

Psalm 93: Biblical Reading and Reflections

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 07 December 2020

Preacher: Alastair Roberts

[0 : 00] Psalm 93. The Lord reigns, he is robed in majesty. The Lord is robed, he has put on strength as his belt. Yes, the world is established, it shall never be moved. Your throne is established from of old, you are from everlasting.

The floods have lifted up, O Lord. The floods have lifted up their voice. The floods lift up their roaring. Mightier than the thunders of many waters, mightier than the waves of the sea, the Lord on high is mighty. Your decrees are very trustworthy. Holiness befits your house, O Lord, forevermore. Psalm 93 is a short psalm of enthronement about the reign of the Lord, perhaps to be sung at a particular festival. The Lord's sovereignty is firmly established and enduring.

The psalmist both speaks about God in the third person, in verses 1 and 4, and addresses him directly in verses 2 to 3 and 5. Conrad Schaefer underlines some of the aspects of divine sovereignty that the psalm brings into view. He writes, He begins by declaring God's reign as king, speaking in more detail of various of his attributes.

The Lord is majestically robed, his authority and regal glory are an open display. He is also girded for action, with strength as a belt. His sovereignty is expressed in the majesty of a throne, but also in the effectiveness of action against his enemies.

[1 : 43] The world and its physical and moral order is firmly established beyond shaking, because God's own throne is established, and God is from eternity. The world and its order is suspended upon God's sovereignty and providence. We can have security in it, because God is unchanging.

Knowing that God is unshakable assures us that our lives are not in the hand of capricious and changeable and fickle forces, but held in the sure grasp of a loving and good creator, who does not alter or shift with the seasons.

From this description of God's sovereignty, the psalmist moves to the forces of chaos, here described as floods. We might think here of great, untamed powers, like those of the deep at the beginning of creation.

God demonstrates his power over these forces of chaos and disorder. Behind this, we might also see the events of the Red Sea Crossing, which enacts this sovereignty over the forces of chaos, both as nations and as natural forces in history.

John Goldingay notes Isaiah chapter 17 verses 12 to 13 here. Whether these are forces of nations or forces of nature, God is above them all, his throne is established, and will not be moved.

[3 : 19] In verse 5, the psalmist concludes by speaking about the trustworthiness of God's decrees. The decrees here are probably the commands by which the Lord tames and bounds the chaotic forces and powers of nature and nations.

These are decrees that remain sure. They set the bounds upon the natural order. The world and its forces don't slip out of God's grasp. The psalm ends with a declaration about God's holiness.

In his holiness, God is set apart from sinful and frail creatures. This also relates to his integrity and truth, the fact that he is reliable and unchanging, thoroughly and unceasingly consistent to himself. A question to consider. What are some other examples of the use of such sea imagery in the psalms?