

Bible Readings

Psalm 2

- ¹ Why do the nations conspire
and the peoples plot in vain?
- ² The kings of the earth rise up
and the rulers band together
against the LORD and against his anointed, saying,
- ³ "Let us break their chains
and throw off their shackles."
- ⁴ The One enthroned in heaven laughs;
the Lord scoffs at them.
- ⁵ He rebukes them in his anger
and terrifies them in his wrath, saying,
- ⁶ "I have installed my king
on Zion, my holy mountain."
- ⁷ I will proclaim the LORD's decree:
- He said to me, "You are my son;
today I have become your father.
- ⁸ Ask me,
and I will make the nations your inheritance,
the ends of the earth your possession.
- ⁹ You will break them with a rod of iron;
you will dash them to pieces like pottery."
- ¹⁰ Therefore, you kings, be wise;
be warned, you rulers of the earth.
- ¹¹ Serve the LORD with fear
and celebrate his rule with trembling.
- ¹² Kiss his son, or he will be angry
and your way will lead to your destruction,
for his wrath can flare up in a moment.
Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

Acts 4:23-26**The Believers Pray**

²³ On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. ²⁴ When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. "Sovereign Lord," they said, "you made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. ²⁵ You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David:

"Why do the nations rage
and the peoples plot in vain?

²⁶ The kings of the earth rise up
and the rulers band together
against the Lord
and against his anointed one.'

Sermon

Psalm 2 - The Father and His Son (Psalm 2:1-12 and Acts 4:23-26)

Intro

- *"The King is dead, Long Live the King!"*
- You might have heard that saying?
- The saying dates back to **1272** during the **reign** of King Henry III of England.
- **Henry died** whilst his son **Edward (I)** was fighting overseas in the **Crusades**.
- To avoid any chance of civil war erupting over the succession to the throne, the Royal Advisers pronounced that *"The throne shall never be empty; the country shall never be without a monarch"*.
- So, **Edward** was declared king immediately and **ruled in absentia**, until news of his father's death reached him and he **returned to England**.
- There were **no mobile phones** or **emails** back then!

Context

- Back in the time of **King David**, about **1000 BC**, **Nathan** the prophet delivered a similar promise from **God to King David**. In 2 Sam 7:16, Nathan said to David *"Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me, your throne will be established forever"*.

- God was making the declaration just like the Royal Advisers in England - that **David's throne would never be empty!**
- This morning's Bible passage from **Psalm 2**, is known as the **Royal Psalm** or the **Coronation Psalm**. Psalm 2 is believed to have been read on the occasion of a **new Jewish King coming to the throne**.
- To the nations around Israel in King David's time, it's a Psalm **about what is expected of you when you are a subject of the king of Israel - a king appointed by God**.
- To people in the Apostles time and to us today, it's MORE than just a Psalm about what is expected of you when you are a subject of an earthly king, it's about what is expected of us by God - the **ruler of the Heavens and the Earth - what does God expect of us?**
- Speaking of what God expects of us...
- **Christmas has come and gone** - and many in our country - have **celebrated Christmas - without acknowledging - the true reason for their celebration**
- Instead, they've **celebrated - family, Santa, presents, overindulging, overspending and partying**
- Is that what God expects of us?
- **I wonder if Christ - was in your Christmas in 2020?**
- **Christ means - God's anointed - God's Promised Anointed One - the One He promised to save people**
- The **Hebrew for Christ - is Messiah**

- We spent all of **December** counting down to the birth of this promised **Messiah - Jesus**
- The reason Jesus came is the **subject of our Psalm** this morning
- **Psalm 2** [Please turn there now] tells of a **problem in verses 1 to 3**
- A **problem they had** way back in the OT
- And a **problem we have** today

Rebellion (Psalm 2:1-3)

- That **problem** is **explained** here in Psalm 2 - v1-3
- It's the problem of rebellion against God [which is sin]
- **V1** says - **nations conspire to keep God** out of the picture - we **see that** today in countries like: **North Korea, Afghanistan, Somalia, Libya, Pakistan, Eritrea, Sudan, Yemen, Iran and India**. These are the Top 10 countries in the world for persecuting Christians - countries who **want to keep God the Father and His Son Jesus** - out of the people's lives. And will **persecute and even kill people** who follow Jesus
- But they're not the only countries in the world doing this
- There's the subtle keeping God out of the picture - even in Australia - **ignoring God's rules for living** - ignoring what God says about sexuality - ignoring what God says about **marriage** and allowing same sex-marriage - and things like the "**conversion therapy bill**" in **Victoria** [explain] - and things

like the **removal of Scripture** in our schools in some states - and even the push to say "happy holidays" rather than "happy Christmas"

- And look who the rebellion is against - see v2 - it's not just rebellion against God - but **against His anointed one!**
- In our NT reading today, Acts 4:23-26, we see that verses 1 and 2 of Psalm 2 were **quoted by the earliest Christians**, in a **thanksgiving prayer**, following the **release of Peter and John from jail**.
- These **early Christians identified the Anointed One**, as not any old king, but as King Jesus, - **the Son of God** -
- and they identified the rebellion against God and His Anointed One, as **being from earthly King Herod, Pontius Pilate, the Gentiles and the people of Israel**.
- So, **rebellion against the Anointed One**, is **rebellion against God**. As the Apostle John puts it:

[PowerPoint 1]

- "He who does not honour the Son does not honour the Father who sent him" (John 5:23)
- See v3 - The **people** back at the **time of the Psalm** and many **people today** think that God's rules - just **tie people up** - and are **too much of a burden** - and that it's much better **when we keep God out of the picture** and **run things our own way** - there's the idea out there - **we don't need God** - we can do everything quite well on our own - thank you!

- Sinful people **never** want to walk in the limitations which **God** places on them.
- Sinful people **claim** their **supposed freedom** and claim they are **masters of their own destiny**. There are many people today who **want to do whatever they want** - be their own God - **deny God is in control** - in fact deny God even exists?
- The **Year 2020** - if nothing else - has **shown us** - we can't control everything
- It's time to look up to the **Heavens** - **time to acknowledge and worship God** - not the time - to **continue to ignore Him!**

The Father's Response (Psalm 2:4-6)

- How will God, the Father, respond to this **rebellion?**
- See **V4** - **God** is still on His throne
- And **God** finds the **rebellion of the nations** and **rulers** back in the time of the Psalm - and Today - **God** finds this **rebellion laughable**
- It's **laughable** - because - no one can **kick God off His throne**
- No-one can **outsmart God** - or think they **know better than Him**
- He **scoffs** at such a **thought**
- **God** **laughs** at this **rebellion** - because **laughing** is what **human** attempts to **overthrow the rule of God** deserve.
- It's understandable that **humans** should want to **reject God's rule** - that's what SIN is - it's **our will** instead of **God's will**.

- All the same, it's foolish and laughable to think we can get rid of God.
- The Roman **Emperor Diocletian** (AD 245-313), during the persecution of Christians, had a **medal struck** with the **inscription** "*The name of Christianity being extinguished*".
- But Diocletian did not abolish Christianity in fact it **grew** and **triumphed** and became the religion of the Roman Empire!

[PowerPoint 2]

- **Humans' attempts to get rid of God cannot succeed**
- **Look at v5** - such rebellion and disregard for God - **makes Him very angry**
- And so, we come to the **climax of the response from God**. And surprisingly, it is not a direct punishment by God but simply an announcement. See **Verse 6** - God says "*I have installed my King on Zion, my holy hill.*" This implies that all the rebellious nation's kings will be no match for God's king. It's a bit like, **kids playing with weapons** made of **Lego** and someone turns up with a real army tank! **There's no contest!**
- It's also **worth noting** that the word installed in verse 6 is better translated as anointed. And that the **anointed king** and the **holy hill** he rules on, **Zion**, which is another name for Jerusalem, **are inseparable**.
- In the same way, God's anointed king, [PowerPoint 3] **Jesus, and his holy Church are inseparable**.

The Son's Response (Psalm 2:7-9)

- With God's King anointed - the **writer** of the **Psalm** tells us what the King says - in see v7.
- The King says: **I will proclaim the decree of the LORD: He said to me, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father.**
- Here the anointed King is saying that **He is God's Son and God is His Father** -and that there is a special relationship between them
- It's an **everlasting relationship** - because this King and Son - is the **forever King of the forever kingdom** - that God promised through the prophet Nathan in 2 Samuel 7 - which I read at the start
- And verse 7 has even more significance, when we look to the New Testament and see that this **actual verse is quoted** about one particular descendant of King David - namely **JESUS**
- Ps 2 verse 7 is quoted at the **baptism of Jesus** (Matt 3:17, Mark 1:11 and Luke 3:22),
- and quoted again at the **transfiguration of Jesus** (Matt 17:5) and again in reference to the **resurrection of Jesus** from the dead (Acts 13:33).

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- **It is Jesus' resurrection from the dead that publicly declares that he is the true King and true Son of God** that Psalm 2 is talking about.

- It's **Jesus' resurrection** that fulfils the claim of **Nathan the prophet** that **King David's throne** would be **established forever** - because **Jesus** is an **"alive" ruler** - not a dead one!
- The psalm continues with **God speaking to the king**, **verse 8** reads: **Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession.**
- Here, being **God's son** carries **privileges**. A bit like an **American Express Card** - membership has its privileges!
- The **king is promised** that he will have **control and ownership of all nations** to the ends of the earth. If we take this as a promise to King David or his descendants, we have **2 problems**: Firstly, the **kings of Israel and Judah** come to an **end** at the **exile to Babylon in 586 BC**, and Secondly, **no king of Israel or Judah ever had control of all nations** to the ends of the earth.
- So, **this verse CANNOT** have its **fulfilment** in any earthly king. We **must look elsewhere.**
- We find the answer - of course - in Jesus, let me read **Matthew 28:18**: **Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me"**
- **Jesus is claiming He has authority over all nations in the world!**
- However, if we **look around our world**, we see countries like: **North Korea, Russia and China** - and we see tumultuous leaders who are **hardly under the authority of Jesus!**

- So, we have to have a perspective. When Jesus came, he truly ESTABLISHED his kingdom, but the climax to His kingdom remains a FUTURE reality. The book of Revelation contains many references to Psalm 2 and anticipates the ultimate rule and triumph of Jesus as described in Psalm 2.
- Revelation 1:5 describes Jesus as the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.
- But why the delay? Why don't we see Jesus as ruler of the kings of the earth today?
- Well, the delay is to give us time, as grateful subjects of the King of Kings - to make Jesus' name known among all nations, so everyone has a chance to believe in King Jesus
- And verse 9 of Psalm 2 tells how this will happen, it reads: You will rule them with an iron sceptre; you will dash them to pieces like pottery." Jesus is going to rule with an iron rod and smash all the rebellious people to pieces, like a crazy bull in a china shop!
- Hang on though? Jesus being crucified on a cross, hardly seems like a king ruling with an iron rod?
- Remember though, God's ways are not our ways.
- Jesus' iron rod is God's Word - which is the **Gospel of Jesus.**
- The author of Hebrews describes **God's Word** as sharper than a double-edged sword that penetrates and divides soul and spirit, joints and marrow, and judges thoughts and attitudes of the heart (Heb 4:12)

- The apostle Paul says of his ministry of the Gospel, the **weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world - on the contrary they have divine power to demolish strongholds** (2 Cor 10:4)

[PowerPoint 5]

- It is the Gospel message that will destroy sin and rebellion - and change hard stubborn hearts.

Ultimatum (Psalm 2:10-12)

- And so, we reach the **climax of the Psalm**. The **kings** of the earth who are **rebellling** in verses 1-3 are **told to be wise and think about their actions**. Verses 10 and 11 read: **Therefore, you kings, be wise; be warned, you rulers of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear and rejoice with trembling.**
- There is an **opportunity to repent** for those kings and rulers who have rebelled against God.
- If you are here today, and **still in rebellion against God** - still thinking your way is better than God's way - like these rebellious kings - **there is still time to repent** [explain]
- And **verse 12 is where the rubber hits the road**.
- Let me read it: **Kiss the Son, lest he be angry and you be destroyed in your way, for his wrath can flare up in a moment. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.**

[PowerPoint 6]

- Those rebelling are told to Kiss the Son, lest he be angry.
- **Kissing someone in authority is seen as an act of respect, honour and gratitude. Mary Magdalene kissed Jesus' feet and washed them with her tears. She loved much and was forgiven much, and was truly grateful for her forgiveness.**
- In the same way, those who are not right with God, are asked to throw themselves at Jesus and Kiss him in repentance and honour. The alternative is to face His anger and judgement and to be destroyed.

Conclusion

- So, in Psalm 2, we see that the rebellious nations are told to Kiss the Son, otherwise face a final fierce destruction.
- We must make sure we are not among them.
- The rulers of many nations and many people in the world rage against the Son Jesus and against the Father's will. We must not!
- The hands that Jesus holds out for us to kiss are pierced by nails when he was crucified in our place.
- One day he is coming as the great judge of all.
- On that day the wicked will be punished, but today is the day of grace. He invites anyone who hasn't come to him - to come to him.

- The final verse says

[PowerPoint 7]

- "Blessed (or Happy) are all who take refuge in him".
- If you have already kissed and embraced the Son, it is a reminder that the ONLY refuge from the wrath of God is God's mercy unfolded at the cross of Jesus Christ.
- It's a reminder to tell OTHERS that they need to Embrace and Kiss the Son - Jesus Christ - BEFORE it's too late.

Let's pray...