



Jesus Christ: The King Among Kings

The following resource explores the wonder of the Christmas story and the incredible way in which the King of Glory entered into mankind for our sake.

Have you ever sat down and considered the various pieces that make up the Christmas story? It certainly is an unusual narrative to anyone unfamiliar with the characters and the events surrounding this newborn child. When we really think about it, the story fits perfectly into the wonder and mystery of Christmas. The more we read and the more we study, the more we start to see the divine penmanship of God as He carefully unwraps the gift of Jesus Christ to the world. Our article today is one that fixes our gaze on one of the most wonderful aspects of Christ's nature; His unmatched and unrivaled kingship. How exactly does this Heavenly King enter the earth and become our Saviour?

1) A Royal King from David's Line

God is meticulous in fulfilling His promises to the people of Israel and ultimately the whole world. He purposefully ensured that there would be a system that would initiate for Israel a royal lineage of kings. That in every generation, there would be a king stemming from the family heritage of King David. He created what would be known to the Israelites as the *Davidic Dynasty*. And He promised to them that David will never fail to have a king to sit on the throne of Israel (Jeremiah 33:17). This prophecy looked down the halls of time and saw the heavenly child of Christmas being born into the world. Christ was to be the greatest of the Davidic Dynasty and He would be the last king to ever reign on David's throne.

Why should we be interested about these historical facts around Christmas time? Among many reasons, I believe it serves to highlight the magnitude of God's love for us. The nation of Israel did not prove to be a faithful people unto the Lord their God. In every conceivable way, they did not deserve the gift of Jesus Christ. In fact, Saul was nominated as the first king of Israel simply because the people rejected the Lord as their King (1 Samuel 8:7). And so, He not only gave them one king, but a long line of Kings to rule over them so they could be like every other nation. God had compassion for Israel even in the midst of their outright rejection of Him.

Now, we fast forward many years later and God still chooses to bend His generous heart toward the feeble minds of the Jewish people. There is no real reason the God of the universe should be forced to play into the political games of mere humans. What is an earthly kingdom to the God of all creation? What is a government to His mighty authority? Why should God care about these worldly thrones when He reigns above them all? This is precisely the startling reality of Christmas. Jesus Christ who is exalted as King above all Kings, and Lord above all Lords, chose to inject himself into the human ancestry of David. Why? Only to get the attention of a rebellious Israel and save them. He lowered Himself and became comparable to a king among many other kings.

2) A Heavenly King beneath Earthly Kings

Jesus not only entered into the earthly line of David, but He also entered into a whole other landscape of kings and rulers. It is one thing for God to subject Jesus to Israel's preference of government, it is another thing for Christ to be subjected to the emperors of this world. When we read the Christmas story, we are immediately introduced to an evil character, King Herod. Matthew's gospel tells us that Herod heard from the Magi that there was one to be born who will be the king of the Jews (Matthew 2:3). As we read further, we understand that Herod was burning with jealousy and anger at the thought of another king rising up. His true intention was to search for the child and kill Him (Matthew 2:13). But God had warned Joseph about this and told him to flee to Egypt to hide from Herod's murderous rage. When Herod realized he would not be able to find the child, he ordered a widespread slaughter of all the young boys in Bethlehem hoping to somehow end the life of baby Jesus. Because of God's sovereign plan, the life of Christ was spared.

Although Jesus survived the attempt on His life, these events beg the question of why the life of Christ was under threat to begin with. It is unbelievably shocking and even absurd that the Lord Jesus Christ would be hunted and sought after even as a child. That the very Lord who holds all of human life in the palm of His hands could now potentially be vulnerable to death. A vulnerability He has never held before.

While we might wish that Christmas be filled with only notes of joy and jubilee, there lay within it this grim reality. The once untouchable King, who is from everlasting to everlasting, has now put on the weakness of human flesh. He descended from His holy throne from which He carried the weight of all existence, only to be scorned by the unrighteous kings of this world. From a baby in cloths to the cross wrapped in linens, the high majesty of heaven was persecuted and incriminated. The one who was to be the supreme judge of the entire world, was now the very one under scrutiny. The King who reigns above all kings handed Himself over for the pure sake of winning us back to the Father. Instead of sending out angelic soldiers to win the war, our King Himself became the agent of peace and reconciliation. And instead of a crown of glory, He mockingly received a crown of thorns. What other King would leave His throne for this? What other King would abandon His glory for death? Only our King and Savior, Jesus Christ.

3) A Throne for a Manger

The moment of His birth is yet all the more perplexing as we contemplate the worth demanded for a King. You might think as I do that a better situation should have been warranted for Jesus. The Lord our God was being birthed into His creation and there were no crowds to welcome Him with rejoicing. There was no palace for Him to receive the royalty due His name. And there was no display of splendor or even decency that surrounded Him. It was not in any fashion a situation fit for the highest king.

Instead, we read that when it came time for the baby to be born, Mary and Joseph looking for a place to rest in Bethlehem were unable to find space. In fact, despite Mary being ready to give birth there was no guest room available for them. Therefore, they were forced without any other option to go to the stable or barn where the animals reside. And after giving birth to our Lord, the precious baby Jesus was laid to sleep in a lowly manger among the livestock. Of course, this was no appropriate place for a newborn baby. It was a feeding trough made of wood or stone and yet, in absolutely humility and meekness, Christ accepted such a place to be born.

This was not the normal and usual residence for the King of heaven. The Bible tells us that the Lord reigns over the nations and that He sits on His holy throne (Psalms 47:8). It is not a throne that is limited to one location, it resides in the heavens in which Christ can oversee the affairs of the whole earth; His kingdom rules over all (Psalms 103:19). Even Isaiah had a vision of the Lord and saw Him sitting upon His throne, high and lifted up. He was wrapped not in cloths for a baby, but a robe that filled the entirety of the temple (Isaiah 6:1). From this high position, the Lord Jesus speaks, "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. Where is the house you will build for me? Where will my resting place be? Has not my hand made all these things, and so they came into being?" (Isaiah 66:1-2). He is not to be surrounded by hay, stables and wild animals. The King of glory was to be encircled by legions of angelic hosts who call to one another singing "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord." A thousand thousands served Him, and ten thousand times ten thousands stood before Him (Daniel 7:10). And yet, this glorious and eternal king made himself nothing, taking on the very nature of a bondservant and was made into human likeness for the sake of loving us (Philippians 2:7).

We must realize at Christmas that it was always a throne that held our Jesus. But in amazing grace it once became a lowly animal manger. Soon after, it would become a cursed cross. And finally, a borrowed tomb would hold the lifeless body of the Lord. But our King would not leave His throne vacant for long. He would ascend once again and prove to the world who He really is. Soon every eye will see, and every tongue confess the glorious reality of our Jesus. He is the King above every King and He is the Lord over every Lord. And it was this mighty King who came to save the very one's He loved. We are left to ponder the wonder of it all; the wonders of His love.

*How deep the Father's love for us, how vast beyond all measure.
That He should give His only son to make a wretch His treasure.*