

ASCENSION: Christ as King: Matthew 28:18-20

Christ is serving in his 3 offices/roles as priest, prophet, and king.

PRIEST: The ascended Christ in his role as High Priest, having completed propitiation, now sits on a throne of grace to preserve and protect his people. (Propitiation: Christ's blood sacrifice that satisfies the demands of God's justice.)

PROPHET: The ascended Christ in his role as prophet is fulfilling everything He revealed in the book of Revelation.

KING: The ascended Christ in his role as king is advancing and overseeing his own "Great Commission" to take the gospel of the kingdom to all nations (Matthew 28:18-20).

The King and His Kingdom Prophesied

There are several OT prophecies about King Jesus and his kingdom.

Read Daniel 7. In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel saw a dream and visions as he lay in his bed. This happened around 550 BC. Daniel had been a captive in Babylon for 50 years. The vision of four beasts covers the intertestamental period ("400 silent years") from the return of the Jews from exile in Babylon and rebuilding of the temple to the rise of the Roman Empire and the ministries of John the Baptist and Jesus Christ.

Daniel saw 4 beasts come out of the sea.

The first beast was like a lion and had eagles' wings. Its wings were plucked off, and it was lifted up from the ground and made to stand on two feet like a man, and the mind of a man was given to it. (Babylon and Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel 4)

The second beast was like a bear. It had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth; and it was told, 'Arise, devour much flesh.' (Medo-Persian Empire that defeated Babylon)

The third beast was like a leopard, with four wings of a bird on its back and four heads, and dominion was given to it. (Persian Empire, 550-330 BC or Greece 330-30 BC)

The fourth beast was terrifying and dreadful and exceedingly strong. It had great iron teeth; it devoured and broke in pieces and crushed what was left with its feet. It had ten horns. (Greece, Alexander the Great, 330-30 BC or

Roman Empire, 27 BC-AD 476) The one dominant horn that makes war with the saints and temporarily prevails over them. This refers to an Antichrist figure in history.

The most important point of this vision: **The Ancient of Days takes away the power and dominion of those 4 kingdoms and makes the 'Son of Man' a king over an everlasting kingdom.**

Daniel 7:13-14: *"I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed."*

The Son of Man shares his kingdom rule with his saints (7:22, 27): *"And the kingdom and the dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High; His kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him."*

Jesus' favorite title for himself was Son of Man. Jesus referred to Daniel 7 when he was interrogated by the religious leaders: **Mark 14:61-65**. Christ was convicted of blasphemy for claiming to be the Son of God ("Son of the Blessed") and also Daniel's Son of Man. Jesus Christ is the King who reigns and his kingdom covers all peoples, nations, and languages.

The King and His Kingdom Incarnated

In between prophesied and realized is the Kingdom's advance or invasion. I refer to Christ's 33-year life and ministry as the "incarnation invasion."

It began with His incarnation. It was an invasion. The greatest invasion of all time was D-Day. Christ's incarnation invasion was nothing like the D-Day invasion of June 6, 1944. (D-Day or "Operation Overlord" used 156,000 soldiers, 7000 ships, and 2400 aircraft.) 156,000 soldiers vs. 1 baby. The incarnation invasion was 1 baby hidden from Satan and his attempt to murder him. It began with a miraculous conception, a virgin birth, and then Christ was born in a small southern country town (Bethlehem). Christ grew up in a small northern country town (Nazareth). He took over his father's carpentry business and supported his mother and siblings.

Jesus began his public ministry after he was baptized by John. He was tempted by Satan. Matthew 4:8-10: *Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.'"*

Satan offered the world's kingdoms to Jesus if Jesus would worship him. The easy way to gain the world's kingdoms was disobedience and sin. Satan will always offer an easy way to get something. Jesus chose the hard road to the cross. The hard way to gain the world's kingdoms and become King of all kings was three years of public ministry, the cross and resurrection, and then 2000 years of spiritual warfare.

His ministry was advancing the Kingdom of God. Christ taught about the Kingdom of God. Christ demonstrated the power of the Kingdom of God. Christ sent out his 12 disciples and other followers to proclaim the Kingdom of God and demonstrate its power by healing the sick and casting out demons. The Church must preach and demonstrate the Kingdom of God.

Luke 4:43: *Jesus said to them, "I must preach the good news of the **kingdom of God** to the other towns as well; for I was sent for this purpose."*

Luke 9:1-2: *And he called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to proclaim the **kingdom of God** and to heal.*

Luke 10:1-12: *After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go. And he said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. Go your way; behold, I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves... Heal the sick in it and say to them, 'The **kingdom of God** has come near to you.'"*

Jesus spent 3 years advancing the Kingdom of God in Galilee, Samaria, and Judea. He completed the Gospel with his atoning (propitiatory) death and then resurrection.

The King Sends the Holy Spirit (Acts of the Apostles)

After Jesus ascended to the right hand of God he sent the Holy Spirit to advance the Kingdom of God. Now Jesus and the Holy Spirit work as a team to spread the Gospel of the Kingdom around the world. Jesus taught that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit was for power to be witnesses.

Acts 1:7-8: Jesus said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Peter preached at Pentecost: *Acts 2:32-33: This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing.*

The book of Acts concludes with Paul in Rome proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom, *Acts 28:31: Paul lived there two whole years at his own expense, and welcomed all who came to him, proclaiming the **kingdom of God** and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.*

Paul in the book of Acts hands off the baton to us! (I ran the final leg of the 440 relay in high school. We practiced how to pass the baton.)

We are commissioned to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. *Matthew 24:14: And this **gospel of the kingdom** will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.* Jesus will not return until we obey his command and make disciples of all nations.

The King Advances His Kingdom by Spiritual Warfare: Ephesians 6:10-20

Kings fight wars and this is war! Satan is the god of this world and he will not give the kingdoms of this world to King Jesus.

6:12: For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

We are helpless to fight against cosmic powers of darkness and spiritual forces of evil in heavenly realms! We cannot even see them. Christ and his army of angels do this fighting (Daniel 10:13: Archangel Michael overcame

the prince of the kingdom of Persia to get a message to Daniel. Rev. 12:7: Michael and his angel army throw the dragon Satan out of heaven.)

We have a big role in this spiritual warfare by sharing the gospel of the kingdom of God. The armor is for “standing firm” so it’s primarily defensive. Our only offensive weapons are prayer and the sword of the Spirit, the word of God.

King Jesus is leading a worldwide invasion by advancing his kingdom. King Jesus fights until all his enemies are a footstool for his feet (Psalm 110:1; Hebrews 1:13, 10:13).

The King and His Kingdom Realized

Read Revelation 19:11-16. This is followed by the imprisonment of Satan and King Jesus’ millennial reign for 1000 years. The saints will reign with Christ over the millennial world. There will be a final rebellion against King Jesus by sinful mankind who despise his reign. Then there will be a great white throne judgment. If your name is not in the “book of life” you will be thrown into the lake of fire. And then the eternal new heavens and earth.

The kingdom will be realized.

The ascended Christ in his office/role as king is advancing and overseeing his own “Great Commission” to take the gospel of the kingdom to all nations (Matthew 28:18-20).

Jesus is YOUR King

- We do not have a king who arrogantly and selfishly reigns over us. We have a King who walked among us in flesh and blood before he sat on his throne of grace to reign over us.
- We love our King and he loves us. There is mutual love, but the love we have is tempered by other attitudes based on the nature of our relationship with Christ. We have *submissive* and *respectful* love for our King Jesus. We are the bride of Christ and there will be a marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:6-8). The Church becomes the wife of her husband King Jesus. The husband-King’s love is perfect. The King has already shown it with His self-sacrifice. The wife-Church’s love is refined

with a submissive and respectful attitude toward her husband, just as a wife and husband according to Ephesians 5:22-33.

- So, we offer obedience to his commands. His two great commands are “Go and make disciples of all nations” and “Love one another.”
- We desire our King’s millennial reign. We’ve seen enough evil human rulers and the Holy Spirit within us causes us to deeply desire, yearn for, Christ’s rule of justice and peace.