

Israel's Hymnal
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 Dr. David L. Cooper

PSALM ONE HUNDRED FORTY-FIVE

[Pss 145:1] I will extol thee, my God, O King; And I will bless thy name for ever and ever.
 [Pss 145:2] Every day will I bless thee; And I will praise thy name for ever and ever.
 [Pss 145:3] Great is Jehovah, and greatly to be praised; And his greatness is unsearchable.
 [Pss 145:4] One generation shall laud thy works to another, And shall declare thy mighty acts.
 [Pss 145:5] Of the glorious majesty of thine honor, And of thy wondrous works, will I meditate.
 [Pss 145:6] And men shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts; And I will declare thy greatness.
 [Pss 145:7] They shall utter the memory of thy great goodness, And shall sing of thy righteousness.
 [Pss 145:8] Jehovah is gracious, and merciful; Slow to anger, and of great lovingkindness.
 [Pss 145:9] Jehovah is good to all; And his tender mercies are over all his works.
 [Pss 145:10] All thy works shall give thanks unto thee, O Jehovah; And thy saints shall bless thee.
 [Pss 145:11] They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, And talk of thy power;
 [Pss 145:12] To make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, And the glory of the majesty of his kingdom.
 [Pss 145:13] Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, And thy dominion (endureth) throughout all generations.
 [Pss 145:14] Jehovah upholdeth all that fall, And raiseth up all those that are bowed down.
 [Pss 145:15] The eyes of all wait for thee; And thou givest them their food in due season.
 [Pss 145:16] Thou openest thy hand, And satisfiest the desire of every living thing.
 [Pss 145:17] Jehovah is righteous in all his ways, And gracious in all his works.
 [Pss 145:18] Jehovah is nigh unto all them that call upon him, To all that call upon him in truth.
 [Pss 145:19] He will fulfill the desire of them that fear him; He also will hear their cry and will save them.
 [Pss 145:20] Jehovah preserveth all them that love him; But all the wicked will he destroy.
 [Pss 145:21] My mouth shall speak the praise of Jehovah;
 And let all flesh bless his holy name for ever and ever.

THE PSALMIST EXTOLS JEHOVAH

Psalms 145 is one of the great hymns of the Psalter. It divides naturally into four well-defined sections:

- I. The greatness of Jehovah (vss. 1-6)
- II. The goodness of Jehovah (vss. 7-10)
- III. The glory of Jehovah (vss. 11-13)
- IV. The graciousness of Jehovah (vss. 14-21)

The psalmist starts out by extolling the Lord and praising Him: "I will extol thee, my God, O King: And I will bless thy name for ever and ever." David, the human author of the psalm, declares his intention to extol God whom he recognizes as his King and to bless His name continually. Repeatedly the inspired writers tell us that it is a good thing to worship God and to bless His holy name. God delights for His children in the spirit of gratitude and praise and thanksgiving to come to Him and to pour forth an acknowledgment before Him of their appreciation of what He is constantly doing for them.

It is best for one to be thankful and thus to express himself. Man's first step of departure from God consisted of his being unthankful. This is seen in the first chapter of Romans. Thus God wants us to be thankful and to remember that it is in Him that we live, move, and have our being. It is most important for our spiritual welfare that we recognize our utter dependence upon Him.

I. The greatness of Jehovah

"Every day will I bless thee;
 And I will praise thy name for ever and ever.
 Great is Jehovah, and greatly to be praised;
 And his greatness is unsearchable.
 One generation shall laud thy works to another,
 And shall declare thy mighty acts.
 Of the glorious majesty of thine honor,
 And of thy wondrous works, I will meditate.
 And men shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts;
 And I will declare thy greatness" (vss. 2-6).

According to verse 2 the psalmist says that he will praise or bless God every day. This line is parallel to the statement "I will praise thy name for ever and ever." Let us remember that these statements are parallel and that one is complementary or explanatory of the other. We must remember the fact that the Hebrew word or expression translated "for ever and ever" does not have the same connotation as our English words by which they are rendered. Our expression, forever and ever, as a rule connotes *never-ceasing, continuing throughout eternity*. In I Chronicles 28:4 David spoke of God's having chosen him to be king over Israel forever. Yet when we look at all the records, we see that he reigned only forty years. It is obvious that David spoke of the forty years as forever. Of course it does not have the connotation of the English word "forever." Here it means *continuously, without any interruptions*, within the limits of the time when he came to the throne and when he died. In Isaiah 32:14 the prophet foretold the desolations that would be wrought in Jerusalem during the Tribulation and declares that "... the hill and the watch-tower shall be for dens for ever, a joy of wild asses, a pasture of flocks; until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness become a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be esteemed as a forest" (vss. 14,15). In verse 14 he declared that the desolation would continue "for ever." But in the fifteenth verse he asserted that this does not mean forever in the sense of our English word, but that this "for ever" was to continue "until the Spirit be poured out ..." Here the term means continuity, without any breaks, within the limits defined by the context. In verses 16 and 17 of the same chapter the prophet foretells the reign of justice and righteousness that will be inaugurated by the Messiah's coming to earth. Then he

declared, "And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and confidence for ever." From the context we see that the prophet was talking about the conditions which will be established at the beginning of the Millennial Age and will continue to the close of it; and yet he speaks of it as being "for ever," that is, that regime of righteousness will continue on through the thousand years reign of our Lord without any interruption whatsoever. But at the conclusion of the thousand years the heavens and earth that now are will pass away in fulfillment of the prophecy of our Lord in His Olivet Discourse and also in fulfillment of Revelation 20:11. Thus this second use of "forever" in Isaiah, chapter 32, connotes the period of one thousand years.

We now turn back to Psalm 145:2. In the first part of the verse the psalmist asserts that he will bless God—speak well of the name of God—every day. Then, in supplementing that thought, he declares that he will praise God's name "for ever and ever." Thus this second expression is limited by the first one. He declares his intention of praising God from day to day, that is, as long as he lives. Then the second expression, that he will praise God "for ever and ever," simply means that he will praise God during his lifetime, without any interruption—from day to day. In view of the fact that the Hebrew word, forever, does not mean what the English term signifies, one must be careful and look at all the facts of the context in each case in order to determine exactly the thought of the inspired writer.

While David avows his intention of praising God continuously, without any interruption, during his lifetime, we may know that in eternity he will ever praise the Lord. Of course, when he came to the end of his life, he went down to Sheol, the place of departed spirits, as did all others of the saints of God during pre-Christian centuries. But in that dark abode of the departed spirits, men do not conduct worship and praise God (Ps. 6:5; Ps. 88:10). Nevertheless we may be certain that, from the time of the first resurrection onward throughout all eternity the saints of God will praise Him who has loved them and done so much for them.

In the verse quoted above, the greatness of God is emphasized. We constantly speak of the omnipotence of God—of His being all powerful; of the omniscience of God—of His knowing all things; and of the omnipresence of God—of His being everywhere. Thus in these verses the psalmist is speaking of God's greatness, which is unfathomable to the human mind. We can get only a glimpse of His greatness by observing His works, all of which reflect His unlimited power, wisdom and might.

According to verse 4 the psalmist declares that one generation will speak to the next one of God's works and of His mighty acts. Anyone who will consider honestly and conscientiously, as he looks into the heavens above and on the earth beneath will admit that the Almighty is the one who has brought these into existence and who is controlling them. There is evidence of His mighty power and acts to be seen on every hand. His works are wonderful, awe-inspiring. Some of them are terrible acts, judgments against the wickedness of sinful man.

"O holy, holy, holy Lord,
Whom heavenly hosts obey,
The world is with thy glory filled
Of thy majestic sway!"

Of course the nation of Israel could look back at the time of her deliverance from Egyptian bondage and could recount the many wonderful and terrible works which the Lord wrought in her behalf against her enemies. The Jew today, together with the Gentile, can look back at the history of Israel from the time of the Exodus to the present day and can discern the invisible hand of God in the history of the nation and can see that it is He who has been performing mighty and providential acts in the guidance of the chosen people and of their preservation.

The parents in Israel were taught to instruct their children when they arose in the morning and when they retired in the evening about God's mighty acts of love and power. It is the duty, yes privilege, of every parent to teach his children daily what God has done, is doing, and will do for those who love Him and who trust Him. Children should be taught as early as possible in life the things of God. If parents would only do their duty toward their children, their lives in many instances would be entirely different from what they turn out to be.

II. The goodness of Jehovah

"They shall utter the memory of thy great goodness,
And shall sing of thy righteousness.
Jehovah is gracious, and merciful;
Slow to anger, and of great lovingkindness.
Jehovah is good to all; And his tender mercies are over all his works.
All thy works shall give thanks unto thee, O Jehovah;
And thy saints shall bless thee" (vss. 7-10).

The psalmist declares that he will speak of the memory of the goodness of Jehovah and of His righteousness, graciousness, mercy, and love. Whereas in the preceding section at which we have just looked, the psalmist speaks of God's greatness as manifested by His mighty acts; in the present verses he is looking at the character of God more than at His works. One of the fundamental passages of the Scriptures is Exodus 34:6,7: "And Jehovah passed by before him, and proclaimed, Jehovah, Jehovah, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in lovingkindness and truth; keeping lovingkindness for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin; and that will by no means clear *the guilty*, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation." Here God declares in sevenfold statement His character, His essential nature, and being. He is good; He is righteous; He is gracious; He is merciful; and at the same time He is slow to anger; nevertheless He does become angry and His wrath is often kindled. Nahum, who wrote the vision of the burden of Nineveh, began his oracle by calling attention to God's essential character or nature (Nahum 1:2,3). Following this statement he declared that God rebuked the sea, that is, the Red Sea through which Israel passed. Is there anyone who can withstand God's wrath? No. But since He is essentially good and merciful, He is seeking every opportunity to bless and to help those who take refuge in Him (Nahum 1:6,7).

III. The glory of Jehovah

"They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, And talk of thy power;
To make known to the sons of men his mighty acts,
And the glory of the majesty of his kingdom.
Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,
And thy dominion *endureth* throughout all generations (vss. 11-13).

The nation of Israel constituted the kingdom of God from the time of the establishment of the Davidic throne (I Chronicles 28:4,5; 29:23) until it was taken from Israel and given to another nation (Matt. 21:43), which will bring forth fruit to the glory of God, the church of the Lord Jesus Christ consisting of both Jews and Gentiles during the present age.

In Psalm 145:11-13 the psalmist is looking forward into the future and sees this kingdom of God in its outward manifestation of glory. Men have talked about the time when God's kingdom will be established upon earth and the glory of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. Men will continue to talk about it until it is finally established. It is proper and right that the children of God today should study what He says about His millennial reign here upon earth, should meditate upon it, and should teach it to others. Notwithstanding this plain teaching of Scripture, there are some good Christians who do not want us to speak of the glorious kingdom that will be established at the coming of the Lord. They tell us that the Lord will do this without our talking about it. Of course, this is true, but He wants us to tell others about it now and keep on talking about it until He does establish that reign of righteousness upon the earth.

When this kingdom is established, it will be an everlasting kingdom. But does that mean that it will continue throughout all the ceaseless ages of the eternity in the future? No. We know that it will last for a thousand years. When it is established, it will continue on without any interruption, until the close of the thousand years, at which time, as we have already learned, the earth will be destroyed. Thus the passing away of the material universe will bring to a close the Millennial Kingdom. Thus according to the second line of verse 13 it will last forever, that is, throughout all generations of the Millennial Age. But after the Kingdom Age has run its course, and after the heavens and the earth have passed away at that time, God will create new heavens and a new earth, which will last throughout all eternity. Great things are in store for the faithful people of God. They are the richest people upon earth and will be throughout all eternity. They have great things to which they may look forward at all times.

IV. The graciousness of Jehovah

"Jehovah upholdeth all that fall,
And raiseth up all those that are bowed down.
The eyes of all wait for thee;
And thou givest them their food in due season.
Thou openest thy hand,
And satisfiest the desire of every living thing.
Jehovah is righteous in all his ways,
And gracious in all his works.

Jehovah is nigh unto all them that call upon him,
 To all that call upon him in truth.
 He will fulfill the desire of them that fear him;
 He also will hear their cry and will save them.
 Jehovah preserveth all them that love him;
 But all the wicked he will destroy.
 My mouth shall speak the praise of Jehovah;
 And let all flesh bless his holy name for ever and ever"
 (vss. 14-21).

We must look forward to these wonderful things which God has in store for us. At the same time we do not want to day dream and do not desire to consume all our time and energy talking about the future. Let us give scriptural emphasis to the things that God has mentioned—things of past, present, and future. We need a well balanced, spiritual diet. This can be obtained only by a thorough study of all the Word of God—the sixty-six books constituting His Scriptures.

In verse 14 we are told that God upholds those who fall and raises up those that are bowed down. This is something that God does for His people, who are trusting Him. He never fails. Let us always look to Him when we are cast down and when we are standing—when things are adverse, or when they are favorable to us. All people live, move, and have their being in God. When they think soberly, they look to God to give them their daily food. Men can plant, water, and cultivate, but it is God who gives the increase. Thus we are told in verse 15 that the eyes of all wait for God who gives food in the right season. Men, planting and cultivating crops, are simply cooperating with God in His giving us our daily bread.

The Lord is thought of, in verse 16, as having a large hand in which He is holding the food and the sustenance of all of His creatures, of man and of beast. He hands it out to us. He clothes the lily of the field with beauty; He feeds the sparrows; and He provides all necessary things for all mankind.

In dispensing His good things to us, He is righteous and is also gracious in all of His works. He extends grace to us all. If it were not for that fact, He would have to deal very drastically with us.

That He is nigh to all that call upon Him, to those who call upon Him in truth is stated in verse 18. His ears are always open, His eyes are always observing; He invites us to come at all times. He is near and will hear the least whisper that comes forth from honest hearts. He is more eager to bestow His blessings upon us than we are to receive them.

That He will fulfill the desire of them that worship Him, hear their cry, and save them is affirmed in verse 19. Everyone who knows God through a personal acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior realizes that this statement is true. Moreover, He preserves all those who love Him. He has a plan and a purpose for them, in their everyday life. It is for each of us to fit in with His plan and purpose and be used of God in the fullest way possible.

But the wicked He will destroy. There is coming a time, the great Tribulation Period, when all the wicked will be destroyed out of the earth. He does destroy the wicked when the proper time arrives even during this present dispensation.

The psalmist concludes his hymn by affirming that he will praise God at all times and adds, "And let all flesh bless his holy name for ever and ever." Every regenerated, redeemed heart is eager for men and women to praise God and render the adoration due His holy name.