



About fifteen years ago I was doing premarital counseling with two unbelievers. The Bible instructs us not to be equally yoked. To my knowledge, I have never married a believer and an unbeliever, but I am certainly willing to marry two unbelievers and use it as an opportunity to share the gospel. In this case, I said something about Jesus being God. I'll never forget when the woman said, "Jesus is the son of God but he's not God." It was a great witnessing opportunity, would you agree? But I confess that I was shocked that she did not know this basic fact. But since I mostly live in the insulated world of evangelicalism, her mistaken belief is probably far more common than I realize.

Two of the most important questions you will ever be faced with are these?

1. Who is Jesus?
2. How will you respond to Jesus?

But if you get the first question wrong, as this woman did, the second question will also be wrong.

This morning and next Sunday we are experiencing Christmas in the Psalms—Psalm 2 today and Psalm 110 next Sunday. But how do you get Christmas out of the Psalms you wonder? To do so you need to use one of the twenty or so messianic Psalms. The best known messianic Psalm is probably Psalm 22. It reads exactly like the crucifixion scene in the gospels even though it was written a thousand years before.

Psalm 22

<sup>1</sup> My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

All who see me mock me;

<sup>8</sup> "He trusts in the LORD; let him deliver him;  
let him rescue him, for he delights in him!"

<sup>15</sup> my strength is dried up like a potsherd,  
and my tongue sticks to my jaws;

<sup>18</sup> they divide my garments among them,  
and for my clothing they cast lots.

Any messianic Psalm is, in itself, a Christmas story as they predict the coming of the Messiah. But the second Psalm is extra relevant because Jesus is called the begotten Son of God. In fact, there are three titles for Jesus that all work perfectly in unison—Messiah, King and Son. This is Jesus in the Old Testament, as Jesus himself recounted after his resurrection.

And he said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself (Luke 24:25-27).

Psalm 2	New Testament	context
1-2	Acts 4:26	Nations rage
7	Acts 13:32-33	Begotten Son
7	Hebrews 1:5	Begotten Son
7	Hebrews 5:5	Begotten Son
9	Revelation 2:26	Rule w/ rod of iron
9	Revelation 12:5	Rule w/ rod of iron
9	Revelation 19:15	Rule w/ rod of iron

→ PERSECUTION

→ PREACHING  
CHRIST

→ COMING  
JUDGMENT

Though it is not indicated as such in the Psalm, In Acts 4, Luke tells us it was David. “who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit” (Acts 4:25). It is quoted seven times in the New Testament and each time, the

NT writers uses it for a different purpose. The apostles used it to define the persecution they had just experienced at the hands of the religious leaders. The nations were raging at them just as they had raged at Jesus when they nailed him to the cross. It’s a reminder that persecution is fundamentally a hatred of God not a hatred of his followers. It is quoted three more times in Acts and Hebrews to present Jesus as the begotten Son and Messiah. And understandably, it is used in Revelation to speak of coming judgment by King who will rule with a rod of iron. It is thoroughly a Messianic Psalm and as a prophecy of the begotten Son, it can also be called a Christmas Psalm. Let’s dig into it together. There are four sections of three verses each.

### 1. The nations rebel against the Messiah.

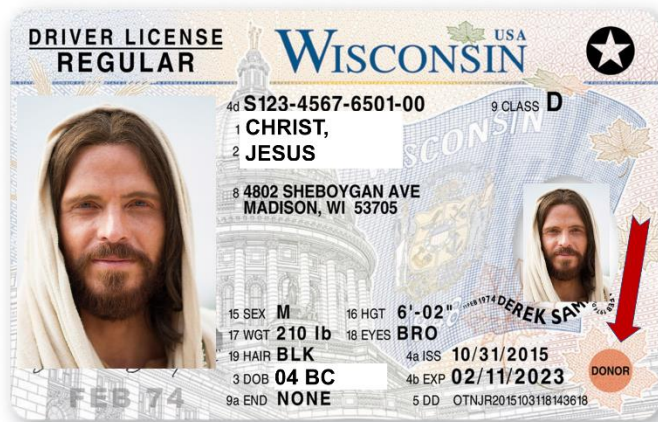
Why do the nations rage  
and the peoples plot in vain?

<sup>2</sup>The kings of the earth set themselves,  
and the rulers take counsel together,  
against the LORD and against his **Anointed**, saying,

<sup>3</sup>“Let us burst their bonds apart  
and cast away their cords from us.”

The key word here is the Lord’s anointed. The Hebrew word for anointed is *mashiyach*, which means Messiah. The Greek Old Testament uses the word *Christos*, which is Christ. Therefore, verse two actually reads:

The kings of the earth set themselves,  
and the rulers take counsel together,  
against the LORD and against his **Christ**.



Jesus is the Christ. Jesus is the Messiah. I think many people think that Christ was Jesus' last name. Like if Jesus had a driver's license, it would look like this: Christ, Jesus. Christ is not Jesus' last name. It is his title—Jesus, the Christ. Jesus the messiah. Jesus the anointed one of the Lord. This is the title that he gave to himself at the very start of his public ministry.

17 And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written,

18 “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
because he has anointed me  
to proclaim good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives  
and recovering of sight to the blind,  
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,

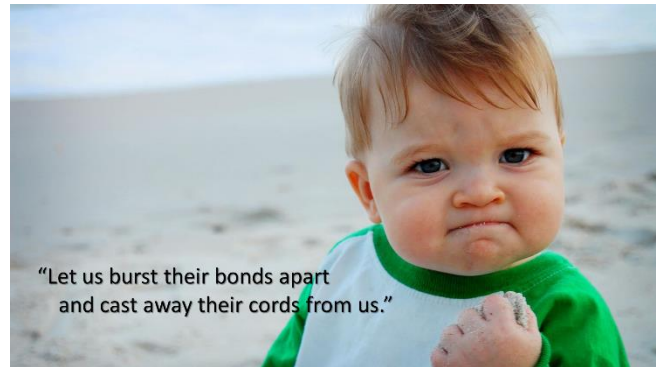
19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.”

20 And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. 21 And he began to say to them, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” (Luke 4:17-21)

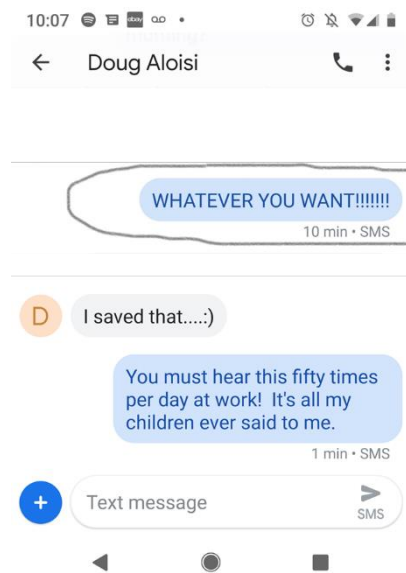
Remember last week when I described how Jesus pointed out his betrayer. “Who is it Lord?” It’s the one whom I dip this bread and give it.” It may as well have been a courtroom scene where Jesus dramatically pointed out the guilty party. “It’s Judas. He’s the betrayer. He’s the man!” It should have been clear as day, but the disciples missed it.

The same goes for this Luke 4 passage. Jesus declared himself to be the anointed one in the flesh, come to fulfill the prophecies and do his Father’s every wish. “I’m the guy. I’m the Messiah” he said on day one, but they didn’t see it. But once they did see it, the nations raged at him. The kings and rulers of this earth gathered together to collectively rage against the messiah. Again, this was perfectly laid out in the apostles’ prayer in Acts 4. *for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, 28 to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.* The highest religious leaders and the highest government leaders of the day conspired together to crucify *mashiyach*, the Messiah. But even in this greatest act of evil God was in perfect control. They simply did “whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.” Their enormous evil was swallowed up by God’s infinite plan.

But it's not just kings and rules who rage against Jesus. The biggest to the smallest and the oldest to the youngest all rage against his kingly rule over them. Our sinful nature does not like being told what to do. It never has and it never will.



Speaking of king, the word reminded me that this is the meaning of Ryan's name—"little king". He's not here to defend himself, but I think Ryan would agree there were times growing up that he thought he was a little king in the house, ruling over his kingdom upon which mom and dad daily encroached. Ethan's name means "firm" and Maurer means "wall" in German, so Ethan is a firm wall. That could be good or bad, right? There were certainly days when Ethan stood like a firm wall of resistance against his mom and dad's guiding hand of authority. No one likes to be told what to do. Kellyn's name means "beautiful flower on the mountain," so we never had any trouble from her. 😊 Actually, her name can mean "adventurous" or "powerful" and she had plenty of both as a little girl. We purposely gave her the middle name of Grace to balance out the odds in our favor.



Doug Aloisi and I had a little fun text messaging this week. We were talking about tonight's Christmas program and I said he could do whatever he wanted. He liked that part, so I emphasized it for him. He said he would save it for the future just in case. So I wrote back, "You must hear this fifty times per day at work! It's all my children ever said to me." All kidding aside, this is what our flesh wants to hear—just do whatever you want. Be your own boss. Chart your own destiny. Follow your heart. Color outside the lines. Just do whatever you want.

It all comes down to the oldest rebellion in human history. "Did God really say?" (Gen. 3:1) Do we really have to do that God wants or can we make our own rules?

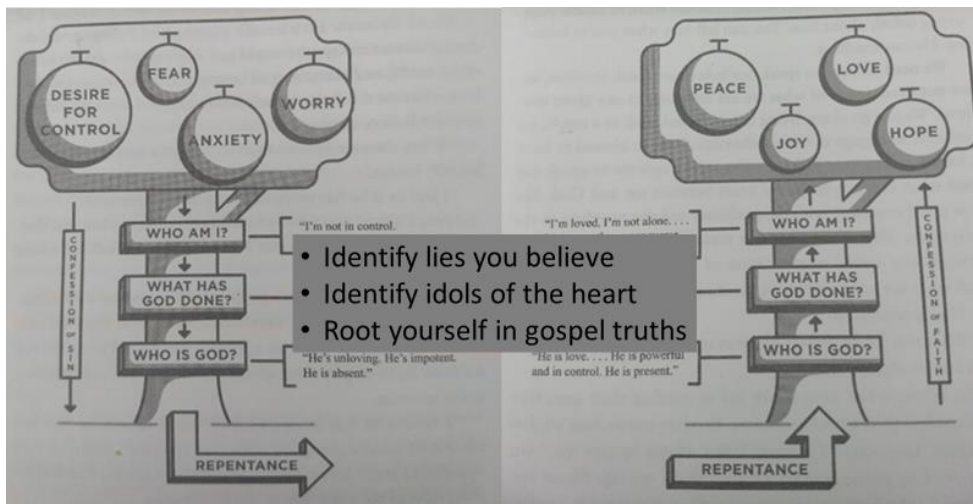
Jesus told Nicodemus that "the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil" (John 3:19). In Romans, Paul wrote: "Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things" (Romans 1:22-23). No one likes to be told what to do

The application for us is to be less concerned when the world shakes its fist at God and more concerned when we do it. For example, grumbling and complaining are minor forms of rebellion. When we grumble, we are saying by our actions that either God is not powerful enough to take away our troubles or he is not good enough to remove them. If god were both powerful and good, we would our troubles would float away. If push came to shove, we may not actually

believe that, but each complain that falls from our lips testifies that we are not happy with God, that we are not happy being a subject in his kingdom.

This is not to say that we can't share our concerns with others. There are some cultures within Christianity pretend that everything is hunky dory all the time. They want to—they need to present to all those around them that their life is effortless and beautiful 24/7. That's not reality. It's not that we have struggles, but it's all about what we do with our struggles.

This past Thursday night at LEAD we all experienced the practical application of Gospel Fluency. We took a few real-life scenarios and ran them through this process. For example, it's very common to complain about work. Everyone does it sometimes, but some do it all the time. But what do we do with it? Usually we just politely listen to someone else complain and do our best not to get caught up into the cycle of complaining.



But by using gospel fluency you can recognize the deeper issues behind the complaining and work them through to a healthier resolution of repentance and faith. It's nothing more than taking the gospel and applying it to

every are of your life. And it has great application to this point about rebellion. As Jeff Vandersteldt and countless others have pointed out—including Jesus himself—everyone is engaged in worship at all times. And there are only two realms of worship. We either worship the Messiah Jesus or else we worship self through endless types of sin. So even if we are not actively shaking our fists against God, we are daily rebelling against him and more often than not, we don't see it. So even something as simple as complaining about work could be revealing multiple idols of your heart, lies you believe about God and about yourself.

## 2. The King laughs and mocks the rebels.

- <sup>4</sup> He who sits in the heavens laughs;  
the Lord holds them in derision.  
<sup>5</sup> Then he will speak to them in his wrath,  
and terrify them in his fury, saying,  
<sup>6</sup> "As for me, I have set **my King**  
on Zion, my holy hill."

Jesus is the Messiah and he is also the King. We need a king, but we don't want a king.

We need to be walking with the Lord in the cool of the garden like Adam did, but we would rather think, “Did God really say...?” Can I get away with this? Do I have to do everything the Bible says? We need a king, but in our flesh, we don’t want a king.

These three verses are the response to anyone who rages at God and tries to throw off the fetters of his rule over their lives. What does he think of it all? He responds with laughter, derision, wrath and fury. This does not sound like the kind of king who is afraid of anything. If you get all tough and threaten someone and they laugh in your face, it kind of takes away your power, doesn’t it? When the other guy is laughing in your face when you’re trying to play the tough guy it never ends well. There is no power in the universe that could go against our King that poses any real threat to his power. The greatest powers in the world and even the greatest combined military forces in the world are as nothing before him. In fact, this is exactly how it will turn out in the last day.

And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison and will come out to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea. And they marched up over the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, but fire came down from heaven and consumed them (Revelation 20:7-9)

### **3. The Begotten Son rules with a rod of iron.**

<sup>7</sup> I will tell of the decree:

The LORD said to me, “You are **my Son**;  
today I have begotten you.

<sup>8</sup> Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage,  
and the ends of the earth your possession.

<sup>9</sup> You shall break them with a rod of iron  
and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.”

This section is what changes this psalm from just a Messianic Psalm into a Christmas Psalm. Jesus is Messiah Jesus is King and Jesus is the begotten Son. The Greek translation of this Psalm is the same word we find in John 3:16. “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”

The early church fathers picked up on the begotten language and used it in the Nicene Creed in 325 AD.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ,  
the only Son of God,  
begotten from the Father before all ages,  
God from God,  
Light from Light,  
true God from true God,

But then they added this line:

begotten, not made;  
of the same essence as the Father.

The Son is begotten, which is from the word for born. But the framers of the Nicene Creed wanted to make sure that no one could take from this that Jesus was made or created. You are I are God's creation. Jesus is the eternal Son—he was always the Son in relationship to his Father—who was subsequently born to become the God man: fully God but also fully man.

This is the Son from Isaiah 9:6  
For to us a child is born,  
to us a son is given;  
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,  
and his name shall be called  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

This is the Son from Daniel 7.  
13 "I saw in the night visions,  
and behold, with the clouds of heaven  
there came one like a son of man,  
and he came to the Ancient of Days  
and was presented before him.  
14 And to him was given dominion  
and glory and a kingdom,  
that all peoples, nations, and languages  
should serve him;  
his dominion is an everlasting dominion,  
which shall not pass away,  
and his kingdom one  
that shall not be destroyed. (Daniel 7:13-14)

Jesus is Messiah, King and Son. And there s only one proper response to him.

#### **4. The Warning to repent and worship the Son.**

<sup>10</sup> Now therefore, O kings, be wise;  
be warned, O rulers of the earth.  
<sup>11</sup> Serve the LORD with fear,  
and rejoice with trembling.  
<sup>12</sup> **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.

The only true response is to worship the Son. This is what the 3 wise men did.

*Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, <sup>2</sup> saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him” (Matthew 2:1-2).*



And worship requires repentance. That’s what it means to kiss the Son. It means to give your allegiance to the Son. It means to lay down your weapons, put aside your raging and complaining, bend your knee and your heart to him and see him for who he really is.

Now there is a stern warning here. The Son rules with a rod of iron. He will come with wrath and fury. We should fear and tremble before him. For the believer, will Jesus come in wrath to us? Absolutely not. “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1). But the most severe of these warnings are for the unbeliever, for the one who has never bent his or her knee to the Christ in allegiance and worship. The King will come in wrath and fury to each of them and this warning must be taken with the uttermost seriousness.

Who is Jesus? He is the Messiah, the King and the Son. For those for whom Jesus is already the Mashiyach, the last line of the Psalm is especially for us. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

**Rich Maurer**



**December 16, 2018**