

## WHEN THE KINGDOM COMES

### PSALM 96

Introduction:

Our Lord taught us to pray, “Thy kingdom come.” We have been faithful to do this across the years. Exactly what are we praying for? How will we know when the kingdom has come?

These questions have challenged interpreters of the Scripture from the beginning, and still challenge us. Psalm 96 fits into the answer to this question because it is definitely a psalm about the coming of the kingdom.

Most scholars are agreed that this psalm is messianic and thus prophetic. The vision of the psalmist took in more than his own day. He was able to see into the future and behold the coming of God Himself to judge and rule over the nations. While the psalm will not answer all of our questions about the coming of the kingdom, it will put before us in broad outline what will happen when the kingdom comes.

The central truth of the whole matter is that the coming of kingdom is the result of the coming of the King. In this case the King is none other than the Lord God, the Creator of heaven and earth. “For He cometh, for He cometh to judge the earth.” Other prophetic passages take this a step further when

this coming of God is fulfilled in the coming of His Son to the earth a second time to take up the throne of the universe. But what will happen when the kingdom comes?

**I. THE GLORY OF GOD WILL BE MANIFEST. (v. 1-5)**

1. The essence of His being will be fully manifest—“honor and majesty are before him; strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.”
2. The emptiness of all other religions will be exposed—“for all the gods of the nations are idols: but the Lord made the heavens.”

The word “idol” means a nothing, an emptiness. Is it not tragic that the multitudes of earth have bowed before non-beings that are absolutely powerless and empty? When the kingdom comes, the manifestation of God’s glory will expose them for what they really are—nothing!

**II. THE WORSHIP OF GOD WILL BE UNIVERSAL.**

One of the most dramatic impacts of the coming of the kingdom will be on the worship of the nations. What modern man has been so proud of will suddenly be gone. There will be no more religious pluralism when the kingdom comes. Instead the people of earth will finally respond to the

glorious and great Creator of the earth like He deserves. They will worship Him and Him alone.

1. All the nations will sing unto the Lord songs of celebration (v. 1-4)

The “new song” that is to be sung indicates that God has done something new. “All of the earth” is admonished to sing this “new song.”

2. All nations will bring gifts of gratitude to Him (v. 7-9)

The gifts will include both expressions of grateful praise, and offerings to be laid before Him. Offerings have always been a way of acknowledging who He really is, and now at last the whole earth will do this. They will do this in a true “fear” or reverence of heart.

Is it not worth noting that the very thing modern man has chosen to marginalize in his life will suddenly be the center of everything? Man in the Western world, and actually in the whole world, is attempting to demonstrate that worship is at best a waste of time, if not actually a danger to the well-being of man, but when the kingdom comes, the whole world will at last worship the true and living God.

### III. THE REALM OF NATURE WILL BE RESTORED. (v. 10-12)

1. Peace will be restored to nature. (v. 10)

There has been a wildness in nature ever since the fall of man into sin that was not there originally. When the kingdom comes, this will be gone. “The world also shall be established that it shall not be moved.” Just think of the havoc that hurricanes, earthquakes, tornadoes, ice storms, floods, droughts, and such, bring to the whole created order. When the kingdom comes, these will be removed. Creation will return to what the Designer had in mind when He made the earth.

## 2. Joy will be restored to nature. (v. 11-12)

Just imagine for a moment the pain that the created order experiences because of the sin of man. Think of what a war does to the realm of nature—especially as it is currently practiced. Think of what human greed does to the earth, of how modern man abuses the realm of nature. No wonder the psalmist calls on the whole realm of creation to join in an expression of joy toward the Lord for when the kingdom comes for all of this will be gone. At last the joy of the Lord shall be restored to the whole of creation. The heavens will be free from pollution, the sea will be free from pollution, the fields will be free from the abuse of selfish man, and even the trees will have reason for joy.

Is it not time to pray for the coming of the kingdom?

#### IV. THE LORD GOD WILL RULE OVER ALL THE EARTH WITH RIGHTEOUSNESS. (v. 10, 13)

At last, at last the world will have a righteous Ruler. For most of human history, man was ruled by kings and strong men. Because their rule tended to be oppressive and unjust, in more modern times man took the matters of rule into his own hands. This is what our nation promotes around the world—we call it democracy. As you know democracy means the power in man to rule himself—he does not need a king. While it is generally better than the rule of one man, it is not free from abuse. The world is still looking for a political system that is just and righteous all of the time.

When the kingdom comes, the world will finally have such a government—and it will be a theocracy.

##### 1. His rule will cover the whole earth.

“For he cometh to judge the earth.” “Judge” is a broader word than just sitting as a judge—it means to govern. Judgment will only be one aspect of his rule, but it will cover the whole earth.

##### 2. His rule will be with righteousness.

Righteousness is the fruit of doing things right. Man has always known in the depth of his being that there is a right way to do things, but no mortal has ever been able to do it. None has ever lived up to what he knew to be right.

He has never found a system that always does things right. Man is limited in every way. But when the kingdom comes, the enthroned Lord God will at last minister to the human family a governmental system that is just and right.

“”He shall judge the people righteously.” “He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth.” At last, at last the prayer of the righteous will have been answered.

We need to learn something from this. History tells of many efforts of man to establish such a kingdom in his own strength, but in the end they have all failed. Our nation is a notable example of such an attempt. But it too has failed! But do not despair! What man has never been able to do, God will accomplish when He comes in the person of His Son and subdues the kingdoms of men and establishes His own rule over the affairs of men. At last there will be peace on earth!

Even so, come quickly Lord Jesus!