

MOUNT SINAI MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

MONDAY EVENING BIBLE STUDY

The Book of Psalms

Psalm 2

The Invincible Kingdom

Quote

“To be God and sovereign are inseparable.”

Stephen Charnock

I. Introduction

Then Pull Down the Stars!

In the turbulent days of the French Revolution, a political revolutionary stormed the Bastille in Paris, seeking to remove every vestige of **law** and order from the eyes of his countrymen. He scaled the Cathedral of Notre Dame and tore down the **cross** from atop its spire, dashing it into pieces on the ground below. The **cross**, representing the authority of God, lay demolished on the ground for everyone to see. Turning to a poor peasant, the revolter boasted, “We are going to pull down all that reminds you of God!” But from the crowd came the challenging reply, “Citizen, then you might as well pull down the stars themselves!”

Such is impossible, and so are the arrogant attempts of sinful man to overthrow the sovereign rule of God. This cosmic revolt is as old as the garden of Eden when the first man, Adam, rose up against the supreme authority of God. Since then, the human race has gained momentum in its conspiracy to revolt against God. But no matter how determined and imaginative the apostasy of depraved humanity may be, it can never succeed in tearing down the authority of God. There are isolated times when this cosmic rebellion is more intense than at other times, but through it all, the puny efforts of man can never thwart the sovereign will of God.

Psalm 2 portrays this ongoing rebellion of a lost world against God and his Son. Although this second psalm has no title, Peter and John ascribed its authorship to

David (Acts 4:25). According to the New Testament, it looks ahead to a future time in which the promised **Messiah**, the Lord Jesus Christ, will appear on the stage of human history (Acts 4:25–26; 13:33; Heb. 1:5; 5:5; Rev. 2:26–27; 12:5; 19:15). The world’s rebellion against God is, in reality, a revolt against the reign of God’s Son over all the earth. But all such attempts will falter and fail. All unbelievers are called upon by the Lord to bow before the Son before it is too late.

II. Commentary

The Invincible Kingdom

MAIN IDEA: In spite of the repeated attempts of man to resist God’s kingdom, the Lord has established his Son as Lord over all and invites sinners to come and embrace him now before his wrath is unleashed.

A the Insurrection Against God (2:1–3)

SUPPORTING IDEA: The human race is united in its rebellion against God’s rule, a revolt that was climaxed at the first coming of Jesus Christ.

2:1. The first voice to be heard in this human drama is lost mankind crying out in defiance against God. Expressing his absolute amazement that the nations are seeking to overthrow the Lord, the psalmist asked, Why **do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain?** The conspiracy addressed was a global rebellion against God and his Anointed (v. 3). Such a plan was **vain**, meaning empty and destined to fail.

2:2. Leading this resistance against God were the political and national leaders of the world. **The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together.** The annals of human history have proven this to be true as the mighty world rulers—Nimrod, Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, Antiochus Epiphanes, and countless others—have resisted God. This rebellion was demonstrated in Christ’s arrest, **trials**, and condemnation at the hands of Annas, Caiaphas, Pilate, and Herod (Matt. 26:47–27:26; Mark 14:53–15:15; Luke 22:54–23:25; John 18:12–19:16). Ultimately, this riotous rebellion will come together again in the last days when the kings of the earth will stand **against the Lord** (Rev. 13:1–18; 17:8–18) and his Anointed One who is God’s Son (v. 7), the Lord Jesus Christ.

2:3. The defiant voice of sinners declared, “**Let us break their chains ... and throw off their fetters.**” Represented here as speaking with one voice, these rebels expressed their desire to be free of control by God. This is the heart of **sin**: a repudiation of God’s rule in favor of one’s own will which says, “We will not have this man to reign over us” (Luke 19:14 KJV). This is precisely how the rest of the Bible portrays the human race (Ps. 14:1–3; cp. Rom. 3:10–12), as totally depraved by the effects of original **sin**.

B the Indignation of God (2:4–6)

SUPPORTING IDEA: In spite of man’s sinful revolt against heaven, God remains the unrivaled sovereign Lord; he laughs at man’s feeble attempts to thwart his eternal purposes.

2:4. In response to man’s arrogant boastings, **the One enthroned in heaven**, God the Father, merely **laughs**. This is not the laughter of hilarity but of divine derision, mockery, and contempt. Men are boldly shaking their fists against heaven, but such an attempted takeover is so bizarre, even insane, that **the Lord scoffs at them**, ridiculing and mocking their puny efforts.

2:5. But the divine laughter turns to fury. **Then he rebukes them in his anger** because his absolute holiness moves him to judge sinners. As the Lord speaks, he **terrifies them in his wrath**, speaking words of burning indignation. Lest we forget, God hates (rejects) all who commit **sin** (Ps. 5:5) and is angry with the wicked every day (Ps. 7:11).

2:6. In response to man’s insane attempts to overturn God’s eternal plans, the Lord thundered from heaven, “**I have installed my King on Zion, my holy hill.**” This confident statement expresses his unrelenting resolution to enthrone his chosen king, his own Son, upon **Zion**—a clear reference to the **holy** city **Jerusalem** (both the earthly and heavenly **Jerusalem**). Within **Zion** is his **holy** hill, a specific location that refers to the earthly temple area in **Jerusalem**, as well as to the elevated throne room in heaven. This declaration speaks first to the present enthronement of Christ at the right hand of God, following his ascension, bestowing upon him the place of highest privilege and authority (Ps. 110:1–2; Acts 2:34–35). Ultimately, these words anticipate the return of Christ to earth and his

glorious enthronement during his one-thousand-year reign from **Jerusalem** (Rev. 20:1–10).

C the Intention of God (2:7–9)

SUPPORTING IDEA: What God has decreed, his Son the **Messiah** will execute, leading to his Father’s bestowal of a universal inheritance upon him.

2:7. As the third stanza now begins, the speaker shifts again. This time, the voice of God’s Son, Jesus Christ, is heard uttering, **I will proclaim the decree of the Lord**. All that the Father has planned and purposed in eternity past, the Son will proclaim and perform within time and history. In this eternal counsel, the Father spoke to the Son, **You are my Son; today I have become your Father**. This passage does not suggest that the second member of the **Godhead**, Jesus Christ, is a created being; this statement points to his incarnation (Heb. 1:5–6) and resurrection (Acts 13:33–34).

2:8. The fulfillment of this divine decree occurred in Christ’s incarnation and became the basis on which the Father said to the Son, **Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance**. Because of Christ’s submission to the Father’s will, God will bestow a rich legacy upon his Son—a vast inheritance that is now being progressively realized and will be fully transferred to him during the millennial kingdom.

The Father will give the Son **the ends of the earth** as his inheritance (Rev. 11:15). From among the nations, a large host of people previously given to him by the Father in eternity past (John 6:37, 39; 17:2, 24) will come to Christ and become his own possession.

2:9. Once enthroned at the Father’s right hand, the Son is promised, **You will rule them with an iron scepter**. So supreme will be the Son’s reign over his enemies that the execution of his final **judgment** is compared to a potter who will take an **iron scepter** and **dash them to pieces like pottery** (cp. Rev. 19:15). He will consign them to his relentless wrath in **hell** forever.

D the Invitation of God (2:10–12)

SUPPORTING IDEA: All sinners are warned to give up their rebellion and to humble themselves in submission to the Son and to embrace him before it is too late.

2:10. The identity of this speaker is not revealed; it is probably the voice of the Holy Spirit entreating through the psalmist. The invitation goes out, **Therefore, you kings, be wise; be warned, you rulers of the earth.** Those involved in this revolt against God must think carefully and cease from their long war with heaven.

2:11. Instead of resisting God, sinners must turn around and **serve the Lord with fear.** They must realign themselves with God. No longer should they serve themselves, but they should yield their service to God. This involves a changed heart that is filled with the fear of awe and reverence for God. Furthermore, they must **rejoice with trembling**, finding their greatest pleasure in God and submitting their deepest reverence to him.

2:12. Sinners must **kiss the Son**, a sign of humble submission to his **sovereignty** as a subject who lowers himself before his king (1 Sam. 10:1; 1 Kgs. 19:18). Loving devotion and loyal allegiance to Christ are required, **lest he be angry and you be destroyed in your way.** The choice is clear. It is better to bend than be broken. God urgently calls sinners to pay homage to the Son, **for his wrath can flare up in a moment.** While there is an opportunity to do so, sinners must turn from their wicked ways and embrace the Son by **faith**.

What will happen if they do? About all who submit to the Son, it can be said, **Blessed are all who take refuge in him.** To take refuge in the Lord is synonymous with having saving **faith** (John 5:24; Eph. 2:8–9). Sinners must kiss the Son today while God is speaking in **grace**; one day, he will speak in wrath.

MAIN IDEA REVIEW

In spite of the repeated attempts of man to resist God's kingdom, the Lord has established his Son as Lord over all and invites sinners to come and embrace him now before his wrath is unleashed.

VI. Deeper Discoveries

A. Nations (2:1)

This word (Heb. *goy*) refers to a group of people which make up a tribe or nation. The word is often used of the non-Israelite, Gentile nations that surrounded the nation of Israel (Deut. 4:38; Josh. 23:13) which was defined by a political or territorial affiliation or by ethnicity. It was also used of Abraham's descendants, the nation of Israel (Gen. 12:2; 17:20). When used of other nations or groups of people, they were usually pagan and described as wicked (Deut. 9:4–5), without understanding (Deut. 32:21), detestable (Deut. 18:9; 1 Kgs. 14:24; 2 Kgs. 16:3; 2 Chr. 28:3), idolators (2 Kgs. 17:29), ruthless (Isa. 25:3), and uncircumcised (Jer. 9:26). The Lord scoffs at the nations (Ps. 59:8), yet it is the nations whom the promised **Messiah** would redeem (Isa. 2:2; 11:10; 42:6; 60:10).

B. Vain (2:1)

This word (Heb. *rig*) means “emptiness,” “senseless,” or “futility.” It refers to the foolish plan of man to oppose God and to throw off his sovereign control. Such anarchy against God is insane and foolish.

C. The Anointed One (2:2)

The title “Anointed One” (Heb. *mashiah*) refers to any anointed king who was seated on the throne of David. Occurring about forty times in the Old Testament, it was used in reference to the office of the high priest (Lev. 4:3), kings (1 Sam. 24:6; Isa. 45:1), patriarchs (Ps. 105:15), and prophets (1 Kgs. 19:16). To be the Lord's anointed implied a special relationship with God, being chosen, consecrated, and commissioned by him for a special function or task. Nowhere is this demonstrated more clearly than when David stood before Samuel and the Lord said to Samuel, “Rise and anoint him; he is the one” (1 Sam. 16:12). It is from *mashiah* that the English word **Messiah** is derived.

But ultimately the title finds its fulfillment in the New Testament. In fact, “Christ” is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew term **Messiah**, both meaning “the Anointed One.” The psalmist's reference to the Anointed One goes beyond King David to the Lord Jesus, who is the Christ. The early church understood that this psalm was fulfilled by the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 2:32; Heb. 1:5; 5:5).

D. Lord (2:4)

The word *Lord* (Heb. *adonay*) means “master” or “lord.” *Adonay* signifies majesty or intensification and is always used of God. Found throughout the Hebrew Bible, in the Pentateuch it is used as a reverent way of addressing God (Exod. 4:10, 13; Josh. 7:8). *Adonay* is prominent in the prophets and is used fifty-five times in the Psalms. Its use in certain passages, “Lord of all the earth” (Josh. 3:13; Ps. 97:5; Mic. 4:13), “Lord of lords” (Deut. 10:17), and the contexts of other passages alludes to the meaning of *adonay* as the sovereign Lord who has ultimate authority, power, and rule. It is used of the **Messiah** in Psalm 110:1.

E. Dash Them to Pieces (2:9)

This phrase or the word *break* (Heb. *raa*) means “to shatter into pieces” or “to be broken up” (Job. 34:24; Jer. 15:12). It is used of God afflicting **judgment** upon the righteous (Jer. 25:29; 31:28; Mic. 4:6; Zech. 8:14). Elihu used *raa* in a similar way to demonstrate the punishment of sinners by God (Job 34:24).

VII. Teaching Outline

A. The Insurrection Against God (1–3)

1. Men are scheming vainly (1b)
2. Men are standing defiantly (2)
3. Men are speaking arrogantly (3)
 - a. Let us break their chains (3a)
 - b. Let us throw off their fetters (3b)

B. The Indignation of God (4–6)

1. God scoffs in derision (4)
2. God speaks in displeasure (5–6)
 - a. He will terrify his adversaries (5)
 - b. He will enthrone his anointed (6)

C. The Intention of God (7–9)

1. My Son will rule the nations (7)

2. My Son will inherit the nations (8)
3. My Son will judge the nations (9)
 - a. Breaking them with a rod (9a)
 - b. Shattering them like pottery (9b)
- D. The Invitation of God (10–12)
 1. Be wise (10a)
 2. Be warned (10b)
 3. Serve the Lord (11a)
 4. Rejoice with trembling (11b)
 5. Kiss the Son (12)
 6. Take refuge in him (12b)

VIII. Issues for Discussion

1. How have I sought to resist God's rule over my life?
2. How should the **sovereignty** of God be a comfort to my heart as I live in a chaotic world?
3. Have I come to embrace God's Son?
4. To whom do I need to witness regarding the **Messiah** of God and the **judgment** he will bring?¹

¹ Steven Lawson, [*Psalms 1–75*](#), ed. Max Anders, vol. 11, Holman Old Testament Commentary (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2004), 20–28.