

PSALM 2 – AN ISAGOGIC, EXEGETICAL AND THEOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION PART II

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ABSTRACT. In this research paper, we intend to offer the reader the possibility of becoming more familiar with the main types of biblical commentaries through an exegetic exercise centred round Psalm 2. The choice of the supporting text is not at all random since, even from ancient times, the psalms have benefitted from the attention of an impressive number of interpreters and have been the beginning of both dialogue and controversy between religions (Christianity and Judaism) and Christian denominations. Throughout the exegetical analysis, we took into consideration the rigors of the school of criticism which we correlated with the rabbinic and patristic commentaries in order to accomplish a very ample interpretation. Even if these commentators were not entirely in agreement, rather than bringing to relief their interpretative differences, we tried to underline the common elements existing in the specific manner of interpretation of each exegetical school. Thus, the complexity of this isagogic, exegetical and theological study resides in the fact that it approaches the text of the psalm from a literary, allegorical and spiritual point of view and it can become a hermeneutical paradigm for those who wish to study the Holy Scriptures with scientific and spiritual accuracy.

Keywords: psalm, rabbis, Holy Father, critical interpretation, king, LORD, Messianic perspective

1. *Why do the heathen¹ rage and the people imagine a vain thing?*
2. *The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying,*

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¹ Taking into account the fact that the word גוֹיִם (*goim*) indicates those that are outside the borders of the chosen people which were in fact pagan and idolatrous some of the translators have chosen here the word *pagan* (*heathen* for the English version) (B. 1936, KJV), which is disapproved by some exegetes. Rabbi Solomon Freehof, *The Book of Psalms: A commentary*, (Cincinnati: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1938), 14.

3. *Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords² from us.*
 4. *He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh³: the Lord shall have them in derision.*
 5. *Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.*
 6. *Yet⁴ have I set⁵ my king upon my holy hill of Zion.*
 7. *I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.*
 8. *Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.*
 9. *Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.*
 10. *Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth.*
 11. *Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling.*
 12. *Kiss the Son⁶, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.*

Verse 6

Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.

In this verse the psalmist establishes clearly that the newly anointed king of Israel whose authority is contested by the rebels has divine legitimacy. This reality is expressed differently in the two consecrated originals: in the Hebrew text God is the one Who speaks these words, and in the Greek text the king is the one who states his status of chosen by God⁷. Even though there is a

² The Septuagint translates this word with ζυγός which means *yeoke*.

³ I chose to translate the verbs in this verse with the Present Tense and not with the Future (which can be found in the Greek original), because it is much more suitable to the context. Cf. Mayer Gruber, *Rashi's Commentary on Psalms*, (Boston: Leiben, 2004), 175; Ioan Popescu-Mălăiești, "Psalmi", *Biserica Ortodoxă Română* 6 (1904): 653; B. 1936.

⁴ In this case the particle ו (vav) is obviously adversative. Cf. George Phillips, *The Psalms in Hebrew; with a critical, exegetical and philological commentary*, vol. 1, (London: J. W. Parker, 1846), 16.

⁵ Because of the fact that the verb נָסַךְ (*nasakh*) is translated by *to pour* some translators have used here the word *anointed*. You can find more details to this respect in the section dedicated to this verse.

⁶ The expression *kiss the Son* is one of the most famous expressions from the Psalms that constituted a point of interest for the exegetes concerning a translation and interpretation close to the original text. In the theological jargon this is a *crux interpretum*. For more details see the exegetical analysis of the verse.

⁷ "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion..." Some of the exegetes consider that the change of the subject in the Greek text is legit, since the syntax in the Hebrew original allows this linguistic device. Mitchell Dahood, "Psalms", in *AB* 19A (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1966), 10. Cf. Phillips, 17; Peter Craigie, "Psalms 1-50", in *WBC* 19 (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 63.

significant difference between the two variants, in the economy of the psalm this fact does not change under no circumstance the idea underlined by the text, no matter who is the person who states and implicitly confirms the legitimacy of this kingship, whether is God or the king himself.

A similar situation may also be found in the case of the verb נָסַךְ (*nasakh*) – *to pour, to spill*, which is translated by the interpreters of the Septuagint by *καθίστημι* which means *to put, to arrange*. Even if the targumim and some of the editions chose to translate the term *nasakh* with *to anoint*, an action which refers to the act of investing the king by pouring blessed oil over his head, most of the exegetes consider that the Greek text presents correctly the psalmist's intention. They support their opinion with the idea that the term is never used to describe an event of consecration, because the verb implies an action of pouring into something or outside it, and not over somebody, as is the case of the anointing of a king or a priest. Hence, the verb is used to refer to a libation, a religious act which consists of tasting and pouring a cup of wine or of other liquids over an altar in honor of a deity (Ex. 30:9; Hos. 9:4; Isa. 30:1), or of the pouring of a metal into an oven⁸.

In the context of this enthroning it is important to underline the fact that when the psalmist gives God's words regarding the Law, he uses a possessive pronominal particle that emphasizes the bond between the two. The expression *my king* also indicates, besides a spiritual filiation, the fact that this king will fulfil the divine will⁹. This aspect is underlined both in the rabbinic writings¹⁰ and in the patristic works. Emphasizing the Messianic dimension of the psalm, the Holy Fathers considered that the psalm refers to the Savior's royalty. Although His status was not accepted by His fellow countrymen who were against Him, Jesus Christ was called and considered king on many occasions during His activity starting with the Three Wise Men (the three kings)¹¹. At the same time, they emphasize the fact that the text of the psalm refers to the proclamation of

⁸ Popescu-Mălăiești, 657. Cf. Charles Briggs and Emilie Briggs, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, vol. 1, (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1906-07), 20; Ernst Hengstenberg, *Commentary on the Psalms*, vol. 1, (Bellingham: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 2010), 27; Franz Delitzsch, *Biblical commentary on The Psalms*, vol. 1, Translated by Fancis Bolton, (Edimburg: T. & T. Clakk, 1871), 94.

⁹ Albert Barnes, *Notes, critical, explanatory, and practical, on the book of Psalms*, vol. 1, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1868-69), 17.

¹⁰ Rabbi David Kimhi, *The longer commentary of R. David Kimhi on the first Book of Psalms*, Translated by R. G. Finch, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1919), 14.

¹¹ Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Commentary on Psalms 1-81*, Translated by Robert Hill, (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006), 23-5. Cf. Cassiodorus, *Explanation of the Psalms*, vol. 1, Translated by P. G. Walsh, (New York/Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1990), 61.

the royal dignity of the Lord after the incarnation, since Christ ruled the world from eternity¹².

The status of Jerusalem, a fortress conquered by David seven years after he became king in Hebron, would become representative for the Hebrew royalty. The *City of David* (2 Sam. 5:7) became a political capital and a spiritual centre through the presence of the Tabernacle and subsequently of the Temple; it was also called Zion (the prophetic and poetic name of Jerusalem¹³) and was the place that God chose in order to found the realm of His people and implicitly of His Kingdom. For all these reasons the fathers identified Zion with the Church of Christ which for its importance and stability received the name of the holy mountain (hill) of God¹⁴. Taking into account also the eschatological context of the psalm, some interpreters considered that the mount of Zion represents here the image of the heavenly Jerusalem¹⁵.

Verse 7

I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.

This verse which introduces the third section of the psalm (v. 7-9) gives the words of the Lord Who offers legitimacy to the new king and confirms His status of ruler of the whole world. The one who reads the decision of investiture is the king himself. He presents to the rebels that contest his authority the proclaiming act, the decree through which God names him son, makes him sovereign in Zion and offers him absolute power over his subjects.

¹² Theodoret de Cir, *Tâlcuire a celor o sută cincizeci de psalmi ai proorocului împărat David*, Translated by PS. Iosif al Argeșului, (Petru Vodă: Sfânta Mănăstire Sfinții Arhangheli, 2003), 9 and Efitmie Zigabenu and Sf. Nicodim Aghioritul, *Psaltirea în tâlcuirile Sfinților Părinți*, vol. 1, Translated by Ștefan Voronca, (Galați: Egumenița, 2006), 72. "It is what the Lord Himself says about Him: "Yet I have set my king upon my holy hill of Zion". But He did not begin His existence when He irradiated physically on Zion, nor did He start then His power to rule, because He was the Logos of the Lord from eternity and eternal King, He condescended to make His Kingdom shine humanly on Zion as well, so that by redeeming them from the sin that ruled within them, to bring them into His parental kingdom; and standing over things He did not stand over those that did not exist yet, but He stood over the things that already existed and needed correction". Sf. Atanasie cel Mare, "Trei cuvinte împotriva arienilor", in *PSB* 15, Translated and Edited with Notes and Commentary by Dumitru Stăniloae, (București: IBMO, 1987), 288-9.

¹³ Alexander Kirkpatrick, *The book of Psalms*, (Cambridge: University Press, 1905), 10.

¹⁴ St. Augustin, "Expositions on the Psalms", in *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* 8, Translated by Philip Schaff, (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, 1997), 4.

¹⁵ Cassiodorus, 61. Cf. St. Hilaire de Poitiers, *Commentaire sur le Psaume 2* in <http://www.patristique.org/Hilaire-de-Poitiers-Commentaire-sur-le-Psaume-2.html> (accessed 29 July 2013).

In order to offer more clarity to the Hebrew text, the translators of the Septuagint chose to use for the beginning of this verse a paraphrase instead of a literal translation. They preferred to use a Participle (*διαγγέλλων*) instead of the Future that we have in the text (אֲשַׁפֵּרדָּ – *asapperd^h*) – *I will announce, I will say* and to reverse the word order, reading יהוה (Yahwe) or לְאֵל (him) after הוֹק (*hoq*) to obtain the sentence *to announce the LORD's command* instead of *I will announce His command*¹⁶. In this context the term *hoq* does not refer to a command or to a decision that must be respected, but to an endowment that is about to be announced, to a so-called constitution that will be at the foundation of the new regency¹⁷.

This endowment proclaimed by the king is founded on the divine filiation: the king of Zion, anointed by God, is called *His son*. The concept of *the son of God*¹⁸ was used at first in the Old Testament to designate the privileged status that the chosen people has before God (Ex. 4:22). Using the semantic field of this notion, God expressed His care for the Hebrew people (Deut. 1:31; Hosea 11:1) and underlined the dignity that it receives when it remains in communion with Him. Within the relationship established by God with the house of David, the respective prestige was assumed by the king (2 Sam. 7:14¹⁹) who was in fact the elected and representative of the entire people²⁰. Although this covenant was eternal, the reassertion of the convention from time to time was necessary. The most suitable moment for this was during the coronation ceremony, when a new descendant from the royal family of David was enthroned. Hence, the words *Thou art my Son* mark the reestablishing of the relationship between God and the Davidic dynasty in the person of the newly crowned king²¹.

¹⁶ Phillips, 20.

¹⁷ Barnes, 18. Interpreting Christologically this action of confessing the divine commandment, the fathers refer to the preaching activity of Jesus Christ that He as king and Son of God developed in Zion, within the Hebrew people. "I was, He says, ordained by God and Father King, to announce His commandment before the others as well, to the people of Zion. And that is, I suppose, what Christ said: "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel" (Mat. 15:24). For since the gift of preaching was owed to them they were the first to receive the word of the announcement of the promise and the correction through the faith in Him". Sf. Chiril al Alexandriei, "Tâlcuirea psalmilor I (1-8)", Translated and Edited with Notes and Commentary by Dumitru Stăniloae, *Mitropolia Olteniei* 4 (1989), 38. Cf. Eftimie Zigabenu and Sf. Nicodim Aghioritul, 72.

¹⁸ See a more detailed presentation of this concept in David Freedman, trans., *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. 6, (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 127-37.

¹⁹ "I will be his father, and he will be my son..." (2 Sam. 7:14)

²⁰ Cf. Gruber, 175.

²¹ Craigie, 67. Rabbi Solomon considers that the king to whom this text refers is none other than Solomon, the one that God named His son (2 Sam. 7:14). Rabi Freehof, 14.

At the same time, the expression *the son of God* was also used for Messiah²². His special relationship with God was based on the exceptional choice and mission that was conferred only to Him²³. Starting from this consideration and taking into account the fact that in this psalm the Messianic king is regarded as representative or regent of God, the hagiographers of the New Testament understood that this honorary title cannot be limited only to an enthroned king, but sends us to Jesus Christ, the supreme coregent²⁴. Thus, the reference of this of the expression *Thou art my Son* to Jesus Christ is very obvious: in the baptism²⁵ (Mat. 3:17) and in the transfiguration (Mat. 17:5), the Father underlines the divine status of Jesus Christ and presents Him as *His son whom He loves, with Him He is well pleased!*

Assuming this manner of interpretation, the fathers stated unanimously that the *Son* to whom the psalm refers is none other than the second Person of the Holy Trinity²⁶.

The use of the term הַיּוֹם (*haiom*) – *today (this day)* emphasizes the fact that the divine filiation of the king starts with the day of the coronation, a

²² Cf. Phillips, 20 and Barnes, 19.

²³ Vladimir Petercă, *Mesianismul în Biblie*, (București: Polirom, 2003), 181.

²⁴ Laird Harris et al., *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 530. Even the rabbis mention that this text has or may have a Messianic message. Rabbi Yapheth ben Heli Bassorensis Karaïtae, *In librum Psalmorum comentarii Arabici*, Translated by L. Bargès (Lutetiae Parisiorum: Excudebant Firmin Didot Fratres, 1846), 107-8. Cf. Rabbi Benjamin Segal, *Psalm 2 – Two Interpretations of the Divine Right of Kings*, in http://psalms.schechter.edu/2010/02/psalm-2-two-interpretations-of-divine_21.html (accessed 8th May 2013).

²⁵ Clement of Alexandria considers that the text of the psalm announces the baptism of Jesus Christ because right after the Father's words *This is my Son whom I love ...* He adds *this day have I begotten Thee*. "Pedagogul", in *PSB 4*, Translated and Edited with Notes and Commentary by Dumitru Fecioru, (București: IBMO, 1982), 180. Cf. Cassiodorus, 62 and J. M. Neale, *A commentary on the Psalms: from primitive and mediaeval writers and from the various office-books and hymns of the Roman, Mozarabic, Ambrosian, Gallican, Greek, Coptic, Armenian, and Syrian rites*, vol. 1, (London/ New York: J. Masters/Pott and Amery, 1869), 100-1.

²⁶ Saint Justin states that: "God has begotten a principle, a rational power, which is called by the Holy Spirit both Glory of the Lord, sometimes Son (Ps. 2:7), other times Wisdom, other times angel, or God, or Lord (Ps. 110:1) and Word [...] For He has His name according to the manner in which He fulfills His Father's wish and according to the fact that the Father has begotten Him through will". Sf. Iustin Martirul și Filosoful, "Dialogul cu iudeul Tryfon", in *PSB 2*, Translated and Edited with Notes and Commentary by Teodor Bodogae (București: IBMO, 1980), 162-3. In the context of the arian disputes Saint Athanasius the Great, appeals to this Psalm and states that the Son is true God, of the same essence with the Father, and superior to all the angels: "...The Father presents Him as His own unique Son saying: *Thou art my Son* (Ps. 2:7) and: *This is my Son whom I love, with Him I am well pleased* (Mat. 3:17). That is why the angels served Him (Matthew 4:11), for he was different from them. And He is honored by them not as the One Who has a greater glory, but as the One that is different from all creatures and from themselves, being the only one proper to the Father and Son in essence". Sf. Atanasie cel Mare, 256. Cf. Clement Romanul, "Epistola către Corinteni", in *PSB 1*, Translated and Edited with Notes and Commentary by Dumitru Fecioru, (București: IBMO, 1979), 65.

moment from which the covenant becomes active²⁷. Although the adverb *today* indicates the present and excludes the idea of past and future, one may suppose, after having analyzed the context that this adverb may express eternity²⁸. Taking into account the fact that the covenant sealed with king David is eternal, that God cannot be impelled under any form of time²⁹ and that His statements are made from eternity, the filiation is from and forever.

This perspective determined the fathers to emphasize even more the Messianic dimension of the text. Thus, for Saint Cyril of Jerusalem the existence of the Son before time is marked by this adverb of time³⁰: “The word *today*, says the hierarch, does not mean: *recently*, but: eternal; *today* means: outside time, before all eternity”³¹. In the opinion of other fathers³², this term may indicate either the birth from eternity of the Son, or the moment of the incarnation³³. Supporting the second variant, Saint Cyril of Alexandria states that “Existing as Son of God and Father, born from His essence before incarnation, better said before all ages, [He] [our underlining] is not upset at all when, becoming human, God and Father tells Him: Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee (Ps. 2:7)³⁴. For He says that He who is God before all time, born from Him, I have begotten this day to receive us in Him to adoption (Eph. 1:5), because all our nature received a renewed existence through Him, for He was man”³⁵. Saint Gregory Nyssa agrees with all these statements that they present in a more obvious manner the fact that the term *today* refers to the birth of the

²⁷ Rabbi David states that after the moment of his anointing as king, the grace of the Spirit became present and active in all his actions. The writing of the psalms under divine inspiration is one of the most conclusive manifestations of the Spirit. Rabbi Kimhi, 14. Cf. Kirkpatrick, 10.

²⁸ Cf. Diodore of Tarsus, *Commentary on Psalms 1-51*, Translated by Robert C. Hill, (Boston: Liden, 2005), 8.

²⁹ Nicolae Neaga, *Hristos în Vechiul Testament*, (Cluj-Napoca: Renașterea, 32007), 60.

³⁰ Saint Hilarion considers that the term *today* means “before time, before all the other things”. Sf. Ilarie de Pictavium, “Tractatus Super Psalmos”, in *PL* 9, 274C.

³¹ Sf. Chiril al Ierusalimului, *Cateheze*, Translated and Edited with Notes and Commentary by Dumitru Fecioru, (București: IBMO, 2003), 125.

³² Although this word may indicate prophetically the moment of the incarnation, Saint Augustin considers that the expression *this day have I begotten thee* “proclaims the birth from eternity of the power and Wisdom of God, who is in His Only begotten Son”. Sf. Augustin, 3.

³³ Tyrannius Rufinus states that psalm 2 indicates both the birth of the Son of God from eternity and in time: “In Christ there are two natures: a divine one and a human one, one from the Father, born in heaven without mother, and another one from a mother, on earth, born without a father”. Rufin, “Comentarius in LXXV Psalmos”, in *PL* 21, 651D.

³⁴ The Bishop of Cyrus states that the Son of God receives at His incarnation the status of Son which He has from eternity. Teodoret de Cir, 9.

³⁵ Sf. Chiril al Alexandriei, “Comentariu la Evanghelia Sf. Ioan”, in *PSB* 41, Translated and Edited with Notes and Commentary by Dumitru Stăniloae (București: IBMO, 2000), 371-2. Cf. Theodore of Mopsuestia, 27.

Son in time: “The Father says He has begotten *this day* the One who created it all, because through this word he placed the temporary name besides the name of the birth. The word showed here not the existence before all ages, but the existence incarnated, the birth under ages, for the salvation of people”³⁶.

Underlining the literal sense of the text of this psalm, we may state that the *birth* from God of the king is not just a simple adoption, but a special birth, of divine nature³⁷. The phrase יֵלִידְתִּיכָהּ (*ielidtikha*) – *have I begotten thee* occurs only one time in the Scripture³⁸ where it refers to a similar event: “The Lord says to my lord: “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet”. The Lord will extend your mighty scepter from Zion, saying, “Rule in the midst of your enemies!” Your troops will be willing on your day of battle. Arrayed in holy splendor, your young men will come to you like dew from the morning’s womb” (Ps. 110:1-3)³⁹. The thematic closeness between the two royal psalms is obvious. Most of the exegetes link the ideas of these two psalms underlining in the same time the Messianic valence of the texts. The significant details from the first and the third verse from Psalm 110 suggest the passage from a historical event to an event placed outside the eschatological sphere, guiding the attention towards an ideal awaited image⁴⁰. The origin of this Messianic character remains mysterious because of the fact that he is born *from the womb and in the morning, like dew or from God’s womb before the morning star*⁴¹. Furthermore, David the psalmist⁴² addresses the king with

³⁶ Sf. Grigorie de Nyssa, “Omiliu la Ecclesiast,” in *PSB* 41, ed. Teodor Bodogae (București: IBMO, 1998), 208.

³⁷ Craigie, 68.

³⁸ It is necessary to note that between the two words there is a difference in vocalization (Ps. 2:7 - יֵלִידְתִּיכָהּ; Ps. 110:3 - יֵלִידְתִּיכָהּ - *Ialduteikha*). This modification determines the change of the grammatical value of the word which thus becomes noun and may be translated with *young, youth, childhood*. However, the Septuagint and the Syrian original translated the word in a verbal form (*have I begotten thee*) having as support many Hebrew manuscripts. This version is preferred by most of the exegetes, amongst which we mention Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 1-150: A Commentary*, vol. 2, Translated by H. C. Oswald, (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1988), 344-5.

³⁹ Cf. Cassiodorus, 61.

⁴⁰ Alois Bulai et al., *Psalms. Traducere, note și comentarii*, (Iași: Sapientia, 2005), 16.

⁴¹ The text from verse three is difficult and may be interpreted in many ways. No matter what translation we choose, the mystery of the birth of the Messianic king remains the same. The first variant is an adaptation after the Hebrew original (cf. P. 1651), and the other after the Septuagint (cf. B. 1914).

⁴² Although the Hebrew original considers David to be the author of the psalm, some exegetes consider that the author is one of the people close to the king that was present at the moment of his enthroning. Cf. Leslie Allen, “Psalms 100-150”, in *WBC* 21, (Dallas: Word Inc., 2002), 114. Their opinion is exaggerated and has no support. The Messianity of the text is obvious because of the fact that Jesus Christ Himself assumes the prophecy (Mark 12:35-37).

a divine name, calling him Lord (יְיָ – *Adon*)⁴³ and confers him the dignity to sit at God's right hand. Hence, if in Psalm 2 the expression I have begotten thee indicates the adoptive filiation of the king in the day of his coronation, in Psalm 110 it renders the divine filiation *stricto sensu*⁴⁴.

Emphasizing the fulfilment of the promises made to the parents, Saint Apostle Paul invokes the text from Ps. 2:7 in order to signal the birth of the Son from the Father through His resurrection from the dead⁴⁵. And he also refers to this text when he wants to show Christ's superiority compared to the angels (Heb.s 1:5) and His glorification by God (Heb. 5:5). Starting from this verse of the psalm, Saint Cyril of Alexandria insists upon underlining the obvious difference that exists between the Son and the creatures. The latter have their origin from God through creation, whereas the Son through birth. The bishop from Alexandria concludes the idea by asking the faithful not to interpose an amount of time between the Father and the Son, because they are both eternal: "Everywhere is used the expression *He created* (He made) for the creatures, but not for the Son. For in the case of the Son He did not say: *I created* (I made), but *I have begotten* (Ps. 2:7; 110:3) and I was born and my heart is stirred by a noble theme (Ps. 45:2) [...] And the same way John speaking about the Son and knowing the distinction between the words, he didn't say: *In the beginning it was made or it was created*, but *In the beginning was the Word*, so that through this expression was to be obvious the fact that He is born and to prevent everyone from thinking there is an interval between the Father and Son, but to consider that the Son exists eternally"⁴⁶.

Verse 8

Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.

The reason that determined the torment and the rebellion of the heathen is mentioned clearly by the psalmist only within this verse. Here it is uncovered the fact that the Lord offered the king the authority to lead and to

⁴³ The word Adon is one of the substitutes for the name Yahwe. The Septuagint translates it constantly with the term *κύριος*, a word used for the writing of the Tetragram. Cf. Mihai Vladimirescu and Mihai Ciurea, "Tetragrama YHWH – cel mai important nume al lui Dumnezeu în Biblia ebraică," *Mitropolia Olteniei 1-4* (2008): 128-31.

⁴⁴ Bulai, 413.

⁴⁵ Sf. Ilarie de Pictavium, 279A-B. Cf. Bernard Northrup, *Recognizing Your Messiah in the Psalms: Finding Christ in the Psalms*, (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems Inc., 1997), 123; Barnes, 18.

⁴⁶ Sf. Chiril al Alexandriei, *Comentariu la Ioan*, 294-5. Cf. Eftimie Zigabenu and S. Nicodim Aghioritul, 73.

rule the whole earth⁴⁷. As son of God, the Hebrew sovereign had now the right to receive by succession all the possessions of his heavenly Father. The only condition that he had to fulfil in order to come into possession of these things was that to ask as inheritance what was rightfully his⁴⁸. The Hebrew word (נַחֲלָה – nahala^b) refers mainly to the permanent possession of many goods that offer the man the possibility to live independently. It is used in the Old Testament most commonly to indicate the things or territory that God prepared for His people. However, here the inheritance that God offer His son is immense because it does not limit to the land of Canaan, but is extended to the whole world. This fact is underlined through the expression אֶפְסֵי־אָרֶץ (aphsei-areṯ) – the uttermost parts of the earth which, metaphorically speaking, indicate the known limit of the whole earth⁴⁹.

Correlating this incommensurable inheritance with the fact that the psalmist does not mention a period of time⁵⁰ regarding the moment in which the transfer of authority from God to the son will be made and comparing these aspects with the history of the chosen people, most of the exegetes⁵¹ noticed the fact that none of the Hebrew kings was invested with so much power⁵². Hence, these words referred to a completely special Messianic character. From here to the identification of this king with Jesus Christ there was only one step. “And I’m ready to cry for the Hebrews’ disbelief – says the bishop of Cyrus – who heard this prophecy, that mentions *the uttermost parts of the earth*, and know that none of their kings ruled over such an inheritance, but from Jesus Christ, the One Who was born from David’s tribe, are still blind in the eyes of their minds...”⁵³. Thus, the fathers saw in the preaching activity of the Apostles in the world, the moment in which Jesus Christ came to rule the whole world observably. But in reality this happened much faster, at His incarnation⁵⁴ or, as some state, at His resurrection when He defeated death and freed the humankind

⁴⁷ Hengstenberg, 32.

⁴⁸ Kirkpatrick, 10.

⁴⁹ Robert Bratcher and William Rebyburn, *A Translator's Handbook on the Book of Psalms*, (New York: United Bible Societies, 1991), 27, Cassiodorus states that this expression does not refer to the known margins of the dry land, but to the whole wide world. Cassiodorus, 63.

⁵⁰ Rashi motivated the absence of a certain time with the fact that God tells the king to ask for these whenever he goes out to fight with his enemies. Gruber, 176.

⁵¹ Rabbi Heli Bassor, 111. Barnes, 21.

⁵² Saint Cyril emphasizes the fact these words are not suitable neither for Zerubbabel, as the Hebrew say: “For what is it that he took or how did he rule over the whole world. But it refers to the Lord who brought the whole world under His rule”. Sf. Chiril al Alexandriei, “Tâlcuirea psalmilor I”, 41. Cf. Theodore of Mopsuestia, 27-9, Eftimie Zigabenui and Sf. Nicodim Aghioritul, 73.

⁵³ Teodore de Cir, 8.

⁵⁴ Diodore of Tarsus, 9.

from its power⁵⁵. In this moment Jesus Christ receives in His human nature what He possessed in His divine nature⁵⁶. The fathers also state that Christ received the heathen as inheritance because of the fact that the Hebrew proved to be against the teachings of the Lord⁵⁷.

Verse 9

Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

After the justification of the legitimacy of the Hebrew king to rule over the heathen, the psalmist mentions that he has absolute power over his inheritance. Whoever tries to confront him will be crushed by the powerful strikes of his rod of iron like a pot (vessel) that is dashed to pieces by the potter who created him⁵⁸. Thus, in this verse, the author presents in an obvious manner the end that of the rebellion of the heathen that wanted to undermine the authority of their sovereign. To this respect, the two verbs that are used in the text רָעַע (*raa*) – *to crush* and נָפַח (*napha*) – *to dash into pieces* that belong to the same semantic sphere⁵⁹ are extremely presentational. Both words indicate irreversible actions to which no resistance is opposed. In order to underline more clearly how simple it is for the king to destabilize his opponents⁶⁰, the author of the psalm compares the rod of iron (symbol of the royal power and authority) with a pot (symbol of the vulnerability and dependency) which can be easily dashed by the potter and then remade or remodeled⁶¹.

In order to emphasize even more the quality of ruler of this king over the heathen and to avoid in a certain manner the despotic attitude suggested by the context, the Septuagint translated the verb רָעַע with ποιμαίνω which means *to pastorate, to lead*⁶². This option would rather suggest the image of a

⁵⁵ Sf. Augustin, 3. Cf. J. M. Neale, 101.

⁵⁶ Cassiodorus, 64.

⁵⁷ "Since Christ was, physically, relative of the Hebrews, He came to His people to teach them, and the Hebrews discarded Him, for this reason the Lord turns rightfully to the heathen, encouraged by His Father to ask for them as inheritance, for it was right that He received an inheritance, for he was Son of God even in humanity. Eftimie Zigabenu and Sf. Nicodim Aghioritul, 73. Cf. Sf. Chiril al Alexandriei, "Tâlcuirea psalmilor I", 41.

⁵⁸ Barnes, 23.

⁵⁹ Rabbi Kimhi, 16.

⁶⁰ Cassiodorus, 64-5. Cf. St. Hilaire de Poitiers.

⁶¹ Cf. Kirkpatrick, 11.

⁶² Specialists consider that this difference in translation might have been generated by a different vocalization of the verb. Cf. Francis Mozley, *The Psalter of the Church. The Septuagint psalms compared with the Hebrew, with various notes*, (Cambridge: University Press, 1905), 4; Craigie, 63; Hengstenberg, 33.

more benign sovereign, yet firm⁶³, that that of a ruthless leader. However, it is necessary to consider the fact that the psalmist refers here to the power that God gave the king to destroy the opposition of the rebel coalition, and not to the manner in which the sovereign usually leads his subjects. Also, this expression was used in the book of Revelation (2:26-27⁶⁴; 19:15⁶⁵; cf. 12:5) to describe the victory and the attitude that the lamb and His subjects have towards the forces of evil. For this reason, even though the Greek text suggests the image of a king that leads his subjects in a manner similar to a shepherd, let us not forget the fact that in his hand there is an iron scepter which in Antiquity could be used in battles as a slashing weapon⁶⁶.

Underlining unanimously the prophetic valence of the text, the fathers of the Church considered that it may be applied both to the Hebrews and to the heathen⁶⁷. Based on the prophecy of Daniel which foretold the appearance of a kingdom which will crush everything as the iron that turns everything to pieces (cf. Dan. 2:40), some of the fathers stated that the psalm refers to the punishment of the chosen people by the Romans⁶⁸. Others stated that here it is prefigured the Savior's victory over the heathen through His cross⁶⁹. However, one must remark on the fact that the fathers do not see in the crushing of God's opponents a complete extinction, but an opportunity for them to be remodeled, remade from the material that was corrupted, in order to be reborn spiritually to the new life brought by Jesus Christ through His resurrection⁷⁰.

⁶³ Sf. Augustin, 3.

⁶⁴ "To the one who is victorious and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations – that one will rule them with an iron scepter and will dash them to pieces like pottery – just as I have received authority from my Father" (Rev. 2:26-27). Referring to this text, Didymus the Blind thinks that the psalm addresses not only to messiah, but also to those who believe in Him and follow Him. Didymus the Blind, "Fragments on the Psalms", in PG 39, 1160 – Craig Blaising, et al., *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Old Testament (Psalms 1-50)*, vol. 7, (New York: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 5.

⁶⁵ "Coming out of his mouth is a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. He will rule them with an iron scepter. He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty" (Rev. 19:15).

⁶⁶ Gruber, 176 and *Septuaginta*, 44.

⁶⁷ Cf. Diodore of Tarsus, 9.

⁶⁸ Teodoret de Cir, 10. Cf. Eftimie Zigabenu and Sf. Nicodim Aghioritul, 73.

⁶⁹ "And Jesus Christ shepherds the heathen with His cross as if he had a rod and with the undefeated power of His kingdom. For the rod (scepter) is also the symbol of the kingdom". Sf. Chiril al Alexandriei, *Tâlcuirea psalmilor I*, 41.

⁷⁰ "«Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron», with His powerful and uncrushed kingdom, and He «thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel», dissolving them and assembling them again through the washing of the rebirth, and He will make them strong with the fire of the Spirit". Teodoret de Cir, 10-1. Cf. Origen, "Selection from the Psalms", in PG 12, 1109 – Craig Blaising, 17; Theodore of Mopsuestia, 27-9; Thomas D'aquin, 53.

Verse 10

Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth.

In the last part of the psalm that begins with this verse, there is an obvious call to reconciliation. The rebel troops are advised to think with much wisdom to the words of God and to the proclamation uttered by His anointed⁷¹ and to accept the sovereignty of the new king. Taking into account that he was chosen by God and invested with the power to destroy any contestant attitude of his subjects, the attempt to undermine his royal authority is useless⁷². Thus, before starting a military confrontation, the psalmist suggests the rebel kings and all those who judge on earth to let themselves be chided, to accept the king's reprimand because all fight started against God and against His chosen men is destined to fail⁷³. The two verbs used in this text שָׂכַל (*sachal*) – *to become wise, to better, to understand* and יָסַר (*iasar*) – *to receive teachings, to accept reprimands, to accept correction* refer to the same action, underline the king's will to make the rebels aware of gravity of their deeds and implicitly to advise them to bow to God, because this is the only way they can achieve stability⁷⁴.

Rashi considers that in this text it is obvious the kindness that the king wants to share with the heathen. Understanding the fact that their rebellion is against the divine will, he asks the heathen to look round from their viciousness⁷⁵. This rabbinic interpretation which refers to God's mercy and clemency can also be found in the patristic writings. Emphasizing the harsh character of the facts and the narrowness of mind⁷⁶ that the leaders of the heathen proved through their revolt, the fathers underline the fact that the psalmist launches here an admonition, but also a call to the wisdom that guides people to the benefits that they may acquire by bowing before God⁷⁷.

⁷¹ Cf. Diodore of Tarsus, 9.

⁷² Rabbi David considers that the psalmist advises the rebels to be aware of the fact that their fight is not only against the king, but against God. Rabbi Kimhi, 16.

⁷³ Kirkpatrick, 12. Cf. Cassiodorus, 65.

⁷⁴ Rabbi Freehof, 14. Cf. Barnes, 23; Hengstenberg, 33.

⁷⁵ Gruber, 176.

⁷⁶ Sf. Augustin, 4. J. M. Neale, 102.

⁷⁷ Saint Euthymius states that the psalmist advises the heathen to observe the fate of the Hebrew that did not subject to God and not to follow their deeds: "For this, you, kings of the Romans and of the other people, and you, judges, that are all over the world, judging earthly men, since you have understood what great dangers suffered the Hebrews, who calumniated Christ, and that Christ took you as heathen for His inheritance, be wise and cast away your former ignorance and aberration and receive your profit both from the example of the Hebrews and from the divine Scriptures". Eftimie Zigabenu and Sf. Nicodim Aghioritul, 73.

Verse 11

Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling.

After he suggests to the leaders of the heathen to meditate wisely to the inutility of their revolt, the psalmist asks them to obey the Lord, to accept His decision and to serve Him with fear. In other words, when he advises them to serve God, the author asks them to end the rebellion, because the peoples' submission before God is only the prelude of the acceptance of the political domination of the new Hebrew king over them⁷⁸. To this respect, the first thing that is required from the kings of the rebel nations is to get accustomed to the fear of God. Through this requirement the psalmist did not intend to frighten the opponents, but rather to rouse into their minds the respect for divinity. The correlation of the feeling of fear with that of religious service does not end in the installation of a spiritual terror, because these two give birth to self-consciousness in a man's heart and to a correct reference to God⁷⁹.

In the view of the fathers of the Church, the fear of God has different connotations from that generated by people. This determines us to stay away from sin⁸⁰ and to be vigilant not only to our deeds, but also to the thought that go through our mind. The target of this kind of fear is love for at a certain point the fear of God's punishment will be replaced by the fear a son has when he takes any effort in order not to upset his father for the love he has for him⁸¹. Hence, the one who achieves this fear comes closer to God, respects His will and perfect himself, because only that "who stays within God's fear, stays within holiness"⁸².

In order to arouse their interest and determination to serve God, the psalmist presents the opponents of the king that the fear of God will bring them joy⁸³. Thus, instead of a well-deserved punishment for their lawless behavior, the rebels are presented with the perspective of forgiveness, and besides that, with the participation to the benefits that come from the submission before God. Furthermore, the text of this verse also presents an invitation to the reconciliation of the rebels with the Hebrew king in the context of a co-service. This fact may be understood from the use of the verb גִּלָּה (gilu) usually translated into Romanian with the words *rejoice*, whose primary sense was that of *dancing in a circle*⁸⁴. Hence, the heathen are called to participate to a ritualistic dance and to enter into communion with God together with the king, trembling because of the greatness

⁷⁸ Kirkpatrick, 12. Cf. Hengstenberg, 34.

⁷⁹ Rabbi Freehof, 14-5.

⁸⁰ Cassiodorus, 65.

⁸¹ J. M. Neale, 102.

⁸² Peter Chrysologus, "Sermon 80", in *FC* 17, 130 – Craig Blaising, 17.

⁸³ Theodore of Mopsuestia, 31-3. Cf. Gruber, 176.

⁸⁴ Popescu-Mălăiești, 662. Cf. Delitzsch, 97.

and kindness of God Almighty⁸⁵. The fathers underline in the second part of the verse as well that in proximity to God it is necessary to be filled with a holy fear of not making a mistake. “Fearing the Lord – the bishop of Tyr draws our attention –, we work the right things and we are full of joy, our conscience being good and offering us a too great joy through this. And to stand «trembling», meaning in a humble attitude, so that God’s joy does not become the joy of the world”⁸⁶.

Verse 12

Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

In this conclusive verse, the psalmist advises again the rebels to obey the king in order not to provoke God’s devastating wrath that can destroy them immediately on the way they’ve chosen. Hence, they are called to come before the son of God and to kiss his hand or a part of his clothing (according to the Oriental customs of the time⁸⁷) as a sign of obedience.

The expression נִשְׁקוּ בֶּרֶךְ (*nassequ-bar*) – kiss the Son which refers to the gesture through which the kings of the heathen accept the sovereignty of the Hebrew king, generated many discussions amongst the exegetes. These were determined by the use of the term בֶּרֶךְ (*bar*) – son which is of Aramaic origin and by the significant differences that exist between the ancient consecrated translations of the Holy Scripture. Taking into account the fact that the psalm was dated in the early period of the Hebrew monarchy, some of the exegetes considered inconvenient the use of this term, because the Hebrew word consecrated for defining the quality of son was בֶּן (*ben*), a term that was used by the psalmist in verse 7. For this reason, when they translated this expression, most of the translators payed attention to the fact that in Hebrew *bar* meant *clean* or *pure*. Thus, they either read this word בֹּר (*bor*) – purity, chastity, discipline (the Septuagint, Targumim, Itala and Vulgate), or בַּר (*bar*) – clean, pure, uncorrupted (Aquila, Semachos and Jerome), except for the Syrian translation (Peshitta), none of the translators of this version gave the genuine Hebrew text. Their options for the translation of the expression mentioned above with *take/gain wisdom* or *adore in purity* were taken and changed under different versions by modern and contemporary translators⁸⁸.

⁸⁵ Sf. Augustin, 4. Cf. Rabbi Kimhi, 17.

⁸⁶ Teodoret de Cir, 10.

⁸⁷ Barnes, 24.

⁸⁸ For more details see Delitzsch, 97; Kirkpatrick, 12; Briggs, 23. The Hebrew exegetes too propose different versions: *Kiss the pure* or *serve/adore in purity* (Rabbi Kimhi, 17), *armour with purity* (Gruber, 176), *adore in purity, kiss* (Rabbi Freehof, 15), *glorify in the faith of the Lord* (Rabbi Segal).

The exegetes that support the version assumed by us in the correction of the text of the psalm, tried to motivate their choice by offering an answer to the main objections that were uttered against this manner of translation. Hence, they state that the author of the psalm might have had contact with the Aramaic language even in the period from the beginning of the Hebrew royalty, because this language penetrated the Syrian-Palestinian territory even from the 9th century BC, which is confirmed in the book of Proverbs (31:2⁸⁹) where the word *bar* is obviously used with the meaning of son⁹⁰. Then, these interpreters justify the use of the Aramaic term on stylistic basis. In their opinion, the author used the term *bar* in order to avoid the use in the text the juxtaposition of two words that are pronounced almost the same בֶּן (*ben*) and פֶּן (*pen*)⁹¹. And some of them, consider that the psalmist addressed in this verse to the heathen and for this reason he used the term *bar*, and in verse 7, where he uses the term *ben*, he presented the dialogue between the Lord and the Hebrew king⁹². Besides these arguments more or less plausible it is necessary to take into account the fact that the expression *kiss the Son* which was contested by many exegetes, fits perfectly the context developed by the author within this royal psalm. After the warning that the psalmist addresses to the rebels, both through God's voice and through that of His anointed, of the inutility of their revolt, the advises them to obey the new sovereign that already achieved the status of son of God, through a gesture characteristic for that period of time (cf. 1 Sam. 10:1⁹³)⁹⁴.

In order to determine the immediate renunciation and to prevent any attempt of abstraction or resistance, the psalmist conditions the decision of the opponents with their destruction. Any opposition will kindle God's wrath that will be awoken by the first sign of rebellion. Some interpreters consider that the author refers here rather to the king's wrath, than to that of the Lord. But in all 13 texts of the Scripture, that refer to the kindling of someone's wrath, each time the subject that takes the action is God⁹⁵. As a matter of fact, the option of the Septuagint to include in the text of this verse the word *κύριος* confirms clearly that the psalmist refers to the Lord⁹⁶. Another argument for this interpretation

⁸⁹ "Listen, my son! Listen, son of my womb! Listen, my son, the answer to my prayers!" (Prov. 31:2)

⁹⁰ Phillips, 25.

⁹¹ Popescu-Mălăiești, 663. Cf. Delitzsch, 98. A. Kirkpatrick states that this argument is unsatisfying. Kirkpatrick, 12.

⁹² Craigie, 63. Cf. Hengstenberg, 35.

⁹³ "Then Samuel took a flask of olive oil and pured it on Saul's head and kissed him, saying, "Has not the Lord anointed you ruler over his inheritance?" (I Samuel 10:1)

⁹⁴ "The king of Zion, enthroned by God, is called *his son* and not only the Hebrews but all the heathen are advised to *kiss his hand* as a sign of obedience". *Liber Psalmorum*, 372. Cf. Rabbi Kimhi, 17.

⁹⁵ Kirkpatrick, 13. Cf. Bratcher, 32.

⁹⁶ Mozley, 5.

is considered by the exegetes to be the content of the final exclamation in which the psalmist calls blessed those that put their trust in God⁹⁷. Those that do not have the Lord as their support and hope of their life are severely critiqued and implicitly they are considered to be unwise (cf. Ps. 146:3⁹⁸).

The fathers interpret this warning of the psalmist as an admonition that God does for those that are far from the right way that leads to salvation⁹⁹. The alienation from Christ, Who is the true way of life¹⁰⁰, generates the divine wrath which will manifest fully at the second coming of the Lord¹⁰¹.

The conclusion of the psalm (*Blessed are all they that put their trust in him*) determined the exegetes to correlate the text of this psalm with psalm 1 and establish a close relationship between the two hymns. The teachings of the two ways that a man may follow (the way of those who fulfil God's will and that of the lawless) that were presented theoretically in the first psalm, were exemplified here in a historical context. Those that do not obey the divine decisions will be destroyed on the way of their rebellion, and those that put their trust in God will achieve happiness and life¹⁰².

Theological dimension

1. The Messianic perspective of this psalm was accepted almost unanimously, both by the Hebrews and by Christians. The reasons that determined the development of this perception may be the following: a. neither of the Hebrew kings did not have vassals amongst the neighboring nations as it may be understood from the text (v. 1-3); b. the prerogatives of the Hebrew king that the psalm refers to, overcome by a lot David's personality or that of Solomon, the most representative sovereign of the Kingdom of Israel; c. the ruling over the whole world promised to the son of God (v. 8, 10) cannot be applied to any of the earthly kings; d. the psalmist's reference to Yahwe to the one that He calls His son is almost identical (v. 2, 7, 12); e. the author wanted to sketch from the very beginning the portrait of a messianic king that may not be identified with a known historical character¹⁰³.

⁹⁷ Delitzsch, 99.

⁹⁸ "Do not put your trust in princes, in human beings, who cannot save" (Psalm 146:3).

⁹⁹ Sf. Augustin, 4. Cf. Theodore of Mopsuestia, 33.

¹⁰⁰ Cassiodorus, 66.

¹⁰¹ "For in the time of the Judgement, your wickedness, as a burning material, will kindle the divine wrath as a fire, and you will stray from the path of the righteous, receiving punishment for the sins committed in this life. But then those that truly and correctly trusted Him will receive the fruit of the trust that is happiness, for He says: «Blessed – those that put their trust in Him». For, although those who work good deeds have happiness in this life, they will receive it fully on that day, when those who lived wickedly will draw on them the divine wrath". Teodoret de Cir, 11.

¹⁰² Cassiodorus, 66. Cf. Rabbi Segal.

¹⁰³ See details in Barnes, 11-2.

The fact that the Hebrew exegetes even nowadays look for an eschatological king that will rule at the end of time the whole world, and the Christian interpreters have already identified in the person of Jesus Christ the features of the king described in the psalm, does not affect the Messianic dimension of the text. In other words, the rabbis accept and support the Messianic interpretation of the psalm, but not in the Christian perspective proposed by the hagiographs of the New Testament and by the Holy fathers. Rabbi David Kimhi stated at a certain point that the psalm rather contradicts the Christian Christological perspective, than it confirms it. Teaching their readers to reject the faith preached by the Christian that is based on the key verses of this psalm as well, the rabbi states that the one essence with the Father and the existence from eternity of the Son is contradicted by the very status of son, His birth from God implying the existence of an amount of time between them¹⁰⁴. The logical argument presented by the learned Hebrew interpreter is not something new, those who contest the equality of the Son with the father have stated this centuries before.

But to this respect it is important to observe the fact that the fathers of the Church emphasize from the content of this psalm several teachings that announced before the incarnation of Jesus Christ the relationship between the Son and the Father: a. the relationship between the two persons of the Holy Trinity involves filiation (v. 7); b. the birth of the son from the Father is happens in a mysterious manner (cf. Ps. 110:3); c. the origin of the son is from eternity (v. 7); d. the Lord offers His son possession over the whole world; e. as king (v. 6), the son may judge and punish those that oppose him (v. 9); f. all those who lead nations must obey the son (v. 12)¹⁰⁵.

2. Theology of the royalty. The divine filiation, the anointing with holy oil, the enthroning in Zion and the uttering of the covenant are elements on which the theology of royalty of this psalm is founded. Because of these details, the psalm received from an early time a privileged status among the other hymns and as a consequence it was introduced in the ritual of coronation of the Hebrew king, together with Psalm 110. The content of this royal psalm aimed to reaffirm the splendor of the Davidic monarchy and to sketch the figure of a representative king, an authentic representative of God in the world, who sees that the divine will is respected and fulfilled¹⁰⁶.

¹⁰⁴ Rabbi Kimhi, 17.

¹⁰⁵ These aspects have been presented in detail within the exegetical section of the paper. Cf. Terrien, 87.

¹⁰⁶ Vladimir Petercă states that "the royal psalms go beyond the momentary occasions in which they were initially created. Usually, these psalms are projected to the future and thus they automatically receive a Messianic content". Petercă, 70. Cf. *Septuaginta. Psalmii, Odele, Proverbele, Eclesiastul, Cântarea Cântărilor*, vol. 4/I, Translated and Edited with Notes and Commentary by Cristian Bădiliță et al., (București: Polirom, 2006), 43.

Use within the cult

Psalm 2 is read each Saturday evening during Vespers within the 1st Kathisma (Ps. 1-8). Separately, it is read within the service of the Royal Hours, during Hour I on the Great Friday. Verse 1 is used at the Vespers from the first Wednesday of the Lent. The words of the verses 1 and 2 are part of the canon of the passions. We may also find them as separate stichs (verses) at the Vespers from the Holy (Maundy) Thursday and for the Apostle of the day. Verses 7 and 8 occur within the ritual of the Royal Hours (Hour I) on Christmas day, before prophecies and the Apostle. Verse 11 is part of the chant *Blessed is the man* which is sang during Vespers on Saturday evening (instead of the 1st Kathisma) and on certain important feasts during the year¹⁰⁷.

Update

The historical context described in the beginning of the psalm generates undoubtedly in the soul of the reader feelings of fear and uncertainty. Everyone would be afraid if in a period of instability some extremely powerful men gathered with the purpose to destroy all opponents that might limit in some kind of way their liberty. But, as we read on the text of the psalm the feelings of uncertainty fade. God's detached attitude towards the useless agitation of His adversaries and the unconditional support of the man that He chose to be king, changes fundamentally the situation. Furthermore, even the king, being aware of God's presence and support seems to impropriate the attitude of superiority that God shows in a very obvious manner. This fact determines us to think that every person that puts its trust in God, following through this attitude the final advice of the psalmist, may manage with the same serenity the forces that in a normal situation should overwhelm it. Thus, God may inspire in the hearts of those that struggle to maintain alive the relationship of filiation with the heavenly Father, the certainty that in the end, their opponents will be destroyed and forced to recognize their superiority.

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¹⁰⁷ See Athanasie Negoită, *Psaltirea în cultul Bisericii Ortodoxe*, (București: Tipografia Cărților Bisericești, 1940), 63, 65, 120, 126, 158.

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