

GOOD LEADERS Sunday School- October 24, 2010

Unifying Topic: GOD'S RULE OVER THE NATIONS

Lesson Text

I. Our Great King (Psalm 47:1-4)

II. God Reigns (Psalm 47:5-9)

The Main Thought: Sing praises to God, sing praises: sing praises unto our King, sing praises. For God is the King of all the earth: sing ye praises with understanding. (Psalm 47:6-7 KJV)

Unifying Principle: People look for good leaders whom they can honor. What style of leadership might we celebrate, and how might we celebrate it?

Lesson Aim: To help students understand that God is our King who reigns forever.

Life aim: To teach how God is our King whose sovereign rule is to be honored on earth with our governmental leaders and in our daily lives.

46 : 1 O clap your hands, all ye people; shout unto God with the voice of triumph.

46 : 2 For the LORD most high is terrible; he is a great King over all the earth

46 : 3 He shall subdue the people under us, and the nations under our feet.

46 : 4 He shall choose our inheritance for us, the excellency of Jacob whom he loved. Selah.

46 : 5 God is gone up with a shout, the LORD with the sound of a trumpet.

46 : 6 Sing praises to God, sing praises: sing praises unto our King, sing praises.

46 : 7 For God is the King of all the earth: sing ye praises with understanding.

46 : 8 God reigneth over the heathen: God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness.

46 : 9 The princes of the people are gathered together, even the people of the God of Abraham: for the shields of the earth belong unto God: he is greatly exalted.

HISTORY:

Again the superscription reads: "*To the chief Musician. A psalm for the sons of Korah.*" Here, as elsewhere, the author is anonymous and may be identified either as the sons of Korah, David, or one of David's associates. However, the tone is definitely Davidic. "*For the sons of Korah*" the Psalm is sung. There are mixed views as to the occasion of the psalm being written. All that can be said is that it is a triumphal psalm, and was composed apparently on some occasion of "victory" over enemies, with reference to a triumphal procession. 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.

The psalm consists of two parts, quite similar in structure and in design. Each part consists of an exhortation to praise God, followed by a statement of reasons why, it should be done.

I. ¹The first part comprises the first five verses:

1. An exhortation to praise God - to celebrate the joy of the soul by a clapping of hands, and by a shout of triumph, Psalm 47:1.

2. The reasons for doing this: Psalm 47:2-5. These reasons are that He is terrible; He is a great king over all the earth; He will subdue the nations and make them subject to His own people; He will choose our inheritance, and in anticipation of this, and in proof of this, He achieves victory, and had gone up as from that victory to His own abode in heaven.

II. The second part embraces the last four verses of the Psalm:

(1) An exhortation, as before, to praise God, Psalm 47:6.

(2) The reasons for this: Psalm 47:7-9. These reasons are, as before, that God is king over all the earth; that He now sits upon the throne of His holiness, and that Psalm 47:9 the princes of the nations - the subdued kings and rulers - are borne along in triumph to the people of the God of Abraham; and that in this victory it has been shown that the shields of the earth belong to God.

The psalm, therefore, is a triumphal ode, and was probably composed to be sung on occasion of some military triumph. All of this is celebrated as indicating the intervening power of God in victory and as evidence of His purpose to protect His chosen people in time of peril. The Psalm may yet be used in a higher sense by the church at large, when all the foes of God on earth shall be subdued; and when His kingdom shall be in fact set up over all the world.

LESSON:

Psalm 47:1- 4 Our Great King

¹ <http://barnes.biblecommenter.com/psalms/47.htm>

47:1 *O clap your hands, all ye people* – It opens with a command – to clap your hands and shout with the "voice of triumph" or "cries of joy". The command is directed to whom? – *All ye people*. Why? Because He is the Great King who rule over all the earth! All this is unto God! And it does not go without reason. Why do we applaud? Mainly to give an expression of appreciation for what we have seen, heard or felt. ²Sometimes it's done half-hearted, and insincere. However, it should be with heart-felt joy! It should be with the intent of our great appreciation to God! When we applaud for personal accomplishments, remember that it should be accompanied with Praise to God! He is always the Creator of what blossoms in us. He is always the greater One in us. He is always the Giver of the gift, no matter what we think we did. To be a good leader, honor the Great King.

³This Psalm is an exhortation to praise the Lord for His sovereignty over the whole earth, and for the victories He gives His people through that sovereignty. The Psalm begins: "*O Clap your hands, all ye people (nations); shout unto God with the voice of triumph (cries of joy).*" The first thing to notice is that very few churches on Sunday morning praise the Lord the way the Psalmist is exhorting us to praise Him: loudly, and with great enthusiasm.

Some would consider "clapping" one's hands for God, and "shouting" to Him with "cries of joy", to be indecent, unsophisticated, and even unholy. Those who think such behavior is inappropriate would do well to study the book of Psalms, and note the many places we are exhorted to praise the Lord loudly. When we go to a sports game, and the home team scores a victory, do we not enthusiastically praise the efforts of our team? Why not do the same to praise the great victories of the Lord? "The most natural and most enthusiastic tokens of exultation are to be used in view of the victories of the Lord, and His universal reign" [Spurgeon, 352]. Sadly, we can "clap" and "shout" for our favorite sports teams, but we are called insane fanatics if we get enthusiastic about the Lord, who has done much more for us than our local athletes have.

It is not just Israel, who is to rejoice at Divine triumph, but the world at large. The most natural and most enthusiastic tokens of exultation are to be used in view of the victories of the Lord, and His universal reign. Our joy in God may be demonstrative, and yet He will not censure it. *All ye people*: The joy is to extend to all nations or peoples. Israel may have been the intended, but all the Gentiles are to following in the march of triumph, for they have an equal share in that kingdom where there is neither Greek nor Jew, but Christ is all and in all.

47:1b "*Shout unto God with the voice of triumph*" - There are 72 mentions of the word "shout" in the bible. Shout goes above talking with exuberance. This Psalm will cause you to make a joyful noise in praise to God; that is, in acknowledgment that this victory has been gained by His interposition. "*Triumph*" - With such a shout as is usually raised when a victory is obtained; such a shout as occurs in a triumphal procession.

47:2 "*For the Lord most high is terrible; he is a great King over all the earth*" – In this verse we are given the first reason for all this Praise. When God dealt with the enemies of His people, he showed Himself "Terrible." Because of His high nobility and His mighty power, every man ought to stand in awe of Him. His awesomeness is first connected to His majestic authority "*over all the earth.*" It says that He is "*terrible*" - literally, is "*to be feared*"; that is, "*reverenced and adored*". The Amplified version reads "*The Lord Most High excites terror, awe, and dread; He is a great King over all the earth.*" He is "*terrible*" to His enemies, being the Lion of the tribe of Judah; who will rule the nations with a rod of iron, and break them in pieces as a potter's vessel (Ps.2:9; Rev.2:27). The concept of "*king*" and the respect for authority has to be understood. God is worthy of profound reverence and adoration because God's rule is universal.

47:2b "*He the great King over all the earth!*" God's sovereignty extends to all nations (whether they acknowledge it or not). Any nation that turns to Him may receive the blessings He extends to His people. Though the children of Israel make up the chosen nation, yet all who worship Him will be blessed. So, all nations have reason to rejoice in Him. Because He is the "*great king*" He has the right and privilege to extend the bounds of His kingdom anywhere on earth. ⁴He is now King of Zion, and head over all things of 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*, (Zechariah 14:9); which is another reason for joy and gladness among the people.

47:3 "*He subdued the people under us, and the nations under our feet.*" – This is another reason for all this Praise. So many times the nation of Israel had witnessed this first hand. Their foes were defeated before their eyes and they neither shot an arrow nor struck a blow. The word rendered "*subdue*" is that which commonly means "*to speak*." The idea in the use of this word here is that He has only to speak and it is done (compare Psalm 33:9), or that He could do it by a Word. God's military victories on their behalf brought them into the Promised Land. This phenomenon of subjugating pagan powers was repeated many times during Israel's history. The Lord God protects and restores us in the face of the challenges that we experience as believers today.

² http://www.bereanpca.org/Assets/Sermons/outlines/Oct_11_2009.pdf

³ <http://www.scripturestudies.com/Vol8/HA/wis.html>

⁴ <http://www.searchgodsword.org/com/geb/view.cgi?book=ps&chapter=047&verse=002>

47:4 "He shall choose our inheritance for us" – God originally chose Canaan as the habitation of His people (Gen.12:1-7). The Promised Land is symbolic of the inheritance in the kingdom of heaven that we will receive. God knows what is best for His people. ⁵It 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.

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.

47:4b "The excellency of Jacob whom he loved" – He chooses for us as He chose for Jacob, that we might rejoice in Him. The One that bestows the inheritance is the One that chooses it. He loved the Jews but this does not negate the bigger picture involving blessing to all nations in the original Abrahamic Covenant of Gen.12:1-3.

"*Selah*" – ⁶The word "*selah*" is found in two books of the Bible, but is most prevalent in the Psalms, where it appears 71 times. It also appears three times in the third chapter of the minor prophet Habakkuk. It is also a musical direction to the singers and/or instrumentalists who performed the Psalms, which was the hymnbook of the Israelites. If this is true, then each time "*selah*" appears in a psalm, the musicians paused, either to take a breath, or to sing acapella or let the instruments play alone. Perhaps they were pausing to praise Him about whom the song was speaking, perhaps even lifting their hands in worship. This would encompass all these meanings—praise, lift up, and pause. When we consider the three verses in Habakkuk, we also see how "*selah*" could mean to pause and praise. Even though Habakkuk was not written to be sung, Habakkuk's prayer in chapter 3 inspires the reader to pause and praise God for His mercy, power, sustaining grace and sufficiency.

Yes, pause, ye faithful songsters. Here is abundant room for holy meditation; Interlude. It would take a moment just to breathe all of this in. All of what God the Great King has fulfilled is breath-taking! Applause and shouts of joy unto God glorify Him, only when we've taken our eyes off of everything else and placed them totally upon Him.

Psalm 47:5-9 God Reigns

47:5 "God has gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet" – The command of the first verse is here, regarded as a fact; the fight is over; the conqueror ascends in triumph. The going up here refers to the ascending to a royal throne, signifying the triumph of Christ and His glorious ascension into the heavens. The ascending or descending of God is frequently associated with a shout and a trumpet (1Thess.4:16). The words are fully applicable to the ascension of the Redeemer.

- Now, 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.
- Jesus ascended to 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.

In ancient times, trumpets were made of animals' horn and then later of metal. Two types of trumpets were blown on the Festivals of Trumpets in ancient Israel. The first was the "*chatsoserah*"—the straight, long silver trumpets blown only by priests and used for a variety of occasions (one to announce the new month). The second was the "*shofar*", made from a ram's horn. The Israelites were to mark this particular day as a memorial of the significance of the trumpets to them physically and symbolically. The significance? - Both of these trumpets were used in war, and both had roles in celebratory events.

- Trumpets were primarily used for signaling large groups of people. Trumpets summoned the Israelites and announced certain holy days or festivals (Lev.23:24; 25:9; Num.10:2).
- Trumpets served several functions in war
 - Rallying troops together (Jud.6:34; Neh.4:20)
 - Initiating the battle (Judg.7:20; Jer.4:19), and
 - Signaling instructions to the troops (2Sam.2:28; 18:16)

⁵ http://www.blueletterbible.org/commentaries/comm_view.cfm?AuthorID=2&contentID=7717&commInfo=31&topic=Psalms&ar=Psa_47_4

⁶ <http://www.gotquestions.org/selah.html>

- Trumpets were also used in worship (1Chron.13:8; Ps.98:6)
- Trumpets will announce the return of the Lord (Matt.24:31; 1Corth.15:52; 1Thess.4:16), and
- Trumpets signal several important events in Revelation 98:7-12; 9:1-14; 10:7; 11:15)

It is the sound of victory to honor God.

47:6 "*Sing praises to God, sing praises! Sing praises to our King, sing praises!*" – 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. From verses 6-7, the phrase, "*sing praises*" is repeated five times, and shows 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)]. The singing is unto God, who has shown Himself to be the Great King of His people - one who rules on their behalf, and who has interposed for their deliverance in danger. Songs of praises should be on our lips and joy should be in our hearts, "*for God is the King of all the earth.*"

47:7 "*For God is 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.

47:7b "*Sing praises with understanding*" – Praise is appropriately offered with singing and should also be made with understanding. If we do not understand what we sing, it argues carelessness with our spirit, or shows hardness of heart; and this makes the service disrespectful. 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). How are we to praise God?

- Praise Him cheerfully when we clap your hands as an expression of our 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 your praise.

"*Strange that we should need so much urging to attend to so heavenly an exercise*" [Spurgeon, 354].

47:8 "*God reigned over the heathen:*" – ⁷Though this is literally true in God's universal dominion, yet more is meant. God reigns over the heathen when? - By the preaching of the Gospel. They are brought into the Church, of Christ. The great truth that God reigneth in destiny is the guarantee that in a gracious gospel, His promises shall be fulfilled, and His kingdom shall come. Continuing prophetically, the Psalm looks forward to the time when God will be acknowledged by all the nations as the True and Living God.

47:8b "*God sitteth upon the throne of His holiness*" – He is a holy God; He proclaims holiness. His laws are holy, He requires holiness, and His genuine people are all holy. The throne of His holiness is the heaven of heavens; also the temple at Jerusalem; and, lastly, the hearts of the faithful. ⁸What other throne is like this?

- God has a throne of holiness, for which He is to be feared by all men.
- A throne of grace, for which He is to be loved by His redeemed.
- A throne of glory, for which He is to be praised by His whole creation.

Never was it stained with injustice, or defiled with sin. Neither is He who sits upon it dismayed, or in a dilemma. He sits in serenity, for he knows His own power, and sees that His purposes will not miscarry. Here is reason enough for a holy song.

47:9 "*The princes of the people are gathered together*" – The prophetic eye of this Psalm sees the willing subjects of the Great King assembled to celebrate His glory. Not only the poor and the men of low estate are there, but nobles bow their willing necks to His sway. "*All kings shall bow down before him.*" No people shall be unrepresented; their great men shall be good men, their royal ones regenerate ones. How grand will be the parliament where the Lord Jesus shall open the court, and princes shall rise up to do Him honour! Those who were divided in their principles, and interests, and religions, are now united and gathered together to Christ, laying their scepters at His feet, and jointly owning His worship and service .

47:9b "*even the people of the God of Abraham*" –The Psalm looks back, first of all, to Abraham. When God appeared to Moses in the burning bush (Gen.3:6), He said, "*I Am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham...*" This is speaking of the Second person of the Trinity which is Christ! They that lay hold of the promise by faith, "*They that are of the faith, are the children of Abraham*" Gal.3:7; that have the same spirit of faith that Abraham had. God gave a promise to

⁷ http://www.studyLight.org/com/acc/view.cgi?book=ps&chapter=47&verse=8#Ps47_8

⁸ <http://www.biblebb.com/files/SPURGEON/TOD/chstp47.htm>

Abraham: a promise that had about it a covenantal structure; a promise that God said would never be repealed; a promise that from out of Abraham and the loins of Abraham would grow a people that would be greater than the stars in the night sky. That same God, who was known only here and there, a patriarch like the father of the faithful, shall be adored by a seed as many as the stars of heaven. All have joined with praising the God of Abraham.

Through Christ's death we receive the promise of eternal inheritance, all which is a reason for joy and gladness in this Psalm. As God has gathered *even the people of the God of Abraham*— He enabled them to take possession of it. He enabled them to protect their possession or when they could not, He guarded it for them without any effort on their part. This land would have been the pride of Jacob, a land he would have rejoiced to dwell in and have as his possession. All that they needed was in the land promised.

47:9c "*for the shields of the earth belong unto God;*" – The emblems of rank, the weapons of war, all must pay loyal homage to the King of all. The princes or rulers, who are called shields, because by their office they are the common prosecutors of all their people. These are the Lord's at His disposal, or subject to His dominion, both as to their hearts and their kingdoms. All principalities and powers must be subject unto Him!

47:9d "*He is greatly exalted*" – By this, it means that God shall be greatly glorified—In nature, in power, in character, and in glory. There is none to compare with Him. Can you see the vision, the picture, and the magnitude of God's Reign?

SUMMARY:

⁹This is the psalm that will usher in the glorious Kingdom Age, as we clap our hands and shout unto God with a voice of triumph, because He has now established His kingdom over all of the earth and we are there with Him. He is the King over all the earth, sing praises. This psalm is read seven times before the blowing of the trumpet to announce the Holy Day, the beginning of the Jewish New Year.

Israel, anticipating their deliverance from their enemies, celebrates the triumph of God, and call upon the nations to unite with them in praise to God. ¹⁰It is significant that they would use it for a New Year, because always in a New Year there is a hope of things better, a new day dawning, a new year dawning, and new opportunities. He is the King over **all** the earth, sing praises.

¹¹We know from Revelation, that in the days of trial, which precede the reign of Christ, a great multitude will be saved from amongst the nations. Apparently it is this great company, "*the willing-hearted of the peoples*" (v.9 JND) that are called in this Psalm to express their joy with shouts of triumph, because God has vanquished every enemy. The Lord Most High has shewn Himself to be terrible to those who refuse to submit to His claims. He is not only King, but "*a great King*" that none can withstand. He has subdued the Gentiles and exalted Israel above the nations and in sovereign grace has chosen the land of Israel, the excellency of Jacob whom He loved.

Anticipating the time when God will have taken possession of His earthly throne, calls for all to sing with intelligent praise to God, the King of all the earth, who reigns over the nations, and whose throne is characterized by holiness. Then, every opposing enemy having been subdued under the feet of Israel, the willing-hearted of the nations will be gathered together with the people of the God of Abraham, and the defense of the whole earth against all evil (the shields of the earth) will be in the hands of God: the result being that, while the whole earth will be blessed, God Himself will be greatly exalted.

The point is: This Psalm is about the rule and reign of Christ. It doesn't waste time in trying to prove the existence of God. It proclaims the God who **is** there in **all** of His power and greatness and glory. First, He is our Great King, and we are to render hands clapping and shouts of triumph with our voices. Everytime we think about the goodness of God; everytime we recognize His awesomeness, His greatness, His authority over all the nations, we see His reign is unlimited.

It is not impossible for great men to be good men and/or a good leader. For the heads of a country to be members of Christ; and for princes as well as the people to serve the God of Abraham, our focus should be on the One who put them there; who brought them to that point; recognizing that God is greater than the so called great! His rule is over not only His people but **all** the peoples. We are still the sheep under the Great Shepherd. We are still the servants under the Great King. He reigns over all; all will bow; all will surrender, for His presence will be made known. The One True King is to be praised and exalted throughout eternity!

APPLICATION:

Imagine, what Good Leaders, whose eyes are focused on God—who rule over the nations and all the earth, are able to do with the loyalty and trust of the followers who sing praises unto the King; who clap and shout unto God with the voice of triumph—giving the best that God has placed within them! Selah!

⁹ http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/Comm/chuck_smith/content.cfm?type=c2000&key=6814&Exact=0&criteria=Psalm

¹⁰ http://www.blueletterbible.org/commentaries/comm_view.cfm?AuthorID=1&contentID=6814&commInfo=25&topic=Psalms

¹¹ http://www.biblecentre.org/commentaries/hs_20_psalms_42to72.htm