

Notes on Psalm 96 'The Gift of a King'

I am fan of the Marvel Comic Universe, of Star Trek and Star Wars, and so I love the whole hero thing. As a child I grew up excited and inspired by heroes such as 'Shane', 'Casey Jones', 'The Lone Ranger', 'Zorro', 'Champion the Wonder Horse' (true, I thought the horse was as awesome as the fantastic theme tune), 'Thunderbirds', 'Captain Scarlet', 'Joe 90', 'Stingray' to name just a few and there are many more!! I was also inspired by real people too, such as Captain Scott as well as footballers but my heroes did tend towards the fictional than the real and today, I still love to be someone who is inspired by the words and actions of others. As a child I also had an unusual hero who was King Charles I. This was because of a friend at school who liked Oliver Cromwell and we both liked the 'Oh yes, he is', 'Oh no he isn't' style of 'argument'. When we read our Bibles, we need to understand that the King is always the hero and especially when this King was God!! Which of the Kings in the Bible inspire you the most and why? Is it David, Solomon, Hezekiah, Jehosaphat, Uzziah? Whoever they may be, they all have one thing in common, which is that they all had feet of clay and because they all disappoint us this is why when I think of who the best Jewish King is, I think of Jesus because he is the real 'King of the Jews' and Psalm 96 help us to understand why.

Psalm 96 gives us three reasons to be cheerful when we celebrate Jesus as the best King. He is, firstly, better than all of the other gods, as in verses 1 – 6. I don't mean as in the Charles I verses Oliver Cromwell sort of way, but because Jesus is the creator. He is not only the one through whom all things were made, but also the one through whom all things will be made new. What this means for the psalmist is that all other gods and idols are frauds and so unworthy of any praise, trust or adoration. Then secondly, the Psalm summons all peoples everywhere to worship him, as in verses 7 – 9. For in Jesus, and in him alone, is there life, hope, joy, love, forgiveness, mercy, kindness etc and the right response is to give our all to him because all that we have is from him who is our creator. And thirdly, Jesus is the rightful judge, as in verses 10 – 13. What this means is that one day he will put all things right and he will make all things new.

This is why we are to be a people of New Orientation, because we are a people who are motivated and inspired by faith, by hope and by love because we are a people who belong to Jesus the true and real King. So may faith, hope and love define us in our lives day by day. May faith, hope and love sustain us when we go through times of Disorientation that we may be strengthened and renewed when we come out again into the sunshine of God's presence once more.