

Psalm 2

Intro:

Though it isn't normative that Psalms follow other Psalms in chronological order (from a linear perspective), Psalm 2 is connected with Psalm 1 in a couple of ways. One of those connections is in sharing the role of introducing the Psalms.

- Psalm 1 provides two different "ways" for **individuals** (the way of the Godly and the way of the Ungodly, for example)
- Psalm 2 seems to follow up with an application for **nations**.

Psalm 2 is referred to as a "**Royal**" Psalm. Royal Psalms are those Psalms that speak to the reign of the king. Other examples of what are considered to be "**Royal Psalms**" in addition to Psalm 2 are Psalms 18, 20, 21, 45, 72, 89, 101, 110, 132, and 144).

Another interesting note. Not only is Psalm 2 referred to as a "Royal" Psalm because of its subject matter but Psalm 2 is also considered a "**Messianic**" Psalm. A "Messianic" Psalm is often prophetic in nature because it's one that points directly toward the coming Messiah. Psalms can be called Messianic when they have been *directly referenced* and expounded upon in the New Testament and point straight to Christ. Not all of the Psalms referenced in the New Testament are Messianic in nature but those that refer to Christ as Messiah are. This Psalm is in fact referenced in Acts (4:25-28, 13:33), Hebrews (1:5, 5:5), and Revelation (2:26-27, 12:5, 19:15) and on all those occasions, point to Christ.

Since we are **NEVER** to wrestle a particular word, verse, chapter, or even Psalm from its context, we have to be **VERY** careful to distinguish between the writer of the Psalm and the

prophetic reference to Christ. It's clear that some of the Psalms are focused *entirely* on our Lord while other Psalms **obviously** refer to the experience of that particular Psalmist where at some point in the Psalm, there's an *isolated* reference to the Christ. Psalm 69 is a good example of this. When David writes, "O God, you know my folly; the wrongs I have done are not hidden from you," he's obviously referring to himself (Ps. 69:5). But later when David continues with, "They gave me poison for food, and for my thirst they gave me sour wine to drink" (Ps. 69:21), we know that this refers to our Lord as we read in Matthew 27:34 and again in Matthew 27:48. And this is the reason why it's so important to make the distinction between the Psalmist and Christ.

Another example of the distinction we have to make is that sometimes a **whole** Psalm references Christ (Psalm 22). But sometimes only a **paragraph** applies (Psalm 40:6-10). And then sometimes it's just a **few** verses (Psalm 69:4, 9, and 21). And in the case of Psalm 41:9, it's just **a single verse**.

Psalm 2:

1. Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain?
2. The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his Anointed, saying,
3. "Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us."
4. He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision.
5. Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying,
6. "As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill."
7. I will tell of the decree: The Lord said to me, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you.
8. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession.
9. You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."

10. No therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth.
11. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling./
12. 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.

We don't know the (human) author of Psalm 2 **for certain**, but it's long been considered to have been written by David (Acts 4:25-26). Looking at how Psalm 2 breaks down, we see that the 12 verses of Psalm 2 are divided into 4 stanzas, with 3 verses each. In the first 3 verses, we see man fighting against God. In the second 3 verses, we see God's reaction to this rebellion. In the third set of verses, we see God's decree. And then finally, the fourth set of 3 verses (verses 10-12), points to our responsibility in light of God's rule.

Verses 1 - 3:

Looking at these first verses, we see a picture of mankind's depravity. "*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."*"

"*Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain?*" Why indeed **do** we fight against the Most High? What a hopeless thing to fight against God. A finite, carbon-based creation who depends upon God Himself for our next breath taking up "arms" against God. What an example of foolishness. It's a vivid description of the nature of our fallen hearts towards Christ.

In Acts 4:25-26, Luke **DIRECTLY attributes this Psalm (the nations raging) against CHRIST as the Anointed One.** Therefore the emphasis can be laid upon the Lord here. Luke specifically attributes the raging of Herod, the Pharisees, the Gentiles, and Pontius Pilate as a fulfillment of Psalm 2:1-2. Acts 4:27 he says, "...*for truly in this city there were gathered together against*

your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel...". But this holds direct application to our lives as well because of how WE constantly rage against Him. **This is something that we do on a DAILY BASIS.** We rage against God when we value something else more than Him. That's why this SIN is such an insult to God: **Human beings prefer something else to God.** We rage against Him constantly. We push Him out of school, from government buildings, out of public Nativity scenes at Christmas, etc. But what about our own hearts and minds?

Maybe you consider yourself someone that's been able to love the Lord perfectly, your whole life, every moment, of every day, worshiping Him as you should, loving Him as you should. But remember that the STANDARD OF GOD IS PERFECTION and none of us has achieved it. Our sin *IS* a rage against God, a plot in vain. That describes us all. Bad news if you aren't in relationship with Christ, because God is Just.

In Romans 1:22–23 Paul writes, “*Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images...*”. We have all done this and we are all tempted to do this every, single, day. We all look at Him and His glory, and we say, “I am going to trade you for something that I really want right now”. We break the 1st Commandment when we do these things. Not a single one of us, not one, has ever at any time in our entire lives, for even one moment, loved God as we should (completely, perfectly) with all our hearts, souls, and minds (Matt 22:37). I would never suggest that we don't enjoy “things”, hobbies, etc. On the contrary, many of our diversions have their place and many of them can be done in a way that glorifies God. The point is that these things are given in exchange for **perfectly** loving God. Our very sinful nature is irrational and vain.

Also note from verse 3 that these “bonds”, these “cords” were not the bonds or cords of enslavement to some evil entity. In Hosea 11, verse 4 God says, “*I led them with cords of*

kindness, with the bands of love, and I became to them as one who eases the yoke on their jaws, and I bent down to them and fed them.”. That’s how twisted the human heart is: that God’s LOVE is confused for something to be cast off and hated.

Verse 4 - 6:

In verses 4, 5, & 6, we read the response of God to this rebellion, “[4] *He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision.* [5] *Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying,* [6] “*As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill.*”.

God’s position is the first thing we see. “He who sits in heaven”, a place of great power. He is high and lifted up, as Isaiah says. Exalted. A place so far ABOVE the ridiculousness, the evil, and the sinful mutinies of fallen man. The next thing we see the mocking laughter of the Most High God. You really don’t want to be the subject of Divine laughter and mocking contempt.

Back in verse 3 we see a futile, empty challenge by man to God where they desire to throw off His rulership over them. And now here in Verse 6 we have God’s response. “*As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill*”.

Consider the three-fold nature of Christ’s Kingship:

1. **He is King over His enemies**
2. **He is King over us, the children of God**
3. **He is His Father’s King**

Verses 7 - 9:

Verses 7, 8, and 9 we now read, “[7] I will tell of the decree: The Lord said to me, “You are my Son; today I have begotten you. [8] Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. [9] You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.”. The first part of that where it says, “You are my Son, today I have begotten you” is an expression of the privilege of the relationship with a prophetic eye toward the coming Messiah, which of course would be Jesus. This is quoted in Acts 13:32-33 saying, “[32] And we bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers, [33] this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus, as also it is written in the second Psalm, “You are my Son, today I have begotten you”. And later in Hebrews 1:5 saying, “[5] For to which of the angels did God ever say, “You are my Son, today I have begotten you”?.

Verse 8 here speaks of Christ’s inheritance of all things that the Father ordained for Him. And with verse 9 we see reference to a rod of iron. It appears that the word used here for “rod” is the same word for both the Shepherd’s “rod” and the King’s “scepter” in the original Hebrew. This idea of Shepherding and Kingship are apparently intermixed in ancient philosophy. So we have a picture of the supreme sovereignty of Christ’s rule by way of both Leading and Ruling over all things.

Verses 10 - 12:

Verses 10, 11, and 12 we read, “[10] Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. [11] Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. [12] 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.”. In light of who Christ is let all men take heed. We are but dust particles before Him. Be wise. Don’t listen to your heart. Let us live in the counsel of God, let us listen to the Word of God. And the staggering reality is that God is, BY HIS VERY NATURE, a Savior. Instead of an immediate judgment, we see **a chance for turning back to Him, a chance for**

repentance. Look at the commands that are placed on rebellious mankind: Be wise, Be warned, Serve the Lord, Rejoice with trembling, Kiss the Son. Amen.