

*THE
BOOK
OF
PSALMS*

Psalm 2

- 1 Why do the nations rage,
And the people plot a vain thing?
- 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 break Their bonds in pieces
And cast away Their cords from us.”
- 4 He who sits in the heavens shall laugh;
The LORD shall hold them in derision.
- 5 Then He shall speak to them in His wrath,
And distress them in His deep displeasure:
- 6 “Yet I have set My King
On My holy hill of Zion.”
- 7 “I will declare the decree:
The LORD has said to Me,
‘You *are* My Son,
Today I have begotten You.
- 8 Ask of Me, and I will give *You*
The nations *for* Your inheritance,
And the ends of the earth *for* Your possession.
- 9 You shall break them with a rod of iron;
You shall dash them to pieces like a potter’s vessel.’ ”
- 10 Now therefore, be wise, O kings;
Be instructed, you judges 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,
When His wrath is kindled but a little.
Blessed *are* all those who put their trust in Him.

Introduction to Psalm 2

Function of Psalms 1 and 2:

Psalms 1 and 2 form an introduction to the Book of Psalms. Neither Psalm has a title; so, there is no statement of theme, occasion, or purpose and no author is named. This is somewhat unique in that all except 34 Psalms have titles or headings that give one or more items of this information.

Relationship between Psalms 1 and 2:

Structurally: Psalm 2 has exactly twice the number of stanzas.

Stylistically: Both Psalms make extensive use of parallelism.

Thematically: Psalm 1 contrasts the righteous with rebellious sinners.

Psalm 2 contrasts rebellious sinners with the Holy God and His Anointed King (the Messiah)

Psalm 1 is essentially moral

Psalm 2 is essentially evangelistic

Functionally: Psalm 1 introduces Psalm 2;

Psalm 2 introduces the Book of Psalms;

so that both Psalms together serve as an introduction to the Book of Psalms. The contrasts contained in both Psalms introduce the thematic currents running throughout the Book.

Spurgeon's Comparison of Psalm 1 and 2

The first Psalm was a contrast between the righteous man and the sinner; the second Psalm is a contrast between the tumultuous disobedience of the ungodly world and the sure exaltation of the righteous Son of God. In the first Psalm, we saw the wicked driven away like chaff; in the second Psalm, we see them broken in pieces like a potter's vessel. In the first Psalm, we beheld the righteous like tree planted by the rivers of water; and here (in the second Psalm) we contemplate Christ, the Covenant Head of the righteous, made better than a tree planted by the rivers of water, for He is made king of all the islands, and all the heathen bow before Him and kiss the dust; while He Himself gives a blessing to all those who put their trust in him. The two Psalms are worthy of the very deepest attention; they are in fact, the preface in the entire Book of Psalms, and were by some of the ancients, joined into one. They are, however, two Psalms; for Paul speaks of this as the second Psalm (Acts 13:33). The first ;shows us the character and lot of the righteous; and the next teaches us that the Psalms are Messianic, and speak of Christ the Messiah – the Prince who shall reign from the river even unto the ends of the earth. They both have a far-reaching prophetic outlook

Theme

Psalm 2 declares the absolute authority of God over all creation and foretells the coming of Christ who will rule over the nations and bless those who trust in Him.

The Psalm describes the hatred of mankind for God and Christ, foretells the coming of Christ and His authority and power, and calls rebellious sinners to turn from their hatred of God and to trust in the Christ.

Matters of Interpretation:

Should we interpret Psalm 2 as describing the coronation of King David and presenting him as a type of Christ, or should we interpret the Psalm as clear prophecy of Christ?

Some theologians see King David as the subject of this Psalm and see the description of the coronation of David as King as a type of Christ. A type is “a person or event in the Old Testament taken as a foreshadowing of someone or something in the New Testament.” It differs from prophecy in that prophecy is a direct statement from God spoken by a prophet.

Considerations:

- 1) Old Jewish interpreters saw this Psalm as a prophecy of Messiah.
- 2) Statements in vv. 7, 8, and 12 can apply only to Christ.
- 3) All the Apostles, by their inspired writings, confirm the Psalm is prophecy of Christ. (Acts 4:24-27; Acts 13:33; Hebrews 1:5, 8; Revelation 2:27; 19:15)
- 4) The names “Son of God” and “Christ” used by Nathaniel in John 1:49 and the high priest in Matthew 26:63 originated from the Messianic meaning of this Psalm.

Matters of Interpretation:

Considerations (Cont.):

- 5) If David had not existed and some other prophet had written the Psalm, nothing about its meaning would change.
- 6) The imagery may come from things about the coronation of David or some other king, but that does not mean the Psalm is presenting David as a type of Christ. The Apostle Paul used imagery of athletic competitions to describe his life as a Christian, but that imagery was not a type for the ideal Christian.

From Thomas Scott's *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, 1788

The occasion of this Psalm might be taken from David's advancement to the throne, and his expectation of triumphing over the opposition made to his authority both by disaffected Israelites and the surrounding nations, (2 Samuel 2:4-9 and Ch. 5), but it is throughout an evident prophecy of Christ, and repeatedly quoted as such in the New Testament.

Structure

There are four speakers and four stanzas.

vv. 1-3 Speakers: vv. 1-2 Psalmist
v. 3 The Rebellious Unbelievers

Topic: All People and All Governments are Naturally
Enemies of God

vv. 4-6 Speakers: vv. 4-5 Psalmist
v. 6 God

Topic: The Nature of God and the Rebellion of Man

vv. 7-9 Speaker: Christ

Topic: Christ Reveals His Offices and Authority

vv.10-12 Speaker: Psalmist

Topic: Call to Repentance and Faith in Christ with a
Warning

I. All People and All Governments are Naturally Enemies of God (vv. 1-3)

- A. Double parallelism in vv. 1-2 and parallel construction in v. 3 emphasize hatred of God and Christ.
- B. All mankind is totally depraved and are enemies of God by nature. (Romans 3:10-18, Romans 5:10, Colossians 1:21, Isaiah 34:1-2)
- C. “Why do the nations rage?”
 - 1. Rhetorical question – emphasizes the uselessness, futility, and hopelessness of trying to break free from the authority of God.
- D. Nations rage and rulers conspire.
 - 1. Rage and scheming is not against us, the Church, but against God and Christ.
 - a. “Luther bids us observe how consolatory this truth is to the militant Church. For the rage of our enemies is not aimed at us, but at the Lord and His Christ.” (*The Book of Psalms*, J. J. Stewart Perowne)
- E. People and rulers rebel because they hate the authority of God and Christ.
 - 1. “The authority of Christ human wickedness greatly abhors. Had he taught the great principles of morality found in the Gospels, but done it as a pharisee or philosopher, merely proposing things, there had never been such an outcry against him. But he asserts his right to rule mankind, and so men rebel against him.” (*Psalms*, A Geneva Series Commentary, by W. S. Plumer)

II. The Nature of God and the Rebellion of Man (vv.4-6)

A. God is Omnipotent – All powerful; possessing infinite power. (Isaiah 40:15)

1. Psalmist says God “shall laugh” and “shall hold them in derision.” (v.4)
 - a. God does not laugh or mock.
 - b. So, what does this mean? (Job 41:1, 29)

God does not actually laugh or mock. These are expressions borrowed from human emotions and actions to explain what humans experience in relation to God in these specific circumstances. Laughing and mocking, or holding someone in derision, are emotions and actions in response to something; and, in humans these emotions and actions express a change of feeling or an action caused by something. But, God does not change. So, God does not laugh or mock. However, from the perspective of the human who rages and rebels against God, it seems as though God is laughing and mocking him because the human encounters absolute, infinite, unmovable power. For example, in Job 41, God speaks to Job about Leviathan, a huge sea monster and in verse 29 God says, “Darts are regarded as straw; He (Leviathan) laughs at the threat of javelins.” Now, Leviathan does not actually laugh. Leviathan does not change, but to the fisherman it seems like Leviathan is laughing. When a dog barks at a full moon, it may seem like the moon is laughing and mocking only because it is completely untouched by the dog.

II. The Nature of God and the Rebellion of Man (vv.4-6)

B. God is totally Just.

1. Psalmist tells us God will “speak to them in His wrath” and “distress them in His deep displeasure.”
(v.5)
 - a. God does not get angry and He is never displeased.
 - b. So, what does this mean? (Deuteronomy 7:9-10)

God does not get angry and never experiences displeasure. God is perfectly just and will always execute justice on nations and rulers. God’s acts of judgment and punishment seem like wrath and displeasure to people; and, people who rebel against God will experience His judgment and punishment.

C. God is Sovereign (v.6)

1. Isaiah 46:9-10
2. “Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion.”
 - a. When? In eternity.
 - b. God has already done what the nations and rulers seek to prevent. He has anointed His King.

God’s judgment against rebellion is to appoint and anoint His King who will possess the nations and the whole earth. God’s anointed King will break the nations and dash them to pieces. So, it looks like God is full of wrath and displeasure, but He is simply executing or expressing justice on the nations and rulers by anointing His King, the Messiah or Christ. God has already done what the nations and rulers seek to prevent. He has “set His King on His holy hill.”

III. Christ Reveals His Offices (vv. 7-9)

A. Christ as Prophet. (v.7)

1. Proclaims the prophetic Word of God:

“I will declare the decree: The Lord has said to Me”

 - a. “Begotten” not created – proceeding eternally from the God the Father.
 - b. “Essential meaning of phrase ‘I have begotten You’ is simply ‘I am Your Father.’” (Plumer)
 - c. When did God speak to Christ? In eternity. “Today” refers to eternal present. Christ eternally, always begotten – eternally Son of God. There has never been a time when Christ did not exist or when He was not Son of God. He is eternally begotten. He is eternally, without beginning or end, of the Father.
 - d. God’s appointed and anointed King is Son of God, the Second Person of the Being of God.

B. Christ as Priest (v. 8)

1. “Ask of Me”
 - a. Here, God tells Christ to intercede for those He has given to Christ as an inheritance. (John 17:6, 9-10, 14, 20-21; Matthew 12:29; Hebrews 7:25)

C. Christ as King (v. 9)

1. God also tells Christ to ask for the whole earth so that He will rule them and judge them.
 - a. “break them with a rod of iron”
 - 1) Hebrew word for “rod” is “shebet”, translated stick, rod, sceptre for punishing, writing, fighting, ruling, walking.
 - 2) “The sceptre is the sign or badge of sovereign power. This belongs to Christ and He will use that power to crush all finally impenitent foes.”

IV. Call to Repentance and Faith with a Warning (vv.10-12)

- A. “Be Wise” (v.10)
 - 1. Psalm 111:10
 - 2. Seek instruction, learn of God and His Church, of salvation, of joy in God, of the promise of everlasting life and happiness.
- B. “Serve” and “rejoice” (v.11)
 - 1. Worship God with reverence and joy, in awe of His nature, power, knowledge, love, and mercy.
 - 2. Obey Christ.
- C. “Kiss the Son” (v.12)
 - 1. Kissing was an act of worship by idolaters
 - a. Hosea 13:2, 1 Kings 19:18
 - 2. Kissing was a profession of loyalty and allegiance
 - a. 1 Samuel 10:1
 - 3. So, to “Kiss the Son” is to surrender to Christ completely – our wills, dreams, desires, loyalty, and obedience.
- D. “lest He be angry, And you perish in the way, When His wrath is kindled but a little.” (v.12)
 - 1. Does not require horrific sin and evil arousing the full wrath of God. Just the refusal to submit to Christ is enough. Deuteronomy 4:24
- E. “Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.” (v.12)
 - 1. Declares the nature, object and blessedness of saving faith. Nature – trust.
 - 2. Object – Christ.
 - 3. Blessing – Everlasting life.