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**Main idea:** Why do leaders waste time making bad decisions? Why do they plot evil and why are they so selfish and shallow? The nations are so busy with their own ways and plans they negate and neglect the Lord. Yet, He is there, and He laughs at our folly. At the same time, He gives us a plan of redemption that we do not deserve. This Psalm is about God's providence and power, His meekness, and His strength under control, as He puts up with our wickedness and yet still hears us, laughs at our recklessness, and speaks to His position. God tells us we are wasting our time plotting and scheming for what we want, as what we want will bring us no real gain, while our real opportunities and blessings go untouched and wasted. Our real inheritance goes uncollected and the incredible wonder of His grace goes unreached. We think we can save ourselves and that we have no need for the God of Truth. We think we are slaves when in fact He is the One who liberates us.

Our faulty thinking about God is, perhaps, our greatest mistake and truest foolishness. This erroneous thinking only brings destruction and death upon us. God loves us and gives us warning to move from our evil ways into Him. He calls us to respect and submit to Him lest we fall into our own folly and vain pursuits that lead to judgment and destruction. On the other hand, we can have God's protection and the joy of being in Christ!

### **Contexts and Background:**

This Psalm contrasts the kingships of man and God: one is of hostility, folly, and meaninglessness, and One is of greatness, comfort, and purpose. This Psalm is about God's Sovereign Kingship. We learn that our lives can be ruled either by a loving and purposeful God or by our own sinful foolishness. This Psalm has been attributed to David as testified by Peter and John in Acts 4:25. It is often quoted in the New Testament (Matt. 3:17; 17:5; Acts 4:25-28; 13:33; Rom. 1:4; Heb. 1:5; 5:5), as Christ is the great Messianic Son of David and God's Anointed. The authenticity of the interpretation pointing to Christ is valid, but not necessarily the idea that David wrote it. Maybe he did, but it is not necessary to authenticate that for its scope and meaning, as the real author is the Holy Spirit. This Psalm being referred to David can mean it was collected, used, or attributed to David, yet not necessarily written by him.

Since their return from the Babylon-captivity period, the Jewish community attributed the entire Psalter to David to honor him. Psalm 2 may be the song composed for or used for David's coronation in 2 Samuel 7, and additionally used for other kings. Traditionally, it is Messianic as it points to a time when all things will be reconciled and the ways of the world will finally be revealed as futile and meaningless. For us as Christians, Jesus Christ is the Son of David, our Messiah, and we are the product of this promise of a future redemption as the promises given to David are fulfilled in Him.

### **Commentary—Word and Phrase Meanings:**

**Verses 1-3:** The world hates God because He represents Truth, love, and Authority, and it is our sinful human nature that hates having a ruler over us; we prefer to rule our own lives and country. Authority means conviction and surrender; we fear His Lordship as it may assault our pride, complacency, and will. We prefer our folly. To this point, we can conjure up the idea we do not need God and we can save ourselves.

- *Why do.* This is a rhetorical query that God is saying, "why do you do such mean and foolish things?" in the sarcastic sense, as "How dare you!" It is foolish, and it wastes His precious opportunities and call.
- *Nations.* Referring to those who hate God, those outside of His will, and a Hebrew term for *Gentiles*. During the coronation of a new king, most of the revolts and invasions occurred due to the perceived instability and uncertainty.
- *Rage/conspire.* Refers to *revolt* as the nations scheme and rebel against God; it is a showcase of our sinful nature and depravity! They further display their disloyalty by rebelling against one another. The only unity they have is their rebellion against God and their hatred of those who are godly and upright. This culminates in the persecuting of those who are righteous, something which God detests! This happened in the Early Church and still does today (Psalm 38:12; Prov. 24:2; Isa. 59:3-13; Acts 4:25-28).
- *Plot in vain... Gather together.... take their stand.* This refers to a coalition or conspiracy to seek sin and disrespect and fight God and any He has called to stand against such hostility. Those who are in sin have a

great need to rationalize that it is OK and flock with others with the same mindset while fighting those who are good and righteous. This is taking a wrong and saying it is a right and fighting for it—even when it is harmful (Rom. 1:18-32).

- *Kings of the earth.* This refers to the leadership and political organizations we make for ourselves to suit our plans—such as community as well as national and political boundaries that are not visible from the heavens.
- *His Anointed.* Means the person God has called, referring to David the favored king, whose heart was after God's, but who also sinned grievously and suffered the consequences, and how God accepted his repentance. This can also be applied to the Messiah, as this is pointing to a time of future redemption. It refers to the promise of David who prefigured a coming Messiah, which was fulfilled in Christ. To rebel against God's anointed, the person He has called to serve, is to rebel against the Messiah and the Lord (Matt. 1:17)!
- *Break their bonds/chains.* This means rebellion against what is right and good, to seek to free self from God and/or feel one is righteous, therefore free to rebel. Our real bondage to Christ is our surrender to His Lordship that yields our liberation and frees our love as our Lord is placed first and foremost for a more triumphant life for us (Jer. 5:5 Hos. 11:4).

**Verses 4-6:** God is the True King, and He laughs at the wicked and hostile self-proclaimed kings in the world. They think they are so important; yet, they are too self-focused to see who the True King is!

- *Laughs.* God is amused at our presumptions and is mocking those who choose to rebel against Him. He allows it as He allows us liberty and freedom. We can never say *God forced me*; He allows us to make mistakes and loves it when we come back to Him and is even more delighted when we never forsake Him (Psalm 59:8).
- *Hold them...Derision.* This means wickedness drives God to anger. God's *wrath* comes because people hate righteousness. God will hold us to account and will rebuke those who rebel and cause harm to His people. The godly person will fear God—as in respect Him—and be terrified of His Judgment, yet not fear it because of His grace (Psalm 7:11). God will, in His time, frustrate the plans and the outcomes of those who come against both Him and those who are in Him!
- *Set my King.* God reveals Himself; He pronounces His sovereignty and the sovereignty of the Messiah! We know who God is, as it is written in our hearts. There is no excuse (Rom. 1).
- *Holy Hill.* Refers to the hill on the north side of Jerusalem where the temple stood in the royal city. "Zion" and "holy hill" are also synonyms for Jerusalem and God's dwelling that pointed to Heaven. This is not about size or location; rather, it is where God chose to reveal Himself and rule (2 Chron. 33:15; Psalm 3:4; 15:1; 43:3; 46:4). This image points us to the eternal reality versus earthly vows.

God shows His anger as well as His sovereignty and control and points to His righteous earthly representatives. God has the right to be angry for sin; this is an expression of His righteousness. This also is foreshadowing Christ.

**Verses 7-9:** God changes His tone from anger to the loving care of a Father declaring you *are my son and it is your birthday. What would you like to have?* God has taken care of any woes or hopes for us by bringing up Jesus (Psalm 89:26; Acts 13:32-35; Heb. 5:5).

- *My Son.* Refers to the promise of the Davidic Covenant where God promises the Messiah to them through Him (2 Sam. 7:5-17; Rom. 1:4; Heb 1:5; 5:5). Earthly kings rule by authority and demand allegiance; God also demands allegiance, but rules us in the theme of the love of a good father who gives to his son.
- *Today.* A word of celebration such as the coronation of a king and/or our gratitude and celebration to be His elect.
- *Ask of Me.* God is promising us an inheritance beyond our scope of understanding. God is not promoting Himself as a vending machine; we do not pick-and-choose. Rather, He is saying we can trust in Him totally and completely with all we have now and for our future.

- *Inheritance.* This is the real promised land of His grace and eternal love (Ex 15:17; Josh. 22:19; Psalm 28:9; 79:1; 82:8). We will be able to overcome all adversities and trials and be better and stronger for it.
- *The ends of the earth.* This refers to God's dominion and what He gives is beyond our sight and thoughts (Dan. 4:34-36).
- *Rod/scepter of iron.* Means strength, authority, and kingship. This is now the victorious reign of our Lord Jesus Christ (Mic. 7:14; Rev 2:26-27; 12:5; 19:15)!
- *Dash them to pieces.* These are prophetic words of judgment that refer to the smashing of a pottery bowl, as kings and people would write the names of their enemies on pottery bowls and then smash them, symbolizing their victory over their enemy as the pottery could not be repaired (Jer 19:10-13).

**Verses 10-12:** God does not just leave us to our own destructive devices. He warns us in a caring way, and when we go too far, He responds in a more firm way, just as a good parent does. But at some point, "tough love" is employed, and if that does not get someone's attention, nothing will.

- *Be wise.* God calls us to wisdom and discernment. Leaders have responsibility to lead with righteousness and care. We all have the responsibility to listen and obey God as LORD.
- *Be warned instructed.* A severe reprimand that you do know better. When you are hostile to God or seek sin, you are setting yourself up for chastisement, defeat, and judgment.
- *Serve the LORD.* This means to have a right relationship with God and out of gratitude, serve Him joyfully (Psalm 34:8-9; 103:18).
- *Rejoice.* Literally means to joyfully and gladly hail the Lord as Lord and King.
- *Trembling.* Means to have utmost respect and awe for the Lord, as in reverence; and this does not mean to fear, as in to be scared of God—unless you are in total rebellion.
- *Kiss.* Here it is not an affectionate or intimate gesture. It means submission as the people in this era would kiss the feet of their king; or how Catholics and Episcopalians will kiss the ring of their Bishop today (1 Sam. 10:1; 1Kings 19:18; Dan. 7:13; Hos. 13:2; Acts 7:9).
- *The Son.* Referring to David, the reflection of the coming Messiah, now fulfilled in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

### **Devotional Thoughts and Applications:**

In the Old Testament period when a new king was crowned, the kingdom was at its weakest and the king had to build his trust of the people. Hence, it was also the time most revolts and invasions took place. The kings would rage against God and themselves—a prelude to the whims of our will and the battle of our sanctification and our sinful nature. Yet through it all, Jesus Christ is the Messiah and the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords. The battles in this Psalm are like the ones that rage in our hearts.

God desires us to wise up and see life as a series of serious opportunities to grow and become spiritually and emotionally mature. It is a time to stop cursing and blaming God, and seek what it is He desires in us; then, we can seek to please Him. A plan to please and serve God will carry us far, whereas a plan seeking to thwart God will only send us into despair, bitterness, and regret. We do not submit to God just because He will become angry if we do not; after all, we have grace now. Rather, we do it because it is the best way to please Him. God's anger denotes disappointment that we wasted our lives when we could have had so much more and so much better as a parent grieves for his or her child when he or she is making bad decisions that are ruining them. We could have been over-comers, prosperous in the important things of life, bearing fruit in our relationships, character, maturity, and our spiritual formation. God does not want us to ruin ourselves and others. He wants us to be victorious and prosper in Him! If you want true security, joy, significance, and contentment, you will only find it in the Person and Work of our Lord Jesus Christ! We must learn to submit to His Lordship—as He is our King.

**Christian Life Principle:** People who are worldly will hate God because He is Truth, love, and the Authority. In the same way, they will hate Christians because we represent His authority, which means conviction, while they want freedom to sin away from God (John 15:18-27).

**The Essential Inductive Questions** (for more Inductive questions see Inductive Bible Study):

1. What does this passage say?
2. What does this passage mean?
3. What is God telling me?
4. How am I encouraged and strengthened?
5. Is there sin in my life for which confession and repentance is needed?
6. How can I be changed, so I can learn and grow?
7. What is in the way of these precepts affecting me? What is in the way of my listening to God?
8. How does this apply to me? What will I do about it?
9. What can I model and teach?
10. What does God want me to share with someone?

**Additional Questions:**

1. In what ways did you try to get out of trouble when you were younger? How is this like how many of us seek to manipulate and conspire today?
2. Have you known political leaders to waste time, resources, and make bad decisions? What about church leaders? How does this make you feel?
3. How do you feel about God being here, laughing at our folly? What do we need to do to please Him according to this Psalm?
4. How do you feel that God gives us a plan of redemption that we do not deserve? How can you explain this to a person who hates God?
5. How have you seen a person's plotting and scheming to get what he or she wants cause them (or you) to lose out on a blessing or opportunity?
6. How does chasing our evil desires give us no real gain? What real opportunities and blessings have you seen go untouched and wasted?
7. How does our faulty thinking about God become our greatest mistake that only brings destruction? How does this passage foreshadow Christ?
8. Why does the world hate God? Why do most people have a dislike for truth, love, and Authority? Why do those who are in sin have a great need to rationalize that it is OK? How have you seen such people gather with others with the same mindset and fight those who are good and righteous?
9. How is bondage to Christ, as in surrender to His Lordship, really your liberation? How can this free you to love more?
10. How do you feel that God may allow you to make mistakes? How can this help you mature? What does it take to come back to Christ when you sin?
11. Why are some people selfish and shallow? What do you think cause them to get that way? What can be done to help them grow deeper in Christ?
12. Have you fixated on your own ways and plans so intensely that you negated or neglected the Lord? How so? What can you do to prevent this from happening again?