

A New Song
Psalm 33:3

11

Hello Dear Listeners!

“Hello” - that word of greeting still rings a bell with very many people! I understand it is the main hit on the British Pop singer Adele’s new CD “25”. It sold more than 2.5 million copies in the first week of its debut, breaking all records!

It tells you that new songs by old(er) and newer singers are in great demand. Mothers will hum their songs to babies, teenagers will MP3 them so they won’t be left song-less on the way to school or the party. Even older folks will croon along despite the danger of experiencing a ‘*geretol moment*’ when the memory of the words disappears out of reach.

Do you know of any “new songs”? You can find a whole book of them called the Book of Psalms in the Bible. A great many of those psalms were written by a shepherd-king called David. They’re very special songs for God the Holy Spirit himself inspired David to sing them and to write them down.

It is so, you won’t find them mentioned very often by the mass media of today. Yet they’ve been sung for 3000 (plus) years by many nations! Furthermore, they haven’t lost their beauty, their power and their direction. Yes, their direction for mankind still finding its way in this world, so full of doubts and downers.

I’m looking at one of those psalms, number 33 right now. It begins with a vigorous encouragement to “Shout for joy in the Lord” . Who are to do so? “ *O you righteous*” says the psalmist. The righteous, or the just. People who honour the Lord. Whose lives are not dictated by the frivolous and worse, the *sinful* dictates of human beings but by that gracious God who is worthy to be praised.

The psalmist says that those “righteous” are to give thanks to that Lord and to make melody to him with ten-stringed instruments.

“Sing to him a new song” said the singer. Do it while playing skilfully on the strings, with loud shouts.” (v. 3) That seems the Holy Spirit would make it fit right in with today’s modern genre’s of music.

So what does it mean to “ Sing to him a *new* song”? Some scholars suggest such a song is “*rare, or choice*”¹. Another one says “ *It is one which springs up from the heart.*”²

Now the bible says that God’s mercies are new every morning and his faithfulness is great.³ Such new mercies demand new praises. They demand that time and again we say “Goodbye” and “Good riddance” to worn-out and useless words that might elevate mankind’s supposed worth, his/her achievements and place on the ladder of success. Yet they so often are words which give no thought to God’s glory, his providence and the display of his majesty which stares us in the face. That is, when we look more closely, with joy to the Lord and with reverence in our hearts.

The author of Psalm 33 wasted no time as he spoke of the upright, truthful, and just words of the Lord as well as his “steadfast love.” (v. 4). Then he recalled how God created all things- no not by allowing for some zillion-year-long process of evolution, which is nothing but an ill-conceived myth but “ *by his word*”. His Word or, as it is called in v. 6, “ *The breath of his mouth.*” He spoke and called into being this vast and amazing universe of which, so far, we’ve only caught a glimpse.

Because of God’s amazing genius by which he planned and engineered and called into being all animate and inanimate things the

¹ John Calvin in his commentary on Psalm 33:3

² Hengstenberg, quoted in W.S. Plumer’s Psalms p. 408

³ Lamentations 3: 22,

psalmist says in effect, “ *Now you people, you who cherish this faithful God and Saviour, “ Sing to him a new song”* . He loves you to do that that your words and your skilful movements on that ten-stringed guitar may reflect his righteousness and his justice. “ Go ahead, or, as an ancient translation ⁴ says, “ Behave beautifully by singing in a joyful shout.” Years ago the Church of England knew it as “ Sing praises lustily unto him with a good courage.” ⁵

The psalmist went on to enumerate more reasons for singing such a “new song” to the Lord. He spoke of God’s acts in history in which he put his enemies to shame. He reminded his hearers of the fact that this Lord God from his throne on high knows the inner recesses, plans and aspirations of a person’s heart. He knows, and he does more. He even delivers the soul, that is, the life, of those who fear him “*from death*”.

It is not strange that he should speak of the saving power of the Lord God. Many, very many of those beautiful songs do the same. For salvation, deliverance from sin and shame and death is at the heart of our reason to sing him a new song. Without that promise of salvation, fulfilled by Jesus Christ and made the benefit of all who believe we really would have no reason to sing. Any sounds we might utter would only be an endless funeral dirge. We’d have no hope and really life would be meaningless.

Yet it is in the assurance of life that the psalmist rest in hope. That hope with its accompanying joy is echo’d throughout the Book of Psalms. “ O sing to the Lord a new song” says another psalmist, one who wrote Psalm 98. “ For he has done marvelous things! His right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him”. (v. 1b). He did not keep knowledge of that salvation, that deliverance to himself. O no! “The Lord has made known his salvation;” said the singer. “ *He has revealed his righteousness in the sight of the nations.*” (v. 2).

⁴ The Chaldee

⁵ Plumer, *ibid*, p. 408

To be sure It was in the first place to the “house of Israel ” that he ‘showed his steadfast love”. But listen, “ *All the end of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.*” He had it proclaimed far and near that those who believe in Jesus Christ have every reason to rejoice and sing.

Then too those believers know that in his righteousness or justice the Lord God will judge the world . Those who reject him and heap scorn and abuse and unbelief at him will ultimately not get away with that. It has rightly been said that one of the main themes of the Psalms is that God saves his people but *destroys his enemies*. The very last book of the bible is rich in hallelujahs, mighty shouts of praise for all the wonders God has done. The Book of Psalms records no less than twenty-seven of those shouts of joy.

But then time and again you find the church of Christ acknowledging and praising God for his righteous judgements . I think of Revelation 19, a chapter which sings the praises of God who invites his true children to participate in what is called “ *The marriage supper of the Lamb*” Rev. 19: 6-10. It will be that grand and holy celebration of joy which the church may participate in on a new earth.

Yet that chapter comes right on the heels of chapter 18 which pictures the fall of Babylon, that city which is the image of all that is false and perverted and stands in arrogant opposition to the Lord Jesus and his church.

Would you and I sing a new song to the Lord for all the marvellous things he has done and will do? Then that song must be faithful to Him and his Word. May it be that your heart and mine will be right with the LORD. Then, when you look to him, and humble yourself before him you may be radiant. Then your face and mine will never be ashamed. For our song, made sparkling new by the blood and Spirit of Jesus Christ will resonate with him. It will be joined to that mighty Hallelujah

Chorus which sings God's praises before his throne. Now and
forever.... Amen, and thanks so much for listening.