

Confidence In God's Sovereign King

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This evening I will be beginning a new series from the book in the Old Testament, book of Psalms. And I would like for you to open with me to Psalm 2. We're going to start this series from the book of Psalm 2.

And this series is not going to go from one psalm to the next in sequential order. I'm going to instead go by a theme. And starting tonight, the theme will be of Godward orientation. Godward orientation. Our hearts to be aligned to his will must be oriented to who first of all who God is and what ultimately pleases him.

And so tonight we will start with this series beginning in Psalm 2. I will read it first. It's going to be a little bit different because I will not be going verse by verse in this series. So just follow along with me as I read the whole passage and then share what God has placed on my heart for this sermon.

Now will you stand at this time for the reading of God's word? Verse one.

Why do the heathen rage and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against his anointed, saying, "Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us." He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh. The Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree. The Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my son. This day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron. Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings. Be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

May God bless the reading of his word. You may go back to your seat.

Psalm 2 serves as a prophetic foundation for God's ultimate universal kingdom through the Messiah, namely Christ. Drawing heavily on the historic context of David's kingship, the Psalm's theme of nations rebelling against the Lord's King reflects the real life struggles David faced, detailed in 2 Samuel. While a national event likely inspired this psalm, its meaning extends beyond that initial setting. The author may have even recognized its broader implications. But the New Testament confirms this ultimate fulfillment, explicitly linking Psalm 2 to Jesus Christ as the eternal son and king through citations in Acts 4:25 and Hebrews 1:5.

The passage begins with the description of an earthly king and his conflict with other nations. But the language used is too profound to be fully limited to a historical figure such as David. The text quickly moves beyond the local and immediate, expanding to embrace the universal and eternal kingdom. The king on David's throne is thus viewed in a new light, transformed by the underlying promise. The text presents a vision of kingship that merges the current reality with an ideal future king and kingdom. And the immediate earthly king is merely a foreshadowing of the true king, capital K, who represents the prophet's ultimate hope. Therefore, the nations rising in opposition are not limited to those currently preparing for conflict, but include all forces that oppose and exalt itself against his anointed. That's the Lord Jesus Christ.

And so when interpreting the Psalms, we must avoid two things. Number one, one side of the extreme is to see the Messiah everywhere when it's not. And then the other side is to be so critical that you deny any messianic predictions. And so the history and character of David serves as a preliminary outline a prefiguration as it were of the glorious ideal king and his reign is one of righteousness and his kingdom is eternal. And this specific psalm vividly depicts the revolt against the Messiah Christ.

So the scope of the opposition, let us start with that verses 1 and 2. The resistance to Christ's reign and kingdom is detailed here in these two passages has always been widespread and aggressive. We see number one a universal opposition. We see that through the nations. You see in the nations here it's translated also as nation. And this can be from the Romans, the Greeks, encompassing various people groups. The Lord said in Matthew 24:7-9, I'll just read it to you. He said this related to this passage, for nation shall rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom, and there shall be famines and pestilences and earthquakes in diverse places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted and shall kill you and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. So that's the universal opposition of all the nations against the Christians.

And by the way Satan cannot get to Christ. So he afflicts the Christians does he not? The other opposition that we see here is the perpetual opposition meaning continual opposition in this way in ranks. You see this with the words and description here of kings of rulers of people those are the different ranks we see here and they're all joining together to destroy the Christians in all generations.

The conflict began with Christ rejection during the time that he was here and just reading from Acts 4:25-27. Read along or hear from me as I read the passage says who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said why did the heathen rage and the people imagine vain things again going back to Psalm 2:1 that's where this portion of Acts 4:25 relates to and then verse 26 the kings of the earth stood up and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against his Christ verse 27 for of a truth against thy holy child Jesus whom thou hast anointed both Herod and Pontius Pilate with the Gentiles and the people of Israel were gathered together. You see the similarity there and it by the way continues through church history as an unrelenting warfare.

So that's there from the context of Christ appearing on earth. Then we have future opposition. Let's look at that. The word of God suggests that intense and violent days of contention still lie ahead for the churches. Revelation 13:5-7 says this. And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies and power was given unto him to continue forty and two

months. Verse 6. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God to blaspheme his name and his tabernacle and them that dwell in heaven. Verse 7. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And power was given him over all kindreds and tongues and nations.

And despite this universal and perpetual opposition, the divine decree stands, namely this. Psalms 110 verse 2 says this, "The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion and rule thou in the midst of thine enemies." That's a truth that we can hold on to. No matter what opposition may come, the Lord Jesus rules over all of them.

Despite of all this and understanding this truth, this verse underscores the guaranteed victory and sovereign rule of the Messiah and it highlights the divine power that he possesses and the ultimate triumph over all of his adversaries.

See the rebellion against God's sovereign king is characterized by deliberate combined effort and resolute determination. So number one, let's start with deliberate. The revolt is not impulsive but carefully planned. The people take counsel. That's the language here. And they do it together. It's the idea they devise a plan to ponder in their heart bringing forth their strongest reasons and most subtle schemes. And this is going back to Matthew chapter 24 was saying about Jesus saying the nation shall rise against nation. This is going on perpetually. They're one side scheming against the other and vice versa. And this is a portrayal of that. So that's the number one. It's deliberate.

Number two, it's combined. It's unified. They take counsel together. And historically and currently, strange combinations have been and still are being formed against Christ. That's who they're trying to target through Christians.

And then they're number three, resolute about it. The attitude is one of absolute defiance. They're not letting back. They are setting themselves. You see in the passage they is standing against Christ taking a defiant attitude and the Hebrew word used suggests the posture of going back to Goliath taking up his station to defy Israel.

And as Matthew Henry observed, one would have expected that so great a blessing to this world should have been universally welcomed. But it proves quite contrary and cold. Isn't that true? The doctrine and government Christ have been met with more violence than any philosophers or princes or kings. The kind of opposition that Christ has been deliberate, combined, resolute than any other opposition towards a specific party and Christians are part of that.

But Luke 19:14 says this, we will not have this man to reign over us. That's their main thing. They don't want his rule.

So I want us to go to the next reason for this kind of uprising. Why are they doing this? The revolt stems from desire to escape ultimately divine law in Christ. Psalm 2 verse three look and read down with me. It says, "Let us break their bands asunder and cast away their cords from us."

The law of God as revealed through Christ demands significant self-denial and sacrifice from human nature which is inherently flawed. Our nature is inherently flawed by sin. And this requirement makes the law unappealing. Resist. Don't want this leading to its rejection. And one

person observed that doctrines would be readily believed if they involved in them no precepts and the church may be tolerated by the world if she will only give up her discipline. Of course, that will never become true. And so they will continually attack Christ through the Christians.

And again, let me just give more on this. While Christ's yoke is easy and his burden light for those that are penitent and are spiritually aware of their sinful condition to them that are not penitent and not humbled and they see it as a band and a cord you see that in the text to those who are spiritually blind and willfully spiritually opposed to Christ they are like oxen that's the picture of Christ, the yoke. They're like oxen, desperate to shed their harness. I don't want to be part of this. That's their attitude.

So men might cite numerous grievances against Christ, such as many people would say, "Oh, there's no such thing as miracles." One would say, or look at his followers. They all scatter away. There seems to be more of that. And so they will mock. They will scorn in this way. And the ultimate cause for his rejection lies in the very laws governing his kingdom. They don't want to obey. And so these are not just laws of demand, but rather truth, of love, of purity. And yet those that are opposed of these good things perceive as hateful and restrictive and almost like a death sentence by the disobedient and those who are lawless. And even though they are as bright to the Christian as pure gold and as light, pure light for the righteous.

Next, I want us to see the irrationality of this opposition. The irrationality of this opposition. The resistance is foolish and without merit. And so in the text back going back to verse one. I will be going kind of back and forth here is it says why do the heathen rage? Why do the heathen rage? It's a sense of this is absurd. Why are you so infuriated? Christ is the ultimate blessed king whose reign brings abundant goodness. to reject him is an act of utter foolishness and complete vanity. He ends it with they imagine vain things. They're missing the point.

And so what harm has he ever done to his enemies? Let me just share with you of Christ's goodness to answer that question is that people in government cannot ignore that the ten commandments are good. Right? In Congress, they have the 10 commandments there. So nations are blessed. America being one of them.

What about philosophers? Philosophers know that Jesus was good, a good teacher, as they put it. Nothing was offensive. It was just going to the cross. They didn't agree with for my sin. No, I'm good. But there was nothing wrong with Jesus. They couldn't find fault with him as it said in the scriptures.

What about those that confess moral character? Again, they cannot deny that he was perfectly obedient. He was without sin. They could not put that on him except saying that he was blasphemous against God when he said he is a son of God.

But then we go to the sinners. sinners themselves deep down know him to be pure love yet opposing his kingdom for their own kingdom.

So there it is line by line, group by group, it's irrational. It's also this opposition is self-destructive. That's the next thing I would like to share with you. To stand against Christ is not only madness and blind passion, but it's suicidal to the soul, self-destructive. He is after all the

friend of the sinners. Jesus said this in Matthew 11:19. The son of man came eating and drinking and they say, "Behold, a man gluttonous and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners."

And the Lord Jesus did command his followers to go to all nations in the great commission Matthew 28 to spread what? The good news. It's all good. And yet self-destructive thoughts sinners saying no to all of that.

What about the uselessness of rebellion against God's sovereign king, the Lord Jesus Christ? Let's look at that. Well, any attempt to rebel against the dominion of Christ is utterly vain, utterly useless. Again, that expression imagining a vain thing is futile efforts. Much like a person trying to defy the law of gravity, try to oppose the law of gravity. It just doesn't work to your favor.

God has decreed that Christ shall reign with all things placed under his authority. Psalm 2:7-8. So let's read that again. He says, "I will declare the decree the Lord hath said unto me, thou art my son. This day have I begotten thee." Verse 8, ask of me and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Everything is under his authority there.

The resurrection of Christ marked the day of his coronation which is the fulfillment in Jesus heavenly enthronement as lord of all. Psalm 2:7 again establishes him through his atoning work as a king of kings who reign eternally. And we see that in Matthew 28:18-20.

God holds the enemies of his son in contempt. Verse 4, look at that there. He says, "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh. The Lord shall have them in derision." The writer of this psalm beautifully contrasts the rage and the exertion of these enemies with the laughter of God. Why is he laughing? Because with one word he can bring down all the mockery and the scorning in a standstill just like that. But yet he doesn't again showing the extended mercy and the grace and longsuffering that he has for us as sinners. Amen.

And the hostility of the unbelieving world fails to destroy Messiah's kingdom. They've tried. It hasn't worked and it will never work. As Luther noted, he said, "The fruitless fury of unbelievers and the adversaries of God's Messiah kingdom is likened to the seas turbulent surging waves that crash upon the coast but are ultimately ineffective and ultimately achieve nothing. It's just noise." That's what Luther is saying there. Thus, the church is oppressed but not suppressed. Cannot be quieted. Amen.

Ultimately, God will cover all Christ's enemies with confusion and ruin. Look at verse 9. Says this, "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron. Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." It would just cause so much confusion to them when they deserve it. When he, the good king, bestows upon us his grace and his mercy. One day this will happen to all those who oppose him. there will be much confusion and much ruin upon them.

The psalmist concludes with a strong admonition verses 10 to 12. Let me read that. Says, "Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings, be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the son, lest he be angry and ye perish from the way when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him."

So he says, "Be wise now. Now is the time to be wise. This is a call for all, especially the rulers mentioned here, to recognize Christ's sovereignty both in their public governance and in their personal lives. Otherwise, it's futile resisting him.

So reflecting on this futility of opposition to the savior and king one person put it this way that if you really understood Jesus and his kingship and his power if you really saw it I mean he once said he could call legions right if you really understood what that means the immense power that he has if you just look at the vast universe and he controls all the stars in the galaxies. If that person would just gaze at him in a moment, there will be a change. But this person refuses all of that and refuses to look and that is futile futile opposition.

Similarly, Christ possesses all power as I mentioned which he wields with love and righteousness. It's love and righteousness. It is not over. I'm going to do this because I don't love you. It's not because I want to do this because it just, you know, to make you feel bad. No, he wants more than anything else that they would not perish.

So this destruction is further explained using the image from Matthew 21:44 speaking of the chief priests and Pharisees. Whosoever shall fall on the stone shall be broken but on whomsoever it shall fall it will grind him to powder. These are strong language. Ground to powder signifies a destruction that is utter hopeless everlasting without remedy. It implies a complete loss of life. Life without God. A destruction that mirrors the concept of everlasting ruin found in 2 Thessalonians 1:9 says, "From the presence of God and from the glory of his power, separated from all that."

And so Christ through current who is currently not ruling earthly here on the with his earthly kingdom will eventually act on the judgment already written in scripture. This is already written. It's going to be done and the scent of the stone will be a terrible event as I described it here. And one author puts this with the word the phrase ground to powder. He says, "This is not an illusion. This is Christ. Therefore, I say to you, since all that stand against him shall become as the chaff of the summer threshing floor and be swept utterly away, make him the foundation on which you build. And when the storm sweeps away every refuge of lies, you will be safe and serene build upon the rock of ages."

You see, fools in the way that scripture calls those who are fools do that at last, meaning too late. But wise men do it first. Wise men hear the word, are quickened by the spirit, and respond. That's an important truth, isn't it?

Now, let's transition to what does it look like to serve the sovereign king. We're going to look at verses 11 and 12 for this portion of understanding. What does the service look like? serving the Lord. We see here in verse 11, Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling.

So we see here fear and joy. Rejoice. That's how we are to serve. So with fear, it's acknowledging his holiness and greatness even in service. Maintaining this heart posture of trembling, reverence because God is God. It's the idea of you think about comparing with men and let's say you can bench press 200 pounds but another man bench presses 400 lb and that man's stronger than me. I'm going to tremble. Now let's take it up a notch. Let's talk about the Lord Jesus Christ. He can carry everything in his hand. That trembling is multiplied, isn't it? And that's the idea. This it's

this holy fear like he has immense power. He can do whatever he wants. And we maintain that reverence all our lives.

But with it, we are to also rejoice. In what way? That we recognize that his law is rooted in love, the law of Christ and serving him brings freedom. We can rejoice because he is the giver of life. We rejoice because he's giving us life. He's giving us life. He's not destroying us with this power. And so we can rejoice. I'm still living. I'm still living. I should have died in my sin. I'm still alive. That should bring great rejoicing if you know the God who we're talking about in scripture. So that's how we are to serve.

Next, this act of submission. This act of submission, we see this in verse 12 with the expression, kiss the son. That submission, kiss the son. There are two things here. Number one, the warning. His wrath can ignite suddenly, leading those who reject him to perish from the way. You see that? So that's one side. But the second side is justice. Christ's power will be made manifest either by destroying the sin within a person or by justly destroying the unrepentant sinner. Let me repeat that. Christ's power will be made manifest either by destroying the sin within a person or by justly destroying the unrepentant sinner.

You see, as a righteous judge, justice must happen, right? Sin must be punished. And so, rather we being punished because we're unrepentant as a Christian, our sins were placed on Christ to be punished on our behalf. And this is the justice. What's the one thing that we as Christians have? We have our sins paid for, but Christ received the punishment on our behalf. And that should be singing upon ourselves. It is, by the way, a psalm of praise. In this part, we can praise God for what he has done.

Next, I want us to reflect on verse nine here. And the idea of trust, of trust, trusting our sovereign king. And here in verse 9, Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron. Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Here it says it's talking about breaking the power of sin with the use of the rod of iron, shattering our stubborn hearts like a potter's vessel.

And crucially, we must place our trust in him for he is the one that keeps our souls alive and blesses all who do so. You see in reality that trust is our hearts were hard as stone was as stubborn stubborn as an ox that won't move. And yet he has changed and transformed our stubborn heart to receptive to his will and to his call in our life. And then he continues to remove the power of sin in our lives. That's the rod of iron. That's the potter and vessel illustration. It's a good reminder for us to place our trust in him that this promise he will keep doing in our souls. That's that word that's used in expression in the New Testament. He will chasten his children. Amen. He will chasten us as his children.

Now I have a lot to say but I'm going to go to an aspect I think would help to end this evening is the Christian life has two opposing characteristics and it's for us and for our good and it's this I'm going to read verse 11 again and I'm going to bring more into this verse. Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling.

Verse 11, the following here discusses the two contrasting yet compatible states of feeling found in the text. The two states of feeling serve the Lord with fear. It's not slavish, but it is like

reverence as a child to a parent. We want to obey God the father. Amen. We want to love him. It's not a slavish way. It's a loving because he is good to us. And so that's the idea of fear.

And as parents, we ought to bring that. We love our children, don't we not? We love them. But often times, do we have to discipline? Yes. Is it for their good or for their bad? Of course, it's the former. Amen. And so that is the sense of that word with fear.

Now, with rejoicing, this is the instructions to be glad in the Lord and to take his satisfaction and glory in serving him. That you're serving a good God. He will do all things good and right always. You don't have to doubt God ever in your life. And you can do things trusting in that way and rejoicing that whatever instruction he gives you that you can receive it with gladness. And may we as a people of God do that more consistently. Amen.

Let's not fear or be of offense towards God. So they're both compatible again in this way as well. And this is the way God designed it and his design is perfect.

And as we meditate on these passages, let's not fear in the wrong sense of the word. Let's not presumptuously have joy without understanding what joy means according to the way it was explained tonight. And as you do, may you feel more secure in your Godward orientation. That as you face struggles in your life, emotionally with all sorts of feelings, know that God knows your feelings and he wants you to have your feelings right. Set aligned according to his way and his will. May he do that because he's sovereign. He has full control. Let him take control. Amen. And may God bless you as you do.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you for your precious words. We thank you, Father, the way you designed us even with our emotions. We thank you, Lord, that you are ultimately sovereign over all. Help us to keep realizing the immense power that you behold. And father, you are not like a evil king, Lord, that just uses his power and to destroy lives or makes decisions that inflict pain and suffering unjustly.

And so, Father, I pray God that you would help us to acknowledge the King of kings and Lord of lords, who is your begotten son, Jesus Christ. Help us to look at the end and not just stay where we are. To know ultimately that all his enemies will be under his footstool and that we can trust that we will have victory whether in this life before our death or in our death till you come. Thank you Lord for your precious truths once again in Jesus name. Amen.