

**05A*THE TIMELESS PSALMS:
A CALL TO WORSHIP
CHRISTMAS DAY (ii) A 2013
PSALM 98**

We join with all creation, in praising our God with another new song of praise.

The rivers' waters sparkle and splash for joy; and the hills are alive with singing!

We come with joyful music and harmonious singing to praise the Lord our God.

Ancient ram's horns unite with modern instruments to praise our Glorious God.

We gather to rejoice with exclamations of praise over God's powerful holiness,
and to celebrate God's victory, and the new revelations of God's loving promises.

**Together we make joyful noise with songs and shouts of glee unto the Lord our God,
who mighty acts of grace and mercy have brought about all creations' salvation. Amen.**

PSALM 98

1 Sing a new song to the LORD, for he has done wonderful deeds.

He has won a mighty victory by his power and holiness.

2 The LORD has announced his victory
and has revealed his righteousness to every nation!

3 He has remembered his promise to love and be faithful to Israel.

The whole earth has seen the salvation of our God.

4 Shout to the LORD, all the earth; break out in praise and sing for joy!

5 Sing your praise to the LORD with the harp,
with the harp and melodious song,

6 with trumpets and the sound of the ram's horn.

Make a joyful symphony before the LORD, the King!

7 Let the sea and everything in it shout his praise!

Let the earth and all living things join in.

8 Let the rivers clap their hands in glee!

Let the hills sing out their songs of joy

9 before the LORD. For the LORD is coming to judge the earth.

He will judge the world with justice, and the nations with fairness.

**PRAYERS OF PRAISE:
CHRISTMAS DAY (ii) A 2013
PSALM 98**

God our King and Judge, we come together to praise and glorify the Lord of all creation – past, present and future. We come because we trust in the God whose judgements offer liberation and security; and whose promises have been faithfully kept through countless generations. We come to unite with all creation in singing praises because of God's royal reign of majestic deeds, all of which are the symbols and signs of the powerful holiness of God. Today, we join with all creation, in praising our God with another new song of exuberant joy, as we echo the singing of the hills and the splashing sounds of the rivers as they add their voices to the mighty anthem of royal celebration. Sing a new song, for the Lord is coming and will give us a new direction in life.

Our praises and celebrations of our God and King are not intended to be polite and discreet murmurs of a refined "Amen"; but rather, they are gleeful shouts of joy and gladness, so that our worship of God comes from our hearts and minds—because of what we have personally experienced of God's victorious reign of liberation. Today, we have thrown off all the shackles which inhibit our worship, so that we can honour our Lord God and King in ways which express our delight. Sing a new song, for the Lord is coming and will give us a new direction in justice.

Holy God, even though our celebrations of God's Kingly reign may seem at times to be less than reverent; we acknowledge through our heartfelt worship, that we also offer our sincere awe and reverence before our God. Just as King David put on priestly robes to dance with delight before the Lord God¹, so we too put on our spiritual robes of joy and blessedness to show our delight in the Lord our Holy God; as together, we sing ever-new songs of praise to the God who blesses us every day. Sing a new song, for the Lord is coming and will give us a new direction in worship. Amen.

**A PERSONAL MEDITATION:
CHRISTMAS DAY (ii) A 2013
PSALM 98**

Psalm 98 is not about a remote and austere God, whose reign is only about outer space and the majesty of the heavens; nor is it about an indifferent God whose relationship with humanity is rather vague and lacking in any intimacy. Instead, this Psalm is about the God who dwells amongst God's people, and who is involved in the day-to-day events of people living within God's kingdom. It is also a Psalm of movement and action, noise and involvement! Included in the endless songs of praise are the ceaseless tides of the seas; the sparkling and splashing waters of rivers as they make their way toward the oceans; and that the hills are alive with singing! There is the blast from the brass instruments and the ram's horn – a very piercing sound; there is shouting and exclamations, announcements and victory celebrations – all with one purpose – of praising God and anticipating that God is coming to give us a new direction and focus in life.

Creative pause: God is coming to give us a new direction and focus in our living.

Psalm 98 demands of us a new song in which we praise God for all God's great deeds, and through God's powerful holiness victories have been won. All creation is also invited to join these celebrations. If only the world of people were as joyful in their witness to God's glory as are the children and the birds around where I live! In Psalm 147 are the words: "...*He feeds the wild animals, and the young ravens cry to him for food...*"² I have crows (ravens to some people) nesting in the trees near my home, and the young crows are incredibly noisy when they want their food—which is all the time! Other birds are also nesting and the magpies celebrate their new babies by warbling all night long! Then there are the uninhibited children on their way to school also adding to the songs of praise each morning, and then, on their way home again, they always have a totally different song to sing and celebrate!

Creative pause: If only people were more joyful in their witness to God's glory!

On the internet, there are some wonderfully uninhibited images of King David gladly dancing before the Lord, as the Ark of the Lord was carried towards Jerusalem. David's wife complained about his behaviour and he replied: "*I was dancing before the Lord, who chose me...He appointed me as the leader of Israel, the people of the Lord. So I am willing to act like a fool in order to show my joy in the Lord....*"¹ Why do we believe we always have to be dignified when we worship God? Thankfully, in some cultures they do not have the same restrictions we place on ourselves!! Listening to the peoples' of the Pacific Islands sing their praises to God, is a lesson in worshipping God with one's whole heart, soul, mind and strength, as they use all of their body to sing praises to God.

Creative pause: Do we always have to be dignified when we worship God?

Acknowledgements:

¹: 2 Samuel 6:12-22

² Psalm 147:9

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