



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond

V25 N33

August 13, 2023

MAKING GOD KNOWN

"Missional God"

Psalm 96:1-13

THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

Personal God

I believe God is involved
in and cares about my
daily life.

*"I lift up my eyes to the
mountains – where does my
help come from? My help
comes from the LORD, the
Maker of heaven and earth."*

Psalm 121:1-2



Who is the
LORD?

To the simple question, "Who is God?" Psalm 96 answers, "God is the LORD, the one who deserves our worship." Describing contemporary Americans, someone has said, "They work at their play, worship their work, and play at their worship." By this he did not mean that we enjoy our worship, that it refreshes and revitalizes us. Instead he meant that we don't take it very seriously even though it is an essential spiritual discipline.

When we worship, we exalt, honor, adore, and glorify the LORD God in response to his holiness and his grace in our lives. In our thoughts and in the words, rituals, and symbols that we employ in worship, we ascribe to God infinite worth that belongs to him alone. Either alone or in unison with other believers, we experience God's presence, and we deepen our relationship with him through sincere worship and are thereby inspired to live righteous lives. In this way, worship truly is a transforming experience.

Dallas Willard writes, "If in worship we are met by God himself, our thoughts and words turn to perception and experience of God, who is then really *present to us* in some degree of his greatness, beauty, and goodness. This will make for an immediate, dramatic change in our lives" (*The Spirit of the Disciplines*, 178).

While all of this is true and constructive in what it asserts, it is, at the same time, misleading and destructive in what it implies. And here's why. It implies that we worship God for selfish reasons, that we worship him for our personal benefit. It leaves the impression that worship is about *our* experience, *our* inspiration, and ultimately *our* spiritual transformation, and while Willard is certainly right when he says worship "will make for an immediate, dramatic change in our lives," *our* personal improvement, no matter how laudable, is hardly worship's *raison d'être* – to which we would all say, "Of course not."

But how we talk after attending worship service belies our words. Do we not talk about whether *we* enjoyed the service or not, whether *we* got anything out of it, or didn't? Do we not comment on whether the music suited *our* ear, the vocalists suited *our* taste, and whether the temperature in the sanctuary was to *our* liking? And do we not, preoccupied with *our* experience, evaluate worship accordingly?

Somehow we overlook talking about whether we truly worshiped or not. After all, we worship because the LORD God is worthy of our worship. True worship is in and of itself worthwhile because the Creator deserves it, and what's more, he demands it. Worship doesn't have to be beneficial to *us* to be worthwhile, which means time spent in worship is never time wasted. With this Psalm 96 concurs. It tells us we are to sing praises to the LORD and ascribe to him the glory due him. And it tells us we are to do this 1) because the LORD is great and worthy of praise (v. 4), 2) because he made the heavens (v. 5), 3) because he is surrounded by splendor, majesty, strength, and glory (vv. 4, 6, 9, 10), and because he is a missional judge (vv. 10, 13) – not because we will somehow benefit from doing it. Worship is not a means to an end; it is an end in itself. So along with the Psalmist, the Lord's people should:

- 1 Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.
 - 2 Worship the LORD with gladness;
come before him with joyful songs.
 - 3 Know that the LORD is God.
It is he who made us, and we are his;
we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.
 - 4 Enter his gates with thanksgiving
and his courts with praise;
give thanks to him and praise his name.
 - 5 For the LORD is good and his love endures forever;
his faithfulness continues through all generations.
- (Ps 100)

1 EXAMINE GOD'S WORD

Read Psalm 96:1-13

- 1 Sing to the LORD a new song;
sing to the LORD, all the earth.
- 2 Sing to the LORD, praise his name;
proclaim his salvation day after day.
- 3 Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvelous deeds among all peoples.
- 4 For great is the LORD and most worthy of praise;
he is to be feared above all gods.
- 5 For all the gods of the nations are idols,
but the LORD made the heavens.
- 6 Splendor and majesty are before him;
strength and glory are in his sanctuary.
- 7 Ascribe to the LORD, all you families of nations,
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 the splendor of his holiness;
tremble before him, all the earth.
- 10 Say among the nations, "The LORD reigns."
*The world is firmly established, it cannot be moved;
he will judge the peoples with equity.*
- 11 Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad;
let the sea resound, and all that is in it.
- 12 Let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them;
let all the trees of the forest sing for joy.
- 13 Let all creation rejoice before the LORD, for he comes,
he comes to judge the earth.
- He will judge the world in righteousness
and the peoples in his faithfulness.*

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Number "sing" in vv. 1, 2.
- Circle "new song" in 1.
- Circle "salvation" in v. 2.
- Circle "glory" in v. 3.
- Box "for" indicating *reason* in vv. 4, 5.
- Circle "gods" in vv. 4, 5.
- Box "but" indicating *contrast* in v. 5.
- Underline "splendor and majesty" and "strength and glory" in v. 6.
- Number "ascribe" in vv. 7, 8.
- Highlight v. 10a.
- Circle "judge" in vv. 10, 13 (2x).
- Number "let" in vv. 11, 12.

What one word would you use to describe the **TONE** of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What one thing do you not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the **THEME** of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about _____."



DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. If verses 7-9 are addressed to “families of nations,” to whom are verses 1-6 addressed?
2. The psalmist begins, “Sing to the LORD a *new song*.” Explain what that means (see note).
3. Explain from verse 3 what “declare his *glory*” means.
4. List the reasons found in verses 4-6 for praising the LORD.
5. Explain the *contrast* in verse 5.
6. Describe the scene *pictured* in verse 6.
7. Verse 8 says, “Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name.” How *exactly* is this done?
8. Explain the sense in which “The LORD reigns.”
9. The psalmist uses figurative language in verses 11-13. Describe its effect on you.
10. **Discussion:** Talk about why the LORD’s coming to judge the earth is a reason to rejoice.

Commentary On The Text

About Psalm 96, one commentator writes: “The Psalm is missionary and millennial. It proclaims a gospel to all mankind, and it points to the triumph of that gospel in the actualized universal righteous rule of the Lord” (W. Graham Scroggie, *The Psalms*, 279). And the four-part summary of the Psalm given by another can easily be used to unpack the psalmist’s message (Craig C. Broyles, *Psalms*, NIBC, 375).

Broyles writes: “The liturgy of this psalm celebrating Yahweh’s kingship opens with calls to praise stated in general terms (vv. 1-3).” The three-fold repetition of the verb “sing” is striking. Not only does it emphasize that singing the LORD’s praise is a must, but it at the same time also inclines the human heart toward that very necessity. “New song” here likely refers not to a new composition but rather to singing again, that is, proclaiming the LORD’s salvation repeatedly in song.

He continues: “Reasons for the praise are then stated in terms of Yahweh’s incomparability among those claiming divine status, his past act of making the heavens, and his royal attributes (vv. 4-6).” These reasons are hard to miss since they are introduced by “for.” According to the psalmist, other so-called gods are “nothings” in reality, but the LORD created the universe. On the recurring use of the Hebrew word translated “for” one author writes, “The use of [*kî*] in vv 4 and 5 provides a double emphasis on the high status of Yahweh, who is greater than all other gods and more worthy of reverence (fear) than any other deity. The second [*kî*] statement in v 5 extends and intensifies the declarations in v 4: all the gods of the peoples are ‘mere idols’ . . . [but] Yahweh ‘made the heavens’ (cf. Ps 8:4)” (Marvin E. Tate, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 20, *Psalms* 51-100, 514). What’s more, unlike the “nothings” to which the psalmist refers, to Yahweh belong “splendor” and “majesty,” “strength” and “glory.” These attributes, *personified* in verse 6, stand before him, figuratively speaking, in his sanctuary as his royal attendants.

Broyles goes on: “The liturgy then moves to another section calling for praise but this time specifying how and where (vv. 7-9).” As the only true God, all people are to praise the LORD by ascribing to him the glory he deserves. Doing this entails bringing him an offering that is not only a religious sacrifice but also a political tribute, and bowing down to worship him as divine king in his temple courts. On the meaning of “glory,” one commentator explains: “What lies at the base of the term is the idea of

‘weight,’ or ‘standing’ (*gravitas*), and of ‘honour.’ The possessions of Jacob are his [Heb. *kbwd*, glory] (Gen. xxxi. 1) — that is, they are what give him standing. And a people’s [*kbwd*] is its nobility, its leaders (Is. v. 13), or its might in general (Is. xvi. 14, xviii. 3, xxi. 16). [*kbwd*] is by and large that asset which makes peoples or individuals, and even objects, impressive, and usually, this is understood as something that can be perceived or expressed. Thus Jahweh’s [*kbwd*] also, that is, his power and standing, his honour, were perceptible in the world in the most varied of ways — in actual fact it fills the whole creation (Is. vi. 3), and *there is a duty laid upon men and angels to praise God and acknowledge this honour given him by his strength* (Ps. xxix. 9), an honour which Jahweh claims for himself alone (Is. xlii 8)” (Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, trans. D. M. G. Stalker, 1:239 italics added). Clearly in this verse, the LORD’s “marvelous deeds” are his glory, i.e., what makes him uniquely impressive.

He then concludes: “The final section specifies the content of this praise, which looks especially to his future act of judging. In response, the whole cosmos is to reverberate with praise (vv. 10-13).” The praise of Yahweh to be declared among the nations (cf. v. 3) is simply this, “The LORD reigns.” “This confession of Yahweh’s rule leads to a look backward at his ‘establishing’ the world and to a look forward to his ‘judging’ the peoples with equity (cf. 93:1-2, 5)” (Broyles, 377). This future judgment is a cause for rejoicing because it implies he will make all things right. When the LORD comes he will restore order and harmony in his sin scarred creation. And so everything in heaven and on earth is to rejoice and be glad in anticipation of that day. Again using *personification* (cf. v.6), a figure of speech that represents *things* as *persons*, the psalmist declares that “the heavens,” “the sea,” “the fields,” “the forest,” and “everything in them” are to jump for joy! “The writer, divinely inspired, saw beyond the horizons of his own age, and beyond the limits of his own nation. He saw a day when the sovereignty of the LORD will be finally manifested and universally acknowledged. There is nothing here of Jewish exclusivism, but a vision of world-wide blessing under the Kingship of Jehovah” (Scroggie, 279). Until then, we are to continually sing songs “to the praise of his glory” (Eph 1:6).

Word Studies/Notes

v. 1 *new song*

This simple expression can be taken in a number of ways. One commentator claims it refers to this song, Psalm 96 (Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms II*, AB, 357); one to a yet-to-be-written one that expresses “the thought and hopes and triumphs of the new and glorious age which is about to dawn” (J. J. Stewart Perowne, *The Book of Psalms*, 196). Another author suggests that it’s not the lyrics of the song that’s new but the singers of the song. “The song is clearly new to the singers of the psalm, that is, ‘all the earth’ (so in 98:1, 4). They are to take up Yahweh’s song – not those of ‘the gods of the nations’ (96:5) – and sing of his salvation, his glory, and his marvelous deeds” (Craig C. Broyles, *Psalms*, NIBC, 375). It may, however, roughly mean “sing again” for “fresh mercies call for fresh melodies” (W. Graham Scroggie, *The Psalms*, 280). “The thought of a ‘new song’ does not involve the idea of a new poetic or musical composition, but as we believe Briggs rightly claims, ‘a new outburst of song because of a new event that evokes it’” (H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of the Psalms*, 682). “Just as God’s care is never ceasing and new every morning (cf. Lam. 3:22f.), so also the song of his praise must be ever new” (A. A. Anderson, *The Book of Psalms*, NCBC, 2:682).

v. 1 *sing, sing, sing*

Cf. ascribe, ascribe, ascribe in vv. 7, 8. When the verb ‘sing’ is used three times, this serves to make plain the compulsion to utter vocal musical praise when the thought of the Lord’s greatness are entertained. This thought kindles the fires of devotion to the point where praise cannot be restrained” (Anderson, 2:682).

v. 2 *salvation*

Cf. “Announce every day how he delivers” (the *NET Bible*). “‘Salvation’ which is the object of praise is again so broad a term and so general in its scope that it allows for including any form of God’s help and deliverance that anyone may have experienced at any time in soul or body” (Leupold, 683). Some commentators see in the term an allusion to the LORD’s past restoration of Jerusalem following the exile (Broyles, 375); others see an allusion to his future coming to judge the earth (v. 13).

v. 4 *gods*

How can the psalmist, on the one hand, admit the existence of other gods in verse 4 and then, on the other, call them “idols,” lit., “nothings” or “non-entities” in verse 5? Note the play on Hebrew words. “They are not [*elōhim*] (‘gods’) but [*elīlim*] (‘nobodies’); cf. Isa. 2:8, 18, 20, 10:10, 11’ etc.” (Anderson, 2:683). “It is possible that verse 4 means to say that Yahweh is to be revered above all would-be ‘gods’ or whatever humans trust in, strive for, and worship. But it is also possible ‘the gods of the nations’ are those fabricated by the nations, and the ‘gods’ of verse 4 are the divine beings of Yahweh’s heavenly council (89:5-8 also refers to them to express Yahweh’s incomparability; cf. 29:1; 148:1-2; 1 Kgs. 22:19)” (Broyles, 376).

v. 5 *the heavens*

This is likely a figure of speech called *synecdoche* in which a part refers to the whole. Here “heavens” is put for the whole of creation.

v. 6 *splendor and . . .*

“Splendor and majesty are before him; strength and beauty are in his sanctuary” (ESV). “Splendor” and “majesty” are terms used to refer to Israelite kings in the royal psalms and to Yahweh in Ps 104:1. “Strength” and “glory” [“beauty” in many translations] are used to refer to the ark of the covenant. Many commentators suggest that these divine attributes are personified in verse 6. “I have read v 6 as expressing the great qualities of Yahweh’s kingship as personifications, who attend him in the temple (cf. Pss 85:14; 89:15). The entourage of Yahweh is not made up of a company of lesser gods, who are in reality no gods, but of those ‘agents’ of his own which are manifest in his saving work and wondrous deeds. Yahweh’s escorts in v 6 are in keeping with his glory in v 3.” (Marvin E. Tate, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 20, *Psalms 51-100*, 514).

v. 7 *Ascribe*

“Acknowledge and proclaim the wonderful deeds of God” (Anderson, 2:684). Cf. “O nations of the world, recognize the LORD; recognize that the LORD is glorious and strong. Give to the LORD the glory he deserves!” (NLT).

v. 7 *families of nations*

I.e., all nations on earth; cf. “all people on earth” (TEV). “All the ‘families’ of the world are urged to ascribe to Yahweh glory and mighty power (which means, of course, that they would not attribute these qualities to their gods) and to come with gifts of tribute to join in a great ‘bowing down’ before Yahweh, who reigns as king over all creation (vv 7-10)” (Tate, 514). “This imperative section is virtually identical to 29:1-2, another psalm focused on Yahweh’s divine kingship, except that here the families of the earth, not ‘heavenly beings,’ are the ones to do the praising . . . And the offering (Hb. *minhâ*) was not only a religious sacrifice but also a political tribute to the kings (e.g., 72:10; 2 Sam. 8:2, 6; 2 Kgs. 17:3-4) (Broyles, 376).

v. 11 *heavens . . . earth*

This is likely a figure of speech called *merism* (a form of *synecdoche*), in which two contrasting parts or extremes are used to refer to the whole, e.g., “I’ve been working *day and night*” or “*all the time*.” Here the heavens and the earth are to rejoice, and more specifically on earth, the sea, the fields, and the forest and everything in them are to rejoice.

v. 13 *judge*

“It might seem strange that impending divine judgment should be a cause for rejoicing, but that is because Christian theology gives prominence to judgment as a criminal trial of each person as a sinner before the perfect God. But in the context of the Psalms, Yahweh’s ‘judging the world in righteousness’ means ‘putting things right’ and restoring order and harmony. Judgment thus calls for joy” (Broyles, 377).



APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

Sing the LORD's praises for he is the only true God,
who reigns now and comes to judge the earth later.

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The "Living Questions" are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?



FAMILY TALK

Kids love to make up songs. They sing about brushing their teeth, dirt and going potty. I have a precious video of my youngest when he was about four singing about “going walking, walking, walking” at our farm. When it pops up on socials I smile and am filled with memories of sticky hands, chubby-armed hugs and the smell of bluebonnets. A few song chords can take us back to a place long forgotten, a time of remembrance. God does that for us. He reminds us of where we’ve been as well as where we’re going. Worship through song shows God’s creativity and pulls us into a moment of oneness with our King. When we pour out our praise to Him, we’re reminded of how He saved us, how He took us from the slimy pit and set us on firm foundation (Psalm 40:2). When we worship Him, we’re reminded of His glory, a magnificence that brings us to our knees. Song writers give us the words to help us marvel at who He is and what He’s done for us. If you’re struggling in your family and things are off kilter, your toddler is teething, you’ve had a run-in with a sassy 10-year-old or the kids have had a little too much togetherness and the sibling rivalry is strong, put on some praise and worship. Something happens. The frustration, anger, and hopelessness begin to melt away and our heart is redirected toward our Savior, the One who called us into relationship with Him. His song fills us with hope and promises one day heaven. We’re praying for you!

What Does The Bible Say?

Read Psalm 96:1-2.

1. What does the author tell us to do?
2. What are we to sing about? (hint: look for the word “his”)
3. To whom do we declare God’s glory and deeds?

What Do You Think?

Who makes up the “great multitude?”

What Do You Do?

What has God done for you that makes you praise Him? Write a Psalm of praise to God?

CORE COMPETENCY: Personal God

I believe God cares about everything in my life.

MEMORY VERSE: Zephaniah 3:17

“The Lord our God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you; in his love he will no longer rebuke you, but will rejoice over you with singing.”

KidPIX COUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRAL Kids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: kids@wearecentral.org

- _____ I completed my Bible Study
- _____ I memorized this week’s verse
- _____ I brought my Bible to church
- _____ I brought a friend



CHILD’S NAME

GRADE

PARENT SIGNATURE

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CENTRAL BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)
I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)
I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)
I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

Humanity (John 3:16)
I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12)
I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)
I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)
I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)
I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)
I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



CENTRAL VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)
I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)
I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)
I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)
I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15)
I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)
I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)
I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)
I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)
I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)
I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)
I choose to esteem others above myself.



CENTRAL PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)
I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)
I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)
I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)
I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)
I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)
I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)
I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)
I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)
I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)
I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

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Stephanie Thomas (B.B.A University of Texas at Arlington). Stephanie is married to James and they have four children: Elijah, Levi, Ella and Simon. Stephanie has attended Central Bible Church for more than 20 years, has been on staff since 2014, and now serves as Children's Minister.

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