

Psalm 2:1-12

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[0 : 00] We're in Psalm 2 today. So, Psalm 2. College students, you're going to get some backlash from last semester when we went over this.!

It's either just an opportunity to pick up where we are or a chance just to be prayerful and mindful and pick something that you think would really minister to what we know is going on in our congregation, what's going on in our world, etc.

So, whenever I'm anxious, wherever I'm, my soul is troubled, like the song just said, I tend to run to the idea of kingly imagery in Scripture because I need to put my trust in something stronger and more powerful than what I am afraid of around me.

And so, Psalm 2 is where we'll be today, right at the beginning of the book of Psalms. So, let's read that together, Psalm 2. Why do the nations rage in the people's plot and vain?

The kings of the earth set themselves and their 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.

[1 : 38] 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.

I will tell 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 possessions.

You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them into pieces like a potter's vessel. 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 those who take refuge in Him. Let's pray with me. Lord, we offer this time to You, just as an act of worship in our listening, with our ears and hearing in our hearts.

[2 : 45] We ask that it would just be pleasing to You. I pray that no matter where we are this morning, in a state of joy, sorrow, rebellion, wherever we are today, that You would meet us and speak to us as Your Word so powerfully does.

And just ask that in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. So I'll give you the outline really quickly of what we're going to do. But first will be, number one will be the theme of the psalm.

Number one is the theme of the psalm. Number two, the sinful world rebels. Number two, the sinful world rebels.

Number three, God the Father responds. God the Father responds. Number four, God the Son decrees.

God the Son decrees. And then, fifthly and lastly, God the Spirit commands. God the Spirit commands. So, what is the theme of the psalm? Well, this is what you would call a royal psalm.

[3 : 51] Since God is the King of the universe, and He is the King of all things, visible and invisible, the reality of sovereignty and kingship is a huge theme in the psalms.

We've read about some of that this morning already. But, the King of God's choosing is celebrated because He is the channel of blessing to God's people.

When God's people sang Psalm 2, they were reminding themselves of how God made David and His descendants to be kings over all the earth, specifically Israel.

But, also, that they would eventually rule, and that rule was spread throughout other lands around them, and that blessing that Israel had of knowing the true God would extend to even the pagan nations that were around them.

So, God appointed a line of kings beginning with David to lead His people in His ways. And, God promised that through that kingly line would come His greatest blessing.

[4 : 56] So, faithful saints inside the nation of Israel understood that that blessing, the hope of that blessing, was irrevocably tied to the house of David. They knew it was going to come through David's line.

So, there's only a handful of places for you to turn. I'd like to kind of give you a heads up. I think there's just three outside our main text. But, flip over to 2 Samuel, if you'll hold your hand, Psalm 2. But, 2 Samuel, chapter 7.

2 Samuel 7, verse 11. And, this is where God makes this promise to David. And so, verse 11. It says, Moreover, the Lord declares to you, this is speaking through the prophet Nathan to David. the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make a house, make you a house. When your days are fulfilled, you will lie down with your fathers.

I will raise up your offspring after you who shall come from your body and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.

[6 : 01] I will be to him a father and he shall be to me as a son. So you see this idea that the descendants of David forever will be referred to as sons.

So that's the connection here. All the descendants will be referred to as sons. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men.

But my steadfast love will not depart from him. As I took it from Saul whom I put away before you.

And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me.

Your throne shall be established forever. In accordance with all these words, in accordance with all this vision, Nathan spoke to David. So there's this idea that like the descendants of David are going to rule forever.

Like God's steadfast love will not depart from that. So back to Psalm 2, this is your background.

When Psalm 2 was read, it was read a coronation of a new king in Israel.

[7 : 05] So when kings served God faithfully, when they were trustworthy and honored God, the people were blessed. But ultimately, as we all know, all those monarchs, all those kings failed.

They failed to be faithful in the bigger picture. And so consequently, when that happened, all the people suffered. All the people suffered around them. So even songs like this one of rejoicing about a king leads us to conclude that despite all those royal failures, people still had a hope deep down of a perfect ruler who was to come one day.

There was still that in their hearts, still echoing. And God never fails to keep His promise, right? He will fulfill His promise. And later in the New Testament, Peter, preaching at Pentecost, he quotes this psalm, he quotes Psalm 2, and he says that David was actually a prophet foretelling of the perfect king who was to come through his line.

In Acts 2, verse 30, Peter says, being therefore a prophet, David that is, knowing that God has sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on the throne, he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of Christ.

It's amazing. So David knew somehow that God had sworn that he was going to install one of his descendants forever to rule. He didn't know how it was going to come about, but he just knew that God had promised.

[8 : 36] And Jesus, as we know, was the direct, direct descendant of King David. He was the Messiah who would one day rule eternally, and Christ was raised from the power of the dead, right?

So now, Jesus is seated at the right hand of God, ruling and reigning, and David recognizes God's good and sovereign supremacy over all things in this psalm. If you're back in Psalm 2, just go back there.

But he also penned this psalm probably during a time of much political and national unrest when the nation, much like ours, is sort of morally bankrupt in so many ways.

Political corruption, unrest. So this psalm has a great undertone of strong confidence in God despite of what's going on around you.

And so, today, especially just here in the West, we've kind of grown accustomed to not having kings, not having rulers, at least for now, right?

[9 : 39] And we've kind of marginalized that. But there remains this idea that we can't escape that we were made to be ruled by the perfect ruler.

There's something in us that kind of echoes we were made to be ruled by something. And the problem is we choose poor kings in our lives.

We try to give it to people. We try to give it to a cause that's going to eventually, you know, dwindle. But there's something deep down in our souls that's telling us that when the right king comes, we will prosper under his rule.

Where no good and righteous kings will ever reign forever on this earth. But this is why so many of us like people like C.S. Lewis and J.R. Tolkien because they captured that kingly imagery so well. Kind of drawn to that. One guy who was speaking about Tolkien's, you know, Lord of the Rings and The Hobbit and the kingly imagery that you see in those stories, he said this, Though we do not have kings in America or want them, our unconscious mind both has them and wants them.

[10:50] We all know what a true king is, a real king, an ideal king. He is not a mere politician or soldier. Something in us longs to give our loyalty and fealty and service to this king.

He is lost but longed for and will someday return like Arthur. Some of you know King Arthur. So that this idea that like we have democracy though because sinful, because mankind is sinful.

No one man has ever been or woman, whatever, has not found themselves fit to rule over all mankind. Many have tried, right? But we need a king.

We were built for a king. So all the old myths and all the old legends are drawing that out of us and echoing that we were meant to be ruled by this perfect king.

It's sort of a memory trace in our souls. It's there. But again, the problem is we give it to so many things that are not worthy. But we want a king who will rule with power, wisdom, compassion, justice, and love us, protect us.

[12:04] And we know that we were built to submit to that king and to stand before him. And the Bible says that there is a king above all the kings of the earth. So in this psalm, there is a king behind the king we're talking about.

There is something beneath these legends and tales who are made by a king and to be ruled by him. And when the rightful king reigns, peace and joy will once again reign over the world.

So that's reflected in this psalm. But we get to the second part of this. Look at verses 1-3. Psalm 2. This sinful world rebels.

Why do the nations rage and the people's 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 off their cords from us.

So, this is a picture of human rebellion. So, in the context, Gentile, pagan kings would plot a revolt. Many times, these other kingdoms that were around Israel would be subdued and conquered by Israel and would have to sort of be like a vassal state of Israel.

[13:22] And there would be a time when they would get together to try to rebel against God's anointed king in Israel. Like, let's come together and throw off their rule.

Why do the nations rage? In other words, why are they in turmoil in the peoples? That name means like nation-states. Why do they plot in vain?

Why do they ponder empty schemes? The kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers, this actually, the ruler actually means potentate, those who parade around and pomp, putting themselves on display for other people to see.

they take counsel together. So several of these pagan kings have come together, their officials, their military, their people, their economies, they all come together to make a common cause.

So what is that cause? Who are they revolting against? Well, verse 2, against the Lord, that's Yahweh, and against His anointed one. God had the prophet Samuel anoint with oil both Saul and David, setting them apart as the ones who were going to rule over the nation of Israel and embody covenant faithfulness.

[14:38] But to summarize, these wicked pagan kings and their nations desire to cast off the rule of David and his descendants. But there's a danger in that.

The problem is to rebel against David or his descendants is ultimately to rebel against Yahweh Himself. That's the danger. And so, such a rebellion would be to cut themselves off of their only hope of knowing the only true God, the God that Israel was meant to put on display to them.

So, the purpose of this rebellion, you see it in verse 3. Here's the goal, the purpose. Let us burst their bonds apart. That means the restraints.

Cast away their cords from us. Let's throw off the bondage that they put on us. So, they hate Israel. They hate David and his descendants. And they want to be rid of them.

And sadly, sinful, wicked men and women see God's person, God's rule, God's character. They look at Him and they only see bondage.

[15:48] And that's so sad. God. So, instead of recognizing that having peace with David and with the people of Israel could lead to the blessing of knowing the only true God, instead, they say, let's come together, combine all our earthly power we can muster so that we might free ourselves from God so that we may commit all manner of abominations and sinful pleasure.

Let us be our own gods. So, to cut themselves off from David and his people was cutting themselves off from their only hope of knowing the true God. That was the danger in all of this. Yet, David says when these kings consulted together and they poured forth their utmost fury is still not really going to be enough. So, today, do you feel like evil is winning in your own life and all around us in our country, in the U.S., in the world?

Do you feel like evil ideologies are prevailing in our government, in our schools, our universities, teaching we are what the color of our skin is and no more?

Teaching boys to be girls and girls to be boys? Do we see wicked men and women acting upon sinful inclinations without any shame, without any kind of restraint at all?

[17:16] Does it seem like the church is losing the cultural battle that we've enjoyed so long here in America? And you see evil from atheistic communist countries kind of on the march now in different places in the world.

And even that rebellion in our own souls, something that just longs to cast off God's law. I want to do what feels good to me and forget about God.

So on the surface it may feel like the church and like the gospel is losing ground. No one throughout history of the church has ever said it looks like capitalism is losing and communism is winning so therefore the church is losing.

No one in church history would have ever thought that. That's something that we're tempted to think. They only knew that the church grew and would persevere through persecution, through suffering.

The church has never grown through political or state power as much as you may think. It has not. It's only grown through persecution and those willing to go and proclaim Christ to the nations.

[18:23] So that's the purpose and goal of this rebellion is to cast off the law of God. We hate God. We hate his character and we're going to do what we want to do. So let's cut ourselves off and rebel against God's chosen anointed king.

So, again, in this psalm, there's a king, capital K, behind the king, small k. The context here is these pagan nations desire to cast off the divine rule.

But, however, as David saw, beyond his own time to our time, again, look at verse 2. It says, who are they rebelling against? Against the Lord, against Yahweh, against His anointed.

The word Messiah translated Hebrew, right, for the anointed. The Greek translation is Christ. Right? So, sorry to disappoint some people who think Jesus Christ, Christ is His last name.

Like, who are you? I'm Jesus Christ. Christ is actually His title. That's His identity. He is the deliverer, the Messiah, the one who will rescue. In a larger way, from this psalm, this revolt is still going on all around the world.

[19:33] It continues. Men, kings, nations, governments, they persist, even to this very day, to try to cast off the rule of God from their lives. And so, the other place you need to turn, Acts 4.

Go to Acts 4 really quickly. New Testament, Acts 4. Hold your hand in Psalm 2. But, this is when Peter and John were arrested and they were released from, eventually, released by the authorities. But again, he quotes Psalm 2. Acts 4, verse 23. It says, when they were released from the authorities, they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them.

And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said, Sovereign Lord, who made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and everything that is in them, who through the mouth of our father David, here it is, your servant, you said by the Holy Spirit, why did the Gentiles rage in the people's plot in vain?

The kings of the earth set themselves against and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against His anointed. For truly in this city, so he's about to tell you what that projected, what was David talking about ultimately, for in this city, Jerusalem, they were gathered together against your holy servant, Jesus, whom you appointed both Herod and Pontius Pilate along with the

Gentiles and the peoples of Israel to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.

[21 : 10] So early Christians saw verse 2 from Psalm 2, the Lord and His anointed being the persecution that they faced at that time.

They saw this as a fulfillment of Christ no matter what they tried to do to Him. They thought it was the end of the Son of God, but in fact, it wasn't the end of the Son of God. What they designed and plotted for evil, God meant for the greatest good.

God turned evil up on its head at the cross, but all these people came together to stop it. They raged against the one that the Lord had appointed. So even though even today dangers loom over God's people and evil leaders are on the rise, growing more powerful it seems, we live in a world that's just wrecked by sin and the evil one is really at work all around us.

David's kingship, his earthly kingdom was a mere shadow of a greater king to come. His eternal kingdom, that is Jesus. So let's turn from the chamber council of the wicked, so to speak, to heaven.

Like, what's going on in heaven now? That's on the earth. Like, what is heaven's response to what the earth is doing? That's number three. God the Father responds. Back in Psalm 2, it says, He who sits in the heavens laughs.

[22 : 32] The Lord holds them in derision and 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 heel.

So here's heaven's perspective on the human revolt. Luther once told Erasmus during the Reformation, Your thoughts about God are way too human.

You think like God is like us. You think that He is just like a man. And that's your problem. We think we can wage war against Him and win because we think that He's just like another puny, earthly leader.

Like God said in Psalm 50, He's like, You thought that I was all together like you. Right? But notice what God is not doing. He is not fretting.

He is not worrying. He's not shaking in His boots at this sinful rebellion. First, there's four things here. First, it says that He, Yahweh, sits enthroned.

[23 : 34] That's a contrast to verse 1. Just look at verse 1. The nations and the kings are in turmoil. They're in chaos. They're all over the place. And what is God doing? He's sitting.

It doesn't bother Him, in other words. He is calm. He is poised. It's a picture of His sovereign, divine power. He is not nervous at all.

He is calm. That's where they are in chaos. Secondly, not only is He sitting on His throne in heaven, that is to say, kind of this idea above the earth, at ease, He actually laughs at them.

He mocks them. He goes, and actually, I think the actual word is goes on laughing. That's like what, so you can just see Him just sort of cutting up, like, are y'all serious?

Like, just sort of laughing at the revolt that the earth is staging against Him. So, but then, that laugh intensifies. Okay?

[24 : 31] I love the play on words there. It's just, He just laughs. He feels no threat from sinful man who is mortal and will soon perish like the grass of the field.

He doesn't fear them at all. So, thirdly, not only does He just kind of sit there and watch them, their puny threats, laughing, it says, the Lord, the Sovereign One, Adonai, He holds them in derision.

It means He mocks them and ridicules them. Picture Elijah with the prophets of Baal. Like, does your God hear you? Is that all you got? Is He there? That's sort of the same idea that God is doing to them.

Is that all you can do? To these wicked, pagan kings and people? It says, then, verse 5, in other words, that then is important in verse 5.

Then, meaning, when His patience and forbearance ends. He will speak to them in His wrath and terrify them in His fury. So, He goes from sitting to laughing to coming after them in His fury.

[25 : 42] And then, fourthly, God reasserts His promise, I have set my king on Zion, my holy hill. So, in declaring that, God, here's what's crazy, God asserts that He's already done.

He's already accomplished what they're seeking to stop. It's already done. You're trying to stop it? It's already done. I've already accomplished my purpose. So, the conclusion, though, is when wicked men, evil leaders, they may strut around the earth for a while with delusions of control and power, but no scheme devised against Yahweh will ultimately succeed.

God is not wetting His pants. Or as the Highlanders used to say, God is not peeing His kilt before the battle. He's just taking it easy. He's not afraid of what is to come. He laughs at them at their puny attempts to get rid of Him.

The Lord is not dismayed. And so, because He's not afraid, we don't have to be afraid. If we are His people and we belong to Him, we don't have to be afraid.

God laughs at them. On a great commentary written in the 1500s on this psalm, John Calvin wrote, the other consolation, the other consolation which follows is, that when the ungodly have mustered all their forces, when depending on their vast numbers, their riches as the means of their defense, they not only pour forth their proud blasphemies, but ferociously assault heaven itself.

[27 : 22] When that happens, we, God's people, may safely laugh them to scorn, relying on this one consideration, that He whom they are assailing is the God who is in heaven.

Wicked men may now conduct themselves as wickedly as they please, but they shall at length feel what it is to make war against heaven. God signifies that He is so far exalted above the men of this world that the whole mass of them could not possibly obscure His glory in the least degree.

As often then as the power of man appears formidable to us, let us remember how much it is transcended by the great power of God.

That's good stuff. Four. Number four. God the Son decrees. That's in verse 7 through 9 of Psalm 2. I will tell 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, the ends of the earth your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them into pieces like a potter's vessel.

[28 : 38] So this is the picture of the Son of God. The Davidic king speaks. I will tell the decree. That's a divine oracle that was spoken by the prophet over the king at his coronation.

It was a foretelling. So David referred to, again, these sons whom God appointed. It was customary to give the new king a gift at his coronation.

So what is this gift? He said, Ask of me and I will make the nations your own heritage. Not just a little gift. I will give you the nations. They will be yours. So it looked forward, I guess, beyond David's time.

How do we know this time has been fulfilled yet? Because for nearly 400 years, Israel didn't even have a king. They were ruled by other people and they still are very much threatened, you know, even today. So that king has not come yet.

It looks forward to the day when the true king descended from David would come. So it's a messianic picture. An heir of David who will lead his people bringing light to not just Israel but the nations by making them subjects.

[29 : 45] By making them his subjects. And that's how the nations of the earth will find blessing. By coming to that king. This king, again, recalls what God said at his, you know, the coronation.

The promise that the line of David will be sure forever. The purpose of Abraham to make all the nations blessed of coming through him. This is a symbolic of that promise.

It wraps up at the end of that. He shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them into pieces like a potter's vessel. That's actually not a symbol of oppression but of firmness and strength.

That means he's not shaky. He's calm. And when he does this, he'll bring it to complete fulfillment. God has the power to bring all the nations to this one king which is Jesus Christ.

Christ. And then lastly, number five, God the Spirit commands. And why do we say God the Spirit? Because this is sort of like a, when we preach the gospel message to people and plea with them to be reconciled to God or perish because of their sin, whose job is that?

[30 : 57] It's the Holy Spirit's job. It doesn't give us warm feelings. He says, Jesus says he's going to come to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and of judgment. That's what Jesus said.

So, verse 10, 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 where his wrath is quickly kindled and blessed are those who take refuge in him.

So, David gives advice to these pagan kings and their people. Be wise, be warned. Be wise, be warned. Some of you need to hear that today.

You're foolishly walking in rebellion. You think it's fun. You think it's cool to rebel against God and his laws, his person, to spit upon everything good he's given you and say that it's yours.

Be wise and be warned. Lasting security comes not from your own health. It doesn't come from the government or political might or strength or the economy or even powerful leadership or even a morally upright society.

[32 : 11] That's not what brings security. It only comes, according to the scripture, it only comes by taking refuge in Yahweh's anointed king, which is his son.

We need not fear anyone sitting on this earth on a puny earthly throne because Jesus Christ sits enthroned in heaven forever. So he gives them an option.

Do this or face this. Option one, kiss the son. It's a gesture of peace, homage, submission to God's appointed king who is worthy and deserving.

And Jesus said, he who honors not the son honors not the father who sent him. Kiss the son. If you refuse to make peace with God's son, his appointed king, it says, he will be angry and you will perish in the way for his wrath is quickly kindled.

He will perish like wax before the sun. That's like what's going on. So make peace with this king. He is a good king. He is a worthy king. He will love you, save you, protect you, give you eternal life.

[33 : 25] You can trust him or you can trust yourself or trust some other earthly thing and fail. Jesus will be the instrument by which God carries out this judgment.

He will send back his appointed king, his anointed son, not to bring peace but to bring the sword of judgment but also to destroy all evil out there.

and it's the last place you've got to look and we're done. Turn to Revelation chapter 19 and we're done. This is a picture of this. We know that Psalm 2 is not fulfilled in David's lifetime.

We also know that this wasn't in the power of any earthly successor he had. The son that Yahweh has appointed will be his instrument of judgment.

The son will come back. Yeah, so Revelation 19 verse 11, right? The apostle John on the island of Patmos given these visions of things to come.

[34 : 38] It says, Then I saw heaven open and behold a white horse. So Jesus isn't coming on a donkey this time. Humble and meek, he's coming back on a war horse.

The one sitting on it is called faithful and true. And in righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire and on his head are many diadems.

And he has a name written that no one knows but himself. He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood and has a name by which he is called, it's called the word of God.

And the armies of heaven arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on the white horses. And from his mouth comes a sharp sword with which he will strike down the nations.

You saw that in Psalm 2, didn't you? And he will rule them with a rod of iron. That's a picture of stability, calmness, order. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty.

[35 : 45] And on his robe and on his thigh, he has a name written, King of kings, Lord of lords. So this is the king we all long for. He's not, if you have peace with this king, you're okay.

He's not coming to make war against you. He's coming to make the enemies, his enemies, perish before his eyes. He's coming to save us. He's coming to deliver us from this broken, horrible world. So that's it. You can either love and serve that king, or you can despise that king. It's your choice. Be enemies with God on your terms, or be friends with him on his terms.

So the scope of such an accomplishment calls for a ruler that is not just a man. It calls for someone who is actually divine. The kings and rulers of the earth must understand the ruler that we reject is not just another human being, but is God's own chosen anointed king.

For the sake of this world. He's coming to bring blessing. So we must embrace him. So love this invincible king, trust him, submit to him, and then there's that promise, all those who take refuge in him, they will be blessed.

[37 : 00] They will be blessed. And so, so much in this psalm can go on and on, but I pray that in the midst of your own life and what you see around us in our own day that this brings some calm to you.

It does to me. To know that our king, Jesus Christ, is ruling and reigning even now and his kingdom is advancing despite of what we see. Hearts are being won to Christ from every nation.

And even here in Dahlenega, it's happening. So let's give him praise and let's just take confidence in him that no matter what we see around us, he is our refuge. Let's pray together.