

“The King Eternal”  
1 Timothy 1:17  
(Preached at Trinity, December 6, 2020)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. Paul has a mixed purpose in writing this letter. On one hand, it is a personal letter to Timothy reminding him of his work in Ephesus - to set things in order, to put to an end the false teaching taking place, and to instruct the church on how it ought to function.
2. But this is also a letter that was meant to be read publicly in the church. This is why Paul affirms his Apostolic office at the beginning and gives so many details that Timothy would have had intimate knowledge of. By the time this letter was written, Paul and Timothy had been close friends for many years.
3. Paul describes his own testimony with an expression of great gratitude for God’s wondrous grace in saving a wretch like him. He refers to himself as the foremost among sinners. After describing his conversion and apostolic calling he gives a powerful doxology – **Verse 17**.
4. I want us to pause to absorb the power of these words.  
This week, I want us to consider Jesus Christ as our Eternal King.  
Next week, I’ll focus on the nature of His Divine essence – eternal, immortal, invisible—the only God worthy of all honor and glory.
5. These words serve as the basis for our well-known hymn – The KJV inserts the word “wise” – “The only wise God”  
*Immortal, invisible, God only wise,  
In light inaccessible hid from our eyes,  
Most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,  
Almighty, victorious, thy great name we praise.*  
God is indeed most blessed, most glorious, worthy of all praise.

I. God is Almighty King

- A. This is the only time this designation “King eternal” is given for God
  1. We find again, this verse has had an impact upon our hymnody.  
*Lead on, O King eternal,  
the day of march has come;  
henceforth in fields of conquest  
thy tents shall be our home.  
Through days of preparation  
thy faith has made us strong;  
and now, O King eternal,  
we lift our battle song.*
  2. Although the hymn was originally written as a graduation hymn, as we sing it today we picture God as our mighty, conquering King marching before us into battle.

- B. This title speaks of God's sovereign dominion – He is Lord of all and King of all.
1. God's dominion is universal, absolute
    - a. As Creator He owns all things – all things exist by Him.
    - b. All resources belong to God - All that we own is borrowed  
A man uses his possessions for a period and then leaves them behind
  2. God governs all – His dominion is absolute  
**Daniel 4:35 NAU** - "All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, But He does according to His will in the host of heaven And *among* the inhabitants of earth; And no one can ward off His hand Or say to Him, 'What have You done?'"
  3. It is foolishness to consider a Creator without supposing dominion  
It would mean creation without purpose or a Creator lacking the power to govern His creation.
  4. God has both absolute power and absolute authority  
Authority = the lawful right to rule. God has the right to order creation according to His will and purpose. He has the right to reign over that which belongs to Him.  
Power = the ability to effect His purposes and enforce His authority.
  5. The great sin of humanity is denying God His rightful authority.
    - a. God commands, "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me." But fallen humanity gives allegiance to endless gods—in fact any god but the one true God.
    - b. When Israel demanded an earthly king like the other nations Samuel lamented that they were rejecting his leadership.  
Instead, God reminded Samuel:  
**1 Samuel 8:7 NAU** - "The LORD said to Samuel, "Listen to the voice of the people in regard to all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being king over them."
    - c. Psalm 2 portrays all of the kings of the earth seeking to bring themselves out from under the rule of God. God scoffs at their foolishness.  
**Psalm 2:4 NAU** - "He who sits in the heavens laughs, The Lord scoffs at them."
- C. God's authority is from everlasting to everlasting – His kingdom is eternal.
1. All earthly kingdoms are temporary. The greatest kingdoms the most powerful kings will come to an end.
    - a. The Greek and Roman Empires were assumed to be permanent
    - b. During the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries under King Charles and then his son King Philip II Spain occupied much of the world including the Americas.
    - c. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century the center of power had changed and world maps showed the British imperial power spanning the globe. There was an expression, "The sun never sets on the British Empire."
    - d. The United States has been in existence for over 200 years and is unmatched as a world power but will someday come to an end.  
World power changes hands often and quickly.

2. Paul uses the word αἰών which points to an age – God is the King of the ages – from age to age. His power and authority are without beginning or end.
3. Paul's emphasis here is upon God the Father as eternal King rather than upon Jesus Christ as King.
  - a. It was the Father who chose Paul unto salvation and sent forth His beloved Son as Redeemer, accomplishing the salvation of His people.
  - b. While Paul's focus here is upon God the Father as eternal King, Jesus Christ is the fulfillment and revelation of the Kingdom of God.

## II. Jesus Christ is the earthly revelation of the Kingdom of God

- A. Jesus is the fullness of the Godhead in bodily form
  1. As Calvin said, "God can be known by no other means, but by beholding him in our Lord Jesus Christ."<sup>1</sup>  
Paul referred to Jesus as the fullness of God in bodily form.  
**Colossians 2:9 NAU** - "For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form,"
  2. Jesus is the full expression of the reign of God. He is the revelation of the Kingdom of God.  
**Revelation 19:11-16 NAS** - "And I saw heaven opened; and behold, a white horse, and He who sat upon it *is* called Faithful and True; and in righteousness He judges and wages war. <sup>12</sup> And His eyes *are* a flame of fire, and upon His head *are* many diadems; and He has a name written *upon Him* which no one knows except Himself. <sup>13</sup> And *He is* clothed with a robe dipped in blood; and His name is called The Word of God. <sup>14</sup> And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white *and* clean, were following Him on white horses. <sup>15</sup> And from His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may smite the nations; and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. <sup>16</sup> And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "King of kings, and LORD OF lords."
- B. The entire Old Testament by way of covenant and promise points forward to the Redeemer and His Kingdom.
  1. God's eternal redemptive purpose is to choose a people and gather them together into His Kingdom. He sent forth His Son to redeem them through the shedding of His own blood.
  2. This Kingdom was foretold throughout the Old Testament  
It was promised to David  
**2 Samuel 7:16 NAU** - "Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever."

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<sup>1</sup> John Calvin, *Sermons on the Epistles to Timothy & Titus* (London, 1579; repr. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1983), Page 93.

3. It was foretold by Isaiah  
**Isaiah 9:6-7 NAU** - "For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. <sup>7</sup> There will be no end to the increase of *His* government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this."
  4. The Psalms sing forth the coming King and the establishment of His Kingdom  
**Psalm 45:6 NAU** - "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; A scepter of uprightness is the scepter of Your kingdom."  
**Psalm 72:8-11 NAU** - "May he also rule from sea to sea And from the River to the ends of the earth. <sup>9</sup> Let the nomads of the desert bow before him, And his enemies lick the dust. <sup>10</sup> Let the kings of Tarshish and of the islands bring presents; The kings of Sheba and Seba offer gifts. <sup>11</sup> And let all kings bow down before him, All nations serve him."  
**Psalm 110:1-2 NAU** - "The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at My right hand Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet." <sup>2</sup> The LORD will stretch forth Your strong scepter from Zion, *saying*, "Rule in the midst of Your enemies."
  5. Micah foretold Him  
**Micah 5:2 NAU** - "But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, *Too* little to be among the clans of Judah, From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, From the days of eternity."
  6. Finally, the Angel Gabriel announced His arrival to Mary  
**Luke 1:31-33 NAU** - "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. <sup>32</sup> "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; <sup>33</sup> and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end."
- C. Jesus came to establish God's dominion in this fallen, rebellious world
1. This was often declared during our Lord's earthly ministry. The Kingdom of God was the chief focus of His work.  
 The Gospel is chiefly about the establishing of our Lord's Kingdom
  2. It was the focus of His preaching  
**Matthew 4:17 NAU** - "From that time Jesus began to preach and say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."  
 He spoke of His Kingdom over 80 times in the Gospels.
  3. It was the subject of His parables which most often began, "The Kingdom of heaven is like . . ."

4. Jesus was the fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant – His throne is forever and His Kingdom will never end.  
**Luke 1:32-33 NAU** - "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; <sup>33</sup> and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end."
  5. Having accomplished His work as our Redeemer, He has ascended to His throne where He reigns as Lord of lords and King of kings.
- D. Jesus has established His Kingdom – it is a present reality
1. It is growing and ever-expanding. It shall fill the earth and shall extend into eternity.
  2. It is here now but also yet to come. It is the already, not yet. It is ever growing and will not come to completion until Christ returns.  
**Revelation 11:15 NAU** - "The kingdom of the world has become *the kingdom* of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever."
  3. Jesus Christ is reigning until all of His enemies have been defeated. The period between the resurrection of Christ and the resurrection of the saints is the period of Kingdom conquest.  
**1 Corinthians 15:25 NAU** - "For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet."
  4. The Gospel demands falling before the Lordship of Christ. Of confessing our treasonous sin and trusting Him alone.
  5. At His glorious return He will finally crush His enemies and remove them from His presence. This will make the end of the Kingdom conquest.  
**1 Corinthians 15:24 NAU** - "then *comes* the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power."

#### Conclusion:

1. The Kingdom of God is a glorious Kingdom and the King is a glorious King  
**Hebrews 1:3 NAU** - "He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,"
2. To Him is due all glory and honor, worship and praise, love and devotion. We are commanded to seek His Kingdom above all else. And we are commanded to keep our eyes fixed upon the one seated upon His throne.  
**Colossians 3:1-2 NAU** - "Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup> Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth."
3. You've seen the bumper sticker that announces, "God is my co-pilot." This is an expression of the human heart that wants to maintain dominion and allow God to tag along as a subordinate co-pilot. Rather, He must be King, Lord, and Sovereign of your life. He reigns and we serve Him.