

Prayer

Praise be to You, Lord God, for when we need Your love, You are there; when we claim Your forgiveness, You are there; when we call upon Your name, You are there; and when we cry to You for help, You are there. We praise You and thank You for the great mercy and love You show to us, and we commit ourselves to live forever according to Your will and pleasure. AMEN

Prayer Suggestions

Prayer ideas

Pray for you own country. Pray for its leaders and its politicians at every level of government, and pray for peace.

On-going prayers

- **Pray for Afghanistan.** *Pray for the future of this nation, and its people and way of living. Pray for God's Word to penetrate the land*
- *Pray for people who are fleeing persecution and genuinely need refuge and asylum*
- *Give thanks for sleep and pray for those who do not sleep well*

Meditation

What is the truth behind Your love, O Lord?
 A love which made the world and chose a people,
 Led a broken nation through the desert;
 Spoke through the lives of kings and prophets,
 And wept and bled when all seemed lost through sin.

But then it triumphed in a plan of unsurpassed beauty,
 Sending Christ, Your Son, into our world to save the lost;
 A man who took the world's rejection on the Cross,
 That good might conquer death and claim love's victory,
 And prove to all the world the timeless moral truth
 That its best and only hope is in its Saviour!

It is a love that only finds a home in you and me,
 Because our past and present make us ever lost
 Unless we place our future's hope in Him
 Who longs, in love, to be at home in us.

Bible passage - Psalm 2

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| <p>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.'
 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</p> | <p>on Zion, my holy hill.'
 ⁷ I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me,
 'You are my Son; today I have begotten
 you.
 ⁸ Ask of me, and I will make the nations your
 heritage,
 and the ends of the earth your possession.
 ⁹ You shall break them with a rod of iron
 and dash them in pieces like a potter's
 vessel.'
 ¹⁰ Now therefore, O kings, be wise;
 be warned, O rulers of the earth.
 ¹¹ Serve the LORD with fear,</p> |
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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.

Bible Study

Review

***The Lord deals with rebellion against Him in the world by sending His Son to rule in Zion!
This is the Old Testament's answer to the ills of the world, and it speaks prophetically of
the coming of Christ!***

Whereas Psalm 1 was about the individual and God, Psalm 2 is about nations and God. It describes conflict between nations and the Lord (2:1-3), the enthronement of God's Son as King in Zion (2:4-6), the Lord's commission of His servant, the king (2:7-9) and God's warning to the nations to pay homage to the King in Zion (2:10-12).

Now, this may not appear to have much in common with Psalm 1, but it does. Psalm 1 presents people with a choice between two 'ways', the righteous way of the Lord or the way of sinners, with each having clear consequences; and in a similar way, Psalm 2 presents nations with two pathways, again, with equally clear consequences. They can either rebel against the Lord and his 'anointed' and incur His wrath (2:3f.), or they can serve Him with fear and trembling (2:11) and receive His blessing (2:12). This sounds straightforward, but despite this framework to the psalm, it is not always easy to follow exactly who is talking to whom, and about what.

We can start by trying to imagine the circumstances in which this psalm may have been written. The phrase '*I have set my King in Zion*' (2:6) suggests the enthronement of a King, perhaps David, and the title of the King is '*the Lord's anointed*' (2:2). The enthronement of a King was an important part of the life of Israel, because the King was a descendant of David and visible evidence of God's blessing on His people. He was expected to maintain the peace and security of the land and to prevent the surrounding nations from attacking the country (as described in verses 2 to 4).

However, there are other ways to understand the psalm depending on how we interpret the title '*the Lord's anointed*' (2:2). For example, there was no king in Jerusalem for considerable periods of Israel's history, such as after the exile in 587BC. Without a King, the Israelites had to interpret this psalm differently, and they came to believe that it was about the 'Messiah', God's 'Anointed One', who would come to liberate His people and rule over them like David. For them, this Psalm described how their Messiah would subdue the nations and protect God's people, like another great 'Son of David' (see 2:7,12). In addition to this, Christians today quickly see connections between this psalm and Jesus, and read it as a prophecy of His coming Kingdom and His rule over the nations.

With all this in mind, it becomes easier to interpret the psalm. It begins with the question '*why do the nations rage?*' (2:1) but this is asked by the Lord who sits in heaven and '*holds them in derision*' (2:4). He mocks the plotting of the nations because He alone has all authority. He then tells the nations that He will set His '*King*' (2:6) in authority over them. It is now easy to see that although the ancient Israelites thought this was their King, later generations believed this was their Messiah, and we now believe that this is Jesus. Then, in verse 7 to 9 we read God's promises to His anointed One. In the same way, these were once thought to be God's promise of authority to the King in Jerusalem, but later generations read this as God's promise to defend His people through the Messiah. For us, however, they remind us of God's promise to Jesus at His baptism (2:7) and also of the authority He will have over the nations when He comes again.

Lastly, verses 10 to 12 have a clear message, whatever period of history you have in mind, whether ancient Israel, the Jewish people of later times, or the Christian church today. They are a challenge to other 'nations' to accept God's authority and rule, and a powerful proclamation of God's Good News, inviting people to worship Him and take refuge in Him (2:12). It also warns people that ignoring this invitation is to invite disaster.

Psalm 2 is therefore a stirring proclamation of God's rule in this world. In the past, he ruled through David and his descendants, and now He rules through Jesus Christ His Son, and He calls the whole world to recognise this authority.

Discipleship

Questions (for use in groups)

1. In what ways do nations, philosophies and religions today reject God, and what does this Psalm say about this rejection?
2. How does Jesus Christ fulfil this psalm, and how may we, as His followers, interpret what this psalm says now?
3. Psalm 2 describes 'taking refuge' in Him (2:12). What does this phrase mean to you?

Personal comments by author

I have found that the Old Testament has always been a source of inspiration to me because of the way it describes God's ultimate victory over evil; despite so many problems experienced by the people of Israel, their prophets always spoke about God's victory. I have also met other Christians who have found it hard to think in those terms and believe that it is inappropriate for us to have such confidence, they say that it sounds too 'triumphalist'. Over the years, however, I have not been able to find any good scriptural reason to hold back from believing in Christ's victory. There is of course no need for us to be arrogant in our manner when talking about the things of God, but unless we believe that the Creator of the world will indeed be victorious over all evil, then it seems to me that the Gospel is incomplete. Jesus' death is a triumph not a disaster!

Ideas for exploring discipleship

- *This Psalm challenges us to identify with our Christian heritage going back through Jesus into Old Testament times. Read through the psalm and think about what it meant for people of past generations, and consider what can be learned from their experiences.*
- *Pray for the church of God and ask the Lord to help it declare the truths it has been given, especially about the ultimate victory of good over evil. This is a fundamentally Christian message that needs to be proclaimed whether we like it or not.*

Final Prayer

Speak to me Lord in the quiet moments offered by this day. Touch me when I need to be reminded to turn to You and choose Your way. Encourage me to exercise the gifts and graces You have given me, as a child of God. Walk beside me all the way, Your wisdom ever present in what I do and say; AMEN
