

**You Are My Son: The Coronation Day Psalm**  
Psalm 2

Turn to Psalm 2. Psalm 2 is what we call a “messianic psalm.” That means that this psalm is a prophetic psalm; it predicts the coming Messiah. But Psalm 2 probably did not begin as a messianic psalm. It began as a coronation day psalm for any descendant of David. Coronation day is the day that a new king is crowned; it’s the day he officially becomes the new king.

So first we will go right through this psalm reading it to be used when any descendant of David became the new king of the Jews. We’ll first understand it as they would have used it then, before they were thinking about the Messiah. That way we’ll better understand what it means that Jesus fulfilled this psalm.

This psalm is twelve verses long, and it divides nicely into four stanzas with four different speakers. First the nations speak, then the Almighty speaks, then the new king speaks, and lastly a prophet speaks.

**1 The Nations Speak – Verses 1–3**

*Why do the nations conspire, and the peoples plot in vain?  
The kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together  
against the LORD and against his anointed, saying,  
“Let us break their chains and throw off their shackles.”*

When a king died, that nation was vulnerable to other nations. Kings had a huge amount of authority in those days. They told everyone what to do. When a nation suddenly lost their king, even if a new king was just starting to rule, that nation was a natural target of his enemies.

Yes, they have a fresh new king, but is he really in charge? Will he know what to do if we attack? Will his army leaders listen to him, or will they have a better plan? Until the new king gets established, things are unsettled inside the kingdom. If you are a neighbouring nation, and you would like to take some of their land for your kingdom, now is the time to attack.

That’s why this Psalm begins as it does. The nations conspire, the peoples plot, the kings and the rulers get together and say, “now we’ll do what we want to do!” “Let us break their chains and throw off their shackles.” “We are not going to have peace with them any more.” Who are they going against? “*Against the LORD and against his anointed.*” This is central. By rebelling against the ruler God chose, they are rebelling against God as well.

We need to imagine this psalm being part of the coronation ceremony. Someone is reading this out loud, and the nervous young king knows very well that the nations out there are conspiring against him. Who are they going against? *Against the LORD and against his anointed.*

This will be great relief for the new king. God is in this with him. They are going against Yahweh himself. The psalm began with the word “why.” Why do they conspire and plot? If they are going against the LORD as well as his anointed ruler, they cannot possibly succeed. Why indeed. So in the first stanza, the nations and their kings and rulers plot against God and his ruler.

## 2 The Almighty Speaks – Verses 4–6

*The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them.  
He rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath, saying,  
“I have installed my king on Zion, my holy mountain.”*

The One enthroned in heaven. This psalm is about a human sitting on a throne on earth. The real story is God on his throne in heaven. The reason this earthly throne demands respect is that behind the human throne, and supporting it, is the One enthroned in heaven.

The plotting nations said, *Let us break their chains and throw off their shackles.* To the One in heaven, this is a joke. He says, “You can’t be serious.” And then he’s outraged at their audacity. And then we get God’s speech: *I have installed my king on Zion, my holy mountain.* God has not just decided to support that king. God himself put that king in place. So the one rising up against God’s king is rising up against God himself.

What is “Zion”? The story is in 2 Samuel 5. When David made Jerusalem his capital city, the Jebusites were still there, one of the Canaanite tribes. David conquered Jerusalem, but the Jebusites had a fortress in the middle of the city, a citadel. They called their fortress “Zion.” The Jebusites retreated to this stronghold, and were sure that David could never chase them out of there. But he did, and he changed the name from “Zion” to “the City of David.”

The historical Old Testament books don’t talk about Zion, but Psalms and the Prophets talk about Zion. It becomes a poetic name for Jerusalem, with strong connections to the temple and the presence of God. Sometimes it means the people of Jerusalem. In this line in Psalm 2, “Zion” means God’s holy city. That’s where he installed his king.

This line from God is crucial for the new king himself, and also for everyone else in Israel. *I have installed my king on Zion, my holy mountain.* This is my king, says God, and I have made him king on my holy mountain. That’s a great comfort to the new king, and it is comfort to all Israel as well. If the king did well, so did the nation.

## 3 The New King Speaks the Words of God: You Are My Son – Verses 7–9

*I will proclaim the LORD’s decree: He said to me,  
“You are my son; today I have become your father.  
Ask me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession.  
You will break them with a rod of iron; you will dash them to pieces like pottery.”*

“You are my son.” In 2 Samuel 7, God promised David, “David, your descendants will rule my people forever. Your line will have a kingdom that never ends. When one of your descendants comes to the throne, David, I will be a father to him, and he will be a son to me.” That’s the key line: David, I will be a father to your descendant, when he comes to the throne, and he will be a son to me.”

The Jews used “son of God” in that sense. To them it did not mean deity. It meant that this was the descendant of David that God had put on the throne.

What about the word “today”? *You are my son; today I have become your father.* What day is that? This psalm was written to be used on the very day that the anointed king was officially crowned. We need to imagine the coronation ceremony in Jerusalem, probably at the temple. This psalm was part of the coronation ceremony. The new king stands up and reads these lines to his audience:

*I will proclaim the LORD’s decree: he said to me.*

So the new king proclaims to the audience what God has said.

*I will proclaim the LORD’s decree:*

*He [God Almighty] said to me [the new king],*

*“You are my son; today I have become your father.*

*Ask me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession.*

*You will break them with a rod of iron; you will dash them to pieces like pottery.”*

What a wonderful thing for the new king to read. What a remarkable thing for those listening to hear. That’s what happens in the temple on coronation day.

In the bigger world, the nations around are conspiring, and the peoples are plotting against God and his anointed ruler. That’s where the last two lines come in. God says to the new king: “Ask me, and you will break them with a rod of iron; you will dash them to pieces like pottery.” In other words, you don’t need to worry about them. Ask me and I’ll do it.

This is not an exaggeration. In Deuteronomy 28, God told Israel that when it came to other nations, if Israel would obey God, Israel would be the head and the other nations would be the tail. That’s what God said through Moses.

#### **4 The Prophet Speaks – Verses 10–12**

If this is in the temple, it could also be the priest speaking. Some speaker, based on what the first three stanzas of this psalm have covered, now speaks to the plotting nations and their rulers.

*Therefore, you kings, be wise; be warned, you rulers of the earth.  
Serve the LORD with fear and celebrate his rule with trembling.  
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.*

“You kings be wise, you rulers be warned. Serve the LORD.” The real question is not what they do with the new king, but what they do with the Almighty. Serve the LORD with fear. Fear means be afraid of what happens if you defy him.

“Kiss the son” means a kiss of submission, not a kiss of affection. Some translations just say “bow to the son,” because that is the sense of this kiss. *“Kiss his son, submit to him, or he will be angry and your way will lead to your destruction, for his wrath can flare up in a moment.”*

“You kings, be wise; you rulers, be warned. Serve the LORD, and bow to the son.” Psalm 1 ends, “the way of the wicked leads to destruction.” Psalm 2 ends almost exactly the same way: “your way will lead to your destruction.” Those who rebel against God’s *torah* and those who rebel against his anointed ruler share the same fate.

But then that wonderful line at the end: *Blessed are all who take refuge in him.* This whole psalm, until that line, warns the rebels. But the last line takes us in the opposite direction, straight toward him. There is no refuge from him, but there is great refuge in him.

Psalm 1 begins with blessing. *Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked.* Psalm 2 ends with blessing. *Blessed are all who take refuge in him.* Psalm 1 and 2 together introduce the book of Psalms.

*Blessed are **all** who take refuge in him.* “*Blessed are **all***” has an invitation built into it. This line is for everyone. “Everyone, listen: the way to blessing is to come to God’s anointed ruler for refuge. Come to God’s anointed ruler for refuge; for this God will bless you!”

## **5 The Baptism of Jesus – Mark 1:9–11**

By New Testament times, Jews understood Psalm 2 as predicting their messiah. So now we will turn to the Gospel of Mark, chapter 1. I plan this winter to go through the Gospel of Mark, but first we’ll go through a few Old Testament prophecies that help us understand Mark.

Mark 1:9 *Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.”*

*Jesus saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son.” Today we’ll stop there.*

When God says to Jesus, “you are my Son,” God was pointing Jesus to Psalm 2. Psalm 2 says, *He said to me, “You are my son.”* Jesus has just heard, with his own ears, God say this very thing to him: “You are my Son.” The Almighty is telling Jesus that he is the king that Psalm 2 described.

Earlier, Psalm 2 mentioned “the LORD and his anointed.” Jesus has just been anointed with the Holy Spirit. Jesus found out, at his baptism, that he was the anointed that Psalm 2 described. He heard God say it to him, just like Psalm 2 describes. “He said to me, ‘you are my Son.’ We don’t know how much of this Jesus knew ahead of time, but Jesus needed to hear this from his Father. These words from heaven took Jesus a big step forward in understanding who he was.

Let’s remember that Jesus lived his life on earth as a human. He was fully God and fully man. I do not water down his deity. But he lived as fully human. Luke 2 tells us that Jesus the boy grew in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man. He was growing and developing. Hebrews 2 says he was made like us in every respect.

He was growing in wisdom. Jesus finds out who he is just as you and I find out who we are. We find out from others. At his baptism, Almighty God tells Jesus, “you are my Son,” which takes Jesus back to Psalm 2. God was telling Jesus, “You are my anointed king, the one Psalm 2 describes, Jesus of Nazareth. That psalm is about you.” That’s how Jesus found out.

Psalm 2 talked about kings and nations conspiring against the LORD and his anointed. Revelation 19 tells us, *Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to wage war against the rider on the horse and his army.* The kings and their armies will conspire against Christ.

Psalm 2 says that the One enthroned in heaven terrifies them in his wrath. Psalm 2 says that the Son’s wrath can flare up in a moment. Revelation 6 spells this out. *They called to the mountains and the rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can withstand it?”*

Now we come to the blessing at the end. It is foolishly dangerous to oppose this king, to plot against him. It enrages God. There is enough of this going on, and God sees it and is biding his time. But blessed are all who take refuge in him. That is such a lovely line. Let’s always go to the Lord Jesus for safety, for refuge, help.

God’s actions against Christ’s enemies will ultimately be severe. The blessing is just as strong the other way, God’s blessing on those who take refuge in Jesus. God is thrilled when people come to his anointed Son for refuge, for safety, for help. His great favour rests on us when we come to his Son that way. Blessed are all who take refuge in him. Amen.

PRAYER: Gracious Father, thank you for sending your Son to save his people. Thank you for leading and guiding him, and helping him. Thank you for urging everyone to take refuge in him. We do take refuge in him, and we want that blessing. Thank you for that blessing. Amen.

BENEDICTION: Grace and peace to you from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. He loves us, and has freed us from our sins by his blood. He has made us to be a kingdom of priests to serve his God and Father. Grace and peace to you from Jesus Christ. Amen. Go in God's peace to love and serve the Lord.