

Jesus Shall Reign (Part 1)

Text: Psalm 2:1-12

Introduction:

1. The Psalms: The Psalms are the hymn book of the Bible and they should be the sound track of our Christian lives. The Psalms contain so many wonderful insights into the ways and the worship of God.
2. Author of Psalm 2: Acts 4:25 reveals that this Psalm was penned by David.
3. Theme of Psalm 2: The coronation of the Son of God in spite of man's violent opposition.
4. Summary: The Psalm divides into four stanzas with three verses in each.
 - Vs. 1-3 – Man in rebellion against the LORD and His anointed.
 - Vs. 4-6 – God the Father's reply to man's sinful rebellion.
 - Vs. 7-9 – Messiah declares the Sovereign decree concerning Him.
 - Vs. 10-12 – Appeal to the rebellious nations to submit to the Messiah.
 - Williams S. Plumer: "The great design of the Psalm is to foretell the hatred of men to the person and reign of Christ, the glories of Messiah, the triumphs of his kingdom, and the dreadful downfall of his foes, thus laying a proper ground for solemn exhortation to all men to yield themselves subjects of the Prince of life."
5. Psalm 2 is quoted at least 7 times in the New Testament which is more than any other Psalm. See Acts 4:24-28; 13:33; Heb. 1:5; 5:5; Rev. 2:27; 12:5; 19:15.
6. We will study the Psalm under its four natural stanzas:

I. THE OPPOSITION TO GOD'S ANOINTED (VS. 1-3)

There are three main points presented in these verses concerning man's opposition to the rulership of God:

A. The Foolishness of Man's Rebellion (Vs. 1)

1. 'why' = means to what purpose? For what reason? It is an expression of amazement and indignation by the Psalmist at the rage of the heathen against God.
2. 'rage' = Webster defines the word as "violent anger accompanied with furious words, gestures or agitation; anger excited to fury." Illustration: Like the raging of the sea.
3. 'imagine' = comes from the same word as 'meditate' in Psalm 1:2. Here it means to plot, plan and devise. (Ross)
4. "vain thing" = an empty thing. It is vain and futile to oppose God.

B. The Form of Man's Rebellion (Vs. 2)

This verse describes an unholy confederacy, an evil alliance of earth's rulers against God.

1. An Evil Alliance (Vs. 2a)

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- a. "the kings of the earth...the rulers" = those who hold the power of government in the world.
 - b. "set themselves" = means to take a stand. David sees the world in a state of outright rebellion against God. The same word is used of Goliath who "presented himself" forty days (1 Sam. 17:16). The same word is used to describe Eleazar and David's defence of the barley field – "And they set themselves in the midst of that parcel, and delivered it..." (1 Chronicles 11:14)
 - c. "take counsel together" = their deliberations one with another. This is premeditated crime.
2. An Evil Animosity (Vs. 2b)
 - a. "against the LORD" = Jehovah God
 - b. "against his anointed" = the Messiah. To oppose Christ is to oppose God. Man's response to Christ is the ultimate test.

C. The Focus of Man's Rebellion (Vs. 3)

In particular, they are opposed to the authority and reign of Almighty God.

1. Their perception of God's authority – they view it as bands (fettters, chains) and cords (ropes). They view the authority of God's Son as bondage. What a contrast to the believer who finds His yoke easy and His burden light. The renewed, regenerated heart responds joyfully to God's call to obedience. "The greatest test of character to which men were ever subjected, is Jesus Christ Himself. Nothing so manifests their real disposition towards God." (Plumer)
2. Their plan for God's authority – "break...cast away". Their desire is to throw off God's authority.
3. They are united against:
 - a. The Person of God
 - b. The Precepts of God

D. The fulfilment of Man's Rebellion

These verses apply...

1. Generally – mankind in his sinful state is opposed to God. We see this anti-authority attitude across the world directed against:
 - a. God – e.g. evil laws, attempts to use the institution of government as an instrument of rebellion against God and His Word.
 - b. God-ordained authority – e.g. parents, pastors, police, sentiments expressed in pop culture (music and movie).
2. Specifically – to the first and second coming of Christ.
 - a. The first coming of Christ – this Psalm was fulfilled when Christ was rejected and crucified according to Acts 4:24-28.
 - b. The second coming of Christ – the nations unite in opposition to Christ at His second advent according to Rev. 19:14-21 (See also 20:8-9 describing the revolt at the end of the Millennium).

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3. Challenge: Beware of this anti-authority bias that resides in our sin nature. Even as believers we can rise up in revolt against the commands of God's Word or to the godly authorities He has placed in our lives.

II. THE DETERMINATION FOR GOD'S ANOINTED (VS. 4-6)

These verses outline God's response to sinful man's rebellion described in Vs. 1-3. They anticipate God's future judgment. God's response is threefold:

A. Contempt (Vs. 4)

1. "He that sitteth in the heavens" = a striking contrast to the rebels on earth. God is pictured as seated in might and power far above earth's rebels.
2. "shall laugh" = this is a form of expression borrowed from human emotions and actions. Man's attempts to overthrow God's reign are met with His holy disdain. It reveals how utterly foolish and futile it is for man to think he can dethrone God. It is like a fly attacking an elephant. John Phillips writes, "God simply sits back on His throne and fills the universe with peal after peal of terrible, spine tingling laughter."
3. 'derision' = means to ridicule, scorn, "the act of laughing in contempt" (Webster) God views mankind's plot to overthrow His rule as utterly contemptible, ridiculous and foolish.

B. Condemnation (Vs. 5)

1. 'Then' = God will terminate man's rebellion at His appointed time. He will not endure forever their attempts to cast off His Sovereign Rule.
2. "wrath...sore displeasure" = God's wrath will be unleashed against a wicked world. "Both words have to do with heat, i.e., a burning anger and a heated rage."
 - a. 'wrath' = from the Hebrew word for nose or nostrils. It therefore has the idea of the flaring of nostrils (Ross), the rapid breathing in passion (Strong's).
 - b. "sore displeasure" = burning rage
 - c. Note: The rage of sinful men is evil and ungodly but God's wrath is absolutely pure, just, righteous and holy. This is God's wrath, not man's wrath.

C. Coronation (Vs. 6)

1. "yet have I set my king" = in spite of the world's attempt to dethrone God and prevent Christ from taking the throne, Jesus will reign in accordance with the Divine will. The word 'set' means "to install".
2. "holy hill of Zion" = a reference for Jerusalem used 38 times in the Psalms. It looks forward to the Millennial reign of Christ.

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3. God's plan will prevail no matter how strong and united the world's opposition may be.

Conclusion:

1. Anthropological lessons (what we learn about man)
 - Man, in his natural, sinful state is a child of wrath, at enmity with God.
 - Man, in his sinful state is opposed to God's reign.
 - Man, in his sinful state will go to great efforts to try and loose Himself from God and His laws.
2. Theological lessons (what we learn about God)
 - God's reign will ultimately prevail.
 - God is totally unmoved by man's rebellion.
3. Practical lessons (what we learn about the Christian life)
 - An anti-authority attitude is a mark of the unregenerate life and has no place in the believer's life.
 - The self-life can rise up in rebellion against God's requirements if we do not walk in the Spirit, appropriating our co-crucifixion with Christ.

To be continued...