

“THE KING AND HIS KINGDOM”

HEBREWS 9:24-28

DECEMBER 26, 2010, SUNDAY, 11:00 PM – DR. JACK GRAHAM

It's our prayer that you would know this Savior for all seasons, that He is Christ the King, and Christ the Lord.

We've discovered in Hebrews chapter 9 that Jesus is Prophet and Priest and King, and we have explored the depths of these titles given to our Lord. The Prophet... the Messiah who has come, the one who tells us that God is with us. The Priest... who now intercedes for us at the right-hand of God, who mediates for us in the presence of God, who connects us that we may know God. He is God for us at this very moment. But not only is He Jesus the Prophet, and Jesus the King... Jesus the Priest, but He is Jesus the King! As a matter of fact He is King of kings and Lord of lords. And this Savior is above all kings and powers and rulers and princes. The one who was born is the King!

So take your Bibles and turn with me to the book of Hebrews, chapter 9. When Jesus came to earth and was born in Bethlehem, laid in a manger, He came in great humility. But when He comes again He will come in great glory and power and victory, and great honor! His kingdom has come and is coming! So at verse 28:

28) So Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time,

That, of course, is the promise of the second advent of Christ, when Jesus comes again, personally, visibly, victoriously. Jesus who is Lord... Lord of life, Lord of all is coming again! Not to deal with sin; that's been accomplished. It is finished! He came, was born to die, that was accomplished. But He comes again to save those who are eagerly waiting for Him. We ought to be on tiptoe with expectation. Our eyes focused on eternity, though our feet are firmly planted on this earth, our focus... our faith looks for the One who has come and is coming again.

And this one who is King, the King to come, is King right now! He reigns and rules in the hearts of those who name Him and claim Him as their King. Jesus was King before He was born... before His birth; Jesus was King at His birth; and Jesus is King after His birth and forevermore! [Hebrews 13:8] *"He is the same yesterday, today and forever!"*

Now in our republic, our democratic style of government, we know very little about kings and royalty. But in the time of Jesus certainly and in other parts of the world today there's much known about king[s], a monarchy. Jesus knew about these kings and faced off against several of these powerful potentates and kings in His earthly walk. But in the... in the monarchy the king's rule is absolute. His authority is total authority. In a monarchy where a king rules the people are completely subject to the desires and the demands of the king. The king makes the laws and enforces the law. You don't vote the king in. You can't vote the king out. The king is king, and he in effect owned his subjects [temporary voice fog]. He promised in return as the king to provide for the subjects and the nation, to protect them and for all the needs of the people to be their king.

So in that context of absolute authority and power, of total ownership of his subjects, think with me about Jesus the King! He owns everything and everyone because He is King. He is Lord of all! So we sing, "Crown Him Lord of all!" The Bible describes Jesus the King as our Master, and therefore, we are His slaves. Paul often spoke of himself as the slave... the bondservant of his Master Jesus Christ.

One of my spiritual heroes is Bill Bright, now in heaven. And when Bill as a young businessman who didn't know God came to faith in Christ, his life was dramatically, dynamically changed. And for the rest of his years he simply wanted to be known as a slave of Jesus Christ. Though he founded one of the most important and significant Christian organizations, Campus Crusade for Christ, Bill Bright's desire was simply to be known as a slave of Jesus Christ.

He is our Master! He is sovereign, and therefore, we are His subordinates. He is our Lord, and therefore, we are His servants. He is our King, and therefore, we are His subjects. We didn't vote Him in and we won't vote Him out! It's just [tap] the way [tap] it is [tap]! Jesus is King and He reigns on the throne of the universe!

But the question is: Is Jesus your King? Can you say honestly that Jesus is the King of my heart, that Jesus is my King, my Lord? Have you personally crowned Jesus as the King of your life, the Lord of your life? Have you surrendered yourself as His subject? Your kingdom with all of our petty fiefdoms and ah... rulerships... have you surrendered your kingdom to His kingdom?

Jesus taught us to pray. [Matthew 6:10] "*Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*" This is the prayer for the return of Christ, but it's also a prayer for the reign of Christ in our lives. Jesus said, "My kingdom is within you [tap-tap]!" So Jesus will not only be king when He comes again and establishes His earthly reign and rule forever and ever, but He is king right now and He reigns... He is enthroned in the lives of those who bow before Him!

So the question is: Is Jesus ruling and reigning in you? Is He on the throne of your life? The fact is... now listen carefully... if Jesus is not your Lord and King, He is not your Savior! Romans 10:9 and 10... If you have a Bible look at Romans 10:9 and 10. [pause] These are the simple, forthright words of the Gospel. Verse 9: *"because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is (say it)[Lord] Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved."* [It] Goes on to say [12-13], ... *"the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."*

Now there was a big theological stew or debate several years ago on the doctrines of so-called Lordship salvation, and I certainly am not going to take my time and your time this morning reviewing all of that. It was to me such a senseless and silly debate because the Scripture is clear. Jesus is Lord! If you confess Him as Lord, receiving Him as Savior, you are saved. But if you do not confess Him as Lord, allowing Him to be the Lord of your life by giving your life in repentance and faith to Him, you aren't saved! He's not your Savior if He is not your Lord!

This is not a work salvation. We know that Jesus accomplished all the work of salvation. Ah... the Lordship of Christ doesn't mean that we earn our way or gain our way through obedience to Christ. That comes after salvation, but the fact is, if you have never bowed the knee and surrendered your life to the Lord Jesus Christ the King, you're not saved... you're not saved!

Why did Jesus come? You say, "Jesus came to love us and forgive us of our sins, to save us." That's absolutely true, but you're in Romans 10; turn in your Bibles over to the fourteenth chapter of Romans... Romans chapter 14 and beginning at verse 7, let's look at these verses together. *"For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord."*

That's what Paul was saying in Philippians. *"To live is Christ, to die is gain."* We live unto the Lord, we die unto the Lord. He is the Lord of life, the Lord of death; the Lord of our present, the Lord of our future. But notice what He said in verse 9: *"For to this end Christ died and lived again... (Why? Alright, why did Jesus come? Why did Jesus go to the cross?) "...to this end, that He might be Lord both of the dead and the living."* He came to be Lord... your Lord and your Savior!

Paul, on the road to Damascus experienced this himself. Known as Saul of Tarsus, rabid in his hatred towards the church, persecuting Christians, delivering them over to death, he was confronted with the risen Christ, the King and Savior Jesus, on the road to Damascus. He was literally knocked off of his horse, blinded in the powerful light of Jesus, and he asked, "Lord, who are You?" That's the question that everyone must ask concerning Jesus. "Lord, who are You?" And when Jesus identified Himself as the same Jesus that Paul was persecuting, Paul, realizing that he was now in the

presence of God Almighty, on his face before God he said, "Lord, what would you have me to do?" That's the surrender! That's putting up your sword and saying, "Lord Jesus, my life is now Yours. I come to You. I crown You as my King!" And when we do this we are saved. We are confessing Him and we are following Him. Now this is basic! This is basic!

When the angels announced the birth of Jesus they said, [Luke 2:11] "*For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior...*" Is that all? "... a Savior who is Christ the Lord." He is both Savior and Lord! He has given His all for us from the cradle to the cross, and now to the crown! He deserves and desires and demands to rule over our lives! He deserves so much more and, yes, demands so much more. Remember, we are His subjects, we are His slaves. He demands... He deserves so much more than just little compartments in our lives! A little Sunday-go-to-church kind of religion! The one who lived and died and rose again commands our all! He owns us! Therefore, our attitudes and our actions and our activities must always reflect His rule. His reign in us! He doesn't want a part of your life or a place in your life or even prominence in your life, but rather preeminence in all of our lives!

Paul said in 1st Corinthians 6 [19]: "*What, do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit... that you are bought with a price. Therefore, glorify God with your... with your body which belongs to Him!*" It all belongs to Him. I belong [tap] to Him. So do you. He purchased us outright with His blood. We are born into His family. We belong to His family. And yes, we belong to His kingdom, and therefore He is our Lord.

Job stated this when he faced those calamities. He said [Job 1:21], "*Naked I came out of the womb, and naked I shall return.*" I didn't have anything when I got here; I'll have nothing when I leave. And that's when he proclaimed "*The Lord gives, the Lord takes away, blessed be the name of the Lord.*" My life, your life belongs to Him! We have nothing! If we have something, it is simply because God has chosen to bless us and favor us! But it all belongs to Him! In Him we live and move and have our being. We don't have a breath without Him!

Now people resist this. In fact, when we had the noted atheist Hitchens here in the debate at Prestonwood Christian Academy the point that he kept driving home to the students as a world renowned and well conceived atheist was that "you don't need a God that he doesn't believe in. You don't need a god to rule over you!" See, that's the kicking point for everybody, whether you're an atheist or just someone who has rejected the Gospel, it's you don't want someone telling you what to do. And people without God... they don't want God telling them... them what to do! And so you contrive all kinds of reasons that you don't believe in God, or excuses that you're not living for God! But it all comes down to whether He is Lord of... of all. Whether you're willing to bow the knee!

I was witnessing to a man one day and sharing some of this with him about trusting in Christ and surrendering his life to Christ, and he looked at

me, glaring, and said, "That's all you Christians want to talk about [strike]... bow the knee, bow the knee, bow the knee!" He said, "I'll not bow my knee to anyone!" I said, "Sir, you will." Because this same Jesus... God has given Him a name which is above every name, [Philippians 2:11] *"that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God."*

Everybody's going to bow! Mr. Hitchens is going to bow before King Jesus. Hitler's going to bow before King Jesus! Osama bin Laden will bow before King Jesus! You, me! We all will bow before the King of kings and the Lord of lords! God has absolute authority; Jesus is God; therefore, He has absolute authority!

Now Satan always wants to usurp the authority of God, the deity of God, the greatness of God, the glory of God. That's the purpose of Satan. From the... from the very beginning of... of ah... his failure and rebellion in heaven when he said, [Isaiah 14:14] *"I will be like the most High God!"* He thought he was bigger than God and better than God and so thus came the rebellion. And Satan's mo... motive and *modus operandi* is still the same! He wants authority over your life! Remember when he tempted Jesus? He said, [Matthew 4:9] *"Bow down and worship me and I'll give all the kingdoms of this world."*

And the same temptations come to us, whether they're temptations of the flesh or temptations of the spirit or temptations ah... of... of ah... of the world. These all come from Satan who tempts us to say, "My world is better! My kingdom is better! It's more pleasurable! You'll have more fun! Don't bow to Jesus; bow to me; bow to this world." That's always what it's about.

I've learned never to say never. That's especially good advice in a marriage. [laughter] You know, I tell young couples a lot of things. One of the things I say is look when you have a fight you can either be right or you can be happy. [laughter] So I suggest to all you men at the start of one of those things, just surrender unconditionally at the very outset [laughter] and you'll be a lot happier for it, I promise you. Because if mama ain't happy... [laughter]! That's good before-the-New-Year-begins advice! [laughter] But you know none... one of the other things that we shouldn't do when we're having arguments is say never. "You never do this! You never do that! You always... here's the other... You always say this or you always do that!" So I've learned never to say never, but I'm about to say never.

In all these years that I've been a pastor and a preacher, watching people live and then some die and go into the presence of the Lord. I've never heard anyone say to me, or others around me, "The worse thing I ever did with my life was to bow before Jesus. I... I... I rue the day... I'm sorry for the day that I gave my heart and life to follow Jesus. Worst decision I ever made was to become a Christian." No, never heard that. To the contrary, "The greatest thing I ever did was to follow Christ. The greatest thing that ever [tap happened [tap] to [tap] me [tap] was making and allowing Jesus to be my Savior and my Lord and my God."

The King rules. He rules over His kingdom. His kingdom is coming, but again, His kingdom has come within us. And His kingdom is one of love and joy and peace and justice. His kingdom is filled with grace and glory. And His kingdom is before us, His coming kingdom is with us, and now with us because Christ reigns.

So we are to seek the King and His kingdom. That's the title of this message. "The King and His Kingdom."

Next weekend Jarrett Stephens is going to preach on one of our favorite verse, Matthew 6:33, "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all of these things will be added to you." The first of the year and times of resolve and times of new commitments and fresh awareness of where our life needs to go. "Seek first the kingdom of God!"

Our hearts are a throne room. The question is who operates... who rules upon... who occupies and operates upon that throne? Someone is going to be on the throne of your life! It will either be you or Jesus! And you can't pray, "Lord, Your kingdom come" until you're willing to pray, "Lord, my kingdom go; my kingdom be gone!" We must take hands off of our life and give the throne and the scepter to the only One who rightfully belongs there!

Now let's make some application. How does that work it's way out in our lives? His kingdom rule, His Lordship. It means that we are managers of everything we are and everything that we have. Ah... what does this mean to practically and personally live in His kingdom and for the King?

Well, it means that He will be King of our clocks. That's pretty practical, isn't it? Everyday, every minute, every hour of the day belongs to Him. God gives us every day to live for Him. He has a plan and a purpose and a daily decision for us to make as we follow Him. And everyday is for His glory. Every day is for His praise. [Colossians 3:17] "*Whatever you do,*" the Scripture says, "*do it all in the name of Jesus.*"

So when you go to work, instead of just looking at the clock and waiting for time to pass, you do what you do for Him. You work with integrity, you work with excellence. When you come to church, you don't sit there gathering wool in your brain, you engage in the worship of the Lord. You are involved in the teaching of God's word; you're committed in obedience of service. Why? Because He's Lord of your life. He's Lord at the church, He's Lord at your office, He's the Lord of your school!

And I read this morning a wonderful article in the Dallas Morning News, the title of it is: "Dal... Dalton's Legacy extends beyond football." And it is an article describing the Texas Christian University quarterback, letting... leading his team the last four years to the most successful period in team history ah... and TCU has a great history with the Horn Frogs. But Andy Dalton is 23 years of age. He grew up in ah... Katy, Texas, I believe. He has an unwavering faith in Jesus Christ; taught to him by his parents, personally received by Andy himself. He's had a record-shattering career.

He's won more games... 41, thrown for more yards... 10,095, and touchdowns... 70, than anyone in school history. Pretty amazing.

But Dalton will not only leave a massive football legacy behind at TCU, he'll leave a spiritual mark as well." The article describes Andy, along with ten other students at TCU who began a Bible study to lead their classmates to Christ and to live under the Lordship of Christ. Andy is quoted as saying, "College is a time where a lot of people are trying to find themselves," Dalton says. "If you've grown up in church, college is a time you may branch away from that."

We have any college students here, returning home, you're with family today, but you've been branching away? You haven't been living under the Lordship of Christ? It happens, doesn't it?

"We felt TCU had been a little complacent in its faith, and having something like this would kind of spark up the campus." Well, I should say so.

But regarding Dalton himself, this is what I like about this great young man. TCU center Jake Kirkpatrick, a frequent attendee of IGNITE Meetings (that's the name of the Bible study) and Dalton's former roommate (I mean, your roommates know you about as well as anybody, right? At college?) says that Dalton has always been comfortable in his own skin." (But here's the quote) "His faith plays a major part in his life and everything he does revolves around it!" Now that is living in the kingdom! That is living under the Lordship of Christ! Everything he does (from his roommate, for goodness sake who sees him at his best and his worst) revolves around Christ." He says, "That's why he's such a leader on this team. I think it shows on the field."

[The] Article describes a defeat last year in which he threw two interceptions, but actually played a great game. And after the game a verse was given to him by Major Applewhite, former quarterback at Texas and this is a verse that Andy has lived by this year. "Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you in due time." So give Him your days and say, "Lord, my life is yours; this day is yours! Let everything I do reveal around you! Lord, I humble myself before you! I bow before you, knowing that if I'm to be exalted, in due time you will exalt me!"

But this is what it means to live under the Lordship of Christ. He is Lord of our clocks, He is Lord of our calendars. We're going to be setting the calendars for the coming year. We're going to be making priorities. Is your priority the... does your priority include, and not just include, but involve totally the Lordship of Christ, the will of Christ, the will of the kingdom of God? What does God want you to do? I assure you... I assure you God wants to do more with you than just for you to make a living; He wants you to make a life and to make a difference for Him!

How 'bout your check book? You know, we kind of save this for last, don't we? Kind of set you up for this one? But I don't know of any... any guide... any measurement more accurate in determining what are the priorities [strike] of my life and who's Lord of my life, and what owns me than my checkbook. You do the same. Figure how you spends your money, how you save your money, how you give your money. Remember, God owns it all! Some have found out that it can go away just like that. God can take it away. And yet I see so many people go through their lives as takers rather than givers.

I don't want to live like that. I've had some serious evaluation in my life going on, and the one plea that I have before God is in the days ahead, Lord, let me give away what you've given to me. God owns everything that I have. We're managers; He's the Master!

Look at ah... 1 Peter 4:10. Go over a few chapters from Romans. I'll show you this verse. And we're winding down but I don't want you to miss this. 1 Peter 4:10. See, a lot of people get all excited about the Baby Jesus, don't have a clue about the King... who He is and what He demands. 1 Peter 4:10: *"As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's grace:"* This is talking not about the gift of money, but the gift of time, the gift of our talents, our spiritual gifts. You've been given a gift, you've been given an opportunity. God's gift to you is eternal and abundant life. What is your gift back to Him?

Your gift back to Him should be to return your life and to live it under His authority. We are ambassadors for Christ! We represent Him and an ambassador represents the king or the government in the land of another! We represent the King and His kingdom on earth! And whatever we do if we're living under the Lordship of Christ and under the kingdom or in the kingdom of Christ, means that our gifts, our talent, our money, our everything has been entrusted [tap] to us, therefore, it should be invested back for eternal purposes!

And the question that I should be asking myself under the Lordship of Christ is not how much money do I make, but how much money do I give? Not, Lord, how much should I even give, but how much should I keep? I mean, we act as though a tithe is like the major stretch of life. The tithe is the bare minimum! You're telling me that the King of kings and Lord of lords can command a dime out of every dollar and that's too much? Everything we have belongs to God.

I was thrilled yesterday... Bridge Builders downtown at the downtown community... to see scores of our people led by Mike Fechner and the team down there... Velma, serving this community of southeast Dallas, taking Sunday after... ah... ah... Christmas afternoon to be there. Now that's not a guilt trip for those who couldn't come; you didn't even know about it. I'm just say... Because many of you did other things. But the question is: What are you doing? We can't all witness the same way. We can't all serve the same way. We're not cut out. We all have different gifts but all of our gifts... all of our time, all... all of our treasure... it all belongs to Him!

Paul said in 1 Corinthians that we're building a life, a foundation is given to us in Christ and we're to build upon that life. And he says in the... in the last day... It's interesting in the Hebrews 9 [:27] passage it says "*It is appointed unto one... man once to die and then the judgment.*" Now we'll not be judged for our sins; that happened at the cross. But at the judgment seat of Christ our lives will be coming into focus and evaluated for the sake of rewards and crowns that we will then lay at Jesus' feet.

But he said, "Some are going to build the... on this foundation with gold and silver and precious stone, and then when the fires of judgment come... when it's tested by fire, that which is built with gold and silver and precious stones... that's going to stand for the testimony of the work of Christ in our lives. But others will build with wood and hay and stubble, and when the testing comes and the fires blow through, it's all going to be wiped out; nothing to show. And some people are going to have nothing but the wasted ember... charred embers of a wasted life to place in the nail scarred hands of the Lord Jesus Christ who is the King. So how 'bout your clock? How 'bout your calendar?

How 'bout your checkbook? Does it reflect the rule of Christ in your life? The Bible says concerning the wonderful counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father and the Prince of Peace, the... the Son who was born, the Child who was given, that the government shall be upon His shoulder! Is the government of our God ruling in you? Seek His governess, because He has purchased you and possesses you.

Seek the guidance of the King. His will, His way.[Proverbs 3:5-6] "*Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean unto your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will del... He will clear the path for you. He will open the way for you.*" Desire the will of the King. Delight in the will of the King. Do the will of the King. Seek His governance, seek His guidance, seek His glory. That means to magnify Christ with everything that you have.

William Borden was a wealthy man. The Borden family was well known in the United States in the nineteenth century. He felt the call to be a missionary. His family was against it. Though they were a professing Christian family, they just didn't get it that their wealthy... wealthy aristocratic young son wanted to bury his life on a mission field somewhere. But nevertheless against his family's wishes, following the King's call, William Borden got on a boat to go to a distant land to serve as a missionary. Interestingly enough, amazingly enough, before he even arrived at the shores of the mission site, he died on board the ship of a disease he contracted. People in America were saying, "What a waste! This young man could have given so much. He could have done so much. He could have been a great business leader. He could have been a senator. He could have been a... a president! But he dies on a boat on the way to a mission field to nowhere!"

But you see William Borden didn't view it in those terms. [He] Kept a diary, as we should do, of what God's doing in our lives. One of the last entries in William Borden's diary were these words, simply put, regarding his faith and his future, as he was dying of some unknown malady, these words: "No reserve, no regrets, no retreat!" That's living for the King and His kingdom. That's living under the authority of our Lord.

And the one who is Prophet, Priest and King will live and reign and rule in us. And one day when He comes for us in great glory, we'll not be ashamed, but we will rejoice in His appearing and celebrate forever our victories in Him. Amen? [Amen] He is King of kings; Lord of lords.

Would you stand with me, please? All of us standing together. Heads are bowed, eyes are closed.

Lord God, we thank You for this hope that not only are you a Savior for some seasons, but all seasons, Lord. We not only celebrate Your life and lordship on special days, but, Lord, every day of our life belongs to You. We believe and we know we belong to You! And so we confess You as our Lord. We receive You as our Savior and our God. And Lord, give us the power of Your Spirit to live for You, to crown you King of every area, of every activity of our lives, of every attitude of our lives. And whether we live or whether we die that you might be Lord of all. In Jesus' name. AMEN