

This psalm seems to foreshadow of the Day of the LORD, the period of time when Christ returns and establishes His kingdom on this earth for 1,000 years. He will bring righteousness and justice to the earth, which will bring joy and gladness to the righteous. The psalmist describes the power of the LORD's presence and His glory that brings joy to His people and fear to the wicked.

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1 The LORD reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad *thereof*.

**“The LORD reigneth [to be king]”** – The psalmist declares the LORD to be the king ruling over the entire earth. He is sovereign and all who live on the earth must obey Him.

**“let the earth rejoice”** – The word “earth” implies the whole world and the Hebrew word for “rejoice” is in the imperfect tense, indicating continuous action. The earth will continuously rejoice in the fact that the LORD reigns and has brought righteousness to the earth.

**“let the multitude of isles [island; coast; region] be glad thereof”** – This statement parallels the previous one of the earth rejoicing. The expression “multitude of isles” refers to all of the continents and islands of the world. No matter where you go on earth, there is joy and gladness because the LORD is in control.

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2 Clouds and darkness are round about him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne.

**“Clouds and darkness are round about him”** – Clouds have long been associated with the presence of the LORD as early as on Mt. Sinai (Ex. 19:16-18) and the darkness speaks of His judgment at the Day of the LORD (**Joel 2:2** “A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations.” **Zeph. 1:15** “That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness”). The psalmist is speaking of the day when the LORD will bring justice and righteousness to the earth (thus the rejoicing).

**“righteousness and judgment [to decide a case; justice] are the habitation [foundation] of his throne”** – In contrast to the corruption present in the governments of men, the throne of God is built upon the foundation of righteousness and justice.

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3 A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about. 4 His lightnings enlightened the world: the earth saw, and trembled.

**“A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about. His lightnings enlightened the world”** – This description seems to look forward to Christ's return (a.k.a. the Day of the LORD) - **Zech. 14:12** “And this shall be the plague wherewith the LORD will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth.” See also Rev. 19:11-15. Jesus described His return as being as impossible to ignore as lightening flashing across the sky (**Matt. 24:27** “For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be”).

**“the earth saw, and trembled”** – Every eye will see Him and they will tremble in fear because they will know that the LORD has arrived to execute judgment and wrath. **Rev. 1:7** “Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.” **Matt. 24:30** “And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.”

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5 The hills melted like wax at the presence of the LORD, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.

The presence of the LORD is so powerful and awesome, it is capable of melting the landscape wherever He manifests Himself. However, this verse may look forward to the time when the earth and the universe will melt as the LORD replaces it with a new heavens and earth (**2 Pet. 3:10** “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up”). The Hebrew word translated “Lord” means “master; king; ruler.” The psalmist is emphasizing that the LORD is not only the ruler of Israel but the entire earth and has the authority to do whatever He wants. Mankind likes to think that the earth belongs to them but the LORD will destroy it and everything they have accomplished and replace it and the heavens with new versions that are untainted by sin.

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6 The heavens declare his righteousness, and all the people see his glory.

The human race is witness to the righteousness and glory of God as displayed in His creation (**Psa. 19:1** “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork”). The problem is that not all of mankind is willing to acknowledge the glory they see (**Rom. 1:20-21** “For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened”). However, when Christ has arrived and established His kingdom, all people will see and recognize His righteousness and glory.

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7 Confounded be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols: worship him, all ye gods.

**“Confounded [to be ashamed] be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols”** – When the Christ returns establishes His kingdom on earth, those who were proud of the idols and graven images that they worshiped will then be ashamed of them. It will be obvious that these idols are false gods and that Jesus Christ is the one true God.

**“worship him, all ye gods [’ēlōhîym]”** – The Hebrew word translated “gods” is a generic word for god, and can refer to rulers, angels, or the LORD God Himself. The psalmist is calling on the human rulers of the earth (whose religious beliefs influence their subjects) to worship the LORD God instead of their false gods. Jesus Christ will be universally worshiped during His millennial kingdom on earth.

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8 Zion heard, and was glad; and the daughters of Judah rejoiced because of thy judgments, O LORD.

Zion refers to Jerusalem, where the temple of the LORD resided. The psalmist expresses the joy in Jerusalem and throughout Judah when they hear and recognize that Jesus Christ is on the throne in Jerusalem enforcing justice and that the worship of the entire world will be focused on Him. It will be a time of righteousness and justice the like of which the world has never before known.

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9 For thou, LORD, art high above all the earth: thou art exalted far above all gods.

The psalmist exalts the LORD above all “gods” (’ēlōhîym), whether they be human rulers, angels, or idols. None can compare to the LORD, Who is supreme in power, glory and honor.

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10 Ye that love the LORD, hate evil: he preserveth the souls of his saints; he delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked.

**“Ye that love the LORD, hate evil”** – The psalmist seems to be speaking to saints throughout the ages, now and when Christ is reigning in His earthly kingdom. He calls on those who love the LORD to hate the things that the LORD hates, particularly the things that are evil.

**“he preserveth the souls of his saints”** – The LORD takes care of those that are His. We may have to suffer for Jesus Christ in this life, but we will never be sorry in eternity that we trusted Him for salvation.

**“he delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked”** – The LORD will vindicate His saints and punish the wicked. This is why Zion and Judah rejoice because of His judgments (v. 8).

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11 Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.

This is a poetic way of stating that the LORD will protect and care for His saints. Light implies truth and the favor of the LORD’s countenance shining upon His saints, a fact that will bring them gladness as they enjoy His blessings.

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12 Rejoice in the LORD, ye righteous; and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.

**“Rejoice in the LORD, ye righteous”** – Those who trust in the LORD are urged to rejoice in all the benefits of belonging to Him (Psa. 103:2 “Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits”).

**“and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness [sacredness; being set apart]”** – The Hebrew word behind “holiness” refers to the fact that the LORD is unique and different from anything else we have experienced. He is not “the man upstairs” or some other label that attempts to describe God in human terms. He is the LORD God, Creator of all things, and that there is nothing that we know of that can compare to Him. We should give thanks every time we remember and think about how sacred that the LORD is.