

# Psalm 2 [using NASB] / COB / 09.22.13

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## Introduction

- † **[Slide 1: Psalm 2 question]** We live with some harsh realities: terrorist strikes in the US; constant war in the Middle East; North Korean nuclear technology that puts Hawaii at risk; persecution of Christians, sometimes to death, in several countries; movies and television glorifying perversion; drugs in schools; churches denying the deity of Christ or his work on the cross...
- When you look out at the world, and you see evil triumphing, the wicked prospering, it is easy to feel hopeless, even to have doubts, to think maybe God is not in control, maybe his Word has nothing to say for our times.
  - At the least, you might wonder, “What is God doing about all this?” Is God ignoring the injustice of the world? Does God allow terrorist attacks to chastise our wayward nation as he used the Babylonians to discipline Judah? Or is God empowering the church to bring justice to the world? You might hear each of these ideas preached somewhere on a Sunday morning, but none of them is the biblical answer. No, the biblical answer centers on Jesus Christ.
- † **[Slide 2: Psalm 2 theme]** Psalm 2 will show us that what is happening in the world is no surprise to God, and he has a plan to bring justice to the world through Jesus Christ, his anointed king and judge. Let me say it again: what is happening in the world is no surprise to God, and he has a plan to bring justice to the world through Jesus Christ, his anointed king and judge.
- Pull out your bulletin insert and flip to the side with a timeline. As we have indicated there, Psalm 2 incorporates all the theology of what God was doing from the creation of mankind until the time of King David thousands of years later; and it directly influenced how the New Testament writers viewed Jesus. I hope you will see that this psalm, written 3000 years ago, has something important to say to us today.
  - So give me your attention for thirty minutes, and see if this psalm doesn't expand your awareness of who Jesus is, what he's about to do, and how magnificently God's Word reveals these things.
  - Let's pray...

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## Review

- † **[Slide 3: Adamic Covenant]** Last week, we saw that God created people to reflect his character and represent him here on Earth. Initially, God set up a system in which God would righteously rule over man; man would reflect God's character and represent God as head of the human family; and man with the human family would reflect God's character and represent God while righteously ruling in God's name over the rest of creation.
- † **[Slide 4: Abrahamic Covenant]** After centuries of human failure in this regard, God chose one family from among the many, Abraham's family, to be his representative people on Earth. God set up a system almost identical to the first one, in which God would righteously rule over the patriarch of this family; the patriarch would reflect God's character and represent God while righteously ruling in God's name over his family; and the patriarch with his family would reflect God's character and represent God while influencing the rest of the world.
- This family became the nation of Israel, and the role of the patriarch fell to the king. So the plan was that God would righteously rule over the king; the king would be God's ultimate representative on Earth, who would reflect God's character and represent God while righteously ruling in God's name over Israel; and Israel with the king would reflect God's character and

represent God while at least influencing the rest of the nations, though it was God's plan that eventually Israel would conquer her enemies and rule in God's name over the rest of the world.

- † **[Slide 5: Characters]** In Psalm 2, there are multiple voices which represent all the parties in our three circles of the Abrahamic Covenant. There is a narrator from Israel, there are rulers of the other nations, God makes an appearance, as does God's anointed king. We shall see this as we go through the psalm.
  - You are welcome to follow along in your own Bible, but the insert has the NASB translation I will be using and indicates who is speaking at each verse. I also will be projecting what you need to see on the screen. Are you ready for a Bible Adventure! This is VBS for older people!

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### Vv.1-3: the Uprising

- † **[Slide 6: vv.1-3]** Let's read the first three lines of Psalm 2. We begin with the narrator from Israel telling us a story, and then he quotes the rulers of the other nations.

Narrator:                   <sup>1</sup>Why are the nations in an uproar  
And the peoples devising a vain thing?

<sup>2</sup>The kings of the earth take their stand  
And the rulers take counsel together

Pagan rulers:               Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying,  
<sup>3</sup>“Let us tear their fetters apart And cast away their cords from us!”

- † I had to look up “fetter.” Fetters are the chains that restrain prisoners, usually around the ankles. Cords are ropes. So the pagan nations are hoping to break free from the rule of God and his anointed.
- † **[Slide 7: “LORD” highlighted]** If you look at v.2, you will see the word “LORD” in all capitals. When you are reading the Old Testament, in most translations you will see Lord written two different ways, in all capitals or with just a capital L.
  - When you see the word “Lord” with just one capital in the Old Testament, it is translating the Hebrew word Adonai, which means “ruler” or “master.” Adonai can refer to God, because he is our master – and it does refer to God in v.4 – but it also can refer to someone else, such as a slave having a human master.
  - When you see LORD in all capitals in the Old Testament, that always refers to God: LORD all in capitals is how the translators handle the name God gave himself. We have lost the knowledge of how to pronounce the name; we think is pronounced [יְהוָה] YAH-way. Older materials pronounce it Jehovah, which is actually the one way we know is incorrect, but that is another story. What matters today is that we see LORD in all capitals here, so we know it refers to God.
- † These three verses tell us that the Gentile nations – that is, the nations other than Israel – are rebelling against God's authority and against his anointed representative. They want to cast away the chains that bind them, to rid themselves of God's control, to break free from God's established order!
  - Sound familiar? David was prophesying hundreds of years before Christ's birth about something that still would be happening in our day.
- † The narrator says this rebellion is a vain thing, which means empty or foolish. In the Bible's wisdom literature – including the Psalms – there are fools and the wise. A fool is anyone who rejects God's

revealed will, in contrast to the wise person who accepts God's revelation, which is wisdom itself. So here the nations are being fools, rejecting God's revealed order and will.

- † **[Slide 8: "Anointed" highlighted]** In the New Testament, Acts 4:25 quotes Psalm 2 and says that David wrote this psalm. So we might assume David is the narrator from Israel.
  - However, it is possible David wrote this psalm about himself being God's Anointed. Remember, David was God's anointed king over Israel at the time, so he was God's ultimate representative, the one who was to rule Israel and through Israel to rule over all the nations in God's name.
  - On the other hand, the Hebrew word for "Anointed" here is the one we translate elsewhere as "Messiah" or "Christ." We will try to figure out about whom David is talking as we go on...

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### Vv.4-6: God's Answer to the Uprising

- † **[Slide 9: vv.4-6]** Let's read vv.4-6. The narrator continues the story, and in v.6 he quotes God.

Narrator:                   <sup>4</sup>He who sits in the heavens laughs,  
The Lord scoffs at them.

<sup>5</sup>Then He will speak to them in His anger  
And terrify them in His fury, saying,

God:                         <sup>6</sup>"But as for Me, I have installed My King  
Upon Zion, My holy mountain."

- † V.4 says God laughs at the Gentile rulers for their empty, vain, attempt to break away. He laughed at Pharaoh's best efforts in the Exodus, he laughed at Nebuchadnezzar when the three Hebrew boys survived in the fire, and he laughed at Rome, the most powerful empire ever, which could not hold on to the dead body of Jesus!
- † God laughs *at* these kings of the nations, but how does he respond *to* them?
  - Look at v.5: God responds in anger, which implies judgment. V.6 says God's expression of anger is to install his anointed king, the means by which he will implement his judgment, because – remembering our three circles of the Abrahamic Covenant – the king of Israel is God's anointed representative to rule in God's name over Israel and through Israel over all the nations.
  - God will install his king upon Zion. This is the hill upon which sits Jerusalem, where David's son, Solomon, would build the Temple for God.
- † So thus far, we have the leaders of the Gentile nations rebelling against the authority of God and his anointed representative, and here we have God replying by laughing at them and then angrily telling them that he will install his king, i.e. he will declare his legally authorized representative in Israel; he will not let the nations loose from that authority.

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### Vv.7-9: Jesus as Conquering King

- † **[Slide 10: vv.7-9]** Let's look at vv.7-9. This is where it gets a little more interesting, but it also gets more intricate, so you have to pay close attention.
  - V.7 is God's anointed King talking. How do we know it is not still God talking as in v.6? Because the speaker refers to God, the LORD all in capitals. So here we have God's anointed King talking, and then he is going to quote what God said to him.

God's Anointed King: <sup>7</sup>"I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to Me,  
God: 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.

<sup>8</sup>Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance,  
And the very ends of the earth as Your possession.

<sup>9</sup>You shall break them with a rod of iron,  
You shall shatter them like earthenware.'"

- † There is a lot to pull out of here. First, we see that the anointed king is also called a Son. A son is the ideal representative of the Father, truly made in his image; he is the one who will identify with God and represent God well. Remember our three circles, the king represents God to Israel, and the king with Israel represents God to the nations... The king therefore should be a true son who really reflects the image of God the Father.
- † The language of God having a Son relates to the Davidic Covenant we mentioned last week. God made this covenant with King David probably just before David wrote this psalm.
  - **[Slide 11: 2 Samuel 7.12-16]** 2 Samuel 7:12-16 tells us what God told the prophet Nathan to say to King David: "When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me... **[Slide 12: 2 Samuel 7.12-16 cont.]** when he commits iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men and the strokes of the sons of men, but My loving-kindness shall not depart from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever."
- † There are three things to note from this passage:
  - **[Slide 13: summary of Davidic Covenant]** First, it directly talks about Solomon, David's son who would be king after him, who would build the Temple for God, the house for God's name.
  - Second, God refers to Solomon as a son. As I said, being God's son implies Solomon would be God's representative, the one who would identify with God by reflecting God's character, and would represent God to the people. He was the anointed king of Israel representing God.
  - If you consider the history of Israel, the early part of Solomon's reign was the pinnacle, the very best Israel ever got to be. Why? Do you remember what Solomon asked God to give him? Wisdom: Solomon was the wisest man, which in Bible terms means he best lived by, and led by, God's revelation, which is wisdom itself. Solomon reflected God's character, Solomon righteously ruled in God's name. Solomon was a true son to God... at least for a while.
  - The third thing we want to note from the Davidic Covenant is that God declared he would establish Solomon's throne forever, and that he would establish David's throne forever. This means there will always be a descendent of David and Solomon who is the rightful King of Israel and – based on the three circle paradigm of the Abrahamic Covenant – that king will be the rightful representative of God to the world.
  - The forever nature of this promise means both the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants are still in effect today. So throughout time, even today, there is an heir of David, an heir of Solomon, who is the rightful King of Israel, and thus the rightful representative of God to the rest of the world, and in Psalm 2 God calls *this* king his "son."

- † **[Slide 14: Hebrews 5.5]** Coming back to our psalm, God declared this anointed king to be “begotten” on a specific date. We can see that this has nothing to do with creation or birth, because the king already existed when God spoke these words to him. Rather, this is when God anointed him to be king, to start his identification with, and representation of, God, to begin his sonship.
- † From our information so far, our psalm could be referring to this king and son in the person of David or Solomon or any descendent of theirs who was rightfully king, because of the Davidic Covenant.
  - However, scripture does tell us who this anointed king is in our Psalm. Hebrews 5:5 quotes our psalm [2:7] and says it refers to Jesus! Paul said the same thing in Acts 13:33.
  - As I said earlier, the term written in our psalm as “His Anointed” is the word for Messiah, the New Testament concept of Messiah or Christ comes from Psalm 2!
  - You might recall the care that Matthew and Luke took to establish Jesus’ genealogy, to show his descent from David and Abraham: this is why: When he was born on Earth, Jesus was born to the right set of parents to make him heir to the promises God had made to Abraham and David, heir to the throne of Israel, and so, when he grew up, he should have been declared Israel’s king! Isn’t it elegant the way everything in the Bible fits together?
- † **[Slide 15: Romans 1.1-4]** Introducing himself in Romans 1 [vv.1-4], Paul noted his association with Jesus, who was – according to Paul – God’s promised deliverer of salvation, God’s Son, a descendent of David, and the Messiah, or Christ. Many other scriptures also attest that Jesus is the ultimate Son of God, as well as the ultimate Davidic king, the true anointed deliverer who was promised way back in Genesis 3 as the seed of the woman, whom we call the Messiah or Christ. He is today, and will always be, God the Father’s anointed representative over the world!
- † **[Slide 16: vv.7-9 again]** David and Solomon were anointed kings, representing God, but they were tainted with sin, as are we. They could not be a *perfect* representation – or image – of God the Father. Only Jesus could do that, because only Jesus is both God and man, and thus able to live righteously.
  - So these verses are prophetic about Christ’s return: God the Father has anointed Jesus as the king to fulfill the Abrahamic and Davidic Covenants. Look at vv.8-9: Jesus will reign forever and over the whole earth, and when he returns to do so, he will shatter those who oppose him as God’s representative, those who are rebelling against God’s rule.
- † I think it is likely that David knew he was being prophetic when he wrote this psalm. I believe this especially since he was obviously prophetic in other psalms and he usually wrote in the first person when writing about himself. In any case, God inspired these words knowing they would refer to, and be fulfilled by, Jesus.
- † So we have the nations of the world rebelling against God, and God responding by laughing at them and then angrily telling them that he will not let them break free, but rather, he is establishing his anointed king and son to rule over them through Israel, and when Jesus – this anointed king and son – returns to establish his kingdom, he will shatter those who oppose God’s righteous rule.

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#### Vv.10-12: Refuge in the Son

- † **[Slide 17: vv.10-12]** Let’s now read the last three verses of this psalm.

Narrator:                   <sup>10</sup>Now therefore, O kings, show discernment;  
Take warning, O judges of the earth.

<sup>11</sup>Worship the LORD with reverence

And rejoice with trembling.

<sup>12</sup>Do homage to the Son, that He not become angry, and you perish in the way,  
For His wrath may soon be kindled.  
How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!

- † The narrator’s voice comes back, giving a warning: align yourself with God or die! And how do you align yourself with God? how do you worship and serve God? Look at v.12: We worship and serve God through his anointed son.
  - The NIV and ESV translate v.12 literally as “kiss the son”! In the cultural context, you must honor and submit to the son, because God the Father has chosen him to be his representative on Earth. If you do not acknowledge the son, then you are not right with God!
- † **[Slide 18: Matthew 26.63]** Let’s look at Matthew 26.63, which shows us what the High Priest said to Jesus at one of his trials: [NIV] “The high priest said to him, ‘I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God.’” The high priest was referring to this psalm, because if Jesus is the Anointed Messiah and Son of God in Psalm 2, then those religious leaders were in a heap of trouble!
- † **[Slide 19: same old rebellion]** In Acts 4.24-27, the apostles referred to this psalm, and then pointed out that not only had the Gentile rulers – the Romans – conspired against God’s anointed king, but so had Israel’s religious leaders! In conspiring with the Romans to kill Jesus, they had allowed the nations to rule over them instead of submitting to their anointed king and allowing him to rule in God’s name through them over the nations, the same sin that had been happening throughout the Old Testament time period.
  - † **[Slide 20: Matthew 23.33]** In our psalm, what happens to those who don’t submit to God through Christ? V.12 says they perish. In Matthew 23.33 [NET], Jesus said to the Pharisees, “You snakes, you offspring of vipers! [In other words – remembering Satan’s guise of a snake in the garden of Eden when the tension of sin started – “you children of Satan!”] How will you escape being condemned to hell?”
    - Jesus’ anger in v.12 of our psalm is the same as God the Father’s anger in v.5: enemies of the Father are the enemies of the Son, and so the Son will destroy them. This judging wrath of Jesus is mentioned again in Revelation 6.
- † **[Slide 21: refuge highlighted]** The last line of our psalm is offered in contrast: the way to avoid God’s wrath is to take refuge in the son, then you will be blessed. How do we do that?
  - Throughout the entire Bible, salvation comes by accepting God’s promise of deliverance: this is another theme that runs from Genesis all the way through Revelation.
  - Today, we know a lot about that promise: we know it comes through the anointed son, or Christ. Accept who Jesus is: part of the Godhead who came to earth to be born as a man, the anointed king, the son of God, the Messiah or Christ promised as a Deliverer throughout the OT and described in the NT. And accept the deliverance Jesus offers: that he died on the cross to pay the penalty for your sins so you could be accounted as righteous before God, and thus reconciled to have peace with God and be spared God’s wrath.
- † This psalm is not only messianic – meaning it is about Jesus – it is also eschatological, meaning it is about the end times. Jesus is already anointed as God’s king, but he has not yet asked for his inheritance, he is not yet on his throne ruling the Earth, which is why things are the way they are right

now. We'll talk more about that over the next two weeks. When he is ready, Jesus will come back, destroy the opposition, and reign forever, bringing justice to the Earth, fulfilling the covenants with Adam, Abraham, and David and the purpose God the Father had for mankind from the beginning, to reflect his character and represent him here on Earth. That my friends, ties the whole Bible together.

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### Application

- † **[Slide 22: application]** I want to assure you that it is ok if you did not understand some of the details you heard today. As I have said before, I try to teach in a way such that everybody gets something, but that is not the same as saying everybody will understand everything.
- Also, when I first learned these things at seminary, I was overwhelmed by them. What is important is that you reflect about what you did grasp, and allow it to change the way you think.
- † Most of us already thought of Jesus as our king, but it is exciting to see how comprehensive and consistent God is in revealing this: the New Testament tells us Jesus is the true son of God the Father which makes him the true representative of God, and now we find out Jesus fulfills the Abrahamic and Davidic covenantal promises which God made way back in the Old Testament, because Jesus was born as the direct heir of those promises, was born as the rightful king of Israel.
- † I hope that excites you, and that you see the value of understanding what the Bible is really about. It is not a book of dos and don'ts: the morality in the text is there to show us how to reflect God's character and how to represent him, how to live as the people he created us to be, in his image, which is one of the driving themes of the story, as God unfolds his plan to have a righteous kingdom here on Earth.
- If the whole Bible is about establishing this righteous kingdom, and we were created to reflect God's character and represent God to others, then we need to assess our lives, realize how often we come up short, and refocus on God's priorities. God told the first people to fill the earth with little images of God; Jesus reiterated that command in the Great Commission: we are to pursue our own spiritual growth to become God's image, and help others to do the same.
- † I also hope this psalm will encourage you, will help you to not lose heart, to keep your faith strong, even as you look around and experience the fallen nature of this world. Scripture reveals that God fully anticipated the current rebellion, that since the beginning of time he has had a plan to bring permanent justice and righteousness to the Earth, and that he will soon do so through the return of Jesus Christ, the anointed king, who will conquer God's enemies and rule the Earth.
- † Knowing this is God's plan, we should shift our perspective, change the focus of our confidence. Our hope as believers is not to be delivered from our problems in this life, but to be resurrected to eternal life with Christ. We can still pray for help with our worldly problems, and sometimes God will bless us by taking them away, but we must not dwell on these problems, nor doubt God's love or power when he does not take them away, because we now know his plan for justice awaits Christ's return.
- † This psalm also should remind us to check our level of devotion and passion for God and his Son. Jesus is the promised deliverer, the Messiah or Christ. He brings salvation to those who take refuge in him and will also deliver an Israel who accepts him as king. He deserves our worship and reverence, and we should submit to him, rejoicing in his righteous kingly rule in our lives.
- **[Slide 23: blank]** So a question: By your lifestyle, your priorities, your attitudes, your quiet times, would Jesus consider that you are kissing him? or are you just throwing him a nod of the head as you go on your merry way?
  - Let's pray...