

Study Resource: The King Crowned in Power

Companion to “Jesus Is the King” | Romans 1:1–4, Acts 2:22–36, Philippians 2:5–11

1. Romans 1:1–4 — The Gospel of the Crowned King

“...the gospel of God... concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead...” (vv. 1–4, ESV)

A. Two Titles: Son of David / Son of God

Paul opens with a tightly packed theological statement identifying Jesus by both **human descent** (“Son of David”) and **divine status** (“Son of God in power”).

- **“Son of David according to the flesh”** points to Jesus' fulfillment of Old Testament messianic promises (2 Sam. 7:12–16; Isa. 11:1–10). The Messiah had to be from David's line.
- **“Declared to be the Son of God in power”** signals a shift: this is Jesus' enthronement. The Greek word for *declared* (ὁρισθέντος, *horisthentos*) can also mean *appointed* or *marked out*. The resurrection was God's public installation of Jesus as reigning King—not a change in essence, but a change in role and recognition.

N.T. Wright (Paul: A Biography):

“Jesus was always God's Son. But now—because of the resurrection—he is marked out as the world's rightful Lord. Not just raised—but raised to reign.”

B. In Power through the Spirit

- The phrase *“according to the Spirit of holiness”* contrasts with *“according to the flesh,”* linking resurrection power to the Spirit's activity (cf. Rom. 8:11).
- Jesus' kingship is Spirit-anointed, not self-made. This echoes Isaiah 11:2, where the Spirit rests upon the Davidic King.

Summary:

Paul isn't just making doctrinal claims—he's retelling a royal story. The crucified Messiah is now the enthroned Son. The resurrection was His coronation.

2. Acts 2:22–36 — Peter's Royal Announcement at Pentecost

“This Jesus God raised up... being therefore exalted at the right hand of God... let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ...” (vv. 32–36)

A. Historical Setting

Peter's sermon is the first public gospel proclamation after the resurrection—and it's not centered on going to heaven. It's centered on **who Jesus is now** because of what God has done.

- Peter cites Psalm 110:1 (*"The Lord said to my Lord: Sit at my right hand"*) to show that Jesus has been exalted to God's throne.
- *"God has made him both Lord and Christ"* doesn't mean Jesus became divine at this moment, but that God publicly enthroned Him as Messiah and King (see also Phil. 2:9–11).

Michael Gorman:

"The gospel in Acts is never **just** 'Jesus died for you.' It is 'God raised Jesus, exalted Him, and made Him Lord.' That changes the entire orientation of Christian life—from consumption to allegiance."

B. The Political and Prophetic Edge

Peter's message had sharp implications:

- Jesus, the rejected and crucified one, is now the world's true Lord.
- Caesar is not. The temple system is not. The empires of this world are not.

The resurrection is not just about eternal life—it's the divine endorsement of Jesus as **the true ruler of heaven and earth**.

3. Philippians 2:5–11 — The Humble King Exalted

"...he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death... Therefore God has highly exalted him... and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord..."

A. The Descent and the Ascent

This passage is often called the "Christ Hymn," and scholars believe it may have been an early church worship song or creed.

- Verses 6–8 describe Jesus' **voluntary descent**:
 - *"Form of God"* (μορφή θεοῦ, *morphay theou*) points to His preexistent divine status.
 - *"Emptied himself"* (ἐκένωσεν, *ekenōsen*) means He laid aside privilege—not divinity.
 - *"Obedient to death... even death on a cross"* is a deliberate echo of the cross's humiliation.
- Verses 9–11 show the **divine response**:

- “*God highly exalted him*” (ὑπερύψωσεν, *hyperypsōsen*) means more than resurrection—it implies enthronement.
- “*Every knee should bow... every tongue confess...*” echoes Isaiah 45:23—previously spoken of **Yahweh**—now applied to **Jesus**. This is a bold affirmation of His divinity and Lordship.

Gordon Fee (Paul’s Letter to the Philippians):

“Paul shows that it was precisely because of Jesus’ self-emptying, his humble obedience to death, that God exalted him as universal Lord.”

B. Cruciform Kingship

- Jesus reigns not through domination but through **self-giving love**.
- His throne is secured not by violence but by **obedience**.
- This sets the pattern for our allegiance: not forced submission, but joyful imitation.

Conclusion: The Coronation We Preach

These three passages—Romans 1, Acts 2, and Philippians 2—offer a unified picture of **the gospel as royal proclamation**:

- Jesus is the **Davidic Messiah** (Romans 1).
- He has been **raised and enthroned by God** (Acts 2).
- He is the **exalted Lord** who first emptied Himself in love (Philippians 2).

To declare, “Jesus is Lord,” then, is not just to profess a doctrine. It is to announce that the true King has been crowned—and to invite the world to bow in allegiance.