

The King Who Sits Over a Crazy World

Psalm 2

Pastor/Elder Phil Layton, GCBC, April 18, 2021

500 years ago today, April 18, 1521, was a day that altered church history and world history. **Dr. Martin Luther** was in Worms, Germany. Jaime and I have been to that town. I got to stand at the very spot Luther took his stand.

Luther stood trial before high-ranking government and church officials, and the Emperor of the Roman Empire was there. They asked him to recant his writings of protest (term Protestant came from this). **His reply on 4/18/1521:**

your Majesty and your lordships desire a simple reply, I will answer without horns and without teeth: Unless I am convicted by Scripture and plain reason—I do not accept the authority of popes and councils, for they have contradicted each other—my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not recant anything, for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise. God help me. Amen.¹

Scripture alone was the battle cry, man has no authority to bind conscience or to act as head over the church. Christ alone rules His church, its worship.

500 years later those who want to worship as a church by their conscience are told it's not right nor safe. Some high-ranking government officials talk as if they're emperors or have infallible authority. They speak as popes ex cathedra dictating what a church can or can't do (singing, seating, etc). They contradict State to State, federal vs. local, CDC vs. CDPH, Governor vs. Constitution, CA Judges vs. Supreme Court justices, etc. But our conscience is bound to a higher authority for how we worship, the Word of God, Jesus as head of the church. Here we stand, we cannot do otherwise, God help us.

For freedom of conscience many came to N. America to be free to worship – without the State regulating what they said and sang and what they must wear (vestments, etc.). Some Puritans in England were barred from meeting in church—they had to find barns or open places far away from town for their 'illegal meetings' the government didn't authorize and tried to shut down. There was a non-conformist movement that went against regulated worship. Some literally locked out ministers from church buildings, locked up others.

Hundreds of years later those who came to North America are in a similar situation – regulated worship where you're told what you must wear and no singing or fellowshiping or unauthorized meetings indoors. They locked up Pastor Coates in Canada for 35 days as 'unsafe.' Why? His conscience from the Word of God didn't let him turn away 85% of his church. It would be 'legal' for them to do 7 services, no singing, and no fellowship after, but that's not the church in their conviction or mine. GL building is behind bars Last week Pastor Coates preached Ps 2, the text I'd decided we'd do today. I'll come back to that story later, but as the nation of Canada rages over this, China rages against secret churches. The Middle East targets Christians by Islamic rage and the moral revolution in America has its own plans against Christians (LGBT or social justice movements

to censor silence or censor or severely impact financially any not all onboard). It's not just Communists, many Western nations and rulers counsel together. The United Nations has globalist aims, the Marxist rulers are plotting, the woke mob is rallying rage –we see nations in an uproar, protests, violence and craziness. We ask why?

Why is there such rage in our nation's streets, even this week?

Psalm 2, v. 1 asks: *Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together...*

This is a psalm to make sense of the world. It moves from WHY to WHO: Look at **v. 6**: *“As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill.”* This is the King of heaven over the kings of the earth, He rules over earthly rulers. He's King over the chaos.

Title: The King Who Sits Over a Crazy World.

Outline: Man's rebellion, God's reaction, Christ's reign, Your response.

1. Man's Rebellion (v. 1-3) - the why question:

Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against his Anointed, saying, 'Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us'

The NT tells us King David wrote these words. He wrote other words about the plots he faced, raging people trying to kill him and his people, nations like the Philistines who took their stand against the Lord and defied Him, as Goliath famously did. The peoples of Israel in some cases plotted the death of David and his people, his own son would form a mutiny wanting to cast off the bonds of the rule of the chosen king, as he wanted the throne instead. This is written in the present tense but the NT applies its truths to the future.

Turn to **Acts 4** and I want us to see how the NT interprets and applies Ps 2. In Acts 4 they try to shut down the church, but they say we obey God, not man. The govt. jailed pastors but couldn't chain the gospel:

*²⁴ And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said, “Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, ²⁵ who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit, “**Why did the Gentiles [nations] rage, and the peoples plot in vain?** ²⁶ The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Anointed’—*

- **that's Ps 2**, and it says David spoke it but the Spirit also spoke in it
- *Anointed* in Hebrew is *Messiah*, but in Greek translation it's *Christ*
- NASB and NKJV have '*against the Lord and against His **Christ***'
- so the Spirit-inspired commentary on Ps 2 shows it's about Christ
- this also shows us the early Christians prayed the words of Ps 2 to a '*Sovereign Lord*' (**v. 24**).

How did they interpret and apply Ps 2?

Acts 4 ²⁷ *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, ²⁸ to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.

The same sovereign hand and plan at work with their anointed king David in the past was at work in a greater way in God's providence predestining the death of the ultimate Anointed King Jesus at the hands of heathen men. Knowing His sovereignty over evil in **v. 29** gave them boldness, courage.

How is the church to interpret Ps 2:1-2? The Spirit-inspired interpretation by the NT church shows us: don't just think raging nations in OT, think of the Idumean Herod, and the Italian Pontius Pilate, and the Roman soldiers. When Ps 2 talks about the peoples plotting a vain thing, end of v. 27 applies that to the peoples of Israel plotting in vain to stop the sovereign Lord Jesus. So you can go back to Ps 2 but I just wanted you to see **this is for the church.**

The end of **v. 1** also **asks why the peoples plot in vain?** We can think of the political vanity in **our own government**, the planning, pushing vain agendas. **v. 2** says the world's leaders literally '*take their stand...*' (i.e., defiant stance) and the nation's '*rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his Anointed*' (capital A, remember when that's quoted in Greek, it's Christ).

That's been **going on since Christ came** and the Jewish council gathered the Gentile rulers against the Lord's Christ, it's been going on since the church's persecution in Acts 4, **mankind is rebelling against God and His Son Jesus.** One translation of **v. 3** has '*They say "Let's tear off the shackles they've put on us! Let's free ourselves from their ropes! ...that hold us back ...that tie us down,"*' another version says '*Let us...free ourselves from their restraints.*'

That's not just true of other nations trying to tear down crosses and get rid of all symbols of Christianity, to try to replace Judeo-Christian law with theirs. The **moral revolution in our own nation** attempts the same politically. Can't we also hear in Ps 2 the American voices of the past several decades saying 'let's cast away God from secular schools or society, keep the state separate, let's not be fettered by cords of Christian tradition, let's not be tied down by the ropes of religion, no, let's tear down any ten commandments references or anything offending atheists, let's tear off any shackles left that once kept people from divorcing, let's free ourselves sexually, let's burst through any bands or bounds of morality, let's cast away clothing and common sense of decency, let's throw off all moral restraint and break through every barrier!

Tree free from roots? Fish from water? Train from tracks?

Can we hear voices in our nation raging for years, 'let's get rid of marriage as society has known it for thousands of years as being between a man and a woman, let's throw off any idea of man and woman or that father and mother are good for boys or girls (and let's not call them boys or girls if they don't want us to).

Let's not be held back or tied down to our biological gender or bodily design or the bigotry that thinks there should be bounds for men around women or young girls, let's throw open all doors but throw out all wisdom, and above all let's throw away all vestige of Christ, His Word.'

The latest version says 'let's throw off the legacy of Christian colonialism that wanted to convert people, white male straight Christians are oppressors –let's cast off the oppression,' BLM says, burst the bonds of nuclear family.

How are we to react to the world around us? Ps 2 shows us how God reacts, and we need to see our sovereign God is not anxious or alarmed in the least.

We've seen **1. Man's Rebellion**, now:

2. God's Reaction

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

Notice the contrast: earthly kings stand against God, but God sits in heaven. God is unthreatened, undisturbed, on His throne, but man is off his rocker!

The world is on a warpath against God, but **God isn't pacing nervously**, He sits and He snorts in derision at man's decisions, as if to say 'really? *You* seriously think *you* can get rid of *Me*?!' This little rebellion isn't even taken seriously by the God of heaven. No panicking in heaven, just laughing. The whole world tries to make a plan against God, seeking counsel together for a coupe, but God needs no counsel or planning session. **He laughs** it off as a pathetic puny microscopic idiotic insignificant insurrection.

On the Rock of Ages founded, what can shake thy sure repose?
With salvation's walls surrounded, Thou mayst smile at all Thy foes.

Acts 4 applies this to **when Christ was crucified**, the people of the earth had conspired to put an end to Christ, and they thought they had that weekend. Christ had said '*take my yoke upon you,*' but in killing Him they thought the yoke had now been cast off, that Christ and His movement was now finally over officially permanently. But God in heaven sat and smiled and laughed! Heaven rumbled, the earth shook, the grave opened, and the King came out! In the words, of v. 1 all their raging and plotting was in vain to stop God's:

Vainly they watched...vainly they sealed the dead [Jesus in the grave]...

Death cannot keep his prey, Jesus my Savior, He tore the bars away, Jesus my Lord!
Up from the grave He arose! With a mighty triumph over His foes!

Ps 2:3 says the enemies of Christ try to tear His bars away from them, and in Christ's death they thought they had Christ bound with that sealed tomb, but He actually tore away the bars of death and burst the bonds of the grave! In **Acts 7**, the same counsel thinks if they kill **Stephen** that will end Christ's church, but God smiled again as He looked at **Saul of Tarsus** holding their robes, and God got the last laugh as Saul spread the church much farther. In history, many rulers attempted Ps 2:3, but they all failed and Jesus prevailed.

Emperor Diocletian around 300 AD thought he did v. 3, his medal that exists to this day boasts]... "The name of Christians [is] extinguished."...in Spain, two monumental pillars were raised, on which were written: Diocletian ...having extinguished the name of Christians... everywhere abolished the superstition of Christ... But in this '*the people imagined a vain thing;*' ...Christianity was on the eve of its final and permanent triumph...'

'**Diocletian** set up pillars declaring victory over Christ, but 7 years later...Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire.'

In...the **French Revolution**, a political revolutionary stormed the Bastille in Paris...scaled the Cathedral of Notre Dame and tore down the cross from atop its spire, dashing it into pieces on the ground below... the revolter boasted, "We are going to pull down all that reminds you of God!" But from the crowd came the reply, "how will you pull down the stars in the sky?"

Ps 59:8 'you, O LORD, laugh at them; you hold all the nations in derision.' I couldn't find the quote, but I remember hearing of **someone in China** who boasted in the earlier 20th century that Christianity had been banished from China, but God laughed again, and made its greatest growth in history there. Nations in the **Middle East** have raged more than ever in history the past 25 years, Islamic rage wants to wipe out Christianity and take over the world. God laughs: in the Middle East more Muslims 'have come to Christ in the last 25 years than came to Christ in the previous 1400 years...of Islam...'

Behind the frowning providence of persecution God hides His smiling face.

TALK ABOUT GRACELIFE CHURCH LAST 1.5 WEEKS AS WELL

Ps 115 says 'Why should the nations say, "Where, now, is their God?" But our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases' (**v. 2-3** NASB). In OT times we see God's sense of humor when Pharaoh wants to wipe out the Israelite male generation, but his own daughter raises one who delivers all Israel after mocking Egypt's gods with plagues. Pharaoh tried to drown the little ones but last laugh: Pharaoh's big army drowns in the red sea instead.

Ps 2, v. 5 says after the Lord laughs in derision at man's foolish decisions, **Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury...**

Ps 37:12 'The wicked plots against...and gnashes his teeth at him, but **the Lord laughs** at the wicked, for he sees that his day is coming. The wicked draw the sword...their sword shall enter their own heart...' It's like Haman building gallows to hang all the Jews, but it becomes his own noose instead. Prov 1 says to those mock God's wisdom 'I will laugh...I will mock...they shall eat the fruit of their own way...' (**1:22, 26, 31**). In other words, to men who mock God: God is not mocked, you will reap what you sow (**Gal 6:7**). If you mock God and don't repent, He'll mock you as judgment strikes you.

Sin is no joke but He can't help a sovereign smile at man's stupid rebellion. Maybe you saw your kids do something so foolish and ridiculous, you can't help but laugh initially, but then at some point you have to speak to them to deal with it. God isn't amused by sin, but when His tiny creatures shake the fist at God, it's so ridiculous, it's humorous.

Illustrations: ant challenging the church, dogs barking at moon to go away, kid bringing a squirt gun to North Korea to try to get their army to surrender.

The sovereign Lord ... **nobody can stop His reign**

So why do the nations rage and all the peoples plot in vain.

Their sin and offense is against His excellence and they're not ashamed...

They cock and aim. Their target: His cosmic reign.

That's like a kid with a super-soaker trying to conquer Spain!

Man ...trying to ball up his puny fist At the Lord who is ruling this,
 what's amusing is God just laughs like "who is this?!"
 Stupid kids who persist in foolishness, it's only by God's power you exist!
 Now you declare war on the Lord when before you were born
 He formed you in the uterus?!
 Look: our God is in the heavens and He does all that He pleases
 He's established His King in Zion and His name is Jesus

That takes us from **God's Reaction (v. 4-5)** to:

3. Christ's Reign (v. 6-9)

In **v. 6** God says *"As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill."*

The King speaks in **v. 7**: *I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you." ⁸ Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. ⁹ You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."*

Man sets himself against Jesus but God Himself set Jesus as Zion's King in the heavenly Zion till the day of wrath when He comes to an earthly throne. Based on how the NT quotes Ps 2 I take as His heavenly enthronement, but Jesus will return to earthly Jerusalem and reign eternally in New Jerusalem.

The language of decree in **v. 7** takes us back to eternity past, a decree from God the Father to God the Son who's eternally begotten, with no beginning. He's the *only begotten* Son, that means *unique One and Only* Son of God. When Jesus was baptized, 'a voice came from heaven, *"You are my son..."* (Lk 3:22 NIV), but the fulfillment of **v. 7** is after Jesus rose:
 - Acts 13:33 *'this he has fulfilled to us ... by raising Jesus, as also it is written in the second Psalm, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you.'*
 - Rom 1:4 says He was *'declared to be the Son of God...by his resurrection'*
 - Heb 1:3-5 *'After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high...as much superior to angels...For to which of the angels did God ever say, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you"?'*

Ps 2:7 is the **resurrected ascended exalted enthroned Jesus**, the King of **v. 6** over the raging nations, and He will be given the nations as His inheritance. Those who hate Him will be His heritage and those who plot against will be His possession. The heathen think they can win their own way, but the Lord shows 'no, I own you.' They think they can bring the end of Christianity on earth, but God promises His Son the ends of the earth will bow to Him from ISIS to Iceland, from Al Qaeda to America, from North Korea to Nigeria.

'Ask of Me, and I will give the nations,' the Father says, and the Son asks of Him in **Jn 17:20-24**, not just for disciples of the nation of Israel, but for all God gives, that raging nations will become praising nations, every tribe and tongue. I've heard it said this verse promising nations to Christ was one of the verses that fueled the early missions movement in recent centuries, as Christ's people joined Christ's prayer asking for the nations to be given for His possession as they took the gospel to *'the end of the earth'* as **v. 8** said.

v. 9 reminds us from His heavenly throne He will come again, as **Rev 19:15** says at the **2nd coming**, ‘to strike down *the nations*, he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God...’ In Revelation we see the final attempt of Ps 2’s multi-national united defiance in **Rev 11**: *The nations raged, but your wrath came, and the time for the dead to be judged, and for rewarding your servants ... the seventh angel blew his trumpet [the last trumpet, 2nd coming], and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.”* (v. 18, 15)

4. What’s Your Response (v. 10-12)?

Response #1. Be Wise and Be Warned

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

O King Abdulla II, be wise! O Ayatolla Khamenei, take warning! O Sultan Saïd, O Prime Minister Sheikh Al-sabah, O President Mahmoud Abbas, Ps 2:10 is for you! O Kim Jong-un, wise up! O General Secretary of the Communist Part of China, O Emperor Akihito, watch yourself! O Putin, O PM Cameron, O Queen Elizabeth, O Castro, be watchful! O Biden, O Harris, show discernment! O Congress, O Senate, O democrats, O republicans, O independents, watch yourself if you think you can tear out the pages of God’s law on gender and marriage. The end of v. 10 in the NASB is ‘*judges of the earth, take warning.*’ O Supreme Court judges trying to cast off God’s law like in v. 3, Jesus is warning you.

Apply to Canada, courts in CA, Governor

This speaks to the **government of Alberta Canada**, O **Premier Jason Kenney**, O Chief Medical Officer **Deena Hinshaw**, Alberta Health Services, RCMP, be wise, be warned, be discerning on what’s really going on. O officers who take hostage a church building while leaving alone mosques and massive crowds at stores and malls, take warning. O provincial judge that keeps a pastor in jail while 2 sex offenders are released from the same center, watch out. There is a rod of justice in v. 9 that can smash you like fragile pottery. And know this: the gates of Hades (or health depts) can’t stop the church!

Response #2: Be Repentant and Be Reverent

He will rule the nations with a rod of iron, but He offers a scepter of grace in v. 11: *Serve the LORD with fear...* [that can also be translated ‘worship’]. This is a call to drop your weapons and drop to the ground in worship, fall in fear. It’s a call to unconditional surrender, to submit as a lowly servant in awe as you serve. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom in v. 10.

Response #3: Embrace Christ and Exalt Christ

The end of v. 11 commands ‘...*rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled.*’ Christ isn’t all love, He has anger and wrath that can flare up if you reject His love.

We want to take God out or at least take Him out of the picture like v. 3 says, we don’t want Him to rule or set the rules. Sin is rebellion and treason against the King, trying to take His throne, that’s why it’s so serious, and any King must bring rebels to justice. But instead of the

death we deserve, there's mercy for all who kiss the Son. Run to the Lord in faith, fall at His feet with trembling, kiss His nail-pierced feet. Give homage to the King who knows you like the back of His hand. If He shows you the back of His hand, kiss the nail-prints. Show honor to Him who wrote your name on His hands and on His heart. Show affection to the Kinsman-Redeemer as the bride whose banner over you is love if you love Him. If you don't yet love Him, embrace Him by faith before it's too late! If you turn from your sin, trust in Him: *Blessed are all who take refuge in him.*

Take refuge in Christ by embracing and clinging to Him, like a man almost falling off a high-rise building because of a foolish mistake, but he grabbed hold of a cross beam, clung to it with all his might, and as he was rescued it seemed too good to be true. He rejoices with trembling, fearful but thankful.

Blessed, happy, are all who take refuge, who trust, who totally cling in faith to Christ. Don't be those in v. 3 futilely foolish trying to cast off His cords, join in the worship of those who cast down crowns at His feet. Embrace the Lord and exalt the Lord of Ps 2, the Sovereign Son over the nations. Don't be dismayed by the raging nations and problems in our nation, because God isn't. Don't lose hope or lose faith based on who may sit in the Oval Office, put your hope and faith in the One who sits in the throne room of heaven.

¹ R. C. Sproul, *The Holiness of God* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1993), 126–127.