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Concordia Lutheran Mission
Terrebonne, Oregon

"Jesus Governs All Things to Build His Church through Gospel."

"Thou hast made him to have dominion over the works of thy hands;
thou hast put all things under his feet"
Psalm 8:6.

Introduction

After Christ's suffering and resurrection from the dead, does He cease working for His Church? Certainly not. Christ does not rest on His laurels, but is working vigorously for His Church to this day. David, therefore, writes that Christ has dominion over all the works of God's hands God has put all things under His feet.

And because this dominion and subjugation is granted to the Messiah, the Savior of all men, then this dominion and subjugation is done for the sake of the Church. For God became man not to have dominion over the works of His hands and to subjugate all things; God need not become man to have dominion over and subjugate His creation. That already happened when God created. But rather, this dominion and subjugation is granted for the sake of the Church. For God became man in order to save men from their sins. Consequently, God leaves nothing out of the realm of the control of the Messiah so that He might take care of everything for the benefit of His beloved Church.

The knowledge that their Savior controls all things comforts Christians in the life wherein they are assaulted by the world, the flesh, and the devil because they are Christians.¹

And Christ takes care of, builds, and sustains the Church through the Gospel. For the Gospel is God's grace that forgives sin, creates saving faith, saves men, and makes men a part of Christ's Church.

Jesus, then, continues work for His Church by governing all things to build His Church through the Gospel.

¹"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose." **Romans 8:28**

I. God Gives Jesus Dominion over and Subjugates All Things to Jesus for the Sake of His Church.

A. Christ is granted dominion over all things and all things are subjugated to Him because He has accomplished man's salvation.

Why is Jesus granted dominion over all things and all things are subjugated to Him? Jesus is given this because He obeyed God and accomplished man's salvation. In the previous verse we read:

For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.²

Even though Christ is the Angel of the Lord³, nevertheless, He is reckoned lower than them. Why? Christ, even though He is the Angel of the Lord, is reckoned lower than the angels because here He is forsaken of God. The expression "lower than the angels" is an expression for the underlying Hebrew which states:

And Thou hast made Him to do without God for a little while.⁴

²**Psalm 8:5**

³³“Jesus appears as God on the pages of the Old Testament. He reveals Himself under such titles as ‘Angel of the Lord,’ Whenever in the Old Testament the name ‘Lord’ occurs, it is pre-eminently not the Father, nor the Holy Spirit, but the Son of God. Ex. 13:21 Moses writes of the Israelites in the wilderness: ‘And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of fire, to give them light.’ Who is this Lord? Ch. 14:19 He is called ‘the Angel of God,’ which is a well-known appellation of Jesus in the Old Testament. Here the Angel of God is directly termed ‘Lord.’ All doubt is removed by Paul (I Cor. 10:3-4): ‘Our fathers did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them; *and that Rock was Christ.* ... Luther writes: ‘The God who led Israel out of Egypt and through the Red Sea; who went before them in a pillar of a cloud and of fire; who nourished them with bread from heaven and did all the miracles which Moses relates in his books; again, who brought them into the land of Canaan and gave them kings and the priesthood and everything, is this God and none other than Jesus of Nazareth. Mary's, the Virgin's Son, whom we Christians call our God and Lord, whom the Jews have crucified and still today blaspheme and curse, as Isaiah says, 8:21: ‘They shall fret themselves, and curse their King and their God.’ Again, He it is who on Mount Sinai gives Moses the Ten Commandments. ... Yes, Jesus of Nazareth, who died for us on the cross is the God who says in the First Commandment: ‘I, the Lord, am thy God.’” *The Abiding Word*, Vol. I, pp. 20, 21.

⁴**Psalm 8:5**

While the angels do always behold the Father's face⁵, the Angel of the Lord, the Captain of the Lord's host⁶, lacks God and is forsaken by God because He bears the sins of the world. Isaiah writes of Christ's suffering this lack of God because of our sins:

Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.⁷

By suffering for the sins of men Christ won their salvation and returned them to God.

This victory returned to man his place as the crown of God's creation which man had forfeited to Satan in the Garden of Eden because he disobeyed God and followed the doctrine of the devil. Hence, Jesus states that His Passion casts out the prince of this fallen world, namely, Satan:

Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all *men* unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die.⁸

Because the man Jesus Christ deposed the prince of this fallen world by the Cross, it is only natural and not surprising that the spoils would fall to Him. Jesus says:

But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you. Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house.⁹

And so rightly, God places all things under Jesus' feet because Jesus has crushed the head of Satan and won back His creation and man. And Christ, the Prince of Peace, is now ruler of this world. Furthermore, we see that Christ is granted authority over only things God Himself has authority because the Savior is God Himself in the flesh. Luther writes:

Lest there be a gap in the text, he speaks universally: "Thou hast put all things," he says, "under His feet." This passage is quoted powerfully in Hebrews 2:8: "In

5"That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." **St. Matthew 18:10**

6**Joshua 5:13-15**

7**Isaiah 53:4**

8**St. John 12:31-33**

9**St. Matthew 12:23-29**

putting everything in subjection to Him, He left nothing outside His control.” Adam in Paradise is also made lord over God’s creatures and works, but not everything is put under his feet. Yes, according to the first creation no man is made lord over another man, much less over angels. The text in Genesis 1:28 reads this way: “Have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.” In comparison with the dominion of Christ, that is still a small dominion, namely, a dominion of human reason over fish, birds, and animals. Here the text reads much differently: “Thou hast put all things under His feet,” excluding nothing but the Father, who has subjected everything to the Son (1 Cor. 15:27). And this dominion extends to angels, men, and everything that is in heaven and on earth. ... Therefore Christ is a much greater and higher lord than Adam was before the Fall. For nothing was subjected to Adam or put under his feet, but everything is put under Christ’s feet, so that the whole world and all His enemies will have to be His footstool (Ps. 110:1). Therefore this text cannot be neglected, since it strongly proves the doctrine that Christ is true God and man. If He were not man, He could not be called ... son of man. If He were not God, He could not be Lord over all the works of God nor have all things under His feet. For no one has a right to be Lord over heaven, earth, angels, man, life—yes, over sin and death—except one who is true God by nature.¹⁰

Christ rules all things because He is the True God, but also the True Man who has won for all men salvation from sin, from death, and from the power of the devil.

B. Christ governs all things for the sake of the Church.

And if Christ has won such a great victory that subjects all things to Him and gives Him dominion over all things, for what reason does He rule all things? Christ rules all things for the sake of His Church which has redeemed by His Passion. Jesus says:

All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.¹¹

Luther writes:

Therefore everything in the wide world belongs to Christ, the Ruler. What emperors, kings, princes, government and subjects, believers and unbelievers, godly and godless people have and own—all this is Christ’s. It is all subjected to Him, all men must be under this King and Ruler, whether in grace or disgrace. Thus Christ has

¹⁰Luther’s Works, Vol. 12, pp. 133, 134

¹¹St. Matthew 28:18-20

everything in His hand and power. Because He does have everything in His power, His Christians are richly provided for and will get along well, so that they may remain in the world; they will also have enough to eat and drink on earth. St. Paul says (1 Cor. 3:21–23): “All things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future, all are yours; and you are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.”¹²

II. Christ Governs all Things to Build His Church through the Gospel.

A. Christ governs all of human history in order to build His Church through the Gospel.

And notice that Christ says that all power in heaven and earth is given to Him and then tells us to preach the Gospel. Why is that? Christ directs us to the Gospel because He builds His Church alone through the Gospel, namely the free remission of all sins for Christ’s sake communicated to men through the Word and the Sacraments. St. Paul writes:

Therefore if any an *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are come new. And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation. To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.¹³

We become new creatures through the ministry of reconciliation, namely the Gospel that delivers His reconciliation, which reconciliation is the forgiveness of our sins. Christ constantly nurtures and takes care of us through His Gospel

And while this Gospel reconciles us to God, it places us at odds with the world, our own flesh, and the devil. These are great forces arrayed against Christians because of their faith. The Lutheran Church states:

... look about you and see whether you are also in the world, or if you do not know it, ask your neighbors about it. If you are in the world, do not think that there will be lack of sins and misery. For only begin to act as though you would be godly and adhere to the Gospel, and see whether no one will become your enemy, and, moreover, do you harm, wrong, and violence, and likewise give you cause for sin and vices. If you have not experienced it, then let the Scriptures tell you, which everywhere give this praise and testimony of the world.¹⁴

¹²*Luther’s Works*, Vol. 12:135

¹³**II Corinthians 5:17-19**

¹⁴*The Large Catechism, [Part Fifth], Of the Sacrament of the Altar.*79

Consequently, it is a great comfort for Christians to know that Christ, after all He has done for us, is not sitting upon His laurels but is actively working in behalf of His Church, governing all human history from the Right Hand of God's omnipotent power. St. Paul, therefore, writes:

For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord¹⁵.

St. Bernard, therefore, speaks of the comfort of having our Savior seated at the Right Hand of God's omnipotent power:

This is the kind of joy and comfort St. Bernard had in his heart, so that he could say, on the basis of this article: "How can I ever become sad and mournful or discouraged? After all, my flesh and blood sits in heaven above. I expect He will not be my enemy." For St. Bernard to apply this to himself and to boast this way is certainly a genuinely spiritual, heavenly, and divine thought, derived from his faith. For he had also amounted to something in the world. He had been rich enough, noble, learned, and holy. But before God St. Bernard knows no other boast or comfort than this Lord.¹⁶

B. Psalm 8 shows the Christ is working in behalf of His Church in every circumstance and at all times.

Psalm 8, therefore, reveals to us that Christ is always active and laboring mightily for His Church, from winning our salvation through His Passion, to delivering that salvation to us through the Gospel, to governing all things for the sake of building His beloved Church through the Gospel. Luther writes:

Thus the Holy Spirit through the prophet David instructs us in this psalm by short, clear words about the following topics: Christ; the two natures in Christ, His divine and human nature, which nevertheless are so united that Christ is a single, undivided person; Christ's dominion and kingdom, the kingdom of faith, how and by what means Christ's kingdom on earth is established, namely, through the mouths of babes and sucklings; the fruit and power of Christ's kingdom, and the end it serves and what it does and accomplishes, namely, destroys the enemy and the avenger; the glory and the renewal of the creation in the kingdom of sight; Christ's humiliation, suffering, and death; Christ's resurrection, exaltation, and glorification;

15Romans 8:38-39

16*Luther's Works*, Vol. 13, p. 245

His dominion and power over all creatures. In a fine and happy way this psalm proves these sublime doctrines with simple and short words.¹⁷

Conclusion

Jesus, then, did not ascend to heaven and sit down at the right hand of God to cease laboring for His Church. On the contrary, Jesus continues to labor mightily for His Church, ruling all things for the sake of building His Church through His Gospel.

Christians, therefore, know and greatly comforted and strengthened in the knowledge that all things work together for their good. For Christ rules *all things* for the sake of building and preserving His Church in saving faith through the Gospel unto the life everlasting and the resurrection of the body.

Amen.

¹⁷*Luther's Works*, Vol. 12, p.135