

The King God Anointed

Psalm 2:1-12

Halifax: December 1, 2002

Introduction:

On the first Sunday of the month, I select a “Psalm of the Month” that we sing for the remaining Sundays of that month. Ordinarily, this Psalm corresponds to whatever I am preaching from on the remaining Sundays of the month. Since we have just begun a new series in Daniel, I have selected Psalm 2 as our Psalm of the month. This Psalm presents the supremacy of Christ’s Kingdom in the same way the book of Daniel does. In fact, the theme of this Psalm is summarised in the words that Daniel proclaims to Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 2:44. He tells Nebuchadnezzar and his court that in the days of the Roman emperors, “the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.” This, of course, is the Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

As I preach from Psalm 2 today, I will follow the very obvious structure in which this Psalm is arranged. It is divided into four stanzas, each with three verses. Verses 1-3 make up the first, 4-6 the second, 7-9 the third, and 10-12 the fourth. Each of the four stanzas has a different focus; and each subsequent stanza grows out of the one that precedes. The second grows out of the first, the third out of the second, and the fourth out of the third.

In the first stanza (v. 1-3), you are told what man does—Foolishly, He rebels against God. In the second stanza (v. 4-6), you are told what God does—Undauntedly, He responds to man. In the third stanza (v. 7-9), you are told what Christ does—Confidently, He proclaims His kingdom. And in the last stanza (v. 10-12), you are told what you ought to do—Humbly, you ought to embrace the Lord.

So let’s begin with the first stanza:

I. What man does—Foolishly, he rebels against God.

Just listen to how he foolishly sets himself against God as I read this stanza!

Psalm 2:1-3: “Why do the nations rage, And the people plot 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 bonds in pieces And cast away Their cords from us.””

This is undoubtedly the most absurd thing in all the world! How foolish that the creature should set himself against the LORD. When “LORD” is written with all capitals, it translates the name Yahweh or Jehovah! This name speaks of Him as the self-existing

one—the “I am”—the one who is dependent on nothing and on whom all things depend! This is like a bunch of sailors in the middle of the ocean attacking the ship on which they stand! If they could be successful, they would destroy themselves!

Yet, their folly is even worse than that—because in this case, there is no way that they can even touch Jehovah. All their efforts to assault Him are in vain. They have imagined a vain thing, a pointless thing, an impossible thing. He is totally out of their grasp... totally unassailable. As the next stanza will show us, He sits in the heavens and laughs! As Matthew Henry said, they are like dogs barking at the moon—yet the moon continues to shine.

But even this is not the extent of their folly. It not only says they are against the LORD, but also that they are “against His anointed!” They are against the very One who was sent into the world that He might save the world! Here you have the sailors drowning at sea...yet, desperately striking at the ship that comes to save them to! You would think that when Christ came into this miserable fallen world, the world would have run to Him with eager delight, but instead the world set herself against Him.

Verse 1 is presented as a question to expose the folly of such behaviour! “Why do the nations rage and the people imagine a vain thing?” There is a note of astonishment in this question! It is the kind of question you would ask if you saw someone desperately pushing and pulling on a huge oak tree that can’t even be shaken...and such a tree that if he was successful would fall on top of him: “What is that guy trying to do?” It’s a reality to check—because so many people are doing it that nobody even stops to consider how foolish it is!

And so I would ask you: What are you trying to accomplish whenever you rebel against God? Why all this rage, all this restlessness, all this resistance to your God? Why would you try to rage against the God of Heaven? Why would you set yourself against the LORD and His anointed?

Of course there is no good answer to this question. Sin is absolutely irrational—that is why the question is asked—to show that. But I suppose the fellow who is pushing and pulling at the tree has some reason for it in his own mind. And there are reasons that the rebellious man has in his own mind, however futile and foolish they may be.

Verse 3 explains what he is trying to do: “Let us break their bonds in pieces and cast away their cords from us!” He wants to break away from God’s restraining authority. Strong language is used here. Not only are the bonds broken, but cast away—thrown to the side with disgust and defiance—and with the enthusiasm of a man who is finally set free. The goal to be free from the authority and laws of God and His anointed.

Fallen man wrongly sees God’s law, which is perfectly suited to him as a man, as something demeaning and harmful to his life. For example, he thinks that if he handles wealth in the ways that God wants, it will not go well for him. He must cheat a little or he will have no profit. If he shares his wealth with others, he will not have enough for

himself. If he seeks God's kingdom first, he will be ruined. In the area of sexuality, the desire is for sexual freedom. He will not find sexual glory in confining himself to relations with one woman in marriage. And a woman thinks that she will not be accepted by men unless she is liberated from the bonds of chastity. Fallen man is completely confused because he thinks that he will find beauty in the things that will make him ugly, and he thinks he will find life in the things that bring death.

This hatred of God's authority began in the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve followed the serpent's counsel. They did it to make them wise and to find a more abundant life. The result was that they severed man-kind from the blessing of God and the beauty of a life shaped by Him. The decision was made for life, but it brought death instead.

Apart from the grace of God, we are all lost and dead in this rebellion. Only God can give you a new heart—a heart that is not set against Him, but that delights in His law from within. The giving of this new heart is called the new birth. It is only with this new heart that you are made able to see the folly of your rebellion and are made willing to turn to Christ to be saved. The result of the new birth is a whole new life! The resistance against God is transformed into submission and delight in His law from the heart. Rather than trying to cast His bonds from you, you willingly and joyfully submit to Him.

Nevertheless, even when you have been given this new heart, the remnants of your senseless rebellion emerge far more than you would like. As the Apostle Paul of himself, "The good that I want to do, I don't do; but the evil that I hate, that I do." And as he said of all who are born again: "The flesh lusts against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh so that you cannot do the things that you want to do."

But still, there is a great difference between the one who is a born again and the one who is not. The difference is that those who are outside of Christ live continually in that rebellion... And do you know how that rebellion is demonstrated? It is by a refusal to come to Jesus Christ to be saved from your sin. You may not actually say "Let us cast their cords from us," but this saying applies to you if you refuse to come to Christ because it explains your attitude toward God and his anointed. By refusing to come to Him, you refuse to do what is necessary to truly bring you under submission to God. You may even a moral or a very religious person who is trying to prove that you good; but if you refuse to come to Christ to be saved, you are really trying to cast away the cords of God and His anointed! You don't really want to submit to God.

So you see that the reason for the senseless rebellion is to break away from God's authority. Since the fall, that is the thing that has made all those who are outside of Christ tick.

But how is it that fallen man can entertain any hope of success in this foolish rebellion—even in his own mind? I mean, what is it that keeps him going in "plotting" such a "vain thing?" You would think that he would give up in trying to resist the Almighty. Why would he keep trying to push over the oak tree when it doesn't even move? What is it that

gives him courage to continue? Well notice that it is not individuals that are referred to here, but nations and peoples under kings and rulers who take counsel **together** against the LORD and against His anointed. It is a rare individual that will stand up to some great power all by himself!

Even a king finds his greatness in his armies and his people. A king with a great and powerful army surrounding him is a very different sort of man than a king whose armies have just been destroyed. Solomon says:

“There are three *things which* are majestic in pace, Yes, four *which* are stately in walk: A lion, *which is* mighty among beasts And does not turn away from any; A greyhound, A male goat also, And a king *whose troops are* with him.”

And corresponding to this, the reason nations submit to kings is because it is in unity with others that the citizens of the nations find security. That is one of the reason there are nations. The king is the one musters them together in a united purpose, and who leads his armies against their common enemies. The people find confidence because they are united in their kings and rulers against their enemies.

You see then that fallen man finds courage to rebel against God in numbers. I don't mean to say that he wouldn't rebel otherwise—He would; but he finds a greater confidence because he finds so many allies to take counsel against God. His fellow rebels help him to deceive himself so that he is comforted in his rebellion. That is how it was at the tower of Babel. And that is how it was at Babylon. And that is how it is today.

The kings and rulers may not always be political rulers, but they are those who lead others and give them confidence to do what they want to do—rebel against God. That is why people will say, “Scientists say that God did not create the world;” or, “its not against the law, is it?” Or “modern scholarship has shown that the Bible is not true.” People find security in their united rebellion.

Then there the even more subtle form of collective rebellion—the assumptions that a society makes about life: “Well the main thing is that we all just try to get along with each other.” The Bible doesn't say that—it says that if you follow Jesus, it will cause division between you and those who don't follow Him—even the members of your own household! There are many other pieces of collective wisdom that are actually nothing but united rebellion against God: “Everyone has to find what's right for himself.” “Marriage is a 50/50 partnership.” “People are basically good.”

But no matter how many people nod their heads and how many kings and rulers and experts they can quote, it is still nothing but sheer folly for man to rebel against His Maker. Let a million dogs join together to bark at the moon—And the moon will still shine just the same. Yet, this is what man does—He unites together to rebel against God.

Now let us turn to the second stanza and consider what God does:

II. Undauntedly, He responds to man.

First of all, we are told that He laughs! here is something very silly about the whole picture we have just seen in the first stanza. Here are all these proud kings and rulers—all the important and highly respected leaders of the society—joining together to attack Jehovah—and all the while acting so confident and sure of themselves! They are like children out in the pasture talking importantly and making serious plans about how they are going to dig a hole to China!

Here they are, all stirred up in their united rebellion—and here is God—seated in Heaven—absolutely unassailable! absolutely undaunted! absolutely tranquil and unmoved! Here is God—laughing at the utter futility of it all! laughing them to scorn, and holding them in derision!

This calls for a response from you! If you are outside of Christ it probably makes you angry, but it ought to make you terrified! You have no defence against God! And understand something—It is not just that God is mighty and you can't resist His power—It is also that He is morally right. No matter what kings and nations may pretend about Him and His ways, He is perfect and upright and no one can legitimately find fault with Him. This was made so clear when Jesus came and his foes desperately tried to find fault with Him, but could not. In other words, it is not just that you have no power to resist Him, but it is also that you have no legitimate grounds to resist Him. On the day of judgement if not before, the folly of all your arguments and all your judgements against God will be fully exposed. You will be ashamed and utterly confounded for resisting not only God who is too mighty to try to resist, but also God who is too holy to find fault with!

God is laughing at your futile attempts. Turn from your folly and turn to Christ!

If you are in Christ, this vision of God laughing also calls for a response. It ought to comfort you! It ought to make you realise that even though the world seems to be so confident and so undaunted in their rebellion—That God is laughing at them from heaven. No counsel against Him will stand!

And that comfort ought to make you bold! Bold to stand up for his truth in the face of opposition! Bold to witness to your family and your friends and your co-workers and to call them to repentance! When the apostles were attacked for preaching Christ, they turned to this Psalm and they prayed: “Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word!” Don't be intimidated—Your God is not intimidated! He has angry grasshoppers jumping at His feet...to Him, they are lighter than the dust on the scales!

But God does more than laugh at them. Verse 5 says that He also speaks to them in His wrath and distresses them in His deep displeasure. In folly, the rebellious nations are like the little children with serious plans to dig to China to be laughed at; but unlike the children, the rebellious nations are also desperately wicked in their schemes! They had thought to overthrow God who is exalted in perfect holiness and justice, filled with love

and compassion, beautiful in wisdom and truth, and of purer eyes than to behold evil...and so worthy of all honour and praise!

Their behaviour is not just stupid, It is repugnant! It is highly culpable! It is inexcusable! And so God responds to them not only in laughter at their folly—but also in just and holy anger at their rebellion! He always does what is right, and such rebellion deserves His wrath and indignation—His deep displeasure.

God is said to **speak** to them in His deep displeasure (in verse 5)! He tells them that the sinful soul shall die! He tells them that they are cursed for their rebellion against Him. He tells them that He hates all workers of iniquity and is angry with the wicked every day.

But don't think this "speaking" is confined to words, for some have not heard these words—God also "speaks" with His actions in cursing the world for our rebellion! His wrath is revealed in His actions. Do you know why there is sickness and hunger and deformities and frustration of our plans and purposes? Do you know? It is because the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness...who distort the truth about God and slander Him and advocate false gods and cast off God's laws and live as they please. In this way, God distresses the world in his deep displeasure. There is distress because we realise that we are not in control and that we are helpless. How distressed the world was when she tried to get rid of Jesus and He rose from the dead and filled the world with His teachings!

Above all, there is death that distresses us! My friends, death is not natural! It is **normal** because God has sentenced all men to die, but it is not **natural** because it is an expression of God's judgement against our sin and rebellion. But what does rebellious man do with it? Does he repent when God speaks? No, he pretends that death is just natural—that is just something that happens to everyone—that God has nothing to do with it. But death is God speaking in His wrath and deep displeasure.

Now of course, Jesus transforms death for those who have come to Him for salvation. For them, death is a thing that purifies and prepares them for a resurrection unto life—which resurrection will transform their corrupt bodies and make them incorruptible and immortal. But for those outside of Christ, death is only a preparation for the judgement, condemnation, and punishment that is to come.

And for all of us, death ought to be a reminder that God is displeased with our original rebellion in Adam. God has spoken and we ought to listen! We ought to see the offense that our rebellion is to Him and the horror that sin brings and we ought to repent.

And so you see that God laughs and God speaks in His wrath—but there is something else that God does that is very wonderful! In a very dramatic way, God begins to speak in verse 6! In verse 5 we were **told** that He speaks—in verse 6, He **does** speak!

God tells us that in spite of all our rebellion and all His displeasure with us, “Yet I have set My King on My holy hill of Zion!” Do you see what this is saying? God has broken into this rebellious, cursed world and set up a king—One that He calls “My King!” My King because He rules according to My ways and My pleasure! My King because He is not part of that rebellious counsel that rages against Me. He is the One in verse 2 who is called “His anointed” or the Messiah or the Christ! He is none other than King Jesus! He is so closely associated with the LORD that those who rebel against God also rebel against His anointed. As Jesus Himself said, “He who hates me hates my father also!”

In other words, God did not leave the world to perish in sin and misery! In this wicked world, He has set up a kingdom that has the One He calls “My King” at its head! This is what was promised to Adam and Eve in the garden after the Fall when God told them that He would put enmity between the serpent’s seed and the woman’s seed—This enmity was good news! It meant that there would be a seed that would rise in the world that would oppose the serpent and his rebellious ways—that everyone would not be left in that rebellion—that God would raise up a restored people that would be in league with Christ instead of in league with Satan!

This is what God promised to Abraham after the world rebelled at the tower of Babel—trying to make their own way to paradise. God told Abraham that in His seed, all the nations would be blessed. They would be blessed as Abraham was in having God as their God becoming His people! He told Abraham that this seed would be so closely associated with God that those who cursed Him, God would curse, and those who blessed Him, God would bless. And now, in Psalm 2:6, we are told that God will set up a king that will be His King—a King that has a people that are God’s people!

This king is said to be set up on Zion, that is, in the midst of God’s holy city! This is the city of those that God has called out of the world to be His people. It is the city of those that God has redeemed from bondage to sin and reconciled to Himself by the sacrifice of blood. This King will be so closely associated with God that all those who truly enter His kingdom will be saved!

Look at John 5:19-30 and see how closely King Jesus is associated with God the Father: Verse 19-20 shows that there is a perfect harmony in the actions of God the Father and King Jesus:

“Then Jesus answered and said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. “For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel.”

Verse 21-23 shows that King Jesus is given the full authority of God the Father and that the same honour is to Him:

“For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to *them*, even so the Son gives life to whom He will. “For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, “that all

should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.

To King Jesus has been given the authority to bestow life on all those who come to be His subjects: (v. 24-26)

"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. "Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live. "For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself,

The Father has also given His king authority to render final judgement: (v. 27 and following):

"and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. "Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice "and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation. "I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.

Truly, He is God's King, God's anointed!

And so you see that even though God laughs at man's rebellion and responds to it in His holy wrath, He nevertheless sets up His King to establish a people for Himself...and to destroy all those who refuse to acknowledge Him!

And now it is the King's turn to speak! And what does He do?

III. He confidently proclaims that God has made Him King in this rebellious world!

You see that in v. 7 He says, "I will **declare** the decree. Jesus' whole focus is on declaring the decree of God to make Him King! What are we told was the nature of His ministry on earth? He went everywhere preaching the kingdom—And He performed signs and wonders to demonstrate that the kingdom of God had come. He told everyone that God had made Him king! He made it His task to declare the decree when He was on earth! He was God's King sent to establish a people for God!

And what did He tell His apostles to do when He ascended into heaven? He told them to go into all the world—to the uttermost parts of the earth—and to preach the kingdom of God to every creature—too all the nations. They were to call all men every where to repent and believe the gospel of the kingdom. Through them—and through us today—He continues to declare the decree that God has made Him king!

In verses 7-9 the decree is spelled out in more detail for you. In verse 7, you are told that the LORD says, “You are my Son, today I have begotten you.” This is the language that a king-father would use when he was inaugurating his son to sit on his throne. It does not mean that the son was born to him on that day (Jesus was always God’s Son), but rather that he was established as king on that day. The one who was already His Son is now (as in verse 6) *set* or *established* as king...so that from that day forth, everyone must honour the son even as they honour the father.

This was not done officially until Christ ascended into heaven to sit at His Father’s right hand. Jesus was not declared to be Lord and Christ until after He had first done all that was necessary to save His people. You see, He came to be king of a sinful people. To be God’s king for them, the first thing He had to do was take away their sins. To do that, He had to come in human flesh and die on the cross so that He might bear the curse of God for them that they might be reconciled to God. Until this work was done, He did not have the power to save—because our sin had not yet been atoned!

Of course, as God, He could save people in anticipation of what He was going to do. But His actual death on the cross was absolutely necessary—Without it, He could save no one. And so, it was not until after He had come into the world and completed that great work that He was made to be LORD and Christ. It was then that He was able to say—as Mediator—“All authority is given to Me in heaven and on earth!

And it is only by virtue of this great work that God also was able to say to Him what it says in verse 8 & 9:

“Ask of Me and I will give you the nations for your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron; you shall dash them to pieces like a potter’s vessel.”

This is a part of the glorious decree! And what this means is that every inch of the earth and every creature belongs to Jesus Christ! Nothing is excepted but God Himself. Everything has been given to Him and will be brought under His feet! All judgement has been given to Him so that He will utterly destroy every single bit of rebellion that remains against the LORD and against His anointed (Himself). He will utterly destroy and frustrate all those wicked alliances that take counsel against Him. Every ounce of rebellion will be put down forever! The word “possession” speaks of a permanent possession. Pottery being smashed pictures permanent destruction. The good news is the rebellion will not last, but will be completely put down.

And this leads to the application of all this to you that is given in the last stanza of this Psalm in verses 10-12!

IV. What you ought to do—You ought to humbly embrace the Lord!

You see, there are only two ways that the rebellion of the nations is put down! Either you come to Him with willing submission; or you wait until He crushes you and renders you a powerless object of His wrath and judgement. There are no other options, there is no

middle ground—everything and everyone will be brought under Christ! He has declared the decree and it cannot be altered!

In light of these facts, you are urged to be wise and teachable! Look at verse 10: “Now therefore, be wise, O kings; Be instructed, you judges of the earth.”

Now I know that this speaks to kings and judges—but if **they** are called from their ignorance, how much more are those who take refuge in them! If all those expects who lead you in rebellion against God are in need of God’s wisdom and instruction—how much more are you! This is written to kings and to those that follow them in their folly!

I have already shown you how foolish all rebellion against the LORD and His anointed is! There is no hope in such rebellion! Never mind what the kings and rulers and important people you have been listening to may say! God is laughing at them...and worse still, He is furious with them! How could it be that they and their followers should reject the very Son of God who came at great cost to Himself to save them from their sins? In spite of all their high sounding arguments for rejecting Christ, they have no plausible reason for rejecting Him! Don’t listen to them, don’t repeat their arguments!

Verse 11 calls you to serve the LORD with fear and rejoice before Him with trembling! He is the unassailable one who is established in Heaven! You ought to be terrified to rebel against Him on the one hand...and delighted that you have the opportunity to serve Him on the other! What is called for here is not the flippant kind of rejoicing that the nations have before their so-called gods—but a reverent rejoicing—a rejoicing with trembling! The kind of rejoicing that does not lead to proud self-confidence and haughtiness—but the kind that leads reverence and self-control before the true God who is a consuming fire. The kind that says, “I am so glad that a sinner like me can serve a God like **Him!**” The kind that dares not to approach Him without a mediator, as Cain tried to do when he worshipped; but the kind that joyfully approaches Him in Christ, as Able did when he worshipped Him.

In verse 12, the admonition reaches its climax! “Kiss the Son.” This was the way the ancients and many nations today showed their homage to their kings! It is a kiss that says, “you are my king and I gladly submit to you as my lord and my master.” What a wonderful sovereign He is who paid for the sins of His people out of the royal treasury of His own blood! Who was willing to come a miserable people that were lost in sin and redeem them to be the servants of the Most High God! What a delight He is to all His people! Come to Him, bow to Him, worship Him, submit to Him, Kiss Him!

But woe to you that reject the Son! All judgement has been given to Him, and He has said that all those who reject Him and His salvation will surely perish, and that most miserably! It is only just and right that you should if you neglect so great a salvation! What greater insult could their be to the living God than that you should reject the One He graciously sent to redeem you! “Lest He become angry”—See Him in pictured in Revelation—coming to tread out the wine press of the fierceness of the wrath of the Almighty! You do not want to be against Him in that day!

The phrase, “When His wrath is kindled but a little” perhaps means, “it doesn’t take but a little of His wrath to destroy you.” But more likely, it means that his wrath can be inflamed in a moment! The Bible teaches that when the enemies of God say: “peace and safety” that “sudden destruction will come upon them!” If you are against Him, you will perish in your way—and it may be when you think that you are not yet near the end of your way!

But hear the other side! Hear the wonderful words of verse 12: “Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him!” There is nothing better for you than to take refuge in Jesus Christ! Not one person who does so will be disappointed! He gives eternal life to **all** who come to Him! In this life, you will have the joy of sins forgiven, the working of the Holy Spirit to transform your life, and the hope of heaven. In the life to come, you will have full fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ in Glory in a world that is perfected in righteousness and love, a world that knows no sorrow and no death.

The foolish try to find refuge **from** Him and find none—the wise take refuge in Him and are blessed forever. So be wise! Stop your foolish rebellion and kiss the Son today. Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation!