

King of Kings - Part 1

The One True King

Matthew 2:1-8

Memory Verses: Matthew 2:2

MANUSCRIPT

Introduction (Me, We, & the Struggle)

Kids are dumb. At least my kids are dumb. They play a game, they get injured, bleeding, crying, screaming... 5 seconds later right back to the game. My kids make up games. It was raining the other day really heavily and Canaan looks over to Pierson and says... "hey let's go play River Cow." I said, "what is River Cow." Canaan says, "When it rains and all that water pools up in the back yard we go and pretend we are cows in the river... and then we fight." "Okay... fighting River Cows?" The other day they were banging into the walls and me and Lisa thought the house was about to collapse. I went downstairs to see everyone sweating, panting, shuffling on their knees. I said, "what are you guys doing?" Vera says, "we are playing ultimate football." I asked, "what is ultimate football?" Hudson says, "it's football, on our knees... and then we fight." I asked... "Is there a game you guys have invented that doesn't involve fighting?" "Nope." "Where's the fun in that, Dad?"

I get it. When I was a kid we played a game called King of the Hill. Have you played this game? I'm not sure it's legal anymore. You find a giant mound of dirt or a place with a large hill. Everyone starts at the bottom of the hill... you yell go and then you try to be the first one to get to the top of the hill. And that's it... there are no other rules. You can punch, kick, pull hair, body slam, or my personal favorite... throw people from the top of the hill. If you aren't the king at the top of the hill then you try to get the king off the top of the hill by pulling him down or tackling him off. If you are the king at the top of the hill you try to maintain your reign by kicking people back down the hill. Your job is to stay king no matter what. It's super fun... super safe.

And of course that's just a game, right? But, in all reality, we've kind of been playing King of the Hill since the dawn of time. In Genesis God is seen as king for just a couple of verses before the serpent convinces Adam and Eve to eat of the fruit of the forbidden tree... so they can become like God and be on top. It's also for that very reason that Satan, the serpent, was banished to Earth in the first place... he wanted to usurp God's throne. Ever since Genesis 3 one of the most elemental desires of man's heart is to be in control... to be the king of their own lives. Everyone wants to be king... but there can only be one true king.

Matthew chapter 2 tells us a story about several kings who end up crossing paths with one another. One who thinks he's king but knows

he's not, a group who are called kings but really aren't, and a baby who some think may be the one true king. It seems like something right out of Game of Thrones. In reality Game of Thrones is like something right out of the Bible. When all is said and done... there can only be one King of Kings. Over the next four weeks, during our Christmas season, we are going to be looking at Matthew chapter 2 and this familiar story and we are going to see who is really the King of Kings and what that means for those of us who are not.

This morning we are going to start by looking at *Matthew 2:1-8*. Right off the bat you can see a conflict emerging. These kingly wisemen, Magi, show up in Jerusalem and start looking for a new born child who they are claiming is the rightful king of the Jews. But, there's a problem. That title has already been claimed by a man named Herod. Herod the 1st was King of Judea and he liked being called King. When he finds out that there may be someone else with a claim to the throne, the Bible tells us that he became troubled.

We have a group of kings who want to worship the one true king of the Jews and we have another king who merely *claims* to want to worship the newborn king. In all reality he has no intentions of worshipping him. He's threatened by him... and in fact he means to destroy him.

And this is where our struggle lies this morning. Are we like the Magi who truly believe in Jesus and want to worship him as the one true king or are we like Herod who pretends to want to worship him but secretly wants to keep the throne for himself. One of the awesome things about Christmas is that... *Christmas Reminds Us That There Is A King... And It's Not Me* And so, this morning we must decide who to worship. We must decide who the One True King is... Jesus or ourselves.

Teaching (Expand on the Problem, God)

The first thing we see here is that... *One Doesn't Worship A King... Unless That King is The One True King (Matthew 2:1-2)*. And yet, these wisemen traveled a great distance to come and worship a child. Let's take a closer look at what's happening here. Who exactly are these wisemen? Are they simply a group of people who are wise, intelligent, and smart? What makes these wisemen any different than say, King Herod's advisors? Well, the title "wisemen" comes from the Greek word Magus which is where we derive the words magic and magician. They weren't just wise, they were extraordinary. Most theologians and historians believe them to be a group of Persian priests who excelled at astrology. It isn't a big stretch to believe that these Magi hail from the lineage of the wisemen who studied under Daniel in ancient Babylon. *Daniel 2:48* tells us that because of Daniel's prophetic abilities he was put in charge of a group of Magi. We know that Daniel's prophecies told of a timeframe of when the Messiah would come... roughly 483 years after the decree was given to rebuild Jerusalem.

Numbers 24:17 also prophecies of a star over Israel leading the way to the Messiah. With these two pieces of prophecy as a road map, and the ability to chart the stars, Daniel's Magi could one day find the Messiah. Many in church tradition have called these travelers kings because of prophecies like **Isaiah 60:1-6**. Regardless if these are the kings this prophecy speaks of or not... these Magi were kingly, majestic, and representative of foreign lands. They may not have been kings but they most certainly were "king like."

And just how many of them were there? Well church tradition claims that there were merely three... mostly because there were only three gifts mentioned, but according to Persian tradition, Magi normally traveled in groups of 12. Some even believe there could have been more. But the point isn't how many there were, or how great they were... the point is... why were they there... and they were there to worship Jesus.

Notice, they call him the King of the Jews – not only could they find him by discerning the prophecies but they also believed that he was the Messiah, the King of the Jews, the King of Kings. It's one thing to have a head knowledge to discern things about Jesus, but it's something entirely different to put your faith and trust in Jesus as the Messiah... to not only have a head knowledge but also a heart knowledge. Notice how strong their faith in Jesus as the Messiah is. These men aren't even Jews - this prophecy is not a part of their heritage, and still, they have been waiting on this to happen for almost 500 years. For these men, their whole lives have led them to this moment. At some point they determined to leave their home land and embark on a very long journey, one that some believe could have taken years... and place their faith in God that where they were being led was the right way. They followed a star all the way to Jesus simply because they wanted to worship the One True King. Don't miss the gravitas of the situation here... this is true faith represented by real action. And why did they do it? Because they knew that... **if there is a great king, worthy of worship, then he is also worth pursuing with our lives.**

Also notice that they didn't come to worship Caesar or Herod... the earthly kings of the region. Why would they? A king is merely a great leader... someone that one may obey, or follow... but worship, probably not. But, there's something different about this King... something that demands worship. He is not an earthly king, He is not merely a human king, He is a God King. He's higher than any king ever - he is the King of Kings. **Christmas Reminds Us That There Is A King... And It's Not Me**

The next thing we notice is that... **The Notion Of The One True King Can Be A Troubling Idea To Some (Matthew 2:3-6).** Herod is clearly

troubled. Why? Because the notion of a coming sovereign ruler is easy to stomach until you realize he's here. I'm sure Herod thought... we've been waiting for the Messiah for thousands of years... he's probably not coming in my life time... i've plenty of time to rule. He was okay with a coming Messiah as long as he didn't come during his reign. But as soon as he hears that the Messiah has come... then the struggle becomes real. Herod realizes that he must either worship him as the one true king and relinquish his throne or he must reject him as king to keep his throne. **Christ demands a choice; accept him or reject him... but you can't be indifferent - he hasn't left you that option.** Look at **Isaiah 8:14** which foretold that Jesus would be either a sanctuary or a stumbling rock of offense. You can turn to him as your only chance of salvation or you can turn from him and trust in your own way. One is a sanctuary and one is the path of destruction.

But it wasn't just Herod who was troubled. The passage tells us that all of Jerusalem was troubled. It's sad. The very people who should've been excited and awaiting the Messiah became opposed to his arrival. In the years of waiting they lost their faith and zeal for the one true king. They formed their own kingdom and their own religious system which gave them comfort and they didn't want anything or anyone upsetting the establishment. It's simple, **accepting Christ means things are going to have to change.**

Herod believed the prophecy of the Messiah but couldn't believe in the Messiah. He trusted the prophecy to lead him to Bethlehem but not to worship the newborn king. Jesus wasn't a blessing to Herod, he was a threat... because he was the true king. **Christmas Reminds Us That There Is A King... And It's Not Me**

The last thing we see here is that... **Some Worship The One True King, While Other's Merely Pretend To (Matthew 2:7-8).** Of course Herod had no intention of worshipping the Christ... it was all a trick. But, we are more like Herod than we'd like to admit. No we aren't trying to kill Christ... but we do pretend to worship him at times. Why would anyone pretend to worship Jesus? It's a good question. I truly believe that there are those like the Rich Young Ruler who want to follow Jesus... but aren't willing to go the distance. There are those who want to appear to be Christians but don't want to follow Jesus where ever he may take us. So we pretend to be on board... we pretend to be all in. Or perhaps we want to appease our parents, our our friends who keep begging us to come to church, or the pastor. I think I can speak on behalf of your parents, and your friends. None of us need you to appease us. We want you to find transformation in Christ. And of course there is a time for transformation and sanctification... but at some point we want you in or out. What we don't want is you to play the church game, the religious game. **Pretending to worship Christ without being a fully committed worshiper is almost just as bad as rejecting him.**

Listen, if you're trying to ride the fence it's not going to work. Jesus doesn't like fence riders. Look at what he says in **Revelation 3:15-16**. Jesus deserves more than your pathetic attempts at pretending to be interested in his Lordship. If he feels that you are playing games... eventually he's just going to spit you out of his mouth. And I don't know exactly what that means... but it can't be a good thing. Stop playing the religious game and commit to worshiping the King. Jesus is a King worth committing to. **Christmas Reminds Us That There Is A King... And It's Not Me**

Application

The point today is simple. In a world full of kings... one stands above the rest. The wisemen, kingly in their own right, rejected any claims to their kingship and choose to worship Jesus, the one true King. Herod, the king of Judea, knew the prophecy, believed it had come true, and must have known that Jesus was the One True King... yet he chose to hold tightly to his claim as the king. He pretended to want to worship Christ but in the end rejected him.

So which one are you? Do you believe that Jesus is the One True King? If so, are you troubled by this – by the fact that there is a King with more authority over your life than yourself? Or.. are you willing to reject your claim as King over your own life and worship Jesus as the One True King... making him your Lord and Master? There's no room for half measures. You can't pretend to be all in while merely playing religious games. You must commit to worshipping Him with your whole life. We are told in **Matthew 22:37** what it looks like. We are to love him with all your heart, soul, and mind. He is the One True King... and he is worthy of our worship. **Christmas Reminds Us That There Is A King... And It's Not Me**

Conclusion

This morning would you commit yourself to the One True King? His name is Jesus.... **That's My King** video.