



MATT BLACK, Sun, Dec 3, 2017
Christmas Psalms series

1 | PSALM 2

BORN TO RULE

Outline

The Setting

The Fullness of Time

Jerusalem without a King

1. The War Against God's King (2:1-3)

Man's War for Independence

A Dress Rehearsal for Armageddon

Plotting to Overturn the Order of God's Creation

Herod's War against Jesus

Two Kings – Enemies, Now Friends

The Last War: Armageddon

What About You?

2. The Victory of God's King (2:4-6)

God Laughs: No Contest

Jesus Coronated

Wrath Stirred

3. The Promise for God's King (2:7-9)

Jesus' Words of Coronation

God's King, a Picture, a Signpost

Ask of Me: A Redeemed Heritage or a Rebel?

4. The Wisdom of God's King (2:10-12)

Be Wise

Be Warned

Be Submitted

Be Blessed

Announcements

1. Welcome Visitors!
2. Tonight, free sacred concert, Schaumburg Christian High School Choir, 6pm
3. The Kid's Christmas Play is next Sunday evening, 5pm. Bring cookies for the cookie fellowship afterward.

Jesus Christ is the King of kings and Lord of lords. What a beautiful and important truth to remember as we begin our Christmas season. Our attention will be devoted this morning to Psalm 2.

When I was a child, my favorite superhero was Superman. I loved how bad guys would shoot at Superman, and he would catch their bullets. Once someone shot a missile at him and he caught it and sent it to disintegrate in outer space. In other words, who ever faced Superman had an unfair contest.

That's how it is in Psalm 2. The Psalm begins with the enemies of Jesus and tells how they have no chance against the Lord. This is an unfair fight.

None the less, there is a great war against Christ, as it has been from the beginning. Obviously this was written first about David's coronation. This is a coronation Psalm. Though there is no superscription as to who the author is, we need look no further than Peter and John the apostles, who quoted this Psalm when they were released from the Jews, and they said it is David who wrote it.

They also push the meaning of the Psalm beyond King David. There is a greater king that David has in mind: Jesus Christ.

David a messiah, but not *the* Messiah

When we read this Psalm, we need to understand that the king of Israel is called a messiah. He is the mediator for the nation. And yet we quickly see that King David, as powerful as he is, is nothing near what is being spoken of in this Psalm. He is pointing toward a greater Kingdom for a greater King, to *the* Messiah.

This Psalm would be read in ancient Israel on two occasions: for the coronation of a new king and after a great victory had been won over another nation. This Psalm looks forward to the day when the true and ultimate Messiah, Jesus Christ, will rule and reign over the nations forever and ever.

Born to Rule

The most famous words of this **Psalm** is **2:7**, "I will tell of the decree: The Lord said to me, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you." *The decree* enlarges on the pledge of adoption given to David's heir in **2 Samuel 7:14**, "I will be his father and he shall be my son."¹ The "today" of the verse is the day of the king's coronation. This is used of Jesus at his resurrection (Acts 13:33). But in a real way, Jesus is **begotten** – birthed by the virgin Mary. He is born to be King. He is born to rule the nations.

¹ Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1-72: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 15, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1973), 67.

Scripture Reading

Hear the Word of the Lord. Psalm 2, “Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? 2 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his Anointed, saying, 3 “Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us.”

4 He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision. 5 Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying, 6 “As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill.” 7 I will tell of the decree: The Lord said to me, “You are my Son; today I have begotten you. 8 Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. 9 You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.”

10 Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. 11 Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. 12 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.” This is God's Word.

THE SETTING

David likely wrote this reflecting on all his great victories as king. As I said, in later days, this Psalm was used at the coronation of Israel's king. Yet, the victories David had did not extend to the super powers even of his day. He did not fulfill this Psalm.

There was a short period in David's lifetime when the king of Israel did rule a small empire, but generally nations such as Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, and Greece could indeed have laughed at the idea that Yahweh was going to control their destinies by means of the king he anointed. Usually the nations were invading, besieging, defeating, killing, transporting, taxing, and generally making life unpleasant for Israel.²

This Psalm belongs to someone else, someone greater than David – not *a* messiah, but *the* Messiah. The only hope for humanity was promised to come as King of kings, and David knew it.

THE FULLNESS OF TIME

Let us think of the fulfillment of Psalm 2. **Galatians 4:4-5** says, “when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those who were under the law...” There would come a time when Jesus would be born to die and redeem God's people. But he wasn't just born to die. He is born to rule and reign over the earth. When would this king come to rule and reign? When would he come to uphold the government of earth upon his shoulders?

JERUSALEM WITHOUT A KING

At the time of Jesus birth, it had been a hundred and sixty years since Jerusalem's last ruler, Judas Maccabeus, had ruled over Judea. The people of Israel were waiting for God's ultimate Messiah to come. The Temple had been rebuilt by Herod, and it was magnificent in it's appearance, not quite the size of Ezekiel's temple, but still so impressive. Indeed, it was one of the architectural wonders of the ancient world.

² John Goldingay, *Psalms for Everyone, Part 1: Psalms 1–72*, Old Testament for Everyone (Louisville, KY: London: Westminster John Knox Press; Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2013), 11.

At the time of Jesus birth, Judea was waiting for their king. It had been over six hundred years since the last Davidic king had been coronated with Psalm 2. Israel was now a vassal state of Rome, and Herod the Great had been proclaimed “King of the Jews” by the Roman Senate.³ They had been told in the days of Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi that the King of all kings would be returning soon. He would be someone greater than David and Solomon.

Isaiah described him in **9:6-7**, “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore.”

And so, Living Hope Church, I am recommending a coronation celebration today! The people of Jesus day did not read Psalm 2 as a coronation Psalm for the king. But we can read it today.

1. THE WAR AGAINST GOD’S KING (2:1-3)

MAN’S WAR FOR INDEPENDENCE

There’s a whole lot of people who don’t want Jesus to be king. This is why the question is asked: “Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain?” (2:1) David was anointed to be king by the Prophet Samuel. Remember David’s predecessor, **King Saul**, did not want David to be king. There were numerous hostile attempts at his life even before David became king.

“Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain?” (2:1). We all know the answer. We all want to rule our own lives. We all want **independence** on an individual level. There is a natural opposition that mankind has toward God’s rule.

We think we create our own plans for ourselves, but we did not create ourselves. We did not design our bodies and our intellects. God did that. God owns us, and God knows what how to direct to live the way life is designed. **We need to live in deep dependence upon God.** We all want to believe that we can live independently from God. We “plot in vain” for this, both at an individual and national level. The word “plot” means to meditate and think about something incessantly.

A DRESS REHEARSAL FOR ARMAGEDDON

Who are the people that “plot in vain”? **2:2**, “The kings of the earth set themselves.” Literally they “take a stand... against the Lord and against his Anointed.” This is a dress rehearsal for Armageddon when all the armies of the earth take their stand against Jesus Christ. We are in a spiritual war aren’t we? The rulers of the earth have always been at war against God. Whether it be...

- **President Donald Trump’s** idolatry of materialism or
- **Barack Obama’s** desire for a global economy and culture

³ Sandra Sweeney Silver. *Footprints in Parchment: Rome Versus Christianity 30-313 AD* (Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2013), 188.

Do you understand that these are two wings on the same bird? Both promote the religion of self. This is the deception in America. Most of our politics promote the religion of self – taking a stand against the YHWH and his blessed Anointed Son Jesus Christ. There is no utopia here on earth whether it is nationalism or globalism. Do you hear me saints? This world’s kings and presidents for the most part have “taken a stand” against our Lord and his government. All the political rhetoric that we hear every two-year political cycle says the same thing: “I can promise utopia on earth.” “Our problem is **immigration.**” Wrong. “Our problem is **taxes.**” Wrong. Our problem is we **need more economic prosperity.** Wrong again.

The root problem is **sin.** We worship the **idol** of self. We need to worship **Christ.** Our problem is a **worship** problem. We need to exchange self for the true Savior, Jesus Christ.

PLOTTING TO OVERTURN THE ORDER OF GOD’S CREATION

Today governments and political campaigns talk as if we are going to live forever. It’s fine to help humanity, but the nations of this world are **plotting together** to overturn the order of God’s creation with: **homosexual marriage**, tearing down God’s assignment of **gender** and **gender roles**, questioning **masculinity and femininity** and so much more. Soon the Gospel will be **outlawed** because it commands people to repent.

But these peoples and nations are planning in a futile way. It is absolutely vain to think anyone could turn over the order of God’s creation as if they owned this earth. “The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof” (**Psa 19:1**).

The big question is: “Why?” Why fight an unwinnable war? Why fight against the Almighty? “Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain?” (**Psa 2:1**). David when he writes this is not surprised or worried about the kings that “stand against” YHWH and his Christ. It is a why of amazement. Why? What’s the point? It’s completely unwinnable.

- Dads and moms, **why** would you lead your home without Christ at the center? Why?
- Young people, **why** would enter into adulthood without Christ having firm and undeniable control of your life? Why?
- Husbands and wives, **why** would you be joined in holy matrimony to reflect Jesus’ love, only to ignore Jesus and fight for your own way? Why?
- **Why**, oh why would any of us live in any kind of sin or attitude of self, knowing that to sin is to “take a stand” against God’s Anointed King Jesus?

HEROD’S WAR AGAINST JESUS

Let me introduce you to another man that tried to war against Jesus to no avail. His name? Herod the Great. He was named “king of the Jews” by the Roman Senate around the time of Jesus birth. Herod the Great was offended by any threat to his rulership. Herod was fulfilling the ancient prophecy of Psalm 2: “The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his Anointed, saying, 3 “Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us” (2:2-3).

King Herod (the Great) is an absolute maniac. He’s someone that cannot be trusted. Herod uses brute force to get his way. He is like a terrorist with a license. He is a very

dangerous man. Joseph and his family were immediately to begin fleeing, and were not to stop until they were safely within Egypt and beyond the reach of Herod. It is likely that the holy family went to Alexandria Egypt where there was a population of over a million Jews at that time. This is a trip of about 300 miles.

Matthew 2:13-16, “Now when they [*the wise men*] had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, ‘Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.’ 14 And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt 15 and remained there until the death of Herod. 16 Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men.”

Herod was ruthless. Herod had always been ruthless, but in his later years, he was especially terrifying. He murdered his favorite wife, Mariamne, had her two sons strangled, and, as a last act of his long and violent career, had Antipater, another son, executed for promoting himself too precipitously as his heir.

Caesar Augustus once said of Herod, it would be better to be one of Herod’s swine than one of his sons. Herod was a gentile pretending to be a Jew, and so he would not eat pork. So it is sad that this monster treated his swine better than his own sons.

So Herod slaughters the children 2 years and younger. With a population of 300, theologians estimate Bethlehem would have had between 12 and 20 children that age. So basically we have the equivalent or worse of the Sandy Hook Killer as the Governor of Judea.

In an age of atrocities, the murder of these children would have been merely one additional cruelty but sadly this was not a particularly striking one at that. Herod would stop at nothing to keep his throne.

TWO KINGS – ENEMIES, NOW FRIENDS

Psalm 2 had implications for the day Jesus was crucified. Two kings, Pontius Pilate and another Herod – *Herod Antipas* – hated each other. What would bring the kings of the earth together, namely Pontius Pilate and Herod? They hated each other, but on the day of Jesus’ crucifixion, they became great friends. They had something in common. They wanted to please the people. They wanted Jesus dead. **Herod Antipas died a horrible death!**

THE LAST WAR: ARMAGEDDON

Armageddon is the name of the last war on planet earth. The population of earth (nicknamed the “Babylonian whore”) will be setting up her utopia on earth. She is the woman that rides the beast – the anti-Christian ruler(s) and their government. We read about it in **Revelation 17:14**, “They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful.”

You say, Pastor Matt, I didn’t know we were going to talk about war this morning. Yes, this is really what Christmas is all about. Jesus is God’s Christ, his Messiah King who has come to defeat all those who reject his rule.

WHAT ABOUT YOU?

What about you? Are you at war or at peace with Jesus Christ? Have you come to Christ? Is he your king? Why would you fight against the living God? Why would you stand against him when it is completely vain? It's an unwinnable battle.

2. THE VICTORY OF GOD'S KING (2:4-6)

GOD LAUGHS: NO CONTEST

The scene shifts from earth to heaven. Now we get a vision of God. He "sits in the heavens." His enemies are earthbound, but he sits enthroned with all power and authority. The kings of the earth who oppose him are fragile and small. He is omnipotent and unlimited in what he can do. What is God doing in the heavens? Laughing. Victory is guaranteed for the Almighty and his Son. **Psalm 2:4**, "He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision." The Lord is not disturbed by the rebellion on earth. He laughs! He scorns them. God is unassailable, untouchable by flesh and blood.

How silly it is go to war against the omnipotent King! Anyone who fights against God is not thinking straight. Whoever would ignore God's summons to you to surrender is not in their right mind. David says God laughs at anyone who thinks they can live outside of his rule and get away with it. It's no contest. No one can defeat our Almighty King!

The devil rages against the Lord and his King. But the devil is nothing. All the king of the earth are nothing. The Lord laughs. No contest whatsoever.

JESUS CORONATED

God speaks to the kings and terrifies them in his fury. There is no king but Jesus! He is jealous for the glory and honor of his Son. Listen to him speak to anyone who opposes Jesus. 2:5-6, "Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying, 6 'As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill.'"

Listen, God tolerates no opposition, competition or even apathy toward Jesus. You cannot simply take him or leave him. YHWH has set Jesus on Zion, his "holy hill," referring to the Jerusalem Temple.

God says, "As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill" (2:6). Who is God's king? Jesus! This is Christmas language. Zion's Temple was the physical and geographical manifestation of God's presence. The glory pillar rested above the mercy seat in the Temple's holy of holies. King David was "set on Zion's... holy hill" upon his coronation, but he did not represent God's glory in it's fullness. King David and all the kings of Israel were nothing more than a faint ember.

Jesus is God's chosen King to rule the world. Glorious Jesus is set on Zion's hill by his Father. Do you know this King? Christ is "the image of the invisible God" (**Col 1:15**). Jesus is the ultimate King for humanity. "Every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father" (**Phil 2:11**).

WRATH STIRRED

God tells everyone that Jesus is king “in his fury” (2:5). “Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury.” God is furious and wrathful that anyone would worship or honor any other king but Jesus.

God’s wrath abides upon anyone who is not currently surrendered to Jesus in a born-again relationship with his Son as King. This is not just the language of the Old Testament. This is the language of the most beloved chapters, John 3, in the New Testament. Look at **John 3:36**, “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.” This is Psalm 2 language. God’s wrath remains on anyone who doesn’t obey Jesus.

Do you obey Jesus? Is it the very blazing center of your life to give him honor and glory? Does obedience to Christ bring you happiness?

3. THE PROMISE FOR GOD’S KING (2:7-9)

JESUS’ WORDS OF CORONATION

David, and ultimately our Lord Jesus, is declared to be God’s “Son” through a decree, a *promise*. The kings of Israel were considered “sons of God” in the sense of representative kingly judges. King David is promised by YHWH to have “the ends of the earth” as his inheritance. Here we have not merely the *words of David*, but the **words of Jesus**. “I will tell of the decree: The LORD [YHWH] said to me, “You are my Son; today I have begotten you. 8 Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. 9 You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel” (2:7-9).”

GOD’S KING, A PICTURE, A SIGNPOST

This Psalm is a coronation Psalm. The Davidic king is a picture and a signpost pointing to a greater King, a Greater Son. The promise of 2 Samuel 7 is here repeated for God’s earthly king. *The decree* is a promise of adoption for David in **2 Samuel 7:14**, “I will be his father and he shall be my son.”⁴ The “today” of the verse is the day of the king’s coronation. God adopts Israel’s king as a son on the day of his coronation.

Jesus is God’s Son coronated as God’s King. Jesus is *eternally* God’s Son and King as the second Person of the Trinity. He is *incarnationally* the God’s Son and King by being born from the virgin in Bethlehem. He is crowned *triumphantly* over sin and death as God’s Son and King at his resurrection. He is enthroned *eternally* as God’s Son and King of all kings at his ascension.

ASK OF ME: A REDEEMED HERITAGE OR A REBEL?

Jesus is crowned king for **two reasons** in the text. He’s going to the redeem the nations and make them his heritage. So Jesus was born to redeem and to rule and reign over a group of people from “the ends of the earth” (2:8).

⁴ Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1–72: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 15, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1973), 67.

2:8-9, “Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. 9 You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel”

Are you a redeemed heritage or are you a rebel? One day the Lord is coming “in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus” (2 Thess 1:8). He shall “break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel” (2:9).

For those who confide and trust and surrender to the Lordship of God's King Jesus, you will be his inheritance. You will be God's child. No hurt or harm will come to you. “No weapon formed against you shall prosper” (Isa 54:17). If you hide in Jesus, you will be saved from wrath. When the angel appeared to Joseph, he said, “Mary will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins” (Mt 1:21).

But if you resist his rule, and if you think you can live your life without him at the very control center of your life, then you will be “dashed to pieces like a potter's vessel.” Bow the knee to Jesus! That's really our next point.

4. THE WISDOM OF GOD'S KING (2:10-12)

BE WISE

Here is a call for wisdom. **Psalm 2:10**, “Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth” (2:10).

David is speaking here, and he says – assess your situation – “be wise!” (2:10a). Don't make a foolish decision. Don't keep making decisions in your life that are self-motivated instead of God-motivated. Stop living the self-life. Stop it right now.

Be wise and willing and humble. A wise person is a teachable person. Are you hungry to learn all about God's Anointed King Jesus and all about his kingdom? Are you humble to receive his instruction and obey him?

He speaks to the “kings” (v 1) and “rulers” (v 2) of the earth. In other words, this is for everyone. If the kings and rulers and people with power on the earth are to surrender to Christ, then all of us should surrender.

BE WARNED

This is a warning. “Be warned, O rulers of the earth” (2:10b). Be warned that you will be crushed if you stand against God's king. Jesus said it this way in **Matthew 21:44**, “And the one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him.” Have you been **broken by Jesus**? Have you come to the place where you have surrendered your life to him? Yes it's **messy** when you follow Jesus. But if you don't follow him, you will be **turned to powder!**

BE SUBMITTED

Be wise, be warned, and be submitted. Here is a call for surrender. **Psalm 2:11**, “Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. 12 Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled” (2:11-12a).

Submission is the only acceptable response to God's king. You see, God has told you to come to Jesus with fear and trembling. Whatever you are afraid of if you keep hanging on to the world is nothing compared to what happens to those who do not bow to Christ.

"Kiss the Son!" Pay homage to him. Surrender to him. The only other alternative is to burn in hell forever. "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled" (2:12a).

You see St. Paul says that "God has highly exalted [Jesus] and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil 2:9-11). Have you bowed your knee to Christ?

Do you have a testimony? Was there a time in your life when you gave the rule of your life over to Jesus? Can you say you have one goal in life, that is to please God and to carry out the will of your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ?

BE BLESSED

"Blessed are all who take refuge in him" (2:12b). Child of God, can you testify that you are blessed in Jesus? The person "blessed" in Christ (Eph 1:4) is "is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers" (Ps 1:3). Every day you will be more and more blessed no matter what is happening in your life. God's blessing for you is not a new car or a better house or straightening out your finances. All those things can actually be more of a curse than a blessing. God's blessing on you is to conform you to Jesus' image through the hurt and the harms and even the blessings and benefits of life. And at the Second Coming of Christ, you will not need to hide. You will be blessed. You will stand in the congregation of the blessed in the final judgment.

Conclusion: Afraid, but Fears Settled

Be wise saints! Humble yourselves before the King of kings! When I was little, my father took me up to the top of the First National Bank building in Chicago next to the Sears' Tower. He wanted me to meet the chairman of the board. This was a very rich and powerful man. We went up and up and up. I saw him. I was afraid. He was an important man. I greeted him. He was kind to me and gave me a candy. He settled my fears. I'll never forget it. I was afraid, but he was so kind.

One day we are all going to meet Jesus. You may be afraid to meet him. You should be afraid. Do you know him? If not, come to Jesus. He says, "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

He will settle your fears! Come to Jesus and be blessed. If you reject him or ignore him you have no hope! Do not run from God's kindness. There will come a day when it will be too late. "Kiss the Son!" "Blessed are all who take refuge in him" (2:12b).

This is what Christmas is all about. Jesus came to bless you. Jesus came to rule in you. Jesus came that you might take refuge in him! Amen! Merry Christmas!

SOLI DEO GLORIA
