

## OUR HOLY KING (Psa 99)

CBC—13 Sep 2020

Read Psa 99. “Only once in sacred Scripture is an attribute of God elevated to the third degree. Only once is a characteristic of God mentioned three times in succession. The Bible says that God is holy, holy, holy [Isa 6.3]. Not that He is merely holy, or even holy, holy. He is holy, holy, holy. The Bible never says that God is love, love, love, or mercy, mercy, mercy, or wrath, wrath, or justice, justice, justice. It does say that he is holy, holy, holy, the whole earth is full of His glory” (R. C. Sproul, *The Holiness of God*, 39). Yet Psa 99 does this in a different way (cf. vv. 3, 5, 9).

Psa 99 is a “royal psalm” celebrating God as King. The sovereignty of God is absolute, effective over all His creatures/actions. Unlike the “gods,” Jehovah is omnipotent and irresistible. “No one can hold back his hand or say to him: ‘What have you done?’” (Dan 4.35 NIV). The Almighty reigns, so His chosen people are sure to be saved and His enemies defeated.

All about God is holy: holy majesty, holy justice, etc. (see the six points).

Each facet of His glorious holiness demands a proper response from us.

NOTE: Theology is practical! Doctrine shapes worship, life, ethics, etc.

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*Our holy King calls us to respond to Him in many appropriate ways.*  
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1. **GODLY FEAR BEFORE HIS HOLY MAJESTY** (1-3). His MAJESTY: “Reigns” = rules as King, even over “the people” (1a, Jews and Gentiles—> everyone). “Sitteth” = “sits enthroned” (1b ESV). Cover of Ark of the Covenant with 2 golden “cherubim” (mighty angels; Exod 25.22), a portable throne. “Great” (2a) = majestic (context); “high” (2b) = exalted —> absolute supremacy, “above all the people” (2b, same word as 1a). The “name” (3a) of God is all that He is/reputed to be. “Holy” (3b) = otherness (incomparable) and moral perfection (1 Jn 1.5). Our RESPONSE: 1st, “tremble,” “be moved” (1a), shake or quake, effect of fear. 2nd, “praise” (3a), “to extol the greatness of God and His works.”
2. **PATIENT TRUST IN HIS HOLY JUSTICE** (4). His JUSTICE: “Mighty king who loves *justice*” (4a, Tanakh), what is truly right. “Equity” (4b), what is truly fair. “Executest [does] judgment [same as 4a] and righteousness” (4c), outward show of His righteousness. Our RESPONSE: Patient trust (implied) because final judgment is not yet. Believing it is inevitable because God is just helps us wait for it.
3. **HUMBLE WORSHIP OF HIS HOLY WORTHINESS** (5, 9). His WORTHINESS: “LORD” (5a, 9a), that unique, ineffable name. “His footstool” (5b, cf. Isa 66.1), “His holy hill” (9b), Zion, temple mount. Our RESPONSE: “Exalt,” to elevate [His reputation, not Him] by praise; extol, glorify.
4. **HOPEFUL PRAYER FROM HIS HOLY FAITHFULNESS** (6, 8a). His FAITHFULNESS: Moses, Aaron, Samuel (6ab) priests/prophets called by the Lord, whose prayers He answered according to His promises. Our RESPONSE: Imitate Moses, praying in hope for ourselves and others.

5. **DUTIFUL OBEDIENCE TO HIS HOLY WORD** (7). His WORD: God “spoke to them in the cloudy pillar” (7a), a visible sign of His presence in those days. “He gave them” “his testimonies and the ordinance” (7b), verbal revelation, *holy* Scripture, revealing His own holiness. Our RESPONSE: “they *kept* his testimonies” (7b), “obeyed a command with diligence and in detail” (DBL #9068), observed, conformed to it. Faith precedes, fosters such obedience. Grace enables, not negates it (Tit 2.11, 12).

6. **CONFIDENT APPROACH THROUGH HIS HOLY FORGIVENESS** (8bc). His FORGIVENESS: “God forgave them” (8b) many times (Num 14.19, 20). He also “punished them when they went wrong” (8c NLT), as a loving father corrects his beloved son (Heb 12.6). Forgive = lit., “take away,” fig., to pardon, remit, cancel guilt. An attribute of God (Exod 34.7). Our RESPONSE: To draw near in worship (Psa 130.4). John Owen:

Although, O Lord, no man can approach unto thee, stand before thee, or walk with thee, if thou shouldst mark their sins and follies according to the tenor of the law, nor could they serve so great and holy a God as thou art; yet because I know from thy revelation of it that there is also with thee, on the account of Jesus Christ the propitiation, pardon and forgiveness, I am encouraged to continue with thee, waiting for thee, worshipping of thee, when, without this discovery, I should rather choose to have rocks and mountains fall upon me, to hide me from thy presence (WJO 6.383).

Thus Psa 99 esp. points to the Lord Jesus Christ, as Martin Luther said:

The whole aim of the psalm is to exhort people to exalt Christ, of whom it knew that He would be despised because of His having assumed humanity. For if these words were said about God not incarnate, what need is there of saying them? Since it would have been certain that among them He alone is the Most High (Works 11.277).

Not just the part of how God forgives us through the sacrifice of His Son Jesus in our place is about Him, but the very King so highly extolled here is Christ Himself. He is the fullest revelation of God our holy King. 1) Who exhibits holy MAJESTY like Jesus, the righteous One, the Lord of lords and King of kings? 2) Who showed His holy JUSTICE like Jesus, suffering God’s wrath on the cross for sinners, and coming again to punish all remaining sin? 3) Who possesses such holy WORTHINESS to praised like Him (Rev 5.9). 4) Who is FAITHFUL like Jesus to keep His promises to His people? 5) Who gives His WORD for us to obey as His loyal disciples (Matt 28.20)? 6) It is through this Man Jesus that we have FORGIVENESS of sins (Acts 13.38, 39). Now, through Christ, we can “come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb 4.16).

Let us therefore fear, trust, worship the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us pray in His name, obey His commandments, and draw near to God through Him. He, our holy King, calls us to respond appropriately in all these ways. Ω