



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Basic Bible Doctrine, Romans 1

"Work of the Redeemer as King"

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for the word of God and for the ministry that the Holy Spirit has to us through it. We are so thankful that as we study the Scriptures that Thou hast teach us through the Holy Spirit and sustain us and strengthen us for the experiences of life.

We know Lord that we are here for a definite purpose and we pray that we believers, particularly we believers, may accomplish the purpose for which we are here. We thank Thee for the word of God and for the way in which Thou hast commissioned us to preach the gospel to every creature. We desire Lord to be obedient to that commission and proclaim the word of God.

We know that not everyone is going to be saved but we desire Lord to be an instrument in the salvation of some of the elect who have not yet come to Jesus Christ. Will Thou give us the estimable privilege of being an instrument in the hands of the triune God and the bringing of some lost soul to Christ. May we have the joy of rejoicing throughout the ages of eternity in the salvation of the lost. Lay the burden of the lost upon us, for we know that it is Thy will that men be saved through prayer, through witnessing, through the preaching of the Gospel.

Be with us in this hour as we study Christ as King. For Jesus' Sake. Amen.

[Message] Now our subject for tonight is “The Work of Christ as King.” Christ performs his mediatorial work by functioning in three offices. The office of prophet, the office of priest, and the office of king. The prophet represents God with men. The priest represents men with God. And the King rules over men for God. Since we've considered Jesus Christ as prophet and Jesus Christ as priest, we turn now to consider the third office, that of King, over which there has been considerable debate.

Premillennialism has taught that he is not yet reigning as the mediatorial King. That is, they do not deny that Jesus Christ is an eternal King, but they deny that Jesus Christ is ruling as mediatorial King at the present time. That his kingdom lies in the future and it will be a kingdom that will exist in this earth and over this earth.

Many Amillennialists, those who do not believe in an earthly kingdom, contend that Jesus Christ is ruling now and that the passages in the Bible which speak of our Lord as King are intended to be understood to refer to his present kingship. Now he is an absent King, they will admit, but he is ruling over the earth at the present time and is fulfilling those passages of Scripture which have to do with him as King at the present time.

What does the Bible say? That's what we want to look at. Now I don't want you to get the impression, I don't want to be so arrogant as to suggest that when I give you a message that is what the Bible says. I want, however, for you to understand that it's what I think the Bible says because I can be wrong. You can be wrong in the study of the Scripture and when I give you something from the word it is to be understood as what I think the Bible teaches.

Now when we cite the Bible that's what the Bible says. But when we expound the Scriptures we are expounding what we think the Bible says. So let's turn to consider what we think, what I think, the Bible says about this question of Jesus Christ as King. And Roman 1 the description of Christ's kingdom, just want to notice several things here of some significance and first of all, capital A, the nature of his kingship.

The kingship of the Lord Jesus Christ has two aspects. He is both an eternal King and he is also a mediatorial King. Now when we say that Jesus Christ is an eternal King we refer to his sovereignty over all things and over all people in every age past, present, and future. In fact, we refer to him as an eternal King. King in the beginning, King in the ending, King eternally.

Now this rule, then, is an eternal rule and it exists over everything in this universe, over all of our universe and over the angels as well. Now this eternal kingdom of the Lord Jesus is his kingdom by virtue of his inherent capacity, right as the second person of the triune God. The Father is King, the Son is King, the Spirit is King. That is, the triune God is the eternal King over all reality.

So when we talk about Jesus Christ as an eternal King we are talking about something that is his by his inherent right as the Son of God, as the second person of the eternal trinity. In Psalm 103, and verse 19, we have a text that probably refers to this aspect of his kingdom. There are other texts that are quite plain too. There we read, "The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all." In the light of the context that is most likely a reference to the eternal kingdom of the triune God in which the Lord Jesus Christ shares.

Now secondly he is also a mediatorial King. Now when we say mediatorial King we mean something a little different. A mediator is a person who stands between two people, in this case between God and men, between God and the creation. So when we say that he is mediator we are speaking about his kingship as the God-man. That is, as the mediator between God and men so that this is a conferred kingship. It is something given to him. It's an economic kingship in the sense that it is a kingship in which he is to perform certain functions. That's the meaning of the term economic. In this sense it's a good theological word that means something like stewardship.

So the kingdom is given to the Son as mediator and he has certain responsibilities with reference to the establishment of that kingdom and also with reference to his rule

throughout the time that that kingdom exists in this particular earth. So this is a kingship by investment from the triune God. The triune God invests the God-man with the right of mediatorial rule.

Now this rule is eternal in its duration although it had a beginning in the past. It is eternal in its duration because Paul in 1 Corinthians 15 says that the time will come when he will deliver over this mediatorial King to the Father that God may be all in all. But this mediatorial kingdom will then become identical with the eternal kingdom and exist throughout all eternity. Incidentally there is agreement among the great confessions of faith over the eternal kingship of the Lord Jesus Christ and over his mediatorial kingship too.

Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession, and other great Confessions of faith acknowledge that he is an eternal King and that he is a mediatorial King. They do differ, however, with Premillennialists over the place upon which this mediatorial kingdom will be exercised, on the conditions under which it will be exercised too. There are some aspects of this mediatorial kingdom that we ought to mention. There are in fact there are two aspects of it.

Now the two aspects of the mediatorial kingdom, I did not put them in the outline but they would be a little A and a little B under this word mediatorial, the two aspects are set forth for us by a comparison of passages such as Matthew chapter 13 with the other passage that I'm going to refer to later on. Now we don't have time to expound all of these passages but I hope that sometime you will take down these notes and you will go home or listen to the tape again. Go home, pull out your Bible, and read these passages to which we refer.

But in Matthew chapter 13, verse 1 through I think verse 52, the Lord Jesus at a particular junction in his ministry, remember, told eight parables, some say only seven, probably eight parables in which he described the things that would transpire on the earth between the first and second coming of the Son of God. So that if we put this as

the cross and this as the coming, the second coming to the earth, then those parables in Matthew 13 describe the conditions that shall exist upon the earth during the period between the two Advents, the First Advent and the Second Advent of the Lord to the earth.

Now these parables of Matthew chapter 13 describe the mystery form of the kingdom. You'll remember the mystery of the kingdom of the heavens and then our Lord would tell a parable, the mystery of the kingdom of the heavens. Now what those passages tell us, then, is that the Lord Jesus is going to reign in the earth during the period of time between the two advents unacknowledged by men. That is, the kingdom is in mystery form. That kingdom is hidden now.

I read a cartoon I believe it was in *Time* magazine, the issue that came to my house today. And it was a cartoon over the Stealth program and I don't remember all of it but Snoopy was in the first panel and he was flying a Sopwith Camel, which as you know is the World War I vintage plane that he flies as the Red Baron. And it had something like "stealth" above it and so Snoopy is just flying in the air and there's no plane around anywhere but he's obviously sitting in the plane. And then they had the Goodyear Blimp, "stealth" it put up above it, "stealth", Goodyear Blimp, and all you could see is just Goodyear, the Blimp is gone because the stealth technology that the Air Force is supposed to have is applied to it. Now see, I didn't cut that thing out, I should have cut it out because I cannot think of the third panel but I remembered the climax [Laughter]. The climax was Jimmy Carter standing behind a pulpit and he's giving a message and he's talking about his economic program and stealth is there and so there's nothing there [Laughter].

Well the mystery form of the kingdom is a form of the kingdom in which our Lord is ruling but we don't see any evidence of our Lord here or any evidence of his ruling. The principles that indicate he is ruling are set forth in the parables. The kingdom is hidden now, it has not yet appeared. But nevertheless he is a mediatorial King, he holds

that office, but he is not yet manifested as that. That's the mystery form of this mediatorial kingdom.

And then the second, the B under this, would be the earthly visible kingdom of the Lord Jesus. So the mediatorial kingdom takes two forms. It is at the present time a hidden kingdom. It will, however, at the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus Christ when he comes here it will have its visible beginning then. And over the earth there will be a visible kingdom with our Lord Jesus Christ ruling and reigning from his throne. Then his sovereignty will be manifested to all. He is sovereign now. But his sovereignty will be manifested in the earth at his second coming, when the mediatorial kingdom becomes not simply a kingdom in mystery form unacknowledged by men but a kingdom manifested to all, visible to all, and acknowledged also by all.

The character of this kingdom is spiritual. That text, Romans chapter 14, in verse 17, expresses that. The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking but it is spiritual. And I want to stress this because there are people who think that if you have an earthly kingdom then how can it be spiritual? But the fact that something is earthly does not mean that it is not spiritual. Our Lord Jesus was here in a physical body, but he certainly was a spiritual man. So the kingdom is a spiritual kingdom although it is an earthly, visible kingdom when he returns and establishes upon the earth. It is a spiritual kingdom. The foundation of the kingdom, capital C, is the work of Jesus Christ on the cross. The kingdom is grounded in the redemptive work of the Son of God, redeeming blood.

Now I'd like for you to turn with me to Matthew 26 and let's just read a few verses in which we have the inauguration of the new covenant and a reference made to the kingdom of God and Christ reigning as King. Matthew chapter 26, verse 26 through 29, is the text as you know which describes our Lord's last Passover and first Lord's Supper in which he inaugurated the new covenant. I'll read beginning at verse 26,

"And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it;" (now that's not, as you know, drink ye every bit of it, but all of you drink of it. Drink ye all of it. As I've often said, drink ya'll would have made good sense but the translators don't like to follow us Southerners, unfortunately [Laughter]. "Drink ye all of it, For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I shall drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

This, of course, is a reference to this second coming to the earth when the Lord Jesus will return and then this text will have its fulfillment. But you can see from the way in which it is set forth here in this passage that the foundation of the new covenant is in turn the foundation of the kingdom of God upon the earth. We would have no kingdom of God upon the earth were it not for the fact that the Lord Jesus has accomplished a redemptive work. Some of my good friends like to say our Lord came in his first coming to give the kingdom to Israel but since they rejected him he then postponed the kingdom and decided he would tell them about his cross. That is not true. The Lord Jesus came to die in his first coming. He also came to establish his kingdom but he never intended to establish a kingdom apart from a cross. And he certainly never intended to suggest that there could be any kingdom in which we would participate apart from the blood that was shed. He came to tell us about his sufferings and the glories but in that order as he himself says in Luke chapter 24, but at the heart of the kingdom, then, is redemptive work. There can be no salvation apart from the cross, there can be no kingdom apart from the cross, so that the foundation of our Lord's kingship is his atoning work on Calvary's cross.

Now let's take a brief look at the proof of Christ's kingship. The kingship of the Lord Jesus Christ is found both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. There are fifteen passages that I would like to make reference to but how can you do it in fifteen minutes and say anything about them? So I'll just be a little selective. I will say them all and you can put them down if you like. This is the story of the kingship of our Lord Jesus as the Messiah in the Old Testament. It begins in Genesis 1, verse 26, where in that text God said that he would create man and he would give him dominion over the earth. That was the intention of God. That is that man should have dominion over the earth. That's where the story of the kingdom of God begins, with that word dominion.

In the 3rd chapter in the 15th verse it was stated that the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent. That's a reference, ultimately, to the coming again to the earth. The cross was where, of course, he bruised him so far as atonement is concerned but it's in the second coming of the Lord Jesus that the work is finally finished. That's why Paul long after the cross says the God of Peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly so that shall the seed of the woman bruising or crushing the head of the serpent is a reference to the victory of the Lord Jesus over the kingdom of Satan and the establishment of his own kingdom.

In the 9th chapter in the 27th verse of the Book of Genesis we read in the prophecy that Noah uttered that the children of Israel would dwell in the tents of Shem and Canaan would be their servant. A reference, again, to the kingship of the nation of the Semitic family of mankind over the earth. And Japheth and the others should dwell in the tents of Shem.

In chapter 17, in verse 6 of Genesis it was stated to Abraham that kings should come out of him so that the promises given to Abraham encompass not only his redemption but also kingship from him ultimately fulfilled in the seed, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the King. In Genesis chapter 49, in verse 10, it was stated that the sceptre shall not depart from Judah until Shiloh comes. And unto him shall the gathering of the

people be so that the rulership was given to the tribe of Judah until Shiloh comes and that means him to whom it belongs, a reference to the Messiah. And then, of course, he would assume the right of rule as the lion of the tribe of Judah. We discussed that when we expounded Genesis not too many weeks ago.

In Numbers chapter 24, verse 7 and verse 17, in Balaam's prophecy references made to a sceptre again. Again, the story of the kingdom unfolding through the Old Testament. Finally in 2 Samuel chapter 7, verse 14 through verse 17 in the seventh passage the famous Davidic covenant is given to David. And there it is said I will establish his kingdom, David's seed, the kingdom of God up on the earth.

Psalm 2, verse 6 and verse 7, just for the sake of time I'll just mention them. Psalm 45, verse 1. Psalm 72, verse 8, where dominion over the whole of the earth is given to the Messianic King. Psalm 110, in verse 2, "Rule Thou in the midst of enemies," the Spirit says to the Messiah. Isaiah chapter 9, verse 6 and 7, the government of this universe shall be upon his shoulders, the one whose name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

Daniel chapter 7, verse 13 and 14, where references made to dominion being given to the Son of Man who comes to the ancient of days. And it is said there specifically that it is an everlasting kingdom. That means it stretches out into eternity. It's given to him at a point in time but it stretches out into eternity. It's the mediatorial kingdom. It's not the kingship which he has from eternity, that's never given to him, he has it by inherent right. This is the mediatorial kingdom.

Micah chapter 5, verse 2, where reference is made to the one who shall come who shall be the ruler in Israel but whose goings forth have been from of old from everlasting. He's the eternal Son. And finally in one of the last books of the Old Testament in Zechariah chapter 9, the prophet announces to the kingdom of Israel, "Behold, Thy King cometh unto Thee." And later in Matthew chapter 21 and the others of the synoptic

gospels references made to this passage, and it is said that it is fulfilled in our Lord Jesus Christ.

So the Old Testament has a rich unfolding of the Messianic kingship of the Lord Jesus Christ. In the New Testament the New Testament is so full of references to the kingship of the Lord Jesus that one hardly knows where to begin. If you open up the New Testament and turn to the first pages of the New Testament you read - you find reference to the kingship of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is stated in Matthew chapter 2, and verse 2, as the New Testament opens in the order of books that we have in our English Version that the wise men came from the East and they said, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?" And the rest of Matthew, and in fact the rest of the New Testament, is simply an unfolding of the kingship of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Matthew, particularly, unfolds his kingship and finally in the 27th chapter, as the climax is reached and sufferings of our Lord upon the cross, it is stated, "This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." This is the King, the mediatorial King. The one to whom the promises of kingship have been made.

We turn finally to the exercise of Christ's kingdom. Now there has been some debate over the exercise of Christ's kingdom. It has been said by some that in the exercise of our Lord's kingdom he exercises all of his kingly rights and prerogatives in the present time. So we could ask the question did he act as King in the legal age, in the age of the Mosaic Law? Does he act as King now in the fullest sense? Amillennialists have contended he does act as King now in the fullest sense. Premillennialists as a general rule say that while he is King *de jure et*, that is by right, he is not exercising all of his prerogatives at the present time. He awaits his Second Advent. Then he will exercise his prerogatives. Present time the kingdom is hidden, it shall be revealed.

What does the Old Testament say? The testimony of the Old Testament, I think, is testimony that supports the Premillennialists. In Zechariah chapter 9, in verse 9, we read that Zechariah prophesied that the time will come in that day in the future when they

will say, "Thy King cometh unto Thee." Evidentially he had not come in the Old Testament. He was the subject of prophecy. He was a King but he did not execute the office then.

Now the testimony of the New Testament, in the church age I have no doubt that he is King, he has offered the sacrifice by which his kingly rights are established. He has ascended to the right hand of the Father, there he sits in the place of authority. He is a King. But he does not yet exercise invisible manifestation, his kingly prerogatives as the New Testament sets forth that it is his future work to do. So his work is a hidden kind of work. The full exercise of his kingship awaits the future.

Now I'd like for you to turn at this point to my passage in Revelation chapter 11, and verse 15 through verse 18, because I think this passage confirms what I'm saying right now. Revelation chapter 11, verse 15 through verse 18. We are now in that section of the Book of Revelation in which the judgments of the tribulation period are being poured out. The judgments of the seals, the trumpets, and the bowls, and we read in the seventh of the trumpets, verse 15 of chapter 11,

"And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders, who sat before God on their thrones, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, Saying, We give thanks, O LORD God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because Thou hast taken to Thee Thy great power, and hast reigned."

Now you can see that this is a reference to the judgments of the future so that the kingdoms becoming the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ is a reference to the future. The having taken to himself great power and having begun to reign is also a reference to the future.

Now let me just say a word about the Greek text here for those of you who have been taking some Greek. In verse 15 when we read, "The kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ: and he shall reign for ever and ever," we have a tense that is called in our Greek grammars the aorist tense, the unlimited tense it is literally. The reference here is to the stress rests upon the initial entrance into kingship. That's translated very well by the Authorized Version, "The kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and his Christ." Literally has come to be. So emphasis is laid upon the coming to be.

Then in verse 17 when it says, "Thou hast taken to Thee Thy great power, and hast reigned," that too is in the aorist tense, it's what we call an ingressive aorist. Now I know that makes a lot of sense to most of you here but for those of you that do read Greek you'll understand that an ingressive aorist is this particular aorist form in which stress is laid upon the entrance into a particular state or the beginning of a particular action. And that is what we have here, "Thou hast taken to Thyself Thy great power, and hast begun to reign," it might be rendered.

So the reference then is, I think, clear evidence for the beginning of our Lord's exercise of his kingdom at the time of the Second Advent. Now we could also look at 1 Corinthians 15:24 through 28 but we don't have time. I think we could also illustrate this by the great vision in Daniel chapter 2. Do you remember that vision? That's when Nebuchadnezzar had his dream, you know, and none of his magicians could interpret it. And finally Daniel interpreted the dream for Nebuchadnezzar, and he described the time from between the - it was the times of the Gentiles, the time between the construction of the city of Jerusalem and the Second Advent.

He said there would be four great world rulers that would arise. He talked about the Babylonian, the MedoPersian, the Grecian, and then the Roman and the revived Roman Emperor. And he said at the conclusion of this great period of time, the times of the Gentiles, there would be a stone cut out of the mountain without hands which would

come, it would strike the image on its feet, prophecy relative to the fact that the kingdom of God is the kingdom of God, not a kingdom produced by the preaching of men or by the good works of men. It is a kingdom of God, it shall strike human government and human rule and the result is that the image is destroyed and swept away like the chaff from the summer threshing floor. And then Daniel looks and he sees that stone cut out without hands beget larger and larger and larger and finally become a mountain that fills the whole of the earth. And reference in the passage is made to the fact that the kingdom of God shall come at the conclusion of Gentile world empire. That would seem to establish very plainly the fact that our Lord begins to exercise his kingly prerogatives in their fullest sense at his Second Advent.

I wish I had time to talk about all of the evidence for that from the Bible, you will just have to take my word from it this is Basic Bible Doctrine, it's not intended to be a complete handling of all of these subjects. It is rather interesting, and I think confirms this, that apart from Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, the New Testament authors never use of the Lord Jesus the expression "King of the Jews" nor "King of Israel." So this marked reticence of the use of the term King of him, and the latter part of the New Testament confirms what we're talking about here.

Furthermore, the epistles contain no mention of the teaching that Christ is a King. That's interesting too. And the reason for it, I think, is the apostles awaited the second coming of the Lord Jesus when he would enter into his ministry as King. Almost all of the reference, I looked them up again this afternoon, every single reference in my concordance, I got my Greek concordance down believe it or not, I got the Greek concordance down, looked up every reference, again, of the word *basileia*. In so far as I could tell every reference of *basileia* from the time of the Book of Acts on to the occurrences in the Book of Revelation, the reference to the term kingdom, that word means kingdom, the reference to kingdom can be understood as a reference to the Messianic kingdom that is to come.

Not all the references are explicitly that. Many are explicitly that and the others make perfectly good sense by giving them the meaning that is explicitly given in many of the texts. So when the apostles preached the kingdom of God, they preached the kingdom of God is coming and therefore men should repent in the light of it and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, become citizens of that kingdom by the receiving of his saving ministry in blood and cross.

If you are here tonight and you have never believed in him you are not a citizen of the kingdom that is to come. You may become a citizen of that kingdom by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. Your name shall be written in the citizenship of the kingdom of God and forever you shall be part of the mediatorial kingdom, which is merged in the eternal kingdom and enjoy the fellowship of the triune God and us saints too, forever.

Now may God, through his Spirit, bring you to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Let's bow in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for the kingship of the Lord Jesus Christ. We know that he possess all authority in heaven and upon earth at the present time. And we look forward to the day in which he shall exercise all of the prerogatives of his kingship in open manifestation. We acknowledge he is a King now, great King of the ages. We look forward to the day...

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]