

PSALM 2: KISS THE SON

INTRODUCTION

Psalms 1 and 2 are companions to each other—both function as an introduction to the Psalter. This assertion is reinforced by key parallel concepts which link the two psalms together:

PSALM 1	PSALM 2
Begins with a beatitude (1:1)	Ends with a beatitude (2:12)
Contrasts righteous and wicked	Contrasts rebellious kinds with true King
Righteous “meditate” (<i>hagah</i>) on God’s Word (1:2)	Peoples “plot” (<i>hagah</i>) against Yahweh and his anointed (2:2)
Wicked are blown away like chaff (1:4)	Wicked are shattered like clay pots (2:9)
Righteous one is like a tree planted by streams of water (1:3)	Righteous One is set on Zion, the holy mountain (2:6)
Godliness is portrayed as delighting in the Law, God’s written Word (1:2)	Godliness is portrayed as kissing and rejoicing in the reign of the Son, God’s incarnate Word (2:11-12)
The “way of the ungodly will perish” (1:6)	Ungodly are urged to “kiss the son, lest he become angry and you perish in the way” (2:12)
Intends to impart wisdom in choosing the right path	Calls sinners to gain wisdom and understanding by taking refuge in God’s King

Date & Authorship

The psalm contains no superscription or indication of authorship. This has led to a range of suggested dates, from pre- to post-exilic. While its close parallels with Psalm 1 could indicate that it was composed specifically as an introduction to the Psalter (i.e., post-exilic), its clear use of the Davidic Covenant seems to demand a date closer to giving of that covenant (2 Sam 7). Peter in Acts 4:25 links David with Psalm 1, although it’s unclear if David stands as a representative of the Psalter or if Peter intends to identify him as the author.

Genre

Since it deals with concepts related to Israel's kingship, this psalm is known as a *royal psalm*. As Goldingay writes, "The Psalm presupposes some theological, religious, and historical background that is not made explicit in the OT narratives, but putting it alongside Pss 18; 72; 89; Isa 55; and the account of Yhwh's commitment to David in 2 Sam. 7 helps us reconstruct something of that background" (Goldingay, 95).

Similarly, Ross writes, "Psalm 2 is a royal psalm focusing on the coronation of the Davidic king in the holy city on Mount Zion. It was included in the collection to be sung by the choirs at any appropriate time—certainly at coronations of kings, but also in times of national crises when people needed to be reminded that God had installed their king and the threats from the nations would fail" (Ross, 199).

More specifically, we might call Psalm 2 a *coronation psalm* in that it seems to be set against the backdrop of the coronation of Israel's kings. "A coronation involved the setting of a crown upon the new king's head, the formal presentation of a document to the new king, and his proclamation and anointing (cf. 2 Kgs 11:12) (Craigie, 64).

Finally, we can also say that, as a royal psalm, it is also clearly messianic, as its extensive use in the NT makes clear. Its concepts clearly anticipate the future reign of Jesus as the last David: "As a royal psalm it was placed here as part of the final structuring of the entire collection: when the final editing took place there was no Davidic king, and so this introduction served as a reminder of God's plan. Thus at the outset of the book we have one psalm focusing on the way of the righteous, and another psalm focusing on the victory of the LORD'S anointed king over the nations" (Ross, 200).

Theology

Psalm 2 is one of the most frequently quoted/alluded to psalms in the NT. It forms an important theological connection to the kingship of Christ:

PSALM 2	NT
2:1	Rev 11:18
2:1-2	Acts 4:25-26
2:2	Rev 19:19
2:7	Matt 3:17; 17:5; Mk 1:11; 9:7; Lk 3:22; 9:35; John 1:49; Acts 13:33; Heb 1:5; 5:5
2:8	Heb 1:2
2:8-9	Rev 2:26-27
2:9	12:5; 19:15
2:11	Phil 2:12

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Structure

The psalm is written in a symmetrical 4-part structure. Each part represents a new perspective and a new speaker: the world (vv. 1-3), God (vv. 4-6), the King (vv. 7-9), and the psalmist (vv. 10-12).

This 4-part structure lends to a well-balanced outline:

1. The World Rebels against God's King (2:1-3)
2. God has Established His King (2:4-6)
3. God has Confirmed His King (2:7-9)
4. The World Considers God's Son (2:10-12)

ANALYSIS

1. The World Challenges God's King (vv. 1-3)

The psalm begins from the perspective of the psalmist, but quickly moves to focus on the rebellion of the nations against God and the Davidic king.

Verse 1

Why				Interrogative
	rage	A		Chiasm 1
		the nations	B	
		the peoples	B ¹	Focus
[Why]	vainly plot	A ¹		

Notes:

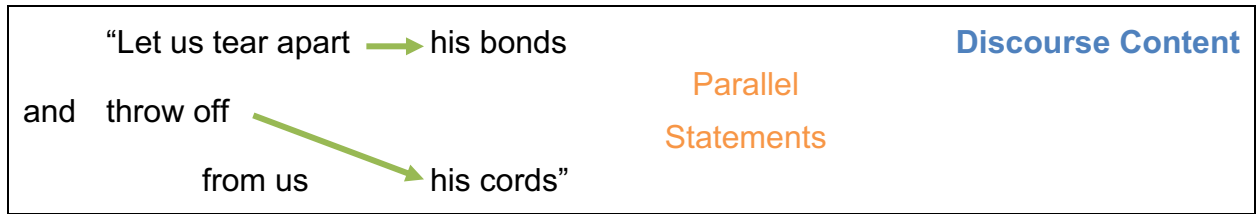
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Verse 2

Stand defiant	A	Chiasm 2
the kings of the earth	B	Focus
the princes	B¹	
Conspire together	A¹	
against Yahweh		Target of Rebellion
and against His anointed		

Notes:

Verse 3



Notes:

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2. God Establishes His King (2:4-6)

The next major section shifts to the perspective of God, who is not threatened in the least by the trite plans of the rebel nations. His response to them concerns the installment of the Davidic king on Mt. Zion.

Verse 4

He who sits in the heavens	laughs	Parallel	Perspective shift
The Sovereign One	mocks them	Statements	

Notes:

Verse 5

Then					Temporal connection
	He will	speak	to them	A	
			in his anger	B	
		and	in his fury	B ¹	Focus
	He will	terrify	them	A ¹	

Notes:

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Verse 6

“As for me		Discourse Content
I have installed	my king	Terror-inducing assertion
on Zion		Terror-inducing location
↑	my holy mountain”	

Notes:

3. God's Confirms His Son (2:7-9)

A new shift in perspective with a focus on the words of the Davidic king, who rehearses the promises of sonship, inheritance, and universal dominion as part of the Davidic Covenant promises.

Verse 7

"I will tell of the decree:

Perspective Shift

Yahweh said to me,

Content of Decree

"You are my son

I myself have begotten you today"

Notes:

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Verse 8

Ask				
	from me			Parallel verbs
and	I will give			
	the nations	A		Parallel objects
	[as] your inheritance	B		
	[as] your possessions	B ¹	Focus	
	the ends of the earth	A ¹		Parallel objects

Notes:

Verse 9

You will break them	A	Dominance
with an iron rod	B	
and like a potter's vessel	B'	Focus
You will shatter them	A'	

Notes:

4. The World Considers God's Son (2:10-12)

The final section is written from the psalmist's perspective, who urges the rebel kings to act wisely by realigning their loyalties to Yahweh and to his anointed king before it is too late and his wrath breaks out against them.

Verse 10

And now				New subject
kings	A			cf. 2:2
be prudent	B			
be instructed	B ¹	Focus		WARNING FOR REBELS
judges of the earth	A ¹			cf. 2:2

Notes:

Verse 11

Serve Yahweh	Call to shift in loyalty
with fear	
and rejoice	New posture towards Yahweh
with trembling	

Notes:

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Verse 12

Kiss the son					New posture towards the king
	lest	he become angry			
		and you perish	in the way		rebellion = path of the wicked
for					Causal
	is kindled	easily	his anger		
How happy					Closing beatitude
	all who take refuge				
		in him			the son

Notes: