



# Home for Christmas

## an Advent Series

### **Home for Christmas King Ephesians 1:20–21**

This week's passage is Ephesians 1:20-23, and in it we are told that Christ has power and dominion because he is a king. But to appreciate Jesus' kingship, let's talk about why the New Testament understands Jesus as a king.

First, and most obviously, Jesus is a king because he is the Son of David. By virtue of his human nature, Jesus was born from a royal lineage and thus has royal blood. But that's not the only reason why Jesus is a king. The second reason why Jesus is called a king stems from what he delivers us from. The Bible tells us that sin ties us into bondage. Sin also produces guilt, shame, and ignorance, but the aspect we want to look at today is the bondage that sin gets us into. Sin is more than a bad deed, it's a condition. Sin keeps us captive so that we are hopelessly ensnared by its tyranny. The apostle Paul calls sin a power and its reach and effects are so widespread and devastating that only a divine power can conquer it. It is precisely because Jesus conquers sin that he is fittingly called a king—he not only destroys the effect that it has on us, but he also guarantees that he will deliver us from its snares forevermore.

- Let's be honest, we all have sins that we still struggle with. What words would you use to describe this struggle?
- What do you think is the main reason why we continue to sin? How is it that Christ empowers us to defeat sin in our own lives?
- What tools do you find helpful in your own struggle?

*Read Ephesians 2:1-7*

And you were dead in the trespasses and sins **2** in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— **3** among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. **4** But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, **5** even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— **6** and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, **7** so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

- How does Paul describe our struggle with sin in verse 1?
- Why might 'dead' be a good description of our struggle with sin?
- In verse 5, what does Paul say that Christ did for us? How does this compare to what sin did to us from verse 1?

*Read Ephesians 1:3-10*

**3** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, **4** even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love **5** he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, **6** to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. **7** In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, **8** which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight **9** making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ **10** as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

- Why does Paul say we have been adopted? What does the language of "adoption" imply about who we were and who we are now?

- According to verse 7, what does Paul say we have now?

*Read Ephesians 1:11-14*

**11** In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, **12** so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. **13** In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, **14** who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

Not only does Christ forgive us of our trespasses, but we are told that Christ “seals” us into an inheritance. We have this inheritance because of what we looked at earlier—we are adopted sons and daughters of God.

- Have you ever come into an inheritance? If so, what was it?
- Think back to Ephesians 2:6. What is our inheritance, according to Paul?

*Read Ephesians 1:15-23*

**15** For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, **16** I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, **17** that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, **18** having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, **19** and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might **20** that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, **21** far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. **22** And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, **23** which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

- Why does Paul want us to have the Spirit of wisdom, and a revelation of the knowledge of Christ? (Hint: read verse 18)
- Verse 18 says that God works power in us who believe. According to this passage, what kind of power is this? According to Paul, where have we seen this power worked before (Hint: read verse 20).
- Think about what this means. The power that delivers us from sin is the same power that delivered Jesus from the dead. What significance does this bring back to Ephesians 2:1?

According to Paul, Jesus' kingship gives us hope. He has been given power and dominion over sin, death, and hell; this means we can have hope. By nature we were sons and daughters of wrath and condemnation, but now we have been adopted by the king to reign with him forevermore.

- Take a few minutes to reflect on Jesus' divinity. Could a merely human person save us from our sins?
- How powerful and dreadful must sin be that only a divine person could free us from it? If sin is that powerful, what does this mean about your ability to overcome your own sins?
- How long have you been fighting your sins in your own power, and what will it take you to trust in God's power to raise you up against the power of sin?
- How can you begin to trust in Christ's power to deliver you from sin?