

~ACTS~

Lesson 17- Jesus is King

We have spent the last few weeks studying all the events surrounding the healing of the lame man at the temple gate. In chapter 3, the lame man is healed, and the Word of God is preached boldly in the Name of Jesus and thousands of people are saved. At the beginning of chapter 4, Peter and John are arrested and brought before the Sanhedrin council. And this supreme court of Jewish law makes a decree that preaching and teaching in the Name of Jesus is illegal. Now Peter and John and all the Christians have a choice... do we obey God or man? And Peter and John take the bold stance of Truth and preach Jesus to the Sanhedrin and they tell them boldly that it is impossible for them to not speak about the things they have seen and heard, Acts 4:20. So when the Sanhedrin council determined they couldn't punish Peter and John because they feared the people, they let them go. And that brings us to where we left off last week. So let's read our text for today starting in **Acts 4:23-31**.

Notice this bold response from the Brethren. They don't run and hide in fear, but rather they stand strong together and pray for more boldness and miracles to take place. And they have this confidence because they have put their full trust and reliance in the Absolute Ruler of the Universe... Jesus Christ. Look how they start their prayer in verse 24...

24 So when they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord and said: "Lord, You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them,

²³ οἱ δὲ ἀκούσαντες ὁμοθυμαδὸν ἥραν φωνὴν πρὸς τὸν Θεόν, καὶ εἶπον, Δέσποτα, σὺ ὁ Θεὸς ὁ ποιήσας τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν καὶ τὴν θάλασσαν καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐν αὐτοῖς.

After hearing the testimony of Peter and John, the disciples cry out to God. And as I said last week, notice how they refer to Him. They call Him **Lord**, **Δεσπότης**, Despot- one who holds absolute power. God is the Creator of the universe. He is the Great I AM. And this is the premise of their whole prayer, that Jesus is King, and His plan of Salvation will be done as He has determined before the foundation of the world.

And notice how they are praying... **with one accord**. Again, look at the unity of Fellowship among one another. This phrase "with one accord" is the word, **ὁμοθυμαδὸν**. Luke has used this word several times so far in the Book of Acts to describe their one-mindedness, Acts 1:14; 2:1, 46. This word literally means "to continue with a similar strong passion of like-mindedness." There is an intense unity among the Brethren and it is this Fellowship with God and each other that is enabling them to persevere through the persecutions. And they are trusting in God as the One with absolute power and authority. And they continue in prayer quoting Psalm 2...

25 who by the mouth of Your servant David have said: 'Why did the nations rage, And the people plot vain things? **26** The kings of the earth took their stand, And the rulers were gathered together Against the LORD and against His Christ.'

²⁵ ὁ διὰ στόματος Δαβὶδ τοῦ παιδός σου εἰπών,
Ίνατί ἐφρύάξαν ἔθνη, καὶ λαοὶ ἐμελέτησαν κενά;
²⁶ παρέστησαν οἱ βασιλεῖς τῆς γῆς, καὶ οἱ ἄρχοντες συνήχθησαν ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ κατὰ τοῦ Κυρίου, καὶ κατὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ αὐτοῦ.

The Apostles are quoting Psalm 2:1-2 word for word from the LXX. And this Psalm gives us the assurance to know that God has a plan, and His plan will be accomplished exactly as He established it before the foundation of the world. He is the Despot, the absolute ruler, our sovereign God who knows the end from the beginning and He cannot be surprised. And the enemy cannot thwart the plan of God no matter how hard they try. There is extreme comfort in knowing this. That Jesus is King and that one day our enemies will be dealt with Righteously. This is why the Apostles lean on this Psalm specifically, because it promises victory and Righteous retribution over the enemy. Even though their enemies are coming against them, and even today, the enemy is still raging against God and against us for His Name's sake, but we can have comfort and confidence in our Sovereign God and His plan of redemption.

Let's go to Psalm 2 and look at this a little closer, because this Psalm becomes the basis of their prayer in Acts 4. So if we can understand Psalm 2, it brings us into a better understanding of the mindset of the Apostles as they cry out to God for boldness.

Let's look at the first three verses of Psalm 2...

Psalm 2:1-3 Why do the nations rage, And the people plot a vain thing? ² The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying, ³ “Let us break Their bonds in pieces and cast away Their cords from us.”

The kings of the earth and the rulers are coming together to take a stand against God... **against the LORD and against His Anointed**. “LORD” in the original Hebrew is, יְהָוָה, Yahweh, the Tetragrammaton. This is God the Father, and “His Anointed,” Χριστός, is of course His Son, Jesus Christ. In this Psalm, there is some great insight into the relationship of the Godhead because there is a conversation between God the Father and Jesus in these verses.

So David asks the question, “**Why do the nations rage and the people plot vain things?**” This word rage in both Acts and the LXX is φράσσω. It is only used this one time in the Bible, but in classic Greek they use it to describe the snorting of a high-spirited horse. It has the sense of haughtiness and arrogance. And the people plot vain things... they are planning and scheming ways to stand against God, but their schemes are in vain and fruitless because no one can overthrow God. But they are so arrogant and foolish, they actually think they can stand against God without any consequences.

Then in verse 3, David answers why they are doing this... they say, “**Let us break Their bonds in pieces and cast away Their cords from us.**” Notice it says, “Their bonds and Their cords.” This is plural because they are coming against both God the Father and Jesus Christ. The kings and rulers of the world do not want to submit to the authority of God as supreme ruler. They are trying to tear away from the bonds of God and throw away the yoke that connects them to Him. As human beings, Paul tells us we are slaves to that which we obey. We are either slaves to sin or slaves to God, Rom 6:12-16; Matt 6:24. Paul continually described himself as a bondservant of God, Rom 1:1; 2 Cor 4:5; Gal 1:10; Eph 6:6; Phil 1:1; Col 4:12; 2 Tim 1:8; 2:24; Titus 1:1. As Christians, we are set free from sin by surrendering our lives to Jesus Christ as His bondservants. We humble ourselves in complete submission to His authority. But the rulers of this world will not do this. In fact, they are trying as hard as they can to rebel against this authority, to tear off the chains and break the bonds that might tie them to God. And they are doing this by rebelling against His Righteousness. They are doing everything in their power to rebel against God and His Holiness because they do not want to submit to God. They want to be their own gods.

But look at God's response in verse 4...

Psalm 2:4 He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; the LORD shall hold them in derision.

“He who sits in the heavens shall laugh...” These rulers think they can actually overthrow God and His Christ. It says God is sitting in heaven laughing at their useless plans. And it says... **“the LORD, Adonai, shall hold them in derision.”** This again is showing two beings in Heaven, the Father and His Christ. In this case Jesus is referred to as “Lord Adonai,” the same as in Psalm 110:1. This word derision means “to jeer, to tease, or laugh at.” The enemy will suffer a humiliating defeat, and they already have at the cross, Col 2:15; Esther 6:6-11, Rev 19:11-16. There is nothing the enemy can do to surprise God, and God is not going to put up with this rebellion forever. Look at verse 5...

Psalm 2:5 Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, and distress them in His deep displeasure:

There is coming a Day when all God's enemies will be placed under His feet when He comes back in Righteous Wrath and Judgement in the Day of the Lord, **Isaiah 13:4-13**.

Verses 6-9 tell us exactly how the Father will unleash His Righteous Wrath on these unbelievers. It is through His Son. At this point in the Psalm, Jesus Christ begins speaking to the Father. And we see Jesus declaring a promise that the Father said to Him. It is clearer in the LXX, He says in verse 6...

Psalm 2:6-7 “And I [Jesus] have been appointed King by Him [the Father] upon His holy mount Zion. ⁷ Declaring the decree that the Lord, יְהָוָה, Yahweh, said to Me [Jesus], ‘You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.’

When did the Father say this to Jesus? Remember we spoke about this in lesson 9, Acts 2:35. Paul tells us in Acts 13:33 that this was a prophecy of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is when the Father raised Jesus out from the grave. Remember in Hebrews 1:5-6 the Father said to Jesus, “*You are My Son, today I have begotten You, and again I will be to Him a Father and He shall be to Me a Son.*” Jesus was the firstborn from the dead, the prototokos, the first to be born again from death to life out from the grave, Col 1:18. In verse 8, the Father continues speaking to Jesus saying...

Psalm 2:8 Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession.

The Father says, “*Ask of Me...*” When does this happen? In Revelation 5, when Jesus takes the scroll, the title deed of the earth from the Father. This is His inheritance, the right to rule as King of kings and Lord of lords; to be the preeminent One over all creation, and to be given the Name that is above every name, **Hebrews 1:3-4; Phil 2:8-11**; Col 1:15, Isaiah 53:10-12; Ephesians 1:18-23. He has been given the right to rule as King of kings and Lords of lords over all the earth and included in His inheritance is the fact that He will take Righteous vengeance on His enemies. Look at verses 8-9...

Psalm 2:8-9 Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession ⁹ You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter’s vessel.

The right to rule as our Sovereign and Holy God in Righteousness and Truth is His inheritance. This is why He doesn’t want us acting in vengeance. The Bible is clear that vengeance is mine says the Lord, **Deut 32:34-35, 43**; Rom 12:19; Ps 94:1, 14. This is His right and responsibility, and it has been granted to Him by the Father, **Revelation 2:25-27; 19:15-16**; 2 Thess 1:3-10.

We give the vengeance to Him. That is His right and responsibility, so then what is our responsibility as the nations are raging against God? It’s not vengeance, its prayer and Truth, **Rom 12:19-21**; Matt 5:44; 1 Tim 2:1-4. We pray for our enemies and preach the Truth. This is what the Apostles are doing in Acts 4. They are praying for boldness to preach the Word in the midst of persecution. This is the great commission, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel,” Matt 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Lk 24:47-48. So even in the midst of persecution, and the nations raging, and kings taking their stand, we preach Truth. We preach the Gospel so that some might be saved. That’s our responsibility. God, in His Righteousness, because of the cross, has given an opportunity for Mercy for those who repent, while they are still alive, and before the coming of that great and awesome Day of the Lord, Acts 2:20-21. He is offering Mercy through the gift of His Son. The Day of the Lord is coming and will most certainly come, but He is delaying final Judgement so that some might be saved from His Wrath, **2 Pet 3:9-10**.

There is a period of Grace that we are living in right now in which His Righteous Wrath is tarrying for the sake of those who might repent and come to Him. And that is what we see in these final three verses of Psalm 2...

Psalm 2:10-12 Now therefore, be wise, O kings; Be instructed, you judges of the earth. **11** Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. **12** Kiss the Son (LXX- take hold of His correction and instruction), lest He be angry, and you perish in the way (LXX- lest you be destroyed from the Way of Righteousness, when His anger burns forth quickly). Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.

This is the Gospel in Psalm 2. Repent from your rebellion against God and His Christ, listen to His correction, take hold of the Son lest you be destroyed by Righteous Wrath that will certainly come in that Day of the Lord. But blessed are all those who have faith in Jesus Christ. The Blessing of Everlasting Life comes upon all who put their trust in Him.

Now let's go back to Acts chapter 4 and overlay the Apostle's prayer with Psalm 2 and see why they quoted this Psalm in their prayer...

25 who by the mouth of Your servant David have said: 'Why did the nations rage, And the people plot vain things? **26** The kings of the earth took their stand, And the rulers were gathered together Against the LORD and against His Christ.' **27** "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 **28** to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done.

25 ὁ διὰ στόματος Δαβὶδ τοῦ παιδός σου εἰπών,
Ἴνατί ἐφρύαξαν ἔθνη, καὶ λαοὶ ἐμελέτησαν κενά;

26 παρέστησαν οἱ βασιλεῖς τῆς γῆς, καὶ οἱ
ἄρχοντες συνήθησαν ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ κατὰ τοῦ
Κυρίου, καὶ κατὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ αὐτοῦ.

27 συνήθησαν γὰρ ἐπ' ἀληθείας, ἐπὶ τὸν ἄγιον
παῖδά σου Ἰησοῦν, ὃν ἔχρισας, Ἡρώδης τε καὶ
Πόντιος Πιλάτος, σὺν ἔθνεσι καὶ λαοῖς Ἰσραὴλ,
28 ποιῆσαι ὅσα ἡ χείρ σου καὶ ἡ βουλὴ σου προώρισε
γενέσθαι.

The Apostles compare Psalm 2 and relate this with those who were in opposition to God and Jesus Christ in their day. The kings of the earth and the rulers who took their stand against God and Jesus Christ were Herod and Pontius Pilate. The nations who raged are the lawless hands of Rome, and the people who plot vain things are the people of Israel who cried out "crucify Him," and asked for a murderer to be granted to them, Acts 3:14. These all stood together against the Lord's Anointed, His Holy Servant Jesus. But none of this was a surprise to God. He laughs in the heavens at their futile schemes. And this is still happening today. The nations are raging, kings and rulers are taking a stand against God, the people of the world are growing in hatred against the Righteousness of God. It's still happening even today, but be of good cheer, Jesus has overcome the world and God is not surprised by any of this.

Look at verse 28... it says He uses their futile plans for His purpose... **to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done**. These dishonorable vessels were weaved into His plan before the foundation of the world according to His infinite foreknowledge and His plan of redemption will not and cannot be stopped, **Acts 2:23**.

So the Apostles, after acknowledging God's absolute rule and having faith and confidence in His plan, they continue in verses 29-30 with their requests...

29 Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your Word, **30** by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the Name of Your holy Servant Jesus.

29 καὶ τὰ νῦν, Κύριε, ἔπιδε ἐπὶ τὰς ἀπειλὰς αὐτῶν,
καὶ δὸς τοῖς δούλοις σου μετὰ παρρησίας πάσης
λαλεῖν τὸν λόγον σου,

30 ἐν τῷ τὴν χειρά σου ἐκτείνειν σε εἰς ἵασιν, καὶ
σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα γίνεσθαι διὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος τοῦ
ἄγιον παιδός σου Ἰησοῦ.

They don't ask for protection from the persecution, they ask for the boldness to endure the persecution... that they might have the boldness to continue to speak His Word. They know it's illegal to speak in the Name of Jesus, but they are choosing to obey God rather than man, and they ask for the boldness to proclaim His Name.

In verse 29, the Apostles call themselves servants of God. This is what the kings of the earth in Psalm 2 refused to do. They refused to submit to the bonds of serving the Lord Jesus Christ. And as servants of God, notice their request... that they speak the Word of God with boldness, and ... **by stretching out Your Hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the Name of Jesus**. Remember back at the beginning of chapter 3 it was the healing of the lame man that started this boldness to preach. And they are asking for this to continue through His Name. They are yielding themselves to the Holy Spirit as honorable vessels to do His work as He wills, all for the glory of Jesus Christ. This prayer is answered immediately in verse 31...

31 And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the Word of God with boldness.

³¹ καὶ δεηθέντων αὐτῶν ἐσαλεύθη ὁ τόπος ἐν ᾧ
ἡσαν συνηγμένοι, καὶ ἐπλήσθησαν ἄπαντες
Πνεύματος Ἅγιου, καὶ ἐλάλουν τὸν λόγον τοῦ
Θεοῦ μετὰ παρρησίας.

Immediately they are filled with the Holy Spirit. Notice this is an additional filling. The Apostles were already filled on the Day of Pentecost, now here they are filled again because the filling of the Holy Spirit is continual as you are serving Him. It is like rivers of living water continually flowing in and out through you to do His will. And we see the answer to their prayers in the next chapter as signs and wonders and boldness increase, **Acts 5:12, 14-16**. Even though it was illegal to preach and teach in the Name of Jesus, God's mighty Hand prevailed, and many people continued to be healed and saved unto Everlasting Life through His Name.

So that's the challenge for us. Even though circumstances in the world might be bleak, and we see the nations raging against God, just remember that God is laughing in the heavens at their puny schemes. So, if He's not worried, then we shouldn't be worried either. Remember that Jesus is King, and we must continue to seek first the Kingdom of God and His Righteousness, be faithful to the end as servants of God, and you will receive unending joy and Everlasting Life with Him.