

## Psalm 2 In Light Of The Resurrection

David had enemies all of his life. For David, the words *“why do the nations rage, why do they plot and scheme”* were close to home. David was the king that had been installed on God's holy hill at the time when Psalm 2 was written. When the nations raged against God, David took the proverbial heat. This is the way it is for all of God's representatives. This is true in history. This is true today.

Today, we want to see this Psalm in light of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Why do the nations rage and the people imagine a vain thing? Pilate, Herod, and the religious leaders in Judah, the Lord's own people, were involved in seeing to it that Jesus was put to death. *“He came unto his own, and his own received him not”* (John 1:11). John is primarily speaking of the house of Judah, the rulers in Jerusalem. They plotted and schemed, they gathered together with others to oppose God and His anointed One.

Men in David's inner circle conspired against him. *“For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him: But it was thou, mine acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company”* (Psalm 55:12-14). These men foreshadow those close to Jesus. For Judas, the Lord's own disciple, and the chief rulers of Jerusalem, who were his own people, conspired against Jesus. Herod and Pilate got involved, but the intent to see Jesus betrayed and put to death did not originate with them.

*“Lord, How are they increased that trouble me! Many are they that rise up against me. Many there be which say of my soul, There is no help for him in God”* (Psalm 3:1 & 2). Psalm 3 is a Psalm of David, when he fled from Absalom. David suffered, but the man who conspired against him died the same way Judas did. *“. . .when Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled his ass, and arose, and gat him home to his house, to his city, and put his household in order, and hanged himself, and died, and was buried in the sepulchre of his father”* (2 Sam. 17:23).

*“Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? See thou to that. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple and hanged himself”* (Matthew 27:3-5).

Now that we see these events in the life of David running parallel with what we find in the Gospels, let us consider how the apostles and the early Church interpreted Psalm 2:1. In Acts 4 we find the arrest of Peter and John. They were commanded not to teach or speak in the name of Jesus. When they were released they went back to their own company and lifted up their voice to God. They acknowledged that God, who was the Creator, was also the One who spoke through David.

*“And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them. And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: Who by the mouth of David thy servant hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done”* (Acts 4:23-28).

This is the way men and women who had no New Testament Bibles interpreted Psalm 2:1. This is how the early Christians in Acts interpreted what we call the Old Testament. The Old Testament was their Bible. The Old Testament did not change after Pentecost. They were simply given ears to hear on the day of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit revealed to them what the law and the prophets had been saying all along. There had to be an Ahithophel. There had to be an Absalom. David wept bitterly over the death of Absalom. Although it was before His passion, Jesus wept over Jerusalem. He knew that death

would ride through the city and all of Judea would be shaken to the core. He knew that since they did not know the time of their present visitation, then they would not know the time of their future visitation.

### Clashing With The Holy Spirit

Those who did not have ears to hear were always clashing with the Holy Spirit. This “clashing” with the Holy Spirit is alluded to in Psalm 2:3. *“Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.”* This passage can be applied to the nations that opposed Israel in the Old Testament. We have also taken note that this could be applied to Absalom and all who joined him in his revolt and rebellion against his father, King David. There are other applications that could be made such as the time of Nimrod and the tower of Babel in Genesis 11. For now, however, we shall see how this relates to the glad tidings of the resurrection.

*“Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Spirit: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which showed before the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: Who have received the law by disposition of angels, and have not kept it”* (Acts 7:51-53).

The Greek word for *resist* in verse 51 literally means *clashing*. The Concordant Version reads; **“you are ever clashing with the holy spirit!”** This brings to mind the image of a people throwing off the restraints of the God they are in Covenant with. They are setting themselves in opposition against God and His Anointed One. They would rather do battle with God than submit to Him.

In Acts 7 Stephen explains his belief to the Jewish leaders. After walking his accusers through history, beginning with the call of Abraham, he concludes his defense with some words straight out of the book of Leviticus. This business of confronting the uncircumcised heart did not originate in the New Testament Epistles.

Stephen's comments concerning the *uncircumcised in heart and ears* takes us back to a section in the Old Testament that was very relevant to the people who were about to kill him. No other passage of scripture could be more relevant to the situation at hand than the enumerated *punishments for disobedience* in the law of Moses. *“If they confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass which they trespassed against me, and that also they have walked contrary unto me; And that I have also walked contrary unto them, and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they can accept of the punishment of their iniquity: Then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham. . .”* (Lev. 26:40-42).

When Moses tells the nation of Israel what God requires of them in Deuteronomy 10:12-22, he says in verse 16, *“Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart and be no more stiffnecked.”* This takes us back to Stephen and his accusers. The Jewish leaders had already sealed their fate before they killed Stephen. Let us consider their determination to continually clash with God in John's Gospel.

*“Then saith Pilate unto him [Jesus], Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee? Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin. And then henceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, if thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar. When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew Gabbatha. And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King! But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar. Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led him away”* (John 19:10-16).

What are they saying here? What did the chief priests mean when he said that we have no king but Caesar? The Jewish people resented the Romans, but still they would not receive their Messiah. They rejected the Son of God. They rejected God's Christ. They rejected God. They rejected His Spirit. In essence they said, *“Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.”* In Stephen's case they rejected the body of Christ. In doing so, they rejected Jesus.

### **The Wrath Of The Lamb**

*“He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.”* (Psalm 2:4 & 5)

The word of the Lord is a light unto our path. Our lives are illuminated with truth that liberates our soul as we live in this present dark world, a world that is in bondage to the falsehood of sin. The religious leaders in Jerusalem preferred darkness. For those who prefer darkness, the word of the Lord torments. This is in essence how the law and prophets function in the context of the Covenant. This is why Jesus told the women not to weep for Him as He was led to Calvary like a lamb to the slaughter.

*“And there followed him a great company of people, and of women which also bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and your children. For, behold the days are coming, in which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us”* (Luke 23:28-30).

In the Gospels, Jesus became a curse for us. Paul explains this in His epistles. We benefit greatly in our understanding when we see that Jesus did not come with a new word or a different word. He came to continue the work that had previously been in progress. **“Do not think that I have come to do away with the Law of Moses and the teachings of the prophets. I have not come to do away with them, but to make their teachings come true”** (Matt. 5:17, Good News N.T.).

When the leaders in Jerusalem rejected the One who became a curse for them, they embraced the curses of the law. This is why we find the words in Luke 23:30 reiterated in Revelation in the context of the wrath of the Lamb.

*“And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every freeman, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks in the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and the wrath of the Lamb”* (Rev. 6:14:-16).

Interestingly enough, Jesus mentions that as long as heaven and earth stand, the law will not be done away with (Matt. 5:18). Hebrews makes it very clear that the Covenant that included the ceremonial system instituted for the service of the temple was passing away (Heb. 8:8-13). For the devout Jew that lived in the life and times of Jesus Christ, the temple in Jerusalem was where heaven and earth intersected. This is one of the reasons that it was such an offense to speak of the temple and the ceremonial system as something that would be done away with.

The literal creation groans for deliverance and transformation; therefore, there is something greater that still awaits, as far as the literal heavens and earth is concerned. Nevertheless, the scriptures on more than one occasion have employed apocalyptic language to describe the passing away of a nation. To put it in modern vernacular, when the Lord executed judgment on a nation, even on the Jewish nation, the scriptures would often describe the event as a total melt down.

In other words, *“He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.”* Then shall He speak. What happens when God speaks in the tone that Psalm 2:5 describes? What happens when He speaks from heaven? Orderly arrangements in the cosmos shake, temporal institutions, like the religious order in Jerusalem shake, they even melt. People's lives are shook, they are moved out of their place.

*“See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall we not escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven : Whose voice shook the earth: but now he hath promised saying, yet once more shall I shake not the earth only but also heaven. And this word once more signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore we receiving a kingdom that cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire” (Heb. 12:25-29).*

What did Jesus preach? He preached the kingdom. He told men to turn and see that the Kingdom that could not be moved was at hand. In the process of fulfilling the law and the prophets, the heavens and the earth of the Old Covenant order were rolled up like a scroll. For those who could receive this, their old heavens and earth were put away on a shelf. A new day had dawned. For if any man be in Christ, He is a new creation, old things are passed away (2 Cor. 5:17). For those who could not receive this, their heavens and their earth passed away violently with fire and much vexation and torment.

### **Firstborn From Among The Dead: This Day Have I Begotten Thee**

*“Yet I have set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them like a potters vessel” (Psalm 2:6-10).*

When we read of King David ascending to the throne in the Old Testament, we should be mindful of Jesus Christ ascending to the throne in the New Testament. It may seem odd that the Lord Himself should have to ascend. He was in a high and lofty place before the incarnation. It was for our sakes that He descended. He did not just descend by the taking on flesh and blood. He took the form of a slave. He endured the death of the cross. This is how He began His ascension. For so often, the way up is first down.

David, as we have stated, had enemies all of his life. Jesus went to the cross to deal with enemies, namely the last enemy: Death.

*“O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death” (1 Cor. 15:55 & Rev. 1:18).*

We see the events unfold in David's life, the man who God loved. The language in Psalm 2:6-10 can easily refer to the many victories God gave over the nations that opposed Israel. The great achievements, the mighty conquest of defeated foes had ramifications for the King that would come after David. David was a man of war. He gathered the materials for Solomon, whose name means “peaceable.” I dare say that the reign that Solomon enjoyed was the result of what David accomplished. This is similar to what we find in the life of Jesus, for He defeated principalities and powers on the cross. Now He is seated at the right hand, and His body, the Church, enjoys the riches of His grace.

When we read, *“Thou art my son. This day have I begotten thee”* we are reading about the good news of the resurrection. This is how Paul interpreted Psalm 2. *“And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre . But God raised him from the dead: And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people. And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm; Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee” (Acts 13:29-33).*

Paul learned that love is stronger than death. Death could not hold our Lord. Paul learned to conquer the same way Stephen conquered. Ultimately, this brings to mind the fact that many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it (Song of Sol. 8:6 & 7).

## Kiss The Son

It is quite fitting that Paul is the one who sheds light on the second psalm. We find the entire Psalm summed up in his life. There was a young man that raged in the early days of the Church. This young Saul, along with his fellow Israelites, plotted and schemed against God and His Anointed One. He did this when Jesus was seated at the right hand, the ultimate fulfillment of what it means to be enthroned on God's holy hill of Zion. Zion is the mountain that is compared to the New Covenant in Hebrews.

Saul did not meet the Jesus that walked the shores of Galilee, with His glory hidden in His meek and lowly posture. Saul had a head on collision with the glorious resurrected and immortal Messiah. Saul ran right into a brick wall of glory that shined out from the body of Jesus, the One who left footprints in hell and has a name far above all the heavens. He has authority over all things, even death and the grave. Saul met the same Lord that caused John to fall as a dead man on Patmos.

Saul had a major melt down. He was stung in the heart, with a sting like a scorpion. As he watched Stephen perish, the words, "*Lord, lay not this sin to their charge,*" shot through the mind of Saul. He wildly kicked against the pricks in an outrage, like a man in torment. Somewhere between the sudden blindness and being smitten to the earth, with the rod of the Lord's mouth, and with the breath of his lips, as it is prophesied in Isaiah 11:4, Saul is destroyed.

Is it not wonderful that the children of God can look in the mirror and know, that while they have not arrived, they are not who they used to be, that is, if they have been regenerated? After all, the earth itself, during the flood, in Noah's time, did not disappear. It was cleansed and made new. The same should be true for you and I.

Now that we have been brought this far, how should we conduct ourselves. The rest of Psalm 2 tells us. "*Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.*"

In Acts 9:6 Paul kissed the Son. To kiss the Son is just another way of saying submit to the Lord. "*And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?*" Trembling and astonished. Lord, what will you have me to do? This experience is quite different from casual easy decision making Christianity. Who trembles at messages that are geared toward and centered around what we get. We need to remember that Jesus was not created for the Church, the Church was created for Jesus.

Today, there are a multiplicity of fears and potential threats to our lives. We live in a world that is hostile to God. But the earth is the Lords. God is not asking kings, judges, and world leaders to make a decision to follow him. They will have to give account for their deeds in His time. He also is not telling us to react to these world leaders. He is promising all those that put their trust in Him, all who take refuge in Him, will be blessed.

Paul lived in a time when Roman Emperors like Nero were so vile that they would make the corrupt politicians of our day blush. However, Paul had something to take him through one of the most unstable times in human history. He once raged and conspired. He knew the depths of human depravity. He met the One on the throne. He learned how the Lord got to the throne. He knew what that meant. Jesus Christ is Lord. He took refuge in the Lord. He kissed the Son.

What can one man do in this world of darkness? He can do what Paul did. Paul gave himself to the Lord. That does not mean we become an apostle. It means that in a day when it might be time for another heaven and another earth to pass away, we will not be ashamed. Even now, today, as we reflect upon the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we can say with Paul, "*I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. . .*" (Rom. 1:16).