

PSALMS 99

Praise to the Lord for His Fidelity to Israel.

INTRODUCTION.

- A. From Roy H. Enoch (2-28-96).
- B. "The Lord Is Holy"
- C. Delitzsch titles the psalm after the praise of the seraphim of Isaiah, see 6:3. This is the basically the same praise that the Living Creatures which John heard praise God in heaven, see Rev. 4:8.
- D. Many ancient scholars ascribe this psalm to David, but present day scholars do not think that this is conclusive.
- E. Coffman agrees with Kinder's assessment that this psalm relates to the Lord's coming again since verse 1 says, "...Let the earth be moved." I question whether this is sufficient evidence to interpret the statement as "Let the earth be *removed*."
- F. No headings are given by Coffman, so I suggest the following:
 - I. The Lord Reigns (99:1-3).
 - II. The Lord Is Just (99:4-5).
 - III. Exalt The Lord Our God (99:6-9).

THE TEXT.

99:1 The LORD reigns, let the peoples tremble;
He is enthroned *above* the cherubim, let the earth shake!

2 The LORD is great in Zion,
And He is exalted above all the peoples.

3 Let them praise Your great and awesome name;
Holy is He.

4 The strength of the King loves justice;
You have established equity;
You have executed justice and righteousness in Jacob.

5 Exalt the LORD our God
And worship at His footstool;
Holy is He.

6 Moses and Aaron were among His priests,
And Samuel was among those who called on His name;
They called upon the LORD and He answered them.

7 He spoke to them in the pillar of cloud;
They kept His testimonies
And the statute that He gave them.

8 O LORD our God, You answered them;
You were a forgiving God to them,
And *yet* an avenger of their *evil* deeds.

9 Exalt the LORD our God
And worship at His holy hill,
For holy is the LORD our God.

COMMENTS.

- A. The Lord Reigns (99:1-3).
[v1] "...let the peoples tremble...let the earth be moved!" I don't know whether these statements are parallel and synonymous or whether they refer to different concepts. I believe there is as much reason to interpret them as synonymous as to say that the second phrase refers to the end of the world.
"He dwells between the cherubim..." The ASV and the NAS translate the word given here as "between" as "above." I can see a fundamental difference in the two translations. If it is translated "between" the cherubim, it seems to refer to the Shechinah, or God's presence on the mercy seat of the tabernacle and temple. If it is translated "above" the cherubim, it may refer to God sitting on the throne in heaven above all heavenly creatures, as Ezekiel saw in the vision, see Ezek. 1:26,28.

This is also similar to John's vision in heaven in Revelation 4,5.

[v2] "The Lord is great in ZION..." In this context, it would seem that of the above interpretations, the first would be preferred: that the Lord was "between" the cherubim and referred to the mercy seat, and thus refers to worship in the tabernacle or temple.

[v2,3] "...He is high above ALL THE PEOPLES....Let THEM praise Your great and awesome name..." Not only Israel, but all the peoples of the earth are to praise God.

"--He is holy." Each of the three divisions of this psalm concludes w/this expression of praise.

B. The Lord Is Just (99:4,5).

[4] "The king's strength also loves JUSTICE... established EQUITY... executed JUSTICE and RIGHTEOUSNESS in Jacob." The king here may be the rulers of Israel, but their Strength is the Lord. Otherwise, this must be interpreted as the King being the Lord himself. It does not seem to refer to the kings of the nations of the earth, because it specifically says, "in Jacob."

C. Exhalt the Lord our God (99:6-9).

[6] "Moses... Aaron... Samuel... called upon His name... and He answered them." God does answer the prayers of those who serve Him.

[7,8] "...they kept His testimonies.... You answered them... You were to them God-who-forgives, though You took vengeance on their deeds." Some people seem to think that forgiveness can have no penalty. Some seem to think that if there is forgiveness, the charges must be dropped and no punishment can be brought. But this clearly teaches that people sometimes have to suffer the consequences of their sins even though they are forgiven the eternal guilt. Moses and Aaron could not enter Canaan though their sins were forgiven.

[9] "...worship at His holy hill..." This seems to reflect back to 99:2 where Zion is mentioned, for in the time of David, the tabernacle was in Zion, the city of David. When Solomon built the temple, it was on Mt. Moriah.