

MARCH STUDY

PRAISE HIM IN OUR WORSHIP

A study of Psalms 95-99

O COME LET US SING (This is What it Says)

I like to work puzzles. I dump the pieces on the table and turn all the pieces face up, meanwhile separating all the straight edges and four corners. There's something magical about fitting all those tiny pieces together to form a finished masterpiece



Working a puzzle is much like Bible study. We choose a portion of Scripture (in this case, Psalms 95-99) and begin asking ourselves all sorts of questions: What kind of writing is this? Who wrote it? Why? When was it written? And finally, how does it relate to me?

We turn the scriptural pieces face up as we read the passage. Although I use the King James Version, I like to read from as many different versions as possible. They give perspective. I rejoice as I read Psalm 96:11, but *The Message*, seats me in the choir!

*Let's hear it from Sky,
With Earth joining in,
And a huge round of applause from Sea.*

These psalms are part of a hymnal, a collection of songs the Jews sang in their tabernacle/temple worship. Not a storybook, but we find stories. Not a book of history, yet rich in historical lore. Not a gospel, but standing in the shadows, we see Jesus. Not prophecy, but we catch a glimpse of our eternal rest when King Jesus shall reign forevermore.

Puzzle pieces turned face up and corners and edges in place, we sort the rest according to color or design and begin to fill in. As we study these psalms, look for themes, word pictures, and exhortations, then record them on a chart, like the one provided. The first one is completed to help you get started.

Psalm	Title, Key Verse	A Picture of God	A Picture of Worship	Warnings
95	O come. Let us worship v.6	Rock of our Salvation. Great God & King. Creator & Maker. Shepherd of the Sheep	Sing joyfully. Come thankfully. Bow down, kneel humbly as sheep	Beware of hard & straying hearts. Seek to know His ways lest He refuse us eternal rest.
96				
97				
98				
99				

SING A NEW SONG

(This Is What it Means)

As the puzzle pieces come together and the picture evolves, we marvel at the transformation. Now the puzzle has meaning.

These psalms were poems set to music. Have you ever questioned the change in person? In one line, God speaks, and the next line may address Him. Then we remember, of course, some psalms are choral pieces—one choir sings a line while another choir echoes. Read Psalm 99 as it may have been sung in their temple worship.

Choir 1: The Lord reigns; let the people tremble!
He dwells between the cherubim; let the earth be moved.
The Lord is great in Zion. And He is high above all the people.

Choir 2: Let them praise your great and awesome name—

Choirs: For He is holy.

Choir 1: The King's strength also loves justice;

Choir 2: You have established equity;
You have executed justice and righteousness in Jacob.

Choir 1: Exalt the Lord our God, and worship at His footstool

Choirs: For He is holy.

Solo: Moses and Aaron were among His priests,
And Samuel was among those who called upon His name.
They called upon the Lord, and He answered them.
He spoke to them in the cloudy pillar;
They kept His testimonies and the ordinance He gave them.

Choir 2: You answered them, O Lord, our God,
You were to them God-Who-Forgives,
Though you took vengeance on their deeds.

Choir 1: Exalt the Lord our God, and worship at His holy hill.

Choirs: For the Lord our God is holy, the Lord our God is holy.

DECLARE HIS GLORY

(This is What it Means to Me)

After the puzzle is completed, we leave it displayed, admiring its beauty. As you approach the final stage of the study, ask yourself, "What does this mean to me?" Below are several examples.

- "Come before His presence with thanksgiving" (Psalm 95:2). Giving thanks prepares us for worship. Pause now and use the five-finger prayer method to pray your thanksgivings. This method can be found online at www.wnac.org under Treasure/ Program Helps/Spring 2017.

*Then I bowed on my knees and cried,
"Holy, Holy, Holy."
I clapped my hands and sang, "Glory,
Glory to the Son of God."*

*—I Bowed On My Knees and Cried Holy
Michael English*

- Creation expresses praise to its Creator. Notice in each psalm how the different parts of creation rejoice; i.e. "floods clap their hands" (Psalm 98:8). It puts me to shame. What about you?
- "Sing a new song" (Psalm 96:1). Right now, compose a new song to our Creator God based on these psalms.
- Your song may not be a new one, but one new in meaning. Janie Aldridge, retired missionary to Côte d'Ivoire, remembers as a child singing, "Some through the waters, some through the flood. Some through the fire, but all through the blood" (Young, G.A. "God Leads His Dear Children Along.") She sang the word "through" as "threw" and envisioned a messy scene. Thankfully, one day she sang a brand new song. Choose a familiar song and look for new meaning.

- Maybe, like me, you can no longer sing. Age and allergies can do ugly things to voice boxes. The psalmists list other ways we can compensate, although “joyful and loud noises” (Psalm 98:4) have never appealed to me. I like “the voice of a psalm” (Psalm 98:5). I can do that! What new ways can you discover to praise Him?
- “Let us bow down...kneel” (Psalm 95:6). What is your posture in prayer? When I was a girl, I remember we often came to the front of the church for an altar of prayer where all knelt and prayed as one voice. I haven’t seen that in years. One day, we will all stand before our Lord face-to-face and crumple at His feet. But what about now when we stand before Him in faith?
- Listen prayerfully to a choir sing, “I Bowed on My Knees and Cried Holy”; it is a foretaste of heaven. Or find a hymnbook and sing it yourself.

About the Writer: Lorene Miley, former editor of WNAC's *CoLaborer* magazine, served with her husband, LaVerne, as pioneer missionaries to Côte d'Ivoire, West Africa. She continues with her mission work at the Hepzibah House (New York) and Christian Disciple Center (Colorado.)