

God's Response to Human Rebellion

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[0 : 0 0] will you turn with me now please to the passage we read in psalms psalm number two in the book of psalms and the second psalm looking at the whole of the psalm this evening we're just pausing a little for this evening in our studies of peter and just because we've had a communion lord's day and we'll pick up god willing studies in peter next time i'd like to look at this psalm this evening looking at it at god as god's response to human rebellion the first two psalms in the book of psalms form a kind of entrance porch or vestibule to the whole of the book when you come into this entrance porch these first two psalms you're conscious of first of all in the first psalm dealing with something that that applies particularly to the psalmist individually blessed is the man he is like a tree so it's all the way through psalm one mostly dealing with the individual dealing with with us as individuals then when you come into the second psalm it widens out into the universal not just people but really the whole universe if you like and the whole span of history indeed as you find it reaching towards the dominion of the lord and how the lord in his judgment ultimately will reveal himself as to be the one who presides as king and who will deal with all whether just or unjust righteous or unrighteous as he himself sees fit in other words in the vestibule of the book of psalms in this opening of the psalms in this entrance porch you have an emphasis in psalm one on the personal and then in psalm two on the whole purpose if you like of god in history as it's addressed there within that short compass and that reminds us of something that's very important in our use of the book of psalms particularly as we use the book of psalms as a book in worship to sing the praises of god as well as to look into its teaching as we're doing this evening because when you go through the book of psalms you come across these two dimensions the personal and the corporate the personal where the individual is actually focused in focus and the corporate where you find the people or the church are actually the focus in certain psalms and the wonderful thing is that you can use these interchangeably because as you go through the likes of psalm one yes it's the individual but then what it says can be applied to the corporate to the body of of god's people to the church to us as a people as well so it's not just saying blessed is the man who walks in the counsel of the wicked when we sing these words we apply them to ourselves personally and individually but they also apply corporately to the whole body of worshipers and it's the same in psalm too when you or other psalms that speak about the church or the corporate body if you like that applies as well you can take the focus and apply it to yourself individually so when you find the church lamenting when hard times have come upon the church and when she's pleading with god that applies to us individually you can take these psalms and use them individually and in your individual prayers and for that reason itself along with many others the book of psalms is such a wonderful book and so important to our christian experience and development and our relationship with god individually and corporately now psalm 2 specifically in the new testament is specified as a psalm that has to do especially with jesus christ it's a messianic psalm a psalm that has to do with christ the messiah christ the savior and as you go through the psalm we discover that there are actually four voices speaking to us the first voice is the voice of human revolt in verses one to three the voice that makes such a clamor in revolt against god or rebellion against god and then in verses four to six you find the voice of god in response he that sits in the heavens laughs he will speak to them in his wrath and terrify them in his fury and then you find in verses seven to nine the voice of christ as ruler because he speaks here about the lord's anointed right near the beginning of the psalm and the lord's anointed comes to be seen as the king in verse six that god has set upon his holy hill of zion over the church and over indeed the whole destiny of human beings and it's that king that then speaks about the decree that the lord that god has said to him applies specifically to him as the king so you find christ the voice of christ as the ruler as the king in verses seven to nine and then the fourth voice we might say is the voice of the holy spirit in the gospel in verses 10 to 12 now

therefore o kings be wise be warned o rulers of the earth and so on serve the lord kiss the son lest he be angry and you perish in the way the gospel the holy spirit in the gospel speaking to us to come to recognize this king for who he is and to come to submission to him and to a loving subservient to him as our king and as our god four voices let's listen to these four voices that speak to us tonight from this psalm the voice of human revolt why do the nations rage and the people's 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 now there's a noise about that there's a tumult about that as though as the words are read out by us as we read them ourselves we can just hear the noise of this human revolt and the voices or the voice of human revolt in all the facets of it that are set out in these specific words now why do the nations rage and the peoples are plotting and the kings of the earth are setting themselves and the rulers are taking counsel together and this is what they're saying let us burst their bonds apart and cast their cords away from us you see the combination there the peoples the nations the kings of the earth the rulers they are all together set on the same purpose on the same course against the lord and against his anointed we'll see what that means in a minute but just look at the combination and look at how up to date it is these words of the old testament are absolutely applicable to the world that you and i live in today this very evening the world is in tumult it's not just a disorganized tumult it's a tumult that's organized in taking counsel against the lord and against his anointed it's a tumult it's a noise that's deliberately pointed against the rule of god and seeks to cast off the cords the bands the restrictions the laws of god

and isn't it very sad that what you find here is a reference to the kings of the earth the rulers taking counsel has a very familiar ring to it tonight for us in scotland or in the uk or in western europe or throughout the world the sad fact is that you see all too often governments and rulers leading the revolt encouraging the revolt not necessarily advocating violence or anything like that but undoubtedly still commending a way of life a philosophy of life that seeks to get away from what's seen as the restrictive rule of god and of the bible they're taking counsel together against the lord and against his anointed we're coming up to a general election manifestos have been published by now not at all taking to do with party politics that's no business of the pulpit but how many of these philosophical political philosophies or manifestos have actually made reference to the deep-rooted dilemma of our people and that is a casting away of the rule of god where do you find references to being submissive to god to love the laws of the lord to respect the ways of the lord to promote the gospel to put christ above all other saviors so-called you don't find it do you what you find is the very opposite that when you speak up in those sort of terms you're looked at as being completely out of date completely irrelevant to the needs of the times and yet you and i surely are persuaded tonight that our people as well as ourselves need one thing and one thing above all else the power of the gospel the power of christ the rule of christ to really be made real to them because this is what human beings have been doing ever since adam fell in the garden of eden human beings have been in revolt against god and however sophisticated those forms of revolt might be revolt is still revolt and there's only one thing that can actually bring an end to that revolt and that is the power of jesus christ changing people's lives the whole purpose of evangelism yes it's to bring glory to god of course it is but the whole purpose of evangelism under that is to actually end human revolt against god by seeing people converted by seeing people coming from whatever background whether it be a background of no philosophy of life at all except maybe secularist or whether it's another religion whatever it is we might be ridiculed for saying so we might be criticized for saying so we might even yet in years to come be put in prison for saying so but our business is with conversions with people's lives being changed for the good by coming to end a revolt against god but let's bring it home let me ask myself tonight are there any elements of revolt minister in your heart is there any tendency of rebellion still left in your soul yes there is and you put the question to yourself can you detect in your heart right now any element of revolt against god can you say assuredly i'm not a i'm not a person who's in rebellion i'm not a rebel against god if christ is not your savior you are it doesn't matter what your intention is it doesn't matter what you intend to have or to be yet as a christian as you would hope to be for all of us tonight if we have not bent the knee to christ if we have not accepted christ into our hearts if we have not made this king the king of our lives we are in rebellion against god too we don't have to be part of radical islam or isis or is or anything like that horrible as all these things are all we need to be is in revolt against god quietly in the secrecy of our own hearts and say i will not have this man to rule over me and we are in revolt against god and here's the question why why do the nations rage

because as he goes on to say it's against the lord and against his anointed we could have read a number of passages in the new testament to explain who the anointed is let me just briefly turn to acts chapter 4 and from verse 23 you can follow it with me if you like acts chapter 4 and verse 23 this is about peter and john when they were released from prison and had been examined then they were had been examined and then they were released they went to their friends reported what the chief priests and the elders have said this is in verse 23 of chapter 4 of acts 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 the kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers were gathered together against the lord and against his anointed for truly in the city there were gathered together against your holy servant jesus whom you anointed that means whom you made the messiah the anointed one both herod and pontius pilate along with the gentiles and the people of israel to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place and they pleaded with the lord then to look upon their threats and yet to speak that they be able to speak the word of god with boldness and the lord answered it and they were all filled with the holy spirit and continued to speak the word of god with boldness but you see that makes it plain that psalm 2 was actually a prophecy about the coming messiah the coming jesus and the apostles without hesitation saw this as a reference to this jesus this is against the lord and his anointed that this rebellion and this revolt is set in place and the purpose of it is to cast off restraint you see verse 3 let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us what's the aim of secularism just to pick out one of the anti-god movements of our day what is the aim of secularism you might think from some of the pronouncement that secularism is just concerned with having a mild alternative to those who want to be godly to those who want to be true to the gospel to the bible but then you actually try and commend christ to them as ruler of their lives you try and commend anything to them from the bible and from the gospel you'll soon find it's not very mild not a mild alternative at all it's rebellion against god

it's a revolt against god the purpose is to cast off restraints let everybody do what's right in their own eyes what seems and feels right to them don't let anybody else have the right or take in any way suggest that they have the right to tell others how to live whether they're preachers of the gospel or whether it's the church and especially if it's the church that's the aim they know our christian heritage throughout this nation and in this island be under no illusion secularism is not content with just a mild alternative to the gospel and to religion it wants to eradicate religion it wants to eradicate especially the gospel from public life and indeed from private life if it could be managed that's the purpose of this revolt against god the voice of human revolt it's a people in tumult it's a people in tumult against the lord and against his anointed and it's with the purpose of casting off the bonds of god the restraints the law of god the the principles of living that god has given to us which are regarded as being so damaging and so restraining whereas when you come to know god you realize that that's actually very different to what reality is they are in fact the bonds of freedom and bonds in which jesus becomes your loving master so what's the voice of god in response then we need to hurry on through the psalm the voice of god in response verses 4 to 6 he who sits in heaven in the heavens laughs the lord holds them in derision then 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 firstly he sits in the heavens the one against whom this tumult this noise of rebellion is directed is actually the one who sits in the heavens who sits on the throne of the universe in the heavens he is in charge of all things including those who are in revolt and one of the main emphases in the psalm and one of the main thrusts in the teaching of the psalm is the futility of this revolt because it's a revolt against somebody who's already reigning and you can't change that and you can't bring god down from his throne however much people would want to and you cannot lessen his sovereignty or his control or his mastery of all things and you can't change the plan that he has and the purpose that he has for the whole course of human history nothing of that can be changed so what's the point of revolt why do the people rage because they're raging against this god this universally sovereign lord what is the point to it it's futile it changes nothing and in fact he says he who sits in the heavens laughs that might be a difficulty in regard to the solemnity of these words in the psalm the solemnity of the situation rebellion against god against the god who rules who sits on the throne of heavens what does it mean that the lord laughs is he just joking is he treating this as a joke is this something that he takes lightly is that what it means it doesn't mean that at all this is the laughter or derision of a deeply

[20 : 10] offended sovereign laughing against his enemies in the way that really precedes making them a laughing stock you know the phrase that's often used having the last laugh well all of that's related to what is said here about god he who sits in heaven laughs you mustn't have a picture of god as a kind of master puppeteer just moving things moving people about just to have fun just to have some sort of past time that's what so many people think the bible teaches that's why secularism and other atheistic views of human life will tell you that's the kind of god the bible teaches you it's not that's not what it means it doesn't mean a god who's just having his pleasure with human beings but it does mean that god treats every revolt with the utmost seriousness mess that he holds them in derision he mocks them he really is looking down and saying to them you poor people what is the point how futile are your efforts how can you change anything by rebellion by revolting against me and so you find in verse 5 he will speak to them in his wrath and terrify them in his fury and you know significant thing is that what rebellion against god is really in essence attempting to do is to bring down or to undo what god has already accomplished i have set my king upon sion my holy hill he's saying in verse 6 he's already appointed this jesus as king and head over all things that's where jesus is tonight that's the position that christ occupies and what god is saying to all who rebel against him is this here you are in rebellion against me here you are trying to undo my sovereign rule over your life but i fixed this you're not going to change this rebellion is futile revolt is madness i've already done this this is not going to change so why why should the people rage why should people plot in vain the voice of god in response to show up the futility of rebellion against him and tonight in your heart and my heart personally what can you achieve by not having jesus as your king what will it add to your life to refuse to bow to christ and accept him what advantage will it give you to continue a rebellion against god god is saying if we are tonight in that position it's pointless it's futility it's madness won't change anything and so he's appealing as we'll see in the psalm to us to come to pay our homage to him that's the second voice the voice of god in response then the voice of christ as ruler verses 7 to 9 we need to hurry through this where he's saying as for me god is saying 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 and then he comes to the promises that god gave to the messiah to jesus ask of me and i will make the nations your heritage this is really putting words into the mouth of christ as it were and jesus saying this is what the lord has said to me this is what god has promised me you see christ has been installed as the king on zion and the lord has said to him 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 psalm 21 comes to mind and regard to that doesn't we sang psalm 21 just a moment ago and where you have said where it says you have given the king his heart's desire you have not withheld a request of his lips he asked life of you you gave it to him length of days forever and ever his glory is great through your salvation splendor and majesty you bestow upon him or take psalm 72 that we sang at the end of our communion service this morning where in these very familiar words to us the reign or the dominion of the lord is brought before us as extensive and universal his name shall endure forever his kingdom will continue his fame continue as long as the sun blessed be his glorious name forever may the whole earth be filled with his glory and tonight the voice of christ as ruler is saying i am the king i am the king whatever happens whatever people say whatever philosophies come and go whatever individuals think in their hearts i have been given this dominion the lord has said this to me and he has promised me that the ends of the earth will be my possession his dominion universal who are we to stand against him who are we to dare resist him who are we to say no to him who are we to refuse his lordship who are we to say to this majestic person not yet or no i won't or i will someday because you see he's saying you shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel so terribly difficult words even to read let alone to expound because they bring you to another side to jesus that perhaps we hear all too little about not the loving gracious patient long suffering not that side of him which is so so important to emphasize and even to emphasize in a sense above this other side of him this is the side of jesus that we also find in the bible jesus the judge jesus the one who places his enemies where he rightly and justly says they ought to be placed and the words are very graphic you shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel you go to jeremiah chapter 18 you find a picture there as god ordered jeremiah to go to the potter's house to learn a lesson as he saw the potter forming a pot on the wheel and he

says whenever he brings a pot together and it doesn't quite work out right something about it is misshapen or whatever even if he's put it aside and it's hardened what does he do with it he just takes it and smashes it against the wall and he takes the pieces and can melt them down or whatever and reuse it but he takes this marred vessel and he smashes it against the wall people might say well Jesus would never do that it's only some other views of the Bible that would say such a thing about this meek and mild and gentle Jesus no this is Jesus saying about Jesus this is God talking about God this is the other side to the Lord that you and I also need to take account of in fact tonight where would we be if the enemies of the Lord went all the way through this life and faced nothing afterwards where would the justice be in that you shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel you know to capture the graphic nature of the language which we need to maintain sometimes you come across passages in the Bible that you wouldn't necessarily gravitate towards or really take long in looking at them or perhaps as preachers we wouldn't really want to get down and preach from them but the Lord makes us do that if you want to maintain the graphic nature of the language it's something like this either we submit to Jesus or we'll be smashed by Jesus that's the bottom line that's what it amounts to either we submit to him or yield to him or we shall be broken by him at last and none of us would want that none of us would want to experience this side of Christ's character and kingship and person and rule because it's real not a pretense it's not made up it's not just something that belonged to the Old Testament is now long out of date the psalmist is describing the world in which we live in rebellion against God today the psalmist is describing the voice of God in response the psalmist is describing the voice of Christ as ruler and then also the voice of the Holy Spirit in the Gospel thankfully the psalm ends on this note now therefore kings be wise 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 well to be warned literally means in the text here to have instruction or to receive instruction and although it's addressed to the kings and to the rulers of the earth as we said already we can take all of these and make them personal to ourselves serve the Lord with fear rejoice with trembling don't just have the kind of joy where there is no element of godly fear or trembling in it because we're dealing with this sovereign with this God with this majestic with this indescribably great God and you cannot come lightly into his presence even if you come rejoicing it's not the kind of rejoicing that's not got gravitas to it if you like but especially verse 12 kiss the Son lest he be angry and you perish in the way for his wrath is quickly kindled to kiss in the sense

of kissing a king is an indication of your obeisance to them you pay homage to them to come before her majesty the queen and you bow or you curtsy that's an indication that you accept or pay respect or homage to her position as sovereign and how much more is it the case with God when we come before God we show that we accept his sovereignty we accept his kingship we accept his rule and we accept his right to rule oh we don't make this sound too harsh it's not meant to be harsh at all it's a loving bending of our knee and of our heart and of our minds to this gracious and great King kiss the Son come towards him literally language is saying come forward to kiss him because in the Gospel the Holy Spirit in the Gospel this is his voice he's inviting us to come forward to kiss this majestic person he's giving us the facility to kiss him before he comes to reveal himself in his wrath and in his eye and hold all who rebel against him in derision for all eternity come forward kiss him come forward in your soul he's reaching out in the Gospel if you like with his scepter towards you the scepter of his kingship and his emphasis is kiss the Son you know the treachery of Judas Iscariot is nowhere more evident than in the fact that he betrayed the Son of Man with a kiss what ought to have been the most obvious sign of affection was in fact a mask for his treachery he kissed Jesus but it wasn't the kiss of submission of loving obedience of acceptance it was the kiss of rebellion but what he's saying here is you kiss the Son you come towards him and accept him on his own terms what he says blessed are all who take refuge in him and these words take refuge in him really are the same as put their trust in him what a wonderful way the psalm finishes after all this solemn and serious stuff that he has been saying to us and that we need to take account of this other side to

[35 : 05] Jesus as mentioned in the psalm having heard the voice of human revolt and the voice of God in response and then the voice of Christ as ruler and his universal dominion and how he will come at last to smash his enemies it finishes with this wonderful gracious voice of the Holy Spirit in the Gospel saying blessed are all who take refuge who put their trust in him now what about your own heart is there anyone here still in rebellion to him someone who has not yet come really to accept Jesus for who he is who have not really dealt with the reality of who Christ is or the Bible

tells us should be our relationship to him kiss him tonight take him as your sovereign because blessed you will be if you put your trust in him it's the only safe way towards eternity 20 years ago from this very day or this weekend late princess Diana made headlines when she visited

Angola and she visited Angola because she had a burden to make that place of had been warfare there to make it safe for people to walk in because there were so many landmines buried under the earth and people were being maimed and sometimes all too often killed and if you remember that famous photograph of princess Diana wearing her bodysuit or armour and walking this narrow corridor marked off by stakes all along the way green sort of stakes or posts in the ground that had been cleared by the experts in the way of clearing mines from the area that cleared this corridor of mines so that she could be photographed and seen walking and head up this campaign against landmines that was a safe corridor the experts had gone ahead of her and ensured that when she walked that corridor she was not going to be maimed she was not going to be hit by a landmine her life would be protected well Jesus has gone before you into eternity he's cleared the way there are no

IEDs in the path of following Jesus not always easy but it is safe and it's the only safe one blessed are all those who put their trust in him let's pray oh lord our gracious god make us increasingly thankful we pray for what you have done for the way that you came into this world to prepare for your people a way of safety heavenwards and into glory itself we thank you that you have removed all that is of sin and its penalty and its defilement and that your people can now come to rest and safety in yourself as their refuge we pray tonight lord for those whose lives are shattered for those who in london and other places in the world still face so much terrorism so much so much in the way that they know not what to expect next so much trepidation as they fear what tomorrow might bring lord we pray that you would in mercy protect us from further encroachments of evil and we pray that you would destroy the root of that evil through the power of the gospel lord we pray that you would bring your own power to bear upon such people as would seek such destruction and grant that you would be pleased to win them to yourself grant lord that you bless us now and bless to us all that we will receive by way of bodily sustenance when we come to our fellowship and accept our praise and thanks now for jesus sake amen now we're singing now in conclusion and psalm 96a that's on page 126 psalm 126 all nations to the lord ascribe the glory that is due glory and strength ascribe to god and praise his name and you that's page 127 it should be from verse 7 through to the end of the psalm all nations to the lord ascribe all nations to the lord ascribe the glory that is due the glory that is due glory and strength ascribe to god and praise his name and you and praise his name and you and praise his name and you and praise his name and you and does course with joy and bring an offering with you an offering with you worship the lord in holy fear all earth before him bow all earth before him bow all earth before him bow all earth before him bow tell every land the lord is king established is the earth established is the earth and cannot move the lord will judge the peoples in his truth the peoples in his truth the peoples in his truth the peoples in his truth let heavens rejoice and death be glad with joy let oceans ring with joy let oceans ring the fields and all in them will shout and forest trees will sing and forest trees will sing and forest trees will sing and forest trees will sing they all sing before the lord who comes to judge the earth who comes to judge the earth he'll judge the world in righteousness the peoples in his truth the peoples in his truth the peoples in his truth the peoples in his truth I'll go to the main door after the benediction now may the grace of the lord jesus christ the love of god the father and the communion of the holy spirit be with you now and evermore amen