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Let's get started with a word of prayer. Heavenly Father, thank you for this most wonderful time of year when we get to study and celebrate the pinnacle of all history. Please open our minds to understand what was going on here and your purposes and what you've truly done for us. Reveal through your Holy Spirit the truths in these scriptures. Help us to understand now in Jesus' name, Amen. Well, it is the first Sunday of Advent, the Christmas season. And as I give this message, I realize that the first Sunday of Advent was like my first message when I started preaching here. So it's been a year and that blows my mind because where has the time gone? I can't believe it's been 52 Sundays. But praise God that I'm still here. He's still giving me messages for you guys. And, man, praise God. All right. We're going to start today in Revelation, Chapter 4, Verses 6 and 7. Before the throne, there was a sea of glass like crystal. And in the midst of the throne and around the throne were four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back. The first living creature was like a lion. The second living creature like a calf. The third living creature had a face like a man. And the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle. Now these four creatures, they're also echoed in Ezekiel 1.5. I guess this would be the echo. But scholars, as they study these four creatures or as in Ezekiel, they're described as one creature with four faces. They suspect, and I think that they're probably right, that these creatures represent the four aspects of Jesus Christ. The lion represents Jesus the King. The calf, or as Ezekiel says, the ox, represents Jesus the servant. The man obviously represents Jesus the man. And the eagle represents Jesus the Son of God. Now interestingly, when we look at the four Gospels, which are four of the disciples' accounts of Jesus, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, we find that Matthew presents Jesus as the King. Mark presents Jesus as the servant. Luke presents Jesus as a man. And John presents Jesus as the Son of God. So again, we see this recurring theme in the Bible. And so today, being the first Sunday of Advent, I decided to talk about Matthew's book, Jesus the King. So I think it's really appropriate that the New Testament starts with the book of Matthew. We have the Old Testament, which is the Jewish Scriptures. It's all of their prophecies and so on that all point towards Jesus. I'm sorry, towards the coming Messiah. And so it's just like the Messiah is coming, the Messiah is coming. And then in Matthew, it's like the Messiah is here. And he's writing primarily to a Jewish audience. And he's in his book, he's saying, look, here is why and how Jesus fulfills the prophecies of the Messiah. Now let's start with a little bit of research here. What is the Messiah according to the Jews? According to clarifyingchristianity.com, the Old Testament books in the Bible, which were all written between 1450 B.C. and 430 B.C. contain hundreds of prophecies about an anointed one or Messiah in Hebrew who would arrive in their future. The Messiah would deliver or save all the Jewish people, bringing them to paradise or heaven. These prophecies also stated that the Messiah would save all the other people in the world through the Jews. For this reason, people who are not Jewish need to learn about the Messiah too. Wikipedia says that the Messiah is a future Jewish king from the Davidic line, who will be anointed with holy anointing oil to be king of God's kingdom and rule the Jewish people during the Messianic age. And according to JewFAQ.org, which seemed to be the most clear description of everything, the Messiah, which is what they refer to the Messiah as, will be a great political leader, descended from King David. The Messiah is often referred to as the Messiah David, which is the Messiah son of David. He will be well versed in Jewish law and observant of its commandments. He will be a charismatic leader, inspiring others to follow his example. He will be a great military leader who will win battles for Israel. He will be a great judge who makes righteous decisions, but above all, he will be a human being, not a god, demigod or other supernatural being. Now I'll stop right there because obviously that sounds a little contradictory, if you're a Christian. First of all, Jesus didn't come as a military leader. Well, that's because we believe that as Christians, we believe that Jesus has two comings. The first coming, he came as the sacrifice for mankind, and his second coming, he will be as the military leader. And secondly, when it says that he would be a man, Jesus was man. I mean, yes, he was fully God, but he was also fully man. So he was born into the line of David, and he inherited the title to sit on David's throne. Going on, it says that the world after the Messiah comes is often referred to in Jewish literature as the "Olam Ha'ba," the world to come. This term can cause confusion because it is also used to refer to a spiritual afterlife. In English, we commonly use the term "messionic age" to refer to the time of the Messiah. "Olam Ha'ba" will be characterized by the peaceful coexistence of all people. Hatred intolerance and war will cease to exist. Some authorities suggest that the laws of nature will change so that predatory beasts will no longer seek prey, and agriculture will bring forth supernatural abundance. Others, however, say that these statements are merely an allegory for peace and prosperity. All of the Jewish people will return from their exile among the nations to their home in Israel, and the law of Jubilee will be in the restated. The whole world will recognize the Jewish God as the only true God and the Jewish religion as the only true religion. There will be no murder, competition, or jealousy. There will be no sin. Sacrifices will continue to be brought to the Temple, but these will be limited to Thanksgiving offerings because there will be no further need for sin offerings. The belief in the eventual coming of the Mashiach is a basic and fundamental part of traditional Judaism. It is part of Rambam's 13 Principles of Faith, which is the minimum requirement of Jewish belief. Obviously, to a Jew, the Messiah, the Mashiach, is very, very important. They have been waiting a very long time to see their Savior come. Matthew sets out to demonstrate that Jesus is the Messiah. He is the King. The first step that he does in proving that Jesus is the King, is the Messiah, is he puts in a genealogy. By showing that Jesus is a descendant of David, he shows that Jesus has the rightful place in the genealogy to be the King of the Jews. I'm going to read it real fast. The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah and his brothers. Judah begot Perez and Zera by Tamar. Perez begot Hezron, and Hezron begot Ram. Ram begot Amenadab, Amenadab begot Nashon, and Nashon begot Salman. Salman begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, and Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David the King. David the King begot Solomon by her who had been the wife of Uriah. Solomon begot Rohobo, and Rahobo begot Abijah, and Abijah begot Asa. Asa begot Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat begot Joram, and Joram begot Uzziah, Uzziah begot Jotham, Jotham begot Ahaz, and Ahaz begot Hezekiah. Hezekiah begot Manasseh, Manasseh begot Ammon, and Ammon begot Josiah. Josiah begot Jekoniah and his brothers. About the time they were carried away to Babylon. And after they were brought to Babylon, Jehoshaphat begot Shealtiel, and Shealtiel begot Zerubbabol, Zerubbabol begot Abiud, Abiud begot Elchim, Eliach, I'm saying that wrong, Eliachim, Eliachim begot Azor, Azor begot Zadok, Zadok begot Achim, Achim begot Eliud, Eliud begot Eliezer, Eliezer begot Mathan, Mathan begot Jacob, Jacob begot Joseph, a husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ. It's important to hear it at least once in your life. Alright. So, he's established. He started with Abraham, went through David, and got to Jesus. Later on in the book of Luke, you'll see that Luke also includes a genealogy for Jesus, but since Luke's goal is to demonstrate that Jesus is a man, Luke's genealogy goes all the way back to Adam. But Matthew says, "No, I'm focusing that Jesus is the king." So he goes back to David and then Abraham. Now, for those of you Jewish scholars in the room, or Old Testament scholars, you may have caught a very interesting name back there. That name was Jeconiah, which in your Old Testament might simply be referred to as Konaiah. And this man is interesting because he was incredibly, incredibly wicked. And it's interesting to point out that in this genealogy, Matthew's not afraid to point out the people who were wicked and evil. He pointed out the Gentiles. He pointed out people who were prostitutes. He wasn't afraid to show that Jesus came from a messed up family just like we all do. He had some black sheep. But one of the most interesting ones was Jeconiah, because in Jeremiah 22, verses 28 through 30, we see God saying this about, as he was called, Konaiah. "Is this man Konaiah a despised, broken idol, a vessel in which is no pleasure? Why are they cast out, he and his descendants, and cast into a land which they do not know? O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord, write this man down as childless, a man who shall not prosper in his days, for none of his descendants shall prosper, sitting on the throne of David and ruling any more in Judah." So hang on a second. One of Jesus ancestors was cursed that none of his descendants would sit on the throne of David. So here we have a problem. If Jesus had been born in the traditional blood child offspring of Joseph, he would have been cursed and he would not have been allowed to sit on the throne. And so the next thing Matthew does to prove that Jesus is the Messiah is show that, is described the virgin birth. The virgin birth is important because without it, if Jesus had simply been the natural child of Joseph, he would have been cursed and forbidden for sitting on the throne. But because he was the adopted son of Joseph, he was therefore entitled to the inheritance, and yet he was not under the curse of the offspring. So he goes through, he talks about the virgin birth, and then after that he goes in and says, "And I have more evidence that Jesus is the king. What's the first thing that happens after he's born? Wise men from the east travel looking for the one born king of the Jews starting in Matthew chapter 2. Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east and have come to worship him." When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. So they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet, that you Bethlehem in the land of Judah are not the least among the rulers of Judah, for out of you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel." Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the young child, and when you have found him, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship him also." When they heard the king, they departed and behold, the star which they had seen in the east went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy, and when they had come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down and worshipped him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to him, gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Then, being divinely warned in a dream, that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way. So once again, Matthew is saying, "Look, he is the king. Wise men who see the signs in the star, came and worshipped him as king of the Jews, brought him kingly treasures." And one little interesting note in there, it says, verse 11, "When they had come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother." I know we always like to set up our nativity scenes with the wise men coming into the manger, but in reality, Jesus had probably already been born and lived for a little while, and they had not continued, Jesus didn't grow up in his stable. They moved into a house soon after he was born. But when they first got to Bethlehem on the night he was born, anyways, just keep that in mind. So yeah, he's saying, "Yeah, he's the king. He's worshipped kings from the east." Also, there's a great DVD about this guy who has been studying, he's using computer models to study stars and astronomical events and stuff, and he thinks he's figured out the stars and everything that were involved. He said, "I think I found the star that the wise men followed, and you can listen to him describe it all. I can get you that resource if you talk to me afterwards." I forget the name of it right now, but the youth group watched it last year, it was really interesting. Matthew continues, he says, "Look, the Messiah is supposed to be born in Bethlehem, and yet it also says, 'Out of Egypt I will call my son,' and yet it also says, 'He shall be called a Nazarene.'" So how can all of these things be true? He goes on to say, "Look, he was born in Bethlehem, but then Herod started killing all the babies, so they fled and they hid in Egypt. But then Herod died, and so they started to come back in, but Herod's son was in charge, and they're like, "Well, let's not go to Bethlehem. Let's take a little detour." So he ended up growing up as a Nazarene, growing up in Nazareth. So he's saying, "Look, Jews, all these prophecies about your coming Messiah, they're being fulfilled right here in this guy. Look." Throughout the rest of the book of Matthew, you'll see Matthew referencing the Old Testament a lot. That was his purpose. Say, "He is here, he has come, your king has arrived." But the Jews didn't recognize him. You see, there are a lot of prophecies about the Messiah. What the Jews failed to realize is that the Messiah was going to have two different comings. The first coming is a child in a major where he would grow up to die on a cross. And the second where he would come as the ruler, and where he would bring order to the world and restore all the people to Israel and the Jews saw all those second prophecies, and that's what they've been waiting for, and that's what they've been looking for. And they missed the first one. They saw the parts about the coming king who will rule and reign, and destroy Israel's foes, and establish an era of peace. But they missed the parts in Isaiah that said, "By his stripes we are healed." So they crucified their king, and in doing so, inadvertently fulfilled God's plan for saving his people. If they had recognized the prophecies, then they might have thrown all the plans out of whack. As it was, Jesus came and he fulfilled exactly what he came to do, which was to save and purchase his people back to himself. And the best news for you and me is that salvation came not just to the Jews, but to us the Gentiles as well. As that one resource I was reading, it says that salvation would come through the Jews to all the people of the earth, and it has come to us as well. Today, the first Sunday of Advent is referred to as the Sunday of Hope. And where we were once a lost people, we were Gentiles without the promise of the Savior, God gave us hope through Jesus. And as we go into our time of open worship, I want you to focus on two things. Number one, is Jesus your hope? And number two, is Jesus your king? And what does that mean for you? Amazing love, how can it be that you my king would die for me? To call Jesus king or Lord takes commitment, takes sacrifice. But look at what he's done for us, look at what he gave. He laid down his life for us and it should be our greatest joy to lay down our lives for him. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we praise you and we thank you for sending your son to make, to purchase us back the cost of his own life. Please help us to remember that and understand that. As we go through our lives calling ourselves Christians, please help us to remember what it means to truly make you Lord and truly make you king. Remind us what good news follows right along with that sacrifice. Throughout this holiday season, please help us to share this joy, this wonderful hope that we have found with everyone we meet. We praise you and thank you in the name of your son. Amen.