

Psalm 33

Introduction

1. Classified as a psalm of praise
2. As is often the case, this psalm references God's creation (which is done by at least 31 other psalms)
3. Author is unknown

A. Structure and Poetic Elements

1. Structure:
 - a. Introductory call to Praise the LORD (1-5)
 - 1) Five imperatives to praise (1-3)
 - 2) Two reasons for praise: the certainty of the LORD's plan and purpose, and the LORD's faithfulness to His people (4-5)
 - b. The LORD is worthy of praise for the certainty of His plan and purpose (6-12)
 - c. The LORD is worthy of praise for His faithfulness to His people (13-19)
 - d. Concluding declaration of trust and petition to the LORD (20-22)
2. Poetic Elements:
 - a. Word Repetition (tons):
 - 1) **"Sing"** (1, 2b, 3)
 - 2) **"counsel"**, **"plans"** (10-11): used in a chiasmic structure in irony
 - 3) **"looks"** (13, 14a)
 - 4) **"deliver"** (16b, 17b, 19)
 - 5) Others: word, works, heart, soul
 - b. Metaphor: **"He is our help and our shield"** (20)
 - c. Personification:
 - 1) **"our soul waits for the LORD"** (20)
 - 2) **"our heart rejoices in Him"** (21)
 - d. Anthropomorphism:
 - 1) **"by the breath of His mouth"** (6)
 - 2) **"the eye of the LORD"** (18)
 - e. Word Pictures:
 - 1) All the inhabitants of the earth standing in awe of the LORD (8)
 - 2) The LORD gathering up the waters of the sea and laying them up in storehouses (7)
 - 3) The LORD looking from heaven (13-14)
 - 4) The LORD fashioning men's hearts (15)
 - f. Metonymy (change of a word naming an object for another word closely associated with it):
 - 1) **"word of the LORD...breath of his mouth"** (6; both refer to His command/speech)
 - 2) **"horse"** (17; refers to chariots)

- 3) “eye” (18; refers to the LORD’s knowledge or awareness)

B. Teaching

1. Call to praise the LORD (1-5):
 - a. The author uses five phrases (all commands) to call his audience to praise the LORD through corporate song (1-3):
 - 1) Our praise should be a byproduct of the joy we have in the LORD: “**Sing for joy in the LORD,**”—I want us to notice a few things about this phrase:
 - a) First, notice that this is aimed specifically at God’s people: “**O you righteous ones;**”
 - b) Second, notice that we are to praise the LORD because it is fitting (or appropriate) for us to do so: “**Praise is becoming to the upright.**”—in other words, praise is something one should expect from the people of God (e.g. the upright)
 - 2) Our praise should be built upon thanksgiving: “**Give thanks to the LORD with the lyre**” (2a)
 - 3) Our praise should not only be about Him, but directed to Him: “**Sing praises to Him with a harp of ten strings**” (2b)
 - 4) Our praise should be fresh, never stale: “**Sing to Him a new song;**” (3):
 - 5) Our praise should be done well: “**Play skillfully with a shout of joy**” (3b):
 - a) The word “**skillfully**” generally refers to that which is good, well or pleasing
 - b) The emphasis here appears to be upon playing well and will joy
 - c) While some interpret this as doing worship with excellence and perfection, it is likely better to understand it as doing it well and with the intent to please the LORD (rather than man)
 - b. The author provides two reasons to praise the LORD: (4-5):
 - 1) The first reason is the certainty of His plan and purpose (4): “**For the word of the LORD is upright and all His work is done in faithfulness.**”
 - a) The word of the LORD here is a synonym for all the work of God (as evidenced by the parallelism), and therefore ultimately His plan and purpose for His creation
 - b) The author writes that this is “**upright**” and done in “**faithfulness**” (lit. firmness, steadfastness) meaning that God’s plan will not be thwarted
 - c) This will be expounded upon in verses 6-11
 - 2) The second reason is the LORD’s faithfulness to His people (5): “**He loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of the lovingkindness of the LORD.**”
 - a) We’ve mentioned before that lovingkindness should generally be understood as God’s faithfulness or loyalty (e.g. covenant loyalty)
 - b) The way this verse is structured in the Hebrew implies that the reason the earth is full of God’s faithfulness is because He loves righteousness and justice—it is those two attributes that drive His faithfulness to His people
 - c) This will be expounded upon in verses 13-19
2. The LORD is worthy of praise for the certainty of His plan and purpose (6-12):
 - a. God has a plan and purpose for His creation which began in Genesis 1:1 with the creation of everything and ends in Revelation 22:21 with redemption and restoration—and this plan will not be thwarted because God is sovereign

- b. His sovereignty is displayed throughout creation (READ 6-9):
 - 1) Four times in these four verses it describes God simply speaking to bring everything into existence:
 - a) **“by the Word of the LORD”** (6a)
 - b) **“by the breath of His mouth”** (6b)
 - c) **“He spoke and it was done”** (9a)
 - d) **“He commanded and it stood fast”** (9b)
 - 2) The author describes God’s ongoing control over Creation by describing His power over the seas (7)
 - 3) All of this should be enough to cause all the inhabitants of the earth to **“fear”** and **“stand in awe”** of Him
 - c. His sovereignty is also displayed throughout history (READ 10-12):
 - 1) Notice the repetition of the words **“counsel”** and **“plans”** and how the author arranges them in an ironic twist
 - 2) The LORD **“nullifies”** and **“frustrates”** the counsel and plans of the nations of the world while His counsel and plans **“stand forever”** from **“generation to generation”**
 - 3) The evidence of God’s complete control over history to accomplish His purpose and plan is overwhelming:
 - a) We see this in the Bible as time and time again God’s plan and purpose is accomplished regardless of any and all opposing forces (be it Satan, man’s sin, rebellion, etc.)
 - b) We also see it in history itself and prophecy after prophecy has been fulfilled
 - c) We see God’s miraculous work in our own lives as He works all things according to His plan
 - d. Ultimately, God’s sovereignty assures that He will bless His people (12): **“Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, the people whom He has chosen for His own inheritance.”**—this certainly is something to praise Him for!
3. The LORD is worthy of praise for His faithfulness to His people (13-19):
- a. There are three principles seen in these seven verses:
 - 1) The first is that the LORD intimately knows every man (READ 13-15):
 - a) He **“looks”** and **“sees”**
 - b) He **“understands all their works”** because He is the one who created them (e.g. heart refers to the inner man)
 - 2) The second is that man cannot save himself (READ 16-17):
 - a) Kings and warriors cannot save themselves by their own might or powerful armies
 - b) Even Powerful weapons—like chariots—provide false hope because they cannot ensure victory
 - 3) This third is that the LORD saves those who place their hope and trust in Him (READ 18-19):
 - a) The eye of the LORD here refers to God’s awareness and protection (in the same way we might use the idiom **“to watch over something”**), and it is ultimately an expression of His faithfulness/loyalty

- b) This faithfulness only comes to those who “fear” the LORD and place their hope in His “lovingkindness”
 - c) Is this not the essence of the Gospel?
 - Paul wrote in Romans 8:24-25: “**For in hope we have been saved...**”
 - In 1 Timothy 4:10 he states that “**we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers.**”
 - In Colossians 1:27 we see that Jesus living “in” us is our “**hope of [eternal glory]**”
 - The Gospel is all about hope—hope in the faithfulness of God to save us from our sins because of what Jesus did on the cross
- b. So, not only is the LORD worthy to be praised for the certainty that He will accomplish His purpose and plan, but for His faithfulness to His people
4. Conclusion: declaration of trust and petition to the LORD (20-22):
- a. The congregation expresses their hope and trust in the LORD (20-21): “**Our soul waits for the LORD; He is our help and our shield. 21 For our heart rejoices in Him, Because we trust in His holy name.**”
 - 1) What we see here is a declaration of acceptance to the theological truths we just looked at above
 - 2) “**Our soul waits**” is another way of describing hope and trust
 - 3) They hope and trust in the LORD because they recognize that He is their “**help and shield**”
 - 4) Likewise, they “**rejoice**” because they can “**trust in His holy name.**”
 - b. The psalmist petitions the LORD for continued faithfulness (22): “**Let Your lovingkindness, O LORD, be upon us, according as we have hoped in You.**”
 - 1) This too, like the above, is a recognition of the theological truths discussed above
 - 2) They can rightly expect the LORD’s faithfulness because they have hoped in Him