

Psalm 2 • Different Voices

Introduction

There is an immediate and dramatic difference between the first two Psalms. Whereas Psalm 1 is much more focused on the individual and God's Word, Psalm 2 is global and focuses on God's prophetic plan. Both Psalms use the word "perish" but Psalm 1:6 applies it to the individual sinner whereas as Psalm 2:12 references rebellious nations. In the first Psalm we are given what it means to engage in the right kind of meditation, in the second we are immediately presented with the wrong kind. In each section of 3 verses in this Psalm can be heard a different voice speaking to us about these things.

¹Why are the nations in an uproar
And the peoples devising a vain thing?
²The kings of the earth take their stand
And the rulers take counsel together
Against the LORD and against His
Anointed, saying,
³"Let us tear their fetters apart
And cast away their cords from us!"

[Read v.1-3]

Q: Whose voice is speaking here?

A: The voice of "the nations" or, literally translated, "the Gentiles".

Q: What is the basic attitude of their voice?

A: The word "uproar" could also be translated, "to assemble tumultuously". In other words, it is the voice of rebellion.

Q: And against what is mankind rebelling?

A: The reference in v.3 to "tear their fetters apart and cast away their cords" means that they are rebelling against God and His rule, that under their earthly leaders they are resisting God and Christ.

Q: So what is it that the nations desire?

A: Freedom from God's rule. It is God who originally provided for the nations who do not want to ascribe to His plan nor ways.

From these the coastlands of the nations were separated into their lands, every one according to his language, according to their families, into their nations.

Genesis 10:5

"When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance, When He separated the sons of man, He set the boundaries of the peoples According to the number of the sons of Israel.

Deuteronomy 32:8

and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation,

Acts 17:26

Q: In what ways have the nations displayed their continued rebellion against God even to this present day?

A: They have rejected God's people (first Israel, then the church), then rejected God's Word, and ultimately rejected God's Messiah.

Q: According to Scripture, what do we know is the eventual and final end of this rebellion?

A: The kings of the earth will ultimately unite together to fight against God.

And I saw coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs; for they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the whole world, to

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gather them together for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty. ("Behold, I am coming like a thief. Blessed is the one who stays awake and keeps his clothes, so that he will not walk about naked and men will not see his shame.") And they gathered them together to the place which in Hebrew is called Har-Magedon.

Revelation 16:13-16

Application: *The basic nature of mankind is rebellion not just against God in general but against His Son the Messiah specifically.*

⁴He who sits in the heavens laughs,
The LORD scoffs at them.
⁵Then He will speak to them in His anger
And terrify them in His fury, saying,
⁶"But as for Me, I have installed My King
Upon Zion, My holy mountain."

[Read v.4-6]

Q: Whose voice is speaking now?

A: God the Father's voice.

Q: Each of these verses expresses a distinct message and attitude from God. What is the first in v.4?

A: First is God's voice of holy derision where he expresses no fear of the nations' vain ranting.

Point: Today God yet speaks and works according to the grace of the cross, but that final day of judgment is coming when, in effect, God has the last laugh when He deals with nations according to His standards of righteousness.

Q: What is God expressing in v.5?

A: Next is God's voice of displeasure.

Point: Again, God today still speaks through His Son in grace (Heb. 1:1-2), but the point of the Great Tribulation is that period of time when God will make His displeasure plainly known to every inhabitant of the earth.

Q: And what is God's final expression in v.6?

A: It is God's voice of declaration. The use of the terms "Zion" and "holy mountain" are specific references that the Messiah is established on the throne of David and fulfilling all that is spoken in Scripture of Him as the Priest-King reigning from Jerusalem. God sees this as already being fulfilled in Christ.

Point: Whereas God first speaks of the present, then speaks of the Tribulation to come, He now provides insight into the Millennial Reign of Christ as the ultimate fulfillment of what He planned from the very beginning.

Application: Like the priest-king Melchizedek (Heb. 6:20-7:17), Christ today intercedes for His own but one day will return in glory to sit on the throne to judge and rule the nations. (Mt. 25:31-46)

⁷"I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD:
He said to Me, 'You are My Son,
Today I have begotten You.
⁸Ask of Me, and I will surely give the
nations as
Your inheritance,
And the very ends of the earth as Your
possession.
⁹You shall break them with a rod of iron,

[Read v.7-9]

Q: Whose voice is speaking now?

A: God the Son's voice.

Q: What is Christ speaking of in these verses?

A: Christ relays what God the Father said to Him in His eternal decree, that in Christ God would fulfill His plan for all mankind.

You shall shatter them like earthenware.”¹⁰

Q: This is not a trick question: When exactly was it that the Son was begotten by the Father?

A: Some would say that this refers to the virgin birth, but Scripture tells us that this was actually something that happened at His resurrection.

“But God raised Him from the dead; and for many days He appeared to those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, the very ones who are now His witnesses to the people. And we preach to you the good news of the promise made to the fathers, that God has fulfilled this promise to our children in that He raised up Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm, ‘You are My Son; today I have begotten You.’

Acts 13:30-33

Q: And what was Christ given in conjunction with His victory over sin and death?

A: Just as it is mentioned in v.8, an inheritance.

having become as much better than the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they. For to which of the angels did He ever say, “You are My Son, Today I have begotten You”? And again, “I will be a Father to Him And He shall be a Son to Me”?

Hebrews 1:4-5

Q: So what is the nature of this inheritance?

A: Jesus is ultimately given all the nations because of the cross.

Q: What might be ironic about this inheritance where Satan is concerned?

A: It is what Satan offered Jesus apart from the cross (Mt. 4) and what Satan will offer to the Antichrist for a brief time in the Last Days. (Rev. 13) But ultimately Christ is given “the very ends of the earth” when He returns in power and glory. (Rev. 19:11-21)

Application: Whereas the nations speak about their desire to break free and follow their own desires, God speaks and reveals He has a plan which will ultimately be fulfilled, followed by Christ speaking as the One who will fulfill that plan for the whole earth on the Father’s behalf.

¹⁰Now therefore, O kings, show discernment;
Take warning, O judges of the earth.
¹¹Worship the LORD with reverence
And rejoice with trembling.
¹²Do homage to the Son, that He not become angry, and you perish in the way,
For His wrath may soon be kindled.
How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!

[Read v.10-12]

Q: Who is speaking now?

A: The Spirit.

Q: To what area of human personality is the Spirit speaking in v.10?

A: The mind, that part of man which employs discernment.

Q: Since discernment is associated with the admonition to “take warning”, what must the Spirit be promoting as the ultimate basis for discernment?

A: Since God’s warning comes from His Word, it’s an admonition to seek and apply the wisdom of God’s Word rather than man’s wisdom in order to properly attain discernment.

Q: To what area of human personality is the Spirit speaking in v.11?

A: The heart, that part of man which can “worship...with reverence”.

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Q: To what area of human personality is the Spirit speaking in v.12?

A: The will, that part of man which pays "homage to the Son".

Observation: What is translated in the NASB as "Do homage" can be literally translated as "Kiss the Son" which is the ancient biblical way of expressing both love and reconciliation.

Application: The path of salvation is the same for individuals as it is for entire nations, involving the exclusive submission to Christ of one's mind, heart, and soul.

Overall Application

Psalm 1 opens up with what in Scripture is often referred to as a beatitude, one which focuses on the benefits of each individual rejecting the ways of the world:

How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked,
Nor stand in the path of sinners,
Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!

Psalm 1:1

Psalm 2 closes with a beatitude which focuses on the benefits of nations who reject the ways of the world:

How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!
Psalm 2:12b

Whether it is individual or corporate salvation spoken of in Scripture, the fact is that it cannot be accomplished except by embracing both God's Word and His Son to the exclusion of everything else. God's plan goes through the Son and only through the Son. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are in agreement:

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.
John 14:6