

Background.

The name of the Book of Psalms comes from the Greek *psalmos* – in the verb for means to pluck a stringed instrument. The overall tone of Psalms is praise to the Lord. But it doesn't stop there. Psalms spans centuries starting with Moses' [Psalm 90](#) to the post exile era in [Psalm 126](#) when the Lord was praised by the return from captivity.

Psalm – a book of the heart.

Psalms is a compilation and expression of the heart – the heart of man as he lifts up his thoughts to the Lord and of the Lord Himself as His very character is revealed within the book. Psalm is a book of praise – to the Lord and a book of worship from believing man of God. Psalm 96 says it well: **¹O sing unto the LORD a new song: sing unto the LORD, all the earth. ²Sing unto the LORD, bless his name; shew forth his salvation from day to day.**

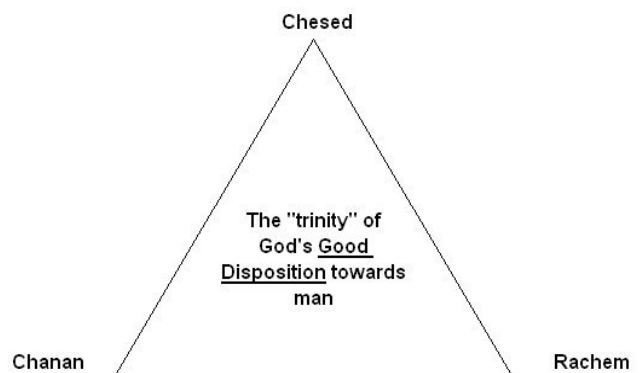
The book of Psalms is a book about relationship – relationship between the God and the heart of man. Even the heart of Jesus is shown particularly in [Psalm 22](#) as we see Jesus, hanging on the cross in agony, reciting in a loud voice in testimony the agony of His heart as the wrath of God is poured out. Psalms imposes no bounds on the emotions of the child of God as he pours out his heart both in praise and thanksgiving to the Lord and in visceral complaint about his treatment by his enemies. This is an important point for us to explore later.

Psalms is a book of complete transparency revealing the worship of God by the child of God and the compassion of the Lord towards His child – there is no holding back – the complete spectrum of worship of God by the believer and the loving character of God is there in bold relief. We have recently covered the confession of David's sin with Bathsheba – Psalm 51. Nowhere in God's word is this transparency more evident than in Psalm 51. The very first words that come from the heart of David contains his complete trust in what I call the trinity of God's Good Disposition toward the sinner. David is trusting in:

the mercy – graciousness (*chanan*) – *to be gracious toward, to show pity for a loathsome person.* This word has the connotation of showing favor towards someone. See [Prov 14:21](#), [Isa 26:10](#).

the lovingkindness – mercifulness (*chesed*) – *goodness, mercy, with a strong emphasis of helping* – of God. It appears 127 times in the Psalms. This "action" word is used by Joseph when he asks the cupbearer to show kindness ([Gen 40:14](#))

when he is restored to the Pharaoh's presence. Chesed has a strong flavor of faithfulness, reliability to be merciful. NIV translated chesed as unflinching love – a good rendition although "mercy" is another good translation.



the tender mercies (*rachem*) – although it is hard to really separate any favorite of these Three qualities of God’s Good Disposition, *rachem* certainly brings God’s love home to me. It is a reference to the mother’s tender thoughts toward her unborn child! A striking and complex use of this word was no doubt at least on the mind of Christ while He was on the cross: **“I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou art my God from my mother’s belly.”** Psalm 22:10. The word “womb” is our word *rachem*. This was not merely a reference to the fact that Jesus Christ was cast upon God (dedicated to God’s service, much as we dedicate our babies to the LORD) but has a complex array of flavors of God’s tender thoughts toward His Only Begotten – as was Mary’s tender thoughts towards her unborn Son.

Although *rachem* is not used in Psalm 139, the thoughts of God toward the unborn child is certainly revealed: **¹³For You formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother’s womb. ¹⁴I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made;** NASB¹ These are the thoughts of God’s heart (if I can use the anthropomorphism) towards sinful man even as he is in his mother’s womb – a strong pro-life statement if I might say so.

Psalm, a book of Praise.

This is the primary meaning of Psalm. For the rest of the lesson I want to bring to our attention Psalm 96. It’s a hard choice to pick the right Psalm for the beginning of this series but this one has a strong emphasis of the Gospel – I like that. Psalm 96 is a little unusual from the biblical Jewish point of view in that it has a world-wide view of God’s dealing with man – indeed, there are some interesting passages referring to all of creation singing praise to God as we will see – a strong reminder of Isaiah where the: **²⁵ The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent’s meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD.**” Isaiah 65:21. KJV. – a reference to the millennium reign of Jesus Christ.

A New Song (of praise).

- [1] **O sing unto the LORD a new song: sing unto the LORD, all the earth.**
 [2] **Sing unto the LORD, bless his name; shew forth his salvation from day to day.**

Oh this is most unusual! The nation as a whole has been exclusive when it came to their worship of the LORD. The gentiles were despised – and not without cause for Israel had always been a thorn in the side of many nations and had been under rule by many. New song? This is the song of the Good News – that salvation is to come to the world.

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A new Mission.

[3] Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people. [4] For the LORD is great, and greatly to be praised: he is to be feared above all gods. [5] For all the gods of the nations are idols: but the LORD made the heavens.

Imagine a message of hope for the gentiles! The first reference to this world-wide missionary work was found in [Genesis 9:27](#) where the gentiles (sons of Japheth) would eventually come to dwell in the tent of the Jews (the sons of Shem). This was and is now the message of the Gospel - an inclusive message – song if you please – that the glory of Jehovah would be declared among the gentiles. Indeed, Paul did just that as told in the account of [Acts 17:16-34](#). Here Paul was fulfilling this “New Song” in bringing the praise of the LORD to the ears of these lost people. Read the wonderful account there that **“³⁴Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.** Acts 17, KJV.

Here the contrast is stark.

“²³For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. ²⁴God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; ²⁵Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;”

So the mission in Psalm was clear: that the Gospel – the New Song would be sung among the heathen even though they were worshiping gods where were merely ones shaped from the hands of sinful men.

A new Vision:

[6] Honour and majesty are before him: strength and beauty are in his sanctuary. [7] Give unto the LORD, O ye kindreds of the people, give unto the LORD glory and strength. [8] Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come into his courts. [9] O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth. [10] Say among the heathen that the LORD reigneth: the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved: he shall judge the people righteously.

This is the new vision for the world to behold – that there is strength and beauty in His sanctuary – all for the believing world to behold! Oh! This is, indeed a New Song. We must consider this vision within the context of biblical days. To be in the court of an all-sovereign king meant one of two things – either one was facing fearsome judgment and certain death – horrible death or, as in this vision, one was to be blessed beyond imagination. Imagine! Being received in the court of the King of Kings as a welcome subject! Strength in verse 6 is self-explanatory – beauty refers to the splendor of the court. This vision is reflected in Hab 3:2, 4

³ God [approaching from Sinai] came from Teman [which represents Edom] and the Holy One from Mount Paran [in the Sinai region]. Selah [pause, and calmly think of that!] His glory covered the heavens and the earth was full of His praise.

⁴ And His brightness was like the sunlight; rays streamed from His hand, and there [in the sunlike splendor] was the hiding place of His power. AMP.²

So the vision for all the world is not one of condemnation but of Good News. Jesus said that He came not to condemn the world but to save it³ – this is the vision of Psalm 96 – the New Song.

A new Earth.

[11] Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof. [12] Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein: then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice

[13] Before the LORD: for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth.

This such a wonderful Psalm. It is the BIG picture of God's kind disposition toward man – that He earnestly desires to bring man to Himself and that man could enjoy the strength (protection) and beauty (splendor, majesty) of His court. But there's more: the LORD intends to bring forth a new earth where even the trees would rejoice in the LORD. This is hard to imagine, especially with the gloom and doom we hear from the environmentalist these days. But here it is. The earth will prosper and will rejoice in the presence of the LORD!

The final verse is a warning to all who would scoff at the message of the New Song – God is coming back. He will hold everyone accountable for acceptance or rejection of this New Song.⁴

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³ Luke 19:10

⁴ Jude 1:14-15