

RIGHT WORSHIP IN A HOSTILE WORLD

From Psalm 2

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INTRODUCTION

1. Opening – Last week Ben introduced us to the psalms by unpacking psalm 1, reminding us that true life comes from a genuine communion with the Lord through Jesus Christ. In this way, psalm 1 invites us into thoughtful reflection about what kind of person we are (righteous vs. wicked) and what right worship looks like in light of our heart’s sinful disposition to turn from God and dwell among the wicked.

This week we continue in Psalm 2 because it completes our introduction to the book as a whole.

“Right worship in a wrong world”

What does right worship involve in light of what’s wrong with the world?

- What is right worship?
- What’s wrong with the world?

Both psalm 1 and 2 answer these questions but in slightly different ways.

Below is a table that will help us clarify how these two psalms fit together

	Psalm 1	Psalm 2
Subject	Ideal person of God	Ideal representative of God and God’s people
Scope	Inward/personal	Outward/communal
Right object of devotion (worship)	Instruction of God	Son of God
What’s wrong	Wicked people	Wicked rulers
Consequence for wickedness	Judgment by God	Judgment by the Son

With this in mind, I believe that God wants us to reflect on this core message found in Psalm 2:

2. Proposition: Since the LORD’s Anointed reigns over this hostile world, right worship requires taking refuge in God’s Son.

BODY

1. What’s wrong? Wicked rulers (vv. 1-3)
 - a. Ruler = representative of a nation’s people
 - b. The problem is not that these rulers aren’t functioning properly (they are representing the interest of their people well). The problem is the object of their hostilities.
 - c. Observations:
 - i. They’re hot and bothered
 - ii. They’re working together
 - iii. They think they’ll be successful
 - iv. Their beef is with God’s authority manifested on earth
 - d. Where/when this has been true
 - i. In David/Solomon’s day
 - ii. In the Exile (Dan. 2:21; 4:34-35)

He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings

*for his dominion is an everlasting dominion,
and his kingdom endures from generation to generation;
all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing,
and he does according to his will among the host of heaven
and among the inhabitants of the earth;
and none can stay his hand
or say to him, "What have you done?"*¹

iii. At the crucifixion (Acts 4:25-27):

²⁵ *You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant,
our father David:*

*"Why do the nations rage
and the peoples plot in vain?*

²⁶ *The kings of the earth rise up
and the rulers band together
against the Lord*

and against his anointed one.'

²⁷ *Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles
and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy
servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate,
along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel,*² **to do whatever
your hand and your plan had predestined to take place**

¹ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Da 4:34-35.

iv. Increasingly true today: "most widely targeted religious group in the world"²

North Korea

Afghanistan

Somalia

International Society for Human Rights: 80% of all acts of persecution are directed at Christians

North America?

e. The heart of a wicked man cannot tolerate the authority of a holy God

2. What's true? The LORD reigns through His Anointed (vv. 4-9)
 - a. It is against this backdrop that the psalmist invites us to consider God's perspective. Our gaze is draw heavenward into God's throne room.
 - b. The Lord laughs, scoffs, speaks, and terrifies. How? By appointing that his king rule from Zion
 - c. Starting in v. 7, our perspective shifts again. This time onto the throne in Zion. On the mouth of the king, God's anointed says [vv. 7-9]
 - i. God's pronouncement (2 Sam. 7:8, 14a):

'Thus says the LORD of hosts, I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be prince over my people Israel. ⁹ And I have been with you wherever you went and have cut off all your enemies from before you... ¹⁴ I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son.

² University of Notre Dame study:
https://ucs.nd.edu/assets/233538/ucs_report_2017_web.pdf

- ii. God's promise:
 - 1. An inheritance of the nations (v. 8)
 - 2. Judgment over his adversaries (v. 9)
- 3. What's right worship? Taking refuge in God's Son (vv. 10-12)
 - a. Invitation to wicked rulers
 - i. Show discernment (i.e. take warning)
 - ii. Worship the LORD with reverence (i.e. rejoice with trembling)
 - 1. Afraid that you *could* fall
 - 2. Afraid that you *will* fall
 - iii. Honor the Son
 - b. True blessing is for anyone who takes refuge in the Son!
 - i. No where in Scripture does it invite someone to take refuge in anyone other than the LORD
 - ii. Is Psalm 2 the exception? I think not!

CONCLUSION/APPLICATION

- 1. Is your heart raging against God today? Take warning!
 - a. Lay down your rebellion. Lay down your pride. Bow your knee to the King of kings and Lord of Lords. Take up His cross. Die to self. And you will find abundant life in Him!
- 2. Are you overwhelmed by the evil around you? Take courage!
 - a. Hope in God. He rules and reigns. Though we don't always see His hand at work, know fully he is orchestrating all things according to His plan in Christ Jesus. If you, by faith, are united to His Son, you have nothing to fear and you have a great and perfect place of refuge!
- 3. Eph. 1:15-23