

The Inevitable Supremacy of the Son

Psalm 2:1 Why do the nations rage, And the people plot a vain thing? 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 break Their bonds in pieces And cast away Their cords from us."

4 He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; The Lord shall hold them in derision. 5 Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, And distress them in His deep displeasure: 6 "Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion."

7 "I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You. 8 Ask of Me, and I will give You The nations for Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth for Your possession. 9 You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel.'"

10 Now therefore, be wise, O kings; Be instructed, you judges 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, When His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him. (Psa 2:1-12)

Perhaps you have seen photos of the group known as the Red Ants. Officially called the The Red Ant Security and Eviction Services company, is a group tasked with evicting people who are illegally living in buildings or houses or land owned by others. The workers dress in red overalls and helmets, and move in to a building, and physically throw the residents belongings out, and evict the illegal dwellers.

The Red Ants get to do that, because even in South Africa, if you legally own the building or land, you can get finally get an eviction order for those who live on your land without paying rent.

It cannot be nice to be one of those people evicted. However, if you live on the property of another without permission, that owner has the right to evict you.

In fact, Psalm 2 is something like an eviction order being served on a world that refuses to acknowledge who the rightful owner of the world is. We are all squatters when we live in defiance, in rebellion without acknowledging the authority, rights and ownership of the Lord. If we are tenants on another's property, if we are citizens of a lord's realm, we must respond to Him as He demands. To deny His authority is rebellion, to act in defiance of Him would be to face eviction, penalty, judgement. You can squat illegally, but when the owner comes, you will face danger.

Psalm 2 answers the question Who is the King of the world by right, and what should we do about it? Who owns all things and what is the sensible response to that?

Psalm 2 is in the Bible to state the absolute certainty of the Son's rulership of this world, the foolishness of defiance and the need to submit now.

You might be looking around you and seeing an increase in vileness and sin. You might be seeing world economies and political systems in turmoil. You might be seeing the rise of false religions, and the apparent shrinkage of Christianity. You might be wondering whether in the midst of all this Christianity really is the only way, whether Jesus really is the exclusive way to God, whether you have it right amidst so many that seem to have it wrong. This psalm answers that by telling us who the rightful owner of the world is, what belongs to Him, and how we should respond to Him.

The psalm falls very clearly into four stanzas of three verses each. We are to imagine the scene is the very throne room of Heaven, where the Sovereign Father and His Son and Spirit survey the whole Earth. They watch as humans attempt to rebel and throw off their rule.

I. The Foolishness of Defiance

Psalm 2:1 *Why do the nations rage, And the people plot a vain thing? 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 break Their bonds in pieces And cast away Their cords from us."*

The psalm opens with a rhetorical question. Why do the nations of the Earth waste their time in a futile effort? Why do they spend so much energy in something that is impossible? Why do they rage and conspire to do the impossible?

What is that thing?

Verse 2 and 3 tell us. *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 break Their bonds in pieces And cast away Their cords from us."*

The kings and rulers of humanity, representing the great mass of humanity seek to organise a rebellion. This is deliberate, planned and resolute. It is, in the real sense of the word, a conspiracy. They unite and work together to rebel.

But notice the rebellion is not against religion in general. It is not rebellion against man-made systems of works, the religion of Cain. It is not rebellion against New Age spirituality. The psalmist tells us who in particular the rebellion is against. "Against the LORD and against His Anointed," Against Yahweh and His Anointed One. In the Hebrew, the word for Anointed here is Mashicho – where we get Mashiah – Messiah. Mankind is united in rebellion against the God of the Bible – the revealed Triune Creator-Redeemer of Scripture: the God of Israel, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Here are their self-indicting words in verse 3. Let us break their chains and let us cast away, free ourselves from their shackles or restraints. Man would like to say that he does not believe in God, he can't see any evidence for God. But here his conspiracy shows he feels the presence of God's lordship, and he sees it as a restraint, a chain, a boundary which he hates.

Sometimes our language incriminates us. The primary school I attended once had a child who bunked school, and then tried to get away with it by phoning the school and pretending to be the parent. And this is how he began the sentence, "Hello, this is my father speaking..."

So here, mankind wants to act as if there is no god, no creator, no one to whom we owe our existence, but the whole time it is done in the spirit of defiant revolutionaries. "Let's free ourselves of His horrible constraint over our lives." "Whose constraint?" "The non-existent god's." or as someone else put it, the motto of the unbeliever is "There is no god, and I hate Him."

They throw it off in all kinds of ways.

They seek to rebel against Him as Creator with evolution, defying what is so obvious in creation. They seek to rebel against Him as Redeemer with psychology and false religion, denying what their conscience warns them about every day, denying the natural law in every human heart.

They seek to rebel against Him as Sustainer with economic, scientific, medical and technological ways of making life work with no acknowledgement of Him, or in defiance to Him.

They seek to rebel against Him as God by false worship, by art that distorts beauty.

They seek to rebel against Him as King by creating political systems and military complexes that deny the existence or relevance of Christ to man.

The great problem of mankind is not ignorance of the True God. It is defiance of what they already

know of Him.

12 Therefore He said: "A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. 13 "So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas¹, and said to them, 'Do business till I come.' 14 "But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We will not have this man to reign over us.' (Luk 19:12-14)

And so we can already judge which side of the psalm we stand on in the first three verses. Does the rightful kingship of Jesus seem like horrible, chafing yoke around your neck, or does it seem easy and light, the needed and necessary leadership of your life?

Now why is this rebellion by mankind so futile, so foolish? That question is answered in verses 4 to 6.

II. The Father's Derision

4 He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; The Lord shall hold them in derision. 5 Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, And distress them in His deep displeasure: 6 "Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion."

He who sits in the Heavens laughs. The image is of someone with unequaled and unlimited power being challenged. It is humorous. Picture sitting in a chair and seeing a line of ants determined to move you and your chair to another spot. However many, however feverishly they work, you know they are not moving you, and that you could wipe them all out in a few seconds.

So the combined rebellion of man – his political systems, his empires, his religions, his cultures, united in building a Tower of babel in every generation – is to God as a line of ants.

Psa 115:3 *But our God is in heaven; He does whatever He pleases.*

Isa 40:22 *It is He who sits above the circle of the earth, And its inhabitants are like grasshoppers, Who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, And spreads them out like a tent to dwell in.*

But the laughter here is not the laughter of happy amusement. It is the laughter of furious scorn. This is God seeing His own creation refuse to acknowledge Him. He sees people made in His image now so twisted, and so defiant that they use their God-given faculties to build systems of defiance and independence from God.

So while the challenge to God is futile and foolish, and worthy of scorn and derision, God is not indifferent to man's rebellion. Instead, God has a reply to all of man's rebellion. *5 Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, And distress them in His deep displeasure: 6 "Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion."*

God the Father's response to this world is this: "You may rage all you want. You may shake your fist at Me and call My cords of love *chains of bondage*. You may use My creation to create your own empires to your own glory. But know this, I have already installed, consecrated and anointed My King on my holy hill of Zion. Whether or not you submit now, whether or not you give up your futile game of rebellion, I have already chosen Him, anointed Him, and given Him the full rights over all the earth."

God has always wanted the world to have a king. Adam was supposed to be King, but failed. Israel was supposed to be a nation of royal priests, but failed. The royal house of David seems to fail. God calls out a people from all nations to be His light, but we see a falling away. In the end, God must impose victory, setting His King up.

Who is this king? Obviously this psalm had immediate application to the king of Israel, to the David. The king of Israel on mount Zion was going to be the mediatorial king between God and the nations. But we know two things. First, David and his sons failed to rule the way verses 7 to 9 suggest. Second, the language of these verses goes beyond any human king of Israel.

The word for *set* is the word for anointed. This is the anointed king. The chosen One. This is Messiah.

“I know men and I tell you that Jesus Christ is no mere man. Between Him and every other person in the world there is no possible term of comparison. Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and I have founded empires. But on what did we rest the creation of our genius? Upon force. Jesus Christ founded His empire upon love; and at this hour millions of men would die for Him.” –Napoleon

God has already chosen Him. Though outside the palace, down below, there are the sounds of crowds shouting and screaming cries of bloodthirsty revolt and rebellion, but inside, the Father is calmly pouring the oil over his head, placing the crown on His Son's head, placing the sceptre in His hand.

So what exactly does that mean? Now the scene shifts to the Son who has been anointed, and we hear Him speak. And what he says tells us the meaning of God having chosen a king.

III. The Declaration of the Son

7 "I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You. 8 Ask of Me, and I will give You The nations for Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth for Your possession. 9 You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel.'"

The Son tells us what the Father has said to Him. The first thing the Father says to Him is a matter of identity. He says, “You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.” What does this mean? When we hear begotten, we think of beginning. We think of human birth.

But that can't be the case here. On what day does the Father say this to the Son? The Son would have no recollection of it if this was said at His birth. This scene is a scene of coronation, not of birth. Furthermore, the New Testament applies this to the Resurrection: *Acts 13:33 "God has fulfilled this for us their children, in that He has raised up Jesus. As it is also written in the second Psalm: 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.*

Begotten here does not mean created. Begotten does not mean beginning. Begotten means the Father owns the Son. The Father acknowledges the Son. As He did at the baptism, as He did at the Transfiguration, the Father claims full relationship with the Son, vindicating and enthroning Him. The Father gives the identity of the Anointed King.

Second, the Father gives the inheritance of the Anointed King.

8 Ask of Me, and I will give You The nations for Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth for Your possession. 9 You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel.'"

It was a custom among great kings, to give to favoured ones whatever they might ask. (Esther 5:6; Matthew 14:7.) Jesus must simply ask and the Father will give the nations for His inheritance and

the ends of the earth as His possession.

Psa 110:1 *A Psalm of David. The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool."*

Isa 9:6 *For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.*

Now we could cite many, many Scriptures which speak of the global dominion of Messiah, of the power He shall have over all nations, of the Messianic king and His Kingdom.

Dan 7:13 *"I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him.*

Dan 7:14 *Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, Which shall not pass away, And His kingdom the one Which shall not be destroyed.*

So the real question becomes, when does Messiah Jesus rule and reign, and how is it achieved? When does He dash the nations rebellion and rule over them? Christians have answered in three ways. The first way is to say that Jesus took ownership of the kingdoms of this world after the resurrection. His is a spiritual kingdom, ruling in the hearts of men. One day, He will return, end human history with a general resurrection and begin the new heavens and the New Earth.

The second way is to say Jesus took ownership of the kingdoms of this world after the resurrection, but his kingdom will be on earth through a steady Christianizing of the whole world. The Gospel will steadily conquer the nations, however many centuries it takes, until He will finally return once the world is largely converted.

The third way is to say that Jesus took ownership of kingdoms of this world after the resurrection, but his kingdom will be on earth through a great tribulation and the imposition of victory on a rebellious world. As Spurgeon put it, "The glorious reign of Jesus in the latter day will not be consummated, until a terrible struggle has convulsed the nations. His coming will be as a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap, and the day thereof shall burn as an oven. Earth loves not her rightful monarch, but clings to the usurper's sway: the terrible conflicts of the last days will illustrate both the world's love of sin and Jehovah's power to give the kingdom to his only Begotten."

I believe this third way is the right way.

David was anointed a long period of time before he sat on the throne. So Jesus was publicly anointed at His baptism, publicly vindicated at His resurrection, publicly glorified at His ascension, and will be publicly coronated at His return.

Victory will not be achieved by us; it will be imposed on us. The role of the church is that of a second John the Baptist. We are a pilgrim people, preparing the way of the Lord. Why does the Lord not simply come and put down the rebellion and take up his throne?

Second Peter tells us. **9** *The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. (2Pe 3:9)*

God is using this time as a time of announcing clemency, pardon, amnesty. Because when the Son returns to take up His inheritance, He is not coming to save, but to fight, to dash, to destroy.

I think we are plagued with a sentimental view of Jesus, as one who would never judge, destroy or kill. But the Saviour who died for all men, has every right to judge all men. And those who will not be persuaded, who will not bow the knee will face not the effeminate Jesus of certain paintings, but a furious King.

2Th 1:8 *in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,*

Rev 6:16 *and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! "For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"*

The Puritan Jeremy Taylor put it thus:

Truly, when I consider how the goodness of God is abused and perverted by the greatest part of mankind, I cannot but [*believe that*]-the greatest miracle in the world is God's patience and bounty to an ungrateful world. If a prince hath an enemy got into one of his towns, he doth not send them in provision, but lays close siege to the place, and doth what he can to starve them. But the great God, that could wink all his enemies into destruction, bears with them, and is at daily cost to maintain them. ..

But think not, sinners, that you shall escape thus. God's mill goes slow, but it grinds small; the more admirable his patience and bounty now is, the more dreadful and unsupportable will that fury be which ariseth out of his abused goodness. Nothing blunter than iron, yet when sharpened it hath an edge that will cut fatally. Nothing smoother than the sea, yet when stirred into a tempest nothing rageth more. Nothing so sweet as the patience and goodness of God, and nothing so terrible as his wrath when it takes fire.

IV. The Decision Demanded

10 Now therefore, be wise, O kings; Be instructed, you judges of the earth. 11 Serve the LORD with fear, And rejoice with trembling. 12 Kiss the Son¹, lest He² be angry, And you perish in the way, When His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him. (Psa 2:1-12)

In light of the identity of the Son and His inheritance, in light of His power and His anger, and His ability to consume when His wrath is only set to low burn, what should we do?

King and judges, those who represent mankind, and therefore by implication all of us, are told to be wise. Be sensible. Learn from what has been said about God, His Messiah, and His rights over the world. Here is what you and I are to do: serve with reverence, rejoice with trembling, kiss the son.

Take that last one. Kiss the Son. In the ancient near east – a kiss was the sign of loving submission. **1Ki 19:18** *"Yet I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him."*

Come to Jesus, and accept His lordship, but do so as one who has been won over by love. God would not conquer your heart with thunder and terror, for then you would submit merely out of self-protection. This is why God now woos you in this time, before His Son returns in glory. Now,

before He takes up His rulership of the nations on earth, submit to Him sweetly. Everyone who trusts in him is blessed – His yoke is easy and His burden is light.

And then we are to combine two other affections – reverence and joy. We must serve the Lord with fear or reverence, and we must rejoice with trembling. To know the King is to know both deep joy and deep awe. And one without the other becomes false. Fear without joy becomes servile fear, intimidation, burdensome, guilt-driven living. Joy without reverence becomes lighthearted flippancy, trivial sentimentality, a Christianity very bright but not at all deep, a cheap neon-light version of the starlight of Christ.

Now at the beginning of this year, ask yourself, have I slipped into a practical pluralism? Have I developed apathy about His return? Have I become complacent regarding evangelism? Am I Acting as if this kind of world will be the only kind that will ever be?

The Inevitable supremacy of the Son. We either live as squatters in His inheritance, denying His lordship, until a day of reckoning. Or we gladly live as His tenants, being in a joyful, reverent relationship with the Triune God through the Son.