

Psalm 47

To the chief Musician, A Psalm for the sons of Korah. Praise and Worship in the Millennium Praising the King of all Earth

Psalm 47: Is one of the six psalms of the divine kingdom, the psalm celebrates the Lord's kingship over all the earth (verse 9). It begins with a universal call to praise Israel's God (verse 1). This is reinforced with reasons: He is an awe-inspiring God (verse 2), He redeemed Israel and settled them in their land (verses 3-4), and He presently is ruling in Israel.

A second call renews the need for praise (verse 6). It is likewise reinforced with a reason: the revelation that His kingship is destined to be universal (verses 7-9). These last verses speak prophetically of the time when the Lord Jesus will reign on the earth.

Verses 1-9: The main concepts of Psalm 47 develop around key words and phrases, e.g., "peoples" and "nations" (verses 1, 3, 8, 9); "earth" and "all the earth" (verses 2, 7, 9); and "king" or "reigning as king" (verses 2, 6, 7, 8). The major message of this psalm is that God is the unique Sovereign over all. Structurally, there are two choruses of worship in this Psalm 47, which celebrate this universal kingship of the Lord God Most High.

This is a wonderful Psalm because it is celebrating a great victory of a great King. Perhaps it was occasioned by the victory of a king such as Jehoshaphat (as in [2 Chronicles 20:15-23](#)), but there is no doubt that it prophetically has in mind the ascension of the Messiah to His throne and celebrates His reign over the whole earth.

A. The King of All the Earth blesses His chosen people.

1. ([Psalms 47:1](#)) **The command to praise.**

Oh, clap your hands, all you peoples!
Shout to God with the voice of triumph!

a. Oh, clap your hands: The clapping of hands *draws attention* to something, usually as an outward expression of inward joy. The Bible uses it both in a negative and positive sense.

i. This is a word for all nations, and "If they cannot all speak the same tongue, the symbolic language of the hands they can all use." (Spurgeon)

ii. There is both clapping for praise (Psalm 47:1, Psalm 98:8, Isaiah 55:12) and clapping in derision (Job 27:23, Lamentations 2:15, Nahum 3:19).

b. All you peoples: This is a command to more than Israel or followers of God; it is a command to **all ... peoples**. It is ultimately the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham to bless all the peoples of the earth through his Descendant, the Messiah (Genesis 12:2-3).

i. "Psalm 47 follows quite naturally after Psalm 46. Psalm 46 is focused on the security of God's people, noting how God had delivered them from one of their great enemies. It challenged the nations to observe that deliverance and stand in awe before God." Now, in Psalm 47 God says to those same people: "Rejoice and be happy; the King of Israel is also the King of all the Earth." (Boice)

c. Shout to God: The note is strong and happy. The Psalmist did not have in mind sleepy singing or whispered prayers.

i. Most people are not against shouting or enthusiastic outbursts; they simply believe there is a right and wrong place for such shouting. Sadly, many who think a loud exclamation is fine at a football game think it is a scandal in the church.

The battle is over. The victory is won. To clap the hands shows extreme joy. Notice, that this is not just a few that are to clap, but all the people of the world. To shout is to rejoice with great enthusiasm. Jesus will rule over all the earth and all people. Those of us who have decided to make Jesus our Lord as well as our Savior now, will be ahead of those who must submit to His rule by force. We of our own free will have submitted to the will of the Lord now. This is enough to make the most stayed person begin to shout.

2. ([Psalms 47:2](#)) **The reason for praise.**

For the LORD Most High is awesome;
He is a great King over all the earth.

a. The LORD Most High is awesome: The Psalmist presents this without proof, as a *self-evident fact*. He considered it obvious to everyone, as much as water is wet and fire is hot.

b. He is a great King over all the earth: Both the *office* and the *realm* are important. He is a **great King**; in that He is the King of Kings and the highest monarch. His realm extends **over all the earth**, and He is sovereign in all places.

i. The pagan gods of the ancient world (Baal, Molech, Ashtoreth, and so forth) were imagined to be *territorial* gods. Their authority was limited to a nation or a region. The Psalmist wants us to know that the Lord God is not like one of these imagined gods.

“Is terrible”: Literally, is to be feared; that is, revered and adored. There is an idea in the words “terrible” and “terror” which is not contained in the original, as if there were something harsh, severe, stern, in his character. The word in the original does not go beyond the notion of inspiring reverence or awe and is the common word by which the worship of God is designated in the Scriptures. The meaning is, that he is worthy of profound reverence or adoration.

“He is a great King over all the earth”: As he must be, since he is the great God and our Savior; and is King of kings, and Lord of lords. He is now King of Zion, and head over all things to the church. And before long the kingdoms of this world will become his, and he will take to himself his great power and reign. And shall be King over all the earth openly and visibly. He shall be one, and his name One (Zech. 14:9). Which is another reason for joy and gladness among the people.

This whole chapter is about the 1000-year reign of Jesus Christ on the Earth as Lord of lords and King of kings. This rule will not be like the meek and mild Jesus that was here to save the world. He will rule with a rod of iron.

Revelation 2:27 “And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.”

His rule is absolute dominion over all the people of the earth.

3. ([Psalms 47:3-4](#)) God's special care for His chosen.

He will subdue the peoples under us,
And the nations under our feet.
He will choose our inheritance for us,
The excellence of Jacob whom He loves. Selah

a. He will subdue the peoples under us: Here the Psalmist speaks as one of God's chosen nation, Israel. He looks forward to the time when the righteous reign of the *great King* will be exercised all over the earth, and Israel will assume its destined place of leadership among the nations.

i. Without doubt, the Psalmist knew that this *great King* would be the Messiah; yet he looked *ahead* to the hope of the Messiah. We look back at the fulfillment of the promise to send the Messiah, fulfilled in Jesus Christ. He is the *great King* who will rule the

earth and subdue the nations, granting believing Israel superpower status in the coming age.

“He shall subdue”: An axiomatic truth about the past, present, and future.

We shall rule with Him as His subordinates. He is King and we Christians will rule and reign with Him.

Revelation 20:6 “Blessed and holy [is] he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ and shall reign with him a thousand years.” We did not win the battle, the Lord did. He places us in a position of authority over the heathen.

b. He will choose our inheritance for us: The Psalmist shows his great confidence in the wisdom and goodness of the *great King*. He is happy to let the *great King choose our inheritance*.

i. It is a glorious fact that our *great King* Jesus has chosen the inheritance of His people. Ephesians 1:3-6 is just one passage that describes some of His choosing for us:

- He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world.
- He chose us to be holy and blameless before Him in love.
- He chose us to be adopted as sons into His family.

ii. It is a wise prayer, to ask our great King Jesus to **choose our inheritance for us**. We often get into trouble by wanting to choose our own inheritance.

- We sometimes want to choose our own *blessings*. One has health, another has wealth, a third has great talents; each wishes they had what the other has. Yet it is far better to let God choose our blessings.

- We sometimes want to choose our own *calling*. One sees the calling of another and thinks that the calling of the other is better, or they want to imitate the calling of another instead of running their own race.

- We sometimes want to choose our own *crosses*. We think that our own problems are so much worse than others, and we think that we could bear any number of crosses - *except* the one He chose for us.

iii. Charles Spurgeon thought that this was a Psalm of David and not the sons of Korah; that he *wrote* it, but they *sang* it. He wrote, "Our ear has grown accustomed to the ring of David's compositions, and we are morally certain that we hear it in this Psalm." This may or may not be true, but certainly David knew that his King chose his inheritance at each stage of his life, and he showed contentment with the inheritance God chose for him.

- As an anonymous shepherd boy

- As a warrior against Goliath

- As a fugitive running from Saul

- As a king over Israel

- As a disciplined sinner

c. The excellence of Jacob whom He loves: This explains *why* we can be at peace with the inheritance He chooses for us. We know that for Jesus' sake and because we are in Him, God is for us and not against us. He **loves** us as His chosen; because He chose us, we are happy to let Him **choose our inheritance for us**.

i. "*The pride of Jacob* is a brief way of saying 'Jacob's glorious land.'" (Kidner)

ii. "The Holy Land is called 'the excellency of Jacob,' or 'the pride of Jacob,' on account of its beauty, and the excellence and variety of its productions (see Deuteronomy 8:7-9; 2 Kings 18:22)."
(Rawlinson)

"The excellency of Jacob whom he loved": The "glory" or "pride" of Jacob also refers to the land of Canaan (compare the term illustratively in Isa. 13:19; then in Isa. 60:15; Nahum 2:2).

"Whom he loved" is a signal terminology for God's special, elective, covenantal "love" (compare e.g., Mal. 1:2). This special focus on God's covenant with Israel does not negate the bigger picture involving blessing to all nations sketched out in the original Abrahamic Covenant of (Gen. 12:1-3).

We will not rule wherever we choose. He will choose the place for each of us. I do not desire to choose for myself. I have previously made Jesus my Lord and His will is my will. I do not want to choose. I want Him to choose for me, and then tell me where He wants me to be. It is inheritance enough to be with Him. We know that just as God gave Israel the Promised Land, He will give us our inheritance and the place that is best for us. He loved physical Israel, but He also loves spiritual Israel who came to Him by choice and not by birthright. We should stop and think on these things

iii. **Whom He loves** provokes a question: *Why* does God so love Jacob? Why does God so love the church? Why does God so love the world? The answer is that the reasons for His love are in *Him*, not in the ones He loves.

B. A call to praise the King of All the Earth.

1. ([Psalms 47:5](#)) The fact of praise.

God has gone up with a shout,
The LORD with the sound of a trumpet.

a. God has gone up with a shout: The *going up* here refers to ascending to a royal throne. The idea is that the *great King* has taken His throne and therefore receives a **shout** of praise.

i. The idea is that God comes down from heaven to help and save His people, and when He goes back up, He deserves praise and acclamation from His people.

ii. Jesus ascended the royal throne in heaven after He finished His work for us on the cross and proved it by the empty tomb. He can only go **up with a shout** because He came down in humility to fight for His people and to save them.

The imagery likely refers to God's presence, after having gone into battle with His people, now ascending victoriously to His immanent "residence on Mt. Zion and to His transcendent residence in heaven. This procession with the Ark of God was accompanied by great shouts and blasts of celebration in (verses 5 and 6).

This is Jesus who goes up with a shout.

b. The LORD with the sound of a trumpet: In the world of ancient Israel the **trumpet** made the strongest and clearest sound; it was the sound of victory. To honor God clearly and strongly for His victory on our behalf, the **sound of a trumpet** is heard.

Matthew 24:31 "And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."

The voice of the Lord and the sound of the silver trumpet of redemption are very close to the same. They are very hard to separate.

1 Thessalonians 4:16 "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:"

We do not know the exact events, but praise God! He knows. I trust Him completely, and I know in my heart that the return of the Lord Jesus to heaven had to be shouted about by the angels. God (in verse 5 above), is Jehovah. He is Jehovah, Lord God Almighty.

2. ([Psalms 47:6-7](#)) **The call to praise and the reason for it.**

Sing praises to God, sing praises!
Sing praises to our King, sing praises!
For God is the King of all the earth;
Sing praises with understanding.

- a. **Sing praises!** In this context, this is almost a *command*. It is a fitting command in light of the glory of **the King of all the earth**. God might have given speech to humanity without the gift of song; there are some tone-deaf people in the world. What is the case of some might have been the case of all; but God gave the gift of song and music to men, and the highest use of this gift is to praise the God who gave it.

- b. "Sing praises; sing praises unto our King, sing praises": Who was then made Lord and Christ, declared King of saints, and crowned with glory and honor. **The repetition of the phrase sing praises denotes frequency, constancy, fervency, and great devotion in the performance of this service.** And that the ascension of Christ, the occasion of it, is of the greatest moment and importance, and requires it to be performed in such a manner.

The type of song here, would be a song of adoration. From the four praises above, I would believe this to be universal, since four means universal. Then this would be sung all over the world, and not just once, but over and over.

i. "Let a thousand people speak at once; all thought, and feeling are drowned in hubbub. But let them sing together in perfect time and tune; both the thought and feeling are raised to a pitch of energy else inconceivable." (Rawlinson)

ii. **Sing praises:** "A single word in Hebrew, with therefore a swifter, livelier impact." (Kidner)

iii. "This word is four times repeated in this short verse and shows at once the earnestness and happiness of the people. They are the words of exultation and triumph. Feel your obligation to God; express it in thanksgiving." (Clarke)

b. The King of all the earth: The idea from the second verse is repeated for emphasis. God's glorious authority extends far beyond the land or people of Israel. He is the global God, the **King of all the earth**.

c. Sing praises with understanding: Praise is appropriately offered with singing and should also be made **with understanding**. God wants our worship to be intelligent and not mindless. It is not necessary to be smart to worship God, but we should worship Him with all our being, including our mind (Mark 12:30).

i. "We must not be guided by the *time*, but the *words* of the Psalm; we must mind the matter more than the music, and consider what we sing, as well as how we sing; the tune may affect the fancy, but it is the matter affects the heart, and that God principally eyes." (Spurgeon)

ii. **Sing praises with understanding:** According to Kidner, Paul had the Septuagint translation of this phrase in mind when he wrote in 1 Corinthians 14:15, *I will sing with the mind also*.

iii. All in all, this Psalm shows us how we are to praise God:

- Praise Him *cheerfully* when you *clap your hands* as an expression of your inward joy.

- Praise Him *universally* together with *all you peoples* who should praise the Lord.

- Praise Him *vocally* as you *shout unto God with the voice of triumph*.

- Praise Him *frequently*, as the idea of **sing praises** is repeated often. You cannot praise Him too much.

- Praise Him *intelligently*, as you are to **sing praises with understanding** and to know and proclaim the reasons for our praise.

C. The King of All the Earth and the nations.

1. ([Psalms 47:8](#)) The reign of the King.

God reigns over the nations;
God sits on His holy throne.

a. **God reigns over the nations:** The LORD is not *King of all the earth* in some passive or ceremonial sense. He **reigns over the nations** and moves history towards His desired destination.

b. **God sits on His holy throne:** When John had his heavenly experience as recorded in [Revelation 4](#) and [5](#) he described everything in heaven in relation to this occupied throne. The center of heaven - indeed, the center of all creation - is this occupied throne in heaven.

i. God **sits** upon the throne; it is not empty. He is no empty or ceremonial ruler.

“God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness”: Or his holy throne, which is heaven; on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; on his Father’s throne. Having done his work on earth he is received up into heaven and is set down on a throne at the right hand of God, an honor which none of the angels have. He has ceased from his work and entered into his rest and

sits and sees of the travail of his soul. All which is matter of joy to his people, and a reason why they should sing praises. And the rather, since they are set down with him in heavenly places.

ii. It is **His** throne; it belongs to Him and to none other.

iii. It is a **holy** throne, where the holiness of God has been perfectly satisfied by the work of Jesus on the cross. Therefore, it is both a **holy throne** and a throne of grace (Hebrews 4:16). Not only will He reign during the 1000 years upon the earth, but He actually reigns now. The heathen does not know at this time, that God rules over all. Jesus is even now seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven. He will sit on His throne in full view of everyone when this verse comes to fulfillment. Sometimes people who sit on thrones on the earth, are not honest and upright. In fact, sometimes they are down-right unholy. The throne that the Lord sits upon is holy in every way. It is based on truth and righteousness.

2. ([Psalms 47:9](#)) **The King is exalted above the nations.**

The princes of the people have gathered together,
The people of the God of Abraham.
For the shields of the earth belong to God;
He is greatly exalted.

a. The princes of the people have gathered: In the mind of the Psalmist, the leaders of God's people gather to both receive and exalt the King of all the earth.

i. "The promise concerning the blessing of the tribes of the nations in the seed of the patriarch is being fulfilled; for the nobles draw the peoples who are protected by them after themselves." (Keil and Delitzsch)

ii. "The princes of the earth belong especially to God, since 'by him kings reign, and princes decree justice' (Proverbs 8:15)."
(Rawlinson)

b. The shields of the earth belong to God: The words refer to something by which the inhabitants of the earth are defended; God's providence, guardian angels, etc., etc." (Clarke)

i. "It is the abundant fulfillment of the promise of Genesis 12:3; it anticipates what Paul expounds of the inclusion of the Gentiles as Abraham's sons (Romans 4:11; Galatians 3:7-9)."
(Kidner)

We Christians are the people of the God of Abraham. We like Abraham, had faith and it was counted unto us for righteousness. All the Christians in the world will be gathered together, when we are resurrected from the earth. All of us will shout praises to Him. We all get our strength and power from Jesus who is our protector.

Holy Bible
Study Bible.org.
David Guzik
Charles Spurgeon