

# The Risen King

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Ephesians 1:15-23

The Constitutional Convention in 1789 was held in strict secrecy at Independence Hall. When they emerged, a woman asked Benjamin Franklin – ‘Well, Doctor Franklin, what have we got – a republic or a monarchy?’ Without hesitancy, he famously replied – ‘A republic – if you can keep it.’

Franklin also said – ‘Only virtuous people are capable of freedom. As nations become more corrupt and vicious, they have more need of masters.’

Wow! He being dead, yet speaks to us today! But it is not the voice of dead men we have come to hear this morning, but the voice of the living King, Jesus.

What kind of government have we in Him as He steps forth victorious from the tomb? What kind of a resurrected Lord is He?

Nothing but a monarchy! A perfect monarchy! A monarchy that drives out man’s pretended monarchies! To quote Franklin once more – “Rebellion to tyrants is obedience to God.”

We are brought today to the empty tomb on resurrection morning. That which entered the tomb in dishonor and weakness, arises in glory and power. May we find his hand on us saying: "Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, <sup>18</sup> and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades. (Rev 1:17-18)

He is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light.

I have three points for us on this very large, full matter – beginning with the nature of his kingship.

Kings rule; they have dominion; they govern; king and kingdom are rule, dominion and governing. What kind of kingly rule and government has Jesus? He did not return to heaven and glory to the highest seat to take a much deserved and long vacation has He? No, he has ascended on high to lead captivity and evil captive, and to give to his own people gifts and goodness and grace! He sits in sovereign power over all the enemies now beneath his toes; He sits in sovereign grace WITH all his precious ones who are not beneath his feet, but are in his body, and he is head over all to them.

You have heard this verse I believe – it is not an Easter verse, but a Christmas line:

<sup>6</sup> 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. (Isa 9:6-7 NAU)

What does all this mean?

To shoulder the government is to bear the full burden or weight of leadership; upon him, as a Prince and Governor, are all things laid, as a true Atlas; He is the perfect Samson of the Lord. And all those wonderful titles fit him for that glorious role.

Now the government of his greatest King has this about it:

One, the **supreme legislative power** belongs to Him and Him alone. He is the Lawgiver; His Word abides first, middle and last. The Father has said, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased; Hear Him!” Boston says well: “He is an absolute monarch, whose will is the only law; and none but he has the wisdom and goodness to be trusted with absolute power.” All things have been given into the hands of the Son – especially so at the resurrection when Jesus steps now as the God-Man into his exaltation. All authority is His.

“Whatever authority any creature is clothed with, is but ministerial and derivative, whether it be political or ecclesiastical. Christ is the only Lord.” (John Flavel, p. 212)

After legislative power, second, **supreme executive power**. John 5:22 – “The Father judges no man but has committed all judgment unto the Son.” Boston – “...He is judge of all. Now he judges particular persons, churches and nations; and the time is coming wherein he will appear on his throne with awesome solemnity, and judge and sentence the whole world.”

<sup>32</sup> "All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; <sup>33</sup> and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left. <sup>34</sup> "**Then the King will say** to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. (Mat 25:32-34)

This leads then to the third quality of his kingship – **the universal dominion he possesses**, reaching to both worlds – earth, heaven and hell, and the passage between the two worlds – death is his. Boston breaks this up into the kingdom of grace – He is head of the church; the kingdom of glory – heaven is his to all eternity; and the kingdom of providence – all things have been put beneath his feet – Eph. 1.22. Abraham Kuyper’s famous line fits here: “There is not an inch of secular life of which Christ does not say, ‘It belongs to me.’”

So supreme legislative authority, supreme executive power, supreme universal rule over all – fourth and last – **supreme pardoning power**. Acts 5:31 - Christ Jesus has been exalted to the right hand of God the Father to be a Prince and a Savior, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sin. “The power of granting remissions, receiving into peace with heaven, pardoning and indemnifying (insuring) criminals and rebels” are his in total. He is the king of grace! The one He pardons IS pardoned and only those!

As a gospel minister, I can appreciate pardons given by Presidents and Governors to criminals. But how limited are these? How small in comparison! And they do not have the power to change the hearts, the lives of those who are trapped in sin, under Satan. But King Jesus is Lord over all mankind. All the nations have been given to Him to do with as He pleases. “The whole of Satan’s kingdom is subject to the authority of Christ.” (John Calvin) Do you believe this? You should!

This leads into our next two points – briefer ones, to be sure – I promise!

Our **second** point is that of the twofold dominion of his risen kingship – over his friends and over everything else.

Psalm 2 – Jesus is enthroned in heavenly Jerusalem to rule over all the nations as his possession – to rule them with a rod of iron as a potter over his clay pots AND to call kings especially to Himself, to be converted, to trust in the Lord and know blessing.

Psalm 110 – Yahweh said to my Lord, sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool – His strong scepter of his kingdom is stretched out to rule in the midst of his enemies – David-like – AND – His people are willing in the day of His power.

In John 17, what could be more plain? ““Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You, <sup>2</sup> even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life. <sup>3</sup> “This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. (Joh 17:1-3 NAU)

And then our passage we read in Ephesians –

He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly *places*, <sup>21</sup> far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. <sup>22</sup> And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, <sup>23</sup> which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. (Eph 1:20-23 NAU)

I hope you catch the fact that Jesus is not just head of the church, but the head of all things, “gave Him as head over all things” to the church

as her head too, His body, His bride, in which his fullness will be manifested uniquely.

It is not two kingdoms, with two heads; but one with a double concern.

Christ has a twofold kingdom, the one spiritual and internal, by which he subdues and rules the hearts of his people; the other providential and external, whereby he guides, rules, and orders all things in the world, in a blessed subordination to their eternal salvation. John Flavel, p. 199

To the goats he will say - <sup>27</sup> "But these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slay them in my presence." (Luk 19:27)

To the sheep, he keeps them as the apple of his eye, and will richly reward them with welcome and everlasting cheer!

The Lord Jesus, head over all, and head of the church, not only blesses but fights the enemies of his church, as Calvin put it. There is no doubt as to the outcome – the gates of hell, which he rules, cannot prevail.

The world is continued on account of the Church which is in it; otherwise the heavens and earth would be burnt up in one moment; because the whole world is not worth one grain of wheat; as it is indeed full of blasphemy and impiety, unless the church supported the world by word and prayer, all things would be destroyed instantly. Luther, quoted in Flavel, p. 213

How can we not love the church then? It is probably because we think too lowly of the church, and too lowly of Christ, and too lowly of His saving purpose to make us a kingdom of priests to Himself.

And perhaps we think too highly of the world; that the world is not so bad a place; that people are basically good, and have no reason to fear the judgement to come.

We who have come to Jesus have broken with the world. “We are against the world’s ways and its false values. We are against the world’s follies and its vain pleasures. We are against this world’s greed and sinful ambitions. We are against this world’s vices and carnal habits.”

And that brings us to **our last point**. If Jesus is risen as King and is my King, who rules and reigns specially for me and all his people, what reason have I to fear or respond to life sinfully?

Christian, you should know well that Jesus the risen One rules in you, dwells in you, abides in you!

Paul says at the end of that great third chapter of Philippians:

<sup>20</sup> Our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; <sup>21</sup> who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself. (Phi 3:20-21)

This all-powerful King will transform all things into a new heavens and a new earth, when He returns – but that transformation has begun in us already.

Jesus is not only the resurrected King – but He is the King of the resurrection! This whole fallen world will be born again, regenerated – Mt. 19. But all the wicked and lost will be cast out of it. Come back tonight for the message – The Returning King – Revelation 19.

But here is the one thing I wish to close with for us. If he is this perfect risen King Jesus, He not only rules in you, but He rules everything around you.

Nothing happens in your life – and I mean nothing – that is not first under his purpose and scepter. Those things in your life that throw you in a tail spin – that make you lose your religion, as they say – Jesus controls, overrules.

And yet how we respond seems to tell to those around us – Jesus is not my King. I can't trust this One who overcame wrath, sin, death – eternal death – for me. No. I must trust to this wonderful and weak arm of flesh! Let me write Isaiah 9:6 upon my bicep. Here is wonderful weakness of worry; here is the counsellor of depression to aid me; here is the mighty god of anger I can take to myself; or the everlasting father of grit your teeth and bear it, followed by prince of passive aggression to lift me up!

And so we turn to our many comforters; miserable comforters actually, whose wisdom will die with us.

Let us fight better than this, standing in the strength He gives, with the armor He purchased, in the way He puts before us – and that way is Himself! “I have set the KING JESUS continually before me; because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken, tottered.” (Psa 16:8)

Jesus did not save you as your King so as to provide you with your own Lordship, but to save you from your Lordship! Let us cease using him as one option among many, and rather see that the One who is working all things for your eternal good – is the One to whom and for whom we are to be conformed in everything.

Take my life and let it be  
consecrated, Lord, to thee.  
Take my moments and my days;  
let them flow in endless praise.

Take my hands and let them move  
at the impulse of thy love.  
Take my feet and let them be  
swift and beautiful for thee.

Take my will and make it thine;  
it shall be no longer mine.  
Take my heart it is thine own;  
it shall be thy royal throne.

Take my love; my Lord, I pour  
at thy feet its treasure store.  
Take myself, and I will be  
ever, only, all for thee.

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