

THE LORD

By

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Isaac Watts knew what he was doing when he wrote, “Joy to the world! The Lord is come; let earth receive her King.”

Jesus is the Lord. He is the Lord, right now — my Lord, your Lord, and the Lord of all. “God has made him both Lord and Christ” is the declaration of Peter on the day of Pentecost. He was Lord that day, and has been Lord every day since. When Peter broke the Jewish traditions by entering the house of Cornelius, a gentile, he further amazed his listeners by saying that Jesus Christ “Is Lord of all” (Acts 10:36). No qualifications. Jesus is Lord of every person.

He is Lord by the right of Creation. “All things were made through him; and without him was not anything made that has been made” (John 1:3).

He is Lord by the command of God. “For he must reign, till he has put all his enemies under his feet... For, He put all things in subjection under HIS FEET” (1 Cor. 15:25, 27). Jesus claimed that He was Lord when he said, “All authority has been given unto me in heaven and on earth” (Matt. 28:18).

Jesus is Lord of ALL the earth. He is the Lord of the sinner and the saint. He is Lord of the atheist and the believer. He is Lord of the savage in the remote jungle and Lord of the communist guerrilla fighter. Maybe they have never heard of Him. But He is still Lord. The fact that men may not know Him does not make Him less Lord of the Heaven and the earth. All must give an account to Him, because He is Lord of all.

In view of these facts revealed by the Holy Spirit in the Bible, it is a great error for modern evangelists to suggest that Jesus is a “personal Lord” to some while remaining no Lord at all to others, as if He were Lord only by human decree.

Placing such emphasis upon a “personal Lord” is an attempt to give meaning to the individual; it is a psychological tool to stir action. But no matter how legitimate the ultimate goal may be, it is dangerous to use a false means to attain it. To create in a person the thought that He can make Jesus Lord by his own private decision is to negate the Biblical view that God has already made Him Lord, with or without man’s approval. How could Jesus be Lord if He were subject to my desires and wishes?

This idea, that men can make Him Lord at their own pleasure, encourages an isolated arrangement between the individual and Christ. He has his own little religious world, separated from the real world in which he lives. He “takes Jesus as Lord” as if he were taking a capsule. He sees Jesus as His Lord, but not as Lord of the world. Yet, the believer is to witness to the world that Jesus is the Lord. “If thou shall confess with thy

mouth Jesus as Lord ..." (Rom. 10:9). This is to be our witness, that Jesus is now the Lord of heaven and earth, not because you and I believe it, but because that's the way it is.

A young teacher told me that she no longer considered the Bible to be authoritative for all mankind. "It is true to Christians," she said. "But the Koran is true to the Moslems, and the book of Mormon is true to the Mormons." To her, a thing became true only if she decided it was true. She had a "personal faith", but she did not hold it to be true in itself; it became true only if she believed it. This is relativity, the basis of modern atheism. Christ exists only if you believe Him to exist. Hence you create him by your own faith. This makes Him no more real than Santa Claus.

But the power of Jesus as Lord does not depend upon my making Him Lord. It is no isolated arrangement. He is Lord of all. Wherever I go, Jesus is the Lord of that place, and has power over the people there. There's no question about whether Jesus is Lord or not. God has settled this question.

There is a question to be answered, however. It is the question of obedience. The sinner lives in rebellion against the Lord, against his own Lord. It is gross disobedience. He sins as if he had a perfect right to do so, as if there were NO Lord at all. He flaunts sin in the face of the Lord, and then laughs about it. He advertises it, and encourages it, and glories in it, because he refuses to recognize that Jesus IS his Lord. As Paul reveals in the Roman letter, men exchange the truth of God for a lie and refuse to have God in their knowledge (Rom. 1:25, 28). It isn't that men cannot know the truth, but that "they received not the love of the truth" and "believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thess. 2:10, 12). They do not want Jesus as Lord, because they do not want to obey Him.

The crisis of our time — violence, confusion, upheavals and revolution — turns upon this fact that men refuse to obey Jesus the Lord. In the Revelation this crisis is seen as a war against the Lord. "These shall war against the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and they also shall overcome that are with Him, called and chosen and faithful." The anti-Christ shall be overcome, for whether they believe it or not, Christ is the Lord.

The individual does have a choice, as to whether or not he will submit to Jesus as Lord. We can rebel. We can spit on Him, thumb our noses at Him, and do as we please. Millions are doing just these very things. But all the same, He is still their Lord. The day will come when they shall all have to account to Him. They will see that all rebelling against Him was futile. All man's so-called intellectual progress, which takes him farther and farther away from submission to Jesus, does nothing to diminish the power of Jesus as Lord. He allows men to shut their eyes, stop their ears, turn off their minds, and live in ignorance, deliberately defying Him. But it does not diminish His authority as Lord. Ultimately men will be held to an accounting to the very Lord they have denied. When He comes again "He will show who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who only hath immortality" (1 Tim. 6:16). Then they will see that He

was Lord all the time, all along the line, and that in their great intellectual pursuit they were blind to the real truth.

The final end of the unbelieving rebels is described in the parable of the pounds (Luke 19:12-27). When the Lord returned and called for an accounting by His servants He also called for an accounting by those citizens who hated Him and who had said, "We will not that this man reign over us." The Lord said to them, "But these mine enemies, that would not that I should feign over them, bring hither and slay them before me."

Paul writes that the Lord Jesus shall come "from heaven with the Angels of His power in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them ... that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus: who shall suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of His might" (2 Thess. 1:7-9). The question is not whether Jesus is the Lord, but whether or not men obey Him as such.

The world views the present chaos as the result of man's weakness and poor judgment. The humanist sees no overriding hand capable of bringing order out of the current conflicts; hence, the despair, the futility and fear that grips men's hearts. But the believer sees in the turmoil and ferment of the world the fulfillment of the testimony of Jesus and His word. The Lord is at work in history. He works all things after the counsel of His will (Eph. 1:11). Here is the true relevancy of Christ — that He is not only Lord of the individual believer, but of all else besides. Present conflict is no barrier to this fact. As the writer of Hebrews points out, "But now we see not yet all things subjected to Him." Indeed the world is filled with rebels. "But", the writer continues, "we behold Jesus ... crowned with glory and honor" (Heb. 2:8, 9). He is already crowned with glory and honor because God has made Him the Lord. The believer is not fearful of the outcome because He knows *Who* is Lord. Where the world sees only blind chance, the Christian sees the hand of the Lord, while the world grapples with the problem of how to accommodate law and morals to man's evil desire, the Christian simply accepts the Law of Christ and tries to obey it, knowing that man is to be judged by the Lord who has given us such law.

Of course, Jesus is a "personal" Lord. He has a personal interest in every soul. He knows His own by name and they experience great peace and joy in fellowship with Him. He knows the wicked also, and they experience a certain fear in this fact, that He knows them. They seek to stay as far away from Him as possible because He is their Lord and they personally refuse to obey Him. Any way you look at it, Jesus Christ is Lord. He was born to be Lord and God has already made Him so. No man can sit in the pew of a church house and decide whether or not Jesus is going to be his Lord. This was decided a long time ago.

But he can decide whether or not he is going to obey the Lord, and receive eternal life, or whether he is going to disobey Him and receive the penalty for sin — death in the day of judgment. Yes, you must choose this; but either way you choose, you do not alter the position of Jesus. Whatever you decide, He remains Lord of the universe with sovereign power over all the heaven and the earth.

We need to quit telling people to “make Jesus their Lord” and start telling them that He already is their Lord, and that they had better repent and start obeying Him.

The Lord is born! He was born once for all. He died once for all; He arose, and reigns today as Lord over all. He will come again to judge all; not to be made King, and Lord and all that, but because He is King and Lord already.

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