

Worship the King

By Don Green

sermonaudio.com

Bible Text: Psalm 47
Preached on: Tuesday, September 6, 2016

Truth Community Church
4183 Mt. Carmel Tobasco Road
Cincinnati, OH 45255

Website: truthcommunitychurch.org
Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/tcomm

Two years ago we studied the promises that God made to Abraham in the midst of a little bit of a survey on the book of Genesis, and if you look at Genesis 12, we need to set the context for the Psalm that we're going to see from Psalm 47 here this evening. You remember the promises that God made to Abraham, the famous Abrahamic covenant? He called Abram out of paganism and set him apart to be the beginning of a new line. In Genesis 12:1, "the LORD said to Abram, 'Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father's house, To the land which I will show you; And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing.'" Now watch this in verse 3, "And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed." The ultimate purpose of God's promises to Abraham went far beyond Abram himself, it went far beyond the people of Israel and their descendants, God gave Abraham promises by which he intended to bless the entire world and you and I as Gentile believers are part of the beneficiaries of that promise that God made to Abraham. The blessing ultimately came through Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, who was a descendant of Abraham.

Now, you and I tend to think, I suppose, of the blessing of God that was mediated through Abraham and his line, as being salvation for those who believe in Christ and that's certainly true and we treasure that and there is nothing to diminish that whatsoever, but what we're going to see this evening is that the blessing of God on the nations through Abraham are far more expansive, they are far more comprehensive in scope than that and that's what we're going to look at.

Turn now to Psalm 46 which we studied on Sunday. Psalm 46, again, we're going to see how the Psalms were evidently arranged with thematic topics that built on one another as you move from section to section, and we ended Psalm 46 last time on Sunday looking at verses 10 and 11 where God says, "Cease striving and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth." The Psalmist concludes that it's that God, "The LORD of hosts who is with us," that God, "The God of Jacob is our stronghold." Psalm 46, ending on the note of the universal exaltation of God among the nations; that there is a time coming where the nations will bow before Christ and ascribe to him the supremacy that he deserves and that he holds. As you turn to Psalm 47 now,

Psalm 47 expands on that universal rule of God and proclaims to all of the world a universal call to worship in response to the exultation of Christ.

Psalm 47, we'll read it here together in its entirety and then we will go through it verse by verse as we like to do. Psalm 47:1,

1 O clap your hands, all peoples; Shout to God with the voice of joy. 2 For the LORD Most High is to be feared, A great King over all the earth. 3 He subdues peoples under us And nations under our feet. 4 He chooses our inheritance for us, The glory of Jacob whom He loves. Selah. 5 God has ascended with a shout, The LORD, with the sound of a trumpet. 6 Sing praises to God, sing praises; Sing praises to our King, sing praises. 7 For God is the King of all the earth; Sing praises with a skillful psalm. 8 God reigns over the nations, God sits on His holy throne. 9 The princes of the people have assembled themselves as the people of the God of Abraham, For the shields of the earth belong to God; He is highly exalted.

This Psalm proclaims the kingship of God and what is a king? A king is a sovereign monarch in his realm. He has full authority and he accomplishes his will with his power. So the king is the uncontested leader, ruler, monarch, sovereign of his realm. And while earthly kings might have their own subdivided portions of our terrestrial ball over which they reign in times gone by, Psalm 47 is proclaiming that the entire earth is under the sovereign kingship of God. It proclaims God is not merely the King of Israel, he is King over all and therefore all nations should worship him, and you see this from the very beginning.

Look back at verse 1 with me now in Psalm 47, as you see this call to worship.

1 O clap your hands, all peoples; Shout to God with the voice of joy.

And as you go through the Psalm, you see this emphasis on all the people, all the earth. Look at verse 2, he's a great King over all the earth. Verse 3, he subdues nations under our feet. Verse 8, he reigns over the nations. Verse 9, the princes of the people, the shields of the earth belong to God. We'll talk about all of that more before we're finished here this evening but what I want you to see just in this little overview fashion is the astonishing breadth of the call that is being made in Psalm 47. This isn't simply a call to the people of God to worship him, it's not simply an Old Testament call to Israel to worship him; in recognition of the statement in Psalm 46:10, "I will be exalted among the nations," Psalm 47 calls for all of the nations to respond and give worship, honor and homage to the one and only true God. It's astonishing in its breadth. It is a welcome cleansing tonic to the postmodern spirit in which we live here today which asserts that, "All ways lead to God and your God is your God and my God is mine and let's not get too worked up over it. Your truth can belong to you and mine to me." Psalm 47 rejects all of that and calls all men of every area of every religion to abandon their false religion and come to the one true God and honor and worship him.

This verse, this Psalm, calls all people everywhere to recognize God as King and give him the ringing acclaim that he deserves. Greet him with thunderous applause. Shout with your voices to him. You know how people respond in athletic events and a great victory is won, the people are cheering and applauding and screaming and all of that, that's a small microcosm of what the Psalmist is calling all the world to do in response to the one true God.

Now, the question might be asked, "Why should God, the God of the Bible, be given this kind of praise? Why should they respond to him like this?" The rest of the Psalm kind of unfolds that. Look at Psalm 47:2. You have been called to praise him and the question is, "Why should you praise him?" Verse 2,

2 For the LORD Most High [Yahweh, Elyon, the God Most High, God Almighty] is to be feared, He is a great King over all the earth.

You see, Yahweh, the God of Israel, is not merely a local deity over the nation of the Jews. He is the most high over all. He reigns supreme over everything. He is a great King over all the earth, and we're going to expand on that and explain that in detail, some of it at the end of the message here tonight. But think about it, what does Genesis 1:1 say? "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." The earth itself finds its origin from the creative activity of God. The people of the earth find their origin in the creative activity of God. He created Adam and everybody flows from Adam within the past 6,000 years or so, we might add, not through evolutionary process.

So all of the people of the earth trace their origin, trace their lineage ultimately back to Adam and Adam was a created man by God and therefore as the Creator, by right of creation, by prerogative of being Maker of all, everything in the earth should respond in worship to him because everything in the earth, all the people of the earth, all the nations of the earth, ultimately derive their origin and their life from him. He is the Creator of all things, he is the Sustainer of all things. Scripture says that it is in him that we live and move and have our being. Well, if you derive your origin from this God, if you live and move and have your being in this God, then the only acceptable response for anyone to make is to give him uncontested, undivided loyalty, worship and praise. That's the only right thing to do. That's who God is. That's who he actually is. That is reality no matter how much men cloud and deny and suppress the knowledge of him that he has imprinted in nature as well as their own conscience.

Let's review that for just a moment. Why do we believe in God? Well, he has revealed himself in nature. He has made himself known. He has imprinted his law on the human mind and on the human conscience. He has revealed himself in the 66 books of Scripture, some 1,200 pages in my Bible. He has revealed himself in the Lord Jesus Christ. He has revealed himself in the conversion of sinners who have been born again and now bear the imprint of his image in their new nature. He has revealed himself again and again and again. He has created us. He has made us. He sustains us. We live because he gives us breath. He has made himself known. And this is true of all men and therefore the only proper response is for men to respond with unrestrained worship and gratitude and praise

to him and that's what Psalm 47 is recognizing. This is the right response of the world to God. The fact that they suppress the knowledge of God does nothing to diminish the rightness of this call.

We've got a lot more to say at the end of the message about the universal reign of God but let's not stray too far from Psalm 47 just yet. Look back at verse 2 just so we stay in the text here, "the LORD Most High is to be feared"; he is to be worshiped; he is to be revered; he is to be adored. And in verse 3, the psalmist supports his assertion that Yahweh is the most high. Verse 3 he says, "

3 He subdues peoples under us And nations under our feet.

What he's doing here is he is referring to the fact that in the days of Joshua, God drove out the nations in order to give Israel the land that he had promised to them, the land that he had originally promised to Abraham and eventually delivered to them a few centuries later. And he says, "That act of deliverance, by delivering us from Egypt, the most powerful nation in the earth in whom we were in slavery for 400 years, God powerfully delivered us by his own mighty hand and delivered us through the Red Sea into the land that he promised us and dispossessed the existing nations in that land, shows and proves that he is God over all." Egypt couldn't stop him. The people with home-field advantage when God brought us into what had been their land, couldn't stop him. The way that God defeated nations with ease, with power, with clarity, with miraculous works, shows that he is God over all. The history of Israel testified to the supremacy of God over all of the false idols and deities that those nations worshiped. He manifested his power when he gave the land to his people.

And in verse 4, the Psalmist tells how that shows God's favor to his people.

4 He chooses our inheritance for us, The glory of Jacob whom He loves.

He's saying that God by his sovereign prerogative, God according to his sovereign pleasure said, "This is the land that my people will have. This is their inheritance." And to the people of Israel, that land was their glory; it's what established them as a nation geographically speaking, and it was a gift of God to them and they rejoiced in what God had done in their good days. God had chosen that for them. God had given that to them. It reflected well on his people. It showed their privileged honored status as the people of God, and all of that testifies to the fact that God did that because they were a weak people not capable of doing that on their own. God went before them in a pillar of cloud, in a pillar of fire, and led them into that conquest, and by defeating nation after nation and peoples after people, he established his power and rule over all of them. So they were not a mighty people on their own. God chose them. God blessed them and gave them a fine land for them to dwell in, a land flowing with milk and honey.

Now, look at the end of verse 4 there,

Selah.

As we've said many times, kind of a notation that says, "ponder this; think over this." God defeated all of those nations even though his people were just coming out of slavery. There was nothing about the prior 400 years that would have suggested that this people was rising up to become a national power. Nothing. They were chasing after straw to make bricks and then God asserted himself, asserted himself over the nations and established the people that he chose in the land that he chose and thus established his supremacy over all.

That's a great God and what the Psalmist is saying here in the flow of things is this, go back to verse 2 now that you see this and you kind of see how his argument is flowing here. He says, "the LORD Most High is to be feared." The people who do not belong to God, those who were not the Jews, those who were not his chosen people should look at the history of Israel at the time that the Psalm was written and tremble and shrink back and say, "If God did that to Egypt, he could do it to us as well. The only intelligent thing for us to do would be to bow down voluntarily before him, cast aside our idols and worship him for the glory that is obviously his due, because if we don't, he'll come after us too. That makes me afraid therefore rather than clinging to my false idols with fear, I'll cast them aside and I'll come gladly to this God and acknowledge him for the sovereign one that he obviously is." That's the point of this first section of the Psalm because nothing can explain the existence of the people of Israel in that land except the sovereign power of God. "So fear him," the Psalmist says, "worship him, give him the adoration that he deserves. One of that great majesty should be honored by those who derive their existence from him." His victories for his people call forth praise.

Look at verse 5 now,

5 God has ascended with a shout, The LORD, with the sound of a trumpet.

There are a couple of different ways to understand this. I'm seeing this a picture of the ascension of Christ being discussed or that perhaps that God had come down, given a great victory as when Assyria was defeated and 185,000 of their soldiers died in a single night; God came down, as it were, exercised his power and then ascended back up once he had delivered his people and ascended and in that place of victory, praise is ascribed to him.

Others have also seen it from the picture of the ark in 2 Samuel. Turn back to 2 Samuel 6, just before Chronicles and Kings. There was a time when the presence of God being represented in the ark was brought into the city of David and you can see the response that David and the people made to the symbolized presence of God in their midst. 2 Samuel 6:12, "Now it was told King David, saying, 'The LORD has blessed the house of Obed-edom and all that belongs to him, on account of the ark of God.' David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom into the city of David with gladness. And so it was, that when the bearers of the ark of the LORD had gone six paces, he sacrificed an ox and a fatling." Now watch the response here in verses 14 and 15, "And David was dancing before the LORD with all his might, and David was wearing

a linen ephod. So David and all the house of Israel were bringing up the ark of the LORD with shouting and the sound of the trumpet." The point being and why we went here to just show you that, is that in response to the presence of God, there were joyful shouts, there was exuberant rejoicing, there was the sound of the trumpet.

Now as you go back to Psalm 47 with me, you see a similar motif being laid out in this Psalm. David serves as an illustration of the proper response that the Psalmist is calling people to in response to the presence of God. "God has ascended with a shout, The LORD, with the sound of a trumpet." Then he goes on in verse 6 and he says,

6 Sing praises to God, sing praises; Sing praises to our King, sing praises.

Notice four times he repeats himself: sing praises, sing praises, sing praises, sing praises. The repetition emphasizing the urgency of the call; that this God is worthy of your praise and I command you, I call you, I urge you, I exhort you, to respond to him in the only way that is appropriate.

One of the things among many that I love about this Psalm is how utterly devoid it is of the presence of man. What I mean by that is that this is a God-centered Psalm. This is not about the needs of men; this is not about reflecting on us and self-esteem and any of that other earthly junk that we have been polluted with for so many decades in our generation. This washes all of that away and instead of telling men to love themselves, it tells them to love the one true God and to give him honor, praise and worship of which he is so richly deserving, and calls them even in their deadness to respond and to worship him and to honor him as he deserves. I love that, don't you? Isn't it nice to not be the center of attention? And what you see repeated as you go into verse 7 is that this is not a call simply to the people of Israel, it is to all men. Embedded in the Psalter here in Psalm 47 is a call to all of the nations to honor God.

Verse 7,

7 For God is the King of all the earth.

He's the sovereign monarch over everything that you see, everything about your existence. He is over it. He is sovereign. He rules. You must worship him because he is King of all the earth.

Sing praises with a skillful psalm.

The idea being that don't simply babble something out, don't sing a 7/11 chorus to him that is just mindless repetition. We have 150 Psalms showing you the skillful didactic way that the Psalmists honored God with an expression of intelligent worship with skillful poetry, deep theology, and urgent appeals to respond. One of the reasons why we teach like we do at Truth Community Church, one of the reasons that we structure our life, our church life around the exposition of Scripture, is because worship is meant to be intelligent with emotions following after that rather than simply being a direct appeal to

the emotions. It is to be a mindful skillful and intelligent appeal to the mind that responds with intelligence and thought to the intelligent thoughtful God who made us. A skillful Psalm he calls for. And because God is King of all the earth, he is not limited simply to Israel in his rule therefore he rightly deserves praise from all men everywhere.

Look at verse 8 and the scope of these final two verses is just so astonishing. I realize that it's easy to read through them quickly but what this says about the universal reign of God cannot be exhausted, and in the simplicity of Spirit-inspired genius, the writer says in verses 8 and 9,

8 God reigns over the nations, God sits on His holy throne. 9 The princes of the people have assembled themselves as the people of the God of Abraham, For the shields of the earth belong to God; He is highly exalted.

Let me unpack those two verses for you for just a moment and then we're going to illustrate the sovereign rule of God overall in about seven different ways with what is to come.

You know, we talk a lot about the sovereignty of God and we should. We talk about the providence of God and how God is always working out his purposes in everything that happens and that is a central theme of biblical truth. When you start to unpack it, well, let me put it this way: often because we're just living our lives and that's what we do, we tend to think about God's sovereignty in terms of the way that it plays out in our own lives. You know, someone prospers in their life, we say, "Praise God for his providence." Someone goes through dark valleys, "God is providentially at work even if we don't understand it. He's sovereign over all." We tend to relate his sovereignty to our personal circumstances and our personal lives, and I don't mind that, I think that's a good aspect of Christian biblical living in a biblical worldview, that's what we should do, we should see God in the details and trust him as he unfolds his purposes in our lives. We should do that. You should be that way. You should not use words like "luck" and "fate" and "chance" as a Christian because it's a personal God working out his personal will, not abstract forces that are blind that direct the course of our lives.

So it's good for us to talk about the sovereignty of God that way but – you knew there was a contrast coming, right, by the way I had set it up. But when you look at the fullness of what Scripture says, you realize that the sovereignty of God is exponentially, geometrically, massively more infinite than that, and if we're only talking about the sovereignty of God as it relates to our personal lives or the lives of those around us, we are badly in danger of missing the point and badly in danger of reducing the glory that is his due, what he deserves. And when you see what we're about to see, you see that the greatness of God has no limits; the greatness of God is absolutely great, it is awesome. It is so vast, it's almost disturbing. In fact, as I was working through this passage and trying to come to grips with what to say about it, I just started to get a headache because how do you get your mind around what Scripture says about this?

Look at verse 8 again in the simplicity of this. "God reigns over the nations." God reigns over the nations. How many nations are there? I should have looked this up. What are there now presently in the world, nations, 250 or so, give or take? The Scripture is saying God is over all of them whether they acknowledge him or not. How many nations have come and gone and kingdoms have risen and fallen over the course of human history. God was over it all. As Egypt rose up and fell, and Israel rose and fell, and Assyria rose and fell, and Babylon rose and fell, and Persia rose and fell, and Greece rose and fell, and Rome rose and fell, and on it goes to today's day, to the United States' rise and, well, you can fill in the blanks. Throughout millennia, God has been reigning over the rise and fall of nations, and these verses, verses 8 and 9, are proclaiming God's great sovereignty. They point to the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham that we read earlier, "In you all the peoples of the earth will be blessed." Even those who never come to a saving faith in Christ have been blessed by the universal reign of God. They have been blessed by the fact that he has ordered the universe and given them stability in life. They have been blessed by the fact that he has sent sun and rain and seasons upon them even when they wickedly suppressed the knowledge of him, he still poured out his goodness and grace upon them, and in Christ they are blessed in the common grace of God. But this verse is saying more than that even. Here it is picturing the nations gathering for the ultimate blessing that God promised to Abraham long ago.

Look at verse 9. Verse 9 is speaking of something that is still future to us as we'll see in a moment. "The princes of the people," in other words, the leaders of the people, "have assembled themselves as the people of the God of Abraham, For the shields of the earth belong to God." Shields of the earth being a reference to the fact that being kind of a poetic description of the leaders of people. They protect people like shields do, and it's in parallel to the princes of the people. So what it's saying is that the leaders of the nation are assembling together as the people of the God of Abraham. They are coming together around to give worship to God. That's a time still future to us when Christ reigns from Jerusalem in this kingdom, and the nations come together to give honor to him, and the fulfillment of God's long-ago promise to Abraham that, "In you all the peoples of the earth will be blessed," is going to find its fulfillment when the nations come and bow down before him and honor Christ as the Messiah and he righteously reigns over all the earth, and kings no longer congratulate themselves and elevate themselves and rule for themselves; they all come and give glory to Christ in that future day.

Now, beloved, the scope of these verses is breathtaking and in keeping with the language of the Psalm, it is not too much to say that it is fearful. It is frightening. Frightening in this sense, in that you just see the majesty of God unfolded in such a way, in such grandeur, and you just shrink in comparison and you realize how vastly great this God of the Bible is. "God reigns over the nations," verse 8, asserts the absolute sovereignty of God over the affairs of men both great and small, and what we're going to do here over the next 10 minutes or so, is we're going to let Scripture help us understand the breadth of what's being said here.

I like to do this as a teaching methodology. It is one thing for the Bible to say, "God reigns over the nations." That's one thing. "God reigns over the nations, yeah, okay, good.

Where should we go and eat after we're done?" It is another thing to let Scripture interpret Scripture and unfold for you what that means, and the detail that it brings; to see principle after principle after principle after principle stated so plainly and clearly, in different realms, God's sovereignty over the nations asserting itself, then all of a sudden it's not, "Oh, you know, well, God reigns over the nations," in some kind of indifferent way, your knees start to buckle and you say, "God reigns over the nations!" And that there is nothing excepted from that rule. What does this passage do? What is this passage saying? Well, nothing less than this: it establishes heaven over earth; it binds the book of Genesis to the book of Revelation; it includes those who willingly comply and worship God, and includes those who will comply by force when God asserts himself in the end days; it applies to the inner man of kings as well as to the outer man of kings. This spreads as far as the east is from the west, as high as the mountains from the depths of the oceans. That's how broad and how deep this is.

How exactly does God reign over the nations? I'm going to give you seven principles here. I'm not even going to expound on this, I'm just going to state a principle and read a Bible verse. Maybe I won't go 80 minutes after all. But this is just stunning. Okay, so here's the question: exactly how does God reign over the nations then and now and in the future? That's another aspect of it. This is past, present and future. This has always been true. He didn't just suddenly start doing this. God is "I am who I am." He is eternally existent. He is eternally sovereign, from eternity past to eternity future. He has always been sovereign like what we're going to describe here.

How does God reign over the nations? Point 1, we'll start in the micro sense, 1: he reigns over the hearts of kings. God reigns over the nations in part by reigning over the hearts of their leaders. Proverbs 21:1 says, "The king's heart is like channels of water in the hand of the LORD; He turns it wherever He wishes." Israel was the beneficiary of that kind of sovereignty in their days when Cyrus ascended to power as the king of Persia and granted a decree that the Jews would be able to go back and rebuild Jerusalem after the Babylonian exile. What prompted a pagan king to do that except the fact that God turned his heart to do it? God reigns over the hearts of kings.

Secondly: he reigns over the rise of kings, the rise and fall of kings. And I'm just giving you a single verse on all of these things just for the sake of simplicity and time. Daniel 2:21 says, speaking of God it says, "It is He who changes the times and the epochs; He removes kings and establishes kings" I believe it's Romans 13 that says there is no authority except that which has been established by God. So men rise to earthly power by the hand of God. For reasons and purposes that are known only to God, he'll raise a man up, allow him to rule and reign and have authority for a period of time, and then when God is finished with him, he sets him aside. And God does this, beloved – watch this – he does this effortlessly. This is not a problem for God. It's not a challenge for him to elevate a man, it's not a challenge for him to bring him down. This is just the seamless exercise of one who reigns over all the earth, to raise up those who would lead, and then when he is done with them, he sets them aside. Nebuchadnezzar was a man who saw this play out in his own life. Great elevated position of authority, took the praise to himself, God cast him down so that he ate grass like a cow for seven years. Not a problem. Do you know

how badly I would love to preach this to the U.S. Congress in a joint session of Congress? I would love to declare that. It's not going to happen but I can dream, can't I? Don't puncture my dream. Don't pop my balloon. That would be amazing to let the word of God operate and humble the hearts of those who need to hear it in all of their pompous pride.

So we've said God reigns over the hearts of kings; he reigns over the rise and fall of kings. Number 3, now we're going to move a bit more into the New Testament and getting into a little bit more of what the church is like today. Point 3: God reigns over the instruction of nations. God reigns, r-e-i-g-n-s, he rules over the instruction of nations. And I love this. Matthew 28:19 and 20, the Lord Jesus Christ after his resurrection, told his disciples to, "Go and make disciples of," what? "Of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you." This is incredible. The Lord Jesus Christ in his resurrected body before his ascension speaks to his disciples and says, "I command you to go out and teach all the nations everything that I have said to you." He is asserting a prerogative over what all men are to believe and do without exception. There is not a carve out for Muslim nations or for Hindu nations or for otherwise pagan nations. Christ asserts his teaching as authoritative for all men everywhere in every nation. "And go and make disciples of all of them," he says. He is Lord over all the nations and therefore his instruction and his teaching is authoritative and is binding on them. They cannot evade the force of the authority of Christ.

So when you ask the question, "How does God reign over the nations?" The Lord Jesus Christ establishes what they must believe in order to be saved. That's how great his authority is. In Luke 24:47 in similar manner Jesus said, "that repentance for forgiveness of sins shall be proclaimed in His name to all the nations." All the nations. You see, this is so much more than just an individual salvation message. This is more than just what you or I believe. If you and I cease to exist, if you and I had never existed, these things would still be true and absolutely authoritative over all men everywhere in every nation, in every corner of the earth. This Gospel of Jesus Christ is the one true message that can bring people to salvation and, "there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name given under heaven by which we must be saved," Acts 4:12. John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son."

So the Gospel comes and asserts the sovereignty of God over all men and says, "You're all lost. You're all doomed to destruction in your sin. And only in Christ can you find forgiveness." We preach that in Mongolia, we preach it in South Africa, we preach it in New Zealand, we preach it in Peru, we preach it in the streets of Los Angeles, we preach it in the cornfields of Iowa, and we preach it here in Cincinnati, Ohio too, Tuesdays at 7 and Sundays at 9. You see, the weight of this is astonishing. In one sense, this has nothing to do with you or me, this is about what God and Christ have declared.

You go on, it gets sweeter in this point. It's not just that we proclaim and God commands the Gospel to be preached to every nation, fourthly: he saves men from every nation. Oh, is this sweet. Is this precious, that this God who has sovereignty over all, this God who

has the power to dispossess nations of their lands, who establishes the rise and fall of nations and leaders effortlessly according to his eternal purpose in Christ, he saves men. He saved you. He saved me. He saves men from every nation.

Let me just remind you that the saving work of Jesus Christ was not just for Jews, even though he came from the Jewish line, he's the Savior of the world. Christ is for Gentiles also. There are so many verses you could look at. I just plopped down on 1 John 2:2, speaking of Christ that says that, "He Himself is the propitiation for our sins," that Christ is the one who turns away the just wrath of God from us. He is the propitiation for our sins, "and not for ours only, but also for the whole world"; that in the Lord Jesus Christ any man, woman or child anywhere in any nation at any time can look to Christ and find a Savior who is sufficient to turn the wrath of God away, to cleanse his conscience, and to secure him in the forgiveness of sins and eternal life forever and ever. Amen. That is a profound assertion of divine sovereignty that Christ is like that; that he is a sufficient Savior for everyone who would believe in him. Revelation 5:9 says, "Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation."

So we ask the question, we try to keep the question in front of us that we are addressing here: how does God reign over the nations? Well, there is this political dimension to it that we've talked about, but there is this spiritual dimension that Christ lovingly, graciously came to earth in order to secure for himself a people from every tribe and nation in the world, and God asserts his sovereignty, he asserts his rule by sovereignly saving sinners from every nation and bringing them into his family that they might become together the people of God. That's sovereign power. Do you know what? You and I can't save a soul, can we? You can't save anybody. I can't save anybody. You would love to be able to save your loved ones and to change their hearts so that they would believe in Christ. You are utterly helpless to do that. God is not. Christ has the power to save, so much so that without distinction to national borders, he can save whomever he wishes. That's sovereign power. It's a display of the way that he rules over nations.

5. We go from the sweetness to the fearfulness of it. Point 5: he will slay rebel nations at the end of human history. He will slay them. He is a divine warrior. Revelation 19:15, for those of you taking notes which should be about 100% of you but we're not checking at the door for that. Revelation 19:15, "From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron." At the end of human history, Christ will come to establish his kingdom, those that oppose him will be slain and Christ will not have any trouble doing it. Why? How can he do that? It's because he's sovereign. It's because he rules over the nations. It's because they are powerless against him. He rules and yet, go to a sixth point.

Let me give you the five points again that we've covered so far just so you can, if you haven't been taking notes after what I just said, you can hurriedly jot these down and show them to me at the end of the service. No, I'm just kidding. We've said that he reigns over the hearts of kings. 2. That he reigns over the rise of kings. 3. He reigns over the instruction of nations. 4. He saves men from every nation. 5. He will slay rebel nations at

the end of human history. Now number 6: yet willing nations will seek him in the future kingdom. Willing nations will seek him in the future kingdom. Here is a verse that you haven't looked at in a long time probably, Zechariah 8:22, looking forward to the still future reign of Christ, speaking prophetically says, "many peoples and mighty nations will come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem and to entreat the favor of the LORD." What a beautiful picture of the reign of Christ, that nations will come and seek his favor. They will bow before him. They will willingly give their worship. They will seek his blessing gladly, willingly, and in that way, Christ will show this – oh, watch this, watch this – Christ will prove himself to be a benevolent ruler to them, just like he has been to you. Hasn't Christ been a gracious and good Lord to you in your individual life? Hasn't he blessed you and given you peace, forgiven your sins and given you comfort, correction when you needed it, given you hope, given you confidence, given you assurance of eternal life? Hasn't he just been so good to you individually? Scripture says that's what he's going to be to the nations in his kingdom. Why? How can he do this? Why? It's because he rules over the nations.

Do you see why this is fearful? It's fearful in this sense: it's because it is so majestic, it is so wonderful, it is so great, it is so far beyond the realm in which we usually think, and you realize that Scripture has revealed this realm that is so far beyond us, so far above us, so wonderful, and we tend to live in a petty realm and not think the lofty thoughts of God of which he deserves. "Why doesn't God change this or that relationship or circumstance in my life?" We think about it in those terms and, you know, we even get so worked up that we start to turn accusations against God, "Why have you abandoned me? What have I done wrong? Why this trouble and sorrow in my life?" Oh please. So you see by comparison to the vast greatness of the sovereignty of God over the nations and the future way that he will bless and slay them, how meager and unworthy those thoughts are of the God that is revealed to us in the 66 books of the Bible? Wow. It makes me ashamed to be me.

Finally, number 7: nations and individuals will all bow before him. Nations and individuals will all bow before him, and for this closing passage, turn to Philippians 2. Finally we come to a little more familiar passage perhaps. Philippians 2. How great and how vast is the sovereignty of God? Well, it's so great that there will not be an individual in human history who doesn't bow before him and acknowledge it; who doesn't bow before Christ and acknowledge him as Lord. Let's look at the broader context of the passage even though time is short this evening. Verse 5, "Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus," this attitude of humility and self-denial that he had talked about in the first four verses of Philippians 2, "Have that attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ," this is exactly how Christ was, "who," verse 6, "although He existed in the form of God," by very nature was God himself, "did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."

Stop right there. We cannot pass by this without making the connection to what we're talking about. Who is Jesus Christ? He is God Incarnate. He is the eternal pre-existent

Son of God, fully God. What did he do? He became a man. In other words, this one who has absolute sovereignty over the nations humbled himself to become a man, humbled himself to the point of death, even further, to death on a cross, the most degrading, humiliating death known in human history. Do you see how great Christ is? That he would do that for your redemption? That he would do that for the forgiveness of your sins, the internal security of your soul? That from this position of unimaginable sovereignty, would condescend to that that you might be saved? The God of the nations, as it were, bends down and wipes off your dirty sinful feet with his own cleansing blood. This is humbling. This is humbling.

So going back to verse 9, leaving behind a thought that needs to be developed, verse 9, "For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." How great is the sovereignty of God? How matchless is the reign of Christ? How does he rule over the nations? It's seen in this: that every knee that has ever lived will bow before him and acknowledge the very things of which we have been discussing here this evening; will acknowledge him as Lord and God and confess that. Those who have rejected him – watch this – those of you that are not a Christian, I would not want to be in this position that you're currently in right now, wouldn't want that at all. Those who are his enemies will bow their knee and make this confession by force. They will comply even if they don't want to because every knee will be brought unto conscious submission to the sovereign rule of Christ and they will acknowledge it and they will speak it with their own tongue and their own knee will bow before him. There will be nothing left that is outside the realm of the sovereignty of Christ because every knee is going to bow and every tongue is going to confess him.

So his enemies will bow by force but for you and I whom he has washed with his precious blood, you and I who he chose before the beginning of time, saved us in time, sanctified us through life and delivered us either through death or his return into his kingdom, perfected, glorified with him forever and ever, amen, our blessed privilege will be to make that confession willingly in joyful worship. It is going to be our blessed privilege to see in greater display than what this meager exposition has done tonight. We will see him face-to-face. Oh, what a glorious time! What a glorious moment that's going to be, to see our Lord face-to-face! To somehow have a greater perception and understanding of his matchless sovereignty and acknowledge it and bow, "Yes, you are Lord! This is what I've been waiting for! This has been the longing of my heart for the culmination of this moment! You are Lord, better yet, you are my Lord, I worship you!" And in that moment of worship, to realize that inextricably wound around his sovereignty is divine redeeming love; that this great King loved you by name; that this great exalted sovereign Majesty thought of you on the cross of Calvary as one for whom he was willing to die, thought of you by name and gladly offered up his blood to cover all of your sins that they would never hinder your fellowship with God, that they would never be brought to your account, that they would never be charged against you, to bring you into the full holy presence of God secure, confident, welcomed and beloved. That's your sovereign King. This is the biblical picture of Christ your Lord.

Go back to Psalm 47. With Scripture helping us to expand and understand the assertions, to know that that's our destiny appointed for us by God, to realize that while it is still future, it is so certain that it is a present possession of ours in Christ, oh, do you see how easy it is then to respond in obedience to Psalm 47:1? "O clap your hands, all peoples; Shout to God with the voice of joy." This great God has redeemed my soul. Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Amen.

Let's bow together in prayer.

Father, from our hearts we sing praises to you, sing praises, sing praises, sing praises. You are the King over all the earth and yet, Father, in your immeasurable grace, you are the King of our hearts. We are yours by right of creation, we are yours by right of redemption and, Lord, it is our great privilege to give you the fullest, highest, most unreserved affections of our heart. You are a God to be feared, you are a great King over all the earth and yet we know you as a loving Lord who gladly lay down his life for our sins. Yes, Father, with joyful hearts, we gladly respond in the worship to which we have been called by Psalm 47. In the name of our Redeemer and our sovereign King, the Lord Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.

Thanks for listening to Pastor Don Green from Truth Community Church in Cincinnati, Ohio. You can find church information, Don's complete sermon library and other helpful materials at thetruthpulpit.com. This message is copyrighted by Don Green. All rights reserved.