

There Can Only Be One

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Date: 15 December 2024

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[0 : 00] Good morning. Please turn with me in your Bibles to the Gospel of Matthew. For those of you who don't know me, my name is Sean. I am one of the pastors of Trinity Cambridge Church. It's my great joy and privilege to preach God's Word to you this morning.

If you don't have a Bible, please raise your hand. We'd love to give you a copy that you can have, and you can use that while you're here also. So I see a hand here for Elder. Could someone grab the Bible for him? Yeah.

Okay. I think... He's got it. He's not good. You got it? Oh, I think he's getting you one, too. Yeah. Yeah. It's good. That'd be great. Thank you, Gabe.

Elder, if you could raise your hand. Yeah. Okay. Yeah. Yeah. Matthew is the first book in the New Testament.

Matthew, chapter 2. We're in verses 1 to 12. Let me pray for the reading and preaching of God's Word.

[1 : 02] Let me pray for the reading and preaching of God's Word. Heavenly Father, we humble ourselves before your Word again.

Amen. We are your servants. I am your servant. I am your servant.

We have gathered not to hear a man speak. We've come to be addressed by our King. So, Lord, speak to us from your Word in the reading and preaching of your Word.

Humble those who have yet to pledge their allegiance to you who are in this room.

Exalt the name of your Son, Jesus Christ. And remind us again of what kind of King he is.

[2 : 21] The King of mercy. The King of grace. That we might serve him with gladness. And fall before him in worship.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. If you are able, please stand for the reading of God's Word. I will read from Matthew 2, verses 1 to 12.

Now, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the King, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he who has been born King of the Jews?

For we saw his star when it rose, and have come to worship him. When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

And assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet.

[3 : 39] And you, O Bethlehem in the land of Judea, are by no means least among the rulers of Judea. For from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.

Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him.

After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was.

When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshipped him.

Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

[4 : 56] This is God's holy and authoritative word. You may be seated. It's a joke among pastors that this passage spoils some of our favorite Christmas carols.

I know one that I've sang twice already this season is We Three Kings. And first, this passage tells us that these wise men come to visit Jesus, but that they are not kings.

Technically, they are not kings, even though they are kingly people, as you can see, from their retinue, from the treasures they bring, their wealth and prestige. But they're not kings. And secondly, this passage never tells us there's three of them, even though we like to sing that there's three wise men or three kings. Traditionally, we assume that there were three magi because of the three gifts.

But the text never actually tells us that. We just know that there's more than one because magi is a plural term. But more than spoiling some of our Christmas carols, this passage intends to upend our expectations of what a king is supposed to be, what the messianic king should be.

[6 : 17] Who is Jesus the Christ? Who is he really? And what kind of king is he? This passage teaches us that Jesus is the servant king who deserves our worship and fealty.

And we're going to examine the three main characters in the passage in turn. First, the searching magi. Second, the troubled king. And third, the worshipped child.

First, we meet the wise men from the east. It says in verses 1 and 2, Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he who has been born king of the Jews?

For we saw his star when it rose, and we have come to worship him. The actual word that translated wise men here is magi.

The magi were originally members of the Persian priestly caste, and they served as advisors to the king. The magi were scholars and priests who specialized in astrology and the interpretation of dreams and various forms of divination and the magical arts occasionally.

[7 : 32] They're similar to the Babylonian court magicians and astrologers we see in the book of Daniel. And these magi were renowned throughout the Greco-Roman world for their skills and divination.

And everyone in the Greco-Roman world knew that the best magi were from the east. And these are magi from the east, east of Jerusalem, that is.

That's why it's remarkable when in 1 Kings 4.30, it notes that Solomon, King Solomon's wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the people in the east, because that's what the east was known for. Persia, Babylonia, although that region. That these wise men practiced astrology is clear from the context in verse 2. It says, For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.

Some people argue that the magi saw planets in retrograde motion, or maybe two planets that are in conjunction, like Jupiter and Saturn. Some people argue that they saw a comet or a supernova.

[8 : 34] And still others argue that it's a miraculous star that defies natural explanation. It's impossible to be sure because the Bible doesn't really tell us those specifics. What is important, however, for us to know is that this star recalls the prophecy of Balaam in Numbers 24, verse 17.

He said, I see him, he's prophesying. I see him, but not now, but not near. I behold him, but not near. A star shall come out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel.

He shall crush the forehead of Moab and break down all the sons of Sheth. This was understood by the Jews as a messianic prophecy, because both the star and the scepter are symbols of kingship. And Balaam, like these magi, was a diviner from the east. 1,400 years after Balaam's prophecy, once again, diviners from the east come to Israel, God's people, and they say that they have seen a star that represents the rise of the king of the Jews, the birth of the king of the Jews.

So in the ancient world, astrology was a popular science. It's actually becoming increasingly more the case here, even today. But obviously it's discredited nowadays in so many ways.

[9 : 57] But back then, even emperors took astrology very seriously. So when a comet appeared that supposedly predicted the demise of Emperor Nero, he was so afraid that he was going to fall, that he was going to die soon, that he killed a whole bunch of nobles in a desire to fulfill that prediction in the stars, in the heavens, so that he himself can be spared.

So the magi were taken very seriously in this culture, and so their arrival creates an understandable stir. It says in verses 3 to 4, The wealthy magi presumably arrived with an entourage.

Since verse 11 tells us that they came bearing not just three loan gifts, but treasures. They probably had some people to help them with that. Their arrival likely was no ordinary affair that people were used to seeing day to day, but something that happened rarely.

So their world-shaking announcement that the king of the Jews has been born causes, it troubles the king, Herod, and it troubles all Jerusalem with him.

But note that while these magi knew that the king of the Jews has been born, they didn't know where exactly the king of the Jews has been born, which is why they arrived with a question in verse 2, Where is he who has been born king of the Jews?

[11:40] And the answer to that question does not come from other wise men, but from Scripture, from God's Word. The chief priests and the scribes tell King Herod, remind him of a prophecy in Scripture, in verses 5 to 6, In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet, And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah, for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.

This is an abbreviated quotation of Micah 5, verses 2 to 4, which prophesied that the Messianic king would come and be born in Bethlehem. And having figured out the location, the king Herod now summons the wise men, and then he sends them to Bethlehem to search diligently for the child. And it's in that search in the right city that they are guided again by the star later on. Matthew could have easily omitted this story of the magi, as Mark and Luke and John, in fact, do.

They do omit this story. But Matthew includes it here for a couple reasons, to illustrate a couple things. And first, God's grace towards sinners. Second, God's grace toward all nations.

Think about it for a minute. How can it be that these Gentiles, and not just any Gentile, but these pagan astrologers are able to discern from observing the stars that the king of the Jews has been born?

[13:16] Isn't that remarkable? Astrology is expressly forbidden in Scripture. Deuteronomy 18, 10 to 11 says, anyone who practices divination, or tells fortunes, or interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or a charmer, or a medium, or a necromancer, or one who inquires of the dead, is an abomination to the Lord.

These magi are, by definition, an abomination to the Lord. In Isaiah 47, 13, the prophet Isaiah mocks those who gaze at the stars, who divide the heavens and gaze at the stars, in hopes of discerning the future.

The reason why the Bible forbids all forms of divination and astrology is because they are all attempts to learn what God has not revealed to us. Because they are attempts to control what is outside of our control.

We want God to speak on our own terms. We want to find a way around God to find certainty and assurance where God has not offered it.

So these magi are sinning, and they are doing wrong. Yet God is so gracious that he reveals himself even to these pagan astrologers who are stumbling about in the darkness looking for the light of the truth of God.

[14:49] God arranges the stars so as to reveal his son, Jesus, to bear witness to his son, Jesus Christ, so that even the magi can come to know him.

Some of you are here this morning because you are seeking God. You are searching for God, like these magi. But you have not yet found him.

Maybe you have dabbled in other religions, like these magi. Maybe you have even tried out various forms of divination. You need to stop trying to find God in your own way.

You need to stop trying to jerry-rig your spiritual life. And you need to start reading the manual.

Because God has revealed himself to us in the way of salvation, in his word.

The magi knew that the king of the Jews has been born, but only from scripture can they learn that this king is the Messiah, the promised Messiah, the long-awaited Messiah who will save his people from their sins, as we saw in Matthew 1, 21.

[16:04] No matter where you have been in life, no matter what you have done in life, no matter what kind of dark secrets you harbor and you hide from those around you, Jesus the Christ is able to save you from your sins.

Even people who are an abomination to God, because of their sins, like you, like me, God in Christ can save us from our sins.

So that those who once were an abomination because of their sins are changed, they are chosen, they are made treasure of possessions and beloved sons and daughters of the living God.

And secondly, the story of the magi teaches us that God's grace extends beyond the Jews to all nations. In the Old Testament, the East is where the pagan nations that are excluded from God's promise and plan live.

The East, right, if you remember from Abraham's story, Abraham is the father of the Jews, but Abraham had other wives besides Sarah, and he also had other sons besides Isaac, who was God's chosen line through whom the messianic king would come.

[17 : 30] And because Abraham knew that the promise of God for him would be fulfilled through Isaac's line, in Genesis 25, verse 5 to 6, he gives everything he has to Isaac, and then he just gives his other sons some gifts and sends them away.

And where does he send these sons away to? He says he sent them away from his son Isaac, eastward, to the east country. This is a poignant phrase because after Adam sinned in the Garden of Eden, humanity is exiled out from the east of the Garden because that's where the entrance is to the Garden of Eden.

And in Genesis 4, 16, it says, Cain went away from the presence of the Lord and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden. In this way, east of Eden, east of the promised land, is a painful reminder of sin.

It represents humanity's separation from God, their alienation from God. But now, because the promised Messiah has come, and the descendant of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the true son of David has come, through him God reconciles all nations to himself, even from the east.

In Christ Jesus, all those who put their faith in Jesus for salvation become children of God through faith. That's why it says in Galatians 3, 28, 29, there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither Jew nor Gentile.

[19 : 05] There is neither slave nor free. There is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

Even those from the east can be counted heirs of Abraham, according to the promise. In light of this, it is no coincidence that these magi bow down before Jesus and present as gifts to Jesus gold and spices, frankincense and myrrh.

Because in 1 Kings chapter 10, when Queen of Sheba, who also comes from the east and the south, paid homage to King Solomon in Jerusalem, she brought gold and a very great quantity of spices.

Jesus is being portrayed as the new and better Solomon, the true and greater son of David. In fact, Jesus says that explicitly in Matthew 12, 42.

He says that the Queen of Sheba will rise up at the judgment and condemn the faithless generation. For she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.

[20 : 16] And that's Jesus. It was prophesied that the nations would come and bow down to the Messianic king and that they would present gifts to him. Psalm 72, 10 to 11, it says this, that the royal son, the king that God has chosen, it says of him, may the kings of Tarshish and of the coastlands render him tribute.

May the kings of Sheba and Seba bring gifts. May all kings fall down before him. All nations serve him. And what do these magi from the east do?

They fall down before Jesus in worship and they bring gifts and pay him tribute. Likewise, it says in Isaiah 60, verse one through six, arise, shine for your light has come and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.

For behold, darkness shall cover the earth and thick darkness the peoples. But the Lord will arise upon you and his glory will be seen upon you and nations shall come to your light and kings to the brightness of your rising.

All those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense and shall bring good news, the praises of the Lord. Everything's prophesied.

[21 : 31] They bring magi, what gifts, gold and frankincense. They bring good news, the tidings that the king of the Jews has come to save his people. But yes, more than just that, the presence of the magi here in this scene tells us that this king is no king of Jews only.

He is no regional king like Herod. He is the universal king, the sovereign king, the king of kings. His name, every tongue will confess and before him every knee will bow.

And that's why when we pray together as a church during prayers of the people, we don't merely pray for our own locality. We pray for the nations because Jesus is king not only among Americans but among all peoples and among all nations.

I was contacted this week by a fellow Williams College alum, class of 1965, so he's a lot older than me.

And he's writing a book on the history of Williams College and Williamstown, which also includes the history of the Haystack Movement. For those of you who don't know, the Haystack Movement commemorates, it's on Williams College campus, it commemorates the prayer meeting that several Williams College students partook in next to a haystack in 1806.

[23 : 00] It was there that these students made a commitment to spread the gospel among the foreign nations. And they were instrumental in the founding of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, which is the first foreign missionary society in the United States.

It's that organization that sent out Adoniram Justin and Luther Rice as the first official foreign missionary sent out from the United States. I happened to be a student at Williams in 2006 during the bicentennial celebration of the event.

And because of that, I had written some op-eds and this alum got a hold of those op-eds and tracked me down, saw that I was a pastor and wrote to me asking for some comments about the Haystack Movement and the monuments so that he could include it in his book.

And I was sad to hear that apparently, this is what he told me, that the Haystack Monument had been crudely defaced in 2018 and in 2023 by people who think that missionary work is inherently imperialistic because they don't believe that anyone should impose their religious beliefs on anyone else.

But here's my problem with that view. If Jesus is a local deity, if Jesus is a regional king, then yes, that makes sense.

[24 : 22] When you're in the U.S., you're under the authority of the President of the United States of America. When you go to China, you're under the authority of the President of China. Sure, local kings and local rulers, that makes sense.

But Jesus is not a local king. Jesus is not a regional king. Jesus is the king of kings over all the earth.

That's why we do not have the luxury to say to people, well, Jesus is for me, but maybe he's not for you. We do not have that luxury. This is why we cannot say, well, Jesus is for our country, but maybe not for yours, maybe not for your culture.

We can't say that. Because Jesus' kingship demands the allegiance of every single person on this earth. He deserves it.

And that's why we must share the gospel with our neighbors. That's why we must make disciples of all nations. Christians. So on the one hand, it's right when people say, well, Christianity is not primarily a political religion.

[25 : 47] That is true because Jesus said in John 18, 36, my kingdom is not of this world. In his first coming, Jesus did not come to establish an earthly kingdom. But on the other hand, Christianity is profoundly political, radically subversive, subversive because it creates a people whose primary allegiance is not to any earthly king but to King Jesus.

And this is why all throughout history, autocrats and despots have feared Christians and have sought to control and subjugate Christians because they know our loyalty lies to someone else. and that's why it makes sense in verse 3 when it says, when Herod the king heard this, he was troubled and all Jerusalem with him.

Herod the king mentioned here is Herod the first. Wikipedia calls him Herod the great but I do not give him that favor. He is Herod the first. He was a Roman Jewish client king.

Most of the time the Bible mentions King Herod, it's referring to his son King Antipas or Herod Antipas or to his grandson Herod Agrippa but in the early chapters of Matthew when Herod's mentioned it's Herod the first.

[27 : 17] He rose to power largely because of his father's good relations with Julius Caesar. He carried favor with the Romans and got himself appointed as the provincial governor of Galilee and eventually through many brutal tactics and after many murders he eventually became sole king of Judea with the approval and permission of the Roman Senate.

So immediately when Herod hears the retinue of Magi asking where is he who has been born king of the Jews Herod is troubled because you see Herod was not born king of the Jews.

He was appointed king of the Jews by the Romans and despite his rebuilding of the Jewish temple and his many projects and his pretensions of being the savior of the Jews he did not come from the messianic line as Jesus did as Matthew took pains to show us in chapter 1 of his book.

And according to second century historian Julius Africanus Herod destroyed all of the Jewish genealogical records that were preserved in the public archives. Why? Because he was he was shamed embarrassed by his Edomian heritage because he was descended not from Jacob Israel but from Esau.

Not from the chosen line but from the excluded line. He feared that someone one day would show up with an actual royal lineage and say I am the king of the Jews.

[28 : 53] In fact Herod was such a paranoid and suspicious man in general that he killed two of his ten wives and three of his sons he executed for suspicion of treason.

So Herod's head already full of murderous plots is already spinning in full gear in this passage. He wants to know he inquires the Magi in verse 7 what time did the star appear?

I mean who cares what time? Why do you want to know what time the star appeared? Because he wants to know how old the child is so he can find him and kill him. That's what we'll see next week. And he tells the Magi in verse 8 go and search diligently for the child and when you have found him bring me word that I too may come and worship him. hypocrisy.

He has no intention of bowing down to another king. He is just recruiting the Magi to be informants in his secret service. Imagine yourself in Herod's shoes for a minute.

[30 : 04] The Magi from the east comes with a lot of fanfare. Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him. What did you say?

Did you say king of the Jews? That's me. Did you say he was born king of the Jews?

Interesting. You say you saw a star and you've come to worship him? To pay your respects to him and bow down before him?

Well you never came to my inauguration? You never came to bow before me? And notice that the Magi are never described in this passage as falling down before Herod as they do before Jesus who is still a mere child.

Herod is seething with murderous anger beneath his mask of cordiality because he is troubled. He is threatened. He knows there can only be one.

[31 : 31] In 333 B.C., Alexander the king of Macedon thoroughly defeated Darius III, king of Persia at the Battle of Issus.

He decimated the Persian army and then he took Darius' mother, wife, and daughters all captive. A complete defeat for Darius. The demoralized Darius before the next battle proposed a truce to Alexander offering him all the lands west of the Euphrates, his daughter's hand in marriage, his son, Ochs, as a hostage, and 30,000 talents as ransom price for the rest of his family.

But Alexander famously rejected his offer saying, heaven cannot brook two sons nor earth two masters. In other words, this land is not big enough for two kings, Darius.

Darius. there can only be one supreme ruler. Alexander didn't want a part of the Persian empire.

He wanted all of it under his rule and eventually he does conquer all of Persia. we see a similar conflict here in Matthew 2. Look at how many times Herod is called king in this passage.

[32 : 52] Verse 1, in the days of Herod the king. Verse 3, when Herod the king heard this. Verse 9, after listening to the king, Matthew is making this contrast and this conflict between King Herod and King Jesus very obvious.

Who is the real king of the Jews? Matthew's answer is also very obvious. It's Jesus. The Magi are given two contradicting commands from these two kings.

King Herod tells them to report back to him once they have found this child king, the Christ. But God warns them in a dream not to return to Herod in verse 12.

And which king do they obey? Of course, King Jesus. They departed to their own country by another way. They take the long way around because there can be only one king.

Our world today has many rulers and many kings but the heavens and the earth will only brook one king in the end. And that's King Jesus.

[33 : 55] Many of our lives we live as wannabe kings. We want no one else telling us how to live, what we can do and what we cannot do.

We obey God as long as it fits with our will, our desires. But as soon as there's a conflict of wills, our will trumps God's will and we betray the reality that we think of ourselves as the highest authority,

not God.

God. But there can only be one. Heaven cannot brook two sons nor earth two masters.

Where does your loyalty lie? Our sinful flesh resists the kingship of Jesus. I know this because every day I must wrestle with my selfish desires.

Every day I am faced with many decisions. King Jesus wants me to be patient here but King me wants everything my way right now.

[35 : 13] King Jesus wants me to listen well to other people to be slow to speak but quick to hear but King me wants to blabber on and on and on and on and make the conversations all about me.

King Jesus wants me to subordinate my desires and my dreams under his purposes and priorities but King me wants to subordinate his word and his will under my dreams and my desires because no way I'm giving that up.

Do you know how smart I am? Do you know how gifted I am? Do you know what kind of heritage I have? No, I'm not giving that up. there can only be one.

When was the last time you believed the Bible even when you came across something that offended your sensibilities? When was the last time you obeyed God's word even when you came across something that you really didn't like and didn't want to do?

Do you this is why reading the Bible is always a moral exercise not just a mental one or an intellectual one because every time you read this book God's word you're faced with a choice and there can only be one king.

[37 : 05] Is your primary allegiance to an earthly king or a political party or is it to king Jesus? Is your primary allegiance to another man or another woman in your life or is it to king Jesus?

Is your primary allegiance to yourself or to king Jesus? If you're like me you fight this every day. I call myself a servant of the king. I am a servant of the king by his grace. And I want to honor him and I want to pay homage to him and I want to see all people prostrate and lie down and worship him but every day I get in the way.

Every day I get in the way. and I have to die again. No Sean.

That's not your place. Fall down before him. is king Jesus really worthy of our wholehearted worship and absolute fealty?

[38 : 31] Yes he is. And let me show you why. We're already seeing that Jesus is no ordinary child and that he is no ordinary king. That these foreign dignitaries travel a long distance to come and pay homage to him and they prostrate themselves before him in worship which is a sign of abject submission because you can't do anything when you're lying flat on the ground.

You can't defend yourself. You're completely and helplessly at the mercy of the person you are buying down to and that's the gesture that they bring to this king. And they do that to him when he's still a child.

And that picture of these important people, these VIPs, prostrate before a child Jesus is a wonderful illustration of what Jesus teaches us in Matthew 18 1-4.

When his disciples ask him, who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? Jesus tells them, he calls to him a child, puts him in the midst of them and says, truly I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Jesus is a king who has humbled himself, the son of God who took on human flesh and has become a son of man.

[39 : 58] He came to our world as a baby and grew up as a toddler. This Jesus literally became a child. And if we want to be great in the kingdom of God, we must emulate his humility.

theologian and biblical counselor David Paulison once summarized Christian sanctification succinctly this way. This is what it means to become sanctified, to become more, to grow as a Christian, to become more childlike toward God, our Father, and to become more Christlike toward other people.

It's simple that way, isn't it? In the natural realm, the more we grow, the more independent we become. But maturity works backwards in the spiritual realm.

The more we grow, the more dependent on God we become. The more humble and prayerful and dependent we become. The more we recognize our own, that our own righteousness is woefully inadequate, the more we cling ever more to the righteousness of Christ alone, more and more to the mercy and grace of God alone, we become more dependent as we grow, not less.

And the worshipped child king is also a wonderful illustration of Matthew 20, 25 to 28, when Jesus says, you know that the rulers of the Gentiles lorded over them and their great ones exercise authority over them.

[41 : 34] It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the son of man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

When we behold King Jesus in his incarnation, in the frailty and vulnerability of this human child we see in Matthew 2, we see clearly that Jesus came not to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Jesus is called the king of the Jews, right, in verse 2. Jesus is never again called the king of the Jews in the rest of the gospel of Matthew until we get to the very end, chapter 27, when Jesus is being tried and crucified to give his life as a ransom for many.

In Matthew 27, Pilate calls him the king of the Jews, and the soldiers twist together a crown of thorns and put it on his head and put a reed on his right hand as a mock scepter, and then they kneel before him and mock him saying, hail king of the Jews.

And when Jesus is crucified, they put a sign above his head which reads, this is Jesus, the king of the Jews. This parallel acclamation from chapter 2 to chapter 27 of Jesus being hailed as the king of the Jews invites a stark contrast.

[43 : 16] Think about this. If you only read Matthew 2, 1 to 12, you didn't know the rest of the gospel story, don't know the rest of Matthew, would you imagine that Jesus' life would end like that?

He's the king of the Jews. His birth was foretold thousands of years before he came.

He's the fulfillment of all of the Old Testament prophecies. His birth was announced by a star in heaven.

The magi from the east came to pay homage to him and they fell down before him and worshipped him. How would you imagine that story to unfold?

Oh yes, he's surely going to be a great one. He's going to conquer kingdoms. He's going to have kings bow their knees before him.

[44 : 29] He's going to be the first, the greatest. But Jesus came to be the last, to be a servant king, to give his life as a ransom for many.

only myrrh he receives at the end of his life in John 19, 39, is the myrrh that they use as a spice mixture when they bury him.

Why does King Jesus do that? It would be so painful for me if I were there in the first century to watch Jesus endure what he endures, the shame, the pain, and the humiliation.

Jesus, you don't deserve that. You deserve honor. Your feet should never touch this dirty earth. Right up my shoulders. Let us carry you everywhere you go. They don't deserve to talk to you like that. Let me have a word with them. But Jesus endures all of it.

[45 : 59] He dies a sinner's death on the cross because he knows that that is the only way he can subdue a rebel heart because he knows that our hearts are in rebellion against his kingship, the kingship of God.

God. So he rules us at the cross. He dies for our sins on the cross so that we can be freed from our slavery to sin so that we can be transferred from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of the light of God and the kingdom of his beloved son.

God. God. God. God. God. God. That can only happen because Jesus died for our sins and was raised from the dead. God. Do you know a king like that?

No. There's no king like that. There's only one. God. And that's why he's worthy of all our worship and all our fealty and the loyalty and allegiance of every nation and kingdom on earth.

Let's pray together. Father. Oh, Father, what precious gift you have given us in Jesus Christ, your son.

[47 : 38] Oh, Lord, we praise you that castaways that we are and we deserve to be. That you have made us a kingdom.

That you have given us a king in Jesus. Oh, Lord, we serve him. We worship him. We bow before him.

And we love him. Help us to do so more and more as Jesus deserves.

For your glory, God. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.