**Calvary Fellowship 2.27.2022 Matthew 2:1-23 “Crowning a King”**

* **My wife & I met at a mutual friend’s house - it was a total chance meeting**
* Neither of us had ever been to this guy’s house & we’ve never been there since
* But we met & talked for a while - but I never got Carey’s phone number
* So I had no idea how to get in contact w/ her, but there was a concert that Friday night & I thought she might be there, so I went
* Sure enough, she was there - we talked for a while & I got her number
* **We talked on the phone for most of that week as we got to know each other - It was a Thursday night & Carey was hoping that I’d asked her out**
* When I didn’t immediately, she started to probe a little & asked, “So what are U doing on Friday night?” I said, “I’m going to the movies.”
* She said, “Oh, What are U going to see?” I said, “The new Mel Gibson movie”
* She says, “Who are U going with?” I said, “I’m going by myself.”
* She says, “I really want to see that movie.” - I said, “I’ll let U know how it is.”
* She says, “How would U feel about me coming w/ U to the movie?”
* I said, “Hey, that sounds like a great idea. Do U want me to pick U up?”
* **Carey loves telling this story b/c it makes me look like a complete idiot**
* But every time she tells it, I think to myself, “Bob, were U even awake? U were head over heels for this girl & U couldn’t find the right combination of words?”
* **It’s like I was sleepwalking through that conversation - have U ever sleepwalked? I used to sleepwalk all the time**
* I would wake up & close my bedroom & say, “I need to close the windows”
* I thought I was a serious problem - that is, until I went on a website for sleepwalkers once & found my situation is mild
* 1 woman’s son sleepwalks - he goes into the kitchen, opens the fridge, & pees all over the food. - It gives new meaning to the phrase, “urine trouble!”
* Another person I read about, wakes up in the middle of the night, cooks a full meal, eats it in bed, then wakes up with food all over them… and has gained 40 pounds In the last 3 months - maybe you’ve gained a few pounds recently…
* There’s this division between dreams & reality in our lives & many times we are living the way we’re living b/c we’ve given up on a dream we once had
* Too many people have a dream or vision for their lives & they end up living something less b/c they’re afraid to take the risk & step out
* Listen, God leads & directs us in a variety of ways - sometimes it’s a dream U have & it prompts U to do something you’d never thing of doing previously
* But I believe God can speak to U through dreams
* **God has spoken to me in dreams - there’s this Bible teacher I loved & I had been looking for his messages everywhere**
* This is years ago before stuff was online - I was in the market for CD’s or tapes
* I visited his church & somehow talked my way into their media center where I went through every box in there looking for CD’s or tapes
* He had this series in Leviticus that I’ve been looking for for 5 years
* I’ve Googled, ebayed, Amazon-ed, everything, but to no avail
* Then 1 night I have a dream where I went on Ebay & bought his Leviticus series on cassette & when I woke up I knew it was from God
* I went on ebay & sure enough, the messages I had been looking for for 5 years were there w/ an hour left in the auction & I got them
* **Now, does that mean every dream U have is from God? No**
* The other night I had a dream that I was a ninja & I was fighting these guys
* I don’t think that means something - I don’t think my back could handle ninja life
* But we’re going to see Joseph have 2 dreams & when he has the dream, he knows it’s from God & that God is directing his life & family
* **Last week we started a brand new series of teaching at Calvary called “The Story” as we work our way through the Gospel of Matthew**
* We’re calling it The Story, b/c I firmly believe if U learn His story, it will change yours - And everyone wants to live a better story - we want today to be better than yesterday - we want a better future for ourselves & those we love
* And Matthew is going to show us how that’s possible through Jesus’ life
* **Matthew’s goal in his gospel is to prove to a Jewish audience that Jesus is the Messiah & that means giving special emphasis to fulfilled prophecy**
* Also to the miracles of Jesus, & especially the words of Jesus like the Sermon on the mount & his private discourse in Matt. 24-25
* And he’s going to give us a big fulfilled prophecy in this chapter as I proceed to ruin a Christmas song, your Christmas manger scene, & everything U thought U knew about a beloved Christmas story - so lots of fun…

**———(v. 1-6)———**

**#1 - The Coming of Jesus Brings Unforeseen Blessings**

* **So here’s now this chapter would start if this were a TV show - chapter 1 would end & then chapter 2 would start w/ these words, “2 years later”**
* The wise men showed up a year & a 1/2 later - this is why when I set up the Christmas decorations, I put the wise men on the other side of the house - my wife doesn’t like that - I say, “If U want to be unbiblical, that’s your business”
* Truth be told, I think our Biblical nativity scene went out the window the year I realized that the kids lost Joseph & Mary & they replaced them w/ Jasmine from Aladdin & Anakin Skywalker - Merry Christmas Darth Vader
* Also, wise men is a bad translation - the Greek word is Magi - they’re called wise men b/c they are the most educated people in their region - Babylon
* It was the name that was given to the priests that the Persians had
* We actually learn about then 600 years before this story - in the book of Daniel
* **The Magi were men who studied the stars & interpreted dreams**
* When Daniel is taken to Babylon at the beginning of the captivity, God gives him favor w/ the king
* The king has a dream & only Daniel is able to interpret it & he gets a new title
* “At last Daniel came in before me, and I told him the dream. (He was named Belteshazzar after my god, and the spirit of the holy gods is in him.) “I said to him, ‘Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in you and that no mystery is too great for you to solve. Now tell me what my dream means.” (Daniel 4:8-9)
* **“Chief of the magicians” =** that has nothing to do w/ pulling bunnies out of a hat or sawing someone in 2/ in Heb. it’s Rab-magi = chief magi
* This begins to answer a question for us - why do non-Jewish astrologers care about a savior being born 600 miles away?
* B/c Daniel told them about the prophecies concerning the Messiah & he told them about a passage of Scripture that would change their lives
* “I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near. A star will come out of Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Israel.” (Number 24:17)
* They knew this prophecy & 600 yrs later, these Magi are following that star…
* **Here’s the other thing - we have no idea if there were 3 wise men or 300**
* We know there’s was more than 1 b/c the word is plural, but we assume there’s 3 b/c they brought 3 gifts
* Truth be told, I bought my wife 4 gifts last Christmas, but there aren’t 4 of me
* And honestly, she can barely deal w/ 1 of me - 4 of me would be cruel & unusual punishment
* **Well, these Magi show up in Jerusalem, fueling expecting this child to be living in the royal palace b/c he is, after all, the king of the Jews**
* The problem is, they told Herod, the king of the Jews, that they were looking for the king of the Jews & Herod - that agitated Herod & in turn, everyone else
* Here’s the problem, Herod was a maniac - He was less than 5 feet tall & had a major Napoleon complex
* Herod’s the guy who killed his wife b/c he believed she was plotting against him, but then he missed her, so he built a stature of her in his house
* He killed all his superiors from his homeland b/c a voice told him to do it, but left 1 girl alive - she found out he wanted to marry her, so she killed herself
* This got Herod mad & he said, “Who are the people saying I should obey what is written? The rabbis.” - So he killed all of the leading rabbis
* He left 1 rabbi, Baba Ben Buta, but he plucked out his eyes
* So Herod asks where the Messiah is to be born - They answer “Bethlehem” & the wise men to Bethlehem w/ instructions to let Herod know where he is

**———(v. 7-12)———**

* Notice we’re told that the Magi get to the house, not the manger & they see the young child - there’s a different Greek word for infant - this 1 means toddler
* Then the Magi gives gifts - these are the most famous Christmas gifts ever given - even though for were Jesus’ birthday & for Christmas
* They give him gold, frankincense, & myrrh - why? B/c the gifts mean something
* **Gold is the gift U give to a king** - they believed he was the king of the Jews
* **Frankincense is an incense that was used for offering sacrifices**
* It was standard to have incense in the worship of God @ temple
* To the Jewish person reading this, incense as given to 1 - to God
* It was handled by the priests & offered up God
* So these wise men are communicating the message that they recognize this Child is God’s divine Son
* **Myrrh was the strangest 1 of all - b/c myrrh was used as a burial spice**
* Getting myrrh as a gift is like someone buying you a coffin for your birthday
* It would be seen as slightly rude to say the least
* But these wise men knew something b/c they knew Child’s mission would culminate at His death
* So why does the coming of Jesus bring unforeseen blessing? B/c Joseph & Mary were not wealthy - they were a family of meager means
* And they are about to need a bunch of cash to leave town & fund relocation to Egypt for a couple of years & this shows up at just the right time
* **When Carey & I were 1st married, we were totally broke - I was in college finishing my theology degree & Carey & I are both working full-time**
* Our monthly budget for groceries was $35 - not a day or a week - a month
* And 1 day we had nothing in the cupboards & payday was a few days away
* We were committed to getting out of debt, so we had stopped using the credit cards, but there was nothing for dinner
* We were faithful tithing, but we had a gap of a couple days where were was no cash - So Carey says, “Let’s go check the mail.”
* So we walk from our apartment to the mailbox & there’s a letter from this girl who was in our small group but went to be a missionary in Guatemala
* She thanked us for opening our home every week & she said, “U were always so generous to buy food for everyone. I’d like to buy some food for U.”
* In the letter was a Publix gift card for $25 - outside of the birth of my children, I don’t know if I’ve ever been so happy in my life
* I said, “Carey, let’s go get some steaks. Jesus is buying.”
* **I have so many stories like that in my life - where Jesus shows up w/ an unforeseen blessing in my life**
* When you’re faithful to God, He’s faithful to U - when U honor God w/ your finances, He honors far beyond what we give
* This isn’t a message on giving - this is a point of living by faith & trusting that God is going to meet us so matter what
* I believed that before that day at the mailbox - but I experienced it at the mailbox & God has met us over & over again

**———(v. 13-18)———**

**#2- The Coming of Jesus brings Unexpected Conflict**

* **As the text reads, it seems like the wise men left & God spoke to Joseph in a dream that same night**
* This must have been a bit of a curveball b/c I’m thinking that Joseph & Mary are getting used to the idea of their Son being the Messiah
* Then the Magi show up w/ gifts & maybe they’re saying to each other, “If our Son is the Messiah, should we move to Jerusalem to be closer to the action.”
* They go to bed & God says, “Leave the country & go to Egypt b/c someone is going to try & kill your Son.”
* Scholars estimate somewhere near 1.3 million Jews living in Egypt at this time, so they’d be able to live there for a while - especially w/ the gifts of the Magi
* **Seeing that he had been deceived by the Magi, Herod freaks out**
* This is 1 of the saddest scenes in all of the Bible to me - it’s an unconscionable thing that Herod does in killing these children
* Now, just like the song says, it was a little ton of Bethlehem, so it was probably around a dozen young boys that Herod ordered to be killed
* Why does he do it? It says he as exceedingly angry - literally, he is in a rage
* The Greek language doesn’t have a word for this much anger - the Gospel writer uses 2 Greek words to describe it - Exceedingly enraged
* He’s totally out on control & he does something that will live in infamy
* **So here’s the question - is it possible to be that angry just b/c someone tricked U or didn’t tell U the information U want to know?**
* Herod didn’t lash out b/c he was tricked - he became enraged b/c people weren’t treating him like a king - instead, someone else was the king
* This is the real problem & it’s why Herod marches into town & starts killing people - it’s to show everyone in the little town of Bethlehem who the boss was
* We all have a little bit of Herod in us - There’s a part of all of us that doesn’t want anyone coming in & telling us we aren't king
* But here’s the tension - when U became a Christian, U were deciding to not be king of your life anymore - that’s what it means to call Jesus “Lord”
* Guess what your biggest problem is as a Christian? The things you do when you try to become king again
* Guess what U do when you grab the throne for a decision or 2, for a conversation or 2, for a relationship or 2 - U start murdering everything good that God is birthing in your life
* “For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand. Today, if you will hear His voice: ‘Do not harden your hearts, as in the rebellion, as in the day of trial in the wilderness.” (Psalm 95:7-8)
* **I want U to notice the tension here - don’t harden your heart like U did in the day of the rebellion - that’s a reference to Exodus 17**
* Exodus is when the children of Israel had left Egypt, they were in the wilderness & they were thirsty, so they began to complain & argue w/ Moses
* And the allusion to this story is to show us the authority problems that are found in the human heart, even though all the while, God is seeking to do us good
* This is the challenge we all face from birth - the struggle to stop being king
* **My kids have this struggle - MY son is almost 13, but he had an amazing conversation w/ my wife at age 7**
* He asked his mom if he could have an Oreo cookie - Carey said, “Yes, U can have 2.” - He says, “No. I want 4.” - Carey says, “Xander, U can have 2.”
* He says, “Fine. I’ll have 3, but that’s my final offer.” - Carey says, “This isn’t Shark Tank. Now you’re having zero.”
* “Mom please. I’d love 2. 2 is fine. 2 is what I really wanted.”
* We are more like Herod than we want to admit & the coming of Jesus challenges us to submit to Him as the king & trust Him
* And here’s the point of the matter - Herod loses - Herod is crazy - Herod is miserable - And God is trying to spare U from all of that if you’ll submit to Him

**———(v. 19-23)———**

**#3 - The Coming of Jesus brings Unexplainable Favor**

* **Now, it should’t surprise us that Joseph wanted to go to Judea - that’s the area that his family was from - Bethlehem is part of ancient Judea**
* Then he hears that Herod’s son Archelaus is ruling over Judea & he decides to go north to Galilee - Archelaus wasn’t as crazy as his father, but he certainly wasn’t the picture of goodness & normalcy
* Before his death, Herod set up a Roman eagle over 1 of the temple gates
* This obviously upset the Jews b/c graven images are not allowed according to Torah - so the students of 2 rabbis (Judas & Matthias) took it down in defiance
* “Put the trumpet to your lips! An eagle is over the house of the Lord because the people have broken my covenant and rebelled against my law.” (Hosea 8:1)
* In return, Herod enacted mass arrests, persecution, & he killed the rabbis of those students by burning them alive as retribution for stirring up trouble
* Then Herod died Avery painful death & a new sense of optimism arose
* They were hoping that Archelaus would not rule like his father
* So that Passover, the Jews petitioned Archelaus to release the people his father imprisoned over the eagle incident
* Archelaus waited until the sacrifices had begun & the temple was packed & he sent his soldiers in & they started slaughtering people indiscriminately
* He had 3,000 Jews killed who are just there to celebrate the feast & Archelaus had the bodies stacked in heaps in the temple courts
* The point is, any Jew living in the territory of Archelaus was in danger, so God directs Joseph to the area of Galilee - 55 miles north of Jerusalem to Nazareth
* **I’ve been to Nazareth - in fact, I was there on my 26th birthday**
* As far as things to do on your birthday, hanging out in Galilee is up there
* But here’s thing about Nazareth - it’s not that it’s a good neighborhood or a bad neighborhood - it’s that it’s a nowhere town - if U blink, you’ve missed it
* Nothing happened in Nazareth - it was a place that U didn’t think about
* **There’s a place like that here called Oatmeal, TX - population 20 people**
* That’s what it was in 1990 & in 2000 the checked again & the population was “about 20” - they didn’t even bother doing census in 2010
* This was the feeling people had about Nazareth - the Savior of the world wasn’t coming from there - I mean, come on Nazareth
* That’s why when U read the Gospel of John, a man named Nathaniel struggles w/ Jesus being the Messiah b/c Jesus is from Nazareth
* “Philip found Nathanael and said to him, ‘We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.’ And Nathanael said to him, ‘Can anything good come out of Nazareth?’” (John 1:45-46)
* **I want U to think about how God works - He never chooses the person you’d expect - He never chooses the oldest son as is the order of things**
* Instead, God works through Abel, not Cain to turn things on its head
* He chooses Isaac, not Ishmael - He chooses Jacob, not Esau
* He works through Judah, not Reuben -He chooses David, not his older brothers
* When God chooses a woman - the person who is going to bring salvation & blessing & deliverance into the world - look at whom He chooses
* Rebekah- Jacob’s mom, Hannah-Samuel’s mom, Sarah-Isaac’s mom,Elizabeth J the B’s mom - all women who weren’t supposed to be able to have children
* He chooses older Sarah, not fertile Hagar - He chooses unloved Leah, not beautiful Rachel
* **Listen - God always choose Nazareth - not Rome the center of power, the Athens the center of philosophy & intellect, not even Jerusalem**
* He chooses Nazareth - U might think, “That’s cool. God prefers the underdog”
* It’s much deeper than that - it’s that God’s salvation works in a counterintuitive way to the way the world works
* That’s why throughout His ministry, the disciples of Jesus kept trying to figure out when Jesus was going to take power & save the world
* And over & over He tried to explain to them, “I’m not going to take power & save the world. I’m going to lose all My power & die, so I can cave the world.”
* If U think you’re powerful & flawless, U will find no need for Jesus & the Gospel of Jesus will be of no use to U
* So He came from Nazareth to save Nazareth-type people - people who realize their own faults, weaknesses, & poverty of spirit
* **Maybe things in life haven’t worked out & maybe that’s by God’s design**
* B/c it’s when the disappointments come into our lives that we call out to Him
* In fact, that could be why God brought U here today
* That’s why God has allowed things to play out the way they have
* Not b/c He wants us to suffer, but b/c He knows life doesn’t make sense w/o Him - we were created to know God & walk w/ Him
* So God uses everything in our lives to draw us to Him
* And this becomes our moment - our moment to decide who’s king in our lives
* B/c if we decide to stay king in our lives - well, that just leads to more of the same - and none of us is asking for more of that
* But if we allow Jesus to be king, then everything changes & everything is transformed…