

## Why Do the Nations Rage?

Psalm 2

March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2019

### Big idea:

The folly of human rebellion against God.

### Intro

Psalms 1 and 2 form an introduction together to the book of Psalms

Both are called “orphan” psalms because they lack a superscription (i.e. “Of David”) that almost all the other psalms in book 1 have

Psalm 1 and 2 as a literary unit

### Blessed

Psalm 1:1-2 the one who delight in and meditate on God’s instruction is blessed

Psalm 2:12 Those who take refuge in Messiah are blessed

Inclusio - Unusual word for blessed

### Meditate

1:2 The righteous “meditate” (haggah) on God’s instruction

2:1 The wicked “plot” (haggah) against Messiah

### Perish

1:6 The wicked perish (abad) in their way (Derek)

2:12 The wicked are destroyed (abad) in their way (Derek)

Futato – what message assures us that living in keeping with divine instructions will issue in a truly happy life? It is simply this: “The Lord reigns!”

The theme of the supreme divine reign of the Lord carries through Psalms

**Psalm 29:10** The LORD sat *as King* at the flood; Yes, the LORD sits as King forever.

**Psalm 47:2** For the LORD Most High is to be feared, A great King over all the earth.

**Psalm 47:6-8** Sing praises to God, sing praises; Sing praises to our King, sing praises. <sup>7</sup> For God is the King of all the earth; Sing praises with a skillful psalm. <sup>8</sup> God reigns over the nations, God sits on His holy throne.

**Psalm 55:19** God will hear and answer them-- Even the one who sits enthroned from of old-- Selah. With whom there is no change, And who do not fear God.

**Psalm 102:12 (ESV)** But you, O LORD, are enthroned forever; you are remembered throughout all generations.

Together with Psalm 2 they are known as “Royal Psalms”

And yet, His reign doesn’t appear to be universal. It appears that there are many who don’t want God to be God. They see Him as oppressive and think that they would be better off without His restrictions.

1. The **rebellion** of humanity (2:1-3)
  - a. Structure: This psalm has 4 stanzas with 3 verses in each.
    - i. Each of the 4 stanzas features a different voice
    - ii. David, the author of the psalm, describing the rebellion

- iii. God the Father speaks
- iv. God the Son, Jesus, speaks
- v. Then the psalm returns to a call for people to respond
- b. Lots of parallel lines through Psalm 2 for emphasis
  - i. Nations/people, uproar/devise a vain thing, kings/rulers, take their stand/take counsel
- c. Uproar
  - i. The Hebrew verb has to do with outward agitation not inner rage.
  - ii. Various translations as rebel (CSB), rage (KJV, ESV), or conspire (NIV)
- d. Devise
  - i. Haggah – same word as “meditate” in Psalm 1 of meditating on God’s law
  - ii. John Phillips – the godly man uses his imagination to meditate upon the things of God; the godless nations use their imagination to find ways to rid mankind of God.
    - 1. This is what our courts call premeditated crime. This is not a crime of passion, but a crime of purpose; one which has been planned and carried out by deliberate design.
- e. This rebellion is both grassroots and led from the top – the nations and people are involved as are the rulers and kings
- f. This rebellion is “against” the Lord and “against” His Anointed, Jesus.
  - i. Ben Ledford pointed me to this quote from Sinclair Ferguson that this one word “against” is essentially a biblical definition of sin. It is “against” God. Our concern with moral right and wrong is that sin is “against” God.
  - ii. **Psalm 51:4** Against You, You only, I have sinned And done what is evil in Your sight, So that You are justified when You speak And blameless when You judge.
- g. Their rebellion is against the Lord’s “fettters” or “cords.”
  - i. Both refer to something that binds, controls, or restricts.
  - ii. Refers to God’s right to rule, judge, say what is right and wrong.
  - iii. They rebel against God’s person (against the Lord and His Anointed) and God’s precepts
- h. In the book of Acts this is quoted in connection with the ruler’s rejection and crucifixion of Jesus.
  - i. **Acts 4:25-28** 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? <sup>26</sup> 'THE KINGS OF THE EARTH TOOK THEIR STAND, AND THE RULERS WERE GATHERED TOGETHER AGAINST THE LORD AND AGAINST HIS CHRIST.' <sup>27</sup> "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, <sup>28</sup> to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur.
    - 1. And yet even that ties in with the verses to come because although Pontius Pilate, Herod, the Gentiles and others involved in the death of Christ did wrong, it was still what God had purposed to happen. They couldn’t thwart His plan.
- i. Last week I mentioned the 4 big worldview questions every person needs to answer: origin, meaning, morality, and destiny.

- i. Many who reject God as the origin do so because they don't want His morality, they see it as restrictive and want to be free from that restraint.
  - j. This rebellion has been going on since Adam and Eve and it will continue and peak before Jesus, the Lord's Anointed, returns to rule.
- 2. The **response** of Deity (2:4-6)
  - a. The people plot, conspire, rage. How does God respond? He laughs!
  - b. Why? Because it's silly to think that a created being could compete with his or her Creator.
    - i. Spurgeon - For what can mortals be as compared with the Eternal? The fire can readily enough consume the grass. Shall men set themselves in opposition to omnipotence, and hope to prosper? And when God determines to glorify his anointed Son, shall worms of the dust prevent him from doing so? What can come of all their opposition? God simply laughs at them, Jehovah has them in derision.
    - ii. Spurgeon goes on to describe them as like a little bubble on the ocean, playing off of the language in Isaiah 40:15
      - 1. **Isaiah 40:15** 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.
  - c. God's response is not what we would expect. He laughs and then He draws attention to His great solution.
    - i. He has installed His King upon Zion (Jerusalem)
      - 1. The kings rage and plot, but God's King will still reign.
      - 2. God calls Him "My King" not because, of course, He reigns OVER God but because He is God's chosen ruler over humanity.
  - d. God doesn't fret or worry, He is never anxious or unsure. He will carry out His plan.
- 3. The **reign** of Christ (2:7-9)
  - a. Now there is a new voice, the voice of God's Anointed, the Messiah, Jesus Christ.
  - b. He speaks of the decree of the Lord that speaks to the Messiah as God's Son who will be given the people to the very ends of the earth as an inheritance.
  - c. This decree is what keeps God's people glued together during the present age. We may not know what to make of the world, political issues, present crises, but we know where history is headed.
  - d. The decree tell us three things about the Messiah's reign
    - i. Legitimacy
      - 1. The Messiah is God's Son and He has installed Him (the idea behind "begotten")
      - 2. **Hebrew 1:5** For to which of the angels did He ever say, "YOU ARE MY SON, TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU"? And again, "I WILL BE A FATHER TO HIM AND HE SHALL BE A SON TO ME"?
    - ii. Scope
      - 1. The Messiah will be given the nations as an inheritance
      - 2. It is international, world-wide
      - 3. Custom of kings to give gifts to those that were favored

- a. **Esther 5:6** As they drank their wine at the banquet, the king said to Esther, "What is your petition, for it shall be granted to you. And what is your request? Even to half of the kingdom it shall be done."
- 4. **John 17:1-3** Jesus spoke these things; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You,<sup>2</sup> even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life.<sup>3</sup> "This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

iii. Force

- 1. He will break them with a rod of iron.
  - a. Woah, woah, woah – I thought Jesus was gentle and His yoke is easy. How can these two images coexist?
  - b. Same Jesus. The difference is in the response of the people.
  - c. To the weary and heavy laden...
    - i. **Matthew 11:28-30** "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. <sup>30</sup> "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."
  - d. To those in an uproar, raging against Him... rod of iron

4. The **choice** facing humanity (2:10-12)

- a. He offers peace, invites repentance if they take warning
  - i. Show discernment, take warning
    - 1. Futato – God’s intention is that David and his descendants serve as the mediators of this truly happy life. So the kings of the nations are invited to a life of wisdom, which includes living in fear of the Lord and in submission to David and his descendants.
- b. They can roar or they can worship
  - i. Emotion laden psalm as they roar and rage, as the Lord laughs and scoffs, and as they worship with reverence and rejoice with trembling, and as the Son does not become angry
- c. Do homage – lit. “kiss” – but as a sign of submission to a king
- d. The other option is that they “perish in the way”
  - i. Just as Psalm 1 ended
    - 1. **Psalm 1:6** For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the wicked will perish.
- e. Our response to the Messiah/King
  - i. Show discernment
  - ii. Take warning
  - iii. Worship
  - iv. Rejoice
  - v. Do homage

- vi. Take refuge
- f. Think about John 3:16 after reading this psalm
  - i. John 3:16 <sup>16</sup> "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."
    1. The world that rebels against Him and tries to tear themselves free, He loves them, He loves that world
    2. The Son that will reign first came to die, to be given for this world
    3. The world will perish, just as we saw at the ends of Psalms 1 and 2, unless they believe.
    4. For those who believe, they have eternal life – the image of the tree with deep roots that is full of life continues past death.
  - ii. Kyle Yates: Revolt brings ruin. Simple trust brings full and free salvation.



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# 1. The rebellion of humanity (2:1-3)

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**Romans 1:18-24**

# 1. The rebellion of humanity (2:1-3)

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## 2. The response of Deity (2:4-6)

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**Isaiah 40:11-17**

**Daniel 4:35** "All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, But He does according to His will in the host of heaven And *among* the inhabitants of earth; And no one can ward off His hand Or say to Him, 'What have You done?'

### 3. The reign of Christ (2:7-9)

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And again, "I WILL BE A FATHER TO HIM AND HE SHALL BE A SON TO ME"?



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## 4. The choice facing humanity (2:10-12)

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**John 3:16** "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.