

Psalm 96

Psalm 96 and 97 are a pair as are 98 and 99. Some say the four are to be treated as a literary unit. Although some say 95 and 96 are the pair. So when you go home read the previous Psalm and the next Psalm.

The Psalm is really a hymn and invitation for the whole of creation to join in worship. That includes all present here now, all who have ever read the Psalm and all those who ever will. In fact it is in some ways acknowledging – everything will worship.

Interestingly, there are some amazing comparisons between this Psalm and passages in Isa 40 –55. We don't have time to look at it all but we will look at some.

Now down to business.

Psalm 96

*PS 96:1 Sing to the LORD a new song;
sing to the LORD, all the earth.*

1. Sing, Song , Sing = repetitive stair parallelism,
2. Songs of Praise Judges 5 and Exodus 15 – Could be Psalmish (Not all psalms are in Psalms!!)
3. Cf Isa 42: 10. *ISA 42:10 Sing to the LORD a new song,
his praise from the ends of the earth,
you who go down to the sea, and all that is in it,
you islands, and all who live in them.*
3. We spoke a couple of weeks ago about the history of the bardic tradition of writing songs to commemorate events.
4. Here new songs written after a new revelation or work of Yahweh (God) . Similarly, a new song is written to commemorate a good thing or a new thing ie victory in battle, a new experience etc. The Celts did this also. New song for a new experience or even a new understanding of God.
5. All the earth = all the nations = all peoples = everyone.

*PS 96:2 Sing to the LORD, praise his name;
proclaim his salvation day after day.*

1. proclaim his salvation = tell of his salvation ie tell of his saving acts. Tell the old stories. Like in Psalm 107 – amazing deeds of God.
2. Praise his name . name = character = revealed by his acts. Names had meaning. And usually you were know for what you did. Even given a name that fitted you.
Ie Armstrong comes from a bloke who became known as Siward Digry – which means sword strong arm. What would each of us been known as. Maybe I would be “Short funny looking bloke with a curly mo. .”
3. Hebrew verb tell of or **proclaim = bring good news.**

*PS 96:3 Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvelous deeds among all peoples.*

1. Another parallel his marvelous deeds = works.
2. These works are not different from his salvation = synonyms.
3. Glory = what makes Him different or noticeable. God’s glory is God’s differentness, His amazingness, His Godness.

*PS 96:4 For great is the LORD and most worthy of praise;
he is to be feared above all gods.*

1. Praise is due to Yahweh (God) FOR He is great.
2. Praise is due to Yahweh (God) FOR He Greater than all gods.
3. The word Feared in the NIV = revered in the NRSV. Two different aspects but both valid. We might use the word respected in a similar context. (Although I am not sure this is a translated or a contextual replacement word)
4. Did the author believe other gods actually existed?– or just using the term?
5. Maybe a polemic (defense) / evangelistic concept - telling good news to other nations. Pretty good way of doing it. In a way they could understand but doesn’t put them down. But the answer follows.

*PS 96:5 For all the gods of the nations are idols,
but the LORD made the heavens.*

1. Gods are idols = made of material that God created.
2. God created made the heavens - and the earth

3. Word play on elohim (god) and elilim (nothingness) (Idols) (I don't read Hebrews so I can't verify this!)
4. Declaration that God is above all gods is essential. Turning to these gods time and time again had just created ruin for the Israelites.
5. The author is using a generic term of god as we speak of god at present.

6. *ISA 44:9 All who make idols are nothing,
and the things they treasure are worthless.
Those who would speak up for them are blind;
they are ignorant, to their own shame.*

*ISA 44:10 Who shapes a god and casts an idol,
which can profit him nothing?*

*ISA 44:11 He and his kind will be put to shame;
craftsmen are nothing but men.
Let them all come together and take their stand;
they will be brought down to terror and infamy.*

*PS 96:6 Splendor and majesty are before him;
strength and glory are in his sanctuary.*

1. Splendor / majesty and strength / glory parallel qualities that embellish each other. Give a bigger picture.
2. His sanctuary is either the Jerusalem temple or his heavenly sanctuary. I.e. dwelling place. For us it is wherever God is – Everywhere.

*PS 96:7 Ascribe to the LORD, O families of nations,
ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.*

1. Give God credit for who He is
2. Families of nations = all nations/ peoples
3. Ascribe to the Lord glory and strength = tell of his works.
- 4.CF *ISA 49:6 he says:*

*"It is too small a thing for you to be my servant
to restore the tribes of Jacob
and bring back those of Israel I have kept.
I will also make you a light for the Gentiles,
that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth."*

*ISA 49:7 This is what the LORD says--
the Redeemer and Holy One of Israel--
to him who was despised and abhorred by the nation,*

*to the servant of rulers:
"Kings will see you and rise up,
princes will see and bow down,
because of the LORD, who is faithful,
the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you."*

*PS 96:8 Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;
bring an offering and come into his courts.*

1. Glory due to his name. = acknowledge Him for who he is
2. Offering into his courts = temple offering. Temple / courts / palace.
Not tithes but over and above.
3. Tribute to king of Kings

*PS 96:9 Worship the LORD in the splendor of (his) holiness;
tremble before him, all the earth.*

1. Splendor of holiness is ambiguous God's holiness or the worshippers holiness.
2. NIV has his holiness – NRSV = peoples holiness coming to worship with ritually clean garments. A symbol of their personal holiness. Are we prepared when we come to worship?

*PS 96:10 Say among the nations, "The LORD reigns."
The world is firmly established, it cannot be moved;
he will judge the peoples with equity.*

1. Reasons why Yahweh should be worshipped.
2. The world's creation is one reason
3. King of creation – his creation.
4. Nothing exists that is not in his rule
5. CF *ISA 40:12 Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand,
or with the breadth of his hand marked off the heavens?
Who has held the dust of the earth in a basket,
or weighed the mountains on the scales
and the hills in a balance?*

*ISA 40:13 Who has understood the mind of the LORD,
or instructed him as his counselor?*

*ISA 40:14 Whom did the LORD consult to enlighten him,
and who taught him the right way?
Who was it that taught him knowledge*

or showed him the path of understanding?

*ISA 40:15 Surely the nations are like a drop in a bucket;
they are regarded as dust on the scales;
he weighs the islands as though they were fine dust.*

*ISA 40:16 Lebanon is not sufficient for altar fires,
nor its animals enough for burnt offerings.*

*ISA 40:17 Before him all the nations are as nothing;
they are regarded by him as worthless
and less than nothing.*

*PS 96:11 Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad;
let the sea resound, and all that is in it;*

1. Invitation for his creation to join in worship.
2. Sky, earth, heavens = total creation.

PS 96:12 let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them.

Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy;

1. Parallel to v11 but more specific.
2. Fields, trees = life
3. CF *ISA 42:10 Sing to the LORD a new song,*

*his praise from the ends of the earth,
you who go down to the sea, and all that is in it,
you islands, and all who live in them.*

*ISA 42:11 Let the desert and its towns raise their voices;
let the settlements where Kedar lives rejoice.*

*Let the people of Sela sing for joy;
let them shout from the mountaintops.*

*PS 96:13 they will sing before the LORD, for he comes,
he comes to judge the earth.*

*He will judge the world in righteousness
and the peoples in his truth.*

1. righteousness = tsedaqah = when parties act in accordance with the relationship. Right relationship
2. that kind of conduct that serves to maintain the established ties. = righteousness.
3. In his truth (NIV) = with his truth (NRSV) Justice will prevail – it is God's way.

4. *CF* ISA 55:12 *You will go out in joy
and be led forth in peace;
the mountains and hills
will burst into song before you,
and all the trees of the field
will clap their hands.*