

The background of the slide is a photograph of a crowd of people from a low angle, looking up. Their hands are raised in the air, some with palms open, suggesting a moment of prayer or worship. The lighting is dramatic, with the crowd in silhouette against a bright, hazy sky. The sky has a color gradient from a deep teal at the top to a lighter blue and white near the horizon. The overall mood is one of spiritual fervor and collective devotion.

PSALMS: THE PRAYER BOOK OF JESUS

Session 6: The Praise Psalms

PSALM 98, *Cantante Domino*

O sing unto the Lord a new song, *

for he has done marvelous things.

With his own right hand and with his holy arm, *

he has won for himself the victory.

The LORD declared his salvation; *

his righteousness has he openly shown in the sight

of the nations.

He has remembered his mercy and truth toward the
house of Israel, *

and all the ends of the world have seen the salvation

of our God.

Show yourselves joyful in the LORD, all you lands; *

sing, rejoice, and give thanks.

Praise the LORD with the harp; *

sing with the harp a psalm of thanksgiving.

With trumpets also and horns, *

O show yourselves joyful before the Lord, the King.

Let the sea make a noise, and all that is in it, *

the round world, and those who dwell therein.

Let the rivers clap their hands, and let the hills be joyful
together before the LORD, *

for he has come to judge the earth.

With righteousness shall he judge the world, *

and the peoples with equity.

THE PRAISE PSALMS

- We've covered the lament psalms, where we reckon with God in the midst of our sorrow and despair.
- We've covered the nature psalms, where we observe how God reveals himself through nature and how nature itself proclaims the glory of God.
- But what about pure worship of God in all his glory—the king over all things?
- Can you think of a time where, because of, or even despite your circumstances, you felt complete joy in the Lord and praised him?

THE PRAISE PSALMS

- To qualify as a praise psalm, it needs to praise God specifically. It is a fixed form with three main characteristics:
 - A formal call to praise.
 - The actual conducting of the praise.
 - A note of closure or resolution.
- Other traits
 - Throughout, we find language such as “shouting,” “bursting,” “reveling,” “resounding,” “clapping,” “thundering,” “crying,” “exulting,” and “dancing.”

THE PRAISE PSALMS

- Additional traits (cont'd)
 - The overall logic is to a) ascribe praise to God, and b) assemble evidence for why God is worthy of praise.
 - "Praise" usually means to "appraise"—to set value on something.
 - The central technique of praise psalms is the cataloguing of God's praiseworthy acts. A less frequent technique is painting a portrait of God.
 - The psalmist can praise God for either his actions or attributes (character).
 - God's praiseworthy acts occur in three primary arenas: nature or creation, history, and the personal life of a believer.
 - The most common actions are acts of providence, redemption, salvation, or forgiveness; creation of the world; and preservation of physical life (through provision or rescue/deliverance).

THE PRAISE PSALMS

- Additional traits cont'd):
 - The psalmists often use generalization and sometimes specific examples (these frequently alternate back and forth throughout the psalm).
 - Allusion (reference to past history) looms large because of the impulse to praise God for his acts.
 - Sometimes the poet praises God for personal blessings, and other times the focus is public or communal.
- Examples of praise psalms:
 - Psalm 29, Psalm 95, Psalm 96, Psalm 98, Psalm 100, Psalm 150

THE PRAISE PSALMS

“Because of the sorrow that dots our lives, joy is often a choice. While a song of praise may erupt from a spontaneous outburst of affection for God, it may also require a decision. In Psalm 107, despite the immediate experience of grief and loss (vv. 4-28), the psalmist offers to God a sacrifice of praise in the presence of God’s people (v. 32). In verse 22, he says, “let them offer thanksgiving sacrifices, and tell of his deeds with songs of joy.”

– W. David O. Taylor, *Open and Unafraid: The Psalms as a Guide to Life*

THE WORSHIP PSALMS (SONGS OF ZION)

- Songs of Zion are psalms that focus on worshipping God in the temple in Jerusalem.
- They celebrate Mount Zion (Jerusalem) as God's chosen dwelling place, the center of his presence with His people.
- Themes: God's presence in the Temple, the security of the city, and the joy of worship in Zion.
- Logic: The logic is to awaken longing for worship and to express the joy of engaging in that worship.
- Representative Psalms: Psalm 46, Psalm 48, Psalm 76, Psalm 84, Psalm 87, Psalm 122.
- Liturgical Use: Likely sung in festivals or celebrations of Jerusalem and the Temple; some are used in Anglican liturgies for church dedications or feast days.

THE WORSHIP PSALMS (SONGS OF ZION)

“When pilgrims sang of Zion, they were not simply praising a place. They were rehearsing the story of God’s commitment to dwell among His people, and in doing so they renewed their own commitment to Him.”

– John Goldingay, *Psalms, Vol. 2*

“When the psalms celebrate Zion, they are not simply exalting a geographical location but bearing witness to the astonishing claim that the Creator of the universe has chosen to dwell with His people. For Christians, that claim comes to fulfillment in Jesus and in the Spirit’s indwelling presence.”

– N.T. Wright, *The Case for the Psalms*

PSALM 46, *Doner noster refugium*

God is our refuge and strength, *

a very present help in trouble.

Therefore we will not fear, though the earth be moved, *

and though the hills be carried into the midst of the sea;

Though its waters rage and swell, *

and though the mountains shake at its tempest.

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, *

the holy dwelling place of the Most High.

God is in the midst of her; therefore she shall not be moved. *

God shall help her at the break of day.

The nations are in an uproar, and the kingdoms are moved, *

but God has lifted his voice, and the earth shall melt away.

The LORD of hosts is with us; *

the God of Jacob is our refuge.

O come and behold the works of the Lord, *

what devastations he has brought upon the earth.

He makes wars to cease in all the world; *

he breaks the bow, and shatters the spear, and burns

the chariots in the fire.

“Be still then and know that I am God; *

I will be exalted among the nations, and I will be exalted
in the earth.”

The LORD of hosts is with us; *

the God of Jacob is our refuge.