

PRAYER AND PRAISE 22 //11 AUGUST 2020

Reading Psalm 96

This psalm is a call to all the earth to sing the praise of the Lord among the nations. The Lord reigns and he has no equal.

Read (1-3) What are the things that the psalm is encouraging us to do in these opening verses? Look at the scope in terms of time, place and people who are to be included.

Read (4-6) What are the attributes of God that these verses highlight? Fear of God means reverential trust that includes a commitment to his word. How should we express this in our lives? Notice the exclusive nature of (4). How does this conflict with our present culture and what does it mean for us as we seek to tell others about the God we follow?

Read (7-9) These verses are the consequences that should flow from the previous section. What are they encouraging us to do? How can we apply them to our lives now?

Read (10-13) The emphasis now moves to the LORD as a reigning sovereign. What has been determined in (10)? Notice the idea of permanency and the expectation that justice will be delivered. The idea of fair judgement in (10) seems to be that disagreements between nations and people will be resolved. The next three verses give a poetic description of the response of the physical creation to the LORD. Can you find a similar thought that Paul uses in Romans chapter 8?

The psalm finishes with prophetic reference to the return of Christ. What is the key part of that event, focused on here? The word for “judge” is different from the one used in (10). The picture now is of righteous judgement – a dispensing of punishment. Why should this be an encouragement for us to spread the good news that Jesus brought through his teaching, death and resurrection?

Prayer Focus

“In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans.” (Rom 8 v 26) Sometimes it is difficult to know exactly what to pray for but we can be encouraged by knowing that the Holy Spirit takes our prayers and presents them on our behalf so that they become in tune with the will of God. Let us be thankful for that.

“Because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death.” (Romans 8 v 2) Give thanks for the new life that we have in Christ because of his willingness to take the punishment for our sins and be grateful that we are fully forgiven and therefore are no longer under the power and penalty of sin.

“Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your bodies.” (1 Cor 6:19) In the Old Testament times God used a tabernacle or the temple to indicate the holiness of his presence. But now we have God's Spirit living within us. This brings serious responsibilities for us to live in ways that honour God. Let us pray that we live lives that are worthy of God and that they show to others what it means to be a Christian.

CREED: I believe in the Holy Spirit

“And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit.” (Eph 1:13) God's gift to those who put their faith and trust in the work of Jesus on the cross is the continual presence of His Spirit to live within us. Let us pray that our behaviour is God honouring in all that we do and commends Jesus to family friends and neighbours.