

PSALMS

Chapter 47

¹ Clap your hands, all you nations; shout to God with cries of joy. ² How awesome is the LORD Most High, the great King over all the earth! ³ He subdued nations under us, peoples under our feet. ⁴ He chose our inheritance for us, the pride of Jacob, whom he loved. *Selah* ⁵ God has ascended amid shouts of joy, the LORD amid the sounding of trumpets. ⁶ Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises. ⁷ For God is the King of all the earth; sing to him a psalm ^a of praise. ⁸ God reigns over the nations; God is seated on his holy throne. ⁹ The nobles of the nations assemble as the people of the God of Abraham, for the kings ^b of the earth belong to God; he is greatly exalted.

Ps 47† Celebration of the universal reign of Israel's God: a testimony to the nations. This psalm belongs to a group of hymns to the Great King found elsewhere clustered in Ps 92–100. Here it serves to link Ps 46 and 48, identifying the God who reigns in Zion as “the great King over all the earth” (v. 2; see v. 7; 48:2). It dates from the period of the monarchy and probably was composed for use in the temple liturgy on one of the high festival days. The specific setting is perhaps the Feast of Tabernacles (see Lev 23:34), which was also the festival for which Solomon waited to dedicate the temple (see 1Ki 8:2). A liturgical procession is presupposed (v. 5), similar to that indicated in Ps 24; 68. Later Jewish usage employed this psalm in the synagogue liturgy for *Rosh Hashanah* (the New Year festival). The Christian church has appropriately employed it in the celebration of Christ's ascension (see v. 5). Structurally, vv. 5–6 form a centered (see note on 6:6) couplet between two four-line stanzas (in Hebrew). This center may represent a different voice in the liturgy. (CSB)

Psalm 47 continues the theme of Messianic rule which was introduced in Psalm 45 and continued in Psalm 46. (PBC)

Psalm in praise of both the kingship of the Lord and the universal reign of the “God of Abraham” (v 9). The psalmist addresses no less than “all peoples,” insisting that all should praise the Lord for what He has done in Israel. Luth: “The 47th psalm is a prophecy of Christ, that He shall rise up and become king over all the world, without a battle, simply through shouts, songs, and trumpet calls, that is, through the joyful preaching of the Gospel, just as the walls of Jericho fell by trumpet blasts and shouts, without any weapons at all” (*PIML*, p 64). The psalm indicates a liturgical procession (“gone up” to the temple mount, v 5) and was possibly used in the temple worship during a chief festival, such as the Feast of Tabernacles, Weeks, or Booths, which included the “sound of a trumpet” (v 5; cf Lv 23:34). *Sons of Korah*. See Ps 42 intro. (TLSB)

Format: Vv 1–4, praise the great king; vv 5–7, God ascends to His throne; vv 8–9, God reigns. (TLSB)

47 title See note on Ps 42 title. (CSB)

47:1–4 The nations are called to rejoice in the God of Israel, the Lord over all the earth—OT anticipation of the evangelization of the nations (see note on 9:1). (CSB)

47:1 *Clap your hands.* As at the enthronement of a king (see 2Ki 11:12; see also 98:8) or at other times of rejoicing (see Isa 55:12). (CSB)

Although this king is an awesome conqueror and judge, the predominant tone of this psalm is joy. This king is no tyrant, but a gracious Savior. (PBC)

cries of joy. See 1Ki 1:40; 2Ki 11:14. (CSB)

Excitement greets the great king, who is God (vv 2, 6–7). Joash was acclaimed with loud clapping at his enthronement (2Ki 11:12). (TLSB)

He is deeply impressed with the fact that what God has just done for his people is of such importance to every last nation on the face of the earth that if the nations could but be made aware of it, they would gladly respond by a loud and sturdy acclaim of the power and majesty of the Most High. (Leupold)

47:2–3 The Lord of all the earth has shaped the destiny of his people Israel (see 105:6; 135:4; Ex 9:29; 15:1–18; 19:5–6; Dt 7:6; 14:2; Isa 41:8). (CSB)

47:2 *How awesome ... !* See 68:35; 89:7; 99:3; 111:9; see also note on 45:4. (CSB)

The great king, not merely over some local tribe but over all the earth. (TLSB)

Most High. See note on Ge 14:19 (The titles “most high,” “lord of heaven” and “creator of earth” were frequently applied to the chief Canaanite deity in ancient times. Terminology and location (Jerusalem was in central Canaan) thus indicate that Melchizedek was probably a Canaanite king-priest. But Abram, by identifying Melchizedek’s “God Most High” with “the LORD” bore testimony to the one true God, whom Melchizedek had come to know.). (CSB)

great King. A title often used by the imperial rulers of Assyria (see note on 2Ki 18:19 – A frequently used title of the Assyrian rulers—and occasionally of the Lord.). (CSB)

47:3 See 2Sa 5:17–25; 8:1–14; 10. (CSB)

SUBDUED THE NATIONS – The reference is to the conquest of the land of Canaan in the days of Joshua. For despite all the odds against them, the children of Israel undertook a task that bordered on the impossible and did

conquer many nations that were stronger and mightier than themselves even though the complete conquest took longer than the book of Joshua might at first glance suggest. (Leupold)

The conquest of Canaan, when God delivered the Promised Land to His chosen people by fighting for them. (TLSB)

SELAH – Hebrew; untranslatable. Mainly in the first two books of Psalms. Probably refers to the accompaniment of the harps during the psalm. (TLSB p. 993)

This often occurs in the middle of a psalm and which apparently signals an interlude. “The Sela indicates that one must be still and quickly think through the words of the psalm; for they demand a quiet and restful soul, which can grasp and hold to that which the Holy Spirit there presents and offers” (Luther). (Psalms – The Prayer Book of the Bible – Dietrich Bonhoeffer p. 23)

Selah may be a musical notation. It could also be a point where a pause is desirable for the singer or reader of the psalm in order that the statement last made or the thought as a whole just developed may be reflected upon before the next turn of the thought appears. (Leupold)

47:4 inheritance. The promised land (see Ge 12:7; 17:8; Ex 3:8; Dt 1:8; Jer 3:18). (CSB)

Inheritance by which God made them a people with a land and gave the promise of the coming Messiah (Gn 12:2–3; Dt 7:6–9). He does all this out of mercy, without any merit or worthiness in Jacob. (TLSB)

pride. That in which he took supreme delight. (CSB)

A reference to the recent defeat of Sennacherib’s forces may well be thought of at this point. (Leupold)

Jacob. See note on 14:7 (Also Israel). (CSB)

47:5–6 The center of the poem (see note on 6:6). These verses portray the liturgical ascension of God to the temple—perhaps represented by the processional bearing of the ark into the temple. The ark is symbolic of God’s throne; the temple is the earthly symbol of his heavenly palace (see Ps 24; 68). (CSB)

47:5 shouts of joy ... sounding of trumpets. See note on v. 1. (CSB)

Height and center of the psalm, where the King who came down has, so to speak, completed His task and “gone up” to reign on His holy throne (v 8). Yet He is with His people. The same words are used in 2Sm 6:15 to recall the ark of the Lord going up to the

city of David, making it the place of God's dwelling. Christ ascended to "fill all things" (Eph 4:9–10) after once coming down to atone for sins when He ascended the throne of the cross. Chemnitz: "Christ, having completed the work of redemption and having defeated death and the devil, ascended into heaven. Therefore Christ is truly God" (*LTh* 1:98). (TLSB)

trumpets. The ram's horn, here announcing the presence of God as King (see 98:6; Ex 19:16, 19; Jos 6:4). (CSB)

47:7–9 The liturgical enthronement of God as world ruler. (CSB)

47:7 *God is the King of all the earth*. See 2Sa 15:10; 2Ki 9:13; Isa 52:7. (CSB)

He is transcendent, but also present with His people. (TLSB)

psalm. See NIV text note; see also note on Ps 32 title. (CSB)

A title for 13 psalms (Hebrew *maskil*), here it refers to a special song of praise. (TLSB)

47:8 *seated on his holy throne*. In the Most Holy Place of the temple, where he takes the reins of world rule into his hands (see Jer 17:12). This verse is frequently echoed in Revelation (see Rev 4:9, 10; 5:1, 7, 13; 6:16; 7:10, 15; 19:4). (CSB)

47:9 The nations acknowledge the God of Israel to be the Great King—anticipated as the final effect of God's rule (see note on 46:10 – God's mighty acts in behalf of his people will bring him universal recognition.). (CSB)

as the people of the God of Abraham. Thus the promises to Abraham will be fulfilled (see Ge 12:2–3; 17:4–6; 22:17–18). (CSB)

Countless princes of the non-Israelite peoples are to be included in the covenant. God brings worldwide blessing through the exclusive promise given Abraham, through whom "all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Gn 12:3; Rm 4; Gal 3:7–9). Believers are true children of Abraham (Jn 8:39). (TLSB)

kings. See NIV text note (Shields) ; see also note on 3:3; cf. Isa 2:2; 56:7. (CSB)

The princes, so called because they were to protect their subjects. (TLSB)

Ps 47 All nations are called to praise God for what He has done for and in Israel. Israel is called to praise Him as their great King, demonstrating His universal rule and salvation. God's promised salvation is for all nations and has been carried out in time and history by His Son, who became man precisely to be "lifted up" on the cross and so "draw all

people” to Himself (Jn 12:32). • Sing praises to our God, for He is the King of all the earth, which He has saved through His Son. Amen. (TLSB)