

Aug. 6, 2017

King of the Nations

Psalm 2

“In the world, you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”

LTS: Psa. 141

This morning we return to the O.T. to meditate on the word of God offered to us in the Psalms. Last week we spent our whole time together looking at Psalm 1. The message of Psalm 1 is that there are two ways to live. There is the way of the righteous and the way of the wicked. The emphasis of Psalm 1 is on the blessed way of the righteous. Who are the righteous? They are NOT people who obey every command in the Bible. They are not men and women who have attained some kind of moral perfection by their works. No, as we learned last time from Psalm 32, the difference between the righteous and the wicked is NOT that the righteous commit NO sin, but rather that their sin has been forgiven.

The divine author set Psalm 1 as a gate keeper for Israel and all who would come to this Temple of wisdom to worship. It stands at the front door of the Psalms to invite men and women, boys and girls of Israel to enter the life of blessing that can be found in a relationship with God according to His word.

Psalm 1 is not, however, the only sentry at the entrance gate of the Psalms. Psalm 2 stands shoulder to shoulder with Psalm 1 also with a message for all who would enter this hallowed ground of worship and prayer. The message of Psalm 2, however, counterbalances the message of Psalm 1. While the first Psalm emphasizes the blessedness of a life grounded in God's word, the second Psalm emphasizes the grave danger looming over those who reject and rebel against Almighty God and His Son who sits upon the throne to rule and reign over all.

This message, however, is not merely for O.T. Israel. It is a profoundly practical message for people who live in this present darkness. It is a message of warning. It is a message of fear. It is a message of pending judgment! But it is also a message of divine grace, salvation, and invitation to all who have ears to hear.

The text of Psalm 2 can be divided into four equal parts (3 verses each):

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| I. The Rebellion of the Nations | (The Nations Speak) vv. 1-3 |
| II. The Rebuke of God | (The Father Speaks) vv. 4-6 |
| III. The Reign of Messiah | (The Son Speaks) vv. 7-9 |
| IV. The Refuge of the Son | (The Holy Spirit Speaks) vv.10-12 |

Read Psalm 2

I. The Rebellion of the Nations (The Nations Speak) 1-3

1. It is not difficult to see the relevance of this Psalm in our day even with a mere cursory reading of it. We live in a time when it seems all the kings, presidents, Premieres, and Prime Ministers of the world are plotting and scheming against the Lord, His word, and His Son. It is undeniably true in the United States that in our 241 years of existence we have never known a time when our leaders and vast numbers of our citizenry were so devoted to unshackling themselves from God and His word. But rebelling against the authority of God is not a new thing. We see it in the earliest pages of Scripture. It began in the heavens when Lucifer rebelled and took a third of the angels with him and God judged him. Later, Nimrod attempted to build a tower that reached into heaven, but God judged them, confusing their languages and scattering the people all over the earth. We could talk of pharaoh, and Nebuchadnezzar, and countless others who ruled over great nations and led the people in rebellion against the Lord. And in every case, God brought judgment upon them.

2. But Psalm 2 is mostly about the final judgment to come Notice in verse 1 how the psalmist plunges directly into his theme. “Why do the nations rage and the people plot in vain?”

- A. The “why” here is not a question of interrogation. It’s a statement of astonishment. It is Madness to Plot and Scheme against your Creator!” The Psalmist is communicating a tone of absolute reproach.
- B. The word for “plot” here is the same word for “meditate” in Psalm 1. The idea is that the leaders of the world put forth enormous mental effort to come up ways to make society work without God. Isn’t it amazing the lengths and depths our leaders will go to demonstrate that God does not exist? We do realize, do we not, that the primary reason for scientific the fixation on Mars and outer space is NOT about worshipping the One who created it, but rather to discover evidence that might prove once and for all that the universe with all its perfect celestial systems and cosmic components appeared by chance. Their whole cosmology is grounded in the equation “Nothing + No one = Everything.” And they spend billions of dollars every year trying to get you to believe it.
- C. The futility of our human understanding is that we believe man can govern the world and usher it into peace, unity, prosperity, and tranquility without God. And this is easy to demonstrate
- D. In 1914, for example, when World War 1 broke out in Europe, President Woodrow Wilson became instrumental in establishing the League of Nations. It was designed to gather world leaders to ensure future peace. World War 1 was to be “The War that Ends All Wars.” But it didn’t work.
- E. Later, the League of Nations became the United Nations. Notice in verse 2 that The kings of the earth set themselves. The word for “set” means to enthrone. Together they enthrone themselves as the rulers of the world.
- F. Once again, in the case of the United Nations, the goal was to bring about world peace. But the “War to End All Wars” didn’t. In 1939, we found ourselves plunged into World War 2. Which was exponentially worse than the first world war!
- G. You see, man without God will never be able to bring about the lasting peace every

politician says they say. Their efforts will always be vain, and worthless. It is mere folly to believe for one minute that they can achieve world peace when they clearly can't come up with a way to pass a simple healthcare bill? World leaders will never agree with one another about anything except for the mutual disdain for God, His word, and His Son, Jesus

H. Seeking to overthrow war while seeking to overthrow God is just dumb. But this is what the rulers of this world have always done.

7. The main speaker in this first section is the nations (collectively). In the third verse they say, "Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us." In other words, the leaders of the world say, "Let us be done with God's restricting precepts and commands."

We want freedom! We want to be free to dismember our babies, to have sex with anyone we want, to marry whoever we want, divorce when we want, make everyone around us recognize the gender we want, and kill off our sick and elderly when we want. By the way, we used to call that last one murder. But in Canada today the new name for it is Death Without Request. With each one of these issues the leaders of this world say, "We're not going to have any God tell us what we can and cannot do. We demand to be free."

8. And the leaders who are really pushing such an agenda have a name for themselves. They call themselves "progressives." More than anything else, they are determined to make progress in undermining the authority of God.

8. This is the rebellion of the nations. In the next three verses we learn about God's response to the world's rebellion.

II. The Rebuke of God

1. In verses 1-3 it was the nations who spoke. Now in verses 4-6 it is primarily God the Father who speaks.

Read 4-6

1. These verses immediately fix our thoughts on a Being who is infinitely exalted above the nations. Notice the quiet dignity of the Omnipotent Creator. He does not hide behind a vast celestial rampart, counting the enemy and calculating whether or not he has sufficient force to repel this new challenge to his kingdom. He does not even rise from where he is sitting. He simply laughs at them for being the imbeciles they are."¹

2. Laughs: This is the only place in the Bible where God is said to laugh. But it is NOT a laugh sparked by humor. Rather, the laugh of derision. "The Lord scoffs at them" (4). Two Centuries ago David Pitcairn wrote,

¹ James Montgomery Boice, *Psalms* Vol. 1, p. 24)

He looks at their poor and puny efforts, not only without uneasiness or fear, but he laughs at their folly; he treats their impotency with derision. He knows how he can crush them like a moth when he pleases, or consume them in a moment with the breath of his mouth.

3. After He laughs, God speaks (Read 5-6).

4. I have set: The idea is “enthroned.” Despite all their plotting, scheming, and raging; despite their best gathering and conferencing, law-making and culture-shaping; despite their best self-professed wisdom and their most powerful weapons, they have no power whatever to inhibit the Father’s eternal plan to set His Son on the ultimate throne. The Father is absolutely undeterred in setting His King. The Sovereign God of the universes does so easily what the world tries so desperately to prevent.

5. Spurgeon writes,

Look back through the ages of infidelity, hearken to the high and hard things which men have spoken against the Most High, listen to the rolling thunder of earth’s volleys against the Majesty of heaven, and then consider that God is saying all the while. “Yet I have set my king upon my holy hill, Zion.

6. God’s response to the greatest most power kings of the earth in their rebellion is simply to laugh at them. They could no sooner sidetrack God’s sovereign plan then to douse the flaming fire of the sun with a water pistol. Let them deceive the world with Darwin. Let them fool the world with Freud. It has no effect on God’s Sovereign Plan.

7. In Daniel chapter 4, King Nebuchadnezzar learned this truth the hard way and then declared of God, “All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing. He does as He pleases with the Powers of heaven and the peoples of earth and no one can hold back his hand or say to Him, “What have you done?” (Dan 4:34-35)

- Psalm 103:19 The LORD has established his throne in the heavens, and his sovereignty rules over all.
- 2 Chron. 20:6 King Jehoshaphat prays, “O LORD, God of our fathers, are you not God in heaven? You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. In your hand are power and might, so that none is able to withstand you.

8. That God has set his king on the throne is not good news for the rulers of the world or for those who follow their lead. This is terrifying to them? Why? Because it is a message of wrath. The thing that causes the most fear in the unbeliever’s heart it this: If there is a God, then we are all accountable to Him. No wonder they so desperately want to believe that God is dead. For it is appointed for a man to die once, and after that – judgment (Heb. 9:27).

9. The Rulers of the world have good reason to be afraid, because the King the Father has set upon His throne is not “gentle Jesus meek and mild,” but a King holy and omnipotent King who rules the nations and will judge the nations.

10. We have heard the nations speak. We have heard God the Father speak. Not it's time to hear from God the Son, Himself.

III. The Reign of the Messiah (7-9)

1. In these three verses the anointed One Himself declares His rights of sovereignty of the nations, and warns all traitors of their inescapable doom.

2. (v. 7) "I will tell of the decree." What God said to the nations is grounded in what He had already said to His Son; namely, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you."

A. When we think of the "only begotten Son" we think naturally of John 3:16. We think of God sending His Son to earth as a baby in a manger. And certainly this is part of what this O.T. prophesy entailed. But there is more.

B. In acts 13:33 Paul is hear preaching the gospel in Antioch saying, "

We bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers, this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus [from the dead], as also it is written in the second Psalm, " 'You are my Son, today I have begotten you.' "

C. Jesus is begotten of the Father in the sense that He is the "firstborn from the dead" (Rev. 1:5)

D. When Jesus rose from the dead his coronation as King began. To the resurrected Christ God gave the nations as an eternal inheritance. Jesus refers to this again as He is being lifted up into heaven saying, "All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me. Go therefore into all the world and make disciples of all nations..."

3. You see why this would concern the human authorities of the world? If Jesus possesses all authority, that means THEY do no! It means they are subject to His authority, and that cannot be tolerated.

4. And do you remember what happened to Jesus after he finished ascending into heaven that day? That's right! He was seated at the right hand of God. Paul explains in Eph. 1:20-22, God the Father...

seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹ far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. ²² And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church..."

5. You see, this King whom the Psalmist is speaking of is NOT an earthly king. He is the king whom the Prophet Isaiah describes as One "who regards all the nations as a drop in the bucket, and as a particle of dust on the scales. He is the king whom God has highly exalted and given a name that is above all names. So that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue will

confess that Jesus Christ is Lord! To the glory of God the Father” This King is none other than the promised Messiah. The anointed one who would reign.

6. This is the decree of the Father (v. 7); namely, that His Son would be the sovereign King who will sit on the Father’s throne. But there’s more. The Son explains that the Father also declared to Him (8), “Ask Me, and I will make the nations your heritage and the ends of the earth your possession.” Ask! And I will give the nations to you. God is not speaking to missionaries in this passage, but to His Son. The Father is doing what every Father loves to do – to give his son a rich inheritance. So, the Son is saying, the nations are mine by sovereign decree.

8. But notice what the Father told the Son (Messiah) to do with the nations; these rulers who are in rebellion against His reign and who are doing their dead-level best to break away from is authority. He says (9) “You shall break them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.”

- A. Here is God the Father raising up all the nations like a great Piñata over the head of His Son. Then He puts in the hands of his Son and iron rod. But in this case, there will be NO blindfold.
- B. This is a picture of Jesus’ judgment of the nations which he will accomplish with ease. It will be as effortless for him to conquer and judge all the rulers of the world as it is to break a piece of potter with an iron rod. It will be child’s play.

9. The apostle John offers a picture of this great and terrible day of the Lord when He will come in Judgment. Revelation 19:11-16.

Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. ¹² His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. ¹³ He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. ¹⁴ And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. ¹⁵ From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. ¹⁶ On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.

10. For “the progressives” who strive every day to make “progress” in throwing off the moral restraints of Almighty God, judgment is coming! It is coming with speed. It is coming with Power. And it is coming eternal judgment that will land them forever in Hell.

11. Beloved, we need not be ashamed of this message. It is EVERYWHERE in the Bible. God glorifies Himself by bringing salvation to rebellious sinners through judgment. Eternal Judgment is “bad news” for the world. But listen to me. The “Good news can only be good is the bad news is really, really bad. And this news is bad! Nevertheless, this is not where the Psalm ends.

12. We have seen,

I. The Rebellion of the Nations	1-3
II. The Rebuke of God	4-6
III. The Reign of Messiah	7-9

IV. The Refuge of the Son: (10-12)

1. Harry Ironside said the voice one hears in these verses is not that of the Nations, or the Father, or the Son, but the voice of the Holy Spirit. After all this warning of inescapable judgment, the Holy Spirit preempts the judgement of God by freely offering the grace of God.
2. “Now therefore, O kings, be wise, be warned, O rulers of the earth.” You see, there is a reason for God’s fierce warning. He is not merely flexing his infinite might to impress and frighten mankind. No, His goal is redemption. He is warning you of judgment before it comes so that you can escape it. Behold the grace of God offering and escape from the wrath of God. Because God is infinitely Holy, He must be just. Sin must be punished. Rebellion must be Remedied.
3. The Holy Spirit is declaring that there is still time to avert the wrath you deserve. So repent! Turn from your rebellion and “Serve the Lord with fear (reverence) and rejoice with trembling.”
4. God created us to relate to Him this way – with reverence and joy. In Acts 9 we read that the church was prospering and peaceful “Walking in the fear of God and the comfort of the Holy Spirit.” The fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom. And in the fear (holy reverence) of the Lord there is much joy. The Holy Spirit now invites you to come to that joy.
5. In verse 12 he says, instead of rebelling against the Son, “kiss the son.” In other words, love Him. Delight in Him. Show reverent affection to Him. Love Him with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. To kiss the Son is to procure all the blessing Jesus won for you on the cross. The only other option (12) is to see his wrath quickly kindled against you and you perish eternally.
6. This brings us back to the two ways to live. We can live in rebellion against God and face His judgment, or we can live the blessed life of embracing God’s word, believing His gospel, and loving His Son.
7. When you stand before the Lord on the last day, will you stand as one of the Blessed Righteous because you have been forgiven by the blessed and only sovereign Son of God?
8. Do you see how much is at stake?
It is not enough to be religious.
Have you come to the Lord Jesus Christ?
Have you come by faith to Christ.?

Have you come all the way to Christ?

Have you surrender your life to him?

Do you love Him?

Do you worship Him?

If not, then I plead with you to be reconciled to God!

Tell him how sinful you are.

Don't tell him how good you are. He will pass you by.

Tell Him you need a Savior.

Tell Him that you believe He is your only hope of salvation.

His promise and warning in John 3:36 is this: *"He who believes in the Son has eternal life. But he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on Him."*

Will you believe in Him today? You know you are a sinner, and you now know what God has in store for those who do not repent. So, I exhort you, my friend, Come to Jesus! Run to Jesus! Fly to Jesus! Embrace the cross where He paid for your sins and become a child of God by grace through faith.

And if you are a believer this morning, I say "be encouraged" As Jesus said, *"In the world, you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."*