

PSALM 2:1-12

CHAPTER STUDIES ON THE PSALTER

"The Psalm expresses the idea of vanity, of unrest and strife"

W"Why do the nations rage and conspire?" (Psalm 2:1). To the Psalmist's mind, humanity is like the heaving ocean, like a troubled sea which cannot rest. The stormy deep is frequently employed as a symbol of human passion, and of the troubled, restless masses of humanity. Along with this, the Psalm expresses the idea of vanity, of unrest and strife. **Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?** (2:1). They are like the ocean, ever fretting but never accomplishing anything by its unrest, beating against the shore in futile rage, and rolling back again into its own restless tides, rising and falling, but never any fuller.

Meaningless and void (Ecclesiastes 1:2) indeed. Oh, how little has come out of all the world's ambitions and mighty endeavors! What is Pharaoh today but a withered mummy in a glass case? What is Caesar but a particle of dust that makes up old Rome? What has become of Nebuchadnezzar's grandeur or the very site of his splendid city? Well might the great Frenchman say as he gazed on the splendid pageant of the review of the Grand Army under the Pyramids, "Nothing is lacking here, nothing but permanence." Oh, how the smallest fragment of all that which came from God lives in immortal glory while the mightiest

monument of human greatness passes away in oblivion!

Pharaoh is gone, but Moses remains. Nero is forgotten, but Paul is more illustrious today than when he died under Nero's hand. Nebuchadnezzar is but a dream, but Daniel's prophecies are only today reaching their grandest fulfillment. Pontius Pilate and Tiberias Caesar have disappeared, but Jesus Christ, their contemporary, is rising every day, every century, into still more prominence.

The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. (2:2-3). This is the spirit of lawlessness which in every age has resisted the authority of God and is culminating today, as never before, in a thousand forms of license and lawlessness, and which is to reach its full development in the coming of the Lawless One. We see it in its most extreme forms in the anarchy and socialism of our age and the revolt of men against every form of government and religion.

The age is rapidly drifting into license and lawlessness, and we need not wonder at the bolder forms that the daring infidelity and wickedness assume, in defying the very authority of heaven and claiming that man is able to be a god unto himself. We shall yet

see greater things than these. The world is hastening to its Armageddon, ". . . battle of that great day of God Almighty" (Revelation 16:14).

How different is all on the heaven side!

How calm and tranquil is Jehovah amid the raging of His foes! He sits in the heavens (Psalm 2:4). He is not agitated; He is not oppressed. He is not even doing anything, but calmly waiting till they have spent their force in vain, like the fretting billows against the rockbound coast.

He despises all their petty and futile hostility. **He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision.** (2:4). How foolish it must seem to Him all the efforts of His enemies to defy Him! How ridiculous the attacks of infidelity upon the Bible, and how vain the fiercest assaults of human and hellish hatred against the cause of Christ! How God loves to confound His enemies by little things, and to laugh to scorn their vain attempts to resist Him.

Once in England, it is said, a bold and blatant infidel had amused and overawed a crowd by his defiance of God to strike him dead; and after again and again appealing to heaven to prove if there was anything in Christianity, without any apparent effect, he turned to his audience and ridiculed the God who was powerless to harm him. Some were influenced by his audacity, but God was waiting. On his way home, apparently in good health, he suddenly fell from his horse, and in a few moments expired. A medical examination was held; it was found that the cause of his death was a little insect no larger

than a sand fly, which he had inhaled. This smallest of insects was sent against him to show how contemptible all his strength and opposition were, and how easily God could confound and destroy him by the feeblest of His creatures.

We see the divine King. **Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.** (2:7). Earth's true King is no less than God's eternal Son. That which should be recognized as the height of honor has been the one object of the world's fiercest opposition. The Lord's parable has been fulfilled. **But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance.** (Matthew 21:37-38). But He shall have His inheritance in this little world, the high and eternal honor of having as its King, the Creator of all worlds and the highest of all beings.

*(The Christ in the Bible Commentary,
A. B. Simpson)*

The first Psalm was a contrast between the righteous man and the sinner; the second Psalm is a contrast between the tumultuous disobedience of the ungodly world and the sure exaltation of the righteous Son of God. In the first Psalm, we saw the wicked driven away like chaff; in the second Psalm, we see them broken in pieces like a potter's vessel. In the first Psalm, we beheld the righteous like a tree planted by the rivers of water; and here, we contemplate Christ, the Covenant Head of the righteous, made better than a tree

planted by the rivers of water, for he is made king of all the islands, and all the heathen bow before him and kiss the dust; while He Himself gives a blessing to all those who put their trust in him. The two Psalms are worthy of the very deepest attention; they are, in fact, the preface in the entire Book of Psalms, and were by some of the ancients, joined into one. They are, however, two Psalms; for Paul speaks of this as the second Psalm. (Acts 13:33) The first shows us the character and lot of the righteous; and the next teaches us that the Psalms are Messianic, and speak of Christ the Messiah — the Prince who shall reign from

the river even unto the ends of the earth.
(Charles Haddon Spurgeon)

1. What are the prophecies concerning Christ in this second Psalm?

2. What are the bands (bonds) and cords in Psalm 2:3 that try to tie up His Anointed?

3. Why must kings and judges “serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling” (Psalm 2:11)? Is it possible to rejoice while at the same time be in fear?