

Studies In Psalms by [John T Polk II](#) For [The Fellowship Room](#)

Psalm 97

1/29/13

Vs. 1-6 show the Earth speaks of God;
Vs. 7-9 contrast the LORD with idols;
Vs. 10-12 show how God connects with people for good.

The description of God's presence on Earth clearly shows how impressive His power is, certainly producing awe.

- (1) If the description in **verses 1-6** is physical, then God coming to Mount Sinai and giving Moses His law would fit this word picture ([Exodus 19:1-25](#)) but the kingdom of Jesus Christ now on Earth did not have that physical terror ([Hebrews 12:18-29](#)).
- (2) If, however, **Psalm 97:1-6** is descriptive of the effect of God's presence on Earth, then it could refer to the first coming of Jesus Christ to Earth ([Isaiah 9:1-2](#) as quoted in [Matthew 4:13-16](#); [Malachi 3:1-3](#) as quoted in [Matthew 11:7-10](#)).
- (3) Or it could describe the awesomeness of God in Heaven ([Revelation 4:1-5](#)).

Regardless, God's Presence is duly noted and to be respected with reverence, so "let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear" ([Hebrews 12:28](#)).

Verses 1-6: The claim is: "The LORD reigns;" the effect is: "Let the earth rejoice;" the extent is: "Let the multitude of isles be glad!" (**verse 1**) Jehovah is over more than just Israelites in their land. The Earth operates by His Laws. "Isles" often refers to areas beyond Israel, referring to "Gentiles" ([Isaiah 40:12-17](#); [Jeremiah 31:10](#)). Jesus' powers over Earth's might was manifested in His miracles: (**verse 2**) "clouds" ([Matthew 26:63-64](#)), "darkness" ([Luke 23:44-45](#)).

"Righteousness and justice" go hand in hand: "To do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice" ([Proverbs 21:3](#)), with both being hallmarks of Jesus' kingdom on earth ([Romans 3:20-26](#); [Matthew 12:14-21](#)). In **verse 3**, "Fire" will be Jesus' punishment on sinners at His Second Coming, [2 Thessalonians 1:5-10](#). Jesus' life was a flash of light (**verse 4**) while on earth ([John 12:44-50](#)). No mountain was outside of His control ([Matthew 17:1-9](#); [21:18-22](#)). Hence (**verse 6**) Jesus would have the endorsement of "The heavens."

Verses 7-9: There can be only shame in serving "carved images" (**verse 7**), for their substances are made from God's Creation ([Hebrews 11:3](#)). Jerusalem and Judah should "rejoice" because God is right (**verse 8**). Only God is "Most High" and above "all the earth," and "far above all gods" (**verse 9**). The term "gods" cannot rise to the level of "angels" in [Hebrews 1:6](#), as some have mistakenly applied it. The history of mankind and the Bible record are positive proof of the claim in **verse 1**.

All Scriptures and comments are based on the New King James Version, unless otherwise noted.



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Verses 10-12: One cannot follow both God and evil (**verse 10**; [Psalm 34:14](#); [Romans 12:9](#)), but God “preserves the souls of His saints,” and delivers them from the wicked (as Jesus taught disciples to pray, [Matthew 6:13](#)). God’s way provides “light” and “gladness” (**verse 11**) not dark and sadness ([Acts 2:38-41, 46](#); [14:17](#)). Therefore His saints “Rejoice in the LORD,” (**verse 12**) “And give thanks” every time they remember “His holy name” and all He has done and continues to do.

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