

Pursuing God

In Step with the Psalms

Lesson 14: Psalm 2

God's Sovereign Rule

Stay on the Path ~

The commanding officer of an elite naval flagship ordered his radioman to send out a message to an obstacle that had appeared on the radar screen directly in the ship's oncoming path: "Move your vessel twenty degrees starboard." There was an immediate reply: "You move twenty degrees to your starboard." The angry officer shot back: "Tell him I am the admiral of this vessel, which is the flagship of the fleet!" Another reply was received: "I am Seaman 2nd Class James. You must change your course twenty degrees starboard immediately." The enraged officer ordered: "This is a battleship—we can and will blow you out of the water; change your course or else!" Seaman James radioed back: "This, sir, is a lighthouse!" And that ended the standoff, since there is no way a battleship can move a lighthouse! Such is the message of Psalm 2: rebellious mankind telling God to move out of the way, and God sending back the message to "change course or else."

The ongoing war of a lost world against God is epic. It is as old as time, extending all the way back to the Garden of Eden where Adam and Eve first took matters into their own hands, exercising their free will to defy God's authority over their lives. The cosmic battle between good and evil has rendered countless novels, movies, and even today's version of video games; most of it for entertainment purposes but, the basic story line is not fiction or fantasy, it is actually quite real. No matter how depraved or determined man's attempts to overthrow God's rule may be, all such efforts will fail; for in the end every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Did you know ~

The book of Psalms contains more Messianic prophecies than any other Old Testament book, with the exception of Isaiah. Psalm 2 is a *royal psalm*, revealing the Messiah as the Son of God, the undisputed sovereign ruler over heaven and earth. The exact origin of this psalm is unknown, but the Apostles Peter and John ascribe its authorship to David (Acts 4:25). It looks prophetically ahead to the time when the Lord Jesus Christ—God's anointed, promised Messiah—takes center stage upon the earth. It depicts the ongoing rebellion of the world against God and His Son.

Psalm 2

The Messiah's Triumph and Kingdom

- 1 Why do the nations rage,
And the people plot a vain thing?
- 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 break Their bonds in pieces
And cast away Their cords from us."
- 4 He who sits in the heavens shall laugh;
The Lord shall hold them in derision.
- 5 Then He shall speak to them in
His wrath,
And distress them in His deep
displeasure:
- 6 "Yet I have set My King
On my holy hill of Zion."
- 7 "I will declare the decree:
The Lord has said to Me,
'You are My Son,
Today I have begotten You.
- 8 Ask of Me, and I will give You
The nations of the earth for Your
possession.
- 9 You shall break them with a
rod of iron;
You shall dash them to pieces like a
potter's vessel."
- 10 Now therefore, be wise, O kings;
Be instructed, you judges 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,
When His wrath is kindled but
a little.
- Blessed are all those who put
their trust in Him.

(Scripture from the New King James Bible, ©1980 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission.)

Open your Bible and lesson each day by beginning with a word of prayer.

Read Psalm 2.

Listen to the psalm ~ First impressions

What is the *tone* of Psalm 2? What stands out to you from your initial reading?

As you spend time with the Lord through your study this week, be open to notice those around you who may not know Jesus Christ as Savior. The Lord may ask you to be the messenger of the good news of salvation.

Put a psalm in your heart ~ (Memory verse) Psalm 2:11

(Write out the verse in the spaces below. Practice it each time you open your lesson.)

Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling.

Learn the lessons of the psalm ~

Selah (Think about):

The rebellion against God the psalmist speaks about is a revolt against the Lord's reign over mankind that climaxed in the appearing of Jesus Christ upon the earth. It is key to note that the psalm represents four different speakers: *David*, speaking for mankind, *God*, *Jesus Christ*, and *the Holy Spirit*.

I. Man's revolt is against God ~ vv. 1–6

David first presents the voice of mankind expressing a united rebellion against God. He is astounded that people would join forces to seek to overthrow the Lord but that is what happened at His first appearance and what will ultimately take place again in the end times.

1. Who are those David mentions in verses 1–3 that plot conspiracy against God and His Anointed?
2. Verses 1–2 are repeated in Acts 4:25–26. According to verse 27, list all those who were united against the Lord.
3. Ultimately, a similar rebellion will join forces in the last days when the kings of the earth will again rise up against the Lord. What does it say in Revelation 17:7–15 about their authority and the one who overcomes them? See vv. 13–14.

David expresses absolute amazement that mankind's effort could be so organized, widespread, and premeditated! Thus we see depicted the natural depravity of humanity—the heart of man that turns away from God and His sovereign rule to seek self and pursue sin.

4. How do the following passages portray man's condition?
 - a. Psalm 14:1–3
 - b. Romans 3:10–18

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:21); such is our sinful condition as the result of original sin.

5. What is God's response to all such arrogant boastings by man? vv. 4–6

God's voice—the second speaker—ridicules man's absurd attempts to overthrow His divine purpose through acts of defiance. He laughs at men for such foolishness, but He doesn't stop there. God's laughter turns to offense and wrath and ultimate judgment, a side of Him which makes us feel uncomfortable.

His response to man's futile attempts to thwart His divine purpose is found in verse 6: *Yet I have set My King on My holy hill of Zion*. This statement speaks first of Christ's rightful place and authority at the right hand of God, and ultimately to His enthronement during His one-thousand year reign from Jerusalem upon His return.

6. How do the following references confirm this as God's will?

a. Psalm 110:1–2

b. Acts 2:34–35

c. Revelation 20:1–6

Pause & ponder ~

Today perhaps more than ever, rebellion against God is alive and well! The Bible is under attack by individuals and groups seeking not only to deny God's presence and power, but to remove all existence of Him and His Word from modern day society. We live in an age of subjective morality which allows people to decide what is right and what is wrong. Many turn away from what the Bible has to say about sin, the sanctity of marriage, homosexuality, respect for authority, salvation and God's impending judgment. The world stage is set for the final rebellion; people are uniting together in a common hatred toward God. As you watch the signs of the times unfold, how do they affect *your* worldview? Are you more motivated to live a life of holiness? Please share your thoughts.

II. *God's invitation is to embrace the Son* ~ vv. 7–12

The third speaker in vv.7–9 is Jesus Himself. Everything that the Father purposed and planned, the Son will proclaim and accomplish.

1. What did the Father speak to the Son? v. 7 (See also Hebrews 1:5; Acts 13:33.)

The fulfillment of this decree came about in Christ's incarnation. This is the reason the Father said, *Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession* (v. 8). It is a reference to Christ's inheritance spoken of in Revelation 11:15: *The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!*

2. What does the Bible have to say about the Lord's inheritance?

- a. John 6:37, 39:

- b. John 17:2, 24

3. What does Psalm 2:9 say about the Son's rule over His enemies?

His final judgment is compared to a potter taking an iron scepter and dashing His enemies to pieces like they were clay pottery (Revelation 19:15).

The identity of the fourth speaker is not specifically mentioned but is likely that of the Holy Spirit, issuing an invitation for sinners to forsake their rebellion and humbly submit to the Son before it is too late.

4. Put the instructions found in verse 11 in your own words . . .

- a. *Serve the Lord with fear*— _____

- b. *Rejoice with trembling*— _____

Touchpoint~

Kiss the Son, let He be angry and perish in the way. The kiss referred to here is that of surrender to a sovereign on bended knee. It is not the kiss of a friend but rather the kiss of obedience to a higher authority; that's why it is accompanied by *fear* and *trembling*. And although we deserve God's wrath for our sin of rebellion against Him, God is pleased when we take refuge in Him: *Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him* (v.12). Have you made a complete surrender to the Lord? If not, don't hesitate; do it today. Record your thoughts below.

Live the psalm ~

In what way does God's sovereign rule over your life bring comfort and peace to your heart while the world around you is in chaos?

Pray the psalm ~

Is there someone you are aware of right now that is rebelling against God's authority? Note their name below and pray for them, asking God to perhaps give you the opportunity to witness to them.
