

Psalms 96:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Say among the heathen that the LORD reigneth: the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved: he shall judge the people righteously.

Analysis

This verse contains a declaration meant to be proclaimed among the nations, establishing God's cosmic authority and just governance. 'Say among the heathen that the LORD reigneth' commands a proclamation: the nations should hear and understand that YHWH, not their gods and not human authorities, truly reigns. 'The LORD reigneth' (Hebrew 'Adonai malach') is a declaration of God's kingship - His active rule and authority over all creation. The continuation 'the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved' indicates that God's reign brings stability and justice to the cosmos and to human society. The word 'established' (Hebrew 'kun') suggests God secures, stabilizes, or makes firm. Without God's righteous rule, the world would be chaotic and unstable. This verse asserts that recognition of God's kingship is not merely spiritual sentiment but foundational to cosmic order and justice. The proclamation to 'the heathen' reiterates the universal scope: all nations should acknowledge this reality. This declaration would have been countercultural - rulers of the ancient world, whether Egyptian pharaohs or Babylonian kings, claimed to embody divine authority. To declare that YHWH alone truly reigns was to challenge all earthly power structures.

Historical Context

The phrase 'the LORD reigneth' appears in the opening of several psalms (93:1, 97:1, 99:1) and seems to be an acclamation used in Temple worship. These psalms likely originated during or after the Babylonian exile, when Israel's earthly

kingdom was destroyed and the Temple lay in ruins, yet faith affirmed that YHWH's reign continued uninterrupted. The affirmation of God's reign brought stability to a community that had experienced collapse and displacement. The declaration that 'the world shall be established' reflects belief in God's ultimate justice - despite chaos and injustice in human affairs, God's governance ensures final stability and righteousness. This vision informed Jewish apocalyptic expectations of divine vindication and judgment. The command to 'say among the heathen' reflects Israel's conviction that they had a mission to declare God's truth to surrounding nations. This proclamation about God's kingship would later find fuller expression in Jesus' proclamation of the 'kingdom of God' (Mark 1:15), emphasizing that God's reign was becoming more fully manifest.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. What does it mean to proclaim that 'the LORD reigneth' in a world that often seems governed by human power and chance?
2. How does affirmation of God's rule provide stability and justice in a chaotic world?
3. Why is it important that this declaration be made 'among the heathen' - among those who don't yet know God?
4. How does the stability of God's rule contrast with the instability of human kingdoms and authorities?
5. In what ways does faith in God's ultimate kingship shape how we respond to injustice and disorder in the present?

Interlinear Text

אָמַר וְ	בְּגוֹיִם	יְהוָה	מֶלֶךְ	אֵרֶךְ
Say	among the heathen	that the LORD	reigneth	H637
H559	H1471	H3068	H4427	
וְתִכּוֹן	תֵּן בְּלֹ	בְּלֹ	תִּמּוֹט	יִשְׁפֹּט
also shall be established	the world	H1077	that it shall not be moved	he shall judge
H3559	H8398		H4131	H1777
בְּמִישְׁרִים:	עַם			
righteously	the people			
H4339	H5971			

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 93:1 (Kingdom): The LORD reigneth, he is clothed with majesty; the LORD is clothed with strength, wherewith he hath girded himself: the world also is stablished, that it cannot be moved.

Psalms 9:8 (Righteousness): And he shall judge the world in righteousness, he shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness.

Psalms 67:4 (Righteousness): O let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth. Selah.

Acts 17:31 (Righteousness): Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

Revelation 19:11 (Righteousness): And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

Malachi 1:11 (References Lord): For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the LORD of hosts.

Revelation 11:15 (Kingdom): And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.

Revelation 19:6 (Kingdom): And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

Hebrews 1:3 (Parallel theme): Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

Psalms 46:10 (Parallel theme): Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.