

sovereignty has always been considered seditious by humanistic governments because it exposes the lie of their claims to absolute sovereignty.

The culture of the ancient world was steeped in the lie of the divinity of the state. The rulers were often considered gods and were worshipped by the people. They had absolute power and answered to no man. It was a central part of the pagan culture of death. The Word of God concerning Christ's deity and absolute authority challenged the lie of the divinity of the state. It established that there was indeed another king, a king that even Caesar must bow to, Jesus Christ the Lord. This message is central to the proclamation of the kingdom of God, and it leads to a culture (society) of life, liberty, and prosperity.

The evangelical church of today has largely abandoned the doctrine of Christ's Lordship. They reject that the Gospel has profound political implications (to the delight of political secularists and tyrants). Therefore, they have little to say to the humanistic government of our day and its claims of sovereignty. They will not preach to magistrates that "there is another king, one Jesus."

But brethren, *we must*. Let us preach the implications of the Lordship of Christ for politics. Let us challenge every claim to sovereignty put forth by a humanistic state and preach that *Christ is King of the nations*.

Printed By:  
Grace Baptist Church  
2611 Pulaski Pike  
Huntsville, Al. 35810

## There Is Another King

by William Einwechter

*And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also; whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus (Acts 17:6-7).*

As the disciples of Jesus Christ went forth into the world to preach the Word of God committed to them by their Lord, they met with great resistance both from the Jews and the Gentiles. It is not hard to understand why. The message that they proclaimed was not according to the wisdom of men, but according to the wisdom of God. As such, it was offensive to rebellious men who had rejected the truth of God and had built their lives and their cultures on the supposition of their own superior wisdom and knowledge (Rom. 1:17-25).

Accordingly, their institutions and practices were mostly corrupt, being built upon the lie and not the truth; the result were cultures of death (Rom. 1:26-32).

Into these cultures of death came the servants of Jesus Christ with the Word of Truth, proclaiming the kingdom of God--a culture of life! The truth of

God preached by these courageous Christians clashed violently with the lies upon which pagan culture had been built. Their message was hated and despised, but not by all. Christ had bound the strongman and was now plundering his house (Matt. 12:28-29). Those "ordained to eternal life believed" (Acts 13:48) and were added to the church. Lives were transformed, and the kingdom of God advanced irresistibly. The truth of God penetrated the darkness and all areas of life were deeply affected by it, including the political sphere.

So great was the effect of the Word of God in the Roman empire of the first century that the enemies of the Gospel charged the disciples with turning "the world upside down" (Acts 17:6). This charge is very instructive. The word translated "world" refers to the inhabited world or, more specifically, to the Roman Empire. The English phrase "have turned the world upside down" is translated from a single Greek term that means to stir up, excite, trouble, unsettle, turn upside down. The word was used as a political metaphor to speak of those who raised tumults and seditions against the state. Therefore, the charge that was leveled against the disciples of Christ before the magistrates of the Roman city of Thessalonica was that they were exciting the people to rebel against Roman authority; they were charged with sedition.

Furthermore, they said that the disciples "all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar...." Does this mean that the Christians of the first century were not obedient to the civil laws of the Empire? No. Insofar

as those laws did not violate the law of God, the early Christians were law-abiding citizens in submission to their rulers (cf. Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Pet. 2:13-15). The "decrees of Caesar" should be understood in the wider sense of sovereignty or government.<sup>1</sup> In other words, they were charged with challenging Caesar's claim of absolute sovereignty over his subjects. That this is the sense of the accusation is made definite in the next phrase, "saying that there is another king, one Jesus." As Alexander states: "The particular violation of the imperial rights here charged was the proclamation of a rival sovereign."<sup>2</sup>

The message of Christ's absolute Lordship over all things in heaven and earth was correctly perceived by the authorities as having strong political implications. If Christ is Lord of all, then He is Caesar's Lord as well. And if He is Caesar's Lord, then Caesar is His subject, and accountable to rule as Christ's minister and for Christ's interests. These implications, of course, were detestable to Rome; they would allow no challenge to their claim of absolute authority from any source. Rome would serve no one and only seek her own interest (cf. Ps. 2:1-2).

It was the preaching of Christ's Lordship over all things, including the state that led to the persecution of the church by Rome. Mark well, the church was not persecuted by Rome for preaching Christ as Savior, but for preaching Christ as *Lord*; for preaching "that there is another king, one Jesus." The faithful preaching of Christ's absolute