

**03.09.06 Coromandel Baptist 10:00 a.m.**

***Trust not in princes!***

Bible Readings = Psalm 146 and Matt. 4:1-11

**Introduction:**

- (1) This week we return to the theme of the God and the nations, and do so with the matter of Jesus' kingship in our minds.
- (2) We saw from Psalm 2 that God has appointed him as his holy king, to bring about the obedience of the nations, and this in the face of their seething rage against the Lord and his anointed.
- (3) We also saw (on the Sunday of the camp) that God's Old Testament people wanted a king like the other nations, and that this came to its pitch in the exchange of kingship at the time of Jesus' trial, where they cried out 'We have no king but Caesar'.
- (4) We saw that this was really an exchange of worship, rejecting the Lord of all, for alliance with the man who stood at the head of the earthly worship system of Rome.
- (5) And all of this leads to the question in whom, or in what, do the nations place their trust?

***This week, we will give our attention to the things in which the nations may place their trust. By contrast, we see how the Jesus has trust only in the word of his Father. Moreover, he leads us as his people to trust this same word, and to proclaim it to the nations.***

**1. The King Who Trusts in God**

(1) In Psalm 2 we saw that the king had to live in dependence on God, and this was to define him as the Lord's anointed.

- All the action in Psalm 2 is focussed on God, who sets the king on his holy hill, who anoints him, who commands the nations hear him, and who wins the victory for him.
- For his part, the king had only to express his faith (i.e. trust in/dependence on) God in Asking.
  - Asking is a royal activity! This is what we see Jesus doing e.g. in his priestly prayer in John 17:6-11, 20; and in his intercession at the right hand of the Father
  - All who belong to him have been *given* to him by the Father (e.g. John 6:37, 39, 45; 10:28; 17:6, 8-9, 24; etc.)
- Refer to Psalm 146, especially verse 3. Compare with Jesus before Pilate and his entrusting of his soul to a faithful Creator (as in 1 Peter 4:19), especially in relation to his own vindication.

(2) The king's greatness lay in his trust of the Father. This is why many of the Old Testament kings are judged negatively, for they forged alliances with other powers in whom they placed their trust.

- We recall, for example, the words of Isaiah 31:1 Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help and rely on horses, who trust in chariots because they are many and in horsemen because they are very strong, but do not look to the Holy One of Israel or

consult the LORD (cf. Is. 30:1ff. "Ah, stubborn children," declares the LORD, "who carry out a plan, but not mine, and who make an alliance, but not of my Spirit, that they may add sin to sin; <sup>2</sup> who set out to go down to Egypt, without asking for my direction, to take refuge in the protection of Pharaoh and to seek shelter in the shadow of Egypt! <sup>3</sup> Therefore shall the protection of Pharaoh turn to your shame, and the shelter in the shadow of Egypt to your humiliation.) Also other references such as Ps. 20:2; 33:16; Jer. 17:5 Thus says the LORD: "Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart turns away from the LORD

(3) By contrast, the nations themselves, and their rulers, do not trust God as their Father.

- This is the plain teaching of Luke 12:30 (For all the nations of the world seek after these things, and your Father knows that you need them.) in its context.
  - Note the thing that triggers Jesus' teaching in Luke 12 is the question of inheritance (Luke 12:13): two things then revealed
    - § Fools who store up treasure on earth (Luke 12:15-21); and those who store up treasure in heaven (Luke 12:32-34). The difference is in the knowledge of the Father and his care!
    - § The one leads to selfishness and to foolish living, the other leads to openheartedness and wise living, but not judged by the nations' standards of "wisdom"!
      - As an example of the contrast between the 'wisdom' of the world's assessment and the wisdom of God's assessment see the case of Omri, highlighted in the notes below.

(4) A need for caution here: this area is one in which we feel all our deficiencies very deeply. Selfishness, competitiveness, gaining the advantage, securing nest eggs, etc... are all areas in which we feel 'alive to sin' (though in Christ, we are not!). Put a group of Christians around a Monopoly board...see what comes out!

- We are prone always to legalism and its handmaid, condemnation. Just look at group of children playing in the school yard! And also see how readily they share!
- Not looking for us to be critical of ourselves, or of one another, or judgemental in any way. Very easy to do so, and legalism accompanies the words 'ought' or 'should' to strangle us quickly!
- The issue is not that we ought/should trust the Father and not be anxious, but that this is creationally how it is! Jesus has come to unite us to himself that his mind may be in us, so that we might, in him, be fully trusting of the Father.

## 2. Trusting God for the Nations

(1) Jesus' temptation at the outset of his public ministry was real, and pressing. So deep was what he suffered that angels came to minister to him (Matt. 4:11). He was physically exhausted and what came out at that point was what was in his heart: unconditioned trust in the Father and obedience to his word.

- What comes out at a time of stress, and how we respond at times of stress and suffering, reveal the inner heart. 'I was tired and run down' is not the cause of our short temper, grumpy spirit, or rudeness, just the occasion of its revelation!

(2) Jesus knew that the nations were destined to be his, as he came into the world for their sakes, fulfilling Psalm 2, so that the nations might come to know the Father's glory.

However, at this point the 'ruler of this world' (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11 cf. Eph. 2:1-2;

6:12; 1 John 5:19; Rev. 12:9-11; 20:2-3) still had power over the nations, to deceive them. Not yet 'cast out' through the Cross.

- Notice in passing: you can have the whole world and still not be filled (as in the case of the evil one himself!) Ultimately the inheritance is not just the world, but God himself. He loved the Father with all his heart, mind and strength!

(3) The battle was on! The King had come to unseat the power of the false king, the usurper of the nations of the world.

- Rev. 12:9 tells us that the evil one has power over the nations by deceiving them. About what? About everything:
  - The nature of God, and his character
  - The place of the law and judgement,
  - The basis of the nations' security,
  - The appeal of his own 'wisdom'
- And here, now, is the Son, the heir. He has come to wrest the nations from the hand of evil one and set them free by the word of his truth. He declares to us the truth about everything:
  - Who God really is, and true revelation of his character
  - The place of law and judgement,
  - The basis of the nations' security,
  - The nature of real wisdom!

(4) But more than simply declaring it, he comes to bring us into it, through union with himself, in the Spirit, placing us in the heart of the Father.

- This is the word he gives us to proclaim to the nations!

Extract from Draft Manuscript of *The Wisdom of God in the Life of the Church*:

*(3) Omri the Great: Omri the Fool*

One of the most notable examples of this hiatus between political cunning and godly wisdom is seen in the case of Omri, who won control of the northern kingdom of Israel in a military coup against the brief (seven day) reign of Zimri (who himself had murdered Elah, the king before him!). Old Testament scholars are united on fact that Omri brought political stability to the northern kingdom,<sup>1</sup> and this was achieved not least by his establishment of Samaria as the capital, which retained this status for about 150 years until the Assyrian invasion. Indeed, so successful was his reign and the building work associated with it (both in terms of physical structures and alliances) that 'the Assyrians referred to Israel as "the house of Omri" long after his dynasty had been overthrown.'<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>See, for example, LaSor, W., & et. al. (1996). *Old Testament Survey: The Message Form and Background of the Old Testament* (Second ed., p.201). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans and the comments of John 'Stability was at last brought to Israel by the vigorous Omri ... Though his reign was brief (876-869), he was able to establish a dynasty that held power to the third generation, and to initiate a policy that restored to Israel a measure of strength and prosperity.' Bright, J. (1981). *The History of Israel* [Third] (p.240). Philadelphia: Westminster.

<sup>2</sup>Bright, p.241.

Of particular interest for our theme is the noteworthy fact that, despite his obvious ability 'the Bible dismisses his reign with five or six verses (1 Kings 16:23-28)'.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, we are told that Omri 'did more evil than all who were before him' (1 Kings 16:25).

However, this assessment would not have been the same some of his contemporaries. B. W. Anderson comments,

If we could look at the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel, to which we are referred, we would undoubtedly discover a man of tremendous political stature. He was able to do what none of his predecessors had done: establish a dynasty of such prestige that Assyrian kings continued to refer to the Northern Kingdom as "the land of Omri" for many years after his death and the downfall of his dynasty...thanks to the work of archaeologists we know a great deal more about Omri's reign than the scanty report in Kings tells us ... [reference to him on the Moabite Stone]...So, inspite of the virtual silence of the book of Kings on Omri's reign, we have reason to believe that under his statemanship Israel achieved great stability and prosperity...Something of an economic boom must have followed in the wake of his vigorous political exploits....The monument to Omri's political astuteness was the city of Samaria, the new capital that he began to build on a hilltop, and that was completed by his son Ahab...Omri's purchase of the hill of Samaria was a wise decision... strategically situated....This luxurious city has come to light under the excavator's spade.

Anderson's phrasing here is interesting to say the least! He suggests that the decision to establish Samaria was 'wise' and that the proof of Omri's leadership lay in its ability to provide economic prosperity and political stability. However, the biblical witness to his reign is decidedly different! His political expediency, his ruthless efficiency, and his international reputation were marks not of biblical wisdom, but of great folly. Micah's prophetic oracle against the iniquity of Israel in Micah 6 ends with the words, 'you have observed the statutes of Omri and all the practices of Ahab's house, and you have followed their traditions. Therefore I will give you over to ruin and your people to derision; you will bear the scorn of the nations' (Mic. 6:16). In the end, the judgment of the northern tribes was due to the wickedness of the worship in which the kings led them (and doubtless, which the people themselves wanted!), as 2 Kings 17:5-23 makes plain.

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<sup>3</sup>Bright, p.241.