

## **King of the Jews**

### **By David Feddes**

When Jesus was born into the world, he was called the King of the Jews. The wise men, who came from afar, said, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him" (Matthew 2:2). And when they came asking about the King of the Jews, the man whose title was King of the Jews, Herod the Great, immediately set in motion attempts to kill Jesus. So from the time he was a baby, Jesus was called—by some at least—the King of the Jews, and efforts were made on his life.

When Jesus was tried and crucified, he was called the King of the Jews. Pilate asks Jesus, "Are you the king of the Jews?" (Mark 15:2). Pilate says to the crowd, "Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?" (Mark 15:9). "Then what shall I do with the man you call the King of the Jews?" (Mark 15:12). The soldiers mocking him say, "Hail, King of the Jews!" (Mark 15:18). The sign they nail above him says in three different languages, "The King of the Jews" (John 19:20). And when they're mocking him, they call him the King of Israel: "Let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross that we may see and believe" (Mark 15:32).

"King of the Jews" is a very significant title for Jesus. It was used as an accusation, but the title was rightfully his. Let's focus on the fact that Jesus is King of the Jews. I have a really complicated outline: first Jesus' Jewishness and second Jesus' kingship. Jesus was and is very Jewish, and Jesus was and is a king.

### **Jesus the Jew**

Today we could ask with the wise men, "Where is he who was born King of the Jews?" The Jewishness of Jesus is something that's easy to overlook by people who aren't Jews. When we're reading our Bible, our kids sometimes ask, "What is a Jew? And are we Jews?" Well, the answer to "What is a Jew?" is, at one level, Jews are people whose great-great-great-great-great-grandparents were Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. There are many people in the world still today—millions of them—whose ancestry goes back to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. By their bodily heritage, they are Jewish people. A lot of Jewish people live in Israel. A lot of Jewish people live in the United States. A lot of Jewish people used to live in Europe too, until Adolf Hitler and the Nazis killed six million of them. But there are many Jewish people still in the world today. And Jesus was a Jew.

Jesus was born Jewish. His mother Mary was Jewish. His adoptive father Joseph was Jewish. He was raised in a Jewish nation and Jewish homeland, according to Jewish customs.

When the wise men came seeking Jesus, they did not say, "Where is he who was born King of the Romans?" or "Where is he who was born King of the Russians?" or "King of the Americans" or the British or the French. They said, "Where is the one who was born King of the Jews?" They didn't go to Berlin seeking him, or to New York, or to Moscow, or anywhere else. They went to Jerusalem, a Jewish city, and then from Jerusalem to Bethlehem, a Jewish town. Jesus was born in the Jewish town of Bethlehem and grew up in the Jewish town of Nazareth.

When Jesus was eight days old, he received the Jewish sign of circumcision. His parents attended a Jewish synagogue every week for the teaching and worship. He and his parents went to the various festivals of the Jewish people in the great temple of Jerusalem. Jesus studied the Jewish Scriptures. Jesus fulfilled the Jewish Scriptures and the prophecies and the hopes and the expectations of the Jewish people.

Jesus was called “Rabbi,” the Jewish term for a teacher. Jesus was called by many “the prophet who is coming into the world” (John 6:14), because they knew the prophecy that there would be a Jewish person even greater than the Jew Moses—a prophet who would be like Moses, only greater—the prophet who was promised. And they knew prophecies of the Anointed One, “Messiah.” The Greek word is “Christ,” but their word would be “Mashiach,” or “Messiah.” They looked for someone who would be a Rabbi, and a Prophet, and the Messiah. All these titles—Jewish titles—were applied to Jesus, and you really don’t understand Jesus as fully as you could if you don’t understand what those Jewish titles for him mean.

The first people who came to honor Jesus were Jewish shepherds. Jesus' first followers were all Jewish. The twelve apostles were all Jewish. The women who assisted the apostles and Jesus on their travels were all Jewish women. The early church in Jerusalem was a Jewish church.

Even the mission to the Gentiles often spread through a network of Jewish people. Paul would always go to the synagogue, or the local gathering of Jewish people and of those who were called “God-fearers”—non-Jewish or Gentile people who would worship the God of Israel, knowing him as the one true God. That’s how the gospel spread, according to the book of Acts. The apostles would always go first to the synagogue. Some of the people in the synagogue would get really riled and angry at the gospel, but others would come to know the Lord Jesus Christ and believe in him. That was Paul’s method. He says that “the gospel is the power of God for salvation, first for the Jew, then for the Gentile” (Romans 1:16). And that was his missionary method: he’d first go to the Jewish outposts, where there were already some worshipers of the one true God. Then he would use that as his launching base to carry the gospel to others in the area.

So Jesus was a Jew, and the early Christian movement was Jewish.

Something terrible happened along the way, however. Some Jewish people resisted the gospel, and some Gentile people still had a lot of anti-Jewishness in their attitudes. After a while, the church and the Jewish people drifted apart, and some—even in the church—became very anti-Jewish and cruel to Jews throughout the centuries. They would accuse the Jews of being “Christ-killers.” And that supposedly gave them the right to take away Jewish property and mistreat Jewish people—and kill them if they wished—because the Jews were “Christ-killers.”

It's true that some Jews were involved in killing Christ, but that’s because the whole story of Jesus happens among Jewish people. That’s like saying that the Scottish people were William Wallace-betrayers. Yes, but William Wallace was Scottish himself, and the whole movement that he led involved the Scottish people. Some of the villains are Scottish—but so was he and his fellow heroes. Some of the villains in the death of Jesus were Jewish—but so was he, and so were his earliest, most prominent followers.

In fact, if you want to be a follower of Jesus at all, you'll have to accept the title that the apostle Paul gives you: "children of Abraham by faith in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:26–29). Even if you didn't descend from Abraham bodily, you are related to him by faith. You come under that umbrella of Israel and become Jewish in that spiritual sense, in union with our Lord Jesus Christ. So when my kids ask, "Are we Jewish?" I say, your mom's great-grandmother was Jewish, so you've got a little bit of Jewish blood in you. But you're Jewish because you're children of Abraham by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

### *A Jew for Jews*

At any rate, Jesus was a Jew. And we need to keep in mind that he is a Jew for Jewish people. That's very important to remember in our time too, because over the centuries, some Jewish people have taught their children that Jesus is not for Jews. If Jesus is any good at all, they say, he's for Gentiles only, so if you were to follow Jesus and believe in him, that would mean you stopped being a Jew.

I spent my whole summer in Israel one year with a group called Jews for Jesus. So there are indeed Jews for Jesus. But the irony is that you could be considered a Jew if you're an atheist or an agnostic who believes nothing—but if you are a Jew who follows Jesus, many of your fellow Jews will say you have renounced your Jewishness. Not so!

Jesus' own mother Mary said that God "has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful to Abraham and his descendants forever, even as he said to our fathers" (Luke 1:54–55). The coming of Jesus into the world was God's mercy to Israel. Nathanael, one of the early disciples, said, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel" (John 1:49).

When there were some Gentile converts who were tempted to think that God was rejecting the Jews and welcoming the other nations, the apostle Paul set them straight. He wrote, "Did God reject his people? By no means!" (Romans 11:1). He told non-Jews that if you belong to God at all, it's because the Jewish people were the native olive tree and you, although outsiders, were grafted in. Maybe a few branches from the Jewish tree were cut off to make room for you, but God can graft any Jewish people he wants right back into that tree again. God has not written off the Jewish people.

Another serious error is to think that there are other ways of salvation—that Christians have one way of salvation through faith in Jesus, but God has a different path for Jewish people. That's not true either. Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). Whether you're Jewish or Gentile, whoever you are, there's one way to be saved and to know God, and that's Jesus Christ.

So he is a Jew for Jewish people. They need him and they can have him. It's wonderful that many Jewish people—even today—are coming to know Jesus. As I understand Romans 11, many more Jews near the end of the age are going to flock to the Lord Jesus as well.

Jesus is a Jew for Jews. He's also a Jew for Gentiles.

## *A Jew for Gentiles*

God's original promise to the father of the Jewish nation, Abraham, was: "All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring" (Genesis 12:3; 22:18). And that offspring, as the apostle Paul explains in the New Testament, is not plural, but one seed. The Lord Jesus Christ is the primary source of that blessing to all nations. And so he's a blessing to us who are not Jews.

But let's never forget that, as Jesus himself put it, "Salvation is from the Jews" (John 4:22). God chose the Jewish people and then chose one particular Jew to be our Savior, the Savior of Jews and non-Jews as well.

Why does this matter today for us who are non-Jewish Gentiles?

First, Jesus' Jewishness affects **how we relate to Jews**. Some Christians have a horrible history of mistreating Jewish people. We need to remember that Jesus and his early followers were Jews, that God chose the Jews in love, that he has not forsaken his purposes for the Jews, and that he says to Jews, "Whoever touches you touches the apple of my eye" (Zechariah 2:8). Satan hates the Jewish people, because they are the people from whom the Messiah came. Throughout history, Satan tried to turn even the very Church of God against the Jews, which was a disastrous error for the church to commit. So whenever you know or meet Jewish people, you are to treat them with love, not with contempt or with hatred.

Second, Jesus' Jewishness affects **how we relate to God**. Remember this: "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one" (Deuteronomy 6:4). Not, "there are several gods." The God of Israel is the only real God available. So if we're going to relate to God, we need to relate to the God of Israel and praise him as the God who has grafted us into Israel as well.

Third, Jesus' Jewishness matters for understanding the **continuity of history**. God doesn't have Plan A, Plan B, Plan C, Plan D—and if one of God's plans doesn't work out, then he goes to a different plan. God had one plan all along, and it was to bring Jew and Gentile together into one body in our Lord Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:11-22). That plan unfolded according to God's appointed times throughout history.

A fourth reason Gentiles need to remember Jesus' Jewishness is to emphasize **the unity and value of both Testaments**, the Old Testament as well as the New Testament. The Old Testament and the New were both written by Jewish people. But we sometimes disregard the Old because we think it's been replaced by the New. However, there is a tremendous amount to be gained by continuing to study all of God's Word in both Testaments.

In short, we Gentiles by physical birth—but Jews by spiritual rebirth—can benefit very much from focusing and being very aware of the Jewishness of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Having looked at Jesus' Jewishness, now let's focus on Jesus' kingship.

## Jesus' Kingship

Jesus declared the coming of the Kingdom of God. If you were to do a computer search of “Kingdom of God” or “Kingdom of Heaven,” you would see those phrases all through the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke: Kingdom of God or Kingdom of Heaven. They mean the same thing. “Heaven” is a polite Jewish way of saying “God” in this context. It’s not just saying, “There’s a kingdom called heaven, which is a really cool place that you can get to someday.” In other contexts, heaven can mean that, but often "heaven" means "God." For example, the prophet Daniel says to Nebuchadnezzar, “You will know that heaven rules” (Daniel 4:26). That’s just a polite, roundabout way of saying, “God rules.” Matthew often uses “Kingdom of Heaven.” The other Gospels use “Kingdom of God” more. It means the same thing: God reigns.

"Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel'" (Mark 1:14-15). Jesus was saying that the reign of God, the kingship of God, has come very close to you. When Jesus drove out evil spirits, he said, "If it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you" (Luke 11:20).

### *Expectations*

People start getting excited, because a lot of them had been waiting for the kingdom to come close and for things to change. So after Jesus did an amazing miracle where he fed 5,000 people with a little bit of bread and fish, the people were really excited about a king—and free food. But that was not the kind of kingship or the kind of timetable that Jesus intended. "Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make him king by force, withdrew again to a mountain by himself" (John 6:15).

What were the people expecting? They thought back to their ideal king, and the golden age of kingship in Israel, the reigns of **David and Solomon**. David gave them victory over foreign powers. Then David had a dream and a desire to build a temple for God. God said, “I don't want you to be the one to build the temple. Your son will do it.” Even so, David still gathered a huge amount of wealth to go into the temple and laid the plans for building it. Then it was his son Solomon who actually built the temple. So the people viewed kingship as something where you conquered nasty foreign enemies, and you had a great place to worship God, the temple.

Another example, later in history, was Judas Maccabeus—or **Judah the Hammer**, less than 200 years before Jesus. After Alexander the Great's empire was divided up, Israel was occupied by foreign enemies, by Greek rulers governing from Egypt and from Syria. By the time of Judah the Hammer, the Jews were under a nasty ruler who was a foretaste of the Antichrist, Antiochus Epiphanes. He butchered babies and killed Jewish people and sacrificed pigs in God's temple. Then Judah the Hammer arose, and he put the hammer down! For three years, Judah and the other Maccabees, his brothers, led a rebellion and won important battles. The enemy king Antiochus, who had proclaimed himself to be god, suddenly died of unknown causes. We know the real cause: God struck him down. After they had driven out the enemy, the Jews cleansed the temple and rededicated it. So there was a three-year military campaign, and then the cleansing of the temple, still celebrated by Jewish people today in the Feast of Hanukkah.

Another royal figure was **Herod the Great**. He was declared King of Judea by the Romans in 40 BC. There was one group of people that the Romans could never quite handle or drive out, the Parthians. They were a tough bunch. They invaded the land of Israel. Herod led a three-year campaign against them and succeeded in driving out the Parthian invaders. After getting rid of the foreign enemies, Herod launched a major project to rebuild and refurbish the temple in Jerusalem. After a long time, it was dedicated under Herod the Great's rule.

Now, some people weren't eager to see Herod as the King of the Jews, though that was his title. They didn't really see him as the fulfillment of the new David coming to rule. He had a few problems. He wasn't really Jewish. He was from the Edomites, the descendants of Esau, not Jacob. Also, he wasn't the ideal godly king: he murdered three of his sons and his wife and various other people, and attempted to murder baby Jesus, among his various crimes. A Jew might say of Herod, "I guess he did drive out some foreign enemies and he did rebuild the temple, but I'm not sure he's the King of the Jews we were all hoping for."

One of Herod's sons whom he didn't kill, **Herod Antipas**, became king. This Herod was the one ruling during the ministry of John the Baptist and Jesus. His symbol was a reed that grows beside the Sea of Galilee. If you were to say, "Who is the King of the Jews?" most people would say, "Herod Antipas." But John the Baptist rebuked him for taking his brother's wife, and Antipas threw John in prison and later killed him. Jesus spoke to a crowd about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swayed by the wind? If not, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear fine clothes are in kings' palaces. Then what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet" (Matthew 11:7-9). Jesus was saying: You didn't go out there to see a swaying reed like Herod Antipas, did you? You didn't go to see somebody wearing silk and fancy finery and all of that, did you? No, you go to palaces for that. Herod's symbol was a reed, and he wore fancy clothing in his palace, but that's not what you were looking for when you went out to hear John preach in the desert. You went out to a prophet. John was the one prophesying and preparing the way for the real king--and it sure wasn't Herod Antipas.

Besides these different models and expectations for kingship, there was the most powerful ruler on earth, the Roman emperor, **Caesar**. After the death of Julius Caesar, his adopted son Octavian took over the Roman Empire after defeating various competitors. Octavian became known as Caesar Augustus and declared his adopted father, Julius, to be god. When you declare your father to be god, what does that make you? The son of god. The supreme king, Caesar Augustus, the son of god, has taken over the world and brought peace on earth. After Caesar Augustus died, his heir, Augustus Tiberius Caesar, took over. Coins with the image of Tiberius were used in Jesus' time. On one side the coin said, "Augustus Tiberius Caesar, son of the divine Augustus." If you're son of the divine Augustus, what are you? You're son of god. On the other side, the coin said "Pontifex Maximus"—Chief Priest. So the Roman emperor was the Chief Priest and the Son of God.

Now, what happens when somebody new comes along saying, "God is taking over. I am the King of the Jews. I am the Son of God"? The Roman powers are not going to be thrilled about that. Herod isn't going to be thrilled about that. The chief priests, who have been making good money under Caesar and Herod, aren't going to be too excited about that.

### *Accused of treason*

When Jesus was arrested, he was accused of treason. “They began to accuse him, saying, 'We have found this man subverting our nation. He opposes payment of taxes to Caesar and claims to be Messiah, a king'" (Luke 23:2). Actually, Jesus had never told people not to pay taxes to Caesar. When asked about it, Jesus took a coin and said, “Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and give to God what is God’s” (Mark 12:17). Don’t go around calling Caesar “Son of God,” as that coin called him. You can give Caesar taxes ("Give Caesar what is Caesar's") but don’t worship him. Anyway, they accused Jesus of opposing the payment of taxes to Caesar and of claiming to be Messiah, a king.

By the time Pilate took custody of Jesus, Jesus had already been beaten badly the night before. So Pilate had this beat-up peasant standing before him, and Pilate was having a hard time taking him seriously as a contender for king or as a rival to Caesar, the so-called “Son of God.” Pilate wanted to set Jesus free, because he knew that whatever this Jesus was, he sure wasn’t a threat to Caesar.

But the Jewish leaders kept shouting, “If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar” (John 19:12).

### *Different kind of kingship*

What was going on with Jesus? He wasn’t exactly competing with Herod for Herod’s position, or even with Tiberius Caesar for Caesar’s position. He had a higher position in mind, and a different way of being king. Jesus explained, "The kingdom of God is not coming in ways that can be observed, nor will people say, ‘Here it is,’ or ‘There it is,’ because the kingdom of God is in your midst" (Luke 17:20–21). In other words, wherever Jesus goes is where the kingdom of God is. That’s what he’s saying: “Wherever I go, that’s where the kingdom is.”

Jesus told Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place" (John 18:36). This doesn’t mean Jesus' kingdom isn’t in this world or has no impact on this world. Jesus came so that God's will would be done "on earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10). It’s not an otherworldly kingdom in the sense of being only about some other place called heaven. But it is “not of this world” in the sense that its authority doesn’t come from this world; it comes from God. His authority and his kingship and his rule come from God himself—not from how many swords he can gather or how many armies he can assemble. Jesus made it clear that his kingdom would proceed in quite a different way than David or Solomon or the Maccabees—and certainly different from Herod or the Caesars.

Jesus revealed a different kind of kingship. Jesus' main battle was not against Rome but against bigger enemies: sin, death, and Satan. Jesus came to fight not against any particular ruler at a particular time, but against the “the ruler of this world,” the devil (John 12:31).

God is becoming King on earth as in heaven through the reign of Jesus. That kingship is already active. The kingdom is present, not just future. It will come in its fullness, in all its power and

glory someday, but the kingdom has already been among us. Satan has been limited ever since Jesus came. He said, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven" (Luke 10:18). He said, "The kingdom of God has come near" (Mark 1:15), and "If I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you" (Luke 11:20).

Jesus kingship is active now, wherever he's freeing people from evil powers, wherever he is forgiving sins, wherever he is healing people, wherever he's transforming lives, wherever he's working from the inside out—not forcing his reign on people. His kingdom is often working secretly, like yeast in bread or like seed in the ground that's just growing up quietly when nobody's looking (Matthew 13:31-33). Jesus says his kingdom is not coming with big armies and trumpets—but it is going to change the world.

When King Jesus comes again, he will come in glory and power. Then he will finally crush those who still remain as enemies. But in the meantime, his kingdom starts and operates in a very different way than the military leaders of his time.

### ***Prophets' predictions***

All of this was hard for people to grasp while it was happening. Many of them did have expectations from the prophets and heard various prophecies, but they didn't put different prophecies together.

They read prophecies about a **king**, the Messiah, the Son of David, who would defeat his enemies and rule wisely and well. So they looked forward to someone who would be a king like that.

They also heard prophecies that Yahweh, the **Lord** himself, would come as the ruler and shepherd of Israel. So they looked forward to a day when God would come himself to reign and to rule. But they didn't think that God and the Davidic king were the same person.

They heard of a third figure in some of the prophets: a **suffering servant**. The prophet Zechariah talked about someone who would suffer and be pierced (Zechariah 12:10). The prophet Isaiah spoke of a humble, unimpressive servant who would suffer rejection, torture, and death for things he didn't do, for sins that others committed (Isaiah 53).

People knew the prophecies about these three figures, but nobody imagined that the King, the Lord, and the Servant could be the same person. However, Jesus, as the person the prophets predicted, did understand.

This could have been grasped if you really studied the prophets carefully. "'The days are coming,' declares the Lord, 'when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The Lord Our Righteous Savior'" (Jeremiah 23:5–6). So the prophecy of the Davidic king is also a prophecy of "the Lord our Righteous Savior." Those two figures actually do come together—right here in the same prophecy.

The ruling King and the suffering Servant appear together in Isaiah's prophecies. "Your God reigns... The Lord will lay bare his holy arm in the sight of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God... Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed... He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering... He was pierced for our transgressions (Isaiah 52-53). It turns out that the ruling King, the mighty arm of God, is the very same person as the suffering Servant.

You would never have guessed this, but it was right there, staring you in the face the whole time. That's the way the Old Testament Scriptures are sometimes: the truth is staring you in the face the whole time, but you don't see it until you see it in Jesus. Then something clicks, and it all fits together.

### **A ridiculous king?**

Jesus seemed like a ridiculous king to almost everybody involved in his crucifixion. Pilate said to himself, "I know why they handed him over to me: they're envious. He's no king. He's no threat to me. He's no threat to Herod. He's no threat to Caesar. I ought to just release the poor guy." Pilate couldn't take Jesus seriously as a contender for a throne. Herod and his soldiers mocked Jesus and laughed at him. Pilate's soldiers mocked him and put a crown of thorns and a purple robe on him and laughed at the notion that he was King of the Jews. The crowds mocked him. The priests mocked him: "King of Israel, come on down!" Then the King died in disgrace. Everybody thought it was hilarious that this man, of all people, would be considered King of the Jews.

Is there anybody who doesn't think it's ridiculous to call Jesus the King? Only one. And he's the one that matters.

God said, "After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied" (Isaiah 53:11). God had said he's to suffer for all those sins, but he's going to see the light of life again and justify many. After everybody else laughed at the King of the Jews, God raised Jesus from the dead and put him on the throne of the universe.

Long after the various Herods are buried and their memory despised, long after all the various Caesars have done all that they could do, Jesus Christ lives and reigns—and billions of people call him King.

When everybody laughed at Jesus and wrote him off, the only one in the universe who matters said, "This is my beloved Son; with him I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17). "This is the sacrifice I had appointed all along, and I accept that sacrifice for the sins of the world. This is the one through whom I'm going to give eternal life to millions. His eternal life is going to resurrect him right now by the power of the Holy Spirit." And so God raised Jesus from the dead.

Jesus is a ridiculous king—in the eyes of the world. "But the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength" (1 Corinthians 1:25).

What did God say after all that? After Romans, Gentiles, and Jews alike killed his Son—after they did their worst—did God just write off these Christ-killers, whether Jew or Gentile?

The apostle Peter preached to the very crowd and the very leaders who had called for Jesus' death. And he emphasizes that their God is the only God: "The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. You handed him over to be killed... Now, fellow Israelites, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders. But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Messiah would suffer. Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that he may send the Messiah, who has been appointed for you—even Jesus" (Acts 3:13-20).

This is the grace of God. Less than two months after they've killed his Son, God has a spokesman say, "You've got another chance. You've got a chance to turn around and change your mind about this Jesus whom you killed. God had his plan and his reasons for letting his Son be killed. But now, if you want your sins to be wiped out, they can be. If you want your Messiah, he has already come, and he's coming again. If you want times of refreshing, here's how to get the refreshing."

The King of the Jews is the source of all forgiveness of sins. He's the source of refreshing. He is our life.

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**By David Feddes**  
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Where is the one who has been born King of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him. (Matthew 2:2)

**King of the Jews (Matthew 27; Mark 15)**

- “Are you the King of the Jews?”
- “Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?”
- “Then what shall I do with the man you call the King of the Jews?”
- “Hail, King of the Jews!”
- The inscription of the charge against him read, “The King of the Jews.”
- “Let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross that we may see and believe.”

**King of the Jews**

- Jesus’ Jewishness
- Jesus’ kingship

**Jesus the Jew**

- Born Jewish, raised Jewish, homeland
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- Jewish Scriptures, prophecies, hopes
- Jewish rabbi, prophet, Messiah
- Jewish shepherds, apostles, women, early church, mission network
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**A Jew for Jews**

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- Nathaniel: “Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel.” (John 1:49)
- Did God reject his people? By no means! (Romans 11:1)
- “I am the way... No one comes to the Father except through me.” (John 14:6)

## **A Jew for Gentiles**

- “All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring.” (Genesis 28:14).
- “Salvation is from the Jews.” (John 4:22)
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## **King of the Jews**

- Jesus’ Jewishness
- Jesus’ kingship

## **Kingdom comes near**

Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.” (Mark 1:14-15)

“If it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.” (Luke 11:20)

Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make him king by force, withdrew again to a mountain by himself. (John 6:15)

## **David and Solomon**

- Victory over foreign powers
- Building God’s temple

## **Judah the Hammer**

- Led three-year campaign against foreign occupation
- Cleansed temple in 164 B.C.
- Still celebrated at Hanukkah

## **Herod the Great**

- Declared King of Judea in 40 B.C.
- Led three year campaign against Parthian invaders
- Rebuilt the temple and dedicated it

## Is Herod the desired ruler?

Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great, ruled during Jesus' ministry. Antipas's symbol was a reed that grows beside the Sea of Galilee.

Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swayed by the wind? If not, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear fine clothes are in kings' palaces. Then what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. (Matthew 11:7-9)

## Supreme King and Son of God

Augustus Tiberius Caesar, son of the Divine Augustus. Chief Priest (Pontifex Maximus)

## Accused of treason

They began to accuse him, saying, "We have found this man subverting our nation. He opposes payment of taxes to Caesar and claims to be Messiah, a king." (Luke 23:2)

Pilate tried to set Jesus free, but the Jewish leaders kept shouting, "If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar." (John 19:12)

## Different kind of kingship

"The kingdom of God is not coming in ways that can be observed, nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There!' for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you." (Luke 17:20-21)

Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place." (John 18:36)

- Jesus' main battle is not against Rome but against sin, death, and Satan.
- God is becoming king on earth as in heaven through Jesus.
- His kingship is active now in forgiving, healing, and transforming, not in forcing his reign upon people.
- When King Jesus comes again, he will come in glory and power.

## Three figures predicted by the prophets

- A **king**, the Messiah, Son of David, will defeat enemies and rule wisely and well.
- Yahweh, the **Lord** himself, will come as ruler and shepherd of Israel.
- A humble, unimpressive **servant** will suffer rejection, torture, and death for sins that others have committed.
- Nobody imagined that the king, the Lord, and the servant could be the same person.

## **King and Lord**

“The days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The Lord Our Righteous Savior.” (Jeremiah 23:5-7)

## **Arm of the Lord: Ruling King, suffering servant**

The Lord will lay bare his holy arm in the sight of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God... Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed... He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering... He was pierced for our transgressions (Isaiah 52-53).

## **A ridiculous king?**

- Pilate thinks Jesus has no power.
- Herod and his soldiers mock the king.
- Pilate’s soldier’s mock the king.
- The crowds and priests mock the king.
- The king dies in disgrace
- Is there anyone who doesn’t think it’s ridiculous to call Jesus king?

## **Sins may be wiped out**

The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. You handed him over to be killed... Now, fellow Israelites, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders. But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Messiah would suffer. Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that he may send the Messiah, who has been appointed for you—even Jesus. (Acts 3:13-20)