

Part 2 - The Revelation of Jesus as King

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[0:00] Hello, good morning everyone. Yes, there we go. My name is Alan. As Blake said, I am one of the pastors here. And just honored that you chose to be with us, especially with this time of the year, holidays, travel, busyness, those kind of things.

So just thank you so much. And the fact that there are so many great churches in this area that proclaim the good news or the gospel of Jesus Christ every week, that you chose to be with us. We're just really honored. As Jason alluded to earlier, Jesse and his wife Haley and their kids have gone on a little mini vacation to the western part of the state.

Just a chance to get away, recharge their batteries. I mean, here at One Harbor, we really value rest. I mean, God gave us the Sabbath for a reason. God gave us rest because we tend to become busy even when we don't need to be.

And so the fact that they intentionally go away is just a value that we have. So be praying for them as their way. They will be back next Sunday. And just be praying that they are rejuvenated, their energy, batteries recharged, love for one another, those kind of things.

So with that being said, we are finishing up the unfolding story of Christmas. The revelation of Jesus as King is what we're looking at today.

[1:09] We started last week looking at the story of Christmas. And if you're just joining us, we've looked at how the story is so incredible when you take the time to look at it intentionally. I mean, we saw God initiate his plan of salvation in a shocking way by coming to Mary and Joseph and informing them of this virgin birth.

And we looked at that last week and the miracle of that. You know, man can only take credit for introducing sin into God's perfect creation. From the beginning, we have believed the lie of Satan that goes, does God really love me?

Does he really truly love me? Does he have the best out for me? And because of that lie and the belief that we have in our hearts, sin entered into the world. God was coming for man. And the salvation of the Lord wouldn't be something man could ever take any credit for.

That was his plan. So today, we get to go and look at the wise men. And we see how they treat Jesus as a king. But Jesus isn't the only king in this story.

As we learn about Jesus as king, full of grace and truth, we see another king named Herod, who's full of wrath and violence. An insecure leader appointed by the Romans.

[2:18] When you think about the story of Christmas, you may not think about Herod and the murder of all the baby boys in the small village of Bethlehem. But that is reality. And that was how this great rescue plan started out.

It sounds horrible. You know, Christmas is for nice thoughts and cookies and presents and eggnog and going to Mike's farm, etc. But that's part of the problem with living in a culture like ours that turns things like Christmas into a holiday marketing campaign.

When we take the story for granted, we miss the story completely. We need the whole story, the real story, more than we need a sentimental version of the story. So let's have a look at this often forgotten part of the story, starting in Matthew 2, verse 1.

It says, 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 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.

[3 : 28] 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. 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. And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you.

[4 : 37] For Herod is about to search for the child to destroy him. And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt and remained there until the death of Herod.

This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, Out of Egypt I called my son. Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men.

Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah. A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and loud lamentation. Rachel, weeping for her children, she refused to be comforted because they are no more.

But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, Rise, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel. For those who sought the child's life are dead.

And he rose and took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. This is the word of God. It's clear this passage of scripture is wrapped around the kingship of Jesus.

[5 : 46] This certainly does not give us the warm and fuzzies, as we like to think of at Christmas time. The Magi, which were really Middle Eastern sorcerers, looking for one born king.

Herod and all of Jerusalem were frightened about there being a new king. What does this mean for them? What does this mean for the existing king? What will their lives look like?

How will he lead? These aren't just questions that they had. They are ones we have when thinking through the kingship of Jesus. If you're here and you're not yet a Christian, what will it mean?

What does it mean if Jesus is king? What will I have to give up? Who will I become? Am I comfortable with who I am? At least I know what to expect. Good, bad, and ugly, you know.

If you're here and you're already a Christian, we have this inner turmoil going on asking the question, is he really king? Does Jesus rule and reign in every aspect of my life?

[6 : 44] Or just the ones I'm comfortable with? Is he just my savior? And then some of us, maybe a lot of us, grew up in Christianity and have a flawed understanding of Jesus as king.

For me, it was growing up with everyone calling me the good little boy, always looking the part, saying the right words, my hair parted the right way, at the right time.

All the while, my heart was full of selfishness and envy. My hope, honestly, is at the end of this sermon, you will have a clearer understanding of King Jesus and what it looks like to fully serve him.

What we see in this passage clearly states the reason for Jesus' coming. Verse 2a, it says, He was born king of the Jews. And in verse 6, we see, From you shall come a ruler.

First thing we see is Jesus is born as a king to rule us. One of the things that's hard for us to grasp is Jesus as king. I mean, think about how seemingly okay so many of us are with little baby Jesus.

[7 : 50] Many of us may see Jesus as the great NASCAR driver Ricky Bobby sees him from the movie Talladega Nights. In his prayer before they eat dinner, he says, Dear 8 pounds, 6 ounce newborn infant Jesus, Don't even know a word yet.

Just a little cuddly. Little infant and so cuddly. But still omnipotent. We just thank you for all the races I've won and the \$21.2 million. Woohoo! Babies don't intimidate anyone, usually.

But what's different? What's different is that Jesus wasn't just any baby. He was the son of God. He was born king of the Jews.

This isn't just an announcement of a birth. It's political. It's the same thing when Prince William, Princess Kate had a child. Billions of people were glued to the TV and their smartphones for hours and days, hoping to catch a glimpse of the newest member of the royal family.

It's the announcement that causes all other announcements to take a back seat. It fills up every headline. He's not just a nice guy. He's good with kids, kind to the poor, easy to get along with.

[8 : 59] No. He is king. Jesus being king is not something we fully embrace when we first become Christians. We love to focus on the savior aspect. The freedom from sin.

The weight of guilt lifted off our shoulders. And all of that is great and wonderful, and I love it too.

But he is savior and king. It's the same with this title of Lord, which equals master or ruler.

It's the same thing. We all want to be forgiven, to be saved. None of us want the Lord. Think about these two very different prayers and when we pray them. Think about this now.

Jesus, Jesus, save me. Help me. It's a lot easier to pray than, Jesus, command me, and I'll obey. Everyone prays the first prayer, which is not a bad thing.

You know, when disaster strikes, when you're about to lose your home, your job, a loved one. We all become the greatest prayer warriors known to man. We become Jedi Knight prayer warriors.

[9 : 57] What is it like when things are going well and we are experiencing the mountaintop? How many of us pray the second prayer? Jesus, command me, and I will obey.

If I'm going to be honest, more often than not, it's not me. But I am compelled to ask you, is that you? Do you, like me, focus on the savior and not the king in our prayer lives?

Baby Jesus doesn't bother people, really. He can't say much. He doesn't seem to demand they be generous or selfless. We like baby Jesus because we see him as someone we command, not someone who commands us.

Shelly and I, my wife and I, have five kids. And I assure you, when they try to command us, it does not turn out well for them. The only problem with that mentality is that scripture tells us he was born king.

He was not born a prince in a line of rulers hoping to one day become king. He was born king. So Jesus is born the king of the Jews. What kind of king is he?

[11 : 02] Like I said earlier, if he was born today, most of us would be glued to the TV or phone trying to find out all the details of this new king. His family lineage.

How wealthy he is. What kind of clothes he wears. What brand of bassinet will he use. What kind of stroller, car seat. Brand of diaper and wipes, etc.

We have to know every detail so we can know what kind of king he will be. And honestly, out of pure vanity, hopefully our kid can be like him, even if it's in our own head, if we use the same things. Well, they didn't have that. They didn't have smartphones. They didn't have internet. But they did have scriptures. They had a lot of scripture that pointed back to Jesus. They were given what he'd be like.

Jesus is a king like no other king. So he's born a king. But not like any other king we've ever seen. Jesus is a king born in poverty, difficulty, and hostility.

[12 : 05] Kings are born in the best hospitals and they're guarded heavily. They are given the best care and protection money can buy. Here we see that not only was Jesus laid in a manger, but that wasn't the scariest thing that happened to him right from the start.

Joseph is warned in a dream that he would be killed if they stayed. So they gather all their belongings in the middle of the night and flee to Egypt. One of the most amazing things about Jesus during his time on earth is his ability to identify with our suffering.

One of the names the Bible refers to Jesus is man of sorrows. He really gets it. He really understands what living in poverty means. He was born in a stable and laid in a feeding trough.

He understands what being rejected feels like. He was betrayed by one of his closest friends. And when he was arrested, the other 11 ran and hid, even denying they even knew him, to a little girl.

It seems like this time of the year during the holidays is when suicide attempts and depression and overdoses ramp up. Unfortunately, just over a week ago, a 26-year-old young man took his life in Newport.

[13 : 16] I'm not sure why. And from best I can gather, there were no drugs involved. Just a total loss of hope. The point is, he identifies with you right where you are.

The problem that everyday folks like us have with royalty is that they live in a sheltered world that seems like a fantasy land from birth to death. I mean, we all love the pomp and circumstance of the beautiful weddings and births of princesses and princes.

But when those things are over and we return back to our normal lives, they can't relate to us. And we certainly can't relate to them. There is a huge disconnect between the two worlds.

We don't see that ever with Jesus. Not from the day of his birth to the time he went back to heaven. And the greatest thing about that truth is that it was by choice. He was not forced to do those things. It was by choice. He is the king who identifies with the brokenhearted, the weak, the anxious. He identifies with you and I today, this day. Whether you feel like king of the world or all hope is lost, he identifies with you and I.

[14 : 25] Don't ever forget that truth. What else do we see about this king that's so different? In verse 6 we see, For from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.

We see Jesus is a king who cares like a shepherd. This king will lead not like a tyrant, but like a shepherd. Later, Jesus himself says that this is who he is.

John 10 says, He says he's the good shepherd who sees the wolf and doesn't run to save himself, but lays down his life for the sheep. He is not some hired hand, but a shepherd that lays his life down for us.

He asks that he knows his sheep and his sheep know him. He talks about leaving the 99 for the one and having a great celebration upon their safe return. No other king has ever acted or even thought about leaving the masses for one.

When you think about a king, you would never imagine this kind of king. A king who knows the names of all his people. A king who all of the people can know personally.

[15 : 33] A king who knows the threats they face. A king who cares more about their good than his own comfort, let alone his own life. Yes, this king, Jesus, knows every sin, every unholy fault you and I have ever had or will have and still freely paid the price to bridge the gap between our unholy selves and a perfect God.

Kings are distant. They're impersonal. They're selfish. They're entitled. And they're protected. But not this king. He's a king like no other.

The shepherd king. Jesus is a king who calls outsiders to find hope. We're all funny about who comes to the hospital or to the house to meet a newborn baby, right?

There's a lot of newborn babies. You're funny about who comes, right? Yeah, we are. We are. I remember when our oldest child, Addison, was born. We were so concerned about her health and safety that we were like hermits for the first six weeks of her life.

The whole house was disinfected. Shelly and I wore class A biohazard suits to prevent infection.

When I came home from work, there was a whole decontamination process I went through before I could see her.

[16 : 49] And then there are all the people at Walmart who see an infant and feel like they need to touch the baby. I mean, really.

This is on a side note. Okay? On a side note. If you see an infant out in public and feel tempted to touch that child, let me encourage you to resist that temptation. All right?

Some sleep-deprived man or mom or dad is going to go off on you one day. All right? Lay off the touching. All right? But really, only certain people get invited.

People we really care about. Right? Now, if you're royalty, how much does that get magnified?

Super close family, maybe some dignitaries, but even that could be a stretch.

Right? With that in mind, consider who gets invited to meet Jesus. The magi. Let's look at them at those.

[17 : 49] That's who God invited to meet Jesus. You probably don't see the scandal because of the song, you know, We Three Kings. That song, like others, isn't telling the story correctly.

I mean, we think and see from all the nativity scenes out and about that they were royalty from their own kingdom from the Far East. Right? That's what it says. The magi were not Asian kings.

They were sorcerers from just south of Baghdad who were obsessed with staring at the stars, thinking that's how they would find answers to life's biggest questions.

They were the equivalent to modern day New Age quacks. That's who they were. Added to that fact, they were Gentiles, which to the Jews equals outcasts.

Stay away. So from all the people on the planet, God gets picky and handpicks these guys. I mean, can you believe that? Certainly not how it's portrayed in the nativity scenes and what we sing about. [18:56] They were outsiders who were desperately searching for hope and answers. And God says, I want to call you to come find what your heart is after. I'm scared to think that some of you may be like them right now.

I think many people today are searching for the answers to the spiritual essence of the universe. I mean, they refer to themselves as spiritual, not religious. That's the PC term you hear today. They may study many religions in many ways, very similar to that of the magi. Searching for answers. Maybe you see yourself as an outsider who doesn't fit in.

And maybe God is leading you to the place where you can find the answers to your heart's questions. This king is not like any king we can wrap our heads around. But there is one way that he is like all other kings. If Jesus is king, he demands our allegiance and worship. This is what a real king demands.

[19:59] And Jesus is no different. In fact, the Bible says that there's a day that's coming where all will bow down before him. Philippians 2, 10 and 11 says, So that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

That feels like what we know of kings. That feels normal. That's a normal response from the commoners, us, to their king. If Jesus is king, then that demands a response.

That's the thing about someone declaring they are a king. It doesn't leave you neutral. I mean, it may leave you neutral if I stood up here and said, I'm the king of the world, but I certainly am not from a royal bloodline, and I certainly am not the creator of the universe.

One scholar writes, In this passage, we see these different types of responses.

I bet there are a mixture of those responses here today. The first one we see, the people were gripped by fear of Jesus. It says, In all of Jerusalem with him.

[21:26] Herod, in all of Jerusalem with him. Why? Why were they so upset? An old saying goes something like this. The devil you know is better than the devil you don't.

Herod was king, and he was evil and selfish and ruthless, but at least they knew what to expect.

This new Jesus as king is guaranteed to disrupt all the norms.

They had no idea what to expect. I think the fear of change, the extent of change, is what keeps so many people from surrendering to Jesus, much like the people of Jerusalem in this passage.

I mean, you may know the life you are living is leading to utter destruction, but at least you know. At least you have that bit of control. A great example of a person not wanting to surrender their lives to Jesus as king was the rich young ruler.

He came and asked Jesus, What must I do to inherit eternal life? And Jesus names off a few of the commandments, and he responds with, I've kept all of those since I was a boy. Jesus responds to him like this.

[22:30] In Mark 10, 21 and 22, it says, Jesus looked at him and loved him. One thing you lack, he said, Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven.

Then come, follow me. At this the man's face fell. He went away sad because he had great wealth.

This is such a great example of many of us today. We are great at following rules and saying the right things at the right time.

But when King Jesus asks us for the thing we love more than him, that is where the line in the sand is drawn. I have read this story so many times and think this guy is an idiot.

I think if I was face-to-face with Jesus, I would give up everything to follow him. I would give up my house. I would give up my car, my time, everything. Funny thing is, at least for me, Jesus has never asked me for anything big like those, and yet I sometimes find it hard to even read or study his word on a daily basis.

I can't even find ten minutes, much less surrender everything else to him. Fear gripped him. Fear of the unknown and fear of change. Some of you likely are thinking of becoming a Christian.

[23:43] You want to be free from addictions or ways of living that rule you, but you wonder, what else will change? What will Jesus really do? I think that's really worth considering.

Jesus called it counting the cost, and he had people do it all the time. The story of the rich young ruler we just looked at is a great example of Jesus asking someone to count the cost. He may or may not ask you to sell everything, but I assure you, as your king, he will ask you to change.

I hope by the end, I can help you see how, when you do the math, you find what Jesus said to be true. He's the pearl of great price. You have to give up everything, but you do it in joy because nothing else compares to him.

Then we see Herod. His response to Jesus was with fury. Herod responded with anger, fear, murder. Why? Jesus was born king.

Herod was a Rome-appointed king and therefore was threatened by the news of a legitimate king. Later, Jesus will come face to face with Herod the Great's son. Herod the Tetrarch, who's a self-appointed wannabe king.

[24 : 55] He will, like his father, refuse to bow to Jesus and will join his soldiers in mocking and ridiculing Jesus before his death. But a day will come when self-made kings and man-made kings will bow to the one who was born king of kings and lord of lords.

It's easy to point fingers at Herod, but all of us are like him. There cannot be two legitimate kings. Only one. So if Jesus is king, well, that means that you and I are not and cannot be king.

When we live our lives like we are in charge, we are pretending. We are sitting on another man's throne pretending to be sovereign, pretending to be in charge when Jesus is king.

That revelation is good news for the world, but it's bad news for our pride that wants to sit on that throne. Herod, and all of us like him, should have surrendered to Jesus.

Jesus tells a parable of what that looks like. In Luke 14, 31 through 33, it says, Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with 10,000 to meet him who comes against him with 20,000?

[26 : 13] And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. So therefore, any of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.

Our pride tells us to dig our heels in and act like we're king. Jesus calls us to see him as the greater king and to surrender. The final group we see who responded to Jesus in this passage is the Magi.

The Magi who responded rightly with worship. Verses 10 and 12 says, 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. The Magi were willing to travel hundreds of miles across the desert to find the true king, risking life and limb just for a chance to see this true king.

They were desperate for answers. They were desperate to see the promised king. Then they rejoiced, fell down, worshipped, and gave gifts.

[27 : 31] To this day, it's still the needy people who find Jesus, people who realize there is no other way, people who realize there is no other hope. The gospel makes sense to the spiritually bankrupt, to the sick, to the poor, to the brokenhearted.

The proud and the arrogant only think of their own achievements. They say, impress me, Jesus, and maybe, maybe I'll think about it. But the Magi fell down at the feet of a child and worshipped.

The idea of bowing a knee is something all humans struggle with. What is so radical about Jesus as king of kings is not that he demands us to bow to him, but how he humbled himself to you and I.

Verse 11 says, they offered him gifts, gold, frankincense, and myrrh. The three gifts were very costly, but all three were very different in their meanings. The gold makes sense for a king, no problem there.

The frankincense makes sense for a high priest who takes away sin. Okay, we get that. But the myrrh, that's the one. That's for dead bodies. That was used to embalm the dead during that day.

[28 : 42] Joseph and Mary would have immediately recognized the myrrh and its use during that time. Imagine the response you might get at a baby shower if you brought embalming fluid as a gift.

Why would this be an appropriate gift for Jesus? Why would this be an appropriate gift for Jesus? Because Jesus is a king born to die in place of his people.

Think about the kind of loyalty that kings demand. You swear undying allegiance for king and country. The thought is that anyone is willing to die for the king.

That's what's understood as normal or noble or even heroic. Instead of his people dying for him, Jesus was born to die for us. Mark 10, 45 says, For even the son of man came not to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.

king, the king who exchanges his own life for his servants, the shepherd who lays down his life for his sheep, this must be the most scandalous part of the story.

[29 : 50] So in looking at how we respond today, you and I must consider how we respond to this king. If you're here today and not yet a Christian, you can live like you are a king and put your hope in earthly kings, but all of that will only lead to disappointment.

And cruelty. Only Jesus is worthy of our life's devotion. Only Jesus is the king born into the pain, suffering, and sorrow of this world, surrounded by death and chaos to identify with us and to lead us out.

Only Jesus knows your name. Only Jesus knows the hairs on your head and cares. Only Jesus knows your story, your pain, and anxiety, and has a plan.

If you're an outsider, just searching for hope and the answers to life, Jesus doesn't leave you in the dark. He's drawing you in. If you're overwhelmed by your guilt, he doesn't say, prove yourself.

He says, come to me. Don't be like the people who chose fear of the unknown. Don't be like Herod, who stubbornly fought to keep his throne. come, respond like the Magi, and surrender to Jesus the King.

[31 : 09] As Ben comes up. If you're here and you're already a Christian, just because you're a Christian doesn't mean you remember this all the time. I don't. Our hearts naturally drift away from this.

We must constantly fight this desire to be back on the throne. But only Jesus is worthy. And only Jesus is able to lead us. Take a minute to consider areas of your life that are not surrendered to Jesus.

Then consider how Jesus surrendered his life for you. What would it look like to surrender to him?

Then let us come and remember our King who surrendered his life for us.

Who was abandoned and betrayed so we'd have life. Let's be like the Magi with our joy, with our humility, and our worship.

We do that by taking communion every week. I love the fact that here at One Harbor we take communion every week because I personally need that reminder all the time that Jesus is King, that he is Savior, that he bridged that gap that no way in heaven or on earth that I could ever bridge.

[32 : 23] We do that by remembering his broken body and his shed blood that covers our sins, that makes us pure and holy and righteous so that God doesn't see our sins.

All he sees is purity. God is to God is to!!! God, you are an amazing God.

You are awesome. And the fact that you chose to freely come here to surrender your life, to surrender perfection, to surrender everything, to live what many would call a horrible life.

You freely and willingly came to live that life, to die that perfect death so that we have hope. We have hope not only for today, for tomorrow, and for all of eternity.

God, I pray that you would speak to us today, God, that our hearts would be changed, that we would recognize the kingship of who you are, that you're not just a savior, which is great and wonderful and things that we should celebrate every day, but you are king and you demand our loyalty.

[33 : 55] God, I pray that we would be known as a people who willingly and freely give us or give you everything, God. Help us to become those people that proclaim the good news, that freely and willingly speak to people whose lives are spiraling out of control.

They may not even realize it, God. Give us opportunities, Lord, and I pray that we would have the courage to walk through those doors of opportunity to speak truth into people's lives. Speak truth to our neighbors.

Speak truth to our co-workers. Speak truth to our family and friends. God, give us those opportunities. Thankful for this time, God. You are awesome and worthy to be praised.

You are worthy for us to lay our lives down. May that be the case, God. You know we pray. Amen. Amen.