

Greetings:

The study that Pastor Pat brings on Sunday mornings is a reflection of the study for that week. It represents a lot of research. Not all of what he has prepared is communicated. In an attempt to continue the learning process, he is making available his study notes to the congregation.

These notes are edited, but not “book” ready. To the critical eye, mistakes can possibly be found. Therefore, he asks that you take the material with humility, teach-ability, and charity.

Enjoy and if you should have any questions or corrections, please do not hesitate to email him at pastorpat@waukeshabible.org.

Date: April 17, 2022

Sermon Title: “Blessed Are All Who Take Refuge In Him”

Text: Psalm 2

Author: Patrick J. Griffiths ©2022



Date: April 17, 2022 (Resurrection Sunday)
Title: "Blessed Are All Who Take Refuge In Him"
Text: Psalm 2
Emphasis: The Resurrection of Jesus is a confirmation of what God promised in the Old Testament. Psalm 2, as an enthronement Psalm, foreshadows fulfillment in Jesus.

Introduction:

"Though Psalm 2 is certainly not a very common choice for Easter Sunday proclamation, we are convinced that you will find its message fresh, appropriate and powerful for Easter. **Psalm 2 is a royal psalm, probably composed for the coronation of a king.** In the background of this Psalm is the promise of God's future redemption of his people and the coronation of his exalted king. In the New Testament this Psalm is applied to Jesus Christ as the son of David and God's Anointed King. In this service we see the resurrected Jesus as the fulfillment of this promise."¹

"One of our question we have as students of this singular, unified Story is, "**How did the early Christians preach about Jesus if they did not have a New Testament? The obvious answer is that they must have preached from the Old Testament!** Of course, it wasn't 'old' to them, it was the only Scripture they knew, the Law, the Prophets, and Writings were God's Word to Israel. Even so, how do you preach Jesus' cross and resurrection if you don't have the Gospel of St. Mark, St. Paul's epistle to the Romans, the epistle to the Hebrews, of the Revelation of St. John the Divine? Well, they did it, by and large, by going through the Psalms! As one reads through the New Testament, it becomes clear that the authors detected in the Psalms various pattern and images which reminded them of Jesus, specifically, who he was and what he achieved in his death, resurrection, and exaltation. **It is hardly surprising then that the three Old Testament texts most often quoted in the New Testament are all Psalms. To be precise, Psalms 2, 110, and 118 provided the scriptural foundation for early Christian preaching about Jesus.**"²

Historical Context:

"**Psalm 2 is an enthronement Psalm,** celebrating how God had installed his holy king in Zion. Unsurprisingly Ps 2:7, 'You are my son; today I have become your father,' was **a favorite text of New Testament authors for referring to Jesus' resurrection where God installed Jesus as Messiah and Lord.** Luke records Paul preaching a sermon in a synagogue in Pisidian Antioch with the words: 'We tell you the good news: What God promised our ancestors he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus. As it is written in the second Psalm: 'You are my son; today I have become your father'' (Acts 13:32-33). Paul is saying, rather provocatively, that all of God's promises to Israel are made good in the resurrection and enthronement of Jesus as Israel's Messiah."³

Literary Context:

Psalm 1 and 2 form an introduction to all the Psalms.⁴

“Together with Psalm 1, Psalm 2 is the second of the two-part introduction to the Psalter. As we noted in our introduction to Psalm 1, Psalms 1 and 2 are linked together by the absence of a superscription above Psalms 2 and by the framing beatitudes. Psalm 1 begins with an extended beatitude, and Psalm 2 concludes with a simple form of a beatitude. Consequently, both psalms are concerned with the necessary conditions for happiness.”⁵

“While Psalm 1 emphasized Torah meditation, Psalm 2 will highlight Messiah anticipation. What begins in garden with a tree and a choice (Psalm 1/Genesis 1-3), climaxes in a cycle of brokenness and desperation leading to hope, and culminates in the praise of God alone (Psalms 146-150/Revelation).”⁶

To Them / Then:

As God placed His anointed on the throne of Judah, here are the threats and promises to the one who would sit upon that throne. There is little doubt even in its initial reading how this reaches beyond the immediate and touches into the future. The New Testament leaves little doubt as to who this “Son” is or will be.

As the Kings of Judah were installed, many of the surrounding nations would rage against this installment and seek to throw off the oversight and demands of their overlord. But God promises to His anointed, His “son” they would receive the nations as their inheritance. Blessed are those who accept God’s anointed and receive His blessings through that king.

Gospel Context:

The numerous references in the New Testament (Acts 4:25, 26; Acts 13:33; Heb. 1:5; 5:5), as well as multiple inferences to Christ clearly makes this Psalm messianic. David would be the king the original hearers would associate with this Psalm, but clearly another is in view.

I have three small points to make concerning this Psalm. Let us begin.

Outline:

- I. The Nation’s Rage | Their Rebellion
[The world’s defiance toward the Anointed One (vv. 1-3)]

New Testament Use – Acts 4:25, 26

- 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."

Michael Foust | *ChristianHeadlines.com Contributor* | Thursday, July 16, 2020

"Nearly seven in 10 Americans, including a majority of those who attend evangelical churches, believe 'people are basically good,' according to a new survey by Arizona Christian University's Cultural Research Center."⁷

Without seeking insult, we have a skewed view of fallen humanity.

Notice the graphic vocabulary of **rage** [The word "rage" in verse one occurs only here in the entire Old Testament], **plot**, **set themselves**, and **take counsel together against**. This rebellion is not passive, but active. They are actively seeking to throw His rule off them. This is where we all begin prior to accepting the person and work of Jesus.

Luke, in his gospel, records the language of Peter, John, and the early church in the face of persecution and threats. They cite Psalm 2:1, 2.

- Acts 4:23-31
²³ When they had been released, they went to their own companions and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. ²⁴ And when they heard this, they lifted their voices to God with one accord and said, "O Lord, it is You who MADE THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH AND THE SEA, AND ALL THAT IS IN THEM, ²⁵ **who by the Holy Spirit, through the mouth of our father David Your servant, said, 'WHY DID THE GENTILES RAGE, AND THE PEOPLES DEVISE FUTILE THINGS? ²⁶ 'THE KINGS OF THE EARTH TOOK THEIR STAND, AND THE RULERS WERE GATHERED TOGETHER AGAINST THE LORD AND AGAINST HIS CHRIST.'** ²⁷ For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, ²⁸ to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur. ²⁹ And now, Lord, take note of their threats, and grant that Your bond-servants may speak Your word with all confidence, ³⁰ while You extend Your hand to heal, and signs and wonders take place through the name of Your holy servant Jesus." ³¹ And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness.

They see application of Psalm 2 in the events of Jesus and the early church.

The next section of the Psalm stands in dramatic contrast to the open rage of the heathen. The Lord [Adonai] responds in three ways. “Structurally, there is a line by line contrasting correspondence between the first (vv. 1-3) and second strophe (vv. 4-6) of the poem.”⁸

II. The LORD’S Response (vv. 4-7)

Notice the shift from LORD [as the God of the promise | covenant] to that of Creator [Adonai].

A. First, He Laughs at Them (v. 4)

- ⁴He who sits in the heavens laughs;
the Lord holds them in derision.

“God is not shaken by the rage of the nations. He’s not worried or anxious. God will not be bullied or intimidated. Instead, he will flex his muscles when necessary, but never prematurely and never reactionary.”⁹

What type of laughter is this?

The parallelism of the passage with “derision,” assures us it is a mocking, contemptuous, superior laugh. Listen to the language of the Prophet of Isaiah.

- Isaiah 40:15-18
¹⁵ Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket, And are regarded as **a speck of dust on the scales**; Behold, He lifts up the islands **like fine dust**. ¹⁶ Even Lebanon is **not enough to burn**, Nor its beasts enough for a burnt offering. ¹⁷ All the nations **are as nothing before Him**, They are regarded by Him **as less than nothing and meaningless**. ¹⁸ To whom then will you liken God? Or what likeness will you compare with Him?

The “threat” of the created world and creature against Him is laughable. There is no rebellion that succeeds against Him. In times of uncertainty, we must remember and then rest in HIM.

B. Second, He speaks to them (v. 5)

- ⁵Then he will speak to them in his wrath,
and terrify them in his fury, saying,

C. Third, He Appoints His Son (vv. 6, 7)

New Testament Use – Acts 13:33; Heb. 1:5; 5:5

- ⁶“As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill.”
⁷I will tell of the decree:
The LORD said to me, “You are my Son;
today I have begotten you.

As God did with the kings of Judah, He fully does in the Lion from the Tribe of Judah, the Root of David.

In response to their rebellion against Him, “God resolutely declares that his king is on the throne, period. ‘I have set my King...’ is a declaration of God’s sovereign power and authority.”¹⁰ No earthly power can stop God from doing what He deems to do.

The Apostle Paul in his first missionary journey in Acts 13, preaches Psalm 2:7.

- Acts 13:32, 33
³² And we preach to you the good news of the promise made to the fathers, ³³ that God has fulfilled this promise to our children in that He raised up Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm, '**YOU ARE MY SON; TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU.**'

Paul uses Psalm 2:7 to preach the good news of Jesus’ resurrection.

The author of Hebrews celebrates this Psalm to show the superiority of Jesus over angels (Heb. 1:5 [entire chapter]) and over the Aaron’s line coming (Heb. 5).

As God’s king and son, Jesus receives His heritage. Here is His reward.

III. The Son’s Reward (vv. 8-9)

- 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.”

See also Ps. 22:27; 72:8; 89:27; Dan. 7:13-14

We have stressed how our study of the Book of Revelation is the culmination of the single story with Jesus at the center. Notice how this Psalm began and now notice what the Son is rewarded: **THE NATIONS!**

The very nations that rebel against Him are the very nations paying homage to Him.

The Psalmist begins by speaking of . . .

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.”

The Book of Revelation speaks of the installed and enthroned Jesus as “the ruler of kings on earth” (Rev. 1:5).

The idea of the Nations being His heritage and the ends of the earth His possession begins in Genesis and ends in Revelation.

Notice how the Book of Revelation celebrates this installment, this enthronement of Jesus (Rev. 5:9; 7:9; 12:5; 15:4; 21:24; 22:2).

- Rev. 12:5 She gave birth to a male child, one who is **to rule all the nations with a rod of iron**, but her child was caught up to God and to his throne,
- Rev. 15:4 Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. **All nations will come and worship you**, for your righteous acts have been revealed.”
- Rev. 21:24 **By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it**, ²⁶ They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations.

Here is where our story ends. In the life, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus, the victory of God is secured. Jesus Christ is worthy to open the scroll of Revelation 5 and is pushing this entire story to its ordered end.

Today, we pay homage to the King of kings and Lord of lords.

NOW WHAT? What are we to do on this Easter Morning?

In the final “paragraph,” the LORD again addresses the NATIONS.

IV. The Sovereign’s Warning (vv. 10-12)

- 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.

Despite the world's defiant rebellion against God and His Anointed, God extends a gracious invitation to come and believe, to receive His Son. Remember, Psalm 1 begins with a benediction and Psalm 2 ends with a benediction. The "key" is blessed. How does this happen? What does the language of this Psalm, this invitation, this request teach us today?

1. First, you must recognize your open handed rebellion against the God of this cosmos and fully embrace your complete inability to save yourself. You must repent of self. You must say, **"I can't."**
2. Second, you must equally say, **"But God can."** You must shift your attention from self-salvation and fully acknowledge that only God can make all things right.
3. And finally, you must fully accept, **"And Jesus did."** No one can be saved from sin and death unless they first recognize they can't, but God can, and Jesus did. Jesus is God's anointed, He is God's Son.

On this Easter Sunday, you must see yourselves in the first three stanzas of this Psalm. You are the defiant ones who reject God's rule. In addition, you must see How God has made a way. He has made provision for your defiant rejection of Him. And this provision is found only in Jesus.

Finally, you must "kiss the Son." You must humble yourself and seek Jesus only. The only question for you this morning is simple, "Will you accept God's provision for your rebellion against Him?" God does for you what you cannot do for yourself. Will you accept Him? Revelation 1:5 and 6 tells us how "the ruler of kings on earth, loves you and releases you from your sin by His own blood."

"Reading Psalm 2 on Easter Sunday announces to us that Jesus is raised to reign. Through the resurrection, Jesus is installed as Lord over all things and he will reign until all of his enemies are subdued, the wicked, evil tyrants, and even death itself. Consequently it is futile that the 'kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together against the LORD and against his anointed' (Ps 2:2). **Not only is Jesus Lord of all, but he is Lord for all.** He is the one in whom Jews and Gentiles can find hope. Therefore, as the Psalmist says, 'Blessed are all who take refuge in him' (Ps 2:12)."¹¹

Four short statements.

1. "God Is Not A Bondage Maker, But The Bondage Breaker."
2. The very nations that rebel against Him are the very nations paying homage to Him.
3. "Not only is Jesus Lord of all, but he is Lord for all."
4. And may God give you understanding so that you will loving say, "I can't, but God can, and Jesus did." May this day be for you, a day of resurrection?

Happy Resurrection Morning Let Us Pray.

¹ <https://worship.calvin.edu/resources/resource-library/from-dust-to-kingship-psalm-2/>

² <https://www.ridley.edu.au/resource/reading-the-psalms-at-easter/> This article written by faculty member Mike Bird, was first published in the Melbourne Anglican, April 2015 No 535.

³ <https://www.ridley.edu.au/resource/reading-the-psalms-at-easter/> This article written by faculty member Mike Bird, was first published in the Melbourne Anglican, April 2015 No 535.

⁴ <https://www.esv.org/resources/esv-global-study-bible/introduction-to-the-psalms/>

⁵ <https://worship.calvin.edu/resources/resource-library/from-dust-to-kingship-psalm-2/> This is an excellent treatment of this Psalm. Well worth the read. Pastor Giles' treatment of Psalm 2 follows the suggest structure of the Psalm.

⁶ Pastor Giles on Psalm 2.

⁷ <https://www.christianheadlines.com/contributors/michael-foust/70-percent-of-evangelical-churchgoers-say-people-are-basically-good-poll-shows.html>

⁸ <https://worship.calvin.edu/resources/resource-library/from-dust-to-kingship-psalm-2/>

⁹ Pastor Giles on Psalm 2.

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