

Advent Psalms | Longing for the Humble King

“Sing to the Lord A New Song”

Psalm 96

12.24.23 5:00pm

Sing to the LORD a new song; Sing to the LORD, all the earth. ² Sing to the LORD, bless His name; Proclaim good tidings of His salvation from day to day. ³ Tell of His glory among the nations, His wonderful deeds among all the peoples. ⁴ For great is the LORD and greatly to be praised; He is to be feared above all gods. ⁵ For all the gods of the peoples are idols, But the LORD made the heavens. ⁶ Splendor and majesty are before Him, Strength and beauty are in His sanctuary.

⁷ Ascribe to the LORD, O families of the peoples, Ascribe to the LORD glory and strength. ⁸ Ascribe to the LORD the glory of His name; Bring an offering and come into His courts. ⁹ Worship the LORD in holy attire; Tremble before Him, all the earth. ¹⁰ Say among the nations, "The LORD reigns; Indeed, the world is firmly established, it will not be moved; He will judge the peoples with equity."

¹¹ Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; Let the sea roar, and all it contains; ¹² Let the field exult, and all that is in it. Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy ¹³ Before the LORD, for He is coming, For He is coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness And the peoples in His faithfulness.

This psalm – the last of FIVE PSALMS we considered in this *Season of Advent*, THIS psalm is mirrored in the account of King David bringing the Ark of the Covenant into Jerusalem. The Book of Chronicles (CH 16) contains a long hymn commissioned by David for the Music Director, Asaph. This Psalm makes up the middle of that long hymn.

The Ark of the Covenant for those who don't know was a sacred symbol God commanded to be in the inner sanctum, the interior chamber of the portable worship space, *the Tabernacle* and then later it was transferred into the Temple in Jerusalem.

It was a box like 4 ½ feet wide and 2 ½ feet high and 2 ½ feet deep. It was wooden but all covered in gold. On the lid two gold angels, one on each end, and stretching their wings toward the center. There was NOTHING at the center... an open, hollow space between the angels representing the invisible presence of God.

King David was really, REALLY HAPPY when the Ark was rescued from the Philistines and brought into his capital city of Jerusalem.

This Psalm celebrates God as the ONLY real, true, living God... NOT a god, an idol invented by people, but the God who Himself INVENTED PEOPLE...

Abraham who lived 1,000 years before David, God met Abraham who was an idol worshiper and God revealed Himself to Abraham – God came down to Abraham. Later God proved Himself to Abraham by a miraculous birth – Abraham’s wife gave birth to a child in her VERY OLD AGE. God promised Abraham a people, a place and blessing spilling over into the lives of all nations, *“in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.”* (Gen. 12.3)

Abraham’s descendants, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph and on through the generations were to center their lives on this God who had COME TO THEM and chosen them just because He wanted to (Ps 115.1-3); because He wanted to show His mercy to planet earth, through Abraham.

500 years later, this God, whose Name is “I Am” (*Yahweh* – Heb) He rescued His people from slavery in Egypt through the plagues and the Passover and He used Moses to lead them... and He commanded Moses to make this portable worship space with this UNIQUE anti-idol at the center – NOT a statue or depiction of God... just a space – the God who can’t be contained or depicted or portrayed or controlled.

And the people of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, of Joseph and Moses and David... they were chosen by *“the God who is there”* (Schaeffer); the God NOT in any way dependent on US... the Creator of all things, this God gave exclusive rights to the Jews, the people of Abraham. The Gentiles, the Nations could only know this God through contact with the Israelites.

When David (about 1,000 BC) brought this symbol, The Ark of the Covenant into Jerusalem, King David danced like a madman. David’s wife was disgusted because David looked like a child and NOT a King. But David couldn’t help himself even the dance couldn’t quite express the UNBOUNDED JOY he felt.

1,000 years later, the Uncontainable Wild God, the Invisible Presence came again to a suburb of Jerusalem called “The House of Bread” – Bayit-lehem, Bethlehem. But this time the Invisible God made Himself VISIBLE. The uncontainable God was contained, disguised in the form of a Man, a Baby.

The Presence at the center of the box, the invisible God surrounded by golden figurines of angels would NOW BE GREETED by living angels

This Psalm tells us how to greet the Uncreated One when He comes... the whole earth should sing a new song, should now sing the song of angels – *“And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased.”* (Luke. 2.13-14)

The Presence of God arrived... Proclaim good tidings of His salvation – that word, salvation in the Hebrew language in which this psalm was written in the word, YESHUA (ישועה) – and that is what the parents were told to name this Child – the image of the Invisible God, *Yeshua* or in English, *Jesus*.

The very form that God took tells us that His offer of peace is real. He comes to make peace... He comes NOT to terrify us or condemn us (John 3.17) ... His Name is “Salvation” – He comes to obey His own LAW on behalf of those who tried but just couldn’t DO IT.

He comes to live the only truly deserving life that has ever been lived... He comes to offer His record of pure love to God and love to people – He comes to earn that record of perfection for sinful, sometimes mean, often uncaring, often selfish people like ME.

And when He had lived that Life of beauty and truth and pure GOODNESS... to clothe desperate people like ME a perfect record... He then went into Jerusalem and they sang and danced like David did... and then they Crucified Him... God the Father gave to His Good Son, the justice I DESERVED.

And God’s Spirit raised HIM, whose Name is Salvation, Yeshua, Jesus Christ was raised from the dead, New and Indestructible showing the whole earth that the peace-treaty between God and sinners is REAL.

And eventually He will make all things new... but for now we sing the New song... at it says in the Last Book: *“When He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.* (Rev. 5.8-9)

You remember the commercial – “What’s in YOUR wallet?” Remember that?

Well, I want to ask YOU – what’s in YOUR PLAYLIST? Do you sing the old song, the same old song sung by people who are just doing their best to get by... sort of biding our time... until out time runs out?

Wouldn't you like to sing the song of angels to the One True and Living God who became visible that He might rule the earth and fix all that's broken – who came to offer peace to rebels and to make US NEW PEOPLE?

Come and join us... believe in Jesus Christ and unite with the rebels who've been made sons and daughters of the living God... even right NOW you can trust Him... then tell someone of the good tidings and throw in with us... there's a joy here... even amidst the pain, regret, sorrow and loss – In accepting the terms of God's peace treaty, there's such relief; there's a real and unshakeable joy that can't be contained. Let Heaven and Nature sing:

Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let the sea roar, and all it contains; let the field celebrate, and all that is in it. Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy, before the LORD, for He is coming, for He is coming to rule the earth. He will rule the world in righteousness and the peoples in His faithfulness.

Q U O T E S

External heat and cold had little influence on Scrooge. No warmth could warm, no wintry weather chill him. No wind that blew was bitterer than he; no falling snow was more intent upon its purpose, no pelting rain less open to entreaty... the heaviest rain, and snow, and hail, and sleet, could boast of the advantage over him in only one respect, they often 'came down' handsomely, and Scrooge never did. (p. 3)

He went to the church, and walked about the streets, and watched the people hurrying to and fro, and patted the children on the head, and questioned beggars, and looked down into the kitchens of homes, and up to the windows, and found that everything could yield him pleasure. He had never dreamed of any walk, that anything, could give him so much happiness. (p. 119)

– Charles Dickens, *A Christmas Carol and Other Christmas Stories* (1843; Signet Classic, pp. 3 and 119)