

June 28, 2020

Psalm 96

The Message Translation

¹⁻² Sing God a brand-new song!
Earth and everyone in it, sing!
Sing to God—worship God!
²⁻³ Shout the news of his victory from sea to sea,
Take the news of his glory to *the lost*,
News of his wonders to one and all!
⁴⁻⁵ For God is great,
and worth a thousand Hallelujahs.
His terrible beauty makes the gods look cheap;
Pagan gods are mere tatters and rags.
⁵⁻⁶ God made the heavens—
Royal splendor radiates from him,
A powerful beauty sets him apart.
⁷ Bravo, God, Bravo!
Everyone join in the great shout: Encore!
In awe before the beauty, in awe before the might.
⁸⁻⁹ Bring gifts and celebrate,
Bow before the beauty of God,
Then to your knees—everyone worship!
¹⁰ Get out the message—God Rules!
He put the world on a firm foundation;
He **TREATS EVERYONE FAIR AND SQUARE.**
¹¹ Let's hear it from Sky,
With Earth joining in,
And a huge round of applause from Sea.
¹² Let Wilderness turn cartwheels,
Animals, come dance,
Put every tree of the forest in the choir—
¹³ An extravaganza before God as he comes,
As he comes to **SET EVERYTHING RIGHT ON EARTH,**
SET EVERYTHING RIGHT, treat everyone fair.

Psalm 96

New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

¹ O sing to the Lord a new song;
sing to the Lord, all the earth.
² Sing to the Lord, bless his name;
tell of his salvation from day to day.
³ Declare his glory among *the nations*,
his marvelous works among all the peoples.
⁴ For great is the Lord,
and greatly to be praised;
he is to be revered above all gods.
⁵ For all the gods of the peoples are idols,
but the Lord made the heavens.
⁶ Honor 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 due his name;
bring an offering, and come into his courts.
⁹ Worship the Lord in holy splendor;
tremble before him, all the earth.
¹⁰ Say among the nations, "The Lord is king!
The world is firmly established;
it shall never 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 that fills it;
¹² let the field exult, and everything in it.
Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy
¹³ before the Lord; for he is coming,
for he is coming to **JUDGE** the earth.
He will **JUDGE** the world with righteousness,
and the peoples with his truth.

QUESTIONS FOR THE PRACTICE OF EXAMEN & CONTEMPLATION

- What part of today's psalm grabs you?
- What does the word "judge" mean to you? How do you understand God as the judge of all creation and nations? Why is the psalmist eager for God to come and "judge the earth"?
- How is God inviting you to reorient the way you see God, the world, others, yourself?
- When was the last time you were excited to talk to someone about God?
- What excited you about the opportunity?
- What good news about the world (even in all our troubles today) do you find yourself most eager to share with the world? Why?

The Book of Psalms is the prayer book of the Bible. Eugene says that it provides us with the language for prayer: our responding to the God who speaks to us. "Prayer is not just what good people do and say when they're doing their best. It's the language by which we become honest, true, and personal in our response to God. It is the means by which we get everything in our lives out in the open before God."

First Testament Scholar Walter Brueggemann writes of Psalm 96 noticing its close connection to Psalm 29. Both are likely a song (psalm) written and commissioned for a new enthronement, inauguration or coronation. It's a new song that sings of a new God who has not been known in this way for these people until now. So there must be new music to match the new reality of liberation, justice and hope.

The first nine verses tell us of this celebration that the future belongs to the God of the Bible, not the feeble idols, who are in face agents of Chaos. This new social reality is happening not just in heaven, but right here on earth, among us.

The remainder of the Psalm (verses 10-13) tell of what the new leadership of Yahwe brings : a reliable, equitable, just order to creation. It's a new reality for the people of God, the peoples of the earth (the nations) and even creation itself (the sea, the fields, the trees).

This psalm celebrates in the face of the old order still present to us, an order of injustice and faithlessness. But that old order is an order which in fact has no serious claim to make. The liturgy is the beginning of the dismantling of that order."

Walter Bruggemann. *The Message of the Psalms*. pp. 144-146.

the nations in Hebrew and Greek the word means everyone who is not Jewish. Often it's translated as the Greek, or the pagans..

JUDGE the Hebrew words used "refer to God's action of intervention to look after the rightful claims of the weak ones who have no power to make their own claim or look after themselves. So judgement means the establishment of a new power structure and a new value center, one characterized by right and reliability, overcoming the fickle, arbitrary, capricious, exploitative social order." (Walter Brueggemann)