

# How to come into the Presence of the King

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## Psalm 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.  
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.

This Psalm begins with Moses and ends with David. It begins with Egypt and ends with Jerusalem. It begins with the Exodus and ends with the Temple. Verses 1-4 take us out of bondage to the Promised Land. Verses 5-9 take us to the Holy City where God reigns over the nations. In all of this we learn how to worship: "Shout to God with cries of joy" (v.1), "Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises" (v.6), "...sing to him [God] a song of praise" (v.7). What releases such extravagant worship? What can release the same in us? Let's look at the text.

v.1 Clap your hands, all you nations;  
shout to God with cries of joy.  
v.2 How awesome is the Lord Most High,  
the great King over all the earth!  
v.3 He subdued nations under us,  
peoples under our feet.  
v.4 He chose our inheritance for us,  
the pride of Jacob, whom he loved.

In the Bible, whenever the windows of heaven are opened, we see God as King (Isaiah 6:5; Daniel 7:9; Revelation 4:2). So here: "How awesome is the Lord Most High, the great King over all the earth" (v.2). But how do you come into his presence? How do you worship such Majesty?

The simple answer is: you throw yourself into high praise. Move your hands: "Clap your hands, all you nations..." Yell loudly: "...shout to God with cries of joy" (v.1). Unconscious of each other, we are fully conscious of him. And everybody gets to play: "Clap your hands, all you nations." We have been created for such unrestrained worship. Matt Redman writes of David, "...he led the way, 'losing' himself so publicly in his worship of God and so on fire with praise that it burned right through any inhibitions or pride. True worship always forgets itself." Then Matt asks, "Isn't it time we saw a bit more holy mayhem in our worship?" [*The Unquenchable Worshipper*, p.29.] But why do we come in this extravagant way?

God is our great deliverer. Like Israel in Egypt, he has brought us out of bondage: "He subdued nations under us, peoples under our feet" (v.3). Unlike Israel, we don't win military victory, we win spiritual victory. Behind Egypt and her idols stands Satan and his demons and Jesus breaks this

power, delivering us from the “dominion of darkness” (Colossians 1:13).

But we have not only been delivered from our spiritual “Egypt,” sin, addiction, and worshipping this age’s idols, we have also come to our destiny, the Promised Land: “he chose our inheritance for us, the pride of Jacob [Israel], whom he loved” (v.4). Our inheritance now is not the Holy Land. It is “the new heaven and the new earth,” in which righteousness dwells (II Peter 3:13). We have already partially entered it through Jesus’ resurrection and the Holy Spirit’s sealing, the guarantee of all that is to come (Romans 8:11; Ephesians 1:13-14). But we don’t simply want to enjoy our inheritance; we want to see the King.

v.5 God has ascended amid shouts of joy,  
the Lord amid the sounding of trumpets.

v.6 Sing praises to God, sing praises;  
sing praises to our King, sing praises.

v.7 For God is the King of all the earth;

..... sing to him a psalm of praise.

v. 8 God reigns over the nations;

God is seated on his holy throne.

v.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.

The scene now shifts to Jerusalem. God ascends into the city as David brings the Ark of the Covenant into Jerusalem. Now in the Tabernacle “God is seated on his holy throne” (v.8). His majesty reigns from the Holy City as the “King of all the earth” (v.7), and the nations are subject to him (v.8). His worshippers include not only “the people of the God of Abraham” but “the kings of the earth.” (v.9). As the great King enters Jerusalem (by the Ark) and goes into his palace (the Tabernacle and later the Temple) he receives “shouts of joy” and “the sounding of trumpets”(v.5). This King alone is worthy of such worship. No wonder the Psalmist repeats two exhortations for emphasis (in Hebrew parallelism):

Sing praises to God, sing praises;

Sing praises to our King, sing praises (v.6).

And adds: “...sing to him a psalm [“song”] of praise” (v.7).

Why such extravagant worship? The King subdues our enemies (v.3). The King provides our inheritance (v.4). The King ascends to his throne (v.5, 8). The King rules over all the nations and their kings belong to him (v.9).

Two quick points:

**Songwriters:** Give the true vision of the God who reigns to our churches. Show that he is “awesome,” “the Lord Most High,” “the great King over all the earth” (v.2), “the King of all the earth” (v.7), “seated on his holy throne” (v.8), and “greatly exalted” (v.9). This will stir and evoke extravagant praise. Do you want to know how to get your people to sing? Worship this way yourself. Show them the real God and they will come shouting, filled with joy.

**Worship Leaders:** Use songs of high praise in your church. Lift our vision to the majesty of the God who reigns. In these troubled times, help us to see him in glory and trust him for the outcome. Osama Bin Laden, Saddam Hussein, George Bush, Tony Blair, and all “the kings of the earth belong to God, he is greatly exalted” (v.9). One day every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:11). We shout and sing in anticipation of that day and we shout and sing knowing that that day has already dawned for us: “Jesus is Lord.” Again, Matt writes, “In an age of informality and irreverence, true unveiled worshippers recognize the ‘otherness’ of God, and treasure the call to intimacy with Him. Transfixed by His glory, and transformed by His presence, we become ever more like him.” [*The Unquenchable Worshipper*, p.53.] Worship leaders have the privilege of seeing this happen, bit by bit, Sunday by Sunday, before their very eyes. Go for it!