

CHRIST & POLITICS

PURSUING POWER: THE DIVINE DIMENSION

AUTHENTIC CHRISTIAN COMMENT RELEVANT TO THE 2015 ELECTION

“HONOUR GOD’S SON!”

The Challenge & Comfort of Psalm 2

1 Why do the nations rage, And the people plot a vain thing?
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 break Their bonds in pieces And cast away Their cords from us."
4 He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; The LORD shall hold them in derision.
5 Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, And distress them in His deep displeasure:
6 "Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion."
7 "I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, 'You *are* My Son, Today I have begotten You.
8 Ask of Me, and I will give *You* The nations *for* Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth *for* Your possession.
9 You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel.' "
10 Now therefore, be wise, O kings; Be instructed, you judges 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, When His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed *are* all those who put their trust in Him.

Despite the constant stream of disturbing national and international news, we rise above the chaos when we recall the Sovereignty of God.

This anchor for our faith is powerfully expressed in the second psalm. It is simply God’s call to all people to recognize and submit to the Messiah. It is thus a call to receive Christ, a truth the Lord Jesus also highlights in the New Testament: ‘... all should honour the Son just as they honour the Father. He who does not honour the Son does not honour the Father who sent him’ (*John 5: 23*).

Vs. 1-3 The psalm must first be seen as a statement about King David, God’s anointed king of Israel. **At the same time, its ultimate message is a prophecy about the Messiah, ‘King Jesus’.** While David’s appointment by God was resisted by King Saul, the ‘shepherd king’ was harassed by the Philistines and others during his reign, including his rebellious son Absalom (see *2 Samuel 5: 17-25; 15: 1-12*).

The psalm makes clear that opposition to David meant opposition to God. All who waged war against David were therefore God’s enemies. Their refusal to submit to David’s divinely-appointed authority was wild and

stubborn rejection of all that was holy, just and good. Refusal to bow to our Lord Jesus Christ is therefore to be seen in the same terms. This is confirmed by the early Church's appeal to this psalm when they prayed for boldness in the face of persecution (see *Acts 4: 23-31*). **In our multi-faith age, not to call upon the whole world to believe in Christ and accept the Gospel is to betray Christ and deny the Gospel.** As John Calvin says, 'Let this be held as a settled point, that all who do not submit themselves to the authority of Christ make war against God.' While the Messiah was to be known as 'the Prince of Peace' (*Isaiah 9: 6*), the holiness and purity of His reign always arouses hostility in unholy hearts. Thus we should never be surprised at the opposition of unbelievers when others are humbled and subdued by God's grace.

Vs. 4-6 We are now reminded of God's power over all His enemies. In this extraordinary passage, we see that He has a sense of humour, albeit very different from the trivial humour often pleaded for in today's compromised church. Recalling the saying 'He who laughs last, laughs longest', we learn that God laughs at all who ridicule Him and His truth. **Arrogance against God can only end in disaster.** Of course, while history records vivid examples of God's triumph over His enemies, His people often suffer cruel persecution. At such times, we should never imagine that God is powerless. Truly, Messiah Jesus reigns at all times, even when His servants are called to suffer for His sake. However, God will have the 'last laugh' when Christ returns to judge the world. The King on Zion's hill is reigning (*v. 6*)!

Vs. 7-9 We are now reminded of the divine decree that made David the King of Israel. There is an indirect reference to David's conquest of Jerusalem (see *2 Samuel 5: 1-10*), when he was set on God's 'holy hill of Zion'. Again, despite his many victories, David was an imperfect king over a limited kingdom. The psalm now points forward to Christ's reign over the whole world.

First, Christ's glory and honour are declared. He is the only-begotten of the Father, a truth we are familiar with in the New Testament (see *John 1: 14-18*).

The words 'this day' seem to conflict with the truth that Christ had been the Son of God from all eternity. Did he only become 'the begotten Son' at a point in time? No. The words 'this day' have a parallel with the day of David's 'coronation'. Just as he was declared as God's King of Zion, so—according to the Apostle Paul (see *Acts 13: 33; Romans 1: 4*)—Christ was 'declared' or confirmed as God's Son by His resurrection from the dead. However, **He was always the 'only-begotten', even before His birth in Bethlehem!** All this implies the truth of the Trinity, for which evidence is scattered all through the Bible.

Second, the psalm then depicts God the Father inviting God the Son to claim the entire world as His kingdom (*vs. 8-9*). Of course, this was not to be a violent military campaign. The Messiah's methods would not be those of David. Christ would come as the 'suffering servant' (see *Isaiah 53; Philippians 2: 5-11*). **He was to wear the crown of suffering before taking the crown of glory.** Thereafter, through the preaching of the Gospel by His servants, Christ was to set up His gracious kingdom in minds and hearts

(*Luke 17: 21; Roman 14: 17*). The ‘sword of the Spirit’ rather than the ‘sword of steel’ would be His weapon (see *Ephesians 6: 12*).

And thus it has proved to be for two thousand years! The Church has spread into all nations, and is continuing to grow! We are also reminded here (*v. 9*), that all will submit to Christ’s majesty. **Some will be sweetly subdued by His grace, others will be crushed by His power.** Many examples of this may be cited from history. Empires rise and fall. In the 16th century, while many rejoiced in salvation through Reformation gospel preaching, God destroyed Catholic Spain’s Armada in 1588. Hitler’s Reich is no more. The ‘Anglo-US’ corrupt cultural ‘empire’ is now crumbling. Whether we like it or not, ‘every knee shall bow’ to Christ, and ‘every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is LORD, to the glory of God the Father’ (*Philippians 2: 10-11*). **This awesome teaching is a warning to all who deny the royal Deity of Christ, whether Jews or Muslims, secularists or satanists, evolutionists or hedonists.**

Vs. 10-12 The psalm concludes with a call to submit to God and to embrace Christ. He is ‘King of kings’ and ‘Judge of judges’. Rulers who expect others to respect them have every reason to fear the wrath of the Son of God if they refuse to submit to Him. **Governments (and those who vote for them), Judges and Educators should be ashamed to pursue policies that oppose the divinely-ordained ethical norms of the Bible. Promoting so-called ‘same-sex marriage’ and being slow to prosecute paedophiles—especially ‘high profile’ cases—are instances of direct rebellion against Christ.** Authentic Christians—as opposed to compromising ones—should be vocal in such matters, as Richard Baxter reminds us:

We are hindered by a base, man-pleasing disposition. We are so desirous to keep in credit and favour with men, that it makes us most unreasonably neglect our own duty...It is common to be hindered by our sinful bashfulness. When we should shame men out of their sins, we are ourselves ashamed of our duties. May not these sinners condemn us, when they blush not to swear, be drunk, or neglect the worship of God; and we blush to tell them of it, and persuade them from it?

Even true believers (unlike Judas Iscariot) who ‘kiss the Son’ and rejoice in His love should tremble at His power. Thus worship requires both joy and reverence, and faith should be seen in loyal obedience. As Jesus showed righteous anger on earth (see *Mark 3: 5; John 2: 13-17*), He will deal with His enemies with ruthless severity when He returns (see *2 Thessalonians 1: 7-9*)! Jesus is only ‘meek and mild’ to those who worship, trust, love and obey Him!

If we feel overwhelmed with the ‘terror of the Lord’ (*2 Corinthians 5: 10*), note the psalmist’s encouraging conclusion: ‘Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.’ Thus John Calvin writes: ‘Having discoursed concerning the terrible judgement which hangs over the unbelieving, he now encourages God’s faithful and devout servants to entertain good hope by setting forth the sweetness of His grace.’ **So let us be sure to trust in Christ with a loving and obedient faith.** Then we have nothing to fear in time or eternity.

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