



September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023 • Psalm 97

Seeking & Praising the LORD thru the Psalms • Message #4  
Page 499 in the church Bibles located on the cart in the back  
by Pastor Marcus Johnson



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## **The LORD Reigns – Rejoice!**

**1. The LORD reigns** – let the earth rejoice & the nations be glad (vs1-6)

**2. The LORD is most high over all** –

He is worshiped & exalted above all gods (vs7-9)

**3. Heed the call for the righteous (you who love the LORD)** – (vs10-12)

- Hate evil: for God preserves our lives & delivers us from the wicked

- Rejoice in the LORD: & give thanks to His holy name

- “See” the glory of Jesus:  
who “tabernacled” among us & who is coming back for us

## **Excursus on Psalm 97, Theophany & the Incarnation of Jesus Christ**

Taken from *Psalms Volume 2*, by W. Dennis Tucker Jr. & Jamie A. Grant (NIVAC)

**Theophany.** Theophany is the term used to describe the appearance of God to his people. The word itself is drawn from two Greek words: God (*theos*) and the verb “to appear” (*phainein*). Strictly speaking, theophany can refer to God’s self-revelation in any form – in dreams, visions, or auditory revelation – but most commonly the term is applied to the more physical and tangible appearances of God to his people. We see this type of tangible meeting from the very beginning of the biblical narrative. In Genesis 3:8 we come across the image of God’s walking with Adam and Eve in the cool of the day – the physical presence of God as he meets with his people ... the description of a theophany is often accompanied by visual and terrifying storm imagery. For readers in the ancient world, and particularly in the ancient Near East, the storm brought both terror and benefit. The storm could bring great destruction and devastation, but it could also bring the rains, always much needed for crops to grow in an otherwise arid climate ... We are ... both terrified by God’s manifestation and attracted to him because we recognize his gracious intent. We see a similar reaction from the people at Sinai in Exodus 19–20: attraction and the desire to see, hear, and know combine with a sense of terror that led the people to send Moses to speak with God. For many people today, storms are both attractive and terrifying at the same time. From Yahweh’s remarkable theophany at Mount Sinai onward, divine appearance became linked with the concept of revelation. When God appears, he very often appears in order to speak to his people. [Jeffery] Niehaus highlights several activities of God that are associated with his appearance in theophany. Among other reasons, God appears to: 1. Initiate covenant; 2. Instruct (and correct) the community of faith; 3. Call or commission prophets; 4. Bring judgment where necessary. Psalm 97 *instructs* all people about the true nature of God (v. 1) and also speaks of his impending *judgment* (vv. 2 – 5, 7 et al.) on all those (regardless of ethnic origin) who reject the things that are important to him. As is common in other theophanic accounts throughout the Old Testament, in Psalm 97 God is presented as both King and Judge. (431-432).

**Theophany and Incarnation** ... Old Testament believers fully accepted that God was present everywhere, yet the \*Zion theology of the psalms shows that the temple represented the presence of God in a heightened way [\*the dwelling place of God]. In some sense, God dwelt in \*Zion amid his people [\*also another name for Jerusalem]. This dwelling theophany in the tabernacle/temple is sometimes referred to as the *shekinah* glory of God (based on the Hebrew verb *shakan*, meaning “to dwell”) ... John picks up on this imagery in the prologue to his Gospel by pointing out that “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). The Greek word in the phrase “made his dwelling” uses the same consonants as are found in the Hebrew verb *shakan* (“to dwell”) ... the author seems to imply that the Word became flesh and *tabernacled* among his people. So, in a very real sense, Jesus–God come in human form—is the theophany of all time. He is the ultimate revelation of the character of God. (433)