

Survey of the Bible part 90 Hymn Psalms

As we continue in the psalms we're going to look at the Hymn psalms, which are psalms that are used to raise the spirits of men to praise their God in music, which shows how God Himself has hard wired us for music and rhythm and a sense of expressing ourselves in creative ways, that go beyond mere words and address the emotional aspect of how we sometimes communicate with our Lord.

The 2 songs we sang tonight take into account psalm 95, which is a hymn psalm.

Psalm 95:1 - 11 O come, let us sing for joy to the LORD, Let us shout joyfully to the rock of our salvation. ² Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving, Let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms. ³ For the LORD is a great God And a great King above all gods, ⁴ In whose hand are the depths of the earth, The peaks of the mountains are His also. ⁵ The sea is His, for it was He who made it, And His hands formed the dry land. ⁶ Come, let us worship and bow down, Let us kneel before the LORD our Maker. ⁷ For He is our God, And we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand. Today, if you would hear His voice, ⁸ Do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah, As in the day of Massah in the wilderness, ⁹ "When your fathers tested Me, They tried Me, though they had seen My work. ¹⁰ "For forty years I loathed *that* generation, And said they are a people who err in their heart, And they do not know My ways. ¹¹ "Therefore I swore in My anger, Truly they shall not enter into My rest."

This psalm begins with the reason for our coming before the Lord.

“O come, let us sing for joy to the LORD, Let us shout joyfully to the rock of our salvation.”

What do the first two words, “O come”, designate, as it is addressed to God’s people?

That there is a corporate attitude that God desires of His people and though we may worship Him in quietness and solitude as individuals, He delights when we as a group approach His throne.

In this particular case what is the attitude in which we as a group approach His throne according to verse one?

With Joy. And notice in what two venues that joy is to be expressed. The first is with singing and the second is with shouting.

The first is the one we're most familiar and comfortable with. I dare say, even if you can't sing, we all desire to make a joyful noise to the Lord.

Singing is one of those things that God built into all people. But singing was first and foremost designed to be brought before the Lord with the express purpose of declaring His greatness with gladness and joy.

Singing and shouting praises to God were also given to the angels and so it would make sense that man was also given this desire from day one.

Psalms 103:20 ²⁰ Bless the LORD, you His angels, Mighty in strength, who perform His word, Obeying the voice of His word!

Hebrews 1:6 ⁶ And when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says, "AND LET ALL THE ANGELS OF GOD WORSHIP HIM."

Blessing and worshipping God includes raising voices in praise and adoration to the living God.

And so, there was a song in the hearts of both Adam and Eve on the very day they were created and as they looked at the wonders of God's creation just for them, they must have sung and shouted for joy at the very existence they shared in the presence of God.

In fact, we're told in Scripture that not only do God's people desire to sing praises to their God, it is God Himself who is their song.

Exodus 15:1-2 ^{NAU} Then Moses and the sons of Israel sang this song to the LORD, and said, "I will sing to the LORD, for He is highly exalted; The horse and its rider He has hurled into the sea. ² "The LORD is my strength and song, And He has become my salvation; This is my God, and I will praise Him; My father's God, and I will extol Him.

And this song has been placed there by God Himself who alone has the ability to put a new song into our hearts because He has given us a new heart as He has taken out the heart of stone and replaced it with a heart of flesh that seeks to worship in spirit and in truth.

Psalm 40:3 ³ He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God; Many will see and fear And will trust in the LORD.

And in psalm 95 it is this new song that we are instructed to sing to God as we consider the source or foundation of this song. And that is the rock of our salvation.

It is this rock upon which we base our joy whether in song or shouting praises to our God.

And who is this Rock?

1 Corinthians 10:1-4 ^{NAU} For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea; ² and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea; ³ and all ate the same spiritual food; ⁴ and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ.

And yet this same Rock of salvation has been rejected by those who do not have a new song placed in them as they sing their own praises because they would not submit to the Rock of ages.

1 Peter 2:5-9 ⁵ you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶ For *this* is contained in Scripture: "BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A CHOICE STONE, A PRECIOUS CORNER *stone*, AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED." ⁷ This precious value, then, is for you who believe; but *for those who disbelieve, "THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE VERY CORNER stone,"* ⁸ and, "A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE"; *for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this doom they were also appointed.* ⁹ But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR *God's* OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

What does Peter at the end of verse 9 and David in verse 1 of psalm 95 both acknowledge as to what is the reason for the existence of God's people, whom He has called out of darkness?

To proclaim His excellencies which in the case of psalm 95 is singing and shouting God's greatness in song.

But again, this song is based upon one thing that should be at the heart of our new song found in Christ and that is thanksgiving.

Psalm 95:2 ² Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving, Let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms.

Again, the theme of joy is tied to thanksgiving, but it is in the context of coming before the presence of the God who gives this joy.

How do we come before the presence of the Lord?

We are always in the presence of the Lord.

Ephesians 2:5-6 ⁵ even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶ and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus,

And so, it's not as though we have to put ourselves into some special place or attitude, like going to "church" or being whipped into some spiritual frenzy, before we can enter into the presence of God.

We are always before His presence because we are in Christ who is presently seated in heavenly places before the Father.

And so, if this is the case, when is it appropriate to enter into His presence with praise and thanksgiving?

Every moment of our lives.

When the writer of Hebrews compares the sacrificial system of Israel with the Messiah he makes this point of worshipping God continually.

Hebrews 13:11-15 ¹¹ For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy place by the high priest *as an offering* for sin, are burned outside the camp. ¹² Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate. ¹³ So, let us go out to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach. ¹⁴ For here we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking *the city* which is to come. ¹⁵ Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name.

So, why do we praise God continually? Because of our thankfulness to our Rock and the hope of that city to come, the

new heavens and the new earth, which is the inheritance Christ purchased for us.

But as we come back to our text in psalm 95 we see that David returns to a familiar theme of who this God is.

Psalm 95:3-6 ³ For the LORD is a great God And a great King above all gods, ⁴ In whose hand are the depths of the earth, The peaks of the mountains are His also. ⁵ The sea is His, for it was He who made it, And His hands formed the dry land. ⁶ Come, let us worship and bow down, Let us kneel before the LORD our Maker.

This God is creator of all things, including us. He is our Maker.

David says, that the Lord is a great God and a great King, which is kind of ironic because who did Israel reject as King in favor of an earthly king, including David?

David is showing how even he, as king, is subservient to the great King who deserves his worship and adoration. It is this God whose hand has created the universe. And the world needs to be reminded of who this true and only God is. And this is precisely what Paul did in Athens.

Acts 17:23-31 ²³ "For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, 'TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.' Therefore what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you. ²⁴ "The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; ²⁵ nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all *people* life and breath and all things; ²⁶ and He made from one *man* every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined *their* appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, ²⁷ that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; ²⁸ for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His children.' ²⁹ "Being then the children of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man. ³⁰ "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all *people* everywhere should repent, ³¹ because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead."

We need to be willing to explain who this God is and what it is that He has done in sending His Son into this world to die for a people for Himself and securing that salvation through the raising from the dead of Jesus Christ.

Psalm 95:7 ⁷ For He is our God, And we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand.

There are two pieces of real estate and two sets of animals in God's economy. There are sheep and there are goats, there is the rocky ground, (the wilderness), and there is the pasture that God places His people on.

The one's who have been given a new heart and a new song by God are those who have been placed in God's pasture because we are the sheep of His hand.

But the world, even though they have been created in God's image, does not and will not hear His voice, but instead reject the truth, and David acknowledges this even among the congregation of Israel.

Psalm 95:7-11 Today, if you would hear His voice, ⁸ Do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah, As in the day of Massah in the wilderness, ⁹ "When your fathers tested Me, They tried Me, though they had seen My work. ¹⁰ "For forty years I loathed *that* generation, And said they are a people who err in their heart, And they do not know My ways. ¹¹ "Therefore I swore in My anger, Truly they shall not enter into My rest."

Two groups are being addressed here: the people of God whom David encourages to sing and shout praises to God and those who only profess with their lips to be followers of God.

The second group hardened their hearts and God did not allow them to enter His rest. This is the fate of the world as they hate their God and creator. But there is a message for the true sheep of God here as well.

There is the temptation to harden our hearts to the truth of who God is and what He has done for us and instead of praises and thanksgiving coming from our lives and directed to our creator, we choose to seek the praises of the world and instead of looking to that city which is lasting, we find that the present city, the present world, to be a pretty comfortable place we prefer at times.

But as David tells us in the beginning of psalm 95 our lives must be devoted to living in the presence of God with joy and praise and thanksgiving.

Romans 12:1-2 ^{NAU} Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which is* your spiritual service of worship. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

Psalm 95:7 Today, if you would hear His voice,

We as believers in Christ are the only one's who can hear the voice of our God. He has given us ears to hear and eyes to see as His Spirit has regenerated our hearts and given us the life of our Savior.

The world, as characterized by those who wandered in the wilderness, have erred in their hearts and God has judged them in His holy wrath and they continue not to listen to the truth of who God is. It is only by the grace of God that we can hear the life giving words of our Shepherd.

John 10:25-30 ²⁵ Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father's name, these testify of Me. ²⁶ "But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep. ²⁷ "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; ²⁸ and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. ²⁹ "My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of the Father's hand. ³⁰ "I and the Father are one."

If we would hear His voice, we would know what He desires of us.

But here's the question: how do we hear the voice of our Savior after we become one of His sheep? How do we recognize the voice of our shepherd?

Through the word He has delivered through His prophets and apostles.

John 17:14-21 ¹⁴ "I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. ¹⁵ "I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil *one*. ¹⁶ "They are not of the world,

even as I am not of the world. ¹⁷ "Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth. ¹⁸ "As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. ¹⁹ "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth. ²⁰ "I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; ²¹ that they may all be one; even as You, Father, *are* in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.

It is when we don't listen to His word that we are prone to listen to the world's wisdom and Paul warns against this as well.

2 Timothy 4:3-4 ³ For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but *wanting* to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, ⁴ and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.

Only as individual believers, and believers collectively in the church, being faithful to want the truth and not compromise by having their ears tickled, will the church go forward as they lift up their God and Creator with joy and thanksgiving.

The world has nothing to offer of any lasting value and the church should be the one place where truth should reign supreme, but in these days it doesn't appear that way and we need to be vigilant to make sure that we continue to hear God's truth as we His sheep follow Him wherever He may lead.

And then like David may we sing for joy to the LORD, and shout joyfully to the rock of our salvation.