

PSALM 96

A Call to Worship the Lord the Righteous Judge

INTRODUCTION.

- A. "Calling the Gentiles to Worship the Righteous God."
- B. In Psa. 95 Israel was "the people of His pasture" but in Psa. 96 Israel is not mentioned. Rather, "Declare His glory among the nations, His wonders among all peoples" (96:3).
- C. The Septuagint ascribes the psalm to David, and it is found with very little change in 1Chr. 16:23-33. In 1Chr. 16:7 it is attributed to David on the occasion of appointing Asaph and his brethren for certain musical responsibilities in the tabernacle. Yet, "scholars" confidently declare that it was written "in the times of the later Hebrew" because of their analysis of its style. This is another example of the great faith they have in their own opinions, and their low opinion of inspiration. They judge David as being incapable of this kind of literary style and thus confidently reject the inspired statement that David wrote the song that included this as a part. Addis justifies this conclusion by claiming that "this psalm was inserted in Chronicles, not by the Chronicler himself, but by a later hand."
- D. Coffman uses the following headings for the divisions of this psalm:
 - I. Worship of God to be Universal (96:1-3).
 - II. Unreality of the Idol Gods of the Gentiles (96:4-6).
 - III. Fellowship in God's Family Open to All (96:7-9).
 - IV. The Coming of the Messiah (96:10-13).

THE TEXT.

- Sing to the LORD a new song;
Sing to the LORD, all the earth.
- 2 Sing to the LORD, bless His name;
Proclaim good tidings of His salvation from day to day.
- 3 Tell of His glory among the nations,
His wonderful deeds among all the peoples.
- 4 For great is the LORD and greatly to be praised;
He is to be feared above all gods.
- 5 For all the gods of the peoples are idols,
But the LORD made the heavens.
- 6 Splendor and majesty are before Him,
Strength and beauty are in His sanctuary.
- 7 Ascribe to the LORD, O families of the peoples,
Ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.
- 8 Ascribe to the LORD the glory of His name;
Bring an offering and come into His courts.
- 9 Worship the LORD in holy attire;
Tremble before Him, all the earth.
- 10 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."
- 11 Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice;
Let the sea roar, and all it contains;
- 12 Let the field exult, and all that is in it.
Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy
- 13 Before the LORD, for He is coming,
For He is coming to judge the earth.
He will judge the world in righteousness
And the peoples in His faithfulness.

COMMENTS.

- A. Worship of God to be Universal (96:1-3).

[v1-3] "...all the earth...among the nations...all peoples." It would be difficult to find a greater emphasis on God's interest for more than just the Jews than this stanza. "...Sing...sing...sing..." One of the most characteristic features of worship is singing. It should characterize praise and thanksgiving.

B. Unreality of the Idol gods of the Gentiles (96:4-6).

[v4-6] The prophets frequently described the process of making an idol to show how foolish is to bow down to them, as Isaiah said in Isa. 44:13-17. Isaiah also describes how useless an idol is (see Isa. 41:21-24).

C. Fellowship in God's Family Open to All (96:7-9).

[v7-9] The Jews may have concluded from the first three verses that THEY were the ones to proclaim the glory of God to the nations or Gentiles. But these verses are too clear for misunderstanding, that it is the Gentiles who are commanded to praise Him in worship.

"Give to the Lord...Give to the Lord glory and strength... give to the Lord glory... worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness..." It is the "families of the peoples...all the earth" who are to worship Him.

"...bring an offering..." indicates that they are to do more than just speak of His greatness, and to sing His praises.

D. The Coming of the Messiah.

[v10] God's greatness is described in terms of authority. "...The Lord reigns... He shall judge the people righteously." God reigned over Israel and exercised authority over all creation. But there is a special reign ascribed to the Messiah. John the Baptist announced the "Kingdom of God" being "at hand" when he began his ministry, and Jesus preached the same. It came with power on the Pentecost after He ascended into Heaven and sent the Holy Spirit on the apostles in Acts 2, and will continue until He comes again to raise the dead and "judge the people righteously." See Ac. 17:30,31.

[v11-13] "Let the heavens rejoice... let the earth be glad... Let the sea roar... let the field be joyful... all the trees of wood will rejoice..." The rejoicing is because the Lord is "coming to judge the world with righteousness."