

# *The Reign of the LORD'S Anointed.*

*Psalm 2:1-6*

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*<sup>1</sup> Why are the nations in an uproar  
And the peoples devising a vain thing?*

*<sup>2</sup> The kings of the earth take their stand  
And the rulers take counsel together  
Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying,*

*<sup>3</sup> "Let us tear their fetters apart  
And cast away their cords from us!"*

*<sup>4</sup> He who sits in the heavens laughs,  
The Lord scoffs at them.*

*<sup>5</sup> Then He will speak to them in His anger  
And terrify them in His fury, saying,*

*<sup>6</sup> "But as for Me, I have installed My King  
Upon Zion, My holy mountain."*

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As is very common in English and most other language, this sentence begins with a preposition "Why". It is an interrogative and is often used by David (and other Bible writers) not to ask a question to which they have insufficient information. Rather it is often used to stimulate thinking along a certain line or in a certain direction by David's readers or listeners. It is also seen to be used to suggest something that David wants in the mind of the listener that will bear impact on the later part of the Psalm.

This is the case here. David wants us to take note of what was indeed a real and noticeable case, namely that the nations around him, (and us, of course) are "raging" with what David considers no real or legitimate cause. "Nations" is the familiar word "goyim" that speaks of the Gentiles or of the peoples around Israel and not of their people group. Specifically, it was used to speak of anyone that was NOT a descendant of Abraham. It was used to refer both a factual way and a basically insulting way. In the OT it could speak of a "swarm" of people, basically pointing to them as if they were a swarm of animals or locusts. As we have noted before, in Psalms or in Proverbs, this noun is both plural and, what is called an "Absolute". The Absolute in the normal form of the Hebrew noun that it takes when it is not tied to another word form. This particular noun is speaking very generally and not of any specific people group. David has all of the non-Hebrew people groups in mind, not any particular peoples in mind. BTW, it is this idea, that any people not a descendant of Abraham.

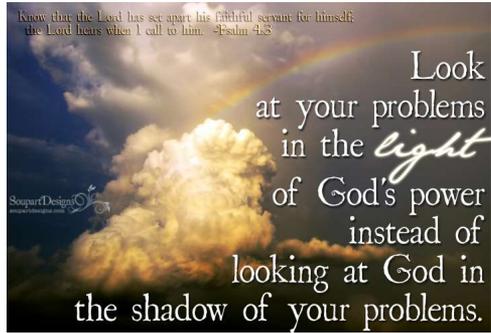
The name "Israel" is a Biblical given name. The patriarch Jacob was given the name Israel (Hebrew: יִשְׂרָאֵל, Standard Yisra'el, Tiberian Yísrā'ēl; "Triumphant with God", "who prevails with God" after He (God) wrestled with a "man" (Genesis 32:28 and 35:10). Thus we conclude that the name "Israel" is

to be considered a special name to refer to this special people. We know also that Jacob/Israel had 12 sons that came to be known as the progenitors of the twelve tribe so Israel and the fathers of the eventual entire nation. The matter of Jacob wrestling with God leads us to consider this as the reason why there came to be a distinction between them and the other peoples round about them.

We should note that this is not a matter of simple prejudice. It is not just a matter of this natural (though not acceptable) human tendency to think themselves as better than the particular others that are in view. It surely takes real work to think of those around us in the fashion in which God thinks of them. They are to be the objects of our love (godly love of course - as God love all men) and of our mercy (as Jesus in the Beatitudes counselled us to have mercy). They MUST not be the object of our hatred or our despise, as if we are somehow better than they.

David, in this Psalm, was recognizing the emotional and mental condition of those people groups around Israel. They were in a state of “rage” referring to being restless or ever moving;

and not just in an uneasy fashion. This is peaking of being in a tumult or state of confusion. It can speak of being in such a tumult or emotional state that one is conspiring or plotting some negative action against the object of their rage. It is in the “Qatal” voice which speaks of the action of the verb as having originated before the



current time, but yet with an effect that is still seen now. The current raging of the nations around him is because of the way that they have viewed and dwelt on their place in the world and in regards to God’s land and people.

“Plot” there means to make a quiet noise to oneself akin to the noise of the dove, a coo or a murmuring. It can speak of a growl or an undertone and thus is not always (or even mostly) a positive or neutral thing. It can refer to speaking or proclaiming a matter as well. However, it does NOT even nearly all speak of the idea that we often speak of it in our day and age. It doesn’t usually refer to the making of a plan or designing the way in which some attack of other negative event. The use of the following phrase “a vain thing” gives some meaning to what they are “murmuring” about. The word we are thinking of can also refer, basically, to talking to oneself prompted by pride or arrogance. The idea is that of making a sound concerning what is on one’s mind or heart and is in the face of what one is surrounded with. It is pretty much the same as you or I, having heard or seen some negative or offensive thing just murmuring to ourselves concerning the matter.

The nations are feeling pride in themselves and it is directed against David’s people. The problem is that vain is many, many times used to speak of

its' basic meaning; that of emptiness of meaning or any real value or sense. It seems as though these nations are pondering and "imagining" something that is an expression of their pride and vanity, and even of their arrogance. The surprising, but understandable thing is that they are imaginations are expended up the one nation with which the God of all men has invested His favor.

Actually, this is NOT an unusual thing. How many nations, throughout history, have exalted themselves above those with whom God has vested His favor? Israel, we know has been the target of man's attacks and animosity pretty much from the time they became a national entity. Christianity is in largely the same boat; attacked and hated by secular peoples on all areas of the globe; around them and elsewhere.

The people of God are the target of the disdain of unredeemed men because of, we are forced to conclude, what the Apostle Paul said in Romans 1:18–32 concerning unbelief and its consequences:

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*<sup>18</sup> For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, <sup>19</sup> because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. <sup>20</sup> For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. <sup>21</sup> For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. <sup>22</sup> Professing to be wise, they became fools, <sup>23</sup> and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.*

*<sup>24</sup> Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. <sup>25</sup> For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.*

*<sup>26</sup> For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, <sup>27</sup> and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.*

*<sup>28</sup> And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, <sup>29</sup> being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, <sup>30</sup> slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of*

*evil, disobedient to parents,<sup>31</sup> without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful;<sup>32</sup> and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.*

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It is well apparent, throughout the Bible that the unredeemed are, as a profound and obvious aspect of their character and nature, haters of God and His people. They are antagonistic and enemies of all that God is doing and all whom God is blessing and working through. There is little wonder that their voice and manner is one that is a constant complaint concerning God and His people.

It seems almost certain that this is what we see going on in the background of this Psalm. The “nations” are those in the category of which we are speaking. They are placed near to Israel, David’s nation; and they can be considered to be, in an undertoned fashion, voicing their pride and sense that they are better than Israel and that they have a real desire to see Israel disappear. They have no certain or distinct place; they are not plotting in that sense; but their dislike, if not hatred of the people of God over whom David ruled was apparent and easy to discern.

It seems that the powerful or well to do, the “kings of the earth” set themselves or have an inflated view of themselves. David goes further and hint that the various “rulers” take counsel together. Early here in this verse we are not told exactly what these rulers take counsel together against, but that becomes apparent quickly. In addition, there is the strong implication that this upset is more concerning the sovereignty of God and His authority over men than it is over anything that has particularly to do with Israel herself. In fact, there is only a couple things that are referred to, in the OT, as the Lord’s “Anointed”. The word is used some 39 times in the entire OT. Most often it speaks of the result of actually doing some anointing on a given thing (a pillar, the sacrifices in the Tabernacle, the various servants in the Tabernacle, the offerings themselves, the Chief Priests, and quite a number of other objects and particular people as the OT progressed. It is used several times to refer to the coming Messiah of God as well. In this context it is most likely speaking of one of the human uses, including, perhaps, the coming Lord Jesus in the context of God, in His sovereignty, send the One Who would ultimately rule the world.

Remember, as we said, it is the nature of man, inherited from Adam, that most often guides the decisions and choices of the unredeemed. It is ONLY when we become children of the Father above that we have the capacity, or ability to submit to and obey He and His Word.

The fact that David was talking about the rebellious spiritual nature of various nations reacting to the undeniable evidence of God’s blessing on Israel and upon David as their king is given for us in verse 3:

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<sup>3</sup> *“Let us break Their bonds in pieces  
And cast away Their cords from us.”*

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This what they were “saying” in their “raging” or murmuring to themselves as they considered the truths about Israel. We can see at least three ideas present in this bit of a declaration:

1. They knew that it was a matter of bondage and control concerning what Israel stood for and what their continuing existence implied about Israel’s place in their midst.
2. This “bondage” could be “broken” given the right approach. The sovereign power of God demonstrated in David’s kingship and protection in their midst could (and should) be broken.
3. This perceived bondage was both a broad, stationary control (bondage) and an ongoing and restrictive control (cords).
4. If they moved to break it, it would be forever gone and they would be forever loose from it.
5. We should also note that they recognized that this was not simply a matter of “bondage” that David and Israel were inflicting. It involved a third party, namely the Lord, the One who would send His Anointed (may be understood referring to both David in the closer view and to the coming Messiah in the far view).
6. That being said, we must also conclude that they believed that they ought to and would be able to break HIS so-called bondage as well.

We must conclude that all of this points to the truth of what we have said concerning the nature of the unredeemed and their bent away from submission to God and His people. We should also note that this same tendency exists in the vast majority of the unredeemed today; that is, among those who God is not already working to any significant degree. The wicked rebellion against all that God is and has done is virtually the same now as it was then. The wicked today do the same kind of “raging” as they did in David’s day.

The question is... how do we, as believers sort this out and deal with it?? The only real way is do exactly as David did here in Psalm 2:4-6:

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*<sup>4</sup> He who sits in the heavens shall laugh;  
The LORD shall hold them in derision.*

*<sup>5</sup> Then He shall speak to them in His wrath,  
And distress them in His deep displeasure:*

*<sup>6</sup> “Yet I have set My King  
On My holy hill of Zion.”*

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The key here is not that God has already done these things. It is that David was convinced, filled with faith that this is the way that his God WOULD handle those rebellious ones when the time and necessity came.

1. First, there was not lack of sureness in David’s mind about this truth. There was a very real difference in his mind about the contrast between God and His enemies when the time final judgment or the rescue of His people comes.

2. That laughter arises out of the manner in which He (God) views and thinks of these enemies of His and His people. "...shall hold them in derision..." is a single word in Hebrew. It is, obviously, future tense and in the imperfect voice. The imperfect speaks of a past event with action that either persists into or is realized in the present (with regard to the statement). At the time that David and this Psalm is speaking the perfect and eternal character of God will cause Him to hold these, His enemies, those who hate He and His people, in "derision".

Just to set this idea in perspective, David speaks of God as One Who "sits in the heavens" and so takes His perspective on this revolt from that perspective. That difference in "place" between He and the rebellious ones is very profound. It is this great difference that causes God to "laugh them to scorn" or hold them in derision, depending on the version you read. David's point here is that since the Lord is not dismayed, neither do his people need to be. In fact, God laughs at the rebels and declares his firm purpose to establish Anointed as he has promised. We remember that this particular Psalm has a long history of being interpreted as speaking typically of the coming Messiah. We should also note that the word for "Lord" is the Hebrew "Adonai" which speaks to God's sovereign rulership and power over the creation and all that is in it. There is little wonder, with this in mind that God has little more than ridicule and mockery in mind at the prospect that David puts forth here.

Our point here is the reassurance that is given to David that, though it may be that all of this will apply, ultimately, to God's Messiah, in the immediate sense it is speaking of David, his present King. He is assured that God has, for the present time, placed him on Mt. Zion. His word is given that nothing will change that. He calls this "hill" upon which He has placed David, His king, a "holy" hill, meaning that it has been removed from common use, it is special and different than all of the other hills around.

We can be assured of much the same thing. We are not the king in the sense that either David or our Lord Jesus is king. But we are the children of God and stand as the children of the Mighty God and so have all of the privileges and benefits of one. We ought to live as what our identity proclaims that we are. Just as David was not to be intimidated and terrified by what went all around us, even when it seems overwhelmingly negative. There will come a time when God will come in the form of the return of the Lord Jesus Christ and will "laugh" those who have opposed Him to scorn. Let's hold onto this as if our lives depend on it...for in a very real way - it does!!