

How Should A King Come?

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[0 : 00] Please remain standing as we read God's word again. The book of John. John chapter 1. John chapter 1, verses 1 through 14.

This is the word of God. In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God. He was with God in the beginning.

Through him all things were made. Without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

There came a man who was sent from God. His name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. He himself was not the light. He came only as a witness to the light. The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him.

[1 : 14] He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.

Children born of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. The word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Amen. You may be seated. Let's hear the word of God preached. Well, in celebrating the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, we're celebrating the birth of a king.

I couldn't help but note, as we sang this morning, I think every carol we sang referred to Jesus as king. Come, thou long expected Jesus, born a child and yet a king.

Hark the herald angels sing, glory to the newborn king. In so many places, the Old Testament points to the coming Messiah as a king.

[2 : 29] I just read one passage. We saw it in Isaiah chapter 9, Jeremiah 23, 5. The days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will raise up to David a righteous branch, a king who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land.

He will be called the Lord our righteousness. And indeed, many of the New Testament identifies Jesus Christ as that king who came to bring God's kingdom to earth, establishing his rule in the hearts of his people and will come again to perfect his kingdom in the end.

And so it is good that many of our carols rightly declare that the baby in the manger is nothing less than a king. I think of that carol, what child is this?

That's the question. And the chorus answers this. This is Christ the king. The king of kings salvation brings.

Well, the baby in the manger of Bethlehem is that promised king. And I have four questions then for today.

[3 : 43] The first is this. How should a king come? We don't have kings in our country, so we go to the nearest country that does to our friends in England.

And we think of Great Britain's royal family. Years ago when Prince William, the heir apparent to the throne, was born. How did he come into the world? Well, with a welcome worthy of a king.

With much fanfare and excitement, drawing the attention of the press and of the whole country awaiting his birth. Born in one of London's most prestigious hospitals delivered by the best of doctors under the best of care.

Born into a royal family with enormous wealth. Many castles and lavish estates. And one day as king to have an elaborate coronation ceremony with all the pomp and circumstance deserving of a king.

And instinctively then we feel that's how a king should come. With a kingly welcome. A royal reception. But secondly, I want to ask, how did King Jesus come?

[4 : 55] And the short answer from the Bible is certainly not like the kings of the world. Not born into a wealthy family, but into the family of a humble virgin Mary and her poor carpenter husband Joseph.

So poor that at the dedication of baby Jesus at 40 days old, when they would need to bring the firstborn child to Jerusalem to dedicate that, consecrate that child to the Lord, they were to give two sacrifices, a lamb and a pigeon.

But they did not bring a lamb and a pigeon. They could not afford those sacrifices. So they gave the allowed exception that was made in the law for the poor, that they could bring two pigeons instead of a pigeon and a lamb.

They were poor. And when Jesus grew, he owned no property or home. As a 30-year-old man, he would say, foxes have holes, birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head, even though the whole earth and everything in it belonged to him.

And his parents, they were not movers and shakers in the capital city of Jerusalem, the center of politics, the center of religion. No, they were from nowhere, a tiny out-of-the-way village in Galilee called Nazareth.

[6 : 24] You remember Nathaniel's response, Nazareth, can anything good come out of Nazareth? Well, the king of kings will come out of Nazareth.

But he's actually come from his heavenly Father's throne in heaven as well. Well, neither was King Jesus born in a hospital bed with elite doctors attending the delivery.

It was just Mary and Joseph and some cattle perhaps wondering who this baby in swaddling clothes is lying in our feeding trough. Little did they know he was none other than the king of kings.

Christ the king whose salvation brings. And the birth of this king was not big news celebrated by the nation. Rather, apart from a few lowly shepherds watching over their flocks by night, the whole nation slept right through the night of his birth with no awareness of it.

Though this baby had the adoring attention of the watching angel hosts of heaven who sang at his birth. Nor was this baby King Jesus welcomed by the nation.

[7 : 37] Rather, he was chased out of the land by King Herod who wanted him dead. And so they fled to Egypt until King Herod died and then they returned to Nazareth.

So that's how this king came. Not with earthly fanfare and glory, but in humility, lowliness, poverty, obscurity, a vulnerable, weak and helpless baby.

It's counterintuitive. It's counterintuitive. Kings should come in outward splendor and glory. So why? Why this way?

Why did the king of kings, the king of angels, the king of heaven and earth come like this? I believe the answer is this, at least in part this, because his whole earthly life and ministry was to be marked by this very feature of lowliness, humility, stooping service, enduring suffering and shame, rejection and death.

The way he came, you see, foreshadowed the way that he would rescue us. So having journeyed for a week or so, Mary and Joseph arrived in Bethlehem to register for the Roman census.

[8 : 57] And while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn, a son. And she wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger because there was no room for them in the inn.

The humble circumstances of his incarnation point us to the humble circumstances of his entire earthly ministry. It was all cut out of the same cloth.

It was fitting that this king should come like this because he's come to do what no other king had ever done or could ever do. To save a people by his own life and death.

So in chapter one of his gospel, as it was just read, the apostle John is struck with amazement that the eternal word, the eternal God has become flesh and actually dwelt among us.

Likewise, the apostle Paul in Philippians 2 could not get over this wonder of wonders in the incarnation. That because of love, the eternal God humbled himself to become a man in order to save us.

[10 : 03] Philippians 2, 6 and 8 is that passage that many think is an early song of praise. It starts with this Jesus.

This Jesus of Nazareth from all eternity was in very nature God. There was no attribute of God that Jesus did not have from everlasting to everlasting.

And yet, though he was in very nature God, he did not consider equality with God something to be grasped. It wasn't robbery for him to claim to be equal with God.

It was his right. But the Bible says he made himself nothing. He was not forced to come. He made himself nothing.

He emptied himself voluntarily, willingly, stepped away from that splendor of heaven and came into a world where he would suffer rejection.

[11:11] He was God and he remained God, though making himself nothing. You see, he emptied himself not by subtraction, but by addition.

Not by losing his deity, but by taking on our humanity. That's how he became a nobody.

That's how he emptied himself. Not becoming less than God, but becoming more than God.

Becoming the God-man. For the first time, his deity is now joined to our humanity.

And he comes as the only mediator between God and man. Oh, how low he stooped when he became man.

The infinite God becoming finite man. The independent great I am dependent on nothing becoming a dependent man. Even a dependent baby dependent on his mother's breast.

[12:16] His father's protection. And then it says he took the very nature of a servant. He didn't just become a man, but a servant man. For indeed, he says the son of man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many.

The Lord of God of glory became the servant of all. And being made in human likeness, he being found in appearance as a man, humbled himself.

And there again, we have the emphasis. He humbled himself. He stooped willingly. Each step of his going down was his own voluntary choice.

The father says, you go and die for them. You go and live and obey for them. And the son says, yes, father, it's just what I was thinking and what I was wanting to do for them. He offered himself. Here am I. Send me. He's willing and humbled himself. And became obedient unto death. Laying down his life voluntarily.

[13:26] And not just any death, but even, Paul says, even the death of the cross. The stauron, the torture of crucifixion. The worst of man's inventions and the very curse of God.

For cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree. Now consider this. This is this great theme of Christmas.

The great theme of the incarnation. God becoming man. And hear me. I don't believe the idea is that though he is God, yet he humbled himself to save us.

That's true in one sense. But we're not to think though he is God, he humbled himself. As if that's something strange and out of character for the God of glory.

It is strange and out of character for the great men and kings of this world, to be sure. But it is not strange to the God of heaven to humble himself and serve.

[14:29] Rather, we ought to be thinking it was precisely because he was God. Because he is God that he humbled himself and came and died for us.

It's the very heart of God's nature to stoop. This impulse to come and be spent on behalf of others. God is love. And love of others is central to the being of God. It's his glory. It's his splendor that he's like this.

It's his glory that he stoops to serve, that he stoops to bless and enrich others. It's his glory that he humbles himself and chooses to save us instead of saving himself.

And is it not that that has drawn our hearts to him in love? That thou who was rich beyond all splendor, all for love's sake, became us poor.

[15:32] Where else in all the world do we find glory like this among the kings of the earth? The glory of a humble king who willingly humbles himself to become one of us that he might die for us and thereby save us.

His stooping to serve us is his glory. It is the most God-like thing we could say he ever does. That is what God delights to do.

He is love. And love delights to enrich the loved ones. That's why the angels on the night that Jesus was born saw the baby in the manger and knew who he was, saying glory to God in the highest.

Not like, oh, this is something to be ashamed of. No, this is the very glory of God on display here. This is God giving himself to us. Here's something truly glorious, something weighty, something to stop whatever you're doing and to adore and worship and stand in awe of.

God has stooped to become a man. Man to be tempted in our place. Man to become sin in our place. Man to be cursed in our place.

[16:53] Man to be the only mediator between God and us. Veiled in flesh, the Godhead see. Hail the incarnate deity. Pleased as man with men to dwell.

Jesus, our Emmanuel. Hark, the herald angels sing. Glory to the newborn king. Here is something really glorious, he's saying.

So his humble circumstances in his birth are pointers to his whole life in ministry here in this world. John chapter 1 told us that this eternal God came into the world and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him.

Indeed, he came to his own, but his own received him not. Isaiah says he was despised and rejected by men. A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

So the problem of no room in Bethlehem's inn that night. It may have been an unavoidable no vacancy since so many were coming to Bethlehem to register for the census.

[18:02] But why? Why is it mentioned in the Bible? Unless in part to foreshadow the kind of reception that he would receive from his own that he came to save.

Because the truth is there simply was no room in their hearts for this king. Though he initially made quite a stir with his authoritative teaching and healing ministries, miracles as we're seeing in Mark's gospel.

It sure didn't last long. Three years later, they've nailed him to a cross to die. Once the people realized he wasn't the political Messiah king that they wanted, they soon rejected him.

He'd not come to lead an armed revolt and to free them from servitude to the Romans and bring them to bow at their feet. Rather, he came from heaven to free them from far worse enemies than Romans.

He came to save his people from their sins. That would take them to hell forever. But they loved their sins and didn't want to be saved from them.

[19:16] In fact, Jesus told his own brothers in John 7, 7, the reason the world hates me is that I testify that what they do is evil. And those sitting in darkness did not want to see the light.

The light of Jesus' own life and words. In John 3, 19 and 20, this is the verdict. This is the bottom line. Light has come into the world.

But men love darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. And everyone who does evil hates the light and will not come into the light for fear that its deeds will be exposed. And this is still the verdict of all of us by birth.

The reason we hate the light is because we are doing evil. We love the darkness to hide our evil. And King Herod is not the only one with hostility against Jesus.

Romans 8, 7 says the natural mind of everyone born into this world, the natural mind is hostility against God. And sometimes it can show itself in very respectable, even religious ways.

[20:27] Because it goes on to say it's hostility against God. It does not submit to God's law. Nor can it do so. And so, this lady may come to church and sit under the preaching of the word, but she just picks and chooses which laws she will obey.

But to receive all of King Jesus' law and to bow in submission, no, she cannot do that. She will not and cannot do that. She has a hostile heart toward his authority and toward the light.

And so the people love Jesus' miracles of healing and they love the free food. Oh, how the thousands came when the bread was multiplied. And oh, how hosannas rang as the king triumphant rides.

As long as the miracles flowed as wine, they called him wonderful. They came to dine. But nobody wanted him when he called them to turn from their sins or they would perish in hell forever.

Nobody wanted him. Nobody wanted him. When he was on trial before Pilate and face beaten and bloodied and wearing a crown of thorns pounded into his head with a purple robe mocking his claim to be the promised Messiah king.

[21:42] Nobody wanted him. Pilate says, behold your king. And nobody wanted him then. He gave him a choice.

I'll set one free. Either Jesus or this murderer Barabbas. Nobody wanted him. They chose a murderer instead of the prince of life.

Pilate says, well then what shall I do with Jesus? And the Jews cried out, away with him, away with him. Crucify him. And Pilate asked, shall I crucify your king? And the chief priest answered, we have no king but Caesar.

We bow to none but Caesar. Oh, what citizens they pretend to be in this time. They hated Caesar. But they hated Jesus more. Nobody wanted him at Calvary either. As he hung there between heaven and earth, suffering and dying in apparent weakness, seemingly unable to come down and save himself, let alone save others.

[22 : 45] Though in fact, that substitutionary death on the cross has been the eternal salvation of a great number of sinners that no man can number.

And I'm one of them. Yes, he did not come down. He did not choose to save himself that he might save us. So how did the king come?

In great humility. In great gentleness, lowliness, suffering and weakness and death. You and me, we didn't want him either. We all like sheep have gone astray.

Each of us has turned to our way, not his way. We've said we will not have this man to rule over us. We don't like his laws. We'll do what we please.

So we too rejected the king from heaven. And yet, he still offers salvation to rebels like us if we will only turn from our way and come and receive salvation and forgiveness of sins based only on what Jesus has done for a hell-deserving sinner.

[23 : 56] If I will come and say, God have mercy upon me for Jesus' sake, he'll receive me. The rotten rebel that I am, going my own way that I am.

He's just that good. What a king of glory and grace is this king. So that's how the king came. It's how he was despised and rejected by men.

Oh, but the Bible doesn't stop there. He rose again on the third day. He ascended to God's right hand and he's coming back again. So third question, how will the king come back the second time? We've seen how he came the first time. How will he come the second time? The short answer of the Bible is not like he came the first time. So in many places, the Bible speaks of both the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.

There's this something that divides these two, that there's this agenda for Jesus that is suffering and humiliation, and then there's this period of glory that should follow.

[25 : 03] In other words, he came the first time to suffer humiliation and death with his glory veiled. And he's coming the second time in the unveiled, full display of his divine power and glory.

He came the first time not to judge the world, they were already condemned, but rather to suffer and die for his people that they might be saved. But he's coming the second time to judge the world in righteousness and the people in his truth and to reign with his people in a new heaven, in a new earth, a kingdom perfected.

How different his second coming is from his first coming. One wonders if it could ever be any more different than what we read of it in Scripture.

Matthew 24, 30 says, Then, then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky and all the nations of the earth will mourn. That's our nation too.

We're part of the all nations of the world will mourn. They'll see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory. Matthew 25, 31, He's coming in all His glory and all His angels with Him, the entire angel army, and He will sit on His throne in heavenly glory.

[26 : 32] Now this is the same Jesus born in the stable, laid in a manger, ignored, neglected, forgotten, despised, rejected by men, but now inescapably present.

He's here and I must stand before Him. He's on a throne. Why? Because there's a judgment. There's a judgment to come.

The second coming will not be a silent night with the world not knowing that He's come. No. It will be known by all because the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, a loud command, and the voice of the archangel, the trumpet call of God, such a loud shout that it will wake the dead. Jesus said, a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear His voice and come out and be called away to judgment. And this time He will not be the one on trial, but we will.

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ that we may receive what is due us for the things that we've done in the body, whether good or bad.

[27 : 54] It will not be a secret, silent coming like the first time. Revelation 1.7 says, look, He's coming. with the clouds and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him.

Every eye will see Him. And Paul says in Philippians 2, and every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that this Jesus Christ is God.

He is Lord to the glory of God the Father. But then it will be too late to repent and be saved. You must turn in your lifetime.

It will be too late for you to repent and trust in Jesus once you've seen Him. Now is the acceptable time. Now is the day of salvation. And then King Jesus on His throne will divide all humanity into two groups.

Those on His right and those on His left. will come and whoever will come and whoever will come and whoever rejects the Son will not see life for God's wrath remains upon him.

[29 : 04] and those on His left will go away into everlasting torments and those on His right will go away into everlasting life. That's how the King will come the second time and never again leave His people as He remakes this heaven and earth without the curse, without even a remembrance of the fall of sin that permeates every aspect of our society and of our personal lives.

It's seen in death and sickness and wars. It's done. Those are the old things are done away. The new order has come. That's how He's coming.

So I have a fourth question. How will the King find you in that day? Rejoicing at His coming because you're now ready to meet Him because your faith is trusting in Him alone and you've turned from your way and repudiated it and come to Him as your King.

Or you'll be terrified and wishing that you could somehow hide from Him but unable to do so. There was no room for Him in the inn that night that He was born and there was no room in our hearts for Jesus when we were born sinners.

Is that still the case with some of you? What is standing in the way? What is keeping Him out? This good and gracious King that delights to enrich others.

[30 : 49] what is it that's so precious to you that for it you would lose Jesus the blessed Jesus and eternal life in Him? That's the very thing you must repent of.

That's the thing you must confess. You must confess that the whole way that you've been living is wrong. You've been content to live your life without this King ordering your life saving you.

and we've all done that. We've all devalued Him as if He wasn't worthy of being our King.

As if we could run our lives better than He could. Do you see the way it diminishes Him? Do you see why sin is so offensive? Do you see why it stirs His wrath and anger?

We must turn from that. We must ask Him to save us and receive Him at once as Savior and King. Oh come to my heart Lord Jesus there's room in my heart for Thee.

[31 : 56] King of my life I crown Thee now Thine may the glory be. I've been running my life I've been the King it's been about me and my name my kingdom my will be done.

you must repudiate the whole mess and say Lord Jesus Your name Your kingdom come Your will be done in my life and throughout the world.

What will you do with King Jesus? Let me tell you what God the Father has done with Him. Do you know He was so pleased to see His Son humble Himself. He was so pleased with His suffering servant Son with His humility His obedience unto the death of the cross that He raised Him from the dead and then He seated Him in heaven He raised Him to the highest place Philippians 2.9 says and then He gave Him the highest name that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

These are the glories that followed His sufferings and it was His Father's pleasure to glorify His Son precisely because of His sufferings.

Read Philippians 2.8 through 11. It's because Jesus became a man and humbled Himself and became obedient to death. Therefore, the Father has highly exalted Him.

[33 : 29] So the Father is so delighted to see the way His Son suffered and stooped to save us that He says whoever humbles himself will be exalted and He exalted Him.

You see, the all-surpassing glory of this King is His humility, is His stooping, is His self-sacrifice. So we're not surprised to see that His past sufferings, though finished and over with, yet remain the central part of His glory even now in heaven and throughout the endless ages.

John's taken up into heaven by vision and he's told that the one who is worthy to open the scroll, the scroll of God's eternal decrees and to bring them to pass in history, He's the lion of the tribe of

Judah, the root of David who triumphed.

And when John looks, he doesn't see a lion, but he sees a lamb as having been slain.

This is heaven now. This is the glory to follow. And he sees the result of His suffering. He sees Him as a lamb having been slain.

[34 : 51] Standing at the center of the throne. It's the slain lamb once dead, now alive forevermore. That's the theme of the new song of all encircling the throne in heaven singing, You are worthy to take the scroll and open its seals because you were slain because you were slain.

You're worthy not in spite of being slain. You're worthy because you were slain. And with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language, people and nation.

You've made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God and they will reign on the earth.

John looked and heard the voice of many angels numbering thousands upon thousands and ten thousands upon ten thousands encircling the throne and singing in a loud voice, Worthy is the lamb that was slain to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing.

You see what's being said. At Jesus' birth the angels were singing to the shepherds of God's glory in this amazing display of Christ's humiliation that God, Emmanuel has become one of us.

He's stooped to save us. And now, that glory of the lamb that was slain is still the adoring wonder of saints and angels in heaven and will ever be the song that is sung in heaven.

[36 : 18] The cross of Christ, a stumbling block to many, a weak man dying at the hands of the Romans, the mighty Romans. That's no savior for me.

You know, every man has his reasons. But so far is it from something to be ashamed of that the apostle Paul and all the saved cry, God forbid, that I should glory in anything save the cross of Christ.

It's something to glory about. It's got heaven glorying now and it will have heaven glorying forever. Such weakness is the greatest strength of all.

Such humble service is really the greatest of all glory. What appeared as a humiliating defeat is in fact the glorious victory to be celebrated forever and ever.

So our king has redefined glory. He's redefined greatness for his people. Who is the greatest? His disciples, his own disciples were often arguing about that very point.

[37 : 31] Who, which of them were the greatest? Remember, Jesus corrected them for who is greater? The one who is at the table or the one who serves?

Is it not the one who's at the table? Isn't that the way it goes in this world? But, I am among you as one who serves. You see, it turns the whole idea of greatness right upside down.

What is glory? What is greatness? Yes. But look at me. Here I am. Just hours away from crucifixion. And I've taken off my outer garment and I've wrapped a towel around my waist and I've dressed myself to serve.

I'm washing your feet. And on the morrow, I'm going to wash your souls from every stain of sin by that blood that you will see flowing from my body.

That's greatness. That's glory. And it's got all heaven singing. Blessed.

[38 : 42] Luke 12, 37. Jesus says, Blessed are those servants whom the Master finds awake when He comes. The Master's coming back. And He says, Blessed are those servants whom the Master finds awake when He comes.

Truly I say to you, He will dress Himself for service. And will have them recline at the table and He will come and serve them. The Master serving the servants.

The King serving His subjects. How counter-cultural is the Kingdom of God from the kingdoms of this world. The humble service of our Savior is the very glory of our Lord.

It's the glory of God on display in His Son. the servant King who suffered in our place is all the glory of Emmanuel's land. This is why the King of Heaven was born in a stable.

Why He was laid in a manger. Why He was found in poor and humble circumstances as He came into this world to teach us that it would be through His poverty that He would make us rich.

[39 : 51] Rich beyond telling. for when we found ourselves with a debt of sin we could not pay and would have had to pay for all of eternity in hell and never paid the last farthing.

God the King of Heaven laid aside His splendor, took our sin debt upon Himself and paid it all. for you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that though He was rich yet for your sakes He became poor that we through His poverty might be made rich.

