

Psalms 71:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thy righteousness also, O God, is very high, who hast done great things: O God, who is like unto thee!

Analysis

Thy righteousness also, O God, is very high, who hast done great things: O God, who is like unto thee! After detailing God's faithfulness from youth to old age, David bursts into doxology. "Thy righteousness" (צדקה/tzidqatekha) encompasses God's just character, right actions, and covenant faithfulness. "Very high" (עד-מרום/ad-marom) literally means "unto the heights"—God's righteousness isn't merely good but transcendent, reaching to heaven itself, surpassing human measure.

"Who hast done great things" (אשר-עשית גדלות/asher-asita gedolot) grounds praise in divine action. God's righteousness isn't abstract theological concept but lived reality demonstrated through mighty deeds of deliverance. The "great things" (gedolot) include all God's redemptive acts—exodus, conquest, David's own deliverance from Saul, victories over enemies, and ongoing preservation throughout life.

"O God, who is like unto thee?" (אלhim mi kamokhah) is rhetorical question expecting answer "no one." It echoes Moses's song after the Red Sea crossing: "Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" (Exodus 15:11). God's incomparability stems from His unique combination of transcendent holiness and immanent faithfulness.

Historical Context

Incomparability questions—"Who is like God?"—appear throughout Scripture as rhetorical devices establishing monotheism and God's uniqueness (Exodus 15:11, Deuteronomy 3:24, 2 Samuel 7:22, Psalm 35:10, 71:19, 89:6-8, 113:5, Micah 7:18). Ancient Near East was polytheistic, with gods ranked by power. Israel's radical claim was that Yahweh wasn't merely supreme among gods but uniquely God— incomparable, without rival or equal.

David's reflection on God's "great things" throughout his life (verses 1-18) climaxes here in worship. From youth (verse 5) through maturity to old age and gray hairs (verse 18), God proved faithful. This longitudinal perspective—decades of experienced faithfulness—undergirds confident worship.

Christian theology applies this incomparability to Christ. Paul writes that God "highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name" (Philippians 2:9). Revelation depicts heavenly worship asking, "Who is like unto thee?" regarding the Lamb (Revelation 15:4, echoing Exodus 15:11).

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does reflecting on God's faithfulness throughout your life—youth to present—strengthen worship and confidence?
2. What "great things" has God done in your life that demonstrate His righteousness and faithfulness?
3. How does God's incomparability—"who is like unto thee?"—inform your response to competing truth claims and alternative spiritualities?

Interlinear Text

עֲשֵׂת יְתָהָר	אֵצֶד קְתָבָה	וְרֹם מִרְאֵת	אֵלֶּה יְמִינֵךְ	עַד	אֵלֶּה יְמִינֵךְ	אֵצֶד קְתָבָה
Thy righteousness	O God	H5704	is very high	H834	who hast done	
H6666	H430		H4791		H6213	

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 57:10 (Parallel theme): For thy mercy is great unto the heavens, and thy truth unto the clouds.

Psalms 35:10 (Parallel theme): All my bones shall say, LORD, who is like unto thee, which deliverest the poor from him that is too strong for him, yea, the poor and the needy from him that spoileth him?

Isaiah 55:9 (Parallel theme): For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Isaiah 40:18 (References God): To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him?

Isaiah 40:25 (Parallel theme): To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One.

Psalms 86:8 (References God): Among the gods there is none like unto thee, O Lord; neither are there any works like unto thy works.

Psalms 72:18 (References God): Blessed be the LORD God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things.

Job 5:9 (Parallel theme): Which doeth great things and unsearchable; marvellous things without number:

Jeremiah 10:7 (Parallel theme): Who would not fear thee, O King of nations? for to thee doth it appertain: forasmuch as among all the wise men of the nations, and in all their kingdoms, there is none like unto thee.

Exodus 15:11 (References God): Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods?
who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?

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