

Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs: The Master Musician's Melodies

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Psalm 75 — God Will Judge

1.0 Introducing Psalm 75

- Psalms 50 and 73–83 attribute their composition to Asaph.
 - ✓ There could be more than one Asaph.
 - ✓ “Asaph” might sometimes refer to a descendant of Asaph (cp. 2 Chron 35:15).
- Psalm 75 shares themes and phraseology with “Hannah’s Song” (1 Samuel 2:1-10) and Mary’s “Magnificat” (Luke 1:46-55).
- Placement of Psalm 75 following 74 highlights common emphases:
 - ✓ The psalmist prays for God to act (74:22-23) and He does (75:7, 10).
 - ✓ God is King (74:12) and God is Judge (75:2, 7).
 - ✓ Question of “How long?” (74:10) will be answered at “an appointed time” (75:2).
 - ✓ Both “meeting places” (74:8) and “appointed time” (75:2) translate the same Hebrew word (74:8 is the plural).
 - ✓ “Your name” occurs in both psalms (74:7, 10, 18, 21; 75:1).

2.0 Reading Psalm 75 (NAU)

75:1 A Psalm of Asaph, a Song.

We give thanks to You, O God, we give thanks,
For Your name is near;
Men declare Your wondrous works.

75:2 “When I select an appointed time,
It is I who judge with equity.

75:3 “The earth and all who dwell in it melt;
It is I who have firmly set its pillars.

Selah.

- 75:4** “I said to the boastful, ‘Do not boast,’
And to the wicked, ‘Do not lift up the **horn**;
- 75:5** “Do not lift up your **horn** on high,
Do not speak with insolent pride.””
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- 75:6** For not from the east, nor from the west,
Nor from the desert *comes* exaltation;
- 75:7** But God is the Judge;
He puts down one and exalts another.
- 75:8** For a cup is in the hand of the LORD, and the wine foams;
It is well mixed, and He pours out of this;
Surely all the wicked of the earth must drain *and* drink down its dregs.
- 75:9** But as for me, I will declare *it* forever;
I will sing praises to the God of Jacob.
- 75:10** And all the **horns** of the wicked He will cut off,
But the **horns** of the righteous will be lifted up.
- For the choir director; on stringed instruments.

3.0 Understanding Psalm 75

3.1 Outline

- I.** Corporate Thanks: God Is Near (v. 1)
- II.** Divine Declaration: I Will Judge (vv. 2-5)
- III.** Corporate Confession: God Is Judge (vv. 6-8)
- IV.** Personal Commitment: God Is Just (vv. 9-10)



3.2 Notes

- **v. 1** “Your name is near”
 - “Name” refers to God Himself.
 - ✓ See references to the “name” of God in Psalms 74:7, 10, 18, 21 and 76:1.
 - God is near to the community of faith and also present to witness the deeds of the wicked. He is omnipresent.
- **vv. 2, 3** “It is I”
 - The personal pronoun (“I”) is emphatic in both statements.
 - God, and God alone, is the Judge of all the earth and in control of both the time and extent of His judgments.

- **v. 3** “firmly set its pillars”
 - By means of this metaphor, God speaks of His creation of the earth.
 - Since He had the power of create the earth, God certainly has the power to preserve and govern the earth.

- **v. 3** “Selah”
 - “Here may the music pause while the sublime vision passes before our view; a world dissolved and an immutable God uplifting all his people above the terrible commotion.” — C. H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David*, 3 vols. (reprint; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, n.d.), 2/1:294.
 - “Perhaps the *selah* was the point for a reading from the story of the exodus, or from 1 Samuel 2 (Hannah’s song).” — Michael Wilcock, *The Message of Psalms 73 – 150*, The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 18.

- **v. 4** “horn”
 - “Horn” in the Old Testament is a metaphor of strength and pride (Jeremiah 48:25; Micah 4:13; Zechariah 1:19, 21). Wild oxen toss their horns, lifting them high, when they are healthy and displaying their power or preparing to meet challenges or threats.
 - “Lift up/Exalt the horn” can refer to prosperity or victory (Psalm 148:14), but here it refers to arrogantly defying God.

- **v. 5** “insolent pride”
 - Literally, “with stiff (or, stretched out) neck.” The phrase here differs from the usual way the Hebrew speaks of the stiffened neck (cp. Deuteronomy 10:16; 2 Kings 17:14).
 - The picture is of an animal resisting bridling or yoking.

- **v. 6** “comes exaltation”
 - Homonyms: NAU’s translation represents one way to understand the Hebrew word, making it a verb. The same word can be taken as a noun meaning “mountains.”
 - Jewish rabbinic tradition states that this verse is the only time in the Hebrew Bible where this Hebrew word does not mean “mountains.”
 - On the one hand, “mountains” is a more fitting parallel to “wilderness” and sets up a reference to the south and to the north to match the preceding east and west.
 - On the other hand, “exaltation” leaves the north unspecified, but it is the direction from which enemies attacked Jerusalem throughout history (esp., the Assyrians and Babylonians).



- **v. 8** “a cup is in the hand of the LORD”
 - The imagery of a cup filled with a poisonous wine occurs in prophetic literature.

- Compare Isaiah 51:17, 21-22; Jeremiah 25:15-28; 49:12; 51:7; Ezekiel 23:31-34; Revelation 14:10; 16:19; 18:6.
- v. 10 “the horns of the righteous”
 - See 1 Samuel 2:1, 10; Psalm 89:17, 24; 92:10; 112:9.

4.0 Singing Psalm 75

To Thee, O God, We Render Thanks (Tune: “God, Our Help in Ages Past”)



To Thee, O God, we render thanks,
To Thee give thanks sincere,
Because Thy wondrous works declare
That Thou art ever near.

Thou teachest meekness to the proud,
And makest sinners know
That none is Judge but God alone,
To honor or bring low.

The God of Israel I will praise
And all His glory show;
The righteous He will high exalt
And bring the wicked low.

Thy righteous judgment, Thou hast said,
Shall in due time appear,
And Thou Who didst establish it
Wilt fill the earth with fear.

Jehovah holds a cup of wrath,
And holds it not in vain,
For all the wicked of the earth
Its bitter dregs shall drain.

— Author unknown

5.0 Praying Psalm 75

- Thank You, Lord, for always being near. [v. 1]
- Give me patience to wait for You to judge the wicked, Lord. [v. 2]
- Remove any pride or arrogance in my life, Father. [vv. 4-5]
- Oh God, help me to be faithful in praising You. [v. 9]
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6.0 Applying Psalm 75

- God’s intervention is and always will be timely and just.
- Instead of fretting over the wicked, we need to be more thankful for what God has already done for us.