After the birth of Jesus, King Herod ordered the brutal killing of all male children in Bethlehem two years old and under (Matthew 2:16). But where did this idea come from? Was it Herod's own jealousy and fear alone, or was there a deeper spiritual force influencing his decision?

And if it was Satan behind the plot, why didn't he stop the massacre once Joseph and Mary had already fled with Jesus to Egypt?

The Real Power Behind Herod's Actions: Satan

To begin, it's important to understand that Herod was not acting independently. The murderous intent that drove him was not just political fear it was inspired by Satan himself. Herod was merely a vessel through whom the devil was attempting to destroy the promised Messiah.

This is clearly seen in the Book of Revelation:

> *Revelation 12:3–5 (NKJV)*
> “And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born. She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne.”

This symbolic passage reveals a heavenly view of what was happening on Earth: Satan (the dragon) stood ready to destroy Christ (the male child) at birth. Herod was the earthly tool being used to fulfill that demonic plan.

Why Didn’t Satan Cancel the Massacre Once Jesus Had Escaped?

Some may wonder: if Satan is a spiritual being, didn’t he realize that Jesus had already fled to Egypt? If so, why did the massacre in Bethlehem still happen?

This points us to a vital theological truth: Satan is not all-knowing (omniscient) or all-powerful (omnipotent) like God. While Satan is a highly intelligent fallen angel with spiritual influence, he cannot read minds or be everywhere at once (see Job 1:7, 1 Peter 5:8). He relies on observation, demonic agents, and human cooperation to carry out his schemes.

When Satan fails to achieve his goals through supernatural means (e.g., direct demonic attack), he often turns to human beings as instruments. This usually involves influencing the mind and heart planting seeds of jealousy, fear, pride, or hatred. But this process takes time.

> *Ephesians 2:2 (NKJV)*
> "...in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience..."

Herod, driven by paranoia and a desperate grip on power, became a perfect candidate for Satan's influence. But once Satan plants a thought in someone's heart, changing that plan is not

simple. Ideas, when nourished by human emotions like fear or jealousy, begin to grow roots.

So even after Satan became aware that Jesus had escaped to Egypt (Matthew 2:13–14), the thought he had already planted in Herod's heart had taken over. Herod proceeded with the mass killing because the sin had matured and controlled him.

Sin Doesn't Start with Action It Begins as a Thought

This situation reveals a deep biblical truth: sin is a process. It doesn't appear suddenly. It begins with a thought, a suggestion often subtle and if that thought is not rejected, it grows until it becomes action.

> *James 1:14–15 (NKJV)*
> "But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death."

If Herod had resisted the initial thought possibly fear or jealousy over a future “king of the Jews” he would not have become a murderer. But by entertaining Satan’s whisper, he became a vessel for evil.

This same pattern is seen with Cain:

> *Genesis 4:6–7 (NKJV)*
> “So the Lord said to Cain, ‘Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it.’”

God warned Cain when jealousy first entered his heart. But Cain ignored the warning and ultimately murdered his brother Abel.

What Can We Learn? Resist Sin at the Root

The key lesson here is that we must learn to resist sin early at the level of thoughts and emotions before it becomes action. Once a sinful idea matures in the heart, it becomes much harder to

resist. That’s why Herod couldn’t simply change his plan when Jesus fled the sin had already taken root.

> *Proverbs 4:23 (NKJV)*
> “Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.”

Like Herod and Cain, we too are vulnerable to Satan’s influence if we fail to guard our thoughts. Jealousy, anger, bitterness, pride these are all doorways the enemy uses to plant greater sin.

But through the Holy Spirit, we are given the power to resist:

> *2 Corinthians 10:4–5 (NKJV)*
> “For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ...”

Conclusion

Herod’s plan to kill baby Jesus didn’t come from his own mind it was planted there by Satan, who sought to destroy the Messiah. Though Satan knew Jesus had escaped, he couldn’t easily cancel the plan because the sinful thought had already taken hold in Herod’s heart.

This teaches us that sin often begins in seed form through thoughts or emotions and must be resisted early. Once it matures, it dominates. Like Cain, Herod allowed sin to grow instead of resisting it, and the result was devastating.

Let us, therefore, be vigilant. Take captive every thought. Reject sin when it’s still a seed, and guard your heart diligently.

Shalom.

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