

Assignment 5 – Preparatory Research on Psalm 2:1-12

DML970: Preaching Psalms – Spring 2023

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Assignment 5: Preparatory Research on Psalm 2:1-12

5) Perform preparatory research on a psalm in the manner described in class. Your preparation should be at least 20 pages long. Include a complete bibliography of all the resources that you consulted (this in addition to the 20 pages of research).

Preparatory research on Psalm 2:1-12

• ESV Version on Psalm 2:1-12

- 1 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.

• Read through the passage of Psalm 2:1-12 by versions of ESV/NSAB 1995/NIV

| ESV | NSAB 1995 | NIV |
|--|--|--|
| <p>2 Why do the nations rage^[a] and the peoples plot in vain?</p> <p>2 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against his Anointed, saying,</p> <p>3 "Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us."</p> <p>4 He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision.</p> <p>5 Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying,</p> <p>6 "As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill."</p> <p>7 I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you.</p> <p>8 Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession.</p> <p>9 You shall break^[b] them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."</p> <p>10 Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth.</p> <p>11 Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling.</p> <p>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.</p> | <p>2 Why are the ^[a]nations in an uproar And the peoples devising a vain thing?</p> <p>2 The kings of the earth take their stand And the rulers take counsel together Against the LORD and against His ^[a]Anointed, saying,</p> <p>3 "Let us tear their fetters apart And cast away their cords from us!"</p> <p>4 He who ^[a]sits in the heavens laughs, The Lord scoffs at them.</p> <p>5 Then He will speak to them in His anger And terrify them in His fury, saying,</p> <p>6 "But as for Me, I have ^[a]installed My King Upon Zion, My holy mountain."</p> <p>7 "I will surely tell of the ^[a]decree of the LORD: He said to Me, "You are my Son, Today I have begotten You.</p> <p>8 "Ask of Me, and I will surely give the ^[a]nations as Your inheritance, And the very ends of the earth as Your possession.</p> <p>9 "You shall ^[a]break them with a ^[a]rod of iron, You shall shatter them like ^[a]earthenware."</p> <p>10 Now therefore, O kings, show discernment; Take warning, O ^[a]judges of the earth.</p> <p>11 ^[a]Worship the LORD with ^[a]reverence And rejoice with trembling.</p> <p>12 ^[a]Do homage to the Son, that He not become angry, and you perish in the way, For His wrath may ^[a]soon be kindled. How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!</p> | <p>1 Why do the nations conspire^[a] and the peoples plot in vain?</p> <p>2 The kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together against the LORD and against his anointed, saying,</p> <p>3 "Let us break their chains and throw off their shackles."</p> <p>4 The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them.</p> <p>5 He rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath, saying,</p> <p>6 "I have installed my king on Zion, my holy mountain."</p> <p>7 I will proclaim the LORD's decree: He said to me, "You are my son; today I have become your father.</p> <p>8 Ask me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession.</p> <p>9 You will break them with a rod of iron^[a]; you will dash them to pieces like pottery."</p> <p>10 Therefore, you kings, be wise; be warned, you rulers of the earth.</p> <p>11 Serve the LORD with fear and celebrate his rule with trembling.</p> <p>12 Kiss his son, or he will be angry and your way will lead to your destruction, for his wrath can flare up in a moment. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.</p> |

• Meaning by Biblehub.com Interlinear for particular words raised from my view

< Biblehub.com. <http://biblehub.com/interlinear/psalms/2> >

▪ **Rage/Uproar/Conspire (v1)**

- To be in tumult or commotion

- **Psalm 2:1** **לָמָּה רָגְזוּ** why do the nations throng tumultuously?

▪ **Plot/Devising/Plot (v1)**

- To Imagine/Devise/Utter

- **Imagine, devise, with accusative Psalm 2:1;** Proverbs 24:2 (subject לָמָּה); with Infinitive Proverbs 15:28

▪ **Vain/Vain/Vain (v1)**

- To make empty, empty out

- **Noun -Emptiness, vanity**; — chiefly in adverb phrase לְרִיק Isaiah 46:4; Job 39:16 in vain (of labor without benefit); **Psalm 2:1 (most = empty scheme)**

▪ **Anointed/Anointed/Anointed (v2)**

- Original Word of Messiah/Christ
- King of Israel anointed by divine command: 1 יהוה יִמ Samuel 24:7 (twice in verse); 1 Samuel 24:11; 1 Samuel 26:9,11,16,23; 2 Samuel 1:14; 2 Samuel 1:16; 2 Samuel 19:22; Lamentations 4:20; 2 אֱלֹהֵי עֲקֵב יִמ Samuel 23:1; so with suffixes reference to 1 ,י Samuel 12:3,5; 1 Samuel 16:6; Psalm 20:7; Psalm 28:8; Habakkuk 3:13; **Davidic dynasty with Messianic ideals attached Psalm 2:2**; Psalm 18:51, = 2 Samuel 22:51; Psalm 89:39; Psalm 89:52; Psalm 132:102Chronicles 6:42; Psalm 132:17; 1 Samuel 2:10,35.

▪ **Decree/Decree/Decree (v7)**

- Something prescribed or owed, a statute
- **Respecting Messianic King (Psalm 2:7)**; day of י Zephaniah 2:2 י0, but on text see We and טָרָם, below; covenant with Jacob Psalm 105:10 = 1 Chronicles 16:17; destiny of man Job 23:14.

▪ **Heritage/Inheritance/Inheritance (v8)**

- Property/Possession, Related to Gift
- Nations as Possession of the people, Psalm 111:6; **of the king Psalm 2:8**.

▪ **Possession/Possession/Possession (v8)**

- Possession/Property
- **In Promise to Davidic King תָּמַד אֶסְפִּיאָרְךָ Psalm 2:8**

• **SETTING / Biblical and Theological Background: The People of God**

- **My First Impression after the words analysis: The Lord and the Anointed, is the King of Universe and God of sovereignty.**

- **Kraus (Theology of the Psalm)** suggests a good layout from biblical and theological aspects to understand the Psalters. Below is a good embraced theological background to link up God of Israel and also the LORD and KING of the People in the world.

In the world of the nations, Israel stands in total isolation, belonging only to Yahweh. “No person outside Israel knows Israel’s secret”. Israel’s existence in the world of the nations and the course that Israel follows are a great mystery, of which also the Psalms speak as enigma and miracle. Yahweh creates a space for his people and for their history. He drives out nations before them (Ps. 44:2; 78:55). He displayed his power among the peoples (77:14) and is exalted on high above the nations (Ps. 99:2). **In his sovereign might Yahweh frustrates the plans of the peoples (Ps. 33:10), who conspire and plot in vain (Ps. 2:1).** As “judge of the peoples” (Ps. 7:8; 9:8; etc.) Yahweh assembles the foreign nations around himself (Ps. 9:8). Israel, however, has been selected from among all the national groups and chosen to play a role in God’s history, to be Yahweh’s road to the nations. Thus, the people of God always stand in a prominent, exalted place. Israel has the task of telling Yahweh’s deeds and miracles among the peoples and of bearing witness to them (Ps. 9:11; 96:3; 105:1). **Israel calls the peoples to praise Yahweh (Ps. 66:8; 117:1), for the God of Israel is the LORD and KING of the peoples. It is through Israel that God comes to the world. All peoples will see his glory (Ps. 97:6).**

Israel exists as a people only because this is the presupposition of the total human response to God. There must be a people, so that the human response may be fulfilled in the whole of life, of which public life is a part. Not the individual person, but only the community in its totality and unity, in working and achieving together through its members with their different gifts and callings can lead the life that constitutes the human response to God.

The Psalms are witness to the reality of Israel, even there where individual voices are raised. Israel is Yahweh’s first partner, a people chosen, caught up in and enclosed in community and in faithfulness to the covenant. It is the first answer, the first witness. None other than the God of this people is the KING of all peoples. The “meaning” of Israel’s existence is the mission to the peoples. (Kraus, 1992:59)

- **Lawson has the same aspect, adding the Messianic promised view:** As the monarch of Israel, the Davidic king faces opposition from many foreign powers. The central focus is upon the king of Israel, God's anointed, the Davidic king. Ultimately, they look ahead to the Lord Jesus Christ. In Psalm 2, the surrounding nations are viewed as rising up in resistance against an earthly king. Prophetically, this looks ahead to the coming of the Messiah and the opposition He will face from earthly powers (Acts 4:25-26; 13:33).

In the face of such opposition, **Psalm 2 testifies to the absolute sovereignty of God over the nations. No foreign power can thwart God's supreme authority over all mankind. How futile to resist heaven's KING** (2:4-6; 45:6-9; 132:11-13; 144:3).

(Lawson, 2012:125-126)

• **TITLE / SUPERScription / JUXTAPOSITION / GENRE**

- **There is no Title and Superscriptions in Psalm 2.**

- **Juxtaposition: Pss 1 → 2**

- **Psalm 2, like Psalm 1, is part of the introduction to the book of Psalms.** Psalm 1 begins with a beatitude and Psalm 2 concludes with one, indicating that the two poems are to be read together. (Brueggemann & Bellinger, 2014:31)

- **As noted regarding Ps 1, Pss 1 and 2 serve as a preface to the Psalter.** Several verbal links occur between the two poems. Psalm 2:11 ends with the same declaration ("happy") with which Ps 1:1 begins. The phrase "the way [of the wicked] will perish" in Ps 1:6 is echoed in Ps 2:11, "you will perish in the way." According to Ps 1, praying the psalms puts one on the right path and endows one with wisdom. According to Ps 2, Yahweh supports the Davidic king and defends Israel from the hostility of the nations. (Clifford, 2002:43)

- **Genre: Royal Psalm**

- **The Genre of Psalm 2 is Royal Psalm,** supported by all the biblical scholars in this research paper.

- Emanuel (lecture of DML970: Preaching Psalms, 2023) confirms this view and generates a referable layout of Royal Psalms:

Mentioning Human enthronement or king

- I have enthroned my king on Zion
- Messianic application

Mentions God's anointed

- Rulers take counsel together against the Lord and his anointed [2:2]
- He shows loving kindness to his anointed [18:50]
- **Examples → Pss 2**, 20, 61, 72

- **Brueggemann & Bellinger summarizes well.** Psalm 2 is distinct in that it is a royal psalm, finding its ancient setting in an important occasion in the life of Jerusalem's Davidic monarchy. Most interpreters place Psalm 2 in the coronation festivities for the king (see 2 Kgs 11:12). Perhaps anniversaries of this coronation or other significant events in a king's rule could also have brought forth this text for the ancient community. (Brueggemann & Bellinger, 2014:31)

- **Clifford elaborates the Royal Psalms.** Like Pss 18, 20-21, 45, 72, 101, 110, and 144, Ps 2 is a royal psalm. These psalms extol the king as the Lord's anointed and plead for the king in times of danger. Royal psalms cite the choice of the Davidic dynasty as a motive for God to intervene on the king's behalf. They appeal to the divine honor: Will you allow the nations to defeat the one you put on the throne?

In addition to traditions about the king, Ps 2 draws on traditions about Zion, the mountain of the Lord. Several songs of Zion (Pss 46, 48, 76, 84) tell how the holy mountain was attacked by enemy rulers and then miraculously saved. For example: "Then the kings assembled.... As soon as they saw [the divine splendor of Zion],... they were in panic, they took to flight" (48:4-5); "[On Zion the Lord] broke the flashing arrows, the shield, the sword, and the weapons of war" (76:3). (Clifford, 2002:43)

- **DIVISIONS**

- **Psalm 2 is divided into 4 sections (vv1-3, vv4-6, vv7-9, vv10-12)**, supported by all the biblical scholars in this research paper.
- **Longman’s subtitles for four sections as my preliminary subtitle (to be changed):**
 - Human rebellion (vv1-3)
 - Divine ridicule (vv4-6)
 - You are my son (vv7-9)
 - Kiss the son (vv10-12)(Longman, 2014:59-64)

- **MINING the Psalm by Divisions**

- **Human rebellion (vv1-3)**

- **Note the parallelism.**

Why do the nations conspire,

and the peoples plot in vain?

The kings of the earth set themselves,

and the rulers take counsel together,

against the LORD and his anointed, saying,

“Let us burst their bonds asunder,

and cast their cords from us.” (vv. 1-3)

- **Human rebellion.** The psalmist uses three tightly constructed parallel lines to describe the rebellion of the peoples of the earth, led by their kings. They direct their rebellion against the LORD and his anointed king (or messiah). A king was anointed with oil, probably by the high priest (2 Kgs 11:12). In their relationship with God and the king, the people view themselves as prisoners or slaves (bound by shackles). They resist their authority and lead the nations of the world in rebellion against this supposed bondage. The opening parallel line already strongly hints at the futility of their actions when it questions the purpose of their evil plotting and in the second colon reveals that it is in

vain. Right from the start, we learn that they will not succeed, in spite of all their noisy turmoil. (Longman, 2014:61)

- **The attack of the nations and their rebellious cry.** The nations of the world (v. 1), represented by their rulers (v. 2), are vassals of Yahweh and the Davidic king of Israel. The vassalship of the nations' kings was decided at creation when each nation was given its own deity and Yahweh, the Most High, chose Israel:

When the Most High apportioned the nations,
when he divided humankind,
he fixed the boundaries of the peoples
according to the number of the gods;
the LORD's own portion was his people,
Jacob his allotted share. (Deut. 32:8-9)

The sovereignty of the Davidic king is derived from the primordial sovereignty of Yahweh (e.g., 89:1-37). (Clifford, 2002:44)

- **Verses 1-3 portray the setting.** The psalm begins with a rhetorical question, the surprised question that begins with "Why?" The question of why the vassal nations plot together in rebellion against YHWH and YHWH's anointed king covers the first two verses and sets the stage for the poem's dramatic action. The view of these nations is uttered in verse 3 as they proclaim their desire for liberation from dominance inflicted by the Davidic monarchy. The attentive reader will already realize that this rebellion is "in vain" (v. 1).

Those who read Psalm 2 along with the previous psalm as constituting the introduction to the Hebrew Psalter will also note that the enemies introduced in Psalm 1 as the wicked now take the form of vassal nations who oppose God and God's chosen ruler. A provocative connection between the poems is the use of the root word *hagah* in Ps 1:2 and Ps 2:1. In the first psalm, the term is translated as "meditate," and in the second as "plot." The contrast is between those who meditate on YHWH's torah and the futility of those who conspire together against YHWH and YHWH's anointed. Rather than considering the vassal nations' action as rebellion against the empire, Psalm 2 views the action as a conspiracy against divine sovereignty and against YHWH's co-regent. The

psalm portrays the Davidic king as YHWH's chosen ruler in Zion/Jerusalem; it is YHWH who guarantees the Davidic monarchy. The issue in the psalm is whether the peoples live in relation to YHWH and YHWH's anointed. (Brueggemann & Bellinger, 2014:31-32)

▪ **Divine ridicule (vv4-6)**

- **Divine ridicule.** God responds by ridiculing their futile actions. They may be human kings and powerful in their own way, but they are nothing to the divine King who is enthroned in heaven. His ridicule leads to angry rebuke. Interestingly, God's rebuke takes the form of announcing the installation of the human king on the throne in Jerusalem. This particular psalm almost certainly was used during the monarchical period as a song that accompanied the installation ceremony of the son of David who assumed the throne after the death of his father. Perhaps Zion is mentioned because it was the actual physical location of the ceremony. The psalm asserts that the mere existence of this Davidic king would bring terror to the raving human kings of the nations and thus reassert order. (Longman, 2014:61)

- **Yahweh's response and oracle.** The Lord laughs scornfully at the rebellion and repeats the ancient decree installing the Davidic dynasty: "I have set my king on Zion, my holy hill" (v. 6). The oracle of sovereignty in verse 6 counters the human statement of independence in verse 3. The identification of the Lord as "He who sits [yôseb] in the heavens," means "the One who is enthroned in the heavens." The verb [yasab] means "to sit as a king" as in 1 Kgs 22:19; Ps 123:1; and Isa 6:1. God angrily denounces the kings as rebels. There is no report of a battle, however. Citing the decree suffices to end the battle. Verse 6 subtly underscores the divine will, as the first person pronouns I or my occur three times in the verse ("I have set," "my king," "my holy hill"). (Clifford, 2002:44)

- **Verses 4-6, in contrast, shift attention to the divine response to this conspiracy.** The one who sits in the heavens is enthroned there as the divine king, and this king laughs in the face of this rebellion. The picture of YHWH heartily laughing in the face of rebellion is not unusual in the Psalms (Pss 37:13; 59:8). "Then," at the proper time, YHWH will terrify these rebels. Verse 3 is put emphatically in Hebrew, with the pronoun "my" in

reference to both Zion and the Davidic king. It is YHWH who authorizes the rule of the Davidic kings in Jerusalem. (Brueggemann & Bellinger, 2014:32)

▪ **You are my son (vv7-9)**

- **You are my son.** The third stanza develops God's relationship with his appointed human king who rules from Zion. Verse 7a assumes that the psalm's composer is none other than the king himself, who announces that he will pronounce the decree which God addressed to him. Although the psalm does not have a title, by the time of the New Testament it was attributed to David, probably on the logic of this verse.

The decree begins with an allusion to 2 Samuel 7:14, the heart of the Davidic covenant, wherein God announces a special relationship with David and his descendants. He there establishes the Davidic dynasty and a special relationship between himself and the king as a father to a son. In 2 Samuel 7, that father-son relationship is described as one that would punish infractions of the father's rules (2 Sam. 7:14b), but also refers to the fact that he would never remove his kingly son's special relationship (2 Sam. 7:15).

A father grants the requests of his son, and here God invites his kingly son to ask him for dominance over the nations of the world. God signifies that he would bring the nations into submission through the agency of his warrior king. (Longman, 2014:61-62)

- **The divine decree installing the Davidic king.** After declaring the king to be the son of God (v. 7), the speaker declares that the Lord has given the lands of the nations to him. The king as God's son is mentioned in 2 Sam 7:14 ("I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me") and Ps 89:27 ("I will make him the firstborn, / the highest of the kings of the earth"). The Hebrew words for heritage and possession refer to land or territory. The Lord has complete and absolute ownership over the lands of the rebel kings!

The position of the king is extraordinarily exalted. In the ancient Near East, kingship belonged primarily to the gods, and the earthly king was the mediator and agent of the divine order. Elaborate royal ceremonies such as enthronements and anniversaries reinforced the claim to the heavenly origin of kingship. Some scholars postulate a New Year festival in which the kingship of Yahweh was celebrated; the Davidic king would

likewise have been affirmed, since his power was derived from Yahweh. Some scholars are skeptical about such a festival, however. It is possible that this psalm is based on a ritual in which enemy kings (represented by officiants) stood outside the walls of the Temple or at the bottom of Mount Zion (cf. 48:4-7) and heard the kind of oracles and warnings found in this psalm. Such a ritual would explain the compact and elliptical descriptions in this and similar psalms (e.g., 46, 48, 114). (Clifford, 2002:45)

- **In verses 7-9, the speaking part in the drama falls to the chosen Davidic king.** The king addresses the coronation audience and reads from “the decree of the Lord,” the divine word that legitimizes the king as God’s chosen ruler. The Davidic king quotes YHWH: “You are my son; today I have begotten you.” The “I” is emphatic; the choice of ruler is clearly from YHWH. The “today” refers to the day of coronation, and so the sonship affirmed is usually taken to be an adopted one. This beginning of the royal decree emphasizes the intimate relationship between YHWH and the chosen ruler in ancient Jerusalem/Zion. The affirmation is of the divine right of this ruler, so YHWH’s adopted son may ask for dominion over the nations. It is often suggested that verse 9 reflects the custom of using the royal scepter, as a symbol of the royal office, to smash a piece of pottery to indicate the fate of those who do not bow to this chosen royal dominion. The emphasis is on the divine guarantee of Davidic rule. (Brueggemann & Bellinger, 2014:33)

▪ **Kiss the son (vv10-12)**

- **Kiss the son.** The fourth stanza again focuses on the kings of the earth. From heaven, God warns them to serve him and to submit to his divinely appointed human king. Not only should Israel and its rulers pay homage to the Lord, but all the kings of the earth should do so. The claim of the psalmist is that the Lord is not a mere local deity, but the God of the whole earth. They should approach God with fear, the attitude that the wisdom literature urges on all of God’s people (see especially Prov. 1:7). Fear implies that God is the center of all existence and power, and that human beings, even kings who are powerful on a human level, are not. Rather, they are dependent on God for everything.

God rules all (v. 11), but he has also established his human representative on the throne in Jerusalem. Because of God's appointment, the kings of the earth also owe obeisance, ritually represented by a kiss, to this king. They should fear him because the power of God is with him. Angering him is dangerous because his wrath triggers dire consequences (your destruction). On the positive side, though, those who submit (take refuge in him) will experience blessings. Blessing is associated with an Eden-like existence that includes harmonious relationship with God and humanity, as well as material well-being. (Longman, 2014:62-63)

- Kings of the world, be obedient to the Lord. Since the king has a decree of authorization from the most powerful deity, the rebel kings should take note of it and behave accordingly, that is, withdraw from their impious campaign and submit to the king. They should act as wise kings: "serve the LORD with fear," that is, behave as vassal kings. The verb "to serve" here means political service as a vassal (e.g., Gen 25:23; Deut. 28:48; 2 Kgs 25:24).

In verses 11b-12a, three of the four words in the Hebrew text are uncertain, though the general sense is clear from the context. NRSV adopts a common emendation, "kiss his feet." Kissing the feet of an overlord was a gesture of political obedience: "May his foes bow down before him, and his enemies lick the dust" (Ps 72:9; cf. Isa 49:23 and Mic 7:17). The Assyrian king Sennacherib boasts that the kings of Syria and Palestine brought gifts to him and kissed his feet. The famous "Black Obelisk" of the Assyrian King Shalmaneser III shows "Jehu, son of Omri" kissing his feet. If the nations do not submit to the Lord and his anointed, the Lord will destroy them in anger. His anger is already aroused (v. 5) and is liable to flame out again with dire consequences for them. (Clifford, 2002:46)

- In verses 10-12, the psalm's final three verses return to the rebellious kings of the earth and address them with the warning that it is wise to serve God; dire consequences await those who rebel against this divine monarch. Well-being in life is found in one's relationship with this YHWH, who is creator and giver of life. The central issue is living under YHWH's life-giving authority. Psalm 2 concludes with a beatitude: Blessed or happy are those who take refuge in YHWH. The call is for trust in the divine monarch rather than rebellion. The concluding line brings readers back to the connection with

Psalm 1, which begins with the form of the beatitude. Interestingly, those who oppose YHWH in this final section of Psalm 2 will “perish in the way” just as the “way of the wicked will perish” in the last line of Psalm 1. Royal blessings in Psalm 2 are tied to YHWH’s sovereignty. (Brueggemann & Bellinger, 2014:34)

- **CONCLUDED INSIGHTS FROM BIBLICAL SCHOLARS**

- **Literary, Theological and Ethical Analysis (Clifford, 2002:43-47)**

Psalm 2 contains a scornful taunt (vv. 1-3) plus a command (vv. 10-11). An oracle (vv. 4-9) intervenes between taunt and command. The taunting question is contemptuous: For what reason would earthly kings rail against the Lord and his anointed? Verse 4 gives the reason for the contempt in the two titles of God: “He who sits in the heavens” and “the LORD.” According to the first title, God sits enthroned as king. From the impregnable throne, God roars with a warrior’s anger (v. 5, cf. Isa 42:13), reminding the rebels that the Davidic king is legitimately anointed (v. 6). As the Lord’s regent, the king dwells on Mount Zion. The scene in Ps 2 is reminiscent of Ps 48:4, where kings similarly stand defiantly at the base of the mountain.

A speaker cites an oracle in verses 7-9. Phrased in the elaborate language of the royal court, the oracle declares the king is the Lord’s son and legitimately exercises his rule. Verse 9 gives the mandate authorizing the king to rule the nations. The rebellion of the nations violates the legitimate rule of the king whom Yahweh has placed on the throne. Following the oracle, the command in vv. 10-11 warns the kings to cease rebelling and do obeisance to the king.

The psalm celebrates the sovereignty of the Lord over the nations and the unrivaled prestige of the Lord’s anointed. It does so in a narrative of a prototypical attack on the Lord’s agent and place, the Davidic king and Mount Zion. The greater the assault, the greater the victory. Against the impious claim of independence from God, the psalmist simply points to the One Enthroned in the Heavens and the decree installing the regent on Zion.

The psalm has had three contexts in the history of the holy community that recited it. The first was when there was a living Davidic king. Though the Davidic Empire was a minor player in international politics for most of its history, Israel prayed the psalm to express its belief that the Lord had chosen Zion and the Davidic dynasty. In the Second Temple period, when Israel had no king, the people prayed the psalm to express its hope that a king would be raised up to deliver it from bondage to the nations. The third context is the Christian community's ongoing confession of the anointed one, the son of God, and his eternal rule.

The New Testament cites this psalm more than any other. Acts 4:25-28 view verses 1-2 as fulfilled in the hostility of Jews and Gentiles to "your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed." Acts 13:33 interprets verse 7 ("You are my son; today I have begotten you") as a prediction of Jesus' resurrection, and Rom 1:4 likewise links sonship and resurrection. The background of the New Testament title "Christ" (NRSV: "anointed"; Heb. [masia h], Gk. [christos]) owes something to this psalm, as does his other title "Son of God" (Ps 2:7b) in Matt 26:63, John 1:49, and elsewhere. In Rev 19:15 (cf. Rev 12:5), the Word of God strikes down the nations with an iron rod (cf. Ps 2:9). Finally, Heb 5:5 places Pss 2 and 110 together as a witness to the eternal priesthood of Christ.

▪ A Closer Look (Brueggemann & Bellinger, 2014:31-36)

- **The Messiah of Psalm 2.** The term used to refer to the Davidic king in Psalm 2 is messiah, one chosen by YHWH. The term often refers to the king of the Davidic dynasty, but not always. Isaiah uses it in reference to Cyrus, the Persian ruler. Psalm 2 distinctly refers to the Davidic king as messiah and son of God. A number of interpreters have suggested that the description of the Davidic Empire in this and other psalms is idealistic. The account of the size of the kingdom and the account of the kingdom's history are somewhat different in historical texts in the Hebrew canon. The Deuteronomic evaluation of the kings is less positive than the Psalms might suggest.

Although the portrayal of Davidic rule in the Psalms is not without historical basis, it does partake of ancient Near Eastern patterns for describing kings and their kingdoms and therefore is idealized. History records that in the sixth century the Davidic kingdom was defeated by Babylon. After the experience of defeat and exile, second-temple

Judaism apparently included a variety of hopes for the return of Davidic rule, but major struggles for the Jewish community continued instead. Some came to apply the royal hopes to the community as a whole, whereas others came to look forward to a future in which one would come who would fulfill an ideal that had come to be seen as a messianic promise. In the Christian canon, the New Testament proclaims that Jesus of Nazareth came to fulfill the messianic promise and complete the line of David. The New Testament alludes to Psalm 2 in that proclamation (Matt 3:17; 17:5; Acts 13:33; Heb 1:5; 5:5) and incorporates the psalm's tradition of opposition to messianic rule (Acts 4:23-31; Rev 2:26-29).

- **Covenant Renewal Ritual.** The ritual reflected in Psalm 2 is a renewal of the Davidic covenant initiated, according to the biblical narrative, by the prophecy of Nathan in 2 Samuel 7. The psalm uses the father-son language of 2 Sam 7:13-15, which is also found in 1 Chr 28:6 and Ps 89:26-27. The newly crowned king in Psalm 2 is a successor in the line of Davidic rulers, whose covenant is renewed before the people in ancient Jerusalem. The covenant reflects the royal ideal of the Davidic dynasty. YHWH was ancient Israel's divine king; their earthly king could not take the place of YHWH. The kings of the line of David are human and enjoy a special relationship with YHWH. They represent God in ruling over the people in Jerusalem and in speaking to them. They also represent the people before God and thus are portrayed as mediating figures. The kings have special rights and responsibilities, and the royal psalms speak to those. Psalms 72 and 101, for example, attend to the central royal task of guaranteeing justice. The emphasis in Psalm 2 is that the king is YHWH's chosen one; the divine ruler has established the Davidic kingdom.

▪ **Context and Meaning (Longman, 2014:59-64)**

- Psalm 2 is obviously a kingship psalm, speaking of the divine King as well as his anointed, the designated human king. In its Old Testament context, Psalm 2 likely functioned as a psalm that accompanied the inauguration of the divinely appointed Davidic heir who occupied the throne in Jerusalem. As part of the ceremony, he was anointed, that is, the priest would pour oil on his head in a ceremony that symbolized his divine authorization and empowerment for his office. While it is true that the majority of

Davidic rulers did not live up to the standard that God had set for them (see Deut. 17:14-20), they all would have relished the idea that they ruled with the Lord's imprimatur and would have encouraged the use of this psalm during their inauguration, no matter how hypocritical it might have been in terms of their own hearts and actions. **After all, God promised his beloved servant David, Your house and your kingdom shall endure for ever before me; your throne shall be established for ever (2 Sam. 7:16). This Davidic covenant provides the theological background to Psalm 2.**

The faithful would probably have seen through the hypocrisy during the monarchical period. But it would have been particularly in the post-exilic period, when the book of Psalms reached its final form, that the eschatological significance of Psalm 2 would have come to the fore. Once the monarchy had ended with Zedekiah and the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple at the hands of the Babylonians in 586 BC, then questions would have arisen in regard to the promise of the Davidic covenant in 2 Samuel 7. The faithful came to believe that there was a deeper meaning to the promise than having a king sitting on the throne in Jerusalem. They began to expect a future Messiah (from the Hebrew word for anointed). The New Testament, of course, recognizes that Jesus is that expected Messiah and affirms that belief every time he is called Christ (the Greek equivalent to Messiah; see also Rom. 1:3-4). For this reason, Psalm 2 is frequently cited in the New Testament.

Psalm 2 does not name an author, but the New Testament associates the psalm with David (Acts 4:25), in line with the general tendency during this time to associate more and more psalms with David.

The psalm may be divided into four three-verse stanzas. The first (vv. 1-3) describes the revolt of the kings of the earth. The second (vv. 4-6) describes God's response to their foolish actions. The third announces God's decree concerning his appointed king, while the fourth (vv. 10-12) returns attention to the rebellious kings of the earth, by admonishing them to submit and be obedient to the Lord and his chosen king.

Psalm 2 celebrates God's power over the wicked plots of the kings of the world. Even more, it celebrates God's human agent, the anointed king, whom God had appointed as

an agent of order in a disordered world. The psalm cites the Davidic covenant of 2 Samuel 7, in which God grants to David a dynasty. It is thus David in particular and his descendants ruling from Jerusalem who are in mind here, and so it is probable that this psalm functioned as an inauguration song during the period of the monarchy.

However, the books of Samuel and Kings indicate that the hopes of the psalm (and the Davidic covenant) for a pious and effective royal agent of God's will on the earth and the submission of the world's kings with their evil intentions as envisioned by Psalm 2 surfaced only occasionally during the history of Israel and Judah. Indeed, the testimony of these historical books is that the kings were largely responsible for Israel's degradation of faith, as well as the end of the monarchy and Israel's national independence.

For these reasons, the New Testament authors recognized a deeper significance to the psalm that found its fulfilment in Jesus Christ, the greater son of David. Jesus is the Lord's anointed (Messiah) and son of David, a role announced every time he is called Christ (the Greek equivalent to Messiah). At his baptism, God's heavenly voice alludes to Psalm 2:7 by announcing to Jesus: 'You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased' (Mark 1:11; see Matt. 3:17; Luke 3:22). Paul explicitly cites Psalm 2:7 in his sermon at Pisidian Antioch to witness to his belief that Jesus is the ultimate fulfilment of the promise that God's anointed would be his Son (Acts 13:33). The author of Hebrews similarly cites both Psalm 2:7 as well as 2 Samuel 7:14 (1 Chr. 17:13) to underline that Jesus, God's Son, is superior to the angels (Heb. 1:5; 5:5).

Early church leaders recognized Herod, Pontius Pilate and other Gentile and Israelite leaders who executed Jesus and persecuted the early church as the raging rulers of the earth mentioned in the first stanza of Psalm 2, but they were also aware that the Lord in heaven was sovereign and in control of the situation (Acts 4:23-31; Ps. 2:1-2 quoted in vv. 25b-26), and thus they confidently continued preaching the gospel.

The book of Revelation utilizes Psalm 2, and in particular verse 9 (You will break them with a rod of iron; you will dash them to pieces like pottery, in reference to Christ's second coming and final victory over the forces of human and spiritual evil (Rev. 12:5). In Revelation 19:11-16, Jesus appears riding a white horse and coming out of his mouth

is a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. “He will rule them with an iron sceptre” (v. 15, citing Ps. 2:9).

Thus, New Testament readers recognized that Jesus was their anointed King and the Warrior who would defeat the evil spiritual and human forces ranged against them.

- **REFLECTIONS AND SERMON OUTLINE FORM**

- **Life with YHWH (Brueggemann & Bellinger, 2014:36)**

- Psalm 2 speaks of royal blessings for the Davidic king, an important plank in ancient Israel’s faith. It also affirms that behind Davidic rule is divine rule, and so an affirmation of divine sovereignty underlies the poem. The psalm’s concluding line also suggests that it provides instruction for the lives of peoples. Those who take refuge in YHWH will find blessing or happiness. The concluding beatitude brings readers back to the opening beatitude in Psalm 1 and the call to delight in YHWH’s torah. As part of the introduction to the Psalter, Psalm 2 treats topics central to the book: God’s choice of a king, the place of Zion, conflict with the nations (enemies), and refuge in God. Psalms 1 and 2 persuasively invite readers and hearers to basic decisions for living in relationship with or in opposition to YHWH. Psalm 1 addresses individuals; Psalm 2 addresses nations. **The contrast between relationship with YHWH and opposition to YHWH persists in the psalms to follow. This invitation at the beginning of the book arouses interest in readers and communities for further instruction in the poems to follow.**

- **Giver of Life (Bellinger, 2012:122-123)**

- This text likely came from a ritual related to the coronation of the king; at such a vulnerable time, this psalm would declare God’s commitment to the monarch and God’s guarantee of the Davidic rule.

The psalm appears at the beginning of the Psalter and is related to Psalm 1; our text calls for the same decision between the life that Yahweh offers and that which the wicked offer. The conclusion of Psalm 2 calls nations to make the wise decision for life found with Yahweh. The placement of the psalm already, then, indicates that the text has been shaped in such a way that it has a broader application to the life of faith and does not relate only to the coronation of a Davidic king in preexilic Jerusalem. The text has

through the centuries offered communities of faith the sure hope of the coming kingdom of God. The structure of the psalm supports this view. The first and last sections speak of Yahweh's authority, and the second and third sections of God's choice of the Davidic monarch as the divine representative. God's response to rebellion is firm! The Davidic choice and covenant stand. The picture of rebellion and God's response in laughter and fury offer a powerful reminder that God is the giver of life. Also worthy of note is the king's use of the scepter to smash a pot (v. 9); this is the fate of rebels. Psalm 2, then, vividly calls nations to the reality that Yahweh, with **Yahweh's Davidic representative, is the authoritative giver of life.**

▪ **Enthronement (Lawson, 2012:127)**

- The enthronement psalms are a kind of kingly psalm that is characterized by the repeated expression "the LORD reigns" This pithy, but profound, statement of faith underscores the sovereignty of God over all creation. An earthly king sat on Israel's throne, but he merely represented a greater and higher King, Yahweh, who reigned above. **In light of the repeated failures of the Davidic kings, God's people needed to be reminded that the LORD reigns with perfect justice over the whole world** (Pss 47; 93; 95; 96; 97; 98; 99).

▪ **Learning (Format of Worked Example, DML970: Preaching Psalms, 2023)**

- My concluded reflection and Homiletical Possibilities are from the green highlight as well the exposition of Psalm 2 in this paper.
 - About God
 - Sovereign KING over the nations
 - Messianic KING over the nations
 - Man's Role to God of Sovereignty and Grace
 - Be Fearful as People of God
 - Be Faithful as Witness of God
 - For us – *BCCC as a green planted church in Brooklyn
 - Be Trustful in God though in the mist of suffering
 - Be Trueful in God's words (Great Commandment & Commission)

*BCCC – Brooklyn Charis Christian Church

- **Sermon Outline Form** (Lecture of DML970: Preaching Psalms, 2023)
 - Introduction – Example
 - Rejection of Christianity: Missionary Couple testimony
 - But Psalm 2: God of Sovereignty and Grace as Transition
 - Verse by Verse
 - Read the whole Passage of Psalm 2:1-12
 - Explain verse (by 4 stanzas) and discuss difficulties
 - Emphasis of Man’s Role (listed above)
 - Homiletics
 - God of Sovereignty and Grace
 - Be Trueful in God’s words (Great Commandment & Commission)
 - Conclusion – Example
 - BCCC: Brooklyn “Charis” Christian Church – Charis ~ Grace
 - BCCC, started in 2017, the church building site donated by the Italian Church – Sovereign Grace Church (as Italians moving out the community but Chinese people moving in)
 - Reminding the congregation, BCCC be an authentic witness of Jesus Christ in spreading the gospel

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