

YouTube video: Is this what Christmas is really about?

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AP37kQg0w\\_4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AP37kQg0w_4)

The video suggests that there are many things that are not really to do with the original Christmas.

The video mentioned:

Mince pies, Christmas Trees, Prosecco wine, Christmas jumpers, Argos Televisions + other things you can't afford things, Santa Claus, posting with Royal Mail, Weather – snow? Christmas cards + gifts

For a lot of people these things sum up Christmas - seeing friends and family, going out to celebrate, giving and receiving cards and presents.

For some people Christmas is a terrible time of the year. Death, debt, war. The problems and issues we all face will still be there when we wake up on Christmas Day, Boxing Day, and New Year's Day – everyday in fact.

So, what *is* Christmas really about?

We've all heard of the Three Wise Men who gave the gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh to Jesus. There are also three well-known Kings in the Christmas story and one little-known King. We'll concentrate on the four of them this morning.

### King Herod

We read about him in the Matthew account of Jesus' birth. The King of Judah, so in a way the King of the Jews. He reigned for 37 years. He organised a great deal of building work and some of it still exists – parts of his massive reconstruction of the temple in Jerusalem, his port in Caesarea Maritima and some impressive fortresses.

He would want the crown at any cost, but he seems to deserve it.

He was a brutal and paranoid king. He was a tyrant. He murdered three of his own sons, his mother in law and his second wife.

Matthew 2:7, 8, 16 [The Message]

He was also only King because the Romans let him be King – a client or vassal King. He wasn't really the top dog.

He has to give the crown to Augustus, as he is a stronger King.

### Caesar Augustus

His great-uncle had been Julius Caesar, a dictator – Asterix the Gaul lived in northern France at this time. Julius had been murdered in 44BC. Augustus became an adopted son and was called his heir in Julius Caesar's will. He was the first proper Roman Emperor and reigned just over 40 years. There was much peace in the Empire (though plenty of fighting initially) and it expanded a great deal. In some parts of his empire he was known as the prince of peace and the saviour of the world. Like Herod he built quite a few things too.

It was this person who Luke tells us in chapter 2 had decreed that a census take place – that's why Joseph and Mary found themselves in Bethlehem.

Around the time Jesus was born the Romans renamed the month of Sextilis, August in honour of Augustus. What an honour to have a month of the year named after you! Our brilliant Queen is having a London tube line named after her (she already has the Jubilee Line) and has a Tower, parks, roads, hospitals etc named after her.

Augustus was very important and powerful at the time.

There is another King in the story. At first glance He seems insignificant, ordinary and to have no lasting legacy. He was born in a dirty and smelly place.

### Jesus

Philippians 2 earlier. He came from heaven through choice.

Many OT prophecies, given several hundred years earlier, talk about Him. He came as a baby. He was vulnerable.

Herod was known as the King of the Jews. So was Jesus.

Augustus was a literal prince of peace and known as Saviour of the world. So was Jesus.

Augustus has to give the crown to Jesus, as he is a stronger King. Jesus our King!

What about the last King we're considering?

### Me

However, I want the crown for myself.

John 3:16-18 [The Message]

Christmas is not just about ourselves. It's not really meant to be only a nice family time. It is about Jesus. God who became a baby and then grew up, to teach us and to die for us on the Cross.

Our primary response to Jesus isn't to send lots of cards and presents to people, to wear special jumpers, to give money to charities who are helping the homeless or those in war-torn places.

What can I give him, poor as I am?

If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;

if I were a Wise Man, I would do my part;

yet what I can I give him: give my heart.

Jesus, I give the crown of my life back to You. I want You to become greater and greater in my life. I want me to become less and less.