



Psalm 100 - All Lands Summoned to Praise God

A Psalm of thanksgiving.

Introduction

This hymn, though not explicitly a psalm celebrating God's kingship, brings the collection of kingship hymns to a close with its exuberant call to come before the Lord in worship. Like the divine kingship psalms, this hymn invites 'all the earth', i.e. all the Gentiles, to join the song of praise.

The title declares that this psalm is for giving thanks. That is certainly fitting, as the worshippers thank the universal creator for the privilege of being 'the sheep of his pasture.' The term 'thanksgiving', Hebrew *todah*, can also be the name for the thanksgiving offering, one kind of peace-offering; refer to Leviticus 7:12-15. Since the peace-offering is a meal enjoyed in God's presence, this too is fitting for the psalm; but there is no reason to be so specific. Further, v.4 uses the word in its ordinary sense in parallel with 'praise. There are several phrases shared between this psalm and Psalm 95, as the comments will point out.

¹ Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth.

Psalm 100:1

Make a joyful noise to the Lord. Unlike the several previous psalms, Psalm 100 does not begin with a declaration of God's sovereignty or character. It begins with the simple and direct exhortation to all the earth that they should praise God with a joyful shout. This is a call to the nations, extending far beyond Israel's borders.

Make a joyful noise was a call made earlier by the psalmist: <<*O come, let us sing to the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation! Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!*>> (Psalm 95:1-2), and is also rendered: <<*Shout for joy to God, all the earth!*>> (Psalm 66:1 NIV). Charles Spurgeon commented, "The

original word signifies a glad shout, such as loyal subjects give when their king appears among them. Our happy God should be worshipped by a happy people; a cheerful spirit is in keeping with his nature, his acts, and the gratitude which we should cherish for his mercies.”

All the earth. The Lord is the creator of all people, not just Israel; and Israel exists to bring light to the entire earth: <<*And now the Lord says, who formed me in the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob back to him, and that Israel might be gathered to him, for I am honoured in the sight of the Lord, and my God has become my strength – he says, ‘It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the survivors of Israel; I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth’>> (Isaiah 49:5-6), and: <<Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel>> (Luke 2:29-32).*

² Worship the Lord with gladness;
 come into his presence with singing.

Psalm 100:2

Worship the Lord with gladness; come into his presence with singing. The whole earth is invited to serve the Lord. The psalmist likely had in mind the service of worship or temple rituals, but the principle applies to any service directed to God. Those who serve the Lord should do it with gladness. Awareness of the goodness of God (v.5) and of the great privilege of worshipping him produces joy in those who know they are welcome into his presence. Again Spurgeon commented, “As for the true believer in Jesus, he serves his God because he loves to serve him; he assembles with the great congregation because it is his delight to worship the Most High.”

Come into his presence with singing. As in many places in the psalms, praise is expressed in song, for example: <<*Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!>> (Psalm 95:2).* Singing is not the only way to praise God, but it is an important and chief way to praise him.

³ Know that the Lord is God.
 It is he that made us, and we are his;
 we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

Psalm 100:3

Know that the Lord is God. The praise that comes to God from His people and all lands should be thoughtful. There are reasons to worship Yahweh, the covenant God of Israel, and the reasons begin with the recognition that he is God: *<<I will take you as my people, and I will be your God. You shall know that I am the Lord your God, who has freed you from the burdens of the Egyptians>>* (Exodus 6:7), and: *<<You shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I, the Lord, am your God and there is no other. And my people shall never again be put to shame>>* (Joel 2:27).

It is he that made us. This could be a reference to God's work as creator of all; but, in view of what follows in the verse, it seems to be more specifically, 'made us [Israel] to be his people.' Under the New Covenant, the believer has a second and greater reason for praise: he or she is a new creation in Jesus Christ; refer to 2 Corinthians 5:17. Spurgeon observed, "Some men live as if they made themselves; they call themselves 'self-made men,' and they adore their supposed creators."

And we are his. Earlier English translations read 'not' in place of 'his' ('and not we ourselves'); the Hebrew for both sounds almost identical; 'his' is Hebrew *lo*; and 'not' is Hebrew *lo*', but 'his' is the better reading.

We are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. The third reason to worship God is because he has chosen a people and he cares for them as the sheep of his pasture. For the image of God's people as his sheep and the Lord as their shepherd, refer to the comment made on Psalm 74:1-3.

⁴ Enter his gates with thanksgiving,
and his courts with praise.
Give thanks to him, bless his name.

Psalm 100:4

Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise. Now the psalmist pictures the people of God from all the earth (v.1) entering through the gates and into the courts of the temple. As God's people approach, they should do so with thanksgiving, gratitude that recognises how much God has done for them. Thanks and praise merge together, as God's people are thankful and bless his name.

Under the new covenant, not only are the gates and courts open, but even way to the Holy of Holies is thrown open: *<<Therefore, my friends, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain (that is, through his flesh)>>* (Hebrews 10:19-20).

⁵ For the Lord is good;
his steadfast love endures for ever,
and his faithfulness to all generations.

Psalm 100:5

For the Lord is good, i.e. full of generosity: <<*Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long*>> (Psalm 23:6), and: <<*Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to your steadfast love remember me, for your goodness' sake, O Lord! Good and upright is the Lord; therefore he instructs sinners in the way*>> (Psalm 25:7-8). This thanks and praise is right in recognition of God's goodness. He is good in his plans, good in his grace, good in his forgiveness, good in his covenant, and good in every aspect of his being.

Steadfast love and faithfulness. These terms evoke: <<*The Lord passed before him, and proclaimed, 'The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for the thousandth generation, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, yet by no means clearing the guilty, but visiting the iniquity of the parents upon the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation'*>> (Exodus 34:6-7); the foundation of joy for God's people is his enduring character of gracious love, of keeping his promises.

To all generations. Exodus 34:7 says that God keeps his steadfast love for a thousand generations. The worshippers delight to think of the people of God being preserved forever, and of the prospect of their own descendants being members of that people: <<*I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your offspring after you throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you*>> (Genesis 17:7), <<*But the steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him, and his righteousness to children's children, to those who keep his covenant and remember to do his commandments*>> (Psalm 103:17-18); this, too, is the measure of God's enduring love. The brief psalm ends on the thought of God's unending mercy and truth. These are everlasting reasons to give thanks and praise to God.