

King of the Earth

God reigns over the nations; God is seated on his holy throne (Psalm 47:8).

Scripture: Psalm 47

Song: “Praise to the Lord, the Almighty”

On June 2, 1953, more than a year after the death of her father King George, young Elizabeth II was crowned queen of the United Kingdom. Even today, footage of that coronation captivates with its pageantry and commitment to tradition, culminating when the archbishop placed the crown on Elizabeth’s head. After an hours-long ceremony, throngs lining London’s streets cheered their new monarch.

Comparing Psalm 47 with the queen’s coronation, we read of clapping, stirring music, singing, and shouts celebrating our ruler—almighty God. The psalm does not depict a ceremony instating God as King; He *is* King. No one is equal to or above Him. His dominion isn’t a country but the entire earth, universe, and everything. All royalty and people in positions of power who have ever lived, or will live, are subject to Him.

It’s not wrong to honor world leaders in proper ways, but we must keep them in their rightful place. We know who the real King is and that everyone—kings and queens, presidents and prime ministers—will bow before Him one day.

Father, You rule over all, without beginning or end. We worship You alone and praise Your name. In Jesus’ name, amen.

November 8–14. **Sherri Langton** is a magazine editor and workshop speaker at Christian writers’ conferences. She plays drums at her church and enjoys walking and swimming.

Our Proper Place

All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing (Daniel 4:35).

Scripture: Daniel 4:34-37

Song: “How Great Is Our God”

“The Eagle has landed.” On July 20, 1969, Neil Armstrong’s words awed nearly everyone watching the Apollo 11 moon landing. Grainy black-and-white images showed Armstrong and fellow astronaut Buzz Aldrin walking on the lunar surface. For Aldrin, the mission was not just rocket science. It was an opportunity to worship the Creator. Hurling back to earth, he read from Psalm 8:3-4 (*KJV*): “When I consider thy heavens, . . . what is man, that thou art mindful of him?” From Aldrin’s unique vantage point, the greatness of the Creator eclipsed His creation.

Millennia before the Apollo 11 mission, King Nebuchadnezzar made the same observation, but from a much different position. He had boasted about building Babylon for his royal residence and bragged of his power and majesty. But eventually this king lost everything, including his mind. Driven from his people, he lived among the wild animals and ate grass. But in humility, looking up to God, Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged the greatness of God and the smallness of people.

It is important to remember our proper place before God. He created us, and nothing we can achieve in this life equals what He’s done in creation—and in our hearts, through the blood of Christ and the gift of His Spirit.

Father, thank You for bending low to redeem. Thank You for how You show us each day that, despite Your greatness, You are always mindful of us. In Jesus’ name, amen.

One and Only

To the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen (Jude 25).

Scripture: Jude 20-25

Song: “God and God Alone”

Coexist. The word stares at me from bumper stickers on cars ahead of me at the stoplights. Each letter represents a major religion, belief, or path. Alongside Christianity (the cross, t) and Judaism (the Star of David, x) are Islam (crescent and star, c), paganism or Wicca (i), and the Chinese yin-yang of Taoism (s); a peace sign (o) and male-female symbol (e) complete the word. Despite the peace-loving premise, the symbols convey an underlying, and false, message: one religion or path/belief is just as good as the other.

Jude would agree we should live in harmony, but he would not support the level ground of coexisting spiritually. In his day, false teachers had snuck in among believers and were denying Jesus as the only way to God. Jude’s ending doxology declares the glory, majesty, power, and authority of God alone. We should not miss the critical adjective “only”—that comes just before “God”—earlier in the Jude 25 sentence. This is Jude’s way of saying that God coexists as God with no one. He has always been matchless and always will be.

Like the believers in Jude’s day, we live among people who deny Jesus as the only way to God. The good news for us is that no bumper sticker fad will change God’s truth.

Father, help me stand fast in my faith, affirming that You and You alone are God. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Faithful Father

You are the helper of the fatherless (Psalm 10:14).

Scripture: Psalm 10:12-18

Song: “Good, Good Father”

“Please help. Your gift can go a long way to help a child.” We hear such pleas from organizations requesting aid for orphans in other countries. Pictures of children with wide eyes and sad faces move us. Thousands of miles away from the situation, many who are stirred by the orphans’ plight respond with financial support.

In Bible times, charitable organizations for orphans most likely didn’t exist. A tithe set aside every three years provided at least something for them, as well as gleanings reserved for the foreigner, fatherless, and widow (Deuteronomy 14:28-29; 24:19-22). The psalmist could have had this in mind, as well as other needs, when he wrote the verses in today’s reading. He groups the fatherless with the helpless, afflicted, and oppressed. In essence, he implores God, “Please help. Act for those who cannot do for themselves.” But in nearly the same breath, the psalmist assures the reader that God needs no reminder. He is a God of justice and compassion for the fatherless. He sees their grief, listens to their cry, and defends their cause.

God’s passion for orphans heightens our awareness to get involved. We can do this through organizational sponsorships and prayer. Perhaps some of us can adopt, foster parent, or mentor. In all these, we bless the heart of God by extending His heart to those without parents.

Father, thank You for looking out for the ones who have no earthly father. Move us to action with Your compassion for their sake. In Jesus’ name, amen.

The Ultimate Price

And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth (Revelation 11:3, *KJV*).

Scripture: Revelation 11:3-10

Song: “God Is Our Victory”

Since the days of the early church, those who spread the gospel have often met with resistance. These courageous followers have shared the good news regardless of the consequences, even at the high price of their lives. Open Doors, an organization that reports on modern-day martyrs, shares disturbing news: Every day, Christians die for their faith in various countries named on the World Watch List. More than 4,000 Christians died between 2017 and 2018 because of their beliefs. Another 245 million face intense persecution.

The fact of persecution of Christians will continue until our Lord returns. Revelation 11 tells of two witnesses who die for their faith in the last days. These are not ordinary men. They are given tremendous power to kill their enemies and perform extraordinary acts (Revelation 11:5-6). Eventually, like so many martyrs before them, they are overcome and killed (v. 7).

In all the mysteries and complexities of this passage, a significant message comes through: The two witnesses keep speaking of God, not in their own ability but in His. They inspire us that God’s message will continue through to the end in the power of the Spirit. Death cannot stop it.

Father, we know that as Your people we are not immune to persecution. Help us not to fear but to remain faithful in our witness through Your power. In Jesus’ name, amen.

A Firm Foundation

The LORD is robed in majesty and armed with strength; indeed, the world is established, firm and secure (Psalm 93:1).

Scripture: Psalm 93

Song: “Leaning on the Everlasting Arms”

School shootings. Economic turmoil. Social and political unrest. Terrorism. When I see such events on the news, it doesn't take much for me to feel as though the world is far from being firm and secure. I felt the same way when I faced personal turmoil in the past: a layoff that shook my financial security, and then my personal terrorist—cancer. Despite what I know to be true of God's character and faithfulness in such times, I find myself needing reassurance of God's control over human affairs.

Psalm 93 provides that reassurance. Its five verses pack a lot of praise for the Lord's might and majesty. The first verse sets the tone and settles the nervous heart in troublesome times. “The Lord reigns,” the psalmist says. The one who always was and always will be holds absolute power over His creation. Because of His strength, not ours, the world doesn't fall apart; it is fixed in place.

One day, of course, the earth will pass away, and all things will be made new. In the meantime, we will face challenges that will rock our faith. But we can find firm footing, not on human answers and ingenuity but on God's sovereignty.

Father, I don't know what will happen tomorrow, but I'm glad You know and that You understand my fears. Help me hold tightly to You. In Jesus' name, amen.

Forever!

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, *KJV*).

Scripture: Revelation 11:11-19

Song: “When We All Get to Heaven”

Traditionally, the last Sunday of the year is one of the best worship times at my church, with the choir and orchestra performing the “Hallelujah Chorus.” Playing timpani in the orchestra allows me a special experience. For those few minutes, the rousing music raises me from the temporal to the eternal. One of my favorite parts is when the basses burst forth with “And he shall reign for ever and ever.” Each vocal part follows, with the same words layering on top of each other, until “for ever and ever” shakes the walls of the sanctuary—and maybe the portals of Heaven itself.

The repetition of those words pounds my heart like a mallet on the timpani and drives home a message of hope. One day we’ll cast off this mortal frame, and Christ will rule at last. Unlike earthly leaders, His dominion will have no limit in a place where there is no death or decay, no tragedy or tears.

What John the Revelator wrote once in Revelation 11:15, George Frideric Handel repeated 14 times in his “Hallelujah Chorus.” He was compelled to do so. It is a truth worth hearing again and again until the day we praise Christ with all the saints—forever.

Father, I can’t wait for the day when this old life is gone and the new begins. Keep me faithful and focused on Christ in the meantime. In Jesus’ name, amen.