

King of Kings

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[0 : 00] If you have your Bible with you, you can open it up to Psalm chapter 2. Psalm chapter 2. So this morning, as we've been working through the psalms this summer, just different psalms each Sunday, and this morning we come to one of my favorites.

I love Psalm 2. It's a short psalm, so I'll read the whole thing all at once, and then we'll talk about it, and then we'll let it lead us into our remembrance of the Lord Jesus at the Lord's table.

So Psalm 2. Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth rise up, and the rulers band together against the Lord and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their chains and throw off their shackles.

The Lord scoffs at them. He rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath, saying, I have installed my king on Zion, my holy mountain.

I will proclaim the Lord's decree. He said to me, You are my son. Today I have become your father.

[1 : 36] Ask me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession. You will break them with a rod of iron.

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 celebrate his rule with trembling.

Kiss his son, or he will be angry, and your way will lead to your destruction. For his wrath can flare up in a moment. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

So this psalm was written by King David, and we know that from Acts chapter 4, verse 25, where the apostles are gathered together, and they quote this psalm in a prayer that they're praying, and they reference it as something that was spoken by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David.

There are four parts to this psalm. If you can see in your Bible, this might even be paragraphed just like this. Verses 1 to 3, in those verses, the nations rise up against the Lord and his anointed.

[3 : 05] Then in verses 4 to 6, we get the Lord's response. He laughs at them and rebukes them. Then in verses 7 to 9, David tells us of God's decree, his royal decree.

And finally, in verses 10 to 12, David warns the people to cherish and serve the Lord and his anointed king. And one of the things I love about this particular psalm is just how strongly it points to Jesus.

Written a thousand years before Jesus came, it just speaks loudly about him, about God's ultimate chosen king, and how things will go in the long run for our world, and what we should all do in response.

So let's dig into this, starting with the first few verses here. Looking in at verse 1. The author begins with this rhetorical question.

Why do the nations conspire, and the peoples plot in vain? What's his point? The conspiring, the raging of the nations and the peoples, the plotting, it's pointless.

[4 : 25] Now what is he talking about? Some of us are so used to seeing how this psalm points to Jesus that maybe we forget that these words meant something to the king, King David, who wrote them long before Jesus came.

These words paint us a picture of how things were in the days of King David. There were nations at that time all around Israel who were conspiring against Israel and the anointed, David, the one who was anointed by Samuel to be king.

And Nathan, the prophet, he came and he delivered the Lord's word that David's kingdom would be an enduring kingdom, a kingdom that would last forever. He would always have a son on the throne.

There were many battles in those days between Israel and the nations and peoples around Israel. They fought with the Egyptians. They fought with the Philistines. They battled the Edomites and the Moabites and the Arameans.

If you've read through the Old Testament, you probably are familiar with all these wars and battles. And because the Lord stood behind his chosen king, David, David had victory, overwhelming victory wherever he turned.

[5 : 50] He conquered them, he defeated them, he brought them into submission, and they were required to pay taxes and tribute to him. If you think back to how the people of Israel were ruled over by the Romans in the days of Jesus, that's kind of like how it was back then.

Each of those nations had their leaders, but David was king over all of them. suddenly, verses 1 to 3 here in the psalm make a little more sense.

Why are these peoples plotting and scheming against the Lord's anointed? Why are they saying, let's break their chains and throw off their shackles?

Well, it's because these peoples and nations are not free and self-governing like they used to be. And so, that's why they're plotting, that's why they're conspiring together.

How can we band together to defeat this king of Israel who rules over us now? And what's the king's reaction to this as he sees this happening?

[7 : 00] He says, all your plotting, all your scheming against the Lord and his anointed is pointless. It's in vain.

It's for nothing. Your attempts to rebel will fail. Now, how can David have this kind of confidence? Well, the reason is because God himself, Yahweh, the Lord, anointed David and promised David that he would be king and that he would rule in this territory, in this kind of a way.

And nobody can stand against the Lord. In verses 4 to 6, the next section, the psalmist tells us what God's response is to all this scheming and plotting of the nations and the peoples.

He says, the one enthroned in heaven laughs. The Lord scoffs at them. I love this verse. God laughs at things.

We don't tend to think of God as a God who laughs or finds things funny. but here's at least one thing that he finds funny. So ridiculous is the idea that these little kings, these little rulers in the nations around can rise up against God and defeat his chosen king that he laughs.

[8 : 28] They think they can win against the creator, the almighty, the Lord of heaven and earth and his chosen king.

They think they can prevail and God finds it funny because it's just so impossible. That's how big and great and powerful God is.

The best laid plans of kings and rulers made against him make him chuckle. he responds with scoffing it says.

He mocks their arrogance, their ignorance, their foolishness and I won't go to some of these passages but if you want to hear examples of how the Lord would mock kings you can read through some of the words of the prophets in the Old Testament because God does it in quite a few places. He rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath. These words speak of how God has been dealing with all of the enemies who are rising up against King David.

[9 : 40] Time and time again he's handed the victory to his chosen king even when it seems like the odds are impossible he causes the enemy to flee and to melt with fear. In verse 6 he says I have installed my king on Zion my holy mountain this is the statement of the Lord over every battle fought with the Philistines the Amalekites the Edomites etc.

in the days of King David they couldn't win and even now as they make plans and talk about these secret alliances this is God's statement of how things are going to turn out.

I have installed my king in other words he will not be displaced or defeated by any of you your plans will fail you will find yourself trembling fleeing in fear my anger and my wrath rising up against you if you rebel and rise up against me God stands behind his chosen king 100% in verse 7 this third section David says I will proclaim the Lord's decree and what follows here is the reason that David has this confidence it's because of what God has decreed about David and his kingdom that David can say all this that he has this confidence that their plans and schemes are pointless David says the Lord said to me you are my son today

I have become your father probably it's best to see these words as a further explanation of that royal special covenant that God made with David about his kingdom being established forever you

are my son today I have become your father this is something special there's a change in the relationship here a profound act of love from God to this king so now it's not just that he's a servant of the Lord but now like a son God places the full weight and care of his fatherly love and protection upon this king you are my son he says to David and if we think back to those ancient times what do sons get a big part of the culture and tradition was that they would get an inheritance from their fathers now of course we still have some of that around today but it was a big deal back then an inheritance comes with being a son and so

God promises the king who he now calls son David an inheritance and it's a large inheritance it's a grand inheritance it's almost as if he's saying what do you want my son ask me I'll give you the nations as your inheritance I'll make the ends of the earth your possession ask me and I will give it to you that's quite the inheritance isn't it a kingdom over all the nations in which all of them belong to you and not just the nations nearby but I'll make the ends of the earth your possession I'll make your dominion your territory that belongs to you reach to the ends of the earth this is no less than God promising David a global worldwide kingdom how will it go in verse 9 he says you will break them with a rod of iron you will dash them to pieces like pottery now there's some variance in the translation you may see in your bible whether it's rod or scepter whether it's break or rule but probably the meaning either way is exactly the same the point is that your kingdom my son will be unbreakable it'll be undefeatable your rule will be as strong as iron it's poetic your rule will be so firm so secure so unshakable and if ever anyone tries to rise up against you tries to attack you to make war against you you will crush them and break them into pieces like iron hitting pottery this is the decree of the

[14 : 46] Lord to David and it sounds similar to some of those grand promises that God made to Abraham if you remember back earlier in the story promises that are global in their reach promises that are greatly exalting and like Abraham's covenant promises some of these things will happen immediately here in the present day for King David he will God will continue to give him victory over all enemies all around but then at the same time in a similar way to Abraham's promises it seems to point to a greater and ultimate future a generational fulfillment an enduring dynasty or kingdom something coming the psalm then ends with a warning therefore you kings be wise be warned you rulers of the earth serve the

Lord with fear and celebrate his rule with trembling kiss his son or he will be angry and your way will lead to your destruction for his wrath can flare up in a moment blessed are all who take refuge in him so notice who this warning is directed at specifically to the kings and rulers of earth so David kind of comes full circle the kings and rulers around they're the ones that have been plotting and scheming about how they can rebel and rise up against David and now David speaks to them and gives them this warning and this is quite the thing to say to them isn't it I mean I was thinking like can you imagine if somebody stood up in the UN council and said something like this people would be livid but he basically says there is a wise path and there is a foolish path implied there is a foolish path when it comes to

God's son his anointed king if you are wise he says you will serve Yahweh the Lord the God of Israel you will celebrate his rule with trembling so the king straight up calls the other kings and rulers of the nations around to serve the one true God the Lord of heaven and earth he calls him to celebrate his dominion and I love the juxtaposition of these words here in verse 11 celebrate his rule with trembling celebrate with trembling there ought to be a mixture of emotions deep awe reverence respect for God holy fear but at the same time joy celebration

God's rule and reign his chosen king's kingdom is not like the evil empires of earth's history it's not some kind of corrupt totalitarian rule like Hitler and the Nazis it's not like Stalin and the Soviet Union or Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon or Alexander the Great's Grecian Empire it's not like the empire from Star Wars God is a good and gracious loving God and his son the ultimate son that this points to is radiant just perfect incorruptible righteous and so there's much cause amidst that fear and that reverence that we should have for celebration and joy that he is the king that he rules if we are wise we will pay homage to God's son

God's king we will honor him and show our love to him kiss his son he says and this warning ends with two ultimate fates if we choose the wise path and serve and love and honor God's king and take refuge in him we will be blessed blessed are all who take refuge in him there's an invitation there come take refuge in him be in his kingdom his good kingdom but if we do not if we persist in rebellion against God and against his king the psalmist says he will be angry and your way will lead

to your destruction for his wrath can flare up in a moment so this psalm is all about the nations conspiring against God and God's chosen king and the message we hear from it is that God is absolutely unthreatened by the kings of the nations we hear that his chosen king his son will reign supreme over all the kings of the earth and so we would be wise to serve him celebrate him cherish him love him take refuge in him or else face God's wrath as we read the historical books of the Old [20 : 34] Testament the story of King David we get glimpses of how this held true in David's story even as we move forward to David's son King Solomon we get glimpses of how all of this was holding true in his kingdom as well but then some of you who are reading through the Bible this year we've probably all got to that spot where things start to unravel and things are spiraling downward and the kingdom the kings are doing wicked things and things are not going well the kingdom of Israel just kind of spirals down until finally the birth of a special son of David descendant of David a thousand years later listen to the words of the angel sent from the Lord to Jesus' mother Mary one more time Luke chapter one verse thirty one the angel says to her you will conceive and give birth to a son and you are to call him

Jesus he will be great and will be called the son of the most high the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever his kingdom will never end so this decree made by God long ago a thousand years earlier in Psalm 2 to David it was also made in anticipation of this coming descendant of David this coming son of David who would be king who would be the son of God the author of Hebrews in the New Testament also looked back on this psalm and by the Holy Spirit he tells us that this psalm was not just spoken to David amazingly it was spoken to Jesus to God's own son listen to these words of the author of Hebrews chapter one he says in the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways but in these last days he has spoken to us by his son whom he appointed heir of all things there's that idea of inheritance again and through whom also he made the universe 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 that's the son had provided purification for sins he sat down at the right hand of the majesty in heaven so he that's the son became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs for to which of the angels did God ever say you are my son today

I have become your father so do you see what the author of Hebrews says here he says that back in psalm 2 God was speaking to who Jesus to his son his point is that his son Jesus even though he is a man is superior to the angels but look how he does this he says these words speak of him you are my son today I have become your father God never said that to any of the angels but he said it to his son and so we are right to look at psalm 2 and to read it as speaking not just of David but of the son of David Jesus Jesus Jesus will be the one who will inherit the fullness of all that God promised in psalm 2 a global worldwide kingdom that reaches to the ends of the earth he will be the one that rules the nations with a rod of iron an enduring unbreakable kingdom let's look ahead to the very end Jesus gave a special revelation to John his apostle a vision pertaining to the future and this was what John saw towards the end of his vision revelation chapter 19 verse 11 John describes what he's seeing he says I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse whose rider is called faithful and true with justice he judges and wages war his eyes are like blazing fire and on his head are many crowns he has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself he is dressed in a robe dipped in blood and his name is the word of [26 : 00] God the armies of heaven were following him riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen white and clean coming out of his mouth is a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations he will rule them with an iron scepter he treads the wine press of the fury of the wrath of God almighty on his robe and on his thigh he has this name written king of kings and lord of lords what is this it's a vision describing the coming of Jesus God's chosen king it describes his coming down from heaven to earth to bring justice and to make just war against his enemies to rule as king over all the nations all their kings and rulers and in this vision look at what John says about his rule he quotes psalm 2 it says he will rule them with an iron scepter so all of this psalm psalm 2 is pointing to Jesus and his coming kingdom he is that ultimate king of God's choosing and someday he will come back he will return he will rule and reign in justice and righteousness over all the ends of the earth and so the warning given here in verses 10 and 11 is not just for King David's day it's also for us today as well it's not just for kings and rulers of the earth but also for the ordinary citizens of earth as well you and me we have two paths before us the path of wisdom or the path of

foolishness will you serve the lord with fear will you celebrate his rule with trembling will you love and honor and cherish his son will you take refuge in him or will you play the fool and live in rebellion defiance or even just apathy towards this king that way will lead to your destruction king jesus will come and when he does there will be anger there will be wrath towards the wicked towards his enemies towards those who have rejected him and rise up against him and so be wise make him your refuge run to him go to him make him your king and your lord receive that blessing that he promises i don't know about you but i want to be a citizen in that kingdom i want to celebrate that rule i want to see righteousness and justice and peace on earth goodness in every corner there's one more way that this song points us to jesus it reminds us of his suffering after jesus had come and gone his apostles were persecuted by the religious leaders after being arrested and threatened they finally released peter and john and peter and john went to the other believers and they all gathered

together and they had a prayer gathering they started praying and this was their prayer acts chapter 4 verse 24 they raised their voices together in prayer to god sovereign lord they said 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 people's plot in vain the kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together against the lord and against his anointed one indeed herod and pontius pilot met together with the gentiles and the people of israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant jesus whom you anointed they did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen and their prayer goes on as peter and john suffered persecution what came to mind it was psalm two as they thought back over all of the the heart wrenching stuff that led up to jesus death on the cross what came to mind it was psalm two they said indeed it it was fulfilled herod the king pontius pilot the roman ruler they met together with the gentiles and the people of israel the rulers the religious leaders the ruling council in this city they conspired against your holy servant jesus the king you had anointed and they did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen we heard it over the past three years as we worked through the gospel of john i'm sure some of you heard some of this how they hated jesus the religious leaders how they schemed and plotted about how they might kill him they boiled at him with jealousy and envy finally they found someone who was willing to betray him judas they they falsely accused him of all kinds of things gave him a sham trial handed him over he was mocked he was beaten he was utterly humiliated and shamed they manipulated the crowds to secure his death they killed him and for three long days his disciples went through the emotions how could this happen to

God's chosen king we thought he was the Messiah but God saw all that coming a thousand years before it happened he knew that all of their plots and all of their schemes against his anointed son Jesus would be in vain yes they would kill him but God would raise him back to life from the dead and declare forever I have installed my king on Zion my holy mountain so as we come to the Lord's table this morning we partake with the cup remembering the suffering of Jesus how they rose up against him and his blood was spilled we remember how it was poured out according to Jesus for a new deal with God our forgiveness and we partake of the bread which symbolizes Jesus' body his body which was broken for us when he died and there is a sadness that we must carry every time we reflect on this he was in such anguish before the cross during the cross right up to the moment that he died but Psalm 2 reminds us that from ages past the attempts of these wicked men to dethrone God's chosen king were doomed to fail God never for a moment felt threatened or insecure as they plotted and schemed and even murdered his son his son would be king and nothing could stop it

God would have the last laugh and so there is a hopefulness here at the table we don't just look back at what Jesus suffered we also look ahead to what is coming the kingdom of Christ this suffering and death of Jesus his body and his blood opened a way for us to be citizens in this kingdom and so we don't just mourn or grieve as we take these elements and remember we do celebrate his rule Jesus even told us that very night to look ahead as we partake of the bread and the cup in remembrance of him listen to his words again on the night of his betrayal he took a cup and when he had given thanks he gave it to them saying drink from it all of you this is my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins

[36 : 04] I tell you I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my father's kingdom we're going to take a moment now to quietly reflect and pray

and after we've done that I'll ask Charles and Dave to come forward and to serve the bread and the cup and if you have put your trust in this king Jesus and are taking refuge in him as your king then this table is for you I invite you to partake with us and celebrate with us and if not you can simply let the cup and the bread pass you by let's take a moment now to silently worship and praise God for this covenant this kingdom that Jesus' death has opened the way for to us and to

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[39 : 13] Thank you.

Father in heaven, we thank you for sending Jesus. We thank you for suffering and dying for us, Lord Jesus.

For your body which was broken and your blood which was poured out. For our forgiveness, for our cleansing, for our ransom. We eat and we drink in remembrance of you and your love for us, your great love for us.

We also eat and drink in anticipation of that day when we will drink this cup anew with you in your kingdom.

To your name be the glory.