

Psalms 2 — Thou Art My Son — The Raging Nations, the Laughing Heaven, the Decree on Zion's Hill, and the King Every Knee Will Kiss

Psalm 2: a royal enthronement psalm of the Davidic court — the nations conspire against the LORD and his Anointed, God installs his King on Zion, and publishes the decree of divine sonship — read from Israel's throne room forward to its fulfilment in Jesus the Christ; composed for the coronation liturgy of the house of David (tradition ascribes it to David himself, cf. Acts 4:25), c. 1000 BC.

We have left the narrative books behind. No kings marching, no prophets thundering at thrones — now we are inside Israel's hymnbook, the Psalter, the one book of the Old Testament written not *about* God but *to* him. A hundred and fifty prayers and songs, the liturgy of a people learning to speak back to heaven: laments when the world caves in, thanksgivings when it holds, and here at the very front, before almost anything else, a coronation.

Hebrew Word Studies

choq (H2706) — the decree (חֻקֵּי) — decree, statute, appointed thing, that which is engraved or inscribed v. 7. "The King says, I will declare the *choq* — and the word matters. *Choq* comes from the verb *chaqaq*, to cut in, to engrave, to inscribe on stone or tablet. A *choq* is not a suggestion or a mood; it is a thing carved, fixed, on the record. God's word installing his king is not a hope he holds but a statute he has engraved. This is the same word family behind the great decrees Israel lived by — the boundary God set for the sea, which "cannot pass" (Prov. 8:29); the "everlasting covenant" ordinances (Ps. 105:10). So when the King recites his *choq*, he is reading from something already chiseled into the constitution of heaven: Thou art my Son. It cannot be un-carved. The nations of verse 1 imagine (*hagah*) a *vain* thing — the word there means empty, hollow, a puff of breath — and set it against a *choq*, a thing cut in stone. The whole psalm is that collision: emptiness muttered against a decree engraved, breath against granite. It is no contest. And the New Testament treats the decree exactly as its grammar demands — permanent, not provisional: what God engraved of the Davidic king he fulfils, unbreakably, in the Son whom he raised and seated at his right hand (Acts 13:33; Heb. 1:5), the one decree that outlasts every empire that ever muttered against it."

nasak (H5258) / melek (H4428) — I have set my king (נָסַקְתִּי / מָלַכְתִּי) — to pour out, pour as a libation, cast (metal) / king v. 6. "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. The verb is *nasak* — and its most common use everywhere else in scripture is to *pour*: to pour out a drink offering before the LORD (Ex. 30:9), to pour molten metal into a cast (Isa. 40:19). So the installation of God's king is imagined not as a handshake but as a pouring — the king poured onto Zion like a libation offered to heaven, or cast there like bronze set hard in its mold, fixed and irreversible. There may even be a whisper of anointing in it: the king poured over with the oil that made him *mashiach*. The noun *melek* — king — is the same word the rebels wear in verse 2 ("the kings of the earth"), and the psalm sets the two uses at war: the earth is full of *melekim* who set themselves (v. 2, the reflexive — they crown their own heads), against the one *melek* whom God himself has poured out (v. 6). Self-made kings against a God-cast King. Verse 10 will circle back to plead with the self-made ones — "be wise now therefore, O ye kings" — offering the raging *melekim* of verse 2 a way to bend the knee before the *melek* of verse 6 while there is still time. The whole drama of Zion, and of the world, runs in the gap between those two kingships: the throne we seize and the throne he pours."

ben (H1121) / bar (H1248) — the Son, in two tongues (בֶּן / בָּר) — son (Hebrew) / son (Aramaic) vv. 7, 12. "The psalm names the Son twice, and — startlingly — in two different languages. In verse 7 the decree calls him *ben* (H1121), the ordinary Hebrew word for son, the same *ben* in every Israelite name from Benjamin to Reuben. But in verse 12's climactic command, Kiss the Son, the word is *bar* (H1248) — Aramaic, the international lingua franca of the ancient Near East. Translators have long puzzled over the shift, but read as poetry it sings: the *ben* of verse 7 is Israel's covenant Son, the Davidic king addressed in Israel's own tongue; the *bar* of verse 12 is the Son the whole world is now commanded to come and kiss, summoned in the language the nations could understand. The psalm widens from the throne room to the ends of the earth, and its vocabulary widens with it. This is exactly the trajectory the New Testament completes: the covenant Son of Israel (Matt. 1:1, son of David) revealed as the Son to whom "every knee should bow" of things in heaven and earth (Philip. 2:10). And the word *bar* is not foreign to Latter-day ears — it is the *bar* in Bar-Jona (Matt. 16:17, Simon son of Jonah), the *bar* in Barabbas (*bar-abba*, son of the father). The psalm's last Hebrew — which is not Hebrew at all — is a hand extended past the covenant border, to every son of every father in the raging nations, saying: come, kiss the Son."

***esher* (H835) — the blessedness of refuge (אֲשֶׁר) — blessedness, happiness, the good state of one rightly aligned —**

literally "O the happinesses of..." v. 12. The psalm's final word is *blessed* — *esher* (H835), the same word that opens the entire Psalter: Psalm 1:1, Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly. It is no accident that Psalms 1 and 2 begin and end on the same note; many ancient readers treated them as a single gateway to the book, and *esher* is the arch over the door — the first psalm's blessed man and the second psalm's blessed refuge-taker are the same person. *Esher* is a plural-of-abundance construction: literally something like O the happinesses! — a burst, not a mild approval. And note precisely who receives it: not the strong, not the victorious kings, but all they that put their trust — *chasah*, take refuge — in him. The blessedness is not earned by conquest but received by shelter. The nations of verse 1 sought their good in autonomy, in casting off the cords; the psalm ends by locating the real good in exactly the opposite motion — running under the King's wing. It is the same *esher* Jesus will multiply on a Galilean hillside — Blessed, blessed, blessed are the poor in spirit, they that mourn, the meek (Matt. 5:3–5) — the happiness of those who stop raging and take refuge. The psalm that begins with a snarl ends with a beatitude. That is the arc of every soul that finally kisses the Son.

From the Chapter's Architecture

And there is a frame holding the whole thing together, an inclusio built on the word "way" and the fate of the peoples. The psalm opens with the peoples raging on a course of their own choosing and closes with the warning that the rebel may "perish from the way" — the two ends bracketing a single question: whose way will the nations walk? Between those brackets, the decisive sentence stands almost exactly at the center — "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee" (v. 7) — the fulcrum on which the whole psalm turns. Everything before it is the world's rebellion and God's answer; everything after it is the reign that answer establishes. The architecture is the argument: at the dead center of all the world's raging stands a Father's word to his Son, and it does not move.