

Rev. Dr. Chris Montovino
Colossians 1:15-21
November 23, 2025

Christ The King

On the heels of World War I with the rise of secularism and atheism, Pope Pius XI established what we know as Christ the King Sunday. It was a response to the spread of communism and fascism in the world. And so this Sunday is aimed to remind us that Jesus has ultimate authority over all governments, all rulers, and all powers in our world. One could argue that with the rise of American Christian Nationalism today that Christ the King Sunday is crucial for us to remember that Jesus is King and not our elected officials.

So this morning, in light of Christ the King Sunday, I'd like to take a tour throughout scripture and see how it paints the picture of Jesus' reign throughout the universe, for all times.

We begin with the prophecies of Isaiah and Daniel who spoke of the King that was to come. Isaiah 9:6-7

“For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
Of the greatness of his government and peace
there will be no end.
He will reign on David's throne
and over his kingdom,
establishing and upholding it
with justice and righteousness
from that time on and forever.
The zeal of the Lord Almighty
will accomplish this.”

Daniel 7:13-14

“In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an

everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.”

Next we move to the King that has come in the Gospels and Paul’s Letters.

At the beginning of Jesus’ life in Matthew 2:1-2 we hear,

“After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, ‘Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.’”

At the end of Jesus’ life in Matthew 27:11, 27-31, we hear,

“Meanwhile Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, ‘Are you the king of the Jews?’

‘You have said so,’ Jesus replied.

Then the governor’s soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole company of soldiers around him. They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand. Then they knelt in front of him and mocked him. “Hail, king of the Jews!” they said. They spit on him, and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again. After they had mocked him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.”

Colossians 1:15-20

“The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.”

And then we hear of the King that is returning in Revelation 19:11-16

“I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and wages war. **12** His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. **13** He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. **14** The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. **15** Coming out of

his mouth is a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. “He will rule them with an iron scepter.” He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. **16** On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: king of kings and lord of lords.”

Let us pray. Prayer of Illumination.

This morning, I want to explore the following questions. What does it mean to claim Jesus as King? How should we as believers respond to this proclamation? How does the world respond to it? What are the many crowns of Jesus noted in Revelation? If Jesus were really King of our lives, what areas, both public and private, would we need to turn over to Him? And finally what does it mean for us that Jesus is King today?

The brief survey through scripture is clear. The Prophets looked forward to the king that was to come. The Gospels and Pauline Letters speak of the King that has come in Jesus Christ. And Revelation shows us the King that will return again in glory and power some day.

The Apostle Paul’s Letter to the Colossians states plainly, Jesus is the King that is now. Jesus is King of all things seen and unseen, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities. Jesus is the head of the Church. The first born over all creation. The creator of all things in heaven, on earth, and beyond. So that Jesus might have supremacy.

The Greek word for supremacy is *proteuo*. It means to be first in rank or influence. Have preeminence. To be the GOAT, the Greatest of all time all Times... of GOATs. No one could come before Him, nor could anyone ever be compared to Him. Jesus is King.

This was quite a counter cultural claim in Paul’s world. Because Caesar was the GOAT. The Greatest of All Times. It was Caesar that people worshiped. Caesar was the savior. And claiming allegiance to anyone other than Caesar was a death sentence.

Caesar’s world was temporal. It would come and it would go. Caesar’s world was one that espoused violence, fear, and misuses of power. Caesar’s world lifted up the wealthy, the privileged, and the entitled. Caesar’s world aimed to make Rome first at the expense of their neighbors. Caesar’s world exploited the poor, enslaved the alien, and sexually abused the vulnerable.

Caesar’s world, my friends, was a lot like our society today.

But on this day, as Christ followers, we stand up and proclaim that we do not belong to Caesar’s world. Yes, we are in the world, but we are not of the world. Our citizenship is in heaven, not in this country or in this world. That doesn’t mean that we take lightly what it means to be an American citizen. We live in a great, but not perfect country. And when push comes to shove our allegiance must

be to Jesus Christ and his kingdom of love, peace, humility and justice. Not to Caesar.

Now I warn you that this alignment could be a death sentence. Politically. Financially. And Relationally.

That is what it means to claim Jesus as King.

So how then should we respond? We worship him. We bow down before him. We offer all that we are and all that we have. Because truthfully, everything we have belongs to Jesus anyway. We are just stewards of the gifts that Jesus gives us. Amen!

Revelation 4 describes what happens in heaven when we worship Jesus as King. John recalls, “Whenever the living creatures, [that would be us], give glory, honor, and thanks to him, who sits on the throne and who lives forever and ever, [that would be Jesus], the twenty four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne and worship him who lives forever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say:

You are worthy, our Lord and God,
to receive glory and honor and power,
for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.”¹

The Apostle James says, “Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial, because when they have stood the test, they will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.”²

For the Greeks a crown or wreath of the laurel was placed upon the head of a victorious athlete or military commander. It represented a great achievement. But it was a temporary reward. One that would not last. The crown that Jesus gives to those of us who stand fast will last forever and bring with it eternal life.

Responding to Jesus as King means that we operate under a different ethos than Caesar’s world. We treat others with the fruit of his Spirit that lives within us. We reflect love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self control. Even to those with whom we disagree.

Have you noticed a change occurring within the spirit of some politicians? A softening of heart? A change of rhetoric? It doesn’t mean that they have abandoned their politics. But it does reflect a new way of doing politics that would be more reflective of what Jesus would expect. That gives me so much hope! And they are getting quite a lot of push back from Caesar. His own people being called traitors. And even receiving death threats.

¹ Revelation 4:9-11

² James 1:12

So how does Caesar's world respond when we claim Jesus as King? The same way that the Romans treated Jesus in the Gospels. They spit on him. They mocked him. They called him all sorts of names. They falsely claimed that he was a criminal of the state. They put a crown of thorns upon his head. They imprisoned him. And then they crucified him.

And we who bear Jesus' name should expect nothing less from Caesar's world. So we need to be ready to respond in the same way that Jesus did. He did not fight back. He kept quiet. He trusted God to look out for him and fight his battles.

You see Caesar's world expects us to respond in the same way they would and it drives them crazy when we do not. So let's stand firm in prayer, knowing that the battles "we fight are not against people, but against the rulers and authorities, against the powers of this dark world and the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realm."³ Amen!

If there is anything we learn from the Book of Revelation, it is that Jesus wins and His kingdom endures forever. Mark my words, Caesar's world eventually comes crashing down around him.

But what of the many crowns of Jesus noted in our Revelation text?

The Greek word for crown is *diadema*. It only has three occurrences in the New Testament each of which are found in Revelation. It means royal crown or diadem. They represent the many roles that Jesus plays in His kingdom.

For example, in Isaiah, Jesus is the Son of God, Governmental Authority, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace.

In Colossians, Jesus is our Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer, and Head of the Church.

In John, Jesus is our Rabbi, Good Shepherd, Truth-teller, Healer, Torch Bearer, and Friend.

In Revelation, Jesus is our Judged Judge, Warrior, Defender, and King of kings, and Lord of lords.

And Jesus wears so many other crowns as well.

So if Jesus were really King of our lives, what areas, both public and private, do we need to turn over to Him today?

Our finances. Our possessions. Our services.

Our health. Our identities. Our sexuality.

Our bodies. Our politics. Our marriages.

Our children. Our parents. Our friends.

Our jobs. Our educations. Our intellects.

Our hopes and dreams. Our successes. Our failures.

³ Ephesians 6:12

Our country. Our world. Our hearts.

Imagine what the world could become if the 2.6 billion people who claim to be Christians truly lived as if Jesus were King today. We would change the world!!!

So what does this mean for us?

With Jesus as King, we can live with confidence, not fear. The world that we live in may be unstable and constantly changing. Economies shift, leaders change, nations rise and fall - But Jesus reigns over it all!

With Jesus as King, we can live with loyalty to His kingdom. Our identity is not ultimately in our politics, nationality, or culture. We belong to the King whose kingdom has no end.

With Jesus as King, we can live life with hope. Because our Story ends with Christ the King, the story of our lives is also held in His hands.

With Jesus as King, we can live under His rule now. Christ the King Sunday is not just another day in the liturgical calendar, it is a call to surrender. Not reluctantly, but joyfully. Not fearfully, but gratefully. Because the One who reigns over us is the Prince of Peace.

Our closing song today is great hymn of faith called *Crown Him with Many Crowns*. It was written by Matthew Bridges in 1851. The original hymn contained twelve verses. But don't worry, we are only going to sing four of them. The lyrics touch on six crowns of Christ. The Lamb upon the Throne. The Son of God and the Son of Man. The Lord of Love. The Lord of Peace. The Lord of Heaven. The Lord of Years.

So as we sing today, let's lift up not only our voices but our very hearts. Let us sing so the whole world will hear what it often forgets: Jesus Christ is King. Not Caesar. And Jesus reigns! Not one day, not someday, but now and forever more!

Amen. And Amen!