

The King is Born

When our children were little, they would awaken before daylight on **Christmas Day**, their eyes dancing with expectation. They could not wait to get downstairs to the **Christmas** tree to open the gifts. But before we opened the gifts, we read the Bible and I prayed. What a thrill it was to kneel in prayer together as a family and to thank God for the privilege of celebrating the birthday of His Son, **Jesus Christ**.

One of the passages that we read was the second chapter of Matthew, where the wise men came from the East to Jerusalem, following a star. They came into the house of Joseph, fell down and worshiped the **Christ Child**. The Bible says, "When they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh" (Matthew 2:11).

Jesus Christ was born to be **King**. His **salvation** and His **Kingdom** apply to present-world problems. But His kingship also has future implications. The sovereignty of Jesus Christ extends in an unbroken line throughout the ages. Hidden from view now, He will come again, according to the Scriptures, in God's time, and He will reign in righteousness.

The wise men of old inquired, "Where is He who has been born King?" (Matthew 2:2). Today wise people in these troubled times are also asking, "Where is He who has been born King?" The Bible says of Him: "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Hebrews 13:8). He was King yesterday, He is King today, He will be King tomorrow.

Yesterday He was **King of Redemption**. He did not restrain the multitudes when they cried on Palm Sunday: "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!" (Luke 19:38). He did not answer negatively when Pilate asked: "Are You a king?" (John 18:37). He did not deny His kingship when Pilate turned

Him over to the crowd, saying, "Behold your King!" (John 19:14).

From His very birth Christ was recognized as **King**. Something about Him inspired allegiance, loyalty and homage. Wise men brought Him gifts. Shepherds fell down and worshiped Him. And angels, knowing more than men that He was truly **King**, became celestial minstrels before His manger throne. Herod, realizing that there is never room for two thrones in one kingdom, sought Jesus' life.

As Jesus came to the age of approximately 30 years and began His ministry, His claims upon people's lives were absolute. He allowed no divided loyalty. He demanded and received complete adoration and devotion. Men and women left their homes, their families and their businesses, and gave themselves in complete obedience to Him. Many gave their lives, pouring out the last full measure of devotion. We cannot understand Christ until we understand that He was King.

The Old Testament promises the coming not only of a deliverer and sin-bearer but also the coming of the King. This King had been eagerly expected, hoped for and prayed for by the pious in Israel.

Every true king has a herald—and on that first Christmas the angels heralded Jesus' birth. John the Baptist also was a herald, preaching: "The kingdom of heaven is at hand!" (Matthew 3:2). When the King who was rejected comes again to set up His Kingdom, He will be preceded once more by a herald, who will declare His coming among His people (1 Thessalonians 4:16). All through His life Christ acted like a king. He spoke with authority. He made demands upon people's consciences. He denounced bigotry, hypocrisy and greed. He denounced immorality, dishonesty and lawlessness. He spoke often of His coming Kingdom, and He recruited followers. His conduct was regal. His ethics were kingly.

From the beginning, the potentates of political, social and ecclesiastical life were distrustful of Him. His high ethical teachings, His irreproachable moral character and His regal lineage constantly jeopardized the security of the thrones of hypocrites.

But Herod needlessly feared Jesus. Pilate was unnecessarily suspicious of Him. Christ had not come to set up an earthly kingdom. He had come to be the King of redemption. His Kingdom was to be spiritual. He was to reign in the hearts of men and women.

By virtue of His kingly office, He was the only One in Heaven qualified to redeem a lost world. Had Jesus Christ been less than He was, He could not have made atonement for our sins. Fully aware of our inability to pay the price of redemption, Jesus Christ gave Himself as a ransom for us.

About 800 years before Jesus' birth, the Prophet Isaiah wrote, "He poured out His soul unto death, And He was numbered with the transgressors, And He bore the sin of many, And made intercession for the transgressors" (Isaiah 53:12). What greater service could the King possibly render His subjects than to exonerate them from all guilt and to make them joint-heirs with Him in His Kingdom? The King laid down His life for His subjects and made payment for the terrible debt that we owe.

But that was yesterday. What about today? Many people are asking, "Where is the Kingdom of God today? If He is a king, where is His kingdom?"

The Bible teaches that Christ does have a Kingdom on earth. His Kingdom is in the hearts of all who trust in Him. He has pronounced a special blessing on those who love Him. He is the undisputed King of the souls of believers of all colors and races in the world today.

Believers are still willing to die for Him. He still makes unconditional demands on our lives. He still denounces sin. His presence is still incongruous with dishonesty, greed and selfishness. His selfless love is still the wonder of the universe. He is the Savior of sinners, the Author of peace and the Hope of the world.

However, the great majority of earth's billions have never paid homage to Him. They have never acknowledged Him as King of their hearts. In H.G. Wells' "Outline of History," he wrote, "Is it any wonder that to this day this Galilean is too much for our small hearts?"

Does Christ reign in your heart? Is He Lord and King? The Bible says, "If we confess with our mouths the Lord Jesus as Christ, and believe in our hearts that God has raised Him from the dead, we will be saved" (Cf. Romans 10:9). You may say, "I believe in Christ." But you have never made Him King of your heart. He is not Lord of your heart. He does not have complete control of your life. Thousands of people who have their name on a church roll have never surrendered their will to Him as King. You may believe in God and the church, and even in Christ, but you have not surrendered your will to Him.

Until you acknowledge and accept Him as King, and are willing to take up your cross and follow Him, the Kingdom of Christ does not reign and dwell in your heart. You are outside of the Kingdom, totally lost; and some day you will be banished into everlasting darkness where there is "weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth" (Cf. Matthew 8:12).

The Bible teaches that tomorrow Christ will be the King of kings and Lord of lords. There is an hour in God's time when Christ will return to this world. The Bible is clear in declaring that Christ will some day return.

Many scoffers today say, as they did in the Apostle Peter's day, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the

fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation" (2 Peter 3:4). The Bible continues, "The heavens and the earth ... are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men" (2 Peter 3:7). But this judgment will be only against the ungodly and the wicked. God will not have forgotten the world, and from the burning embers of a smoldering civilization, God will shape and form a regime in which Christ will be King. One will appear upon whose thigh is written "King of kings and Lord of lords" (Revelation 19:16). Thus Christ will at long last have taken His rightful place to rule this earth. What a moment that will be!

Every king has a coronation. The Bible speaks of the marriage supper of the Lamb, which will be the coronation of Jesus Christ. What a sight that will be! All of us who have acknowledged Him as King here will be there in that day. My reservation is made. My seat is being saved at the marriage supper of the Lamb. My ticket is in my heart. It is the ticket to the greatest banquet of all time, paid for by the blood of Christ upon the cross. The only thing that it cost me was my sins. I gladly renounce them and pay allegiance to the King of kings before Whom I some day shall stand to give an account of my stewardship on earth.

Yes, I renounce my sins. I give my allegiance to Christ as Savior and Lord. I will work for Him, and I will give Him everything that I have. I will suffer for Him. And some day I will have the privilege of reigning with Him in Glory. ©1992 (revised 2000) BGEA

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