

New Road Signs

Psalm 110

By Phillip G. Kayser 3-16-2008

Intro:

This past week, Dinesh Chand, an Indian friend of mine, told me a story that I think illustrates so well the barrier between what we know and what we do. Anyone who has traveled much in India knows that trucks, autos, bikes, motorcycles, cows, chickens, dogs, and pedestrians – everything seems to travel on the road. In fact, it is absolutely mesmerizing to see how hour after hour the traffic just flows and swirls all around. Even on divided highways you will have traffic coming at you on what appears to be the wrong side of the road. I say, “appears to be the wrong side of the road” because there doesn’t seem to be any part of the road or the dirt off the road that isn’t fair game for anyone to hit at high speeds. Initially you have to close your eyes. Then as you get used to it, you sit there in fascination that very few people are getting killed and that you haven’t been killed yourself. (It is fascination and thanks to God.) It looks like chaos, but there really is some order and arrangement. Of course, everything hinges on the horn of your car working at every given moment. Every truck on the road has a sign on the back that says, “Please use horn.” You can’t even drive without using the horn every few seconds. So it’s a different culture. Anyway, Dinesh had this guy traveling with him in a taxi, and finally his friend asked the taxi driver, “I was wondering what those dotted white lines are for – you know, the ones that are painted in the middle of the road?” The taxi driver looked a bit puzzled. He thought for a minute and then he said, “I think those dots are something that the British left behind.” Roads have to have dotted white lines on them because that is just the way we have always done it. But they seem to make no difference to the traffic.

But as I was thinking about that story, I realized that this is the way doctrine frequently is handled. We say we believe it, but it has little impact upon us. Doctrine was intended to transform us. And that is certainly true of the doctrines taught in this wonderful chapter (which we will only get halfway through today). If Jesus is really God, it ought to lead us to worship Him and depend upon Him. If He really is king, it ought to make us want to bow before Him and obey Him. It ought to make us confident that things are not out of control in this wacky world. He has our elections just where He wants them – probably in judgment. And if He really is a Judge who judges

© Copyright 2007 by Phillip G. Kayser. Permission is granted to all readers to download, print, and distribute on paper or electronically any Sermons, provided that each reprint bear this copyright notice, current address, and telephone number, and provided that all such reproductions are distributed to the public without charge. They may not be sold or issued in book form, CD-ROM form, or microfiche without prior permission.

Phillip G. Kayser • Dominion Covenant Church • 307.N 41st Ave. Omaha, NE 68131 • 402.934.3300

in history, then we should have confidence that there *is* rhyme and reason to the disasters and blessings that come upon nations. Many Christians doubt it, but our theology demands it. If Jesus really is a king-priest, that ought to affect our lives. If bloody wars are a part of His plan in history (which the last two verses indicate), then we ought not to be discouraged when we see such things because we know what they are for. On the other hand, if He commands us to be responsible (as this Psalm does), then we ought to do what we can to make a difference. If He really does rule in the midst of His enemies, it ought not to surprise us to still see enemies all around us. But if He wins in history, then it ought to stir up our faith to expect great things from Him and attempt great things for Him. As we work our way through this passage, our hearts and our lives need to be constantly responding to the Word in appropriate ways. Don't respond to me. Respond to God's Word. Jesus is in our midst this morning, and He is glorified by full-hearted responses.

Some Christians have wrong road signs that say, "Don't go this way. Jesus will not be king till after the Second Coming." In my books, this is a denial of Palm Sunday. But more to the point, these false road signs are dangerous because they could lead us to head on collisions with reality. Let me give a sampling of dangerous road signs that Christians (not God) have put up. **1)** One leader said, "We should live like people who don't expect to be around much longer."¹ Let me ask you a question: "Would you hire a taxi driver in India who expected to die any moment?" I think that would make me a little bit nervous. Would you invest your money with a person who didn't expect to be around much longer? **2)** Or what about this sign: "The darker the world gets the lighter my heart gets! Because that means we are that much closer to the Second Coming of Christ!" (R.A. Torrey) Would you elect such a person to Congress? He's happy that things are getting worse. **3)** Here's another road sign: Any "attempt to establish long-term change in institutions will only result in the leaven of humanism permeating Christianity."² Well, I don't think he would be a good candidate for City Council. **4)** Or would you invite the guy that gives the next quote to inspire your volunteers to get active and to make a difference? He says, "We have reached the point of no return. We are on an irreversible course for world disaster." (Salem Kirban).³ Wow! That really rallies the troops, doesn't it?! **5)** Would you invite the following Reformed speaker to your Salt and Light

¹Hal Lindsey, *Late Great Planet Earth*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1973) p. 145.

² Wayne House & Tommy Ice, *Dominion Theology: Blessing or Curse?* (Portland, OR: 1988),

³Salem Kirban, *Countdown to Rapture* (Irving, CA: Harvest House Publishers, 1977), p. 11.

conference? He said, “The world [is] filled with sin and getting worse, a hopeless situation beyond repair and impossible to salvage”⁴ I guarantee you that the ignoring of God’s road signs and the putting up of their own road signs has had very practical and disastrous consequences over the last 100 years. It has made the church passive, careless, uninvolved and uninterested in being salt and light in culture. No wonder the humanists have taken over.

House and Ice have said that our goal should not be the conversion of the nations. They believe that that is impossible. In fact, they said, “God has not given the Church a proper dose of grace to Christianize the world.”⁵ Well, that completely changes your tactics of evangelism.

And if you yourself have ever had doubts about whether the Great Commission *could* be accomplished, and whether all nations could really be disciplined, here is a Psalm that can encourage your heart and stir up faith within you. This was a Psalm that gave huge encouragement to early church Fathers like Athanasius who believed that the Gospel must triumph until all the world is Christianized. It has encouraged saints like Calvin, Knox and Wesley and Whitefield and one of my favorite preachers: Charles Spurgeon. Spurgeon said, “I myself believe that King Jesus will reign, and the idols be utterly abolished; for I expect that the same power which turned the world upside down once will still continue to do it. The Holy Ghost would never suffer the imputation to rest upon His holy name that He was not able to convert the world.”⁶ And by the time that we are done with this Psalm, I hope that you can have the same confidence. This is a fantastic Psalm of encouragement, not only for personal holiness (which many people are discouraged over), but for *societal* holiness as well.

Everyone agrees that this Psalm describes the *complete* triumph and victory of Jesus, but they disagree on the timing. Amillennialists typically say that it will all happen in one day at the end of history. Premillennialists say that it will be for the last 1000 years of history. They are a little closer to the mark. We believe that it began at Christ’s ascension (described in verse 1) and continues to grow and increase until the end of history when Christ comes back. And we are not going to get into that debate much, because I want to focus on the positive applications of this passage. But if there is any passage of the Old Testament that has been consistently and clearly applied to the present day by the New Testament, it is this one. Psalm 110 is quoted

⁴ Hanko, “The Illusory Hope of Postmillennialism,” p. 159.

⁵ Wayne House & Tommy Ice, *Dominion Theology: Blessing or Curse?* (Portland, OR: 1988), p. 340.

⁶ Charles Spurgeon, quoted by David Chilton in *Paradise Restored* (Fort Worth: Dominion Press, 1987), p. 129-130.

by the New Testament more than any other passage in the Bible – 21 times to be exact. And there are additional allusions to this Psalm. Just by way of comparison, Paul’s favorite passage on the foundational doctrine of justification by faith is only quoted three times in the New Testament. It is Habakkuk 2:4, **the just shall live by his faith**. In contrast, just verse 1 of this Psalm is quoted 18 times, verse 4 is quoted 3 times, and there are allusions to other phrases in this psalm.

This is an incredibly foundational Psalm to the New Testament. It forms the foundation for Peter’s argument in Acts 2 that Jesus has indeed ascended His throne. This Psalm is absolutely foundational to the argument in Hebrews that Jesus has already replaced the temple system and is sitting at the right hand of the Father. 1 Corinthians 15 uses this Psalm to explain why Christ must remain in heaven at God’s right hand – He still has many enemies to subdue to Himself. And so, it is a Psalm that not only encourages us that Jesus will win the battle for the world, but that also warns about what kinds of opposition to expect as we take the nations of this world for King Jesus. It’s got both optimism and realism.

I. Messiah is God (v. 1) - Lord by divine right

- A. David’s Lord
- B. At God’s Right Hand
- C. God Speaks to God

So let’s dive in. The first thing that we see is that Jesus is up to the job; He is powerful enough to accomplish this great task. And He can handle it precisely because He is David’s divine Lord. Verse 1 says, **The LORD said to my Lord**. And Jesus knew this would be a stumper for the Pharisees, because the Pharisees see the Adonai that is being spoken of in this Psalm as the coming Messiah. Jehovah said to my Adonai. Let’s analyze this a bit.

When Jesus cleansed the temple, the Pharisees were outraged, and kept trying to get him to say by what authority he was doing these things. He wouldn’t tell them outright. Instead, he told them by parables that He not only owned the temple, but He owned all of Israel, and would come to judge and destroy both. They are remarkable parables. And then He gave a question based on Psalm 110 that would settle the issue of authority. Here’s how Matthew words it: **While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, “What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?” They said to Him, “The Son of David.” He said to them, “How then does David in the Spirit call Him ‘Lord,’ saying: ‘The LORD said to my Lord, Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your**

“footstool”? If David then calls Him ‘Lord,’ how is He his Son?” And no one was able to answer Him a word... (Matt 22:41-46) The riddle for the Pharisees was how could Christ be both Lord of David and a son of David? Or as Isaiah words it, “How can the Messiah be both the root of David and the Branch of David.” Those are quite different things. If Messiah is the root, then David came from the Messiah (in other words, David grows from and was created by Messiah). How is that possible? But if Messiah is also the Branch of David, then Messiah also came from David. How could that be? Can you see how there would have been some stumbers for the Jews in the Old Testament? Unless He was both man and God, this would be impossible. And so there is the problem of being David’s Lord.

Secondly, how can any mere man sit at God’s right hand? Hebrews 1:13 says that *not even an angel* could possibly have those words in verse 1 said to him. That would be blasphemy. The Jews knew that no mere creature could sit at God’s right hand. When Christ told His trial court that from now on He would sit at the right hand of God and come on the clouds of heaven (Matt. 26:64) the Pharisees accused Him of blaspheming by claiming to be God. And He was indeed claiming to be God. You would have to be divine to be in that position.

And so Jesus highlights the Trinity in that verse. The Spirit inspires David to record something that the Father will say to the Son.

So the first point we can derive from this Psalm is that Messiah will be God. He’s up to the job. He’s the Almighty. He is the Creator and Sustainer of all things. All things are held together by the Word of Christ’s power. As William Hendriksen says in his commentary, David “is promising the Mediator such pre-eminence, power, authority, and majesty as would be proper only for One, who, as to person, from all eternity was, is now, and forever will be God.” Both Christ and the apostles use this passage to prove Christ’s deity. Especially Hebrews 1.

II. Messiah is a Man (v. 1-2)

A. His Kingship Is Appointed (v. 1; see commentary in Acts 2:34-36)

A second principle taught in verses 1-2 is that Christ is man. Though He was already Lord at the time David wrote, there was a time in history when He would be made King by divine appointment. He’s pre-existent God, but He is coming as a man. After quoting this verse Acts 2 says, **Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.** God made Him Lord.

B. He Will Arise Out Of Zion (v. 2)

Another indication that He was to be a man is seen in verse 2: **The LORD shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion.** Christ would arise out of Zion. He would be an Israelite. Well, that means that He would be a man.

C. He Will Be A Priest (v. 4)

And thirdly He is called a priest in verse 4. And so Jesus is up to the job. Only a Person who was both God and man would be sufficient to convert this world. He had to be fully God to give an infinite sacrifice and to represent God to man, and He had to be man to be a substitute for us and to represent us to the Father. So Jesus is definitely up to the job of converting the world to Christianity. Amen? We can bank on this. We can step out in faith on this. We can worship Him for this. Let these truths sink into your soul and grab and transform you. You've got an awesome Savior.

III. Christ Ascended His Throne At The Resurrection (v. 1; Mark 16:19; Acts 2:32-36; 1 Cor. 15:22-28; Eph. 1:22; Col. 3:1; Heb. 1:13).

A. A Time When There Is Opposition (vs. 1-2)

B. The Time of His Resurrection (Mark 16:19; Acts 2:32-36)

C. A Time When God's Power (v. 3 with Acts 1:8; 2:33) Would Result In Volunteers (v. 3)

A third principle taught in this Psalm is that Christ would become king before the end of history: **Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies Your footstool.** Christ doesn't rule only after all enemies are crushed. Verse 2 says, **Rule in the midst of Your enemies.** There are still enemies around for a period of time when Christ rules. Of course, the New Testament settles the time when Christ sits at God's right hand. It's not in the future. We already read one passage in Acts 2 that says it was at His ascension. But there are many others: Mark 16:19 says, **So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God.** It was Christ's ascension that began the process of subduing enemies under Christ's feet. This is quite different from what many people claim. Walvoord (a very popular Bible teacher) said, "Therefore, the only solution to the turmoil among nations is the return of Jesus Christ in power and glory to the earth." (Walvoord)⁷ He says that only the Second Coming can reverse history. Salem Kirban says, "Without the hope of our Lord's return...what future do any of us have?"⁸ But we

⁷John F. Walvoord, "Why are the Nations in Turmoil?" in Feinberg, *Prophecy*, p. 210-211.

⁸ Salem Kirban, *Your Last Goodbye* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1969), p. 252.

believe the cross reverses history, not the second coming. This Psalm is about the King/Priest. The cross is the answer, and the ascension is the beginning of His application of that cross to history. Palm Sunday was not just a sweet time when Christ offered Himself as King and then was disappointed when He was rejected. *He knew He was going to be rejected.* God wanted His rule to be in the midst of His enemies. Enemies don't overturn His rule. There is no postponement of the kingdom.

A third indication of timing is that verse 3 says, **Your people shall be volunteers in the day of Your power.** Acts 1:8 says that when the power of the Holy Spirit has come upon you, you shall be witnesses. *There are your volunteers.* In Acts 2 the power of the Spirit comes upon them, and Peter quotes Psalm 110 and says that the shedding forth of the Spirit is a sign that Christ is at the right hand of God. These volunteers are the mighty missions outreach that began with the power of Pentecost. And so it is significant that the next thing this psalm speaks about after the ascension is **Your people shall be volunteers in the day of Your power.** All of this clearly points to the beginning of the kingdom as the first century AD.

IV. Christ Reigns By Devout Acknowledgment (“my Lord” vs. 1,3)

But let's spend a bit more time on that last phrase because it illustrates point number IV, which says that Christ reigns by devout acknowledgment. There is a recognition in this Psalm that three great enemies of Christ – our flesh, the world and the devil, will resist Christ's Lordship. And part of Christ's reign is to bring about the glad acknowledgment of His reign. David calls Him “**my Lord**” in verse 1. It takes grace to make us submit to His Lordship. In verse 3 he says, “**Your people shall be volunteers** [or as the KJV has it, “shall be willing”] **in the day of Your power.**” But it took His power to accomplish that willingness. When Peter had quoted this verse, he called on the people to repent and to acknowledge Christ as Lord and Savior. And then it says that the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

But there is another implication of that phrase. Christ intends to reign through His people. He's not going to do it while we watch on the grandstands. He will do it through volunteers. Now think about this. For the Almighty God to accomplish all of this through volunteers is absolute staggering. It's not just that divine sovereignty and human responsibility are consistent. Many passages like this indicate that God has ordained His sovereign kingdom *must* be established through the weakness of human volunteers. In His book, *An All Around Ministry*, Charles Spurgeon speaks

in awe and wonder that God would choose to use the feebleness of our mouths and our actions to bring about this new creation. He said,

It is strange that, instead of speaking, and saying with His own lips, “Let there be light,” He speaks the illuminating word by our lips! [He’s speaking about the wonder that God would convert people through the foolishness of preaching and lay witnessing. He goes on:] Instead of fashioning a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness, by the mere fiat of His power, He couples Himself with our weakness, and so performs His purpose!”

I don’t know about you, but this blows me away! This humbles me but also excites me. I want you to lay hold of this because it is life transforming. How does Christ extend His kingdom? It won’t extend an inch except as He does it through volunteers. Why are things in such a mess today? Because we don’t have volunteers for a Gideon’s army. And how do we get those volunteers? It is only as they have experienced the day of His power. Not all Christians experience that power. Most Christians act just like the bulk of the army at the time of Gideon – they only get involved when things get exciting. Until that time they go along blithely living selfishly consumed with their own appetites and desires. They are not consumed with a passion for Christ. It takes the power of God’s grace and the gift of His Spirit to give us the boldness of the Christians in Pentecost. But there is no other life that is worth living. And if you are one of the Gideon soldiers, don’t be discouraged. It only takes a dedicated minority to turn the world upside down. And while it takes great dedication, it will bring you fulfillment in life and treasures in heaven.

There is a book that I want to recommend that you read. It’s a book written by Buddy Hanson. I read it on the airplane, and it is powerful. The title is, *It’s Time to Un-Quo the Status Quo*. You’ve all read about the Status Quo. Well, he says it is time to un-quo that status quo. Here’s the subtitle: *How to normalize the present abnormal culture of a non-Christian, upside down world and turn it rightside up with Christian principles.*” This book highlights the missing ingredients that are keeping Christians from being effective volunteers. These are the missing ingredients that keep them from living out the connection between Christ’s Priestly Kingship and their status as powerful volunteers. Every Christian has a role to play in God’s kingdom if they will embrace it. And the weakness of the volunteers is immaterial to our success. It’s our radical commitment to His power that makes the difference. We must be a sold out Gideon’s army, not the multitude that laps with their mouth. Some of the chapter headings in this book are:

The first Un-Quo: Identity Theft. And he shows how the Christian worldview has been infected by the virus of our culture and made impotent. I see some of this impotence in our own congregation. And he points out that it is because of Identity Theft. Our identity isn't radically different from the world. If it was, it would turn the world upside down.

The Second Un-Quo flows from this: Reclaiming our Identity. There are practical steps for doing that. But it will cost you. It will cost you time and energy. It will cost you reputation. It will cost you name-calling. You will be called every spiritual name under the book because the part of the army that laps water with their tongues won't like the fact that you are different. Hard core people make them a little bit uncomfortable.

Third Un-Quo: Satan's devices to distort our worldview. And he shows you what to do about it.

Fourth Un-Quo: Your vision for the future.

And he gives several other ways to un-quo the status quo and begin to be a revolutionary army that has the potential to once again turn the world upside down instead of being conformed to the world.

V. Christ Reigns Over A Disputed Empire (1-2; 1 Cor. 15:22-28; Heb. 1:13)

A fifth point in this Psalm (and this is the last one we will look at today) is that Christ reigns over a disputed empire. I have had dispensationalists say that Christ cannot be reigning now because of all the evil that we see around us. They mock at the idea that we are in the kingdom age because they point to evil out there and say that this is Satan's hay day, not Christ's. Their idea of Christ's kingdom is an instantly established state of peace and prosperity. But you could not get a more explicit statement that even after Christ sits at the right hand of God, there will be enemies. Verse 2 says, **Rule in the midst of Your enemies.** 1 Corinthians 15 quotes this and concludes, **He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet.** Did you know that there are enemies of Christ in your life that need to be placed under His feet? Before you can be a volunteer, you've got to quit fighting Him. There are enemies who are disputing every square inch of planet earth. And so this is a warning that we can expect opposition from the world, the flesh and the devil. And if you are not fighting by God's grace against all three fronts, then you are losing. Don't be surprised if we receive backlash from the ACLU and other organizations. It's almost guaranteed. And yet, who is the winner? It's Christ, not Satan. Christ rules over a disputed empire, and I urge you not to

be one of the people disputing His right to subdue every area of your life to Him. You are either one of His volunteers or you are part of the problem.

I've had too much to say in one sermon, so I am going to continue this Psalm next week, on resurrection day. The second half of this psalm has some exciting and some chilling elements to it. No one gets warm fuzzies over verses 6 and 7. Over the past 2000 years as Jesus has been judging the nations, there have indeed been places filled with dead bodies. There have indeed been heads of countries killed. This is the Jesus that you worship. Don't make a Jesus in your own image. Though Jesus is a good God, He is also terrible when you anger Him. But there are promises in the second half of that Psalm that exhilarate me, and I am looking forward to preaching on it.

But I want to end things today by suggesting four exercises that you can do to implement today's message. Remember? There can't be a disconnect between doctrine and action. God has painted these lines on our road for our good.

First, begin to elevate your faith by worshipping Jesus for who He is. If He really is God, you can pray Psalm 104 to Him, because he created all things. You could turn that Psalm into a prayer like this: "Jesus, my God, You are very great; You are clothed with splendor and majesty. You wrap Yourself in light as with a garment; You stretch out the heavens like a tent.... You make Your angels spirits and Your ministers a flame of fire..." Etc., And the more you meditate on His greatness, the more your doubts about what He can accomplish right now will begin to diminish. Keep in mind that the church's progress is limited by its faith. Your family's impact on this world is limited by its faith. This is an exercise that could increase your faith. The problem in America right now is not the democrats or the republicans. It is a church that has set their sights way, way too low. Can we really believe that we have achieved something that glorifies Christ by getting a compromised Republican into office? I think not. And it is only deep worship of Christ and meditation upon His kingly purposes that will begin to make you long for something far greater and to have the faith to see another Great Awakening come to America. Don't settle for second best. Be a Gideon. Strive for something consistent with His majesty.

A second way to apply this sermon is by meditating deeply upon Christ's humanity. If He is fully man; if He is a branch of David, then it means that He can sympathize with our weaknesses. It means that He fully identifies with us. He's not going to leave us in the lurch. He is our Elder Brother. But it also means that He was the first and only perfect volunteer in the day of God's power, but as such He is also our pattern. Don't look to

other humans as your standard for behavior. Look to Jesus. Don't be satisfied with anything less than conformity to Christ. As 1 John 2:6 says, **whoever claims to abide in him ought to live [just] as he lived.** That's not legalism. That is conformity to Christ. He's our pattern. He's our strength. This is why it was Paul's life's goal to know Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings.

A third application is to write down every area of your life that is still a disputed territory. Take that list before the Lord and ask Him to conquer it. Tell Him that you will volunteer as an enlisted soldier to fight against that disputed territory as well. Tell Him that you want to submit to His kingship, but you are going to need to His power. By faith receive the Spirit for today and seek to walk in victory. Every day put on the armor of Christ, ask for the filling of the Spirit and determine to be a part of a Gideon's army.

The last application is to find specific ways that you can volunteer. Verse 3 says, **"Your people shall be volunteers in the day of Your power."** This is not a volunteer for Phil Kayser, but a volunteer for Christ. You should ask Jesus, "What do you want me to do? I have been put on this earth for a purpose – not to live for myself but to live for Christ. If you aren't a volunteer in the army of Christ, it means that you haven't tasted of His Spirit's power because the power of the Spirit fills us with a desire to be volunteers. Bow yourself before Him, confess your sin of being AWOL (Absent Without Leave), Seek His power and resolve to start using everything you are and have to advance the cause of Christ. It might be leveraging your job or your money or your talents for the kingdom. This is what Wilberforce did in England. He used his talents, position and money to advance godly agendas in politics. Critics told him to strive for something less. They told him that his grandiose passions were unachievable. But Wilberforce was sold out for total victory for King Jesus. He made plans for specific battles realizing that the outcome was God's. In your own realm of influence, try to be as specific as you can on what things you are going to volunteer to Jesus. He is the exalted Priestly King and He is worthy of our best. Amen.