

Behold the King

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Well, today I invite you to turn to Psalm 93 as the starting point for our message today. I want to read Psalm 93 to you and then explain to you why we're going to this passage of Scripture on this particular day. Psalm 93, it's a short Psalm, and it says this, it says,

1 The LORD reigns; he is robed in majesty; the LORD is robed; he has put on strength as his belt. Yes, the world is established; it shall never be moved. 2 Your throne is established from of old; you are from everlasting. 3 The floods have lifted up, O LORD, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their roaring. 4 Mightier than the thunders of many waters, mightier than the waves of the sea, the LORD on high is mighty! 5 Your decrees are very trustworthy; holiness befits your house, O LORD, forevermore.

We're going to continue this morning the ongoing series that we have on "Building a Christian Mind." This is something that we're doing over the course of many months, it may take all of 2023 to get through, quite frankly. Building a Christian mind doesn't come easy, and it doesn't come cheap. To build a truly functional Christian mind that is informed by necessary biblical principles is a matter of sustained effort, a matter of sustained study, a matter of unquenchable desire to be conformed to the image of our Lord Jesus Christ. And we need help to do that. God has given us his word, and in his word there are certain foundational truths that rise to the forefront that we must understand if we are to think rightly and to have our minds functioning in the way that they should, and to have a Christian mind is essential to live life to the glory of God. How could you live life to the glory of God if you didn't know how God wanted you to think? And said sympathetically, how are our minds to work properly if we don't know the fundamental principles by which they are to operate, by which we are to view and interpret everything in life around us?

So there's a series of seven distinct series that we're going through, and we're in the middle of the third one right now. The first one was "How to Know that God Exists," and we considered that in several messages, and we saw that we know that God exists by looking to the places where God has made himself known, where God has revealed himself. We don't determine what we think God should have done and should have said. No, we go to where God has said, "Here I have spoken," and we see without question and

conclusively the existence of God. So we looked at the areas of natural creation, and the Canon of Scripture, and the conscience that is embedded in humanity, the person of our Lord Jesus Christ who was the pinnacle of the revelation of God, and in the matter of conversion, God has shone his light into our hearts. Scripture says those of us that have come to believe, God has made himself known by bringing us to salvation. And so we see multiple multiple ways that God has spoken, and it is a complete refutation of the folly of atheism and the casual dismissal that people make of theology and of a theocentric view of the world. God has made himself known, and that's how we know.

And why is that important for us to say? Why is it important for us to cultivate that? Well, the implications of that are massive. Let's just say it this way to those perhaps who are sorrowing and feeling isolated, and also to those who live in rebellion and like to live on the edge of sin, and you know, while maintaining an outward appearance of righteousness, of some semblance of Christianity, why is the existence of God so important? Well, for the one, for the sorrowing person, it brings a message of comfort and hope and direction to you because it says to you that you're not alone in the universe. There is a God, and he is there, he exists, and he has spoken. There is a God, he exists, and he has spoken, and that light beckons you to come to him as he's made himself known in his word.

For the casual Christian, for the hardened rebel, it speaks a word of caution, of warning, that there is a God who reigns, who knows, who sees everything, who knows the thoughts of your mind, the intentions of your heart, and there will one day be an accounting that we give to him. You will all stand before God one day, either redeemed to receive rewards or apart from Christ and to receive the consequences of your sin and the punishment and being sent away into eternal perdition. God isn't messing around, and the fact that he is real is a warning to the rebel and to the one who is indifferent to spiritual reality, or even simply to the naive person who is just content to live by the happiness of life without any regard for any substance of anything spiritual. God is real, God exists, and one day you will stand and give an account to him.

Scripture says in Acts 17, I want you to turn there with me, Acts 17, we'll get back to Psalm 93 probably on, I don't know, Thursday night. Psalm 17:30 and 31 are really crucial for the spiritually indifferent, the spiritually careless, the ones who harbor rebellion in their hearts. In Acts 17:30, the Apostle Paul preaching says this, he says, "The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead." Paul preaching to pagans says, "It's time to repent. There is a God who has made himself known, and now he's fixed a day, there is a time of judgment coming that all men must calculate into their perception of reality."

Beloved, if you haven't calculated this most basic principle into your view of life and are not living in the light of this, you're doomed. There is a God, he is righteous and holy, he commands you to repent and come to his Son, and there will be one day, a day of judgment for all men to stand before him. This is of incalculable significance. If you're not a Christian, this is the only thing in life that matters, is to be reconciled to this God

through his Son, Jesus Christ. That's the significance of knowing that God exists, it frames the way you view and approach everything else. The one who hasn't addressed that in his heart and lived in response to it is living on borrowed time, is walking on thin ice, is hanging by a spider's thread over a bottomless pit. It's important for us to take these things seriously as part of building a Christian mind. How do we know God exists?

Secondly, this is all by way of review, secondly, we said how do we know the Bible is true? How do we know the authority of the Bible? How do we know that the 66 and no more books of the Bible are authoritative and sufficient for our lives? How do we know that? How do we know that for certain? On what authority do we receive the Scriptures as the word of God? Well, in one sense, the Scriptures are their own best authority, they are self-attesting; you read the Scriptures and the word of God is made manifest to you. But what we said is that we know that Scripture is true because Jesus Christ himself affirmed it. He affirmed the Old Testament when he said that not a jot or a tittle of the Old Testament can pass away, he came to fulfill it. And we saw how Jesus affirmed the Old Testament in its details of theology and prophecy and history and factual information on and on it went. Jesus viewed the Old Testament as having complete authority as being absolutely true and Jesus Christ is the King of the universe. As a result of that there is no higher authority. What he says we know that we can rely on. He affirmed the Old Testament as being infallible and inerrant. On the New Testament side, Jesus prepared the way for its coming. He appointed apostles. He promised them the help of the Spirit and then the apostles wrote the word of God under the influence of the Spirit that Jesus Christ himself sent.

And so we see the authority of Scripture affirmed by Christ himself and then in a subsidiary, secondary way we said and we saw that this word is affirmed to our own hearts. The Spirit affirms it to our own heart. That's not the primary testimony. It's a consequence of the main testimony of Christ and the Spirit affirms it all to our hearts so that there's both an external and an internal affirmation of it. Again, these things are vital. If we're going to know, if we're going to say that Scripture is the word of God, we need to know why we believe what we believe. You see, beloved, that's part of the whole thing of this series. We need to know what we're trying to do is to establish for ourselves, establish for you why you believe what you believe. Most of you in this room already believe that God exists, but to know and to be able to ground that in solid principles, solid inarguable principles is another thing. Many of you, most of you are here affirming in one degree or another the authority of Scripture and yet you struggle with obedience to it and you struggle in seeing the way that its authority works out in your daily life. Well, knowing that Scripture comes to us from the authority of Christ himself gives us a different perspective on it.

Right now what we're doing in the middle of the third series that we're on is how to know that Jesus is Lord. How do we know that Jesus is Lord? And we've been studying this for a few messages, we have maybe two or three left to go after today. Well, what we saw is that the Old Testament prophets prepared the way for Christ. Over and over and over again in the New Testament by the Apostle Paul in the book of Romans, by the contemporaries of Christ, by Christ himself, by the apostles in their preaching in the book of Acts, by the apostles in their writing in the epistles, over and over and over again, so

much that we had to spend like four and a half hours of preaching time to inadequately introduce it to you. We saw how over and over again Christ, the apostles, his contemporaries, they always referred back and said, "It is written. As the Scriptures say. As the Law and Moses, as Moses, the Psalms and the Prophets say." It all had to be fulfilled. It was necessary that it be fulfilled. There were 1,500 years prior to the coming of Christ where God had started his revelation through Moses and then through a series of faithful prophets made things known, and the entire New Testament, it is not too much to say, the entire New Testament points to that Old Testament foundation as the authority for everything that is said in the pages of the New. The New Testament is built on the rock of the Old Testament.

So the Old Testament prepared the way for him and that's just a general statement. The more specific content of it we've looked at and we saw that in the Old Testament there was the life of Christ predicted. There was an ever-developing picture as Old Testament revelation unfolded that pointed to the coming of Christ and the coming of the Messiah. We compared it to those talented artists who can have a blank canvas in front of an audience and then just make outlines and then fill in a picture and and bring all kinds of different details together so that what started as a blank canvas suddenly there's this great landscape or portrait in front of you. And that's what the Old Testament does stroke by stroke, line by line, pointing more and more to Christ. Even the whole system of sacrifice we said, the whole system of animal sacrifice was pointing to Christ. It wasn't just words itself, it was the whole sacrificial system that the Lord put into place that pointed to him.

Last time we saw how his death fulfilled specific prophecies and they had prophesied that he would be pierced and that he would be rejected and that he would cry out in different ways on the cross and we saw how all of that was fulfilled. And we saw something really, really critical, we saw that in the cross, in the apparent outward defeat of the cross was the most stunning display of the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Christ submitted himself to death on a cross in order to fulfill the plan of redemption that God had established before time began. And when he hung exposed on the cross before the public, suspended as it were between heaven and earth, between two common criminals in utter disgrace by human standards, it was in that moment, it was in that event, that great moment on Golgotha that Christ defeated sin, defeated death, defeated Satan, redeemed our souls and established for all time that he is Lord. He. He manifested his Lordship in his death in a way that is utterly contrary to human wisdom. Christ manifested his power and Lordship in his death on the cross and thus declared by his death and his resurrection that he is Lord.

That's the great testimony of Scripture, beloved, and this is only a partial foundation for building a Christian mind: the existence of God, the authority of Scripture, the Lordship of Christ. Do you notice something? There's a common theme in all of this that is utterly contrary to every carnal notion in your heart, that is utterly contrary to the natural man. There's this element of authority, that you and I are not the boss of the universe. We're not even the boss of our own lives. There's the authority of God in the manifestation of his existence. There's the authority of Scripture declaring what is true, the very word of God itself written. And then we have the Lordship of Christ, Lord being a term among

other things of authority. Christ is Lord, meaning that we are under his Lordship, we are under his authority, that he is the boss, that he is King, that he is supreme.

That's why I wanted to come to Psalm 93 here in continuance of this series on the Lordship of Christ and how to know that Jesus is Lord. Psalm 93, we're going back to something we looked at a few years ago, probably on a Tuesday night, and this is out of the 165 messages I did on the Psalms over the course of a few years. This is one of the very favorite themes that we had the privilege of studying together. Psalm 93 picks up on a central verse in the immediately prior Psalm, Psalm 92. Psalm 92:8 says, "but you, O LORD, are on high forever." A blanket statement of the sovereignty and supremacy of God. He is head over all.

Now as you come to Psalm 93, and I realized that many of you were not with us during that exposition, one of the wonderful things that you find as you study through the Psalms consecutively over a long period of time is that there are sections of the Psalms that are interconnected together. That's easy to miss when you're not alerted to it, when you're not taught about it, when you're just kind of reading hurriedly, following a Bible plan, trying to get through the Psalms. It's so easy to miss these great themes that are found in the Psalms and to see how they're obviously arranged in order to communicate certain themes so that we would not miss them if we only pay attention to them. Psalm 93 through Psalm 99 is one of those sections of the Psalter. What's happening when you come to Psalm 93 and then follow through in the following Psalms through Psalm 99, you find that the Psalter is pivoting to a specific theme in this section of Psalms, in these seven Psalms. It's a new theme that is distinct from what had been preceding it, and that theme is simple, the theme is that God is King. The kingship of God is the central theme to those Psalms 93 through 99.

Now, I have the same problem that you do when it comes to considering the concept of King here in the 21st century. You and I in America are at a particular disadvantage for gaining the right understanding of the significance of that declaration that God is King, that God is supreme in that way. Why is it a problem for us in 21st century America and other places with democratic societies? Beloved, you really have to understand this. I want to walk you through some of our presuppositions and the way that we're conditioned by the way that we live and by the way that we think because I want to clear away a hindrance that is built into your mind and your presuppositions that would keep you from thoroughly grasping and understanding the fullness of the statement that God is King. You and I here in America, we do not live in an era of kings, do we? We have a President, but he's not a king. We don't live in an era of kings, and so you and I – this is so crucial for you to understand because it opens the door to a teachable spirit about very important fundamental principles of biblical truth, this opens the door for us to understand – you and I do not intuitively and experientially grasp the fundamental concept of kingship having been raised and reared in the United States of America.

Think with me for a moment. In the United States of America, our system is built on, it theoretically thrives on, a balance of power in a constitutional form of government. The way schools go these days, I can't even assume that these fundamental things that I'm about to say are understood, so we're going to have a three-minute diversion on Social

Studies on political systems in America. The way it's supposed to work, the way that it's designed, is that the Legislative branch makes laws by majority vote, and then the Executive branch signs laws, signs those things into law, and enforces them with the police power of the state. The Legislature makes laws – follow me here, it's really not that complicated, the ultimate point that I'm going to make – Legislature makes laws, majority vote, Executive, they don't become law until they're signed into law by the Executive branch, and then the Executive branch undertakes the enforcement of them. Then we have a Judicial branch that when challenged will review laws to make sure that everyone has acted in accordance with the Constitution. Very, very simplistic statement of things, and speaking at the Federal level, which is mimicked at the State levels most everywhere, as far as I know, but here's the thing, beloved, this is what you need to see in order to grasp and come into a better understanding of the importance that God is King, okay? We're not teaching Political Science here, we're using it as a means to understand Scripture. There's a Legislative, an Executive, and a Judicial branch. Separation of powers. Moreover, our President and our Legislatures only hold power as they are voted into office by majority vote, and they are subject to recall and re-election, I should say. They periodically face the voters for re-election, and they have to give an account, so to speak, if they want to continue in power.

Beloved, all of that, simple review to make this one simple point: there is no one person in our society that holds absolute, unfettered sovereignty over everything that happens. Power is limited by the balance of powers in the structure of government. It was designed that way, with great thanks to James Madison. It is designed that way. Its power is temporary. It can be withdrawn by the voters. Decisions can be overruled by judges. Judges can be, theoretically at least, recalled for misconduct in office. There are all these points of balance of power that we are used to if we have any awareness of the structure of the society and government in which we live. Here's the point for you and me today: we, you and I, in this room, living in the United States of America, we assume that kind of society with varying degrees of consciousness; we presuppose this, that if the government does wrong, somebody can sue and bring a lawsuit and try to overturn what's been done. Our culture, we are not conditioned at all to have a context to call God King, because a king has sovereign power over all. A king describes a critical reality about the nature of God. He has power over everything, and there is no one to challenge his hand. There is no parallel authority to him that he shares. There is no appeal. There is no higher power over him that can overturn God.

That's like being a king, and what we want to do with our remaining time here this morning is to take time to understand the reality that Jesus is King, that Jesus is Lord. We're going to use as our foundation as the New Testament writers did, we're going to look to the foundation of the Old Testament to help us do that. So I have three points that I want to make for you. Actually only two. Only two this morning. So those of you that came expecting three, you can ask for a partial refund as you head out the door, I guess. "I thought there were going to be three points? He always preaches with three points and now you're saying there's only two points? This is not fair. This is not what I bargained for." Take it up with Nathaniel as you walk out the door. He'll be very gracious and helpful to you.

Two points for today. First point is God as King. God as King. Psalm 93 opens up a series of what are called theocratic Psalms. Theocratic Psalms celebrate God as the sovereign Ruler, the sovereign King. He reigns over all. And now what we're going to find, I'm just going to give you a quick survey of how that theme is embedded throughout Psalms 93 through 99. Look again at Psalm 93:1. We're going to be looking in this first series of verses at the term "reigns," that he rules, that he is over all. Psalm 93:1, "The LORD reigns; he is robed in majesty; the LORD is robed; he has put on strength as his belt." Look at Psalm 96:10 and notice how this verse reinforces the things that I said earlier about one day standing before God in judgment. Psalm 96:10, "Say among the nations, 'The LORD reigns!'" Yahweh reigns. "Yes, the world is established; it shall never be moved; he will judge the peoples with equity." God is King. He reigns. He is a judge and he will exercise judgment with complete righteousness and equity when he does.

Look at Psalm 97:1. It's really, to me, it's just thrilling and exciting to see these things jump off the page when you know to look for them because it's obvious, beloved, it's obvious that the compiler of the Psalms, who I believe was most likely Ezra, put these together with a sequence to teach us that we would read these things and see them and not miss the themes that are strung together. Psalm 97:1, "The LORD reigns, let the earth rejoice; let the many coastlands be glad!" There's a universal aspect to this reign. All nations are under it. All the nations, all the earth is to be glad. God is over it all. And he's not simply over the round globe of the planet that circulates around the sun, the obvious point is that he is over all the inhabitants of the earth, which includes you and me. And this reality of his Lordship, of his Kingship, is a matter that should make us glad. That's why it calls us to rejoice and be glad, Psalm 97:1.

And yet, alongside that gladness, there is an element of fear as well, an element of reverence. Psalm 99:1 says, "The LORD reigns; let the peoples tremble! He sits enthroned upon the cherubim; let the earth quake!" There is joy and fear mingled together in a true recognition of the God who is King over all. Joy in his goodness. Fear and trembling at his authority and his holiness. And this is the God that reigns. We come before his sovereign majesty with reverence. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," Scripture tells us, and well might men and women everywhere fear in the presence of a God who has unchallengeable authority over everything and who knows us in all of our sins and private thoughts and private actions. Well might we take a moment or two to let the authority and the significance of that sink into our hearts.

Turn to Psalm 95 as we take another pass through the Psalms to see these themes. We saw the verb, he reigns. We see the noun in Psalm 95:3, "For the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods." Do you see it there again? He's placed above every imagined authority in the human sphere. Other nations, pagans, had their own ideas of gods and deities and multiplied them and, you know, thought that there were gods that reigned over certain localities. They were not true gods but they were figments of the imaginations of men but they were controlling figments, and in this Psalm it is declared that God is over all of them and there's an implicit call to repentance, to repent of your false religion and recognize the true one true God. "The LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods," it says there in verse 3 of Psalm 95.

Look at Psalm 98. Psalm 98:6, "With trumpets and the sound of the horn make a joyful noise before the King, the LORD!"

In Psalm 99:4, actually let's read the prior verses to get the fullness of the context. Verse 1. "The LORD reigns; let the peoples tremble! He sits enthroned upon the cherubim; let the earth quake! The LORD is great in Zion; he is exalted over all the peoples. Let them praise your great and awesome name! Holy is he! The King," verse 4, "The King in his might loves justice. You have established equity; you have executed justice and righteousness in Jacob. Exalt the LORD our God; worship at his footstool! Holy is he!" You see that refrain. Verse 3, "Holy is he!" Verse 5, "Holy is he!" This is a King who not only has unfettered sovereignty, he is holy, majestic, separate, perfect in every of his attributes. Perfect in his essence. And that's what these Psalms are teaching us again and again and again, bringing us to the authority and majesty of the God who is King, who has no separation of powers in a constitutional form of government over the universe to respond to. All authority rests in his sovereign holy hands. All direction. Everything is done according to his will. His purpose is supreme. His law is supreme. His judgment is supreme. And there is no appeal beyond him. This is the God with whom we have to do and so, beloved, the term "King" somehow describes a very critical reality about God and the Psalter is arranged in a way to impress that upon our minds. It must be important because of the way these Psalms bring this to the forefront.

Now, there's another factor that increases the significance of what we're considering even more, that brings us to view someone with a distinct reverence that's not given to anyone else, to view someone as being in a class all his own, someone who demands obedience, loyalty, respect, and calls it forth by his very person, and that one is Jesus. That brings us to our second point here this evening, this morning. I'm used to preaching the Psalms in the evening. Jesus as King. Point number 2, Jesus as King. Now, beloved, this is really wonderful in the unfolding theology of Scripture as we study it together. We've spent so much time cultivating the reality that the New Testament grows out of Old Testament soil. The oak of the New Testament is rooted in the soil of the Old Testament. It flourishes there. We've seen that in general. Now we're going to see a specific, particularly luscious piece of fruit on that tree of the New Testament, rooted in Old Testament soil, nourished there and watered by the Holy Spirit. We're going to pluck a luscious piece of fruit that grows out of the Old Testament and enjoy the benefit of how it nourishes us here this morning because the concept of King links the Old and New Testaments together.

We've seen in the past that our Lord Jesus Christ fulfills the offices of prophet, priest, and king. The Old Testament had prophets who were the spokesmen and servants of God. They had priests who served as the mediator between sinful man and holy God. And the Old Testament had the role of king. Think of King David, King Solomon, and the line that followed. All imperfect human instruments. But still the office was there. The office of prophet, the office of priest, the office of king, and Jesus Christ fulfills them all. Fulfills all three of those offices. You can look online for our message, "Prophet, Priest, and King," I believe it is, where we discuss all three of those in a single place. But today

we're focused on the matter of King and the right of Jesus Christ to the Davidic throne. The right to be king. He fulfills the office of king.

Turn now to the book of Isaiah as we lay the Old Testament foundation for what I want to show you in the New. Isaiah 9. And as you're turning there, I would just ask you... I had a dear person tell me recently that we were interacting about Scripture and reference was made, "That's a part of Scripture that I've never read before." Okay, that's fine but, beloved, you and I together, you and I who claim the name of Christ, I ask you whether there are parts of Scripture that you've never read before. Are there Scripture that you've never turned the page, that the pages are still stuck together after years of owning a Bible? It really shouldn't be that way. You see, we're meant to read the Bible and to know the fullness of it, to know the full counsel of God and to have some kind of system, some kind of plan, where we're reading it systematically so that we're getting everything that God has to say, not simply picking and choosing that which we like. I would venture to say, this is a total tangent, but one that I'm glad the Lord has brought to my mind, I would venture to say that so-called or professing Christians that struggle repeatedly in life, that stumble frequently into sin, that struggle with assurance of their salvation, I would be pretty confident that if I could have an open conversation, an open transparent conversation with them, that they would come forward and say, "You know what, I don't read the whole word of God consistently." And that creates spiritual weakness, just as if you avoided vitamin D and vitamin C entirely in your diet, you know, your body would show the effects of it. A failure to expose yourself over the course of time on a regular basis to the fullness of the word of God, beloved, it's not supposed to be that way. We're supposed to read it on a consistent basis and read it in its fullness. I'm not saying that anybody has to have a six month or a nine month or a 12 month Bible reading plan to get through it all, I'm just saying where is it in your life as a priority to read through the entire Bible and to know it, to become familiar with everything that it says.

And the reason that people struggle like what I was just describing, with patterns of sin, with disobedience, with questions of assurance, is that if you're not approaching the Bible that way, what you do is you go to the passages that you like. You choose what you like the Bible to say to you. You like the passages of comfort. You like the passages about heaven or whatever it may be. None of us like being rebuked and convicted by Scripture and called to repent. None of us like, on first response, the challenge of the authority that the Old Testament prophets draw us to. But beloved, if we belong to Christ and the whole Bible is the word of Christ, then somewhere there needs to be a place in our hearts where we make time for this, we plan our life around being in the word of God. And if that means that we drop our kids out of certain activities so that we can do that together as a family, if it means that I give up hobbies that I like in order to give attention to the word of God, that's what you do. That's what you do! If Christ gave his life on the cross to redeem us from our sins, it's not really too much for us to say, "You know what, I'll at least structure my life to read the word that you've given to us." All of that prompted by turning to the book of Isaiah, and the reason that turning to Isaiah prompted that is that, you know, Isaiah is a long book, it takes a long time to read, and it's not always the easiest thing to understand but we come to the word of God and see what it has to say.

Isaiah 9:6 and 7, these verses are familiar as we come back to the theme of Jesus as King. The prophet looking forward to the fulfillment in Christ says, "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." Notice that, this one who is to come will be Mighty God. He will share the essence of the Everlasting Father. This is a statement about God himself and his coming incarnation. And what do we read about this one? In verse 7, "Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this." This one who is Mighty God is also King and he will sit on the throne of David.

Well, when you come to the New Testament with that little Old Testament, not little, with that brief Old Testament basis, turn to the gospel of Matthew, the early chapters of Matthew. Matthew 1:1, immediately linking Jesus to the kingly genealogy. Chapter 1 verse 1, "The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David." David the King, Christ the King. Now, turning over to Matthew 2:2, we read the question of Herod, ""Where is he who has been born king of the Jews?" At the opening of the gospel, the first gospel in the New Testament, the gospel of Matthew, the kingship of Christ is immediately put into consideration.

When you go to the opening days of his public ministry, same thing. Turn to the gospel of John 1. John 1 and as you're turning there, just realize the outline of the cumulative effect of everything that we are seeing and saying. The prophets, the Psalms spoke of God as King. Alongside that, they started pointing to a Messiah who would also be King. He would be born in certain place and he would become a king. At the birth of Jesus, watch the chronology of this, the Old Testament prophecies there's a coming King. At the birth of Jesus, King of the Jews. As we come to his public ministry, we see in John 1:49, John 1:49. Oh, this is just magnificent. Nathanael meeting Jesus for the first time after Jesus had made himself known. Verse 49, "Nathanael answered him, 'Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!'" Jesus is King.

And so, the prophets, the birth of Christ, the beginning of his public ministry, near the end of his public life, Jesus himself asserted his royalty. Look at John 18, beginning in verse 33. He is on trial. He is about to go to the cross and in John 18:33, we read a little bit of the interchange that he had with Pilate. "So Pilate entered his headquarters again and called Jesus and said to him, 'Are you the King of the Jews?' Jesus answered, 'Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?' Pilate answered, 'Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered you over to me. What have you done?' Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not of this world.'" Now notice that in that statement he is asserting that he is a king and that he has a kingdom. He just says it's not of this realm. "If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world." Three times in that one verse he says "my kingdom, my kingdom, my kingdom."

Verse 37, "Then Pilate said to him, 'So you are a king?' Jesus answered, 'You say that I am a king.'" He's not denying it. He's saying, "Your own words have said it." "For this

purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world--to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice." Pilate dismissively said to him, "What is truth?" After he had said this, he went back outside to the Jews and told them, "I find no guilt in him."

Notice how Pilate refers to Jesus after that interchange so that you don't miss the fact that Jesus impressed the truth of his kingship upon him. Verse 39, "But you have a custom that I should release one man for you at the Passover. So do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?" Jesus said, "my kingdom, my kingdom, my kingdom." Pilate says, "Here's the king of the Jews. Should I release him?" He's king based on the testimony of Christ himself.

And then as you follow through in the gospel of John, John 19:19, you see it established on the very inscription of the cross. The inscription in those days, the historical context of this, is when a man was crucified, often they would put the charges of which he was guilty. Why is this man being crucified? Well, the charges would be right there. You know, he's a robber, he's a thief, whatever. And so over the head of Jesus was put the charge that was against him. Verse 18, "There they crucified him," there at Golgotha, "and with him two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them. Pilate also wrote an inscription and put it on the cross. It read, 'Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.'"

The prophets, his birth, the start of his public ministry, during his ministry and his own teaching, at the cross King, King, King, King, King. You can't miss it. You have to be willfully blind to miss it and yet it's still not done, beloved. Christ, as you know, rose from the dead. Christ ascended into heaven and Scripture tells us that from heaven one day he will return, and what will be the mark, what will be the recognition, what will be the ascription made to Christ and claimed by Christ as he comes again?

Look at Revelation 17. Revelation 17:14. Revelation 17:14, "They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for," how is it that the Lamb will conquer them? I thought a lamb was, you know, was a meek, innocent, gentle and lowly animal and you're calling him a lamb and yet this is a lamb unlike any others because this lamb will conquer them because, "for he is Lord of lords and King of kings." There may be earthly kings, this King is over all of them and there's no king above him. He's sovereign and complete in his majesty.

Chapter 19, verse 16. We can start in verse 15, Revelation 19:15. In this return of Christ as he returns to conquer, it says, "From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations." How can anyone strike down the nations? "And he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty." Who is the one who does that? Who conquers nations? Who rules over nations? We can't even rule ourselves within our own boundaries. Here's one that rules over nations. Who is like that? What do we call him? Verse 16, "On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords."

The prophets, the birth, the public ministry, his teaching ministry, the cross at his return, Jesus is King. He is, in other words, for the sake of our current series, he is Lord. Jesus

Christ is King with authority over an unlimited realm. Beloved, stay with me as I just cite these things without even referring to Scripture. Jesus is King over the universe and over all of nature. Jesus is King over the nations of the earth. Jesus is King over the course of human history. Jesus is King over angels and demons. Jesus is King over believers who are his willing subjects. And Jesus is King over unbelievers as well. He will one day be their judge and he will punish their sin if they do not repent. He is King over justice for he is the great lawgiver. He is King over sin for he conquered it at the cross. He is King over death for he rose from the grave in his resurrection.

Stunning. Just let the weight of that sink in. Let the majesty sink in and realize that through his word the Spirit of God has brought us into the presence, the spiritual presence of the Lord Jesus Christ even as we speak. Christ has been fully set forth before you as King, as Lord, as Master. This is who he is. Beloved, the Bible, especially when you read the totality of the Bible, the Bible gathers up our collective corporate attention and our individual attention and points it like a laser to Jesus Christ and says to you, "Behold your King," and the question is whether you have bowed your heart to this King. Is the word of this King law and rule and final authority in your life? Is obedience the tender direction of your heart? Or are you content to have, and beloved this is this goes to the Kingship of Christ, are you content to have pockets and areas of your life that you know are disobedient, that you know that you have attitudes of rebellion in your heart and yet you don't care, you don't repent of that, you don't respond to it, you just foster, nourish it and continue in that same vein of thought. That's not how kingship works. I can only ask you have you bowed your heart to this King?

One day Scripture says every knee will bow to him in heaven and on earth and under the earth and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Beloved, men of our day clamor to have temporary earthly power, but for the true child of God those things are of passing interest at best. The King that we want to know is right now in heaven. The King we want to know is revealed in heaven and it's that King that we devote our hearts and our study to. Is this King your King? He's King over you one way or the other, it's just a question of whether you're in a state of reconciliation with him or whether you're outside resisting his Kingship.

Let's pray together.

O Christ, in response to your word we bow before your Kingship. We bow before you as Lord. One day a returning conquering King, in your first coming a humble King mounted on a donkey led to your own death by your own will and voluntary submission to the plan of the Father. Lord, our words are so feeble and our power is non-existent if your Spirit does not help us and so I pray for each one under the sound of my voice that you would bring these truths with power to every heart, that unbelievers would tremble and the earth would quake under their feet until they repent and give themselves to you. Lord, I pray for believers who are living in a carnal way preoccupied with the things of the world and indifferent to the things of Christ, at least professing believers. Father, pierce through it all with the Kingship of Christ, with his authority that they would turn to you. God, we ask this so many times, do that work in hearts. Father, for others that love you and embrace you and however imperfectly are devoted to serving you as King, would you

strengthen them in their assurance of salvation? Would you strengthen them in their obedience? Would you open their eyes more and more to see the glory of Christ who is the very image of God? We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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