

# Psalm 2 (ESV)

Why do the nations rage

and the peoples plot in vain?

<sup>2</sup>The kings of the earth set themselves,

and the rulers take counsel together,

against the LORD and against his Anointed, saying,

<sup>3</sup>“Let us burst their bonds apart

and cast away their cords from us.”

<sup>4</sup>He who sits in the heavens laughs;

the Lord holds them in derision.

<sup>5</sup>Then he will speak to them in his wrath,

and terrify them in his fury, saying,

<sup>6</sup>“As for me, I have set my King

on Zion, my holy hill.”

<sup>7</sup>I will tell of the decree:

The LORD said to me, “You are my Son;

today I have begotten you.

<sup>8</sup>Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage,

and the ends of the earth your possession.

<sup>9</sup>You shall break them with a rod of iron

and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.”

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<sup>10</sup> Now therefore, O kings, be wise;

be warned, O rulers of the earth.

<sup>11</sup> Serve the LORD with fear,

and rejoice with trembling.

<sup>12</sup> 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.

## Psalm 2 – Only One King

**Author:** While there is no designation of the author at the beginning of this psalm, in Acts 4:25, Peter quotes Ps. 2:1, 2 and attributes it to David speaking under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

**Digging Deeper:** This psalm is an example of a “kingship” or “royal” psalm. These speak of the king or his throne. As kings, they were considered “sons of God.” Along with the priests, they would participate in the public worship of Israel (2 Sam. 6:12-19).

**Study Skill: Grammar I**  
**Pronouns** can help us understand who is speaking to whom. **First-person pronouns** (I/me/my, we) *personalize* the psalm. **Second-person pronouns** (you/yours) make them *conversational*. **Third-person pronouns** (he/she/it/they) provide *description*.

**Study Skill: Grammar II**  
**Verbs** are another key to understanding psalms. As you read, look for *action words*. If they are in parallel structure, ask *how these verbs are related* and how the second verse *amplifies or contrasts* with the first. Another thing to look for is **tense**: *present* (now), *imperfect or perfect past*, and *future*. These help us to understand accurately.

Psalms 1 and 2 are believed by many commentators to set the stage for the entire book of psalms. While Psalm 1 focused on the importance of God’s law in the life of a righteous person, Psalm 2 focuses on the righteous King Himself.

### Study Questions

Before studying this psalm, review 2 Sam. 7. What does God promise David?

Read Psalm 2 at least three times to get the general idea of the psalm. There are four “voices” speaking in this psalm. Using pronouns, can you identify them?

vv. 1-3

vv. 4-6

vv. 7-9

vv. 10-12

Go through the psalm and list the verbs you see throughout. If you can, determine the tense. If the verb has a counterpart in parallel, consider how it is related—does it amplify or extend? Does it show contrast?

Verb	Tense	Relationship

## Psalm 2—Only One King

**Read verses 1-3.** Describe the opening scene pictured here: What’s going on? What is their complaint? Who is fighting whom? Why?

**Read verses 4-6.** What do you learn about the LORD here? What do you hear? What does he say?

**Read verses 7-9.** What do you learn about the relationship between the LORD and his Anointed? (Hint: Look at the pronouns and quotation marks!)

In verses 8-9, what two specific arrangements have the LORD and his anointed agreed upon?

What imagery is used in verse 9? What do you learn about the “rod of iron” in Rev. 2:26-28; 12:5; 19:15?

**Read verses 10-12.** These verses return back to the kings and rulers of verse 1. What three commands are given to them by the King of Kings? Why?

Psalm 1:1 and Psalm 2:12 bookend this prologue to the Psalms. How do these two set the stage for the rest of the Psalms?

### **Definition: Nations**

When the Bible talks about “nations,” it is not merely literal but symbolic shorthand for *those who ignore God and do life their own way.*

**Application:** In what way have you joined the nations in rebellion against the Lord?

### **Names of the Lord**

“Anointed”: This is the Hebrew name for “Messiah.”

“LORD”: God’s covenantal name, Yahweh. Verse 2 differentiates the LORD and his anointed as two separate people with the conjunction “and.”

“Lord”: Adonai or “sovereign one.” Note that in verse 4, this is not in all capitals, meaning it is not the same. As you study, note these subtle differences.

**Digging Deeper:** If vs. 7-9 sound familiar, it is because they are frequently quoted in the New Testament. See Acts 13:33 (v. 7); Heb. 1:5, 5:5 (v. 7), Rev. 2:26, 27; 12:5; 19:15 (v. 8-9). How does your study in the psalm enrich your understanding of these passages?

**Application:** The blessed life is only possible through Christ. How can knowing this King personally impact how you live your life today? List specific implications.