

## Mediatorial Reign of Christ

Let us turn to our Bibles, back to Psalm 72, Psalm 72. Psalm 72, verses 11-12, let us listen attentively to the word of God. Yes, all kings shall fall down before him, all nations shall serve him, for he will deliver the needy when he cries, the poor also, and him who has no helper.

Let us pray. Our Lord and Savior, with this beautiful psalm, we are thankful, God, as it is a picture of your kingdom. Back then, through the topology of the kingdom of Israel, David and Solomon alike, but especially as it's a picture of the future of Christ coming as our king and delivered 2,000 years ago and even now reigning among all the world and mankind.

So may we learn anew, and again, God, what your reign is and what it entails and how important it is for our Christian living, that you are our king and master and protector, therefore, and God, and direct all things of this world, not only as God, but as the God-man for the good of your church. And may this comfort us, I pray, in our time of trouble. In your name alone we pray, by Jesus Christ, amen.

And so as I preached last week, this whole psalm is about the kingdom of Christ. It is a prophetic prayer about David's sons, asking the Lord to grant them, as we saw in the opening verse there, wisdom and justice to execute said things, but it continues to build into a view, as you unfold or read through the psalm, a view of the future rule of Jesus in a fuller sense that we find ourselves in today. The second set of verses that I will read right now, verses 25 and 26, in 1 Corinthians 15, 24, pairs with Psalms 72, 11, and 12.

1 Corinthians 15, 24 through 26 pairs with this psalm and these particular verses. We read there by Paul, 2 Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom of God to God the Father, when he puts an end to all the rule and all authority and power. For he must reign till he has put all enemies under his feet.

The last enemy that will be destroyed is death. He's speaking of the kingdom of Christ, the kingdom of God. Both of them together in a way that may seem confusing at first.

I pray to unpack for you this evening for more clarity. He puts an end to all rule and authority. For he must reign, that is Jesus Christ, verse 25, till he has put all enemies under his feet.

And that last enemy that will be destroyed, of course, is death. And then he will come under the Father and all will be under him. In this short selection of verses, it contains a picture, therefore, of universal power and control of our Lord Jesus Christ as the God-man-redeemer.

And as the God-man-redeemer, as both God and man, the second Adam for us, Jesus Christ, he has a kingdom, a domain or a rule that grows until all are within his realm. Even death itself comes under his reign until he has finished all the sanctification of his saints and destroys hell and death forever. And so I'm going to go through here and describe in theological terms, that is from systematic theology and the like, a description of Christ's

kingdom and explaining what is going on here in these verses, 1 Corinthians 15, for example, as well as here in Psalm 72.

We read here of the kings of, excuse me, yes, all the kings shall fall down before him. All nations shall serve him. I take that as a specimen of the broader theme of Psalm 72, right? That everyone's going to submit to him, even his enemies, it says a few verses earlier.

And Paul's saying the same thing in 1 Corinthians 15, everything, even death itself will be submitted to Jesus Christ, not merely and only as God, but as the God-man, the redeemer, and hence it's known as his mediatorial reign.

## **Christ's Kingdom of Power**

So it leads us here to the first point, Christ's kingdom of power. Properly, we have, I guess you could say logically first, the divine reign or the natural reign of Jesus as the Son of God, who is the Son of God.

The divine reign or the natural reign of the natural kingdom of God as God and Jesus Christ as a second member of the Godhead, they rule by virtue of him being God, period. He created all things by the word of his power, Christ is the word. He sustains and upholds all things by the word of his power, Christ is the word.

He is the second member of the Trinity, the Spirit is involved in this rule as well. And so as a second member of the triune God, the Son of God has divine attributes and as such he has ruled and always will rule forever and ever. And even now rules through history and guides and directs providence.

But the Son of God became man as well, the God-man. That's what I'm going to be talking about here and that's what you see highlighted in these texts, in the New Testament in particular. They're not speaking of, although texts do talk about it clearly, that God rules just by virtue of him being God and you're not God.

You're not the creator, you're not the master, you're not the sustainer of all things as such. But here it's a unique relationship. It's the God-man, both man and God in one divine person ruling now.

So there's this difference in time and space just as there was in the Old Testament before Christ took upon him the body and soul of a man. There's a difference, isn't there? We see that in Revelation, that is the giving of Revelation that was darker in the Old Testament as well as their practices and all of the topology and the future pointing towards. And similar things happening here with respect to his kingdom.

He was given a kingdom from the Father, what we call the Mediatorial reign of Christ Jesus. So the first point here is Christ's Mediatorial kingdom of power, to make it a longer title. He has a kingdom of power by virtue of him being God, period.

All three members do. But as the God-man, he has a unique thing we call the kingdom of his power, Mediatorial kingdom, as the mediator emphasizing his relationship with the church. The kingdom is a relationship with the church, his Mediatorial reign, whereas of course the divine of a natural reign, a kingdom of God as the creator of all things and one who guides all providence is him as the father, creator father, you could say, but not in a redemptive sense for anybody.

He's just their master and he's over all things. So the relationship is different, that's what we're emphasizing here in this doctrine of the Mediatorial kingdom of Jesus Christ. And one description, one part of it is we describe it as the kingdom of power.

The second part you see in the second point is the kingdom of grace. So the kingdom of power here emphasizes his sovereign ability to direct all things, that he's in charge of all things, not again, not merely only as God, but as the God-man as well, as the second Adam. He has this power short of being divine because the human is still human, but it's an authority over all things.

Like Adam was what? King of the earth, wasn't he? He was our master at the time. If we had a human race that didn't fall, he would have been king until I guess he passed it on to his kids or something, we don't really know. But that's the parallel we have here, Jesus is that new king of a new kingdom, but of course his people that he rules over is us in particular, not the world in general.

He does that as God, but as the God-man he rules over us in particular. Psalm 2.6, you know Psalm 2. Yet I have set my king on my holy hill of Zion. The father sets the son as the king over the world.

Ask of me, we read, and I will give you what? The nations for your inheritance. That's really amazing. Because again, back then the kings ruled a little slice of the earth and they thought it was really great.

I took over the whole Mediterranean. Yay, the Roman Empire. That's nothing, man.

You got the whole world you got to work on. And here it's just a casual, it's almost like casual, I'll just give you whatever you want. You can have the whole world.

Who is this but the son, the God-man, yet to be incarnate, that God, the father, gives the whole world, the whole universe to him. And the ends of the earth for your possession. And so here it clearly implies the incarnation, that there's a difference here between the father and the son, and the son has a specific job the father doesn't have which is to be the mediator and the king in this sense over his people.

Mediatorial king, can make it a hyphen description of Jesus. Ephesians 1.22 is another one in the New Testament, so that's the prophecy of Psalm 2, painting a picture of the mediatorial reign that's going to be exploding at the time of Christ that, you know, Israel's gone, you don't have the Davidic line anymore. He is literally the Davidic line, the fulfillment of it.

Ephesians 1.22 we read, And he put all things, that is God the father, put all things under Christ his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church. Right? Jesus is described, we know over and over again in the New Testament, as the head of the church. Jesus, what? The God-man.

Remember there's two things going on, he's divine and he's human. Showing the difference between the son of God's divine reign, as we read for example in John 1.1, in the beginning was the word, the word was with God, right? That's not the mediatorial reign, that's the divine nature of the son of God before he was incarnate. He just simply, that's his power, he just must and shall exercise it as a sovereign of all creation, of all existence.

But here in Ephesians 2, clearly something's going on here because he says he'll put all things under his feet. Well how is that possible if he's already God and everything's under his feet? Because he wasn't man yet. It's the man part that makes the difference, the incarnation.

God and man in one divine person, Jesus Christ. So this is therefore in Ephesians 1.22 and elsewhere as we'll see, a picture of his mediatorial reign as one who rules by the gift of the Father over and for whom? All things to the church, right? For us, uniquely and particularly. And thus to conflate Christ's natural rule over all with his mediatorial rule will cause confusion in our understanding of how to live the Christian life or how to live in the kingdom of God.

And as you know, I'm on that committee, so this is very providential. I wasn't planning on doing Psalm 72 after I was set on the committee. I thought, Lord, well here we are, let's talk more about the kingdom.

So I'll have another sermon on the kingdom and explaining the difference between the kingdom, the supernatural of Christ, and the kingdom of man in the sense of everything else in this world is a kingdom, a kingdom that works properly to live in under leaders, under business leaders, under social leaders, under family leaders. That's all the second kingdom. That's what two kingdoms means.

It just means the supernatural and the natural. That's it. And the big question is, how do they relate? You already got some of the answer this morning, right? It doesn't destroy the natural, does it? The supernatural kingdom of God does not destroy the natural kingdoms, but rather reinforces them.

But I'll say more than that. So here I want to give the groundwork in explaining what we mean by the kingdom of God, more precisely the kingdom of Christ, the mediatorial kingdom, right? So we should not conflate these two. For example, the historical conflation and the problem that came along with it was that some of the Christians during the Puritan times would argue the state has the power over the church.

You see that? If there's no mediatorial difference, distinction, that this kingdom just means a conflation, there's only one kingdom as opposed to two, you're going to ask yourself, well, who's over whom? What's the relation now, really? And they were arguing, well, it's under, because the state, of course, is Christ's kingdom. It's under Christ. Christ rules all things as a

mediator, and therefore the biggest power is the state, and churches are within states in the sense of like we have in America.

The state recognizes churches by giving them what? Tax exemption. You're not a church, but we are a church, you individually. So that's already happening in the American system, but what's going on here? So this conflation causes some problems historically.

So we need to make clear that there is a distinction between His divine power over all things and His mediatorial rule over all things. So in sum, the Son of God reign, His reign, His kingdom, is divine, that is as God, but also He has a kingdom that we describe with respect to us as mediatorial, because as eternal God He is divine and has all power and prerogative and universal in scope, but as the God-Man He has a mediatorial kingdom and a reign for His people's sake and over His people. So He is not the mediatorial king over pagan emperors, for example.

That's the implication of denying this distinction. You would say, well, I guess, well, there you go, Christ, they're in Christ's kingdom. If Christ, as we read in Ephesians 1, has all things underneath Him and you deny that the mediatorial rule is simply and only over His people specifically and for His people, you just say everyone is in His kingdom, then you're saying pagan emperors are part of His kingdom and they're not in that mediatorial sense, they are in His divine sense.

So hopefully this makes a little more sense as we continue on here. That's certainly not the case, there's a distinction. So, secondly, Christ's kingdom of grace.

## **Christ's Kingdom of Grace**

So the power is, the kingdom of power is His mediatorial reign and so is the kingdom of grace. There are two different ways of describing what's going on. In the first case, the kingdom of power describes that He has authority over all things, even pagan emperors, but they're not properly speaking within His kingdom.

They're not members of His church, they don't submit to Him, they're not born again. They're not under His mediatorial rule in that sense, but they are under His rule in the sense of being tools and instruments that He uses for our good. That's the distinction.

The kingdom of grace is His kingdom directly related to us, whereas His control over all things is indirectly related to us. I don't know how Him directing and guiding things in China will affect us in 200 years, but He does, and it's under His control, not only as God, but as the God-man. That's the point.

But they're not under His mediatorial kingdom in the sense of they're part of the church, they are not. This is about the church, the second point. Christ's kingdom of grace.

So when I have these verses, Psalm 72, verses 11 and 12, yes, all kings shall fall down before Him, all nations shall serve Him, is a picture of His mediatorial reign of power over the unbelievers who are not properly in His church, but are being used by Him for His glory and

for the good of the church, and directed and guided in providence. That's the distinction. And in verse 12, I'm highlighting, for He will deliver the needy when He cries, the poor also and Him who has no helper, clearly a strong picture and imagery of our redemption from Satan's kingdom.

So there you have, in verse 12, in other words, a snippet or a representative of Christ's mediatorial reign, which we describe as the mediatorial reign of grace, emphasizing it's within the church, it's about the church, it's about us. That's the nub in the heart of His kingdom as a mediatorial God-man. And so this, His rule over the church for her redemption.

Everyone else outside that church is not ruled for redemption, but rather ruled for the sake of the church, for their good. And so here, then, we can describe it in a two-fold manner, of Christ's kingdom of grace, of a universal and then of a particular, the universal over all creation, Psalm 72, 11, as I read. Ephesians 1, 19, And what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He worked in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at the right hand of heavenly places? And so depending on how you slice the pie, you can describe the kingdom of grace as universal, but again in the sense of power, the universal kingdom, power of Jesus Christ, His kingdom of power, for the sake of His church, and it's for all His people.

In verse 21 of Ephesians 1, 21. Far above all principalities and power and might and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in that which is to come. So Ephesians 1 is very strong in describing the authority of Jesus Christ, not only as God, but as the God-man, as the second Adam, as the King and head of His church, everything in the world is under His authority.

So it's universal in scope that way. And again, as it's exercised and moved, and those kings and people and the like are moved to that end, that's the kingdom of His power, or description of Him exercising His power for the good of the saints. Again, 1 Peter 3.22. Who has gone, that is Christ, into heaven, is at the right hand of God.

Angels and authorities and powers have been made subject to Him. So I think it's pretty clear by now that the mediatorial reign of Christ must have this kind of distinction, whether you can say, or want to say it's the kingdom of His power, or the application of it outside the church, or universal in scope. The point being it includes all things, because some people wish to describe Christ's kingdom, the church, as that's it.

That's what He rules. He just rules in the church. No, He doesn't.

He rules the whole world. It says everything is under His feet, under His authority. It says it in so many words in so many ways, often in the New Testament.

It's got to mean something, and what it means, so I'll pack more particularly next week, is that all these things are guided and directed and under His control for the good of the church. Now, in particular here, the particular kingdom of grace exercised for His people directly for them, just shuffle out the rest of the world, just ignore it for now, we're focusing on the church. It's for us.

The primary purpose of this mediatorial reign is for the good of the saints, for their redemption, for their sanctification, for their holiness, and all the authority in the world is given to Him to that end. Matthew 28, 19, after asserting the power of heaven and earth, Jesus commands His church to evangelize the world. This is where we often think of the kingdom of Christ or the kingdom of God.

Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you, and lo, I am with you always, even into the end of the age. And thus, as the mediatorial king, He does not immediately command the world, but rather He commands, what, the church in a direct way in which He does not with the world. They're not given this commission.

They are not given this commission. We are. And so we have church officers that arise from this, church discipline, the church sacraments, the ordinances as they are described in our confessions, the commands of God given uniquely for the church of Jesus Christ, for you, for me, not for the pagan emperor who is under the mediatorial rule of Christ, yes, but not to be saved or delivered, but to be used rather for the good of the church.

His mode of reigning in the church, or sometimes described as the mediatorial economy of Christ's kingdom, the way He does things, its origin and its purpose, let me back up a second here, as God, Jesus is equal to the Father in glory and might, right? Yet each member of the trinity has a particular work in what? Redemption for the sake of the church. We call that the economical trinity, not that they're going to the mall and buying something. That's not the idea of economical.

It's an old way of describing a dispensation or a way of exercising power in doing things. The Old Testament was an old dispensation in that sense, and how God applied the covenant of grace in the New Testament is clearly different and a lot better. I don't have to worry about, you know, bleeding sheep and the like.

That's what it means with respect to the Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost. Ontological trinity, they are the same, they are one God in three persons, all divinely equal with power, glory, and might. But when they exercise with respect to us, our redemption, our salvation, the Father elects from eternity past, the Son came in time and space and died for us, and the Holy Spirit applies it to us.

They each have a separate job. That's the language of economical trinity. That's what that means.

And so here, Christ has an economy, a way of exercising the kingdom of God for His people, His mediatorial reign for us. The origin of this mediatorial reign, of course, is divine, and that's already hinted at in Psalm 2. The Father says, whatever you want, I'm going to give it to you. More clearly here in John 18.36, in John 18.36 we read, My kingdom is not of this world.

If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews. But now my kingdom is not from here. That is, its origin is not human, it's not natural, it is supernatural.

It is from above. He identifies His kingly rule as His own, as the God-man, and its origin is not of earth, but rather from heaven. And thus, He has direct methods of the like, as divine, like conviction of sin by the power of the Holy Spirit, but He does not use earthly methods with respect to the church itself.

That's what He emphasizes here. In the church, He's not going to have a sword, He hasn't given the church the sword to execute heretics. What He has given us is the ability to excommunicate and throw them out.

That's His emphasis here. I've not come to deliver a kingdom that exercises swords and the like, it's not of this world. My servants would fight if it was earthly kingdom, but it's not.

The purpose of the mediatorial rule is to make Himself a holy bride, that is us, a holy people, a royal priesthood, to show forth His praises. Psalm 72.12 here, as I tied earlier, for He will deliver the needy when He cries, that's us, the poor also, and Him who has no helper, we have no helper without Jesus our Lord and Redeemer and King. The kingship here is especially important and being emphasized, of course, with the kingdom, the kingdom of Christ for us and for His people.

So the description here, and into verse 13, He will spare the poor and needy, Psalm 72, and will save the souls of the needy, He will redeem their life from oppression and violence, the same language we have with respect to our salvation used here in Psalm 72 on purpose. It's not only, of course, the outward concerns, as we know, God is concerned about our body, and so we have a dyke in it, for example, and acts of mercy, but especially the soul, the redeeming of the soul, the saving of the soul, and precious shall be their blood in His sight, verse 14. It so easily bleeds in from the external to the internal, from the natural to the supernatural to the spiritual deliverance of His people.

The King is involved in our salvation, because as we know, Jesus Christ is prophet, priest, and king, and all three offices are exercised in harmonious unity as the Son for His people, and the kingship here is especially emphasized in His rule, of course. Now how does Christ help the spiritually poor and needy? Verse 12, by His work, of course, 2,000 years ago, the incarnation, His perfect life, His death, His resurrection, His ascension, His glorification in heaven, reigning right here and now for His people, all His miniatorial outworkings to save us, all the gifts of salvation from His fulfillment of the covenant of grace for us, and part of His rule and work for us is what? Granting us the Holy Spirit. You have that language, I've come and give you the Holy Spirit.

That's the economic trinity exercising redemption, each having a particular role for us, and the Son, of course, part of His role is to also be man. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, Ephesians 1.1. This is how Jesus helps the spiritually poor and needy, clearly, in saving us, and some of the particular ways in which He reigns and rules over us as not only God, but as man, the God-man, the new Adam who represents us, is one, directly, and two, indirectly.

Directly would be through the ordinances of the church and the like, and indirectly would be the kingdom of His power or the universal rule that Jesus has over even pagan kings, although they're not in His kingdom to be saved as such, but to be used for our good in His glory.

Directly, He rules by word and spirit. This is very significant and very important. The world does not run that way.

Your family doesn't run that way, although if you are saved, they do. They run that way, plus another way, by force. You will spank your kids, I hope, as the time is appropriate for that, and give them discipline and reprimands you would not do for an adult in church, at least normal churches, right? So there's already this distinction.

Kingdom work is a little different. Being in the church is a little different and significant. By being in the church, I don't just mean here on Sunday.

I don't mean whenever we formally get together at Presbyterian meetings. I mean also you organically, wherever you are throughout your life as a Christian, whatever job, wherever you are in the world, you're still part of His church, i.e. His kingdom, His kingdom of grace, in particular, as it's described historically. And so, we have the Word of God, and so we read, there's preaching, there's singing, there's praying, not just on Sunday, it should be in our lives as well.

But these things are used by the Spirit with the Word. The Word and Spirit help us grow as believers. It's something that we have in the kingdom of Christ's grace that the world does not have under the kingdom of Christ's power.

They could get it, and we pray they would get it, so they could be redeemed and be brought into His mediator grace and His protection. But they don't. So this is one of the distinctions between the two kingdoms, the natural world and everything in it, and ours, is we have the Word and the Spirit in a way they do not have, and so we pray and sing and have instruction according to it as the Spirit wills and as He moves and uses it for our sanctification, for your sanctification and for your growth.

He also uses other methods, the officers of the church establishing, of course, a visible institution to help us with invisible problems. Think about it. By invisible problems, I mean the troubles of your soul, the conviction of guilt, the question of how do I obey God, of being pure in thought as well as Word and in deed.

I can't read your thoughts, but I can hear your words and I can see your actions if you're around me. And God uses an earthly institution in the sense of a physical, tangible, I see humans, right, I can touch the leadership of the church. We have roles and we have descriptions of people being excommunicated from the roles.

These are tangible ways of doing, what, spiritual exercises. Think about that. Again, the body being affected by the soul, and here bodily actions affecting the soul of another person, and that's how Christ has established it in His church.

Church officers are for the church, not for the world, not for America, not for Coloradans, unless they repent and join the kingdom of God, His church, or the kingdom of His grace we can describe it as. And He rules by correcting and protecting, which is kind of an offshoot of officers, of course, as part of what they do, they rule and they protect, but not just them, one another. We are called to, what, carry one another's burdens, Galatians 6, 1 and 2. We are a new people in that sense, a new community, that's true, but not a community, as we know, we heard this morning, that supersedes and therefore overrules all other communities.

That's not how it works. We work in harmony with the rest of the nature as such in our church community. We have a special calling, of course, that's unique from the world, a relationship, a love for one another.

We ought to have this love for one another as we can exercise it through prayer and help and consideration for bodily and spiritual concerns for one another, and Jesus uses all these things for our good. These are direct methods in the church, officers, word and spirit, correcting and protecting, not just from officers, but from one another, living in community, you could put it as part of the picture as well, because that's part of what it means to be human or natural, to have community, and baptism brings that to us. That would be part of the word, the word and spirit working through the sacraments, for example.

Even so, Christ's methods, of course, indirectly vary in different ways in accomplishing spiritual aims. There are indirect methods and tools, other nations, the laws around us. Do we have access to politicians who care enough to give us a free day on Sunday so we can worship God, or do they not care? Or do Christians even care? That's the question of what I described as radical two-kingdom, which most of them pretty much don't want that kind of a rule.

And the rest of us here are like, well, that's crazy. Why wouldn't you want to have freedom to worship God on Sunday? Praise the Lord for Christ's rule and reign, a mediatorial reign as the God and man in one divine person that is both universal and in power and in scope for all things for your good and for the good of His glorious kingdom. And thank Him for His infinite wisdom and how He reigns over us in particular in His kingdom of grace.

And thus we finish here in verse 18 of Psalm 72 with a glorious praise to Him. Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only does wondrous things, and blessed be His glorious name forever, and let the whole earth be filled with His glory, amen and amen. Let us pray.

Father God above, as we contemplate the universal scope of Your kingdom of power and of might and that Lord all things are under Jesus Christ as our Redeemer, but not in the same way as we are under Him as our head in the kingdom of His grace, Lord, in His church in particular. Father, as we meditate upon these things, may it comfort us to know that Jesus is our head and is king, not just of the church only, but of everything and for our good and directed in a way somehow mysteriously and sometimes very overtly, Lord, for our good. May we continue to rely upon this, rest in this truth, and above all, praise You God for Jesus Christ being not only our prophet, our priest, but also our king, amen.