

Let Earth Receive Her King

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[0 : 0 0] So let me begin with a bit of an odd question. When was the last time that any of you celebrated imperialism? I mean, that's obviously...

It's a bit of a dirty word now, isn't it? Imperialism. That wasn't the case a hundred years ago. Imperialism, well, a hundred years ago with World War I, sort of brought a bit of an end to that.

But before that time, imperialism was absolutely in fashion. European powers, they were on the tail end of these great imperial projects of colonization, which they're acquiring, they're dividing up, they're exploiting lands and peoples all over the rest of the world.

And back then, imperialism was celebrated. The focus was on here is all the good things that imperialism is bringing to the empires of Europe.

And now when we look back, we see that, in fact, there was a huge, huge dark side to that, a lot of injustice and negative effects of extending a country's empire through colonization, through military force, through economic might.

[1 : 1 1] Now, did you know that each and every person in this room is guilty of celebrating imperialism? And I know this for sure because we have one day in our calendar that's devoted entirely to celebrating the expanding of an empire.

There is a day in which we celebrate a sovereign ruler who is claiming the world for himself. And the most imperialistic day in our calendar is, in fact, Christmas Day.

It's imperialism of a good sort. Christmas Day is a day in which we sing together, let earth receive her king. And that's the theme of several songs that are written in the Bible in the book of Psalms.

And this morning, we're going to learn from Psalm 96 about what kind of king we have, about what kind of king has made his advent, has come, has arrived to extend his empire over all of the earth.

That's what we'll be looking at today in Psalm 96, learning who is this king, what has he come to do. And then tonight at our candlelight service, we'll be flipping over a couple of psalms to Psalm 98 and seeing what our proper response to this king is, what our proper response to his kingdom, his empire is.

[2 : 3 0] So let's look at Psalm 96 first. So if you're using one of the blue Bibles that our ushers handed out, Psalm 96 is on page 499. And here are the words of Psalm 96.

Oh, sing to the Lord a new song. Sing to the Lord, all the earth. Sing to the Lord. Bless his name. Tell of his salvation from day to day.

Declare his glory among the nations. His marvelous works among all the peoples. For great is the Lord and greatly to be praised. He is to be feared above all gods.

For all the gods of the peoples are worthless idols. But the Lord made the heavens. Splendor and majesty are before him. Strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.

Ascribe to the Lord, oh families of the peoples. Ascribe to the Lord, glory and strength. Ascribe to the Lord, the glory do his name.

- [3 : 35] Bring an offering and come into his courts. Worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness. Tremble before him, all the earth. Say among the nations, the Lord reigns.
- Yes, the world is established. It shall never be moved. He will judge the peoples with equity. Let the heavens be glad and let the earth rejoice.
- Let the sea roar and all that fills it. Let the field exult and everything in it. Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy before the Lord.
- For he comes, for he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in his faithfulness. This is the word of the Lord.
- Now the irony isn't lost on me. That not only is the psalmist, he's calling you and me. He's calling us to join him in celebrating an empire.
- [4 : 35] Not only is he doing that, even in an anti-imperial age. But the psalmist is calling us to celebrate an empire when the latest Star Wars movie is reminding us that empires are bad and evil.
- And we shouldn't like them. Resistance against the empire, resistance against the imperial order. That's seen as a good thing in our culture. So this idea that the Lord is coming to judge the earth, as the psalmist says, that we should respond to that judgment with worship.
- That's going to rub the average Canadian the wrong way. Psalm 96, it describes the Lord God as the rightful ruler of the whole world.
- It describes the empire, the kingdom of the Lord, as one that is going to take over the governance of the world. It's going to replace our present government systems.
- We're going to be reading a scripture tonight that says about God's coming king, the government will be upon his shoulders. That he will have ruling authority over the earth. It describes the kingdom that will bring enlightenment to a backwards society, that will elevate the living standards of this society.
- [5 : 47] So rather than, you know, integrating itself into our own government way of life, rather than just trying to fit into a pre-existing system, God's kingdom demands that we submit to his way of life.
- We submit to his way of life. He doesn't fit into the nooks and crannies of our culture. He doesn't fit into the nooks and crannies of our own life. He takes over. He is a singular authority. And that is not a popular message.
- People don't like being told what to do. I know I don't like being told what to do. At some point, people rise up and resist this. And so every empire in history has always crumbled, has always faded away.
- From Assyria to Babylon to Persia to Greece to Rome to Mongolia to Britain to the Soviet Union. And the American empire is going to dissolve away as well.
- The rest of the world always rejoices to see empires fall. Because it associates empire with arrogance. And not without reason.
- [6 : 49] No human being is worthy of all the honor and glory and praise. No human being is worthy to retain complete sovereign control over the whole world.
- But if you're a genuine Christian, if you're someone who confesses Jesus Christ as Lord, this psalm that tells of a coming king is something that makes you want to say, Amen.
- Amen. Because the words of Psalm 96, they aren't words of arrogance. They are words of good news. They are words of justice.
- The good news that the Lord is coming to judge the earth and set up his righteous reign. They are good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Jesus Christ has come to be the king.

Jesus Christ has come to be the king. And that is the good news of Christmas Day. That is the good news of a good empire.

[7 : 53] The kingdom of God. And we're going to uncover in Psalm 96 four attributes of the great king. Four attributes of the great king, Jesus Christ. And the first attribute of our king is found in verses one through three.

Oh, sing to the Lord a new song. Sing to the Lord all the earth. Sing to the Lord. Bless his name. Tell of his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the nations.

His marvelous works among all the peoples. So here, the servants of this great king. They can't help talking about him.

They sing. They write songs. They bless or affirm his name as good. They tell him. They tell how he has saved them day after day. They love to talk about him.

And I've yet to meet a person, no matter how quiet a person is, that if you just find the one thing that they love, they will just not stop talking. Right?

[8 : 56] Some of you just love a lot of things and you just, you never stop talking. Right? But there's some things, even really quiet people I've noticed, once you just find that one thing that they are really passionate and excited about, they just go on and on and on and on and on and on.

And that's how the servants of the king are. They love their king. They love to talk about him. And this psalm tells us in verse 3 where you and I are to talk about him and where we're to do that.

Not just inside of our homes. Not just inside, not just in the one hour on Sunday mornings when we're here. Among the nations.

Among all the peoples. Everywhere. Now why would we do that? Why not just keep it to ourselves here in this building?

Why not keep it to ourselves here where we're safe to talk about Jesus? Why not keep our religion a private matter between God and me? You know, just a me and Jesus Christianity. And why would the Israelites who first heard and sang this psalm, why would they be called, encouraged, spurred on to declare the glory of the Lord among the nations?

[10 : 06] Why would they embrace that mission? Well, the answer is clear. It's because Jesus has come to be the king universal. Jesus has come to be the king universal.

Jesus is not content to have the earth receive her king one day out of the year. Jesus is not content to have you and me receive our king for one and a half hours, one day a week.

Jesus is not content to be just Lord over you and Lord over me. Jesus is Lord over all the earth. Jesus has come to be the king universal.

Now sometimes in Christian circles we lose sight of this truth. Our Christian vocabulary, it includes odd phrases, things that, you know, I sometimes like to call Christianese.

Right? Little Christian vocabulary and expressions. Things like, I invited Jesus to be Lord of my life. Or Jesus is my personal Lord and Savior. And that's personally, and that's perfectly okay.

[11 : 08] Those are expressions that are even quite helpful in a way. To talk about our attitude towards Jesus Christ. We'll come back to those phrases in a moment because we're going to see their value in a bit.

But when the early church would say, Jesus is Lord. Jesus is Lord. They meant Lord over the whole earth. They meant Lord over creation.

It was a defiant statement opposed to the statement, Caesar is Lord. Caesar is not Lord. Jesus is ultimate Lord over all creation. He is Lord.

His kingdom is real. And he is returning. He will return to fully establish it throughout the earth. In verse 13. He comes to judge the earth.

He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in his faithfulness. And so that's why in verse 1, it is all the earth that ought to be singing. A new song.

[12 : 07] A new song as everyone on earth sees the world made new. Because its savior and its lord has arrived. The savior, this lord, he is not content with just a little pocket of the earth.

He insists on being king over all of it. And so the Dutch theologian Abraham Kuyper explains, There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence.

Over which Christ, who is sovereign over all, does not cry, mine. Mine. Every square inch of our world. Every square inch of our lives.

Every thought of ours. Jesus says, that is mine. And so it is that when God the Son came to earth as a baby boy, as the man Jesus Christ.

It was not only the people of Jesus' hometown. It was not only the people of his homeland that came to worship him. In Matthew chapter 2 we read, After Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the king.

[13 : 13] Behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose, and have come to worship him.

So these wise men are coming from distant lands in the east. From far away. And they are coming to worship the baby boy, Who is rightfully their king as well.

They're not coming because he's some sort of king that has nothing to do with them. He's coming because he's their king too. And so this child grew up to be a lowly carpenter from Nazareth, And yet he continued to speak these words that we might think of as aggressive and expansive imperialism.

But these words that he deserved to speak in Matthew chapter 28. All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

And behold, I am with you always to the end of the age. This is the little child, meek and mild, Saying, all authority has been given to me.

[14 : 39] Our Father God, His Son Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, They call us to sing the glory of God, Because our Lord reigns over all the earth. And unlike all those reigns of the imperial tyrants of Babylon and Rome and Europe, The reign of this king is a good reign.

It is a good reign. Jesus Christ has come to be the king universal, And he came to be a good king. But good king or not, we have to ask, What gives Jesus the right to claim the throne of the entire world?

What gives him that right? What makes Jesus worthy of being declared the king universal? What we see in these next few verses, That this heavenly king is very different from any earthly king.

Beginning in verse 4. For great is the Lord, And greatly to be praised. He is to be feared above all gods.

For all the gods of the peoples are worthless idols. But the Lord made the heavens. Splendor and majesty are before him. Strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.

[15 : 50] So what's different about the Lord Jesus is this. He is God. It's wrong for a human being to claim this authority, Because human beings aren't divine.

We don't deserve it. We're not worthy. Jesus is different. He is a man. He is fully 100% human. But he isn't merely a man.

And he isn't merely some sort of superman. He is the one true God. 100% human. 100% God. The mighty sovereign over all the universe.

And so you cannot put Jesus in the same category as a tyrant like a Napoleon or a Stalin. He is the Lord God. Great is the Lord.

And greatly to be praised. Verses like this, they make it clear why we praise the Lord. It isn't because, you know, he's just some sort of whiny childish prince who, Oh, you know, he craves our attention and affection and affirmation.

[16 : 54] And he needs you to worship him. It's because he is great. That's why we praise him. Not to prop up his ego. But because he deserves it.

It's because the Lord is great. It is right. It is appropriate. It is fitting to say great things about him. Once again, when you see someone or something is great, that is great.

When you watch a movie, that's great. When you listen to music, that's great. When you see sights and nature that are great. You talk about them.

You praise them. And so it is with Jesus. It would be wrong not to speak words of praise about him. There's something inappropriate about mere casual labels for the Lord God.

Dismissive labels, like calling him the big guy or the man upstairs, because he is just so much more than those. He is great. The psalmist says that we need to find great things to say about him.

[18 : 01] Things that fit who the Lord is. And not only that, but in verse 4 we also read, he is to be feared above all gods.

Now, that fear, that's something that we studied for several weeks back in May. And fear, that's an appropriate response to the Lord God.

Why? Because fear, the way that that word is used in Scripture, that's a broad term. That covers a wide array of experiences and behaviors. At its core, as you might recall, fear is a visceral gut response that comes from deep inside of us.

And the experience of fear is this inescapable sense that someone or something else is great in power or significance. Someone or something else is great in power and significance.

And I sense it. And I know it's true. And I feel it all the way down in my gut. I fear. So fear is the appropriate response to a God who is great.

[19 : 08] Fear is the appropriate response to the Lord Jesus Christ. But what makes the Lord so great? Well, let's find out. Verse 4.

Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised. He is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the peoples are worthless idols.

But the Lord made the heavens. So the psalmist here, he's drawing a contrast between the one true God, on the one hand, and then on the other hand, the false gods of the nations that are surrounding Israel.

So on the one hand, the Israelites, they could choose to worship the Lord God. So they may choose to worship the Lord God who created the heavens. He formed solar systems, star clusters, galaxies, the whole universe by his command.

The Lord is as far beyond us in power and intelligence as we are beyond a cluster of bacteria coating a petri dish.

[20 : 14] That's one possibility. They could worship that Lord, that God. Or on the other hand, they could choose to worship the little wooden and stone statues of the nations around them. Boy, how impressive is that?

Now that seems incredibly foolish to us, and that's something that the prophets in the Old Testament used to make fun of in very comical ways. The worship of these idols.

To the Israelites living then, who are worshiping these idols, and even to billions of people around the world today, idolatry actually makes a lot of sense. It's still a very common practice. It's really no different than the dynamic in the secular world where we devote our time and energy to other inventions of ours that we think are going to save us, that we look to for power and significance and for help and security.

We fear the power of money. We fear the power of business interests, the power of celebrities, the power of politicians, the power of the state. We think that all these things, they're going to protect us.

They're going to save us. They're going to provide us security. They're going to provide us meaning and significance. We don't consider that all of these things are going to pass away with time.

[21 : 26] They might look impressive. But holding on to all the things that our world values and praises, it's like chaining yourself to the Titanic because the lifeboat looks unsafe.

Don't go down to the ship. It's not going to last. These things are not to be leaned on in times of trouble. It is foolish. It is foolhardy to trust in something that we ourselves as human beings have created, to treat someone or something else as the ultimate source of security, of favor, or of justice.

This is the message of Christmas. Jesus Christ has come to be the king, universal and unrivaled. Jesus Christ has come to be the king, universal and unrivaled.

This is a message that is offensive to our culture because we don't like the idea that the Lord God is an exclusive God. We don't like the idea that he is the only God there is.

That's not a very pluralistic message. That's not a message that's open to religious alternatives. There is one God.

[22 : 39] He accepts no rivals, no gods of other religions, no human institutions. I think that's the value of those expressions. Jesus Christ is my Lord and Savior, Lord of my life.

Because what I'm saying in that is I'm saying any other authorities, any other things, they have their place. But Jesus, as far as I'm concerned, Jesus is supreme overall.

I have conformed my life and my ways of thinking to the way that things really are in this world, that Jesus is Lord.

Jesus Christ has come to be the king, universal and unrivaled. That's always going to be perceived as a threat to those in power, by the way. It always has been from the foundation of the church until now.

That's how it was on the first Christmas. We read about this in Matthew chapter 2. Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem saying, Where is he who has been born king of the Jews?

[23 : 52] For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him. When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled and all Jerusalem with him.

Of course, Herod was troubled. And when the king with authority gets troubled, of course, everybody else gets troubled too. The news of a new king reminds Herod.

His own kingdom is coming to an end. If you're a guy like Herod, deep down you're always uneasy. Because you know that your hour is going to come. Your time will soon be passed.

Your kingdom, your throne will come to an end. I have a friend of mine who's a missionary in France. And he pointed this out in an email newsletter he sent a few days ago.

And here's what my friend Charlie noticed about the mission of the Magi, the wise men. He said, It's all over for Herod.

[25 : 12] And it's all over for Satan, the prince of this world. It's all over for every human authority, every human government in power today. There reign, there authority. It's been granted to them for a time.

It's granted them for a time. They've been given authority that we should honor and respect for a time. But that time is soon coming to an end. Christmas is a reminder that Jesus Christ has come to be the king, universal and unrivaled.

He is to be feared above all gods. And so when you and I fear the Lord, if we really fear the Lord, if we really understand that he is Lord of all, then we fear nothing and no one else.

And we're not shaken up by political developments. We're not shaken up by a world falling apart. We fear the king.

That's why in Isaiah chapter 44, the Lord says, Fear not, nor be afraid. Have I not told you from of old and declared it? And you are my witnesses.

[26 : 20] Is there a God besides me? There is no rock. I know not any. There is no rock. Is there a God besides me? No. There is one God.

He accepts no rivals, no gods of other religions, no human institutions. Any other authority or power is secondary to him, to his ultimate authority. Jesus Christ has come to be the king, universal and unrivaled.

Now, that might seem a little bit threatening if we've grown comfortable in the way this world is going. If we've grown comfortable in the way our lives are going.

We might think that this universal and unrivaled king, that's a king that, you know, maybe we should keep our distance from. But that's not what Psalm 96 calls us to do. It doesn't say, keep your distance from this king.

Here's what we read, beginning in verse seven. Ascribe to the Lord, O families of the peoples, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.

[27 : 22] Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name. Bring an offering and come into his courts. Worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness.

Tremble before him all the earth. So because of the awesome power of this king, because of his great work of salvation, of rescue, how he has delivered us, we are to recognize, we are to joyfully acknowledge his wonderful reputation, his name.

He deserves our praise. And what's amazing is that in these verses, we aren't told to do this, you know, stand at a distance and worship the Lord. Don't come close.

Instead, it says, come, come into his courts. Just as we learned from the book of the Exodus, the Lord invites us into his courtyard. Come, come closer.

And that invitation extends. It didn't extend only to the people of Israel. It extended to the whole world. Tremble before him, all the earth. Come before him. Come, trembling.

[28 : 33] I have a picture in my mind of what that looks like from a few years ago when I was working in the warehouse of a flooring store in Langley. And there was a day when I was, you know, busy unloading a truck.

I was driving a forklift around the warehouse, which is probably one of the most fun things I've done at a job, and possibly destructive, is driving a forklift around. And I noticed that I had an observer because there was a little boy, and he was maybe four or five years old.

And his mother was shopping for rugs, but that little boy's eyes were just glued to the forklift that I was driving, to this powerful piece of machinery. And that little boy was watching this forklift as it transported heavy loads back and forth from the truck that I was unloading.

And this boy was mesmerized, just absolutely mesmerized by the power of the machine. And so the sales rep, who was working with his mother, she invited the boy, you know, come take a closer look.

Do you want to see it? And so I stopped the forklift and closed him. And this little boy, he was about 20 feet away, and he just stood at a distance, and he would not say a single word.

[29 : 47] And so we tried to coax him, you know, come closer. Do you want to see it? And he would not move. He was absolutely frozen in place. And because that little boy feared the forklift.

He feared it because of its power, and he was fascinated by it, transfixed. He did not want to leave. He recognized that the forklift deserved the trembling admiration of a little boy.

We as God's people, we are not to stand frozen at a distance, though. We are not to run away. The reason the psalmist says come is because we are, we tend to be frozen in place when we see that power.

In those moments in our life, when you glimpse it, it says come closer. Come closer. Come toward him. Even though your hands are shaking, even though your knees are knocking, the Lord wants you and me to come before him.

He invites you into his presence, into the presence of the God who is with us. You and I, we don't deserve to come to him. We've spent all year learning that he is holy, that he is great, that he is good.

[31 : 00] We're not worthy to come into his presence. And so he's provided for us an offering. It says bring an offering.

What did we have to bring that is worthy of this God? Well, the Lord has provided that. He has given his own son, Jesus Christ, who is crucified for our sins, put to death so that we would not face the punishment and the penalty for our sins, so that we are now made worthy to come.

Jesus Christ died, was buried, was raised to life again on the third day to show that God the Father has accepted this sacrifice on our behalf. And so come before his throne, come trembling.

And follow that psalmist's call to ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name, as we sang earlier this morning. To credit him for who he is, to recognize his glory.

Jesus Christ has come to be the king deserving. The king deserving, deserving your honor and your praise. That's what these wise men from the East understood when they went to worship the newborn king.

[32 : 21] In Matthew chapter 2, we read, Going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshipped him.

Then opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. Expensive gifts, fit for a king. These sages, they understood that Jesus was worthy.

Jesus was deserving of honor and praise. They understood something that our world doesn't appreciate about Jesus. In our culture, we don't really buy into the idea that Jesus deserves our worship and admiration and affection.

The Lord deserves that. We don't really believe Jesus when he says that the first and most important commandment, the most important thing you can do with your life is love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.

And that if you're not doing that, you're missing the whole point of what it means to be a human being. We don't mind God as long as he stays powerless and threatening and unthreatening and far away.

- [33 : 32] God can continue to exist as long as he doesn't ask you and me to change anything about ourselves. We want the Lord to be irrelevant except when we need him. The Lord, though, he invites us to encounter him as he really is.

To worship him because he deserves it. He is worthy. It is our responsibility and not just our responsibility. It is our joy because it is what we were made to be, what we were made to do.

This is what it means to be human. Our responsibility and our joy to enter the presence of our king, the presence of the Lord and worship him because Jesus Christ has come to be the king, universal and unrivaled and deserving.

And not only do we ascribe glory to the Lord Jesus, we announce his reign. Verse 10. Say among the nations, the Lord reigns.

Yes, the world is established. It shall never be moved. He will judge the peoples with equity. And once again, this is a message to be proclaimed throughout the whole earth.

- [34 : 49] A message to be proclaimed to all nations. The Lord reigns. Lord reigns. And this is good news for the earth. This is good news for our world. I don't think I need to tell you we live in a world that is characterized by unrest, by disorder and increasingly so with each passing year.

We've been shielded from it here in Canada for now. I don't know how long that will last. The unrest, the disorder is locked safely away in our newspapers, on our TV screens at a distance when we read about it on the internet.

This sort of security though that we enjoy, it is not guaranteed. All human institutions do come to an end. We're becoming keenly aware of that.

Even today, places like Syria, Afghanistan, Somalia, the Congo, anarchy, war, famine, these are the prevailing powers, the prevailing situation. And we can sit back on our heated leather couches and we can complain about what's wrong with the world today, how things are getting so much worse.

It didn't used to be like this when I was a kid. But the world has always suffered from chaos and disorder. This is not a new state of affairs. Here's what Jesus himself said in Mark chapter 13.

- [36 : 03] When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, freak out! No. He says, when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, you know, that's got to be the end of the world.

No, he says, don't be alarmed. When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. This must take place but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom.

There will be earthquakes in various places. There will be famines. These are but the beginning of the birth pains. In other words, Jesus says, you know, just because you feel these things, that's not a sign the world's coming to an end.

This is the normal state of human affairs in a world under the curse, a world corrupted by sin. This sort of thing is commonplace throughout all of human history.

The security we enjoy is the exception, not the norm. This insecurity and instability and injustice has always been a problem.

- [37 : 08] It always will be a problem until Jesus Christ returns to claim his throne as king. And that's why we are putting all of our trust in Jesus to stabilize a disordered world.

to stabilize a disordered world. And when he returns, this is what we will be able to say. The world is established.

It shall never be moved. He will judge the peoples with equity. Or as the angels, they announce, the angels say at the birth of Jesus Christ in Luke chapter 2, glory to God in the highest and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased.

This is the promise of Psalm 96. This Psalm, it looks forward, it not only looks forward to the first coming of Christ at Christmas, but the Psalm also looks past that through that first arrival of Christ and it looks forward to his second coming, which now we are waiting for.

And here's the scene that will greet Jesus' return. In verse 11. Let the heavens be glad and let the earth rejoice.

[38 : 27] Let the sea roar and all that fills it. Let the field exult and everything in it. Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy before the Lord for he comes for he comes to judge the earth.

He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in his faithfulness. This is what all of the created world was made for. Made for this moment.

It was all meant for this moment. The Apostle Paul writes in his letter to the church in Rome in Romans chapter 8. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God.

For the creation was subjected to futility. Not willingly, but because of him who subjected it. in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

Freed from corruption, freed for glory. Because we human beings, we've rebelled against the reign of the Lord God.

[39 : 38] this whole creation. All of the world has been subjected to futility, to a curse. But when Jesus Christ returns, when he sets up his reign together with the people of God, together with you and me, you're going to be there for that forever and ever.

Jesus will make all things new. the whole creation will rejoice that everything is set right. And there is going to be happiness like you wouldn't believe.

Fulfilled hope that goes far beyond your wildest expectations. The psalmist says even the fields and the trees are going to resonate with joy. The whole world alight with joy.

Every rock you lift up will have joy underneath it. Here's why there is joy. The Lord comes to judge the earth.

It's not a word we usually associate joy with, is it? Judgment. It sounds judgmental. We don't like that. We don't like to be judged.

[40 : 53] Don't judge my dishonesty. Don't judge my sexual misbehavior. Don't judge my drug abuse. Don't judge my Power Rangers action figure collection. We don't like that.

Psalm 96 tells us that there is one whose judgment brings joy. There is one whose judgment brings joy because he is the rightful judge.

The Lord God is coming to judge the world. He will judge the world with righteousness and the peoples in his faithfulness. And the psalmist calls us to rejoice because his judgments are righteous.

They're always right. They're always good. They're always just the right thing that we need to hear, that the world needs to hear. They're consistent.

They're good. He isn't corrupted by power or money like so many human government officials. This judge will reward those who do good.

[41 : 55] This judge will punish those who do evil. He sees things the way they are. He always does what is right. The Lord will be the deciding judge over all the earth, the deciding judge.

So Jesus Christ has come to be the king, universal and unrivaled, deserving and deciding. Universal and unrivaled, deserving and deciding. And this judgment, it is good news.

It is good news that God is going to set everything right in the end. This judgment is only good news if you trust Jesus Christ, if you entrust yourself to him and to his work on the cross, if you believe that Jesus is your only refuge, that only through Jesus can you be saved from the judgment of God and counted righteous by God.

Because Jesus has fulfilled all righteousness because he has done what is right at all times on your behalf. If you believe that, if your confidence is in him and not in yourself, this judgment will not be a source of dread for you like it would be if you don't trust him.

If your confidence is in the king, universal and unrivaled, deserving and deciding, then Jesus coming will be a source for joy, even now you will long for it.

[43 : 20] You will ache for it. And when he comes and he guides you to springs of living water and wipes away every tear from your eyes, then you will sing a new song of joy.

Because empires always fall, kingdoms always collapse. Where is Babylon now? It's just a few dusty ruins in the middle of the Iraqi desert. For centuries, European powers attempted to revive the Roman Empire and they all failed.

The American government, the Canadian government too will fail. All their military powers and monetary systems, social programs, economic protections, they're all going to crumble. But we are not afraid.

We are not afraid. Because we don't put our ultimate trust in human institutions. Our hope is in our coming king. that's a hope that is never going to be disappointed.

Never going to be shaken. Put your hope there. Put your hope in him. That's the message of Christmas. This joy that comes. Because Jesus Christ has come to be the king, universal and unrivaled, deserving and deciding.

[44 : 35] Let's pray. Thank you. We who needs to be the king, some justice and from the thing.

We can see him more. isn't right?