

## **When God Laughs (Psalm 2:4–6)**

From the beginning of human history, mankind has been in rebellion against a good and benevolent and kind Creator. The sin of Adam in the garden launched his progeny into a rebellion that has lasted to this present day and will last until the Lord Jesus Christ returns. And this course that Adam set us on has been willfully and intentionally pursued by all of his children down to this present day even to our own self-destruction. The idolatrous worship of false religion, the violence, immorality, and wickedness have marked Adam's fallen race since the beginning.

Cain expressed his hatred for the one true God by killing his brother outside the garden. Since Cain could not ascend the steps to Heaven and tear God off His throne and plunge the knife into God's chest and do away with Him, he did the next best thing that he could do, which was to kill a righteous man who was created in the image of God. It was the closest he could get, and that's why he did what he did.

That rebellion of Adam's race is expressed both individually and corporately through all of history. At the time of Noah, the earth was filled with violence, and there were only eight God-fearing people on the planet. God destroyed the world that then was through a deluge of water, drowning everybody except for the eight who were spared on board the ark. After the flood, man populated the earth again and began to fill the earth, and they assembled themselves in contradiction and against the revealed will of God at Babel, and God judged them for that by confusing their languages, and so goes all of human history, mankind in rebellion against God.

And we are part of a cosmic war, a cosmic war with eternal stakes. There are spiritual forces on both sides. There are two kingdoms at war with one another. It is a truth war, and you and I are caught up in the midst of that. It is a war that is old as time itself and as current as today's headlines, and the questions that are asked in every era are asked today, and the questions go as follows: Who determines what is true? Whose authority will be recognized? Who has the right to set the rules? Who is it that is going to rule in this creation? Who will be obeyed, and who will be worshiped? Those are the questions that are asked in our day. They are the questions that are asked in every age, and everything that man wages war over, every conflict, boils down to the answer to those questions. All of our conflict, our suffering, and our sin is really man insisting that we get to set the rules, we get to determine what is true, and we get to do as we please.

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Fallen man's raging hatred for the one true God is expressed in the words of Psalm 2. Look at verse 3: "Let us tear their fetters apart and cast away their cords from us!" Fallen man says, "We will cast off God's restraints. We will break off His fetters. Submitting to divine authority is a yoke, so we will be free, we will do whatever we want, we will express our individuality, we will be true to ourselves, we will live out our own truth, we will not be oppressed by religious dogmas and religious ideas that infringe upon our self-expression and our independence." That is the mantra of our age. That is the mantra of every age because that is the banner and the battle cry of man at war against God and against His Anointed.

And for those who love the truth, it seems as if every age in which we live the war is raging at a fever pitch that is heretofore unknown and unseen, does it not? It seems like it's more intense in our day. It's not. There's nothing new under the sun. It feels new to us because we are new to it. We're not the first ones to step onto the scene. It just feels like, well, things are raging particularly badly and intensely and heated at this moment in history, but it has always been this way. It's expressed differently. Different cultures do different things, but every age, every era, is the same. It's the same war. It's the same parties. It's the same kingdoms in conflict with one another, and it's the same questions being asked.

And we understand the raging rebellion of the wicked is a cause of great angst and vexation to us. And I think that today, looking at this psalm, at least I hope, is going to calm our hearts just a little bit as we consider what God's response to the raging wicked is. We are in Psalm 2, and here we have God's response to the raging wicked. Psalm 2 describes Yahweh's promise to establish His King and His kingdom in spite of the vain opposition of earthly powers. Psalm 2 is about God's promise to establish His King and His kingdom in spite of the opposition of earthly powers.

We looked at verses 1–3 last week. In fact, we saw that the psalm can be very neatly divided into four sections of three verses each. And the first three verses we saw described the rebellion of the wicked as vain folly. That's the first three verses. Let's read them together. "Why are the nations in an uproar and the peoples devising a vain thing? The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against His anointed, saying, 'Let us tear their fetters apart and cast away their cords from us!'" We saw in verse 1 that this rebellion is a raging rebellion, in verse 2, that it is a defiant rebellion, and then in verse 3, that it is a lawless rebellion. Those three things characterize this vain folly, this rebellion of the wicked.

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Now, today we're looking at verses 4–6. And I'll give you the outline for the rest of the psalm just so we can remember sort of what has come before, what is going to come afterwards, so we kind of take it in its context. In verses 4–6, we see that the response of Yahweh is mocking fury. Let's read those verses together. “He who sits in the heavens laughs, the Lord scoffs at them. Then He will speak to them in His anger and terrify them in His fury, saying, ‘But as for Me, I have installed My King upon Zion, My holy mountain.’”

Then in verses 7–9, the reign of the King is sovereign force. Verse 7:

7 I will surely tell of the decree of the Lord: He said to Me, “You are My Son, today I have begotten You.

8 Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, and the very ends of the earth as Your possession.

9 You shall break them with a rod of iron, You shall shatter them like earthenware.” (Ps. 2:7–9 NASB)

And then in verses 10–12, the refuge for the wise is His blessed favor. Verse 10:

10 Now therefore, O kings, show discernment; take warning, O judges of the earth.

11 Worship the Lord with reverence and rejoice with trembling.

12 Do 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! (NASB)

So our passage today is verses 4, 5, and 6. “He who sits in the heavens laughs, the Lord scoffs at them” (v. 4). We're going to see three things in these three verses about God's response to the rebellious wicked. First, in verse 4, He holds rebels in derision. That's verse 4. He holds them in derision. In verse 5, He terrifies rebels with divine wrath. And then in verse 6, He answers rebels with a decree. He holds them in derision, He terrifies them with divine wrath, and then He answers them with a simple decree that is in verse 6.

So let's look at God's response, this mocking fury in verse 4. He holds rebels in derision. “He who sits in the heavens laughs, the Lord scoffs at them.” Now, you may have

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guessed, if you've listened to my preaching for any amount of time whatsoever, I find verse 4 very comforting. Encouraging, delightful—I sometimes recite it to myself to get myself to sleep at night. It is an object of my adoration, my love, my thanksgiving. I appreciate this verse a tremendous amount.

I do not think that the raging of the wicked in verses 1–3 and the calm repose of God in verses 4–6 could be more starkly contrasted than they are in these two sections. In verses 1–3 we see the frothing, tumultuous commotion of the wicked like a sea that is always stirring and tossed up. They are in this state of violent, defiant, raging, lawless rebellion. They have no peace. Their rebellion is in itself this turbulent tossing about. They're not satisfied. The wicked are not happy. They are not content. They are not peaceful. They are not at rest. They are always kicking against the goads, fighting against sound wisdom, casting off restraint, breaking apart fetters, thrashing about, fighting against God, aligning themselves against God and His truth, taking counsel together, taking their stand, bustling and raging about. There is no peace before them. There is no rest in their lives. They are always drenched with blood and with violence, and they are unsettled and never at ease.

God sits and God laughs. Why do the nations rage like a sea tossed about, always at war, taking their stand, counseling together? God sits and God laughs. He holds them in derision. His calm repose in the midst of all of this violent, raging, foolish rebellion of the wicked is just seen in that statement “He who sits in the heavens laughs.” God sits.

Now this is an anthropomorphism, which means it's human language or language that would be used to describe a human being, and it is applied here to God to give us a picture of something, to put an image into our head. It doesn't mean that God literally sits because He doesn't have a literal physical body. So it is an anthropomorphic phrase that the psalmist is using here to describe God's calm repose. He sits in the heavens. He doesn't stand. He doesn't rage. He doesn't rush about. He's not whisking about Heaven trying to figure out what to do with these two presidential candidates that we are stuck with and our nation the way it is. He's not wondering what is going to happen between Putin and China and Iran and Iraq and us and Lebanon and Israel and everybody else on the planet. He's not taking counsel with the hosts of Heaven, asking the saints who are already there, “What shall we do about this?” He's not consulting with the angels to figure out a good way to deal with this or to handle all of the chaos and commotion. He sits in the heavens and He laughs. He is not panicked. He is not worried. He's not upset. He's not wondering what's going to become of it.

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In fact, I want you to notice that there are three distinct contrasts between the first three verses and those next three verses, verses 1–3 and verses 4–6, three contrasts that are worth noting. First, the wicked are on earth and God is in Heaven. I mentioned last week how that is an intentional contrast by the author. The kings of the earth do this, God sits in the heavens and He laughs. That's the first contrast. The second one is that the wicked take their stand, verses 1–3, and God sits. They take their stand, God sits. And the third contrast is that the wicked are in commotion and raging and God is calm and unmoved.

Now I ask you, saint, are you in angst over the world as it is? Does it vex you at all? You see what's happening, and are you disturbed by the plots and the ploys and the plans of the wicked and the rebels and their raging and their threats? Do you lose sleep at night? Do you wonder, what is going to happen to my kids? What is going to happen to my grandkids? What is this nation going to look like? And if you're my age, maybe a little younger or a little older, then you realize that the change that you have seen in our culture, in our nation, and in this world is not slow and gradual, it is becoming exponential. It is changing exponentially. Do you worry about that? Then I say to you, believer, behold your God. He sits in the heavens and He laughs. He holds them in derision. All of the raging heathen and the raging pagans of this entire world are nothing before Him.

Spurgeon says this: “Mark the quiet dignity of the Omnipotent One, and the contempt which he pours upon the princes and their raging people. He has not taken the trouble to rise up and do battle with them—he despises them, he knows how absurd, how irrational, how futile are their attempts against him—he therefore *laughs* at them.” See, He's not on the earth like the other kings. He's not just another monarch going to battle against a worthy adversary over a piece of turf here in this world. He's not that at all. No, our God sits in the heavens and He laughs.

Psalm 11:4: “The Lord is in His holy temple; the Lord's throne is in heaven; His eyes behold, His eyelids test the sons of men.”

Psalm 68:33—let these verses just wash over your mind and your heart. Psalm 68:33: “To Him who rides upon the highest heavens, which are from ancient times; behold, He speaks forth with His voice, a mighty voice.”

Psalm 115:3: “Our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases.”

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Isaiah 40:22: “He who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers, who stretches out the heavens like a curtain and spreads them out like a tent to dwell in.”

Isaiah 66:1: “Thus says the Lord, ‘Heaven is My throne and the earth is My footstool. Where then is a house you could build for Me? And where is a place that I may rest?’”

The kings are of the world, of this earth, this little, tiny terrestrial ball that they fight and bicker over. And let me give you a word picture. Imagine a meatball on the floor and two ants on top of the meatball arguing with each other, and every once in a while they look up and shake their little tiny fists at a six-foot-six, three-hundred-pound offensive lineman standing above it, and they curse him and say, “You will not tell us what to do.” That is the kings of the earth before our God. He sits in the heavens and laughs. And it would take more energy for that offensive lineman to squash that meatball and its ants than it would for God to conquer all of the kings on this little speck of dust in this solar system in this universe. He would expend no energy whatsoever to dissolve it all into nothingness and to judge every last creature on this planet, no energy. Our God sits in the heavens and He laughs. He rules over all.

Now, what kind of laughter is this? You and I laugh for different reasons. Some of you just kind of chuckled or laughed over the little illustration that I gave you. It's kind of a neat, quirky little thing. It's an odd word picture, so that makes you chuckle. We laugh for different reasons. For instance, sometimes we laugh because something is funny, like that word picture, or because something is funny because something kind of catches us unexpectedly. Like, this is what makes stand-up comedy funny to us, that the joke or the punchline is something that we don't expect, we don't see coming. So the funniest part of stand-up comedy or a situation comedy or something like that or a joke is the thing that you don't see coming and it strikes you as weird, out of the blue, and the more that somebody is able to surprise you with an outcome like that or a twist, the funnier it becomes.

Sometimes we laugh as a coping mechanism. We say, “Either we're going to laugh about this or cry about it. I'm not sure what.” So we see what's happening in the world and I might as well poke fun. I mean, I might as well enjoy some good memes. I never thought that the fall of Western civilization would be this much fun, but at least we're memeing about it all the way through to the end.

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Sometimes we laugh at pain. Like, my natural mechanism is to laugh at my pain or the pain of other people. I don't intend to do that. If you stub your toe or bonk your head or something like that, you're likely going to hear me chuckle before I can kind of control myself because it's a defense mechanism. I laugh at other people's pain. Sometimes we laugh to relieve tension or stress. Sometimes we are nervous or anxious and we're responding to those situations with laughter.

But the laughter that is described here in verse 4 is none of those things. It's none of those kinds of laughter. This is a laughter of mockery and scoffing. This is ridicule. Does that make you a little uncomfortable? This is ridicule. The next phrase of verse 4 tells you what's going on: "The Lord scoffs at them." This is scoffing. This is not God uncomfortable with the situation and so nervously laughing in Heaven. He's not laughing because He finds sin humorous or because He thinks that the kings of the earth and the raging nations are doing unexpected things like the punchline of a joke that kind of catches Him unawares. He's not laughing. He doesn't think that the violence and the bloodshed and the wars and the raging and the immorality and wickedness—He doesn't think that it's cute. He doesn't say, "Aw, boys will be boys," and just kind of laughs at them down there fighting with each other. That's not why He's laughing. He's not indicating in verse 4 that God does not take it seriously. How do I know that? Because verse 5 says He is angry and He is going to speak to them in His fury. So God is furious and He is angry. He is full of wrath at this situation. He's taking it serious. In verse 4, this is mockery and derision. This is scoffing that God is heaping upon these kings and these nations.

Now, if that makes you uncomfortable, let me argue a case for you for just a moment. Part of God's triumph over His enemies is holding them up to open disgrace. This is not the only place we're going to read this in Scripture. I'm going to give you a few other references. Part of God's triumph over His enemies is holding them up to open disgrace. He publicly triumphs over them. He publicly shames the wicked. Colossians 2 says that God has done this to the spiritual forces in heavenly places, the evil spirits. Colossians 2:15: "When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him [that is, through Christ and His suffering on the cross]." The triumph over evil spiritual forces was a public triumph. They hung the Son of God on a cross in broad daylight next to the gate to the city of Jerusalem on the highest holy day of the year so that thousands upon thousands of Jews walking in would walk right past this public shameful display of the Son of God being crucified in broad daylight before everyone's eyes. But the joke was on them because

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three days later He rose again and there was a public empty grave to testify to the fact that God raised Him from the dead. And so His triumph over the wicked was a public display of His victory over spiritual forces.

Now the wicked in this world, they mock God publicly. They do it shamelessly. They scoff at Him and His law. This is one of the ways that they take counsel against the Lord and His Anointed. Unjust laws, unjust court decisions, immoral policies, shameful public acts are open mockery of God and His truth. The wicked take their seat in the seat of the scoffer. They sit down in the seat of the scoffer, and from there they publicly mock and jeer everything holy, righteous, and true. Their sin and their defiance is an open, raging, and defiant, lawless rebellion against God, and every act of defiance against the Lord and against His Anointed is an open and public act of scoffing and mockery. They take the name of Christ and they use it as a filthy four-letter filth word to express disgust. They take the name of our God and they drag it through the mud. They hold Him up to mockery, making Him and His cause the gist and the butt of their ribald jokes. This is what they do publicly. They publicly flaunt their immorality, debauchery, and perversions, openly defying God and mocking Him as if He can never have the final say.

And therefore, I would suggest to you that it is just and it is righteous for God to openly, publicly mock those who have mocked Him. And I for one am content with that. It is just for God to do that. He makes a mockery of mockers and He scoffs at the scoffers. That is just and it is right, for they have made Him the object of their jokes, and then He will show that publicly, shamefully, the joke is on them in the end.

Now, just this week we saw at a rally for one of our presidential candidates somebody, during a brief quiet moment, shout out, "Christ is King." Then you heard that statement publicly booed by the people who were there, and then Kamala Harris, the presidential candidate, said, "I think you're at the wrong rally." And then she mocked it, laughed, and everybody cheered that. The kings of the earth take their stand against the Lord and against His Anointed, and they hold Him up to public mockery and shame. They do this all the time and everywhere. And when the presidential candidate on the other side of the aisle, if he does the same thing, he deserves the same reproof and the same rebuke because this is not a partisan issue. But we are seeing, in candidates on both sides of the aisle, righteousness and truth slandered and mocked and God's name dragged through the mud.

God's promise is that those who defy Him publicly and openly, their judgment will be public and open. Those who mock Him, He will mock. Those who scoff at Him, He will

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scoff at. He scoffs at the nations. Isaiah 66:24, the last verse in the book of Isaiah, describes something that is going to be true I think in the new heavens and the new earth. Isaiah 66:24 says, “Then they will go forth and look on the corpses of the men who have transgressed against Me. For their worm will not die and their fire will not be quenched; and they will be an abhorrence to all mankind.” For all of eternity, the wicked who have mocked God will themselves be the objects of mockery.

Obadiah, verse 15—I love the book of Obadiah. I call Obadiah the—I don't know where I got this. I know it's not original to me. Very little of what I do is original to me, except the meatball analogy, the meatball with the ants. I came up with that during Sunday school. Simon, it wasn't that I wasn't listening, but I was back there thinking about it. So the meatball picture is mine with the ants. That's all me. I get credit for that. But this I don't necessarily think I can take credit for. Obadiah has been called the prophet of poetic justice. You know why? Because Obadiah lists the sins of the Edomites and what they had done against the nation of Israel. He says, “You have done this, and you have done this, and you have done this,” and it is a litany of charges against them. And then he says, “Because you have done this, God is going to do these things to you—this, this, and this,” and it is a one-to-one correspondence between these things. In fact, the key verse of Obadiah is verse 15 where we read this: “The day of the Lord draws near on all the nations. [Listen] As you have done, it will be done to you. Your dealings will return on your own head.” That's the prophet of poetic justice. As you have done, it will be done to you. Mock God openly and die in that condition and you will be mocked openly and publicly and that for all of eternity.

This is not the only place where we read of God laughing. Psalm 37:12:

12 The wicked plots against the righteous and gnashes at him with his teeth.

13 The Lord laughs at him, for He sees his day is coming.

14 The wicked have drawn the sword and bent their bow to cast down the afflicted and the needy, to slay those who are upright in conduct.

15 Their sword will enter their own heart, and their bows will be broken. (Ps. 37:12–15 NASB)

Listen to that last verse. The wicked have drawn the sword and bent the bow to slay the righteous, and the psalmist says their sword, which they have drawn to slay others, will enter their own heart, and their bow, which they have drawn back, will itself break

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while it's drawn back and punish them. As you have done, it will be done to you. Your deeds will return upon your own head.

Psalm 59:8: "But You, O Lord, laugh at them; You scoff at all the nations." Take comfort in that, Christian. He holds them in derision.

Second, verse 5, He terrifies rebels with divine wrath. "Then He will speak to them [this is Yahweh] in His anger and terrify them in His fury, saying"—then verse 6 gives us the statement, the decree. The scoffing itself that God does in verse 4 is an expression of the wrath that is mentioned, the fury that is mentioned in verse 5. In other words, the scoffing is an expression of God's judgment. The scoffing is part of their judgments, not all of their judgment. It is part of the judgment that falls upon the wicked.

These two words, *anger* and *fury*, both of them describe a deep and burning indignation. In fact, the word *anger* is used I think a couple hundred times in the Old Testament. It is most often translated "anger," but it is also translated as "nostrils." I bet you didn't see that coming. You thought, "I could see it being 'wrath,' you know, being 'upset' or something like that, but I didn't see 'nostrils' coming." It's translated "nostrils." For instance, in Exodus 15:8, where it's describing the children of Israel leaving Egypt and the parting of the Red Sea and the eventual destruction of Pharaoh with his army—Exodus 15:8: "At the blast of Your nostrils the waters were piled up, the flowing waters stood up like a heap; the deeps were congealed in the heart of the sea." At the blast of your nostrils—you might say at the blast of your anger or your fury or your wrath. Also translated "nostrils," and this is not just twice, but a number of times in the Old Testament—Psalm 18:15: "Then the channels of water appeared, and the foundations of the world were laid bare at Your rebuke, O Lord, at the blast of the breath of Your nostrils" or at the blast of Your anger. So it's not difficult to see how anger would be associated with nostrils. You picture somebody who is furious and just "hmp!" like that, the blasting out of the nostrils, somebody full of rage that vents that rage. That is the picture there.

He will speak to them with the blast of His nostrils, with His anger vented, and terrify them in His fury. The word *fury* there describes a burning or something that has become hot. It describes something that is kindled. This is a description of God's righteous anger with the wicked. Psalm 7:11 says, "God is a righteous judge, and a God who has indignation every day." Ephesians 5:6—just in case you are thinking, "Well, that's the Old Testament God. There's no mention of wrath in the New Testament." Ephesians 5:6: "Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of

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God comes upon the sons of disobedience.” And Romans 1:18 says, “The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness.”

This is a just wrath. Old Testament, New Testament, it is a just wrath. A wrath against sinners who spurn His grace and abuse His mercy, who perpetuate violence and immorality and wickedness, who openly mock and take their stand against God and against His Christ. And when you see it happening in our day, it should fill you with a righteous indignation. If you do not have something in your heart that longs to see righteousness done and justice done and truth vindicated and God's glory redeemed and held high, if you don't have that in you, even to the point of saying, “I desire that God judge the wickedness in our land and in this world and for all of this to come to an end,” if you don't have that in you, you're either an unbeliever or your moral compass is broken. Seeing the sin around us should fill us with righteous indignation. God is holy and just, and He is full of righteous indignation against the wicked.

And the mention of that wrath in verse 5 should spark in us, in you, the kind of penitence that you see in verse 12: “Do homage to the Son, that He not become angry, and you perish in the way, for His wrath may soon be kindled. [Here's the promise in the very last phrase of the psalm] How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!” Jesus Christ will return and He will execute the just wrath of God upon the heads of the impenitent. That is the promise and teaching of Scripture. And His wrath toward the wicked is a just wrath.

Now, does this up to this point sound a little bit lopsided? Like Jim, where's the love? Where's the grace? We haven't got to that yet. OK, that's verses 10–12. We'll get to verses 10–12. There is a gracious invitation in verses 10–12 to find your refuge in the King who will execute justice. And if you will not find your refuge in that King, then you will face that King's justice. Today is the day of salvation. Today is the day of grace. We are all, every last one of us, violators of God's law and deserve the punishment that is due to us. For our lying, our stealing, our lust, our hatred, our envy, our strife, our murderous thoughts, for our idolatry, our greed, our selfishness, our immorality, our past, our present, we deserve the just wrath of God. It is right for a just God to punish sinners. We want a just God to punish sinners. We want a just judge to do what is just and what is right. And we would be offended if an earthly judge didn't give justice in an earthly realm. If he let lawbreakers go free, we would be righteously indignant. And God, because He is a good God, will Himself see that evil is punished and that evildoers

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are punished for their crimes against Him. But verses 7–9 describe the punishment that is to come. This Son will execute that wrath. The wrath mentioned in verse 5, the Son will execute in verse 9. “[He] will break them with a rod of iron, [He] will shatter them like earthenware.”

So what is the conclusion of all of that? Verse 10: Now do homage to the Son. Show reverence. Take warning. Worship the Lord. Rejoice with trembling. Come before the Son and find your refuge in Him or stand before Him and be judged justly for the sins that you have committed against Him and against His law.

God's Word in verse 5 terrifies the wicked. His is a voice of power and authority. His is a voice that is like thunder, like the roaring of the waves. The word translated “terrify” there is a word that speaks of being put out of your senses into a state of complete discombobulation and consternation. It just simply means to come undone. So here you have the picture of the wicked who are taking their stand against God and against His Anointed. They have set themselves up. They have gathered together their counselors. They're raging, they're defiant, and they're lawless. And they think, like ants on a meatball, that they have dominion over all of this territory. And then God just has to speak the word. He doesn't have to rise up. He doesn't have to get anxious. He doesn't have to rage. He just has to say the decree in verse 6, and that is sufficient to terrify the wicked, to put them out of sorts, to discombobulate them, to put them in utter and total consternation. They've taken their stand and now they're undone by this decree. They've gathered together their counsel and now they are scattered and shattered like an earthenware vessel. And all He has to do is say this one thing: “I have installed My King” (v. 6). They've taken their counsel and God undoes it just simply by His decree.

Isaiah 11:4 says, “But with righteousness He will judge the poor, and decide with fairness for the afflicted of the earth; and He [this is the Lord; this is Yahweh, His King] will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked.” Just God speaking—when He speaks, He will terrify the wicked. He doesn't need to stand, He doesn't need to rush about or panic. As the hymn that we opened up our service says in one of the verses, “One little word shall fell [them]” (Luther, “A Mighty Fortress”). They will crumble.

Up to this point at the end of verse 5, God is seemingly silent. The raging is happening. The rebellion is going on. They're taking their stand. God is mocking. God is laughing. He sits in Heaven. He is full of wrath. He is full of fury. And now verse 6, He speaks. So He holds them in derision, He terrifies them with divine wrath, and now look at verse 6. He

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answers these rebels with a simple decree. “As for Me, I have installed My King upon Zion, My holy mountain.”

Zion there is a reference to Jerusalem. It was the ancient name for Jerusalem. In 2 Samuel 5:7, David conquered that. It became the seat of his kingdom. It was eventually the location of Solomon's Temple, which would be built after the time of David. David is the author of Psalm 2. We saw that last week. And so he is describing here in some sense his own installation as king over Israel. God made him king over Israel in Jerusalem. But there is in the psalm a double meaning. There is a near and a far fulfillment for these words because it is not just David that is being described in the psalm as verses 7–9 make clear. There is another King who will exercise dominion over all of the nations. David never did. In verses 7–9, it is the divine Son who is speaking, this one who is the Son of God. It is Yahweh. And He speaks in verses 7–9. So ultimately, Christ fulfills the statement in verse 6. He is the ultimate King who will be established on Zion.

Now listen, Zion is not spiritual symbolism for the church. It is not symbolic of the whole world. It's not a reference to Heaven and Christ's rule in Heaven now. Instead, God's judgment upon the wicked will involve Jesus Christ as King taking His seat on David's throne in Jerusalem and ruling from Zion. That is coming. God's King is coming. The fulfillment of verse 6 is coming.

Now you say, “Why is it that it's spoken in the past tense?” Because in David's day, God's answer to the raging of the nations around Israel was to give Israel a king, a man after His own heart, David. And with David, He made a covenant. And He sat David upon that throne and established him upon Zion and gave him to rule over the nation of Israel. And that caused the nations around that to be terrified in the sense that David executed God's justice upon the surrounding nations and had peace at the end of his reign because he had subdued all of their enemies. But that is not the last enemy to be subdued by a descendant of David. Someday, the greater Son of David, the Lord Jesus Christ, Yahweh in human flesh, will take that throne and He will rule over the nations. That's Psalm 2:8. He will have all of the nations as His inheritance. And you say, “But it's in the past tense.” That's right, for the same reason that your glorification is spoken of in the past tense in Romans 8, because God has decreed this and it cannot but otherwise happen. It must happen, it will happen, and there is nothing that can keep this from happening. Here is God's decree on that day to all of the nations around the world who are in rebellion today against that King and will be when He returns. God's decree is,

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“This is My Son, I have installed Him upon Zion, and He will crush the nations with a rod of iron.” That's verses 7–9.

Here are other passages that describe the same thing, Psalm 110:1–2: “The Lord says to my Lord: ‘Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet’” (v. 1). And this is David describing his Lord saying to his Lord—this is two People, both of whom are Lord, and one says to the other, “Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.” “The Lord will stretch forth Your strong scepter from Zion, saying, ‘Rule in the midst of Your enemies’” (v. 2).

In Daniel 7, Daniel looked forward and saw this King and this kingdom being established. Daniel 7:13–14:

13 I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven one like the Son of Man was coming, and He came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him.

14 And to Him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations and men of every language might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed [yet future]. (NASB)

Isaiah 9:6–7:

6 A child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

7 There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this. (NASB)

He has established it. That King is coming, and He will take that throne, and nothing can prevent it. And in the end, the wicked will get the very thing that they have hated and spent their lives warring against, and that is a King to rule them in righteousness, and they will get the justice that they so very rightly deserve. Their judgment is that the very thing that they work so vehemently against, God decrees is going to happen. They resist it, and God judges them by doing the very thing that they have resisted. They cannot

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and they will not get their way. He breaks them with a rod of iron, and He shatters them, verse 9 says.

Now verses 7–9 describe this King, this installed King, as He speaks and describes His reign and what He has come to do. And then in verses 10–12, the implications of this are described: “Do homage to the Son, that He not become angry, and you perish in the way. . . . How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!” (v. 12)

Let me offer a couple of implications to these truths as we wrap this up. Number one, first to the unbeliever who may be sitting here today: if you are not in Jesus Christ, you are under the wrath of God. His wrath rightly abides upon you, it rests on you, for your every sin is counted and known by Him, and He knows all of them, and they are written down in a book. And there will come a day, if you die in this unbelieving state, there will come a day when you stand before that King and the books will be opened, and He will take His throne, He will sit upon that great white throne, and you will be judged according to the things that are written in that book. And the decree will be guilty. That's the just verdict. The decree will be guilty. And if you do not have somebody who has taken away your sin and washed your account clean and given you that righteousness, then you will perish on that day, just as this psalm promises. You're going to stand before this King, and your crimes against Him will be named, and God's wrath will be poured out upon you. That is justice. That is good. That is righteous.

But that same King offers you today peace. You can sue for peace with that King, and He will grant it, and He has promised that all who come to Him, He will not cast any of them out. He will give you eternal life, and He will raise you up on the last day. But you have to come to this King on His terms, and that's repentance and faith. He has done everything that is necessary to save you and to give you righteousness because He came here, He lived a perfect life, and in His doing and in His dying, He purchased the righteousness that you need to stand before a holy God. And in His death, He suffered the punishment that sinners deserve so that any and all who will come to Him in repentance and faith can be forgiven of their sins and be given the righteousness that only Christ can provide.

The day of mercy is not forever. The day of wrath is coming, and it is coming soon. And there is not one of us seated here who has any promise that we will see the end of this day. If you're not in Christ, His wrath rests over you even now, but He offers you mercy this day. Embrace it through repentance and faith, turn from your sin, and believe upon

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Christ that you may have eternal life and righteousness. “Blessed are all who take refuge in Him!” (Ps. 2:12) Seize that promise today.

Now, to the believers who are here, this passage should comfort you. You're not going to face any of this wrath. There's no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:1). No condemnation. The establishment of this King ensures your eternal glory and your unending joy, and this should comfort you in this life. Are you tossed about the tumult of the raging wicked? Are you at the mercy of fools who rule us? Do we suffer now under the tyranny of wicked madmen and wicked madwomen? The raging of the wicked in rebellion against this truth will not live long. It will end. It will come to a conclusion at some point.

And if you long for righteousness and truth and justice and peace, then take comfort and solace in the promise of this psalm. God has installed His King upon Zion. And that will happen. And there is nothing that can keep that from happening. All of the raging wicked are impotent and worthy of scorn. They will all be undone. God is good. God is wise. He is sovereign, He is never late, and He will not be one day late in installing His King upon that holy hill. So let this comfort you. They shall not prevail. They shall not last. All of their sin, their folly, and their raging wickedness will be short-lived, and God holds them in derision. He is not the least bit disturbed. He has promised to give you the kingdom, He has promised to seize the nations, and He has promised that He is going to share that rule and His reign with us, His people. Our God laughs at their folly, and He smiles at His children. That should be a source for us of great encouragement and calm in a tumultuous time.

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