A Grace Gathering
3 May 2020

Psalm 145: "A Call to Praise"

The Structure of the Psalm

Ironically, like the Psalm of last Sunday (34), this is another example of an artistic literary poem; it is acrostic in form.
Each verse begins with a consecutive letter in the Hebrew alphabet. Again, one letter is deleted (*nun)* which *should be* after v. 13. Some ancient translation supply what they must have thought was a missing verse, such a 11QPs at Qumran.

Since the literary form is acrostic it is a wisdom or instructional Psalm, as well as a praise psalm.

The Setting of the Psalm

1. The superscription provides no historic context. The only insights come from the place of the Psalm in the collection.
2. Within the Psalter, this is the last one written by David.
3. This is the ninth acrostic Psalm written by David in the collection (9, 10, 25, 34, 37, 111, 112, 119).
4. The use of an acrostic is more than literary artistry. Since the acrostic form spans the Hebrew alphabet from beginning to end, it conveys the idea of wholeness or completeness. In this Psalm, the acrostic form suggests the perfection of God in his character and His conduct. The word "all" is found seventeen times in the Psalm.
5. Psalms 138-145 were written by David.
6. The placement of the Psalm in the collection is rather amazing. Psalms 138 and 139 are praise poems, 140-143 are lament psalms, and 144-145 are thanksgiving psalms as are the remaining psalms in the collection (146-150 forming a climax). After tears comes praise, after sorrow thanksgiving, after darkness light!!!
7. The Psalm is unique in that it is the only one that is entitled, "A Psalm of Praise," in the superscription.
8. The Psalm begins and ends with David's declaration of his willingness to praise God (vv. 1-2, 21). It frames the psalm and defines its nature.

The Theme of the Psalm

A poem of thanksgiving and adoration to God for His mighty acts, His righteous character, and His gracious provisions for mankind, most particularly the

manner in which He responds to those who love Him. It is a pure praise psalm that David would have sung to the Lord.

<u>The Key Words in the Psalm</u>

By David: “I will (vv. 1 and 2 [twice in each verse], 5, 6).”

“Extol,” v. 1a
“Bless,” v. 1b, 2a
“Praise,” v. 2b
“Meditate,” v. 5
“Tell,” v. 6
“My mouth will speak,” v. 21

Descriptions of God (His person):

“King,” v. 1
“Great,” v. 3
“Glorious splendor of Thy majesty,” v. 5
“power of Thy awesome acts,” v. 6a
“Greatness,” v. 6b
“Gracious and merciful,” v. 8a
“Good,” v. 9

Descriptions of God (His actions):

“Thine abundant goodness,” v. 7
“Slow to anger and great in lovingkindness,” v. 8b
“Sustains all who fall,” v. 14a
“Raises up all who are bowed down,” v. 14b
“Thou dost give them their food,” v. 15b
“Thou dost open Thy hand,” v. 16a
“Dost satisfy the desire of every living thing,” v. 16b
“Righteous in all His ways,” v. 17a
“Kind in all His deeds,” v. 17b
“He is near,” v. 18
“The Lord keeps all who love Him,” v. 20

Descriptions of God (His promises)

“He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him,” v. 19a.
“He will hear their cry and save them,” v. 19b

If you have ever wondered what to think about when you mediate on the Lord, this Psalm provides a wonderful “grocery-list” for all of us. You can replace some destressing moments, something we all experience at times, with some great and nourishing thoughts that will bring you great joy and contentment. To

think of another is an antidote to the pain that comes when thinking about ourselves!

<u>The Survey of the Psalm</u>

I. Prelude: The Praise of God, His King, vv. 1-2

Praise was David's first thought when he wrote this poem; he employs three different nouns that express praise (exalt, praise, and bless) These verses tell us several things: David reserved his highest praise for His God; David, though Israel's greatest king, thought he was a servant to the King of Kings; David had a personal relationship with God ("my King").

It is rare in people of high privilege, authority, and power to also know humility!

II. The Greatness of God, His King, vv. 3-6

These four verses have a common theme that is captured in the four initial words (v. 3) of the section, "Great is the Lord." The section is divided into two verses each

v. 3 God's greatness

v. 4 David's Response ("shall declare Your mighty acts")

Here is the duty of parents and grandparents; we are to pass to our loved ones our heritage of the faithfulness of God. There are a lot of lessons we have all learned, some the hard way and others not, that are important in the spiritual development of others.

v. 5 God's majesty

While our times are quite unusual right now (rumors are flying around, blame is being scattered concerning what should have been done or not done, miscues seem to be abundant), God has not changed; He is beautiful!

v. 6 David's Response ("I will tell")

What could David have been thinking of for offering praise? The great redemptive Abrahamic Covenant, the Mosaic in revealing God's willing to tabernacle among His people, the Davidic Covenant promising a greater son to rule on His throne forever, the birth of the nation out of Egypt, preservation in the wilderness, the subduing of the land, the deliverances in the times of the Judges, the deliverance from Saul, the gift of the prophets to warn and instruct, etc. What would your list look like?

III. The Goodness of God, His King, vv. 7-9

v. 7 Declared to God

The noun "Your" tells us David is addressing God. There is a clue with the parallelisms in most verses that the poem was sung

antiphonally. Goodness and righteousness are parallel, one necessitating (the latter) the manifestation of the other (the former).

v. 8 Specifics exampled

Again, there are parallelisms, "gracious" relates being "slow to anger" and "merciful" to "lovingkindness." The great word in the Hebrew Scriptures of God's loyalty to us is "hesed" or lovingkindness. God's kindness in His actions are a response to His love for us. Mercy is God's response to our needs.

It is worthy of time to think about how God so gently deals with us. Are you not glad He is slow to chastise, being full of mercy and love?

v. 9 Its universality

Here is a wonderful statement of God's goodness and benevolence to all mankind, redeemed and unredeemed (this for the unredeemed is a basis of their just judgment in the Day of Judgment). Sun to warm us, the rain to replenish us providing for our food supply, and darkness so that we can sleep are gifts to all!

One of the truly comforting words in the Old Testament is the word translated "lovingkindness. It has a range of meanings and is translated as loyal, steadfast love, mercy, goodness, great kindness, and faithful love. One scholar defined the word as "divine love condescending to His people." See Gen. 24:27; Exod. 15:13, 34:7; Num. 14:18; Deut. 7:9; I Kings 3:6, 8:23; Neh. 1:5, 9:32). Meditating on the character of God is a great antidote to restlessness!

IV. Interlude: Praise God, v. 10

Here is an antiphonal break of a choral singing in the tabernacle. It is the duty of all of "Your godly ones."

When God's goodness is recognized, our response should be praise!

V. The Glory of God, His King vv. 11-13

vv. 11 The greatness of His rule

God rules over the creation so that it is a revelation the glories of His person. "The heavens are telling the glory of God. (Ps 19:1). God has written, through creation, a portrait of Himself. Natural revelation is a wordless book. "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power, and divine nature, have been clearly seen… (Rom. 2:20)."

v. 12 The purpose of His rule

v. 13 The length of His rule
In contrast to the kingdoms of earthly monarchs, however great and lengthy, His kingdom has no end.

VI. The Grace of God, His King, vv. 14-16
This section begins and ends with similar wording framing the section ("The Lord sustains [v. 14]," "The Lord keeps [v. 20])." This is called an inclusion.
v. 14 The compassion of God
Hebrew poetry is most frequently arranged in couplets with the second line paralleling the first, and making the same point. What a wonderful verse of comfort in our very uncertain and trying days. God supports the fallen; those bowed down with sorrow.
v. 15 The closeness of God
The point of the verse is that God is aware of human needs, particularly with nourishment and sustaining mercies.
v. 16 The care of God
Here the emphasis is upon the universal provision of God, His bounty. While we tend to clutch and horde, God opens His hands to us (what a beautiful metaphor).

VI. The Righteous Acts of God, His King, vv.17-20
v. 17 The kindness of God
The demeanor of God toward His children is expressed in kindness and generosity.
v. 18 The prayer answering God
Our God is not so transcendent that He stands apart from His creation; He is the condescending God who is near to us. He hears our cry to Him and in hearing He always answers (Yes, no, or no now).
v. 19 The deliverances of God
God hears the cry, the needs, of His children for deliverance from our troubles and disturbances and acts as our guardian and redeemer. God not only hears us; he saves us each and every day from our foolishness, folly, and blindness.
v. 20 The love of God
The tense of the verb, loves, is present. Think of it; God loves us.

VII. Postlude: Praise His Holy Name, v. 21
The psalmist began with the declaration that he would praise the Lord (again stated here); it ends with a call of all mankind to do the same.