

Psalms 94,96

Psalms 96:11-13 Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and all its fullness; let the field be joyful, and all that is in it. Then all the trees of the woods will rejoice before the Lord. For He is coming, He is coming to judge the earth. He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with His truth.

Psalms 94: The Psalmist feels the observable injustices in the world around him and seeks assurance from God that these issues will be resolved. He begins by calling on the Lord to intervene, asking the inevitable question, "How long?"

The list of offenses draws a picture of a need for redress. "They utter speech, and speak insolent things; All the workers of iniquity boast in themselves. They break in pieces Your people O Lord, and afflict Your heritage. They slay the widow and the stranger, and murder the fatherless."

But, they feel as if they are safe from any repercussions of their choices, "Yet they say, 'The Lord does not see, nor does the God of Jacob understand.'" This is an overt atheism. In most cases, our atheism tends to be covert, that is, the difference that a

consciousness of God would make in our lives is avoided by our failure to give any thought to the issue. Overt atheism considers the possibility but then denies the reality of God's existence and His involvement in creation.

It is from creation that the foolishness of this position is exposed. "He who planted the ear, shall He not hear? He who formed the eye, shall he not see? He who instructs the nations shall He not correct, He who teaches man knowledge?" So the point made is that the Creator is not only aware of the goings on of His creation but that He is also involved in the shaping of those goings on toward the achievement of His purposes.

So, the position of blessing is to be in conformity with God's will as revealed to us by His word. There will be a blessing of the righteous just as surely as there will be a judgment of the wicked. The Psalmist is assured of God's merciful aid in times of troubles and when those troubles are sponsored by the wicked he knows that the Lord will be his defense and his rock of refuge. Inevitably, the tide will turn and the wicked will find themselves the victims of their own iniquity.

Psalms 96: This Psalm also considers the reality of unbelief but as a problem that has been resolved rather than as anything that could threaten or harm the faithful.

The psalm begins with celebration. God's salvation is good news every day. His glory is apparent to all and His wonders have been demonstrated before all peoples. He is great and worthy of praise but unlike the gods who are just idols, He is our Creator and we must take Him into account as we conduct ourselves through life. So, begin by giving Him praise. Acknowledge His strength and majesty. Find the strength and beauty of His sanctuary.

So the worshipping community gathers and proclaims God's glory and greatness. Worship is itself transformational and to do so is to experience the beauty of holiness. This serves as a witness to the world that the Lord reigns. He will judge righteously.

This confidence interprets the voices of sea and field and trees as rejoicing, gladness and joy before the Lord. One truth is in the air, "He is coming, for He is coming to judge the earth. He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with His truth."