

The One True King

Psalm 2

When you first hear this Psalm you are probably thinking - "Christmas?!?" Yeah, it doesn't feel much like a Christmas-y passage. But you'll see that it really is, and wonderfully so. **Christmas is the celebration of CHRIST.** And this is one of the key passages in the Bible that teach us *what Christ means*. Here is the preview - it means KING. Jesus is the One True King. (You might have guessed that from the title today - but hopefully that statement will have a deeper, richer meaning for all of us after we study Psalm 2.)

There was a time when Psalm 1 and 2 were considered one Psalm and you can see the connection in the first verse of Psalm 1 and the last verse of Psalm 2:

***"Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked... but his delight is in the law of the Lord"** Psalm 1:1-2*

***"Kiss the Son... Blessed are all who take refuge in him."** Psalm 2:12*

Psalm 1 presents two ways to live - one that leads to blessing and happiness, the other that leads to curses and death. The way to blessing is called the way of the righteous, "but the way of the wicked will perish" (Ps. 1:6).

Psalm 2 presents the only place this happiness and blessing can be found: in the anointed King - the One chosen by God to rule over everything and all of us. ***"Blessed are all who take refuge in him."***

Jesus is the One True King - true happiness can only be found in Him.

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That is the lesson today - ***Jesus is the One True King - true happiness can only be found in Him.*** This is the meaning of Christmas: the one true king has come. He is the one Israel was waiting for. And He is the One we have been waiting for too. Stop looking in other places for happiness and blessing for it can only truly be found in one place - the Person of Jesus Christ, the King.

Our outline today is very simple - Psalm 2 gives us ***two urgent exhortations:***

Jesus is the One True King - true happiness can only be found in Him.

1. Stop your **Rebellion** against God

2. Surrender yourself completely to Jesus

Rebellions are serious matters. You don't take up arms against the king unless you mean business. We love rebellions in America because we are the product of a successful one. So we love Star Wars and hate the Empire and think of ourselves as "rebels" even though we're actually very compliant, submissive citizens.

But imagine you lived through the revolution. **1776 was a perilous year.** King George was not to be trifled with. England was the great world power, rivalled only by France at the time.

The original signers of the **declaration of independence** knew if the rebellion failed they had all signed their death warrants - for rebellion was treason against the crown. So the rule of thumb in a rebellion is to **be sure you can win**. If you can't win, surrender right away and start begging for mercy because the king you've rebelled against isn't going to take your insurrection lightly.

Psalms 2 shows us **what happens when you rebel against God**. Look again at verse 1-2.

1. Stop your Rebellion against God

*"Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers take counsel together, **against the Lord and against his Anointed.**"* Psalm 2:1-2

These two lines summarize **the history of Israel**. Nations raging against them. Peoples plotting to overthrow them. Kings and rulers taking counsel together against the anointed kings of Israel and thereby against God Himself.

Matthew 1 was read earlier, quoting Isaiah's prophecy of a virgin who would bear a child and they would call him **"Immanuel."** That prophecy was spoken to **a king named Ahaz**. He was a bad King who worshiped idols and even offered his own son as a sacrifice to the local deities. As a judgment on this bad king, God sent two nearby kings to attack Ahaz in Jerusalem. He held out against them but he was very scared.

That was when Isaiah went and offered Ahaz hope and a way out - **"Ask for a sign"** - any sign! God was willing to help Ahaz and even when this evil king refused the sign God gave him one anyway - **a virgin who would give birth to a child**. That promised child was a sign of hope for God's people right up until the time of Jesus' birth. But Ahaz didn't want to hear it. He did not turn to God in faith and ask the Lord for help. Instead, look at what he did:

*"So Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, saying, **'I am your servant and your son.** Come up and rescue me from the hand of the king of Syria and from the hand of*

the king of Israel, who are attacking me.' Ahaz also took the silver and gold that was found in the house of the Lord and in the treasures of the king's house and sent a present to the king of Assyria." 2 Kings 16:7-8

Instead of letting his fear lead him to deeper faith in the Lord, Ahaz doubled down on his rebellion and pledged himself to the king of Assyria. Do you see his personal commitment? "I am your servant and your son." **Ahaz rejected sign of the promised child** - the promise of a divine King who would come - **and committed himself to a different king**, the king of Assyria.

And don't we all do the very same thing?

1. Stop your Rebellion against God

"The kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his Anointed, saying, 'Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us.'" Psalm 2:1-2

People think of God as a dictator, a cruel and powerful tyrant, and they plot to escape his rule. They think of the Bible and God's law as restrictive to their happiness so they reject those shackles and run away from Him. You can almost hear the devil whispering in peoples' ears - "You will not surely die... when you eat that fruit you will BE LIKE GOD - with the knowledge of good and evil!"

But in the process, **they run away from His protection**. Remember verse 12 - "Blessed are all who take refuge in him."

2. Stop your Rebellion against God

- If you run away from God's **Direction** you also run away from His **Protection**

"The kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his Anointed, saying, 'Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us.'" Psalm 2:1-2

Safety and blessing can only be found under the wise and sovereign rule of God's Anointed One. When we throw off the bonds of his rule we place ourselves in the dangerous position of being outside of His sovereign care. If you try to escape from God's reign over your life be very careful - you just might succeed.

And sometimes, like Jonah - if you run away from God's direction you run into His correction - which can feel like a major storm.

Psalm 2 is primarily a warning. In it may we hear the voice of God laughing and shaking His head at our futile attempts to escape his rule. May we see the peril of insurrection against the King. When we run away from His direction we also run away from His protection. There is safety inside the will of God. There is great danger outside of it. Ahaz learned that the hard way and all Israel with him. May we stop our rebellion and bow before the One true King!

Brother, sister, ***stop your rebellion against God.*** Why do you rage against him? Why do you plot to overthrow His rule? Why do you set yourself against him and take counsel with other rebels against his kingdom?

I'll tell you why we do this. ***Either we don't believe*** He is the sovereign Lord ***or we don't want Him*** to be Lord over us. Listen to God's response to our rebellion:

He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision. Then he will speak to them in his wrath and terrify them in his fury, saying, "As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill." Psalm 2:4-6

When people think they are powerful, God just laughs at them for **it is laughable to set yourself up against God.** Here are a few examples:

- ***Nebuchadnezzar*** of Babylon thought he was the greatest of all kings and God made him live like a wild donkey for seven years until he acknowledged that "the most high rules over the kingdoms of men and gives them to whomever he chooses."
- ***Herod***, in the days of the early church, bragged about the awesome kingdom he had built and instantly God struck him dead and he was eaten by worms (Acts 12:23).
- ***Diocletian***, a Caesar of Rome in the 3rd century, set out to eradicate Christians from the whole empire and worked hard to accomplish that goal. Ironically, as soon as he retired his kingdom fractured into civil war and 100 years later Christianity became the law of the land under Constantine!
- Julian of Rome quote from Boice. "Thous hast conquered, O thou Galilean!"

Kings who exalt themselves to oppose God and His people just make God laugh. A basic Bible principle is ***"exalt yourself and you will be humbled; humble yourself and you will be exalted."*** Kings tend to exalt themselves so they force God to humble them. This is true for all of us - if we exalt ourselves by rebelling against God's direction He will humble us by removing His protection or introducing His correction. So stop your rebellion against God!

- 1. Stop your Rebellion against God**
- 2. Surrender yourself completely to Jesus**

"Then he will speak to them in his wrath and terrify them in his fury, saying, 'As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill.'" Psalm 2:5-6

And here is the second exhortation: surrender yourself completely to Jesus, for He is the One True King! ***If you talk back to God this is how he will put you in your place*** - "he will speak to them in his wrath and terrify them in his fury." Why do we ever talk back to the Lord, like ignorant, rebellious toddlers?

Here is the clear message of Psalm 2, and the whole Bible: "I have set **MY KING** on Zion." There is a King - and there is only ONE KING. ***God has established the identity of that King*** clearly and without question and His name is Jesus.

Here we will see **three title for Jesus** - the King, the Son and the Savior. These all connect to Matthew 1 so you'll see how this really is an Advent passage.

Surrender yourself completely to Jesus

A. The Anointed King

"The kings of the earth set themselves... against the LORD and against his anointed one... I have set my King on Zion." Psalm 2:2,6

Kings of Israel were marked by God through a process called **anointing**. A prophet was directed by God to the man of God's choosing and poured oil over that man's head as a sign that he was the one God had **appointed and empowered** to lead the nation. ***Psalm 2 was a coronation hymn*** used by Israel as they recognized a new king. It was written by King David but was probably used with reference to kings that followed him as well. Do you remember David's story?

God had chosen Saul as the first king to reign over Israel, but Saul did not follow God's clear direction so ***the anointing was taken from him and placed on David***, a young shepherd boy. Saul exalted himself and therefore was humbled. David humbled himself to first serve King Saul, and therefore was exalted to become Israel's most glorious ruler. Listen to how Paul explains this in Acts 13:

"Then they asked for a king, and God gave them Saul... And when he had removed him, he raised up David to be their king... Of this man's offspring God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, as he promised." Acts 13:21-23

"Brothers, sons of the family of Abraham, and those among you who fear God, to us has been sent the message of this salvation. For those who live in Jerusalem and their rulers, because they did not recognize him nor understand the utterances of the prophets... fulfilled them by condemning him." Acts 13:26-27

Jesus' Coronation was His Resurrection

"They took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb. But God raised him from the dead... And we bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers, this he

has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus, as also it is written in the second Psalm, **‘You are my Son, today I have begotten you.’**” Acts 13:29-33

Here is **the coronation moment for Jesus - his resurrection!** This was the public anointing of Jesus, the final confirmation that He is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords! This was the fulfillment of God’s whole plan of salvation.

“Today I have begotten you,” may sound strange to our modern ears, but when you see it refers to the resurrection as a sign of God’s anointing of Jesus as king it makes perfect sense. **Jesus was reborn. His resurrection was not when he was CREATED, rather it was when he was CROWNED.**

On the cross Jesus wore **a crown of thorns** - a symbol of his defeat at the hands of men. But he left those thorns in the tomb and **now wears the crown of glory** as he reigns at the Father’s right hand. Jesus is the Anointed King! Listen to Matthew 1:

Surrender yourself completely to Jesus

A. The Anointed King

*“An angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, ‘Joseph, **son of David**, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.’”* Matthew 1:20

Since Joseph was from the line of David (as was Mary), **Jesus lineage traces back to King David.** God promised David a house - a dynasty - that would last forever. Jesus is the fulfillment of that promise, and the angel reminds Joseph of that promise to help him understand what was happening with his betrothed.

We can imagine Joseph wondering and he and Mary pondering together - “Could this really be? Mary is carrying the baby who will reign on David’s throne?”

What they could not yet understand and what it took the disciples three years and the resurrection to begin to comprehend - **that Jesus was not only the Davidic Messiah, he was the fully divine Son of God.**

Surrender yourself completely to Jesus

A. The Anointed King

B. The Divine Son

*“An angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, ‘Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is **from the Holy Spirit.**’”* Matthew 1:20

The Jews in those days expected Messiah to be a human king with a typically human king agenda - to conquer his enemies and expand his territory. Jesus was a human king but he was much more than that - he was **THE KING**.

The fact that he was conceived by the Holy Spirit was a clue to this truth. Here is a child born in no ordinary way. A human mother, the Spirit of God providing DIVINE DNA - the GOD-MAN. Fully human and also fully God. ***This is the mystery of the incarnation.*** Look again at Psalm 2:7.

Surrender yourself completely to Jesus

A. The Anointed King

B. The Divine Son

"I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me, 'You are my Son; today I have begotten you.'" Psalm 2:7

We saw already that begotten doesn't mean created it means CROWNED. ***The resurrection was Jesus' coronation.*** But his identity was clear long before he walked out of the tomb. Here in Psalm 2 - 1,000 years before he was born - we have a prophecy of the LORD (Yahweh Himself) naming a King his own begotten Son!

Mary was told Jesus had been conceived by the Holy Spirit (and she knew he had not been conceived in the ordinary way). The angel also quoted Isaiah's prophecy that the child would be ***"Immanuel, which means God with us."*** ***This confirmed Jesus' divine identity at his birth.***

His identity was confirmed again at his **baptism** and a third time on the mount of ***transfiguration.*** At the baptism and on the mountain God the Father Himself spoke from heaven, referring to this passage in Psalm 2, saying, ***"This is my beloved son"*** (Matt. 3:17; 17:5).

Surrender yourself completely to Jesus

B. The Divine Son

- Fully human son of David &
- Fully divine son of God

"Joseph, son of David, do not fear..." Matt. 1:20

"This is my beloved son, with whom I am well pleased." Matt. 3:17

This is the Jesus we celebrate at Christmas, and all year long - the anointed King of Israel who is the fully divine Son of God. **Eternally begotten of the Father.**

- There was not a time when Jesus did not exist.

- There was, however, a time when Jesus was conceived as a human - the full essence of His divinity combined with the full humanity of Mary. Because he was fully human Jesus was able to die for us.
- And because he died, there was a time when he was raised from the dead as the final proof that he was who he said he was.

As the centurion stated by the cross - ***“Truly this man was the Son of God.”***

And because Jesus is the One True King; because He is the fully divine Son - therefore He is, third, the Only Savior for sinners like you and me.

Surrender yourself completely to Jesus

A. The Anointed King

B. The Divine Son

C. The Only Savior

“Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling.” Psalm 2:10-11

These are not optional, “if you feel like it” suggestions. ***These are direct commands from the mouth of God.***

- **“Be warned.”** There is a King in heaven. He laughs at our rebellion. He mocks our feeble attempts to gain power. We are ants climbing on other ants and God looks down not just from the vantage point of a human over ants but as the Creator of the Cosmos who holds all the scattered galaxies in the palm of His hand.
- **“Serve the LORD with fear.”** This is the beginning of wisdom - to see God for who He is and to see yourself for who you are. Fear is the proper starting point for a relationship with God. If you do not fear God then you do not know God - not as He truly is. For the LORD is mighty beyond imagination. His power is irresistible. He can speak to a storm and it will cease. He can speak to a dead person and he will live. When you stand before Him He will say one of two things - “well done, good and faithful servant,” or “depart from you, I never knew you.” The only appropriate response to this reality is a ***deep and holy reverence***. But for the believer - this fear is filled with joy:
- **“Rejoice with trembling.”** Yes, we tremble, but we rejoice to approach this Almighty God who has come near to us. The holy and righteous One from heaven came to earth. More than that, he gave up his life on the cross so we could become one with Him and live with Him forever.
- Verse 12 -

Surrender yourself completely to Jesus

A. The Anointed King

B. The Divine Son

C. The Only Savior

“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.” Psalm 2:12

To kiss a King was an act of submission and devotion. Again, let's be careful not to gloss over the strength of these words. If Jesus - the One True King - is angry with you (and his wrath is quickly kindled) then you will perish in the way. Jesus cannot tolerate sin. He is the omniscient and ***all-righteous judge of all people***. So he knows all sin and he is 100% committed to punishing all sin. He would not be just if he tolerated even the slightest stain of sin. His holy presence, by its very nature, **consumes sin like a raging fire consume straw.**

If you are defined and controlled by sin then the holy presence of Jesus will consume you. I've used this analogy before but imagine Jesus as the red sun in our solar system. As a human if you get near the sun you will be vaporized. ***To walk on the sun you must become Kryptonian.*** Then the sun's rays will heal and strengthen you. Jesus can transform someone who is defined by sin into an immortal Kryptonian!

Surrender yourself completely to Jesus

C. The Only Savior

“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.” Psalm 2:12

- Trust Jesus to Transform you so you can Enjoy Him forever!

To use a different analogy, imagine all people on earth are **born cats and God is the ocean.** We will all spend eternity in the presence of God, for there is nowhere you can escape it. For those who remain in their natural, sin-ful, cat-like state, the presence of God will be constant, eternal, unescapable torture - like a cat in the ocean.

But the Christian believer is transformed into a fish - a creature immediately and naturally at home in the ocean. So for us the presence of God will be the essence of freedom and life - while for a cat-sinner the presence of God will be never-ending death and frantic despair.

“Blessed are all who take refuge in him.” Jesus is the only Savior. His name is the only name under heaven by which you can be saved. Have you come to him and bowed down before Him as your King? Have you put your faith in Him as the fully divine Son of God? Have you called on Him to save you from the punishment you deserve?

All of us are rebels. We are not good citizens in need of a little moral improvement “we are rebels who must lay down our arms” (C.S. Lewis paraphrase). Every one of us has deeply

offended the One True King. Indeed, we have utterly betrayed Him, committing treason against the crown, seeking to overthrow His kingdom and set up our own gods in His place.

Therefore we must stop our rebellion - repent of our idolatry - and surrender to Jesus as the One True King. True happiness can only be found in Him! "Blessed are all who take refuge in him." Have you let Jesus transform you so you can enjoy Him forever? Are you letting Him continue to transform you so you can increasingly enjoy Him now?

You've probably heard of [John Chau \[map PPT\]](#) - the missionary who died a couple of weeks ago near Myanmar and Thailand on North Sentinel Island. On that remote island lives a small tribe of primitive natives who have long been hostile to outsiders.

John developed a heart for unreached people groups several years ago and something about the **Sentinelise** captured his attention. He prayed for them and prepared for several years to make contact with them so he could learn their language and culture and eventually help lead them to Jesus.

John had experienced the fact that true happiness can only be found in Jesus. He knew that for himself and was determined to share that joy with a tribe that had never heard this amazing good news.



John Allen Chau (1992-2018)
Missionary with All Nations



Were there things he could have done better? Probably. Could he have taken more time, worked to learn at least more about them, and developed a more elaborate strategy to make contact? Sure.

But on the following points John was absolutely right:

"This is not a pointless thing – the eternal lives of this tribe are at hand and I can't wait to see them around the throne of God worshiping in their own language as Revelations 7:9-10 states... I love you all and I pray none of you love anything in this world more than Jesus Christ. Soli Deo Gloria." John Allen Chau

Whether it's an island tribe of 25 people like those on North Sentinel or a Muslim nation of 1 million, they are lost without Jesus. He is the only Savior. There is no salvation apart from the name of Jesus.

- Was John foolish to so hastily rush to this island? Probably.
- But have other Christians been rebellious, hard-hearted cowards for failing to get to North Sentinel before now? Probably.
- Have thousands upon thousands of believers **wasted their lives in comfort**, utterly unconcerned about the fate of lost tribes like this one? Definitely.

Listen. The police director for the Adaman islands of which North Sentinel is a part said **“this tribe is a treasure”** and therefore should remain undisturbed. Most news coverage has heartily agreed with this and happily quoted this official. Many are saying Chau was not only a fool who threw his life away but that he was an arrogant colonialist who risked the health of this tribe by bringing potential illness to their island and threatened the “purity” of their simple culture.

This little tribe - like every people group that has not heard the good news of Jesus - is not a treasure to be preserved but a lost tribe to be saved. They are **a rebel army living in active resistance to the reign of God**. They are living and dying, raising children and burying loved ones apart from the knowledge of Jesus - the one true king, the fully divine Son and the only Savior. If John Allen Chau accomplished nothing else, he put North Sentinel on the map for most of us who had never before heard of them.

Each of those tribal natives - just like each one of us - must stop their rebellion against God and surrender themselves completely to Jesus. That is their only hope.

And the amazingly good news is that **the reigning King of heaven CAME to us** - rebellious, idolatrous sinners that we were. So we need to GO to other rebellious sinners and tell them about the one who loves them and gave himself up for them!