

This psalm of David focuses on the greatness of the LORD and the fact that He is worthy of our worship and praise. David expresses his own enthusiasm for praising and worshipping the LORD, and then declares that all of the kings of the earth will one day sing the praises of the LORD. David concludes the psalm by praising the LORD for being his provider, protector and a keeper of the promises made to him.

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*A Psalm of David.*

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Notice that the words “A Psalm” are in italics (indicating they are not in the Hebrew text but added by the translators), so the Hebrew literally reads “of David.” This simple title tells us that David is the author of this psalm, but we are not given any information about when it was written or the occasion for David writing it. We can only attempt to discern these things from the content of the psalm.

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1 I will praise thee with my whole heart: before the gods will I sing praise unto thee.

**“I will praise [to praise by giving thanks] thee with my whole heart”** – David’s heart was not divided between the LORD and other gods and so he wasn’t going to give the LORD half-hearted praise. Instead, David is fully invested in giving the LORD thanks and praise because he knows that all of the blessings that he enjoys come from the LORD alone. **James 1:17** “Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.”

**“before the gods [’ēlôhîym: rulers; judges; angels; divine ones; God] will I sing praise unto thee”** – The Hebrew word for “gods” is the same word used to refer to the LORD in Gen. 1. It essentially refers to someone with power and authority, such as a judge, king, governors, and even angels. Jesus illustrated this when He quoted from Psalm 82:6 when challenged on His claim to be the Son of God (**John 10:34-36** “Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?”). In the context of this psalm (v. 4), David is apparently saying that he is willing to sing the LORD’s praises in front of any human rulers, such as foreign kings or government officials of his own county. David is not ashamed of the LORD and will not be intimidated into restraining his praise for the LORD no matter who is watching.

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2 I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.

**“I will worship [to bow down] toward thy holy temple”** – Whenever David is not at the tabernacle, his worship of the LORD is directed toward its location where the Ark of the Covenant is housed. He will bow down facing the direction where the ark resides.

**“and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness [goodness; faithfulness] and for thy truth [reliability; unchanging]”** – While he is worshiping, David will praise the LORD for His goodness and the fact that He is true in all that He promises and does.

**“for thou hast magnified [to make great] thy word above all thy name”** – The LORD has based the integrity of His name upon the reliability of His word. If anything that the LORD has ever said were ever to be found to be untrue then His name would be forever tarnished. He would be known as a liar and unfaithful. For this reason, the LORD protects the integrity of His word and exalts its importance even above His own name.

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3 In the day when I cried thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul.

David recalls a time in the past (likely many times) when he has called on the LORD for help and the LORD responded. The Hebrew word translated “strengthenedst” means “to make bold.” David may have been fearful in his time of trouble but the LORD gave him boldness by giving him “strength in my soul.” David is not talking about physical strength, although the LORD may have given him that as well. The LORD gave him strength in the core of his being, producing courage because David’s confidence was no longer in his own limited strength and abilities but in the power of the LORD Who was now helping him. The Apostle Paul shared this sentiment (**2 Cor. 12:9-10** “And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong”). These times are an example of the LORD’s lovingkindness and truth that David mentions in v. 2.

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4 All the kings of the earth shall praise thee, O LORD, when they hear the words of thy mouth.

The Hebrew word used for “praise” is the same one David used in v. 1, meaning “to praise by giving thanks.” David may have believed that all of the kings of the earth would thank and praise the LORD if only they could hear the word of the LORD. Perhaps this is why he said he would sing the praises of the LORD in front of these kings (v. 1). Historically, very few Gentile kings have given glory and praise to the LORD, with kings like Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 3:26-29; Dan. 4:34, 37) and the Queen of Sheba when she came to see Solomon (1 Kings 10:9) being a couple of examples. However, when Christ establishes His kingdom on earth during the millennium, this verse will be fulfilled throughout the whole earth. **Phil. 2:9-11** “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

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5 Yea, they shall sing in the ways of the LORD: for great is the glory of the LORD.

The “ways of the LORD” refers to the LORD’s behavior – the way He does things. These kings of the earth will glorify the LORD by singing of the things He does and the righteous and holy manner in which He does them. Such things bring great glory to the LORD. The only time that “all the kings of the earth” will sing of the ways of the LORD will be during Christ’s millennial kingdom.

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6 Though the LORD *be high*, yet hath he respect unto the lowly: but the proud he knoweth afar off.

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**“Though the LORD *be high*, yet hath he respect [to see and discern] unto the lowly”** – Unlike human leaders who sometimes believe they are too important to pay attention to the petitions of “the little man,” the LORD does not ignore the needs of the lowly. The LORD is not exalted in pride because of His elevated position and power. Instead, He genuinely cares for the lowly and their needs.

**“but the proud he knoweth afar off”** – I know who the president is, but I don’t really know him since I’ve never met him or interacted with him. My knowledge of him is from “afar off.” In contrast to the lowly, whom the LORD takes special interest in, the proud are those who oppress the lowly and ignore their needs. The proud do not have a relationship with the LORD and thus He only knows them from “afar off.”

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7 Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me: thou shalt stretch forth thine hand against the wrath of mine enemies, and thy right hand shall save me.

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**“Though I walk in the midst of trouble [distress], thou wilt revive [to preserve alive; to give life; refresh] me”** – David understands that even when he feels like he is in distress, perhaps even in danger of losing his life, that the LORD will intervene to rescue him from his distresses and preserve his life. The LORD can preserve our life even in the midst of dire circumstances.

**“thou shalt stretch forth thine hand against the wrath of mine enemies, and thy right hand shall save me”** – The right hand was considered to be a person’s hand of strength and dexterity since most people are right handed. David trusts that the LORD will powerfully intervene for him against his enemies. Instead of merely helping David to hide from or avoid the attempts of his angry enemies to do him harm, the LORD will go on the offense and neutralize the threat.

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8 The LORD will perfect *that which* concerneth me: thy mercy, O LORD, *endureth* for ever: forsake not the works of thine own hands.

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**“The LORD will perfect [to bring to completion] *that which* concerneth me”** – The LORD will accomplish His plans, purposes and promises that He has made concerning David. These plans are unconditional and the LORD will not change His mind, as we saw in our previous lesson (**Psa. 132:11** “The LORD hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne”). The LORD has chosen that the Messiah (Jesus Christ) will be from the lineage of David and that He will reign on David’s throne forever. **Rom. 1:1-4** “Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.”

**“thy mercy, O LORD, *endureth* for ever”** – David considered the LORD’s plans, purposes, and promises to him as being acts of mercy. He did not believe them to be something that he deserved or that the LORD owed to him. The LORD’s mercies are eternal, just as His promises to David are eternal.

**“forsake not the works [labor; achievement; a thing made] of thine own hands”** – Some commentators believe David is referring to himself as a “work” of the LORD’s hands and is asking that the LORD would never forsake him, implying David’s understanding of his own human frailty and propensity to sin. Other commentators see the “the works of thine own hands” as being the things which “concerneth me” (the LORD’s purposes concerning David) and that David is urging the LORD to see these things through to completion, also implying that David understood that his own sinful could stand in the way of these promises being fulfilled. Alternatively, David may be simply approving of the LORD’s plans and purposes, saying, in effect “Let it be done as You have promised, LORD.”