

# Christ a King.

by Edward Payson

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*Christ's kingdom is a spiritual kingdom that originated from his undertaking the office of Mediator, and its purpose is to deliver those out of the snare of the devil, who are led captive at his will.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 72:8, Isaiah 9:6, Daniel 7:13, 1 Corinthians 15:24, Philipians 2:6, Revelation 19:16

**Topics:** "Christ's Kingdom", "Mediatorial Reign"

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## Description

Edward Payson preaches about the mediatorial kingdom of Christ, emphasizing the various names and titles by which Jesus is described in the Bible, particularly focusing on His role as Ruler or King. Payson explains that Christ's kingdom is not temporal but spiritual, established in the hearts of men for righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. He delves into the origin, design, and progress of Christ's Mediatorial kingdom, highlighting the spread of the gospel and the future glories of Messiah's reign. Payson concludes by discussing the termination of Christ's mediatorial kingdom, pointing towards the day of judgment when all enemies will be put under His feet, and Christ will deliver up the kingdom to God, signifying the end of His delegated power and authority.

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## Transcript

"Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power; for he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet"

1 Corinthians 15: 24, 25

can more powerfully tend to give us just and exalted conceptions of Christ, than a due consideration of the various names, titles and characters by which he is described in the word of God. These names and titles, which are more than two hundred in number, include every thing which is great or glorious, amiable or excellent in the estimation of mankind. It would not be easy, neither is it necessary on the present occasion, to enumerate them all, but we wish to direct your attention particularly to one of them, viz., that of Ruler or King.

By this title he is very frequently described in both the Old and New Testament? Under this character it was predicted that he would make his appearance in the world, many years before his incarnation. Unto us, says the prophet, a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called the Prince or King of Peace. A similar prediction was uttered by

Gabriel, to the virgin Mary, respecting him, previous to his birth. The Lord God, says he, shall give unto him the throne of his Father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

Numerous predictions to the same purpose may be found scattered throughout the Old Testament, especially in the Psalms of David, and the prophecies of Isaiah and Daniel. In perfect conformity with these predictions, we find our Saviour, while on earth, using the language and exercising the authority of a king. I appoint unto you a kingdom, says he to his twelve disciples, even as my Father has appointed a kingdom unto me. Similar language he used when arraigned at the tribunal of Pilate, though he knew that death would be the consequence.

My kingdom, says he, is not of this world. Then said Pilate, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest I am a king; to this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world. The same truth was taught by the apostles after his resurrection and ascension to heaven. They represent him as being seated on the right hand of the throne of God, upholding all things by the word of his power; acting as head over all things to his church. To the same purpose are the words of our text: He must reign, till all enemies are put under his feet: and then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father, after he shall have put down all other rule, authority and power.

This is confessedly an important and instructive, but at the same time a very difficult passage. In attempting to explain it, we shall aim to avoid being wise above what is written. Our design is, to describe, so far as the Scriptures enable us, the nature, origin, progress, and termination of that kingdom, which Christ is here represented as delivering up to the Father. I. With respect to the nature of this kingdom, we may observe, that it is not a temporal or earthly kingdom!

Here lay the grand mistake of the Jews. 1. The prophecies of the Old Testament had taught them, that the promised Messiah was to be a king; and as they could form no conception of a spiritual kingdom, they fondly imagined that he would make his appearance on earth as an earthly monarch, and not only deliver them from the Roman yoke, but reduce the whole world under their authority. Even his own disciples fell into the mistake, and continued in it till after his resurrection; for at that period we find them saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?

It was not till the Holy Spirit, who was to guide them into all truth, had been poured out upon them on the day of Pentecost, that they began to form more correct opinions respecting the kingdom, which their Master came to establish. They then learned that his kingdom was to be erected in the hearts of men; that it consisted in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, and that he was enabled to be a king and a Saviour, that he might give repentance and remission of sins to his people, and deliver them, not from temporal, but spiritual bondage.

The kingdom which Christ is here represented as delivering up to his Father, is not that which he originally possessed as God. You need not be told, that he is God and man in one person, and that as God he is equal with the Father, and shares in that eternal, underived and uncontrollable authority, which he exercises over all the works of his hands. In this respect, he and his Father are one, and possess the same kingdom; and this kingdom he neither will nor can resign, though he may for a time suspend the exercise of his divine authority.

What then is the kingdom, which Christ is here said to deliver up to his Father. I answer, it is the Mediatorial kingdom, or kingdom of grace, that kingdom which, he holds as God and man united, and

which he received from his Father in consequence of his undertaking the office of Mediator. That we may form clearer ideas of the nature of this kingdom, we must consider, as was proposed, 2. Its origin and design. We are told by the apostle that in the beginning, that is, before the world was formed, or the plan of redemption laid, the Word was with God, and that the Word was God.

The Word then dwelt in the bosom of the Father, and shared with him the throne of the universe. As the apostle expresses it, he was in the form of God, and thought it no robbery to be equal with God. God was then all in all. The names of Father, Son, and Spirit were unknown, though that mysterious distinction, on which these names are founded, then existed in the divine nature. There was no Mediator between God and his creatures; for all creatures were then holy, and consequently needed no mediator to interpose between them and God: Sinners only need a mediator.

Holy beings may approach God in their own names and plead for themselves. But when man sinned, and the plan of redemption was formed, a mediator became necessary. This office the Word took upon himself, and was in consequence made flesh. The Father created a human soul, which the Word took into union with himself, and thus became the Son of God. In union with this soul, he entered into a human body, and thus became the Son of man. Thus, though he was originally equal with God, and was God, yet he humbled himself and became of no reputation, took upon him the form of a servant, and was found in the likeness. of sinful flesh.

These and other similar expressions seem to imply that, when the Word undertook the office of Mediator, he suspended for a time the exercise of his divine perfections, laid aside his equality with the Father, and emptied himself of all that infinite fullness which he originally possessed, and engaged to act as the Father's servant, and to do nothing but by his power and authority. In a word, he condescended to put himself into that state from which Adam fell, a state of trial and probation, to stand like him as the head and representative of his people, and to do every thing which was necessary to accomplish the salvation, and secure the honor of the law they had broken.

He engaged to know nothing which the Father did not reveal to him, to work no miracles which the Father did not direct him to perform; to have no will of his own, and to make it his meat and drink to do his Father's will and finish his work. A suitable consideration of these things, which are all implied in Christ's humbling and emptying himself, will enable us to understand those passages in which Christ speaks of himself as inferior to the Father, as being the Father's servant, as doing nothing of himself, and as not knowing the day nor the hour of judgment; for though as God he was equal with the Father, yet as Mediator he was his inferior, and could do nothing without him.

A proper attention to these observations will also enable us to answer those objections against our Saviour's divinity, which are drawn from his having the Spirit of God given to him. We read that God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power, that he giveth the Spirit not by measure unto him, and that it pleased the Father that in him all fullness should dwell. Hence it may be asked, if Christ be God, why did he need the assistance of the Holy Spirit? Or how could God give it to him? or how could it be owing to the pleasure of the Father, that all fullness dwelt in him?

But if we consider that Christ did, as it were, lay aside his own divinity, and empty himself of his own infinite fullness, we still see that he needed to be filled with the fullness of the Father, and to have the Holy Spirit to assist him; and if we consider that he acted as the Father's servant, we shall see the propriety of his praying to him, and receiving from him power to work miracles, to lay down his life and to take it again.

Farther, if we consider that his human nature was in a state of probation, as Adam was, we shall see why he was tempted, why he is said to have been made perfect through sufferings, and to have learned obedience by the things that he suffered.

Had he fallen in time of trial, as Adam did, his people never could have been saved, and his human nature must have perished. But it did not fail. He overcame the tempter; persevered even to the end, and finally became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. As a reward of his sufferings, obedience, and death, the Father gave him that mediatorial kingdom which is mentioned in our text. This kingdom includes all the creatures with which we are acquainted in heaven, earth or hell; for we are told that God hath put all things under him; that all power is committed to him in heaven and earth, that he is King of kings, and Lord of lords, and that for this cause he died and rose, that he might be Lord both of the dead and the living.

Hence, the apostle informs us, that because he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, God hath highly exalted him, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly place, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that which is to come; and hath put all things beneath his feet, and given him to be head over all things to his church. In a word, God has resigned the whole government of the universe into his hands for a season, and given him authority to execute judgment, so that now the Father judgeth no man, having committed all judgment unto the Son.

This unlimited power and authority God has bestowed upon his Son, in order to qualify him for executing the great office of Mediator between him and his rebellious creatures; and to enable him to deliver those out of the snare of the devil, who are led captive at his will; to cast out the strong man armed from his palace in the heart, and save even to the uttermost all who come unto God by him. The laws of this extensive kingdom are recorded in the gospel. The subjects of it may be divided into two grand classes, those who are obedient, and those who are rebellious.

The former class is composed of good men and angels; the latter, of wicked men and devils. The former serve Christ willingly and cheerfully. He rules them with the golden sceptre of love; his law is written in their hearts; they esteem his yoke easy and his burden light, and habitually execute his will. All the bright armies of heaven, angels and archangels, who excel in strength, are his servants, and go forth at his command, as messengers of love to minister unto the heirs of salvation, or as messengers of wrath to execute vengeance on his enemies.

Nor are his obedient subjects to be found only in heaven. In this rebellious world also the standard of the cross, the banner of his love, is erected, and thousands and millions who were once his enemies, have been brought willing captives to his feet, have joyfully acknowledged him as their Master and Lord, and sworn allegiance to him as the Captain of their salvation. Nor is his authority less absolute over the second class of his subjects, who still persist in their rebellion.

In vain do they say, We will not have this man to reign over us. He rules them with a rod of iron, causes even their wrath to praise him, and makes them the involuntary instruments of carrying on his great designs. He holds all the infernal spirits in a chain, governs the conquerors, monarchs and great ones of the earth, and in all things wherein they did proudly, is still above them. None are too small to escape his notice, none are too great to be controlled by his power. In vain do the people rage; in vain do the kings and rulers of the earth take counsel together against the Lord, and against his Anointed, saying, Let us break his bands asunder, and cast away his cords from us.

He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh, the Lord shall have them in derision. Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree, the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt rule them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces as a potter's vessel. But this leads its to consider, 3.

The progress of Messiah's mediatorial kingdom. By the progress of this kingdom, we do not mean the increase of Messiah's power; for, as we have just seen, this is already unlimited and universal; but we mean the spread of the gospel, and the increase of the number of Christ's obedient subjects. In this respect, the progress of his kingdom has hitherto been comparatively small; for though thousands and millions have submitted to his arms, yet many more millions are still in arms against him.

Satan still apparently reigns as the prince and god of this ruined world. Darkness still covers the earth, and gross darkness the people; and by far the greater part of our race are still the wretched captives of idolatry, vice and superstition. But it shall not always, it shall not long be thus, the promise of him who cannot lie assures us, that it shall not. His word abounds with the most explicit and animating predictions of the future spread and approaching glories of Messiah's reign.

The stone, which the king of Babylon saw in his dream, cut out of a mountain without hands, shall spread and fill the earth. In the days of these kings, that is, of the Roman emperors, says the prophet Daniel, in expounding this dream, shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; it shall never be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. The fulfillment of these predictions the same prophet elsewhere describes.

I saw in the night visions, says he, and behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds, and came to the Ancient of days, and there was given him dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. In addition to this, the prophecies of Isaiah and the minor prophets are filled with predictions of the same import. We are there assured, that in the last days the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established upon the top of the mountains, and all nations shall flow unto it; that the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the earth; that Ethiopia shall stretch out her hands unto God, and that the Jews shall be brought in with the fullness of the Gentiles.

It is however needless to insist on these predictions, for our text assures us, that Christ shall reign till all enemies are put under his feet; and we are elsewhere informed, that Jehovah has sworn by himself, that every knee shall bow to Jesus, and every tongue confess that he is Lord. In vain will any strive to prevent the fulfillment of this declaration. Those who refuse to confess him cheerfully, shall be compelled to do it reluctantly; those who will not bend shall break; for God has declared, that he will overturn, overturn, and overturn, till he shall come whose right it is, and the dominion shall be given to him, and that all the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.

Nor will it be long, ere these predictions are fulfilled. Already is the banner of the cross unfurled. Already are the soldiers of Christ going forth to subdue the nations, with weapons which are mighty to the pulling down of strong holds. Already does a voice begin to be heard throughout the world, saying, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Already has Christ ascended the chariot of his salvation, and is riding forth, conquering and to conquer, arrayed in meekness and truth, and righteousness, while God overturns, overturns, and overturns, the nations which oppose him, and dashes them in pieces against each other,

like a potter's vessel.

Already is the cry heard from Asia and Africa, Come over and help us; and soon will Ethiopia stretch out her hands to God, and the isles of the Southern ocean wait for his law. Soon will the cry be heard, Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. He who sits on the throne is exclaiming, Behold, I create all things new; I create new heavens and a new earth. Behold, the Lord God shall come with a strong arm, his reward is with him, and his work before him. Prepare ye then the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

But what tongue can describe the happiness which is approaching? who can paint the glories of Messiah's reign? In his days shall the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace, so long as the moon endureth. His name shall endure as long as the sun, and men shall be blessed in him, and all nations shall call him blessed. The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad, and the desert rejoice and blossom as the rose. Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing.

Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, nor learn war any more. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard lie down with the kid, and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together. Thus that paradisiacal state, which was destroyed by the first Adam, shall be restored by the Second; and love, peace, and happiness, which sin had banished from the world, shall again return, under the mild reign of him who is emphatically styled the Prince of Peace. Who, in view of these glorious prospects, can avoid exclaiming, O long expected day begin; Dawn on this world of death and sin! Come the great day, the glorious hour, &c.

We proceed now, as was proposed, to consider, 4. The termination of Christ's mediatorial kingdom. How long this kingdom will continue on earth, before its termination arrives, is uncertain. We are indeed informed, in the Scriptures, that he shall reign on earth with his people for a thousand years but in prophetic language, a day is put for a year; and if we thus understand this prediction, the duration of his reign will be three hundred and sixty-five thousand years. In favor of this supposition writers have assigned various reasons.

But whether they are right or not, in their conjecture, it is neither possible nor necessary to determine. It is however evident, that after the expiration of this period, the powers of darkness will make one more violent effort to destroy the kingdom of Christ on earth; that a great apostasy will take place, and that the church will appear to be in imminent danger. But then will be seen the sign of the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven. The day of judgment will break suddenly upon the world, the righteous go into heaven, and the wicked into hell.

The transactions of the judgment will be the last act of Messiah's mediatorial reign. All his enemies will then be put under him. Death itself will be destroyed, or as the apostle expresses it, will be cast into the lake of fire, together with the fearful, the unbelieving, the abominable, and whatsoever loveth and maketh a lie. Then will a mediator between God and man no longer be needed. He will not be needed for wicked men and devils; for the day of grace will then be past, and they will have no more offers of salvation, no more opportunities of approaching unto God.

Nor will God's people any longer need a mediator; for they will be then perfectly holy; they will have no more sins to be forgiven, no more favors to ask, but will themselves be kings and priests to God, and live

and reign with Christ forever. Then, therefore, will the end come. Then will Christ deliver up his mediatorial kingdom to his Father, together with his delegated power and authority, and reassume his own proper eternal divinity, together with that infinite fullness which he had laid aside.

If it be asked, how this representation agrees with the twenty-eighth verse, where we are told, that then shall the Son also be subject to him that did put all things under him; I answer, in the language of Scripture, things are often said to be, when they manifestly appear to be. Thus it is said in one place, that the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. But we know that the Lord alone is as much exalted now, as he can be at any future day. The meaning, therefore, must be, that in that day the Lord alone will more manifestly appear to be exalted, than he does at present.

So in this case, when it is said, Then the Son also shall be subject unto him, that did put all things under him, it implies, that Christ will then evidently appear to have been subject to his Father during the whole continuance of his mediatorial kingdom, and to have acted merely as the Father's servant. Then God will be all in all; that is, he will then cease to govern his creatures by a mediator, or any other delegated power, and will therefore appear more clearly, than he does at present, to be all in all.

In conclusion: What an animating, encouraging subject is this to those of you, my friends, who have chosen Christ for your Lord and Master, and become the willing subjects of his kingdom! Do you ask, how shall we know this to be our character? I ask, in return, do you love Christ's laws? Are you reconciled to his government? Are his friends your friends? Are his enemies your enemies? Are you waiting and praying for the universal spread of his kingdom? If so, you are his willing subjects; and we may venture to say to you, your Lord reigneth, and he shall reign till all his enemies and all your enemies are put under his feet.

Because he lives and reigns, you shall live and reign also. He is for you; who then can be against you? Come then, and renew your oath of allegiance at his table. Engage with fresh vigor and courage in your Christian warfare. Deny, mortify, crucify your sins. Labor to bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. Labor also to bring others into his kingdom. Do all in your power to fulfil the great law of his kingdom. Go preach the gospel to every creature. Fervently pray that the Lord of the harvest would send forth laborers into his harvest.

But be not content with prayers. Contribute cheerfully to the Lord of your substance. Other kings impose taxes on their subjects. But the tribute which he requires, is a freewill offering. Hasten then to pay this tribute; and while you are feasting on the rich fruits, which his bounty has provided, remember those who are perishing for want of the bread of life. To those of you who refuse to submit to Christ, this is an awful and alarming subject. You are the enemies of a being, whose enemies must be destroyed.

You are contending with omnipotence. You're practically saying, that he shall not reign over you, who is appointed by God to reign overall. But it is not too late to repent. You are still at liberty to choose whether you will have the King of kings for an enemy or a friend; whether you will serve him voluntarily or by constraint. One way or the other you must serve him. God has sworn by himself, that you shall. Is it not then better to serve him willingly, and be rewarded, than to serve reluctantly and be destroyed?

Do any of you say, we are willing to serve him? We are willing, sincerely willing to take him as our Lord and Master? Then show your sincerity by serving him. Treat him as subjects ought to treat their king. Treat him as you wish your children to treat you, and all will be well. But if you refuse or neglect to do this; if you persist in habitually disregarding the least of his commands, you practically say, We will not have this man to reign over us.

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