

# Psalms: God's Worship & Prayer Guide

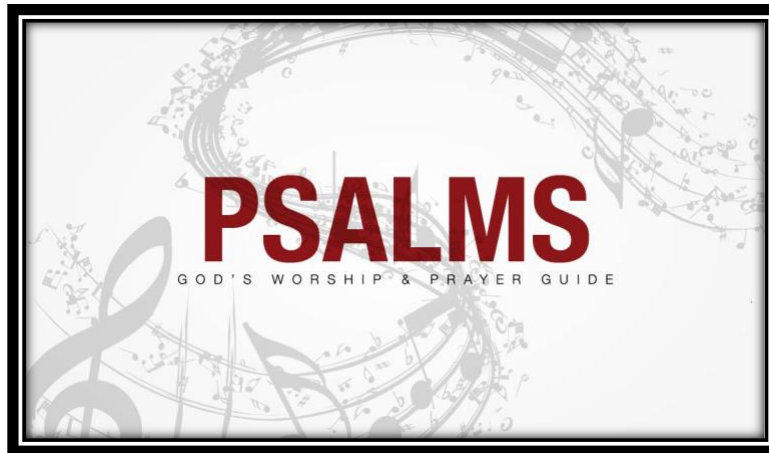
## The End Of Rebellion

Selected Texts

Written By

©Dr. Marty Baker

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**D**raconian. Seems like you cannot move through a COVID-19 day and not encounter this word. Merriam-Webster defines the word for us:

*Draconian* comes from *Draco*, the name of a 7th-century B.C. Athenian legislator who created a written code of law. Draco's code was intended to clarify preexistent laws, but its severity is what made it really memorable. In Draco's code, even minor offenses were punishable by death, and failure to pay one's debts could result in slavery. *Draconian*, as a result, became associated with things cruel or harsh.<sup>1</sup>

Why is this word cropping up? Because it is shocking the level our government, in particular, has reached in order to keep us all safe. There is no doubt we all needed, and need, to adhere to various measures in order to make sure we curtailed the spread of the virus in question; however, in some respects it seems as if the State, which loves to exert its power over the people it governs (the growth of the State in recent years validates this premise), has gone to extreme levels, in some instances and in some places, to control us for our good. Let us take a quick tour of interesting situations around the country. As a sidelight, I know we have many well-meaning leaders who are attempting to lead in the best way possible at an extremely complex time; however, what some of them do or permit is disconcerting.

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<sup>1</sup> "Draconian," *Merriam-Webster*, accessed, April 30, 2020, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/draconian>.

- Just today Governor Newsom of California made an edict closing down all beaches. He later rescinded it, limiting it to Orange County. That was good, because from what I heard from family in Cali, the people in Orange County did not abide by social distancing rules when they did go to the beach. However, the move to close all beaches seemed a bit of an over-reach. (I tend to check on CA because I was born and raised there, and lived there for over forty years.)
- A few weeks ago, I read an article about a San Diego area police department which moved to purchase Chinese manufactured drones in order to watch the movements of Americans to make sure they observed State social distancing laws. While this might be a wise move for the moment, history shows that governments do not cede power later too readily. (Again, I tend to pay attention to law enforcement in San Diego because my father was a District Director for Fees and Fines for U.S. Customs in this city prior to his retirement.)
- Also, this week *YouTube* bent to pressure from those who do not want a conservative medical opinion articulated which counters that of the State. What did they do? They pulled the analysis of highly respected doctors which said the death rate from COVID-19 was so low the government should relax its heavy-handed laws.
- In Washington, D.C, residents face 90 days in jail and a \$5,000 fine if they leave their homes during the outbreak. Violators in Alaska could face jail time and up to \$25,000 in fines.
- In San Francisco, cannabis dispensaries were included as essential businesses during the lockdown, but pretty much everyone else is closed.
- South Carolina's police have been empowered to break up any public gatherings of more than three people.
- In Greenville, Mississippi, police issued \$500 tickets to Christians who gathered in their church's parking lot to worship safely inside their vehicles.
- As of April 16, 16,622 criminals awaiting trials have been released from prisons all over the United States. At the same time, law-abiding people in Los Angeles were prohibited from purchasing firearms for personal protection.

What is going on here . . . other than the State doing its part to assure our safety in the midst of a viable national emergency?

The State, which loves to exert its power to usher in its version of utopia, is, from my viewpoint, seeing how quickly we will surrender our Constitutional rights. The State is also learning how they can silence dissent to its messages. My concern is simple: *Whatever rights and freedoms we willingly give up now may be hard to get back because the government never relinquishes power willingly.*

From a prophetic standpoint, we know from Daniel's pen that the last form of world government is Statist, headed by the utterly lawless man of sin, the Anti-Christ (Dan. 2:36-43; 7:2—9, 23-25; 11:36-45; 2 Thess. 2:5-12). This eschatological reality, when seen in light of the Draconian, totalitarian laws our politicians have, and are creating, to "protect us," merely shows

us how quickly we can descend (willingly) into Statism, the utter despotic nature of the end times.

How should we, as believers in the living God, view this upheaval not only among our nation's leaders but among leaders worldwide? For starters, we should not be fearful, but fearless defenders of truth whether it be moral, spiritual, and political. Secondly, we should garner much wisdom for living in tumultuous political times from Psalm 2. Why is this Psalm so significant? It is significant insofar as it is a wisdom/messianic psalm depicting how geo-political history will play-out as the Holy Trinity strategically sets the world stage for the magnificent appearance of the true King of Kings and Lord of Lords, Jesus, the Messiah. Thematically, here is the main idea of this powerful, pertinent, and highly practical psalm:

### The Messiah's Kingdom Will Arrive Despite Man's Devious Dive (Psalm 2:1-12)

Emphasis here should be placed on the phrase "will arrive." Nothing and no one is, or will be able, to halt or delay the coming of the Messiah to establish His prophesied Davidic empire. Along these lines, we would do well to remember Daniel's prophetic counsel to Nebuchadnezzar. The massive metallic image the king saw served to represent the final empires and governmental forms of the world order. They will, of course, be decimated and replaced by the Messiah's glorious empire of peace, holiness, true justice, and righteousness:

<sup>44</sup> And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. <sup>45</sup>  
"Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold-- the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure (Dan. 2:44-45).

The dream is certain, meaning it will occur in time and space, and it is occurring as we watch our world rush headlong, albeit in a nice, orderly fashion, toward ultimate Statism. The King of Kings is coming; however, from what we learn in Psalm 2, there will be much political and personal opposition to Him and His people prior to His appearance. We should prepare for this, but we should always keep our eyes on what the Holy Scriptures tell us regarding how this mayhem ends. Psalm 2 helps us have inexorable hope, as this geo-political darkness expands, by pulling back the prophetic curtain and giving us a divine glimpse at how the world will behave prior to the coming of the Christ in glory (Matt. 24).

Wise, godly people should fill their lives with that hope in hopeless times by focusing on the three-fold thematic movement of this amazing messianic prophecy.

### Expect Man's Rebellion Against God (Psalm 2:1-3)

Since man's fall in the Garden of Eden, he has attempted to throw off the rule and rules of God, seeking to make his own rules and regulations so he can enjoy his sin to the fullest. In this way, he merely emulates his father, Satan, who attempted to do the same thing in the angelic sphere (Isa. 14:13ff; Ezek. 28:11-19ff).

Nancy Percy's book *Total Truth: Liberating Christianity From Its Cultural Captivity*, does an excellent job tracing how godless philosophers from the beginning of recorded history have devised various systems designed to remove God from man's thought as the solution to his sin problem, while replacing Him and His perverted positioned designed to elevate him, give him a life without restraints, and to create a utopian society. Whether it is Marxism's belief that man's fall relates to the rise of private property and his solution is revolution to overthrow oppressors and establish the utopia of communism, or Rousseau's belief that in creation man enjoyed his animalistic self, that man's fall relates to his being unwillingly dumped into oppressive structures like the family, marriage, or the church, and his redemption comes from the power of the State, all false geopolitical systems are designed to dethrone God and enthrone man. All worldly systems are at odds with God and will be until God appears.

This reality moves the Psalmist to pose the logical question as a man with a proper fear of the living God:

<sup>1</sup> Why do the nations rage, and the people plot a vain thing?

As a fish rots from the head down, the unrest and opposition to God in the world is depicted here as originating with world rulers and negatively impacting the masses. They foment rebellion on large scales against God. Interesting. We can readily see this on any given day can we not?

The opening word in the Hebrew text, the preposition (וְ) wedded to an interrogative pronoun, *mah* (מַה), is highly emphatic because it rests at the head of the sentence instead of an anticipated verb. Grammatically, it is as if the psalmist says with great exasperation and astonishment, "Why, why in the world would the nations ever think that raging against God is a good thing?" The Hebrew for rage, *ragash* (רָגַשׁ), denotes a riotous, angry mob. Perhaps you have seen them on television in the last week, month, or year. Collectively, they rage against God, desiring to be their own gods in control of their own lives.

The question the Psalmist poses is also a figure of speech called *erotesis*. With *erotesis*, the author is not attempting to obtain answer to his question, but to make a definitive statement with a Socratic question. Of the nineteen types of *erotesis*, this is usage number seventeen wherein a question is posed in relation to divine indignation. Again, it is as if God says in astonishment, "Why would political types ever think it wise and profitable to oppose me, my laws, and my path to true peace." Yes, why ever? Why do they seek do drive the Ten Commandments out of the public view? Why do they opt for truths and not truth? Why do they embrace relativism and not absolutism? Why do they seek to govern as if truth is fluid and not fixed? Why do they devise temporal, selfish laws which run contrary to God's timeless laws? Why would they ever think this would be a wise course of action?

The Psalmist adds a logical follow-on question:

<sup>1</sup> Why do the nations rage, and the people plot a vain thing?

The Hebrew word for plot, *hagah* (הִגָּה), is an onomatopoeic word meaning its pronunciation represents the sound it represents. Since it speaks of a low murmur of someone hatching a secret plot, the word, therefore, sounds like that low tone, *hagah, hagah, hagah*. Again, do not the godless leaders and philosophers of the world who embolden them with their false and vacuous worldviews (democracy, dictatorship, totalitarianism, oligarch, plutocracy, colonialism, aristocracy, et. al) not purposefully devise ways to rule without God? Indeed. They are so

captivated with the mindset they will even return to old geopolitical systems which do not work, but are highly destructive. Can you say socialism?

All of their efforts to oppose God and throw off His rule are, in the Psalmist's words, vain. This is the Hebrew word for something which is empty and useless, *riq* (רִיק). Think of an empty can of corn, or a box your Dove soap came in and you have an idea of what the word connotes. The object in question is now useless, empty of meaning and purpose. Such are the geo-political and philosophic actions of wicked man. While they might serve some degree of purpose to man, they are, from God's perfect and lofty perspective completely worthless.

What exactly are the world rulers doing as they espouse and erect their governing systems? The Psalmist answers this query in verse 2:

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

Here the political leaders are pictured getting together to purposefully devise plans to do everything in their perverse abuse of power to lead against the LORD, Yahweh the covenantal God, and against His Anointed, or the Messiah, Jesus. Again, they want to be on the throne of their lives, enjoying their (I must say, temporal) power, prestige, and pushing their godless agendas on the unsuspecting, so they do what they have to do, whether it is by maligning God-fearing, law-abiding people, or by twisting the rule of law by placing judges on benches who share their anti-God mindset. This desire to be their own gods is clearly evidenced in the Psalmist's words in verse 3:

<sup>3</sup> "Let us break their bonds in pieces and cast away Their cords from us."

Ah, there it is. Ah, there is their menacing and maniacal goal: to be gods by breaking free from the true God. They see His existence, laws, rules, and regulations as slavery, as chains keeping them from enjoying their hedonistic, narcissistic selves. Hence, with every fiber of their beings they are committed to driving God from their lives, thinking, and the culture at large. I do not think I need to tell you how well they appear to be doing. Many fine books catalogue and reveal their evil motives:

- David Horowitz, *"Dark Agenda."*
- Patrick Buchanan, *"Suicide of a Superpower."*
- Patrick Buchanan, *"The Death of the West."*
- Charles Colson, *"Against the Night."*
- Charles Colson, *"How Now Shall We Live?"*
- Cal Thomas, *"What Works."*

... to name a few. Here's some proof of what is really going on:

Pastor Jian Zhu, who was raised in China and now serves as the director of the China Institute at Lincoln Christian University in Illinois, said persecution against unsanctioned Christian churches in China is "now the worst" he has seen since the late 1970s. The systematic harassment, according to Zhu, has included asking neighbors to spy on one another as well as pressuring schoolteachers, professors and students to sign a statement denouncing their faith. "They are trying to

eliminate Christianity from public life,” he told *The Christian Post* in mid-April. “Cameras are all over to watch church and Christians go to Sunday services. Families are threatened not to go to church or they will be punished or their relatives could be in trouble.”<sup>2</sup>

Here is another closer to home:

The rise of anti-Christian discrimination on public university campuses is astounding in its breadth and shocking in its shamelessness.

The American Center for Law & Justice (ACLJ) is currently representing two students who were denied admission to the Radiation Therapy Program at the Community College of Baltimore County (CCBC): Brandon Jenkins and Dustin Buxton. These students, who were acting out their Christian faith by seeking to serve the hurting and the sick, were brazenly refused admission because of their professed belief in God

One student, Brandon, was denied admission because when asked in an admissions interview what was the most important thing in his life, he replied simply, “My God.” In rejecting his application, Radiation Therapy Program Director Dr. Dougherty informed Brandon, “I understand that religion is a major part of your life. . . however, this field is not the place for religion. . . . If you interview in the future, you may want to leave your thoughts and beliefs out of the interview process.” The college unapologetically doubled down on this sentiment, stating that Dr. Dougherty’s statement “is not bad advice,” and that students, when interviewing for secular positions, would be better advised to “have a concrete reason for wanting to undertake the training at hand than to say only that God directed one to do it.” This situation is almost unbelievable, but unfortunately Brandon isn’t alone.<sup>3</sup>

The wicked rest not in their attempt, at all levels of life, to break free from God. In relation to their activity, Charles Spurgeon remarked, “What! O ye kings, do ye think yourselves Samsons and the bands of Omnipotence but as green withs [new moist cords] before you? Do you dream that you shall snap to pieces and destroy the mandates of God? the decrees of the Most High—as if they were but tow?”<sup>4</sup> Oh, how the world rejects the true monarch, God and His Christ, and embraces anyone and everyone else. This is prophesied to be the pattern as God works out His magnificent kingdom plan as foretold throughout the Old Testament.

How does God respond to those who oppose Him? Read on and gain wisdom for living in a godless world.

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<sup>2</sup> “China’s Religious Persecution in the Era of COVID-19, April 28, 2020, *World Net Daily*, accessed: <https://www.wnd.com/2020/04/chinas-religious-persecution-era-covid-19/>.

<sup>3</sup> Matthew Clark, “Exposed: Christian Students Rejected, Failed, and Expelled for their Faith by State Colleges and Universities,” *ACLJ*, accessed April 30, 2020: <https://aclj.org/religious-liberty/exposed-christian-students-rejected-failed-and-expelled-for-their-faith-by-state-colleges-and-universities>

<sup>4</sup> Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David*, Vol. 1 (Lynchburg: Thomas Nelson Publishers), II.

## Expect God's Reaction Against The Rebels (Psalm 2:4-9)

God, in His omniscience, is completely aware of what is going on down here, even when you might feel or think He is not. When He hears and sees the latest move of the wicked leaders of the world to thwart Him, regardless of whether they are politicians or academicians, He finds it most amusing.

<sup>4</sup> He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; The Lord shall hold them in derision.

He, from His heavenly vantage point in the cosmos, hears of their plans and is quite aware of what they are attempting to do, and He merely responds with laughter. This figure of speech is called *chleuasmos*, and it denotes sneering and jeering at those who cannot possibly defeat you.<sup>5</sup> God possesses all power, all knowledge, and all wisdom; therefore, He is more than content He will be able to defeat the thinking, strategy, and forces of evil arrayed against Him and His people. While we, as His people, might worry at the advancement of evil, He is not concerned for one second He is being out-flanked or out-thought. He has everything under control where the messianic kingdom is concerned, and this is why He laughs at what He sees and hears from the wicked down here.

Admit it. You do get overcome with the advancement of evil, do you not? You like the prophet Habakkuk, probably wrestle with the fact it does not appear that God is doing anything to thwart the contagion of evil:

<sup>1</sup> The burden which the prophet Habakkuk saw. <sup>2</sup> O LORD, how long shall I cry, And You will not hear? Even cry out to You, "Violence!" And You will not save. <sup>3</sup> Why do You show me iniquity, and cause *me* to see trouble? For plundering and violence *are* before me; There is strife, and contention arises. <sup>4</sup> Therefore the law is powerless, and justice never goes forth. For the wicked surround the righteous; Therefore, perverse judgment proceeds.

Perverse judgment. We have had our fill of it, have we not? I have. The hypocrisy I see among our leaders at all levels, among our news channels, among our judges, among our teachers and so forth frustrates and saddens me. The wicked will go after a good, godly man, but a wicked, godless man they will defend to the max, while obfuscating and rationalizing his/her bad behavior. Perverse judgment seems to be the order of the day with no seeming end in sight.

But such is not the case. Habakkuk learned that much from God. Just when he was almost out of spiritual gas, just when he thought he might as well throw in the spiritual towel, God spoke most clearly:

<sup>5</sup> "Look among the nations and watch-- Be utterly astounded! For *I will* work a work in your days *Which* you would not believe, though it were told *you* (Hab. 1).

Commenting on these verses, the late Hebrew Jewish/Christian scholar, Charles Feinberg remarked,

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<sup>5</sup> E. W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1968), 942.

The silence of God in human affairs, then as now, has ever been difficult to understand. But this does not mean that there is not an answer, and that divine wisdom is incapable of coping with the situation. All is under His seeing eye and everything is under the control of His mighty hand. But in the meantime the Law was slacked (lit. chilled), rendered ineffective, paralyzed. It came to be looked upon as being without force or authority. Because of unrighteous judges the Law was set at naught. Since the forms of judgment were corrupted, both life and property were insecure. Justice could not prevail because the wicked knew how to hem the righteous in on all sides, so that he could not receive his just due. Miscarriage of justice was the order of the day. Ensnaring the righteous by fraud, the ungodly perverted all right and honesty. Because God did not punish sin immediately, men thought they could sin on with impunity (Ec. 8:11). God is far from being an unconcerned spectator in earth's affairs. We can always be certain that, if our hearts are stirred over the prevalence of sin and ungodliness, God is all the more deeply concerned.<sup>6</sup>

And as Dr. Feinberg goes on to teach, the Lord told Habakkuk to look around and watch how He, the living God, would work to thwart the wicked in an astonishing, jaw-dropping fashion.

Likewise, the Lord inspired the Psalmist to encourage us with the fact that He had already set a kingdom program to re-place all the inferior empires of this old wicked world.

<sup>5</sup> Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, and distress them in His deep displeasure: <sup>6</sup> "Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion." <sup>7</sup> "I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.' <sup>8</sup> Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession. <sup>9</sup> You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel (Psalm 2).

That king is none other than Jesus Christ, and despite how powerful the forces of wickedness seem today one thing is sure: *The King and the kingdom are coming!* So hold on. We will dig more into this comforting, eye-opening passage in our next series. In the meantime, you be encouraged. I leave you with a song which meant much to me as a young man, and still touches and motivates me today. Be blessed.



<sup>6</sup> Charles Feinberg, *The Minor Prophets* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1982), 206-207.