

King of kings

A message delivered to
MAYER COMMUNITY CHURCH
February 21, 1999

TITLE: King of kings

TEXT: 1 Timothy 6:15

THEME: Jesus as King

THRUST: If He is the King, where is His honor?

INTRODUCTION:

We talked last week about Love being an attribute
of the character of God. *God is love....*

We came to understand that His purpose
is to reflect that aspect of His character through us;
and, He does that by the Holy Spirit.

The fruit of the Spirit is Love.

We also came to understand that we, in and of ourselves,
can *never* produce that, nor any other portion
of His character.

Any and all attempts end in dismal failure
and gross caricature.

Since God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit
are one in essence and glory,

then that which is true of the Father's character
is also true of the Son's character

and true too of the character of the Holy Spirit.

God is love ...

God the Father is love,
God the Son is love,
God the Holy Spirit is love.

God is light, in Him dwells no darkness at all....

God the Father is light — no darkness.
God the Son is light — no darkness.
God the Holy Spirit is light — no darkness.

When it comes to their character,
they are co-equal.

Here is where we become easily confused.

While they have the same attributes,
they are *not* the same persons.

There is a distinctiveness in their person.

God the Father is *not* the Son.

God the Son does *not* pray to Himself.

He prayed to the Father,
in the direction and power of the Holy Spirit.

The Father heard His prayer and answered.

Distinctiveness in their person.

When Jesus walked this earth as a human being

He had a specific job to do — reveal God to man;
and, redeem man for God.

Philippians tells us that when redemption was secured,
that God exalted Him and gave Him a name above all names.

Revelation tells us that one of His names is:

King of kings!

We opened our service this morning with a fast-paced song
by Bill Gaither called *Get all Excited ...*

and the reason for that excitement is because
Jesus is *still* the King of kings!

There are several other references to this title apart from Jesus

One is found in Ezek 26:7 and another in Dan 2:37;
both are referring to Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon.

The only other reference is in Ezra 7:12

and refers to Artaxerxes, the king of Persia

Artaxerxes came to power shortly after Cyrus the Great.

Cyrus the Great was the Persian king

who decreed that the captives could return to Jerusalem.

These O.T. references to a human king being king of kings

are statements of the encompassing power of a kingdom.

“The phrase “king of kings” was originally used by Assyrian kings, since their empires incorporated many kingdoms. It was then used by the later Babylonian and Persian kings.”

In Ezra especially, the context surrounding

the use of this title is of great significance.

Artaxerxes I was writing a letter to Ezra, the scribe,

He starts it this way:

“Artaxerxes, king of kings, to Ezra the priest, a teacher of the Law of the God of heaven: Greetings.”

The next section of this letter gives instructions concerning

underwriting an expedition to Jerusalem

to institute the Law of God as the law of the land.

To more fully appreciate this,

picture Sadaam issuing a law

that would require his countrymen to support

financially and in any other way needed

the establishment of God’s Law in Israel.

In the enormity of the awesome thing that God is doing

in and through this pagan king,

something seemingly insignificant is in danger of being lost!

“Artaxerxes, king of kings”.

What is so special about this?

During the course of human history,

man has from time to time assumed the position

of absolute authority over their fellow man.

Nebuchadnezzar had such power.

Artaxerxes I had such power.

This power was theirs not only because they took it,
but because the rest of humanity submitted to it.
That is why it was such an affront to Nebuchadnezzar

when the three young men from Judah
refused to bow down and worship the image
that the “king of kings” Nebuchadnezzar had built.

That is why it was such an affront to Darius the Mead,
when Daniel the Prophet refused the command of *that* king
to cease his thrice daily ritual of praying
to the God of heaven — the true King of kings!

Of special significance in these passages
is that these “kings of kings” themselves came to recognize
that their power, their authority was relatively insignificant
when compared to the power and authority
of the God of Heaven.

When Artaxerxes I made his proclamation concerning
the establishment of God’s Law in Jerusalem,
his whole kingdom was expected to come into compliance.

v.21 Now I, King Artaxerxes, order all the treasurers of Trans-Euphrates to provide with diligence¹ whatever
Ezra the priest, a teacher of the Law of the God of heaven, may ask of you ... ²³ Whatever the God of heaven
has prescribed, let it be done with diligence² for the temple of the God of heaven.

¹ speedily: i.e. in a timely fashion

“When I tell you to jump — jump!”

² carefully: i.e. with attention to detail!

“When I tell you to jump, if you have a question as to how high I want you to jump, ask it on the way
up!”

To defy the authority of these kings
was to invite immediate sentence of death.

To dilute the authority of these kings
was to invite immediate sentence of death.

Ezra got: silver, wheat, wine, olive oil, salt,
and whatever else he needed.

Why? Because it was so decreed by a king of kings.

A pagan king of kings who recognized the supreme authority
of the God of heaven!

There is a distinction in scripture between
kings of the caliber of Nebuchadnezzar and Artaxerxes
and that of Jesus. That distinction is found in 1 Tim 6:15.

“... God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords....”

Not a *king of kings*, but, ***the King of kings and Lord of lords!***

Now, if an earthly, pagan “king of kings”
commands the respect, and immediate response
from earthly and pagan subjects,
Should not we, those who have been redeemed,

speedily and carefully comply with the Commands
of **the King of Kings?**

In fact, in this passage of scripture from 1 Timothy,

Paul is instructing Timothy to keep the commandment:

“¹³ I charge you ¹⁴ to keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which God will bring about in His own time — God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords....”

What *command* is Paul referring to?

“¹¹ But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. ¹² Fight the good fight of faith. Take hold of eternal life to which you were called....”

Does it not stand to reason,

that we should *flee* from the “love of money”
speedily and carefully?

Shouldn't we pursue:

righteousness in a timely fashion and with attention to detail?

godliness in a timely fashion and with attention to detail?

faith in a timely fashion and with attention to detail?

love in a timely fashion and with attention to detail?

endurance in a timely fashion and with attention to detail?

gentleness in a timely fashion and with attention to detail?

Shouldn't we “fight the good fight”

in a timely fashion and with attention to detail?

Shouldn't we “Take hold of eternal life

to which (we) were called”

in a timely fashion and with attention to detail?

The rest of the world may not be as quick

as Nebuchadnezzar and Artaxerxes to recognize

the power and position of the God of heaven;

but, we as His people *must* acknowledge

not only His person, but His position

as the King of kings and Lord of lords.

We *must* give Him honor and glory!

How?

By obeying Him in a timely fashion

and with attention to detail!

CONCLUSION: Hymn #