

**Grace Among Us – Part Four**  
**Responding to King Jesus – Matthew 2:1-18**  
Crosspoint – Dave Spooner – Dec. 26<sup>th</sup>, 2021

**Intro**

- Churches in our culture focus our gaze on the identity of Jesus as the Savior, which He is. Those who are aware of God and aware of their sin embrace this characteristic of Christ with joy, grateful for what He has done for them. We also focus on the aspect of Jesus as Messiah, the one who restores the effects of our sin and makes us whole, and redeems what was lost.
- The title of Jesus we don't emphasize is His role as Lord, King, and Ruler. The other two characteristics of Christ are what He is and does for us. It requires us to believe and receive Him. The title of "King" requires much more of us. We are not just being forgiven of our sin and restored by His power; we are required to acknowledge His authority and give ourselves in service to Him. This characteristic we struggle with the most, especially in our western mindset of "we the people" and democracy, where "our rights" and "our freedom" are highly valued. Jesus as "king" is a hard pill for us to swallow, but it is the truth of the reality of who Jesus is.
- A king is not voted in, nor can he be voted out, nor does he have term limits. One is a king by birthright, and he is king for life. The king's word is law, and it cannot be changed. The king's authority is absolute, he personally owns everything in his kingdom, and he chooses who is a citizen and who is not (for more on this, see *Kingdom Principles* by Myles Munroe).
- When Jesus started to preach, what was His message? "From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand'" (Matt 4:17 ESV). He did not say "repent, for the Savior is at hand" or "repent, for the Messiah is at hand," but "repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Jesus as King requires a response from us, and people respond to this title in the three main ways we see from our text for today.
- You, like everyone, will respond in one of these three ways. You need to understand what it means that He is the King and then choose how you will respond accordingly.
- We have been reading about what God has communicated to His people concerning the birth of the long-expected Jesus. God communicated to both Joseph and Mary and announced the birth to a marginalized shepherd who saw the truth of what was communicated and spread the message of this Son born to the community.
- God also set up signs in the heavens of this heralded birth. Some, who did not receive a supernatural angelic announcement of the birth, longed and looked to other signs of his arrival. Once they saw what they had been looking for, they continued their quest to find the One.

**Some are drawn to Him**

**Matthew 2:1-2 NIV**

**After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."**

- These people, who were more than likely living in Babylon, were drawn to Him. They, more than likely, were descendants of or influenced by those taken into captivity (including the prophet

Daniel). They knew about Him and were drawn to Him, knowing that He was a king and born that way, and they came to worship Him.

- Their worship of Him cost them something. When they heard of Him, they wanted to find Him because they had put their hope in Him. It required them to move from where they were, and it required them to exert themselves and spend themselves to find Him with the intent of worshipping Him. There was a continual pursuit of the King of the Jews. They were not just looking for knowledge of the fact, but they wanted to see and worship for themselves.
- They knew that this was not any ordinary king, because worship was reserved for those who were considered God. Therefore, they did not come to give “homage” or to give respect for this King but to worship Him.
- They went on the information they knew (the star or natural/general revelation). They were then directed by supernatural/specific revelation from the Word itself as they sought more information in Jerusalem (Matt. 2:3-6). In their worship, they gave, and true worship is always an act of giving. It is giving of oneself to what is worshiped (Matt. 2:11). There was a practical response and an emotional response (they were “overjoyed” Matt. 2:10).
- People today are still drawn to King Jesus, and worship Him in Spirit and in truth. People give themselves entirely to Him, recognizing that He is the true King and giving themselves to following and serving Him. There is an acknowledgment that He is indeed the Savior, the Messiah, and the King to whom we give our lives. Once people grasp that He is these things, they then fully give themselves to Him as their Lord.

### Some are disturbed by Him

#### Matthew 2:3 NIV

**When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him.**

- He was disturbed, and so was Jerusalem, and rightly so. They were disturbed to know that one was born “king of the Jews.” The title “king of the Jews” was the title that “disturbed” them, caused inward turmoil, stirred them up, and unsettled them. For this title to disturb them, they had some understanding of what this means.
- It was indeed disturbing to “king” Herod. Having a true, rightful king born was a complete threat to him. If this rightful king took the throne, he would lose his power, position, way of life, authority, and everything with it. He would no longer be in charge and able to call the shots. He was completely threatened by another king, the true rightful king, reigning.
- Others, primarily the leaders, were disturbed as well. They knew that a born king of the Jews would also affect them. What about the Romans, what will happen to our lives, how will this affect us, what would he be like, what would my position be in his kingdom? Some of these people had made an alliance with and were working alongside Herod, and he had given them positions of power and influence as well. If there were a king, the leaders of the people would have to serve this king and follow what He said and do as He would command them to do.
- Still, others were disturbed because of the uncertainty of what this could mean for them and their lives. Knowing that a king is born who will be over you and your people is a disturbing thing. However, if you knew the nature of this true king, you would run to embrace him and gladly give yourself to him.

- They knew the implications of what it was to have a king. The difference between those who embrace the king and those who are disturbed that there is a king, is knowing who the king is. This King came to save His people from their sin by giving His life. This King offers eternal life, and this King will deal with grace. This King will rule with justice and strength. This King is wise beyond comprehension. This King has all power. This King is the only one worthy of giving one's life to and one's life for.
- Some people run to Him and worship, while others are completely threatened and disturbed by Him. People need to understand this concept of Jesus as King, especially in our western mindset. You also need to understand what this means for your life as one who follows Christ.
- The Magi stopped in Jerusalem and asked for directions. The "chief priest and teachers of the law" knew where this ruler was to be born according to the prophecy given by Micah:

#### **Matt. 2:6 NIV**

**"But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel."**

- This verse gives the location of where this ruler was to be born, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah (which was planned long, long ago). It also tells us that this ruler will be a "shepherd," someone who would take care of them. Jesus, indeed, was the "good shepherd" who not only cared for the sheep but laid His life down for them (John 10:7-18).
- King Herod lied to the Magi and told them that he wanted to worship Him as well, so once they found Him, they were to return to let him know (Matt. 2:7-8). The star that the Magi first saw continued to lead them. They found the child with Mary at a house and presented their gifts to him (Matt. 2:9-11).
- They were then warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, so they went home another way. An angel of the Lord also appeared again to Joseph in a dream and told him to:

#### **Matt. 2:13b NIV**

**"Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him."**

- God supernaturally intervenes to ensure His sovereign plan will be enacted. No one and nothing will stop His plan from moving forward. Joseph, knowing this was a messenger of the Lord, immediately took action:

#### **Matt. 2:14-15 NIV**

**14 So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, 15 where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: "Out of Egypt I called my son."**

- Those who trust the Lord and have given their lives to the true King do whatever the King asks of them, for they trust Him and count it an honor to work in accordance with His will and gladly give all to Him.
- Now, not everyone responds this way. Some again are disturbed that there is a true King, and instead of giving themselves in service to this King, they are furious with Him and seek to destroy Him and destroy anything and anyone in their way.

## Some are furious at Him

Matt. 2:16-18 NIV

When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi. **17** Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:

**18** “A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more.”

- Great evil is done for self-protection of self-governance. People are threatened by having a king, and they go to great lengths to remove his presence in their lives. People are fatally flawed and are bent toward evil. Christ is the only cure for this, and some would rather have the disease than the cure. A good and just king holds people to account, and people want to do what they want to do.
- There is persecution that comes because we are connected to Christ the King and His Kingdom. Some people are furious at Him. People are damaged and destroyed because of this. It was true when Christ was born, and it is true in our time and beyond as well. There will be a reckoning one day, and there will be justice. Know that when you are persecuted in whatever form, from mild to great, they are not ultimately coming at you but coming at the great King to whom you are connected.
- We pray for mercy, and we pray for justice. Know that any price you pay in connection to the King will be worth it and will be rewarded at the renewal of all things.

## Conclusion

- Jesus was born “King of the Jews.” He died with the same title over His cross, “King of the Jews.” When He comes back on a white horse, **“On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords”** (Rev 19:16 ESV).
- When talking about Jesus, people need to know that He is the Savior, He is the Messiah, and that He is the Lord, the King by birth whose kingdom will never end.
- How do you respond to his “kingship?” What does that mean for you and your life? A renewed commitment, and giving up and not holding back? Greater participation, availability, and connection? Going on a mission trip, giving greater of time, talents, and treasure? Take time to really think about this. Seek this King. Know this King. And serve this King. Pray for those who persecute you, and continue to do good. At the proper time, you will reap a reward if you do not give up. Fix your eyes on Jesus, so you will be encouraged and find strength.
- Prayer