

December 30, 2007

## “A King Like David” Isaiah 9:6-7

FCF: Our weakness and helplessness > need of One to rule and unite

**PROPOSITION:** (anchor) Jesus, our Great King, is our Great Savior.

(magnet) We can and must submit and entrust ourselves to His reign.

### **SCRIPTURE INTRODUCTION:**

Here are some headlines from this past week. “*Teen Killed in Tiger Attack at Zoo Was Trying to Save Friend.*” “*Russia Denies Plans to Sell Iran New Missile Defense System.*” “*Hundreds of Thousands Attend Bhutto’s Funeral.*” All just from Friday.

Such brokenness and pain. What does it tell us? Or, coming at it from another angle, consider the labors, the strivings of so many down through the ages. Philosophers writing, activists marching, artists organizing, donors giving, voters campaigning, children praying. What does all this reflect? What’s driving it? A deep desire for a better world – a place of justice, honesty, freedom, peace, compassion, and love.

This desire may manifest itself in various forms but, at its core, lies the same impulse – a restlessness, a longing, an aching for a new order. One of which God has spoken, promised, established, and is delivering through the Messiah, King Jesus.

**SCRIPTURE READING:** [Isaiah 9:6-7](#)

**PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION** > who is this One called “Jesus”?

### **SERMON INTRODUCTION:**

I’ve been doing some reading over the last month on the stories behind Christmas traditions and found a common theme. Much of what we do here in the United States can be traced back to the 1841 wedding between Prince Albert and Queen Victoria of England. Albert was from Germany and, as is the case with most any marriage, he brought his background with him – including the ways he was accustomed to celebrating the holidays. Everything we think of in terms of a “Victorian Christmas” – a tree and lights, the singing of carols, nativity scenes, even the Christmas Eve service – is all traced to Prince Albert whose influence proved not only to spread abroad but to last as well.

The influence of a royal figure. Which brings us to the need to revisit where we’ve been over the last few weeks. The callings of prophet, priest, and king were each part of God’s original intent for mankind. That said, the Fall perverted and twisted each one in such a way as to require the coming of a Savior, a Savior who would restore us and embody those very three callings in His person and His work. This plan was progressively unveiled through the centuries and communicated through “living pictures” – men appointed by God to demonstrate both our need and how this promised One would meet it. The prophets – minds darkened are in need of the truth made known. The priests – estrangement in guilt requires the work of reconciliation. And kings – rebellion is quelled by one who will establish his rule. Jesus being the fulfillment of all three.

The great Prophet, the perfect Priest, and the highest king. This is what Isaiah was speaking to. This could not be fulfilled by mere pictures – imaging, modeling but never fulfilling. Not the prophets, the priests, or the kings. Think of the greatest of the them – King David, the man after God’s own heart – ruling, protecting, defending his people. Yet David had his failures. So David gave a picture of what this greater King would be and yet showed the need for this greater King as well. Jesus is that greater King, that great Savior. And as such, we can and must submit and entrust ourselves to His reign.

#### **I. SUBDUING**

Why? Three reasons – each of which are part of His reign. First, His subduing.

### A) *Our Need*

That is, He comes to us and finds us in such a state we need Him to change us.

#### 1. Helplessness

Ours being, on our own, a helpless condition – circumstances working against us, people letting us down, our own impulses leading us astray. And without any means of fixing it.

#### 2. Hostility

We are, on our own, helpless. Not only that, but hostile as well (**READ Titus 3:3**). Left to ourselves, we are rebelling from cradle to grave, wanting only our way and not God's.

### B) *His Ways*

Yet Jesus is determined to have us. And so He matches His ways to our needs.

#### 1. Convincing

How? Jesus, the King, sends His Holy Spirit to convict our hearts of our sin and misery. He convinces us of our need of a Savior – the risen, ruling King Jesus.

#### 2. Enabling

Then He persuades and enables us to believe, to entrust ourselves to Jesus' care.

#### *Illustration:*

A great illustration of this can be found in Acts (**READ Acts 9:1-9**). This is the account of how Saul the Pharisee became, in time, Paul the Apostle. It is the story of how Jesus brought a rebellious enemy – helpless and hostile left on his own – under His rule and made him one of His most faithful servants. It's a stunning turnaround.

#### *Application:*

And if you know something of this work in your life – and several of you do – it should cause your days to be permeated through and through with the deepest humility and gratitude. For what did you bring, what did you do, to make that happen? No more than Saul the Pharisee in becoming Paul the Apostle. You were subdued by His grace.

But this tells us something not only of how the follower of Christ should view themselves but everyone else as well – with understanding, patience, and prayer. For if anyone is ever to come to know and believe these things, it is only going to be by the King graciously subduing them. Which, in candor, if you have not given your life to Christ, is exactly what I'm praying for you even today – for Him to subdue you, to open your eyes, enflame your heart, and transform your life. Jesus, our great King, is that great a Savior. And being so, we can submit and entrust ourselves to His reign.

## II. RULING

That's the first thing – His subduing us, bringing us to Himself. The second is His rule over us, His governing and legislating our lives. Here too He is the great King.

### A) *Inwardly*

This begins inwardly. Not merely some outward conformity but far deeper.

#### 1. By His Spirit

By His Spirit, Jesus, our great King, writes His laws upon our hearts, works in us in such a way that His ways become the delight of our days and the inclination of our paths.

#### 2. Through His Word

By His Spirit and through His Word. Through the Scriptures, through which He still speaks and communicates in profound ways to His people (**READ Hebrews 4:12**).

### B) *Outwardly*

This rule begins inwardly. But, that said, it also comes about outwardly.

#### 1. His representatives

For He appoints leaders who are tasked to represent Him in every sphere of life. In matters of civil government (**READ Romans 13:1-2**). Such is the state. At home, Paul shows in Ephesians 5 and Colossians 3 that husbands are charged to be servant leaders of their wives and parents are charged to shepherd their children. Then, in the local church, we read (**READ Hebrews 13:17**). In all of these arenas – state, home, and church – leaders are seen as God’s appointed representatives through whom He will lead.

## 2. Their roles

That is, He will lead as they faithfully carry out their roles – to model justice, mercy, and humility and to lovingly and selflessly serve those in their care.

That is to say, they are to be regarded as God’s good gifts to His people, both the tangible signs and the practical means of His ruling His people even now.

### *Application:*

Which, of course, should impel a certain gratitude on our parts – for their service to us and to the Lord and for the Lord’s provision of them in our lives. A certain gratitude and a posture of submission as well, remembering who these servants – whatever the sphere – really do represent, who they ultimately serve. A certain gratitude, a posture of submission, and then a commitment to support. For rarely is the task of His representatives in leadership – church, state, home, or anywhere else – an easy task.

They need encouragement. They need prayer. Consider your teachers. Consider your boss. Consider the policeman or the elected official. We’re called to gratitude, submission, and support in all these arenas and so many more. That’s partly what it means to live under the good reign of our great King, our great Savior, Jesus.

## **III. DEFENDING**

For He subdues us to Himself and He exercises His rule. And then, as any great King would, He ever cares for us, never failing to defend us from our enemies as well.

### *A) Even Now*

Despite however things may seem at the moment, this is true even now – defending us against the world, the flesh, the devil, and even death itself – setting bounds and limits to them, not allowing them to pass any further than He would will.

#### 1. Individually

From an individual standpoint, it’s clear that sometimes He protects us from sickness or physical harm. Yet sometimes He does not. The assurance we have, the promise He has given, is that nothing will ultimately draw one of His own away. Nor will anything cause Him to lose us or His love for us (**READ Romans 8:38-39**).

#### 2. Corporately

But this defense extends not just individually but corporately – to the Church. In the history of the Church, it has often looked as if her enemies had won. With the state of the Church, it often looks as if her enemies have won. We see opposition and persecution, distraction and corruption – the mission often compromised. But nothing will destroy the Church. Why? Our enemies are His enemies. He restrains them from us. He keeps us them from doing all the evil and harm that they could do. He allows them do to only as much harm as will make us stronger and work for our good (**READ Ephesians 1:19-23**).

### *B) Fully Then*

We have this assurance that His defense is real now. And will be fully one day with a restraining and conquering, an abolishing and destroying, of all that opposes Him.

#### 1. Fuller understanding

The Scriptures have a way of stripping the veneer of the pleasantries and helping us to see things as they are. Listen to this calling out of the enemies of Jesus and what awaits (**READ Revelation 17:14**). The imagery of this whole chapter is of strength, terror, cruelty, gathered together against Him. And His protection and sure defense of His own.

## 2. Final conquest

So as we let the Scriptures speak, we have a fuller understanding of His enemies. And an assurance of a final conquest (**READ Revelation 19:11-16**). None of King Jesus' enemies can stand against Him. He conquers them all and one day will destroy them all.

Which, when taken to heart, should have no small effect upon us now.

### *Illustration:*

After all, we know how things are going to end. Much as we do with favorite movies we've seen time and time again that somehow still pull us into the story, making us feel as though we're there with the characters. I think of the Jimmy Stewart classic of this season, "It's a Wonderful Life." George Bailey is in a dire situation. Mr. Potter finally has him right where he wants him. It seems financial ruin is all that awaits, the Building and Loan going down and taking him with it. Oh, it's going to take quite a rescue to pull this off. And, of course, the rescue comes through Clarence the angel.

I know all that but the story just has a way of pulling me in such that I have to keep calling to mind what I know the climax of the story, coming at the end, when the people of Bedford Falls rally to George's aid. So, no matter what happens along the way, I can say, "*This looks bad. But I know how it ends. So I can hang on a little longer.*"

### *Application:*

You get the idea. We can take that and do the same in the midst of our own lives. "*This looks bad. But I know how it ends. So I can hang on a little longer.*" Because Jesus is our great King, our great Savior, we can trust Him. We need not fret. We need not take things into our own hands for we know who has us and all things in His.

## **CONCLUSION:**

For Jesus, our great King, is our great Savior. We read from Acts 9 earlier. Let's look there again – not just for an example of a man subdued by Jesus but for an example of another man submitting himself to Jesus (**READ Acts 9:10-17a**). Ananias referred to Jesus as "Lord," as one he obeyed. Ananias was understandably hesitant to go to Saul, given his reputation for hunting and hurting Christians. But Ananias obeyed his Lord and went. He knew Jesus as his King and understood what it meant to serve a king. Servants do not argue with their lords. Subjects do not dispute with their sovereigns. In fact, there were things Jesus told Ananias of His plans for Saul that showed just how real His rule is. Saul had been chosen for a purpose and Ananias was being sent as part of that purpose.

I bring this up because of the reminder we need of this simple reality – Jesus, our great King, is unlike any other King. His rule is greater, higher, wider, deeper, stronger than any other. His is wisdom, compassion, and power in all His ways with His subjects. He can be trusted in ways no other ever could. Though we may not see how what He is calling us to do in a given situation could possibly do any good or how the things going on around us could possibly work out for any good, though we may not be able to see our way clearly in any way at all, we can know this. He is good. He is strong. He is our King. He is our great Savior. Which means we really can give ourselves to His reign. And this is the One of whom we read and sing this season. Merry Christmas!

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(magnet) We can and must submit and entrust ourselves to His reign.