

Psalm 2 - The Christian's King

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Introduction

We have to be careful when we come to the Old Testament. We have to remember that the Old Testament was written before Christ's work on the cross. We have to remember that revelation (what God reveals of himself) is progressive - more and more is known as we move through the Scriptures. You've also been taught here at Clearcreek that you can't directly apply the Old Testament to our lives today without first going through the cross of Christ. Otherwise, we would still be forbidden to "boil a young goat in its mother's milk"¹. And we all know how tasty that is.

So, this morning, as an introduction, I want to familiarize you with what the people living in the time of Psalm two would have been hearing. This Psalm was originally written about David and his being the Anointed one. We read in 2 Samuel, "When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever."² And you would have heard that word "forever" in there and my have thought. Wait, David can't live forever. No, no he can't, and didn't. But his family line will. We read in Luke about the Angel Gabriel telling Mary of the birth of Jesus, "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."³ You see, Jesus is the fulfillment of what we are reading in Psalm two. Now, this is not just me thinking this, listen to Acts chapter four. After Peter and John have been arrested and released they quote our Psalm and then say, "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 plan had predestined to take place."⁴

Our Psalm today is about the eternal King over all. Yes, it is and was, about David and his Kingdom, but now, on this side of the cross of Christ we can agree with Peter and John that Psalm two is not only about David, but about a King to come. King Jesus. Now quickly forget that you know the end of the story and pray with me before we get into our text for this morning.

¹ Deuteronomy 14:21

² 2 Samuel 7:12-16

³ Luke 1:31-33

⁴ Acts 4:27-28

****Prayer****

The Nations

Plotting

1 Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain?

Our Psalm starts out with a question of futility. Why do the nations rage? Why do the peoples plot in vain? We don't know. The Psalmist has set us up. Rage at what/who? Plot in vain to do what? All we know at this point is that "the nations" and "the peoples" are angry and they are plotting to do something about their anger. They will not sit by while whatever injustice they perceive to be out there is taking place. They will not be held down by whatever terrible force is opposing them. They will plot and scheme and seek to rule the day of the battle with an iron fist. Oh, they won't do it alone either. Notice we are not looking at "a" nation, or "a" people, we are looking at "nations", plural and "peoples" plural.

But notice one more thing at the end of this first verse of ours this morning. How do the nations rage and the peoples plot. They do so "in vain", not yielding the desired outcome. All of their plotting will come to nothing. Whatever this force is they are dealing with will ultimately bring their little plot to an end with nothing in the way of victory. It will all be "in vain". Hmm.

Has the Psalmist pulled you in. Do you wonder how these nations and peoples plan to win this vain battle? God's word is going to tell us in verse two. God's word says this,

Planning

2 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together,

We now see that the uprising is not just something coming from the people at the lowest levels of power and prestige. This is coming from the top of the pecking order. The kings of "the nations" have "set themselves". They have, as you would in a tug-o-war, set their feet. They have dug in. This is war talk. They are not playing games. The battlefield accoutrements are all in place and they have been fortified. The women and children have been put to safety and the men have removed all from their mind but the ensuing battle.

And again, they are not going this alone. They have joined forces with other higher-ups, other "rulers" to plan out this battle against our yet unknown enemy. And you might be thinking, odds are good for these folks. They have unified in their cause. They plotted and planned together - leaders of the highest rank have shared tactics and will share strengths in the battle to come.

Good for them, so far their odds of victory are looking good. But still, we have no idea who's on the other side of the battlefield. Who are they plotting and planning against?

And then we get to the last part of verse three where God's words says this, "**against the Lord and against his Anointed**". Being a good child of the early 80's I want to furrow my brow, look them in the eye with consternation and proclaim with Arnold Jackson, "Whatchoo talkin' 'bout Willis?" Our enemy has been named, He is the Lord God Almighty and his anointed. This anointed one will be revealed in full soon.

This madness get worse as the nations, the people, the kings and rulers roll out there prediction for what's about to happen. God's word says this in verse three,

Predicting

saying,

3 "Let us burst their bonds apart
and cast away their cords from us."

Right. You would question their sanity if you didn't know your own hearts propensity for rebellion. These fools, so much like ourselves, are predicting liberty from God! They will "**burst**" and "**cast away**" from the God of the universe and live happily ever after.

Listen to their hearts. God and his anointed are like cords bonding them in slavery. They will never know true freedom until they burst free from the laws of God and his leadership over them. They have no idea that they will burst free into a freefall over the depths of hell. No care is given though. They will not only break free, but before running off into their imagined liberty they will throw the cords away from them. This, one last act of independence as they run from their only means of salvation.

The nations, peoples, kings and rulers have plotted, planned and predicted their liberty from the Lord and His Anointed one. What will the Lord do about this act of treason against his sovereign rule and reign? God's word says this in verse four.

Our God

Sitting

4 He who sits in the heavens laughs;
the Lord holds them in derision.

While we, the people of God, tend to wring our hands with worry and anxiety at the smallest hint of rebellion from the many powers of the world, God hasn't even bothered to stand up. If war is what they want, and breaking free is what they plan to do...you wouldn't know it by the posture

of God. He sits. He sits laughing. They are no threat to the God the Universe and should bring no worry or anxiety to the hearts of his people. And in an interesting choice of words for those who wish to break free from the bonds of the Lord and His anointed, it says he HOLDS them in derision. Derision being “a state of being laughed at or ridiculed⁵”. Not only can’t they break free from his hold, but their attempt has sent him into a fit of pitiless laughter. Much like the ant that raises its fist the size twelve Nike about smash it to smithereens, their rebellious intentions have caused nothing more than a good chuckle.

That in and of itself would be bad enough for the rebellious, but there is more. God’s word says this in verse five,

Speaking

5 Then he will speak to them in his wrath,
and terrify them in his fury,

For many in our world today there is no thought of God at all. They wander through life with their minds so busy with this entertainment and that emergency that they scarcely think of eternity at all and never of the God who sits there. This willful ignorance of the Lord will cease on the day he opens his mouth to speak to them in his wrath. When God spoke into nothing, the Heavens and the Earth were created. Imagine for just a moment what it would be like for him to speak in his wrath! I praise God for my own soul and the many of you with me this morning who love Jesus more than anything this world has to offer...we will never hear this side of God’s voice.

Not only will they hear him, but they will be terrified in his fury. He will leave no stone unturned. All will hear him and follow, or be cast out. I don’t know about you but again, I am happy to say I will never hear these words or experience this fury and I praise God for it.

So what will he say? How will this fury be voiced to those enraged with the King and His anointed? Verse Six. God’s word says this.

Setting

Saying,
6 “As for me, I have set my King
on Zion, my holy hill.”

God has set his King! Notice that the nations said, “let us burst”, present tense. We’re going to do this now. And God says, “I have set”, past tense. This setting “my King on Zion, my holy hill” has already been accomplished. This rebellion has not taken God by surprise. He knew long ago what the intentions of the nations, peoples, kings and rulers would be. He long ago knew

⁵ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/derision>

who his King would be. Do you remember what the book of Hebrews tells us about Zion? It said, but you (believer in Christ) “**have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to...**”⁶ well, we’ll get there later in the Psalm.

But for now, how can the mention of a mere man bring so many fears and apprehensions into their hearts? Because this is no ordinary king. This is no ordinary man. Why would he terrify them?

God’s word says this in verse seven.

His Son

Decreed

**7 I will tell of the decree:
The Lord said to me, “You are my Son;
today I have begotten you.**

Can you recall the end of the verse I read from Hebrews? It goes like this, “**and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant**”. Here he is! The Son of God, King on Zion, God’s holy hill! God is not afraid, God is not caught unaware, but he has installed his only begotten Son, The King in the line of David, on his holy hill. He has decreed that what has always been shall always be⁷. Jesus has arrived in our Psalm and we should be overwhelmed with joy, or terrified at his presence. What will King, this Son of God do with this stirring rebellion amongst the nations, peoples, kings and rulers? You will not be surprised if you’ve known him for long.

God’s word says this in verse eight.

Delivered

**8 Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage,
and the ends of the earth your possession.**

The Son of God reigning as the King on Mt. Zion bows his will to that of his father’s. Jesus, in perfect contrast to the nations, after being decreed the Son of God, is perfectly content to rest in the bonds of his father’s will. He does not cry out, I’ll go Father!, I’ll conquer this rabble! No, he simply says, Ask of me, and I will... The nations plot, plan and predict what they will to be done, and the all powerful, all mighty, all glorious Son of God, set on Zion, says, I’ll do whatever you want me to do Father.

⁶ Hebrews 12:22-24

⁷ New Bible Commentary

Knowing the Father as only he could he says, If you will, I'll go forth and, "make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession." He wants nothing for his own, but only for his Father. He says, I'll make them "YOUR heritage...YOUR possession". Amidst all this talk of war, heritage, possession and such, how is our King, God's son going to accomplish this? He tells us elsewhere in his word that he will, "empt[y] himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he [will humble] himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross"⁸. He submits his will to that of his father, he gives up all that he is to obey the father and in turn rescue us and make us his own. Child of God, this is your King!

God's word says this in verse nine.

Destroyed

9 You shall break them with a rod of iron
and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."

This war will be no war at all. The nation are terrified, the fight has run out of their faces and turned to a ghostly pale, God has set his King on Zion, and he will gather up what is his. All that is left to do will be to "break", or "rule" over them with an iron rod and dash them to pieces like the vessels for dishonorable use that they are. The King, our King, will be victorious. He will rule with an iron rod and all the nations, people, kings and rulers rage against the Lord and his anointed will be dashed to pieces like a potter's vessel. But there is hope, as many of you have found.

God's word says this in verse ten.

Our Blessing

Warning

10 Now therefore, O kings, be wise;
be warned, O rulers of the earth.

Yes, for the rebellious, attempting to cast off the bonds of the Lord and his anointed there will be sure judgement but there is also mercy flowing from Mt. Zion and it comes in the form of this warning. God is calling out for the Kings to be wise and the rulers to be warned. Like the teacher over the disruptive class, God has switched the lights off and back on. The darkness of the moment has served to bring all kings and rulers to attention. Ears perked up and all eyes on the king he calls out the way of salvation.

⁸ Ephesians 2:7-8

God's words says this in verse eleven.

Way

11 Serve the Lord with fear,
and rejoice with trembling.

The way to freedom is not to burst the bonds or cast away the cords, but it is to, in reverence, serve the Lord. The Son has shown you the way to salvation by his actions and you, in order to find the way, must be quiet, turn your eyes to the King, and learn to cherish the fetters of God which bond you to freedom, not from freedom. And in your freedom from the bonds of this world you can rejoice, ever aware of your helplessness before the King on Zion. C.S. Lewis once wrote of Aslan, The King of Narnia, "He's not safe, but he's good". That seems a very appropriate comparison this morning. Rejoice with trembling, Our King Jesus is not safe, but he is so very very good.

So many times in our culture people will respond to questions of faith with, "Yes, I'm a Christian, too". However, when pushed further into how they live out there life, you see the all too familiar evidence of unbelief stacked upon unbelief. So what does true belief look like? What does it look like to heed the warning and be walking on the way of the Lord. It looks like worship. It looks like verse twelve. God's word says this.

Worship

12 Kiss the Son,
lest he be angry, and you perish in the way,
for his wrath is quickly kindled.
Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

This kissing of the Son is not the familiar kiss on the top of the head, like that of a child. It is not even the familiar kiss on both cheeks that we see in other cultures. It is more, as evidenced by the ensuing verses, that of the subject coming before the benevolent King, down on one knee, rejoicing in the goodness of his sovereign, and kissing the back of his hand as a measure of respect and honor. Knowing he is welcome, but always and ever aware that his is a special blessing of belonging here in the presence of such power and might. Kiss the Son, and (not but) always be aware of the anger and wrath from which you have been spared.

And lastly we see our King in all his mercy and grace, seated high upon his throne, welcoming in the few who have been given access to this place, a banner over his mighty throne that reads, "**Blessed are all who take refuge in him**". This, this is our King, Christian. This is our God. Fall on your knees and kiss the Son. Give up your life, as he has his, and serve God with fear. Cast off all you hold dear and cling to the righteousness you have been given in Christ. He has shown you the way, now follow him all the way to Zion, the holy hill of God.

Closing

And I would be remiss if I didn't address those of you here today who still belong to the nations, peoples, rulers, and kings of this world. Your freedom from God will lead to nothing but an eternity outside his presence. There is a King waiting for you on his throne in heaven and he has put forth this invitation for you today; "Kiss the Son". In him and him only will you find the refuge from the chaos of this life now, and forever. May you give him all the glory he is due. Amen.