

PSALM 135

Praise the LORD'S Wonderful Works. Vanity of Idols.

INTRODUCTION.

- A. From Roy H. Enoch (12-25-96).
- B. "A Mosaic Hymn of Praise to God."
- C. This is another of the Hallelujah Psalms, with its first line and last line being the word Hallelujah, or "Praise the Lord." Many suggest that Psa. 135,136 are companion Hallelujah Psalms, because of the similarity of contents and the focus on praising God.
- D. This psalm shows great skill in composition. The first three verses are a Prologue, or introduction. The last three verses are an Epilogue, or conclusion. In between God is praised for six different kinds of blessings. He is the God:
 - 1. ...of Jacob. (v4).
 - 2. ...of gods (v5).
 - 3. ...of all Creation (v6,7).
 - 4. ...the Terrible to Israel's Enemies (v8-11).
 - 5. ...of Gracious Love for Israel (v12-14).
 - 6. ...the Living One Contrasted to Idols (v15-18).
- E. Many call this psalm a "mosaic" because of so many allusions. Almost every verse is from, or quoted somewhere else in the Bible. Alexander Maclaren describes the use of so many scriptures as, "The flowers are arranged in a new bouquet, because the poet had long delighted in their fragrance. The ease with which he blends into a harmonious whole, fragments from such diverse sources tells how familiar he was with these, and how well he loved them." (Vol. 3,p 362)

THE TEXT.

- 135:1** Praise the LORD!
Praise the name of the LORD;
Praise *Him*, O servants of the LORD,
2 You who stand in the house of the LORD,
In the courts of the house of our God!
3 Praise the LORD, for the LORD is good;
Sing praises to His name, for it is lovely.
4 For the LORD has chosen Jacob for Himself,
Israel for His own possession.
5 For I know that the LORD is great
And that our Lord is above all gods.
6 Whatever the LORD pleases, He does,
In heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deeps.
7 He causes the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth;
Who makes lightnings for the rain,
Who brings forth the wind from His treasures.
8 He smote the firstborn of Egypt,
Both of man and beast.
9 He sent signs and wonders into your midst, O Egypt,
Upon Pharaoh and all his servants.
10 He smote many nations
And slew mighty kings,
11 Sihon, king of the Amorites,
And Og, king of Bashan,
And all the kingdoms of Canaan;
12 And He gave their land as a heritage,
A heritage to Israel His people.
13 Your name, O LORD, is everlasting,
Your remembrance, O LORD, throughout all generations.
14 For the LORD will judge His people
And will have compassion on His servants.
15 The idols of the nations are *but* silver and gold,
The work of man's hands.

- 16 They have mouths, but they do not speak;
They have eyes, but they do not see;
- 17 They have ears, but they do not hear,
Nor is there any breath at all in their mouths.
- 18 Those who make them will be like them,
Yes, everyone who trusts in them.
- 19 O house of Israel, bless the LORD;
O house of Aaron, bless the LORD;
- 20 O house of Levi, bless the LORD;
You who revere the LORD, bless the LORD.
- 21 Blessed be the LORD from Zion,
Who dwells in Jerusalem.
Praise the LORD!

COMMENTS.

- A. The Prologue: The Call to Praise God.
[v1-3] Five times, men are urged to praise the Lord. Several groups are referred to:
1. The servants of the Lord (v1).
 2. Those who stand in the house of the Lord, the priests (v2).
 3. Those who are in the courts of the house of the Lord, the people (v2).
- The reasons for praising the Lord, “for the Lord is good,” and “for it is pleasant.” It is a pity that so many who want to be known as “Christian” have never learned these lessons.
- B. God is the God of Jacob.
[v4] The selection of their nation was not because of their goodness, or attractiveness, but because of God’s love. Therefore, it too, is a reason to praise God.
- C. He is the God of Gods.
[v5] “...our Lord is above other gods.” Coffman notes that idols are dealt with in verses 15-18, but that “gods” here is used to refer to earthy rulers as in Psa. 82 where it refers to human judges who sat in the place of God.
- D. He is God of All Creation.
[v6] A fourth reason why God should be praised is that He is the “God of all Creation.”
[v7] “He causes the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth...” The ancients could not understand how water arose from the seas to come down as rain. They did not understand how clouds could hold water (Job 26:8).
“...He makes lightning for the rain...” They also wondered how God could make fire (lightning) and rain to come out of the same clouds--why would not the water put out the fire?
- E. God the terrible to Enemies of Israel.
The fifth reason for praising God is that God has long fought the enemies of Israel.
[v8,9] “He destroyed the firstborn of Egypt...” Only the 10th plague is mentioned to remind them of God’s deliverance from slavery. The rest of the plagues are referred to in v. 9 as, “He sent signs and wonders into the midst of you, O Egypt...”
[v10,11] “He defeated many nations and slew mighty kings--Sihon... Og...” This brief reference brings to mind the conquering of the land of Canaan. The Israelites were so familiar with their history that these brief references were sufficient to bring to their minds the entire episodes.
- F. God of Gracious Love for Israel.
The sixth reason to praise God is the blessings that He had brought to the nations.
[v12] “And God gave their land for a heritage.” He not only defeated their enemies but allotted the land to the tribes.
[v13] “Your name... Your fame... endures forever.” It was not a freak of luck, but God’s eternal nature that He blessed them.
[v14] “For the Lord will judge His people...He will have compassion on His servants.” It seems that Israel completely misunderstood this promise to bless and believed that regardless of what they did,

that God would always deliver them in a similar way that is described here. Coffman points out that when Jerusalem was being destroyed by the armies of Vespasian and Titus, in 70AD, that the final High priest comforted the people by saying that Jerusalem would stand until the Messiah came, and that the Messiah had not come, so Jerusalem would stand.

G. The Living God Infinitely Above Dead Idols.

[v15-18] The seventh reason to praise God was his greatness above idols.

We referred to these verses when we were studying Psa. 115:4-8. The ancient world worshiped idols that they made. Man still worships things that he makes, whether is his car, computer or some other toy.

H. Epilogue: A Call to Bless God.

[v19-21] Five times in these three verses they are called upon to bless the Lord, with the closing Hallelujah. "...O house of Israel... O house of Aaron... O house of Levi!" We have seen this three-fold address in several other psalms. It included the whole nation.