

"He Is The King"

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Preacher: Les Martin

[0:00] I'd like you to turn your Bibles to Matthew chapter 2. Actually, we're going to skip around a little bit today, but we're going to start there in chapter 2. And I'm going to read a few verses from that passage.

It's interesting in the Gospels that very little is said about Jesus' birth. Of course, Mark and John do not even mention Jesus' birth. Most of the time when Jesus referred to his early life, he talked about coming down from heaven.

He spoke very little of, like one time I think mentioned something with reference to Bethlehem birth. Luke gives us the most information.

Matthew mostly just tells us at the end of chapter 1 that Jesus was born. And then chapter 2, now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem saying, Where is he who has been born king of the Jews?

For we saw his star when it rose, and we have come to worship him. When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.

[1:16] They told him, In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet, And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah. For from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.

Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly, and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word that I too may come and worship him.

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 it came to rest over the place where the child was.

And when they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshipped him.

Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. When an heir to the throne is born, it causes quite a stir.

[2:20] For some, there is great joy in celebration. For others, there is despair and maybe even some panic. Matthew records this meeting between King Herod and some magi from the east who came searching for the one whom they had discerned had been born in Bethlehem.

The magi assumed that the present king of the region would certainly know something this monumental. So they scheduled a meeting with King Herod. Herod was king, was the ruler over this portion of the Roman world.

He was known as King of the Jews. He had been in this position at this point for about 30 years.

The magi were anxious to find this baby king so they could worship him.

Possibly, the possibility of a new king in town was, to say the least, rather unsettling to this reigning king. We'll see that pattern repeat.

Warren Wiersbe wrote a little booklet called His Name is Wonderful. He made the case that the names that Jesus wears are the blessings that he shares. He was referring to the words that we just sang, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace.

[3:40] Well, we know his name from the outset when the pregnancy was announced, even before that, His name was to be called Jesus, which means Savior.

And he certainly shares his name with us, and then he gives us his salvation to all who believe he is Savior. He is Jesus. He's also called King.

And as King, he exercises his sovereign rule over everyone. For all who believe, that's a great blessing. For those who don't, not so much.

Sovereign rulers call all the shots. They have all the power. Those who fall before them are responding appropriately.

Those who fail to submit to that sovereign authority will be in a battle that they cannot win.

Everywhere the king appears, there are the same reactions.

[4:41] Joy and fear. Admiration and hatred. Attempts to exalt. Efforts to destroy. So we're going to follow some of those responses as we consider Jesus as the king as described in the New Testament.

So we're going to start with when the king came to Bethlehem from the passage that we just read. And we're going to discover some interesting witnesses who express the understanding, at least in some form, and the awareness that Jesus came as king.

The first testimony comes from the Magi. Where is he who was born king of the Jews? It shouldn't surprise us that a king is among Jesus' earliest titles.

For centuries, it was promised that God would send a king who would sit on the throne of David.

How many times do we read that in the Old Testament? But this king would not be subject to the same challenges that were faced by the former kings of Israel.

Prophet Micah prophesied that this king would come from Judah. He is, according to Micah, one who is to be ruler in Israel. He shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.

[5:59] He shall be great to the ends of the earth. Micah's contemporary, Isaiah, said, again, for the passage we're learning, For to us a child is born, to us a son is given.

If you continue in the passage, it reminds us of the increase of his government, and of peace there will be no end. And of the throne of David over his kingdom to establish it and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore.

So at his birth, Jesus was the fulfillment of these prophecies. He truly was the king of the Jews. So the Magi come searching for Jesus, they find him, they treat him as a king, and even more.

They worship him, they give him royal gifts. The Magi's testimony collectively was, he is a king, and they were delighted. That was not so much true for the current king, Herod.

But in a strange way, Herod also acknowledges and testifies that Jesus is king. Herod was a ruthless ruler.

[7:11] He, having murdered his own wife, several sons and relatives, mostly to protect his position. When he heard that there was a king of the Jews that had been born, he wanted details regarding this infant's whereabouts.

Now he said, I'm going to worship him, but that was hardly his intent. He was to arrange a murder of this rival king. The news troubled the king, and when the king was troubled, everyone else felt the pain.

Herod called together the chief priests and the scribes of the Jews to find out when and where this Christ was to have been born, and they shared an understanding of Micah's prophecy. I find that kind of interesting, where here you have these scribes and rulers of the law, and we sometimes think very negatively of them, which is probably appropriate, but they understood the Old Testament scripture, and they quote from Micah's prophecy, and they share that information with Herod.

Now make no mistake, Herod believed Jesus to be a king. He wanted no part of this rival. His extended quote may help us, this extended quote may help us understand this ruler a little bit better.

This comes from a MacArthur commentary on Matthew. MacArthur writes, Because he was not Jewish, Herod married a Jewish heiress. In order to make himself more acceptable to the Jews, he now ruled.

[8:39] He was a clever and capable warrior, orator, and diplomat. In times of severe economic hardship, he gave back some tax money collected from the people.

How about that? During the Great Famine of 25 BC, he melted down gold objects in the palace to buy food for the poor. He built theaters, racetracks, and other structures to provide entertainment for the people.

In 19 BC, he began the reconstruction of the temple in Jerusalem. If you read history, you'll find that it's known as the second temple, or sometimes referred to simply as Herod's temple.

Continuing the quote, he revived Samaria. He built the beautiful port city of Caesarea in honor of benefactor Caesar Augustus. He built the remarkable and almost impregnable fortress of Masada, where in AD 73, nearly a thousand Jewish defenders committed suicide, rather than to be captured by the Roman general Flavia Silva.

But Herod was also cruel and merciless. He was incredibly jealous, suspicious, and afraid for his position and power. Fearing his potential threat, he had the high priest Aristobulus, who was his wife's brother.

[10:00] He had him drowned. After which, he provided a magnificent funeral where he pretended to weep. He then had his wife killed, and then her mother, and two of his own sons.

Five days before Herod's death, about a year or so after Jesus was born, he had a third son executed. At that same time, he had the most distinguished citizens of Jerusalem arrested and imprisoned.

And then shortly before Herod died, he knew that no one would mourn for him, for his death, so he gave orders for these distinguished citizens, these prisoners to be executed the moment he died, in order to guarantee that there would be mourning in Jerusalem.

By his horrific actions, however, Herod was declaring that Jesus was the true king. And then we have a testimony of the people in verse 3.

When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. Now, to be fair, the reaction of the people had not too much to do with Jesus' birth, and almost everything to do with Herod's reaction to it.

[11:17] As we've learned, when Herod got mad, people got hurt. It's true that people react to the deeds and attitudes of those in power, both positively and negatively, even when they know little or nothing about the issues in question.

But what I'm proposing is that when Jesus came to Bethlehem, he came as king, even as a baby. And his coming as king shook up the place. One way or another, most of Israel was affected, even if they knew little about King Jesus' birth.

Because of Jesus' birth as king of the Jews, you recall that several families lost their infant children at the hand of a jealous king. Well, this is not the end of the record of King Jesus, so what we're going to do is leave this scene.

We're going to fast forward about 30 years toward the end of Jesus' earthly ministry. We're going to take a look not when Jesus came to Bethlehem, but now when Jesus came to Jerusalem.

I'm going to turn first, just to jump ahead of that, or behind it just a little bit, but we're going to look at how the people wanted Jesus to be king.

[12:30] In John chapter 6, verse 15, this was following the miraculous feeding of the 5,000, 5,000 men plus women and children. John writes this, Now this technically wasn't in Jerusalem, this was in Galilee, but this will help us to see what was happening.

Jesus came as king, but he didn't come as the kind of king the people were looking for. You see, they didn't want Jesus to rule over them, they wanted Jesus to rule over the Romans.

You can see the difference. Sometimes people today want Jesus to be king to rule over the bad guys, but not really that interested in ruling over them.

When he refused to submit to their wishes, they wanted no part of Jesus. We'll see that in a little bit. So, people wanted him to be king.

Well, when a little bit later in John's gospel, in chapter 12, people even declared Jesus to be king. You recall the passage of Jesus entering the city of Jerusalem, this, we sometimes call it the triumphal entry.

[13:54] In John chapter 12, the passage goes like this, the next day, the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him,

crying out, Hosanna, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, and then the next phrase, even the king of Israel.

Jesus didn't reject their acknowledgement, but he did not bow to their desires. A week later, they were calling for his demise. I doubt that it can be proven, but I wonder if some of those who cried out, Hosanna, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the king of Israel, were not among those who were calling for his crucifixion.

So, the people tried to force him to be king. They acknowledged that he was king. But then you have the scene, just a little bit later, where Jesus has been arrested, now he's been brought before Pilate, the soldiers have worked him over, and there's a mockery that takes place.

But it's interesting that they mock Jesus, and they emphasize the idea of king. Listen to the passage in John 19, verses 1 to 5, Then Pilate took Jesus and flogged him.

And the soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and arrayed him in a purple robe. They came up to him, saying, Hail, king of the Jews! And struck him with their hands. [15:36] Pilate went out again and said to them, See, I'm bringing him out to you that you may know that I find no guilt in him. So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe.

Pilate said to them, Behold the man. Now earlier, they'd had a discussion, Jesus and Pilate. Pilate asked him, Are you the king of the Jews? Remember that?

And there was this response from Jesus and Pilate, very interesting and intriguing time. Pilate's contemplating this whole idea of Jesus being king. And again, there's mockery involved by the soldiers, and there is somewhat of a mockingness toward Jesus by Pilate.

But nevertheless, there's an acknowledgement there that Jesus is king. Pilate and the soldiers were making light of the truth, but speaking the truth without intending to do so.

Jesus was the king, and all they did to him did not change that truth. So they determined to kill him. [16:47] But as Jesus is hanging on the cross, remember what the sign said over him? That was to be the charge. A sign was put on the cross typically to say, This is what this person died.

This is the crime they've committed. So that those who would pass by would see the crime, and would think to do that crime results in this punishment. So here's the crime.

Jesus of Nazareth. You finish it. King of the Jews. So even the charge that's printed is a declaration that Jesus truly is king.

Now you remember, the people didn't want that up there. The rulers didn't want that there. He said he was. Look, now what I've written, I've written. So, you have these testimonies.

The people. Let's now fast forward to the very end of the story. Revelation chapter 19.

[17:48] We've looked at Jesus, when Jesus came to Bethlehem, and when Jesus came to Jerusalem. Now we're going to see when the king comes to reign over the world. Revelation 19, verses 11 through 16.

Then I saw heaven opened. Behold, a white horse. The one sitting on it is called faithful and true, and in righteousness he judges and makes war.

His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems. He has a name written that no one knows but himself. He's clothed in a robe dipped in blood.

And the name by which he is called is the word of God. And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. And from his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations.

And he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh, he has a name written, King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

[19:02] What kind of king is this Jesus? Well, from that passage, we could do an exposition of that, but I want to do something a little bit shorter than that.

I want to think about when the Apostle Paul at one point was talking to Timothy about who God is and this concept of the idea of king. He actually uses a very, sort of a summary of what we just read in Revelation 19.

It's 1 Timothy 1, verse 17. Here's the verse. To the king of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever.

Amen. Again, what kind of king is this King Jesus? Well, he's the forever king. He's the king of the ages.

It's true that Paul could have been speaking more generically about the triune God than specifically about Jesus in this verse, but surely this applies to Jesus.

[20:06] He is the king and he is the king of the ages. As far as I understand, the Greeks had no word for eternal. So in order to describe eternity, it would be unto the ages or unto the ages of the ages.

In other words, when the ages are past, he remains. He remains as king. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom. It's an unshakable kingdom.

It is a kingdom that is incorruptible. It is a perfect kingdom. It's a kingdom of which he, Jesus, is king and he is the forever king. He is fully and publicly, he will demonstrate this fully and publicly in his return.

In chapter 19 of Revelation, there was talk of the diadems, the crowns on his head. There was talk of the power of his ruling with a rod of iron and his title was king of kings and lord of lords.

He is the forever king. What kind of king is Jesus? The forever king. He is also the God king. Paul described it as immortal, invisible, the only God.

[21:20] Many kings believed themselves to be gods. Nebuchadnezzar thought he was a god to be worshipped. It cost him his mind for seven years.

I wasn't going to read this but I've got to read this. This is great. This is from a pagan king. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. And in Daniel chapter 4.

Listen to this. Nebuchadnezzar had been under judgment by God. He'd been eating grass and all this for all these years. And now at the end of the days, I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven and my reason returned to me and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored him who lives forever.

Here's his description. This pagan king, here's the description of God where his dominion is an everlasting dominion. His kingdom endures from generation to generation.

All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing and he does according to his will, according to the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth and none can stay his hand or say to him, what have you done?

[22:31] And then he concludes this way. Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the king of heaven for all his works are right and his ways are just and those who walk in pride he is able to humble.

That's amazing coming from this king. King Herod Agrippa I thought he was a god or at least god-like but he failed to publicly give God the glory after giving this great oratory message.

It cost him his life. If you read Acts chapter 12 it ends with a very ugly scene of him being eaten by worms and dying. The prince of this world, the devil has a hold on this world's kingdoms right now. He even offered all of his dominion to the Lord Jesus in the temptation accounts if Jesus would have bowed down to worship him. He so wanted to be like God to rule over all including God but that temporary permitted dominion my friends is just about to come to an end.

It will cause Satan an eternity of torment in the lake of fire. There is one king who is worthy. It's King Jesus and he's the God king.

[23:51] There's one king there is the God king the forever king but Paul also mentioned he is the honor and glory forever king.

The honor and glory forever and ever. Honor has a way of turning into disrespect. glory has a tendency to fade.

The trophies of the past become dusty and corroded and finally discarded but there is one whose glory never fades. It grows brighter through eternity.

It will never become old or routine to declare the glory of King Jesus. We will be doing that forever and we will be thrilled to do it. I read somewhere this we are not saved from sin and changed into righteousness for the sake of pride but for the sake of praise.

And when God's work on us is done and we stand perfected before Christ in the last day we will not exult in our worth but we will sing with millions of angels worthy is the lamb that was slain to receive power and wealth and wisdom and honor and glory and blessing.

[25:03] Do we get it? Jesus was and is the king. He is the king of all wisdom and knowledge. There is nothing that we can do to con the king.

No question we can ask to stump the king. He is the king of all power. There is nothing we can do to outmaneuver the king or defeat the king or run from the king or hide from the king. He is the king of all glory and we must not think that we somehow can siphon some glory for ourselves or accept from others what to do alone to him.

He is the king. To him belongs our allegiance our obedience our worship our dedication to serve him and to speak well of him throughout our lifetime both with words and actions.

God's government is not a democracy it is a dictatorship. He alone is the supreme ruler. He needs and receives no counsel. He is in perfect control and he will accomplish all that he has planned to do.

To resist him is foolish and futile. To embrace him and follow after him and to be subject to him is the only response that makes any sense. And when we understand who he is that response is pure delight.

[26:18] In a weird sort of way the people declared it. Herod declared it. Even Satan declared it. But in a perfect way God has declared it. Jesus is the king.

And I would like to declare it as well. He can be your king. Now perhaps you're not convinced. Let me make one final appeal in scripture. The final appeal is in Psalm 2.

I encourage you to take a look at that. Here's the passage. Why do the nations rage and the people plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against his anointed saying let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us.

He who sits in the heavens laughs. The Lord holds them in derision. Then he will speak to them in his wrath and terrify them in his fury saying as for me I have set my king on Zion my holy hill.

I will tell of the decree the Lord said to me you are my son today I have begotten you ask of me and I will make the nations your heritage and the ends of the earth your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

[27:42] Now therefore kings be wise be warned oh rulers of the earth serve the Lord with fear rejoice with trembling kiss the sun lest he be angry and you perish in the way for his wrath is quickly kindled blessed are all those who take refuge in him.

Kings of the earth the rulers continue to take counsel against the Lord and against his anointed they continue to want to break free from the from the what they sense is the bondage that God has on them they want to do their own thing they want to reject God they want to be rulers themselves what a foolish idea he's king no wonder God sits in the heavens and laughs not a funny laugh a laugh of scorn because he has set his king Jesus on the throne no wonder he says at the end therefore oh kings be wise be warned oh rulers of the earth serve the Lord with fear rejoice with trembling kiss the sun that's an odd statement isn't it

James Boyce helped me with this a little bit he wrote this is what these rulers will not do of course it's why they are in danger of final fierce destruction make sure you're not among them the rulers of this world rage against Christ but why should you the hands he holds forth for you to kiss are hands that were pierced by nails when he was crucified in your place one day he's coming back coming as a great judge of all on that day the wicked will be punished but today is the day of his grace blessed are all who take refuge in him it's a reminder says voice that the only refuge from the wrath of God is God's mercy unfolded at the cross of Jesus Christ he's king is he your king let's pray father how we thank you for your great plan and purpose we thank you for the season that we celebrate the coming of

Jesus in the flesh all part of your wonderful glorious remarkable providential purposeful plan to redeem those whom you had chosen before the foundation of the world to be in your family you revealed here in your word how Jesus comes as king king and how he will rule and reign over all we I think I hope I believe we in this local family of believers love that you are our king we rejoice that we are able to be able to bow to your authority we even pray when we pray your kingdom come we are praying that you will rule and reign in our lives every day that we will not try to usurp your authority we will bow to what you called us to do may that increase in our daily walk may we not only live in light of the fact that you are king but may we declare your rule and reign to all who will hear thank you for this great privilege of worshiping the king of heaven in Jesus name we pray amen