

# All Peoples Clap Your Hands For Joy

## Psalm 47

The result of the gospel, of God's sovereign love taking effect in this world, is joy among all the nations. Messianic psalms either explicitly describe the rule of the messiah or are quoted in the New Testament as being about Christ. Psalm 47 doesn't always make the list though it speaks about the panoramic impact of the Lord's mercy to all the peoples of the earth.

### Summary & Structure

Psalm 47 has a chiasm structure:

1 Praise the Lord, all you peoples!

2-3 God is awesome and a great King; He and will subdue the nations beneath our feet.

4 He will provide our inheritance, the blessing of Jacob. Ponder it.

5 The Lord has ascended with a shout, with a trumpet blast.

6 Sing praises to our God and King.

7-8 God is the King of all the nations.

9 All the princes and the people of Abraham's God gather to praise our exalted Lord.

Charles Spurgeon said that though many songs were dedicated to the Chief Musician, he wasn't overloaded by them. When the Lord's people work together, wonderful things get written, set to music, and sung. All the peoples—tribes, tongues, nations—must clap, sing, and shout to God in triumph (v. 1). He is awesome in the old sense: terrible, powerful, majestic, overwhelmingly glorious and wonderful (v. 2; cf. Ex. 34:10; Jdg. 13:6, Job 37:22, Ps. 76:7, 12). He will subdue the nations beneath the feet of Israel and deliver an inheritance to Jacob whom He loves; meditate on this (vv. 3-4). The Lord leads the way in worship and has ascended with a shout and trumpet blast (v. 5). Five times the psalmist commands us to sing to our King and to do so with understanding (vv. 6-7). The Lord actively reigns over all the nations, sitting on His throne (v. 8). The princes gather before Him, the people of Abraham fulfilling God's promise to Abraham (v. 9; Gen. 12:3, 15:5). The shields of the earth, emblems of peace, strength, and protection, belong to God. He is highly exalted.

### Clap & Shout

The Lord teaches us how to worship Him and it may surprise you that He calls for clapping and shouting (v. 1). Worship has the tenor of serious joy about it. It's serious because God is King over all the earth, so we must "worship Him acceptably with reverence and godly fear" (Heb. 12:28). Paul rejoiced in the good *order* that marked the Colossian church and wanted things done that way in Corinth (Col. 2:5; 1 Cor. 14:40). Reverence, honor, serious joy go with clapping, shouting, and exuberance to the Lord. You may have grown up or experienced casual worship where people clap, hoot, and holler at will, and you may know what a stiff and stuffy worship service is like where you can hear a pin drop but no babies. We want worship to be more festive, like a wedding, like preparation for *the* Wedding and the Wedding Supper of the Lamb. God is great and awesome. The most powerful and majestic thing you have ever seen on earth is nothing in comparison to Him. This is the God you come to worship. Just as we see harmony in Psalm 47 between reverence and exuberance, so we see it between music and wisdom. Sing, sing, sing, sing (v. 6), and sing with understanding (*maskil*, "skillfully") because God is King of all the earth (v. 7). Do wise kings enjoy schlock? Psalms are packed with content: doctrine, wisdom, history, joy, sorrow, repentance and more. Augustine said the Psalms contains the whole Bible. As disciples we must learn what they mean and how to sing them. So come to church ready to worship and love God with all of your mind and voice.

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Psalm 47

## Subduing the Nations

The occasion of Psalm 47 may have been David bringing the ark to the tabernacle on Mount Zion:

*Now it was told King David, saying, “The Lord has blessed the house of Obed-Edom and all that belongs to him, because of the ark of God.” So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom to the City of David with gladness. And so it was, when those bearing the ark of the Lord had gone six paces, that he sacrificed oxen and fatted sheep. Then David danced before the Lord with all his might; and David was wearing a linen ephod. So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord with shouting and with the sound of the trumpet. –2 Sam. 6:12-15*

The ark had been in exile in Philistia before finding a home with Obed-Edom for three blessed months (2 Sam. 6:11). Israel triumphed over the Philistines and Obed-Edom was an example of how the Gentiles would trust in Yahweh and be blessed. We know how precarious David’s ascension to the throne was after Saul, and how globally insignificant was his defeat over Philistia. But because he was a man after God’s own heart who walked by faith and not by sight, he believed what God would do: “He will subdue the peoples under us, and the nations under our feet” (v. 3). Based on Yahweh’s word, David reasons from what God just did to what He will do. It’s not presumptuous or triumphalistic to believe the astounding promises of God. Israel’s conquest of the nations did not mean capturing them by the sword. It meant seeing them worship the God of the whole earth, joining them in song (vv. 6-8). Israel wanted to be in the land God gave them, interceding for others as a priestly nation (Ex. 19:6), and there’s no tension between Jacob’s inheritance and the blessing of the nations. Jesus went to the cross to save the world; after rising from the dead, He told the apostles to disciple the nations (Matt. 28:19). Like the psalmist and the authors of the New Testament, we believe “‘You have put all things in subjection under his feet.’ For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we do not yet see all things put under him. But we see Jesus” (Heb. 2:8-9). Christ has been reigning in heaven for over two millennia and many peoples have come to Him.

## Ascending with God

What if you could watch the ark go up to Mount Zion? You would have seen David dancing before it, and if you looked at a window in one of the surrounding buildings, you’d see Michal despising him: “How glorious was the king of Israel today, uncovering himself today in the eyes of the maids of his servants, as one of the base fellows shamelessly uncovers himself!” (2 Sam. 6:20, 16). She was not impressed and apart from faith neither will we be. David didn’t take himself seriously, but he believed God and this made him dance. Why is verse five at the center of this psalm? God Himself goes up with a shout. He always led in worship, and now He has taken on flesh in person of Jesus Christ to lead us to sing and shout and proclaim the love of God for the nations of this world. All the shields of the earth are His. God has a sword. He is a rock who falls on oppressors who would try to kill His bride. But He is a shield to those who trust in Him, a defender who has forgiven our sins and therefore refutes all the accusations of the wicked one. No wonder the princes of earth gather to Him. Solomon made 300 golden shields and put them in the House of the Forest of Lebanon (1 Kgs. 10:17). God’s shields surround the church and protect us on every side.