

Every Christmas season we sing the famous song of Isaac Watts—"Joy to the World." It is a great song. However, if you carefully look at the lyrics and analyze them, this song was not a praise about the birth of Christ, but about the reign of Christ.

- 1) Joy to the world! the Lord is come; let earth receive her King. Let every heart prepare Him room, and heav'n and nature sing and heav'n and nature sing and heav'n and heav'n and nature sing.
- 2) Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns; let men their songs employ; while fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy.
- 3) No more let sins and sorrows grow, nor thorns infest the ground; He comes to make His blessings flow far as the curse is found, far as the curse is found, far as, far as the curse is found.
- 4) He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove the glories of His righteousness and wonders of His love and wonders of His love and wonders, wonders of His love."

There will be great joy in this world when Jesus Christ reigns and that is precisely the subject of Psalm 47.

You cannot read the Bible without realizing that God has promised some great things to the nation Israel. He has promised her a land, a king and a kingdom.

A theme that shows up over and over again in Scripture is that one day the Kingdom will be restored to Israel and it will feature her Messiah reigning as King. Shortly before Jesus Christ ascended into heaven, He gathered His apostles together to instruct them about matters pertaining to "the kingdom of God" (Acts 1:3). The apostles asked Him this question—"Lord is it at this time you are restoring the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6).

Jesus responded and told them that it was not their job to know the time of this program of God or when He would bring it to pass; but their job was to be a witness of Jesus Christ to the world (Acts 1:7-8).

Psalm 47 is a Psalm that gives us insight as to what will happen when Jesus Christ does restore Israel to her Kingdom in which her King is reigning.

We may notice from the superscription that this is a Psalm for the choir director, which means this Psalm was to be publicly taught and sung. Furthermore, it is a Psalm of the sons of Korah, which means it is possible for sinful, finite people to praise and worship God.

The main point of the Psalm is this:

WHEN JESUS CHRIST REIGNS AS KING, ALL PEOPLES OF THE EARTH WILL EMOTIONALLY SING AND PRAISE GOD AND WORSHIP GOD FOR ALL HE HAS DONE.

There is a great musical called “The Sound of Music.” Some of the lyrics say, “the hills are alive with the sound of music.” If you carefully look down through this Psalm, you will discover that four times in a row we read the words “sing praises” (47:6 - three times; 47:7 - one time).

So this describes a time when the sound of God-exalting music will be heard all over the world. Not only will the hills be alive with the sound of music, but the entire world will be, too.

There are two general themes that are seen in this Psalm:

THEME #1 – When the King reigns there will be wonderful reasons for us to praise God.
47:1-5

Now notice carefully from **verse 1** that this moment will feature the clapping of hands and joyous shouting for “all” peoples, not just Israel. So when Jesus Christ reigns as King, specifically over Israel, “all” peoples will be praising God. Obviously there will be no jealousy or animosity toward Israel, but joyous praise for Israel and for her king.

Now there are at least five reasons why there will be joyous praise:

Reason #1 - Because Jesus Christ is the Most High God and He will be feared. **47:2a**

Notice who this King is—He is the LORD (YHWH), the most High God, and this will be a time when the whole world will fear Him and reverence Him as such.

This is why all peoples can shout for joy because all people of the world will finally come to terms with who Jesus Christ is—He is God who is to be feared.

Now we know, eschatologically speaking, that Jesus Christ will come at the end of the Tribulation as the glorious King of Kings and Lord of Lords and every eye will see Him. The whole world will reverence and worship Jesus Christ for who He is.

Reason #2 - Because Jesus Christ is King over all the earth. **47:2b**

Jesus Christ is not just “a king”; this is the “great King of Kings.” During the Millennium, He will reign over the entire earth. Finally, we will have a King who reigns in total truth and righteousness. Even though the Antichrist will try, only Jesus Christ will reign over the whole earth.

Reason #3 - Because Jesus Christ toppled powers that were dominating Israel. **47:3**

One of the things Jesus Christ will do is humble the nations and subdue them so that all nations of the world will honor Israel and His nation. This will one day be the cause of worldwide praise.

We have said this many times; those who are right with God think very highly of Israel and there will come a day when the whole world will do the same.

Reason #4 - Because Jesus Christ chose Israel. **47:4**

Israel is a beloved chosen nation of God, and during the Millennium the entire world will praise God for this. God chose Israel and her glory will be seen when Jesus Christ reigns on this earth. God is the One who chose the land that Israel would inherit.

By inserting the word “selah” here, God wants all who read this Psalm to stop and think about the fact that God did choose Israel.

There is a N.T. passage that speaks of this very thing and then relates it to the Gentiles. The passage is Romans 9:24. In eternity, the doctrine of election will be a doctrine of which all people will praise God. The doctrine of election honors God and glorifies God and in eternity people will not quibble about it, they will praise God for it. God chose us and He will also determine our eternal inheritance.

Reason #5 - Because Jesus Christ has taken His throne . **47:5**

Jesus Christ, who is God, will have ascended to His throne. He comes with the sound of a trumpet and becomes the reigning King of the world. When this happens, joyous worship and praise will be heard all over the world.

THEME #2 – When the King reigns, there will be reasons for joyous singing . **47:6-9**

When Jesus Christ takes His throne, the sound of music will be heard all over the world because people will be singing all over the world. It will be a glorious moment. Now look carefully at what is stated in these verses: 1) Sing praises to God (**47:6a**); 2) Sing praises to our King (**47:6b**); 3) God is the King (**47:7**). **Do not over look these things—Jesus Christ the King is the God !**

He is not “a God” or “a King”; He is the God and the King who reigns over the entire world and one day the entire world will sing praises to Him for who He is.

Now carefully look at the end of **verse 7**—the praises sung to God are not to be silly or stupid, they are to be skillful. What that means is that they are to line up with a skillful understanding of God’s truth and God’s program.

God does not want His people singing shallow songs or silly songs or emotional songs, He wants them singing skillful songs that are doctrinally true; specifically, about the Person and Work of Jesus Christ.

Now there are three skillful topics that God’s people will sing about:

Topic #1 - God's people will sing because God reigns over all the nations. **47:8a**

Now carefully observe from **verse 9** that God is identified as "the God of Abraham." So clearly, when Jesus Christ reigns on this earth over all the nations, one of the things all the nations will sing about is the fact that He is Israel's God.

It seems to me that most of the hymns that we sing today don't seem to skillfully present that point and even if the point is presented, it is watered down to the point that Israel is almost an afterthought.

For example, the song "We are Climbing Jacob's Ladder" is spiritualized to mean we in the Church are climbing to heaven. "We're Marching to Zion" is spiritualized to mean truth pertaining to the Church.

Well, the truth is we are not climbing Jacob's ladder and we are not marching to Zion. We are the Church and we are looking to go to heaven via the Rapture. Israel, on the other hand, is on a march to Zion and has been on that march ever since Genesis 12.

Topic #2 - God's people will sing because God sits on His holy Throne. **47:8b**

Jesus Christ is God and He will literally sit on His throne in Jerusalem. His reign will be a holy reign and His throne will be a holy throne.

Topic #3 - God's people will sing because the whole world will gather to exalt God. **47:9**

What a glorious moment this will be. When Jesus Christ reigns, the entire world will assemble themselves together to honor Israel and exalt the God who blessed her.

This will be a special time of great joy, praise, singing and exaltation of God.

Practical Lessons:

1. God is a God who is to be revered and feared.
2. Jesus Christ is God and now is the time to acknowledge truth about Him.
3. The doctrine of election is a doctrine for which we should praise God, not argue with God.
4. Israel is very special to God and should be very special to us.
5. Hymns we sing should be Biblically accurate.
6. Corporate worship that is skillful emphasizes the exaltation of God, not the experience of man.