

# Psalm 47

**Introduction** – Many times in the Old and New Testament, we are given glimpses of God’s glorious plan for this fallen world. Just as Abram had to look away from his circumstances (no child, no land, no rule) and believe the promises of God (Gen 12:1-3, 15:5-6), when we start to see and believe, we see these promises all over. And this psalm is one of them. Jesus Christ reigns now at His Father’s right hand, not in some nebulous way over the spiritual places up there in heaven, but over all the nations of men. And our worship manifests and extends the efficacy of that rule.

**Overview of the Text** – A command is given to all people groups to clap and shout with the sound of triumph because Yahweh is awesome, a great and terrible King over all the earth (vv1-2). He will subdue all foes and choose for His people, those He loves, our great inheritance (vv3-4). Selah. He has ascended with that great shout of triumph; the joy cannot be contained, and so we sing and sing and sing praises for all He has done as we understand all He has done as King of all the earth (vv5-7). He has ascended to His throne and reigns over the nations such that all the princes of the nations are gathered together before Him, rendering their shields as His with great exaltation (vv8-9).

**Victorious Praise** – As we have seen in the psalms, there is an appropriate psalm of lament, of confession, of complaint, and of weeping before God. We have seen that in those times when your world seems to be coming apart, you are commanded to hope in God (Psalm 46:4, 10). But there is also a place in every believer’s life, to see what Jesus has done, and how that will affect the outcome of everything in your life with ultimate victory. Jesus, Who completely humbled Himself for us, has been fully exalted for us as well (Phil 2:9-11) where He rules the kingdoms of this world (Rev 11:15).

This praise of His redemption, His ascension, and reign is our rippling echo of what has and is going on in heaven as it pours out upon the earth. This worship is more than a military victory, but it is a militant victory. It was due to a war and it is the victory cry of our victorious Christ. It isn’t to sound and feel distant, other-worldly, or ethereal. It is earthy, present, masculine, militant, victorious, like a great procession of a ruling King and His loyal and devoted citizens. This worship is warfare as well, and so it continues the shaking of heaven and earth with this triumphal declaration and glory (Heb 12:18ff).

**The LORD Most High is Terrible** – This psalm declares God’s absolute sovereignty over every nation, every prince, and therefore, every person. He is not absent from the affairs of men or only a spectator. He is reigning (Psalm 135:6). Autonomous unbelief wants to believe the words of this 19<sup>th</sup> Century poem, “I am the master of my fate: I am the captain of my soul” – Henly. The Most High refutes such vanity (Deut 32:39, Isaiah 45:6-7, 1 Sam 2:7, Lam 3:37-38).

And so the AV translates better, saying that the LORD Most High is terrible. Look back and see His terrible hand as Noah’s world is destroyed, Pharaoh’s army drowns, Sennacherib’s 180,000 are slaughtered in one night, or as Jerusalem and the Temple are destroyed, not a stone left upon another. Yet, as Spurgeon said, “*None can resist his power or stand before his vengeance; yet as these terrors are wielded on the behalf of his subjects, they are fit reasons for rejoicing. Omnipotence, which is terrible to crush, is almighty to protect.*” Therefore, we are to “*serve the LORD with fear and to rejoice with trembling*” (Psalm 2:11), we are to worship Him “*acceptably with reverence and godly fear, for our God is a consuming fire*” (Heb 12:28f). Immeasurable joy with trembling awe.

He has declared the end from the beginning (Isaiah 6:9-10) and this includes *your* salvation (Eph 1:11). He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens (Rom 9:18). “But, but, but....” we want to say. “Wait,” the psalmist sings, “Listen to all He has determined...”

**Conquest by Conversion** – He will subdue the nations (v2) and choose our inheritance for us (v3). He reigns over the nations (v8) and the princes of the people have gathered together before Him (v9). How does this work? Jesus said “*Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth*” (Matt 5:5). Paul tells us that Jesus shall reign at God’s right hand “*...till He has put all His enemies under His feet*” (1 Cor 15:25). He is sitting at His throne OF GRACE and that grace is a conquering, converting grace (Eph 2:4-5). This is why we are told to go and disciple the nations and why we are to pray “*Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*”

**Seeing the World with This Perspective** – Our modern mindset believes that the city of man is fundamental and absolute and that the city of God is invited or not to come in under man's authority, because religion is just a subset of what the world (and its government) really is, and besides, "your god is really part of another dimension in another time far, far away." But Jesus didn't tell the nations to disciple the church. He told the church to disciple the nations. We are all concerned about how well the church is responding to the mandates of the state. Why are not at all concerned about how our nation (of whom you are a citizen) is responding to the mandates of the church and our King of kings?

Or let's put it another way. Government was not established to grant us the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Government was established to ensure and defend those rights. God granted those rights, and to deny God is to deny the Giver of those rights. They do not exist without Him.

Or how about this: We do believe in the separation of church and state. But we do not believe in the separation of God and state. "*The princes of the people have gathered together...for the shields of the earth belong to God.*" So, who is to submit to whom?

We are the lump of yeast that has been put in the loaf of the world. We are a yeasty people. We are somehow being told that we are welcome to be in the bread but that we cannot do what yeasty people do. But the loaf doesn't have control over the yeast. The yeast affects the loaf.

Sing this psalm and see if your perspective is not challenged, and Lord willing, changed.

**In the Kingdom** – "Shout to God with the voice of triumph!" Why? "*In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins*" (1 John 4:9-10). There is only one way to be a willing member of God's kingdom (Rom 10:9-10). This kingdom is expanding in this age and will triumph, amidst trials and chastisements upon the church and unbelieving nations, because Jesus is reigning on His throne of grace. He is calling people from every imaginable condition of life and they are bowing the knee – the poor and the mighty, the sick and the healthy, the rich and the needy, from every tribe and tongue. We sing this psalm to celebrate the victory, to participate in the victory, and by faith looking ahead to the fulfillment and completion of this victory. God grant you faith to believe and a tongue to sing. Amen.

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*Dave Hatcher – September 13, 2020*