

One King to Rule Them All

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[0 : 00] Please have a seat and I'll pray. Lord Jesus, be present among us now by your Spirit that anointed you in your life and in your current reign at God's right hand.

Help us to trust you and believe your word of revelation as true reality, even when the world feels so different. Help us to do this by faith for your glory. Amen.

There is nothing new under the sun and as it was in Old Testament times, it's true today that the world we live in is in hatred to God and is at war against God.

I mean, you have a rough time, I think, even arguing that our world is neutral to God. There is a war going on and it's a war of rebels made in the image of God against their maker and we are caught up in that war every day.

And really, I don't know why people get surprised when Christians talk about their God as if we have to keep it silent, as if God forbid he would not want to rule his own world.

[1 : 14] Of course he would want to and of course we would want to help him in that and tell his world that and that is going to offend many and upset many. Well, it happens today and it happened in the Old Testament especially and it happens in the life of King David who wrote Psalm 2.

We know from elsewhere in the Bible that he penned it and this is how he describes what the world is doing against God and God's people. He says, Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain?

The whole world is conspiring. What are they conspiring to? Well, the kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers take counsel together. They harness all their intellect and forces together with one cause against the Lord and his anointed.

And this is what they say, Let us burst their bonds asunder and cast their cords from us. This ancient world is not that different from our world, is it? That people unite in opposition against Christianity, against Christ, against God.

That people work hard to push God out, to ignore him and see that those who believe in him don't speak about that. People work very hard to undermine Jesus.

[2 : 33] Ever since the Tower of Babel, and maybe even a bit earlier, humanity has tried to unite to not need God, to seek harmony in this world without God, despite God and against God.

People with system after system of different models of human government, man-made movements, always seeking to do without God and work against him.

And if you think about Australian society today, though there's some merit to having a sort of secular democracy, you'd have to say that secularism in Australia has become a kind of a totalitarian secularism that is absolute at the expense of all other voices, especially pushing out the voices for God in the public sphere, in the public realm.

Nobody wants you to mention your God in public. God forbid that a politician would. It's seen as...

You can just see how secularism has really got legs now and it's really become unbridled.

And it's not just about neutrality and individual freedom anymore. It's actually really about squeezing out God from the centre of life. There are many public intellectuals in our society who are not just sort of agnostic but openly anti-theistic, openly hating God.

[4 : 05] And I think that reflects a current that's under the surface of most secularism, that it's anti-God. In Israel's day... I mean, Israel was a small nation, largely independent.

It happened to be on the crossroads of a number of nations that kind of got in the way a little bit. But largely they were a drawing of the nations. But the nations hated them.

They hated them because they hated the fact that Israel claimed their God was the true and living God, that their God was the creator God, their God was the sustainer God.

And they hated that and they tried again and again. It's the whole story of the Old Testament, let's destroy Israel. Let's get to God by getting to his people. I mean, Israel are very much in AFL terms the magpies of the nations.

They're hated by everyone and their supporters are hated by everyone. Speaking as a die-hard Collingwood fan here. Feel the pain. Now, the hatred in Psalm 2 is not just directed at God but against, in verse 2, his anointed.

[5 : 13] That is, God, the king of Israel was called the anointed one. He was anointed by the Holy Spirit to rule on behalf of God in Israel and wherever else.

But he's the anointed one. And the Hebrew there is the word Messiah. We're beginning today a series of psalms that I've called Messianic Psalms. It just really means psalms about the kingdom of God in this world.

And they rail against God and his Messiah, his king, his anointed one by the Holy Spirit. Now, how do you think God feels when people do that, when the world conspires and unites against him?

Do you think he's going to his drawing board and doing battle plans and thinking, oh, what am I going to do? How am I going to keep tabs on this whole world I made? Well, verse 4, this is God's response to universal opposition to him.

He who sits in heaven laughs. That's God's response. He laughs. I mean, he's God. Even in unified, what could the nations ever do to threaten him?

[6 : 20] It's a joke. He laughs. He has them in derision. He mocks them. He belittles them. There's just really no chance.

We may feel that the forces against God and our society are powerful and we feel threatened and shaken by them, but God doesn't. God just laughs. And I think that's why in verse 1, it asks the question, why do the nations conspire?

Why do they plot in vain? Because it's a joke. Why bother? Why open yourself to ridicule from God by trying to fight him? Do you see? That's the why, because it's got no chance.

You cannot stop God. And they may rail against his anointed king, but he's what God says about his king. And this is what terrifies them. He will speak to them in his wrath and terrify them in his fury, saying, I have set my king on Zion, my holy hill.

He's there and I'm sticking with him. Zion, of course, is Jerusalem. And Jerusalem is the capital of Israel in the Old Covenant. And so God is saying, I'm not threatened by you.

[7 : 26] I'm not going to hide my king from you. I'm going to put him on the hill and set him there in the world. See, God can never, ever be threatened. Your God, your saviour, never feels weak like we feel weak, never feels under attack like we feel under attack.

When the great pagan nations of Assyria and Egypt and Babylon sought to really destroy Israel, God was never threatened. They only ever did as much as God allowed them to do.

God was never threatened in the first century when the greatest, I think the greatest empire a man has ever seen are Rome. And, you know, lots of history buffs were really into Rome.

I can understand that because Rome, the empire was incredible. But even their combined forces could not snuff out Christianity in infancy.

Last century, God was never threatened at the fact that there were these massive, atheistic, violent empires of communism that, you know, were throwing Christians in jail.

[8 : 27] God was never threatened by that. And those that God wanted to topple have toppled. And now the gospel thrives in some of those places like the Russian states. God is never threatened.

And God is not threatened by the arrogant, unbridled secularism that pervades Australian culture and pervades public discourse in this country.

God is not threatened by that even though we may feel a bit rattled by it. Now, let's hear more about this king because God seems really committed to this Holy Spirit anointed one, this Messiah, this king.

And King David, who writes this psalm, tells us of this amazing kind of promise that God speaks to the king at coronation. And so when Solomon is at his coronation, these words would have been said to him maybe by a priest or by someone who has psalm too.

David says in verse 7, I will tell of the decree of the Lord. He said to me, now this is at coronation of the Messiah, the coronation of every king of Israel.

[9 : 38] God says to that king, you are my son, today I have begotten you. Isn't that an amazing promise? For God to make to Solomon and Solomon's son and the next son, sinful men.

And yet God declares to them at their coronation as Messiah, as anointed king by the Holy Spirit. God says to them, you are like a son to me. Today you have been declared my son. It doesn't mean that they're declared divine. It's a metaphor. It just means you are to represent me on the earth. You are to represent the Father, God. You are to act in my interests and I will protect you like I will protect a son.

Do you see, it's a grand metaphor, an extravagant metaphor but quite a good one if you're Israel and you're wondering whether God's behind you. God says, yeah, your king is like my son and you can have whatever you like.

Ask of me, I will make the nations your heritage, the ends of the earth your possession and the nations, your enemies, don't worry about it. You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

[10:47] Now if you come to our Wednesday night series, we may get to this really great chapter of 2 Samuel, chapter 7 where God actually sets all this up and God actually promised David that when his son Solomon takes the throne, in 2 Samuel 7 he says, I will establish his kingdom forever and I will be a father to him and he shall be a son to me.

And so this is the idea that throughout every Messiah, Solomon, every king of Israel will be anointed by the Spirit and will be like a son of God. So it's really an amazing promise and a great protection to Israel.

Actually, I'm very interested by this that if you think about what kind of government would God ever establish on earth a God who is a trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, what kind of government would a trinity establish?

Well, here you have a government of a father with a son king anointed by a spirit. That's actually a trinitarian form of government you see, in Israel, in the Old Covenant.

This is exactly the kind of government that God would set up. The only flaw in the model is that you've got the father and you've got the spirit anointing but the guy they're making the son of God each time is pretty sinful and some of them are real ratbags, these kings of Israel.

[12:14] That's the only weak point in the model but of course the model is there to show us that we can't rule ourselves, to show us that we need God, the son, the eternal son to enter the world and take his place on the Davidic throne and so the whole model is actually set up for the incarnation.

The whole structure of kingdom and Messiah in the Old Testament is to get you ready for Christmas, to get you ready for God to come born of Mary, God incarnate, the incarnate deity. And see, if you're a rabid secularist, one of the really paranoid, rabid secularists that wants God not spoken of anywhere in public, then you're going to hate the incarnation because the incarnation is God saying, I'm committed to this world.

I want to be seen and known and worshipped and followed in this world and I will not be silenced. That's what the incarnation says and it's very interesting when you look at Jesus when he arrives, he's a very different kind of king.

You know, Christmas, he's born in a manger, he's born of a carpenter, he's got a humble life, he's not really an average king by any stretch of the imagination. He must have made coffee tables, for example.

[13:33] But, and interestingly, when he started to preach Jesus and preach the kingdom of God, the nations heard and conspired against him just as they did against David.

They plotted and the rulers came together, the Jews and Romans and in council together conspired to kill him. to break the chain of his claim as king.

And God, according to this psalm, did exactly what he said he would in an unusual way. He set his king on Zion. He set his king on his holy hill on a cross to redeem the whole world.

And then, in the resurrection of Jesus, it was basically the coronation of Jesus. The resurrection is Jesus' coronation. God exalted him, God resurrected him, God enthroned him, God crowned him. And in the resurrection, it's really where God says to the son in a kind of messianic way, he says to Jesus, you are my son. You are the king now. You are the Messiah.

[14:43] Today I have begotten you. You are my eternally begotten son. Now I have begotten you as the true Messiah, the true king of this world. Jesus is not just a metaphorical son, but he's the true eternal son.

And so now we have this Trinitarian form of government, straight from Psalm 2 of the father who was appointed the son in his resurrection, and Jesus lived by the Holy Spirit, lived anointed by the Spirit, was raised in the power of the Spirit, father, son, and Spirit to rule forever. The son is king, the father appoints, the Spirit anoints, and the son, he will rule. He will rule forever. And his government stands today above every form of government on earth. And you think of other places in the Bible, there's so much to talk about this, about Jesus' resurrection as coronation of king of this world. Paul the Apostle says in the start of Romans, in a tricky verse, says, Jesus was declared with power to be the son of God by his resurrection from the dead.

And you think, well, wasn't he already the son of God before his resurrection from the dead? But he was declared to be the son of God in the messianic sense, in the coronation sense, in the Psalm 2 sense, by his resurrection from the dead.

[16:01] Or Philippians 2 says, because Jesus died on the cross, God raised him and gave him the name above every name. See, did Jesus have that name before he came to earth?

Well, he was the eternal son of God, but he didn't have the name Savior. He didn't have the name above every name. He didn't have a rule above every governmental rule, but now he does. In his resurrection, he has the name above every name and every knee should bow to him as king, as Messiah.

And of course, there's so many texts. Isaiah 9, the increase of his government and peace, there'll be no end. Psalm 110, we'll look at it in a few weeks. God has placed Jesus at his right hand to rule until all the enemies are a footstool for his feet.

That's very similar to Psalm 2. And so that is now the triune government is in place. Jesus rules our world and nothing can stop him.

So then the psalm ends with this incredible warning, not to us, unless you're in government, there's a warning here to the governments of the world in verses 10 and 11.

[17:08] So I'm speaking now, so if you're in government, I'm speaking to you. I'm speaking to Kevin Rudd, I'm speaking to Barack Obama, Gordon Brown, I'm speaking to the leaders of the single-party communist states, China, North Korea, I'm speaking to the Islamic monarchies, King Abdullah, Saudi Arabia, the Islamic republics, Yemen, Pakistan, Iran.

God's word is addressing them today. Now therefore, O kings, be wise, be warned, O rulers of the earth. God says to those government leaders, serve the Lord with fear.

It's talking about the king now, I think, with trembling, kiss his feet. Now that's actually a bad translation, it actually is kiss the son, kiss the son, that is the son of God, the king, Jesus.

Or he will be angry and you will perish in the way, for his wrath, that is King Jesus' wrath, is quickly kindled, but happy are all who take refuge in him.

So it's not primarily a word to us, so it is. It's a word to our government leaders. God has established his triune government and he wants all the kings and rulers and elected leaders of every nation to bow the knee to Jesus.

[18:24] They are called to serve him lest he get angry and topple their reign. And history is full of that, isn't it? History is full of great empires that have railed against Jesus and are now no more and now just footnotes in history books.

Whatever the form of government, whether it be a communism or a democracy or whatever, it has to submit to Jesus. It has to submit to Jesus. That's what Psalm 2 commands.

Now, let's just explore very briefly how this might play out because the devil's really in the details or the rubber's got to hit the road somewhere. There's a bit of a debate going on. This is just one illustration.

A bit of a debate going on quite regularly. Should our federal parliament pray the Lord's Prayer before each session? You've heard people talk about this? You know, and so the secularist God haters, they rail against it.

Oh, they should not do that. We're a secular government. Christians are a bit embarrassed by praying the Lord's Prayer. Well, I reckon my personal opinion is that it's not a bad acknowledgement that Jesus is Lord, that you pray his prayer, that our government is accountable to him.

[19:41] And I guess there was a time when there were more Christians in Australia and more Christians in the government and they recognised that and so they put that in the rules that you've got to pray the Lord's Prayer.

But I think even if the people don't believe it, it's a good little token act of acknowledgement of accountability to Jesus even for those in government who don't believe it. But of course much more is required by governments if they're going to be honouring Jesus as king. I mean, is it really possible that a government, a democratic government could acknowledge and honour the rule of Jesus?

Well, I'd like to say it is possible. Why wouldn't it be possible? Throughout history there have been countries that have acknowledged Jesus as Lord constitutionally or in practice.

And I don't just mean in terms of a diluted moralism or something, I mean actually explicitly leaders who acknowledge the reign of Jesus. It has happened. Now, it may be that some Christians have done it and stuffed up and we're embarrassed by that, we're embarrassed by crusades and those kind of things, but that ought to stop us seeking the reign of Christ anywhere and everywhere from the lowest person to the highest person in government to nations together honouring Jesus.

[21 : 07] I don't think that should stop us that Christians have mucked it up. You see friends, Psalm 2 and the whole Bible says you cannot contain the reign of Christ to just your individual heart.

You cannot contain the reign of Christ to just heavenly future realities. You know, Jesus must reign. God has established his government. I don't think this means also, by the way, that we need to go and register the true kind of Jesus political party at the Australian Electoral Office and start campaigning for him.

In fact, I think this government means that we are not to be committed to any earthly political party absolutely, but actually the way that Jesus spreads his kingdom is through the preaching of the gospel and through the ingathering of the people of God through the church.

That's the way that God will spread the kingdom, not through us playing politics. There is a place obviously for Christians to be involved in politics, but that's not our main means. Our main means is the gospel, which is the announcement of Jesus' kingship and the good news of his death and resurrection.

[22 : 15] In conclusion, Jesus' mandate from this psalm, his mandate is to be the centre of the world, nothing less. His mandate is to ask for the nations and to have them as his inheritance.

That's why Jesus said, go and make disciples of all nations, not just of all peoples. God's will is that actual nations will worship him as king. Now, Jesus is coming back soon and he will wind up history and all will acknowledge him on that day as king.

And Christians actually do disagree on how much will his reign be enacted amongst the nations before he returns. Some Christians think it's not going to happen much at all until he returns.

But I personally don't want to limit the extent of his reign now. I personally think we ought to be hopeful that Jesus could reign amongst the nations even now before he returns as coming judge. Well, friends, who do you think has power in the world? Who do you think really controls the world? Do you think it's the governments? Do you think it's the media? Do you think it's the corporations, the multinationals?

[23 : 24] They may conspire together very cleverly with all their might against God and against his appointed king, but they've got nothing on Jesus. They've got no power compared to Jesus.

It's a joke. God will laugh at them as they try and take their stand against Jesus. God's word to the world today is to kiss the sun, lest he be angry, for his wrath can flare up in a moment, can kindle in a moment, but the promise is you can't run from the sun, but you can run to the sun.

You can hide in Jesus and have your sins forgiven and be spared and enjoy his rule. You can, happy are those who take refuge in him.

Blessed are those who take refuge in him. So why don't we pray and acknowledge him now as Lord, the true reality of this world. God, our Father, we thank you for the appointment of your own government over this world, of your Holy Spirit, anointed Messiah, King, your very begotten Son. We pray that Father, that we in this room would take refuge in your King. We pray that our nation's leaders would take refuge in your King, the reigning Son.

[24 : 44] We pray, Father, that nations, whole nations would kiss the Son and take refuge in him. We thank you, Father, for this system of triune government above all governments.

We praise you for your reign through your Son, anointed by your Spirit. Amen.