

“Ask of Me, My Son”

Psalm 2

1 Why do nations conspire,
and the peoples plot in vain?
2 The kings of the earth take their stand
and the rulers band together
against *I AM* and against his anointed one:
3 “Let us break their chains,
and throw off their shackles.”
4 The One enthroned in heaven laughs;
the Sovereign scoffs at them.
5 Then he speaks to them in his anger
and in his wrath terrifies them:
6 “I install my king
on Zion, my holy hill.”
7 I will proclaim the decree of *I AM*;
He said to me: “You are my son;
today I give you birth.
8 Ask of me,
and I will make the nations your inheritance,
the ends of the earth your possession.
9 Break them with a rod of iron;
Like a potter’s vessel dash them to pieces.”
10 Therefore, kings, be wise;
be warned, rulers of the earth.
11 Serve *I AM* with fear
and celebrate his rule with trembling.
12 Kiss [his] son, lest he become angry,
and you be destroyed in [your] way,
for his wrath will soon flare up.
Blessed are all who seek refuge in him!

Bruce Waltke translation¹

I. Meditation #1: Voices in the News

- a. What emotions do you experience listening to the world news?
- b. Why does the poet want us to see that the gospel *always* provokes fierce opposition that is universal, highly orchestrated, powerful, violent, and unifying opposing world forces (“band together as one”) like nothing else?
- c. Does the poet’s rhetorical “*why*” resonate on your lips when you rebel?

II. Meditation #2: The Voice on the Throne

- a. The poet “sees” the Sovereign Lord on his heavenly throne laughing in derision against his enemies, as if their opposition is ludicrous, posing no threat his rule.
- b. Does God’s inward disdain and warlike resolve surprise you?
- c. How do you put these two utterly opposing worlds together?

III. Meditation #3: The Voice of the Son

- a. The third strophe speaks of the son’s *identity* (7), his *privilege* (8) and his *destiny* (9). A son is consecrated, given the privilege to pray, and guaranteed a victory. It looks so simple in theory, but the rest of the Psalter and the gospels add a painful dimension to the paradigm.
- b. Reflect on the God’s faithfulness to Jesus’ prayers and the victory over his enemies through the cross and resurrection. Does this give new meaning to “*dash to pieces*”?
- c. Reflect on your sonship in Christ. What do you “*ask*” for? Do you ever “*ask*” for the ends of the earth?

IV. Meditation #4: The Voice of the Evangel

- a. With the heavenly vision and divine decree firmly fixed in his heart, the poet is transformed into a bold witness, courageously challenging the rulers of this world to serve the Lord by submitting to the rule of his chosen King.
- b. Reflect how this psalm transformed Peter from a fearful follower to a courageous disciple, as the poem comes to life in every detail in Acts 4:1-31.
- c. Whom might the Sovereign Lord be inviting you to challenge with the Good News?

Note: Each strophe is designed to overcome our **fears**

¹ Bruce K. Waltke and James M. Houston with Erica Moore, *The Psalms as Christian Worship: A Historical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 157-60.

On Earth as it is in Heaven

Act 1: Voices in the News

I find it difficult to grasp the polar extremities
that converge in this poem,
designed by the poet to one end –
to grant us unflinching confidence
to follow the “Son”
despite what we hear in the news
and everything read in our newspapers.

Take a good, long look at politics under the sun
and a clear eye can only conclude
that God’s righteous rule is a lightning rod
for riotous rage, a rage so fierce,
it unites implacable enemies
with a fortified resolve
to fight to the death.

These vicious voices terrify me.
The poet, however, has a different spirit –
his opening *lammah* (“why”) unleashes
his “exasperation, amazement and indignation”
over the absurd stupidity of the whole affair,
something akin to the tower of Babel.

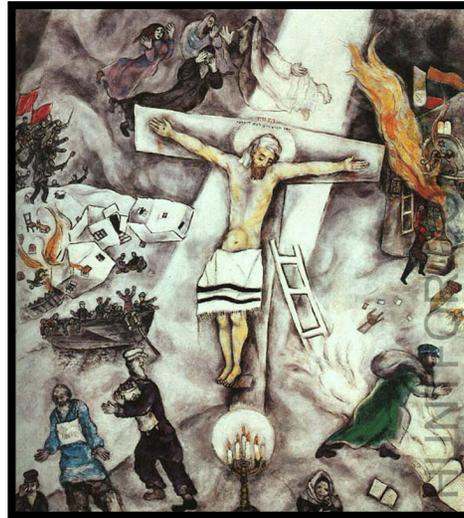
Act 2: The Voice on the Throne

In the second act of this four act drama
we learn the secret to the poet’s unwavering faith.

Unveil my eyes O God that, like the poet,
I may perceive your immovable throne,
unrivaled sovereignty,
and perhaps even catch a glimpse of the King,
relaxed at the breakfast table, sipping his espresso,
undisturbed by the morning’s news.

May I feel his commanding voice
reverberating deep in my gut as he reconfirms
his covenant choice of person and place,
irrevocable choices,
immovable as his heavenly throne.

And yet I ponder, “How
does your kingdom come on earth
as it is in heaven?”



Marc Chagall – White Crucifixion 1938

Act 3: The Voice of the Son

As the waters of baptism recede
a voice his heard, “*beni attah*” – (“You are my son”)
birth, adoption, privilege,
and the simple invitation to *sha’al* (“ask”*)
and with it the promise
that the rebellion *sha’al* be crushed.

I am amazed that just one *hoq* (“statute”**)
becomes the driving force and end of human history.
Is this the “one thing” Mary had chosen?

Act 4: The Voice of the Evangel

Peter standing before the Sanhedrin,
Paul testifying before Agrippa,
Luther refusing to bend the knee before the pope,
Bonhoeffer resisting Hitler,
Dorz’s eternal songs recreated in prison,
and our beloved Harmanstein ever speaking,
“Kiss the Son.”

The record shows that whenever the simple,
yet profound message of the gospel
is courageously proclaimed,
the hope is realized
“on earth as it is in heaven.”

Such hope ignited my confidence when I was young
and took my stand before my peers and professors,
both home and abroad,
what JOY I found in your presence in those days;
but now my feet stumble as I consider the cost –
blood flowing everywhere,
Palestine, Egypt, Aleppo, Nepal –
which gives *sha’al* a whole new meaning.

Grant me courage, O God,
for on most occasions
I fear that I have been ashamed.

*שאל *sha’al* (“to ask”) is a key word in the books of 1 and 2 Samuel, especially in the story of Hannah who “asks” for God to give her a son and then names him Samuel. *Sha’al* now becomes the pivotal means granted to the Davidic kings to bring heaven to earth.

**חוק *hōq* (“statute”) comes from the verbal root *hāqāq* “incise, inscribe, engrave” and connotes the idea of permanence. The noun is “often found with *’olam* (“eternal”), referring to an ‘eternal decree’ to be kept throughout the generations.”

