

Bible Basics Conference 2011: “Christ the Lord, Christ the Head, Christ the King”

Part 10

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[00:00:00] I'd like to preface my remarks upon the accompanying slides by reading a verse from John 15.

John 15, verse 15.

Henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth.

But I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.

We've been occupied thus far in our time together today with Jesus as Lord, and we've been left with no misapprehension.

[00:01:14] We recognise that he is the Lord of every Christian.

We've been occupied with the Lord Jesus as Head, and we've been left in no doubt that he is the Head of every Christian.

But now we come to the subject of the Lord Jesus as King.

And let me say, emphatically, as we launch upon this study, that the Lord Jesus is not the King of the Christian.

[00:02:16] You may ask me, why then should we as Christians spend time occupying ourselves with Christ as King?

And it is for this reason that I read verse 15 in John's Gospel, chapter 15. In its context, the Lord Jesus is referring to those heavenly things that have been shown to him by the Father. [00:03:01]

Those things that are brought before us in the course of the Gospel of John. But in principle, what the Lord Jesus said there is capable of a much broader application.

And that is that he counts us as his friends.

He counts the Christian as one who has an interest in him, the Lord.

He counts upon the Christian as his friends who will be delighted to be occupied with the fact that the Lord Jesus is King.

[00:04:04] And that he is to take up his station as King in this world at God's appointed time.

I was pleased to see Nick's slide of those lovely parcels, those lovely presents.

And it reminded me of my children when they were little.

And Christmastime could be a little bit fraught because they each had to have the same number of parcels. And broadly speaking, the parcels had to be about the same size as each of the parcels of the other.

[00:05:06] And the point I'm making is that all they were interested in was what was for them.

And that's a characteristic of immaturity.

As we get older, we take delight in what is for others.

And this can also be a characteristic of an immature Christian.

Where the only thing that the immature Christian is interested in in the Bible is what's for them. And that's so sad.

Because they're putting themselves at the centre.

And we as believers are not at the centre. [00:06:04] Christ is at the centre.

And it is our immense privilege to be occupied with the glories that are his, the offices that he is going to fill, the offices and functions that are his now as Lord and Head, and the office that he will fill as King when he comes.

First of all, we should notice that God has appointed that the Lord Jesus should be King.

And already in his purpose, he has set his King upon his holy hill of Zion.

[00:07:10] And there is no power in heaven, on earth or under the earth that can overthrow this divine purpose.

And yet we know from the psalm from which this quotation is taken, that it shows that Jehovah and his King, God and the Lord Jesus are opposed by the nations in relation to this very matter.

Backtracking just for a moment, I ought to mention that Psalms 1 and 2 are critical. [00:08:06] They form a preface to the whole collection of Psalms.

And they bring before us themes that we find taken up and developed right through the other Psalms.

In Psalm 1, what we have brought before us essentially are that in Israel there are godly and there are ungodly.

These are Jews on earth.

And we're talking about a time that will begin once we the church have been taken up to be with the Lord and God will begin again to work with his earthly people Israel.

[00:09:13] Psalm 1 notices that within Israel there are godly and there are ungodly.

And the ungodly are dealt with by divine judgment.

That's how God liberates his earthly people, the godly in Israel.

He delivers them by executing judgment upon their enemies, the ungodly in the nation of Israel. In Psalm 2, we have the introduction of Jehovah's King, the Lord Jesus.

And as we read down in that Psalm, we learn that his king is his son and that he begets [00:10:24] the humanity of the Lord Jesus in time, which the Lord Jesus takes. And as we've said already, Jehovah and his king are opposed, but he who is altogether above them, he that sitteth in the heavens and looks down upon the poverty and pretension [00:11:01] of those nations that oppose his purpose, he laughs at them.

As I've said, in his purpose he has already installed his king in his holy hill of Zion.

And just as he will deliver the godly in Israel by the judgment of their enemies, so also he will make way for his king, the Lord Jesus, by the execution of judgment upon the kings and rulers of the earth. So in Psalm 1, we talk about the godly and the ungodly in Israel. Here in Psalm 2, the subject is the heathen, those who are of the nations. The way for his king is made by the execution of judgment. [00:12:06] We then move on to Psalm 24, and the Psalm is anticipating the coming of the king.

And there is this verse twice repeated in verses 7 and 9, lift up your heads, O ye gates, be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the king of glory shall come in. And as we read on in the Psalm, it shows us the basis on which the Lord Jesus takes the kingdom.

And in many respects, just as we were occupied with the basis on which Jesus is Lord in Philippians [00:13:07] chapter 2, and we saw there that there was a personal basis on which he could take the place of Lord, and a moral basis on which he could take the place of Lord. We have a similar situation presented to us here in Psalm 24. First of all, the Psalm opens by emphasizing, as we shall see later on in the Psalm, that the king is actually Jehovah himself, and he is the creator.

There is also a moral qualification.

[00:14:02] Qualification. Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?

Who has the right to take this place of king and to rule?

Only he that has clean hands and a pure heart. The clean hands are connected with righteousness in outward dealings, and the pure heart is connected with inward holiness. Furthermore, there is now a people that seek unto him. There were a people that sought unto him when he was here, they were a remnant of the Jews, [00:15:02] a small portion of the nation as a whole, and that group of believers on the day of Pentecost formed the nucleus of the church.

But now the church is gone, the Lord has come for his own, we have been translated, and we are with the Lord Jesus in heaven, but God has now another people on earth with whom he is working again, and the first characteristic of this believing remnant is that they seek unto Jehovah.

And you remember that the Lord Jesus said to the Jews, well you won't see me again until you say, blessed is he that cometh in the name of Jehovah. [00:16:08] And now there are such a people, and to such a people he returns. And he suddenly comes to his temple, we'll consider more about this as we proceed, he is mighty in battle because he's the one who executes this divine judgment on all those that oppose, he's Jehovah.

He is Jehovah of hosts, the king of glory.

And it's remarkable that in Hebrews 1 we were talking this afternoon, this morning, about the fact that the Lord Jesus is called God, we shall see that in Psalm 45 too. [00:17:08] The Lord Jesus is called God, but there were others in the Old Testament who were called gods, who were creatures, who were acting as representatives of God.

But there is a name of God in the Old Testament that is never ever used, of anyone but God, and that is the name Jehovah. And were we to turn to Hebrews chapter 1, we should find there that the Lord Jesus is shown to be Jehovah and thou, Jehovah in the beginning. It's laid the foundation of the earth and the heavens are the works of thy fingers. I don't think I'm quoting it correctly, but as we see by one of the earlier points, [00:18:04] the king is Jehovah, he is the creator and he is the king of glory. He's the Lord of glory and he's the king of glory. And then we come to Psalm 45, which has a great deal more to tell us about the king.

But before we get into some of the detail in Psalm 45, I want to consider the psalm in its context in the second book of Psalms, because actually there are five books of Psalms that together make up the collection of 150 Psalms. And as a matter of fact, there are not 66 books in the Bible, there are 70, which is a number I [00:19:05] much prefer to 66.

But Psalm 45 in its context, the second book of Psalms begins with Psalm 42. And Psalm 42, just like Psalm 1, because we've come to the beginning of another book and we have the same principles laid down, if you like, at the beginning of the second book, as we have had brought before us at the beginning of the first book in Psalms 1 and 2. Psalm 42 therefore distinguishes a godly Jewish remnant. The remnant of the Jews will know nothing of the Christian blessing that we enjoy.

And it's a mistake for Christians to go back to the Old Testament and to read about believers [00:20:07] there and to think that they enjoyed all the blessings that we as Christians know. That won't be the

case at all. But here in Psalm 42, we are going to be occupied with some of the things that they do know. That they do know. And the first thing they know is that they are no longer in covenant relationship with Jehovah. They are not yet in the good or under the blessing of the new covenant. All they know is that they've broken the first covenant, the covenant of the law. And they know that because they've broken the law, they've lost everything that, properly speaking, they could claim as the earthly people of God. [00:21:10] They're reproached by their enemies, the unbelieving Jews all around them, to ask them, where is thy God?

And they panteth after thirst for hope in and remember God. But they are not in the enjoyment of a settled relationship with him. Their consciences are deeply affected by the fact that they know that they have broken the law. They don't enjoy justification by faith as we enjoy it. They don't have that blessing at this point in time. [00:22:04] And then in Psalm 43, they seek deliverance. And as well as the ungodly in Psalm 43 in verse 1, there's reference to the deceitful and unjust man, a reference to the antichrist, the man who will be the religious head in the nation of Israel under whose leadership the unbelieving Jews will arrange themselves. In Psalm 43, they seek deliverance from the ungodly and antichrist desire to be led to his holy hill, tabernacle and altar. In Psalm 44, we come to the subject of the nations again. Psalm 43, it's the ungodly in Israel and the antichrist. Psalm 44, it's the heathen again, from whom they desire to be delivered and certain other [00:23:11] positive statements are made about them, particularly in verses 17 to 22, where they plead their integrity. What that means is that they take the place of being completely consistent with the truth that they know. It makes me hang my head in shame when we've been thinking about the Lord as our Lord and [00:24:02] the Lord as our head. They can plead integrity. And then we come to Psalm 45. And in Psalm 45, we breathe a completely different atmosphere because the king has come. And all those things that troubled them have been taken away. They are liberated. And they're no longer occupied with themselves or with their enemies. They sing a song of the beloved. Now their eyes are fastened upon the Lord Jesus.

They are liberated, heart and tongue set free. They celebrate his perfections. [00:25:01] The grace that is poured into his lips and what they are celebrating is that in grace, he has now spoken to them on the occasion of the giving of the law.

We know that it was accompanied by thunder and lightning and thunder and lightning and it was accompanied by thunder and lightning, lots of things that pointed to the opposite of grace.

But they rejoice in the grace that is poured into his lips because in that grace, he has now spoken to them and relieved them of every burden that formerly they carried.

[00:26:04] They call upon him to gird his sword upon his thigh. I'm going to run out of time, Michael. Can I carry on? Good, thank you. We noticed in the previous psalm that twice over, there was reference to the gates being lift up, that the king of glory might come in and there is a reason for that. There is a reason why here, they speak about his majesty and might because the Lord Jesus will already have come in the way that Revelation chapter 19 shows us.

This is the first time that the king of glory has come in. [00:27:02] This is the first aspect, the first part of the appearing of the Lord Jesus.

He comes from heaven and he destroys the armies of the west under the leadership of the beast, the head of the revived Roman empire. And as we read at the end of Revelation chapter 19, the beast

and the false prophet, the antichrist are both cast alive into the lake of fire.

So he's already displayed. By the time he appears in Jerusalem, he has already displayed his majesty and might.

[00:28:02] And after those western powers have been destroyed, then his feet shall come down upon the Mount of Olives as we read in Zechariah chapter 14 and he shall enter in. The king of glory, he shall enter in. But his dealings with his enemies are not over in a flash. It's not like the rapture at all. Because there are other enemies that are to be dealt with. And we know from other scriptures, for example, that there will be the Assyrian power supported by the forces of the east.

[00:29:05] We read of them in the latter verses of Daniel chapter 11 and in Zechariah chapter 14. And the Lord Jesus will deal with these foes too. In Psalm 46, the remnant are in trouble again. The king has come. But they say, God is our refuge and strength, the very present help in trouble. Why are they in trouble? They are in trouble because the forces of the Assyrian have already passed through Jerusalem once and sacked half the city. And now they're coming back again. Daniel 11 makes this abundantly clear. And so the Lord Jesus will destroy that enemy too.

[00:30:02] His throne and fitness to reign, he is addressed as God. Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever. His kingdom is never going to be superseded by another kingdom. And the scepter of his kingdom is a right scepter, a scepter of righteousness, which represents the principle according to which he will govern. He will govern in absolute righteousness. And he's owned as already having loved righteousness and hated lawlessness. And we know that he died on the cross in order to establish the one. Righteousness and to put away the other wickedness. He has shown how much righteousness means to him.

[00:31:05] And he is therefore the one who is fit to wield the scepter of righteousness. And therefore, God, his God has anointed him with the oil of gladness above his fellows. His joy will be greater than the joy of any of the remnant.

All his garments smell of myrrh. And those three references are references to the occasions in the New Testament when we read of the Lord Jesus weeping. Aloes, we can see here was something brought forward on the occasion of the Lord's death. And these garments show that here in this world, when he first came, he was a man of sorrows, [00:32:06] one acquainted with grief. Cassia, and this is beautiful because Cassia was used in the holy anointing oil of the priest. And we know that the Lord Jesus will not only be king, but he will also be a priest upon his throne so that he not only maintains righteousness in his kingdom, but he also maintains the connection with God. Those two things obviously go together. And he has a queen. And here in Psalm 45, the queen isn't the assembly. He has a consul on earth.

We are used to the idea of the assembly, the bride of Christ, being presented to us in scripture, [00:33:13] also under the figure of a city, the new Jerusalem. There it is above the centre of divine of divine administration in the heavens. And that city, that new Jerusalem is his heavenly consul. Just so, his earthly consul is an earthly city. It is Jerusalem, which will be the centre of divine administration on the earth. And it's referred to in Matthew 5, verse 35, as the city of the great king. It stands in gold of Ophir, [00:34:08] which I understand means gold from India.

And gold all through scripture is a figure of divine righteousness.

And in order that that city might stand in divine righteousness, that divine righteousness had to be brought from a very long way away. And we think again about the Lord Jesus coming from heaven, down into this world in order to suffer for us upon the cross in those three hours of darkness, being made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. And now, [00:35:05] now the city of Jerusalem will stand in the same righteousness. And there is wrought gold, which signifies that this righteousness, just as it should be seen practically in the life of the Christian every day of his sojourn here on earth. So this divine righteousness will be seen in the life and practice of this city. This is the name wherewith Jerusalem shall be called Jehovah our righteousness. His name will be remembered to all generations. And what I've done is to refer to some of the references at the end of Psalm 22, where the vista is opened out, and we see the blessing just rolling on and rolling on and rolling on around the earth. And through the generations that are to come, so that his name will be remembered [00:36:09] in Israel, the great congregation in the nations, and those who are born during the millennium, too, will remember his name. Now I end where I began. And I hope you young people aren't disappointed to hear that Christ isn't your king. Because if I may come back to the parcels, the presents, your present is the biggest present. Your present is the best present. The blessing of the Christian is the greatest possible blessing. And the blessing of the Jewish remnant and that of the nations on earth in the world to [00:37:06] come is tiny in comparison with your blessing now. You've got it. You've got it all. You are blessed with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ now. Now all God says is, you know, when I give my children their presents, enjoy it. Enjoy it. Unwrap it. Enjoy it. And that's what God wants us to do now. And we've been seeing how we get to that point by practically acknowledging the Lord Jesus as Lord and head. I was struck by the fact when I looked up the references to the Lord Jesus as king outside of the four Gospels, that there are how many? Any offers? No, I'm sorry. [00:38:07] It's easy. No, nobody wants to be made to look silly, do they? Now there's a man who knows his scriptures. He's almost right. He said two, but it's actually three. There are only three references to Christ as king outside of the four Gospels. When you compare that to the number of references to him as Lord, it is self-evident that our relationship with him as Christians is as Lord and not as king. They are the references. Two of them are in the latter chapters of the book of Revelation. And there are two references, sorry, there are, oh, [00:39:02] we've got a preview. Is it the up button? Top right. Page up. There we are. There are three other references where God is referred to as king. I'll conclude by saying, don't be afraid of prophetic scripture, but don't approach Old Testament scripture in a selfish, self-appropriating way. Even when my children were little, and they were only interested in what was for them, they never stooped to the point where they were pinching the other one's parcels. Now that's what immature Christians do when they go to the Old Testament and they rob the Jews [00:40:09] of their portion and they say, that's mine too. Sorry, David. But the Lord would encourage us, I am sure, and the Spirit would encourage us in everything to be occupied with Christ, to have Christ before us, whether we're reading the Old Testament or the New Testament, we read that the spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus, who's in the middle of the picture. When we read prophetic scripture, it is Christ, more often than not Christ as king, rejected or coming or reigning. And may the Lord help and encourage us to study his precious word in its totality and to benefit from it.