Congregation of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I think I am right in saying that most Kings and Queens today are largely symbolic figures. The actual rule of countries is typically by government and a President or Prime-minister. But I think that most people are still fascinated by the idea of Kings and Queens. History books spend a lot of time recording and analysing the rule of Kings and Queens, and some of the most well known novels and movies are about the rule of Kings and Queens. Those of us with Netflix are probably binging through season 4 of The Crown, a historical drama about Queen Elizabeth’s family, and many of us will know about King Arthur and Cleopatra and the Asian Emperors, and of course, from the Bible, we have the accounts of King David and Queen Esther and Caesar Augustus and King Herod. And if I gave each of you a piece of paper, I am pretty sure that you could all come up with a long list of kings and queens that you have heard of over the years.

Well, our Lord’s Day is about the most important King who has ever existed – the Lord Jesus Christ! The three questions and answers are full of Kingly language – ruling, bestowing gifts, defending, and judging. And the Lord’s Day has to do with those lines of the Apostles’ Creed that describe Jesus as sitting “at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from there He shall come to judge the living and the dead.” And while it is often hard to find a single Bible passage that addresses every aspect of a topic addressed in a Lord’s Day, that is not a problem today, for this part of the Apostles’ Creed is almost a word for word quote of our text!

So today we want to think about the answer that Jesus gave to Caiaphas during His trial. And what we will see is that His answer and the reaction of Caiaphas reveal Jesus Christ as our King. And we want to see **how** this episode reveals Jesus Christ as our King. And when we have done that, then we will be able to consider the **so what**? of Jesus Christ as our King.

1. So first of all, **how** does Jesus’ answer and Caiaphas’ response reveal Christ our King?
	1. And it really is a fascinating study! Jesus said, “*But I tell you, from now on (or in the very near future) you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven*.” And then we read about Caiaphas declaring Jesus guilty of blasphemy. So let’s think about this for a moment: What is blasphemy? A later Lord’s Day of the Catechism says that blasphemy is misusing God’s name, which means failing to use His name with reverence and awe when we speak about Him with others and when we pray. So with that in mind, look at Jesus’ answer again. And notice that He did not say, I am God. He didn’t even use the name of God. So how, in Caiaphas’ mind, did Jesus’ answer qualify as blasphemy?
		1. Well, to answer that question we need to think about Jesus’ answer in the light of Scripture.
			1. In **Psalm 2**, for example, we read that the kings of earth and the rulers take their stand against the LORD and His Messiah. But God, who is enthroned in heaven, laughs at these kings and terrifies them with His anger, because, as one Bible paraphrase puts it, God has placed His chosen King in heaven. And this chosen King is called the Son of God in that Psalm. And the rulers of earth are commanded to kiss or worship the Son.
			2. And earlier we sung **Psalm 9**. It says that the Lord is enthroned in heaven and He judges the world in righteousness.
			3. And we also sung **Psalm 110**. It says, “*The Lord said to my Lord, ‘Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet … The Lord will rule … The Lord will shatter kings on the day of His wrath. He will judge nations*.”
			4. And we also read from **Daniel 7**. And Daniel had a vision about someone called ‘the Ancient of Days’ who takes His seat in heaven and judges the people. And a Son of Man appears before the Ancient of Days and He is “*given authority, glory, and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshipped Him*.” And this Son of Man comes “*with the clouds of heaven*.”
		2. So now listen to Jesus’ answer again: “*But I tell you, from now on (or in the very near future) you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven*.” Do you see now why Caiaphas accused Jesus of blasphemy? It’s like, if you asked me, “Are you a soccer player? Yes or no?” And I replied, I put boots on and I kick a round ball into a goal, and there are 10 others on my team and we play for 90 minutes, well, technically, I have not said, “I am a soccer player,” but everything I have said undoubtedly adds up to I am a soccer player. And Caiaphas knew his Old Testament. He knew that Jesus was declaring Himself to be Messiah, Son of God, Son of Man, the one who would sit at God’s right hand and rule the nations, and who would come on the clouds of heaven to judge the nations.
	2. So with these words, Jesus most definitely revealed Himself to be Christ our King. He was saying, I am the one who these Scriptures speak of. I will soon rule in heaven! And I will one day come to judge the living and the dead!
		1. Do you boys and girls remember when **the devil tried to tempt Jesus to sin**? And as part of his temptations, he said to Jesus, I will give you all the kingdoms of the world “*if you will fall down and worship me*.” And make no mistake, at that time in world history, the devil pretty much had free reign in the kingdoms of the world, while Jesus, according to His human nature, had no power and influence and authority, anywhere. Well, Jesus refused the devil’s offer. But after He rose from the dead, He spoke with His disciples about how His Father had rewarded Him for His obedience; He said, “*All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me*.” So not only did the soon to be ascended Jesus now have power on earth, He would also exercise power in heaven!
		2. And the Bible has a particular way of describing Jesus’ position of authority in heaven. When we talk about someone who is intimately involved in assisting someone in a position of authority, we use the expression “**your right hand man**.” And the New Testament is full of references to Jesus being at the Father’s right hand:
			1. In **Acts 7**, just before Stephen was stoned, he had a vision of heaven and He “*saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God*.”
			2. **Ephesians 1:20** speaks of the Father raising Jesus from the dead “*and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly place*s.”
			3. **Colossians 3:1** calls on believers to “*seek the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God*.”
		3. So Christ’s position at the Father’s right hand is a position of power and rule:
			1. **Ephesians 1:21-23** says He is “*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. And [the Father] put all things under [Jesus’] feet and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all*.”
			2. **Colossians 1:17** says, “*He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together*.”
			3. **Hebrews 1:3** says, “*He upholds the universe by the word of His power*.”
			4. And **1 Corinthians 15:25** says, “*For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet*.”
2. So Christ is our King. Right now He lives and reigns in heaven. And this leads us, very nicely, into our second point, which is the ‘**So what**?’ of Christ as our king.
	1. What we have seen from this answer of Jesus is that everything, right now, is under His kingly rule: Angels, devils, kings and prime-ministers, and the rise and fall of nations. It is all under the kingly rule of Christ.
		1. So take the country of **China** as an example. We hear reports about authorities there demolishing churches and putting believers in prison. And the control of the Chinese Communist Party seems absolute, doesn’t it. But the implication of Christ’s kingly rule is that unless He returns first, sooner or later, the CCP will be replaced by another government and those who once *demolished* churches will *build* churches. That is how it has always been in history, because Christ is King! And this will be a source of great comfort and courage to believers there, like Pastor Wang Yi and others, who have been imprisoned for being faithful followers of Christ.
		2. But even here in New Zealand, where the **Labour Party** has been voted in to rule *outright* in an MMP election system, and the rule of our Prime-minister seems to be total, Christ is King!
		3. **Romans 13** tells us that governments “*have been instituted by God*.” And that was written when Nero was the Emperor of Rome. And Nero was a vicious persecutor of Christians! In **Daniel 2**, we read these words in a prayer of Daniel, “*God removes kings and sets up kings*.” So God has established the CCP and Prime-minister Ardern, for now. But when they have gone from power, Christ will still be reigning!
	2. And I don’t know if you have noticed, but we live in times when we are **inundated and saturated with information**. The internet is awash with news and fake-news and conspiracy theories about 5G and one world-government and Covid and the Deep State and Q-Anon. It is endless! And it is so easy to get caught up in it all.
		1. And none of this is to say that we must be ignorant and uniformed, or that we should not be politically active. On the contrary, we are commanded to be good citizens of our countries, who make use of democracy to say, ‘Thus says the Lord…’ in relation to public policy.
		2. But people of God, what truth do we confess in **Question and Answer 1 of the Catechism**? “Not a hair can fall from my head without the will of my Father in heaven” who rules with Christ our King. So Christ is at work in all things through to progress His plan and purpose in history. So as you scroll through your Facebook feed and see startling and shocking articles about this theory or that president or this scientific evidence, remind yourself that Christ is our King!
		3. And you know, even if we should lose our lives in Christ’s service, we don’t actually lose, do we; for we gain heaven! We enter into the reign of Christ!
	3. Now, all that has been said, thus far, assumes something that is vital to this whole matter. And that is that **you joyfully submit yourself to Christ as your King**. And I want to repeat that again because how I have put it is significant: Do you *joyfully submit* yourself to Christ as your King? You see, Christ *is* your King. Fullstop. You may not recognize Him as your King and submit to His rule, but He is your King!
		1. The Bible is very clear about this. **Philippians 2:10** says, “*God has highly exalted [Jesus] and given Him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father*.”
		2. So Christ as King may not be obvious today, but one day Jesus will return to earth and then His royal reign will be obvious to all and every one will recognize and acknowledge Him as King. But for those who did not joyfully submit to Him in this life, it will be a terrified recognition because He will not be a Beautiful Saviour but a condemning Judge.
		3. And Caiaphas is an example of someone who refused to joyfully submit to Christ as his King. He knew exactly what Jesus was saying with His answer. But He would not have Christ to rule over him.
		4. And it was the same with the other Jewish rulers gathered there that day. They agreed that Jesus had spoken blasphemy. They said, “*He deserves death*.” And “*then they spit in His face and struck Him*.” They too refused to joyfully submit to Christ’s kingly rule.
		5. **Matthew 25** is Jesus’ description of Judgment Day. Listen to how He describes it: “*When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. Before Him will be gathered all the nations, and He will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And He will place the sheep on His right, but the goats on the left*.” So, He started off by describing Himself the same way as He did with His answer to Caiaphas – as “***the Son of Man***.” But when it comes to the actual Judgment of those on His right and those on His left, do you remember how He describes Himself? “*Then the* ***King*** *will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world,’*” and “*to those on His left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels*.’”
		6. And so, I ask you again,Do you joyfully submit yourself to Christ as ***your*** King? In every area of your life, does Christ reign? Is He in charge of how you function in church and at work and in your relationships and recreations? Do you strive to live according to His royal law in every area of your life? Do you bow in everything before the will of your King – **in gratitude** because your Saviour is also your King?
	4. And if you do, do you trust in Him and His Kingly care and protection? Have you heard the expression ‘**a sworn enemy’** before?
		1. A sworn enemy is an enemy who has vowed to harm or kill a certain person. There is an example of this in the Bible. In **Acts 23** we read about a group of more than forty men who went to the Jewish rulers and bound themselves by an oath not to eat or drink till they had killed the Apostle Paul. And they set up an ambush to capture him and kill him. But someone else heard their plans and told Paul who escaped. So we can only assume that those forty men died of thirst a few days later ☺ But they were Paul’s sworn enemies.
		2. Well, a later answer of the Catechism explains that every believer has ‘sworn enemies’ – the devil, the world, and the sinful nature.
			1. **1 Peter 5:8** describes the **devil** as like a prowling lion seeking people to devour. He uses all His powers to stir people and governments up to cause trouble in the church and in believer’s lives. It is why we are commanded to put on the full armour of God so that we can stand against the devil’s schemes.
			2. And the **world** assaults us with its secular ideas and philosophies, and enticements and entertainments. It is why we are told, in **1 John 2:15**, “*Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him*.”
			3. And our own **sinful nature** is like a piece of metal yearning to attach itself to the magnet of temptations offered by the devil and the world.
		3. And these three are constantly at work to drag us away from Christ. But Jesus, our King, said, “*Behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age*.” He said, “*The gates of hell shall not prevail against [my church]*.” He said, “*My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand*.” And we have His promise that “*for those who love God all things work together for good*.”
		4. And He does this especially in times of crisis and affliction. The Apostle Paul spoke about this in **2 Corinthians 1:8-10**. He said, “*For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead. He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and He will deliver us. On Him we have set our hope that He will deliver us again*.”

Believer, Christ is your King. He reigns! In all your distress and persecution, turn your eyes to the heavens and confidently await as Judge the One who has already stood trial in your place before God and so has removed the whole curse from you. All His enemies and yours He will condemn to everlasting punishment. But you and all His chosen ones He will take along with Him into the joy and glory of heaven. Amen.