spending a little bit of time on, despite the fact that we don't know an awful lot about them.

[7 : 43] These men, they were a group of scholars, and they were what we would call astrologers. They were not people who were caught up in mystics and in magic.

They were people who studied the stars. They were people who believed that they could foretell and receive guidance from the stars. They were people who studied the stars as proof of God's existence.

And without a shadow of a doubt, somehow or other, this star that the Lord Almighty had created was used in a significant way at the birth of Christ, at the time when Christ was a baby, to guide these wise men too.

In Psalm 19 and in verse 1, there is much written in the word of God about the stars. But the psalmist says in verse 19, the heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.

Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. We have to remember that there was a time long before navigation, where the ancient mariners of the sea would very often look to the stars for guidance, as they made their journey from place to place.

[9 : 19] Of course, all these things have now changed. What's remarkable about this star is that these men see the star, but seeing the star, seeing this wonderful sight wasn't enough for them.

They were not content with just seeing the star. They wanted to follow the star. Their desire was not just to look at the star. Their desire was to go to meet the baby and to worship him.

And that is why they bring the gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And my friends, as we think of that today, does that not remind us, even today in 2022, does that not remind us, and is the Lord not saying to us simply that it is not enough just to know about Jesus?

Head knowledge is not enough of Jesus. We have to go and seek him until we find him. Everybody that you have ever known and loved, every Christian that you have ever sat with, who is in your own home and your own congregation, they all became Christians.

They all trusted in Christ. But there came a day when hearing about him was not enough. They had to go to the place where he was to be found and to seek him and to worship him.

[11 : 04] Is that not our experience today as Christians in here today? Head knowledge is not enough. J.C. Ryle says a wonderful quote with regard to these men.

He says this, We read of no greater faith than this in the whole volume of the Bible. It is a faith that deserves to be placed side by side with that of the penitent thief.

The thief saw one dying the death of the malefactor and yet prayed to him and called him Lord. The wise men saw a young baby on the lap of a poor woman and yet they worshipped him and confessed that he was Christ.

This is the kind of faith that God delights to honour. He goes on to say, Let us not be ashamed to believe in Jesus and to confess him though all around us remains careless and unbelieving.

Have we not found a thousandfold more evidence than these wise men had to make us believe that Jesus is the Christ? Beyond doubt we have.

[12 : 17] Yet, where is our faith? Well, my friends, do you have this faith in this Christ today? We read of somebody here in this portion of Scripture who wanted to come and worship him and he was the king.

He was King Herod and there are many things that we learn about this man from history and none of them are good.

King Herod was known as Herod the Great for his loyalty to Rome. He was somebody who became king. He came into the throne in the year 43 BC.

43 years before Christ was born, he was the king. Can you imagine how untouchable he must have felt after 43 years? And in these years he had 10 wives and he had many children.

And he had a reputation for being most cruel. And at the end of the reign, at the time when his reign is coming to an end, it is at this time that these wise men are coming into the picture some 43 years later to come and worship Christ.

[13 : 49] And then we read incredibly, it's an incredible chapter this, because we read in verse 3 that King Herod was troubled. And you see, when King Herod is troubled, it's not just him that's troubled.

The verse tells us, and all Jerusalem with them. When the king was troubled, it was like the domino effect. When he was suffering, all the people would be suffering.

And there are no doubt reasons as to why he was troubled. He was troubled because he would have known within himself that he was not the rightful heir to the throne of David, despite the fact that he was king for 43 years.

And he was obviously somebody as well. When we read history, we find that he was insanely suspicious of people. He trusted nobody at all, this king.

He didn't even trust his own family so much that one Bible commentator says this about him. King Herod had one terrible flaw in his character, and that was he was insanely suspicious.

[15 : 10] He had always been suspicious, and the older that he grew, the more suspicious he became. Until an old age when someone said of him that he was a murderous old man.

If he suspected anyone as a rival to his power, that person was promptly eliminated. Now listen to this. He murdered his own wife, Miriam, and her mother, Alexandria.

He killed his eldest son, Antipater, and his other two sons, Alexander and Arabus, they were all assassinated by him because of his jealousy and because of his insecurities.

Augustus, the Roman emperor, said of King Herod at one time, it was safer to be King Herod's pig than King Herod's son.

That gives you an idea and a description of the kind of man this king was. And the last thing he wanted to do, knowing that, hearing about the birth of Christ, the last thing he wanted to do was to find that the religious Jewish people at that time were going to gather around the throne, to gather around the place where Christ was to be born and had been born and look upon him as the expected and the coming Messiah.

[16 : 41] Even this king knew that the Messiah was going to be born. So, what you actually find is that this king is unsettled and this king is rattled at the news of a baby being born.

And this baby being born, it upsets him so much that in some way he is reaching the point of thinking to himself that this baby being born is going to remove him and have the authority to remove him from position and to remove him from the pleasure and the power that he has had for the last 43 years.

And he is so disturbed about this that we read in verse 4 that he immediately demands, he asks a question and he demands an answer from it.

And his question in verse 4 when he assembles the chief priests and the scribes is where Christ is to be born and he is told in Bethlehem of Judah for that is where it has been prophesied by the prophet.

And this is something that was prophesied in the Old Testament days in the days of Micah. In Micah chapter 2 in chapter 5 and in verse 2 we read of the ruler to be born in Bethlehem.

[18 : 11] But you, O Bethlehem, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, for you shall come forth for me, one who is to be ruler of Israel, whose coming forth is from old, from ancient days.

It's remarkable, isn't it, that the chief priests and these people that were the scribes that were part of the Sanhedrin, that were people that ought to have been waiting for the news of the birth of Christ and expecting the birth of Christ, knowing where Christ was to be born, they were unmoved, they were unconcerned.

They really weren't watching and waiting for Christ to be born. And yet these were the people who had the scriptures. These were the people who were trained in the scriptures.

And yet when Christ was born, it's almost as if they were unmoved. They cared not to seek him. And I wonder, is that any of us today?

As we reflect upon many years of hearing of the word and the word of God, and the many times we heard of Christ being born, and the many times we have heard of Christ being crucified.

[19 : 42] And yet can it be that there is somebody in here today still unmoved, unmoved to seek the Lord. These were people who would have had the ability to point people to the Savior.

but they would not worship the Savior themselves. Again, telling us and showing us that head knowledge is not saving knowledge.

And you know, when you think of it really over the years, nothing really changes. You could go to many parts of Scotland today, and you could go into many churches today, and you could hear many people in a pulpit preaching today.

And yet they are not the Lord's people, and they care not for the Lord. It is but a job for men and women.

Unconcerned, they point people to the Savior, but they don't know the Savior themselves. Oh, how you should give thanks to the Lord for your minister, and how we should give thanks to the Lord for all the ministers of our island.

[21 : 06] At whatever church, whatever denomination we go into in our island, we will hear the gospel. Maybe presented in a different ways in different congregations, but still the gospel.

By men who love the Lord. And so he hatches the plan, the king, and you find that the king in verse 7, he summons these wise men secretly.

Of course, it has to be secretly, because he needs help. He wants more enlightenment as to where and how old this child is. And so the king is on a mission, and he calls upon these men, these astrologers exactly in the same way as King Belteshazzar and King Nebuchadnezzar would have done in the days of old in the book of Daniel.

And he has now discovered from them what town, the town where Christ is to be born. But now he wants more information, and the information that he wants to find out is at what point exactly, how long ago it was that this star first appeared to them.

And what he's trying to do here is work out the exact age of Christ. So he sends them to find out really and truly if this is the Messiah, if this is the Christ.

[22 : 42] and he tells them to go to where the Christ is, and then to come and to return to him with news of how old Christ is and where Christ is, so that he himself can also go and worship the Lord.

that's the words that he says, go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word that I too may come and worship him.

Oh, but my friends, the devil is at work here, because what you have here is what we would give the title of our sermon today. It is the first plot in this world to destroy Christ.

Christ. And from the time Christ's public ministry began, there were many plots to kill him. But this is the first one.

And he can't even talk, and he can't even crawl, and he can't even walk. And yet there is a plan set in motion by this king to destroy Jesus Christ the babe.

[23 : 57] so that in no way this babe will dethrone him and take away from him his power and his pleasures. He promises to worship Christ, but ultimately he intends to destroy Christ.

What this man is actually doing is that he is saying that his intention is to defeat God. God. And that is why we have just finished singing these words in Psalm 2.

What does the Lord say? What does the Lord think? When we as mere mortals and we as mere men seek to change his role and seek to change what the Lord has already decreed, he that sits in the heavens shall laugh, the Lord shall scorn them all.

We've just finished singing these words. Here is King Herod's plan being put together, but look at what the Lord is thinking of it all.

He laughs in heaven. And he says to them, bring me the information that I may too come and worship him.

[25 : 19] My friends, does this not remind us of the kiss of Judas? That we find as another plot, as another plan in later life, 33 years later on, is hatched to kill our Saviour.

The King has no faith in Christ, no faith in this little baby. But what's remarkable as we read this is that he has full faith in these wise men.

He has full faith that not only that they will find the Christ, but that they will also come back to him with all the information that he needs.

You know, it's remarkable to me that as the king. It shows us the power that he had. He could have easily ordered that some of his soldiers would go there and accompany them.

He could have accompanied them himself. He could even have stayed behind in the distance and almost spied upon them in order that he would get close to Christ to kill Christ.

[26 : 48] But he's fully convinced that these men are going to come back and that these men are going to give him all the information that he needs in order that his plan will come together.

He sends these men out on this errand ultimately thinking that he's going to make fools of them. But little does he know and little does he realize that in the big picture God himself is going to make him the king himself a fool.

Because the Lord is in control of this situation. In verse 9 we read after listening to the king they went on their way and behold the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until they came to rest over the place where the child was.

And in these words you see a divine guidance from the Lord and you also see a divine presence from the Lord. And then you see in verse 12 the Lord's divine protection and being warned in a dream not to return to hell they departed to their own country by another way.

these wise men we have to say and we're not to assume that they were obedient to the king. They were not carrying out the king's orders.

[28 : 16] They were going to worship Christ for themselves. They were going to worship Christ because it was their heart's desire to worship Christ. It was that the king had summoned them in order that he could put his plan together.

So there you have the king's plan. But what about God's plan? God in his wisdom is now at this point from verse 12 onwards revealing to us how he is in control of the situation.

And he warns Joseph in a dream to go to his own country in another way. You know my friends obedience isn't always easy.

But here you have a man who's totally obedient. As the Lord in his mercy speaks to him in a dream. And he chooses to go in another direction.

And I wonder can we apply that to ourselves too? You know when the time comes and Christ challenges us with the things of eternity?

[29 : 31] Does he not want us to be obedient and to go in another direction? And maybe you were like me for many years, wanting to hold on to the things of this world, wanting to have a foot in both camps, and stalling and stalling and stalling and constantly saying no to the Lord.

I will wait for a more convenient season. I'm amazed that he gave me another opportunity and another opportunity and another opportunity when I said no.

But what then of our second heading Joseph's warning? What can we read from Scripture about that? we read here that for the second time Joseph is spoken to by God in a dream.

He has already been spoken to the Lord, has spoken to him in chapter 1 with regard to Mary. And then you see in verse 19, when Herald died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream.

And in verse 22, being warned of being warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee. Two chapters, four dreams, four times, the Lord spoke to this godly man.

[30 : 59] No wonder the Lord gave him the privilege of naming Christ Jesus. What a godly saint this man of God, Joseph, is.

But you think that that's remarkable, but there's also something which is even more remarkable about this story, something that I didn't know about myself really until I started studying into it.

But history tells us that in years gone by, it was always the way, even at the time of the birth of Christ, that when times of peril or persecution came for the Jewish people, that they sought refuge in Egypt.

And when they got to Egypt, there were colonies of Jews within Egypt. And so when Mary and Joseph and Christ the baby eventually go to this city of Egypt, they are not there alone.

They will be there amongst many other Jewish people, who for many, many years took refuge in this place in Egypt.

[32 : 09] Egypt. And this is showing us that God is a great provider for his own people. And God reveals to Joseph what to do by night to flee and to leave.

But you know what's remarkable about this 90-mile journey that they had to make? To leave from where they were to get to the Egyptian border from Bethlehem.

what's miraculous about this story is that not only would Jesus and his family be safe from Herod there, the reason that they would be safe from Herod there is because this part was outwith the jurisdiction of King Herod.

King Herod could not go into this part of Egypt looking for Mary and Joseph. he would never have thought they would have been there anyway.

And even this fleeing from into Egypt, even this itself was prophesied in Hosea and in chapter 11 where it speaks of the Lord's love for Israel.

[33 : 24] When Israel was a child I loved him and out of Egypt I called my son. you know it's remarkable every aspect of the Lord's life from birth to ministry to death to resurrection everything is prophesied in the Old Testament.

And now surely as we are reading this it is coming to our attention that even in infancy our Savior was born to die.

even as a child he is persecuted. Even as a child it is now becoming obvious to him that he is a man of sorrows even in infancy.

Do we not read in Isaiah 53 and in verse 3 he was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows unacquainted with grief.

But we think it was just as a man. he was despised and rejected as a baby too. So how does Joseph react?

[34 : 37] What does Joseph do when he is revealed, when dream number two is revealed to him? Well we don't read for a moment here, we don't read anything here that tells us that he packed up all his possessions to go into Egypt.

We don't read anything here that as a carpenter he would have gone and gathered his dates. He is obedient straight away and no sooner has the dream come and he is up and gathering his wife and Jesus and making way to this place of safety.

And he leaves everything behind. I wonder if you've ever thought of that. He leaves everything behind but he takes things with them.

What he takes with them is the promise of God's special care upon him and his family. And he takes with them the gold, the frankincense and the myrrh which has just been given to him by these wise men.

And these are the gifts that are going to enable them to set up a new life for a period of time in Egypt. God's perfect timing. It's remarkable when you go into and study all that is taking place in this chapter.

[35 : 56] And then we come to the final part of the sermon where we read these horrendous words and we think of King Herod's wrath. And when we realise the outcome of what has happened, the king's plot, but the way in which the Lord provides a plan of his own.

You see, it was never ever the intention of these wise men in any way to make a fool out of King Herod. These wise men's intention simply was to honour and glorify the Lord in all that he did.

And that's what he did. But proud men, my friends, they are very quick to imagine things and build up a picture which isn't really there.

power. And when Herod saw that he was tricked by the wise men, he became furious. I prefer the word that we have in the authorised version, mocked, when Herod saw that he was mocked by the wise men.

But that was not their intention. And then from that we see that this king of 43 years of power gives the most horrendous barbaric command that he has ever given.

[37 : 26] And from the very pit of hell itself he authorises the slaughter of these young children. Now remember, the wise men have not come back to him.

The wise men have not come to him and said, Jesus Christ is X amount of weeks old. Jesus Christ is X amount of months old.

So just to be sure, he orders the death of the death. Despite the fact that he knows with all certainty that Christ, however old Christ is at this point, Christ is nowhere near even one year of age.

But just to be sure, he orders the death of all the male children that are two years of old and under. He doesn't care how many are going to be slaughtered.

as long as within this slaughter Christ the babe is killed. And notice, it's not just all the male children in Bethlehem that he summons, but also in the region, and in all the regions round about in verse 16.

[38 : 59] Now you picture the scene, if you can. I know that there are many, many, many horrendous experiences we can go through in this world through ill health and through all kinds of hard and difficult providences.

And I might be wrong in this, but I don't think I am. and I hope it will never be my cup, but I don't think there's any providence in this world as hard as losing a child.

And I hope I'm not offending or hurting anyone by saying that in here. Now it is one thing, my friends, to lose a child of any age through sickness or ill health or an accident at work or a car accident or anything like that.

That's one thing, and that's horrendous enough. But you imagine soldiers bursting into your home, grabbing your child, knowing it was not the Christ, and slaughtering that child in front of your eyes.

That is the command of King Herod. And that's what everybody forgets about when we all think about Christmas and all these things.

[40 : 38] Nobody remembers this massacre. Can you imagine these mothers and fathers, saying, he's two years old.

This is not the Christ. And still, before their very eyes, being put to death. The slaughter of the innocents was the only way that this king knew to wipe out Christ.

And he has reached the point where he doesn't care how many get killed. Christians, and so it is today, even in this world. Those who are persecuting Christians, they don't care if you're a man or a woman or a child.

Just get rid of them all. It still goes on in this world today. how many children were killed, we don't know.

Some commentators are of the opinion that it was 20 to 30. Others are of the opinion it was 2 to 300. 300. We simply don't know.

[41 : 54] But my friends, vain, vain, vain is this rage because Christ is safe in Egypt, out with his jurisdiction, exactly as the prophet Jeremiah had prophesied.

And you find these words in verse 18, a voice that was heard in Ramah, weeping and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children. She refused to be comforted because they are no more.

Yes, this blessed baby will surely die one day, but not as a baby. And he will not die by Herod's hands.

And what you have here before us, my friends, today is the first tragic series of martyrdoms that we have in the New Testament with regard for the Messiah.

And these martyrdoms come in the form of children, many themselves that never uttered a word, many children that never crawled, walked, many children that never walked, many children that never even got to say the words, mommy or daddy.

[43 : 26] Have we ever thought of these children? children? They shed their blood for Jesus, this Christ who would one day shed their blood for his own people.

And I have no problem whatsoever in saying that I believe that every single one of these infants immediately went to glory. what does martyrdom mean to us today?

Do we remember the persecuted Christians? Does it mean anything to us? The Lord came into my life in 1991 and I don't think I ever prayed for persecuted Christians until 1999.

For one reason or another, I never seemed to hear anything about it. Church didn't seem to be concerned about it.

We never heard the stories. We were never encouraged to pray about them. I wonder has that changed now? But as where time comes to an end, my friends, we read in verse 19, that Herod died.

[44 : 54] And Herod died and he never met Jesus Christ in this world. But oh my word, he met him in the judgment. So I ask the question at the end of the day, what does Christ mean to you today?

as we consider his birth, as we consider the story of the wise men? Will you reject him like Herod? Will you neglect him like the chief priests and the scribes?

Or will you accept him, my friends, like the wise men? what is our decision going to be? Surely, surely there's nobody in here today who's saying that they, at the end of life's journey, want to go to hell and spend eternity with people like King Herod.

Christ. Is that really what you're saying to me today and here? If you haven't committed your trust in Christ yet? Oh, friends, make sure, make sure before it's too late that you place your trust in Christ.

Not just before Christmas but today. Wouldn't it be more wonderful, my friends, if you went and you spent eternity with Joseph and Mary and Jesus and the wise men and all those precious people that you had in your family and in your congregation that you know have gone home to glory?

[46 : 52] Why would you not worship? Choose to spend eternity with them. Make sure, make sure, my friends, that you don't leave it too late and that you don't neglect and that you don't save for a more convenient season because if you do that and God forbid you do that but if you do that and you end up at the judgment without Christ as your saviour, it is with people like King Herod you will spend eternity.

May it be that as we all walk out of here today, may it be that we walk out that door and we say today, for me to live is Christ and to die is gain.

please, my friends, whatever plans you have for the next few weeks, make sure that seeking Christ is a priority.

Amen. May the Lord bless to us that portion, these thoughts from his own holy word. we shall sing in conclusion again in Psalm 2 and we shall sing the last part of this psalm, Psalm 2 at verse 8.

Ask of me and for heritage, the heathen I'll make mine, and for my possession I to thee will give earth's utmost line.

[48 : 37] Down to the end of verse Mark 12, because ye the son left in his eye, he perish in his way, from the way, if once his wrath begin to burn, blessed all that on him stay.

Shall we sing these words together to the Lord's praise. Ask on me and for heritage, the heathen I'll make mine, and for possession I'll to thee will give her sound most side.

Thou shout us with a weighty rod, of iron, break them all.

How does the water share the child, let us in pieces fall.

Now therefore, kids, be wise, be taught, ye judges of the earth, serve God in fear, and see that ye join trembling with your birth.

[50 : 44] earth. Is he the son blessed in his hour, ye perish from the way, if once his wrath begins to birth, blessed all that on him stay.

Shall we pray in conclusion? Heavenly Father, we give thanks for our time of worship. We give thanks for the privilege which is ours, and we give thanks that we read in your word that blessed are all those that place their trust upon the Lord.

May we be amongst each one of us. May we all be amongst the blessed of the Lord this day. Help us, Lord, bring us all to that place where we see the danger that we are in without Christ as our Saviour, and bring us all to that place where we would call upon the Lord for mercy to be our Saviour and our friend in this world so that we will not just experience the endless ages of eternity worshipping with the Lord, but also experience in this world His goodness and His mercy and the way He keeps and provides for His own people.

Lord, in this world, the clock will always get the better of us. And we confess that that is so.

But how wonderful it will be one day to spend eternity in Your presence forever and ever, where there will be no clock to say to us then, it is time to stop our worship.

[52 : 59] In Your mercy, Lord, we pray and we plead that each one of us will be granted a place in the house of many mansions.

Until that time, Lord, guide us and keep us in this world forevermore and keep us looking to Thyself as long as we live. In Jesus' precious name we ask these things.

Amen.