

Christ Reformation Church

Tillamook, Oregon

You Must be Born Again!

“The habit of preachers today is to address their people as though they were all Christians and just need instruction...men and women are being treated as saved who never knew they were lost.” [Lloyd-Jones]

*“In my lifetime I did not care to hear that word that cut me most, and showed me my lost estate aright. I was vexed to hear my sins mentioned, and laid to my charge. I loved him best, who deceived me most; who said, Peace, peace, when there was no such thing.” (Jer. 5:30,31).
[Bunyan, John. A FEW SIGHS FROM HELL]*

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The Lord Blinds and Strikes Down Rulers Who Mock Him

July 28, 2024

Sermon Text: 1 Kings 22:18-22

Scripture Reading: 2 Peter 3

1Co 2:6-10 Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed

to pass away. (7) But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. (8) **None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.** (9) But, as it is written, “What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him”— (10) these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit.

For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.

Acts 13:27-30 For those who live in Jerusalem **and their rulers**, because they did not recognize him nor understand the utterances of the prophets, which are read every Sabbath, fulfilled them by condemning him. (28) And though they found in him no guilt worthy of death, they asked Pilate to have him executed. (29) And when they had carried out all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb. (30) But God raised him from the dead,

We live in a day when we are seeing wicked, evil, ungodly people in the highest offices of our nation. One nation under God has increasingly become a nation under people who love unrighteousness and hate the Lord. They are of the spirit of the antichrist – particularly those who claim to be Christians. And yet they consistently endorse all kinds of terrible wickedness – even putting it into law and

threatening those who stand for what is Godly.

It is interesting that the Apostle Paul so often speaks of the blindness and wickedness of as he calls them – *the rulers of this age*. By this term he means the kings and rulers of this present world *as empowered and directed by principalities and powers in high places who are not flesh and blood*. These are the ones who crucified Christ, the Lord of glory.

Psa 2:1-3 Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? (2) The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against his Anointed, saying, (3) “Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us.”

Why don't these evil rulers of this age recognize Christ? Why do they rage against Him? Why do they exalt themselves to the point of demanding that they be worshipped? It is because the spirit of the antichrist animates them:

2Th 2:3-4 Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, (4) who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God.

“I will be like the Most High” is Satan’s declaration. He sets his kingdom of darkness against God’s kingdom and does all he can to destroy King Jesus and His people – the Church. This war is raging right now in this world.

Now, what I would like to show you very briefly this morning is a repeated pattern in Scripture which tells us how the Lord deals with rulers – kings, governors, presidents, dictators – who rage against Him and do all they can to cast off His rule over them.

This is the pattern I would like us to recognize – and it is a subject which should greatly encourage us:

The Lord always blinds and destroys wicked rulers of this age. He destroys some even now to show us their ultimate destiny and to order them to bow down to King Jesus now or perish when He comes in His kindled wrath, and ultimately he will destroy all such evil rulers. As part of His decree to destroy them along with Satan, He effects a blindness upon them so that they are hardened against Him, and He does this because He desires to kill them for the praise of His glorious justice.

Let me show you this pattern.

1. Pharaoh

Exo 5:1-2 Afterward Moses and Aaron went and said to Pharaoh, “Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, ‘Let my people go, that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness.’” (2) But Pharaoh said, “Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice and let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, and moreover, I will not let Israel go.”

Pharoah represented the kingdom of Satan. He hated the Lord and oppressed the people of the Lord. He killed the Hebrew babies to prevent the Israelites from growing in number. But all of his efforts were thwarted by the Lord and we read this repeatedly in this account:

Exo 7:1-5 And the LORD said to Moses, "See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron shall be your prophet. (2) You shall speak all that I command you, and your brother Aaron shall tell Pharaoh to let the people of Israel go out of his land. (3) But I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and though I multiply my signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, (4) Pharaoh will not listen to you. Then I will lay my hand on Egypt and bring my hosts, my people the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great acts of judgment. (5) The Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch out my hand against Egypt and bring out the people of Israel from among them."

Over and over again, even each time that Pharaoh started to relent, we read that the Lord *hardened his heart*. Why? *Because the Lord, for His own glory, had resolved to destroy Pharaoh and humble all of Egypt. "The Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord!"*

And of course we know how this story ended – with Pharaoh and his army at the bottom of the Red Sea and all of Egypt in shambles.

The Lord blinds and hardens the wicked rulers of this age because He desires to destroy them and therein be glorified. This is why Psalm 2 announces to these rulers that Christ's wrath is about to be kindled and break out upon them and they will perish in His way.

2. Ahab

1Ki 22:13-23 And the messenger who went to summon Micaiah said to him, "Behold, the words of the prophets with one accord are favorable to the king. Let your word be like the word of one of them, and speak favorably." (14)

But Micaiah said, “As the LORD lives, what the LORD says to me, that I will speak.”

(15) And when he had come to the king, the king said to him, “Micaiah, shall we go to Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall we refrain?” And he answered him, “Go up and triumph; the LORD will give it into the hand of the king.”

(16) But the king said to him, “How many times shall I make you swear that you speak to me nothing but the truth in the name of the LORD?” (17) And he said, “I saw all Israel scattered on the mountains, as sheep that have no shepherd. And the LORD said, ‘These have no master; let each return to his home in peace.’”

(18) And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, “Did I not tell you that he would not prophesy good concerning me, but evil?”

(19) And Micaiah said, “Therefore hear the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing

beside him on his right hand and on his left; (20) **and the LORD said, ‘Who will entice Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead?’** And one said one thing, and another said another.

(21) Then a spirit came forward and stood before the LORD, saying, ‘I will entice him.’ (22) And the LORD said to him, ‘By what means?’ And he said, ‘I will go out, **and will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.**’ And he said, ‘You are to entice him, and you shall succeed; go out and do so.’ (23) **Now therefore behold, the LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these your prophets; the LORD has declared disaster for you.**”

Michaiah, a true prophet of God, told Ahab (and us) what was really going on in regard to all the “prophets” who Ahab loved because they always told him what he wanted to hear, and then they stuck God’s name on what they said.

NOTE: Here we have one of the clearest statements in the Bible about what is happening in the churches today. Listen now very carefully.

After speaking the truth to Ahab – that Ahab would be killed and all Israel scattered and routed in defeat – Michaiah pulls back the curtain and shows us exactly what was really going on with these false prophets. In doing so, he shows us what is happening behind the scenes with the majority of preachers today. Here it is. Listen again:

(21) Then a spirit came forward and stood before the LORD, saying, ‘I will entice him.’ (22) And the LORD said to him, ‘By what means?’ And he said, ‘I will go out, **and will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.**’ And he said, ‘You are to entice him, and you shall succeed; go out and do so.’ (23) **Now therefore behold, the LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these your prophets; the LORD has declared disaster for you.**”

See it? The Lord sends lying counselors to wicked rulers of this age because He wants them blind and deceived so that they believe a lie and pursue it to their own destruction. Just as He did with Pharaoh, and so He did with Ahab –

1Ki 22:34-35 But a certain man drew his bow at random and struck the king of Israel between the scale armor and the breastplate. Therefore he said to the driver of his chariot, “Turn around and carry me out of the battle, for I am wounded.” (35) And the battle continued that day, and the king was propped up in his chariot facing the Syrians, until at evening he died. And the blood of the wound flowed into the bottom of the chariot.

NOTE: This is exactly what the Lord does with an apostate church. He hardens and blinds such people and He sends a lying spirit through the personage of lying preachers – *the Lord has put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these your prophets;*

the Lord has declared disaster for you.

We are seeing it today, as it was in Isaiah's day. When a true prophet, a true pastor/preacher/teacher speaks God's truth, such people hate it and hate the messenger just as Ahab hated Micaiah –

Isa 29:9-14 Astonish yourselves and be astonished; blind yourselves and be blind! Be drunk, but not with wine; stagger, but not with strong drink! (10) For the LORD has poured out upon you a spirit of deep sleep, and has closed your eyes (the prophets), and covered your heads (the seers). (11) And the vision of all this has become to you like the words of a book that is sealed. When men give it to one who can read, saying, "Read this," he says, "I cannot, for it is sealed." (12) And when they give the book to one who cannot read, saying, "Read this," he says, "I cannot read." (13) And the Lord said: "Because this people draw near with their mouth and honor me with their lips, while their hearts are far from me, and their fear of

me is a commandment taught by men, (14) therefore, behold, I will again do wonderful things with this people, with wonder upon wonder; and the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the discernment of their discerning men shall be hidden."

The remnant however, (and the Lord always keeps His remnant, His true people), see the lie and reject it. That is why increasingly today we are seeing genuine believers unable to find a church where God's Word is really preached and believed-

1Ki 18:3b-4 Now Obadiah feared the LORD greatly, (4) and when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the LORD, Obadiah took a hundred prophets and hid them by fifties in a cave and fed them with bread and water.

This is how God deals with wicked rulers of this age. He hardens them in their sin, blinds them to truth, and ultimately destroys them. And He deals in the same way with all who follow them.

3. Belteshazzar

The handwriting on the wall. Daniel interpreted it. It was God's declaration that Belteshazzar, who had been mocking God, had come to his end:

Daniel 5:17-31 Then Daniel answered and said before the king, "Let your gifts be for yourself, and give your rewards to another. Nevertheless, I will read the writing to the king and make known to him the interpretation.

(18) O king, the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar your father kingship and greatness and glory and majesty. (19) And because of the greatness that he gave him, all peoples, nations, and languages trembled and feared before him. Whom he would, he killed, and whom he would, he kept alive; whom he would, he raised up, and whom he would, he humbled.

(20) But when his heart was lifted up and his spirit was hardened so that he dealt proudly, he was brought down from his kingly

throne, and his glory was taken from him. (21) He was driven from among the children of mankind, and his mind was made like that of a beast, and his dwelling was with the wild donkeys. He was fed grass like an ox, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, until he knew that the Most High God rules the kingdom of mankind and sets over it whom he will.

(22) And you his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, though you knew all this, (23) but you have lifted up yourself against the Lord of heaven. And the vessels of his house have been brought in before you, and you and your lords, your wives, and your concubines have drunk wine from them. And you have praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone, which do not see or hear or know, but the God in whose hand is your breath, and whose are all your ways, you have not honored. (24) "Then from his presence the hand was sent, and this writing was inscribed. (25) And this is the writing that was

inscribed: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, and PARSIN.

(26) This is the interpretation of the matter: MENE, God has numbered the days of your kingdom and brought it to an end;

(27) TEKEL, you have been weighed in the balances and found wanting;

(28) PERES, your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians.”

(29) Then Belshazzar gave the command, and Daniel was clothed with purple, a chain of gold was put around his neck, and a proclamation was made about him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom.

(30) That very night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was killed. (31) And Darius the Mede received the kingdom, being about sixty-two years old.

Our nation’s highest offices today are filled with wicked people who mock the Lord in everything they do. Some pretend to be Christians, but they are corrupt, they constantly lie, and the laws they

press upon the nation are laws which call evil good, and good, evil. They should tremble, but they do not because the Lord has hardened their hearts and blinded them so that they believe only lies.

This is what the Lord does. It is a clear pattern in Scripture – those who refuse to humble themselves, who exalt themselves in pride, who lord their evil over a nation, will be blinded to truth and madly chase after a delusion. These people are *delusional*.

2Th 2:9-12 The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, (10) and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. (11) Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, (12) in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

4. Herod

Acts 12:20-24 Now Herod was angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon, and they came to him with one accord, and having persuaded Blastus, the king's chamberlain, they asked for peace, because their country depended on the king's country for food. (21) On an appointed day Herod put on his royal robes, took his seat upon the throne, and delivered an oration to them. (22) And the people were shouting, "The voice of a god, and not of a man!" (23) **Immediately an angel of the Lord struck him down, because he did not give God the glory, and he was eaten by worms and breathed his last.** (24) But the word of God increased and multiplied.

Psalms 2:10-12 Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. (11) Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. (12) Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

All of these wicked rulers are energized by and are servants of Satan, the ultimate one being the Antichrist – the Beast. As it has been with all of these underlings, so it will be with this Man of Lawlessness:

Rev 13:4-8 And they worshiped the dragon, for he had given his authority to the beast, and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?"

(5) And the beast was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words, and it was allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months. (6) It opened its mouth to utter blasphemies against God, blaspheming his name and his dwelling, that is, those who dwell in heaven. (7) Also it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them. And authority was given it over every tribe and people and language and nation, (8) **and all who dwell on earth will worship it**, everyone whose name has not been written before the

5. Antichrist

foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain.

This one is coming, all in accordance with the sovereign decree of the Lord, for His glory. His spirit is working today and we are seeing it increase even in the so-called Christian nations such as our own. More and more we are seeing rulers and people embracing lies which are delusions. This is the judgment of God, it is His blinding of them because He desires to destroy them. They mock Him – even just recently mocking the Last Supper with vile perverted scenes in the opening ceremonies of the Olympics. But God is not mocked – whatever a man sows, that he shall also reap.

Where is our encouragement in all of this darkness? It is in this – listen once more:

2Th 2:8-12 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming. (9) The coming of the lawless one

is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, (10) and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. (11) Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, (12) in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

This is what God has always done with the evil rulers of this age and the day is rapidly approaching when the last of them will be destroyed forever. These mocking leaders in our own nation should fear and tremble. But they will not. They are hardened. They are blinded. And the Lord's Day is coming.