

# Christ's Kingship and Counseling



by CARLY ROBINSON

---

At six years old, I had my first experience with being deeply moved by the arts. Sitting on my pink floral bedspread, I watched an animated lion, soaked in rain and worn from grief and battle, paw his way up a slab of rock to claim what was rightfully his. Hans Zimmer's Oscar-winning score swelled through the television speakers. *The Lion King* left me in tears.

I could not have put words to it then, but immersing myself in a tale about loss, a cruel enemy who destroys everything good, and a returning hero plunging himself into places of injustice and pain to bring restoration reached down into the realities of my life. From a young age, I felt acquainted with darkness, sensitive to a world that seemed full of great sin and suffering. I longed for a hero—someone stronger to fight for me, protect me, and show me the way. I wanted a king.

Some things never change. Decades later, I'm still quick to tell my friends why *The Lion King* finale is the peak of cinematic genius. Decades later, darkness remains; like many who become involved in ministry, I've found that evil is more pervasive than I knew at six. But decades later, one thing has certainly changed. I've learned that the king I longed for is real, and he's more majestic than I could have hoped for as a little girl crying in her room. I've come to know King Jesus.

*Carly Robinson (MA) is the director of CCEF's School of Biblical Counseling and also serves as a counselor.*

The theme of divine kingship is pervasive in our faith. We see it in many of the enduring hymns of the church. Two years ago, I began an experiment on Sunday mornings: Could we get through a service in which kingship did not show up in our hymns at least once? I tuned in to key words:

*Reign. Ruler. Royal. Diadem. Crown. Scepter. Majesty.*  
*Throne. Dominion. King. Kingdom.*

After two years of careful observation, the answer was no! We could *not* get through a service without kingship showing up in our singing. As I tracked these words week after week, I noticed something interesting about how the great hymn writers portrayed God's kingship. It is a biblical truth with range, something they found applicable for all types of occasions.

It appeared in many hymns of praise, where we might most expect it. Note the words in italics.

*Crown* him with many *crowns*,  
 the Lamb upon his *throne*.  
 Hark! How the heavenly anthem drowns  
 all music but its own.  
 Awake, my soul, and sing  
 of him who died for thee,  
 and hail him as thy matchless *king*  
 through all eternity.

—“Crown Him with Many Crowns”

But I also found kingship in anthems meant to inspire courage in the face of adversity:

Let goods and kindred go,  
 this mortal life also;  
 the body they may kill:  
 God's truth abideth still;  
 his *Kingdom* is forever!

—“A Mighty Fortress Is Our God”

In meditations on his atonement:

He left his Father's *throne* above,  
 So free, so infinite his grace;

Emptied himself of all but love,  
And bled for Adam's helpless race.

—“And Can It Be That I Should Gain?”

In songs of consecration:

Take my voice, and let me sing  
always, only, for my *King* . . .

Take my heart, it is thine own;  
it shall be thy *royal throne*.

—“Take My Life, and Let It Be”

In children's lullabies:

Jesus loves me, loves me still,  
Though I'm very weak and ill;  
From his shining *throne* on high,  
Comes to watch me where I lie.

—“Jesus Loves Me”

I found it in hymns for Christmas, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday, and in hymns about missions, God's creation, and the church's future. Over the centuries, the Lord's kingly office has blessed his people in many circumstances.

Of course, when we turn to Scripture, we find the same. Kingship is everywhere, building in clarity, intensity, and glory as we progress in the biblical narrative. It reaches down into countless realities of life. God has given us many other beautiful and helpful descriptors of who he is (e.g., Good Shepherd and High Priest), but in this article, we will explore God as our king and how it can aid us in counseling ministry. We will begin in the early books of the Old Testament where we see God's power and authority over all creation. We will then move to his sovereign appointment of an earthly king in the Historical Books and Wisdom Literature, and we'll see how Jesus, the God-man, fulfills Scripture's promises of both earthly and divine rule over us. Finally, we'll explore the richness of the counseling applications of God as king, both for us as helpers and those we seek to help.

## God as King

When you think about the characteristics of a king, what comes to mind? Maybe you think about a king's authority, or a king's majesty, riches, and

To continue reading this article, visit [ccef.org/jbc](http://ccef.org/jbc) to purchase the individual journal issue or subscribe to the *Journal of Biblical Counseling*.

*The Journal of Biblical Counseling*

(ISSN: 1063-2166) is published by:

Christian Counseling & Educational Foundation

1803 East Willow Grove Avenue

Glenside, PA 19038

[www.ccef.org](http://www.ccef.org)

Copyright © 2024 CCEF

All rights reserved.