

Sermon Notes

WORSHIP SERVICE - 3.10.2024

THE LORD REIGNS - PSALM 2

Psalm 2:1-12

1 Why do the nations rage

and the peoples plot in vain?

2 The kings of the earth set themselves,

and the rulers take counsel together,

against the Lord and against his Anointed, saying,

3 “Let us burst their bonds apart

and cast away their cords from us.”

4 He who sits in the heavens laughs;

the Lord holds them in derision.

5 Then he will speak to them in his wrath,

and terrify them in his fury, saying,

6 “As for me, I have set my King

on Zion, my holy hill.”

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.”

10 Now therefore, O kings, be wise;

be warned, O rulers of the earth.

11 Serve the Lord with fear,

and rejoice with trembling.

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.

I. INTRODUCTION

- Who or what is the ultimate power in the world?
 - It's a relevant question in our time as it has been at any point in human history.
 - We want to know where all of this is headed.
 - As we read and Psalm 2 today, we find the theological answer to those questions.
 - The Psalm is especially helpful to us as God's people who find ourselves in a present moment of increasing hostility towards Christianity and Christians.
 - And we will see in this Psalm, that the hostility we experience is exactly what we are supposed to encounter in a world that is operating in open treason of the Sovereign, and that the gospel message is God's answer to the world's opposition.
 - This Psalm teaches us the relation between the kingdom of God and the kingdoms of the earth and of the supreme power over all the other powers at work in world history.
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- Psalm 1 and 2 serve as an introduction to all of the Psalms.
 - These two Psalms are connected and directly related to one another.
 - Refer to Part 1 in the series, The Blessed Man.
 - The blessed man is blessed because he delights in God's Word, he meditates on it.
 - And the outcome of his way of life is that he is like a flourishing, fruit-bearing tree that is continually watered by a never-ending stream of refreshment from God's Word.
 - This is contrasted to the outcome of the wicked, they are destined to perish as they face judgment.
 - The Blessed man is a prototypical individual. He is the example that others are to follow.
 - For that reason, the blessed man has to be the Lord's Anointed, the King of Psalm 2.
 - Now all of Israel's kings were to be examples of righteousness and delighting in God's Word. He was to be the ideal and exemplary Israelite that all people were to emulate because he was God's representative.
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- Psalm 2 is classified as a Royal Psalm. These are Psalms concerning the king.
 - We interpret the Psalm from a historical perspective but also a theological and eschatological perspective.
 - The Psalm easily reveals a four part structure that is identified by the four distinct voices in the stanzas.
 - That is of the kings and rulers of the nations in v1-3; the Lord in v4-6; The King in v7-9, and lastly the Psalm writer himself in v10-12.

II. THE NATIONS REBEL

- Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain?
- The Psalm opens with a rhetorical question. This is more an expression of astonishment.
- It's an exclamation regarding t
- Recall that the word "plot" is the same word as "meditate" in Psalm 1:2.

- We are to meditate on God's Word and they meditate on rebellion.
- The object of their rage and hostility is the Lord and His Anointed.
- They don't want to submit to his rule.

- The "rulers take counsel together...", this is the counsel that the blessed man does not walk in, the counsel to reject the Lord and His anointed.
- The phrases "let us burst their bonds apart" and "cast away their cords from us" have to do with rejecting God's instructions, his promises, the precepts, commandments, and prohibitions, and guidance from the Lord on how to flourish in the world that he designed.
- They see his rules as chains and fetters that need to be cast off.
- They scoff at the law of God. They mock the Creator, they treat him as insignificant and his commandments as unnecessary and restrictive.
- They want to usurp cosmic authority and rule. They want to sit in the seat of authority.

- What is the historical context of this psalm?
- The ongoing battles of Israel with the peoples of the surrounding nations show us that this rage against the Lord and His king was repeated throughout Israel's history.
- But the rebellion of the nations in Psalm 2 transcends any historical occasion.
- It is a way to interpret all of history until the Second Coming of Christ.
- Every nation, every ruler, every people group, every government or organization that possesses and uses power independent of the rule of the Lord is in rebellion.
- They are under God's wrath and will face judgment.
- But, their plot to cast off God's Word and rule won't be met with success.

- Notice they rage against the Lord and against His anointed.
- Now this is a reference to the king. That is a frequent title referring to David and all of his successors from his line.
- The first example we have of this is Samuel anointing Saul (1 Sam 10:1).
- And then David was anointed by Samuel, the prophet of the Lord, to be king over Israel after Saul. (1 Sam. 16)
- The prophet, as the Lord's representative, speaking for God, would anoint the designated person by pouring oil over their head from a ram's horn.
- The anointing was a symbol of the divine choice and it conveyed not only the royal title but the endowment to rule over God's people.
- It was an act of consecration to the Lord and the Lord's service.
- The term "anointed" Hebrew is where we get the transliterated word, Messiah.
- "The anointed" was the principal royal title. (1 Sam 12:4; Ps 18:50)
- To rebel against God's anointed is to rebel against the one who appointed him to rule.
- *"The Lord forbid that I should do this thing to my lord, the Lord's anointed, to put out my hand against him, seeing he is the Lord's anointed."* (1 Sam 24:6)

III. THE LORD RESPONDS

- Well, the nations have their say and now the Lord has his.
- While the kings and rulers and the peoples of the nations sit in their seats scoffing, the One who sits in the heavens—laughs!
- He finds their rebellion and behavior laughable.
- He holds them in derision. They are objects of his ridicule and mockery.

- God is on his throne, in the heavens, while they are mocking him from their seats on the earth.
 - This is anthropomorphic language to impress the truth that the puny kings of the earth are no threat to the cosmic power of “I Am”.
 - Psalm 37:12-13 The wicked plots against the righteous and gnashes his teeth at him, 13 but the Lord laughs at the wicked, for he sees that his day is coming.
 - This is why they “plot in vain.” Their meditations on rebellion are pipe dreams.
 - The day of judgment is coming for the wicked.
 - Psalm 59:5, 8 You, Lord God of hosts, are God of Israel. Rouse yourself to punish all the nations; spare none of those who treacherously plot evil. 8 But you, O Lord, laugh at them; you hold all the nations in derision.
- Isn't it a comfort and encouragement to know that God is not rocked by the rebellion of sinful humanity?
 - The people of God should not despair, God is not worried. God's throne will never be overthrown.
- The wicked will face judgment.
 - They are not going to get away with anything though it may appear like they are for a time.
 - God in his mercy, delays judgment giving people time to repent.
 - That is why we will see the kings and rulers urged to serve the lord with fear, because of the wrath of God hanging over their heads.
- Now the Lord speaks in his wrath and terrifying fury.
 - His majestic voice thunders, “I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill.”
 - God declares that he is installing his King.
 - The king from the line of David is going to reign. And His king will reign from Zion! God's holy hill.
 - Zion is synonymous for the city of Jerusalem, the place where the royal palace was built, and the temple mount.
 - Now in the historical context, this installation refers to the Davidic king whom God appointed to rule.
 - Now this king is superior to all of the other kings of the earth because this king is the Lord's anointed.
 - But there is a larger telos to this proclamation of the king's installation by the Lord.
 - It is a messianic prophecy, pointing to the greater David yet to come.

IV. THE KING REPORTS

- The voice speaking shifts from the Lord to the Davidic king.
 - And he is reporting what the Lord said to him at his coronation.
 - It was the decree of the Lord, the prophetic word establishing divine sonship.
 - The Lord said to me, “You are my Son; today I have begotten you.”
 - Now, every anointed king of Israel was said to be God's son. The representative king of Israel takes the place of the son of God.
 - Like “anointed”, “my son” is symbolic of the divine choice.
- But the way this is phrased here David is signaling that the person speaking is not David, but the promised descendent of David.
 - This King's reign would be over the whole earth.
 - The nations would be his inheritance; the ends of the earth his possession.
 - All of the promises made to Abraham will find their full realization through him.
 - This king will possess all the ends of the earth.

- Notice in the ESV how the term “Son” is capitalized.
 - What is the prominent title for Jesus in the NT? He is the “Son of God.”
 - He is God’s representative King to the whole world.
 - The Father declared Jesus to be his beloved son at his baptism (Matt 3:17) and at the transfiguration (Matt 17:5).
 - And it is at his resurrection and ascension where he is declared to be King and enthroned.
 - Paul, the apostle of the Lord, ties this announcement to the resurrection of Jesus.
 - Acts 13:30-33 But God raised him from the dead, 31 and for many days he appeared to those who had come up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are now his witnesses to the people. 32 And we bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers, 33 this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus, as also it is written in the second Psalm, “‘You are my Son, today I have begotten you.’”
 - Romans 1:1-5 Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, 2 which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, 3 concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh 4 and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, 5 through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations,
 - No other king of Israel ever rose from the dead. Only Jesus has the undisputed title of resurrected King!
- After the resurrection, Jesus is with his disciples, and he declares, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me, go therefore and make disciples of all nations...” (Matt 28:18-19)
 - He rules over all, the ends of the earth are his possession, the nations are his inheritance.
- The phrases, “break them with a rod of iron” and “dash them to pieces like a potter’s vessel” speaks to his power and might, no opponent can stand in his way, those who resist and rebel against his sovereign rule will be crushed.
 - Now this has not been fully realized yet. The nations are still raging to this day against the Lord’s anointed, but the day of judgment is coming.
 - When? At the consummation of the ages, at the return of Christ, this shattering and breaking will come to pass.
 - Rev. 2:26-27 The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations, 27 and he will rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, even as I myself have received authority from my Father.
 - Rev. 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.

V. THE PSALMIST REASONS

- Now the psalmist interjects himself and reasons that it would be better for the kings and rulers of the earth to learn wisdom from God’s word, like the blessed man.

- Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth...
 - The kings and rulers need to embrace the Lord's commandments, they need to delight in the law of the Lord, they need to submit and serve the Lord's Anointed King.
 - "Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling."
 - The kings and rulers and people of the earth need to fear the Lord, serve him, obey him, love him, and delight in him.
 - This is the mercy and grace of God in this appeal.
- Instead of rebelling, instead of defying his reign, they are exhorted to "kiss the Son", to pay homage to him.
 - They must show him the adoration he rightly deserves as the only Sovereign.
 - That is the only way to avoid the fate of the wicked, it is by submitting to the rule and reign of the King.
 - Make no mistake, to oppose the King is to incur his anger and wrath, you will perish in the way.
 - He does not tolerate those who disregard his rule, who defy his righteous reign, "his wrath is quickly kindled.
 - This doesn't mean he is short-tempered.
 - It means that one should not presume upon his patience and forbearance.
 - His wrath can come suddenly once his patience has run out.
- "Blessed are all who take refuge in him."
 - The only place of safety, the only shelter one can find to avert the wrath of God, is God himself.
 - There is no refuge FROM him, but there is a refuge IN him.
 - Have you made Jesus your refuge?
 - Have you "kissed the son" acknowledging his rule and reign over your life?
- The message of this Psalm is the basis for Christian courage in the face of threats and opposition by the rulers and people to God's anointed and his Church.
 - Read Acts 4, the early church saw Psalm 2 as the interpretative lens which showed them that the hostility of the ruling powers was no cause for them to despair but a catalyst emboldening them to declare the Son of God as God's answer to the opposition of the world's power.
 - Don't despair at the world's opposition to Christ and his people.
 - Jesus is King over all the powers of the world. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom.
 - This should give us confidence in fearful times.
- Psalm 2 gives us the big picture view.
 - Jesus has been opposed from the beginning and will be until his return.
 - The church will always have its opponents, those who will attack her, mock and ridicule her, and even those who will seek to physically harm God's people.
 - But the message of this Psalm helps us interpret the world rightly.
 - We cannot forget God's sovereign rule and power and the kingship of Jesus.
- These two Psalms together give us the key to all of the psalms.
 - They describe to us the path to the blessed life, delighting in God and his Word, delighting in His Son, embracing his rule, because he is the King.
 - The unveiling of the Lord's anointed declares to us, and it is the theme echoed throughout all of the Psalms, that "The Lord reigns!"
 - May we continue to "kiss the Son" and take refuge in him, until heaven announces the climactic goal of human history has been accomplished,

that “the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.” (Rev. 11:15)

APPLICATION AND REFLECTION

In light of today's message....

- What did I learn about the gospel?
- How can I apply what I learned about the gospel to my life?
- With whom can I share the gospel this week?