

Psalm 149

There is a phrase known as *dispensationalism* that describes how God and his people have arranged to interact. The Old Testament is largely about hard rules with penalties for those who do not believe. The New Testament is largely about how to cultivate a more vibrant personal relationship with the Holy Spirit. There are still more changes coming. The millennium will be a bit like the Garden of Eden, mixed with Old Testament firm rules and consequences. It will also be a combining with living saints and saints who have come back from the dead.

Dispensationalists hold to a literal interpretation of the Bible as the best hermeneutic. The literal interpretation gives each word the meaning it would commonly have in everyday usage. Allowances are made for symbols, figures of speech, and types, of course. It is understood that even symbols and figurative sayings have literal meanings behind them. So, for example, when the Bible speaks of “a thousand years” in Revelation 20, dispensationalists interpret it as a literal period of 1,000 years (the dispensation of the Kingdom), since there is no compelling reason to interpret it otherwise.

There are at least two reasons why literalism is the best way to view Scripture. First, philosophically, the purpose of language itself requires that we interpret words literally. Language was given by God for the purpose of being able to communicate. Words are vessels of meaning. The second reason is biblical. Every prophecy about Jesus Christ in the Old Testament was fulfilled literally. Jesus’ birth, ministry, death, and resurrection all occurred exactly as the Old Testament predicted. The prophecies were literal. There is no non-literal fulfillment of messianic prophecies in the New Testament.

Dispensational theology teaches that there are two distinct peoples of God: Israel and the Church. Dispensationalists believe that salvation has always been by grace through faith alone—in God in the Old Testament and specifically in God the Son in the New Testament. Dispensationalists hold that the Church has not replaced Israel in God’s program and that the Old Testament promises to Israel have not been transferred to the Church. Dispensationalism teaches that the promises God made to Israel in the Old Testament (for land, many descendants, and blessings) will be ultimately fulfilled in the 1000-year period spoken of in Revelation 20. Dispensationalists believe that, just as God is in this age focusing His attention on the Church, He will again in the future focus His attention on Israel (see Romans 9–11 and Daniel 9:24).

This psalm is a continuation of the description of life in *The 1000-Year Millennial Reign*. Jesus will be King of the World. Jerusalem will become the world capital on its highest mountain. Major highways will lead to Jerusalem. World leaders will visit Jerusalem to curry favor to help their national economies and state of well-being. If nations ignore God; he will stop the rain from falling. Righteous laws will be enforced out of Jerusalem. It will be a life completely different than what the world has seen before. It will be like *turning a page in time* to a new era. Jerusalem will be the happiest place on earth.

This psalm is written as Hebrew poetry. That means that there is a repeating pattern of things being said twice in similar ways. This helps us to understand the context better.

Read Psalm 149:1-4: People wonder about the afterlife. Some people think of life after death as sitting on clouds and listening to harp music. It does not sound like that is what it will be like.

This psalm begins with the phrase: *Hallelujah/Praise the LORD*. In Hebrew, that is two words:

- Hallal (H1984) praise, and
- Ya or Jah (H3050) abbreviation for Yahweh or Jehovah God. This is God's name.

Sing a New Song

The listener is encouraged to *sing a new song*. In fact, that instruction could be used as the min underlying idea in this psalm. What does that mean? It is time to change up the way that we have been doing things. Are you ready to concede that there might be a better way to live? Do you think that you are leaving a lot of spiritual potential on the table? Is your faith walk wanting or dry or unfulfilling? We need to find an application here too.

- New (H2318) a fresh new thing
- Song (H7891) song, musical

That phrase *Sing a New Song* is used nine times in the scriptures. It always involves our *spiritual or physical salvation*. Physical salvation can lead to spiritual salvation. "Oh God, if you get me out of here alive, I will devote my life to you". We were not built to robotically fall into a pattern. God wants us to expand. There will be a group of Jews who survive unbelievable dangers and attacks in the tribulation.

Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps. They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth. These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being first fruits to God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God. (Revelation 14:1-5)

In Revelation, the *New Song* phrase applies to a special group of Jews who awaken to their faith amidst catastrophic tribulation events. They realized that they were supernaturally preserved through the Great Tribulation. This context says that nobody else can learn this song. This psalm is not talking about memorizing melodies and notes. It is more personal and involved than that. The 18" between our head and our heart can require that we face our mortality up close. We need skin in the game to be affected and transformed.

This means that it is *a song from experiencing a life-changing event*. Do Israel and the world change their thinking at the second coming; or do they change a little before that? Ezekiel tells us that the Magog Invasion (Russian confederation attacking Israel) will trigger a change in awareness and thinking about Israel and God before the second coming.

“And you, son of man, prophesy against Gog, and say, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD: “Behold, I *am* against you, O Gog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal; and I will turn you around and lead you on, bringing you up from the far north, and bring you against the mountains of Israel. Then I will knock the bow out of your left hand, and cause the arrows to fall out of your right hand. You shall fall upon the mountains of Israel, you and all your troops and the peoples who *are* with you; I will give you to birds of prey of every sort and *to* the beasts of the field to be devoured. You shall fall on the open field; for I have spoken,” says the Lord GOD. “And I will send fire on Magog and on those who live in security in the coastlands. Then they shall know that I *am* the LORD. So I will make My holy name known in the midst of My people Israel, and I will not *let them* profane My holy name anymore. Then the nations shall know that I *am* the LORD, the Holy One in Israel. (Ezekiel 39:1-7)

Spiritual CPR

Singing a New Song is to pair emotions arising from a uniquely transforming event with a fresh and revived perspective. All of our spiritual experiences have a *life cycle*. We can become very excited about our faith...but that may not last our whole life. Moses’ face was shining after spending time with the LORD on Mount Sinai; but eventually that all faded away. We all leak very badly; and we need a continuous refilling of the Holy Spirit.

We can start out pretty strong, and fall into a dry pattern. We can just soldier on indefinitely. Christians can lead lives of *quiet desperation*. Very few people, at the end of their lives, care about what they spend each day doing as much as they thought they would. Almost everyone regrets a *lack of meaningful relationships* or a *lack of meaning* in their work and life. A proper view of success is targeted toward *human flourishing* — what the bible calls the abundant life. A flourishing life is full of purpose — including meaningful love (positive relationships), avocations, beauty, occupation (good work), religious or philosophical beliefs, and service to others. God has a process that can be used to rejuvenate a life that has gotten stale.

Music can resonate with these extreme emotions more than words. Fervent faith does not seem to be sustainable without trials. We hate setbacks and challenges; but without them we become dormant spiritually.

So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked— I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that

the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. (Revelation 3: 16-19)

Singing a new song has more to do with human nature. A new song is connected to a rejuvenated sense of enthusiasm. It is the opposite of sluggishness and no longer being inspired. As human beings, our *emotional capital* runs out. We can underestimate the need for hope. Without it, we become essentially dormant. None of us are able to just live in a continuous mountain-top enthusiastic state. We have ups and downs. This world drains our enthusiasm and dashes our hopes. Isaiah made use of the new song idea in an illustration by comparisons and contrasts:

Sing to the LORD a new song, And His praise from the ends of the earth, You who go down to the sea, and ¹all that is in it, You coastlands and you inhabitants of them! Let the wilderness and its cities lift up their voice, The villages that Kedar inhabits. Let the inhabitants of Sela sing, Let them shout from the top of the mountains. Let them give glory to the LORD, And declare His praise in the coastlands. The LORD shall go forth like a mighty man; He shall stir up His zeal like a man of war. He shall cry out, yes, shout aloud; He shall prevail against His enemies. “I have held My peace a long time, I have been still and restrained Myself. Now I will cry like a woman in labor, I will pant and gasp at once. I will lay waste the mountains and hills, And dry up all their vegetation; I will make the rivers coastlands, And I will dry up the pools. I will bring the blind by a way they did not know; I will lead them in paths they have not known. I will make darkness light before them, And crooked places straight. These things I will do for them, And not forsake them. They shall be turned back, They shall be greatly ashamed, who trust in carved images, Who say to the molded images, ‘You are our gods.’ “Hear, you deaf; And look, you blind, that you may see. Who is blind but My servant, Or deaf as My messenger whom I send? Who is blind as he who is perfect, And blind as the LORD’s servant? (Isaiah 42:10-19)

Isaiah uses similarities and opposites to talk about things relating to a *new song*. The opposite of a new song is not to sing the same old songs. It is to keep quiet, and restrain ourselves altogether. A new song is needed by the LORD’s followers who have essentially become blind and deaf to what God is doing all around them. In other words, we have a big capacity to take things for granted and get used to the plethora of blessings from God. I am learning that the abundant life really has more to do with my awareness of what God is already doing for me...than to expect new blessings.

Otherwise, we just become blind and deaf to all of the ways that God is supernaturally caring for us all day long. They become the *expected level of service*. A blessing is like a wave that can be ridden for a certain distance. The Holy Spirit issues wave after wave of blessings as we draw near to God. Singing fresh words requires fresh inspiration and a renewal in thinking

from the Holy Spirit. The scriptures are clear that healthy Christians do not reach a peak and retire. If we are pushing out to greater acts of faith and worship, we are in the state of becoming stale or in decay.

Zion

This psalm interchanges the word for Israel and Zion. The word *Zion* is another name used here for Jerusalem. This word, H6726 (meaning *a parched place*) is first used in 2 Samuel 5. It is the name of the original Jebusite stronghold that David overthrew (Salem in the days of Abram). Similarly, Jesus is returning to make Jerusalem his earthly capital. Today, the term Zionism refers to those who believe that Israel is the rightful home of the Jews. Zionism also includes the idea of all Jews worldwide repatriating back to their homeland.

The media and Arab opponents to the Jewish repatriation of their God-given land refer to Zionism as forcefully occupying this land.

Read Psalm 149:5-9: There may not be armies during the millennium, but The Kingdom will have its own *agents of justice*. Those who have abused and dominated Israel will be dominated by Israel in the millennium. Jerusalem will be a plane on a high mountain.



Now it shall come to pass in the latter days That the mountain of the LORD's house Shall be established on the top of the mountains, And shall be exalted above the hills; And all nations shall flow to it. Many people shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths." For out of Zion shall go forth the law, And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people; They shall beat their swords into

plowshares, And their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, Neither shall they learn war anymore. (Isaiah 2)

King David, and other valiant saints from the past will have the honor and pleasure of carrying out the King's commands.

I will establish one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them—My servant David. He shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I, the LORD, will be their God, and My servant David a prince among them; I, the LORD, have spoken. "I will make a covenant of peace with them, and cause wild beasts to cease from the land; and they will dwell safely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods. I will make them and the places all around My hill a blessing; and I will cause showers to come down in their season; there shall be showers of blessing. Then the trees of the field shall yield their fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase. They shall be safe in their land; and they shall know that I am the LORD, when I have broken the bands of their yoke and delivered them from the hand of those who enslaved them. And they shall no longer be a prey for the nations, nor shall beasts of the land devour them; but they shall dwell safely, and no one shall make them afraid. I will raise up for them a garden of renown, and they shall no longer be consumed with hunger in the land, nor bear the shame of the Gentiles anymore. Thus they shall know that I, the LORD their God, am with them, and they, the house of Israel, are My people," says the Lord GOD.' (Ezekiel 34:23-30)

The beatitudes in Matthew describe how the meek will inherit the earth. That is not only a promise, but its also a statement of fact regarding our future life. In fact the promises regarding obedience in the Old Testament can only really apply to the Millennial Age, because there has never been a lasting period of national obedience.

'If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments, and perform them, then I will give you rain in its season, the land shall yield its produce, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit. Your threshing shall last till the time of vintage, and the vintage shall last till the time of sowing; you shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely. I will give peace in the land, and you shall lie down, and none will make you afraid; I will rid the land of evil beasts, and the sword will not go through your land. You will chase your enemies, and they shall fall by the sword before you. Five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight; your enemies shall fall by the sword before you. 'For I will look on you favorably and make you fruitful, multiply you and confirm My covenant with you. You shall eat the old harvest, and clear out the old because of the new. I will set My tabernacle among you, and My soul shall not abhor you. I will walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people. I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, that you should not be their slaves; I have broken the bands of your yoke and made you walk upright. (Deuteronomy 26:3-13)