

## Psalm 2 Notes for Study Leader

**Big point:** Yahweh rules supreme through his Royal Son; submit to him to be blessed

**NB** The intro video (<https://youtu.be/hY0gv4j9PgI>) hardly looks at Psalm 2 itself at all. Instead it aims to briefly sketch the outline of the theme of the Royal Son/King/Messiah through the Bible, landing on Jesus. The hope is that this gives you lots of space to dig into the details of the Psalm, with its biblical context already in mind.

### Structure

- v1-3: Situation: Rebellion
  - of human rulers against Yahweh & his king
- v4-9: Reality: Reign
  - Yahweh is utterly sovereign
  - He rules through his Royal Son
- v10-12: Invitation: Submission
  - Path to blessing: submit to Yahweh and his king; take refuge in him
  - Path to destruction: rebel against Yahweh and his king

### Text notes

- Acts 4:23-31 tells us that David wrote Psalm 2. But in the book of Psalms, it seems intentional that the author is not named, but instead it's placed with Psalm 1 as an introductory pair to the whole book.
- V1-3: these probably describe a general category/pattern of behaviour rather than specific events. If this was originally a coronation Psalm, these verses (and the whole Psalm) may be particularly aimed at nations which were currently subject to Israel.
- V2: "anointed" here refers to the King (see eg 1 Sam 16:12-13).
  - The Hebrew word for anointed is literally Messiah. In the OT it most commonly refers to the king, but can refer to other set-apart offices eg prophet or priest. These ideas start to merge into an ultimate hope for a prophet/priest/king Messiah...
- V3: the rulers imply that God's rule is oppressive (contrast v12)
- V4-6: the language emphasises Yahweh's total sovereignty
  - V6: His power, status and rule are invested in his king.
  - V6: Zion = Jerusalem.
- V7-9: God "adopts" his anointed king as a royal son
  - V8: He has inheritance rights as God's son (not just over Israel but the whole earth, because the whole earth belongs to God)
- V10-12: these mirror v1-3
  - "Therefore": in light of reality, the wise response is not rebellion, but submission to God's rule expressed by submitting to his Royal Son
    - You can take refuge in him through submission – and that brings blessing

### *Tricky things*

- V7 “today I have become your father”: how does this adoption idea apply to Jesus?
  - Jesus is the eternal divine Son, who has become incarnate. In that sense he never “became” God’s Son or was “adopted”.
  - The sense of adoption in the Psalm is more to do with a specific royal title, status and position, rather than actual nature or being. Israel’s king didn’t become the Son of God in a divine sense – they became a “Royal Son” in terms of role and inheritance.
  - In this sense, the New Testament does talk about Jesus “becoming” enthroned as God’s royal ruler (eg Philippians 2:5-11). The divine Son in nature becomes the Royal Son in position, role and inheritance.
- V9: why the violent language? how is this bringing blessing to the nations?
  - This is tough, and it’s important to see it in context, and remember this is only one part of the description of the rule of God’s King.
  - The context is kings and rulers who are set on anti-God rebellion. This verse would particularly seem to apply to those rulers. It can be hard to swallow, but ultimately the defeat and destruction of human rulers set against God does bring blessing to the world. (Revelation 19:15 quotes this verse in a context which pictures the final defeat of those rulers as a good thing)
- V12 “his wrath can flare up in a moment”: how does this fit with God being “slow to anger” (eg Exodus 34:6)?
  - Again, this is tough. One way of understanding it is that v12 is from our human perspective. If we set ourselves against God and his King, things might seem OK for a time, but then a moment comes where in our experience of life, God’s “wrath flares up” and our “way leads to destruction”.

### *Cross-references*

#### **2 Samuel 7:12-16**

(see video)

#### **Mark 1:9-15**

(see video)

#### **Other New Testament quotations**

Acts 4:23-31 – shows how v1-3 were fulfilled in Herod and Pilate conspiring against Jesus

Acts 13:32-33 – refers to v7 as part of showing Jesus as the fulfilment of promises to David

Hebrews 1:5, 5:5 – these also quote v7 (probably less relevant)

Revelation 2:26-27 – quotes v9 about Christians who endure to the end – Jesus will share his authority to rule with them(!)

Revelation 19:15 – quotes v9 about the victorious risen Jesus overcoming anti-God rulers

### *Suggested study questions*

[if you're watching it together, may be worth asking - any questions or thoughts about the video?]

[You could do some underlining\* to help people get into the Psalm before you discuss it, eg:

- Everything about God in Green
- Everything about God's King in Purple
- Everything about responding to God in Red]

- What's the main thing this Psalm leaves you thinking or feeling?
- What does the Psalm show us about God's King?
  - [prompt if needed] what does it show us about responding to God's King?
- Look through the details of the Psalm. How do we see them fulfilled in Jesus?
  - What difference might this Psalm make to how you relate to Jesus?
    - [prompts:
      - how you think about his authority in your life?
      - how you pray?
      - how you worship?
      - how you think about his authority over the world?]

\*On Zoom, if you share screen with the passage on a word document, everyone can click "View options -> Annotate" and you can all underline together!