

Office of King

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- [0 : 00] We'll turn back to Revelation chapter 5.
 And we can read the second half of verse 13. Amen.
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- [2 : 38] We'll turn back to Revelation chapter 5.
 And as he said himself, all power is given unto me in heaven and on earth.
 Now, when we think of the way that Jesus is a king, we have to remember that he's a king in two different ways.
 And this happens to him in many different aspects because he's both God and man. And as God, he's always been king.
 I mean, as God, he's always been in charge. And sometimes in the Old Testament, for example, in the book of Psalms, God is said to be a king.
- [4 : 30] And that is because he's brought into being by the word of his power and so on. And Jesus shares that fully because he's one of the Trinity.
 We don't understand the Trinity. We don't understand the Trinity. But we know there's three persons in the Trinity. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. They're the same in substance and equal in power and glory.
 And so when the psalm says God is king, it's telling us that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, that they are the sovereigns in charge.
 And they always have been. They never became king. They've always been that. And that's one way in which we have to think about Jesus.
 And at times it can get a bit confusing if we don't work out which meaning of king is being used of him in the Bible.
- [5 : 31] Because the other meaning is connected to him as God and man. And a word that's often used to describe that or used to be used in the past is the word mediator.
 And as a mediator, he's both God and man. And it is a mediator, as we know, is somebody who can lay his hand in two different parties in the work.
 And we use the word, for example, if someone's having a disagreement with somebody else, and a mediator comes along and tries to solve the situation.
 And Jesus, as the solver, or the mediator, he functions as a prophet and as a priest and as a king.
 And this second aspect of him being king, there was once a time when he wasn't that kind of king. But he became it.
- [6 : 37] And he became it at his ascension. Because that's what we read about in Revelation chapter 5. That he went up to heaven and he was inaugurated there.

He had it in a sense of being, he knew it was coming. But remember, one occasion he refused, he told his disciples not to tell people that he was lord.

And why were they not to tell them that he was lord? Because we were saying, well, that's the thing we want to tell them. And way back then, this group of disciples, we said to them to say, tell no one.

Because he was showing the power of the king, but the time had not arrived yet for his kingdom, as it were, to start flourishing and spreading throughout the world.

Which he did after he was exalted. So sometimes we have to remember that difference. But, yeah, that's the second one I want to think about tonight.

[7 : 46] What it means for Jesus to be the king as God and man. And a couple of things we can just say in general about it first.

And then after that, I want to look at his priorities. And some features that mark his way of ruling. So what general things can be said about this kinship of Jesus.

And we can say it's anticipated in the Old Testament. I mean, what is the Old Testament about when we read the Old Testament? I suppose a lot of different answers could be given to that question.

For example, we could say it's the history of Israel. But is it the history of Israel? There's lots of things that happened in the history of Israel.

It's not mentioned in the Old Testament. And so there's... So while it does refer to historical facts in Israel, its primary purpose is not to tell us the history of Israel.

[8 : 59] So is it a book about how people should worship God? Well, there are obviously details in it that give us guidance as to how to worship God.

But many of the things that they did in Israel in the Old Testament times in God's worship, we're not required to do. We don't have sacrifices and we don't have all these rituals that were connected to the, what's called the ceremonial law and so on.

And they've passed away. And while there may be pictures for us of how to worship God, they're not the... That's not the main message of the Old Testament.

What is the main message of the Old Testament? Well, surely it must be that a deliverer is coming. That's the main message.

I mean, that's what was said in the Garden of Eden, wasn't it? And sometimes we think it was said to Adam and Eve, and it was said in their hearing, but it was actually said to the devil.

[10 : 12] Because the devil imagined he'd won a great victory, and at one point in view he had, when he got Adam and Eve to fall. But God said to him, that someone is coming, a champion, a warrior, and he's going to crush you.

And that's a promise of a deliverer, isn't it? Of a king. Because who is going to be capable of crushing this great enemy? And we're told about this future triumphant victor, that he's going to be of the seed of the woman.

So he's actually going to be a man. And yet he's going to be able to crush the powers of the enemy kingdom, the powers of darkness.

And that's the message right from the start of the Old Testament. He's coming. And right down through all the other books in the Old Testament, there's continual references and more information given about this coming king.

And we get to the prophets like Isaiah, and their books are full of him, of what he's going to be like when he comes. And they say that sometimes he's going to reign over God's people, and other times the prophecies say he's going to reign over the entire world.

[11 : 35] And it's getting expanding, expanding, and at the same time, there seems to be less and less sign of it about to happen.

And quite often that's the way God works, isn't it? Yeah. That he almost lets things go in the opposite direction. But they aren't going in the opposite direction.

They're going in the way that he's planned it. But that's what seems to happen, because Israel rose to a great height under David and Solomon. And people might have imagined that they were the Messiah, but they weren't.

And after that, there's a kind of steep decline. But God keeps saying through the prophets, the king is coming. And that was the message of the Old Testament.

And of course, those who understood that, they love to sing about it. We need something worth singing about, don't we? And the people in Israel, in the Old Testament, they love to sing about someone.

[12 : 47] And we might say, well, of course, they love to sing about God. Well, that's true. But they also love to sing about the coming king. And they sang about him before he came.

And of course, we sang three of their songs tonight. What they thought of the coming king. We won them in Psalm 21. And in that psalm, there's a king who asks God for the great blessing of reigning forever.

It says there, God has bestowed upon him all that his heart would have. And now from him does not withhold whate'er his lips did trade.

And what did he ask for? He asked, He desired life of thee, thou life to him did good, even such a length of days, that he forevermore should live.

There was no king at that time who had reigned forever, was there? But there in Psalm 21, the psalmist is singing about a king who is going to reign forever and it's going to happen to him after he has been had a great deliverance.

[14 : 13] He's going to be highly exalted after he's had a great deliverance. I'm actually fully understood of that. We don't know. But we know what they were singing about. They were singing about Jesus.

Because after his work on the cross, he was delivered and he ascended to heaven and so on. That's Psalm 21. And then in Psalm 45, he sang about a king who's both God and man.

I mean, that's extraordinary, isn't it? That David knew that. That this coming king will be both God and man. Because it says, about in verse 2, you are fayer than the sons of men.

That's just saying he's the most handsome of all men. He hasn't seen him yet. And yet he knows when he does come, he's going to be incredibly beautiful.

And part of his beauty is going to be a speech. Because it says, into thy lips the store of grace infused. But then later on in the Psalm, he calls him God.

[15 : 20] Not only is he a man, but he is God. Forever and forever is, O God, thy throne of might. And this coming king, David sings about.

And he sings and rejoices because he's both been God and man. And he's going to be involved in a great battle. Battle for the souls of men. And in this Psalm, he also says something wonderful.

We didn't sing about it, but he mentions the fact that this king is going to have a bride. And who is the bride that he's going to have?

When we talk about blue blood as being suitable for royal managers, well, where's the blue blood that's going to be the bride of this king?

And if you want to choose a color, his black blood is going to get, isn't it? Because his bride is going to be made up of sinners. And yet they sang about it.

[16 : 26] And the other Psalm that we sang, Psalm 72, well, again, they're singing about one that's going to be incredible. And if someone had said to the author of Psalm 72, and we're not sure if it was written by Solomon or for Solomon, the title can be translated in both ways, but the assembly was to say to them, what was the greatest time of prosperity you've had as a nation?

Is it Solomon's time? Because that was the occasion when they had the most land. Because during Solomon's reign, the promise that was given to Israel in Egypt that they would have land going from the river of Egypt to the river of Ephraim, that was fulfilled in Solomon's time.

And they might say, well, that was a wonderful kingdom. kingdom, but what's the point of looking back to a kingdom? There's no point in looking back to a great kingdom.

I mean, if we're going to go around the world, for example, celebrating the British Empire, everybody's going to laugh at this. It's gone. And if somebody from Israel can go around the world celebrating the empire of Solomon, people would laugh at them because they're gone.

But in the psalm, remember, the kingdom of Solomon, it's stretched to the river. That's the Euphrates. But in verse 8 of Psalm 72, we're told that when this real king comes, his kingdom will not extend to the river, but from the river.

[18 : 24] In other words, where Solomon's kingdom stopped, his is going to begin. Solomon thought he had got to the limits of God's promises when he got to the river.

to the Euphrates. But there in Psalm 72, the psalmist celebrates it. When this king comes, the Euphrates is not going to be a barrier.

His kingdom is going to spread way beyond that. And we live to see it. And that's the amazing thing about it.

Anyway, it was anticipated in the Old Testament and they've given us their songs to sing and we can sing them with far more understanding than they could do.

And that's wonderful, isn't it? What else can we say about this coming king in general? well, not only was he anticipating in the Old Testament, but he's got his kingdom as an award because he went to the cross.

[19 : 41] And that's what we read about in Revelation chapter 5. It's the greatest prize giving ever. And it starts off as we can see in Revelation chapter 5 with John that's looking on.

Imagine getting a sight into heaven and being disappointed. Because that's what John experiences, isn't it? He gets a look into heaven and what does he do in verse 4?

He starts crying. And the reason why he starts crying, because it looks as if they've all gathered together for a celebration.

And the celebration is going to involve somebody getting this scroll handed to him. And this scroll has got seven seals.

These seals have to be opened in order for the contents of the scroll to be revealed. and John hears an angel in verse 2 shouting, who can open this scroll and lose its seals and so on?

[20 : 56] And then he discovers that no one in heaven? Who's that? No one in heaven? Does that include God the family?

God? No one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth can open the scroll? it's not just a reference to power.

Because of course if it's a reference to power, the father can open it. But there's something more needed than just to be divine or only be divine.

God can't open it. And John weeps because God can't open it. Who can? And he's told there about the angels in verse 5, don't weep.

Because there is someone that can open it. And his name is the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David. And of course John would know what that meant because he was a Jew.

[22 : 14] and he would know that these two titles were titles of the Messiah. And he's told that this Messiah has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seals.

And John turns to see this powerful king. And what does he see?

In verse 6, he sees a lamb. He sees a lamb. Not only does he see a lamb, he sees a lamb as though it had been slain.

He sees Jesus. And Jesus can open this seal not only because he's God, but also because he's man.

man. And because of what he did as a man. And how as a man he was slain.

[23 : 21] And he went, we know that's a reference to him going to the cross. And there he prevailed to get this book, this scroll.

scroll. What is the scroll? Well, he has answered that question. Personally, I think it's a book of life.

The names of all his people are handed to him. and round the scroll there's seals, seven seals, and they're going to be opened in the book of Revelation.

And all these seven seals are what happens in Providence. They refer to famines and to wars and to all kinds of different things in Providence.

And as they're being opened, people get converted. And more and more of the names, as it were, are being read out.

[24 : 34] And one day, all of them will have been brought in by this incredible king. And he's going to do it.

That's what he's doing at the moment. And we can be assured that somewhere around the world today, Jesus brought sinners into his kingdom. Who knows how many that were told that in heaven rejoice over sinners who repent.

And I somehow suspect it's continual rejoicing. one after the other from here, there, and everywhere. And they're all brought into the kingdom.

And it's wonderful that heaven sings about it. And leading the singing is the king himself. Now, so it's anticipated in the Old Testament, and there's a given to Jesus as his reward for the cross.

And I suppose we could ask ourselves this question. Do we think he deserves it? I mean, after all, what do we give him for going to the cross?

[26 : 00] I mean, God is just. God the Father is just. What can he give to his son for his amazing achievement on the cross?

Well, I suppose we could say he would give him what he wanted. Because that's what Psalm 21. says. And what did he want?

He wanted the scroll. And he wanted to release all the names that are in it. And that's what he does ever since he got it.

his admiring and his admirers are increasing in number by the day.

As they're brought into his kingdom. kingdom. I mean, in every kingdom of the world today, there are subjects who don't like their ruler.

[27 : 21] But in the kingdom of Jesus, the subjects all admire him. vicinity of so there he is.

He's got the reward he deserved. But it's also the reward he wanted. and then we could say that this kingdom is announced throughout the world by his people I mean that's the accusation that was made against the early church wasn't it that they declare another king and the Roman Empire tried to stifle it the first of many who tried failed and that's what still happens what is the message of the church the church anywhere I mean the true church I mean what is this message the message of the church is not here's a list of commandments you're meant to keep I mean it's very important to keep the commandments but that's not the message of the church the message of the church is there's a king who requires you to keep the commandments and there's a world of difference between the two things there's no point keeping the commandments and not obeying the king it has to come from the heart and this is our message that the king is there and that leads us to think about his priorities every kingdom has its priorities and he's amazed at the moment and she has to focus on them about other things that she does and the same is true in a far higher sense of the kingdom of Jesus he's got his priorities or are they well I think he's got two priorities this is just a suggestion of course but I think he's got two priorities and the first one is he does everything for the glory of God for the glory of his father that's what Paul says in Philippians isn't it when he gives us that wonderful description of Jesus in Philippians chapter 2 but the one who humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death and then we're told that he's been given the name Lord that the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every time confess that he is Lord why?

and we're told they're to do it to the glory of God the Father and that's what Jesus wants Jesus we could say is looking forward to this occasion when the entire universe will confess that he is Lord but the reason why they will do it will be to the glory of God the Father that's why he does everything that's why he did things when he was down here on earth he always did what pleased the Father that was on his mind all the time and the task that he's been given to do as king Paul tells us about it in 1 Corinthians 15 and it's a rather obscure verse at times but I think the general thrust of it is fairly obvious that it says that the purpose of Jesus is to subject everything to God the Father see there verse 24 then comes the end when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father and he has put down an end to all rule and all authority and power there's coming a day an amazing day when Jesus will be seen to be the king and every other kingdom will disappear and he's going to turn to his father and say here it is and it would be wonderful to be part of the kingdom that he hands across to the father wouldn't it he does everything for the glory of God the Father the second priority is he does everything for the benefit of his church

Paul writes in the Colossians and says that Jesus' head were all things he's paying he's head over all things for the benefit of his body the church he does everything for them and that includes that particular aspect could be explored in dozens of ways but even just take the things that seem to be against them how can Jesus use that for the good of his church?

well take Paul he gets sent to prison in Rome or as a prisoner to Rome how is that going to be for the benefit of his church?

[33 : 09] well we know the answer to that question if he hadn't gone to Rome as a prisoner we wouldn't have the book of Ephesians or the book of Philippians or the book of Colossians I mean Paul was sent as a prisoner to Rome in one sense because the Jews were accusing him of being a troublemaker but behind the scenes God's Jesus sent him to Rome because he had arranged for different people to travel to Rome in a few years time and when these people travel back to where they had come from Paul would give them a letter and that letter would become part of the New Testament I mean who can who can understand a king that can arrange these events and all their circumstances were involved in each one it's incredible to see the way he works the martyrs there's been martyrs all down the centuries and I'm sure you know this but the century which had the most martyrs was the 20th century but the 21st already looks as if it's going to beat it what's the king doing well the Roman emperor called Julian the Apostate he tried to crush the church his last words were when he was dying he turned and spoke to Jesus but not as a believer he turned and said you have conquered

O Galilean persecution didn't crash the church back then but Nostra Tullian the church father said the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church why has the church grown so much in the 20th century I don't think it's because of the internet no doubt that's one of the channels that God has used but if the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church and the 20th century was the one in which there was the most martyrs then heavenly arithmetic tells us it should be the time when there's most converts and that is what's happened all over the world how many Christians were there in China in 1950 hardly any the ones that were there a lot of them were martyred today there's more Christians in China than our people in Britain what's the king doing we don't know but he knows and that kind of thing can be amplified lots of ways why are all these refugees coming to Western Europe

I mean there's lots of political reasons but most of them are coming from countries where the gospel is not and in a strange way because of the one who runs Providence they've been brought to locations where the gospel is some of them will be converted but they wouldn't have been converted unless they become refugees the kings at work and all the things that go on in life the big and the small and all you can do is admire them and say well that's his priority and as I said that can be spread out and countless other ways but what features mark as king well what's the basic principle that covers everything in his kingdom is mercy

I mean occasionally in an earthly kingdom mercy is shown isn't it who was the last person to receive mercy in Britain I mean from the government who was the last person has anyone received it in the 21st century did anyone get it in the 20th century there have been occasional times when the government has shown mercy to somebody but it's very rare and even when it does happen they're usually shown mercy for one or two actions but when it comes to the kingdom of Jesus it's mercy all the way and it's not just mercy for one or two activities it's mercy for untold numbers of activities all our sins were acts of rebellion and how many acts were we guilty of thought word and deed and each person that comes and responds to the gospel and message of the king and trusts in him and believes in him they are pardoned it's an act of mercy they didn't deserve it they weren't so good that Jesus was desperate to have them instead they were so bad that his great love extended to them and he freely forgave all their sins didn't matter who they were he even shows that at the cross doesn't he it doesn't matter if the sinner is the criminal beside him or if it's the sinner the soldier who nailed him to the cross both get forgiven when they ask for it and that's just the way he is mercy mercy mercy so the reminder to us of course that we don't deserve it that that's actually good isn't it because if we don't deserve it we can only get it because God is merciful and that's what Paul says

I obtain mercy I mean it's good to think of mercy because mercy is the best thing to keep us in our place the minute I start to think I'm more important than somebody else I've forgotten mercy mercy just tells us there's one important person and it's the one who gives mercy and that's Jesus himself and that's his kingdom in Britain in the kingdom of Britain today there are probably made up entirely of people that have never received mercy from the government that is and that's because they haven't done anything so serious that only mercy can deal with it as far as the

[42 : 39] British laws are concerned when it comes to heaven's laws all of us need mercy and the amazing thing is that everybody asks for it gets it that's that's what the tax collector said in Jesus parable isn't it God be merciful to me the sinner you know when we pray it doesn't matter what the length of the prayer is because the other person in the parable the fantasy said a far longer prayer but it didn't get anywhere he prayed about himself and that's as far as he got but Jesus said to the tax collector he just said God be merciful to me the sinner and that was it

I sometimes think that people imagine they have to persuade God to forgive them the real problem is persuading people that God wants to forgive them and the gospel says to us there's mercy all of us here know that don't we we all know that the question is have we asked Jesus for it and the king says to us come to me for mercy and if you do come you'll get it and all your sins will be forgiven and you'll be a member of the greatest kingdom one that will last forever

I mean if this world lasts long enough the British empire will once fill volumes after volumes will just become a footnote in the same way as the Babylonian empire is a footnote every other empire eventually becomes a footnote one day the American empire will become a footnote but the kingdom of Jesus it will be the one that the final book will be written about and it will be great to be a member of it for you so may God bless these thoughts to us