

PSALM 99



GOD, MY EXCEEDING JOY
A JOYFUL JOURNEY THRU THE PSALMS

August 28, 2022 – THE HOLY KING

I. GENRE: Hymn for the Divine King

- A. Several verses in Ps 99 refer to the reign of Yahweh.
 1. V. 1 which includes a **shout** of acclamation that Yahweh is King and describes Him as sitting enthroned on the Ark of the Covenant.
 2. V. 4 explicitly calls him “The King.”
- B. Each of the Divine King psalms (93-100) stresses different attributes of the King. This ps highlights His holiness (vv. 3, 5, 9).
- C. While the psalm appears to have been written during the time of Israel’s monarchy (note the references to “Zion,” v. 2, cf. v. 9), there is no mention of an earthly king.
- D. Key figures from Israel’s history (Moses, Aaron, & Samuel) knew the King’s blessing before there ever was an earthly king over Israel.

II. SETTING

A. AUTHOR: Unknown

1. This poem is an “orphan” psalm because no author is listed.
2. Because of the 3-fold references to Yahweh being “holy,” some have wondered whether the author was influenced by **Isa 6:3**.

B. BACKGROUND

1. There are no specific events mentioned in the psalm.
2. The references to worship at Zion show that it was written after 1003 BC, when David moved the ark to Jerusalem.
3. The talk of Yahweh sitting enthroned between the cherubim (v. 1) indicates that it was written before the **exile**.

PSALM 99 <small>Dr. Scott Babcock © 2022</small>		
FIRST SUMMONS TO WORSHIP: ACCLAMATION OF THE KING OF ALL NATIONS vv. 1-3	SECOND SUMMONS TO WORSHIP: DECLARATION OF THE KING'S PERFECT JUSTICE vv. 4-5	THIRD SUMMONS TO WORSHIP: CELEBRATION OF THE KING'S GREAT MERCY vv. 6-9
Praises for the Praiseworthy King vv. 1-3a Shouts of Acclamation and Calls for Response from the Nations v. 1 Praise for Yahweh's Surpassing Greatness v. 2 Prayerful Invitation to the Nations to Praise Yahweh v. 3a Acclamation of Yahweh's Holiness v. 3b	Declaration of the King's Love for Justice v. 4a Praise for Yahweh's Establishment of Justice within Israel v. 4b Call to Worship God at His Earthly Footstool in Zion v. 5a Acclamation of Yahweh's Holiness v. 5b	Recollection of Intercessors Whom God Used to Show Mercy vv. 6-7 Yahweh's Positive Answer to Great Intercessors in the Past v. 6 Yahweh's Gracious Revelation of His Holy Will v. 7 Celebration of Yahweh's Forgiveness and Justice v. 8 Call to Worship at Yahweh's Holy Hill v. 9a Acclamation of Yahweh's Holiness v. 9b
Purpose: The psalmist calls all nations, including Israel, to celebrate Yahweh's kingship. While His presence induces fear, His righteousness guarantees true justice, and His mercy leads to the forgiveness of those who fear Him. Type: Hymn for the Divine King Author: Unknown Date: After 1003 BC when Zion hosted the sanctuary Note: The reference to Yahweh's enthronement on the Ark in Zion indicates preexilic composition.		

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 99 contains numerous phrases and themes which are found in the surrounding pss. Like Ps 98 before it, it calls on the nations to praise Yahweh as the supreme King.

III. STRUCTURE:

- A. Ps 99 has **three segments** of unequal length, each ending with a reference to Yahweh’s holiness.
- B. Each of the three acclamations of Yahweh’s holiness grow in **intensity** (vv. 3, 5, 9).
- C. The three segments progress from announcing the King’s presence to bring judgment (vv. 1-3), the righteousness of the King’s judgment (vv. 4-5), and the mercy the King loves to show (vv. 6-9).
- D. Each of these segments includes statements about the King, prayers to the King, and calls to the people to worship the King.

IV. NOTES & APPLICATION

- A. **A Song of the Eternal King.** Israel’s monarchy was often a royal failure, but God continued to reign even when His rulers failed. This is one of the encouraging themes that comes from reading the Divine King psalms after the royal lament of Ps 89.
- B. **Global Appeals:** Along with other Divine Kings psalms, this one also 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. This ps also anticipates the coming global rule of God and His Christ.
- C. **The Holy King.** Three times the ps declares that Yahweh is holy. Whereas the angels declare God’s holiness in Isa 6:3, here that declaration is made by God’s people.

D. **The Royal Footstool.** V. 5 speaks of God’s footstool in Zion. This reference to the ark. God’s seat is in heaven, but the footstool of his throne was on earth at the Ark.

E. **Seven Names.** The name “Yahweh” (LORD) appears 7 times in the ps, and pronouns referring to Yahweh (“He” and “You”) also appear 7 times.

F. **A Song with Switching.** Ps 99 frequently switches between talking about God to talking to God. Sometimes the nations are addressed, sometimes Israel, & sometimes God.

1. Vv. 1-2: Speech about God.
2. V. 3a: Prayer of praise to God.
3. V. 3b-4a: Praise about God.
4. Vv. 4b. Prayer of praise to God.
5. V. 5. Calls to praise God, and declaration about God.
6. Vv. 6-7. Recollection about God’s chosen men.
7. V. 8: Prayer of praise.
8. V. 9. Praise about God.

G. **A Hard Phrase.** The opening phrase of v. 4 is very difficult to translate. The Hebrew text reads, “And strength [of] a king justice loving.” The sense seems to be that the King uses all His might to show His love of justice.

H. **A Love for Mercy.** Vv. 6-8 highlight how the King delights in showing mercy for those who turn to Him. As surely as God answered the prayers of Moses, Aaron, and Samuel (all uniquely powerful spiritual leaders), so He will answer the call of those who turn to Him in fear and faith.

I. **Forgiveness Not Automatic.** While the Lord loves to show mercy, v. 8b reminds us that His mercy is not a blank check. Forgiveness is for those who related to God in fear & faith.