

June 22, 2014 by Steve Brandon



The Coming King

Psalm 2

1. Earth (verses 1-3)
2. Heaven (verses 4-6)
3. Coronation Day (verses 7-9)
4. The Warning (verses 10-12)

Last week, as most of you know, we finished up the book of Philippians. Through the summer, we will spend our time in the Psalms. My hope is working through a handful of Psalms will help to give us all a heart for God. Fundamentally, this is what many of the Psalms teach. They teach us how to see life in relationship with God. Most of them were written by King David, whom the Scriptures say, "was a man after God's own heart" (1 Samuel 13:14).

This morning, we are going to begin with Psalm 2. Next Sunday morning, we will be in Psalm 3. Then Psalm 4. Then Psalm 5. And so on. I'm not sure how far we will go. But, I'm trusting that the LORD will lead us.

Psalm 2 is one of my favorite Psalms in all of the Bible. It is quoted in the New Testament more than any other Psalm (with the exception, perhaps of Psalm 110). The reason why I love it so much is that it sets forth the reality of this world. It puts our world in proper perspective, rebelling against the LORD. It puts God in proper perspective, with all under control. It puts Jesus in proper perspective, as the coming king. It puts forth hope, in bowing to King Jesus.

Well, let's begin by reading our Psalm. And as we do, catch these themes: the world rebelling, God reigning, Christ coming, and the response of hope.

Psalm 2

Why are the nations in an uproar
And the peoples devising a vain thing?
The kings of the earth take their stand
And the rulers take counsel together
Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying,
"Let us tear their fetters apart
And cast away their cords from us!"

He who sits in the heavens laughs,
The Lord scoffs at them.
Then He will speak to them in His anger
And terrify them in His fury, saying,
"But as for Me, I have installed My King
Upon Zion, My holy mountain."

"I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD:
He said to Me, 'You are My Son,
Today I have begotten You.
'Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance,
And the very ends of the earth as Your possession.
'You shall break them with a rod of iron,
You shall shatter them like earthenware.'"

Now therefore, O kings, show discernment;
Take warning, O judges of the earth.
Worship the LORD with reverence
And rejoice with trembling.

Do homage to the Son, that He not become angry, and you perish in the way,
For His wrath may soon be kindled.
How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!

Most every Bible translation has this Psalm broken up into four different sections, each containing three verses. In each of these sections, we have a different voice. The first section gives us the voice of the nations (1-3). The second section is the voice of the Father (4-6). The third section is the voice of the Son (7-9). The fourth section is the voice of Invitation (10-12). Let's first look at the first section. The scene takes

place on ...

1. Earth (verses 1-3)

Psalm 2:1-3

Why are the nations in an uproar
And the peoples devising a vain thing?
The kings of the earth take their stand
And the rulers take counsel together
Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying,
"Let us tear their fetters apart
And cast away their cords from us!"

How appropriate are these words for us today! These words were written some 3,000 years ago, and yet, they are as current as if they had been written yesterday. These are words of defiance. These are words of rebellion. These are words of hatred and hostility against the LORD. You can see it right there in verse 2, ...

Psalm 2:2

The kings of the earth take their stand
And the rulers take counsel together
Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying,

That is, against God, the Father, and against the Messiah, Jesus, our Lord. The kings of the earth and the rulers of the land are standing opposed to the LORD. They are saying, ...

Psalm 2:3

"Let us tear their fetters apart
And cast away their cords from us!"

In other words, the kings and rulers see themselves under the bonds of God. They view themselves as prisoners under His rule! And they want to get out from under it.

Like any criminal behind bars, like hostages looking for an opportunity to escape, they stew and think how they can be free of the tyranny of the LORD. You say, "How do they feel bound by the LORD?" They feel bound in their conscience, as God has written His law upon their hearts (Romans 2:15). They feel bound by the moral codes of society. Not realizing that such things are "bonds of love" (as God calls them in Hosea 11:4), they want to get rid of such things. They do not see the reality of 1 John 5:3: "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome." They want to escape from under the "tyranny" of God's righteousness.

And in so doing, they are setting themselves, "Against the LORD and against His Anointed" (verse 2). They want to live with no restraint. As Marv Rosenthal wrote, ...

The nations want no restraint, no absolutes, no standards, and above all, no accountability. They want to be able to say, "I'm the master of my fate. I'm the captain of my soul." Here, then, is the inevitable end-of-the-age's long march toward the deification of man. Stripped of all its camouflage, it is raw, naked, prideful humanism. It is the potter saying to the potter, who has breathed into it the breath of life, "Get lost!" "Take a hike!" "We are not interested in what you are offering." "We want to do it our way." [\[1\]](#)

And so has gone our nation. We have systematically removed any mention of God from the public arena. Naturalistic evolution is taught as fact in most of our schools. Fifty years ago, prayer in schools was banned. Forty years ago, abortion became legal. For the past few decades, marriage has been on the decline. Divorce has been on the increase. In fact, many today aren't even bothering with marriage. I read this week that almost half of first babies in our country are born to unwed mothers. [\[2\]](#) And in recent years, same-sex marriage has become legal in many, many states.

All of these things are the fruit of a nation, whose people and leaders are shaking their fists at God. Rulers who hate God and want to rid the land of His influence. And it's not only our nation. You can look to communist lands and see it all over the place. The former Soviet Union. North Korea. Vietnam. China. You can look at the Muslim nations of Iraq and Iran and see much the same thing.

Last week I told you of the troubles in Nepal, where we have placed some of our missions efforts. The "Shiva Army" is seeking to restore Nepal into a Hindu Kingdom once again. So, this week, "the Shiva Army" is disrupting Christian worship services, doing whatever they can to remove the influence of God.

But this is nothing new. From the dawn of time, God's people have always known persecution. Since the time of David, the nations have been plotting and scheming against the LORD. Jesus spoke of how the Jews have often spilled the blood of their fathers, from the righteous blood of Abel to the blood Zechariah that was shed in rebellion against the LORD (Matthew 23:35). People have long been thinking of ways to defy Him. That's the idea of verse 1.

Psalm 2:1
Why are the nations in an uproar
And the peoples devising a vain thing?

The people are agitated. They are thinking hard, thinking of how they might resist the Lord. In fact, it is interesting here that the word translated, "devising" here in verse 1, is the same word translated "meditate" in Psalm 1, verse 2. Your translation may have "plot" (ESV, NIV, NKJV) or "imagine" (KJV). The contrast is clearly evident.

In Psalm 1, you see the blessed man is the one who delights in the law of the LORD, and meditates upon it day and night. In Psalm 2, you see the wicked men, who meditate day and night on how they might defy the LORD. There's no greater illustration of this than what took place during the days of Jesus.

Even a cursory reading of the gospels shows how often they schemed against Jesus. After Jesus healed the man with the withered hand, we read, "The Pharisees went out and immediately began conspiring with the Herodians against Him, as to how they might destroy Him" (Mark 3:6). They frequently approached Jesus with questions, seeking to trap Him in what He said. "Is it lawful for a man to divorce a wife" (Mark 10:2). "Shall we pay taxes to Caesar?" (Mark 12:14). "What about remarriage and the resurrection?" (Mark 12:18-23). "What's the greatest commandment in the law?" (Mark 12:28). During His days, "The chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to seize Jesus by stealth and kill Him" (Mark 14:1). In fact, the entire debacle of the trial of Jesus was a way in which they tried hard to find Jesus guilty. They schemed and plotted.

And this was not lost on the early church. Turn with me, if you will to Acts, chapter 4. Peter and John were in Jerusalem "proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead" (Acts 4:3). The religious leaders were strongly opposed to their preaching, and so they had them imprisoned. After a short trial, they warned them "to speak no longer to any man in the name of Jesus" (Acts 4:17). And then, they released them.

I want to pick up the narrative in Acts, chapter 4, and verse 23. We read, ...

Acts 4:23-26

When they had been released, they went to their own companions and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. And when they heard this, they lifted their voices to God with one accord and said, "O Lord, it is You who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that is in them, who by the Holy Spirit, through the mouth of our father David Your servant, said,

'Why did the Gentiles rage,
And the peoples devise futile things?
'The kings of the earth took their stand,
And the rulers were gathered together
Against the Lord and against His Christ.'

I trust that you can see there in verses 25 and 26 how the early church quoted Psalm 2 in their prayers. They knew what had happened in their days. They knew that the religious leaders had conspired against Jesus. And they were quoting the Scriptures back to the LORD, seeking His help in the day of trouble. They go on to explain, ...

Acts 4:27-31

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, to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur. And now, Lord, take note of their threats, and grant that Your bond-servants may speak Your word with all confidence, while You extend Your hand to heal, and signs and wonders take place through the name of Your holy servant Jesus." And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness.

They pray the sovereignty of God. None of this took the LORD by surprise. In fact, in verse 28, we see that the LORD had it all under control. Neither Herod nor Pontius Pilate, nor any of the Gentiles, nor any of the people of Israel acted outside of the sovereignty of God. They did, "whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur" (Acts 4:28).

If any time things seemed out of control, it was when Jesus came to earth. He came as God's perfect Son. And they hated Him and put Him to death. And yet, God's plan carried on without a hitch.

The early church found comfort in the sovereignty of God. And so, I point this out to you as well. If you are one who reads the news and comes to a point of despair or fear or anxiety because of the direction of our nation and our world, fear not. Our God is in control. He is in control of the oil in the Middle East. He is in control of the stock market. He is in control of the kings of the earth.

Take comfort in Proverbs 21:1, "The king's heart is like channels of water in the hand of the LORD; He turns it wherever He wishes." That's not to say that we shouldn't fight for righteous causes, the cause of the unborn, or for victims of human trafficking, or against oppression of the poor. We should be engaged and work. But we should never despair.

Let's move onto our second point. We have seen the scene on Earth (verses 1-3). Let's look at the scene in ...

2. Heaven (verses 4-6).

Psalm 2:4-6
He who sits in the heavens laughs,
The Lord scoffs at them.
Then He will speak to them in His anger
And terrify them in His fury, saying,
"But as for Me, I have installed My King
Upon Zion, My holy mountain."

I love this scene. Despite all of the raging and scheming that's taking place on the earth, you would never know about it in heaven. God is in heaven, watching it all and finding it quite amusing.

Imagine with me a little ten year-old boy, who is a big football fan. This little guy is a hard-core fan of his favorite NFL team. He wants to do anything to help his team win. He's got a plan, and he's been thinking about it for months.

He gets to the stadium early and waits for the opposing team's bus to arrive. He knows exactly where the bus will park. He knows exactly where the players will walk as they enter the stadium. Then, as the team walks into the stadium, he tries to pick a fight with one of the offensive lineman from the other team. He figures that if he would get into a fight, perhaps this guy would be in some legal trouble and disqualified from the game. And so, he approaches him and begins to call him names, making fun of his mother. He even grabs his leg and tries to punch him in his belly.

The three-hundred pound lineman might find it a bit amusing. The lineman would so overpower the little kid, that he doesn't even attempt to engage in the fight. He laughs and passes it off as a little prank, and keeps on walking toward the stadium. Now, if he's in a particularly feisty mood, he might pick the little guy up off the ground with one of his arms and tell him to scram.

Three hundred pounds is nothing compared with the seventy five pounds of the little boy. This is a little bit like what it's like for God. But, millions of times worse. We read in Isaiah 40, "Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket. And are regarded as a speck of dust on the scales; Behold, He lifts up the islands like fine dust" (Isa 40:15). "All the nations are as nothing before Him, They are regarded by Him as less than nothing and meaningless" (Isa 40:17). Isaiah 40:22 speaks of how God "sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers." And in Isaiah 40:23, "He it is who reduces rulers to nothing, Who makes the judges of the earth meaningless."

God could squash all who take counsel against Him in a moment. "Our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases" (Psalm 115:3). But, at this moment, God patiently waits. He laughs, not because he has a sense of humor, but because he has everything under His sovereign power. And puny man is vain in his resistance.

It's right here that we can begin to understand the first word of the Psalm, "Why?" "Why are the people taking up a fight with the LORD?" It is so totally impossible to win. "Why do they plot in vain" (verse 1). There is no way that they will overthrow the LORD. Yet, in their irrationality, they still fight on. This is like Satan. He knows that he is defeated. Yet, he still fights on. And God laughs. And as God laughs, He gets angry. Verse 5, ...

Psalm 2:5-6
Then He will speak to them in His anger
And terrify them in His fury, saying,
"But as for Me, I have installed My King
Upon Zion, My holy mountain."

Why is He angry? Because, He has made this world, and rather than loving God and serving the LORD and worshiping Him, as He deserves, His creatures have gone astray. Right in the Ten Commandments, themselves, He tells us, "I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God" (Exodus 20:5). As His creatures turn against Him, His jealousy will come forth. And the judgment will come.

In Romans 1:18, we read, "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness." In other words, the anger of the Lord is kindled against those who live unrighteously. He has created the world and made Himself clear, but people have rejected Him (Romans 1:20-21). And so, God has judged them by letting them reap the fruit of their sin (Romans 1:24, 26, 28).

In Psalm 2, the judgment comes in the form of establishing His king upon Zion. As the kings of this earth resist the reign of God in their lives, God will establish His own king to rule over them. The kings of the earth think that they are something. Well, they truly are not, compared to this King who is installed upon Zion, where God rules His people.

This leads nicely into the third scene, which describes the coronation day of this king. We have seen the rebellion on the kings on Earth (verses 1-3). We have seen the confidence of the LORD in Heaven (verses 4-6). And now, we see ...

3. Coronation Day (verses 7-9)

Here, we see the installed king giving His take on the situation. He says in verse 7, ...

Psalm 2:7-9

"I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD:
He said to Me, 'You are My Son,
Today I have begotten You.
'Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance,
And the very ends of the earth as Your possession.
'You shall break them with a rod of iron,
You shall shatter them like earthenware.'"

In verse 7, we see the Son quoting the Father, who said, "You are My Son, Today I have begotten You."

The interesting question here is this: "When did this take place?" It may seem that this took place sometime in eternity past, when the roles of the Godhead were established. But, such a conclusion can almost lead us to a theology of Jehovah Witnesses, who teach that Jesus was a created being. But, such is not the case. Jesus is not a created being. Yes, He is "begotten" of the Father, but He is not created. "Begotten" does not mean created. It means that the substance of the Son and the Father are both divine.

The Nicene Creed seeks to make this clear, ...

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, the maker of heaven and earth, of things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the begotten of God the Father, the Only-begotten, that is of the essence of the Father.

God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten and not made; of the very same nature of the Father, by Whom all things came into being, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible.

So, again, "When did this take place?" Let's turn to the New Testament for our answers. H

Acts 13 tells of Paul's first missionary journey. Being sent away from the church in Antioch, he and Barnabas travel west on the Mediterranean Sea, coming at last to Psidian Antioch. On the Sabbath day, they entered the synagogue, and at the request of the synagogue officials, Paul stands to speak. He begins with a short history of God's dealings with Israel. And then, he turns to Jesus. Let's begin in verse 32, ...

Acts 13:32-33

And we preach to you the good news of the promise made to the fathers, that God has fulfilled this promise to our children in that He raised up Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm, "You are My Son; today I have begotten You."

Here, we see a connection being made with Psalm 2 and the resurrection of Jesus. Now, this is not to say that there was any time that Jesus wasn't "the Son." Remember the baptism of Jesus? The Father's voice came from heaven, "This is My beloved Son" (Matthew 3:17), a reference to this Psalm. Remember the transfiguration of Jesus? The Father's voice came from heaven, "This is My beloved Son" (Matthew 17:5). Jesus was certainly the son of God, even before his resurrection.

But, as Psalm 2 is on the context of coronation day, we see an interesting connection between the resurrection and the establishment of Jesus as King of the earth. In Romans 1:4, Paul writes that Jesus "was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead." There was something about the resurrection that made an announcement to the world of who exactly this Jesus is! He is the Son of God, who will rule and reign upon the earth.

We get some further confirmation of this in Acts 17, when Paul was speaking to those on Mars Hill. Paul had an opportunity to speak to the intellectuals of his day. He speaks about "the unknown God" (Acts 17:23). And he comes to his conclusion in verse 30, ...

Acts 17:30-31

Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead."

The resurrection of Jesus from the dead was proof to the world that Jesus is indeed the ruler of this world. As such, He will judge the world. He will rule the world. Indeed, this is where Psalm 2 is headed. It is headed toward the ruling and reigning of the Messiah upon this earth. Turn back to Psalm 2. Again, this is the Son quoting the Father. And the Father says to the Son, ...

Psalm 2:8-9

'Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance,
And the very ends of the earth as Your possession.
'You shall break them with a rod of iron,
You shall shatter them like earthenware.'"

Jesus simply needed to ask the Father, and the world was His.

These kings who hate the rule of God (in verses 1 and 2) will lose their power when the Son comes to claim what is rightfully His. It is the Son who will inherit the earth. But, it doesn't come without a fight. Verse 9 describes the fight, or at least it describes the forceful submission of those who continue to rebel against the LORD.

Psalm 2:9

'You shall break them with a rod of iron,
You shall shatter them like earthenware.'

This is ruling from a position of strength. The picture here is an iron rod against a clay pot. The picture a three foot section of rebar being swung like a golf club striking a clay flower pot. The pot has no chance. So likewise is the LORD's dominance over those who rebel against Him.

On three different occasions, verse 9 is quoted in the book of Revelation to describe Jesus coming to establish His reign over this earth. (Revelation 2:26-27; 12:5; 19:15). This morning, I want to read two of those verses for you. The first is Revelation 12:5: "And she gave birth to a son, a male child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up to God and to His throne."

Again, you see the Son coming into the world; He is then established upon the throne of God to rule the nations with a rod of iron. Listen to the apocalyptic scene:

Revelation 19:11-16

And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war. His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems; and He has a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself. He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses. From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "King of Kings, and LORD of Lords."

We don't know who will be elected to be the next president of the United States. But, we do know who will reign on the earth forever: King Jesus will. And this is the message of Psalm 2. Kings may try to resist it, but the King is coming. Thus, the title of my message, "The Coming King."

And it only seems right that verses 10-12 are in this Psalm. They form the conclusion. They give the application. I have simply called it, ...

4. The Warning (verses 10-12)

I get this from verse 10. And here I use the ESV, because it's a more literal translation.

Psalm 2:10-12

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.

These words are addressed to the very ones who were rebelling against the LORD and His anointed (verse 2), the leaders of nations. But, it equally comes to us as well. In light of the coming King, where will your allegiance be? Will you join with the earthly kings? Or, will you await the final arrival of the anointed King?

This isn't rocket science. They all flow from the first 9 verses. In fact, that's the call of verse 10, "Think about it!" These kings and rulers and judges were good about thinking of ways to rebel against the LORD and to thwart His rule. And now, David writes, think about the reality of the situation. Or, as verse 10 says, "be wise," "show discernment." "Be prudent," "be instructed," by everything just written in verses 1 through 9.

Three clear applications come from these verses. And they are all the same:

Psalm 2:11-12

Serve the LORD with fear,
and rejoice with trembling.
Kiss the Son,

All three of these commands bring us to a point of submission.

When we serve the LORD, we are doing his bidding. When we rejoice in the LORD, we take delight in His ways. When we "kiss the Son," we are showing where our true allegiance lies. It lies with Jesus.

When you think about "kissing the Son," think about the sinful woman who came to Jesus, kissing his feet and wiping away her tears with her hair (Luke 7:36-39). This is the allegiance we give to Jesus. Bowing before the Lord and worshiping Him.

Is this your heart? Is this your life? Are you serving the Lord Christ? Or, are you serving your own pleasures?

There is an urgency to these words, because God's anger is like a burning fuse. It's waiting to go off (:12b). And when it goes off, the Son will come and shall break his enemies with a rod of iron; He shall shatter them like earthenware (verse 9). So, for your own well-being, lay down your lives before the coming King.

This is the best thing for you. Note the blessing in the last phrase of verse 12, ...

Psalm 2:12

... Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

This naturally brings us back to Psalm 1. It's the same message as we see in Psalm 2. In Psalm 1, the message was, "avoid the counsel of wicked people, and you will find blessing." In Psalm 2, the message is, "avoid following those who resist the Lord, but instead, find your rest in the Son."

Jesus Christ is our hope. Jesus Christ is our blessing.

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on June 22, 2014 by Steve Brandon.
For more information see www.rvbc.cc.

[1] Marv Rosenthal, Zion's Fire 12:2 - May/June 2001.

[2] <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/almost-half-of-first-babies-in-us-born-to-unwed-mothers/>