

PSALM 138

Thanksgiving for the LORD'S Favor.

INTRODUCTION.

- A. A Psalm of David. "Thanksgiving for the Lord's Lovingkindness."
- B. Coffman points out that this is the first of a group of eight psalms which are ascribed to David in the ancient Hebrew superscriptions. He suggests that we would need something more concrete than the guesses and speculations of liberal critics to reject these ancient traditions.
- C. John T. Willis divides the psalm into three parts:
 1. A Declaration of Thanksgiving (138:1-3).
 2. All Nations Profit By God's Action (138:4-6).
 3. God Will Preserve Him from His Enemies (138:7,8).

THE TEXT.

138:1 I will give You thanks with all my heart;

I will sing praises to You before the gods.

2 I will bow down toward Your holy temple

And give thanks to Your name for Your lovingkindness and Your truth;

For You have magnified Your word according to all Your name.

3 On the day I called, You answered me;

You made me bold with strength in my soul.

4 All the kings of the earth will give thanks to You, O LORD,

When they have heard the words of Your mouth.

5 And they will sing of the ways of the LORD,

For great is the glory of the LORD.

6 For though the LORD is exalted,

Yet He regards the lowly,

But the haughty He knows from afar.

7 Though I walk in the midst of trouble, You will revive me;

You will stretch forth Your hand against the wrath of my enemies,

And Your right hand will save me.

8 The LORD will accomplish what concerns me;

Your lovingkindness, O LORD, is everlasting;

Do not forsake the works of Your hands.

COMMENTS.

A. A Declaration of Thanksgiving.

[v1] "...Before the gods I will sing praises to You." In Jo. 10:34-35 Jesus quotes from Psa. 82:6 where men are called gods. Jesus says the "gods" here refers "...to whom the word of God came..." therefore, they were not idols or angels, but seems to represent men with authority who sometimes exalted themselves as God.

[v2] "I will worship toward Your holy temple..." Modern critics sometimes claim that this shows that the psalm must have been written later than David. But this Hebrew word is used 78 times (1Sam. to Mal.), and first in 1Sam. 1:9, referring to the tabernacle at Shiloh.

[v3] "In the day when I cried out, You answered me..." God's answering prayers in the past gives him confidence to ask again, and to praise Him for His blessings.

B. All Nations Profit by God's Action.

[v4,5] "All the kings of the earth shall praise You...WHEN they hear the words of Your mouth." H.C. Leupold says, "Everything here centers about the prospect of having the kings of the earth offer their praises to the Lord for what He had done for David."

[v6] "Though the Lord is on high, yet He regards the lowly..." Regardless of how exalted God's glory, and seemingly remote in heaven, he is concerned about helping the lowly, but is distant to the proud.

C. God Will Preserve Him from His Enemies.

[v7] “Though I walk in the midst of trouble...” This reminds us of the similar reading in Psa. 23:4. It was not walking in the practice of sin, but in times or places of danger.

[v8] “The Lord will perfect that which concerns me...” David is confident that the Lord will cover his imperfections as he strives to do His will and praise Him for His blessings.