

Let All The Nations Give God Glory!
A Passion on Display in the Life and Martyrdom of Missionary
Jim Elliot

Psalm 96

Introduction: 1) A true and genuine movement of our great God will cause the church to look 1) up to heaven catching a vision of His greatness, 2) in to view our own desperate sinfulness apart from His grace, and 3) out to see the lostness of the nations cut off from His goodness.

2) Such a movement of God engulfed and baptized the man and missionary Jim Elliot who would passionately seek to extend the glory of God among the nations only to see his earthly life, and those of his four faithful companions, end in martyrdom among the Auca Indians in Ecuador at the age of 29, the same life span God granted to another missionary by the name of David Brainerd (1718-1747).

3) Neither life, however, was a loss. On the contrary, more of the nations were added to give God glory because of their radical devotion to “the Lord [who] is great and greatly to be praised.” (v.4).

4) I think James Boice captures the full impact of Psalm 96 when he says, “it is a joyful hymn to the God of Israel as king and an invitation to the nations of the world to join Israel in praising Him. It is also a prophecy of a future day when God will judge the entire world in righteousness” (p.782).

5) It is this type of theology that drove Jim Elliot to give his life as a missionary, that inspired him to pray, “Oh that God would make us dangerous” (S.A., 79). It is this kind of theology that will not let you be satisfied with a shallow, impotent, useless and comfortable Christianity. It requires more! It inspires more!

Transition: Our psalm has 4 major movements that focus on the desires of God in relation to the nations. What does He want? What does He rightly deserve?

I. God desires that the nations praise Him 96:1-3

God is identified as the Lord (Yahweh) 11 times in this psalm. Here all the earth (v.11) is invited to praise Him. Three aspects of praise are specified.

1) We should sing a new song 96:1

- Three times we are called to “sing to the Lord” in vs. 1-2. Here it is said we should sing “a new song.” The new song is the good news of His salvation from day to day” (v.2). It looks back to His mighty acts of deliverance, especially the Exodus, but it also looks forward to the greatest act of salvation in Jesus Christ, witnessed climatically in Revelation.
 - Revelation 5:9-10: “And they sang a new song, saying “You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for you were slain, and have redeemed us to God by your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth.”
 - Revelation 14:3-5: “They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred *and* forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth. These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to God and

to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God.”

- The new song of salvation will be sung by all the nations!

2) We should proclaim His salvation

96:2

- The three imperatives “sing” are paralleled by three additional imperatives in vs. 2-3: “bless, proclaim, declare.” Singing to the Lord we bless His name, we honor and give glory to the name of the Lord (Yahweh). We do this as we “proclaim the good news of His salvation from day to day.” The idea is that not a day goes by, not a moment passes, that our hearts and minds and mouths are not occupied with the wonder of His salvation (v.3).

3) We should declare His glory

96:3

- The new song (v.1) and good news (v.2) of the Lord’s salvation demands a universal, worldwide declaration. “The glory of this God must be declared among the nations and His wonders (NASV, “His wonderful deeds”) among all peoples.”
- Eugene Peterson paraphrases it this way, “Shout the news of His victory from sea to sea, take the news of His glory to the lost, news of His wonders to one and all!”
- This was the passion of Philip James Elliot. Born in 1926 in Portland, Oregon, God blessed him with a father who was an itinerant evangelist. While he was not an educated man, Fred Elliot’s love and devotion to Christ would significantly shape the life of his son. Of his father he would write in a letter to his future wife Elizabeth, whom he called Betty,

“Betty, I blush to think of things I have said, as if I knew something about what Scripture teaches. I know nothing. My father’s religion is of a sort which I have seen nowhere else. His theology is wholly undeveloped, but so real and

practical a thing that it shatters every 'system' of doctrine I have seen. He cannot define theism, but he knows God. We've had some happy times together, and I cannot estimate what enrichment a few months' working with him might do for me, practically and spiritually."

His journal adds this:

January 29. "When I think of how far he has gone into the secret riches of the Father's purposes in Christ, I am shamed to silence. O Lord, let me learn tenderness and silence in my spirit, fruits of Thy knowledge. Burn, burden, break me." (S.A., 90-91).

- Jim's home was often visited by missionaries, and at about the age of 8 he trusted Jesus as his Savior. As a teen the thought of being a missionary was already in his heart. It is never too early to consider such life decisions! He was a fine athlete who saw sports as a helpful way of preparing his body for the rigors of the mission field.
- He enrolled at Wheaton College in 1948, joined the wrestling team, began speaking to youth groups, began journaling in his junior year, and met Betty.
- It was in June 1950 that Jim's passion to see the nations praise the Lord Jesus saw his heart drawn to the remote and greatly feared Huaorani tribe in Ecuador, known in that day as the "Aucas." Two written pieces capture what God had placed in his heart.

Letter to his parents (August 8, 1950).

"Surely those who know the great passionate heart of Jehovah must deny their own loves to share in the statement of His. Consider the call from the Throne above, Go ye, and from round about, Come over and help us, and even the call from the damned souls below, Send Lazarus to my brothers, that they come not to this place. Impelled, then, by these voices, I dare not stay home while Quichuas perish. So what if the well-fed church in the homeland needs stirring? They have the Scriptures, Moses, and the Prophets, and a whole lot more. Their condemnation is written on their bank books and in the dust on their Bible

covers. American believers have sold their lives to the service of Mammon, and God has His rightful way of dealing with those who succumb to the spirit of Laodicea.”

Journal (July 26, 1952)

“Oh for a faith that sings!...Lord God, give me a faith that will take sufficient quiver out of me so that I may sing! Over the Aucas, Father I want to sing.”

Transition: God desires that the nations praise Him.

II. God desires that the nations fear Him 96:4-6

- A right theology of God will lead to a healthy reverence, even fear and awe of Him. He will not be insulted as “the man upstairs”, “my buddy or pal.” “J.C. is my homeboy” will be dismissed for the dishonoring and disrespectful sham that it is. No, this God is the omnipotent, omniscient, omnipotent sovereign of the universe who is coming “to judge the earth...the world with righteousness” (v.13).
- The psalmist, therefore, says fear Him! Why? Two reasons are given.

1) We should fear Him because He is a great God 96:4-5

- Our God is a great God and greatly (*NIV*, “most worthy”) to be praised.
- He is to be feared above all the other gods. Why? Because the gods of the peoples are idols, false gods, imposters, no gods at all. They are scattered around the globe enslaving millions to false idols and false systems of religion that are an expressway to hell.
- The Lord is great and they are not. He saves and they damn.
The Lord is really something and they are really nothing.
The Lord made everything. They have made nothing.

2) We should fear Him because He is a glorious God 96:6

- Four marvelous affirmations are made of the great redeemer and Creator God in v. 6. These are truths the nations need to know.
 - Honor (NASV, “splendor”) is before Him, radiating from His person.
 - Majesty is before Him, flooding forth from Him.
 - Strength is found in His sanctuary, His royal residence.
 - Beauty is found in His sanctuary, His kingly court.
- Standing before the great God like “throne room attendants,” honor, majesty, strength and beauty bear witness to the God who is awesome and like no other.
- Elizabeth Elliot said of her husband, “Jim’s aim was to know God” (S.A., 9). Jim, himself would write, “Lord, make my way prosperous, not that I achieve high station, but that my life may be an exhibit to the value of knowing God” (S.A., 11). Jim Elliot saw our God for who He is and a holy reverence and fear attended him while at Wheaton and drove him to take the gospel to the Aucas.
- “God, I pray thee, light these idle sticks of my life and may I burn for Thee. Consume my life, my God, for it is Thine. I seek not a long life, but a full one, like you, Lord Jesus (1948; S.A., p. 247).

July 15, 1948 (Journal)

How like Orpah I am – prone to kiss, to display full devotion and turn away; how unlike Ruth, cleaving and refusing to part except at death (1:14-17). Eternal Lover, make Thou Thyself inseparable from my unstable soul. Be Thou the object bright and fair to fill and satisfy the heart. My hope to meet Thee in the air, and nevermore from Thee to part!

October 27, 1948

Sense a great need of my Father tonight. Have feelings of what Dr. Jaarsma [philosophy professor at Wheaton] calls

“autonomous man” in another context. I do not feel needy enough. Sufficiency in myself is a persistent thought, though I try to judge it. Lord Jesus, Tender Lover of this brute soul, wilt Thou make me weak? I long to understand Thy sufficiency and my inadequacy, and how can I sense this except in experience? So, Lord, Thou knowest what I am able to bear. Send trouble that I might know peace; send anxiety that I might know rest in Thee. Send hard things that I may learn to rely on Thy dissolving them. Strange askings, and I do not know what I speak, but “my desire is toward Thee” – anything that will intensify and make me tender, Savior. I desire to be like Thee, Thou knowest.

October 28, 1948

Wonderful season of intercession...tonight. “At thy right hand are pleasures...” (Pss. 16:11). Prayed a strange prayer today. I covenanted with my Father that He would do either of two things-either glorify Himself to the utmost in me, or slay me. By His grace I shall not have His second best. For He heard me, I believe, so that now I have nothing to look forward to but a life of sacrificial sonship (that’s how thy Savior was glorified, my soul) or heaven soon. Perhaps tomorrow. What a prospect!

November 1, 1948

Son of Man, I feel it would be best if I should be taken now to Thy throne. I dread causing Thee shame at Thy appearing (Mark 8:38).

- “Father, take my life, yea, my blood if Thou wilt, and consume it with Thine enveloping fire. I would not save it, for it is not mine to save. Have it Lord, have it all. Pour out my life as an oblation for the World. Blood is only of value as it flows before Thine altar.” (1948; S.A., p. 247).

Here we find the words, the heart, of a man who rightly feared the Lord. How strange his words sound to the convenient Christianity that has engulfed our churches. We would say he is a fanatic. What would Jesus say? What he had we desperately need. What he had must be shared.

III. God desires that the nations worship Him

96:7-9

- Warren Wiersbe says, “Praise means looking up, but worship means bowing down” (p. 264). It means to acknowledge and ascribe to God His worth and value by humbling ourselves before Him and submitting to His will for our lives.
- Three times in this 3rd stanza we are commanded to “give” or “ascribe” glory to God, a glory that rightly belongs only to Him and a glory that should come from “the families of the nations” (*NIV*). These words are almost identical to the beginning of Psalm 29. There it is the angels who are called to worship the Lord. Here it is the nations. What are we to give to the great and greatly to be praised God?

1) Give Him honor

96:7-8

- All the nations are summoned to give the Lord acknowledgement of His glory and strength, glory due to the name of Yahweh, the name above all names that Philippians 2:9-11 informs us, is the name of Jesus.
- The honor He rightly deserves is proven by an offering that is brought into His presence. The apostle Paul will speak of our giving our bodies as an offering, as “living sacrifices” to King Jesus (Romans 12:1).

2) Acknowledge His holiness

96:9

We honor Him because of the beauty or splendor of His holiness, His moral perfection, His utter transcendence and greatness. In light of our sinfulness and depravity, our finitude and creaturliness, we and all the earth rightly tremble before such a God. No doing “the wave” before this God. No 3 cheers for Jesus from those who see Him for who He is and see us for who we are without Him.

- Again, I believe there is much to learn from the life and martyrdom of Jim Elliot.

November 6, 1948

“Forgive me for being so ordinary while claiming to know so extraordinary a God.”

September 19, 1948

To worship in truth is not sufficient, that is to worship in true form. There must be exercise of the spirit; the new man must be stirred to action; we must have *spiritual* worship. Philippians 3:3: We have mention of *emotional* worship – rejoicing in soul as well as exercising in spirit. Paul has spoken of rejoicing in the Gospel’s furtherance (1:18); in the sending of Epaphroditus (2:25), and now he says, “Finally, rejoice in the *Lord*” (3:1). Not in fellowship or in privileges, but in the *Lord*. “Delight thyself also *in the Lord*” (Pss. 37:4). Then Romans 12:1,2 gives us rational worship, involving the presentation of our bodies. Yea, Lord, make me a true worshiper!

September 20

2 *Chronicles* 20. I cannot explain the yearnings of my heart this morning. Cannot bring myself to study or to pray for any length of time. Oh, what a jumble of crosscurrented passions I am – a heart so deceitful it deceives itself. May Christ satisfy my thirst, may the river Rock pour out Himself to me in this desert place. Nothing satisfies - not nature, or fellowship with any, but only my Eternal Lover. Ah, how cold my heart is toward Him. But “our eyes are upon Thee” (v.12). Possibility of seeing Betty again brings back wistful thoughts. [Betty is Elizabeth whom he would eventually marry. They would serve together in Ecuador and have one child together, Valerie]. How I hate myself for such weakness! Is not Christ enough, Jim? What need you more-a woman-in His place? Nay, God forbid. *I shall have Thee*, Lord Jesus. Thou didst buy me, now I must buy Thee. Thou knowest how reluctant I am to pay, because I do not value Thee sufficiently. I am Thine at terrible cost to Thyself. Now Thou must become mine-as Thou didst not attend to the price, neither would I.

August 16, 1954

Because O God, from Thee comes all, because from Thine own mouth has entered us the power to breathe, from Thee the sea of air in which we swim and the unknown nothingness that stays it over us with unseen bonds; because Thou gavest us from heart of love so tender, mind so wise and hand so strong, Salvation; because Thou are Beginning, God, I worship Thee.

Because Thou are the end of every way, the goal of man; because to Thee shall come of every people respect and praise; their emissaries find Thy throne their destiny; because Ethiopia shall stretch out her hands to Thee, babes sing Thy praise; because Thine altar gives to sparrows shelter, sinners peace, and devils fury; because “to Thee shall all flesh come”; because Thou art Omega. Praise.

Because Thou sure art set to justify that Son of Thine and wilt in time make known just who He is and soon will send Him back to show Himself; because the Name of Jesus has been laughingly nailed upon a cross and is just now on earth held very lightly and Thou wilt bring that Name to light; because, O God of righteousness, Thou wilt do right by my Lord, Jesus Christ, I worship Thee.

IV. God desires that the nations enjoy Him**96:10-13**

John Piper loves to say, “God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him.”

In other words God wants us, He wants the nations, to enjoy Him. We could spend all of eternity listing the reasons we should enjoy our great God, but Psalm 96 highlights 2 that shine like the sun announcing the glory and goodness of God.

1. Enjoy Him because He is a sovereign King**96:10-12**

- The nations must hear: this God reigns, He rules sovereignly over the whole earth. He made it (“the world is firmly established”) and He maintains it (“it shall not be moved”). He’s got the whole world in His hands.
- He shall judge the peoples righteously. No one will ever point a finger at out God and say, “You were not fair. You did me wrong.” You cannot bribe this

God. He plays no favorites in judging the nations. Here is one judge you can always count on to do the right thing.

- In light of all this enjoy Him!
 - Let the heavens rejoice.
 - Let the earth be glad.
 - Let the sea roar and all that is in it.
 - Let the field be joyful and all that is in it.
 - In antiphonal response “all the trees of the forest will rejoice before Yahweh, before the Lord.

2) Enjoy Him because He is a righteous King 96:13

- This psalm ends on an eschatological note, a note of hope for those who love and enjoy Him, a note of warning for those who reject His rightful lordship over their lives.
- He is coming...coming to judge the earth.
 He is coming to judge the world with righteousness.
 He is coming to judge the peoples with His truth.
- What does this look like? Revelation 19:11-16 has the answer!

Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him *was* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes *were* like a flame of fire, and on His head *were* many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He *was* clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on *His* robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

Conclusion

Jim Elliot wrote in a letter to his family, “Remember you are immortal until your work is done. But don’t let the sands of time get into the eyes of your vision to reach those who still sit in darkness. They simply must hear.” (S.A.,81).

- On January 8, 1956, Jim Elliot, along with Ed McCully, Roger Youderian, Pete Fleming and Nate Saint, waited hopefully for another meeting with the Auca or Huaorani Indians, having made contact with several friendly encounters in previous days. However, a group of 10 Huaorani men attacked the 5 missionaries and brutally murdered them. Jim Elliot’s mutilated body was found downstream in the river. There was no funeral, no tombstone for a memorial. On resurrection day the glorified bodies of these champions for Jesus will rise from the dirt of Ecuador! Jim left behind his wife Elizabeth and a baby girl named Valerie. They had been married less than 3 years.
- On January 30, 1956, *Life Magazine* published a ten page article on the martyrdom of these men entitled, “Go ye and preach the Gospel” – five devout Americans in remote Ecuador follow this precept and are killed.”
- Our nation was shocked and Christians all over the world wept. Jim would have been embarrassed by all of this. After all in a letter to his parents dated June 23, 1947, he wrote, “Missionaries are very human folks, just doing what they are asked. Simply a bunch of nobodies trying to exalt Somebody” (S.A., p. 46).
- And in a letter to his mother dated August 16, 1948, Jim would write, “oh what a privilege to be made a minister of the things of the ‘happy God’. I only hope that He will let me preach to those who have never heard that name Jesus. What else

is worth while in this life? I have heard nothing better. ‘Lord, send me!’” (S.A., p. 60).

- Finally in his final note to his wife Elizabeth, dated January 4 and found on the river beach where he died, “Our hopes are up but no sign of the ‘neighbors’ yet. Perhaps today is the day the Aucas will be reached....We’re going down now, pistols, gifts, novelties in our pockets, prayer in our hearts. – All for now. Your lover, Jim.”
- Jim Elliot’s journal entry of October 28, 1949 is famous. However, do not miss its context or you will miss a marvelous blessing of the Lord. I will allow Jim’s journal to speak for itself. No commentary will be needed.

October 27

“Enjoyed much sweetness” in the reading of the last months of Brainerd’s life. How consonant are his thoughts to my own regarding the “true and false religion of this late day.” Saw, in reading him, the value of these notations and was much encouraged to think of a life of godliness in the light of an early death....I have prayed for new men, fiery, reckless men, possessed of uncontrollably youthful passion-these lit by the Spirit of God. I have prayed for new words, explosive, direct, simple words. I have prayed for *new miracles*. Explaining old miracles will not do. If God is to be known as the God who does wonders in heaven and earth, then God must *produce* for this generation. Lord, fill preachers and preaching with Thy power. How long dare we go on without tears, without moral passions, hatred and love? Not long, I pray, Lord Jesus, not long....

October 28

One of the great blessings of heaven is the appreciation of heaven on earth-Ephesian truth.

He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose...

- Jim Elliot said, “Our orders are: the gospel to every creature” (*Time*, p.10).

Because he believed this he said,

“Nothing is too good to be: so believe, believe to see.’ In my own experience I have found that the most extravagant dreams of boyhood have not surpassed the great experience of being in the Will of God, and I believe that nothing could be better. That is not to say that I do not want other things, and other ways of living, and other places to see, but in my right mind I know that my hopes and plans for myself could not be any better than He has arranged and fulfilled them. Thus may we all find it, and know the truth of the Word which says, ‘He will be our guide even until death.’” (S.A., 196).

- Jim did give up that which he could not keep to gain that which he could not lose.

Now the question is before us: Will I? Will you? Oh God, give us more Jim

Elliot’s that all the nations may give You glory!