

## PSALM 96

### DECLARING THE GLORY OF GOD TO THE WHOLE WORLD

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INTRODUCTION: Although the psalm does not have a superscription explicitly denoting authorship, verses 96:1b-13a are recorded in 1 Chronicles 16:23-33 as part of a psalm **David** delivered to Asaph (1Chr16:7) at the celebration associated with the entrance of the ark of the covenant into Jerusalem for the very first time.

God's purpose in creation was to establish His Kingdom on earth, with man as His image-bearer and vice-regent (Gen1:26-28; Cp., Ps8:4-8), which will be the consummation of history (Dan2:44; Rev11:15); the coming of this kingdom, for which the Lord Jesus taught His disciples to pray (Matt6:10), is the grand subject of all of Scripture. Psalm 96 anticipates this coming Kingdom (i.e., the Millennial Kingdom) as a time in which the LORD Himself (in the Person of the Messiah; cf. Heb1:2-3) will reign upon the earth over both Israel and the Gentile nations, and all of creation will glorify Him.

### A SONG OF THE REDEEMED

- [1] Scripture also mentions "a new song" sung by the 24 elders (Rev5:9) and by the 144,000 (Rev14:3). Here, "a new song" is commanded to be sung "unto the LORD" by "all the earth". Psalms are songs intended to be sung. Clearly, the context of this psalm is the Millennial Kingdom.
- [2] Those who sing this song do so to "bless [the LORD's] name", which is a Hebraism denoting the person of God (cf. Jn1:12; Act4:12). This is a "song" of the redeemed (Cp., Rev5:9; 14:3), for they are praising the LORD for "salvation".
- [3] God called Abraham to separate from "the heathen" (i.e., the Gentiles) and to become the head of a new nation, Israel. The establishment of the nation Israel was to be the "glory" of God, in contra-distinction to the Gentile nations, but in the Millennial Kingdom "all people" will glorify God.
- [4] This is one of the places where Scripture speaks of many "gods". When the LORD revealed Himself to Abraham, it was as "the most high God" (Gen14:19), which is a designation that presupposes the existence of other (lesser) "gods" (cf. Ps82:1). The Hebrew word translated "gods" is *elohim*, which can designate spirit beings that dwell in the heavenly dimension, and is used sometimes used of angels (e.g., Ps82:6).
- [5] The "gods" of the (Gentile) "nations" are "idols". But more than mere inanimate objects fashioned by the hands of men, the "idols" of the Gentiles are associated with fallen angels/demons (cf. Deut32:16-17; 1Cor10:20). In contrast, "the LORD" (i.e., the most high God) "made the heavens"; only the LORD is Creator, not only of "the heavens", but of the creatures that dwell in the heavens (i.e., the gods of the Gentiles). Revelation 4:11 asserts that "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; **for thou hast created all things**, and for thy pleasure they are and were created".

- [6] Synonymous parallelism suggests that "honor and majesty" are in parallel with "strength and beauty". Furthermore, "his sanctuary" denotes the very presence of the LORD (cf. 2Sam6:2; 2Kgs19:15; 1Chron13:6; Ps80:1; Isa37:16).
- [7] Here, "ye kindreds of the people" are commanded to give glory to the LORD, where "people" include both Jews and Gentiles.
- [8] Both Jews and Gentiles are commanded to "bring an offering" and "come into his courts". Here, "courts" is synecdoche for a temple, and "offering" designates an animal sacrifice. Animal sacrifices will be made by both Jews and Gentiles in the Millennial Temple (cf. Isa2:2-4; 66:23; Zech14:16-19).
- [9] Only during the Millennial Kingdom will the LORD be worshiped by "all the earth".
- [10] The Millennial Kingdom is characterized as a time when "the LORD reigneth", and He will do so "righteously" (cf. Isa11:1-5); righteousness is the preeminent characteristic of the Kingdom of God. It will be a time when "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Matt6:10).
- [11] Verses 11-12 personify aspects of the creation to join in glorifying the LORD, including "the heavens", "the earth", "the sea"...
- [12] "the field" and "all the trees of the wood". All of the creation has been subject to the curse associated with the fall of man (cf. Gen3:14-19), which will in large measure<sup>1</sup> be removed during the Millennial Kingdom. The Apostle Paul wrote that "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain", waiting to "be delivered from the bondage of corruption" (Rom8:21-22).
- [13] At His 1st coming, the Lord Jesus Christ asserted that He had not come "to judge the world, but to save the world" (Jn12:47). However, the purpose of His 2nd coming will be judge the world in righteousness (Rev19:11). Thus, the psalm ends with a prophecy of coming judgment, which must precede the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom, for Jesus taught that "except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (Jn3:3).

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<sup>1</sup> While the Millennial Kingdom will be a virtual restoration of Edenic conditions on earth, certain aspects of the curse will remain. Namely, there will still be human death (Isa65:20), and the serpent will still eat dust (Isa65:25).