

Rejoice, the Lord is King!

By Daryl Wingerd



When one looks around at the world, reasons for rejoicing often seem few and far between. The news about our world is a constant stream of strife, war, disease, tragedy, death, injustice, corruption, oppression, wickedness, perversion, immorality, and sorrow. The seemingly obvious conclusion when viewing all of this is that the Lord either is not King, or not a good

King, or not a powerful King, or a distracted or inattentive King who doesn't seem to notice or care about what is happening in his kingdom.

One response to this apparent dilemma would be to shut out the stream of bad news. That may be good advice for some who are addicted to too much news-watching, but even if you never watched the news and never assessed the condition of the world, that would not change the actual condition of things in the world. It would only change the degree to which you were personally aware of them. There would still be just as much strife, war, disease, tragedy, death, injustice, and so forth. In the minds of skeptics and scoffers, there would be just as much reason to deny the Kingship of the Lord, and therefore the Christian's reason for rejoicing.

The answer is not to "establish" his kingship in your mind by imagining that the condition of the world is better than it really is. The solution is to recognize — to believe — that despite the deplorable condition of this world and its rebellious occupants, his Kingship is real and active and moving inexorably toward his ultimate redemptive purpose and glory. He really is King, and that fact really is cause for rejoicing. Consider Psalm 2:1-3:

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."

The two most important words in the psalmist's opening question are at the end: "in vain." The raging of the nations and the plotting of the peoples are "in vain." This means, of course, that their raging and plotting will not end the way they expect them to end. Their efforts to be free of the "bonds" and "cords" that are the kingly authority of "The LORD and his Anointed" and to rule over themselves instead, are *vain* efforts.

The psalmist continues in verses 4-6 with the LORD's response:

He who sits in the heavens laughs;
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."

These words are not spoken by a powerless, disinterested, or morally bankrupt King. They come from a King with ultimate power, absolute authority, and an unstoppable plan to defeat his enemies and finally establish his kingdom. The psalmist continues in verses 7-9 to identify the LORD's King — his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ — with his authority to judge and condemn any subjects who finally refuse to submit to his authority:

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."

King Jesus will one day destroy all who persist in their raging and plotting against him. Unless they kneel before him in repentance and homage (the meaning of "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way" v. 12), he will destroy them in his holy wrath. He is not threatened by this world, and his loyal subjects should not be either. His Kingship is indeed cause for rejoicing for those who will "serve him with fear and rejoice with trembling" (v. 11). Blessed are all who take refuge in him (v. 12).

Christian, rejoice! The Lord Jesus Christ is King!

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