

One of the challenges of Christ the King Sunday is that, on balance, Americans do not have a very favorable opinion of Kings. Historically, we broke away from being governed by a monarchy, so the idea of being subject to a king is one that meets with resistance, to say the least. Having said that, there is still a fascination that many have toward Kings, and Queens for that matter. What various Kings, Queens and royal families do still grab the headlines worldwide, yet strangely, their wealth and power has conferred on them more of a celebrity status than any meaningful authority, providing a kind of regal reality show for consumers.

But while human nature bristles at the thought of a Kingly, ultimate authority, or consigns modern monarchies to nothing more than entertainment, there is something inside us that responds strongly to the idea of a good king; a king who has the best interest of his people at heart. Our imaginations are stirred by the possibility of a Ruler who really cares; a monarch who will not only make wise decisions, but also take up arms to defend his people. Two of the 20th century’s greatest British authors understood this very well and communicated it in their work. One was J.R.R. Tolkien, who in his epic work “The Lord of the Rings” created a character named Aragorn, who was a valiant warrior in the face of great evil, but who also had the peculiar ability to heal the wounded. And then there was his friend C.S. Lewis, who wrote the following in his classic “Mere Christianity.”

Enemy-occupied territory—that is what this world is. Christianity is the story of how the rightful king has landed, you might say landed in disguise, and is calling us all to take part in a great campaign of sabotage.

The writing of these Christian authors uncovers a profound truth. The Bible is the narrative of the rightful King who has landed, who has come to wage war against evil and win, a King who rules with healing in His hands. This King is Jesus, only Son of the Father, and His greatness is such that our instinctive move is to bow the knee before Him. Indeed, Scripture forecasts that the day is coming when “at the Name of Jesus every knee shall bow...and every tongue confess that He is Lord.”

And so, on this Christ the King Sunday, we’re met with an Epistle Lesson that is perfectly on point. The Apostle Paul, writing to the Christian Church in

Colossae, speaks of Jesus in a way that could be compared to bringing us, his readers, into the throne room. Paul is bringing us in and inviting us to behold the true King, to see “the Lord of all” for who He really is. As you are brought into His presence, listen again to the description given by the Apostle:

Jesus is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities, all things were created through him and for him. OK. Let’s pause for a second. Jesus, our rightful King, is described as the image of the invisible God; in other words, He is God in the flesh. God who is knowable; in fact, to know King Jesus is to know God as far as our minds will allow.

Attached to this is the remarkable truth that Jesus created everything you see and don’t see. Of course, with His Father and the Holy Spirit. But we’re told directly here that all things were created through and for Jesus, the image and Word of God. The apostle Paul makes sure to point out that “all things” includes thrones, dominions, rulers, and authorities. Jesus is sovereign over each one because they were His idea. Jesus was not exaggerating when He said, at His ascension, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.” That’s King Jesus—your King and mine.

But there’s more. Paul writes that *Jesus is before all things and in Him all things hold together. And he is the head of the Body, the Church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything He might be preeminent.* Again we have to stop and say, hang on just a minute. Are you taking this in? Jesus is not just king of a nation, He’s the King of creation! He holds the universe together. He orders reality and keeps it from flying apart. AND He is the head of the body, the Church, the full number of gathered believers who receive and deliver the King’s gifts to the world. AND He is the firstborn from the dead. Jesus is the beginning of resurrected life—not just revived for a while, but risen from death, never to die again!

Jesus is King, powerful and preeminent beyond our comprehension. It would be enough for us to be a citizen in his holy city; a subject in his kingdom, maybe even a servant in his court. But that wasn’t nearly enough for this Monarch. For we are told here that “...in [Jesus] all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.”

King Jesus, the Creator, the Preserving Force, the Origin of Power, did the most extraordinary thing ever seen. He came down from His place of rule and authority, set aside the might that keeps the solar system in motion, and became a vulnerable, killable human being. He did that because his own divine justice required that sin be condemned and punished. Rather than make his people pay, He climbed down from the throne and laid down on the cross to take the sinner's place. To take my place. To take yours. He is indeed the beginning, the firstborn from the dead. He is, for you, the beginning of new life; the beginning of purity; the beginning of holiness; the beginning of faith and bright hope. King Jesus is the beginning of reconciliation; the beginning of the peace of a clear conscience. That peace was not purchased by an army he sent into battle, but by the shedding of his own blood.

It's Christ the King Sunday. Rejoice that you have this King. King Jesus has absolute power, therefore it is right to be awestruck and to bend the knee in submission. The same King Jesus made the ultimate sacrifice, making peace by the blood of his cross, therefore He is worthy of your love.