

- 1 *The LORD reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof.*
- 2 *Clouds and darkness are round about him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne.*
- 3 *A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about.*
- 4 *His lightnings enlightened the world: the earth saw, and trembled.*
- 5 *The hills melted like wax at the presence of the LORD, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.*
- 6 *The heavens declare his righteousness, and all the people see his glory. (Psalm 97)*

This is the third of the Royal Psalms which sing and exult in the sovereign reign of God as brought to gospel light in the advent of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. These are progressive. The 97th Psalm tells us something of the character of the reign of Christ in the New Covenant (church or gospel) age.

Verse two tells us that the King's Presence is accompanied by glory, awe, and wonder. Clouds symbolize His glory, and darkness His unfathomable transcendency. His truth is revealed in glorious light, and it is fully sufficient for our needs, but there is always that barrier of mystery incapable of comprehension by the mortal mind. We never get glib with God! But we can be certain that all His reign rests upon absolute Righteousness and Justice. That is enough to command our loyalty and evoke our joy.

Verses three and five tell us that the enemies of truth, righteousness and justice are consumed; insurmountable obstacles are dissolved by the King's coming and by His Presence. In our prayers we see these formidable foes, and they often terrify us and eat away at our faith. How can even God dispense with this Pharaoh bent on enslaving and destroying us? How can God topple these walls that have never yielded to assault? But when God comes on the scene, they have already fled before His face. They cannot stand in His Presence, and no longer exist on our horizon. These Egyptians we shall see no more.

Verse four tells us that the truth of the gospel lights the earth from pole to pole. (John 1:9) Not every man on earth will be enlightened by the gospel, for many will continue to love their darkness. But all who *have* light will have it by this Christ and this gospel. There is no other light. Those who do see this light see it with trembling. As proud and arrogant Saul on the Damascus road, they fall to the earth trembling, and submit to the will of the King.

Verse six tells us that heaven vindicates Him. This Jesus was a man "*approved by God among you by miracles, wonders and sign*" (Acts 2:22). The Almighty spoke His approval of Him at His baptism, and at His transfiguration. The sun hid its face at His crucifixion, and the whole of creation trembles and shook like a reed in the wind. His righteousness was proclaimed when His resurrection testified that death had neither power to take Him or to hold Him. Heaven welcomed the return of her Prince in His ascension, and angels promised His coming again for His purchased Bride. But the final and crowning seal of His established throne was His sending of the Promise of the Father at Pentecost. Since that time He has commanded and received the adoration of all peoples of the earth. Idolaters are put to shame, and the mighty fall at His feet. Zion hears and is glad! (vs. 8).

-C.M.