

Title: Experiencing the Laughing God

Passage: Psalm 2

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Series: Taste

Read Psalm 2

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This is a song that never happened.

It is a song about God giving Israel's king the power to ruler over the nations of the world.

And it never happened.

There was never a time in the history of Israel when its king governed a global empire.

Let's make sure we understand what the Psalm asks us to sing.

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Psalm 2 begins with a question: "Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain?" (verse 1).

- The song writer is mystified. Why would nations want to rebel against God, when God is so good and so powerful.

Verses 2-3

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But the nations and people's experience God and the rule of his king as constraining. Oppressive. So they conspire together to reject God's King.

Verses 5-6

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In response, God laughs and ridicules their pride. God is completely unconcerned. His power is so great and his position so secure that any conspiracy will never be a serious threat to his rule.

The laughter turns to anger and God says he will restrain the nations by the establishment of "my King on Zion, my holy hill" (2:6).

God will show his power through Israel's king ruling over the nations of the world.

In verses 7-9,

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this King recalls his coronation, remembering what God had said over him

He remembers the relationship God has with King David's house in 2 Sam 7:13-14

"I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father, and he will be my son."

He remembers his right to rule through God's power

"Ask me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession."

This rule over rebellious nations comes with the strength to do as a potter might do with defective pottery, break it with a rod of iron.

Verse 10-12

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So the King warns the rulers of the earth. serve Yahweh by bowing the knee to God's anointed king or your way will lead to his wrath and your destruction.

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And it never happened. Israel always submitted to larger powers.

The reigns of David and Solomon are the closest to this vision of an extended, influential kingdom.

But Jerusalem never held anything remotely close to the power of the great empires of Egypt, Bablyon, Persia, or Greece. For most of its history, the kings in Jerusalem who were more often "kissing the feet" of foreign kings.

If the nations heard Israel sing this song, they would have laughed at the idea that God was going to rule them through Israel's king.

Israel was a small corridor of land nations invaded, besieged, defeated, killed, exiled, taxed, and oppressed. This psalm imagines a complete reverse of the real historical situation Israel experienced.

So, what good is it to sing a song, that seemingly never comes to pass?

At Pastors conference a reference was made 2 Chron 20. Israel facing a vast army from surrounding nations. King Jehoshaphat called the whole nation together to seek help from the Lord. He stood up and lead his people in prayer.

I noticed how he started the prayer

Vs 6 "Lord, the God of our ancestors, are you not the God who is in heaven? You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. Power and might are in your hand, and no one can withstand you."

This King knew he was God's ruler, so he stood up and reminded himself and his people of God's power. This is the powerful idea behind Psalm 2. God, you rule all the kingdoms, and you are our God. No one can withstand you.

Psalm 2 is not about how mighty Israel's king is, it is about how mighty Israel's God is.

This is the reality the song sings about, and it has a firm conviction that if this is true, then God's people should reign not be ridiculed. This song builds a humility before God and a pride before nations. No wonder Israel for all its oppression, has been impossible to crush.

But the song never came to pass.

Or did it? Psalm 2 is the most quoted Psalm in the New Testament.

This Psalm shapes the Jewish hope present in Jesus' time. It explains the expectation people had of Jesus as they lay palm branches when he entered Jerusalem. 'Hosanna to the Son of David'.

Psalm 2 speaks to the temptation of the Devil in Luke 4

The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. 6 And he said to him, "I will give you all their authority and splendour; it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. 7 If you worship me, it will all be yours."

This is why Jesus' language is potent as he begins his teaching "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel" (Mark 1:15)

Psalm 2 explains the Disciples request in Acts 1 "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6)

The New Testament understands Jesus as the fulfilment of the hope of Psalm 2.

In Acts 4 Peter explains Jesus crucifixion as culmination of the resistance of nations against God by quoting Psalm 2

"Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? "Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed."

And God vindicates his authority by raising him from the dead and seating him at his right hand.

Paul preaches in Acts 13

"32 "We tell you the good news: What God promised our ancestors 33 he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus. As it is written in the second Psalm: "You are my son; today I have become your father."

In Colossians it says

"having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross"

Jesus is the King Psalm 2 hopes for.

His power outstrips that of any ruler and nation in any time. It has not come through military might but through emptying suffering, death on a cross and the power of God to raise him to life, and set him as the name above every name, to which every knee will bow.

The Psalm 2 King could use the rod of iron to smash

the rebellious nations. Jesus, this King wins the nations through his sacrifice, his love, his embrace. "Blessed are all who take refuge in him."

But the nations are warned.

Jesus in his parable about the sheep and the goats in Matt 25 says

"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. 32 All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33 He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

...

41 "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels

We live in tumultuous times. Times when nations are rising against nations.

What does Psalm 2 build in us?

What does Psalm 2 fulfilled in Jesus build in us?

Rev tells us one day this King will set everything right:

"Coming out of his mouth is a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron scepter." He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. 16 On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: king of kings and lord of lords."

Our world has a King of Kings, a Lord of Lords. He is unconcerned by the machinations of people. We can hope in him.

Christians can feel like minnows in threatening sea.

But with Jesus as King

Eph 2:6 tells us "God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus,"

The believer can walk with a humility before God and a pride before nations.

We can be gentle, open, respectful, humble, but we should never be timid.

The way Jesus is winning the nations now is through us,

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, ...