

# PSALM 98

## INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 98

### *A Psalm.*

This is the only psalm throughout the whole book which is so called, without any other additional word, epithet, or inscription. The Targum calls it a psalm of prophecy, or a prophetic psalm, as indeed it is; for it respects time to come, as Jarchi observes, even the Gospel dispensation. Aben Ezra says, perhaps this psalm is concerning the coming of the Redeemer; a doubt need not be made of it, it certainly is. Abendana, a later writer among the Jews, says of the latter part of the psalm, that it figuratively expresses the greatness of the joy that shall be in the days of the Messiah. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, ascribe it unto David; but it was not penned by him on account of any victory obtained by him, but as a prophecy of the victories and salvation of the Messiah; nor is it of the same argument with, or a compendium of, the song of Moses at the Red sea, as Grotius thinks; though the inscription of the Syriac version begins thus,

“a Psalm of David, concerning the redemption of the people out of Egypt, when they conquered and triumphed;”

yet it more rightly adds,

“but spiritually a prophecy concerning the coming of Christ, and the calling of the Gentiles unto the faith.”

**Ver. 1.** *O sing unto the Lord a new song*, etc.] An excellent one unto the Lord Christ, on account of the great work of redemption and salvation wrought out by him; and because of the new and living way opened by him, and because of the new dispensation of the Gospel, which takes place through him, and for the reasons next mentioned; (see Gill on “~~1981~~ Psalm 96:1”),

*for he hath done marvellous things*; by assuming human nature, in that he, being God, became man, took flesh of a virgin, even pure and uncorrupted,

a clean thing out of an unclean; which he took into personal union with himself, and that for the sake of sinful creatures: a most marvellous affair this! which calls for a new song from men, as it had from the angels. In this nature he taught wonderful doctrines, at which his hearers were astonished, wondering from whence he had his wisdom; and in it he did many miraculous works, which filled them with amazement above measure; and especially in it he performed the amazing and surprising work of man's redemption, an instance of the marvellous lovingkindness and astonishing wisdom of God; performed in a manner quite stupendous, through Christ's being made under the law both the precept and penalty of it; through his being made sin and a curse for men, even for the ungodly, sinners and enemies; a redemption which is of the souls of men from sin, Satan, and the law; a complete and plenteous one, which includes and secures all the blessings of grace and glory, justification, pardon, adoption, and eternal life. To which may be added the resurrection of himself from the dead, his ascension to heaven, the effusion of the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit on the apostles, the wonderful success of the Gospel in the Gentile world, the support of his interest against all the powers on earth, the destruction of the man of sin, the calling of the Jews, and the bringing in of the fulness of the Gentiles in the latter day; all which marvellous events require a new song of praise: another reason of which follows:

*his right hand and his holy arm hath gotten him the victory:* over sin, Satan, the world, death, and hell, in which he has made his people sharers, yea, more than conquerors; and therefore may well sing the new triumphant song to him: the words may be rendered, "hath brought salvation to him"<sup>f1378</sup>; as in (~~23916~~ Isaiah 59:16 63:5); to him personally, he raising himself from the dead, as a triumphant Conqueror; to him mystically, his body the church, to whom he is the author of salvation; or to him, that is, to his Father, in obedience to whose will he wrought out salvation for his people, and for the honour of his name, and for the glorifying of his perfections. This was done by him alone, by his right hand of power, by the mighty arm of his strength, and which no mere creature could ever have performed: and this he did in a way of holiness; his holy arm did it in a way that maintains and secures the glory of divine holiness and justice.

**Ver. 2.** *The Lord hath made known his salvation,* etc.] Which was appointed him, he undertook, came to perform, and has effected; this, though wrought out, is unknown to men, especially to the Gentile world,

who had no prophecy, promise, or revelation of the Messiah, and salvation by him; but now this is made known in the everlasting Gospel, called therefore the Gospel of salvation, and by the ministers of it; and, besides this, the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, and his salvation, is given to some; whereby they come to know their need of it, the suitableness of it to their case, the necessity of going to Christ for it, and their special and particular interest in it; and such have a new song put into their mouths, and are under great obligation to sing it:

*his righteousness hath he openly showed in the sight of the Heathen*; either the faithfulness of God in fulfilling his promises, particularly in raising up the Saviour Jesus; or the goodness of God to his people, and the strictness of his justice on their surety; goodness towards them, and severity on him, when he spared them and not him, turned his hand of grace and mercy on them, when he awoke the sword of justice against him; or rather his own righteousness, by which he fulfilled the law in the room and stead of his people; and which being brought in is revealed in the gospel, from faith to faith; and that “openly”, not in dark shadows, types, and figures; but it is to be seen with open face in the clear glass of the Gospel; and is held up and forth in the ministration of it unto the Gentiles, whom God justifies through faith in it, as well as the believing Jews; (see ~~4181~~Romans 3:30 ~~4188~~Galatians 3:8).

**Ver. 3.** *He hath remembered his mercy and his truth toward the house of Israel*, etc.] His mercy promised them, in raising up a Saviour to them, one that should be the glory of them; and his truth, in fulfilling that and every other promise concerning him; (see ~~4172~~Luke 1:72-74 2:32 ~~5138~~Romans 15:8),

*all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God*; either Christ himself, who is the salvation or Saviour of God’s appointing, providing, and sending; or the salvation which he has wrought out, the Gospel declaring it; which has been sent throughout the world; and many in all parts of it, even in the most distant parts of it, in the very ends of it, have been made to see the nature, want, worth, and value of it; not every individual person in the world, but some in the several parts, and in the remote corners of it, whither the Gospel has been or will be sent; (see ~~4520~~Isaiah 52:10).

**Ver. 4.** *Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth*, etc.] That is, all the inhabitants of the earth, as the Targum, to whom the joyful sound of the Gospel comes; (see Gill on “<sup>4901</sup>Psalm 95:1”),

*make a loud noise, rejoice, and sing praise*; exalt and extend the voice to the highest pitch, in the most musical and melodious strains; this heap of words is used to express the intenseness of mind, vehemency of affection, and strength of spirit and exceeding greatness of joy, with which the Lord should be praised for his great and marvellous works.

**Ver. 5.** *Sing unto the Lord with the harp*, etc.] Playing upon that at the same time: here and in the following verse is an allusion to Old Testament worship, and the manner of performing that; not that this should be done in New Testament times, only New Testament worship is expressed in Old Testament language, which is no unusual thing; hence in Gospel times, and Gospel churches, the saints, especially when singing the new song of redeeming grace, are said to have harps in their hands, expressive only of their spiritual melody in their hearts, (<sup>4888</sup>Revelation 5:8,9 14:2,3 15:2,3),

*with the harp, and the voice of the psalm*; with the harp alone first, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi interpret it, and then with the harp, and together with the words of a psalm, sung in a psalm tune. Gospel churches are to sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, (<sup>4859</sup>Ephesians 5:19 <sup>5086</sup>Colossians 3:16).

**Ver. 6.** *With trumpet and sound of cornet*, etc.] The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Ethiopic versions, render it

*with ductile trumpets*, such as were made of silver, as the two trumpets for the calling of the assembly, (<sup>4002</sup>Numbers 10:2) to which the allusion seems to be here, called “asosra” by Josephus <sup>f1379</sup> according to the Hebrew language **twrxwj**; which he says were in length a little less than a cubit, but the pipe narrow, somewhat thicker than a flute, having a sufficient breadth at the mouth to blow with, ending after the manner of a bell. The cornet was a trumpet or pipe, made of horn, from whence it has its name; such were those, made of rams’ horns, the priests blew with when they encompassed Jericho, (<sup>4004</sup>Joshua 6:4),

*make a joyful noise before the Lord, the King*; or rather “before the King, the Lord” <sup>f1380</sup>; before the King, who is Jehovah, who is the King of kings, and Lord of lords; let this shout be made before him, in his presence, and

on account of his kingly office, and because of some eminent appearance of his kingdom and glory; (see <sup><66016></sup>Revelation 19:6,16).

**Ver. 7.** *Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof*, etc.] (See Gill on <sup><49611></sup>Psalm 96:11”),

*the world, and they that dwell therein*; men, the inhabitants of the world; that is, let them rejoice because this glorious King has taken to himself his great power, and reigns, (<sup><66115></sup>Revelation 11:15-17).

**Ver. 8.** *Let the floods clap their hands*, etc.] Or “rivers” <sup>f1381</sup>, dashing against their banks, as they pass along; a prosopopoeia, as the preceding and following, expressing great joy on account of the Messiah, the reigning King. Aben Ezra interprets this of men that are in rivers, as the sea; in the preceding verse of such that are in ships at sea; and the hills in the next clause of such that dwell on them;

*let the hills be joyful together*; (see <sup><28512></sup>Isaiah 55:12).

**Ver. 9.** *Before the Lord, for he cometh to judge the earth*, etc.] (See Gill on <sup><49613></sup>Psalm 96:13”),

*with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity*; both at his first and second coming, and during the intermediate time; see the note as before. The only difference is, that in (<sup><49613></sup>Psalm 96:13), it is said that he shall judge the people “with his truth”, here “with equity”, or “uprightnesses” <sup>f1382</sup>; in the most upright manner, according to the strictest rules of justice and judgment; (see <sup><23118></sup>Isaiah 11:3-5).