God the Great King

Psalm 47:1-9
God the Great King

Commentary

by

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Text:

Psalm 47:1-9,

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 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 of the earth belong to God; he is greatly exalted. (NIV)

Introduction:

I. Psalm 47 is a hymn of praise to God who reigns over all the nations and peoples of the earth (2,7,8).
A. Psalm 47:2, 7, 8, How awesome is the LORD Most High, the great King over all the earth! For God is the King of all the earth; sing to him a psalm of praise. God reigns over the nations; God is seated on his holy throne. (NIV)

II. The psalm opens (1-4) and closes (8-9) with invitations to praise God, and the center (5-7) portrays God ascending His throne amid those shouts of joy.

A. Psalm 47:1-4, Clap your hands, all you nations; shout to God with cries of joy. How awesome is the LORD Most High, the great King over all the earth! He subdued nations under us, peoples under our feet. He chose our inheritance for us, the pride of Jacob, whom he loved. Selah (NIV)

B. Psalm 47:8, 9, God reigns over the nations; God is seated on his holy throne. The nobles of the nations assemble as the people of the God of Abraham, for the kings of the earth belong to God; he is greatly exalted. (NIV)

C. Psalm 47:5-7, God has ascended amid shouts of joy, the LORD amid the sounding of trumpets. Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises. For God is the King of all the earth; sing to him a psalm of praise. (NIV)

III. The movement of the psalm is from that of God’s subduing the nations (3) to His coronation (5) to his reign (8).

A. Psalm 47:3, 5, 8, He subdued nations under us, peoples under our feet. God has ascended amid shouts of joy, the LORD amid the sounding of trumpets. God reigns over the nations; God is seated on his holy throne. (NIV)
IV. Anthropomorphic language describes God in terms of earthly enthronement ceremonies, although this is likely nothing more than a literary device.

The Awesomeness of God

Psalm 47:1, Clap your hands, all you nations; shout to God with cries of joy. (NIV)

I. To clap the hands was a familiar way of expressing exuberant praise, and shouting often accompanied it.

Psalm 47:2, How awesome is the LORD Most High, the great King over all the earth! (NIV)

I. God’s awesomeness is first connected to his regal authority “over all the earth”, although verses 3-4 focus on his choosing Israel’s inheritance for her.

A. Psalm 47:3, 4, He subdued nations under us, peoples under our feet. He chose our inheritance for us, the pride of Jacob, whom he loved. Selah (NIV)

B. God’s activity on behalf of Israel, however, was but a microcosm of his universal dominion.

Psalm 47:3, He subdued nations under us, peoples under our feet. (NIV)

I. Verse 3 describes the means by which God chose Israel’s inheritance.

A. He “subdued nations” by empowering Israel’s armies to conquer Canaan.
B. This phenomenon of subjugating pagan powers was repeated many times during Israel’s history.

Psalm 47:4, He chose our inheritance for us, the pride of Jacob, whom he loved. Selah (NIV)

I. “Pride” here does not carry the common connotation of insolence; it is rather a synonym for “glory”.

A. Israel’s glory or honor is couched in the land that God gave her for an inheritance.

B. God’s love for His chosen motivated Him to glory in her and to act on her behalf.

The Worship of God

Psalm 47:5-7, God has ascended amid shouts of joy, the LORD amid the sounding of trumpets. Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises. For God is the King of all the earth; sing to him a psalm of praise. (NIV)

Psalm 47:5, God has ascended amid shouts of joy, the LORD amid the sounding of trumpets. (NIV)

I. “Shouts of joy” reiterates the invitation of verse 1.

II. There is nothing in Israel’s history to suggest that she followed the Canaanite practices of attempting to resurrect and enthrone God in the fashion of pagan ceremonies.

A. The phraseology poetically describes the beginning of a worship assembly.
B. Trumpets were often employed in Israel’s calls to worship, and in parts of their worship (Num. 10:2-10; 29:1; 31:6).

1. Numbers 10:2-10, "Make two trumpets of hammered silver, and use them for calling the community together and for having the camps set out. When both are sounded, the whole community is to assemble before you at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. If only one is sounded, the leaders—the heads of the clans of Israel—are to assemble before you. When a trumpet blast is sounded, the tribes camping on the east are to set out. At the sounding of a second blast, the camps on the south are to set out. The blast will be the signal for setting out. To gather the assembly, blow the trumpets, but not with the same signal. "The sons of Aaron, the priests, are to blow the trumpets. This is to be a lasting ordinance for you and the generations to come. When you go into battle in your own land against an enemy who is oppressing you, sound a blast on the trumpets. Then you will be remembered by the LORD your God and rescued from your enemies. Also at your times of rejoicing—your appointed feasts and New Moon festivals—you are to sound the trumpets over your burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, and they will be a memorial for you before your God. I am the LORD your God." (NIV)

2. Numbers 29:1, "'On the first day of the seventh month hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work. It is a day for you to sound the trumpets. (NIV)

3. Numbers 31:6, Moses sent them into battle, a thousand from each tribe, along with Phinehas son of
Eleazar, the priest, who took with him articles from the sanctuary and the trumpets for signaling. (NIV)

Psalm 47:6, Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises. (NIV)

I. Repetition here is employed for emphasis, as in many of our hymns and spiritual songs.

II. The second line narrows the scope of God as King to His special relationship with Israel.

Psalm 47:7, For God is the King of all the earth; sing to him a psalm of praise. (NIV)

I. Verse 7 reiterates the universal reign of God set forth in verse 2.

A. Psalm 47:2, 7, How awesome is the LORD Most High, the great King over all the earth! For God is the King of all the earth; sing to him a psalm of praise. (NIV)

II. “Psalm” renders the word maskil, which may be a literary or musical term.

A. The term may be connected to the verb sakal, to act or perform with skill, intelligence or wisdom.

1. Perhaps “sing skillfully” catches the force here.

Acknowledgement of God

Psalm 47:8-9, God reigns over the nations; God is seated on his holy throne. The nobles of the nations assemble as the people of the God of Abraham, for the kings of the earth belong to God; he is greatly exalted. (NIV)
Psalm 47:8, God reigns over the nations; God is seated on his holy throne. (NIV)

I. “God reigns over the nations” reiterates the thought of verses 2,7.

   A. Psalm 47:2, 7, How awesome is the LORD Most High, the great King over all the earth! For God is the King of all the earth; sing to him a psalm of praise. (NIV)

II. Refrain is an important part of hymns of praise.

   A. “Holy throne” is a metonymy for the holy God.

      1. His throne is holy because of His presence.

      2. His holiness provokes awe in the heart of thoughtful people (v. 2).

Psalm 47:9, The nobles of the nations assemble as the people of the God of Abraham, for the kings of the earth belong to God; he is greatly exalted. (NIV)

I. Verse 9 portrays an imaginary scene in which “the nobles of the nations” converge in a holy convocation to worship “the God of Abraham”, the only true God.

II. At the final judgment scene, every knee will bow to God, and every tongue will confess Him (Rom. 14:11; Phil. 2:10), some for their salvation and others to their everlasting shame and contempt.

   A. Romans 14:11, It is written: ''As surely as I live,' says the Lord, 'every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God.''' (NIV)
**B. Philippians 2:10**, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth (NIV)

**Application:**

I. Exuberant worship is pleasing to God as long as it is performed in an orderly and reverent manner.

II. We are to worship God “in spirit and in truth” (John 4:23-24).

   A. John 4:23, 24, Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. 24God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth." (NIV)

III. We must also worship God “with reverence and awe” (Heb. 12:29).

   A. Hebrews 12:29, for our "God is a consuming fire." (NIV)
Questions

Psalm 47:1-9

(Questions based on NIV text.)

1. “_________ your _______________, all you _______________; ________________ to ________________ with ________________ of joy.”

2. The _______________ _______________ _______________ is _______________. He is the _______________ _______________ over all the ________________.

3. God “____________ ______________ under us, ________________ under our ____________. He ______________ our ______________ for us, the ________________ of ________________, whom he ________________.”

4. “God has ______________ amid ______________ of ______________, the Lord amid the ______________ of _______________. ______________ to God, ______________ ________________; ______________ to our ______________ ______________.”

5. “God is the ________________ of all the ________________; _______________ to him a ________________ of _______________. God ______________ over the ______________; God is ______________ on his ________________ ________________.”

6. “The ________________ of the ________________ ________________ as the ________________ of the ________________ of ________________, for the ________________ of the ________________ belong to God; he is ________________ ________________.”
7. According to Psalm 47, what acts of adoration are said to be activities of divine worship for that time in history? 

8. Define pride as used in verse 4. 

9. Define *maskil* and *sakal* and tell how they are related. 

10. ____________ ____________ ____________ is ____________ to ____________ as long as it is ____________ in an ____________ and ____________ ____________. We are to worship God “in ____________ and in ____________” and “with ____________ and ____________.”