

Advent: Jesus the King

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[0 : 01] On this first Sunday of Advent, we come to the beginning of another church year, the first Sunday of the new church year. And I say that each time I get a chance to say it each year, and I try to emphasize it for all of us in both of our parishes.

I'll be preaching this sermon to our friends up in Ohio in three weeks, and I'll remind them as well, because I think we all need to be reminded and need to learn to think in terms of God's time frame, God's timetable, the way he is working and not in the way that we work and the way that we number our days.

I think all things are being redeemed, and that reminder that the ordinary days have passed, and now that we have come into a season of anticipation is a good thing for us.

So that when we come to the season of celebration of Christmas in four weeks, we are fully ready for it, and we're ready to blow the doors off of the celebration and truly celebrate all of what we see represented in Christmas.

And then in Christ's life, and then in his resurrection, and then in his ascension, and then in the giving of the gifts, and in his reign, and all of what his life means.

[1 : 28] This is just the very beginning. And so here in the beginning, we are reminded of the end. And during this Advent rotation, we'll add each more, each Sunday, a little more to the story that answers the question, who is it that is to come?

Who does this Advent season commemorate? What is it that we get excited about celebrating at Christmas? So now, please, stand with me.

As I read for you, our scripture text that answers that very question, in Psalm chapter 2. Hear now the word of our Lord.

Why do the nations rage, and the people plot in a vain thing? 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 bonds in pieces, and cast away their cords from us.

He who sits in the heavens shall laugh. The Lord shall hold him in derision. Then he shall speak to them in his wrath, and distress them with his deep displeasure.

[2 : 45] Yet I have set my king on my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree. The Lord has said to me, You are my son. Today I have begotten you.

Ask of me, and I will give you the nations for your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron. You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel.

Now therefore, be wise, O kings. Be instructed, you judges 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, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in him.

The grass withers and the flower fades, but the word of our Lord will stand forever. Let's pray. Father, we thank you for your faithful people who are gathered together today in anticipation of being fed from your word and from your table through this entire worship service.

[3 : 49] We thank you that we are the recipients of these good things over and over again every Sunday. And we pray, Lord, that this day would be like all of those others. That we would hear your spirit speaking to us from your word.

And that the words that come from your word would pierce our hearts and show us once again wonderful things out of your law.

We ask this in Jesus' name and for his sake. Amen. Please be seated. Psalm 2 certainly does answer the question, who is it that is to come that we celebrate at Christmas?

But it could also answer the question, what in the world is going on on our planet right now? Why are people losing their minds?

What has happened to so many faithful who we thought were faithful in the church? And why did we all collectively lose our minds over a sickness?

[4 : 58] And what's next? And I wonder what it will be like a year from now? Or five years from now?

All of these questions and many, many others like them I believe can be answered here in Psalm 2. Because Jesus is the king.

And the world does not like that. Jesus is king. He's king over everyone and everything. He's not simply king over your heart.

He's king over every inch of the universe. Jesus is king over heaven and he's king over hell. He's the king over all the universe and shall have dominion as king over it.

He is the king over the United States. And he is the king over every other nation on this planet. To him belong the kingdom and the power and the glory forever as we just said in our prayers.

[6 : 01] And of the increase of his government and his peace, there will be no end. He will order his kingdom and establish it through judgment and justice.

Earthly powers, kingdoms, nations will come and they will go. But of his reign there will be no end.

And as our king, he deserves our allegiance. There is no one anywhere on this earth who can command our worship like him.

Now all that I just said has been clearly prophesied beginning in Genesis 3 and continuing on through the entirety of Scripture.

And it is exactly that that the world hates. It is exactly those words that they see as bonds upon their lives.

[7 : 02] The very bonds they want to throw off. The very bonds they conspire to eradicate. The nations hate this. And they rage against it.

Plotting and setting themselves against the Father and the Son. And taking counsel together saying, let us be done with him. And so we've seen it.

It's in the news all the time. World leaders conspiring together to do so. Against God. To remove any and all vestiges of him from our personal lives.

And from society. And from the public discourse. Now I could spend way too much time right now. Elaborating for you.

All of the ways that we see this happening. You probably have had the just. Just had the best refresher course of. How crazy the world is. Right now.

[8 : 00] In the last year and a half to two years. We've all had it. And so I don't need to elaborate on all of that. But I probably could just do well to say. It is actually worse than we think.

Now maybe there are some of you out there. I don't know all of you quite as well as I do the folks in Abingdon. But maybe there's a conspiracy theorist here. And I mean one of the hardcore conspiracy theorists.

Like that person. When you see them walking up to you. You think. Oh boy. You know. Walk the other direction. But I doubt it. But I tell you. I'm more of a conspiracy theorist now than I was two years ago.

And I've learned that there's actually something biblical. About being a conspiracy theorist. Not like the crazy level. Conspiracy theorist that you want to steer clear of.

But far more than I would have believed two years ago. And why not? Because from before the garden.

[9 : 05] Satan conspired. And took a third of the angels with him. And since then he has been conspiring. And we see in Psalm 2.

That the nations conspire together. And so. When someone. You know. Talks about the threat of the one world government. Which they were talking about. I don't know. Was it the 80s?

I think I first heard that. And I remember thinking back then. Oh. Come on. You know. Don't be so crazy. Settle down.

You sound like a conspiracy theorist. And now when they talk about it. Like. Yeah. It's. True. I think it's true. And it is a. It is a.

An exalting of man. Over. God. And man's mind. It is eradicating God from. Everything. Psalm 2 explains it for us.

[9 : 59] It shows us. How the world. With demonic forces. Influencing them. Serve the prince of darkness. Rather. Than the prince of our father. In heaven. And here's the thing.

The vestiges. Of the world. That remain in us. That remain in the church. Rage against him as well. So it's not just all out there. It's in here.

It's in here. As well. Even after saving grace. Remaining sin within us. Causes us to choose. Ourselves. Over the Lord.

Our Lord. Our King. Repeatedly. Now we know. In Jesus' day. We see this. Repeatedly. In the Gospels. That the original. Elite.

Exalted themselves. Above the Lord. And that they. They would. Conspire. To quiet. His voice. The voice of Messiah. Saying that he blasphemed. Or he broke the law.

[10 : 56] Or he ate with sinners. Or he healed. Through the power of demons. And we know. That there are times. That we. Conspire. In our hearts.

To sin. There are times. That we. Deliberately. Choose. The darkness. Over the light. We know.

That that remaining sin. Remains. In us. And it will. Until glory. But. But what we see. In that. Is that it's. It's not just something. Some evil.

Out there. It's the remaining evil. In us. And. And so. What good. Would it be. I mean. I certainly. Could. Have the voice. Of a prophet. To stand here.

And. And yell at all of you. About all the evil. Out there. But what we need to hear. Is about all the evil. In here. What the church. Needs to know. Is that we. Remain. Sinners.

[11 : 49] We. Continue to conspire. And plot. To do evil things. Against the Lord. And against his anointed. And we need to know. That we can't really. Be talking about. The evil. Out in the world.

The evil. And. Committing this evil. Ourselves. So we need to first. Turn the light. Inward. We need to shine that. On ourselves.

[illegible]

[13 : 15] And the ultimate act of conspiracy we know came in man raging against God, the creator, and Jesus, their king, murdering him on the cross.

It helps us put the words of the Old Testament that sometimes are cryptic, and we don't exactly know how to take them. It helps us to apply them. It tells us this is exactly what this means.

The kings of the earth took their stand and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against his Christ. For truly against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together to do whatever your hand and your purpose determined before to be done.

And they rage again today against the exclusive and living God of Israel. They love darkness and sin and hate, light and righteousness.

It's okay if your God is not exclusive. And it's okay if your God doesn't want to have sovereign rule.

[15 : 34] But once he becomes exclusive, once his words are authoritative, once he is truly sovereign over all things in their realization, all bets are off and you are enemy number one.

And it was over whether or not we ordained homosexuals. And I got that. Like, let me shake your hand. I've never met anybody like you. Kind of look from him.

And then he found out we don't even ordain women. And he like took a big step back and panicked. And you could see him talking himself down from the ledge, as it were, and saying, okay, all right, well.

Well, you know, you could see his tolerance quotient kicking in and trying to, you know, practice what he preaches about being nice.

[16 : 55] They love the darkness and they love sin and they hate the exclusivity and the law of Christ. That's what we see going on in the first three verses of Psalm 2. And up until the last couple of years, the rage has been muted.

We've seen it increasingly growing, but nothing like the last couple of years. The last couple of years, it's just blown open. And now it's just right in our faces.

And it's not under, you know, socially and politically acceptable terminology anymore. Now it's just socialism.

Now it's just communism. Now it's we are all guilty of hate speech. Or we are all the bigots.

We are the terrorists now. And they're not afraid to say it. They're not afraid to say it in public. And this is the nation's raging against our God and his righteousness.

[18 : 00] But we know as the story goes, they put Jesus to death, but he didn't stay dead. No grave could keep his body down. And in Acts 13, 32 and 33, which gives us another inspired commentary.

This on verse 7 of Psalm 2, we read, And we declare to you glad tidings, that promise which was made to the fathers. God has fulfilled this for us, their children, in that he has raised up Jesus.

As it is also written in the second Psalm, you are my son. Today I have begotten you. Referring to the resurrection. And so we can know how to interpret those words there.

They refer to the resurrection. And in the background, we should hear laughing. All through this narrative, there should be this, I don't know what God's laugh sounds like.

I would think to us it would sound glorious, and to them it would be haunting. Forty days later, Jesus would ascend to his throne on high.

[19 : 15] After commissioning his followers to go into all the world and make disciples of the nations. And they knew that this incredible task, for these few people who were there at his ascension, they knew that that task could be completed because he opened with the words, all authority in heaven and earth have been given to me.

All authority in heaven, which most of the church accepts, and on earth, which a lot of the church rejects. All authority on earth as well has been given to Jesus.

So you can go and do this thing. Make disciples of the nations. And again in the background, the sound of God laughing and saying, I have set my king on the holy hill of Zion, my holy hill.

And I have decreed the nations, which they were just commissioned to go and make disciples of, I have decreed the nations to be his inheritance. The ends of the earth to be his possession.

And then in verse 9 we read, You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel. And this is one of those places where we can only know what this is saying by looking at what the scripture says about it.

[20 : 41] And there are three places that the rod of iron are referenced in the book of Revelation. So let me read those for you. In Revelation 19, 15 to 16, we see Christ rule over the nations in his wrath.

In Revelation 12, 5, we see his rule over the nations just in general. And these mention the rod of iron. So Revelation 19, 15 and 16.

Revelation 12, verse 5. I know I said I'm going to read them for you, but you can read them. I'm referring to them and summarizing them for you. And then Revelation 2, 26 to 29.

Tells us that his rule over the nations will come with a rod of iron through the saints in the church. Amazing, is it not?

Beautiful. Beautiful. Beautiful. And so you marry that with Jesus' the gates of hell will not prevail against the church.

[21 : 50] And you begin to get a picture of where the psalmist is going all the way back in Psalm 2, which we know to be David. We get a picture of what God is giving him here.

Where he sets his king on the holy hill of Zion and decrees that all the nations, the farthest reaches of the earth are his possession. And then David finishes the psalm with these words.

Now, therefore, you kings, be instructed. You judges of the earth, serve the Lord.

Serve the Lord. You monarchs, you presidents, you dictators, you rulers of the earth.

You judges, serve the Lord. Serve the Lord with fear. And rejoice with trembling.

[22 : 56] Kiss the son lest he be angry and you perish in the way. I'm pretty sure him being angry, you know, it says later, if his wrath is kindled just a little, that that would be far worse than that haunting laugh that's going on in the background through this whole psalm.

If his wrath is kindled just a little. Kiss the son lest he be angry and you perish in the way when his wrath is kindled a little.

Blessed are all those who put their trust in him. Who is it that we're looking forward to? It's the king. It's the coming of King Jesus.

And all that that means. This is not a sermon about what does all of that mean. This is a sermon about who is it that is coming. And the one who is coming is the king.

Next week, Lawrence is going to preach to you about the dragon slayer. And then Don has one as well. And then Chad has another one. And all of these are building and looking forward to what we're going to celebrate in Christmas.

[24 : 10] And particular to mine here in Psalm 2, the coming of the king, what this means is that the nations, whether they know it or not, believe it or not, or admit it or not, they owe their allegiance to their king.

Now. Not once they all come around and learn the truth. They owe their allegiance to him now. He is their king now. But we say, they say, we have no king.

We know no king. We do not want a king. And that's where the spirit of God, with his rod of iron working through the church, comes into play.

As his word, particularly his word through the church, changes things. Now that presupposes that the church recognizes the king.

That the church is serving the king. That we in the church are not living in our own little mini kingdoms. But that there's one king.

[25 : 27] And he alone is the one we serve. In Revelation 2, to the church of Thyatira, Christ said, To the one who conquers and keeps my works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations and he will rule them with a rod of iron.

To the one who conquers, to the one who keeps my works until the end. To him, now he's talking to people in the church. I will give authority over the nations and he will rule them with a rod of iron.

As foreign as this may sound, given the theology that most of us were raised with, given the weakness of the church in many ways, as far off in the future as this may sound, given the current state of our country and all of the West, we should still, as the psalmist said, be instructed.

We should learn something from this. We should understand this is the authoritative word of God speaking. Jesus is king. And though the nations rage, though the church herself sometimes ignores his word, though kingdoms of this world turn from him, Christ's kingdom cannot fail.

And always in the background, when all of this insanity is going on around us, we should hear the sound of laughing. God's laughter in the background.

[27 : 03] His reign isn't going away. Not only will his government and his peace continue to increase, Isaiah 9-7, but he must reign until all his enemies are brought under his feet.

Psalms 110-1 and 1 Corinthians 15-25. And the last enemy to be defeated will be death. Death. Verse 26. So people of God, in this Advent season, at the beginning, we're reminded of where all of this is going.

So we, what's the word to us? Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling. Not trembling. Not trembling in the fear of man as so many of us have been guilty of doing in the last couple of years.

But trembling in the fear of the Lord, whose zeal, he says, will accomplish these amazing and incredible things for us. As you come to this table today, you will, by necessity, because the table's up here and you're out there, you will have to take several steps.

Those of you in the front will take fewer. Those of you in the back will take more. To a physical table. And with each step, I want you to be confessing. I want you to be exalting.

[28 : 22] I want you to be acknowledging your King. You don't simply come to a table here in this building. You come before the Lord to His table that He has prepared for you.

In the presence of your enemies. And it's a table of peace. And it's a table of celebration. And it's a table of hope for our future. Come in that spirit.

Taste and see that the Lord is, in fact, very, very good. Let's pray. And it's through the■.