

## Jesus Is Our Living King

Acts 2:22–36 • Romans 5

This glorious Resurrection morning we wrap up a short three-part sermon series on the offices Jesus Christ holds as Prophet, Priest, and King. What a great day to recall that through his resurrection and victory over death he has been made Christ and Lord! He is King of kings, preeminent over all things. There is far more in our text than we will get to today, but we will cover the major points and bask in the overarching truth that Jesus Christ is the eternal King. After we consider those points, as with the other two sermons, we will look at the model of Old Testament kings and see how Jesus completes and fills forever the office of King. So let's pray, and then read the Scriptures. [PRAY]

**Acts 2:22–36** [Peter, the former denier, is now on fire, boldly preaching in resurrection power]

<sup>22</sup> “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know— <sup>23</sup> this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. <sup>24</sup> God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it. <sup>25</sup> For David says concerning him, “I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken; <sup>26</sup> therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; my flesh also will dwell in hope. <sup>27</sup> For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One see corruption. <sup>28</sup> You have made known to me the paths of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence.’

<sup>29</sup> “Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. <sup>30</sup> Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, <sup>31</sup> he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. <sup>32</sup> This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. <sup>33</sup> Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. <sup>34</sup> For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says,

“The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at my right hand, <sup>35</sup> until I make your enemies your footstool.”

<sup>36</sup> Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.”

## 2

### King Jesus was Foretold — v. 30

King David was the pinnacle of Israel's kings, marked by grievous sinful failure as he was. He led them to worship better than other kings, but he did not have the capacity to rescue them from their greatest foes of sin and death. But God promised David one of his descendants would reign forever and do just that. God would send Jesus, the King of kings, to rule and reign in perfect righteousness and peace, something David, the highwater mark of kings was unable to do. God did not leave his people languishing under flawed kings. In v. 22, we see God fulfill his promise when Jesus came.

### His Life Testified that He Was God — v. 22

God the Son came and did what only God could do. He lived righteously. He performed mighty works and wonders and signs that proved he was from God and was God — not a mere man. The God-man Jesus did what human kings could never do, ruling over creation, fulfilling the law. Every aspect of his life — miracles, forgiving of sins, and his atoning death on the cross — proved that he is God.

### His Atoning Death was God's Definite Plan — v. 23

His crucifixion was not at the whim of religious or political leaders. It wasn't "Plan B" when Judas went rogue. Even Judas going rogue wasn't rogue. God orchestrated that, too. The death of the King to atone for the sins of his people happened at God's right time for the ungodly, through no merit, goodness, or contribution on our part. The King rescued his people as David could not do.

**Romans 5:6–8** — For while we were still weak, ***at the right time*** Christ died for ***the ungodly***.<sup>7</sup> For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—<sup>8</sup> but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

### King Jesus Rose Defeating Our Greatest Enemy — vv. 24–28; 31

God raised Jesus up, loosing the pangs of death. **V. 31** says David foresaw the resurrection of Jesus and understood that ***this fulfilled God's promise*** for David's son to reign forever, because this resurrected King would not be subject to death; *this* King's throne is forever occupied by the King. Jesus conquered the enemy no other king could conquer, death itself, and so lives forever. We'll look at this again in a few minutes.

### The resurrection was known accepted, and believed as true at the time. — v. 32

Peter was now speaking plainly and publicly, and though the truth of Jesus' resurrection made the religious leaders mad, it was widely known and attested to by hundreds of witnesses. There were

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hundreds more witnesses to the living post-resurrection Christ than were needed to make a legal case in a 1<sup>st</sup> Century trial — or in a 21<sup>st</sup> Century trial. The women were the first witnesses on Resurrection morning, then Peter and John, the apostles, including Thomas who needed to touch the wounds to believe — and he did, by the way — and then hundreds of others, as we read in the Call to Worship. Finally Paul saw the risen Christ on the road to Damascus. Those eye witnesses were not only convinced of his physical victory over the grave by what they saw, they were also convinced by how their hearts and lives were transformed. You couldn't make them believe Jesus was dead. They were the original **Live Not by Lies** people. They wouldn't shut up, and many were executed because they kept repeating what they knew was true: **He is risen and everything has changed!** Indeed, the certainty of his resurrection is how chapters like Hebrews 11 and Acts 7 were written. Christians stared death in the face and did not blink, knowing that as Jesus lives forever, they do too. Because Jesus is risen, risk is right. Threats of death because of Gospel proclamation are impotent. Believers can say with Paul in **Galatians 2:20**: I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

We live in a strange day of revisionist history when people create alternate, fictional versions of history to suit their own ends. Jesus' resurrection was indisputable in 1<sup>st</sup> Century Jerusalem. He did not un-resurrect sometime later when unbelieving academics decided they didn't want to submit to either contemporary eye witnesses or Christ's lordship. If you won't believe, it is not because there is not sufficient evidence; the evidence is overwhelming. Unbelief simply rejects the evidence. As with the unbelieving scholars, your rejection of the evidence does not alter it, nor does it make you unaccountable for it. Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life and he is the Righteous Judge coming to judge the living and the dead. Do you believe this? It is truth, and has been validated as true by any standard of evidence throughout history. Believe, and live. When death stares you in the face, the only thing that will help and comfort you is knowing that because Jesus lives forever, I live forever as I have entered into Christ through faith and repentance.

#### **He Is the Eternal King — vv. 33–36**

Having defeated death, he ascended to his eternal reign in heaven as the scriptures tell us in a number of places, including Acts 1, Hebrews 10, Ephesians 4, and Psalm 68. God has made him both Christ and Lord. He is the King of the ages, immortal, as 1 Timothy 1:17 describes him. The kingdom of this world has become his eternal kingdom, and he shall rule and reign forever and ever.

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Every knee from every time and every place, in heaven, and earth, and under the earth, will bow before this one King, and every tongue will confess that he is Lord.

No human king has been able to conquer the greatest enemy, death, on our behalf. Only King Jesus has done this. **1 Corinthians 15:20–27a** — But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. <sup>21</sup> For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. <sup>22</sup> For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. <sup>23</sup> But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. <sup>24</sup> Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. <sup>25</sup> For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. <sup>26</sup> The last enemy to be destroyed is death. <sup>27</sup> For “God has put all things in subjection under his feet.”

All things are in subjection under his feet, especially death. He is our ever-living Prophet, our eternal High Priest who has finished the work of atonement and is now seated, and is our death-conquering King, who is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Now let's make some practical application of these life-giving truths as we consider what kings were supposed to do in the Old Testament, and what Jesus for us as our eternal King.

### Jesus Our King

God intends righteous rulers for his people. Kings subdue and rule their people for moral good. Sin produces brokenness, corruption, and ultimately death. Good kings rule in such a way that they subdue sinful behavior so that their subjects live and prosper. This is one way subjects are kept safe physically and spiritually. King Jesus wins a dual victory by paying the price for our sin and then delivering from enslavement to deadly sin. He will not allow sin to kill us, nor rule over us. **He** is King, not sin. King Jesus calls us to live and walk in holiness and turn from sin, which destroys and kills. Only an immoral, worthless king would rule in such a way that left his people pursuing what destroys them. Thus, under King Jesus' life-giving reign, we have passages like this from Romans 6 that describe what his reign does in our daily living: **Romans 6:1–6** — What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? <sup>2</sup> By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? <sup>3</sup> Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? <sup>4</sup> We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. <sup>5</sup> For if we have

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been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. <sup>6</sup>We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.

Child of God, is there an area of your heart where you are not submitting to the rule and reign of the King who calls you away from sin to life? Do you hate your sin and the brokenness it produces in your life and your relationships? Here is truth: We were crucified with Christ in order that sin might be done away with. Do not live as a slave to sin. You are free in Christ! Perhaps today is the day resurrection power sweeps into the hidden places of your heart and breaks the chains of pride, of anger, lust, or selfishness, or neediness, or compromise. None of those things provide life and blessing, and you have believed a lie too long if you think they will. Live in resurrection power today by turning from those things. His resurrection gives you life as you trust him. Live as he lives.

The King secures peace for his people. The wrath of God heaped up on sinners is a frightening indicator of the state of hostility between us and holy God. The punishment that brought us peace was upon King Jesus as he died on the cross for his people. He made peace by the blood of his cross (Colossians 1:20). Hostilities have ended. He absorbed God's wrath.

*Took the blame, bore the wrath, we stand forgiven at the cross.*

Kings defeat enemies. David beat back a number of foes so they could not harm God's people. But it didn't last, and the wars David won never defeated their greatest foe, which is our greatest foe. Death is the final enemy, as we read in the Call to Worship, 1 Corinthians 15:26, and Death will wage war right up to the point this body finally drops back to the dust from which it came. But King Jesus has conquered death. Death is now a defeated foe. Death no longer has a death-grip on the soul of the believer. The shadow of death has now become a portal through which this decaying body, cursed by the fall, is transformed into the resurrection body that is like King Jesus' body, and lives forever. Jesus has defeated death; the war for the eternal soul has ended, and Jesus has won, giving everlasting life.

Kings provide a safe and pleasant dwelling place for their people. King Jesus is coming again to take us to our eternal dwelling place, as we studied in last chapters of Revelation a few weeks. This ever-living King is coming to receive us to live with him forever. This is the ultimate hope of the resurrection: Death and darkness defeated, Eden restored. Supper at the King's table.

## 6

How does one respond to this? There are 2 choices: Run to the life-giving rule and reign of the risen Lord Jesus and experience freedom from sin and its penalty, or remain under the tyrannical enslavement of Death. The former is meaningful life, joy, forgiveness that frees you to forgive, and joyful service of the King. The latter is guilt, condemnation, wrath, and death.

There are no other options, and the right choice is clear and plain. But God knows how blinding death's deception is and our intellect and will are under his control. So he outright calls us to submit to his reign. **Deuteronomy 30:19–20a** — I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live, <sup>20</sup> loving the Lord your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him, for he is your life and length of days...

For those who come to him, this closing truth from **1 Corinthians 15:50-58** —

I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. <sup>51</sup> Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, <sup>52</sup> in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. <sup>53</sup> For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality.<sup>54</sup> When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

<sup>55</sup> "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?"

<sup>56</sup> The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. <sup>57</sup> But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>58</sup> Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

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