

As I said last week, in the month of August 2 we are focusing specifically on Psalms that are specifically pointing to Christ himself. Just as a matter of biblical theology, I'm definitely among many in the camp who believe that in every way, in some way, shape, or form, all the Psalms point us to Christ. But specifically, there are a few that do so more than just thematically or show us a 'type' of Messiah. They are the ones that are specifically pointing to him. We know so because of another biblical idea. As we look at the Scriptures, as you study the Scriptures, it is very easy to take Scripture out of context. Certainly, I've done it. But one of the biblical principles that we use to study the Bible is to allow Scripture to interpret Scripture. So one of the things we learn from the New Testament is there are Psalms that are referenced and interpreted for us, who are the ones who have received the New Testament, that point to how we look at these Psalms in their relationship to Jesus Christ.

So this Sunday we look at Psalm 2. But before I read the Scripture itself, I want to make you aware of just a brief, brief introduction to Psalm 2. In some translations throughout the history of the church, Psalm 1 and Psalm 2 have been put together because of their theme, but also because of how Hebrew poetry works. Psalm 1 begins this way: Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked. In the end of Psalm 2 it says: Blessed are all who take refuge in him. So Psalm 1 begins with a beatitude: Happy is the one. And Psalm 2 ends with: Happy is the one. But with that idea, these two Psalms, whether they are read together or even separately, they are meant to be an introduction to the entire Psalter. Each of these Psalms brings up so many themes that the rest of the Psalms will unpack and reflect on.

But this morning our concentration will be Psalm 2. And here is the end of the story to Psalm 2: The Messiah, the Victorious Messiah. As I read this morning, I want you, as I've said before, to put on as best you can, your biblically shaped imagination. Think about Psalm 2 as I read it over the span of history, because this Psalm is covering the span of history of God's intention and what that intention is and how that intention will be fulfilled. And it ends with the great statement that he is the Victorious Messiah.

Hear now God's word, Psalm 2.

Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain?

The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the LORD and against his Anointed One.

"Let us break their chains," they say, "and throw off their fetters."

The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the LORD scoffs at them.

Then he rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath, saying,

"I have installed my King on Zion, my holy hill."

I will proclaim the decree of the LORD: He said to me, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father.

Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession. You will rule them with an iron scepter; you will dash them to pieces like pottery."

Therefore, you kings, be wise; be warned, you rulers of the earth.

Serve the LORD with fear and rejoice with trembling.

Kiss the Son, lest he be angry and you be destroyed in your way, for his wrath can flare up in a moment.

Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

This is the word of God. Thanks be to God.

Will you pray with me. Father, we bow our heads this morning, because we desire to be taught by you. Will you, by your Holy Spirit, open up your Word and magnify your anointed one, the Messiah,

Lord Jesus, as the victorious, conquering King. But help us, O Lord, to see in your word, the kind of King he is. Help us, we pray, in Jesus' name. Amen.

This is one of those Psalms that, I will tell you, I enjoy preaching because of the way in which thematically it breaks up. Particularly as a preacher it works well because it fits nicely---you'll see in your outline---it fits nicely into four points. You see *The Nation's Resolve*, verses 1 through 3; *The Lord's Response*, verses 4 to 6; *The Promise of Victory*, verses 7 to 9; and *The Lord's Invitation*, verses 10 to 12. So this morning what I'm going to do is, I'm going to walk us through these four points looking at what the Psalm actually is saying from its original context. Then, once we do that, I'm going to pick up on how the New Testament takes what is written here and points us to Christ, and then we will apply it.

So let's look together. *The Nation's Resolve*. Verses 1 through 3 tells us these words---which I've just read, I recognize, but I want you to hear it again. It simply says this: Why do the nations desire to rebel? The nation's resolve, first, is one of rebellion against the Lord's King. It says specifically, why do the nations conspire? Why do they plot in vain? And then it says the kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the LORD and against his Anointed One. It's literally the Hebrew word, *Mashiach*, Messiah. Now what is interesting, is when we hear the word Messiah, as those who are recipients of the finished work of the Bible itself, when we think 'Messiah,' we think immediately--- 'Jesus.' But I want you to put that on pause for just a moment, because in its original context there are different ways of understanding the Anointed One against which the nations are rebelling. But not only are they rebelling against God's Anointed One, they also desire to conquer. They take their stand. So they desire to both rebel and to conquer. That's the nation's resolve. They desire to stand against this King.

And then they say, in derision, let us remove ourselves from the chains of this Anointed One, this King. But what's interesting is this is the Lord speaking in verses 1 through 3 through the writer, and this is attributed to David. It is this idea. Not only are the nations seeking to rebel and conquer the Lord's Anointed One, they're also standing against the Lord himself. Notice what it says. The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the LORD. And here I want you to think of it for just a moment this way: you see, the King, in Old Testament context, the King was often referred to as the Anointed One. In fact, this phrase, 'anointed one,' was used to refer to kings, also to priests, and sometimes to prophets. So these are the ones who were in God's place as the mouthpiece of the Lord to the people. And so for it to say that they are taking their stand, it doesn't necessarily refer to Jesus, first and foremost. In its original context it's saying that these nations are conspiring against the King of Israel. But not just against the King of Israel, they are also rebelling and seeking to conquer the Lord himself.

Now how do we know that it's the King of Israel? We know that, for just a few verses later, we hear it. I will establish my King on Mount Zion---that's referring to Jerusalem. And we know that from Old Testament biblical history that the kingship of David established the throne of Israel in Jerusalem. So here we have a Psalm, attributed to David, using the words of the Lord in verses 1 through 3, telling us about the nature of the nations and their stand against the Lord and against his King in Jerusalem. The nation's resolve.

In fact, it has been a resolve ever since our first parents. Kids love the game Hide and Seek. Any kids in the room still love Hide and Seek? Raise your hands? I love Hide and Seek. But in many ways, that is what man has been trying to do with the Lord since the beginning. If you go back and read earliest accounts in Genesis, what do you see? When Adam and Eve decide they will not obey the Lord, but seek to be their own gods, to seek to be like God, and to believe the deception of Satan himself who was set over against the Lord---when the Lord comes back to the garden, what do they do? They hide. And then when they come out into the open, they try to cover themselves. They want to hide

themselves from shame, they want to hide themselves from the Lord. But now, all the way through biblical history, to the point of God establishing a people, Israel, and his King, we now know they are no longer fleeing from the Lord, they're seeking to attack the Lord and his Anointed One. The nations conspire---this is the resolve.

Secondly, verses 4 through 6 tell us of *The Lord's Response*. It's quite interesting that it tells us this in such wonderful detail. It tells us this: the Lord has two responses. He laughs and he declares.

He laughs. Verse 4. He says the Lord enthroned in heaven laughs, he scoffs at them. Why does it tell us that the Lord scoffs or laughs at the nations? It is because here the nations are trying to conspire against the King of Israel, but also against the Lord. But it's like this. This is a war that is going on between two entities: the nations and God. And unlike most wars where within the fog of war you're unsure of what is going to happen, here what you find is, this is a war whose end is absolutely certain. This is like the Washington Redskins showing up to scrimmage with the River Hill Hawks. Oh, it might be interesting, but there is no doubt who's going to win. Oh, they might be the number one in the state, but they have no chance against the Redskins. Okay, the Baltimore Ravens, too. There you go. Maybe what you're thinking is, the Redskins against the Baltimore Ravens, but that's a different point. But the issue is, they have no chance. So the Lord is laughing and saying, do you really think---do you really think you can defeat me? And the Lord sits enthroned, and he laughs.

But then he also declares. And here we hear the declaration in verse 6. He says, I have installed my King. Meaning that my King is like me, he is certain of victory over you. Do you really think you can come against me? Not only is that worthy of a laugh, you can't come against my King. Why? Because it's a declaration of God's sovereign will, God's sovereign power at work. And here the Psalmist is saying, this is what the Lord has said. This is the Lord's response against the nation's resolve. He both laughs and he declares. You will not prevail against me or my King. It is God's sovereign declaration of announcement of victory. That is the Lord's response.

Thirdly, we see *The Promise of Victory*. Now here we have a change in voice. Beginning in verse 7, what we hear is, I---the first-person pronoun---I will proclaim the decree of the LORD. So this is now no longer the Lord speaking, this is now the Anointed One, the King, who is speaking. And what does he announce? He announces who he is according to the Lord's decree, God's promise. And he says these things, he says: You are my Son; today I have become your Father. Now we hear that and we think---what? We think in some way of bloodline. But that's not the way that this is being referred to. This is not about offspring or genetics. This is about calling. I have called you my Son. I am your Father. And from that calling the King is to live out his kingship. We think 'genetics.' What is being pronounced here is not that the Lord is saying literally that somehow God himself came down and had a wife, and then produced this son. Rather, it's [saying] that this king is from him because of his calling. I have called you to be my son. I am your father.

And what is so beautiful about that---that calling tells us about the union yet again, which we've already heard about, the union between this King and the Lord. They are absolutely united by declaration, calling. But then it says something else. So from that calling, because the Lord has called him by name---You are my Son, I am your Father---and because of the Lord's sovereign decree, which we have heard---now hear the promise of conquering. Look at what it says in verse 9: You will rule them with an iron scepter; you will dash them to pieces like pottery. He is saying that all the nations will be the inheritance of this Son, all the nations. He will rule them with an iron scepter. Now, this scepter is an iron rod. And what's interesting is that this simple iron rod would be used of the Lord to have both a shepherding aspect---because we hear it understood as one who shepherds---but also the one that is a weapon against which no nation can stand. He will be the conquering son whose father has called him to be King. That is the promise of the Lord.

Now the final point is *The Lord's Invitation*, verses 10 through 12. Two things that the Lord invites all the nations to do: One is to worship, the other is to find refuge. Indeed, that's what it says. All the nations are invited to come in fear, in awe, in worship, and as it says here, to rejoice, and to kiss the Son. That is language for paying homage, bowing the knee, acknowledging the authority, acknowledging the kingship, acknowledging the rule and the sovereignty of this one. The Lord invites all the nations, not just Israel, but all the nations to come and to worship this King, this Son, whose Father is the Lord.

But also it's an invitation to find refuge. That is how the Psalm ends. It's a refuge, but a refuge from what? It's a refuge from---even though the King is now installed on Zion, even though all the nations have been given to him as an inheritance, there will come a final point at which there will be judgment. So even though the King is on the throne, all of the enemies have not been defeated. And so now before the war is over, the Lord, through his servant, through his King, through his people, is inviting all nations to come and to worship and to seek refuge from the day when the war will be finished and no one will be able to appease or to overthrow that judgment. So it's an invitation.

So there you have Psalm 2 in its Old Testament context. And read in its Old Testament context, it seems to be referring to a King of Israel, whom God has placed by his sovereign rule. The nations are conspiring, wanting to rise up against him---not only against him, but against the Lord---because they do not believe in the Lord, they do not honor him, they do not worship him, they desire to worship their own god, and they do not want anything to do with this Lord or his King. And it seems to be referring to the marching onward of God's work through the nation of Israel, defeating its enemies around it to a point where all the nations will come to Israel and find their hope in its King, in its Lord. And then there will come a final conquering---and here it says, of incredible, immense value. It's not just defeating one nation, it is a world-wide domination of victory and declaration. And if you don't come and enjoy this kingdom, there will come judgment, and you will be defeated.

But here's the curious thing. Scholars have looked up and down, they've scoured the history of Israel. There is not one king in the entire Israelite history about whom these things could be said. Oh sure, there are parts. David was certainly King of Israel, set over Israel by the Lord. But at the time of David's rise to kingship there were not these little nations around them immediately trying, or at least being able to conquer. Perhaps it's Solomon, but it doesn't seem to be.

It's not until the New Testament that we begin to see that what is promised here in Psalm 2 is such an overwhelming kingship, such an overwhelming rule, and shepherding, and victory---it is something absolutely, positively cosmic in scope. It is of none other than the Lord Jesus Christ himself, who is a king through the line of David. Now if you don't believe me---for just a moment---I've just gone through the outline, right? Now what I want, if you're taking notes, (and you're quite kind, if you do), if you're taking notes, what I want you to do, just out to the side, jot down these few things.

First, Scripture interpreting Scripture. In the book of Acts, after they have suffered their first onslaught of real persecution, they gather together---the church, that is---and they begin to pray. And instead of being downcast and defeatist, they are actually rejoicing in their persecution. How could that be? Let's hear from their words alone. This is what the New Testament says in Acts chapter 4, verses 23 and following. "On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them. When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God." And this is what they prayed: "'Sovereign Lord,' they said, 'you you made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David: Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the Lord and against his Anointed One. Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city [that is, Jerusalem] to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. They did what

your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” And then they finished their prayer, and then Luke records these words: After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

The New Testament leaves us no doubt as they point back to Psalm 2, that it is one of David, and this Anointed One, this King, is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. This King is Jesus. But not only does it tell us that, it tells us that the New Testament people of God, the Church of Jesus Christ, finds itself, and considers itself, in the very same place as was Israel. As Israel was to its King, so Israel was to its Lord. What the King enjoyed, the people enjoyed. The King was called the Son. They were called children.

Here Peter and John are praying with the church in its smallest form, in its earliest days after it's just undergone great persecution. They pray words of promise. They say, this King, against whom the nations have conspired, the Gentiles, the Jews who were against Jesus Christ---they have raised and conspired in vain against the Lord Jesus. But we are his people, they do so in vain. So they consider themselves in line with Israel. They are God's children. Jesus is the King. There is not a hint of defeat in their voice. In fact, if you go back and read that prayer, it's celebratory, because it is based---that though the nations resolve, God in his sovereignty says, against me? Shall you come against me? And the Lord laughs. Because he has sent his son. This King.

And though the nations looked at Jesus Christ and scoffed at him, the New Testament leaves us no doubt through the words of these apostles they are praying. Do you know what that is implying for us---that though the nations---and may I pick up on the old spiritual---I was there, we were there, in the taunts against Jesus. I was there when they crucified my Lord. My scoffs, my laughs, at what seemingly looks like a conquered King of the Jews. That though the nations were conspiring and laughing against this 'exalted one' on the cross. It is the Lord who has the final laugh. Because it is the Lord, through his anointed, raised-up son on the cross through whom he would bring salvation. Do you see? It's a very different kind of King.

The New Testament points us---because this Psalm points us---to Jesus. But it is also this. Not only do we hear these words proclaimed in Acts, we also here it in the earliest verses of Hebrews. The New Testament here also picks up on the same language in Psalm 2. But here he says in Hebrews chapter 1, verse 5, after he has declared these beautiful things---that the Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. The writer of Hebrews is talking about the ascent of Christ on the cross, the descent into the grave, and the resurrection, and he's now seated at the right hand of God the Father. And then the writer of Hebrews says these words: For to which of the angels did God ever say, 'You are my Son; today I have become your Father.'? That the end of the story isn't the cross. That the end of the story is resurrection. That Jesus is victorious over death itself, and is now seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. So the writer of Hebrews, as with Luke, reporting what John and Peter said, is pointing back to what the Psalm, in seed form, is ultimately pointing us to: this King, this One, this Messiah, Jesus.

But then it also says to us in Hebrews chapter 5, verse 4: No one takes this honor upon himself; he must be called by God, just as Aaron was. So Christ also did not take upon himself the glory of becoming a high priest. Jesus did not choose this; he was called, remember? He was called by the Lord to go. He says, but God said to him, You are my Son; today I have become your Father. So, like it was when Jesus was raised to be called 'King'---the one who has all authority---here in Hebrews 5,

not only is called Son because he is the King, he is called Son and his Father because Jesus is also high priests. Jesus is the ultimate King because he is also the one who is the perfect high priest who offered sacrifice, not for his sins, because he was pure and sinless, but offered a sacrifice **for** sin---as we have sung earlier, to take away the sin of the world.

Here I want to tell you, this is the beautiful part of what God is trying to demonstrate to the entire world. That though Psalm 2 talks about the shattering of pottery and the defeat of nations, the New Testament tells us how God does this, and Acts and Hebrews demonstrates this for us. Jesus will not do this by way of literally raising up an army with an iron scepter and crushing nations. No, he will come onto a cross and allow himself to be crushed to take on the sins of the world. That this conquering King is one who allowed himself to **be** conquered so that he could then demonstrate that he is the King. He is also the high priest and he is the Victorious One whom the Father has called Son and he calls Father, and he's raised from death to life. So Hebrews demonstrates [this] for us.

But then, finally, Revelation. In the book of Revelation, chapter 19 verse 15, the rider on the white horse. "Out of his mouth [that is, the rider on the white horse] comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. He will rule them with an iron scepter. He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has the name written: King of Kings and Lord of Lords." So as I said earlier, the same is the case now---the Bible does two things simultaneously. Jesus Christ is seated at the right hand of God the Father, called the Son, called King of Kings and Lord of Lords, but he is also going to come again, finally, and the war will be done, and his last enemy will be death, and it will be crushed. All of his enemies will be under him, and he will come in final judgment. So there's an already-kingship of the Lord Jesus Christ, but there will be an eternal--not yet--that will be realized.

Psalm 2, you see, goes over the whole history of the Bible. That though the nations conspired in their nascent form, and Adam and Eve, stretching all the way to all the enemies of God and of his people to the point where God would send his son Jesus Christ, just at the right time. And even the nations would rage and conspire against him, and place him on a cross, laugh at him, scoff at him, thinking that they had defeated this one, this King of the Jews. But it is God who laughs, and he's the one who raises his Son from death, victorious over sin and death, and now seats him at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. And then on that day he will come again, and on his robe and on his thigh it will be King of Kings and Lord of Lords. That is why Paul says, every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. Do you see Genesis to Revelation? That is the scope of Psalm 2, ladies and gentlemen.

But let me tell you, if you were sitting there going, well, that's interesting. What in the world does that have to do with me? Let me attempt humbly to put forth to you this. First. We are uncomfortable with superpowers in this day. We think strength and overwhelming power something to be ashamed of. The idea of conquering kings is not something, except in films that we might like to enjoy---but surely we don't live in a day where superpowers are thought of like they were back in the 80's. Am I right? But here's the issue. The issue is, that discomfort with superpowers is often brought over into how Scripture is read and interpreted. People don't like the idea that God calls himself the Lord of Lords, the King of Kings, and his Son is the conquering King, the one over whom all authority and powers has been given. We don't like this idea. But what I'm asking all of us to do is to come again to the Scriptures and see this is a kingship like no other. This is not about politics. This is not about culture. This is not about domesticating some nation or another. This is about the God of glory announcing his redemption through a King, his Son, who would die for your sin and would conquer death, that we might taste eternal life. That is truly the superpower, and his love conquers our sin. His love pierces our rebellion. His love pierces our scoffing, our derision.

Just days before I bowed the knee to King Jesus, I was laughing at his children, I was laughing at the message of the gospel. But God in his design, and in his grace and his mercy, he did not strike me down as a piece of pottery. Rather, he pierced my heart and mind and told me of his conquering son. In the face of my laughter and yours, he redeems.

Secondly, if you are not a Christian, I must warn you. It is my solemn duty. But I warn you with an illustration. When I was a teenager, Highway 26 was a prominent highway in South Carolina. And on that Highway 26 was a rather large chemical plant, and one day during rush hour that chemical plant had a malfunction. A cloud of chemical smoke left the chemical plant and drifted over Highway 26, fogging up the highway where no one could see. A fender bender turned into people plowing into that cloud at full speed.

People who were cautious, stopped. And they got out of their car and they could hear what was happening as people continued to go through. They did not feel comfortable going into the cloud, but they knew that something wasn't right, and they got out of the car and they could hear the cars crashing. And so what they do. They began to wave down the other drivers, saying, Stop! Stop! Don't you know, I can hear what is coming. Please stop. I say this to you with no sentimentality in my voice. I say it with all passion. Through the ordination that has been given to me, I warn you, if you do not know the Lord Jesus Christ, today is the day of his grace. But tomorrow may be the day where his wrath may come, and if you do not know him, there will be no other chance. But today, if you can hear my voice, come to this King who loves you and pierces the depth of your sin, your fleeing from him, your doubt, your disbelief, your rebellion---and he says to you, I have sent my Son. So I say to you in his name, Stop. Stop. Come to him.

But then I say this to every Christian who can hear my voice. This Psalm 2 is meant to be of greatest encouragement to you. For whatever prayers, whatever concerns, whatever doubts, whatever difficulties you bring into this place, whether they be relational, whether they be circumstantial, financial, whatever it is---emotional---it does not matter what it is. What I say to you is look at this Psalm and look at the arc of history. Because if you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, you are called a son or daughter of the Most High God, you are a child of the King. And the end of the story is not defeat, it is victory for the Lord Jesus Christ, and if there is victory for Jesus, there is victory for all of his children. So what I tell you doesn't magically remove your circumstances, your difficulties, your challenges, but it does tell us how to pray. It tells us to pray in the midst of our difficulties, that we're praying to the one who is acquainted with our difficulty, acquainted with our temptation, acquainted with our suffering, and he loves us.

And I will use it again as I did last Sunday---I borrowed from Abraham Kuyper in his speech. I say to everyone here who calls Jesus Christ, Lord, this is what the Lord says, Abraham Kuiper said. "There is not one square inch in the whole domain of human existence over which our Christ, our Sovereign overall, does not cry, 'Mine.'" 'Mine.' And if you are his, then everything you are and everything you have, every square inch of your human existence, is his. And the end of the story is victory. May that promised victory give you hope in the midst of today. This is the Messiah, the Victorious King, the Lord of Lords and the King of Kings.

Let's pray. Heavenly father, your son, our Lord, our King, Jesus. May you exalt him above every name, may you exalt him in our hearts. May you flood us with the power and promise of your Holy Spirit to shine the light of renewing, redeeming, all-powerful grace, to give us life, to give us hope, and to give us an eternity that is sure. That we would not taste of your wrath, but enjoy the feast of your Son. Help us, O Lord. But I cannot do this, only you can as the King of Kings and the Lord of Lord. So come and renew us in the midst of persecution and difficulty and challenge, disbelief and doubt. May you come, Lord, as a conquering King, to redeem and renew us for your glory and for the extension of your kingdom, today and forevermore, Amen.