

Psalm 98-100

Psalm 98 interestingly enough was the Psalm that inspired Isaac Watts to write what's become one of the single most popular Christmas Carols on the planet "Joy to the world." But the irony to it all is that in reality it wasn't written about the 1st coming of Christ but about the 2nd coming. It was written concerning the coming Messianic Kingdom, not the Christ child born in a manger. "Joy to the world the Lord the Lord is come, let earth receive her King. Let every heart prepare Him room and heaven and nature sing." We sing the song so as to stir up the good news of Christ's 1st coming. That wasn't Isaac's intent at all. He wrote the song to stir up the good news of His 2nd coming. Be that as it may we read beginning in Vs 1...

Vs1-3

Once again the psalmist exhorts us to "Sing to the Lord a new song." I have to confess that there are times (as one who teaches the Word) when I find it difficult to teach from a fresh perspective something that we heard many, many times before in a short period of time. The psalms are jam packed with the exhortation to sing to the Lord a new song. Or perhaps we could understand that more along the lines of, "Stay true to your 1st love relationship with the Lord." As we've mentioned before it's not necessarily new lyrics to a different melody that constitutes a new song. You can sing a familiar song from a fresh incentive in your heart to the Lord; the idea being that your love relationship with the Lord should be kept fresh and clean as opposed to growing stale or stagnate. But with regard to a new fresh twist on something we've heard so many times I have to remind myself that if God finds it necessary to be in His word, than I have to conclude that it's necessary for me to hear it and receive the instruction of it whether I've heard it before or not.

Remember when Paul was writing to the Philippians; he said this, "*Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. For me to write the same things to you is not tedious, but for you it is safe.*" Phil 3:1 A large part of our walk and relationship with the Lord as it pertains to His word isn't about have some new thing *revealed* to us so much as it is about having things we've already learned stated again as a *reminder* for us. For us it is "safe" to be reminded of the same things lest we forget or grow lethargic toward the principles and precepts of the word of God.

"Sing to the Lord a new song!" Why? For He has done marvelous things; whether you want to talk about *creation*, *salvation*, or the *revelation* of His word, "He has done marvelous things" the way He works in you and me from day to day, "He has done marvelous things." We do well to praise Him for His marvelous, wondrous works.

There where it says that His right hand and His holy arm have gained the victory; what that means is that God does what He does in His own strength and by His own power. He doesn't need my help, or your help. with out *Him* we can do nothing, with out us there's nothing He can't do.

Vs2

Now with regard to its interpretation the Psalmist here is obviously in reference to a particular victory that God has granted to Israel. However as for an application we can't help but see Christ all in this. "He has made known His salvation;" salvation didn't come through a philosophy, or ideology, it didn't come through a particular set of do's and don'ts.

It came through a *person*, the person of Jesus Christ God has made known His Salvation. In Luke Ch 2 we read an interesting account concerning a man by the name of Simeon, tradition tells us that he was over 100 yrs old by the time the text catches up to him. We read there that he was a devout man, one who was just and awaiting the Consolation of Israel. The Holy Spirit had somehow revealed to him that he wouldn't see death until he'd seen the Savior. One day the Spirit somehow informed him, "Today is the day, your eyes will see the Christ." He made his way to the temple, perhaps expecting to see a massive entourage, soldiers escorting a king in a military procession. What he found was a peasant couple carrying a baby boy. Have you discovered that Jesus doesn't always show up exactly like you expect Him to? But we read there in Luke Ch 2 that when Simeon saw this baby boy just 8 days old, "...*he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said: 'Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, According to Your word; For my eyes have seen Your salvation Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel.*" Luke 2:28-32 "The Lord has made known His salvation."

It's His desire to continue to *make known* His salvation. Jesus said, "*Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.*" Mark 16:15 God has made know and continues to make known that Jesus is the way, the truth and the life and that no one comes to the Father but through Him. Not only has God made known, not only does He continue to make known, but He will see to it personally that all know before He comes to judge the earth. He's commissioned you and me to make the gospel known but ultimately He'll tend to the matter personally before the kingdom is established on earth. We read in Rev 14 where prior to the Lord's return that God will commend the task of preaching the gospel to a particular angel. We read, "*Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth — to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people — saying with a loud voice, 'Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.'*" Rev 14:6-7

The word “heaven” in that Vs speaks of the atmosphere above us, the sky. God will get the gospel out to the ends of the earth before His return, He’s made known His salvation. “His righteousness He’s revealed in the sight of the nations.” Again in the person of Jesus Christ 2 Cor 5:21, *“For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”* Jesus said that unless our righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees we’ll by no means enter the kingdom of Heaven. That was a tall order and everyone knew it, these were the guys who were meticulous in their observance of the law. Carefully tithing one seed out of every 10 from their increase, so careful to avoid eating blood that if a gnat flew in their mouths they’d gag themselves to insure that it’d been purged, they lived by every letter of the law. Jesus said, “You’ve got to do better than that.” Of course He was pointing out that righteousness isn’t found in being able to corral myself outwardly, but that I needed to be cleansed inwardly. Something that none of us can do for ourselves; that’s why Paul said that he counted everything that might be gain to him in this world as garbage that he might gain Christ. All the things that were working for him as a legalistic Pharisee worked against him in the Lord. He said he threw all of that self reliance away that he might gain Christ, *“...and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;”* Philippians 3:9 Christ is both; our salvation and our righteousness.

Vs3

Again these statements find application in Christ, “All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.” We read in the book of Isaiah, *“Indeed He says, ‘It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob, And to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.’”* Isaiah 49:6 and Again, *“The Lord has made bare His holy arm In the eyes of all the nations; And all the ends of the earth shall see The salvation of our God.”* Isaiah 52:10

Vs4-6

How anyone could read through the psalms and somehow glean the idea that God doesn’t like music, or thinks musical instruments are of the devil is beyond me. God loves when we make music to Him and sing our praises to Him, shouting to Him, our praise should be an overflow of enthusiasm because He has loved us and given Himself for us having saved us from eternal destruction and separation from Him. He’s made known to us His salvation, He’s imputed to us His righteousness, “Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth, break forth in song, rejoice, and sing praises.”

Vs7-9

Over and over again we read in the psalms of the Lord's righteous judgment. "He's coming to judge the earth, with righteousness He shall judge the world." In Acts Ch 17 we find Paul preaching repentance because God "...has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead." Acts 17:31 Creation itself will enjoy restoration, "Let the sea roar...the rivers clap their hands...the hills be joyful before the Lord." "Joy to the world the Lord is come, let earth receive her King! Let every heart prepare Him room and heaven and nature sing."

Psalm 99

Psalm 99 centers around the holiness of God, in the long list of God's attributes probably the 1st and foremost attribute He has (if you can place them in some sort of class) is that He is *Holy*. He is separate from you and me, of a different order altogether (set apart). We've spoken before of the characteristics of holiness, being set apart. But the beautiful thing about God's holiness or "set apartness" is the fact that rather than drawing a circle around Himself and saying, "I'm different than you, you stay away from Me, I'm clean, you're unclean." He invites you and me to partake in His holiness, to share in His holiness through Christ... We find 3xs in this psalm the phrase, "He is holy." We find it in Vs 3, again in Vs 5, and then finally in Vs 9. So we have this psalm broken down into 3 stanzas, 3 sections (if you will) revolving around this phrase, "He is holy."

Vs1-3

Another call to praise the great and awesome name of the Lord, and of course when we speak of the "name" of God we're talking about all that is tantamount to who He is. When you do something in someone's name you do what you do on their behalf, you're reflecting them, their person, their name. We're to praise His holy name, who He is; holy, high, lifted up, full of love and mercy, righteousness and truth.

He is sovereign (Vs 1) "The Lord reigns," God is sovereign and He is in control. He dwells between the cherubim.

What does that mean? “He dwells between the cherubim.”? As you know *cherubim* are a specific class of angelic beings. We know that Michael is an “Arc angel,” perhaps Gabriel is as well but we don’t know the bible doesn’t say. Seraphim are another class of angelic beings. We read in Isa 6:1-3, “*In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one cried to another and said: ‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!’”*”

So there are at least 3 classes of angels, there is at least 1 arc angel, beyond that there are seraphim and cherubim that we know of. We know that Satan is of the “cherub class” of angelic beings. As far as structure goes he was evidently the highest ranking cherub created, we read where God said of him (in Ezekiel 28) that he was the *anointed cherub* who covers; established by God and on the holy mountain of God. Perfect in all of his ways until the day iniquity was found in his heart.

Ezekiel also describes (in Ch 10) the cherubim that he seen and speaks of these wheels with in wheels that looked like beryl stone (kind of a translucent golden/yellowish) and how they moved in straight lines in any of 4 directions. Now it’s interesting that so often UFO sightings report these disc or wheel like features that move very quickly in linear, very straight line kind of fashion. I believe that it is possible that often times these people aren’t complete quacks but have perhaps had some sort of spiritual encounter of a satanic fashion. It’s not uncommon for “UFO/ extraterrestrial” type phenomena to be closely related to cultic activity. “Are you saying that people who see UFOs are seeing fallen cherubim who are seeking to lead them astray?” Not conclusively or dogmatically, but I would say it’s a possibility.

Now, the Lord “dwells between the cherubim.” You recall that when God visited with Moses on the MT that God gave to Moses a blueprint of heaven in the tabernacle. He then instructed him to build the tabernacle according to the design he was given on the MT, and in the holy of holies he was to place the ark; that box of acacia wood covered in pure gold with in which would be Aaron’s rod that budded, a jar of manna, and the table of the law. Then he was to have lid formed/fashioned out of gold and as part of the lid there was to be 2 cherubim of pure gold with their wings outstretched covering the lid. The lid was called what? The “Mercy seat” it was there that God said He would meet with them from above the mercy seat, that place where the blood of the sacrifice for the sins of the people was to be sprinkled once annually on the great day of atonement by the high priest. We read in Exodus 25:22 where the Lord told Moses, “*And there I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are on the ark of the Testimony, about everything which I will give you in commandment to the children of Israel.*”

Of course those things foreshadowed what would be fulfilled in Christ, Jesus is our Mercy Seat, it is through Him that God meets with us and we are so thankful for that. If God were to leave out the mercy seat, the blood of the sacrifice there would be nothing between us and Him outside of the law which only reveals our sin and condemns us in the sight of His righteousness. But we thank God that He saw fit to “sandwich” between the law and Himself (as it pertains to His relationship with us) mercy.

He meets with us on the basis of His mercy through the sacrifice and shed blood of Jesus Christ “He dwells between the cherubim” a reference to the mercy seat. “He is holy”

Vs4-5

He is holy, exalt the Lord our God and worship at His footstool, at His feet. He is worthy of our utmost in worship and humility before Him, exalting and honoring Him.

Vs6-9

As it pertains to prayer warriors, in regard to great intercessors of the scriptures the bible seems to highlight 3 in particular as great men of prayer. Moses, Aaron, and Samuel, these were men who would stand in the gap on behalf of the people. We find Moses on his face before God with regularity in the scriptures. As for Aaron one of his greatest moments of intercession is found in Num 16:46-48 whereby he took the censor with fire from the altar and went and stood between the living and the dead so as to intercede before God so that the plague would come to an end. As for Samuel he walked intimately *with* the Lord, heard regularly *from* the Lord. In 1st Sam 7 you find the people begging him that he would continue to pray for them. In Ch 12 we read where he said, “*Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you; but I will teach you the good and the right way.*” 1 Sam 12:23

The idea here being that these guys had a personal relationship with the Lord, they prayed *to* God, heard *from* God, one of the foremost fingerprints of a man or woman of God is their communion and consistent communication with Him through prayer. When we read here that they called and He answered, it’s saying that they “kept calling” He “kept answering.”

“He spoke to them in the cloudy pillar.” For you and me can God impart to us an impression or a still small voice? Absolutely, though generally I would say that God will speak to us directly from His word and even in the still small voice it will never violate His written word. The bible says, “*God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son,*” Heb 1:1-2 God speaks to us through His word.

Why is it that these guys had effective prayer lives? Look at Vs 7, “They kept His testimonies and the ordinance He gave them.” They were *doers* of the word, when God instructed, they obeyed, and God honors our obedience to His word. You’ve heard me say it before, God will often times not share with us insight in one area if we’re not obeying the instruction He’s given us on another. These guys had powerful and effective prayer lives because they were obedient to the word God spoke to them. Now...

Vs 8

Aren’t you glad that God is to us, “God –Who-Forgives” man I am. I’m so glad that I can come to Him, confess my sin to Him and find forgiveness in Christ, that His grace is bigger than my sin. However that doesn’t mean that God doesn’t deal with our rebellious tendencies, whom God loves He chastens, He is still holy and righteous. So though God loved them, maintained a relationship with them and moved through them, He still dealt with them with regard to sin in their lives, He took vengeance (He wasn’t vindictive) on their deeds (just as He will with you and with me as well).

Vs9...

Psalm 100

Vs 1-2

Again we see shouting and singing before the Lord. However for now I want to highlight the 1st phrase of Vs 2, “Serve the Lord with gladness.” You guys this is such a key, God loves a cheerful giver, I don’t care if it’s time, if it’s talent, if it’s money or whatever it is, when we give unto the Lord we should do so with a glad and willing heart. If we can’t serve the Lord with gladness then we shouldn’t serve Him at all.

If in your service you find your heart growing bitter/burdened or bummed out you do well to step down from what you’re doing and re-evaluate where you’re at and why you’re there. If when you give financially, it’s out of constraint or some sort of pressure, you shouldn’t give at all. Because when we give of our time or our resources from a position of griping and grumbling as opposed to gladness, far from counting for us it actually counts against us. Better to do nothing than to do something with a wrong heart. If after all God has done for us we can’t serve Him and give to Him with gladness, we simply shouldn’t serve or give at all. We should allow the Lord to make an evaluation of our heart and do what we need to do to get things right with Him.

Vs3

No such thing as the “self made man.” Evolution is out the window, it’s a ridiculous notion, a pathetic effort to avoid accountability. The bottom line is that the Lord is God, it is He who made us, we graze around on this earth as the sheep of His hand. Everything in this universe belongs to Him, He made it all. We enjoy clothing and shelter from resources He made, we eat His cattle, His fish, His produce, we drink His water, breathe His air. It’s like the scientist who challenged God to the making of man, after the study of all of the chemical composites found in the dirt the scientist was convinced he could create a man as well. But just before they began God looked at the scientist and said, “Get your own dirt.” It’s *His*, we’re the sheep of His hand, and yet we have the audacity to breathe His air and with that breath deny His existence and refuse to worship Him, serve Him and give our lives to Him. We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.

Vs4-5

I don’t have this mastered but I find it healthy when I remember. When you come to God in prayer, when you “Enter His gates” do so with thanksgiving. We do well to offer thanksgiving to God 1st and foremost, yes we want to make our requests known, but for all that He’s already done we should be thankful, we should praise Him for His goodness and grace. “For He is good, His mercy is everlasting, and His truth endures to all generations.”

We thank God that His mercy is everlasting, if it wasn’t by the time He was finished with me there might not be enough left over for you! But He has plenty for us all, for He is good and His truth is unwavering, never changing, it endures to *all* generations. The gospel has always been and will always be the gospel, Jesus will always be the way, He’s the same, yesterday, today and forever, “His truth endures to all generations.”

Prayer Points:

Father according to the exhortation of Your word we want to enter Your gates with thanksgiving. Thankful for who You are *to* us, all that You’ve done *for* us, how You take care *of* us and are so gracious, so good. We thank You for Your gracious *forgiveness*, teach us to be a people of prayer, intimate communion and communication with You, acting in obedience *to* You. May Your word dwell richly in us to the glory of Your name, we praise Your name.