

“Wickedness in the Heart of the King”

Matthew 12:1-18; Psalm 2; 2 Kings 23:25-30

Pastor John E. Stoos

Preached on January 22, 2006

Our Scripture reading is from Matthew chapter 2. Last week we talked about the Magi and the wise men. This week we'll be focusing on King Herod. So listen as we read the word of God.

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, “Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him. When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. So they said to him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet: ‘But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are not the least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you shall come a Ruler who shepherd My people Israel.’”

Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found Him, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also.” When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Then, being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way.

Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, “Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him. When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother and was there until

Church of the King: Worship Service at 11:00 am: Eagles Hall in Roseville
Mailing Address: 4246 2nd Avenue Sacramento CA 95817
916-451-5660 www.ChurchoftheKingSacramento.com

the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, “Out of Egypt I called My Son.”

Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet saying: “A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, refusing to be comforted, because they are no more.”

Let us pray. Heavenly Father, we come to your word this morning seeking your wisdom and your guidance on how to confront, not only the sin in our lives, the sin in our church and families, but the sin that ravages our nation this day. Guide us by your Holy Spirit as we would learn how to respond. In Jesus’ name, amen. You may be seated.

January 22nd actually falls on a Sunday this year; as many churches remember the Roe versus Wade decision that brought abortion on demand to our country. We are going to look this morning at the Word of God for guidance as to how we as Christians should respond to the sin of abortion.

Last week, we stressed how God turns the hearts of kings and why we should pray for kings and the righteous things that can happen. This week, we’re going to study, as we have read the account in Matthew, the awesome evil that can come forth from the wickedness of a king’s heart. And it fits in the flow that we’re doing with books of Ezra & Nehemiah as we continue on in Chapter 7 of Ezra: The next thing that we see after Artaxerxes’ decree is the long list of returnees, all the people, name by name, who came back to Jerusalem and who benefited and were blessed by the righteous actions of King Artaxerxes.

And of course, in the reading this morning, as we continue on in the Christmas story, we find that King Herod, with wickedness in his heart, causes the great slaughter of children in the region around Bethlehem. This year there are 920 crosses just down the street on the front lawn of Foothill Community Church – each cross representing 50,000 lives that have been lost to abortion in this country since 1973. I hope you have been able to go by. To walk among those crosses is

Church of the King: Worship Service at 11:00 am: Eagles Hall in Roseville
Mailing Address: 4246 2nd Avenue Sacramento CA 95817
916-451-5660 www.ChurchoftheKingSacramento.com

an incredible thing. To just see them from afar is incredible enough. But it should remind us of the gravity of this sin in our nation today.

[05:40]

So we’re going to consider how we, as Christians, should respond, but we also need to make sure that we understand that this issue revolves around death. And I don’t know that we grasp that often enough; we are often surprised by death. As our young people grow, we need to teach them about death and destruction because they do live in a nation that is slaughtering its children. They do live in a world where tsunamis can kill 150,000 people in a space of hours. They do live in a world where planes crash, where people get ill, where people die. And we shouldn’t wait until one of those things happen and then have to confront them and explain it to them. As Christian children, they should be able to understand, even in their young ways, why these things happen.

And of course, if we’re going to explain it to them – and in explaining it to them, we always teach ourselves – we have to take them back to the book of beginnings as we do with all great things in this life. It is in the book of beginnings where we learn why we see death and destruction in this world. As God was creating Adam and Eve, He came to Adam and He said in Genesis 2:16, *And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”*

Now we all know the story: Adam fell into sin; he partook of the fruit of that tree, and God, always true to His word, brought death and destruction into the human race. Adam and Eve, from that moment forward, and every child born of men, every descendant of Adam from that moment on, was dead in trespasses and sin – dead in trespasses and sin. That’s why Paul talks about the Gospel in those terms, and if we don’t understand that, then physical death seems out of place.

That’s the context that gives us an understanding of physical death because almost immediately in Genesis, what happens? Cain goes out and murders his brother; he sheds innocent blood. And it carries on in the next few chapters where there are intermarriages and sin and destruction and death.

Church of the King: Worship Service at 11:00 am: Eagles Hall in Roseville
Mailing Address: 4246 2nd Avenue Sacramento CA 95817
916-451-5660 www.ChurchoftheKingSacramento.com

It prevails in the world to the point where God is sorry He even started it. It’s just an amazing concept. But it says in Genesis 6:6-7, *And the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. So the Lord said, “I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping things and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them.”*

Now we all know that there was a remnant – Noah, who was placed in the ark – and that was because God had promised to Adam and Eve that there would be a seed and that the Son of God, Jesus Christ, would come. That’s the only reason Noah was saved if you look at it in the flow of history. God could just as easily wiped everything out and started it over. But He made a promise. But it doesn’t take away sin and destruction because we see in the Scriptures, from Noah’s time on, and then again with the calling of Abraham, both inside and outside of God’s chosen nation, sin and destruction and falling away is the pattern all the way up to the account that we read this morning with King Herod, who was so covetous of his power and his peace and his prosperity and his good life in Jerusalem, and all of Jerusalem with him, that they were willing to slaughter the innocent lives of children – lots of children if necessary, to find the one child that would interfere.

[09:59]

All of these killings down to that story in Matthew and coming all the way forward to the sin of abortion in America today is because of the sin and selfishness of man. That’s what our children have to understand. That’s the only perspective that makes sense. It’s the only way which you can deal with something like those crosses and the gravity of what we’re doing in this nation, and not just have it totally overwhelming like we talked about last week.

However, with that said, it is so important as Christians that we not become callous or uncaring. We shouldn’t be surprised by sin and destruction but we’re not fatalistic. We’re not, “Ah, God’s in control – who knows what’s going to happen,” or “God will work things out in the end.” We are not given the luxury of that type of thinking. We are called to have the same attitude that our God and Savior did as He confronts death in this world, and understand that He has a tremendous empathy for us as we go through these things.

Church of the King: Worship Service at 11:00 am: Eagles Hall in Roseville
Mailing Address: 4246 2nd Avenue Sacramento CA 95817
916-451-5660 www.ChurchoftheKingSacramento.com

Think of Noah. Noah spent 120 years building that boat. He preached all through those times to his friends and his neighbors, and we all have friends and neighbors and co-workers and people that we’re concerned about, and other family members in the world. And think about that: For a 120 years, you know that destruction is coming; you’re building a boat and you’re out pleading with them and talking to them and asking them to come. And then the final day comes that God brings all of the animals throughout the earth, and no people – nobody. All of the other friends and relatives and family and everyone that Noah knows, and everybody on the earth as Noah knows, are about to be destroyed.

And Noah has to go up on that boat, and one of the most comforting parts of the story comes in Genesis 7:16: *And so they entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him; and God shut him in.* God did not expect Noah, in his own strength, to be able to close that door – to be able to at some point say, “This is it. You’re all going to die.” It was God. In the Hebrew, it’s very forceful: God shut them in. He was the one who had mercy on Noah – not only in saving him but also in helping him to deal with the death and destruction that was going to take place around him.

The other Scriptural comfort comes in the New Testament at the tomb of Lazarus. Lazarus was Jesus’ good friend. He had died; they had buried him. He’d been in the tomb for four days, and in the story of John chapter 11 verse 34, we come to Jesus asking, *Where have you laid him? And they said to him, “Lord, come and see.* And He came before the tomb, and we have to recognize that Jesus knew what He was going to do: Jesus was going to raise Lazarus from the dead. Jesus knew that He was going to go to the cross and raise all people from the dead. And yet, as He stood before the tomb of His friend, as He stood there thinking about what death had done to his friend, what sin and destruction had done to his friend, you have the shortest and I believe one of the most powerful verses in all of the New Testament. Verse 35 simply says, *Jesus wept.* Jesus wept.

That’s the attitude that we have to have when we see death and destruction. We should be overwhelmed when we stand in that field of crosses. We should be broken when we look at some of the pictures that we don’t like to look at. We should be confronted. We should confront others. But we have to do it with this attitude of understanding – that God’s heart is broken as well.

But as we consider how we respond as Christians, we need also to understand God’s heart towards this kind of sin. To do that, we’re going to take a brief look at

Church of the King: Worship Service at 11:00 am: Eagles Hall in Roseville
Mailing Address: 4246 2nd Avenue Sacramento CA 95817
916-451-5660 www.ChurchoftheKingSacramento.com

a few of the Jewish kings who ruled wickedly and destroyed children. We’ll learn from them just how serious it is when a people who have covenant with God decided that slaughtering children is a good idea – children who have been made in the image of God.

[14:53]

We begin in 2nd Chronicles chapter 28. King Ahaz, we’re told, walked in the ways of the kings in Israel, the wicked kingdom in the north. *He walked in the ways of the kings of Israel and made molded images for the Baals. He burned incense in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, and burned his children in the fire, according to the abominations of the nations whom the Lord had cast out before the nation of Israel.* God had wiped out all the nations of Canaan because of the sin of idolatry and child sacrifice that they were involved in. When it says that “he passed his children through the fire,” it is no different than the sin of abortion today. Why do we have abortion in America? Because of selfishness – children are unwanted; children are in the way; children are inconvenient. We want to get on with our lives, and that’s what these people wanted. That’s what King Ahaz wanted, and they believe that if they took one of their little infants and put them in the molten hot hands of idols and allow them to be burned to death, that the gods would look down favorably and bless them and their lands. It’s always been that same theme of selfishness all the way through history.

And God’s attitude has been pretty consistent as well. It says there in 2nd Chronicles, *Therefore the Lord his GOD – Ahaz’ God – delivered him into the hand of the king of Syria. They defeated him and carried away a great multitude of them as captives, and brought them to Damascus. Then he was also delivered into the hand of the king of Israel, who defeated him with a great slaughter.* This guy was just besieged on all sides, losing 120,000 in Judah in one day – one battle, 120,000 lost – all valiant men because they had forsaken the Lord God of their fathers. Now you would think that that would get their attention; that as the nation of Israel, they would repent of their sin and come back. But what we find in Israel just a few generations later – King Manasseh.

Church of the King: Worship Service at 11:00 am: Eagles Hall in Roseville
Mailing Address: 4246 2nd Avenue Sacramento CA 95817
916-451-5660 www.ChurchoftheKingSacramento.com

In 2nd Kings 21 starting at verse 6, we’re told that he made his son pass through the fire. His seed, probably his oldest, should have been a king of Israel, and yet he sacrificed him to an idol for blessings. *He made his son pass through the fire, practicing soothsaying, using witchcraft and consulting spiritists and mediums. He did much evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger.* How angry did God get? Well, we start finding out a good picture of it in verse 10: *And the Lord spoke by His servants the prophets, saying, “Because Manasseh king of Judah has done these abominations (he has acted more wickedly than all the Amorites who were before him, and has also made Judah sin with his idols) – he’s taken the entire nation with him as an example. Therefore thus says the Lord God of Israel: ‘Behold, I am bringing such a calamity on Jerusalem and Judah, that whoever hears of it, both his ears will tingle.’”* I tried to come up with a modern example of that but – shocking story; something we can’t believe; maybe the news that the tsunami had wiped out a hundred thousand plus people in a matter of hours – that kind of ringing in the ears. He talks about stretching a line out over Jerusalem. That was the line of Samaria and Ahab. He had just destroyed the house of Ahab, and He said I’m going to use the same standard now with Manasseh and with Judah: *I will wipe Jerusalem as one wipes a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down.* “I’m going to clean up the whole mess” is the picture that God presents – and so, *I will forsake the remnant of My inheritance and deliver them into the hand of their enemies; and they shall become victims of plunder to all their enemies.* Now we know in our study of Ezra and Nehemiah that just as Noah was saved when destruction was wrought, that God was going to save a remnant because the promise still stands. But the destruction was going to be real. And why? *Because they have done evil in My sight and have provoked Me to anger since the day their fathers came out of Egypt, even to this day. Moreover, Manasseh shed very much innocent blood, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another, besides his sin by which he had made Judah sin, in doing evil in the sight of the Lord.*

[19:55]

Now as we go on in the story of kings, God first deals, as He did with Ahaz, with Manasseh individually as a king. We learn about that in 2nd Chronicles chapter 33 beginning at verse 11: *Therefore the Lord brought upon them the captains of the army of the king of Assyria, and took Manasseh with hooks, bound him with bronze fetters, and carried him off to Babylon. Now when he was in affliction, he implored the Lord his God, and he humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, and prayed to Him; and God received his entreaty; heard his supplication,*

Church of the King: Worship Service at 11:00 am: Eagles Hall in Roseville
Mailing Address: 4246 2nd Avenue Sacramento CA 95817
916-451-5660 www.ChurchoftheKingSacramento.com

and brought him back to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew the Lord was God.

There in the midst of this story of judgment is a reminder of the gospel. There is no sin – there is no sin or big sinner who cannot know the forgiveness of God if they come honestly before God repenting of their sin. That’s why our confession time is so important. That’s why we do it every week. We must confess our sins, and if we do, God is faithful and just.

So, Manasseh individually repents. He’s brought back, restored to the throne. His grandson, Josiah, brings revival to the land. He’s such a good king that in 2nd Kings 23 at verse 25, we learn that with Josiah *there was no king like him, who turned to the Lord with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might, according to the Law of Moses; nor after him did any arise like him.* He had cleaned up the Temple. He found the Law. He restored the – it was just tremendous – chapters and chapters of all the good things that Josiah had done which God summarizes here, and yet, verse 26 has an amazing transition because it says, *Nevertheless.* Despite Manasseh’s repentance and restoration, despite the revival, *Nevertheless the Lord did not turn from the fierceness of His great wrath, with which His anger was aroused against Judah, because of all the provocations with which Manasseh had provoked Him.*

You see, there was still going to be consequences to sin. And we face that in our lives. You know, sometimes we just rejoice that God is merciful. There are so many things in my life that should have consequences that don’t that I praise His mercy day in and day out. But I think we all know that there are places in our lives that we do see consequences of sins that we have committed, even sin that we have been forgiven of. King David is a classic example where he came with the Psalm that we all pray when we’re broken: *Against you and you only have I sinned, O Lord,* as he confessed his sin of adultery and murder, and yet that young child died. The judgment was carried out upon the child, and David had to say, “I can go to him but he won’t be able to come to me.”

And that’s what we see in 2nd Kings Chapter 24 when the actual judgment is carried out. God sent King Nebuchadnezzar against Judah to destroy it, *according to the word of the Lord which He had spoken by His servants the prophets. Surely at the commandment of the Lord this came upon Judah, to remove them from His sight because of the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he had done, and also*

Church of the King: Worship Service at 11:00 am: Eagles Hall in Roseville
Mailing Address: 4246 2nd Avenue Sacramento CA 95817
916-451-5660 www.ChurchoftheKingSacramento.com

because of the innocent blood that he had shed; for he had filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, which the Lord would not pardon – which the Lord would not pardon.

As we come to the text that we read this morning, the final Jewish king that we look at is Herod – Herod, who with the others, was willing to slaughter children, this time to protect his throne, his peace, his prosperity, the happiness of Jerusalem. Matthew Chapter 2:16, *Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its surrounding districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men.* He wasn't going to miss this child. Now of course, God thwarts the wickedness of kings. Jesus was saved because it was not yet His time. But the children of Bethlehem and the surrounding regions, any that were two years or younger, were slaughtered for the peace and prosperity of King Herod and the nation.

[25:30]

And of course, the nation of Israel would fall again, this time for the last time in AD70. It's an account that is stunning. It is outlined for us in both Matthew and Mark. But it's also talked about in Luke, and Luke is the only one that mentions this. It comes at a time when the Jewish leaders and the Roman governors were preparing to crucify the very child that Herod was after. They had finally rounded Him up. His time had finally come. He'd been condemned to death. He was carrying that cross that we read about in Psalm 22. Simon the Cyrenian had taken it from Him because of His physical exhaustion, and then Jesus notices some women.

In Chapter 23 verse 27 of Luke, it says, *A great multitude of the people followed Him, and women who also mourned and lamented Him. But Jesus turned to them and said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For indeed the days are coming in which they will say, ‘Blessed are the barren, wombs that never bore, and breasts which never nursed!’ For they will begin to say to the mountains, “Fall on us!” and to the hills, “Cover us!”* Jesus knew what was coming just a few years hence to the people of Jerusalem because they were crucifying the King of glory.

Church of the King: Worship Service at 11:00 am: Eagles Hall in Roseville
Mailing Address: 4246 2nd Avenue Sacramento CA 95817
916-451-5660 www.ChurchoftheKingSacramento.com

So, with all of this discussion and obviously, a parallel to the sin of abortion today, what do we do with our nation? Will there be repentance in America? That’s certainly what we call for. That’s why we confront the sin. That’s why we work in some of the political realms. That’s why we preach and call down on God’s judgment. We want America to repent. We want the individuals that are involved in this great sin to repent.

Whether they will, whether our nation will, is still an open question. We don’t know. We don’t know what’s going to happen. Could there be a coming judgment for America because of the sin of abortion? I would say, based on what we’ve read from the word of God today, that it’s almost inevitable. God can be merciful. But if God is consistent, the innocent blood that we have shed and stained our land with is crying out and has angered our God, and there will be judgment. Is that unthinkable?

You know this is a Christian nation: America, light to the world – surely, surely God need us in His plan. Well, you know, we’ve looked at the dream of Daniel numerous times. We’ve continuously studied the book of Ezra. Four great kingdoms: There’s the head, the chest, the thighs, the legs – they’re gone; they’re footnotes in history. They’re gone and you don’t have to go to ancient history and say, “Well, oh yeah, they’re obviously gone over thousands of years.”

If we went back, and our kids probably know this, if we went back just a hundred years – if this was 1910 and one of the kids got their school books out, and we looked at a map of Europe and Asia – you know, that big chunk of land up there, guess what we would see – the big bright colored countries. It would be the Ottoman Empire. It would be the Austrian Empire. It would be the Russian Empire. And I’m not talking about the Soviet Union – the Russian Empire – the czars that had stood for a thousand years. Those would have been the great nations. And if we just stood here on a fellowship Sunday afternoon and said, “You know, I don’t think those nations are going to be around much longer. They’ve kind of walked away from God and they served other gods, and I think God’s going to shake things up and it’s going to change. People probably would have laughed you out of the room. Those were the great empires. Nothing was going to happen to them. And yet, just a few short decades later, none of those three kingdoms was anything close to their former selves. That’s how fast it can happen.

Church of the King: Worship Service at 11:00 am: Eagles Hall in Roseville
Mailing Address: 4246 2nd Avenue Sacramento CA 95817
916-451-5660 www.ChurchoftheKingSacramento.com

[29:55]

Now it’s not my job to predict the future. I can’t tell you what God has in store for America. My calling is to rightly divide the word of God so that we as Christians are prepared to obey God wherever He puts us and in whatever way He needs us to serve Him. Will one of our children be the great revivalist like King Josiah who’ll bring our nation back and see a restoration and glory days that we’ve not seen? We certainly hope and pray that many of them will be involved in that. Will any of our children be the Daniels who are hauled off to Red China or someplace else as judgment for America? We pray not but we want them to be prepared. We want them to be ready to serve.

So as we think about that this morning, as we rightly call down God’s judgments and curses upon the sin of abortion, we need to be prepared:

I’d like to mention just three things – three good places to start. If you take notes, these are good places to take notes.

1) We need to repent. We’re doing that as part of our service today but we need to do it a lot. We need to read things like Daniel Chapter 9 with Daniel’s great prayer. 2nd Chronicles Chapter 7 – read the whole chapter, not just the verse that talks about God having mercy. Read the whole chapter and see it in this context. Look at Isaiah Chapter 1 and see the condition of Israel at the time when they turned their backs and God’s anger toward them.

Those are the things. We must understand that the same battle rages today. What sent Israel to Babylon? Sacrificing children for peace and prosperity. Why do we have abortion in America? Because we want our personal peace and affluence and power, and we don’t care who we have to step on to get it. That’s the bottom-line. And sadly, that perspective rages almost as much according to the statistics in the churches as it does in the world. Certainly, those that stand out in front of the abortion clinics and counsel know that you’ll have Christians with Christian bumper stickers driving up to kill those unwanted children. Maybe because they’re called to be a minister or a missionary or have a nice job – whatever it is, they decided that that child can be sacrificed. That’s what we need to repent of.

Church of the King: Worship Service at 11:00 am: Eagles Hall in Roseville
Mailing Address: 4246 2nd Avenue Sacramento CA 95817
916-451-5660 www.ChurchoftheKingSacramento.com

2) We must have the guts, as we are doing this morning, to call down God’s judgment on that sin no matter what the cost. We need to look at things like Psalm 2 and Psalm 10. We’re going to sing Psalm 2. We’re going to pray responsibly Psalm 10. We’ve already read it responsibly. These are imprecatory psalms. They’re not familiar psalms to the American church by any stretch of the imagination. I’m sure a lot of people, when they read them, they go, “I don’t know what that’s in there for, so what’s the next psalm?” We need to focus on them. This is what God is telling us to read in times like this. We need to read them so that we realize how we have to be broken, and with King David we have to say, “Lord, against You and You only have we sinned.” It’s not the little innocent child in the womb. It’s not the mother. It’s not the people that are involved. Those are all things that we have to have Christian compassion for, and David certainly had to deal with real things. But when he confessed his sin, he didn’t say, “Bathsheba, I’m sorry. People of Jerusalem, I’m sorry.” He didn’t go to Uriah’s family and say he was sorry. He said, “Lord, against You and You only have I sinned” – You and You only. That’s the attitude we have to have.

3) We have to repent. We have to call for God’s justice! Now you may not believe this but I’m going to end this on a high note, because as we do all of this, as we prepare for whatever God has planned, we can all do something that I often do in the political realm. People often asked me how I could smile with all the stuff you have to put up with. And I would just smile and say I’ve read the end of the book and I know we win.

You see, death and destruction is all around us. But if we look at the comforting words of the Word of God, we find out that the servants of the King of Kings, we’re going to win. 1st Corinthians Chapter 15 beginning at verse 20 – *And now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep* (for who are in the grave like Lazarus was). *For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead.* You see why we have to begin in the book of beginnings? Unless we understand where death came from, unless our children understand that we are all dead in trespasses and sins, and we see this death and destruction around us because of Adam’s sin, we don’t fully understand fully what Jesus did in taking that curse upon the cross and the power of His resurrection. *For since by man came death, by Man – the Son of God incarnate; we just celebrated that with Christmas – by Man also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, after those, who are Christ’s at*

Church of the King: Worship Service at 11:00 am: Eagles Hall in Roseville
Mailing Address: 4246 2nd Avenue Sacramento CA 95817
916-451-5660 www.ChurchoftheKingSacramento.com

His coming. And then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. Christ must reign till He has put all of His enemies under His feet. That’s our commission. That’s our call – to disciple the nations. He must reign until those nations have been disciplined.

But verse 26 is our promise for this morning: *The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.* It was destroyed on the cross. That’s why we celebrate the Last Supper each Lord’s Day. But it will be the end of time before we see the final outworking of Christ’s victory. Just as Adam did not drop dead physically the day he ate of the fruit, he was as good as dead. Just as we don’t see death destroyed in all of its fullness, it is destroyed and will be destroyed. We should be comforted and emboldened – comforted and emboldened by these words just like the faithful mothers in the region of Bethlehem years ago.

The faithful mothers – those who understood the word of God would have been comforted by the words of the prophet Jeremiah, the very words that Matthew quoted in his account. We read them in Jeremiah Chapter 31 beginning at verse 13: *“Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, and the young men and the old together; for I will turn their mourning to joy, will comfort them, and make them rejoice rather than sorrow. I will satiate the souls of the priests with abundance, and My people will be satisfied with My goodness,” says the Lord. Thus says the Lord: “A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping, Rachel weeping for her children, refusing to be comforted for her children, because they were no more.” Thus says the Lord: “Refrain your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears; for your work shall be rewarded, says the Lord, and they shall come back from the land of the enemy. There is hope in your future, says the Lord, that your children shall come back to their own border.”*

Servants of the risen Savior, hear the word of God as we prepare to confront sin and serve Him this week. There is hope in your future, says the Lord. And all of God’s people said, amen.

[End of sermon 39:20]

Church of the King: Worship Service at 11:00 am: Eagles Hall in Roseville
Mailing Address: 4246 2nd Avenue Sacramento CA 95817
916-451-5660 www.ChurchoftheKingSacramento.com