

A National Celebration [Psalm 47]
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INTRODUCTION

1. I believe it was Benjamin Franklin who said:

"You just gotta ignite the light and let it shine; Just own the night like the 4th of July

'Cause baby, you're a firework; Come on, show 'em what you're worth; Make 'em go "Oh, oh, oh"

As you shoot across the sky"

*It may not have been Franklin . . .

2. We're heading into Fourth of July week which means a slew of prideful activities.

a. Of course, people mainly fixate on setting off fireworks and blowing stuff up.

1) In the city, fireworks will start this week and will continue well throughout July.

b. Whether eating meat or other apple pie, we'll feed our nationalistic pride

3. Today's text was a psalm likely written for a national holiday.

a. Most scholars believe this was sung as the ark of the covenant returned to Jerusalem

1) The ark would be carried by the priests in battle and in front of the nation.

2) It contained the Ten Commandments, Moses' rod, and manna from the desert

3) Its ultimate resting place was the temple, which is why they brought it there.

c. This psalm, then, functions as an anthem for God's people, reflecting their joy and pride

VERSES 1,2

¹ *Clap your hands, all you nations; shout to God with cries of joy.*

² *For the LORD Most High is awesome, the great King over all the earth.*

1. The return of the ark of the covenant has always been a source of great joy.

a. We see King David's joy in **2 Samuel 6:14,15**

"Wearing a linen ephod, David was dancing before the LORD with all his might, while he and all Israel were bringing up the ark of the LORD with shouts and the sound of trumpets."

b. So in this joy, he was willing to embarrass himself dancing in his underwear

c. But great joy will cause us to do abnormal things:

1) EX: Promised my daughter if the Reds won the World Series we'd stay up all night.

d. Here the joy is two-fold: it's for the ark but, more so, for whom it represents.

1) As our celebration this week is for our nation and freedom, Israel's was for their God

2) Their king reigned, not only in Jerusalem, but over all the earth.

e. As such, their were action commands given to the worshippers.

2. First the command is to CLAP.

a. It's the loudest/easiest noise that we humans are can create (loudest 110DB [jet])

1) I was at a restaurant this week & clapped and the nearby baby emulated me

2) Claps are best when communal, but this best clap ever, is the slow clap.

b. You know this right? It's popular in movies, but great in real life.

1) Can we start this now? See how it feels? We don't clap for God enough

3. We are also told to SHOUT.

a. There's nothing like a USA chant to get you feeling great.

b. Again, it's a communal action. Yell by yourselves and you're a madman.

4. We don't we do this to the Lord? It feels undignified. We can't we escape our pride.

VERSES 3-5

³ *He subdued nations under us, peoples under our feet.*

⁴ *He chose our inheritance for us, the pride of Jacob, whom he loved.*

⁵ *God has ascended amid shouts of joy, the LORD amid the sounding of trumpets.*

1. Verse4 The inheritance was the land of Israel/Jacob, given to his beloved people

2. Verse 3 is a reference to the conquest of Canaan undertaken by Joshua.
 - a. We read in **Joshua 1:2,3** that the land was given to the people of God.

"Cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them—to the Israelites. I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses."
 - b. We again, in the Psalms, run up against this "conquest" language that's uncomfortable
 - 1) But another angle to make us understand better: it was to God's choosing
 - 2) The Israelites weren't chosen b/c they were special; they were special b/c they were chosen
3. And a third command was given in verse 5: BLOW THE SHOFAR
 - a. A musical celebration long accompanied the transportation of the ark.
 - b. Again, in **2 Samuel 6:5** David ensured that it would be ushered in with noise.

"David and all Israel were celebrating with all their might before the LORD, with castanets, harps, lyres, timbrels, sistrums and cymbals."
 - c. I brought with me a shofar to worship today (show the instrument of the Israelites).

VERSES 6,7

⁶ Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises.
⁷ For God is the King of all the earth; sing to him a psalm of praise.

1. Four times in these two verses, we are commanded to SING.
 - a. As you think about it, singing is fascinating.
 - b. Singing isn't something that is unique to humans (mice, whales, and bats can)
 - 1) But only humans can carry a tune, making music and taking it with us.
2. Even if you can't sing, you need to sing. And you must sing for the Lord.
 - a. My challenge for you: sing louder, even if you can't, when we sing.

VERSES 8,9

⁸ God reigns over the nations; God is seated on his holy throne.
⁹ The nobles of the nations assemble as the people of the God of Abraham, for the kings of the earth belong to God; he is greatly exalted.

1. HE REIGNS. That is the reasons for rejoicing as the ark returns.
 - a. SEATED. The ark of the covenant was God's footstool.
 - 1) **1 Chronicles 28:2** "I had it in my heart to build a house as a place of rest for the ark of the covenant of the LORD, for the footstool of our God."
 - 2) While a king was seated, he would give commands and make judgment
 - 3) While seated, he ruled his Kingdom.
2. All of this is an allusion towards a heavenly reign.
 - a. **Revelation 15:3,4**

*"Great and marvelous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty.
 Just and true are your ways, King of the nations.
 Who will not fear you, Lord, and bring glory to your name?
 For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before you,
 for your righteous acts have been revealed."*

CONCLUSION

1. And now, another story related to another song this patriotic week: This Land is Your Land
 - a. Woody Guthrie wrote this song in the 1940's out of some discontent
 - b. The song "God Bless America" was becoming hugely popular, and Guthrie didn't like it
 - 1) He felt it wasn't a realistic description of the country.
 - 2) We know the popular verse.

*This land is your land, this land is my land
 From California to the New York Island
 From the Redwood Forest to the Gulf Stream waters
 This land was made for you and me.*

3) But there were other verses that weren't quite as popular, such as this one:

*In the squares of the city, In the shadow of a steeple;
By the relief office, I'd seen my people.
As they stood there hungry, I stood there asking,
Is this land made for you and me?*

- c. In short, it's a skeptical song, asking where's the joy for the marginalized.
- 2. This has been a peculiar season to be an American citizen.
 - a. There are scandals and controversies that abound.
 - b. No matter your political leanings, there's been something to set you off.
 - 1) It illustrates the imperfection of this country and dampens our celebrating.
- 3. This psalm, however, perhaps gives us some perspective for redirecting our passions.
 - a. We can still appreciate our freedoms but understand that there's something greater.
 - b. There is a kingdom where justice is ultimately realized, and the marginalized are free.
 - 1) The ark of the covenant was both a symbol of national pride and of the Lord.
 - c. While the ark was local, while this long was locally specific, it WAS FOR ALL PEOPLE.

Philippians 3:20,21

"But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body."