

# Christ In The Old Testament

## Lesson 4

### Psalm 2

**Psalm 2** describes a typical theme that can be seen throughout the Bible. Essentially, it is the contrast between good and evil, and the inherent battle that consumes their correspondence. In the end, righteousness is the victor, just as we read in **Psalm 1:6**, *“For the Lord shows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.”* The application of **Psalm 2** certainly can be seen as Davidic, but its deepest meaning, as well as a few aspects of the psalm which definitely do not apply to King David, refers to the Messiah. As we study this passage of scripture, it is essential to notice the way it describes Christ as our king – an indestructible one at that, and one that shall clearly and decisively conquer all enemies

*“Why are the nations in an uproar, and the people devising a vain thing?” (Psalm 2:1)* What about Jesus Christ would send the nations into an uproar? Indeed, the message of our Lord is so powerful that it upsets entire nations of people, such as the Romans of the first century. Jesus was put to death because of the “uproar” of the Jews in Jerusalem. Beyond that, as a direct result of the popularity of Christianity in the decades following the establishment of the church, Roman emperors worked hard at persecuting and embittering the Lord’s people. *“The vision shows the psalmist Jew and Gentile banded together against the gospel of Christ. Its scope is not exhausted by the exposition of Acts 4:26, but extends to the whole struggle between Christianity on the one hand, and Judaism and paganism on the other. ‘The peoples’ still to this day ‘imagine a vain thing’ – imagine that Christianity will succumb to the assaults made upon it – will fade, die away, and disappear” (Pulpit Commentary, Vol. VIII, 10).* The vain thing in this verse is really any attempt to enact a plan that is in opposition to the will of God. No matter what powerful kings or rulers may do, they are always in subjection to God. Even though false teachers may try to devise ways of defeating the truth, they will fail. This is a primary lesson: God is in control, and all the “uproaring” and “devising” in the world will not prevent Him from fulfilling every word of His message.

**Discussion Question:** How is the “uproar of the nations” manifested today?

*“The kings of the earth take their stand, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against His Anointed: ‘Let us tear their fetters apart, and cast away their cords from us!’” (2:2-3).* It is interesting to note the kind of perspective from which these kings and rulers see God. Instead of standing with God and His Anointed, the kings of the earth would rather fight the Lord. They would much rather choose freedom from God than freedom from sin. Indeed, this is a great misconception that these people have about God. Is choosing to reject the Almighty really “freedom?” They seem to think that obedience to God is a “fetter” – that is, a chain – or a cord, which is another word for a rope. It is amazing that people today feel the same way! Unbelievers do not want to become Christians because they see religion as some kind of binding force which prevents them from doing what they really want to do. In truth, though, it is sin that is the fetter! Until we become Christians and accept release from the bonds of sin, we are in slavery to those vile passions which so easily encumber us (**Galatians 5:13, 4:8-9, Romans 6:19-23**).

*“He who sits in the heavens laughs, the Lord scoffs at them” (Psalm 2:4).* We should not take this verse to mean that God enjoys the sins of people in this world. He does not get pleasure out of our foolish ignorance, nor does He savor and relish those times that He gets to rub it in our faces that we are wrong. Rather, God laughs at the arrogance of those worldly kings who think that they have the power to rebel against the judgment of the Almighty. It is ironic that physical beings, with only a very limited amount of days in this world, who rule over kingdoms that will pass away in only a few generations, think that they can reject God and lead themselves to victory. *“Then He will speak to them in His anger and terrify them in His fury...” (2:5)* There are those who say that God is not an angry being – that He is all love, rainbows, and warm fuzzy feelings. But this verse clearly describes God being angry, and with good reason. It angers the Lord when we allow our arrogance to send us into a spiritual tailspin. *“‘But as for Me, I have installed My King upon Zion, My holy mountain’” (2:6).* It is clear that this is talking about Jesus Christ, the triumphal king over all the creation. *“... Which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name which is named... And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church...” (Ephesians 1:20-22, Colossians 1:16-18).*

*“I will surely tell of the decree of the Lord...” (2:7).* Prophetically, this verse is being spoken from the perspective of Jesus, and it perfectly describes the mission on which our Lord was sent. Christ came into this world to declare righteousness to the world, and to make clear the decrees of God in the Kingdom. *“He said to Me, ‘Thou art My Son, today I have begotten Thee...”* This same verse is quoted in **Acts 13:33** as being fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Later, the same is stated in **Hebrews 1:5** and **5:5**. In these verses, the writer asks whether or not God spoke this phrase to any other being but Jesus alone. The answer, of course, is no, for not even angels are considered sons of God in the same exalted way as Christ, the Lord. There are a number of valuable lessons in this verse, beginning with the fact that God Himself placed His stamp of approval on Jesus. It would be much more difficult to believe in Jesus if the Almighty had not personally vouched for His validity. So when we confess our belief in Him, it is not just a shot in the dark, but a sure and true testimony. We can take great confidence in Jesus – after all, what other person in this world today has God personally recommended to us? Second, it is very beneficial to see how this verse was fulfilled. Essentially, the same statement is made by the voice of God at Christ’s baptism in **Matthew 3:17**.

*“Ask of Me, and I will give the nations as Thine inheritance, and the very ends of the earth as Thy possession” (2:8).* This verse may seem confusing to some, since we are taught that Jesus was not sent into this world to establish an earthly kingdom. But let us remember that this offer is used by Satan in **Matthew 4** in order to try and tempt Jesus into worshiping him. The fact is that God would have given all the kingdoms of the world to Jesus, had He asked for it. However, both Jesus and the Father knew that this was not the purpose of our Lord’s coming. Jesus was not tempted by the kingdoms of the world because He had His divine mind set on a more grand accomplishment: salvation for the world!

**Discussion Question:** Why was Jesus able to resist the temptation by Satan in the wilderness?

*“Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, thou shalt shatter them like earthenware” (2:9).* That is, Jesus was given the authority to judge the nations of the world by His power. If it seems fitting to the Lord to break one nation, then He has the ability to do it. The strength of the kingdoms of this world seem like

nothing compared to the strength of Christ's arm, and no king can stand against Him. Therefore, when we take confidence in Christ, it is not in vain! He will defend us, and secure us, and lead us to victory against all the foes that may set themselves against the church!

*"Now therefore, O kings, show discernment; Take warning, O judges of the earth..." (2:10).* I.e., pay attention! There are many people in the world who believe that a government should not stand on religious principles, but this verse clearly teaches otherwise. The kings of the earth need to pay attention to God, and the judges need to be warned about Him. *"Worship the Lord with reverence, and rejoice with trembling" (2:11).* We ought to always worship God in the same way, treating Him as holy. Unfortunately, some "Christians" view worship much more flippantly than they ought to – worship becomes a game, or a source of entertainment, rather than something observed with reverence and trembling. The *"trembling"* here is not necessarily out of fear, but more likely from awe. When we see something more grand than our imagination could have conceived, we tremble at it. Consider the very first time you walked into a baseball stadium, or watched a major fireworks display, or took a tour of the United States Capitol. In the same way, we also tremble when we are in the presence of greatness – would you tremble just before meeting your favorite athlete, musician, or politician? Now put things into perspective and consider how much more we ought to be trembling from awe when we go to God in worship! *"Do homage to the Son, lest He become angry, and you perish in the way, for His wrath may soon be kindled. How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!" (2:12)* While we still have time, we ought to pay our respect to Jesus. For a day will come when all people will confess Jesus (**Romans 14:11**), but some will do it out of compulsion and it will be too late (**Matthew 7:21**). Also, this verse is very good for refuting the idea that Jesus Christ is all about love, peace, rainbows, and butterflies. While His mercy is available for all, those who reject His helping hand will only feel His wrath on that great and terrible day of judgment. Truly, truly, how blessed are those who take refuge in Him. How much better will it be for those who are on Christ's side than those who are opposed to Him!

**Discussion Question:** How do we answer when somebody brings up **John 12:47**? Is there a discrepancy between "I did not come to judge the world, but to save" it and the prophecy discussed in this lesson?