

Kingdoms in Conflict (Matthew 2)

Matthew has been endeavoring to show that Jesus is the long awaited Messiah King of Israel (and the whole world)

- Who would bring God's promised **universal blessing** and **righteous rule** to earth
- Matthew has been doing this by teaching us about:
 - What preceded Christ's birth (ancestry)
 - The unique conditions surrounding Christ's birth (virgin conception; incarnation)
 - Now: The events following Christ's birth

(Verses 1-2) **Magi** from the **east** = Wise men, astronomers, kings, rulers?

- Saw a **star**... discerned a king had been born in Israel (v. 2 = ...**King of the Jews**)
- Went to Jerusalem (naturally) and began to inquire (v. 2 = **Where is He who has been born...**)
 - Whole books are written about these details...

Herod was troubled (v. 3)

- (The Great) (Appointed by Romans in 40 BC) (Sons after him = Herod [Archelaus, Philip, Antipas])
- A powerful, productive, ruthless and cunning King (protective of rule) (**Emperor Augustus**)
- "It is no surprise that King Herod was disturbed when the Magi came to Jerusalem looking for the One who had been 'born King'. Herod was not the rightful king from the line of David. In fact he was not even a descendant of Jacob, but was descended from Esau and thus was an Edomite... If someone had been rightfully born king, then Herod's job was in jeopardy." –The Bible Knowledge Commentary¹
- Here we see the set up for the **gist** of the story: **When Jesus was born King, it created conflict**
 - Telegraphed: "**Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the King**" (v. 1)
 - Matthew developing the story (Jesus = The King with an everlasting Kingdom)
 - Descendent of King David; fulfillment of the covenant; **expected Messiah King**
 - **More proof: Born in Bethlehem** (see **vv. 4-6**) = **Fulfillment** (**Micah 5:2**; 8th c. BC)
 - It's not that Herod didn't know who this was—it's that he didn't like what it meant
 - **So Herod sought to destroy this new King**
 - But God was working... (**see v. 12-14**)
 - The intent of God and the intent of Herod were in **conflict**

The **gist** of the story is evident: **Two Kingdoms have come into conflict (Herod and Jesus)**

- So what?
 - **Macro sense = The Kingdom of God and the kingdom of this world are in conflict**
 - **James 4:4**, NASB
 - **1 John 2:15-17**, NASB
 - Opposed: values, power ideals, sense of justice, soteriology
 - We often get caught in a battle for allegiance and way of being
 - **Personal sense = Christ the King is always confronting our false claims of kingship**

There is a picture here to ponder: **Herod was not a real and rightful King (but he sure acted like one)**

- Don't we sometimes have the same hang-up or persona? (make-believe kings)
- **This is what we do when we choose sin:** We rebel against the real King and His truth and we assert our false rule
 - **I.e. The Garden**
 - Satan cast aspersions on the True King's will and words (made Him out to be a bad king)
 - Humanity took and ate in a quest to be like God (King) (and to escape His rule)
 - Perpetual battle
 - **Romans 10:9**, NASB
 - **Philippians 2:9-11**, NASB

¹ Louis A. Barbieri and Jr., "Matthew", *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985). Mt 2:3-8.

Herod was willing to go to **great lengths at great costs** to protect his reign (see vv. 16-18)

- The Garden was **great lengths at great costs** to try to gain sovereignty and rule of self
- What are the ways we try to rule?
 - What does it cost us?

When Kingdoms are in conflict, we have a choice

- **2 responses in the text** (The **conniving king** vs. the **worshipping wise men**)
 - Both parties were extravagant in their pursuits
 - No end to what Herod would do to protect self-rule
 - **No limit to what the wise men would do to honor the New True Forever King**

To be a Christian is to joyfully submit to the Kingship (i.e. Lordship) of Jesus, the Messiah King

- It is the only way to live in the Kingdom (cf. kingdom as rule)
 - We **enter** the Kingdom through **forgiveness**
 - We **dwell** in the Kingdom through **obedience**
 - In **entering** we are delivered (from sin)
 - **Colossians 1:13-14**, NASB
 - In **dwelling** we live in freedom (from sin)
 - **Romans 6:6-17**, NLT

We are not kings—we were slaves—but we have been delivered

- Allusions to the Exodus story (See **verses 14-15**)
- “**Out of Egypt I Called my Son**” (**Hosea 11:1**; typology)
 - Israel as a typology (symbol) of Christ (i.e. Christ as fulfillment of Exodus – The new Israel)
 - **Israel as the teacher of Christians** (**1 Corinthians 10:11**, NASB)
 - Our own Exodus from the tyranny of a bad/false king
 - Jesus is the true and better Moses
- **What did Israel do? What do we often do?**
 - = Sometimes, we try to live back toward Egypt/Pharaoh
 - Though we truly have been delivered from Pharaoh (Satan and slavery to sin)
 - We often struggle with the tension
 - We find ourselves **caught between the 2 responses** seen in the text
 - **Herod vs. The Magi** (fighting vs. submitting) (flesh vs. Spirit)
 - **Galatians 5:13 and 16-25**, NLT

In the Gospel, there is this invitation to Kingdom living (entering & dwelling) (deliverance & obedience)

The text is calling us to see the conflict between Kingdoms and to give our selves fully to Christ the King

- Where do you need to submit? (The King is right!)
- Where do you need to trust? (The King is good!)
- Where so you need to repent? (The King is merciful!)
- Where do you need deliverance? (The King is strong!)

How should you worship? (The King is worthy!)

- Gold, frankincense, myrrh (representative gifts of great value)
- **But what will you bring today?** (heart, allegiance, will, praise, all that you are)
 - **Don't fear the loss of your own kingdom**

Join the New and True King in bringing God's gracious blessing and righteous rule to earth