

# One King Too Many

## Matthew 2

### Intro

*Let's begin our time together by quickly going over the passage that we studied last week...*

### **Matthew 1:18-25 (NKJV)**

**18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit.**

**19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly.**

**20 But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.**

**21 And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins."**

**22 So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying:**

**23 "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us."**

**24 Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife,**

**25 and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name JESUS.**

- [quick recap — Change of Plans — Joseph and Mary planned to get married and live a simple life — God had a change of plans...]

*We continue the story in Matthew 2 this morning in a message I have entitled One King Too Many...*

## **Matthew 2 (NKJV)**

**1 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king,**

Matthew continues the story of Jesus by introducing us to **Herod the king...**

- There are several Herods in the NT and this Herod is the most famous one — he is known as *Herod the Great* — a name that he surely gave to himself...

We know from historical sources outside the Bible that Herod was a wicked man who murdered both his wives and his sons when he suspected that they were a threat to his position...

- Herod had a kingdom that was his to rule under the authority of Rome and Herod was willing to keep that kingdom at any cost...

*Continuing on in vs 1 we read...*

**behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem,**

- [the magi — **wise men** likely from Babylon — great number of people — experts in dream interpretation / study of the stars / using information passed on by Daniel? — king-makers?...]

*Moving on to vs 2 we see what the wise men are seeking a King...*

**2 saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews?"**

This is where the conflict begins — the wise men come to Jerusalem and ask about **He who has been born King of the Jews...**

And this is a problem — because as far as Herod is concerned, the Jews already have a king — and his name is Herod the Great — *two kings is one king too many...*

*Continuing in vs 2, the wise men continue speaking...*

**For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him."**

- [expand — much debate on **His star** — I believe that it was some sort of supernatural phenomenon...]

**worship** — *to show respect, to fall down before a superior. Literally, to kiss toward someone, to throw a kiss in token of respect or homage — to express in attitude or gesture one's complete dependence on or submission to a high authority figure...*

So, somehow the wise men came to the understanding that a baby was born who was the King of the Jews — and they came to worship Him...

*Continuing on to vs 3...*

**3 When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.**

It seems likely that the wise men and their caravan are causing quite the stir in Jerusalem, asking about this new King of the Jews...

- The people of Jerusalem know that Herod is a dangerous and unpredictable ruler so they are troubled at the news that there is another King of the Jews — how will Herod respond?...

[ex. a hot-tempered dad who reacts poorly to bad news — Herod is an extreme example of this...]

- Now, Herod is troubled because someone is threatening *his kingdom*...

Within his realm, Herod recognized *no other kings*...

- Sure, Herod was under the authority of Rome but only Herod was *the King of the Jews*...

And if there was another person claiming to be the King of the Jews then that was ***one king too many***...

*Moving on to vs 4 we see how Herod responds...*

**4 And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.**

This is very interesting — Herod puts the pieces together and understands that the King of the Jews is a reference to the Messiah — to the **Christ**...

- Herod understands that he is not the true king — Herod is a usurper — Herod is a false king...

***And at this point I must say that I see a great deal of Herod in my own life — because I too want to be my own king...***

- I want to call the shots — I want things to work out the way that I want them to work out — I want to be the boss of my own life — and often I want to be the boss of those around me...

*But the Bible tells me that this a problem...*

Because the Bible clearly teaches that God is the ultimate King — the He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords — that He is the Ruler to whom we all must submit...

- But that defeats the whole purpose of me being my own king — I want to be a king so I can do what I want — not so I can do what someone else wants...

*So a couple of questions must be answered...*

*Who is the true and ultimate King — me or God? — **God is the true and ultimate King...***

- *How many true and ultimate Kings can there be?... **There can only be one true and ultimate King...Because two kings is one king too many...***

*Let's move on to vs 5-6 where the chief priests and scribes answer Herod's question regarding the birthplace of the Christ...*

**5 So they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet:**

**6 'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,  
Are not the least among the rulers of Judah;  
For out of you shall come a Ruler  
Who will shepherd My people Israel.'**"

From the prophecy of **Micah 5:2**, the priests and scribes *rightly recognize* that the Christ will be born in Bethlehem...

*And though they know this to be what the Scripture teaches — and though there are people in town who are looking for the Christ and claim that He has been born...*

***The priests and scribes make no move to go and find the Christ and worship Him...***

I believe that this is a clear indication that Herod is not the only one who considers himself to be a king — the chief priests and scribes are in the same boat — they consider themselves kings as well...

[ex. if you really want a new job then you will go looking for a new job — but if you are happy with the job you have then you will not go job-hunting...]

- Likewise, if you realize that you are **not** the king of your life then you will go out looking for the One who is the rightful King so that He may rule you...

But if you want to remain the king of your life then you will **not** go out and look for the One true king — because then you would have to step aside and submit to Him...

*Continuing on in vs 7-8...*

**7 Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared.**

**8 And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found Him, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also."**

- [expand — Herod wants to know when the star appeared — to determine the age of the Child that was born?...]

So, Herod sends the wise men to Bethlehem and he wants them to figure out where the child is and bring the information back to him...

- Herod claims that he also wants to worship the child but we know that this is not true — Herod views the new King as one king too many...

**9 When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was.**

Here we see the supernatural movement of the star — it led the wise men to the place where **the young Child was...**

*This situation reminds me of...*

**Jeremiah 29:13 (NKJV)**

**“...you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.”**

- [expand — God wants to be found by those who want Him to be King...]

*Now to vs 10-11...*

**10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy.**

**11 And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.**

First of all, please notice that finding the true King is an occasion of *rejoicing with exceedingly great joy...*

- [expand — self-rule is a burden — it is the heavy yoke / but submission to the true and perfectly good King is the easy yoke...]

*Now, there are several things to notice in vs 11 conflict with church traditions...*

We see that Jesus, Mary and Joseph are in a **house** and not in a stable — so some time has passed between Jesus' birth and this event...

- Jesus is referred to as a **young Child** and not as a baby — and Bible commentators believe that a year or more may have passed since Jesus was born...

Notice also that Jesus is given the place of prominence — **they saw the young Child with Mary His mother...**

- [expand — Jesus is mentioned first / Mary is identified by her relation to Jesus (not the other way around)]...

Also, we are told that the wise men **worshiped Him** — they worshiped Jesus and not Mary...

- And they offer to Jesus gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh...

[expand — gold (royalty & deity) / frankincense (priesthood) / myrrh (death)...]

**12 Then, being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way.**

After worshiping the Child Jesus and giving Him gifts, the wise men receive a divine warning not to return to Herod and go back to their own country with a route that takes them around Jerusalem...

***APPLICATION — Worshiping God allows you to hear from God...[expand]***

**13 Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him."**

Once again, an angel communicates with Joseph and gives him direction...

- The family is to flee to Egypt and essentially hide out until the angel tells them that it is safe to return...

This departure was necessary because Herod was going to try to kill the young Child...

- Why — because Herod believed that two kings was *one king too many* — Herod would not submit to losing his kingdom...

*Moving on to vs 14-15...*

**14 When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt,**

Once again, we see Joseph responding in obedience — this is his normal response...

***REMINDER — Obedience to God is a trained response — it becomes a normal part of our lives through habituation...***

*And you and I can form this habit of obedience very simply...*

When we know that there is something that God wants us to do — however small — *let's just do that thing...*

- And as you and I keep doing the *little things* that we know God is calling us to do — we will soon be able to do the *big things* that God is calling us to do...

**Luke 16:10 (NKJV)**

**“He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much.”**

*Let's continue on in Matthew 2, vs...*

**15 and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled [made complete] which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt I called My Son."**

- [expand — **Hosea 11:1** — the Lord Jesus is the true Israel — many elements of Jesus' life were foreshadowed in the history of Israel...]

*Moving on to vs 16-18 we read...*

**16 Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men.**

**17 Then was fulfilled [made complete] what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying:**

**18 "A voice was heard in Ramah,  
Lamentation, weeping, and great mourning,  
Rachel weeping for her children,  
Refusing to be comforted,  
Because they are no more."**

Tragically, Herod — in an effort to keep his kingdom — chooses to have all the male children who were two and under killed so that no king will arise to depose him...

- Please understand that Herod — who was around 70 years old at this time — orders the death of all of these male children in ***a vain attempt*** to keep his little kingdom for a little longer...

Matthew, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, sees this horrible act as a further fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy of the children of Judah being killed by the Babylonians...[expand]

*Now, this is a terrible action on the part of Herod presents us with two difficult truths...*

***1) In this situation, Jesus is spared but the other male children are killed...[expand — James being killed but Peter being spared...]***

## ***2) If you view yourself as a king then you will have to fight to maintain your kingdom...[expand]***

*With these things in mind, we are greeted with a stark statement in vs...*

### **19 Now when Herod was dead,**

After all that — after all the evil that Herod committed throughout his life — all the murders that he ordered so that he could maintain his kingdom — he lost his kingdom anyway...

- And so it is with all self-appointed kings — no matter what they do — they will lose their kingdom in the end — there is no way for them to keep their kingdom...

### **Matthew 16:26 (NKJV)**

**“For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?”**

God doesn't warn us against establishing our own kingdoms because He's a big meanie — He warns us against it because it doesn't work — it will never end well — we will always lose...

- [ex. trying to leap the Grand Canyon — it's never going to work — no matter what...]

*Continuing on in vs 19-21 we read...*

**Now when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt,**

**20 saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the young Child's life are dead."**

**21 Then he arose, took the young Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel.**

Once again, Joseph is instructed by an angel make a move — this time to return to Israel — and as is his custom, Joseph obeys the instruction that he is given...

**22 But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea instead of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And being warned by God in a dream, he turned aside into the region of Galilee.**

Instead of going back to the southern region of Judea where Bethlehem is located, Joseph leads his family to the region of Galilee in northern Israel...

- And it is interesting that Joseph is given *progressive revelation* — he isn't given all the instruction at once...

[expand — walk of faith — trusting God day by day — He probably can't tell us everything at once because we would just quit on the deal...]

- [expand — think about all the tasks you have completed in this life — and imagine that God had given you a list of all of them when you were 5 years old — you would have quit on it...]

*So, instead of telling us all that we need to do — and all that is coming down the road — King Jesus gives us simple instruction on how to live one day at a time...*

### **Matthew 6:33-34 (NKJV)**

**33 “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.**

**34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.”**

- [expand — we are to seek the kingdom of God and not our kingdom — this will simplify our lives tremendously...]

*Now to our final verse...*

**23 And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, "He shall be called a Nazarene."**

The idea here is that a **Nazarene** was someone who was despised and rejected — someone who was considered low class and unworthy of respect...[expand]

- The Lord Jesus was treated shamefully during His earthly ministry and if we are to follow Him as our King then we can expect similar treatment...[expand]

## **Conclusion**

We will stop here for today and Lord-willing pick up in Matthew 3 next week...

*And as we begin to wrap up our time together, I will remind you of the words that the angel Gabriel shared with Mary in...*

### **Luke 1:30-33 (NKJV)**

**30 ...“Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.**

**31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS.**

**32 He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David.**

**33 And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.”**

All the kingdoms of this world will fall — and only the Kingdom of Christ will remain...

- So — final question — ***Who is the king of your life?*** — If the answer is anyone besides King Jesus — ***then you have one king too many...***

*Let's pray...*