

CHAPEL, January 4, 1934

-- President Wright

Scripture Lesson: Matthew, Chapter 2, Verses 17-

We are really living in the year 1940 instead of 1934. In the calculation of the period of Christ a mistake of at least four years was made. It is known that Herod died in April of a certain year. Herod had these children killed in Bethlehem, two years old and younger, which would indicate that he lived two years after the birth of Christ, and we know that a mistake of four years was made in calculating, so that makes this year 1940. The facts gathered from this chapter and in the Roman record indicate that this is really 1940. The Herod referred to here was known in history dealing with the Jews as Herod the Great. These people were not Jews, but were worshipping God according to the Jews, and Herod the Great was one of the meanest men that ever ruled. However, it was this same Herod that re-built the temple. Many things were added to it after his death, but it was he who built the temple that was in use in the time of Christ. His descendants were rulers at the time of the crucifixion. We quite often fail to connect our religious studies with the current governmental activities, of the time.

Matthew--his name was really Levi, and Matthew seems to be a name he took to represent him as an apostle-- Levi, or Matthew as he is called, was working for the Roman government and was a tax collector. He was probably one of the most despised Jews of his time. For any Jew to collect taxes for the Roman government was to be made an outcast among his own people. Yet Jesus selected him as one of his disciples. Matthew was rather well-to-do financially. He gave a great feast and had Jesus come to it, and that put Jesus in bad with the Jews around him. Is there any significance in all this, to you? To me, the fact that Jesus didn't pay very much attention to the current attitude of people, but looked beyond that into the hearts of people, and found a heart of gold in this tax collector for

the Roman government. Jesus went past public opinion and selected this man because of his character. This gave the disciples an entree to the Roman people, and opened up a vast area of humanity that might be saved through Christ. Christ came as the friend of sinners, to help sinners repent, and that is one of the mainsprings of religion, today.

Matthew unquestionably wrote this gospel to convince the Jews that Christ was the Messiah, the long-looked for savior of the Jewish people. He doesn't seem to have attempted to put things down in their chronological order. He collected things Jesus said from time to time and put them down as the Sermon on the Mount. He seems to have collected things and put them together regardless of the time they happened. He was writing this book to convince the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah.

I hope you are going to study your Sunday School lesson; there are many things in this book that will be helpful to you.