

# Worship the King

A Sermon on Psalm 47

by  
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## 1. Introduction

## 2. Rejoice in the Lord of All the Earth (vv. 1-4)

### *a. The call to worship (v. 1)*

- i. The psalmist begins this hymn with a command to all people on the face of the earth, “O clap your hands, all peoples” (v. 1a).

- 1. Every tribe, tongue, and nation are invited to praise the One True God.
- 2. The call to worship though is not one where the people come hesitantly, but with much excitement.

- a. They are coming before the One to whom all glory, praise, and honor are due—and the anticipated result of this call to worship is that the people will pay homage to the King.

- b. It is not merely an invitation, where the people of earth are free to consider whether or not they want to worship God. It is a command.

- ii. The second command the psalmist gives to the nations is to “shout to God with the voice of joy” (v. 1b).

- 1. The scene here is anything but reserved. The people are called to clap their hands together and to raise their voices with everything they have to muster.
- 2. They are to shout in triumph with a ringing cry—and it is a cry of victory.

- a. This is not your calm Sunday morning service where people mildly sing and clap; they make an uproar unlike any the earth has ever seen before.
- b. The reason they are to make this uproar is simple: God is King and this is their joy.

*b. The causes of worship (vv. 2-4).*

- i. The Lord Most High reigns over all the earth (v. 2).
  - 1. “For the Lord Most High is to be feared, a great King over all the earth” (v. 2).
    - a. The title given to God here is quite explicit in what it states. Yahweh is the highest of all beings.
    - b. The very reason God is to be worshipped is because He is the King of all the earth and it contains—and this includes any earthly kingdom.
  - 2. This King of all the earth is to be feared. The idea goes well beyond a simple matter of reverence or respect for God’s authority.
    - a. In the purest sense, it conveys the idea that as the One who wields ultimate authority in all things, there is a healthy fear that the kingdoms of this earth should approach God with.
    - b. As King, God has the power and intrinsic right to do whatever He pleases and he does not consult anyone in how He should rule—but He demands absolute allegiance from all.
- ii. The Lord Most High reigns over all peoples (v. 3).
  - 1. “He subdues the peoples under us and nations under our feet” (v. 3).
    - a. The specific context of God’s reign here is seen in light of the victories He provided for the nation of Israel.

- b. More than likely, the psalmist is referring to the conquest of Canaan as the Israelites came into the Promised Land, but it would undoubtedly bring to mind all of the victories the Lord had provided.
  - 2. Yet the undertones of this verse lift up the undeniable reality: God is not yet done subduing all the people of the earth.
    - a. The implicit warning to those who would reject God as King is that He is King regardless of their submission to Him.
    - b. The warning serves to drive men to a proper fear of the One who has and will continue to subdue every last enemy.
- iii. The Lord Most High reigns over Israel (v. 4).
  - 1. “He chooses our inheritance for us, the glory of Jacob whom He loves” (v. 4).
    - a. Again, the specific context of this aspect of God’s reign is seen in light of Him giving the Promised Land to the Israelites as their inheritance.
    - b. The psalmist frames this in terms of God’s sovereign choice in the matter.
  - 2. The emphasis, however, is not upon Israel, but upon God’s sovereign right as King to do as He pleases.
    - a. It is God’s exclusive right to set His favor upon whom He pleases, and to love whom He pleases, and to bless whom He pleases.
    - b. The call for the nations to worship this God who sets His favor upon whom He pleases and gives good gifts to whom He loves rests upon the foundation of His sovereign choice.
- iv. The Lord Most High reigns from His throne (v. 5).
  - 1. “God has ascended with a shout, the Lord, with the sound of a trumpet” (v. 5).

- a. The picture here is that of a triumphant King who has finally come to sit upon the throne and rule with absolute authority.
  - b. As He sits upon His throne, the people gathered around Him celebrate all the more, for One who is worthy is their King.
- 2. For Israel, though they have earthly kings who sit upon the throne and rule over the nation—they innately recognize that the One true King of Israel is God Himself.
  - a. God is the One who presides over His Kingdom and His people, and the earthly celebration they participate in echoes throughout the halls of heaven.
  - b. In all things, God is pictured as the triumphant, Sovereign One, who is far greater than even the best of earthly kings.

### **3. Sing Praises to the Lord of All Peoples (vv. 6-9).**

- a. *Sing praises for God's rule over all the earth (vv. 6-7).*
  - i. "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 a skillful psalm" (vv. 6-7).
    - 1. Five times, the singular command is repeated and given to all the earth: sing praises to the sovereign God and King.
      - a. The repeated emphasis on this command is quite intentional. God is worthy of praise, and this is a non-negotiable.
      - b. The reasons we are given for why we should praise God is purely because He is the King. He is the Sovereign One who is above it all, and therefore, He is worthy.

2. When we come to worship the King, we do so out of an awareness of everything that He is. This is our proper response as creatures before our Creator.
  - a. Worship is not designed to suit our particular preferences, tastes, or even for our own pleasure. It is not even designed for the unbeliever.
  - b. In no sense is worship designed to cater to humanity—but rather, worship is designed to be an expression from humanity as it caters to their Creator, who is worthy.
- ii. God is worthy of excellent and skillful praise, because His Kingship over all the earth has to be responded to in an appropriate manner.
  1. The idea behind the command to sing God’s praises with a “skillful psalm” is that our praise should be done with the proper reflection of the truth, and it must be well done.
    - a. The word for “skill” translates to “prudent, wise, or having insight,” and the specific intent behind it is that while we sing praises to God, it is well-thought-out.
    - b. “Wise” praise must lift high a proper theology of who God is, what He has done, and what He has promised to do.
  2. And yet the idea moves well beyond simply being able to articulate good theology in our praise.
    - a. “Wise” praise also lifts up the art and science of beautifully written musical arrangements, metrical form, and poetic skill to match the lyrical depth and beauty of God’s Word.
    - b. The reason for this is quite simple in the end: praise is designed to lift up God as the One who is supremely worthy of our affections in all things.

b. *Sing praises for God's reign over all the nations (vv. 8-9).*

i. "God reigns over the nations, God sits on His holy throne" (v. 8).

1. Verse 8 begins with a declaration: God reigns.

a. The statement is made in what's called a "prophetic perfect."

b. The Israelites can look to their past and even their current victories over other nations and see this as a foretaste of what is to come.

2. The psalmist then declares, "God sits on His holy throne," and here the concept is much the same, in that it portrays God as the One who rules from His throne in heaven.

a. Thus, it is not merely that all on earth belongs to Him, all within the spiritual realm is also under His Divine authority.

b. God rules from on high on His holy throne, far above anything else in all creation—and this too is a foretaste of what is to come.

ii. "The princes of the people have assembled themselves as the people of the God of Abraham, for the shields of the earth belong to God; He is highly exalted" (v. 9).

1. The command given in verse 1 for all people to come and worship the King is now realized in full.

a. The princes of various kingdoms on earth have come and assembled themselves before the King of kings—but they have come *as the people of the God of Abraham*.

b. What this foreshadows is the inclusion of the Gentiles in the Kingdom of God through Christ.

2. The psalmist then gives a reason for why this will be so: the shields of the earth belong to God; He is highly exalted.

- a. All mighty warriors belong to the Lord; God is over everything and everyone, and He will take what is rightfully His—but they will receive Him with joy as their King.
- b. The implications of this are astounding, because the anticipated hope the psalmist sings of here is that the Kingdom of God will indeed encompass all of Creation, and it will last forever.

#### **4. Conclusion**