

January 26, 2025

“The Lord is Righteous”
Lesson 4

Psalms 145:1, 10-21

Intro

Psalms 145 is an acrostic, meaning each line begins with successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet, which has 22 letters. But this psalm only has 21 verses. It appears that a line is missing right after vs. 13, which will be addressed in the comments below. Psalm 145 is a reminder of how great God is, which calls us to remember our own smallness in comparison. This allows us to put our lives in a proper context.

Psalm 145:1, 10-21

1. vs. 1: The psalm begins, as many psalms do, with praise to God
 - He is called “my God the King” and the writer states his intention to praise Him forever
 - God’s actions can be categorized in three groups: He creates, rules, and redeems
 - The writer acknowledges the second group in called God his King
 - He is leading us to consider God’s character as good and powerful because He is the King

2. vs. 10: The phrase “All your works” goes beyond what God does for Israel
 - This now includes all things done for all people, and in the inanimate world also
 - God’s “faithful people” are those who live in solidarity with both God and other people
 - They see their responsibility to owe others respect, care, and concern
 - These are shown by tangible actions toward others, not just in thoughts

3. vs. 11-12: These two verses use parallelism between them, rather than within one verse
 - “glory of your kingdom” vs 11 and “glorious splendor of your kingdom vs. 12
 - “your might” vs. 11 and “your mighty acts” vs. 12
 - Glory* is an attribute that belongs to God, so it also belongs to His kingdom
 - God’s kingdom is not the same as human political systems
 - It is of a different nature, and for a different purpose
 - One of the purposes of God’s kingdom is for His people to serve Him
 - God’s faithful people of vs. 11 “tell” and “speak” of God’s glory
 - The aim of this speaking is to make God and His kingdom known to all
 - One topic to speak of is “God’s mighty acts”, the things He has done
 - This includes all examples from the Bible, and personal examples as well

4. vs. 13: The writer understands that God’s kingdom extends through all time; it’s not limited by time
 - Because of that, God’s merciful concern for His creation also does not pass away
 - In the intro section, it was mentioned that a line appears to be missing right after vs. 13
 - The Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, includes that segment
 - It reads, “The Lord is faithful in his words, and holy in all his works.”

5. vs. 14: Parallelism is present here again.
 - “Upholds” is the same idea as “lifts up”
 - “Fall” and “bowed down” are also similar, but with an interesting twist

The word translated “bowed down” is found in only 4 places

Here, Ps.148:6, Ps. 58:5, and Micah 6:6

The word can mean being in great distress, or a posture of worship

In this verse, it seems to mean both

The thing which has greatly distressed a person leads to bowing before God

God upholds His people, those who come to Him in times of distress

6. vs. 15-16: These two verse use parallelism between them like vs. 11-12 earlier

This passage shows that “all”, “every living thing” depends on God for life

This is true, whether or not everyone acknowledges it

God graciously feeds all, “their food at the proper time”

This text is not a promise of wealth; spiritually mature people wouldn’t expect it

God gives us what we need

An open hand implies a gift being given

All we receive is a gift from God

These may go beyond basic sustenance to things that bring pleasure (the desires)

7. vs. 17: This verse is very similar to the “missing” verse discussed in vs. 13

“All his ways” and “all he does” are parallels

They reference the generosity and kindness of God shown in vs.15-16 just before

When the word “righteous” is used in Scripture, it usually refers to godly people

This is one of about 6 references to God in Scripture as righteous

It means that God acts rightly, with holiness and justice, in all He does

Humanity as a whole lacks in this area, but not God

8. vs. 18: This verse is a promise that God will always be near those who seek Him

This is not a nearness in the physical sense, but in the spiritual sense

Thought the Holy Spirit, God will always be near to those who “call on Him”

God keeps an ethical distance from those who choose to sin rather than call on Him

These are people God cannot be close to because they do not want/seek Him

God solved this “nearness” issue when Jesus died on the cross to pay the penalty for sin

This payment now allows humanity to be close to God, but only on God’s terms

9. vs. 19: The first half is not a blanket guarantee that God will give us everything we desire

The second half, the parallel, says that He “hears their cry and saves them”

The desire, then, is for God to help those who call on Him, who have trusted Him

The saving could be from either a physical or a spiritual danger, sometimes both together

We know that God does not always deliver from loss of life

But we also know that God’s salvation is spiritual even more than it’s physical

10. vs. 20: God “watches over all who love Him”

This suggests protection; God’s care for His people is never-ending

The original Hebrew for “all who love Him” is also translated “His friends”

That sounds like John 15:14, where Jesus says those who obey Him are His friends

In contrast, those who do not love God, who don’t obey Him, are called wicked

These will have a terrible fate, to be destroyed

These refuse to repent while deliberately disobeying God and causing harm to others

11. vs. 21: This psalm concludes, like many do, with a promise to praise God

The speaker pledges this, but also encourages all others, “every creature”, to also do it
Every creature would seem to include all of God’s creations, not just man

Application: Psalm 145 is a celebration of the permanent nature of God’s kingdom and His work in the lives of His people. It shows us God’s desires: that we be saved and rescued from all the things that cause sin in our lives, and saved from death itself in the life to come. God’s superior purpose for us calls for us to examine ourselves and change those parts of our lives that don’t conform to Him and His nature. That means we are to refine our values, redirect our affections, and reshape our behaviors. Our language is to be full of grace and mercy, as God’s language to us is full of grace and mercy. This psalm celebrates the compassion and beauty of God as it challenges us to pursue noble causes rather than short-term goals of pleasure or power.

Prayer: Father God, we praise You, even though our best praises fall short of adequately expressing how great You are. Help us become people of the truth, who speak of Your goodness and kindness to us. Help us show that same goodness and kindness to all. Please accept our words of praise and gratitude; they are the only things we can truly give you. In Jesus’ name, Amen.