

Psalm 96

1. *Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth.*
2. *Sing to the Lord and bless his name; tell out his salvation from day to day.*
3. *Declare his glory among the nations and his wonders among all peoples.*
4. *For great is the Lord and greatly to be praised;
he is more to be feared than all gods.*
5. *For all the gods of the nations are but idols; it is the Lord who made the heavens.*
6. *Honour and majesty are before him; power and splendour are in his sanctuary.*
7. *Ascribe to the Lord, you families of the peoples;
ascribe to the Lord honour and strength.*
8. *Ascribe to the Lord the honour due to his name;
bring offerings and come into his courts.*
9. *O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness;
let the whole earth tremble before him.*
10. *Tell it out among the nations that the Lord is king.
He has made the world so firm that it cannot be moved;
he will judge the peoples with equity.*
11. *Let the heavens rejoice and let the earth be glad;
let the sea thunder and all that is in it.*
12. *Let the fields be joyful and all that is in them;
let all the trees of the wood shout with joy before the Lord.*

13. For he comes, he comes to judge the earth;

with righteousness he will judge the world and the peoples with his truth.

Sing to the Lord a new song;
sing to the Lord, all the earth.

Psalm 96 was composed for the enthronement festival, the main themes of which are creation and judgement.

The creator and judge of the earth requires the worship of all its inhabitants. 'Sing to the Lord, all the earth.' (Verse 1).

This is a "new song". This does not necessarily mean something from the recent past. It could be a familiar hymn renewed in the present experience of God's majesty. We also renew familiar hymns and prayers as we seek to update the language or make them more inclusive.

God's name ('Sing to the Lord and bless his name', v. 2) is his authoritative presence with his people. (see also Psalm 46: 'The Lord of Hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.')

The worshippers are urged to see in God's presence the source of all blessing. and submit to his authority. V7: 'Ascribe to the Lord, you families of the peoples; ascribe to the Lord honour and strength.'

All divine power is within the might of the Lord, so the gods of the nations have no reality, v5: 'For all the gods of the nations are but idols; it is the Lord who made the heavens.'

We may have our own idols, excessive worship of money, consumerism, hedonistic pleasure. When things go well, we have a tendency to forget God and to stray away.

But the psalmist says that we are to worship God, as he is the creator, and the whole world owes its being to him.

In the final part, (vv.10-13) no distinction is made between nature and history. The same decrees of God establish the ordered universe and judge the nations.

We sometimes have to make judgements, in school reports, in references, in job interviews. This is not negative, but positive, to help people to progress, to improve on what they are doing. So, God's

order-producing justice causes universal joy. God comes 'to judge the world with righteousness and the peoples with his truth', to put right what is wrong and what is damaged. So, it is a transforming power, creation always being renewed.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, in whom we live and move and have our being, we pray that you will so guide and govern us by your Holy Spirit that in all the cares and occupations of our daily life we may never forget you, but remember that we are always walking in your sight; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

(New Every Morning)