

LORD OF THE NATIONS*

God is the Sovereign over all nations—raising kings, toppling empires. He holds each nation accountable.

SCRIPTURE†	MUSIC‡
Genesis 9:1-19 Psalm 2 Psalm 33 Psalm 33:11-15 Psalm 47 Psalm 145 Proverbs 21 Isaiah 40:12-28 Daniel 2:19-47	A Mighty Fortress All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name Blessed Be the Name Fairest Lord Jesus Glorious, Indescribable! (Berry) SATB Jesus Shall Reign O God Beyond All Praising O God, Our Help in Ages Past O Worship the King Our Eyes Are Upon You, Lord Our Eyes Are Upon You, Lord (Bryson) SATB Rejoice, the Lord Is King There Is a Higher Throne (Larson) Duet This Is My Father's World



* Theme can acknowledge **Independence Day**, the Sunday before July 4 each summer.

† Daily preparatory readings shown in **bold**.

‡ Published choral and vocal music shown in **bold**.

PRESENTING & PROMOTING THIS THEME

PSALM 2

[Write the brief from the pre-written theme intro.]

Promotional Post: [Social media post] / [Insert preparatory Scripture readings.]

[Adapted from a sermon by Dr. Mark Minnick on Psalm 2.] This week's July 4 celebration is an opportunity to thank God for the blessings of being a part of our nation. The Scriptures remind us, though, that we are only one nation of many—and the most important thing about us is what we do with Him.

Psalm 2, our focus this morning, asks: “Why do the [**nations**] rage” and “the people imagine a vain thing?” It then takes us into the meeting, as it were. Heads of state are “taking counsel together...to break their bonds” and “cast off the [moral] restraints” of the Lord and His Anointed.

The New Testament shows this psalm fulfilled in one great act these rulers “imagine” together. Acts 4 quotes Psalm 2 and says, “both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles [the **nations**] and the people of Israel, were gathered together” to *murder* the Lord's Anointed. This is how far they will go to cast off God's restraints! But God says to Messiah in Psalm 2, “You are my Son; today I have begotten you.” Acts 13 helps us interpret: “Today I have [brought you to life again]!” This rightful King of the **Nations** is risen from the dead!

“Ask of me,” God says to Messiah, “and I will give you the [**nations**] for your inheritance, the uttermost parts of the earth for your possession.” In Matthew 28, Jesus claims His Kingly rights: “all authority is given to Me in heaven and in earth.” So, “make disciples of ... all **nations**”—in Acts 1, “to the uttermost parts of the earth.” *Anyone* from *any* nation can submit to the true King, no matter what their rulers are doing. They can “kiss the Son,” Psalm 2 says—they can submit to Him.

Today, the Rulers of the **nations** still conspire against God in their public policies. We are saddened to see our own nation's laws following this pattern in recent years. God's words to His Son in Psalm 2 give them a warning: “You will break [the **nations**] with a rod of iron. You will dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.” God *has* judged **nations** throughout history; but one day the Lord's Anointed will judge them once and for all, then rule them at last by the Law of God they so long have resisted. This coming judgment should fuel our prayers for *our* nation.

The last sentence in Psalm 2 says, “Blessed are all who put their trust in Him.” Today, we are the “blessed.” We have submitted to the Lord's Anointed in repentance and faith. We acknowledge His rule in our worship. And we hope for the day when all **nations** shall pay homage at His feet. (Caleb French)

BLESSED IS THE NATION

What does it mean that the nation whose God is the Lord is blessed? What does it not mean? Another way to think about this question is to ask how do we ultimately worship God while still honoring our country? We should pray for quiet and peaceable lives but not put our hope in a nation. The proper attitude certainly includes gratitude that we do not suffer physical persecution in our nation. It also includes an ultimate loyalty to our God – the God over (all of) the nations.

Promotional Post: [Social media post]

[Insert preparatory Scripture readings.]

GOD DEALS WITH NATIONS

Using a biblical theology approach, briefly touch on Scripture passages that show that God is concerned with the nations. He sees the nations. He holds nations accountable and deals with nations as a whole. God has dealt and will still deal with the nation of Israel, His chosen people, in a special way. But the motto engraved on every piece of U.S. currency (“In God We Trust”) is a testament to the fact that our nation is also tied to the God of the Bible. Throughout Scripture, we see evidence that God oversees and cares about Gentile nations as well, and America is no exception.

Promotional Post: [Social media post]

[Insert preparatory Scripture readings.]

ONE NATION “UNDER GOD”

Daniel 2:19-47 | *The pledge of allegiance has not always included the phrase “under God.” It was added in 1954 in response to communism.[§] How are you feeling right now about the 4th of July? How are you feeling about America? People might be feeling a wide range of emotions—sadness, cynicism, anger, or despair—at the direction you see our country going. What does God want us to feel?*

*First, we need to **be thankful** for the freedoms and blessings we have enjoyed up to this point in history. We thank God for where we have been, but we don’t worship our nation. Second, we need to **engage** in the present. We have a citizenship stewardship and responsibility to pray and vote. We can’t walk away from what others paid for with their lives. Third, we must **trust in God** for the future. Nobody stole this country from God, and they never will. Nothing is going out of His control. Things can get better. But even if they don’t, we have the ultimate hope for our nation and all the nations: Jesus will one day return and reign.*

Promotional Post: How are you feeling about America right now? How do will you feel on the 4th of July? Join us this Sunday, our country’s Independence Day, to turn your attention in worship to the true Lord of all nations.

These Scriptures can help you prepare: [Insert preparatory Scripture readings.]



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[§] <https://www.ushistory.org/documents/pledge.htm>