

CHRISTMAS DAY - Lord of the Kings

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Preacher: Paul Dudley

[0 : 00] This is the 2002 Christmas Day service at Holy Trinity. The preacher is Paul Dudley.

His sermon is entitled Lord of the Kings and is based on Matthew chapter 2 verses 1 to 12. Have you ever noticed those people who think they are more important than they really are? You know the ones. The ones in your workplace or the ones in your family who think that they're in control.

They're power hungry. They're self-seeking. They have to be the centre of attention. Self-glorifying. And they can't stand having rivals. You know the ones, don't you? You know who I'm talking about. Those bosses, they just can't stand another rival.

[1 : 05] They're jealous of others' attributes and strengths. They go to any length to knock them off their perch. Rude comments. Gossip behind their back.

Sabotage. They have to be Lord of all. The one to rule all. And they will go to any length to obtain it. If you know the type of person I'm talking about, then you know exactly the type of person that King Herod is. He is, in his own mind, Lord of all.

But I will not serve King Herod. For I have met King Jesus. I will serve him and I will risk my life for the true King.

Let me explain. I love studying the stars. I don't know if you've been out and you've seen all those magnificent stars. They're fantastic to look at.

[2 : 12] In all their vast array. All the planets. You might call me a bit of an astrologer. I also like doing a little bit of magic every now and then, you know.

Once we pull a rabbit out of my hat type thing. One night I was looking into the stars. And I just happened to notice a particular star that I haven't seen before.

An unusual looking star. I quickly got out all the charts and I was having a bit of a look through the charts. And after doing a bit of an investigation. And knowing a bit about the Jewish, you know, history and the expectations that they had.

I didn't know a lot about them but I knew little bits and pieces. I realised that this star that I'd seen pointed to the fact that there had been a new born King.

King of the Jews. I was certain of the fact. Absolutely certain of it. Now, I come from a country where we did need to follow this King.

[3 : 16] And, you know, I was fairly important myself. Well, I am sort of kind of important. But we decided that we'd go and follow this star. We decided we'd go and see this King.

This King born of the Jews. We thought we'd go and pay him homage. So, off we went. A few of us. There was a few of us who had seen it, you see.

So, we decided we'd go and look for this King. King of the Jews. Now, we had no idea where this King would be. Had no idea at all. We were outsiders, you see.

We weren't a part of the Jewish race. We were outside that. The Jews called us Gentiles and had very little to do with us. So, we decided the best thing to do would be to go to their capital, Jerusalem.

Surely, they would know about the great King of Jerusalem. There must be great celebrations. Their great Messiah had come. They would know where the King would be.

[4 : 17] So, off we went to go and find the King. The new King. We set off west for Jerusalem. The capital for the Jews.

Well, when we arrived there, we started asking people. We said to them, Where is the child who has been born King of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising and have come to pay homage.

We were asking all around the place. Soon, the King of Jerusalem, King Herod, he heard that we'd come to find this King. And obviously, he knew a little bit about this.

And obviously, he was very worried about the fact that we'd made this observation. Because he gathered very quickly all his Jewish leaders, his scribes, he gathered all those who were his chief priests, his legal religious leaders, to ask them where this King would be.

Well, they told him. They gathered and they told him. In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it has been written by the prophet, and you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah.

[5 : 33] For from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people, who is to shepherd my people, Israel. They knew their scriptures. They knew that there was a King to come.

God had promised it. And they knew where this baby would be born. In Bethlehem. Well, this sounded great. Except for King Herod.

He called us to come and meet him. But he did it secretly. Under stealth. None of the other religious leaders were there. He called us in to meet him.

He sat us down. He seemed rather concerned, I thought. We were a little concerned about the secrecy as well. What was going on in his mind? Why the secrecy?

When we arrived there, he was very concerned to know when exactly he had first seen the star. When was the accurate moment? He seemed very intense at this moment.

[6 : 38] When was the precise moment we'd seen this star? It seemed an unusual question. We told him. Why would he want to know exactly when the star when we'd seen it?

Well, after we told him about this when we'd seen the star, he then told us where the place of this king would be.

It was Bethlehem. And so he sent us on our way. But when he sent us on our way, he said these words to us. Go and search diligently for the child.

And when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay homage. He wanted us to go and search through Bethlehem to turn every stone over, to search high and low for this baby.

He seemed very concerned that we should have the right baby. He wanted to know exactly who was this king. Well, off we sat.

[7 : 46] We went on our way, feeling a little concerned about the whole thing. I mean, on the whole, he seemed rather positive about it all. He told us that he wanted to go and pay homage himself.

But why all the secrecy? It seemed very strange for us back then. Very strange indeed. Well, off we went.

But something amazing happened on our way. As we were heading out, a star went ahead of us. The star that we had seen before. It went before us.

Like it was leading us, guiding us. Like divine intervention. Like God was leading us in to meet the king. It was amazing.

And then it stopped. We were there. We were at the place where the king was. The king at which we had seen his star.

[8 : 49] We were overwhelmed with joy. Here was the place. We were so excited by it all. We went inside.

And there was the child. The king of the Jews. And his mother Mary.

It was awesome. The angel had told Mary to call the baby Jesus because he would be the one to save his people from their sins.

Then he would be called Emmanuel because he would be God with us. He was the great king. We fell to our knees.

We worshipped him. What a privilege to be there. We opened up our chests and we gave him, offered him gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh. Gifts fit for a king.

[9 : 48] A great king. A worthy king. Oh, the joy of it. You should have been there with us. We had found the right one. We had been led to the king.

But before we could go back to tell King Herod about this, we had a dream. We had a dream that told us not to go back to King Herod.

That we were not to give the news to him. Joseph also, the child's parent. Herod's father had also a dream and he was told by the angel not to take the baby, baby Jesus and Mary to Egypt, to flee because King Herod was searching for the child, searching to destroy him.

Here was the reason for the secrecy. It all became clear to us. King Herod didn't want to pay him homage. King Herod wanted to destroy this king.

King Herod wanted to be the king of all kings, the lord of the kings. He wanted to be the one to rule them all. He had no room for Jesus in his life.

[11 : 00] He had no room for him at all. It threatened his power, his control, his rule. For him, the only way to deal with this king was to destroy him.

The true king. This amazed me. He was the king of the Jews and his own people were trying to kill him.

We were staggered. I will not serve King Herod. I will not return to him. For I have met the true king. And he's not just the king of the Jews. He's the king of me. An outsider. One who has come in from the nations afar. He's not just king of the Jews.

He's king of the world. He is the one I will serve. He is the lord of the kings. He is the one to rule them all.

[12 : 07] He is the one to save us from our sins. He is the one who has brought me into his family. We're on our way back to our country. We're going via a different road.

We're not going to go back via King Herod. It's a risk that we're going to take. It's a risk that could cost us our lives.

But we will not serve him. We will serve the lord of the kings. Who is the king of your life? Who is the one that you serve?

What is the king of your life? Do you have room for the great king in your life? Oh, glorious day! A great life has shone into the world. The lord of the kings has come.