

PSALM 98:1-9
NOVEMBER 7, 2021



INTRODUCTION

It's November, which means you've probably already heard Christmas music playing in stores or on the radio. What is your favorite Christmas carol (or current Christmas song)? What do you like about it?

Here's a fun fact—"Joy to the World" was not written to be a Christmas song! The lyrics actually describe Christ's second coming better than His first. Read the lyrics of that song (you can find them with a quick Internet search). Which lyrics stand out to you the most personally? Why?

Psalm 98 inspired Isaac Watts to write the hymn we all know as "Joy to the World." He didn't write it because he lived in easy, joyful times, but because he read the Scriptures and found joy and faith in Christ. We don't live in easy times either, but we do have the same Scriptures and we serve the same God. Our study of Psalm 98 will help us see that there is joy even in 2022 and every day for those who turn in faith to Jesus.

DISCUSSION

> **HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PSALM 98:1-9.**

How can you sing a "new song" to the Lord if you've been trusting in Him since you were a little kid?

What are some of the "wonderful things" that has God done?

How should knowing that salvation is for all people impact the way we live?

Is the command to "shout joyfully to the Lord" something you take literally or figuratively? Why?

What are some ways you express your joy to the Lord? Why is it important that you do?

The first and most well-known stanza of “Joy to the World” contains these lyrics: “Joy to the world! The Lord is come. Let earth receive her King. Let every heart prepare Him room, and heaven and nature sing.” Where do you see Psalm 98:4-6 referenced in these lyrics?

Most people think of God’s judgment as a fearful thing. Why did the psalmist believe the news that the Lord is coming to judge the earth was a reason for joyful singing?

When the Lord comes as Judge, He will restore all things. What wrong are you most looking forward to being made right?

GOING DEEPER

How has Jesus made it good news that God is the final judge over our lives?

Why should this reality also give us an urgency in sharing the gospel?

APPLICATION

We should rejoice in God as Savior of His people, as King over all the Earth, and as judge over all the nations. Which of these three truths stand out to you the most? Why?

There are things that tend to steal our joy in these days, like the fear of missing out (social media) and weariness. What are some things that have threatened to steal your joy in recent days? How does Psalm 98 challenge or encourage you in that?

What would change in your life this week if you stopped looking at the things that steal your joy and started looking at Jesus?

PRAYER

Thank God for the never-ending joy you have in His Son Jesus. Ask Him to help you demonstrate that joy, both to Him in your praise and worship of Him and in your relationships with others. Invite Him to show you new opportunities this week to share that joy with others who don’t know Him.

COMMENTARY

PSALM 98

98:1. This first stanza is a call to sing with exuberance and celebration a new song to God. This means to offer fresh praise because of some new act of his grace. The reason for this call is clear: He has done wonderful things. This refers to his saving acts on behalf of his people, divinely intervening with both eternal and temporal salvation. No sinner is beyond God's saving power. No situation is beyond his rescuing power. With his right hand and his holy arm, he has worked salvation. God's hand and arm symbolize his great strength and power in his saving work. Because he is holy, there is no other way for unholy man to find acceptance with him except through his salvation.

98:2. God is a saving God whose very nature is to save. Therefore, he has made his salvation known, even to the nations, a salvation that reveals his righteousness. In regard to temporal salvation from earthly trials, he is righteous, rewarding the godly and punishing the ungodly. Regarding eternal salvation, he provided the righteousness that the ungodly sinner needs to be reconciled to God through his Son, Jesus Christ.

98:3. He has remembered his loyal, steadfast, and unalterable love and his faithfulness to the house of Israel. God's commitment to save his chosen people is unchanging and eternal. All the ends of the earth have seen God's salvation. He is the Savior not only of those in Israel who believe but of all peoples around the world who trust him. Far from every person being saved, rather, this teaches that God's salvation reaches out to all peoples. The wicked will perish (Ps. 1:6). God is worthy of praise because he is a powerful, holy, righteous, loving, faithful Savior forever.

98:4-6a. The psalmist addressed all people on the earth and called every creature to shout for joy to the Lord. There is only one true God, and all the earth must worship him. They must forsake their pagan gods and dumb idols. Here is the highest purpose of evangelism—that there would be increased numbers of worshippers of the Lord. Pardon is secondary; praise is primary. Specifically, God should be praised with music. The psalmist called for loud, lively music to be given with the harp and the sound of singing, as well as with trumpets and the ram's horn. Such jubilant song should be given in the praise of God's name.

98:6b. Shout... before the Lord, the King is a summons to worship issued to all peoples of the earth. Give glory to God. There is no god like heaven's King.

98:7-8. This last stanza calls all creation to make music to praise God, the righteous Judge. Let the sea resound, and everything in it. The ocean and all marine life within it were created for God's glory. The dry land and all who live in it are beckoned to praise. The rivers are to clap their hands unto the Lord as they carry his praise across the continents, rejoicing and celebrating in God. The mountains that tower over the land are to sing together for joy. Let every feature of the earth clap and sing for joy before the Lord.