

# Royal Psalms

## Key Scripture: Psalm 97:7-10

All who worship images are put to shame, those who boast in idols—worship him, all you gods!

Zion hears and rejoices and the villages of Judah are glad because of your judgments, Lord.

For you, Lord, are the Most High over all the earth; you are exalted far above all gods. Let those who love the Lord hate evil, for he guards the lives of his faithful ones and delivers them from the hand of the wicked.”

## A. INTRODUCTION

In this Psalmify series, we have looked at the Psalm genres of Praise & Thanksgiving. This session will focus on Royal Psalms (Appendix 1). In ancient times, the monarchy had significant influence over the religion of nations. For Judah, the southern kingdom of Israel, the kings were often a patron of God's temple in Jerusalem. The Royal Psalms give us historical insights into the relationship between the Jews and God before and after they were exiled to Babylon. They are classified into two categories: Psalms that focus on the reign of God as King (47, 93, 97, 99) and Psalms that focus on the human King of Israel (2, 20, 21, 45, 72, 101, 110, 132). Psalm 97, which we will study in this session, explores the incomparable awesomeness of God's kingship and what life looks like for those who choose to submit to the rule and reign of God.

*The session style is reading of the Main Point followed by Discussion Questions.*

## B. WATCH VIDEO – [Ps. Michael Chong \(3:44\)](#)

1. Introduction to Royal Psalms
2. Background to Psalm 97
3. What Psalm 97 reveals to us about God's nature
4. What Psalm 97 tells us about human nature
5. How Psalm 97 challenges the way we live

## C. SCRIPTURAL BACKGROUND TO [PSALM 97](#)

Psalm 97, nestled between Psalms 96 and 98, rejoices in God's impending reign as the world's King. While Psalms 96 and 98 brim with excitement about God's return, Psalm 97 takes a different angle by emphasizing, as theologian James Montgomery Boice puts it, "the frightening, awesome side of God's kingly rule."

Now, let's delve into the scriptural connections:

- In verse 2, when Psalm 97 mentions God surrounded by clouds and darkness, it vividly recalls the dramatic encounter of Moses and the Israelites with God at Mount Sinai (Exodus 19:16-20).
- Verse 7 references a peculiar incident involving the statue of the Philistine god Dagon. This statue amusingly toppled over on its face not once, but twice, in the presence of the ark of the Lord (1 Samuel 5:3-4).

These connections provide a quick glimpse into the background of Psalm 97

## D. MAIN POINT

*God's reign offers the righteous hope in the midst of opposition and evil.*

Putting our hope in anything else other than God will leave us disappointed. In a world full of evil, we would be wise to cling to the one who has not only overcome the world, but invites us to live as conquerors. Because God reigns and has authority over all, we can celebrate and rejoice. Even though God's kingdom is still yet to be fully established on earth, God calls us to live his way in order to experience his joy and peace. It can be difficult to live righteously as God's people in this modern-day Babylon with completely different value systems. To love God means to hate evil. This resounded in the words of Jesus in John 14:15, "If you love me, keep my commands." Allegiance to God in this world that does not recognise his authority and rule could mean that we are ostracised, oppressed, opposed, and hated by the world (John 15:18-19), but that is the cost that God is asking us to make. When we belong to God, the world should notice a difference in us and Jesus warns that the difference will cause friction. Yet, God promises to guard our lives, more than just a physical sense, but for eternity. He promises that he will deliver us from the hand of the wicked and that he will be the ultimate righteous and just judge. He promises that light and joy will shine on the righteousness and upright in heart. We who love the lord can rejoice in his holy name for we are blessed when people insult or treat us unfairly because of His name's sake (Matt 5:11).

## E. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### **1. What is your current understanding of God as King? How is that similar or different to how he is described in Psalm 97?**

*Answer Guide: Some people might share that they see God as a friend or a father, but not as a ruler or king. They might also share that they often forget his righteous and just nature. It'll be important to emphasise these some of these traits of God: just, righteous, hates evil, hates sin, powerful, frightening, faithful, invites us to experience his joy and to rejoice in him, is glorified whether or not we choose to glorify him. A King means that he's the ultimate authority. Not just for those who believe in Him, not just for your private life, but over whole kingdom (or over everything).*

### **2. What are some modern-day idols that people worship (v 7)? How does the worship of those idols put people to shame compared to the worship of God?**

*Answer Guide: Examples of modern-day idols: money, comfort, friends, family, reputation, hobbies, sex, relationships, marriage:*

- *They leave people feeling empty even though they might have a lot of it.*
- *If they put their security in these things, they might never feel a sense of safety or peace in their pursuit.*
- *Love of these idols might bring anxiety, depression, fear, striving, and worries.*
- *They will never satisfy or give people what they are looking for*

### **3. Do you love God? What does hating evil (or following Jesus' commandments) look like from day to day? Share some of the friction you have experienced as a result of**

**you choosing do things God's way.**

*Answer Guide: The aim is to get people to honestly evaluate if their lives are lived in allegiance to God or to the world. Can they truly say they hate evil?*

*Hating evil might look like:*

- *exercising integrity at work even though it might be more inconvenient or you might have to explain to someone why you have to do things the harder way*
- *not finding excuses for repeated sin in your life, but to turn away completely from it*
- *investing time and money to eradicate evil in the world (e.g. contributing to antihuman-trafficking efforts, volunteering to help those who are isolated or destitute)*
- *stepping out of your usual friendship circle to speak to someone who seems to be in the periphery at church*
- *praying against evil that you know or heard of*

## F. PRAYER

Dear Heavenly Father, we acknowledge you as King and Lord of our lives. The One who reigns above all and has authority overall. There is no other than compares to you. Help us to love you not just with our words, but with our obedience. May the way we live reflect what is important to you, and may we hate the things you hate. Help us not to avoid friction, but to know that friction is expected when we live your way in a world that does not recognise you as King. Shine your light on us and guard our lives as we choose to live righteously and with an upright heart. We praise your holy name, Amen.

# APPENDIX I

## PSALMS BY GENRE

Psalms are categorized by genre in the table below. To explore and expand your playlist of inspiring songs, consider selecting a psalm to include in your personal devotion. Use the following four questions to guide your reading and reflection on the Psalms:

1. **What do you see?**
2. **What does this say about God?**
3. **What does this say about us?**
4. **What is God saying to you?**

Praise & Thanksgiving			
8	75	113	139
18	92	114	145
30	100	116	146
33	103	117	147
34	104	118	148
40	105	124	149
65	106	135	150
66	107	136	
67	111	138	

Songs of Trust			
16	62	115	126
23	63	121	131
46	91	125	140
59			

Royal Psalms			
2	47	93	99
20	50	95	101
21	72	86	110
24	78	96	132
29	81	97	144
45	89	98	

Lamentation			
3	27	54	79
4	28	55	80
5	31	56	85
6	35	57	88
7	38	58	90
9	39	60	94
10	41	61	102
11	42	64	108
12	43	69	120
13	44	70	123
17	51	71	130
22	52	74	141
26	53	77	142
			143

Wisdom Psalms (God's Ways)			
1	25	49	127
14	32	73	128
15	36	112	133
19	37	119	

Other			
48	82	87	129
68	83	109	134
76	84	122	137