

# PSALM 2

KISS THE SON



# Introduction

- ▶ Psalm 2 is a companion to Psalm 1—both function as an introduction to the Psalter
- ▶ Some key parallels link these two psalms together:
  - ▶ Psalm 1 begins with a beatitude (1:1)—Psalm 2 ends with one (2:12)
  - ▶ Psalm 1 contrasts the righteous and the wicked—Psalm 2 contrasts rebellious kings with the true King
  - ▶ In Psalm 1, the righteous “**meditate**” on God’s Word (1:2)—in Psalm 2, the peoples “**plot**” against Yahweh and his anointed (same Hebrew term)
  - ▶ In Psalm 1, the wicked are blown away like chaff (1:4)—in Psalm 2 the wicked are shattered like clay pots (2:9)
  - ▶ In Psalm 1, the righteous one is like a tree planted by streams of water (1:3)—in Psalm 2, the Righteous One is set on Zion, the holy mountain (2:6)



# Introduction

- ▶ Psalm 2 is a companion to Psalm 1—both function as an introduction to the Psalter
- ▶ Some key parallels link these two psalms together:
  - ▶ In Psalm 1, godliness is portrayed as delight in the Law, God's written Word (1:2)—in Psalm 2, godliness is portrayed in kissing and rejoicing in the reign of the Son, God's Incarnate Word (2:11-12)
  - ▶ In Psalm 1, the “way of the ungodly will perish” (1:6)—in Psalm 2, the ungodly are urged to “kiss the son, lest he become angry and you perish in the way” (2:12)
  - ▶ Psalm 1 intends to impart wisdom in choosing the right path—Psalm 2 calls sinners to gain wisdom and understanding by taking refuge in God's King



# Background

- ▶ No superscription
- ▶ A range of dates, from pre- to post-exilic have been suggested
- ▶ Its close parallels with themes and concepts in Psalm 1 suggest it was composed as an introduction to the Psalter
- ▶ However, it's clear use of the Davidic Covenant in 2 Sam 7 may indicate a date close to that event (Ross, 199)
- ▶ In Acts 4:25 links David with Psalm 2—however, some suggest David stands as a representative for all the psalms



# Background

## Genre

### ► Royal Psalm

“The Psalm presupposes some theological, religious, and historical background that is not made explicit in the OT narratives, but putting it alongside (e.g.,) 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)

“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)



# Background

## Genre

### ► Coronation Psalm

“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)

### ► Messianic

“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 psalm in the NT
- ▶ It forms an important theological connection to the kingship of Christ
  - ▶ Psalm 2:1 - Revelation 11:18
  - ▶ Psalm 2:1-2 - Acts 4:25-26
  - ▶ Psalm 2:2 - Revelation 19:19
  - ▶ Psalm 2:7 - Matthew 3:17; 17:5; Mark 1:11; 9:7; Luke 3:22; 9:35; John 1:49; Acts 13:33; Hebrews 1:5; 5:5
  - ▶ Psalm 2:8 - Hebrews 1:2
  - ▶ Psalm 2:8-9 - Revelation 2:26-27
  - ▶ Psalm 2:9 - Revelation 12:5; 19:15
  - ▶ Psalm 2:11 - Philippians 2:12



# Structure

- ▶ Written in symmetrical 4-part structure
- ▶ Each part represents a new perspective and a new speaker
  - ▶ World (2:1-3)
  - ▶ God (2:4-6)
  - ▶ King (2:7-9)
  - ▶ Psalmist(?) (2:10-12)

## 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 Son (2:7-9)
4. The World Considers God's Son (2:10-12)



# Verse 1

Why

Psalm opens with a question

- provocative
- rhetorical
- expresses astonishment not a reason

Question may continue through vv. 1-2

Chiastic arrangement

Rage used of raging sea

Here = tumultuous meeting of rebel nations

rage

the nations

the peoples

plot a vain thing

A

B

B<sup>1</sup>

A<sup>1</sup>

Focus = identification of the rebels

In Psalm 1, "meditation" is on God's law

In Psalm 2, the "plotting" is on an "vain thing"

"Plot" = same word as "meditate" in Psalm 1:2

Pictures conspiratorial grumblings



# Verse 2

(Why)

The opening question serves to these lines

In Ps 1, the righteous one does not "**stand**" in the path of the wicked, and the wicked will not **stand** in the final judgment

PART 1: Chiastic structure

Focus of chiasm further elucidates the rebels...they are the kings and princes of the nations

Verse contains two parts

Note that Yahweh is placed in parallel with his anointed one.

God mediates his rule through his anointed one...thus, to defy the king is to defy God

the defiant

the kings of the earth

the princes

are together

A

B

B<sup>1</sup>

A<sup>1</sup>

against Yahweh  
and against His anointed

In Ps 1, the righteous one does not walk in ungodly "**counsel**" while the wicked do not stand in the **assembly** of the righteous

PART 2: Chiastic structure is broken by two parallel lines identifying the object against which these rebels "plot," "stand," "conspire"



# Who is the "anoointed" in v. 2?

- ▶ Is he David?
  - ▶ 2 Samuel 7 describes his covenant relationship w/ God
  - ▶ 2 Samuel 10 describes the Ammonite/Syrian rebellion against David's reign
- ▶ Is he Solomon?
  - ▶ 1 Chronicles 17:13-14 and 22:10 extend Davidic covenant relationship to Solomon
- ▶ Is it Ahaz?
  - ▶ Isaiah 7 describes Syrian/Ephraimite plot against Judah



# Who is the "anoointed" in v. 2?

## ► Is he Messiah?

- Ps 2:1-3 describes a universal spiritual and political rebellion—the subjugated kings conspire and rebel against God and his anoointed—see Zech 14:16-18 and Isa 60:12 for examples of warnings against rebellion during the millennial kingdom
- God's wrath is associated with the enthronement of the king (Ps 2:4-6)
- Universal dominion and judgment is associated with the Son (Ps 2:7-9)
- Leaders and nations are required to serve and fear Yahweh and submit to the Son (Ps 2:10)
- Spiritual blessing is promised to all who "put their trust" in the Son (Ps 2:12)

At the very least, this psalm presents an ideal of the Davidic dynasty never realized historically

Ultimately, it can only be fully actualized through the final Davidic King



# Verse 3

Verse 3 puts into words the rebellious plot of the kings and princes.

Let us tear apart

his bonds

and let us throw off

from us

his cords

Two parallel lines using synonymous parallelism

Both lines same the same thing

Cohortative verbs...

This type of verb expresses 1<sup>st</sup> person volition ("I want to...")

Here, they are plural, expressing the conspiratorial desires of the rebels

Who does "his" refer to?

- Yahweh?
- His anointed?

Answer: probably both!

Yahweh's rule is mediated through his anointed king

"Bonds" and "cords" describe the relationship between these nations and God/messiah

They are vassal kingdoms subjugated under the Davidic king's rule



# Vv. 1-3 in the NT

## ► Verse 1

"**The nations raged**, but your wrath came, and the time for the dead to be judged..." (Rev 11:18)

## ► Verse 2

"And I saw the beast and the **kings of the earth** with their armies **gathered** to make war **against him** who was sitting on the horse and against his army" (Rev 19:19)



# Vv. 1-3 in the NT

## ► Verse 1-2

"And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said,  
"Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit,

‘Why did the Gentiles rage,  
and the people plot in vain?  
The kings of the earth set themselves,  
and the rulers were gathered together,  
against the Lord and against his Anointed’—

for truly in this city were **gathered together against your holy servant Jesus**, whom you **anointed**, 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" (Acts 4:24-28)



# Verse 4

He who sits

"Sitting" here is **regal language** picturing one sitting on a throne

cf. Ps 29:10

in the heavens

The location of this throne makes the statement even more powerful

cf. Pss 11:4; 123:1

Verses 4-6 shift to a new perspective

Contrast w/ "the kings of the earth" (v. 2)

cf. Isa 40:22

laughs

God's response to their

These verbs are anthropomorphisms...they present God in human terms to emphasize the foolishness of the rebels' plans

The Sovereign One

cf. Ps 59:8

Hebrew = *adonai*, trans. as "Lord"

Emphasizes sovereign authority...God is the **master** and all others are His servants

mocks them

This term is in parallel with "laughs" and clarifies the statement



# Verse 5

Then

Connects v. 5 with v. 4

May function to transition setting to the future—thus it could imply a delay between God's actions in vv. 4 and 5

He will speak

to them

Notice that even though the focus of the verse is on divine wrath, the **mode** of that wrath is **divine speech**

Isa 11:4; Rev 1:16; 2:16; 19:15, 21

in His anger

and in his fury

He will terrify them

A

B

B<sup>1</sup>

A<sup>1</sup>

Chiastic arrangement

Focus on the verse is on God's anger/fury

The result of divine wrathful speech will be the utter terror of these rebels

This focus is reinforced by multiple points of alliteration

*b<sup>e</sup>'apo ubacharono y<sup>e</sup>babalemo*



# Verse 6

Verse 6 presents a major textual issue between the MT and the LXX

## Masoretic Text

As for Me, I have installed My King on Zion, My holy mountain

MT portrays this as God speaking

There's no strong reason to take the LXX reading over the MT.

Most likely, the LXX reading arose to harmonize with the discourse found in v. 7

## Septuagint

As for me, I have been installed as His king on Zion, His holy mountain

LXX depicts the statement as spoken by the king



# Verse

As for Me

The location of the king's installation.

Zion was a hill SE of Jerusalem. It is often used as a synonym for the city as a whole (Isa 56:7; 57:13; 65:11, 25; 66:20; Ezek 20:40; Joel 2:1; 3:17; Obad 16; Zeph 3:11; Ps 3:4; 15:1; 43:3; 48:1; 99:9)

I have installed

My king

on Zion,

= My holy mountain

Verbs in Hebrew have no established tense. Instead, tense is determined by context alone.

In this case, the action could be:

- immediate past ("I have just now set...")
- instantaneous perfect ("Here and now I establish...")
- Perfect of resolve ("I have resolved to set...")

+ S + O

tain the  
re is no  
pronoun

When a pronoun appears, it adds more emphasis to the statement.

"The psalmist was portraying the divine decision to install the Israelite king as condemnation of their [rebel] plot. In other words, if people tried to throw off this king, and then God declared that he was putting this king on the throne, that would mean that God was against them and they would be terrified. Not only would they be defeated by the new king, they would be judged by God as well. So what he will say to them is that he, the God in heaven, has

Lit., "the mountain of My holiness" ...oss,

This is a common synonym for Zion/Jerusalem and emphasizes it as a location set apart for special divine use



# Structure of vv. 1-6

1 The nations rage

2 The kings conspire

3 Speech: desire for rebellion

4 The Lord laughs

5 God speaks in anger

6 Speech: establishment of monarchy

Vv. 4-6 parallel vv. 1-3, with each section climaxing in a verse of discourse.

The juxtaposition of these two speeches highlights that thematic intent of the psalm



# Verse 7

Shift in perspective introduces a new speaker—the king, who desires to recite the Lord's decree

I will tell of the decree:

= that which is recorded, decided, or even stipulated in writing

Yahweh said to me:

LXX: "I will tell of the decree of **Yahweh**: **he** said to me..."

MT: "I will tell of the decree: **Yahweh said** to me..."

You are My son

I myself have begotten

Craige: "The 'decree' is a document, given to the king during the coronation ceremony (cf. 2 Kgs 11:12); it is his personal covenant document, renewing God's covenant commitment to the dynasty of David. The content of the decree establishes the nature and authority of the newly crowned king."

The king's w  
quotations



# Verse 7

Contents of the decree

Father-son language is central to the Davidic covenant:

2 Sam 7:14  
Ps 89:26

Foundation of the decree =  
Davidic Covenant (cf. 2 Sam 7)

Picture extends to 2<sup>nd</sup> line

Begotten = establishment of  
father/son relationship

Yahweh said to me:

You are My son

I myself have begotten you today

Speaks of special relationship, **not heredity**

Ross: "The statement makes a comparison between what a son is to a father and what the king is to God to describe the special relationship between them. The immediate significance of this special relationship concerns the inheritance of the kingdom, beginning on coronation day"

- = Present (Deut 26:17; 30:19)
- = incarnation (Heb 1:5)
- = baptism (Matt 3:17; Mk 1:11; Lk 3:22)
- = transfiguration (Matt 17:5; Mk 9:7; Lk 9:25)
- = resurrection (Acts 13:33; Rom 1:4)
- = eternity past (Heb 5:5)



# Jesus & Sonship

- ▶ The NT undeniably identifies Jesus as the eternally-existent Word who was with God in the beginning (John 1:1)
- ▶ As the 2<sup>nd</sup> person of the Trinity, he is co-equal and co-eternal with the Father
- ▶ But how does Jesus' **sonship** relate to his eternity?
  - ▶ Has he existed eternally as **Son**?
  - ▶ If he has, how is sonship compatible with co-equality?

## TWO MAJOR VIEWS HAVE ARISEN:

- ▶ Both are within the bounds of evangelical theology
- ▶ Both are fully compatible with Christ's deity and eternity
- ▶ In other words, **no Christological doctrine is threatened** in either view



# VIEW 1: Eternal Sonship

## Premise

- ▶ The title “Son of God” when applied to Christ speaks of his **essential deity**
- ▶ The term “only begotten” when applied to Jesus speaks of his **total uniqueness** as the eternal Son

## Support

- ▶ John 5:18 – Jewish leaders conclude that Jesus is making himself “equal with God”

## Implication

- ▶ Since it speaks of his essential deity, the title doesn’t just apply to his incarnation but to his eternal relationship within the Godhead
- ▶ “Today” in Ps 2/Heb 1:5/5:5 is figurative not literal



# VIEW 2: Incarnational Sonship

## Premise

- ▶ Father-Son language referencing God is anthropomorphic—it puts the unfathomable heavenly relationship in a paradigm understandable to humans
- ▶ Sonship in relation to Jesus refer to the voluntary submission of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Person of the Godhead to the 1<sup>st</sup> Person for the purpose of fulfilling the program of redemption established at eternity past (cf. Phil 2:5-8)

## Support

- ▶ Sonship language used at Christ's birth (Mk 1:1; Lk 1:32, 35), baptism (Matt 3:17; Mk 1:11; 3:22), transfiguration (Matt 17:5; Mk 9:7; Lk 9:25), and in apostolic declaration concerning his resurrection (Acts 13:30-33; Rom 1:4)
- ▶ Close association between Sonship and Davidic Covenant

## Implication

- ▶ Jesus as “Son” is a role that Jesus entered into at His incarnation
- ▶ It speaks of his voluntary subordination to the Father, not to his essential nature



# Verse 8

Note the literary structures

NET Notes: "reflects ancient Near Eastern adoption language associated with covenants of grant, by which a lord would reward a faithful subject by elevating him to special status, referred to as "sonship." Like a son, the faithful subject received an "inheritance," viewed as an unconditional, eternal gift. **Such gifts usually took the form of land and/or an enduring dynasty.**"

Ask

from me

Two parallel verbs

and I will give

Taken together, these point to a universal dominion as the king's inheritance

Two parallel objects

the nations

[as] your inheritance

[as] your possession

the ends of the earth

A

B

B<sup>1</sup>

A<sup>1</sup>

Chiasm

Focus = inheritance of the King

cf. 1 Cor 15:25-27; Rev 11:15



# Verse 9

Continuation of the contents of the divine decree

LXX = "shepherd w/ an iron staff"

Context lends to MT reading

Picture of strength

Often associated with dominance and kingly rule

4:17; Isa 11:4

You will break them

A

Craige: "The stark contrast between the power of the Davidic king and the fragility of earthly monarchs rested not in the human strength of the Hebrew king, but in the strength of God, the speaker of these words"

dominance

You will shatter them

A'

Picture of utter fragility

Taken with "iron rod," emphasizes the ease with which the king will achieve dominion over the nations and gain his universal inheritance

The violence of this dominion reminds us of the rebellion introduced in vv. 1-3

This will not be a peaceful takeover...



# Verses 7-9

Each verse leads to the next

**7** The Confirmation of the Son

With sonship comes inheritance

**8** The Inheritance of the Son

The means of gaining inheritance is through dominion

**9** The Dominion of the Son



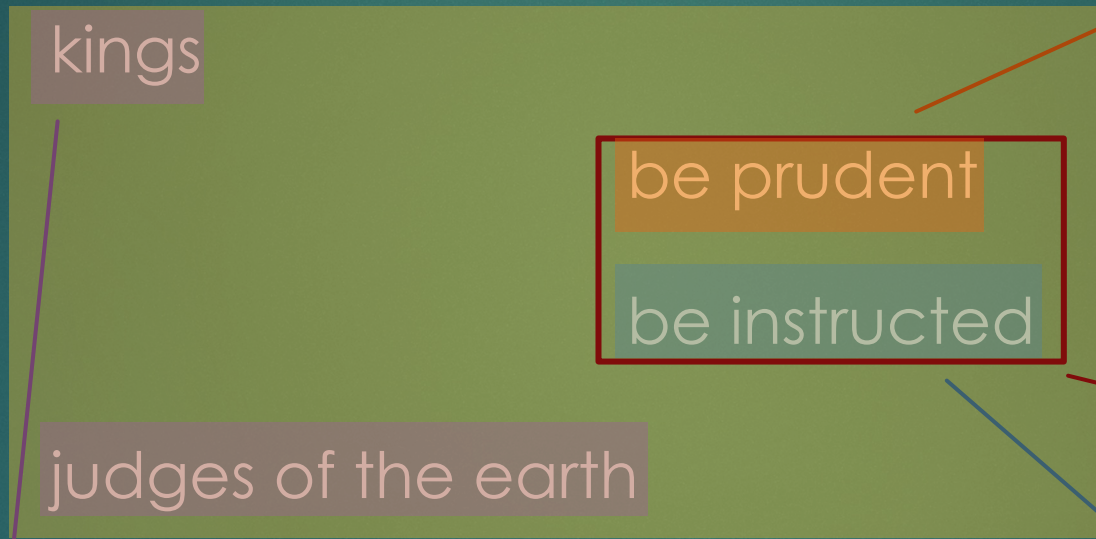
# Verse 10

4<sup>th</sup> and final shift in perspective—the rebellious kings and rulers are now addressed, either by the king or by the the psalmist

And now

Introduces new subject through inference from vv. 7-9...in light of the divine decree, be warned...

Speaks of careful choices resulting in divine approval rather than destruction (v. Ps 36:3)



A

B

B<sup>1</sup>

A<sup>1</sup>

Chiasm

Focus = warning

Speaks of instruction or even child-like discipline

Addressees appear in chiastic pattern

2:2 kings of the earth

2:10 princes  
kings

judges of the earth



# Verse 11

Warning continues with the description of what prudence and instruction looks like

Serve **Yahweh**

Language of slavery

cf. 2:3... "burst his bonds/throw of his cords"

with fear

denotes a shift in loyalty...serving in love, reverence, and adoration

and rejoice

Craige: "the word 'serve' has political overtones and implies that the foreign nations should submit as vassals to Israel's God"

with trembling

Evidence of true shift in loyalty--fearful service to Yahweh done with rejoicing

As pagan kings, they must recognize the holiness of God and render their service and express their joy appropriately

cf. Phil 2:9-11

In all this, the object of their service and joy is "Yahweh"

Corresponds to their rebellion "against Yahweh" in v. 2



# Verse 12

Language of homage

Kissing the feet was a common way of expressing allegiance to a superior (cf. 1 Sam 10:1; Hos 13:2)

Kiss the son

Homage is paid to "the son"

Corresponds to "against his anointed" (v. 2)

lest he become angry

and you perish in the way

for

is kindled easily his anger

How happy

all who take refuge

in him

Aramaic (*bar*) used rather than Hebrew (*ben*) (cf. Dan 7:13)

Several potential reasons:

- speaking to Gentile kings
- "lest" following = *pen*...could be confused with Hebrew *ben* if occurring back-to-back...perhaps avoiding confusion or unintentional alliteration



# Verse 12

Denial of homage will  
result in the son's wrath

The result of the son's anger

Kiss the son

lest he become angry

and you perish in the way

Note the echoes from Ps 1:6

"the way of the wicked will  
perish"

Conjunction can function:

• causal ("for")

Interestingly, "in him" here  
refers not to God but the  
the son...

Gives the cause  
for their  
perishing...the  
son's wrath is easily  
provoked by  
rebellion and lack  
of homage

for

is kindle

Ps 1 opens with blessing,  
while Ps 2 concludes with  
one

How happy

all who take refuge

in him

"Let all who take refuge  
in you rejoice" (Ps 5:11)

cf. "rejoice" in Ps 2:11