

# Why Do the Nations Rage?

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Psalter 261

Scripture: Psalm 2

Psalter 266

Psalter 3:1–2

Psalter 3:3–4

Jesus is the King. God the Father says that He has set His King, as we read in Psalm 2, upon His holy hill of Zion. We read in Zechariah 9:9, “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee.” And Gabriel said to Mary, “The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever” (Luke 1:32–33).

Christ is supreme King. He shall have dominion over land and sea. To Him are the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Of His kingdom, there is no end. And He is King over all creation. He is King over His people; He is the King of grace, the King of glory. He is King in the inward life, and He is King over the outward life. He is King of kings and Lord of lords. Every kingdom of this earth has been brought to naught—the Assyrian kingdom, the Persian kingdom, the Roman kingdom, the Egyptian kingdom, the Grecian kingdom. One day, the present kingdom of the United States of America as a world power shall come to an end. But of this King and of this kingdom we read it shall never end.

Thus, it is of this King that you and I must be made willing subjects in the day of His power. We must learn

what it means to bow before Him because His kingdom has eternal consequences for every one of us. This King invites and calls us to enter into His great kingdom. This King tells us the way of entrance: “Ye must be born again” (John 3:7). This King calls us to seek Him while He is yet able to be found, to call upon Him while He is yet near. He commands us to believe in Him and to bow before Him. This King tells us that if we reject His work, His person, His invitation, we reject Him and we reject His salvation.

However, though no one can avoid this King, mankind does not receive Him. Though He made the world, the world does not know Him (John 1:10). The human race is on a collision course with their rightful Sovereign, and if we do not repent of our treason, His justice will crush us. But if we put our trust in Him, then we will be blessed by God and happy forever. In Psalm 2, we learn the gospel, or good news, of the kingdom, which raises the thematic question, “Why do the nations rage?” Under this theme, we will see that Psalm 2 tells us about man’s rebellion, Christ’s reign, and the sinner’s refuge.

### **Man’s Rebellion**

Consider verses 1–3: “Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.” “Heathen” means the nations of this world. God’s “anointed” is His chosen king from the family line of David (Ps. 18:50). Therefore, Psalm 2 is teaching us that all the nations of this world reject the Lord and rebel against His anointed King. It is not a matter of bad behavior, but of the thoughts and purposes of their

hearts. Whereas the blessed man of Psalm 1 delights in God's law and meditates on how he can obey it, the accursed nations hate God's law and meditate on how they can overthrow it.<sup>1</sup> In other words, mankind hates God and Christ.

The apostle Paul wrote the following about all people who lack the Holy Spirit: "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. 8:7–8). Sin is a "turning aside from the law of God," as William Ames said, whether in who we are or what we do.<sup>2</sup> Our inner desires and will have become corrupted by Adam's fall so that "spiritual and true goods taste bad," and "evil things...seem the most gratifying."<sup>3</sup> At its core, sin is a hatred ("enmity" is the attitude of an enemy) against God rooted in a refusal to believe His word.

If this conclusion seems extreme, remember that it is the teaching of Jesus Christ. He said in John 15:18, 23, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.... He that hateth me hateth my Father also." Men, women, and children love the darkness of sin and hate the holy light of Christ—until God works salvation in them (John 3:19–21).

Christ not only revealed the world's hatred for God, but Christ also experienced it personally. In Acts 4:24–27, the early church quoted man's rebellion in Psalm 2

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<sup>1</sup> . The same Hebrew word (*hagah*) for "meditate" (Ps. 1:2) is used for "imagine" (Ps. 2:1).

<sup>2</sup> . William Ames, *The Marrow of Theology*, trans. John Eusden (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1968), 13.2; 14.2 (120–21).

<sup>3</sup> . William Ames, *A Sketch of the Christian's Catechism*, trans. Todd M. Rester, *Classic Reformed Theology 1* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2008), 18.

and applied it to how “both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel” treated Jesus Christ. If ever you wonder how the world views God, consider how it handled His Son. When God became a man and lived among us, we crucified Him and mocked Him as He died.

We should not be shocked, then, when we see the world rebelling against God’s good and righteous laws, wallowing in moral filth, bowing before ridiculous idols, attacking Christ’s holy church, and destroying human life in every way. Man’s rejection of God spawns a host of evils: sexual immorality, pornography, homosexuality, malice, greed, envy, murder, lies, gossip, pride, boasting, disobedience to parents, cruelty—and all this while cheering others on in their sins though we know that God outlaws it all (Rom. 1:21–32). We should marvel that God’s common grace holds back so much of this evil so that civil society can continue to exist and the gospel go forth in some measure of peace.

Oh, what need we have to really see and know ourselves, to know that we hate God. Those are strong words, but apart from saving grace, we have a strong, evil heart. Are not these words really true? When it comes to a test between God and you, whom do you pick? Do you not pick yourself? Is that not hating God? When God’s providence cuts across your hopes and ambitions, how do you respond? Is it not with resentment? Is that not hatred against God? We are haters, enemies of God. The bent of our nature is to hatred. Only grace makes it different. The bent of our nature is always to say, “Lord, let my will be done,” not “Thy will.”

The unfathomable truth is that for such corrupt enemies and rebels God still sends His gospel of love, grace, and mercy. But as He sends the gospel, He usually

probes our hearts with the law. He comes and asks each one of us, “Is your heart set against God? Are your thoughts and purposes striving after a vain and empty thing? Do you love God’s Word, or regard it as a chain that enslaves you to a tyrant? Are you yet a sinner in need of salvation?” Who is this King that the world so hates? Who is this ruler that the world thinks is worthy of no obedience whatsoever? Is it some evil beast that commits moral atrocities against his people? No. This hated King is none other than Jesus Christ, the Lord’s anointed.

### **Christ’s Reign**

Jesus Christ is the King of the world. We see Christ’s reign in the heart of verses 4–9. The first part of this section speaks of God’s absolute sovereignty, victorious wrath, and appointed King. The second part of this section speaks of God’s promises to His Son.

#### *The King Appointed by the Absolute Lord*

Look first at verses 4–6: “He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the LORD shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.” For God to sit enthroned in the heavens means that He is the supreme and sovereign Lord over all. God is not anxious, though the whole world rages against Him, but laughs at His puny enemies. The words “vex them in his sore displeasure” can be translated, “terrify them in his wrath.”

God does not worry about polls. He is not concerned when the world is against Him. His mere rebuke can shake the powers of this age. Therefore, let God’s people not fear the face of man. Certainly, we must honor civil authorities and not mock them, for we are not the

sovereign Judge, but mere men under the institutions that God ordained (Rom. 13:1–7). However, though we honor authority, let us never think too highly of man, whose breath is in his nostrils, for on the day of the Lord all pride of man will be cast down (Isa. 2:12–22).

This text reminds us of God’s omnipotence. “Omnipotence” comes from the words “omni,” meaning “all,” and “potent,” meaning “power.” Thus, “omnipotence” means *all power*. God creates all things by the free act of His omnipotent will so that not only we but all creation came into existence through the sovereign will of God. He speaks and it is; He commands and it stands firm (Ps. 33:9). By that same omnipotent power, God’s plans never fail and He frustrates the evil schemes of sinners (vv. 10, 11). If you stop and think about this, it is an awesome thought that every movement we make, every thought we think, every moment of health we have, every breath we take, is God’s powerful act of upholding and ruling His creation. There is nothing that happens by chance.

The omnipotent God overthrows the wicked plots of mankind by appointing His own King to rule the world: “Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion” (Ps. 2:6). Zion represents the holy presence and mighty kingdom of God. God has entrusted to Jesus Christ the right as Mediator to rule, defend, and advance God’s kingdom in every respect. Though individual churches and Christian organizations may fail and nations may fall under God’s judgment, Christ’s kingdom cannot fail. This can give us great confidence as we serve Him.

The Reformed forefathers used to speak of three dimensions of Christ’s kingship. They spoke of His *kingdom of power*, for when He rose again and was about to ascend on high, He said, “All power is given unto me in

heaven and in earth” (Matt. 28:18). He rules over the whole universe as King of power, over heaven, over earth, and yes, even over hell. Theodorus VanderGroe explained, “He therefore governs all His and His people’s enemies, including Satan, the world, and sin. He so completely controls and governs them by His hand that, apart from His divine power and will, they cannot make even a single move.”<sup>4</sup> This is His kingdom of power.

Second, they spoke of a *kingdom of grace*. That is His special rule over the lives of His dear children whom He serves out of His mediatorial office of mercy and compassion. Christ rules in the hearts of believers by the saving work of the Holy Spirit.

And they spoke of His *kingdom of glory* through which He prepares heavenly places for a people He will prepare on earth and whom He will bring to their everlasting God of glory.

Thus, how critical it is that you and I know Him not only in His kingdom of power, as we all shall know Him, for every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that He is Lord, but that we know Him internally in the kingdom of grace through faith in Him! Only then, when we are in His kingdom of grace, can we be assured that we will participate in His kingdom of glory. Otherwise, the very sound of Christ’s voice—the voice of the Lord is full of majesty—will terrify us when He comes.

Do you see that everything hinges upon who Jesus is? Martyn Lloyd-Jones said, “It is clear that if He is not who He claims to be, there is no need to listen to Him. If He is, then we are bound to listen to Him and to do whatever

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<sup>4</sup> . Theodorus VanderGroe, *The Christian’s Only Comfort in Life and Death: An Exposition of the Heidelberg Catechism*, trans. Bartel Elshout, ed. Joel R. Beeke (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2016), 1:391.

He may tell us to do. My own happiness is not the criterion. If He allows me to go on being ill or in trouble—whatever He says, I will answer, ‘Yes, Lord.’ I will do so because He is the Lord.”<sup>5</sup> We may be sure that Christ is King because of God’s Word. God made a solemn covenant with this King (Ps. 110:1–4), and here we find some of God’s promises. This is very precious, for God’s promises to Christ are promises to all who belong to Christ’s kingdom.

*The Promises Made to God’s Appointed King*

Look now at verses 7–9: “I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.” The Lord promised, first, *the glory belonging to God’s Son*. We must remember at this point what the rest of the Bible teaches us. Christ is eternal, without beginning or end (John 1:1; Heb. 1:10–12). He has always been the Son of the Father, even “before the world was” (John 17:5). Yet in the fullness of time, God’s Son became a man and was born of a woman (Gal. 4:4). Though equal to God the Father, God the Son took the nature of a servant and humbled Himself by becoming obedient even to death on the cross (Phil. 2:6–8). Therefore, God has exalted and honored His Son to the highest place as Lord of all (Phil. 2:9–11).

When Psalm 2:7 records God’s decree, “Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee,” it refers to Christ’s

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<sup>5</sup> . D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Authority* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1984), 21.

exaltation and enthronement as the risen Lord. The apostle Paul preaches this in Acts 13:33: “He hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.” Though Christ has been God’s Son from the beginning (Heb. 1:2), God promised that His humbled and lowly Son would be “declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead” (Rom. 1:4). Once put to shame on the cross, Christ was lifted up over the angels (Heb. 1:4–5).

We need never fear that the name of Jesus Christ will be disgraced. Though men and women may rage against Him, God will see to it that His beloved Son is honored. Christ’s kingdom will be established in justice without end, for “the zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this” (Isa. 9:7). God’s love for His Son guarantees that His kingdom cannot fail. John Owen said, “Though our persons fall, our cause shall be as truly, certainly, and infallibly victorious, as that Christ sits at the right hand of God.... The cause in which we are engaged shall surely conquer as Christ is alive and shall prevail at last.... The gospel shall be victorious.”<sup>6</sup>

Second, God promised Christ *a worldwide inheritance of people*. The Father covenanted with His Son, “Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance.” This is a remarkable statement, for God’s “inheritance” (*nakhalat*) was the nation of Israel.<sup>7</sup> Here, Christ’s inheritance, the covenant people given to Him by God, includes the Gentile nations (Isa. 19:25). God

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<sup>6</sup> . John Owen, “The Use of Faith, If Popery Should Return Upon Us,” in *The Works of John Owen* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1965), 9:507–508.

<sup>7</sup> . See Deut. 4:20; 9:26, 29; 32:9; 1 Kings 8:51; Pss. 28:9; 33:12; 78:62; 94:5; 106:5, 40.

promises not only that Christ will own this people, but that God will make them willing to be owned. Psalm 110:3 says to the One seated at God's right hand, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." The salvation of each soul is a work of Christ's power, a work of the conquering King of grace. It must be so, for the forces of sin and Satan fight to retain their dominion. John Flavel said, "Christ obtains a throne in the hearts of men...by conquest, for though the souls of the elect are his by donation and right of redemption (the Father gave them to him, and he died for them), yet Satan hath the first possession."<sup>8</sup>

The Lord Jesus makes Himself that King of grace when He enters the heart of a sinner in the moment of regeneration. He is then that King of kings who comes with irresistible power to gain a heavenly conquest in the heart of a sinner. He rides His white horse, John tells us, and He shoots with His bow the sharp arrows of His Word into the hearts of sinners and causes them to be convicted and to cry out, "Take me out of the battle, for I am sore wounded!" He strips sinners of all their power and all their methods of salvation and draws them to find salvation in Christ alone. He sets up His throne of grace in the heart of a sinner. He causes grace to reign. He causes sin to no longer have dominion. "This is the regeneration," say the Canons of Dort (3/4.12), "so highly celebrated in Scripture and denominated a new creation: a resurrection from the dead, a making alive, which God works in us without our aid."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> . John Flavel, *Fountain of Life*, in *The Works of John Flavel* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1968), 1:201.

<sup>9</sup> . *The Three Forms of Unity* (Vestavia Hills, Ala.: Solid Ground Christian Books, 2010), 144.

Christ not only begins with His Word and Spirit as King of kings, but He also governs His people by that same Word and Spirit. He leads them in the way of salvation. He keeps them. He reigns. He watches over them in every respect. He is King over all the spiritual battles of their souls. He understands their thoughts afar off. Oh, what a precious governor Christ is! Not that He governs the way *we* want Him to; His thoughts are above our thoughts and His ways are above our ways. But as King of kings He governs His people in the way that is best for them.

The living church is in the hands of Christ, and that is their great comfort. Is it your comfort? Are you in the hands of Christ? Do you know what it means to bow under His kingship? Is He your King by grace? Have you learned to know Him as that wise King who makes no mistakes, who directs your whole life in such a way that you have to say later on, “Lord, Thou hath done all things well”? Is He a wooing King for you who woos you and wins you to His love so that you learn to trust Him and to say with your whole heart, “Thy will be done”? We don’t learn that in a day, and we need to relearn it again and again. But the more we are acquainted with the kingship of Christ, the more we learn to trust Him and His will rather than ourselves and our will.

Third, God promised to Christ a *crushing victory over His enemies*. The Father said, “Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.” The picture is vivid, bloody, and frightening: the warrior goes forth with an iron club and crushes his enemies like fragile pottery. Already Christ rules the world with “a rod of iron,” using His supreme power to fight against the wicked forces of evil (Rev. 12:5). Though He is the Lamb that was slain for our sins to

redeem sinners for God, He also is the Lord who holds the scroll of God in His hand and unleashes God's judgments upon the nations so that the gospel may go forth on the white horse of victory (Rev. 5, 6).

Christ is the defender of His people. He will keep an eye upon His people and He will defend them from every enemy. What a blessing! He will keep them from sin's dominion and will protect them from its damning power. He will deliver them from Satan and all his devices, assaults, and temptations. He delivers from the world with all its enticements, with all its drawing power. He will keep His people *in* the world but be sure that they do not become *of* the world. He will protect from heretical doctrine. He will keep the feet of His saints in the pathway of His truth. He will protect us from ourselves, which is the greatest wonder of all, that we may not re-enslave ourselves to sin or self-righteousness. He will protect from unbelief. He will protect even in death. He will protect not from physical dying but from the sting of death, from the punishment of death, from the spiritual and eternal forms of death. He will protect as the great King, as a King who is mightier than Satan, world, self, and death combined. He is almighty. Asa cried unto God, "LORD, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power" (2 Chron. 14:11).

This promise of "a rod of iron" will find its ultimate fulfilment when Christ returns on the day of judgment. Revelation 19 presents the vision of the Rider on a white horse who comes to wage war, and says in verses 15–16, "And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on

his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF  
KINGS,  
AND LORD OF LORDS.”

The day of judgment will be ushered in with a glorious coming of the Son of God on the clouds of heaven. He shall come “in the glory of his Father” (Matt. 16:27). In that day, the glory of His Father will radiate from Jesus Christ as He comes in solemn majesty with divine authority. The glory of the Father with which Christ will appear is Christ’s own glory (Matt. 25:31), for God’s Son is “the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person” (Heb. 1:3). Thomas Manton told us that “this glory must be exceeding great,” for it is the glory of the “God-man” infinitely more majestic than all created persons in heaven and earth; it is the glory of “the judge of the world, who now cometh to appear upon the throne to be seen by all”; and it is the glory of a great work “on the one side, to gather together, to convince, to judge, and punish creatures opposite and rebellious; and to honour and reward his servants, on the other.”<sup>10</sup> So much glory of God shall shine forth at His coming and shall fill the heavens and the earth that the ungodly shall cry out, “Mountains and rocks, fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb” (Rev. 6:16).

Jesus’s coming shall be sudden. We don’t know when. We know that we are living in the last times. We know that it may be soon. We know it will be unexpected, coming as a thief in the night (1 Thess. 5:2; 2 Peter 3:10). He will come when few are expecting Him.

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<sup>10</sup> . Thomas Manton, Sermon 19 upon Matthew 25, in *The Complete Works of Thomas Manton* (London: James Nisbet and Co., 1872), 10:23–24.

When He comes, it will be the day of resurrection and judgment. All mankind shall hear His voice and come out of their graves to receive either life or damnation (John 5:28–29). And in that day, there will be no more mockers who shall challenge the promises of God. But in that day all the ungodly shall have their knees knock together in fear. In that day all that is truly real shall become real. Christ shall become real, eternity shall become real, the fact that I have a soul shall become real. Yet it will be too late to repent.

When we are brought to give an account before God in that day, nothing shall escape the Lord. Every thought, every word, every action shall be accounted for. The Lord is not in a hurry on the day of judgment. The day of judgment is a day in which everyone shall give an account. And if we are not ready to meet God in that day, if we are not washed by the blood of Jesus in that day, our entire lives shall have been a miserable failure. You can be successful in your job in the eyes of men; you can have a happy family; you can have a relatively easy life; you can have a cheerful and positive character; but if in that day you are not under the cleansing power of the blood of the Son of God, your entire life will have been a miserable, eternal failure.

Are you ready for the day of the Lord? If Jesus were to come today, would you be ready to meet Him? Do you have a new heart? Are you born again? Have you learned to hate sin? Have you learned to love the Lord? Is your faith in Christ alone? Are you ready for the great day which is the only thing that we know for sure is coming in our lives? Your plans for tomorrow you don't know if you will be able to realize, but this you know, Jesus is coming. This we know, you and I—if we are four years

old, if we are eighty-four years old—Jesus is coming. We must be *ready*. We *must* be ready. We must be ready.

### **The Sinner's Refuge**

Next, in verses 10–12, we see the sinner's refuge or hiding place: "Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little.

Blessed are all they that put their trust in him."

The Lord can terrify the rebels with His word of judgment, but now He speaks to them with His word of grace. They must stop being so foolish as to "imagine a vain thing" (v. 1), and instead "be wise" and receive God's correction. The day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God has not yet arrived. There is still time for mercy; we live in the day of grace.

God calls rebellious men, women, and children, and even kings and high officials of the government, to repent of their rebellion against Him. Repentance is not just an improvement in behavior, but a completely new direction for the heart. The Scripture says, "Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling." You have despised God; you have treated Him like a little ant upon which you may put your foot. You must now see Him and reverence Him as the omnipotent Lord who holds you in His hand. You have hated God; you have turned away from Him like a disgusting, hateful enemy. You must now know Him and love Him as the supreme Good who is the giver of all good gifts. This combination of fear and joy arises from a true faith. Wilhelms à Brakel said, "Such a soul exalts Him above all, has a high esteem for His majesty, which

is delightful and awe-inspiring, and stirs up in him extraordinary reverence.”<sup>11</sup>

To honor God, we must honor God’s King. To honor the Father, we must honor the Son (John 5:23). “Kiss the Son,” the Bible says. In the ancient Near East and in some cultures today, a kiss was a common way to say hello. However, a kiss could also be a sign of submission to authority or even an act of worship.<sup>12</sup> In today’s language, we would say, “Bow down to the Son.” Bow not just your body, but bow your heart because Jesus is Lord. If you continue in your rebellion, Christ’s anger will come upon you like a burning fire. If you will trust in Him, then His love will bless you forever.

What a blessed King! He is the great Physician. Sometimes a doctor says, “I will take no new patients. I am booked full.” But this Doctor is never booked full until He comes again on the clouds. Then it will be too late to seek Him. Still today He receives new patients who have nothing to offer Him but putrefying sores and deadly bruises from head to toe. Still today, He receives children, young people, parents, grandparents. Some physicians specialize. Some only see children; some only do one or two particular tasks. But this physician does every task, and this physician sees all kinds of patients—all kinds of races, all kinds of classes, all kinds of people. There is no one who has sinned too much; there is no heart too hard; there are no hopeless cases with Him. He never has to send anyone home, saying, “There is nothing I can do for you.” And beside all this, He does all His work freely. He

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<sup>11</sup> . Wilhelmus à Brakel, *The Christian’s Reasonable Service*, trans. Bartel Elshout, ed. Joel R. Beeke (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 1992), 1:570.

<sup>12</sup> . See 1 Sam. 10:1; 1 Kings 19:18; Job 31:26–27; Hos. 13:2.

has paid the price Himself. He has earned as High Priest to do what He does as King.

Do you see no beauty in Him to desire Him? Can you be your own king? Can you rescue yourself from Satan and sin and evil? Are you so strong, my friend, that you can stand up to the powers of evil without the power of Jesus? Do you not yet know your own heart at all? I urge you to bow before this King, take refuge in Him, and be made a subject of Him. The subjects of this King are the only truly joyful people on the face of this earth. I know there are a lot of people who do a lot more laughing and they have more worldly fun, but I am speaking of true joy, deep joy in the heart, the joy of knowing God, the joy of being safe in the hands of Christ, the joy of being a willing subject of a worthy King of kings! That is a joy that the world does not know, and that joy is yet available. Bow, sinner; bow before it is forever too late!

How do you bow your heart? You bow by believing in Him. There is a wonderful specificity to the last sentence of Psalm 2: "Blessed are all they that put their trust in him." We are saved by faith in Christ alone. Saving faith, or saving believing, believes something. Saving faith is not the kind of faith that so many people make it out to be today when they say, "It really doesn't make too much difference what you believe. As long as you are sincere, as long as you believe, it's okay, and you will be going to heaven, no matter what you believe, just as long as you are sure that you really believe what you believe." That doctrine is from the bottom of hell. We do not believe that we can be saved by a faith without content. Faith believes something. Faith depends on someone outside of yourself to be and to do what you cannot be or do.

Faith is expressed by the idea of leaning your weight upon something. Proverbs 3:5 says, "Trust in the LORD

with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.” Missionary John Paton related how he discovered how to translate faith in the native language of the Pacific islanders of the New Hebrides. One day, he was sitting in a chair and he had an idea. He asked a native woman, “What am I doing?” She said, “You are sitting down.” He then pulled up his feet off the floor so that his weight rested entirely on the chair and repeated the question. She answered, “You are leaning wholly,” using a term in their language for depending entirely upon one thing for support. Paton knew that this was the term he must use for faith. He would now tell the islanders they must be “leaning on Jesus” for eternal life.<sup>13</sup> Are you leaning on Jesus? Have you rested the weight of your sins and your guilt before God, your future hope and happiness, entirely upon Christ? You must do so in order to be saved.

Another way to express faith is the idea of taking refuge or hiding in something. That is the term used in Psalm 2:12: “put their trust in him” is literally “take refuge” (*khasah*) or “hide themselves in him.” King Jesus can be your hiding place. David prays in Psalm 18:2, “The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.” When sin and Satan, death and hell, and the wicked people of this world surround you, hide in Jesus Christ. If you take refuge in God’s King, then you will find yourself “blessed” by God (Ps. 2:12b).

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<sup>13</sup> . A. K. Langridge and Frank H. L. Paton, *John G. Paton: Later Years and Farewell* (New York and London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1910), 56.

Blessed means granted by God everything necessary for life and happiness. Thus, God teaches here where true enjoyment is to be found, namely, in willing subjection to the King of kings. Hiding in the shadow of His wings, Christ's people drink from the river of His delights (Ps. 36:7–8). They are enabled to praise God even in their sleepless nights, in the days of warfare and strife, for the Lord's hand upholds them (Ps. 63:3–9).

However, the blessedness spoken of here goes far beyond our present communion with Christ. God's people will see the King in His beauty. This King prepares a place for them in glory and He makes them homesick for that glory. He preserves them for the full enjoyment of that salvation He has purchased for us. They shall enter a land of enjoyment of which Scripture says, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (1 Cor. 2:9). In that day, there shall be no more sin. There shall be no more Satan, no more world, no more influences from my own evil heart, and no more death. Oh, to be preserved forever, preserved to enjoy God the Father through God the Son by God the Spirit; to enjoy the company of the redeemed, the saints made perfect, and the legions of holy angels! The Lord will be the glory of heaven (Zech. 2:5).

Thus, the Christian life is a life that knows true enjoyment, a joy that would not be traded for all the pleasures of this world (Ps. 4:7). That is why we read in Nehemiah 8:10, "The joy of the LORD is your strength." Is that your strength, my friend, the joy of the Lord? Is that your strength? Do you know both the sorrow of sin and the joy of divine fellowship?

The Westminster Shorter Catechism opens so beautifully: "What is the chief end of man?" What is the

chief purpose of your life? “To glorify God and to enjoy him forever.”<sup>14</sup> Forever. This is a kingdom that does not end with death or the grave. This King went through death and through the grave to conquer them both so that death may have no sting, so that the grave may be a pillow for His people, and so that they may arise one day with soul and body reunited, and with the whole man may glorify God and enjoy Him forever. This is the end result of the kingship of Jesus.

Oh, happy is that people who has the God of Jacob, King Jesus, for their help, whose hope is in the Lord their God. One day, dear child of God, you shall be fully delivered from all evil. You shall fully enjoy the gracious, glorious presence of your faithful King. And then your greatest happiness shall be to praise Him; your greatest freedom shall be to serve Him; your greatest honor shall be to obey Him; and your greatest peace shall be to dwell with Him. Everything then shall be focused for you upon this King of kings. All our hearts will go back out to the King of kings, and we will say, “Not unto us, O King of kings, be honor, and glory, and dominion, but unto Thee, O King immortal, to Thee be all honor, glory, and dominion.” Truly, “blessed are all they that put their trust in him” (Ps. 2:12b). Amen.

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<sup>14</sup> . James T. Dennison Jr., comp., *Reformed Confessions of the 16th and 17th Centuries in English Translation: 1523–1693* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2008–2014), 4:353.