

# Madness: Coming of the King

*Coming of the King*

By Dr. Jeff Meyers

**Bible Text:** Matthew 1:18-25

**Preached on:** Sunday, January 13, 2013.

I do want to encourage you this morning to open your Bibles to the first book of the New Testament, the book of Matthew, the first of the gospels, chapter one. And if you are a first time guest or visitor I want to welcome you as we continue in a study of this first book of the New Testament, the book of Matthew in this season of our church's life.

Now you may be thinking to yourself, even if you weren't here last week, this is week two and we are still in the first chapter and Matthew has 28 chapters. How on earth are we going to get to the resurrection by Easter? It is real simple. We are going to skip a bunch of chapters in the middle. But the theme, the purpose, the idea of this entire message series is *madness*. This concept that Jesus Christ when he came to save us from our sins, the methodology, the manner, the means by which he did it was so dramatically different than how an earthly king would do it, so dramatically different than how earthly royalty would do it. When you look at his means, his methodology, even his teachings, it is just madness. And in a study of the madness of Jesus' coming in the gospel of Matthew, we cannot overlook the story we know so well as the Christmas story.

Now most of what we are going to read today is not the traditional Christmas story. The traditional Christmas story that we even read publicly at our Christmas Eve service is Luke chapter two, the story of the donkey ride, the story of the inn without rooms, the story of the shepherds being spoken to by the angels.

Today in Matthew chapter one beginning in verse 18 it is a simple account of a young lady by the name of Mary and a man by the name of Joseph. It is the simple account of prophecies being spoken. It is the simple account that the Messiah would come much differently than the world ever expected. In fact, the gospel of Luke's account tells us that he was put in swaddling clothes, not quite the silver spoon that we would expect from a king.

If you weren't here with us last week, we looked at the lineage of Jesus that leads us to his coming, the fact that in Matthew chapter one there are 45 names, 42 generations and 40 begats. I heard commentary last week of how the statistics just came alive. I thought I would give you one last good statistic before we turn to Matthew one verse 18. Three hundred and forty six. You say, "What is 346?" It is 346 days till Christmas. So I want to encourage you to turn with me to Matthew chapter one as we read what we know as the Christmas story today.

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and

not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.<sup>1</sup>

As I mentioned earlier, we cannot get out of our minds the Luke two account with the inn without a room and the swaddling clothes and so hopefully these simple verses will help us piece together what we know as the Christmas story from a very maddening perspective, the fact that here is the King of creation, the King of the Jews, the one who will come and save all of humanity from the worst problem, sin, coming in a manner that is so opposite and so backwards than how any earthly king or royalty would do. There are absolutely three main points of my message that I want to draw from Matthew chapter one today, but I have an introductory.

You know us preachers. We never have enough to say, so I am going to say a little bit more. My first little introductory—but there are technically four—but my first one is this. This story has a real predicament to it, because if we take a step back from the story it is a story that had been desired to be told for hundreds and literally for over a thousand years. The predicament of the king's coming actually has kind of a two-fold predicament. The first one is this. The fact that the king was coming to save humanity from their sins, particularly the Jewish people, was probably the greatest anticipated event of the day. And just in this very passage we read there is a quotation from the prophet Isaiah who really lived about 700 to 800 years before the time of Jesus. And here in this account in this story we have a quotation that I know the rabbis, I know the dads in the home, I know the people who were concerned about the Messiah coming, I know that they lived in great anticipation. There is no telling how many times this verse had been read or quoted in a synagogue service, incredible anticipation. But the anticipation is found in other books of the Old Testament, even the book of Malachi.

In fact, if you go to the last chapter of the Old Testament, 400 years before what we know as the account of Jesus in the gospel of Matthew, chapter four states that the Sun of righteousness is going to come with healing in his wings. The last thing that God gave the Jewish people in what we know as the Old Testament, was the Messiah is coming, the king is coming, there is healing in his wings and yet it had been 400 years. Imagine the anticipation that had been welling up generation after generation as they sat down and they shared the hope that that generation would see the coming of the Messiah.

---

<sup>1</sup> Matthew 1:18-25.

But it goes even beyond Isaiah. It goes beyond Micah. It goes beyond Malachi or Zachariah. For the most well known and most famous religious celebration known to man, Passover, a celebration that many of you are familiar with where the Jewish people gather together with their family and they remember the Exodus event, they remember that God delivered them from the plagues, that God delivered them from Pharaoh, that God delivered them from Egypt and miraculously allowed them to cross the Red Sea. They had the Egyptians who were coming behind destroyed. That final plague with what we call the death angel coming to those homes which did not have the blood of the lamb across the door frame. They remembered that the Lord passed over them who believed. Every year since Isaiah, every year since Malachi, family after family had gathered together and they always set one more place setting than necessary. Why? For Elijah, the forerunner of the king, the forerunner of the Messiah. And every year at every Passover and at every Jewish family they have somebody open the door and hopefully Elijah has come, which means the king has come.

So when I talk about anticipation it is not just the ancient prophets of Isaiah and Malachi. Within the last year the Jewish people had anticipated the Messiah. The predicament is that anticipation was coupled with a great angst. Now that word angst is one of those words it is just fun to say but not fun to live out. Angst is an intense frustration and just almost a misery that comes about because of the situation or the scenario that surrounds somebody. Let me give you the first century predicament of the Jewish people. They had come back to the homeland after being basically captured by the Babylonians. They had been there for about 400 years. According to Nehemiah and Ezra they had rebuilt the walls. They had rebuilt the temple. They had rebuilt their lives. But there was this group of people that showed up a couple of hundred years before this time known as the Romans.

You know the old phrase, all roads lead to Rome. Well, all roads led right through Israel. And what we know as Israel, what we know as Judea, the southern part, what we know as the Jerusalem, everywhere they turned they might have been in their land, they might have had their temple, but they were under the rule of somebody who not only did not anticipate the Messiah, but rejected that there was only one God. According to Deuteronomy chapter six verses four and five. In fact, when you get to the crucifixion account of Jesus Christ there in Jerusalem, the holy city in Passover week, whom do we find reigning? Pilate, a Roman governor. Whom does he send Jesus to? Herod, a Roman tetrarch. Everywhere they turned, the Romans, the Romans.

And so there is this great predicament in that they are anticipating at any moment that the king, the Messiah will come, but they are living in angst, because the situation they find themselves in is miserable at best. And then we get to verse 18 of Matthew chapter one. The king comes. But he comes so differently from what they had hoped. He came so dramatically opposite of what their flesh had expected and hoped for that just like today many people missed him. And so the three things or the three ways in which the king came, kind of in a form of madness, were these. The way or the people that were utilized, the people that were involved in this story.

Now we know the people that are mentioned here in Matthew chapter one. We hear Mary and Joseph. And when you hear those names, particularly in our setting and in our day, there is just a level of respect that comes with those names. But I want to take you back about 2000 years and I want you to look, first off, at their position in life. Young married, just a young teenage girl from a small town in upper Galilee. She was not from the right place. She was not from the right area. Everything about her, let me just be honest about Mary and I don't mean to be disparaging, but there is a good chance that if Mary had been in our culture she would not have won prom queen. There is a good chance she would not have won most popular. She was a common girl who would be married to a common man. Joseph the carpenter.

You say, "Jeff, where do you get that idea?"

All throughout the gospels (for Jesus is), for lack of better terms, when people are coming against him and speaking against his words, do you know what they keep saying to him? Aren't you the son of a carpenter? Aren't you that guy from Nazareth? Do you remember that when he calls the first disciples in John chapter one, one of his first disciples says, "Can any good thing come from there?"

In other words, Mary and Joseph, their social position, where they came from in life is not what humanity puts stock in. It is completely madness, why? Because today there are kings and monarchs and queens all around the world that go to great lengths to make sure that their children marry the right people. And if they don't marry the right people, they eliminate those people. Why? Because we can't have a king coming from them. We can't have a queen coming from them. And yet here you have these characters with a social position that for lack of better terms is less than desirable.

I want to equate it to you to another famous Old Testament character. Do you remember a man by the name of King David? King David who would extend the rule of Israel more than any other king, the second of the three monarch kings, roughly about 1000 BC. In chapter 17 of 1 Samuel there is a battle waging between the Israelites and the Philistines over this one guy by the name of Goliath. Everybody is scared. Everybody is panicked. Nobody is willing to fight him. Yet David's dad, by the name of Jesse, sends him with some cheese and crackers to his older brothers who are fighting the battle.

So he gathers up the food and he goes to the battle front. He goes, "Hey, guys. Here is your lunch. How are you doing?"

Next thing he knows Goliath is just ripping and roaring and all kinds of horrible stuff. And he says, "Who is going to fight this guy?" And they say, "Oh, nobody can fight this guy." He says, "Well, let me give it a shot." And they say, "Well, who do you think you are, pipsqueak? Who are you? You are our baby brother."

In other words, baby brothers don't fight Goliaths. He didn't have the right position in the family. But do you know what? A chapter earlier in chapter 16 while Saul was reigning

the prophet Samuel came to Jesse and said, “Jesse, I am going to anoint one of your sons to be the King of Israel.” They started with the oldest and went all the way down, so much so that finally Samuel said, “I haven’t found him yet. You have got to have another kid around here, because I am out.” And Jesse says, this is the New Revised Jeff Version, “You don’t mean the little guy, right?” And he says, “Well, bring him and let’s see what happens.”

And in 1 Samuel chapter 16 verse seven we have the Lord say, “For God is not like man. He does not look on the outside, but on the heart.”

And the position of Mary and Joseph on the outside was not nearly as impressive as the heart that was on the inside. And yet every ... not every, but so many people Jesus came into contact with, boy, they looked good on the outside, didn’t they? But they were messed up on the inside. They didn’t have the position. The position was maddening. But they also didn’t have the prosperity. I mean kings come from money, right?

I remember when my wife and I had the privilege of going to London, England some years ago. We went on a tour of the castle and they showed us the jewels of England, you know, the crowns and all the famous jewels they have. Now, you know me. I will talk to a brick. So I will talk to anybody. And there is somebody giving a tour and I asked this very ignorant, dumb American question. How much are they worth? Do you know what they said? Can’t put a price on it. You literally cannot put a price on the value of those. That is where kings come from. That is where queens come from.

It says here Mary and Joseph. They were from Nazareth which is a rock quarry and he was a carpenter. Now let me help you connect the dots here. This is like a young man who decides to graduate from high school or college, move to Athens, Georgia, and set up a shop selling Georgia Tech material. You might have an occasional customer, but generally speaking not much business. He is in a small town on the backside of Galilee and he is in a trade that is not very lucrative.

Now the last time I checked these aren’t the type of people that the tabloids talk about. But this is just the type of people that God used in the Christmas story. It is madness. But it wasn’t just the people that were utilized. It is the prophecy that they fulfilled. You will notice here in verse 22.

Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.<sup>2</sup>

This prophecy that would have been spoken for hundreds of years maybe just as recently as the last Passover celebration in the homes across the land, this prophecy is utter madness. And the first reason is this, because of the process by which the child would come.

---

<sup>2</sup> Matthew 1:22-23.

Now, number one, royalty doesn't come from folks like Mary and Joseph and you and me. But in particular, supernaturally, a virgin birth. I don't mean to be crass and I don't mean to be crude, but as you study the gospel record, not only did they pick on Jesus for his human father who helped raise him being a carpenter, one of the things that he got most picked on was the fact that he did not have a biological dad. And they said, "Who are you? How dare you speak into our lives when you didn't even come in a proper fashion?"

Isn't it good to know that even in situations like that God can intervene and God can show up and God can move? The process of what we know as the virgin birth is absolute madness. Why? Because not only is the king not coming from "royal blood," he is not coming from human blood. He is not coming from a man. He is not coming from an earthly father. He is coming from God himself. That is why in Acts chapter 25 it says that he shed his own blood for the Church. It is a process that is just backwards. But it is the protocol that gets me.

You understand this is the birth of the king. And if we were to go to the Luke story we would have an inn without rooms. We would have clothes that are less desirable, just swaddling clothes. But the protocol that this prophecy says is that he would be Emmanuel, he would come to us.

Let me share with you why this is so backwards to our mindset. When is the last time a king, a queen, a member of royalty, a president or a prime minister showed up to your front door, knocked and said, "Hey, you want to have lunch?" It doesn't happen, does it? What happens if you try to go have lunch with them?

See, we live in a world where royalty is so protected, so admired and so revered that only the who's who with the right amount in the bank account get even any access whatsoever.

You know, one of the privileges that I am anticipating in my life is this. My son, my oldest son is in the fifth grade. That means he is graduating elementary school. He is proud that middle school is looming. But part of being in fifth grade is you have the opportunity to apply to be safety patrol. That is right. You get to wear a neon yellow strap and you get to guard the doors of the school.

Do you know one of the things we found out about safety patrol? He has two shifts that he alternates. One week he is in the bus line. The other week he is in the cafeteria. Well, we are up there one night for something for the school and one of the P E teachers, this coach who is over the cafeteria was bragging to Traci and I about how well Marshal did with a mop. Who knew? He doesn't come close to touching it at home. We found he mops every day up at the school. That means that one of the benefits, one of the privileges, how they actually get kids to sign up, is that at the end of fifth grade if you are a safety team member and you do your job all throughout the year, you get the privilege of being one of those select students who get to take one of their parents to a tour of Washington, DC. You get to go on the special tours where you and I can't normally go

because it is a school. You get to go all the neat places. One of the times when we are going to be up there is when we are going to have the opportunity, assuming nothing traumatic happens between now and then, we are going to have the opportunity to go to the White House. We are going to go to where the leader of our country resides. We may not get to see it with our eyes, but this is where the office is that is oval. I mean this is where whom we call it the leader of the free world works. This is where the decisions and the power reside.

Did you know back in September we had to sign up on our security check to get in? Six months before we even show up they wanted to make sure we were even going to let you past the gate. You think there is a chance we are even going to get to meet the president? No. Why? Because he is Marshall and I am Jeff. Hey, we are just like Mary and Joseph.

But do you realize in this story when the prophecy said he will be Emmanuel, God with us, not a president, not a prime minister, not a king, the creator of the universe showed up to the front door and said, "I want to dwell with you." That is madness. Why? Because on earth we do whatever we can just to get in those people's lives. And here he was saying, "I want to be a part of your life." It is backwards. It is different from everything that we are used to. It is why so many people missed it.

So there is this predicament. There are these people involved, Mary and Joseph. There is this specific prophecy that is utilized. Then there is the proclamation. How would God share the news to the world that the king has come?

I want you to notice what happens in verse 20. Joseph has just been given the news that his wife-to-be is with child, and that the child is not his, nor is anybody else's. It is God's. Imagine how that went when he shared that with his friends on Facebook. Nonetheless, verse 20.

"But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not..."<sup>3</sup>

The last time I checked in our world when someone who is considered a royalty sneezes they put it in a magazine. I mean we found out there is about to be a new lineage and a new heir to the royal throne. There are newspapers and tabloids spending millions of dollars, millions of pounds on the other side of the Atlantic desiring to get the latest scoop, the latest news. Why? Because they knew a future ruler is coming. And yet here is the king of creation and how does God announce it? Privately. Even if you go into Luke chapter two with the shepherds it says the glory of God shone around about them, but if you have ever been there. And I have had the privilege of going over to the Middle East. Bethlehem is just on the other side. It is not far away from Jerusalem, five or six miles. And you don't have anybody saying, "Man, what happened on the hill last night? That must have been big."

---

<sup>3</sup> Matthew 1:20.

You know, in Matthew chapter 17 Jesus goes on the Mount of Transfiguration. Peter, James and John go up there with him. While they are up there it says that Jesus transfigures himself as bright as the sun. There are Moses and Elijah speaking with him. Peter had the audacity, and personally from a fleshly perspective, was pretty smart. He said, “Jesus, why go down the mountain? This is good. Let’s build three tabernacles and let’s hang out. This is good stuff.”

Jesus says, “No, we need to go down to the bottom of the hill.”

They go down to the bottom of the hill. There is that famous story where there is the young man who is possessed by a demon. Jesus heals him when the disciples could not. In verse 21 of Matthew chapter 17, Jesus says, “This kind only come out by prayer and fasting.” In the story of the transfiguration, we have Peter, James and John, Jesus, Moses and Elijah; when Jesus transfigures as bright as the sun and yet we have no record of when they came down anybody saying, “Hey, what went on up there? That was a bright light.”

Why? Because it was localized. When the angels came to the shepherds in the Luke two passage, yes the glory of the Lord shown round about them, but it was localized. When he came to Joseph the angel of the Lord came in a dream. It was privatized. It was localized. He did not announce it in the headlines. He came and he announced it to their heart and into their lives, completely opposite how you would ever see it done today.

But, you know, it is not the private announcement of the king that gets me. It is the purpose. If you will turn with me to Matthew chapter one verse 21:

“And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.”<sup>4</sup>

Why is the king’s coming madness? Why is it so backwards to our flesh? Because if we think of kings and queens today, royalty today, we think of fancy cars, huge weddings, jewels without expense, power and authority. But do you know one of the things that we always think about? Security. Think about how many people are on security detail for the leaders of the world. There is a reason you can’t get close to them. Why? They possess power. They possess authority. And yet here his name is Jesus which means redeemer. He will save them from their sins. That same Isaiah that gave us this same passage about a virgin giving birth later on gave us a passage in chapter 53 where it says that he would suffer, that he would give of his blood, that he would be nailed. He would have stripes on his body. By his stripes we are healed.

Why did most people miss the coming of Jesus? Because they were looking for the earthly king and not the heavenly king. And it says there that the purpose of this announcement was not to announce a crown, but to announce a cross. Not to announce a ruling of the earth, but a reigning in the hearts of the people.

---

<sup>4</sup> Matthew 1:21.

And so the Christmas story, the madness of this, you have got an inn without rooms. You have got swaddling clothes. You don't have a silver spoon. But you have the coming of a king and this is the madness, folks. This is what just gets me. Most kings, most monarchs, most leaders if not all on this earth from an earthly realm, they demand that the peasants give their life for them. Here the king was giving his life for the peasants. That is madness. That is backwards. Why? Because we, humanity, sinful humanity, we are the ones who should say to him, "Hey, we will give our all. We will give our lives for you. We will bow down." And yet he said, "No, no. You can't do that, because you will never be good enough. You will never be smart enough. You will never figure it out. I am going to come and dwell in flesh, show you how it can be done, go to the cross, rise from the dead. I am giving my life for you.

The reason so many people missed it is because they were looking at heaven with earthly eyes. They were looking for crowns and not a cross. They were looking for reigning of the earth and not their hearts.

So the question I have for you today is simple. Have you missed the madness? Have you missed the Christmas story because you were looking for Jesus to be all the things opposite of what he came to be? The great news is this. Every one of us is like Mary and Joseph. Every one of us has access to Emmanuel, God with us. It is not about knocking on the door of the palace. It is about opening up our heart to his knock.