

9/18/22 Sermon: King of the Jews

MEDITATE

Read Matthew 2:1-12.

EQUIP

The Magi recognized and sought out Jesus as the “King of the Jews.” But when reading Matthew, we notice that title is only used by pagans and foreigners. And in Matthew 2:3, we see that Herod and all of Jerusalem were “troubled” by the news of his birth.

According to first century Jewish historian Josephus, Herod the Great was installed as king of Judea in 63 BC. He pacified the Jews, collected taxes, and quelled uprisings. Herod focused on building projects like the port at Caesarea, the Herodium, and Masada. He renovated the Jewish temple. He was a soldier, orator, and builder. But Matthew 2 reveals that Herod’s “greatness” is hollow, because the prophesied King of the Jews filled Herod with envy. Herod rejected Jesus’ kingship because of his personal biases and fears. He tried to kill Jesus.

Read Matthew 10:34-36.

The Jewish religious leaders did not go to Bethlehem like the wise men from the East. They did not recognize or worship the King of the Jews. Rather, they felt called out by the passage because they failed to shepherd God’s people. As we will read later in Matthew, they even rejected Jesus and put him to death! Both the Jewish religious leaders and the Jewish king saw Jesus’ royal presence as a threat: to the status quo, and to their control of the kingdom.

Read Matthew 21:33-41. Once the King of the Jews is born, you are no longer king.

CULTIVATE

Like the authorities in Jesus’ day, we fear that the King of the Jews will take away our control and freedom to be our own royalty.

Read Matthew 6:24.

Does Jesus as King feel like a threat to you? Or does it feel like protection? There are two reasons why Jesus could feel like a threat. Firstly, he's a threat to those who want to write their own story. Second, he is a threat to people that control others with fear. So people insulate themselves from other people and hard situations. They invest their time, money, and attention on goods and services that give them pleasure and control.

What if following Jesus means giving up the control and freedom you want? Just like a closet overflowing with clothes, your heart does not have infinite space. The bottom line is that when their desires occupy their hearts, people do not value God.

What if Jesus calls you or your children to something the world does not celebrate as the good life?