



## Psalm 96:1-13

### Missions in the Psalms

It is wonderful being involved in something that will still be worthwhile a million years from now.

The Hebrew Psalms are filled with this missionary message of outreach to the nations of the world. "Tell of His glory among the nations, His wonderful deeds among all the peoples" (Psalm 96:3). This isn't just a passing word; it is a dominant theme in the Psalms.

A church soccer team in Uberlandia, Brazil is leading opposing players to Christ. Before the soccer games the team gathers with members of the opposing team at midfield to tell them about their relationship with Jesus Christ. They sing a song about Jesus and hand out New Testaments to each player and referees. At one of the recent games, the entire opposing team and a referee prayed to accept Christ as their personal Savior. One spectator became a Christian after he got tired of waiting for the game to start and came on to the field to find out what was going on.

The great nation of Brazil has 161 million inhabitants and constitutes around half of the population in South America. About 11 percent or 18 million Brazilians consider themselves evangelical Christians. These evangelical Brazilians want to plant 150,000 new churches. Their goal is to plant a local church within the reach of every inhabitant during this generation.

It is interesting that Psalm 96 is found with very few changes in First Chronicles 16:23-33. The occasion was the time when David first moved the ark of the Lord to its resting-place of honor in the city of Jerusalem.

Psalm 96 is "a missionary hymn for all ages." It is filled with a jubilant note of joy, but there is also a declaration of impending judgment. The psalm must originally have been composed for public worship because it is entirely one of worship. It is devoted to praise to God in the context of public worship in the Temple. The LORD God is a wonderful Creator and Ruler and He is coming to judge all men. People are to be reached with the Good News with the goal that eventually all may join in God's praise. It is a great missionary psalm with missionary themes.

The Old Testament scholars Keil and Delitzsch says Psalms 96-98 "are more Messianic than many in the strict sense of the word Messianic; for the central gravitating point of the Old Testament gospel lies not in the Messiah, but in the appearing of JHVH." The LORD God comes to reign. How true this is, especially when we think of the Jesus Christ the Son of God, when He returns to reign as King of kings and Lord of lords. The coming reign of God over the nations of the world finds its fulfillment only in the Messiah.

over the nations of the world finds its fulfillment only in the Messiah. Moreover, this Psalm has a broad eschatological outlook. It is enthusiastic with the hope of the Lord's coming. It is full of Messianic hope and kept the Messianic expectation alive among the Jewish people for centuries.

You will find twenty-five quotations in various parts of the Old Testament in this beautiful psalm.

## **THERE IS A CALL TO SING A NEW SONG OF PRAISE UNTO THE LORD (96:1-6)**

### *The Psalmist has a new song to sing (verses 1-3).*

Three times the Psalmist says in the first two verses, "Sing to the LORD," "Sing to the LORD," "Sing to the LORD." It is hard to miss his point. He has a new song to sing, and he wants all the earth to hear it. The psalmist cannot restrain himself any longer. He is so impressed with the greatness of the Lord and His wondrous works he simply burst forth with praise to God.

"Sing to the LORD a new song; Sing to the LORD, all the earth. Sing to the LORD, bless His name; Proclaim good tidings of His salvation from day to day" (Psalm 96:1-3).

It reminds us of Revelation 5:9; 14:3 when the redeemed out of all the nations will sing the new song gathered around the throne of God in eternity. They sing of the great things the Lord has done for them.

"And they sang a new song, saying, 'Worthy art Thou to take the book, and to break its seals; for Thou wast slain, and didst purchase for God with Thy blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation'" (Revelation 5:9).

"All of the earth" will be gathered there. Representatives from every tribe and village all over the earth will be worshipping Him. Aren't you glad it is not just the ancient Jewish people, or Americans, or an elite group? It is a message for "all the earth." Those who will be gathered around the throne of grace are all those who have bowed before the Lord God, confessed their need of Him, and believed on name of the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation. However, let us be very careful if we think it is just for us. Let us not become exclusive in our sectarianism. God will gather before the throne people of every nation, and tribe who have surrendered to Jesus Christ alone for salvation.

This psalm reminds us of the commission of Jesus to His disciples in Matthew 28:18-20. "And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.'" On another occasion Jesus said in Matthew 24:14; "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all the nations, and then the end shall come."

***"Proclaim good tidings of His salvation from day to day" (Psalm 96:3).***

When you fall in love with the Lord Jesus, you want to tell everyone. It becomes your life style. When you are so full of His presence in your life you can't help but share the Good News you have found of Jesus Christ with others.

Another missionary song tells us the same message. "God be gracious to us and bless us, And cause His face to shine upon us –Selah. That Thy way may be known on the earth, Thy salvation among all nations. Let the peoples praise Thee, O God; Let all the peoples praise Thee. Let the nations be glad and sing for joy; For Thou wilt judge the peoples with uprightness, And guide the nations on the earth. Selah. Let the peoples praise Thee, O God; Let all the peoples praise Thee" (Psalm 67:1-4).

The word "Selah" means to pause and think on this great truth. The author invites us to stop and ponder these words and their implications in our lives.

When you see the words "nations" and "peoples" in the plural form they are referring to non-Jewish people. The Jewish people had received the Good News and it was their responsibility to share it with their non – Jewish neighbors. They were chosen of God to be a great missionary nation.

The message the Psalmist is excited about is found in verse 10. The LORD God reigns! He is the King of all the earth and all that is in it. "Say among the nations, "The LORD reigns; Indeed, the world is firmly established, it will not be moved; He will judge the peoples with equity."

Who is invited to hear the message of salvation? "All the earth," "the nations," "all the peoples," "all the nations," "all the peoples." The missionary message is so strong it is impossible to miss it.

***He is a great God and He is worthy to be praised (Psalm 96:4 -5).***

Look at the incomparable greatness of our God. Verse four notes why He is worthy of our praise. "He is to be feared above all gods" (v. 4) because "all the gods of the people are idols" (v. 5) They are "non-existent things," good for nothings, unreal useless. That which is nothing is powerless. The Hebrew has play on words contrasting the true God and idols. The *elohim* gods of the nations are mere *elilim*. *Elilim* means heathen gods. That which is nothing can make nothing. "But the LORD made the heaven." The LORD (*Yahweh*) is the Creator. This should cause your heart to rejoice and sing. How superior is the LORD who made the heavens and the earth. God s`architecture is a constant reminder of His presence. The sky, the lamps in the heavens, the rain that falls on our heads, the dew in our fields, the thunder and the flash of lightening are His voice to every creature. No wonder the Psalmist uses expressions like splendor, majesty, strength and beauty to describe his thoughts of wonder love and praise to our God.

The Apostle Paul had the same idea in mind when he wrote to new Christians who had come out of pagan culture. They were anxious about food that had been sacrificed to idols in pagan temples and then made available commercially for people to purchase and take home and prepared to eat. He said, "we know that there is no such thing as an idol in the world, and that there is no God but one" (1 Corinthians 8:4).

The idols of the new age pantheism are only a figment of a vivid imagination. They are powerless to effect a living relationship with a holy God.

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The Apostle Peter wrote: "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). Thomas, a disciple of Jesus inquired about the way to heaven. Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me" (John 14:6).

***We also sing because of His strength and beauty (verse 6).***

"Splendor and majesty are before Him, Strength and beauty are in His sanctuary," writes the Psalmist.

God is beautiful! Our God is not a grotesque image, or idol, or vain thing. He is a beautiful person full of splendor, majesty, strength and beauty.

Another messianic Psalm calls upon all the nations to praise the LORD. "Praise the LORD, all nations; Laud Him, all peoples! For His lovingkindness is great toward us, And the truth of the LORD is everlasting. Praise the LORD!" (Psalm 117:1-2).

Has God given you a new song to sing? Is it a song of His beauty and grace? God puts that new song in your heart when you come to the deep realization that you have no song to sing without Jesus in your life. God the Holy Spirit reveals the need in your heart to abandon your self-centered ways, turn from your unbelief and put your trust in Jesus Christ as your savior. When you invite Jesus Christ to become your personal savior, He puts a song in your heart of thanksgiving and praise to God.

**THERE IS A CALL TO THE NATIONS OF THE WORLD TO PRAISE THE LORD  
(96:7-10)**

All the families of the earth are called upon to come and worship the LORD. It is a call saying, "Thank you God that you are who you are."

***Give to the Lord the glory and strength due to Him (verses 7-8a).***

"Ascribe to the LORD, O families of the peoples, Ascribe to the LORD glory and strength. Ascribe to the LORD the glory of His name . . ." (vv. 7-8a). There is only one person who is worthy of our praise. He is the LORD. Who is your most valued person? Please let me encourage you to let Jesus Christ become your most valued person. Give Him the glory that is due His holy name.

***Bring an offering to the Lord (verse 8b).***

"Bring an offering, and come into His courts."

We owe Him our lives. "I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship" (Romans 12:1).

We have a debt we owe. A responsibility goes with grace. You cannot earn your salvation, but because of what God has done for you, you want to glorify Him by the way you live. The Apostle Paul reminds us of the debt we owe in Romans 1:14-17. "I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. So, for my part, I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome. For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, 'But the righteous man shall live by faith'" (Romans 1:14-17).

***Worship the Lord in the beauty of His holiness (verse 9a).***

The idea of "worship" is to fall down before, prostrate or bow down before. The word for "fear" is to "tremble, trust, wait carefully (patiently)." It reinforces the idea of worship. It is to have humble attitudes before God. We are to approach Him in the spirit of deepest awe, reverence of worship. Do you sometimes tremble in His presence?

***"He will judge the peoples with equity" (verse 10c).***

The Psalmist looked upon divine judgment as an occasion for rejoicing. People ask for it, and are glad when He administers judgment on unrighteousness. Psalm 67:4 says, "Let the nations be glad and sing for joy; For Thou wilt judge the people with uprightness, and guide the nations on the earth. (Selah)." Just pause and think of that.

The word "judge" has the idea of to govern and rule. The main idea in the Psalm is the sovereign rule of God over the nations in righteousness. Revelation 19:1 2, 5 6, 11 16 tells us the Lord Jesus Christ reigns. One day the King will come in glory and reign as King of kings and Lord of lords. "After these things I heard something like a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God; because His judgments are true and righteous; for He has judged the great harlot who was corrupting the earth with her immorality, and He has avenged the blood of His bond-servants on her. ". . . And a voice came from the throne, saying, Give praise to our God, all you His bond-servants, you who fear Him, the small and the great. Then I heard something like the voice of a great multitude and like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, saying, Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns." . . . "And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war. His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems; and He has a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself. He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses. From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. ""

Do you welcome His return? Are you ready if He were to come today?

**THERE IS A CALL TO ALL CREATION TO CELEBRATE (96:11-13)**

***The whole creation is called upon to praise God (verses 11 -12)***

All created inanimate objects are called upon to join in the worship of the Creator. He is Lord over the heavens, the earth, the sea and all that is in it, the field, the crops, and the forest. You can hear them rejoicing and shouting. It reminds us of the words of the Apostle Paul when he says the whole creations groans waiting for redemption (Romans 8:18 22). It is beautiful figurative language of all creation bowing and worshipping God. The roar of the ocean waves along a beach is praise to God. The wind rustling through the leaves of a forest is a song of praise to God.

***The Lord is coming to judge (v. 13).***

He is coming to judge the earth in "righteousness." The word means, "what is just and right." It is something

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He is coming to judge the earth in "righteousness." The word means, "what is just and right." It is something God has given His people out of His grace. It is a whole new way of life. It is an act of grace. He is a faithful God and we can rely upon Him. Instead of fearing God's judgment, we can sing for we know He is coming to reign over the world.

It will be a time when He will correct the injustices of the world. He will set right that which is now full of disharmony and disarray, suffering and anguish and violence. Our God reigns! Oh how we need Him to come, soon.

What is your attitude toward the coming of the King? Do you welcome His coming with joy? Do you sing from your heart, Lord Jesus will I see you today? Will you come and bow in humility before Him and ask Him to become your personal Savior? Pray this simple prayer from your heart: *"Lord God I realize that I have failed you, and that I am a sinner. I have come short of your expectations in my life. I believe that Jesus died for my sins on the cross and He rose from the dead. I am asking Jesus Christ to be my Lord and Savior. Thank you for saving me. Amen."*

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