

Moments for YOU

Volume 50, Number 4

Theme: Christ the King



“LONG LIVE THE KING!”

When a king dies and another takes his place, it is traditional to proclaim: “The king is dead; long live the king!” This statement gives honor to the passing king while showing reverence to his successor. But did you know that there is a King who died and yet continues to reign and will reign more in days to come?

Join us in this paper as we undertake a brief study of Christ the King, the promised One who came from heaven to be born on earth as a king (Matthew 2:2); the One who died as a king (Matthew 27:35-37); the One who rose again and longs to be your Saviour, Lord, and King (Romans 10:9,10; 1 Timothy 1:15-17); and the One who will reign over all some day (Revelation 11:15; 19:16).

How is it with you? Is Jesus your King? Does He reign in your heart and life? Have you made Him your Saviour and Lord? Consider who He is and what He has done: He is the “only begotten Son” of God who came to earth to “give His life a ransom for many” (John 3:16; Matthew 20:28). And He did just that! When Jesus died on Calvary’s cross, He “died for our sins” and then “was raised again for our justification” (1 Corinthians 15:3; Romans 4:25).

Now it is up to you: eternal salvation from sin, and a new life in Christ await all those who repent of their sins to God and place their faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord. In doing this, you will be crowning a new King in your life by dethroning self, sin, and Satan, and beginning a new life that proves: “The king is dead; long live the King!”

—T. Don Johnson

“Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe” (John 19:5). Mocking the Lord, the soldiers provided Christ three symbols of royalty: a reed for a scepter; a mocking robe of purple for the garments of sovereignty; and a crown of thorns for the royal diadem. The soldiers took back the reed and the scarlet robe, yet left the crown of thorns implanted on His head. Is it because the thorns symbolized the curse He came to break? What must Joseph and Nicodemus have thought as they removed that crown of thorns? This was our crown—He wore it for us. Some day He’ll be crowned with many crowns. May we crown Him with our worship today.

—Sam Thorpe

KING OF KINGS

“Jesus of Nazareth the king of the Jews.” This title written by Pilate was nailed to the cross upon which Christ died. Pilate, evidently angered at the insistence of the Jewish leaders upon the death of Christ and possibly ashamed of his own weakness in giving way to them, jested at the Jews in the words of the inscription. The leaders of the people sent back a request to Pilate that the title be altered to read, “*He said, I am King of the Jews*” (John 19:21), and Pilate’s abrupt and angry reply, “What I have written I have written,” betrayed his motive in setting up the inscription above the head of the Crucified. He implied by his words, “Behold this poor creature. He is a king, and over what a poor people does he reign!” As the reed placed in His hand was a

MOMENTS FOR YOU Vol. 50, 4th Quarter, 2006. A quarterly publication sent free upon request as the Lord provides.

Publisher: Moments With The Book, PO Box 322, Bedford, PA 15522. A non-profit, tax-exempt corporation. Visit us online at www.mwtb.org/mfy **Senior Editor:** Tim Johnson **Editor:** T. Don Johnson



mock scepter, as the crown of thorns upon His brow was a mock diadem, so Pilate by the inscription made the cross a mock throne.

Judah rejected her King but nowhere was He more kingly than upon the cross, and because He hung there in agony He shall someday sit upon the throne of David. He who endured the cross, despising the shame, shall reign over all nations. The brow crowned with thorns shall wear a diadem. The hand that held the reed and was nailed upon a cross shall grip a rod of iron and a scepter of power. Pilate wrote more truthfully than he knew that day, but the inscription will be incomplete. God's full inscription will be written on His vesture and His thigh when He comes again in power to rule not Judah alone, but all the nations of the world as "**KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS**" (Revelation 19:16).

—From "As the Small Rain" by Bob Jones, Jr.

FOILED AGAIN!

"Foiled again" is an expression that comes from the sport of fencing, and refers to the one who is losing the duel. "Foiled again" could certainly describe Satan's attempts to hinder the purposes of God in human history! Ever since he was cast down from his position as the most highly favored of God's angels (Ezekiel 28:11-19), Satan has schemed and worked to oppose God, attempting a variety of evil strategies to triumph in the cosmic "fencing match"—but never attaining victory!

As we trace the history of Satan's attempts to oppose God, we find that his various strategies are directly related to his increasing knowledge of God's plans and purposes, as that information was gradually revealed by God to man.

A HUMAN "HEAD-CRUSHER"

Satan's first attempt to disrupt God's purposes was to entice the first man and woman to disobey God, thereby ruining the harmonious relationship between God and the people He had created in His image. But Satan's strategy was foiled when God declared that the "seed of the woman" (Genesis 3:15) would be his undoing! From God's edict, Satan knew that his defeat would come through the human race. Therefore Satan's next attempt to thwart the plans and purposes of God was to do all he could to annihilate the human race.

Undoubtedly Satan was involved in Cain's murder of Abel. Maybe he hoped that he could entice the whole human race to use murder to settle jealous disputes, and thus kill themselves off! (see Genesis 4:23,24). Although this attempt failed, most likely Genesis 6:1-8 describes Satan's next strategic move to destroy the human race by genetically corrupting the human line so that it was no longer truly human. Although there have been various interpretations of the "sons of God" (Genesis 6:2,4), other Scriptures seem to indicate that the "sons of God" were fallen angels who left the angelic realm and had relations with human women. (See Jude 6,7 and 2 Peter 2:4.) In only a few generations, this strategy would have genetically altered and corrupted the human race, but Satan was foiled again! The Flood of God's judgment not only destroyed the wickedness on this earth—it preserved the true human race in Noah and his family!

A JEWISH MESSIAH

God's promise to Abraham, the father of the Jewish people, was that all the earth would be blessed through his seed and that his seed would conquer any enemy (see Gen-

esis 12:1-3; 22:16-18). So Satan began to concentrate his efforts on eliminating the Jewish people. While they were in captivity in Egypt we read that Pharaoh tried systematically to murder every Jewish male baby. This Satanically-inspired attempt was foiled when God had Pharaoh's own daughter save the life of the Jewish baby, Moses, whom God used to bring His people out of Egypt! Another example of Satan's failed attempts to annihilate the Jewish race is recorded in the book of Esther.

A KING FROM JUDAH

Through the blessing of God upon Jacob's sons, Satan learned that the promised "Peace-bringer" or "Shiloh" would come through the tribe of Judah, and that he would be a king (Genesis 49:10). The first king from the line of Judah to ascend the throne of Israel was David. Satan probably thought that God had miscalculated when He sent a shepherd boy with a slingshot against Satan's well-armed pagan giant, Goliath! Foiled again! And Satan was certainly behind King Saul's attempts to kill David on several occasions (see 1 Samuel 19). But Satan was foiled again and again as God protected David.

Probably the most concentrated Satanic attack on the kings in the line of David took place during the time of wicked Queen Athaliah (see 2 Chronicles 21-22), the daughter of the notorious King Ahab and Queen Jezebel. "Like mother, like daughter," Athaliah tried to seize the throne of Judah for herself when her son, King Ahaziah, was killed. In order to accomplish her wicked goal she ordered that all her grandchildren who were in line for the throne be killed! She almost succeeded, but baby Joash, the only remaining direct link to the kingly Davidic line, was rescued and

hidden in the Temple. For six years the wicked Queen Mother was able to usurp the throne, but Satan was foiled again when, at the age of seven, Joash was brought forth from hiding and crowned as the king of Judah!

A DIVINE RULER

During the time of the Old Testament prophets Satan came to realize much more about the coming "Head-crusher." He learned He would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2), of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14), and could approximate the date of His birth from an analysis of Daniel's prophetic time-table (Daniel 9).

When did Satan learn that his conqueror would be the incarnate Son of God? Although we can't say for sure, Isaiah's prophecy that the Promised One would be called "Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (9:6), would certainly have revealed this incredible truth! So when Jesus Christ was born, Satan had no doubts about His identity. In attempting to destroy the Son of God, he was foiled when he manipulated King Herod to kill all the babies in Bethlehem—the Lord Jesus was safely in Egypt (Matthew 2:13-16). Satan was foiled when he tried to have Jesus thrown over a cliff. The Lord Jesus walked away unharmed because "His hour had not yet come" (Luke 4:28-30). Satan was foiled again when he attempted to drown Jesus and His disciples during a storm on the Sea of Galilee, but his plan backfired when Jesus used this event to "showcase" His power and control over nature! Once again Satan was foiled when he had the self-righteous Pharisees endeavor to stone Jesus (John 8:59; 10:31), or attempt to seize Him (John 10:39; 11:57) or plot to kill Him (John 8:40; 11:53). Satan was certainly behind these efforts—in fact, Jesus Himself

described those evil men as being “of their father, the devil” (John 8:44), and “doing the deeds of their father” (v. 41)!

THE LAMB OF GOD

As Jesus breathed His last on the cross of Calvary, Satan must have gloated, thinking that he had finally done away with the Son of God. Little did he realize that there God accomplished the ultimate, eternal plan for the redemption of mankind; there the Lamb of God fulfilled the promise to “take away the sin of the world!”

Three days later Satan’s premature gloating was cut short by the shocking news that Jesus was alive! The “Head-crusher” had triumphed! Through death He rendered the devil powerless” (Hebrews 2:14). Satan’s head was crushed at the cross of Christ, where his “master strategy” resulted in his complete and ultimate defeat!

AN EMPOWERED CHURCH

Although he is a defeated foe who knows his end, and his power is limited, Satan’s attempts to hinder God’s plans continue. As Satan, along with other fallen “rulers and authorities,” learn of the eternal purposes of God, he schemes to oppose God in every way he can. He disrupts fellowship and tempts believers to sin. And he is trying to drag as many people as possible to eternal judgment with him by putting up roadblocks between them and the Good News of Jesus Christ. But God has empowered the church, the body of Christ, to assault the very gates of hell and snatch people out of Satan’s clutches (Matthew 16:18), plucking them as “brands from the fire” (Zechariah 3:2). Praise God, Satan’s schemes will continue to be foiled again and again! Ultimate victory has been won by our Lord Jesus Christ!

—David R. Reid

QUESTION & ANSWER

QUESTION: Can you tell me why there are two genealogies of Jesus in the Bible and explain some of the differences between them?

ANSWER: It is perhaps well enough known that in the four Gospels there are two genealogies of the Lord Jesus. There is no genealogy in Mark. That is the Gospel of the Servant, and a genealogy would be neither appropriate nor relevant. There is no genealogy in John. That is the Gospel of the glory of the Son of God. It commences with a “beginningless beginning” where human genealogy is not possible. Matthew, however, paints a portrait of a King, and Luke presents the beauties of a perfect Man. The legal rights of that King must be established beyond all doubt, and it is needful also for Luke to trace the human lineage of that perfect Man. In these two Gospels genealogies are both necessary and welcome.

There is a difficulty in the reconciling of the two genealogies and an explanation is needed. It will, of course, be easily and readily observed firstly, that the two genealogies move in opposite directions. Matthew’s begins with Abraham and moves forward through David and Solomon eventually to Joseph, husband of Mary the virgin mother. Luke begins with Joseph and moves backward through David and Abraham to Adam. There is then, for a little, a common line in the two. From Abraham to David in Matthew agrees with David to Abraham in Luke. After David, however, there is a divergence, and for a very important reason.

Matthew’s genealogy proceeds from David through his son Solomon. Luke will rather trace the line

through David's other son Nathan (see 2 Samuel 5:14). The reason for this digression becomes apparent from Jeremiah 22:30. Jechonias, of Solomon's seed, is cursed and disinherited. He is reckoned as if childless, without heir, and Joseph is of that line. So our Lord's lineage may be traced in another way. Joseph is the "son" (in-law) of Mary's father Heli. Jesus is therefore Joseph's heir, but He is not of Solomon's line but of Nathan's. He is Son of David but He is not Son of Solomon. Had He been so descended from Solomon He would have inherited the curse on Jechonias. The Lord Jesus, born of a virgin, inherits the title to the throne, but not the curse on Solomon's seed.

Now note the orderliness of Matthew's genealogy. He will reckon the generations in three series. From Abraham to David is the first series. Then from David to the carrying away into Babylon. Then from the captivity to Christ. In each period he will list fourteen generations, but note the inspired accuracy of Holy Scripture. Matthew says that "all" the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen. Notice the careful inclusion of the little word "all" in the first series, but its omission from the second and third series. The reason for the omission of the word "all" here is, of course, that not all the generations of that period are listed. There was a wicked queen, Athaliah, daughter of Ahab, who once had tried to destroy the seed royal (2 Chronicles 22:10). The names of her immediate progeny are omitted, as Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah, leaving fourteen generations as Matthew gives them. This is divine accuracy.

—Taken from "Behold Your King," by J.M. Flanigan. Published by John Ritchie Ltd. Used by permission.

GOLD, FRANKINCENSE, AND MYRRH

One of the most familiar and best-loved stories of the Bible is the account of the wise men coming from a distant country east of Israel to worship the young child Jesus, and to give Him three special gifts from their treasures: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. We cannot help but wonder, "Why these particular gifts?"

GOLD

The gift of gold obviously was appropriate for both honoring a king and worshipping God. It has always been symbolic of wealth and of royalty. The essential symbol identifying a king was a golden crown on his head. But God is the ultimate Sovereign and His Son is the King of kings (Revelation 17:14). Therefore gold is most fittingly appropriate.

As God was structuring the nation of Israel in the wilderness under Moses, He told them to build a tabernacle in which He could "dwell among them" (Exodus 25:8). As He gave the pattern that they were to follow in building the tabernacle and its furnishings, it is noteworthy how often gold was to be used. The word was used well over 100 times as they received and carried out these instructions. Everything was either made of gold or overlaid with gold.

The same was true on an even larger scale in the temple, which King Solomon later built in Jerusalem to replace the tabernacle. Again there was gold everywhere (1 Kings 6:21,22). But the tabernacle and the temple, as beautiful and meaningful as they were, were only types of God's future home with all His people. The heavenly city, New Jerusalem, will be made of gold everywhere (Revelation

21:18,21). A gift of gold was indeed a wonderfully appropriate gift for the Magi to offer the Lord Jesus as they worshipped Him.

FRANKINCENSE

But what about frankincense and myrrh? Both were highly valued in Israel and other nations of that time, used especially for medicines, incense, and perfumes. Interestingly, they are both encountered for the first time in the Bible in God's instructions for the services of the tabernacle (Exodus 30:23,34). The use of frankincense was commanded, both as a chief ingredient of the incense which was to be kept burning in the tabernacle and also in connection with the meal offering.

David prayed: "Let my prayer be set forth before Thee as incense" (Psalm 141:2). As the smoke of the burning offering ascended up from the altar, so the people believed their prayers would go up to God with it, and it would be a sweet savor to Him. The typological meaning of burning incense as prayer rising up to God is seen even in the prophecies of Revelation. John saw "golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of saints" (Revelation 5:8). This surely gives us a clue as to the real significance of burning incense (especially its chief ingredient, frankincense) rising up to God's throne. We pray, on the basis of the sin-cleansing sacrifice of the Lamb of God, and they rise up to the throne of God via the indwelling Spirit of God.

In the Old Testament figure, the High Priest had to serve as the intermediary, but now the relationship is different: "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5; see also Hebrews 7:1-8:6).

Now we can see how wonderfully

meaningful was this gift of frankincense to the little child in Bethlehem. Not only is He destined to be the great King, but also our eternal High Priest. The incense confesses that He alone can convey our prayers, and indeed our very souls to God.

MYRRH

The third gift was myrrh. Its first use in the Bible would suggest that its definitive Biblical use was in the holy anointing oil. The priests were to be "anointed" with a divinely-designed oil, the main ingredient of which was myrrh. This type of special ritualistic anointing was also applicable to kings and prophets. For example, Samuel anointed Saul and later David to be king over Israel (1 Samuel 10:1; 16:13; Psalm 89:20). God told Elijah: "Elisha ... shalt thou anoint to be prophet" (1 Kings 19:16).

Myrrh is used in a striking way in Psalm 45, which eulogizes the Messiah ("the Anointed One"). Jesus is pictured in this psalm as about to leave the palaces of heaven for a mission to Earth with a "tongue" like the "pen of a ready writer" and with grace "poured into thy lips" (Psalm 45:1-2). He has beautiful words from God (Hebrews 1:1-2); in fact He is the Word of God (John 1:1,14)!

PROPHET, PRIEST, AND KING

The Magi had surely read Moses' promise of the coming Prophet (Deuteronomy 18:15), as well as David's promise of the coming Priest (Psalm 110:4), and Daniel's promise of the coming King (Daniel 9:24-27), and when they saw Him, they fell down and worshipped Him, presenting Him with the three most fitting gifts of worship which the world contained.

—Condensed from "Gold and Frankincense and Myrrh" by Henry M. Morris and Kathleen Bruce. Published by Institute for Creation Research, Santee, CA. Used by permission.

CONVERTED BY THE KING

Jonathan Edwards, the American theologian, was suddenly converted, as by a flash of light, in the moment of reading a single verse of the New Testament. He was at home in his father's house after some hindrances kept him from going to church one Sunday with the family. A couple of hours with nothing to do sent him listlessly into the library, where the sight of a dull volume with no title on the leather back of it evoked curiosity as to what it could be. He opened it at random and found it to be a Bible, and then his eye caught this verse: "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, in-

visible, the only wise God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen" (1 Timothy 1:17).

He tells us in his journal that the immediate effect of it was awakening and alarming to his soul, for it brought him a most novel and extensive thought of the vastness and majesty of the true Sovereign of the universe. Out of this grew the pain of guilt for having resisted such a Monarch so long, and for having served Him so poorly. Until that moment he had slight notions of his own wickedness and very little poignancy of acute remorse, but now felt the deepest contrition and need of the Saviour, King Jesus.

—C.H. Robinson

"ON MY FATHER'S SIDE"

You may remember the account from the Bible of the time when Jesus was twelve years old and tarried in Jerusalem while Mary and Joseph returned home, only to find that He was not among their caravan. When they returned to the city, "they found him in the temple" in the midst of the teachers, "both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers" (Luke 2:45-49). Here are some of the questions they might have asked, and the answers He might have given.

What is your name?

On my mother's side, it is Jesus. On my Father's side, Emmanuel.

Where are you from?

On my mother's side, I was born in Bethlehem. On my Father's side, I came from the portals of glory.

How old are you?

On my mother's side, I am twelve

years old. On my Father's side, I am from everlasting to everlasting.

What religion are you?

On my mother's side, I am a Jew from the house of David. On my Father's side—before Abraham was, I am.

Do you think you will ever amount to anything?

On my mother's side, I will be despised and rejected. On my Father's side, I will, throughout eternity, be worshipped and adored.

What are your plans?

On my mother's side, I will go to the cross and die. On my Father's side, after three days in the tomb I will burst forth.

How will we know you?

On my mother's side, you will see the nail prints in my hands and feet. On my Father's side, I will be seen as a Lamb standing as if it had been slain, and riding a white horse with many crowns upon my head.