

## Psalm 98

Immaculate Conception 8th December  
Christmas Day; 6th Sunday of Easter Year B  
28th Sunday Year C; 33rd Sunday Year C  
Morning Prayer Wednesday Week 3  
Office of Readings 31st December  
Prayer during the Day Epiphany

This is the sixth in a series of psalms (Psalms 93-99) celebrating the reign of God, perhaps composed to celebrate the restoration of Judah after the Babylonian Exile. God is returning to his city for all the world to see, to inaugurate his universal reign. It is the only one of the seven psalms to have a title, which reads simply: 'A Psalm\*'.<sup>1</sup>

**<sup>1</sup>Sing to YHWH\* a new song,  
for he has done marvellous  
things. His right hand and his  
holy arm have achieved vic-  
tory\*.**

I hereby make a covenant. Before all your people  
I will perform marvels, such as have not been  
performed in all the earth or in any nation; and  
all the people among whom you live shall see the  
work of YHWH; for it is an awesome thing that I  
will do with you.

– Exodus 34:10

**<sup>2</sup>YHWH has made known his  
salvation\*; he has revealed  
his justice\* in the sight of the  
nations.**

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet  
of the messenger who announces peace, who  
brings good news, who announces salvation, who  
says to Zion, 'Your God reigns.' Listen! Your  
sentinels lift up their voices, together they sing  
for joy; for in plain sight they see the return of  
YHWH to Zion. Break forth together into singing,  
you ruins of Jerusalem; for YHWH has comforted  
his people, he has redeemed Jerusalem. YHWH  
has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the  
nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the  
salvation of our God.

– Isaiah 52:7-10

**<sup>3</sup>He has remembered his kind-  
ness\* and faithfulness to the  
house of Israel.**

I will remember in their favour the covenant with  
their ancestors whom I brought out of the land of  
Egypt in the sight of the nations, to be their God:  
I am YHWH.

– Leviticus 26:45

**<sup>3b</sup>All the ends of the earth have  
seen the salvation\* of our God.**

YHWH came to the help of Israel and achieved  
victory by his own power, and because of his  
faithful love for Israel has revealed to all the  
world his justice.

The following scene gives the background to the imagery of the psalm:

The priest Zadok took the horn of oil from the tent and anointed Solomon. Then they blew the trumpet, and all the people said, "Long live King Solomon!" And all the people went up following him, playing on pipes and rejoicing with great joy, so that the earth quaked at their noise.

– 1 Kings 1:39-40

It is good to give thanks to YHWH, to sing praises to your name, O Most High; to declare your steadfast love in the morning, and your faithfulness by night, to the music of the lute and the harp, to the melody of the lyre.

– Psalm 92:1-3

I will sing of loyalty and of justice; to you, YHWH, I will sing.

– Psalm 101:1

Praise YHWH! How good it is to sing praises to our God; for he is gracious, and a song of praise is fitting.

– Psalm 147:1

Praise YHWH! Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty firmament! Praise him for his mighty deeds; praise him according to his surpassing greatness! Praise him with trumpet sound; praise him with lute and harp! Praise him with tambourine and dance; praise him with strings and pipe! Praise him with clanging cymbals; praise him with loud clashing cymbals! Let everything that breathes praise YHWH! Praise YHWH!

– Psalm 150

Sing to YHWH a new song, his praise from the end of the earth! Let the sea roar and all that fills it, the coast lands and their inhabitants. Let the desert and its towns lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar inhabits; let the inhabitants of Sela sing for joy, let them shout from the tops of the mountains. Let them give glory to YHWH, and declare his praise in the coast lands.

– Isaiah 42:10-12

God's victory reveals God's justice and is in view of establishing justice on earth.

The God of Israel has spoken, the Rock of Israel has said to me: One who rules over people justly, ruling in the fear of God, is like the light of morning, like the sun rising on a cloudless morning, gleaming from the rain on the grassy land.

– 2 Samuel 23:3-4

**<sup>4</sup>Shout with joy to YHWH, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises.**

**<sup>5</sup>Sing praises to YHWH with the lyre, with the lyre and the sound of instruments.**

**<sup>6</sup>With trumpets and the sound of the horn shout with joy before the King, YHWH.**

**<sup>7</sup>Let the sea roar, and all that fills it; the world and those who live in it.**

**<sup>8</sup>Let the rivers clap their hands; let the hills sing together for joy,**

**<sup>9</sup>at the presence of YHWH, for he is coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world with justice\*, and the peoples with equity.**

For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her vindication shines out like the dawn, and her salvation like a burning torch.  
– Isaiah 62:1

YHWH has proclaimed to the end of the earth: Say to daughter Zion, 'See, your salvation comes.'  
– Isaiah 62:11

It is I, announcing vindication, mighty to save.  
– Isaiah 63:1

\* \* \* \* \*

Christians long for the coming of Christ. He came to save us in the Incarnation. He is coming to judge and reward. See Revelation 1:4; 22:7,12,17,20; John 1:27,30. Saint Bernard writes:

We know a threefold coming of the Lord ... In the first coming, he came in the weakness of human nature, in this intermediate coming he comes in the power of the Spirit, and in the final coming he will come in the majesty of glory. Therefore this intermediate coming is, as it were, a way of connecting the first coming to the final coming. In the first coming Christ was our redeemer, in the final coming he will reveal himself as our life, in this present coming he is our rest and our consolation.  
– Sermon 5 on Advent

We reflect on the reign of Christ who said: 'I have overcome the world'(John 16:33; see 1John 5:4). We think of Jesus' resurrection and the fruits of Christ's victory for the blessed.

And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb: 'Great and amazing are your deeds, Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, King of the nations!  
– Revelation 15:3

They sing a new song: 'You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slaughtered and by your blood you ransomed for God saints from every tribe and language and people and nation.'  
– Revelation 5:9

I heard a voice from heaven like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder; the voice I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps, and they sing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and before the elders. No one could learn that song except the one hundred forty-four thousand who have been redeemed from the earth.  
– Revelation 14:2-3

The root of Jesse shall come, the one who rises to rule the Gentiles; in him the Gentiles shall hope.  
– Isaiah 11:10 (quoted in Romans 15:12)