

## Psalm 2

### Introduction

1. **Author:** There is no prescript telling us who the author is, but according to Peter and John in Acts 4:25 and 26 it was written by David
2. **Category:**
  - a. The early church viewed this Psalm as a Messianic psalm meaning it foreshadowed Christ
  - b. Even before Christ was born many in the Jewish community understood it as a reference to Messiah
  - c. King David likely viewed it in a double-fulfillment sense: both as a reference to God's earthly kings over Israel and that ultimate end-time fulfillment in THE King, the Messiah
3. **Structure:**
  - a. There are four parts/sections
  - b. There are four different speakers
  - c. Flow: each section is a response to the previous section (with the exception of the first)
4. **Poetic Elements:**
  - a. Synonymous parallelism throughout
  - b. Word pictures (vs. 3, 7, 9)
  - c. Double-meaning (dual or double fulfillment)
  - d. Foreshadowing

### A. The Arrogance of the Nations (1-3)

1. Their Thoughts (1):
  - a. The psalmist begins with a rhetorical question: **“Why are the nations in an uproar and the peoples devising a vain thing?”**
  - b. Notice the synonymous parallelism between **“in an uproar”** and **“devising a vain thing”**—in this case, the second phrase explains why they are in an uproar, what they are doing
  - c. **UPROAR:** comes from the word for conspiring or plotting, basically refers to a noisy assembly or people coming together to act as one
  - d. **DEVISING:** this is the same word used in Psalm one translated “meditates”; here it refers to plotting against God (as most translations)
  - e. **VAIN:** refers to something empty or useless; only used 12 times in the OT and TWOT suggests it refers to when men try to do something contrary to God.
2. Their Actions (2): **“The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers take counsel together against the LORD and His Anointed One.”**
  - a. More synonymous parallelism: **“take their stand”** is further clarified and explained by **“take counsel together against the LORD and His Anointed One”**—their stand is against not another army, but the LORD Himself and His King.
  - b. **TAKE COUNSEL TOGETHER AGAINST”:** Hebrew root means to lay a foundation but in the Niphal stem it means to lay oneself as a foundation, digging in

- c. **ANNOINTED:** Used of Israel's earthly kings and the Messiah (David's decedent)
  - d. As mentioned earlier, we're not sure how David might have understood this as he penned it:
    - 1. He likely saw himself in it as God's anointed, especially considering the circumstances surrounding his calling and appointment as king by God Himself
    - 2. He likely saw his descendants who would inherit the throne in this as well
    - 3. It's possible he understood the ultimate fulfillment in the Messiah
3. Their Words (3): **"Let us tear their fetters apart and cast away their cords from us!"**
- a. We have a great word picture here: fetters were chains, manacles or bands that were used to restrain prisoners, usually around the wrists or ankles
  - b. Figuratively refers to casting off God's authority
  - c. While we understand God's moral laws and authority as expressions of his love and protection, the world sees them as overbearing, suppressive, enslavement
  - d. **THEIR** refers back to Yahweh and His Anointed (present king, future messiah)
4. What we have here is historical (Israel), "here-and-now" (us today) as well as a forward looking prophecy
- a. It certainly applied to David and the history of Israel as they faced their enemies
  - b. It also applies to us today as we see our own nation continue to push back more and more against God's standards
  - c. It also foreshadows that final end-times battle of Armageddon that takes place right before the return of Christ who will come back and reign on earth for 1000 years.

B. The Announcement of Yahweh (4-6)
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- 1. We now move on to God's response to the nations
- 2. His Thoughts (4): **"He who sits in the heavens laughs; The Lord scoffs at them."**
  - a. **HE WHO SITS IN THE HEAVENS:**
    - 1) clearly a reference to God, especially with the parallelism of **"The Lord"** that follows
    - 2) His place in the heavens is significant because it is THE place of authority and power
  - b. **LAUGHS/SCOFFS:**
    - 1) Laughing here refers to laughing with incredulity (i.e. not believing what one sees or hears; Genesis 17:17 when Sarah laughed at the thought of God giving her a child)
    - 2) Scoffing refers to mocking or deriding
    - 3) This same language of God laughing and scoffing at the wicked is seen elsewhere:
      - a) Psalm 37:12-13: **"The wicked plots against the righteous and gnashes at him with his teeth, but the Lord laughs at him, for He sees his day is coming"** (a reference to judgment)
      - b) Psalm 59:7-8: **"Behold, they [the wicked] belch forth with their mouth; Swords are in their lips, for they say, 'who hears?' But You, O Lord, laugh at them; You scoff at all the nations."**
- c. So, when God sees and hears the nations rise up against Him, his first response is to laugh incredulously and scoff at their foolishness

3. His Actions (5): **“Then He will speak to them in His anger and terrify them in His fury...”**
  - a. Notice the progression from laughing to anger to fury (some translate fury as wrath)
  - b. Notice also that God simply speaks and it terrifies His enemies!
4. His Words (6): **“But as for Me, I have installed My King upon Zion, My holy mountain.”**
  - a. **ZION/HOLY MOUNTAIN:** references to Israel
  - b. **AS FOR ME:** serves to setup a contrast between the thoughts, words and actions of the raging nations and the thoughts, words and actions of a Holy Righteous God
  - c. Notice the 1<sup>st</sup> person pronouns: **Me, I, My, My**
  - d. We have a reflection here of God’s promise to David in 2 Samuel 7 to establish David’s throne as an everlasting throne, for both his descendants and ultimately the Messiah

C. The Address of the Messiah King (7-9)
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1. The pattern now changes from THOUGHTS, WORDS and ACTIONS to the King simply repeating God’s decree (extension of the section above)
2. The decree declares the PREDOMINANCE, POSSESSIONS and POWER of the King
3. This is where this psalm truly becomes Messianic as well
4. The PREDOMINANCE of the King (7a) **“I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to Me, ‘You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.’”**—this is now the King speaking
  - a. Predominance refers to being greater in some form or fashion; in this sense, this King is greater than all the others because he was established as such by God
  - b. The king speaks of the LORD’s decree:
    - 1) **DECREE:** to inscribe, as in making a declaration or writing a law
    - 2) This is a declaration of God’s sovereign will, not simply a wish or desire.
    - 3) The King is in authority because he was put there by God:
      - a) Both in Israel’s case in terms of an earthly king
      - b) And in the case of Christ, the eternal King
  - c. The LORD’s decree: **“You are My Son, today I have begotten You”**
    - 1) **SON:** in a non-literal sense, son is used to highlight things such as membership in a group (sons of the troop or war meaning soldiers) or possession of certain characteristics (son of valor meaning brave man). It is also used to speak of possessing a certain nature (i.e. son of man referring to human nature or son of God referring to divine nature).
    - 2) **BEGOTTEN:** also in a non-literal sense; reference to the inauguration of the king--this verse is quoted three times in NT:
      - a) Hebrews 1:5 and 5:5 where it refers to the inauguration of Christ’s ministry
      - b) Acts 13:33 where Paul refers to the resurrection of Christ
5. The POSSESSIONS of the King (8): **“Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, and the very ends of the earth as Your possession.”**
  - a. A common theme in the Bible is that of inheritance and there are two different kinds of inheritances in the Bible:

- 1) The first is legal inheritance: refers to an irrevocable gift where a father passes along his possessions to a son
  - 2) The second, which is actually the majority of references in the Bible, is metaphorical or theological which refers to spiritual blessings
  - 3) There are three different heirs (or groups of heirs) spoken of in Scripture:
    - a) Abraham and Israel: God promised Abraham and his descendants (Israel) the land of Canaan as an eternal possession along with all the spiritual blessings of God
    - b) Believers: As children of God, we are the heirs of eternal life and all the spiritual blessings of God (Acts 20:32; Romans 8:17; Galatians 4:7; Ephesians 1:14; Colossians 3:24)
    - c) Christ:
      - **“heir of all things”** (Hebrews 1:2);
      - **“God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church”** (Ephesians 1:22 and 1 Corinthians 15:27-28)
- b. We have here another example of double-fulfillment:
- 1) A promise to Israel’s king that he would receive the nations as an inheritance
  - 2) A promise to the Messiah that he would receive His inheritance, all the nations to the very end of the earth
6. The POWER of the King (9): **“You will break them with a rod of iron; as a potter’s vessel you will shatter them.”**
- a. This is in direct response to the nations’ boastful words and their attempt to cast off God’s authority
  - b. Look at the amazing word picture: the fragile clay pot smashed to pieces easily by an iron rod!
  - c. **Notice that the King/Messiah does not speak for Himself; this whole section is God’s decree, what He said to the King!**
  - d. There is clearly some eschatological foreshadowing happening here: See **Revelation 20:7-10**

D. The Appeal of the Psalmist (10-12)
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1. In this last section, the speaker is actually the psalmist himself and it serves as an APPEAL to the nations
2. He calls the nations to REPENTANCE (10): **“Now, therefore, O’ kings ...”**
  - a. The first thing he does is challenge them to think about what they are plotting and reconsider it: **“...show discernment”**—TWOT describes the Hebrew word used here as “the process of thinking through a complex arrangement of thoughts resulting in a wise dealing and use of good practical common sense”—in other words, it’s a call to be prudent or wise,
    - 1) What the nations are considering is foolish
    - 2) It’s suicide; they are going to get slaughtered
    - 3) They are going up against the Almighty God and His King
    - 4) The better part of wisdom says they would be fools to continue
  - b. The next thing he does is challenge them to change course: **“Take warning...”** (be disciplined, chastened, take instruction)

- c. He then challenges them to worship and serve the LORD with genuine faith: **“Worship the LORD with reverence and rejoice with trembling!”** (11)—the Hebrew word is actually “serve the LORD”
  - d. The last thing he does is challenge them to do all of this quickly: **“Do homage to the Son, that He not become angry, and you perish in the way, for His wrath may soon be kindled“** (12)—speaks to the urgency and serves as a warning
3. The psalmist ends the psalm with a blessing (12b): **“Blessed are all who take refuge in Him!”**

E. Conclusion
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God is sovereign over His creation and those who rise up against Him will perish, while those who worship Him will be blessed.