**WHERE IS THE ONE WHO HAS BEEN BORN KING OF THE JEWS?**

**Matthew 2:1-12**

**Key Verse 2:2**

 **“Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.”**

“Where” is one of the most fundamental questions that man asks; it goes to the very heart of man’s existence and purpose of man’s life. “Where did I come from?” “Where am I going?” “Where can I find something or someone to devote my life to?” “Where” is so vitally important for man to answer. In today’s passage we meet the Magi who travelled a long, long distance because they were trying to find where the King of the Jews was, so that they could worship Him. They were looking for the object of their worship. Every person, including us, is looking for someone to worship and to devote our lives to, but where do we find him? Today’s passage teaches us where we can find the One who has been born king of the Jews. And in so doing it teaches us who the king of the Jews is.

**Look at verses 1-4.**

**After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem 2and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” 3When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. 4When he had called together all the people’s chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. 5“In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written: 6“‘But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.’”**

The Magi went to Jerusalem to seek the king of the Jews because that was the most logical place to find him. Probably they thought that palace in Jerusalem was the place of the king of the Jews. But what they heard was totally different. They were told it was not Jerusalem but Bethlehem.

What is the difference between Jerusalem and Bethlehem? Jerusalem is the city of prominence. The name “Jerusalem” is repeated more than 600 times in the old testament. Ever since king David made it his own city it has been the center of Israel’s political and religious and civil activities for all the Israel people. At the time where the Magi visited it was the capital city where king Herod was. So it was logical for Magi to visit Jerusalem as the place where the king of the Jews was born when they lost their star. But what they heard was ‘Bethlehem’.

Somehow Bethlehem never rose to its prominence in Israel’s history. The only two things the bible records for Bethlehem was it was the place of romance between Ruth and Boaz, and it is the birth place of king David. It is true that Bethlehem was never prominent place. Bethlehem was small among the clans of Judah. And it was regarded as one of the least among the towns.

But the king of the Jews was born in Bethlehem rather than Jerusalem. It shows ‘who the king of the Jews’ was. The king of the Jews is the one who wants to identify himself with least people rather than prominent people.

The king of the Jews was not born in the place of ‘prominence’ or ‘greatness’. He was born in the least town of Judah.

The king of the Jews was born in ‘Bethlehem’ and he is the Messiah. And the Messiah pays attention to small things, small events, small activity, small people, or even least people. Long time ago one man was preparing the message based on **John 1:41** **“The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, “We have found the Messiah” (that is, the Christ)”.** But he had a big trouble because he could not make any progress and his message was so miserable. So he despaired so much and lied down in a room just the night before delivering the message. In his deep despair, he heard the Messiah’s whispering. “Do you know why I am the Messiah? I am the Messiah because I pay attention to the small things, little things people do not pay attention to.” With that revelation the Messiah showed him the very little things he prepared for his message which he thought was completely useless. So he began to work on his message based on the very little thing he had and delivered the message. Amazingly one of his friends said it was the best message ever.

So the king of the Jews was the Messiah, and he reminds us of the story of Jesus’ feeding 5,000 people with ‘the five small barley loaves and two small fish”. **John 6:8-9** reads**, “Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, spoke up, “Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?”**

Andrew knew it was small loves and small fish. So he said, ‘five small barley loaves and two small fish’ and he said, ‘how far will they go among so many?” But Jesus took it and fed 5,000 people with it. Jesus is the Messiah who paid attention the small barley loves and small fish. And he is the king of the Jews.

The meaning of the word “Bethlehem” is ‘House of Bread.’ “It is not the house of stake’ or ‘house of chocolate’ or ‘house of pancake.’ It is ‘house of bread.’ Bread refers to common food. It is the most plain but essential food. Indeed Jesus identified himself as the bread of life when he declared in **John 6:35, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.”**

The king of the Jews is like bread. Everyone has to eat and everyone will be satisfied.

So the king of the Jews was born ‘in the house of bread’. “House of bread” refers to common people rather than rich people. It can refer to insignificant people or even ‘least people’.

When the king of the Jews, the greatest king ever, the king of kings and lord of lords was born, people would expect such places like Rome or Jerusalem or New York or Los Angeles. But he was born in ‘Bethlehem’, the place of common people, the place of non prominent people or even the place of least people.

“Bethlehem”, the least town of Judah, reminds us of the story of Mephibosheth. When we studied the book of Samuel, Lani was deeply moved by the story of how David treated Mephibosheth. She felt she was like Mephibosheth. He was a crippled son of Jonathon. His grandfather Saul was trying to kill David but he died with his father Jonathon in battle. Now David became king. If David were an ordinary man he could have started to execute all the male descendants of Saul. But he did not do so. He said in **2 Samuel 9:3, “Is there no one still alive from the house of Saul whom I can show God’s kindness?”**

David said, ‘God’s kindness’. What is God’s kindness? It means God’s mercy. What is God’s kindness and mercy? It is kindness to the undeserved people. It is the kindness even for the ungrateful and wicked. Jesus said, **“Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreated you. Lend to those from whom you do not expect repayment and then your reward will be great and you will be children of the Most High because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked.” (Luke 6:27-36)**

Mephibosheth was a crippled man and he did not deserve David’s kindness. But king David wanted to show God’s kindness and Mephibosheth was invited to the king’s table. Who is not like Mephibosheth?

Who are we? Are we better than Mephibosheth? Once we were all enemies of the Messiah. Once we all shouted, ‘crucify him! Crucify him!’ to the king of the Jews. So he was crucified under the name, “Jesus of Nazareth, king of the Jews.” Are we better than Mephibosheth? No, but why are we loved by God and favored by God so much that the king of the Jews gave his own life to save us? It is because he identified himself with us. He had great mercy on us instead of us. He could do so because he identified himself with us, sinners. So when he was crucified he was crucified as a sinner. When he was crucified he was crucified as ‘the king of the Jews.’

Who can be proudly said before God, “I am better than Mephibosheth”? Who? No one. We all needs God’s kindness like Mephibosheth all the days our life. And the king of the Jews will show God’s kindness to us without limit because he identified himself with us.

Before Apostle Paul met the king of the Jews his name was ‘Saul’ which means ‘great’. But after he met the king of the Jews he changed his name to Paul which means ‘small’. He realized that he is small before the king of the Jews and furthermore the king of the Jews identified himself with small people.

Once disciples of Jesus argued about ‘who is the greatest among them.” Then this is what Jesus did in **Luke 9:46-48 “[46] An argument started among the disciples as to which of them would be the greatest. [47] Jesus, knowing their thoughts, took a little child and had him stand beside him. [48] Then he said to them, “Whoever welcomes this little child in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. For it is the one who is least among you all who is the greatest.”**

Bethlehem was ‘the least among the towns of Judah’, but the king of the Jews was born in Bethlehem. So it is no wonder that the king of the Jews pays attention to small things and small people or even least people.

Last night I was in the room at Children’s Bible center. I noticed that many people came to the center and prepared Christmas worship service today, and I was busy to prepare today’s message. When I needed to go out to take my dinner I found that there was one group bible study going on in the front entrance of the house. When I tried to go out through the living room area there was another group bible study. The first group bible study was led by missionary Mari and another group was among Korean women missionaries. But what amazed me was their cracking. They kept laughing so joyfully. I could hear their joyful laughter from both sides. It was busy night. But somehow these women coworkers made their time and gathered together and had fellowship with the word of God and with each other. They were small group and in a small place of the back house. But they were so happy and joyful. They kept laughing. I was moved by their devotion to the bible study. Most of all, I was moved by their joyful laughter. What made them so joyful? I believe it the none other than the presence of the king of the Jews, the Messiah. Jesus must have been present among them because he pays attention to small things such as small group bible studies. He must have blessed their bible studies and fellowship. I could see they were small meetings but there was great joy among them.

Around 10 pm I went back to the main sanctuary. At the parking lot all cars were gone except one car. I was going to lock the entrance door of the computer area thinking that all were gone. Then I heard some kind of sound. So out of curiosity I looked around. I found little Grace Oh in the dinning area. When I looked at the main sanctuary I could see missionary Peace Oh moving something. And I could see missionary Mariah Oh doing something on the entrance area of main sanctuary. I did not say ‘hello’ to them. But I could see they were doing something for Christmas worship service. Who could notice their work? They would do something but most people would not notice. But I could see the king of the Jews would notice because he pays attention to small things or even least things. Whatever they did last night was probably small things and many of us may not even notice of it but the Messiah pays attention to it.

About half a year ago, during a hot summer, I saw Anthony was painting children’s bible center. One day I saw him weeding out in the lowest part of wooden bars near the ground in order to paint better. In order to weep out he had to work in a very uncomfortable position. Who could notice such a small thing? Who could blame him when he did not weed out and still painted and it may not be perfect. He was doing all these things voluntarily without pay. So who can complain? When I saw how much he was faithful to such a small job under hot weather, I was deeply moved. To my eyes he was a great man. And I am sure he is great man in the sight of the king of the Jews because the Messiah pays attention to small things or even least things. When he moves around microphones it is so natural as if he was born to do it. But when I tried to do so it is not so natural.

The king of the Jews pays attention to us even though we may be the least. Do you feel you are small? Do you feel you are troubled? Do you feel you are lonely? Do you feel that no one understands you and no one is around you? But there is one person who is with you and who pays attention to you. There is one person who identifies himself with you. He is the king of the Jews, the Messiah, and the shepherd. According to today’s passage the king of the Jews would shepherd God’s people.

Shepherding was so essential for the lives of Israel but the job was poor men’s job in Jesus’ days. It was not the prominent job. Shepherds did not have credit. So their testimonies were not even accepted in their courts. But the king of the Jews identified himself as the shepherd according to God’s prophecy. Indeed he shepherds over his people. King David sang a beautiful song about his shepherd in Psalm chapter 23. Let’s us read responsibly.

**Psalm 23.**

 **“[1] The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing. [2] He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, [3] he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name’s sake. [4] Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. [5] You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. [6] Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.”**

Are you looking for someone you want to worship? Are you looking for someone to whom you want to give your whole life? Where can you find him? It is not Jerusalem but Bethlehem. It is not the prominent town but the least down. The king of the Jews identified himself with the least people instead of prominent people. He is our Messiah and our shepherd. He deserves our worship and devotion. Where can we find him? Again in Bethlehem, small people, small things and small events, little things, little help, and the place where you think insignificant. There you will find your king and your Messiah and your shepherd.

**Matthew 25:34-45**

**34“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. 35For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, 36I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’**

**37“Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? 38When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? 39When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’**

**40“The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’**

**41“Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. 42For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, 43I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.’**

**44“They also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?’**

**45“He will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.’**

Where can we find the king of the Jews? The place where least of these brothers and sisters is because the king identified himself with them.

One word: **WHERE IS THE ONE WHO HAS BEEN BORN KING OF THE JEWS?**