

Key:

Purple – Introduction, Conclusion, Main Points, and Sermon Thread

Blue – Explanation/Exposition

Red – Application

Green – Illustration

Brown – Quotation

Yellow – Sermon Notes

Sing to the King

Psalm 96:1–13

We are continuing our series entitled, “The Five Books of Psalms.” We come today to Book IV of the Psalter. Book IV consists of Psalms 90–106. And today, we will look specifically at Psalm 96, one of the more familiar psalms in that collection.¹

And it’s a joyful praise psalm. I know we’ve been depressed the last two Wednesdays with the lament of Psalm 51 and the lament of Psalm 88. Psalm 96 is not a lament! It’s a praise psalm. This is a psalm that elevates the soul as we sing praises to the Lord.²

The title of today’s message is “Sing to the King.” Please take your Bibles with me and turn to Psalm 96.

Several years ago, I read a biography of D.L. Moody, one of my favorite historical characters. And during my reading I came across two figures in Moody’s life that had an incredible impact on his ministry. One of those characters was a musician and song leader named Philip P. Bliss. Bliss wrote my favorite hymn, “Hallelujah, What a Savior,” which Moody used extensively in his evangelistic campaigns. Usually they would sing that song at the end of the service to challenge people to give their lives to Christ. And it’s thrilling to think that the same song we sing here at Messiah Bible Church, was used over a hundred years ago to bring thousands of people to Christ. But I’ll let you in on a secret—we sing it a little different than they did.

Besides Bliss, another character that caught my attention in that biography was a man named Ira Sankey. Sankey was a talented musician, composer, soloist, and worship leader who travelled with Moody around North America and the United Kingdom to lead the evangelistic campaigns of the late nineteenth century. Sankey was instrumental in leading people to Christ. He partnered with Moody by preparing people’s hearts for the Word of God through music and worship.

And people estimate that during the course of thirty years of ministry together, Sankey and Moody ministered to upwards of one-hundred million people. One of the things that Sankey showed me is that the pairing of worship and proclamation of God’s Word not only pleases God but also releases the power of the Holy Spirit for life transformation.

Okay, now fast-forward about a hundred years to us here today. I’m certainly no D.L. Moody, and I don’t expect Derek to be Ira Sankey. And God hasn’t called us to preach before one-hundred million people. Instead he has called us to preach and lead worship in our church community here in south Texas. And we do that faithfully every week.

And that might surface a few questions for you today. Why do we worship the Lord here at church? Why do we do that? Why do we sing songs as an expression of that worship? Why do we sing instead of just “saying” stuff? Why do we write and sing “new songs” as an expression of our praise and

¹ Marvin E. Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, WBC (Dallas: Word, 1990), 531: “I have argued that Pss 96–99 are a coherent unit in Book IV of the Psalter with two pairs of ‘twin’ Psalms: 96-97 and 98-99. These psalms are at the center of Book IV, and they provide a response to the petition in Ps 94:2-3.... Pss 96–99 give assurance that the Judge-of-the-Earth reigns and is coming to judge the world with equity. Therefore the righteous are encouraged to rejoice and praise Yahweh, anticipating that all peoples and nations will pay him homage and adoration.”

² Derek Kidner, *Psalms 73–150: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 16, TOTC (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1975), 379: “Nothing listless or introverted, nothing stale, befits the praise of God.”

worship? And what has the Lord done, and what will he do in the future, that kindles inside of us worshipful hearts? Let's take a look at **Psalm 96** to help answer those questions.

As we've seen already in our series, the book of **Psalms** is a magnificent part of our Scriptures. In the **Psalms**, we learn how to lament. We learn how to praise. We learn how to pray. And we learn how to worship. The main character of the book isn't Moses or David or Abraham; it's instead the God of the Israelites, Yahweh.

The psalm in front of us, **Psalm 96**, is found in Book IV of the Psalter, which is full of exhortations to praise and sing and lift up the name of Yahweh. Interestingly there is little lament in Book IV. And there is little interest in David as king of Israel. Instead, Yahweh is King.

In fact the farther you get into the book of **Psalms**, the less you hear about David as king, and the more you hear about Yahweh as King. It's almost as if the Psalter itself was expecting a true and better son of David who is also son of God to someday be King.³

And also, the kingdom is increasingly envisioned as not just Israel and her cities, but the entire world. This is clearly elucidated in **Psalm 96** as the psalmist makes repeated references to the nations, the peoples, the earth, the families of the peoples, and the whole world.⁴ It's almost as if the psalmist anticipates a true and better Son of David who is also the son of God, Yahweh himself, who rules over the entire world full of Jews and Gentiles both.⁵ That's the theological trajectory of the book of **Psalms** as you move sequentially through the book.⁶

Now, the structure of this psalm is pretty simple. The author of the psalm is not stated and there is no superscription.⁷ **Psalm 96** is divided into four sections, which I will call stanzas.⁸ Stanza 1 is **verses 1–3**. Stanza

³ Allen P. Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms (90–150): Commentary*, vol. 3, KEL (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2016), 133: "The psalm also shows some similarities with passages in the book of Isaiah. Verse 11 is close to Isaiah 44:23 and 49:13; verse 12, to Isaiah 43:23 and 55:12; and verse 13 to Isaiah 40:10; 50:9, 10, 60:1 and 62:11." Willem A. VanGemeren, "Psalms," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Psalms (Revised Edition)*, ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008), 722: "The relationship of Psalm 96 to Isaiah has become a matter of scholarly discussion because of common motifs: polemics against idolatry (Isa 40:18–31; 41:21–24; 44:6–8), creation (40:22; 42:5; 44:24; 45:12), nature's response to God's redemption (49:13; 55:12), and the nations (45:20; 49:7; 56:3–8; 60:9–12, 14, 16; 66:18)."

⁴ WOLFGANG MUSCULUS: "This psalm calls not only Israel to praise, celebrate, admire, and revere God but the whole universe and all nations of the world, which he does from the first verse to the twelfth. And the last verse closes with a prophecy of the kingdom of Christ." Quoted in Herman J. Selderhuis and Timothy George, eds., *Psalms 73–150: Old Testament*, vol. VIII, RCS (Downers Grove: IVP Academic: An Imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2018), 138. EUSEBIUS OF CAESAREA: "The good news will no longer be for Israel but for all the nations, since it says that the Lord who is to come will be their King. Who could this be but God the Word, who, intending to judge the world in righteousness and the human race in truth, considers all people in the world equally worthy of his call, and consequently of the salvation of God?" Quoted in Quentin F. Wesselschmidt, ed., *Psalms 51–150*, ACCS (Downers Grove: IVP, 2007), 190.

⁵ C. John Collins, "The Psalms," in *Psalms—Song of Solomon*, ed. Iain M. Duguid, James M. Hamilton Jr., and Jay Sklar, vol. V, ESVEC (Wheaton: Crossway, 2022), 487: "Psalm 96 enables Israel to celebrate the Lord's universal kingship, particularly with an orientation toward the Gentiles, eagerly anticipating their eventual participation in worshipping the true God."

⁶ Collins, "The Psalms," in *Psalms—Song of Solomon*, ESVEC, 485: "This psalm appears in 1 Chronicles 16:8–36, where it is joined with a selection from Psalm 105 (and a few other elements). The Chronicler is asking his (postexilic) audience to picture the people's singing an adaptation (or perhaps an early edition) of these psalms when David brought the ark to Jerusalem." The dating of this psalm and the identification of author is highly debated and impossible to ascertain. For different possibilities see Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms (90–150)*, vol. 3, KEL, 132–4. But Ross concludes, "Any suggestion concerning the date of the final form of Psalm 96 has to be tentative."

⁷ Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms (90–150)*, vol. 3, KEL, 132–3: "The superscription found in the Greek version [LXX] ascribes the psalm to David, which may mean that it belonged to the Davidic psalms, or that much of its material was originally Davidic. The fact that the superscription also says the psalm was a celebration for the building of the house after the captivity indicates that the translators thought it was put together later, at least in its final composition, or that it was simply adapted to that use later."

⁸ Samuel Terrien, *The Psalms: Strophic Structure and Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 290–4 divides Psalm 96 into four strophes (vv. 1–3, 4–6, 7–9, 10–12) along with a closing *envoi* (v. 13). J.P. Fokkelman, *Reading Biblical Poetry*, translated by Ineke Smit (Louisville: Westminster, 2001), 216 has three stanzas of unequal length (vv. 1–6, 7–10, 11–13) and a total of six strophes (vv. 1–3, 4–6, 7–8, 9–10, 11–12, 13). Terrien's division is more consistent with the grammatical changes of the text, but one may object to the inclusion of verse 10 with the final strophe. I'm inclined to follow Terrien's division with only slight modification. I see the psalm divided into two stanzas (vv. 1–6 and 7–13) and four strophes (or stanzas) of relative equal length (vv. 1–3, 4–6, 7–10, 11–

2 is verses 4–6. Stanza 3 is verses 7–10. And Stanza 4 is verses 11–13. Stanza 1 starts out with commands that basically boil down to this—Worship Yahweh. Do it! Worship him! And then Stanza 2 gives a reasoned explanation of why we worship him.

Then Stanza 3 gives additional commands—Worship Yahweh some more. And then Stanza 4 gives additional reasons for why we should do that. In other words, the first and third parts of this psalm command us to worship the Lord. And then the second and fourth parts of the psalm tell us why we should worship him.⁹

Let's start with Stanza 1 and see what the psalmist says.

¹ Oh sing to the LORD a new song;¹⁰

sing to the LORD, all the earth!

² Sing to the LORD, bless¹¹ his name;

tell¹² of his salvation¹³ from day to day,¹⁴

³ Declare his glory¹⁵ among the nations,

his marvelous works¹⁶ among all the peoples!

The psalm starts out with rapid fire commands for the reader. Sing! Bless! Tell!¹⁷ Declare! Do these things! It's as if the psalmist has a sense of urgency with these imperatives.

Verse 1 is a key statement that is often repeated by songwriters in our day, “sing a new song!” I'm going to talk in a minute about what is meant by “sing a new song” to Yahweh, but let me first deal with the imperative. **The psalmist tells us to Sing! So, sing! “I don't have a good singing voice, Pastor Tony!” So what! If you can't sing well, make up for it by singing loud.**¹⁸

We have two commands in the first two verses to sing, and these are not isolated occurrences in the book of **Psalms**. We have repeated statements in this book to sing to the Lord. And the fact that there are musical notations and musical inferences throughout the book indicate that God is serious about music and singing. **And he wants us to use those mediums to worship him. He wants us to use instrumentation and vocalization and musicality to worship him. He wants us to use these vocal chords that amazingly can be**

13). Verse 10 is a crucial transition from the imperatives of strophe 3 to the indicative statements in strophe 4. Verse 13 is the climax of strophe 4. However one divides the psalm, the changing grammatical features are easily recognizable. In vv. 1-3 and 7-10, imperative verbs are dominant. In vv. 4-6 there is only one non-participial verb, a perfect form of עָשָׂה. In the final strophe (vv. 11-13) there is a combination of jussives, imperfects, and participial verbs, which escalate to the final statement “he will judge [imperfect form of שָׁפַט] the world in righteousness, and the peoples in his faithfulness.

⁹ Compare 1 Chronicles 16:23-33 with Psalm 96. The songs are almost identical, but the opening refrain of Psalm 96 (“sing to the Lord a new song”) is absent in Chronicles. See John Eaton, *The Psalms* (New York: T&T Clark, 2003), 340-1.

¹⁰ Kidner, *Psalms 73–150*, TOTC, 379: “The *new song* (cf. on 33:3) is not simply a piece newly composed, though it naturally includes such, but a response that will match the freshness of his mercies, which are ‘new every morning.’”

¹¹ Or “kneel down before.” See HALOT entries for I בָּרַךְ and II בָּרַךְ. John Goldingay, *Psalms Volume 3: Psalms 90-150* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 103 has “worship” for “bless.”

¹² The use of בָּשַׁר (“tell”) is rare. It is probably chosen for the way it accomplishes alliteration with שִׁיר.

¹³ VanGemeren, “Psalms,” in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Psalms (Revised Edition)*, 723: “The exact nature of the salvation is not specified here, but it may include all acts in redemptive history—creation and redemption (vv. 2, 11–12; cf. 136:4–25).” Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms (90–150)*, vol. 3, KEL, 136: “In this context the term could describe some recent victory the nation had experienced, or some great victory in the past, or even the LORD's great triumph at creation. It probably refers to some victory Israel experienced that demonstrated to the world that the LORD was a saving God; but since the psalmist does not identify what that was, it is futile to try to identify one.”

¹⁴ Kidner, *Psalms 73–150*, TOTC, 379–80: “The LXX, here and elsewhere, translates it by the verb which gave us ‘evangelize’, used here in almost our modern sense of bringing news of God to the world at large.”

¹⁵ Tremper Longman III, *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary*, ed. David G. Firth, vol. 15–16, TOTC (Nottingham: Inter-Varsity Press, 2014), 341: “His deeds bring him *glory*, a word (*kābôd*) that literally means ‘heavy’ and indicates that God is a God of substance and great reputation.”

¹⁶ Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms (90–150)*, vol. 3, KEL, 137: “‘Glory’ is the metonymy of cause, and ‘wonders’ [ESV: ‘marvelous works’] the metonymy of effect.”

¹⁷ Kidner, *Psalms 73–150*, TOTC, 379: “With the word *tell*, the direction of flow changes from Godward to manward, for this is a messenger's word: ‘take the news.’”

¹⁸ Charles H. Spurgeon, *Psalms*, Crossway Classic Commentaries (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1993), 45: “New joys are filling human hearts, for the glad tidings of blessing to all people are proclaimed; therefore let them sing a new song.”

manipulated to elevate and make a singing pitch that directs praise towards the Lord. And the Lord wants that. He wants us to sing to him!

Now what does it mean to sing a *new song* to the Lord? The implication of the statement is that we should use the medium of song and music to direct our attention to the Lord. And not just any music, mind you, *new music*.

And this new music shouldn't be just any music with any lyrical content. The music that the psalmist has in mind is music about "his salvation." Do you see that in **verse two**?

² *Sing to the LORD, bless his name;*

tell of his salvation from day to day,

*We sing... we sing new songs... we sing new songs about God's salvation.*¹⁹

This psalmist wants us to worship the Lord with new songs of salvation. Write that down as #1 in your notes.

1) Worship the King with new songs of **salvation** (96:1-3)

You might ask, "Why do you have 'the King' here instead of the Lord?" I'll show you why in a moment.²⁰ But to be honest those two terms are interchangeable. The King is the Lord. And the Lord is the King in **Psalm 96**. More on that in a moment.

That command to sing a new song may be new to some of you. The Hebrew is as clear as can be.

שִׁיר (shir) a שִׁיר (shir) to the Lord.²¹ The noun and the verb are homonyms. The psalmist says "song a song" to the Lord. שִׁיר a שִׁיר. More precisely, שִׁירוּ לַיהוָה שִׁיר חֲדָשׁ. "Sing a new song." Don't just sing a song, but sing a חֲדָשׁ (hadash) song, a fresh song, a newly minted song to the Lord.²²

In my experience there are two mistakes that churches make with regard to music and songs in the activity of worship. Worship is not limited to singing, but singing is an important aspect of worship, as we see in the book of Psalms. The first mistake is that they fail to embrace fresh and current expressions of worship for the Lord. Let me put this another way, more bluntly—some churches *only* sing old songs.

Now there is nothing wrong with old songs. I love old songs. One of my favorite hymns is "Be Thou My Vision" which dates back to eighth century Ireland. I love "O Come, O Come, Emanuel." It's one of my favorite Christmas songs. I love Rich Mullins' song "Creed" which is really just the Apostles'

¹⁹ Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms (90–150)*, vol. 3, KEL, 136: "The reason the psalms frequently call for a new song to be sung is that God's faithfulness is new every day, making praise for him inexhaustible."

²⁰ Marvin E. Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, WBC (Dallas: Word, 1990), 504 deals with Psalms 96–99 as one unit because of their similarities, and he entitles the unit "Yahweh Reigns as King."

²¹ The noun שִׁיר occurs a total of 77 times in BHS and 42 times in the Psalter. Victor Hamilton, "שִׁיר," #2378, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, edited by R. Laird Harris et al., (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999, c1980), 920 states that 30 of those instances are in superscriptions. There is also the Hebrew feminine noun שִׁירָה which occurs 12 times in the Psalter. The difference between the masculine and feminine nouns and their usage in BHS is not clear.

The noun is connected to the Hebrew verb שִׁיר "to sing," which is also replete in the Psalter. The verb occurs 87 times in BHS and 27 in the Psalter. It is cognate to the Ugaritic *šīru* and the Akkadian *šēru*. The cognates and BHS reflect that a שִׁיר was used for more than just religious purposes. In fact Isaiah uses this term to refer to the song of a harlot (Isa 23:16). Deborah and Miriam used songs to celebrate a war victory (Exod 15:20-21, Judg 5:1ff.). Although these were obviously songs of worship for deity, they took place outside the context of a house of worship.

מְזִמֹּר ("psalm") is the term in the OT that is restricted to religious usage. שִׁיר and מְזִמֹּר are often found together in the Psalter (Pss. 30, 48, 65-68, 75-76, 83, 87-88, 92, 108), which may imply a combination of sacred and secular components. Other secular usages of שִׁיר include a joyous send-off (Gen 31:27), the song of fools (Eccl 7:5), drinking songs (Isa 24:9) and the renowned "song of songs" (Cant 1:1)

²² The words translated "new song" in the English versions are a combination of the Hebrew adjective חֲדָשׁ and the noun שִׁיר. The adjective חֲדָשׁ is common, occurring 53 times in BHS. HALOT, 294 links the word with the Ugaritic *hdī* and defines it as "new, fresh, not yet existing." Exodus 1:8 is an example of standard usage for this term, "Now a *new* king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph" (NASB). In Judges 15:13, חֲדָשׁ describes the new ropes to tie up Sampson. These ropes were evidently newly created, in contrast with older, weaker ropes. See also Carl P. Weber, חֲדָשׁ, #613, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, R. Laird Harris et al., (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999, c1980), 266.

Creed from seventeen centuries ago. I love Martin Luther's "A Mighty Fortress is Our God." That song is over five hundred years old!

And the imperative in Psalm 96:1 (see also Pss 33:3; 98:1)²³ doesn't say, "Don't sing old songs." It says, "Sing to the Lord a new song" (96:1). And it's an important responsibility of the church to match contemporary expressions of music, instrumentation, and vocalizing with the worship of the Lord... and to create in each generation new songs for the Lord. I'm glad that Fannie Crosby, Charles Wesley, and Isaac Watts didn't just sit on their hands and sing old songs in their churches. I'm so glad that they wrote new songs for us to sing. And we need to do likewise in our generation.²⁴

And this has an evangelistic function within the church. Notice the emphasis on "all the earth" in verse 1, and "among the nations" and "among the peoples" in verse 3. What are the people doing among the nations? They are praising God. They are singing songs to Yahweh. They are telling of his salvation from day to day. I told Derek once in regard to our worship set, "I want people to hear the gospel in the songs that we sing before I ever get behind the pulpit." People can get saved before I even preach!²⁵

The other mistake that churches make is that they *only* sing new songs. And they fail to embrace the rich treasure trove of old songs that have been passed down to us. I think that's a mistake.

Additionally, sometimes those new songs don't emphasize the salvation we have in Christ. Let me say it this way—some churches sing "new songs" that don't emphasize the gospel. That's a mistake too.

And sometimes those new songs are woefully inadequate theologically. This will be my "get off my lawn moment" for today. Forgive me. Bear with me. I don't like songs that are emotionally frothy without substance. That's not an improvement. Instead of solid theology, sometimes those songs express goofy expressions of puppy love without an emphasis on the cross. I like songs that access the emotions of the singer... I do. We are to worship the Lord with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. But I don't like emotionalism.

One thing that I'm leery of with a lot of contemporary Christian music is a bizarre man-centeredness instead of God-centeredness. If a song repeats continually first person pronouns (I, me, my, myself), than I'd rather not sing that at church. If a worship set goes on and on without any mention of salvation, than I grow leery. If expressions of worship are strictly testimonial, "God did this for me, God loves me so much," than I am leery. I have nothing against songs that are testimonial, but I desire at every worship service to sing songs that are ascriptive towards God. Songs that are vertical!

Our songs need to emphasize that "God is awesome!" They need to say things like, "God, you are worthy!" and "God, you are holy!" and "God is the author of our salvation." Praise God! Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!²⁶

Now we are moving away from the use of music in worship, and we are dealing more theologically with another aspect of worship. Look at verse 3 again with me.

³ Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvelous works among all the peoples!

²³ See also Pss 40:3; 144:9; 149:1; Isa 42:10. Psalm 40:3 and 144:9 are not connected to an imperative form of שָׁיר. Instead 40:3 states, "He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God" (NASB) and 144:9 states "I will sing a new song to Thee, O God" (NASB).

²⁴ Richard D. Patterson, "Singing the New Song: An Examination of Psalms 33, 96, 98, and 149," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 164:656 (2007): 434: "As the Old Testament saints could sing a 'new song' with each experience of God's gracious deliverance, so New Testament believers may sing boldly 'to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making music to the Lord'(Eph 5:19)."

²⁵ Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms (90–150)*, vol. 3, KEL, 134: "The value of the psalms even for believers: the psalms, and particularly Psalm 96, are meaningful in every age, including the modern age when there is so much uncertainty about the doctrines of the faith. The psalm proclaims the ancient truths that the LORD is the creator, the king, and the coming judge, and at his coming there will be righteousness on the earth. Therefore, his greatness, displayed in his saving power, should be praised in all the earth. And the call for the nations to praise the LORD is essentially a call for them to come to faith."

²⁶ Alistair Hunter, "Sing a New Song: Towards a Biblical Theology of Song," *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 22 (Fall 2004): 210-1: "Song is a gift of creative and evocative communication that has been given to human beings by a gracious God whose creativity is reflected in the words of human song."

Hopefully you can feel the parallelism in that verse. The word “glory” is parallel with “marvelous works.” Also “the nations” is parallel with “the peoples” in the next line. That’s good Hebrew poetry. That’s artistry right there.

The activity of “declaring” God’s glory is a global responsibility. The Hebrew word קָפַר (*safar*) means “to tell, proclaim, recount, inform.”²⁷ The OT Israelites were called to evangelize other nations with the goodness of God’s glory. They were to declare it before the world. In the OT era, the Israelites were called to display the glory of God in the nation of Israel. They were to be a light unto the Gentiles (Isa 49:6). They were God’s people, and they declared his glory among the nations. And all the nations of the earth were blessed through Abraham and Abraham’s sons (Gen 12:3).

In the NT era, God’s glory and God’s marvelous works (including the work of salvation—verse 2) is found in God’s Son. Jesus’s death was not localized or limited to Jerusalem and the Jewish people... or to the continent of Europe or North America for that matter. The gospel of Jesus Christ is global, and God desires us to take it globally.

Practically speaking, our primary location for “declaring” God’s glory is here in San Antonio. It is perfectly appropriate for you to read this passage and say, “I’m being obedient to this command by sharing my faith with the people of south Texas. I’m singing and declaring God’s glory here.” That is a reasonable and sacrificial act of worship.

But in addition to that calling, we as a church have opportunities to reach other nations and other people groups around North America, Europe, Asia, Africa, and elsewhere. We have mission trips. We support the work of missions in other parts of the world. We are obedient to Jesus’s Great Commission, “Go into all the world and make disciples” (Matt 28:18). We can do that too. We are actively doing that as Christ’s church.

To a certain extent God has allowed the nations to come to us here in San Antonio. Whatever the case, we, as God’s people, showcase God’s glory. We declare it. We tell people of his mighty works. We tell people about the work that he has done through the Israelites of the OT. And we tell people about the culmination of that work in the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who came to save Jews and Gentiles from their sins.

Let’s move on. Write this down as #2 in your notes. Worship the King with new songs of salvation.

But also,

2) Worship the King because of his eternal **greatness** (96:4–6)

Look at verse 4.

⁴For

The psalmist is answering the question why here. Why worship? Why write these new songs? Because... for... this is the Hebrew word כִּי (*ki*) which is used causally here.

⁴For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised;²⁸

he is to be feared above all gods.²⁹

⁵For all the gods of the peoples are worthless idols,³⁰

but the LORD made the heavens.

⁶Splendor and majesty³¹ are before him;

strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.³²

²⁷ DBL Hebrew, 6218 קָפַר, #3.

²⁸ Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms (90–150)*, vol. 3, KEL, 137: “Yahweh is simply the most important person in existence, ever. And the songs and praises of people should acknowledge this.”

²⁹ Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms (90–150)*, vol. 3, KEL, 137: “The word ‘gods’ (אֱלֹהִים) can refer to human leaders, or angels; but here it most likely means the so-called gods of the nations since the next verse will explain that they are worthless objects of trust.”

³⁰ Spurgeon, *Psalms*, 47: “Dread of other gods is mere superstition; awe of the Lord is pure religion.”

³¹ Collins, “The Psalms,” in *Psalms—Song of Solomon*, ESVEC, 485: “The phrase ‘splendor and majesty’ (v. 6) describes royal magnificence (applied to humans in 21:5; 45:3), which is suited to the theme of divine kingship (Job 40:10; Pss. 104:1; 111:3; 145:3).”

That first statement, “great is the Lord” may seem like the understatement of the century. But there is no way to fully express God’s greatness in human language. We can only do the best we can with adjectives like great, praiseworthy, fearful, splendid, and majestic. Our words woefully fall short of perfectly worshipping the Lord. But words are all we’ve got. Let’s do the best we can with what we’ve got. That’s what the psalmist is doing here.

I remember a while back there was this movement to take back the word “awesome.” Every time someone would say, “that’s awesome,” there would be that annoying friend who would say, “Nothing is awesome, except God.” Okay, yeah, that’s true. But you’re fighting an uphill battle with that one. I use the term “love” for my wife and for God, but I also use the term “love” for ice-cream and college football. I’m not equating those things or my “love” for those things. Words don’t always get the job done. Words unfortunately fail us when we try to use them to describe God.

But here is the great thing. Despite our limitations with language, God still accepts our imperfect expressions of adoration. The psalmist here couples creative expressions with common expressions in his declaration of worship. “Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised.” Amen! Who’s going to argue against that?

By the way, “greatly to be praised” is all one word in Hebrew. It’s a word derived from הָלַל (*halal*), which we get the word “Hallelujah” from. It’s one word that could be translated “praiseworthy.” In other words, Yahweh is infinitely praiseworthy.

The reference to “other gods” in **verse 5** is a reference to the idols and pagan deities found in the other religions of the Ancient Near East.

⁵ For all the gods of the peoples are worthless idols,³³

That’s not something that you’ll hear said by the United Nations! That’s not a popular statement in our morally pluralistic and relativistic world. This psalmist is throwing shade on every other religious system in the world other than the Yahweh-worship of the Israelites.

And good for him. In regard to the global call of evangelism, the Israelites were to lift up the name of the Lord above the names of all the other foreign gods and false gods of the world... gods like Baal and Dagon and Asherah and Marduk and Ishtar and Molech and Chemosh and Ra.³⁴ Those gods are worthless idols!³⁵ They are “fakes.” The fact that they are made by human hands and subsequently worshipped is a joke. It’s laughable. The prophet Isaiah makes fun of people who carve out idols from wood with their hands and then worships them (see **Isa 44:9–20**).

In fact there’s some Hebrew wordplay here to accentuate this. The psalmist writes all the אֱלֹהִים (*elohim*) are אֱלִילִים (*elilim*). We might paraphrase it this way in English—“Those ‘mighty’ deities are ‘mighty useless.’”³⁶

In contrast to these gods, the Lord Yahweh made the heavens. The two terms here used for God are the words (1) אֱלֹהִים, meaning “God” or “gods” and (2) Yahweh. אֱלֹהִים is a generic word for deity. It can be used to refer to Yahweh as the true God, or it can be used to refer to false gods (similar to the English word “God/god” which can be capitalized or uncapitalized).

³² Kidner, *Psalms 73–150*, TOTC, 380: “If we ask whether this *sanctuary* is earthly or heavenly, the probable answer is both. The earthly one was a ‘copy and shadow’ of the heavenly (Heb. 8:5); but its outward *strength and beauty* (cf. Exod. 28:2; 31:3ff.) were to be outshone by the inward glory of Christ, the true earthly sanctuary (John 1:14; 2:21).”

³³ Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms (90–150)*, vol. 3, KEL, 138: “They are ‘worthless’ (literally “nothings,” אֱלִילִים, v. 5). Some choose to translate this word as idols, which is in part what the word is describing; the Greek version chose ‘demons.’ The word is a descriptive term of contempt and should be retained if possible to capture the psalmist’s tone. The false gods are ‘nothings,’ ‘non-entities’ ... There was no reason to fear or worship those gods, for they failed the nations that worshiped them.”

³⁴ There is good reason for the psalmist to not even mention these gods but just call them worthless idols. As TERTULLIAN cites, “True, Scripture says, ‘Make no mention of the name other gods, neither let it be heard out of your mouth’ (Exod 23:13).” Quoted in Wesselschmidt, ed., *Psalms 51–150*, ACCS, 193.

³⁵ Longman, *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary*, TOTC, 342: “An idol is an object made by human hands, which, according to Jeremiah, is ‘like a scarecrow in a cucumber field’ (Jer. 10:5).”

³⁶ Collins, “The Psalms,” in *Psalms—Song of Solomon*, ESVEC, 485.

But Yahweh is the name of the God who created the universe. He is the capital-G God of the Universe who saved the Israelites from Egypt. He appointed David as king over Israel. In English, we represent the Name Yahweh with “the LORD” in small caps. The NT further reveals the identity of Yahweh as a triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Three distinct persons! One magnificent God!

This is the God who created the heavens. His acts are legendary. They are recorded in **Genesis**. They were written down and recorded by the Israelites of the OT. Yahweh is the God who has the splendor and majesty of all his creation. The heavens, the stars, the galaxies, the supernatural beings, the earth, and all the creatures were made by him and glorify him. He has power over them, and he has all authority to snuff them out in a moment.

In addition to God’s glory being manifest on a large scale, it is also localized in the sanctuary. In a general way we can describe the entirety of creation as God’s “sanctuary” (or his “holy abode”). He created it and it supplies evidence of his majesty.³⁷

Isaiah 66:1 says that the heavens are God’s throne and the earth is his footstool. But God also chooses to localize his glory in smaller settings. We see this in the OT with the tabernacle and the temple. God, who is everywhere all of the time, actually chooses to manifest some particular aspect of his presence among the people of Israel.

In the NT era, we see this with Jesus, Emmanuel (“God with us”). We also see this with God the Holy Spirit. God has chosen to reside in the hearts of men and women, who have embraced Jesus Christ as their Savior. His Spirit indwells us.

*⁶ Splendor and majesty are before him;
strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.*

We can say, along with the Apostle Paul, that our bodies are sanctuaries. They are the temples of the Holy Spirit, in which God chooses to manifest his glory (1 Cor 6:19–20).³⁸ If you’re wondering why God brings such strong conviction when you sin or pollute your body, it is because God has chosen to sanctuary with you. Sin is contrary to his holy nature, and he opposes it.³⁹ Because...

strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.

Write this down as #3 in your notes. Let’s look at stanza 3. The psalmist isn’t done with commands. Now he’s going to command us to...

3) Worship the King with sacrificial **actions** (96:7–9)

This psalm is like a two act play. In the second act the themes of the first one will repeat with similar structure and reasoning. In Stanza 3 he tells us to do some stuff. And then in Stanza 4 he tells us why. Just like Stanzas 1 and 2 above.

What does he tell us to do? Well, this. Look at **verse 7**.

*⁷ Ascribe to the LORD, O families of the peoples,
ascribe to the LORD glory and strength!⁴⁰*

*⁸ Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;
bring an offering, and come into his courts!⁴¹*

³⁷ Spurgeon, *Psalms*, 48: “Beauty of architecture and apparel he does not regard; moral and spiritual beauty is that in which his soul delighteth. Worship must not be rendered to God in a slovenly, sinful, superficial manner; we must be reverent, sincere, earnest, and pure in heart both in our prayers and praises.”

³⁸ AUGUSTINE: “‘For holy is the temple of God, and this temple you are,’ (1 Cor 3:17) and, ‘Do you not know that your members are the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have from God?’ (1 Cor 3:16).” Quoted in Wesselschmidt, ed., *Psalms 51–150*, ACCS, 191.

³⁹ Collins, “The Psalms,” in *Psalms—Song of Solomon*, ESVEC, 486: “The Gentiles’ uncleanness, which would defile the holy place (Isa. 52:1), can be cured by conversion, after which they too will be welcome in God’s house.”

⁴⁰ Spurgeon, *Psalms*, 47: “Give unto the Lord glory and strength; that is to say, recognize the glory and power of Jehovah, and ascribe them unto him in your solemn hymns... Glory and strength are nowhere to be found save with the Lord; all others possess but the semblance thereof.”

⁴¹ Exodus 22:20 states, “Whoever sacrifices to any god, other than the Lord alone, shall be devoted to destruction.”

The sacrificial actions include ascribing glory to the Lord. Some of you may wonder what the word “ascribe” means in English. Well the Hebrew word is more naturally translated “give.” It’s the Hebrew word that Jacob used when he told his uncle Laban, “Give me my wife” (**Gen 29:21**) after he had worked seven years for her. If we substitute the word “give” for “ascribe” than the verses read like this.

⁷ **[Give]** to the LORD, O families of the peoples,

[Give] to the LORD glory and strength!

⁸ **[Give]** to the LORD the glory due his name;
bring an offering, and come into his courts!

But that’s a little confusing because we don’t give the Lord “glory” and “strength.” The Lord is infinitely glorious and infinitely strong. Instead, we recognize, as an act of worship, that God has glory and strength. We recognize that the Lord is worthy of the glory due his name.⁴²

This act of “recognizing” or “ascribing” or “giving” is a sacrificial act. In **verse 7**, the psalmist is telling us to give glory and strength to the Lord. In other words, we deflect glory and attention from ourselves or anyone else, and we direct it to the Lord. We can even take of our strength and offer it as a sacrifice to God. This is an act of worship.

When I lived in Chicago, I worked at Soldierfield as an accountant. And let me tell you, that place was a house of worship. Every Sunday people came to worship and ascribe glory to the Chicago Bears, which was ironic because as far a football teams go, the Bears weren’t that glorious.

But while working there I also worked several concerts at that venue. One of the most memorable was “The Rolling Stones.” I remember vividly walking around the stadium and collecting cash from the vendors as part of my job, and I saw through the corner of my eye a geriatric Mick Jagger strutting around on stage like a peacock. And he was singing this song that I recognized, but I didn’t know the words. But everyone in that stadium—40,000 to 50,000 people—knew *every* word to that song. And they had their hands up. And they were worshipping Mick Jagger. And they were worshipping the Rolling Stones. And they were ascribing glory to them. That was a worship service.

And...

all the gods of the peoples are worthless idols,

That’s the kind of energy and worship we should be bringing to the Lord at church. And our God is the true God of the Universe worthy of our worship.

And worship is also the emphasis of **verse 8**, where we are told to bring an offering (you could translate this “gift” instead of “offering”), and come into his courts.⁴³ In the OT world, this act of worship took on different forms. It could be a financial gift. It could be tithes and offerings. It could be an animal sacrifice.

We bring financial gifts to the Lord as well. The Israelites brought grain and food offerings to worship Yahweh, and provide for his priests, the Levites. We give to the Lord’s work by giving to his church to provide for the church staff and pay for facilities and other ministerial experiences. That giving should be sacrificial giving, according to Paul in 2 Corinthians 9:7. It should be cheerful. It should be sacrificial. And it is beneficial to the church community.

But we also give sacrificially of our time and energy too. A gift of time and energy is given every Sunday when we forsake our personal desires to fish or shop or sleep or watch football to come and study God’s Word and sing praises to him and minister to others in the church. We bring a sacrifice of praise to the Lord (Heb 13:5).

⁴² ALEXANDER NOWELL: “The glory of God, forasmuch as it is continually most ample, cannot indeed in itself be made either greater by increase, or lesser by decrease. For it is not changed with any addition or diminishing, as our earthly things are. But our prayer is that the name of God be made renowned and known to mortal men, and his praise and glory celebrated here in earth, as it is meet to be. And as the infinite power, wisdom, righteousness, and goodness of God, and all his divine works, do truly set forth the glory and majesty of God, so we wish that they may appear noble and glorious to us, that the magnificence of the author of them, as it is in itself most large, so it may also in all sorts shine honorable and excellent among us, and be both privately and publicly praised and honored.” Quoted in Selderhuis and George, eds., *Psalms 73–150*, RCS, 139.

⁴³ Longman, *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary*, TOTC, 342: “The word *offering* (*minhâ*) could be used in the general sense of a sacrifice, but more likely in the sense of an offering given as a gift or tribute to God (Lev. 2).”

And we bring an offering to God, when we sacrifice time and strength in children's ministry or youth ministry or small groups or sharing the truths of the gospel with someone who needs to hear it. This is something that brings pleasure to Yahweh. It is worship expressed in sacrificial actions.

Also, as part of the sacrificial actions of the worshipper, the psalmist says in **verse 9**.

⁹ *Worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness;
tremble before him, all the earth!*

Here the believer worships God “in the splendor of his holiness” and trembles! These actions are linked with the previous verses where God is described as “feared” above all gods (96:4). Also the psalmist said that “splendor and majesty are before him” (96:6).

One way to translate **verse 9** is noted in the ESV footnote. A possibility here is “in holy attire” instead of “in the splendor of holiness.” What does that mean? What would the psalmist be intimating here if he meant “in holy attire?” It probably harks back to the Levitical sacrifices of the OT and the garments of the priests. But surely it means more than that.⁴⁴ **Hophni and Phineas had the holy attire of the priests, but they weren't clothed with holy actions. They didn't** “worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness” (see 1 Sam 1–4).⁴⁵

How do we apply this expectation in our day? Should I wear a holy ephod on Sunday morning when I preach? Do your clothes need to be sanctified when you come to church on Sunday? I don't think so.

We should apply this exhortation by honoring God with a sacrificial and holy lifestyle. Your covering should be righteousness and godliness. Paul says in the book of Romans, “I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect” (12:1–2). Pursuing a holy life that is godly and not worldly is one meaningful way to worship the Lord.

These are acceptable forms of worship for Yahweh. He is pleased by them. The end of **verse 9** tells us to tremble before Yahweh. Trembling is an action that accompanies fear, but trembling also expresses admiration, awe, and reverence. **I remember seeing footage once of what was called “Beatlemania.” The Beatles came to America in what was called the “British Invasion.” And there were all these teenage women who would visibly shake and tremble in the presence of John, Paul, George, and Ringo. They were trembling, not because they were afraid, but because they were in awe of musicians! That was, as you know, silly and inappropriate.**

But the worship of God should be accompanied by reverence and fear. It is appropriate, before God to fear him and tremble before him.⁴⁶ **This is a response to his glory and his majesty. His goodness overwhelms us, and we feel small before him.**⁴⁷

This will be our experience when we see God the Son in all his glory when he returns. He will be utterly fear-inducing. And we won't tremble because we are afraid he will destroy us. No, we're on his side. We need not fear that. We will tremble because of the awesome display of his might. Like we might tremble on the battlefield at the display of tanks and guns fighting on our behalf.

⁴⁴ Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms (90–150)*, vol. 3, KEL, 140–1: “This holy attire usually refers to garments that are ritually clean and acceptable in the sanctuary (see Lev. 11:24–8); the imagery means that those who would praise the LORD and bring him a gift of gratitude and dedication must be properly prepared to come into his presence.”

⁴⁵ Spurgeon, *Psalms*, 46: “Too often the name of the Lord Jesus has been dishonored among the heathen by the vices and cruelties of those who call themselves Christians; may this fact excite true believers to greater diligence in causing the Gospel to be proclaimed as with a trumpet in all quarters of the habitable globe.”

⁴⁶ Longman, *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary*, TOTC, 342: “The Lord is worthy of fear, not the kind of fear that makes one run away, but one that acknowledges that God is all-powerful and sovereign over everything. He is majestic, and his earthly dwelling, the *sanctuary*, reflects his *strength* and *glory*. Indeed, the poet piles up words that emphasize his glory (*glory* [*kābôd*], *splendour* [*hōd*], *majesty* [*hādār*]) in order to express the ineffable.”

⁴⁷ Spurgeon, *Psalms*, 48: “The sight of the King in his beauty caused no alarm to John in Patmos, and yet it made him fall at his feet as dead.”

And speaking of Christ's return. Write this down as #4. The psalmist tells us...

4) Worship the King because of his future **reign** (96:10–13)

Let's bring this home because this is where this psalm gets exciting. Look at **verse 10**. This is the climactic verse of this psalm.

¹⁰ Say among the nations, "The LORD reigns!"⁴⁸

The Hebrew here is יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ. And that verb מֶלֶךְ is cognate with the Hebrew word for "king" (מֶלֶךְ [melek]). So one of the ways that you can translate this verse is "The Lord is King!" Or "The Lord reigns as King."⁴⁹ Not David. David was a good king, but he's not the king you want reigning forever.⁵⁰

And this psalmist is telling the nation of Israel to tell the other nations, "The Lord is King!"

¹⁰ Say among the nations, "The LORD reigns!"⁵¹

Yes, the world is established, it shall never be moved;

He will judge the peoples with equity."⁵²

There will come a day when the God of the Universe will judge the entire world. The OT saints knew about it. The NT saints knew about it. They were waiting for that day. We are still waiting for that day. Even though Jesus has come already, we are waiting for his return. We are still waiting for the day when the rightful King of this world will take his throne and rule forever.

And when that day comes, look at **verse 11**. Here's some prophecy.⁵³

¹¹ Let the heavens be glad,

and let the earth rejoice;⁵⁴

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

This is like an ecological revival right here.⁵⁵ Nature is celebrating. In **Romans 8**, Paul writes that "the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time."⁵⁶ The creation groans now. But at Christ's return, it'll rejoice.⁵⁷

⁴⁸ There is some confusion textually with this verse among the church fathers. We see this with both Justin Martyr and Tertullian. For example JUSTIN MARTYR: "Furthermore, from a verse of the ninety-sixth psalm of David they have left out the short phrase 'from the tree.' For they have changed the verse, 'Say to the Gentiles: The Lord has reigned from the tree,' to 'Say to the Gentiles: The Lord has reigned.'" Quoted in Wesselschmidt, ed., *Psalms 51–150*, ACCS, 195. Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms (90–150)*, vol. 3, KEL, 141n43 addresses this question in his commentary: "Briggs (II: 304–5) includes a note of passing interest that later versions, especially the old Latin, had 'the Lord reigned from the tree,' which was cited by Latin fathers as a prophecy of Christ, and was used by Justin Martyr in his charge that the Jews were erasing things from the text (*Apol.* I:41). The reading was clearly a later, Christian gloss; nevertheless, it gained currency through its use in the hymn of Fortunatus at the beginning of the 7th century, *Vexilla regis prodeunt*, 'The royal banners forward go.' It was translated by Neale."

⁴⁹ See also Pss 93:1; 97:1; 99:1. Also the psalmist makes it clear that Yahweh reigns in Zion, not David or any Davidic King (99:2). See Terrien, *The Psalms*, 686–7.

⁵⁰ VanGemeren, "Psalms," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Psalms (Revised Edition)*, 725: "'The Lord reigns' is characteristic of this type of psalm (cf. 93:1; 97:1; 99:1). He has established his rule on earth by the fact of his creation ('the world is firmly established'; cf. 93:1) and by the evidence of his rule with 'equity' (*mēšārīm*; cf. 9:8; 17:2; 58:1; 75:2; 98:9; 99:4)."

⁵¹ Kidner, *Psalms 73–150*, TOTC, 381: "So the psalm moves to its climax. If the cry, 'The Lord reigns!' was a message first of all to Israel (cf. 93:1, and comment) like that of the lone runner in Isaiah 52:7, here a host of messengers spreads it to the world."

⁵² Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms (90–150)*, vol. 3, KEL, 142: "The wonderful saving works of the LORD have revealed that he is the sovereign ruler; but at the great Day of the LORD that is coming the people of the world will finally realize his absolute, eternal reign; and then people will have no choice but to acclaim his kingship."

⁵³ ROBERT BELLARMINE: "He had hitherto seen, as it were from afar, the kingdom of the Messiah, and he exhorted preachers to announce, and people to acknowledge, the coming of the king... he calls on not only all nations, but even the heavens and the earth, the seas, the very trees, to exult, and to adore him; not that he looked on such things as imbued with reason, but in order to express his own feelings, and the universal joy that would be felt all over the world on the coming of Christ. Some will refer this passage to the first, others to the second, coming of Christ, but we see no reason why it should not take in both." Quoted in Selderhuis and George, eds., *Psalms 73–150*, RCS, 140.

⁵⁴ JOHN OF DAMASCUS: "Still again, 'the heavens show forth the glory of God' (Ps 18:2) not by speaking in voice audible to sensible ears but by manifesting to us through their own greatness the power of the Creator, and when we make comments about their beauty, we give glory to their Maker as the best of all artificers." Quoted in Wesselschmidt, ed., *Psalms 51–150*, ACCS, 195–6.

¹³ before the LORD, for he comes,
for he comes to judge the earth.⁵⁸
He will judge the world in righteousness,
and the peoples in his faithfulness.⁵⁹

That right there is the OT equivalent of “**Maranatha, Come Lord Jesus**” (1 Cor 16:22; see also Rev 22:20). What the psalmist of the OT was longing for, we still long for. **We long for the day when God makes all things new. We long for justice. Notice the number of times that the word “judge” is used in these final verses. We long for a true and better judge who gives proper judgment. We long for the one who will put an end to injustice.**⁶⁰

We long for the day when God puts everything right. The day when God judges all evil-doing. The day when the true King of the Universe takes his throne and we worship him for eternity.

And we don’t have to wait until then to start worship him. We can do that now. We can get a head start on that. And we do. We worship King Jesus. We sing to the King, the Messiah. And we worship the King for so many reasons. And one of those reasons is because of his future reign... because of what’s coming.⁶¹

As we close, let me connect the dots for you. You might say, “When will this happen, Pastor Tony? When is this all going to transpire? I can’t wait for this.”

Well, here’s the final culmination of everything. Here’s the end of the end. Watch this! This is so good. **This is Revelation 21:1–4:** “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

As I understand it eschatologically, this is after the rapture, after the seven years of tribulation, after the millennial reign of Christ, and after the final rebellion when Satan and the rejectors of Christ are sentenced forever to the Lake of Fire. This is the end of the end of the end, when what theologians call the eternal state takes place. And in that eternal state in the New Jerusalem with the new heavens and new earth, all former things will pass away.

⁵⁵ Kidner, *Psalms 73–150*, TOTC, 381: “This ecstatic welcome had its human counterpart on Palm Sunday, with a hint, as well, that given half a chance ‘the very stones would cry out’. How much more the teeming seas, fields and forests.”

⁵⁶ Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms (90–150)*, vol. 3, KEL, 142: “These images (personifications) signify that everything will thrive and flourish in the coming the reign of the LORD—all singing and rejoicing is an acclamation of God’s blessing in one way or another. These motifs are found in eschatological passages in the psalms as well as the prophets; they predict the time when the effects of the curse will be replaced by divine blessing, or to put it another way, they declare the expected corrective for the apostle’s description of the whole world’s groaning, waiting for the day of redemption (Rom. 8).”

⁵⁷ Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms (90–150)*, vol. 3, KEL, 143: “This prospect of judgment could refer to some expected divine intervention at the time, an expected reality in the experience of the psalmist. But ultimately it refers to the great Day of the LORD, the eschatological expectation of the final judgment (see Isa. 40:10).”

⁵⁸ Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms (90–150)*, vol. 3, KEL, 142n45: “The expression ‘the great Day of the LORD’ refers to the coming of the LORD in glory to judge the world and establish his universal reign of peace and righteousness. In the prophetic literature (e.g., Joel and Amos) it is usually described in epiphany language (see Ps. 97).”

⁵⁹ VanGemeren, “Psalms,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Psalms (Revised Edition)*, 725: “The Lord comes to establish ‘righteousness’ and ‘truth’ (‘faithfulness’) on earth. The hymn closes on the same motif with which it began—the affirmation of God’s rule (‘governs’; NIV, ‘will judge’) with ‘equity’ (synonymous with ‘righteousness’ and ‘truth’).”

⁶⁰ Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms (90–150)*, vol. 3, KEL, 143: “Those who refuse to acknowledge his sovereign kingship in this life, who refuse to do obeisance to him in holiness now, will find themselves the objects of his judgment when he comes. For the Christian, the witness of Scripture is clear: Jesus Christ, the Son of God, created all things (John 1), and will judge all things (John 5); he came and brought salvation to us, and he will come again to judge the world and establish his righteous reign over it. When he comes to fulfill all things, he will be identified as Faithful and True (Rev. 19).”

⁶¹ WOLFGANG MUSCULUS: “Could he not judge the earth even if he would not have descended to us by the incarnation? Who does not see how great that philanthropy of God is? He could have even ruled the earth by his angels. Indeed, it is not through his angels but he descends by himself to us.” Quoted in Selderhuis and George, eds., *Psalms 73–150*, RCS, 140.

So, no more tears. No more heartache. No more emotional pain. No more physical pain. No more anxiety. No more dread. No more fretfulness. No more murder. No more deceit. No more six o'clock news full of violent crime. No more injustice.

No more **"I'm sorry I hurt you."** No more conflict. No more apologies. No more messy breakups. No more interventions with a family member who is stuck in a pattern of sin. No more alcoholism. No more addiction. No more sexual perversion. No more killing of innocent people.

No more cancer. No more surgery. No more heart disease. No more doctors. No more dentists. No more root canals. No more gastroenterologists. No more hardships. No more unemployment. No more financial stress. No more temptation. No more **"my kids are driving me crazy."** No more lying. No more adultery. No more idolatry. No more infidelity.

And when I see you there, in eternity... and when I ask you, **"How's it going today?"** You will never ever, ever, say, **"I'm having a rough day."** **"I'm struggling, today."** **"I'm not doing too well, Tony!"** You will never say that! You will never complain about the government again.

I'll ask you how you are doing, and you'll say, **"Everything is awesome all the time. It's better than I ever imagined before. Every day just gets better and better and I couldn't be happier."** And you'll ask me in eternity, **"How are you doing, Tony?"** And I'll say, **"I'm doing awesome. I couldn't be better. Every day is amazing from start to finish. And King Jesus is ruling on his throne."**

And there will be no more crying. No more dying. No more mourning. No more suffering. And King Jesus will rule over us perfectly and unerringly forever and ever. That's what's coming. And we can worship that Jesus even now in anticipation of his future reign.⁶²

⁶² Spurgeon, *Psalms*, 49: "Let us ourselves join in the song. Since the whole universe is to be clothed with smiles, shall not we be glad?"