



# JESUS: KING OF KINGS

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*But there is a great difference between Adam's sin and God's gracious gift. For the sin of this one man, Adam, brought death to many. But even greater is God's wonderful grace and his gift of forgiveness to many through this other man, Jesus Christ. And the result of God's gracious gift is very different from the result of that one man's sin. For Adam's sin led to condemnation, but God's free gift leads to our being made right with God, even though we are guilty of many sins. For the sin of this one man, Adam, caused death to rule over many. But even greater is God's wonderful grace and his gift of righteousness, for all who receive it will live in triumph over sin and death through this one man, Jesus Christ. Yes, Adam's one sin brings condemnation for everyone, but Christ's one act of righteousness brings a right relationship with God and new life for everyone.*  
(Romans 5:15-18, NLT)

So far in this series we have looked at the lives of the first man and a number of kings who pre-dated the birth of Jesus, namely Adam, the first man, and the kings Melchizedek, Ahab, Hezekiah, Nebuchadnezzar and Herod the great. There are a number of differences between these kings:

- Some were Jews and some were gentiles.
- Some ruled over small kingdoms, Ahab over Israel, Hezekiah over Judah; one ruled over an empire, Nebuchadnezzar over Babylon; and one was a client ruler of a kingdom which was part of a great empire, Herod over Judea.
- Some kings ruled well and wisely most of the time, such as Hezekiah, and some rulers were very bad, such as Ahab.

All of these rulers shared some similarities as well:

- They ruled kingdoms or empires that were limited in extent. They were only rulers over the subjects of their kingdom, they had no universal powers over everyone in the world.
- They inherited their kingdoms by right of birth, their position came by right of the family they were born into, not their personal suitability or a popular vote.
- They ruled for their own benefit and glory, although this did sometimes benefit their subjects. They were also subject to the usual human failings of pride and greed on many occasions.

Jesus is different in many ways from these kings as He is not a king because of human descent, His kingdom extends over all the people of the Earth, whatever their race or origin, and He rules for the benefit of all mankind and the glory of God the Father, not himself.

*For, at just the right time Christ will be revealed from heaven by the blessed and only almighty God, the King of all kings and Lord of all lords. He alone can never die, and he lives in light so brilliant that no human can approach him. No human eye has ever seen him, nor ever will. All honour and power to him forever! Amen.*  
(1 Timothy 6:15-16, NLT)

Jesus is a priest and king in the order of Melchizedek. Melchizedek was the king of Salem, i.e. Jerusalem, and he met Abram with bread and wine after Abram had defeated an enemy army. He blessed Abram in the name of God, and Abram gave him a tenth, or a tithe, of all the goods that he had recovered in the battle (Genesis 14:17-20). As the Bible explains, we do not know the origins of Melchizedek, there is no record of his father or mother or the beginning or ending of his life, but he was a priest as well as a king, and in this was a forerunner of Jesus. This demonstrates that God's plan of salvation for men through the sacrifice of Jesus, His son, on the cross pre-dates even the giving of the Jewish Law to Moses, as in this story we see the bread and wine, which are symbols until this day of the death and resurrection of Jesus, and the principle of the tithe is also shown.

Jesus is a king, but He is also a priest:

*So then, since we have a great High Priest who has entered heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to what we believe. This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin.* (Hebrews 4:14-15, NLT)

Jewish priests came from the tribe of Levi, no person from another of the twelve tribes of Israel was allowed to be a priest. From the tribe of Levi one of the priests was chosen to be the High Priest and just once a year he was allowed to enter the Holy of Holies in the Temple to offer a sacrifice for the sins of the people, after he had carried out appropriate purification for himself by animal sacrifices. To enter at any other time, or without purification, would have meant his death.



Jesus was descended from the tribe of David, i.e. Judah, so He was not qualified to be a priest under the Mosaic covenant, but Jesus's right to be a priest came from His appointment to the role by God the Father, just as his appointment to be king was also received. This was a unique combination, that of both a king and a high priest in the same person. This meant that Jesus was born to both rule and also to act as a mediator between God and man, offering sacrifice for the sins of men. Unlike earthly priests Jesus was sinless, so He did not need to make sacrifices for His own atonement.

Every year the high priest made a sacrifice to take away the sins of the people, and this had to be repeated every year as it was a temporary fix, it did not deal with the problem of sin once and for all. When Jesus became the high priest, He was able to make a sacrifice that did permanently deal with the problem of sin: He sacrificed Himself on the cross.

*So, Christ has now become the High Priest over all the good things that have come. He has entered that greater, more perfect Tabernacle in heaven, which was not made by human hands and is not part of this created world. With his own blood, not the blood of goats and calves, he entered the Most Holy Place once for all time and secured our redemption forever. (Hebrews 9:11-12, NLT)*

For Jesus to become a king and high priest he had to become human:

*Because God's children are human beings made of flesh and blood the Son also became flesh and blood. For only as a human being could he die, and only by dying could he break the power of the devil, who had the power of death. Only in this way could he set free all who have lived their lives as slaves to the fear of dying... Therefore, it was necessary for him to be made in every respect like us, his brothers and sisters, so that he could be our merciful and faithful High Priest before God. Then he could offer a sacrifice that would take away the sins of the people. Since he himself has gone through suffering and testing, he is able to help us when we are being tested. (Hebrews 2:14-15, 17-18, NLT)*

This is the mystery and miracle of Christmas: that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, put aside His heavenly glory and became a man, to live among men, to experience the reality of being a human being, with all the weaknesses that that involves, and ultimately die for all men.

Jesus is God, and He existed before anything else existed. He created the heavens and the earth, and nothing that exists could exist without Him. And yet he became a human being and was born in a stable in Bethlehem, to

parents who were not royal at all, or rich, in a land that was occupied by a foreign power and ruled by a king who was later prepared to murder innocent children to try and protect his position. Jesus was totally dependent, as any baby is, on his parents for food, shelter and other daily requirements. He then had to grow up and learn many things, including the Jewish law as His contemporaries would have done. He then gathered twelve disciples around Him and spent a few years teaching and performing miracles among the people. Finally, he was arrested on false charges, underwent a rigged trial and was condemned to death for a crime He did not commit. He was then executed in the most degrading manner that the Romans could devise.

And he did all of this for us! For by dying on the cross He was able to pay for all of our sins and obtain salvation for all men who believe in Him:

*For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16, NLT)*

The stable at Bethlehem contained a baby, but that baby was vaster than the entire universe: that is quite a thought, and that is what Christmas is really all about. The eternal and infinite became finite to bless all mankind.

The story of the Magi demonstrates the truth and meaning of the Christmas story. The Magi were not Jews, and yet they recognised that this king of the Jews was going to be special, and they were looking for the sign of His birth. They travelled to Bethlehem once they saw the star so that they could worship Him, because they realised that this king was not just going to rule over the Jewish people, but all people, including gentiles such as themselves. They found the child and gave Jesus three highly symbolic gifts:

- Gold, because Jesus was a king.
- Frankincense, because Jesus was a priest.
- Myrrh, because Jesus was to die for His people.

The Magi then had to return home by a different route to avoid King Herod, who wanted to kill the new king as Jesus threatened his earthly power. We see the contrast between a king exercising power for his own benefit and a king who came to exercise power for the good of His people.

We live in troubled times, and times have always been troubled, but the message of Christmas is that God the Father sent Jesus to be our King of Kings, and great High Priest, and deliver us from our sins so we can inherit eternal life.