

# Further up, Further in

## Resources for Continued Study



LOOKOUT  
MOUNTAIN  
Presbyterian Church

### “KINGDOM DEFIANCE AND DEVOTION”

DATE: June 7, 2026

SPEAKER: Brian/Chad

SERIES: Summer in the Psalms

PASSAGE: Psalm 2

## Family Dinner Table

Besides being Israel's songbook, the *Psalms* are also a window into the reign of God's promised King. Psalm 2 opens our *Summer in the Psalms* series with a breathtakingly high vision of the Son whom the nations oppose but whom God enthrones forever. Rooted in the language of Davidic kingship, the high Christology of Psalm 2 transcends earthly kingship, pointing to a divine figure whose preexistence, exaltation, and reign are linked throughout the New Testament. Psalm 2 invites us to see that defiance against God's King is futile, while joyful devotion to him is the only path to wisdom, refuge, and life.

#### Defiance against the King is futile. (vv. 1–6)

Verses 1–6 present a picture of humanity's rebellion against God and his appointed King. The nations rage, rulers conspire, and kings unite in defiance against the Lord and his “Anointed” (v. 2). Yet the psalm immediately exposes the futility of such rebellion. As theologian Christopher Ash points out: “*Psalm 2 begins with a dramatic uproar that summarizes human history in seven vivid lines. And yet the first verse begins and ends with words that calm our fears: ‘Why do the heathen rage and the peoples plot in vain?’*”<sup>1</sup> While earthly powers imagine themselves autonomous and invincible, God remains enthroned in heaven, utterly unthreatened by human resistance. With sovereign certainty, God responds: “*As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill,*” reminding us that no political movement, cultural trend, or human authority can overturn the purposes of God. Defiance against the King is futile because the Kingdom of God rests upon his divine decree.

- If we look at Psalms 1 & 2 next to each other, note the many overlapping words and ideas. Read Psalm 1. In what ways do these two psalms capture the narrative arc of the Scriptures?
- Psalm 2 divides into four nearly equal parts, each uttered by a different speaker or speakers. Who is speaking in each of the stanzas: Verses 1–3? Verses 4–6? Verses 7–9? Verses 10–12?
- Read Genesis 12:2–3, 22:17–18 and 2 Samuel 7:14. What two OT covenants are fulfilled in Jesus as described in Psalm 2? How are each realized in Christ?

#### Devotion to the King is wise. (vv. 7–12)

Verses 7–12 introduce the King as God's Son, a title carrying far greater significance than ordinary royal language. The Son is promised the nations as his inheritance and the ends of the earth as his possession. The New Testament writers recognize this psalm as pointing ultimately to Jesus Christ. At Jesus' baptism and transfiguration, the Father publicly declared him to be the beloved Son, echoing the language of Psalm 2 (Matthew 3:17, 17:5). After the resurrection, the apostles proclaimed Christ's exaltation and universal authority as the fulfillment of this royal psalm (Acts 13:30–33). Jesus is the eternal Son who reigns with divine authority over every nation and every ruler.

The psalm concludes with a stark warning and an invitation: devotion to the King is wise (vv. 10–12). The author urges rulers and citizens to abandon their pride, serve the Lord with fear, and “*kiss the Son*” as an act of allegiance. Even though the King's wrath terrifies the rebellious, the poem ends on a note of hope and grace. True wisdom drives humanity to shift from open defiance to humble submission, because ultimately, safety belongs to “*all who take refuge in him*” (v. 12). As one commentator concludes, “*There is no refuge from him: only in him.*”<sup>2</sup>

- Psalm 2 is one of the most quoted passages in the Hebrew Bible. In the NT, the Sonship language (v. 7) appears in three different contexts: Jesus' preexistence, his existence as a man, and his exaltation after the cross. Read Matthew 3:17, 17:5, Acts 13:30–33, and Romans 1:2–4. What is significant about Jesus' Sonship identity at pivotal moments like his baptism, the Mount of Transfiguration, and the resurrection?
- Read Malachi 4. What overlapping themes do you notice with Psalm 2? What promise given to God's Anointed in Psalm 2:7–9 is also extended to those “*who fear my name*” (v. 2–3)? (cf. Revelation 2:26–28)
- Read Psalm 23:4 and Revelation 2:25–28. This “*rod*” is the same word that is used in Psalm 23, where David says, “*Your rod and your staff, they comfort me.*” How can the same object (the rod) be a source of comfort and of terror? What does it communicate about how Jesus rules uniquely as King?

#### Futility of Defying the King

Psalm 2 opens with nations raging and rulers plotting against the Lord and his Anointed, imagining they can cast off God's rule and establish their own authority. History repeatedly shows the futility of such rebellion.

In the late 1950s, Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev confidently predicted that religion would disappear from the USSR by 1965. He mockingly claimed that Christianity would become so extinct that future generations would need to see a believer preserved in a museum. For decades, the Soviet government aggressively promoted atheism, imprisoned Christians, closed churches, and attempted to erase faith from public life. Yet the opposite happened. Despite severe persecution, Christianity endured and even spread underground. Young people, intellectuals, and former atheists increasingly turned to Christ, while secret Bible studies and underground churches multiplied throughout the Soviet Union. The harder the regime pressed against the church, the more spiritual hunger seemed to grow.<sup>3</sup> Psalm 2 reminds us why: earthly rulers may resist God's King, but they cannot overthrow him. The nations may rage, but the Son still reigns.

- Read Matthew 21:33–44. How does the *Parable of the Tenants* deepen your understanding of Psalm 2's picture of humanity's rejection of God's Son? What do these passages, along with Nikita Khrushchev's bold claim, teach us about the futility of resisting Christ's reign?

#### PRAY FOR HOME MISSIONS

House of Refuge, supported ministry partner

#### PRAY FOR WORLD MISSIONS

Keith and Ruth Powilson, supported missionary partners with MTW

<sup>1</sup>Christopher Ash. *The Psalms: A Christ-Centered Commentary, Vol. 1*. 2024, Crossway. 19

<sup>2</sup>Derek Kidner. *Psalms 1–72*. 2014, IVP Academic. 79

<sup>3</sup>Anita and Peter Deyneka, Jr. *Life on the Soviet Precipice*. March 1, 1985, Christianity Today. <https://www.christianitytoday.com/1985/03/life-on-soviet-precipice/>