

# Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs: The Master Musician's Melodies

**Bereans Sunday School  
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## Psalm 96 — Sing and Shout: The King Is Coming!

### 1.0 Introducing Psalm 96

- David's bringing the ark of the covenant into Jerusalem was apparently the setting for the composition of Psalm 96 (see 1 Chronicles 16:23-33). Other portions of David's psalm in 1 Chronicles 16 appear in Psalms 105:1-15 and 106:1, 47-48.
  - ✓ "The symbolism of the march, in which God crowned His victories by planting His throne in the enemy's former citadel, is matched by the theme of the psalm, although 1 Chronicles 16 does not claim that these were necessarily the very words that were sung on that occasion." —Derek Kidner, *Psalms 93–150*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentary (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1975), 346-47.
- David seems to have understood that the ark's entrance into Jerusalem was either a picture or a promise of the future coming of the Messiah to reign over the world as King.
- This psalm continues the collection of theocratic psalms (Psalms 93–100).
- One commentator notes a possible progression of Psalms 90–107 relating to the Book of Exodus. He associates Psalms 93–99 with Exodus 14–24 (Michael Wilcock, *The Message of Psalms 73–150*, The Bible Speaks Today [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001], 98, 107).
- Observe the relationships between Psalms 96–99:

Psalm 96	Psalm 97	Psalm 98	Psalm 99
a new song	the LORD reigns	a new song	the LORD reigns
Earth called to praise the LORD	thanksgiving to the LORD	sea and world called to praise the LORD	exaltation of the LORD
the LORD's coming to judge the world	Zion	the LORD's coming to judge the world	Zion
	holy name		holy hill

## 2.0 Reading Psalm 96 (NAU)

- 96:1** Sing to the LORD a new song;  
Sing to the LORD, all the earth.
- 96:2** Sing to the LORD, bless His name;  
Proclaim good tidings of His salvation from day to day.
- 96:3** Tell of His glory among the nations,  
His wonderful deeds among all the peoples.
- 96:4** For great is the LORD and greatly to be praised;  
He is to be feared above all gods.
- 96:5** For all the gods of the peoples are idols,  
But the LORD made the heavens.
- 96:6** Splendor and majesty are before Him,  
Strength and beauty are in His sanctuary.
- 96:7** Ascribe to the LORD, O families of the peoples,  
Ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.
- 96:8** Ascribe to the LORD the glory of His name;  
Bring an offering and come into His courts.
- 96:9** Worship the LORD in holy attire;  
Tremble before Him, all the earth.
- 96:10** 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."
- 96:11** Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice;  
Let the sea roar, and all it contains;
- 96:12** Let the field exult, and all that is in it.  
Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy
- 96:13** 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.

## 3.0 Understanding Psalm 96

### 3.1 Outline

- I. All the Saved Must Worship the King (vv. 1-6)
  - A. Joyful Proclamation of Salvation (vv. 1-3)
  - B. Justifiable Praise for the Savior (vv. 4-6)
- II. All Peoples Must Worship the King (vv. 7-10)
  - A. Preparation for Worship (vv. 7-8)
  - B. Prostration in Worship (vv. 9-10)



- III. All Created Things Will Welcome the King (vv. 11-13)
  - A. The Celebration (vv. 11-12)
  - B. The Coming (v. 13)

### 3.2 Notes

- vv. 1, 2 “Sing”
  - The psalmist issues the command to “sing” three times. Three more imperatives follow: “bless,” “proclaim,” and “tell” (which have a progressive assonance: *bar<sup>e</sup>khu*, *bāshsh<sup>e</sup>ru*, *sāpp<sup>e</sup>ru*).
  - Like Psalm 95, 96 commences with an emphatic call to worship.
- v. 1 “a new song”
  - This is the third time in the Psalter that psalmists have employed this phraseology and it will occur three more times.
    - ✓ See Psalms 33:3; 40:3; 98:1; 144:9; 149:1.
  - It is not a newly composed psalm, but a psalm celebrating a fresh experience of divine action or being struck anew by the amazing glory of God’s person and deeds. Cp. Lamentations 3:22-23.
  - In this context the song might be new because it anticipates new divine deeds yet to come in the future.
- v. 1 “all the earth”
  - This phrase is the first of ten revealing the global focus of this psalm.
  - “The earth” brackets the psalm in an inclusio (vv. 1, 13).
  - Commentators often refer to Psalm 96 as a “missionary psalm,” as well as a “millennial psalm.”
- v. 2 “Proclaim good tidings of His salvation”
  - The first four imperatives of the psalm command the proclamation of praise to the LORD, the next two imperatives command the proclamation of His praise to mankind.
  - Here is the evangelistic thrust—the “good tidings” or “gospel.”
  - This proclamation is the duty of a herald who walks ahead of the victorious king and announces the report of victory.
- vv. 4, 5 “all gods . . . gods”
  - How can God (*'elohim*) be compared to those that are idols (literally, “worthless things,” *'elilim*—used in the Psalter only here and 97:7)? The play on words brings out the contrast.
    - ✓ Compare 1 Corinthians 8:4.
- vv. 7, 8 “Ascribe”
  - These verses are a near repetition of Psalm 29:1-2. That psalm addresses these imperatives to the angels, but Psalm 96 addresses all people everywhere.
  - Compare this threefold imperative to the threefold “sing” with which this psalm begins. It depicts a crescendo of universal praise.

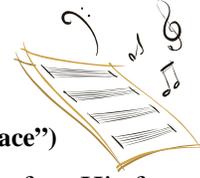
- It “contributes to the air of almost irrepressible excitement at the prospect of God’s coming. The creation’s ‘eager longing’, of which Paul speaks in Romans 8:19, breaks out here into singing at the moment of fulfillment.”—Kidner, *Psalms 93–150*, 347.
- **v. 9** “Worship the LORD in holy attire”
  - Here the psalmist refers figuratively to a solemn and sanctified attitude upon entering the Temple service.
  - See notes on Psalm 29:2 ([www.drbarrick.org/sermons](http://www.drbarrick.org/sermons)).
    - ✓ Angels are involved in Psalm 29, but people here.
    - ✓ Similar to the figure of being clothed in righteousness (cf. Job 29:14; Psalm 132:9; Isaiah 61:10; Revelation 19:8).
- **v. 10** “The LORD reigns”
  - This is the central theme of the psalm.
  - See the same kind of phraseology in Psalms 47:8; 93:1; 97:1; 99:1.
  - Compare the contexts of Isaiah 52:7 and Revelation 19:6.
- **v. 10** “the world is firmly established”
  - There is no need for anxiety. God is in control of the earth—it is stable and reliable.
- **v. 10** “He will judge the peoples with equity”
  - At His advent, the Lord will bring justice and fairness with complete integrity. No capricious or arbitrary decisions. He will set everything right.
  - See Psalm 9:8.
- **v. 12** “will sing for joy”
  - This verb has the concept of the ringing shout of joy, exultation, and victory. It is the final of five verbs in verses 11 and 12 that have built to this crescendo: “be glad” > “rejoice” > “roar” > “exult” > “give a ringing, joyful shout”!
  - Creation itself reacts to welcome and celebrate the coming of the LORD, the High King.
- **v. 13** “He is coming”
  - Coming to “judge”—set the world right.
  - Traditionally, Psalm 96 was sung or recited on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day—looking at the first and second advents of Christ. This same thought is also conveyed by Psalm 98, which inspired Isaac Watts to write “Joy to the World!”
  - See Revelation 22:20.



#### 4.0 Singing Psalm 96

### O Sing a New Song to the Lord

(Tune: "Oh God Our Help in Ages Past" or "Amazing Grace")



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|--|---|
| <p><b>1</b> O sing a new song to the Lord;<br/>Sing all, the earth, to God,<br/>To God sing, bless His Name, show still<br/>His saving health abroad.</p> <p><b>3</b> Do ye ascribe unto the Lord,<br/>Of people every tribe,<br/>Glory do ye unto the Lord<br/>And mighty power ascribe.</p> <p><b>5</b> In beauty of His holiness,<br/>O do the Lord adore;<br/>Likewise let all the earth throughout<br/>Tremble His face before.</p> | <p><b>2</b> Great honor is before His face,<br/>And majesty divine;<br/>Strength is within His holy place,<br/>And there doth beauty shine.</p> <p><b>4</b> Give ye the glory to the Lord<br/>That to His Name is due;<br/>Come ye into His courts, and bring<br/>An offering with you.</p> |
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— *Scottish Psalter*, 1650

### The King Is Coming

(Bill Gaither, Gloria Gaither, Charley Millhoff – © 1971 Gaither Music)

The market place is empty, no more traffic in the streets;  
All the builders' tools are silent, no more time to harvest wheat.  
Busy housewives cease their labors, in the courtroom no debate;  
Work on earth is all suspended as the King comes through the gate.

Oh the King is coming, the King is coming;  
I just heard the trumpets sounding and now His face I see.  
Oh the King is coming, the King is coming; praise God, He's coming for me.

Happy faces line the hallways, those whose lives have been redeemed;  
Broken homes He has mended, those from prison He has freed.  
Little children and the aged, hand in hand stand all aglow,  
Who were crippled, broken, ruined dressed in garments white as snow.

I can hear the chariots rumble; I can see the marching throng.  
The flurry of God's trumpets spells the end of sin and wrong.  
Regal robes are now unfolding, heaven's grandstand's all in place;  
Heaven's choir is now assembled, start to sing Amazing Grace.

Oh the King is coming, the King is coming;  
I just heard the trumpets sounding and now His face I see.  
Oh the King is coming, the King is coming; praise God, He's coming for me.

#### 5.0 Praying Psalm 96

- I praise You, O Lord, because You saved me. [vv. 1-2]
- Lord, You are great and I praise You abundantly. [v. 4]

- Father, I ask that all people might praise You. [v. 7]
- O God, may Your kingdom come and Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. [v. 13]
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## **6.0 Applying Psalm 96**

- Worship the LORD and celebrate His deeds in song.
- Only the LORD Himself can save us from our sins.
- The LORD alone is in control of all things.
- The LORD Himself is coming again to judge the world. “Amen! Come quickly, Lord Jesus!” (cp. Revelation 22:20).

Supposing the Psalm to have been sung antiphonally, verses 1 and 2, 4 and 5, 7 and 8, may have been sung by two bands of Levites alternately, the whole choir taking up the concluding verses of each stanza, verses 3, 6, 9. Then in the last strophe, verses 10, 11, 12 would be sung antiphonally, the whole choir taking up the grand solemn close of ver. 13, with fullest expression of voice and instrument.

— J. J. Stewart Perowne, *The Book of Psalms*, 2 vols.  
(reprint; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1966), 2:196