

***Another Perspective***

**October 7-8, 2024**

**A New Song –** When I read in Revelation 5:9 that the four living creatures and the 24 elders fell down before the Lamb and “sang *a* *new song”,* the phrase sounded familiar to me. Then Tom’s devotional for last Wednesday’s prayer meeting began with Psalm 149:1, “Praise the Lord! Sing to the Lord *a new song*, His praise in the assembly of the godly!” So I decided to research the phrase and discovered that it occurs a total of nine times in all of Scripture: not surprisingly, six of these are in the book of Psalms; two are in Revelation (here in chapter 5 and again in chapter 14); and the remaining one is in Isaiah. Five of the nine occurrences are *commands* for the people of God to sing a new song to the Lord, usually because “He has done marvelous things!” So that made me think that we should consider this concept a bit further.

**Examples in Scripture –** Then I thought about specific times when the people of God did just that, i.e. composed and sang a new song to the Lord because of some marvelous thing they had seen Him do. For example, in Exodus 15 the entire multitude of Israelites who witnessed deliverance at the parting of the Red Sea, when all of their enemies were destroyed before their very eyes, spontaneously erupted into a joyous song of praise to God for saving them. And we saw a couple of weeks ago that all the angels in Heaven burst into song as they witnessed God’s handiwork in creating the universe. This led me to search for other examples of someone in the Bible singing a new song…and I recalled that many of the Psalms were composed to celebrate God’s deliverance on specific occasions. David put headings on several of the Psalms he wrote, spelling out the specific event that had inspired this particular “new song”, and a careful reading of most of his other Psalms gives the impression that he had some specific event or special occasion in mind for each one of them as well, even though he didn’t mention what it was. The unknown author of Psalm 102 says that this psalm is “a prayer of one afflicted, when he is faint and pours out his complaint before the Lord.”

**“Amazing Grace…My Chains Are Gone” –** As we were singing this updated version of an old hymn—another way to sing a “new song”—I was struck by the thought expressed in one of the verses: *’Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved. How precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed!* Some of you have shared with me that reading through Revelation is very scary for you. Indeed, it *is* fearsome to think about the terrible judgment that is coming on the world when God will pour out His wrath on all unrighteousness and end it forever. We are right to fear such a powerful, utterly holy God, before Whom we could not possibly stand on our own merits. But as the old hymn says, “Twas grace that taught my heart to fear.” God wants us to honor His holiness and not shrug it—and Him—off as irrelevant to our lives, as so much of our culture does. He wants us to know that the way we live our lives absolutely matters, and so in grace He gives us a glimpse of what it would be like to face Him with all of our guilt still upon us. But God also wants to *bless* us through the reading of Revelation, and so He intersperses those frightening scenes of judgment with glimpses of Heaven, showing us what it will be like for those who have traded the filthy, sin-laden rags of their own merit for the pure righteousness of Christ. His grace can truly relieve our fears and give us a new song to sing as we anticipate life spent with Him forever.

**Meditating on New Songs –** So let us join the “elders” in Heaven in singing a new song of praise to God. I thought you might find it helpful to meditate on some of the “new songs” in Scripture, so I have put my findings on a separate page that you can stick in your Bible. Feel free to make copies to share with others who might be interested.