

1. Sing, for the LORD is Our Rescuer! (vv1-3)

- a. This is Victory Song
 - i. In the ancient near east, when a chieftain or a king would go out in battle for the sake of his people, then return in victory, the people would sing songs at his return
 - ii. “Sing, for the Champion has returned victorious!”
- b. Sing a song to the Lord (v1)
 - i. The command to sing is issued over 50 times in the Psalms (the Bible’s songbook)
 1. The Psalms were meant to be sung!
 2. All the deep, rich theology contained in them is meant to be theology that is sung, not merely recited
 3. All the deep, rich human experiences described in them are meant to be sung, not merely recognized or studied
 - ii. Singing is a human act of soulful response
 1. There needs to be a reason to sing
 - a. There are many reasons that humans sing
 - iii. The Psalms are, at their root, *musical* expressions of truth intended to be sung *communally* – the command is in the plural
 1. “A congregation is just as responsible to sing the gospel as the preachers are to preach it. The two tasks (singing and preaching) jointly undertaken to their fullest, then reduce themselves to one common act.” (Harold Best, *Music Through the Eyes of Faith*)
 2. While the Psalms are prayers, in many cases, they are all songs meant to be sung together
 - a. The revelation of Jesus given to John mentions singing in heaven at the completion of all things
 - i. Revelation 5:8-10; 14:3; 15:3
 - iv. Jesus leads us in singing!
 1. The LORD Himself sings
 - a. Zephaniah 3:17
 2. Jesus sings among us
 - a. Heb 2:10-12
 - b. In fact, Jesus’ last words from the cross were from this same quote by the Hebrew author, and it was from a song, Psalm 22
 3. “When the church sings, we join the song that Jesus sings as he stands before the Father and leads us in worship.” (Reggie Kidd, *With One Voice*, 21)
- c. Sing a song to Him because He has done extraordinary and powerful things *to rescue us from real threats to us*
 - i. The reason which the composer gives in this psalm is the “extraordinary” things which God has “powerfully” worked
 1. It is a song about what God has done
 - a. “declared his salvation”
 - b. “revealed his justice”
 - c. “remembered His covenant love”
 2. When it comes to salvation, to justice, to God’s covenant – IT IS GOD ALONE WHO ACTS!
 - a. This is so obvious that we often miss it and drift away from the centrality of this teaching throughout all of the Scripture
 - b. This idea that we have of God waiting around for us to “do our part”, or chomping at his bit agitated because we haven’t done the right things, so he cannot do what he wants – is heretical

- i. And this heretical view of God permeates the evangelical church and permeates our souls – when we fail, we think that we’ve changed God’s actions, God’s heart, and God’s works towards us
 - ii. We emphasize so much the works of man, even making God’s promises *contingent* upon humanity doing something first
 - 1. “If you let Him open your eyes...”
 - 2. “If you will let Him”
 - 3. “To those who receive Him He gave the rights to be called children of God” (John 1:12) – reception is not permission, nor is it contingency – it is *recognition* of God’s already performed works
 - ii. The LORD declared His salvation (v2)
 - 1. Salvation is what God has done for us
 - a. Rescue – divine rescue
 - b. Therefore, there is always hope for us, even in the darkest days – the days of exile and suffering, like Israel experienced
 - 2. He has done so publicly – “before the eyes of the people”
 - a. “The saving revelation of God, unlike the intimations of the gods, came not in nature with its storms, misfortunes, and rejuvenations; it came not in human nature with its whisperings and intuitions; it came in *history*. It came in a history that was external, objective, known to Israel and its neighbors...The resurrection of Christ had nothing to do with the religious imagination, nothing to do with parables of existence and symbols of inner experience it had everything to do with an act of God that was public, external, and objective.”

- David F. Wells, *No Place for Truth*
 - 3. He has done so righteously
 - a. The problem of righteousness is how God can keep two promises which He makes:
 - i. He will punish sin and not let the guilty go without justice
 - ii. He will show mercy and lovingkindness to those who entrust themselves to Him and keep His commandments, to be their God forever
 - b. The problem arises when there are none who fit the latter category
 - i. “All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God” (Rom 3:23)
 - ii. “The wages of sin is death...”
 - c. Well, there is one: Jesus, Yeshuah, “The LORD saves”
 - i. The Christian gospel is that God is both righteous in judging sinners by judging their representative who was without sin (Jesus), and He justifies sinners in the very same act
 - ii. Jesus represented us “before the presence of the LORD” and took upon Himself the wages of sin, the righteous judgment of God, and granted to us His perfect obedience, His perfect faith in God, so that God would be both “just and the justifier of the one in accordance with faith in Christ Jesus” (Rom 3:26)
 - iii. His salvation was promised and He is faithful to His promise (v3)
 - 1. *chesed*
 - a. The Hebrew word, *chesed*, is a complex word, but the basic description of it is the characteristic of God, the attribute of God, which holds vehemently to His promise to show love, kindness, mercy, patience, and dedication to the good of those to whom He has covenanted.
 - i. When God promises good, He delivers on it, and it comes from His heart of compassion, kindness, and love

- ii. Therefore, I usually translate this word as “covenant love” – the love which is according to God’s promise
 - b. Promises come through Israel, but expand to all the ends of the earth
 - 2. ‘to all the earth’
 - a. God’s promises are not only for Israel, but for “all who put their faith in Jesus” whether Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male or female, etc.
 - i. It is humble faith in Jesus, the kind of faith which strives to follow the LORD obediently, which is the distinguishing characteristic of those who belong to the LORD and those who do not – nothing else
 - b. God reveals His salvation *to whom* – “to all the earth”
 - i. The reason that we sing of God’s rescue is to help the world remember God’s means salvation
 - ii. We sing to help the world remember that there is a God who has done extraordinary works to redeem sinners!
2. Shout, for the LORD is King! (vv4-6)
 - a. Shout a song to the LORD
 - i. There is an exuberance in this verse which goes way beyond clapping our hands in song
 - 1. Joyfully!
 - 2. “bursting out”
 - 3. With abnormal instruments, too!
 - a. The “lyre” and the voice were the normal worship instruments
 - b. The trumpets and ram’s horns, however, were for wartime communication.
 - i. They were not primarily musical, but declarative
 - ii. They proclaimed an announcement or a command
 - iii. They were radically public and radically attentive
 - c. “BEHOLD! LOOK HERE! SEE WHAT THE LORD HAS DONE, IS DOING, AND HAS PROMISED TO DO!”
 - ii. When a prisoner, whose guilt is known and felt, is forgiven and released, then granted a place of honor *in the household of the King* – He shouts for joy!
 - 1. He draws attention to the goodness of the King because He knows the danger, felt the hangman’s breath, and was set free
 - 2. The joy of our redemption draws the world’s eyes to it, to behold the extraordinary works of God!
 - b. Shout in triumph
 - i. In the presence of the KING
 - ii. YHWH is the KING over all the earth
 - 1. The KING has won victory over sin and death – He brings peace between God and man
 - 2. All the earth simply is under the King’s authority
 - c. Festive shout of victory and the joy of redemption and peace and safety – the completion of redemptive victory by the LORD
 - i. Romans 8:31-39
 - 1. Who can be against us? – GOD is for us!
 - 2. Who can question His “forness”? – GOD gave His only Son for us!
 - 3. Who can charge us with anything? – GOD justifies us!

4. Who can condemn us? – Jesus was condemned for us, even more, was raised and continues to defend us!
 5. What shall separate us from God’s love? – We are victorious over all these “separators” through Him *who loved us!*
 - ii. More than all things which make us “burst forth” in joyful song, it is the reality that God is King and He went to great lengths to save you *and that because of Christ Jesus His smile is upon you at all times!*
 1. Do you picture God as more of a frowner or more of a smiler?
 2. If a frowner, why?
 - a. Is it not because you are looking at your works instead of His?!
 - b. Isn’t it interesting that Jesus’ first miracle was not a miracle to meet us in our grief, like raising the widow’s son, or healing a blind man, but rather met us in our joy, at a wedding, making our drab water into joyful wine?
 - d. No matter what you are going through now, God is the KING, and if you belong to Him, your have reason for festal bliss and blaring announcements and shouts of freedom’s song.
3. Thunder, for the LORD is Judge! (vv7-9)
- a. There has been a crescendo in this Psalm. Do you see it?
 - i. Singing...O Israel
 - ii. Shouting...all the nations
 - iii. Thundering...all the earth (sea, land, mountains)
 1. Our songs remind us of God’s faithfulness in the past, because faith is hard
 2. Our shouts remind us of God’s faithfulness in the present, because faith is harder
 3. The thundering of Nature reminds of God’s faithfulness in the future, because faith is hardest
 - b. This psalm ends uncomfortably – from joy and singing to...*judgment?*
 - i. How can human joy and divine judgement be reconciled?
 - ii. How can the crescendos of celebration climax with divine judgment?
 - c. The means by which the KING gains victory is by judging the earth
 - i. The FEAR of the LORD
 - ii. The LORD has enemies who will be judged without mercy
 1. Those who refuse to submit to Him, who refuse to honor His Son, have chosen their side against Him
 2. While God laughs in joy with His children, He laughs in derision against His enemies and their pride
 - a. Psalm 2 – whole thing
 - d. All creation thunders for JUSTICE
 - i. Romans 8
 1. Narnia and talking animals – why is the personification of Nature so deeply rooted in the souls of humanity?
 2. We long for the restoration of Eden, for Narnia’s Spring
 - ii. Creation thunders for justice!
 1. Sea thunders
 2. The world thunders (in triumphant shout!)
 3. The mountains rejoice
 - e. The LORD is coming to judge the earth – so THUNDER
 - i. This gives hope to those who have been abused and sinned against

1. YOUR GOD SEES IT, KNOWS THE DEPTHS OF THE EVIL AGAINST YOU, AND WILL ANSWER IT WITH JUSTICE
2. Nature thunders with this hope that upon the return of Jesus Christ all things will be made right
- ii. It is God's certain and coming justice which actually empowers us to love our enemies and forgive them
 1. Why?
 - a. "Violence thrives today, secretly nourished by the belief that God refuses to take the sword... It takes the quiet of a suburb for the birth of the thesis that human nonviolence is a result of a God who refuses to judge. In a scorched land — soaked in the blood of the innocent, the idea will invariably die, like other pleasant captivities of the liberal mind... if God were NOT angry at injustice and deception and did NOT make a final end of violence, that God would not be worthy of our worship."
(Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace*)
- f. He judges with righteousness
 - i. A straight edge
 1. Psalm 15:1 – "O LORD, who shall sojourn in your tent? Who shall dwell on your holy hill?"
 - a. Who can draw near to sing with joy in the presence of a holy God who hates sin and injustice and brokenness?
 2. Psalm 15:2 – "He who walks blamelessly and does what is right and speaks truth in his heart."
 - a. OH...NO!!!
 - ii. What, then, would lead us to rejoice in His presence?
 1. "Who shall sojourn in your tent and dwell on your holy hill?"
 2. JESUS CAN!!!
 - a. The word translated "salvation" in v2 is the Hebrew word, *yeshuah*
 - b. HE has clean hands and a pure heart.
 - c. HE has done no evil and broken no promise.
 - d. HE speaks truth *from His heart*
 3. Jesus, the Righteousness of God, took upon Himself all of our sins, our woes, our curses, our violence, our exploitation, and placed Himself under the holy wrath of God
 4. At that point, God's love for you met God's judgment upon you...and when the dust settled in the blood-stained soil of Calvary...there was joy.
 - iii. How can human song find its crescendo in divine judgment?
 1. The good news is that for those who repent of their own righteousness and entrust themselves to Jesus will be brought into God's tent with Him
 - a. Heb 6:19-20... "we have this hope as an anchor for the soul"
 2. We sing because Jesus was made silent...so entrust yourself to Him alone.
 3. We shout because the King who was coming to judge the earth, to our shock judged Himself in our stead, for all of the evil, oppression, violence of our hearts and hands...so entrust yourself to Him.
 4. Creation thunders because that King rose from the dead, defeated the undefeated curse, and proved that redemption is coming and one day all things will be resurrected and made the way that they are supposed to be...so entrust yourself to Him
 - iv. The LORD has made His *Yeshuah* known to all the earth...so we rejoice with singing at His salvation, we shout in triumph at the reign of the King who laid down His life to save us, and we thunder in the hope of His return to set all things right.

And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. (Lk. 2:10-11)