

“A Missionary Psalm”
Psalm 96
(Preached at Trinity, February 12, 2012)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. **Psalm 96** is a unique psalm. It follows closely with the song of David composed when the Ark was brought from the house of Obededom. You can read of it in **1 Chron. 16**.
 - A. It is also a perfect companion psalm with the previous psalm. In **Psalm 95** we read of the stubborn heart of Israel – **Verses 8-11**.
 - B. We know that that generation was judged and did not enter into Canaan. But we also know that ultimately this stubborn resistance would lead to the Gospel being taken from Israel and given to the Gentiles.
Acts 13:46 KJV - "Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."
2. As we come to **Psalm 96** we find a change from a focus upon the single nation to a great expansion of God's worship throughout the whole world.
Psalm 96:1 KJV - "sing unto the LORD, all the earth."
Psalm 96:3 KJV - "Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people."
Psalm 96:7 KJV - "Give unto the LORD, O ye kindreds of the people"
Psalm 96:9 KJV - "fear before him, all the earth."
Psalm 96:10 KJV - "Say among the heathen *that* the LORD reigneth"
3. Spurgeon called this a "Missionary Hymn." He wrote, "The design of the Holy Ghost in this psalm was to give forth a song for the Gentiles, a triumphant hymn wherewith to celebrate the conversion of the nations to Jehovah in gospel times.
4. As we've seen with many of the psalms, this psalm is difficult to divide into sections. Spurgeon declared that it shouldn't be divided at all. "This song is one and indivisible, a garment of praise without seam, woven from the top throughout."
Most expositors, however, do make some attempt to divide the psalm which I will likewise attempt to do.
 - I. The King's Glory Declared – **Verses 1-6**
 - II. The King's Glory Demanded – **Verses 7-9**
 - III. The King's Glory Delivered – **Verses 10-13**

I. The King's Glory Declared – Verses 1-6

A. God's glory is being declared in the context of worship

1. There is a charge for God's worshippers to sing unto the Lord a new song
 - a. The psalmist is thinking about some new thing God has done – He is calling upon God's people to sing forth a new song praising God for the new thing He has done
 - b. What is the "New Thing?"
 - When David sang a new song to God in 1 Chronicles the new thing was God coming to Jerusalem symbolized by arrival of the Ark
 - In the New Covenant the new thing is the inclusion of the Gentiles as God's people – the mystery kept veiled from the foundation of the world.
Ephesians 2:19 NAS - "So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household,"
2. The New Covenant is an era of great joy
Luke 2:10-11 KJV - "And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. ¹¹ For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."
 - a. The Gospel is called "good news"
 - b. God's people have a new song upon their hearts
The endless animal sacrifices are over
Our condemnation has been erased in Christ Jesus
Romans 8:1 NAS - "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."
Psalms 96:2-3 KJV - "Sing unto the LORD, bless his name; shew forth his salvation from day to day. ³ Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people."
3. It is a universal Gospel that brings people all over the earth to worship God
Psalms 96:1 KJV - "O sing unto the LORD a new song: sing unto the LORD, all the earth."

B. The psalmist gives reasons why God's glory should be declared

1. Because He is great - גָּדוֹל *gadol* – the word points to something large in magnitude. If He is a God who is infinite in magnitude His praise should also be infinite in magnitude (A big God)
Psalms 96:4 KJV - "For the LORD *is* great, and greatly to be praised"
2. Because He is greater than all the gods
Psalms 96:4 KJV - "he *is* to be feared above all gods."
 - a. This isn't an admission that there are other gods. But human beings are prone to idolatry and fill their lives with idols.
An interesting side note: the word for idol here literally means "worthless or good for nothing."

- b. Men worship the gods of their creation made after their own likeness, but God is the Creator of all.
Psalm 96:5 KJV - "For all the gods of the nations *are* idols: but the LORD made the heavens."
Romans 1:25 KJV - "Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen."
- c. This is a statement that God must be first above all things. This is the consistent teaching of Scripture and has become the absolute requirement of the New Covenant
Matthew 6:24 KJV - "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."
Luke 18:22 KJV - "Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me."
Matthew 16:24-25 KJV - "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. ²⁵ For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it."
Romans 10:9 NAS - "that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved;"
3. Third reason His glory must be declared: Because He dwells in absolute majesty and glory
Psalm 96:6 KJV - "Honour and majesty *are* before him: strength and beauty *are* in his sanctuary."
Isaiah 6:1-4 KJV - " In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. ² Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. ³ And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, *is* the LORD of hosts: the whole earth *is* full of his glory. ⁴ And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke."
4. Christianity is an exclusive religion. It declares our God is the only God. He alone rules the world. He alone is worthy of worship. All men will have to stand before Him to give account.

II. The King's Glory Demanded – Verses 7-9

- A. **Psalm 96** is full of imperatives to praise God.
- Verse 1, Verse 2, Verse 3**
 - Verses 7-9** intensify the charge – God is to be praised because it is His due. We owe Him praise and worship.
- B. First, it is demanded that God be given the glory He is owed
Psalm 96:8 KJV - "Give unto the LORD the glory *due unto his name*"
 There is a difference between God's essential glory and His ascribed glory
- God's essential glory is that which is intrinsic to His being – His essential glory. This is the glory that is basic to His nature. It describes the fullness of His being, His splendor, His majesty, His brightness. God is infinitely glorious. Nothing can be added to nor taken away from His glory. It is described here as the "glory due unto his name."
 - God's ascribed glory is that which we recognize and declare openly upon the earth. It is described here by the word "give."
 The Psalmist commands all men to declare the glory of God:
Psalm 96:7-8 KJV - "Give unto the LORD, O ye kindreds of the people, give unto the LORD glory and strength. ⁸ Give unto the LORD the glory *due unto his name*"
 - Giving God glory begins with knowing about Him.
 You cannot ascribe to Him what you do not know.
 This is why the Word of God is essential not only to knowing God but to giving glory to God.
- B. Second, it is demanded that God be worshipped – that we give Him all the worship He is due.
- We give glory to God when we worship Him in a manner that reflects that greatness.
Verse 9 - "worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness."
 - All men owe God worship. It is because they will not worship God that they are under His wrath
Romans 1:18 KJV - "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness"
Romans 1:21 KJV - "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened."
 - They don't worship God because they don't recognize His holiness. God is the perfect reflection of His Law, but they despise His Law. God must be worshipped in the beauty of holiness—in a manner that reflects His perfection.
- C. Thirdly, it is demanded that we give God all the reverence He is due
- Men should stand before God in awe.
Psalm 96:9 NAS - "Tremble before Him, all the earth."
 - As we saw in **Psalm 92** gazing upon the wondrous works of God causes us to erupt with praise
Psalm 92:4-5 KJV - " For thou, LORD, hast made me glad through thy work: I will triumph in the works of thy hands. ⁵ O LORD, how great are thy works! *and thy thoughts are very deep.*"

III. The King's Glory Delivered – Verses 10-13

The first stanza declares the infinite glory of God

The second stanza demands that all men worship God in all His glory

This final stanza proclaims that God will receive glory. It expresses the universal reign of God among the nations

A. In a world that seems chaotic and lawless God is on His throne

Psalm 96:10 KJV - "Say among the heathen *that* the LORD reigneth"

1. Nothing is out of order

2. Nothing happens outside His sovereign dominion

Daniel 4:35 KJV - "And all the inhabitants of the earth *are* reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and *among* the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?"

3. In the end God will restore all things to perfect righteousness

Psalm 96:10 KJV - "he shall judge the people righteously."

2 Peter 3:13 KJV - "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

B. What is the response of creation to this blessed reality?

1. All of creation rejoices

Psalm 96:11-13KJV - "Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof. ¹² Let the field be joyful, and all that *is* therein: then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice Before the LORD"

2. This great King is reigning and He is coming. He is coming in all of His glory. He is coming in the fullness of His majesty

2 Thessalonians 2:8 KJV - "And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:"

Revelation 1:14-16 KJV - "His head and *his* hairs *were* white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes *were* as a flame of fire; ¹⁵ And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. ¹⁶ And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance *was* as the sun shineth in his strength."

3. He is coming as the Righteous Judge to set all things right.

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

4. But it is striking the way the psalmist presents such judgment with joy and anticipation.

It is our duty to look for His coming with all anticipation; to continue our lives in holiness; to worship Him in the beauty of holiness.

Conclusion:

1. All of creation exists for the glory of God.
We exist to worship Him, to adore Him, to ascribe glory to Him who alone is holy.
2. This is our chief work – to glorify God with our lives – to be most satisfied in Him.
3. We must manifest this glory to the world. We must do it with our lips. We must do it with our lives.
4. And we must be continually aware of His coming.
And we must look up with anticipation and live with anticipation.
1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 KJV - "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: ¹⁷ Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Wherefore comfort one another with these words."
5. And we must live with Him as our focus in all things
Revelation 22:20 KJV - "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."
Revelation 3:11 KJV - "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."
Revelation 19:7 KJV - "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready."