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BETWEEN
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ESSAYS IN HONOUR OF
VICTOR A. SHEPHERD

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Psalm 96: Declare His Glory Among the Nations

Rebecca G. S. Idestrom

The word *glory* is a very “large” and majestic word, full of significance and depth, capturing a number of nuances, concepts and images.¹ Some of its nuances are related to honour, magnificence, excellence, weight, playing on the concept of heavy, weighty, of worth, making someone impressive and thus deserving honour. It is also associated with the imagery of light, shining brilliance, fire and cloud. This magnificent term is applied to the LORD in the Bible. In fact, Scripture presents a rich and multifaceted picture of the glory of God. The divine glory is like a glass prism through which the light of God’s glory is refracted and many colours of light are seen, revealing various aspects of Yahweh’s character and actions.² As a result, different aspects and depictions of the glory of the LORD are revealed throughout Scripture. In this essay, I will focus on Psalm 96 and see what it reveals about God and his glory. I will begin with a brief survey of glory in the Psalms.

The most common Hebrew term for glory in the Old Testament is כבוד (*kabod*), usually translated as glory or honour. In the Psalms there are 51 occurrences altogether of the word כבוד (glory), of which about 23 refer to God’s glory. In addition, there are many other synonyms for glory, usually translated as majesty, splendour, beauty, radiance, power, excellence, etc. Some of these synonyms appear in Psalm 96.³

In the book of Psalms, the references to God’s glory are related to a number of biblical themes. Carey Newman has identified these as the following: “The three themes of kingship, creation, and worship organize Psalmic Glory language.”⁴ In addition to these three themes, I would add two more, the mission of God, which extends salvation to the nations of the world, and the future eschatological hope associated with God’s glorious coming.

First of all, glory is associated with Yahweh's reign as king in Zion. The LORD is described as the king of glory (Psa 24:7-10). His kingdom will be glorious as well as his name and reputation (Psa 66:2; 79:9; 145:11-13). Nations and kings will both recognize the greatness of God's glory and fear it (Psa 138:4-5; 102:15-16 [102:16-17 Heb]). As the divine king, Yahweh has chosen Zion (Jerusalem) to be the place where he inhabits his earthly palace, the temple, and from where he reigns (Psa 48:1-3 [48:2-4]; 78:68-69; 132:13-14). The divine glory filled the temple when it was inaugurated, as a physical sign of God's manifest presence among his people (1 Kgs 8:11; 2 Chron 7:1-3; Psa 26:8; 102:15 [102:16]). Thus, God's glory in the temple indicates that Yahweh is reigning in Zion. As king, Yahweh's reign is characterized by justice.

Second, God's glory is revealed in his creation. The heavens declare his glory (Psa 19:1 [Heb 19:2]; 97:6), and his glory is over all the earth and fills it (Psa 57:6, 12; 72:19; 108:6). His glory dwells in the land, yet is also above the heavens (Psa 85:10; 113:4). God's glory is also seen in his works (Psa 104:31). All of creation testifies to God's glory, honour and majesty (Psa 8:1 [8:2 Heb]). Thus there are many psalms that depict nature worshipping and singing in gratitude to its Creator (Psa 96:11-13; 97:1; 98:4, 7-9).

Thirdly, the glory of the LORD is revealed in the context of worship and the temple (Psa 26:8; 63:2 [63:3 Heb]). God's glory will appear in Zion, the place of worship (Psa 102:16). His power and glory are experienced in the sanctuary (Psa 63:3). In return, the worshipping community responds in praise by giving or ascribing glory to Yahweh (Psa 29:1-2, 9; 96:7-9; 115:1; 138:5). The revelation of God's glory leads the people of God to respond with both exuberant praise and quiet and reverent worship.

Fourthly, in the Psalter we see God's glory related to the mission of God. The salvation of the LORD will be proclaimed, revealed and known among the nations. Although God's glory first appeared to his chosen people Israel, the glorious hope of the Old Testament, emphasized both in the Prophets and in the Psalter, is that God's glory will be revealed to the nations of the world (Psa 102:15 [102:16 Heb]; 138:4-5; 145:5-6, 10-13).⁵ God's glory will be revealed in his acts of justice and redemption, and this message will be proclaimed to all peoples. As a result the nations will acknowledge the LORD. The people of God will participate in God's mission by declaring his glory among the nations (Ps 96:3; 57:9-11 [57:10-12 Heb]).

Finally, the future eschatological hope is associated with God's glorious coming. The LORD will come in glory and all nations will see his glory. His coming will set the world in order and bring justice, righteousness, equity, and peace (Psa 96:13; 98:9; cf. Isa 40:3-5). His coming will also impact all of cre-

ation, which will be restored. This restoration is anticipated in the imagery depicting all of creation singing and celebrating the Lord's coming (Psa 96:11-13; 98:7-9). As we look at Psalm 96, we will discover that all of these themes regarding the divine glory are present.

As we turn to Psalm 96, I will first examine a few introductory matters. Canonically, Psalm 96 is found in Book Four of the Psalter, which consists of Psalms 90-106.⁶ Psalm 96 is also placed among the psalms that celebrate Yahweh's reign as king, along with Psalms 47, 93, 95-99. From a form-critical perspective, scholars have described these psalms as "hymns of descriptive praise of Yahweh" or as "enthronement psalms" celebrating Yahweh as king.⁷ Here it is interesting to note that Psalm 96 has a lot in common with these other psalms celebrating the kingship of Yahweh. In particular, there are several similarities between Psalms 96 and 98 as well as Psalms 96 and 97.⁸ In addition, there are connections with Psalm 29, where almost identical phrases are used (Psa 29:1-2; 96:7-9).

In the Hebrew Masoretic Text there is no psalm title or superscription given to the Psalm. However, in the Septuagint, the Greek Translation of the Old Testament, there is a heading given: "When the house was being rebuilt after the captivity. An Ode. Pertaining to David."⁹ This heading puts the Psalm in the historical context of the post-exilic Persian period. This heading either implies that it may have been composed around the dedication of the rebuilt temple after the return from Babylonian exile in the Persian period or that it was composed earlier but maybe appropriated for this occasion. Since the title was not part of the original Hebrew text, there is no explicit indication from the psalm itself regarding who wrote it and when it was composed.¹⁰

However, Psalm 96 is also cited elsewhere in the Old Testament, in the Chronicler's account of David bringing up the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem (1 Chron 16:23-33). In this context, David appoints Asaph and the other priests to give thanks to God by reciting the following psalms: Psalms 105:1-15, 96:1-13 and 106:1, 47, 48 (1 Chron 16:8-36).¹¹ From this account, it is assumed that the psalms listed were composed during David's reign, and perhaps even for this occasion.

Psalm 96 celebrates the divine kingship of Yahweh. The people are told to declare God's glory among the nations and to tell them the good news that the LORD reigns (96:3, 10). It is in this context that we learn about God's glory. The word glory כבוד (*kabod*) occurs three times in the Psalm (96:3, 7, 8). There are also a number of synonyms used: splendour הוד (*hod*), majesty הדר (*hadar*), strength עז ('*oz*), and beauty תפארת (*tip'eret*) (96:6). Splendour and majesty, strength and beauty, are all word pairs. These characteristics of God's

glory are experienced in his temple, in the place of worship (96:6). Glory is also paired with God's wonderful deeds, glory and wonders/marvelous works (in 96:3) and glory and strength/might (in 96:7). Regarding the word pair, splendour and majesty, (*hod* and *hadar*) in 96:6,¹² Franz Delitzsch calls them, "The usual pair of words for royal glory."¹³ The notion of splendour associated with royalty is implied here, fitting for a psalm celebrating the kingship of Yahweh. Thus the parallel lines and word pairs shed light on the meaning of glory. The phrase translated as "splendour of holiness" or "holy adornment or attire" in 96:9 is also related to the concept of glory. The people are to worship God appropriately, since he is holy. As king, the LORD possesses glory and honour, but also receives it from the worshipping community as they give or ascribe glory to his name (96:7-8). As the true God and king, Yahweh is worthy of all glory and praise.

The Psalm begins with six plural imperative verbs: sing (repeated three times) sing, sing, sing, bless, announce/proclaim, tell/declare (96:1-3).¹⁴ The summons to sing and testify is supported by reasons and motivations for such action (96:4-6). This is followed by another set of imperatives, eight commands: ascribe/bestow/give (three times), bring, come/enter, bow down/worship, tremble, and say (96:7-10). Altogether there are fourteen imperative verbs in the Psalm commanding and urging the people to action. The Psalm concludes with all of creation joining in the celebration, rejoicing, singing, and anticipating the LORD's coming as king to judge the world.

To begin with, the people are commanded to sing to the LORD a new song. What is new about this song? In response to this question, Christopher Wright states that:

The content of this new song is essentially a remix of the old songs of Israel—the name, the salvation, the glory and the mighty acts of YHWH. What makes it new is *where* it is to be sung (in all the earth) and *who* is going to be doing the singing (all peoples). What was an old song for Israel becomes a new song as it is taken up by new singers in ever expanding circles to the ends of the earth.¹⁵

The whole earth, representing both humanity and the natural world of creation, will take up this song.

Understanding the liturgical use of this Psalm in the context of a coronation ceremony, Walter Brueggemann interprets the need to sing a new song as: "A new song must be sung for a new orientation. In the ancient world a new orientation was typified by a new reign, introduced by inauguration or corona-

tion.”¹⁶ Adopting Brueggemann’s concept of a new orientation, I would argue that this new orientation also embraces a vision of the universal scope of God’s saving work. The audience of the Psalm is given a new orientation, which sees salvation and its proclamation extending beyond Israel’s borders to include the whole world.

The specific content of this new song is seen in the three parallel lines that follow: proclaim the good news of his salvation from day to day, declare his glory among the nations, and his wonderful deeds (or wonders) among all the peoples (96:2b–3). In this tricola, the terms salvation, glory and wonders parallel each other.¹⁷ The parallelism helps us understand the concept of glory in this verse. God’s glory is revealed in his saving acts, wonderful deeds and miraculous works. Yahweh is Saviour, whose glory is revealed through his redemptive work. This is the good news of the gospel. In fact, the first verb to “proclaim” *בשר* (*basar*) can be translated “announce good news” (glad tidings, the gospel; cf. Isa 40:9; 52:7). Proclaim the gospel, the good news about the salvation of the LORD daily. Take this message to the nations and declare it among the peoples (96:3).¹⁸ This is a glorious message indeed!

From this example, we see that God’s glory is revealed in his saving actions. Here I agree with Marvin Tate when he writes: “Thus the ‘glory’ of Yahweh is an active, not a static, concept. It is his presence, power and action in the world.”¹⁹ Put in another way, Wright states that: “The name, salvation and glory of YHWH were all bound up with ‘his glorious deeds’.”²⁰ Thus one aspect of God’s glory is demonstrated in the LORD’s glorious character as Saviour revealed in his acts of redemption.²¹

In verses 4–6, the psalmist contrasts the greatness of Yahweh with the gods of the nations, who are nothing or worthless in comparison to the Creator of the universe. Therefore God deserves much praise and reverence. In this context, the four synonyms of glory are mentioned, splendour, majesty, strength and beauty, which appear before the LORD in the sanctuary. As stated above, these terms highlight the royal glory and splendour of the divine king. In the context of worship, the worshipper experiences the royal glory of Yahweh, and the gods of the nations are truly seen for what they are, as completely insignificant.

In discussing verse 6, John Calvin writes that, “The Psalmist means that we cannot be said to know God if we have not discovered that there is in him an incomparable glory and majesty. He first takes notice of his power and strength, as that in which his glory consists.”²² Here Calvin equates God’s glory with his power and strength but he also makes the astonishing and challenging claim that part of what it means to know the LORD is to comprehend his glory.

The Psalmist reminds us that we have no reason to say that his glory is obscure, since there were emblems of his presence in the temple, the sacrifices, and the ark of the covenant. Let us endeavour, when we make mention of God, to conceive this glory which shines before him—otherwise, if we do not comprehend his power, it is rather a dead than a living God whom we worship.²³

Not only should we be able to comprehend his glory in the context of worshipping him, Calvin challenges us that when we speak of God, our testimony of the LORD needs to be informed and shaped by a vision of God's glory. As we encounter God's power and glory in worship, we are transformed and our perspective on the LORD and the world is changed. This will significantly impact our witness in the world.

Because the psalmist is profoundly aware of God's glory and majesty, he both invites and urges people to come and worship this glorious God, in a series of eight commands. Three times they are commanded to "ascribe" or "bestow/give" to the LORD glory/honour (96:7-9) echoing the language of Psalm 29:1-2 (where the wording is identical at times).²⁴ Because God is worthy of worship, they are to give him the glory due to his name. What is amazing is that this invitation is extended to all the "families of the peoples" (96:7). All the nations of the world are called to bring an offering and to worship the LORD in his courts.²⁵ Here we again see the universal scope of God's salvation widening to include the nations. Because the glory of the LORD has been proclaimed among the nations (96:3), the nations of the earth will be drawn to worship God and will acknowledge his glory and honour. The nations will be attracted to the glory of Yahweh. They will also hear the good news that God is the true king, as the final imperative or command is to "say among the nations, the LORD reigns" (96:10). And God's reign brings stability to the world (the world "will not be shaken," 96:10), because he will judge fairly with justice and equity.²⁶

As the missional call to worship and proclaim rings out to all peoples, all of creation is invited to rejoice. Nature personified is pictured as celebrating joyfully with four different Hebrew verbs that communicate exuberant joy (96:11-12). Why will creation sing for joy? As king, God comes to bring justice to the earth. The notion of God bringing justice is repeated three times (96:10, 13). Not only is Yahweh's coming welcomed, as king he will judge with uprightness or equity (96:10), in righteousness and faithfulness (96:13). In a world full of injustice this becomes a message of hope. This is truly good news!

The Psalm concludes with an emphasis on the coming of the LORD and the implications of his coming. The Hebrew word for “come” can be translated as either “has come” or “is coming” since the spelling of both forms is identical.²⁷ If the message is that the LORD has come, then the emphasis is that God is already reigning in the present.²⁸ But if it should be translated as the LORD comes or is coming, then there is a future, perhaps even an eschatological emphasis, anticipating the final day of the LORD and the Messianic reign, when all evil will be eradicated and God will establish universal justice and peace. This is when God’s glory will be fully revealed. But even if one interprets it as a future coming of the LORD, this does not negate God’s present rule in the world, since the psalmist has already proclaimed the good news that Yahweh reigns (96:10) and throughout the Psalm, God is depicted as sovereign king in all his glory. This is the good news of the Psalm. This is the reason why he is worshipped and why his glory and reign is proclaimed. The LORD has already come and is reigning, but there is also the promise of a future coming of Yahweh, which brings hope to the faithful in the present. In commenting on this, James Mays writes, “The past ‘comings’ of the LORD have a future. The liturgy remembers and anticipates. The psalm always places those who sing it in the presence of the LORD who has come and will rule the earth in righteousness and faithfulness.”²⁹ Thus the people of God experience the present reality of his glorious presence while they anticipate his coming in glory.

Finally, the LORD comes in order to judge the world in righteousness. For the faithful, his judgement is not to be feared but welcomed since he comes to establish justice and to set things right in the world.³⁰ This is also good news for all of creation, which is pictured as longing for the final day of redemption (96:11-13; see Rom 8:18-25). The coming of the LORD is welcomed news for all God’s creatures.³¹

Conclusion:

What does Psalm 96 reveal about God’s glory? The glory of the LORD is seen in his redemptive work in the world, and this is the good news that is to be proclaimed to all people. As king, the LORD brings salvation and justice to the world. We also learn that we can encounter God’s glory and majesty in the context of worship. Therefore the people of God are invited to behold the glory of the LORD in all its royal splendour. And as we worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness, we are humbled and compelled to give him the honour due his name. He is worthy of all praise and glory.

How then should we respond and appropriate the message of Psalm 96?³² As believers, we need to heed the fourteen imperatives emphasized by the

psalmist. These can be summarized under two main themes, worship and mission. Psalm 96 reminds us that the people of God are called to a life of worship and mission; the two are intimately related. As we worship the LORD, we catch a glimpse of who God is, in all his majesty and glory, and as we do we are transformed and able to embrace a new vision, God's vision for the world. Worship leads to mission. The psalmist calls the worshipping community to witness to others what they have experienced, to proclaim the glory of the LORD to the world. In song and word, we are to share the good news to all people and nations that the LORD reigns and that he has come and will come again to bring salvation and to establish justice. This is the hope of the world.

As Christians we believe that ultimately God's glory has been revealed in Jesus Christ (2 Cor 3:18; 4:5-6; Heb 1:2-3). "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us and we have seen his glory" (Jn 1:14). The good news of God's redemptive plan has been fulfilled in the coming of the Messiah, culminating in his death and resurrection. This is the gospel to which the Church is called to witness and proclaim in the world. While we are fulfilling this calling, we wait in expectant hope for the final revelation of God's glory in his second coming, when he will establish justice and peace. This is the vision of God's just reign proclaimed in Psalm 96.

As we wait in anticipation of this glorious hope, may we hear the invitation of the psalmist and respond in faithful and joy-filled obedience. May we proclaim the glory of the LORD among the nations. And as we meditate on God's glory as revealed in Jesus Christ, may we be transformed and empowered to proclaim the good news and may we give him all the glory. May we also fall on our knees in reverent worship and cry "glory" (Psa 29:9).

Notes

1. Eugene Peterson spoke about this in a sermon he preached at my colleague Dr. Arthur Boers' ordination service held at St Paul's L'Amoreaux Anglican Church in Toronto, October 21, 2012. In his message he said: "Glory in both its verbal and noun forms is one of the large, horizon-filling words in Scripture." One of his points was that we need the whole story of Scripture to comprehend the concept of glory. When Peterson hears the word *glory*, he is aware that, "something magnificent is going on!"

2. I have adopted the metaphor of a prism from professor Robert Gordon at Cambridge University. In linking the glory with divine goodness in Exodus 33:18-19, Gordon writes: "In the disclosure that is given in the next chapter (34:6-7), it is as if the light of the glory/goodness of God is passed through a prism to reveal the variegated attributes of deity" (Robert P. Gordon, "טוֹרֵב" *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* [vol. 2;

Willem A. VanGemeren, ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997], 355). Robert Gordon shared this insight with me over lunch in Cambridge.

3. Glory/beauty/radiance/splendour תפארת (*tip'eret*) (4x), majesty, weight, splendour, power הוד (*hod*) (8x), majesty הדר (*hadar*) (13x), excellent, majestic אדיר (*'addir*) (7x).

4. Carey C. Newman, *Paul's Glory-Christology: Tradition and Rhetoric* (Supplements to Novum Testamentum vol. LXIX; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1992), 50. Trygve Mettinger also argues that glory (*kabod*) is connected to kingship in the psalms about Yahweh's reign, noting Psalms 96:3, 7-8; 97:6; 145:5, 11, 12 in particular. Trygve N. D. Mettinger, *The Dethronement of Sabaoth: Studies in the Shem and Kabod Theologies* (Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1982), 117.

5. Ramsey writes: "Thus the Psalmists unite with the prophets in using the word glory to tell of Yahweh's universal sovereignty and its future vindication." Arthur Michael Ramsey, *The Glory of God and the Transfiguration of Christ* (London: Longman, Green and Co, Ltd, 1949), 15.

6. The Psalter is divided into five books. Book one: Psa 1-41; book two: Psa 42-72; book three: Psa 73-89; book four: Psa 90-106; book five: Psa 107-150.

7. Marvin Tate prefers Claus Westermann's category of "hymns of descriptive praise of Yahweh" over Gunkel's and Mowinckel's category of "enthronement psalms" because the latter category assumes some kind of enacted ritual behind the designation, which Tate questions. Marvin E. Tate, *Psalms 51-100* (Word Biblical Commentary vol. 20; Dallas: Word Books, 1990), 504.

8. Both Psalms 96 and 98 begin and end in the same way. Both Psalms 96 and 97 speak of God's glory (Psa 97:2-6 alludes back to the revelation of the divine glory at Sinai in the images of cloud, thick darkness, fire, and earthquake). There are also parallels in structure between Psalms 96 and 95. In addition, similar ideas or themes are expressed in these psalms of celebrating Yahweh's kingship and Isaiah 40-55. See Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 507-509; Robert Davidson, *The Vitality of Worship: A Commentary on the Book of Psalms* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), 317-318.

9. Albert Pietersma and Benjamin G. Wright, eds., *A New English Translation of the Septuagint* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 595.

10. Tate argues that the dates of origin of Psalm 96 along with Psalms 95, 97-99 is uncertain. He says that they could all possibly be "pre-exilic, but more probably post-exilic in their present form." Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 507.

11. In 1 Chronicles 16:23-33, Psalm 96 is slightly abbreviated with a few variations.

12. Splendour הוד (*hod*) and majesty הדר (*hadar*).

13. F. Delitzsch, *Psalms* (Commentary on the Old Testament in Ten Volumes; vol. V; by C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch; transl. James Martin; Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, orig. 1871, reprinted 1988), 91; Delitzsch is cited by C. John Collins, "הדר," *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* (vol. 1; Willem A. VanGemeren, ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 1014.

14. The plural imperatives show us that a group of people is addressed, here the people of God. Both the verb to "sing" and the verb to "give" or "ascribe" (96:7-8) are repeated three times.

15. Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2006), 480.

16. Walter Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms: A Theological Commentary* (Augsburg: Augsburg Publishing House, 1984), 144.

17. Here I follow John Goldingay who sees the whole psalm structured with tricola and staircase parallelism. John Goldingay, *Psalms: Volume 3: Psalms 90–150* (Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 101–102. Hans Urs von Balthasar makes the argument that especially in the Psalms, the glory of God is set in parallel to other characteristics of Yahweh, which reveals his attributes. Thus God's glory is revealed in his attributes. Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics* (vol. VI: Theology: The Old Covenant; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1991), 147–48. Therefore the structure of parallelism, so characteristic of Hebrew poetry, helps flesh out the meaning of glory.

18. Declare it *among* the nations/peoples (the *beth* ב preposition translated “among” in 96:3 [twice] and in 96:10) implies going to the nations and being in their midst to share the good news.

19. Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, 512. In this context, Tate refers to a number of Scripture passages in support, including Psalms 19:2; 29:9; 96:3.

20. Wright, *The Mission of God*, 56.

21. To this discussion we could add the voice of the Jewish philosopher Maimonides (AD 1135–1204) when commenting on Exodus 34:6–7 made the observation that the divine attributes revealed to Moses were attributes of action. He wrote: “what was made known to him were simply pure attributes of action: *merciful and gracious, longsuffering*. It is then clear that the *ways*—for a knowledge of which he had asked and which, in consequence, were made known to him—are the actions proceeding from God.” Moses Maimonides, *The Guide of the Perplexed* (translated with an introduction and notes by Shlomo Pines; vol. 1, ch. 54; Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1963), 124; emphasis by Maimonides. The divine revelation of his character emphasizes his actions, what the LORD does for his people. In other words, we come to know Yahweh's character through his deeds. In a similar vein, we catch a glimpse of his glory through God's saving actions.

22. John Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms* (vol. 4; transl. by James Anderson; Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1949), 52.

23. *Ibid.*, 52.

24. Because the nuances of the Hebrew word for “ascribe” יָהַב (*yahab*) includes not only the notion to recognize or acknowledge but also to bestow or give, Goldingay argues that not only are the people to recognize and acknowledge God's honour, they are to surrender their own honour and strength to the LORD by giving God the glory due to his name. Humans are tempted to hold on to their own honour. See his discussion on this with both Psalms 29 and 96. John Goldingay, *Psalms: Volume 1: Psalms 1–41* (Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 415; Goldingay, *Psalms: Volume 3: Psalms 90–150*, 105.

25. See Isa 66:18–23. The blessing of the Abrahamic covenant is being fulfilled in this inclusive picture (Gen 12:1–3; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14).

26. Mays, *Psalms*, 308.

27. The Hebrew word בָּא (*ba*) can be parsed as either a perfect “has come” or an active participle “is coming”.

28. This is how Goldingay prefers to read the text. Goldingay, *Psalms: Volume 3: Psalms 90–150*, 107.

29. Mays, *Psalms*, 309. In answering the question if the text is referring to a historical, liturgical or eschatological event, Mays argues that, “these alternatives are not mutually exclusive for Old Testament faith.” *Ibid.*

30. Craig C. Broyles, *Psalms* (NIBC; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1999), 377. In Psalm 97, the concepts of righteousness and justice are tied to the notion of God's glory. His glory is revealed in a just and righteous reign (97:1-6, 11).

31. Marvin Tate writes, "The news of Yahweh's saving work should be spread abroad day after day, until all people and nations will know about his glory. The message is intended to arouse joy and evoke faith in Yahweh as the nations come to understand that he reigns as king over the whole earth" (Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 512).

32. In response to the question of how to appropriate this Psalm, we are reminded that the Psalms as a whole have been part of Jewish and Christian worship for nearly three thousand years. See the historical survey done by Holladay. William L. Holladay, *The Psalms through Three Thousand Years: Prayerbook of a Cloud of Witnesses* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993). But Psalm 96 has been specifically used at certain times of the liturgical year of the church calendar. Some churches have traditionally read Psalm 96 on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, reflecting on both Christ's first coming and anticipating his second coming (Mays, *Psalms*, 309-310). In the synagogue, Jews recite Psalm 96 every Sabbath, as part of the Friday evening service of worship called *Kabbalat Shabbat* (meaning "Welcoming the Sabbath"), which precedes the regular service. This service, outlined in the Jewish Prayer Book called the *Siddur*, involves reciting Psalms 95-99 followed by Psalm 29, a short prayer, a hymn called *Lechah Dodi* (meaning "Come my Beloved"), and concluding with Psalms 92 and 93. Thus the message of Psalm 96 is heard weekly in the Jewish worshipping community. Although it is not obligatory to recite the *Kabbalat Shabbat* before the regular Friday evening Sabbath service (called the *Maariv*), it has become customary to do so. Holladay, *The Psalms through Three Thousand Years*, 142.