TODAY'S ORDER OF WORSHIP

Welcome by: Daniel Balch /Opening Prayer by: Ken Coleman

Morning Assembly Song Leader: Bobby Rader

#144 O, Worship the King
#47 Holy, Holy, Holy

Scripture Reading by: Rock Cary
#332 Lead Me to Calvary
Lord's Supper and Contribution

#538 My Hope is Built on Nothing Less
Sermon: "Liar, Liar"
Acts 4:32-5:11

#915 Trust and Obey
#414 Anywhere with Jesus

Closing Prayer by: Walden David

Welcome by: Daniel Balch

Evening Assembly Song Leader: Danny Balch

#867 To Canaan's Land
#837 I Need Thee Every Hour

Opening Prayer: Jerry Mallernee
#480 Blessed Assurance

Sermon: "Peace of Christ"
Colossians 3:15-17

#643 Sowing the Seed of the Kingdom
#957 This World is Not My Home

Closing Prayer: David Warren

Other Opportunities For Spiritual Growth

Sunday: 9:00am — Bible Study Classes, 10:00am — Worship, 5:00pm — Worship
Wednesday: 6:30pm — Bible Study Classes

March 6, 2022

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"

Galatians 5:1

God is in Control

Why do the nations rage
and the peoples plot in vain?
The kings of the earth set themselves,
and the rulers take counsel together,
against the Lord and against his Anointed…
He who sits in the heavens laughs;
the Lord holds them in derision.

- Psalm 2:1-2, 4

All of us have likely been following the Russian invasion of Ukraine to some extent. It seems that the world stands closer to the brink of World War 3—or even nuclear conflict—than at any time since perhaps the Cuban Missile Crisis. Coupled with the last couple of years of pandemic, social unrest, political turmoil, inflation, and on and on, it could cause any of us to despair.

So I want to briefly remind us all of the theme of this Psalm—something that the believers facing persecution for the first time in **Acts 4** remembered (as they quoted it in their prayer): God is in control. The sovereignty of God is the bedrock of Scripture and Christian faith. Ultimately, he is king. He sets human governments in order to ultimately bring about his will. And that theme resounds throughout all Scripture.

In the Exodus
This is of vital relevance for the existence of Israel and the Biblical account of history. God's covenant with Israel was based on his gracious act of deliverance from Egyptian bondage. In this, he was repeatedly opposed by Pharaoh. Not only did God overcome this resistance through the power exhibited in the plagues visited upon Egypt, but the most revealing statement about God's control of events discloses that Pharaoh was only a foil to manifest the power of God: *[F]or this purpose I have raised you up, to show you my power, so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth* **(Exod 9:16).**

While this is the most overt statement of God's ordering of the existing authorities, examples could be multiplied to show God's sovereign control in the Exodus event against opposition (e.g., **Exod 7:4-5; 10:1-2; 14:3-4**). The point is clear: God ruled above the greatest power of the Ancient Near East, achieving his purpose for the sake of his people; he even utilized the resistance of that power to leave
no doubt about his management of affairs. The song of Moses sums it up well in its concluding exclamation: *The Lord will reign forever and ever* **(Exod 15:18)**.

In the Exile
No OT book reveals this principle more clearly than Daniel. When Nebuchadnezzar erects a golden image and demands it be worshipped on penalty of death, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refuse, trusting that God had a power greater than the king and would deliver them from the fiery furnace (**Dan 3**). God found Belshazzar wanting because of his pride and defiance, ripping his kingdom away and giving it to the Medes and Persians (**Dan 5**).

Family News & Notes

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH YOUR CHURCH FAMILY

Our Sick

Susan McCain is having health problems.

Joe Edd Stifflemire is taking chemo treatments.

Continued Prayers
(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Gwen Pettit, Harold & Geri Cryer, Steve Ward, Frank & Tina Garcia, Caitlin Smith, Ka'Leisha Jones, Oscar Cantu, Gary Nielsen, Virginia Cole

Shut Ins
(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Jim Smith, Winona Angelle, Myrtle Sheffield, Catherine Parker, Peggy McIntosh

Our Missionaries

Aaron & Marisa Bailey in Montepuez, Mozambique , Rod Kyle in the South Pacific

Upcoming Activities

Elders, Deacons, Minister meeting this Monday, Mar. 7th at 6:30 p.m.

We will have a fellowship meal Wednesday, March 16th at 5:30 p.m.

We have a Houston Food Bank truck on Tuesday, March 17th at 8:00 a.m.

Primetimers will be going to Iguana Joe's on Tuesday, Mar. 22nd at 6:00 p.m. A driver is needed.

New Movers Program

We are starting a new movers program. We will have a list of people that have moved into the area. If you are interested in helping with this, see Bryant Perkins.

Reminder

Remember to set your clocks ahead one hour, Saturday night, March 12th.

Elders	Deacons	Minister
Ken Coleman	Daniel Balch	Bryant Perkins
Bobby Rader	Danny Balch	
Don Taylor		
Robert Ward		

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"

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Against the irrevocable death decree for those who prayed to anyone other than Darius, God affirmed Daniel's life by shutting the mouths of the lions in the den (**Dan 6**).

The foremost example in the book is the humbling of Nebuchadnezzar in Dan 4. In keeping with a dream he had which was interpreted by Daniel as a warning of impending judgment, Nebuchadnezzar is walking on the roof of his palace and surveying the city, when he boasts of his power and glory seen in the splendor of Babylon (**4:28-30**). *While the words were still in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, O King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: The kingdom has departed from you…until you know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will* **(Dan 4:31-2).**

In the Psalms

The theme of God as king is a major focus of the Psalms. Many hymns celebrate his enthronement in Zion, the place of his rule among his people; but his reign is not confined to Israel, as they praise him as king over the nations, the powers of chaos, and the entire universe. Perhaps no psalm expresses it better than the enthronement hymn of **Psalm 47.** Read it in its entirety, as it is only 8 verses.

Other examples from the OT could be noted, but these are sufficiently representative to demonstrate that the concept of God as sovereign king was ubiquitous in ancient Israel. It is the basis of the Exodus, the source of hope in the midst of exile, and the confession of her worship.

Over Rome

This understanding is reinforced in the NT. Jesus states the principle emphatically in his trial before Pilate. Confronted with silence in his interrogation, Pilate attempts to bully Jesus into answering him. "*You will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have authority to release you and authority to crucify you? Jesus answered him, "You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above* " **(Jn 19:10-11).**

Arguably the best NT illustration of God's sovereignty is the book of Acts. The apostolic preaching repeatedly emphasizes God's reversal of the verdict of the authorities in crucifying Jesus in the resurrection. In fact, the earthly powers were unwittingly serving God's purpose, as Jesus was *delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God* **(Acts 2:23).** This is forcefully stated in the believers' prayer in the aftermath of their first opposition, as already noted **(Acts 4:25-28).** The thread runs throughout the entire narrative of Acts: mocking the Sanhedrin in releasing the apostles so they return to teach in the temple **(Acts 5);** the inversion of Cornelius, a Roman official, now bowing to Christ as Lord **(Acts 10);** God's judgment against the Roman-appointed Herod **(Acts 12);** the Philippian earthquake demonstrating God's control of the justice system **(Acts 16);** Paul, a prisoner bound for Rome, directing shipwrecked Romans **(Acts 27**). In fact, the concluding episode of the book is Paul, *proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance* **(Acts 28:31)** as God's kingdom overcomes all human opposition. Throughout Acts, God, not the government, is sovereign, accomplishing his purpose for his people.

The concept of God's sovereignty is deeply ingrained in 1st-century Jewish thought and Christian experience. He is the one in control over and above human governments. May we continue to trust him.

Bryant Perkins