

The Glory And Greatness Of The Messiah-King Psalm 2

Introduction:

- 1) Beginning with the Fall in Genesis, mankind has looked for the deliverer promised by God. As Scripture unfolds and history rolls on, step by step, piece by piece, God has painted the portrait of this Savior.
 - Gen 3:15 He will crush the head of the Serpent (Satan).
 - Gen 12:1-3 He will come from Abraham.
 - Gen. 49:10 He will be of the tribe of Judah from whom the scepter shall not depart, until Shiloh (Peace) comes.
 - Deut. 18:15 He will be a prophet greater than Moses.
 - 2 Sam. 7:5-16 He will be a Son of David and a Son of God whose throne and kingdom will be established forever.
- 2) Now in Psalm 2, against this marvelous backdrop, we are granted further insight in a song that celebrates the Coronation of the King, that celebrates the glory and greatness of the Messiah-King.
- 3) Psalm 2 is a royal Psalm, a coronation Psalm for the King. It was written at a specific time for a specific King; Acts 4:25 informs the author is David. Perhaps he penned the Psalm for, or in reflection of his own ascension to the throne. Perhaps he wrote it for Solomon. Deposited in the sanctuary, it would have been retrieved for subsequent coronations or similar celebrations. And yet, as the fortunes of the nation of Israel turned dark because of its sin, idolatry and rebellion, and she faced exile and foreign oppression, Psalm 2 began to function as a Psalm of hope as the people of God looked not to the past and the glory days of David, but to the future and the greater Son of

David and His greater glory. They looked and longed for the great Messiah-King, the Christ, the Anointed One of God who would usher in a cosmic and universal kingdom as the enthroned King of God (*Yahweh*) Himself.

- 4) Psalms 1 and 2 serve as the preface to the psalter. These twin songs began and end with the theme of blessedness (1:1; 2:12). Kidner helpfully points out, “the private world of the first Psalm opens out into the public world of the second; the personal is followed by the cosmic...one is domestic and the other international” (p. 23). Further, what we see is that the blessed Man of Psalm 1 becomes and is the Messiah-King of Psalm 2. The blessed righteous of Psalm 1 are the blessed humble who trust this King in Psalm 2. The wicked scoffers in Psalm 1 are the foolish rebels in Psalm 2.
- 5) This Psalm finds its climatic fulfillment in the Lord Jesus Christ. Note surprisingly it is one of the most often quoted Psalms in the New Testament. William Van Gemeren notes the significance the 1st century church attached to this psalm.

“The second psalm is one of the psalms most quoted in the NT. It was favored by the apostles as scriptural confirmation of Jesus’ messianic office and his expected glorious return with power and authority. The writers of the synoptic Gospels alluded to Psalm 2 in their account of Jesus’ baptism, when the Father proclaimed him to be his son (v.7; cf. Matt 3:17; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22). The first-century church applied the second psalm to the Messiah as an explanation of the crucifixion of Christ by the rulers (Herod and Pontius Pilate), the nations, and Israel (the priests, scribes, and Pharisees). They had conspired together against the Messiah of God (Acts 4:25-28). Paul applied it to Jesus’ ministry: his sonship, resurrection, and ascension to glory, which confirmed God’s promises in Jesus as *the* Messiah (Acts 13:32-33). Psalm 2:8 is similarly applied in Hebrews, where the glory of the Messiah as “the exact representation of his [God’s] being” is revealed in Jesus’ suffering for sins, in his authority “at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven” (1:3), and in his authority over angelic beings (1:5-6). The apostle John reveals the greatness of the Messiah’s victory. He was born of a woman but is destined to “rule all the nations with an iron scepter” (Rev 12:5). He is the

Rider on the white horse who will “strike down the nations” in the day of God’s wrath (Rev 19:15; cf. 11:16-18).

The apostolic witness makes it clear that the second psalm has a messianic dimension. While it is preferable to understand the psalm first in its historical and literary setting as a “royal psalm,” the eyes of faith must look beyond it to the powerful message of the full establishment of God’s kingdom in Jesus Christ (EBC, vol. 5, p. 65).

6) This coronation psalm of celebration naturally divides into 4 stanzas of 3 verses each.

In it David declares that the truly wise will humble themselves and submit to the authority of the Messiah-King because God has appointed Him, and He will put down anyone and everyone who opposes and rebels against his sovereign rule.

I. First Stanza: See the fools who rebel in sinful insurrection 2:1-3

God’s people look forward, yes we long, for the time when all aspects of this psalm are fulfilled in the reign of the Messiah-King. However, not everyone feels this way. Sadly, most do not. This has been true in the past, and it will be true until the end of time. David sees the nations and their leaders rising up against God and His anointed King. In the process he sounds a warning all persons should heed.

1) Be careful when you scheme 2:1

- The Psalm begins with a rhetorical question: “Why do the nations rage, and the people plot a vain thing?” The psalmist, David, is amazed and astonished that the people on earth would rebel and conspire against the God of heaven (v.4).
- Like the raging waves of the sea during a storm the peoples of the earth in a wild rage conspire against the Lord.
- In their rebellion that plot against the Lord. The word “plot” is the same root word translated as “meditate” in Psalm 1:2. The godly meditate day and night

on the law of the Lord, but the nations surrounding God's people (in the context of the day the nation of Israel) mediate in empty, foolish rebellion against God and His authority. Brilliant perhaps in the eyes of the world, the nations and their leaders are empty heads to conspire against the Lord of heaven. What does this conspiring look like in the modern context? BBC president Mike Randell says it looks like the "Paganizing of Our Culture" that is diminishing and silencing our Christian influence and values. In particular he cites 9 change agents that are dominate: 1) The banning of Bible reading in our schools, 2) Prayer in public assemblies diminished or eliminated, 3) abortion, 4) feminism attacking biblical marriage and family, 5) pornography, 6) homosexuality, 7) gambling, 8) drugs and alcohol use, and 9) cults, new age religions, and the occult (Charles Lyons, *Urban Current*, Sept. 2006, in *Baptist Bible Tribune*, p. 19). This is the modern plotting of those who oppose and reject God in their lives.

- In Acts 4:25-27 Peter saw this verse fulfilled in the murder of God's "holy servant Jesus whom God anointed" (2:2). He notes that Herod, Pontius Pilate, the Gentiles and the people of Israel all conspired together to crucify the Son of God. Here was the ultimate act of defiant scheming against God. All who refuse to submit to the Lordship of Jesus in their life align themselves with these who foolishly reject God's authority.

2) Be careful where you stand 2:2

- The leaders and rulers of the nations are now the focus of attention. Acting out the thoughts of their evil hearts, they take a public stand against Yahweh and His

Messiah. The irony of the situation is breathtaking. The kings of the earth are setting themselves against the King of heaven! It does not get more foolish than this.

- The counsel of the wicked in Psalm 1 is now the wicked counsel of the kings and rulers of the earth. The thought of the great leaders of the earth coming together for counsel, or even taking a stand against some opponent would not seem unusual or out of order except for one thing: It is “against the Lord (*Yahweh*) and against His Anointed” (*Mashiah*/Messiah). Standing in opposition and plotting evil against God’s Messiah is nothing less than opposing and plotting against God!
- The righteous/blessed Man of Psalm 1 is not wanted or desired by these political rulers and leaders. We don’t want Him they say in taking their stand against Him.

3) Be careful what you say 2:3

- What was in the hearts of these rebels not flows freely from their mouths. With defiance and determination they declare their intention to be free from this “sky God” and His puppet lackey!
- Let us break their bonds (*NIV*, chains) in pieces, and cast away their cords (*NIV*, fetters) from us. They will not be lord, we will. “Chains and fetters” picture the yoke of a cart or plow placed on the necks of animals for service. This is how they see the authority of the Lord’s authority in their lives and they will have none of it. It is not just rejected, it is thrown off. “This man will not rule over us” (cf. Luke 19:14). They declare freedom from the Lord and His Anointed.

Illustration: This attitude of ancient Israel’s neighbors has not waned over the centuries. In the “Lowell Lecture” (1992) given at Harvard Un., Gore Vidal declares “an all-out war on the monotheists” and their “sky God”, the God that David describes in v.4.

The great unmentionable evil at the center of our culture is monotheism. From a barbaric Bronze Age text known as the Old Testament, three anti-human religions have evolved – Judaism, Christianity, Islam. These are sky-god religions. They are, literally, patriarchal –God is the omnipotent father—hence the loathing of women for 2,000 years in those countries afflicted by the sky-god and his earthly male delegates. The sky-god is a jealous god, of course. He requires total obedience from everyone on earth, as he is in place not for just one tribe but for all creation. Those who would reject him must be converted or killed for their own good. Ultimately, totalitarianism is the only sort of politics that can truly serve the sky-god’s purpose. Any movement of a liberal nature endangers his authority and that of his delegates on earth. One God, one King, one Pope, one master in the factory, one father-leader in the family home. (Mohler blog, 8-31-06).

Transition: See the fools who rebel in sinful insurrection.

II. Second Stanza: See the God who ridicules with scathing indignation 2:4-6

- Those who scoff and mock God in Psalm 1:1 are now mocked themselves with divine laughter and derision in 2:4. They may laugh at God and His ways, but it is the Lord and His Messiah who will have the last laugh.
- Verses 1-2 describe the actions of the earthly kings, and v.3 their speech. Verses 4-5 describe the response of the Heavenly King, and v.6 His speech. Here is heaven’s response to the arrogant earthlings. Hear now the Father roar from heaven’s throne.

1) God derides the senseless peoples 2:4-5

- God sits (*NIV* “enthroned”) in heaven as sovereign Lord over all creation. He laughs, ridicules the foolish leaders of the earth and those who follow them. He is Lord over all and they are lords over nothing. He laughs and “He scoffs” (*NIV*), He holds them in derision, in contempt. Boice says, “he does not even rise from where he is sitting. He simply “laughs” at these great imbeciles” (p. 24).
- In verse 5 God announces how He will deal with the rebels of the earth. He has an announcement to make (v. 6), and He will do so in wrath and displeasure.

2) God declares His sovereign plan. 2:6

- The rulers claim they will be thrown off the Lord’s yoke and sovereign rule over them (vs. 2-3), but the Lord responds simply and yet clearly “I have installed my King, On My Holy Hill in Zion.”
- Yet could be translated but and is a strong contrastive, “But as for me.” It is common in the psalms. “They may do such and so, but as for me ...” (Ross).
- Set, “I, myself (it is intensive) have here and now (perf. tense) installed My King,” My Anointed, My chosen ruler over the earth. The place from which this King will rule is Mt. Zion, the mountain on which David built his city and designated as the location for the temple. It is a holy mountain, set apart for the worship of the LORD.
- The rebellious and raging tribes of the earth may yell and scream, plot and plan, but God will see to it that a Davidic King will rule over the nations. It is like pigmies trying to face down a giant. 2 Sam. 7:12-14 will come to pass. God speaking to David said, “I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish His kingdom. He shall build a house for My name,

and I will establish the throne of His kingdom forever. I will be his Father, and he shall be my son...”

Transition: This leads to our 3rd stanza where this anointed Son of David now speaks.

III. Third Stanza: See the Son who reigns with a supreme inheritance 2:7-9

God’s Messiah now speaks, responding to the nations who have rejected Him and to the God who has chosen Him. Hebrew kings, esp. those in the Davidic lineage, used the language of adoption, denoting that their installation into the office of King placed them in a unique relationship to the God who sovereignly put them there. In this sense the words are figurative and yet, they take on a literal fulfillment in the greater Son, Jesus. What these David kings were anticipating the final king, the greatest son of David, who would realize. In the fullest sense all that these words promise and foretell will come to fruition in Jesus the Messiah.

1) The Son will be revealed to the nations 2:7

- The divinely appointed King, God’s Messiah, now declares, publicly proclaims the promise made to Him by the Lord. “I will declare (*NIV*, “proclaim”) the decree: The Lord has said to Me,

“You are my Son, Today I have begotten You.”
- This King has received a word from the Lord Himself declaring a Father/son relationship, a unique and special relationship. This Davidic King is by birth and promise the “Son of God.” Here it is the son repeating what He was told by God who is His Father. However in the Baptism of Jesus, it is the Father declaring from heaven for all of Creation to hear, “This is my Beloved Son” (Matt. 3:17; Mark 1:11, Luke 3:22). But, the voice from heaven does not stop there. It adds

the words of Isaiah 42:1, “In whom I am well pleased.” The significance of this is monumental. Jesus is the Lord’s Anointed, the Messiah, the Christ. He is God’s Son. And, He is also the Servant of the Lord, the Suffering Servant of Isaiah’s prophecy. He will reign over a universal kingdom, but one brought into existence by His suffering and word of redemption. Psalm 2 and Isaiah 42:1 are wed and the portrait of the Messiah is made clear.

- Now the phrase “today I have begotten you” comes into light, made plain by the resurrection from the dead. Acts 13:33 sees the resurrection as the occasion of vindication of Jesus’ divine Sonship. Romans 1:4 can declare that Jesus Christ is “our Lord, who was born of the seed of David, according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God... by the resurrection of the dead.” Hebrews 1:5 can unite the theme of resurrection to heavenly exaltation, quoting the psalm with the exact same significance, and declare that in resurrection/exaltation God has declared the coronation of King Jesus who now sits at His right hand. Hebrews 5:5 can further unite the Kingly motif with the priestly idea so that great David’s greater Son is now exalted and enthroned as a King-Priest, a Messiah-Priest, after the order of Melchizedek. Here is the full disclosure of Ezekiel 34’s “True Shepherd”, whom the Lord describes as “My servant David, a prince among them” (34:24). Here then is the fulfillment of Is. 9:6-7; the Child born and the Son given... “Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end. Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom to order it and establish it with judgment and justice, from this time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of host will perform this.” “I have set my King” says the Lord. And what was

originally a beautiful figure of speech is now a declaration of a literal historical reality and vindication in David's greater son, God's Son, the Lord Jesus, established now and forever.

- You want to know if Jesus is the anointed Son of God? Look to His empty tomb. Look to His exalted throne at God's right hand.

The Son will be/has been revealed to the nations!

2) The Son will rule over the nations 2:8-9

- In the Hebrew Bible the books of the Bible are arranged differently from ours, as the Law, the Prophets and the Writings. Interestingly the last of the prophets is Malachi. The first of the writings is Psalms. In Malachi 4 God says a day is coming when the proud and wicked will be stubble and burned up. But to those who fear the Lord's name and remember the Law of Moses, they shall see the Son of righteousness rise with healing in His wings. They will grow fat like stall-fed calves while the wicked will be trampled and be like ashes under the soles of your feet on the day God does this.
- The Law of the Lord remembered as in Ps. 1:2?
The wicked destroyed as in Ps. 1:6 and 2:12?
All of this accomplished by the Anointed Son, the Righteous Son as in 2:8-9?
Malachi opens the door for Messiah.
Psalm 2 sees Him come marching in!
God tells His Son "just ask, I will give you the nations as Your inheritance, the ends of the earth Your possession."

Those who oppose you, “you shall break (or “rule”) with a rod of iron (*NIV*, “iron scepter”), You shall dash (smash) them to pieces like a potter’s vessel.”

- The book of Revelation beautifully develops the themes and trajectories of Psalm 2. Because we are the people who trust and “take refuge” (*NIV*) in the Son of God” (2:12):
 - Rev. 2:26-27 tells us we will share in His rule over the nations.
 - Rev. 12:5 tells us this Son shares God’s throne.
 - Rev. 19:15 tells us all of this will come to pass when the Rider on a white horse whose name is called “Faithful and True” returns s King over all kings and Lord over all lords. When he comes, his enemies will indeed be dashed like pieces of a potter’s dry, clay vessel.”

Allen Ross, Old Testament professor at Beeson Divinity School, makes an interesting observation about this imagery.

The allusion may be to the custom in the execration (curse) texts of Egypt to describe how the pharaohs put down rebellions. In Egypt the name of each city under the king’s dominion was written on a little votive jar and laid up in the temple of his god. If a city rebelled, the pharaoh would go into the temple and smash the little jar for that city into pieces in the presence of the deity. Such an act would have the added psychological effect of terrorizing the city that the god approved the smashing...The psalmist may be drawing on the imagery to stress how easily the king, with all the authority of heaven behind him, will crush the rebellion swiftly.

IV. Fourth Stanza: See the blessed who respond to salvation’s invitation 2:10-12

The tragic destiny of all those who oppose the Lord’s Messiah, who reject God’s Son and His rule over them provides the bases and motivation for our missionary and

evangelism priorities. The nations will be ruled by God's Son the Lord Jesus. The nations must know and be challenged to trust in God's Son the Lord Jesus. We must go. We must tell. We must warn. And, we must heed and listen to ourselves.

1) Be wise and instructed by the Lord 2:10

- In the face of God's sovereign purpose (v. 6), plan (vs. 7-8) and power (v. 9), there is only one appropriate response according to David. Given that it was the kings and rulers of the earth who were raging and plotting against God's Son, the psalmist addresses them specifically, though all persons should hear and heed these words.
- There is significant irony here. Those who should be wise and well instructed are themselves viewed as inadequately wise and deficiently instructed. In light of the decreed purpose of God to honor, exalt, and prosper His righteous King (Ps. 1:6), they should ("Now therefore") be wise (act prudently) and be instructed (receive child training!) The kings and rulers of the earth need to be educated like elementary school children. They need to be taught how to be wise decision makes so that they might be blessed and not destroyed. They need to become like the wise man of Psalm 1!

2) Serve and rejoice for the Lord 2:11

- The wise person will worship and work for the Lord. He will serve Him as He meditates on His law (Ps. 1:2), and He will do so with a spirit of reverence. "Servant of the Lord" is the greatest and most honored title any of us can have. Our loyalty is to Him and no other. He is my Lord and King and I will serve Him

with fear (awe & reverence). In my worship I will rejoice, but with trembling, holy adoration.

- I will not see worship as a “pep rally” for Jesus.

I will not applaud God like He is some cosmic actor or performer.

I will not cheer God on like I do my favorite sports team!

He is in a totally different category all together. There is no place for some kind of “spiritual wave” in the congregation of God’s people.

No, He is God. I will serve and I will rejoice.

No, He is God. I will fear and I will tremble.

3) Honor and trust the Lord 2:12

- Verse 12 is an invitation to salvation. It is a call to be saved. It is universal in scope. It is personal in response. The wise and instructed in heart will kiss the Son, they will humble themselves and submit to His rightful Lordship over their lives. They will indeed be like the blessed man of Psalm 1 because they put their trust in the Son.
- In stark contrast, the wicked, like the ungodly of Psalm 1, will perish. With them the Son will be angry in judgment and they will perish in the way (cf. Ps. 1:2), when “His wrath can flare up in a moment” (*NIV*), “in an instant” (*NLT*).
- Again we see a “fork in the road,” 2 lives, 2 ways to live that life, 2 ways to end that life.

Conclusion:

- 1) In Phil. 2:9-11 Paul speaks of God’s exalted Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. The language is drawn from Is. 45:23 but the imagery from Psalm 2. Phil. 2:10 says

“every knee shall bow.” Psalm 2:12 says “kiss the Son.” What better place to begin than at His feet, in great gratitude for His salvation and sovereignty, His redemption and His reign. Kiss the Son and trust Him. Kiss the Son and serve Him. Kiss the Son and adore Him. Bow the knee and kiss the Son.

2) Lo, He Comes with Clouds Descending

4th verse/stanza by Charles Wesley (slight editing).

“Yes, Amen! Let all adore Him, High on His Eternal throne.

Messiah, take the power and glory, Claim the Kingdom For Your own

O, come quickly, O, come quickly! Everlasting God, come down.”

- 3) He has come down, and He will come down again. Trust in Him and be among the blessed who worship God and His Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ.

