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Christmas day 2009

Recognising the King

The wise men when they came to Bethlehem having followed the star and consulted Herod and the Bible scholars their search for the King came to an end.

¹After 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 in the east and have come to worship him." Matthew 2.1-2

Paul Graham shows us how King Wenceslas was an inspiration -following in the steps of Jesus.

How do some Kings down through the ages do?

Slide 2 – Kings from around the world down through Time.

Cyrus the Great – (Persian King)

Cyrus gets a big - Yes

October 29, designated the "Cyrus the Great Day" and is the anniversary of his issuing the first declaration of human rights

Twenty five centuries ago, when savagery was the dominant factor in human societies, a civilized and compassionate declaration was written on clay and issued to the "four corners of the world" that dealt with important issues relevant to the rights of humans, the same issues that not only in those days but even today can inspire those who believe in human dignity and rights.

"The Declaration of Cyrus the Great," emphasized the removal of all racial, national discrimination and slavery, bestowing to the people, freedom to choose their places of residence, faith and religion and giving prominence to the perpetual peace amongst the nations.

God speaks of Cyrus as " My servant" – What a great King.

King Leopold II of Belgium

Leopold gets a big – No

Between 1885 and 1908, there were between five and eight million victims of Leopold's personal rule, under a barbarous system of forced labour and systematic terror.

What is shocking is how many people were affected (the Congo is a huge territory) and also how recent these events were -- barely a hundred years ago.

Slide 3 – English Kings

Alfred the Great. (871-899)

I knew he burnt the cakes, but then Jamie Oliver wasn't around to provide guidance. Alfred was a great king and was one of the best kings ever to rule mankind. He defended Anglo-Saxon England from Viking raids, formulated a code of laws, and fostered a rebirth of the Christian faith as a distinctly Christian king.

Henry the VIII

He gets a no.

Just a few facts to account for this.

1. Not a good husband - King Henry VIII married six times.
2. His daughter Mary prosecuted Protestants and was responsible for executing 300 people and has therefore been referred to as Bloody Mary ever since. Yet her father was responsible for 72,000 executions, including women, and never given such a nickname.

Slide 4 Prince William – A King in the Making A big yes.

Prince William on Tuesday night 22 December 2009 spent a night sleeping rough on the freezing streets of London to draw attention to the plight of homeless people, a charity said William, who is next in line for the throne after his father Prince Charles, bedded down on cardboard boxes in an alleyway near the River Thames as temperatures fell to minus four degrees Celsius "There was no shielding from the bitter cold or the hard concrete floor or the fear of being accosted by drug dealers, pimps or those out to give homeless people a good kicking," said Seyi Obakin, chief executive of homeless charity Centrepoin, who accompanied the prince.

"One of the hairiest moments occurred when we were almost run over by a road sweeper which simply didn't see our small group huddled together, which just goes to show how vulnerable rough sleepers are." William added: "I cannot, after one night, even begin to imagine what it must be like to sleep rough on London's streets night after night."

Over 4,500 people sleep on the streets in London, according to government

figures released earlier this year. They also showed that some 40 percent came from outside Britain, particularly Eastern Europe.

Recognising the King

Jesus a big big big Yes.

Jesus is described in John's gospel as the Word and it says the Word became flesh. In other words Jesus came into our world and John described it he pitched his tent among us for good. Not a one day experience but a lifetime.

A King with a Difference.

A King who rules with humility – born at the back of the Inn laid in a Manger. Jesus one full of grace – that is God's freely given love and goodness.

A King who doesn't abuse power – rather than use people for his own ends he comes to serve and to give his own life to enable every human being to become sons and daughters of the King of Kings God himself.

A King who comes to bring in God's Kingdom – which is described as God's upside down kingdom. A King who says blessed are the poor, a king who places his hands upon the lepers, a King who mixes freely with the greatest and the least.

A King born as the baby at Bethlehem – he was recognized because God made it possible; creation spoke with the star, God spoke in scripture, God sent his messenger – the angel Gabriel, God spoke in dreams, he caused people to sing. To sing great songs. Zechariah's the Benedictus, Mary's – Magnificat, Simeon's Nunc Dimittis, the angels song with the shepherds.

For us we get the full story, Jesus the King of the Jews we go to the events leading to Christ's death and upon the cross the words were written The King of the Jews. Christmas reveals that Jesus is indeed the one born King of the Jews and through him the King of all. Jesus is the good news for he is the Saviour of the World. Jesus described in Philippians 2 as the one who has been given the name above all names.

So this Christmas will you bring your worship and live your life for God. What kinds of kings will you emulate, will you be a Cyrus or a Leopold, will you be an Alfred or a Henry, will you like Prince William recognize that the process of life transformation is ongoing and that the God of all compassion is the one who in Jesus invites us to follow Him.

**Wise where is he born King.
Do we think of Jesus as king.
King Alfred a great English King.**

King Alfred the Great (849, ruled 871-899) was one of the best kings ever to rule mankind. He defended Anglo-Saxon England from Viking raids, formulated a code of laws, and fostered a rebirth of religious and scholarly activity. His reign exhibits military skill and innovation, sound governance and the ability to inspire men and plan for the future, piety and a practical commitment to the support of religion, personal scholarship and the promotion of education.

Henry VIII doesn't get my vote.

Interesting Facts about Henry VIII

Fact 1 - King Henry VIII married six times. Fact 6 - His motto was *Coeur Loyal*, meaning true heart which he illustrated on his clothes in the form of a heart symbol accompanied by the word 'loyal'...

- **Fact 11 - His daughter Mary prosecuted Protestants and was responsible for executing 300 people and has therefore been referred to as Bloody Mary ever since. Yet her father was responsible for 72,000 executions, including women, and never given such a nickname**
- **Fact 12 - In 1521 King Henry VIII received the title "Defender of the Faith" from the Catholic Pope Leo X for his opposition to Martin Luther and the Protestant reformation**
- **Fact 13 - By 1534 King Henry VIII broke with the Church in Rome and passed the Act of Supremacy making King Henry VIII the head of the newly established Church of England**
- **Fact 15 - He was an extremely tall man and his height was six foot four inches tall**
- **Fact 16 - His early armour showed a waist measurement of waist of about 34 to 36 inches indicating a weight of about 180 to 200 pounds when he was a young man**
- **Fact 17 - The last set of armour owned by King Henry VIII showed a waist measurement of waist of about 58 to 60 inches which indicated a weight of about 300 to 320 pounds when he was an old man**
- **Fact 20 - The English navy increased under Henry VIII from just 5 ships at the beginning of his reign to about 60 ships and he created a great chain of coastal fortresses to defend England against the threat of invasion**

Cyrus the great – good Liberated the Jews in exile.

October 29, the “Cyrus the Great Day” And the anniversary of his issuing the first declaration of human rights

Twenty five centuries ago, when savagery was the dominant factor in human societies, a civilized and compassionate declaration was written on clay and issued to the “four corners of the world” that dealt with important issues relevant to the rights of humans, the same issues that not only in those days but even today can inspire those who believe in human dignity and rights.

This document, known as “The Declaration of Cyrus the Great,” emphasized on the removal of all racial, national discrimination and slavery, bestowing to the people, freedom to choose their places of residence, faith and religion and giving prominence to the perpetual peace amongst the nations. This Declaration could actually be considered as a present from the Iranian people, expressed through the words of Cyrus, their political leader and the founder of the first empire in the world, to the whole humanity. In 1971, the general assembly of the United Nations recognized it as the first Declaration of Human Rights, thus, registering such an honor to the name of Iran as the cradle of this first historical attempt to establish the recognition of human rights.

When reading a reference by Mark Twain to these deaths, and the world-wide campaign against slavery in the Congo of which he was a part, Hochschild was surprised at his own ignorance. “Why were these deaths not mentioned in the standard litany of our century's horrors? And why had I not heard of them?” Pursuing his inquiries he uncovered a "vast supply of raw material".

King Leopold's Ghost tells the story of King Leopold II of Belgium and his (mis)rule of a colony that he essentially owned, known variously as the Congo, the Belgian Congo, and Zaire. It is a wild and unpleasant story of man's capacity for evil and the peculiar manifestations of it. King Leopold II, who never set foot in his fiefdom, managed (with the help of many willing underlings) to ruin a country. Regrettably, it is not the worst example of colonial misrule, but merely a representative one. What is shocking is how many people were affected (the Congo is a huge territory) and also how recent these events were -- barely a hundred years ago.

Prince William one day to be King Slept out patron of charity for the young homeless

Prince Williams sleeps rough for charity
23 Dec 2009, 1347 hrs IST, AGENCIES

Britain's Prince William spent a night sleeping rough on the freezing streets of London to draw attention to the plight of homeless people, a charity said Tuesday (December 22).

William, who is next in line for the throne after his father Prince Charles, bedded down on cardboard boxes in an alleyway near the River Thames as temperatures fell to minus four degrees Celsius (25 degrees Fahrenheit) last week.

"There was no shielding from the bitter cold or the hard concrete floor or the fear of being accosted by drug dealers, pimps or those out to give homeless people a good kicking," said Seyi Obakin, chief executive of homeless charity Centrepoin, who accompanied the prince.

"One of the hairiest moments occurred when we were almost run over by a road sweeper which simply didn't see our small group huddled together, which just goes to show how vulnerable rough sleepers are."

Obakin added that William was "determined" to understand all the problems that homeless people face.

William added: "I cannot, after one night, even begin to imagine what it must be like to sleep rough on London's streets night after night."

The prince's mother, princess Diana -- who died in a Paris car crash in 1997 -- also supported Centrepoin.

Over 4,500 people sleep on the streets in London, according to government figures released earlier this year. They also showed that some 40 percent came from outside Britain, particularly eastern Europe.



AP – In this image made available by the Charity Centrepoin in

LONDON – A cold alley in central London is a far cry from a palace — but it was the spot Prince William chose to sleep to highlight the plight of homeless British teenagers.

He spent a chilly night near Blackfriars Bridge last week with Seyi Obakin, the chief executive of British homeless charity Centrepoin. William has been the charity's patron since 2005.

"I cannot, after one night, even begin to imagine what it must be like to sleep rough on London's streets night after night," William said Tuesday. "Poverty, mental illness, drug and alcohol dependancy and family breakdown cause people to become and then stay homeless.

"I hope that by deepening my understanding of the issue, I can help do my bit to help the most vulnerable on our streets."

William, second in line to the throne, was exposed to some of the hardships found on London's streets when his mother, Princess Diana, took him to a shelter in 1996. Just 13 at the time, William spent an hour at the facility with his younger brother, Harry.

Diana was well-known for her charitable work and the homeless was a group she was particularly close to. She had also served as Centrepoin's patron, a position she held at the time of her death in 1997.

A photograph released by the charity shows William, 27, in the alley in jeans, a gray hooded sweat shirt and a knit hat pulled low.

In a post to the charity's Web site, Obakin said the idea for William to spend a night on the streets — known as "sleeping rough" in Britain — was hatched in March.

"He was determined, as he has always been, to understand deeply the full range of problems a homeless young person might face," Obakin said. "For me, it was a scary experience. Out of my comfortable bed. Out there in the elements. Out there on an extremely cold night, with temperatures down to -4 C (24.8 F). And it was the same for Prince William. But he was determined to do it."

Obakin said they found a secluded spot — tucked away behind some garbage bins — and settled in for a restless night.

"But there was no shielding from the bitter cold, or the hard concrete floor, or the fear of being accosted by drug dealers, pimps or those out to give homeless people a 'good' kicking," Obakin said.

William is currently training to be a Royal Air Force search-and-rescue pilot.

On the Net: