

Psalms 96 - Bringing the Future Into the Present

by Art Katz

Psalm 96 is a preview of the future, and the anticipation of the Lord's coming should influence our present and enable us to sing a new song day-by-day.

Scripture: Psalm 96:1

Topics: "Hope in Christ", "Eschatology"

Description

Art Katz emphasizes the prophetic nature of Psalms 96, portraying it as a celebration of the future fulfillment of God's promises where all nations will rejoice and worship Him. He encourages believers to live in anticipation of this future, which can uplift spirits and dispel negativity in the present. Katz highlights the coming of the Lord as a pivotal event that will bring perfect justice and equity, eliminating racial enmity and restoring creation to its intended harmony. He calls for a new song of praise that reflects God's current work in our lives, reminding us that our faith is dynamic and rooted in the hope of the future. This anticipation should inspire us to live out God's righteousness now, as we await His glorious return.

Transcript

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How would you label this psalm? What kind of a psalm is it? Does it celebrate the God of Israel's past? Is it speaking of the present? Is it an eschatological psalm that speaks of the eternal future? My sensing is that it is definitely the future.

Can you picture this psalm being sung in the day that it is fulfilled? All the nations and all the earth rejoicing before the Lord and giving Him praise. For us, now, it is almost like a preview. It is going to happen, saints, and we ought to be in anticipation of its fulfillment. I believe that this very anticipation would obliterate any kind of sulkiness, moodiness, depression, and discouragement. Just the anticipation ought to already now and presently exert an influence that lifts us up. Remember that this psalm is inspired by the Spirit of God. It's the Word of truth. It shall come to pass. All of His creation will exalt Him

and celebrate their Creator in truth. Every other false religion and every false ideology for which the nations have given themselves will dissipate away, and come to nothing. There will be only one God, one acknowledgment, and one worship in all the earth.

There will no longer be the enmity that exists between the different ethnic groups. Right now we are experiencing the last death rattles of a world system under the prince of darkness that capitalizes on racial differences and turning the one against the other.

When the Lord comes, "He will judge the peoples with equity" (v.10). What does that mean? Equity is derived from the same root as equal or equality, which is to say, He will judge fairly and impartially. He's not going to be influenced by someone's rank or race or any such thing. There'll be perfect justice and righteousness in the earth. Righteousness will prevail. There'll be "a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwells righteousness." Nobody will ever feel that they're going to be slighted or taken advantage of. He will rule with equity. What a thing to look forward to! We can even begin to practice it now!

We are living in a sub-standard world now. Even nature is infested with disease and death. It says that when the Lord comes in His Millennial rule, all animals will be eating straw. They are not going to be eating each other. There will be a perfect balance. The whole of creation will suit the purposes for which it was designed. Each will live according to the way God intended. There will be a beautiful harmony. You will be able to put your hand right into a cobra's den and not be fearful. What we are seeing now in this final paroxysm of nations destroying one another is the last death throes of a world system that is presently being judged. The Lord is coming and He will rule in equity and righteousness.

The coming of the Lord is the pivotal point of the faith. It is the eschatological genius of a faith that looks toward a future event. It is like a magnet, and everything is drawn to that one thing; and that one thing is the Lord's coming. What an event! The Lord Himself, the Creator, will come as King to rule and reign over His own creation through His nation, Israel, which He will Himself have restored out of its own final judgments. All of the earth and all of the nations will have seen the glory of the Lord, both in His judgment and in His restoration. It is the climax of the ages. It has always been the 'blessed hope' of the church. The rapture theory has never been that hope. But this hope has a blessing. There is a life and a vitality in it that springs alive and touches everything whether you are making your waffle mix in the kitchen, changing your baby's diaper, or resolving a crisis in the church. Whatever it is, there is something blessed that is working to raise us up and to encourage us amidst the weight of all of the things that would otherwise press down.

We all need to sing to Him a new song. This is not Israel alone. She is only the key. Israel is the nation for the nations, but God's jealousy is for His whole creation. The veil will be off from the nations, and what a rejoicing shall spring forth from the earth! That does not mean we need to compose a new lyric. It is something that expresses what God has done for us that is current and alive in our own experience. There should always be a newness in whatever we are about in God.

This is the faith. The future is not some static category that we mentally acknowledge. We are the peculiar people who draw from the future in our present life, and it changes everything presently. It enables us to sing a new song day-by-day, because tomorrow will be different from today. The Lord is ever fresh and ever-living.

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