FAITHFUL TO THE WORD

Systematic Theology Series

CHRISTOLOGY

The Doctrine of the Person and Work of Christ

UNIT 6: THE THREEFOLD OFFICE OF CHRIST — PROPHET, PRIEST, AND KING

Lesson 19

Christ as King

The Sovereign Lord Who Reigns Over All

The Throne of David, the Kingdom of God, and the Crown of Glory

Key Texts: 2 Samuel 7:12–16; Psalm 2:6–9; Psalm 110:1; Matthew 28:18; Ephesians 1:20–23; Revelation 19:16

"All Authority Has Been Given to Me in Heaven and on Earth"

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SERIES VERSE

"For we do not preach ourselves
but Christ Jesus as Lord,
and ourselves as your bond-servants
on account of Jesus."
2 CORINTHIANS 4:5, NASB 1995

INTRODUCTION

We arrive at the third and final office of the munus triplex: Christ as King. This is the office that, of the three, most directly engages the cosmic dimension of Christ's work, His sovereign lordship over all things, His defeat of every enemy, His governance of the church and the world, and His coming consummation of all things in the eschatological kingdom. The prophetic office addresses the human mind (ignorance dispelled by the Word); the priestly office addresses the human conscience (guilt removed by the sacrifice); the kingly office addresses the whole order of human existence and cosmic reality (bondage broken by the sovereign rule of the one who has all authority in heaven and on earth). It is the office that declares that the universe is not a random or contested space but a governed one, governed by the one who was crucified, raised, and exalted to the supreme position of cosmic lordship.

The kingly office of Christ is the dimension of the munus triplex that most directly challenges the assumptions of contemporary culture. We live in an age that is systematically suspicious of authority in general and of divine authority in particular, an age that has elevated individual autonomy to the status of an unquestionable ultimate value and that regards any claim to universal lordship with either incredulity or hostility. The claim that Jesus of Nazareth, the crucified carpenter from Galilee, is at this moment the sovereign Lord of all creation, that He rules over every government, every power structure, every spiritual authority, and every individual life, whether they acknowledge it or not, is among the most countercultural claims that the Christian gospel makes. It is also among the most personally consoling, because the one who holds all authority in heaven and on earth is the same one who purchased His people with His own blood, intercedes for them at the Father's right hand, and governs all things for their ultimate good.

This lesson examines the kingly office of Christ under six headings: the Davidic covenant as the Old Testament foundation of the kingly office, the declaration of the kingdom in the ministry of Jesus, the present reign of Christ from the right hand of the Father (the amillennial affirmation that Christ reigns now), the nature of the kingdom as spiritual and advanced by Word and Spirit rather than by earthly power, the universal scope of the royal authority ("all authority in heaven and on earth", Matthew 28:18), and the eschatological consummation of the kingly reign at Christ's return. Together these dimensions constitute the most comprehensive and the most cosmically exhilarating account of what God is doing in history through the exalted King who sits at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

I. THE DAVIDIC COVENANT: THE OLD TESTAMENT FOUNDATION OF THE KINGLY OFFICE

The Promise That Will Not Fail, The Throne of David Established Forever

A. 2 Samuel 7 and the Covenant with David

The theological foundation of Christ's kingly office in the Old Testament is the Davidic covenant of 2 Samuel 7, the divine promise given to David through the prophet Nathan that established the Davidic royal line as the vehicle of the divine redemptive purpose in history. The heart of the covenant is the divine promise of 2 Samuel 7:12–16: "When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever… Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever" (NASB 1995). The promise is remarkable for its double claim: the kingdom of the Davidic Son will be established permanently ('forever', עולם, le'olām, appears three times in this passage), and the relationship between the Davidic king and YHWH will be that of a father to a son ('I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me', v. 14).

The Davidic covenant created the theological framework within which the entire subsequent history of the monarchy in Israel was interpreted and within which the eschatological hope for the Messiah took its most distinctive shape. When the Davidic kings proved unfaithful, when Solomon turned to idolatry, when the kingdom divided, when the Babylonian exile brought the Davidic line to its nadir, the covenant promise was not abandoned but transmuted into eschatological expectation: a new David would come, a shoot from the stump of Jesse (Isaiah 11:1), a righteous Branch who would reign wisely and execute justice and righteousness in the land (Jeremiah 23:5–6; 33:15–16). The prophets insisted that the promise of 2 Samuel 7 was not revoked by the failure of the historical kings; it was being reserved for the one who would fulfill it perfectly, permanently, and eschatologically.

B. Psalm 2 and Psalm 110: The Royal Psalms as Messianic Christology

The Psalter provides two royal psalms that together constitute the most comprehensive Old Testament account of the messianic king's divine appointment and universal dominion. Psalm 2 presents the divine decree that establishes the Davidic king as the Son of God: "I will surely tell of the decree of the Lord: He said to Me, 'You are My Son, today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, and the very ends of the earth as Your possession'" (Psalm 2:7–8, NASB 1995). The nations who rage against the LORD and His Anointed (v. 2) are promised to the Davidic Son as His inheritance, and the kings of the earth are commanded to "do homage to the Son, that He not become angry" (v. 12). The universal scope of the Davidic king's dominion, from Zion (v. 6) to the ends of the earth (v. 8), exceeds anything that any historical Davidic king actually achieved, establishing the psalm as eschatological in its ultimate reference.

Psalm 110, which is the most frequently cited Old Testament text in the New Testament, adds the dimension of the session and the waiting: "The Lord says to my Lord: 'Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet'" (Psalm 110:1, NASB 1995). The Davidic king is

addressed by YHWH and invited to sit at the supreme position of divine authority, to wait while YHWH subdues his enemies, and then to rule in the midst of his foes. The combination of the two Psalms presents a Messianic figure who is simultaneously the divinely appointed Davidic king (Psalm 2), the one who rules from the divine right hand (Psalm 110:1), and the eternal priest after the order of Melchizedek (Psalm 110:4), three dimensions of the messianic identity that converge in the person of Jesus Christ.

II. THE KINGDOM DECLARED: CHRIST'S ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE REIGN OF GOD

The Time Is Fulfilled, The Kingdom of God Has Come Upon You

A. The Central Message of the Ministry

The kingly office of Christ finds its most public and most comprehensive expression in the central theme of His entire ministry: the proclamation of the kingdom of God. Mark 1:14–15 provides the programmatic summary at the outset of the Galilean ministry: "Now after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel'" (NASB 1995). The announcement is both temporal ("the time is fulfilled", the eschatological moment has arrived) and spatial ("the kingdom of God is at hand", the divine reign is breaking into the present order of reality in a new and decisive way) and demanding ("repent and believe", the arrival of the kingdom requires the response of repentance and faith). The king has come; the kingdom has come with Him; and the appropriate response to the king's arrival is submission to his authority.

The miracles of Jesus are not merely demonstrations of divine power; they are kingdom acts, the breaking in of the eschatological reign of God into the domain of sin, disease, and death. When Jesus casts out demons, He interprets the act as the arrival of the kingdom: "If I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you" (Matthew 12:28, NASB 1995). When He heals the sick, gives sight to the blind, raises the dead, and calms the storm, He is not merely demonstrating credentials; He is acting as the King who has authority over every dimension of the fallen order. The Old Testament had promised that when the King came, the blind would see, the deaf would hear, and the poor would have good news preached to them (Isaiah 35:5–6; 61:1–2), and Jesus points to these very acts as the evidence of His messianic identity when John's disciples ask whether He is the coming one (Matthew 11:4–6; Luke 7:22–23).

B. The Kingdom's Presence and Hiddenness

The parables of the kingdom in Matthew 13 develop the character of the kingdom's present form with great theological precision. The kingdom of God in its present form is not the visible, political, triumphant reign that first-century Jewish expectation anticipated; it is the hidden, growing, mustard-seed-from-small-beginnings reality that coexists with the fallen order of the present age until the final harvest when the wheat and the tares are separated (Matthew 13:24–30, 36–43). The kingdom is genuinely present wherever the King is acknowledged and obeyed; but it is not yet consummated in the visible, universal, comprehensive form that it will take at the King's return. This "already/not yet" structure of the kingdom, already inaugurated in the ministry, death, and resurrection of Christ; not yet consummated in the eschatological fullness of the new creation, is the theological key to understanding the relationship between the present reign of Christ and the future consummation of the kingly office.

III. THE PRESENT REIGN: CHRIST RULES NOW FROM THE RIGHT HAND OF THE FATHER

The Amillennial Affirmation, We Live in the Age of Christ's Reign

A. Psalm 110:1 and the Session of Christ

The resurrection and ascension of Christ constitute the enthronement of the Davidic King in His position of supreme cosmic lordship. When the risen Christ is seated at the right hand of God, the promise of Psalm 110:1 is fulfilled: "The Lord says to my Lord: 'Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.'" The early church understood the resurrection and ascension precisely as the enthronement of the crucified Messiah, Acts 2:32–36 records Peter's Pentecost declaration: "God has made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified" (v. 36, NASB 1995). The making of Jesus "both Lord and Christ" is not the creation of a new divine status that did not previously exist; it is the public vindication and installation of the crucified King into the position of supreme lordship that the resurrection makes visible and the ascension makes permanent.

The present reign of Christ is not a future hope but a present reality. Ephesians 1:20–23 declares with comprehensive precision what God has done in raising and seating Christ: "He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all" (NASB 1995). The scope of the subjection is universal ("all things in subjection under His feet") and the position is supreme ("far above all rule and authority and power and dominion"). Christ is not waiting to begin His reign; He has been reigning since the ascension, and all of human history since Pentecost is the history of His reign.

B. The Amillennial Framework and Its Christological Grounding

The amillennial conviction, that Christ reigns now at the right hand of the Father and that the present age is the age of His kingdom, not a parenthesis between the promised kingdom and its future inauguration, is directly grounded in the New Testament's identification of the resurrection and ascension as the fulfillment of Psalm 110:1. The "millennium" of Revelation 20:1–6 is, on this reading, the present age of the church, the "thousand years" being the symbolic expression of the complete, sovereign, divinely determined period of Christ's reign between the first and second advents, during which Satan is "bound" in the sense that he cannot prevent the gospel from advancing to the nations (Matthew 12:29; Revelation 20:2–3). The kingdom of God is not primarily a future political reality to be established after the second coming; it is a present spiritual reality already established in the reign of the exalted Christ.

This amillennial reading has profound pastoral and missiological implications. If Christ is already reigning, then the church's mission is not to establish the kingdom or to create the conditions for its inauguration; it is to proclaim the kingdom that has already been inaugurated and to summon people from every nation to submit to the King who is already on the throne. The Great Commission ("All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations", Matthew 28:18–19, NASB 1995) is the command of the reigning King to His ambassadors: the one who sends them already holds all authority; they go in the name and the authority of the one who has already won the decisive victory; and the promise of His presence ("I am with you always, even to the end of the age", v. 20) is the promise of the one who reigns over all things to uphold and sustain those who carry His royal message to the ends of the earth.

> *"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations… and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."*
>
> **MATTHEW 28:18–20, NASB 1995**

IV. THE NATURE OF THE KINGDOM: SPIRITUAL, ADVANCED BY WORD AND SPIRIT

My Kingdom Is Not of This World, The Means and Mode of the Royal Advance

A. John 18:36 and the Nature of Christ's Kingdom

One of the most theologically important statements about the nature of the kingly office is Jesus' response to Pilate's question about His kingship: "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm" (John 18:36, NASB 1995). The declaration is not a

denial of the kingship, Jesus explicitly affirms His kingship in the next verse ("You say correctly that I am a king", v. 37), but a clarification of its nature and its means. The kingdom of Christ is not "of this world" (ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου τούτου, ek tou kosmou toutou) in the sense that it does not operate by the methods and means of earthly political kingdoms: military power, coercive force, political alliance, and the machinery of state. It is a kingdom advanced by the Word of God and the power of the Holy Spirit, exercised through the willing submission of those who hear the gospel and receive the King, and extended through the mission of the church to the ends of the earth.

The distinction between the nature of the kingdom (spiritual, not earthly in its mode of operation) and the scope of the kingdom (cosmic, universal, over all things) is crucial for avoiding the two opposite errors that have plagued the church's understanding of the kingly office. The first error is to confuse the spiritual nature with a limited scope, as if Christ's kingdom applies only to the "religious" dimensions of life and has nothing to say to politics, economics, culture, and society. Christ's kingdom is spiritual in its mode of advance but universal in its scope of authority: all things have been placed under His feet (Ephesians 1:22), including the principalities and powers that govern earthly affairs. The second error is to confuse the universal scope with an earthly mode of advance, as if the church should use political power, state coercion, or cultural dominance to extend the kingdom. Christ's kingdom is universal in its scope but spiritual in its mode of advance: the instrument of the kingdom's extension is the Word and the Spirit, not the sword or the vote.

B. The Advance of the Kingdom Through Word, Spirit, and Mission

The means by which the kingly reign of Christ advances in the present age are precisely the means that the New Testament specifies: the proclamation of the gospel (the word of the kingdom), the power of the Holy Spirit (who applies the word with converting and sanctifying effect), and the mission of the church to all nations (the ambassadors of the King bringing the royal proclamation to those who have not yet heard it). Romans 10:14–15 identifies the chain of royal ambassadorship: "How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? How will they preach unless they are sent?" The royal logic of the kingdom's advance is the logic of missionary proclamation: the King has won the decisive victory; the ambassadors carry the terms of peace to those who do not yet know it; and the Spirit opens hearts to receive the royal word with faith and repentance.

The church's social and cultural engagement, its care for the poor, its advocacy for justice, its formation of educational and charitable institutions, is a genuine expression of the kingdom's values but is not itself the advance of the kingdom in its saving, converting, eschatological sense. The kingdom advances through the gospel; its social expressions follow from the transformed hearts and transformed communities that the gospel produces. This is not a privatization of the faith; it is the proper ordering of means and ends. The one who reigns over all things does so through the Word and Spirit, not through the machinery of cultural power; and the church that confuses the instruments

will lose both the missional focus and the countercultural distinctiveness that make its witness credible and its proclamation compelling.

V. THE UNIVERSAL SCOPE: ALL AUTHORITY IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH

The Cosmic Christ, King Over All Things for the Sake of the Church

A. Matthew 28:18 and the Universal Royal Authority

The most comprehensive statement of the scope of Christ's present kingly authority is Matthew 28:18: "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth" (NASB 1995). The comprehensiveness of the claim is total: not some authority, not authority over spiritual matters, not authority over those who voluntarily submit to Him, but all authority (πᾶσα ἐξουσία, pasa exousia) in heaven (every spiritual power, every angelic and demonic authority) and on earth (every political power, every cultural authority, every individual life). The scope of this authority is not merely the scope of what He has the right to rule but the scope of what He actively, sovereignly, and purposefully governs. The King who holds all authority in heaven and on earth is not an absentee landlord; He is the active, purposeful, sovereign ruler of all things, governing them toward the goal that the Father has ordained.

Ephesians 1:22–23 specifies the relationship between Christ's universal cosmic lordship and His particular headship over the church: "He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all" (NASB 1995). The word "gave" (ἔδωκεν, edoken) is significant: the universal cosmic lordship of Christ is given to the church, it is exercised for the church's benefit. He does not merely reign over all things; He reigns over all things for the sake of His body. The principalities and powers that would harm, diminish, or destroy the church are under His feet; the historical circumstances that would discourage, overwhelm, or defeat the church are in His hands; and the ultimate destiny of every person who belongs to His body is secured by the one who "fills all in all."

B. Colossians 1:15–20: The Cosmic Christ and the Cosmic Reconciliation

Colossians 1:15–20 provides the most theologically comprehensive statement of Christ's universal kingly lordship in terms of both creation and reconciliation: "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities, all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together… For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile

all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven" (NASB 1995). The Colossian hymn establishes two dimensions of Christ's cosmic lordship: the creational ("by Him all things were created… all things hold together") and the reconciliatory ("through Him to reconcile all things to Himself"). The kingly reign of Christ is not an imposition on a universe that belongs to another; it is the rightful authority of the Creator exercised through the Redeemer for the comprehensive restoration of all things.

VI. THE ESCHATOLOGICAL CONSUMMATION: WHEN EVERY ENEMY HAS BEEN MADE A FOOTSTOOL

The Already/Not Yet of the Kingly Reign and the Glorious Destination of All History

The present reign of Christ is real, comprehensive, and authoritative, but it is not yet the consummated reign. The "already" of the kingdom does not yet exhaust the "not yet." The enemies of the kingdom are real and active; the suffering of the church in the present age is real and painful; and the gap between the present invisible reign of the exalted King and the visible, universal, uncontested reign of the returned King is a gap that is felt in every act of faithful Christian witness in a hostile world. Psalm 110:1 holds both dimensions in its single phrase: "Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet." The "sitting" is the present reality of the completed reign; the "until" is the divine promise that the present phase of the reign will give way to the consummated phase in which every enemy is definitively and visibly subdued.

1 Corinthians 15:24–28 provides the most theologically comprehensive account of the eschatological consummation of the kingly reign: "Then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be abolished is death" (NASB 1995). The eschatological consummation is the universal, visible, final subduing of every enemy, every power, every authority, every spiritual dominion, and death itself, under the feet of the reigning Christ. The goal of the kingly reign is not simply the preservation of the church in a hostile world but the comprehensive, total, eschatological victory of the King over everything that opposes His will and His purposes.

Revelation 19:16 provides the doxological image: the returning King bears a title written on His robe and on His thigh: "King of Kings, and Lord of Lords" (NASB 1995). Every earthly king, every cosmic authority, every principality and power that has exerted its dominion in the present age, all of them are subsumed under the universal lordship of the one who is King of every king and Lord of every lord. The history of the world is moving toward this moment: not the triumph of human wisdom, not the victory of a political ideology, not the culmination of a cultural project, but the visible,

uncontested, eschatological reign of the Lamb who was slain and who has been found worthy to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing (Revelation 5:12). The kingly office of Christ is the theological ground of the Christian's hope for history: this age is not a meaningless chaos but a governed process moving toward a glorious destination under the sovereign rule of the one who holds all authority in heaven and on earth.

The pastoral significance of the kingly office for the present life of the church is therefore immense. The congregation that knows that Christ is king, that He is already reigning, that all things are under His feet, that the outcome of history is already determined by His resurrection victory, is a congregation that can face opposition, suffering, and apparent defeat with a confidence that is not naive optimism but theologically grounded hope. They are not fighting to win; they are fighting from a victory that has already been won. They are not trying to establish the kingdom; they are ambassadors of a kingdom that has already been inaugurated. And they are not waiting for the King to begin His reign; they are living under the reign of a King who is already on the throne, who governs all things for their good, and who will return to consummate in visible, universal, eschatological glory the reign that He has been exercising invisibly and spiritually since the day of His ascension. To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Key Texts: *2 Samuel 7:12–16; Psalm 2:6–9; Psalm 110:1; Mark 1:14–15; Matthew 12:28; Matthew 28:18–20; John 18:36–37; Ephesians 1:20–23; Colossians 1:15–20; 1 Corinthians 15:24–28; Revelation 19:16*

THEOLOGICAL TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
Kingly Office	The third dimension of the munus triplex: Christ's office as the divinely appointed sovereign ruler who governs His church and all creation with comprehensive authority, defeats every enemy of His people, and advances His kingdom through the Word and Spirit toward the eschatological consummation. Grounded in the Davidic covenant (2 Samuel 7:12–16), exercised in the present age through the exalted session at the Father's right hand (Psalm 110:1; Ephesians 1:20–23), and to be consummated at the second coming when every enemy is placed under His feet (1 Corinthians 15:24–28). The kingly office addresses the dimension of the human problem identified as bondage: the enslaved will is freed by the sovereign royal authority of the one who has all authority in heaven and on earth.
Davidic Covenant	The divine covenant established with David through the prophet Nathan (2 Samuel 7:12–16), promising the permanent establishment of the Davidic royal house ('your throne shall be established forever'), the special father-son relationship between YHWH and the Davidic king (v. 14), and the eventual

Term	Definition
	fulfillment of these promises in a descendant of David whose kingdom would be eternal. When the historical Davidic monarchy failed, the prophets transmuted the covenant promise into eschatological expectation (Isaiah 11:1; Jeremiah 23:5–6; Ezekiel 37:24–25). The New Testament identifies Jesus as the definitive fulfillment of the Davidic covenant: He is the Son of David (Matthew 1:1) who reigns forever on David's throne (Luke 1:32–33) at the right hand of the Father (Acts 2:30–36).
Kingdom of God	The dynamic, active, saving reign of God in the world, inaugurated by the ministry, death, resurrection, and exaltation of Jesus Christ, and to be consummated at His return. Distinguished from a territorial or political kingdom: the kingdom of God is a sphere of sovereign divine activity rather than a geographic or political entity. Its present form is characterized by the 'already/not yet' tension: already inaugurated in Christ's victory and present wherever the King is acknowledged and obeyed; not yet consummated in the universal, visible, eschatological reign that will follow the return of Christ. Advanced in the present age through the proclamation of the gospel, the power of the Holy Spirit, and the mission of the church to all nations.
Already / Not Yet	The theological structure of the kingdom of God in the present age: the kingdom has already been inaugurated in the ministry, death, and resurrection of Christ (the 'already'), but has not yet been consummated in the visible, universal, eschatological fullness that will characterize the age to come (the 'not yet'). The 'already' grounds the church's confidence and mission: the decisive victory has been won, the King is already reigning, and the outcome of history is already determined by the resurrection. The 'not yet' grounds the church's hope and endurance: the present age of suffering and opposition will give way to the consummated reign of the returned King when every enemy is finally subdued.
Session of Christ	The seating of the risen, ascended Christ at the right hand of God the Father (Psalm 110:1; Hebrews 1:3; 10:12), signifying completed priestly work (He sat down because the sacrifice is finished) and supreme royal authority (He sits at the supreme position of divine power). The session is the present mode of Christ's kingly reign: He governs all things from the supreme position, with all authority in heaven and on earth, for the sake of His body the church. The session is permanent in its royal dimension (He reigns until every enemy is subdued) and complete in its priestly dimension (the once-for-all sacrifice does not need to be repeated). Ephesians 1:20–23 provides the most comprehensive New Testament statement of the session and its cosmic scope.
Amillennialism	The eschatological position that the 'millennium' of Revelation 20:1–6 refers to the present age between the first and second advents of Christ, during which Satan is bound and Christ reigns from the right hand of the Father. Grounded in the New Testament's identification of the resurrection and ascension as the

Term	Definition
	fulfillment of Psalm 110:1 ('sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool') and in the already/not yet structure of the kingdom. On this reading, we are already living in the age of Christ's reign; the church's mission is to proclaim the kingdom already inaugurated rather than to establish the conditions for its future inauguration; and the return of Christ will bring the immediate, visible consummation of the reign He has been exercising invisibly.
Pasa Exousia	Greek: 'all authority.' Used in Matthew 28:18 for the scope of Christ's present kingly authority: 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.' The comprehensiveness of the claim ('all') and the scope of its reach ('in heaven and on earth') establish the present, universal, active reign of the exalted Christ. Pasa exousia is the royal ground of the Great Commission (v. 19): the ambassadors go in the name and authority of the one who already holds all authority, and the promise of His presence (v. 20) is the promise of the one who rules over all things to uphold those who carry His royal message.
Great Commission	The royal command of the risen Christ to His disciples in Matthew 28:18–20: 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.' The Great Commission is a royal commission: its ground is the universal authority of the reigning King (v. 18), its scope is universal ('all the nations'), its content is comprehensive ('make disciples… baptizing… teaching… all that I commanded'), and its guarantee is the promise of the omnipresent King to accompany those He sends.
King of Kings and Lord of Lords	The supreme royal title given to the returning Christ in Revelation 19:16: 'On His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."' The title declares the universal lordship of the returning Christ over every earthly king, every cosmic authority, and every power that has exerted its dominion in the present age. In the Old Testament, similar language was applied to the God of Israel (Deuteronomy 10:17; Psalm 136:3); its application to the returning Christ in Revelation is a declaration of His co-equal divine sovereignty. The title is the eschatological form of the already-reigning universal lordship described in Ephesians 1:20–23 and Matthew 28:18.
Spiritual Kingdom	The characterization of Christ's kingdom as 'not of this world' in mode and means (John 18:36), distinguishing it from earthly kingdoms that advance by military power, political coercion, and cultural dominance. The spiritual nature of the kingdom does not limit its scope (which is universal) but specifies its means: the kingdom advances through the proclamation of the gospel, the power of the Holy Spirit, and the mission of the church. Two opposite errors must be avoided: (1) reducing the scope of the kingdom to the 'religious' dimensions of life (as if Christ's lordship has nothing to say to politics,

Term	Definition
	economics, and culture); and (2) confusing the universal scope with an earthly mode of advance (as if the church should use political power or cultural dominance to extend the kingdom).

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

A. For the Mind: What Must We Believe?

We must believe that Christ is reigning now, that the ascension was not a withdrawal from cosmic lordship but its commencement, and that every moment of the present age is a moment under the active, purposeful, sovereign governance of the one who holds all authority in heaven and on earth. The congregation that does not know that Christ is already reigning will tend toward two equally damaging errors: either the triumphalism that confuses the church's cultural or political success with the advance of the kingdom, or the defeatism that interprets the church's opposition and suffering as evidence that the kingdom is failing. The amillennial conviction that we are already living in the age of Christ's reign, with all the "already" of the inaugurated kingdom and all the "not yet" of the consummated kingdom, is the theological framework that enables the church to engage the present age with both realistic assessment of its difficulties and confident hope in the certain outcome of history.

We must also believe that the Great Commission is a royal commission, that the church goes in the name and the authority of the one who already reigns, not in the hope that He will eventually reign if enough people convert. The missiological confidence of the church rests not on the church's own resources, strategies, or cultural influence but on the pasa exousia of the one who sends it. The ambassador who goes in the name of an all-powerful King goes with a confidence that the ambassador who goes in the name of a potential future King cannot possess. The church's mission is possible, sustainable, and certain of ultimate success because the one who sends it already holds all authority in heaven and on earth.

B. For the Heart: What Must We Feel and Desire?

Let the kingly office of Christ transform the affective register in which you engage the difficulties and adversities of Christian ministry. If Christ is already reigning, if all things are under His feet and He governs them all for the sake of His body, then the opposition you face in ministry is not evidence of cosmic indifference but of the ongoing spiritual conflict between the already-reigning King and the enemies who have not yet been finally subdued. The adversity is real; the conflict is real; the suffering is real. But so is the victory. The King who was crucified and raised has already won the decisive battle; the present age is the working out of that victory toward its final consummation; and the

church that knows this will fight with the confidence of those who know the outcome, not with the desperation of those who fear the worst.

Desire a congregation that worships the King with the full emotional range that His kingly reality demands: the awe and reverence of those who stand before the supreme Lord of all creation, the gratitude and joy of those who know that this sovereign Lord died for them, the confidence and boldness of those who go in His name and His authority, and the hope and endurance of those who live between the already of the inaugurated kingdom and the not yet of the consummated kingdom. The kingly office of Christ is not a cold theological abstraction; it is the most personally empowering and the most cosmically exhilarating reality in the universe.

C. For the Hands: What Must We Do?

- Preach the present reign of Christ explicitly and regularly. Many evangelical congregations have a robust sense of Christ as their personal Savior and a genuine hope for His future return but a very thin or absent sense of Christ as the present reigning King over all things. The sermon series that establishes the present reign of Christ from Ephesians 1:20–23, Colossians 1:15–20, Matthew 28:18–20, and Revelation 20:1–6 (in its amillennial reading) will transform the congregation's understanding of both the present age and the church's mission within it.
- Ground the Great Commission in the kingly authority of the one who gives it. Every sermon or teaching on mission should begin with Matthew 28:18, not with the command ('Go therefore') but with the ground of the command ('All authority has been given to Me'). The missional confidence of the church is not generated by enthusiasm, strategy, or cultural relevance; it is generated by the recognition that the one who sends the church already holds all authority over the nations He is sending the church to reach. The congregation that understands the royal ground of the Great Commission will not treat mission as one optional program among others but as the central royal duty of those who live under the sovereignty of the reigning King.
- Address the relationship between the kingdom of God and political engagement with theological precision and pastoral care. The question of how Christians should engage in political life is one of the most contested and most divisive questions in contemporary evangelical culture, and the theology of the kingdom is directly relevant to it. The kingly office of Christ, specifically the distinction between the spiritual nature and the universal scope of the kingdom, provides the framework for an answer that avoids both the error of political quietism (retreating from cultural engagement in the name of spiritual purity) and the error of political triumphalism (treating political victory as equivalent to the advance of the kingdom). Christ reigns over all things, including the political order; His kingdom advances through the Word and Spirit, not through political power; and the church's engagement in the political sphere should be shaped by the values of the kingdom rather than the logic of any particular political movement.

- Teach the congregation the meaning of 'King of Kings and Lord of Lords' (Revelation 19:16) in the context of the entire book of Revelation. Revelation was written to a church facing Roman imperial persecution, and its central christological claim, that the Lamb who was slain is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, was the most countercultural and the most personally empowering claim imaginable in that context. The Caesar who demanded worship was not the ultimate lord; the crucified Galilean was. Teaching this christological claim in the context of contemporary opposition to the Christian faith will give the congregation the same theological ground of confidence and endurance that Revelation was written to provide.
- Use the already/not yet structure of the kingdom to frame the congregation's experience of suffering, disappointment, and apparent failure in ministry. When individual believers experience the gap between the kingdom's present reality and its future consummation, when prayer seems unanswered, when faithfulness seems unrewarded, when the opposition seems overwhelming, the already/not yet framework provides both a realistic account of why the gap exists and a confident hope that the gap will be closed. The King is already reigning; the outcome is already determined; and the 'not yet' of the present age is moving, under His sovereign governance, toward the 'then' of the consummated kingdom.

STUDY AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

OPENING QUESTION

1. How central is the present reign of Christ to the way you think about your life, your ministry, and the current state of the church in the world? When you face opposition, suffering, or apparent failure in ministry, does the reality of Christ's present reign function as a genuine source of confidence and endurance, or does it feel more like a theoretical doctrine than a living reality? What would change in your ministry posture if you were more deeply and more practically convinced that Christ is already reigning over all things?

OBSERVATION QUESTIONS (WHAT DO THE TEXTS SAY?)

2. Read 2 Samuel 7:12–16 carefully. Identify the specific elements of the Davidic covenant: the promise of the permanent throne, the father-son relationship between YHWH and the Davidic king, and the conditional and unconditional dimensions of the covenant (v. 14 introduces consequences for sin, but v. 16 maintains the permanence of the throne). How do Acts 2:30–36 and Luke 1:32–33 identify Jesus as the fulfillment of this covenant? What specific elements of the Davidic covenant does each New Testament text identify as fulfilled in Jesus?

3. Read Ephesians 1:15–23, with particular attention to verses 20–23. Identify the four-part description of Christ's present exaltation in verses 20–21 (raised from the dead, seated at the right hand, far above all rule and authority, every name that is named). What is the scope of the subjection described in verse 22 ('all things')? What is the specific relationship between Christ's universal cosmic lordship and His headship over the church in verses 22–23? How does verse 22b ('gave Him as head over all things to the church') establish that the universal cosmic reign is exercised for the church's benefit?

4. Read Matthew 28:16–20. What is the specific ground of the Great Commission stated in verse 18 before the command is given in verse 19? How does the royal ground ('all authority has been given to Me') relate to the missiological scope ('all the nations') and the promising presence ('I am with you always')? Why does the commission begin with a statement about authority rather than a statement about urgency or strategy? What does the structure of the commission tell you about the theological ground of the church's missional confidence?

5. Read 1 Corinthians 15:20–28. Identify the eschatological sequence Paul describes: the resurrection of Christ as the firstfruits (v. 20), the resurrection of those who belong to Christ at His coming (v. 23), and the end when He hands over the kingdom to the Father (v. 24). What is the specific description of Christ's present reign in verses 24–25 ('He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet')? What is the 'last enemy' to be abolished (v. 26), and why is it significant that it is the last rather than the first? What does verse 28 ('the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him') mean, does it imply the subordination of the Son in His divine nature?

INTERPRETATION QUESTIONS (WHAT DOES IT MEAN?)

6. The lesson affirms the amillennial conviction that Christ is already reigning from the right hand of the Father and that the present age is the age of His kingdom. How does the New Testament's application of Psalm 110:1 to the present session of Christ (Acts 2:34–36; Hebrews 1:13; 10:12–13) support this conviction? How does the amillennial reading of Revelation 20:1–6 interpret the 'thousand years' and the 'binding of Satan' in a way that is consistent with the New Testament's declaration of Christ's present reign? What are the most significant exegetical challenges to the amillennial reading, and how would you respond to them?

7. The lesson presents John 18:36 ('My kingdom is not of this world') as establishing the spiritual nature of the kingdom's mode of advance rather than limiting its scope. How does this reading avoid both the error of kingdom triumphalism (using earthly power to advance the kingdom) and the error of kingdom quietism (limiting the kingdom's relevance to 'spiritual' matters)? What specific biblical evidence supports the universal scope of the kingdom (it has something to say about every dimension of life) alongside the spiritual mode of its advance (it advances through the Word and Spirit, not through political power)?

8. The lesson argues that the Great Commission is a royal commission grounded in the pasa exousia of the reigning King, and that the church's missional confidence rests on His authority rather than on the church's own resources. How does this royal grounding of the Great Commission differ from pragmatic, strategy-driven, or culturally-adaptive approaches to mission? What specific pastoral and missional consequences follow from the conviction that the one who sends the church already holds all authority over the nations being reached?

9. The lesson describes the Colossian hymn (Colossians 1:15–20) as establishing two dimensions of Christ's cosmic lordship: the creational ('by Him all things were created… in Him all things hold together') and the reconciliatory ('through Him to reconcile all things to Himself'). How do these two dimensions of the cosmic lordship relate to the kingly office? What does the reconciliation of 'all things' in Colossians 1:20 mean, does it imply universal salvation, or something else? How does the Colossian hymn deepen the understanding of what the kingly reign of Christ is ultimately aimed at?

10. The lesson presents the kingly office as the theological ground of the Christian's hope for history, the conviction that this age is not a meaningless chaos but a governed process moving toward a glorious destination. How does the already/not yet structure of the kingdom help the believer navigate the gap between the present experience of suffering and opposition and the future expectation of the consummated kingdom? What specific New Testament texts would you use to ground this hope for a believer who is experiencing the 'not yet' more acutely than the 'already'?

APPLICATION QUESTIONS (WHAT DOES IT DEMAND OF US?)

11. The lesson describes two opposite errors in understanding the relationship between the kingdom of God and cultural or political engagement: kingdom triumphalism (using earthly power to advance the kingdom) and kingdom quietism (limiting the kingdom's relevance to 'spiritual' matters). Which of these two errors do you think is more prevalent in your specific ministry context and in the broader evangelical culture you inhabit? What specific theological convictions and what specific pastoral practices would most effectively address the more prevalent error?

12. The lesson recommends teaching Revelation 19:16 ('King of Kings and Lord of Lords') in the context of the original recipients of Revelation, a church facing Roman imperial persecution, and then applying the same christological claim to the contemporary church's experience of opposition. What specific forms of opposition does your congregation face? How would the explicit declaration that the crucified Galilean is King of Kings and Lord of Lords over every authority that opposes the church change the way your congregation responds to opposition? What would a sermon on Revelation 19:11–16 look like in your specific pastoral context?

13. The lesson recommends grounding the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18 before moving to the imperative of verse 19. Think of the most recent time you preached or taught on the Great Commission. Did you establish the royal ground of verse 18 before presenting the missional

imperative? What would change in your congregation's motivation for and engagement with mission if they understood the commission as a royal commission from the one who already holds all authority, rather than as a moral obligation to be discharged by those with a missionary temperament?

14. This lesson completes Unit 6 on the Threefold Office of Christ. Looking back over the four lessons of the unit, the Munus Triplex Introduced (Lesson 16), Christ as Prophet (17), Christ as Priest (18), and Christ as King (19), what is the single most significant insight you have gained about the comprehensive work of Christ? How has the threefold office framework changed the way you understand the relationship between the Word (prophetic), the cross (priestly), and the present reign (kingly) of Christ? And as you look ahead to Unit 7 on the Atoning Work of Christ (Lessons 20–24), how does the priestly office established in Lesson 18 prepare the ground for the more detailed treatment of the atonement that is to come?

PRAYER FOCUS

Open this lesson's prayer time with a reading of Revelation 5:1–14, the heavenly vision of the Lamb who was slain and who is worthy to receive all authority, and who receives from the entire created order the sevenfold doxology that is the proper response to His kingly triumph. Read it as the heavenly liturgy that frames and interprets the whole of the present age: the slain Lamb is on the throne; the scroll of history is in His hands; and the whole creation, the four living creatures, the twenty-four elders, the myriads of angels, and every creature in heaven and earth and under the earth, joins in the doxology that declares His worthiness. Let the group enter into this heavenly liturgy as those who are already, in the present age, participating in the worship of the Lamb who reigns. The doxology of Revelation 5 is not merely the eschatological future; it is the present reality of heaven into which the church is drawn in its worship.

Spend time in worship of Christ the King under the specific dimensions of the kingly office developed in this lesson. Adore Him as the fulfillment of the Davidic covenant, the one whose throne is established forever, who is the Son of God in the most complete and permanent sense, and in whom every promise made to David and to Israel finds its eternal Yes. Adore Him as the risen, ascended, and enthroned Lord who reigns at the right hand of the Majesty on high, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, with all things under His feet for the sake of His body the church. Adore Him as the coming King whose return will consummate in visible, universal, eschatological glory the reign He has been exercising invisibly since the ascension, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords before whom every knee will bow and every tongue will confess.

Pray the Great Commission as a royal prayer. Bring before the reigning King the specific nations, peoples, and communities that the church is trying to reach. Ask the one who holds all authority over these nations to open hearts, remove obstacles, sustain and protect missionaries and evangelists, and bring the word of the kingdom to those who have not yet heard it. Pray for boldness in the proclamation of the royal gospel, the news that the King has come, has died, has risen, and is now reigning, and that He is calling every person from every nation to submit to His authority and receive His grace. And pray the promise of Matthew 28:20 ('I am with you always, even to the end of the age') as the specific ground of the church's missional confidence: the one who sends the church is the one who accompanies it, and the one who accompanies it is the one who holds all authority in heaven and on earth.

Close with the doxology of Revelation 5:12–13, spoken together as the congregation's participation in the heavenly worship of the Lamb who reigns:

> ***"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing… To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever."***
>
> **REVELATION 5:12–13, NASB 1995**

Soli Deo Gloria

To God Alone Be the Glory

FAITHFUL TO THE WORD

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