

**BIBLE
PROPHECY**

Insights



The Message of Psalm 2



Observations by the Editor

Psalm 2

This ministry was only six months old when the Holy Spirit directed my attention to the great prophetic message of Psalm 2. As I read the psalm one day it exploded in my heart, and it kindled a fire within me that I could not contain. Suddenly, I knew what Jeremiah meant when he wrote about the message God had laid on his heart:

Then in my heart it becomes like
a burning fire
Shut up in my bones;
And I am weary of holding it in,
And I cannot endure it.
Jeremiah 20:9

I had grown up in a church that put no emphasis whatsoever on Bible prophecy, and on the rare occasions when end time prophecy was preached, it was spiritualized into meaninglessness. I had never heard a sermon based on Psalm 2.

It was hard for me to believe that anyone could overlook the powerful message of this psalm about the glorious Second Coming of Jesus. But then, my childhood church was also one that taught the Old Testament had been “nailed to the cross” and was no longer relevant to us today. So, we rarely studied any passages from the Hebrew Scriptures. The Old Testament was relegated to the children’s ministry for the telling of stories like Noah and the Ark.

In the 1960’s, as I began to study the Old Testament earnestly, I soon discovered that the only portion of it that had been “nailed to the cross” was the Law of Moses (Colossians 2:14 and Hebrews 8:13). The histories, the poetic literature, and the prophecies were still as valid as ever. And even the moral laws of the Law of Moses had been carried over to the New Testament in expanded form, applying to thoughts as well as actions (Matthew 5:21-22).

I was astonished to discover that there are more than 500 prophecies in the Old Testament concerning the Second Coming of Jesus. This was quite a revelation for a fellow who had been taught all his life that all Old Testament prophecies had been fulfilled in the First Coming of Jesus.



Dr. David R. Reagan

There were two passages of Scripture that had always been used to prove that all Old Testament prophecy had been fulfilled. The first was Luke 24:44 where Jesus is recorded as having said “that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” That statement is absolutely true. All prophecies concerning Jesus will ultimately be fulfilled. But the statement does not say they have already been fulfilled.

The other passage is Acts 3:18 where Peter proclaimed in a sermon that all the prophecies concerning the Messiah’s suffering had been fulfilled in Jesus. Again, that statement is correct, but it applies only to the suffering prophecies concerning the Messiah as a Suffering Lamb. The prophecies that portray Him as a Conquering Lion are yet to be fulfilled.

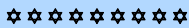
The Apostle Peter made it clear in 1 Peter 1:11 that the Old Testament contains prophecies that relate to both the First and Second Comings of the Messiah: “. . . the Spirit of Christ within them [the prophets] was indicating . . . the sufferings of Christ *and the glories to follow*” (emphasis added). Likewise, in Romans 11:12,15 the Apostle Paul refers to Old Testament prophecies concerning the Jews that are yet to be fulfilled.

Since 1980 I have preached the message of Psalm 2 more than 200 times. The message has developed over the years as I have come to understand it better and better. As I continue preaching it, I look forward to new insights from the Holy Spirit. Most of all, I look forward to its fulfillment when Jesus returns to this earth to rule in glory and majesty. *Maranatha!* ✚

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Are you SWEATING the end times?

The Message of Psalm 2

Dr. David R. Reagan

And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and upon the earth dismay among nations . . . men fainting from fear and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. — Luke 21:25-26

We live in a world gripped by fear. Among all segments of society and all nations of the world, there is a foreboding sense that we are marching toward some cataclysmic consummation of history.

The news is filled with reports of increasing violence — muggings, kidnappings, child abuse, terrorism, wars, and rumors of wars. We seem to be bombarded by an endless stream of natural calamities such as earthquakes, famines, hurricanes, floods, and fires. And the increasing immorality continues to spawn new diseases that threaten Man's very existence.

Significant too is the fact that all these frightful trends are taking place within the context of a world armed to the teeth with nuclear weapons. And to make things worse, these weapons of mass destruction are now spreading to irresponsible outlaw nations like Iran and North Korea. We have giant weapons in the hands of moral pygmies.

All the while, the nations of the world continue on their spending binge, piling debt on debt, preparing the way for a colossal worldwide economic collapse.

The Reality of Fear

In the midst of the Great Depression, President Franklin Roosevelt tried to rally a despondent nation by declaring, "There is nothing to fear but fear itself." Those words ring hollow today as we face a multiplicity of very real and unprecedented fears.

It is no wonder that people are scared. They are afraid of losing their jobs, their homes, and their life savings. They fear for their personal well-being, the safety of their children, and the security of their nation. They are frightened by the prospect of menacing plagues and the potential for devastating civil disorder. And lurking in the background is always the possibility of nuclear holocaust.

People are desperately searching for security. They are buying guns and securing their houses with electronic devices. They are altering their lifestyles to protect themselves against the violence of muggers and diseases like AIDS. They are turning to Eastern religions and pop psychology to find solace for their souls.

Increasing Questions

As the world disintegrates before our eyes, even Christians are beginning to question the trends. Increasingly, Christians are asking: "Is God in control? Is evil going to triumph? Is there really any hope?"

The good news is that God in His grace and mercy gave the answers to these questions almost three thousand years ago when He spoke to the heart of a shepherd boy by the name of David ben Jesse. He gave the boy a poem that was short, sweet,



powerful, and full of hope. It contains a message that a fearful world desperately needs to hear today.

The poem is found in the Hebrew Bible. It is called Psalm 2. Let's take a look at it.

Rulers Scoff

Unlike most of the psalms, Psalm 2 does not have a superscription that identifies its author. But we know it was written by David ben Jesse because Luke, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, identified David as the author in Acts 4:25.

The psalm begins with the author lamenting the world's condition:

- 1 Why are the nations in an uproar,
And the peoples devising a vain thing?
- 2 The kings of the earth take their stand,
And the rulers take counsel together
Against the Lord and against His Anointed:
- 3 "Let us tear their fetters apart,
And cast away their cords from us!"

— Psalm 2:1-3

The language of these verses is rather stilted in the English translation, so let me try to put the words into modern English for you.

The psalmist is asking: "Lord, why is it that everywhere I look in the world the nations are in turmoil? Why are they always devising some vain thing to the glory of Man — things like the tower of Babel, the Roman Empire, the League of Nations, and the United Nations? Why is it, Lord, that the presidents, and prime ministers, and kings of the earth are always conspiring against You and Your Anointed One, Jesus? Why is it that the world's political leaders are always saying, 'Let's put aside the limitations of God's Word and cast away His laws and do what we please!'"

As you can see, nothing has changed in three thousand years. As in the time of David, the nations of the world today are still in full revolt against the Lord. And so it is that Psalm 2 is just as relevant as if it were written yesterday.

Probing Questions

One thing you must understand about Psalm 2 is that the questions which David poses at the beginning were not asked for the purpose of eliciting answers from God. David already knew the answers.

These are rhetorical questions, asked for the purpose of provoking thought. They are designed to motivate the reader to think about the nature of the world in which he lives, and to do so in response to what God's Word reveals about that world.

I say David knew the answers to the questions because the answers are provided in the book of Genesis, and David must have been familiar with that book as well as all the Torah — the first five books of the Hebrew Scriptures — if only by oral tradition.

A Phenomenal Gift

If you will think back for a moment to the opening pages of Genesis, you will remember that God presented an incredible gift to Adam and Eve shortly after their creation.

God gave them something on a silver platter that Hitler lusted for. He gave them something that Stalin dreamed of, that the Romans yearned for, and that Alexander the Great almost achieved. God gave them dominion over all the earth (Genesis 1:27-28).

But almost as soon as Adam and Eve had been given this gift, they lost it. When they rebelled against God, Satan stepped forward and stole the dominion that was intended for Man.

Satan became the prince of this earth. That is the reason Jesus referred to him as "the ruler of this world" (John 12:31). That is the reason that Satan could tempt Jesus by offering Him "all the kingdoms of the world" if Jesus would only worship him (Matthew 4:8-10). That would not have been a legitimate temptation if the kingdoms were not Satan's to give.

Even after the Cross, the apostle John stated that "the whole world lies in the power of the evil one" (1 John 5:19). The Cross sealed the ultimate fate of Satan, but that fate will not be experienced until Jesus returns and Satan is crushed beneath the feet of the Lord's people (Romans 16:20).

God's Sovereignty

The fact that Satan rules as the prince of this earth does not mean that God has lost control. Satan is not omnipotent. He has always operated within limits prescribed by God.

The oldest book in the Bible, the book of Job, begins by picturing Satan before the throne of God asking permission to afflict Job (Job 1:6-11). God gives him permission to touch all that Job has but denies him permission to take Job's life (Job 1:12).

Satan was further limited by the Cross, for since that time believers have been indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and "He who is in us is greater than he who is in the world" (1 John 4:4).

The book of Daniel makes it clear that God is the one who raises up nations and puts them down. As Daniel put it, "He [God] removes kings and establishes kings" (Daniel 2:21). Paul affirms this in the New Testament when he speaks of "governing authorities" and states that "there is no authority except from God" (Romans 13:1).

But the other side of the coin is the fact that the moment God puts someone in a position of governing authority, Satan comes against that person and attempts in every way possible to corrupt and compromise the person so that he ends up serving Satan's purposes.

It doesn't matter whether the person is a school board member, the governor of a province, or the president of a nation, Satan attempts to control all governing authorities. That is why we are so strongly urged to pray "for kings and all who are in authority" (1 Timothy 2:1-2).

Satan's Havoc

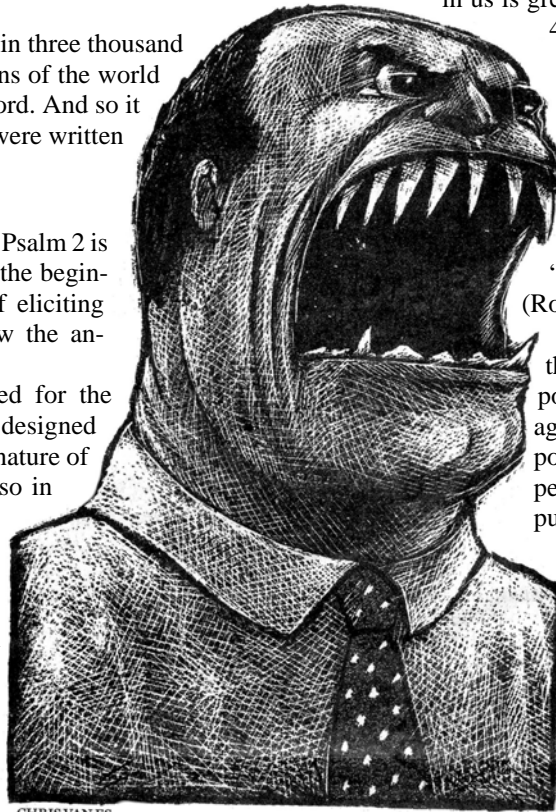
The Bible attests to this never-ending cycle of God appointing and Satan attacking. I think, for example, of the tragic story of Saul, the first king of Israel. He began

with such promise, having received a special anointing of God's Spirit that even enabled him to prophesy with the prophets (1 Samuel 10:1,6,9-11).

But Satan immediately encouraged Saul's pride and attacked him with a spirit of melancholy that drove him into fits of depression. Out of pride Saul began to "act foolishly," assuming for himself the duties of the priests (1 Samuel 13:8-13). In depression, he turned to mediums and witches for advice rather than relying on the prophets of God. The tragic result was that the Spirit of God departed from him (1 Samuel 16:14), and Saul committed suicide on the battlefield (1 Samuel 31:4).

In like manner, Solomon began his reign on his knees before the Lord, receiving a special anointing of wisdom and knowledge (2 Chronicles 1:7-12). His future looked so bright.

But Satan came against him, tempting him with worldly riches. Solomon's turning point came in the year when he received 666 talents of gold (1 Kings 10:14). From that point on, he became obsessed with three things: riches, women, and military power (1 Kings 11:1-8). He ended up doing "what was evil in the



CHRIS VAN ES

Fear and despair are being expressed increasingly in fits of rage. (Drawing from the *Dallas Morning News*.)

sight of the Lord” (I Kings 11:6).

The empire divided following Solomon’s death, and during the 209 year history of the northern kingdom of Israel, there was not one king who was considered good in God’s sight. The southern kingdom of Judah lasted a hundred years longer, but during its three hundred years, only 8 of its 20 kings were considered righteous by the Lord.

The Continuing Struggle

When the New Testament opens, we find the tug of war between God and Satan continuing. Satan inspires King Herod to slaughter all the babies of Bethlehem in an attempt to cut off the Messiah at His birth.

Later, Satan orchestrates a conspiracy between governing authorities who hated each other. He brings together the Roman governor and the Jewish Sanhedrin, and through their joint efforts he accomplishes the murder of the Messiah.

Satan’s triumph was, of course, short lived, for it was overcome by the victory of the Messiah’s resurrection. But Satan was not to be deterred for long. He renewed his relentless attacks on God’s sovereignty by launching an all out persecution of the Messiah’s followers.

When Satan realized that this persecution of the church was only spreading it and increasing its strength, he shifted to a new strategy — the wedding of the church and the state so that the church could be compromised. This occurred around 331 A.D., and it marked the beginning of the dark ages when the church became subservient to the state. The church quickly became penetrated by the world, and its testimony for Christ became secondary to the pursuit of politics.

But, thank God, Jesus had made an important promise concerning His church. He had promised that “the gates of Hades shall not overpower it” (Matthew 16:18). So, even during the darkest years of the Middle Ages, there was always a faithful remnant preserved by the Spirit of God.

Finally, the day came when Martin Luther nailed his theses to the door and called for a return to God’s Word. Satan was put on the defensive once again as the church experienced reformation and began to send out missionaries all over the world.

The Conflict in Our Time

As the 20th Century dawned, Satan went back on the offensive. He orchestrated one of his greatest victories with the birth of Communism in Russia in 1917. Satanism became incarnate in the atheistic ideology of the Communists as they attempted to exterminate both the church and God’s Word.

Simultaneously, Satan launched an internal attack on the Western democracies by energizing the philosophy of Secular

Humanism. The Judaic-Christian foundation of Western Civilization came under direct attack from within while the Communists hammered at it from without.

The Communist threat has collapsed from the weight of its own internal inconsistencies. But Satan has provided no breathing space. He continues to promote the advance of Secular Humanism, and he has brought about a resurgence of Islam.

The Focus of the Conflict

Perhaps the clearest example of Satan’s determination to exert his dominion in defiance of God’s will is to be found in his opposition to the re-establishment of the nation of Israel.

Throughout the Old Testament God promises repeatedly that in the end times He will regather the Jewish people from the four corners of the earth to the land of Israel (see Isaiah 11:10-12 and Ezekiel 36:22-37:12). God reveals that His purpose is to do a mighty work in the hearts of the Jews that will result in a remnant accepting His Son as their Messiah (Zechariah 12:10, 13:1 and Romans 9:27, 11:1-6, 25-32).

Satan hates this purpose of God because he hates the Jewish people with a passion. His hatred is fueled by the fact that God has used the Jewish people as a vehicle to bless all the nations of the world. Through the Jews, God gave the world the Scriptures. Through the Jews, God gave the Messiah.

Satan is determined to destroy the Jewish people so that God cannot keep His promise to bring a remnant to salvation. This is the reason that Satan is orchestrating all the nations of the earth against Israel today. God has raised up a nation that Satan, as the prince of this world, is determined to destroy.



The spread of terrorism has intensified our fears.

Rage vs. Laughter

I am personally outraged by Satan’s many attempts to frustrate and defeat the will of God in Israel and throughout the earth today. I often feel so frustrated that I want to shout, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging” by sending your Son back to reign in glory and majesty and righteousness and justice? (Revelation 6:10)

The only way I am able to restrain my anger is to remind myself of what God is doing in Heaven while I fume over Satan’s plots on this earth. Do you know what the Scriptures say God is doing?

He is laughing! Yes, God is sitting on His throne laughing — not because He doesn’t care, but because He has the world’s events under control. This may be hard to believe, but I can prove it to you. Let’s return to Psalm 2.

God Laughs

- 4 He who sits in the heavens laughs,
The Lord scoffs at them.
- 5 Then He will speak to them in His anger
And terrify them in His fury:
- 6 “But as for Me, I have installed My King
Upon Zion, My holy mountain.”

— Psalm 2:4-6

God laughs at Satan and all the politicians in league with him as they attempt to thwart God’s purposes in history. He laughs for three reasons.

First, the passage says, “The Lord scoffs at them.” The Hebrew here means literally that “the Lord has them in derision.”

In short, this means that no matter what Satan does, God sees to it that it backfires in his face to the glory of Jesus. Psalm 76:10 says that even “the wrath of Man” shall go to the praise of God.

Satan’s Frustration

In this regard, Satan has got to be the most frustrated personality on planet earth. All his schemes ultimately fail. All his plots sooner or later unravel.

The Cross is the classic example. Satan thought he had gained his greatest victory. Instead, it proved to be a defeat. God took history’s most dastardly event and converted it into something majestic through the power of the resurrection.

In World War I Satan managed to put together a conflict of unparalleled carnage, but God worked through the evil of that war to accomplish a spiritual purpose. He liberated the land called Palestine from the Turks and delivered it into the hands of the British who immediately proclaimed it to be a homeland for the Jews.

Likewise, during World War II, God worked through the incredible evil of Satan’s Holocaust to prepare the Jewish people for their homeland. They came out of the Holocaust saying, “Never again! Never again! We are going to have our own land, our own nation, our own state.” Accordingly, they began to return to Israel by the hundreds of thousands.

God used World War I to prepare the land for the people. He worked through World War II to prepare the people for the land. God sits in the heavens and laughs while Satan writhes in frustration.

A Day of Wrath

The second reason God is laughing is because “He will speak to them in His anger and terrify them in His fury” (Psalm 2:5). This statement refers to the fact that God has appointed a day when He will deal with all the kingdoms of the earth and their political leaders by pouring out His wrath through the return of His Son, Jesus the Messiah.

Paul spoke of this momentous day during his sermon on Mar’s Hill in Athens: “God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead” (Acts 17:30-31).

This day is often mentioned by the Old Testament prophets. They called it “the day of the Lord” (Joel 2:1). The prophet

Zephaniah described it as “a day of wrath, trouble, distress, destruction, desolation, darkness and gloom” (Zephaniah 1:15). He said that the Lord will bring such distress upon people that they will reel about, walking like blind men (Zephaniah 1:17).

Satan’s False God

This day of wrath that God has reserved for the rebellious nations of the world and their leaders is one of the best kept secrets in the universe. Satan doesn’t want anyone to know about it. In his attempt to cover it up, he has created a false image of God that has been bought by both Christians and unbelievers.

The false god Satan wants us to believe in is a push-over that could be characterized as “the cosmic teddy bear.” He is big and warm and soft and cuddly. And when we stand before him to be judged, he will put his arm around us, snuggle us up to him, and say, “I know you never accepted My Son as your Lord and Savior, but that’s okay, because you were a lot better person than the reprobate who lived down the street from you. So you just come on into My kingdom and enjoy eternal life with Me.”

No such namby-pamby god exists. He is a cruel hoax created by Satan. All of us stand condemned before the true God, for “all of us like sheep have gone astray” (Isaiah 53:6). Our only hope is through faith in Jesus (Romans 3:21-24). God does not grade on the curve nor is He some patsy who can be easily hoodwinked. God cannot be deceived or mocked (Galatians 6:7).

Yes, God is full of grace and mercy (Psalm 86:15), and He does not desire that any should perish (2 Peter 3:9), but He is also a God of perfect righteousness, holiness, and justice — and as such, He cannot countenance sin.

God must deal with sin, and He does so with either grace or wrath. That is why John the Baptist declared that every person on earth is under either the grace of God or His wrath (John 3:36).

“God is not a cosmic teddy bear who winks at sin.”

A Coming Reign

The passage in Psalm 2 indicates a third reason that God is laughing. God explains it by saying, “As for Me, I have installed My King upon Zion My holy mountain” (Psalm 2:6).

The wording here is very interesting. God speaks of a future event — the Millennial reign of Jesus — as if it were an accomplished historical fact. This strange manner of speaking of the future as if it were past is a very common feature of Bible prophecy — so common, in fact, that theologians have coined a word for it. They call it “proleptic” speech.

Such speech is particularly characteristic of God in the Scriptures. The reason is that God is not in time as we are. We are on a time line. We have a past, a present, and a future. God is outside of time. If He wills something, it is accomplished, whether or not it has yet happened in history as we know it.

Take for example the crucifixion of Jesus. We think of it as happening 2,000 years ago on the outskirts of Jerusalem — and it did, as we perceive time. But when did the crucifixion take place as God sees time? The Bible says that Jesus was slain “from the foundation of the world” (Revelation 13:8) because that is when God willed it.

The proleptic principle is best expressed by God Himself in 2 Kings 19:25 — “Have you not heard? Long ago I did it; from ancient times I planned it. Now I have brought it to pass.”

But let’s get back to our point. The point is that God sits in the heavens and laughs at the rebellious kingdoms of the earth

because He has ordained that one day soon His Son will return as “King of kings and Lord of lords” (Revelation 19:16) to reign over all the earth and bring it into submission to God’s perfect will (Isaiah 9:6-7).

An Unfulfilled Promise

How do we know this is a proleptic statement — that although it is stated in the past tense, it is a promise yet to be fulfilled? The answer is obvious — namely, there is no fulfillment in history. Does Jesus reign today as King of kings from Mount Zion in Jerusalem? Has He ever?

There are those who argue that He is spiritually reigning over the nations of the earth. If so, then He is doing a very poor job, for the earth is dominated by evil rebellion against God.

When you consider what the Bible says will be the characteristics of the Lord’s reign over the earth, it is easy to see that the reign is yet future. Isaiah 11 says the reign will be characterized by righteousness, fairness, and faithfulness. Are these the characteristics of national governments today? In that same chapter Isaiah says “the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea” (Isaiah 11:9). How could anyone argue that such a prophecy has been fulfilled?

The promise of God in Psalm 2 that His Son will one day rule over all the earth is yet future. The King is coming! The kings of the earth are living on borrowed time. They plot and connive, but their fate is sealed. So, God sits in the heavens and laughs.

Jesus Proclaims

The next spokesman in Psalm 2 is Jesus Himself. He makes a glorious proclamation about the future in which He confirms His Father’s intention to establish Him as the King of kings:

- 7 I will surely tell of the decree of the Lord:
He said to Me, “You are My Son,
Today I have begotten You.
- 8 Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as
Your inheritance,
And the very ends of the earth as Your possession.
- 9 You shall break them with a rod of iron,
You shall shatter them like earthenware.”

— Psalm 2:7-9

The Begotten One

Jesus begins His proclamation by repeating the Father’s promise to Him that He will one day rule from Mount Zion over “the very ends of the earth.” It is a promise that undoubtedly dates back to the foundation of the world itself. I say that because the Bible tells us that Jesus was foreknown as the Savior who would shed His blood “from before the foundation of the world” (1 Peter 1:19-20, Revelation 13:8, and Ephesians 1:4).

Because Jesus is the Worthy Lamb who was slain for the sins of Man (Revelation 5:9), He is the only one eligible to assert dominion over God’s creation. In that sense, He is the “only begotten” (John 1:14,18) — the only Anointed One of God who is authorized to act in the Father’s behalf as the Regent of planet earth.

This sense of meaning is reflected in the Living Bible’s



paraphrase of Jesus’ proclamation:

I will reveal the everlasting purposes of God, for the Lord has said to me, “You are my Son. This is your Coronation Day. Today I am giving you your glory. Only ask, and I will give you all the nations of the world.” — Psalm 2:7-8

Note that the statement, “Today I have begotten You,” is paraphrased to present the real meaning: “This is your Coronation Day.” That is why Jesus could address Himself to the church at Philadelphia as the one “who has the key of David” (Revelation 3:7). He is the fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant and its promise (Psalm 89:3-4): “I have made a covenant with My chosen; I have sworn to David My servant, ‘I will establish your seed forever, and build up your throne to all generations.’”

Once again, keep in mind that the Father’s promise to Jesus is yet to be fulfilled. Remember, Jesus was “slain from the foundation of the world” (Revelation 13:8) because that is when the Father willed it to happen. But the Father’s will did not become an historical reality until thousands of years later. In like manner, Jesus was crowned from the foundation of the world — also because the Father willed it then — but it is an event that is yet to take place in history.

The Roles of Jesus

The first time Jesus came, He came as our Suffering Savior (Isaiah 53). After His resurrection, He became our High Priest (Hebrews 4:14-16). He continues in that capacity today, ministering as the mediator of our prayers before the throne of God (Hebrews 8:1-2). But one day very soon He will return, and when He does so, He will return as our Glorious King to reign over all the nations of the world (Revelation 19:16).

Jesus is not serving as a king now. He is never pictured as currently being the king of this world or the king of the church. His relationship to the church is portrayed as being like the head to the body (Ephesians 5:23) or a bridegroom to a bride (Revelation 19:6-9).

Jesus is a king-in-waiting. The situation is like that which prevailed in the life of David for many years. David was anointed the King of Israel by Samuel. But David had to wait many years before he was coronated. Likewise, Jesus has been anointed King of kings and Lord of lords, but He will not be crowned as such in history until He returns to earth.

An Incredible Inheritance

When Jesus does return, the promises of Psalm 2 will be fulfilled to Him. The first of those promises is that He will inherit the earth — “the very ends of the earth” will become His possession (Psalm 2:8).

There is a popular myth that when Jesus returns the earth will burn up and cease to exist. That can’t be true because the Bible affirms that the earth is “eternal” (Psalm 148:6, Psalm 78: 69, and Ecclesiastes 1:4).

It is true that the earth will be radically changed when the Lord returns. The change agents will be earthquakes and supernatural phenomena in the heavens (Revelation 6:12-13). We are told that every island will be moved and that every mountain will be lowered and every valley raised (Revelation 6:14 and Isaiah 40:4). The image that is portrayed is one of the earth's surface being smoothed out, with Jerusalem being lifted up to become the highest point on the face of the planet (Micah 4:1).

The earth will also be refreshed. The deserts will bloom (Isaiah 35:1,6-7). The hills will "drip with sweet wine" and "flow with milk" (Joel 3:18). The abundance of agriculture will be so great that "the plowman will overtake the reaper" in the sense that a new crop will be planted as fast as the old crop can be harvested (Amos 9:13). Even the Dead Sea will come alive and teem with fish (Ezekiel 47:8-9).

The animal kingdom will also be restored. We are told that the carnivorous animals will become herbivorous. Thus, "the lion will eat straw like the ox" (Isaiah 11:7). This change will enable the animals to live together in peace with each other and with Man. "The wolf will dwell with the lamb" (Isaiah 11:6), and a "nursing child will play by the hole of the cobra" because the cobra will no longer be poisonous (Isaiah 11:8).

The Eternal Earth

Even when the Millennium ends, the earth will not cease to exist. Instead, its fundamental nature will be changed once again. This time the change agent will be fire.

God will take the redeemed off this planet and put us in the New Jerusalem. From that vantage point we will watch as the Lord superheats the earth and burns away the pollution of Satan's last revolt.

Then, working with the earth like a hot ball of wax, the Lord will reshape it, and out of that flaming inferno will come a new earth, a perfected earth, an earth which will serve as our home eternally (Revelation 21:1).

Joint Heirs

God has promised to give that redeemed planet to His Son and to His joint heirs — namely, those who have received Jesus as their Lord and Savior. In Psalm 2, He promises the earth to His Son. In Psalm 37:11, He extends that promise to the redeemed: "The humble will inherit the earth." That promise is repeated in verses 22, 29, and 34.

These promises are the ones that Jesus referred to in His Sermon on the Mount when He said: "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth" (Matt. 5:5). Paul recognized that the same promise was inferred in the Abrahamic Covenant when he wrote that God's promise to Abraham and his descendants (by faith) is that they would "inherit the world" (Romans 4:13).

A Worldwide Reign

The second promise that the Father makes to His Son in Psalm 2 is a natural corollary of the first. Not only will Jesus inherit the earth, but He will also reign over it: "I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance . . . You shall break them with a rod of iron" (Psalm 2:8-9).

Jesus is coming to reign. That is one of the most persistent themes of the Scriptures from beginning to end. And again, the redeemed will be joint heirs of this promise. We will reign with Jesus.

These truths were graphically portrayed to Daniel in a series of night visions. In one he saw the "Son of Man" appear before the "Ancient of Days" and receive dominion and a kingdom that included "all the peoples, nations, and men of every language" (Daniel 7:13-14). Then Daniel was told that "the saints of the Highest One" would receive the kingdom and would exercise "the sovereignty, the dominion, and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven" (Daniel 7:18,27).

In the book of Revelation Jesus promises that He will give overcomers "authority over the nations" and they will rule over the nations "with a rod of iron" (Revelation 2:26,27).

In Revelation 4, when John is raptured to Heaven and finds himself in the throne room of God, he hears the heavenly host singing a song of praise to Jesus. In the song the statement is made that those who have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb have been made a kingdom, and "they will reign upon the earth" (Revelation 5:9-10).

The Glory of the Lord

And what will be the purpose of all this? There are many reasons for the Millennial reign of Jesus. God is going to use that period of time to fulfill promises He has made to the nations, to nature, to a remnant of the Jews, and to the Saints. But the fundamental purpose is to fulfill His promise to His Son that He will one day be glorified in history, just as He was humiliated in history.

This promise is a persistent theme of the Scriptures. It is the essence of the Father's promise in Psalm 2, and it is echoed throughout the Bible, in both the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament.

The prophet Isaiah says that when the Lord returns in "terror" and in the "splendor of His majesty," all proud men will be humbled, and "the Lord alone will be exalted in that day" (Isaiah 2:10-11). The Lord's name will be honored, and He will be called "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6). He will return to manifest His glory before His Saints (Isaiah 24:2 3) and before the nations of the world (Isaiah 66:18).



Paul affirms this purpose of the Lord's return in 2 Thessalonians 1:10 where he states that Jesus is returning "to be glorified in His saints" and "to be marveled at among all who have believed."

The Spirit Warns

Psalm 2 begins with David speaking as a prophet, lamenting over the way the world's rulers scoff at the Lord. It proceeds with the Lord laughing over the feeble attempts of men to frustrate His will. It is then punctuated by a proclamation of Jesus in which He announces His Father's promise that He, the Son, will one day triumph over all the kingdoms of the world.

The psalm concludes with a warning given by the Holy Spirit:

- 10 Now, therefore, O kings, show discernment;
Take warning, O judges of the earth.
- 11 Serve the Lord with reverence,
And rejoice with trembling.
- 12 Do homage to the Son, lest He become angry,
and you perish in the way,
For His wrath may soon be kindled.

— Psalm 2:10-12a

The Audience

The Spirit's warning is addressed to the kings and judges of the earth. It is a solemn call for the political leaders of the world to clean up their acts and submit themselves and their nations to the Lord's will before He bursts from the heavens in wrath.

Unfortunately, this stern warning seems forever to fall on deaf ears and hardened hearts. The warning was spoken 3,000 years ago, and power grubbing and political corruption continue unabated to this day. The world's political leaders continue to thumb their noses at God and mock His Anointed One.

But a "day of reckoning" (Isaiah 2:12) is fast approaching, and what a day it will be! The book of Revelation says that on that day "the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong . . ." will hide themselves in caves and will cry out to the rocks of the mountains: "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb" (Revelation 6:15-16).

The Lord has delayed the outpouring of His wrath because He does not desire that any should perish but that all should come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9). But there is a limit to the Lord's patience, and while He waits, "He reserves wrath for His enemies" (Nahum 1:2). The Lord may be slow to anger, but "He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished" (Nahum 1:3).

But the political leaders of the world are not the only audience for the Spirit's warning. The warning is also aimed at the redeemed, for — as I have already pointed out — we will one day serve as the kings and judges of this world. So, let the redeemed take notice of what we are called to do as we await the Lord's return.

A Call to Worship

First, we are called to "worship the Lord with reverence" (Psalm 2:11). The actual Hebrew word here is "serve" rather than "worship." But I like the use of the term, worship, because it emphasizes that our ultimate worship of the Lord is expressed in how we serve Him.

We so often think of worship only in terms of what we do



when we come together corporately as a congregation of believers. Don't get me wrong — corporate worship is extremely important. We were created to worship God (Deuteronomy 6:13), and God actively seeks people who are worshipping Him in spirit and truth (John 4:23).

But the ultimate worship is expressed in what we do when we leave the congregation and return to the world. Do those who come in contact with us recognize that we have been in the presence of the Lord? Do we return from worship "to bless our household," as was the case in King David's life? (2 Samuel 6:20)

Do you have a passion to worship God? Do you desire to celebrate Him for who He is and what He has done? And do you desire to express that worship not only with the praise of your lips but with the labor of your body and the money you have earned?

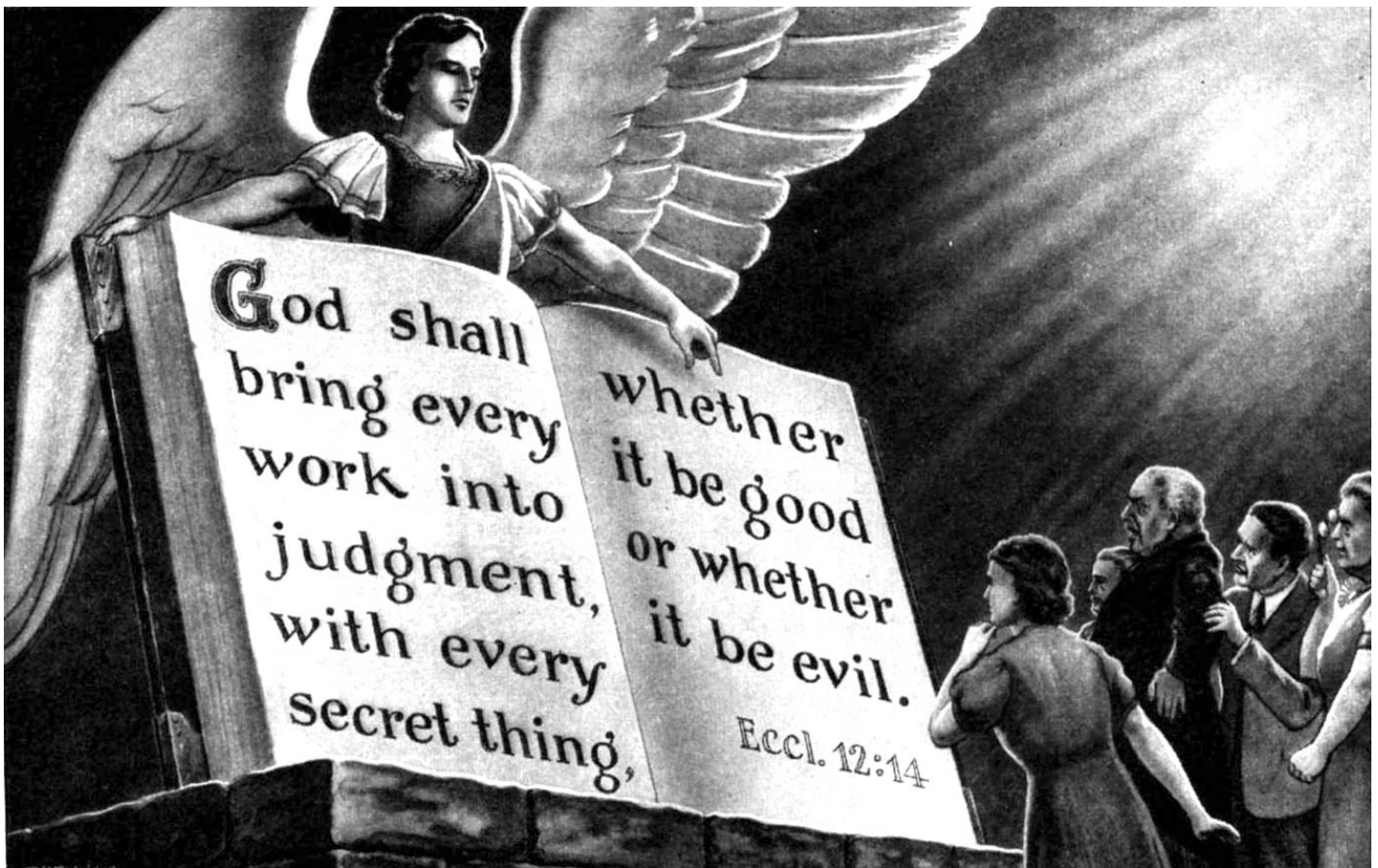
One other thing — Do you understand that one day soon You will stand before the Lord and be judged of your works?

A Call to an Unusual Form of Rejoicing

The future judgment which we face for our works is the reason that the Spirit expresses His next command in such an unusual way. He calls us to "rejoice with trembling" (Psalm 2:11).

Have you ever thought about what a strange command this is? A person normally rejoices with laughter, dancing, singing, or hand-clapping. How does one rejoice with trembling?

I think the command relates to the tension that exists in the Scriptures between grace and works. We are saved by grace, and we should rejoice over that and over the completion of our salvation (the glorification of our bodies) that we will enjoy when the Lord returns. But at the same time we should tremble



over the prospect of standing before Jesus to have our works judged.

There is both good news and bad news about the Lord's forthcoming judgment of the redeemed. The good news is so good that many Christians find it hard to believe, but it is true nonetheless. The incredible good news is that the redeemed will not be judged of their sins to determine whether they will spend eternity in heaven or hell.

The reason, of course, is that we have already been judged of our sins. That judgment took place at the Cross when all our sins — past, present, and future — were placed on Jesus, and He received the wrath which we deserve.

That's why the Bible teaches that if you are covered by the blood of Jesus, your sins have been forgiven and forgotten (Isaiah 43:25 and Hebrews 8:12). They have been removed from the presence of the Lord "as far as the east is from the west" (Psalm 103:12-13). As Corrie ten Boom used to say, "The Lord has placed our sins in the deepest part of the ocean, and He has put up a sign that says, 'No Fishing!'" (see Micah 7:19.)

What does it mean for the Lord to "forget" our sins? It means they will never be held against the Redeemed again with regard to the determination of their eternal destiny. That's why the writer of Hebrews could confidently assert that when Jesus appears a second time, He will come "for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him" (Hebrews 9:28).

So, if our sins have been forgotten, what will be the nature of our judgment when we, the Redeemed, stand before the Lord? This brings us to the bad news that should cause us to tremble. We are going to be judged of our works, not to determine our eternal destiny, but to determine our degrees of reward. And in regard to our works, our shortcomings and failures will be re-

membered.

This news comes as a great shock to most Christians for most seem unaware that their works have any significance, and others do not realize that there will be degrees of reward.

Degrees of Reward

The concept of degrees of reward is clearly spelled out in the Scriptures. In 1 Corinthians 3:8 Paul says "each will receive his own reward according to his labor." He then says that our works will be tested by the Lord to determine their quality (1 Corinthians 3:13). He indicates that some will, in effect, be saved with their tail feathers smoking! This is because their works will not stand the test of the Lord's "fire" (His judgment). He thus concludes, "If any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire" (1 Corinthians 3:15).

Some of the last words Jesus spoke on this earth had to do with degrees of reward. Those words are recorded in Revelation 22:12 — "Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done."

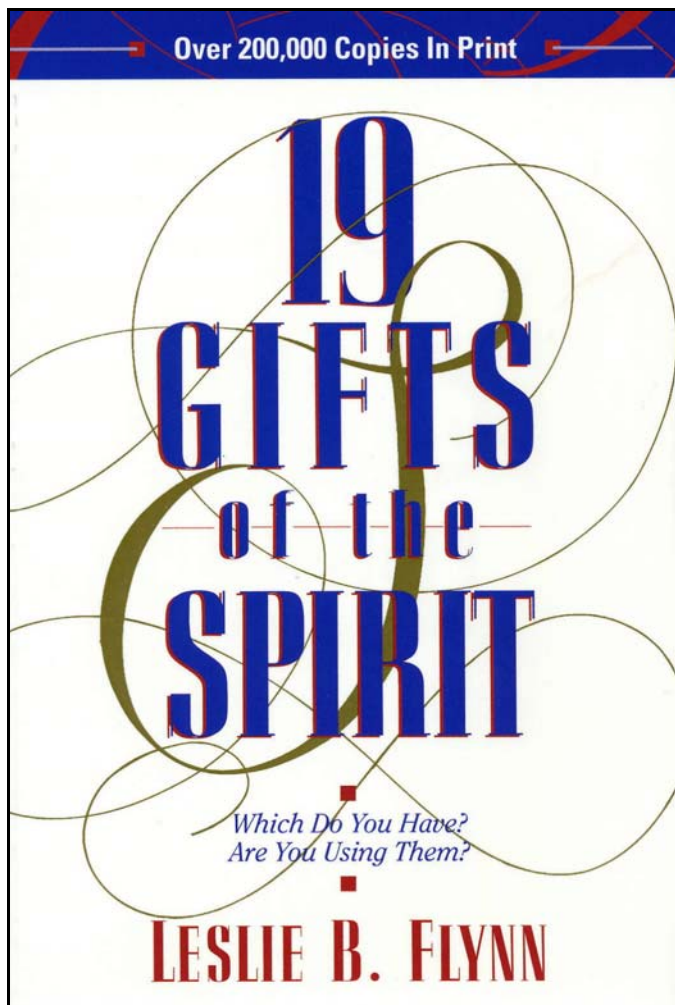
The Judgment of Works

How will the Lord judge our works? What criteria will He use?

I believe the starting point will be the gifts of the Spirit which we received when we were born again. The Word teaches that at the moment of salvation every redeemed person receives at least one gift of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:7 and 1 Peter 4:10). Some receive more than one gift, and some may receive additional gifts as they develop in the Lord, particularly if they are good stewards of their initial gifts (Matthew 25:14-30).

I believe the Lord will ask each one of us how we used the gifts He gave us for the advancement of His kingdom. And then I believe He will test our works in terms of quantity, quality, and motive.

What about you? Do you know what gifts you have been given by the Spirit? Are you using them to advance the kingdom? And are your motives pure? Are you serving the Lord in the power of His Spirit for the purpose of His glory?



This book presents a very balanced and easy to understand analysis of the gifts of the Spirit. It is available through Lamb & Lion Ministries for a cost of \$15.

A Call to Commitment

As we await the Lord's return, we are to "worship the Lord with reverence" and we are to "rejoice with trembling." The third thing the Spirit calls us to do is to "do homage to the Son" (Psalm 2:12).

What the Hebrew actually says here is very clear but is seldom literally translated because it sounds so strange. Literally, the Hebrew words say "Kiss the Son."

For years I wondered what those words meant. I consulted commentaries and found a lot of conjecture, but none of the answers seemed to click in my spirit. So, I continued to pray that the Lord would show me the true meaning of the words.

One day, as I was reading the book of Hosea, the Spirit suddenly impressed a verse upon my heart that gave me the answer I had been seeking. The verse is found in chapter 13.

As this chapter begins, Hosea has just completed his preaching tour of Israel in which he calls the people to repent of their idolatry. To his horror, when he arrives back home, he finds a neighbor bowing down before a silver calf, and he cries out, "Men kiss calves!" (Hosea 13:2)

When I read those words, the Spirit witnessed to my spirit. I immediately thought of the words of the psalmist: "Kiss the Son!" Suddenly, this strange statement made complete sense to me.

You see, if Hosea were alive today and could preach to us about America, I think he would say, "I have traveled all over your land to seek its spiritual temperament, and I say to you, everywhere I go I find men kissing calves!"

Except, I suspect he would put it in modern English: "Everywhere I go in this land I find men kissing CD's in the bank, chrome plated automobiles, and audacious houses. I see men in love with money, power, and fame. I say to you, take all that the world has to offer, set it aside in a junk pile, and put God first in your lives. Fall in love with Jesus!"

That's what it means to "Kiss the Son!" It is a call to commit your life to Jesus by falling in love with Him and putting Him first in your life — above career and family. It's a call to make Him the Lord of everything in your life — your family and job, your hopes and dreams, your thoughts and words, your music, reading material, food, drink, recreation — *everything!*

By making Him your refuge, you will be delivered from the wrath that is to come (Romans 5:9 and 1 Thessalonians 5:9), and you will come to know the full meaning of the last line of Psalm 2: ***How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!***

The Message

God is on His throne. He is in control. Three thousand years ago He promised Mankind that His Son will triumph in history. He is currently working out that purpose in history.

God has the wisdom and the power to orchestrate all the evil of Man to the victory of Jesus. The world may appear to be out of control, but what we are experiencing are the death throes of a worn out world and the birth pangs of a new one.

End time events may be fearful in nature. But believers can find peace and comfort in the assurance of Psalm 2 that Satan will be defeated and Jesus will triumph as King of kings and Lord of lords.

The signs of the times tell us that Jesus is at the very gates of Heaven, ready to return any moment to take His church out of this world. Keep your eyes on Jesus. Live with an eternal perspective. Rest in the confidence that while evil men scheme and Satan plots, God sits on His throne in Heaven and laughs.

Maranatha! ✚



A Message of Hope

Psalms 2 in video! We have produced a video recording of Dr. Reagan presenting his most frequently requested sermon and the one he has preached more than any other.

He preaches through Psalm 2 verse by verse, showing how it is one of the most powerful passages in the Bible concerning the Second Coming of Jesus.

As he explains each verse, Dr. Reagan demonstrates how the psalm answers some of the questions that are most frequently asked today:

- What on earth is God doing?
- Is He paying attention to what is going on?
- Does He care?
- Is evil going to triumph?
- Why doesn't God do something?

It is a passionate presentation from beginning to end. In the process Dr. Reagan emphasizes that God has the wisdom and power to orchestrate all the evil of Man and Satan to the triumph of Jesus.



Dr. Reagan preaching.



In short, Dr. Reagan shows how we are going to win in the end and then participate in the Lord's worldwide, glorious reign.

The message is filled with hope, and you will be shouting, "Maranatha! Maranatha!" with Dr. Reagan as he concludes this presentation.

This is a great resource to use with churches and Bible study groups.

DVD format. Up front menu for quick jumps to various parts of the message. 60 minutes in length. \$12 plus the cost of shipping. ✚



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