

# Psalm 97:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about.

## Analysis

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Fire going before God symbolizes His holiness consuming impurity and His judgment against sin. The verb 'burneth up' (lahat) indicates complete consumption. This imagery recalls the pillar of fire, Elijah's altar, and anticipates eschatological judgment. God's enemies being consumed demonstrates that opposition to Him is futile. The fire represents both God's zeal for His own glory and His active judgment against evil—He is not passive but dynamically opposes wickedness.

## Historical Context

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Israel witnessed God's fire consuming sacrifices, destroying Sodom, and defeating Baal's prophets—establishing fire as a symbol of divine presence and judgment.

## Related Passages

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**Colossians 1:16** — All things created through Christ

**Psalm 19:1** — Heavens declare God's glory

## Study Questions

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1. How does the imagery of God's holiness as consuming fire affect your understanding of sin's seriousness?

2. In what ways should awareness of God's judgment against His enemies humble and sober you?

## Interlinear Text

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אָשָׁר יְבָרֵךְ תְּלַבֵּד לְפָנֶיךָ אֵת שָׁאֵל  
A fire before him and burneth up round about his enemies  
H784 H6440 H1980 H3857 H5439 H6862

## Additional Cross-References

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**Psalms 50:3** (Parallel theme): Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him.

**Psalms 18:8** (Parallel theme): There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it.

**Hebrews 12:29** (Parallel theme): For our God is a consuming fire.

**Malachi 4:1** (Parallel theme): For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

**2 Thessalonians 1:8** (Parallel theme): In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

**Daniel 7:10** (Parallel theme): A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.

**Deuteronomy 32:22** (Parallel theme): For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell, and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains.