



# Pastor Ken Nelson's Sermon

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**"A SERMON FOR CHRIST THE KING"**  
**JOHN 18:33-40 AND DEUTERONOMY 17:10-18**  
**NOVEMBER 21, 2021**

Back when England's King James I, - yes, that King James of the "King James Bible" [believed](#) in the [divine right of kings](#), it was perhaps unwise and a bit tactless of one of his subjects, an English lawyer by the name of John Selden to write: *"A king is a thing men have made for their own sakes, for quietness' sake. Just as in a family one man is appointed to go buy the meat."* Well. For his irreverence Mr. Selden spent some time in the Tower of London. He was one of the lucky ones – King James may (or may not have been on fire for the Lord) but he certainly had a fondness for the use of fire if you know what I mean!

If you are wondering what this *"divine right of Kings"* thing is all about, basically it was the belief that kings (and queens) were appointed by God and therefore not answerable to men. Not that the Bible doesn't lend *some* support to this notion – God after all directly choose Israel's first two kings – Saul and David, and Paul in the New Testament orders Christians to pray for kings and others in authority and to subject ourselves to them out of reverence for God.

Then again, we believe we are subjects of a king whose coronation was on a cross, who came not to be served but to serve, who did not, upon close examination before going that cross deny he was a king, but did insist his kingdom *"was not of this world."* Consequently, we his subjects, must learn that in following our king we're going to have to at least be *"out of step with the world."* God knows that people's hearts are divided, and the claims and enticements of this world tangled up with our very natures call for our devotion.

When those particular people God called the *"apple of His eye"* – Israel – was about to enter the land promised to their ancestors and establish themselves, God had an inkling what they would want – which was to be *"like all the other nations"* with a king like all the other nations ruling over them. God acquiesced, but in our reading from Deuteronomy stipulated the king ought to meet certain standards or else things would unravel. For starters he would be one that God had chosen and eventually God chose Saul and David. But then the Lord let David choose who his heir would be – he went with his wife Bathsheba's favorite – Solomon, and at that point Israel was off to the races with kings and all their intrigue.

David, despite many flaws, was known as *"a man after God's own heart."* That's important, because in our lesson from Deuteronomy, God stipulates kings of Israel should be like that – a worshipper of Yahweh whose heart was not after God's own – a heart diverted from the Law of the Lord. The king was to be a student of the Law of the Lord – notice God says they were to carry a little scroll with him to remind them of what God's word requires of his subjects, beginning with the one endowed with the privilege and responsibilities of leadership. The divine right of kings in ancient Israel stated the king must see themselves accountable to He who was truly divine – in no way above the law that bound Israel to its true King!

Picture in your mind's eye a king who reads not his own edicts but God's, someone whose custom was scrolling through Law of the Lord like it was a Small Catechism! It is not coincidental that Deuteronomy requires of the king that he be someone not given to accumulating for himself storehouses and treasure houses and, let's be honest, houses for many wives! The king was to be a modest man – the implication of all these stipulations is that the king would have to be a generous man.

In II Corinthians, I believe Paul picks up on this idea and particularly the passage from Deuteronomy 17. Kings in the Old Testament you see controlled the storehouses of the nation – they provided 'seed to sowers' so there would be bread for families and by implication more in the king's storehouses. In II Corinthians I believe Paul transfers this image of releasing seed for sowing and harvesting to our faith and how we express it in giving. We would not miss the mark in saying Paul is anointing, by faith, each Christian a king – it was he after all who said a Christian is "*an heir of God and joint heir with Christ.*"

You've heard it said, "*our home is our castle.*" And who lives in castles? Kings and queens and their heirs – royalty. That is what you are. Yet Jesus in our lesson from John says his kingdom "*is not of this world.*" We might however say His kingdom is "out of this world" – even as His kingdom is laser focused on the needs of this world. Out of our castles Paul is calling forth our "expressions of thanks to God." Paul is not the first to suggest giving is a confession of the gospel. Jesus said, "*may your light so shine before others that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.*"

How has your giving, an expression of your faith, shown your hearts to be like God's? You supported ministry to the intellectually and developmentally disabled, bible translation in Papua New Guinea, water projects in numerous countries, a Christian school in a country where Christians are persecuted, spiritual and emotional support for gospel workers, business loans to entrepreneurs in the poorest of places, and a ministry seeking to help women to choose life for their unborn children. Your giving supports our congregation – soon to enter our 65<sup>th</sup> year, we are blessed and part of a national church body that is growing, Christ centered, mission driven.

You and I will likely never be "on trial" for our faith – certainly not in the way Jesus before Pilate was. But we testify when we give, as I urge you to commit yourselves to doing today. Giving says we are people after God's own heart – that we are eager to release from our storehouses those provisions God has placed in them for the fulfilling of his Kingdom's work. With our faith we confess "*God so loved...He gave*" and with our giving that in His name, so will we! AMEN