

*While the LORD in heaven mocks and terrifies earth’s rulers who rage in vain, he crowns his Son as the king who will inherit and subdue all nations. Rebels can avoid utter defeat by fearfully serving God’s Son, for he is Jesus Christ the Almighty and his vengeance is fierce. Kiss the Son to be blessed in him!*

**Introduction** – Leave it to the God of heaven to have us look at Psalm 2 the Sunday after the election.

**Background** – Psalms 1 and 2 introduce the whole Psalter as something like twin pillars at the entrance into the temple of praise, a sanctuary from the world’s rage and conspiracy theories and lies. Psalm 1 describes the path of blessing as a right relationship to God’s Word. Psalm 2 describes that blessed person as God’s divine-human Son, the Almighty King of kings. Just as Psalm 1 begins, Psalm 2 ends by pronouncing a blessing, this time on all who live in right relationship to God’s King.

## **I. The World’s Raging Rebellion**

### **A. A forceful but vain conspiracy led by our kings and rulers (vv. 1-2a)**

In the ancient Near East the coronation of the new king was often occasion for the revolt of peoples and other nations that had been subject to the previous king. The newly anointed sovereign of Psalm 2 rules over an empire of nations. A new sovereign always prompts talk of rebellion. Their restless raging is pointless, useless, senseless, a waste of emotional energy. First an ungodly coalition of the peoples and nations plot in vain in verse 1, and then kings and rulers in verse 2 organize the peoples’ rebellion via politics. These kings and rulers represent all governing authorities, dignitaries, and elites of the earth (Jdg 5:3; Hab 1:10; Acts 4:23-28). Political leaders often stir passions, organize, and then lead into action the people who would follow them. Rebels who “set themselves” (i.e., “take their stand”) is an image often used in military contexts to connote battle preparations (Jdg 20:30, 33; Ps 3:6; Ezek 23:24). The righteous meditate on the LORD’s instruction in order to obey it (Ps 1:2). The wicked also “meditate” (same Hebrew word *hagah*) when they murmur to themselves, mutter, and plot with others (Ps 2:1). The righteous spend their time thinking about how to follow God’s ways, but the wicked spend their time thinking about how to rebel.

### **B. Aims to break the yoke of service from God and his Christ (vv. 2b-3)**

When kings were chosen, sometimes before coronation, they were anointed with oil symbolizing the Holy Spirit empowering the king for office. Each royal son of David, especially the contemporary king who reigned over God’s people during each regime of Israel’s kingdom, is in view in Psalm 2. So for each generation, the anointed one symbolized and ideally reflected the glory of the ultimate Anointed One, the only begotten Son of God. As the Anointed One, Jesus suffered as rebel sinners, “kings and rulers,” raged and plotted to throw off his yoke, and they crucified him. But their victory over God’s King was in vain, for in his defeat he conquered sin and death, nailing them to the cross, and rose triumphant on the third day in resurrection victory. Verse 3 records what the rebels say as they plot in vain. The chains are bound to farm animals, and cords of rope bind the chains together to keep them working close together under the direction of the farmer. Service and obedience to the LORD and his Messiah King are the intolerable yoke rebels chaff under.

## **II. The LORD’s Wrathful Response**

### **A. Mockingly laugh while installing his terrifying King on Zion (vv. 4-6)**

The LORD who sits in the heavens laughs because truly the kings of the earth are no match for the king of heaven! Whereas in Psalm 1 sinful men scoffed at the LORD’s instruction, in Psalm 2 the LORD derisively laughs at (mocks) the rebellious people and nations led by their kings and rulers.

Knowing the outcome of such vain plotting, Yahweh laughs (Ps 37:13). Disobedience invites Yahweh's angry displeasure because he is a jealous, holy, righteous God (Dt 11:16-17; 29:24-28; Ps 78:21-22). His anger is always an expression of his perfect and holy righteousness (Ps 7:11). If the nations and their leaders plot against the LORD and his Messiah, God counters by pointing to the establishment of Messiah's throne on Zion. In the old covenant Mount Zion was the place where heaven touched earth (1 Kgs 8:1; 2 Chr 33:15; Pss 3:4; 15:1; 24:3; 43:3; 46:4). In the new covenant Jesus fulfills the function of the temple as God's dwelling place among his chosen people (Heb 12:22-24). Now Jesus reigns from the heavenly Zion throughout eternity (Rev 21:10, 22-27).

### **B. A decree that the King, his almighty Son, will inherit all nations (vv. 7-9)**

Psalm 2 envisions a king greater than David or Solomon to justify the glory and fury of this decree. "You are my Son, today I have begotten you," is a formula for royal adoption, and henceforth that king was viewed as God's son. David was a witness to this covenant promise (2 Sam 7:14), and Psalm 2 is a meditation of the promise fulfilled. King Jesus, the divine-human messianic king has such a privileged position that he is able to ask God his Father to extend his rule, even to "the ends of the earth" (Exo 15:17; Josh 22:19; Pss 21:2, 4; 28:9; 79:1; 82:8; Mt 28:18-20; Acts 1:8). God deals with obstinate rebels more by his arm than by his mouth. Messiah's rule with an iron rod symbolizes power and authority (Gen 49:10; Ps 110:2). God's enemies are prone to false comfort, supposing the royal scepter of gentle Jesus, meek and mild, is a mere reed. But the rod Christ wields on the backs of rebels is made of iron. Don't make the grave mistake of taking a futile stand against the LORD and his Anointed One. God's reigning Son will effortlessly annihilate the rebellious nations as easily as a potter smashes his pottery (Isa 30:14; Jer 19:11).

## **III. The Sinner's Refuge for Rejoicing**

### **A. Offered to all repentant people, especially to their forewarned kings and rulers (vv. 10-11)**

"Be warned...be wise" echoes the words of Proverbs (8:32-33) and Psalm 1 to choose the wise path that leads to life, and to forsake the rebellious path that leads to death (cf. WCF 23.2). "Serve the LORD with fear" is to love and obey him as holy and righteous and worthy of all worship and devotion (Pss 34:8-14; 100:2; 103:13, 17-18). Rather than break free from his bonds and ropes, instead embrace his yoke. Joyfully and fearfully serve him. Embrace both the kindness and severity of God, and approach him with humility and reverence (Rom 11:22). Psalm 2 strengthens the bond between fearing the LORD and acquiring godly wisdom (Ps 1; Prov 9:10).

### **B. Blesses only those who "kiss" God's Son and trust in him to escape his wrath (v. 12)**

The Hebrew text does not use the normal word for "son" (*ben*) but rather unexpectedly a loan word for "son" (*bar*) from Aramaic (cf. Prov 31:2) to address the nations surrounding Israel in the Semitic *lingua franca*. All peoples, regardless of nation or language, are invited to choose between the two paths. The cursed path is the way of rebellion against the LORD's anointed Son—a path that leads to death, to perishing (just like in Psalm 1:6). The blessed path is the way of submission to the Messiah, of trust, of loving obedience to the LORD's instruction and his divine-human Son (just like in Psalm 1:1). Psalm 2 ends where Psalm 1 began: with the word "blessed" or "happy". God gives joy to those who fear him (Ps 1:1-2) and trust him (Pss 18:30; 34:22; 119:1-3). If you do, God promises you will see and experience his royal Son's dominion as a place of refuge, not slavery (Ps 2:3). The bondage feared by rebels is security and bliss for those who kiss the Son.

**Conclusion** – Back to the national election and its results. How should a Christian respond? Turn to the Scriptures and find wisdom, knowledge, insight, and salvation. Turn to the prophet Daniel (Dan 2:21-22). Turn to the apostle Peter (1 Pet 2:13-17). Turn to the apostle Paul (Rom 12:16-18). Turn to the Psalms and sing from your heart about the person of blessing, Jesus Christ, God's Anointed King (Ps 2:11-12). For there is no refuge *from him*, only *in him*.