

Psalm 47:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

O clap your hands, all ye people; shout unto God with the voice of triumph.

Analysis

O clap your hands, all ye people; shout unto God with the voice of triumph. This enthronement psalm opens with an exuberant call to universal worship, summoning all nations to acknowledge Yahweh's kingship. The imperative plural forms and the address to 'all ye people' transcend Israel, envisioning worldwide recognition of God's sovereignty—a vision ultimately fulfilled in Christ's kingdom.

"O clap your hands" (תַּקְעִיף/tiq'u-khaf) commands vigorous physical expression of joy and celebration. Clapping hands signifies triumph, victory celebration, enthusiastic approval (2 Kings 11:12, Isaiah 55:12). This isn't sedate, emotionless worship but passionate, embodied praise. The body participates in worship—hands clap, voices shout, because the whole person (not merely intellect) responds to God's greatness.

"All ye people" (כָּל-הָעִמִּים/kol-ha'ammim) universalizes the call. Not just Israel but all nations, all ethnic groups, all peoples are summoned to worship. The plural ammim (peoples/nations) emphasizes diversity—every tribe, tongue, and nation owes allegiance to this King. This anticipates the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19) and Revelation's vision of a multitude from every nation worshiping the Lamb (Revelation 7:9-10).

"Shout unto God" (הָרִיעוּ לְאֱלֹהִים/hari'u le'Elohim) uses rua, meaning to shout, raise a war cry, acclaim a king. This isn't polite applause but thunderous acclamation—the sound of subjects hailing their victorious king. Ancient coronations involved

loud public acclamation; this psalm pictures God's enthronement celebrated by all humanity.

"With the voice of triumph" (בְּקוֹל רִנָּה/beqol rinnah) describes the shout's character: rinnah means ringing cry, shout of joy, triumphant exclamation. This is victory celebration—God has conquered, achieved triumph, established His reign. The psalm anticipates Christ's ultimate victory when 'at the name of Jesus every knee should bow...and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord' (Philippians 2:10-11).

Historical Context

Psalm 47, attributed to the Sons of Korah, belongs to the 'enthronement psalms' (Psalms 93, 95-99) celebrating Yahweh's kingship. Scholars debate whether these psalms accompanied an annual enthronement festival (analogous to pagan New Year festivals) or simply celebrated God's eternal kingship through Israel's worship. Regardless, they affirm a central biblical truth: Yahweh reigns as King over all creation.

Ancient Near Eastern cultures held elaborate coronation ceremonies and annual festivals celebrating divine kingship. Babylon's Akitu festival annually re-enacted Marduk's victory and enthronement. Egypt celebrated pharaoh's divine kingship. Against this background, Israel's enthronement psalms assert: not Marduk or any national deity, but Yahweh—Israel's covenant God—reigns as universal King over all nations.

The psalm's language suggests eschatological fulfillment. While God has always reigned, His kingship isn't universally acknowledged in the present age. Nations rage, peoples rebel, kings set themselves against the LORD (Psalm 2:1-3). Yet these enthronement psalms envision the day when all nations will recognize Yahweh's sovereignty, all peoples will worship Him, all creation will submit to His reign.

This vision begins fulfilling through the gospel. Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension established His kingship (Matthew 28:18, Ephesians 1:20-23). The

church, composed of believers from every nation, already acknowledges His reign and worships Him. Missionaries carry the gospel to every people group, gathering worshipers from all nations. Yet complete fulfillment awaits Christ's return, when 'the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever' (Revelation 11:15).

Throughout church history, this psalm encouraged believers under persecution or minority status. Though surrounded by paganism or hostile governments, Christians proclaimed: God reigns! All nations will ultimately bow before Him. This confidence sustained martyrs, emboldened missionaries, and encouraged believers that human opposition cannot thwart God's purposes.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does the call to 'clap your hands' and 'shout unto God' challenge contemporary worship that may be overly reserved or emotionally suppressed?
2. What does it mean that 'all peoples' (not just Israel or the church) are commanded to worship God, and how does this relate to missions and evangelism?
3. How do we balance celebrating God's kingship now (through faith) with anticipating its future universal recognition (at Christ's return)?
4. In what ways should recognizing God as universal King over all nations affect our political views, patriotism, and national identity?

Interlinear Text

בָּקָר וְלִלְאָלָה יְמִם בָּרְעָיו בְּקָרְעָיו בְּעָמִים כָּל
H3605 all ye people H5971 O clap H8628 your hands H3709 shout H7321 unto God H430 with the voice H6963

רָגְבָה:
of triumph
H7440

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 106:47 (References God): Save us, O LORD our God, and gather us from among the heathen, to give thanks unto thy holy name, and to triumph in thy praise.

Psalms 98:4 (Parallel theme): Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all the earth: make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise.

Jeremiah 31:7 (Parallel theme): For thus saith the LORD; Sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations: publish ye, praise ye, and say, O LORD, save thy people, the remnant of Israel.

Isaiah 55:12 (Parallel theme): For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

Psalms 47:5 (References God): God is gone up with a shout, the LORD with the sound of a trumpet.

Psalms 46:1 (References God): God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

2 Kings 11:12 (References God): And he brought forth the king's son, and put the crown upon him, and gave him the testimony; and they made him king, and anointed him; and they clapped their hands, and said, God save the king.

2 Samuel 6:15 (Parallel theme): So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet.

Psalms 98:8 (Parallel theme): Let the floods clap their hands: let the hills be joyful together

Zechariah 9:9 (Parallel theme): Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.

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