

# The Promised King

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We're starting a brief series on the gospels looking at our Lord Jesus Christ from four different perspectives: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. One message from each of the gospels. Those of you that attend our church know that I'll often preach for 70 minutes on one or two verses. Here I am I'm about to cover all 28 chapters of the gospel of Matthew. That's a little bit intimidating even to me but hopefully we'll be able to get out of here before Wednesday. I think that might be good, especially since we have an open house at our new church building this afternoon at 4:30. But for right now, we get to focus on Christ and that is the best thing that anyone could do in the universe. That is the most precious thing that we could do, more than spending time with one another, more than spending time in any particular place on this planet, to be able to contemplate Christ is a wonderful thing and that's what we are going to do here this morning. We're going to look at Christ from a particular thematic way from the gospel of Matthew and I invite you to turn to Matthew 1.

In a particular way, the gospel of Matthew ties the life of Jesus Christ to the history and promises of the Old Testament. Matthew was a Jew. He was writing primarily to a Jewish audience and so it's natural that he would focus on the Old Testament and put Christ in the context of the Old Testament Scriptures which the Jews knew. As he does that, as Matthew does that, we're going to see that what he lays out, the picture that he paints of our Lord Jesus Christ is that Christ, the Lord Jesus, Jesus of Nazareth who walked on the earth with human feet, Jesus of Nazareth is the promised King that God had been promising for ages and ages in the past. For centuries, the prophets had been speaking, "Here is a picture of who this Christ will be," and for hundreds and hundreds of years, the Jews had been looking for this one to appear. Matthew, as he writes his gospel, makes it plain and makes it obvious that Jesus of Nazareth is the one that we've been waiting for. It is a glorious expectation that has now reached its fulfillment in Christ.

The force of Matthew's argument is seen in the cumulative impact of multiple fulfilled prophecies about the life of Christ. It is obvious as Matthew writes his gospel that he wants his audience, he wants us as his readers to understand that Christ is the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies, those men of God who without dispute, spoke for the living God, were mouthpieces of the living God. What they had said over the centuries and in centuries gone by, found their perfect fulfillment in the life of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is the promised King that the Jews had been looking for.

As you go through the book of Matthew, you see this laid out in five different areas and we're just going to start in chapter 1 and go through this rather in very much a survey fashion. I'm really not much of a preacher here this morning, I'm more of a tour guide for you to simply point out highlights along the way that you would see them and that you would be impressed upon and impressed by the perfect way that Christ matches the picture that the prophets painted many years earlier. Whenever it comes to talking about fulfilled prophecy in the life of Christ, I like to set a little context like this: some of the main prophecies of Christ came from the prophet Isaiah over 700 years before the life of Christ. If you put that in our context just to give a sense of that length of time, 700 years today looking back would precede the date that Columbus discovered America. So if you put ourselves just to give you a sense that of what those who saw Christ at the time, they were seeing someone who had been prophesied not only 700 years but we're just using that as part of the example, it's as if we were seeing today someone who had been accurately predicted to come before Columbus crossed the Atlantic Ocean. That is remarkable and here is what you need to think about by way of orientating your mind to receive the word of God in a proper way here today: the only way that could be true, the only way that that kind of perfect prophetic fulfillment could take place hundreds of years after the prophecies were made, where the fact that those prophets spoke by inspiration of a sovereign omniscient God who knew the end from the beginning. The only way that a man could accurately speak to what would happen 700, 1,000 years after the fact, is if he's not speaking from his own wisdom and insight. He is speaking as the mouthpiece of a holy and sovereign God who had not only the knowledge but the perfect power to bring to pass what he had said through those men centuries earlier, hundreds of years earlier.

That is what we're seeing in the book of Matthew here this morning. I say that all by way of introduction so that your heart would be properly prepared for what is about to come. We've been singing of faith. Faith is the victory. By faith this mountain will be moved and so forth earlier in our service but as you come to this gospel, what you need to see is the context of the life of Christ. What you see by the way of the context of the life of Christ is the context of what we believe as Christians. You see, we have to transcend our ever present temptation to be fascinated with ourselves. We have to transcend our ever present temptation to be consumed with this life and to be consumed with what God can do for me today. You see, we as believers in Christ, we stand in a stream of history that far transcends us. Our lives, in a sense, although they have eternal significance because Christ has set his love upon us, our lives pale into insignificance in light of the transcendent work of God that is taking place throughout the course of history and as you grasp that sense of the transcendent nature of the purposes of God in Christ, you're going to have a context to understand your own life with the right sense of perspective.

The other thing that it will do for you is that this testimony from the gospel of Matthew will strengthen your confidence and should strengthen your assurance of salvation in Christ. Those of us who have repented of sin and put our faith in Christ, let me say something emphatically from the start: we have not believed in an imposter. We have not followed cleverly devised tales that were spun out of the imagination of some silly old woman a few years ago. We're not following the imaginations of people who today say

that God has spoken directly to them because he hasn't. Where God spoke was God spoke through the Old Testament prophets and in Hebrews 1 it says, "In these last days, God has spoken to us in his Son who is the fulfillment of those prophetic proclamations." When we preach the Bible, when we preach Christ, when you walk with Christ and follow him, you are not following something that you designed. You're not following something that is a trivial piece of religious curiosity. You're following the living and true God. If your faith is in Christ for your eternal salvation, your faith is in the King that God promised to be the one and only Savior of mankind. When you see the vast span of history that was fulfilled in the life of Christ, you realize that God in his grace has brought you to the one true Savior, the one true Lord and in that, your spiritual confidence takes great root. That's what Matthew intended for us to see and that's what I'm going to try to guide you through briefly here this morning.

Where do we see this fulfillment of prophecy? It's all over the gospel of Matthew from beginning to end. We're going to frame this, I think I said around five, we're going to frame this around four aspects of the life of Christ here this morning to just help us see that Christ is in fact the King that God had promised to Israel and now is the King that is proclaimed to all of the world. You see this first of all in the person of Christ, who he is in his human lineage even. So point 1: the person of Christ. How do we know that Christ is the promised King? Well, we look first of all at his person. In the Old Testament, Genesis 12, God made promises to Abraham that from Abraham would come a seed that would be a blessing to all the nations. When David became king in 2 Samuel 7, God promised David that there would be a king that would come from his loins who would reign in an everlasting way. Well, Matthew and the Jews as they contemplate who is going to be this Messiah, are conscious of these Old Testament promises that God had promised blessing through the line of Abraham. He had promised a King through the line of David. And Matthew does not waste any time getting to the point. Right in Matthew 1:1 he says, "The record of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah." That is the word that is usually translated "Christ."

1 The record of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

Then the genealogy follows through verse 16. We won't bother to read each one but what Matthew is doing here in chapter 1 is he is meticulously showing the genealogical connection that Jesus had to the promises that were made to Abraham and David. Jesus was a legal heir to the throne of Israel. He was a descendent of Abraham through whom the promised blessing would come and so from the very start, Matthew connects Jesus of Nazareth and says, "He is in the line of Abraham. He is in the line of David," and a Jew reading this would immediately snap to attention and say, "Hey, this matters."

Then he goes through and he gives that physical lineage starting from Abraham in verse 2 all the way down through verse 16 showing that his father, Joseph, not his human biological father but the father of the patriarch of his family into whose family he was born by the Virgin Mary, is in the line of Abraham. He is in the line of David. Jesus is entitled to the throne.

Look at verse 17,

17 So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; from David to the deportation to Babylon, fourteen generations; and from the deportation to Babylon to the Messiah, fourteen generations.

Matthew has delineated 42 generations to set the genealogical context for the life of Christ. 42 generations. I can identify maybe seven generations of my parents. Maybe you can identify a few more but in Christ we have not someone who randomly appeared on the scene, we have someone who has the genealogical pedigree to be the Messiah. That is significant to understand because not anyone could have been the Messiah, he had to be in the right genealogical line for that to occur. So from the very beginning, Matthew declares that Jesus is the Messiah. By Messiah he means that he is God's anointed one. In the Old Testament, kings and high priest were set apart often by ceremonies that involved anointing with oil. What happens here is that Jesus is set apart to be the King of the Jews. His very person speaks to that.

So beloved, just dealing with this at a very basic fundamental level, how do we know as Christians that we've looked to the right one for our salvation? How would you as an unbeliever know that what I am saying when I call you to repentance and faith in Christ for your salvation, how would you know that Christ is the right one to whom you are to look? It starts with this God-inspired testimony in the gospel of Matthew. Matthew's gospel shows that Christ is in the Old Testament line to fulfill what was promised. In Jesus Christ, we have the promised King that dozens of generations were looking for, that many prophets spoke of, that the course of history, Scripture says, finds its culmination in him. Here is the beauty of it, beloved, and here is one of the reasons why I love to preach Scripture and I would never preach anything else: you don't have to take my word for it. Your faith does not rely on anything that I say that you can't verify for yourself in Scripture. You don't have to depend on the word of a human speaker, in fact, you shouldn't. You should be searching the Scriptures for yourself and say, "Is Christ the one who is really promised? Is he the one to whom we really are to put our only faith in? Is he the one who can truly save me?" Matthew settles that from the beginning saying, "Here's the Messiah. Here is the proof. Here's his genealogical pedigree."

But he doesn't stop there as he lays forth the person of Christ. As you walk through the life of Christ, you see other manner of fulfilled prophecy and Matthew goes out of his way to emphasize this. Let's look secondly at the youth of Christ. Look at his childhood if we could. In Isaiah 7:14, you don't need to turn there, the prophet Isaiah foretold that the Messiah would be born of a virgin. Now, that's a pretty remarkable prophecy to make. That doesn't happen ever but here we see in Matthew 1, beginning in verse 18, that Jesus Christ was the fulfillment of that very unique prophecy. Now we're just going to start reading Scripture passages together by and large here. Matthew 1:18,

18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. 19 And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly. 20 But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. 21 She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."

Stop right there for just a moment. Notice that the central aspect of the coming of Christ was to come to save people from their sins, his people from their sins. We're going to pick up on that later. I just want to highlight it right here that it's woven into the very introduction about the life of Christ. Go back to verse 21, "She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." Now watch this in verse 22,

22 Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: 23 "BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL," which translated means, "GOD WITH US."

What I want you to see there, there are so many things you could focus on in that passage but for today's message, what I want you to focus on is verse 22. All of this, all of the birth of Christ took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet. The birth of Christ took place to fulfill prophecy. The

birth of Christ took place in this manner, at this time, to fulfill what the prophet had said 700 years earlier. 700 years earlier, Isaiah said, "A virgin will be with child." Now in the life of Christ 2,000 years ago from our time perspective, that has been fulfilled. The impossible thing that God promised through the prophet Isaiah has just happened and a virgin is with child and that child is the promised King as spoken by the prophet.

Matthew then goes on as he expands on the youth of Christ, the childhood of Christ. He shows that the very place of Jesus' birth fulfilled another prophecy, this one from Micah chapter 5. Turn to Matthew 2:4, actually let's start in verse 1,

1 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, 2 "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? 3 When Herod the king heard this,

because another King would be a threat to his throne,

he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. 4 Gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. 5 They said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for this is what has been written by the prophet."

Then you see in most of your Bibles that it's going to be in all caps which is representing the fact that it's a quotation from the Old Testament. Verse 6,

6 "AND YOU, BETHLEHEM, LAND OF JUDAH, ARE BY NO MEANS LEAST AMONG THE LEADERS OF JUDAH; FOR OUT OF YOU SHALL COME FORTH A RULER WHO WILL SHEPHERD MY PEOPLE ISRAEL."

Micah was a contemporary of Isaiah. In round numbers, 700 years again before the time of Christ, he prophesied that the Messiah would be born into the little town of Bethlehem, just a village of a few hundred people. You never would have guessed it, let alone to guess it 700 years in advance. The fact that Christ was born in Bethlehem was a mark that God had orchestrated history in order to fulfill what his prophets had said to honor his word which he spoke through the prophets. And you see Matthew again saying, "This fulfilled the prophets. This fulfilled the prophets." He's not done saying that even about the youth of Christ. Herod searched for Jesus to destroy him and Joseph and Mary fled to Egypt again in fulfillment of prophecy. Look at Matthew 2:14. Herod had threatened to kill all of the babies that were two years and under and so in verse 14,

14 So Joseph got up and took the Child and His mother while it was still night, and left for Egypt. 15 He remained there until the death of Herod.

Verse 15, here you see it again, this is a theme throughout the gospel of Matthew,

This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "OUT OF EGYPT I CALLED MY SON."

Three times: at the end of chapter 1 and in chapter 2, describing the life of Christ, "To fulfill what the prophet said. To fulfill what the prophet said. To fulfill what the prophet said." You know, the Bible only has to say something one time for it to be important because all of Scripture is inspired by the Spirit of God. When it says something repeatedly, all the more are you to make the connection; all the more is it to grab your attention. God was keeping his promise to send a King and events which Jesus humanly could never have controlled on his own because he was only an infant, God was orchestrating to be the fulfillment of the prophecy so that Israel could know this was really their King; so that we now 2,000 years later can look through Scripture and say, "Jesus has to be the one." There was never another one like him and there never will be another one, therefore our faith in him could not possibly be misplaced. That's the thing. That's what we're supposed to see. Jesus Christ is the promised King.

Now, you take these things and you meditate upon them. You set aside the things that trouble you about earthly life. You look beyond your own life. You look beyond your own circumstances and you see this magnificent Christ being raised up, being lifted up in the pages of Scripture and the effect that that is to have on us is to give our exclusive attention to him to recognize that he is the Messiah. He is set apart. There is no one else like him and there never will be. As the unique nature of Christ in fulfilling prophecy settles in on your mind more and more, your heart is elevated to worship and honor him because you realize he is distinct from you, he is greater than you, he is greater than anyone else. He is Jesus the promised King and you love him and you worship him in response to that. And as part of that, as you start to realize who he is and the sovereign purposes of God that are at work in the life of Christ, you start to mature in your faith. You start to get settled and take deeper root. When you realize who Christ is, you are no longer tossed about by the waves of change, by the waves of false teaching that come and go. You say, "No, no, no, no there is no reason for me to drift. There is no reason for me to fear. There is no reason for me to be angry here. I know the King. I belong to Christ. What else could I want? I am in line with, God has brought me into harmony with, for severe lack of a better term, God has included me in his eternal plans in Christ. I see it in the fulfillment of prophecy about Christ. If I belong to him, what else matters by comparison?" And you start to settle. And you start to trust. And you start to disassociate yourself from your anxieties and your worries. You start to disassociate yourself from the trivialities of the world's entertainment and the things that preoccupy men and women of the world because you see it for what it is. You see that it is all so trivial and superficial by comparison to the fact that Jesus Christ fulfills prophecies that span millennia. And as Christ gets greater in your eyes and your own sense of self diminishes by comparison, that's where you as a Christian are supposed to be. That's where we're supposed to be. Christ: high, elevated, lifted up. Me: a servant at his feet. That's what we see when we realize that Jesus is the promised King.

Now, thirdly as you move on from the person of Christ to the youth of Christ and you move into the public ministry of Christ. 3. The ministry of Christ. You see Matthew going to the same careful extent of affirming that what Jesus was doing in his public ministry was the fulfillment of prophecies made centuries earlier. The life of Christ as much as the person of Christ was fulfilling earlier promises that God had made to his people. Look at Matthew 3.

1 Now in those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying,  
2 "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

John the Baptist, as you well know, was the forerunner of the Messiah. He preached a message of repentance, of a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins and he drew the attention of Israel to his teaching all for the simple point of being able to say, "The one who comes after me is the one in whom you are to believe." Well, even the forerunner, John the Baptist, had been referenced by Isaiah the prophet. Look at verse 3,

3 For this is the one referred to by Isaiah the prophet when he said [in Isaiah] 40 "THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, 'MAKE READY THE WAY OF THE LORD, MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT!'"

The one who prepared the way for Jesus had been prepared for 700 years earlier by prophecy. The very ministry of John the Baptist fulfilled the promise.

Now, as you continue on, the geographic focus of Christ's early ministry was a fulfillment of prophecy. Look at chapter 4, verse 12,

12 Now when Jesus heard that John had been taken into custody, He withdrew into Galilee; 13 and leaving Nazareth, He came and settled in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali. 14 This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet: 15 "THE LAND OF ZEBULUN AND THE LAND OF NAPHTALI, BY THE WAY OF THE SEA, BEYOND THE JORDAN, GALILEE OF THE GENTILES - 16 THE PEOPLE WHO WERE SITTING IN DARKNESS SAW A

GREAT LIGHT, AND THOSE WHO WERE SITTING IN THE LAND AND SHADOW OF DEATH, UPON THEM A LIGHT DAWNED."

The very geographic area in which Christ ministered at that time was fulfilling prophecy. He was on a prophetic timetable which was certain in its fulfillment because a sovereign God was directing it to accomplish his ends. So from verse 17,

17 From that time Jesus began to preach and say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

The kingdom. The kingdom. The kingdom. Why the kingdom? Simple: the King was there. The kingdom was at hand because Jesus, the promised King, was there in their midst. The one who reigned was in front of them. So John the Baptist fulfilled prophecy. Geography fulfilled prophecy. Now we're going to see that the miracles of Christ fulfilled prophecy. Turn to Matthew 8, beginning in verse 14,

14 When Jesus came into Peter's home, He saw his mother-in-law lying sick in bed with a fever. 15 He touched her hand, and the fever left her; and she got up and waited on Him. 16 When evening came, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed; and He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were ill.

This is starting to sound like a broken record, isn't it?

17 This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet: "HE HIMSELF TOOK OUR INFIRMITIES AND CARRIED AWAY OUR DISEASES."

Christ performed these miraculous healings. Matthew says, "See in these miracles the fulfillment of prophecy and as you see in the fulfillment of the prophecies, look to the person who is fulfilling them and recognize that he is the King that God has long promised. The King is now here. The kingdom is at hand and it's verified by the miracles that he does and did which all were spoken of before they ever took place. There is no doubt about this. This is a matter of divine certainty, guaranteed by the prophets who spoke it, guaranteed by Matthew who recorded the life of Christ under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and now guaranteed as the Holy Spirit himself certifies to your heart the truthfulness of the word of God. There is multiple divine attestation to the person of Christ: the prophets, the gospel writers, the Spirit working in your own heart. This is why we preach the Bible. This is why I don't try to entertain you with stories. This is why we don't joke around. There is too much at stake. This is too important. Why would we talk about those kinds of trivialities when Christ is right here in front of us in his word? Why would we not focus on him? Why would any preacher not bring Christ to your immediate attention as his sole obligation of this pulpit? Those men will have to answer for that. Here at Truth Community, we just want to see Christ in the Scripture.

As you move along, Matthew tells you that the teaching of Christ fulfilled the prophecy. His forerunner fulfilled prophecy. The geography fulfilled prophecy. The miracles fulfilled prophecy. The teaching fulfills prophecy. Matthew 13, beginning in verse 10,

10 And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?" 11 Jesus answered them, "To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted. 12 For whoever has, to him more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him."

Now look at verse 13, Christ speaking,

13 "Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. 14 In their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, 'YOU WILL KEEP ON HEARING, BUT WILL NOT UNDERSTAND; YOU WILL KEEP ON SEEING, BUT WILL NOT PERCEIVE;

15 FOR THE HEART OF THIS PEOPLE HAS BECOME DULL, WITH THEIR EARS THEY SCARCELY HEAR, AND THEY HAVE CLOSED THEIR EYES, OTHERWISE THEY WOULD SEE WITH THEIR EYES, HEAR WITH THEIR EARS, AND UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEART AND RETURN, AND I WOULD HEAL THEM."

Why did Jesus teach as he did at this point in his ministry? Because Isaiah the prophet said that he would and the word of God must be fulfilled. The word of the prophets must be fulfilled. That's the whole theme running through Matthew and so the teaching of Christ fulfilled prophecy. So, do you know what? This does something as you read the gospels. As you read the gospels about the life of Christ, you should read them with this sense in your mind that what you are reading is the unfolding of the sovereign, eternal plan of God that was certain of its fulfillment. There was nothing random about the life of Christ. There was nothing incidental. There was nothing that was outside of what God had intended to happen. As we read about Christ, we're reading about something that had a chronological and prophetic context that informs the way that we are to understand and interpret it. We read the Old Testament and then we see Christ blooming out of what the prophets said. You see the theme right? God had kept his promise to send a miracle working, teaching King and that's who we worship here today.

Now, we see it from our perspective with the benefit of the passage of time and with the benefit of the apostolic writings after the gospels and Acts and Paul's letters and the general epistles and so forth, but the Jews at that time were looking for a different kind of King. They were looking for a political military deliverer; a conquering hero who would overthrow Rome and give them political deliverance. This is a little bit of a pause in the prophetic fulfillment passages, Jesus clarifies in the heart of his ministry that his purpose in coming was different than their expectations. Look at Matthew 20:25,

25 But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. 26 It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, 27 and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; 28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Jesus in his first advent of which we read here in the Gospels, was not coming to be a political king who would provide a political deliverance. What I'm about to say is incredibly precious: Jesus, this promised King, came to provide a spiritual deliverance and this King who has all authority, this King who is the fulfillment of prophecy, this King who is the Son of Man, this King who is the Son of God, this King who was there before creation, this King, came to earth taking on human flesh. This King, came with a royal pedigree. This King, came with authority and yet this King, came to serve. This King came to lay down his precious life as a ransom payment to deliver Jews and Gentiles alike from sin. Where can you go to begin to grasp the glory, the majesty and the incomprehensibility of such glory? Here is the Lord Jesus. Here is the promised King saying, "I'm not here to have you serve me, I'm here to serve you with my own blood."

It would be enough to humble us eternally before Christ to simply recognize the majesty of who he is in his very essence as the second member of the holy Trinity. To recognize that in Christ we have the prophetic fulfillment of what the prophets spoke hundreds of years in advance. He's greater than us. You get that, right? You realize that Christ is everything and by comparison we are nothing? And not just by comparison, nothing as sinful, by comparison, nothing. And yet this promised king came as a servant to us to lay down his life which has infinite value, infinite merit, eternal value, he laid it down in order to rescue us from sin, to pay the redemption price from sin. This is multiplied glory upon exponential glory that tongue can't express. We are in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ here this morning and we are in the presence of one of unspeakable majesty, unspeakable pedigree and unspeakable condescension. Why did this King not simply destroy the rebels who were around him? Why did he not just destroy you and me in our sin and guilt? It's not like we were looking for him. What kind of King lays down his life for his people? This is a reversal of order. The kings rule and the subjects obey. Here is a King going underneath his subjects, as it were, to serve them with his life. I love him, don't you? He's the King and yet he came to serve. He came to serve in his first advent. He came to serve at the cross. He came to pay a ransom for his people.



There are not adequate words of gratitude are there? There are not adequate words of worship that could exhaust the fullness of the majesty of what this gospel says about Jesus of Nazareth. You see, when you recognize who Christ is, you begin to recognize that you owe him your life and it's not out of a legal obligation that you would respond to him that way. You are so drawn to his majesty, so drawn to the grace, the unmerited favor that a King would show to you that all you can do is respond to him with love and an obedient spirit that says, "Lord, having saved me, what would you have me do? Because Lord, there is nothing too great that you could ask from me." The authority of this prophetic King, the condescension of this gracious Savior was unlimited toward us and therefore, in response as those who are now his people through faith in Christ, it's obvious. It's the desire of the redeemed heart that says, "Lord, there would be no limits on what I would give to you in response. In response to your unlimited gift of your life, I just want to respond with an unlimited sacrifice of myself in return. No limits. No preconditions. Just an abandonment of myself to follow after you for your inherent, supreme worth."

Now, Jesus' ministry. We'll finish it here. Not the whole message, don't start to shuffle your papers like you're getting ready to go. We're not ready to go yet. But this is the end of the third point. Jesus' entry into Jerusalem prior to his crucifixion fulfilled prophecy. Matthew 21:1,

1 When they had approached Jerusalem and had come to Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, 2 saying to them, "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied there and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to Me. 3 If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord has need of them,' and immediately he will send them."

Verse 4, here it is again,

4 This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet: 5 "SAY TO THE DAUGHTER OF ZION, 'BEHOLD YOUR KING IS COMING TO YOU, GENTLE, AND MOUNTED ON A DONKEY, EVEN ON A COLT, THE FOAL OF A BEAST OF BURDEN.'"

His entry into Jerusalem fulfilled the prophet. The King had arrived. All in perfect fulfillment of prophecy. The divine timetable spoken into existence, let's say, centuries before in the Old Testament was now in full operation. The King had arrived. The Messiah was there. The Anointed One was on the scene. This one of whom we have spoken today. The one of whose glory we have feebly tried to expound. He's there and what did they do with him? They killed him. They killed him.

Point 4: the death of Christ. The death of Christ. Even when those wicked men killed Christ out of the evil of their own hearts, their actions for which they were culpable because they flowed from their own wicked, sinful desires to silence the Messiah, even in that, their actions fulfilled divine prophecy. Jesus quotes Zechariah at the Last Supper. Look at Matthew 26:31,

31 Then Jesus said to them, "You will all fall away because of Me this night, for it is written, 'I WILL STRIKE DOWN THE SHEPHERD, AND THE SHEEP OF THE FLOCK SHALL BE SCATTERED.'"

Why were they going to fall away? Because it had been ordained by divine prophecy. This is what God said would happen. This is what God predicted through the mouth of the prophet Zechariah and so the fact that the disciples fled was a fulfillment of prophecy. The betrayal by Judas was a fulfillment of prophecy. Look back at verse 14 of chapter 26. We're going to look at a couple of passages here real quickly to see this. Matthew 26:14,

14 Then one of the twelve, named Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests 15 and said, "What are you willing to give me to betray Him to you?" And they weighed out thirty pieces of silver to him. 16 From then on he began looking for a good opportunity to betray Jesus.

Now turn to him Matthew 27:3. Judas had done his deed. He led the soldiers to the secret place and they had carried Jesus off for a mock trial, a sham of a trial. Now in Matthew 27:3 it picks up the story with Judas after that fact.

3 Then when Judas, who had betrayed Him, saw that He had been condemned, he felt remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, 4 saying, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." But they said, "What is that to us? See to that yourself!" 5 And he threw the pieces of silver into the temple sanctuary and departed; and he went away and hanged himself. 6 The chief priests took the pieces of silver and said, "It is not lawful to put them into the temple treasury, since it is the price of blood." 7 And they conferred together and with the money bought the Potter's Field as a burial place for strangers.

Now, obviously these men had no desire to fulfill prophecy. They had just betrayed the Messiah over to executioners and so these men were not biblical men. They were not godly men. They were the height of ungodliness and yet what does Scripture say about their actions. Verse 8,

8 For this reason that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day. 9 Then that which was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled: "AND THEY TOOK THE THIRTY PIECES OF SILVER, THE PRICE OF THE ONE WHOSE PRICE HAD BEEN SET by the sons of Israel; 10 AND THEY GAVE THEM FOR THE POTTER'S FIELD, AS THE LORD DIRECTED ME."

Even the betrayal was a fulfillment of prophecy. Even the use of the money that was the price of betrayal was a fulfillment of prophecy. In the death of Christ, when he seemed to be at his weakest, most subject to the authority of wicked men, it was all on God's timetable. Prophecy was being fulfilled. Nothing happened here that was outside the design of God. And the prophecies were so certain and necessary in fulfillment that Jesus could say this, Matthew 26:55,

55 At that time Jesus said to the crowds, "Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest Me as you would against a robber? Every day I used to sit in the temple teaching and you did not seize Me.

"Why now then, Lord Jesus?" Verse 56,

56 "But all this has taken place to fulfill the Scriptures of the prophets." Then all the disciples left Him and fled.

You see, from his very person, from his genealogical lineage, his childhood, his ministry, his death, the life of Christ unfolded by a prophetic blueprint that was certain in its fulfillment. Even those who crucified him unknowingly, unconsciously were fulfilling divine prophecy because God works even through the actions of sinful men to accomplish his holy purposes. And even those who crucified him, unwittingly testified that he was the promised King. Look at verse 37 of Matthew 27. He's the King. He's the King. He's the King. That's the message of Matthew. And God so perfectly overrides the wicked intentions of men to accomplish his own purposes that even those who crucified gave testimony to the fact that Jesus was the King of the Jews. Verse 37, as he was crucified,

37 And above His head they put up the charge against Him which read, "THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS."

Now go to verse 41 just a few verses down the page there,

41 In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes and elders, were mocking Him and saying, 42 "He saved others; He cannot save Himself."

They are mocking him and yet look at what comes out of their mouth,

"He is the King of Israel."

So even in the mouths of those who crucified him were the words, the affirmation, "This is the King of Israel." The charge against him, "This is the King of Israel." Throughout Matthew's gospel, throughout fulfilled prophecy, "This is the king of Israel." And they set up a false challenge saying, "Let him come down from the cross and we'll believe on him. He's the King of Israel, let him come down from the cross, that will prove it." Well, Jesus didn't prove it by coming down from the cross, did he? He proved it by something infinitely greater when he didn't come down from a cross, he came out from a grave. No one does that. No one rises from the dead on their own power. Jesus did. The Messiah is he set apart? Beloved, there is no King like this. Look at Matthew 28.

1 Now after the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to look at the grave. 2 And behold, a severe earthquake had occurred, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it. 3 And his appearance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. 4 The guards shook for fear of him and became like dead men. 5 The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; for I know that you are looking for Jesus who has been crucified. 6 He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said. Come, see the place where He was lying. 7 Go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead; and behold, He is going ahead of you into Galilee, there you will see Him; behold, I have told you."

He not only fulfilled prophecy in those various points in his life, the divine attestation of this Jesus of Nazareth as being the promised King, the only Lord, the only Savior is found in the empty tomb.

What God has laid out for us in his word here this morning is a reality of unquestioned, unparalleled authority that rests in the Lord Jesus Christ. Matthew's gospel demonstrates conclusively that he is the one of prophecy and now, my friends, Christ comes and asserts his authority over us here today. He's a living King. He's not dead. He may not be physically present but he is alive and he speaks through his word and continues his claim established through all of eternity that he is the King. Now, the question is: what is your response and mine to that because there are two responses that are embedded in the narrative after the statement of his resurrection? Question 1: are you one who will respond in faith and trust and obedience and worship like the disciples did? Look at verse 8,

8 And they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy and ran to report it to His disciples. 9 And behold, Jesus met them and greeted them. And they came up and took hold of His feet and worshiped Him.

That's the only way that you respond to this King, you fall down and you worship him. You bow before the matchless authority of Christ and worship unconditionally. And if you're here today, you young people, and you don't know Christ, what is laid out before you here today is the way that you respond to Christ. You turn from the sin for which he died and you receive him unconditionally as your King. That's the only way that you respond to a King, you bow before him. This King, you bow before in utter worship of heart, soul and mind and receive him. That's the response of faith.

But as if to warn us, as if to caution us, there is another portion of the narrative that shows how the rebels respond. Verse 11,

11 Now while they were on their way, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all that had happened. 12 And when they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, 13 and said, "You are to say, 'His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we were asleep.' 14 "And if this should come to the governor's ears, we will win him over and

keep you out of trouble." 15 And they took the money and did as they had been instructed; and this story was widely spread among the Jews, and is to this day.

For those of you that are rejecting Christ today, you are doing the exact same thing as those wicked chief priests did. In the face of overwhelming, conclusive, final evidence of the glory and certainty of Christ, you make up silly excuses, manufacture silly questions to evade the issue. When people are in unbelief like some of you, it's not a question of intellectual comprehension. You can't deny the fullness of what Scripture says. You can't deny the testimony of the Spirit of God continually bearing witness to Christ through the proclaimed word. You can't deny it and so your unbelief is not a problem of your intellectual comprehension, it's a problem of your rebel volition. It's the fact that you don't want to bow down before him. It is a moral problem. What these chief priests did was foolish, a foolish story. They bribed off soldiers to tell an obviously false story. How would they even know if they were asleep what happened while they were asleep? That doesn't make any sense. It's laughable. It makes no sense whatsoever. Do you know what? Your refusal to bow to Christ, your rejection of the gospel, is of equal foolishness and contrived excuses that don't bear the closest scrutiny of truth. Your rejection of Christ is morally culpable. It only adds to your guilt.

To mock him in that way. It grieves me. It grieves me. You see, after this message, there is no middle ground for any of us. You and I will either walk out that door as a committed believing disciple of Jesus Christ rejoicing in the fact that he is the promised King and God by his Spirit has brought him to us and we'll go out grounded and rejoicing because of the reality of the truth settled in our hearts that Christ is King and we have not believed in him in vain and we'll go out triumphant and rejoicing which is what I'm going to do or because there is no middle ground, you will go out as a dishonest man, woman or child, filled with sin, sinning against God and sinning against your own soul because of your irrational, selfish, sinful rejection of the proclamation of King Jesus. There is no other ground. There is no other way. There is no other exit. You either go out belonging to Christ or you go out having been made known to you of your inexcusable guilt. And eternity is coming quickly.

Yet this gracious King offers himself to you one more time. One more time, Christ comes to you and says, "I will still receive you. You haven't sinned yourself beyond my grace." Confess your sin. Receive him as King and he'll forgive all of your sins. Your sinful past will be forgotten in the courts of God, erased by the cleansing blood of Christ and you can be fully reconciled to God through faith in this promised King.

The certainty of fulfillment is there. Look at the closing verses in Matthew 28:18,

18 And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

He's a King, alright. King of heaven. King of earth.

19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Are you walking out today as a rejoicing disciple fully redeemed by the blood of Christ or are you walking out with inexcusable guilt on your soul? That's the question. You don't have to walk out that way. Christ will receive you. Christ will forgive you even now. You just come to him by faith.

Let's bow together in prayer.

*Father, you have certified Christ to us in such an unmistakable way. Lord Jesus, you have laid down your life for us in such an unmistakable way. We thank you for the gospel and I pray, Father, that those who belong to Christ would walk out rejoicing, knowing that they stand on an unshakable foundation of truth and may the glory of their Savior rejoice their heart today. I pray for those who have been rejecting him now, Lord. I ask you for a work of your Spirit in their heart. Lord Jesus, you said that if you are lifted up that you will draw them into yourself. We've done our level best to lift you up before men today, now I ask*

*you that those who have heard who are outside your kingdom would be drawn to you, that you would bring them by that same resurrection power that raised you from the dead, by that same power that overturned the grave, O God, would you overturn the stony, rebellious hearts that are in our midst that they might willingly, gladly, humbly receive Christ for their salvation? We pray in his name. Amen.*

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