

Why Do the Heathen Rage?

Text: Psalm 2:1-12 Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

Purpose: The purpose of this psalm is to reflect on the folly of men who rebel against God's authority, and calls all of us to live Christ-centered lives.

Proposition: God wants you to live a Christ-centered life.

Interrogative: How can I live a Christ-centered life?

Truth 1: Rebellion: We need to understand human nature: 2:1-3 "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us."

- **This is written from the perspective of the observer/historian**
- **Five Universal Response of Ungodly People:**
 - **Mankind is angry with God:** The heathen rage...
 - Cain with his brother Abel.
 - The Jewish Sanhedrin.
 - **Mankind thinks they can somehow beat God's justice system:** They imagine a vain thing...
 - Satan puts in Judas heart to betray Christ.
 - The mobs in Jerusalem said His blood be upon us and our children.
 - Pharaoh as he pursues the Hebrews into the Red Sea.
 - **Mankind takes active steps to coordinate to beat God's justice system:** They set themselves...
 - The nations at the Tower of Babel.
 - Saul of Tarsus as seeks Christians in Damascus.
 - **Mankind deliberates together against God:** They take counsel together...
 - Herodias and her daughter to provoke Herod to kill John the Baptist.
 - The Jewish religious establishment seeking to take Jesus.
 - **Mankind hates God's authority:** They say, let us break their bands...
 - The nation of Israel when they demanded a king near the end of Samuel's life.
- **Written in the form of a question: Why**

Ecclesiastes 12:1-7 Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them...In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble (**you won't be able to control your most basic movements**), and the strong men shall bow themselves (**you won't be able to stand up straight**), and the grinders cease because they are few (**you will loose your teeth**), and those that look out of the windows be darkened (**you won't be able to see clearly anymore**), And the doors shall be shut in the streets (**you won't be bale to get out of your house**), when the sound of the grinding is low (**you won't be able to hear anymore**), and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird (**you won't be able to stay in bed**), and all the daughters of musick shall be brought low (**childhood songs will pass away and your ability to hear them will be lost**); Also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden (**you won't be able to pick up normal physical loads**), and desire shall fail (you will loose the drive to get simple tasks done): because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets (**you will die and people will mourn your passing away**)...Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

Truth 2: Righteousness: We need to understand how God will ultimately deal with mankind's rebellion: 2:4-6 "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion."

- **This sections is written from the perspective of God the Father:**
- **How does God view people who have set themselves in anger and rebellion against Him?**
- **There is a season of God's gracious and good hand, but that season is temporary: Matthew 5:44-45** But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust... **Romans 5:6** When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly... **Acts 17:30** And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness... **Romans 2:2-6** We are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth...And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, Who will render to every man according to his deeds...
- **He that sitteth in the heavens:** He is in the position of highest authority.
- **Shall laugh...and have them in derision:** He looks at them and their rebellion with utter disdain.
- **Then shall He speak:** God withholds His justice for a season, but that season is meant to be space to be humbled and repent, rather than seen as disinterest.

- **Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill: God has already established Christ as the rightful judge and heir of this Kingdom. Revelation 5:1-5** And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

Truth 3: Sovereignty: We need to remember Christ's future role as King and

Judge: 2:7-9 I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

- **This section is written from the perspective of Christ the Son:**
- **This day have I begotten thee:** He is referring to the moment that Christ rises from the dead and ultimately triumphs over sin, death, and the grave **1 Corinthians 15:53-57** This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ...**Acts 13:26-33** Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent. For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him. And though they found no cause of death in him, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain. And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre. But God raised him from the dead: And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people. And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.
- **I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance: Daniel 7:13-14** I saw...one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.
- **Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron and dash them like a potter's vessel:** God will swiftly and decisively judge the wicked.

Truth 4: Worship: We need to live a worship-filled life: 2:10-12 Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and

rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him...

- **The wise observer:** Be wise therefore.
- **Serve the Lord:** Give your strength to His pursuits and His glory, rather than your own.
- **Rejoice with trembling:** Glory in Him and have a humble disposition toward Him.
- **Kiss the Son:** Have an affectionate position of worship to God.
- **Trust the Lord:** Walk in humble trust.

Several Final Thoughts:

- If you have been imposing on God's grace, turn from your presumption and get serious about your true condition before God.
- If you are fighting God, humble yourself in repentance because you cannot win.
- If you living a self-centered life, realize the emptiness of your life and its inability to provide the satisfaction you are pursuing.
- If you are discouraged with the state of this world and our culture, remember that Christ is King and will eventually establish His rule forever.
- If you are frustrated with God's apparent lack of action in difficult circumstances and toward difficult people, remember that His patience should not be misunderstood.

Conclusion: God wants us to be Christ-centered people. May we live out our lives as this Psalm exhorts us!