

Which King?

by Anton Bosch

The sermon explores the contrast between Herod the Great and Jesus, emphasizing Jesus' rightful claim to kingship and his significance as the true king of all.

Duration: 29:34

Scripture: Luke 1:26

Topics: "Jesus Christ", "True Worship", "Kingship of Christ"

Description

Anton Bosch explores the contrasting kingship of Herod and Jesus, emphasizing that while Herod held the title and power, he was not the true king of the Jews. He highlights how Herod, an Edomite, sought acceptance from the Jewish people through grand gestures, yet his heart was far from God. In contrast, Jesus, born in humble circumstances in Bethlehem, is the rightful heir to the throne of David and the true King of Kings. Bosch challenges the congregation to reflect on who they acknowledge as their king in their lives, urging them to recognize Jesus as the ultimate authority over worldly powers. The sermon concludes with a call to worship Jesus genuinely, beyond mere tradition.

Transcript

Please read with me from the Gospel of Luke chapter 1 and from verse 26. And we interrupt our series on the book of Joseph, or the book of Genesis and the story of Joseph to speak about Christmas this morning. And I'm going to read from Luke chapter 1, but I'm going to speak from Matthew chapter 2, which is where we took our response of reading So Luke chapter 1 and from verse 26.

Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And having come in, the angel said to her, Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you, blessed are you among women.

But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. Then the angel said to her, Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a son, and you shall call his name Jesus.

He will be great and will be called the son of the highest, and the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David. And he will reign over the house of Jacob forever. And for his kingdom and of his kingdom there will be no end.

Then Mary said to the angel, How can this be, since I do not know a man? And the angel answered and said to her, The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the highest will overshadow you. Therefore also that holy one who is to be born will be called the son of God. Now indeed Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age, and this is now the sixth month for her who is called barren.

For with God nothing will be impossible. Then Mary said, Behold the maidservant of the Lord. Let it be to me according to your word.

And the angel departed from her. Now also I want to read from Matthew chapter 2, and I'm going to speak from Matthew 2, and we've been studying the book of Matthew in the evenings, and we passed over this, and I want to go back and just stop again at verse 1. Matthew chapter 2, and verse 1. Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold wise men from the east came to Jerusalem. And I'm just going to take a few things from chapter 2, verse 1. Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, wise men came.

And so He was born in the days of Herod the king. This dates the birth of Jesus fairly accurately, because we know that Herod died in AD 4, four years BC. Now that confuses some people, because people think, well Jesus was born in 1 AD, or 1 or 0. But in fact He was born 4 BC, because we were able to very accurately date Herod's death, because of Josephus and other Roman historians who recorded His death, and also His sons who took over His rulership from Him.

And so we know that He definitely died in 4 BC, and so Jesus was born either 5 or 6 BC. We don't have that very accurately. Now the question obviously is, why do we have this discrepancy? Why was He not born in 1 or 0? Well at that time they were using the Roman calendar.

Later on the Roman calendar was converted into the Christian calendar, and the priest whose job it was to do the conversion made a mistake. That's as simple as that. And so He dated Jesus' birth 5 years or 6 years later than it actually was.

Now that doesn't change anything. We still run the calendar running back to then, but just for those who want to know. And of course the reason why it gives it to us like that is because it's saying two things.

And we're going to focus on Herod the king this morning and Jesus the king. These two kings born and claiming the throne in Israel. But it specifically dates it for us because it says that He was born in Judea in the days of Herod the king.

Now who was Herod the king? Well there were a whole lot of Herods, different Herods. And in fact when you read through the scriptures you find that there were a number of Herods. There was this Herod, and I'm not going to bore you with all of the names and all of the details.

And then there was another Herod who beheaded John the Baptist, not this Herod because this one had died just after Jesus was born. And then there was another Herod, you remember, that Paul appeared before. And so there were a number of Herods.

And this was a dynasty in fact, and Herod the great was the first of those Herods. Now his title was Herod the great king of the Jews. That was his official title, Herod the great king of the Jews.

And of course it was really a stupid title because he was neither great nor was he the king of the Jews. But this was the title that Antonius and the senate had given to him. The Roman senate had given to him this title, Herod the great king of the Jews.

We think that the reason why he was called the great was because of his great building exploits. He had performed many, he'd built many great buildings, not just in Palestine or in Judea, but throughout the world. He had been commissioned to, or he commissioned himself really, but he was really a builder and he really wanted to be an architect.

And so he built these magnificent buildings all over the world. One of the buildings that he built was the restored temple in Jerusalem. And so you'll hear people speak about Herod's temple.

Now the reason he did that was because Herod desperately wanted to be a Jew. The problem was that he was an Edomite. Now we just recently studied the Edomites and the Amalekites, the people against whom the scripture says God has indignation forever.

God hates the Edomites because of, remember the attitude of Esau who sold his birthright, who despised his birthright and gave it away. And then the Amalekites attacked the people of Israel when they were weak and when they were straggling in the wilderness, attacked their rear parts. And so God has indignation against the Edomites and the Amalekites forever, but he was an Edomite.

His mother, in fact, was an Arab. And so he had absolutely no claim to Judaism or to being Jewish at all, but he desperately wanted to be Jewish. And so one of the reasons why he built the temple was he was hoping to by that gain the favor of the Jewish people.

He had also adopted the Jewish faith. And so he was practicing as a proselyte or as a Gentile who had adopted the Jewish faith. He also married a Jewish noblewoman, hoping that that would somehow give him an in into Judaism.

And that was not his only wife, by the way. He had a whole bunch of them. He had about five or six different wives.

But the one that was most political was the one that he married simply because she was Jewish. And so he wanted to be a Jew. He wanted to be accepted by the Jews.

And in fact, at a time when Palestine was going through some real hardship because of a famine, he returned a whole year's worth of taxes to the people. And so that was probably the first stimulus package that happened. But he gave money back.

And the purpose of that was not because he was a kind-hearted man. In fact, he was a vicious and a brutal despot. But he desperately wanted the acceptance of the Jewish people.

He desperately wanted to be a Jew. He desperately wanted to be worthy of this title, King of the Jews. And so he did all of these things.

But the reality was that he was really far from a Jew. His heart was not that of a Jew. And obviously by birth, he was not a Jew at all.

And so he built the temple. And people say, well, you know, surely this is a great thing. But he also built many idol temples.

So not only did he build the temple of the true God, he also built the temples of the idols. And so you can see that while he was trying to do the right thing, at the same time, his heart was really far from God. And he really didn't understand what the issues really were.

He was a vicious man. He had executed three of his sons at different times. And then his Jewish wife, he killed her also, just because he had suspicions that they were wanting to depose him and that they were wanting to take his throne.

And so he became, as many of these tyrants become, as they get older, they become more and more vicious. They become more and more paranoid. They become more and more aware of possible plots.

And so they become... And so as he got older, he began to do these things. And this is at the end of his life, when Jesus is born. And obviously this is a major threat, because the wise men come and they say, well, where is he? Where's the king of the Jews who's going to be born? And of course, Herod's saying, I am the king of the Jews.

Now, it's interesting that when you look at the passage, that it says that after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the king. This is written by Matthew. Remember, Matthew is a Jew.

Matthew is loyal, not just to the Jewish faith, but he is a Christian. Why does he give Herod the title, which he clearly did not deserve? By the way, there had not been a king in Israel for 450 years at this stage, after Judah had been carried into captivity. And so, in fact, it was more than 460 years.

560 years there had not been a king in Israel or in Judah. And so, Matthew knew these things. So, why does he give credence to Herod? Why does he speak of Herod as the king? But it's interesting, when you read the passage, it says after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the king, the wise men came from the east to Jerusalem saying, where is he who is to be born king of the Jews? And so, you can see that Matthew is juxtaposing, is comparing Herod to Jesus.

Herod to Jesus. Everybody knew that Herod wanted to be Jewish, acted like he was a Jew, but in fact he was born an Edomite. He was born in Arabia.

Jesus was born, on the other hand, in Bethlehem of Judea. Why does it not just say Bethlehem? Well, there were two Bethlehems, but I don't think that was the reason. The other Bethlehem was really a minor Bethlehem.

It was really not well known. And when you spoke about Bethlehem, and when the Scriptures speak about Bethlehem, we all think of one place and the same place, and that is where Jesus was born. So, why does he specify that Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the king? Well, the statement he is making is, he is clearly defining Jesus' right to the throne of David.

To the throne of David. Now, when we go back, what was Bethlehem, and where did Bethlehem come from? Well, the first time we read about Bethlehem, and we've been going through the book of Genesis, Rachel was buried in Bethlehem. Rachel was buried in Bethlehem.

That's the first time we read about that. Who was Rachel? Jacob's wife. And she was born in, she was buried in Bethlehem.

Then, the next time we read about Bethlehem is in the book of Ruth. Remember, Ruth comes and she marries Boaz, and they lived in Bethlehem. Ruth and her mother-in-law Naomi came from Moab, and they returned to Bethlehem, the ancestral home of Naomi, of her father-in-law who had passed away.

And so, they came back to Bethlehem, and it is in Bethlehem that Ruth marries Boaz. Now, why is that important? Because Ruth is the great-grandmother of David the king, of David the king. And then, David is born in Bethlehem.

And then, you remember when David flees from, before Saul, and he lives in the cave of Adullam, you remember one of the greatest desires he had was for a little water from the well at Bethlehem. And it was his brave men who went down to Bethlehem which was occupied by the Philistines at the time, and they went to that well. They drew water for David, brought it to David, and David said, I can't drink this.

This is too much of a sacrifice that these men have committed, or made too much of a sacrifice to bring this for me. And he poured it out before God as a sacrifice before God. That was the well of Bethlehem.

And then later, David would be crowned as king, and he would be crowned king in Bethlehem. And so, Bethlehem is the city of David. And as we read in the book of Luke, it is the city of David the king.

That is where the greatest king of Israel came from. That is the city of the kings. And so, what he is saying here is that Jesus was rightfully a claimant to the throne.

He was not born in Arabia. He was born in Bethlehem of Judea, Bethlehem of the Jews. Not of Israel, the ten northern tribes, but of the two southern tribes where the legitimate kings would come from.

And so, really, he is making a very strong statement, and he is saying Jesus was born in the place where the kings are born. He was obviously born of the right family. And Matthew had just gone through the genealogy, remember, in chapter 1, and explained how that day Jesus descends from David in chapter 1, verse 5. Sammon begat Boaz by Rahab.

Boaz begat Obed by Ruth. Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David the king. David the king.

And from that comes Joseph and Mary. Both of them descend from that line. And so, Jesus has the right claims to being the king of the Jews.

And so, Jesus is not only the king of the Jews. Not only was he born in fulfillment. And in fact, when you go down in chapter 2 of Matthew, you will find a prophecy there which is taken from the book of Micah.

And it says, But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are not the least among the rulers of Judah. For out of you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel. And so, this is in fulfillment of the prophecy in Micah that Jesus would be the great king who would come.

Who would be the ultimate king of Israel and of Judah. And who would be the end of the line of David. And not only would he be the king of Israel and the king of Judah, but he would be the king of kings.

And this was the difference between Jesus and every other king that came before him. David was king over both Israel and Judah. Solomon was king over Israel and Judah.

But after those, the kings, there were two kingdoms after that. There were kings of Israel, kings of Judah, but never again kings of both. Jesus is both king of Israel and Judah.

But more than that, he is the king of kings and the Lord of lords. In 1 Timothy chapter 6 and verse 15, Paul says, He who is the blessed and only potentate, the king of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, dwelling in inapproachable light, whom no man has seen or to whom be honor and glory and everlasting power. Amen.

He is the king of kings, not only the king of Israel or the king of Judah, but he is indeed the king of kings. Now in the life of Jesus, we would see that this issue of his kingship was an issue all along. In Matthew, we see that in Matthew chapter 27 verse 11, it says, Jesus stood before the governor and the governor asked him, and of course the governor was Roman, saying, Are you the king of the Jews? And Jesus said to him, It is as you have said.

This was the problem that the Romans had with Jesus all along. The fact that he claimed to be the king of the Jews. Of course, because they were the rulers.

They had set in place their governors. They had set in place men like Herod, who claimed to be the king of the Jews. And of course, they did not want anyone else to take his place.

And then, of course, they mocked him at his crucifixion in Matthew 27 verse 29. And when they twisted a crown of thorns, they put it on his head and a reed on his right hand, and they bowed the knee before him and mocked him, saying, Hail, king of the Jews. And so they mocked him, not understanding that in fact, he really was the king of the Jews.

That he was the only true king of the Jews, and that no one else was entitled to that claim. And then, of course, when he was crucified, remember Pilate put a superscription over his head, the accusation against him, the king of the Jews. And you remember that it was written in John chapter 19, verse 15.

It was written in Greek and in Roman, in Latin, sorry, and in Hebrew. And so declaring in the three main languages, Greek, the language of culture and of learning and of philosophy, Roman or Latin, the language of law and of rule, and in Hebrew, the language of religion. And so in every language, Jesus is the king.

Jesus is the king of kings and the Lord of lords. And so when we go back to Matthew chapter 2, it says then that Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king. So the question then is, who is the king? Is it Jesus or is it Herod? Herod had all the trappings, and he had the throne, he had the palace, and he indeed had a magnificent palace.

He had the title, he had the power, he had the authority, he had everything that would appear to make him to be the king. And here's this little baby born in the manger, and the wise men come and see him. And he is so poor that when he is circumcised, his parents can only pay the bare minimum or make the bare minimum sacrifice of turtle dove for his circumcision, indicating that they were the poorest of the poor.

And so here's this baby born in a stable, and he is the king. And yet here is this one standing in his throne room with all of his pomp and circumstance and his guards and his palace and all of these things, and he says he is the king. And you know, when you look at these two characters, which one would you say would appear to be the king? It has to be Herod.

He looks like the real deal. And you know, the wise men come, and it says wise men at the end of verse one, wise men came from the east, came to Jerusalem saying, where is he was born king of the Jews? We have seen his star. And when Herod the king heard this, he was troubled and all Jerusalem with him.

But there's Herod. Why did they not understand he was the king? I mean, if you came to Jerusalem, you're coming from the east, these guys are coming from Persia, and they come to Jerusalem. One of the things when you come into Jerusalem, there's a few things you would see.

The first thing you would see would be the temple. The next thing you would see would be Herod's, and probably the first thing you would see would be Herod's palace because it was built on the city wall. And so there's the palace.

There's the royal guard that, you know, everybody, you know, this has to be the king. And these men just ignore Herod. They don't even speak to Herod.

Remember, they only speak to Herod because Herod summons them and said, you know, what are you guys on about? They just ignored Herod, but he's the king. He's got the title. Rome said he's the title.

The Caesars in Rome gave him the title that he was the king, and yet they're looking for a baby born in a manger. The wrong picture, the wrong environment, the wrong everything. But in fact, they had it right.

No wonder the scripture calls them wise men. We don't know. They may have been sorcerers.

They may have been shamans. They were stargazers. We don't know exactly what their religious affiliation was, whether they had any true understanding of who God was.

But the scripture calls them wise because they were able to discern the difference between the true king and the false king, between the imposter and the one who is the real king. And even today, there are two kings claiming to be the king of this world. There is the God of this world, the devil, with all of his power, and all of his empire, and all of his authority, and all of his trappings, and everything that he's able to offer.

And remember, he even comes to Jesus. He says, I'll give you all of the kingdoms of the world. And there's Jesus.

Which one is the real king? Only wise men are able to understand the difference. You see, and right now, today, there are millions of people who are worshiping the wrong king, who have not been able to understand that the one meek and lowly riding on the foal of an ass, this is the king. This is the real king.

And when he comes again, he will indeed set up his kingdom, and he will indeed be the king of kings and the Lord of lords. So it takes wise men to understand the difference. You know, the sad thing was, the religious leaders of that day didn't understand the difference.

And when they came to, when Jesus was being judged, the question was, what about Jesus? And they said, away with him, crucify him. And Pilate said, shall I crucify your king? And the chief priest, this is in John chapter 19 verse 15, the chief priest said, remember what they said? We have no king but Caesar. We have no king but Caesar.

Here are the religious men, here are the men who understand the scriptures, who should have known the true king. And yet their allegiance and their loyalty is to Rome, to the empire that represented this world and its systems. And they chose to have the true king crucified.

And I'm afraid that today it's the same thing. There are so many people who are choosing to crucify the real king and are choosing to bow and give allegiance to this world and to its system. And that's really what Rome represents all through scripture and right through to the Old Testament.

It represents the world and its systems. And so the question today is, who is the true king? Who is the king of your life? Who is it that you're bowing to? Who is it that you're acknowledging? Who is it that you're serving? Who is it that you're paying allegiance to? Is it to the king or is it to the false king who has all the trappings, who seems to be in control, who seems to be in power, but in fact is not the real king and is not the real king at all? Philippians chapter 2 verse 8 says about Jesus that he was found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, of those on earth and those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord.

Every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord. Right now and over these next few days, people all over the world are going to be singing the various carols that we have sung, carols that hail Him as King, hail Him as Lord, and hail Him as Master. But in fact in reality their hearts are far from Him and in reality they're worshipping and serving a different king and a different master and they're part of a different empire.

And so that's a question we have to decide for ourselves this morning. Who is the true king and who is the king of your life? Who is it that you're bowing your knee before today? Are you bowing and saying Caesar is our king? The world and its systems and the materialism and the philosophies of this world, that's what we're serving. Or are you recognizing that Jesus is indeed the king, He's the one that I'm going to bow before, He's the one I'm going to serve, and He's the one that I'm going to acknowledge as Lord and as Master.

Father we thank you for your word. Above all we thank you for Jesus who came. And we thank you Lord that He came in a way that the world would not recognize.

But those who were wise would understand and recognize the true king. Lord our hearts go out to the religious leaders like the scribes and the Pharisees who didn't understand that Jesus was the king and and who gave their their allegiance to Rome. And Lord we're sad today about so many religious people who don't understand that Jesus is indeed the king and yet they're worshipping even at this moment the gods of gold and of silver and of things and of crystal and of materialism, the gods of power and of pomp and circumstance.

But Lord help us to understand and help us to see Jesus and help us Lord above all to acknowledge Him as the king, not just in theory, not just in theology, but in reality in our lives. And that He would be the one that we bow before, that He would be the one that we worship, that He would be the one that we serve. We ask this in Jesus' name.

So Father we thank you for for Jesus. Thank you for your word. Thank you for this time of fellowship together.

And we pray that you would part us now as we go home. We pray that you keep us and protect us. Bring us together again safely this evening.

We pray for those who are traveling today Lord of our number. We pray that you would you would keep your hand on them and protect them and bring them back to us safely. And Lord we pray above all as we go through this this holiday season Lord these next few days as we spend time with family and with friends and as there's a lot of eating and feasting that in all of these things we would not forget Jesus and that He

would be the one that we worship in everything that we do.

We ask these things in His wonderful name. Amen.

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