



JOHNSON AVENUE
Church of Christ
WHERE *God's Family* BUILDS ETERNAL HOMES

A Spiritual Encouragement Message

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Shifting Focus

By Derrick Victor

Psalms is the Hebrew word for praises, or hymns. Often, we say, turn to the book of Psalms. It would be just as correct, and possibly easier understood if we said, turn to the book of praises. Isn't it fascinating that the book of praises happens to be the longest book in the bible and the most often quoted book in the New Testament? How much of our life is praise, as opposed to complaint?

As we open the book of praises, we notice a very fitting beginning to this wonderful book. We're given two very distinct call and response praise hymns. Psalm 1 is a contrast of the righteous life over the wicked life. The call is simple, seek the Lord and live righteously. We're told those who love the Lord also love His law and meditate on it day and night. The reader is presented with a case, in which the choice is obvious; live righteously!

Psalm 2 is another call and response. Only this time, we're not called to live righteously, but to praise the Son. To recognize His glory and Kingship, never abandoning His leadership in our lives. What better way to start the book of praises than to call the reader to righteous living and to recognize and kiss the Son? We cannot do one without the other. If you seek to live righteously, you will need to acknowledge the Son, and if you acknowledge the Son, you will indeed need to keep His commandments and live righteously.

Psalm 1 was a wisdom Psalm. Psalm 2 is a Messianic Psalm. Messianic Psalms are quite fascinating because they are two-fold. They often carry a current fulfillment as they are being written as well as a prophetic fulfillment of the Christ, Jesus. The current fulfillment for the Messianic Psalm does hold importance in our understanding, as well as the reader of the day, but we must put our main focus on the prophecy of the Anointed One.

*“Why do the nations rage
and the peoples plot in vain?
The kings of the earth set themselves,
and the rulers take counsel together,
against the Lord and against his Anointed, saying,
“Let us burst their bonds apart
and cast away their cords from us.”
He who sits in the heavens laughs;*

*the Lord holds them in derision.
Then he will speak to them in his wrath,
and terrify them in his fury, saying,
“As for me, I have set my King
on Zion, my holy hill.”
I will tell of the decree:
The Lord said to me, “You are my Son;
today I have begotten you.
Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage,
and the ends of the earth your possession.
You shall break them with a rod of iron
and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.”
Now therefore, O kings, be wise;
be warned, O rulers of the earth.
Serve the Lord with fear,
and rejoice with trembling.
Kiss the Son,
lest he be angry, and you perish in the way,
for his wrath is quickly kindled.
Blessed are all who take refuge in him.*

PSALM 2

As the Psalm begins, we are introduced to a reality that has not changed in the last 3,000 years or more. Men and nations plot together for their own will, regardless of the will of God. When nations go to war for resources; when people try and eliminate other races/nations from existence; when world leaders think they can get away with manipulating our systems and hurting our people. God sees all of it. There is no conspiracy or reality that God is not aware of... While we might find ourselves scared, confused, or angry, God *“sits in the heavens and laughs” (Psalm 2:4)*. He is not laughing at our misery or our confusion. He is laughing at the arrogance of men who think they can change the outcome which he has established since the beginning. You see, it didn't take long for Eve to consider herself worthy of the knowledge of God. Likewise, men of this world often count themselves worthy of god-like knowledge and power. God laughs at their arrogance, knowing that He will be victorious. I almost imagine an ant trying to plot his revenge against me as I ready the poison to rid him from my house. There is no chance for this little ant!

Of course, this is where our peace should rest. God is in complete control. He knows what men and women in our world are doing. He will not allow injustice to persist without consequences. Some of those consequences are in the here and now (*Rom. 1:21-25; 2 Thess. 2:9-12*), while others come on the final day of Judgment (*Acts 17:29-31*). Regardless, justice will be served. Therefore, our job, is not one of being the righteous judge and casting condemnation down. Our job is to do our part in helping these fallen people to see the error of their ways so that they will be covered by Grace on the day of Judgment. With that heart in mind, knowing that a lack of effort on our part means destruction on theirs, the Apostle Paul wrote:

“For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them. To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.” (1 Cor. 9:19-23)

So, instead of constantly worrying about the affairs of this world, perhaps we should be shifting focus to what really matters! Therefore, we must answer one question: who are we becoming?