

Psalm 150:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Praise him for his mighty acts: praise him according to his excellent greatness.

Analysis

This verse begins the enumeration of instruments and reasons for praise: 'Praise him for his mighty acts: praise him according to his excellent greatness.' The command 'Praise him for his mighty acts' (be-gibrot-o) specifies the content of praise: God's powerful deeds and demonstrations of strength. This is not abstract praise but praise grounded in God's actions in history and creation. 'Praise him according to his excellent greatness' (ke-rov gudul-o) establishes the measure of praise: it should match the magnitude of God's greatness. The parallel structure emphasizes both God's demonstrable acts and His incomparable character. The verse establishes that praise should be informed by knowledge: we praise because of what God has done (mighty acts) and what God is (excellent greatness). This verse counters purely emotional worship - praise should correspond to understanding of God's actual character and works. The phrase 'according to his excellent greatness' suggests that our praise, however enthusiastic, will always be inadequate to the reality it attempts to express.

Historical Context

The emphasis on God's 'mighty acts' (gibborot, literally 'mighty deeds') connects to the narrative tradition of Israel's history: deliverance from Egypt, conquest, restoration from exile. These historical works of God provided the content of liturgical praise. The Psalms frequently recount these acts as grounds for worship (Psalm 77:11-12, 105:1-7). In the tradition of the Hallel Psalms (Psalms 113-118, sung at Passover and festivals), recounting God's mighty acts was integral to the

liturgy. The phrase 'according to his excellent greatness' implies that praise should be proportional - the more one understands God's character, the more enthusiastically one should praise. In medieval Jewish thought, philosophers attempted to balance rational understanding of God's greatness with emotional worship, using verses like this to argue that both intellectual and emotional dimensions of praise are necessary. The verse provides biblical support for worship that combines intellectual content (knowledge of God's mighty acts) with emotional expression (praise proportional to greatness).

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. What is the relationship between knowing God's mighty acts and offering authentic praise?
2. How does understanding God's 'excellent greatness' affect the character and quality of our praise?
3. Why should praise be 'according to' God's greatness rather than simply as much as we feel capable of offering?
4. In what ways does grounding praise in God's mighty acts prevent worship from becoming disconnected from reality?
5. How should contemporary believers identify and celebrate God's mighty acts as grounds for praise?

Interlinear Text

כָּרְבָּה	בְּגָבוּרָתְךָ יְהוָה	לְלִיל וְהַ	פָּraise	him for his mighty acts	לְלִיל וְהַ	פָּraise	him according to his excellent
			H1984	H1369	H1984	H7230	

:17ג

greatness

H1433

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 3:24 (Parallel theme): O Lord GOD, thou hast begun to shew thy servant thy greatness, and thy mighty hand: for what God is there in heaven or in earth, that can do according to thy works, and according to thy might?

Psalms 145:3 (Resurrection): Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable.

Psalms 96:4 (Resurrection): For the LORD is great, and greatly to be praised: he is to be feared above all gods.

Psalms 145:12 (Parallel theme): To make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom.

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org