

Psalm 2
Serve the Anointed Son

**Why do the nations rage^(a)
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^(b) them with a rod of iron
and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."
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.**

Prayer:

The incarnate God has come to this world, and he is going to come back a second time. That is the meaning of the word "Advent" when we talk about the two comings of Jesus Christ.

The season of Advent begins today, four Sundays before Christmas. The word "Advent" means "coming" or "arrival." Advent is a remembrance of Jesus' first coming and a looking forward to his return, his second coming. We look back and we look forward to the future. We look both of these directions during Advent.

Advent begins what we call the Christian Calendar Year. The goal of the Christian Calendar Year is to rehearse every year in the life of the local church the great redemptive acts of our Lord Jesus Christ. As the Year progresses, we usually begin with Epiphany, which is always January 6. It is a remembrance of the revealing of Jesus Christ to the world. Often on Epiphany Sunday we preach from Matthew 2 about the coming of the Wise Men, or we may preach from one of the baptism accounts, when Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit and the Father spoke from heaven, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

Then as we move through the spring months we come to Holy Week and Christ's suffering, death and glorious resurrection. Forty days after Resurrection Sunday we come to Ascension Sunday, then Pentecost, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Church, then Trinity Sunday.

Today begins Advent. This year during the four Sundays of Advent we will be looking at four different Messianic Psalms, one each on the four Sundays in Advent. A Messianic psalm is a psalm that has within it references or prophecies about the coming Anointed One, that is, the Messiah or the Christ, the one anointed with the Spirit, who would come to rescue God's people from their sins.

Today we will study one of the greatest Messianic Psalms in the 150 Psalms in the Psalter – it is the second Psalm. This Psalm clearly reveals the coming King whom Yahweh God would set on the holy hill of Zion, the place where God meets with his people. He would be anointed with the Holy Spirit and would also be especially designated the Son of God. He was the anointed Son of God, the King of Zion, the King of the people of God.

But this revelation of the coming anointed King and Son of God was not set in a vacuum. It was not set outside of human history; it took place in the midst of human history, in the midst of humanity with all its sin and rebellion against the reign of almighty God.

This Psalm of 12 verses has a rather clear structure of four sections, four parts. Here's what they are:

I. Humanity's Opposition to Yahweh's rule is futile. v. 1-3

II. Yahweh's Response to Human Opposition is Decisive v.4-6

III. Yahweh Has Issued Sure Decrees Regarding his Son v.7-9

IV. Yahweh Declares the Necessity of Submission to the Son – v.10-12

Another way to understand the structure of this psalm is to notice that there are 4 voices speaking here in each of the four sections.

In the first section v. 1-3, a narrator is speaking, that is, one who is observing all that is happening and explains it to us the reader. The narrator is probably best described as God the Holy Spirit – he is the one who inspired King David to write this psalm. So I think the narrator is really God and that is in the first section. He is describing the wicked rulers of the world and how they throw off and reject any submission to God.

In the second section, v. 4-6, the Father speaks. In the third section, v. 7-9, the Son speaks, and in the fourth section, v. 10-12, the narrator, that is, I would say the Holy Spirit, is again speaking.

So let's look at the first section:

I. Humanity's Opposition to Yahweh's rule is futile. v. 1-3

v. 1 - Why do the nations rage^[a] and the peoples plot in vain?

**²The 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."**

What do we see here? We see the nations raging with anger against God. We see the peoples of the earth plotting how they can outwit God and carry on their sinful activities, how they can overturn the rule of God and instead themselves be the rulers of everything.

And so they get together and plan and scheme to do evil.

We see this in Acts 4 after the Jewish leadership ordered the apostles to quit preaching to the people in the name of Jesus. So Peter and John returned to the group of disciple and told them what had happened. We read in **Acts 4:24-28**:

²⁴ 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, ²⁵ who through the mouth of our father David, your servant,^[a] said by the Holy Spirit,

"Why did the Gentiles rage,
and the peoples plot in vain?

²⁶ The kings of the earth set themselves,
and the rulers were gathered together,
against the Lord and against his Anointed'^[a]—

²⁷ for truly in this city there 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, ²⁸ to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.

So this conspiracy against Yahweh and his Anointed servant Jesus by the Jewish and Roman officials was a fulfillment of this prophecy in Psalm 2 that kings and rulers would

meet and plan how they could cast off any rulership over their lives by God or his anointed Servant Jesus Christ.

What happened in Jerusalem has happened many times throughout human history. Kings and rulers have tried and continue to try to destroy the Christian church. Some of the Roman emperors tried to do this; some of the Communist leaders tried to do this. In our present world there are political leaders and governments opposed to the church of Jesus Christ and are persecuting it. In North Korea, for example, it is very difficult, even dangerous to be a Christian.

But what is God's response to this? Does he wring his hands in helplessness of being able to help his faithful people on earth? No, we read in Psalm 2:4-6:

**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."**

II. Yahweh's Response to Human Opposition is Decisive v.4-6

What does he do?

He laughs at humanity's foolishness. It has been noted that this is the only incident in Scripture where we see God laughing. But he laughs, not because he thinks something is really funny, but because it's pitiful.

He holds them "in derision," This word means the use of ridicule or scorn to show contempt. "Mockery" would be a similar term. Or "disdain."

Then we see that his wrath and fury are stirred up and Yahweh has something to say to these rebels, these mutineers who would cast him off the throne of the universe if they could and make themselves the captains of the ship.

Yahweh will not just issue a decree from heaven, a pronouncement of judgment on the wicked. But he will do something more concrete: He will set his own King on Zion, his holy hill."

The word "zion" refers to the place where God meets with his people. In ancient Israel it was in Jerusalem, in the center of the temple, where the Shekinah glory, the very presence of the living God resided. This is why David, for instance, longed to be in the courts of the LORD, for there God's presence on earth dwelled.

What is being said here is that God is going to send a person to deal with evil and rebellious humanity. The great Judge of the universe will not just remain on his throne in heaven, but he will come down to earth.

He will become incarnate as a man, as a human king, and he will come down and live among evil humanity, and live among wicked kings and rulers – and he will rub shoulders with the sinful human race, yet he will not be tainted with the evil, but remain the holy King in the midst of an unholy people. Who is it that will come from heaven and live on the holy hill of Mount Zion?

The next section answers that question:

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^(b) them with a rod of iron
and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.”**

We can summarize this section like this:

III. Yahweh Has Issued a Sure Decree Regarding his Son v.7-9
The voice here is the Son speaking.

In this section we have another voice speaking – it is the voice of the Son of God.

The Son states that a decree has been issued by Yahweh. What is a decree? It is a declaration of what God has determined he will do and he has not kept it silent but declares it publicly.

For example, on September 22, 1862, President Abraham Lincoln issued the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, which declared that as of January 1, 1863, all enslaved people in the states currently engaged in rebellion against the Union “shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free.”

The Son is speaking here in this section, and he tells us what happened. Yahweh himself spoke to him and declared something. He declared, first of all, **“you are my Son.”**

Yahweh is stating a fact to the Son, ‘you are my Son.’ Yahweh is affirming and certifying the relationship between himself and his Son. He is the Father, and the Son is the Son. He doesn’t say you are beoming my Son, but he is declaring that the Son was already his Son. This was a reality. It was inactuality a declaration of their eternal relationship.

In all eternity the Father had been the Father to the Son, the Son had been the Son to the Father. Christian doctrine affirms the eternal sonship of the Son. This does

not mean that the Son is inferior in deity to the Father, he is not lacking in any of the attributes that make God to be God, but both the Father and Son are equal in all the divine attributes such as power and glory and holiness, but there is an interpersonal relationship with the Triune God of Fatherhood and Sonship.

In a human marriage relationship, there is a man and a woman. The husband has roles and responsibilities in the home and the wife has roles and responsibilities but they are equal in their humanity and value – both are equal.

But in this eternal relationship of the Father and the Son there is an added or new element. Verse 7 says **“today I have begotten you.”**

What does this mean? The word here “begotten” means to “bear, beget, or bring forth.”

Probably in its historical context, when David wrote this Psalm he had reference, first of all, to his own installment as King of Israel.

2 Sam. 5:3 - ³ So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and King David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the Lord, and they anointed David king over Israel.

But then there were other fulfillments of greater significance when it referred to the entrance of the Son of God into his Kingly ministry as the Messiah.

To understand this phrase, “today I have begotten you” we need to turn to the NT and see how the apostles understood this phrase when they quoted from Psalm 2:7. There are several examples:

Paul, on his first missionary journey, went with Barnabas into the synagogue in Antioch of Pisidia and began to declare the Gospel to the Jews gathered there:

***Acts 13:33* - 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.”***

³⁴ And as for the fact that he raised him from the dead, ^{(A)(B)} no more to return to corruption, he has spoken in this way,

"I will give you [ⓐ]the holy and sure blessings of David.'

So the apostles understood this statement in Psalm 2:7 to refer to Jesus' resurrection from the dead. By his resurrection his office as Messiah was confirmed.

Let's also look at some other ways this term "Son" is used in the NT, describing the relationship of the Father and his Son.

Their Relationship is affirmed and declared:

Matt. 3:17 - and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is **my** beloved **Son**, with whom I am well pleased."

The Son is the One who fulfilled Moses' prediction of the coming prophet who must be listened to when he comes:

Matt. 17:5 -

He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is **my** beloved **Son**, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him."

Uniqueness of Son over the angels:

Heb. 1:5 - For to which of the angels did God ever say, "You are **my Son**, today I have begotten you"? Or again, "I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a **son**"?

Appointment to priesthood

Heb. 5:5 - ⁵ So also Christ [ⓐ]did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him,

[ⓑ]"You are my Son,
today I have begotten you";

The Son glorified by God the Father:

2 Pet. 1:17 - For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, "This is **my** beloved **Son**, with whom I am well pleased,"

In the other verses in this section, see that:

- He will give his Son the nations and the earth.
- He will shatter the opposers of Yahweh.

...Like an iron rod that shatters a vessel of pottery.

IV. Yahweh Declares the Necessity of Submission to the Son – v.10-12

The Narrator is speaking again.

**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.

The narrator addresses those whom he was describing at the beginning of the Psalms: kings and rulers. If they would be wise, they should listen to the Word of God. They need to be warned that not to imperils their eternal destiny. To reject God and his Word is a dangerous thing – it is really spiritual suicide.

To turn one's back on God is to turn one's back on the only hope of knowing truth, of knowing how sins can be forgiven, of knowing what God has done in history through the Lord Jesus Christ to reveal himself to humanity and provide for their redemption and salvation through the death and resurrection of the Son.

Instead of rejecting the knowledge of God which is displayed in creation all around us every day, humanity should gladly drink of it as a man dying of thirst in the desert would drink from the spring of water that he arrived at in the oasis. The existence of God is an open book that all people everywhere can read at a glance.

And this great God who created all things and sustains all humanity with every good gift that we have is not to be approached lightly or flippantly. But the kings and rulers and all people should serve Yahweh ***with fear and joyful trembling***.

"Fear" here refers to holy reverence and awe: he is the great God; he knows our thoughts before we think them, and we are mere creatures to whom he has given life and existence.

Yet to come to know this God, to enter into relationship with him, gives us a joyful trembling. We can only approach him by his grace and calling and mercy, yet when he

calls us, "come," we come in trembling joy, not a giddiness, but a holy, joyful reverence, ingratitude that he would have mercy on a sinner and bring us into his fellowship. Oh, to know fellowship with the living God! What is sweeter, what is more desirable on earth?

Hear David's words in Psalm 63:1-4

O God, you are my God; ¹earnestly I seek you;
²my soul thirsts for you;
 my flesh faints for you,
 as in ³a dry and weary land where there is no water.
² So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary,
 beholding ⁴your power and glory.
³ Because your ⁵steadfast love is better than life,
 my lips will praise you.
⁴ So I will bless you ⁶as long as I live;
 in your ⁷name I will ⁸lift up my hands.

Verse 12 tells the kings and rulers to "kiss the Son." This is an expression indicating submission to him, love for him, gratitude to him.

To kiss him means he has allowed us entrance into his very presence and intimacy of relationship. As a child would kiss his father, so God's called and beloved people should draw near to Christ, to kiss him, to enjoy the affectionate intimacy of the Savior with those for whom he suffered and died.

Isa. 53:

...when his soul makes ⁹an offering for guilt,
he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days;
¹⁰the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.
¹¹ Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see ¹¹and be satisfied;
 by his knowledge shall ¹²the righteous one, my servant,
¹³make many to be accounted righteous,
¹⁴and he shall bear their iniquities.
 They should submit to the Son lest they perish. (Constantine)
 They are blessed who take refuge in the Son.

So the rulers and kings and all people should bow in referent submission and love to Yahweh's Son who is also the anointed King of the kingdom of God. To refuse him is to anger him. To reject him is to kindle his wrath.

But to take refuge in him is to receive blessing without end from the living God.

God will judge the wicked.

God will welcome those who loves him and submit to him through his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us never turn away from Yahweh or the gift of his anointed King and Son. Some will, but let us fully submit to him and come before him in joyful, trembling worship and adoration.

To God be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus forever and ever. Amen.

-by Jeff Gregory, pastor
Good Shepherd Community Church
8441 Hunnicut Rd.
Dallas, TX 75228

214-324-9915

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