

Psalms 105:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

O give thanks unto the LORD; call upon his name: make known his deeds among the people.

Analysis

O give thanks unto the LORD; call upon his name: make known his deeds among the people. This opening verse establishes three essential postures of covenant worship: gratitude, prayer, and proclamation. "Give thanks" translates the Hebrew *yadah* (יָדָה), meaning to praise, give thanks, or confess—acknowledging God's character and works with both heart and voice. The imperative form calls for active, intentional thanksgiving rather than passive feeling.

"Call upon his name" uses *qara* (קָרָא), meaning to call out, proclaim, or invoke. In Hebrew thought, a name represents the full character and nature of a person. To call upon Yahweh's name is to appeal to His covenant character, invoke His presence, and depend upon His revealed nature. This phrase encompasses prayer, worship, and covenant relationship.

"Make known his deeds among the people" employs *yada* (יָדָה, "make known") and *alilot* (אֱלִילֹת, "deeds" or "mighty works"). This is missional language—God's people must declare His redemptive acts to the nations. The psalm recounts Israel's history as testimony to God's faithfulness, inviting others to know the God who keeps covenant. This evangelistic imperative anticipates the Great Commission, where disciples make Christ known among all peoples (Matthew 28:19-20).

Historical Context

Psalm 105 is a historical psalm recounting God's faithfulness from Abraham through the exodus and conquest. According to 1 Chronicles 16:8-22, David appointed this psalm (or a portion of it) to be sung when the Ark of the Covenant was brought to Jerusalem, establishing regular worship. This context made thanksgiving and proclamation foundational to Israel's worship life.

The psalm served multiple purposes in Israel's worship: it taught covenant history to new generations, reinforced national identity as God's chosen people, provided content for corporate praise, and declared Yahweh's uniqueness among the nations. When sung at festivals like Passover or Tabernacles, it connected contemporary worshipers with their redemptive history.

For post-exilic Israel returning from Babylon, this call to 'make known His deeds among the people' took on fresh urgency. Having witnessed God's judgment and restoration, they were called to testify to the nations about Yahweh's covenant faithfulness. The psalm's rehearsal of God's past faithfulness strengthened hope that He would continue His redemptive work, ultimately fulfilled in sending the Messiah to all nations.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. Why does worship begin with thanksgiving rather than petition or praise?
2. What does it mean practically to 'call upon the name of the LORD' in daily life?
3. How does recounting God's past faithfulness strengthen present faith and obedience?

4. In what ways are believers today called to 'make known God's deeds among the people'?
5. How does this verse establish the connection between personal worship and public witness?

Interlinear Text

הוֹדוּ	לַ יְהוָה	קִרְאוּ	בְּשֵׁם י'	הוֹדוּ יְעוֹ
O give thanks	unto the LORD	call	upon his name	make known
H3034	H3068	H7121	H8034	H3045
בְּ עַמִּי ים	עֲלִילוֹתָיו:			
among the people	his deeds			
H5971	H5949			

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 12:4 (References Lord): And in that day shall ye say, Praise the LORD, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted.

Romans 10:13 (References Lord): For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Psalms 106:1 (References Lord): Praise ye the LORD. O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.

Acts 9:14 (Parallel theme): And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name.

Daniel 3:29 (Parallel theme): Therefore I make a decree, That every people, nation, and language, which speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill: because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort.

Psalms 96:3 (Parallel theme): Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people.

1 Chronicles 29:13 (Parallel theme): Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name.

1 Chronicles 16:34 (References Lord): O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever.

Isaiah 51:10 (Parallel theme): Art thou not it which hath dried the sea, the waters of the great deep; that hath made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over?

Psalms 99:6 (References Lord): Moses and Aaron among his priests, and Samuel among them that call upon his name; they called upon the LORD, and he answered them.

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