

Advent 2018 Part 5

Now That We Know Who He Is

This past October I felt we needed to spend some time focusing on who Jesus is (not that we don't try to do that every Sunday.) I felt a fresh understanding of who Jesus is would affect how we lived and worshiped and treated others. We began in late October with Jesus' question to his disciples, "Who do people say I am?" And then he asked them, **"But what about you? Who do you say I am?" Matthew 16:15** That's the question we've been trying to answer.

In part 1 we focused on Jesus as the Eternal Son of God. Part 2 focused on Jesus as the Savior of the World. Part 3 focused on Jesus the Messiah. Part 4 focused on Jesus the Head of the Church and part 5 focused on Jesus as our Coming King. During Advent we focused on the meaning of Jesus' name to help us understand who he is. They were to call him Jesus which means "the Lord saves", because he would save his people from their sins. They called him Immanuel which means "God with us". Last Sunday we focused on the words of the prophet Isaiah who said Jesus would be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace. He was the child that was born and the son that was given. These titles ascribed to him help us understand who he is. Savior, Messiah, Mighty God, Prince of Peace. Turn to Matthew 2 and let's look a little further into who he is.

"After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, '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 2:1-2

The Magi, wise men, astronomers from Persia perhaps, had seen a phenomenon in the sky that led them to believe a king had been born. They probably believed in gods, plural. There is no reason to believe they were followers of Israel's God. We don't really know what they saw although there has been speculation. What we know for sure is that it led them to Jesus! God can use just about anything to lead anyone to Jesus if they are hungry and looking.

The Magi believed him to be a political and national king – one that would rule the Jewish people someday. They assumed he would be born in Jerusalem since that was the capital and perhaps in a palace since that's where a king would likely be born. Instead, they discover no one in Jerusalem has heard a thing. Herod immediately sends for the chief priests and teachers and asks where the Messiah was to be born. It's not that they didn't know the Scripture predicted the birth of a Messiah/King, it's just that they weren't looking for him or expecting him. Even after telling the magi where he was to be born, the chief priests and teachers of the

law didn't go with them! They weren't looking. They didn't care. We know who he is. Eternal Son of God, Savior, Lord, Coming King, but are we expecting him and watching for his return? Are we looking for him and seeking him as diligently as these foreign, pagan Magi?

The Magi saw Jesus as a king and told Herod they had come to worship him. The teachers of the law told them to look in Bethlehem, that's where the prophets said Messiah would be born. Matthew tells us, **"After they had heard the king, they went on their way and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him."** Matthew 2:9-11.

The star must have reappeared to them and led them to the house where Jesus was. Imagine what Mary must have been thinking when the Magi and their entourage arrived at the house and these strange men came in, bowed and worshiped her son! We don't know the spiritual condition of the Magi, but we know something caused them to worship and honor Jesus and we know God warned them in a dream to not return to Herod. They were seeking, and listening, and learning! No wonder we call them "wise men."

The Magi saw him as King and worshiped him. Herod however saw him as a threat, a political rival and gave orders to have all the boys in Bethlehem under the age of two to be killed thinking this would eliminate the child Messiah. (Herod had a wife, a brother in law and three of his own sons executed because he saw them as threats to his throne so killing babies in Bethlehem was nothing to him.) Prior to this however, God warned Joseph in a dream to take Mary and Jesus and flee to Egypt to keep the child safe. Jesus became a fugitive from Herod's henchmen that are looking for him. The family travels to Egypt and live there so for the first few years of his life Jesus is a political refugee. After Herod died an angel told Joseph it was safe to take the family back to Israel. Hearing that Archelaus, the son of Herod was ruling in his place, Joseph took the family to Nazareth in the Northern district of Galilee. Now we would say Joseph and the family were living off the grid, keeping a low profile in a backwater town of Nazareth. Matthew said this fulfilled what was said through the prophets, "He will be called a Nazarene." This wasn't exactly a good thing and was essentially viewed as a slight, an insult.

In the first three chapters of Matthew we see Jesus as the one who will save his people from their sins; as Immanuel, God with us; as a king, sought after by the Magi and worshiped by them; as Messiah and a threat to Herod; as a fugitive fleeing from Israel's wicked king; as a

refugee in Egypt; then finally as a citizen of a tiny village in the Galilee and called a Nazarene. From the highs and lows of Matthew 1 and 2, the next chapter tells of his baptism by John and the heavens opened and we hear a voice from heaven saying, **“This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”** **Matthew 3:17** Put all of that together and no wonder we ask, “Who is this guy?!”

He is one like no other! We’ve spent weeks talking about him but we haven’t even begun to scratch the surface of who he is or of what it all means to us. Scott Cairns in the book *God With Us* writes, **“While it is good that we seek to know the Holy One, it is probably not so good to presume that we ever complete the task, to suppose that we ever know anything about him except what he has made known to us....Think of it like this: he cannot be exhausted by our ideas about him, but he is everywhere suggested. He cannot be comprehended, but he can be touched. His coming in the flesh – this Mystery we prepare to glimpse again- confirms that he is to be touched.”** ...Scott Cairns in *God With Us*

We know something about him, but our ideas about him cannot be exhausted. We will never complete the task of knowing him. We can’t comprehend him, but yet we can touch him, believe him and receive him. How incredible! The bible says the heavens declare his glory, the earth is his footstool, he rides upon the winds and yet he became flesh so we can know him. Who is this? Jesus, the One and Only, the One full of grace and truth. He is not simply a holy child born to be an example, a teacher, a philosopher, a liberator. Unique in every sense, like no other, He is God in flesh appearing, revealing himself to all who would receive him.

Think about this. The voice from Heaven was God the Father speaking, “This is my Son, whom I love.” Jesus is God’s eternal son, the beloved of the Father. Colossians says, **“For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him and through him to reconcile to himself all things...by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.”** **Colossians 1:19-20** He is Jesus, the very fullness of God and the one through whom we are reconciled to God. We are at peace with God because of what Jesus did for us by dying on the cross. This is who he is!

“This is my son in whom I am pleased,” the Father says. Then Paul tells us God was pleased to have his fullness dwell in Jesus and to reconcile all things to Himself through Jesus. Then in Philippians the bible says **“Therefore God exalted Him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is**

Lord to the glory of God the Father.” Philippians 2:9-11 The Father was also pleased to give him a name that is above every name!

This is who he is. The one who is enthroned above all, at the highest place, given a name above every name. Jesus is the one to whom every living thing will bow and confess that he is Lord. Do you get who he is? Do you see how it matters? Do you see how he should be honored and worshiped? How he alone should be master and Lord and king and Sovereign in your life? If he is all of this, then we need to believe him, serve him, live for him!

We can't begin to explain all that he is. The bible says He is the image of the invisible God and the creator of the universe. By him all things were created, things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things and in him all things hold together. He is the savior of the world, the light that shined into darkness. He is the word of God. He is the head of the body, the church. Revealer of the Father, Creator of the universe, Before all things and the one who holds all things together. Savior, light of the world, word of God, head of the church!

Can I tell you who and what he is to me? He is my Savior, healer, comforter, redeemer, baptizer, closest companion and coming king. He is the joy of my desire, the fulfillment of every hope and dream. He is the one who supplies me with every blessing according to the riches of his grace. He keeps me as the apple of his eye. He is my refuge, my strength and my deliverer. He is the One who became poor so I could become rich. He knew no sin, yet he became sin for me so I could become the righteousness of God. He humbled himself and became a slave so I could become a son. He made me to be a partaker of his divine nature. While I was still a sinner he died for me. He took me when I was nothing and nobody and made me a son and an heir. He has gone to heaven to prepare a place for me and has promised to come again and take me home to live with him forever. He is the one I'm listening for, expecting to hear a trumpet sound and an angel's shout and to hear his voice calling me away. He is the one at whose name demons tremble, sickness flees and death hides. He speaks and the blind see, the deaf hear, the lame walk and the dead live again. He is the one who looks upon the human heart and judges the motives of men and women. He is a friend to the friendless, a father to the orphan, a husband to the widow. He is the same yesterday, today and forever. He is not a man that he should lie. When he speaks it is truth for he is the way, the truth and the life. He never sleeps and he never slumbers. His eye is always on us, his ear is always listening for the cry of his children, his arm is not short and he never grows tired or weary for he is the mighty God. He is my everything and

my all! Oh, how I love him!

Some years ago I played an audio recording of the late Dr. S. M. Lockridge preaching a message about Jesus as the king. If you've not heard it, google it and listen because no one can tell it like he did. I've read parts of it before but let me quote from his amazing message again to remind you of who Jesus is. (Every so often we need to hear this!)

Dr. Lockridge said Jesus was a seven way king. He's a king of the Jews, the king of Israel, a king of righteousness, a king of the ages, a king of heaven, a king of glory, a king of kings and lord of lords.

Dr. Lockridge said, "Now, that's my king. That's the baby born of Mary. I wonder if you know him? Let me tell you about him. David said the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament shows his handiwork. My King is the only one for whom there's no means of measure that can define his limitless love...no far seeing telescope can bring into visibility the coastline of his shoreless supplies. No barriers can hinder Him from pouring out his blessing. He is enduringly strong, He's entirely sincere, eternally steadfast, immortally graceful, imperially powerful, He's impartially merciful. That's my King. He's God's son, the sinner's Savior, the centerpiece of civilization. He stands alone in Himself. He's august, unique, unparalleled, unprecedented. He's supreme, preeminent. He is the loftiest idea in literature, the highest personality in philosophy, He's the supreme problem in higher criticism, He's the fundamental doctrine of true theology, He's the cardinal necessity of spiritual religion. That's my King. That's who he is.

Let me see if I can explain it to you. He is the miracle of the Age. He is the superlative of everything good that you choose to call him. He is the only one able to supply all of our needs simultaneously. He supplies strength for the weak. He's available for the tempted and the tried. He sympathizes and he saves, he guards and he guides, he heals the sick, cleanses the lepers, forgives sinners and discharges debtors. He delivers the captive and defends the feeble. He blesses the young and serves the unfortunate. He regards the aged, rewards the diligent and beautifies the meek. Do you know him? He is the key of knowledge, the wellspring of wisdom, the doorway of deliverance. He is the pathway of peace, the roadway of righteousness, the highway of holiness and the gateway of glory.

He's the master of the mighty, the captain of the conquerors, the head of the heroes, the leader of the legislatures. He's the overseer of the over comers, the governor of governors. He's the prince of princes, the king of Kings and He's the Lord of Lords. Do you know him?

His office is manifold. His promise is sure. His life is matchless, his goodness is limitless, his mercy is everlasting, his love never changes, his word is enough, his grace is sufficient, his reign is righteous, his yoke is easy and his burden is light. I wish I could describe him to you but he is indescribable. He's incomprehensible, He's invincible. He's irresistible. I've come to tell you the heaven of heavens cannot contain him, let alone a man explain Him. You can't get him out of your mind, you can't get him off of your hands, you can't outlive him and you can't live without him. The Pharisees couldn't stand him, but they found out they couldn't stop him. Pilate couldn't find any fault in him, the witnesses couldn't get their testimonies to agree. Herod couldn't kill him, death couldn't handle him and the grave couldn't hold him.

That's my King. Do you know him? He always has been and he always will be. He had no predecessor and he'll have no successor. There was nobody before him and there will be nobody after him. You can't impeach him and he's not gonna resign. That's my king. That's who he is. And all the kingdom is his and all the power belongs to my King and all the glory is His now and forever and forever and forever and ever and ever and ever and ever. And when you get through with all of the forevers, He will still be King of Kings and Lord of Lords. ”

You would think Dr. Lockridge said it all, so beautifully, but really, he didn't even scratch the surface. You see, we cannot begin to tell of his glory.

He is the lord of peace, the righteous judge, the brightness of God's glory, the express image of God the Father. He is our high priest, the mediator of a better covenant, the propitiation for our sins, the Savior of the world, the faithful witness, the hidden manna, the Amen, the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of Jesse, the Sun of righteousness, the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the rose of Sharon, the bridegroom coming for his bride. He is the lily of the valley, the Son of the Highest, the Chief Cornerstone and the head of his body, the church. He is the lifter up of my head, the Dayspring from on high, the consolation of Israel, the hope of glory. He is the branch, the rock of my salvation, the way, the truth, the life, the vine, the Lord of glory, the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world. He is the author of eternal salvation, the true light, the bread of life, the bright and morning star, the prince of peace, the good shepherd, the author and finisher of our faith. He is the life giver, the way maker, the wave walker, the storm calmer, the promise keeper. He is our joy and our strength. There is no one like him. He is our Lord and Savior and He is worthy of our highest honor and praise.

Jesus reveals himself to us as all of these things in order that we can know him, but we haven't even started to explore who he is. There is more and more and more. The bible speaks of ever increasing glory. That's what we find as we get to know Jesus and he begins to reveal himself to us in ever increasing glory!!

If Jesus is everything I've said he is today, and I believe he is, then what should we do? How should we live? In light of this, in light of what I've said, how should we be living our lives? Ignoring him? "Thanks but no thanks. I'll just go ahead and live as I please. I didn't ask you to die for me." Seriously? You're going to ignore who he is and what he has done for you? Jesus came to save us from our sin. He came to give us life. He came to save us from hell. He came to make us new people. He came to be for us everything I've said today. Believe him! He died and rose from the dead. Believe him. He is God the Son and he is speaking to your heart today. Believe him! He is calling you to a new kind of life, living for him, obeying him, living according to his word and it will be like nothing else you've known if you will truly surrender your heart and life to him. The one I've tried to describe today, he is the one that is calling you. It's the greatest decision you'll ever make.

Now you know who he is. Live for him. Surrender your life to him. Make the choice and decision today! It's the only logical thing to do in light of what we know about who he is. Who do you say I am? Jesus asked. I say Jesus, you are everything! You are Savior and Lord! Are you ready to surrender your life to Jesus? He's given us everything, let's give him not just our praise or our respect, our appreciation but let's give him everything; let's give him our all.