

Jason Upchurch - Christmas Eve Morning 2023 - Kiss the Son

This morning as we celebrate the coming of the Lord Jesus I want to turn our attention to what I believe is one of the most powerful Psalms in the OT: **Psalm 2**.

And this psalm is not a psalm prophesying the first coming of Jesus. It's not a psalm about his atonement or his substitutionary sacrifice on the cross in our place for our sin. It's not a prophesy of light or truth.

This is a psalm about how Jesus is the sovereign King of all the universe. He is the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. The one to whom every knee will bow and confess as Lord when he comes on that great day.

And as we celebrate Christmas this year I want to remind us that that's who came into the world 2,000 years ago: our great and mighty King.

He was small and fragile in the manger.
He was gently and lowly in life.
He was obedient in his suffering death.
He was triumphant and vindicated in his resurrection.

And then he ascended into heaven. And from heaven he reigns over all his created universe.

And as the sovereign King of all the universe he is due - right now, this minute - honor and glory and power and worship from every living thing that breathes. From the rocks to angels. From slaves to kings. King Jesus is worthy of all honor and adoration.

As much as we celebrate the humility and lowliness of Jesus coming into the world, we need to remember that who came into the world is none other than the royal Son of God. And there is coming a day when all people - kings and everyone - will acknowledge the Kingship of Jesus.

We live in a time in our culture when many people have rejected almost anything Christian in basically every aspect of life. There was a time when our country had a generic Christian atmosphere, we held to a Christian basis of morality at least in part. But now that seems to be rejected in many ways. To hear anything overtly Christian in sports or media or government or education or business or advertising is really unusual.

I was watching a Christmas movie a couple weeks ago and, of course, there isn't much at all about Christ even in Christmas movies. But I was surprised when the Christmas songs in the movie were very overtly Christian, prominently referencing Jesus very clearly. This was a secular movie. And it wasn't Charlie Brown Christmas either. It's so rare in our society that it caught me off guard.

And what can happen especially among Christians is that we can become pessimistic about the world. We can become depressed about the society around us and burdened by all the sin we see.

But as believers we're never called to have a pessimistic view of the situation. We are never to think that somehow the glory days are gone. We're never to feel defeated or down trodden. Why?

Because our God is in the heavens and he does all that he pleases.

And because the Kingdom of Jesus is not threatened. Not truly threatened, anyway. And the society around us that shakes its fist at God is not something new. It's not even worse than its ever been. It's something that's been going on since the dawn of time. Since Cain killed Abel, and since the Tower of Babel.

And I think as we look at this passage in light of the coming of Jesus into the world I think we're going to be very encouraged. Because who came into the world is the God King in human flesh who will - and does - rule over all the nations.

We see the psalmist describe the problem very early on in the first 2 verses of **Chapter 2. Read 1-3**

1) Let's call this the futility of the raging nations.

Usually when we think of Christmas we think of peace and quiet and humility and great joy. And those are all things that are appropriate to think of this time of year.

But that's our perspective as Christians: Joy to the World is ours to sing. Peace on Earth is ours to proclaim.

But the world's perspective is precisely the opposite. The unbelieving world - the nations - rage. They cause a commotion. And they plot in vain.

What are they raging about? What are they plotting to do? When people are raging they're usually raging against someone. When they're plotting, they're plotting something evil.

Well, they're plotting against the Lord - Yahweh - and his anointed. The unbelieving world hates God and all that God stands for. That's why this time of year you'll see people want to put up satanic manger scenes or refuse to allow Christian manger scenes. They hate what this season is all about.

The world tries to distract us from Christ: presents, parties, Santa, reindeer...

Why? Because they hate Yahweh and they hate his anointed. As you know from our study in Mark's gospel Jesus is often called the Christ. Or the Messiah, which means the Anointed One. Jesus is the anointed one - the chosen one - in this passage. And the nations are raging not just against God generically, they're raging and plotting against Jesus specifically.

This has always been the case. This psalm is written hundreds of years before Jesus. The nations were raging then. Throughout the life of Jesus people raged against him. And people still rage against Jesus.

They can't stand what he stands for. They can't stand the truth he proclaims and the reality he stands for. Oddly enough, usually the people raging the most are those who claim to be religious. Here it's all the nations.

And what the psalmist describes is exactly what we see all around us. Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The nations rage. Our nation, as well as other nations, seem to shake their fists at God and specifically at the Christian God. There always seems to be unrest and unruliness.

Why are they raging? **Read 3**

They don't like the sovereign authority of God. They don't like the fact that God is in control. They feel as though they are in bondage to God and to his anointed. They feel as though God is their task master.

Now, here's the irony: He is. God is the sovereign Lord of all the universe. The reason they're trying to burst the bonds apart is because the bonds exist.

The nations know in their heart there is a God who reigns and to whom they will give an account.

As Christians we love that reality. We love that God is on the throne. That's our identity.

Rom. 10:9-10: If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord - master - and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

The gracious bonds of Jesus is our salvation.

The world doesn't want that. They want the bonds burst apart. They want to be released from God and Jesus because they view it as oppression.

And we call this the futility - the worthlessness - of the raging nations because imagine mere humans trying to plot against Almighty God. How's that working out for them? What's God's response?

2) God laughs at the nations. Read 4-6

This is actually pretty amazing. What is God's responses to this mutiny they're trying to plan out? He laughs at them. God is not intimidated by puny humans. All the kings of the earth and all the rulers of the earth put together against God are absolutely nothing. God just laughs.

This isn't a happy chuckle, either. This is a mocking laughter. The Lord's view on this is that it is an absolute joke. What are human kings going to do against God?

You remember when King Nebuchadnezzar looked over all of his kingdom of Babylon and said "look at the splendor of my majesty?" What utter foolishness. God basically turned him into a goat for 7 years and he ate grass a like beast out in the pasture. He deserved instant death, but God chose to humiliate him for almost a decade instead. Here was his conclusion.

Dan. 4:34-35: At the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High, and praised and honored him who lives forever,

for his dominion is an everlasting dominion,
and his kingdom endures from generation to generation;
all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing,
and he does according to his will among the host of heaven
and among the inhabitants of the earth;
and none can stay his hand
or say to him, "What have you done?"

Listen to what he says after that 7 years out eating grass: "Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the **King of heaven**, for all his works are right and his ways are just; and those who walk in pride he is able to humble."

God has never been bothered by the pride of wicked rulers.

Can you imagine finding ants in your basement and they're building a little nest and then they see you get a can of Raid? And then you squint at them and you realize they're shaking their fists at you? What would your response be? Laugh. What if the queen ant was shaking her fist at you? Ohh scary..

That's what God does when human kings shake their fist at him.

Actually, God says this is a battle between human kings and his King in **Vs. 6? Read**

So we've got all the kings on one side, and God's King on the other and it's go time.

There was a time when I liked playing chess. And if you play chess against someone who is really good they don't even need all their pieces to beat you. They can remove some of their pieces and still win easily. Here, it's like all the kings and rulers of the world are on one of side of the chess board and just Jesus is on the other. And before anyone makes a move God says "checkmate."

"You've lost, kings of earth. My King is on Zion. My King is one the holy hill. My King is the King of Kings and rules over all."

This is Jesus who came into the world 2,000 years ago. He was on the throne before his incarnation. That's why **Phil. 2** says he did not consider equality with God a thing to be grasped. He had all the glory and power. But he gave the splendor of his glory to serve us, to live for us, to die for us, to be raised for us.

Phil 2:9-10: Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the very 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.

Checkmate, kings of the world. The death of Jesus didn't stop anything. Because God raised him and catapulted him to supreme glory and gave him all authority over all the earth.

That's why God just laughs at the nations.

3) God's plan with his Anointed. **Read 7-9**

So God laughs at the nations and then he says let me tell you what I'm going to do to you. "Let me tell you my decree."

What is a decree of God? It's the eternal plan that God made in eternity past.

You know when you make a vacation plan or plans to go visit family? You determine what you're going to do and where you're going to go and then you try to get all that done? And if you get half of it done that's actually pretty good?

Well, God's decree happened in eternity past and God's decree always gets done. God doesn't ever **try** to do something and fail at it. God's decree - his eternal plan - is always accomplished because it's what he has chosen to do and no one can stop him. No one can hinder what he's doing.

And here God tells us and the nations of his eternal decree. Now, think about that.

Back to the chess analogy: if you're playing chess you don't actually want to tell your opponent what you're planning to do. That would give them an advantage and they might stop you. You want to misdirect them and confuse them as you unfold your strategy.

But here, God is so confident in his own decree that he says to the kings of the earth: I'll even tell you my plan. I'll give you my whole strategy because even then you won't be able to stop it. That's sovereign, omnipotent power.

And then what we have is the perspective of Jesus in the eternal decree. **Read 7**

This is amazing. This is the Son of God - Jesus - telling the kings what the Father promised to him. "I will tell of the decree." I'll tell you what the Father promised me. "Yahweh said to me, 'You are my Son...'"

This is the pre-incarnate Jesus telling us what the Father promised to him. "You are my Son, today I have begotten you."

Now, here's the interesting thing. We often read "Today I have begotten you" and we think this is the moment of Jesus's incarnation. That sounds like when the Holy Spirit conceived him in Mary's womb. But it's actually not.

I'll show you this in a minute, but stay with me. This is actually Jesus's coronation as king. Or we could say his inauguration. It's the moment when he was officially crowned king. He was always the king of the universe, always destined to rule. But there came a time when he placed the proverbial crown on his head and began his reign. That's what this is referring to.

Usually when the Bible talks about begetting it means having kids. So and so begot so and so. Or it could be talking about Jesus, who is God's only-begotten Son.

But begetting can also mean "to give way to" to "to initiate" it can also mean coronated.

See, when a king's son is born there is a sense in which they have the right to the throne. They are the king-to-be. But it isn't until coronation day that they are actually king in fullness.

When was Jesus's coronation day? When did he become King in full? I believe he became King in full at his resurrection.

I think this verse is talking about the resurrection of Jesus. And that the moment he rose, he was coronated as King. And I'll show you why. **Look at Acts 13:33** for a minute.

This is Paul and Barnabas preaching in Asia Minor - modern day Turkey. They are at a synagogue to people who had never heard of Jesus before. Jesus was brand new information to them. So they're giving a quick history of kings in Israel and how Jesus fulfills the promises of God in the OT. Specifically that God promised kings from the line of David. **Read 20-23**

So Paul says "This guy, Jesus, is in the lineage of David. He is in line to be king." And there was even a witness about this: John the Baptist. **Read 24-25**

So follow the story Paul is setting up here: Jesus is in line to be king, this prophet named John knew it. But get this: the religious leaders in Jerusalem blew it! They didn't understand that Jesus is king! **Read 26-31**

What Paul is saying is that the religious leaders killed their own Messiah. They read the Scriptures about him every week, but they didn't understand, so they killed their own promised king. But even that didn't mess up God's plan! Jesus's death was God's plan.

Remember these guys had never heard of Jesus before this moment. So hearing about a guy named Jesus who was wrongly executed and then raised from the dead was brand new information to these Jewish people. They had never understood the Messiah would die and then rise. They thought Messiah would just be crowned King.

So Paul has to convince them really fast that the OT promised this very thing. So he quotes 3 verses in rapid fire to show that King Messiah had to die and rise. Quote 1 is from Psalm 2. **Read 32-33**

This is our psalm. Why does he quote this? To show what they all know: that Messiah would be crowned king. Paul knows that begotten language in **Psalm 2** is talking about Messiah being crowned King. When does Paul say that happened according to **Verse 33**? At his resurrection.

"We've got the Messiah that God promised and he was crowned king at his resurrection." Then he connects that with the promise God made to David. **Read 34**

How does this help Paul? Because Messiah had to be from David's lineage. Jesus was from David's line. But if Jesus was killed, he can't be king, right? Wrong! He was raised from the dead. And at his resurrection he received the holy and sure blessings of David. What is that? It's the right to rule as King; this is when Jesus became the Messianic King that God promised to David.

And get this: his Kingdom never ends, because he never dies. When does a King's reign end? When he dies. Jesus died and became King when he rose again. Now he lives forever more, never to die again. There is no end to his rule and reign.

That's why Isaiah says the government rests on his shoulders, he is the Prince of Peace, and of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end. **Isaiah 9:6-7** Messiah's Kingdom will always increase and expand.

Here's the third quote. **Read 35-39**

Why does Paul quote this passage? How does this help Paul's case that Jesus was the Messiah that the religious leaders killed? Because most people thought this was written about king David. It's in **Psalm 16**. But Paul's point is that it can't be written about David because David did see corruption. His body died and decayed and is gone. You know who's body died but didn't see corruption? Jesus. Because he rose 3 days after he was killed.

So putting all 3 of these passages together: the Messiah was coronated at his resurrection, he received the blessings of David to reign at his resurrection, and he was always prophesied to rise from the dead. This means Jesus is the long awaited King.

So when the psalm talks about begetting Jesus it's referring to his resurrection which is when he was coronated as the Messianic King for all eternity.

One more passage that says basically this same thing. **Look at Rom 1.**

This is the beginning of Paul's letter to the church in Rome. And interestingly he writes about many of the same things we just saw. The Scriptures promised Jesus. Jesus descended from David. And then he says there was a point when Jesus is declared to be the Son of God. And not just the Son of God, but the Son of God in **power**. The Son of God who reigns. Two guesses when that happened. **Read 1-5**

So when was Jesus declared to be the Son of God in power? Through his resurrection. He's always been God. He's always reigned over the universe as the second person of the Trinity. But in his resurrection he rules as the God-Man Messiah King.

That's when His Messianic rule began. When he was coronated, or inaugurated or begotten. That's why when Jesus gives the great commission he says "All authority in heaven and on earth **has been given** to me." **Matt 28:18**

I thought he had it already as God. Well, he did. But now he has it as the risen Messiah, the offspring of David.

By the way, look who is coming to obedience. **Read 5-6**

Who will obey Messiah? All the nations. Tuck that away for a minute.

Let's go back to **Psalm 2** and pull this together. So we're in this section where the Father promised the Son that he would rule over the nations. That would happen when he is begotten, inaugurated or coronated as King. That happened at his resurrection. **Read 8**

What the Father has promised to the Son is to give him all the nations, the ends of the earth. Who did Paul says was coming to obedient faith in Romans? The nations.

The moment Jesus rose from the grave he began a campaign to conquer the entire world. All the nations. **Read 9**

Now, that sounds violent. But Jesus isn't conquering the nations through violence. We're not given a command to evangelize with the sword or force people to be Christians. We can't do that. Only God can change someone's heart. So what do we do with this? We understand that it's a threat from God.

Either we will come to Jesus as our Lord willingly in salvation. Or he will crush us in judgement. Those are the two options.

I don't know about you, but Jesus conquered me. I was on the throne of my own life, doing my own thing when he came in and saved me from his own wrath. And through faith in Jesus I am part of his heritage and I am his possession.

Those who don't come to Jesus broken like a potter's vessel.

So we saw the nations rage at God; God laugh at them. God's plan with his Anointed to make him King.

4) Here's the warning to kings honor Jesus. **Read 10-12**

Whatever your view of the end times is, Jesus wins. And not some future win, but he wins in this age. When Jesus comes back it will be as the King who's name is revered around the world from people in all nations.

And God invites everyone, kings and rulers and everyone, to come to Jesus. Serve him with fear - because he's the sovereign God.

And ironically at the same time we are to rejoice! King Jesus is not tyrant king. He's good king, the King of peace and love.

The psalmist says Kiss the Son. What does that mean? When you would kiss the king in ancient times you bowed to the ground and kissed their feet in reverent homage. You humbled yourself before the king.

That's what it is to follow Jesus. To bow down in the dust and acknowledge his kingship, his rule over all the world and in your life. He became king because he rose from the dead and he is worthy of all honor and glory from all men.

Those who refuse to kiss the king - to worship him in joy and gladness should fear his wrath.

And the last line ties it all together. **Read**

God promises blessing to all who worship Jesus. God has set his Davidic Messiah on the throne, ruler of the entire universe. The raging nations are a joke to God. He just laughs. Because his Son is on the throne. His Son reigns in ultimate power.

But his Son is merciful and good. And everyone from kings to peasants can come to him. They can come and bow down and worship Jesus. And if they do they'll be blessed. This is the King who came into the world 2,000 years ago. This is what we celebrate.

If you've never bowed down and worshipped King Jesus, come take refuge in him. Put your faith in Jesus, rejoice in him. Because he is the reigning, glorious King who promises to bless you more than you can imagine.

Pray