

Psalm 108:1–6

Gaining Glorious Perspective by Praise

Tuesday, December 26, 2023 • Read Psalm 108:1–6

Questions from the Scripture text: What does this Psalm title itself (superscript)? Whose Psalm is it? Whom does it first address (v1a)? What does it call Him? To what of the psalmist does it refer? What is the condition of his heart? What two things does he say that he will do (v1b)? With what? What does he awaken in v2a? What does he call upon to awaken (v2b)? Now what does he call God (v3a)? With whom does he offer this covenantal praise? How does v3b emphasize this last declaration? For what two attributes does this great assembly praise YHWH (v4)? How great is His covenant love (“mercy” in v4a)? How great is His faithfulness (“truth” in v4b)? What does v5a petition God to do? How highly? What, in particular, does the psalmist desire that God would exalt (v5b)? How highly? In order to do what for whom (v6a)? What does the beloved need (v6b)? What metaphor (anthropomorphism) does the psalmist use for requesting that God would do this personally and powerfully? In response to whom?

How can believers cope with trouble and the feeling that God has cast them off? Psalm 108:1–6 prepares us for the opening portion of public worship on the Lord’s Day. In these six verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **believers cope with trouble by praising the God for Whom they were made, in anticipation of the praising assembly for which they were redeemed.**

We’re not getting to v11–12 until next week, so we need to remember the situation of hardship (and perceived rejection by God) from which the Psalm is written. As the Spirit carries David along, He gives us a lesson in applying the refrain from Ps 42:5, 42:11, 43:5. When our soul is cast down and disquieted, we must address it to find its hope in God. We must embrace the certainty that we, who were created and redeemed to glorify and enjoy Him, will surely “yet praise Him.”

That is what the Psalmist is doing in these six verses: looking to the future in which the full redeemed assembly and all creation are praising Him (v1–3), lifting our hearts to praise Him as He is in Himself (v4), and praising and praying for how His attributes are expressed in His dealings with His saints (v5–6).

Taking our place in congregation and creation, v1–3. v1b is interesting in light of v11–12. David (and the nation) has been brought low. But, he is remembering also that the Lord exalted him, lifting him from shepherd sheep in the countryside to throne of Israel. What do we have that we have not received? If it is little, then it is for the praise of God. If it is much, then how much more we ought to possess it with humility as we offer it to the praise of God! And so David is determined that all that he is would be offered unto God in praise.

You should be determined to do so, too. Whatever He has done in you, whatever He has given to you, offer it to Him in a life of praise, and come to Him with all that you are whenever you are gathered in the assembly to praise. Maintain a steadfast heart to praise Him by taking your mindset from His Word rather than from your flesh (v1a).

Don’t settle for individual praise. David was highly invested in corporate worship. The great focus of his later years was gathering resources for the building of the temple (cf. 1Chr 22–26, 28–29). Among those resources were the assignments of priestly families as musicians (1Chr 25) so that the stringed instruments that we see in the Psalms (and metaphorically in places like revelation) emphasize not just singing to God generally, but the singing of the corporate assembly, specifically. It looked forward to a time where Christ Himself would be the temple (cf. Jn 2:21), together with His assembly (1Pet 2:4–5). And, Christ Himself would be the great Musician, Who both sings through His people, and accompanies the singing, not by instrument-strings, but melodies that are played upon heart-strings (cf. Eph 5:19, cp. Col 3:16).

“Awake, lute and harp!” expresses a widening David’s of desire and intention, from private worship in v1b, to public (corporate) worship in v2a. Indeed, he is looking forward to that corporate worship that will include all of the peoples (v3a) and all of the nations (v3b). He is looking forward to the day that he will be a member of an innumerable multitude from all the nations—not just something like Rev 4–5, but the final assembly. We will be there one day, dear believing reader. The whole assembly, not one elect soul missing, resurrected—the temple that has been constructed in Jesus, that whole every-believer priesthood, singing with grace-perfected hearts and glorious bodies!

Even now, we get to taste it a little bit every Lord’s Day. There, we are in an assembly of God’s people from several nations. There, we admonish one another with His Word in song, and enjoy the reality of His grace accompanying it in our hearts. There, we participate by faith with that Heb 12:22–24 assembly in glory. And, there, we anticipate the great worship assembly to come. David looks forward to the same in v3, and in v2b, where he remembers that praise is the purpose of the creation itself (cf. Ps 19:1–6).

When things are hard, we can reason with our souls about how all of this ends (cf. Ps 42–43). And to help us do so, we can lay hold of the means of grace that is prayer and call upon God’s Name with reference to that end!

Worshiping God’s glory in His character, v4. YHWH’s covenant love (v4a) and faithfulness (v4b) are a merism for the totality of His glorious character.

“Abounding in goodness and truth” at the end of Ex 34:6, which John coopts for describing Jesus as the full revelation of God to us (Jn 1:14, 17–18), is actually these two attributes in v4. He directs the attention of his heart above the heavens and the clouds to God Himself, and God alone. What a help there is for a believer’s encouragement, a believer’s praising, a believer’s praying, in the contemplation of God Himself in Himself!

You may know that old “turn your eyes upon Jesus” chorus; with an important modification, it is genuinely true in the life of a believer. Not so much that the things of earth “grow strangely dim,” but that the solution to a lack of perspective is to zoom out, out, out, out. Soon, we can see that the infinity of God Himself never gets smaller as we zoom out. Rather, we come to see all our circumstances in the context of Him Himself. His character becomes the great thing in all existence.

How often we need this perspective! And what a blessing it is to come to Him, by faith, in praise, to gain it: to feast our hearts upon our God and His perfections. They are never in conflict. Not one of them every flickers or diminishes in the slightest. He never stops being fully Who He is, regardless of our circumstances. And it is in beholding Him in Himself that we are then prepared to consider Him in relation to our circumstances, and consider our circumstances in relation to Him.

Worshiping God’s glory in His work—especially His redeeming work, v5–6. In the final two verses of our portion for this week, the psalmist takes the perspective in v4, and zooms back in to his own situation. v5a corresponds to v4a in scope, but now the glory in v5b is above all the earth, and the request in v6 comes all the way down to the psalmist’s own circumstances and the psalmist’s own voice.

The attributes of God feature prominently, even in v6. By referring to God’s people as “Your beloved,” he highlights that attribute of God, but now in connection with His people. We do not always feel that we are beloved—especially when it seems that God has “cast us off” (cf. v11a). This word itself would have been precious to David, as he had given this nickname to Solomon in response to the prophetic word concerning his son (cf. 2Sam 12:24–25). He is laying hold of this attribute of God—in accord with God’s previous expression of it in his life. What joy there is for you, dear believer, when you can speak of yourself as “beloved” of God—not (at first) because you feel or perceive it, but because He is love, and He has declared it!

To love, he adds justice by speaking of “being delivered,” something that is connected in Scripture especially with the attribute of God’s justice. To justice, he adds power, asking to be saved by “Your right hand” (v6b)—an anthropomorphism emphasizing God’s power. Finally, he closes with the same attribute as in v4b: God’s faithfulness. “Hear me” (literally, “answer me”) depends upon God to honor, in His faithfulness, the covenant bond that He has made between His people and Himself (cf. 65:1–2).

In v5–6, David’s faith keeps its view fixed firmly upon God, but now with respect to His actions on earth. If our hearts are cast down and discouraged, let us remember the worshiping end for which the Lord has created and redeemed us, and let us praise Him for His glorious attributes in Himself, and let us praise Him for His expression of those attributes in the work by which He brings us to our end. He is worthy of this praise, and He uses the praise itself to gladden and strengthen our hearts. Won’t you praise Him? And won’t you look to His Spirit to bring that praise specifically into times of discouragement and times of trouble?

What discouraging trouble have you been enduring? How can you implement the Ps 42–43 method of addressing your own soul in discouragement? How can you prepare your mind and heart for such an opportunity? How can you implement the Ps 108:1–6 method of addressing God in trouble? How can you prepare your mind/heart for it?

Sample prayer: O God, our heart is steadfast! We will sing and give praise with all that we are and all that we have. Your assembly gathers to praise You, even as all creation exists to praise You! We look forward to that final, great assembly with all the nations, where we will praise You. Your covenant love and faithfulness are greater than all creations, and You glorify Yourself in saving Your beloved. Now come, help Your beloved, to worship You. Answer us, we ask, through Christ, AMEN!!

Suggested songs: ARP108A “God, My Heart Is Steadfast” or TPH108 “My Heart Is Steadfast, God!”

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Psalms 108 verse 1 through 6. These are God's words. A song. A psalm of David. Oh God. My heart is steadfast. I will sing and give praise.

Even with my glory. Awake, lift up and hear. I will awaken the dawn. I will praise you O Lord, among the people's And I will sing praises to you. Among the nations. For your mercy is great above the heavens. And your truth reaches to the clouds. Be exalted. Oh God.

Above the heavens. And your glory above all the earth. That your beloved may be delivered save with your right hand. And hear me. Amend our ends this reading of God's. Inspired and inherent word.

One of the things that, The Spirit teaches us. To do for ourselves. Or to ourselves. When we are cast down and discouraged in Psalm 42, And 43 is to dress our own soul. Why? My soul. Are you cast down? Why are you so discouraged? Hope now in God, for, I will yet.

Praise Him. And here, the Psalmist is actually quite discouraged, although we won't find that out till next week because we're taking this almost two parts. But at the end he says, is it not you? Oh God who has cast us off? You Oh God who did not go out with our armies?

Give us help from trouble for the help of man. Is useless. And so, he is actually at the beginning of the psalm. Giving us an example of, Applying the same principle. As in psalm, 42 and 43. That in circumstances that are difficult. Even if we are remembering, especially if we are remembering The God sovereignly superintends the difficulty.

So that the hardship in our life actually comes from His hand, in our relationship with Him. Now, it comes from His good hand, according to His good content. Good intentions. But that as we relate to Him, we must remember that. His character. His work. And the end to which all of creation is going.

That He is. The God who is glorious. Above the heavens and above the earth. And simple. That all of His attributes are always fully expressed and full agreement with one another His love never takes a back seat as justice never takes. A back seat or one diminishing in order to express the other.

No. His. Hazard and Emmett verse 4. Your mercy. Is casted there. Great above the heavens, your emotion. Uh, truth or faithfulness there reaches. To the clouds. They are Uh, a mirrorism. A summation of the fullness of all of the character of God. Uh just as he describes himself using those two words, meaning not just those two attributes but all of His attributes Uh, when he declares his own name to Moses, just as he describes that Jesus is the living God and the flesh.

Uh, when he When he quotes that when the word became flesh we beheld His glory as full of grace and truth and quoting the phrase in the from the Greek translation of the Old Testament to God declaring His own name to Moses. And so, when we are in hardship, We must come back.

To the character of God Himself. And the fact that His character is actually displayed in His works, Which encourages us to cry out to Him? And that when all is said and done, We are going to be in a holy assembly. With holy angels and even more glorious than the holy angels.

On that day, all of the holy ones, whom He has redeemed in Christ. And we will worship Him. And the assembly of the redeemed, under the gray type priesthood of Christ. Uh, enjoying our privilege. According to the priesthood of all believers. Uh, and so we have all of that taken together here.

Now, in verses 1 through 6. Uh, with verses 1 through 3, especially Taking our place. In congregation. And creation. And then, in verse 4, Worshipping God's divine glory and simplicity. In His character. And then in verses 5 and six, five and six. Worshipping. And then in verses five and six worshipping God's divine, glory and simplicity in His work.

Especially, of course. His redeeming work. So first taking our place in congregation and creation. All that, the Lord has. Has given to David all that. He has done in and four David David? Now turns And He offers it all to glory. I will sing and give praise even with my glory.

He understands That everything God does for Him and everything. God gives to Him is for the honor and praise and glory of God. Which we should also do this enables us. Uh, to receive that to which God has elevated us however, high or however low. That might be. For David, it was pretty high.

He had been made the king of the nation. And yet He counted His own glory as nothing to Himself. But rather something to be offered unto God in song and in praise. And that that second part of verse 1 is, is actually behind the first part when He says, Oh God, my heart is steadfast.

Now, that wasn't necessarily true with relation to His flesh. Was it? His His flesh. Uh would waiver and doubt and be anxious, but praise God, He's being carried along by the Holy Spirit. Now is He writes the soulment? This prayer under divine inspiration. This is my heart is steadfast.

My heart is resolved. My glory is for your praise and then also therefore. That which I suffer is for your praise that, which I'm going through the difficulty. About which He will sing in the back half of the psalm. Is for God's, praise. And so, we learn. That. We are to take, not just everything that God has given us, whatever.

Level that is and Uh, if we are in lowly condition and Uh, lowly status. Uh, then that too. We offer to God for His praise because He has emergency upon the lowly. And if He elevates us, we offer that up to His praise. Because, He is not exalting us for our own pride for our own.

Um, And for our own service, our own pleasure. But that we might praise Him and serve Him and take and delight in Him. Let the rich exalt in His humiliation, we just had last week and James chapter 1. And let us learn then also to have hearts that are steadfast Determined to praise God.

And whatever condition we find ourselves. And so, He's taking His place. Not just as an individual. Uh, we can take man's chief end or the chief ends of all things. Uh, and we can hyper individualize it. We can take to. Uh, we can consider it as if we are the only creature and we mustn't.

And so He goes from the individual in verse 1 to the corporate in verse two, how do we know that it's corporate He's calling upon instruments. Instruments that are being designated at this time. Remember, the David didn't just function as a king and a prophet. But He also made all these contributions Uh, to the service of the temple.

With the priestly choirs and the priestly musicians. And so lift up and harp here are Are part of this man's focus, the saints focus on corporate worship the holy assembly. That we don't just want to praise the Lord ourselves. Individually. But we want to praise the Lord corporately. And so, He says, awake and lift up heart, but He recognizes not only is the entire congregation.

Being redeemed for the worship of God and the praise of God. But even the whole creation. Is unto the praise. And to the glory of God exists from. So not just awake lift up and harp now verse 2 but I will awaken the dawn. Verse 2. That we know the reason for the sun, And we know the reason for the sunrise, the heavens declare the glory of God.

The sun itself has been created by god to shine brightly and run, consistently across the sky and bring god glory. And so, Uh, so he is remembering his own purpose. He is remembering the purpose of redemption. And the gathering of people by god salvation, these remembering the purpose of creation.

And now he looks forward. To when god has gathered, not just From among israel, but from among the nations, Verse 3. I will praise you. Oh, yahweh among the peoples. I will sing. Praise to you. Among the nations. And he looks forward to that worship. That we see already, don't we in revelation 4?

Revelation 5 and one day. You and i we who are around this table. Will be in an innumerable multitude. Of those who have been redeemed by christ. And brought to him. And we, Will participate all at once. In one another's, hearing in his physical and visible presence. That which we perceive a little bit by faith.

In the assembly on the lord's day morning as and the lord's day evening. As god. Um, God collects us with a congregation of his people and who in hearing of one another and in sight of one another. But one day, it'll be all of his people from all of the nations.

That we can see and that we can hear Teachers. But more than that, even it'll be Him himself, the lord, jesus. I will praise you. Oh, yahweh among the people's And i will sing praises to you. Among the nations. You see how? Grit is the difference. And focus. David on earth.

Is in the circumstance. In versus 11 and 12. But as he employs the spirit taught method, In Psalm 42 and psalm 43. He says i will yet. Praise him. And so what does he start remembering? He remembers god's purpose for him. That he will praise him. He remembers god's purpose for the congregation.

I will praise him with the congregation and not just the congregation of israel, but the assembly of the people. We'll praise him with all of a new creation. So, first taking our place in congregation and creation versus one three. Worshiping than his god's divine glory and simplicity in his character in verse 4, For your mercy, your steadfast love your covenant, love your cousin.

And it's great. Above the heavens. And your truth, your faithfulness, your covenant, faithfulness, your emot. Reaches to the clouds. And so we can be focused on our particular situation. Um, Under. Under heaven. But we need to zoom out and broaden our perspective. That we would see the greatness of the steadfast love of god.

That has never negated. There's never a doubt of it because of something that happens in a section of his earth for a sliver of time. No god in himself. Is full of steadfast, love, covenant, love and faithfulness. And all of his attributes. God himself is the great reality. And so, we worship that divine glory of his and that simplicity the holding together of all of his attributes, his steadfast love is faithfulness.

You can use your catechism. Being wisdom, power holiness, justice goodness, truth all of those things together. And you see how the reality of god himself dwarfs, What happens in time? What happens in history? What happens in our? Day. And the circumstances of our life. But then he's not just separate from us.

Because he moves from worshiping god's divine. Glory and simplicity in his character in verse 4, To worship in god's divine glory, glory and simplicity in his work has redeeming work, especially in verses five and six. Notice how he takes that, which is true of God in god, himself in verse 4 and then he applies it to his cry to god in verse 5 and 6.

Very similar language verse 5. Be exalted. Oh god above the heavens and your glory. Above the earth. Now, he introduces, doesn't he the earth while the heavens are above the earth? But he's he is remembering as it were now the the character of god and bringing the truth, the reality of the character of god as it were down into his situation not that god was ever apart from his situation.

But that we're forgetful. Of the fact that the living god is operating in our life and living god is operating in our circumstances. And then look at how he ties to Of god's glorious attributes in. The way he prays in verse 6. That your beloved, May be delivered. Of your right hand.

And hear me or answer me. And there's actually probably four of his attributes, not just two here. First that your beloved He remembers the steadfast love of god. He does not. Look at the current experiences and say, And allowed out about the love of god to creep in. How wonderful or for us to be able to take that theology of the bible.

And refer to ourselves in the third person. And say oh lord, help your beloved. That the holy spirit would take that which our hearts are tempted to doubt and even do sometimes god forgive us doubt and he would he would take it and put it on our lips. So that even by praying according to the bible and singing, according to the bible.

We refer to ourselves in our prayers to god as your beloved. Oh, lord. Help me your beloved is in a difficult situation today. And we remember that our being beloved does not because Of who we are. It's because of who God has and what god is like, So you have the love of god.

That your beloved may be delivered saved. Which is associated in scripture, especially with the justice of god. That those whom he has justified in himself, he will deliver, he will give them justice. From that, which has been done against. As you have the love of god and the justice of god, and then you have the power of god.

Associated in scripture with his right hand, the right hand of his power. That your beloved may be delivered save with your right hand and then you have the faithfulness of god. That he listens to his people and he hears their cry and he persists with them, he does not leave them alone.

And so he says, save with your right hand and to answer me hear me. He's not here. Being demanding anymore. Then he is praying to god according to god's character and according to God's promises that what god is like and what god has said, god would bring to pass.

And so there is demanding here but it's a submissive demanding, it's a holy crying out, according to the word of god. So that it is the character of our god himself. And the end of all creatures. And ourselves as a creature. That he brings to bear here, as he cries out in the midst of trouble.

If we didn't know that you had the trouble, Versus 11 through 12, you would think, wow. What a glorious, amazing high passage of praise to god and indeed it is. Because that is the holy spirit's prescription for us. In our trouble. To turn our attention to god. And praise him for who he is in himself.

And therefore, for whom he shows himself to be In all of his actions. As he is bringing all creation to praise him. And as he is bringing. A congregation. Of the redeemed in holy assembly. To praise him. As we will do one day perfectly. And yet we get already in christ by the spirit.

To enjoy doing sincerely and genuinely though not perfectly. Already. And then, let's pray. Oh lord, please help me and please help my family. To. See, the way that your spirit trains us, To respond to our troubles. Thank you for giving this to david. Thank you for preparing it, even for our lord, jesus and his humanity.

As he grew and wisdom and in favor with you. Thank you for preparing it for us, help us. Lord to Take this into our actual difficulties in life. That the realization of who you are. And that you are being yourself in our lives. And in our circumstances, Carry us through and sanctify us.

And the midst of our troubles. We thank you, especially. That we may call ourselves your beloved And know from the bible. No, from your word from your lips. What our hearts often doubt. And so we pray. Oh god, your beloved Has difficulty. In the midst of our hardships. Remembering you and aiming to glorify and enjoy you.

And so come by your spirit and help your beloved. Now we ask By the power of your right hand. For we ask it and the name of the son of your right hand, even our lord jesus. Amen.