

Joy to the World

Did you know you can read about Christmas in the Psalms, the songs of the Bible? Ok, maybe you won't find the story of Mary, Joseph, and the angels, but hints of Christmas litter the book as the psalmists sing of the coming of a Savior. As we continue to anticipate the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ this Advent season, let's examine the Psalms to learn what his coming will bring and what it means for us and for the world.

AWARENESS Before listening reflect on what you already know or understand about topics we'll cover in the episode.

- When you think about preparing your heart for Christmas or observing Advent, do you think about the Psalms? Are there any Psalms that remind you of Christmas or make you think of Christ's birth when you read them? Why or why not?
- Is it ok to think and talk about God's judgment at Christmastime, why or why not?



LISTEN TO THE EPISODE: [Joy to the World](#)

READ [Psalm 98](#), [Psalm 96](#), [Psalm 72](#)

REFLECTION After listening, consider the following questions:

- In North American society, judgment has a very negative connotation. We don't like to be (or feel) judged by others. But the Psalms present God's judgment as good news and the psalmists anticipate it eagerly. Why is God's judgment different than human judgment?
- How does it make you feel to think about God's judgment during the Advent and Christmas season?
- Advent is a season of waiting, longing, and hope. How does observing Advent help us in our desire for justice in our world today?
- Study one or two of your favorite Christmas hymns or carols. Do they tell the whole story, the story of Christ's birth and what it brings about? What do we miss when we only sing one or two verses?
- How often do you talk about *why* Jesus came and will come again? When you discuss the nativity story, do you also talk about all that Jesus Christ's reign brings with it?
- What new song might you sing this Christmas season? What are your "fresh praises"?

RELATED PASSAGES for further study

[Exodus 15:1-21](#), [Psalm 68](#), [Psalm 97](#), [Psalm 98](#), [Psalm 102](#), [Psalm 148](#), [Luke 1:46-55](#), [Revelation 19:1-8](#)

CONCLUSION

Consider this reflection on singing the Psalms from the book *Sing a New Song: Recovering Psalm Singing for the Twenty-First Century*:

“In Biblical Hebrew, a new song is not necessarily a song that was recently written. The phrase is an idiom for a certain kind of praise song—the kind of praise one sings loudly for all the nations to hear after God has granted a great victory...Such a song is sung when the old notes of lament have given way to a new melody of joy and gladness. It bursts forth from the heart because of some momentous deliverance that puts all the old griefs into the distant past” (p ix).

What new things is God doing in your life? What victories do you attribute to God and want to shout from the mountain tops in praise? Write your song of praise; express the joy you have because Jesus has already come and tell of the work he has done and is doing in your life.

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