

A LIVING LORD

THE LIFE OF DAVID IN THE PSALMS #17

I read a true story some time ago about a young boy named Johnny. Johnny was an elementary aged student with a terminal illness. His disease made it difficult for him to understand school assignments. But his teacher and fellow classmates realized that it was best for Johnny to live as normal a life as he could for as long as he could so they just overlooked Johnny's miscues in class.

It was during the Easter season that his teacher got an idea of a way to affirm each of the students in her classroom. She instructed them to bring in an empty Legg's pantyhose container which, of course, is in the shape of an Easter egg. Each student was to put something inside of the egg that reminded them of Easter or life. She then planned to take each Egg in turn, open it and make some positive comments about what was contained inside, affirming each of her students. As she opened egg after egg and saw the faces of her students brighten up, the instructor knew that this had been a worthy project and she made a mental note to do it again in future years. But then she came to Johnny's egg. When she opened it up, she found it to be empty. Assuming that Johnny had not understood the assignment and not wanting to embarrass him publicly, she just continued on to the next egg until she had finished with the entire class. But she was unable to move on to the next project on the lesson plan gracefully because Johnny raised his hand. *Teacher, you didn't share my egg, Johnny protested. I know, Johnny, and I'm sorry. But evidently you didn't understand the assignment - you were supposed to put something in the egg that reminds you of life or Easter.*

I know, continued Johnny. When the women came to Jesus' tomb on Sunday morning, it was empty. That's really what life is all about, isn't it? Because his grave was empty, we know that we can live again after we die.

Only then did the teacher realize that in his simplicity Johnny had captured the Easter message more than any other student had. It was just a few weeks later that his fellow students noticed Johnny's desk was empty. Johnny had gone to the hospital. Within a few days, he had passed away. But as friends of the family visited the funeral home to pay their respects, they noticed something that was most unusual. In Johnny's little casket, his classmates had placed 27 empty Legg's pantyhose eggs. Johnny's testimony had come through loud and clear.

There is no symbol that more completely sums up the meaning of this life than that empty tomb that those first ladies and then John and Peter found in the garden. For the easiest way to distort this life and make it lose all of its meaning is to make this life an end in itself. Anyone who lives totally for this earthly life finds it to be empty and void of true significance. For there is no pleasure or luxury that this world can offer that can bring lasting satisfaction. No, one of the paradoxes of this life is found in the fact that a person only finds the true meaning of life as he realizes that this life has been designed to prepare one for an eternal life to follow. This life is the trial run; this life is the dress rehearsal - the real life, the feature presentation comes only after we die.

We see this truth pictured in the Living Lord that we worship. The quality of the life of Jesus on this earth was mediocre at best and downright miserable at worst. Yes, it is true that Christ's life had its enjoyable moments. He built some

lasting relationships with his disciples and had some good times of fellowship with them. But when one compares that to the poverty in which he lived and the rejections that he received and the pain and torture that he suffered, I don't think any of us would choose to live that kind of life if we had the choice. But the glorious truth of the overall picture is that the Lord Jesus Christ really began to live when he died. For it was his resurrection from the dead that ushered him into fullness of life once again.

We have been looking at the Life of David from the Psalms that he wrote. We have seen the growth of David's life and the many lessons that he learned.

* We began by looking at the Shepherd's Psalm as we reflected on lessons that David learned as a young boy tending his father's flock. David learned to rely upon the Lord for all his physical and emotional and spiritual needs in life, his anxieties and fears in life, and learned to hope in the Lord for his future while just a young lad tending his father's sheep. He reflects this in Psalm 23 that he authored.

*We then looked at many lessons that David learned during that period of life when he was running for his life from Saul. He learned that God was still in control and that he would protect and defend him from Psalm 11. He learned not to be fooled by opportunistic people from the treachery of Doeg and Edomite in Psalm 52. He learned to trust in God and even praise him while he was hiding in caves even when people were slandering him and spreading all kinds of lies about him from Psalm 57. He learned not to put his confidence and trust in people even after he had delivered them from the situation in Ziph from Psalm 54. He learned

patience in waiting upon the Lord even though the Lord seemed to be so long in answering his prayers as we saw in Psalm 13. He learned to see God's presence even in suffering as we saw in Psalm 22. It was during this very difficult decade of David's life that he learned so many valuable lessons that helped to prepare him to be such a successful king.

* And then we looked at some of the Psalms that David wrote after he had ascended to the throne. These were much more positive in nature reflecting how David's fortunes had now turned. We saw David's character and humility as king from Psalm 18. We heard David speak of the pathway to life and how he had discovered the intimate relationship with God that allowed him to be called a "man after God's own heart" from Psalm 16. We saw David's healthy self-image and self-esteem reflected in Psalm 8. And we saw how that even though he was so successful on the battlefield, that David did not trust in chariots or horses, but he rather trusted in the Lord for his victories in Psalm 20. We saw how that David did not heap the glory on to himself, but rather reflected that glory to God, the King of Glory in Psalm 24.

*But then we saw a deep valley that David went through when he committed that heinous sin with Bathsheba and how he sought and accepted God's forgiveness for his sins reflected in Psalm 51.

*And then we saw some of the consequences of that sin when Absalom tried to usurp the throne from him and how he dealt with the fear and stress that came from this dangerous coup in Psalms 3 & 4.

*Then we saw that one of the great strengths that David manifested

throughout his life was his attitude of gratitude that allowed him to generally be thankful to God throughout the majority of his life in Psalm 103.

Now this evening, we want to conclude our series by looking at Psalm 110. Let's read this Psalm together.

PS 110:1 The LORD says to my Lord:

"Sit at my right hand
until I make your enemies
a footstool for your feet."

PS 110:2 The LORD will extend your mighty scepter from Zion;
you will rule in the midst of your enemies.

PS 110:3 Your troops will be willing
on your day of battle.
Arrayed in holy majesty,
from the womb of the dawn
you will receive the dew of your youth.

PS 110:4 The LORD has sworn
and will not change his mind:
"You are a priest forever,
in the order of Melchizedek."

PS 110:5 The Lord is at your right hand;
he will crush kings on the day of his wrath.

PS 110:6 He will judge the nations, heaping up the dead
and crushing the rulers of the whole earth.

PS 110:7 He will drink from a brook beside the way;
therefore he will lift up his head.

Psalm 110 speaks of the relationship that David had with the Living God. In this Psalm, David speaks prophetically of 3 glorious ministries that the Lord Jesus Christ has as our Risen Savior.

We know beyond a shadow of a doubt that David is writing this Psalm prophetically of the Lord Jesus because he begins by saying, *The LORD says to my Lord*: Now there are 2 different Hebrew words that are used here for Lord. The first, Jehovah or Yahweh, is the most sacred term for God in the O.T. There can be no question that David is referring to Almighty God when he first says Lord. The second, adonai, literally means master or owner. It is also a common term for deity in the O.T., but it is also used at times of human beings who were in a position of power. But we know that David could not be using this term of a mere human because David was now King as he wrote these words. There wasn't any human being who could be called his lord, his master. So it is obvious that David is speaking in a prophetic sense of his divine owner, his creator, the Lord Jesus Christ who would come to earth as God's Messiah. If we would have need of any confirmation that this Psalm is prophetic, the Lord Jesus himself gave that when he used this very passage in reference to himself confounding the wisest Rabbis of his day as recorded in each of the synoptic gospels (Matt. 22; Mk. 12; Luke 20). So there can be no question that in writing this Psalm, David is looking forward to the coming of the Messiah.

Now there are 3 pictures of the Living Lord that are presented in this Psalm. And each of these was so significant in the life of King David.

3 PICTURES OF THE LIVING LORD FOUND IN PSALM 110:

1. The first picture is THE VICTORIOUS WARRIOR - VS. 1-3

The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet." ² The LORD will extend your mighty scepter from Zion; you will rule in the midst of your enemies. ³ Your troops will be willing on your day of battle. Arrayed in holy majesty, from the womb of the dawn you will receive the dew of your youth.

Now there is certainly a sense in which these verses were fulfilled in the life of David. For God's plan was to give King David a great and mighty kingdom. God's plan was for David to exercise control over most of the countries of the Middle East by the end of his reign. In fact, Israel never had before David, nor has it ever had again, the dominance that it enjoyed during the reign of David. From Egypt in the south to Syria in the north, from the Mediterranean Sea on the West past the lands of Moab and Edom and Ammon to the east of the Jordan River, all of this area was controlled by King David by the end of his reign. David was certainly a great military leader. There is not a battle recorded in the bible where David was the loser.

But in studying this Psalm, we must realize that its ultimate fulfillment comes with God's Messiah. And we know that this picture of the victorious warrior is fulfilled after Christ's resurrection for Jesus did not come to be a conquering king the first time, but he rather came as the suffering servant. Christ did not attempt a coup of the Roman government; he did not try to organize zealots into a united force; he did not stir up the people with revolutionary speeches. Rather he presented God's truths of personal peace; he taught that the kingdom of God was

within a person; he told his followers that in order to be great, they must be servants to all.

In fact, the Lord Jesus looked anything but the conquering victor as he was hanging helplessly upon Calvary's cross. It appeared that God's enemy had finally gained the victory. The forces of evil were celebrating during that time when darkness covered the earth.

But those days of rejoicing for God's enemy were shortlived. For when the Lord Jesus rose in triumph from the grave, another chapter had been written in God's redemptive book. Before, the frail body of Jesus had succumbed to death, but now the resurrected body of Christ had gained victory over the grave. Before, nails driven by Roman soldiers held Jesus' body to that wooden cross, but now the resurrected body of Christ could move from place to place instantaneously and walk through doors and walls. Before, Jesus was subject to the cruel whims of his creatures, but now the resurrected Christ had become the firstfruits of all creation.

There is an ancient Greek legend which illustrates the victory of the Lord Jesus Christ. The young son of the king of Troy named Paris had kidnapped Helen, the beautiful wife of the Menelaus, the king of Sparta. Of course, Menelaus' honor had been defiled and he missed the companionship of his wife. So, the Spartan king joined together all of the forces that he could muster to attack the city of Troy, to rescue his wife Helen. For 10 years the armies of Sparta continued to siege the city of Troy but to no avail. Troy was just too strong and powerful to be taken. Finally, the Greek hero, Ulysses, thought of a way to gain entrance into the city. He had the Spartan soldiers construct a large, hollow horse.

When it was completed, as many Greek soldiers as could fit were sealed inside the horses belly. Then the remaining Greek soldiers boarded their ships and sailed around the corner of the peninsula, out of sight.

The citizens of Troy were baffled by this change in strategy at first. After 10 years of steady siege, they didn't know what to make of the abrupt departure of the Spartan soldiers and this huge, wooden horse. But they finally decided that the Greek soldiers had given up their fight and returned to their native land. And that they had left this horse as an offering to the goddess, Athena, so that they might have safety on their returning trip. Not wanting to risk the disfavor of Athena, Paris lead his men to wheel the Trojan Horse into the walls of the city. And then the Trojans began to party - their victory had finally been secured.

Little did they know that while they were getting themselves into a drunken stupor, the Greek ships were turning around and returning to the Trojan harbor. And in the night, the secluded soldiers inside the horses belly opened a secret trap door, dropped to the ground and opened the gates of the city to a waiting army of Spartan soldiers. In one night, the Spartan army was able to accomplish what they hadn't been able to do for a decade. The city of Troy was defeated, burned to the ground and queen Helen was rescued and taken back to Sparta.

As the Lord Jesus Christ hung upon that Roman cross of Execution, the Devil thought that he had finally won the victory. He had captured the minds and hearts of the creatures that God had created for fellowship and now he thought that he would have them forever. We can only imagine the celebration that was going on in the spiritual realms of darkness as the Son of God was being put to death.

But just when Satan thought that he had gained the final victory, the Lord Jesus Christ suddenly rose from the dead with divine power. He rose to free his people from spiritual bondage. He lead captivity captive the Bible says. In one, dramatic event, Satan realized that he had been defeated forever.

There is coming a day when the Lord Jesus Christ will return as the conquering victor. He was appear in the skies riding his white horse with all of the heavenly armies at his side according to Revelation 19. There will be a great battle on that day - the battle that we call Armageddon. But the outcome of that battle is already assured. It was assured by the events that took place at the end of Christ's first coming. For when Jesus died on the cross and rose from the grave, Satan was defeated finally and forever.

2. But let's move now to a second picture of the Living Lord that we find in this Psalm - THE CONTINUING PRIEST - VS. 4

⁴ The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind: "You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek." Now as King, David didn't actually function as a priest offering sacrifices, but he did represent his people before God like a priest would. And David was the one who initiated bringing the ark of the covenant back to its rightful place. But it is clear in the this Psalm that David was again writing prophetically for he speaks of this obscure priest named Melchizedek.

The priest was the person in the O.T. who represented the people to God. Now the priests for the nation of Israel were those that came from the tribe of Levi. And the high priest was always the direct descendent from Aaron. Each priest performed his ministry for the people and then he died, leaving his function

to the next generation to carry on.

But there was another priest who mysteriously appeared long before Aaron was even born or Moses wrote out the ceremonial functions in the law. His name was Melchizedek. He was priest for God in the city of Peace, Salem, we would know it as Jerusalem. Almost nothing is known about this man, Melchizedek. He suddenly appears in Genesis 14:

(GE 14:17 After Abram returned from defeating Kedorlaomer and the kings allied with him, the king of Sodom came out to meet him in the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley).

GE 14:18 Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High, ¹⁹ and he blessed Abram, saying, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth.

GE 14:20 And blessed be God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand." Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything.)

Melchizedek blesses Abraham upon his return from victorious battle, receives tithes from the patriarch, and then disappears back into the obscurity of anonymity. No date of birth or account of death is given for Melchizedek. No genealogies or ancestries are given of him. Because of his sudden and mysterious appearance, some theologians feel that Melchizedek was actually an appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ himself in a pre-incarnate form. We can't be dogmatic about this - we just don't have enough information. But we do know that Melchizedek becomes an important figure for he pictures the priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ in contrast to Aaron's priesthood. For Jesus was a priest after the order of

Melchizedek, not after the order of Aaron.

The author of Hebrews takes several chapters to develop the significance of the Messiah's priesthood. Aaron, and the priests who followed him were mere men who were born, lived and died. Be not having any record of his birth or death, Melchizedek becomes a symbol of one who is eternal, who never will die. Aaron, and the priests who followed him had to first offer sacrifices for their own sins before they interceded on the behalf of others. There is no record of Melchizedek offering any sacrifices for himself, nor did Jesus offer a sacrifice for himself because he was the sinless lamb of God - Christ's sacrifice was for others. Aaron, and the priests who followed him had to continuously offer sacrifices year after year proving that the sacrifices themselves were not sufficient to fully pay for sins. But the Lord Jesus Christ after the order of Melchizedek offered one sacrifice - himself - and this was sufficient to totally pay for sin.

Now the beautiful truth that David brings out in this Psalm is that Jesus being a priest after the order of Melchizedek continues in that priestly ministry forever. The sacrifice has been paid once for all. When the Lord Jesus Christ said *It is finished* from the cross, our sins were paid in full. But even now, seated at the right hand of God, the Lord Jesus continues the intercessory ministry of a priest on our behalf. The author of Hebrews wrote these words which bring such strength and comfort to our hearts: *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are - yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our*

time of need. Heb. 4:15,16.

Because the Lord Jesus Christ is the Living Lord, we will never have a need for another priest again. We will also have one to intercede on our behalf before God the Father. For Jesus Christ is a priest forever - he is an everliving priest.

3. There is a 3rd picture that we want to look at as well. The Lord Jesus Christ as the living Lord is not only a victorious warrior and an eternal priest, but he is also THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGE - Verse 6 says, *He will judge the nations.*

Part of David's job as king was to rule and provide an example of justice for his people. But he recognized that there was another ruler and judge whom he answered to, one who was far more powerful than he. One of the most important truths that is taught in the Scriptures is the fact that one day every, single person will stand before the Lord Jesus Christ and give an account of his or her life. Jesus Christ is the creator of all things - by him were all things created Col. 1:16 says. Jesus Christ is the sustainer of all things - by his powerful word all things are presently being held together Heb. 1:3 says. So everything that exists is accountable to the creator and sustainer. And the Bible says that one day everyone will stand before the righteous judge to give an account of his or her life. *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad. 2 Cor. 5:10.*

A judgment seat can be a place of excited anticipation or dreaded terror depending upon what is expected to be received. The Olympic athlete who has won his or her event can't wait to get to the judgment seat so that the gold medal

might be received. But the student who is sent down to the principal's office because of misbehavior walks that long hallway with fearful anticipation.

God has given to us all that we need to be prepared to come to the judgment seat of Christ with excited anticipation. God sent his one and only son into the world to pay the penalty for our sins. God promises to make all of those who confess their sins and receive his forgiveness through the Lord Jesus Christ members of his own divine family. So for those who are children of God, to come before the judgment seat of Christ will be to be welcomed home - to be finally at home in heaven with God for all eternity. And we have this confidence and assurance because we worship a living Lord.