

ALMIGHTY GOD AND FALLEN MAN

Psalm 2:1-12

Key Verse: 2:7

"I will proclaim the decree of the Lord: He said to me, 'You are my Son; today I have become your Father.'"

1. Read verses 1-3. Who is the one against whom nations and kings of the earth rebel? (Isa 40:12,15) Why do they rebel? (Ge 11:1-10) Why do sinful men regard God's rule over them as chains and fetters to be thrown off?
2. How do even God's chosen people reveal the mentality of fallen men? (Ex 19:4-6a; Mk 12:1-8; Mt 27:25) What should we learn from this?
3. Read verses 4-5. How does the Sovereign God regard rebellious mankind? What does it mean that he laughs and scoffs at them instead of destroying them? Why does he rebuke and terrify them?
4. Read verses 6-7. What did the Almighty God do instead of crushing wicked men? Where is Zion and his holy hill? What was God's plan? (Isa 2:3)
5. What are the most important words in verse 7? When did God say these words to Jesus? (Lk 3:22) What is the character and mission of the Messiah? (Lk 4:18-19) What can we do to be his people? (Jn 8:31-32; Jn 3:3)
6. What did the Sovereign God promise his Son? (8) Read verses 9-10. What do these verses mean? (Lk 20:17,18) What is the warning to the kings of the earth? How can they be wise? (10-11)
7. Read verses 11-12. How can we serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling? Why must we kiss the Son? What promise does he give to us when we surrender to him in love?

ALMIGHTY GOD AND FALLEN MAN

Psalm 2:1-12

Key Verse: 2:7

"I will proclaim the decree of the Lord: He said to me, 'You are my Son; today I have become your Father.'"

Psalm 2 has broad meaning, so broad that we cannot figure out what the point is. But when we carefully meditate and study Psalm 2 from a poetic point of view, it is very easy to understand. Psalm 2 tells us that God is Almighty and the Creator of heaven and earth and the Ruler of history. As the Creator God and the Owner of the universe, he doesn't like fallen man's conduct and mentality. He could have destroyed them all. In spite of his pain, he proclaims that he will send his Son as the Messiah of the world. In actuality, the Son is just the same as God. But he is like a good shepherd. He is a humble and gentle king. It is easy for fallen man not to listen to him. But the psalmist warns them to listen to him so that they may be the blessed who would take refuge in him.

First, the One enthroned in heaven (1-4).

In verse 4, "The One enthroned in heaven" is God the Creator. He is God Almighty who created the heavens and the earth with his power and wisdom. Genesis 1:1 says, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." When God said, "Let there be light," there was light. Not only did he create the heavens and the earth, he also created man and woman. He also made a paradise to let them enjoy God's blessing forever. They could eat from the tree of life and walk around the beautiful garden of paradise, which is more beautiful than Mt. Kilimanjaro under the equator, where there are many mysterious animals living peacefully. Our God is Almighty God. To our God, all the nations are like a drop in a bucket (Isa 40:15). To him, all the nations are also like fine dust. Almighty God measures the waters of the sea in the hollow of his hand, and with the breadth of his hand marks off the heavens. Our God weighs the mountains on the scales and the hills in a balance (Isa 40:12).

On the other hand, all men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field. The grass withers and the flowers fall. But since the Fall, men became proud and do not honor God as God. They want to do whatever they want to do. These days many young people say, "I am my own man." It is not a new story. It is a very old, old story. Genesis 11 describes fallen man's mentality so excellently. When God created the world, the whole world had one language and a common speech. When God blessed them to live a happy life, they became even more proud. They said to each other, "Come, let us make

bricks and bake them thoroughly." Again, they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered over the face of the whole earth" (Gen 11:1-4). As we know well, when God made the world, God made it for his own glory and for the happiness of mankind. But after the Fall, men only wanted to live for their own glory. They wanted to make a tower reaching to the heavens and show off their achievement. This shows that they are so proud that they thought they can do anything God can do. They wanted to live among themselves without God. God was very sorry to see them. The Lord said, "If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other" (Gen 11:6-7). From that time on, the language problem occurred. For example, the Philippines is made up of 400 islands and 200 dialects. Chinese people have two major languages, Cantonese and Mandarin. But each province has its own dialect. So Chinese people in one province cannot understand the people of other provinces, because of their different dialects. For them, it is very important to learn English and unify the language. China's slow progress was caused by difficult Chinese characters and several hundreds of dialects. Last year 43 American delegates attended the Russian summer Bible conference. But because of a language problem, we stared at one another and made many bitter smiles. Last year, Russian students mainly delivered the messages. We didn't know what they were talking about. But there were several Russian students who spoke English. So we could communicate a little bit. Even though we are very close Christian friends, when there was a language problem we felt a distance. We really wished we could speak fluent Russian so that we could share our life testimonies and Bible knowledge. Many American delegates made decisions to study Russian. But as soon as they came back to America, they did not study Russian.

God had a definite plan to save the world. So he chose the Israelites and trained them in the godless nation of Egypt for 400 years so that they could understand how happy it is to live where God rules and how terrible it is to live under a godless ruler. God hoped they could be well-trained people in Egypt. Exodus 19:4-6a says, "You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." God gave them the most precious and glorious mission so that his world salvation plan was possible. As God promised, they entered the promised land after 40 years of the wilderness training. At first, they fought for the glory of God and conquered the land. But when they could settle

down and live securely, they stopped fighting and left many of the enemies, especially the Philistines, in the land. They did not teach the Bible as their mission. They began to like flowing milk and honey in the promised land. In the matter of time, they forgot God.

Not only in the Old Testament, but also in the New Testament, we can see fallen man's mentality among the chosen people. There is the parable of the tenants in Mark 12:1-8. It says, "He then began to speak to them in parables: 'A man planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a pit for the winepress and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and went away on a journey. At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants to collect from them some of the fruit of the vineyard. But they seized him, beat him and sent him away empty-handed. Then he sent another servant to them; they struck this man on the head and treated him shamefully. He sent still another, and that one they killed. He sent many others; some of them they beat, others they killed. He had one left to send, a son, whom he loved. He sent him last of all, saying, "They will respect my son." But the tenants said to one another, "This is the heir. Come, let's kill him, and the inheritance will be ours." So they took him and killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard.'" In this parable, the tenants were happy to be the tenants of God's vineyard. But when the vineyard was abundantly fruitful, they could not see God. They could only see the fruits from the vines and they felt that they had made the vineyard and that they had ownership. When God sent some servants to get some fruit, to see if they were doing well, out of their covetousness they did all the evil they could do in their hallucination that they were the owners of the vineyard. This parable describes fallen man's mentality. This parable describes why they don't want to be under God's rule, and why they want to do everything in their own way. It is simply because they do not recognize God as God. They are fallen men.

God chose the Israelites as a chosen people. God wanted to make them Bible teachers so that the knowledge of God would overflow in the whole world. But they did not carry out God's world mission purpose. When Jesus came and healed the sick and preached the gospel, they became jealous of him because of his popularity among people. They crucified him, hoping that they would not see him again. After crucifying Jesus, the Son of God, in their ignorance, they said, "Let his blood be on us and on our children" (Mt 27:25). Because they shed the blood of the holy Son of God, as they said of themselves, they have been punished for 2,000 years without their own country. They were scattered all around the world. And wherever they went, they were discriminated against. Actually, Germany was not a stable country. German means, originally, "barbarian." But God's chosen people went into Germany and created German culture.

For example, Heinrich Heine (1797-1856) wrote poems. His poems were so excellent that genius musicians such as Schubert (1797-1828), Mendelssohn (1809-1847), and Brahms (1833-1897) composed their music based on Heine's poems. In this way, German culture grew. God's chosen people also went to the former USSR for refuge. But it is very strange. Stalin taught Russian to all the colonial countries. Those who did not speak Russian were severely punished. But Stalin ordered that Jews should not learn Russian, so that they may be distinguished from other people. Hitler massacred so many Jewish people in the name of patriotism. We call it "The Holocaust." But the death camps were not in Germany, because German Christians strongly protested. Without railroads the Holocaust could not have happened. Hitler went to Russia and ordered Stalin to kill all of the 5,000,000 Jews in Russia. And they were all killed. Hitler also ordered 2,000,000 Jews to be killed in Poland. And they were all killed. So the Holocaust took place mainly in Russia and Poland. Some people of the world thought that the Jews had been persecuted so cruelly and killed because they were responsible for the blood of Jesus, so they deserved such a persecution and mass massacre.

But from God's point of view, it is not true. God scattered them all over the world, even to the Soviet Union, to teach the Bible. But mainly they did not teach the Bible. They mainly made money through diligent letter writing when communication was very poor.

The worst thing they did was to limit themselves to the Torah instead of using the New Testament about the Son of God and promised Messiah. The chosen people limited themselves to the Old Testament, not to recognize Jesus as the Son of God or the Messiah of the world. But the whole world was shaken by the fact of Jesus' death and resurrection through which people receive the grace of forgiveness, eternal life and the kingdom of God as their inheritance. In order to prevent gospel work, the Jews made all kinds of regulations: how to eat, how to work, how to comb their hair, and mainly how to grow their moustaches and beards. Among Jewish people, the Torah became their Bible. In the movie, "Fiddler on the Roof," Tevia, Golda's husband, sang about Jewish tradition and really honors Jewish tradition. But he says, "I don't know where it came from." It came from the Torah, which prevented the chosen people from knowing the New Testament and knowing Jesus' death and resurrection. If Jewish people want to prosper spiritually and maintain their race, they must accept Jesus and the New Testament. As a paralyzed man cannot live long with half a body, the Jewish people will not last long. They must go beyond the Torah and grab the New Testament in their hands. This is not a small matter. They were against God. They sought their own glory. They were preventing God's purpose of world salvation.

Politically speaking, English people colonized India so that a small island country, England, would be the world power. It was also against God's will. In the past, the United Kingdom, four pieces of islands, England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland, colonized India, simply because they wanted to be a world-power nation by occupying a huge country, India. But God was not pleased. After World War II, India and subordinate African countries all became independent.

Once, Japanese people wanted to be a world-power nation. They attacked Pearl Harbor in an attempt to conquer the United States. It turned out to be kicking the goads. It was also against God's will. Fallen man does not know God's unlimited love. Fallen man does not know God's love that he gave his one and only Son as the atoning sacrifice for the sin of the world. Fallen man always wants to grab something, as a monkey wants to grab bananas. Look at verses 1-3. "Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the Lord and against his Anointed One. 'Let us break their chains,' they say, 'and throw off their fetters.'" In verse 2, the words "against the Lord," refer to the Almighty God and "his Anointed One" refers to Jesus, the promised Messiah. In this verse, we learn that fallen men are historically and intentionally wicked.

Second, I have installed my King on Zion (4-10).

When the Almighty God saw the wickedness of rulers and kings of the world, especially his chosen people, he rebuked them in his anger. Look at verses 4-5. "The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them. Then he rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath...." When the Almighty God saw the wickedness of the rulers and kings of the world, and especially that his chosen people did many wicked things, he became dumb-struck. The Almighty God did not know if he had to laugh or be upset. He had to just despise them or terrify them in his wrath. Since he is the Almighty God, and man is made by his own hand, he can crush him, as the owner of an old watch crushes it and throws it away. The Almighty God can destroy them all at once by a flood or by a fire.

But God is love. So he said in verse 6, "I have installed my King on Zion, my holy hill." Verse 6 is part of Isaiah's prophecy, and it is God's utmost hope that Jerusalem would become a world mission Bible center where many people would say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths" (Isa 2:3). Even though his people, the chosen people, are so wicked, God did not give up or stop carrying out his will for world salvation. Verse 6 is the prophetic picture that someday the world salvation plan through the Bible study will be reality.

Look at verse 7. "I will proclaim the decree of the Lord: He said to me, 'You are my Son; today I have become your Father.'" In the first part of verse 7, the word "decree" is the word of God. The most important words in verse 7 are "You are my Son." "You are my Son" is one of the titles of the Messiah. Luke 3:22 says, "...and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: 'You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.'" The voice of God came from heaven right after Jesus' baptism by John the Baptist, the forerunner. Biblically speaking, it was the inauguration ceremony of Jesus as the Messiah of the world. At his inauguration, God clothed Jesus with the power of the Holy Spirit. The power of the Holy Spirit descended on him like a dove. Almighty God did not crush all wicked men. He sent the Messiah, who is full of the Holy Spirit and who is full of peace like a dove. Luke 4:18,19 describes the character and mission of the Messiah. It says, "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." Though he is the Son of God and the Messiah of the world, his main mission is to preach the good news to the poor. Here "poor" means humble people. Humble people receive good news of great joy from their hearts. Proud people receive it from their reason and then escape from reason. Our Savior Jesus was sent to proclaim freedom for the prisoners. All human beings are, in one way or the other, prisoners. In other words, they are slaves of fear. These fearful people never commit themselves, even to God. So they are always fearful and meaningless and they have no direction of life. They are number one on the list of those who go to eternal condemnation (Rev 21:8). There are all kinds of prisoners; prisoners of hate, prisoners of future security, prisoners of pleasure, prisoners of unbelief, and prisoners of meaninglessness. They may look good, but they are suffering endlessly. There is a very handsome young man who is attending a first-class university. He lacks nothing. But he has no commitment to God. In other words, he does not honor God as God. Because he does not honor God as God, he thinks he is not so handsome, even though he is handsome. Our Savior Jesus was sent for the recovery of sight for the blind. God has given us Jesus, the grace of forgiveness, eternal life and the kingdom of God as our inheritance. But the blind cannot see these things. There are many people who are spiritually blind. When we study John 3, there is a most symbolic figure named Nicodemus. He drove a golden chariot drawn by four white stallions. When he drove his chariot, wearing his Sanhedrin robe, he was the envy of all people of his time. But something bothered him. He felt like committing suicide with no obvious reason. One night, he disguised himself as an ordinary person and came to Jesus. Jesus noticed that he was Nicodemus. Jesus said to him just one word,

"You must be born again" (Jn 3:3). Jesus also told him that the world consisted of three dimensions. The first dimension is the material world. The second dimension is the human world. The third dimension is the kingdom of God. Jesus immediately knew that Nicodemus could not see the kingdom of God and that he had no right to enter the kingdom of God. Jesus knew that he was a spiritually blind man. In the world, there are very sorrowful people. Those whose parents are divorced are sorrowful. Those whose future is not promising are sorrowful. The most sorrowful people are those who do not have spiritual insight to see the kingdom of God. Those who have spiritual eyes are not confined in this world. Those who have spiritual eyes do the same thing all the time. Still, every day is a new day. Even though he lives with his own wife, his wife seems to be just as she was right after their wedding ceremony. Those who have spiritual eyes to see the kingdom of God do not fight with dogs and puppies and pigs. They do the work of God. Most of all, our Savior King Jesus came to this world to release the oppressed. There are many oppressed people because of their financial situation or because of their family situation. There is a very handsome young man. He is deeply oppressed by his neighbor, uncle Tom, assuming that his neighbor is going to kill him someday. But there is no oppression at all when we are in Jesus, for we are free indeed. This describes our Savior King, the Messiah's character and major work according to Luke's gospel. Most of all, he is like a father who does everything for his children. Our Savior King wants to give us even the many nations as our inheritance and wants to give us every good thing which is in the whole world as our possession (8). St. John summarized this messiahship so precisely, including our obligation. John 8:31,32 says, "To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, 'If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.'" When we accept the word of God from the Savior King, the Messiah, we become his friends and disciples. In addition, we are free indeed. This freedom comes from the truth. The truth is God himself and the Savior King, the Messiah, because he is the Alpha and the Omega (Rev 1:8).

Look at verse 9. "You will rule them with an iron scepter; you will dash them to pieces like pottery." This verse clearly tells us that our Savior King Jesus is the King who rules with the iron scepter. How he moves his scepter determines one's destination. If his scepter is down, it means the wicked will be dashed to pieces like pottery, with a noisy, smashing sound. Jesus was like a rejected stone. He was useless to wicked people. He was despised and rejected and became a man of sorrows in order to shepherd the flock of God. Because he is a father-like shepherd and gentle and humble, people treated him at random. But that's a great mistake. Luke the historian and evangelist described this Biblical thought so excellently. Luke 20:17,18 says, "Jesus looked directly at them and

asked, "Then what is the meaning of that which is written: "The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone?" Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, but he on whom it falls will be crushed." The psalmist said in verse 10, "Therefore, you kings, be wise; be warned, you rulers of the earth."

Third, serve the Lord with fear and rejoice (11-12).

In God, there is no mistake. We know Joseph's story. Many people would like to be Joseph. So they name themselves "Joseph." Even Stalin's name was Joseph Stalin. But he could not be a Joseph. Romans 8:28 says, "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." Many people evaluate themselves according to the situation. But we must see ourselves with the thought that God is good. God is good, whatever we do. God is good, whatever situation we may be in. There is a medical missionary to Korea. His eldest daughter, whom he loved the most, died as a result of a car accident. He thanked God and praised God that God is good. The next year, his youngest son, Philip, was drowned. Philip was only seven years old. But the missionary had a fear of God in his heart and he rejoiced in God with trembling. At his youngest son's funeral ceremony he said, "There is no accident in God. God is good." We do something living in this world. Why do we do something? Maybe because we have to survive. That doesn't make sense. So the psalmist admonishes us, "Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling" (11). In verse 12a he says, "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry and you be destroyed in your way, for his wrath can flare up in a moment." Our Savior King is so good. Sometimes we lose the fear of the Son and we have no deep respect and honor for him. But the psalmist says, "Kiss the Son." Otherwise, you will be punished. There are many people who think the Savior King Jesus, the Messiah, is nothing but a phantom figure. They have no respect. They have no love for him. They have no commitment in him. They have no realization that he is the Creator God. It seems to be the social consensus. But the Bible teaches us that we must serve the Lord with fear. The world seems to be ruled by the politicians: President Yeltsin, President Nelson Mandela, and Chairman Deng Xiaoping, who is 4' 7", one inch shorter than Ho Chi Minh. But in view of history, especially from a Biblical point of view, they are not true rulers. They are God's instruments. They conspire, they manipulate, they politick, but all of them must have a fear of the Savior King Jesus the Messiah and have spiritual insight and true freedom.

Today we learned that God Almighty rules the world with his absolute sovereignty. When men had to be destroyed, God sent his Son as the Savior King and the Messiah of the world. Especially, we learned that we must have a deep commitment in Jesus, the Savior King. We learned that we must kiss the Son.