

Christ's Advent in the Psalms

Make a Joyful Noise to the Lord

Psalm 98:1-9

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Scripture

During this Season of Advent we have been looking at “Christ’s Advent in the Psalms.”

Tonight I want to examine briefly Psalm 98. This Psalm pulsates with joy and expectation at the coming of the Lord. This Psalm is a call to make a joyful noise to the Lord.

Let us read Psalm 98:1-9:

A Psalm.

¹ Oh sing to the Lord a new song,
for he has done marvelous things!

His right hand and his holy arm
have worked salvation for him.

² The Lord has made known his salvation;
he has revealed his righteousness
in the sight of the nations.

³ He has remembered his steadfast love and
faithfulness
to the house of Israel.

All the ends of the earth have seen
the salvation of our God.

⁴ Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth;
break forth into joyous song and sing praises!

⁵ Sing praises to the Lord with the lyre,
with the lyre and the sound of melody!

⁶ With trumpets and the sound of the horn
make a joyful noise before the King, the Lord!

⁷ Let the sea roar, and all that fills it;
the world and those who dwell in it!

⁸ Let the rivers clap their hands;

let the hills sing for joy together
'before the Lord, for he comes
to judge the earth.
**He will judge the world with righteousness,
and the peoples with equity.** (Psalm 98:1-9)

Introduction

Isaac Watts is known as the “Father of English Hymnody” and he is credited with writing more than 500 hymns, including “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross” and “Joy to the World!” “Joy to the World!” is often classified as a Christmas carol but it is really Watts’ Christocentric interpretation of Psalm 98. It is a description of the Advent of Christ, particularly his Second Advent.

Regarding Psalm 98, we don’t know the name of the author. It is one of fifty anonymous Psalms. The Psalm was written to praise the Lord for a great victory over Israel’s enemy. Scholars believe that this was the victory that led to the return of the Jewish exiles from their Babylonian captivity (*cf.* Daniel 5 and Ezra 1). The Psalmist celebrates a recent victory that also points to the ultimate victory of the Lord.

Lesson

Psalm 98:1-9 teaches us to make a joyful noise to the Lord.

Let’s use the following outline:

1. The Lord Is Savior (98:1-3)
2. The Lord Is King (98:4-6)
3. The Lord Is Judge (98:7-9)

I. The Lord Is Savior (98:1-3)

First, let us make a joyful noise to the Lord because the Lord is Savior.

Psalm 98 begins with these words in verse 1, “**A PSALM. Oh sing to the LORD a new song, for he has done marvelous things! His right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him.**” God had rescued his people. He had saved them. He had done marvelous things for them. So the people of God were called to sing “**a new song.**” This was to be song about the Lord who was the Savior of his people.

The Psalmist continues in verse 2, “**The LORD has made known his salvation; he has revealed his righteousness in the sight of the nations.**” The Psalmist wants all the nations surrounding Israel to know that the LORD is their powerful Savior. He has made himself known in the salvation of his people.

The reason that the Lord is the Savior of his people is revealed in verse 3, “**He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel. All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.**” The Psalmist encourages his people with the truth that God is always faithful to his covenant. He rescued his people from their enemy.

And he will rescue his people once again. How will he do it? The Lord rescues his people as their Savior in the Advent of Christ. The First Advent of Christ took place two millennia ago. And the Second Advent of Christ will take place in the not-too-distant future. That is when Jesus will return and set up his kingdom on earth.

So, let me ask you: are you able to make a joyful noise to the Lord because the Lord is your Savior?

II. The Lord Is King (98:4-6)

Second, let us see make a joyful noise to the Lord because the Lord is King.

The Psalmist writes in verse 4, “**Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises!**” If anyone has a song to sing, it is the people of God. We have been rescued from sin and Satan and hell. We have been rescued from the wrath of God. And we are expecting our coming King to come and complete our redemption.

The Psalmist continues in verses 5-6, “**Sing praises to the LORD with the lyre, with the lyre and the sound of melody! With trumpets and the sound of the horn make a joyful noise before the King, the LORD!**” In ancient times, as in modern times, whenever there was a coronation it would also include a great procession. Among those participating in the procession would be instrumentalists and singers marching and singing praises to their King.

Here the Psalmist is encouraging God’s people to use instruments to aid their singing to the Lord. Lyre and trumpets and horn are listed here as aids to our songs of praise to the Lord. The Psalmist wants our highest expressions of music to bring praise and adoration and glory to our Creator and Redeemer and King.

A quick survey of a hymnal shows how much the people of God are called upon to sing the praise of God. One of the carols we sing at Christmas is “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing.” It was written by Charles Wesley, who wrote thousands of hymns. The first stanza opens with these words, “Hark! The herald angels sing / ‘Glory to the newborn King;’ / Peace on earth and mercy mild; / God and sinners reconciled.’ / Joyful, all ye nations rise, / join the triumph of the skies; / with angelic

host proclaim, / ‘Christ is born in Bethlehem!’ / Hark the herald angels sing, / ‘Glory to the newborn King.’” In this carol, we are called to join with the angelic host to praise our newborn King, Jesus.

So, let me ask you: are you able to make a joyful noise to the Lord because the Lord is your King?

III. The Lord Is Judge (98:7-9)

And third, let us make a joyful noise to the Lord because the Lord is Judge.

The Psalmist has written of the Lord as a Savior and as a King. Now he presents the Lord as a Judge who will one day come and deal with the world as he once dealt with the Babylonians. He writes in verse 7, “**Let the sea roar, and all that fills it; the world and those who dwell in it!**” The seas and the world and all those who dwell in it are to praise the Lord.

The Psalmist concludes Psalm 98 with these words, “**Let the rivers clap their hands; let the hills sing for joy together before the LORD, for he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with equity**” (98:8-9). The rivers and the hills are now summoned to praise the Lord. And the reason they are to praise the Lord is given: it is because the Lord is coming. Like Psalm 96, the Lord is coming to judge the world with righteousness and the people with equity. This is a reference to the Second Advent of Jesus. When he returns, it will be to judge all the people. All history as we know it will be over. At that time, the Lord will set up the new earth with the New Jerusalem at the heart of it. Following the final judgment, all the elect will spend all eternity with the Lord in the new earth.

Conclusion

Therefore, having analyzed Psalm 98:1-9, let us be prepared for the Second Advent of Jesus.

Pastor Wayne Cordeiro tells the story about his three-year-old daughter Amy. She was in her preschool Christmas concert. About 30 preschoolers came on stage and filled all the risers. A teacher had an old nylon string guitar that she probably had not played since the Christmas program the previous year. She was leading them in the singing of “Joy to the World!”

The children were only three-years old. They could barely speak in complete sentences, let alone sing full measures of music. Undaunted, the teacher began, “Joy to the World!” But the children were more interested in finding their parents: “Hi, Dad! Hi, Mom!” The teacher kept singing, “Joy to the World!” Then Amy saw her Dad. He took a picture of her. The teacher kept singing, “Joy to the World!” Just then one of the boys in the back of the risers began to fall backwards. He bravely took four others with him. Bang! The teacher kept singing, “Joy to the World!”

It was absolute chaos! When the song was done, all the parent jumped to their feet and gave the children a standing ovation.

After it was done, Wayne thought, “We just gave a standing ovation to the worst concert we’ve ever heard. I just took pictures of the worst concert I’ve ever heard.” Why? It was because Wayne’s daughter Amy was singing. He applauded not because of her performance but because of their relationship.

Jesus came on Christmas so that you can have a relationship with him. Repent of your sin and believe in him so that you can begin your relationship with him tonight. Amen.

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develop them to Christlike maturity,
equip them for their ministry in the church
and life mission in the world,
in order to magnify God's name.*

Sermons by Rev. Freddy Fritz

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