

Psalms 138:0 ¶ *A Psalm of David.*

Another beautiful song of praise from the Shepherd King.

Jewish Study Bible: “This is the first of a collection of hymns (138–145) that concludes the Psalter. Petitions characterize the Psalter’s opening, and many see an intentional movement from petitions to hymns as part of the structure that the editor tried to convey.”

Psalms 138:1 ¶ *I will praise thee with my whole heart: before the gods will I sing praise unto thee.*

In looking at the Hebrew, I tend to think that David is referencing the angelic hosts of heaven as “the gods.” The point he is making is that he wants all of creation to know that he is full of praise to the LORD.

Psalms 138:2 *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 am reminded that David had desired to build a temple to honor the LORD for a long time. In fact, he made extensive preparations both in writing and in gathering material. Though the temple did not exist in his time, I believe he saw it as a reality because of God’s promise.

1 Kings 8:18–19 “And the LORD said unto David my father, Whereas it was in thine heart to build an house unto my name, thou didst well that it was in thine heart. Nevertheless thou shalt not build the house; but thy son that shall come forth out of thy loins, he shall build the house unto my name.”

On the other hand, David could have had in mind the heavenly temple in connection with praising God before the angels.

Either way, the main point is that David was committed to praising the name of the LORD in thanks for His lovingkindness and truth. He is aware that God honors His word above His name. That is an interesting thought in that both God’s name and His word represent who He is. Having the insight of the New Testament, I believe that truth is rooted in Jesus, the Word become flesh.

John 1:1& 14 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God....And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."

Interesting historical note from Chuck Smith: "In the Old Testament times, the Jews held this name in such high esteem that they would never pronounce the name of God. They felt that no human lips were worthy to pronounce His name. And it came to pass that as they would copy the scriptures, when they came to the name of God, they would only copy the consonants, leaving out the vowels, so that a person would not even pronounce the name in his mind as he was reading because just the consonants were unpronounceable. And so in reading of the scriptures, when they would come to this name of God, they would just bow their head and worship."

Psalms 138:3 In the day when I cried thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul.

David is praising the LORD for answered prayer and strengthening him spiritually when he was weak.

Psalms 138:4 All the kings of the earth shall praise thee, O LORD, when they hear the words of thy mouth.

Psalms 138:5 Yea, they shall sing in the ways of the LORD: for great is the glory of the LORD.

David looks forward to the day when all the kings of earth will honor the LORD and give Him the praise He is due. In fact, they will sing praise to the glory of the LORD. This truth is affirmed other places in scripture.

Isaiah 45:23 "I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear"

Romans 14:11 "For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God."

Philippians 2:10–11 "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."

Psalms 138:6 ¶ Though the LORD be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly: but the proud he knoweth afar off.

David knows from experience that though the LORD is great in majesty and power, he watches out for those that are humble; however, although He is aware of everything, He doesn't get involved as intimately with the proud. Pride is one of the things He hates the most.

Proverbs 6:16–19 “These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.”

Psalms 138:7 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.

Psalms 138:8 The LORD will perfect *that which* concerneth me: thy mercy, O LORD, endureth for ever: forsake not the works of thine own hands.

Again, David knows from experience that God is watching out for him. He has revived him in times of trouble and delivered him from his enemies. That gives him confidence that He will do so in the future as well.

I love the first part of verse 8. It reads a bit differently in other translations.

NIV: “The LORD will fulfill [his purpose] for me....”

NLT: “The LORD will work out his plans for my life....”

NASB: “The LORD will “accomplish what concerns me....”

David knew this was true for him, and I know this is true for all those that are part of God's family through faith. The beautiful truth is that the LORD will bring about a perfect conclusion according to His plan for my life. This is yet another act of His never-ending mercy.

Because of this truth, the last part of the verse is a bit puzzling. It's like David is pleading with the LORD not to forget that beautiful truth.

I liked Spurgeon's observation: “Our confidence does not cause us to live without prayer, but encourages us to pray all more.”