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A HISTORY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

“2nd Psalm of David: A Prologue to the New Testament”¹

by

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“2nd Psalm of David: A Prologue to the New Testament” (Part Six)²

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² Roderick O. Ford, *The Apostolate Papers* (unpublished research papers, 2015 to 2022). www.roderickford.org.

A Foreword on the Book of Psalms

Jesus Christ himself explained that his ministry had been prophesied in the Book of Psalms.³ The prophecy of King David is also recorded in the Book of Psalms. There are 150 psalms written in that book. It is not clear as to whether David wrote or contributed to the creation of all of these psalms. One position holds that David himself only wrote about 73 of these 150 psalms. While another position—that of Reformed theology—holds that David wrote all 150 of the psalms. For instance, Augustine of Hippo held this later position in *The City of God*, stating that:

But those seem to me to hold the more credible opinion, who ascribe to him the authorship of all these hundred and fifty psalms, and think that he prefixed to some of them the names even of other men, who prefigured something pertinent to the matter, but chose to have no man's name in the titles of the rest, just as God inspired him in the management of this variety, which, although dark, is not meaningless.⁴

Here, Augustine pointed out that “the Savior Himself” ascribed Psalm 110 to the authorship of David, even though the caption to this Psalm reads “Of David. A psalm.”⁵

According to Augustine, King David's prophecies are contained within the 150 psalms.⁶ Augustine surmised that, given David's natural talents and musical gifts, his prophecies were naturally transmitted through psalms. “Now David was a man skill in songs, who clearly loved musical harmony, not with a vulgar delight, but with a believing disposition, and by it served his God, who is the true God, by the mystical representation of a great thing. For the rational and well-ordered

³ See, e.g., Luke 24:44 (“He said to them, “This is what I told you while I was still with you: **Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.**”)

⁴ St. Augustine, *The City of God* (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1950), p. 595.

⁵ *Ibid.* See, also, Psalm 110.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 602 (“...about the Psalms, that is, about King David's prophecy...”); p. 595 (“... almost all his prophecy is in psalms, of which a hundred and fifty are contained in what we call the Book of Psalms....”)

concord of diverse sounds in harmonious variety suggests the compact unity of the well-ordered city.”⁷

But Augustine’s viewpoint ascribing the authorship of the entire 150 psalms to David is partly called into question by the historical record contained in I Chronicles, whereby King David is described as setting aside dozens of men for the ministry of prophesying through musical instruments, as follows:

David, together with the commanders of the army, set apart some of the sons of Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun for the ministry of prophesying, accompanied by harps, lyres and cymbals. Here is the list of the men who performed this service:

2 From the sons of *Asaph*:

Zakkur, Joseph, Nethaniah and Asarelah. The sons of Asaph were under the supervision of Asaph, who prophesied under the king’s supervision.

3 As for *Jeduthun*, from his sons:

Gedaliah, Zeri, Jeshaiiah, Shimei,[a] Hashabiah and Mattithiah, six in all, under the supervision of their father Jeduthun, who prophesied, using the harp in thanking and praising the Lord.

4 As for *Heman*, from his sons:

Bukkiah, Mattaniah, Uzziel, Shubael and Jerimoth; Hananiah, Hanani, Eliathah, Giddalti and Romanti-Ezer; Joshbekashah, Mallothi, Hothir and Mahazioth.

5 (All these were sons of Heman the king’s seer. They were given him through the promises of God to exalt him. God gave Heman fourteen sons and three daughters.)

6 All these men were under the supervision of their father for the music of the temple of the Lord, with cymbals, lyres and harps, for the

⁷ Ibid., p. 595.

ministry at the house of God. Asaph, Jeduthun and Heman were under the supervision of the king.

7 Along with their relatives—all of them trained and skilled in music for the Lord—they numbered 288.⁸

But St. Augustine here explains that where Asaph, Jeduthun, Heman and others may have “prefigured something pertinent to the matter” of specific psalms, David “prefixed to some” of the psalms “the names even of other men.”⁹ A careful review of the several inscriptions that are affixed to the Psalms seemingly support—or, at least, they do not refute—Augustine’s position, because these inscriptions are not consistent or clear, and they give no clear indication as to authorship.¹⁰

In Christian and Reformed hermeneutics, it has long been held that the Book of Psalms contains prophetic descriptions or predictions of Jesus Christ and his Church. This paper explores those prophetic descriptions and predictions that are contained within the book of Psalms.

⁸ I Chronicles 25: 1-7.

⁹ St. Augustine, *The City of God*, supra, p. 595.

¹⁰ For example, in some the inscriptions which appear before the Psalms we find, e.g., “For the director of music. A psalm of David”; “Of David. A makil.”; “Of David”; “For the director of music. Of David the servant of the LORD.”; “A psalm of David. A petition.”; “For the director of music. For Jeduthun. A psalm of David.”; “For the director of music. Of the Sons of Korah. A maskil.”; “For the director of music. Of the Sons of Korah. A psalm.”; “A song. A psalm of the Sons of Korah.”

Introduction

The Second Psalm is not an “evangelical” prophecy about getting the individual soul to be born again, but rather it is a passage of Scripture which may rightfully be described as “High Church” theology— meaning, that the Second Psalm is constitutional and political in nature, and directed towards the kings, governors, civil magistrates, and rulers of the earth.

The Second Psalm is clearly a prologue to the New Testament (e.g., the Great Commission¹¹ and to the Book of Revelation¹²)— nay, it reflects, at least from a Judea-Christian perspective, the existential state of our present-day national and international world order.

As stated in this Second Psalm, that entire multinational political world order is in rebellion against the LORD God and his anointed (i.e., Christ), whom God has installed as king in Zion.

Moreover, this Second Psalm firmly establishes the LORD God’s sovereignty upon the earth and forewarns all the nations of the world to follow and heed to His sovereign Law.

Hence, this Second Psalm essentially summarizes the spiritual and political status of the Church of Jesus Christ; because of its adherence to, and ministry of, the law of God, this Church is often in an oppositional relationship to the nations of the earth.

From the viewpoint of an American constitutional lawyer, an international human rights lawyer, and Reformed Puritan lawyer, it is my general impression that the Second Psalm is a constitutional expression as to the nature of secular law and jurisprudence; and of the relationship of subordinate human laws to higher moral and natural laws.

Here, in the Second Psalm, the sovereign Law of God means the same thing as it does in Genesis, with respect to God’s assessment of the Patriarch Abraham,

¹¹ Matthew 28: 18-20.

¹² Revelation 19: 11-21; Revelation 20: 1-15.

viz, that all the nations of the world would be blessed in Abraham and his seed, because Abraham would teach his children to do “justice and judgment.”¹³

In Roman Catholic jurisprudence, this Second Psalm is an exemplification of the ideals of Augustine of Hippo and Thomas Aquinas. For instance, Augustine’s theological scheme ties all earthly kingdoms to the divine Providence of a Sovereign God, who is the “Ordainer of all natures,”¹⁴ to wit:

Therefore that God, the author and giver of felicity, because He alone is the true God, Himself gives earthly kingdoms both to good and bad. Neither does He do this rashly, and, as it were, fortuitously— because He is God, not fortune— but according to the order of things and times, which is hidden from us, but thoroughly known to Himself; which same order of times, however, He does not serve as subject to it, but Himself rules as lord and appoints as governor.... And therefore earthly kingdoms are given by Him both to the good and the bad....¹⁵

In a word, human kingdoms are established by divine providence....¹⁶

God can never be believed to have left the kingdoms of men, their dominations and servitudes, outside the laws of His providence.¹⁷

In the Church of England, the Second Psalm is an exemplification of the ideals of sagas such a St. Anselm, Henry de Bracton, Richard Hooker, Edward Coke, and William Blackstone. For instance, that English lawyers and jurists from times immemorial have sought to subordinate the secular civil laws of England to the law of the LORD God is adequately reflected in Sir William Blackstone (1723 - 1780)’s *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, where he says:

Law, in its most general and comprehensive sense, signifies a rule of action; and is applied indiscriminately to all kinds of action, whether animate or inanimate, rational or irrational. Thus we say, the laws of motion, of gravitation, of optics, or mechanics, as well as the laws of

¹³ Genesis 18: 18-19.

¹⁴ Ibid., p 691.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 140.

¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 142-143.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 158.

nature and of nations. And it is that rule of action which is prescribed by some superior, and which the inferior is bound to obey.

Thus, when the Supreme Being formed the universe, and created matter out of nothing, he impressed certain principles upon that matter, from which it can never depart, and without which it would cease to be. When he put that matter into motion, he established certain laws of motion, to which all moveable bodies must conform. And, to descend from the greatest operations to the smallest, when a workman forms a clock, or other piece of mechanism, he establishes, at his own pleasure, certain arbitrary laws for its direction,-- as that the hand shall describe a given space in a given time, to which law as long as the work conforms, so long it continues in perfection, and answers the end of its formation....

The whole progress of plants, from the seed to the root, and from thence to the seed again; the method of animal nutrition, digestion, secretion, and all other branches of vital economy; are not left to chance, or the will of the creature itself, but are performed in a wondrous involuntary manner, and guided by unerring rules laid down by the great Creator.

This, then is the general signification of law, a rule of action dictated by some superior being.... Man, considered as a creature, must necessarily be subject to the laws of his Creator, for he is entirely a dependent being.... This will of his Maker is called the law of nature. For as God, when he created matter, and endued it with a principle of mobility, established certain rules for the perpetual direction of that motion, so, when he created man, and endued him with freewill to conduct himself in all parts of life, he laid down certain immutable laws of human nature, whereby that freewill is in some degree regulated and restrained, and gave him also the faculty of reason to discover the purport of those laws.

Considering the Creator only as a being of infinite power, he was able unquestionably to have prescribed whatever laws he pleased to his creature, man, however unjust or severe. But, as he is also a being of infinite wisdom, he has laid down only such laws as were founded in those relations of justice that existed in the nature of things antecedent to any positive precept. These are the eternal immutable laws of good

and evil, to which the Creator himself, in all his dispensations, conforms; and which he has enabled human reason to discover, so far as they are necessary for the conduct of human actions. Such, among others, are these principles: that we should live honestly (2), should hurt nobody, and should render to every one his due; to which three general precepts Justinian (a) has reduced the whole doctrine of law....

The law of nature, being coeval with mankind, and dictated by God himself, is of course superior to obligation to any other. It is binding over all the globe, in all countries, and at all times: no human laws are of any validity, if contrary to this (3); and such of them as are valid derive all their force, and all their authority, mediately or immediately, from this original.

But, in order to apply this to the particular exigencies of each individual, it is still necessary to have **recourse to reason**, whose office it is to discover, as was before observed, what the law of nature directs in every circumstance of life.¹⁸

And, more broadly, the Second Psalm reflects the Puritan and Reformed-Calvinistic conception of law and civil polity; e.g., the Puritans and Calvinists have held that all civil polities— and especially those claiming to be Christian civil polities— must subordinate all secular laws to the function of implementing “general equity” [as in the London Baptist Confession of Faith 1644/1689 and the Westminster Confession of Faith of 1647)].

The Puritans helped to establish these ancient principles in colonial British North America during the 17th century. When following the U. S. Civil War (1861 – 1865), these Puritan or Christian ideals receded from the public discourse of the United States, and the secular law codes of the various states of the United States became more anti-religion and anti-equity, Jewish immigrants from Europe— having thus been described in some circles as the “last Puritans”¹⁹ — began to enter the American legal profession, and they revitalized the older Judea-Christian conception of American constitutional law and jurisprudence.

18 William Blackstone, “Of the Nature of Laws in General,” *Commentaries on The Laws of England* (New York, N.Y.: W.E. Dean Pub., 1840), pp. 25-28.

19 Jerold S. Auerbach, *Rabbis and Lawyers: The Journey from Torah to Constitution* (New Orleans, LA: Quid Pro Books, 2010), p. 15 (“So American Jews became the last Puritans; that last Americans, that is, to take seriously the claim that the United States truly was the fulfillment of divine promise to Israel.”)

Finally, the practical meaning of the Second Psalm is that the nations of the world must mete out substantive justice. From this theological concept, the Puritan and Calvinistic idea of “general equity” was established; and from this Christian idea of “general equity,” the noble and sacred principles of the American Declaration of Independence (1776)²⁰ and the Preamble to the United States Constitution²¹ have been derived.

The Second Psalm is a prophecy of the Messiah, the man Christ Jesus, and of His authority as king over the nations.

20 THE AMERICAN DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America,

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which **the Laws of Nature and of Nature’s God** entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.—That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, —That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. ...

We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to **the Supreme Judge of the world** for the rectitude of our intentions....

And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the **protection of divine Providence**, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.

21 See, e.g., Algernon Sidney Crapsey, “The American Church-State,” *Religion and Religion* (New York, N.Y.: Thomas Whittaker, 1905), pp. 297- 326 (“When the Constitutional Convention of 1787 sent forth the Constitution which it devised for the government of the nation it did so in these words: ‘We, the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, **establish justice**, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our children, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.’ Now can any man write a more perfect description of the Kingdom of god on earth or in heaven than is to be found in these words? A government resting upon such principles as these is not a godless policy; it is a holy religion.... A religion having as its basis the principles of individual liberty and obedience to righteous law is really the religion of the golden rule.”)

Chapter One:

“Psalm 2, Verses 1- 3, 10-12”

In the Abrahamic faith traditions (i.e., the Judea-Christian-Islamic traditions), the LORD God in the Old Testament is clearly sovereign over all the nations.

This theological concept is certainly reflected in the Second Psalm, in both the first three verses, and in the last three verses, as follows:

Psalm 2: 1-3; 10-12

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

² The kings of the earth rise up
and the rulers band together
against the LORD and against his anointed, saying,

³ “Let us break their chains
and throw off their shackles”....

Therefore, you kings, be wise;
be warned, you rulers of the earth.

¹¹ Serve the LORD with fear
and celebrate his rule with trembling.

¹² Kiss his son, or he will be angry
and your way will lead to your destruction,
for his wrath can flare up in a moment.

Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

Here we see plainly the same political rebellion against God that is reflected in narrative of the “Tower of Babel” in Genesis— for which, says Augustine of Hippo, the proverbial “Babylon” of the Book of Revelation is named after and derived.

In other words, the words “Babel” and “Babylon” are symbols for world-wide rebellion among the nations against the Law of God, which, as recounted in

the Second Psalms, these nations consider to be “their chains” and “their shackles.”²²

Hence, the words “the nations conspire” in Verse 1 and the words “band together against the LORD and against his anointed” certainly mean that, as fallen sinners who grope after worldly dominions, power, prestige, and wealth, the nations and peoples of the world often *work in concert to overthrow* the truth and Law of the sovereign LORD God.

This conspiracy is innumerable and comes in many different forms: political ideology, economic theory, public policy, and false religion.

The fruits of this conspiracy are always the same: murder, war, sexual debauchery, exploitation, slavery, empire building, and wealth accumulation.

Thus, given the existential state of the world in which we live, the mission and objective of the churches of Jesus are therefore obvious— they exist in conflict and in opposition to the injustices of the world; they exist to prophesy against worldly injustice, as in Verses 10 through 12, to wit:

**“Therefore, you kings, be wise;
be warned, you rulers of the earth.
Serve the LORD with fear
and celebrate his rule with trembling.**

Hence, there is inherently a prophetic, advisor role which the Church of Jesus Christ (i.e., the individual saints of God) must play, namely, to inform the kings, governors, and civil magistrates of the world to **“be wise; be warned, you rulers of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear and celebrate his rule with trembling.”**²³

Furthermore, this passage of Scripture goes on to say:

**Kiss his son, or he will be angry
and your way will lead to your destruction,**

²² Psalm 2:3.

²³ Psalm 2: 10-11.

for his **wrath can flare up in a moment.**
Blessed are all who take **refuge in him.**”

Hence, the churches of Jesus Christ (i.e., the individual saints of God) must prophesy to the kings, governors, rulers, and civil magistrates of the world, proclaiming the sovereignty of the Messiah (i.e., “his son”),²⁴ forewarning them that he “**will be angry**” and “**his wrath can flare up in a moment,**” if they do not heed his divine Law.²⁵

This description about Christ and his sovereign reign, and of the present-day prophetic message of his saints to the earth’s leaders and governors, is certainly restated in the Gospels²⁶ and in the Book of Revelation.²⁷ This passage of Scripture certainly elucidates the plain meaning of the Great Commission.²⁸

²⁴ Psalm 2: 12.

²⁵ Psalm 2: 10-12.

²⁶ Matthew 28: 18-20 (“Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.’”)

²⁷ Revelation 19: 11-21; Revelation 20: 1-15.

²⁸ See Matthew 28: 18-20, supra.

Chapter Two: “Psalm 2, Verses 4- 9”

The middle verses of the Second Psalm clearly describe the enthronement of king whose dominion shall be established over all the nations upon earth.

Moreover, through the entirety of this Second Psalm, we find that this king is juxtaposed against all the nations and kingdoms of the earth which have conspired against this king, who is the LORD’s anointed.

According to Verses 4 through 9 of this Second Psalm, the essence of the divine sovereignty is that the Christ, the Messiah, is now **subduing the nations of the earth**, to wit:

Psalm 2: 4 - 9

The One enthroned in heaven laughs;
the Lord scoffs at them.

⁵ He rebukes them in his anger
and terrifies them in his wrath, saying,

⁶ “I have installed my king
on Zion, my holy mountain.”

⁷ I will proclaim the LORD’s decree:

He said to me, “You are my son;
today I have become your father.

⁸ Ask me,
and I will make the nations your inheritance,
the ends of the earth your possession.

⁹ You will break them with a rod of iron;
you will dash them to pieces like pottery.”

Here we see that the Messiah, the Christ, is no passivist, for he “laughs” at and “scoffs at” the sinful nations of the earth.²⁹

The Messiah, the Christ, “rebukes them in his anger.”³⁰

The Messiah, the Christ, “terrifies them with his wrath.”³¹

For the LORD God has commissioned his Messiah, the Christ, to “break” the nations “with a rod of iron” and to “dash them to pieces like pottery.”³²

Ultimately, the LORD God will make “the nations your inheritance,” that is to say, Christ and his saints will ultimately rule over and judge the nations.

For this same prophecy, that is recounted in this Second Psalm, we find amply repeated in the Book of Revelation.³³

²⁹ Psalm 2: 4.

³⁰ Psalm 2: 5.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Psalm 2: 9.

³³ Revelation 19: 11-21; Revelation 20: 1-15.

CONCLUSION

The Book of Psalms is a prophecy— King David’s prophecy on the spiritual meaning of his own kingdom and of the future eternal kingdom of the Messiah.

It is perhaps the clearest expression of all the Psalms that David himself is not the promised Messiah or Christ, but that He is yet to come.

The Second Psalm’s description of this Messiah or Christ plainly demonstrates that none of the kings of Judah or Israel fit the same description or maintained the same personal characteristics or features as this Messiah or Christ— *none save the man Christ Jesus*.

Finally, the Second Psalm exemplifies “High Church” Christian theology— it is not an evangelical rendition of the importance of being “born again,” so as to qualify individual souls for entrance into the kingdom of God, but rather the Second Psalm is a prophetic warning to the kings, governors, civil magistrates and rulers of the nations.

For the Reformed Christian interpreters of the Second Psalm, the entire civil polity—i.e., all the nations or nation states upon the earth— must subordinate its constitution and laws to the Law of the LORD God, or else suffer dire consequences.

THE END

Appendix

THE KINGS OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH

Saul	1050-1010 BC
David	1010-970
Solomon	970-930

Judah (and Benjamin)					Israel (Ten Northern Tribes)				
King	Reign		Character	Prophets	King	Reign		Character	Prophets
1. Rehoboam	931-913	17 years	Bad	Shemaiah	1. Jeroboam I	931-910	22 years	Bad	Ahijah
2. Abijah	913-911	3 years	Bad		2. Nadab	910-909	2 years	Bad	
3. Asa	911-870	41 years	Good		3. Baasha	909-886	24 years	Bad	
					4. Elah	886-885	2 years	Bad	
					5. Zimri	885	7 days	Bad	
					6. Omri	885-874*	12 years	Bad	Elijah Micaiah
4. Jehoshaphat	870-848*	25 years	Good		7. Ahab	874-853	22 years	Bad	
5. Jehoram	848-841*	8 years	Bad		8. Ahaziah	853-852	2 years	Bad	
6. Ahaziah	841	1 years	Bad		9. Joram	852-841	12 years	Bad	Elisha
7. Athaliah	841-835	6 years	Bad		10. Jehu	841-814	28 years	Bad	
8. Joash	835-796	40 years	Good	Joel	11. Jehoahaz	814-798	17 years	Bad	
9. Amaziah	796-767	29 years	Good		12. Jehoash	798-782	16 years	Bad	Jonah Amos Hosea
10. Uzziah (Azariah)	767-740*	52 years	Good		13. Jeroboam II	782-753*	41 years	Bad	
11. Jotham	740-732*	16 years	Good	Isaiah Micah	14. Zechariah	753-752	6 mo	Bad	
12. Ahaz	732-716	16 years	Bad		15. Shallum	752	1 mo	Bad	
13. Hezekiah	716-687	29 years	Good		16. Menahem	752-742	10 years	Bad	
14. Manasseh	687-642*	55 years	Bad/Repented	Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah	17. Pekahiah	742-740	2 years	Bad	
15. Amon	642-640	2 years	Bad		18. Pekah	740-732*	20 years	Bad	

16. Josiah	640-608	31 years	Good		19. Hoshea	732-712	9 years	Bad	
17. Jehoahaz	608	3 mo	Bad		722 BC Fall of Samaria to Assyria				
18. Jehoiakim	608-597	11 years	Bad	Daniel Ezekiel Jeremiah	* Co-regency				
19. Jehoiachin	597	3 mos	Bad						
20. Zedekiah	597-586	11 years	Bad						
Destruction of Jerusalem, 9th Av, 586 BC, Babylonian Captivity									

The Last Five Kings of Judah

1. Josiah Reigned 31 years (640-609 BC)		
2. Jehoahaz (Shallum) Reigned 3 months (609 BC) Taken prisoner to Egypt by Pharaoh Neco	3. Jehoiakim (Eliakim) Reigned 11 years (609-598 BC) Died in Jerusalem	5. Zedekiah Reigned 11 years (597--586 BC) Taken prisoner to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar
4. Jehoichin (Jeconiah, Coniah) Reigned 3 months (December 9, 598 - March 16, 597 BC) Taken prisoner to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar (with Ezekiel)		

