



The one true God, whose name is Jehovah, is the ultimate source of all life, authority, and power. He is the self-existent, supreme, and incomparable "I Am." He is the God who created the worlds of space (Gen. 1:1) and time (Heb. 11:3), who Himself "inhabits eternity" (Isa. 57:15). Attempts to describe and define God can only be made in terms understandable to finite minds. God's underived and beginningless life is spoken of in terms of time, as the Psalmist declares, "From everlasting to everlasting, thou art God" (Psa. 90:2). From the infinite past (as men speak) into the infinite future, thou art God, the God of sovereign power.

God, speaking through the prophet Isaiah, describes Himself in terms suited to their capacity to understand. "Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me" (Isa. 43:10). All other claimants to deity are no match for Jehovah who has eternal priority. The God of Israel is superior to them, for He has no beginning nor ending.

Remember the former things long past, For I am God, *and there is no other*; I am God, *and there is no one like me*, Declaring the end from the beginning And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, "My purpose will be established, and I will accomplish all My good

pleasure"; . . . Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass. I have planned it, surely I will do it (Isa. 46:9-11 NAS).

God being who and what He is, it follows that we are totally dependent upon His grace for a revelation of Himself and His plans and purposes. This He has granted, saying, "Truly I have spoken."

THE LORD OF CREATION

In the first two chapters of Genesis we have the account of creation. The climax of God's creative work was the making of man.

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness; and let them *rule over* the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and *over all the earth*, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

And God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and *fill the earth*, and

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subdue it; and *rule over* the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, and *over every living thing that moves on the earth*" (Gen. 1:26-28 NAS).

Adam was to be God's king, reigning over the earth "with his consorted Eve." And his "court" must have been indescribably beautiful for "the Lord God planted a garden toward the east, in Eden; and there He placed the man whom He had formed" (Gen. 2:8 NAS).

God had made the earth "and the fulness thereof" (Psa. 24:1), to display His glory in all its varied forms, and man was the most magnificent part of the display. "For *since the creation of the world* His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, *being understood through what has been made*. . ." (Rom. 1:20 NAS). David "understood," and through nature, acknowledged nature's God. In Psalm 8 he expresses the overwhelming awe that gripped him as he beheld "what has been made."

When I consider Thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, The moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained; What is man, that Thou dost take thought of him? And the son of man, that Thou dost care for him? (Vs. 3-4 NAS).

Yet, as David "considers" the wonders of creation, his understand-

able reference to human insignificance gives way to an inspired declaration of man's God-ordained purpose and destiny. Human dignity has been marred by sin, but implicit in David's words may be heard the assurance of faith in a redeeming God, who will restore man to his place of dominion.

Yet Thou hast made him a little lower than God, And dost crown him with glory and majesty! Thou dost make him to rule over the works of Thy hands; Thou has put all things under his feet, All sheep and oxen, And also the beasts of the field, The birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, Whatever passes through the paths of the sea (Vs. 5-8 NAS).

"The beauty of God's plan" (Rom. 3:23 JBP) is clear. He had made a beautiful earth, in which He had planted a beautiful garden, to be the beautiful home for two beautiful creatures, Adam and Eve, who would reproduce beautiful children, who in turn would reproduce, until through the process of reproduction, the world would be full of beautiful people. All of this would, of course, be done in obedient submission to the sovereign authority and supervision of Jehovah God. Even the redeemed and sanctified imagination has difficulty envisioning such a world of morally, physically, and spiritually magnificent rational creatures, living in an unsullied and uncontaminated earth of divinely ordered splendor.

It is obvious we do not live in such a world. Our world is not the orderly and beautiful place we have just attempted to describe. Something has made it otherwise. Volumes have been written to record the account of human misery and disorder, and volumes have been written suggesting ways and means to remedy the situation. However, all remedies that have not rightly diagnosed the disease, are doomed to failure. Some superficial and temporary measures may reduce the pain, but the patient is doomed to die if the disease is not accurately diagnosed and properly treated. The malady is universal, and all men, unless they have discovered the proper

remedy, are afflicted. The Bible gives us the correct diagnosis. "For there is no distinction to be made anywhere; *everyone has sinned, everyone falls short of the beauty of God's plan*" (Rom. 3:22,23 JBP).

Genesis 3 contains the painful account of Adam's defection. Adam's authority to rule over the earth was delegated. He ruled under God's ultimate authority. He must not make decisions independent of his Creator and Sustainer. The continuation of his authority depended on his obedience to the One who had placed him in power.

Satan, who himself had disobeyed and been punished by God, deceived Eve, who in turn was successful in getting Adam to eat the forbidden fruit. The serpent, Satan's agent, and Eve, were both meted out punishment for their part in the disobedience of Adam. However, Adam was the one held totally responsible for his defection. He was God's king, and answerable to God for his conduct. And so we are told, that "by *one man* sin entered into the world, and death by sin," and, "by *one man's* disobedience many were made sinners" (Rom. 5:12, 19).

Adam forfeited his authority. The sovereign of the soil became the slave of the soil (Gen. 3:17-19). Driven from his beautiful garden headquarters, this deposed monarch with the sentence of death hanging over him, paid dearly for his disobedience. The price was terrible. An immediate reduction of spiritual awareness, the reluctance of the hostile earth to provide him subsistence, the irrevocably altered relationship with Eve, the tragedy of turmoil and murder in his home, together with the nagging memories of Edenic bliss, all combined to make his act of disobedience incomputably costly.

DELEGATED LORDSHIP

But now the question arises, If Adam is no longer king, who is? The earth is made to be ruled, and its ruler has been dethroned. Obviously the authority reverts to the One who gave

it. The Scriptures make it abundantly clear that God reigned, delegating authority to whomever He chose, awaiting the time when man should qualify to assume the universal authority forfeited by Adam. The Old Testament writers repeatedly affirm the kingship of Jehovah over the earth, and His delegation of authority. (See Ps. 22:28; 24:1; 47:2,7,8; 66:7; 96:10; 59:13; 103:19; 75:6,7; Dan. 4:34-37).

It is evident from these scriptures, and many others which could be cited, that God reigned over the earth by delegating authority to kings and kingdoms, both Israelitish and Gentilic. His medium for delegating and dealing with earthly authority was the prophet. A prophet is "one who speaks for another." (See Heb. 1:1, Lk. 1:70).

Many names come to mind, such as Seth, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Melchizedek, Isaac, and Jacob. Jacob's twelve sons became the fathers of a nation, being named Israelites after Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel, after wrestling with the angel. As a nation, the Israelites went to Egypt in time of famine and enjoyed security under the delegated authority of their brother Joseph, who had become second in command only to the king. In Egypt they became a sizeable nation. After the death of Joseph, "there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph" (Ex. 1:8). The new king, alarmed at the growth of the Israelites, subjected them to servitude to keep them from possibly overthrowing him.

God raised up the prophet Moses to be His voice to the Israelites, and also their deliverer from Egypt. He was able by the mighty power of God to lead the people out of Egypt, and bring them into the wilderness where God could prepare them for going into the land of Canaan. While in the wilderness, God entered into covenant with the nation (Ex. 19:4-6; 24:1-8). In spite of God's blessing and provision, the Israelites established a record of disobedience. They rebelled against Moses repeatedly, and eventually in the days of Samuel, they

declared their desire to be rid of the divine kingship mediated through prophets and have a king like the other nations. Samuel was displeased with the people for their attitude, and "prayed unto the Lord" (1 Sam. 8:6). God's response to Samuel is most enlightening. It makes clear that He had indeed been reigning over Israel through the prophet Samuel. "And the Lord said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them" (1 Sam. 8:7).

While Israel thought they were being governed by their new king Saul, the fact was, that Samuel continued to be the one through whom God mediated His authority. Samuel anointed Saul as king, and he also delivered the message of God to Saul pronouncing his fate. So, while the people thought they were being ruled by Saul, they were still under the kingship of God, Samuel the prophet being His deputy in the earth.

Israel's next king was David. Although he was "a man after God's own heart," he was still subject to God through the prophet Nathan. He also was himself a prophet, so God could speak to him directly as a prophet concerning his kingly duties. And so it continued through Israel's history. God sent them prophets to direct them, warn them, and often be killed by them. But God never dropped the reins of government. Also, whatever authority Satan had was limited by the will of God. He was only permitted to do such things as fitted in with the plans and purposes of God, as in the case of Job.

When Satan is spoken of as "the god of this world" (2 Cor. 4:4), it is well to define his territory. The "world" over which he is "god" and "prince" (John 14:30), is that number of moral intelligences willingly submitted to his sway. The "world" of Satan's dominion consists of that part of mankind organizing its life apart from God, thus leaving itself vulnerable to Satan's manipulation.

From the time of Adam's forfeiture

of authority, God began to speak of another Man who would be the woman's "seed" (Gen 3:15), and who would assume the sovereignty lost through disobedience. Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, "filled with the Holy Ghost, prophesied," saying, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David; as *he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets*, which have been *since the world began*" (Luke 1:67-70).

We cannot deal with all the prophetic references to the coming of the new Ruler. However, three things are declared about Him from the human standpoint. He would be a man as was Adam, thus a member of the human race (Luke 3:38). He would be Abraham's "seed," blessing the world with redemption from sin (Heb.2:16). He would be David's "seed," restoring the lost royalty to man according to God's purpose (Matt. 1:1). And from the divine side, He would be no less a person than God's Son (Luke 1:32).

CHRIST'S LORDSHIP

Since it is our purpose to consider the scope of Christ's lordship, we will confine ourselves to some of those passages which deal with His rulership, emphasizing two points. First, He was to be God's Son, and second, He was to be of "the seed of David." We will look at three Psalms which establish the character of the coming One as God's Son, Psalm 2, 45 and 110.

To David, in Psalm 2, are revealed the declarations of God and His Son, concerning rulership of the earth. The first three verses describe mankind in rebellion against God and His anointed King. Then comes the response of God, followed by the Son's report of His Father's "decree."

He who sits in the heavens laughs, The Lord scoffs at them. Then He will speak to them in His anger And terrify them in His fury: "But as for me, I have installed My King upon Zion, My holy mountain."

"I will surely tell of *the decree of the Lord*: He said to Me, 'Thou art My Son, Today I have begotten Thee. Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Thy inheritance, and the very ends of the earth as Thy possession'" (Psa. 2:4-8 NAS).

The fact and scope of Christ's lordship are here clearly delineated. God will install His King in the midst of the nations, and "decree" that His Son-King shall have the earth with all its inhabitants as His rightful "possession." The early Christians understood this Psalm to apply to God's installation of Christ as King at His resurrection, and appealed in prayer to God to confirm His promise in the Psalm, and establish Christ's lordship, through granting success to the preaching of the Gospel (Acts 4:24-33). For them the Psalm was fulfilled in the enthroning of the King, and was being fulfilled in His moving out to conquer the nations through the Gospel.

The relevant passage in Psalm 45 is quoted and interpreted for us by the writer to the Hebrews. The inspired interpretation leaves no doubt who the Psalmist is referring to or the time of this One's reign. Hebrews 1 tells us how God spoke "in *time past* unto the fathers by the prophets," but *now*, "hath in these *last days* spoken unto us by His Son" (Heb. 1:1,2). He then proceeds to speak of the absolute supremacy of the Son over all things and creatures, including angels who are servants and not sovereigns, as is the Son. But let us put the two scriptures together.

Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever; A scepter of uprightness is the scepter of Thy kingdom (Psa. 45:6 NAS).

But of *the Son* He says; "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever, And the righteous scepter is the scepter of His Kingdom (Heb. 1:8 NAS).

God's Son is the One spoken of by the Psalmist, and He is the One according to Hebrews who has a "throne," a "scepter," and a "Kingdom."

Psalm 110 is the most frequently

quoted Psalm in the New Testament. When Jesus used the Psalm to counteract the wrong teaching of the scribes, He made it clear that David had spoken of Him by divine inspiration, saying, "For David himself said *by the Holy Ghost*" (Mark 12:36). By inspiration of the Holy Spirit, David was permitted to hear the word of the Lord to One whom David called "my Lord." This One of course was Jesus Christ, David's Lord, and the Lord of all who have bowed the knee to Him in total surrender. Let us hear the Holy Spirit speaking through David.

The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at My right hand, Until I make Thine enemies a footstool for Thy feet." The Lord will stretch forth Thy strong scepter from Zion, saying "*Rule* in the midst of Thine enemies." (Ps. 110:1-2 NAS).

Thus we clearly see that the "last Adam" who would assume the sovereignty over the earth is God's Son.

The second point is, that earth's ultimate Ruler was to be of "David's seed." God had promised David that He would build him a "house," telling him that "your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever" (2 Sam. 7:16). This pledge is incorporated in two Psalms.

"I have made a covenant with My chosen; I have sworn to *David My servant*, I will establish *your seed forever*, And build up your *throne* to all generations" (Psa. 89:3,4 NAS).

The Lord has sworn to *David*, A truth from which He will not turn back; "*Of the fruit of your body I will set upon your throne*" (Psa. 132:11 NAS).

Does the Word of God tell us when this promise to David was fulfilled? Turning to Acts 2, we listen to Peter giving a Spirit-inspired explanation of the happenings on the day of Pentecost. Commencing at verse 22, Peter gives a brief but graphic statement covering the life of Jesus through to His resurrection from the dead. Then at verse 25 he speaks of a Psalm of

David, (Psa. 16:8-11), which Peter declares, "David says of *him*." He then goes on to quote the last four verses of the Psalm in which David states a promise of God. "Thou wilt not abandon my soul to Hades, nor allow Thy Holy One to undergo decay" (vs. 27). Peter has already assured his audience that David was speaking of *Him*, the Lord Jesus Christ. However, he patiently points out, that this could not be said of David, since David "both died, and was buried, and the tomb is with us to this day" (vs. 29). David could not have been speaking of himself. Peter then gives us the Spirit's interpretation of the Psalm.

And so, because he [David] was a prophet, and knew that God had sworn to him with an oath to seat one of his descendants upon *his throne*, he looked ahead and *spoke of the resurrection of the Christ*, that He was neither abandoned to Hades, nor did His flesh suffer decay. This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses. Therefore *having been exalted to the right hand of God*, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which ye both see and hear. For *it was not David who ascended into heaven*, but he himself says: "The LORD said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, Until I make Thine enemies a footstool for Thy feet'" (Acts 2:30-35 NAS).

The "decree" of God in Psalm 2, to "install His King" was fulfilled at the time of Christ's resurrection and ascension. The "throne" of Psalm 45 was occupied by "the Son" whom we now "see *crowned* with glory and honor" (Heb. 1:8; 2:9). And Peter, quoting Psalm 110, assures us that the King-Priest is now seated "at God's right hand."

Paul says the same thing in his first recorded sermon delivered at Antioch in Pisidia. Making reference to the second Psalm, he says:

And we declare unto you the glad tidings, how that *the promise which was made unto the fathers*, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that *He hath*

raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee (Acts 13:32,33).

Then let us hear the words of Him who is "the true witness," even our Lord Jesus. Addressing the Father in the prayer recorded in John 17, He acknowledges that the Father had given "Him *authority over all mankind*" (vs. 2 NAS). Another rendering reads, "For thou hast made him *sovereign over all mankind*" (NEB).

Hear Him again after the resurrection as He speaks to His disciples, saying, "*All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth*" (Matt. 28:18 NAS). In the light of His "*all authority* in heaven and *on earth*," He issues a commission which is possible of fulfilment. "Go *therefore* and make disciples of *all nations*" (vs. 19 NAS). It is only as we apprehend the scope of His lordship over the earth, that we can with genuine faith and God-inspired confidence expect to "make disciples of all nations."

It was the Spirit-imparted knowledge that Jesus Christ was "Lord of all" (Acts 10:36) that fired the first Christians to invade cities, provinces, and nations with the Gospel. Their Lord had "*all authority . . . in heaven and on earth*," and He had delegated them to affirm and establish that authority "in all the world" (Mark 16:15), by word and by deed.

The universal lordship of Christ is not just a doctrine to which we give mental assent, but the basis of all sound Christian conduct, personal and corporate. Could it be, that we as individual Christians, and as the redeemed community, have lost sight of the significance and purpose of Christ's lordship? If so, would this not account for our devastating disunity and debilitated discipleship?

Let the conquering cry of the first Christians, who "turned the world upside down" (Acts 17:6), be heard again as the unanimous affirmation and commitment of the people of God, until the world hears and sees and knows that "*Jesus Christ is Lord!*"