

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

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Psalm 93 — The LORD Reigns in Majesty

1.0 Introducing Psalm 93

- Whereas Psalm 92 was read in the post-exilic Temple on the Sabbath, Psalm 93 was read on Friday. The Greek Septuagint added the heading: “For the day before the Sabbath when the world was inhabited; a praise song for David.”
- Psalms 93–100 are the theocratic psalms, the collection of psalms declaring that “The LORD reigns” (93:1; 96:10; 97:1; 99:1).
- Psalm 93 picks up and develops the central theme of Psalm 92: “But You, O LORD, are on high forever” (verse 8).
- “Using terse and powerful language, the hymn rushes along like the roaring water of which it speaks.”—Artur Weiser, *The Psalms: A Commentary*, trans. by Herbert Hartwell, Old Testament Library (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), 618.

2.0 Reading Psalm 93 (NAU)

- 93:1** The LORD reigns, He is clothed with majesty;
The LORD has clothed and girded Himself with strength;
Indeed, the world is firmly established, it will not be moved.
- 93:2** Your throne is established from of old;
You are from everlasting.
- 93:3** The floods have lifted up, O LORD,
The floods have lifted up their voice,
The floods lift up their pounding waves.
- 93:4** More than the sounds of many waters,
Than the mighty breakers of the sea,
The LORD on high is mighty.
- 93:5** Your testimonies are fully confirmed;
Holiness befits Your house, O LORD, forevermore.

3.0 Understanding Psalm 93

3.1 Outline

- I. The Splendor of the Eternal LORD (vv. 1-2)
 - A. The LORD is Majestic (v. 1)
 - B. The LORD is Eternal (v. 2)
- II. The Strength of the Elevated LORD (vv. 3-4)
 - A. The Sea is Powerful (v. 3)
 - B. The LORD is More Powerful (v. 4)
- III. The Sanctity of the Eloquent LORD (v. 5)
 - A. The LORD's Word is Trustworthy (v. 5a)
 - B. The LORD's House is Holy (v. 5b)



3.2 Notes

- v. 1 “The LORD reigns”
 - Verse 1 begins with and verse 4 concludes with “LORD,” forming an inclusio that brackets a section of the hymn dealing with natural revelation’s message that the Creator is omnipotent and eternal.
 - The Hebrew makes a simple statement of fact that looks at the situation as a whole. Simply stated, “The LORD reigns”—permanently (cp. Psalms 47:8; 146:10). It is not a reference to the commencement of His sovereign rule at creation or to the culmination of His rulership in the millennial kingdom prior to the new creation.
 - See Revelation 11:15-17; 19:6. The eschatological *implications* of the reign of Yahweh give an *implied* Messianic flavor to the theocratic psalms.
- v. 1 “clothed with majesty”
 - “Clothed . . . clothed . . . girded” comprise the first of several repetitions that highlight key thoughts in this psalm.
 - Yahweh is majestic—possessing dignity, authority, grandeur, and might. Unlike the majesty of earthly kings, Yahweh’s majesty and sovereignty are not just a show or display of grandeur and strength.
 - ✓ “Majesty” is translated as “excellent things” in Isaiah 12:5.
 - ✓ Compare Psalms 65:6; 68:34; 96:6; 104:1, 5.
- v. 1 “the world is firmly established”
 - Man is powerless to change the existence of the earth. God preserves His creation—He alone can dissolve it.
 - See Psalms 24:1-2; 96:10; 119:90; compare Colossians 1:16-17; 2 Peter 3:7, 10.
- v. 2 “Your throne is established”
 - God’s throne symbolizes His sovereignty.
 - See Psalms 9:7; 45:6; 47:8; 103:19.

- v. 2 “You are from everlasting”
 - Note the progression from the world, to God’s throne, to God Himself.
 - Only an eternal God could have created all things and would be able to govern them.
 - ✓ “Let the believer rejoice that the government under which he dwells has an immortal ruler at its head.”—C. H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David*, 3 vols. (reprint; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, n.d.), 2/2:135.
 - See Psalm 90:2; Isaiah 40:28; Jeremiah 10:10; Habakkuk 1:12.
- v. 3 “The floods have lifted up”
 - “Flood” might also be translated as “streams” or “rivers.” The word is used of the sea in Jonah 2:3 (“current” in NAU).
 - Most commentators interpret verse 3 figuratively, taking the seas as a poetic description of the disorderly chaos of the unbelieving world and its opposition to God.
 - ✓ See Psalm 65:7. Compare Job 9:8; 38:11;
 - ✓ Many commentators and theologians identify Psalm 93 as an enthronement psalm influenced by Canaanite or Babylonian hymns. We respond with Derek Kidner that “the Old Testament looks back to no event that invested the Lord, like the Babylonian Marduk, with sovereignty, and makes no provision in its calendar of feasts (Lv. 23) for an enthronement festival. To hear the authentic voice of these psalms we need no cultic expertise: they speak to us directly.”—Derek Kidner, *Psalms 73–150*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (London: Inter-Varsity Press, 1975), 338.
 - The Jewish Aramaic Targum reads verse 3 as follows:

The rivers have lifted up their voice with songs;
They have given praise before the LORD;
The rivers have lifted up their voice with songs;
The rivers will receive a reward for their praise.
 - An alternative interpretation considers the pounding surf and surging seas as great natural phenomena that reveal the Lord’s great power and majesty. As awe-inspiring as the pounding surf can be as it breaks rocks and carves the shore, God is even mightier.
 - ✓ Compare Psalms 89:9; 107:25, 29; Isaiah 51:15; Jeremiah 5:22; 31:35; Mark 4:39.
- v. 4 “the sounds of many waters”
 - See Psalm 29:3.
 - Compare Isaiah 17:13; Jeremiah 51:55. These references provide the basis for interpreting the sea as a metaphor for rebellious peoples.
- v. 4 “the mighty breakers”
 - See Psalm 42:7; Jonah 2:3.



- v. 5 “Your testimonies are fully confirmed”
 - “Testimonies” focuses on the integrity of God whose Word is dependable, true, and will be fulfilled.
 - A very similar statement is made by David in Psalm 19:7. Like the reference here in Psalm 93, the declaration is preceded by a look at natural revelation and how creation reveals its Creator.
- v. 5 “Holiness befits Your house”
 - Compare Exodus 15:11; Hebrews 7:26.

4.0 Singing Psalm 93

Jehovah Sits Enthroned

(Tunes: “I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord” or “Crown Him with Many Crowns”
or “This Is My Father’s World”)



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|---|--|
| 1 Jehovah sits enthroned
In majesty most bright,
Appareled in omnipotence,
And girded round with might. | 2 The world established stands
On its foundations broad;
His throne is fixed, He reigns supreme,
The everlasting God. |
| 3 The floods have lifted up
Their voice in majesty,
But mighty is the Lord our God
Above the raging sea. | 4 Thy testimonies, Lord,
In faithfulness excel,
And holy must Thy servants be
Who in Thy temple dwell. |

— Author unknown

5.0 Praying Psalm 93

- Almighty Lord of creation, You are in control of all things. [v. 1]
- I thank You, Father, that Your Word is dependable and trustworthy. [v. 5]
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6.0 Applying Psalm 93

- The Lord is actively sovereign, not passively glorious.
- The Lord and His Word are dependable and holy.

The foundational truth of all Christian theology is that bedrock doctrine of all doctrines, the sovereignty of God. Here is the immovable mountain that towers above all theology, the Mount Everest of all truth. The absolute reign of God represents his undisputed right to govern all that he has created. God’s reign is the continual, unhindered free exercise of his supreme authority over all. This must be the first article of doctrinal creed, the chief cornerstone of all divine truth.

— Steven J. Lawson, *Psalms 76 - 150*, Holman Old Testament Commentary
(Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2006), 100