

## Reign

Christmas Eve – 12/24/23 – Mt. Calvary Luth.

Text: Psalm 110:1-4 Pastor Keith Besel

v. 1-2, [King David prophesies that God, the Father will say to Jesus, His Son,] **“Sit at My right hand, until I make Your enemies Your footstool. ... Reign (i.e. have dominion) in the midst of Your enemies!”**

### **Introduction**

✘ It's just a given - kings reign in glory. Palaces and castles are built on a grand scale on purpose; to convey an important public message. They are not large and opulent just for the pleasure and comfort of the king and his court. No, castles, palaces and fortresses are built to impress and project power over any who would dare to challenge the king.

→ All of the royal etiquette, pomp and ceremony that surround a king's every action is there for a reason – to let you and me know that the king is in charge and we are not. As his subjects our present security; our future prospects, and our chances for a long and prosperous life are directly tied to our relationship with the king. Either you are in His favor or you are out of favor. And it all depends upon the king. He reigns in glory, and you do not.

### **I. Human kings protect their glory at all costs.**

✘ The problem though, with human kings, is that they are, in fact, human beings with the same flesh and blood as those that they rule over. Under all of the royal robes; behind the protocol, and under the crown, each one is still just a man.

→ Despite thousands of years of human and societal development; for all of our philosophy and education and practice, we humans have not changed in one very important characteristic since the time that Adam and Eve were removed from the Garden of Eden. We are still paranoid about protecting our position and reputation and any influence that we have gained over those around us. And kings are no different – all of us can be utterly brutal toward one another. Around the world, in every nation and empire that has ever existed, the annals of history all read as one long, sad litany of kings and rulers who are corrupt, ruthless and tyrannical.

✘ In 1 Samuel, chapter 8, God's prophet Samuel tried to warn the people of Israel about the dangers of having a king when they insisted and urged Yahweh to allow them to have a human king. Why did they want a king? For no other reason but that they could be like all of the other nations around them. It was peer pressure; keeping up with the Jones' even back then.

→ God was against it: first of all because He was all-the-King they would ever need, and second because He knew the problems that would come with a human king on the throne. Whether it was then or now today, rejecting God as your king always turns out to be a really bad idea.

✘ But the people would not stop hounding God, so He finally allowed it for no other reason but to let them learn how bad their idea was the hard way. And all you have to do is look at the first three kings of Israel.

→ Saul disobeyed Samuel, the prophet and had the kingdom removed from him. He was driven mad and then died on the point of his own sword.

→ Saul was replaced by David; supposedly a man after God's own heart. Yet when David wanted to build the temple, God refused, saying, “You may not build a house for My name, for you are a man of war and have shed blood” (1 Chron. 28:3). And the third king was Solomon. He was filled with riches and wisdom. But even this wise, rich king was foolish enough to allow idols and false gods to take root in the kingdom and turn him away from God's will.

- So it is, from Alexander the Great to Kim Jong Un, human kings gain, keep their thrones, and reign through bloodshed and fear and power. The king reigns, and you do not.
- ✘ In the first century A.D. the rumor was that the Roman Emperor, Caesar Augustus said of Herod the Great, that he would rather be Herod's pig than Herod's son. Why is that? Because Herod was so paranoid; so ruthless in protecting his throne even from his own sons that the pig would probably live longer.
  - In fact Herod murdered three of his own sons because he believed they were after his throne. If he could do that to protect his throne against rivals, no wonder he was willing to order the destruction of all of the young boys in Bethlehem when the Magi came from the east in search of the newborn King of the Jews. Historians may call Herod "great," but he is just another sin-corrupted king who knew only blood, fear, and death.

## **II. Imagine a King Powerful Enough to have Mercy.**

- ✘ So what would it be like though if there was just one king that could break that mold of corruption? Wouldn't it be wonderful - wouldn't it be a blessing if a different kind of king would arise and reign?
  - Since not only the human kings, but all of mankind – every man, woman and child throughout history is now contaminated with the perversions and fears and flaws of our sinful nature, we really could use a king who was able to reign in honesty and purity, but still with the authority and power needed to protect us from the sinful and evil powers that threaten us.
- ✘ So imagine, if you will, a king with enough authority to command disease to leave his people. Just think: what if there was a king powerful enough to control the very elements of the earth; to make storms cease; and to send evil spirits running in fear.
  - That's amazing to think about, isn't it? But what if this same king was powerful enough to actually have mercy instead of inflicting fear and suffering? Imagine a king so secure with his reign and rule that his throne could never be threatened. If there was such a king, then he would be able to treat even his enemies with grace and compassion because his reign would never be at risk.
- ✘ This is the kind of king all humans need; the kind of ruler people have dreamed about for time in memorial, but how could that ever happen since all of mankind has inherited the corruption of sin?
  - Though King David had his share of sin and evil, he was still inspired by God to share the promise that just such a king would one day come. Psalm 110:1–2: "Yahweh says to my Lord: 'Sit at My right hand, until I make Your enemies Your footstool.' Yahweh sends forth from Zion Your mighty scepter. Rule (i.e. reign) in the midst of Your enemies!"

## **III. That King has Come...with an Infant's Cry.**

- ✘ This great promise; this seemingly impossible dream; this most desperate need of all of mankind – this is the great and wondrous miracle that we have gathered to celebrate here tonight! As God's angels filled the sky and declared, not only to the "shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock" that night; they also brought "good news of great joy...for all the people" of this entire world!
  - This seemingly impossible King did come; born as "a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger" (Lk. 2:12).
- ✘ But as David foretold it, this was no ordinary human king. He was fully human, yes. David knew that He would come as a descendant in David's physical bloodline. But at the same time, as he

says in verse one, Yahweh Himself, the Creator of the entire universe tells this King to sit on His own throne at Yahweh's "right hand."

→ Now understand, the right hand of a king is the highest place of honor, but it is even more than that. It means that person has been placed in full fellowship with God; given the same dignity, dominion and authority to participate fully in God's reigning over all things and all people!

→ So what does that mean about this little newborn that the shepherds ran to find? It means He is not only fully human, but He is at the same time fully God – one of a kind; like no other creature ever!

✘ This is the one that verse two of Psalm 110 says Yahweh sends forth from Zion with "[His] mighty scepter." This is why He is uniquely equipped to "rule in the midst of [His] enemies!"

→ He would not rule by might or by the power of human kings and armies. No, He came to abolish the sinful human assertion that "might makes right." He came as a different King. He came to all of mankind with an infant's cry. As the angels proclaimed it, this infant King brought "Glory to God in the highest" as well as bringing "peace to earth among those with whom He is pleased" (Lk. 2:14).

✘ Here in the manger bed, dear people, is Jesus, the Christ; the root and offspring of David; both David's son and David's Lord!

→ To Him and Him alone is every human king, ruler, president, dictator, and warlord forced to bow down in submission. The Herods of this world all crumble, and despots have no choice but to fall in fear. In the end – at the end of all time, even the most wise and noble of kings and queens will all remove their crowns in humility and place them at His glorious and victorious feet.

→ For this King has given His own life on the cross to pay for the sins of the entire world; for your sins and mine – all of them! Every evil power; all corrupt authorities hold no power against Him. They are all under His feet; under His rule today and forevermore! And anyone who rejects Him as King, is under His feet as well.

✘ But for those who submit to Him; for those who believe in Him and worship Him as Savior and God and King over all, this baby in the manger – He is your loving and compassionate and merciful and saving King! And His reign will be forever...for you; for your life and salvation!

→ On earth He had no palace, no bed of gold, no clothes of luxury; only a manger, straw and the smell of animals and shepherds. Yet He came as the King of all people...for all people!

→ And tonight we worship Him and Him alone along with the resounding praises of angels and archangels and all of heaven. By His power; by His mercy He forgives all of our sins and He gifts us with a new and vibrant life in His reign and rule that lasts into eternity.

## **Conclusion**

✘ This is your Christmas gift friends. God has become man! As we light our candles and sing "Silent Night" we wonder at this profound mystery, and yet we glory at His love; the love that we now know is revealed in the scars upon His hands and feet and in His side for our salvation.

→ His gift to you and to me is the "joy that He gives to all the world" in knowing that Satan's head has been crushed under His foot and that He, Jesus now reigns and rules at the right hand of the Father tonight, tomorrow and forever as our King! Amen.