

PRAISE THE SAVIOR, KING, AND JUDGE (Psa 98) CBC-23, 30 Aug 2020

Praising God is our high calling and there is no higher cause for it than the LORD Himself in His identity and mighty works. Rehearsing this is both the substance and motivation of true worshippers that please Him (Jn 4.23). Psa 98 illustrates gloriously (read aloud).

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Praise the LORD who saved us, and reigns, and will judge.

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Before the grounds/motivation for praise in the LORD and His deeds, consider the ACT of praise according to this psalm. 1) **MUSICAL**. “A Psalm” (title) means a song for worshipping the LORD. “O sing a new song” (1), “sing praise” (4), the musical instruments (5, 6) all denote musical praise. Worshipful thoughts and talk and writing are not enough. Strike up a tune! His majesty deserves joyful songs from us! Something is seriously wrong, spiritually and morally, with those who refuse His call! 2) **ALWAYS WARRANTED**. “A new song” is not = newly composed but may be old songs newly offered after fresh instances of His grace to us, “for he hath done marvelous things” (1). The constant call implies constant deliverances for us. For a true Christian, no day or hour lacks reasons for your praise to the LORD. 3) **JOYFUL, EXUBERANT**. Even our laments contain joy. Nehemiah’s sadness serving the king was rightly exceptional (Neh 2.1, 2). “Cursed be he that doeth the work of the LORD deceitfully” or “with slackness” (Jer 48.10 ESV). Outward joy must reflect inward. Banish mumbled praise to the LORD! Let your joy be seen and heard!

Psa 98 clearly seems to have three parts (3 vv. each; 9 total) distinguished by time [past, present, future] and divine acts [saved, reigns, will judge].

- I. Praise Our Savior in the Past (1-3). Note past tense in each verse. Note “victory” (1c) for His people, “salvation” (2a, 3b), “his mercy, faithfulness to the house of Israel” (3a). → God’s past act of rescuing His people from their bondage, miseries, death, etc. Countless instances from Jewish history (patriarchs, exodus, wilderness, Promised Land, days of the kings, etc.). How much more now for us in Christ!
 - Miraculously (1b). “Marvelous” (Heb.) → of a supernatural act of God (causing astonishment) often deviating from the normal course (or laws) of nature (LBSL), surpassing, extraordinary (BDB), something ordinarily too difficult to be done. Climax of all such saving acts in Jesus Christ our Savior—incarnation of God, painful suffering/shameful death, healing stripes, life-imparting death and resurrection, etc.! “Doubtless [Psa 98] is messianic [says] Luther, Horne, Poole, Henstenberg, Calvin, Scott, and many others” (Plumer). E.g., “this again is a prophecy concerning the preaching of Christ and the spread of his kingdom” (Luther). This gospel-key unlocks the psalm to the richest meditations for a Christian.
 - Triumphantly (1c). Enemies implied; battlefield/warfare metaphor. Christ on the cross vanquished our corruption, guilt, alienation, and all the hosts of hell against us (Col 1.13; 2.15; Rev 12.10).

- Internationally (2b, “nations” or “Gentiles,” mg.). Christ is the salvation God prepared before the face of all people, a light to lighten the Gentiles (Luke 2.30-32). The gospel goes out (Acts 1.8).
- Faithfully (3a, “steadfast love and faithfulness,” alt.). Christ the LORD is “the hope of Israel” (Jer 14.8; Acts 28.20), the expectation of salvation based on God’s promise.
- Gloriously (3b). The emphasis on all “seeing the salvation of our God” suggests this redounded to God’s public glory, the highest end for all creation, the best consequence of redemption (Rom 11.36). All around the world today, the greatest manifestation of the glory of God is the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ which we preach!

“The deepest meaning of [Psa 72] becomes clear, then, only in the inauguration of the kingly reign of Jesus Christ” (*Annotated Luther*, 6.229). Also with Psa 98. Similar language before (e.g. 96.11-13; expounded before). The literal sense is plain. Now consider the redemptive-historical.

II. Praise Our King in the Present (4-6)

Jehovah reigns eternally (Dan 4.34, 35). He is Creator/Sustainer/Ruler. Doubters fail to grasp the Creator/creature distinction. His reign alone (wise, benevolent, just) is ample reason for loud, musical praise to Him!

But Psa 98 esp. anticipates *the mediatorial reign* of Jesus Christ *still future* for the psalmist. This is a “prophetic present”: so sure it’s as good as done already (cf. 6b; cf. 96.10). Now, since His incarnation, death, resurrection, ascension, “God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2.36; cf. 5.30, 31). Christ came not only as Savior (Psa 98.1-3) but also to receive His kingdom! He is the nobleman of the parable (Luke 19.11-27). God’s kingdom with Jesus enthroned has already begun, is growing, and to be completed at His return! Intensity of musical praise increases → OT anticipation (good: local, typical), NT inauguration/continuation (better: worldwide, spiritual), future consummation (greatest: sinless, unfettered, complete, eternal; Rev 15.2-4).

III. Praise Our Judge in the Future (7-9). Reigning/judging both kingly functions. Some resist His reign (Luke 19.14). For them His enemies, severe judgment is coming (Luke 19.27).

Jehovah is the supreme Judge and shall judge all in the last day, but Psa 98 points esp. to Jesus, God Incarnate (John 5.22, 23; Acts 10.38-43).

How is Christ’s final judgment a matter of joyful praise? 1) Signals the end of this miserable ago/start of future glory, 2) Is the greatest glorification yet of Christ our Savior/King/Judge, whom we love supremely, 3) Totally rescues, vindicates, rewards all His maligned followers, 4) Defeats forever Satan, demons, and all the reprobate, bringing them to holy justice.

Applications: 1) trust Christ, 2) persevere, 3) praise Him with Psa 98!

Cf. Isaac Watts’ psalter: “Joy to the World” (Psa 98 Part 2). Ω