

## Songs of the Kingdom 1 – Psalm 2

### Background to the Psalms

- When Were the Psalms Written?
  - 500-1500 years before Jesus
- Who Wrote the Psalms?
  - King David... Solomon... Asaph and his family... Sons of Korah... Heman... Ethan... Moses... and 48 anonymous Psalms
- Different Types of Psalms
  - Psalms about the Word of God
  - Imprecatory Psalms (curses)
  - Penitential Psalms (repentance)
  - Wisdom Psalms (praising the virtues of wisdom)
  - Messianic Psalms (about the Messiah)
- Why are the Psalms Important?
  - Psalms is quoted in NT a lot
  - Psalms is quoted in NT more than any other OT book
  - Much of our understanding of the nature and character of God comes from the Psalms
  - Much of our understanding of Jesus as the Messiah comes from the Psalms
  - Much of our NT theology comes from the Psalms

### Messianic Psalms

- Psalms written about the Messiah, the Deliverer that God promised to the Jewish people
- Parts of 14 Psalms are specifically attributed by NT authors as being about the Messiah
  - 5 others have possible Messianic connotations, depending on which theologian you ask
- These Psalms all point to Jesus, yet were written 500-1500 years before Jesus
- A subset of Messianic Psalms are specifically about the Kingdom (Psalm 2, 45, 72, 110)

### What is the Messiah?

- Throughout the OT, God promised that a Messiah would come who would set everything right
- “Messiah” (Heb) = Christ (Gk) = Anointed One
  - “Anointed One” = lit. “Someone who had oil poured on them”... a symbolic ritual when certain people were installed into office in Israel
  - Three Kinds of People were Anointed
    - 1) Kings
    - 2) Priests
    - 3) Prophets
  - It was understood for centuries that this Coming Messiah, this Anointed One, would be Prophet, Priest, and King
    - We know, through the NT, that Jesus was the Messiah

### The Messiah is a King of a Kingdom

- 2 Samuel 7:12-16 – God promised that a son of King David’s would have a throne that would never end – this is the Messiah, Jesus
- When Would This Kingdom Come? Two Camps
  - 1) Jesus, the Messiah, came 2000 years ago and began establishing His kingdom through the Cross, and He is currently ruling
    - His reign is not literal but figurative, not physical but spiritual
    - We still await the day when Jesus will return physically and rule physically, but He is, right now, ruling spiritually

- 2) We're still waiting for Jesus the Messiah's Kingdom to begin, sometime in the future, as He reigns on a literal throne
  - Jesus came to the Jewish people, who rejected His Kingdom, so He went to Heaven and will one day return with the Kingdom, at some point in the future, at which time He will rule on a physical throne in Jerusalem for 1000 years
  - Though He does not now reign in His Kingdom, He will one day
  - It will be an actual, physical kingdom, not spiritual or figurative
  - It will be a Jewish kingdom, based in Jerusalem
  - Gentiles will have no part in this kingdom unless they submit to the Jewish nation
  - When Jesus establishes His Kingdom, He will rebuild the Temple and re-establish the priesthood and sacrificial system
    - This is all very contrary to the NT teaching that Jesus was the once-forever sacrifice, that we are the Temple of the Holy Spirit, and that the people of God are a royal priesthood

### Psalm 2 Overview

- Written by King David 1000 years before Jesus
- Quoted or alluded to at least 9 different places in NT (Gospels, Acts, the Epistles, and Revelation)
- Main Structure: 4 sections of 3 verses each
  - Section 1 (vs. 1-3): Kings and rulers of the earth rebel against God and the Messiah
  - Section 2 (vs. 4-6): God's response to the rebellion
  - Section 3 (vs. 7-9): God's commission to Jesus as King
  - Section 4 (vs. 10-12): A warning to rulers

### Section 1 (vs. 1-3): The Rebellion Against God

- Psalm 2:1-3 - 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."
- "the nations" = the non-Jewish, non-Israelite nations... the Gentiles
- "the peoples" = many times in the Psalms and Prophets, "the peoples" refers to the people of Israel
- The people and their rulers, Jewish and Gentile, want to cast off God's rules and the rule of the Messiah
- Hosea 11:4 - I led them with cords of kindness, with the bands of love, and I became to them as one who eases the yoke on their jaws, and I bent down to them and fed them.
  - God's commands are good and for our benefit, but we still try to cast them off
- Question: When is this section about? Is it about a future day when Jesus the Messiah returns? Or did it happen already when He came the first time?
  - Acts 4:24-27 - 24 And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said, "Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, 25 who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit, "Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples plot in vain? 26 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Anointed" – 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...
    - The early church saw a direct fulfillment of these verses in the crucifixion
  - This isn't something that will one day happen. It happened already. The nations already raged against the Messiah, and they continue to do so until this day

### Section 2 (vs. 4-6): God's Response to the Rebellion

- Vs. 4-6 - 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."

- God gives a 2-fold response: first to laugh, then to get angry
  - 1) First, He Laughs
    - He's laughing not in pleasure or joy but in incredulity at their bold, misguided arrogance
    - "derision" = Hebrew word translated elsewhere as "mocks"
  - 2) Then, He Gets Angry
    - It's ultimately not funny that they're rebelling. It's a sad, tragic, terrible thing that infuriates God.
- Then He tells them, essentially, "Look, I've put My King on the throne. Deal with it."
- Question: When is this section about?
  - This can't be about a future return of Jesus to reign as King, because the nations are fighting to tear down his already-existing rule, not resisting his about-to-begin rule. And God's response is, "I already have put my King in place," not "I will still put my King in place."
  - If Section 1 about the nations and peoples raging was about the Crucifixion, then this section in which God proclaims, "I have set My King in place, so deal with it," would have to be after that... meaning that by the Crucifixion, Jesus was already reigning as King.
- What is Zion?
  - "Zion" = the name of a mountain Jerusalem was built upon
    - Sometimes "Zion" means the mountain itself
    - Sometimes "Zion" means the city of Jerusalem
    - Sometimes "Zion" refers to the people of God (Isaiah 51:16 – "say to Zion, 'You are My people.'")
  - In NT, "Zion" is used rarely, but it always refers to the church (Heb 12:22)
    - This Psalm is not saying a Jewish king will reign over Jerusalem... but that Jesus reigns over God's people

### Section 3 (vs. 7-9): God's Commission to Jesus

- Vs. 7 – "I will tell of the decree: The Lord said to me, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you."
  - "begotten" = brought forth... like a child brought forth into the world
  - Question: When did this happen?
    - Response 1: This is about how Jesus has existed for all eternity (but it says "today" I have begotten you, implying a specific time)
    - Response 2: This is about Jesus' physical birth (could be)
    - Response 3: This is about the Resurrection, when Jesus was "begotten from the dead" (Revelation 1:5)... this understanding is what the Apostles seemed to hold
      - Acts 13:32-33 - 32 And we bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers, 33 this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus, as also it is written in the second Psalm, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you."
        - The Resurrection is connected with this verse
- Vs. 8 - Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession.
  - This must have shocked David, who was probably used to thinking of God's inheritance as being the people of Israel, not the Gentiles
  - But the reign of the Messiah was for all people, not just for the Jewish people
- Vs. 9 - You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."
  - "break them with a rod of iron" = According to some, this phrase could just as easily be translated "You shall shepherd them with a scepter of iron"
    - Jesus will lead the Gentiles as a shepherd, with an unbreakable authority that can never be taken from Him
    - 3 times the book of Revelation mentions Jesus ruling with a rod of iron
  - Those who surrender to Jesus and His leadership will be led with His unshakeable authority... but those who resist and fight Him will be broken into pieces like the potter's vessel.

- Matthew 21:44 - And the one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him.

#### Section 4 (vs. 10-12): A Warning to Rulers

- Vs. 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.
- Surrender to Jesus, submit to Him, receive His Kingship... or perish in the way

#### Why Does This Matter?

- Know that Jesus is already reigning as King, no matter how much opposition may come
- Stand in faith, resist fear, and know that He is in charge
- Resist the false teaching and distraction of seeking after a Jewish Messiah who will rebuild the Temple and reinstate the sacrificial system