

Psalm 2

The Two Kingdoms

July 23rd, 2023

1. Intro

- a. There is a lot of confusion these days over who we're supposed to be angry at, isn't there?
 - i. Are we boycotting Disney this week, or is it Target now?
 - ii. Is it all those evil Democrats and their woke, socialist agenda we're supposed to hate, or is it Jason Aldean, the country music star that wants to keep his small town the way its always been?
 - iii. Or take it to the global scale... are we supposed to be on the side of the Russians, who are simply trying to regain control of a land that was once theirs, or are we supposed to be on the side of the Ukrainians, who are just trying to fight to keep their own independence?
 - iv. Who is our enemy supposed to be these days?
 1. Well, the answer to that question probably depends on which news station you watch, doesn't it?
 - a. But the Bible is much more clear on its answer to this question
 - i. As we dig in to Psalm 2, we will find that, according to the Scriptures, there are really only TWO Kingdoms in this world
 1. The Kingdom of the Lord's Anointed One
 2. The kingdom of everyone else
 - a. These are the only two options that the Bible gives to us
 - b. And it is crucial that we understand this truth!
- b. Open your Bibles with me, and let's look together at the second of the sacred hymns of the Scriptures, Psalm 2...
 - i. *¹Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? ²The 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.” ⁴He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision. ⁵Then 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.” ⁷I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me, “You are my Son; today I have begotten you. ⁸Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. ⁹You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.” ¹⁰Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. ¹¹Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. ¹²Kiss 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.*
 - ii. One of the first questions we want to ask as we're reading through the Psalms is, who wrote this Psalm?
 1. Was it David? Was it Asaph? Was it Moses, or Solomon?
 - a. Knowing WHO wrote each Psalm helps us to understand the context of when and where it was written, and what was going on during that time
 - i. At first glance, however, we can't really tell who wrote Psalm 2, which is the case with around fifty of the other Psalms
 2. BUT, for Psalm 2, we do get a very unique insight, when we see what the early church said about it in Acts chapter 4 (keep Psalm 2 marked, but turn to Acts 4:23-26)
 - a. *²³When they [Peter and John] were released, they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them. ²⁴And 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, ²⁵who 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? ²⁶The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Anointed...’”*
 - b. Isn't that great?
 - i. Thanks to this prayer, we now know that Psalm 2 came from King David himself

3. This is a very helpful insight for us
 - a. We know from earlier passages of the Bible that David was the Anointed king of the Lord
 - i. If you think back to when we first meet David in 1 Samuel 16, he becomes the one anointed by the Lord, after God rejects King Saul
 - ii. This term of “the Lord’s Anointed” is seen ten times throughout the Psalms, and it almost always points to David, or to those kings who come from the line of David
 1. So David is writing this Psalm from his own perspective
 - b. And if you think about his story, David knew what it was to have the nations and the peoples rage and plot against him, didn’t he?
 - i. King Saul, the Philistines, his very own son
 1. David KNEW what it was to have the kingdoms of the world against him
 2. So, knowing that this Psalm came from the pen of King David helps give us some context and understanding of its original meaning
 - iii. But ultimately, Acts 4:23-26 helps us in showing us that, while Psalm 2 is INITIALLY about David, in the bigger picture it is meant to point us to Jesus
 1. Jesus is the TRUE Anointed One of the Lord
 2. Jesus is the TRUE King whom God has set on Zion
 3. Jesus is the TRUE begotten Son whom EVERY ruler of the earth is commanded to serve with fear and trembling
 - iv. Knowing this sets the tone for the entire book of Psalms
 1. As I just mentioned, we will see repeated references to the kings in Israel, all throughout this study
 2. But, Psalm 2, in combination with the New Testament application of Psalm 2 in Acts 4, forces us to look past the kings of Israel
 - a. And it fixes our eyes upon the TRUE Anointed One, the TRUE King, our Lord Jesus Christ
 3. And when we use that interpretive key, we see very clearly our two main points for Psalm 2...
 - a. There is the kingdom of this world
 - b. And there is the Kingdom of Jesus Christ
 - i. Understanding this simple truth is at the very heart of the Christian faith
 1. So let’s begin by looking at the kingdom of this world
2. The kingdom of this world
 - a. As we look at the first stanza of Psalm 2, verses 1-3, we see that the kingdom of this world has three main strategies
 - i. The rage of the nations
 - ii. The plotting of the peoples
 - iii. The rebellion of the rulers
 1. Its important for us to note that all of this rage and plotting and rebellion is SPECIFICALLY directed toward the Lord and His Anointed
 - a. Toward God the Father, and His Son, Jesus
 - b. First, the rage of the nations
 - i. “Why do the nations rage...”
 1. In the Hebrew of the Old Testament, this word for “rage” is only used one time throughout all the Scriptures, here in Psalm 2:1
 - a. It has the idea of a people being in great chaos, or violent commotion
 2. In Acts 4:25, when this verse is quoted by the believers in their prayer to the Lord, they of course use a different word to translate “rage,” this time in the Greek
 - a. This word that they use is the picture of an uncontrollable horse, stamping its hooves, rearing up on its hind legs, and snorting and neighing with great anger

- b. Both David and the early church ask the same question, “Why do the nations rage with such uncontrollable anger against God and His Son?”
 - ii. We could ask that same question today, can’t we?
 - 1. The nations are certainly raging against Christ, like a wild horse trying to break the rope of its new master
 - a. If you go to the website www.opendoors.org, you’ll find their “World Watch List” of the fifty most dangerous countries in the world to live in as a Christian
 - i. North Korea tops the list
 - 1. Christians in North Korea have absolutely zero freedoms
 - a. If their faith in Christ is discovered, they are labeled as an enemy of the state, and they are immediately executed, or thrown in prison, where they are repeatedly tortured for their beliefs
 - 2. North Korea is a nation RAGING against Christ and his followers
 - ii. Somalia ranks second on the World Watch List
 - 1. Christians in this Muslim nation are seen as “high value targets,” and it is permissible to kill them on the spot if they are found
 - a. The terrorist group, Al Shabaab, has made it one of their top priorities to eradicate Christians from Somalia, as if they were some kind of infectious disease
 - 2. Somalia is a nation RAGING against the Lord and His Anointed One
 - iii. As I said, there are fifty countries on this World Watch List
 - 1. And you’ll find that the story is virtually the same across the board
 - a. These nations are VIOLENTLY raging against the Kingdom of Jesus Christ
 - i. Those who claim allegiance to his Kingdom are seen as direct threats to the kingdom of the world
 - ii. And they are immediately imprisoned or executed
 - b. But here in the West, we see a more subversive attack, don’t we?
 - i. Which leads us to the second strategy of the kingdom of this world...
- c. The plotting of the peoples
 - i. In the second part of verse 1, David asks the question, “Why do the peoples plot in vain?”
 - 1. When the believers in Acts 4 prayed Psalm 2 the words they used for this plotting in vain were “kenos meletao”
 - a. Meletao can be defined as, “to care for; to attend to; but especially to ponder or meditate upon
 - b. Kenos can be defined as “being empty, or vain, or foolish; vessels that are “empty” of truth
 - 2. So if we put these two words together we could rephrase the question as, “Why do the peoples meditate upon things that are completely empty of truth?”
 - a. This is THE question for the time and place in which we live, isn’t it?
 - i. We live in a world of post-modernism, where the idea of an ultimate truth is not just laughable, but now it has become completely offensive
 - 1. “Who are YOU to impose YOUR truth on ME?”
 - 2. “Your truth may be fine for YOU, but don’t tell me that I have to live by that truth as well”
 - ii. Truth has become relative to the individual, and therefore truth has become lost
 - 1. The peoples are no longer governed by truth when it comes to gender and their sexual identity
 - 2. They are no longer bound by truth when it comes to their individual morality or lifestyle choices

3. And they are certainly no longer restrained by any truth when it comes to their religion or spirituality
 - iii. The things that they care about and meditate upon are simply “vessels that are empty of truth”
 - b. We see this all around us out in the world, but sadly we are seeing it more and more inside the church as well
 - i. “Judge not” has become the catch-phrase of an alarmingly increasing number of churches, as the people surround themselves with shepherds who will tickle their ears and tell them exactly what they want to hear
 1. And so much of it is devoid of any truth whatsoever
 - a. Things are no longer black and white when it comes to sin
 - i. Everything has become gray and muddied
 3. The vain plotting of the peoples is the very definition of our Western culture, even within many churches
 4. Which leads us to the third strategy of the kingdom of this world...
- d. The rebellion of the rulers
 - i. In verse 2, David says
 1. 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.”
 - a. We see in this one statement the main reason for their raging and plotting and rebellion:
 - i. They have rejected the King that God has appointed over them, and they have placed THEMSELVES on the throne
 1. This is the great sin of the world
 - a. It is not the sin of murder, or greed, or theft
 - b. It is not the sin of homosexuality or any other form of sexual immorality
 2. It is the original sin of Adam and Eve back in the Garden
 - a. The sin of wanting to be on equal footing with the God of all Creation
 - b. It is the sin of not wanting anyone – not even God Himself – telling us what we can and cannot do
 - c. It is the sin of idolatry, putting ourselves on the throne of our lives
 2. We saw the great contrast with this attitude last week when we looked at Psalm 1
 - a. The blessed man is the man who “DELIGHTS in the law of the Lord”
 - i. But those who rage against the Lord and his Anointed have no delight in his laws
 - ii. Those who plot vain and empty things, devoid of truth, want no part of the truth of his Word
 - iii. Those who are citizens of the kingdom of this world have no desire to serve the King that God has set on Zion
 - b. And so David writes in verse 4-6...
 - i. “He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision.”
 1. God in heaven looks at the rage of the nations like North Korea and Somalia... and he laughs
 - a. He hears the empty plotting of those who live in the “Enlightened” West... and he holds them in derision
 - b. He sees the rebellion in the hearts of the masses, and David says...
 2. “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.’”

3. Which leads us to our second point...

3. The Kingdom of Christ

- a. And of this Kingdom, we see three important realities
 - i. This Kingdom has already been established
 - ii. This Kingdom will expand to the ends of the earth
 - iii. This Kingdom comes with both a terrifying warning AND a glorious promise
 - b. First, this Kingdom has already been established
 - i. Note again what God says in verse 6... "I HAVE SET my King on Zion"
 1. This word that God used here is a word that was used in the area of metalworking
 - a. It is the idea of a goldsmith pouring out the melted gold into a form, so that gold would permanently take the shape of the form
 - b. Once the gold is set, it is set for good
 - i. It's form has been firmly established by the craftsman
 2. In the same way, but with INFINITELY greater permanence, God HAS SET – past tense – His King upon Zion
 - a. Christ reigns FULLY from his throne... NOW... TODAY... over all Creation
 - ii. This is the focus of Paul's incredible prayer in Ephesians 1:16-23
 1. *¹⁶I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, ¹⁷that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, ¹⁸having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might ²⁰that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. ²²And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, ²³which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.*
 - a. That is an incredible prayer, isn't it??
 - i. We could spend DAYS unpacking everything Paul included in his prayer for the Ephesian believers!
 - ii. But what we need to see this morning is that God's King has been FRIMLY set upon Zion
 1. God has raised Christ from the dead
 2. He has seated his Son at His right hand, FAR above all rule and authority and power and dominion
 3. And ALL things have been put under HIS feet
 - b. God has set his King on Zion
 - i. Like the gold poured out into the form, Christ has been PERMANENTLY installed as God's King
 2. The Kingdom of Christ has already been established
- c. Second, the Kingdom of Christ WILL expand to the ends of the earth
 - i. Look back at Psalm 2, in verses 7-9...
 1. *⁷I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you. ⁸Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. ⁹You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."*
 - a. Ask of me, and I WILL make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession
 - b. My friends, this is why the church should not only be radically missions-minded, but we should also be CONFIDENTLY missions-minded!
 - i. God didn't say to His Son, "I'll do my best to try to make the nations your heritage..."

- ii. He didn't say, "Hopefully you might someday possess the ends of the earth..."
- iii. NO! God the Father said to His Son, "I WILL make the nations your heritage. I WILL make the ends of the earth your possession."
 - 1. And in His mind-blowing wisdom, Jesus has chosen US to lead the advance to spread his name throughout the entire earth!
 - 2. This is the great promise – and the great calling – of Acts 1:8...
 - a. *"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."*
- 2. Jesus has poured out his Holy Spirit upon us, IN ORDER THAT we would go to the ends of the earth as his witnesses
 - a. And we go with the promise that God WILL give the ends of the earth to his Son as his possession!
 - i. Think about the implications of that promise
 - 1. There WILL come a day when the North Koreans and the Somalias of this earth will no longer rage against the name of Jesus
 - 2. There WILL come a day when the peoples of the West will no longer be fixated on ideologies void of truth
 - 3. There WILL come a day when the people of the Lyuli in Kyrgyzstan will KNOW the name of Christ
 - b. As Habakkuk 2:14 says,
 - i. There WILL come a day when "the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea!"
 - 3. We can go to ALL the nations and people groups in this world WITH CONFIDENCE, for Psalm 2 tells us that the Kingdom of Christ WILL expand to the ends of the earth!
- d. And third, this Kingdom comes with both a terrifying warning AND a glorious promise
 - i. First, the terrifying warning... (look with me at Psalm 2, verse 10-12)
 - 1. *¹⁰Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. ¹¹Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. ¹²Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled.*
 - a. This is one of the reasons why studying the Psalms is so important for us as followers of Jesus Christ
 - i. One of the growing trends in the church today, mostly here in America, is the idea that church should be fun
 - 1. Let's fill our parking lots with inflatables and games to show the world how fun we are
 - 2. Let's put video games and big screen TVs in our youth rooms to show all the teens how fun we are
 - 3. Let's have theme Sundays, where everyone wears jerseys from their favorite sports teams, or (even worse) where everyone gets to come in their pajamas
 - a. All of these things are done in the name of making the church look more "fun" to a lost and dying world
 - 2. And because we no longer sing the Psalms in our churches, we have forgotten that we are called to serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling
 - a. We have forgotten that the wrath of JESUS is quickly kindled against those who do not worship him as he deserves
 - b. My friends, Jesus came to earth the first time as a lamb – a helpless baby born in a manger in the little backwoods town of Bethlehem
 - i. But he will return as the Lion of Judah, riding on a white horse with his eyes full of fire

1. His robe will be dipped in blood and a sharp sword – the Word of God – will come from his mouth
 - a. He will strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron
 - b. And he will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty
3. Friends, what we do here on Sunday mornings is not a game
 - a. We are at war
 - b. And Psalm 2, one of the favored hymns of the early church, reminds us that we are to SING of the warnings that Christ himself will fulfill
 - i. The Kingdom of Christ comes with a terrifying warning regarding the wrath of Christ
- e. But it concludes with a simple, yet tremendously reassuring, promise...
 - i. Blessed are all who take refuge in the King
 1. Blessed are all who look to Christ as their fortress
 2. Blessed are all who look to Christ as their deliverer
 3. Blessed are all who look to Christ as their shield, and the horn of their salvation
 - a. This was David's great praise in 2 Samuel 22, verses 32-37, as he sang,
 - i. *³²"For who is God, but the LORD? And who is a rock, except our God? ³³This God is my strong refuge and has made my way blameless. ³⁴He made my feet like the feet of a deer and set me secure on the heights. ³⁵He trains my hands for war, so that my arms can bend a bow of bronze. ³⁶You have given me the shield of your salvation, and your gentleness made me great. ³⁷You gave a wide place for my steps under me, and my feet did not slip..."*
 - b. Blessed are all who take refuge in the Lord's anointed
 - i. For he will make your way blameless
 - ii. He will give you the shield of his salvation
 - iii. And he will put firm ground underneath your feet, that you may never be shaken!
 4. All of this comes to the one who takes refuge in Christ
 - a. You can't work your way into his Kingdom
 - b. You certainly can never be good enough to earn your way into his Kingdom
 - i. The only way into his Kingdom is by surrendering
 - ii. The only way into his Kingdom is by acknowledging the fact that you have lived your life in treason against His authority, and by repenting of your sinful idolatry
 - iii. You must lose your life in the kingdom of this world, and you must take refuge in Christ
 5. And Psalm 2, this incredible hymn given to David by the Holy Spirit, promises that you will indeed be blessed!
4. My friends, there are only two Kingdoms in this world
 - a. The kingdom OF this world, or the Kingdom of Christ
 - b. Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain?
 - i. From our limited, earthly perspective, the nations rage and the peoples of this world plot in vain because of the sinful idolatry that exists in all of our hearts
 1. But I wouldn't be a good teacher of the Word of God if I just left things with the earthly perspective
 - c. You see, if we go back to the prayer of the saints in Acts 4, we find that there is much more at work in all of this than just the sinfulness of our own hearts
 - i. We'll conclude this morning by looking at Acts 4:26-28
 1. *Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples plot in vain? ²⁶The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Anointed' – ²⁷for 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, ²⁸TO DO WHATEVER YOUR HAND AND YOUR PLAN HAD PREDESTINED TO TAKE PLACE.

- a. That is an ASTOUNDING statement, isn't it??
 - i. Look at all the moving pieces that are included in this claim
 1. King Herod
 2. The governor over Judea, Pontius Pilate
 3. The Gentiles, possibly referring to the Roman soldiers who beat and mocked and crucified Jesus
 4. And the peoples of Israel
 - a. Not just the Jewish leaders who had opposed Jesus' ministry from day one
 - i. But also Judas, one of the twelve, who would betray Jesus with a kiss
 - ii. And also the Jewish crowds, who shouted "Crucify him! Crucify him!", even after Pilate had offered to set Jesus free
 - b. All of these pieces come together in Acts 4:28, to do "whatever GOD'S hand and God's plan had PREDESTINED to take place!
- d. WHY did all the kingdoms of the world set themselves against Christ when he walked this earth two thousand years ago?
 - i. Because that was what God had PREDESTINED to happen, according to HIS hand and HIS plan
- e. WHY do the kingdoms of this world continue to set themselves against Christ even still today?
 - i. Because that is what God has PREDESTINED, according to HIS hand and HIS plan
 1. Jesus makes this truth clear to us in Matthew 24:7-14, when he says,
 - a. *⁷For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. ⁸All these are but the beginning of the birth pains. ⁹Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake. ¹⁰And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. ¹¹And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. ¹²And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. ¹³But the one who endures to the end will be saved. ¹⁴And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.*
 - ii. So how are we to live, as citizens of the Kingdom of Christ who are increasingly being persecuted by the kingdom of this world?
 1. Are we to wring our hands in anger and frustration?
 2. Are we to hang our heads in gloom and despair?
 3. Are we to fight back, using the weapons of this world to give em what they deserve?
 - iii. No, friends, as citizens of the Kingdom of Christ
 1. We are to pray that our love will not grow cold
 2. We are to endure faithfully to the end
 3. And we are to proclaim the gospel of the Kingdom throughout the whole world, until people from every tribe, tongue, and nation take refuge in the King
 - a. And then, the end will come – just as God has predestined, according to HIS hand and HIS plan
 - i. Friends, THIS is the God whom we serve with fear
 - ii. THIS is the Lord before whom we rejoice with trembling
 1. Blessed are ALL who take refuge in HIM!!