

Psalms 103:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.

Analysis

David's self-exhortation to 'Bless the LORD' (Hebrew 'barak'—to kneel, praise) initiates this magnificent hymn of praise. The dual summons—to the soul (nephesh) and 'all that is within me'—calls the entire inner person to unified worship. Blessing God's 'holy name' means reverencing His revealed character and attributes. This internal dialogue demonstrates that worship requires intentional engagement of the whole person, not mere emotional spontaneity. The psalm continues by rehearsing God's benefits (verses 2-5), modeling gratitude as the foundation of praise, and anticipating the believer's role as image-bearer in worship (Revelation 5:13).

Historical Context

This Davidic psalm reflects mature meditation on God's covenant love (chesed), likely written during his later reign. The psalm's rehearsal of God's mercies parallels Israel's liturgical practice of recounting God's mighty acts in worship (Deuteronomy 26:5-10; Psalms 105-106).

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. Why might David need to command his own soul to bless the LORD? What does this reveal about worship?
2. How would your worship deepen if you consistently engaged your whole inner being—mind, will, and affections?

Interlinear Text

בְּרַכְּךָ יְיָ
Bless H1288
נַפְשִׁי
O my soul H5315
אֶת
H853
יְהוָה
the LORD H3068
וְכָל
H3605
קִרְבִּי
and all that is within H7130
אֶת
H853
שֵׁם
name H8034
קִדְשׁוֹ
me bless his holy H6944

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 111:1 (References Lord): Praise ye the LORD. I will praise the LORD with my whole heart, in the assembly of the upright, and in the congregation.

John 4:24 (Parallel theme): God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

1 Corinthians 14:15 (Parallel theme): What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.

Psalms 99:3 (Holy): Let them praise thy great and terrible name; for it is holy.

Colossians 3:16 (References Lord): Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

Psalms 63:5 (Parallel theme): My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips:

Psalms 47:7 (Parallel theme): For God is the King of all the earth: sing ye praises with understanding.

Philippians 1:9 (Parallel theme): And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment;

Psalms 138:1 (Parallel theme): I will praise thee with my whole heart: before the gods will I sing praise unto thee.

Isaiah 6:3 (Holy): And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.

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