

King of All Kings

Matthew 2:1-12

Intro

Jesus once asked the religious people of his day a question about himself that people have been asking in every generation since then: “*What do you think about the Christ (Messiah)? Whose son is he?*” (Matt. 22:42). That is the question Matthew answers in the first two chapters of his gospel book.

In Matthew’s Gospel chapter 1 we can see the evidence of Jesus’ royal genealogy and of His virgin birth. The Jewish leaders of the New Testament times acknowledged that the Messiah would be of the royal line of King David. And Matthew has proven that in the first chapter.

Matthew continues his thrust to establish Jesus’ right to Israel’s true and final kingship. Matthew in chapter 2 gives three additional evidences of Jesus’ legitimate, unique and absolute royal right to the throne of David.

1/ King Herod’s Evidence

One of the evidences of Christ’s kingship is shown in a negative sense, through the antagonism and hatred of King Herod.

King Herod was known as “the Great.”

He was the first of several Herods. After Herod the Great was Herod Antipas and Herod Agrippa I (who killed James and put Peter in prison) and then Herod Agrippa II (who Paul made a legal defense before him).

Herod the Great was an Edomite and not a Jew, and he had no legitimate claim to be the king of the Jews. He married a Jewess, Mariamme in order to make himself more acceptable to the Jews.

In 19 B.C. he began to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem, he began great reconstruction programs in Israel and primarily in Jerusalem. But Herod was cruel and merciless.

He was jealous, suspicious and afraid for his position and power. Therefore he feared this king who is to be born. But even the hatred of Herod, the false king, gave indirect testimony to the identity of the true king.

2/ The Magi’s Evidence

In chapter 2 we see the testimony of the magi, who came to give homage and gifts to the infant Jesus.

In Matt. 2:1-2 we read, “*After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem² 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.”*”

Interesting point is that we are not told their number; their names; their means of transportation; nor their specific country or countries they came from.

These men were highly influenced by Judaism and by some of the prophetic writings, especially that of Daniel. Most biblical scholars believe they came from Persia (present day Iran). We know that they were God-fearing gentiles.

The Roman Historian, Suetonius, speaking of the time around Christ's birth wrote: "*There had spread over all the Orient an old and established belief that it was fated at that time for men coming from Judea to rule the world.*"

Because the Magi as foreigners knew of the monumental birth, they assumed that most of the people in Judea and Jerusalem would know where this special baby was.

Even though the details about the wise men who went to see the baby Jesus are unknown, what is documented is the three gifts that were given: gold, frankincense and myrrh. Why were they given by the magi?

The Gifts of the Magi

I personally believe that Joseph and Mary, who were especially poor because Joseph was temporarily not working in his trade, were able to use these gifts when God sent them into Egypt in order to escape Herod's slaughter of the Bethlehem children.

It would have been difficult for Joseph to establish himself in Egypt and I am very confident that the gold, frankincense, and myrrh were the resources they used to support themselves until they finally made their way back to Nazareth. It is believed that the family stayed in Egypt only a few months after Herod had died, around the 4th century.

1) Gold

Gold is associated with royalty. In the Old Testament when Joseph was in Egypt as the vice-regent next to the king, he was given a gold neck-chain. Daniel was also given a gold chain as he was made third ruler in the kingdom of Babylon. Kings in the Bible had crowns and scepters of gold. Solomon had gold all over the palace, illustrated by the fact that a description of Solomon's wealth in 1 Kings 10 mentions gold ten times. Because gold was the gift for a king, Matthew is telling us that Jesus is King.

2) Frankincense

The great scholar and early church father, Origen, said, "This is a gift to God." Frankincense speaks of deity, because incense was always offered to God as a pleasing fragrance. In the Old Testament, it was stored in front of the Temple in a special chamber and was taken and added to the offerings and used in front of the Holy of Holies so that the sweet savor would rise to God. Exodus 30:34-38 tells us that the incense was for God, not for the people. Ezekiel 16:18 also identified it as belonging to God.

3) Myrrh

Myrrh was the gift that spoke of Christ's mortality, since it was used to embalm the bodies of the dead. From the very beginning, it was clear that He would die. A famous picture by Holman Hunt illustrates the fact that He was destined to die: Jesus is seen as a little boy in the carpenter shop. As the sun is setting in the west and Jesus stands at the door stretching His arms after a hard day's work, the sun casts a shadow on the back wall in the form of a big cross. That was Holman Hunt's way of saying He was born to die as a mortal.

In John 19:38-40 we read about Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus taking Jesus' body and wrapping it in myrrh and aloes before burial.

And so the Wise Men came with the gold saying He was a King, with the myrrh saying He was a man destined to die, and with the incense saying He was God. Perhaps the magi weren't aware of the complete significance of those gifts, but we do see a beautiful symbolism as we look back at the event.

3/ Prophetic Evidence

The 3rd evidence of Christ's kingship is presented through 4 fulfilled messianic prophecies. There are some 330 Old Testament predictions concerning Messiah, the Christ. In chapter 2 Matthew points out 4 of those prophecies, which were fulfilled during Jesus' infancy. The fact of all these prophecies being fulfilled shows the overwhelming evidence of God's sovereign control of history and of the utter reliability of His word.

1st Prophecy (Matt. 2:1 & 6)

Bethlehem was a small town 5-6 miles south of Jerusalem.

Matthew quotes Micah 5:2 which predicts that Messiah would be born in Bethlehem.

Micah 5:2, *"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."*

2nd Prophecy (Matt. 2:15)

This second prophecy is concerning the escape to Egypt. Matthew quotes Hosea 11:1, *"Out of Egypt I called my Son."*

3rd Prophecy (Matt. 2:18)

The third prophecy is concerning Herod's slaughter of all the boys under two years of age in Bethlehem and vicinity. Matthew quoted from Jer. 31:15, *"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."*

4th Prophecy (Matt. 2:23)

The fourth and final prophecy in chapter 2 is when Jesus' family leaves Egypt and goes to Nazareth. Matthew says it was foretold by the prophets, *"He will be called a Nazarene"* (Mark 1:24, Luke 24:19; John 1:45; Acts 3:6; 4:10). In Acts 3:6 Peter heals a crippled man at the gate of the temple *"in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth."*

In regards to these prophecies theologian Dr. Charles Ryrie says, "That according to the laws of chance, it would require two hundred billion earths, populated with four billion people each, to come up with one person whose life could fulfill one hundred accurate prophecies without any errors in sequence. Yet the Scriptures record not one hundred, but over three hundred prophecies that were fulfilled in Christ's first coming alone."

Christ is King

Isaiah 9:6-7 *"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷ Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this."*

Zechariah 9:9 *"Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey."*

Conclusion

So Matthew chapter 2 establishes Jesus' kingship, and Matthew gives 3 evidences of Jesus' legitimate, unique and absolute royal right to the throne of David.

The most important thing to notice is that Jesus is the King. He is the Messiah, the Saviour promised by God in the Old Testament (Matt. 1:22-23; 2:6; Is. 7:14; Mic. 5:2). He is not only Israel's King, but the King for all the nations.

Revelation 19:16 "*On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING of KINGS and LORD of LORDS.*"

Jesus is the King of kings and the Lord of lords! Is He your King and Lord?

Peter T. Forsythe was right when he said, "The first duty of every soul is to find not its freedom but its Master."

A Christian woman asked her pastor, "Will you please tell me in a word, what your idea of commitment is?" Holding out a blank sheet of paper the pastor replied, "It is to sign your name at the bottom of this blank sheet, and to let God fill it in as He wills."

Romans 10:9 "That if you confess with your mouth, "*Jesus is Lord,*" and believe in your heart that *God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*"

Jesus is my Lord and King. He rules in my life!