

**PSALM 98**  **GOD, MY EXCEEDING JOY**  
A JOYFUL JOURNEY THRU THE PSALMS

August 21, 2022 – JOY TO THE WORLD

**I. GENRE: Hymn for the Divine King**

- A. Ps 98 is another classic example of a divine king hymn.
- B. The portion which most clearly refers to Yahweh as king is v. 6 which alludes to a shout of **acclamation** that Yahweh is King.
- C. As in Pss 96 and 97, Yahweh is celebrated not only as the King of Israel but also the rightful King of all the earth.

**II. SETTING**

**A. AUTHOR: Unknown**

- 1. This poem is an “orphan” psalm because no author is listed.
- 2. Ps 98 certainly sounds like material **David** could have written.
  - a. Portions of Ps 98 are identical with or very similar to portions of Ps 96, a poem which was primarily by David according to **1 Chron. 16:7, 23-33**.
  - b. It is possible that David authored Ps 98 also, but it could easily be an adaptation of Ps 96 by a later inspired author.
- 3. There are also similarities between Ps 98 and portions of Isaiah. Compare Isaiah 52:10 and 55:12. It is unclear whether Isaiah’s poetic lines influenced the author of Ps 98 or the other way around.

**B. BACKGROUND**

- 1. There are no historical references made in the psalm.
- 2. The deliverance of the nation in vv. 2-3 is described **generically** and could include events such as the exodus, the liberation from Babylon, and many events in between.

<p><b>PSALM 98</b> <small>M. Scott Bealton © 2022</small></p>		
<p><b>HEADING</b> v. 0</p>	<p><b>Purpose:</b> The psalmist calls upon Israel, the nations, and even the physical world to celebrate Yahweh’s wondrous victories for His people and the coming advent of His righteous judgment which will renew the earth.</p>	
<p><b>Song Type</b> A Psalm (intended for musical accompaniment)</p>	<p><b>FIRST SUMMONS TO PRAISE:</b> ISRAEL CALLED TO CELEBRATE YAHWEH’S DELIVERANCE vv. 1-3</p>	<p><b>SECOND SUMMONS TO PRAISE:</b> THE WHO EARTH CALLED TO CELEBRATE YAHWEH’S RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT vv. 4-9</p>
<p><b>The Call to Praise</b> v. 1a</p> <p><b>The Basis of the Call</b> vv. 1b-3</p> <p>Yahweh’s Wonder Working Power has Overcome His Enemies v. 1b</p> <p>Yahweh’s Deliverance of Israel has been Revealed to the Nations v. 2</p> <p>Yahweh’s Faithfulness to Israel Evident to All the Earth v. 3</p>	<p><b>The Nations Called to Praise</b> vv. 4-6</p> <p>Introductory Call to All the Earth v. 4a</p> <p>Calls for Musical Praise vv. 4b-6a</p> <p>Various Kinds of Songs v. 4b</p> <p>Songs with Stringed Instruments v. 5</p> <p>Songs with Trumpets and Horns v. 6a</p> <p>Concluding Call for a Shout of Acclamation v. 6b</p>	<p><b>The Creation Called to Praise</b> vv. 7-9</p> <p>Calls for Loud Praise vv. 7-9a</p> <p>To the Sea &amp; its Contents v. 7a</p> <p>To the Earth &amp; its Creatures v. 7b</p> <p>To the Rivers and the Mountains v. 8-9a</p> <p><b>The Basis of the Call:</b> Yahweh’s Coming Arrival as Judge v. 9bcd</p>

### C. PLACEMENT

1. Pss 91-100 are all “orphan psalms,” having no author listed.
2. Pss 93-100 are often called the Theocratic Psalms because they praise Yahweh as the ultimate King of Israel and of all the earth.
3. Pss 96, 97, and 98 each summon the nations to God’s praise for the righteousness of His reign in the earth.

### III. STRUCTURE:

- A. At first glance the psalm clearly has **three segments** of three verses each: a call for Israel to praise (1-3), a call for the nations to praise (4-6), and a call for nature to praise (7-9).
- B. On closer inspection, segments 2 and 3 are linked together.
1. Segment 1 has a call to worship (1a) and the reason for it (1b-3).
  2. Segment 2 has only calls to worship with no reasons stated (4-6), & segment 3 has calls to worship and a lengthy reason (7-9).
    - a. Verse 4a calls all the earth to praise, including its people and the elements of nature.
    - b. Vv. 4b-6 call on that nations of the earth to praise God, ending with a call for them to acknowledge His kingship.
    - c. Vv. 7-9 call on physical aspects of the earth to praise God.
    - d. V. 9b gives the single reason why both the people and features of earth should rejoice: He is coming to bring a reign of righteousness in the earth.

### IV. NOTES & APPLICATION

- A. An **Inspiring Song**. Ps 98 is the inspiration behind Isaac Watts’ famous hymn, “Joy to the World.” While this hymn is traditionally sung at Christmas, Watts intended the song to celebrate the Second Coming of Christ which is foreshadowed in the prophecy of Ps 98:9.

- B. **Global Appeals:** This psalm makes a worldwide appeal for all men to turn to the Lord in worship and joy. It lays the **groundwork** for the Great Commission. Matt. 28:18-20. As with Ps 96, this song paves the way for the idea of Gentiles being fully welcomed into God’s presence.

- C. **Varieties of Sound:** Vv. 1-6 describe many different forms of music, including shouting, cheering, singing, and musical accompaniment.

1. “Shout joyfully” (vv. 4, 6): shouting battle cries & cheers.  
“Break forth” (v. 4): opening up the mouth to belt out.  
“Sing for joy” (v. 4): loud shouting and singing.  
“Sing praises” (vv. 4b, 5a): singing with instruments.
2. The “lyre” (v. 5): a handheld harp-like instrument with a varied number of strings. The difference between a harp and lyre might consist of the type of strings used, with the lyre having a brighter, higher sound.
3. The “trumpet” (v. 6): instrument of silver or bronze;  
The “horn” (v. 6): a **ram’s** horn hollowed for blowing.

- D. **The Joy of Creation:** Vv. 7-9a call upon the inanimate world to rejoice in God’s kingship. In one sense, the creation groans as it awaits the redemption of the world (Rom) 8:16-23. This ps imaginatively calls on the creation to sing with pure joy at the thought of God’s coming to redeem the world.

- E. **Judgment and Joy:** Vv. 4-9 call on the earth of men and nature to rejoice in the thought of God’s coming to judge the earth. We tend to think of judgement in negative terms, but the result of judgment is the glory of God, the ending of evil, and the establishment of righteousness—all calls for joy!

- F. **Future Hope of the World:** The teaching of the millennial reign of Christ is rooted in part in phrases like v. 9. (The Bible places much more focus on the initiating of the **Millennium** than it does on other related events such as the Rapture.)