

Psalms 18-04-12

This is Thursday, the 12th of April 2018, and we continue our study in the book of Psalms. We began last time looking at Psalm 1, and we will continue tonight in Psalm 2. Let's take a moment, as is our custom, to ask God's blessing on our study and our fellowship, and then we'll begin. Father, how grateful we are for the gift of Your Word and the presence and power of Your Holy Spirit to help us understand it, remember it, and put it into practice.

We thank You for Your cleansing grace in forgiving our sins, in restoring us and renewing us, and granting us Your peace as we seek to redeem the time and live a life that is pleasing in Your sight and that glorifies the Lord Jesus. We pray that as we look at this portion of Your Word tonight that Your Holy Spirit will be present and help us to get the most out of it as we look at it together, and that it will be something that sticks with us and makes a difference in how we live in the hours and days ahead. We pray these things in Jesus' name.

Amen. We really, after an introduction to the book of Psalms last time, learned the really only salient feature of Hebrew poetry, and that is that it occurs in lines. And those lines, as you compare them one to another, usually in pairs, come in three forms.

You remember that? You have a line, then you have another line. And those two lines can be related in one of three basic ways. And that's the entirety, that's a whole semester of Hebrew poetry in a nutshell.

And if you took notes, or if you happen to remember it, the three different relationships are, first of all, synthetic, where there is one line that occurs, followed by a second one that builds on it. You synthesize something, you put it together. That's one kind, and these are in no particular order.

I think I gave you the next kind first last time, which is synonymous. First line makes a statement, and the second line restates it in a slightly different way. You saw some of these in our Psalm 1. Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the way of sinners.

That's not restating the same thing, so it would not be synonymous. It's synthetic. One builds on the other.

And in Psalm 1 we actually have a tri-stitch, or a three-line set. Walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, doesn't stand in the way of sinners, and doesn't sit in the seat of the scornful. And those build.

They add to one another. They create a complete whole. So those three initial lines in the Psalter are synthetic.

Later on in the Psalm, remember it said, He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water,

that brings forth his fruit in his season. Well, that's also synthetic. Because you have to have the tree planted by the water, and then you add to that bringing forth fruit.

One requires the other to make any sense. If you just said he brings forth his fruit in his season, there's kind of something missing. If you just say he's planted by the water, well, of what benefit is that? So those would be examples of synthetic lines.

Synonymous is something we'll see coming up later on. For example, in Psalm 9, verse 5, You have rebuked the nations, you have destroyed the wicked, you have blotted out their name forever and ever. These are three different kinds of judgment and destruction on the nations, and they're all sort of of a piece.

They're synonymous. The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in time of trouble. That's pretty much a synonymous set of lines.

And then, of course, you have the antithetical. The righteous do well, but the wicked are judged. Opposites.

Now, that's interesting in and of itself. And when I was in seminary and they were teaching us about this, I thought, well, that's an interesting observation, but so what? Does it actually help me to identify these lines and say, this is synonymous, this is synthetic, or this is opposite, this is an antithetic, as they call it, antithesis, antithetic set of lines. And in musing over that and looking at many examples, and this is my personal take on why knowing this is helpful, because you get three different kinds of application out of these related lines.

So it's one thing to say, oh, look, it's a synthetic distich, but how should we then live? It's an antithetic distich. Well, how is that going to affect my next 15 minutes of decision making and action before the Lord? If it doesn't make a difference, why bother with it, is my view. So I thought about these and I thought, well, why did God do this? Why does He put these in there? And so, just by way of quick review, it's the only review we're really going to do on Psalm 1. Let's think, first of all, about the synonymous, where one says a thing and the other one kind of says it in a complementary or supplementary way, but it's basically the same idea.

The wicked will not prosper, nor will he dwell in the land. He's on the outs in both lines. Well, a synonymous or a restating of a thing, why do we restate a thing? Have you ever been in a discussion or even, God forbid, a debate with your spouse or with somebody who's close to you, and you say a thing, but then you find several other ways to say it also.

What does that do? What does it do when we have a restatement of a thing? Why does anybody restate a thing? It emphasizes it, right? And why do we care that something's been emphasized? We say, well, I already figured that was important or it wouldn't be in the Word of God. If God's emphasizing it, what do we then do with it? If I see something emphasized in Scripture, what's my part? Oh, wow, that sure is emphatic. Well, and what do we do then? This is something to dwell on, right? To expand, try to expand our understanding of it, to think about it

a little bit and widen the horizon.

If God has given us two eyes to get a perspective and to see depth, then if He gives us two lines, your two eyes give you almost the same picture, right? They're just slightly different. It's magnified, quote, unquote, when you look through binoculars. You notice how things look like a stage prop.

There are planes at varying distances when you look through binoculars because the magnification in the binoculars, you're still getting a slightly different picture for your eyes, but your depth perception gets a little tricked. But it's almost the same picture. But what does a slightly different picture in each eye give you? Depth.

You can see things you can't see with one eye closed. And so this is my encouragement. When we go through the Psalms and we see a synonymous distich, God restating a thing in a slightly different way, in the words of the psalmist, this is something always that we can look for more depth.

There's something maybe just below the surface. There's something that we can widen our understanding with in a synonymous setting. Okay, what about the second one? What about synthetic, where He shall be like a tree and He brings forth His fruit in a season.

His leaf doesn't wither and whatever He does will prosper. Those all build on one another. Well, what happens when you build one thing on top of another? What does it do? It gets higher, right? I've been building chicken coops and it was flat when I started.

Actually, it was high when I started. The wind flattened it and I raised it back up. I synthesized the pieces and I built them up.

And now they have some height. So we're in a synonymous setting. We're looking for breadth and maybe for depth.

When you have a synthetic statement where one thing builds on another, we're trying to elevate our understanding. We're trying to put something together, synthesize thoughts, put two thoughts together and come up with a new conclusion. So, for example, let's take the one we looked at last week.

He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water that brings forth His fruit in His season. So I think, okay, that's synthetic. You really have to have the first line and the second one builds on it.

The fruit makes sense because the tree is by the... And remember we saw that real interesting verb that actually means transplanted. And I find that fruitful for meditation and reflection that God has taken us out of the dry and thirsty ground and transplanted us next to living water. But once you have that idea and you say, okay, so the scholars say this is synthetic, it builds, so I should look for maybe a conclusion or an understanding that elevates my perspective a little

bit.

Well, what would it do? If you think about that, God has already transplanted us by the river. We have access to the water. You think about Hebrews 6, where's another place where you're talking about growing things and available water.

Remember in Hebrews where he's talking about, let us go on not laying in the foundation, because a field that has the rain coming on it many times and it only produces thorns is fit for burning and is near to a curse. Remember that? Hebrews 6, there's available water for something that should be growing and producing fruit, but it perversely produces only thorns. So what if I am a tree transplanted by the river of water, but I'm not producing my fruit in my season? Just because I'm by the river doesn't necessarily mean I'm going to automatically produce, because there is my element of choice.

If I have been favored, I'll continue my chicken example since they're kind of on the brain, but you create a coop and a pen, and you get the right food, and you get a moisture shell and water, and you fuss over them and visit them several times a day. What's the whole purpose? What's the goal here? I want the hens to produce their egg in their season, right? That's the whole reason I transplanted them and I put them in a favored environment, is I want to see eggs. Well, we had a day yesterday, out of all of these hens, no eggs.

So we're scratching our heads saying, do everything and provide everything and set them all up and try to keep them stress-free and relaxed and happy and fed and watered and sheltered and comfortable and give them this wonderful wood scratching ground they've got. No eggs. Well, it's disappointing that the whole purpose for which I transplanted them is not being fulfilled.

So do you see what I'm saying, where in a synthetic set of lines, you look for building your understanding and building a little bit higher perspective as you look at those and say, not only would I, in a synthetic world, explore the meaning of it, but now I'm looking more for application. When one thing builds on another, you're hoping to build application on your knowledge, right? So that makes sense to me. So then we've got the third kind, the antithetic, the antithesis, the contrast lines.

Righteous man does well, wicked man does badly. What does that suggest to you? If God offers us a contrast, what's the first thing that comes to your mind? Well, I'm typically not going to be both of those at the same time. I'll be one or the other, right? So how do I arrive at being one or the other? It's a choice, right? It's an option.

So when you see antithetic lines, this immediately faces you with a choice, in my view, because do you want to be the righteous that gets blessed or do you want to be the wicked that gets hammered? So that's your analysis of these three. So as we go through, if we identify these in their different categories, that's a little useful information about them. So we begin tonight now Psalm 2. I said last time that Psalm 1 and Psalm 2 are related, and consciously so.

Psalms 1 really introduces the entire book of psalms. And it begins with focus on the law of God and the foundation. You can think of Psalm 1 and Psalm 2 as synthetic psalms.

Psalm 2 builds on the foundation of Psalm 1. The people of God make the choice between being a tree planted by the rivers of water and bringing forth their fruit, or being the unrighteous who are not going to stand in the assembly, who are like the chaff that the wind drives away. In a thought concept there you've got the antithesis and there's a choice involved. But that sets up life on this earth for God's people.

You're either soaking up the water and bearing fruit or you are drying up, withering up, even after being transplanted, and you're going to be blown away and you're not going to have a place in the future in God's economy. Well, that's the law. If you do well, will you not be accepted? But if not, sin lies crouching at the door.

It goes all the way back to what God told Cain. Well now, in Psalm 2, this is sort of equivalent to the prophets, the law and the prophets. We've just completed a lengthy study looking at kings and prophets.

And you'll remember as we looked at Hosea and Joel and Amos and Obadiah and Habakkuk and Haggai and the rest of them, they bring a message about choice. They bring a message about you can either listen to God's call, you can listen to God's word and be elevated and be the dwelling place for God and enjoy the benefits of God's sovereignty over the earth and over mankind and over the nations. Or you can be ground to powder underneath that.

Jesus very succinctly is pictured as the rock of salvation. And you either fall on that rock and are broken in humility or the rock falls on you and you're ground to powder. It's the same rock, but what is your relationship to it? And this is essentially the message of the prophets.

And it's essentially the message of Psalm 2. So let's read it. This psalm breaks into four equal parts. Scholars call these strophes.

That's too fancy for me. I just call them parts. So each part has three verses.

So as you would expect, there are 12 verses in the psalm. And each set of three verses is a part, a strophe if you will. Now, as I mentioned last time, we know, even though there's no attribution, we know who wrote this psalm, don't we? How do we know? Acts 4.25 quotes this psalm and says specifically, now there is such a thing as using David's name as sort of a synonym for all of the psalms.

As it says in David, you find that usage in Hebrews 4.7, where it is written in David or something like that. And it basically means in the psalms. And it's general and it might not be specifically David.

But when you read Acts 4.25, it is not that general use of the term. And it's important for us, in hindsight, they may not have had this information throughout history, but certainly after the

close of the New Testament, the Church Age has access to this information and it's helpful. They raise their voice to God with one accord and say, Lord, you are God who made heaven and earth and the sea and all that is in them, who by the mouth of your servant David have said.

Now that's pretty specific. Why do the nations rage and the people plot vain things? Kings of the earth take their stand, the rulers gather together against the Lord and against his anointed, his Christ, his Mashiach or Christos. Well, by the mouth of your servant David, that's not a general allusion to the Psalter.

That means David wrote it. And that helps us interpret the psalm. So now back to Psalm 2. Why do the nations rage and the people plot a vain thing? How would you classify those two lines? Synthetic, synonymous or antithetic? It's not an antithesis, is it? So it either builds or it's synonymous.

But if they're raging and plotting, that's pretty similar, right? It's really two different aspects of their rebellion. So most people would say this is synonymous. Two different ways of saying a very similar thing.

Why do the nations rage and the people plot a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers take counsel together. How would you classify that? Still pretty much synonymous, right? You've got authorities who are aligning themselves in hostility. How? Then you have this central line here, against the Lord and against his anointed.

And this sticks out as a separate line almost. And it really emphasizes it because it's like if you were reading a poem that rhymed and had meter and then all of a sudden you had a strange line that was all by itself and it breaks the rhythm. That's what this does.

And it tells you that all of this is against the Lord and against his anointed. So that's going to be a theme. Now they're quoted saying as in italics, but it's clear in the Hebrew what they are saying.

They are taking counsel together against the Lord and against his anointed. Let us break their bonds in pieces and cast away their cords from us. So who is the they? Who is they? It's the aforementioned Lord and his anointed.

They're on the same team. They are a plurality. And these people recognize both of them.

They see the Lord and they see his representative, his anointed, and they oppose both. It's not just opposition to God, not just opposition to one or more of God's people. It's the whole package.

Now that's three verses. That's our first section. So let's take a quick look at this.

First of all, it is clear that there is hostility involved. And as soon as we have Psalm 1 saying, here is the path of blessing and here is the path of loss of blessing for the people of God, that's sort

of an inward look, isn't it? This is what I need to do. I need to be sure that I, as a transplanted tree by the rivers of water, am bringing forth my fruit so that my leaf doesn't wither and whatever I do will prosper in the divine, eternal righteousness sense, faith and obedience.

That's me looking at myself, making sure I am availing myself of that wonderful privilege. Once I have taken a look at that, do this and thou shalt live was the message of the law. Now we look outward.

What is our relationship to the rest of the world? The prophets tell Israel about their relationship to Moab and Ammon and Philistia and all of the other surrounding nations that have besieged them and caused them harm. In some cases they have been subject because they have been themselves disobedient and it's a judgment. Remember the judges? Gilgal, Gilgal.

God would let the other nations come in and overcome them because they were lackadaisical and apathetic. But looking outward, this is more of a prophetic message. That's what Psalm 2 is doing.

And what are the nations doing? And behold, the nations think we're great. The nations think God is just super. They like everything about God and they like the godly.

They like the wonderful blessings of peace and prosperity. Is that what's happening? It is hatefulness. It is hostility.

It is vituperation. They rage. This word translated rage here means it's ragash and it's translated literally in the lexicon a seething antagonism.

Have you ever been around that? A seething antagonism? You can see it on TV sometimes directed at some of our national leadership, past and present. I remember it directed against President Reagan. I remember it directed against President George W. Bush in particular.

I remember it on the opposite side being directed against Mr. Obama. You see it now directed against Mr. Trump. It goes beyond disagreement.

It goes beyond strong disapproval of policy. There is a bitter seething antagonism that can develop when people just hate the guy and the horse he rode in on. So that's what this is.

And it is the nations. This is the word goyim. And almost always in the Old Testament when you see the goy, the goyim, it's in kind of a negative light.

They are generally the hostile outsiders who care nothing for God at best. And many times they are seething hostiles. So this is the goyim, they rage.

And the people are plotting emptiness or futility. And you might think that this is the word that's used over in Ecclesiastes for vanity and a chasing after the wind, hevel. But it isn't.

It's a different word. It's reek, R-I-Q. And it means, it's just another way of describing what is futile or what is empty.

Hevel is sort of a breath, a vapor that disappears as soon as the sun hits it or a puff of breeze comes along. It's the steam in the kettle that rises and very soon it's gone. But reek is more the idea of a plot that can only come to nothing.

It is futile. It's like the, what was that thing where they had the Borg and resistance is futile. Futile in the sense of why are you wasting your energy? You're the mouse shaking his fist at the eagle who is just about to swoop you up and make a meal of you.

Which I saw in the pasture yesterday, by the way. Really kind of tragically beautiful to watch. The hawk swooping down there.

They are so engineered for perfection in that attack. And the hapless mouse, he's going to have to really be quick. But generally speaking, by the time that thing is descending, you might as well just say your prayer and be breakfast.

But this is already sort of tipping the hand that they are raging and they are plotting, but it's a hopeless plot. Who do they think they're dealing with? You're going to plot against God and succeed? How do you see that working? How do you see unseating God from the heavens, the creator of the universe, but how do they think they're going to do it? They are basically looking at the anointed and they think that they will unseat the anointed. And what they underestimate, and we run the danger of underestimating, it isn't us, it's who we are related to.

The reason it is reek, the reason it is such a vain thing, isn't that we are so great or so formidable or so indomitable or so undefeatable. It's because God is in His heaven and we are His anointed. We are in Christ.

Remember in Ephesians we have those seven wonderful statements of what it means to be in Christ. In Him we have, in Him we are, in Him we have been. Remember it was like the menorah.

All of those things in Him. Christ, in Christ, in Christ. And Paul purposely uses the word Christ.

He is the anointed. If we're in Him, we share all the benefits of anointing. This is the Lord's anointed.

And nobody is going to topple the Lord's anointed because if you deal with the anointed, you're dealing with the Lord Himself. And it's hopeless, hopeless. We should realize that the things that stack up against us cannot prevail, cannot overcome.

Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world. Whether it is the nations or the people. Plotting, imagining these vain things.

Then it says in verse 2, and notice that these are their actions. They are raging, they are

speaking out and complaining, and they are plotting. They are raging and plotting.

That's what they do. Now verse 2 is going to give us their policy, their attitude. The kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers take counsel together.

So instead of just being a mob and a rabble that are disorganized and sort of ineffective because they have no direction, verse 2 focuses this opposition to a sharp point. It is the kings and it is the authorities. It's the rulers, the significant ones, who have set themselves, that's their policy, and they are taking counsel together.

They are figuring, we'll ally, there will be safety in numbers, there will be power in aggregation. You think of the Tower of Babel, we'll all get together and build this tower. You think about in the tribulation period, when you get over to Revelation 17, verse 12 and following, where you've got the ten kings who confederate, and they make up the beast, the seven hills, it's being ridden by the scarlet harlot and all of that.

But there's this confederation, it's the ten toes of Nebuchadnezzar's vision. The feet of iron mixed with clay, and you've got ten toes, ten horns. But they figure by confederating in the service of the Antichrist, they can overcome.

And there is always this idea that if we band together, the whole will be greater than the sum of the parts in some way. So that's their idea. They take counsel together against the Lord and against His anointed.

So, what do they say? Now there's a quote, and it sums up the first three verses. Let us break their bonds in pieces, and let us cast away their cords from us. So, what's the beef? What's their complaint? Why are they so enraged? Why are they so hostile and seething and bitter? What bugs them? What's it say in verse three? You're restricting me.

You're hemming me in. You're saying I can't or I shouldn't. Right? What do cords and bonds do? We put our dog on a chain.

Why? I don't want him to go bite anybody else. I restrict his movements. I prevent his freedom.

So, what is it that's got these nations and peoples and kings and rulers so infuriated? God, in general, and His anointed, in particular, represent a restriction. You represent a frown at the very modest level, or a prohibition if you're a parent or an employee, or you're in some position of influence in a family or in a company or in any environment. And you, casting the light of truth that says, This ought not to be.

This shouldn't happen. This is wrong. To mention it, to represent it, even if you don't say anything, you can just represent it by being present.

This hasn't happened to me very often, but I know it has happened a lot to pastors, where there's a group of guys fishing or hunting or sitting around having a good time, and the guy

who was a pastor shows up, and all of a sudden, the joy dies. Because, well, I was right in the middle of a really funny story, but I can't finish it now that you're here. I can't use the language that is so colorful and communicative now that you're here.

We've got to clean up. This was true more so in the past probably than it is now. I think people have very few inhibitions.

But we, because we are in Christ, and because we are the body of Christ on this earth, if He is the anointed and we are His body and His presence here, what does that make us? The Lord's anointed. And who are people going to get angry with for almost inscrutable reasons? You think, I don't understand why the hostility, why the separation, why the arm's length, why the cold shoulder, why am I out, why am I despised or worse? Well, this can be a reason. And this is a principle.

It's not just a one-time thing. Now, we can look in the career of David. We know he wrote this.

And if you go to 2 Samuel 8 or 2 Samuel 10, we don't have time to turn there, but if you read those, you can easily imagine that this psalm might have been composed on those occasions where there is some real heartburn with David. And it's of this nature where it's almost universalized. What do they want to do? They are feeling the cords and the bonds.

They don't say, let's talk about some loosening here. Let's talk about an alternative. What do they want to do? They want to shatter these bonds.

They want to destroy them. They want to break them. And break is your key word here.

Let us break their bonds in pieces and cast away their cords from us. We don't even want to see the remnants of this anymore. Gone be gone be gone.

Get those Ten Commandments off the courthouse lawn and off the wall. Get those Christmas displays out of my sight. Cast it from us.

So now, that's our first vignette, our first part. Now we go into the second part. Very quickly now.

He who sits in the heavens shall laugh, the Lord shall hold them in derision. This seems a little bit harsh and out of keeping with our view of the Lord in heaven. You would think, well, maybe it would engender His wrath or His displeasure.

You know, the Lord who sits in heaven will thunder. He will call for 12 legions of angels to go down there and make short work of these boasters and these haughty despisers. But it says He will laugh and He will hold them in derision.

And verse 4, the first part of it there, it really creates a title for God. Have you ever seen these posters that have all the different names of God? This one is not on there, but it should be. Because it's sort of a participle idea.

The sitter in the heavens. It is given as a title for God. The sitter in the heavens is what it literally means.

The sitter in the heavens will chuckle. You know what's worse than getting yourself all steamed up and going in and unloading on somebody and them turning right around and getting harsh and getting their back up and coming right back at you and it's a matched set of hostile opposition people? You know what's worse? Is when you get yourself all worked up and your pulse rate is at 135 and your face is red and you go in there and you just unload both barrels and somebody just sits back and starts laughing. This is sort of like, you know, heaping coals of fire on the head of somebody who's really trying to be mad at you.

It just makes it worse. Because what does it imply? And what is the figure here? This is an anthropopathism. It is ascribing to God a human reaction.

But what does this mean? Why would God do this? Why is it said of the sitter in the heavens that he will laugh? What does it mean? You've got to tip off back with the word reek. How silly and hopeless it is to think that you're going to topple the anointed. You are completely underestimating the link between the Lord and the Lord's anointed.

You don't see it. All you see is the anointed and you think you're going to rain all kinds of hard times on the anointed. But the one who's sitting in the heavens doesn't take it seriously.

If you're laughing, what are you not doing? You can translate this freely as the one who sits in the heavens doesn't take it seriously. It's reek. It's hopeless.

It's silly. Who do you think you're dealing with? You just radically underestimated where you are and what your resources are. You've all gathered together.

You think you're the kings of the earth and the whole earth is going to rise up and crush the Lord's anointed. You think about David there in Jerusalem. You think about all of the surrounding nations, confederating to come down there.

Did they not hear the story of Goliath? Who's on David's side here? He can't take it seriously at this moment. At this moment. God's first reaction while it's happening is he doesn't take it seriously.

And the Lord shall hold them in derision. Is he worried? Does he call a council of the mighty angels and say what are we going to do about this confederation and this conspiracy and all of these people that are coming after my anointed? Let's form a plan. Let's have a plan A and a plan B. Let's send some resources down there.

Let's bolster the battlements and design defenses and do whatever else we can. What does the Lord do? Pass me another grape. Somebody got another fan here? The seraphim got a little close, get a little warm.

He's completely casual. He is relaxed. He is unconcerned.

It is nothing that he takes seriously. Now, why are we given this picture? It's a little shocking. It has always been shocking to me.

Every time I come to Psalm 2, it seems very unfeeling of the Lord. Because if you're the Lord's anointed, you're thinking, that may be easy for you up there in the heavenly throne to be sitting there laughing, but I'm down here staring at enemies on every side. But why are we given this picture? What is the application of it? And once again, what kind of stitch do we have? If he who sits in heaven shall laugh, and the Lord shall hold him in derision, what is that? It's really synonymous, isn't it? It's two ways of saying the same thing.

God's not worried. And when you have synonymous, we want to expand that out. We want to try to find why it's been told to us two different ways.

He finds it amusing, and he doesn't assign it any importance. Well, why are we told this? It goes back to the relationship between the Lord and his anointed. If our relationship with the Lord is what it should be, if it's strong and secure and healthy, then why should I fear what man shall do unto me? With God, all things are possible.

So, if I do find this unsettling, the problem is with me. I should be as relaxed and as certain of the outcome as God is. God's not taking it seriously.

Evidently, he's already made all the provision that needs to be made. He doesn't have to call angels. He doesn't have to say, go down there and fight that fire with trucks and hoses.

It's unimportant, because it's already provided for. When you're connected to the Lord as his anointed, fear thou not, for I am with thee. Be not dismayed, I am thy God.

I will strengthen thee, I will help thee, I will uphold thee, the right hand of my righteousness. So, it is something, when we think about this sort of odd picture of God laughing in heaven and deriding the puny hordes that are trying to align themselves against his anointed, it prods us to think further and figure out, why don't I have that attitude? Why am I not equally relaxed? So then, in verse 5, and now we're in the middle of this second part, then he shall speak to them in his wrath and distress them in his deep displeasure. So, the first response, in the moment when they assemble and take counsel together, God chuckles, doesn't take them seriously, but, what? His ultimate reaction is one of anger and deep displeasure.

And this is the multifaceted God. Have you ever had a water main break or the bottom come out of your hot water tank or your electricity goes off right in the middle of something important and, initially, you just shake your head and you're kind of amused. Oh, that figures.

You know, it's just like a law of the universe that when you need it the most, it isn't there. Or, just as you're about to leave on a vacation, something happens and you can't go. I've told you before, I had a rare, long weekend and was going to go up to Pennsylvania from Quantico,

Virginia, and got all packed up, ready to go, had a friend that was going to go with me, and went out there and my car was just dead.

Wouldn't start. Everybody else was gone. No help.

No way to fix it. It was a fuel problem, not just a battery. The car is undriveable.

And, you know, I looked at Joe, my fellow lieutenant, and we just laughed. Like, of course, four-day weekend, this is when the car is going to quit. But what do you do after that? After you assess the situation and you have that initial, well, this is not the end of the world, then what do you do? You get after it and fix it.

And that's what God is going to do. Initially, he says, well, this is silly. And it's vain.

But it still makes the Lord angry. And in His displeasure, He is going to take care of it. So you have this movement from verse 4 to verse 5. And He'll speak to them in His wrath and distress them in His deep displeasure.

So remember the first section? Let's compare the first section and the second section just real quick. What's going on in the first section? Does somebody have displeasure? Is somebody angry? It's the nations and the people, right? They have displeasure and they're angry. This is the people outside of our Christian fellowship.

Many times, they have displeasure and they're angry. Right? And then they speak. Let us break their bonds in pieces and cast away their cords from us.

Well, now, God chuckles at this. Then He gets serious. He gets angry.

He has displeasure and He says something. What did they say? Let's break their bonds in pieces and cast away their cords from us. God says, I am not a destroyer for my people.

I'm not one who breaks things to improve the situation. I have established. I have grounded.

I have firmly placed my king on my holy hill of Zion. And the way this is phrased in Hebrew is I have established my king and the emphasis is on I. And we're going to see this emphasis again. But you see a three-fold reference to God.

I have established my king on my holy hill. And you get the idea that it only takes God's single king on His single hill to overcome all the kings of all the nations and all the peoples on all the other hills on the planet. Now, that is a great thought.

That's worthy of reflection. All I need, God says, is my one faithful anointed on my one holy hill. And when I've planted Him there, the entire rest of the planet cannot move Him.

And it just makes me laugh to even think that they would try. God's ways are higher than our ways. His thoughts are higher than our thoughts.

And His power is somewhat greater than ours. In fact, it's infinitely greater than ours. And we just are so easily distracted and deflected from remembering who is behind us as God's anointed.

My king, my holy hill. And again, you go back to 2 Samuel 7, verses 5-17, the Davidic covenant, where God talks to David and says, your son is going to reign on an eternal throne, in a nutshell. Well, let's quickly see if we can cover the third section here as we close tonight, because it ties directly into this.

You will see sort of a chiastic structure here, where the outside two parts correspond, and the inside two parts correspond. It's kind of like a book folding in the middle. You've got part one, part two, then you've got part three that folds against part two, and then you've got part four that's going to go back against part one.

So if you had the nations and the heathens and all those guys in part one, you'd expect to see them again toward the end of the psalm. And in the middle, you've got God and His response. So in this third section, which is going to be verses 7, 8, and 9, what does God say? Actually, this is the psalmist talking now.

We shift speakers. God has spoken. Now the psalmist speaks.

I, David says, will declare the decree. And this word decree is choq, C-H-O-Q, choq. And it comes from the verb tshakak, which means to engrave, to engrave.

It's one thing to write with a marker on something or maybe to stick a label on it. But if you want to permanently identify something as yours, what do you do? You engrave your name or you engrave an ID number or something. Used to have those little vibrating pens.

It's funny to try to read what most people do with those things when you're trying to write your social security number or something with this little vibrating engraving pen. And usually it just winds up being a scattering of dots. I never had any success with it.

But my ring, for example, is engraved. It's got my name and United States Marine Corps inside it. And that'll be there long after I'm gone.

It'll be there until they melt the ring. Engrave. And so when he says, I will declare the engraving, I will declare what has been written and cannot be changed.

The Lord has said to me, you are my son. Today I have begotten you. So how closely related are the Lord and his anointed? You are my son, God says.

And you find this in 2 Samuel chapter 7. You are my son. Today that relationship has been established. And that's the first thing that is said.

He doesn't say, don't worry, David. Fear not. Let not your heart be troubled.

I'll take care of these nations that are surrounding you. I'll take care of these kings and this confederation. I know their plots and I've got a plan to spoil their efforts.

What's the first thing God says to David? What is David's comfort as he looks around and sees this huge conspiracy and this great confederation against him that is extremely hostile? What does David answer with? Well, he writes this psalm and he says, Why are they raging and conspiring? God has said that he has set me, his king, on Zion, his holy hill. So the question is, do we belong to God? Are we in Christ and therefore sons by adoption? We are. Christ is the firstborn among many brethren.

That makes God our Father. And we are his children. You are my child is a perfectly legitimate way of translating this.

You are my child. As of this day, I have engraved that relationship permanently. This is another argument, by the way, for eternal security.

What God joins together, what God engraves, isn't going to be torn asunder. So, I will declare the engraving. The Lord has said to me, you are my son, you are my child.

As of today, that relationship exists and persists. Ask of me and I will give you the nations for your inheritance. These nations that are conspiring together to squash you like a bug and throw away your bonds and cords.

If you ask me, I'll give them to you for your inheritance. Your possession. You can go plant carrots up there.

It's your inheritance. It's your land. Your possession.

What did they say in verse 3? Let us do what? What was the verb? Let us break? Remember that? What does it say in verse 9? You shall break them with a rod of iron. They are trying to break restrictions. You have a rod of iron that will break them.

He doesn't say, I'll give you cords and you can freshly bind them. You'll have a rod of iron that will crush them. You will dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

Now, comparing in strength between a healthy, strong young man with an iron rod in his hand, walking up to some fired clay pottery, who's going to win if he starts swinging that stick? What's the relative strength? You can see now why God is chuckling and holding them in derision. The clay pots say, we're going to jump up off the ground and smash this guy in the head and make him drop his rod and we're going to get away from his influence and his authority. It's a comical picture.

You will break them, God promises. You shall dash them to pieces and it is they, not their bonds, that end up being broken. Well, this is three quarters of the psalm.

And I thought about trying to finish it tonight, but in this last section there is a really strange

verse. And it's the last verse. It's verse 12.

Now therefore be wise, O kings, be instructed, you judges of the earth, serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling. This is what's going to pertain during the Millennial Kingdom, right? In the reign of Christ. This is quoted several times.

He will rule them with a rod of iron. But then in verse 12, kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish in the way when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.

That verse kind of sticks out like a sore thumb. You can see the symmetry that the kings and the authorities, the judges of the earth, just like the ones that were plotting and scheming and raging in the first verse, are going to serve with fear and trembling. Their rage is going to be turned to abject, servile obedience.

And they are going to be completely dominated and subjugated by God's anointed. Well, one thing about having that kind of power is it can easily corrupt. And one of the reasons God leaves us here suffering under unfair authority, suffering under hostile opposition, is the same reason that the service academies have their younger cadets and midshipmen serve enlisted watches and undergo the hardships of unfair authority and so on.

Because when you then are handed that authority, you know what it's like to be on the other side of it. And hopefully you exercise it with more care and more balance and more objectivity and more sensitivity. Remember, the overcomers are going to rule and reign with Christ.

We've seen that judging angels over in 1 Corinthians. That's a lot of power. And power corrupts, absolute power corrupts absolutely.

How will we not be unfair and unjust when we share that ruling authority with Christ in the hopeful case that we do? It is because we learn obedience through the things that we suffer just as He learned obedience, the Lord Jesus Himself, through the things that He suffered as a human being. So God has allowed our contact with hostile opposition and unfair authority now because there is a day coming when we will be on the other side of a much greater authority and a much greater opportunity for oversight and for judgment. And to be fair and to be just and to be balanced, we need this experience to prevent us from messing up.

This is something the angels that kept not their first estate did not have. And I think God is showing the angels through us that that experience is necessary so that we can continue to have free will. What's to say we wouldn't fall somewhere in the eternal future? Well, we're being inoculated by contact with weakened and defeated sin just like an injection of vaccine acquaints our system with a weakened and defeated foe.

We build up a resistance and we're never infected by it. So that's what the reminder is here. We first of all look at Psalm 1 and we disassociate ourselves from evil people and bad practices and bad places.

We take delight in the law of the Lord and reflect on it day and night. That is the path to prosperity and peace and production. Well, it's hard to enjoy the path of prosperity, peace and production when you've got hostility and opposition threatening to undo you on every side.

That's what Psalm 2 covers. Isn't it a beautiful balance here between showing us our personal responsibility and then how to look at the world around us? It prevents subjectivity with eyes on self. It prevents subjectivity with eyes on people and eyes on circumstances.

We get the whole squared away view in these first two Psalms and it sets the tone for all of the rest of the Psalter. So we'll come back and take a quick look at the fourth part next time because we want to look at verse 12 in particular. It's really fascinating.

I wrote an entire paper on this back in my younger days and it was so much fun to figure out what happened to this verse and why it is translated so strangely. And not only can we figure out what it says but what it means. And then we can move on to Psalm 3. Lord, how they have increased who trouble me.

You ever felt like that? They're just multiplying like rabbits. And so Psalm 3 is a wonderful one to look at and we'll hopefully take that up next time. But let's close here in a word of prayer.

Father, thank you for the wonderful assurance that we have in this age as in no other. That we are your children. That we are in Christ.

That we enjoy all of the privileges and the opportunities of being the anointed. We represent the Lord Jesus on this earth. We have a chance to shine as lights so that others can be drawn to you through the Lord Jesus.

And we pray that we can exploit that opportunity by seeing our place and seeing that we really have nothing to fear and we have everything to gain by trusting you, by availing ourselves of the resources that you've put at our disposal, of maintaining our perspective, being diligent, being obedient, and awaiting the day when the Lord Jesus will vindicate our faith and will, as your anointed, rule the earth for a thousand years and usher us, if we are qualified, into your own kingdom. So we're inspired and encouraged by these things and we pray that they'll be brought to our minds by your spirit to make a difference in the way we think and live in the days ahead. And we pray these things in Jesus' name.

Amen.