

A NEW SONG

Saturday, January 3
Reading: Psalm 98

Psalm 98:1 *Sing to the LORD a new song, for He has done marvelous things; His right hand and His holy arm have worked salvation for Him.*

During the Protestant Reformation (16th century), reformers like Martin Luther not only taught the Scriptures but wrote great hymns that also taught God's Word (i.e. Luther's "A Mighty Fortress is Our God"). John and Charles Wesley lead great revivals in the 18th century and wrote hundreds of new hymns in support of the effort. In the 19th century, D. L. Moody and Ira Sankey introduced new gospel songs during their revivals throughout America and Great Britain. In more recent history, God has used Christians like Bill Gaither, Keith Green, Darlene Zschech, Matt Redman, Phil Wickham, and a host of others to inspire and enrich His people with new songs. When God is working, His people respond with new and fresh praise and worship to His name.

In Psalm 98, Israel is instructed to "sing to the LORD a new song" (98:1). The word "new" means both new (as opposed to old) and fresh (something that has not existed before). All of creation is enjoined to "burst into jubilant song" and "shout for joy" (98:4-8). The "marvelous things" God has done requires a fresh burst of joy and praise. This idea of a new song is repeated six times in the Psalms (33:3; 40:3; 96:1; 98:1; 144:9; 149:1). If God had it recorded that many times, He must be serious about it!

Psalm 98 gives us several reasons for this new song. First, it is because God has worked salvation (98:1). This was probably written by the exiles who were finally allowed to return to Israel after 70 years of captivity in Babylon. Today, we have an even greater salvation to sing about - the eternal salvation available because of Christ's work on the cross.

The second reason to sing is that God has revealed His salvation and righteousness to the nations (98:2-3). The surrounding nations witnessed as God's people returned home to rebuild the Temple and worship the Lord. Today, God's plan of salvation is not hidden. It is available to all who will repent and trust in Christ as Savior. "All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God" (98:3)

The third reason to sing is that God "has remembered His love and faithfulness to Israel" (98:3). God had promised through His prophets that one day the exiles would return home (see Jer. 29:10-14). Now God was fulfilling that promise. God has kept a much greater promise in the coming of Jesus the Messiah to triumph over sin, death, and Satan in order to bring us back into a right relationship with God, a relationship that will culminate when "He comes to judge the world in righteousness" (98:9).

Has your worship and relationship with God grown stale? Is the excitement you once had disappeared? Maybe you need a new song in your life! Even an "old" song can become new when we experience fresh mercies and new meaning from the Lord. Think about what God has done for you and let the music in your heart soar!