

All Hail to Our Invincible King

Psalm 47:1-9

Halifax: 20 March 2011

Introduction:

As most of you know, it is our custom to sing a psalm each week that corresponds to whatever we are studying about in our regular sermon series.

- We call the designated Psalm our Psalm of Focus.
 - Every few weeks, I introduce a new Psalm to you, and when I do, we break from our regular series and I preach to you from that Psalm.
 - This enables you, to understand the Psalm as you present it before God each week in worship.

As most of you also know, we are coming to the end of Isaiah in our regular sermon series.

- We only have seven more chapters.
 - And in these chapters, the glorious reign of Jesus Christ is presented to us!
 - Isaiah has been promising His coming all through the prophecy,
 - but in this last section He speaks to us about the nature of His reign,
 - especially about the subjugation of the nations to Him.
- This must have been a very amazing thing to the godly in Judah who believed.
 - For theirs was a day of terrible spiritual decline, as Isaiah has shown us all along.
 - From the appearance of things, it looked the kingdom was falling to pieces.
 - Yet the promise of the reign of Jesus Christ at the right hand of the Father bringing about the subjugation of the nations to Him was as sure as ever...
 - And now in these last chapters Isaiah will tell us all about that reign!

Psalm 47 is a Psalm that anticipates these same events.

- It anticipates the ascension of Jesus Christ, and His glorious reign that brings the nations under Him as His worshippers.
- Like many of the Psalms, it seems to have more to say about the times in which we live than it does about the times in which it was written!
 - Like Isaiah's prophecy, it must have been a tremendous encouragement to those who sang it of old, anticipating the glory of the coming kingdom.
 - And now, even though the ascension of Christ itself is fully accomplished,
 - And even though we have seen an amazing fulfilment of the turning of the nations to Him,
 - we yearn for the greater subjugation of the nations to Christ.
 - And so for us also this Psalm provides support for our faith as we wait for the LORD to bring all of His enemies under His feet.

- It is a Psalm that puts fitting words of hope and of praise to our now ascended Lord in our mouths whenever we take it upon our lips to sing.
 - Let us see that we also sing with the accompaniment of our hearts, the instruments in which our Lord delights in this gospel dispensation.
 - See to it that you Hail King Jesus as our reigning sovereign whenever you lift up these words before His throne!

We will look at this Psalm under the headings of three acclamations that are made in this Psalm...

- I.** All hail to King Jesus our conquering King (verses 1-4)!
- II.** All hail to King Jesus our ascended King (verses 5-7)!
- III.** All hail to King Jesus our reigning King (verses 8 & 9)!

It should be said at the outset that the whole Psalm truly does revolve around the ascension of our Lord Jesus that is the subject of the middle section.

- If you are not familiar with that term, the ascension refers to our Lord's going up to heaven to sit at God's right hand until all His enemies are made His footstool.
 - This great event took place 40 days after His resurrection before the wondering eyes of His disciples who saw Him taken up into heaven.
 - Like the birth of our LORD, it was not an event that gained much attention from the earth—
 - The disciples who saw it, far from lifting up their voices in praise,
 - stood gazing at His disappearance with blank and bewildered stares until the angel interrupted them and said:
 - **Acts 1:11: "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This *same* Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven."**
 - But after they understood what had happened and after the Spirit came upon them,
 - you can be sure that they lifted up their voices in praise to God—even with Psalm 47 as they gathered in the assembly to sing praise.
 - Let us join in the praise of our now ascended Lord even as we sing this Psalm.
 - May God now furnish our hearts with true understanding of His ascended glory as we now consider the acclaim that is due to Him.

I. All hail to King Jesus our conquering King.

- In these first four verses, we acclaim Him as the One who is going forth to battle against His enemies.

- A. In verse 1 we are summoned to “**clap our hands**” and to “**shout to God with voice of triumph!**”
1. Our vantage point is like that of Israel when she stood at the borders of Canaan, called to go forth and conquer the nations!
 - They felt like grasshoppers before giants!
 - They know that the task was impossible apart from the powerful working of God.
 - And our task is every bigger.
 - We are called to go forth with the gospel of our risen Lord to make disciples of all nations.
 - We are to go on with this work, trusting Him to do it, even when there is bloody persecution.
 2. It is ours to go forth with confidence in our reigning Lord!
 - a. The clapping and the shouting are that of an army getting ready to march forth against their enemies!
 - Some believe that this Psalm was written at the time when Jehoshaphat led the armies of Judah out against the confederation of Ammon and Edom in 2 Chronicles 20, with singers going before them.
 - This is only one of many conjectures, but whatever the case,
 - The shout is a shout of triumph!
 - b. Now that Jesus has ascended to sit at the Father’s right hand,
 - We go forth with confidence that the victory belongs to Him!
 - We go forth clapping and shouting, as it were, with a shout of victory.
 - I say, “as it were,” because we do not find that clapping and shouting are appointed for us in New Testament worship any more than dancing,
 - although these may be suitable for a godly nation in going to war or returning from war as the case may be.
 - But the point is that we go forth on our mission with confidence in our ascended Lord.
 3. And there is something unusual here—something extraordinary!
 - The ones who are called to do the clapping and the shout of victory are “all you peoples.”
 - In the plural, this refers to the nations of the earth!
 - But why are **they** cheering for the God of Israel and His triumph?
 - Surely it is because the victory that is spoken of here is not their demise,

- but rather their glad inclusion into the kingdom of God.
- They who were once cut off have been brought near by the blood of Christ to enjoy salvation with the people of God.

- My brothers and sisters, we, who are mostly from among the nations and not Jews are among those peoples who shout in triumph as we follow King Jesus into battle to subdue the nations to Himself.

B. Our confidence in going forth is in our invincible King Jesus.

1. We are confident of triumph because of who He is...

a. v. 2 says **“For the LORD Most High is awesome.”**

- Here we have His personal name is *Yahweh*, translated as LORD with all caps...
 - This is the name that means “I am.”
 - It speaks of Him as the one who alone is self-existing and so the one by whom and for whom all other things have their being.

- He is given the descriptive title of *El Elyon* which means *the Most High*.
 - He is not a mere local deity such as the nations worshipped—He is the supreme One.

- As Yahweh El Elyon, He is truly awesome—
 - A great and mighty force that we cannot stand before on account of His transcendent greatness...
 - We bow down with reverence before His majesty.
 - Even the great ones shut their mouths when they come before Him because of the terror of His majesty.

b. Verse 2 goes on to say that **“He is a great King over all the earth.”**

- This does not speak merely of His rule over all things in his providence by which He governs the world...
 - This speaks of the place He has been given as the ruler before whom all must bow and before whom every knee will bow and every tongue confess that He is Lord.

- This speaks of the change that came when Jesus had finished His work and all authority was then given to Him in heaven and earth so that He sent us to make disciples of the nations.
 - Before, He was, in this sense, the king only of Israel,
 - but after he ascended, He became the king of the whole earth.
 - And He will reign until all his enemies are brought under His feet!

2. We are sure that He will be victorious in this mightiest of conquests...
 - a. I say, “mightiest of conquests” because the power that is displayed in turning hearts of rebellion into hearts of loving submission is greater than the power that merely destroys the enemy.
 - The winning of them to become His cheerful subjects who want nothing more than to serve Him in His kingdom and to do His will is a tremendous feat that can only be accomplished by divine power.
 - He draws them to Himself by curing their corruption and rebellion...
 - by taking away their stony, stubborn hearts and uniting them to Himself forever, transforming them to love His law!
 - b. As it is expressed in verse 3,
 - **v. 3: He will subdue the peoples under us, and the nations under our feet!**
 - The ones who are speaking here are the peoples who have already been conquered (this speaks prophetically in anticipation of this).
 - We, from among the nations, who have already been subdued by Him, have taken up our place as God’s Israel,
 - cheering on King Jesus with confidence that He will subdue the peoples under us and the nations under our feet...
 - He will do to others as He has done to us as His work goes forward until all are brought under His feet.
 - They will be willing in the day of His power, and we go forth in His name at His command to make disciples of all nations.
 - We will not stop until all are brought under His feet to be His willing subjects.
 - c. This is a far greater conquest than the mere destruction of His enemies.
 - It is a work that none but the LORD most High, Yahweh El Elyon who is awesome can accomplish.
 - Do not lose heart dear child of God!
 - Go forth with confidence in His name—
 - Clap your hands! Shout to God with a voice of triumph
 - He will bring the peoples under us!
3. We look to Him to give to us our promised inheritance.
 - This is the subject of verse 4:
 - **Ps 47:4: He will choose our inheritance for us, the excellence of Jacob whom He loves.**
 - a. We are partakers of the inheritance that Yahweh El Elyon promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob...

- That all nations would be given to Christ, and so to us who are already a part of His kingdom, as our inheritance!
 - And when that kingdom is fully populated, then even the curse will be removed and paradise will be restored.
 - This is our glorious hope.

- b. Here it is referred to as the **excellence** or the **pride of Jacob**.
 - Jacob sought to obtain the promised inheritance by striving and by clever scheming until he finally came to understand that it was his by free grace.
 - that it was His, not by craft, but by bequest.

 - Jacob is referred to as the one whom God loves which reminds us also of free grace—
 - For the LORD declared, before he and his brother were born or had done anything good or bad that:
 - **“Jacob have I loved and Esau have I hated.”**

 - In this way, He showed clearly that His salvation is by pure grace to the undeserving.
 - He has mercy on whom He will and whom He wills, He hardens.
 - The inheritance of His kingdom is a gift to be received with humble gratitude.
 - He chooses it out for us and freely gives it to us in mercy.

- c. Do you want this inheritance?
 - Do you want to be part of this great kingdom of willing subjects who have been transformed into lovers of God?
 - Then simply come to Him for mercy and grace.
 - He will not turn away any who come to Him, turning from sins to obtain life in Jesus who was crucified.
 - Come now, come without delay, and you will know His love.
 - You will become an heir to His marvellous inheritance.

TRANS> What confidence is ours in our ascended Lord Jesus!

- Clap your hands all you peoples and shout with the voice of triumph!
 - Mighty King Jesus will bring the peoples to glad submission under Him.
 - Do not try to resist Him—Come—Come and be blessed.

- Now the Psalm moves on to its core in verses 5-7 where it speaks of the ascension of King Jesus itself...
 - And so my second call to acclamation is this:

II. All hail to King Jesus our ascended King.

A. The very act of His ascension is described in verse 5:

- **Ps 47:5: God has gone up with a shout, The LORD with the sound of a trumpet.**

1. The ascension was portrayed in the Old Covenant by the bringing up of the ark into the temple.

a. The very same language was used in 2 Samuel 6:15 when David brought up the ark to Jerusalem...

- 2 Sam 6:15: "So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting and with the sound of the trumpet."

- You see the shouting and the trumpet are mentioned.

b. In this way, the people were shown by symbols that the LORD was pleased to dwell in the midst of them.

- It was something like a coronation when the trumpets are blown and the king comes forth to take His throne in majesty and splendour!

- It was a tremendous thing when the LORD went up, in this way, to reign on Mount Zion as symbolised by the entry of the ark into the holy place.

2. But how much greater is the thing signified by the bringing up of the ark!

- How much greater that King Jesus Himself ascended into heaven!

a. He went up to sit at the right hand of the Father.

- And what was so special about this was the fact that He went up to that throne in our nature—as the Son of man!

- And when He arrived, He was given authority and power over all the kingdoms of the earth—they were given to Him as the Mediator of the New Covenant!

b. Indeed, there were no trumpets and no shouting on the earth when He actually ascended...

- Just a small group of bewildered disciples who stood gazing up into heaven.

- But by prophecy, Daniel gives us a description of what happened on the other side of the clouds before the throne of God!

- Daniel 7:13-14 says:

- **Dan 7:13-14: "I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, Which shall not pass away, And His kingdom the one Which shall not be destroyed."**

- The earth was not yet aware of this monumental event that was to change all history by which we now date our calendars.
 - But heaven knew and heaven rejoiced!
- c. It was not until Jesus had finished His work on the cross and been raised again that the authority to redeem the nations was given to Him.
 - When the Holy Spirit was poured out, Peter proclaims that it is the result of Christ having been declared to be LORD and Saviour and ascending into heaven.
 - He explains this in Acts 2:32-36:
 - **Acts 2:32-36: This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear. For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: ‘The LORD said to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.’” Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.**
 - Because the LORD Himself has “ascended far above the heavens” in our nature,
 - “all authority in heaven and earth has been given to” Him.
 - It is on account of His saving work that He is able to go forth and gather the nations into His kingdom.
 - This is the work that He is now doing and that He has sent us out to do until He returns by the mighty working of His power.
 - And it will not cease until all the nations have been gathered.

TRANS> Even though the bewildered apostles did not break forth with praise when He ascended, it is only fitting for the whole church in every age to sing praises to Him now that we understand!

B. A strong call is given to sing praise to our ascended LORD in verse 6-7.

1. Five times the word *zawmar* is used, which is translated by two English words, “sing praise!”
 - It says:
 - **Ps 47:6-7: Sing praises to God, sing praises! Sing praises to our King, sing praises! For God is the King of all the earth; Sing praises with understanding.**
 - Five times!
 - Almost as if the Psalmist is annoyed that praise was not given when our Lord actually ascended!

- We need to make up for the deficiency!
 - We need to summon the nations to praise the king of the whole earth who is now sitting at the right hand of the Father in glory!
- 2. Now that we understand what has happened, how can we be silent?
 - How clearly we see the divinity of our LORD Jesus!
 - The One who ascended is called God and He is also called our King and we are to worship Him.
 - Jesus is God and so He is to be worshipped.
 - Jesus is King—in this we see His grace that God should be our King, clothing Himself with our flesh and representing us despite our sin!
 - Jesus is said to be God who is King of the all the earth!
 - All authority and power is given to Him to subdue all things to Himself!
 - Do you see what a glorious thing it is to have Jesus in heaven?
 - Nothing will be withheld from us now if we have come to Him!
 - Our brother is reigning at God’s right hand for us!
 - Sing praises to Him with understanding!
 - As Spurgeon has said,
 - Let our homage be paid not in groans but songs. He asks not slaves to grace his throne; he is no despot; singing is fit homage for a monarch so blessed and gracious.
 - Indeed brothers and sisters, He is there for one reason...
 - to bring salvation to the nations!
 - Have you a heart to praise Him?
 - Does your heart not go out to praise Him?

TRANS> And now, having seen that Jesus has gone up to reign,

- It is only fitting that we should also praise Him *in* His reign.
- We praise Him as the one who has gone up—let us also praise Him as the one who is now reigning and doing great things in the earth...
 - This is our third acclamation.

III. All hail to King Jesus our reigning King.

A. The glory of His reign is displayed in several ways...

1. First, the glory of His reign is seen in that He is over the nations.
 - See verse 8: **God reigns over the nations;**

- You might say, “well of course He reigns over the nations, He is God!”
 - But remember what we have seen about *this* reign—the reign that is spoken of in this Psalm.
 - It is a reign that causes the nations that are subdued to rejoice!
 - Brothers and sisters,
 - On this very day, God has worshippers from all over the world who humbly bow before Him,
 - looking to Him for His grace...
 - looking to Him for the forgiveness of sin...
 - looking to serve Him and obey Him and to lay down their lives for Him.
 - This is absolutely remarkable!
 - This people were in total darkness.
 - They were dead in trespasses and sins!
 - It is one of the greatest manifestations of God’s power that so many in west have turned to Him—when the gospel began in the east.
 - 1/3 of the world at least outwardly confesses His name.
 - This is all because Jesus has ascended to the Father’s right hand to reign.
 - All of these nations that He is now over were once in total darkness, without hope, without resources!
 - Salvation has encompassed the earth in the reign of Jesus Christ!
 - And there are, I believe, many more to be subdued under His footstool.
 - But we praise Him for the marvellous work that has already been accomplished!
 - Truly He is reigning!
 - Have you come under Him, or are you still cut off?
 - Have you bowed to Him and accepted Him as your Lord?
2. Second, the glory of His reign is seen in that He sits on His holy throne.
- Verse 8 says, “**God sits on His holy throne.**”
 - A holy throne is one that is not tarnished by injustice or by anything unseemly.
 - It is a throne that is secure.
 - Wicked men who are not subdued to Christ like to cry out against it.
 - They delight in ranting.

- They like to charge Him with injustice because of the judgements that He inflicts on us in this sinful world.
 - They even whine and squeal about the cross...
 - calling it “cosmic child abuse”
 - calling it “unfair and unjust that the death of one should be accepted in the place of another.”
 - But all their criticism is without merit.
 - They can howl and bark all day,
 - but they are like dogs barking at the moon.
 - Though they make a lot of noise and a very unpleasant clamour, the moon is unmoved.
 - Though they cast reproach all day, their charges will not stand on the great day of reckoning...
 - They will only stand against them, proving their vanity and wickedness who found such boldness when they stood at a distance, but will then be in great terror and shame.
 - His throne is a holy throne, His rule is holy and just.
 - The evidence is in His people.
 - Whenever and wherever He is obeyed, there is love and peace
 - His rule guides His people into gracious and holy living...
 - characterised by love, by justice, by generosity to the poor and needy, by love to their enemies.
 - Even in the house where Jesus is honoured, there is great peace and blessing...
 - so attractive that it caused the conquerors of Rome to the embrace of religion of the humble believers.
 - Oh let us be true to Him as His subjects that His glory may be seen in our service!
 - Let your light shine before men so that they will glorify your Father in heaven—and Jesus who is reigning in heaven!
 - We are adorn Him in His reign by living in the purity and love to which He calls us!
 - So knock off the complaining and the quarrelling and start loving each other!
3. Third, the glory of His reign is seen in that He gathers princes (of the peoples) into His kingdom.
- a. These are the nobles or the rulers (naw-deeb).

- Originally the word meant *willing ones*—those willing to give and serve.
 - Then it came to be used of princes and nobles who serve others as leaders.
- b. It says, **“The princes of the peoples [people is plural in the original] have been gathered together!”**
 - It is important to know that **people** is plural because this shows that kings and rulers from the various nations of the earth are gathered to Him.
 - In other words, even nations represented by their leaders have turned to Christ.
 - Those who were once enemies have beat their sword into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks...and now they are united in Jesus.
 - They who were once His enemies are now His friends and His heirs,
 - because of the power of His grace.
 - c. Even rulers give up their authority to Him when they see who He is.
 - They come to understand what King Nebuchadnezzar was brought to confess when the Lord humbled him...
 - That though they are kings, He is the King of kings and the Lord of lords.
 - They come to see that their authority is not their own, but that which is derived from Him.
 - They who once reigned in resistance to Him now reign by Him.
 - Has He captured you?
 - Are you a tyrant where you have authority, or do you exercise His authority?
 - Have you laid down your life for Him as the head of you home?
- 4. Fourth, the glory of His reign is seen in making these princes to be the people of Abraham.
 - Verse 9 says, **“The princes of the peoples have gathered together, the people of the God of Abraham.”**
 - The idea is that they who were princes of many different peoples (as I pointed out, it is plural in the original) have gathered together as the people of Abraham.
 - The language is difficult, but it seems to be saying that they are now one people, the people of Abraham!
 - They are now one in Christ Jesus who were once strangers and aliens.
 - They are now part of the one holy nation with King Jesus at their head.

- This is the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham that those scattered at Babel would be united in adoption to God through faith.
 - Gen 12:3 says: **“I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.**
 - Gal 3:7-9 tells us that the blessing of Abraham has now come to the nations.
 - We have been gathered into one fold under Jesus.
 - This is the glory of His kingdom—to make us one.
 - There is much division now because of sin, but as the gospel does its work, nations are united.
5. Fifth, the glory of His reign is seen in that they now protect the Lord’s heritage who used to fight against it.
- As it says, **“the shields of earth belong to God”**
 - The shields are their insignia, their emblems of rank, and their weapons of war...
 - And all of these are now laid at the feet Jesus Christ.
 - All principalities and powers must be subject to Him.
 - His glory is seen in that all that they had is now brought into His service and honour.
 - The more glorious the power of kings was,
 - The more glory it gives to Him when it is brought under His service.
 - Though it is politically incorrect to say it, it is factually true that wherever Christ has been served, even by the most powerful of nations, there has been peace and benevolence.
 - Even a place like Geneva where the gospel took root in Calvin’s day has many testimonies describing the peace that prevailed there for 150 years.
 - And in our own country—the peace we enjoy now (though it is rapidly eroding as we turn from the Lord) has its roots in submission to Jesus.

B. Our Lord is greatly exalted in His glorious reign!

1. What an amazing God He is, that He should do all that He had to do to make us His subjects!
 - That the mighty Creator of heaven and earth should come and make Himself an offering for sin,
 - all so that He might take us to be His people, pardoned and sanctified by the cross,
 - justified and made willing to serve,
 - humbled and united to Him and His people as one great church.

- He spared nothing to obtain this kingdom...
 - And what He did will never be forgotten.
 - His name will continue to be advanced, and though there will be times of decline—even great decline—as there were in Israel,
 - His dominion is an everlasting dominion and He will reign until all His enemies are brought under His feet,
 - And then He will reign most gloriously forever!
 - But those who have refused Him along the way will be cast into the Lake of Fire where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth...
 - But even in the earth, the day will come when the great mass of the people will call upon His name and worship Him.

2. How great is His love!

- That He should do all this for ungrateful rebels, for wretches who fully deserved to be cut off forever in the Lake of Fire.
 - Truly His love is demonstrated in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

3. How great is His power!

- That He should be able to bear the sin of all His people and rise with victory, having borne the full weight of the curse for us...
 - That He should be able to take men with wicked hearts and transform them so as to be willing to serve Him, willing to lay down their lives for Him!

TRANS> He is highly exalted in His redemptive reign as He gathers the nations to Himself!

- And He will be even more exalted in the days to come.

Conclusion

- All hail to King Jesus our invincible King!
- All hail to King Jesus the conquering One! Shout with a voice of triumph!
- All hail to King Jesus the ascended One! He has gone up with a shout—sing praises!
- All hail to King Jesus the reigning One! He reigns over the nations!