

* The Heights Baptist Church * Series: The Psalms *
* Topic: Worship the LORD * Psalm 96 * 5/4/25 *

MAIN POINT

As Christians, we are created to worship God and rejoice in Him in all circumstances.

INTRODUCTION

What things come to mind when you hear the word “worship?”

The definition of “worship” is, “to honor or show reverence for as a divine being” (Mirriam Webster). Some people might think this means a lot of things, and others think only of singing together on Sunday.

In Psalm 96, we will see a description of several attributes of God for which we should worship Him, and several different methods that we as Christians are to respond to God in ways that honor and revere Him.

UNDERSTANDING

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ PSALM 96

Note to study leader: Consider writing a list on the white board of the ways we can worship God as people come up with them from this Psalm. This will serve as an outline as you work through Psalm 96.

What are the various things we are called to do in this Psalm?

- **Sing** to the LORD (Verse 1).
- **Bless (or praise)** His name (Verse 2)
- **Proclaim** His salvation (Verse 2).
- **Declare** the LORD’s glory (Verses 3-6).
- **Ascribe** to the LORD the glory due His name (Verses 7-8)
- **Worship** the LORD and tremble before Him (Verse 9).
- **Say**, “The LORD reigns” (Verse 10).
- **Rejoice** before the LORD (Verses 11-13).

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO RE-READ PSALM 96:1-6 (SING, PRAISE, PROCLAIM, DECLARE, ASCRIBE)

How do you think these four methods of glorifying God should look in our lives?

Our purpose as people is to glorify God (Isaiah 43:7 and Eph. 1:12). We see from Psalm 96 that a big part of glorifying God is to be audible on our part. This includes singing, praising, proclaiming and declaring.

Note to study leader: Strong’s defines the Hebrew word translated here as “to kneel; by implication to bless God (as an act of adoration).”

To whom are we to direct our singing and praising, and to whom are we to proclaim and declare the LORD’s glory, and how often are we to do this?

We are to sing, praise God, and tell others about Him. These verses direct us to declare His glory among the nations, and His marvelous deeds among all peoples. And we are to glorify God “day after day.”

What attributes of God are listed in verses 1-6 that should cause us to glorify Him?

We are to glorify Him for His salvation, deeds, worthiness, splendor, majesty, strength, and glory.

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO RE-READ PSALM 96:7-10 (ASCRIBE, WORSHIP, SAY)

What do you think it means to “ascribe to the LORD the glory due His name”?

The definition of “ascribe” is, “to say or think that (something) is caused by, comes from, or is associated with a particular person or thing.” We should be telling others of His greatness, mercy, love, justice, and goodness. We should not hold back on our praise of God.

“God is not going to share His glory with another... If I said that... ‘It’s all about me and I’m not going to share that glory with anybody else’ you’d think, ‘Wow, he’s just a little bit full of himself, isn’t he?’ So, what about when God says that? Here’s the difference; when I say it, it’s not the truth. I’m not the center of all things. Your soul is not aided by me. The universe is not aided by me being the center of it. It’s the truth when God says it. When you put glory in anything else, it’s going to fail you.”
Pastor Randy Hahn, The Heights Baptist Church, September 27th, 2020

What attributes of God are listed in verses 7-10 that should cause us to ascribe glory to God?

We are to glorify Him for His salvation, glory, strength, and the splendor of His holiness. We are also to give glory to Him for His reign, for His establishing of the world, and for judging the people with equity.

What lessons can we learn from the fact that when we worship the LORD in the splendor of His holiness, we are to tremble before Him?

As Christians, we can call God “Abba, Father” since we have been adopted into God’s family through Christ’s atoning work on the cross. But we must not forget who we are and who God is. He is all-powerful, perfectly righteous, and completely holy. We must not lose our awe of Him.

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ PSALM 96:11-13 (REJOICE)

Who is called to rejoice in the LORD, be glad, be jubilant, and sing for joy before Him?

The heavens, the earth, the seas, the fields, the forests, and everything in them. Verse 13 summarizes this as follows; “Let all creation rejoice before the LORD”.

How does this call to rejoice in the LORD compliment the earlier call to tremble before God?

As verse 13 tells us, the LORD comes to judge the earth, and He will judge the world in righteousness. And while He is perfectly holy and all-powerful, we are sinful and weak. Verse 13 also reminds us of His faithfulness.

ASK VOLUNTEERS TO READ ROMANS 3:25-26 AND ROMANS 5:8

What two qualities of God are demonstrated by Christ’s death on the cross?

Christ’s death on the cross demonstrates God’s righteousness (God the righteous judge is required by His nature to judge sin), and also His love for us (God willingly sacrificed His only Son, whom He loves, so we as sinful people could be restored to Him).

Note to study leader: You may choose to skip the verses in the next section and jump straight to the Philippians verses based on either time restrictions or on the level of your class's Bible knowledge.

"These Psalms are not only stories about David & others, but they also represent... David's Lord & David's King, Jesus Christ." Rev. Rico Patterson, Sermon notes from *The Heights*, March 23rd. 2025

"He said to them, 'This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.' Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures." Luke 24:44-45

ASK VOLUNTEERS TO READ ISAIAH 9:6-7, JEREMIAH 3:17, ZECHARIAH 8:22-23, ZECHARIAH 14:16, ROMANS 8:18-23, AND AMOS 9:13-15

These verses from Isaiah, Romans, and Amos are thought to be describing the future millennial reign of Christ in Jerusalem.

Matthew Henry viewed Psalm 96 as being prophetic of this time when Christ reigns in Zion ("the Lord Christ reigns, that King whom God determined to set upon his holy hill of Zion.... the days of the Messiah will be joyful days." In what ways is Psalm 96:7-13 a good description of the millennial reign of Christ?

- The nations will be worshiping Christ (Jer. 3:17, Zech. 8:22-23, Zech. 14:16 and Psalm 96:7-9).
- Jesus will be reigning on earth (Isaiah 9:6-7 and Psalm 96:10).
- The creation will be thriving (Romans 8:18-23, Amos 9:13-15, and Psalm 96:11-12).
- Christ's reign will be characterized by justice and righteousness (Isaiah 9:6-7 and Psalm 96:13).

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ PHILIPPIANS 4:4-9

What disciplines does Paul challenge the Philippian Christians to pursue in these verses?

Rejoice in the Lord! Don't be anxious about anything. In everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present our requests to God. Think about good things. Imitate mature believers.

What blessings will come to us if we do these things?

The God of peace will be with us. The peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

What does it mean to "rejoice" in the Lord (v. 4)? What is the distinction between joy and happiness?

Paul's exhortation to rejoice in the Lord always emphasizes that in all our circumstances, we are to celebrate being held securely in God's grace.

What are we focusing on when we are grumbling, anxious, or thinking impure thoughts?

Circumstances and fleshly concerns or pleasures.

How can praising God and choosing to be thankful help with worry?

Worry is a major part of every person's life. It's easy to let it control us. Paul urges us to stop worrying, and pray to the Lord with thankful hearts instead.

This is not just self-help or the offering of psychological advice. This is a supernatural peace that comes from God and is beyond our understanding.

APPLICATION

How can you adjust your focus or schedule this week so that you can more consistently dwell on glorifying God rather than allowing our mind and emotions to dwell on our circumstances?

What are some ways you can actively prepare yourself to come into the corporate worship setting?

PRAYER

Hallelujah! For you, our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give you glory! You are holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty. May your name be kept holy. Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to you for ever and ever. Amen.

COMMENTARY

Psalm 96

96:1-3. This new song was cosmic praise for Yahweh's reign over a universal kingdom comprising all peoples (98:1; 144:9; 149:1; Isa 42:10). Mention of the sanctuary (96:6) implies a pre-exilic origin for this psalm. A threefold repetition of "sing" followed by three imperatives—praise... proclaim, and declare—underscore the purpose of the song: to glorify the Lord's works of salvation.

96:4-5. The psalmist contrasted the impotence of idols with the creative power of the Lord, challenging all association between false gods and the natural forces of the cosmos. The gods of the peoples are worthless or powerless (97:7; Isa 42:5,8,17).

96:6. Four descriptive nouns—splendor...majesty... strength, and beauty—are personified as divine escorts preceding the Lord's processional entrance into the temple.

96:7-9. These verses represent an expansion of 29:1-2, substituting families (lit "tribes, clans") of the people for "sons of God" (29:1), while adding bring an offering and enter His courts, and tremble before Him, all the earth. The modifications redirect the praise of the Lord from the heavenly realm to the earthly sphere, functioning as a polemic against other deities. To ascribe something to someone is to acknowledge they have that attribute.

96:10-13. With the phrase the Lord reigns, the psalmist reinforced the Lord's dual roles as King and Creator.