

## PSALM 2

### I. TEXT

**1** *Why are the nations in an uproar and the peoples devising a vain thing? 2 The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against His anointed, saying, 3 “Let us tear their fetters apart And cast away their cords from us!”*

**4** *He who sits in the heavens laughs, The Lord scoffs at them. 5 Then He will speak to them in His anger and terrify them in His fury, saying, 6 “But as for Me, I have installed My King upon Zion, My holy mountain.”*

**7** *“I will surely tell of the decree of the Lord; He said to Me, ‘You are My Son, today I have begotten You. 8 ‘Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, and the very ends of the earth as Your possession. 9 ‘You shall break them with a rod of iron, You shall shatter them like earthenware.’”*

**10** *Now therefore, O kings, show discernment; take warning, O judges of the earth. 11 Worship the Lord with reverence and rejoice with trembling. 12 Do homage to the Son, that He not become angry, and you perish in the way, for His wrath may soon be kindled. How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!*

### THE MESSAGE

<sup>1-3</sup> *Why the big noise, nations? Why the mean plots, peoples? Earth-leaders push for position, Demagogues and delegates meet for summit talks, the God-deniers, the Messiah-defiers: “Let’s get free of God! Cast loose from Messiah!”*

<sup>4-6</sup> *Heaven-throned God breaks out laughing. At first he’s amused at their presumption; then he gets good and angry. Furiously, he shuts them up: “Don’t you know there’s a King in Zion? A coronation banquet is spread for him on the holy summit.”*

<sup>7-9</sup> *Let me tell you what GOD said next. He said, “You’re my son, and today is your birthday. What do you want? Name it: Nations as a present? continents as a prize? You can command them all to dance for you, or throw them out with tomorrow’s trash.”*

<sup>10-12</sup> *So, rebel-kings, use your heads; upstart-judges, learn your lesson: worship GOD in adoring embrace, celebrate in trembling awe. Kiss Messiah! Your very lives are in danger, you know; His anger is about to explode, but if you make a run for God—you won’t regret it!*

### II. BACKGROUND

#### A. TYPES OF PSALMS

1. LAMENTATIONS—more than 60
2. THANKSGIVING—individual (10)—corporate (6)

3. PRAISE—16
4. CELEBRATION/AFFIRMATION—28
  - **Coronation of king—like Psalm 2**
  - Anniversaries of reign
  - Celebrating birth of a child
  - Marriage of daughter

INCLUDES SONGS OF ZION—that the people would chant (e.g. #122)

  - 6 psalms (#46, 48, 76, 84, 87 122)
5. WISDOM (8)
6. TRUST—10—affirming confidence in God during times of crisis/danger

## **B. AUTHORSHIP**

1. NO ATTRIBUTION IN HEADING OF PSALM
2. DAVID WROTE IT
  - Attributed by the apostles—**Acts 4:25**
3. IDENTIFIED AS ‘SECOND PSALM BY PAUL—**Acts 13:33**—at Pisidian Antioch

## **C. MUCH QUOTED IN NEW TESTAMENT**

1. **Verses 1-2—in Acts 4:25**
2. **Verse 7**
  - **Acts 13:33**
  - **Heb 1:5**
  - **Heb 5:5**
3. **Verses 8-9—in Rev 2:26-27**
4. **Verse 9a—rod of iron**
  - **Rev 12:5**
  - **Rev 19:15**

## **D. FOUR-SCENE DRAMA**

- COURT OF WORLDLY KINGS
- HEAVENLY COURT
- ‘ASIDE’ TO THE AUDIENCE
- COURT OF WORLDLY KINGS

## **E. SUBJECT—“THE REIGN OF THE LORD’S ANOINTED’**

## F. READ THIS PSALM AT TWO LEVELS

1. GOD WORKING TEMPORALLY THROUGH HIS ANOINTED EARTHLY KING—DAVID
  - o See Davidic Covenant—**II Sam 7** and **I Chr 17**
2. GOD WORKING ETERNALLY THROUGH HIS SON—CHRIST—THE MESSIANIC KING

## III. EXPOSITION

### A. SCENE ONE—THE COURT OF WORLDLY KINGS

**1** *Why are the nations in an uproar and the peoples devising a vain thing? 2 The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against His anointed, saying, 3 “Let us tear their fetters apart And cast away their cords from us!”*

#### SUMMARY

1. Humankind thinks it is chafing under God’s stern rule—and chooses to rebel
2. This is rooted in the sin of Eden—but goes beyond that
  - a. Adam and Eve—wanted to be like God—sin of human pride and ‘knowledge’
  - b. But this goes beyond Eden
    - Unlike Adam/Eve—these rulers want to have nothing to do with God!
3. This is more like the sin of Babel
  - a. Self-reliance—thinking they can be like Him
  - b. Willful rebellion against God—and setting their own standards

#### TEXT

1. The nations *devising* = verb for ‘meditate’
  - a. Same word used in Ps 1:2—positively—he ‘meditates’ on the law day and night
  - b. Here—negatively—but negative sense here ‘muttering’
2. They take their *stand* against the Lord and His *anointed*
  - a. The Lord’s *anointed*
    1. Anointment was done for
      - Prophets (Is 61:1)

- Priests (Ex 30:30)
  - Kings (1 Sa 10:1; 16:13; 1 Ki 1:39)
2. Technical use—here—refers to coming ‘Anointed One’
    - **Dan 9:26—Messiah, the Prince**—who will restore and rebuild Jerusalem
    - Terms—‘Messiah’ (Hebrew)—‘Christ’ (Greek)
- b. Their *stand* against Him—anticipates Calvary here
1. **Acts 4:25-28** quote verses 1-2
  2. Those opposing Christ are listed
    - Herod
    - Pontius Pilate
    - The Gentiles
    - The ‘peoples of Israel’
- c. This was according to God’s sovereign plan!
- **Acts 4:28**—this followed God’s purpose—which was *predestined to occur*
- d. But the rulers of that age were ignorant of God’s plan
- II Cor 2:8—or *they would not have crucified the Lord of glory*
3. They want to throw off the *fetters* and *cords*—[that bind them]
    - a. They think they are harsh and restrictive
    - b. But they are really gentle—and for their own good!

**Hos 11:4**—*I led them with cords of a man, with bonds of love, and I became to them as one who lifts the yoke from their jaws, and I bent down and fed them.*

**Mt 11:28-30**—*Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.*

## B. SCENE TWO—THE HEAVENLY COURT

**4** *He who sits in the heavens laughs, The Lord scoffs at them.* **5** *Then He will speak to them in His anger and terrify them in His fury, saying,* **6** *“But as for Me, I have installed My King upon Zion, My holy mountain.”*

## SUMMARY

1. GOD RESPONDS IN FOUR WAYS—IN SEQUENCE—WITH FOUR EMOTIONS
  - o Amusement
  - o Ridicule
  - o Anger
  - o Speaking with intent to terrify
  
2. REASON WHY GOD RESPONDS THIS WAY
  1. The issue is already settled!
  2. The rulers of this world are ignorant about the significance of what He has done.
  3. The already accomplished fact—THE King has been installed!
  4. And their rebellion is futile—foredoomed to failure

## TEXT

1. *Then shall he speak*
  - o For God to speak—is for Him to act
  - o What He resolves He will do (Ge 1:3; Ps 33:9).
  
2. *I will set my king*
  - a. The **I** is emphatic
  - b. Best translation of tense—*I have set*
  - c. *But as for me, I have set my king*
  - d. What God has willed for the future—is as well as already accomplished
    1. He *had* set David upon the throne already
    2. He *will* set the Messiah on the throne—but it is as good as already done!
  
3. **Set** = ‘install’ or ‘enthroned’—coronation language
  - o Fulfills promise of Davidic covenant
  - o **II Sam 7:13-14**—*I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me.*

#### 4. upon my holy hill of Zion

- o David selected Mount Zion to put the Ark of the Covenant—I Kgs 8:1

### C. SCENE THREE—ASIDE TO THE AUDIENCE

7 *“I will surely tell of the decree of the Lord; He said to Me, ‘You are My Son, today I have begotten You. 8 ‘Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, and the very ends of the earth as Your possession. 9 ‘You shall break them with a rod of iron, You shall shatter them like earthenware.’”*

#### SUMMARY

##### 1. THE SUBJECT = ROYAL PROCLAMATION

- a. Begins in verse 6
- b. Is explained in verses 7-9

##### 2. THE ROYAL PROCLAMATION

- a. The King has [already] been installed
- b. The King is my begotten son
- c. All the nations—all creation—is His inheritance
- d. This King—His Son—is omnipotent and sovereign
  - 1. He will bring everything into subjection to Himself
  - 2. He will do this first by prodding them with the rod
  - 3. If they do not respond, He will shatter them in judgment

#### TEXT

##### 1. *You are my son*

- a. Fulfills pledge of adoption in Davidic Covenant—II Sam 7:14
- b. First half of the proclamation—at Jesus’ baptism and transfiguration
  - Second half—*in whom I am well pleased*—comes from Servant passage—Is 42:1
- c. Used in relation to Christ’s resurrection

**Acts 13:32-33**—*And we preach to you the good news of the promise made to the fathers, that God has fulfilled this promise to our children in that he raised up Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm, ‘You are My Son; today I have begotten You.*

**Rom 1:4**—*who was declared the son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord.*

- a. This does not mean the resurrection *made* Jesus Christ to be God's Son
- b. It *confirmed* His eternal identity to witnesses—by the power of the resurrection
- d. The Son is—higher than the angels of God—using Psalm 2 to affirm this fact

**Heb 1:5**—*For to which of the angels did he ever say, You are My Son, today I have begotten You?*

2. *This day have I begotten thee*

3. *Ends of the earth*—

- o The universal thrust of the Gospel—for all creation
- o Reiterated by commission to go to all nations/creation—Acts 1:8—Mk 16—Mt 28

4. *Rod of iron*

- a. Used three times in Revelation
  - 1. Once—of the Christian—**2:27**
  - 2. Twice of the Lord—**12:5; 19:15**
- b. But it uses the LXX interpretation of Hebrew consonants
  - 1. Instead of 'break' (here in Hebrew OT)
  - 2. Revelation broadens term to 'rule' or 'shepherd' (from LXX)
- c. This suggests two phases in Psalm 2 of dealing with opposition
  - 1. The rod—to rule/shepherd = discipline them (and if they respond, good!)
  - 2. But those who remain obstinate = shatter them!
- d. The Shepherd's rod/crook
  - 1. Used to guide and sort out the flock—**Lev 27:32**—**Ezek 20:37**
  - 2. Also used as weapon against marauders—Ps 23:4
- e. Rod—also understood as '**scepter**' of ruler
  - *The scepter will not depart from Judah*—see **Gen 49:19**

5. *You shall shatter them*

- o Points to Christ's ultimate triumph over the rulers of this age
- o They have all been put them to shame—**Col 2:15**

## D. SCENE FOUR—THE COURT OF WORLDLY KINGS

**10** *Now therefore, O kings, show discernment; take warning, O judges of the earth. 11 Worship the Lord with reverence and rejoice with trembling. 12 Do homage to the Son, that He not become angry, and you perish in the way, for His wrath may soon be kindled. How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!*

### SUMMARY

1. GOD'S MESSAGE OF WARNING
  - a. Listen to this warning
  - b. God is merciful—there is still a chance—if you respond appropriately
2. APPROPRIATE RESPONSES TO GOD'S WARNING
  - o Worship the Lord—with reverence
  - o Rejoice—with trembling
  - o Do homage—to the Son
  - o Take refuge—and you will be blessed

### TEXT

1. *warning*
  - a. The kings are summoned—to give them another chance
  - b. This is an invitation—not pronouncement of judgment—[yet]
  - c. If you heed this warning—and respond properly—you can be saved!
2. **Tension** between *discernment* [wisdom]—and *warning*
  - a. Typical of tension in Hebrew wisdom literature
  - b. These two ideas interact with each other
    - Those who are **wise** will listen
    - Those who **respond** to **warning** are **wise**
    - The **warning** is to **obey**—and **obedience** to God is great **wisdom**
3. **Tension** in the four appropriate responses to God
  - a. Worship [**serve**] the Lord—with reverence [**fear**]
  - b. **Rejoice**—with **trembling**
  - c. Do homage [**kiss**] to the Son—who has ability to become **angry/wrathful**
  - d. Take **refuge**—in Him who has the power to **destroy** and cause you to **perish**
    1. Irony—the rulers of this world want to **flee** from God—get away
    2. But the remedy—is to come close to Him!

3. There is no place one can take refuge **from God** when He is angry
4. The solution—to take refuge **in God**
4. Psalm 2 ends where Psalm 1 begins

*How **blessed** are all who take refuge in Him.*