

The Kingdom of God

Our text is Psalm two.

This Psalm declares the identity and office of the Messiah. God tells us that Messiah is an authority figure. He is a king. God has given him all power and authority. Therefore, we should “rejoice with trembling.”

Background—

We live in an anti-authoritarian world. Inherited authority, biblical authority, civil authority, the police, etc. are generally despised. Dr. Peter Jones notes,

“We really are now in the presence of a massive rejection of authority in general. There is no authority...Seventy-some percent of Americans no longer believe that there is any absolute truth. Even amongst evangelicals, forty percent no longer believe that there is any kind of ultimate truth. We really are in the presence of a massive change in the way people view authority.”

God is pro-authority. In fact, he created Adam to exercise authority.

(Genesis 1:26) "Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

When Adam sinned, God judged Adam and Eve. He withdrew his offer of dominion.

But he didn't withdraw his initial intention that a human being rule his creation. Soon scripture began to predict a Second Adam who would exercise the dominion that the first Adam's sin forfeited.

(Genesis 17:6) "I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you."

(2 Samuel 7:12–13) "I will raise up your Offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever."

King David was a prophet. Psalm two is a prophecy about the coming Messiah, the Son of David, the Second Adam, the One that would restore God's intention of dominion.

The New Testament writers quoted it extensively.

It divides into three parts. 1. Authority Rejected. 2. Authority Responding. 3. Authority Reconciling.

A. AUTHORITY REJECTED

- 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."

Notice the all-inclusive language—nations, peoples, kings, rulers they all hate the Messiah. The language is universal. Our fallen world is in rebellion.

Why? We love sin, and the Second Adam, the Messiah, comes to detach us from our sin.

(John 15:18–19) "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you."

We talk much about "hate crimes," but hatred of the Messiah is the only "hate crime" that ultimately matters. Those that speak most against "hate crimes" are in fact, those most apt to commit the only "hate crime" that will condemn them eternally. Secular America hates Christ and his church.

How does God respond to this animosity?

B. AUTHORITY RESPONDING

Two members of the Trinity address the Rebels. The first is the Father, the second is his Son.

1. The Father Responds

- 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."

The key words that describe God's response are "laughs, derision, wrath & fury." First, "laughing and derision."

(Pr. 1:24-26) "Because I have called and you refused to listen, have stretched out my hand and no one has heeded, because you have ignored all my counsel and would have none of my reproof, I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when terror strikes you."

“Wrath and fury” are also deeply unsettling words. But Paul quotes this verse in the New Testament.

(Romans 2:8) "But for those who...obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury."

Why wrath and fury? Because God has set his King, on Mt. Zion. He has established his authority/dominion, and no human rebellion can thwart, upset, or derail it. God’s authority is immutable and absolute. Rebellion against it is cosmic treason.

Notice: “I have set my King...” The Messiah is a King. Kings are authority figures. We don’t like Kings. Kings have absolute power, and Lord Acton reminds us that “power corrupts but absolute power corrupts absolutely.

Christ is the only Exception!

Why Zion? Zion is the hill on which the temple stood in Jerusalem. It represents the place of God’s presence, the seat of his rule. Zion is in Jerusalem. Therefore, the King will be earthly. He will be human. He will be God’s Son and David’s Son.

2. The Son Responds

- 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.”

The Son repeats his Father's "decree." What is it?

1st The King who will sit on Zion's throne is God's Son.

2nd God's Son is eternally God's Son, but he is begotten in the sense that his incarnation, death, and resurrection will make him known.

As a human being he will restore the authority that Adam lost. He will be a Second Adam.

He will "inherit the nations."

As a rod of iron shatters clay vessels, he will "break them with a rod of iron."

When? At Christ's return, on the Day of Final Judgment.

C. AUTHORITY RECONCILING

- 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.

Because he doesn't want us to experience his wrath and fury, God warns us. He doesn't want to crush us with a rod of Iron. That is why verses 10-12 contain four admonitions—

1st Rulers and Kings, be Wise. (Be prudent).

(Pr. 9:10). "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom"

(2 Cor 7:1) "Holiness is perfected in the fear of God."

(Isa 11:1-3) The Messiah "delighted in the fear of God."

2nd Rulers and Kings, be Warned. We need to heed David's advice. Paul heeded it.

(Colossians 1:28) "28 Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ."

3rd Rulers and Kings rejoice with trembling. Same warning in Phil. 2. After telling us that every knee will bow and every tongue confess, Paul advises us to—

(Philippians 2:12) "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."

4th Rulers and Kings. "Kiss the Son... "*Blessed are those who take refuge in him*." The words, "Take refuge in him" hints that a way of salvation is coming. One thousand years later the Son appeared in human form. He declared Good News. The Kingdom of God has come.

(Matthew 4:17) "17 From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.""

(Matthew 27:11) "11 The governor asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus said, "You have said so.""

But he came to serve those who would submit to him.

(Matthew 27:29) "29 and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on his head and put a reed in his right hand. And kneeling before him, they mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!"

(Matthew 27:37) "37 And over his head they put the charge against him, which read, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews."

Because he went so low, God gave him all authority. He gave him the rod of iron.

(Matthew 28:18) "18 And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me."

History is the outworking of the Son of God slowly and inexorably eliminating all resistance to his dominion/rule/authority.

(1 Corinthians 15:24–26) "Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death."

D. FOUR APPLICATIONS

Application One: Settle the Issue of Authority.

Today he holds out the olive branch of peace. But the day is coming when it will be withdrawn. Then there will only be wrath and fury. He will break all resistance as a rod of iron shatters earthen vessels.

Which will you be? Will you be "shattered" or will you "take refuge in him" through the gospel?

Application Two: Hold God's goodness and severity in tension.

"Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God's kindness to you, provided you continue in his kindness. Otherwise, you too will be cut off" (Romans 11:22).

Application Three: “Take refuge” in his authority. “You can’t take refuge from him. You can only take Refuge in him.”—Derek Kidner.

Application Four: Teach your children to settle the issue of authority. Teach them to “rejoice with trembling.”