

The King of the Jews

By Paris Reidhead*

I turn your attention for just a few moments to His Word. In Matthew the second chapter we read concerning the coming of the three wise men to seek out the Lord Jesus. May I read, beginning with the 1st verse of the 2nd chapter:

“Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel. Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, enquired of them diligently what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also. When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense and myrrh. And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.”

This is an amazing scripture because of what it leaves unsaid. Have you ever been impressed by the silence of scripture. I have been as I have anticipated the privilege of sharing with you in these few minutes. If you read in Psalm 24 with your ear tuned to the future as you read it, you hear there an exaltation in heaven over the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ should be born King of the Jews. Listen to these words: “Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of Glory? The Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of Glory? The Lord of Hosts, He is the King of Glory.” (Psa. 24:7-10) The Psalmist sang of the Lord Jesus; sang in Israel’s hymn book, for this was the song that Israel would sing. Told them of the One that was to come. Then in Isaiah the 7th chapter you hear the Spirit of God through the prophet as he speaks saying, “Therefore shall the Lord give you a sign. Behold a virgin shall conceive and bare a son, and shall call His name Immanuel, God with us.” (Isa. 7:14) Then in the 9th chapter verses 6 & 7 you hear again: “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.”

The silence of which I speak is the silence which you had in Jerusalem at this time. The Jews had the Scripture. They were profited because they had the oracles of God. They had the prophesies that were cherished in Messianic hope by their fathers for centuries. They had the Star. That too had been given in their sky as well as to be seen in the East. But their eyes were holden, their eyes were closed. The Scripture had become dead to them. They venerated it, they held it to be true, but they didn’t believe it, they didn’t meditate upon it. It wasn’t real in their experience, it was a ritual, it was a form through which they passed. It was simply truth in the abstract and they believed it, of course. They knew where to turn when they were questioned as to where Messiah was to be born, but you see their eyes were not lifted up. They were looking down at their own feet, around them at their own interested, consumed with their own plans and satisfied with their own state. Though God had spoken through the Psalms and eloquently described all that should pertain to the coming of His Son through the Prophets, and then had sealed the time with this Star in the heavens, Israel’s leaders sat there dull and dense and content without the promised Messiah. When over in the East a company of people, not blest as Israel had been, not possessing the Scripture in the manner in which Israel had it, but simply seeing in the zodiac in the skies and the writings that had trickled through from Israel and had been incorporated into their sacred writings, the fact that there would come a redeemer, a deliverer. They knew little about Him, but they knew enough to be sensitive to what they did know. They knew enough to be

responsive to what they saw. They knew enough to follow the burden of their hearts and the hunger of their spirits. They did just that. Seeing the Star, learning what they could from the writing they possessed and obeying the impulses that God gave to them, they journeyed from their land, following the Star, seeking the King of the Jews. They knew this much about it. Isn't it amazing that when they came into Jerusalem, they had to break the silence. Have you thought about the fact that the Jewish people, Israel, was completely oblivious to all the marvelous things that were taking place until strangers apprise them of what God was doing.

I wonder this Christmas, this year, if you and I may not find ourselves somewhat in the state of Israel at the time of the coming of the Lord. Do you have heritage as rich as theirs? A heritage of truth, a heritage of doctrine, a heritage of privilege, and often neglected responsibility. You have such a heritage, but I'm afraid that we've been content to hold the truth in the abstract, to venerate it, to rejoice that we are the people. I wonder if the stars may not be still fixed with strange signs for those whose eyes are lifted up. I wonder if the Lord Jesus may not yet be moving in matters that we may miss because we sit down in our tradition, sit down in all of our ritual, in our privileges of the past and say, our fathers hewed the path and we need go no further. I wonder if it may not be that the Lord will have to raise up others that follow the leading of the Spirit of God. My heart goes back to those weeks just recently past, when everyone that has ears to hear must have certainly heard God speak as our Brother Bakht Singh came from India and told us of God moving. Moving in America through India. They'd seen the Star in the sky, they'd seen that God wanted to do something in America, and they were sensitive and responsive and they heard the voice of the Spirit of God calling them to prayer. They didn't plead weariness, they didn't plead the tea, they didn't plead occupation. They went to prayer, earnest, agonizing, intercessory prayer, all night prayer for America. They saw the Star, they saw that God was moving, they saw that God had a plan, God had a purpose and they responded. I am wondering if it isn't necessary for one to come as our Brother Bakht Singh came, saying "Where is the sign of His moving? God wants to work in America." I talked to our Brother Bakht saying, "Why he'd come?" He said, "I came because I felt a strange inner urge that God is beginning to do something, wants to do something in America." Have you felt, an urge? Have you felt a strange concern? Have you felt something that's pressing within you like an eagle within its cage whose wings beat against the bars? Have you felt the pressure crowding in upon you that restricts and the moving of the Spirit of God. Have you felt God moving? He did. I trust, my dear, that you shall not be as Israel was, sitting down and venerating the Book and neglecting what it teaches. Worshipping God, but obeying Him not, serving Him but seeking Him not. Oh, let it not be true of you thus, as it was of His people, for He came and they wist it not, they knew it not, they saw Him not, and then when in full time He was set forth 30 years afterwards, set forth as the anointed one, the promised one, the Messiah of Israel that had come to redeem, what did they say? We will not have this man to rule over us. We do not want Him, and when the claim was made that He had said that He was the King of the Jews, the judge said to Him. "They called you the King of the Jews, are you the Kings of the Jews, and the answer came 'Thou sayest'." (Mar. 15:2) "Thou sayest." And Israel said, "We have no king but Caesar." (John 19:15) I wonder tonight if it could be true that you and I would say, we have no King, but tradition, we have no King, but the past, we have no more future than had our fathers, we are held, we are bound. Israel believed in the Messiah, but He was distant, removed from their day and their generation. He was coming sometime, but He wasn't there in their midst, my day. My heart goes out today to you and to me, because we believe in danger. It was a crisis. He stood before them, He manifested Himself in their midst; He demonstrated that He was the One whom He claimed to be, very God, God come in the flesh, but somehow their eyes were holden. They didn't see, and if they saw they didn't understand, and if they heard they didn't believe. They were so content in what they had, they were so certain that there could be nothing beyond, nothing more, nothing other than already passed beneath the bridge of their experience. No more water in the river than they had seen, that they missed Him, and when He was evidently set forth as the King of Kings, they rejected Him, they would not follow Him. They were looking for someone to come and do other than this One was doing.

I wonder, my friend, if somewhere in your thinking and mine we have not stereotyped God. I wonder if somewhere we have not fixed an image of what must be if God is in it. I believe that God is working today, working on miraculous ways, marvelous ways, but there are some who somewhere, somehow in some sort caught a glimpse of what they thought God's working would be, and if God doesn't come to them to fit His working to the little image that they have in their mind, then they'll not believe anything else is of God. That was what Israel thought. He must come back, He must proceed to present Himself to the Sanhedrin, he must come before the rulers of Israel, they must counsel Him, they must promote Him, they must sustain Him,

they must support Him, and He becomes their servant doing what they want Him to do for them. When the Lord Jesus came he said, "Verily, verily I say unto you" I appeal to no authority than myself. I would do those things that please the Father, and I have no intention pleasing you. When the Lord Jesus evidenced that He was come to be King indeed and not a puppet, they turned on Him, they revolted against Him. Why? Because He did not fit into the stereotype that they had fixed through centuries of anticipation of what the Messiah would be. They were so inflexible in their attitudes, in their spirits, they would not recognize the workings of God. And I submit to you, that He is still King, and He is King in that way that He is prepared to act according to His own sovereign fiat. He makes no appeal to me or to you. It is not my responsibility to say have King Jesus work as I have anticipated Thy working or I will not believe in Thee that's doing the work. It is my responsibility to so fall in love with Him and so come into fellowship with Him, and so understand His Word that anything King Jesus wants to do, I gladly consent to it, for He is King, and I am but a lowly follower of His. They missed Him, they missed Him because He didn't fit the pattern that they had come to expect of Him. Oh, this should not be true have of us that we miss Him, that we miss him, because we have somehow accepted from some source a pattern. God must work this way, He must do it after this fashion. It's not a revival unless you have this emotional accoutrement or this expression. It isn't of God unless it is done the way the Father did it. No dear. I submit to you that He is King Jesus, and He has a perfect right to do what He will, when He will and as He will. Israel missed Him. In all of their orthodoxy and fundamentalism they missed Him, because He didn't do it their way.

I submit to you that we are living in great jeopardy, because we are often more loyal to such pictures of the past than to the person of the present. Move with me just a moment further. They missed Him and they failed to see Him as King, because they didn't recognize the extent of His dominion. There are many people that want Jesus to be King over their ultimate destiny. There are many people that are willing to accept Jesus as Governor, as Lord to this degree that His Lordship shall begin at the time they die. They're perfectly willing for Him to reign as long as His reign is confined from the time that they finish the course of their life and then go out into Eternity. In other words, they want Him to be King in Heaven. They are perfectly willing for Him to reign in heaven, but right now they don't want a King as much as a Savior. All they want is someone that will make certain to them and insure to them that if anything happens between now and morning their destiny will be secure. But my friend, the Lord Jesus Christ cannot be received in parts. It is said of Him that He has been exalted by the right hand of the Father to be a Prince and a Savior. It was said of Him that He is both Lord and Christ, and Peter rightly spoke to Cornelius saying, He is Lord of all. He is not only the King of the Jews and the King of Heaven, but He must be the King of your heart now. And the difference between the true child of God and the counterfeit, spurious Christian is this, that the true child of God has recognized the sovereignty of this One, the Lord Jesus Christ, has abdicated the throne in his heart, has abandoned all right to rule, denied all claims in the counsels of government of his life and has irrevocably turned his life over to the only One that's ever been appointed to the King, to be Governor, even the Lord Jesus Christ. They were not prepared to do that. They wouldn't have Him to rule over them and so they perished in their sin.

I want to ask you tonight, as you come up to this Christian season, is your heart just filled with sentiment and emotion, which is shared by a godless world? For there will be many a person in his cups within the next two weeks, that will look into some crèche scene, some manger scene and will have the most moving sentiments regarding this One who is pictured there. He will remember a mother that talked to him in Sunday School where he heard the songs and gave his little piece. Yes, there are many that will, that have no thought whatever of abandoning the right to rule, of making Him King of their lives. All the sentiments, generally profitable as it may be to us who live in a Christian land rather than in a land of some other religion, all that it may be as far as making your life somewhat pleasanter socially, culturally, has no meaning at all for the glory of this One that was born as a babe and laid in a manger and died on a cross. The only thing that you can do for Him, the only present you can bring Him, the only thing that He asks of you is this, that you totally and absolutely and irrevocably abandon the kingdom of your heart to Him, for He will be King of all, Lord of all, Sovereign of all or He'll have no part in it at all. Have you done that? Is He King of your business? Is He the King of your home? Is He the King of your entertainment? Is He the King of your habits? Is He the King of your attitudes and your motives? Is He the King of your savings, is He the King of your time? Is He the King of your personality? Is He? Where are you going to start? Are you going to look into the face of this one who endured the agonies of Hell and the suffering of the cross and say, Lord Jesus your dominion comes up here to the place of my business, but when I step out here over the threshold of my business, your sovereignty ceases. Are you going to say to Him, you're the King of my life, but when it comes to my recreation and entertainment, your sovereignty ceases. Are you going to say, You're the King of

all, but when it comes to the habits of my life and my body, your sovereignty ceases. Are you going to say to Him, when it comes to the savings I have acquired by the dint of perspiration and effort, your sovereignty ceases? What are you going to say to Him? What are you going to stop? What limits are you going to fix to His sovereignty? Where? He is either King of all or not at all. It resolves itself to such situation as that. And He only makes Him King who makes Him King of all. Oh, they were quite prepared to have His Kingship in certain selected areas. They were quite prepared to do that. My dear, the only one who can come to Him on His terms must recognize that, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon His shoulders," (Isa. 9:6) and God means that you come absolutely abandoning every right to rule in every area of your life, in your Christian life, your business life, your church life, your recreational life, and you see the Lord Jesus and India is in one section and the Bride will come before her bridegroom, take the sash from off the brow and roll it on his shoulder and signify thereby to all that are attending that she is recognizing him as the head of her home and her house and her heart. So you must come and take the mantle of everything that is dear and precious to you; everything that others would live and die for, and voluntarily lay it on the shoulders of the One - the child that was given and the Son that was born to be Governor. Have you done that? Or have you said with Israel, we will not have you rule over us. In our pleasure, in our business, in our home. My friend, if there is any place where you are unwilling to admit His sovereignty, you have rejected Him as Sovereign. Are you going to take your side, your place with that company who, drawn by hunger of heart to God and in response to the promptings and leadings of God, follow the Star of truth and the Scriptures and come to His feet and their lay the gifts that you bring, gold you may not possess, frankincense you may not have, myrrh may be unknown to you, but the gift He desires is the abandonment of your whole being, body, soul and spirit to Him. That's the only thing that you can bring that He wants. Behold! The King of the Jews wants to be your King. He was born to be King.

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