

## THE KING ANNOUNCES THE KINGDOM (MATT 4:12-25)

The fact that the Messiah would announce the kingdom in Galilee and not in Judah or Jerusalem would be unexpected were it not for Isaiah's prophecy that the land of the northern tribes, first to be carried off into exile, would be the first to see the great light of the Messiah (Isa 9:1-7). Jesus' message was exactly the same as that of the forerunner: the kingdom was coming and repentance was required. Jesus called disciples to help get the word out, and as was typical in God's way of working, he chose ordinary men instead of the religious leaders or wealthy elite. Jesus' ministry is summarized in three verses (4:23-25) and then expanded at length in chapters 5-12. In short, Jesus preached the good news of the kingdom ("the kingdom is almost here!") and demonstrated his identity as the promised king who reverses the effects of sin by healing diseases and casting out demons. As intended, this attracted large crowds.

### CONCLUSION

Matthew wrote his gospel to make it clear how Jesus was the fulfillment of God's promises to send a king who would bless all the peoples of the world. In the first four chapters, Matthew focuses on Jesus' identity as the rightful king of the house of David who was honored, persecuted, and tempted. The coming of the king naturally anticipated the establishment of his kingdom and thus the people were called to repent of their sin and to submit to God's anointed one.

### GOING FURTHER

Review some OT passages that underlie Matthew's introduction of Jesus: Gen 12, 22; 2 Sam 7; Ps 2, 72; Isa 7-11, 53; Mic 4-5; Mal 3-4.

How do the other Gospels show (in different ways) Jesus as the fulfillment of God's promises in the OT?

### PREPARATION FOR THE NEXT STUDY

Read Matthew 5-11. What does the writer want you to understand about Jesus? What is the significance of Jesus' miracles? What is the meaning of the Sermon on the Mount? How does the OT help us to understand these chapters?

## THE ARRIVAL OF THE KING (MATT 1-4)

### PREPARATION FOR THIS STUDY

Read and savor Matthew 1-4. How does the OT inform our interpretation of Jesus' birth, the visit of the Magi, the message of John, the temptation, and the announcement of Jesus?

### THE KING'S LINEAGE (MATT 1:1-17)

The first verses of the NT alert the reader to a crucial fact: you're not going to understand a lot of the NT if you don't understand the OT. The NT was written to those who loved the OT. Jesus came to those who were *longing* for him, to a nation who had endured God's silence for 400 years but were confident that he was faithful.

What is to some of us a boring list of long names was a precious record to God's remnant. These names proved that David was a son of Abraham, and thus heir to the glorious promises God made to Abraham. These names proved that Jesus was the *son of David* and the *son of Abraham* and thus heir to both covenants. The list from David to Jeconiah names Israel's kings until the exile. The list from Jeconiah to Joseph names those who would have been Israel's kings if the nation did not remain in exile—without national sovereignty and spiritually separated from God. Matthew repeats the crucial elements of the list: Abraham, David, exile, and Jesus the Messiah.

### THE KING'S BIRTH (MATT 1:18-25)

Throughout the OT, God loved to display his glory in extraordinary births: a 90-year-old Sarah gives birth to Isaac, a barren Hannah gives birth to Samuel, and others. But here God exceeds all: a woman conceives without the seed of a man. Only one child in the history of the universe would be born in such a miraculous way, and he is appropriately called Immanuel—God with us. He is the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy: a virgin of the royal house would conceive and give birth to a child who would not enjoy palace fare but would eat a subsistence diet (curds and honey) because the land had been overrun by the enemy (Isa 7). But this child would be the king on David's throne, ruling forever in righteousness (Isa 9). He is

the Prince of Peace, but he would bring peace by bearing the punishment of his people to save them from their sins (Isa 53). For this reason he was to be named Jesus, which means salvation.

### **THE KING HONORED (MATT 2:1-12)**

Micah predicted that the new shepherd that God would raise up for Israel would be born in Bethlehem (Mic 5:1-5). David's descendants (mostly unrighteous kings) were born in the capital city of Jerusalem, but the new David would be a fresh start (Isa 11:1), born in the same city as the one promised an eternal dynasty.

The OT predicted that when God established his kingdom on earth, the nations would bring their wealth to it (Isa 60). This begins with the visit of the Magi who bring the most valuable gifts of the day: gold and frankincense. Myrrh was useful for anointing the dead; it was entirely appropriate for the king who would die for his people. To those familiar with the OT, the identity of Jesus as the awaited king who would be rejected by his people is already clear.

### **THE KING DELIVERED FROM "PHARAOH" (MATT 2:13-18)**

Just as Israel was persecuted by the nations, so Jesus was persecuted by God's enemies. Pharaoh killed the male Israelite infants to thwart the fulfillment of God's promises and Herod killed the male Israelite infants to destroy God's anointed king. Just as God delivered Israel, his firstborn son, from Pharaoh, he saved Jesus, his firstborn son, from an oppressive king (Exod 4:22). Though the land wept with the slaughter of the innocent children, Matthew's quotation of Rachel weeping comes from a context of hope: after the death of the children, God will bring comfort, return from exile, and a new covenant (Jer 31:15-37).

### **THE KING'S DESPISED RESIDENCE (MATT 2:19-23)**

Jesus was not raised in Bethlehem or Jerusalem where one would expect the son of David and heir to the throne to grow up. Matthew explains that this is because the rule of Herod's son threatened the life of the legitimate king. Thus Joseph took Jesus to a despised town in Galilee. Today we think highly of Galilee because of the NT, but before

Jesus, all the great Israelites came from Judah and Ephraim. The tribes in Galilee were distant and without honor. But the prophets had predicted that the Messiah would be despised and scorned and this is fulfilled in Jesus' move to Nazareth (Ps 22:6-8; Isa 49:7; 53:2-3).

### **THE KING ANNOUNCED (MATT 3:1-12)**

Isaiah and Malachi predicted that the Lord's coming to establish his kingdom would be heralded by a messenger (Isa 40:3-5; Mal 3:1-5; 4:1-6). Since God's righteous kingdom would require purification of the earth from God's enemies, the message of the Messiah's forerunner was one of repentance. If the people did not get right with God, they would be consumed by the fire of God's judgment. John the Baptist was the new Elijah who challenged Israel's idolatry and called on all to "repent, for the kingdom of God is near." The kingdom was near because the king was about to appear.

### **THE KING IDENTIFIED BY GOD (MATT 3:13-17)**

In being baptized by John, Jesus identified with John's message. (To have avoided it could have suggested they were not united in purpose and teaching.) When the Father spoke from heaven, his words identified Jesus as his royal son (Ps 2), the servant in whom he delighted (Isa 42:1), and his beloved son who would be sacrificed (Gen 22:2). The Father's words underscore Jesus' identity in Matt 1:1: Jesus is the son of David, the son of Abraham. He would succeed where David's son failed; he would be sacrificed as Abraham's son was not.

### **THE KING TEMPTED BY SATAN (MATT 4:1-11)**

Jesus came as the new Adam to reverse sin's grip on humanity, and he was himself "Israel," God's chosen servant to restore Israel and be a light to the Gentiles (Isa 49:5-6). Thus to show that he was greater than Adam or Israel, the Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted by the serpent. His temptation was greater than that of Adam (who quickly succumbed in the *garden*) or of Israel (who was not weak with hunger after 40 days of fasting). Yet he triumphed over Satan and the greatest of all temptations by faith in God's word. Jesus was shown worthy to be God's regent on earth and the blameless Servant who could die for the sin of his people.