

Does Christ Now Reign As King?

Introduction. It is difficult for us to fully understand the significance of the announcement at the birth of Jesus that He would reign on the throne of His father David (Luke 1:30-33). In our society of "equal rights" it is inconceivable that a ruler, like Herod, would react with a decree to kill all children two years and under around Bethlehem just because a child described as "King of the Jews" was born (Matthew 2:2-3). Furthermore, one might wonder why it even mattered to the Jews what was inscribed on His cross. They demanded that Pilate change the wording from "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews" (John 19:19-22). Surely the claim that Jesus is King has stirred the passion of the world to as deep a degree of hate as it has to love.

Our difference with the Premillennialist is not over whether Jesus Christ is the one who is to be King. We both agree He is the Messiah. But our disagreement is over whether He now rules or whether His kingdom is yet in the future.

I. ***Two Significant Old Testament Promises Concerning His Kingship***

- A. Christ will reign on the throne of David (2 Samuel 7:12-16).
 1. No one else can reign than one who is of the lineage of David. Furthermore, He would reign "forever." How could a 1,000 years satisfy this condition?
 2. David's literal throne was in the city of Jerusalem. He was succeeded by his son, Solomon, then Rehoboam, through to Zedekiah, a total of 21 kings since David. Each of these occupied the literal throne of David in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah. However, in 586 B.C. the Babylonians overran the city, and David's throne was destroyed. That throne lay in ruins for more than 600 years.
 3. Christ's birth was announced, but when and where Christ was to reign was misunderstood by the Jews. It is also misunderstood by Premillennialists.
- B. God's kingdom will be established in the days of the Roman Empire (Daniel 2:36-45).
 1. Daniel interpreted Nebuchadnezzar's dream regarding the world kingdoms to come.
 - a) 1st kingdom (head of gold) was Babylonian (Daniel 2:36-38).
 - b) 2nd kingdom (arms and breast of silver) was Medo-Persian (Daniel 2:39).
 - c) 3rd kingdom (belly and thighs of brass) was Grecian (Daniel 2:39).
 - d) 4th kingdom (legs of iron; feet of iron and clay) was Roman (Daniel 2:40-43).

2. "In the days of these kings" (of the 4th kingdom, Daniel 2:40) "shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom ..." (Daniel 2:44). Either this came to pass as spoken by God through the prophet, or the scripture is broken and prophecy is therefore unreliable, or else the Lord made a mistake. The last two alternatives are unacceptable to any believing Christian!

II. ***Have These Prophecies Been Fulfilled?***

- A. Several witnesses claim He is now reigning as King.
 1. The angel Gabriel announced at His birth that God would give Him the throne of His father David (Luke 1:30-33).
 2. Peter preached after His death that God had raised Him up to sit on David's throne (Acts 2:29-36).
 - a) "To sit" (vs. 30) is an infinitive with the construction of an adverb, carrying the idea of purpose equivalent to "He raised Christ that He should sit on His throne."
 - b) If Christ is not now on David's throne, the resurrection must have been deferred! But "know assuredly" that He is now reigning (vss. 33-36)!
 3. James declared that in order to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, the tabernacle of David had to be rebuilt (Acts 15:13-17).
 - a) He quoted from Amos 9:11. Here the "tabernacle" means the lineage, family, or descendants of David. Though his family had earlier ceased to occupy the throne, Christ is now raised up of this lineage to reign.
 - b) If this is not true of Christ, the Gentiles are yet without God and without hope! The hope of the "residue of men" (vs. 17) depends on the fulfillment of this prophecy.
- B. The testimony is abundant that His kingdom has been established.
 1. Jesus Himself declared the kingdom was "at hand" during the days of the Roman Empire (Mark 1:14-15).
 - a) Mark 9:1 -- He said some would not die before they saw it come with "power."
 - b) Acts 1:8 -- "Power" would come with the "Holy Ghost."
 - c) Acts 2:4 -- The "Holy Ghost" came on the day of "Pentecost," therefore this marks the beginning of the kingdom of God on earth, and this is within the time frame of the prophecy of Daniel.
 2. The apostle Paul spoke as though he believed the kingdom was established.
 - a) Colossians 1:13 -- Some had been translated "into the kingdom of His dear Son."

- b) Hebrews 12:28 -- He said we have received a "kingdom which cannot be moved." This is the kind of kingdom Daniel prophesied it would be (Daniel 2:44-45).
- 3. John also spoke of the kingdom as being in existence.
 - a) Revelation 1:9 -- He described himself as being a companion "in the kingdom."
 - b) Revelation 1:5-6; 5:9-10 -- Those redeemed by Christ's blood are in the kingdom.
- 4. The church and the kingdom are equal. The church is not an "afterthought."
 - a) The church is "a spiritual house" (1 Peter 2:5). "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36); hence, it is a spiritual kingdom (John 3:3-8; Romans 14:17).
 - b) By one Spirit, we are baptized "into one body," the church (1 Corinthians 12:13). We are "born of water and of the Spirit" to "enter" the kingdom (John 3:3, 5).
 - c) God set Christ to be head over all things to the church (Ephesians 1:20-23; Colossians 1:18). God set His King on His holy hill of Zion (Psalm 2:6). Since kings are set over kingdoms, Christ has rule over His kingdom (Luke 1:32-33; 1 Corinthians 15:24; Acts 2:30-31; Hebrews 1:3, 8).
 - d) The "mountain," government, or house (church) of the Lord go forth "from Jerusalem" (Isaiah 2:2-3; 1 Timothy 3:15; Hebrews 3:6). God set His King upon His holy hill of Zion; His government, throne, dominion, and kingdom began "at Jerusalem" (Psalm 2:6; Luke 1:32-33; 24:47-49; Acts 1:6; 2:5, 30-31; 11:15).
- C. How can He be ruling on David's throne if He is not on earth?
 - 1. We must first understand that David was reigning over God's people, the Jews. By physical birth, an Israelite came under his rule. Although his literal throne was in Jerusalem, the "throne of David" (1 Kings 2:12) is in reality the "throne of the Lord" (1 Chronicles 29:23).
 - 2. Christ is now reigning over God's people, but we come under His rule by a spiritual birth. Since He reigns on the throne of the Lord, He is on David's throne.
 - a) It is now a spiritual kingdom (Luke 17:20-21; John 18:36).
 - b) We are made citizens by a spiritual birth (John 3:3-5).
 - c) The rule of God's people is in heaven (Daniel 7:13-14; Ephesians 1:20-23).
 - d) Christ is both King and Priest (Zechariah 6:12-13; Hebrews 8:1).
 - e) He is now King of Kings (Revelation 17:14).

III. **Why Bring Christ Back To The Earth?**

- A. His mission of redemption is already complete (Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:13-14). What more could He do?
- B. His authority is complete (Matthew 28:18-20; Colossians 1:16-18; Hebrews 12:25). What else must He prove?
- C. His revelation is complete (Jude 3; Hebrews 1:1-3). Why would we desire anything else?
- D. His glory is complete (Luke 24:25-26; 1 Peter 1:20-21). Should He give up this to return?
- E. He cannot reign in Jerusalem (Jeremiah 22:30).
 - 1. Because of the sin of idolatry, Jehoiachin, or Coniah, was the last of the Judean kings. In him the royal line became extinct. Jeremiah 23:5-6 goes on to speak of the new King to be raised up by the Lord (cf. Matthew 2:2; Luke 1:32; 19:38).
 - 2. Since Christ is of the seed of Coniah, as is shown in Matthew 1:11-12, how could a reign in Jerusalem be justified?

Conclusion. Christ's work here on earth is finished. John 17:4 says, "I glorified Thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which Thou hast given Me to do." He now reigns as King in heaven!

I am deeply indebted to Robert Harkrider for the use of his material.