



Psalm 93 - The Majesty of God's Rule

Introduction

Psalms 29, 93 and 95-99 are hymns of praise for divine kingship, namely, God's kingly rule over creation. The idea of God as universal king is of course rooted in the creation account; the specific words first appear in the Song of Moses: <<***The Lord will reign for ever and ever***>> (Exodus 15:18).

When the OT speaks of the kingship of God, it can mean his kingship over all creation, or it can mean God's acknowledged kingship over his people: <<***and the Lord said to Samuel, 'Listen to the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them'***>> (1 Samuel 8:7), <<***But when you saw that King Nahash of the Ammonites came against you, you said to me, "No, but a king shall reign over us", though the Lord your God was your king. See, here is the king whom you have chosen, for whom you have asked; see, the Lord has set a king over you. If you will fear the Lord and serve him and heed his voice and not rebel against the commandment of the Lord, and if both you and the king who reigns over you will follow the Lord your God, it will be well; but if you will not heed the voice of the Lord, but rebel against the commandment of the Lord, then the hand of the Lord will be against you and your king***>> (1 Samuel 12:12-15); the NT expression 'kingdom of God' focuses on the way God ministers to and governs his people through the heir of David: <<***But he said to them, 'I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God to the other cities also; for I was sent for this purpose'***>> (Luke 4:43). In each case, it is important to discern which of these is primarily in view. The psalms of divine kingship especially celebrate God's kingship over his creation. Even though it is important to distinguish these ideas, one should not separate them: it is Israel's great privilege that the God who rules over them is the universal Creator and Lord, who one day will rule all nations. Psalm 93 ends with this experience of wonder. The conviction that God reigns is the ultimate antidote to doubt and despair; refer also to Psalm 89:38-51.

There is no title to this psalm supplied by the Hebrew text. It is a short, bold declaration of God's might, power, and holiness. Psalm 93 describes a theocracy, as do the seven psalms that follow it. The Hebrew words *Yahweh melek*, i.e. 'Jehovah reigns' or 'Jehovah is king', are the watchwords of these theocratic psalms.

Ps. 93:1-2 - The Lord Reigns, and Thus the World and God's Throne Are Stable.

The Lord reigns as king because his throne is established and secure; therefore the world is established, a stable and reliable place to live. The security of God's throne is here traced to his awesome and majestic power for he is robed, he 'is girded with strength and his eternity', for he is 'from everlasting'.

- ¹ The Lord is king, he is robed in majesty;
the Lord is robed, he is girded with strength.
He has established the world; it shall never be moved;
- ² your throne is established from of old;
you are from everlasting.

Ps. 93:1-2

The Lord is king. Psalm 93 begins suddenly and wonderfully, the proclamation of Yahweh's rule. This lifts the covenant God of Israel over every idol and pretender to sovereignty. Charles Spurgeon comments, "What can give greater joy to a loyal subject than a sight of the king in his beauty? Let us repeat the proclamation, 'the Lord reigns,' whispering it in the ears of the desponding, and publishing it in the face of the foe."

He is robed in majesty. God is adorned with the clothing befitting his sovereignty; he is clothed with **majesty** and **strength**. They surround and mark him like clothing marks the man.

He has established the world; it shall never be moved. At one time this passage was taken to support the picture of the universe in which the earth is stationary and everything revolves around it. However, the verse does not imply this, for the term translated **moved** simply implies some kind of instability, and **never be moved** points to God-given security. The psalmist is not concerned with the kind of motion that physics studies. The expression probably means that the world's ongoing order and the moral principles that underlie that order are faithful and sure, guaranteed by God's own faithfulness.

Your throne is established from of old. Not only is the world established, but so also is the throne of God; his reign is without challenge. There are rebels against his reign, but they do not have the slightest chance of success.

You are from everlasting. God's eternal authority extends to his very being. He is eternal in a sense none other is; his life is both without beginning and end: <<*Then he said to me, 'It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life'>>* (Revelation 21:6). In these and in other ways God stands majestically above and beyond his creation.

Ps. 93:3-4 - The Lord Is Mightier than the Raging Sea.

To an Israelite, the raging sea, also referred to as floods and mighty waters, was the most vivid emblem of uncontrollable chaos. This section insists that the divine king is mightier than even that. Both of these verses use building parallelism, a kind of parallelism in which each successive line adds to or clarifies the line before it as previous seen: <<*For your enemies, O Lord, for your enemies shall perish; all evildoers shall be scattered>>* (Psalm 92:9).

- ³ The floods have lifted up, O Lord,
the floods have lifted up their voice;
the floods lift up their roaring.
- ⁴ More majestic than the thunders of mighty waters,
more majestic than the waves of the sea,
majestic on high is the Lord!

Ps. 93:3-4

The floods have lifted up, O Lord. There are strong things that seem to oppose God. A flood of water seems unstoppable and unsparing in its destruction. Like the mighty waves of the ocean, they raise up against God with their voice. Spurgeon noted, "Observe that the Psalmist turns to the Lord when he sees the billows foam, and hears the breakers roar; he does not waste his breath by talking to the waves, or to violent men."

More majestic than the thunders of mighty waters, more majestic than the waves of the sea, majestic on high is the Lord! As fearsome and powerful as the mighty waves of the sea are, they are not higher or stronger than God. He reigns over all that might challenge or oppose, and over the mightiest things of this earth.

Ps. 93:5 - God's Decrees Are Trustworthy.

God's decrees are very trustworthy and holiness befits his house, because the moral order of the universe reflects God's own character and is therefore stable and reliable. The laws given to Israel are based on this stable moral order, because

Israel's calling is to be God's renewed humanity after the fall of Adam and Eve; and thus it is a fixed point that only those who constantly pursue holiness will constantly enjoy God.

⁵ Your decrees are very sure;
holiness befits your house,
O Lord, for evermore.

Ps. 93:5

Your decrees are very sure. As in other places in the psalms, 'decrees' or 'testimonies' is a poetic reference to God's Word. The psalmist understood that the might, sovereignty, and strength of God was powerfully expressed in and through his Word. David uses the word translated decrees or testimonies twenty three times in Psalm 119 in this context.

Spurgeon wrote, "As in providence the throne of God is fixed beyond all risk, so in revelation his truth is beyond all question. Other teachings are uncertain, but the revelations of heaven are infallible."

Holiness befits your house. This mighty God is holy, different from any man or woman. His power is holy power and his sovereignty is a holy sovereignty. His holiness is connected to all he is and does, and could be said to adorn his very house. This is true both for the representation of his house on earth, the temple under the Old Covenant, and his ultimate house in heaven: <<*My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you?*>> (John 14:2 NIV).

If taken in the sense as an exhortation to God's people to display holiness as his inheritance, his house, this idea has parallels in the NT:

- <<*If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple*>> (1 Corinthians 3:17).
- <<*But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light*>> (1 Peter 2:9).

O Lord, for evermore. God's great being and character - his might, sovereignty, strength, and holiness - are his eternally. He is from everlasting (v.2) and unchanging; he is forever. He will not diminish or degrade with time.