

Royal Rebellion, Part 1

Several years ago a high-rise hotel was built in Galveston, Texas, overlooking the Gulf of Mexico. In fact, they sank pilings into the gulf and built the structure out over the water. When the hotel was about to have its grand opening, someone thought, “What if people decide to fish out the hotel windows?” So they placed signs in the hotel rooms, “No fishing out the hotel windows.” Many people ignored the signs, however, and it created a difficult problem. Lines got snarled. People in the dining room saw fish flapping against the picture windows. The manager of the hotel solved it all by taking down those little signs. Now, no one checks into a hotel room thinking about fishing out of the windows.

Why did the hotel guests fish out the hotel windows in the Gulf of Mexico?

Why did Adam and Eve eat fruit from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil?

Why do we walk on the grass when the sign reads, “Do not walk on the grass.”

Because we are inherently rebellious!

What is true of us individually is also true of the nations, primarily because the leaders of nations are rebellious against God. David wrote about the rebellion of the nations in Psalm 2.

Psalm 2 is a Royal Psalm, i.e., a Psalm written by or about royalty. Psalm 2 was written by David about his coronation. Psalm 72, another Royal Psalm, was written by Solomon about his coronation.

1. Historically, Royal Psalms speak of David as the Lord’s vice-regent or co-leader over Israel who ruled in Jerusalem or Zion, the capital of God’s universe as Psalm 48:2 describes. Psalm 2 describes “a celebration at the coronation of David despite opposition by rebellious people in surrounding territories, such as the Philistines. In a word, the psalmist exhorted the pagan nations to abandon their rebellious plans against the Lord and His anointed king and to submit to the authority of the Son whom God has ordained to rule the nations with a rod of iron” (BKC, page 791).

2. Prophetically, Some Royal Psalms speak of Jesus who will reign as King of kings from Jerusalem for 1000 years and the New Jerusalem eternally. Jesus will rule for 1000 years in spite of the nations that refuse to submit to Him. So Psalm 2 is not only a Royal Psalm but the first Messianic Psalm. Psalm 2 is quoted by several NT writers as referring to Christ: Luke in Acts 4:25, Paul, the writer of Hebrews.

So, who is your King? Of late, NBA basketball star James LeBron has been praised as King James by the media and himself especially after he signed as a free agent with the Miami Heat. But not all agree. Here is a comment by one on our young men on *Facebook*:

“That is the truth! And personally, I think neither Kobe nor LeBron are worthy of shining MJ’s shoes... But MJ can’t even begin to compare to The Real King (Not a self-proclaimed king named

LeBron). And if He were to play basketball, he would beat the Miami Heat by Himself! His throne is a lot higher than LeBron's 40 inch vertical leap. I just wish people would understand that's what we should be excited about. What if we all gave an hour of our time at night to God, instead of watching an overhyped athlete who hasn't won anything in his life sign a contract?"
Zack Walker on Facebook

This Fourth of July we celebrated Freedom and Independence as a nation. We were not founded as some believe in rebellion against the British government and therefore God who instituted human government. We were established by our founding fathers who wanted freedom from tyranny in obedience to what they thought was God's will.

Like Psalm 2, Proverbs 14:34 addresses and warns Gentile nations: "Righteousness exalts a nation but sin is a reproach to any people."

Psalm 1 and 2 form the introduction to the Psalms with a clear contrast of the individual's relationship to God (Psalm 1) and the nations' relationship to God (Psalm 2). Psalm 1 opens with conditions for the individual to meet to be blessed by God: "Blessed is the man." Psalm 2 opens with a question as to why nations are rebelling against God: "Why do the nations rage?"

Psalm 1 opens with a benediction or blessing for the obedient individual believer. Happiness is the result of the individual's obedience to the Word or "law" (1:1).

Psalm 2 closes with a benediction or blessing for the nation. Happiness is the result of the nation's submission to God's authority (2:12).

Psalm 1 contrasts the godly and ungodly individual.

Psalm 2 contrasts the godly and ungodly nations.

Psalm 1 emphasizes precepts which must be obeyed by the individual believer.

Psalm 2 emphasizes the prophecy of the nations that rebel.

In Psalm 1, the wicked individual is driven away like the chaff (1:3).

In Psalm 2, the wicked nations are broken in pieces like a piece of pottery (2:9).

Not only must the individual submit to God's rule and not rebel, but also our nation.

Our nation must submit to God's rule because of the following reasons.

1. Because It Is Futile Not to Submit (2:1-3)

A. Why do Nations Rebel? David in 2:1 expresses his astonishment with a rhetorical question at the futility of any people rebelling against God. It is more feasible for an ant to attack and conquer the combined armed forces of the United States military. Isaiah compared the nations to a drop in a bucket or a grain of sand in the Almighty palm of God (Isaiah 40:12). It is "vain" to rebel against God. David's son, Solomon, wrote the entire book of Ecclesiastes about the vanity of vanities of not being right with God.

B. Who Rebels? The people rebel in 2:1 because their leaders rebel in 2:2. The early church

applied these verses in Acts 4:25-27 to the leaders who rejected Christ at first coming. Yet these early believers recognized that these rebellious leaders instead of frustrating God's plan were actually accomplishing what God had foreordained: "To do whatsoever your hand and you counsel determined before to be done." Proverbs 21:1 declares this same truth: "The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as rivers of water: he turns it whithersoever he will."

C. Against Whom do They Rebel? They rebel against God "the LORD" when they rebel against "his anointed."

1) Historically, David was his anointed at the time of the writing of Psalm 2. The Jebusites and the Philistines were David's enemies who rebelled against God's representatives (2 Samuel 5:17). God adopted the Davidic kings as His sons according to Psalm 2:6 and the Davidic covenant in 2 Samuel 7:14: "I will be his father, and he shall be my son."

Someone well said, "To rebel against God's leader who is held in God's hand is to rap the knuckles of God." David called Goliath who was attacking God's nation an "uncircumcised Philistine" or a opponent against God not just Israel and her leaders.

2) Prophetically, Christ is the anointed. Christ is the Davidic Son as Matthew 1:1 identifies. In Acts 4:26, the persecuted early church recognized Christ as God's anointed whom governmental leaders rebelled against.

a. We are to obey our leaders and pray for them (1 Timothy 2:1-6). We are to pray the leaders on a national, state, and local level will follow the laws of God so we can peaceably live for God. When they disobey the laws of God,

b. We are to expose their sins when they rebel against God (Acts 4:27).

In 1 Samuel 10, when God raised up the long prophesied monarchy, He also instituted the school of prophets to watchdog the kings of Israel. Preachers also have a prophetic ministry in this Old Testament sense of rebuking and correcting governmental leaders when they disobey the God who raised them up.

This is God's Checks and Balances. In addition to the Legislature, Judicial, Executive Branch of our government, there is also the Prophetic Branch. When governmental leaders promote homosexuality and abortion, God's preachers must lift up their voices like a trumpet and cry out and show their sin.

D. How did They Rebel? "Rage" in 2:1 is a general word for rebel. The specific steps of rebellion are now given.

1) First, they think rebellion. The "imagine" in 2:1 is the same as "mediate" in Psalm 1:2. In Psalm 1:2 is the thought life of the godly individual believer. In Psalm 2:1 is contrasted the thought life of the ungodly nation. Ungodly leaders mediate or plot how they can circumvent God's revealed will for a nation.

What are we mediating on as a nation? What fills our minds as a nation? What are the

best sellers our nation is reading? What are the top of the charts musical hits our nation is listening to? What are the blockbuster box office movies our nation is watching? What Paul said to us individually certainly must be applied to our country: “Be not conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Romans 12:1, 2).

- 2) Next, they act or “set themselves” against God. What we think on and mediate about eventually is flesh out in our actions. The writer of Proverbs knew this very well: “As he thinks in his heart, so is he” (Proverbs 23:7). This verse is quoted in Revelation 19:19 in the ultimate rebellion against the Lord and His anointed at the 2nd Coming of Christ: “And I saw the beast (Anti-Christ) and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse and against his army.” Here is the culmination of secular values and world views and it’s destruction with the sword of King Jesus.
- 3) Finally, they give voice to their rebellion: “Saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us” (Psalm 2:3). “Bands” (v. 3) refers to the harness of a work animal. The rebellious nations considered God’s control as a kind of slavery from which to be freed.¹ Against Christ the nation of Israel voiced their rebellion saying, “We will not have this man reign over us.” “Crucify Him, Crucify Him.” Rebellion cannot remain silent. Or as Jesus said, “Out of the abundance of a man’s heart, the mouth speaks.”
 - a. Individual sinners and nations want their freedom from God’s authority.
 - b. God gives individual sinners and nations freedom to rebel.
 - c. But God does not give them freedom from the consequences of their rebellion.
A nation cannot rebel against God’s law with impunity. An individual sinner cannot reject Christ without eternal repercussions.

Warren Wiersbe wrote about an incidence in a frontier town in which a horse bolted and ran away with a wagon that had a little boy in it. Seeing that the child was in danger, a young man risked his life to catch the horse and stop it. The child who was saved grew up to become a lawless man, and one day he stood before a judge to be sentenced for a serious crime. The prisoner recognized the judge as the man who, years before, had saved his life; so he pled for mercy on the basis on that experience. But the words from the bench silenced all of his pleas: “Young man, then I was your savior; today I am your judge, and I must sentence you to be hanged” (Warren W. Wiersbe. *Meet Yourself in the Psalms*. Pages 108-109).

One day Jesus Christ will say to rebellious sinners, “During your life I could have been your Savior. I died for you. But today I am your Judge: ‘Depart from me you cursed into everlasting fire.’”

Paschall, F. H., & Hobbs, H. H. (1972). *The Teacher's Bible Commentary: A concise, thorough interpretation of the entire Bible designed especially for Sunday School teachers* (293). Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers.