

Sing a New Song

12/25/22

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O sing to the LORD a new song, for he has done marvelous things. His right hand and his holy arm have gotten him victory. ² The LORD has made known his victory; he has revealed his vindication 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 victory 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 live in it. ⁸ Let the floods clap their hands; let the hills sing together for joy ⁹ at the presence of the LORD, for he is coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world with righteousness and the peoples with equity (Psalm 98:1-9).

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴ in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it. ⁶ There was a man sent from God whose name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸ He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹ The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world came into being through him, yet the world did not know him. ¹¹ He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹² But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³ who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. ¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth (John 1:1-14).

1. Merry Christmas

Merry Christmas! I am so delighted to see you all this morning. Many people celebrate Christmas at home exchanging gifts and sharing meals with their family. We give thanks to God for being able to worship the Lord on Christmas Day!

The question I would like to ask is, do we have a specific reason to give thanks and praise to the Lord this Christmas?

2. Sing a New Song

The writer of Psalm 98 says, ***“O Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things.”***

We don't know the exact reason why the psalmist wrote Psalm 98. But we notice that the same statement, ***“Sing to the Lord a new song”*** is found in Isaiah 42:10. The writer likely wanted to give praise to the Lord to commemorate the end of the Israel exile in Babylon. The psalmist believes that the Lord has done incredible things.

In 539 BC the legendary Persian king Cyrus conquered Babylon. He allowed the Israelites to return to their homeland. We can imagine how excited the Jews in Babylon were. After 70 years in exile, the captives of Judah were full of joy. Nearly 50,000 people made this journey to Jerusalem. When they arrived, the people began to rebuild the temple. The writer of Psalm 98 believed that it was what God has done. He calls the Israelites to sing a new song of God's amazing grace.

They thought they had been forgotten by the Lord. But verse 3 says, ***“He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel. All the ends of the earth have seen the victory of our God.”*** NIV version of the Bible translates this verse, ***“all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.”***

The salvation of God was not only for the Jews but also for everyone. That's why the writer invites everybody to make a joyful noise to the Lord with the musical instruments. Their excitement is beyond our imagination. That's why in verse 8 he says, ***“Let the floods clap their hands; let the hills sing together for joy.”*** The writer extends his call to the natural world: sea, the rivers, and the hills to join in praising God's salvation.

That is not the end of God's salvation. In verse 9 he says, ***“he is coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world with righteousness and the peoples with equity.”*** In verse 8, the writer reminds us, the one who gives us salvation is the King, the Lord of the world.

In 1719 English hymnwriter David Watts wrote “Joy to the World”. He wrote this hymn based on Psalm 98 to remind us that Jesus saves us. He says in the hymn that even “heaven and nature sing to praise to the Lord.”

In the Bible we notice whenever the Israelites experienced God's amazing power and love, they sang a song to celebrate God's love. Moses and Miriam, Hannah, Elizabeth, and Mary are just some of the people who sang new songs after experiencing the marvelous power of God.

3. Why Do We Praise?

Every day, God is at work in our lives and among us. That's why the floods clap their hands, and the hills sing for joy. Do we notice the natural world praises the Lord every day? If we have the eyes to see, we can see what God is doing in our daily lives.

Have you found any reasons to praise the Lord this Christmas? I am grateful to Ben and our choir for our annual Christmas Cantata. Especially I praise the Lord that ten children joined the choir and sang last Sunday. I have been dreaming of having a children's choir in our church. Although we don't have a children's choir, our Sunday school children sang with our choir. I believe that it was what God had done for us. The Lord has done a marvelous thing. I wish, I could write a new song and sing praises.

4. Jesus is the Light

Do you think you can't see what God is doing for us? John's Gospel 1:4 & 5 says, "***in him was life, and the life was the light of all people.***" ⁵ ***The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it.*** If we recognize that Jesus is with us as the light, we can see what God is doing in our lives and we can joyfully praise the Lord.

5. Conclusion and Application

Christmas Day is an opportunity for us to praise the Lord for what he has done. It is a day that we look forward to what God has in store for the future. We don't have to wait for Christmas to praise the Lord. We can praise and give thanks to the Lord any time.

As we get up each morning, may God open our spiritual eyes to see what God has done and is doing. May God fill us with excitement about what God will do for us and among us. May we sing a new song when we see God's great love and his faithfulness in our lives, in our church, and in our community. Sing a new song and make a joyful noise to the Lord. Amen.