

## [Psalm 2: The Nations Raging](#)

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In the [previous part](#) of this study on Psalm 2, we looked at a fearful world's need for hope. Today I'll explain why in the first three verses of Psalm 2 the nations of the world are raging against God.

### **Rulers Scoff**

Unlike most of the psalms, Psalm 2 does not have a superscription that identifies its author. But we know it was written by David ben Jesse because Luke, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, identified David as the author in [Acts 4:25](#).

The psalm begins with the author lamenting the world's condition:

*1 Why are the nations in an uproar,  
And the peoples devising a vain thing?*

*2 The kings of the earth take their stand,  
And the rulers take counsel together  
Against the Lord and against His Anointed:*

*3 "Let us tear their fetters apart,  
And cast away their cords from us!"*

([Psalm 2:1-3](#))

The language of these verses is rather stilted in the English translation, so let me try to put the words into modern English for you.

The psalmist is asking: "Lord, why is it that everywhere I look in the world the nations are in turmoil? Why are they always devising some vain thing to the glory of Man — things like the tower of Babel, the Roman Empire, the League of Nations, and the United Nations? Why is it, Lord, that the presidents, and prime ministers, and kings of the earth are always

conspiring against You and Your Anointed One, Jesus? Why is it that the world's political leaders are always saying, 'Let's put aside the limitations of God's Word and cast away His laws and do what we please!'"

As you can see, nothing has changed in three thousand years. As in the time of David, the nations of the world today are still in full revolt against the Lord. And so it is that Psalm 2 is just as relevant as if it were written yesterday.

## **Probing Questions**

One thing you must understand about Psalm 2 is that the questions which David poses at the beginning were not asked for the purpose of eliciting answers from God. David already knew the answers.

These are rhetorical questions, asked for the purpose of provoking thought. They are designed to motivate the reader to think about the nature of the world in which he lives, and to do so in response to what God's Word reveals about that world.

I say David knew the answers to the questions because the answers are provided in the book of Genesis, and David must have been familiar with that book as well as all the Torah — the first five books of the Hebrew Scriptures — if only by oral tradition.

## **A Phenomenal Gift**

If you will think back for a moment to the opening pages of Genesis, you will remember that God presented an incredible gift to Adam and Eve shortly after their creation.

God gave them something on a silver platter that Hitler lusted for. He gave them something that Stalin dreamed of, that the Romans yearned for, and that Alexander the Great almost achieved. God gave them dominion over all the earth ([Genesis 1:27-28](#)).

But almost as soon as Adam and Eve had been given this gift, they lost it. When they rebelled against God, Satan stepped forward and stole the dominion that was intended for Man.

Satan became the prince of this earth. That is the reason Jesus referred to him as *"the ruler of this world"* ([John 12:31](#)). That is the reason that Satan could tempt Jesus by offering Him *"all the kingdoms of the world"* if Jesus would only worship him ([Matthew 4:8-10](#)). That would not have been a legitimate temptation if the kingdoms were not Satan's to give.

Even after the Cross, the apostle John stated that *"the whole world lies in the power of the evil one"* ([1 John 5:19](#)). The Cross sealed the ultimate fate of Satan, but that fate will not be experienced until Jesus returns and Satan is crushed beneath the feet of the Lord's people ([Romans 16:20](#)).

## God's Sovereignty

The fact that Satan rules as the prince of this earth does not mean that God has lost control. Satan is not omnipotent. He has always operated within limits prescribed by God.

The oldest book in the Bible, the book of Job, begins by picturing Satan before the throne of God asking permission to afflict Job ([Job 1:6-11](#)). God gives him permission to touch all that Job has but denies him permission to take Job's life ([Job 1:12](#)).

Satan was further limited by the Cross, for since that time believers have been indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and *"He who is in us is greater than he who is in the world"* ([1 John 4:4](#)).

The book of Daniel makes it clear that God is the one who raises up nations and puts them down. As Daniel put it, *"He [God] removes kings and establishes kings"* ([Daniel 2:21](#)). Paul affirms this in the New Testament when he speaks of *"governing authorities"* and states that *"there is no authority except from God"* ([Romans 13:1](#)).

But the other side of the coin is the fact that the moment God puts someone in a position of governing authority, Satan comes against that person and attempts in every way possible to corrupt and compromise the person so that he ends up serving Satan's purposes.

It doesn't matter whether the person is a school board member, the governor of a province, or the president of a nation, Satan attempts to control all governing authorities. That is why we are so strongly urged to pray *"for kings and all who are in authority"* ([1 Timothy 2:1-2](#)).

In the next part of this study on Psalm 2, I'll review the ongoing spiritual war between God and Satan.