

Q. What makes a good ruler?

A. It is 12 inches long, made of wood or metal, and has a firm straight edge.

Good answer – if you are an engineer or in geometry class.

What makes a person who has the authority to make laws, judge disputes, and make decisions about what is best for society good at exercising that authority?

- Fairness
- Level-headed
- Wise
- Listen to all sides
- Wants the best for everybody
- Cares about people

Now a step further.

What if the society is God's covenant people? What makes *its* rulers good?

- Obedience to the covenant
- Understands the consequences of acting outside the covenant.
- Seeks to uphold the covenant by eliminating abuses and enacting practices that are faithful
- Seeks to undo past bad practices and establish best practices

- Cares about the people in relation to God

And God would add one more point: God chooses the ruler.

Among human societies, there are elected rulers,

monarchs that inherit the right to rule,

and those who buy power over others.

Only in Israel – only among God's covenant people

– is God the Sovereign who chooses the human agent who will exercise authority over them.

The Lord God chose David and anointed him King over his people.

- God chose the runt of the litter – the youngest and weakest of Jesse's sons – for this office.
- David was not perfect – he lusted, coveted another man's wife, murdered him, committed adultery with her, and then married her to try to cover it up.
- **But the perfect God chose flawed David to further his perfect will.**

And with the Spirit of God working through him, David had some incredible accomplishments:

- he united the kingdom under his benevolent rule and
- made Jerusalem the capital, and then
- he brought the ark of the covenant into Jerusalem.

I want us to remember 5 things about David's rule:

1. God gives strength in weakness
2. God works Reconciliation

3. Jerusalem—city of peace -- as center
4. The presence of God in Jerusalem
5. God's covenant promise that David's line would reign forever

Now, with his last breath, King David speaks not only of himself and his son Solomon, but of a future King – another descendant anointed by God.

- A lowly, weak man whom God exalts
- Anointed by God to exercise authority over God's people
- Favored by God
- Bears the Word of God
- One who rules justly in obedience to God's covenant

Sounds like a great ruler, by our earlier definition.

- He is Messiah, Christ,
- the Dawn from on High,
- the rising Sun,
- the giver of Life.

This King is God's Word who became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth, according to John's Gospel.

Of this King, the apostle Paul writes (1 Corinthians 1):

- He is considered foolish
- He is the Anointed of God
- He was crucified and raised from the dead
- He is a stumbling block

- He is the power and wisdom of God for those who believe
- He is salvation from God

27 But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong;

God's messenger Gabriel said to a young girl:

, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, ³³ and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

The Angels announce: *to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Most High God's anointed, the Lord.*

Here's your sign of truth – you will find him a weakling – a baby in a manger.

This King is born in the City of David, the house of bread, and is the Bread of Life.

This King culminates his reign in Jerusalem

- –bringing down the temple of human sin in his own body and
- rebuilding the temple of human redemption in his own body – death and resurrection.

This King brings justice for the poor and healing to the sick;

This King reconciles sinners by his own blood.

This King breaks down barriers of race and class to save people from destruction.

This King upholds and fulfills the covenants God made with Abraham and with Moses and

becomes the new covenant by which all might be saved by faith in him.

The very things that David spoke of in his dying breath – those 5 things I asked us to remember – are fulfilled in Jesus.

In his glory, Jesus is a King of splendor and might.

In his earthly rule, Jesus is a Suffering Servant, exercising authority with compassion, mercy, and justice.

The day is coming when we will see and share the glory of Jesus, anointed King by the Most High God.

But until that day, we are anointed by baptism in the Holy Spirit to share in his humble reign

– to be the visible kingdom of servants who show mercy, forgiveness, and compassion.

We live under Christ's authority –to obey him and trust him for everything good.

This isn't easy, because there are plenty of other claims to authority – all vying for our allegiance –

But only Jesus Christ our King gives us life with him that is wholly good and lasts forever.

He rules supremely over all the other powers and authorities

and when he comes, he puts them in their proper place.

Let us eagerly await the day when our King comes and let him find us prepared for his coming.

In the words of James Montgomery, let us sing with King David:

1. Hail to the Lord's Anointed,
great David's greater Son!
Hail in the time appointed,
his reign on earth begun!
He comes to break oppression,
to set the captive free;
to take away transgression,
and rule in equity.

2. He comes with succor speedy
to those who suffer wrong;
to help the poor and needy,
and bid the weak be strong;
to give them songs for sighing,
their darkness turn to light,
whose souls, condemned and dying,
are precious in his sight.

3. He shall come down like showers
upon the fruitful earth;
love, joy, and hope, like flowers,

spring in his path to birth.
Before him on the mountains,
shall peace, the herald, go,
and righteousness, in fountains,
from hill to valley flow.

4. To him shall prayer unceasing
and daily vows ascend;
his kingdom still increasing,
a kingdom without end.
The tide of time shall never
his covenant remove;
his name shall stand forever;
that name to us is love.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Powerful: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b5XN8MW60SQ>