

Psalms 99

This evening - we're continuing our overview of the Old Testament book titled Psalms.

With this as our focus - let's open our Bibles to Psalms chapter 99 - and as we make our way to the 99th Psalm...

...I should take a moment to point out that this Psalm is the seventh of eight Psalms...

...which have been called by some - the theocratic Psalms - and by others - the Enthronement Psalms.

The reason why is because - this series of songs focus our attention on the theocratic rule of our infinite King - Who sits enthroned over His creation.

And while the 99th Psalm is another anonymous Psalm that fails to identify it's author...

...the Septuagint attributes the lyrics of this Psalm to King David.

Well - regardless of who wrote this Psalm - the anonymous author directs our attention to the One Who is exalted over His creation.

And it's here in our text tonight - where we find the Psalmist - singing the praises of the Holy One - Who dwells between the cherubim.

It's for this reason that Spurgeon called this the Holy Holy Holy Psalm in his commentary - by writing...

This may be called THE SANCTUS, or, THE HOLY, HOLY, HOLY PSALM, for the word "holy" is the conclusion and the refrain of its three main divisions. Its subject is the holiness of the divine government, the sanctity of the mediatorial reign.

From this - we can see that the Psalmist wrote this song of praise...

...in order to exalt the One Who alone is Holy Holy Holy.

With this as our focus - let's turn our attention to the lyrics that we find here in the 99th Psalm.

Look with me - beginning there at verse 1 - where the Psalmist declared...

Psa 99:1 The LORD reigns;
Let the peoples tremble!
He dwells between the cherubim;
Let the earth be moved!

Psa 99:2 The LORD is great in Zion,
And He is high above all the peoples.

Psa 99:3 Let them praise Your great and awesome name—
He is holy.

Here in the beginning of this Psalm - we find the Psalmist - encouraging every person to sing the praises of the LORD...

...and the reason why is because - He alone is inherently holy.

Just to be clear - that word - holy - found there at the end of verse 3 - was translated from a Hebrew word...

...which was used of that which is pure - clean - and free from defilement.

It's also interesting to note that - the Psalmist refers to the LORD as Holy - three times throughout this Psalm.

This includes verses 3 - 5 - and 9 - where the Psalmist sings the praises of the LORD our God - Who is Holy Holy Holy.

And as we consider this declaration of the LORD's three-fold holiness...

...I can't help but to remember the song sung by the Cherubim.

With this as our focus - let's take another look at the beginning of this Psalm - look with me there at verse 1 - where the Psalmist declared...

Psa 99:1 The LORD reigns;
Let the peoples tremble!
He dwells between the cherubim;
Let the earth be moved!

As we take a closer look at this verse - we must not fail to notice the Psalmist's reference to the Cherubim.

Just to be clear - the Cherubim that surround the throne of the Lord are incredible creature that worship our God.

And while I realize that cherubs have been depicted as little chubby babies with two wings...

...this is not the way that the Cherubim are described in the Bible.

In order to comprehend what the Psalmist was saying - let's consider the description that the Prophet Ezekiel presented in his book.

Hold your place here in the book of Psalms - and let's turn in our Bibles to Ezekiel chapter 1.

And as we make our way to the first chapter of Ezekiel - I should take a moment to point out that...

...the first mention of Cherubim found in the Bible was presented by Moses in the Genesis account...

...where we learn that the Lord used cherubim to stop Adam and Eve from returning to the Garden.

Unfortunately - there was no description given of these incredible beings.

Thankfully for us - the prophet Ezekiel provides us with a description here in the first chapter of his book.

Look with me - beginning there at verse 4 - where the prophet declared...

Eze 1:4 Then I looked, and behold, a whirlwind was coming out of the north, a great cloud with raging fire engulfing itself; and brightness was all around it and radiating out of its midst like the color of amber, out of the midst of the fire.

Eze 1:5 Also from within it came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance: they had the likeness of a man.

Eze 1:6 Each one had four faces, and each one had four wings.

Eze 1:7 Their legs were straight, and the soles of their feet were like the soles of calves' feet. They sparkled like the color of burnished bronze.

Eze 1:8 The hands of a man were under their wings on their four sides; and each of the four had faces and wings.

Eze 1:9 Their wings touched one another. The creatures did not turn when they went, but each one went straight forward.

Eze 1:10 As for the likeness of their faces, each had the face of a man; each of the four had the face of a lion on the right side, each of the four had the face of an ox on the left side, and each of the four had the face of an eagle.

Eze 1:11 Thus were their faces. Their wings stretched upward; two wings of each one touched one another, and two covered their bodies.

Eze 1:12 And each one went straight forward; they went wherever the spirit wanted to go, and they did not turn when they went.

Eze 1:13 As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, like the appearance of torches going back and forth among the living creatures. The fire was bright, and out of the fire went lightning.

Eze 1:14 And the living creatures ran back and forth, in appearance like a flash of lightning.

Here in these verses - we find the Prophet Ezekiel - describing the cherubim that he saw - after he was taken captive by the Chaldeans.

And as we consider this description of these incredible creatures that he saw on that day...

...we must agree that Cherubs are most certainly NOT little chubby babies with wings.

And so - if you have little statues - or paintings of little chubby babies with wings...

...please trust me when I tell you that - these are not the Cherubs found in the Bible.

Cherubim are incredible creatures that are difficult to describe.

From their four sided faces - to the multiple wings that covered their bodies...

...I have no doubt that the prophet Ezekiel was struggling to explain what he was witnessing...

...as he watched these creatures running back and forth like a flash of lightning.

In similar fashion - the prophet Isaiah also witnessed a similar scene - as he caught a glorious glimpse of the Lord - seated upon His throne.

Let's consider the account that he presented in the sixth chapter of his book - and so...

...continue holding your place there in the book of Psalms - and let's turn in our Bibles to Isaiah chapter 6.

And as we make our way to to the sixth chapter of Isaiah - I should take a moment to point out that...

...it's here in this section of scripture - where we find Isaiah describing another creature...

...which he referred to as - seraphim.

Let's consider how he described these Seraphim here in Isaiah 6 - look with me beginning there at verse 1 - where he declared...

Isa 6:1 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple.
Isa 6:2 Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew.
Isa 6:3 And one cried to another and said:
“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts;
The whole earth is full of His glory!”

Here in these verses - we find Isaiah describing these creatures - that are similar to the Cherubim.

These Seraphim have six wings - - and according to Isaiah...

...they constantly sing the praises of the One Who is
Holy - Holy - Holy.

And it might interest you to know that this is the same song that the four living creatures sing...

...as they worship before the throne of the
LORD.

With this as our focus - we should take some time to consider the way that John described the four living creatures.

Continue holding your place there in the book of Psalms - and let's turn in our Bibles to Revelation chapter 4.

It's here in the fourth chapter of Revelation - where we find the apostle John...

...doing his best to describe the throne room of the Lord.

And it's there in that place - where he saw four living creatures...

...proclaiming the three-fold holiness of the
LORD.

Let's consider his account - found here in Revelation 4 - look with me - beginning there at verse 6 - where he declared...

Rev 4:6 Before the throne there was a sea of glass, like crystal. And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back.

Rev 4:7 The first living creature was like a lion, the second living creature like a calf, the third living creature had a face like a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle.

Rev 4:8 The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying:
"Holy, holy, holy,
Lord God Almighty,
Who was and is and is to come!"

Rev 4:9 Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever,

Rev 4:10 the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying:

Rev 4:11 "You are worthy, O Lord,
To receive glory and honor and power;
For You created all things,
And by Your will they exist and were created."

Here in these verses - we find the apostle John - describing the throne room of the Lord.

And it's there in the midst of the throne - and around the throne where these created beings sing the praises of the LORD...

...as they declare "Holy, holy, holy - Lord God Almighty,
Who was and is and is to come!"

Now - as we consider the way that God dwells between the cherubim - as they celebrate His three-fold holiness...

...I can't help but to consider how this song is also a celebration of God's Triunity.

Just to be clear - the doctrine of the Trinity is based upon five Biblical pillars - that are revealed in the scriptures.

The first Biblical pillar that Supports the doctrine of the Trinity is found in Deuteronomy 6 - it's verse 4 - where Moses declared...

Deu 6:4 "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!"

According to the scriptures - there is one - and only one - true and living God.

Paul confirmed this in 1 Corinthians 8 - it's verse 4 - where he assured us that...

"....there is no other God but one."

The second Biblical pillar that Supports the doctrine of the Trinity is found in the scriptures that reveal that God the Father is God.

As a matter of fact - there are 16 verse that refer to "God the Father"

...and 11 verses that refer to "God our Father" - and one verse that refers to "Father God."

Without debate - the One True God is our Heavenly Father.

The third Biblical pillar that Supports the doctrine of the Trinity is found in the scriptures that identify Jesus as the incarnation of God.

For example - it's in John chapter 20 - verses 28 - where Thomas called Jesus - "My Lord and my God!"

And in Hebrews chapter 1 - verse 8 - we find God the Father referring to Jesus as God - by declaring...

Heb 1:8 "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever;
A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom.

The fourth Biblical pillar that Supports the doctrine of the Trinity is found in the scriptures that identify the Holy Spirit as God.

For example - it's in Acts chapter 5 - where the apostle Peter rebuked Ananias for lying to the Holy Spirit.

And just to be clear - he went on to declare: "You have not lied to men but to God."

It's in 1st Corinthians 3 - verse 16 - where Paul also assured us that...

...the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God Who dwells within the believer.

The Fifth Biblical pillar that Supports the doctrine of the Trinity is found in the scriptures that identify all three - as One God.

For example - it's in Matthew chapter 28 - verse 19 - where the Lord Jesus declared...

Mat 28:19 "Go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit..."

Here in these verses - we find the Lord Jesus - directing His disciples to baptize new believers...

...in the NAME - - not the NAMES - plural - - but - in the NAME of the Father - Son - and the Holy Spirit.

It was a couple of weeks ago - when I saw a couple of Jehovah's Witnesses at Walnut Creek park

Just so you know - Jehovah's Witnesses don't believe in the doctrine of the Trinity.

And so I asked them - what's the NAME of the Father - Son and Holy Spirit.

In response - they informed me that the name of the Father is Jehovah...

...the name of the Son is Jesus - - and they don't believe that the Holy Spirit is a person.

After listening to their argument - I drew their attention back to the fact that...

...the Lord Jesus mentioned ONE NAME that identifies the Father - the Son - and the Holy Spirit.

I'm of course referring to the name - Yahweh - Who dwells between the cherubim.

And while it's true that God the Son clothed Himself with humanity - as He tabernacled among us...

...I'll remind you that the name - Jesus - means - Yahweh is salvation.

The everlasting Name of the Father - the Son - and the Holy Spirit is Yahweh.

And it's for this reason that the Cherubim - the Seraphim - and the four living creatures sing Holy - Holy - Holy.

I believe that they are singing about the holiness of the Father - the Son - and the Holy Spirit.

And in similar fashion - the Psalmist also encouraged his audience...

...to praise the great and awesome name of Yahweh because - He is holy.

With this as our goal - let's make our way back to the 99th Psalm - where we find the Psalmist - worshipping the One Who is Holy.

Look with me - beginning there at verse 4 - where he declared...

Psa 99:4 The King's strength also loves justice;
You have established equity;
You have executed justice and righteousness in Jacob.
Psa 99:5 Exalt the LORD our God,
And worship at His footstool—
He is holy.

Here in these verses - we find the Psalmist - encouraging his audience to worship the LORD - because He is holy.

With this as the goal - let's consider how the holiness of the Lord is revealed by His love for justice.

It's there in the beginning of verse 4 - where we learn that the King's strength also loves justice.

But know - what does this mean - that the King's strength loves justice?

I like the way that the scholars who created the Bible in Basic English rendered the beginning of verse 4 - they put it like this...

Psa 99:4a The king's power is used for righteousness...

In other words - the King of kings is a judge - Who uses His mighty strength - to judge with righteous judgment.

And just to be clear - the righteous judgments of God are based on the standard of His holiness.

It's for this reason that Peter described the Lord Jesus as the Holy One and the Just.

The Lord is the Holy One - - and it's the purity of His holiness that leads Him to judge with righteous judgment.

And not only that - but - His holiness is also the basis for His equity.

Let's consider how the Psalmist explained it here in the 99th Psalm - look with me again there at verse 4 - where he declared...

Psa 99:4 The King's strength also loves justice;
You have established equity;
You have executed justice and righteousness in Jacob.

Now - that word - equity - in this context - speaks of the equitable - or - fair judgments of a just judge.

And when it comes to the legal systems set up by humans...

...achieving true equity will always be an issue.

It's for this reason that the Lord has so much to say about unrighteous judges.

I like the way that the Lord addressed this in Isaiah chapter 10 - it's there where He declared...

Isa 10:1 "Woe to those who decree unrighteous decrees,
Who write misfortune,
Which they have prescribed
Isa 10:2 To rob the needy of justice,
And to take what is right from the poor of My people,
That widows may be their prey,
And that they may rob the fatherless.
Isa 10:3 What will you do in the day of punishment,
And in the desolation which will come from afar?
To whom will you flee for help?
And where will you leave your glory?

Christian - listen - we won't always find true justice while we're here in this world - - and one reason why is because...

...the judicial systems that are created by imperfect people will always fail to achieve true equity.

Thankfully - there's coming a day - when the Lord will established everlasting equity...

...as He executes justice and righteousness in Jacob
- and throughout the entire world.

It's for this reason that the Psalmist encouraged his audience to worship the God - Who alone is inherently holy.

Look with me again - there at verse 5 - where he declared...

Psa 99:5 Exalt the LORD our God,
And worship at His footstool—
He is holy.

Here in this verse - we find the Psalmist - encouraging the people of God to EXALT the Lord...

...while we humbly bow down - and worship before His
footstool.

Just to be clear - it'll help you to know that the word - exalt
- was translated from a Hebrew word...

...which in this context - was used of those who are
being lifted up on high.

Now - I'm sure we realize that - it's impossible for us to literally lift the LORD our God - to a higher position than He already occupies.

And so - in order to properly exalt the Lord - we should make sure that He occupies the highest place in our hearts.

Is the King of kings seated upon the throne of your heart?

Or - have you allowed the things of this world - to
take His place?

With this question in mind - let's consider the instructions that the psalmist presented - there in verse 5 - where he declared...

Psa 99:5 Exalt the LORD our God,
And worship at His footstool—
He is holy.

Now - that word - worship - was translated from a Hebrew word -
which was used of those who bow down before their master.

It was used of those who prostrate themselves before a superior.

What this means is that - those who truly exalt the Lord -
to the highest place in their hearts...

...will also submit our lives to the LORD - as we bow
before the One - Who alone is inherently Holy.

In order to grasp what this looks like - let's consider the way in which the psalmist
illustrated this concept of worship.

Let's pick up our study of the 99th Psalm - beginning there at verse 6 - where
the Psalmist declared...

Psa 99:6 Moses and Aaron were among His priests,
And Samuel was among those who called upon His name;
They called upon the LORD, and He answered them.
Psa 99:7 He spoke to them in the cloudy pillar;
They kept His testimonies and the ordinance He gave them.
Psa 99:8 You answered them, O LORD our God;
You were to them God-Who-Forgives,
Though You took vengeance on their deeds.
Psa 99:9 Exalt the LORD our God,
And worship at His holy hill;
For the LORD our God is holy.

Here in the third - and final section of this Psalm - we find the psalmist -
using the word - holy - for the third and final time.

And much like in verse 5 - it's there in verse 9 - where he
encouraged his audience...

...to Exalt the LORD our God - as we worship the One Who is
holy - holy - holy.

With this as the goal - let's consider the examples that the Psalmist
presented - here in the final stanza of this song.

Look with me again - there at verse 6 - where he referred to Moses
and Aaron - who were among the priests of the Lord.

And while it's true that neither of these men were holy - in and
of themselves...

...it's also true that they were men who exalted the LORD
as they humbly worshipped Him.

The psalmist also mentioned Samuel - as a man of faith who was
among those who called upon the name of the LORD.

And as we consider the way that the LORD answered them -
we can rejoice in knowing that...

...our God - Who is Holy - Holy - Holy - - is also the
gracious and merciful God...

...Who is ready to answer the prayers - of those who
trust in Him.

Let's consider again how the Psalmist explained it here in the 99th Psalm
look with me again - there at verse 7 - where we learn that...

Psa 99:7 He spoke to them in the cloudy pillar;
They kept His testimonies and the ordinance He gave them.
Psa 99:8 You answered them, O LORD our God;
You were to them God-Who-Forgives,
Though You took vengeance on their deeds.

Here in these verses - we find the Psalmist - reminding his audience
about the way in which the Lord led the people...

...according to His holy ordinances.

And while it's true that the Lord took vengeance on those who rebelled...

...it's also true that He also became the God-Who-Forgives...

...with those who were willing to repent.

With all of this in mind - we should take a moment to consider how a God Who is Holy Holy Holy...

...is the same God - Who has made a way for sinners to be forgiven.

And just to be clear - it's important for us to understand that - the Lord must take vengeance on every single sin.

The reason why is because - His holiness demands pure and perfect justice.

That being the case - He must punish every sin ever committed.

Thankfully for us - the God Who is Holy Holy Holy - is the same God - Who sent His only begotten Son...

...to receive the punishment that we deserve - so that He can remain just...

...while simultaneously justifying those who trust in Jesus Christ.

I like the way that the apostle Peter described those who trust in Jesus - it's in 1st Peter 2 - beginning at verse 9 - where he declared...

1Pe 2:9 ...you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;
1Pe 2:10 who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.

Christian - listen - those who repent - and trust in Jesus Christ have not only become a royal priesthood...

...but - we've also received the imputation of Christ's righteousness.

And in this way - we've become a holy nation of believers...

...who are called to proclaim the praises of the LORD as we exalt His holy name.

With this as our calling - I encourage you to Exalt the LORD our God - as we humbly bow down before our King.

And as we sing the praises of our great and awesome God...

...let's worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness - as we dedicate our lives to the God-Who-Forgives.