

Text: Psalm 47 Part 4

Title: Christ the True Universal King

Occasion: Westminster Presbyterian Church

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## **Introduction**

The Psalmist brings this great call to all the earth to praise the Lord as the Great King over all the earth. To be gripped with reality of Christ conquering grace is to be brought to spontaneously spring forth in joy and rejoicing to Him. The great scope of this Psalm is the celebration of the advancing kingdom of Christ. We have then been opening the reasons and content of that praise to Christ: First is Christ's great sovereign exalted majesty over all for He is the Lord Most High. Second is Christ's advancing kingdom: "He will subdue the peoples under us, and the nations under our feet." Third is Christ's care for the support and benefit of His own. Fourth is Christ's ascension to glory triumphant over all His enemies.

### **I. The fifth reason and matter of praise to Christ is His relation to His Old Testament people and yet as the True Universal King.**

In two verses the call is sent out to all the earth to sing praise to God five times. No doubt you have read of our Lord's statement in Mt. 11:29, "Take my yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." Perhaps you have thought at times that His yoke was not so easy and His burden not so light because of the world's lures, the desires of the corrupt flesh and the suggestions of satan. But the call to praise the glories of our Lord -- Is this not a joyful duty? To glory in the greatness of our King! Really now, is it not a sign of our corruption that we are so slow to do this?! Our homage to Christ's rightful place in our lives should not be a matter of reluctant groans, but of joyful rejoicing praise and adoration.

#### **A. Our King**

Ps. 47:6, "Sing praises to God, sing praises! Sing praises to our King, sing praises!" *Our King* - You hear this first from David calling all Israel to own their Lord and King for which they had special and first reason. Why? Because God, out of all the nations of the earth had chosen them to have the first place in privilege and interest in the coming Messiah Jesus Christ. Ro. 3:2, "What advantage then has the Jew, or what is the profit of circumcision? Much in every way! Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God." Ro. 9, where the Apostle has great sorrow because of their unbelief, because Christ came unto His own and His own received Him not! So he has grief for his countrymen according to the flesh, "...to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises; of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen." He

delivered them from the tyranny of Egypt, brought them into Canaan, dwelt among them in the tabernacle, answered them by oracles from the ark of the covenant, sent them types, prophets, was the Holy One of Israel their Redeemer and took, as Paul says, His humanity from them. What privileges to be the church of the Jews - Rightly says David, "Sing praises to *our King*."

But NOTE THIS -- All who take Jesus Christ to be their king may - "Sing praises to *our King*!" Why? Because Christ's is not simply or only the King of the Jews, but His kingdom extends over all the earth and not just His kingdom of power, but His special kingdom of grace by which He takes for His own, people out of every kingdom, tribe, and nation and brings them to be His own kingdom. He is the true universal King. There is talk about what truly unifies any people and religion is discounted, but this must be the supreme unifying allegiance: Christ the King.

Why? Because the glory of God which shines gloriously in Creation, which shines in His distinguishing works of Providence, is seen most clearly in Jesus Christ in the accomplishing of salvation. When you think upon how Christ abased Himself in order to take on our human nature. When you think upon how Christ paid the ransom for us as our Surety. When you think upon how Christ faced and fought with all our enemies and then how as He was victorious in our name/representing us that He ascended in our human nature with the shout of victory and the sound of the triumphant trumpet !! When you see all these you cannot but joyfully praise the glorious Godhead of Jesus Christ and sing praises to Him as God over and over and over again!

### **B. Spiritual Worship with understanding in truth**

Which leads us to the Psalmist specifically saying Ps. 47:7, "Sing praises with *understanding*." As in: Prov. 3:3, "Let not mercy and truth forsake you; Bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart, and so find favor and high esteem [lit. *good understanding*] in the sight of God and man." Ps. III:10, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; A good *understanding* have all those who do His commandments. His praise endures forever." Neh. 8:8, "So they read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped them to *understand* the reading." Illust. Once I was approached by a visiting couple who wanted to alter our worship service to be more like the neo-Pentecostalism which they had experienced in another PCA church worship service! She wanted us to just sing 3 or 4 choruses or hymns "You know, so familiar that we don't have to think about them ... to put us in the mood for worship." Even under the OT administration when there were all these types and symbols, still God regarded the spirituality of worship: Isa. 1:12, "When you come to appear before Me, who has required this from your hand to trample My courts?" And if that was true then, then how much more now that the full light of the Gospel shines upon us?! He would be praised thoughtfully, intelligently, with deep appreciation for the truth. Spurgeon: "Sound doctrine praises God." I knew a young man who was dating one of the young ladies in a church I served, but he had no interest in the truth of the Gospel. But he

did have a great appreciation for music and was involved in a liberal church because of their music. Spurgeon: "Is it not a sin to e tickling men's ears with sounds when we profess to be adoring the Lord?...Do not men mistake physical effects for spiritual impulses? Do they not often offer to God strains far more calculated for human amusement than for divine acceptance? An understanding enlightened of the Holy Spirit is then and then only fully capable of offering worthy praise." Our praise must be both the fruit of sound teaching and the vehicle for sound teaching. As the Apostle in I Cor. 14:15, "...I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding." We must sing as we pray. The smallest child understands what he/she asks in prayer. If we do not understand what we sing it shows a carelessness, a hardness of heart. This is why the congregation sings in their own language. God will not worshipped with simply sound, but from our hearts and minds in spirit and truth; Hearts and heads - so that you understand what you sing and fell what you understand.

## **II. The sixth reason and matter of praise to Christ for gathering the redeemed out of all peoples and reigning over them as King of Saints**

Ps. 47:8, "God reigns over the nations; God sits on His holy throne." When you remember that in this Psalm Christ is called God - eight times in this Psalm, then we realize that it is impossible to worship Him or to know Him in truth without understanding that He is God. When He is ascribed works which are properly only those of God. When He is called by that great and personal name Yahweh translated LORD and acknowledged as God (twice) as the great King and Head of the Church among the Gentiles - then it is redundantly proclaimed that the fullness of the Godhead dwells in Him. So we praise the Lord Jesus Christ for gathering the redeemed out of all peoples, but you note particularly that He is presented as the sovereign God enthroned in holiness!

Now the great sum of Christ's kingdom is holiness. Holiness is what God preeminently is. Holiness is His delight. All who come near with Him and with whom He dwells must be holy. So what is the great work of Christ the King? Setting up His kingdom of holiness in involves that great work of teaching, prescribing, commanding holiness. It involves His work as Priest whereby He satisfied the claims of holy justice in the law and the very nature of God offended by our rebellion - taking away sin. As He applies His blood bought redemption covering sin and imputing righteousness is holiness. He governs His subjects by His word and Spirit until each of the redeemed is made perfectly holy. No wonder then that His throne is particularly called a throne of holiness.

## **III. The seventh reason and matter of praise to Christ arises from His subduing to Himself the great of the earth, bringing them into the obedience of the faith and union with the Church.**

Ps. 47:9, "The princes of the people have gathered together, the people of the God of Abraham. For the shields of the earth belong to God; He is greatly exalted." The Psalmist with a prophetic eye sees all these

gathered by this great King before Him praising and worshipping, both great and small.

**A. Who are “the people of the God of Abraham”?**

Be sure you understand this clearly because it is a popular error just here! In John 8, our Lord is clear about who the genuine children of Abraham. Jn. 8:39, Jesus is speaking to the Jews: “They answered and said to Him, “Abraham is our father.” Jesus said to them, “If you were Abraham’s children, you would do the works of Abraham. But now you seek to kill Me, a Man who has told you the truth which I heard from God. Abraham did not do this. You do the deeds of your father.” Then v. 56, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.” Clearly Abraham was looking to God’s promise of the Seed in the oath he made his servant swear in Gen. 24:7 and there on Mt. Moriah Gen. 22:8, when he trusted that the Lord would provide (even to the point of believing that God could raise Isaac from the dead). So “the people of the God of Abraham” are Abraham’s children - There are those who were born from him according to the flesh (Ro. 9:6), but 9:7, “...For they are not all Israel who are of Israel, nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, “In Isaac your seed shall be called.” That is, those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of Promise...” as Gal. 3:7, “Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham.” Those that worship the Messiah, believing in Him with the faith of Abraham, these are Abraham’s children and the people of the God of Abraham. As the Apostle declares in Eph. 2:14, Christ has made of Jew and Gentile one “having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two...” 3:6, “That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakes of His promise in Christ through the gospel.” (1) So as the Psalmist speaks of the assembling, the gathering of the people so that we are taught that all who would be reckoned among the children of God ought to seek to have a place in the Church and to join themselves to it in order to maintain a family unity with all the godly. (2) Then as well, that when we think of the unity of the Church it is found to consist in nothing else but a genuine agreement to yield obedience to the word of God in order that there may be one sheepfold and one Shepherd. (3) And that submission to Christ includes both the great of the earth as well as the lowly.

**B. Will the great own the King?**

Then you have in closing this language of the leaders, the rulers, the princes of the people. We learn from similar language in Ps. 89:17,18, that this speaks of human kings and those in authority: “For You are the glory of their strength, and in Your favor our horn is exalted. For our shield belongs to the Lord, and our king to the Holy One of Israel.” This is a fitting closing for this Psalm, that as the Lord Jesus Christ advances His Gospel kingdom and draws all nations to Himself beneath His rule of holiness, this will include men of every rank, both high and low. It is an assurance on the one hand that all the shields of protection on the earth are below His reign

of power and under His sovereign control. But it is also a rich and joyous anticipation that while it may be easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom, and while (I Cor. 1:26) “..not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called” - Yet that does not mean that no rich, no mighty, no leaders of nations of the earth shall come and acknowledge Christ as Lord, for with God all things are possible. So that of these who are responsible to God and set in power by Him and are His ministers - There have been, are, and shall be those who bow the knee to Christ and honor the Son lest He be angry and dash them (Ps. 2). Isa. 49:23, “Kings shall be your foster fathers, and their queens your nursing mothers.” Or in that great Messianic Psalm, 72:8f, “He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth. Those who dwell in the wilderness will bow before Him, and his enemies will lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles will bring presents; The kings of Sheba and Seba will offer gifts. Yes, all kings shall fall down before Him; All nations shall serve Him.”

So take the royalty and honor of the greatest of nations. Speak of the high and mighty princes and all principalities and powers. Think of the mighty powers, the shields of the earth. Whatever and whoever they are - they must all pay homage and bow before the King of kings and Lord of lords, the Ruler over the kings of the earth (Rev. 1:5). If they are honorable they will honor Him who is the most honorable of all and obey Him. All those with majesty must honor Him who is supreme majesty and from which all receive power and jurisdiction for His is the original and universal jurisdiction. All must come to praise worship and adore, for the shields of earth belong to God. He is exalted high!

Oh, then how we ought to pray that Christ's rule would hold sway. That His gracious kingdom would sway all before it. That what we have heard and read and seen in the past and in other places, may yet break forth more gloriously than ever. Do not judge of Christ nor His kingdom, nor the extent of His reign by feeble sense - By what you see here and now. Let us rather pray, labor, and rejoice as those who know that He must reign until He has put all enemies under His feet; until the nations fall before Him as Savior and Lord. Now as we do not yet see this and weep and pray and labor for it - let us not grow weary. Rather, I Cor. 15:58, “... be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”