

## Joy to the World *Psalm 98*

Good Morning

In 1719, *English minister and hymnist Isaac Watts* published his work titled, *Psalms of David*, along with the song he wrote titled, *Joy to the World*, which was a direct result of *Psalm 98*.

The song “*Joy to the World*” is a deliberate Christological interpretation of *Psalm 98* because it is a Messianic *Psalm*.

Of course, most of us know some of the lyrics that say, “*Joy to the world! the Lord is come; Let earth receive her King; Let every heart prepare him room, and heaven and nature sing.*”

Please open your Bibles to *Psalm 98* as we continue in our survey of the *Book of Psalms*.

*Psalm 98* celebrates the LORD’s rule over the world and His offer of redemption through the LORD, our King.

*Psalm 98* praises the LORD as the sovereign ruler of the world and invites creation to celebrate with song and instruments.

*Psalm 98* calls for the world to worship the LORD with a “*joyful noise*” in response to all He has done.

This *Psalm* is also known because Mary, the earthly mother of Jesus sang part of it during her praise song to the LORD and the song *Joy to the World* was made from *Psalm 98* as well.

## I. A new song.

Read *Psalms 98:1a*

In 1975 B. J. Thomas wrote a song titled, “*Another Somebody Done Somebody Wrong Song*”,

Some of the lyrics say, “*So please play for me a sad melody so sad that it makes everybody cry. A real hurtin' song about a love that's gone wrong, 'cause I don't want to cry all alone.*”

No matter what old country song your life used to resemble, Jesus wants to make you a brand-new creation and give you a new song.

There are many references in the Bible telling us to sing a new song to The Lord. In Christ, we have a reason to sing, rejoice, and celebrate because He makes all things new.

The idea of a ***new song*** says there is something fresh and **dynamic** about the worship we offer the LORD because He has done a new thing in our lives.

***2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. NKJV***

F. B. Meyer said, “*The song of redeeming grace can never grow old, even though the same words recur.... Are not His mercies new every morning, and His faithfulness every night?*” (Meyer)

We must learn to sing a new song in every situation because we have a new song in Jesus who has come, seen, and conquered.

C. H. Spurgeon said, *“Jesus, our King, has lived a marvelous life, died a marvelous death, risen by a marvelous resurrection, and ascended marvelously into heaven.”*

*“For all this, He deserves the highest praise. His acts have proved His Deity, **Jesus** is Jehovah, and therefore we sing unto Him as the LORD.”* (C. H. Spurgeon)

After Mary was told the news by Gabriel, that she would give birth to the Messiah even though she was a virgin, she sang a song of praise to the LORD.

Most of the lyrics of Mary’s praise song to the LORD, in *Luke 1*, were taken from *Psalms 98*.

The psalmist said, *“Oh, sing to the LORD a new song!”*

The portion of Mary’s song that goes along with this is...*Luke 1:46 And Mary said: "My soul magnifies the Lord.*

The psalmist said, *“For He has done marvelous things”*

Mary said in *Luke 1:49, For He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name. NKJV*

*done marvelous things* literally means He has worked miracles.

Adam Clarke said, *“What marvels has Christ done? He was conceived by the Holy Spirit. Born of a virgin. Healed all manners of diseases.*

*He fed thousands with a few loaves and fishes, raised the dead, and what was more marvelous is that He died Himself.”*

*“He rose again by His own power, ascended back to heaven, and sent forth the Holy Spirit.” ...and so much more. (Clarke)*

## **II. The whole Earth has seen His Salvation.**

Read *Psalm 98:1b-3*

*Isaiah 52:10 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. NKJV*

David Guzik said, *“The idea of His holy arm is that God has rolled up His sleeve to do His mighty work. Together, His hand and arm have gained Him the victory.”*

Rich Mullens wrote the song, *“Our God is an awesome God”*, the lyrics say... *“When He rolls up His sleeves He ain't just putting on the ritz (Our God is an awesome God)*

*There's thunder in His footsteps and lightning in His fists (Our God is an awesome God).”*

When the psalmist spoke of the *right hand*, it was a direct reference to the fact that the *right hand* always signifies the **power** of God.

Again, most of the lyrics of Mary’s praise song to the LORD, in *Luke 1*, were taken from *Psalm 98*.

The psalmist said, “***His right hand and His holy arm have gained Him the victory.***”

The portion of Mary’s song that goes along with this is...

***Luke 1:51 He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. NKJV***

***How has the LORD made known His salvation and His righteousness in the sight of the nations?***

The portion of Mary’s song that goes along with this is...

***Luke 1:50 And His mercy is on those who fear Him from generation to generation. NKJV***

In the Old Testament, the LORD made Himself known by His mighty deeds.

Think of the creation of the world, of animals, and of mankind.

The restoration of Job's family and wealth, the deliverance of the Jewish people out of Egypt, the conquering of Israel’s enemies, and on the list goes.

The psalmist said, “***He has remembered His mercy and His faithfulness to the house of Israel.***” NKJV

The portion of Mary’s song that goes along with this is...

***Luke 1:54 He has helped His servant Israel, in remembrance of His mercy, NKJV***

*How many times did the nation of Israel disobey the LORD, yet He always redeemed and saved them?*

But there is so much more to this because this ***Psalm***, which was written roughly 1,000 years before Christ, deals with a prophecy about the Messiah.

Even though the psalmist was inspired by the Holy Spirit to write this, he didn't realize the implications and meaning of **vs. 3** ***All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.***

*Do you remember the covenant the LORD made with Abraham?*

***Genesis 12:3 "I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." NKJV***

The people of Earth had witnessed some of the Old Testament rescues for the Nation of Israel accomplished by the LORD, but they had not witnessed God's **ultimate** salvation, Jesus Christ.

***Psalm 98*** was a prophecy about the fact that the Gospel of Christ, would be preached to the whole world.

***Colossians 1:21 And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled***

***Colossians 1:22 in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight***

*Colossians 1:23(a) if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard,*

*Colossians 1:23(b) which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister. NKJV*

The New Testament shows us that the LORD *made known His salvation* through the person and work of Jesus Christ as the world saw the fulfillment of this prophecy with the Gospel.

### **III. The joyful song with instruments.**

Read *Psalms 98:4-6*

*Psalms 98:4* is one of the verses that inspired *Isaac Watts* to write the song, *Joy to the World*.

Derek Kidner said, “*The joyful noise of verses 4 and 6 meets us elsewhere as the spontaneous shout that might greet a king or a moment of victory.*”

“*Joyful Noise is translated ‘shout aloud’ in Zechariah 9:9, the prophecy that was fulfilled on Palm Sunday.*” (Derek Kidner)

The noise from the Temple in Jerusalem was legendary. The Jews were known for loud worship and shouts of praise to the LORD.

Marvin E. Tate points to the accounts of Israel’s worship. In *Ezra 3*, the sound of the instruments and the shouts of the people are said to have been “*heard far away.*”

*Do you remember when the Children of Israel came into the Promised Land and went up against the people of Jericho?*

The words *Joyful Noise* translated as '**shout aloud**' were used when the Israelites shouted, and the walls of Jericho came down.

A shout of praise was a picture of praise being used as a **weapon** of spiritual warfare.

When we face walls or uphill battles in life, we need to seek the LORD who gives the victory and praise Him for them.

We praise the LORD for the victory we already have in Christ, no matter how the circumstances appear, because the LORD fights our battles.

The song *Joy to the World* reveals what Messiah will bring.

Notice, "***Sing to the LORD with the harp***"

Not only can we use musical instruments while worshiping the LORD, but the instruments themselves **sing to the LORD** a song of praise.

With the Palm Sunday narrative we read in ***Luke 19:39 And some of the Pharisees called to Him from the crowd, "Teacher, rebuke Your disciples."***

***Luke 19:40 But He answered and said to them, "I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out." NKJV***



Seeing all these different instruments being used, there must have been some level of effort and skill among the musicians.

We know that it is the LORD who gives the talents and gifts to worship, otherwise the musicians were simply making **noise**.

Adam Clarke said about, “*The sound of a psalm*”

“I think *zimrah*, which we translate *Psalm*, means either a *musical instrument*, or a *species of sonnet* modulated by different voices.” (Clarke)

And “*The horn [shofar] proclaimed such events as the year of jubilee, or the accession of a king*”. (Kidner)

#### **IV. Messiah offers new life.**

Read *Psalm 98:7-9*

So many people think the Christmas story began at Bethlehem, however, Jesus existed before the world began and the Old Testament was all about Him and His plan of redemption.

I shared this a couple of weeks ago, but it bears repeating. After Jesus rose from the dead and He was walking with the two men on the road to Emmaus, but they did not recognize Him...

***Luke 24:44 Then He said to them, "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me." NKJV***

Stephen Coleman said, “*God’s revelation throughout the Old Testament prefigures, anticipates, and announces beforehand...  
...the redemption that He would accomplish in the person and work of His incarnate Son, Jesus Christ.*”

Some people cannot understand the fact that if Jesus is God the Son, why would He have to die.

While Paul was giving a defense before King Agrippa, he told him how it was foretold in the Old Testament, how the Messiah would come, suffer, and die for the remission of sin.

***Acts 26:22 Therefore, having obtained help from God, to this day I stand, witnessing both to small and great, saying no other things than those which the prophets and Moses said would come***

***Acts 26:23 that the Christ would suffer, that He would be the first to rise from the dead, and would proclaim light to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles." NKJV***

The Lyrics of *Joy to the World* go on to say,

*“Joy to the world! the Savior reigns; let men their songs employ.  
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains.*

*Repeat the sounding joy, Repeat the sounding joy, Repeat,  
repeat the sounding joy.*

*“No more let sins and sorrows grow, nor thorns infest the ground; He comes to make His blessings flow far as the curse is found.” (Joy to the World)*

The psalmist and the writer of Joy to the World knew that nature can be tough. Thorns, floods, natural disasters, and death are happening all the time.

Because of Adam’s sin, sin entered the world bringing the curse with it. Because of the curse, death reigned over mankind and creation, as all men were condemned to die as sinners.

***1 Corinthians 15:22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. NKJV***

But God’s promises fulfilled in Jesus Christ shows us that the curse in **Genesis 3** is completely reversed for those who will believe in Him.

***John 11:25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.***

***John 11:26 And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?" NKJV***

With this promise from Jesus, He was reversing the curse that was upon all mankind for those who would believe in Him.

Jon Bloom said, “*Why is believing so crucial to Jesus? Because the fall of Adam and Eve was the failure to believe in God.*”

***Romans 1:25 who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. NKJV***

*“This is a dishonoring, a treason of such magnitude that a holy God cannot tolerate and be righteous. Such guilt must receive its just penalty.”*

But Jesus reversed the curse.

***John 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.***

***John 3:17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.***

***John 3:18 "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. NKJV***

Jesus came to bear “our sins in His body on the tree because the wages of sin are death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus.

What joy a Christian should have knowing the curse is reversed, we have eternal life, and we are now His favored children.

## **V. Practical Application.**

**Joy** comes from receiving rest.

***Matthew 11:28 Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.***

***Matthew 11:29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.***

***Matthew 11:30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."***

When we are part of the fellowship with our creator, we can rest assured knowing that He is going to take good care of us, because He loves us.

Our lives are full of activity as we get closer and closer to Christmas, in the middle of all of our frenzy, let us remember to find **rest** in Jesus.

So many of us work so hard for the so-called good life when in actuality, we are on a hamster trail.

As we learn to rest in Jesus, our joy is restored.

King David asked in ***Psalms 51:12, Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, And uphold me by Your generous Spirit. NKJV***

As Christ-followers, we need to be emptied of self to find joy; Joy in trials, Joy in weaknesses, Joy in God's Word, Joy in the Gospel, Joy in God's Discipline, and Finally, Joy in God's rest.

Our Hope, Faith, peace, and Joy come from knowing Jesus.

Jesus Christ left heaven's throne, and came to earth as a baby...

***Matthew 1:23 "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us." NKJV***

Oswald Chambers said, *"That is the staggering Proposition the Bible gives - God became the weakest thing we know."*

Then Jesus lived a sinless life and died a criminal's death, rose again on the third day, and now offers forgiveness of sin for all who would place their Faith/Trust in Him for Salvation.

It is said that Christmas is the most wonderful time of the year.

I believe that is only true if we have a proper perspective on what Christmas is really about!

Christmas should be the most wonderful time of the year because we celebrate Salvation being revealed to mankind!

The title of the sermon is, *"Joy to the World"*. We can receive Joy from the Gospel, the good news about Jesus Christ.

***Philippians 1:6 being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;***

***Philippians 1:7 just as it is right for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as both in my chains and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers with me of grace. NKJV***

Debbie was a young missionary nurse, who was pregnant while on the mission field, and then captured by guerilla forces.

Even though her life and the life of her unborn child were threatened by these men, she continued to pray for them.

Even as her life lay in balance, Debbie experienced true joy.

Debbie knew the gospel was at work in the very lives of the men who captured her. She was more concerned with their eternal destination than her present circumstance.

This woman truly had the same attitude we see in the Apostle Paul while he was imprisoned on death row.

***Philippians 2:3 Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.***

***Philippians 2:4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. NKJV***

*Do you experience joy from sharing the Gospel with the unsaved? Are you more concerned with the eternal destination of others more than your current circumstance?*

A secret recipe to experience joy in your life comes from practicing the acronym for joy: Jesus, **Others**, then you.

*“Joy to the world! the Lord is come; Let earth receive her King; Let every heart prepare him room, and heaven and nature sing.”*

*Have you prepared room in your heart for the King, Jesus?*