

A NEW SONG OF PRAISE FOR YAHWEH

06/25/23

INTRODUCTION

Take your Bible if you will and open it to the book of Psalms, to the 33rd of the book of Psalms.

This particular psalm has no *superscription*, thus there is no way knowing who wrote it. The LXX, which is the Greek translation of the Hebrew text, attributes this psalm to David.

Not only do we not know who wrote it but we do not even know why it was written. One clue we are given is in **v. 19** where there is mention of a famine – “*to keep them alive in famine.*” Perhaps the psalmist reflected on some national crisis, like a famine in the land, and wrote this particular psalm to call upon the righteous *to praise the Lord*.

Psalms has been called “*Israel’s Hymnbook*” yet this particular psalm opens it up for “*all the inhabitants of the world to stand in awe of Him.*”

It is a praise psalm for everyone who knows the One True God and seeks to honor Him in praise and thanksgiving.

Allow me to read this beautiful psalm. **Read** Psalm 33.

C O N T E N T

First things first: There is a link between Psalm 32 and 33.

- Psalm 32 describes the *joy* of the person who has confessed his sin and has been restored.
You could say that Psalm 33 begins where Psalm 32 ends. Notice how Psalm 32 ends in **v. 11** –

¹¹ **Be glad** in Yahweh and rejoice, you righteous ones;
And **shout for joy**, all you who are upright in heart.

- Psalm 33 continues to describe that same joy but specifically ponders over the *excellency* of His character.

Psalm 33 puts **1 Pet. 2:9** into practice whereby Peter explains the reason we are a chosen family, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, is so that...

⁹ ... so that **you may proclaim the excellencies of Him** who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

Here in Psalm 33, we don't just speak [ἐξαγγέλλω, *announce, speak about, proclaim*] about His excellencies, we sing about them as well.

In other words, who we are dictates what we say, announce, proclaim. Here in the psalms, the focus becomes not on who we are but on who He is and that dictates why we sing!

We *sing* because of who He is. We *give thanks* to Yahweh because of who He is. We *sing to Him a new song* and **vv. 4-5** extol the excellency of His **greatness** and His **grace** –

⁴ For the word of Yahweh is upright,
And all His work is *done* in faithfulness.

⁵ He loves righteousness and justice;
The earth is full of the lovingkindness of Yahweh.

This earth is full of His “*lovingkindness*,” “*steadfast love*” if you have *ESV* or “*goodness*” if you have *NKJV*. What I want you to observe is that this one perfection, one essential character of God is repeated in this psalm. Lovingkindness appears 3x in this Psalm.

The earth is full of His *lovingkindness* (v. 5); “*the eye of Yahweh is on those who fear Him, on those who wait for His lovingkindness*” (v. 18); it is the concluding prayer that His “*lovingkindness, O Yahweh, be upon us, as we wait for you*” (v. 22).

Lovingkindness shall surround the one who trusts in Yahweh (32:10). It is because of His lovingkindness that we sing for joy.

You see as **Lam. 3:22-23** declares –

²² The lovingkindnesses of Yahweh indeed never cease,
For His compassions never fail.

²³ *They* are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness.

That is why we sing and why we bring forth praise each and every day. That is why we diligently work to know our Great God and Savior, that our life would be filled with songs of praise, that you might proclaim the excellencies of Him.

In this Psalm we see...

- I. The *Call* to Praise (vv. 1-3)
- II. The *Motivation* for Praise (vv. 4-11)
- III. The *Response* of Praise (vv. 12-19)
- IV. The *Finale* of Praise (vv. 20-22)

The beginning is *straightforward*.

THE CALL TO PRAISE (vv. 1-3)

¹ **Sing** for joy in Yahweh, O righteous ones;

Praise is becoming to the upright.

² **Give thanks** to Yahweh with the lyre;

Sing praises to Him with a harp of ten strings.

³ **Sing** to Him a new song; Play skillfully with a loud shout.

Four imperatives:

- Verse 1 – *Sing for joy*
- Verse 2 – *Give thanks to Yahweh,*
Sing praises to Him or Make melody to Him
- Verse 3 – *Sing to Him*

These are commands given to the people of God. This is the *who*? Here they are “*righteous ones*” – those who seek to live according to His standard. Righteousness takes God’s law into consideration.

Moses says, “it will be righteousness for us if we are careful to do all this commandment before Yahweh our God, just as He commanded us” (**Deut. 6:25**).

They are also referred to as “*the upright*” – those who follow Yahweh faithfully and seek to do what is right in His eyes.

The word “upright” (יָשָׁר) has the idea of going straight or direct. The upright look straight ahead, i.e. there is no deviation (**Prov. 4:25** – *let your eyelids be fixed **straight** in front of you*); the upright do what is right in the eyes of the LORD, i.e. they keep his commands.

Deut. 6:18 – “You shall do what is **right** and good in the in sight of Yahweh.”

In verse 1, we are given the *what*, the righteous and upright are called to “sing for joy.” The Heb. term means to “give a ringing cry, in joy, exultation, especially in praise to Yahweh.”¹

Sometimes you see it being translated as “shout for joy” (cf. **32:11** – “**shout for joy, all you who are upright in heart**”).

Just think of what it will be like when Jesus returns and reigns from Jerusalem. The King is here! Isaiah prophesies concerning this day in **Is. 52:7-9** –

⁷ How lovely on the mountains Are the feet of him who proclaims good news, Who announces peace And proclaims good news of good things, Who announces salvation, And says to Zion, “Your God reigns!”

⁸ The voice of Your **watchmen**! They lift up *their* voices; **They shout joyfully together**; For they will see with their own eyes When Yahweh returns to Zion.

⁹ Break forth, **shout joyfully together**, You waste places of Jerusalem; For Yahweh has comforted His people; He has redeemed Jerusalem.

This is what we get to do, each and every Lord’s Day, *shout joyfully together* as the people of God for He reigns and He will return!

Notice the latter part of **v. 1** –

¹ ... Praise is **becoming to the upright**.

It is *suitable* and *proper*. **Psalm 147:1** adds, “*it is pleasant and praise is becoming*.” It’s just what the people of God do.

Not only is it our *supreme* duty for we called to sing, but it is our highest priority. We get to worship our Great God!

¹ Francis Brown, Samuel Rolles Driver, and Charles Augustus Briggs, *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 943.

The *who* are the people of God.
The *what* are the shouts of joy; praise to God.
Now the *how*: *sing with instruments*.

We read in **v. 2** –

² Give thanks to Yahweh **with the lyre**;
Sing praises to Him **with a harp of ten strings**.

Many of the psalms specify the use of instruments in the singing of the psalm. Here “*sing praises*” has the basic idea of making music or singing a melody to Yahweh. There were two different types of lyres.²

Lyre (*kinnôr*) appears 13x in Psalms.
Harp (*nēbel*) appears 8x.

The lyre was more portable while the harp was larger having 10 strings. These were well known instruments in Mesopotamia and Egypt, but it was the music of Zion that became well known in Mesopotamia.

In **Ps. 137:3**, we read how the Babylonian captors taunted the Jews asking, “*sing for us one of the songs of Zion*”.

Now, whatever the shape and sound of these instruments, what is clear is the people of God are called to sing praise to their God.

Look down at **v. 3** –

³ Sing to Him a new song;
Play skillfully with a loud shout.

“*Sing to Him a new song*” (cf. v. 3). This does not necessarily imply that you sing a song that was never before sung.

² See Othmar Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancien Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms*, trans. by Timothy J. Hallett (Eisenbrauns, 1997), 346-351.

It is being gripped anew by the majesty and greatness of our God.

Spurgeon reminds us all –

“Our faculties should be exercised when we are magnifying the Lord, so as not to run in an old groove without thought; we ought to make every hymn of praise a new song. To keep up the freshness of worship is a great thing, and in private it is indispensable. Let us not present old worn-out praise, but put life, and soul, and heart, into every song, since we have new mercies every day, and see new beauties in the work and word of our Lord.”³

The OT is filled with references to a new song that flows from a heart that has experienced God’s redemption or deliverance (Ps 96:1; 98:1).

- **Psalm 96:1** - ¹ Sing to Yahweh a **new song**; Sing to Yahweh, all the earth.
- **Psalm 98:1** - ¹ Sing to Yahweh a new song, For He has done wondrous deeds, His right hand and His holy arm have worked out His salvation.

If you fast-forward to the book of Revelations, you find all the angelic hosts along with the saints singing *a new song* of God’s final and glorious deliverance.

The apostle John writes in **Rev 5:9-10** –

⁹And they sang a **new** song, saying, “Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.

¹⁰“You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.”

³ C. H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David, Volume 2: Psalms 27-57* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 2009), 104-05.

New praise, new reasons for praise must find its way to the singing lips and playing fingers of God's people.

We are not singing about a God who did something in the *past* alone but a God who is working out His marvelous works in the *present*. We can even praise Him for the work He has to do in the *future*.

*With each new week do have new reasons to praise God?
What new reasons do you have to praise God this week?*

Just to jumpstart the discussion, the psalmist provides reasons for praise.

THE MOTIVATION FOR PRAISE (vv. 4-11)

You praise. You praise God because of...

HIS RIGHTEOUS CHARACTER (vv. 4-5)

That is to say that His moral attributes are a reason to praise Him.

- “For the word of the Lord is **upright**” (v. 4). Upright means “*straight, level, right.*” What God says is “*upright.*”

What you have to realize is the correlation between who He is (i.e. faithful, true, and trustworthy) and what He says (v. 4a – “the word of the Lord”) and does (v. 4b – “all His works”).

All that God commands is right; whatever he brings to pass is faithful and true because He is upright in all He does.

O, that we would be a people who would declare this not only with our mouths but in our hearts as well! What if go through a hard providence, may we declare it with all our hearts.

Great is Thy faithfulness, O God, my Father, There is no shadow of turning with Thee, Though changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not; As Though hast been, Though forever wilt be. Great is Thy faithfulness!

He is the One, True God who cannot lie. He is the God of truth and as such His words are true and faithful. Because this is so, He is a rock of refuge. He keeps His covenants and promises. *Amen?*

How different it is with us. We say one thing and do another. We are inconsistent at best and hypocritical and dishonest at our worst. Praise be to God that He is faithful and true and upright.

- Because He is upright and true, *“He loves righteousness and justice”* (v. 5a).

“Righteousness” refers to a norm or standard and God is that standard. You measure all moral right by God.

“Justice” refers to how righteousness is governed and executed.

He loves righteousness and justice because it is a reflection of who He is. This being the case, my beloved, how ought His people love what He loves and hate what He hates.

- God has demonstrated his unfailing love to all mankind - *“the earth is full of the lovingkindness of the Lord”* (v. 5). Just watch His dealings with his creatures and creation (i.e. rain, sun, life, breath, and all things).

HIS RIGHTEOUS CHARACTER (vv. 4-5)

HIS CREATIVE POWER (vv. 6-9)

The psalmist turns back the clock of human history.

- *Verse 6:* By the word of Yahweh the heavens were made, And by the breath of His mouth all their host.

The focus is on God’s spoken word to call things into existence. *“Let there be light; and there was light”* (Gen 1:3). All we can do is stand in awe and wonder at the greatness of God.

- Verse 7: He gathers the waters of the sea together as a heap; He lays up the deeps in storehouses.

God gathers and controls the mighty oceans like water in a jar.

Moses sang *“At the blast of Your nostrils the waters were piled up, The flowing waters stood up like a heap; The deeps were congealed in the heart of the sea”* (Ex 15:8) – sung after the sea was divided and people crossed it.

Exodus 14:31 tells us that *“When Israel saw the great power which the LORD had used against the Egyptians, the people feared the LORD, and they believed in the LORD and in His servant Moses.”*

Q: *What then is our response to His creative power?* Look down at **v. 8** –

⁸ Let all the earth **fear Yahweh**;
Let all the inhabitants of the world **stand in awe of Him**.

A: In response, we fear the Lord – maintain the appropriate relationship and attitude to God. In response, we stand in awe.

HIS ENDURING COUNSEL (vv. 10-11)

¹⁰ Yahweh nullifies the **counsel** of the nations;

He frustrates the **thoughts** of the peoples.

¹¹ The **counsel** of Yahweh stands forever,

The **thoughts** of His heart from generation to generation.

- God orders all things according to His secret counsel.

Two key words are worth noting: One is *“counsel”* which can be translated as *“plan.”* The second is *“purpose”* which can be translated as *“thoughts”* or *“intentions.”* **Gen. 50:20** tells us of the brother’s intended evil against Joseph. Not so with God. God does as He wills, according to the counsel of His will.

Notice what God does to the nations and peoples: He “*nullifies*” and “**frustrates**” them.

Perhaps a key verse would be **Eph. 1:11** –

¹¹ In Him, we also have been made an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of **Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will**,

His decree is comprehensive: He works all things according to the counsel of His will.

Prov. 21:30 reminds us –

³⁰ There is no wisdom, there is no discernment
And there is no counsel against Yahweh.

Calvin reminds us - “*the events which daily come to pass are undoubted proofs of the providence of God.*”⁴

- Our plans frequently go wrong, but not God’s plans.

Proverbs 19:21 says –

²¹ Many thoughts are in a man’s heart,
But it is the counsel of Yahweh that will stand.

His plans cannot be shaken or interrupted.

- Illustration: Cars do not last long, but God’s counsel endures. Cars are planned obsolescence – *in the process of becoming obsolete*. How depressing!

Our response then is to hope in God. This is where the psalmists lead us...

⁴ John Calvin and James Anderson, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, vol. 1 (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2010), 545–546.

THE RESPONSE OF PRAISE (vv. 12-19)

Here we are exhorted to hope in God and it begins in **v. 12** -

¹² Blessed is the nation whose God is Yahweh,
The people whom He has chosen for His own inheritance.

The exhortation comes in the form of a proclamation - blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord.

We as the people of God know whom we have believed in. We know His moral attributes, His power, and counsel. That is why we praise Him.

Blessed are those who know Him and are aware of...

HIS DIVINE SCRUTINY (vv. 13-15)

- God looks down from heaven and scrutinizes the hearts and actions of mankind. In other words, He alone evaluates man's heart & actions.

Genesis 6:5 says –

⁵ Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

On a positive note, God told David in **Ps 32:8** –

⁸ I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go;
I will counsel you with My eye upon you.

Are you not glad that the watchful eye of God is on you?
Comforting.

- Everything is laid bare to Him. All is transparent. He even knows man's willingness or lack of willingness to trust Him. He knows it all.

HIS DIVINE PROTECTION (vv. 16-17)

- The imagery is that of war and battle. A king cannot hope to protect his kingdom by sheer numbers or military equipment.

How many men did God use to defeat the Midianites? 300.

Who did God use to defeat the 9 ft. 9 in. Goliath? David.

Saul even said to David *“you are but a youth while he [i.e. Goliath] has been a warrior from his youth”* (1 Sam 17:33).

What military equipment did he use? None – a stick, five smooth stones, his shepherd’s bag, and a sling.

- The truth is that we are still in need of divine protection because of the world we live in...*do we not?*

Just listen to the testimony of Scripture, of other psalmists, who testified of God’s sovereign protection over their lives and affairs.

Turn over to **Psalm 31:14-15** –

¹⁴ But as for me, **I trust in You**, O Yahweh, I say, “You are my God.”

¹⁵ My times are in Your hand; Deliver me from the hand of my enemies and from those who pursue me.

When your trust is in Yahweh, there is no room for anxious thoughts, when you are engulfed with the character and nature of God.

My beloved hope in God, not in any other *relationship, possession, amusement, power, or position*.

He is faithful and will always provide protection and deliverance, even in the most dire of circumstances.

As Paul wrote *“hope does not disappoint”* (Rom 5:5) – if its placed in God.

HIS DIVINE DELIVERANCE (vv. 18-19)

¹⁸ Behold, the eye of Yahweh is on those who fear Him,
On those who wait for His lovingkindness,
¹⁹ To deliver their soul from death
And to keep them alive in famine.

- Deliverance belongs to the Lord and salvation comes to those who wait on Him.
- His eye is on those who depend wholly on Him. His eye is on those who hope [i.e. wait] for His lovingkindness.
- Hopeful waiting, faithful endurance, rather than panicked action/frantic activity is the appropriate stance of God's people. Such waiting is a sign of surrender to God's divine power rather than in human strength & power.

Illustration: David displayed this hopeful waiting when he fled Jerusalem before the arrival of his son Absalom.

As he fled, the priests joined David bringing with them the ark of the covenants.

David sent them back saying in **2 Sam. 15:25-26** –

²⁵ ... “Return the ark of God to the city. If I find favor in the sight of Yahweh, then He will cause me to return and show me both it and His habitation.

²⁶ “But if He should say thus, ‘I have no delight in you,’ behold, here I am, let Him do to me as seems good in His sight.”

Zadok and the Levites apparently had carried the Ark of the Covenant in exile in order to support David's claim to the throne: David's possession of the ark would demonstrate that he alone possessed the divine favor necessary to rule Israel.

David, however, rejected this line of reasoning: the ark would not be used as a talisman or as a means of coercing the Lord to favor David. Saul had already tried this with the Philistines in *1 Sam 14:18*.

This is the way that David thought:

- If the king *“found favor in the Lord’s eyes,”* then the Lord would bring him back and let him *“see it and his dwelling place again.”*
- If the Lord were not pleased with David, then *“let him do to me whatever seems good to him”* (v. 26).

This response lays bare David’s heart for God and models a degree of submission to God’s sovereign will.

David put his hope in the Lord.

C O N C L U S I O N

My beloved, we may not know when that day of trouble, affliction, and tribulation may come, but one thing we do, we trust in the Name of the Lord our God and in no other.

We trust in Him. We rely upon Him. We can do no other.

Yet no matter the circumstances, God is still the same and for this we praise Him.

Every trial provides for this strengthening resolve and confidence...we *“know whom we have believed and we are convinced that He is able to guard what we have entrusted to Him until the day.”*

We trust Him with our lives knowing that nothing comes to us without it first being providentially and sovereignly orchestrated in the mind of God. He establishes good in the midst of suffering. He is a good and benevolent God. He is righteous and does what is right.

We trust Him in our afflictions knowing that they produces blessings - blessings of endurance, proven character, and hope.

And this hope *“does not disappoint”* because it is anchored in God.

And so rather than causing us shame, fear, and uncertainty, our hope in God causes us to glory and to exult in tribulations.

It moves us to praise God, to sing for joy in the Lord and to give thanks to the Lord, and to sing to Him a new song.

Oh people of God, what is the song of your heart this morning?

If that is the cry of your heart this morning my beloved, I invite you to stand with me and let us all affirm, renew, and end with a great **finale of praise** in the remaining verses of this great psalm:

²⁰ Our soul waits for the Lord; He is our help and our shield.

²¹ For our heart rejoices in Him, Because we trust in His holy name.

²² Let Your lovingkindness, O Lord, be upon us, According as we have hoped in You.

Let us pray.