

Contrasting the Godly and Wicked & The Kingdom of our Lord on this Earth

Psalms 1 & 2

Background Notes for the Book of Psalms

As we study the book of Psalms, we'll follow our normal format of background notes, doctrinal points, and practical application. However, because many of the psalms are short, we may study two psalms per Talk. If so, we'll divide the Talk into two sections, and give Background Notes, one Doctrinal Point, and one Practical Application for each psalm.

As you read the book of Psalms, one of the first things you'll notice is that most of the psalms have titles. The titles contain information, such as the author, the occasion for which the psalm was written, the type of psalm, etc. But some psalms do not have titles, so they are anonymous. About a third of the psalms are anonymous.

From the titles of the psalms we know that David wrote about half of the book of Psalms. And if he wrote some of the anonymous psalms, then David wrote well over half of the 150 psalms in this inspired book of Scripture!

Psalm 1

Psalm 1 - "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water that brings forth its fruit in its season; whose leaf also shall not wither. And whatever he does shall prosper. The ungodly are not so, but are like the chaff which the wind drives away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish."

Doctrinal Point for Psalm 1

The contrast between the godly person and the wicked person.

This psalm tells us that the secret of true happiness is "bridle and Bible." A bridle controls a horse, and we use the word "bridle" to describe the action of controlling, or curbing, or restraining. Notice how this is a characteristic of godly people. Godly people are restrained. They control themselves. They don't take the advice of the wicked, who say: "If you really want to be happy, you need to break free of any restraints!"

Godly people do not mock and scoff at righteous standards, and they do not go along with the majority down the broad path of sinners. No. They control themselves, and they curb their appetites. They know what God's Word says, because they meditate on it day and night. Godly people limit themselves to what *"the law of the Lord,"* God's Word, says.

"Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night." What is the result of applying "the bridle and the Bible"? Blessing! The word "blessed" means "happy," and godly people are blessed. They are truly happy!

Godly people are productive and prosperous as well. They're like fruitful trees planted by streams of water. They prosper - not in the world's ways, but God's ways. "He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season; whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper."

What a contrast to the wicked people! They are described as chaff, the useless husk of grain that is blown away during threshing. They amount to nothing, and their end is the unhappy day of God's judgment. The secret of true happiness is "bridle and Bible."

Practical Application for Psalm 1

Let the Lord know your way!

"For the Lord knows the way of the righteous" (v6). The Lord is aware of the lives of godly people, and He also approves of the paths in life that they have chosen.

Does the Lord "know" your way? He certainly is aware of where your life is going - but does He approve of it? Are there some things that need to be changed and corrected in your life? Let the Lord know – and guide - your way!

Psalm 2

Psalm 2 - *"Why do the nations rage, and the people plot a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying, "Let us break their bonds in pieces and cast away their cords from us." He who sits in the heavens shall laugh. The Lord shall hold them in derision. Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, and distress them in His deep displeasure.*

"Yet I have set My King on My holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: The Lord has said to Me, 'You are My Son; today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I will give You The nations for Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth for Your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron. You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel.'"

Background Notes for Psalm 2

In Psalm 2 God declares that the Kingdom of our Lord will be established on this earth - and nothing can overthrow the plans of God.

Psalm 2 has no title, and the author's name is not given. However, this psalm is quoted in Acts 4, after the chief priests and elders threatened Peter and John for preaching and healing in the name of Jesus, and Acts 4:26 says that David was the author of this psalm. *"After being released, they [Peter and John] went to their companions and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them. So when they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord and said: 'Lord, You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them, who by the mouth of Your servant David have said: 'Why did the nations rage, and the people plot vain things? The kings of the earth took their stand, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against His Christ' (Acts 4:23-26).*

Psalm 2 is a royal psalm. It describes the celebration of a king at his coronation, despite opposition by surrounding enemies. The psalm is ultimately fulfilled in the King of God's choosing, the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus Psalm 2 is a Messianic psalm, and it is quoted as such several times in the New Testament. For example, verse 7 was quoted in Acts 13:32-33: *"And we declare to you glad tidings—that promise which was made to the fathers. God has fulfilled this for us their children, in that He has raised up Jesus. As it is written in the second Psalm: 'You are My Son. Today I have begotten You.'"*

So, in the historical context of Psalm 2, verse 7 is a reference to the day of David's coronation using language of the Davidic Covenant. But the psalm looks ahead to the future, to the resurrection of Jesus Christ, as described in Acts 13.

Doctrinal Point for Psalm 2

Nothing can prevent or thwart Christ's kingdom on this earth.

When we refer to "Christ's kingdom on this earth," we don't mean the present-day Christian Church. We're talking about the future – the literal kingdom of Christ on this earth in the future. We believe the Bible teaches that after the rapture of believers, there will be a time of great tribulation on this earth. This Tribulation period will last for seven years. Then the Lord will return to earth, and the Davidic throne and kingdom will literally be re-established in Jerusalem. Jesus Christ will reign as King over the nations for 1000 years. Psalm 2 previews that millennial kingdom of Christ here on earth.

The nations, including unbelieving Israel, are, and will continue to be, against God and His chosen King. "Why do the nations rage, and the people plot vain things? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord."

The people of the nations want to be free of any restraints from God, and they rebel against Him. “Let us break their bonds in pieces and cast away their cords from us” (v3).

But God laughs and scoffs at those rebels who think that they can somehow overturn God’s plans. “He who sits in the heavens shall laugh. The Lord shall hold them in derision” (v4). They will be judged, and fall under God’s anger and wrath. “Then He will speak to them in His wrath, and distress them in His deep displeasure” (v5).

Nothing can prevent or thwart God’s plans and purpose to establish Christ’s kingdom here on earth. His plans are so sure that verse 6 speaks as though it has already happened: “Yet I have set My King on My holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: The Lord has said to Me, ‘You are My Son. Today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance.’”

Notice where Jesus Christ’s throne will be set up – in Zion, on God’s holy mountain. “God’s holy mountain” is the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, where the Muslim Dome of the Rock now stands. But it will not be there when the Lord returns.

All nations will be judged, and broken: “You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter’s vessel.” All nations will submit to the King of kings and Lord of lords!

Revelation 12:5 and Revelation 19:15 tell us that the Lord will continue to rule all the nations with the rod of iron throughout His millennial kingdom on this earth. And Satan will be bound during this 1000-year kingdom (Revelation 20). There will be peace! Psalm 2 promises that nothing can prevent or thwart Christ’s kingdom on this earth!

Practical Application for Psalm 2

Have you experienced the best “R&R” available?

Psalm 2:10-12 - “Now therefore, be wise, O kings. Be instructed, you judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish in the way when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him and take their refuge in Him.”

The term “R&R” refers to “rest and relaxation.” It’s used to describe a vacation or a military leave. Rest and relaxation on a vacation is good, but the **best** R&Rs are “**Rejoice in the Lord**” (v11), and “**Take refuge in the Lord**” (v12). Refuge & Rejoicing? It doesn’t get any better than that!

In the context, we see that these verses are a call to the nations to get right with the Lord. It’s a call for them to submit to the Lord, and to love and worship the Lord - but we certainly can apply these verses in a personal way. Don’t look for joy from this world. Rejoice in the LORD! Don’t depend on this world for protection and security. Take refuge in the LORD! That’s the best R&R! Have you experienced the best R&R available?