

Psalm 2

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[0 : 00] Yes, you take your copy of God's Word and join me in Psalm chapter 2. Well, once again, we are going to take a breather from our study of Romans.

! On Monday, you likely know an individual entered a private Christian school and killed three adults and three nine-year-olds.

The whole matter is heartbreaking. The event itself and the ensuing coverage and politicizing of it. And it is a grand example of the moral insanity that Paul speaks of at the conclusion of Romans chapter 1.

I don't want to belittle or minimize other mass shootings, even those that have occurred this year. But this one especially was felt by me. As I considered and prayed this week, my mind was continually drawn to Psalm 2.

Now, I preached on Psalm 2 in January of 21. Some of you may remember some reasons why we might have considered Psalm 2 then.

[1 : 12] A clay preached on it in March of 22. And now we're going to look at it once again. Perhaps more than ever, we need its lessons for us.

Could be that we're starting a bit of a tradition here. I've mentioned before that my work as a pastor for the first 12 years can be summarized in my working to answer three questions.

I was asked to me one time, what do you want college students to know before they leave your church? And I wanted college students to have fully formed answers to three questions.

Number one, what is the Bible? Number two, what is the gospel? And number three, what is the church? We thought we'd be doing a great work if we could send college students out from our church into the world with good answers to those three questions.

In the last two years, I found that I need to add a fourth, an extremely important question to that list. I think that far too many professing Christians are being shaken in our time when they ought to be immovable.

[2 : 23] Beloved, I want us to be immovable, regardless of the circumstance of our day, from mass shootings and grand tragedy to the minutia of the circumstances we walk through each day.

And we will not be immovable unless we can rightly answer the question, who is God? We will explore this question for all of this life and in the life to come, which is a thing to consider.

But our God has told us much of himself and we do well to learn as much as we can. So let's look at Psalm 2 together this morning to do that very thing.

Before we read Psalm 2, I want to remind you, beloved, that this is God's word to us written for his glory and for our good. And so we would all do well to listen to it in order to believe its promises and to obey its commands.

Psalm 2, beginning in verse 1. 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.

[3 : 48] He who sits in the heavens laughs. The Lord holds them in derision. Then he will speak to them in his wrath and terrify them in his fury, saying, As for me, I have set my king on Zion, my holy hill.

I will tell of the decree. The Lord said to me, You are my son. Today I have begotten you. Ask of me and I will make the nations your heritage and the ends of the earth your possession.

You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Now, therefore, O kings, be wise. Be warned, O rulers of the earth.

Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling. 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. As we consider the present state of the world in which we live, we see widespread and seemingly unbridled rebellion.

[4 : 56] All we have to do to see this rebellion locally is turn in to our favorite TV, radio or social media outlet. This is a rebellion that spans all cultural and political vantage points.

What is the Christian meant to think of such things? How are we to bear up when everything seems to be falling apart around us? Psalm 2 speaks into our world concerning its rebellion and tells us that God is powerfully at work to end this world's rebellion.

The uprising that began with Adam and Eve will not be allowed to persist forever. For those not in Christ, this is terrible news.

For those found in Christ, Psalm 2 is a psalm of hope and encouragement. I often read to you a quotation off of your bulletin.

Today I want to read to you one that's on the kids' coloring sheet. If you don't know, these exist. They're available for you too, adults. Susanna Spurgeon, the wife of Charles Spurgeon, once said, The soul that has learned the blessed secret of seeing God's hand in all that concerns it cannot be a prey to fear.

[6 : 17] It looks beyond all second causes straight into the heart and will of God and rests content because he rules. So I hope that Psalm 2 will be a psalm of hope and encouragement to you today.

We will study the text briefly in the following outline. Number one, the world rebels. Number two, God the Father answers. Number three, God the Son declares.

And number four, God the Spirit invites. Number one, the world rebels. Psalm 2 begins with a rhetorical question.

I imagine the psalmist frustrated, shaking his head. It's the way I read it when we read it together. Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain?

He has noticed that the world over, people have a rebellion problem. He continues in this disbelief.

[7 : 21] 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.

Let us not believe that God does in fact reign and that his reign is a good reign. We want nothing to do with an authority over us. We want to be an authority.

The nations, the peoples, the kings, and the rulers of the earth do not want to be placed under any type of authority. We have this problem, too.

They want to be unbound to go their own way. And the psalmist tells us that all the people of the world are rebelling against the Lord and against his anointed. They do not want to be placed under the authority of whom?

Of God and of Jesus Christ. The early church understood Jesus to be the anointed of Psalm 2. Listen to the response of the church to the news that Peter and John have been arrested and then released in Acts chapter 4.

[8 : 32] I'll begin reading in verse 24 and following. 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, who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit, Why did the Gentiles rage and the peoples plot in vain?

The kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against his anointed. For truly in this city, they were gathered together against your holy servant, Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, to do whatever your hand and your plan had protested to take place.

The early church saw this, that Christ was the anointed of Psalm 2. Rebellion against God and his Christ did not end with the persecution of the early church.

Much of the New Testament is written to Christians who were suffering because the world was rebelling against God and his Christ. I find it quite fascinating to speak to believers who are older than me.

They exist, praise God. So many so shocked that the world now has some pushback against their Christianity.

[9 : 56] This place in which we live. I would have never thought that the world would not be a follower of Christ. This has been the truth of the church throughout its history.

Near the end of his reign, the Roman emperor Diocletian set up two massive pillars in Spain declaring victory over Jesus Christ. The inscription on the pillar reads, Diocletian, Hovian, Maximian, Hercules, Caesarius, Augusti.

There was his title. For having adopted Gallerius in the East. For having everywhere abolished the superstition of Christ.

For having extended the worship of the gods. Set up this monument to himself to congratulate himself for such a thing. This rebellion against God and his Christ continues to this day.

We saw a clear example of it on Monday. We can witness it all around us in many forms. And we should make no mistake that it is a rebellion against God and his Christ.

[11:09] We may experience it. But it is ultimately a rebellion against the Lord and his anointed. As God's people, it is reasonable that we will be seen as enemies of those rebelling against the one we follow.

The early church expected to suffer for the name of Christ and rejoiced when the suffering came. What a difficult emotion to feel.

Expected it and rejoiced in it. Let me show you an example from Acts chapter 5 verse 40 and following. When they, the council, had called in the apostles.

They beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus and let them go. Then they, the apostles, left the presence of the council rejoicing.

They were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name. And every day in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching that the Christ is Jesus.

[12:17] So the world rebels. It always has and it will until Christ returns and makes all things new.

But we find in the psalm that God, the father, answers this rebellion. The rebellion does not go unanswered. And he answers the rebellion of the world with laughter.

Verse 4 says, he who sits in the heavens laughs. The Lord holds them in derision or think mockery. Right? The world and everything in it belongs to God. Right? He reigns over it absolutely regardless if somebody wants to rebel against him.

Psalm 24 verse 1 and 2 says, The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein. For he has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers.

[13:21] Right? He made it. It is his. Isaiah chapter 40 and verse 15. Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket and are accounted as the dust on the scales.

Behold, he takes up the coastlands like fine dust. God reigns over all things and all peoples with absolute sovereignty to the degree that he finds the rebellion of the world laughable and mockable. Do you find yourself troubled at the rebellion of the world? If you belong to God, you need to know this morning that God finds the world's rebellion laughable.

That isn't to say that he thinks lightly of the wickedness of humanity. But the idea that humanity can set aside God's rule is what he finds laughable.

The rebellious think that they can escape the authority of God. But he reigns with absolute authority. Nothing has ever or will ever escape his grasp or his control.

[14:33] In fact, he orders all things, even tragic things, according to his will. So God the Father answers the rebellion of the world with laughter, but also with speech.

This is how we know that he doesn't take wickedness lightly. Verse 5 says, then he will speak to them in his wrath and terrify them in his fury, saying, As for me, I have set my king on Zion, my holy hill.

Note that after God laughs, he speaks and what he says should receive our highest attention as he says it furiously. What does he say? In the text, verse 6, as for me, I have set my king on Zion, my holy hill.

God says that he has anointed King Jesus to reign. When you think of Jesus, where do you most regularly place him in your mind?

Is he the humble servant, the suffering Savior, or the reigning king? He is all of these at all times.

[16:00] And an awareness of his person, his complete person, and his accomplished work will enable you in the day of trouble to also laugh at the rebellion of the world because you know that King Jesus reigns.

God has not been silent against the rebellion of the world. He laughs and he speaks and he says, Jesus is the Christ and he reigns.

And so we see thirdly in our text that God the Son declares. Now here the voice of the psalm changes.

And it's this point that Jesus Christ is speaking. And he declares three things that God the Father has said of him. Verse 7.

Number 1. Christ's identity. I will tell, Jesus says, I will tell of the decree the Lord said to me, you are my son. Today I have begotten you.

[17:01] Christ's identity as the Son of God resurrected. And I'm going to show you why that's the case. What does it mean that Jesus is begotten?

It is important to note that that is not the same word translated in John 3.16 as only begotten. That's for another morning.

Psalm 2.7 is cited three times in the New Testament, which is very helpful to us understanding what this word means, begotten.

So let me give you these three. First, Hebrews chapter 1, verses 3 through 5. Keep in mind, we're talking about Christ's identity. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature.

And he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high.

[17:59] Having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs. For to which of the angels did God ever say? And here we are in Psalm 2.

You are my son. Today I have begotten you. Or again, I will be to him a father and he shall be to me a son. Okay, so here we see this idea of him being gotten, tied to him making purification for sins, and then sitting down at the right hand of the majesty on high in his session where he reigns right now.

Hebrews 5, 5. So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him, you are my son.

Today I have begotten you. Right? So Christ, after his death, burial, and resurrection, is exalted and made a high priest over the church.

And here again we see the citation from Psalm 2. I keep trying to say Acts 2 and my mind goes, no, stop it, dummy. Psalm 2. You are my son.

[19:06] Today I have begotten you. And then most clearly in Acts chapter 13, verse 30 and following, Paul here is speaking in the synagogue at Antioch, and he says, But God raised him from the dead.

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. And we bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers, 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. And as for the fact that he raised him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, he has spoken in this way, I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David.

Notice that in each of these texts, the resurrection of Christ is either explicit in the case of Acts chapter 13, or implicit in the cases of Hebrews 1, 3 through 5 and 5, 5.

So begotten, in this case, in Psalm 2, by way of sparing you further details, means to bring forth.

[20:20] It's a literal translation of it. It means to bring forth, and it refers to the bringing forth of Jesus from the grave. It refers to his resurrection. When Jesus declares his identity in Psalm chapter 2 and verse 7, the Lord said to me, You are my son.

Today I have begotten you. He is speaking to the future reality of his resurrected life. The fact that he is the Christ, that the church will be built on that foundation, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.

And therefore, his sacrificial death, and all that it has accomplished. He also tells us something of his destiny.

Verse 8 says, Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. God has promised to give Jesus Christ every corner of the creation, and all the peoples of it to rule over it forever.

Some cross references for this. Philippians chapter 2, verse 8 through 11. And being found in human form, Christ humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

[21 : 37] Therefore God has highly exalted him, and bestowed on him the name that is above every name. So that the name of Jesus, every knee should bow in heaven and on earth, and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The reigning and the praise of the peoples. Now join me, if you will, in Philippians chapter 2. I want you to look at the text that immediately follows verses 8 through 11.

At the beginning of verse 12 of Philippians 2, Paul says, Therefore, my beloved. So in light of the exaltation of Jesus Christ, I want you to look for the responses we should have to that reality.

Paul says, Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence, but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

For it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ, I may be proud that it did not run in vain or labor in vain.

[23 : 05] Even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. Likewise, you also should be glad and rejoice with me.

Notice that our response to Jesus' forever reign should be good works. verse 12, accompanied by good attitudes, verse 14, general holiness, that we should read, know, and treasure God's word, verse 16, and that we should be found happy and rejoicing, verse 18.

Is this the characteristic response of us to the trouble that we find all around us in our day? I hope that it is.

I wrestle to this end. As you contemplate the troubled age in which we live, does the reign of Jesus Christ affect you, inform the way you respond in this way, Philippians chapter 2, verse 12 and following?

It should. It should. Let's look lastly here at Christ's authority. Verse 9 says, this is back in Psalm 2, you shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

[24 : 35] God has given to Jesus, has anointed the authority and the power to judge the nations for their rebellion. Right? Think an effortless task, right? It's not difficult to break a pot with a rod of iron.

And we spoke of God's judgment last week at greater length and in the future we'll look at it once again in Romans chapter 2. But I want you to note that before the final judgment comes, Jesus is calling all men everywhere to repent.

Ephesians chapter 2 and verse 17, Paul says, and Jesus came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near.

Right? Rebels. Those held in laughable, mockable state. Christ has come and preached peace to us that we might by faith in him have peace with God.

Those who do not repent and believe in the personal work of Jesus Christ are going to face a frightful final judgment.

[25 : 45] Hear just a little bit of that from Revelation chapter 19. This is verse 11 through 15. John writes, 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. 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.

He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood and the name by which he is called is the Word of God. And the armies of heaven arrayed in fine linen white and pure were following him on white horses.

From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations and he will rule them with a rod of iron. Hear that language picked up from Psalm 2.

He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. Jesus will come and he will judge and he declares this as God says over him in verse 9 of Psalm 2 that he has the authority to do so.

[26 : 59] But in the meantime he came and he preached peace and he charged others to preach that peace and we see a beautiful summary at the end of Psalm 2 which I've given us the title of God the Spirit invites.

Now the text does not expressly state that this is the Spirit of God speaking but we know that the Scriptures are inspired and that people come to repent and believe through the efficacious work of God the Spirit.

And so I think it is fair it's also nice and tidy to see our triune God in this text. God the Spirit invites. Now therefore O kings be wise be warned O rulers of the earth serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling kiss the sun give your devotion to him lest he be angry and you perish in the way for his wrath is quickly kindled blessed are all who take refuge in him.

The very one the authority to come and to reign and judge is the one in whom we hide ourselves from that very wrath. because of the coming judgment of Christ God the Spirit calls all people everywhere to put down their rebellion and take refuge in Christ recognizing that he reigns.

[28 : 32] So be wise be warned if you have not repented and believed in Christ do so today kiss the sun swear your allegiance to him because I do not we do not want you to perish when his wrath comes.

And so we see in Psalm 2 the world rebels God the Father answers God the Son declares and God the Spirit invites. God the Father will not tolerate the rebellion of the world forever.

One day God the Son will return and judge the nations but in the meantime they are working mercifully by God the Spirit to call people to be saved and to enter into everlasting comfort and joy and peace.

If you have not already done so repent and believe in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. If you are in Christ beloved the reality of who our God is as we answer that question who is God it should make you immovable despite the circumstances of our day because our God is immovable. Let's pray together.