

Psalm 96

Psalm 96: Psalms 96 and 99 are linked together with the expression “the Lord reigneth”, except for Psalm 98 which has “the Lord, the King” (verse 6). As such, they conclude the body of the divine kingdom psalms (see also 47, 93), which speak of Messiah’s reign over all the earth. The use of a similar expression, “Thy God reigneth” (in Isa. 52:7), shows that the time of fulfillment for this prophecy is when Isaiah’s “Servant of the Lord” is exalted. This can take place only during the reign of Christ on the earth. This particular psalm, apart from the description of the King in verses 4-6, is composed of three calls: two calls for universal submission to the lord’s kingship (verses 1-3, 7-10), and one call to creation to praise the Lord (verses 11-13).

Verses 1-13: The substance of this psalm, and portions of Psalms 97, 98, 100 are found (in 1 Chron. Chapter 16), which was used by David’s direction in the dedication of the tabernacle on Mt. Zion. The psalm has importance beyond that historical occasion, however, because it anticipates kingdom praise for the Lord from all the nations of the world (verses 3, 4, 7, 9-13; compare Isa. 2:2-4; Zech. 14:16-19), and even from nature itself. It also expresses the intense joy that will saturate the earth when the Messiah is ruling from Jerusalem (compare Isa. 25:9; 40:9-10).

- I. The Proclamation of Praise (96:1-6).
 - A. The Invitation to Praise (96:1-3);
 - B. The Recipient of Praise (96:4-6).
- II. The Exhortation to Worship (96:7-13).
 - A. Worship from the Gentile Nations (96:7-10);
 - B. Worship from Personified Nature (96:7-13).

Verses 1-9: When Christ finished his work on earth, and was received into his glory in heaven, the church began to sing a new song unto him, and to bless his name. His apostles and evangelists showed forth his salvation among the heathen, his wonders among all people. All the earth is here summoned to worship the Lord. We must worship him in the beauty of holiness, as God in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself. Glorious things are said of him, both as motives to praise and matter of praise.

Psalm 96:1 "O sing unto the LORD a new song: sing unto the LORD, all the earth."

“A new song”: This new song was intended for the future inauguration of the millennial rule of the Lord over the earth (compare Psalms 144:9; 149:1; Rev. 5:9; 14:3).

This new song that we are to sing to Jehovah (LORD), is a prayer of thanksgiving and praise in song. This could be the song of all who have been redeemed. Salvation is for all the earth. Every one of every nation of the world could sing this beautiful song of redemption. I believe the new song has to do with grace, and not the law. The time for mourning is over. It is time we sing joyful songs unto the God of our salvation.

Psalm 96:2 "Sing unto the LORD, bless his name; show forth his salvation from day to day."

"Show forth his salvation": Genuine praise includes a testimony to others of God's plan of redemption.

This is the third mention of the Lord; could this have to do with the three in one from 1 John?

1 John 5:7 "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one."

We see above, that this is not to be one day and then forgotten. Every day is the day to praise God for our salvation. It is such a little thing for us to praise His name. He has done marvelous things.

Psalm 96:3 "Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people."

"His glory ... heathen" The glory of the Lord is more than just His majestic splendor. It includes all of the reasons for admiring and praising Him, such as His acts of creation (compare Psalm 19:2) and redemption (verse 2).

"All people" (see note on Psalm 67:3).

God's greatness will one day be declared in all nations, and the gospel will be known "among all people". This is a reiteration of the promise made to Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3), and a call to world missions (Matt. 28:18-20).

We are instructed to go into all the world and preach the gospel (good news), to every creature. In our time, this is more possible than it has ever been with satellite television. One of the very best ways of sharing this with other people, is to get a Bible into their hands, and show them how to study the Word. I believe these Bible studies to be a very good way of spreading the gospel. The Bible speaks for itself. The miracle of creation, and all the later miracles as well, are in God's Word.

Psalm 96:4 "For the LORD [is] great, and greatly to be praised: he [is] to be feared above all gods."

In the perfections of his nature; in the works of his hands, of creation, providence, and redemption; and in the several offices he bears and executes.

"And greatly to be praised": Because of his greatness and glory (see note on Psalm 48:1).

"He is to be feared above all gods": The angels by whom he is worshipped; civil magistrates, among whom he presides, and judges. And all the fictitious deities of the Gentiles, who are not to be named with him, and to whom no fear, reverence, and worship, are due.

God is not just God of a handful of people, but of all mankind. Over and over and over in the Bible God discredited the false gods around Him, and showed that He is the One true God. We

find even now, there are false doctrines on every hand. We are to try the spirits, and see whether they be of God, or not.

1 John 4:1-3 "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." "Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:" "And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that [spirit] of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world."

The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom.

Psalm 96:5 "For all the gods of the nations [are] idols: but the LORD made the heavens."

Or are "nothings", nonentities; such as have not, and never had, any being. At least many of them are but in the fancies of men; and all of them such as have no divinity in them. An idol is nothing in the world (1 Cor. 8:4).

"But the Lord made the heavens": And all the hosts of them, the sun, moon, and stars; these are the curious workmanship of his fingers, and which declare his glory, and show him to be truly and properly God, who is to be feared and worshipped (see Heb. 1:10).

The translation of idols, is "nothings". When gods are not capitalized, it is speaking of false gods. People of the day that the Bible was written, carved gods out of wood and stone, and they were really nothing. Elijah proved to the prophets of Baal, and God proved to the Pharaoh that these false gods had no power at all. The LORD (Jehovah), made the heavens.

John 1:1-3 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." "The same was in the beginning with God." "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."

Psalm 96:6 "Honor and majesty [are] before him: strength and beauty [are] in his sanctuary."

He being set down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, and having honor and majesty laid upon him. Being arrayed in robes of majesty, crowned with glory and honor, sitting on the same throne of glory with his Father, and having a scepter of righteousness in his hand, and all the forms and ensigns of royalty and majesty about him. Rays of light and glory darting from him; as well as those glorious and bright forms before him. The holy angels continually praising him.

"Strength and beauty are in his sanctuary": The Targum is, "the house of his sanctuary," the temple; the Gospel church, of which the temple or sanctuary was a figure. The strength of Christ is seen here, in the conversion of sinners by his Gospel, which is the rod of his strength. The power of God unto salvation, when it comes not in word only; and by which he also strengthens his people to the more vigorous exercise of grace and discharge of duty. Here they go from strength to strength. The "beauty" of Christ is seen here. The King is held in the galleries of Gospel ordinances, and is beheld in his beauty. His people appear here in the beauties of holiness, and as a perfection of beauty, through the righteousness of Christ upon them. And as

they observe the order of the Gospel, and do all things decently, and with a good decorum. Here Christ reigns, girded with "strength". Here he rules as the Lord God omnipotent, having all power in heaven, and in earth, and doing according to his will in both. And from hence he shows himself strong on the behalf of his people. He, who is beauty itself, fairer than the children of men, dwells; and where those beauteous forms of light and glory, the holy angels, are. And here the spirits of just men made perfect, who are without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, have their abode (1 Chron. 16:27).

Even the tabernacles here on the earth had much beauty and majesty connected to them, but it is beyond our wildest dream how beautiful heaven is.

1 Corinthians 2:9 "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

Think of the beauty of a place where even the streets are paved with gold! The gate is one giant pearl. The walls have precious stones. I could go on and on. The majesty of it all is the throne of God. This is the Holy of Holies that the tabernacle in the wilderness was a miniature of. Jesus opened the way for you and me to this magnificent throne of God. All majesty and power are His. He is supreme ruler of the universe. All must bow to Him.

Verses 7-9: "Kindreds" is literally "tribes". The psalmist invited Gentiles to submit to God and become His worshipers. The goal of God's redemptive mission has always been to make obedient worshipers of all the nations of the earth (97:1).

Psalm 96:7 "Give unto the LORD, O ye kindreds of the people, give unto the LORD glory and strength."

Or families. The Targum is, "give unto the Lord a song, ye families of the people". By whom are meant not the tribes and families of the people of Israel, but the Gentiles, the nations of the world, who were to be blessed in the seed of Abraham, the family of Egypt, and others (see Amos 3:2; Zech. 14:17). Even such as were chosen of them, taken out from among them for a people to his name. Who were redeemed out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation; and were taken, one of a city, and two of a family, and brought to Zion.

"Give unto the Lord glory and strength": (see note on Psalm 29:1).

This verse is for all of mankind, kindreds of the people. Everything we are is His. We are His creation. He is our Creator. What can we give Him, but ourselves? We can praise, and worship Him with the voice that He placed within us. We should never cease praising and glorifying His name.

Psalm 96:8 "Give unto the LORD the glory [due unto] his name: bring an offering, and come into his courts."

"An offering": According to the psalmists and prophets, offerings and sacrifices will be presented to the Lord in the millennial kingdom (compare Psalm 45:12; Ezek. Chapters 40-46).

The only offering that we can give Him is the sacrifice of our praise.

Hebrews 13:15 "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of [our] lips giving thanks to his name."

Psalm 96:9 "O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth."

"Beauty of holiness": That is, "worship the Lord because of the splendor of His holiness" (compare Psalms 29:2; 99, 110:3; also 1 Chron. 16:29; see note on 2 Chron. 20:21).

God does not regard material things of this earth as beauty. Beauty to Him, is in the life of holiness that we are attempting to live. Moral and spiritual beauty from within is what moves Him. Praise God! When He looks at us, He sees the garment of righteousness that His precious Son has clothed us in. This garment, white as snow has been made white by washing it in His blood.

Verses 10-13: We are to hope and pray for that time, when Christ shall reign in righteousness over all nations. He shall rule in the hearts of men, by the power of truth, and the Spirit of righteousness. His coming draws nigh; this King, this Judge standeth before the door, but he is not yet come. The Lord will accept the praises of all who seek to promote the kingdom of Christ. The sea can but roar, and how the trees of the wood can show that they rejoice we know not; but He that searches the heart knows what is the mind of the Spirit, and understands the words, the broken language of the weakest. Christ will come to judge the earth, to execute just vengeance on his enemies, and to fulfil his largest promises to his people. What then are we? Would that day be welcome to us? If this be not our case, let us now begin to prepare to meet our God, by seeking the pardon of our sins, and the renewal of our souls to holiness.

Psalm 96:10 "Say among the heathen [that] the LORD reigneth: the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved: he shall judge the people righteously."

"Shall be established": Instead of the continuance of international chaos in human history, the world will be settled and efficiently managed by the Messiah in the millennial kingdom (compare Psalm 2; Micah 4:1-5).

"Judge the people righteously": Not only will the Lord establish international peace and stability in the future messianic kingdom, but He will also rule the world with impeccable justice (compare verse 13, Isa. 11:1-5).

There is a chorus, taken from the Bible that I love to sing. It says, Our God Reigns. Reigneth, means to continually reigns. The reign of the Lord Jesus Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords will bring perfect peace to the earth. He is the righteous Judge that each of us stands before.

Verses 11-12: This is what even inanimate creation awaits (compare Rom. 8:19-22).

Psalm 96:11 "Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and the fullness thereof."

Let all worlds be full of joy, as they are all interested in the fact here stated. The universe is one. It has been made by the same hand; it is under the control of the same mind; it is governed by the same laws. The God who reigns on earth reigns in heaven; and what affects one part of the universe affects all. Hence, in all the manifestation of the character of God, whether made in heaven or in the earth, it is proper to call on all the universe to partake in the general joy.

"Let the sea roar": In praise to God. It is not uncommon in the Scriptures to call on inanimate things to praise God (compare Psalm 148:7-9). The same thing is common in all poetry.

"And the fullness thereof": Its abundance. That which fills it. All that it contains. That is, Let all that dwell in the seas praise God. His reign is an occasion for universal gladness. All in the inanimate world; all among the irrational tribes of being; all in the air, in the waters, or on the earth, have occasion for praise. And would render praise if they could appreciate the wisdom and goodness evinced in their creation. Though unconscious, the lower creatures seem to celebrate his praise; but man only can give an intelligent utterance to thanksgiving.

We know that the angels in heaven rejoice over one sinner who is saved. At the fullness of times when all the problems are over, even all of heaven and all the natural elements will rejoice together.

Psalm 96:12 "Let the field be joyful, and all that [is] therein: then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice"

Not the field of the world, but of the church, separated from others by distinguishing grace. The peculiar property of Christ, cultivated and manured by his Spirit and grace, and abounding with the fruits and flowers thereof. Of a wilderness becoming a fruitful field, and for that reason should rejoice, even with joy and singing (Isa. 35:1).

"Then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice": The sons of God, so called (SOS 2:3). Who, though like such, in their nature state, barren and unfruitful, yet, being engrafted into Christ, become trees of righteousness. And so have reason to rejoice at their root in Christ, their stability by him, and fruitfulness through him. Jarchi interprets this of all the governors of the people (see Ezek. 17:24). All this, indeed, as represented as speaking, may be understood of inanimate creatures; the heavens, earth, and sea, fields, woods, and trees, rejoicing, if they could, and in their way, at such great and wonderful appearances in the Gentile world (see Isa. 44:23). Aben Ezra interprets all this of the heavens giving dew, the earth its increase, and the field its fruit; all which is rejoicing.

There will be no more destruction of the earth, or the grass burning up, or the trees being burned up. As I said, even all the elements of nature will rejoice because the King of peace will reign and there will be a sabbath of rest for all the land and trees, as well as for the people.

Psalm 96:13 "Before the LORD: for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth."

“For he cometh”: The rule of the Lord described in this psalm is not the present universal kingdom (Psalm 93), but one which will be established when Christ returns to earth.

I personally believe that the coming of the Lord is very near. The desire of every true Christian should be for the Lord to come quickly. We are promised a great peace for all the people when the Lord returns. He will rule with a rod of iron. There will be no problems during His reign, because Satan will be locked up for a thousand years. He will judge with truth, because He is the Truth. He will judge righteously, because He is the righteous Judge. Those who believe in the Lord will be judged righteous, because we have taken on His righteousness. The sad thing here is that He is also, just and will judge those who refused His salvation with justice. Un-repentant sin brings death.

Psalm 96 Questions

1. Sing unto the LORD a new _____.
2. What is this song that we are to sing?
3. The author believes this has to do with _____ and, not the _____.
4. When is the time to praise the Lord?
5. Who are we to declare His glory to?
6. What is the gospel?
7. What is the best way to declare the glory of the Lord to the heathen?
8. God is to be feared above all _____.
9. How can we try the spirits, to see if they are of God?
10. The gods of the nations are _____.
11. What is an idol?
12. What are we to give unto the Lord?
13. How do we know that all people are intended in verse 7?
14. Where do we find the Scripture that says, the sacrifice we are to give is praise?
15. What is beautiful to God?
16. What does reigneth mean?
17. What will the reign of Jesus bring to the earth?

18. What are some of the unusual things spoken of as rejoicing in verses 11 and 12?

19. Verse 13 says, He will judge _____.