

Where Is He Born King of the Jews

by Gareth Evans

The sermon explores the quest for the true King amidst modern societal structures, emphasizing the need for reverence and integrity in faith and leadership.

Duration: 36:52

Scripture: Isaiah 9:6, Matthew 2:2, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 21:5, Luke 2:9, John 18:37, Philippians 2:5

Topics: "Birth Of Jesus"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on the lack of honor given to God in various aspects of society, such as the law courts, higher education, and the marketplace. He emphasizes that true disciples of God are built by the King himself, not by these worldly institutions. The speaker also highlights the humility and sacrifice of Jesus, who left his heavenly glory to enter the sinful world. The sermon concludes with a personal anecdote about a young man facing difficulties with his vehicle, illustrating the importance of relying on God in times of trouble.

Transcript

One announcement as Pastor Gareth is coming that I should have made. We have a special Christmas Eve candlelight service this evening. We're going to do a bit of singing, a few other things.

Since I've experienced one of the blessings, am I on? I think Larry, you've taken my notes away. I can preach without notes but... You might be here a lot longer. You might be here a lot longer, that's right.

Just one page. So you should be. One of the great blessings I've had of being with you for the last four months has indeed been the choir on Friday evenings, which is a small group, but it's been a very precious time together.

You'll enjoy tonight, I'm sure you will. I must also thank you for your signs of appreciation that you showed. Anne and I, it is, you know, tiring.

I get weary, come up here every weekend, and we drive back home to Victoria, then I have to do my pruning of my garden trees and putting out the leaves and all those kind of things, then come back up. But it's been a precious time. It has not been something that we've regretted, it's been a very precious time to be with you.

Anne and I want to wish all of you a very happy Christmas and pray that you have a blessed time with your families, those of you with families tomorrow. We should be with my daughter, that's part of the blessing of being here, we have a daughter who lives here in Nanaimo. It's been precious.

I would especially ask your prayers over the next three months because not only am I here, I'm also in the church in Duncan every week. On Wednesdays, doing an hour and a half teaching, I have to prepare that material too. I know you are praying for me, but I will need special prayer.

I'm getting older, not younger. I woke up this morning, I thought to myself, gosh, I've got to teach Sunday school, then I've got to stand in the pulpit and preach, then I come this evening to do my calisthenics, and then I sing, and then of course I'm speaking at the end of the evening service too, so I sure need prayers. I just appreciate all the prayers for me.

I have a question. Where is he that is born King of the Jews? Same question that the wise men asked so long ago. It's a question I want to ask this morning.

Where is he that is born King of the Jews? It's striking that that verse is found in Matthew's account of the nativity, the birth of Jesus. It is he alone that refers us to the wise men that came seeking the King. I find it striking that it's in the Gospel of Matthew because Matthew is the Gospel that's written to the Jewish people.

It is the Gospel that quotes most often from the Old Testament. It is the Gospel that speaks very much about the operation of the law. You are aware, I'm sure, that there are four Gospels, and they all have a different purpose.

They're written to different peoples. Matthew's Gospel is the one that is written particularly to the Jews. It is a Gospel where these readers would certainly know a lot of the reverence.

For example, he has 60 prophetic references that are recorded for us in Matthew where he quotes from 60 prophetic references in the Old Testament. His key thought in the Gospel is the Kingdom and the coming of the King. And so it's not striking that he should have that question formed there in this Gospel.

Where is he that's born the King? He answers it partly in his own Gospel, Matthew does, in chapter 21, where he says, Behold your King who comes lowly seated upon a donkey. Jesus comes into Jerusalem. It is Matthew again who records concerning the King that Pilate stands before the people and declares to the people who are crying out for Jesus' crucifixion.

He said, I find no fault in this man. Behold your King. But if we today ask the question, where is he that's found King of the Jews, where would we go? The wise men went naturally to the palace.

Where else would you expect to find the announcement of the birth of a King except in the palace? They come to Herod's palace. And you know the story. Herod knows nothing about this coming King.

And he asks them, what do you mean, King? They said, well, the prophets have spoken of the King. Maybe the conversation will go like this. So there's a prophet that says that he will be born in Bethlehem.

There are other prophets that says he will be the son of David, a king. So we've come into the palace. We expected that by now he would be here.

There are prophets he's concerning that he would be born of a virgin. They would have been where these prophecies found in Isaiah, in particular in Zechariah. And so they come to the palace, but he's not there.

And so down through the years of the church, into the Middle Ages, if you wanted to find the King, you would go to the palaces, particularly the papal palace in Rome. And all of Christendom and that then would look towards Rome to the place where the representation of the King would be found in the Pope. There was always a movement within the Catholic Church rebelling against the pomp and ceremony of the papal throne.

And you had many monastic orders came out, were seeking to live in poverty as Jesus they believed would have, and renouncing all the riches of this world. But the common people, their view of God was imaged in what they saw in the church in Rome, and particularly what they then saw in their local churches. And churches were built with spires that were higher and higher and higher to reach into the presence of God.

So the people would develop a sense of majesty and awe looking for the King. It strikes me that since the Second World War probably, we have got a very low view of majesty. I know that King George VI during the Second World War was a man who was greatly, greatly respected in the British Empire.

A man who had a personal faith in Christ himself. A man who was courageous and determined not to leave his people when the bombs came down upon London. He stayed in London.

He would not leave London. A man who demonstrated true servanthood. And yet since the Second World War, I think most of you probably like me have developed a cynical attitude probably to majesty and royalty.

Queen Elizabeth became queen and we sensed a new era. And I feel so sorry for her when I look at what she's had to handle as the defender of the faith. That's one of her official titles.

Then Prince Charles and we begin to get a little bit of a sad or a sour taste in our mouths if you like, considering majesty. The tragedy I think of that is that we've developed a similar attitude towards majesty when we consider God. There's been a loss of reverence in churches.

A loss of respect for leadership in churches. And the whole sense of majesty and awe that used to be present in churches has gone. Maybe it needed to go, a lot of it.

But I sense that today there is far more self and man in the throne and we've got so little that we can look to as a picture of God and his majesty. I don't find it strange that the writer to Revelation quoting Jesus in his letters to the seven churches, that last church was Laodicea. The church that was lukewarm.

The church that he would spit out of his mouth. The church that did not please him. The church that had lost reverence.

The name Laodicea literally means ruled by the people and nowadays it is the people who rule. There is no longer a sense of majesty and awe in godly leadership. We've lost that.

We certainly don't see the king there anymore. But let's go beyond that. Where would we go today if we were looking for the king? If you imagine, for example, an alien coming to this world as wise men came long ago to another country.

And he came to us and he said, where will I find the king that has been born? He's not in the palaces. We don't see him pictured there. So maybe then we need to go to the parliamentarians, the leaders of our society, the politicians, the parliaments, the local councils.

If you come to those places, what we will find is people debating, organizing, arguing, scheming, working out plans that they think are the best for the society that they represent, that they've been elected to lead. We find them very good at developing programs. And I'm sure we would find many Christians operating there.

Thank God there are Christians in parliament. We have a privilege in our country to have a godly man who is our prime minister. As a little sideline, I don't know if I've said this before, I find it very interesting that President Bush claimed to be a born-again Christian.

Tony Blair claimed to be a born-again Christian. John Howard of Australia most certainly is a born-again Christian. And our own prime minister is most certainly a born-again Christian.

And yet these are the four countries involved in the turmoil in the Middle East right now. And I really confess, I just don't, I can't get my head around it. Is God permitting it for some reason that he is going to bring out? It seems very striking to me.

Thank God there are politicians who are Christians. But when I look at the methods of politics and I look at the, right from the local councils way up to our parliamentarians, I do not see the king there. Indeed, if there is a king who reigns in the parliamentary offices of our land, it is the king of man.

For man has made himself king there. And the religion that flows out of such a center is that of secular humanism, where man places himself on the throne. And the decisions of our parliament are geared to do what is best for man.

We don't expect anything different. I don't expect necessarily to see the king there, but I certainly don't see the king evidenced in the council offices, the parliamentary offices of our countries. So where do I go? If I won't find him in the palaces, if I do not see a representation of the king of kings in our palaces, if I do not see a representation of the king in our parliaments and our councils, where shall I find him? Well, let's turn to our second highest level of government, to the law courts.

We are privileged that we live in a country where the law of this land is based upon Christian principles and the foundation of the Christian principles of law that came out of Britain in the early days. I certainly wouldn't like to live in a country where the law was Sharia law of Islam, for example, where you could have your hands chopped off. Or as I read recently, a woman having her fingers chopped off because she wore nail varnish.

I certainly wouldn't want to live in a country like that. I'm so glad our law is based upon Christian principles. When I go into the law courts, what I find are politicians, I find lawyers, and they are like the shepherds of old.

They don't seem to have a very good name, do they? May I tell you a joke? Do you like Departure Day and the Baptist Church? A young Irish couple died in a car crash and they went to heaven. And Peter met them, and he said, welcome, I'm so sorry about the tragedy that's brought you here. The young man said, well, I'm a little bit afraid, he said, because I don't really want to meet the Lord yet because we're not married.

Can you find us a priest to do a wedding? So Peter said, well, I'll certainly look and see if I can. In the meantime, he said, I'd like you to remain here and hold in place. A month later, Peter comes back and he says to the young couple, I have good news, he said, I found a priest.

It took him a month to find a priest and the young couple were delighted. They found a priest in heaven. Then the young man said, but I've still got another concern, he said, what if we want to get divorced? Can we get divorced in heaven? And Peter threw his books on the floor, he said, what's the matter? I've spent a month looking for a priest and now you want me to find a lawyer? I did ask you for permission to tell you the joke.

Lawyers, we find them in our courts, our law courts. I find in the law courts that there's a place where the law is king, legalistic, where judgements are made, where fingers are pointed, where accusations are made, where defences are made, where lawyers fight for the defence of their client. Truth really often times goes out of the window and they're far more concerned about getting the result of their legal pushings and if you are accused of something, the more money you can pay, the better lawyer you can get, the better chance you'll get off and it's not a question of whether you're guilty or not guilty so often.

And there are Christians at work there. I have some very fine Christian friends who are lawyers. But the whole operation system I do not find to be a place where the king would find himself at home because the king of kings is the one who acquits the sinner, who gives grace to the foul, who takes the foul and the unclean and lifts them up and makes them clean.

The judgement has been paid, the price has been paid and there is no civil law, there is no law now that condemns the sinner. And the filthy and the dirty can come to this place knowing that there is forgiveness and cleansing. I don't see that very often in our courts.

They can't be because law is king in the court, not the king of kings. So if we will not find him in the palace, if we will not find him in our parliaments, if we will not find him in our law courts, where next do we go? Let's go to the marketplace. The marketplace is the place of buying and selling.

The marketplace is the place where profit and gain are paramount. The marketplace is the place where those who want to keep up with the Joneses will be found. They need to buy the latest and the best and the biggest.

Well there are Christians at work there. Thank God for the Christians at work there. But I don't find the king there.

You see the king is not interested in profit and numbers. The king is interested in quality and discipleship of his people. The king is not interested in greed.

In fact Jesus himself made this statement, he said that people who often deal in these places where there is a love for money and profit, they are not serving God, he said, they are serving mammon, a false god. And whereas man is the king in the parliaments and the governments of our land, in social secular humanism, whereas law is the king in our law courts and legalism and justice and judgment, mammon is the king in the marketplaces. I'm amazed how often I find Christians operating in debt.

Now let me make myself very clear, if you've got a house and mortgage, that's not a debt because your house is your equity for your mortgage. But the moment you live on a credit card that you are not able instantly to pay, you're living in debt. And Jesus speaks very, very clearly about debt in the word.

He said, those who are in debt are serving mammon. You cannot serve God and mammon. He says, if you bring your gift to the altar and there remember that your brother has ought against you, you leave your gift at the altar and you go to see your brother and you will be not released until you have paid the last cent.

It amazes me how casually Christians can get involved in buying things for Christmas. And a young woman came on board the ship where I was the chaplain and she was from the West Indies, I remember, and as was want, a number of our young people on board ship, they did not have finances to support themselves on ship. Most of them were there as volunteers and their churches were sending money and friends were sending money and she did not have sufficient for her crew fees.

And so in talking to her, I discovered that she had sold a car or she had a car back home. And she bought this car from a man for \$5,000 and she'd not be able to pay him the money. And she had left home and come out to the ship and she was getting letters from this man demanding his money and her reply to him was, I can't give you the money because I'm a missionary serving God.

I asked her, I said, what do you think that man thinks of your Christian testimony? Put it bluntly, it stinks. And you want God to provide your support financially while you're operating in a way where your testimony is held in such disrepute because you're in debt? God says, you're not serving him, you're serving my money. And a young man living with me who had got into some problems, legal problems, and he was in debt to the tune of \$20,000, \$25,000.

My wife was very good at doing financial work and operating budgets, was working with him and his debt was coming rapidly down. A friend of his had a business in Victoria, business cards out. If you wanted small jobs like moving garbage to the garbage dump or moving a piano from one room to another, call him.

He'd come along and do it for a fee. And so he gave his cell phone to this young man. And he said, look, when people call for a good job, you take their call and you can go.

He had a van, you can go and do the job. We can pick up a few dollars every day by doing that to help you with your debt. A couple of days later, the phone rang and a young man answered it in the home and somebody wanted him to go and move a piano.

He said, yes, he said, he got the address. He said, I'll be there in 10 minutes. He rushes out to his van and he will not start.

So he comes running back in to me and asks, do you have jumper cables? I said, yes, I do. So he went out. The jumper cables would not help the car stop.

He starts crying. What had happened was that the oil had run out of his vehicle and it had frozen. The block was frozen.

The car never went again, ever, the van. And he's saying, what's the matter? I'm trying to get out of debt and God does this to me. I said, what God are you speaking about? He said, but God.

I said, I've known God now for 40 odd years. I've never known God do anything like this to his children. But I said, it's not my God you're talking about, are you? He said, God, I'm talking about God.

Why does God do this to me? I'm trying to do. I said, brother, years ago you sold yourself to Mammon. That's your God.

Now don't blame my God when your God doesn't turn up. And we need to get serious about understanding when we are in debt and how I handle finances and what finances do in our life, how we operate in the marketplace. Do we buy things simply to keep up with the Joneses? Did I recently buy that latest stereo system because I need to keep up with Jones? And we need to understand sometimes our attitudes and finances in the marketplace robs us of our integrity working with God.

Because in the marketplace, Mammon is God. In the last days, we understand that there will be people who will take upon themselves what is called the mark of the beast. And I listen to a lot of debates and there are videos you can buy and books reading about the mark of the beast in the days of tribulation.

I do not know what the mark is. Something is a credit card, something is an electronic chip in the forehead or in the hand. I do not know.

But I know this has got to do with buying and selling because without it you can't buy and sell. It's something to do with the market. It's something to do with financial institutions.

Now will Christians bear the mark? Do you think that you as a Christian are strong enough that you will not bear the mark? You will know what the mark is. You will recognize it when you're asked to take it and you will not bear it. Do you believe that? It amazes me when I see churches today get so involved in finances that the whole goal of the church is to build bigger and better, to get more money to do things.

I know churches in my own denomination that were in debt. There were four churches that were in debt to the total of \$9 million in 1987 when the mortgage rates went up to 27%. Do you remember those days? Four of the churches in my denomination in B.C. were in the debt to the Royal Bank of Tunis of \$9 million.

And they would tell you it was God's will. We need to be far more circumspect about our finances, understanding that Mammon is very active in this world today when we live in a capitalist society. And I say to myself, is the king there? The king is the one who says this, take no thought of tomorrow what you will eat or do because your father knows your needs.

The king says that your God will supply all your needs. Is that the king you know? Not all he wants, but all your needs. He is more than sufficient.

So let's go from the marketplace. Let's go to the place of higher education. We have students here from Malaspina.

I have a lot of privilege at the University of Victoria. I know a lot of students there. I work with them.

I speak at the Intervarsity Christian Fellowship. It's been my privilege. So where do you find a king at university? A place where people of superior intellect, if you like, of learning should be found.

In the place of higher education, you'll find the scholars. Listen to them. You don't believe in Jesus Christ, do you? You need to get wise.

You need to get educated. Here you'll find more arguments than debates. Here you'll find more theorizing and opinions.

But where do you find the king who told us not to give ourselves a vain disputation? In our educational institutions, knowledge is the king. But the word of God tells me that there is a wisdom that men exhibit that comes from below in the book of James. It is demonic.

It is devilish. It is evil. But there is a wisdom that comes from above.

No university education can give you wisdom. It can give you knowledge. It cannot give you intelligence.

It can give you knowledge. For knowledge is the king in higher education. But will you find a king there? The king who said these things, that I will take the weak and the foolish to confound the wise.

I will take the things that are not to confound the mighty. I operate as the king in peoples whose lives are given to me. And where I reign, I build disciples.

I build men and women of God. You won't find them. You will find individuals, but you certainly won't find a king being honored in an institution of higher education.

You will not find him being honored in the marketplace. You will not find him being honored in the law course. You will not find him being honored in the political centers of our world.

In fact, coming back to the marketplace, today is the season where you look in all your marketplaces and you see the busy busyness of all the shoppers going around their Christmas stores. Do you see the king there? Oh, you see a couple of managers and they're trying to do away with them. They're even taking the name Jesus out, or Christ out of Christmas.

That shouldn't disturb you too much. After all, it was a pagan festival to start with. And to Christians, Christ will be present every day, not necessarily just at Christmas.

But when you look at the busyness of the marketplace today, and I'm sure every one of you, except me, because I'm lazy. That's the reason why I don't go out. My wife is so good to me.

She spoils me rotten. My wife does. I do not have to go out.

Guys, how many of you have been, how many of you guys have been, no, no, I won't ask you that. Shopping, and you can't find a car park, and then you trudge around, and in the end you spend your last dollars on a little gift that really got no value at all, but it has to fill somebody's stocking. You see the busy, busy, busyness of the marketplace.

Is the king there? You don't see him. So you won't find him in these places. Well, surely then, if we can't find him in those places, surely, I've just seen this church.

It's called the First Church of Christ Nanaimo. Surely we'll find him in there. So let's walk into the church and see.

And what I discover, oftentimes when I walk into the church, is not so much that the church is in the world, but the world is coming to the church. And I see the politicians. I see the schemers and the planners.

I see that this church, the First Church, not this one, the First Church of Christ Nanaimo, has got all the wonderful programs. It's seeker-sensitive. Don't preach on sin, and don't preach on repentance, and certainly don't mention carrying your cross, because you may offend a few people who won't come to your

church, because after all, we exist for those men out there.

Brothers and sisters, you do not exist for the men and women out there. You exist for the glory of him up there. Did I hear amen? We need to get our priorities right.

When we lift Jesus higher and begin to live as Christians, when the church becomes the church, believe me, the people out there will want to be in here. You are not called to stand in the world giving witness of Christ. You're still called to stand in Christ being a witness to this world.

You do not get the light and sprinkle it around there. You light the light and let the light shine. And we are called to be Christians here.

But what do I find in the First Church of Christ Nanaimo? I find the politicians there. With all their planning. Oh, they're genuine.

They're very nice people. But their whole goal is motivated by man. And sadly, it's in the pulpits as well.

It's in the pulpits. Where men are seeking esteem. I speak as a pastor.

Where men are so concerned about their esteem. Believe me, brothers and sisters, I can speak as a pastor. When you sit on top of the pyramid of your church, if that is the kind of church you've got, it's a very insecure place to be.

And you operate by control because you are concerned to maintain your status. My status is not wrapped up in whether I'm the pastor of Departure of the Baptist Church. My status is wrapped up in that I'm a child of the King.

And the privilege you afford me here is that I can speak like this to you because I'm not staying around. I love you dearly. But I don't have to compromise what I'm preaching in case I'm afraid that some of you may not like me and vote me out.

I find the politicians in the church of the First Church of Christ in Nanaimo. I find the legalists in the church. Those who judge and criticize and point fingers and accuse.

I find them there. They're very, very good at pointing fingers at other people and accusing other people. And judging other people.

And acting upon their judgments. I find the law courts in the church. I find the marketplace in the church.

The more money you've got, the more influence you have. Oh, we have to get better and better because the church up the road has now got a five-piece band leading their worship. We better get a better equipment and PA system because we have to compete.

Competition is the word of the marketplace. It is not the word of the church. It amazes me and saddens me and it does not surprise me.

How does that say? It amazes me and saddens me how many church advertise their things in the church bulletin page in the newspaper by words like great, better. Almost saying we've got it. I read an advertisement just last week in the Christian Bulletin magazine of churches.

We are a church that preaches the word and does this and does this as though implying that no other church does it. Are we called to be in competition? Here we are. It's no surprise either to me that that's the least read page in the newspaper.

Why are we in competition when the king calls us to be his servants, calls us to be willing to be his last and least if we want to be great in the kingdom? We want to compete because that's the mark of the marketplace and though we may not be out there, the marketplace is in the church. I also find in the church the higher education people, the intellectuals, those who want to argue theological issues, more concerned with being right in their arguments and expressing their opinions than they are to be right in the eyes of the king. For there is a wisdom that seemeth right to man even within the church.

But it's demonic and devilish. That's not this church, is it? I pray it's not this church. But it's very, very prevalent in many, many churches in our land today.

So when people come to this church, what do they discover? Do they find politicians here? Do they find legalists here? Do they find people here for whom gain and numbers is more important than quality of discipleship? Do they find the debaters and the arguers and the opinionated people here? Or does the king reside here? Because if the king is here, and my prayer is that the king is here, then his kingdom will be here. And if his kingdom is here, then the people of his kingdom are here. The people of his kingdom are those who want to obey the king.

Who says then, love one another even as I have loved you. The king who says, let your light show shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your father which is in heaven. The king who says, honor one another, lift up the feeble hands and strengthen the weak knees that we may walk the path.

Seen as we are surrounded by such a cloud of witnesses. The king who says, I love you, therefore love one another. Is that the king who reigns here? That's the kind of church I want to belong to.

Wise men. Wise men came looking for a king. Wise men still go looking for kings.

These wise men came because they saw a sign, a star. The star led them all the way to that manger where the first king displayed himself having disrobed himself of his glory and left the mansions of his power. Can you imagine heaven when the glorious, eternal son of God came to this earth? We imagine the manger.

How about imagining just a moment the chambers of heaven as he stands before his father and disrobes himself of his royalty. Disrobes himself of his majesty. Lays his glory down at the feet of his father for he's about to leave all this to enter the sinful world.

Have this mind in you, says Paul, I was also in Christ Jesus although he was equal with God did not think it's something to be clung onto but emptied himself. And the eternal angels are watching this happen. They don't understand this.

They don't understand how God can love this fallen creation. They do not understand they never needed to be redeemed. They don't understand and they see the son, the glorious, eternal Christ disrobing himself of his power and his majesty.

And then they come to the doors of heaven and they shout out, open the doors, open the gates for the king of glory is passing through. There's gonna come a day when they cry out that again when he re-enters and comes with his church with him. But that day he left glory to come to this world.

But he did not come to the palaces. He did not come to the governments. He did not come to the marketplace.

He did not come to the law course. He did not come to the higher education. He came to be a babe in a manger.

He chose that significantly because he wants us to understand that people who are wise will still find him in the lowly, people around them, still find him in the humble place, still find him as they lower themselves. Evan Roberts, he was mighty by God in the Welsh revival. His cry was, God, bend me lower because lower and lower as we get lower and lower, we see the glory of the king.

Today, churches want us to lift up higher and higher, bigger churches, bigger numbers. The king says, get on your knees, humble yourself before me and you'll find me. They're the people of God.

They're the church of God among whom the king wants to be known. May we be such a people for his name's sake. Let's pray.

Father, we celebrate this Christmas time in remembrance of the birth of our savior, Jesus. We thank you that in his manner of coming, he came in such a way that he would not manipulate any of us to follow him. We do not follow because we gain esteem by following a man like a president.

In fact, we associate ourselves with a despised people when we become followers of this man, Jesus. But Father, you've made us sons of God. You do not point the finger of judgment upon us because your son is born the judgment.

You do not need us to politicize and to organize, but you have called us to submit ourselves to you that you might work by your spirit in us, fulfilling your purposes, building your church. And so, Father, we pray for this church, Departure Bay Baptist Church. We know you love us.

We know you love this church. And we pray, Father, as people of this church, that you will make us children of the kingdom, that the king might reign in this place for the glory of his name. And God's people said, Amen.

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