

# RULE AND REBELLION

By

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“Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies” (Psalm 110:2).

If we could but see from a distant point in time with the benefit of retrospection we might see the whole world of today in the throes of the greatest convulsion and judgment since the flood. The terrorists and guerilla activities form only a small part of this convulsion — only the tip of the iceberg. The real revolution and consequent judgment is going on in a much more subtle and veiled manner.

Man’s revolution and God’s judgment both are being carried out in the very midst, even in the very purposeful activities, of people who are hardly aware of either of them, so blind is the mind of twentieth century man. Yet the knowledge of what is going on, especially with regard to God’s present judgment, is revealed in Scripture as a source of great encouragement to Christians.

Psalm 110 was quoted by Jesus, by Peter and the author of Hebrews for the purpose of proving that Christ is the one whom David prophesied would sit on his throne, that He did ascend to that throne, began to rule on the Day of Pentecost and that He now sits in supreme authority as King of Kings and the judge of the world. It is no secret that His present rule is constantly in question, even by professed believers. “But if Christ is not the King, why do we have all the open wickedness? Why does He allow the Devil such power? Why is there such turmoil and rebellion in the world?” Since Christ has not put down the rebellion, it is thought that the devil is the one in power. It may not be too important that we all see the fulfillment of prophecy eye-to-eye (and hardly any two people do see it that way), but it is of great importance that we have our faith set on Christ as our ruler and Lord and in order to do this we must not attribute the present flux of things to the power of the devil.

David sang that Christ would rule “in the midst of his enemies.” This condition is to continue until the very last day, when He shall return and abolish the very last enemy, and make his enemies the footstool of his feet (Psa. 110:1, I Cor. 15:25). In the second Psalm, another prophecy of the Messiah, the princes and presidents of the world are said to have one common cause, to rebel against the Lord, against His rule, to break His laws and abolish His power over them. There can be no rebellion against one who is not in power! The reason the humanists and socialists of the world make it their common aim to try to destroy the principles and doctrines of Christ is because He rules, and they have not been able to overthrow Him.

The primary cause behind the French revolution was the humanist effort to destroy Christian faith and the restraints of Christ. The same is true of the Bolshevik take-over of Russia. Everyone knows that the Communists are not so much concerned with the health, happiness and prosperity of the citizens as they are with destroying the church, killing the pastors and leaders, and changing the religion from worship of Jesus to the worship of the state. Theirs is primarily a rebellion against the Lord, and against the rule He exercises through the church and the preaching and teaching of the scriptures.

The same rebellion is going on full blast in our own country, although so far without too much bloodshed. It is being done through education, through the media and through the general carnality of the populace who are so determined to get all the “gusto” they can that they willingly sacrifice principles, character, health and family to get it. In this they break all the rules of the King and join forces with the organized humanists in seeking to destroy His reign, while all the time maintaining membership in the local church and riding high on the accolades of fraternal brothers as civic-minded and respected citizens.

Still Christ reigns, surrounded by raging enemies and those who support them. His promise still stands that “all things work together for good to them that are called according to His purpose” (Rom. 8:28). When a faithful believer claims this verse, he must believe that Christ is ruler over the whole nation, even the whole world, so that He may control events that affect the good of that believer. Things that affect one’s life may have their origin thousands of miles away, and almost always are affected somewhere along the way by unbelievers, even by the very reals who defy Christ. Yet, the promise is that those things will be so adjusted, guided and controlled by the Lord Jesus Christ, that they will work for the ultimate good of the Christian. This is because He reigns, in spite of all the resistance and opposition.

**JUDGMENT NOW!** The very turmoil and upheaval that is going on in the world today, and which is often cited as evidence that Christ does not yet rule, is actually the strongest evidence of His rule. The results of rebellion is judgment, and the judgments of the Lord do not always wait until the final day. He judges nations continually even as He did Israel and Judah, and as He obviously has ever since. The destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD was a wide-open demonstration of His judgment upon a people who had rejected Him and given their allegiance to Caesar in preference to Jesus. Governments continue to rise and fall, but not without the hand of the King.

In fact, from the fall of Adam, the whole world has been under judgment. God said to him that the earth was cursed because of his sin, and that from then on man would have to live by toil and sweat, that instead of the soil always yielding up the fruit desired, it would yield thorns. This is judgment upon fallen man. Wherever men live, there is trouble, difficulty and hardship, because men everywhere are sinful. “There is none righteous, no not one” (Rom. 3:20). Jesus said that “he that believes not is judged already...”. So all the world is under the judgment of the King, and the throes of pain suffered throughout the world is not because Jesus is helpless to stop it. He is able. He can heal every disease. He can cure every sickness. He could but speak the word and every rebellious, lying soul would drop dead, even as did Annanias and Sapphira, or King Herod. He can make it rain on the parched grounds of Ethiopia or cause the rains to stop in the flood drenched areas of our land. He does not, because it is His Choice. He can control the economy. “It is the Lord that gives thee power to get riches.” If there is depression, it is not because Jesus has no power over the productive power of a people. An evil people are given an evil king! This is a form of judgment, and is the result of Christ’s sovereign power.

What then of Satan’s power? He is powerless to touch those whom Christ protects. He had to ask permission to afflict Job, but was denied any power to take his life. Satan asked permission to tempt Peter, and it was granted, that great lessons might

be given for Peter's sake and ours. Satan has no power over a Christian. "He that is in you (the holy spirit of God) is greater than he that is in the world (Satan)" (I John 4:4).

It is a different story for most of mankind. "The whole world lies in the evil one" (I John 5:19). Satan plagues those who serve Him. They are delivered to Satan because they love not the Lord, are rebelling against Him, and do not want His rule. They must suffer from the results of the first curse which we all share, our mortality, and the necessity of living in a world where the blessing of Eden are withdrawn, but they must also suffer the results of continual rebellion and the torments brought by Satan because they serve him.

Paul wrote that when men refused to submit to God, "He gave them up" to suffer the consequences of the first curse — they followed their own alienated instincts and became corrupt and evil (Rom. 1:24–23). Thus the terrible implications of sexual impurity manifest in the world today is part of the Lord's judgment. So is the violence and the wars, which John says are a result of lust, or unholy desire.

When one turns to Christ, he is lifted out of Satan's grasp. The curse of mortality is made only temporary, for he will be subject to a resurrection to immortality. He still must live in the midst of the enemies of Christ, but he has the protective presence of holy angels, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and the peace and joy of knowing the truth about his condition and his destiny, and the very fellowship of God and His people. He may often suffer chastening from the Lord, for his own perfection, and sometimes suffer from the world's evil. Persecution was promised by the Lord himself, so let none think that his suffering is a sign of power-failure with the Lord! It goes with the territory, and provides us with opportunities to test and apply our faith, which Peter says is most precious to us (I Pet. 1:6–7).

When we hear the news and consider all the wickedness, and when we see that nation after nation, such as our own, are on a downhill plunge into destruction, the question arises: "Why doesn't God do something?" He is. He is sending forth His word through His faithful people. He is redeeming those who put their trust in Him. He is sending strong delusions to the wicked who hate His truth ( II Thess. 2:11) He is testing and purifying the saints, and protecting them from the evil one. He is destroying the power of some of the wicked while raising up others to execute His will. In brief, He is ruling in the midst of His enemies.

At the last, He will raise up all the dead, and judge the unbelieving world in a final day of judgment, destroying the wicked in one final execution (Psa.2, 110, 37, II Pet. 3:7, Matt. 3:12, I Thess. 1:19).

"What then shall we say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31). Jesus speaks to us in plain terms as to those with honest child-like faith: "I say unto you, be not anxious for your life...but seek you first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:25, 33). If He cannot be trusted to keep His word to care for His people, then there is nothing to Christian faith, no Lord, and no hope. But He is Lord! He is able to handle the situation. He commands, "Fret not thyself because of evil doers...Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him and he will bring it to pass...As for transgressors, they shall be destroyed together" (Psa. 27:1, 5, 38).

God has given us the ministry of proclaiming Jesus as Lord, and salvation through His blood. The dangers, and threats that surround only serve to emphasize this mission.

“For God gave us not a spirit of fearfulness; but of power and love and discipline.” The Christian lives in the knowledge that Jesus is not only Savior, but Lord, and so he lives without fear, but with faith.

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