

**Portraits of Christ**  
**Matthew: Coming King**  
**by**  
**Dr. E. Harold Henderson**

Dr. E. Harold Henderson was for 25 years, from 1972 -1997, the principal English language speaker on LifeWord Broadcast, an international radio outreach of the Baptist Missionary Association of America. Dr. Henderson was the Writer of the Adult Sunday School Quarterly (Baptist Publishing House, Little Rock, AR) for 39 & 1/2 years. He authored four books and numerous religious periodicals

© LifeWord Broadcast Ministries  
Conway, Arkansas  
Reprinted by permission

Prisoners Bible Crusade  
2212 Stonecypher Road  
Lucedale, MS 39452

**Contents**

<b>Introduction of the King</b>	<b>----- Page 1</b>
<b>Presentation of the King</b>	<b>-----Page 2</b>
<b>Proclamation of the King</b>	<b>-----Page 4</b>
<b>Rejection of the King</b>	<b>----- Page 7</b>

**INTRODUCTION OF THE KING**

I read with surprise, for I had not noticed before, Luke's report that "*many have taken in hand to set forth*" a written record of the life and teachings of Jesus. Of course, a person with the ministry of Jesus must have excited many to write of it. Yet, out of the "many" there are only four preserved for us. We refer to them as "The Four Gospels."

Each of the Four Gospels was written by a different man: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John. Each is of a different length. Matthew has 28 chapters. Mark has 16 chapters. Luke has 24 chapters. John has 21 chapters.

Each of the Four Gospels has a different theme. Each writer presents Jesus in a different aspect, like a person who has his picture taken with different poses. The difference in presentation in the Gospels was determined by the experience of the writer and the background of the people to whom he addressed his biography of Jesus.

Matthew was a government official who wrote for Jewish readers. He presented Jesus as a King, the King of the Jews. Mark was a servant of the apostles who wrote for Roman readers. He presented Jesus as a Servant, the Servant of Jehovah. Luke was a physician who wrote for Gentile readers. He presented Jesus as the Son of Man. John was an intimate confidant of Jesus who wrote for believers everywhere. He presented Jesus as the Son of God.

I propose to lead you in a series of studies in which we investigate the portraits of Christ as set forth in the Four Gospels. Our studies will begin in The Gospel According to Matthew. There we will see Jesus as the King and hear His teachings concerning the kingdom of God.

### **Ancestry of a king**

The Gospel According to Matthew begins with the genealogy of Jesus (1:1-17). That is not surprising. If one lays claim to a throne, he must be proved of proper descent. Matthew takes great care to present Jesus as an heir to the throne of David, which qualified Him to reign over the nation of Israel.

Matthew 1:1 begins, *“The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.”* That is surprising. David is mentioned first even though he lived 1,000 years after Abraham. Why was not Abraham mentioned first, as is common in all genealogies? It is because David was the great king of Israel. The throne of Israel is called “the throne of David.” The emphasis of the genealogy of Matthew 1:1-17 is to show that Jesus is the rightful heir to the throne of Israel, the throne of David. Matthew begins with the emphasis because he intends to present Jesus as the King. In the record that follows, Jesus is called *“Son of David”* ten times but the *“Son of Abraham”* only one time.

Matthew traces the genealogy of Jesus back through 42 generations from Abraham to the birth of Jesus, but he breaks the record with special mention at the generation of David. He is careful to keep emphasis on the legal descent of the right to the throne. He was careful to show Jesus would have sat on the throne of David to reign over Israel, if the nation had had a king in His day.

But Matthew is careful to show that though the legal right to reign was passed on to Jesus from Joseph, yet Joseph was not the physical father of Jesus. For generation after generation the record reads like this, *“And Eliud begat Eleazar; and Eleazar begat Matthan; and Matthan begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ”* (Matthew 1:15, 16). He did not say, “Jacob begat Joseph; and Joseph begat Jesus” Instead, he wrote, *“Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.”* There is great significance in that distinction. Joseph was not the human father of Jesus, nor was any other man.

### **Announced as a king**

God’s anointed King is more than a descendant of David and heir to the throne. He was God’s only begotten Son. So Matthew is careful to record that before Joseph and Mary were united as husband and wife, he discovered that she was awaiting the birth of a child. He thought to break his commitment to marry her, but an angel of God came to him with this announcement: *“Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel which being interpreted is, God with us”* (Matthew 1:20-23). (That quotation of Isaiah 7:14 is the first of 60 Old Testament quotations in the Gospel According to Matthew.)

Jesus was a Jew by birth to His mother. He was God by virtue of His miraculous conception and divine nature. He was a King, and more than a King. He was not King over a political nation but is King over the whole kingdom of God.

### **Adored as king**

Wise men came from an eastern country, as Matthew tells us, to see Him who *“is born King of the Jews”* (Matthew 2:2). He was not born a prince who would one day become a king. The wise men said He was born King! That is why they went to the palace of Herod first. One would expect a newborn king to be in the house of the ruler. But He was not. Men who had knowledge of the Scriptures were called and asked where God’s prophets said the anointed Messiah-King would be born. They identified Bethlehem as the place. So the wise men went there to seek the baby. They were directed by the star God had shown them. At last they came into the house where Joseph had brought Mary and the baby Jesus. They *“fell down, and worshiped him,”* an act befitting those who were in the presence of a King. *“And when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh,”* “gifts befitting a King (Matthew 2:11).

### **Acknowledged as king**

Herod the king recognized the newborn baby, whom he had not seen, as a king and rival to the throne, So he sent soldiers and killed all the infants in Bethlehem from two years old and younger. But God had sent Joseph into Egypt with his wife and foster son to protect them. That is how Matthew introduces us to Jesus, the King of the Jews and Messiah of God. He has the ancestry of a king. He was announced to the wise men as a king. He was recognized by Herod as a king. He was given gifts befitting a king.

I call you to recognize Him as your king. *“O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand”* (Psalm 95:6, 7).

## **PRESENTATION OF THE KING**

Have you ever witnessed the coronation of a king? It is a most beautiful and solemn ceremony, filled with pomp and impressive ritual. The ruler is presented a crown is put on the head, and all the subjects kneel in recognition of the authority which rests in the king.

It was by an impressive display that God presented His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, as the King of Israel and Savior of men. We read of it in Matthew chapter 3.

### **The kingdom anticipated**

The coronation of the king was preceded by the announcement of the coming kingdom. *“In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, and saying; Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. . . Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins”* (Matthew 3:1-6). How very strange. That was the first (and only) time in history that a new king was welcomed by the people repenting of their sins and receiving baptism in water as the sign of their repentance and renewal.

What kind of king will rule over “the kingdom of heaven,” whose citizens enter the kingdom by repentance? Jesus must be a King in a way the monarchs of the world could never be. He must reign over a kingdom no other could rule. The kingdom announced by John the Baptist was greater far than the political boundaries of the nation of the Jews. *“Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham”* (Matthew 3:9). His is a spiritual kingdom made up of people

who repent of their sins. It is the spiritual kingdom of God.

Jesus early ministry involved preaching the same message John the Baptist preached. Matthew 4:17 summarizes it well: *“From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”*

When the twelve apostles had been selected and trained, Jesus sent them out to preach. His commission was, *“As ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand”* (Matthew 10:7). That was the message heard through all His ministry on earth. Men and women could acknowledge Jesus as King and enter the kingdom of heaven by repentance and faith. No wonder that was called the *“gospel of the kingdom”* (Matthew 24:14).

### **The King anointed**

But look at the coronation of the King of that kingdom. Matthew records it in these words: *“Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now.’ for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: and lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased”* (Matthew 3:13,17). There was the coronation of the King of the Kingdom of God. On that occasion *“God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power”* (Acts 10:38).

John the Baptist saw that miraculous event and recognized Jesus as the Messiah of God (John 1:29-34). God’s anointed King had come. God had personally identified Him and claimed Him as *“My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”* Let all people rejoice.

### **The kingdom attacked**

But every kingdom has its enemies. Every authority has its opponents. So the King or the kingdom of heaven was challenged immediately upon His coronation. Matthew 4:1 reads, *“Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.”* For the next forty days and nights a spiritual battle raged in the wilderness of Judea. Jesus was challenged to have a kingdom which attracted people by providing their physical needs: *“Command that these stones be made bread”* (Matthew 4:3). He was challenged to base his kingdom on compromise with the devil: *“Fall down and worship me”* (Matthew 4:9). He was challenged to have a kingdom based on miracles and spectacular demonstrations: *“Cast thyself down”* (from the pinnacle of the temple, Matthew 4:5,6). But Jesus rejected all those alternatives. In His burial in water and rising from water at the hands of John the Baptist, when He received baptism, He had committed Himself to the will of God even to death. He would follow that way. His kingdom would be the kingdom of God!

### **The kingdom advancing**

The affairs of the kingdom of God on earth were entrusted to twelve men. They were selected by Jesus after a night of prayer and trained by Jesus over a three year period. They took the leadership of that kingdom when Jesus had returned to heaven from whence He came.

Jesus began gathering His disciples one by one. Two came with Him upon the recommendation of John the Baptist, *‘Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. This is he*

*of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me*" (John 1:29, 30). Others were selected as they worked by the fishing boats on the Sea of Galilee at the receipt of customs in Capernaum, and so they were gathered. The kingdom of God was growing.

The power of the kingdom of God was manifest. Miracles began to mark the ministry of Jesus. It is no surprise when you remember that *"Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee, and there went out a fame of him through all the region roundabout"* (Luke 4:14). Miracles, such as the healing of the body of the mother-in-law of Simon Peter (Matthew 8:14-17), became increasingly common. People pressed on him with their sick, tormented, demon possessed, and He healed them all (Matthew 4:23-25). Even a leper was cured from a disease thought incurable (Matthew 8:24). A palsied man was made whole (Matthew 9:1-8). Yes, the kingdom of God had come among men.

Jesus broke religious traditions which did not agree with Holy Scripture. He healed a man on the Sabbath day. He feasted with His disciples instead of fasting as others did. He was King, and He exercised the authority of a King.

Behold the King! He came from God. He was identified by God. He rules over the Kingdom of God. For He is, Himself, God. He who came as lowly man is sovereign Lord. And you may enter His kingdom by repentance from sin and personal faith in Him as your own Savior and Lord.

## PROCLAMATION OF THE KING

In Matthew's portrait of Christ there was a four-fold witness borne to Jesus, testifying that He is King of the kingdom of God. The four witnesses were different in source and expression, but their message was the same.

### **God, the Father**

First, God the Father testified to Jesus. At His baptism in water at the hands of John the Baptist, God said, *"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"* (Matthew 3:17). About three years later, on the mount of transfiguration, the Father testified of the Son, *"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him"* (Matthew 17:5). If a person will accept the testimony of God, he must agree that Jesus is the Son of God and King over the kingdom of God.

### **Jesus' words**

Second, the words of Jesus testify to Him. It is generally agreed that the greatest sermon ever spoken on human lips is what we call "the Sermon on the Mount," recorded in Matthew 5, 6, 7. Shortly before that great address, Jesus had chosen and ordained twelve men to be with Him and that He might send them out to preach. Many students of the Bible consider the Sermon on the Mount to be an ordination sermon upon the selection of the twelve apostles.

The sermon begins with a list of beatitudes and woes, pronouncing blessings and judgments. This section describes the spirit of the citizens of the kingdom over which Jesus rules as King. They are poor in spirit, they mourn, they are meek, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, merciful, pure in heart, peacemakers and willing to endure persecution for righteousness' sake (Matthew 5:3-12). Such qualities indicate that more than a political kingdom is involved in the reign of Jesus. Persons with those qualities are salt to the earth and light to the world. Those who

see them are pointed to the Father who is in heaven, and God is glorified.

The theme of the Sermon on the Mount is righteousness. There is a contrast between the popular concept of righteousness (keeping one's self ceremonially undefiled) and Jesus' concept of righteousness (uprightness in spirit and purity before God). The citizens of the kingdom over which Jesus reigns must be righteous. Jesus used six illustrations (murder, adultery, divorce oaths, retaliation and love of enemies) to show what biblical righteousness truly is. People had not heard that kind of teaching before. He showed by almsgiving, prayer and fasting that God looks at the heart and not simply at conduct. Single-hearted devotion to God is what God is looking for in citizens of the kingdom. He concluded the Sermon with a parable about two houses which endured a storm, one falling and another standing, depending on the foundation of each. He said His teachings were the only reliable foundation for life. No wonder Matthew reports, "*The people were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one having authority*" (Matthew 7:28, 29). That is the way one would expect a King to speak.

Matthew 13 records seven great parables Jesus told. They are called "the parables of the kingdom" because Jesus began most by saying, "*The kingdom of heaven is like*. "He used a sower and his fields, weeds among the wheat, leaven in dough, treasure in a field, relative value of pearls, a drag-net filled with fish of many kinds to picture what the kingdom of heaven is like. Jesus showed Himself as a master story teller and a great theologian as he told those earthly stories and revealed their heavenly meanings. No wonder John records men's words upon hearing Him, "*Never man spake like this man*" (John 7:46). His words were the words God had given Him to speak. He spoke so much of the kingdom of God that the good news He announced was called the "*gospel of the kingdom*" (Matthew 24:14).

### **Jesus' works**

Third, the works Jesus did testify of Him. Examine chapters 8 and 9 of The Gospel According to Matthew. Look at Jesus as He heals a leper with a touch of His hand, heals the servant of a Centurion by speaking the word and not even seeing the patient, heals the mother-in-law of Simon Peter by touching her, stills a storm on the Sea of Galilee by commanding it to cease, casts a legion of demons out of a poor man by commanding them to depart, heals a palsied man with a word, heals a woman who touched His garment, gave sight to two blind men by touching their eyes "*and healing every sickness and every disease among the people*" (Matthew 9:35). Who but God could do things like that? Who but a King of God's anointing could have power like that? Look at His works and behold your King! Jesus Himself summarized His works in the message He sent to John the Baptist, saying, "*The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them*" (Matthew 11:5).

### **Jesus' messengers**

Fourth, the messengers of Jesus bear witness to Him. Matthew 10 recounts how Jesus called the chosen 12, whom He called apostles, and "*gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease*" (Matthew 10:1). But their mission was much more than just a healing campaign. He commissioned them, "*As ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand*" (Matthew 10:7). They went out saying they were messengers of the King and the kingdom of Heaven had come among men. What a precious announcement that is!

Some did not want to acknowledge Jesus as ruler of the kingdom of God. So they sought some

other explanation of His power. They accused Him of casting out demons by the power of Beelzebub, the prince of the demons. He showed them the foolishness of such a suggestion: *“If Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself how shall then his kingdom stand?”* (Matthew 12:26). Then He made this profound statement, *“If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you”* (Matthew 12:28).

Jesus is King. Let us not be surprised if He acts like a king. His coming into the world by miraculous virgin conception was kingly, His anointing with the Holy Spirit and confession by the Father as His beloved Son were kingly. His words were beyond words of any man. His works were more than any man could do. Those who knew Him best testified that He was the King of Israel. What further proof do we need? It is not proof but faith which we must exercise in Him. Like the wise men who visited the infant Jesus, let us kneel down and worship Him, presenting our finest gifts to Him. He is King. Not only is He King of the Jews but He is also King over the whole kingdom of God. By faith in Jesus you and I can sing, *“I’m a child of the King. . . With Jesus my Savior, I’m a child of the king.”*

### **REJECTION OF THE KING**

Jesus began one of His parables with these words, *“A certain nobleman went into a far country, to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us”* (Luke 19:12, 14). That parable pictured those who rejected Jesus and refused to acknowledge Him as King over the kingdom of God. Such a rejection of the Son of God is the greatest tragedy in human history.

#### **A hostile world**

Jesus knew He would not be welcomed by many. He told the disciples, *“Whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city. Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves”* (Matthew 10:14-16). Such a rejection was not a surprise to Him. But He went, and He sent His disciples to bear witness of the truth of the kingdom.

The witness of God was given in words and works by Jesus and His disciples. The words He spoke were the words of God. The works He did were what the Father had commanded Him to do. But men persisted in their unbelief, refusing the opportunity to enter as citizens into the kingdom of God.

*“Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not: Woe unto thee, Chorazin! Woe unto thee, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But lazy unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee”* (Matthew 11:20-24).

#### **Authority rejected**

Those who rejected the authority of Jesus as God’s anointed King naturally rejected His

teachings. He spoke of His divine authority over religious rituals and ceremonies when He said, *“The Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day”* (Matthew 12:8). That was blasphemy to the ears of many. They believed God had created people just so He would have someone to observe the Sabbath. To say the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath, and to say He was Lord of the Sabbath, was blasphemy of the grossest kind. But since Jesus is very God and King over God’s kingdom, He did have authority over all persons and things.

The ultimate rejection of the King came when His enemies thought it necessary to explain His power to cast out demons. They said, *“This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils”* (Matthew 12:24). Such an evident perversion of the revealed truth and exhibition of the power of God brought forth Jesus’ severest condemnation. He said, *“All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come”* (Matthew 12:31, 32).

Such rejection of the King whom God had anointed proved it to be an evil generation (Matthew 12:34). When they asked Jesus for a sign proving He was God’s Messiah, He said, *“An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign”* (Matthew 12:39).

Beginning in chapter 13 of The Gospel According to Matthew, much of the teachings of Jesus was in parables. The people had Largely rejected His teachings. He spoke in such a way that those who trusted Him could understand but those who did not acknowledge Him would not understand.

He began to foretell His coming suffering. Three times (Matthew 16:21; 17:22, 23; 20: 17-19) He told His disciples that He would go to Jerusalem, be betrayed, be crucified and die. He also told them He would rise from death, but they did not seem to understand that part. Opposition began to increase. His three-year ministry had a year of obscurity, a year of popularity and then a year of opposition. That year of opposition ended in His crucifixion and resurrection.

### **The king killed**

At last the time came. Jesus officially offered Himself to Israel as her divinely anointed King. According to the prophecy of Isaiah 62:11 and Zechariah 9:9, Jesus offered Himself by riding into Jerusalem on a donkey. Many people recognized the significance of that act. They broke limbs from the trees and laid them on the path, some even putting their cloaks there, for the donkey to walk on. They cried, *“Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh/i in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest”* (Matthew 21:9). To acknowledge Jesus as *“the Son of David”* meant they were proclaiming Him to be God’s anointed King. But the temporary popularity soon faded, and the religious authorities who opposed Him took charge.

Jesus was betrayed by a member of His own band of apostles, Judas Iscariot by name. False witnesses were brought to a hasty trial to testify against Him. The laws of man and God were broken in their haste to get a verdict condemning Him. Only their insistence, and the threat of mob violence, secured a sentence of death against the Lord. But at last it was done.

Jesus was taken from the judgment hall of Pilate and led away to the place of the skull just outside the walls of Jerusalem. He was nailed to a cross and remained there until He died about six hours later. He was taken down and buried in the tomb that belonged to another man. Is that the end? Is that what will happen to the King of the kingdom of God? Not at all! Men did not know that the death of Jesus atoned for the sins of the whole world and made it possible for you and me to enter the kingdom today by repentance from sin and faith in Jesus Christ. He died



for our sins. He arose for our salvation. He reigns in our hearts today as King. He is coming again when He will be revealed as *“King of kings, and Lord of lords.”* And He shall reign forever! Get in on the good of it by welcoming Him into your life as Lord and Savior right now.

## TRIUMPH OF THE KING

If a king had been ruling over the Jews at the beginning of the Christian era, Jesus of Nazareth would have been that king. Matthew wrote to his fellow Jews and very carefully outlined the genealogy of Jesus to show that He was rightful heir to the throne of David.

The beginning of the personal ministry of Jesus here on earth was marked by an announcement of the kingdom. John the Baptist preached, *“Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand”* (Matthew 3:2). Jesus’ early preaching is summarized by Matthew in the words, *“Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand”* (Matthew 4:17). Those who repented of sin and received baptism in water at the hands of John the Baptist testified that they were ready to welcome the reign of God’s Messiah King.

### **A kingdom with a future**

Those who knew Jesus best testified, *“Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God”* (Matthew 16:16). Their Old Testament concept of Christ and His ministry on earth was that He would be a great King who would deliver God’s people from all their enemies. The confession that Jesus is the Christ (called Messiah in the Hebrew language) was an acknowledgement that He was the Anointed One who came to bring the kingdom of God to earth.

Jesus appealed to the works He did to substantiate His claims to be God’s anointed King. He challenged His opponents, saying, *“If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you”* (Matthew 12:28). The kingdom had come, but men did not recognize it because it was not the political dominion they expected. It was a spiritual rule instead.

The kingdom Jesus introduced is still in existence today. It is entered by repentance from sin and faith in Jesus Christ. The *“keys of the kingdom of heaven”* are used today to open and close through the witness of the gospel (Matthew 16:19). What is thereby bound on earth is bound in heaven, and whatever is loosed on earth is loosed in heaven (Matthew 18:18). Those who trust Jesus are citizens of His heavenly kingdom.

But not all people welcomed the coming of the Kingdom of God. Many did not want to repent, pretending that they had no sin from which to turn. John the Baptist met them with the challenge, *“O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance”* (Matthew 3:7, 8). Jesus challenged them, saying, *“The publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him”* (Matthew 21:31, 32). Such preaching will bring repentance or rebellion. Some repented, but many rebelled. By act and by word they declared, *“We will not have this man to reign over us”* (Luke 19:14). And so Israel rejected her Messiah King.

### **Death without defeat**

It was a great tragedy that Jesus was rejected and crucified. The sin was compounded in that the very people who did it had copies of Holy Scripture that foretold what was going to happen. Yet, they did not recognize that they were fulfilling the words of their own prophets when they crucified Jesus.

Read the twenty-sixth and twenty-seventh chapters of The Gospel According to Matthew. It recounts no less than 19 prophecies that were fulfilled in the betrayal, trials, death and burial of Jesus of Nazareth. Amazing, isn't it? Matthew, writing to prove to the Jews that Jesus was and is their Anointed King (the Messiah for whom they had looked and longed), quoted the Old Testament writers over and over. So ma