

“The Reign of Christ Over Wicked Nations”

Holiness

Psalm 2:1-12 Lesson #22a

Don Maurer

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Don: All right. Lou, would you like to play music where we can meditate upon Christ and, as Bruce so often says, to let us know that He is God? (*Music.*)

Father, Son and Holy Spirit, indeed, great is Thy faithfulness! We thank You, Lord, that Your mercies are new every morning. Great is Your faithfulness! Father, we confess that we are unfaithful so much of the time. But we thank You for the promise of Your word, Lord, that even when we are unfaithful, Lord Jesus You remain faithful. And it is that faithfulness, Lord, that we are so grateful for, that You will neither leave us nor forsake us and that You have promised us that we will never be snatched from Your hand and that we will have eternal life because of You. We thank You, Father. We pray this morning that You would instruct us in Your word, that You would use me, Your weak and sinful servant, that we may profit from this study of Your word. For we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Men: Amen.

Don: Well, you'll notice on your handout that we're going to be talking about Psalm 2 this morning. We're taking a little break from 1 Peter. I just found out Monday that I was going to be teaching today.

And you may be wondering, “Well, why this portion of Scripture?” Out of all of the Scriptures that I could have chosen, why this Scripture?

Well, unless you've been in a cave somewhere, you know the events that occurred two weeks ago—the Supreme Court debacle, as I call it, attempting to redefine marriage. They haven't really done that, but they certainly attempted to do that. And I heard a sermon from a pastor, one of my favorite pastors in South Carolina, Karl Robins, entitled “The Reign of Christ Over Wicked Nations.” And I thought, “Wow! There's a lot here.”

This Psalm I believe, really talks about why things are the way they are today. I'll be referring now and then to what happened two weeks ago, not exclusively. But we know that all Scripture is profitable for reproof and correction and training in righteousness and teaching as well. And this Scripture passage has a lot to say about the world in which we live and its events. It gives us fear; there's a lot of scary stuff in here. But there's also great comfort, as we're going to find out. So let us pay attention here to the very word of God found in Psalm 2. And I'll be reading from the ESV.

“Why do the nations rage,
And the peoples plot in vain?
The kings of the earth set themselves,
And the rulers take counsel together
Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying,
“Let us burst their bonds apart,
And cast away their cords from us.”,
“He who sits in the heavens laughs;

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The LORD holds them in derision.
Then He will speak to them in His wrath,
And terrify them in His fury, saying,
“As for Me, I have set My King on Zion, My holy hill.”
“I will tell of the decree.
The LORD said to Me,
“You are My Son;
Today I have begotten You.
Ask of Me, and I will make the nations Your heritage,
And the ends of the earth Your possession.
You shall break them with a rod of iron,
And dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.””
“Now therefore, O kings, be wise;
Be warned, O rulers of the earth.
Serve the LORD with fear
And rejoice with trembling.
Kiss the Son, lest He be angry,
And you perish in the way.
For His wrath is quickly kindled.
Blessed are all who take refuge in Him.”

This is the word of the Lord.

Men: Thanks be to God.

Don: Amen.

Psalm 2 was written by King David. That’s according to Acts chapter 4 verse 25. It’s a Messianic Psalm, that is, a Psalm that predicts and exalts the Lord Jesus Christ. And it’s very interesting to me. I used to be on our Credentials Committee in Presbytery. Pastors would be coming up for ordination and they would be asked to name some Messianic Psalms. And one guy who wasn’t sure that he could name some off the top of his head said, “All 150 of them.”

Well, that’s a clever answer. But there are certain Psalms that are Messianic, that really key in on Christ—this one, Psalm 22, Psalm 110.

And it strikes me that Psalm 2 is one of only a few Psalms this is not a prayer. Psalm 1, Psalm 2, Psalm 37 and Psalm 133 are statements; they’re not prayers. But along with Psalm 110, Christ’s coronation Psalm, Psalm 2 is the most often quoted passage in the New Testament. It’s quoted twice in Acts, twice in Hebrews, and three times in the book of Revelation. So something that is quoted so much in the New Testament is worth paying attention to, don’t you think?

Participant: Yes.

Don: Yes. Karl Robins refers to this Psalm as a drama in four acts. And that’s why I have written on your handouts “Act 1, Act 2,” etc. So let’s dive in.

Act 1 is verses 1-3.

“Why do the nations rage,
And the peoples plot in vain?”

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Now King David is the speaker here and the scene happens on earth. It’s a rhetorical question. It’s a question of disbelief.

“Why do the nations rage,

And the peoples plot in vain?” Or, As the King James Version says, “The people imagine a vain thing?”

I can’t read this passage without in my mind hearing Handel’s “Messiah,” and that operatic tenor singing that portion of Scripture: “Why do the nations rage?” If you like it, all well and good. If you don’t, well, I think that you need to examine the state of your soul! Just kidding, just kidding! (*Laughter.*)

But anyway, you know, the intense, unrelenting anger! You know, we think of road rage, for example. We’re all familiar with that kind of thing. It’s akin to Acts chapter 7, where the people yell and gnash their teeth at Stephen before stoning him.

We talk a lot about conspiracies today. And when we usually think of conspiracies we think of boogeymen under the bed trying to poison our water or pollute our air or whatever, or mess up the Internet, or certain international organizations like The Trilateral Commission, or something. But this is something bigger and much more sinister. This is the ultimate conspiracy.

“The kings of the earth have set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together.”

It’s a determined, concerted effort—

“Against the LORD and against His Anointed One, Against His Messiah, against His Christ, if you will.”

Now it’s incredible and unbelievable on the face of it that this could happen. After all, this is against God. This is against the One who created us. This is the One who gives us “life and breath and everything,” according to Acts 17. This is the God who “satisfies your mouth with good things,” according to Psalm 103. This is the God who “sends His sun to shine and His rain to fall on the just and on the unjust,” according to Matthew 5, from whom comes “every good and perfect gift,” according to James 1.

And yet the world is raging against Him. And lest we think, “Oh, well, we’re better than they are!”, don’t forget, according to Ephesians chapter 1 and other passages of Scripture, that we were born that way. We were just as bad and would continue in that if it were not for God’s grace, right?

Participant: Right.

John Gerstner said that, as a parody to the greatest commandment, “Love the LORD your God,” and the second, to “love your neighbor as yourself,” that man in his sin hates God, hates his fellow man, and hates himself most of all.

We have that attitude here, don’t we? Man, if he could, would kill God and does kill God’s representatives, as we’ve seen throughout the centuries with persecution in many parts of the world, even today. They did that very thing when God in the flesh was here on earth, didn’t they? At His birth a king, the wicked, demonic Herod plotted—in vain, but nevertheless he plotted—to do just that.

And notice. They “plot in vain.” John Gerstner refers to Satan and his minions as “the supreme blockhead.” (*Laughter.*) The ultimate dummy. Satan knows that he can’t possibly defeat God. And yet he keeps on trying to do that very thing. And, of course,

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his people willingly follow him. In John 8⁴⁴ Jesus said to the Pharisees, “You are of your father the devil, and it is your desire to do his will.” It’s the classic definition of insanity, you know, to do the same thing over and over again and hope for different results. But that’s Satan’s way.

These rulers, past and present, say,
“Let us burst their bonds apart, And cast their cords from us.”

Now what do you think of when you think of bonds and cords? You think of restraint, don’t you? And it shows the Satan-instigated attitude of sinful man against God’s law. It goes back to Eden, as Satan confronted Eve. (*Paraphrase.*) “Has God really said that you’re not to eat from that tree? Why, He doesn’t really love you. Why, if He really loved you, that tree wouldn’t be there. That restriction wouldn’t be there. He doesn’t really love you. He doesn’t want you to be free.”

And what is he saying today? The same kind of thing. “Why, you know, if God really loved you, you could have sex with whoever you want and have no consequences. You could vent out your anger and commit any sin you want to.” And, you know, sin is pleasurable. We know that. “But if God really loved you, He wouldn’t have this law to hang around your neck and to restrain you. God’s raining on your parade.”

Now we know, as those who have been redeemed by Christ, that the very opposite is true. The law is for our good. But it’s only by God’s grace that we know that. And we see the consequences today of people throwing God’s law off.

They want to eliminate God’s rule. It’s as old as Babel, isn’t it, where they set up the tower of Babel and the Lord said, (*Paraphrase*), “Well, I’m going to have to confound your language because you want to get rid of My rule.”

Pharaoh in Egypt. “Who is the Lord that I should serve Him?” The opposition to Christ when He was on earth, even to the point of political and theological enemies getting together—the Pharisees and the Sadducees, Herod and Pilate becoming friends, Rome and the Jews, all right?

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries we had the Enlightenment, where people said, “Well, it’s science and reason that are the authority. We don’t need God’s revelation anymore.” And of course it expressed itself in the violence of the French Revolution. And sorry, patriotic Americans, but even some of the founders of our own country—Thomas Jefferson, Thomas Paine, Ben Franklin—same kind of thinking.

And of course, later on we have the publication of Charles Darwin’s *Origin of Species*. Darwin may not have intended this, but *The Origin of Species* and Darwin’s theory of evolution, in my opinion, is the definitive epitome of the sentiment expressed here in verse 3, of casting off God and His rule, because, after all, Darwin and his bulldog Aldous Huxley said, “Oh, my goodness, this is great! We don’t need God anymore! We have the Big Bang! All of this is natural selection. It happened by itself.” It requires more faith to believe that than to believe what’s said in the Bible.

And we have it in academia today. Many of you young people today, who’ve gone to school, know this, or if you have kids in school, all right? Stephen Hawking, Richard Dawkins, all of those kinds of people, not even accepting any alternative theories in certain public schools. I remember it happened ten years ago in Eastern Pennsylvania,

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where they wouldn't even have the option of intelligent design being taught in public schools. And of course, some of the ideas of Darwin—survival of the fittest and natural selection—came home to roost in the Communist revolutions in Russia and China and Nazism in Germany, resulting in untold bloodshed.

And of course, what do we have today in this country, in our public school system? God is all but out the door and the theory of evolution is what reigns.

And then we have five senior citizens determining for us what marriage is. Even in their ruling they use the word *autonomy*—that men ought to marry men or women ought to marry women in their autonomy. So certainly this is the picture of the world predicted so many years ago by King David.

Okay. Now we come to Act 2, verses 4-6. And now we have God speaking. And what is God's response? Is it “Hey, guys, I understand. Everyone has his own truth. What's true for Me may not necessarily be true for you. And I love you. I have a wonderful plan for your life.” (*Laughter.*) “So let's just all get along. Worship anyone or no one. It doesn't matter.”?

No. The Scripture says, “He who sits in the heavens laughs.” Now I remember that a long time ago there used to be a program on TV called “Pittsburgh Today.” And there was a guest that they had on, a Catholic priest who was a comedian on the side. And he said, “Did you know that the Scripture says that He who sits in the heavens laughs?”

I said, “Yes, but what kind of laughter is that?” I didn't say it. I didn't talk to the TV. I just thought it. (*Laughter.*) When the TV talks to me I'll realize that something is really wrong. (*Laughter.*)

But anyway, what kind of laughter is this? Is this the laughter of amusement or delight? No, it's derision! It's mocking! It's scorn! Even in Handel's “Messiah,” you know, the opera guy sings, (*mock imitation*), “He who sits in the heavens laughs them to scorn.” Even Handel realized that this is scorn, not the laughter of amusement.

And if you ever get a chance sometime today, read the end of Proverbs chapter 1, where God says, (*paraphrase*), “Because you would have none of my reproof, and will have none of my counsel, I will mock you when calamity strikes you. When you cry to me I will not answer you.” A dreadful passage!

Now on the handout here I have Isaiah 40:21-24. Rich Clark, would you read that for us, please?

Rich: Maybe.

Don: Maybe? Okay. I'm sorry. I didn't know you didn't—

Rich: I have it now.

Don: Okay.

Rich: “Do you not know? Do you not hear? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? It is He who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers, who stretches out the heavens like a curtain and spreads them like a tent to dwell in, who brings princes to nothing, and makes the rulers of the earth as emptiness. Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown, scarcely has their stem taken root from the earth, when He blows on them and they wither, and the tempest carries them off like stubble.”

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Don: Yeah. Wow! God regards the nations as nothing, and its inhabitants as grasshoppers. What an analogy!

And, you know, God really does have a sense of humor. Think for example, Biblically, of Nebuchadnezzar. “Oh! Look at great Babylon that I have built!” (*Paraphrase.*) “Fall down before that image and worship me.”

And what does God say? (*Paraphrase.*) “Okay. If you’re going to do that, I’m going to make you insane and turn you for all intents and purposes into an animal until you acknowledge Me.”

The tower of Babel, as I just said, where the people said, (*paraphrase*), “We’re going to build this tower to heaven to express our autonomy.” Well, God says, (*paraphrase*), “Well, I’m just going to confound your language. You’re not going to be able to understand what you’re saying to each other.”

Or how about Jesus coming out of that tomb on the third day? Oh, Satan and his hosts and the Pharisees and the Roman officials thought, “We got Him! We got Him!” No. Jesus came out of the tomb and God was up there laughing.

You know, Voltaire, the atheistic Frenchman, claimed that one hundred years after his death that Christianity would be extinct. And his house was used to publish Bibles. (*Laughter.*) Yes, God does have a sense of humor, doesn’t He?

And God sits in the heavens and laughs at five Supreme Court justices, senior citizens who want to redefine marriage.

And this laughter is not, as I said, the laughter of delight. It’s “wrath and fury.” Now that’s a concept that has all but disappeared from our culture today to be sure, and also, unfortunately, from many churches today. For many of you, you haven’t heard for a long time, if ever, a sermon on the wrath of God. I dare to say that more is spoken, particularly in the Old Testament, about God’s wrath than about God’s love. And if we neglect that very important attribute of God, then we are guilty, as Bruce has said so many times, of worshipping the God of human imagination rather than the God of Biblical revelation.

Now remember. God’s wrath is not like our wrath. God’s wrath is His settled indignation against evil. It’s not like our irrational, selfish wrath. God’s wrath is a good thing.

And He says, And He says, “I have set My King on Zion, My holy hill.” Now as I’ve said before, we Americans are allergic to the concept of a king, aren’t we? Oh, we’re fascinated when we see coverage, for example, of Prince William and Kate, or in the earlier decades of Prince Charles and Princess Diana. But basically we just don’t like to be told what to do. It goes back to the American Revolution, doesn’t it?

John Guest, when he came to this country, was in Philadelphia and noticed a sign on one of the shops. “We serve no sovereign here.” And he said, “How in the world am I going to preach the gospel when people serve no sovereign?” God is sovereign. He is the benevolent Dictator. He has set His King on Zion.

Folks, the kingdom of God is not a democracy. It’s not a republic. It’s a sovereign monarchy. God doesn’t say, “Well, you know, I’ve set My King, but, you know, it’s up for a majority vote. And if you don’t like it, that’s fine. I’ll come up with plan B.” No,

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there is no plan B. God says, “I have set My King on Zion.” You will either come to Him, or you don’t come! It’s as simple as that. “I have set My King on Zion,” and you either bow before Him and worship Him, or you’re toast, all right? (*Laughter.*) That’s the way it is! We have no say-so in the matter. And of course, by God’s grace, we wouldn’t have it any other way, right?

Participant: Amen.

Don: To know the sweetness of Christ, to know the wonder of our Savior, of our King. And even though we still sin, oh, we long to worship Christ. We long to see His face. Amen and Amen.

All right, now. In Act 3 we have this King, this Anointed One, the Messiah, the second Person of the Trinity, the pre-incarnate Christ speaking—verses 7-9.

He says, “I will tell of the decree.” Now this is an eternal decree, alongside the great doctrine of election that Bruce talks about with us so much. This is alongside of that. This is the eternal counsel of God.

And this is the decree.

“The LORD said to Me,

“You are My Son,

Today I have begotten You.””

You know, this is what it’s all about, folks. I don’t mean to sound tacky, but this is why the world turns. This is why we have life. This is why life goes on. What’s it all about? It’s about the King! It’s about Jesus! As Bruce is so fond of saying, “It’s not about you. It’s not about me.” It’s not about you and me in worship. It’s not about you and me in our occupations. It’s not about the world and its entertainment, or whatever. It’s that Jesus Christ would be glorified.

Sig, I remember a few months ago that you asked me, “Why did God go through all the trouble of all this evil in the world and everything in the Old Testament leading up to the Messiah, the sacrificial laws and everything? Why couldn’t He just come and set up His kingdom and we wouldn’t have to go through all this mess?” Well, it’s because of Jesus. It’s because of the glory of Christ. Evil is in the world so that Jesus would come and destroy it by His sacrifice so we would appreciate His love in a way that we would not be able to do otherwise.

Sig: But Don, if Adam had done his job, Christ would not have come.

Don: Exactly.

Sig: I’m not sure I understand your response, that the reason there is sin is so that we can show God’s glory.

Don: Well, as I said before, this is the eternal counsel of God. It is that Christ chose us from before the foundation of the world and sin entered into the picture. I mean I don’t fully understand it myself. It’s the mystery of mysteries.

Participant: Well, the fact is that Adam did not do his job.

Don: Exactly.

Participant: So we go from there. Or He had it already planned. One of the two.

Don: Well, yes. He did have it already planned. And of course that’s something that we don’t fully understand. But what I’m trying to get at is that this world, everything

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happening—Shakespeare was wrong in *Macbeth*. This world is not (*paraphrase*) “a tale told by idiots on a stage, signifying nothing.” I garbled it. I got it all wrong. You know what I’m talking about. That view is the view of modern man. It’s the view of evolution. But Christ is what it’s all about. So let’s keep that in mind.

But He says, “You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.”

Now there are two major interpretations of this verse. What does this mean?

Well, first of all, we know that the Son, the second Person of the Trinity, is eternally begotten of the Father. I did not put John 1:1-3 on the handout. I forgot to do that. But let me just recite it to you here.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that has been made.”

The Son, the second Person of the Trinity, is coequal and coeternal, eternally begotten of the Father. Some of you say the Nicene Creed in your worship services on Sundays. I said it in my church last Sunday. “I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, eternally begotten of the Father before all ages, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, of one substance with the Father, through whom all things were made.”

Of course, it’s also in one of our beloved Christmas carols. It’s the second verse of “O Come, All Ye Faithful.” It has those words, too. Christ is the God-Man. And we must hold to this doctrine tenaciously, especially if Jehovah’s Witnesses come to our doors.

However, there is another interpretation that I think is more to the point here, and it is the declaration that is made at Christ’s resurrection. Sig, do you have a handout?

Sig: Yes.

Don: Would you read Acts 13:33-34, please?

Sig: Acts 13:33. And we bring to you the good news, that what God promised to the fathers, this He has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus. As also it is written in the second Psalm: “You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.”

“And as for the fact that He raised Him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, He has spoken in this way: “I will give You the holy and sure blessing of David.”

Don: Yes. Brothers, we cannot overestimate the importance of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It was the message of the early church. It was the message of the apostles. And this is the definitive moment for Christ, as well as His ascension and His being seated at God’s right hand. But this is the time when this promise is fulfilled. “Today I have begotten You.”

And this promise is from God. What is the consequence of this promise? What are these “sure blessings of David” that are being referred to here? Well, we come to verse 8, and it’s the promise of God. He says, “Ask of Me and I will give the nations for Your heritage, The ends of the earth for Your possession.”

This is the promise of the Son. This is the promise to Christ as He fulfilled His mission on earth.

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Now there is something very interesting here. It’s contrary to someone else who made a counterfeit claim in the wilderness temptation of Christ. Bill McCoy, would you read Luke 4:5-7 for us?

Bill: And the devil took Him up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, and said to Him, “To you I will give all this authority and glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I will. If you then will worship me, it will all be yours.”

Don: What an arrogant, arrogant claim! Satan knew very well that he did not have it. Now ,there’s a little bit, a grain of truth there, because after all, Satan is called “the god of this world,” that kind of thing. But wow! And of course, Christ’s responds correctly. (*Paraphrase.*) “You shall only serve the LORD Your God. Begone, Satan! Get thee behind Me, Satan!”

But Satan made that counterfeit offer. “Come on, Jesus! Worship me.” What must it have been like for Christ to see all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time? Boy, that shows that Satan is a clever fiend! We dare not trifle with him. “You don’t have to go to the cross! Look! Just genuflect. You don’t have to kneel before me. But just make a little gesture of worship and obeisance and then it will all be yours.”

Of course, it was a lie. And praise God! Christ did not submit to that temptation

Participant: Isn’t it like the world today? We want it instantly. Jesus knows it’s coming in its time. But today the counterfeits tell us, “Don’t wait! Get it right now!”

Don: Yes, instant gratification, right? Have that fling! Have that affair! Get it now! Make that money now, or whatever. Satan always tempts us with the easy way, doesn’t he? And of course, later on we find out. Why is sin so alluring? Because it’s initially so pleasurable, isn’t it?

Participant: Mm-hmm.

Don: Yes. That’s right. And of course later on, though, we suffer the consequences. It’s the opposite of what Hebrews 12 says—that, you know, God’s discipline for the moment doesn’t appear to be to be good (I’m paraphrasing here)—it doesn’t appear to be pleasant but painful. But afterwards “it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness for those who have been trained by it,” right?

Participant: Hey, Don?

Don: Yes?

Participant: Back in verse 7, where it says, “Today I have begotten You,--“

Don: Yes.

Participant: That sounds like a time conflict with “in the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God.” It seems that in the very beginning, in eternity past, the Son and the Spirit and the Father were one. But it sounds like with “Today I have begotten You” that there’s a timing.

Don: Well, okay. And maybe I didn’t make myself clear. Of the two interpretations, the second is probably the best, where “today,” at Christ’s resurrection, is the declaration of the Father. And I should have been more clear on that, Dick. Sorry.

Dick: That’s fine.

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Don: It’s just that we use that expression “eternally begotten of the Father.” And Matthew Henry, who is a very, very good ancient commentator, did pose that as a possible option for interpretation, so that’s why I included it. But I think you’re right, Dick. I think that the best interpretation is that this is talking about Christ’s resurrection—today.

Dick: Okay.

Don: Right. Now what is Christ’s reward for His obedience? Dick, do you have a handout? Would you read Matthew 28:18-20?

Dick: Sure. “And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Go therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Don: What a claim! Absolute authority! “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me.” Now of course as God He already had it. We know that. But as the God-Man, and as a reward for His perfect obedience to the Father’s will, this is what happened. This is what He gets. *Now* he has this. *Now* He has this authority that Satan counterfeited in the temptation.

What a truth! Why do we dare to preach the gospel in our churches and to a hostile world? Do you ever get discouraged when you witness to a neighbor, a coworker, a family member who is not a believer? Do you think, sometimes, “What’s the use?” But no! We dare to do this, we dare to take the gospel all around the world. Why? Because all authority has been given to Christ!

Another one of our Christmas carols says it very well. “He rules the world with truth and grace.” He reigns now! And when we obey the Great Commission, whether it’s preaching the Word in our churches, evangelizing, being witnesses, being missionaries, we are saying that Christ has authority. And it’s because He has all authority that we dare to do this. It’s because He is with us to the end of the age that we dare to do this. Otherwise, it would be in vain.

And what a privilege! As Bruce said last week,—and he used the word *miracle*,—but he said that it’s a miracle that God uses us. Well, it’s certainly a privilege! It is certainly unbelievable that He would. He doesn’t need to do it that way. But in His grace He helps us to share in the victory as it were, to share the spoils, to share the blessing. And we all know that in proclaiming the gospel, in seeing someone come to Christ, that is indeed a blessing. That’s for sure.

Okay. Now verse 9—the judgment of Christ on rebellious nations. “You shall rule them with a rod of iron.”

I don’t know anything about how pottery is made, how vessels are created. But I’ve heard that when the clay is used and the vessels are made, a rod of iron can shatter them into smithereens. Well, Christ rules now and He will rule this way when He comes.

You know, it’s my observation in this culture that the Lion of the tribe of Judah has been defanged. He really has. You know, every year—

Participant: What was that?

Don: The Lion of the tribe of Judah has been defanged.

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Participant: Defanged. All right. Thank you.

Don: Yes. Every year at Christmas—and this is less and less the case in our secularized culture—but still, you know, you do have a baby Jesus. And He’s brought out every year as an heirloom. But that’s just about all the culture can stand of Him. Nobody’s going to object—well, not nobody; a lot of people do these days, with all the hubbub and fuss about Nativity scenes on government buildings. But anyway, a lot of people don’t object to a little baby. He’s harmless, non-threatening. But the Lord of glory who makes demands on my life? No, no, “we will not have this Man to reign over us.”

Speaking of which, Christ reigns and He “will break the nations with a rod of iron” in judgment. Let’s see. Would someone like to read Luke 19:12-14 and 27? Corky, could you read that for us, please?

Corky: He said, therefore, “A nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. Calling ten of his servants, he gave them ten minas and said to them, “Engage in business until I come.”

“But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after Him, saying, “We do not want this man to reign over us. But as for these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slaughter them before me.”

Don: That is one of the most blood-curdling passages in Scripture. And yet it is what is going to happen to those who will not bow the knee to Christ. You know the Scriptures says that “every knee will bow ... and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.” And as R. C. Sproul says, either they will bow willingly in obedience after being regenerated and becoming children of God, or they’ll bow because they won’t have any choice. Their knees will be broken.

Revelation 19:13-16. Let’s see. Rich, would you read that? Do you have the handout?

Rich: I do.

Don: Okay.

Rich: “He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which He is called is The Word of God. And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following Him on white horses. From His mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. And “He will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. On His robe and on His thigh He has the name written, King of King and Lord of Lords.”

Don: The “Hallelujah Chorus,” right? Let’s face it brothers. We don’t like to think about this. And it’s not very pleasant to our way of thinking. But there has to be justice, right? There has to be justice. God would not be good if there were no justice. Even the philosopher Immanuel Kant saw that. There has to be an omniscient, omnipotent Being, because we know that justice doesn’t always prevail in this world. But one day it will. Good will be vindicated and evil and evildoers will be destroyed.

Okay. So very quickly, let me go to verses 10-12—Act 4, this very gracious offer of salvation. Notice, I didn’t say “invitation.” This is a command. This doesn’t have an RSVP. But it’s a gracious offer.

“The Reign of Christ Over Wicked Nations”

Yes, God must be just. Yes, the Judge of all the earth must do right. But it also says in Ezekiel 33:18 that “God does not delight in the death of the wicked.” In 2 Peter 3:9, “God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

And so He says, “Be wise.” All right, it’s the opposite of being foolish. This isn’t talking about intellectual wisdom only, but spiritual wisdom. You know, there are people with Ph.D.s We know what B.S. stands for, right. And M.S. (more of it), and Ph.D. (piled higher and deeper.) (Laughter.)

But anyway, there are a lot of people with Ph.D.’s who are spiritually foolish. When you have people with Ph.D.’s who say that man must have come because aliens from other civilizations must have brought us down to earth, that’s foolishness, that’s not wisdom. And they call it *directed pan-spermia*! Whew! (Laughter.) But anyway, spiritually they’re foolish.

But no.

“Be wise, Be warned, O rulers of the earth.”

Be warned that there is going to be judgment. Be warned, oh kings, oh Presidents, oh heads of state, all of you who are bosses, all of you who are employed. Be aware of all of these things, that one day we’re going to stand before God and give account to Him, believer and unbeliever alike. And we believers will not be condemned. But “Serve the LORD with fear, And rejoice with trembling.”

Is that possible? Is it possible to do that? It sounds like a contradiction—rejoicing and then trembling with fear. But no, I don’t think it is, and let me very quickly just go through this.

In Luke 12:4-5, Jesus says, “I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of the one who can only kill the body and after that can do no more. But be afraid of the One who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Yes, I tell you, fear Him.” That’s God.

And yet He says in the same passage, “Fear not; you are of more value than many sparrows.”

So it is possible for us to rejoice, knowing that we are loved by God, knowing that God is our Father, knowing that we’ll never be separated from Him, that heaven is our eternal home, and yet to come in reverence and fear before God, as I did with my father who I loved deeply but respected when I was growing up. It says, “Work out your salvation with fear and trembling, because it is God who is working within you to will and to do His good pleasure.”

“Kiss the Son.” When I first saw that Scripture when I got my Braille Bible many years ago, “Kiss the Son!” The Son is in the Old Testament! I don’t know how Jews deal with that, but it’s there, it’s right there!

A kiss in the Bible is not the way that we see a kiss today, erotically, but it’s a sign of affection. Samuel kissed Saul when he was going to be anointed as king, and of course the infamous kiss of Judas with Jesus.

To kiss the Son means what? To embrace Him, to love Him. To believe in Jesus is not just an intellectual assent or emotion, but trust. It’s what Bruce calls “DART”—to depend upon, adhere to, rely on and trust. Exactly. Otherwise, anger awaits you. Judgment awaits you.

“The Reign of Christ Over Wicked Nations”

But praise God, one of the most wonderful verses in all of Scripture is this. “Blessed”—happy, despite circumstances, “blessed,” because the favor of God is upon you who put your trust in Him—“blessed are all who take refuge in Him.” Sig, would you read Romans 9:33, please?

Sig: Yes. “As it is written, “Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense. And whoever believes in Him will not be put to shame.”

Don: Amen. Now, just four very brief applications here to close. You know, Sig and I were talking on Wednesday about what I was going to teach this morning. And he said, “Well, Don, how is this going to apply to the men here in the barn?” So hopefully these applications will help you a little bit.

Number 1. “Our struggle is not against flesh and blood.” It’s not against ISIS. It’s not against Supreme Court justices or politicians. It’s against Satan and the principalities and powers in heavenly places. Let’s remember that.

And what is our greatest weapon? Is it the voting booth? No, it’s prayer, or as John Bunyan says in *Pilgrim’s Progress*, “all prayer.” Yes, we do everything that we can, lawfully, to change things. But at the end of the day, we can’t put our trust in politicians or weathermen. Sorry, Dennis Bowman, if you’re here. (*Laughter.*) But “Put not your trust in princes,” as it says in Psalm 146. But keep that in mind.

Number 2. Christ is building His church, “and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.”

Participant: Amen.

Don: All right. It may be discouraging and overwhelming to see what’s happening. And I don’t know what’s going to happen in our culture, to churches. Will we lose our tax exempt status? Will pastors go to jail because they refuse to marry same sex couples? I don’t know. The news can be very overwhelming.

But I know this, that Christ is building His church and He’s building it all around the world. And maybe persecution will be the means by which God builds us in this country. It’s happened before. It’s happening in other parts of the world. Keep that in mind.

Number 3. What is your reaction about all of the events that we hear about on the news? Are you angry at the rebellion you see currently? Or do you grieve for the lost like Paul did, for the very people who wanted to kill him? He said, “I am filled with unceasing anguish in my heart. I could wish that I myself would be cut off from Christ for the sake of my brethren.” Do we have that kind of mindset for people caught up in the homosexual lifestyle, or who are just blatant atheists, agnostics, etc.?

And last, but not least, number 4. At the end of the day, when all is said and done, remember this. “This world is not our home. We’re just a passin’ through.” We’re citizens of another kingdom. We’re citizens of a heavenly country. Keep that in mind as you ponder these things. “Blessed are all who take refuge in” the Son.

And now I’d like to have us sing, to exalt Christ. And if you have your handout with the lyrics, Lou is going to accompany us in the first and last verses of “Fairest Lord Jesus.”

(The men sing.)

Fairest Lord Jesus,

“The Reign of Christ Over Wicked Nations”

Ruler of all nature!
O Thou of God and Man the Son!
Thee will I cherish!
Thee will I honor,
Thou my souls' glory, joy and crown.
Beautiful Savior!
Lord of the nations!
Son of God and Son of Man!
Glory and honor,
Praise, adoration,
Now and forevermore be Thine!

Don: And all the Brave Men said,

Everyone: Amen! (*Applause.*)