

Dr. Bruce Waltke, Psalms, Session 21, Psalm 2 and 110 – A Liturgical Approach 20-min. Podcast Audio Overview

BiblicaleLearning.org by Ted Hildebrandt

Ready to dive deep into Psalm 2 with us? It's been one that's left people scratching their heads for centuries. We're going to see why today with the help of Dr. Bruce Waltke, a leading scholar on the Psalms.

It is fascinating, isn't it, how this Psalm, I mean, it really connects political power with religious belief. It touches on these timeless human struggles we all face. Yeah, absolutely.

And today we'll be focusing on his lecture where he unpacks Psalm 2 as a coronation Psalm. It's a song, you know, used in the crowning ceremonies of kings in ancient Israel. Wow.

Imagine, just picture yourself stepping back in time and witnessing this grand event. Yeah, it paints a picture, doesn't it? Dr. Waltke describes this vivid scene on Mount Zion, you know, the holy hill. And it's where the newly crowned king is anointed with oil, and that signifies God's authority being given to him.

Can you imagine the sights and the sounds? It's like you're almost there, transported back in time. But here's the thing: Dr. Waltke doesn't just leave it in the past. He connects this ancient ritual to the concept of leadership and authority, even in our modern world today.

It makes you think about the symbolism and the power dynamics that still exist, right? Yeah, it's a crucial point, you know, how we view authority, where it comes from, and who we choose to follow. I mean, those are questions that have echoed through history, and they continue to resonate even with us now. So let's unpack this coronation a little further.

The anointing, it wasn't just a symbolic gesture, right? I mean, it was a powerful statement. Yeah, it transformed the king into God's property, which was a concept that carried huge weight, you know, in that culture. Defying the king basically meant defying God himself.

Oh, wow. So what do you think the real-world implications were of that belief, you know, that the king was kind of untouchable because he was God's anointed? Well, it certainly adds, like, another level of complexity to those power dynamics. Just imagine the tension between human ambition and this belief that God ultimately held the reins.

Dr. Walton used the example of David, David refusing to kill Saul, even though he had the chance, you know? Right. Because he recognized that Saul was still, quote, God's anointed, despite his flaws. Wow, that's a powerful example of faith and restraint in the middle of a power struggle.

But as we move deeper into Psalm 2, we see it doesn't shy away from conflict. In fact, it portrays these rebellious kings, right? They're actively plotting against God and his anointed king. Yeah.

And Dr. Waltke makes a fascinating connection here. He compares this ancient rebellion to modern-day, I guess you could call them, efforts to establish a secular world government, one that seeks to suppress religion and freedom of conscience. That's a really interesting parallel.

So it sounds like he's suggesting that this age-old struggle between earthly and divine authority is still playing out today, just in different forms. Do you think that's an accurate interpretation? Well, he doesn't necessarily see it as a prediction of specific events, but as a recurring pattern throughout history. It reflects this human desire to seize power, to reject any authority that's higher than ourselves.

That's thought-provoking. It makes you think about the power dynamics and the ideologies that are operating in our world today. It certainly does.

Speaking of those rebellious kings, Psalm 2 doesn't just describe their actions. It also shows how God responds to their defiance. And this is where things get really interesting.

The Psalm says that God laughs at these kings. Yeah. And that can be a little jarring, right? This laughter has definitely sparked a lot of debate and discomfort.

You know, some might even call it *schadenfreude*. That's a German word for taking pleasure in another person's misfortune. And it raises those questions about God's justice and mercy, doesn't it? It can be a little unsettling to imagine God, you know, finding humor in the downfall of his enemies, but is it really about him taking pleasure in their suffering, or is it something else entirely? What are your thoughts on that? Well, Dr. Waltke argues that we need to see this laughter within the bigger picture of the Psalm.

He suggests that it represents the ultimate triumph of justice over injustice, you know, like a cosmic reassurance that righteousness will win in the end. So it's not about God enjoying their suffering, but more about affirming that evil won't have the final say. Exactly.

It's like a divine stamp of approval, you know, that even when things seem chaotic, there's a moral order to the universe and justice will ultimately prevail. That's a powerful perspective, but it does make you wonder: how do we reconcile this image of God laughing with the image of Jesus who, you know, emphasized compassion and forgiveness? You've hit a crucial point there. Dr. Waltke acknowledges this apparent contradiction.

He suggests that Jesus, during his time on earth, focused primarily on extending God's love and mercy. The time for judgment, the time for that laughter of justice, that's yet to come. Okay.

So there's a divine timetable at play here, a time for grace and then a time for reckoning. Where do you stand on this? Does that idea of God laughing bring you comfort, or does it make you question divine justice and mercy? It gives me a lot to think about. It's a reminder that while we might catch glimpses of God's nature, it ultimately remains beyond our full grasp.

Absolutely. Now let's shift gears a bit and focus on the second part of Psalm 2, where God speaks directly to his anointed king. He declares him his son and promises him the nations as his inheritance.

Sounds like a pretty good deal. You'd think so, right? But what's really interesting is that even though this king is chosen by God, destined for greatness, he still has to ask for this inheritance. So it's not just handed to him.

There's something he needs to do. Exactly. It highlights the role of faith and prayer, even for those in positions of power.

It's not about entitlement. It's about actively seeking and trusting a higher power. So it's not about passively waiting for those blessings, but actively shaping our lives to line up with God's will.

That's a really intriguing idea. This reminds me. Yeah, it really is.

It kind of suggests this dynamic relationship, right? Like between us and the divine, a partnership where we actively participate in our lives as they unfold. This reminds me of something I heard. They said prayer isn't about changing God's mind.

It's about changing ours. It's about aligning our will with his, even when we don't fully get the plan. Absolutely.

And that makes even more sense. You know, when you consider that the final part of Psalm 2 ends with this really powerful call to action, it urges the rebellious kings to submit to God and his anointed. It's like this ultimate showdown, right? A clash between earthly arrogance and divine authority.

What are the stakes in this confrontation? I mean, the stakes couldn't be higher. Dr. Waltke says that true wisdom is recognizing God's ultimate authority and choosing to serve him instead of our fleeting desires or worldly powers. It's a powerful reminder, isn't it? That true fulfillment isn't about chasing fleeting things.

It's about aligning ourselves with a higher purpose. This idea of submission, though, it's a challenge for a lot of people, isn't it? Because it can sometimes have these negative connotations, like giving up our freedom or individuality. You're right.

The concept of submission can be really easily misunderstood. But Dr. Waltke presents it not as a form of oppression, but rather as a path to real freedom. It's about recognizing that our desires, you know, the ones driven by ego, often lead us astray.

And that aligning ourselves with God's will actually brings us closer to, I guess you could say, who we were always meant to be. So it's not about blindly obeying rules, but surrendering to a wisdom that's bigger than our Own. It's surrendering to a love that seeks the best for us, a love that sees the bigger picture, even when we can't.

This call to submit, to recognize that power greater than ourselves, really gets to the heart of what Psalm 2 is trying to say. And it's a message that's relevant, not just for ancient kings, but for all of us today. So how do we apply the lessons of Psalm 2 to our own lives? Well, I

think the first step is realizing that this struggle between earthly and divine authority is not just some ancient story.

It's still happening, like a dynamic that's playing out within each of us. I mean, we all have those times, right, where we're tempted to choose our own way over God's, where we put our desires first, cling to our limited perspectives, maybe even resist seeing what other people need. It's that inner battle, that pull between what we want and what we know is right.

Yeah, exactly. It's about noticing those subtle ways, those ways we might be rebelling against that divine order, those times when we put our ego before the greater good. That makes sense, but it sounds like a lifelong process.

How do we stay connected to that divine order in a world that often feels really chaotic and confusing? What are your thoughts on that? Well, for me, prayer. Prayer is essential. It's like a direct line, a direct line to that source of wisdom and strength that goes beyond our limited understanding.

It's how we surrender our will to His. It's about seeking guidance and finding peace and clarity in the middle of all the chaos. It's like tapping into this power source that can help us get past our fears and limitations.

That's it. And remember, it's not just about asking for things. It's about aligning our hearts and our minds with God's purpose, seeking His guidance and trusting His plan.

So it's about being open to that guidance, being willing to let go of our ego, and having faith that we're being led in the right direction. Beautifully put. It's like having this childlike trust in how God's plan unfolds, you know, even when we can't see the whole picture.

It's about trusting the journey, even when it takes us through those unfamiliar places. I want to shift gears for a second and go a bit deeper into this concept of the Son in Psalm 2. We talked about the King being, you know, God's anointed, but Dr. Waltke also makes a strong connection to Jesus. Right.

Yeah. And this is where Psalm 2 really takes on these deeper levels of meaning. Dr. Waltke's argument is that it's ultimately fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

He's saying that Jesus is the ultimate anointed one, the true King who reigns over all the nations. So the coronation ceremony, the one we talked about earlier, it's like a foreshadowing, a prefigurement of this ultimate enthronement of Jesus. Yes.

It's like taking that concept of the King and making it cosmic. Exactly. Dr. Waltke believes that understanding this connection between the earthly King and the heavenly King, between the coronation Psalm and it being fulfilled in Christ, unlocks this deeper level of meaning in Psalm 2. Wow.

It adds a whole new dimension to the story. It's not just about earthly power or those political kingdoms anymore, but the ultimate triumph of good over evil, the establishment of God's reign over all creation. And that makes me wonder: what does it mean for us to think of Jesus as that ultimate anointed one? How does that change how we see power and

authority in our place in the world? That's a question that deserves some serious thought, isn't it? I think it's calling us to re-examine our values, our priorities.

What do we truly worship? What do we place our faith and trust in? It forces us to confront those things that we might unknowingly elevate, give them that King status in our lives, those things that we put above all else. And if we truly believe that Jesus is the ultimate authority, then our lives should show that belief. Our relationships, our choices, how we treat others, everything should come from that understanding.

It's about striving to live out those qualities that we see in Christ, right? Love, compassion, forgiveness, humility, and allowing those to guide how we interact with the world. Exactly. And it's about being ambassadors of His kingdom, spreading His message of hope and healing.

It's a tall order, but it's also so inspiring to think we can each play a part in building that kingdom right here. What an amazing responsibility and what an incredible privilege. It is, isn't it? And Dr. Waltke reminds us that, yeah, the forces of evil might seem powerful, but they're ultimately powerless against God's love and grace.

It's a reminder that in the grand scheme of things, love wins. Righteousness prevails. That's a powerful message of hope to hold onto, especially when we're facing those tough times.

It is. It gives us the strength to keep going, the courage to stand up for what's right, and the hope to continue on, even when things are tough. Okay, before we wrap up, I want to touch on this final point that Dr. Waltke makes: this idea of breaking the rebellious kings with an iron rod.

Pretty intense imagery, right? It seems to clash with this message of love and forgiveness we've been talking about. How do we make sense of that? It is jarring imagery, and it can be really easily misunderstood. But Dr. Waltke says we shouldn't take it literally.

He sees it as a metaphor. It's about the ultimate defeat of evil, establishing God's just and righteous rule. It's about taking down those systems of oppression, breaking those chains of injustice, and bringing in a new era of peace and harmony.

So it's not about actual violence or punishment, but the victory of good over evil. Exactly. Transforming the world through love and justice, not force.

And Dr. Waltke makes a really important point here. This transformation, it's not something we just sit back and wait for. It's something we take part in through our choices, our actions, our commitment to building a better world.

So we're not just bystanders. We're like co-creators with God, shaping our world's destiny with the choices we make every day. That's a beautiful way to put it.

Yeah. We each have a unique part to play, a contribution to make. By lining up with God's purpose, we become agents of transformation, bringing that light and love to the world.

Now, that's powerful. It reminds me that Psalm 2 isn't just about these abstract ideas. It's about living a life of purpose, meaning, and service.

But what about when we mess up? When we give in to our bad instincts, make selfish choices, or just don't live up to our ideals? We're only human, right? It's going to happen. What do we do? How do we get back on track? That's a great question. We all make mistakes.

We all fall short. But the key is not letting those mistakes define us. The first step is owning our shortcomings, admitting our mistakes, but without being too hard on ourselves.

We need self-compassion. It's like giving ourselves that same grace and forgiveness that we so easily give to other people. Exactly.

And then, you know, we need to recommit to our path, renew our intention to align with God's purpose, and keep moving forward. It's like remembering that every moment is a fresh start, a chance to choose again. You got it.

We can draw strength from the message of Psalm 2. It reminds us that even when we stumble, even when we feel lost, God's love and grace are there for us. We're never really lost. We're always held in that divine embrace.

That's so reassuring. It reminds me that spiritual growth isn't about being perfect. It's about progress, resilience, and that willingness to learn and grow from our mistakes.

You said it. It's about accepting that our human journey is messy and imperfect, you know, trusting that we're guided every step of the way. So even when we mess up, even when we feel lost or discouraged, we can always go back to God, seek His guidance, and draw strength from His love.

Exactly. And by doing that, we connect with a power that's bigger than anything we can understand, a power that can help us overcome anything and reach our full potential. That's really uplifting.

It reminds us that we're not alone on this journey, that we're always held in that divine embrace, and that even amidst all the chaos and uncertainty, there's always hope. That's beautiful. It's about trusting in the good of the universe, believing that love will win in the end, and living each day with purpose and gratitude.

We've covered a lot today. We've explored the historical context of Psalm 2, you know, its importance as a coronation psalm, the imagery of those rebellious kings, God's response, the idea of the Son, and how it's fulfilled in Jesus Christ, and even how we can apply it to our daily lives. Yeah, it's been a rich conversation.

We've really dug into this ancient text and uncovered so many layers of meaning that speak to us even now. I love how Dr. Waltke brings together those historical insights, you know, the theological analysis and that practical wisdom. He doesn't shy away from those tough questions, but always brings us back to that message of hope and transformation.

He does. He reminds us that Psalm 2 isn't just old words; it's a living message. It speaks to what our hearts long for and offers us a path to true freedom and fulfillment.

So as we wrap up our deep dive into Psalm 2, what final thought would you like to leave our listeners with? I think it's really important to remember that the journey of faith is not about getting to some finish line. It's a process, a lifelong adventure of discovery and change. It's about those moments of realization along the way, like when an ancient text suddenly speaks to your struggles and joys right now.

That's it. And it's about being brave enough to wrestle with those hard questions, challenge what we think we know, and keep looking for deeper meaning. I think that's what really hit home for me in this deep dive.

Psalm 2 isn't some dusty old book. It's a conversation starter. It makes us think about power, authority, and where we place our trust.

I agree. And speaking of trust, I want to come back to something Dr. Waltke said. The idea that Psalm 2 finds its ultimate fulfillment in Jesus Christ.

It is a powerful idea. Psalm 2 finds its, you could say, ultimate fulfillment in Jesus. Yeah.

He really makes a strong case for Jesus being their ultimate anointed one. The true king reigning, not just over an earthly kingdom, but over everything. It's mind-blowing when you really stop and think about it.

Yeah, it is. It takes that coronation, you know, the one we talked about, and it just expands it. It's cosmic.

It suggests that when Jesus ascended to heaven, that was the real crowning. And his rule reaches every part of the universe. So then how does that change things for us? It's one thing to say Jesus is king, but how does that affect our view of the world, our own lives, even our daily choices? That's the million-dollar question, right? I think it challenges us to look at our values, our priorities, and to ask ourselves: what do we really worship? Where's our loyalty ultimately? It makes us look at what we might be without realizing it, treating as kings in our lives: power, success, stuff, even our own egos.

Exactly. If we truly believe Jesus is the authority, our lives should show it. Our relationships, actions, how we treat people- it should all flow from that.

It's about trying to live out what we see in Christ, right? That love, compassion, forgiveness, humility, and letting those qualities guide us in the world. Yeah, exactly. It's being like ambassadors for his kingdom, bringing healing and hope and change to a world that really needs it.

It's a huge responsibility, but also what a privilege to be part of something so much bigger than us. It is. And Dr. Waltke reminds us that, even though we'll have challenges, we can always lean on knowing God's love and grace are with us.

It's that assurance. Even when things are crazy or uncertain, there's an order, you know, a divine plan unfolding. And in the end, love wins.

That's a beautiful way to put it. It's about having that faith that even when we can't see the path, we're not alone. It's trusting in the good of creation and embracing the whole journey, every twist and turn.

This has been great. We've dug into Psalm 2, its history, how it applies to us now, and the deep spiritual truth it offers. A truly enriching conversation.

I hope everyone listening is inspired to really engage with Psalm 2 to find their own meaning and let its message shape their lives. Absolutely. We encourage you to keep exploring Psalm 2, think about its words, and let its message of hope, resilience, and the ultimate triumph of good guide you.

Thank you for being with us on this deep dive. Until next time, may you find peace, wisdom, and the courage to live a life true to your calling. What a perfect way to wrap things up.

Thanks for joining us on this deep dive into Psalm 2. We hope you enjoyed the journey.