

Text

Why do the nations rage^[a]

and the peoples plot in vain?

*² The 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."*

*⁴ He who sits in the heavens laughs;
the Lord holds them in derision.*

*⁵ Then 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."*

*⁷ I will tell of the decree:
The Lord said to me, "You are my Son;
today I have begotten you.*

*⁸ Ask of me, and I will make the nations your
heritage,
and the ends of the earth your possession.*

*⁹ You shall break^[b] them with a rod of iron
and dash them in pieces like a potter's
vessel."*

*¹⁰ Now therefore, O kings, be wise;
be warned, O rulers of the earth.*

*¹¹ Serve the Lord with fear,
and rejoice with trembling.*

*¹² Kiss 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.*

Main Point

Rebels only have limited time before the reign of Jesus is fully realised. They must repent or they will be destroyed

Introduction (300)

Hook

Please turn in your Bibles to Psalm 2.

We all know the stereotype of the rebellious teenager.

Finally old enough to make decisions and fed up with his or her parents' rules and regulations. They have all these great ideas of what it means to be happy and free and independent. And it often gets played out in indulgence and excesses.

Maybe it's excessive drinking, maybe it's drugs, maybe it getting into debt, maybe it's stealing vehicles or maybe it is simply being overtly arrogant and selfish.

Those looking on see them make these terrible decisions. And can't help but ask:

“Why would you do that? “Why would you be so foolish?”

The consequence will catchup sooner or later, and it is not going to be pretty.

In this psalm see a similar sort of rebellion. But it is not children rebelling against their parents, but creatures rebelling against their creator. Subjects rebelling against their king. But rebellious activity will not go on forever and they will face the consequences.

The Rebels only have limited time before the reign of Jesus is fully realised. They must repent or they will be destroyed.

The main theme and title of our study today is:
The Absolute Reigh of King Jesus is Inevitable.

Outline

This Psalm is written in four clear sections. We are going to uses these section or scenes to for the outline of our study too.

Four definite scenes in this psalm.

- 1.Human Rebellion 1-3
- 2.Divine Reaction 4-6
- 3.Divine Rule 7-9
- 4.Human Responsibility 10-12

Part 1 – Human Rebellion v1-3 (700)

Exposition

The Nations Plot and conspire

Our first scene opens with the people of the earth, the kings and the rulers plotting rebellion against God.

Why do the nations rage^[a]

and the peoples plot in vain?

*² The kings of the earth set themselves,
and the rulers take counsel together,
against the Lord and against his Anointed,
saying,*

The creatures are rebelling against the creator. The people are plotting against the very one who gives life. Those dependent on air and food to survive are raging against the very one who sustains their every breath and heartbeat.

But how do the nations rage against God who is Spirit? What are their plots and counsels pointed against when God is in heaven? God is their ultimate enemy, but since they can't reach him in any way they rage against his Anointed.

The one chosen by God for a specific task. They rage against His anointed and the people who follow that Anointed one. This was first seen expressed by David and the people of Israel, but then fulfilled by Jesus and the Church. The title

Anointed is the same word as Messiah from which we get the Title Christ.

So the Nations rage against the Anointed of Yahweh and His church.

Think they can win

And the author is somewhat stunned and confused by their actions. ***Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain?*** What they are doing is so futile and pointless, that the author looks on bewildered. He is questioning, not only their actions, but their sanity for doing those things.

Because the thing is that these rebels believe they can win. They are plotting, organizing themselves and taking counsel together in their best effort to overthrow God. The nations are putting everything they have together. Rallying the people, inspiring them, and reiterating that they can win. The psalm pictures these rebels assembling as a great army. Impressive weaponry, numerous people, top strategist, foolproof plans. An impressive army as far as humans are concerned.

Want to be free of chords

And notice their driving motivation for rebelling against God. See verse 3

³ *“Let us burst their bonds apart
and cast away their cords from us.”*

They want to remove restraints and regulations that Yahweh and his anointed seem to be imposing on them. They want to be free to do whatever they want however they want.

Of course, these bonds and cords are referring to God's commands and his law. They do not want God to define what is right and wrong. They want to be the law writers and the definers of right and wrong.

They are like a kite, soaring in the air but angered by this string which seems to be restraining it from flying free. They want to cut that string and be free. They gleefully cut the string and take off in their newfound freedom, only to find that the next moment they are crashing to the ground headed for destruction.

Application

Rebellion in our Nation

This picture is all too familiar to us. Both on a national level and on a heart level.

The nations all around are Rebelling against God. The nations around are trying to cast away these "apparent" chords of bondage. They remove God's "Common Graces" and rejoice in their apparent new found freedom. They hate and want nothing to do with all of God's truths and regulations. They want nothing to do with

the church and persecute it overtly or covertly. Even just looking at the state of our own nation.

- Parental authority over children is frowned upon and hindered
- Purity and chastity become a joke
- Marriage is redefined to a perversity
- The most vulnerable are murdered in abortions
- Absolute right and wrong are ridiculed
- Encouraging someone to turn from their sin of homosexuality is now illegal

Rebellion of the heart

The casting off of God's restraint in our nation is seen in all areas of life, but the rebellion we are seeing on a national level is directly linked to rebellion on a heart level.

The condition of people's heart is the key issue, not bad policy. Rebellious people write rebellious policy. Rebellion against God is fundamentally an issue of the individual, not the nation. The people rallying against God in this psalm and the people rallying against God in our nation are simply being drawn by a common purpose: Hatred of God's rule in their life.

And this was true of me and might still be true of you. We think we can do things our way and get away with it. We feel like God's rules and restraints are a hindrance and a pain. We think we would be better off without God altogether.

We think this world will keep going as it has, and we will not face the consequence of our actions. We think we stand a chance against the God of the universe. But let us look at the next scene to see God's response to such people.

Part 2 – Divine Response (700)

Exposition

Rebellion Cause of Ridicule

Our next scene takes us to God's throne in heaven to see the Divine Response. The nations are raging. The people are plotting. The rulers are conspiring together, and what is God's response:

*⁴ He who sits in the heavens laughs;
the Lord holds them in derision.*

Not a nervous laugh, but a laugh of contempt, a scoffing laugh. They think so little of him, but he knows how little they are. All this show of strength is a laughing matter. Like a child defying a SAS soldier by showing him his toy army.

He is not even moved to rise from his throne. He sits in the heavens and laughs.

Derision just means to mock or ridicule. This great assembled army, this organization of nations, this mighty rebellion is a laughing

matter to God the Mighty ruler of the universe. When your enemy laughs at your show of strength, you know you are in trouble, but these nations have no idea at how ridiculous they are.

They do not fear Him because they do not know his wrath

And God does not remain silent. If his laugh would be terrifying, how much more his verbal response. Look at verse 5

*⁵ Then he will speak to them in his wrath,
and terrify them in his fury, saying,*

We are kept guessing as to the timing of this, which almost adds to the fearful anticipation. “**Then** he will speak...” we don’t know when, but it will happen “then”.

Rebellion against God will bring about His fury. It will happen sooner or later. These nations, these people do not fear God and choose their own way because they do not know his wrath. They are deceiving themselves. Deceived about who they are and deceived about who God is. They think they are big and God is small. They think the world revolves around them and their happiness. But, his fury and his wrath will terrify them.

God's plan is sure

And what does God say? Look at verse 6. In the face of insurrection and open rebellion He says:

*⁶ "As for me, I have set my King
on Zion, my holy hill."*

This is emphatic, authoritative and definitive. This little rebellion means nothing to the plans of the God of all creation.

God has set his King. He has established his king. God's king will reign, not these rebellious nations.

David was God's king, appointed by God, but of course David was foreshadowing the Great King, our Lord Jesus who will rule the nations and the hearts of all people.

In fact His king will deal to the rebellion swiftly and decisively, as we will see later in the psalm.

Application

Opposition to the King is futile on National level

But the key thing to not here is that opposition to God and His King is futile. Opposing Him is a laughing matter and will only bring fury and wrath from the most powerful being in the universe.

This is true on a national level. All of the policies, all of the perversities, all of the

blasphemies against God, will be quickly and decisively dealt with by Him.

We can rest and have peace in this. The direction our nation is taking is concerning. The things we see on the news is disheartening. The way our society calls good things evil and evil things good is angering.

But The Lord holds them in derision. All this rebellion will be made right by the King.

Opposition to the King is futile on a Heart level

And opposition to God and His king is also futile on an individual heart level. You may not be assembling with the armies of the world, but what about your own little kingdom? Who is reigning that? By nature, we want to be king in our lives, to overthrow the real king, but to rebel against the real king is futile.

He laughs at our attempts to do things our own way and deny his authority. He restrains his judgement for a while, but his wrath and fury will come if we continue in our rebellion and deny his due rule in our lives.

God's plan is sure. There is nothing the nations can do to change that. There is nothing you can do to change that. Remember who you are and remember who God is. You are small and God is big.

With that proper view in mind, you too will laugh when the nations rage. You can laugh because you can know what is coming. Divine rule is coming, as we see in the next section of the psalm.

Part 3 – Divine Rule (700)

Exposition

Jesus is the “Me”

Divine Rule is coming. God has made a decree and it will come to pass.

In 1 Chronicles 17 we can read of the covenant God makes with David. God promises that a descendant of David would rule forever, that God would be like a father to him, he like a son, and that God’s steadfast love would never depart from Him, and that this promised descendant’s throne would be established forever.

In these verses, 7-9, the rule of this promised descendant is restated. The covenant of Chronicles 17 is the Decree spoken of here. And so the “Me” and the “you” is referring to this promised descendant, who David was looking forward to, which of course we know to be Jesus Christ our King of kings and Lord of Lords.

⁷ I will tell of the decree:

The Lord said to me, “You are my Son;

today I have begotten you.
⁸ Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage,
and the ends of the earth your possession.
⁹ You shall break^[b] them with a rod of iron
and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."

King Ruling

The Promised Descendant, the Anointed of God, The Son of God will reign with total authority. He will succeed to expand the borders of the kingdom and to cover the land with the Glory of Yahweh.

Adam was tasked with this and failed. David and the kings of Israel were tasked with this and failed. The Lord Jesus, the King, is tasked with this and he is victorious.

Yes he first came to preach the way of salvation and make a way for people to be reconciled to God.

But He will return, not as prophet or priest, but as King. Ruling the nations and bringing justice to this world. Ensuring obedience to his laws and punishing any who disobey. All rebellion will be subdued and what seemed like a great army will be but chaff in the wind, clay pots dashed to pieces.

The return of Christ - Rod of Iron

Jesus will rule with a rod of iron and judge the enemies of the Yahweh. This reality is further described in Revelation. This is where this psalm is pointing to, so let us go there together.

Revelation 19:11-16

¹¹ Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war.

¹² His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself.

¹³ He is clothed in a robe dipped in^[b] blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God.

*¹⁴ And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. ¹⁵ From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, **and he will rule^[c] them with a rod of iron.** He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.*

¹⁶ On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.

This is the covenant. This is the Decree coming to pass.

Those who rebel against Anointed One have much to be afraid of.

Application

Those who disregard the rule of YHVH stand the same chance as clay jars

Those who disregard the rule of Yahweh stand the same chance as clay jars smashed by an iron rod. They stand no chance. They will be utterly destroyed.

The end of the rebels has been set and it will come to pass. There is not prolonged war, filled with moments of doubt as to who the victor will be. He will *strike down the nations, **and he will rule^[c] them with a rod of iron.*** The victory will be sure before the battle even begins.

So let us not fret as the nations rage. Let us not worry even as our very nation becomes more and more hostile to the Church of Christ and what it stands for. Let us not be dismayed as our society spirals down into total rebellion against God.

But let us serve our King and obey his commands. Let us continue his rescue mission, pleading with people to trust in his saving work on the cross. We are all rebels against God, deserving to be dashed to pieces like jars of clay, but He died to save us from our due punishment. So let us plea with people to bow the knee to

Jesus willingly today, before it is too late and they are forced to bow the knee as a conquered enemy.

Because that is the ultimate question. On that fateful day, which battle line will you be part of? Will you be with the plotting people, seeking to remove all restraints of God from your life? Or will you be part of the armies of heaven? Will you be among those described in verse 14 of this revelation passage: *¹⁴ And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses.*

Or will you be amongst the nations, about to be dashed like jars of clay?

The author gives a plea to the kings and the nations. A plea to see reason, as we see in the next and final section of the psalm.

Part 4 – Human Responsibility (700)

Exposition

In verses 10 to 12 we see the author warns and pleads with the rebels to take responsibility in their actions and turn from their rebellion.

Be Wise

In verse 10 he says

*¹⁰ Now therefore, O kings, be wise;
be warned, O rulers of the earth.*

The little phrase “be wise” is the key thing the author is pleading the kings and rulers to do. In a few passages such as Joshua 1 and 1 Kings 2 we find that the words used for “being wise” is synonymous to “prospering”. And this prospering is due to knowing and obeying God’s Word.

Those who delight in the law of God and meditate on it Day and Night will prosper, will “be wise”. This is what we learn in the beginning of psalm 1, which as a strong link with Psalm 2.

Look at the source of a blessed man described in Psalm 1:2-3:

*² but his [The blessed man] delight is in the law^[b] of the Lord,
and on his law he meditates day and night.*

*³ He is like a tree
planted by streams of water
that yields its fruit in its season,
and its leaf does not wither.*

*In all that he does, **he prospers**. [He is wise]*

So here the kings and rulers are not being told to go study philosophy and logic, and become wise in human terms.

No, the rebels are being admonished to make themselves wise through the study of what God has commanded and what God has promised in His Word.

Alternative to plotting

In verse 11 and 12 the author gives active alternatives to plotting and rebelling against God. He says

*¹¹ Serve the Lord with fear,
and rejoice with trembling.*

*¹² Kiss the Son,
lest he be angry, and you perish in the way,
for his wrath is quickly kindled.*

You see here the two-fold approach to right relationship to the God of God's and the King of Kings.

There is service but there is also reverence. There is right activity, but the heart is also in the right place. The heart is in awe, in worship, in fear of HIM. They should not be quick to forget the anger and fury of the Lord against those who rebel against him.

You can picture the Son extending his hand in an offer of reconciliation. To accept that offer, to "Kiss the Son" is a sign of allegiance, a sign of submission, a sign of fealty, for the rebels to show to the gracious King. They can accept this gracious gift and live, or reject it and die.

Blessed are those who take refuge in Him

As if fear of destruction was not enough, there is also promise of blessing for siding with the son. Verse 12 finishes with the words:

Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

Blessed, happy, content, full of joy, satisfied, pleased, glad and fulfilled, are all who take refuge in Him.

Permanent happiness, deep-seated joy, genuine contentment, lasting satisfaction are ultimately the things these rebels were trying to achieve. They were trying to achieve them on their own terms. They believed removing God's bonds was the way to go, but doing the exact opposite is the way to go. Taking refuge in Him is the way to ultimate blessing.

Application

So in these verses we see the message of reconciliation to God. A plea to accept the gift of Grace from the Son and turn from rebellion. A message that we too must give to the people of the rebelling nation we live in.

This is a message for individual people who are rebelling. The raging nations are simply made up of rebelling people. And the rebelling people need to hear this plea: Be wise, Be warned, take refuge in him!

We wise

Be wise, that is study the Word. Meditate on the word day and night. Use the Word to shape your life. Obey his commands and find true freedom. Live according to his will and find true pleasure.

Take refuge in Him

And take refuge in Him. By God's grace we have a much better alternative than plotting rebellion against the King of kings. We can be reconciled to him and serve Him. We can submit to him and rejoice. We can take refuge in him and experience true blessing.

Conclusion

As we bring this study to a close, I want us to hold on to one thought. The one thought that this entire psalm is pointing to.

Let us hold on to the fact that The Absolute Reign of King Jesus is Inevitable.

He is resurrected, He has ascended, He is seated at the right hand of the Father, and He will return one day to exercise his absolute reign.

Yes, the nations rage, but it is all in vain.

Yes, the people plot against God, but it is a laughing matter.

Opposition to the King is futile, but opposition to the King will not go unpunished.

Jesus is king both of the nations and of our hearts, and to enthrone another is treason and will be dealt with as such.

He is only delaying his return and his judgement by his grace to see more people willingly submit to Him.

And so He pleads to us, and we plea with others: Be wise, be warned, Serve the Lord with fear and trembling. Reject him and you will face his wrath. Bow the knee to him and he will welcome you. Blessed are all who take refuge in Him.

So we take refuge in Him, knowing the Absolute Reign of King Jesus is Inevitable.

Let us Pray