

PSALMS 95 and 96

Psalms 95, 96, 97, 98, and 99 have the same common theme, a summons to sing praises to Yahweh. Each psalm is connected in some way with the establishment of the Messiah's kingdom. This 95th psalm can be divided into two parts, the first being a summons to praise and the second a warning against disobedience. It is directed to the nation of Israel, but St. Paul, by quoting it in the book of Hebrews, gives us warrant for using its appeals and entreaties when pleading with Gentile believers. It is a psalm of invitation to worship. Though there is not enough material within the psalm to give it a definite date, it seems quite reasonable to set its time after the return from the Babylonian captivity. In fact, there appears to be no plausible objection to the idea of its being sung at the time of the dedication of the Second Temple.

Psalm 95

- 1 O come, let us sing for joy to YAHWEH, let us shout joyfully to the rock of our salvation.
- 2 Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving,
let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms.
- 3 For YAHWEH is a great God and a great King above all gods,
- 4 in whose hand are the depths of the earth, the peaks of the mountains are His also.
- 5 The sea is His, for it was He who made it, and His hands formed the dry land.

- 6 Come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before YAHWEH our Maker.
- 7 For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand.
Today, if you would hear His voice,
- 8 do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah, as in the day of Massah in the wilderness,
- 9 "When your fathers tested Me, they tried Me, though they had seen My work.
- 10 "For forty years I loathed *that* generation,
and said they are a people who err in their heart, and they do not know My ways.
- 11 "Therefore I swore in My anger, truly they shall not enter into My rest."

In the Septuagint, this psalm is entitled, "*A Hymn of David; when the Temple was rebuilt after the captivity*". The substance of it is found in 1 Chronicles 16:23-33, where we read of David bringing the Ark up to Zion. In verse 1, David's original psalm is called a "new song," because new mercies of God were now to be celebrated. There is a broad eschatological outlook to the 96th psalm, for it throbs with the hope of the Lord's coming. The psalm might be considered a missionary hymn, for it celebrates the conversion of the Gentiles to Yahweh. This jubilant note is found throughout the psalm, and it should not escape our notice that the thought of impending judgment for those who will not worship Yahweh is

included in it.

Psalm 96

- 1 Sing to YAHWEH a new song; sing to YAHWEH, all the earth.
- 2 Sing to YAHWEH, 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 YAHWEH and greatly to be praised; He is to be feared above all gods.
- 5 For all the gods of the peoples are idols, but YAHWEH made the heavens.
- 6 Splendor and majesty are before Him, strength and beauty are in His sanctuary.

- 7 Ascribe to YAHWEH, O families of the peoples, ascribe to YAHWEH glory and strength.
- 8 Ascribe to YAHWEH the glory of His name; bring an offering and come into His courts.
- 9 Worship YAHWEH in holy attire; tremble before Him, all the earth.
- 10 Say among the nations, "YAHWEH 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 YAHWEH, 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.

PRAYER

Almighty God, creator of all that is, you alone are worthy of all our praise. Let us proclaim with gladness your majesty and mercy to all mankind. Let us spread the good news that Jesus Christ has made an atonement for sin, and everyone who believes in his heart that Christ has died and risen from the dead shall be saved from eternal punishment. You take no delight in the death of the wicked, and therefore the invitation is to all; and to all who come, none will be cast away but will be received to eternal life through the merits of the great Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ. Hear our petitions, for we pray in his name. Amen.