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# Psalm 2

## Phase 1: ORAL



### Step 1: Listen

Listening to a guide translation and versions of the psalm

Listen well to the poem (notice content, emotions and interesting use of language). There are two guide translations in Appendix A:

1. **Hebrew-mirror** - copied from the Exegetical Layout and adjusted for minimal readability,
2. **Guide translation** - the literal, type 1 corresponding (but more readable) translation, exegetically the same as Hebrew-mirror.

**Activity:** Read the Hebrew-mirror and the Hebrew tight version in Appendix A. One reader per translation or one reader for all translations (as skills permit). Others to listen with closed books. Consider 'how to listen' – posture? With responses? In silence?



### Step 2: Familiarise

Explaining and discussing the meaning and beauty of the psalm

Get an overview of the poem (the big picture) - what's the main message? Who is involved? A poem must be understood as 'a whole' (unlike a story).

#### FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF THE PSALM

After listening to the guide translations, please respond to any of the following questions:

- What do you like about the psalm?
- What do you find difficult?
- How does the psalm make you feel?
- Which verse do you find particularly important in this psalm?
- What does this psalm teach you about the LORD? What is the LORD like?
- Are there any noticeable repetitions in this psalm?





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## CREATIVE RESPONSES

### **Creative Activity 1:**

*Note to the Teacher: You need to be able to display the following color-coded text for this exercise.*

Act out the poem, with the different persons acting out and reading the text, as indicated by the colours below. Include a narrator, **king**, **earthly kings and rulers**, and **the Lord (God)** (all to speak). **Repeat** with different people taking **different parts**.

Based on guide translation 2 for Psalm 2:

1 Why are the nations in an uproar

and the peoples plotting in vain?

2 The kings of the earth are taking their stand

and the rulers band together as one

against the LORD and against his anointed, saying:

3 "Let us break their chains

and let us throw off their ropes from us."

4 The One who sits in the heavens laughs,

the Lord mocks them.

5 Then he speaks to them in his anger

and terrifies them in his wrath, saying:

6 "I myself have installed my king

on Zion, the mountain of my holiness."

7 "I will tell the decree of the LORD:

He said to me, 'You are my son,

Today I have become a father to you.

8 Ask of me and I will give the nations as your inheritance

and the ends of the earth as your possession.

9 You will break them with a rod of iron,

you will break them to pieces like a potter's earthenware."

10 So now, kings, act prudently.

Be admonished, rulers of the earth.



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11 Serve the LORD with fear

and rejoice with trembling.

12 Worship the Son lest he be angry

and you will be destroyed in the way.

For his anger burns in a moment.

Favoured are all those who take refuge in him.

### Second Reading: Those Being Addressed

Read again the above color-coded Psalm and pay special attention to who is speaking. Note the direct speech in the poem in v 3, v 6bc, v 7b-9b (quote within a quote). This is shown by quotation marks. Identify who is speaking (*Answer: v3 – green – kings and rulers, v6bc – yellow – The Lord = Adonai, v7b-9b – blue – The King speaks but he cites the Lord's decree.*).

Who is talking at the beginning of the poem and throughout like a narrator? *Answer: The answer is in the gray text – most commentators think this is the psalmist acting as a narrator. But many commentators propose that the narrator is the King or Messiah because it sounds like God is talking to the rulers in vv 10-12. However, if the King is narrating, then he is referring to himself in the third person (vv 2, 12) which seems less likely, but possible. The poem could be a coronation hymn for a Davidic king. In any of the interpretations, there is a messianic flavour to the psalm: God's King ruling from Zion is a Davidic king with an ultimate messianic fulfilment when all of the Scriptures are considered. Note also that in the final application in v 12, the audience is 'all who hear' at the end of the poem which includes you and anyone else who hears this poem.*

### Creative Activity 2:

In Ps 2, rather than looking at an individual believer like in Ps 1, there is a focus on nations or rulers in relation to Yahweh and his anointed one. In verses 1-6, we see conflict between these nations/rulers against Yahweh and his anointed one. But this conflict continues throughout the first part of the psalm, and Ps 2 ends with a warning to these earthly rulers. Think about the following in your large group:

- The text does not tell us but think about why the rulers and nations are upset when they talk about Yahweh and his anointed one (vv 1-3). Discuss some specific ideas.
- In what way in history do you see nations or rulers making useless plots against Yahweh and his anointed one? Can you think of some modern-day examples of this same basic conflict? (*Example, when the U.S.S.R. claimed there is no God... an atheistic state.*)
- Ps 2:4-6 talks about God's plan to install his king in Jerusalem (Zion). In what other specific ways have you seen God at work to frustrate or overturn the plots and schemes of nations/rulers?
- In the history of your nation or leadership how do you see these battles with God working out? Are they in conflict with the Almighty God? These attitudes may be seen on the level of local or national leadership which can be different perspectives.



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## ENGAGING WITH THE WHOLE PSALM

**Facilitator:** address the following topics:

- *The participants in the psalm, the different “speakers” and “audiences”*
- *The historical background and the context of the psalm, the story behind the psalm, if relevant*
- *The theme of the psalm*
- *The flow of the psalm*
- *The potential big picture obstacles*
- *Emotion map*
- *The peak or peaks of the psalm*
- *The genre and purpose of the psalm*
- *Highly important poetic device(s) related to understanding the big picture*
- *How does the psalm point to Christ?*

To understand Ps 2 better, read it again and answer the following questions:

- Describe in your own words how you understand the main message of the psalm. *Answer: The main idea is to call the rebellious kings of the earth to submit to the LORD and his king and also that all must submit to God’s rule.*
- What is the attitude of the earthly kings to God and the king of Israel (v.3)? *Answer: Rebellious, unwilling to submit to him.*
- How does God respond to the earthly kings (v.4)? *Answer: Laughs at and mocks them. This means he is utterly exalted over them. God laughing and mocking are anthropomorphisms (God acting as if he is human). These are used to communicate the utter foolishness of human authorities trying to war against God.*
- What does God feel towards the earthly kings (v.5)? *Answer: Anger. He rebukes them. Implied: they are powerless against him and his plans.*
- How do God’s words make the earthly kings feel (v.5b)? *Answer: Terrified!*
- What does God say to the earthly kings (v.6)? *Answer: God has his own plan to install his own king in Zion (Jerusalem) to rule everyone on earth.*
- What is the promise that God gave to his chosen king (vv.7b-9)? *Answer: To be his son (a father-son relationship which means he’ll be king), The whole earth is his inheritance. He will rule with absolute authority.*
- If the earthly kings are wise, what should they do? (vv.10-12) *Answer: Heed the warning. Serve God with reverent fear. Trust (take refuge in) him.*

**INSIGHT:** More details: The unveiling of God’s plan – Ps 2 is dramatic, broad in scope and set in a context of conflict. Large groups (nations and rulers of the world) in conflict with God himself. A central point of the psalm is for Yahweh’s appointed one to accomplish his purposes. This broader focus is quite different from Ps 1 which does not mention nations, rulers, God’s appointed one, or his plan to deal with a world in rebellion. It shows us the truth that ultimately God is in control over this world, and all rebels, whether rulers or not, and they need to repent of wickedness.



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## Context and Genre of the Psalm

This is a “royal psalm,” composed to celebrate the crowning of the king of Israel. It was believed that, as the king was appointed by God, the evil acts of enemies against the king were really against God. Royal psalms often apply to the Messiah. Do you have this genre of a “royal psalm”? Consider using it for the melody for your performance song.

See Appendix E as to how Ps 2 is cited in the NT. These repeated citations show that Ps 2 is a messianic psalm, that is, it refers to Jesus as the Messiah.

**Activity:** Think now more broadly about the whole poem and especially the role of God’s anointed one or king in his overall plan in dealing with nations and rulers. This is a **broader** exercise than the activity above that focused on verses 1-6 which simply looked at the conflict between the nations and Yahweh. The unveiling of God’s plan through his Son (anointed one) is key to his redemptive purposes for the world.

Listen to the psalm again and then do this broader exercise. If you are struggling to see the significance of God’s anointed one (or king or Son), read the broader context of Paul’s sermon in Acts 13:26-34 which explains God’s divine plan.

In light of your discussion of this psalm as a whole, create a poem, song, drama, or dance. Try to bring out the distinction of God’s plan versus the plans/schemes of the world. The idea of true control or authority or God’s sovereignty comes out in this kind of reflection.

## UNLOCKING SOME OF THE BIG PICTURE OBSTACLES TO THE PSALM

### Who is the King in this Psalm?

There are three main interpretations of the king here: 1) David or a subsequent Davidic king  
2) Messiah (Jesus) 3) Both

- 1) David or a subsequent Davidic king – There are many royal psalms that focus on David (ex., Pss 20-21, 45) or possibly a subsequent Davidic king (ex., Ps 72). However, there is no superscription for Ps 2. One NT Scripture (Acts 4:25) says David wrote Ps 2, but we don’t know for sure who wrote it. This reference could have been a general one to David’s dominating influence in writing Psalms. As king in the ANE there is a father/son relationship between God and king. David and subsequent Davidic kings reigned as king over Zion (Jerusalem). However, it was not a truly world-wide reign unless this would be hyperbolic language.
- 2) Messiah (Jesus) – Since the reign in Ps 2:8 is a world-wide reign, it applies more naturally into the Messiah’s ultimate rule over all nations. The Father/Son terminology fits in well to biblical theology of God the Father and God the Son. The NT also cites this Psalm as being fulfilled in Jesus (see Appendix E). Most Christians and even some Jewish scholars believe that Ps 2 is a messianic psalm (for Christians: fulfilled in Jesus).
- 3) Both – It could be that it was a psalm used in reference to the coming Messiah and it referred at the epoch to David or a subsequent Davidic king being used at a sacred royal



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anointing ceremony (coronation). The Messiah is called the son of David. Key passages like 2 Samuel 7 point to a Messiah who would come in the line of David.

**Conclusion:** Interpretations 2 and 3 best handle all the evidence, particularly the NT passages which refer to Jesus as fulfilling a number of these verses in Ps 2 (see Appendix E). Interpretation 3 is the commonly favored interpretation (WORD, EBT, Ross) because we have many examples of royal psalms that have messianic overtones and are sometimes quoted in the NT (e.g., Pss 20, 21, 45, 72). In Ps 2 David or a Davidic king could be a picture of the Messiah. David and Solomon did have extensive reigns for many years, a picture of the messianic rule. However, the picture of God’s Son co-reigning with him over all the nations of the world is only fully realized in the Messiah. So, these interpreters favor a typological or somewhat prophetic interpretation of Ps 2.

Interpretation 2 puts the emphasis on the messianic intent or prophetic meaning and purpose of the Psalm. God and his choice (anointed one, Son, king) are set in clear contrast to the kings and rulers of the whole world. In this view, the idea that this psalm was **performed** at a royal coronation is questioned, and the focus is placed on recalling or looking back at the occasion of the coronation (vv 7-9) (Kidner). But the psalm would still be a royal psalm with the theme of the messianic King.

### The Meaning and Translation of Verse 12 (“Kiss the Son”)

The phrase at the beginning of v 12 can be translated as “Kiss/Worship/Bow down to the Son,” “Kiss/Worship the Pure One,” “Kiss/Bow at his feet,” “Accept correction,” “Serve the LORD with fear and bow to him,” “Kiss the hand of the Son (as a sign of allegiance),” and other possibilities. (See Appendix B, v 12 for an explanation). This guide recommends the translations using “Son” (or possibly “Pure One”). Appendix D contains a technical explanation for the possibilities for v 12.

In the light of the NT and citations of Ps 2 there, it seems clear that *the son* (v.7) as referring to Jesus as the Messiah. In the original context it could have referred to the king who had God’s authority, probably David or a Davidic successor, but probably intended to be a typology or prophecy about the Messiah. Even many Jewish scholars hold to the view that Ps 2 is a messianic psalm.

### SEGMENTATION OF THE PSALM

There are 4 stanzas for Ps 2: vv 1-3, vv 4-6, vv 7-9, and vv 10-12. Notice how stanzas 1-3 show mounting tension (shown by indents for stanza 2 and again for stanza 3) until we reach the peak of action in the poem in stanza 3.

The peak of the poem is in stanza 3. The poem builds in tension toward this magnificent decree by the king to indicate who is the one in authority. Divine authority is questioned in stanza 1 by the kings and rulers. Stanza 2 reveals God’s plan which is to install his king in Zion (Jerusalem). Stanza 4 is the application of this plan of the Lord (his authoritative king in Jerusalem) to the kings and rulers



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and their need to submit to him. So, stanza 3 marks the intention of the Lord to rule with absolute authority (rod of iron). V 9 (breaking and smashing) is the peak of the poem. Everything before leads up to it and everything after follows from it. Stanza 3 is clearly the place where the peak idea of the poem is found.

#### Stanza 1

- 1 Why are the nations in an uproar?  
and the peoples plotting in vain?
- 2 The kings of the earth are taking their stand,  
and the rulers band together as one  
against the LORD and against his anointed, saying,
- 3 “Let us break their chains,  
and let us throw off their ropes from us.”

#### Stanza 2

- 4 The One who sits in the heavens laughs.  
The Lord mocks them.
- 5 Then he speaks to them in his anger,  
and terrifies them in his wrath, saying:
- 6 “I myself have installed my king  
on Zion, the mountain of my holiness.”

#### Stanza 3

- 7 “I will tell the decree of the LORD:  
He said to me, ‘You are my son,  
Today I have become a father to you.
- 8 Ask of me and I will give the nations as your inheritance,  
and the ends of the earth as your possession.
- 9 You will break them with a rod of iron,  
you will break them to pieces like a potter’s earthenware.”

#### Stanza 4

- 10 So now, kings, act prudently.  
Be admonished, rulers of the earth.
- 11 Serve the LORD with fear  
and rejoice with trembling.
- 12 Worship the Son lest he be angry,  
and you will be destroyed in the way.  
For his anger burns in a moment.  
Favoured are all those who take refuge in him.



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## FINAL SUMMING UP

### Discuss:

- In summary, what is the main point/message of the psalm? *Answer: The main idea is to call the rebellious kings of the earth to submit to the LORD and his king and that all must submit to God's rule.*
- What does this Psalm teach you about the LORD? *Answer: He is the Sovereign One who controls this universe. He has his own plan to relate to the world through his Son – implied: to save them.*
- How could your church (or you) use this psalm? *Answer: Salvation message. Turn it into a drama to explain this important concept Also, if persecuted, like the apostles in Acts, the psalm can be applied to one's situation and seeing deeper into the true spiritual battle of many in the world against God.*
- What heading or title would the group suggest for this psalm? *Answer: "The LORD's Chosen King" or "The LORD and his Anointed".*



## Step 3: Internalise

### Absorbing the big picture of the psalm

'Get the poem inside yourself' (feel the emotions and be able to recall the main ideas).

Look at the whole psalm so that you can experience it and retell the message. This is not an attempt to memorize the psalm, but to be able to understand the whole message and to express it in the target language. Aim to do at least the first two activities.

## CREATIVE RESPONSES

First, do Internalisation Activities 1-5 as a whole group

**Internalisation Activity:** Listen to Psalm X being read again. Note all the words you hear which speak of God's power, or which are very intense/extreme language.

**Internalisation Activity:** Say each line of the psalm in the right order, as a group. Use your own words; there's no need to have it precisely right. Then let one or two persons say each line of the psalm, again in the right order

**Internalisation Activity:** Then, as a group, make gestures for each line and again say all the lines in order, but this time with gestures. Use mime/gestures to show the emotion and action.

**Internalisation Activity:** Lastly, as a whole group, use the popcorn method. Each line, in the right order, is said by a different person. Do this a second time to further reinforce.

**Internalisation Activity (optional):** The storyboard method: draw pictures of each event in the psalm as they unfold.





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Then divide the group into two or three groups

**Internalisation Activity: Skits**—act out what’s happening in each of the lines. Make a little drama. Encourage them to use facial expressions, body language, motions, and movement to try to experience the emotions and the sequence of events. This psalm lends itself well to a skit.

**Internalisation Activity:** Memory song, chant or memory aid to help remember the psalm. Consider making a short poem of the song in the local language or Language of Wider Communication to help you remember the different actions in order. This song is only to help everyone remember each stanza in sequence (and the lines in sequence if it is a short psalm)

Other options

**Creative Activity:** Internalise the **main** ideas in each stanza and try to express it in your own language (not with all the details). This is to capture the big picture and the flow of the psalm. Three possible activities are mentioned in detail below. Do as one big group.

**Internalisation Activity: Drawing** – There are two kinds—one big picture that captures all the events or elements of a set; or, a separate image/drawing for each event/element). Translators can each do their own, or they can work together to create one for the team. One drawing with the whole group works well if you have a good artist. Display these drawings where they can be seen to jog memory as translators practice and record their oral drafts.

**Creative Activity: More detailed (the whole psalm)**

Now internalise with more detail all of Ps 2. You can use the same internalisation technique as in Creative Activity 1 above or add some other methods to help you recall the details of the psalm.

NOTE TO FACILITATOR: You could work as a whole group to do the whole psalm. You could split into groups to handle 1 or 2 stanzas. If you do break up into groups, record the entire psalm together, one group after another.

- 1) Think of a keyword (or expression) to capture the main point in each stanza. Then make a chant, with rhythm, out of the four key words (for example, “rebellion” or “enemies plot” for stanza 1 which is verses 1-3). This method can be used with any of the stanzas for Ps 2.
- 2) As one person calls out each key word, others call out words from the psalm that they remember as fitting in that section. These call-outs could be ways of expressing the poet’s emotions. This can be acted out with or without words. This can be used with any of the stanzas for Ps 2.
- 3) You could try to capture each stanza with a drawing or a song, if you have good artists or musicians.
- 4) Act out each stanza using either skits or gestures as described above. These two methods can be used with any of the stanzas for Ps 2.
- 5) Whatever method is chosen, try to capture all of Ps 2, the flow from beginning to end. The methods are used to help you remember the content of the psalm. But not each detail is necessary in this section (the details will come in step 5).



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6) Record your internalized version of Ps 2. If you are not happy with your work, you can re-read the psalm and try again until you are satisfied, but it does not have to be “perfect”.



## Step 4: Explore and compose

Explore the Hebrew and local poetry and compose a song

### EXPLORING HEBREW AND LOCAL POETRY

**For the facilitator:** in this step, address the following topics to explore in Hebrew poetry:

- 1) Repetition of words, images, and sounds
- 2) Handling the Hebrew parallelisms
- 3) Figures of speech, like metaphors, personification
- 4) Rhythm, verse length, beat
- 5) Word order, clause order
- 6) Poetic devices that emphasize and mark something as important

Once the artist-translators have sufficiently internalised and drafted the psalm in the workshop setting, compose a song, poem, rap, chant, or prayer to capture as much of the psalm as possible.

#### 1. Poetic devices- repetitions of words, images, and sounds

**Activity:** Trace all the words that are repeated. Then all the concepts/images.

#### 2. Poetic devices - main Images or metaphors of the Psalm

- Metaphors, metonyms, similes, personifications, hyperboles, merisms,

**Activity:** Can you identify any images, similes or metaphors?

#### 3. Rhythm

**Activity:** Listen to the psalm again and in groups, and get a feel for the rhythm. Are the lines short or long?

#### 4. Irregular word order

- Fronting of nouns before the verbs in Hebrew is particularly in focus here

**Activity:** Look at the Flower Garden or the Hebrew-mirror, and identify all the verses that have irregular word order, mostly (in English) nouns put before the verbs.



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## 5. Highlighting poetic devices

**Activity:** Look at the Flower Garden in Appendix C or the Hebrew-mirror in Appendix A, and identify all the verses that have highlighting devices.

## COMPOSING A SONG

**For the facilitator:** several considerations, like the big question when to start doing the song

- 1) *When to start composing a song? The guide writer and facilitator have some freedom when. Either at the end of step 4, or after step 5. There are pro's and con's to each option. One advantage of doing it in Step 4 (before the detailed exegesis) is that the team starts to think about poetry. They only start to think about poetry once they start composing a song. The risk is that when they compose something early, before step 5, that they settle on a melody they like, but need to change it or even abandon it after getting the more detailed exegetical insights. The advantage*
- 2) *Some other considerations: what about memory aid, the poem or song made at the end of Step 3?*
- 3) *Another option is to only compose a nice tune and song on one stanza with not any serious exegetical issues. That tune can then be used for the rest of the psalm at the end of Step 5. Experience with shorter sections, like one or two stanzas at a time, to compose.*
- 4) *The team needs to learn some song-writing skills.*
- 5) *It is not necessary to use the same tune for every stanza. Sometimes 3-4 tunes can be used for long psalms.*

Note the poetic devices used in the Hebrew mirror or in the Flower Garden (Appendix C). What is the psalmist trying to achieve? Consider what poetic devices are used in the local language to achieve the same functions.

**Activity: NOW, COMPOSE A SONG!** Participants are to choose a style or genre that is relevant for the psalm, and to set the whole psalm or sections to a rhythm or music. The song needs to cover all the main stanzas, but doesn't need to be correct in every detail (that comes later in Step 5)

**Activity:** Make a recording of the composition(s).



## Step 5: Draft

Translating section-by-section, stanza-by-stanza

Listen to the poem again. Orally create stanza-by-stanza a first draft of the psalm in the target language, trying to capture the poetic elements and essential details of the meaning. To take full advantage of the oral form, avoid reverting to written Biblical text at this point.



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**Activity:** Divide into smaller groups and let one in each group read through guide translation #2: Hebrew-tight (or play a recording) while others translate. The oral draft can at that point be recorded and/or immediately written down (Step 6 merged with Step 5).

## STANZA-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Often it speeds the work to have different groups do different stanzas. If you do this, make sure you all hear the psalm from top to bottom and to make suggestions to other groups when you come together...

### Stanza 1: Verse 1-3

1 Why are the nations in an uproar,  
and the peoples plotting emptiness?  
2 The kings of the earth are taking their stand  
and the rulers seat themselves together as  
one  
against the LORD and against his anointed,  
3 “Let us break their chains  
and let us throw off from us their ropes.”

1 Why are the nations in an uproar  
and the peoples plotting in vain?  
2 The kings of the earth are taking their stand  
and the rulers band together as one  
against the LORD and against his anointed,  
saying:  
3 “Let us break their chains  
and let us throw off their ropes from us.”

The narrator describes how other people behave, and how their kings behave. The stanza ends with a direct quote of these kings’ words. They do not want to serve God but want to be their own bosses.

#### Discuss:

- Read/Listen to stanza 1 again (in one or more versions). Can you think of any conspiracies or plots that you have experienced in life? Perhaps someone attacked you because of your faith, gender, skin color or appearance. Perhaps you have experienced a coup d’état or heard about a potential plot against the government. Think about how the most powerful rulers and nations on earth are no match for the Lord Almighty. Their plans and conspiracies, even together against God are useless, vain exercises. He is too powerful to be outwitted or overcome.

**Creative activity:** Listen to vv 1-3 several times on the recording. Think of this dramatic scene that these verses describe. **Retell** in your own words the content of vv 1-3.

*Consider:* Can you think of any strong vocabulary in your language for describing conspiracies or plots. These could be \*idioms. In English examples would be: “hatch a plot”, “cook up a plan”, “be in cahoots”, “gang up”, “pool resources”, “putting heads together”, and “work hand in glove”.

Think now about \*idioms for breaking chains or ropes. Examples in English would be: “set at liberty”, “pull the plug on”, “free as a bird”, and “cut loose from”.

Every language has unique ways of saying things. An oral translation will often try to capture these colorful expressions. Remember that the written translation that you do later may be quite different. Just think in terms of lively and interesting communication for vv 1-3 at this point.

**Creative activity:** With ideas from your retelling of vv 1-3 and the reflection on \*idioms in your language, can you think of some ways to improve your retelling of vv 1-3? You may choose to use regular, clear language to express these ideas orally rather than something that may be too slang or



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too idiomatic. You as translator must choose your style or way to communicate, thinking about who is receiving this message. For these verses you can have one voice for the narrator (vv 1 and 2) and another voice for the kings and rulers (v 3).

NOTE: If necessary, listen again to one or more readings/recordings. Create this oral translation without referring to the written text. Make sure you understand all the details of the text before you record it.

**Creative activity:** Make a poetic oral translation of these verses and record it.

### Stanza 2: Verses 4-6

4 The One who sits in the heavens laughs,  
the Lord mocks to them.  
5 Then he will speak to them in his anger  
and in his wrath will terrify them,  
6 “And I have poured out my king  
on Zion, mountain of my holiness.”

4 The One who sits in the heavens laughs,  
the Lord mocks them.  
5 Then he speaks to them in his anger  
and terrifies them in his wrath, saying:  
6 “I myself have installed my king  
on Zion, the mountain of my holiness.”

God is on the heavenly throne, and he looks down and mocks these earthly kings to indicate how foolish they are in terms of power. God is angry and the earthly kings are afraid of him. He reminds them of his own words (a quotation) that he has his king, one “set” or “installed” (lit. “poured out”) to be his representative, and God has given him the authority to rule. Believers are comforted to realize God’s sovereign control over the chaos around them.

**INSIGHT:** God expresses his desire – Note how in v 3 the rulers and kings expressed their rage against the LORD (Yahweh) and his anointed one, claiming to be imprisoned or trapped. In vv 4 and 5 Yahweh reacts by laughing and scoffing at these rulers. He expresses his rage at the rulers and rebukes them. Yahweh expresses his viewpoint. He states his plan to appoint his own King in Zion (Jerusalem).

#### Discuss:

- (v 4) God is pictured in heaven on his throne laughing at the rulers of the earth down below. The image of being enthroned is intended to show God’s authority and power over his creation (people and things). To highlight the difference between God and earthly rulers, some translations express implied information coming from v 3 like the GNB: “From his throne in heaven the Lord laughs and mocks their feeble plans.” In the GNB it clarifies what God is laughing about or mocking.
- (v 5) In some languages there may be only one word for anger. In that case you could combine the two lines by saying: “He rebukes and terrifies them in his great anger, saying”. This might be a good oral style. But even in a case like that you could say: “He rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his great anger, saying”.
- (v 6) “installing” my king can be translated as “putting”, “placing” or “establishing”.

**Creative activity:** Make a poetic oral translation of these verses and record it.



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### Stanza 3: Verses 7-9

7 “I will recount to the decree of the LORD,  
He said to me, ‘My son, you,  
I this day have become a father to you.  
8 Ask from me and I will give nations, your  
inheritance  
and your possession: the ends of the earth.  
9 You will break them with a rod of iron  
like a vessel of a potter you will break them  
to pieces.’ ”

7 “I will tell the decree of the LORD:  
He said to me, ‘You are my son,  
Today I have become a father to you.  
8 Ask of me and I will give the nations as your  
inheritance  
and the ends of the earth as your  
possession.  
9 You will break them with a rod of iron,  
you will break them to pieces like a potter’s  
earthenware.’ ”

God’s chosen king is speaking here (implied by the pronouns in the text), reminding the earthly kings of the promise that God gave to him, that he would rule them. The stanza includes an extended quotation, a promise given by God to the king, that he would destroy the other nations. The king just has to ask, and God will act powerfully on his behalf.

**INSIGHT:** The anointed one speaks – Now it is time for the anointed one, the king, to speak. “The king says” could be added at the beginning of v 7 to make clear who is speaking. The king is declaring a decree or proclamation that Yahweh has made. It is in terms of the father and son relationship. Make sure it is clear who is speaking for the oral translation.

In the Ancient Near East it was common for kings to be called the son of God. So this is understood in the original context of the poem. The father/son imagery for a king and God is common also. The rod of iron is an image of supreme authority.

**Discuss:** (vv 7-9) It is important to understand what the Lord’s decree is in these verses. It starts with “You are my Son... (in v 7) and ends with ... dash them to pieces like pottery” (in v 9). The king mentioned in v 6 is quoting this decree. One creative way to handle the king’s words which might be more natural in some contexts is to put them at the end after the Lord’s decree is quoted. You could say something like: “And that’s what Yahweh has decreed about me and my kingship (or ‘role’)”.

**Creative activity:** Make a poetic oral translation of these verses and record it.

### Stanza 4: Verses 10-12

10 And now, kings, act prudently.  
Be admonished, rulers of the earth.  
11 Serve the LORD with fear  
and rejoice with trembling.  
12 Kiss the Son lest he will be angry  
and you will be destroyed in the way  
for his anger burns in a moment.  
Favoured are all those who take refuge in  
him.

10 So now, kings, act prudently.  
Be admonished, rulers of the earth.  
11 Serve the LORD with fear  
and rejoice with trembling.  
12 Worship the Son lest he be angry  
and you will be destroyed in the way.  
For his anger burns in a moment.  
Favoured are all those who take refuge in  
him.



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The final stanza is an exhortation or warning to those who disobey the LORD and his Son. This stanza shows how the kings and rulers must respond to Yahweh and his Son. It is a call for all to worship or obey the chosen one. Blessing follows for all those who follow this path.

**INSIGHT:** The conclusion to the psalm does not include a quotation like the other stanzas. It is also marked in several other ways: beginning with a word indicating a conclusion and having two vocatives (forms of address) in v 10. Five imperatives are given with a reason in an extended format (including 4 clauses). It also contains a final blessing.

*Important Note:* In verse 12 “Worship the son” is the translation of “Kiss the son”. For a detailed explanation of this, see Appendix D.

**Creative activity:** Make a poetic oral translation of these verses and record it.

## PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

### Activities:

- 1) Listen again to the recordings of each verse or section.
- 2) Think about how to include relevant parts from previous steps and to use ideas from the previous creative activities.
- 3) Put everything together to make a poetic oral representation of the complete psalm, and then record it.

## Phase 2: TEXT



### Step 6: Transcribe

Writing it down

**Activity:** Transcribe the recording/s of the oral draft onto paper or a computer.

Before moving on to the checking steps, check the transcribed draft for the following. This should be done as a whole group, looking at the psalm projected onto a screen or wall. Doing this now will help the exegetical and poetical checks that follow to stay focused on essential matters.

1. **Versification:** put the verse numbers into the psalm.
2. Check that the number of the psalm, and any **superscription**, are in place at the top. (Superscriptions are often left out completely according to team policy, but they are recommended to be put in the written text but not the song.)
3. Put in the **stanza breaks** (blank lines usually).





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4. Correct the **punctuation**, in particular finding out where the sentences should end. Different groups use different approaches. Our recommendation is to use capital letters only for the beginning of sentences, not for the beginning of each poetic line.
5. Correct the **spelling**. You may find that there is a lot of discussion over this. The group needs to have consistency but also needs to abide by any government guidelines.
6. Raise any questions you have about the **back translation** at this point. The back translation just needs to be comprehensible; it does not need spell checks etc. You, the facilitator, are the only person who needs it. However, without a good back translation you cannot understand what is going on. As a bonus, at least a couple of exegetical questions you've prepared usually turn out to be unnecessary after this step.
7. Check the **line divisions** (this refers to how the power is broken up into lines and where to make those breaks).



## Step 7: Contents Check

### Checking exegetical faithfulness

Check the exegesis of the oral translation. Consider whether the correct meaning has been translated and if the wording used can be improved. The purpose of this step is to check the content of your draft for faithfulness and trustworthiness.

**Activity:** Review the draft translation in detail, using the oral recording of Step 5 or the transcription of Step 6. Do an exegetical check by comparing the draft with the guide translations given in Appendix A and the exegetical layout in Appendix B and adjust the text as necessary.

### EXEGETICAL CHECKLIST

Give special attention to:

- “Anointed” or “Chosen” or “Appointed” (v 2) – this is theologically important in the Psalms.
- Give careful thought to how you translate God “laughing”, “mocking” (or “scoffing”). One option is to follow the Good News Bible model “God laughs and mocks their feeble plans” which is clearer, but a bit interpretive.
- Stanza 3 (vv 7-9) is very significant. It is the peak of the poem and full of theological importance. Be very careful how you translate “decree”, “begotten” (= “became a Father”), “rod of iron” (used to indicate authority) (check the notes in Appendix B carefully). “Begotten” is archaic, but perhaps you have a more current word in your language.
- For v 11, give careful thought to how you translate “Serve the Lord, fear and rejoice with trembling”. Several options are given to you in Appendix B as a footnote for v 11.
- Check your translation for “Kiss the Son” in v 12 and how it is translated in the languages of wider communication. Read carefully the notes in Appendix B and read the technical explanation in Appendix D. For a written translation, consider a footnote. Personal



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preference is to put the meaning in the text with the literal text as a footnote but follow your team policy for this important verse.

- Make sure your choice for 2:12 ‘*ashre* “Favoured are...” is consistent with 1:1 where the same word is used (an inclusio between the first two psalms), unless you have solid contextual reasons for varying the terms.



## Step 8: Poetry Check

### Comparing and weighing the poetic features

Check if the Hebrew poetry is all accounted for in the translation through equivalent poetic features in the target language. Consider if the poetry of the translation can be improved, for example, look at the length of lines and the use of rhythm and ideophones.

**Activity:** Consider the poetic features of your translation. Do they reflect the purpose of the Hebrew poetic features, drawing attention to the correct parts? Experiment a bit with different word-orders and see what sounds the most beautiful, the most poetic.

### POETIC CHECKLIST

Give special attention to:

- How you handle the chiasms (vv 1, 2, 5, 8, 9, and 10) if that is important in your context.
- The rhetorical question for v 1 and possibly v 2 (see the notes in Appendix B).
- Consider how you handle the direct discourse in a poetic text. See the Flower Garden in Appendix C which show the places where direct discourse is used in the poem.
- Key terms are important to reflect upon for communicating the Hebrew idea of poetry: consider kings/rulers, nations/peoples, chains/ropes, anger/wrath and inheritance/possession. Make distinctions where you can, but follow the poetic principles of your local language. For example, you may need to combine two synonymous key terms into one term in some languages.
- Check the emotional language throughout the poem to see if you can add an ideophone or adverb or make the text more dramatic. Examples, “uproar” (v 1), “rise up – in rebellion” (v 2), “throw off chains” (v 3), “laughing/scoffing” (v 4), “terrify” (v 5), “break with a rod of iron” and “break to pieces” (v 9), “be warned” (v 10), “rejoice with fear” (v 11), and “wrath flaring up” (v 12).
- To show the stanzas clearly, put a blank line before v 4, v 7, and v 10.



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## Step 9: Finalise

Preparing the final version of an authenticated translation

Prepare the final version which will serve as an authorized translation, that in turn will serve as the basis for performing the psalm in the community (audio, visual and written).

**Activity:** Re-check the spelling of your transcription, the punctuation, in-setting, and the layout of paragraphs to represent stanza segmentation.

**Activity:** Re-check the essential accuracy of the back translation (not worrying about spelling).

**Activity:** In AVTT, ensure that the final text of your psalm is uploaded with a back translation, check that the recordings from different steps are in the correct place, and do a final audio recording.

**Activity:** If possible, copy the final written text into Paratext.

## Phase 3: PERFORMANCE



## Step 10: Perform

Performing the psalm in your community

Convert text into performance (dramatic reading/song/chant) to both perform and share this psalm, ensuring the main message comes through in content and style (the same emotional mood as the original poem in the Bible).

You now want to convert your written translation into a performance (song or chant) so that you can share it with your community. You need to make sure that the main message comes through in content and style (the same emotional mood as the original poem in the Bible). The genre - lament or praise or thanksgiving or other - should be similar to songs of the same genre in your culture.

### **Psalm-specific ideas:**

Do you want to bring in ideas from the OT or NT into your song? For example,

- You could mention earthly kings who opposed God in the OT, like Ahab (Jezebel's husband) or just talk about "leaders who do not honour God".



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- You could focus on the anger of God against those who do not honour him, and include a text from the NT like Jesus cleansing the Temple when some bad people were not allowing others to worship God freely there.

**Activity:** Identify any relevant genres or styles or performance and put the psalm to music. You can put the whole psalm to music, word-for-word, or you can use creative licence to adapt the psalm for the performance.

**Activity:** Complete a transcript and back translation for the lyrics of any song created by the team to be checked before recording.

## FINAL CHECKLIST

**In the end of each psalm, there should ideally be four products:**

1. Transcription: An authorized, authenticated, or officially written draft in AVTT and Paratext.
2. Dramatic Reading: A recording of a dramatic reading or recitation of the whole psalm, using the authenticated version word-for-word, recorded in AVTT.
3. Whole Psalm Performance: A recording of a performance of the whole psalm, using the entire authenticated version but with freedom to adapt it for authentic performance, including poetic and dramatic features beyond the authenticated version, recorded in AVTT.
4. Song or Hymn: A recording of a performance of part of the psalm including the main idea of the psalm, in the form of a song, hymn or chorus, with or without drama, with freedom to adapt it for authentic performance and to make it easy to sing and remember, recorded in AVTT. An improved version of the Step 4 composition could be used here.



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## Appendix A: Guide Translations

Hebrew-mirror	Guide Translation
<p>1 Why are the nations in an uproar, and the peoples plotting emptiness?</p> <p>2 The kings of the earth are taking their stand and the rulers seat themselves together as one against the LORD and against his anointed,</p> <p>3 “Let us break their chains and let us throw off from us their ropes.”</p> <p>4 The One who sits in the heavens laughs, the Lord mocks to them.</p> <p>5 Then he will speak to them in his anger and in his wrath will terrify them,</p> <p>6 “And I have poured out my king on Zion, mountain of my holiness.”</p> <p>7 “I will recount to the decree of the LORD, He said to me, ‘My son, you, I this day have become a father to you.</p> <p>8 Ask from me and I will give nations, your inheritance and your possession: the ends of the earth.</p> <p>9 You will break them with a rod of iron like a vessel of a potter you will break them to pieces.’ ”</p> <p>10 And now, kings, act prudently. Be admonished, rulers of the earth.</p> <p>11 Serve the LORD with fear and rejoice with trembling.</p> <p>12 Kiss the Son lest he will be angry and you will be destroyed in the way for his anger burns in a moment. Favoured are all those who take refuge in him.</p>	<p>1 Why are the nations in an uproar and the peoples plotting in vain?</p> <p>2 The kings of the earth are taking their stand and the rulers band together as one against the LORD and against his anointed, saying:</p> <p>3 “Let us break their chains and let us throw off their ropes from us.”</p> <p>4 The One who sits in the heavens laughs, the Lord mocks them.</p> <p>5 Then he speaks to them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath, saying:</p> <p>6 “I myself have installed my king on Zion, the mountain of my holiness.”</p> <p>7 “I will tell the decree of the LORD: He said to me, ‘You are my son, Today I have become a father to you.</p> <p>8 Ask of me and I will give the nations as your inheritance and the ends of the earth as your possession.</p> <p>9 You will break them with a rod of iron, you will break them to pieces like a potter’s earthenware.’ ”</p> <p>10 So now, kings, act prudently. Be admonished, rulers of the earth.</p> <p>11 Serve the LORD with fear and rejoice with trembling.</p> <p>12 Worship the Son lest he be angry and you will be destroyed in the way. For his anger burns in a moment. Favoured are all those who take refuge in him.</p>





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## Appendix B: Exegetical Layout

Psalms 1 and 2 introduce the book of Psalms. Psalm 2 is a royal messianic psalm quoted many times in the NT about Jesus. It may have been initially about David or a Davidic king, but the messianic interpretation is clear throughout NT usage. This makes it a psalm of extreme importance to the early church. It is also a very dramatic psalm full of different voices and an epic conflict between God and human rulers. The messianic theme is touched on throughout the rest of the Psalms, often as a Davidic psalm or a royal psalm, or both. Therefore, Psalm 2 plays an important thematic role concerning Messiah or “Son of David” in the Psalms, but also a prophetic role for both the OT and the NT.

### SUGGESTED HEADING

“The LORD’s Chosen King” (CEV) or “The LORD and his Anointed” (Kidner).

#### **Coding for TAM Verbs and Hebrew features:**

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qatal perfective = blue</li> <li>• Yiqtol imperfective = red</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infinitive construct = purple</li> <li>• Wayyiqtol waw+imperfective = pink</li> <li>• Jussive/cohortative = light brown</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Imperative = brown</li> <li>• Participle = green</li> <li>• Weqatal = navy</li> </ul> |
|--|---|--|

1 לָמָּה רָגְשׁוּ גוֹיִם <sup>1</sup>Why<sup>1</sup> (are) in.an.uproar<sup>2</sup> (the).nations<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Verse 1 is a \*leading question or \*rhetorical question. It indicates surprise or astonishment, even contempt that the nations would attempt to rebel against the Lord of the Universe.

<sup>2</sup> “Are in an uproar” (NJB, FC) or “are raging” (NAB) or “conspire”. The idea of restlessness or roaring may be in the verbal idea. The verb form is *yiqtol* which works together to balance the *qatal* form in the next line. Another rendering could be “Why should the peoples plot for nothing?”

<sup>3</sup> *Nations* and *peoples*: people groups. It is not necessary to use two different words, but if synonymous words work well in parallel lines in your poetry, then try to find two different words.



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וְלֹא־מִים יִהְיוּ־רִיקִים:	and <sup>4</sup> .(the).peoples are.plotting-emptiness? <sup>5 6 7</sup>
2 יִתְּצְבוּ מַלְכֵי־אָרֶץ	<sup>2</sup> Are.taking.a.stand <sup>8</sup> (the).kings.of-(the).earth <sup>9</sup> <sup>10</sup>
וְרוֹזְנִים נוֹסְדוּ־יַחַד	and.(the).rulers seat.themselves.together-(as).one <sup>11</sup>
עַל־יְהוָה וְעַל־מְשִׁיחוֹ:	against-the.Lord and.against-his.anointed <sup>12</sup> .
3 נִגְתְּקָה אֶת־מוֹסְרוֹתֵינוּ	<sup>3</sup> (They <sup>13</sup> say:) <sup>3</sup> “Let.us.break their.chains <sup>14</sup>

<sup>4</sup> A second rhetorical question with “why” can be added in 1b for stylistic reasons: “Why do the nations plan rebellion? Why do people make useless plots?” (GNB)

<sup>5</sup> “Plot emptiness” is based on the idea of “murmuring” or “grumbling” or “whispering”. Same word as Ps 1:2 for “meditating on the LORD’s law day and night”. The idea is one of consuming thoughts or meditations of plotting or overthrow. “Empty” means “in vain”, “futile” or “useless”.

<sup>6</sup> In vv 1-3, the second of the parallel lines adds information or becomes a more detailed, often more intensive action (typical of Hebrew poetry).

<sup>7</sup> Hebrew has a chiasm in v 1 with “nations” and “peoples” as the middle terms. Sometimes this chiasmic form can be translated into other languages, and at other times it is not the best style. Search for the best style, depending on the kind of translation that you are doing.

<sup>8</sup> Resistance or rebellion against God. The verb is fronted for emphasis. The qatal form “are taking a stand” could be rendered: “would take a stand” or “customarily take a stand”.

<sup>9</sup> V 2 repeats v 1, but now it is more specific, viz. the kings (not the whole nation) are plotting. Kings and rulers are a word pair filling out the completeness of lines 2a and 2b.

<sup>10</sup> The “why” extends over the whole of v 1 and can extend to v 2. The rhetorical question has the idea of chastisement here.

<sup>11</sup> The kings and rulers are united against God and his chosen one in resistance. Like v 1 the middle terms “kings” and “rulers” are part of a chiasmic expression.

<sup>12</sup> The “Anointed One” is the Davidic king, but it refers also to the Messiah (but don’t translate it as “Messiah” here). It can also be translated “Chosen One”. Verse 6 makes clear that he is God’s chosen king. Kings were anointed in the ANE.

<sup>13</sup> Some translations (example, NET and CEV) add “They” to make it clear that the kings and rulers are speaking.

<sup>14</sup> *Bonds, ropes*: may imply they are captives, but could also be metaphorical and just refer to the discipline of serving God or submitting to God’s superior authority. It could well refer to the neighboring rulers and their desire to cast off the yoke of being dominated by the king in Jerusalem.



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וְנִשְׁלִיכָהּ מִמֶּנּוּ עֲבֹתֵימוֹ:	and.let.us.throw.off from.us their.ropes <sup>15</sup> .”
4 יוֹשֵׁב בַּשָּׁמַיִם יִשְׁחַק	<sup>4</sup> The.One.who.sits <sup>16</sup> in.(the).heavens laughs <sup>17</sup>
אֲדֹנָי יִלְעַג-לָמוֹ:	<b>The.Lord</b> <sup>18</sup> mocks-to.them.
5 אִזְ יִדְבֹר אֵלֵימוֹ בְּאַפוֹ	<sup>5</sup> Then he.will.speak to.them in.his.anger,
וּבְחֵרוֹנוֹ יִבְהַלְמוֹ:	and.in.his.wrath <sup>19</sup> will.terrify.them,.(saying,) <sup>20</sup>
6 וְאָנִי נִסְכָּתִי מִלְכִּי	<sup>6</sup> “And.I <sup>21</sup> have.poured.out <sup>22</sup> my.king
עַל-צִיּוֹן הַר-קֹדְשִׁי:	on-Zion, mountain.of-my.holiness <sup>23</sup> .”

<sup>15</sup> “Ropes” or “cords”. “Their” refers to the LORD and his Anointed.

<sup>16</sup> Literally “He who sits” but this is a common OT formula for describing the LORD on his throne or enthroned.

<sup>17</sup> The LORD “laughing” or “scoffing” are \*anthropomorphisms. Translate according to your translation team guidelines. One option is to follow the Good News Bible model “God laughs and mocks their feeble plans” which is a bit clearer. But often such anthropomorphisms need to be taught by pastors and preachers rather than being too explicative in the biblical text.

<sup>18</sup> Most translations understand Adonai “the Lord” following the MT, but some Hebrew MSS say Yahweh “the LORD” (example, RSV). Adonai is fronted for emphasis. Yahweh (the LORD) is not mentioned in stanza 2 but is implied in the expression “the One sitting on the throne”. God addresses himself to the nations in stanza 2 as Adonai.

<sup>19</sup> Between verse 5a and 5b there is \*intensification in 5b. If your language has only one word for anger you can say “great anger” or “intense anger” in 5b. “In his anger” and “In his wrath” are the middle terms of a chiasmic structure in v 5. However, a chiasmic structure might seem unnatural in your language.

<sup>20</sup> “Saying” is added by most English translations to make clear the direct words of Yahweh in verse 6.

<sup>21</sup> The “I” here is emphatic. It can be rendered: “But/Yet as for me” or “Truly it is I” or simply “Now I myself”. But this meaning emphasis needs to be weighed against a poetic emphasis where often too many words are less poetic. Make sure you listen to those who have a poetic feel for the language in evaluating this decision.

<sup>22</sup> The lit. text “poured out” (TH) probably means “set” or “established” (WORD, Ross). Some take the meaning to be “anointed” (Dahood, mentioned in WORD). Most translations take this verb to mean “have set” or “established” or “installed”, but a few (like NJB) see the idea of “anointed” from the verb and context (TH). Another proposed meaning for the verb is “fashion” or “form” from a different Hebrew root (סכך) (personal correspondence: Nathan Lovell). The context favors “installed” or “established”, so this is recommended.

<sup>23</sup> This refers to God’s holy mountain in Jerusalem (Zion). Jerusalem is set on a hill or mountainous land. It is normally a good translation practice to transliterate “Zion” to distinguish it from “Jerusalem”.





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APP. A



APP. B

7 אֲסַפְּרָה אֶל חֵק יְהוָה	<sup>7</sup> I.will.recount <sup>24</sup> to (the).decree.of <sup>25</sup> (the).Lord:
אָמַר אֵלַי בְּנֵי אֶתְנָה	He.said.to.me, “My.son (are) you <sup>26</sup> ;
אֲנִי הַיּוֹם יִלְדָתִי:	I this.day <sup>27</sup> have.become.a.father.to.you. <sup>28</sup>
8 שְׂאֵל מִמֶּנִּי	<sup>8</sup> Ask from.me
וְאֶתְנָה גוֹיִם נַחֲלָתֶךָ	and.I.will.give nations (as) your.inheritance,
וְאֶחְזַתְךָ אֶפְסֵי-אָרֶץ:	and.(as).your.possession <sup>29</sup> (I.will.give) (the).ends.of-(the).earth <sup>30</sup> .
9 תִּרְעַם בְּשֶׁבֶט בַּרְזֶל	<sup>9</sup> You.will.break.them <sup>31</sup> with.a.rod.of iron; <sup>32</sup>
כְּכֵלֵי יוֹצֵר תִּנְפָצִים:	like.(a).vessel.of a.potter

<sup>24</sup> Although fairly clear from the context, it is the Anointed one (the King) who is speaking here. One way to clarify is to say, “The king proclaims the LORD ‘s decree...” (NLT) “I will recount” could be the poet as king speaking.

<sup>25</sup> “Decree” or “proclamation”. חֵק *hoq* “decree” in this context is a royal pronouncement by YHWH concerning his choice (King, Son, Messiah).

<sup>26</sup> See 2 Sam 7:8-16 (God’s covenant with the king), especially v 14. “My Son” is fronted for emphasis.

<sup>27</sup> *Today*: the day the king was enthroned or made king. The expression “I this day” is emphatic. Try to find an emphatic term or structure to create an emphasis here, but perhaps “Today” is emphatic enough.

<sup>28</sup> In the ANE civilizations the king was called God’s son. So, Ps 2 could be described as a coronation ceremony, or at least, it is referred to here like it was God’s coronation ceremony for his Son (or local context “David” or both). We should not read the “only begotten Son” of JN 3.16 into this context. This comes as a further NT revelation. See Appendix E for how often Ps 2 is cited or developed for NT theology.

<sup>29</sup> “Your inheritance” and “your possession” are the middle terms of a chiasmic expression here. As stated before a chiasmic structure cannot always be kept in target language because of unnaturalness

<sup>30</sup> *Ends of the earth*: all the lands in the earth. It means that the King will rule over “the far corners of the earth” (CEB). You could also say: “all the people on earth will be yours”. (NCV). Line 8b is more detailed than line 8a to emphasise the extent of the kingdom.

<sup>31</sup> “Break” them or “rule” them (Septuagint) with perhaps a shepherding idea (common with OT kings). “Them” refers to the rebellious rulers and kings mentioned earlier. See Appendix E for NT quotations from Revelation about the “rod of iron”.

<sup>32</sup> The rod of iron (or sceptre) is the symbol of ruling. “Iron” indicates it is an authoritative or firm reign.



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APP. A



APP. B

	you.will.break.them.to.pieces.” <sup>33</sup>
10 וְעַתָּה מְלָכִים הַשְׁבִּילוּ	<sup>10</sup> And.now <sup>34</sup> (o).kings <sup>35</sup> act.prudently; <sup>36</sup>
הַנְּסִיחוּ שְׁפִטֵי אֶרֶץ:	Be.admonished, (o).rulers.of <sup>37</sup> (the).earth.
11 עֲבַדוּ אֶת־יְהוָה בִּירְאָה	<sup>11</sup> Serve the.Lord with.fear
וְגִילוּ בְרַעְדָּה:	and.rejoice with.trembling. <sup>38</sup>
12 נִשְׁקוּ־בַר	<sup>12</sup> Kiss <sup>39</sup> -(the).Son <sup>40</sup> ,

<sup>33</sup> Meaning “dash to pieces” or “shatter”. V 9 is a chiasmic expression (observe where the verbs are). The middle terms “rod of iron” and “vessel of a potter” are genitive expressions and are in balance. If you keep the chiasmic structure, weigh the naturalness of the structure. The verbal idea of 9b is stronger or more emphatic than the verb of 9a. This is typical of Hebrew poetry. Can you use an ideophone in 9b for “dash to pieces”?

NOTE: Rev 2:27 interestingly applies this to believers reigning as co-heirs of Christ, having authority/power over the nations!

<sup>34</sup> The fourth stanza brings a conclusion. Other possibilities for the connecting word here are “therefore,” “now therefore,” “so now,” and “now then”.

<sup>35</sup> In vv 10-12, *kings of the earth* are told to serve Yahweh. No mention is made of Israel’s king. The first three stanzas mentioned Israel’s king, but now the focus is only on *earthly kings* submitting to God. Also note the inclusio, with repetition of earthly kings in v 2 and v 10. Of course, as in the FN below, the Son is the referent for God’s king in stanza 4. See Appendix D for a closer analysis of v 12 and the structure of Ps 2.

<sup>36</sup> “Be wise,” “Take heed,” or “act wisely”.

<sup>37</sup> Chiasm here, note how the verbs are in the middle of the chiasm, “kings” and “rulers” are the first and last terms of the chiasm.

<sup>38</sup> “Rejoice with trembling” is difficult to translate. Possibilities are: “Rejoice while trembling”, “Rejoice while fearing him”, and “Be glad but with trembling”. Another option is to take the opposite meaning of rejoice (like when “curse” is sometimes the translation of “praise”). So, the idea would be “Repent with trembling” (see NET note).

<sup>39</sup> Kissing was a sign of homage and submission. See 1 Sam 10:1 and 1 Kgs 19:18.

<sup>40</sup> This is best rendered “worship the **Son**” or “bow down to the **Son**” in light of ANE understanding of kissing a king’s feet and the Aramaic word *bar* “Son” being completely appropriate in this context. A technical argument for this choice is made in Appendix D along with the possible choice “Pure One” in Kompaore’s article. Another option is to “kiss the hand of the Son (as a sign of allegiance).”

Avoid the renderings “kiss his feet” (NRSV), “Accept correction” (LXX, Douay-Rheims) and “Serve the Lord with fear and bow down to him” (GNB and NET). If you are constrained to use one of these translations because of a LWC, try to put it in a footnote or minimally put “worship the Son” in the footnote.



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APP. A



APP. B

פְּוֹיֵאֲנָף	lest-he.will.be.angry <sup>41</sup>
וְתֵאבְדוּ יָרֵךְ	and.you.will.be.destroyed (in.the).way,
כִּי־יִבְעַר כְּמַעֲט אַפּוֹ	for-will.burn like.a.little.(moment) his.anger <sup>42</sup>
אֲשֶׁר־יִבְטְחוּ בּוֹ:	Favored <sup>43</sup> (are) all-those.who.take.refuge in.him. <sup>44 45</sup>

BETA

<sup>41</sup> “He” probably refers to God, although *son* (v 12a) refers to the king. The ambiguity emphasizes the close identity between the king of Israel and God.

<sup>42</sup> This means “all of a sudden, unexpectedly”, not that his anger is easily aroused. The wrath of the king will dramatically flare up and they will be destroyed by the king yielding his rod of iron (Nathan Lovell).

<sup>43</sup> This verse forms an inclusio with Ps 1:1, holding the two introductory psalms together as a unit. This is the same word (*‘ashre* “Favored”) in Ps 1:1. Translate it the same unless you have a reason for changing the translation.

<sup>44</sup> Take refuge in him can be understood to mean “trust in him” or “those who God takes care of”.

<sup>45</sup> This final declaration is true for all peoples and kings, those in Israel and those not.

