

# יהוה מלך, Psalms 92-100

## יהוה מלך, Psalms 92-100

### Overview

Psalms 92-100 form a unit within Book 4 (Figure 1, chart). They are set apart from the Psalms on either side by several features.

1. They are almost all hymns (with the exception of 94). Psalms 90 and 91 are Psalms of confidence.
2. Psalms 101 and 103 are attributed to David, and 102 fits with them as well, while 90 is by Moses, but 92-100 have no attribution.
3. The theme of kingship dominates in 93-99. Of these seven, all but 94 refer to the Lord as king, and 94 (with 96 and 98) assigns the Lord the kingly function of judging.

Psalms 90-106, Maturation 90-91, God as Habitation <b>92-100, The LORD reigns now</b> 101-103, David will reign 104-106, Hallelujah
---

Figure 1: Structure of Book 4

These Psalms share many features in common (see notes). Some of these features are arranged chiasmatically, centered on Psalm 96 (Figure 2). Let's work out from the center.

### 95-97, The Lord is **King over all gods**

95:3 For the LORD is a great God, and a great **King above all gods**.

96:4 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. ... 10 Say among the heathen that **the LORD reigneth**: the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved:

97:1 **The LORD reigneth**; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof. ... 7 Confounded be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols: **worship him, all ye gods**. 8 Zion heard, and was glad; and the daughters of Judah rejoiced because of thy judgments, O LORD. 9 For thou, LORD, art high above all the earth: thou art exalted **far above all gods**.

### 94, 96, 98, The Lord **comes** to earth to exercise **judgment**

94:1 O LORD God, to whom vengeance belongeth; O God, to whom vengeance belongeth, **shew thyself**. 2 Lift up thyself, thou **judge** of the earth: render a reward to the proud.

96:12 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.

98:8 Let the floods clap their hands: let the hills be joyful together 9 Before the LORD; for **he cometh** to **judge** the earth: with righteousness shall he **judge** the world, and the people with equity.

### 92, 94, 96, 98, 100, the Lord shows **lovingkindness** חסד and **faithfulness** אמונה (faithfulness missing in 94; lovingkindness missing in 96)

92:2 To shew forth thy **lovingkindness** in the morning, and thy **faithfulness** every night,

	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100
The LORD is King over All Gods				Red	Red	Red			
The LORD comes in Judgment			Red		Red		Red		
The LORD shows Lovingkindness	Red		Red		Red		Red		Red
Worship in the LORD's Temple	Red	Red			Red			Red	Red
The LORD rules the Nations			Green		Green				

Figure 2: Symmetric organization of Psalms 92-100

## Psalms 92-100, יהוה מלך

94:18 When I said, My foot slippeth; thy **mercy**, O LORD, held me up.

96:he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his **truth**.

98:3 He hath remembered his **mercy** and his **truth** toward the house of Israel:

100:5 For the LORD is good; his **mercy** is everlasting; and his **truth** endureth to all generations.

**92, 93, 96, 99, 100**, People should worship at **his temple**

92:13 Those that be planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in **the courts of our God**.

93:5 Thy testimonies are very sure: holiness becometh **thine house**, O LORD, for ever.

96:8 Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come into **his courts**.

99:9 Exalt the LORD our God, and worship at **his holy hill**

100:4 Enter into **his gates** with thanksgiving, and into **his courts** with praise:

Concurrent with this symmetric structure is a shift from Israel to the nations. Gentiles appear before 96 only in 94:10, but seven times in Psalm 96, and in every Psalm after that through 100.

The overall picture, moving from the center out, recalls 89:5-18, moving from God’s faithfulness in heaven (vv. 5-7) down to his lovingkindness to his people on earth (13-18), and establishing his rule over all the earth. The central Psalm 96 unites all these themes. We will find three groups of three Psalms each. The first and last correspond chiastically in their focus on God’s works, his majesty, and his judgment, while the center three declare his superiority to all the gods.

The first three Psalms successively praise God for his works, his majesty, and his judgment.

### Psalm 92, God’s Works

**1 A Psalm or Song for the sabbath day.**--This and Psalm 100, at the end of the sections, are the only ones designating worship, consistent with the temple theme at the extremes of the section. But why the Sabbath day?

The answer lies in vv. 5-6, the densest concentration of reference to the Lord’s works in Psalms (Figure 3, chart). Recall why God instituted the Sabbath (chart):

Gen 2:2 And on the seventh day God ended his **work**<sup>1</sup> which he had **made**; and he rested on the seventh day from all his **work** which he had **made**. 3 And God blessed

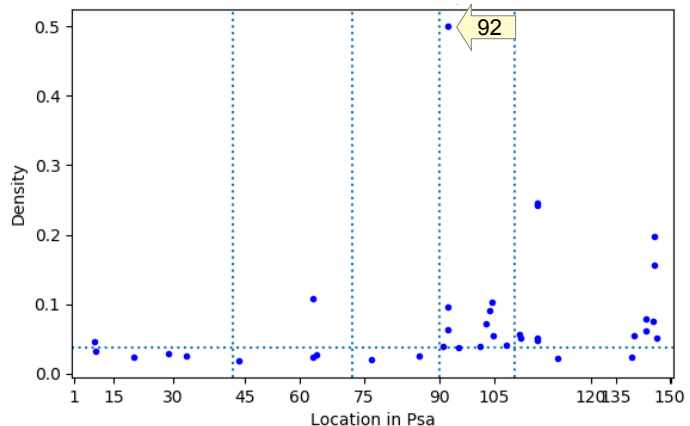


Figure 3: God's Works (מעשה or פעל Strong 6467 or מעשה Strong 4639) in Psalms

1 “Work” in Genesis 2 is מלאכה, not מעשה or פעל, but מלאכה is very rare in Psalms (only in 73:28 and 107:23). “Made” עשה in Genesis 2 is the root of מעשה, which is about half (39 vs. 37) of the references in Figure 3.

## יהוה מלך, Psalms 92-100

the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his **work** which God created and **made**.

The Sabbath was not just a vacation, but a celebration of God’s works, and so is this Psalm.

The name יהוה “LORD” appears seven times. Four are addressed *to* the Lord, vv. 4, 5, 8, and 9, while in 1, 13, and 15 the Psalmist speaks *about* him to others, suggesting a chiasm (Table 1).

LORD 3 <sup>rd</sup> person	Blessings on his people: Answers to Heman Ps 88 & Ethan Ps 89	1-3		12-15
LORD 2 <sup>nd</sup> person	Blessings on Psalmist	4-5		10-11
	Judgment on enemies	6-7		9
Lord’s intrinsic status		8		

Table 1: Structure of Psalm 92

***It is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High: 2 To shew forth thy lovingkindness in the morning, and thy***

***faithfulness every night, 3 Upon an instrument of ten strings, and upon the psaltery; upon the harp with a solemn sound.--***He begins talking about God to the people, but his joy in the Lord is so great that he turns to him directly.<sup>2</sup>

The emphasis on God’s חסד ואמונה rebukes the doubts of Heman 88:11 and Ethan 89:49.

The central section is addressed entirely to the Lord, including all four instances of יהוה, and reinforces the chiasm by moving from the Psalmist (singular, contrasted with plural worshippers in the outer elements) through the wicked to the exaltation of the Lord himself at the center.

**4 For thou, LORD, hast made me glad through thy work: I will triumph in the works of thy hands. 5 O LORD, how great are thy works! and thy thoughts are very deep.--**Here is the focus on God’s works that makes this Psalm appropriate for the Sabbath, and the answer to 90:16, “Let thy work appear unto thy servants.” God’s works are the basis for his assertion of God’s lovingkindness and faithfulness. Meditating on them brings gladness in the midst of tragedy. Even a captive in Babylon can see the beauty of a sunrise or the power of a windstorm. When we rejoice in the Lord’s works, our own circumstances become less painful.

**6 A brutish man knoweth not; neither doth a fool understand this. 7 When the wicked spring (פרח Strong 6934) as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish; it is that they shall be destroyed for ever:--**The wicked do not recognize God’s works, and their own vaunted accomplishments will be destroyed

**8 But thou, LORD, art most high for evermore.--**Here is the center of the Psalm: the focus is not on the Lord’s blessings to his people (1-3, 12-15), or to the Psalmist (4-5, 10-11), or even his judgment of the wicked (6-7, 9), but on who he is in himself, far above everything

**9 For, lo, thine enemies, O LORD, for, lo, thine enemies shall perish; all the workers of iniquity shall be scattered.--**Working out of the chiasm, the wicked are judged.

**10 But my horn shalt thou exalt like the horn of an unicorn: I shall be anointed with fresh oil. 11 Mine eye also shall see my desire on mine enemies, and mine ears shall hear my desire of the wicked that rise up against me.--**Once again, the Psalmist celebrates God’s blessing on him personally.

2 The shift is abrupt. Tate cites other places with similar shifts between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> person: 66:8–10; 93:1–2, 4–5; 94:12–14 (all MT), but none is in the middle of a clause as this is. Dahood wants to read ל in ליהוה as a vocative marker, which seems extreme. Is 1a a call to worship, with 1b-2 the response?

## Psalms 92-100, יהוה מלך

Finally, we return to the corporate praise of God.

**12 The righteous shall flourish פרה like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. 13 Those that be planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish פרה in the courts of our God.**--He picks up the verb translated “spring” in v. 7, where it described the temporary prosperity of the wicked. In the end, it is the righteous who flourish.


Note the references to God’s house and courts. The editor presents to us the confident hope of Israel in exile that God’s earthly sanctuary will be restored so that they can worship him there. This is a persistent theme in the outer Psalms of this section (Figure 2).

**14 They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing;**--The first section answered the concerns of Heman and Ethan about חסד ואמונה. Now the last section finishes the response by dealing with the concerns about the shortness of life expressed in 88:10-12 and 89:47-48.

**15 To shew that the LORD is upright: he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.**--As the boundary between the first two sections is blurred by shifting from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> person for God, so the boundary between this and the previous section is blurred by returning here to “my rock” after speaking of blessing on God’s people collectively.

### Psalm 93, God’s Majesty

This Psalm is also chiasmic (Table 2, chart), and focuses on God’s victory over the raging sea.

God’s Attributes (Majestic, Strong, Holy)	1		5b
God’s Eternal Throne and Word	2		5a
God’s Victory over the Floods	3-4		

*Table 2: Structure of Psalm 93*

**1 The LORD reigneth, he is clothed with majesty; the LORD is clothed with strength, wherewith he hath girded himself: the world also is stablished, that it cannot be moved.**--For the first time in 92-100, we have the affirmation that God reigns. Though David’s dynasty appears broken, David’s God is still in control.

**2 Thy throne is established of old: thou art from everlasting.**--In the first of two elements dealing with eternal things, the Psalmist affirms that God’s rule was established long ago; it is as old as God is. The implication is that it will endure as long as he does.

**3 The floods have lifted up, O LORD, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their waves. 4 The LORD on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea.**--In Israel’s culture, the sea is alien and hostile. Israel was never a seagoing people; when Solomon and Jehoshaphat wanted to go to sea, they made alliances with other nations. Israel’s perennial enemies, the Philistines, were sea people, from Crete. The sailors Jonah found to take him to Tarshish worshipped other gods. And in the mythologies of Canaan and Mesopotamia, the sea was a hostile deity that is slain in the process of creating the world.

God’s victory over the sea pervades the Bible. Four episodes come to mind:

- In Genesis 1, the initial, chaotic earth was entirely covered by the sea, and God’s creative work separated out dry land as a home for his representative, man.
- In Exodus 14-15, the Red Sea is a barrier keeping his people from their inheritance, and he defeats it by opening it before them.

## Psalms 92-100, יהוה מלך

- In Joshua 3, he demonstrates this same power for the generation that had not walked through the Red Sea by dividing the Jordan.
- In the new heaven and new earth (Rev 21:1), “there [is] no more sea.”

The point of this center section is the effectiveness of God’s rule. Though his throne is not currently on earth, his influence extends over earthly powers.

**5 Thy testimonies are very sure:**--Not only is God’s throne eternal, but so are his testimonies. This word for law is related to the verb “bear witness,” and emphasizes his personal involvement. He is bearing witness, on the strength of his word, that certain things will be so.

Given the issues with David’s throne, it may be worth recalling that this term describes the law as it is given to a new king on his enthronement, at least in the case of the coronation of Joash:

2Ki 11:12 And he brought forth the king's son, and put the crown upon him, and gave him the **testimony**; and they made him king, and anointed him; and they clapped their hands, and said, God save the king.

The throne of Israel rested on the law of God, and whatever may seem to be the fortunes of the throne, that law is steadfast. “Sure” is the verbal form of “truth,” the word often paired with **סדק** to emphasize its trustworthiness. This Psalm thus addresses the concerns of Ethan in 89:49 about the durability of the Davidic covenant: what God says is indeed sure.

**holiness becometh thine house, O LORD, for ever.**--Finally, we return to God’s own attributes, and once again the Psalmist is assured of the restoration of the temple (Figure 2).

### Psalm 94, God’s Judgment

God’s Vengeance	1-2	↕	22-23
Description of the Wicked	3-7	↕	16-21
Rebuke and Blessing	8-11	↕	12-15

*Table 3: Structure of Psalm 94*

At first glance, the inclusion of this lament in a series of hymns is confusing. But the theme of the Psalm is the Lord’s judgment of the wicked, which (as 96 and 98 will reiterate) is a major function of a king. As we move from the physical restoration of the temple in 92 and 93 to the coming of the Lord as king (94, 96, 98), it’s fitting to begin with a reminder of why a king is needed.<sup>3</sup> Without a king, society dissolves into lawlessness (Jdg 17:6; 21:25).

The Psalm is chiasmic (Table 3, chart).<sup>4</sup> It begins and ends with God as judge, then moves through a description of the need for judgment to rebuke for the wicked and blessing on the righteous.

**1 O LORD God, to whom vengeance belongeth; O God, to whom vengeance belongeth, shew thyself. 2 Lift up thyself, thou judge of the earth: render a reward to the proud.**--The theme of the Lord’s coming is captured in the verb “shew thyself.” The world needs a judge, someone to execute divine vengeance on the wicked deeds described in Book 3.

**3 LORD, how long shall the wicked, how long shall the wicked triumph? 4 How long shall they utter and speak hard things? and all the workers of iniquity boast themselves? 5 They break in pieces thy people, O LORD, and afflict thine heritage. 6 They slay the widow and the stranger, and murder the fatherless.**<sup>5</sup> **7 Yet they say, The LORD shall not see, neither**

3 Howard provides detailed examples of keywords that integrate 93 with the Psalms around it. I’m more concerned here with the rhetorical flow.

4 VanGemenen. This recognition of a major break at v. 12, reinforced by the vocative “O LORD,” is in line with the older commentators ((Hengstenberg, Alexander, consistent with the finer divisions of Delitzsch and Kidner).

5 This triple occurs 18x in the OT, 11 in Deuteronomy. The first, Deut 10:17, emphasizes God’s care for them.

## Psalms 92-100, יהוה מלך

shall the God of Jacob regard *it*.--Next, the Psalmist describes the problem. The wicked oppress the righteous, and arrogantly assume that they can hide their guilt from God. Asaph in Book 3 might well associate this description with the Gentile invaders of Psalms 74 and 79.

**8 Understand, ye brutish among the people: and ye fools, when will ye be wise? 9 He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see? 10 He that chastiseth the heathen, shall not he correct? he that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know? 11 The LORD knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity.**--The center section begins with a rebuke of the wicked, which refutes their claim, “The LORD shall not see” (v. 7).

After Book 3, we expect to read that God “chastiseth the heathen” (v. 10). But the Psalmist begins with “ye brutish בער among the people [singular].” This must refer to corrupt Israelites, the false shepherds of Jer 10:21 (also called brutish בער) and Eze 34:2.

This rebuke explains the misfortunes of Psalm 89. David’s kingdom was allowed to dissolve because those in responsibility were brutish (92:6), acting like animals (73:22; cf. Hab 1:13, 14) concerned only with feeding themselves (Ezek 22:4). God will judge the heathen, but first he will deal with his own people:

1Pe 4:17 For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?

**12 Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O LORD, and teachest him out of thy law; 13 That thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity, until the pit be digged for the wicked. 14 For the LORD will not cast off his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance.**--The believer who recognizes and accepts God’s correction will find rest during the time of difficulty, and the assurance that God will ultimately make things right.

**15 But judgment shall return unto righteousness: and all the upright in heart shall follow it.**--“Judgment” משפט is the judicial activity of the ruler, often corrupted today. But when the Lord shows himself as judge (vv. 1-2), it will become צדק, conformity with his law and character.

**16 Who will rise up for me against the evildoers? or who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity? 17 Unless the LORD had been my help, my soul had almost dwelt in silence. 18 When I said, My foot slippeth; thy mercy, O LORD, held me up. 19 In the multitude of my thoughts within me thy comforts delight my soul. 20 Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee, which frameth mischief by a law? 21 They gather themselves together against the soul of the righteous, and condemn the innocent blood.**--Once again he contemplates the wicked, but this time with the assurance of God’s protection.

**22 But the LORD is my defence; and my God is the rock of my refuge. 23 And he shall bring upon them their own iniquity, and shall cut them off in their own wickedness; yea, the LORD our God shall cut them off.**--Finally he returns to contemplating the God of vengeance, who will right all the wrongs of the captivity.

The next three Psalms state the Lord’s superiority over כל־אלהים “all gods” (only in 95:3; 96:4; 97:7, 9; and 135:5). 95 tells *how* we should worship, 96 states *who*, and 97 shows *why*.

### Psalm 95, The Test of True Worship

This Psalm begins with a common Psalm pattern: a call to worship followed by the cause for worship (Figure 4, chart). This cycle occurs twice, calling the people first to joyful praise, then to

## Psalms 92-100, יהוה מלך

reverential prostration. But at the end of v. 7, the tone changes to a challenge to daily obedience. The third dimension of true worship is obedience to the Lord, and the cause is God's wrath.

### 1-5, *Worship in Praise*

**1 O come, let us sing unto the LORD: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. 2 Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.**--The initial call to praise recalls the beginning and end of the previous three Psalms:

92:1 It is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High: 2 To shew forth thy lovingkindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night, 3 Upon an instrument of ten strings, and upon the psaltery; upon the harp with a solemn sound.

94:22 But the LORD is my defence; and my God is the rock of my refuge.

**3 For the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods. 4 In his hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is his also. 5 The sea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land.**--The motive for this praise is the Lord's superiority over other gods, demonstrated by his raw creative power. The next Psalm repeats this argument in vv. 4-5.

In the myths of the ancient near east and Greece, Heaven and Earth are not created, but are the most ancient gods, whose offspring are the active deities.<sup>6</sup> Modern society makes a similar claim: the physical creation came first, and the idea of God has evolved. The opening verse of the entire Bible, Gen 1:1, is a radical challenge to this line of thought. The ancient world taught, "Heaven and Earth created the gods." The Bible responds, "God created the heavens and the earth."

### 6-7a, *Worship in Posture*

**6 O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker.**--The second cycle of call-cause addresses religious posture, bowing and kneeling.

**7 For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.**--The cause is their special relation to God. The vocabulary of this paragraph (the Lord as the maker of Israel, they as his sheep) is an allusion to the Exodus, when God created the nation.<sup>7</sup>

### 7b-11, *Worship in Obedience*

At this point the tone shifts suddenly. Up to this point, the people have been called to forms of worship (singing, bowing down), in the light of God's past acts of creation. But there are other past acts that should draw forth a further form of worship, obedience to his commands. It is all too easy to participate enthusiastically in liturgical actions, such as singing hymns and bowing

Psalm 95, The Test of True Worship

1-5, Worship in **Praise**

1-2, Call to Praise

3-5, Cause: Creation

6-7a, Worship in **Posture**

6, Call to Bow Down

7, Cause: Exodus

7b-11, Worship in **Obedience**

7-9, Call to Obey

10-11, Cause: Judgment

Figure 4: Structure of Psalm 95

6 See F.M. Cross, Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic, ch. 2, "El and the God of the Fathers." An accessible summary is at <http://meaninginhistory.blogspot.com/2010/06/frank-moore-cross-theogony-cosmogony.html>.

7 Enns, WSJ 55 (1993) 255-280, sees this as the second creation, thus linking the first call-cause pair with the events remembered in the challenge of vv. 7b-11.

## Psalms 92-100, יהוה מלך

our heads, but completely neglect God's law. Recall Israel in the wilderness. God gave them the Tabernacle with a liturgy to guide their worship, but they fell into disobedience.

**To day if ye will hear his voice,**-- "If" can mean "If only": "I wish that you would hear his voice," שִׁמְעוּ בְקוֹלִי, which often (unlike the simple accusative) means "obey."

**8 Harden not your heart, as in the provocation מְרִיבָה, and as in the day of temptation מִסָּה in the wilderness: 9 When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work.**--The words "Provocation and temptation" is Meribah and Massah, the name of the place where Moses struck the rock to give the people water (Ex 17:7).

**10 Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways: 11 Unto whom I swear in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest.**--The cause for worship is the example of God's chastisement to Israel after their disobedience.

### Psalm 95 in Hebrew 3-4

Hebrews 3-4 comments extensively on this Psalm. The key idea of Hebrews is "better than": Jewish believers must not to fall back into Judaism, because the new way is better than the old. Jesus is better than the prophets or the angels (ch. 1), a better rest-giver than Joshua (4), a better high priest than the Levitical priests (ch. 4-7), mediating a better covenant (ch. 8-9), offering a better sacrifice (ch. 10) in a better sanctuary (9), and providing a better salvation (ch. 11-13). Ch. 3 presents him as better than Moses. The thesis is stated in the first six verses:

Heb 3:1 Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; 2 Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house. 3 For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house. 4 For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God. 5 And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; 6 But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.

v. 6 combines the assurance of Christ's superiority with a solemn warning. Christ is a son over the household where Moses was only a servant. But who are the people who make up that household? Mere profession of faith is not enough. Only those who "hold fast" their profession (4:14; 10:23) have the assurance of being members of the household.

The particular temptation facing the original readers is to go back to Judaism. So the writer shows that the same principle applies there: not all are Israel, who are of Israel (cf. Rom 9:6-7). To support his claim, he quotes the last section of Psalm 95. in Heb 3:7-11, warning that those who harden their hearts and fall away will not participate in the rest of God.

### Psalm 96, Conversion of the Gentiles

This Psalm introduces the declaration of God's universal sovereignty that runs through Psalm 100 and the end of the book (Figure 5, chart). Along with with 105 and 106 (which also emphasize the nations), it is part of 1 Chronicles 16, celebrating the taking of the Ark to Zion.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> See notes for detailed alignment and comparison.



## יהוה מלך, Psalms 92-100

This Psalm expands the version in 1 Chronicles in adding emphasis to God's judgment in vv. 10 and 13. This emphasis on the nations in 1 Chronicles 16 shows David's intent in bringing up the ark: Jerusalem is to be the capital, not just of Israel, but of all the earth.

Psalm 96, like Psalm 95, alternates between call to worship and cause for worship (Figure 6, chart). In the first half, we are to carry the message of God's salvation to the heathen, while in the second, the nations are invited to join in worship in God's sanctuary, enlarging the circle of *who* will worship. Between the two halves, v. 6 marks the transition between the two.

As the central Psalm in 92-100, this Psalm brings together all of the themes that are arranged around it in the other Psalms in this section (Figure 2). Figure 5 shows the prominence of the last of the five items, the Lord's rule over the nations.

**1 O sing unto the LORD a new song:**--This expression appears six times in Psalms.<sup>9</sup> Isaiah 42:10 and Rev 5:9; 14:3 also pick it up.<sup>10</sup> Yet here, as in Psalm 33, the themes include the ancient truth of creation. How can praise of God for creation be "new"?

As we suggested on 33:3, the verbal form of "new" in the OT almost always has the sense of "renew." The psalmist is warning against staleness in our worship, urging us to appropriate anew the ancient praises of God and appreciate them in our situation.

**sing unto the LORD, all the earth. 2 Sing unto the LORD, bless his name; shew forth his salvation from day to day. 3 Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all peopleS.**--Here as throughout the Psalm (and unlike 94:8), "people" is plural. God is to be proclaimed to all the different cultures of the world.

**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.**--The argument here is the same as in 95:3-5: God's power in creation shows his superiority over other gods. This is the message we are to take to the heathen. It is also how Paul begins his systematic demonstration in Romans that "all have sinned." To show the sin of the pagans, he points out,

Rom 1:18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; 19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. 20 For the invisible things of him **from the creation of the world** are clearly seen, being understood **by the**

9 See also 33:3; 40:3; 98:1; 144:9; 149:1.

10 Isaiah invites the nations to join in the song; John connects it with being redeemed.

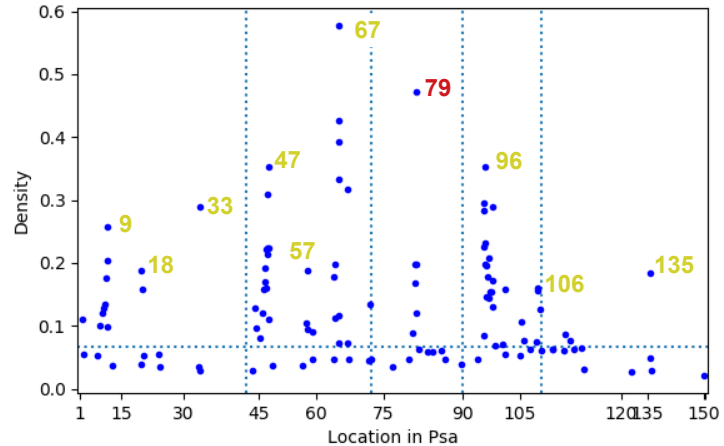


Figure 5: *Gentiles/Nations* גוים, *Peoples* עמים, *Kingdoms* ממלכות, or "All the Earth" כל הָאָרֶץ in Psalms (79 is the fall of Jerusalem before the heathen)

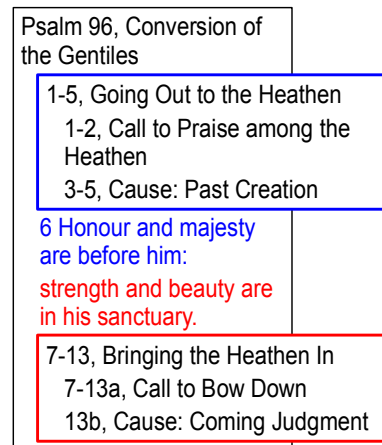


Figure 6: Structure of Psalm 96

## Psalms 92-100, יהוה מלך

**things that are made**, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

As we noted in Psalm 95, in both ancient Mediterranean thought and modern science, God does not create the world; it creates him. But vv. 4-5 go beyond the claim of 95:3 that the Lord is above all gods. There, his creative superiority over other deities motivate his own people to worship him. Here, it is the basis for declaring his glory among the heathen.

**6 Honour and majesty are before him: strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.**--This verse transitions between the evangelistic outreach to the heathen in 1-5 and bringing them into the temple in 7-13. The first half concerns his intrinsic honor and majesty, which is in his presence wherever he may be, while the second half focuses on his beauty as it is manifested in his sanctuary. This verse and v. 8 cover the fourth topic in Figure 2, worship in the temple.

The second call-cause invitation puts much more emphasis on the call to worship:

**7 Give unto the LORD, O ye kindreds of the peopleS, 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.**--First, the gentiles are invited into the courts of the Lord, in direct contradiction to the laws of first-century Judaism (Acts 21:19), but explicitly addressed in Eph 2:11-22.

**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 peopleS righteously.**--As the firstfruits of the Gentiles enter the sanctuary, the outreach continues, bringing all nations under God's righteous rule. Together with the reference to other gods in v. 4, this verse covers the first topic in Figure 2.

**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:**--Even what we think of as inanimate creation joins in the worship. Recall our Lord's words as he entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday,

Luk 19:39 And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples. 40 And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.

**for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the peopleS with his truth.**--The second cause for praise is the coming of the Lord to judge. Again, the focus is not simply on the final judgment, but on his exercise of the functions of kingship, ruling over all the earth. This verse covers the second topic in Figure 2, the Lord's coming judgment. In addition, while **חסד** does not appear in the Psalm, the last word, "truth," reminds us of the expression, "mercy and truth," corresponding to the third topic.

## Psalm 97, The Effects of the Lord's Reign

The Psalm has three stanzas (Figure 7, chart).<sup>11</sup> It begins with a description of what the coming of the Lord mentioned in 96:13 will be like (1-5), and ends with his blessing on those who submit to him (10-12). The central stanza (6-9) has two parts, each mentioning his righteous rule, its universal scope, and his superiority over other gods, but shifting from third to second person.

11 This analysis follows Kidner. Older commentators (Hengstenberg, Delitzsch, Alexander, Perowne) see four 3-verse stanzas of three verses each, where the outer triplets contain exhortation (vv. 1, 10, 12) and the central ones describe God's impact first on inanimate creation, then on idolaters

## Psalms 92-100, יהוה מלך

The first stanza recalls God's universal judgment, while the second half looks forward to his blessing on his people. If 95 shows *how* to worship and 96 *who* will worship, 97 shows *why*, the consequences of our decision to worship or to oppose the Lord.

Almost every verse in this Psalm echoes or paraphrases some other portion of Scripture (see notes). Yet it has a single, coherent theme: the effects of the Lord's coming rule over all the earth. The point is, "All Scripture tells of God's rule on earth." One is reminded of the Lord's post-resurrection teachings from the OT:

Luk 24:27 And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things **concerning himself**.

Luk 24:44 And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, **concerning me**. 45 Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,

The focus of all the Scriptures is the coming reign of God's Messiah over all the earth.

### 1-5, *The Lord Dominates the Earth*

**1 The LORD reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad<sup>12</sup> thereof.**--The Lord's rule brings joy to the earth and its isles. The reference may be to the physical creation, as in 96:11-12, or it may include all the inhabitants of the planet.

**2 Clouds and darkness are round about him:**--The imagery here and throughout this paragraph recalls Psalm 18:8-13, which in turn is reminiscent of the fire and clouds of Sinai.

**righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne.**--As we have observed before, righteousness (conformity to God's will) and judgment (the activity of ruling) ought to be aligned, and under Messiah's administration they will be.

**3 A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about. 4 His lightnings enlightened the world: the earth saw, and trembled. 5 The hills melted like wax at the presence of the LORD, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.**--Here the language recalls the Exodus and Sinai (cf. Judg 5:4-5). While the earth and its isles rejoice at the Lord's reign, the more immediate impact is the destruction of his enemies. The light that he shines is the fire and lightning of judgment.

### 6-9, *Impact on All the Gods*

The central stanza has two parallel parts, a hinge between the first and last stanzas (Table 4, chart). The first recalls the judgments of 1-5, while the second anticipates the blessings of 10-12.

12 The verb forms are ambiguous between jussive and indicative; the parallel with v. 12, forming an inclusio around the entire Psalm, suggests that we take these as jussives, as does the AV. The situation is different in v. 7, where the parallel with v. 8 urges us to read them as indicatives (contrary to AV, but in agreement with the NET Bible).

Psalm 97, Effects of the Lord's Reign

1-5, He dominates the earth  
1, Let the earth **rejoice**  
3, He **destroys** his enemies  
4, **Light** brings fear

6-9, Impact on all the gods  
6-7, **Confusion to idolatrous peopleS**  
8-9, **Joy to Zion and Judah**

10-12, He blesses his people  
10, He **preserves** his saints  
11, **Light** brings gladness  
12, **Rejoice**, ye righteous

Figure 7: Structure of Psalm 97

## Psalms 92-100, יהוה מלך

**6 The heavens declare his righteousness,**--The Psalmist divides the “righteousness and judgment” from v. 2 between the two halves of the hinge.

**and all the peopleS see his glory. 7**

**Confounded be are all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols:**

**worship him; all ye the gods worship him.**--The first half focuses on idolaters, recalling the judgment in v. 3. The verbs in v. 7 might be either wishes (jussives) or assertions (indicatives), but the parallel with the emotional response of the Lord’s people in v. 8 urges us to read them as statements.

**8 Zion heard, and was glad; and the daughters of Judah rejoiced because of thy judgments, O LORD.**--In contrast to the frustration of the idolaters, God’s people rejoice at his coming, bringing the practical judgments that reflect his righteousness.

**9 For thou, LORD, art high above all the earth: thou art exalted far above all gods.**--Again, we are reminded of the universality of the Lord’s superiority, both over the earth and other spiritual beings. Paul associates this promise with the resurrection of our Lord:

Eph 1:19 his mighty power, 20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, 21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:

### 10-12, The Lord Blesses his People

**10 Ye that love the LORD, hate evil: he preserveth the souls of his saints; he delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked.**--If God destroys the wicked, it is to deliver his saints.

**11 Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.**--The light of his appearing, which strikes terror into the wicked, brings gladness to the upright.

**12 Rejoice in the LORD, ye righteous; and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.**--Contemplation of his glorious advent should lead us to joy and thanksgiving.

The last three Psalms echo the motives for worship in the first three, chiastically: God’s judgment, majesty (here holiness), and works.

## Psalm 98, Praise for the Coming Savior

This Psalm, like 95 and 96, has multiple call-cause stanzas (Figure 8, chart). The first focuses on God’s saving acts (√עשׂו occurs three times, the densest in Book 4), while the second concerns his

Theme	6-7	8-9
Righteousness and Judgment (v. 2)	6 The heavens declare his <b>righteousness</b> ,	8b because of thy <b>judgments</b> , O LORD.
Emotional response of witnesses	7 <b>Confounded</b> be are all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols:	8a Zion heard, and was <b>glad</b> ; and the daughters of Judah <b>rejoiced</b>
Universality of rule	and <b>all the peopleS</b> see his glory.	9 For thou, LORD, art high above <b>all the earth</b> :
Submission of other gods	<del>worship him</del> , <b>all ye the gods</b> worship him.	thou art exalted far <b>above all gods</b> .

*Table 4: The Hinge in 97:6-8*

## Psalms 92-100, יהוה מלך

coming to rule.<sup>13</sup> This psalm thus answers the plea of Psalm 94 for the Lord to bring judgment.

Two word-pairs appear frequently in Book 4: “mercy and truth” (or “truthfulness”), and “righteousness and judgment.” The first Cause for Praise mentions the first of these pairs, which underlies the Lord’s saving activity, while the second mentions the second, which describes the purpose for which he comes.

There are numerous parallels between this Psalm and Psalm 96 (see notes), including the final announcement that the Lord comes to judge the earth. But the two have very different themes. There, the focus was on taking the Lord’s claims to the heathen and bringing them into his sanctuary. Here, it is on the salvation that the Lord has achieved for his people.

**1 A Psalm.**--This is the only time this title appears by itself in the Psalter. It appears to mark a break, separating 98-100 from the earlier Psalms in this section.

**O sing unto the LORD a new song;**--See notes on 96. This expression indicates, not that the content is new, but that the singers sing anew of their theme, which may be ancient.

**for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory (ישע C).** **2 The LORD hath made known his salvation יְשׁוּעָה: his righteousness hath he openly shewed in the sight of the heathen. 3 He hath remembered his mercy and his truth toward the house of Israel: all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation יְשׁוּעָה of our God.**--This paragraph makes three important points.

First, it emphasizes the salvation achieved by the Lord over his enemies. This cluster of verses is the third-densest concentration of references to salvation in the Psalms, after Psalm 44 (which laments that God’s past saving acts are not being repeated) and 20 (prayer for the king as he goes to war). Those are tentative, but here the Lord is unambiguously the Savior.

Second, this salvation is universally visible--“in the sight of the heathen,” “seen” by “all the ends of the earth.” This point is very much in agreement with Psalm 96.

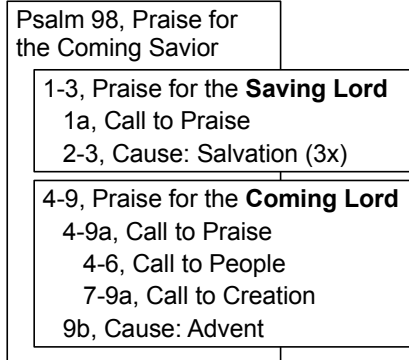
Third, this salvation reflects “his mercy and his truth.” These have not vanished, as Heman and Ethan lamented at the end of Book 3, but are clearly in evidence.

**4 Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all the earth: make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise. 5 Sing unto the LORD with the harp; with the harp, and the voice of a psalm. 6 With trumpets and sound of cornet make a joyful noise before the LORD, the King.**--The second call to praise returns to the theme of joyful song from v. 1. It is here (as in the second call to praise in Psalm 96) that we are reminded that the Lord is king.

**7 Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. 8 Let the floods clap their hands: let the hills be joyful together 9 Before the LORD;**—Not only the people, but also the non-human creation, joins in the praise, as in 96:11-13. As there, even the ocean joins the worship, a stark contrast with 93:3,4, where the floods are opposing him. His victory will subdue even the hostile behavior of the sea.

**for he cometh to judge the earth: with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the**

<sup>13</sup> See notes for discussion of the three-part outline proposed by most commentators.



*Figure 8: Structure of Psalm 98*

## Psalms 92-100, יהוה מלך

**peopleS with equity.**--Almost identical with the end of Psalm 96, except that the character of his judgment is “equity” here, compared with “truth” there. Again we find the pairing of righteousness and judgment so prominent in this section.

### Psalm 99, Invitation to the Sanctuary of the Holy One

This Psalm returns to the invitation to enter God’s sanctuary from the start (92 and 93) and center (96) of this section. In particular,

Grammar	Subject	1-5, First Stanza	6-9, Second Stanza
Third person	Description of the Lord and his subjects	1-4a, Enthroned in the Holy of Holies over all peoples	6-7, Delivering Israel in the desert
Second person singular	Prayer to the Lord	4b, Praise for his righteous judgment	8, Recognition of his principled forgiveness
Second person plural	Exhortation to the people	5, Worship our Holy Lord	9, Worship our Holy Lord

*Table 5: Structure of Psalm 99*

the emphasis on his holiness recalls the vision of his majesty in 93. The dominant structural feature is the refrain in vv. 5, 9, calling us to exalt the Lord and worship before him. Each of the two stanzas thus marked<sup>14</sup> has three parts (Table 5, chart): a description of the Lord and his subjects in the third person, a second person singular prayer to the Lord, and a second person plural exhortation to worship in his sanctuary. The first stanza defines God’s holiness, while the second describes what it means for people to live with such a God.<sup>15</sup>

The first paragraph consists of three pairs of description followed by third person imperatives—like the “call-cause” pattern, but in reverse. Each description is different perspective on the same theme: that the Lord is king.

**1 The LORD reigneth; let the peopleS tremble:**--Here is the most direct statement of the theme: the Lord reigneth. As a result, all the inhabitants of the earth (“peoples” is plural) are to tremble before him. The verb “tremble” רגז (Strong 7264) describes something that is usually characteristic of the earth (18:7; 77:18) in an earthquake or the water (77:16) in a storm, emblematic of the cosmic effects of the Lord’s coming; compare the use of a semantically related word (היל Strong 2342) in 29:8 and 97:4 for the Lord’s shaking of the earth.

**he sitteth between the cherubims; let the earth be moved.**--The second expression of the theme describes the Lord’s throne, which is borne by cherubim. Ezekiel 1 gives the most detailed description we have of the Lord on this throne and of the winged creatures who carry it, which combine features of a man, an ox, an eagle (including the wings) and a lion. They are not called cherubim in chapter 1, but they are identified by name in Ezek 10:15. The ark of the covenant with its images of cherubim was a representation of this throne, and references to the Lord’s “sitting between the cherubim” (here and 1 Sam. 4:4; 2 Sam. 6:2; 2 Ki. 19:15; 1 Chr. 13:6; Ps. 80:1; Isa. 37:16) often have the ark and the sanctuary in view (as in the first four references).<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Many commentators treat “it/he is holy” (3) as a third refrain, but this breaks the grammatical symmetry.

<sup>15</sup> As usual, Kidner suggests particularly felicitous titles: “Holiness Enthroned” and “Holiness Encountered.”

<sup>16</sup> Some ancient near eastern art shows monarchs seated on a throne ornamented with winged sphinxes, or cherubim. See T.D. Mettinger, *In Search of God* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), 126-131, for examples and drawings, though I disagree with his interpretation of צבאות as the heavenly host. Photographs are available in G.E. Markoe, “The Emergence of Phoenician Art.” *BASOR* 279 (1990) 13-26.

## יהוה מלך, Psalms 92-100

The mobility of this throne adds the notion of his coming (as in Ezekiel 1) to his royal position; compare the concluding verses of Psalms 96 and 98, “he cometh [‘he sitteth between the cherubim’] to judge the earth [‘the Lord reigneth’].” In response to his advent (as in Psalms 96 and 98), even inanimate creation trembles.

**2 The LORD is great in Zion; and he is high above all the peoples.**--The third description combines these two. “Great in Zion” recalls the Lord seated upon his cherub-throne, the ark, in the holy of holies of the temple, while the reference to the peoples recalls the first description.

**3 Let them praise thy great and terrible name; for it is holy.**--Throughout the OT, the “name” is a representation of the person himself,<sup>17</sup> emphasizing the features described in the particular name used. We read often in the OT that God’s name, and in particular the name Jehovah, is holy, separated, set apart,<sup>18</sup> which is why we are not to take it in vain (Ex 20:7) or profane it (Lev 22:2, 32). Thus this verse reinforces the exaltation of the Lord described in vv. 1, 2.

**4 and The king’s strength, also who loveth judgment;**--This seems the best parsing of the ambiguous syntax of 4a. The peoples (including all nations, not just Israel) are exhorted to praise not only the Lord’s holy name, but also his strength to carry out judgment. The conjunction of a king who is involved in judgment with a deity who is holy and separate draws our attention.

**thou dost establish equity, thou executest judgment and righteousness in Jacob.**--In the second part of the stanza, the Psalmist speaks directly to the Lord, demonstrating the praise he has described in 3-4a. He emphasizes the involvement of this holy God with his people.

**5 Exalt ye the LORD our God,**--The refrain extends God’s name in a way distinctive to this Psalm, “the LORD our God.” This name appears four times (in vv. 5, 8, and twice in v. 9). By itself, “LORD” (יהוה “Jehovah”) emphasizes the God who redeems his people and brings them into covenant with himself (which is why it comes into focus at Exod 6:3). But in this Psalm, more than any other, the people own Jehovah as their God. They dare to approach the Holy One.

The expressions “Lord our God” and the singular “Lord my God” have an interesting distribution (Figure 9, chart). This Psalm uses it four times; no other Psalm uses it more than twice. Neither form appears in book 2, because it is addressed to the heathen, who *cannot* yet own Jehovah as their God, or in book 3, because Israel, in its sin, *will* not own him.

In book 1, almost all instances are singular, by David, giving his people an example of trusting in the Lord in the midst of difficulty.

Out of the nine citations, all but one (104) bear David’s name, and there is reason to think that 104 is also by him; all but two (18 and 104) are laments. The only plural instance in book 1 is

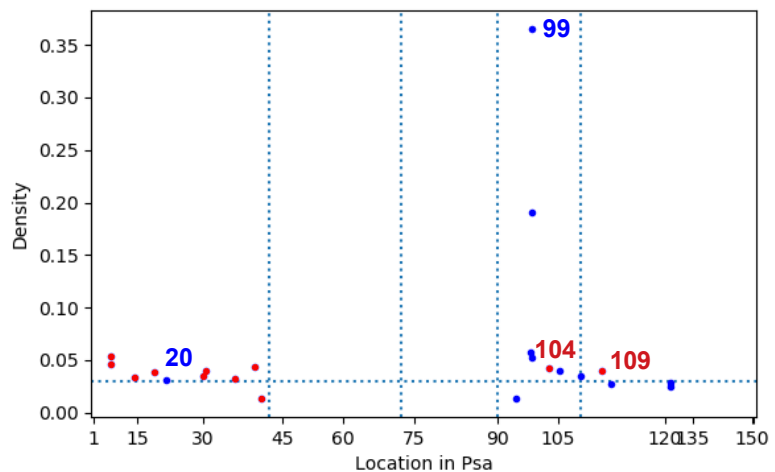


Figure 9: "LORD our God" and "LORD my God" in Psalms

17 Mettinger, *In Search of God* p. 8, cites as examples Isa 30:27 and Ps 20:1.

18 Lev. 20:3; 22:2, 32; 1 Chr. 16:10, 35; 29:16; Ps. 33:21; 99:3; 103:1; 105:3; 106:47; 145:21; Isa. 29:23; 47:4; 57:15; Ezek. 20:39; 36:20-21; 39:7, 25; 43:7-8; Amos 2:7

## Psalms 92-100, יהוה מלך

Psalm 20, where the people pray to the Lord to deliver the king from trouble. Books 4 and 5 use the plural almost entirely, following Psalm 20 in asking God to deliver the Messianic monarchy from the humiliation of the captivity. In other words, the godly attitude of the Messianic king guides the people when they face suffering, just as we are to imitate our Lord Jesus.

**and worship at his footstool; for he is holy.**--Here is the invitation to draw near to the Holy One in his sanctuary. The first instance of the refrain describes the ark as God's footstool (with the cherub throne above it). David introduced this term:<sup>19</sup>

1Ch 28:2 Then David the king stood up upon his feet, and said, Hear me, my brethren, and my people: As for me, I had in mine heart to build an house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and for the **footstool** of our God, and had made ready for the building:

There is an interesting, though probably accidental, parallel in French. Sometimes a business man will live in one place but often visit another and maintain a tiny apartment there to make visits more convenient. Such an apartment is called a "pied-à-terre," a "foot on the ground." Jerusalem is God's pied-à-terre on earth. His home is in heaven, but he often visits his people, as the next stanza emphasizes, and the focal point of his presence is the temple in Zion.

The first stanza thus sets forth God's exalted holiness, "high above all peoples," "great and terrible." The refrain introduces the radical notion of a personal relation between this holy God and his people, and the second stanza develops this relation.

**6 Moses and Aaron among his priests, and Samuel among them that call upon his name; they called upon the LORD, and he answered them.**--These individuals were notable for their boldness in interceding with the Lord for the people; Moses and Aaron often during the wilderness wanderings, and Moses in particular at the affair of the brazen calf, and Samuel in praying for deliverance from the Philistines (1 Sam 7:9) and his general promise to pray for the people in his farewell address (1 Sam 12:23). Their boldness was rewarded: "he answered them."

**7 He spake unto them in the cloudy pillar: they kept his testimonies, and the ordinance that he gave them.**--The cloudy pillar marked the ark, God's footstool. Their intercession was in the context of the sanctuary at which they all ministered (Moses and Aaron as priests offering sacrifice; Samuel as a Levite). They approached God's sanctuary, and found him accessible.

**8 Thou answeredst them, O LORD our God:**--In his respond, the Lord demonstrated that he was indeed "our God."

**thou wast a God that forgavest them, though thou tookest vengeance of their inventions.**--But this accessibility works both ways. The Lord hears the prayers of his people, but also recognizes their sin. "Inventions" is עלילות (Strong 5949), "childish, irresponsible deeds," actions that do not recognize that they are under his authority.

The pairing of God's willingness to forgive and his zeal to chastise for sin may seem harsh, but lies at the heart of his revelation of himself in Exodus 34:

Exo 34:7 Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.

<sup>19</sup> Other references to הַדָּם Strong 1916 all appear to reference the temple or the ark: 1 Chr. 28:2; Ps. 110:1; 132:7; Isa. 66:1; Lam. 2:1. Isa 60:13 makes "place of my feet" parallel with "my sanctuary." See further discussion on Psalm 110.



## Psalms 92-100, יהוה מלך

It is a wonderful thing to be able to call the all-powerful God of the universe “our God.” But he is a fearful God, and if we claim him as our Savior, he expects us to obey him as our Lord.

**9 Exalt the LORD our God, and worship at his holy hill; for the LORD our God is holy.**-- The refrain emphasizes that the footstool is Zion, and emphasizes once more the unique relation that God’s people enjoy with him.

### Psalm 100, Praise for God’s Works and Character

Again, we have multiple call-cause stanzas (Figure 10, chart). The first urges us to rejoice at God’s works (his care for us), while the second calls us to confess his character of mercy and truth. Both echo Psalm 92, and other Psalms in 92-99 in this one. Psalm 100 forms a capstone.

**1 A Psalm of praise.**--Or, “for thanksgiving.” This is the only Psalm that bears this title, reflecting the emphasis on this attitude in v. 4. This Psalm is the high point for this theme in Book 4 (Figure 11, chart).

Our version translates this word as “praise,” showing a deep understanding of how it differs from English “thanksgiving.”

English “thanks” refers to gratitude for something that we have received. The Hebrew word can include thanks to God (for example, the thank offerings in Leviticus), but it is both broader and narrower. It is narrower because it never describes one person thanking another, but only what we do to God. It is broader because it not only acknowledges his gifts, but can describe any confession. For example, David uses it in his Psalm of confession,

Psa 32:5 I said, I will **confess** my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.

Figure 11: "To Thank" ידה (Strong 3034) and "Thanksgiving" תודה (Strong 8426) in Psalms

Other confessions of sin also use this verb. Clearly, “give thanks” won’t work in these cases. The basic idea is to confess or acknowledge something (as reflected in the common LXX translation εξομολογεω), and always to God. What we acknowledge can be God’s blessings, in which case “thanksgiving” is not a bad translation, but more generally it is a term of confession and praise.

The first stanza calls for us to be joyful, based on the Lord’s care for us.

**Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands.**--This joy is not restricted to the nation Israel. As these Psalms have often noted, Gentiles are to join in the worship. For example,

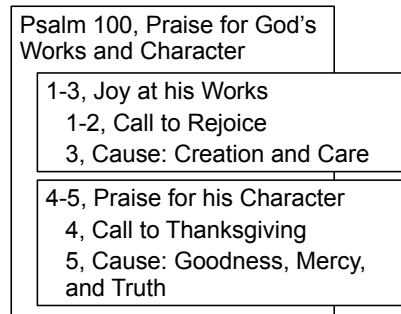
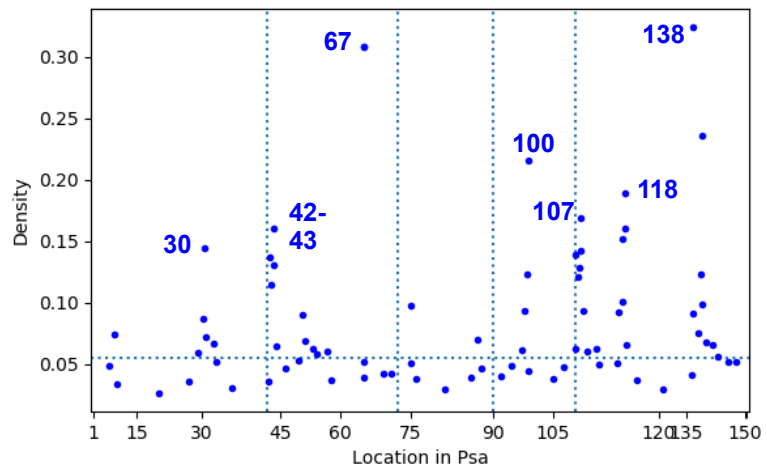


Figure 10: Structure of Psalm 100



## Psalms 92-100, יהוה מלך

98:4 Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all the earth

**2 Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing.**--Recall Psalm 95,

95:2 Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.

But remember that the ones to whom he is speaking are “all ye lands.” As in Psalm 96, they are invited into the Lord’s presence:

96:7 Give unto the LORD, O ye kindreds of the peopleS, 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.

The Cause for Praise is not introduced with “for,” but it is pretty clear that it occupies v. 3. It has three elements:

**3 Know ye that the LORD he is God:**--The first point is the unique right of the Lord to be worshiped as God. This point echoes the theme of 95-97 that the Lord is above all gods.

**it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves;**--The second point recalls 95:3-5 and 96:5: the Lord’s position above other gods is due to his creative power. In those Psalms, he creates heaven and earth, recognized as deities in ancient near eastern thought. But here we are the objective of his creative power. We saw a glimpse of this in Psalm 95,

95:6 let us kneel before **the LORD our maker.**

But here it is related to his claim to be the supreme God.

**we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.**--Not only has he created us, but he cares for us and feeds us. The wording is almost identical with Psalm 95,

95:7 For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.

But we are building on the invitation of v. 1, not just to Israel, but to “all ye lands.” In Psalm 95, references to God as our maker and to us as his sheep are allusions to the Exodus, linking the second stanza to the third. Here, their application is broadened to encompass the Gentiles.

So the first stanza teaches us to rejoice because God has created us and cares for us daily. If we are assured of the loving care of a sovereign God, what worries should we entertain?

**4 Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise:**--The first stanza spoke only of God’s “presence.” Now the reference to the temple is much more concrete.

**be thankful unto him, and bless his name.**--The nature of the response is different. We have moved from joy to what our version calls “thanksgiving.” But we have seen that this term really means to acknowledge or confess something, and v. 5 tells what we are to confess.

**5 For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.**--As in 98:3, the Psalmist affirms that God’s mercy and truth, his steadfast loyal love, has not disappeared, but endures forever. This Psalm, summarizing 92-100, is a direct response to the discouragement of 88-89.<sup>20</sup> Confronted with disaster, as were the captives in Babylon, the response of a mature faith is not to doubt God’s essential character, but to confess it, and to rejoice in the simple blessings that he gives.

20 Compare also how the Messianic promise of 45 responds to the lament of 44. In isolation, Psalms like 44, 88, and 89 seem bleak and without hope, but as the editor has arranged them, each has its answer.

## Psalms 92-100, יהוה מלך

### Notes

#### Repeated Themes in Psalms 92-100

	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100
Genre	Hymn	Hymn	Lament	Hymn	Hymn	Hymn	Hymn	Hymn	Hymn
יהוה מלך		1		מְלֹךְ 3	10	1	מְלֹךְ 6	1	
God as צור	16		22	1					
כל or עמים or גוי הארץ			10		1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 10, 13	5, 6, 9	2, 4, 9	2	1
עם (singular)			5, 8, 14	7, 10					3
Raging floods		3-4			11		7,8		
<b>חסד(ואמונה)</b>	<b>2</b>		<b>18 (no אמונה)</b>		<b>13 (no חסד)</b>		<b>3</b>		<b>5</b>
Opposition of the Wicked	7, 11		3, 13			10			
<b>Lord above all gods</b>				<b>5</b>	<b>4-5</b>	<b>7, 9</b>			
Come with singing	1-3			2	1-2		1, 4, 5		2
People as sheep				7					3
<b>Reference to God's house or hill</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>5</b>			<b>8</b>			<b>9</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The Lord comes</b>			<b>(1 shew thyself)</b>		<b>13</b>		<b>9</b>		
<b>שפט</b>			<b>2</b>		<b>13</b>		<b>9</b>		

#### 92:12-13, Believers as Trees in the Temple

See also 52:8. The idea of planting trees in the temple to make it a garden, reinforces the recognition of sanctuary language in describing the garden of Eden in Genesis 2. See notes there for further detail. See separate notes on Believers as Trees for further references.

#### Psalm 96 and 1 Chr 16

Psalm 96 forms the center of the Psalm in 1 Chronicles 16, and is the only one of the three that 1 Chronicles 16 includes completely. 1 Chr 16:7 strongly suggests that David gave this Psalm along with portions of 105 and 106 to the Levites for the occasion, which ought to put an end to numerous suggestions of their post-exilic origin.

1 Chr 16	Psalms
7 Then on that day David delivered first this psalm to	

## יהוה מלך, Psalms 92-100

1 Chr 16	Psalms
thank the LORD into the hand of Asaph and his brethren.	
<p>8 Give thanks unto the LORD, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the people.</p> <p>9 Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him, talk ye of all his wondrous works.</p> <p>10 Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the LORD.</p> <p>11 Seek the LORD and his strength, seek his face continually.</p> <p>12 Remember his marvellous works that he hath done, his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth;</p> <p>13 O ye seed of Israel his servant, ye children of Jacob, his chosen ones.</p> <p>14 He is the LORD our God; his judgments are in all the earth.</p> <p>15 Be ye mindful always of his covenant; the word which he commanded to a thousand generations;</p> <p>16 Even of the covenant which he made with Abraham, and of his oath unto Isaac;</p> <p>17 And hath confirmed the same to Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant,</p> <p>18 Saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance;</p> <p>19 When ye were but few, even a few, and strangers in it.</p> <p>20 And when they went from nation to nation, and from one kingdom to another people;</p> <p>21 He suffered no man to do them wrong: yea, he reprov'd kings for their sakes,</p> <p>22 Saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.</p>	<p>Psa 105:1-15</p> <p>O give thanks unto the LORD; call upon his name: make known his deeds among the people.</p> <p>2 Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him: talk ye of all his wondrous works.</p> <p>3 Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the LORD.</p> <p>4 Seek the LORD, and his strength: seek his face evermore.</p> <p>5 Remember his marvellous works that he hath done; his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth;</p> <p>6 O ye seed of Abraham his servant, ye children of Jacob his chosen.</p> <p>7 He is the LORD our God: his judgments are in all the earth.</p> <p>8 He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations.</p> <p>9 Which covenant he made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac;</p> <p>10 And confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant:</p> <p>11 Saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance:</p> <p>12 When they were but a few men in number; yea, very few, and strangers in it.</p> <p>13 When they went from one nation to another, from one kingdom to another people;</p> <p>14 He suffered no man to do them wrong: yea, he reprov'd kings for their sakes;</p> <p>15 Saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.</p> <p>+16-45</p>
<p>23 Sing unto the LORD, all the earth;</p> <p>shew forth from day to day his salvation.</p> <p>24 Declare his glory among the heathen; his marvellous works among all nations.</p> <p>25 For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised: he also is to be feared above all gods.</p> <p>26 For all the gods of the people are idols: but the LORD made the heavens.</p> <p>27 Glory and honour are in his presence; strength and gladness are in his place.</p> <p>28 Give unto the LORD, ye kindreds of the people, give unto the LORD glory and strength.</p>	<p>Ps 96</p> <p><b>1 O sing unto the LORD a new song:</b> sing unto the LORD, all the earth.</p> <p><b>2 Sing unto the LORD, bless his name;</b> shew forth his salvation from day to day.</p> <p>3 Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people.</p> <p>4 For the LORD is great, and greatly to be praised: he is to be feared above all gods.</p> <p>5 For all the gods of the nations are idols: but the LORD made the heavens.</p> <p>6 Honour and majesty are before him: strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.</p> <p>7 Give unto the LORD, O ye kindreds of the people, give unto the LORD glory and strength.</p>

## Psalms 92-100, יהוה מלך

1 Chr 16	Psalms
<p>29 Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come <b>before him</b>; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness. 30 Fear before him, all the earth:</p> <p>the world also shall be stable, that it be not moved.</p> <p>31 Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice: <b>and let men say among the nations, The LORD reigneth.</b></p> <p>32 Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof: let the fields rejoice, and all that is therein. 33 Then shall the trees of the wood sing out at the presence of the LORD, because he cometh to judge the earth.</p>	<p>8 Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come <b>into his courts.</b> 9 O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth. <b>10 Say among the heathen that the LORD reigneth:</b> the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved: <b>he shall judge the people righteously.</b> 11 Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad;</p> <p>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: <b>he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth.</b></p>
<p>34 O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever.</p> <p>35 And say ye, Save us, O God of our salvation, and gather us together, and deliver us from the heathen, that we may give thanks to thy holy name, and glory in thy praise. 36 Blessed be the LORD God of Israel for ever and ever.</p> <p>And all the people said, Amen, and praised the LORD.</p>	<p>Psa 106: 1 Praise ye the LORD. O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever. +vv. 2-46</p> <p>47 Save us, O LORD our God, and gather us from among the heathen, to give thanks unto thy holy name, and to triumph in thy praise. 48 Blessed be the LORD God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting: and let all the people say, Amen. Praise ye the LORD.</p>

### Allusions in Psalm 97

The older commentators emphasize the many citations in this Psalm from other Scriptures, which they consider older. Delitzsch offers a particularly thorough treatment. Here is a collection, with no pretensions to completeness.

Psalm 97	Other Scriptures
<p>1 The LORD reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof.</p> <p>2 Clouds and darkness are round about him:</p> <p>righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his</p>	<p>Isa 42:10 the isles, and the inhabitants thereof. ... 12 Let them give glory unto the LORD, and declare his praise in the islands. 51:5 the isles shall wait upon me Psa 18:9 ... darkness was under his feet. ... 11 He made darkness his secret place; his pavilion round about him were dark waters and thick clouds of the skies. Psa 89:14 Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy</p>

## Psalms 92-100, יהוה מלך

Psalm 97	Other Scriptures
<p>throne. 3 A fire goeth before him,  and burneth up his enemies round about.  4 His lightnings enlightened the world: the earth saw, and trembled.  5 The hills melted like wax at the presence of the LORD, at the presence  of the Lord of the whole earth. 6 The heavens declare his righteousness,  and all the peopleS see his glory.  7 Confounded be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols:  worship him, all ye gods. 8 Zion heard, and was glad; and the daughters of Judah rejoiced because of thy judgments, O LORD. 9 For thou, LORD, art high above all the earth:  thou art exalted far above all gods. 10 Ye that love the LORD, hate evil: he preserveth the souls of his saints; he delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked.  11 Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.  12 Rejoice in the LORD, ye righteous;  and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.</p>	<p>throne Psa 18:8 fire out of his mouth devoured 50:3 a fire shall devour before him Isa 42:25 it hath set him on fire round about, yet he knew not; and it burned him, yet he laid it not to heart. Psa 77:18 the lightnings lightened the world: the earth trembled and shook. Psa 77:16 The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee; they were afraid: the depths also were troubled. Jdg 5:5 The mountains melted from before the LORD, even that Sinai from before the LORD God of Israel. Mic 1:4 And the mountains shall be molten under him, and the valleys shall be cleft, as wax before the fire Mic 4:13 the Lord of the whole earth Psa 50:6 And the heavens shall declare his righteousness: Isa 35:2 they shall see the glory of the LORD, Isa 40:5 And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: Isa 52:10 all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God. Isa 66:18 I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come, and see my glory. Isa 42:17 They shall be turned back, they shall be greatly ashamed, that trust in graven images, that say to the molten images, Ye are our gods. Jer 10:14 every founder is confounded by the graven image:  Psa 83:18 thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the most high over all the earth. Psa 47:2 For the LORD most high is terrible; he is a great King over all the earth.  Psa 37:28 For the LORD loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever: Psa 34:20 He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken.  Psa 32:11 Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, ye righteous: Psa 30:4 Sing unto the LORD, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.</p>

## Psalms 92-100, יהוה מלך

### **Parallels between 96 and 98; between 97 and 99**

Tate notes strong parallelism between 96 and 98 (and in turn, between 97 and 99). The heading of 98 might suggest its link with unheaded 99, as in 42-43 and 9-10.

The parallels between 96 and 98 are particularly strong, as seen in this table:

	96	98 1 A Psalm.
New Song	1 <b>O sing unto the LORD a new song</b> : sing unto the LORD, all the earth. 2 <b>Sing unto the LORD</b> , bless his name; shew forth his salvation from day to day. 3 <u>Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people.</u>	<b>O sing unto the LORD a new song</b> ;
Cause for Praise: 96: creation 98: victory in holy war	4 <b>For</b> the LORD is great, and greatly to be praised: he is to be feared above all gods. 5 <b>For</b> all the gods of the nations are idols: but the LORD made the heavens.	<b>for</b> he hath done marvellous things: his right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory. 2 The LORD hath made known his salvation: his righteousness hath he openly shewed <u>in the sight of the heathen</u> . 3 He hath remembered <b>his mercy and his truth</b> toward the house of Israel: all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.
Hinge (only in 96)	6 Honour and majesty are before him: strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.	
	7 Give unto the LORD, O ye kindreds of the <u>peopleS</u> , 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, <u>all the earth</u> . 10 Say among the <u>heathen</u> that <b>the LORD reigneth</b> : the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved: he shall judge the <u>peopleS</u> righteously.	<b>4 Make a joyful noise unto the LORD</b> , <u>all the earth</u> : make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise. 5 <b>Sing unto the LORD</b> with the harp; with the harp, and the voice of a psalm. 6 With trumpets and sound of cornet make a joyful noise before <b>the LORD, the King</b> .
Praise from Inanimate Creation	11 Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; <b>let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof</b> . 12 Let the field <b>be joyful</b> , and all that is therein: then shall all the trees of the wood <b>rejoice</b> 13 <b>Before the LORD</b> :	<b>7 Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof</b> ; the world, and they that dwell therein. 8 Let the floods clap <i>their</i> hands: let the hills <b>be joyful</b> together 9 <b>Before the LORD</b> ;
Coming in Righteous Judgment	<b>for</b> he cometh, <b>for</b> he cometh to <b>judge</b> the earth: he shall <b>judge</b> the world with <b>righteousness</b> , and the <u>peopleS</u> with his <b>truth</b> .	<b>for</b> he cometh to <b>judge</b> the earth: with <b>righteousness</b> shall he <b>judge</b> the world, and the <u>peopleS</u> with equity.

However, there are noteworthy distinctions:

- God's glory in 96 is due to his work in creation; in 98, to his salvation.
- The progression between the first and last stanzas in 96 is between reaching out to the heathen and bringing them into the sanctuary. In 98, it is between what God has done and our response to it, with no reference to the sanctuary.

## Psalms 92-100, יהוה מלך

Tate also suggests comparing 97 with 99. There are important parallels; it is interesting how the mention of the sanctuary and of God's exaltation in the central stanza of 97 are distributed across the two stanzas of 99 (though the verbs for exaltation are different). But the structural alignment is not nearly as strong as in 96-98.

	97	99
	<p>1 <b>The LORD reigneth</b>; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof. 2 Clouds and darkness are round about him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne. 3 A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about. 4 His lightnings enlightened the world: <b>the earth saw, and trembled</b>. 5 The hills melted like wax at the presence of the LORD, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.</p> <p>6 The heavens declare his <b>righteousness</b>, and all the people see his glory. 7 Confounded be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols: worship him, all ye gods. 8 <b>Zion</b> heard, and was glad; and the daughters of Judah rejoiced because of thy <b>judgments</b>, O LORD. 9 For <b>thou, LORD, art high עליון</b> above all the earth: <b>thou art exalted עלה</b> far above all gods.</p> <p><u>10 Ye that love the LORD, hate evil: he preserveth the souls of his saints; he delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked.</u></p> <p>11 Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart. 12 Rejoice in the LORD, ye righteous; and give thanks at the remembrance of his <b>holiness</b>.</p>	<p>1 <b>The LORD reigneth; let the people tremble</b>: he sitteth <i>between</i> the cherubims; <b>let the earth be moved</b>. 2 The LORD <i>is</i> great in <b>Zion</b>; and he <i>is</i> <b>high רם</b> above all the peopleS. 3 Let them praise thy great and terrible name; <i>for</i> <b>it is holy</b>. 4 The king's strength also loveth judgment; thou dost establish equity, thou executest <b>judgment and righteousness</b> in Jacob. 5 <b>Exalt רום ye the LORD our God</b>, and worship at <b>his footstool</b>; <i>for</i> <b>he is holy</b>.</p> <p><u>6 Moses and Aaron among his priests, and Samuel among them that call upon his name: they called upon the LORD, and he answered them. 7 He spake unto them in the cloudy pillar: they kept his testimonies, and the ordinance that he gave them.</u></p> <p>8 Thou answeredst them, O LORD our God: thou wast a God that forgavest them, though thou tookest vengeance of their inventions. 9 <b>Exalt רום the LORD our God, and worship at his holy hill</b>; <i>for</i> the LORD our God <i>is</i> <b>holy</b>.</p>

### Structure of Psalm 98

Numerous commentators divide the Psalm into three stanzas, with 7-9 as an independent unit. But this neglects the larger call-cause pattern. The threefold division is no doubt motivated by the imbalance in the first section that would result from a very short call (only four words in Hebrew) and a much longer cause. But this imbalance appears to be a deliberate feature of the



## יהוה מלך, Psalms 92-100

Psalm, since it is reversed in the second stanza. There, the call is very long, embracing two different audiences, and the first part of it subsumes the first call, while the cause is much shorter, only nine words in Hebrew. In other words, vv. 1-3 has a very short call and a longer cause; 4-9 has a very short cause and a longer call.

### *Vocabulary for Thanks and Praise*

	αινεσις/εω	εχομολογεω/ησις
תודה	20	7
ידה	12	80
תהילה	25	1
הלל	71	3