

# Jesus Christ Is a Despot

When Shakespeare penned Juliet's famous words "What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet," he intended Juliet to convince Romeo to abandon all his formal ties to his family, since they were warring with Juliet's family. Juliet pressed upon Romeo, who was from the family of Montague, that he himself was the person she loved, not Romeo *of Montague*, a name which contained so much unnecessary baggage of family name, relatives, and past disagreement with her family. In response, Romeo, with Esau-like travesty, deliberately turned his back on his name, essentially denying his father, and was content to be known simply as Juliet's lover.

Could there be anything more tragic? Yes; a far greater tragedy occurs regularly in Christianity. It is the calamity that has many believers promoting a view of God that is divorced from that found in the Bible. Like Juliet, they are content to let peace, warm feelings, or pragmatism win the day. After all, the God of the Bible comes with a ferocity that unsettles many and upsets a myriad of apple carts.

In our day, people are attempting to protect God from what the Bible says about Him. For example, many Christian books speak of God using paraphrased interpretations of the Bible like *The Message* because these nonliteral "Bibles" dull the stark transcendence of God. For their publishers and readers, the sign posted states, "No sharp edges, please." In a culture where many evangelicals want to park their theological cars on the pavement of "God is so crazy about me," some biblical words are too jagged and cutting to use in the company of polite, sophisticated people. "Despot" is certainly one of these words. When did you last hear the phrase "Jesus is a Despot"? Well, He is.

Does language like this cause you to cringe? Let's face it: words like this are not common parlance for the twenty-first-century Christian. Perhaps an atheist or someone criticizing the Christian faith would use them, but evangelicals rarely call God a Despot.

Phrases like "Jesus is a Despot" tend to invoke visceral reactions. To

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many, “Jesus is a Despot” are veritable fighting words. Are thoughts of God as Despot actually blasphemous? For certain, this chapter’s title is mentally provocative and is like a goad or sharp cowboy spur driven into the ribs of a horse, or, in this case, into you.

I will never forget when I first read that God was jealous. I could not wrap my mind around that concept. It seemed so foreign, so unlike God (and, from a natural, fallen perspective, it is). I immediately grabbed the only resource available to me that addressed my problem: *Baker’s Dictionary of Theology*.<sup>1</sup> In a brilliant article, the author confirmed my worst nightmare: God is jealous. Really jealous. Repeatedly jealous. Righteously jealous. Gradually, I submitted to the clear revelation of Scripture, and the Holy Spirit sealed this marvelous truth in my mind. God and His Word were not the source of the problem; that was within my finite and fallen mind, and in the way I had always associated sinful and unbiblical thoughts with the word “jealous.” I needed my sinful thoughts sanded down so that they could be contoured to match what God said plainly in His Word. It is the same with this concept of “despot.” I intend to rivet the truth that Jesus is a Despot into your mind and have you accept it into your theological grid. I want you to affirm these words of Curt Daniel:

The universe is not a democracy. God’s authority is not based on a majority vote. Nor is it an oligarchy, or shared authority, much less anarchy. No, God is the undisputed King of all ... God is a totalitarian despot, but a holy one. Now, to the non-Reformed ear, these words sound severe and unbecoming of God. “What, is God a cruel despot like Adolf Hitler? Is He a totalitarian dictator like Idi Amin? Is he an unquestioned potentate like Stalin?”<sup>2</sup>

No, God is not like them. Remember that God’s sovereignty is a holy sovereignty. Nevertheless, He is still a King with unlimited authority in Himself over all people and things.<sup>3</sup>

### **Four Cushions to Help Absorb the Initial Shock**

To alleviate any initial fears and to allow you to more quickly get over the shock to your system, let us look at four clarifications that will serve as

spiritual shock absorbers. These four facts should help muffle the troubling sound of the theological implications of God as Despot. Just as modern automobiles come complete with air bags designed to minimize damage in a collision, so the following discussion will help ease most of the stress associated with considering God as an absolute Ruler. A reaction similar to that experienced when fingernails are scratched over a chalkboard need not result when we associate the word “despot” with God. As you will soon see, the Bible itself uses the concept of “despot” to describe God’s Lordship. Facts being facts, the sooner we can learn to face them, the sooner we will think biblically.

### **THE ORIGIN OF THE WORD “DESPOT” REMOVES THE NEGATIVE CONNOTATION**

The initial negative reaction can be tempered by being reminded of the very real differences between the Greek, Hebrew, and English language definitions of “despot.” The English word comes from the Greek *despotes*. The English word is itself broken down into *des* and *pot*. *Des* is short for *domos* (“house”; hence “domicile”) and *pot* is short for *potentate* (“lord” or “ruler”). Thus, “despot” literally means “house ruler” or “house lord” (lord of the house or master of the household). Certainly, every Bible student would concur with the great creed “Jesus is Lord” (Phil. 2:11), so why would anyone fuss and fume over “Jesus is Potentate”? Why is there an unenthusiastic reaction to “Jesus is a Despot”?

The answer is obvious. In history, “despot” has most commonly been used for ogre-like leaders who have controlled their people completely and ruthlessly. A great example of an ancient despot would be any of the pharaohs of Egypt.

As time passed, the words “tyrannical” and “despot” began to be regularly linked together, like a ball and tether. For example, the modern-day English dictionary meaning of “despot” is “a ruler with absolute power and authority [or] a person exercising power tyrannically.”<sup>4</sup> It is fascinating that the most common usage of this word today defaults to that second, negative definition; it is important to study words in their historical contexts.

### **FAMILIARITY WITH THE BIBLICAL GREEK REVEALS THE TRUE DESPOT-LIKE CHARACTER OF CHRIST**

The second and closely related contributor to the problem with seeing God as Despot is found in the distance between the English language and the Greek New Testament. For reasons unknown to us, Bible translators preferred to translate the Greek word for “despot” in a nonliteral fashion. While many words, such as the Greek for “baptism,” are strictly transliterated, “despot” cannot be found in any English translation that I know of. Yet the Greek text reveals Jesus Christ as something far greater than a viceroy, grand duke, archduke, duke, count, tsar, or baron. He is not portrayed as a president, nor is He shown to be a prime minister. The entire corpus of Holy Scripture portrays Jesus Christ of Nazareth as the God who towers over, and rules over, all—including pharaohs, chieftains, kaisers, khans, shahs, and sultans. Jesus is the King. Jesus is the Despot. And the Greek Bible does not hide from that fact.

When studying a word in the Bible, it is important to go further than simply perusing a couple of English dictionaries. If you don’t know Hebrew and biblical Greek, find a resource that does and start there.

### **DON’T LET THE PREVALENT CULTURE OF INDEPENDENCE IN WESTERN GOVERNMENT, CULTURE, AND SOCIETY INHIBIT YOUR UNDERSTANDING**

The third aid to facilitating scriptural thinking is to honestly reflect upon our origin and who we are. It is very difficult for fish to think about life outside the aquarium; likewise it is complicated for us to look at our culture and life externally and objectively, but we must.

The concepts of freedom and independence ring loudly and truly for almost every Westerner today (and most Easterners too). Arguably, the trinity of autonomy, self-determination, and choice is at the top of the charts for the majority of people in the world today. Curt Daniel brilliantly portrays the reaction of today’s culture when it figures out that God is King and therefore culture is not, as it once thought, autonomous. He says that the doctrine of the utter sovereignty of God

... sounds harsh to our Western ears, we who are so accustomed to democracy. But let’s go deeper. Why do men resist this great truth? It is this: it strikes them to their very

being that God is God, not them. And men want to be little gods (Gen. 3:5). There is, therefore, something about the sovereignty of God that sticks in the craw of sinful man. Note that I said “sinful” man, for the holy angels and redeemed men in heaven have no trouble with this truth whatsoever. On the contrary, they rejoice in it daily. But sinful worms called “men” here below rebel against it.<sup>5</sup>

Sinful men and women vehemently insist that there must be no external or internal restriction placed upon them. They are like wild stallions refusing both bit and bridle; such independence is clearly a manifestation of the pride of fallen man. Man wants no powerful authority figure exerting influence upon the pursuit of life, liberty, and happiness. Our Western heritage and American culture contribute to our distaste of anything but democracy, as we chant, “One man, one vote. No taxation without representation.”

The US Declaration of Independence triumphantly bellows, “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” But when was the last time you read the entire Declaration of Independence? I would wager that you have forgotten these words:

But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute *Despotism*, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.—Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States [emphasis added].<sup>6</sup>

Despotism is something most Westerners are conditioned to run from, flee from, and, frankly, topple. This aggressive reaction reminds me of the body’s reflex action when the doctor softly hits your knee with a rubber mallet. Man’s reflex is to downplay the rule of God while simultaneously exalting his own autonomy. Yet, eerily, John Hancock penned these

closing words of the Declaration: “And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor.”<sup>7</sup> It sounds as if our forefathers were running from the realm of one despot into that of another! How surreal it would be if Hancock had written, “And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of the Divine *Despot*, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor”! The authors of the Declaration were not undermining God by calling Him the “Divine Providence”; rather, they were stating a fact, a fact that would give the citizens hope, trust, and confidence. The biblical concept of despot should be just as encouraging as the biblical truth of providence.

It behooves us to recognize the culture of independence in which we are living (and in which we have been incubated) and how it can, and probably does, detrimentally affect us.

### **THE PRIDE OF MAN CONTRIBUTES TO THE DISDAIN OF DESPOTS**

Inextricably connected to the previous point is the fact that man’s pride handicaps his understanding of God as Despot. God made man in His likeness and image. In a very real sense, Adam resembled his Creator as he exercised sovereignty over creation. Adam, as image-bearer, acted sovereignly. Sadly, after the Fall, everything was sinfully distorted. Young boys still reflect God’s image as they play army games in the sandbox, deciding who is evil, who is strongest, who lives, who dies, and who wins the war; but there are aspects of fallen image-bearers that are not so cute. Divine sovereignty to the prideful man means that he, the creation, is not the one most highly exalted. Man hates having another King to contend with, and he rebels.

The pride of man, and his disdain for God’s rule, can be heard in the words spoken by Sirhan Sirhan just after he shot Senator Robert Kennedy: “They can gas me, but I am famous; I have achieved in one day what it took Robert Kennedy all his life to do.”<sup>8</sup> The murder of a potential president is heinous, but it is a small infraction compared with the spiritual treason prideful man executes as he attempts to overthrow God’s government and laud himself. As R. C. Sproul said, “Sin is cosmic treason.”<sup>9</sup>

Man's pride blurs his vision and gives him a skewed view of himself, and, more tragically, of God the King. Reflection upon Ella Wheeler Wilcox's poem would benefit all created beings:

You cannot put one little star in motion,  
You cannot shape one single forest leaf,  
nor fling a mountain up, nor sink an ocean,  
presumptuous pigmy, large with unbelief!  
You cannot bring one dawn of regal splendor,  
nor bid the day to shadowy twilight fall,  
nor send the pale moon forth with radiance tender;  
and dare you doubt the One who has done it all?<sup>10</sup>

We should no longer be shocked to think of Jesus as a Despot, as long as we are thinking etymologically and biblically. Let's look at five biblical "exhibits" that reinforce the actuality of God as Despot. Whether we take them separately or together, we should have no further need to wonder if Jesus is a Despot, biblically speaking. Notice how each biblical example yields wonderful insight into the nature and character of God.

### **Exhibit 1: Jude 3–4**

The epistle of Jude, to use terrorism language, profiles false teachers and describes how they, with great subterfuge, infiltrate the church. Second Peter told its first readers that this infiltration would happen in the future, but already, just as God predicted, false teachers had cunningly and covertly slipped into the church, bent on total destruction. Like their father, the devil, these wicked and base offspring were satisfied with nothing less than the defamation of God Himself. They were jealous for their own glory and were ruthless enough to understand that stealth is the wisest vehicle for entrance into the bride of Christ and her sacred fellowship.

Jude, the half-brother of Jesus, had hoped to write to his readers about God's salvation. He initially planned on discussing it and probably reveling in it. Humanly speaking, the Christian church nearly had another book hailing the matchless mercy of Jesus Christ, possibly an epistle

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similar to Romans in its amplification of God's righteousness. However, God the Holy Spirit interrupted Jude and moved him to valiantly vie for the Christian faith, the faith that was unchanging and eternally and irrevocably fixed. The book of Jude is a brilliant call to arms for the Christian, and it is strategically placed just before the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

See if you can find the word that, according to the Greek, should really be translated "despot":

Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints. For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

If you thought that "Master" is a translation of the Greek for "despot," you would be right (this is too easy)! The actual Greek word is *despotan*. Jude calls Jesus our Despot to highlight the devilish depths to which the false teachers go in their attempted usurpation. Jesus the Lord, and absolute Sovereign, is blatantly renounced by the ungodly false teachers. How do they do this? By twisting grace into licentiousness.

Interlopers have a creed. Lacking the real gospel, they feel free to change the sanctifying gospel for a religion of irreverence and loose living. Heretics vainly attempt to excuse their immorality in ways similar to those of atheists, but they disguise it with polite and suitable religious vocabulary. If they really believed that Jesus was Lord and Despot (Master), they would behave in a way commensurate with that fact, because servants are to obey their masters. Since they want unbridled living as their god, however, they need to mentally construct a god who is less than Master and Despot. False teachers crash the gates of the church and spout half-truths about the Person and work of Jesus Christ, trying to minimize and restrict His complete rule so that they can live the way they want to live (and heap up followers who also like sin but still want to name the name of Christ).



Acting like believers, intruders editorially cut and paste biblical truth to fit their own selfish ends. The result is a faith that more resembles science fiction than biblical truth. Thankfully, God knows, sees, and overrules all their satanic shenanigans. Such apostasy is doomed before it is started. God has written down this condemnation beforehand and will mete out a severe punishment that befits this capital crime. Trespassing on God's sovereignty might prove initially profitable (earning power, wealth, and prestige), but sinful impostors will one day be forced to receive the awful judgment from the Master, Jesus Christ.

Do you believe that Jesus is a Master and a Despot? If you believe the Bible, you must affirm that Jesus has total authority and is the supreme Ruler. Knowledge like this should help suppress any desires to follow charlatans and shams who try to dislocate God's grace in an attempt to live licentiously. Thankfully, Jesus is Lord and Master over sinful and false pastors who spout heretical doctrines so that people will follow them.

“Master” is found in a parallel passage, 2 Peter 2:1–3. The exact same Greek word found in Jude 4, *despotan*, is used in verse 1:

But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; and in their greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.

Lying prophets are ghastly when they come from any nation, but when they have their roots in Israel, a nation redeemed from the land of Egypt, it is the supreme felony against God. Jewish teachers stood in a long lineage of men and women who were physically redeemed out of Egypt. Of all people on the planet, Jewish teachers should have known better because of all the temporal and spiritual blessings their nation had received. Peter is expressing utter dismay at Jewish false prophets. They are especially condemned because God had “bought them,” that is redeemed them out of Egypt. The apostle lambasts these false-doctrine smugglers as they sinfully

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import and export damning lies with the ferocity seen on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange as the opening bell rings.

Unlike in Jude 4, the focus of “Master” in 2 Peter 2 is not specifically Jesus Christ. The term refers generally to the God who saved Israel from Egypt.<sup>11</sup> God delivered (bought) a nation from the clutches of Pharaoh and was now repaid with a bevy of false teachers looking to attract followers after themselves. Peter warns his readers of the trouble that is looming. Destructive heresies escort people straight to their damning doom. Thankfully, the Master and Lord knows these people and will soon return to dish out appropriate vengeance.

Below are several other verses describing Jesus as a Despot, but how many more verses would we need to answer the question “Biblically speaking, is Jesus Christ a Despot?” We must be committed to thinking about God as He has revealed Himself in the canon of Scripture. Evangelicals are, by definition, committed to only one source of revelation: the Bible. Just as a sprinter must stay within the prescribed lanes to qualify for the finish, so the Christian confines his or her mind to the lanes of Scripture—that is, with the book of Genesis on one side and the book of Revelation on the other. Anything else is grounds for disqualification as a runner in the race of sanctification. The Scriptures clearly teach that Jesus is the supreme Ruler and that He exerts divine power over the entire world and beyond.

Words have many meanings. The specific meaning of a word must be determined by context and syntax. Unlike the Amplified Bible (which includes every definition of each word, regardless of context), we are not forced to import every single meaning into a word. Just because the definition of “despot” contains a pejorative meaning, it is not incumbent upon the reader to import that meaning—especially when it is used of the Messiah! Jesus never uses His power in an unfair or cruel fashion, so the derogatory part of the definition cannot apply. The pejorative portion of “despot” must not be foisted upon Jesus as if He were some resented, indecisive, human monarch like the French king Louis XVI.

Jesus, thankfully, is the Lord and powerful Master of the Universe. Jesus is God. His Monarchy is absolute and universal. Far from being that of a sinful and selfish tyrant, Christ’s despotism stems from His character of goodness, graciousness, righteousness, and holiness.

## Exhibit 2: Acts 4

In Acts 4, Luke records,

When they had been released, they went to their own companions and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. And when they heard this, they lifted their voices to God with one accord and said, “O *Lord*, it is You who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that is in them, who by the Holy Spirit, through the mouth of our father David Your servant, said,

‘Why did the Gentiles rage,  
And the peoples devise futile things?  
The kings of the earth took their stand,  
And the rulers were gathered together  
Against the Lord and against His Christ.’

For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur.”

(Acts 4:23–28<sup>12</sup>)

With an emphatic “You,” the Lord is extolled as the all-powerful and sovereign Creator (v. 24). The Greek declares that the Despot (*despotes*) made the heavens and the earth through the Holy Spirit! The Christians boldly beseech the Lord, quoting the Messianic Psalm 2. They call upon the all-powerful Sovereign. He surely has the resources and dominion to grant their requests. The evidence is mounting.

## Exhibit 3: Revelation 6

The exiled apostle John provides our third Despot example, saying,

When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained; and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, “How long, O *Lord*, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?” And there was given to each of them a white robe; and they were told that they should rest for a little while longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been, would be completed also.

(Rev. 6:9–11)

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The NET correctly translates “O Lord” in verse 10 as “Sovereign Master.” The Greek word is transliterated as *despotes*. Why would faithful martyrs cry out in united voice, “How long, O Despot?” They appealed to the absolute rule and reign of the only One who would be able to avenge their blood. It is God’s prerogative to judge and to pay back. Who else is able to accomplish such a feat? This holy King and Judge would properly and adequately retaliate on their behalf. Far from being some kind of genocidal, Pol-Pot-type tyrant, this Despot is holy and true. He righteously reigns and should be the object of all the saints’ prayers—even yours! If the martyrs can trust the King in a horrendous situation like the tribulation, how much more can we confidently rely upon the Sovereign Master, the Despot!

### Exhibit 4: 2 Timothy 2

What does Timothy teach us about God in the following verses?

Now in a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels, but also vessels of wood and of earthenware, and some to honor and some to dishonor. Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the *Master*, prepared for every good work. (2 Tim. 2:20–21)

The Greek word *despotes* is used in verse 21. God, the holy Despot and Master, employs cleansed vessels. Translating this as “Master” is so much better than “Lord” because it gives the reader an inkling that the Greek word used is not *kurios*. Even if you believe that *kurios* and *despotes* have the exact same meaning (which is not the case), it is helpful to know when the Greek New Testament uses one or the other. God Himself wants you to know this; otherwise He would have had His apostles write *kurios* or *despotes* consistently. Paul’s illustration in this letter is driving this point home: God’s people run from iniquity (v. 19). Just as the master of a household uses proper tools to get the job finished, so too God, as Master and Despot, employs holy and pure lives for His gospel work.

Household masters own some vessels (such as household jars, tools, containers, and dishes) that are for special occasions and purposes; these are used for honor. Other vessels are relegated to common and menial use

(such as privy pots); these are used for dishonor. Timothy and every other Christian leader or layperson should strive to be used by the divine Despot for noble and honoring purposes.

### **Exhibit 5: Luke 2**

Lastly, God is seen as a Despot in chapter 2 of Luke:

And there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to carry out for Him the custom of the Law, then he took Him into his arms, and blessed God, and said, "Now *Lord*, You are releasing Your bond-servant to depart in peace, According to Your word; For my eyes have seen Your salvation, Which You have prepared in the presence of all peoples, A light of revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel." And His father and mother were amazed at the things which were being said about Him. And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary His mother, "Behold, this Child is appointed for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and for a sign to be opposed—and a sword will pierce even your own soul—to the end that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed." (Luke 2:25–35)

Based on typical English translations, most readers would never see the importance of the word "Lord." They would assume that the original word is no different from the regular use of *kurios*. Yet here God the Holy Spirit intends the Greek word *despotes* to be understood. What fine distinction does the Author want the reader to grasp? In this passage, there is a reason to consider God as the authoritative Master who rules the world. The NIV translation is to be commended for translating this word as "Sovereign Lord," prompting the reader to ask, "Why these words?" The answer Paul would give (2 Tim. 2:20–21) is that God owns and controls all things, including people (referred to as "vessels").

Won't you praise God, the Despot, with Simeon? Exalt the King who

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reigns over life and death! Speak well of the God who sovereignly brings all prophecies to pass! Do not let language like this disturb you. Biblical language is not meant to act like a small rock in your shoe or stick in your craw, but, instead, to magnify your praise and give you a reason for joy in a world of sin.

### Summary

The next time you read your Bible and run across the word “Master” or “Lord,” you might want to stop and check the original text. The introductions to most Bibles tell the readers how *Adonai*, *Yahweh*, and *Elohim* are translated, yet do not reveal when the original language denotes the meaning of “Despot.”

As you ponder the nature of God, make certain that you think of “Despot” as the most powerful Ruler, not as some vindictive tyrant. Void your mind of simple notions of human emperors and Byzantine princes, and focus on what God means by what He has said in Scripture. This will ensure that your mind does not drift toward thoughts of political powers or statehoods.

God’s universe has no room for majorities, oligarchies, or democracies. God created the universe and it is His alone to govern. Thankfully, the Lord of lords is benevolent and gracious in the ruling of His totalitarian regime. God is a Despot, or, to use the Latin, He is *dominus*! Unlike the Emperors of Trebizond, who became rulers by inheritance, cunning, or popular vote, Jesus was never awarded this position for His services or given this title by mortal man. Instead, the God-Man is Despot by His eternal nature, essence, and Word.

### Hymn

Rejoice, the Lord is King! Your Lord and King adore;  
Mortals, give thanks and sing, and triumph evermore;  
Lift up your heart, lift up your voice;  
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

Jesus, the Savior, reigns, the God of truth and love;  
When He had purged our stains He took His seat above;

Lift up your heart, lift up your voice;  
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

His kingdom cannot fail, He rules o'er earth and Heav'n,  
The keys of death and hell are to our Jesus giv'n;  
Lift up your heart, lift up your voice;  
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

He sits at God's right hand till all His foes submit,  
And bow to His command, and fall beneath His feet:  
Lift up your heart, lift up your voice;  
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

He all His foes shall quell, shall all our sins destroy,  
And every bosom swell with pure seraphic joy;  
Lift up your heart, lift up your voice,  
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

Rejoice in glorious hope! Jesus the Judge shall come,  
And take His servants up to their eternal home.  
We soon shall hear th'archangel's voice;  
The trump of God shall sound, rejoice!

(Charles Wesley, 1744)

### Notes

- 1 **Walter E. Elwell** (ed.), *Baker's Dictionary of Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996); available under "Dictionaries" at: [biblestudytools.com](http://biblestudytools.com). Accessed November 2010.
- 2 **Curt D. Daniel**, *The History and Theology of Calvinism* (Springfield, IL: Reformed Bible Church, 2003), 229.
- 3 I cannot overemphasize how valuable Curt Daniel's work is for all serious students of the Bible.
- 4 "Despot," at *Merriam-Webster* online: [merriam-webster.com](http://merriam-webster.com). Accessed November 2010.
- 5 **Daniel**, *History and Theology of Calvinism*, 228.
- 6 "The Unanimous Declaration of the Thirteen United States of America," July 4, 1776; cited at: [ushistory.org](http://ushistory.org). Accessed November 2010.

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7 Ibid.

8 Cited at “The Study of Assassination,” at: [assassinology.org](http://assassinology.org). Accessed November 2010.

9 **R. C. Sproul**, *The Holiness of God* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1985), 115–116.

10 **Ella Wheeler Wilcox**, “Presumption,” at: [readbookonline.net](http://readbookonline.net). Accessed February 2011.

11 Second Peter’s general reference to God is actually confirmed to be Jesus via Jude 4. Blum says, “The focal point of their error was christological; they were ‘denying the sovereign Lord who bought them.’ The sovereign Lord (*despotes*) is Christ ... as in the parallel in Jude 4” (**Edwin Blum**, “2 Peter,” in *Hebrews–Revelation*, vol. 12 of **Frank E. Gaebelein** and **J. D. Douglas** (eds.), *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* (CD-ROM; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984).

12 Emphasis in all Scripture quotations is mine.