

The apostle Paul writes that when Jesus comes again, "...he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords..." (1.TIM 6:15). Paul is saying, in essence, "When Christ comes, He's going to show everybody who's Lord!"

God the Father enthroned Christ as King over all nations and all nature, and as Lord over the church. Paul is saying, "It doesn't matter what things look like on the outside. Everything may seem out of control. It may look like the devil has taken power. But the truth is, God has put all things under Jesus' feet. Christ is still King over everything!"

"For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:" (COL 1:16). *"And he is the head of the body, the church... that in all things he might have the pre-eminence."* (verse 18).

Each of these passages proves that Almighty God has appointed Jesus Christ as King, Lord and potentate. All dominion has been given into His hands - and He rules over our nation, the church and our individual lives.

Yet all around us today, we see our society and government dethroning Christ - refusing to acknowledge His authority and kingship. **We're removing God from our schools and courts and ignoring Him in the making of our laws. And now we're reaping a terrible harvest!**

I believe America's rejection of Christ's lordship is the reason behind all the bloodshed, violence, racial hatred, moral decay, drug

The Dethroning of Christ in America!

abuse and outbreak of deadly sexual diseases in our society. Law-makers, educators and the media have made God an unspeakable subject. Even in prisons, there is a ban on religious mottos including the Ten Commandments. We've dethroned Christ completely!

Yet my concern goes beyond America's rejection of Jesus' authority. I believe the problem of Christ's dethroning is much worse, much more tragic - because it's happening in His church! It's true - **Jesus, our exalted Lord and King, is being dethroned in churches throughout the land and in the lives of a multitude of believers.**

Now, it's understandable that ungodly people would want to dethrone Christ. They've mocked and ridiculed His Name since the day He was born and will keep doing so until He returns. But how it must grieve God to see Christ dethroned by those who call themselves by His Name!

We've already seen from scripture that God has made Christ to be all things to the church. Simply put, we're to have no other resource, reference or counsellor before

Jesus. All of the church's government, guidance and counsel are to come from Him. Isaiah writes, *"...the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."* (ISA 9:6).

Yet, slowly but surely, many Christians, churches and ministries are rejecting the Lord's counsel. They no longer lean wholly on His lordship. Instead, they're turning to the wisdom of the world - to man-centred practices!

The Prophet Hosea Speaks On This Issue of Rejecting The Lord's Counsel!

Hosea describes the terrible harvest reaped by those who dethrone God from His lordship and turn to the arm of the flesh. When Hosea wrote his prophetic message, he addressed a people whom the Lord had carried in His arms for years.

God had blessed and prospered Israel, giving them houses they hadn't built and vineyards they hadn't planted. He'd raised up godly men to speak as prophets,

and had given the people clear words of direction. And for years the people had proven God faithful. They listened to His counsel, never turning to the flesh. When God spoke to them, they obeyed. And they were miraculously delivered from powerful enemies.

But now an apostasy had come over Israel - and the Lord accused them of being guilty of a terrible wickedness: *"They have deeply corrupted themselves..."* (HOS 9:9). *"...all their princes are revolters."* (verse 15).

What was this awful sin they'd committed? It wasn't drunkenness, sexual perversion, covetousness, adultery or murder. No - God said their wickedness was in turning away from His counsel, ignoring His Word and obeying man instead: *"...God will cast them away, because they did not hearken unto him..."* (HOS 9:17). In God's eyes, the greatest wickedness a believer could commit is to no longer be dependent on Him!

In essence, the Lord was telling Israel, "You no longer put your trust in Me. I'm no longer your guide, your source of wisdom. Now you're turning to the wisdom of man. You're running back to Egypt for help - back to the very place from which I delivered you. You've rejected My Word and turned from Me. You've dethroned Me!"

A great Puritan prophet once wrote: "Pure power is never anxious for co-operating. It just demands." In other words, God doesn't say to us, "You do your part, and I'll do Mine. Just check in with Me occasionally." No! God is pure, raw power - and He demands that we follow Him, first and foremost, in all we do. We're to be wholly dependent on Him. And anything short of this maligns His kingship over our lives!

Consider the Tragic Results Of Dethroning the Lord as Counsellor, Keeper, Provider And Source of All Wisdom And Power!

Hosea lists about a dozen tragic results that befall those who dethrone the Lord. I want to give you just four:

1. *"Israel is an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto himself..."* (HOS 10:1). Everyone in Israel was

looking out for himself - and the result was total emptiness!

At Times Square Church, we see this truth illustrated each week. Across the street from our church building is a Broadway theatre featuring a famous, long-running musical. Every Wednesday is "matinee day," and people rush into the theatre trying to find some bit of satisfaction. Yet, as they emerge some three hours later, there is only emptiness on their faces. Yes, they've been entertained - but that kind of satisfaction doesn't last. Jesus Christ is the only lasting satisfaction - and if you dethrone Him, everything in life becomes empty!

Yet, Hosea's words weren't directed at the godless. He was speaking to believers - showing them a picture of what happens to all who dethrone the Lord in their lives. Such people become selfish and miserable - and their every pursuit ends in emptiness!

2. *"Their heart is divided... he shall break down their altars, he shall spoil their images."* (HOS 10:2). Our nation's heart is divided. Americans pay lip service to God and religion, but they don't worship the Lord in truth. And that has led directly to the breakdown of all our hallowed institutions.

The Hebrew phrase for "heart is divided" here is "faithless heart." You see, when you lose faith in God and place your trust in something else, that thing becomes an idol. And God makes sure that idol will be brought down. He destroys everything in our lives that takes His place!

We see this happening in our nation today. Our society no longer trusts God, turning instead to the government, the President, the educational system, Social Security - all to try to find some kind of stability. But, beloved, scandal is rocking every institution - even the United Way, the great collector of charities. That institution had to fire its president because he was squandering millions of dollars. And now all of its patrons' trust is gone.

God is saying, "If you won't trust Me, I'll make all your trusted institutions fail. You won't have anything left to believe in!"

3. *"Ye have plowed wickedness, ye have reaped iniquity... because thou didst trust in thy way, in the multitude of thy mighty men."* (HOS 10:13). Hosea is saying, "You stopped trusting in the Lord. And now you're going to reap a harvest of iniquity!"

Humankind today is sophisticated, educated, knowledgeable. We have dethroned God - rejecting the Bible and prayer - and enthroned science, psychology and education instead. Yet, I ask you: What has been the harvest? What has all our sophisticated learning brought us?

It has given us a plague of AIDS, a deluge of drug abuse, dysfunctional families, absolute chaos among our youth. Everything is spinning out of control. Why? God is saying, "If you take Me off the throne - if you rely on human wisdom - you'll reap a harvest of wickedness!"

4. *"...We have no king, because we feared not the LORD..."* (HOS 10:3). Hosea was king over Israel, but his heart was full of idolatry. So, when Israel's backsliding began, he was powerless to stop the loss of faith. His words carried no authority. Whenever he spoke, the people merely shook their heads and said, "We have no leadership, no direction. We're drifting!"

That's just what is happening in America right now! The White House is embroiled in a sex scandal the likes of which our country has never known. Our President is being mocked and laughed at by the nations of the world.

And, beloved, the same thing is happening in the church today. Many Christians mock their pastors, ridiculing their authority. Why? It's because these men's words carry no power! People are saying, "We no longer have any leadership in our church. We're lost, confused." That is the pay-day for dethroning the Lord!

Do You Have a King in Your Life, Your Home, Your Ministry?

Is Jesus the ruler and counsellor in your life? If so, scripture says, you're being given strength from God Himself:

"The LORD sitteth upon the flood; yea, the LORD sitteth King for ever. The LORD will give strength unto his people; the LORD will bless his

people with peace." (PSA 29:10-11). *"Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever..."* (PSA 45:6). *"Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations."* (PSA 145:13).

These are wonderful promises. But they didn't apply to Israel - because they had dethroned the Lord! Hosea told the people: "When you dethroned God, you became confused, leaderless. You said, 'We have no king. We're directionless.' But the truth is, you will have a king!"

"He shall not return into the land of Egypt, but the Assyrian shall be his king, because they refused to return [to Me]" (HOS 11:5). The word "Assyria" here means "king of pride." In other words: "When you dethrone the Lord, pride takes the throne!"

I've seen this happen in churches time after time. The people don't want to hear a message of holiness - so they hire a CEO-type pastor, someone who's a salesman and vows to run the church like a corporation. He comes in and immediately declares, "We're going to reach people the most effective way possible."

This minister sends his sheep door to door surveying people, with questions such as: "What would you like to see in a church? What would you want in the form of worship?" Then he puts all the data into a computer - and it dictates which programs the church should implement. It's all done according to surveys. The Holy Spirit is ignored completely - and Christ is dethroned, no longer relied upon as Lord!

This has happened even among zealous churches and godly ministries. These works were founded by the Holy Ghost and had humble beginnings. Their leaders were men and women of God - lovers of lost souls, intercessors who wept and prayed over every matter. They didn't have money for consultants, so they prayed in every dollar. And they depended wholly on the Lord for all direction. Whenever He told them, "Do this," they obeyed.

But now these ministries have been taken over by younger, more educated staffers, many of whom

have never had to sacrifice. And these young people run things with a whole different way of thinking. Intercessory prayer is unknown to them. They don't depend on Jesus for their needs. Instead, they're convinced proper strategies can accomplish everything.

Now, don't misunderstand me - I'm not against using modern methods or computers. We employ many such things in our ministry. But the difference is, we don't receive our direction from these "ministry tools." We spend time on our knees, seeking the Lord for direction in every area of ministry. Yet, this is a lost practice among many ministries today. They rely on computers rather than on Christ!

Today, "experts" have taken over the reins of the church. Sin is seen in psychological terms and called a "disease". A drug addict is said to have a "weakness". Altars have been replaced with counselling rooms. Prophets of holiness have been replaced by psychologists and social workers spouting the latest man-centred jargon. In short, Jesus is being dethroned - and Freud is being exalted!

This wasn't true of the church some forty years ago. At that time, God led me to start a ministry to drug addicts and alcoholics. Today, there are over two-hundred-and-fifty Teen Challenge centres world-wide. And it all started in a rundown house in Brooklyn.

We had no money, no how-to books - only total dependence on the Holy Spirit. We hung a sign in our offices that read, "No one shines here - only the Holy Ghost!" And during our chapel services, we prayed, "Lord, our help isn't in psychology or psychiatry, but in the Holy Spirit. We can't work on the head unless you change the heart!"

Nicky Cruz, one of the first gang members we encountered, was a killer at heart. A psychiatrist we knew took an interest in his case. He spent a whole day with Nicky - and when that day was over, the psychiatrist decided Nicky was incorrigible, hopeless. (Little did this man know, Nicky delighted in confusing all "head doctors"!)

Yet Jesus had other plans for Nicky - and at an altar in that rundown house, Christ accomplished

in five minutes what the experts said could not be done. Nicky wasn't psychoanalysed; his head wasn't examined. No, God sent an arrow into his heart - and that arrow was the truth of the gospel: "Nicky, Jesus loves you!"

In a single moment, out went Nicky's heart of stone - and it was replaced with a heart of flesh. Nicky wept, hugging us all. He was supernaturally transformed by the power of God - after society's experts had written him off! Over these past forty years, I've watched with alarm as the church has slowly but surely dethroned Christ and enthroned the wisdom of the world. Jesus is no longer the source and power behind God's people. Instead, we've turned to fleshly things that eventually will fade. And we've lost all the power we had when we trusted in Christ! At this point, let me ask you personally: Have you removed Christ as King from the throne of your heart? If you're trusting in psychology or some how-to book, you'll only become more confused. And you'll end up saying: "I have no king - no direction, no leadership - because I didn't trust the Lord. I didn't esteem or obey His Word. I didn't seek or desire His counsel. I only did what I thought was right in my own eyes, or what my trusted friends advised me to do." God says to you: *"A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? And if I be a master, where is my fear?..."* (MAL 1:6). In other words: "If I'm King to you, why don't you obey My Word? You don't seek Me. Instead, you turn to psychology, to books, to friends. You refuse to trust Me, your Counsellor and King!"

I Have Shown You Some Of the Tragic Consequences Of Dethroning Christ - But Now Let Me Show You the Glorious Benefits to Those Who Keep Him Enthroned In Their Hearts!

Perhaps you're saying, "I want Jesus to be King of my life. I want to do everything He commands me!" Let me show you the wonderful blessings that come to all who enthrone Jesus as King of their lives:

1. Those who submit to Christ's lordship will be infused with His holiness. Scripture says if you'll

submit yourself to Jesus, waiting to receive His counsel and direction, you'll partake in His holiness:

"We have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness." (HEB 12:9-10).

Paul commands us to come to Jesus, asking Him to give us dominion over all our sins and fears: *"Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace."* (ROM 6:13-14).

God is saying, "If you want to know abundant life - true, full life - then submit yourself to me. I'll give you life without fear, guilt or condemnation!"

2. Those who submit to Christ's lordship will walk in peace. Submitted Christians don't live in fear, turmoil or anxiety. They're clothed with peace:

"That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life... Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace." (LK 1:74-75,78-79).

What a wonderful promise! If we will yield our lives to Him, He'll

shine His light into our darkness. He'll remove the shadow of death over our lives and guide us into peace and rest. He says, "I'll clear up all the confusion in your life - and you'll be able to walk in peace!"

You can tell when a person has enthroned Christ in his heart. Such a life produces a peace that passes all understanding - and you can see that peace in the person's face and demeanour. *"Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means..."* (2.THESS 3:16).

3. Those who submit to Christ's lordship have an increase of strength and knowledge of the Lord. They literally gain a new mental and physical strength. They don't faint along the way - because Jesus pours His own strength into them as they go:

"For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;" (COL 1:9-11).

4. God will keep those who submit to His lordship blameless to the day of Christ's coming. If we submit to Jesus - doing as He commands, not leaning on our own understanding - we will never lack anything. He'll supply everything we need to please Him. The Lord Himself will hold and keep us blameless, to the very end!

"That in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all

knowledge; even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: so that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord." (1.COR 1:5-9).

We are to entrust our lives into Jesus' care. It then becomes His responsibility to hold and keep us: *"But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil."* (2.THESS 3:3). He says, "If you keep me enthroned on your heart as Lord, I'll keep you blameless until my coming. I'll keep you from falling!" *"...commit the keeping of (your) souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator."* (1.PET 4:19).

Psalms 121 sums up the attitude we're to have:

"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber... nor sleep."

"The LORD is thy keeper: the LORD is thy shade upon thy right hand. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night. The LORD shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul. The LORD shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore." (PSA 121:1-8).

Put Christ on the throne of your heart today - and live!

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