
The King on Zion's Hill

Psalm 2

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It is quite common to use "as for me" in our speech. When we use it at the beginning of a sentence it only makes sense if it is a follow-up to something said or done by others. It is the alternative we chose. It is our response to something someone else has said or done that is different.

Further, we often use to make a strong contrast. Many Christians say that or do that. As for me, I choose to say this or to do that. What is almost always implied is the word, *instead*. "Many Americans love baseball; as for me, I love soccer." In this case it is not an instead of something wrong. But we can also say, "Many people say that all religions are basically equal; but as for me, the God of the Bible is not only superior, but exclusive. There is no other god."

When we say this, we are recognizing that we are interpreting the world differently. It may be an opinion which matters to us but is not right or wrong. Sometimes, maybe even often, it is an interpretation that rooted the Word, the Bible, in Truth and therefore is an assertion of what is believed. "Many think it is ok in certain circumstances to take what is not yours; as for me, stealing is always wrong." This is an assertion of a moral truth, an ethical norm. It is not merely my opinion, but is grounded in the Bible. "Some religious people believe that it is ok to be involved in same-sex relationships; as for me, the Bible teaches that same sex relationships are a sin against God and against the other person." This is setting some people's understanding over against a definitive, confidence in the moral rightness of what I believe.

We are taking up several Psalms over the next two months in which the author makes this "As for me..." statement. These Psalms will help us to think about how we ought to have a different opinion, a different confidence, a different belief that others around us.

It is our prayer and expectation that the Spirit will use these Psalms as a means to encourage you, to examine you and to exhort you to stand firm in the truths you have learned and believed.

The Rebellion of the Nations (v.1-3)

A question opens the Psalm. This question prepares us for an interpretation of history. Through it the rebellious thoughts and actions of humanity against Yahweh and His king.

¹ Why do the nations rage
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."

Its Noisy Futility (v.1)

The nations rage and the people plot. This is a fact of history since the Fall. The Bible is full of the history of nations in conflict. Israel conquered Canaan by warfare. David had experienced in many times and many ways the nations raging, foaming at the mouth, like a rabid dog, to attack Israel.

But all their raging and plotting never succeeds, in the long run. They rage and plot in vain. We can observe this in modern history. Think of all the wars since the war to end them all, WW1. How many have reached their objectives? How many have reached out to increase their land, their wealth, their standing among nations? Look at Russia now... spilling the blood of her sons and daughters in the fields of the Ukraine.

But is this what this verse is about? When the nations are attacking God's appointed king, David, who are they really attacking? This is a question. Why do they do this?

Its Intentional Revolt (v.2)

This verse interprets what the raging and plotting are all about. It is not so much against each other. All this noise, smoke, bombs, killing... all this raging, this gnashing of teeth... is aimed at God. The revolt is against God and His Messiah, His Anointed. Their aim is not merely horizontal. It is primarily vertical. The conflict among nations and people groups is a way that God is rebelled against.

What are they trying to accomplish?

Its Ultimate Goal (v.3)

Do you see it? The conflict among nations is designed to break the limits, the bonds, the restrictions God has placed on the peoples of the world.

To the immediate audience, this would be the attacks against Israel and Jerusalem. It would be the attempts to defeat and overthrow King David. David is the King, God's anointed one. There are real circumstances in which this Psalm is written. We must understand stand that first.

The world, represented here as nations and peoples, are in rebellion against God. They go to war with each other and against God's commands so as to free themselves from God's rule over them. So they engaged in a proxy war. They went to war with God's appointed king in Jerusalem. In doing so, they had gone to war against God.

What are some ways that this is true today?

Rejection of God's Word...

Rejection of God's moral standards in creation, conscience, culture and in Scripture...

Rejection of God's created order in gender, sex, and marriage...

Refusal to bow to Christ as Redeemer and Ruler...

The war against God is conducted by attacking what God has created and ordained. It is even conducted by the persecution of God's people.

The Response by the King (v.4-9)

What is God's response to all this noisome revolt? These stanzas describe His comeback to this rebellion - He laughs at the insolence and presumption of rebellious humanity. Rebellion is futile because God has already decided the issue.

God, enthroned in heaven, laughs at man's futile plots. His laughter stems from His unshakable position as the Great King.

He holds rebellious nations in derision and speaks to them in wrath. Despite their defiance, God declares His chosen King's reign on Zion's holy hill.

The Mockery by God (v.4)

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

God mocks them because of where He sits. He is in the heavens. What is war against the heavens? What is war against one who is enthroned in sovereign power on high?

God mocks them with how He laughs at them. The warring nations are not even good comedians. God's laughter is in derision, contempt.

God mocks them because of the scorn God has for them. He looks down on them, not just because He is lifted up, but also because they are so tiny.

The Wrath of God (v.5)

From God's attitude, the song turns to God's words.

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

Sometimes God speaks in wrath and anger. This is not limited to the Old Covenant. God still speaks in anger against all that is launched against Him and the order in the world He has made.

God's anger and words of wrath serve, not to convert, but terrify. The wrath of God is revealed from heaven since the creation of the world. It is revealed in what He has made. The voice of God is inescapable. But sinful men will not hear, will not listen. The voice in their conscience and their culture goads to more and deeper acts of disorder against God (Romans 1-2)

What will terrify them?

The Action by God (v.6)

Here is the reversal, the great turn around...

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

The first "As for me..." is spoken *by God*. He is the One who initiates all great reversals. Our own strong affirmations are good and welcomed imitations of God's own assertions.

The first "As for me..." is spoken *about Christ*. Here are all the kings of the earth seeking to dethrone God and to break the bonds of His Word and laws. They hate both the natural law and great

commandments, to love God and love each other. But what God has done is to set HIS OWN KING on Zion's hill. This is the great commitment of God. His true King will rule from Zion, the city of God. HE will exalt this One to heaven's throne.

The first "As for me..." is **an eschatological word**. David is not this King. David rules from Jerusalem's mount. But there will come One who will be established on Zion's hill and rule and reign from there. But that rule will begin in a most unexpected way. That is what the book of Matthew is all about. The King set on Zion's hill begins by coming to the dust of earth.

So, who will be this elevated King?

The Decree from God (v.7-9)

This great stanza gives us the substance of God's decision or decree – the Messiah has been ordained by God and the whole earth has been given to him as his own property or inheritance. Moreover, the Messiah has divine authority to lay the smack down on rebellious humanity.

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 them with a rod of iron
and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."

God has spoken. He has made a decree. This is His Word, His will. This is not just an announcement. This is the sovereign God who does as He will.

What has God decreed? His decree is a word to His Son. He spoke..."He said to me..." Who is this, "me"?

He is the Son. God has spoken to and about the second Person of the Godhead. Does this word point to the Son coming into existence in eternity past? Does it refer to His birth in the incarnation? All of these ideas are put forward, the first by heretics and the other by many commentators.

However, Acts 13:32-39 sheds light on this statement. It is viewed as *prophecy*.

³² And we bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers, ³³ this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus, as also it is written in the second Psalm,

“ ‘You are my Son, today I have begotten you.’

³⁴ And as for the fact that he raised him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, he has spoken in this way,

“ ‘I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David.’

³⁵ Therefore he says also in another psalm,

“ ‘You will not let your Holy One see corruption.’

³⁶ For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep and was laid with his fathers and saw corruption, ³⁷ but he whom God raised up did not see corruption. ³⁸ Let it be known to you therefore, brothers, that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, ³⁹ and by him everyone who believes is freed from everything from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses.

The New Testament tells us what it means. It says that Jesus would return to life, be resurrected. Thus, Jesus was “begotten” or “brought forth” from the grave. In the Psalm, Jesus’ resurrection was so certain that it was spoken of as already having occurred. In the whole of the Scripture, the resurrection is the launch of the new creation. In it and over it Jesus will rule and reign because He has been raised from the dead. His resurrection is the beginning of all things new.

And there is a *promise*. What the resurrection launched will go throughout the world to all the people groups. Here is the gospel with the resurrection and regency of Christ at its center. He will receive as His heritage all the people groups (nations is language, people group, not geographical nation-states). They will come to Him from all over the world and He will rule over them.

But there is also the promise of breaking those who will not submit. He will break them and crush them. This is will take place at the Day of the Lord and the White Throne judgment. This should bring terror and fear to all who fight against this anointed, resurrected One.

The Resolution in the Gospel (v.10-12)

This Psalm has in it a warning and an invitation. This is the gospel to the rebellious.

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.

It is the kings who represent the rebellious. They are the ones who have waged war against God. But this is true of all sinners. Whether actively or passively, all unsaved people are at war with God. So, this argument proclaimed to the kings is also proclaimed to all the world, to all sinners.

Through a Conclusion (v.10)

The gospel is communicated through the means of an argument. There are statements of truth and conclusions drawn from them. Since God has resurrected His son and elevated Him to be the King on Zion's hill, then... therefore...

Be wise and be warned... Understand the consequences of choices. If you continue to choose the way of rebellion, then the King will destroy you. But if you respond to the gospel call, then the King will have saved you. These are the first steps of repentance.

By a Call (v.11-12)

This sweet song serves as a call to faith, obedience, and joyful submission to God's rule. This is an invitation. This is a call. This is a command.

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.

As the King on Zion's hill, all are to come as submissive subjects. We come as servants to declare our fealty to the king. We know little of this in our culture. What does it mean to bow to a king?

It means to serve with reverence... The fear of our serving is not a servile fear, but a respect for the King in all that He is and all that He has done.

It means mingled joy and trembling. This is ever our approach to this King on Zion's hill. We can rejoice that He accepts us. We can rejoice that He leans over from His throne. We can rejoice that it is a throne of grace to those who believe and bow. But we are still coming to the Divine King...

But for the sinners, the rebellious?

Kiss the Son. Not on His mouth. That would be impudence and presumptuous. No, kiss the Son's feet. That is the appropriate call to those who need to submit. These are raging, plotting, rebellious sinners. What they are called to do is to submit to the King

Why? Because the anger and wrath of the great one God is like kindling. It is easily lit to a devouring fire. We are fools if we think that God's love will overlook the wickedness of the wicked. No, God's great love for this King on Zion's hill, His Son and His love for His people are some of the motivations for His wrath against sinners.

This call is first to the enemies of King David in his day and to the people of Israel. But God has taken this song about a great king and has pointed it with startling clarity to the His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. He has placed Christ as the great King on Zion's hill having raised Him from the dead.

Those who have believed and bow, approach Jesus with joyful, respectful, submissive serving. He welcomes you...

Those who are unbelieving, rebellious, yet in your sin, believe in Christ and bow to Him. Kiss the Son's feet lest the anger and wrath of God fall on you now and in the day of judgment.

With a Reward (v.12b)

Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

You who believe and bow are encouraged to seek refuge in God and His Anointed, finding blessings in surrender. Happy, blessed, joyful we are hidden in the refuge God has provided from fearsomeness of His wrath.

There is no greater blessedness than to rest in submitting and serving the King on Zion's hill. Will you? Do you?

Reflect and Respond

Our Psalm offers a compelling depiction of God's power and His control over the nations, reassuring believers that despite apparent chaos in the world, God and His Anointed One reign supreme. The psalm serves as a call to faith, obedience, and joyful submission to God's rule, promising blessings for those who seek refuge in Him.

What evidence of rebellion against God do you see in international events? In national events? In local events? In the lives of your coworkers? How can you help reconcile at least one person to Christ?

What do you learn from this Psalm about God's sovereignty? How does knowing God is sovereign help you face life's challenges?

If we give attention to the structural cues in the psalm, we realize that the goodness and sovereignty of God is of far greater importance of the world. We should not be so worried about the state of the world as the state of our own souls.

This great King, on Zion's hill, calls and commands and, yes, invites you to:

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.

Notes