

Psalm 97

This Psalm continues with the concluding thought of Psalm 96, the joy of the coming of Jesus Christ to reign over all people.

Psalms 97:1 [New King James] *“The LORD reigns; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad!”*

All of the earth will eventually experience the rule of the returning Jesus Christ.

Psalms 97:2-6 [New King James] *“Clouds and darkness surround Him; righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne. A fire goes before Him, and burns up His enemies round about. His lightnings light the world; the earth sees and trembles. The mountains melt like wax at the presence of the LORD, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth. The heavens declare His righteousness, and all the peoples see His glory.”*

A vision of the actual moment of Jesus Christ’s return to this earth.

Jesus Christ expands on the details of His return in response to a question from his disciples.

Matthew 24:3-9 [New King James] *“Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, ‘Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?’ And Jesus answered and said to them: ‘Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, “I am the Christ,” and will deceive many. And you will hear of wars and rumours of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake.’”*

The evil that we see in this world will increase as will the persecution of true Christians.

Matthew 24:10-13 [New King James] *“And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved.”*

Some Christians who lack total dedication to their Saviour will fall by the way.

Matthew 24:21-24 [New King James] *“For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened. Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or ‘There!’ do not believe it. For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.”*

Into this scene of devastation will come false prophets, spreading lies as they are influenced by Satan.

Matthew 24:27 [New King James] *“For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.”*

The actual return of Jesus Christ is something that all humanity on earth will see, even if they do not understand what is happening.

Psalms 97:7 [New King James] *“Let all be put to shame who serve carved images, who boast of idols. Worship Him, all you gods.”*

The Hebrew word translated “images” is “chammân” referring to a “sun-pillar” like the Egyptian obelisk in the centre of St. Peter’s Court in The Vatican. “Idols” the Hebrew word “elîyl” meaning vain, good for nothing.

People worship all kinds of idols pursuing goals they believe are important but have no eternal value.

The Word of God, the Christian Bible, makes it clear that anything that has a higher loyalty than that towards the Creator God is an idol, [Luke 14:26-27, 33].

2 Corinthians 5:10-12 [New King James] *“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences. For we do not commend ourselves again to you, but give you opportunity to boast on our behalf, that you may have an answer for those who boast in appearance and not in heart.”*

One day we will stand before Jesus Christ in all His glory and power, then we will really see all our physical goals and physical accomplishments for what they are, foolish physical pursuits that do nothing to enhance our spiritual character on which we will be judged.

Psalms 97:8-9 [New King James] *“Zion hears and is glad, and the daughters of Judah rejoice because of Your judgments, O LORD. For You, LORD, are most high above all the earth; You are exalted far above all gods.”*

We can only join these rejoicing people if we have applied the next verse to our personal lives.

Psalms 97:10 [New King James] *“You who love the LORD, hate evil! He preserves the souls of His saints; He delivers them out of the hand of the wicked.”*

We show our love for the Creator God by aligning our lives, our desires, with His desires. Evil can take many forms, mostly interrelationships.

The Hebrew word translated “evil” is “ra” with a general meaning of breaking up all that is right and good, causing misery and sorrow for all concerned.

We have to resist the influence of Satan whose whole attitude is “ra” evil, who at the present time has been allowed by the Creator God to control the world’s society, [1 John 5:19]. We resist Satan’s influence by drawing close to the Creator God, [James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8-9].

Psalms 97:11-12 [New King James] *“Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart. Rejoice in the LORD, you righteous, and give thanks at the remembrance of His holy name.”*

We model our lives on the Creator God’s known moral requirements, as stated in His Word, the Christian Bible, and make Him the centre and sole object of our religious devotion, with unending thanks, [Colossians 2:6-7; Colossians 4:2].