

KING OF KINGS – Sunday, December 13, 2009 – Summit EFC

Advent Series: *Meet the Christ of Christmas* – Pastor Doug Corlew

This fall we've been studying the Gospel of Mark. And we have taken a break for Advent, right at the summit of the book, where Peter confesses his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. "*Who do you say that I am?*" Jesus asked. And Peter said, "*You are the Christ*" (**Mark 8:29**).

This month we are inviting everyone to *Meet the Christ of Christmas*. The word "Christ" literally means "Anointed One," and it identifies Jesus as the long-awaited Messiah of Israel.

He's called by many names in Scripture, including Son of God, Savior of the World, King of Kings, Lord of Lords, and Prince of Peace. We're taking a look at those names this month to grasp more fully what that phrase, "You are the Christ" actually entails. And today we're looking at Jesus as the King of Kings. We're going to move quickly from Genesis to Revelation, so fasten your seat belts for the ride.

Did you know that the promise of a Messianic King goes back at least as far as **Genesis 17:6**? When God chose to bless Abraham and make him a blessing, He promised, *I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you*. Kings! There would be royalty among Abraham's descendents.

Later this prophecy becomes more specific, as Abraham's grandson Jacob blesses his twelve sons. And in **Genesis 49:10**, Jacob says, "*The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.*"

So of the twelve tribes of Israel, the tribe of Judah would be the kingly tribe. And one particular ruler to come in that tribe would be no ordinary king, for *to him shall be the obedience of the peoples* or nations – plural! In other words, He would reign not just over Israel, but over all the kingdoms of the world!

The theme surfaces again when God promises King David, a ruler from the tribe of Judah – "*I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body... and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever... And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.*" (**2 Sam 7:12-16**)

Obviously these words were not fulfilled in the reign of David's son Solomon. But God's promise remained: an eternal kingdom would belong to one of David's descendents –

Not just a King – but a King of kings – as pictured by the psalmist: *May all kings fall down before him, all nations serve him!* (**Ps 72:11**) The prophet **Isaiah** also hints at such a worldwide scope –

When he prophesies of a male child to be born, and *the government shall be upon his shoulder... And of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end.* (**Isa 9:6-7**).

These were the expectations and hopes of the Jewish people. The Messiah, the Christ, would be a king, and these promises would have been well-known to Mary when the angel appeared to her and said, "*Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.*" (**Luke 1:31-33**)

Apparently the Hebrew prophecies were also familiar to the wise men who from the east who came to Jerusalem after Jesus was born, saying, "*Where is he who has been born king of the Jews?*" (**Matthew**

2:2) Of course Herod was troubled by this question, because he considered himself the king of the Jews and he was more than ready to crush any potential rivals to his throne, even if it was the Christ, the Messiah, the final King to end all kings.

The religious leaders knew where the Christ was to be born. So they quote to him from the prophet **Micah** – “*In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: ‘And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.’*” (**Matthew 2:5-6; Micah 5:2**)

When Herod learns of this prophecy, he orders his soldiers to slaughter every male child two years old and younger in the vicinity of Bethlehem, hoping to guarantee that no newborn king would usurp his authority. Of course, God was more than able to protect His Son, and the King of kings survived the massacre. But from the day He entered our world, Jesus’ life did not seem very king-like.

I mean, if Jesus was the long-awaited King, it’s ironic that His birth was so humble: no royalty invited, just a few no-name shepherds, the lowest of the low in the social stratosphere of first century Palestine. No posh accommodations, just a smelly stable where He was laid in a feeding trough. Hardly the welcome you’d expect for a king.

Jesus began His ministry by announcing that the kingdom of heaven had arrived. And on Palm Sunday, as He entered the city of Jerusalem on a colt, the crowds threw their cloaks on the ground before Him, shouting, “*Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!*” (**Luke 19:38**)

But the only crown Jesus ever wore on earth was twisted together of thorns a few days later, and cruelly placed on His head to draw blood and incite mockery. *The soldiers arrayed him in a purple robe. They came up to him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” and struck him with their hands.* (**John 19:2-3**)

Just prior to that, Pilate had asked Him, “Are you the king of the Jews?” And Jesus didn’t deny the title. But He answered, “*My kingdom is not of this world. 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*” (**John 18:36-37**).

And just prior to that, in our Advent passage from this past Thursday, **Matthew 26**, Jesus stood silently before Caiaphas, and the high priest said, “*I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.*” The Christ! That was Peter’s confession: You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.”

But notice how Jesus replies to the high priest: Jesus said to him, “*You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.*” (**Matthew 26:63-64**)

Wow! This is what it means to be the Christ! The first time He came to this world as a helpless, gentle Baby. But here, His last night on earth, Jesus says, “Pay attention, people, because the next time you see Me, I’ll make a slightly different entrance!” What will that look like?

Look at **Revelation 19:11-16** - *Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. 12 His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. 13 He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. 14 And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. 15 From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to 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. 16 On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.

That may sound like a strange way of describing things. But we talk that way sometimes, when we say someone is “a man among men,” or “the best of the best.” In the grammatical structure of the language, to speak about the King of kings and Lord of lords is to describe something in the highest possible superlative that the language can bear:

This is the King Supreme, the King who rules over all other lesser authorities—over all governors, over all princes, over all emperors, over all presidents, over all prime ministers. He’s the king of the kings and he’s the Lord of the lords.

He’s the King that is not anointed by Herod, the King that is not anointed by Samuel, the King that is not anointed by the Roman Empire, but the King who is anointed by God Himself:

*(God) raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all (**Ephesians 1:20-23**).*

Right now, Jesus reigns in the seat of all cosmic authority as King of the kings! And that means, if we belong to Him, we can go through our days on this earth without a hint of worry, without succumbing to fear, without surrendering to despair. We can wake up each morning and go to sleep each night completely at peace, knowing that Jesus Christ reigns over heaven and earth!

It may not always look like it or feel like it, because He has ordained that in this world we would have trouble. **Hebrews 2:8** admits, *At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him.* The effects of the fall are still in place. The creation is groaning, some people have not chosen to be loyal subjects of His kingdom. There are still pockets of resistance to His reign.

So the battle is not finished, but the victory is secure. The end is not yet, but history is unfolding according to God’s Master Plan. In all things, He is sovereignly at work for His glory and for our good, that we should be like Him.

Jesus reigns *right now* as King of kings, and one day the glory of that reign will become fully manifest. His authority over the church and over the universe will be more fully recognized by people when Jesus comes to this earth a second time.

And we will rejoice, saying, *“The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever” (**Revelation 11:15**).* Hallelujah — it may be sooner than we think!

The late **Pastor Adrian Rogers** wrote, *When Jesus came the first time, He came in a manger. When He comes again, He is coming in majesty. The first time, He shed His royal blood for our redemption. When He comes again, He is going to be dressed in royal robes to reign in righteousness. The first time, He came to a crucifixion. When He comes again, He is coming to a coronation. No longer will He wear a crown of thorns, but He will wear a diadem of glory. The first time He came, He was despised and rejected of men. When He comes again, every knee will bow. The clouds will be resplendent in glory as He triumphantly steps out of heaven. And we will meet Him face to face.*

Are you ready for His return? He's the King of glory and power. He's the King of grace and love. You will be proud to have Jesus as your King and to live under His reign forever! He will not disappoint you. The kingdoms of this world will become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ. Every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

No longer will the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain. The kings of the earth (will no longer) set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his anointed (His Christ), saying, "Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us." He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision. Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying, "As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill." I will tell of the decree: The Lord said to me, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

Now is the time to take refuge in Him. Now is the time to kiss the Son, to bow before Him in the grateful obedience of faith, trusting in His death and resurrection as a payment for your sins. The cross of Christ is a refuge for all who come to it. There the Messiah bore the holy wrath of God so that you would not have to suffer it in hell forever.

Take refuge in the cross and submit your life to the King of kings. And you will be blessed beyond measure, not only in this age, but when He returns in great power and glory to reign forever.

How about it? Is Jesus truly your king today? Do you submit to His Lordship? Or have you hijacked the life that He was intended to direct? Let's not forget that Christmas is the birthday of a King, a Ruler! There's only one appropriate response. Bow down before Him and crown Him as your King. Call Him your Lord as we bow now in prayer and our worship team comes to lead us in a closing song.