

King Jesus Reigns Today (1 of 12)

Restoring The Future

By Willard A. Ramsey

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Hallmark Baptist Church
211 Bridges Road
Simpsonville, SC 29681

Website: hallmarkbaptist.org
Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/hallmark

We are starting a series this morning that speaks on what do the results and fruits that the work of God as the Lamb of God will bear in the future, and what and how he has laid out the future, what it's all about, and how he has things lined up for the long haul. And we'll been discussing those kinds of things and we'll be looking at the scriptural, what we would consider to be the scriptural outline of the future throughout these 12 sessions, and we believe we will be looking at those scriptures in a way that anybody can tell that this is what the scripture is meaning to say. We want to have everyone understand the actual teachings of the scripture because abroad today there is a lot of things we believe that are misrepresentations, misinterpretations of the scripture, and so it's really important that we get this matter right because prophecy or sometimes you will hear it called a word that's a little long but it's useful in this setting, and that is eschatology, meaning future things. That is God's target that he's shooting at and that is his aim and goal and he is such an excellent marksman that he always hits the target, and if his people misunderstand what his target is and they're shooting at a different target that's off to the side, or maybe in some cases almost backwards, it really affects the work of God on this earth in the great commission. And so that's why these matters are important.

After about the second session here, we'll be getting into the book of Revelation and I believe by the time we are through with this, you will have a friend in the book of Revelation. It is difficult the way it's written but once you see the scene that God has obviously set before us, then it becomes your friend and it affects your daily life and affects the way you feel when you get up in the morning.

The title of the series is "Restoring the Future." Now the reason why that title is chosen is because we think that a part of the understanding of God's people about future things has been distorted enough in the past several decades, even centuries, at least a century and pretty much we feel from a historical point of view of the mark of scripture, and we'd like to restore that vision that God sets before us, and we'd like to have you understand from the very scriptures itself just what the picture that God has painted for us in the future. Now the title enlarged there is the title of this message, "King Jesus Reigns Today." Right now he's on the throne reigning on David's throne and that will probably come as news to some of you maybe, but it's important and we must make an issue of that because I think that's the leading issue that leads us into the real study of the things of the future.

So we're going to try to begin there and bring today the meaning and concept of Jesus' reign, his reign as he now reigns today at the right hand of God, and seeing what the meaning of it really is today. So we have the opportunity now to take a look at that subject and we just want to move right on into it without any further ado.

And we might ask first: why is the current reign of Jesus important to understanding the future? The main reason why that's important is because it forms the basis, that's one way of putting it, of a foundation, you might say, of what God's going to do for interpreting the book of Revelation which we are going to get into two or three Sundays from now. And it also forms the basis of the New Testament eschatology, the New Testament view of things to come and their marching orders in the new covenant, and it's important also because the views that are popular today and the most popular view today puts the reign of Jesus out there in the future somewhere, that Jesus is not reigning on the throne of his earthly father or his forefather David as the scripture says and some people say, no, that will not happen until after he returns and catches up the saints, and then he will return after another period of time, a seven year tribulation, some say, and he will establish and actual literal throne in the literal city of Jerusalem, reigning over we flesh and blood people, sinners and saints alike, and that only then will he reign. And really, that picture is not presented in the scripture and it's important that we understand what picture is presented in the scripture.

So we're going to take a look at that now today in this sermon because that has to be settled and that issue, and once you won't hear these things, if you don't hear this thing, then, of course, you're going to be shooting at a different target perhaps than what God is. So these things are really very much important so we continue, then, by looking at getting into the scripture by looking at the origin of the kingship of Jesus as he is accounted to be the son of David to sit on the throne of David in the future. In the passage of scripture that deals with this and the home base, you might say, of that doctrine is in chapter 7 of the book of Samuel. So if you will, turn in your Bibles there to the book of Samuel because we want you to see from the Bible from the pages of the Bible itself just what the scripture says, and if you see what the scripture says, then you know this is not just something that somebody is making up.

Chapter 7, 2 Samuel. The prophet Nathan is coming to David with this message and it starts in verse 12. "And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever."

Now dropping down to verse 16. I won't, I just don't have time to deal with every verses there. You study that at home because if you care to, why, as Brother Rich pointed out, you can have these outlines and you can study them at home. Verse 16, "And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever," notice the word forever, "before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever." Notice the word throne here, the throne of David, that's who he's speaking to, shall be established not just for a period of time, not just for a

thousand years, but it will be established forever because as David observed now if you look down in verse 19, David realizes that in a promise like this, there's something really special about it because you don't tell a king, an earthly king like this that his throne is going to be established forever unless that very statement partakes of something that is supernatural in its nature.

Notice what he says in verse 19, and so David said, "this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O Lord GOD; but thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come. And is this the manner of man, O Lord GOD?" Now he's not talking about this chapter. He says, "O Lord God has spoken," this is right at the end of that verse, "O Lord GOD, hast spoken it: and with thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed for ever." You see, we're talking about something that goes on beyond the limits of this earth, and that thing that goes on beyond the limits of this earth is said to be the house of David, the reign of David, the throne of David. It's typical of David's throne because it's going to be a person that is occupying the throne is going to be the seed of David, and that person that is the seed of David is not only a human but he is divine, and this is what is different about this promise.

Now let's turn quickly over to the book of Luke because we find here now in the book of Luke, the time has drawn near when this king will come and when this particular seed of David will be born. And the angel, as you know, we study this always around the time of Christmas, comes to a virgin by the name of Mary and he gives and delivers her this message, Luke 1:30, "And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest," this is the Son of the transcendent God that spoke these worlds into existence, this one who is to be born the seed of David and to occupy the throne of David is going to be royal beyond compare, and this is not a royalty that is conferred by earthly kingship. Notice verse 32, he goes on, "He shall be the Son of the Highest," and the latter part of verse 32, "and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob," yes, "and of his kingdom there shall be no end." Now there is the establishment by scripture and there is no scripture in the Bible that disagrees with that, and every scripture in the Bible is compatible with it because, you know, sometimes we get to thinking, "Yeah, but doesn't it say somewhere else that so-and-so and so-and-so?" The Bible never contradicts itself somewhere else. The throne of David and the heir upon that throne of David is, in fact, the Lord himself.

Now as to the boundaries of that throne, that's everywhere. You see he is the Son of the Highest and the Son of the Highest we know is the Highest. That only begotten Son is God himself incarnate in human flesh. We have to understand that from all the scriptures teach it everywhere. That's the heartbeat, the core of Christianity, unless you believe that Jesus is deity because that is the core of what a Christian is, is one who regards the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, as being the incarnation of God in human flesh, having atoned for our sins on the cross, and having forgiven us our sins as we repent of our sins.

So his boundary, there are no boundaries really to the area of his reign, then as far as location is concerned, we're going to see that right away and the duration of it we will see further on down in the message today. But now I want to turn to Psalm 110 and verse 1 because now, here we're beginning to reach a passage of scripture that forms more than any other passage in the Bible, it forms the foundation or, you might say, the umbrella over all of the works of God as he is doing his work in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Look at verse 1, "The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies." You see there is a rulership to this one who sits at the right hand of God. Zion is a symbol that's used several times in several different situations in the Bible. It originated with the temple site on top of the mountain in Jerusalem, and it also has been used in the New Testament for reference to the church, and it is used also in some prophetic passages with reference to the throne of God in heaven. It's a very broad use that has been made of that.

So going on with verse 3, it says, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power," and in the interest of time, skip down to verse 5, it says, "The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath. He shall judge among the heathen," that is, among the nations, "he shall fill the places with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries," that is, the ruler, ruler or head over many countries.

Now this is the role of that one who sits at the right hand of God and that one sitting at the right hand of God, that idea or that concept where there is a king sitting at the right hand of God for the purpose, notice in verse 1, for the purpose of making his enemies his footstool. That is a key issue and that is one, that's probably a summarizing statement that summarizes the basic target that God is shooting at, to make his enemies his footstool and a footstool is something that is conquered, something that has been either surrendered voluntarily or has been put down by judgment, and God used both of these means. His goal and his aim is to make all people his footstool or to bow before him by virtue of his salvation by grace that he extends to everyone where those who were once sinners and aliens and enemies of God now repent of their sins, humble themselves, bow the knee to him, and become subservient to him because he is the king and because he is gracious and he pardons their sins. That's the preferable way, the way that God is going to make, I trust in this particular day, I don't know, it looks kind of dim, but when you look at the broad scope of God's prophecies, but scripture says there's going to be more people, it teaches that there will be more people saved than there will not be saved, and we don't have the time to weed that out. But that's the preferable way to make his enemies a footstool voluntarily so that they humble themselves and quit being enemies and quit being unbelievers and quit being sinners and follow him by the grace that he has given. The second way is like it says in verse 6, he will fill the places with dead bodies. In other words, judgment. Judgment is rendered against his enemies. And one way or the other, every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God, and that's his goal, that Jesus will be honored in the way he really truly is and deserves to be honored.

Now moving on, let's go on to some more aspects of this whole thing. This matter informs the prophetic worldview of the church. Psalm 110 is the foundation of the New Testament prophecies and the most quoted verse in the New Testament. There is no other verse from the Old Testament that's quoted more times than this, probably around 20 times that it's quoted and it was sort of the heartbeat of the preaching of the apostles. It formed their prophetic worldview right from the beginning, you might say, of the church getting underway.

Turn with me to the book of Acts 2 and we'll look at verse 29 because we need to see what the early church, how they regarded this matter of Jesus at the right hand of God and the throne of David. Verse 29, Acts 2, says, "Men and brethren," this is Peter, Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost, "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day." Notice he calls out the proposition and it's an important point to make that David is dead and buried, that David is in the grave as Peter here speaks on the day of Pentecost. And do you remember the phrase from the passage that I read in 2 Samuel, the phrase that says "when you shall sleep with your fathers," is when this throne is going to be occupied by his descendants. If it were only to be occupied after the resurrection of David, it wouldn't be true to the prophecy. The prophecy is that he will ascend this throne while David is in the grave, dead and buried, and Peter was quick enough to catch that proposition.

Going on in verse 30, it says, "Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne." That is a reference to the proposition that we just finished studying over in the book of Samuel 7, and he's saying that David has understood it to be that the Christ, the Messiah, when he did come would sit on David's throne not because of the location of the throne but because he has legal heirship. His the legal son of David. The genealogies, that's part of the reason why the genealogies are included in the Bible, to show as an official record that he was the son of David and, of course, the angel then all of the other supernatural things, God attested to that fact.

Now he was raised up to sit on the throne that was the promised throne that would be forever, and if a throne, as we saw in the book of Samuel, is to be a forever throne, it has to be occupied by a forever person. It's the same concept as the matter of Melchizedek. We skipped over that in the book of Psalm 110, but it's covered in the book of Hebrews. He said that Melchizedek, Christ is after the order of Melchizedek simply because he ever-lives, and he's the king, the eternal king on the throne of David, the eternal throne of David only because he ever-lives. But nevertheless, he in the flesh has the genes of David in his own human body though he is, himself, divine.

Now going on here in Peter's sermon, looking at Christ to sit on his throne, verse 31 says, "He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ," of the Messiah, "that his soul was not left in hell," as is recorded in the King James he was in Hades, that is the place of the dead, in other words, his soul is not left in the grave as dead, but verse 32 says, "This

Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we," Peter and the others, "all are eye-witnesses." So they saw it.

Verse 33, "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens," David is still in the grave, "but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool." That is the throne of David. That's where Jesus is sitting today. If this doesn't nail that proposition down, then it can't be nailed down because this is probably the strongest passage in the Bible that I know of that ties Jesus' ascension or his session at the right hand of God to the prophecy of the resurrection of David and the throne of David that was promised by the prophet Nathan. So that's one of the mentions of Psalm 110 and there are several numerous others.

Now we have to move on now, we have to ask this question. Okay, then who is the enemy? If he's going to make his enemies his footstool, we need to identify the enemy and that, I think, is identified best in Ephesians 6:12 where Paul says this, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." Now if we are in a wrestling match, that means we have an enemy and the enemy is identified here as powers and principalities, rulers of the darkness of this world, and that doesn't just mean, it includes but is not limited to kings on thrones, it is individuals with their respective influence, it is maybe corporations with their respective influence, it is thugs with their respective influence, and it is the people of the earth. The powers and principalities and the rulers of the darkness of this world and spiritual wickedness as well in high places, but there's also spiritual wickedness in low places as well. And so the enemy, then, becomes what John particularly called the world. The world system, the unsaved and all that the unsaved have created or generated, you might say, in this world comprises the enemy that Jesus is reigning over and of whom he's going to make his footstool.

Now I said a while ago that there are two ways in which he makes his footstool, makes his enemies his footstool and that same description of this same entity, the world system, the powers and principalities that be and all the things that go on in the world, the central reason why Jesus built a church here is that the church might be his agent in proclaiming the gospel to these powers and principalities and spiritual wickedness in high places and low places, wherever there's a sinner, and that they might be brought to Christ. So let's look at one of the most important scriptures, I believe, in the whole Bible as far as the church's mission is concerned.

Verse 10 in chapter 3, just turn back a page or two in the book of Ephesians, and we'll see there what God's intention is with respect to the use of the church in regards to making his enemies his footstool. Paul's talking about his calling, his calling as a servant of the Lord and the commission that's been given to him and, of course, to the church as well. Verse 9 says, "to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world." The mystery, I think of salvation by God in Christ. It's not as if

to say it's never been revealed, it is to say that it is a very mysterious matter when you try to analyze and understand all that the Godhead is and all that his purposes are. That's pretty complex and here's the reason, though, in verse 10, and the reason for making all men see is for this, "To the intent," intent means purpose or it is in reference to purpose, "that now," that is to say in this dispensation, not some future one, not some past one, well, some past one, this still, the gospel was preached even unto Abraham but now in Paul's day and continuing today, "unto the principalities and powers," there's the audience for this message.

Now I'm going to read that same passage in a modern English version because it's a little easier to understand. So it reads like this in modern English in the New King James version, "To the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be known by the church," by means of the church, might be made known by means of the church, "to the principalities and powers in heavenly places," or high places. The word translated "heavenly" here is exactly the same word as translated "high" over in chapter 6. It's high places. It's not talking about saved people in heaven, it's talking about the powers and principalities as defined in chapter 6, verse 12.

And so the church's task is to make known the manifold wisdom of God. Wherein lies the manifold wisdom of God? First and foremost, it's in Christ as the Lamb of God. It's in the gospel and the accomplishment of the salvation of mankind through the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross. If you're here this morning, this whole issue of the reign of Christ and all of the things that God has done in the target he's shot, it's on your behalf because if you're not saved this morning, then you're still in the enemy's camp, you may not mean to be, you may not understand yourself to be, you may not think you are, but when you deny the Lordship of Christ, the salvation of him and do not put your trust in him in order to be saved, not willing to repent of your sins, that falls under the activity of an enemy and the Bible supports that.

So what Paul is saying here is that the manifold wisdom of God which includes that great soul-saving gospel and all of the other doctrines that surround it and hold it up and support it, that's what the church's job is to declare and to declare it to the powers and principalities and all spiritual wickedness in high places and wherever we find a sinner. That's the job. Now notice, I wouldn't make such a big issue out of this one verse here except for the fact of what verse 11 tells us. Verse 11 says that all this is, "According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." That's why Christ came. And it was according to his purpose that he would establish a church, his assembly, he called it, "I will build my assembly," he established a church for the purpose of presenting the manifold wisdom of God, the gospel and all other truths, to the powers and principalities or the world system.

That's the agenda of the church. That's what the great commission is all about. He said, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Now that's the job of the church and that's the way, the primary way that God wants to render his enemies to be his footstool, so that

they will bow the knee to him voluntarily, willingly, gladly, rejoicing and be saved forevermore and be with him in the new heaven and new earth.

Now moving on, then, to the book of Hebrews, I want to mention before we go further into this full matter, of the mission of the work of Christ at God's right hand. That will be Hebrews 10:12 because, look, I want you to understand all of this business is on behalf of saving the soul of the sinner, that you just must, you just must bring your own personal self under the scrutiny of the words of God. "Have I been forgiven of my sins? Am I going to be on his side? Am I going to bow the knee voluntarily? Am I going to come humbly before him and repent of my sins and be saved and forgiven of my sins and fall in behind him as my King and my Lord and My Savior?"

Chapter 10, verse 12 says, "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting," or anticipating, you see, he's done the hard work of the cross, he's suffered for our sins, he was buried, he rose again from the dead, he ascended back to the Father at the right hand of God and there he sits at God's right hand, so says verse 12. Then he says, "From henceforth," he is anticipating, this is his agenda now, he is waiting until all of "his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." You want to be in that group. You don't want to bow the knee by being judged. You don't want to wait until you get to the judgment seat in order to bow the knee because there is you're just going to be in a forced situation, and once Jesus comes, there will be no more opportunity for being saved, and that is the reason why, one of the reasons why I am the most concerned that the issues of prophecy today that are being preached is to be corrected, I believe, because if you go that route, then when Jesus comes back, there's still opportunity to be saved under that scheme and there is none offered in the scripture. We'll get to that next Sunday in particular.

But now let's try to summarize the matter for you so that we can see really what is going on with the powers and principalities. Jesus reigns today. I've drawn this banner up here to indicate the scope of his reign from the time of the ascension on through to the second coming. That's the period at which he sits at the right hand of God. Next week we will see that when he rises from his session at the right hand of God, comes back to this earth, that this will terminate not only that period of time, it will terminate the whole of God's purpose for the earth, for the earth system.

Now I want you to notice here God's providential strategy. It's really very simple, maybe you haven't thought about it like this but we all quote Romans 8:28 which says, "All things work together for good to them that love the Lord who are the called according to his purpose." God operates all of his providential affairs of this earth for one reason, and that is to hit that target that he's shooting at, that exalts Jesus, to come to the time when all intelligent beings will bow the knee to him. And that's one way that he operates down here is that all events that do occur down here are oriented toward the accomplishment of his purpose. They're working together for good to those people, those individuals who are saved. And this is such a blessing, you may have some terrible frustrating days, I do, and you say, "Lord, what's going on? I make one step forward and I slide back three." Well,

the sliding back is just as much operative toward the purpose of God as the march forward. So don't despair, this is your promise.

Now what about the rest of the things that go on in the world? Psalm 76:10 says this, that God causes the wrath of men to praise him, and the balance of wrath he restrains. That is exemplified in so many places in the Bible. I just want to point out one thing to you. Pharaoh, for example, his wrath, his anger, his unbelief, his hatred against God, God turned it into praise. He delivered the children of Israel through the Red Sea, and when he got through with using Pharaoh and Pharaoh would have done more evil, but he would have gone across the Red Sea, tried to, in fact, gone across the Red Sea and attacked the children of Israel and killed them over there but that wasn't according to God's purpose. So he closed the Red Sea over them, he used him for a period of time and then he put him down.

Now this is again and again and again through the scriptures, just don't have time to tell so many of those things, but by those two means, now you stop to think about it. If you are a king sitting by the right hand of God, and one scripture says the right hand of power, if you're a god sitting by your father and you're operating causing all things here that are according to your purpose to go forward and work out for good, and everything that would be done that it cannot be used according to your purpose by the wicked, you're restraining it, then, my friends, you're bound to hit the target because nothing is going to happen that doesn't contribute or march forward to the target.

Now I think that's a tremendous blessing. You get up in the morning, you need to live under that idea. It's not that you necessarily always have in your mind to do the right thing, but you need to study the scriptures so that you do do the right thing and then God will bless it and it will march forward to hit his target. God doesn't control the wicked so that he allows their wickedness to march ahead in his target and restrains the rest of it. If I didn't live under a system I thought like that, I would be highly discouraged. I would be thinking there is some issue out there, there's some force, there's some power that God doesn't control, that doesn't work according to God's will and according to his purposes. I would be afraid to live in a universe, I would hate to live in a universe where there was a power like that. Satan is on a leash, my friend. He goes thus far and no further, and whenever the wickedness of men quit promoting God's purpose, unbeknownst to them and no purposed by them, they're restrained.

You live under a king. Most people in the New Testament when they saw that he was sitting at the right hand of God, they said, "This is our King. He's marching. He's giving us our marching orders. He's said we're on the victory side because he said, 'I'm going to put down all enemies.' He's got the power to do it. He's got the will to do it. He's got the righteousness to do it." And they girded up their loins and they went forward marching for the Lord Jesus Christ right into the jaws of death and lay down their lives for him. We need to be exactly the same way, but how can you be unless you know that Jesus is king now today.

Now then real quickly, this period of time is called the last days in the book of Acts. You read Acts 2:17, we don't have time, and you will find in outline these are the last days from the days that Jesus ascended up into heaven, really, and from the days of Jesus on through to the second coming, to the great and notable day of the Lord, it is said there. The church age is the same exact period of time because the church is God's agency for the dealing with the powers and principalities. And there they are, they're working, working, working on their own behalf and God through the gospel is going to pull out of them those who will bow the knee in repentance and faith, and he's going to put the rest down by just, just a little few pictures to depict the powers and things that go on today in today's world, the picture would look a little different. We're looking in the world of the first century, they would be no different in principle, only in the way that it's executed.

Now this umbrella, if that describes the work of God, it's going to stretch across all that we need to know and understand until his second coming. Next Sunday we will see what happens at the second coming and we will fill in the major blocks or outlines of history from here to here. And notice, this stands for the great white throne judgment, that's the new heaven and new earth, and we're going to fill in all of this in here and this is the banner under which it will all come to pass. And if that's the way things are, then when we get to the book of Revelation, we interpret it under that banner because the things in the book of Revelation are the things that he will be doing in all the providential affairs of the world from the ascension to the second coming, and it will be much easier to understand since we know what the basic outline of his purpose is. He reigns today.