



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of Dan Duncan

Psalm 96: 1-13

Summer 2020

"A New Song"

TRANSCRIPT

Good morning to all of you. It's good to be with you again this Sunday morning. We finished a series last week and so we're in between series. And I'll just give you a heads up, in the weeks to come, I think in about two or three weeks I'll begin a series in Joshua. But I often like, in between series, to do a Psalm. And so I'm going to do two Psalms in between the series, and the Psalm this morning is Psalm 96. So if you have your place, follow along with me as I read,

¹Sing to the LORD a new song;

Sing to the LORD, all the earth.

²Sing to the LORD, bless His name;

Proclaim good tidings of His salvation from day to day.

³Tell of His glory among the nations,

His wonderful deeds among all the peoples.

⁴For great is the LORD and greatly to be praised;

He is to be feared above all gods.

⁵For all the gods of the peoples are idols,

But the LORD made the heavens.

⁶Splendor 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 exalt, 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.

Psalms 96: 1-13

May the Lord bless this reading of His Word, and bless our time together in study. Let's bow together in a word of prayer.

Father, what a glorious text this is, Psalm 96, and the praise it gives to You and the instruction that it gives to us, to sing that praise. Sing it among each other, but sing it within our hearts, fundamentally, to be a people who are full of joy—rejoicing. May that be the vision, the appearance, the reality of the church that the world sees around us—a people full of joy and hope because we have that. And the Psalm reminds us of

that. And so, Lord, I pray that as we study this together, You would bless us with the understanding of the things that the psalmist praised You for, and that they would be praises that arise naturally within our hearts, and that it's reflected in our behavior, in our demeanor, and in the things we say to others.

So Lord, bless us, build us up in the faith, equip us spiritually for this time together, and the week to come. Lord, the Psalm praises You as the sovereign God of all things. You are the creator, You are the ruler of this world, and You are coming. Your Son is coming again into this world to bring justice and establish righteousness all across this earth. And so that's what we're to look forward to and we're to be encouraged by.

And so, Lord, as we consider the material things of life, and we pray for that for ourselves and our congregation and for our friends and for others, we look to You as the One that can bless. And whatever things we ask for, You can bless us in the material things of life. You can bless our health. You can protect us from the dangers that are without. And the dangers are really innumerable. We are aware of it in this particular time because of this virus that is the plague upon the land, and across the globe.

But even when this goes away and when this clears up, the dangers will be multitudes, and things we don't even see, in every moment of our life, from what we breathe to what we eat to the things we avoid on the road—the dangers are innumerable. We just don't see them and we're not aware of them so often because You are protecting us at every moment. So we can look to You with confidence, and pray for help.

We pray, Lord, that you'd bless the health of this entire congregation, and protect us. And we pray that for just our population generally. Bless the people of this land and across the globe, that there would be healing. I pray for our government, that You give them wisdom as they continue to deal with these issues. I pray for a resolution of things.

So Lord, we look to You. We thank You for the time we have together now, to think of You as who You are in Your greatness, and the foundation that that give us in our thinking, to provide wisdom for us in our conduct. So Lord, bless us now as we again

sing another hymn. I pray that You'd use that to prepare our time of worship and study together. We look to You to do that. Thank You for Your Son who has made this possible. And it's in His name we pray. Amen.

I think we would all acknowledge the importance of worship. But if you have wondered about the right way to worship, then Psalm 96 has a lesson for you—has a lesson for all of us. Worship is important. True worship is directed to the Lord and is based on truth. So it requires knowledge. If it is informed with truth, it will be joyful. It will stir the emotions. And all of that is in our Psalm; Psalm 96.

The Hebrew Bible doesn't give the name of the author. The Greek translation of it, the Septuagint, does and it attributes the Psalm to David; and there's really no reason to doubt that. In fact there's reason to think that is probably the case. And one reason to believe it is, the middle verses of Psalm 96 are found in 1 Chronicles 16 in a Psalm David composed when he brought the Ark of the Covenant up to Jerusalem.

Well that was probably the most joyful day in King David's life and may be the historical event behind this Psalm. The Ark was sacred. It was more than a box containing the tablets with the Ten Commandments. It is described in the Scriptures as being the place where the Lord of hosts is enthroned above the cherubim. It was the symbol of His heavenly throne. But it had been in exile for decades. It was captured by the Philistines when they defeated Israel at the battle of Aphek. But it proved too hot for them to handle, so they got rid of it. Put it on an ox cart and let it return to Israel, first to Beth-shemesh, and then to Kiriath-jearim. After a failed attempt to move it to Jerusalem, it was kept in the house of Obed-Edom.

Finally, after years of storage in temporary shelters, David brought the Ark of the Covenant up to its permanent place in Jerusalem, his newly conquered capitol. And, as I said, I don't think there was a more joyful day in David's life. Thousands of people were there to celebrate. There were choirs and an orchestra. The priests carrying the Ark advanced only a few feet when they would stop and make a sacrifice. There was shouting; trumpets played, and David walked before the procession. And then he was so

overcome by the awe and the meaning of the moment that David danced before the Lord.

The joy of that event is expressed in Psalm 96. It calls for joyful worship of the Lord, to sing to Him, to recount God's greatness, His glory, His deeds, and be joyful because He is coming. That's how the Psalm ends. "...for He, *(the Lord)*, is coming, for He is coming to judge the earth..." (vs13).

The coming of the Ark to Jerusalem, the throne of God to the City of David, is seen as a prophecy of the future when the Lord will come in triumph to conquer the world and to reign over it in righteousness. He will judge it; He will rule it righteously. That's the future, and that is reason for joy and celebration for the believer; because we are joined to Him. We're joined to Christ, and therefore we are, as Paul wrote in Romans, chapter 8, verse 37, "...more than conquerors." Jews and Gentiles. In fact, the Psalm has that scope of Jews and Gentiles; Israel and the nations. It is worldwide in its scope.

The New American Standard Bible that I'm using follows the Hebrew Bible in dividing the Psalm into three divisions, verses 1 through 6; verses 7 through 10; and verses 11 through 13. In the first six verses the command is given to proclaim salvation and God's glory among the peoples of the earth. He made the heavens; and He is greater than all their gods. So the message of the Psalm is to the world. It's evangelistic. Israel was to be a light to the nations.

But the instruction given here is to God's people. It is given to the saved. It's given to the evangelists, those who will spread the good news. And in verses 1 and 2, we are directed to sing. Three times, in verses 1 and 2, that command is given. Be joyful. This is worship. And it is testimony to the world of the reality of the things we believe, and that the world should see within us, it should have seen in Israel.

It begins, "O sing to the LORD a new song." And since the Psalm ends with the LORD coming and ruling the earth, that new order of righteousness and glory, may be the subject of the song. It may be the new song that is to be sung. That is salvation ultimately—the LORD's return and kingdom to come. But the Psalm is also about His

wonderful deeds in verse 3, and of His splendor and majesty in verse 6—of who He is and what He has done.

Jeremiah wrote in Lamentations, chapter 3, verse 23, that the Lord's mercies are "...new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness." Every morning, His mercies are new. And we ought to see that; we ought to see that all around us. We ought to see that in our life, because it's true for us whether we know it or not. —And we ought to be able to sing. It ought to be a natural thing within us to see these mercies around us; and the mercies in our lives should well up within our hearts a song as a result of that; of some new blessing that we've experienced.

And as I prayed about the innumerable dangers around us, that's really something I saw in Calvin's *Institutes* early on. He talks about how the dangers are innumerable. If we really realized how great they were, we wouldn't go outside of the house for the danger of it. But, the Lord is sovereign, and that is what gives God's people the confidence to do what they do. —To go out and live life as we should; obediently, confidently, because we know the Lord who sits on His throne is guiding us and protecting us. And so that being the case, Jeremiah is completely correct. "New every morning" are these faithful acts that God does for us, and we should see that in our lives.

So three times, we're told to sing to the Lord the blessings that He has given to us. That's worship. It is directed toward the Lord, not ourselves. I think that's fundamental, (I'll come back to that point). It's directed to the Lord. It is about Him, it's not about us. That's the object of true worship.

You see that in the first three verses: "Sing to the LORD a new song; Sing to the LORD, all the Earth. Sing to the LORD, bless His name; Proclaim good tidings of His salvation from day to day." (Because every day we're experiencing these things.) "Tell of His glory among the nations, His wonderful deeds among all the peoples."

One of the great blessings we praise God for, that is stated here, is God's worldwide blessing of grace. It's for the Gentiles. It's for all the nations. In other words, we worship the Lord for the breadth, the width of His love and grace. It is wide. It is

broad. Salvation is for the ends of the earth. We praise and worship Him for that worldwide grace, that worldwide mercy and love.

But He is the One the whole world is to worship, not simply Israel, (and that's really the object of this), but the whole world, because He is the God of the whole world; the only God—the world's gods are no gods. And that's the praise of verses 4 through 6; "For great is the LORD and greatly to be praised; He is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the peoples are idols, But the LORD made the heavens. Splendor and majesty are before Him, Strength and beauty are in His sanctuary."

The recognition here of other "*gods*" isn't David ascribing reality to those gods; it's acknowledging that the pagans believed in other gods. And that's a reality of that ancient world.

But the psalmist's description of them as "*idols*" showed that they are not real. In fact, the word translated *idols* is a word that also means *worthless*. They are worthless things, false ideas. That's all. They are nothing. In fact, the psalmist, (David, I think), makes the point with a play on words. The common word for *God* in the Hebrew text, (for the real God), is *Elohiym*. It's a plural word. So sometimes it's used of the false gods because it is a plural word. And it's used here in that way in verse 4. But the word that David used to describe them as worthless is similar to the word Elohim. It's *eliyl*. So he said to the heathen, your *Elohiym* are *eliyl*. —Worthless, good for nothing.

Derek Kidner commented, "This robust challenge to the accepted ideas of the day invites the Christian to be equally unimpressed by currently revered nonsense, whatever its pedigree or patronage." Now by "pedigree", I take him to mean ideas that are, in our modern times, sacred. That they are like sacred cows. They're untouchable. They're held without question. Don't question them because the debate is over, —"This is the truth." And "patronage" because your job may depend on you holding to it, not questioning it, and not speaking up about it.

Nevertheless they're nonsense. They are the idols of this age. And we should be like David and expose them as such, show the stupidity of them, and certainly not yield to them in any way in our thinking, and not believe in them.

In David's day polytheism, with its pantheon of gods, was the accepted belief. No one questioned that. That was beyond debate. That was universal. There are many gods, and they control the weather, they control every aspect of life. And their lives, the lives of the ancient heathen, revolved around those gods and around the magic of their religion to manipulate the gods and obtain what they needed; whether it be a harvest or fruitfulness of some kind. Well we understand all that to be nonsense. But we live in a day with our own myths.

Christians favor science. And one of, I think, the myths that we hear is, "we're against science." No, we're not against science. We've very much in favor of science. And the Bible is not in conflict with science. But when scientists ignore God, they inevitably come up with foolish ideas. It's just the result of not beginning in the right place with one's thinking.

So we shouldn't be impressed or intimidated by anti-theistic ideas offered under the banner of science. In time, modern myths will be seen to be just that—and worthless idols. But Scripture, on the other hand, remains true and timeless. "All flesh is grass," Isaiah said. "The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever." (Is 40:8). That was as true in Isaiah's day as it was in Moses' day and in Adam's day—and in our day. The Word of our God declares here, in verse 5, that the heathen's gods are "worthless", and that "the Lord made the heavens." That was a revolutionary idea in that time.

The Lord God made the heavens. And, of course, that's how the Bible begins. The first note of revelation is, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." (Gen 1:1). And that's reflected here. David knew that because he knew that revelation—that divine revelation of Genesis 1:1. Again, Kidner commented, "that is still a valid retort to those who would shelve the question of creation and start their thinking at some secondary point, that is, "That the Lord created the heavens." No, they want to start at the secondary point."

That is so true. That's what men do today. And when I say men, I mean brilliant men. Mike Black talked about how smart the fool is. And in many ways the fool is

brilliant. We have brilliant men in science and all other areas of life. And they talk about a “big bang”. But they won't talk about the origin of the “hypothetical dense particle of energy that suddenly exploded or suddenly began expanding.” They can't explain it. They can't answer the ultimate question about the origin of things. So don't be intimidated and disturbed by these kinds of things,—“The Lord made the heavens.” That's where we begin.

He's worthy of all praise. And in verse 6, the psalmist resumes his praise in worship. “Splendor and majesty are before Him, Strength and beauty are in His sanctuary.” David may have been thinking of the tent that he would set up in Jerusalem when the Ark entered the city and where it was placed—the earthly sanctuary. —But that would, (as glorious as it may have been), would only have foreshadowed the earthly sanctuary when the Lord actually comes in the future.

Now if the coming of the Ark and its presence in Jerusalem was glorious in David's day, what must it be like when the Lord comes as the conquering King and establishes righteousness on the earth? —Something beyond our comprehension.

Well that's the past and that's the future but this still applies to us now. The sanctuary of the Lord is the place of spiritual beauty and strength, presently—of spiritual health and healing for us today. His sanctuary is where He dwells, it's where He meets us, nourishes us, and corrects us.

Asaph, from Psalms 73, was deeply disturbed by the prosperity of the wicked, (and we can sympathize with that), to the point that he questioned his faith. He questioned his faith until, he said in verse 17 of the Psalm, “...I came into the sanctuary of God.” That is where he got perspective. That is where he got revelation and realized that God was in command of the situation. I would say, probably, where he was reminded of the truth that he already knew, but it came back to him with force and with great correction. God was in complete control, and He had, as Asaph said, “set the wicked in slippery places.” (Ps 73:18). Their day is temporary. The day of righteousness is coming.

But today, for us, His sanctuary is His Word. It is in the Scriptures that we fellowship with Him, and He teaches us, as He taught Asaph. And it is, as David said in verse 6, a place of "Strength and beauty..."

Now I don't want to limit the application here of the sanctuary to Bible study. I think it would involve more than that. I think it would involve this meeting here that we're having with God's people on a Sunday morning and a Sunday evening. And later, David speaks of coming to His courts; Jesus said, "Where two or three are gathered in My name, that He is there in their midst." Revelation, chapters 1 and 2 depict Him as walking among the lamp stands; walking among the seven churches of Asia Minor. I like to think of Him as walking among us; and we should think in those terms, that we have a real relationship with Him. So His sanctuary, it seems to me, involves all of that for us in the present dispensation.

Still, fellowship with the Lord and worship of Him occurs through His revelation. General revelation, the glory of God in the heavens, we sang about that in one of our hymns this morning. Certainly, we learn of Him from that, but in a very general, unspecific way. So the most important form of revelation, what we desperately need, is special revelation—the Word of God; Scriptures.

That's how the Lord communicates with us. It is the basis for our communication with Him. It's the basis for worship. We see that in these verses where we are invited to sing and where we're invited to ascribe greatness to the Lord.

The name, LORD, Yahweh, or Jehovah is itself a great revelation. It's meaning was explained to Moses at the burning bush where, you'll remember, the flame burned but the bush wasn't consumed. That was so curious to Moses it drew him close to it and he studied it. And it illustrates who the Lord is. It's a great picture of who He is in His essence. The flame didn't need the bush for fuel. It was self-sufficient.

And that is a picture of our Lord. He is self-existent. He exists in the world, but He's not dependent upon the world for His existence. The world depends upon Him. He existed in Israel—but He didn't need Israel to exist. Israel needed Him. He carried them like an eagle carrying its young on its wings. He exists in the church, but the church

doesn't give life to Him—He gives life to us. The Lord is self-sufficient because the Lord is self-existent. That's how He explained His name to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And Moses was to tell the Israelites, "I AM has sent me to you." (Ex 3:13-14).

Well that is what Yahweh is. He is the self-existent God, without beginning, without end. And because He is self-existent He cannot be frustrated in anything. He will always fulfill His promises and His will. His name reveals that. All of that is reason to praise Him in our hearts as we think about that—as well as to praise Him in the congregation, verbally, as well as inaudibly, within ourselves.

But we know that, and that is stirred up within us from His Word—from His revelation. So again, fellowship with the Lord and worship go together. But both are dependent upon divine revelation. When we are studying Scripture seriously, He is there with us. That's application for us now. Still this statement of David's will have its ultimate fulfillment when the event of verse 13 occurs and the Lord comes. Then, everything will change and He will be with us. The universe will change. This world will change.

Now, because the Lord's worthy of our worship, this second division of the Psalm beginning in verse 7, gives instruction to everyone to give Him worship. "Ascribe to the LORD, O families of the peoples, Ascribe to the LORD glory and strength." The "families of the peoples" are all mankind. There is one God, the creator of the heavens, the creator of all the peoples, all things—so all mankind is to worship. Three times we are told to "ascribe glory to God." It corresponds to the three commands to 'Sing to the LORD.'

"Ascribe to the LORD glory and strength, and the glory of His name." His name is His person. When we hear the name of God, something like that, it speaks of the person of God, and all that's represented in His name, His attributes and His ways. And they, those ancient Israelites, and we presently, they were and we are today to ascribe glory to Him.

David leaves "*glory*", this word *glory*, undefined. So we might wonder, well, what is it? What exactly is God's glory? One thing it is, is riches—wealth. That at least illustrates what it is. And I say that because in Genesis, chapter 31, verse 1, the sons of Laban where Jacob had been living for some 20 years, became very jealous of Jacob, because over those 20 years he had worked very hard and he had accumulated great wealth. And they speak of that. They speak of his wealth.

But the word that is translated wealth, "this wealth", is the word for *glory*. So *glory* is *wealth*. At least that illustrates God's glory. It is His wealth and His attributes, like self-existence, are among that wealth of God. He doesn't need gold or silver literally. He has spiritual wealth. —And it's His attributes. And so I say, it's His aseity, His self-existence. But I think Paul helps us here with His great doxology at the end of Romans 11, where in verses 33-34 he says, (and he says it in total amazement), "Oh, the depth of the riches..." (*the depth of the wealth*), "...both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!" Now this is the end of a section in Romans, Romans 9, 10, and 11, three chapters that are all about God's salvation for Israel.

Paul has been preaching justification through faith alone in Christ alone and how the Gentiles are saved through that. Everyone is saved through that. And so the question naturally arises, "Well, what about Israel?" They're not believing that. And all these promises have been given to Israel. What about the Jew? And so in those chapters, Paul answers that question. The nation is in unbelief. But their failure did not remove them from God's promise of salvation. It actually, by their failure, opened up salvation to the Gentiles, whose salvation will in turn provoke Jews to jealousy, leading to their salvation—which will result, Paul says, in blessing for the whole world.

As Paul reflected on God's plan of salvation for the world, Jew and Gentile, he marveled at the wisdom, grace, and power of it. No one was God's counselor in that. No one could have thought up this great plan of salvation. Salvation is all His plan; and all His doing. So he ended the chapter with the statement, "For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen." (Rom 11:36).

Psalms 96 has the same breadth or scope as that—salvation for the world. Calling Gentiles to forsake their foolish idols and come to the Lord; as we might urge some individual today to forsake their foolish ideas about materialism and naturalism and come to the Lord who is the creator and sustainer of all things.

The Lord's plan in salvation and His grace and power in doing it—that is His glory. Ascribe that to Him. The glory of His wisdom and knowledge, His plans and power, His goodness and love. What Paul describes in Ephesians, chapter 3, verse 18, when he speaks of the love of God in terms of its “breadth and length and height and depth”. There's no measure of it all. It's bottomless. It's ceiling-less. It's without bounds. That's the love and the grace of God. All of that is the Lord's strength and the glory of His name. His love and grace are infinite—wide and long and deep.

Do you think about that? Does that enter your mind during the day? Do you ever reflect upon those things, or do you get so caught up in the details of life that the Lord doesn't really enter into much of your thinking? His mercies are with us every day—and these are the kinds of things that we ought to reflect upon.

The Gentiles were to acknowledge that. They were to “ascribe to Him” these great things. And then, at the end of verse 8, we are instructed to, “Bring an offering and come into His courts.” Now that's worth noting. One of the older commentators, Peron, did note that. And he made the point that, (actually he quoted others who made the point), that, “We go into God's courts to give rather than to get.” That's true. And that's important to understand. Worship is not about us getting, but about us giving. Worship, if genuine, is a natural response to the goodness and the greatness of God. If we get it, if it really grabs hold of us, if it gets us I should say, then we will have emotion in our worship. It will be natural. But we express our adoration to the Lord.

Then in verse 9 David said, “Worship the LORD in holy attire. Tremble before Him all the earth.” What's the holy attire? I'm not sure what that is, but if I were to guess, I would say robes of righteousness. Like that pictured in Zechariah 3 where the filthy garments of Joshua the high priest were removed and cleaned. “Festal robes” and a “turban” were put upon him. “See”, the LORD said, “I have taken your iniquity away

from you." From head to foot he was clothed in clean garments—holy attire. He was made acceptable.

That would then speak, perhaps, to the Gentile's salvation. "Be justified." Maybe that's the idea. What I do know is that no one can approach God without that, without being justified, without being forgiven of sin and declared righteous, without having the righteousness of Christ imputed to them. And then with that, of course, we must approach Him with a clean heart, with pure motives in worship.

Now verse 10 is a kind of transition between verses 7 and 9, and verses 11 through 13, with the command to proclaim God's rule over the earth, now—but also it will be in regard to His reign in the future. You see both of those meanings in verse 10. "Say among the nations, "the LORD reigns;...", (*that is, He's reigning right now*), "...Indeed, the world is firmly established, It will not be moved; He will judge the peoples with equity." In the future He will do that.

That's what the Gentiles were to be told. —that it is the LORD, it is Yahweh, who governs the world, who rules the universe. Not the false gods—not the god of the storm, or the god of the harvest, or the god of...whatever. God, the Lord GOD, Yahweh rules it all. He rules over time and space. And you find this all through the Word of God. Glorious statements by the prophets, like Isaiah in Isaiah 40, verse 22, where he speaks of the LORD, "...who sits above the circle of the earth, All its inhabitants are as grasshoppers."

Daniel 2, verse 21, He changes "the times and the epochs; He removes kings and establishes kings..." It's Hebrews, chapter 1, verse 3, where he speaks of Christ who, "upholds all things by the word of His power." It is actually, 'He is presently bearing along, or carrying all things along by the word of His power'—which means He's moving time and space, and making history according to His will and plan. He is in control. That's what the Gentiles were to know. He's not one of many gods. He's not the greatest of the gods. He's the only God. He rules now. That's reason to praise and worship Him. He's sovereign over life.

The one who is carrying the ages along is carrying His people along to their appointed end. He's in control of your life, now, you, individually. He's in control of your life to ensure that you will arrive safely at your glorious destination. That's something to give you, as a believer in Jesus Christ, hope and joy and make you want to praise Him for it. He's sovereign and good, and He's in control.

But it's the second promise given of His future reign over the nations that begins the praise and worship of the third stanza. "He will judge the people with equity. Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; Let the sea roar, and all it contains; Let the field exalt, and all that is in it. Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy 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." (vs 10c-13).

"All nature" here is personified, giving it human characteristics described as, "breaking out in joy and praise." We do when we experience God's blessing. And I think that is the point here, nature will be blessed. It's not going to literally sing or do these things, but the point is to describe nature as being blessed. And this is a typical way for the writers of Scripture to describe the future blessings of the world—of the material world. Isaiah 35, verse 1 and 2 we read, "The wilderness and the desert will be glad, And the Arabah will rejoice and blossom; like the crocus. It will blossom profusely And rejoice with rejoicing and shout of joy."

Paul does the same thing in Romans 8, verses 19 through 23. He describes nature as subject in the present age to futility due to man's fall. But he also describes the universe and nature, as eagerly waiting the revealing of the sons of God, because then it "will be set free." (vs21). And so it's viewed as waiting for that with hope. In the meantime it "groans" under the burden of this curse.

But that great day is coming. It's what Jesus called "the regeneration", in Matthew 19, verse 28, when the Son of Man will sit on His throne, and the 12 apostles will judge the 12 tribes of Israel. In other words, the whole world will be transformed; glorified; materially as well as spiritually. Nature, as well as the saints. It will be so great that David here describes nature as rejoicing. And that will happen, as verse 13 states,

when the Lord comes, "He will judge the world in righteousness And the peoples..." (*all peoples of the world*), "...in His faithfulness."

David saw that event prophesied when bringing the Ark of the Covenant up to Jerusalem. The Ark, again, was the symbolic throne of God; and it's coming to Jerusalem pictured that future coming of the king. That's the destiny of the world—Christ's reign of righteousness. The things that men cannot do as they seek to establish justice in every generation, He will do. It's the hope of God's people. We will someday be fully righteous. We will be holy. We will be perfect. And society will be as well. In the meantime, in this present time, we press on, knowing that victory is certain.

Now that should give us joy today in the midst of trials and that should cause us to want to praise and worship the Lord—to sing to Him. That's the purpose of Psalm 96, to have us sing to the Lord joyfully. Verse 1 begins with a "new song". There's a "new song" in the Book of Revelation, also. Chapter 5 gives a vision of heaven. And there is a book in God's hand. It is the book of human destiny. It's the book that guarantees the kingdom to the one who can take it. The book is God's will for this world but it's sealed up. And as long as the book is closed, events cannot unfold and our future is uncertain.—And no one is able to open the book. So John begins to weep. He begins to despair.

Then the Lamb of God comes. He takes the book. He can open it and carry out the plan and fulfill God's future for the world. That's when heaven responds in joy and sings, "...a new song saying, "Worthy are You to take the book and break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood *men* from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth." " (Revelation 5, verses 9 and 10). That's our hope. He will come in power and glory and justice, and He will reign, and we will reign with Him upon the earth.

Why? Why will we reign with Him? Why is that our future? Because when He came the first time, He came in humility, and purchased us with His blood. Can you say

He died for me? Can you say He purchased me? If not, realize this: You are a sinner, as we all are, and you need a Savior. There's only one Savior, Jesus Christ. And only by His death can your sins be removed and your guilt taken away, and righteousness be given to you.

So look to Him. If you haven't done that, trust in Him. By faith, lay hold of His sacrifice on the cross for you. He will save you, and make you a son of God, child of God, a daughter of God, an heir to the kingdom to come. And then live with that hope. May God help you to do that.

We're going to close in prayer, now, and then I'm going to ask the Lord to bless us, not only for the things we've considered, but for what we will do when taking the Lord's Supper. So ask Him to prepare our hearts for that. Let's bow together in prayer.

Father, we do thank You for Your goodness to us, and we're reminded from our Psalm that You are worthy of all praise. And we should be singing to You, and singing a new song, daily, for all the new things You do to us. Help us to become more aware of Your presence in this world and Your presence within us; that the Spirit of God is within every child of God, every believer. We've been sealed by Him for the day of redemption. And so may we, under His influence, walk faithfully and rejoice and give praise to You.

Father, we praise You and thank You for this sacred table before us that reminds us of what Your Son did in our place, in His death for us. We thank You for sending Him into the world to die for us. May we now reflect deeply upon Him and worship Him as we take the Lord's Supper. Bless us now, Father. We pray in Christ's name. Amen.

(End of Audio)