

PSALMS: DIARIES OF GODLY OLD TESTAMENT SAINTS

Psalm Ninety-Seven - MOTIVATION For The Godly To Get SERIOUS In Overcoming Personal Sin (Psalm 97:1-12)

I. Introduction

- A. When a person comes to believe in Christ, becoming a new "baby" Christian, 1 John 2:12, 13c reveal that such "little children" appreciate that their sins are forgiven and that they know the Heavenly Father.
- B. However, the challenge to grow for the Christian involves going **beyond** simply basking in the warmth of the Heavenly Father's love and forgiveness -- it involves God's urge that the believer learn to **stop loving the world** system as it is **evil** in **opposition** to the forgiving Heavenly Father, 1 John 2:15!
- C. Psalm 97:1-12 provides **motivation** for the upright to become **intolerant** of evil this way as follows:

II. MOTIVATION For The Godly To Get SERIOUS In Overcoming Personal Sin, Psalm 97:1-12.

- A. Psalm 97 is an admonishing treatise as **six** times, the listener is admonished in a direct command or an indirect jussive, an implied command, to respond in a certain way to God, Ps. 97:1a, 1b, 7b, 10a, 12a, 12b with Bible Knowledge Commentary, Old Testament, p. 864.
- B. The arrangement of this psalm's treatise reveals a burden of the psalmist to lead the godly to become *serious* about overcoming any personal evil to live uprightly as follows:
 1. Due to the fact that Israel's Jahweh, the Eternally Existing One, or the "I AM" (Ex. 3:14) **reigns**, the psalmist twice urges the earth and distant shores to be **glad**, Ps. 97:1.
 2. To add motivation to his readers to heed this call, the psalmist reveals the absolute **vulnerability** all men will have to Jahweh when He comes to pass judgment upon the earth, Ps. 97:2-9, Ibid.:
 - a. In envisioning the coming of Jahweh to rule the earth, the psalmist pictures Him being surrounded by clouds and thick darkness, a picture of great judgment, Ps. 97:2a with Dt. 4:11; 5:22-23.
 - b. This overwhelmingly sovereign judgment will be founded on righteousness and justice, Ps. 97:2b.
 - c. In application, God's negative decisions against the unrighteous and the unjust will consume the ungodly like a fire, a fire as sharp as lightening that causes even witnesses to tremble, Ps. 97:3-4.
 - d. Such judgment is so powerful that it figuratively makes even the mountains melt down like wax, and that sovereign power of God against the ungodly will be experienced **worldwide**, Ps. 97:5-6.
 - e. In fact, all who worship false idols will be put to shame, so the psalmist calls on even the *idols* to respect so as to worship the Lord, Ps. 97:7!
 - f. Those who are upright in Israel (Zion and Judah) will rejoice because of God's vindicating judgments to come, for that judgment is sovereign over all evil oppressors, Ps. 97:8-9.
 3. Because **both** the ungodly **and** godly will be totally **vulnerable** to the **absolutely correct** judgments of God when He comes to judge the earth, a summarizing admonition is offered by the psalmist, 97:10-12:
 - a. First, those who love Jahweh need to **hate evil THEMSELVES**, for God preserves the welfare of His upright ones, even snatching them away from the destructive hands of the wicked, Ps. 97:10. **The implication also exists that our failing to HATE evil leads to greater vulnerability to the oppressions of the ungodly!**
 - b. For the godly who **hate evil**, "light", representing prosperity or welfare (Ps. 27:1; 36:9) will be shed upon them along with joy, Ps. 97:11. (Ibid.)
 4. Accordingly, the psalmist closes his admonition, addressing the upright who are to **hate evil** that they should rejoice in Jahweh and praise His name that is separate from evil, or that is "holy", Ps. 97:12!

Lesson: (1) God is **ABSOLUTELY** sovereign **AND ABSOLUTELY** righteous. (2) **THAT** God is also coming to judge **EVERYONE** on the earth. (3) Thus, there exist **OVERWHELMINGLY** stark **CONTRASTS** in the status of the final destiny of the ungodly and the godly due to their mutual exposures to this God. (4) As such, one does himself a very **PRUDENT** thing not only to become upright, but even to hate evil so as to stand **SHARPLY** on the side of uprightness!

Application: God is to be **RESPECTED** in contrast to man's tendencies to **DISRESPECT** authority! His overwhelmingly **STRICT** sense of righteousness and His overwhelming power and desire to judge all men in response to His character should **MOTIVATE** us to get very serious about overcoming sin!