

Why Rage The Heathen?

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[0 : 00] I'd like us to turn once again to the book of Psalms and at Psalm 2, the beginning of that psalm.

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 his anointed, saying, Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us.

Why do the nations rage? You know, we live in a world which continues to direct its hostility and anger towards the Church of Christ.

Now, that's not something we should think strange because that is what we've been told will happen by the Lord Jesus Christ.

If they do these things in the green tree, what shall they do in the dry? If they do these things as they did to the Lord Jesus Christ when he was on earth, as he came to establish his kingdom, to establish righteousness and justice and peace on earth, and those who were his people, the Jewish nation turned against him.

[1 : 48] He came to his own and his own received him not. And so we find as a natural consequence of that enmity that was established 2,000 years ago, we face all the hostility and anger that emanates against Christianity.

And it emanates from every sphere of society. And we, in and of ourselves, can do nothing about it. We cannot defend ourselves.

We cannot in some way overcome that hostility. We have to learn to pray that God will intervene and that he will act on behalf of his own people.

Everything, you see, depends upon the working of the Holy Spirit. Every renewal in church, in the nation, in society, is a repetition of what happened on the day of Pentecost, when the Spirit came in power, when he came to direct the course of that nation, and when he brought great revival and great conversion into that city.

So let's look at what the psalmist says here, to encourage us and to know that we are not alone in this world, that we are not without hope, but that what is happening is something that the Lord has foreseen and which he will overcome.

[3 : 36] Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain, or the people imagine vain things?

Now if we think back to the book of Ecclesiastes, vain really means empty, or nothing. Why do the people imagine things which really are of no consequence, and have no lasting effect?

Aren't we amazed at the state of affairs in the nations around the world that now exist? Psalm 46 tells us that the nations of the earth are raging.

Raging like a sea. Now we know that there are times when the sea appears to be very calm, like a mill pond almost. But underneath there is always the ebb and the flow, all the currents that continue to flow.

And at other times we see the sea as it really is, mounting up to the heavens and then down to the depths again.

[4 : 50] And mankind is just like the sea. Sometimes we appear to be very calm, but at others we are like a raging storm.

We've only got to compare the world during the Victorian and the Edwardian eras to see the truth and the reality of that particular statement.

Mankind was evolving into something more noble. The world was improving in every aspect of its commerce, and every aspect of the Western nations were building their empires, and there was great improvement in medicine and science, and all the other aspects which makes life living.

And people thought that the world was evolving into something new, and that there was going to be a new peaceful design that God had in store for the world.

And then two world wars. Two horrendous world wars. And us Christians today we are living in a violent world, with mankind raging against God.

[6 : 20] Raging against their fellow man. Every law, whether it's God's law or man's law, is trampled down and destroyed. Sin against God, violation of every law that man has ever devised, whether it's against men or women or children, infants, grows remorselessly.

And men and women sin without compromise. Whether it's marriage, whether it's the Lord's Day, whether it's drunkenness, whether it's drugs, whatever aspect of life we look at, the world continues to deteriorate, continues to get into a worse situation than it was when perhaps we were young.

But I'm sure every generation makes that comparison. But as we look at the world around us, we can see the evil and the consequences of that evil unfolding even before our very eyes.

And yet it's no more than what the Lord threatens to us in Romans chapter 1. Giving mankind over a reprobate mind to do what ought not to be done.

Professing themselves to be wise, they become fools and not only do such deeds, but boast of those who do them. So we see as evil grows, there are those who admire that evil and try to imitate that evil and boast in the evil that they themselves are engaging in.

[8 : 16] David tells us that the people imagine vain things. Mankind is like the seed dredging up the dirt and the evil from the seabed and trying to do things which possibly past generations thought impossible to even imagine, much less to do.

All the people, all the great ones of the world, philosophers, thinkers, academics, rulers, devising empty and futile and vain things.

People think that politics can somehow put all these things right. And I'm not going to try and preach some social sermon.

I'm trying to direct our thoughts toward the one who controls all things, who engages in the affairs of men at every level. People think politics can somehow put things right, that some elusive scheme is going to be a cure-all for all the ills that surround the world today.

Over past generations, governments of the world have tried to organize themselves for some better future. Go back to end of the First World War.

[9 : 47] They had the League of Nations, which was supposed to put an end to all wars. Since the Second World War, we've had the United Nations. We've had NATO. But the problem is not so much the difficulties that are arising, that the solutions take no thought of the God who has arranged this world to work in a particular way.

Then people come along and say, no, the problem is social. It's either housing or education or health or finance.

Looking everywhere to try and solve the problems of the world, the only place they haven't looked is up and that's towards God.

Because God has been airbrushed out of the thought patterns of this world. God does not exist everywhere, every church and nation is failing in going from crisis to crisis.

I'm sure many nations and times have spoken in such a way but as we look around us today, we see so many of the ills of the world compassing us as a people, not just as a people here in Great Britain but throughout the world.

[11 : 19] There are trials and difficulties and tragedies. And we can perhaps ask why is this? And surely the answer stares us in the face.

Why are we seeing the breakdown of life and marriage and communities and nations? Because of an out and out rebellion against God.

Mankind has chosen to airbrush God out of their thoughts, has chosen to rebel against God and think they can live their lives without any thought of God or any recompense from God for our actions.

As the psalmist says, we say let us cast records from us. Something we have to recognize that this is not some weakness in mankind.

it is nothing less than a hatred of God. A hatred of God who wants to establish laws for us who we think is trying to subjugate us and rule us and want us to do things in the way that he is established for his own good and not for ours.

[12 : 41] The world feels God is against us and this is nothing less than the hatred of God and what he stands for and his laws.

And so as the psalmist reminds us let us break his bands from us. Let us cast off the chains and fetters that are so often thought that God establishes around us.

what God has given us for our well-being what God has given us so that we might lead lives of dignity and security we think of as cords as something that is chaining us restricting our lives not enabling us to live our lives in the way that we think we should.

But in reality God has done this so we may live lives of peace that we may live in harmony nation with nation that we might live lives of dignity where everyone is able to worship God in their own way where we might live lives of self-respect God says the only way for such blessings to be received by us is to live according to his ten commandments honor your father and your mother do not kill do not steal do not bear false witness do not commit adultery do not covet the world would become a paradise heaven on earth if we lived according to the laws that he has established for us but our fatal self-confidence rages against God and thinks we can do better with our own laws and our own ways of living then we have in some way at the church to speak to the world we're going to try and show the world that they're absolutely mad in their opposition to God in their rebellion and their hatred of

God as in the case of the prodigal son we have to show the world that they are beside themselves they've lost their senses for he that sits in heaven shall laugh the Lord shall scorn them all he shall break them in pieces and as we look around us at the world today he's doing precisely that he's breaking down all our plans and our schemes everything we're trying to establish for a better secular life the Lord is saying that is not what I want from you what I want from you is your heart your love your commitment to me see the world is not defying the laws of men and women they're the laws of almighty God the world thinks that they can live such a life that there will be no retribution men and women of reputation no longer believe in

[16 : 24] God to believe in God is to make yourself a second class citizen to be mocked and ridiculed for reading the Bible and going to church and believing there's a God and believing there's a life to come they believe in science people like David Hume or people also like Richard Dawkins or Hawkins and the other names that you have come to know in the past years and decades people who rejected God and are living their lives according to their own laws but it is God who controls science it is God who has made all things according to his ways and purposes in the space of six days and all very good that power that emanates from the word of God the power that created the universe the heavens and all that we see that power that created you and created me from the dust of the earth for of the dust we have been taken and of the dust we shall return and as he looks he looks on the world in his wrath he hates the world as he sees it tonight but he made it he made it all very good and he loved that world and into that world he placed man man and he brought into that world all things that were good but the world as he sees us tonight he hates and God's wrath is already being revealed from heaven again unrighteousness and ungodliness us it's not that what's happening today in our streets and in our towns will bring down

God's wrath upon us but what's happening is already the outpouring of God's wrath and anger against the world that has turned its back on him the scriptures are the revelation of God to the world against unrighteousness and the greatest demonstration of God's sitting in heaven and laughing at the ways the world tries to reject him was the raising of the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead death hell and the devil defeated God laughing at those who thought they could outwit God and bring their own purposes into being when they crucified the Lord of glory the real tragedy of the world is that we're rejecting the Lord and his anointed

God's only begotten son while we were yet sinners God sent forth his son into this world to seek and to save the lost and to give his life ransom for the many God gave his only begotten son even on the cross the son prays father forgive them for they know not what they are doing and yet today we carry on we know what's been done we know our rebellion against God and yet we continue to rebel against that revelation you know it's possible to live happily in this present evil world if we would only be reconciled to God that's the only condition God requires no more fear of death or of hell no more anxieties of what tomorrow is going to bring no more nightmares of unimagined evil no more dread you and I couldn't be happier if we could only believe believe in Christ and receive and rest upon him alone for our salvation and our security see the modern way of thinking is that what men and women need is entertainment when we come to church to be somehow to be entertained

to sing and to dance not preaching but we're not here to entertain as you listen to sermons here lords day after lords day they're not meant to entertain preachers aren't called to entertain the world can do it far better than any church can ever do it we're called to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ we're here to tell people the naked truth to tell men and women to rejoice with trembling to serve with fear why to rejoice with trembling and to serve with fear because God has promised a heaven and that we might not be part of it that's why we rejoice with trembling to live our lives in a saving relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and kiss the son and to know him as our Lord and our God what we are seeing today is God giving the world over to a reprobate mind he's abandoning us to it he says that if we think we can make a better job of it ourselves well then get on with it but if we're willing to kiss the son and to receive and rest upon him alone

God welcomes us for God is by Christ reconciling the world to himself not imputing our sins to us but drawing us to himself in the Lord Jesus Christ we mentioned earlier on about defeat of death and hell and the devil well there's a greater and more comprehensive defeat waiting for all those who are not on the Lord's side while those who are on the Lord's side and wait for his coming have great and precious promises to anticipate the day is coming when every eye shall see him and every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord tragically the church of today is living in an age of

[24 : 23] Laodicean apathy and ease that's why I chose to read that passage from Revelation earlier on yet the promise is held out to us that if we overcome our lethargy and our spiritual blindness we shall share in God's throne see the Lord calls the Laodicean church lukewarm neither hot nor cold and sadly the church of today is descending into such a neutral aspect of service and commitment the Lord wants us to be either hot or cold he wants us in fact to be hot he wants us to be committed to him and when

Peter thinks about the end of the world he says things such as what manner of men ought we to be in all holy living and godliness looking for and earnestly desiring the coming of the day the challenge is to a spiritual earnestness a spiritual holiness and a sincere desire for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 25 you all know the parable of the foolish and the wise bridesmaids who were waiting for the coming of the bridegroom they were all sleeping when the call went up behold the bridegroom comes like them we're all ignorant of the time of the Lord's second coming but some were ready and some were not for the unready the call was met with fear and dread for they had no oil for their lamps and the oil there obviously signifies they had not the Holy Spirit giving light to their lives but for those who are ready the cry fills us with joy and gladness that's what we spent our whole lives waiting for when we shall awake in his likeness and when the Lord says behold

I come quickly those who are his will say even so Lord Jesus come may the Lord bless these thoughts to us