

## PSALM FORTY-SIX AND FORTY-SEVEN

*his channels make glad the city*; and not only glad, but patient, bold and defiant (Isa. 37:22) in presence of the besieger. Louder than the roar of nations is the *voice* of God; at the resounding of which *earth melteth* and the courage of her most valiant sons becomes weak as water. The minds of the singers of this song are left to supply the rest. Assyria has been overthrown in the land. The scene is one of terrible devastation. We are invited to view it, and to learn its great lesson. Wars will cease when Jehovah inflicts such *wastes* and *horrors* on those who wage them, that they will be compelled to stay the carnage. He will say *Desist* in such manner that they will *know* that He who speaks is God and must be obeyed. Then will he be *exalted among the nations*: "scattering those who in war take delight" (Ps. 68:30) and giving the nation rest and peace.

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. There seems to be a close association in the next three psalms —what is it?
2. Read again the paraphrase of verses one and two, and see the very real relevance of this psalm to our present day dilemma.
3. Allow the term "Jerusalem" in this psalm to mean the church, or "the city of our God". What then would be the river flowing through the city? Discuss.
4. Read Romans 8:31-39, and compare with verses two and three. Discuss.
5. Read the verses of the hymn *A Mighty Fortress Is Our God*, and compare with this psalm.

## PSALM 47

### DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

Israel Invites the Nations to Rejoice in the  
Universal Kingship of Her God.

### ANALYSIS

Stanza I., vers. 1, 2, The Invitation Itself, announcing the Central Fact of Jehovah's World-wide Sovereignty. Stanza II., vers. 3, 4, Israel Claims her God-given Supremacy over the Nations. Stanza III. and IV., vers. 5, 6;

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and 7, 8, God's Ascension to his Holy Throne calls for Thoughtful Praise, with Instrumental Accompaniment. Stanza V., ver. 9, Gentile Nobles Gather Themselves Together, with the Hebrew Nation, in Acknowledgment of the Ownership and Enthronement of Abraham's God.

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### (Lm.) Psalm.

- 1 All ye peoples! clap the hand,  
shout to God with the voice of jubilation;<sup>1</sup>
- 2 For Jehovah Most High fear-inspiring  
is a great king over all the earth.
- 3 He subdueth peoples under us,  
and races of men under our feet:
- 4 He chooseth for us our inheritance,  
the pride of Jacob whom<sup>2</sup> he loved.
- 5 God hath ascended with a sacred shout,  
Jehovah with the sound of a horn.
- 6 Make melody unto God make melody,  
make melody to our king make melody.
- 7 For God is king of all the earth,  
make melody with contemplation:
- 8 God hath become king<sup>3</sup> over the nations,  
God hath taken his seat<sup>3</sup> on his holy throne.
- 9 The nobles of the peoples have gathered themselves together  
with the people of the God of Abraham;  
For to God belong the shields of the earth:  
very high hath he ascended.<sup>4</sup>

(Lm. To the Chief Musician—accidentally omitted.)

(CMm.) For the sons of korah.

## PARAPHRASE

### PSALM 47

Come everyone, and clap for joy! Shout triumphant praises to the Lord!

1. Or: "of a ringing cry."

2. Or: "which."

3. "The verbs express not merely a fact but an act. God was King, but He has given fresh proof of it. He has caused Himself to be acknowledged King, and taken His seat upon His throne to judge and rule (103:19). Cp. Rev. 11:15"—Kp. Similarly—Dr.

4. *Niphal*, conjugation of *'alah*—the verb used in *kal* in ver. 5, the relation with which should be shown. Cp. for same form of verb 97:9; also, for force of cong. *niphal*, Num. 9:17, 21, 22, and in particular Eze. 9:3.

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2 For the Lord, the God above all gods, is awesome beyond words; He is the great King of all the earth.

3 He subdues the nations before us,

4 And will personally select His choicest blessings for His Jewish people<sup>1</sup>—the very best for those He loves.

5 God has ascended (into heaven)<sup>2</sup> with a mighty shout, with trumpets blaring.

6, 7 Sing out your praises to our God, our King. Yes, sing your highest praises to our King, the King of all the earth. Sing thoughtful praises!

8 He reigns above the nations, sitting on His holy throne.

9 The Gentile rulers of the world have joined with us in praising<sup>3</sup> Him—praising<sup>3</sup> the God of Abraham—for the battle shields of all the armies of the world are His trophies. He is highly honored everywhere.

### EXPOSITION

The scope of this psalm is our surest guide in the settlement of questions which mere verbal criticism cannot set at rest. Ought we to render, in the second stanza,—“He subdued,” “He subdueth,” or “He will subdue”; “He chose,” “He chooseth,” or “He will choose”? The mere circumstance that the tenses here used are imperfects, with an incipient, initialling, or repeating force will not determine this point—strange as this may seem to those who are accustomed only to Western grammars. In such cases, the known facts, or the main scope, are our best guides. Now it cannot be overlooked that this psalm is first and last an invitation to the nations of the earth to rejoice in the newly assumed Divine Sovereignty over the whole earth. This at once strongly impresses on the psalm a future reference: not only a *then* future but a *still* future reference. For if it is difficult to see how the overthrow of the Assyrians under Sennacherib could form the basis of an invitation to all nations to come and acknowledge themselves under Jehovah and at the same time under the feet of Israel; still more difficult must it be to discover such a ground of joyful submission, in the action of Israel when in the time of the Maccabees she took up arms against foreign nations. Briggs sees and frankly admits this difficulty; and his words are worth quoting. Against the witness of the Heb., Greek, and

1. Literally, “the pride of Jacob.”
2. Implied.
3. Implied.

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Latin, in support of the pronouns *under us*, *under our feet*, and in favour of a conjectural emendation, "under Him," "under His feet," he truly says: "The triumph of the people of Israel . . . certainly would have been no ground for the rejoicing of foreign nations . . . which in fact had no realisation until the Maccabean times. Then the victories were so exclusively national and hostile to other nations, that no one would have thought of asking them to share in Israel's triumph." But the remarkable thing is that even this purely conjectural change in the text, leaves the broad outlook of the psalm untouched: it still remains an enthusiastic invitation to all nations to acknowledge with gladness the newly assumed, or newly proclaimed, sovereignty of the God of Abraham over all the earth. And though "under Him," "under His feet," may look less repugnant to the nations than the present authentic reading, yet will the broad testimony of the prophets as illustrated by such passages as Isa. 14:2, 60:12, Mi. 4:8, remain unsilenced as a standing protest in favour of Hebrew supremacy in the coming kingdom, and against tampering with the witness of this psalm. Such supremacy, we must indeed suppose, will ultimately be so obtained as to make reasonable Israel's invitation to the nations of the earth to clap their hands over the new assumption of world-wide sovereignty by Israel's God. All we have any right to say, in face of the inviolable Scriptures of God, is: That, if Israel has never yet been in circumstances to tender such an invitation with any chance of its being accepted, then, in the providence of Him who is "excellent in counsel and wonderful in working," she will yet have it put in her power to sing this psalm with such sincerity and force of appeal that it shall evoke a willing response from the nations. Under the influence of considerations such as these, we may very well content ourselves to represent Israel as saying with the abiding force of a recurrent truth: *He subdueth—He chooseth*. "I am inclined, therefore," says Perowne, "with Ewald, Hengst., and Bunsen, to take both verbs as *presents* (which the previous context seems to require), either as referring to a recent act of God, or (as Delitzsch) to a continued act—'God is ever choosing Israel's inheritance anew, inasmuch as He shows Himself to be the true and mighty Protector thereof.' The *present* may be used, as in 104:2, where the act of creation is spoken of as present, because its results are present. Comp. Is. 14:1, where Israel's restoration is described as another choosing."

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The same breadth of outlook which has assisted us in the interpretation of the second stanza of this psalm, may perhaps throw light on the reference of the third, and help us to just thoughts regarding the *ascension* there spoken of: To what throne hath God ascended? On what occasion—one or many? Instead of urging either of these questions at present, it may be better to confine ourselves to two elementary facts: first, that no argument can be based upon the difference between “gone up” and “come up”—it is *either*, and therefore the neutral word “ascend” is better; second, that a form of the Hebrew word *alah*, “to ascend,” is used both in ver. 9 of this psalm and in Ps. 97:9, “Very high hath he ascended above all messengers divine”; which forcibly suggests that the ascension intended is not so much local, as relative to other beings—God’s manifest placing of inferior rulers beneath himself. This of itself subordinates the mere question of locality to more important considerations. The grand *fact* celebrated is Divine rule manifestly supreme; the *act* particularised is the assumption of proclamation or demonstration of that rule. The event forms an epoch in history. It takes place at a particular time. It can be joyfully celebrated. All nations can be called upon to celebrate it. That is what is done in this psalm. Therefore the psalm is unfulfilled. Fulfilment will settle all questions of detail. Meanwhile, side-lights of probability may fall on the general question of Divine Ascension from other sources. Cp. Exposition on Ps. 2, and see Intro., Chap. III., “Kingdom.”

There is but one other matter of interpretation here needing attention: The Massoretic text of the second line of ver. 9, says Kirkpatrick, “must be rendered ‘To be the people of the God of Abraham’ . . . ‘Unto the people’ is scarcely legitimate . . . The consonants of the word ‘*am*, ‘people,’ are identical with those of ‘*un*, ‘with’ . . . It is a natural conjecture that we should restore the preposition and render:

*The princes of the peoples are gathered together,  
Along with the people of the God of Abraham.*

The title (God of Abraham recalls the promises of blessing to the nations through Abraham (Gen. 12:2f, etc.) . . . Princes are called (the shields of the earth) as the protectors of their people. Jehovah is their overlord, and they come to acknowledge their dependence. The title *shield* is often applied to God, and sometimes to the kings and princes of Israel (Hos. 4:18, Ps. 89:18).”

STUDIES IN PSALMS  
QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. It would be well here to quote the wise words of W. G. Scroggie as to the two views of the Kingdom: "Two distinct views are taken by students of the Scriptures of the Messianic Kingdom. One is, that it is now in progress of realization in the world through the Church; and the other is, that it is to be realized in the future in the world through restored Israel. In the one view, it is entirely spiritual, and in the other, it is also temporal. The Scriptures and the course of events must decide which of these is the right view. (*Ibid.* p. 268) It is not difficult to determine which view is held by Rotherham. What is your view?
2. There *will* be a time when all people will recognize the sovereign rule of God. There *will* be a time when all nations (—or at least some out of each) will clap their hands for joy at this rule and reign of God?—When will this be?
3. Despite whatever reading we give this—(or what commentator we read) this psalm does sound like the universal triumph and rule of God—how?—when?
4. Is there some way in which this psalm could be given a spiritual application to the church today?
5. Will the church of our Lord ever conquer all nations to the extent here described? Discuss.

PSALM 48

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

Jehovah Worthy to be Praised in his Holy City, whose History rebounds to the Honour of her Shepherd-King, who will yet Lead Israel against Death.

ANALYSIS

Stanza I., vers. 1, 2, Jehovah's Greatness in his Holy City calls forth Praise for Himself and World-wide Gladness at the Elevation of his Earthly Dwelling. Stanza II., vers. 3-7, The Deliverance of His City Dramatically Described. Stanza III., vers. 9-11, A Thoughtful Recognition of the Leading