

January 11, 2026

Psalm 2

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.

Scriptures for further study:

Revelation 6:15-16

“We have, in these first three verses, a description of the hatred of human nature against the Christ of God.”

-Charles Spurgeon

“The attempts of Christ’s enemies are easily ridiculed. God laughs at them as a company of fools... sinners’ follies are the just sport of God’s infinite wisdom and power; and those attempts of the kingdom of Satan which in our eyes are formidable in his are powerless.”

-Matthew Henry



The Laughter of God
Psalm 2

BIG IDEA: Today, when you face a myriad of moments that seek to disrupt or silence the good news of Jesus’ sweet and sovereign rule, first laugh with God, then winsomely and wisely speak the Gospel into your current context.

Or to say it more simply: if Jesus is on the throne, then all is well!

OUTLINE

1. The World that Rages
2. The God Who Laughs
3. The God who Terrifies
4. The God who Reigns
5. The God who Warns
6. The People who are Blessed

DISCIPLESHIP DURING THE WEEK

These “Sermon Discussion Questions” are designed for study during the week for believers in a wide variety of ages & stages in their walk with Christ.

1. Talk about the things that can wreck your concentration.
2. What moments seek to disrupt or silence the good news of Jesus’ sweet and sovereign rule in your life? How have you responded to those moments in the past?
3. Refer to Psalm 2:1-2. Read the following statement: Modern Western culture promotes radical individualism by rejecting any external authority (even God’s) over personal identity and lifestyle, asserts moral autonomy by allowing individuals to personally define good, truth, and beauty while discarding biblical boundaries, and embraces secularism by excluding God from public life, treating faith as mere private opinion, and encouraging self-invented purpose—all in an effort to diminish Christ’s relevance and authority. Is there any aspect of Western cultural thought or behavior towards God’s authority that is tempting for you?
4. Refer to Psalm 2:4. What does the raging of the nations accomplish? When circumstances in life tend to get you all out of sorts, thinking that your life is about to spiral out of control, what does God intend for us to see about himself through his response to severe circumstances?
5. Refer to Psalm 2:5 and Revelation 6:15-16. Do these passages bring comfort or conviction? Explain.
6. Refer to Psalm 2:6-8. Jesus reigns! Does Jesus’ rule have any boundaries or limits? How can these verses encourage a Christian brother or sister who is overwhelmed by their circumstances?
7. Refer to Psalm 2:10-12. What challenge or admonition does this verse present to folks who are in authority?
8. “...Blessed are all who take refuge in him.” Psalm 2:12
Do you take refuge in anything other than Jesus? How is that going for you?

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

When the people of God sing Psalm 2, they remind themselves of how God made David and his descendants to be kings in order to enable them to fulfill the very purpose for which Abraham was called (to bring blessing to all nations, Gen. 12:1–3). Thus, it can be called a royal psalm. The pious Israelite realizes that his hope of blessing is now irrevocably tied to the house of David (cf. 2 Sam. 7:12–16), and so he prays that God will keep the king pure. At a time when the Gentile kingdoms that are part of the Davidic empire seek to throw off Israelite rule, this psalm recalls the promises made to the Davidic king at his coronation and notes that the Gentiles will find lasting joy only as subjects of this king. With its prospect of a worldwide rule for the house of David, the psalm also looks to the future, when the Davidic Messiah will indeed accomplish this; in fact, the scope of such an accomplishment calls for a ruler who is more than a mere man.

-ESV Study Bible

Praise to Jesus – Lord Jesus, we praise You as the King installed on Zion, the eternal Son whom the Father has exalted above every ruler, power, and nation. Your throne is unshakable, Your reign is sweet and sovereign, and all creation finds its meaning and hope under Your authority.

Repent through Jesus – We confess that we have often resisted Your rule: seeking our own counsel, trusting our own strength, and fearing the threats of this world more than resting in Your calm, holy sovereignty. Forgive our pride, our anxiety, and our attempts to cast aside Your wise and loving commands.

Consecration for Jesus – Lord, set our hearts apart for Your service. Teach us to serve You with reverence, to rejoice with trembling, and to proclaim Your Gospel with wisdom and grace. Make us people who take refuge in You alone, living with courage, peace, and joyful obedience under the reign of our risen King. Amen.

FOR FAMILIES AND YOUNG CHILDREN

These questions are written to aid parents in leading family devotions with their children.

1 Read Psalm 2:1-3. What do you see going on in these verses? Who are the people mentioned in these verses? (Make sure to point out that there is a conflict or struggle described. The people in these verses are “the nations”, “the peoples”, “the kings of the earth”, “the rulers”, “the LORD”, “his Anointed”. The struggles described are the kings of the earth against the LORD and His Anointed. The kings, people, or rulers describe the non-Jewish or non-Israelites. The LORD is the God who made a covenant with Israel. “His Anointed” is the King of Israel, who is a part of the family of David or is related to King David. God is the Lord of all and rules all people of the earth. He planned to have the Israelite King bless the Israelites and all the peoples of the earth. If you have older children, then read Genesis 3:15 with them and talk with them about how the conflict in Psalm 2 is another description of the conflict in Genesis 3:15.)

2. What are God’s reactions in verses 4-9 to the conflict in verses 1-3? (First, He “laughs” and “holds them in derision”. He is showing that He is not worried one bit that the kings of the earth would be able to defeat Him. Second, in verses 5-9, He describes another reaction, which is to set up a King on Zion. Zion is a hill near Jerusalem, and it came to be another way to describe Jerusalem. This King that God anoints to rule is from the family of David that He has said will rule forever (2 Samuel 7:8-17). Make sure to point out that God would often call the King that He anoints to rule as His son. As we will mention later, this is an allusion to the coming of God’s true Son, Jesus.)

3. What is the invitation to the peoples and rulers on earth in verses 10-12? Or, in other words, how does God want the peoples to react to the anointing of His King to rule the earth? (He wants the peoples to “be wise”, to “serve the LORD with fear” or reverence, to “rejoice”, to “Kiss the Son”, and to “take refuge in him”. All that is pointing to us bowing down and worshipping God and His Anointed King. We are to submit to Him as the true Ruler and Lord.)

4. Read Acts 4:23-27. How does this passage show the fulfillment of Psalm 2 in the life of Jesus? (The Acts 4 passage shows that Herod, Pontius Pilate, and the leaders of Israel were acting like the “kings of the earth” and “the peoples” in Psalm 2. This passage from Acts 4 also revealed how Jesus is the Anointed One or Messiah from Psalm 2.)

5. How can we find peace knowing the truths of Psalm 2 this week? (Knowing that Jesus is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords is meant to give us peace in the midst of the tribulation and trials of our sinful world. Take time to pray this week that you and your family will take refuge in God this week and every week.)

Scriptures for further study:

Matthew 3:17

Matthew 17:5

Acts 4:23-27

Acts 13:32-33

Genesis 3:15

FOR STUDENTS

Scriptures for further study:

Genesis 3:15

2 Samuel 7:12-14

Matthew 3:17; 17:5

Acts 4:25-27

Hebrews 1:2-5

1. Read Psalm 2:1–3. What examples from our culture or your own experience show the world resisting God’s rule and trying to “burst His bonds apart”? Why do you think people find God’s authority offensive or restrictive?
2. According to verses 4–5, how does God respond to the rebellion of the nations? Why do you think God “laughs” at their efforts to overthrow Him? What comfort does this bring to believers?
3. In verses 6–9, God declares that His King (an allusion to Jesus) is firmly established. What does it mean for Jesus to rule over all nations and the ends of the earth? How does this truth shape how you respond to political or cultural anxiety?
4. Psalm 2 ends with a warning and an invitation (vv.10–12). What does it mean to “serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling”? How do fear and joy come together in a healthy relationship with God?
5. The Psalm finishes with a promise: “Blessed are all who take refuge in him.” What does it practically look like to take refuge in Jesus when you are anxious, fearful, or overwhelmed?
6. Reflecting on this Psalm, where have you tried to find control or refuge apart from Jesus? What would it look like to surrender that area to His rule this week?

FOR NON-BELIEVERS OR NEW BELIEVERS

1. Psalm 2 describes the “nations” (i.e., the rest of the world, apart from the people of God) as conspiring against God and rejecting his rule (while asserting our autonomy).

Question: In what ways does this describe the very heart of our fallen condition? How well does this Psalm describe the spirit of our age today?

Question: Why does God see all of this as laughable in its vanity? (v.4)

2. In verse 2, the “kings of the earth” could be extended to mean any person of power or influence.

Question: Can you think of some powerful individuals or institutions (media, business, technology, education, entertainment, etc.) that are pulling the levers of culture in America today?

3. Verse 3 encourages us to think about what true freedom really is.

Reflect on the following remarks by author Christopher Ash in his commentary: “We define freedom as the absence of restraint; it is freedom from God’s law...[But] true freedom is not about being free from restraint but being set free for living rightly, in glad obedience to God’s law.”

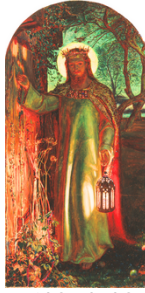
4. According to verses 10-12, what are the two most momentous choices that God has set before us, and what are the two outcomes of each?

Question: Have you made the decision to reject your own autonomy and submit yourself to the Lord God and serve him instead? Have you weighed the consequences of rejecting him as God, versus submitting to him and receiving his full blessings?

5. For those who see the interconnectedness of the whole Bible, the allusion to God’s Son (verses 7, 12) can only refer to Jesus Christ, the perfect Davidic King who was to come. Take a few moments to read some New Testament passages and see the connections. (Matthew 3:17; Mark 1:11; Matthew 17:5; Acts 13:33; Heb.1:2; Revelation 19:15; etc.)

Advice: As a new believer, perhaps learning to read your Bible for the first time, we encourage you to read it as one unified story, and all of it pointing ultimately to Jesus Christ. This is one of the most important rules of interpretation you will need to bear in mind if your reading is to be fruitful and true.

The Blessed Life: A Study of the Psalms



"The Light of the World" (1851-1854) by William Holman Hunt

Psalms Introduction

The Book of Psalms is the sacred place where the living God meets His people in the most intimate and personal of ways. He invites them to know Him not merely as an idea, but as their refuge, portion, shepherd, and King. From the opening doorway of blessedness in Psalm 1 to the climactic Hallelujahs of Psalm 150, the Psalter reveals that the truly happy life is one rooted in the person and work of Almighty God, whose steadfast love holds His people through every season of the soul. As the Psalter moves from anguish to adoration, from darkness to dawn, it becomes a mirror of the Christian life itself. It teaches us to pray honestly, to hope stubbornly, and to sing faithfully, even when night seems long. In the deepest valleys, the Psalms give voice to the church's groan; on the highest heights, they train the church's doxology. And in every line, every cry, and every hallelujah, Christ Himself comes near, revealing the light of the world in the dark night of the soul and leading His people into the blessedness that only His grace can give.

– Pastor Bill

About the artwork and artist.

The Light of the World, 1851-1854, is an iconic allegorical painting by William Holman Hunt. The painting depicts Jesus Christ as a regal figure in flowing robes, wearing a crown of thorns, holding a glowing lantern, and preparing to knock on a weed-overgrown wooden door with no external handle. This illustrates Revelation 3:20 from the Bible: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him..." The artist William Holman Hunt is showing us that Jesus is the divine door to the living God who meets His people in the most intimate and personal ways. The closed, overgrown door → representing the human soul or "obstinately shut mind" that has long ignored spiritual calling. There is no handle on the outside → the door can only be opened from within, emphasizing free will and personal invitation to faith. The lantern → Christ as the light of the world (John 8:12), illuminating darkness and offering salvation. The work marked Hunt's deepening Christian faith (from earlier agnosticism) and became one of the most reproduced and devotional images of the Victorian era, inspiring oratorios, hymns, and widespread popular piety. It's often called a visual sermon on personal salvation.