

Jesus: Prophet, Priest, King "Part 3: The King Who Rules"

Selected Texts

Delivered during the COVID-19 pandemic via Livestream at Central Baptist Church on December 20, 2020

INTRODUCTION

- **(SHOW SLIDE 1)** What did you think of that story we just had read for us? Isn't that a horrific story? Why would we read such a thing, especially so close to Christmas, which is supposed to be this happy and joyful time of year?
 - Here's the answer: Christmas is most certainly about good news that brings great joy but the reason it is such good news is because that directly addresses how bad the world can be. The reason why it brings such joy is because there is so much in the world that causes unbelievable sorrow.
 - The true message of Christmas is not a nice little story about a baby being born that fills us with warm fuzzy feelings while we sip our hot chocolate under the Christmas lights. It's no wonder many people don't care about Jesus. People rightly say, ***"What does that have to do with real life? What does that have to do with the fact that my life is falling apart? What does that have to do with all the violence and horrific acts of evil in the world?"***
- This morning I want to show that the true message of Christmas speaks directly to the harsh reality of life. You see Judges 19-21 is not in the Bible because God approves of what happened. Far from it! You are supposed to read it and be appalled. It is a brutal story of men abusing their power, of the attempted gang rape of a man, of an actual gang rape and physical assault of a woman that appallingly results in her death.
 - Why is this even in the Bible? And how is this possibly a Christmas story?
- It's in the Bible because the Bible never shies away from talking about the brutality of real life.
 - The book of Judges does this better than just about any other book because it describes what happens when a society rejects God and everyone has their own definition of right and wrong.
- How is this a Christmas story? The key to understanding this story is to see that it is bracketed by the same statement at the beginning and at the end. **(SHOW SLIDE 2)** ***"In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes."*** (Judges 21:25)
 - Judges was meant to show Israel and is meant to show us that we cannot rule ourselves. History is one long lesson in the fact that we cannot rule ourselves. When everyone tries to be their own king or queen there is conflict, society disintegrates and horrific things like this take place.
 - Judges ends this way to make you cry out for a true king; a king who has the power to stop such brutality, a king who can defend the weak, and a king who can conquer the evil that lies in all of our hearts. The horror of Judges 19-21 is meant cause you groan and cry out, ***"Is there any king***

who could possibly be good enough and powerful enough to make all the wrongs right?"

- **(SHOW TITLE SLIDE 3)** The good news of Christmas is that Jesus is the good king who has the strength and power to do all of this. So let's wrap up our series on Jesus as our prophet, priest, and king by looking at Jesus, the king who rules.
 - This morning we will look at three things: *what a king does, why we need a king, and how Christmas reveals the ultimate king.*

WHAT A KING DOES

- First, let's talk about **(SHOW SLIDE 4) what a king does.** We all know that **(SHOW SLIDE 5) a king is a man who has the authority to rule and reign over a certain area and people.**
 - In the Bible God is our ultimate King. He rules over us and this planet because he is our Creator. Amazingly, God also appointed human beings to be his vice-regents on earth. That is, God made human beings in his image, placed life on earth under our dominion, and called us to rule it as he would.
 - But Adam and Eve turned away from God and believed the lie that they could be their own gods, that they could be their own kings and queens. This brought disaster upon them and the world.
- **(SHOW TITLE SLIDE 6)** What happens when two monarchs want to rule one kingdom? Conflict. What happens when billions of people all want to be their own kings and queens? Lots of conflict.
 - And so Genesis 4-11 are just like the book of Judges. These chapters tell story after story about how human beings fail to rule themselves, each other, society, and the planet.
- But in his grace, God gave kings to the nation of Israel. Their role was to bring God's good reign and rule over his people again. The ultimate Old Testament king is David. In many ways he was a good king, but he also failed miserably and the history of Israel is in many ways the failure of one king after another.
 - The prophets began telling of a king who would come who would be greater than David. He would be human but also would be identified with God. This king would fulfill what a king was supposed to do – bring God's good rule and reign to this world and restore humanity's role to what it was supposed to be.
 - So that is what a king does.

WHY DO WE NEED A KING?

- Second, **(SHOW SLIDE 7) why do we need a king?**
 - Most people, especially here on the West Coast would say we don't. In fact, sociologists tell us that West Coast people are the most likely in Canada to be anti-authority. It is this distrust of authority that sociologists also say is the reason why British Columbians rank the highest in Canada among those who say they have "no religion." West Coast people value personal autonomy and don't want anyone telling them what to believe or how to live.

- In many ways this is good. Human authorities often abuse their power and so there should be a level of suspicion. Likewise, it is a wonderful thing to live in a free society. I would not trade life in Canada for any other country in the world.
- Yet, here's the hard reality. Despite being wealthier and more educated than any culture in history contemporary research also reveals that:
 - **(SHOW SLIDE 8) Symptoms of depression and anxiety are on an eighty-year upswing among young people and a twenty-year upswing among adults.**¹
 - **(SHOW SLIDE 9) Each generation is experiencing depression at earlier ages.**²
 - **(SHOW SLIDE 10) Since 1985 people are reporting lower levels of life satisfaction.**³
 - **(SHOW SLIDE 11) Stress levels have risen over the past thirty years.**⁴
 - **(SHOW SLIDE 12) Drug overdoses have hit an all-time high.**⁵
 - **(SHOW SLIDE 13) Feelings of loneliness are up.**⁶
 - **(SHOW SLIDE 14) 38% of Canadian marriages end in divorce.**
 - **(SHOW SLIDE 15) Wealthy countries and wealthy neighbourhoods have higher suicide rates than poor countries and poor neighbourhoods.**⁷
 - And we haven't even talked about horror stories of domestic abuse, sexual assault, or murder.
- **(SHOW TITLE SLIDE 16)** All of this is meant to cause us to pause and ask, *"Why is the world like this? With all our technology and money, why can't we fix ourselves?"*
 - Today I'm asking that you would consider the Bible's answer to this. The Bible says that the reason we can't fix ourselves is because we are helpless and powerless to do so. When humanity turned away from God we did not set ourselves free. Rather we became enslaved to our sin. We did not open our

¹ G. L. Klerman and M. M. Weissman, "Increasing Rates of Depression," *Journal of the American Medical Association* 261 (1989): 2229–35. See also J. M. Twenge, "Time Period and Birth Cohort Differences in Depressive Symptoms in the U.S., 1982–2013," *Social Indicators Research* 121 (2015): 437–54.

² Myrna M. Weissman, PhD, Priya Wickramaratne, PhD, Steven Greenwald, MA, et al., "The Changing Rates of Major Depression," *JAMA Psychiatry* 268, no. 21 (1992): 3098–105.

³ C. M. Herbst, "'Paradoxical' Decline? Another Look at the Relative Reduction in Female Happiness," *Journal of Economic Psychology* 32 (2011): 773–88.

⁴ S. Cohen and D. Janicki-Deverts, "Who's Stressed? Distributions of Psychological Stress in the United States in Probability Samples from 1983, 2006, and 2009," *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 42 (2012): 1320–34.

⁵ Andrew Sullivan, "The Poison We Pick," *New York Magazine*, February 2018, <http://nymag.com/intelligencer/2018/02/americas-opioid-epidemic.html>.

⁶ "New Cigna Study Reveals Loneliness at Epidemic Levels in America," *Cigna's Loneliness Index*, May 1, 2018, <https://www.multivu.com/players/English/8294451-cigna-us-loneliness-survey/>.

⁷ Wealthier countries, on average, have higher suicide rates than poorer countries. Data can be found from the World Health Organization, "Suicide Rates Data by Country," <http://apps.who.int/gho/data/node.main.MHSUICIDEASDR?lang=en>. Suicide is also more prevalent in wealthier neighborhoods compared with poorer neighborhoods. See Josh Sanburn, "Why Suicides Are More Common in Richer Neighborhoods," *Time*, November 8, 2012, <http://business.time.com/2012/11/08/why-suicides-are-more-common-in-richer-neighborhoods/>.

eyes to great freedom; dark spiritual powers blinded our eyes so we cannot see the truth that we are all slaves to sin, under condemnation, and alienated from our Creator.

- In short, **(SHOW SLIDE 17) We fail to rule ourselves, society, or the world. As a result, we are enslaved to sin, dark powers, and death.**
- In rejecting God we make a mess of our own lives, or society, and of the world. We think we are free but we are slaves to our own desires.
 - The Bible says that what we need is a king who has the power to defeat our enemies of sin, evil spiritual powers, and death itself. We need a king to conquer our hearts for they are too powerful for us and lead us into all manner of sin.
 - We need a king who can fix the world.

HOW JESUS IS THE ULTIMATE KING

- Now let's turn to the good news. In the third place, let's talk about the **(SHOW SLIDE 18) how Christmas reveals the ultimate king.**
 - Long before that first Christmas 2000 years ago, God made great promises about a future king. God promised a future day when he would send a king who would free his people, crush his enemies, and set up his kingdom on the earth.
 - Let's quickly walk through this.
- This promise of a future king was given right after Adam and Eve sinned. When pronouncing the curse on Satan, God said this in Genesis 3:15: **(SHOW SLIDE 19) "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."**
 - God is saying, *"Serpent, you who have enslaved the human race through deception, a day is coming when out of this woman will come one who will crush your head. You will strike his heel but he will crush your head."*
- This person, the promised one, is then revealed to be a conquering king. Jacob prophesies that he will come from the line of Judah and would rule the nations. Genesis 49:1 **(SHOW SLIDE 20) "The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs and the obedience of the nations is his."**
 - God raised up Old Testament kings like David who pre-figured this promised one. But they all fell short. Not even David rightly ruled as God's representative over his people. But it was again promised a supreme king would come from Judah, from David, to rule forever.
 - Isaiah 9:7: **(SHOW SLIDE 21) "Of the increase 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."**
- So the Jews were longing for this future day and for this future king. Daniel 2:45 speaks of this great hope.
 - **(SHOW SLIDE 22) "The God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever."**

- So God promised to send a Messiah, a chosen one. This Messiah would be a king, from the line of David, and this king would make everything right.
- All of this comes together in the first page of the New Testament. Matthew 1:1 is one of the most exciting verses in the Bible. You say, ***“But isn’t Matthew 1 the genealogy of Jesus.”*** It is. I know you skip over it with all the names. But Matthew 1:1 should cause you to burst with joy. Matthew 1:1 says,
 - **(SHOW SLIDE 23)** ***“A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David.”***
 - Matthew 1:1 is saying, ***“The long-promised king is here. This baby named Jesus is the chosen one, the Messiah, the son of David.”***
 - The magi bore witness to his kingship after his birth. Matthew 2:2: **(SHOW SLIDE 24)** ***“Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him.”***
- And then there is John the Baptist. He had built up anticipation saying, **(SHOW SLIDE 25)** ***“Repent for the kingdom of heaven is near.” (Mt 3:2)*** In other words, ***“It’s almost time. The long-awaited day is almost here. Get ready.”***
 - And then the moment comes. In Mark 1:15 Jesus makes this pronouncement: **(SHOW SLIDE 26)** ***“the time has come...the kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!”***
 - Jesus was making the radical claim that in him the kingdom of God had come. That in him heaven was now invading earth. That in Him, the king of the kingdom, God was coming to free his people and destroy his enemies.
- Why did Jesus become a man? What is the message of Christmas?
 - Hebrews 2:14: **(SHOW SLIDE 27)** ***“Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death – that is, the devil – and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.”***
- And so he did, not by using military might, but by the cross.
 - On the cross he did at least two things: He saved us from our sins and he triumphed over the devil.
 - Colossians 2:13 says it perfectly, **(SHOW SLIDE 28)** ***“He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.”***
- And so on that cross Satan struck the heel of Christ, wounding him, but after he died doing away with sin Jesus rose victoriously. As he ascended to glory he led Satan captive as a pathetic and defeated enemy. Daniel describes the coronation that awaited him.
 - **(SHOW SLIDE 29)** ***“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 peoples, nations and men 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.”

- Right now, Jesus occupies the seat of supreme cosmic authority. The universe is not a democracy. It is not even a battle between Satan and God. It is an absolute monarchy and Jesus is the King of all kings who sits on its throne.

BUT WHY DOES EVIL CONTINUE?

- **(SHOW TITLE SLIDE 30)** But a question is immediately raised, *“If Jesus is presently reigning with all authority and power why is there still evil in the world? Why do his enemies continue to exist?”*
 - Jesus taught that when he came into the world God’s kingdom had come. That promised day had arrived. However, he taught that it had not come in all its fullness. There would be a period of time between the beginning and the final completion of the kingdom. Theologians call this ‘the already/but not yet’ of the kingdom. The kingdom is already here in that Jesus defeated Satan and dealt with sin but it is not yet here in that he has not finally done away with sin and Satan. We live in the already but not yet.
- The one illustration that works best for this is to think of the difference in WWII between D-Day and V-Day.
 - D-Day was the day when the Allied Troops won the decisive battle over Nazi Germany in places like Omaha Beach. V-Day, “V” for Victory happened about a year later
 - You see the battle was decisively won on D-day but it was not until V-day that all the Axis nations finally surrendered and hostilities officially ended.
 - Now if you were a soldier in certain places in Europe during that year between D-Day and V-Day you would never have known that the war was over. You were still taking heavy enemy fire and it may have even appeared hopeless. But unbeknownst to you D-Day had already happened.
- We sit today between D-day and V-day. We still await V-Day. We hope in what Paul writes in Romans 16:11, **(SHOW SLIDE 31)** *“The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.”* But oh friends that day is coming.
 - **(SHOW TITLE SLIDE 32)** *“Look He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him.”* He is the *“KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS”*
 - *“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory.”*
- On that day *“every knee will bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.”*
 - On that day it will be fully true that *“The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign forever and ever.”*
 - Then every creature will gather around the throne and sing, *“To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honour and glory and power forever and ever!”* Amen.

IMPLICATIONS

- What are we then to do with this? Two things. **(SHOW SLIDE 33)** First, **bow before your rightful King**. Let me summarize the entire message of the Bible to you in the language of an old town crier:
 - *“Hear ye! Hear ye! Hear ye! All rebels, insurgents, dissidents, and protesters against the King! Hear the royal decree! A great day of reckoning is coming, a day of justice and vengeance. But now hear this, all inhabitants of the King’s realm! Pardon is now proclaimed by the mercy of your Sovereign. A price has been paid. All debts may be forgiven. All rebellion absolved. None is excluded from this offer. Lay down the weapons of rebellion, kneel in submission, receive the royal pardon as a gift of royal love, swear fealty to your sovereign, and rise a free and happy subject of your King”⁸*
 - Will you receive this good news?
- **(SHOW SLIDE 34)** Second, **live for the glory of your King**.
 - The old story of Robin Hood is helpful here. You remember in that great story the rightful king of England, King Richard, had left for some time. His evil brother John set himself up as king and oppressed the people. But Robin Hood and his men worked to make the kingdom of Richard a reality and not the kingdom of John.
- Today the king’s planet is in the hands of a false king. Although defeated, Satan is permitted to work his destruction until Jesus returns. It is the church’s job to announce the kingdom – to call people away from serving the evil prince to serve the one true king.
 - We live by his values and do what he calls us to. We don’t steal like Robin Hood but we give money generously, we follow our king’s values on sexuality, we use power for the good of others, and we serve others even at cost to ourselves.
- But you must realize that just like Robin Hood, we will not be treated like the king’s people. Like Robin Hood, we will be persecuted, laughed at, scorned, and ridiculed. You can speak about just about anything else in culture but speak the name of Jesus and people will scorn you.
 - But be patient and remember that people’s minds are enslaved by the enemy. Also persevere living for your king because the day is coming when like King Richard, Jesus will return and give to each one what is due them.
- On that day King Jesus will bring us into his new world where stories like Judges 19-21 will never be told because such things will never happen there.
 - This is the good news of Christmas. We cannot rule ourselves or our planet. But Jesus is the king who is both good and powerful and he came to set us free.

CONCLUSION

- **(SHOW TITLE SLIDE 35)** I hope this series has enabled you to understand what Jesus came to do.

⁸ John Piper, *God is the Gospel*, 19.

- Jesus came into the world to be our ultimate prophet who cures our ignorance by revealing truth to us.
- Jesus came into the world to be our ultimate priest who cures our guilt by offering his own life as a sacrifice for our sins.
- And Jesus came into the world to be our ultimate king who frees us from sin, death, and dark powers.
 - All praise to Jesus, the prophet who reveals. All praise to Jesus, the priest who reconciles. And all praise to Jesus, the king who rules.