

Summit Woods Baptist Church
Sermon Study Equipping Class

Psalm 97: Judgment is About Worship

Remember to begin your study early in the week so that you have time to really think (and keep thinking) about the passage without being rushed.

❖ Day 1

Read Psalm 97

For these lessons, the sermon text is provided in a format that visually helps display the structure of the paragraph or section of text. The main verbs are underlined>. Commands are double-underlined>. Generally, the main indicative clauses remain to the left, and the other clauses are either directly underneath when they have equal priority to what comes before, or are tabbed to the right when the clause supports, develops, or draws a conclusion from a neighboring clause.

¹The Lord reigns,

let the earth rejoice;

Let the many islands be glad.

²Clouds and thick darkness surround Him;

Righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne.

³Fire goes before Him

And burns up His adversaries round about.

⁴His lightnings lit up the world;

The earth saw

and trembled.

⁵The mountains melted like wax at the presence of the Lord,

At the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.

⁶The heavens declare His righteousness,

And all the peoples have seen His glory.

⁷Let all those be ashamed who serve graven images,

Who boast themselves of idols;

Worship Him, all you gods.

⁸Zion heard *this*

and was glad,

And the daughters of Judah have rejoiced

Because of Your judgments, O Lord.

⁹For You are the Lord Most High over all the earth;

You are exalted far above all gods.

¹⁰Hate evil, you who love the Lord,

Who preserves the souls of His godly ones;

He delivers them from the hand of the wicked.

¹¹Light is sown *like seed* for the righteous

And gladness for the upright in heart.

¹²Be glad in the Lord, you righteous ones,

And give thanks to His holy name.

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1. When you hear about the judgment of God, what does it make you think? How does it make you feel?
2. List out all the activities of the Lord in this Psalm. What does the Lord do according to this Psalm?
3. What is the future response that is to be had to the Lord's activity in verse 1?
4. Where else do we see this response show up in the Psalm?
5. According to verse 1, who is to respond?
6. Consider Isaiah 42:8-12. How does this passage enhance the way you understand this Psalm? How does it give clarity to the term "islands" found in verse 1?
7. Considering their context, read Exodus 20:21, Deuteronomy 4:11, and Zephaniah 1:15. How might these verses shape your understanding of verse 2a?

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8. What is the foundation of the Yahweh's throne? What does this say about Yahweh?

❖ Day 2

Read Psalm 97 again.

9. Note the descriptions of the Lord in verses 4-5. What do these descriptions display about God?

10. What triggers the mountains to melt?

11. What attribute of God is displayed in verse 6 and who ascribes this?

12. How does verse 7 relate to the previous discussion? What does any of this have to do with idols?

13. Who/what is Zion? Why is this significant?

14. What is the extent of God's reign according to verses 4,5, and 9?

15. How is God's activity toward his godly ones contrasted with the ungodly in this Psalm? Make a list of examples.

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16. Consider Isaiah 60:1-3. How might this inform how you understand what vs 11 means? How is the light of verse 11 contrasted with verse the light of verses 3-4?

❖ Day 3

Read Psalm 97 again.

17. Create an outline for this psalm. Be as detailed as you like, but at least include three main sections. Consider referencing the structural diagram on page one for clues at divisions in the text. What summarizing titles would you give the major sections of this passage?

18. What commands do you see in this psalm? How do these responses fit with the content of the psalm and descriptions of God?

19. How might these commands inform how you are to live?

20. How is it possible that God can command his people to be glad and to hate? What does that say about our emotions?

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21. How is God's judgment related to rejoicing according to this passage? Why is this to be an appropriate response to God's judgment?

22. How does this Psalm relate to missions? Can you find textual evidence that would compel an evangelistic or missional response to this view of God as king and judge? Where?

23. Reflect back to question one from Day 1's questions. How does the Psalmists reflection on the judgment of God compare to your own? Where might you need to correct your thinking to align it with scripture?

In preparation for Sunday, pray with gladness for a God who rules in justice. Pray with hatred toward evil in the world and gladness for God's certain judgment of all evil and injustice.