

Bible Reading Schedule The Golden Thread

August 14 – Psalm 98

In verses 1 - 3 the Psalmist praises God for the things God has done in the past as He brought Israel out from slavery in Egypt to the Promised Land. Then in verses 4 – 6 the Psalmist focuses his attention to what God is doing in the present as He rules over His people as their King. Finally, in verses 7 – 9 the Psalmist praises God for His future role as the great judge who will reward those who are faithful and punish those who rebel against him.

It is good for us to remember God in this way: for the things He has done for us in the past, for the things He is doing in the present, and for the future hope we have through faith in His promises. Through Christ, our great warrior, we are victorious. We have already passed from death to life through faith in his victory for us at the cross.

2 Timothy 1:9-10 *This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, ¹⁰ but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.*

Jesus has saved us in the past, and as our king, Jesus defends us from Satan's attacks in the present.

Revelation 12:10 *Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: "Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down.*

And one day, Jesus will come again to judge the whole earth and reward those who are faithful to him to the end.

2 Timothy 4:7-8 *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸ Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day-- and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.*

Read the Psalm again, and everywhere you see the word Lord, think of Jesus your warrior king who saves you, defends you, and rewards you as you faithfully serve him.

August 15 – Psalm 100

Psalm 100 is a very familiar Psalm that the words to the Doxology is based on.

*Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.*

It is Psalm that summons not just Israel but all the earth to come and worship the Lord. In the words of this Psalm, we are reminded that we owe God our worship because He is the creator (verse 3a), and the sustainer of our lives (verse 3b), who cares for us and provides for our needs. But the Psalmist also reminds us, in verse 5, that God's love and faithfulness isn't something that just happened in the past or is happening in the future, but it is something that will continue through all generations. This love and faithfulness of God are expressed to us in His gift to us of His Son Jesus Christ. Jesus is the reason that we can become true worshippers. Jesus came not just to offer salvation to the Jews but also to the Gentiles.

John 10:14-16 *"I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me-- ¹⁵ just as the Father knows me and I know the Father-- and I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁶ I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.*

Jesus came to break down the barriers that separated us from God and from each other.

Ephesians 2:10-14 *For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. ¹¹ Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (that done in the body by the hands of men)-- ¹² remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. ¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility,*

Through Christ all mankind and all of creation will offer a hymn of praise to the God who created us, sustains us, saves us and loves us.

Luke 19:37-40 *When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen: ³⁸ "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" ³⁹ Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples!" ⁴⁰ "I tell you," he replied, "if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out."*

If the rocks and stones have enough sense to offer praise to God, shouldn't we also?

“Shout for joy to the Lord, all of the earth.”

August 16 – Psalm 104

Psalm 104 is a Psalm of praise to God who created all things. This Psalm reminds us that we are to offer praise to the creator not to the creation. To praise the creation is like going to an art gallery and seeing a beautiful painting, and praising the painting rather than the painter. Think how foolish that would be, but it is what so many of us do today. In the past pagans would make gods of created things like the sun and the moon, and they would worship and give praise to them rather than to the one who made them. The more things change the more they stay the same. So much of the modern environmentalist movement is a movement toward praising creation while at the same time they refuse to acknowledge the creator. Evolution and the environmental movement go hand in hand. On one hand through evolution they deny that there is a creator, but on the other hand through the environmental movement they offer praise to the creation.

Christians should care about the environment. We were put on the earth to care for the world that God created, and nothing has changed about that, but we must never lose sight that God is the creator and one who deserves all of our worship. This Psalm beautifully reminds us that God is the one who created all things, and God rules over all of His creation to accomplish His divine purpose. Nature is God's servant, and the writer of Hebrews took verse 4 of this Psalm and used it to express the greatness of the ultimate servant of God, our Lord and savior Jesus Christ. In the verses from Hebrews that are printed below look how Jesus is described. In a very real sense, Jesus is the one Psalm 104 is really all about. Jesus is the radiance of God's glory, Jesus is the creator of all things (verse 2), and Jesus is the one who sustains all things (verse 3). Jesus is also the heir of all things (verse 2), who ultimately will rule over all of creation (verse 8). Jesus is not just part of God's creation, Jesus is God, and therefore Jesus is greater than anything in all of creation, even the angels.

Hebrews 1:1-8 *In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. ³ The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty*

in heaven. ⁴ So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs. ⁵ For to which of the angels did God ever say, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father"? Or again, "I will be his Father, and he will be my Son"? ⁶ And again, when God brings his firstborn into the world, he says, "Let all God's angels worship him." ⁷ In speaking of the angels he says, "He makes his angels winds, his servants flames of fire." ⁸ But about the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever, and righteousness will be the scepter of your kingdom

August 17 – Psalm 110

Psalm 110 is a Messianic Psalm that is quoted in several New Testament passages, and by Jesus himself. But before we get to those New Testament uses, I want us to consider the context of this Psalm. Most commentators believe that David wrote this Psalm following the conquest of Jerusalem, which would become capital city of Israel, and dwelling place of God, because the temple would be built there. Until David conquered Jerusalem it had been in the hands of pagans, but Jerusalem's history goes back to the time of Abraham. In Genesis 14 there is a reference to Jerusalem (Salem is believed by many commentators to refer to the town that later under King David's rule became known as Jerusalem). Genesis 14 also includes a reference to a man named Melchizedek, whom David also references in this Psalm.

Genesis 14:18-20 *Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High, ¹⁹ and he blessed Abram, saying, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. ²⁰ And blessed be God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand." Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything.*

There is something very interesting to notice about Melchizedek, and that is that he is referred to as both a king and a priest of God Most High. In fact, Abraham gives him a tenth of everything. When these things are all put together, it leads many commentators to believe that the Melchizedek was a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus. How can someone appear before they are born? Remember Jesus didn't start as baby in manger in Bethlehem. He was with God in the beginning and he was God (John 1), so, if he chose to, he could have appeared to Abraham even though he had not yet been born. It is very interesting that Melchizedek was both a king and a priest, because Jesus wears those same hats as well. Jesus is both our priest who sacrificed his life for ours, and our king who rules us and defends us, and subdues all of our enemies. All of this is why the writer of Hebrews, as he talks about the greatness of Jesus, makes several different references to this Psalm

and Melchizedek. Jesus is our great high priest and he is our king. The hope we have in him is the anchor for our soul.

Hebrews 6:17 - 7:1 *Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath. ¹⁸ God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged. ¹⁹ We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, ²⁰ where Jesus, who went before us, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.*

August 18 – Psalm 110

Yesterday we looked at the context of Psalm 110 and its reference to Melchizedek. Today I want us to take a second look at Psalm 110, and pay particular attention to verse 1, because Jesus quoted this verse to make the point that he is the King that this Psalm is really referring to—the great king (messiah) that Israel had been longing for.

In verse 1 there are two concepts we need to understand so that we can begin to understand this verse and how it applies to Jesus. The first is the concept of sitting at the right hand of the king. In David and Jesus' day the right hand of the king was the seat of honor. It was reserved for someone who was the favorite of the king. After Jesus rose from the grave, he ascended into heaven and Scripture tells that Jesus is seated in heaven at the right hand of the Father.

Ephesians 1:18-23 *I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, ²⁰ which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, ²¹ far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. ²² And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, ²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.*

The second concept we need to understand is that in David's time, when a king would defeat another king in battle, he would often put his boot on the neck of the defeated king. That is what the words "Make your enemies your footstool" means in verse 1. God is in the process of bringing the whole world under the rule and authority of Christ. In the verses we just read from Ephesians 1 Paul makes it clear that this

exactly what God is at working doing—putting everything under Jesus’ feet.

The words in verse 1 of Psalm 110 clearly point us forward to a ruler even greater than King David. They point us forward to Jesus, and as Jesus claimed to be the messiah he took these words and made it clear that they pointed to him.

Mark 12:35-37 *While Jesus was teaching in the temple courts, he asked, "How is it that the teachers of the law say that the Christ is the son of David? 36 David himself, speaking by the Holy Spirit, declared: "The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet." 37 David himself calls him 'Lord.' How then can he be his son?"*

In David’s culture, a father would never refer to his son as his lord, so Jesus is making the point that when David wrote these words he was writing them about someone who would be greater than any biological son that would descend from David. Even though Jesus descended from King David’s family line, he was greater than David because even the great King David refers to the coming messiah as “my Lord.”

Jesus is our great king who is seated at the Father’s right hand. One day every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord, because God is at work right now to make that happen.

August 19 – Psalm 113

Psalm 113 presents an amazing contrast that truly shows us the greatness of our God. On one hand, the Psalmist extols the greatness and majesty of God, and then on the other hand, the Psalmist also praises our God as a God who is involved in our lives in a personal way.

Let’s start by looking at verses 1 – 6, as the Psalmist describes the greatness of God. In verses 1 – 3, the Psalmist establishes the fact that God is to be praised for all of eternity and through all the earth (wherever the sun rises and sets). Next, in verses 4 – 6, the Psalmist describes God as being enthroned on high, and being so great that in order to look on the heavens and earth He has to actually stoop down to see them. We look up to the heavens and feel overwhelmed by the vastness of it all, but God is so vast and great that to even see what makes us feel so overwhelmed God has to stoop low. That’s the greatness of God.

But, if that is all God is, then as magnificent as God may be it would mean nothing to us, because he would be so high and removed from us that we could never know Him, or have Him as part of our lives. But in verses 7 – 9, the Psalmist also tells us that this mighty God is personally

involved in our lives, especially the lives of those who are humble and broken. This great God takes a personal interest in those who are poor (verse 7). He is even concerned with women who are barren and can't have children (verse 9). Think of how many times God intervened in the Old Testament in the lives of women who were unable to conceive. There was Sarah, Abraham's wife, there was Rebecca, Isaac's wife, there was Rachel, Jacob's wife, and Hannah, Samuel's mother. This great God who is exalted over all, is personally interested in the heartaches that we endure in life. Our God is a God who is at once great and exalted above all, but who also bends low, so He can be near those who call upon Him. Our God is a God who is great (transcendent), but also close by us (immanent).

Jesus is the ultimate picture of this. Jesus is God, the creator and sustainer of life.

Colossians 1: 16 – 17 The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. ¹⁷ He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

He had all of the riches of heaven at his disposal, but he set all of that aside so he could come and make his dwelling with us—first in flesh as he walked among us, and then in spirit, as he comes to dwell in our hearts.

John 1:14 *The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

Imagine that for just a moment (or maybe longer), All the greatness of God, all the glorious transcendence of God living in you through the presence of His Holy Spirit.

John 14:19-20 *Because I live, you also will live. ²⁰ On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.*

August 20 – Psalm 115

Verse 1 of Psalm 115 is the theme verse of our church. It reminds us that all that we do and accomplish as a church or as individuals is not about us and our glory, but about God and His glory. We'll come back to that thought in a moment, but before we do, take a second look at the last two verses of this Psalm. As you look again at verses 17 and 18, notice that the Psalmist says it is not the dead who praise the Lord, it is we who extol the Lord, both now and forevermore. What do these

verses mean? Very simply this, those who are spiritually dead cannot praise the Lord, but those who are spiritually alive will praise the Lord forever. Why is that so? When we are spiritually dead we are incapable of doing anything to please God or to properly praise God, because our sin taints everything we do with evil. But when we come to faith in Christ, Christ takes our sin away, which makes it possible for us to praise God in a way that is pleasing to Him.

Now let's go back and put this together with verse 1. The only way we can live for God's glory is by first becoming spiritually alive in Christ.

Colossians 2:13-14 *When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, ¹⁴ having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross.*

As we become alive in Christ, we also become able to live for God's glory rather than our own, as we grow to look more and more like Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:14-15 *For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. ¹⁵ And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.*

2 Corinthians 3:18 *And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.*

Becoming a Christian doesn't simply mean that we will live forever, it also means that we will learn to live only for the glory of God. The Bible promises a crown of glory for those who persevere and live for Christ.

1 Peter 5:4 *And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.*

But as we go to live eternally in the presence of Christ, we will gladly give our crowns and all of the glory to Christ alone.

Revelation 4:9-11 *Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever, ¹⁰ the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne, and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say: ¹¹ "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being."*