

Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs: The Master Musician's Melodies

Bereans Sunday School
Placerita Baptist Church
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Psalm 33 — Strike Up the Band and Sing a New Song

1.0 Introducing Psalm 33

- Psalm 33 is a corporate hymn of triumph, a celebration of national deliverance (see v. 12). The occasion is unknown, although it might have been the end of a famine (v. 19).
- Psalm 33 continues the thoughts of Psalm 32:
 - ◆ “shout for joy” (32:11) and “Sing for joy” (33:1)
 - ◆ “righteous ones” and “upright” (32:11; 33:1)
 - ◆ “songs of deliverance” (32:7) and “new song” (33:3)
 - ◆ “Maskil” (32:Heading) and “Play skillfully” (33:3)
 - ◆ “lovingkindness shall surround” (32:10) and “The earth is full of the lovingkindness of the LORD” (33:5)
 - ◆ “I will counsel you” (32:8) and “The counsel of the LORD” (33:11)
 - ◆ “Blessed” (32:1, 2; 33:12)
 - ◆ “horse” (32:9; 33:17)
 - ◆ “with My eye upon you” (32:8) and “the eye of the LORD is on those who fear Him” (33:18)
 - ◆ “he who trusts in the LORD” (32:10) and “we trust in His holy name” (33:21)
- Psalm 33 is one of four psalms in Book I (Psalms 1–41) without a heading (cf. Psalms 1, 2, 10).

2.0 Reading Psalm 33 (NAU)

- 33:1** Sing for joy in the LORD, O you righteous ones;
Praise is becoming to the upright.
- 33:2** Give thanks to the LORD with the lyre;

- Sing praises** to Him with a harp of ten strings.
- 33:3 Sing** to Him a new song;
Play skillfully with a shout of joy.
- 33:4** For the word of the LORD is upright,
And all His work is *done* in faithfulness.
- 33:5** He loves righteousness and justice;
The earth is full of the lovingkindness of the LORD.
- 33:6** By the word of the LORD the heavens were made,
And by the breath of His mouth all their host.
- 33:7** He gathers the waters of the sea together as a heap;
He lays up the deeps in storehouses.
- 33:8** Let all the earth fear the LORD;
Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him.
- 33:9** For He spoke, and it was done;
He commanded, and it stood fast.
- 33:10** The LORD nullifies **the counsel of the nations**;
He frustrates **the plans of the peoples**.
- 33:11** **The counsel of the LORD** stands forever,
The plans of His heart from generation to generation.
- 33:12** Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD,
The people whom He has chosen for His own inheritance.
- 33:13** The LORD looks from heaven;
He sees **all** the sons of men;
- 33:14** From His dwelling place He looks out
On **all** the inhabitants of the earth,
- 33:15** He who fashions the hearts of them **all**,
He who understands **all** their works.
- 33:16** The king is not saved by a mighty army;
A warrior is not delivered by great strength.
- 33:17** A horse is a false hope for victory;
Nor does it deliver anyone by its great strength.
- 33:18** Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear Him,
On those who hope for His lovingkindness,
- 33:19** To deliver their soul from death
And to keep them alive in famine.
- 33:20** **Our** soul waits for the LORD;
He is **our** help and our shield.
- 33:21** For **our** heart rejoices in Him,
Because **we** trust in His holy name.
- 33:22** Let Your lovingkindness, O LORD, be upon **us**,
According as **we** have hoped in You.



3.0 Understanding Psalm 33

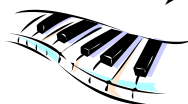
3.1 Outline

- I. Prelude (vv. 1-3)
- II. Divine Word and Work (vv. 4-7)
- III. Divine Command and Counsel (vv. 8-11)
- IV. Divine Preference and Providence (vv. 12-15)
- V. Divine Power and Preservation (vv. 16-19)
- VI. Postlude (vv. 20-22)



3.2 Notes

- v. 2 “with the lyre ... with a harp of ten strings”
 - First mention of the use of musical instruments for worship outside the psalm headings in the Book of Psalms.
 - Psalm 4:Heading – “stringed instruments”
 - Psalm 5:Heading – “flute”
 - Psalm 6:Heading – “stringed instruments ... eight-string lyre”
 - Psalm 12:Heading – “eight-stringed lyre”
 - The “lyre” and the “harp” are probably the same musical instrument. Lyres had either eight or ten strings. Cf. Psalm 144:9.
 - From the time of the Church Fathers, many believed that the Christian church should not use musical instruments in worship.
 - “The use of singing with instrumental music was not received in the Christian churches as it was among the Jews in their infant state, but only the use of plain song.” — Justin Martyr (fl. A.D. 148-161) as cited in Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David*, 1/2:111.
 - “It was only permitted to the Jews, as sacrifice was, for the heaviness and grossness of their souls. God condescended to their weakness, because they were lately drawn off from idols: but now instead of organs, we may use our own bodies to praise him withal.” — Chrysostom (fl. A.D. 386-407) as cited in C. H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David*, 3 vols. (reprint; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, n.d.), 1/2:111.
 - “Israel was at school, and used childish things to help her to learn; but in these days, when Jesus gives us spiritual manhood, we can made melody without strings and pipes. ... We do not need them, they would hinder than help our praise, but if others are otherwise minded, are they not living in gospel liberty? ... As a help to singing the instrument is alone to be tolerated, for keys and strings do not praise the Lord.” — Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David*, 1/2:104.
 - Should we employ musical instruments in our worship services?



- See 1 Corinthians 14:7. Perhaps the flute and lyre were well known because of use in the early church worship service.
 - Revelation 5:8 (if the 24 “elders” are representatives of the church) and 15:2 indicate that the saints will play harps before the throne of God. If such instruments are legitimate in heaven, why not on earth? They are obviously not sinful in and of themselves.
 - Greek *psallo* and *psalmos* refer to singing a song to the accompaniment of a stringed instrument or instruments (played with the fingers). See Liddell & Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 9th ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940), 2018.
 - *Psallo* or *psalmos* are used in the following New Testament texts with regard to music and singing: 1 Corinthians 14:15, 26 (note the reference to the assembly of believers); Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; James 5:13.
- **v. 3a** “a new song”
 - The reference is not to a song never sung before.
 - It appears to have the idea of either being gripped anew by the majesty and wonder of God or to sing of fresh experiences of God’s providential care and salvation.
 - “When the hymnists of Israel call for ‘a new song,’ they call for a new and adequate response to a new act of God, or to an act of God newly realized by God’s people.
In Psalm 33:3 a new song is prompted by a new realization of the Word and work of God.” — Ronald Barclay Allen, *When Song is New: Understanding the Kingdom in the Psalms* (Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson, 1983), 40-41.
 - **v. 3b** “Play skillfully”
 - Same words used to describe the playing skills of David in the court of King Saul (1 Samuel 16:16).
 - **v. 6** “by the breath of His mouth”
 - Cf. Job 26:13 (NKJV: “By His Spirit He adorned the heavens”).
 - Not the Spirit of God here because of the words “of His mouth” and the parallelism with “the word of the LORD” in the first line.
 - **v. 11** “The counsel of the LORD”
 - See Proverbs 19:21.
 - The LORD’s counsel is for guidance (Psalms 32:8; 73:24).
 - It is parallel to His words (Psalm 107:11).
 - It is associated with His wisdom (Isaiah 28:29).

- **v. 12** “Blessed is the nation”
 - See Psalm 144:15.
 - “This cannot be said strictly of any nation but Israel.” — James Montgomery Boice, *Psalms*, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1994), 1:288.
 - Speaking of a nation as “chosen for His own inheritance” is consistent with other passages in the Old Testament referring to Israel:
 - Deuteronomy 4:20, 37; 10:15
 - Deuteronomy 32:9; Psalm 78:62, 71; 94:14; 106:5, 40; Jeremiah 10:16; Joel 3:2

- **v. 18** “the eye of the LORD”
 - See Psalms 32:8; 34:15.
 - This is a metaphor of God’s care (Deuteronomy 11:12).
 - It can be used of God answering prayer (1 Kings 8:29).
 - It is also a reference to His support (2 Chronicles 16:9).
 - Compare Ezekiel 20:17 with 5:11; 7:4, 9; 8:18; 9:10.

- **v. 21** “in His holy name”
 - “His holy name” in the Old Testament can be the object of verbs like “trust” (here), “glory” (Psalm 105:3; 1 Chronicles 16:10), “give thanks” (Psalms 30:4; 97:12), and “bless” (Psalms 103:1; 145:21).
 - See Exodus 34:5-7. God’s “name” refers to His character as revealed in Scripture.



4.0 Singing Psalm 33

Works of Creation and Providence

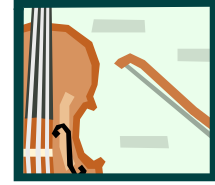
(Tune: *Crimond* = “The Lord’s My Shepherd, I’ll Not Want”)

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|---|---|
| <p>1 Rejoice, ye righteous, in the Lord,
This work belongs to you;
Sing of his name, his ways, his word,
How holy, just, and true!</p> | <p>2 His mercy and his righteousness
Let heav'n and earth proclaim;
His works of nature and of grace
Reveal his wondrous name.</p> |
| <p>3 His wisdom and almighty word
The heav'nly arches spread,
And by the Spirit of the Lord
Their shining hosts were made.</p> | <p>4 He bid the liquid waters flow
To their appointed deep;
The flowing seas their limits know,
And their own station keep.</p> |
| <p>5 Ye tenants of the spacious earth,
With fear before him stand
He spake, and nature took its birth,
And rests on his command.</p> | <p>6 He scorns the angry nations' rage,
And breaks their vain designs;
His counsel stands through every age,
And in full glory shines.</p> |

— Isaac Watts

I Stand in Awe

You are beautiful beyond description,
Too marvelous for words;
Too wonderful for comprehension,
Like nothing ever seen or heard.
Who can grasp Your infinite wisdom?
Who can fathom the depth of Your love?
You are beautiful beyond description,
Majesty enthroned above.



And I stand, I stand in awe of You,
I stand, I stand in awe of You;
Holy God, to Whom all praise is due,
I stand in awe of You.

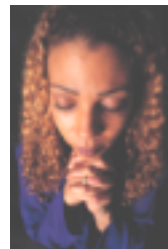
I stand in awe of You,
I stand, I stand in awe of You;
Holy God, to Whom all praise is due,
I stand in awe of You.
I stand in awe of You.

— Mark Altrogge

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5.0 Praying Psalm 33

- Father, I praise You for who You are and what You have done. [v. 1]
- Thank You for Your Word, O God. [v. 4]
- Lord, I stand in awe of You. [v. 8]
- O God, You know the heart and thoughts of my neighbors. [vv. 13-15] Help me speak Your Word to them.
- Help me to stop depending on my own strength. [vv. 16-17]
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6.0 Applying Psalm 33

- Each generation of God’s people should expect further cause for praise.
- “Hopeful waiting—faithful endurance—rather than panicked action is the appropriate stance of God’s people” — Gerald H. Wilson, *Psalms Volume 1*, NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2002), 561.
- The Lord is faithful to care for His people.