

CHRISTMAS 2022

- Session 1

—Christ the Lamb

- Session 2

—Christ the King



Summary so far...

- We saw how the truth of Christmas has been obfuscated by tradition
- Jesus came as the Lamb of God to take away the sins of the world
- He was born in the town of sacrificial lamb's
 - Bethlehem
- In the Tower of the Flock (Migdal Edar)
 - as prophesied by Micah
- Wrapped in 'swaddling bands' as a lamb that was to remain unblemished & laid in The manger
- Inspected by the very shepherds whose job it was to inspect and care for the lambs destined for sacrifice in Jerusalem!

Summary so far...

- So, when you think ‘Christmas’ ...
- You should think...

‘Sacrificial Lamb’!

- The location, the details and the Shepherds themselves all speak of this great truth!
- But, that is only half the story (specifically Luke’s half!)...
- When you think ‘Christmas’ ...
- You should also think...

The King of the Jews

- These two aspects are summarised in Isaiah 9:6-7

Lamb & King

- “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, Counseller, 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”.

Isaiah 9:6-7

Model in Advance

- As a forerunner to Christ, Melchizedek was part of a line of kings and priests of Jerusalem spanning 1000 years from just after the time of the flood
- God had always intended a monarchy for the Nation of Israel, but had stated:

IO I will be thy king: where is any other that may save thee in all thy cities? and thy judges of whom thou saidst, Give me a king and princes?

Hosea 13:10

Model in Advance

– Israel were not to be like the other nations:

²¹ He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel: the LORD his God is with him, and **the shout of a king is among them.**

²² God brought them out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn.

²³ Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel: according to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought!

The Failure of Human Government

- Not content to be without a visible king, Israel ‘jumped the gun’ and appointed Saul as king
- That ended in failure!
- Man’s government of man will always be lacking at best, and tyranny at worst!

(The Prophecy of Balaam)

The Promise of Divine Government

- Then in God's time He appointed a king, (David) as a model / forerunner of His ultimate plan to rule over His people Himself
- 2 Samuel 7 documents God's promise to David of an eternal throne & kingdom!

(The Prophecy of Balaam)

18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise:
When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph,
before they came together, she was found with child
of the Holy Ghost.

19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not
willing to make her a publick example, was minded
to put her away privily.

Matthew 1:18-19

- Joseph was the legal heir to the throne of Israel Gr. 'dikaios' (dik'-ah-yos); equitable (in character or act); by implication, innocent, holy (absolutely or relatively):

24 Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife:

25 And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.

Matthew 1:24-25

- **Incredible faith!**

- 1 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,
- 2 **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.
- 3 When Herod the king had heard these things, **he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.**

Matthew 2:1-3

The Wise Men

- Who were they?
- Where did they come from?
- Why did they travel so far?
- How did they know about this King?
- How many were there?
- Why was 'all Jerusalem' troubled?

The Wise Men

- Who were they?



The Wise Men

- Dispelling the myths!



The Wise Men

- Eastern tradition:
 - 12 wise men,
 - Arrived at Christmas on Jan 6
- 3rd century: “Kings” bearing gifts,
Ps 72:10, 68:29
- Western tradition:
 - 3 kings who arrived after Christmas at Epiphany: Jan 6

The Wise Men

- 6th century chronicle, *Exerpia Latina Garbari*
 - Bithisarea, Balthasar
 - Melichior, Melchior
 - Gathaspa, Gasper
- Bede (673-735): three sons of Noah
 - Shem: Asia
 - Ham: Africa
 - Japheth: Europe
- 14th century Armenian tradition:
 - Balthasar King of Arabia
 - Melchior King of Persia
 - Gasper King of India

The Wise Men

- Many years ago at an archaeological dig in Persia, three skulls were discovered in a grave together
- Who else could it possibly be!!



The Wise Men

- Dispelling the myths!



The Wise Men

- Dispelling the myths!



The Wise Men

- Dispelling the myths!



The Wise Men

- Dispelling the myths!



The Magi

- Verse one calls them 'wise men'
- Matthew is actually much more specific than that in the original text, he specifically calls them 'magi'
- The magi come up time and time and time again in ancient history.

The Magi

- The Magi were actually one of the most powerful groups of men in the ancient world.
- The Magi would have been well known at that time

The Magi

- The Priests of the Media
- Renowned for interpreting dreams
- Mixed up the science of astronomy with their superstition of astrology
- They started trying to predict the future
 - Fortune telling / Sorcery
 - Magic is derived from Magi
 - As is the word 'magistrate'
- They had a political and religious component

The Magi

- As their reputation grew, they were looked to for advice
- No government in the east would be without their team of Magi!
- Important decisions would first be run passed the Magi
- Particularly the appointment of a king
- They make a number of Biblical appearances...

The Magi

¹³ Then the king said to the **wise men**, which knew the times, (for so was the king's manner toward all that *knew law and judgment...*

Esther 1:13-16

The Magi

¹ And in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams, wherewith his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him.

² Then the king commanded to call the **magicians**, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, for to shew the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king.

Daniel 2:1-5

The Magi

48 Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon.

Daniel 2:46-48

Chief of the Magi

- This was a hereditary order! ...
- Yet Daniel actually became Rabmag – (Jer.39), meaning Chief of the Magi.
- King Nebuchadnezzar gave up the worship of Ishtar, (from where we get 'Easter') and was apparently converted.

Chief of the Magi

- So, it seems that much happened to the magi under Daniel's ministry...
- if you go to Daniel chapter 5 verse 7 you'll come to Belshazzar's feast, and you'll notice that the new king at that time, calls the soothsayers, but the magi are mysteriously not present!
- There's no doubt at all, that many of the magi, carried on as true believers from this time, under the influence of Daniel himself.

The Magi

9 But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one:

Acts 8:9

The Magi

- 6 And when they had gone through the isle to Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Bar-jesus:
- 7 Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God.
- 8 But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith.

Acts 13:6-8

The Parthian Empire

- Parthia, ancient empire of Asia, in what are now Iran and Afghanistan.
- The Parthians were of Scythian descent, and adopted Median dress and Aryan speech.
- Parthia was subject successively to the Assyrians, Medes, Persians, and Macedonians under Alexander the Great, and then the Seleucids.

The Parthian Empire

- 250 BC: the Parthians succeeded in founding an independent kingdom
- During the 1st century BC, grew into an empire extending from the Euphrates River to the Indus River and from the Oxus (now Amu Darya) River to the Indian Ocean.
- After the middle of the 1st century BC Parthia was, thus, a rival of Rome, and several wars occurred between the two powers.

The Roman Empire 68 BC – 476 AD



Judea: a Buffer Zone

- Pompey, the first Roman conqueror of Jerusalem, in 63 B.C. had attacked the Armenian outpost of Parthia.
- In 55 B.C. Crassus led Roman legions in sacking Jerusalem and in a subsequent attack on Parthia proper. The Romans were decisively defeated at the Battle of Carrhae with the loss of 30,000 troops, including their commander.
- The Parthians counterattacked with a token invasion of Armenia, Syria, and Palestine.

Judea: a Buffer Zone

- Nominal Roman rule was reestablished under Antipater, the father of Herod, who in turn retreated before a Parthian invasion in 40 BC.
- Mark Antony reestablished Roman sovereignty in 37 B.C., and like Carssus before him, also embarked on a similarly ill-fated Parthian expedition.
- His disastrous retreat was followed by another wave of invading Parthians, which swept all Roman opposition completely out of Palestine
 - (including Herod himself who had to flee to Alexandria and then to Rome).

Judea: a Buffer Zone

- With Parthian collaboration Jewish sovereignty was restored and Jerusalem was fortified with a Jewish garrison.
- Herod, by this time, secured from Augustus Caesar the title of “King of the Jews.”
- However, it was not for three years, including a five months’ siege by Roman troops, that the king was able to occupy his own capital city.

Herod's Slippery Rock

- Herod had thus gained the throne of a rebellious buffer state situated between two mighty contending empires.
- At any time his own subjects might conspire in bringing the Parthians to their aid.

Roman Tensions

- Augustus was also aged; Rome, since the retirement of Tiberius, was without any experienced military commander.
- Pro-Parthian Armenia was fomenting revolt against Rome
 - (which was successfully accomplished within two years).
- At the time of the birth of Christ, Herod was close to his final illness

Parthian Instability

- The time was ripe for another Parthian invasion of the buffer provinces, except for the fact that Parthia itself was racked by internal dissension:
- Phraates IV, the unpopular and aging king, had once been deposed and it was not improbable that the Persian Magi were already involved in the political maneuvering requisite to choosing his successor.
- It is possible that the Magi might have taken advantage of the king's lack of popularity to further their own interests with the establishment of a new dynasty if a sufficiently strong contender could be found...

A Precarious Visit?

- It was then that a group of Persian-Parthian king makers entered Jerusalem in the latter days of the reign of Herod.
- *“The Magi, likely traveling in force with unimaginable oriental pomp and adequate cavalry escort to insure their safe penetration of Roman territory, certainly alarmed Herod and the entire populace of Jerusalem”* – Chuck Missler
- Herod’s reaction was understandably one of fear when one considers the background of Roman-Parthian rivalry that prevailed during his lifetime.

The King Makers

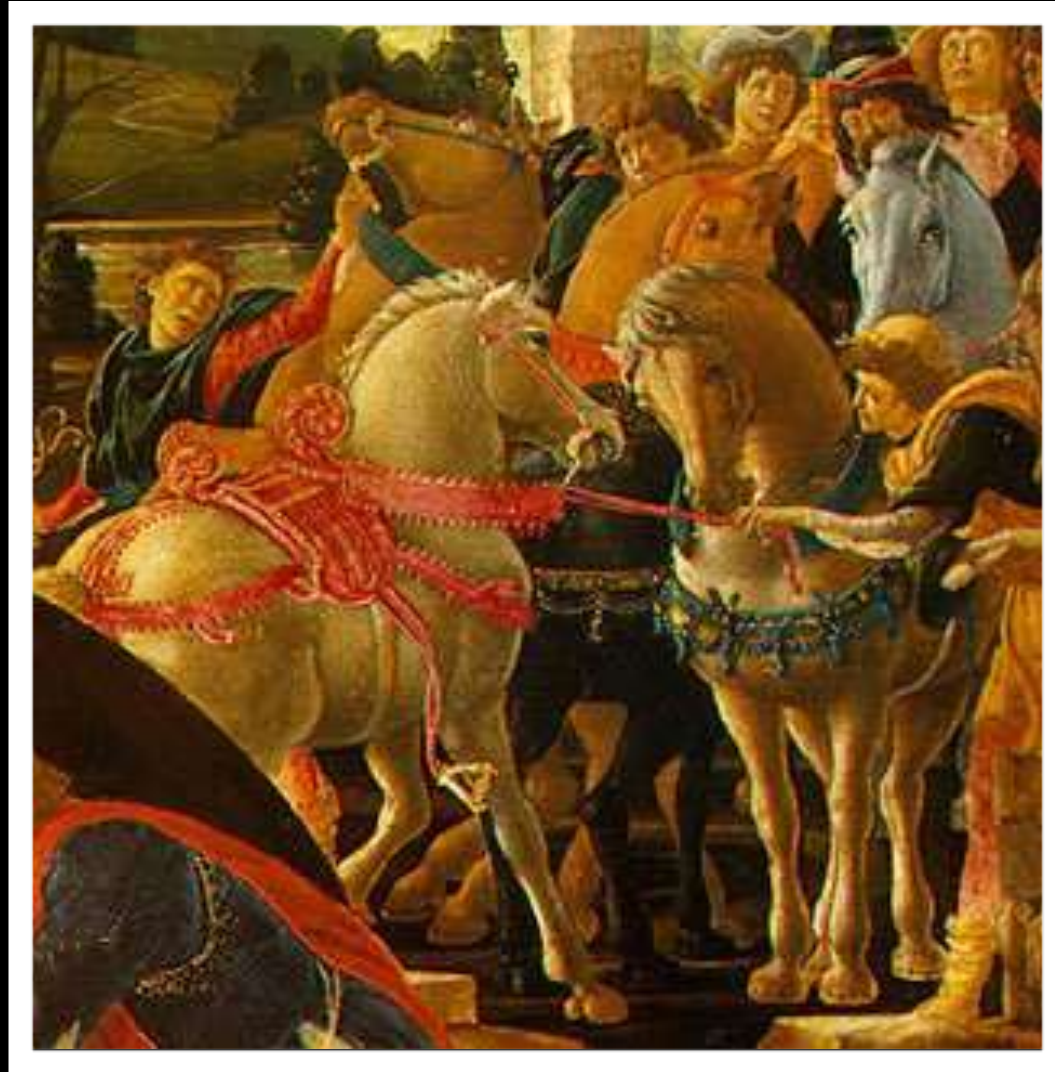
'Journey of the Magi'



Giovanni

The King Makers

‘The Adoration of the Magi’



Botticelli

The King Makers

“The Magi” CIRCA 1460



Order of Events

- Mary & Joseph go to Bethlehem for census
- Jesus is born (& a star appears?)
- Shepherds visit and return with joy!
- After 8 days Jesus is circumcised
- After 41 days Joseph & Mary take Jesus to the temple in Jerusalem to present Jesus to the Lord & offer sacrifices
- Simeon & Anna glorify God
- The family then returns home to Nazareth
- Sometime later, Magi come seeking Jesus

9 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.

10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

Matthew 2:9-10

The Star of Bethlehem?



The Star of Bethlehem?

- When they came out from seeing Herod, “lo” = suddenly they saw that star which they had seen in the east.
 - They hadn’t seen it since then - and now, lo! there it was again!
 - No wonder they were excited and rejoiced with exceeding great joy!
- Question: Why, at the point they come out from seeing Herod, would God send a star? and why would they even need the star at this point in time, if Herod had just given them the correct directions ?

11 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.

Matthew 2:11

- They come to a house (not stable or tower)
- They have with them their treasures, or which 3 specific gifts are mentioned:

Gifts

- Not necessarily all mentioned.
These mentioned because they are prophetic:
 - Gold
 - deity
 - Frankincense
 - priesthood (mixed into the shewbread by the priests)
 - Myrrh
 - when crushed, an ointment for burial
- Prophet; Priest; and King

Not that far to Bethlehem?



12 And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

Matthew 2:12

Divine Providence

- The kingdom in Israel has seemingly come to an end in 587 B.C. when Zedekiah (the last king of Judah) was taken captive to Babylon
- The Crown was literally taken to Babylon
- God had prophesied through Hosea (3:4) that Israel would abide many days without a king
- Even though, upon returning from exile, there were those of the royal line, none assumed the crown or title of king of Israel
- Then at the time appointed, the Crown was brought back, by the king-makers (Magi), and given to the Son of David!
- He shall reign forevermore!

The King of Israel

32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:

33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

Luke 1:26-33

- The Throne of David is a nationalistic Jewish throne
- It demands the reestablishment of the royal throne of David, a Jewish King and Jewish Temple on the Temple Mt.

The King of Israel

² But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.

Micah 5:2

King Jesus

- King of Saints x1 Rev 15:3
- King of kings x3 1Tim 6:15 / Rev 17:14 / Rev 19:16
- King of Israel x6 Is 44:6 / Zeph 3:15 / Matt 27:42 / Mark 15:32 / John 1:49 / John 12:13 /
- King of the Jews x18 Mt 2:2; 27:11; 27:29; 27:37 / Mk 15:2; 15:9; 15:12; 15:18; 15:26 / Lk 23:3; 23:37; 23:38 / Jn 18:33; 18:39; 19:3; 19:19; 19:21(2)
- Thy King x4 Hos 13:10 / Zech 9:9 / Mt 21:5 / Jn 12:15
- Total = 28x to do with National Israel

Two Messiahs?

- Isaiah 53 – The suffering Servant
- Psalm 2 – Rule with a rod of iron
- Not two Messiah's...
- But two comings!
- First: 'Lamb of God'
 - The Shepherds first
- Then: 'King of Israel'
 - The Magi some time later



- So, when you think ‘Christmas’...
- Think...

‘Sacrificial Lamb’!

- This has been fulfilled!”
- Then think...

The King of the Jews

- This *will* be fulfilled – soon!



The Reason For The Season!

- The real reason to celebrate Christmas is because of the priceless gift that God gave
- It had been planned for 4000 years!
 - Actually planned from before the foundation of the world!
- Every present under the tree is a reminder of the greatest gift of all
- The angels appeared to the shepherds first because Jesus had to first come as the spotless Lamb... before He can come as King!

CHRISTMAS 2022

Christ the Lamb
&
Christ the King



Calvary Chapel Portsmouth



Simply teaching the Bible, simply