

Psalm 75 and God's Character

Psalm 75

¹ Unto you, O God, do we give thanks, unto you do we give thanks: for that your name is near your wondrous works declare.

² When I shall receive the congregation I will judge uprightly.

³ The earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved: I bear up the pillars of it. Selah.

⁴ I said unto the fools, Deal not foolishly: and to the wicked, Lift not up the horn:

⁵ Lift not up your horn on high: speak not with a stiff neck.

⁶ For promotion comes neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south.

⁷ But God is the judge: he puts down one, and sets up another.

⁸ For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red; it is full of mixture; and he pours out of the same: but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out, and drink them.

⁹ But I will declare for ever; I will sing praises to the God of Jacob.

¹⁰ All the horns of the wicked also will I cut off; but the horns of the righteous shall be exalted.

A PROPER understanding of God's character sheds much light upon this Psalm. By "proper understanding" I mean the knowledge that God's character is revealed most clearly in His Son, Jesus Christ, who was...

Hebrews 7

²⁶ ...holy, harmless, and undefiled.

This character is fully in harmony with the principles of His Law. What God asks us to be, is what He himself is: non-violent, truthful, respectful of others. That is how Jesus was, and it is written of Him:

Psalm 40

⁸ I delight to do your will, O my God: yes, your law is within my heart.

If these ideas are new to you, I recommend reading the book: *Behold Your God*. Now let us proceed with the Psalm, laying down a few principles regarding the Law and God's character:

Psalm 11

⁷ For the righteous Lord loves righteousness...

The true God "loves righteousness."

Psalm 129

⁴ The Lord is righteous...

Not only does He *love* righteousness, but He *is* righteous. That is His nature, His character. The moral law of Ten Commandments was given to man as an expression of God's righteousness. And so it was testified of the parents of John the Baptist:

Luke 1

⁶ And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.

And the Lord appealed to His people through the prophet Isaiah:

Isaiah 51

⁷ Hearken unto me, you that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law.

Therefore, in interpreting this Psalm, we will bear this thought in mind, that what the Ten Commandments express, is nothing more or less than the righteousness of God, how He himself behaves towards His creatures. Let us now look at verse 1:

Psalm 75

¹ Unto you, O God, do we give thanks, unto you do we give thanks: for that your name is near your wondrous works declare.

God's "name" is simply an expression of His character. So, in the Bible, names are given to represent character, or when there is a change of character, a change of name often follows:

Genesis 32

²⁸ ...Your name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince you have power with God and with men, and have prevailed.

God's name, or character, is revealed in His "wondrous works", and when His children understand those works, and how His character is revealed in them, they pour forth thanks. The greatest revelation of God's character took place at the cross of Christ, where the Son of God gave His life for His enemies. This was a revelation of the Father's love also, for it was He who gave the Son, and stood by and allowed it to happen, because He knew it would result in freedom and another chance for the human race.

When the early church finally grasped what the cross was all about, they poured forth praise and thanks to the Father and Son for their unspeakable gift.

Psalm 75

² When I shall receive the congregation I will judge uprightly.

The focus now shifts from the thanks of the people who understand His works, to a series of incidents by which those wondrous works are seen. The first incident is the reception of the congregation. Jesus applied this to himself in the following parable:

Luke 19

¹² ...A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.

Jesus is the one who has gone into "a far country" even heaven, in order to establish a holy people on this earth, whom He will receive when He returns.

John 14

¹ Let not your heart be troubled: you believe in God, believe also in me.

² In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

This return of Jesus to receive the congregation takes place after the judgment of the "great whore" (false church) who corrupts the whole earth, and makes all nations suffer the awful judgments of the seven last plagues:

Revelation 19

¹ And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God:

² For true and righteous are his judgments: for he has judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and has avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.

³ And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.

⁴ And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshiped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia.

⁵ And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all you his servants, and you that fear him, both small and great.

⁶ And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigns.

⁷ Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife has made herself ready.

⁸ And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

⁹ And he said unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he said unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

Notice the repetition of “Alleluia” in verses 1 and 3. It corresponds to the twice giving of thanks from verse 1 of the *Psalms* 75, “Unto you, O God, do we give thanks, unto you do we give thanks...” These expressions do not in any way indicate a spirit of revenge in the earthly and heavenly saints who behold the destruction of the “great whore.” Instead, they see how God has won the war by letting sin have its own reward, and by sustaining His servants on earth to remain faithful through the intense pressure and persecution put upon them.

God’s glorious character is revealed in two ways: by the grace and beauty He puts in His people, and by the expression of evil that comes from those who refuse Him, but pretend that they

have a better way. When the pretense fails, it also demonstrates that God’s way is not just the only way, but it is the best way.

At this time on earth, the inhabitants will be involved in a huge conflict and trouble. The nature of some of the seven last plagues which occur at that time reveal that the powers of nature will be out of control: “scorching men with heat” “waters turned to blood” “everything in the sea died.”

On top of that, there will be a terrible bloodbath. The kingdoms of the world, who supported the “whore” (false church) and helped her persecute and put God’s servants to death, now suddenly turn upon the “whore” and...

Revelation 17

¹⁶ ...burn her with fire, and eat her flesh.

Since the whole world is involved in the worship of the whore, the whole world will be involved in this terrible bloodbath.

The few who survive this conflict and are alive to witness Christ return for His chosen people, run into the caves and ask for the mountains to fall on them.¹ This situation is well described in the next verse of the Psalm:

Psalm 75

³ The earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved: I bear up the pillars of it. Selah.

This verse also makes it clear that the final purification of the earth by fire does not take place just yet, for God “bears up the pillars of it.”

Next follows the warning message that is given to the rulers and people of the world, prior to this awful scene of destruction:

⁴ I said unto the fools, Deal not foolishly: and to the wicked, Lift not up the horn:

⁵ Lift not up your horn on high: speak not with a stiff neck.

⁶ For promotion comes neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south.

⁷ But God is the judge: he puts down one, and sets up another.

¹ Revelation 6:15-17.

This is synonymous with the warnings given to the whole world in *Revelation* 14: 6-12, and *Revelation* 18:1-4. In those verses, the command is given to worship God who created all things, for the hour of His judgment is come. Here in the Psalm, the thought is put into other words,

“Don’t be proud, it is God who lifts up and puts down the powers on earth, He is the judge.”

But how does He lift up and put down? The next verse of the Psalm explains how:

Psalm 75

⁸ For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red; it is full of mixture; and he pours out of the same: but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out, and drink them.

This cup represents the consequences of sin. In order to give men a chance to understand their fallen condition and be saved from it, Christ takes upon himself the consequences of sin. He bore those on the cross, and in the temptation in the wilderness. Like Aaron of old who waved the incense through the congregation to stop the effect of the fiery serpents, he “stands between the living and the dead.”

Man is given a chance to learn, without the consequences of his sins being immediately visited. But these consequences accumulate, and if man fails to learn, eventually the control that the Savior was imposing is taken away, and man receives the consequences of his own evil deeds. He reaped a wind and sowed a whirlwind.²

The wine in the cup is “red” because it is alcoholic wine; no longer the healthy purple juice of the fresh grape, it has become fouled by the working of the leaven of sin.

It is “full of mixture.” The most deceptive sins are a mixture of good and evil. Evil is done “for the sake of good,” or evil deeds are covered by “good motives.” Men suppose that God works the

² *Hosea* 8:7.

same way, that He sometimes breaks the principles of His law for “righteous” reasons. In this they err, not understanding His character in His dealings with faulty humans.

By false religious teaching, the people, and the rulers, are misled, and think that they are “doing God a service” by persecuting those faithful ones who raise a warning against the corruptions in the world and in the churches. But they are wrong. They do not understand that God’s standard never changes, but He sometimes adapts His counsels to meet weak and faithless men.

In the various wars and killings recorded in the Old Testament, it was the people who picked up the sword, and God told them how to use it in a way that the judgments, which were already hanging over the heads of the wicked inhabitants of Canaan (and would have come by natural methods), was meted out by their sword. But He never equipped them with the sword when they left Egypt, nor did Moses, His representative, ever use the sword (except once in Egypt, for which he was corrected, and learned the way of faith).

In this way, God sometimes works with men, who do not have perfect faith or a perfect understanding of His ways. He allows them to use means that are not entirely just, but instructs them how to use them in as just a manner as possible. But when God has a pure agent to work through, as He had in Christ, law-breaking of any kind is never used as a means to establish righteousness. The “end” is never justified by the “means used” in the kingdom of God.

When Abraham tried to make the promised son by combining with his wife’s servant, it was not accepted by God. When Moses tried to use the sword to deliver Israel from Egypt, it failed. When Solomon tried to extend the kingdom by marriages with heathen princesses, it led to ruin. When the leaders in the church in Jerusalem counseled Paul to offer sacrifices in the temple, and thereby give a false appearance, it led to Paul’s imprisonment and death.

These and many other examples in the Bible teach the clear lesson that “only by righteousness (law-keeping) is righteousness established.”

Romans 13

¹⁰ Love works no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

Therefore, it is only by non-violent action that righteousness is established. Gandhi was right: non-violence (love) is the way of God, and the way of life. And this is the way Christ overcame his enemies while He was on earth, and it is the only way He fights through His people on earth today.

Psalm 75

⁹ But I will declare for ever; I will sing praises to the God of Jacob.

When it is finally seen that destruction is not a direct act of God, but that each person reaps what he himself planted: the wicked reap wickedness, and the righteous reap righteousness, then God’s character, in the great battle over sin and righteousness, will be clear. That character will be declared “for ever” because it is the only way of life. It will be declared “for ever” because for six thousand years it had been obscured and misshapen by the author of evil, until men were transformed into that same evil image of the first great rebel.

He is the “God of Jacob” because he takes men who mistakenly do evil in the name of good, like Jacob did when he extorted the birthright from Esau, and when he lied to his father to receive the blessing. He takes those kind of men, and by the revelation of His beautiful, consistent, and perfect character and ways, transforms them into His own image.

¹⁰ All the horns of the wicked also will I cut off...

“Horns” represent “kings”, or powers. In *Revelation*, the “ten horns” give their power to the final “beast” power.³ It is a world-

³ *Revelation* 17:13.

wide union, for the whole world “wonders after the beast,” and they make war with the Lamb and His followers:

Revelation 17

¹² And the ten horns...

¹³ ...have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.

¹⁴ These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.

But how does he “cut off” the horns of the wicked? Initially the ten horns give their power to the beast, and therefore to the “woman” who rides upon the beast, and cooperate with the plan to kill all those who will not “worship the beast or his image”. But at some point this plan backfires (a discussion of how their plan breaks down is left for a future article). And so they turn on each other:

Proverbs 28

¹⁰ Whoso causes the righteous to go astray in an evil way, he shall fall himself into his own pit: but the upright shall have good things in possession.

Haggai 2

²² And I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen; and I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them; and the horses and their riders shall come down, *every one by the sword of his brother.*

Revelation 17

¹⁶ And the ten horns which you saw upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.

And now the last part of the Psalm:

Psalms 75

¹⁰ ...but the horns of the righteous shall be exalted.

It is righteousness, and right-doing, that will prepare a man to rule in this world, which will eventually be the seat of the new and eternal kingdom of Jesus Christ.

Men think they are getting ahead, and building a great kingdom by bringing in shortcuts: elements of dishonesty, lying, stealing, and appealing to men's lusts, in order to build their kingdoms. But every one of these elements acts as a corrupting influence, and ends up weakening the structure. It's development is like yeasted bread, which rises quicker and quicker, higher and higher, and then suddenly collapses on itself.

The only eternal principles of permanent kingdom-building are found in the righteousness of God, as expressed in His commandments, and revealed in full display in the lovely and obedient life of Jesus Christ, Son of man, and Son of God.