

## Psalm 75

To the chief Musician, Altaschith, A Psalm [or] Song of Asaph.

Psalm 75: The message of the psalm is summarized (in verse 7): “God is the judge”. Consequently, the psalm may be outlined as follows: thanksgiving for God’s presence and work (verse 1), promise of God’s judgment (verses 2-5), explanation of God’s judgment (verses 6-8), and confidence in God’s judgment (verses 9-10).

Verses 1-10: In this psalm, the believing community asserts that, in spite of physical, moral, and societal turmoil, God never loses control of the universe. He gives stability to earthly life, and He will judge the wicked at the appropriate time. Structurally, the psalm revolves around 3 metaphors: pillars of the earth (verse 3); horns (verses 5-6, 11); and God’s cup of wrath (verse 8).

- I. Divine Stability of the Universe (75:1-3).
- II. Divine Justice over the World (75:4-10).

Title: “Altaschith” (see note on Psalm 57: Title).

Verses 1-5: We often pray for mercy, when in pursuit of it; and shall we only once or twice give thanks, when we obtain it? God shows that he is nigh to us in what we call upon him for. Public trusts are to be managed uprightly. This may well be applied to Christ and his government. Man's sin threatened to destroy the whole creation; but Christ saved the world from utter ruin. He who is made of God, to us gives wisdom and bids us to be wise. To the proud, daring sinners he says, boast not of your power, persist not in contempt. All the present hopes and future happiness of the human race spring from the Son of God.

**Psalm 75:1 "Unto thee, O God, do we give thanks, [unto thee] do we give thanks: for [that] thy name is near thy wondrous works declare."**

“Thy name is near”: God’s name represents His presence. The history of God’s supernatural interventions on behalf of His people demonstrated that God was personally immanent. But Old Testament saints did not have the fullness from permanent, personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit (compare John 14:1, 16-17; 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19).

This begins with praise, which is good for us to do as well. The repeating of the giving thanks could mean, in the morning and in the evening, we give thanks. One of the most beautiful statements in the letters to the churches in Revelation, is because the Light of the world is in each church. As I have said over and over, God never leaves His people. Praise God, from whom all blessings flow. It is so easy when our crisis is over to forget who brought us out of the crisis. When is the proper time to praise Him? All the time.

**Psalm 75:2 "When I shall receive the congregation I will judge uprightly."**

To wit, the whole congregation, or body of thy people. Meaning all the tribes; which are now distracted and disordered by a civil war, which is a great hindrance to the administration of justice. Or, when I shall receive or obtain the appointment of what God hath appointed and promised to me, the full and firm possession of the kingdom. Or, the time or place appointed by God for that work. Some make these and the following passages the words of God concerning his church or people. Which seems not probable; partly because he speaks of God in the third person, as one distinct from him that speaks these words (Psalm 75:7-8). And partly because it is evident that one and the same person speaks from hence to the end of the Psalm, and the ninth verse cannot be spoken by God.

"I will judge uprightly": I will not use my power tyrannically and wickedly, as Saul did, and as most other princes do. But holily and righteously, for the good of my people.

This I believe is saying when the believers stand before the throne of God, He will judge uprightly. We need not expect to be judged harshly, but righteously. The following is a promise Jesus made to all of His congregation.

John 14:3 "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, [there] ye may be also."

Notice, in the next few verses, that the Lord blows the trumpet and calls us to that new home in heaven, if we are His children.

1 Thessalonians 4:14-17 "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive [and] remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep." "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:" "Then we which are alive [and] remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

**Psalm 75:3 "The earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved: I bear up the pillars of it. Selah."**

Here are the answers to the questions posed in Psalm 74; the Lord is in control, even when it seems that everything is falling to pieces. God is the great Judge-Ruler who will not permit wickedness, evil powers, or the arrogant to undermine the foundations of His kingdom.

"The earth and all inhabitants thereof are dissolved" is a metaphor for the adverse effects of evil. The Lord graciously upholds His creation, with "pillars" shoring up the moral order.

"I bear up the pillars of it": In uncertain times, God stabilizes societies through His common grace.

All of this, in my opinion, is speaking of that great and terrible day of the Lord. Notice in the verse above, that the Lord took care of His own first and then the terrible wrath of God descends upon the earth. To dissolve is to do away with. We are told in another Scripture, that the earth

will melt with fervent heat. The Lord is the only thing that is holding up “the pillars” of the earth today.

**Psalm 75:4 "I said unto the fools, Deal not foolishly: and to the wicked, Lift not up the horn:"**

“Lift not up the horn”: The horn symbolized an animal’s or human’s strength and majesty (compare Deut. 33:17; Amos 6:13; Zech. 1:18-21). Lifting up the horn apparently described a stubborn animal who kept itself from entering a yoke by holding its head up as high as possible. The phrase thus symbolized insolence or rebellion.

A fool is someone who does not regard God. God put a conscience within each of us. We should regard that conscience and deal accordingly. The only real power (horn), is the power that comes from God. The richest most powerful man upon the earth, will stand before God with empty hands. All of that power and prestige they thought they had, will be left behind here on the earth. When you deal foolishly you are dealing as if there is no tomorrow. Shame on those who would be so foolish.

**Psalm 75:5 "Lift not up your horn on high: speak [not with] a stiff neck."**

In a proud, self-confident, arrogant manner.

"Speak not with a stiff neck": With arrogance and pride; in a haughty, imperious manner. The word rendered "stiff" (literally "a neck of stiffness"), means properly bold, impudent, wicked. And the idea is that of speaking as those do who are impudent, shameless, bold, licentious. Indicating confidence in themselves, and a reckless disregard of truth and of the rights of others. The Septuagint and the Vulgate render it, "And speak not unrighteousness against God."

Nebuchadnezzar found out the hard way, when he was bragging that he had built the kingdom by his power and for the honor of his majesty, that he had nothing to do with it. While the words were still in his mouth, there fell a voice from heaven saying: O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee. The same hour was the thing fulfilled. Read this in the 4<sup>th</sup> chapter of Daniel. To be stiff-necked is to be full of pride. Pride goes before a fall. To be brazen and proud before man is bad enough, but to try to be proud and arrogant with God is the act of a fool. God is saying here, put your horn down, the only power you have is that I gave you.

Verses 6-10: No second causes will raise men to a higher position without the First Cause. It comes neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. He mentions not the north; the same word that signifies the north, signifies the secret place; and from the secret of God's counsel it does come. From God alone all must receive their doom. There are mixtures of mercy and grace in the cup of affliction, and mixtures of the curse, when it is put into the hands of the wicked. God's people have their share in common calamities, but the dregs of the cup are for the wicked. The exaltation of the Son of David will be the subject of the saints' everlasting praises. Then let sinners submit to the King of righteousness, and let believers rejoice in and obey him.

**Psalm 75:6 "For promotion [cometh] neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south."**

There is a God, and a providence, and things happen not by chance. Though deliverance be hopeless from all points of the compass, yet God can work it for his people. And though judgment come neither from the rising or the setting of the sun, nor from the wilderness of mountains, yet come it will, for the Lord reigns. Men forget that all things are ordained in heaven. They see but the human force, and the carnal passion, but the unseen Lord is more real far more than these. He is at work behind and within the cloud. The foolish dream that he is not, but he is near even now, and on the way to bring in his hand that cup of spiced wine of vengeance. One draught of which shall stagger all his foes.

**Psalm 75:7 "But God [is] the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another."**

All depends on him, not on the natural advantages of a country. Not on human strength, human skill, or human prowess. Whatever may be the natural resources of a country; whatever may be the enterprise, the numbers, or the valor of its inhabitants. Whatever alliances of peace or war they may form with other nations, yet success depends on God. He presides over all; he can give success when it is least expected. And he also can humble people when they have made the amplest preparations for success, and anticipate it in the most confident manner.

"He putteth down one, and setteth up another": Literally, "This one he humbles, and this he exalts." This is true alike of an individual or a nation. The word rendered "setteth up" is the same which is used in (Psalm 75:4-6), rendered "Lift up," and "promotion." The idea is, that in the matter of "lifting up," or "promotion," all depends on God. He is a sovereign, and he confers exaltation, whether of an individual or a nation, as he pleases.

There would not even be an east or a west, had not God ordained it. Those who believe that their success comes from themselves, have an awful lot to learn. We have absolutely nothing to do with the nationality we are. We have nothing to do with the family we are born into. We have absolutely nothing to do about the sun coming up in the morning or a flood coming. All of these things are out of our hands. All of these things are controlled by God. It is even God's decision whether you will take your next breath or not. Haughty mankind, bow before your maker who ordains all things. Even kings are kings, because God had it done. The wise will be thankful. Kingdoms rise and fall because the Lord tells them to. We know by the prophecies in the Bible that God not only knows the future, but actually sets up whoever he wants to as ruler. God is in total control of his creation.

**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 poureth out of the same: but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring [them] out, [and] drink [them]."**

"Cup": The cup of wrath describes God's judgment which He forces down the throats of the wicked (compare Job 21:20; Isa. 51:17; Jer. 25:15-29; Matt. 20:22; 26:39).

The wrath of God is pictured as a full cup of wine in several places in Scripture (60:3; Job 21:20; Isa. 63:6; Jer. 25:15; Rev. 14:10; 16:19). The wicked are forced to drink God's wrath once He no longer waits for people to repent.

The cup in the hand of the LORD is full of the wrath of God. It is red with blood. God is standing waiting until just the right moment to pour this wrath upon the evil inhabitants of the earth. All of the plagues and woes are mixed up together in the cup. When He begins to pour them out, He will not stop until He has wrung the last drop out. Want to or not, the inhabitants of the earth will have to accept them (drink them).

**Psalm 75:9 "But I will declare for ever; I will sing praises to the God of Jacob."**

I, the author of the psalm. I will make known at all times the character of God, and will declare the truth respecting his works and ways. The particular mode as referred to here, was praise.

"I will sing praises to the God of Jacob": The God whom Jacob worshipped. The God who proved himself to be his Friend, thus showing that he is the Friend of all that trust in him (see notes at Psalm 24:6).

This has jumped back from God speaking to man speaking. He is determined to praise God as long as he lives.

**Psalm 75:10 "All the horns of the wicked also will I cut off; [but] the horns of the righteous shall be exalted."**

"Horns ... cut off": To cut off the horns of the wicked would be to humble them (compare verse 4).

This is speaking of the power being taken away from the wicked and being given to the righteous. As we have said over and over, horns denote power. God will cut off the power of the wicked. It is God who elevates the righteous. This is possibly speaking of the time when Jesus will set up his kingdom on this earth, and the Christians will rule with Him as His subordinates. When society has arrived at where God intended for it to be, the righteous shall rule with Jesus.

Revelation 5:9-10 "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;" "And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth."

## **Psalm 75 Questions**

1. What does the repeating of the giving thanks in verse 1, possibly mean?
2. What is one beautiful thing in the letters to all the churches in Revelation?
3. When is the proper time to praise God?
4. When does the author believe is the time setting for verse 2?

5. Where do we find the Scriptures that tell of the Lord blowing the trumpet and coming to get the Christians?
6. What is meant by the earth dissolving?
7. When does the wrath come to the earth?
8. What is holding up the pillars of the earth today?
9. Who is a fool?
10. What does the horn symbolize?
11. When you deal foolishly, you are dealing as if there is no \_\_\_\_\_.
12. Who was the foolish ruler that thought it was by His power he had built the kingdom?
13. When did the voice from heaven speak?
14. What did the voice say to Him?
15. To be stiff-necked is to be \_\_\_\_\_.
16. Where does promotion come from?
17. Name some of the things in our life that we have nothing to do with.
18. The cup in the hand of the Lord is full of the \_\_\_\_\_.
19. When will He pour it out?
20. Who will He pour it on?
21. What is meant by them drinking it?
22. In verse 10, the power is taken away from the \_\_\_\_\_ and given to the \_\_\_\_\_.