

Hebrew Whiteboard

Biblical Hebrew and the Psalms

Psalm 2

Objectives

- 1. Identify verse structure by means of major disjunctive accents.**
- 2. Display verse structure by means of logical line diagramming.**
- 3. Interpret verse structure.**
- 4. Identify poetic devices.**
- 5. Interpret poetic device function(s).**
- 6. Identify the psalm's structure.**

Psalm 2:1–2

Identify major
disjunctive accents and
divide into poetic lines.

'athnach

rebi'a here is topical.

1 לָמָּה רָגַשׁוּ גּוֹיִם

וְלֵאמֹר יְהוָה-רִיק:

silluq = end of verse 1

disjunctive *rebi'a*

2 יִתְיַצְּבוּ מַלְכֵי-אֶרֶץ

וְרוֹזְנִים נוֹסְדוּ-יָחַד

'athnach

silluq = end of verse 2

עַל-יְהוָה וְעַל-מְשִׁיחּוֹ:

Psalm 2:1–2

Adjust to display
grammatical and parallel
relationships.

Chiasm

Focus on center
elements.

Chiasm

Focus on center
elements.

Adverbial
prepositional phrases
modifying verb.

A

1 לָמָּה רָגִישׁוּ

B

גוֹיִם
וְלֹא־אֱמִים

B'

A'

יִהְיֶה-גּוֹי-רִיק:

A

2 יִתִּיצְבוּ

B

מַלְכֵי-אֶרֶץ
וְרוֹזְנִים

B'

A'

נֹסְדוּ-יַחַד

עַל-יְהוָה

וְעַל-מְשִׁיחּוֹ:

Psalm 2:1–2

Interrogative:
“Why?”

Same verb as “meditate”
in 1:1. Here, “grumble.”

1 לָמָּה רָגַשׁוּ

A

B

B'

גוֹיִם
וְלֵאמֹר

A'

יֵהָגוּ-רִיק:

Noun, direct object: “a vain
[or, futile] thing”

2 יִתִּיצְבוּ.

A

B

B'

מַלְכֵי-אָרֶץ
וְרוֹזְנִים

A'

נֹסְדוּ-יַחַד

עַל-יְהוָה

וְעַל-מְשִׁיחוֹ:

Adverb: “together”
(could be placed below
like next 2 phrases)

Psalms 2:1-2

Qal perfect: simple fact
in characteristic present

Qal imperfect:
continuous action in
present time

Hithpael imperfect: root only
used in Hithpael; continuous
action in present time

Niphal perfect: root only used
in Niphal; simple fact in
characteristic present

A

1 לָמָּה רָגִישׁוּ

B

גוֹיִם
וְלִנְפֻלִים

B'

A'

יִהְיוּ-רִיק:

A

2 יִתְצַבּוּ

B

מַלְכֵי-אֶרֶץ
וְרוֹזְנִים

B'

A'

נֹסְדוּ-יָחַד
עַל-יְהוָה
וְעַל-מְשִׁיחוֹ:

Psalm 2:1–2 — Translation

- 1** Why do the nations rage
And the peoples grumble a futile
thing?
- 2** The kings of the earth take their stand
And the dignitaries conspire together
Against YHWH and against His
anointed.

Psalm 2:1–2 — Translation

A **1** Why do rage

B

B'

the nations
And the peoples

A' grumble a futile thing?

A **2** Take their stand

B

B'

the kings of the earth
And the dignitaries

A' conspire together
Against YHWH
and against His anointed.

Restructured to
show
relationships.

Psalm 2:1–2 — Observations

- The psalmist describes a current set of events characteristic of those who are acting.
- The question is real, not rhetorical, and the context provides an answer.
- “Grumble a vain [or, futile] thing” = to complain to no avail; they are powerless to accomplish their plans.

Psalm 2:1–2 — Observations

- **“Take their stand” = to resist.**
- **The resistance and conspiracy display a hostile mindset “against YHWH and against His anointed.”**
- **The psalmist depicts a global rebellion of world leadership against the Lord and His anointed individual.**

Psalm 2:3–4

Identify major
disjunctive accents and
divide into poetic lines.

'athnach

3 גִּבְתָּהּ אֶת־מוֹסְרוֹתַיִמוֹ

silluq = end of verse 3

וְנִשְׁלִיכָה מִמֶּנּוּ עֲבֹתַיִמוֹ:

'athnach

4 יוֹשֵׁב בַּשָּׁמַיִם יִשְׁתַּק

rebi'a here is topical.

אֵדְנִי יִלְעַג לִמּוֹ:

silluq = end of verse 4

Psalm 2:3–4

Adjust to display
grammatical and parallel
relationships.

Move direct object to the
left for parallelism.

Adverbial prepositional
phrase modifying verb.

Direct object parallel to
the one in 1st line.

Adverbial prepositional
phrase modifying participle.

Move verbs to the left
for parallelism.

3
בְּנִתָּהּ
וְנָשָׁאֶיהָ
מִמֶּנּוּ
אֶת־מִוֹסְרוֹתֶיהָ

עֲבֹתֶיהָ:

4
יֹשֵׁב
בְּנִשְׁמִים
בְּנִשְׁמִים

יִשְׁתָּק
יִלְעַג־לָמוֹ:

אֲדֹנָי

Psalm 2:3–4

Verbs in v. 3 are cohortatives of exhortation: “Let’s tear off . . . Let’s cast”

מֹו pronominal suffixes are 3rd masc. singular.

Substantival participle serves as subject—parallel to *Adonai* in the last line.

Dashed-line box to indicate discourse.

ל preposition marks the accusative object.

אֶת־מִוֹסְרוֹתַי־מֹו

וְנִתְּקָה
וְנִשְׁלִיכָה

3

מִמֶּנּוּ

עַבְדֵי־מֹו:

יֹשֵׁב

4

בְּנִשְׁמַיִם

יִשְׁתַּק

יִלְעַג־לִמֹו:

אֲדֹנָי

Psalm 2:3–4 — Translation

- 3** “Let’s tear off their fetters
And let’s cast their cords from us!”
- 4** The one enthroned in the heavens
laughs;
The Lord derides them.

Psalm 2:3–4 — Observations

- The leaders of the nations exhort one another to break free from the divine Lord's authority.
- The Lord, however, responds to their rebellion with mirthless, derisive laughter.
- His reaction highlights the futility of the world leaders' conspiracy (see v. 1).

Psalm 2:5–6

Identify major
disjunctive accents and
divide into poetic lines.

'athnach

5 אֲזַ יִדְבָּר אֱלִימוּ בְּאַפּוֹ

וּבְחֲרוֹנוֹ יִבְהִלְמוּ:

silluq = end of verse 5

'athnach

6 וְאֲנִי נִסְכָּתִי מִלְכִּי

עַל-צִיּוֹן הָר־קֹדֶשׁ:

silluq = end of verse 6

rebi'a here is topical.

Psalm 2:5–6

Adjust to display
grammatical and parallel
relationships.

Temporal adverb (“Then”).

Adverbial prepositional phrase of
indirect object (“to them”).

Adverbial prepositional phrase of
manner (“in His anger”).

Parallel verb modified by
adverbial prepositional phrase of
manner before it.

5 אָז

יְדַבֵּר

אֵלֵיהֶם

בְּאַף

וּבְחֲרוֹנוֹ

יְבַהֵלֵמוּ:

6 וְאֲנִי נִסְכָּתִי מִלְּקָי

עַל-צִיּוֹן הָר־קֹדֶשׁ:

Psalm 2:5–6

Dashed-line box to indicate discourse.

Chiasm of verbs and adverbial phrases of manner. Focus on center elements.

Conjunction + non-verb = disjunctive clause—contrast: “But as for Me, . . .”

5
 אֶזְדַּבֵּר
 אֵלֵיהֶם
 A

B
 בְּאַפּוֹ
 B'
 וּבַחֲרוֹנוֹ
 אֵלֵיהֶם
 A'

6
 וְאֲנִי נִסְכַּחְתִּי מִלְכֵּי
 עַל-צִיּוֹן
 הַר-קְדֹשִׁי

Apposition defining “Zion” as “My holy mountain.”

Psalm 2:5–6 — Translation

5 Then He will speak to them in His
anger

And in His burning anger He will
terrify them.

6 “But as for Me, I have anointed My
king

Upon Zion, My holy mountain.”

Psalm 2:5–6 — Translation

5 Then He will speak to them

Rearranging
translation to
display chiasm.

in His **anger**

Two different
words for
“anger.”

And in His **burning anger**

He will terrify them.

6 “But as for Me, I **have anointed** My
king

Global leaders are revolting against
the already anointed king (v. 2).

Upon Zion, My holy mountain.”

Psalm 2:5–6 — Observations

- “Then” at the start of v. 5 points to an action consecutive to that in v. 4.
- The chiasm in v. 5 highlights the wrath of God against the rebelling global leaders.
- God emphatically announces the investing of His authority in the Davidic king whom He had installed on Mt. Zion.

Psalm 2:7

Identify major
disjunctive accents and
divide into poetic lines.

'oleh-veyored, the major
disjunctive for the verse

7 אֶסְפְּרָה אֶל תָּק

'athnach

יְהוָה אָמַר אֵלַי בְּנִי אֶתָּה

אֲנִי הַיּוֹם יְלִדְתִּיךָ:

rebi'a on first words in all
three lines are topical.

Psalm 2:7

Adjust to display
grammatical and
parallel relationships.

The preposition marks the
accusative direct object.

Adverbial prepositional phrase
of indirect object

Dialog boxes

Emphatic
personal
pronoun: “I
Myself”

7 אֶסְפָּרָה אֶל תָּק
יְהוָה אָמַר
אֵלַי

בְּנִי אֶתָּה
אֲנִי

Noun clause
identifying
the subject:
“You are
My Son”

הָיוֹם
יְלֵדְתִּיךָ:

Psalm 2:7

Note the initial א, like first words of vv. 5 (אֶלֶּי) and 6 (וְאֵנִי). Reminiscent of same assonance in Ps 1:1.

Cohortative verb of determination: “I will declare the decree.” The speaker is not the psalmist nor Yahweh, but the Son Himself.

7 אֶסְפָּרָה אֶל תִּק
יְהוָה אֶמַר
אֵלַי

Yahweh had declared that the speaker had become His Son.

בְּנִי אֶתָּה
אֵנִי

Imagery of birth: “I have begotten You.”

הַיּוֹם
יִלְדֶּתִיךָ:

Temporal adverb (“today”) modifying following verb

Psalm 2:7 — Translation

7 “I will declare the decree—
YHWH said to Me:
‘You are My Son;
Today I have begotten You.’”

Psalm 2:7 — Observations

- The anointed King speaks and reveals His appointment by divine decree.
- The many New Testament citations of this verse prove that it is Messiah who speaks (esp. Heb 5:4–6).
- “Today” points to a specific event in eternity past.
- “Son” is a reference to the 2nd Person’s submission to the 1st Person for the program of redemption’s fulfillment.

Psalm 2:8–9

Identify major
disjunctive accents and
divide into poetic lines.

rebi'a, quarter marker

8 שָׁאֵל מִמֶּנִּי

'athnach, half marker—the
logical mid-point of the
verse

וְאֶתְנֶה גּוֹיִם בְּחִלָּתְךָ
וְאֶחְזֹתְךָ אֶפְסִי-אָרֶץ:

silluq, end of v. 8

'athnach, half marker

9 תִּרְעַם בְּשֹׁבֶט בִּרְיָל
כְּכֹלִי יוֹצֵר תִּבְפֹּצֵם:

silluq, end of v. 9

Psalm 2:8–9

Adjust to display
grammatical and
parallel relationships.

adverbial prepositional phrase

cohortative of determination

וְאַתְּנָה גּוֹיִם
נַחֲלָתְךָ
וְאַחֲזֶתְךָ
אֶפְסֵי-אָרֶץ:

two chiastically arranged
appositions: “nations *as*
Your inheritance and *as*
Your landed property the
ends of the earth”

chiasm

dialog box

נִשְׂאָל 8

מִמֶּנִּי

תָּרַעַם 9

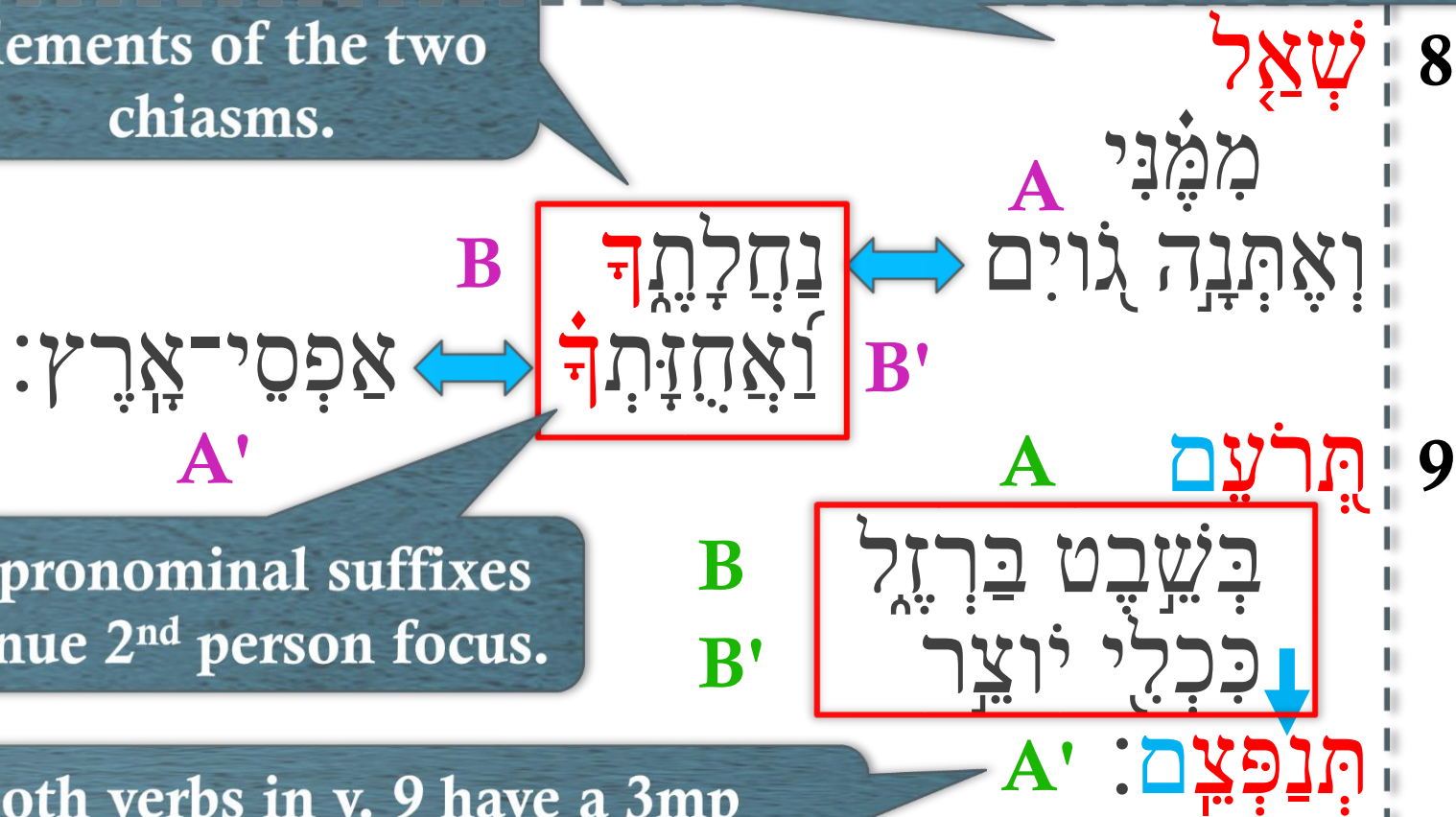
בְּיִשְׁכּוֹת בְּרִזְלֶךָ
בְּכָלִי יוֹצֵר
תִּנְפְּצֶם:

Psalm 2:8–9

Focus is on center elements of the two chiasms.

2nd person verbs: v. 8

(imperative: “Ask”); v. 9 (“You will shepherd [or, rule]”; “You will smash”)



2ms pronominal suffixes continue 2nd person focus.

Both verbs in v. 9 have a 3mp pronominal suffix as direct object.

Psalm 2:8–9

synonymous parallelism

Verb gapped in 2nd half of verse—understood there also.

8 שֶׁאֵל

מִמֶּנִּי

A

וְאַתְּנָה גּוֹיִם

B

נִחַלְתָּךְ
וְאַחֲזַתָּךְ

↔

B'

אֶפְסִי-אֶרֶץ:

A'

instrumental בְּ-preposition
= “by” or “with”

B

B'

בְּשֵׁבֶט בְּרִזָּל
כְּכִלִּי יוֹצֵר

A

9 תִּרְעֵם

comparison: “like a potter’s vessel”
(genitive of possession)

A'

תִּפְּצֵם:

Psalm 2:8–9 — Translation

Text arranged to display
two chiasms.

- 8** “Ask from Me,
And I will give nations
 as Your inheritance
 And *as* Your landed property
the ends of the earth.
- 9** “You will shepherd them
 with an iron rod—
 Like a potter’s vessel
You will smash them.”

Psalm 2:8–9 — Observations

- **Yahweh addresses His Son in vv. 8–9.**
- **The cohortative of determination means that Yahweh will certainly give the nations as His Son’s possession.**
- **“Shepherd” expresses rulership by means of an ancient near eastern metaphor.**
- **“Smash” clarifies the extent of His authority over the nations, as well as explaining the need for “an iron rod [or, scepter].”**

Psalm 2:10–11

Identify major
disjunctive accents and
divide into poetic lines.

rebi'a as topical marker

10 וְעַתָּה מְלָכִים הַיֵּשְׁבִים לֵאמֹר

'athnach

הַיּוֹסְרוֹ שֶׁפִּטִּי אֶרֶץ:

silluq, end of v. 10

11 עֲבָדוּ אֶת־יְהוָה בִּירְאָה

'athnach

וְגִילוּ בִרְעָדָה:

silluq, end of v. 11

rebi'a as topical marker

Psalm 2:10–11

Adjust to display
grammatical and
parallel relationships.

inferential particle: “Therefore”

chiasm

Hiphil mp
imperative and
Niphal mp
imperative

B

B'

A

הַשְׁכִּילוּ
הַנֹּסְרוּ

A'

Adverbial
prepositional
phrases of
manner

עֲבֹדוּ אֶת־יְהוָה
בִּירְאָה
וְגִילּוֹ
בְּרַעְדָּה:

וְעַתָּה 10

מְלָכִים

vocative

(1)

4 imperatives out
of 5 in vv. 10–12

(2)

שִׁפְטֵי אֶרֶץ:

vocative

(3)

11

two Qal
imperatives mp

(4)

Psalm 2:10–11 — Translation

Text arranged to display
chiasm and first 4 of 5
imperatives.

10 Therefore,
kings,

- (1) **act wisely;**
- (2) **Be instructed,**

judges of the earth.

11 (3) **Serve** YHWH with fear
 (4) **And rejoice** with trembling.

Psalm 2:10–11 — Observations

- **“Therefore” draws an inference based upon revelation concerning the Son’s authoritative power in vv. 8–9.**
- **The psalmist addresses global rulers whom he had earlier described as rebelling against Yahweh and His anointed (vv. 1–2).**
- **Now he commands them to change their behavior to serve (or, worship) the Yahweh.**

Psalm 2:10–11 — Observations

- The psalmist emphasizes the first two imperatives by means of the chiasm—global leaders must act wisely with regard to divine instruction they receive.
- The five imperatives move from wisdom (v. 10) to the fear of Yahweh (v. 11; a fitting reminder that “the fear of YHWH is the beginning of wisdom,” Prov 1:7) and worship of Yahweh (v. 12).

Psalm 2:10–11 — Observations

- Psalm 2 addresses *spiritual* rebellion vs. *spiritual* worship of Yahweh, not a political situation involving a historical king in the Davidic line.

Psalm 2:12

Identify major
disjunctive accents and
divide into poetic lines.

pâzēr

12 נִשְׁקוּ-בָר

m^ehuppākh l^egarmēh

פֶּן-יֵאָגֵד

rebi'a

וְתֵאבְדוּ לָרֶךְ

'athnach

כִּי-יִבְעַר כְּמַעַט אֶפֶן

The final line of this verse
significantly stands apart
from the rest of the verse.

אֲנֹשִׁי כָּל-תְּחוֹסֵי בּוֹ:

topical *rebi'a*

Psalm 2:12

Adjust to display
grammatical and
parallel relationships.

the 5th imperative (Piel mp)

compound preventitive
clause: “Lest He be angry
and you perish *in the way*”

causal clause

temporal adverb

subject of verb

Beatitude forms inclusio with
beatitude at start of Psalm 1.

12 נַשְׁקוּ-בָר (5)

פֶּן-יִאֲנָה

וְתִאָּבְדוּ לְדֶרֶךְ

כִּי-יִבְעַר

2nd person
plural verb

בְּמַעַט

אֲפֹ

Arrow: relationship to verb.

אֲנֹשִׁי כָּל-חַוִּסִּי בּוֹ:

Psalm 2:12

Word for “Son” is an
Aramaic loanword—cp.
Dan 7:13.

12 נַשְׁקוּ-בֶר (5)

פֶּן-יֵאָנְחָא

וְתֵאָבְדוּ לָרֶךְ

כִּי-יִבְעַר

בְּמַעַט

אֶפְּסֹ

Beatitude closes Ps
2 just as Ps 1 starts
with one. Unites
the two psalms to
open the Psalter.

Qal active participle
mp construct

אֲנֹשִׁי כָּל-תּוֹסִי בּוֹ:

Psalm 2:12 — Translation

(5) **12** Kiss the Son,
Lest He be angry
and you perish *in the* way,
Because His anger quickly consumes.
O the happinesses of those who take
refuge in Him.

Psalm 2 — Structure

I vv. 1–3 Global Rebels Conspire

II vv. 4–6 Divine Response

III vv. 7–9 Divine Decree

IV vv. 10–12 Global Rebels Summoned

Stanzas of 3 verses each—indicated by changes in subjects and speakers: 1–3 psalmist about rebels, 4–6 the Lord, 7–9 the King, 10–12 psalmist about rebels.

Psalm 2:12 — Observations

- “Kiss” represents submission to and worship of Yahweh’s King, the Son (see 1 Kgs 19:18).
- No biblical beatitude offers blessing for taking refuge in a mere human king—only trust in God brings such blessing.
- This psalm speaks of the Messiah, not an Israelite king—no Israelite king in history fits this psalm’s circumstances.

Psalm 2 — Observations

- **Psalm 2 is one of the most often-quoted OT texts in the NT:**
 - **v. 1 — Revelation 11:18**
 - **vv. 1–2 — Acts 4:25–26**
 - **v. 2 — Revelation 19:19**
 - **v. 7 — Matthew 3:17; 17:5; Mark 1:11; 9:7; Luke 3:22; 9:35; John 1:49; Acts 13:33; Hebrews 1:5; 5:5**
 - **v. 8 — Hebrews 1:2**
 - **vv. 8, 9 — Revelation 2:26–27**
 - **v. 9 — Revelation 12:5; 19:15**
 - **v. 11 — Philippians 2:12**

Psalm 2—Summary

v. 1: Focus rests upon the nations in center of chiasm. Question gets the attention of hearers and readers. The psalmist provides the answer—the nations, as fallen sinners, rebel against Yahweh.

v. 2: Same chiastic focus—this time on the leaders of the nations who rebel against both Yahweh and His anointed King.

Psalm 2—Summary

v. 3: Global rebellion further defined—they already had been subject to Yahweh and His anointed King before rebelling.

v. 4: The Lord (Master) enthroned in heaven laughs at the futility of the nations' rebellion and ridicules their attempt. His rule is inevitable and the outcome for them is certain.

Psalm 2—Summary

v. 5: The chiasm focuses on divine wrath—Yahweh will judge the rebels.

v. 6: The emphatic personal pronoun announces who is really in control. He Himself has anointed His King who will govern all the nations from Zion.

v. 7: The King Himself testifies to His reception of divine authority by His appointment as the Son of God.

Psalm 2—Summary

v. 8: The Son shall rule over all the earth and its peoples by divine decree.

v. 9: The Son's governance includes full authority and power to destroy the rebels.

v. 10: With the Son's authority in mind, Yahweh commands the global leaders to act wisely and in accord with divine instruction.

Psalm 2—Summary

v. 11: Rebellion must be replaced with the fear of Yahweh—this is equivalent to a call to repentance (cp. Pss 115:11 and 130:4).

v. 12: Global leaders must devote themselves to worshiping the Son—He is capable of destroying them for their rebellion. They must personally trust Him—this is the only path to spiritual blessing from Him.

Psalm 2—Preaching

- God calls everyone to submit to the authority of the Son of God before He comes to judge and to reign.
- We (believers) must live victoriously in the light of our hope in the coming Christ and we must warn unbelievers of their coming judgment by Him.