

# PSALM 2 – A MESSAGE FOR POPERY, ISLAM AND ATHEISM

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Dean Law (1797–1884), was one of the leaders of the evangelical party in the church of England. He became dean of Gloucester in 1862. Like his fellow Anglican, J.C. Ryle, Law's writings possess clarity, conciseness, and timeless application. His numerous pamphlets and books enjoyed a wide readership and were used to great effect. Of his better-known works, *Christ is All – The Gospel in the Pentateuch*, are much-prized. The Banner of Truth Trust has republished two of the above volumes, *The Gospel in Genesis* and *The Gospel in Exodus*. What follows on Psalm 2 is from his work on the Psalms, entitled, *Family Devotion; the Book of Psalms arranged for Worship*. And the second piece is from something entitled, *Cordials in Temporal Troubles* – Ed.

To oppose the kingdom of Christ is utterly vain, because it is established by the Father's power, and by the provisions of the eternal decree. Holy exhortation follows. May faith read reverently the prophetic hymn!

## **Verse 1 “Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?”**

Pious anticipation might exclaim, “Surely, when Jesus comes to bless this earth, adoring welcomes will receive Him. Surely each heart will call Him to its throne; each knee will bow; each tongue will shout His praise; thanksgivings will encircle Him.” Those who thus reason little know the devil's power and man's rebellious wickedness. The Spirit's eye foresees the black reality. Among the heathen, rage shall be rampant. The favoured nation of Israel shall plot destruction. How base, how vain is this iniquity! It may well be asked, What prompts this hatred? Why does this frenzy madden?

## **Verse 2 “The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the LORD, and against his anointed.”**

Those who occupy earth's highest seats are fiercest to oppose Jesus. The Herods and Pilates take determined stand. The council of the priests and elders meet in secret assembly. In the beginning it was so. The same hatred has defiled succeeding thrones and courts. Against whom is this rage? Tremble, O earth, turn pale, you heavens. This fury assails the Lord Jehovah and His beloved Son. The Father sends the Son anointed by the Spirit to be the promised Saviour, to execute the all-saving offices of Prophet, Priest, and King, to bless the Church with every blessing. And earth's chiefs combine to tread Him beneath insulting feet. Give ear! this is their frantic cry —

## **Verse 3 “Let us break their band asunder, and cast away their cords from us.”**

Self-will rejects restraint. Pride will not yield to rule. Licentiousness surmounts all barriers. Conceited reason lifts up defiant head. The gentle sceptre of Christ's kingdom, His sweet, His light, His easy, and His loving yoke, are hated as chains which restrain and cords which fetter. When Jesus came, earth raised the cry, “We will not have this man to reign over us.” It still resounds. When will man learn that widest liberty is true submission to the Gospel sway? He is a free man whom the Son makes free. He is a slave in whom unbridled lusts and passions rule. But can proud man prevail? Can he drive back the ocean's might with a feather? Can he lift up his puny hand, and bid the sun conceal its rays? Can he with straws bind the hurricane? Can he lay mountains low, exalt the valleys, and change the laws of nature? Can he scale heaven and dethrone our God? Such, doubtless, is his frantic will. But give ear again;

**Verse 4 “He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the LORD shall have them in derision.”**

Let us lift up our eyes to God. He sits upon His throne on high; while earth is all unsettled, wild in mad menace, He reigns in calm repose. The Spirit here takes images from human feeling to depict His unruffled contempt. God laughs derisively, when puny efforts dash their feebleness against overpowering strength. Thus God shows undisturbed disdain of human fury.

**Verse 5 “Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.”**

God may be silent long; but patience is not impunity. Reprieve brings not release. When the appointed time comes, the floodgates open and wrath overflows. Who can conceive these terrors? What must His displeasure be? Who can endure when His anger issues forth? What weeping, what wailing, what anguish, what gnashing of teeth, when God arises to execute due judgment on His foes!

**Verse 6 “Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion.”**

In spite of earth's malignant rage, God manifests His King. He called His Son to be the heir of all things. Upon His shoulder supreme government is laid. His hand receives the sceptre of universal reign. He announces, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.” Who can resist? Who can withstand? Our Jesus is God's King by choice, by appointment, by will, and by sovereign decree. Now He spiritually sits enthroned on Zion's holy hill. He reigns supreme in every true believer's heart. He is invited by rejoicing love. Lift up your heads, O you gates, and be ye lift up, O portals of my soul, and the King of glory shall come in. He enters, and all heaven follows in His train. He enters, and establishes the kingdom of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. This present reign on Zion's holy hill is now open to the eye of faith.

But the day quickly comes when Jesus' throne shall be universally conspicuous. The wicked cannot hinder. Their rage can interpose no barrier. God has spoken. It must be. It must soon be. “Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously” (Isaiah 24:23).

**Verse 7 “I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.”**

Oh, wondrous thought! Before the birth of time, eternal councils willed the well-being of man. A covenant of grace was firmly made. We live in hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before the world began. Jesus, in His love for souls, in tender zeal to fill our hearts with joy, and to cause streams of peace to flow, announces the decree. By His Spirit He unfolds it. In His Word He writes the record. Here He displays important articles.

It was decreed that honour should await Him as God's co-eternal Son. For a brief period His deity was hidden. In outward appearance He differed little from the sons of men. Occasionally, heavenly rays broke forth; but the sun's brightness was eclipsed. Thus, as man, He suffered and died. The resurrection-morn arrives. He strides forth the mighty conqueror of death and hell. The glorious rising has a glorious voice. With trumpet-tongue it tells the wondering world, Jesus is God's Son! this day removes all doubt! this day unveils Him! The Father has begotten Him — another morn will brightly shine. Greater manifestations rapidly

come on. Amid all glory Jesus will be shown again as God's co-equal, co-eternal Son. Who then can shake His kingdom's firm supports?

**Verse 8 “Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.”**

Another article of the covenant is stated. Christ's kingdom shall exceed all bounds. The outcast heathen shall bend the knee. Earth's uttermost extent shall call Him Lord. But this shall be in answer to His prayer. In heaven the Son shall prosecute His entreaty. With supplication He shall urge His claims. His pleading shall recite His part performed — the ransom paid — the kingdom bought — all hindrances removed. He shall thus ask, and He shall thus obtain. Blessed Jesus, extend thy wounded hands! Let not the Father rest until earth's length and breadth shall own thy rule!

**Verse 9 “Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.”**

The covenant, moreover, states that all Christ's enemies shall lick the dust. Hate may continue. Opposition may oppose. But oh! how vain! Behold His might. A rod of iron is wielded by His hands. It breaks and cannot be withstood. Opposing strength is brittle as the potter's clay. He strikes, and it lies shattered atoms. Thus shall His kingdom trample down all foes.

**Verse 10 “Be wise therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth.”**

But wrath yet lingers. Space for repentance is given. Let it be duly used. A warning voice arrests earth's great ones in their mad career. It bids wisdom to awake, and sit submissively at Jesus' feet. The truest sage is a meek learner in the school of grace. To know Christ truly is the crown of knowledge.

**Verse 11 “Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling.”**

Knowledge leads surely in the paths of service. Gospel-obedience is a blessed walk. It is the happy union of all grace. Strictest submission goes hand in hand with filial reverence. The cup of joy is mixed with tenderest dread of error. Love fears. Fear loves. Joy trembles, and trembling is glad.

**Verse 12 “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 who put their trust in Him.”**

Mercy still warns. It points to Jesus. It exhorts to give Him homage, because it is His due — to worship Him to whom all praise belongs — to love Him who has so loved us as in our stead to die. It forbids delay. Until our hearts be wholly His, we totter on destruction's brink! One spark of kindled wrath excludes forever from salvation's way. What, then, will be their doom against whom wrath in full fury blazes?

Sweet melody concludes this hymn. It speaks of blessedness. It tells where true happiness now and forever dwells. It is in faith. Faith is the saving and the happy grace. It tightly clings to Christ. It trusts Him at all seasons for all things. Oh! may this blessed state be ours. Truly blessed it is!