Rebellious Nations & A Sovereign God

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[0:00] Well, in less than 48 hours, voters in this nation will be headed to the polls to vote in the second referendum in our nation's 42 year history.

! And this referendum before us is really a referendum of monumental importance because the outcome can radically change the Bahamian society in negative and irreversible ways.
And then in less than a year's time, we're going to be going to the polls to elect a government to lead us for the next five years in a world that is increasingly unsafe, unstable, and unpredictable.
It's a world where we are watching common sense values and practices being abandoned and rejected, and they're being replaced by so-called progressive values.
Which really, when we consider them, are foolish and confusing and ungodly. And the nations that are pushing this new way forward, this so-called progressive direction, they're telling us things like marriage is whatever they decide it to be and not what God's word declares it to be.
[1:26] They're telling us that gender is whatever people feel it should be and not what God created them to be. And what is worse, these nations are not content with keeping these so-called progressive values to themselves.

They are determined to export them and impose them on other nations, in particular smaller nations like the Bahamas and others in the Caribbean.
And so, as the people of God, how do we respond as we live in this world that is unraveling before our very eyes, in a world that is clearly in rebellion to whatever is righteous, holy, and good?
How do we respond? What do we do? What do we do?
How do we do?
[3:15] How do we advance the nation? So please turn to Psalm 2 if you have not yet done so. I'm reading from the English Standard Version. So if you have another translation, yours will read slightly differently.

The psalmist writes, Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against his anointed, saying, Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us.
He who sits in the heavens laughs. The Lord holds them in derision, and he will speak to them in his wrath and terrify them in his fury, saying, As for me, I have set my king on Zion, my holy hill.
I will tell of the decree. The Lord said to me, You are my son. Today I have begotten you. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage and the ends of the earth your possession.
You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Now, therefore, O kings, be wise.
[4:45] Be warned, O rulers of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way.

For his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him. Let's pray together.
Father, we thank you for your word this morning. We thank you for the comfort that your word brings to us in the midst of a tumultuous world.
In the midst of a world that is unraveling and in rebellion against his creator.
Lord, we ask this morning that you would speak to our hearts. And would you give us perspective from your word today? Lord, these words are relevant to us wherever we live and whatever circumstances we face.
[5:49] But Lord, I pray for those of us who reside in this nation, those of us who will be participating in the referendum on Tuesday, who will be participating in our general elections in less than a year.

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Lord, would you grant us perspective from your word this morning? And I pray, Lord, that you would enable us to see all that is around us through the lens of your word and in particular this passage that is before us.
Father, I ask for grace to be faithful to your word and to care for these who are assembled this morning. And we trust you to do that. In Jesus' name. Amen.
Well, before we unpack Psalm 2, I believe it will be helpful to share some preliminary comments on the psalm.
The Spirit of the Reformation Study Bible shares this very helpful introductory note to Psalm 2. This is what the note says.
[7:05] The theme of kingship permeates psalms. Most of the kingship psalms focus on either divine or human kingship.

Psalm 2 masterfully integrates the two while contrasting the divine king and his human counterpart with the hostile kings of the earth. The psalm does not have a title, but both Peter and John ascribe it to David in Acts 4.25.
I think that's a helpful note because it alerts us to the fact that this psalm integrates both the divine and human kingship. And also it tells us that David wrote this psalm.
And we're able to know that because over in Acts 4.25, Peter and John and the congregation they were with, when they had been imprisoned and they were released, they lifted their voices up and they quoted from this psalm and they said, as David said.
So I think that's helpful to know that this is a psalm written by David and it interweaves between the divine and human king.
[8:22] And then in the English Standard Version Study Bible, there's another helpful note that I want to share with you and the note is this.

At a time when the Gentile kingdoms that are part of the Davidic Empire seek to throw off Israelite rule, this psalm recalls the promises made to the Davidic king at his coronation and notes that the Gentiles will find lasting joy only as subjects of this king.
With this prospect of a worldwide rule for the house of David, the psalm also looks to the future when the Davidic Messiah will indeed accomplish this.
In fact, the scope of such an accomplishment calls for a ruler who is more than a mere man. So this note is helpful because it gives us a bit of background and tells us that there was this time when the Gentile kings were trying to throw off the rule of Israel and the psalmist is recalling this promise made to the Davidic king at his coronation.
And when we read the psalm, we're being alerted to the fact that it speaks to more than just a human king because what it declares that this king will do really requires someone who is more than human.
[9:54] It speaks to a divine king and that divine king ultimately is Jesus Christ. And then finally, I want us to look at a portion of scripture that I've referred to over in Acts chapter 4.

So if you would turn there with me. Acts chapter 4. I want to read verses 23 through 28. Acts 4, 23 through 28.
Peter and John had been beaten and released by the authorities.
And it says in verse 23, when they were released, they went to their friends and reported what the chief priest said. What the chief priest and the elders had said to them.
And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said, Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, who through the mouth of our father David, your servant said by the Holy Spirit, why did the Gentiles rage and the people's plot in vain?
[11:13] The kings of the earth said themselves and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against his anointed. For truly in this city, they were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.

So notice that in interpreting this psalm, that Peter and John and their fellow believers put the rebellion of Herod and Pontius Pilate and the Gentiles and the people of Israel in the context of Psalm 2.
And I believe that that is the way we, as New Testament believers this morning, should be reading and understanding Psalm 2. Ultimately, Psalm 2 is about the rebellion of sinful kings and nations

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against God and against Jesus Christ, the Son, whom he has appointed King and heir of all things. And so this morning, as we consider this psalm, it is in this vein that we will consider it. So what's the message of Psalm 2 to the people of God?
I believe it's this. God's people should be encouraged that there is a sovereign God and his appointed king who rule over this rebellious world.
[12:50] That should be our encouragement if we bear in mind Psalm 2 and similar passages that remind us of the sovereign rule of the Lord over all things.

The passage that we just read in Acts 4 tells us that they did what God had predestined to come to pass. This is our encouragement this morning.
That there is a sovereign God and an appointed king who rule above this rebellious world. This is an encouraging conviction that we need to hold as we live life in this rebellious world.
That there is this sovereign God and king over it all. We need to hold this conviction as we go to vote on Tuesday, knowing that whatever the outcome, this will still be true.
We need to hold this conviction as we go to the polls in general elections in less than a year's time. That whatever the outcome, this will still be true.
[14:01] As believers, we should be godly citizens. We should seek to be salt and light. But our hope does not rest in our own efforts and what we can do and how the efforts that we get involved and how they go, how the vote goes, how the vote does not go.

Our hope rests in the fact that there is a sovereign Lord who has not left us to ourselves and he works out all things according to the counsel of his will. Psalm 2 reminds us of these realities and thereby encourages our hearts in this rebellious world.
For those of you who are taking notes this morning, I've organized my thoughts for this sermon under three headings. The first is the nation's rebellion. The nation's rebellion.
The psalmist identifies the nation's rebellion in verses one through three. Notice that he begins by asking the question, why do the nations rage and the people plot in vain?
He's not asking the question as if he's trying to figure out something, but he's asking the question to basically say, it's pointless. Why are you rebelling?
[15:15] Why are you raging? Why are you plotting? He's implying that it is a waste of time for all that the nations are doing in rebelling and plotting.

The psalmist helps us to see, and I hope you've turned back to Psalm 2 without me asking you to do so, but we should be back in Psalm 2 now. We should notice, though, in verse 2, that the psalmist helps us to understand the rebellion.
The rebellion is not in a vacuum. The rebellion is not something off by itself to the side. No. He tells us the rebellion is against the Lord and against his anointed.
And here we must understand that all sin, no sin, is in a vacuum. All sin is a rebellion against God. And the root of all rebellion is found in Adam's sin.
And what we see is in sinning, Adam sinned in his heart, in his thoughts, in believing that God was holding out on him, that he should not obey God because God was not being good to him.
[16:33] And Adam quietly rebelled against God in his heart. And then he acted that out by doing what God forbid him to do. And now what we see is we see that that has matured, that has grown, and that the nations are in a very open and blatant way rebelling against God.

It is active rebellion against God. And the psalmist sees it as that. He sees these nations and kings in active rebellion against God.
And verse 3 reveals it even further. Verse 3, they say, let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us. And these bonds and cords are the loving, divine restrictions and boundaries that God has revealed in his word for us.
And also in nature, he has revealed these loving restrictions and boundaries for us. But the nations and the rulers want to live free of them. They want no divine boundaries.
They want no divine rules. And they say, let us break them off and let us burst them asunder. And really, that's what we're seeing happening today. Take, for example, the area of human sexuality.
[17:52] The witness of Scripture and nature is that God made them male and female, that God made man and he made man male and female. And connected to making man male and female, God instituted marriage, whereby one man would leave his father and mother and cling to his one and only wife.

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And they will become one flesh, speaking about their sexual intimacy. But rebellion against God that started with Adam's rebellion changed all of that.
It changed. And what we see is that those boundaries are violated and they're violated through adultery. They're violated through fornication. They're violated through homosexuality and every form of sexual expression outside of the boundaries of marriage between one man and one woman. They're all expressions of rebellion against God. They're all expressions of saying let us burst their bonds apart and let us cast their cords away from us.
What God has given to us is not good enough. We want something else. We want something more. We want something better. It's too restrictive. But our rebellion doesn't stop there.
[19:18] It's not enough for us to violate God's word concerning human sexuality but we go further and we write our own laws in opposition to God's law in trying to give legitimacy to our rebellion.

There was a time when we just did these things but now there is an effort to say you know what we're also going to sanction this as being good and right and legal and generally accepted.
So we started out where no longer people were expected to have commitment in a formal marriage but they just lived together and states began to say we recognize your common law marriage even though there was no covenantal commitment between the parties.
And now nations are increasingly rebelling against God in the area of marriage and they're redefining marriage as a commitment between two persons. I looked up a definition the other day as I was looking up some definitions and looked at the definition of marriage and there's a dictionary in the UK and they said that this is the first dictionary to state the definition of marriage no longer as between a man and a woman or some would give both definitions this one simply has that it is a commitment service of some sort between two persons.
Now nations are just rebelling against God in this area and it won't stop there. Do you know that back in 2005 in the Netherlands they recorded the first three person civil union and really it's a marriage it just has a different name it is a marriage and you see pictures of it no different two women dressed in bridal attire and the one man and they're all in a union together and they all love each other it's just a matter of time before those who are given the boundaries now of two persons will break that off and say that's not enough and we want to expand that and the trouble is where do you put the stake down the trouble is when you remove an ancient boundary mark where do you put it down to whose satisfaction it becomes a moving goal post all of this is a part of the nation's rebellion against God we must not see these things as purely cultural trends we must not see these things as the fabrications of people's imaginations no these are outward overt rebellion against
[22:06] God recently we were made acutely aware of rebellion even in our own context in the area of gender identity and here in this area of sexual identity rebellious men and women are saying that they can ignore the sex that they were born with and they can be whatever sex they identify with and some are going as far as taking hormone treatments others are undergoing surgeries and the psalmist looks at it all verses 1 2 3 of psalm 2 and he says the nations are raging and the kings and rulers are rebelling and they are rebelling against God and I think a lot of times when we consider these issues often times we see them as an affront to us and our values more than they are an affront to God they are first and foremost an affront to God a rebellion against him so how do we react to this well I can tell you that many of us are concerned

I'm sure many of you like me you are concerned and rightly so we should be concerned as a small country that is hugely dependent on large nations in particular the United States again whose rulers are not content with keeping their values to themselves but they want to export that so we have rulers like President Barack Obama and his Vice President Joe Biden who are forcing other nations compelling them to rebel against God in the area of human sexuality and threatening them in many ways and if you've been paying any attention to the news you would have been hearing about this statement that Joe Biden made about how the U.S.
will now begin to tie aid to these kinds of outcomes that they desire in various nations and naturally we wonder about our children who would go to the U.S.
and Canada how they will fare and how they will manage through all the issues of same-sex marriage and gender-neutral bathrooms and political correctness that goes with it all we are concerned but how does God respond how does the Lord respond to the rebellion on earth starting in verse 4 the psalmist tells us and this brings me to my second point the Lord's reaction how does the Lord react the psalmist tells us in verse 4 he who sits in the heavens laughs and holds them in derision that's the Lord's reaction doesn't lose sleep over it he laughs and holds them in derision as

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severe and as overwhelming as the rebellion of the nations is they are no match for the sovereign Lord who sits in the heavens as Lord and ruler over all and so he confidently laughs at their feeble efforts to rebel against him and to free themselves from him and he is going to hold them accountable and we should not recognize his laughter as humor because it's not a funny thing his laughter is a laughter of disdain at the feeble efforts of rebellious men and women rebelling against God in God's world the psalmist tells us that not only does the Lord laugh at them in verse 5 he tells us that the Lord will speak to them in wrath and terrify them in his fury and then we see in verse 6 what he actually says to them he says first of all as for me I have set my king on my holy hill and I think when we see this and understand this here is a picture of a rebellious world of kings and rulers and nations banding together and rebelling against God and in the midst of that
[27:01] God says here is my model here is my king he is talking about David in the very first instance he says he is my king whom I have established and set in mount Zion in Jerusalem a real physical place and so the nation of Israel was to be this picture of this people who would be under God's delegated king and who would serve the Lord in the midst of rebellious nations in the midst of nations who are doing their own thing and one of the things that we should see is that we identify with a nation in terms of politics and you know what status we have in terms of nationality but ultimately those who belong to Christ are of another nation and see we can live in a particular nation in that nationalistic sense but in in a higher sense in the spiritual sense we are part of the nation of God over whom he sets his king as a model to all those who will not live life in God's way but as I said the first instance is God is modeling for these rebellious kings and in

David's time in the nation of Israel's time this king over this nation this people who were to be serving him but ultimately this psalm finds his fulfillment in Christ ultimately this psalm speaks about another king a divine king and another mount a spiritual mountain and the writer to the Hebrews helps us to see this in Hebrews 12 you don't need to turn there it should be projected for you here's what the writer to the Hebrews writes in Hebrews 12 verses 18 through 24 he says for you have not come he's speaking to New Testament believers he's saying you have not come to what may be touched a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words were whose words made the harris beg that no further messages be spoken to them he's talking about the
Lord's encounter or Israel's encounter with the Lord at Mount Sinai read about that in Exodus 20 he says you've not come to that kind of mountain he goes on for they could not endure the order that was given if even a beast touches the mountain it shall be stoned indeed so terrifying was the sight that Moses said I tremble with fear that's the old that's Mount Sinai but he says this in verse 22 but you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God and the heavenly Jerusalem and to innumerable angels in festal gathering and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven and to God the judge of all and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect and to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel the writer to the Hebrews helps us to understand that Jesus Christ is this ultimate king this ultimate Davidic king the divine one who can truly do these things that Psalm 2 speaks about and he talks about this Mount Zion that it is the assembly of the firstborn those who are enrolled in heaven and see we must understand this I know we have quite a number of individuals here this morning from the US and no doubt your hearts break as you watch your nation unravel as you watch common sense things thrown out of the window but remember that you are part of this assembly of the firstborn you are part of the spiritual and heavenly Mount Zion you find your place naturally you reside in that nation but you are of another nation your citizenship as scripture says is from above so in the midst of this rebellious world
Jesus is God's set king in Mount Zion which is the church of the living God he is a savior king and then in verse 7 we see the words of God to his son and he makes three statements to him first he says you are my son today I have begotten you in the case of David again when these words were spoken it spoke to his coronation as king over Israel and obviously in Jesus Christ they find a different fulfillment now Jesus is the eternal son there was never a time when he was not God's son there was never a time when he became God's son so these words you are my son today I have begotten you are best understood in the context of God's salvation plan and here is how the commentators in the ESV study Bible put it when they were commenting on this quotation in
[32:32] Hebrews 1 5 sorry they referred to it in Hebrews 1 5 because it's quoted there as well and this is what the note says this speaks of entering into a new phase of the father son relationship and

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should not be pressed to suggest that the son once did not exist so in a similar way to the time of David's coronation over king over Israel as king when God said you're my son today I've forgotten you these words the best way we should think about them is they find their fulfillment at some point in salvation history when Jesus is declared king over the nations and a good option as to when that may have been was when he had finished his work on earth he had conquered death and provided salvation and he ascended back to heaven and he sat at the father's right hand where the psalmist tells us he is now seated ruling in the midst of his enemies and waiting until they are made his footstool the second thing the father says to him is in verse eight he says to him ask of me and

I will make the nations your heritage and the ends of the earth your possession the father invites the son to ask him for the nations and he will grant them to him as a possession to the ends of the earth and the third thing the father says to the son is he tells him you will break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel now what this foreshadows for rebellious nations is not necessarily what will happen but what might happen you can see it more not as a promise that it will happen but as a threat of what will happen if they don't turn if they don't respond to God's king as he should and the way we are able to see this is from the way the psalm concludes that this was more conditional than actual in terms of what would happen so that's how
God deals them from heaven and then he speaks to his son who is the heavenly king who rules over all he threatens the nations that they and their kings will be destroyed if they stay on their course of rebellion and this brings me now to my third and final point the Lord salvation the words of the psalmist in verses 10 through 12 really help us to see that the destruction foreshadowed in is conditional here in verse 10 the psalmist gives these kings and rulers good advice he says to them be wise and be warned he says to them serve the Lord reverently and he calls them to kiss the son which is a sign of repentance from rebellion and submission to the son he says unless he would be angry with you and we see the grace and mercy of
God displayed in this psalm because a psalm that begins with rebellious nations a psalm that begins with nations bursting off the restrictive boundaries that God has lovingly given to them this psalm ends in such a gracious way the Lord offers essentially to them salvation he offers to them those who would take refuge in him that they would be blessed for doing so this is nothing short of a stark display of mercy and grace I mean we don't need to think long and hard about how we feel when people spurn us when people reject us when people go contrary to the way we want them to go and we're nothing like God because he's perfect and holy and just and therefore rebellion against him is never warranted and never justified and yet that same
God extends to rebellious nations and rebellious kings this offer of salvation this offer to serve the Lord serve him with fear rejoicing before him with trembling these are the options receive God's mercy and pardon or remain in your rebellion and suffer the full extent of his wrath!
[37:46] love love! God's offer to rebellious nations and rulers today as we consider this this morning I believe that we should all be asking ourselves the question or I want to ask you the question where do you stand do you identify with rebellious rulers and nations who are living life on their own terms who are spurning God in God's own world or are you heeding or have you heeded the words of the psalmist these concluding words of the psalmist and repented from your own rebellion and found refuge in Jesus Christ you see there are only two ways there are only two ways there's this way of continuing in rebellion against God or there's this way of serving the Lord rejoicing with him with trembling finding and taking refuge in him those are the only two options there's no in between and the stark reality is this morning every single one of us regardless of how we would answer the question each one of us finds ourselves on one side of this issue we are living in rebellion against God and that may be what we may call a white collar kind of rebellion where we're just doing our own thing and can't point to any big major sin but nonetheless not living for God not serving him with our lives and it's all in one basket called rebellion or we are serving him with our lives and we are loving him and seeking to please him and walk in the light and it's in that other area of submission submission to him and seeing him as a refuge and receiving the blessings that go with it if you this morning in your heart of hearts know that you really are in that category of rebellion and though you may not think of yourself as an extreme condition

I want to say to you this morning that Jesus Christ came for all sinners he came for the ones who are the good sinners and the ones who would be considered by this world's standards the bad sinners he came for them all he came and died for them all because they all need forgiveness and I encourage you this morning as you consider this psalm to realize that whether you see yourself as

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actively involved in this riotous conduct of individuals in this world who are spurning God and spurning his rules whether you see yourself that way or not I want to say to you that if you're not in Christ you are part of that rebellious band and these concluding words are extended to you as well serve the Lord with fear rejoice with him rejoice with trembling before him kiss the son lest he be angry and you perish in the way for his wrath is quickly kindled blessed are all who take refuge in him take refuge in the
Lord today see this being here this morning as an indication of God's mercy bringing you to hear what you're hearing and calling you to repentance calling you to turn from sin calling you to trust in Jesus Christ I conclude with these words as we consider again the world that we live in the rebellion that is in this world as God's people we should be encouraged that there is a sovereign God and his appointed king who rule above this rebellion this rebellious world that's the foundational perspective we need to have that no matter what in their commentary on this psalm trump along in the third and David Garland writes the following the confidence of God's people rests in
God himself who is not unmoved by the political machinations on earth as earthly creatures we can hardly avoid becoming involved yet our hope is in God who laughs and scoffs at our enemies see that's our confidence and where it should lie our confidence is to be in God and our confidence is to rest in God not in our efforts not in our own abilities this brothers and sisters is what required our hearts in the midst of a rebellious world it is this that would give us faith that we can release our children even in this rebellious world knowing that there is a sovereign God who is above it all and knowing that that sovereign God is able to take care of them no matter where they are in the world far better than we can if we kept them right in our very presence and we could release them because though this world is rebellious this is
God's world God has not left us to ourselves and he has promised that he will bring every deed into account as we've been hearing in the sermon in Ecclesiastes!
[43:55] So may the Lord help us to remember this truth in the coming days and even in the coming years let's pray up

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