

## **Psalm 99**

The theme of the Psalm is the Holiness of God (Yahweh). What do we think when we say God is Holy? What is conjured up in our minds when the word or concept of holiness is raised? Usually it is a concept of purity or Puritanism. But that isn't what the word is about, and that means the chances are our concept of this passage is a bit warped.

Holiness is a set apart concept. Have the idea that God is set apart and all together different from us. Different in all good ways. Yes, purity is one of those things but not all of it. Let's look at how this Psalm tells us about God's uniqueness.

*PS 99:1 The LORD reigns,  
let the nations tremble;  
he sits enthroned between the cherubim,  
let the earth shake.*

1. The Lord Reigns = the Lord is King. Makes sense doesn't it. The God made the world set things in process, is in control. It makes sense for the Psalmist to use a concept that made sense to the readers. They understood a king's reign, they had that idea. We probably don't understand it quite so much in our democratic governance system. (We certainly don't have the same concept of God's reign when we thin of our prime ministers term in office.)
2. The Lord reigns and he sits enthroned = parallelism
3. Cherubim = support Yahweh's throne, cf Eze 1-2, Carved representation on the ark of the Covenant.
4. The ark is God's throne

*PS 99:2 Great is the LORD in Zion;  
he is exalted over all the nations.*

1. exalted = high and lifted up = the higher the more important the king.
2. In Zion = his house / temple / palace / His domain.

*PS 99:3 Let them praise your great and awesome name--  
he is holy.*

1. Let them = Nations invited to worship

2. A name is perceived to be an example of one's power. Remember God changed people's names. Jacob, Israel, Saul to Paul. Why? Because names had a meaning. His name is great and awesome because God is great and awesome. Using God's name with disrespect was the worst possible thing to do in Jewish society. Bit different now. The name of God and of Jesus have become swear words. Imagine how horrified people will be at the final judgment when God asks them about the use of His name.

*PS 99:4 The King is mighty, he loves justice--  
you have established equity;  
in Jacob you have done  
what is just and right.*

1. Justice and righteousness go together. Eighth Century prophets all talked about justice and righteousness. It was the expression of God being involved in the people's lives.
2. Justice and righteousness have similar effect in OT
3. Lover of justice = loves what is right
4. Mighty = all powerful

*PS 99:5 Exalt the LORD our God  
and worship at his footstool;  
he is holy.*

1. **your footstool:** The metaphor may be derived from the sphere of warfare: sometimes the victorious king and his captains would place their feet upon the neck of the defeated enemy .The vassals of a king not infrequently refer to themselves as the overlord's footstool
2. Broyles sees the psalm as a liturgy at this point. Perhaps the people bow down at this point of its recitation in an action of worship. (Hey how comfortable are we with that? ) Wanna have a go?

*PS 99:6 Moses and Aaron were among his priests,  
Samuel was among those who called on his name;  
they called on the LORD  
and he answered them.*

1. In praise of a faithful God – proven in history.

2. **Moses and Aaron. . .**: the representatives of the priests, while **Samuel** was a type of the prophets.
3. Faithful to them in past - faithful now.

*PS 99:7 He spoke to them from the pillar of cloud;  
they kept his statutes and the decrees he gave them.*

1. Again, referring to history and God's communication and care for them.
2. The Cloud was the symbol of God's presence.
3. Spoke to them = those mentioned (Moses etc) or maybe to the whole peoples
4. Kept his decrees = transmitted it to the people in terms of covenant.
5. Testimonies / statutes and decrees parallelism.

*PS 99:8 O LORD our God,  
you answered them;  
you were to Israel a forgiving God,  
though you punished their misdeeds.*

1. Them = Israel
2. Fair in punishing sin – refer to Just and righteous above.

*PS 99:9 Exalt the LORD our God  
and worship at his holy mountain,  
for the LORD our God is holy.*

1. Congregation is called to worship
2. Worship on holy mountain = Jerusalem = Zion = the place of God's presence. For us that means worship wherever we are in God's presence. (That is potentially everywhere.)
3. Our God = We belong to him. Is He our God, do we treat Him as such, do we treat Him with what he expects of us? Justice and righteousness towards others?

## **So where have we come.**

- i. The Declaration is that “the Lord is King / the Lord reigns.
- ii. Those who are called to worship = Israel / the Nations/ in our context – us.
- iii. Yahweh’s kingship is over creation and the nations and the idols
- iv. What God has done in history. Remember it.
- v. Characteristics of his reign – Justice and righteousness.
- vi. Eschatological dimension of the reign of Yahweh (On going, permanent, forever)
- vii. Response of the worshippers to their king. – Our response should be to exalt the Lord our God.