

The Ascension of Our Lord (observed)

May 10, 2026

Text: Psalm 2

Other Texts: Acts 1:1-11 (First Reading); Ephesians 1:15-23 (Epistle); Luke 24:44-53 (Gospel)

### **“Kiss the Son”**

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father and our risen Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Today we celebrate, the Lord Jesus’ ascension to heaven. It is His rightful return to the glory that was His from all eternity as the divine eternal Son of God, glory that He temporarily set aside during His state of humiliation. More, it is the incarnate Son’s coronation as the King of kings and Lord of lords, as He now sits at the Father’s right hand. Jesus’ ascension fulfills His words, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”<sup>1</sup> So we, the citizens of the kingdom of God’s Anointed One,<sup>2</sup> rejoice in our king’s enthronement. But not everyone rejoices.

Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against his Anointed, saying, “Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us.”<sup>3</sup>

And so begins the second Psalm. The nations, heathen peoples, the world of unbelievers. The collective rebellion of humanity against God. Rage, plotting, fist-in-the air defiance against their Creator. Found in all realms of human life: political, government, military, economic, social, philosophical, and education systems as well as false religions, cults, and spiritualities.

Rulers of the world who disagree about so much, yet are united in their opposition to God and His Christ. Pilate and Herod, Pharisees and Sadducees, all bitter enemies who found common cause against Jesus, united in their rage against Him, determined that He must die. The Roman Empire tried to crush Christianity. And so it continues as Islam and Hinduism, Communism and Buddhism, often bitter enemies on earth, still concur in their opposition to Christ, proven by their persecution of those who bear His name, *Christians*.

But not all rebellion is so overtly bloody and violent. Bible critics each with their own personal theories, yet all agree that Christ’s Word, the Bible, is not inspired, inerrant, and infallible, but contains errors, falsities, and so is not fully reliable, needing “interpretation” through the lens of evolution and the current culture. And people in general despise the moral truths of God’s Law, as presented not only in the Commandments, but also in nature—in the created order and the conscience—and so live in sinful rebellion, even unto calling what is truly good, God’s ways, as evil, and calling the most despicable filth, good. Some even claiming His name, but not living by His Word, but by their personal “faith,” which is just another idol.

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew 28:18. All quotes are from *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version* (ESV) unless otherwise noted.

<sup>2</sup> Hebrew *Messiah*; Greek *Christ*.

<sup>3</sup> Psalm 2:1-3.

Yes, the people rage against God and His Anointed One, often externally in persecution and open vileness, but always internally, within their hearts and minds (i.e. their spirit). For this rage is, at all times, *spiritual rebellion*. It is real. But it is foolish; hopeless.

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

In sinners’ ever greater attempts to make God more like us, they imagine Him laughing at all sorts of things, perhaps even chuckling at sin. Yet it is both enlightening and humbling that that the only times Scripture actually records God laughing is when He looks upon the rebellion of mankind and then laughs in mockery, ridicule, and scorn. Again Psalm 37, “The Lord laughs at the wicked, for he sees that his day is coming.”<sup>5</sup>

This laughter is not cruel. God is not rejoicing in the damnation of the wicked. His laugh is certainty. He is not threatened. He is not anxious. The rebellion of the nations and the rage of humanity does not shake His throne in the slightest. He is supreme and eternal; mankind is insignificant, nothing but dust to which He makes them return under His wrath.<sup>6</sup> He laughs in divine contempt at human pride, arrogance, hubris. For in the face of human raging, yes, despite this all out rebellion of mankind, God’s decisive action occurred: “I have set my King on Zion.”

I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me, “You are my Son; today I have begotten you. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.”<sup>7</sup>

This King is not elected, not negotiated into power, not dependent on human recognition. The psalm lifts us beyond time into eternity—and then brings eternity into time. The Son is not a creature, He is not made, but begotten. He is the eternal Son of the Father, now revealed, now declared, now manifested in the world. Not an afterthought, not a temporary ruler, but the incarnate Son who is the fulfillment of God’s promise to David concerning his descendent, “I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.”<sup>8</sup>

Yet this mighty King does not first appear in glory. Jesus comes in humility. He is rejected, opposed, crucified. The very rage described in the psalm finds its greatest fulfillment when rulers and crowds unite against Him, when the shouts of “Crucify Him!” are realized with the pounding of the nails, the raising of the cross, the killing of the King, the death of God’s Son.

But that rejection does not dethrone Him—it reveals Him. His resurrection on the third day is the public declaration: this crucified One is indeed God’s Son, the King, whom God has set over all.<sup>9</sup> He is the ruler to the ends of the earth; the nations are His heritage. Yet, this is not just dominion, it is redemption. The nations that rage, the peoples that plot, they are those who are gathered unto

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<sup>4</sup> Psalm 2:4-6.

<sup>5</sup> Psalm 37:13. See also Proverbs 1:26.

<sup>6</sup> Genesis 3:19; Psalm 90:3 (consider the following verses).

<sup>7</sup> Psalm 2:7-9.

<sup>8</sup> 2 Samuel 7:13.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Acts 13:33; Hebrews 1:5.

Him. Not territory conquered, but hearts converted. Not the spirit of the sword, but the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God.

This is the purpose of God placing His King on Zion: *the salvation of sinners*. But for those whose hearts will not break in repentance, whose knees will not bow in the worship of faith and newness of life, there is judgment. The rod of iron will break them, their knees will bow in terror. The same King who saves will judge. The same Christ who invites will then confront. There is no neutrality; you are either with Him or against Him.<sup>10</sup> Either His rule is received as grace and mercy—or it comes in judgment and wrath. Thus Revelation says, “And from His mouth proceeds a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and He will rule them with an iron scepter. He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.”<sup>11</sup>

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

This is a call to humility. Rebellion is not just “out there”—it is also “in here” for it begins within the corrupted human heart. A contaminated heart which we must honestly confess still is within us. And we do not confess this lightly, for we know that it is rebellion against the Lord and His Anointed. We do not confess this casually, for if we had no sin but lived in perfect faith and love we would have no need to be warned, no reason to fear the Lord or His judgment. But we are still subject to temptation, still pressured to join the rebellion, either directly, or by supporting evil by not calling it out, by turning a blind eye to it, especially when it is our loved ones. Repentance is daily, the sorrow is deep, the battle against sin remains and we dare not rest.

So yes, we are called to deep humility, to bow the heart and knee now. We surrender our pride by yielding to Him. But this is not weakness, but wisdom. For here, in this humble surrender, is exactly where fear gives way to hope: “Blessed are all who take refuge in him.”

The King who is resisted by the world and its rulers, who are all under the ruler of this world, Satan, the King whom our own sinful nature protests and resists in unbelief and sin, *He is the very refuge we need*. The One against whom sinners rage, who would be under His fiery judgment, is the One in whom sinners find safety from that judgment. For this ruler is also the Redeemer, this King is also the High Priest who sacrificed Himself to save His people and so rule them in love.

Even now Jesus’ rule is good; His yoke is light. The world and the flesh see His Law as harsh, but that is Satan’s lie. His Law is His good will for us and the obedience of faith brings blessings now and forever even as Jesus’ blood cleanses the sins and weakness that still clings to our good works. And by His Word and Spirit we are instructed, growing in our service to Him.

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<sup>10</sup> Matthew 12:30.

<sup>11</sup> Revelation 19:15.

<sup>12</sup> Psalm 2:10-12.

What paradoxes! Sinners use the life and breath God gives to rage and rebel against Him. Yet the King who could easily smash His enemies instead bears their sins on the cross. He who could destroy His enemies dies for them that they might die to sin and so live to Him forever.

The King reigns in power, yet also in grace. So kiss the Son by taking refuge in Him through faith, trusting in His death for forgiveness. Kiss the Son through reverence and worship rendered unto Him, and by faithful obedience to His Word. Kiss the Son by bearing the cross in humility and by suffering afflictions with the endurance of faith. Kiss the Son with certain hope that He is now risen, ascended, and seated at God's right hand, ruling all things for His Church, for you, so that He would bring you into the fullness of His victory at His return. Yes on that Day, in wrath, He will eternally destroy His enemies. But in mercy He will eternally save His people. The nations rage. The world of unbelievers resists. Behind it all is the devil and the powers of darkness. But God has set His King; Jesus is risen, ascended, and enthroned in glory. And blessed—*truly blessed*—are all who take refuge in Him. Amen.