

Psalms 75:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Unto thee, O God, do we give thanks, unto thee do we give thanks: for that thy name is near thy wondrous works declare.

Analysis

Unto thee, O God, do we give thanks, unto thee do we give thanks: for that thy name is near thy wondrous works declare. This psalm of thanksgiving opens with emphatic repetition. The doubled "unto thee... do we give thanks" (hodinu... hodinu, הָדַיְנָה... הָדַיְנָה) intensifies the expression of gratitude. The Hebrew yadah (root of hodinu) means to praise, give thanks, confess—acknowledging God publicly for who He is and what He has done.

"For that thy name is near" (qarov shemekha, קָרוּב שֵׁמֶךְ) presents a theologically rich statement. God's "name" represents His revealed character, His reputation, His accessible presence. That His name is "near" (qarov) indicates availability, intimacy, readiness to act. In contrast to the complaint of Psalm 74 that God seemed distant, Psalm 75 celebrates His nearness.

"Thy wondrous works declare" (sipru nifle'otekha, סִפְרֹו נִפְלֹאָתֶיךָ) shows that God's mighty acts provide evidence of His nearness. Nifla'ot (wonders, marvelous deeds) refers to acts that inspire awe—works beyond human capability that reveal divine power. These works "declare" (saphar, to recount, tell) God's character. Creation, exodus, and providential deliverances all testify that God is not absent but actively present.

Historical Context

Psalm 75 is attributed to Asaph, suggesting origins in Israel's temple worship. The thanksgiving likely celebrates a specific divine deliverance, though the particular occasion is not specified. This ambiguity allowed the psalm to be used across various settings of divine intervention.

The "nearness" of God's name contrasted with pagan conceptions where deities were distant, requiring elaborate rituals to gain their attention. Israel's God was near—"what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the LORD our God is in all things that we call upon him for?" (Deuteronomy 4:7). Yet this nearness was not automatic; it depended on God's gracious self-revelation and the people's faithful response.

The alternation between congregational speech (verse 1), divine speech (verses 2-5), and prophetic declaration (verses 6-10) suggests liturgical use. Different voices or sections of the congregation may have recited different portions, creating responsive worship that reinforced communal faith.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. Why does the psalm repeat 'unto thee do we give thanks' twice?
2. What does it mean for God's 'name' to be 'near,' and how do believers experience this nearness today?
3. How do God's 'wondrous works' serve as evidence of His presence and character?
4. What specific wondrous works in your own experience give you cause for thanksgiving?

Interlinear Text

וְקָרְבָּן וְהַזְדִּינָה לְבָנָה יְמִינָה אֱלֹהִים
do we give thanks H3034 Unto thee O God H430 do we give thanks H3034 is near H7138

נְפָלָאֹתֶיךָ שְׁמַת בָּנָה כְּפָרָה
for that thy name H8034 declare H5608 thy wondrous works H6381

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 145:18 (Parallel theme): The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth.

Psalms 138:2 (Parallel theme): I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.

Jeremiah 10:6 (Parallel theme): Forasmuch as there is none like unto thee, O LORD; thou art great, and thy name is great in might.

Psalms 76:1 (References God): In Judah is God known: his name is great in Israel.

Exodus 23:21 (Parallel theme): Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in him.

Psalms 44:1 (References God): We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what work thou didst in their days, in the times of old.

Psalms 57:1 (References God): Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me: for my soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast.

Deuteronomy 4:7 (References God): For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the LORD our God is in all things that we call upon him for?