

Jesus As King
Selected Scriptures
ABC 12/25/22

If I were to ask you which person's name appears in the Bible most often, what would you say? Jesus? That's a good guess. His name appears 957x. But is His the most common? It isn't. Maybe it's someone from the OT. Abraham is named 234x. What about Moses? 834x, still less than Jesus. The answer? The only 1,000+ mentions of a person's name in the Bible is David, 1078 occurrences. Now statistics aren't everything but they can sometimes tell us something. The prominence of King David in the Bible is important. When kings are mentioned, generally speaking, Americans don't like kings. We had a king once & we didn't care for it. When we hear the word *king*, 1 or 2 images typically come to mind: The 1st is that of a distant tyrant across the ocean who mistreats people & taxes our tea. The 2nd image is that of a meaningless figurehead; a historical office held over from the past that no longer has any real power. But when we speak of Jesus Christ as King, we aren't alluding to either a tyrant or a figurehead. We're speaking of a perfect, righteous, & loving King; One who's absolutely sovereign in His authority & eternal in His reign. The Bible is a book all about Jesus:

- In the OT Jesus is *predicted*.
- In the gospels Jesus is *revealed*.
- In Acts Jesus is *preached*.
- In the epistles Jesus is *explained*.
- In the book of Revelation Jesus is *expected*.¹

We've seen that Jesus is fully God & fully human accomplished through the Virgin Birth. Jesus fulfilled the offices of the anointed ones in the OT, Prophet, Priest, & King. King David is mentioned in Scripture so much because...

1. David is a picture of Jesus In the story of Jesus' birth in Mt & Lk, David plays a prominent role, kind of lurking around backstage. Remember what the angel told Mary?

Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. & behold, you will conceive in your womb & bear a son, & you shall name Him Jesus. He will be great & will be called the Son of the Most High; & the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; & He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, & His kingdom will have no end (Lk 1:30-33).

¹ Alistair Begg & Sinclair B. Ferguson, *Name above All Names*

Did you catch that? **God will give Him the throne of His father David** & He will reign forever. This is the nature & identity of the Child who's birth we celebrate today. He'll be given the throne of His father David. He's a King & He'll have a kingdom. In the account of the wise men going to Herod, David's name isn't mentioned, but he's there in the background. We read the words of the prophet Micah: **& you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, are by no means least among the leaders of Judah; for out of you shall come forth a Ruler who will shepherd My people Israel** (Mt 2:6). David is the great, unspoken name in this prophecy. **A Ruler who will shepherd My people Israel** has David written all over it. A new David is being promised. That's why, in the words of the angel to Mary, David occupies a central place. **The Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David**. We're to see a strong relationship between David & Jesus. Jesus is born in David's town, Bethlehem. Bethlehem was famous for a number of reasons: it was where Rachel, the wife of Jacob, died & was buried; it was where Ruth met Boaz in the fields at the time of the barley-harvest; & it was the place where Samuel went to visit the sons of Jesse, to anoint one of them king. & that son of Jesse was David. Bethlehem was the city of David but also the town where Jesus was to be born. As we know Jesus was born in Bethlehem & laid in a manger. He was born in poverty & obscurity. There's also that obscurity in terms of David's origins. When Samuel went to Bethlehem to anoint one of Jesse's sons as king, 7 sons passed by & not one of them was to be the king. Almost as an afterthought, the 8th son was sent for from watching the sheep. Jesse **sent & brought David in. Now he was ruddy, with beautiful eyes & a handsome appearance. & the LORD said, "Arise, anoint him; for this is he"** (1 Sam 16:12). The Messiah, the anointed One (Prophet, Priest, & King) would be a descendant of David. What do we read in Lk 2? **Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house & family of David** (4). Matthew begins his gospel by saying, **The record of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David** (1). Paul tells us in Rom 1:3 that Jesus **was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh**. But why is the connection between David & Jesus so important? It's important because...

2. David was a Great King We all know David's story. We cheer David as he fights Goliath. We wish David well as he flees from Saul. We feel David's pain as he laments the death of Jonathan. We

groan when David sins with Bathsheba & Uriah. We echo David's heart of prayer & praise as we read the Psalms & join with him in meditating on God's goodness. There are other descriptions of David which attract us, which make us like him. For example in 1 Sam 22:1-2:

David departed from there & escaped to the cave of Adullam; & when his brothers & all his father's household heard *of it*, they went down there to him. Everyone who was in distress, & everyone who was in debt, & everyone who was discontented gathered to him; & he became captain over them. Now there were about four hundred men with him.

We can almost feel as if we were there in the cave with David. We can smell the fire burning, see the flickering shadows on the cave walls, & hear David's encouraging voice. We can feel the sword strapped to our side. We sense the camaraderie that these men would have felt. But David wasn't just any king of Israel; he was the king with whom God made a covenant. This promise of God to David is seen in the words of 2 Sam 7:16: **Your house & your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever.** This is given even greater expression elsewhere, especially in Ps 89. Let me read from it:

I have given help to one who is mighty; I have exalted one chosen from the people. I have found David My servant; With My holy oil I have anointed him, With whom My hand will be established; My arm also will strengthen him (19-21).

This psalm goes on to say...

I also shall make him My firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth. My lovingkindness I will keep for him forever, & my covenant shall be confirmed to him. So I will establish his descendants forever & his throne as the days of heaven (27-29).

A psalm which begins by describing David soon speaks of a magnified David, a greater David, an eternal David: the Son of David, King Jesus.

3. Jesus is the Greater King The people asked the question of Jesus, **This man cannot be the Son of David, can he?** (Mt 12:23). 2 blind men seeking healing cried out to Jesus as He passed by, **Have mercy on us, Son of David!** (Mt 9:27). The term *son of David* is used in reference to Jesus' power to heal & to cast out demons. *Son of David* had become a formal designation of the Messiah.² When the Pharisees were asked to identify the lineage of the Christ, they responded, **The son of David** (Mt 22:42). The identification of the Messiah with the son of David shows that the people expected

² Herman N. Ridderbos, *Matthew*, p 190

a king to arise like David to sit on the throne of David.³ But all that is good about David is even better about Jesus. David slays Goliath, but Jesus crushes the head of the serpent. David laments the death of Saul, but Jesus summons Lazarus back to life. David writes the Psalms, but Jesus fulfills the Psalms. David commits adultery, but Jesus forgives & restores the adulterer & the murderer. David dies but Jesus rises from the dead. We can say even more than this because David's kingdom stretched from the Euphrates to the borders of Egypt, but Jesus is the King of kings, whose kingdom fills the whole earth, & which can never be destroyed.

Jesus is referred to as the **King of the Jews** (Mt 1:2), the **King of Israel** (Mk 15:32), the **blessed & only Sovereign** (1 Tim 6:15), & the **King of Kings & Lord of Lords** (Rev 19:16). Even the term *Lord*, used so often of Jesus, speaks of His supreme power & authority. Eph 1:21 tells us that Jesus is now seated at God's **right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule & authority & power & dominion, & every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.** We have a King, & His name is Jesus. He isn't just *a* king but *THE* king—the King of Kings, with authority & dominion over all things. Jesus didn't usher in the same type of kingdom that David or Solomon ruled over. He didn't come to overthrow Roman rule by force, but instead rules & reigns over the hearts & lives of His people. That the Bible sets Jesus forth to be a king is beyond dispute. It was one of the many claims of Jesus & it's one of the most notable titles that He now wears. The word *kingdom* appears in the NT some 150+ times, the majority of which are in reference to the kingdom of Christ. It means *reign* or *rule*. In one respect, the universe is Christ's domain. He is sovereign. All things were created by Him & are governed or upheld by Him & by the word of His power. They belong to Him. But the kingdom of Christ, as foretold in the OT & realized in the NT, refers more specifically to the rule of Christ over His chosen people & His relationship to His people. It's a powerful & ever-expanding kingdom which exists in heaven & earth today. Sometimes it's called *the kingdom of God* because the authority that Christ has as King was given to Him by God. All authority is God's & God's alone to give. It's called *the kingdom of Christ*, or as Paul once referred to it, **the kingdom of His beloved Son** (Col 1:13) because God has given the kingdom to His Son to rule over. It's also

³ Richard P. Belcher Jr., *Prophet, Priest, & King: The Roles of Christ in the Bible & Our Roles Today*, p 145

called *the kingdom of heaven* because it originated in heaven. It's based there &, ultimately, its citizens will be there. The Bible is clear that Jesus came to this world in view of being King & He understood that a crown awaited Him after He came & accomplished the will of His Father. When Jesus was born, the wise men asked, **Where is He who has been born King of the Jews?** (Mt 2:2). When Jesus was 30 years old, John the Baptist was preparing the people for Christ's appearance & ministry by preaching, **Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!** (Mt 3:2). John saw the kingdom as something new that was arriving. We learn in the next chapter that as Jesus stepped into the spotlight, He began to preach the same thing. **Jesus began to preach & say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"** (Mt 4:17). That would be a strange statement if, 2,000 years later we were still waiting on the kingdom to arrive. Throughout his 3½ year ministry, Jesus taught about His kingdom, laying down many of the principles & truths would characterize & govern it. He affirmed Himself to be the King who would rule within it. For example, He painted a picture of judgment this way:

when the Son of Man comes in His glory, & all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne.... 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' (Mt 25:31, 34).

He didn't restrain the multitudes when they cried on Palm Sunday, **Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord** (Lk 19:38). He didn't answer negatively when Pilate asked, **Are You a king?** (Jn 18:37). He didn't deny His kingship when Pilate turned Him over to the crowd, saying, **Behold your King!** (Jn 19:14). From His very birth Christ was recognized as King. Magi brought Him gifts. Shepherds fell down & worshiped Him. Angels sang His praises. & Herod, realizing that there's never room for 2 thrones in one kingdom, sought to kill Him.

Heb 8:1 tells us, **the main point in what has been said is this: we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens...** Sitting at God's right hand means that God has given Him His power & His authority. In other words, He is ruling from heaven as King at the right hand of God. Rev 19:16 tells us Jesus has **on His robe & on His thigh He has a name written, "KING OF KINGS, & LORD OF LORDS."** This expresses His sovereignty, His superiority, His supremacy over all who would be called *king* or *lord* in this world. Jesus possesses

all power & authority, as He told His disciples. **All authority has been given to Me in heaven & on earth** (Mt 28:18). He possesses dominion over every force, power, or authority in the universe. His kingdom, reign, & rule are the most powerful in the entire universe. & yet this King laid down His life for His subjects & made payment for the unpayable debt we owed. You & I, if we're Christians, are subjects of King Jesus. & our relationship to Jesus is infinitely stronger than our relationship to David. We are united to Jesus; we are one with Him. Did David ever say to his followers, **I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me & I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing** (Jn 15:5)? No, David didn't, but Jesus did. Does the Bible ever say that the people who follow David are *in David*? Of course not. But Paul can't speak of Jesus without saying that he, & every other Christian, is **in Christ**. Did David ever say to his men, **because I live, you will live also** (Jn 14:19). No, but Jesus lives eternally, having conquered death; & the eternal life of faith & love which Christians live, they live because of the Son of God who loved them & gave Himself for them. On the Day of Pentecost, Peter told the crowds in Jerusalem that the body of King David still lay in his tomb (Acts 2:29). But the tomb of Jesus was empty, & it remains empty today. Because Jesus lives, we will live.

We don't serve a mediocre King; we serve the risen Christ! We serve a King who came down from His throne & was born in a manger. He lived a sinless & selfless life, & died on the cross as the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Because of this...

God highly exalted Him, & bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven & on earth & under the earth, & that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Phil 2:9-11).

After His resurrection He ascended to His throne in heaven, where He continues to reign as we await His return when He comes again as a conquering King. Then there will be **loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become *the kingdom* of our Lord & of His Christ; & He will reign forever & ever"** (Rev 11:15). Clearly, Jesus came to establish the kingdom of God. He began His ministry with a message of the kingdom (Mt 4:17; Mk 1:15), He taught His disciples to pray **Your kingdom come** (Mt 6:10; Lk 11:2), & He urged them to seek 1st that kingdom (Mt 6:33). It's presented as a reality that can be entered today (Mt 12:28; 21:31) & as a reality that will be

established in the future (Mt 8:11; 1 Cor 15:50). The kingdom of God has the character of an inner spiritual blessing of righteousness, peace, & joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom 14:17), & it's an external reign that will encompass the whole world (Rev 11:15). The parables establish that it's already present in the world but not yet in its full expression. Christ will one day, hopefully soon, take His rightful place to rule this earth. What a moment that will be! & think of this: Jesus received the kingdom as a human being, & as a human being He ascended to the right hand of His Father's throne in heaven. The incarnation didn't change the Son's status as God (Phil 2:6) but defined His human role as a Servant who'd come to be obedient to the point of death on the cross (Phil 2:7–8). Humiliation led to exaltation, & the Son received the name that is above every name & the homage of every knee as the result of His earthly ministry. In His incarnation He didn't give up His deity, & in His exaltation He doesn't give up His humanity, but every tongue confesses that Jesus Christ is Lord. He's the image of the invisible God (Col 1:15), who shows us what God is like, & has come to restore the divine image in human beings through His incarnation. His exalted status is shown in the description of Him **as the firstborn of all creation** (15). This phrase reflects Psalm 89:27, where David is called the firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth. Christ's preeminence above all creation is seen in that He is before all things, that He is the Creator of all things, & that all things hold together in Him (Col 1:17). As the firstborn of the dead, He takes His place as the head of the church to continue His work of reconciling all things to Himself (Col 1:18–20). He assumes this position not only as God, but also as man, so that now a human being has the highest & most powerful position in the universe. Jesus currently reigns above all authorities & powers as all things are put under His feet for the sake of the church (Eph 1:20–23). He rules this universe for the good of His people & guarantees that believers, who are already seated with Christ in the heavenly places (Col 2:6), will be with Him in glory (Jn 17:24).⁴

4. Is Jesus your King? The Westminster Shorter Catechism asks, (#26) *How is Christ a king?* Here's the answer: *As a king, Christ brings us under His power, rules & defends us, & restrains & conquers all His & all our enemies.* I won't go into all this this, but let's think about the way in which Christ,

⁴ Belcher, pp 155–156

as King, rules us. We live in days which are so much like the days of the Judges in the OT, that time between the death of Joshua & the beginning of the monarchy in Israel. At the end of Judges we read these words of lament & desperation: **In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes** (Judges 21:25). No thoughtful person can hear those words today without thinking history is repeating itself. There was anarchy in Israel, now there's anarchy in much of society. Not the complete breakdown of law & order, thankfully, but a breakdown in terms of what people believe, what people think, a breakdown in moral consensus so that everyone does what they believe is right. If there's no king people do what's right in their own eyes. But if there is a King, & there is, & He's set clear laws which are to be obeyed, then to trample on them & disregard them is to be guilty of treason. The truth is, Jesus Christ was King when He was upon the earth. Jesus Christ is still King today. He's been raised & exalted to the glory at God's right hand as the eternal King. We, the people who belong to Jesus, are to be different from the world. Let us rededicate ourselves to the service of our King. Jesus is King: will you submit to Him, obey Him, worship Him, & serve Him as your King? As it says in Ps 45:11, **Because He is your Lord, bow down to Him**. Let's be known as the people who bow down to Jesus, submitting to Him in the entirety of our lives. & don't be discouraged, our King still reigns! Celebrate Him today & everyday as Your King.

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