

## One Little Word Shall Fell Him

Psalm 2<sup>i</sup>

### Humble Yourself Before the Lord

There are not a lot of references to go by, but when the Archangel Michael appears in the pages of Scripture he appears as a warrior Angel contending for and with the people of God. On such occasion is in Revelation, chapter 12. The dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan,<sup>ii</sup> had undertaken to devour the Promised Son, the Redeemer who would overcome and crush his authority once and for all as was written in Genesis chapter 3. But when the woman gave birth to the male child, the child was caught up to God and to His throne. Then, we're told,

<sup>7</sup> ...war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, <sup>8</sup> but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. <sup>9</sup> And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. Revelation 12:7–9 (ESV)

A couple of verses later, this event is given a refrain:

<sup>12</sup> Therefore, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to you, O earth and sea, **for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!** Revelation 12:12 (ESV)

Two things then. First, this is the context for what we often call spiritual warfare. This is why Peter exhorted his readers:

<sup>8</sup> **Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.** 1 Peter 5:8 (ESV)

He exhorted them to do this because Satan, through the rulers, the authorities, the cosmic powers over this present darkness, and the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places<sup>iii</sup> is at war with the people of God, the church, and his wrath is great.

But notice the depiction of Michael, the archangel, in John's vision. He appears there as a warrior leading the armies of heaven in battle against the dragon. And yet, in the book of Jude, when the author urged his readers to contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered to the saints, noting that certain men have crept in unnoticed, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and in so doing deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ,<sup>iv</sup> he takes note that these "dreamers" as he describes them, "defile the flesh, reject authority, and blaspheme the glorious ones,"<sup>v</sup> and to make his point, he went on to say that even the archangel Michael when he was contending with the devil,

<sup>9</sup> ...did not presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgment, but said, **"The Lord rebuke you."** Jude 9 (ESV)

So, Michael, the archangel, “did not presume”, he did not dare to contend with the devil in his own strength, but called on the Lord to intervene and rebuke Satan. And this is the nature of our warfare too. Paul said, “we do not wrestle against flesh and blood” not to minimize the battle, but to make us understand that we are not to depend upon ourselves; that “by ourselves we are too weak to hold our own even for a moment” and need the Lord to “uphold us and make us strong”,

...so that we may not go down to defeat in this spiritual struggle, but may firmly resist our enemies until we finally win the complete victory.<sup>vi</sup>

This is why (and how) we must first submit to God if we are to resist the devil. We must humble ourselves under His mighty hand; we must acknowledge our weakness and inability; we must trust in Him and Him alone and call upon His name. That’s where, by the grace of God, salvation begins, and it will never change; and that’s why we need not go down to defeat or to despair in this spiritual struggle. Our foe is more powerful than we are—our foe is perhaps more powerful than the archangel Michael—but while we are in this battle, the battle is not ours. As Martin Luther wrote,

The prince of darkness grim, we tremble not for him; his rage we can endure, for lo! his doom is sure; **one little word shall fell him.**<sup>vii</sup>

### Why Do the Nations Rage

This was also the conclusion of our text this morning from Psalm 2.

<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. Psalm 2:11–12 (ESV)

But to get us there, the Psalmist began with a question.

<sup>1</sup> Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? Psalm 2:1 (ESV)

Why indeed, given that

<sup>6</sup> ...the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish. Psalm 1:6 (ESV)

I suppose it is as Jesus said,

<sup>19</sup> And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. John 3:19 (ESV)

So, they rage. They vent their anger at God, and at Jesus Christ, their Lord, Creator, and Sustainer.

<sup>2</sup> The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against his Anointed... Psalm 2:2 (ESV)

And this looks different at different times and places in culture and history. Certainly we could go back in the Old Covenant Scriptures and see occasions when the kings of the nations

round about Israel were literally taking counsel together against the Lord and against His anointed, making battle plans and raising armies to go up against the city and the people of God.

We can also look closer to home, which is to say you can turn on your TV or your computer. There is, of course, an aspect of this which is visible in the current conflicts in Ukraine and Israel, among other places, but these are the fruit, not the root. When the kings, presidents, and prime ministers of the nations take counsel against the Lord, it always ends in violence somewhere, but this is more the evidence of what the Psalmist wrote in verse 9,

<sup>9</sup> You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."  
Psalm 2:8–9 (ESV)

Nations in rebellion against the Lord have always found it so, and always will.

<sup>34</sup> Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people. Proverbs 14:34 (ESV)

But, to understand what this taking counsel together against the Lord and against His Anointed—His Christ—looks like, all we have to do is to consider their words in verse 3:

<sup>3</sup> “Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us.” Psalm 2:3 (ESV)

Let us cease and desist hearing and especially obeying the Law of the Lord. Let us make clear once and for all that we will not have this man (the man Christ Jesus) to reign over us. This, of course, sounds like an invitation to freedom, no one likes to bow the knee and acknowledge the authority of anyone, but given that these counsels are spoken “against the Lord and against His Anointed”—against God and the Lord Jesus Christ—this is not a call to glorious revolution, liberty, and equality. This is cosmic treason. This is mankind spitting in the face of the glorious God who made him—the God whose image he bears.

This is the Kings and rulers—the presidents, prime ministers, and supreme court justices—ruling by fiat and declaring that it is legal to kill a child up to and in some cases after the last moment when it emerges completely from the birth canal. This is the Prime Minister of Canada decreeing that anyone who wants to run for his party, including incumbent members of Parliament, must be willing to vote pro-choice (which is to say, pro-death), should the issue come up in the House of Commons<sup>viii</sup>. This is the government of Canada passing a bill making it illegal for anyone to knowingly promote (and I quote),

...**the myth** that heterosexuality, cisgender gender identity, and gender expression that conforms to the sex assigned to a person at birth are to be preferred over other sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions...<sup>ix</sup>

This is the world we live in, and this is what it looks like when

<sup>2</sup> The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against his Anointed... Psalm 2:2 (ESV)

**He Who Sits in the Heavens**

Still, this is not the end of the story, or even the end of the Psalm, for

<sup>4</sup> He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision. Psalm 2:4 (ESV)

Which, by the way, is not something desirable. God laughs at the futility of their impotent plans. God jeers at these little tin dictators whoever they are and wherever they may be found. Verses 5 and 6:

<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.” Psalm 2:5–6 (ESV)

Which is to say that over all the kings and rulers of the earth whatever their titles may be, there is one who reigns supreme in the heavens, Jesus Christ, who is King of kings and Lord of lords. And that’s not a promise of some far away idyllic future. That’s a declaration of the current reality. Verses 7 and 8 say:

<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. Psalm 2:7–8 (ESV)

In Acts 13, the Apostle Peter connected this promise this to the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead—the resurrection being the proof that Jesus, our Savior, is indeed the “Son” being referenced here. And as we have noted on more than one occasion, when Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was raised from the dead He did not neglect to ask for the nations, nor did His Father fail to keep His promise. God always keeps His promises, and just as certainly as Jesus humbled Himself and became obedient to death on a cross, even so

<sup>9</sup> ...God **has** highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, <sup>10</sup> so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup> and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 2:9–11 (ESV)

<sup>18</sup> ...“All authority in heaven and on earth **has been given to [Him]**. Matthew 28:18 (ESV)

<sup>13</sup> “...behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man...

(this is speaking about the ascension of Jesus Christ),

...and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. <sup>14</sup> 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 (ESV)

Do I need to go on? Maybe in just a bit. For now understand this. Jesus Christ is Lord. That’s not a mere creedal or baptismal formula. It’s more than that. It’s a living reality, a living hope. We look at the world with it’s turmoil and trouble, it’s wars and rumors of war, and sometimes we tremble. Some of us ask the question, “What kind of world will be left for our grandchildren and great-grandchildren?”

Here is the answer. A world just like this one. A world over which Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is Lord. A world which will be called (just like this one), by the Word and Spirit of God, to bow the knee and confess with their mouths that “Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.” This is the word of the Lord. This is the gospel of Jesus Christ. This is our faith, and this is our hope as we stand against the cunning craftiness of the devil, the world, and even our own flesh.

Jesus Christ is Lord. He is Lord of heaven and earth. He is Lord of the Nations. He is Lord over the kings and rulers of this world. He is Lord of the Church. He is Lord over politics and law. He is Lord over our every aspect of our lives, and this should comfort us, because it means He not only wants to, but is authorized and able to work all things (even this spiritual battle in which we find ourselves standing, sometimes on wobbly legs) together for our salvation and the glory of our loving Father in heaven.

### Kiss the Son

I am tempted to ask, do we really believe this? We had better because Revelation 19 (I said I would go on in a bit) reads:

<sup>11</sup> Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. <sup>12</sup> His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. <sup>13</sup> He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God.

(That would be Jesus, by the way.)

<sup>14</sup> And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses.

(And that would be us, the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills everything in every way.)

<sup>15</sup> From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations...

(that would be His Word—the sword of the Spirit.) And here’s where this ties in to Psalm 2:

...and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. <sup>16</sup> On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords. Revelation 19:11–16 (ESV)

And when we sing in a minute,

The prince of darkness grim, we tremble not for him; his rage we can endure, for lo! his doom is sure; **one little word shall fell him.**<sup>x</sup>

That’s the Word. Jesus Christ, the Word who is God, and the Sword that comes from His mouth—the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God.

In the end, Satan, the nations, and the people of this world, for all of their high opinions of themselves, will not be able to withstand the One who is, was and always will be King of kings and Lord of lords. Those who try will be like “chaff that the wind drives away”. So, the Psalmist calls us to repentance, to salvation, and grateful service. Verses 10 – 12:

<sup>10</sup> Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth.

(And what applies to them applies to those they rule.)

<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. Psalm 2:10–12 (ESV)

May God give us grace...

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- i All Scripture citations, unless otherwise noted, *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016).
  - ii Cf. Re 20:2.
  - iii Cf. Ep 6:12.
  - iv Cf. Jud 4.
  - v Jud 8.
  - vi Christian Reformed Church (CRCNA), “Heidelberg Catechism, Q&A 127”, in *Ecumenical Creeds and Reformed Confessions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Faith Alive Publications, 1988), 76.
  - vii Christian Reformed Church, “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God” in *Psalter Hymnal* (Grand Rapids, MI: CRC Publications, 1987, 1988) 469.
  - viii <https://globalnews.ca/news/1403406/justin-trudeau-now-says-pro-life-incumbent-mps-must-vote-pro-choice-on-abortion/>, last accessed October 15, 2023.
  - ix <https://www.parl.ca/DocumentViewer/en/44-1/bill/C-4/first-reading>, last accessed October 15, 2023.
  - x Christian Reformed Church, “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God” in *Psalter Hymnal* (Grand Rapids, MI: CRC Publications, 1987, 1988) 469.