

Psalms 2:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

This climactic verse issues an urgent summons blending tenderness and warning. **'Kiss the Son'** employs the Hebrew bar (son), an Aramaic term rather than the expected Hebrew ben, possibly emphasizing royal sonship or providing poetic variation. The kiss signifies submission, homage, and covenant loyalty—a vassal's acknowledgment of legitimate authority (1 Samuel 10:1). This is not mere respect but absolute allegiance.

The warning **'lest he be angry'** introduces consequence: divine wrath against persistent rebellion. The phrase **'ye perish from the way'** suggests losing one's path or life's journey—destruction resulting from refusing submission. The qualifying clause **'when his wrath is kindled but a little'** is sobering: even minimal divine anger is catastrophic. The contrast between 'kiss the Son' (tender submission) and kindled wrath (terrifying judgment) creates urgent choice.

The benediction **'Blessed are all they that put their trust in him'** offers gracious alternative. **'Blessed'** (ashre) means supremely happy, deeply fulfilled—echoing Psalm 1's opening. **'Trust'** (chasah) means taking refuge, seeking shelter—like fleeing to a strong city. This concluding beatitude balances warning with invitation: rebellion brings destruction, but refuge in the Son brings blessing. Jesus extended this invitation: 'Come unto me... and I will give you rest' (Matthew 11:28).

Historical Context

Ancient vassals kissed their overlords' hand, ring, or feet as covenant gestures signifying submission. Refusal to perform this ritual constituted rebellion, justifying military response. The psalm's warning thus employed contemporary political metaphors: acknowledge the true King or face consequences. For ancient Israel, this meant neighboring nations should recognize Davidic authority rather than rebel during coronations.

Prophetically, this verse calls all humanity to submit to Christ before judgment. Jesus warned, 'The Father... hath committed all judgment unto the Son' (John 5:22). Revelation depicts Christ's return bringing both blessing for believers and wrath for rejecters (Revelation 6:16-17, 19:15). Early Christians proclaimed this message: 'Kiss the Son' became an evangelistic appeal to embrace Christ before the day of wrath. Augustine, Luther, and Calvin all emphasized this verse's evangelistic urgency—the Son extends gracious invitation, but persistent rejection culminates in judgment. The 'little' kindling of wrath should terrify: if minimal anger destroys, what of full fury?

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. What does it mean to 'kiss the Son' in contemporary Christian discipleship—what attitudes and actions constitute this submission?
2. How do we balance proclaiming God's love with warning about divine wrath, as this verse does?
3. What is the relationship between taking refuge in Christ and experiencing true blessedness/happiness?
4. Why does Scripture describe even minimal divine wrath as devastating, and what does this reveal about God's holiness?

5. How can believers extend the invitation to 'kiss the Son' to unbelievers with both urgency and grace?

Interlinear Text

כִּי	יָדָךְ	וְתִאֲבָדוּ	יֵאָנֶּרְךָ	פֶּן	בֶּרֶךְ	נִשְׁקֶהוּ
H3588	H1870	H6	H599	H6435	H1248	H5401
	from the way	and ye perish	lest he be angry		the Son	Kiss
כָּל	אֵל שֶׁרִי	אִפּוֹ	כְּמַעַט	יִבְעֶר		
H3605		H835	H639	H1197		
	Blessed	when his wrath	but a little	is kindled		
		בּוֹ:	ח וְסִי			
		H0				
			are all they that put their trust			
			H2620			

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 40:4 (Faith): Blessed is that man that maketh the LORD his trust, and respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies.

John 5:23 (Parallel theme): That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.

Psalms 84:12 (Faith): O LORD of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee.

Psalms 34:8 (Faith): O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.

Isaiah 30:18 (Judgment): And therefore will the LORD wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for the LORD is a God of judgment: blessed are all they that wait for him.

Jeremiah 17:7 (Faith): Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is.

Proverbs 16:20 (Faith): He that handleth a matter wisely shall find good: and whoso trusteth in the LORD, happy is he.

1 Kings 19:18 (Parallel theme): Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.

1 Peter 2:6 (Faith): Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.

Psalms 2:5 (Judgment): Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.

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