

Psalm 2

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[0 : 0 0] Again, the scripture text is the second psalm on page 494 of the White Bibles. Please stand for the reading of God's word.

Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against his anointed, saying, Let us burst their bounds apart and cast away their cords from us.

He who sits in the heavens laughs, and the Lord holds them in derision. Then he will speak to them in his wrath and terrify them in his fury, saying, As for me, I have set my king on Zion, my holy hill.

I will tell of the decree. The Lord said to me, You are my son. Today I have begotten you. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession.

You shall break them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Now therefore, O kings, be wise. Be warned, O rulers of the earth.

[1 : 1 0] Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. 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. Amen. This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. You may be seated. Thank you.

Well, good morning. I just want to add my greetings to you. We're so glad that you're here today. And I've been looking forward to even these brief moments before us as we look at a psalm that is quite well known, both within the synagogues of Judaism, as well as the congregations of Christianity, Psalm 2.

If I was to title it this morning, the editors, of course, have given us their own, The Reign of the Lord's Anointed. But I would put it to you this way.

Things are different now. Things are different now. When I grew up, more often than not, those individuals who went to church did so by entering into a traditional church building.

[2 : 4 3] That was true not only for my growing up years, but even into my early married years.

It was nearly unheard of to attend a church in a school or a theater, a rented auditorium, a warehouse that was converted into a meeting space for people of religious identification and gatherings.

Things are different now. When it came to music in a church, you have to recall that as we were growing up, more often than not, you sat in a pew.

It was about as crowded to the row in front of you as you find these seats, originally made for third graders rather than adults. But these pews were a long, lengthy, either straight or curved, wooden seat.

And every pew had a pew rack. Now, I'm probably introducing terms and ideas that are foreign to you, but a pew rack was this little affixed piece of wood with a rail that held always three things.

- [4 : 07] It held a Bible that someone who walked into church without one would be able to reference. It also held an offering envelope in its own separate little sliding drawer.
- Wonderfully, if you were in a good row, every offering envelope was attended by a golf pencil for you to pull out and, if not write your name and what you were giving today, certainly doodle something along the way.
- But next to these was always a hymnal, a hymn book. So when we grew up, that's what it was, but things are different now. It would have been unheard of to have a screen before you that somehow was the focal point of everyone's attention and to have lyrics placed on it and that without musical notes.
- And what was indicated, what was also intriguing about the day in which I grew up is there was no back projection lighting.
- There was no dry ice emerging. There was really, the buildings themselves were not meant for bands even to be playing. I'm just explaining to you that the days of old are at least old enough to have been around when I was growing up.
- [5 : 42] And most structures, you would have been led in music by a choral director rather than the pastor standing here with a few vocalists and musicians.
- You would have stood to sing at the instruction of the one who also directed, he or she directed, a fully robed choir that was escalating behind you in rows.
- And the glory of the church was always the glory of the choir. I guess that's why they say sometimes the devil fell out of the choir loft.
- This place of music has always been a place of encouragement and strength, but a place of variant views and even contention. Things are different now.
- Let me explain. It's not only different in the building we kind of walked into. Let me explain. It's not only different in the way in which we did music together, it was also different in what we expected out of music.
- [6 : 49] The church I grew up in, on occasion, the choral director would explain to us what the writer was trying to do before we even sang.
- And then we would give it a run. In other words, there was an educational component to music and an instructional element to music.
- So music was teaching, not merely experiencing. Our expectation of singing together was to declare something, let me put it to you this way, to actually, to learn something about God.
- And then to learn it and declare it. Whereas today, more often than not, our singing is not educational or instructive or learning.
- As much as it is, what we want to do is just, I just want to listen. I want, I want something to arrive to me. therefore, these hymns that the old church used to sing are increasingly placed on the side because they require so much mental attention while you're singing.
- [8 : 10] And who's got time for that? Things are different now. Psalm 2. Welcome to Israel's hymn book.
- The Psalms, if you've never understood them as a complete book within the scriptures, they're a collection of 150 songs all in one place, kind of like the way the book stood in the rack before me growing up.
- But these would have been on one scroll and they would have been sung at various times in the season of the life, first of Judaism and now later for Christianity.
- Let me explain. These Psalms, this hymn book that you've opened today and you found yourself to number two of that hymn book would have been read in anticipation of high holy days.

when you look at the Psalter, that's what they call these 150 together, the Psalter has some Psalms that are grouped together topically, thematically.

[9 : 36] There's almost little units within the larger unit. Kind of the way your Spotify works for you today. Show me your Spotify and you've shown me your hymn book.

Let me explain that. What do you listen to? Well, it depends on what mood you're in or what you're trying to do for the day. Isn't that right? So in the morning, I got my playlist.

And it's going to be a little different according to the eclectic nature. In other words, you group what you do day by day according to themes and seasons of life and what you need.

So Psalm 2 is part of this communal book that people return to all the time.

And interestingly, and this is the end of the introduction, it brought together both instruction and affection. It didn't make you choose between is music supposed to teach me something or is music supposed to move me?

[10 : 44] Is it something that I'm to affirm or is music supposed to lead me into some action? Psalm 2 is a wonderful example.

It actually does both. And we are taking three weeks to look at three different kinds of music that the church has been singing for centuries. Last week, we looked at a psalm that would have been grouped under the Spotify playlist of Thanksgiving.

But this week, we're looking at a psalm that would have been replaced under not just that we are to give thanks, but the one to whom we give thanks. It's a royal psalm. It's a kingly psalm, which is why all the songs we've already sung deal with God as king and ruler.

And it's why next week we'll pull out a different Spotify playlist and look at a psalm for the community of faith when they're not just the wonder of thanksgiving or the rule of his domain, but the woe of our own experience and our life.

I'm fascinated by this and I think it will help us make progress in our own ability to live well. Believe me, you need music to live well.

[12 : 06] Things may be different now, but that has not changed. Take a look at it. Psalm 2 on your phone. Grab the white Bible near you.

Psalm 2 looks like to me the way they've put it before us on the page to consist of four verses or stanzas, four lines of instruction about God and how we are to respond to God.

The first verse then is really verses one to three and it lays down lyrics that reveal an agitated assembly.

Hip-hop would know, TJ would know how to bring to you verses one through three. I'm sorry, Decipher would have known.

It's when you read it, you feel the hastily called conference of an agitated assembly who throw a spoken word on the floor that would move the listener from resistance to outright revolution.

[13 : 41] I mean, it's a strong verse. Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against his anointed saying, let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us.

That opening verse obviously lets you know that there's almost some international conference of convening that the writer wants you to think about.

the nations the peoples and the word rage is really this idea of being restless. They're entering into the conference hall in a restless state and the word plotting is really interesting to me because it's identical to the word meditate in the first psalm verse 2.

The one who is meditating on the law of the Lord is here. They are hastily gathering and they are meditating they are chewing on something.

But they're not chewing on the word of God they're chewing on and scheming to the idea of resisting and revolting from Yahweh and his anointed.

[15 : 02] And then somebody finally stands in that assembly and you can almost hear it spoken or sung. This is the motion that they are to consider. Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us.

Namely the cords of Yahweh or his anointed. They have two things they want to pass in their singing. They want freedom from God and they want to be doing away with him.

Freedom from and doing away with. And the first verse falls silent and the singer goes back to repeat a whole other verse that's laid down underneath it.

And it's verses 4 through 6. And these are not the verses of an agitated assembly seeking revolution. This is a counterpoint verse.

You're moving from an earthbound convention hall to the heavenly throne room. And notice there's a counter motion verse 6 that almost is equally confident in his ability to resist the nations.

[16 : 24] He who sits in the heavens laughs. The Lord holds them in derision. You ever say to somebody don't laugh when I say that?

Well because you're holding me in contempt. And what this verse is saying is while the world puts emotion on the floor to do away with God God himself holds the world in contempt.

Then he will speak. to them in his wrath anger. He's going to terrify them in his fury. And here's the counter motion at the end of verse 2. As for me I have set my king on Zion my holy hill.

This word that is emerging from heaven is that God will be invasive and come down.

Mount Zion is a phrase really for the city of Jerusalem and saying that I am going to come into your world. I'm going to put up my ruler in the face of your resistance and revulsion of me.

[17 : 42] revulsion of me. As if he says to them like a parent well as if God says do whatever you're going to do but know this at the end of the day oh rulers of the earth oh kings of the earth my king will be set up in your domain.

Wow what a hymn I mean this soloist this baritone breaks the eastern sky and indicates another plan verse verse 3 fascinating to me those verses 7 through 9 just that stanza I mean when you look at it it's actually a new voice I mean this isn't four part harmony because there's some real people going at each other here in these hymns these verses so it's anything but four part harmony but there's certainly different parts being sung the voice of resistance against God the voice of divine decree that God has against those who resist and then verse 7 the nations fall silent

Yahweh himself is no longer speaking because it says I will tell of the decree the Lord said to me so Yahweh is now saying to an individual suddenly there is a voice that emerges from the stage that is neither the rulers of the world nor the baritone voice of God but it's the one to whom God has said something or given something and this is what the one is singing let me tell you what Yahweh has said to me in the midst of this war you are my son today I have begotten you ask of me I will make the nations your inheritance the ends of the earth your possessions you shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel this is the one that stands between the two worlds the son who is this son interestingly

Exodus 4 refers to Israel God says is my son later in 2 Samuel 7 Israel is represented as the son by David who is the king David is God's son and David is given a promise that from his own kingly line will come God's son who will get an everlasting kingdom so Israel is looking for the son of God to emerge from the loins of David who will be given everlasting rule in the world and the world to come and notice verse 8 that one gets the nations as heritage literally as their hereditary possession it's almost always used in the scriptures to refer to land so the son gets the topography of the earth now if you got the land then it meant that you were the heir you were the recipient that you could do with your property that which you please!

so the one who is the son who gets the land of all the earth to do with as he pleases is the one that we are trying to determine who he is and evidently verse nine this godly son is one who rules when the new testament emerged as a document in assembled form one thing became clear very early on the the the interpreters of what happened with Jesus the Nazarene were connected to the idea that he was the fulfillment of the promises to Israel through David of whom would emerge the son so that when you read the new testament record and

[22 : 52] I don't know if you've read this before but it's something that you ought to consider at the baptism of Jesus they tell us he was declared he is my son at the transfiguration of Jesus the skies open and a voice comes out listen to my son at the at the resurrection of Jesus in Acts 13 the good news of the promise was concerning Jesus and his resurrected state as the fulfillment of this very text from David actually uses this very text at the ascension of Jesus in Hebrews 1 5 Jesus is referred to as God's son at the mediating death of Jesus in Hebrews 5 5 where he performs his priestly role they indicate he is his son this is something for you to consider is Jesus the promised son of whom all the heavens and the earth now owe their allegiance is he the one that

God put on his throne at Mount Zion if not then who is but the writers of the new testament were so convinced at his baptism at the transfiguration!

at his death at his resurrection at his ascension Jesus the son of God in accordance with the promises laid down in this song that was sung of old if that's true if that's true then things are different now you don't merely offer songs of praise to God for this general sense that he loves you although that's true you would offer songs to God in a more particular sense that through Jesus he saves you and therefore you sing this is why in the

Christian church we're always singing about Jesus Jesus there's something about that name Jesus because the idea is that he is the fulfillment of the one that this writer actually wrote about I mean this this is amazing look what's given if that's the case then look what's given to Jesus by decree the nations verse eight all the nations are given to Jesus verse eight the ends of the earth the ends of the earth would be given to Jesus even beyond that verse nine his eternal rule he would have all authority is given to Jesus all authority over all people for all time now this is really fascinating when you figure out that

Moses Matthew closes his gospel with the great commission where Jesus after the resurrection says hey let me tell you something guys on the basis of my resurrection we should probably just read it because it's really stunning I don't want to miss a word of it Matthew 28 verses 18 and following Jesus came and said to them all authority in heaven on earth has been given to me therefore go and make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the father the son and the holy spirit teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you and behold I am with you always to the end of the age Jesus himself walks off the pages of the gospel account with all authority over all nations for all time and he promises his continual presence if you will bow the knee things are different now this is the teaching that has changed the landscape of the world and its religions over 2000 years you're at the crux of the matter are the

[27 : 52] New Testament writers correct in associating the fulfillment of this song with Jesus the Nazarene I love the way verse 4 starts back to the sermon of my title the title of my sermon things are different now look at the way the next verse begins by way of by way of emphasis now therefore and it returns to that convoluted cacophony of sound out of that international congress that appeared in verses 1 to 3 now therefore oh kings be wise you want wise living oh by the way be warned oh rulers of the earth and look at all these imperatives in the text this is the action the affirmation of the psalm is now completely moving toward the action and what he desired for the one who was listening to the music serve the lord with fear and rejoice in trembling 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 music was to move you to these multiple actions serving yahweh with fear and rejoicing while trembling serving serving give your life to the rule of god as you understand his ways to be put forward in the scriptures that he has revealed himself look at this one verse 12 kiss the son this is a very interesting phrase and it's been one of contention between judaism and christianity to be honest with you the english translation kiss the son is a bit of an interpretive stretch the word son sounds like ben the word for more like purity or excellence in that would have been sounding like bar it's a difference in a letter that curves like an r and a letter that would be straight edged and a little longer like an n and the

Hebrew text is obviously curved like an r it's it's really perhaps if you were to do it as woodenly as possible it would have been like serve the Lord with fear rejoice in trembling and and with all purity give yourself to this one with all allegiance live ethically live rightly follow God let's God be angry and you perish in the way may your refuge be Yahweh now because it says here kiss the son Christians automatically think son Jesus and those who follow Judaism say well it doesn't actually say kiss the son so it can't mean Jesus what do you do when you see something like that well let me let me put it to you as simply as possible just because it doesn't say son it can't it doesn't mean that it can't mean

Jesus in other words the verse four about serving Yahweh that is given to the kings and rulers of the earth is in response to what they were doing in verse two of the psalm and in verse two they are scheming not only against Yahweh but his anointed so who is the anointed who is the one they are turning against well the anointed is actually the son of verse seven so Yahweh is saying I've got my son on a throne so the real question is if you are to serve Yahweh does that not mean you are to give allegiance to his anointed certainly it does the implication is you follow his ruling!

King that he has set up so the question is simply this is Jesus the one he set up and if he is then he to him is owed your allegiance to him is owed your honor to him is owed your life!

to to him to!! to To consider and determine for yourself, is Jesus the rightful heir of Israel's songbook?

[33 : 38] If you don't know, then get a concordance, read this psalm this afternoon, much more profitable than giving yourself to some pig-skinned game along the way.

And look at all the references of this music under the interpretation of those who bore witness to Jesus.

And if you decide that Jesus is not the rightful heir of this psalm, and therefore Jesus does not, I do not owe my allegiance to him. Then I have two questions, one question for you.

Then who? And on what grounds? Who is Israel's anointed?

Who is Israel's anointed? Jerusalem, as a city, was to be the seat of those who would worship God through their voice.

[35 : 06] For the arrival of his king. As I understand the scriptures, and how these two testaments connect to one another.

This table, this table, in all of its irony, actually is the way God set up his king.

The death of the anointed. That you might be saved. The death of the angels. The death of the angels.