

Psalms 138-145, Psalms of David

Overview¹

The second panel of Book 5, like the first, introduces the Hallelujahs with a collection of Psalms of David (Table 1, chart). This larger collection is organized chiastically (Table 2, chart). Consider each row.

In 138 and 145, David promises to praise the Lord.

- Both declare David’s purpose: “I will praise/extoll thee.”
- Both recall Ex 34:6; 138:2 with the phrase “goodness and truth” from the end of the verse, and 145:8-9 in a virtual quotation of the entire verse.
- 138:4 and 145:10 are the only instances in the Bible of the phrase, “All X shall praise thee, O LORD” (יודוך יהוה כל-). The progress from “all the kings of the earth” to “all thy works,” along with the acrostic in 145, marks the climax of the section.

Both 139 and 144 express David’s confidence in the Lord. In 139, this confidence is based on God’s complete knowledge of him and his circumstances, while in 144 the emphasis is on God’s actions in delivering David and caring for his people.

The central four Psalms are all cries for God’s deliverance from his adversaries, but there is a progression among them.

- 140 abounds with descriptions of the wicked, the violent, the proud. The emphasis is on their offense against God, contrasted with David’s position as one of the righteous (v. 13). All is neat, orderly, a Sunday-school picture of how God’s deliverance is supposed to work.
- In 141, he recognizes that he must be pure to enjoy God’s care, and prays that the Lord will keep him from sin (vv. 3-4) and send righteous people to rebuke him where needed (v. 5).
- In 142, the focus shifts from the adversary and the conditions for crying to God to his desperate

107, Suffering, coming to the land: ידה, חסד	120-134, Ascents: Coming to the Temple
	135-136 ברך, ידה, חסד, hymns for the temple
	137, Call for Judgment
108-110, Psalms of David	138-145, Psalms of David
111-112, Acrostic (111 Works of the Lord)	145, Acrostic (Works of the Lord)
111-117, Hallelu-Yah	146-150, Hallelu-Yah
118-119, Torah (Acrostic) and Messiah Pair	

Table 1: Structure of Book 5

Promise of Praise	138 “All the kings of the earth”	145 “All thy works”
Confidence in God’s Care	139 God’s Care through his Knowledge	144 God’s Care through his Actions
Cry for Deliverance	140-143, Spiritual Journey 140, Righteous Indignation 141, Qualifying for God’s Help 142, Depths of Despair 143, Humble Confession	

Table 2: Structure of Psalms 138-145

¹ I have benefited throughout this section from D.C. Singer, “The Literary Context of the Fourth Davidic Grouping in the Psalter (Psalms 138-145),” Ph.D. dissertation, Westminster Theological Seminary 2013.

spiritual condition. He is depressed, with nowhere to go, and declares his emptiness and discouragement to God. This depression lays the foundation for the insight of 143.

- By 143, David recognizes his own moral problem (v. 2) and seeks God's deliverance. Compare 130:3 and the request of 139:23-24. Now the adversaries are characterized as "mine enemies," defined in relation to David; he avoids moral labels, which would turn back on his own head.

Psalm 138 Initial Promise of Praise

Changes in the pronouns mark the structure of the Psalm (Figure 1, chart). At the beginning and end David is speaking to the Lord, praising him for his past deliverance and expressing trust in his future care. In the center, all the kings of the earth join in the praise. The object of praise (what they are praising God for) moves from God's Word, to his Ways, and finally to his Works.

Psalm 138, Initial Promise of Praise

1-3, I praise **Thee** for thy Word
4-6, **Kings** praise **Him** for his Ways
7-8, I trust **Thee** for thy Works

Figure 1: Structure of Psalm 138

138:1 *A Psalm of David.*

David begins by praising God himself: "I" speaks to "thee."

I will praise thee with my whole heart:--"All the heart" alludes to Deut 6:5, the command to love the Lord "with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thine abundance."² True praise requires undivided loyalty to the Lord. Consider the offerings of Cain and Abel (Genesis 4). Cain simply brought "of the fruit of the ground," but Abel brought "of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof." God rejected Cain's casual offering, and 1 John 3:12 calls it evil.

before the gods will I sing praise unto thee.--The reference to "kings" in v. 4 suggests that "gods" here refers to earthly rulers, as in Psalm 82 (chart),

Psa 82:1 God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the **gods**.

There, we saw that the term can refer to human rulers:

Exo 21:5 And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free: 6 Then his master shall bring him unto the **judges**; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an aul; and he shall serve him for ever.

Exo 22:8 If the thief be not found, then the master of the house shall be brought unto the **judges**, to see whether he have put his hand unto his neighbour's goods. 9 ... the cause of both parties shall come before the **judges**; and whom the **judges** shall condemn, he shall pay double unto his neighbour.

David promises to glorify God before his peers, the kings of other lands. It is hard to bear witness to our peers, but it is strategic, for we have special access to them.

2 I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness **דָּבָר**

2 See "The Triple Choice" for further details and translation of the third term.

Psalms 138-145

and for thy truth אמת--Now David describes the subject for which he gives praise: God's lovingkindness and truth, חסד ואמת, the concluding two words in Exod 34:6.³ He will pick up this reference more fully in 145:8-9.

for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.--God's "word" אָמַרָה (Strong 565), as opposed to the more common and generic דָּבַר (Strong 1697), is specifically his promise, and in David's case focuses on the covenant of 2 Samuel 7. To David, greater than every possible aspect of God's character (the "name") is the promise he has made and his faithfulness to it.

3 In the day when I cried thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul.--God's care for him in past troubles is evidence of that faithfulness.

4 All the kings of the earth shall praise thee, O LORD, when they hear the words of thy mouth.--Now he turns to praise that will be uttered by "all the kings of the earth," "the gods" before whom he bore witness (v. 1). Certainly, David's military might impressed them, but what really will win them over is "the words of thy mouth." Here, as in the NT, the rebellious are "born again ... by the word of God" (1 Pet 1:23).

5 Yea, they shall sing in of the ways of the LORD: for great is the glory of the LORD.--David praised the Lord for his word; the kings praise him for his ways among men ("sing in" here has the sense "sing of"). The following verse gives the content of their praise.

6 Though the LORD be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly: but the proud he knoweth afar off.--This is quite a confession for a king to make, but essential for any monarch who is to come to the knowledge of the Lord. They must be humble if the Lord is to regard them.

7 Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me: thou shalt stretch forth thine hand against the wrath of mine enemies, and thy right hand shall save me.--Now David returns to praising the Lord himself, this time looking toward the future rather than the past.

8 The LORD will perfect that which concerneth me: thy mercy חסד, O LORD, endureth for ever: forsake not the works of thine own hands.--From God's Word in 1-3 and Ways in 4-6, the focus now moves to his Works.

To the chief Musician

Psalm 139 Under the Eye of God

This Psalm is the central text in the Bible describing God's omniscience. But it would be a mistake to view it as a theological treatise. It is intensely personal and contemporary.

Today's culture prizes privacy. Every day someone complains that their privacy has been compromised. We constantly worry about the invasion of privacy enabled by our technology.

3 The reference to this foundational text is picked up again in the matching final Psalm of this section, in a complete quotation at 145:8-9.

4 Marks the topic of which one speaks, as in Deut 6:7.

Psalms 138-145

In this Psalm, David struggles to come to grips with his lack of privacy before God. Whatever we may hide from other people, before God we are “naked and opened” (Heb 4:13). What should we think about this situation?

The four stanzas are marked by shifts in the participants and their roles (Figure 2, chart). The first verse and last two verses frame the Psalm with the key words “search ... know.” In vv. 1-6 God is the subject and David as the object. In 7-12, David is acting, seeking unsuccessfully to flee from God’s invasion of his privacy, but realizing finally that God’s knowledge is benevolent. The Lord resumes the active role toward David in 13-18, as David acknowledges that the Lord has created him and submits to his knowledge. Verses 19-22 introduce a new actor, the wicked, and describe God’s actions and David’s attitude toward them.⁵

Psalm 139, Under God’s Eye

1, Statement: God has **Searched** and **Known** David

2-6, Theology: God knows David

7-12, Rebellion: David tries to flee from God’s knowledge

13-18, Surrender: David accepts God’s sovereign knowledge

19-22, God and David deal with the Wicked

23-24, Request: **Search** me and **Know** me

Figure 2: Structure of Psalm 139

139:1 A Psalm of David.

O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me.--David begins by acknowledging that God knows him completely. This fact was the heart of the confession by the kings in the previous Psalm (v. 6): that God, though high in heaven, knows us intimately. But before David can bear witness to that truth to the pagans around him, he must first come to grips with it himself.

David begins by confessing that God knows everything about him.

2 Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising,--God knows his every motion.

thou understandest my thought afar off.--God even knows his thoughts, though God is in heaven, far away.

Ps 11:4 The LORD is in his holy temple, the LORD’S throne is in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men.

Ps 33:13 The LORD looketh from heaven; he beholdeth all the sons of men. 14 From the place of his habitation he looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth. 15 He fashioneth their hearts alike; he considereth all their works.

3 Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted *with* all my ways.--Day or night, God knows where he is and what he does.

4 For *there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether.*--Every word that he speaks, God knows. In fact, dropping the italics gives an even stronger meaning: before the word is on my tongue, you know it—you know what I am about to say.

5 Thou hast beset [besieged] me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me.--The first verb usually describes laying siege to an enemy, and shows a fearful attitude on David’s part.

5 Compare the movement in this Psalm with F. Thompson’s poem, “The Hound of Heaven” (<https://www.bartleby.com/236/239.html>).

6 *Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.*--This expression is usually taken as a statement of worship, but in view of v. 5 and the following paragraph, it is more likely a statement of terror.

David is terrified at God's invasion of his privacy. In the next stanza, he contemplates fleeing .

7 *Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? 8 If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there:*--Naturally, for that is where one expects to find God:

Ecc 5:2 God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few.

if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.--A much less pleasant prospect would be to flee into the place of the dead, but God pursues him there.

9 *If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;*--The sea was alien to the Israelites, and only under the most dire circumstances would they flee there. Jonah is an excellent example of someone who did seek to flee from God to the sea (chart). But to no avail: he learned, like David, that God is there too.

10 *Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.*--Here is the first glimpse of a positive attitude of the Psalmist toward the Lord's intrusiveness. As the Psalmist places himself in more and more discomfort and danger to escape God, he not only finds that God is there, but that God in fact protects him. Again, Jonah is a perfect example—pursued by God into the sea, yet God prepares a fish to deliver him.

11 *If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. 12 Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.*--Not even pitch blackness can hide him from God.

So flight is futile, but his experience leads him to expect that perhaps God's penetrating interest in him is not malevolent. In the third stanza, he applies his insight into God's knowledge, to his own origin.

13 *For thou hast possessed [created] my reins: thou hast covered me [i.e., with flesh; woven me together] in my mother's womb.*--If God's knowledge is so complete, it must extend to his conception and birth.

14 *I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.*--Recognizing that this God, whom he fears, has given him form and life, the terror of v. 6 and the cautious hope of v. 10 has turned to full praise.

15 *My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.*--The last phrase, "lowest parts of the earth," refers to the tomb (chart):

Psa 63:9 those that seek my soul, to destroy it, shall go into **the lower parts of the earth.**

But this does not mean that he was grown underground. David compares the darkness and hidden nature of the womb to a cave or grave in the earth. Job uses the same figure:

Psalms 138-145

Job 1:21 Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return **thither**:

We do not return to the womb, but to the grave, but Job sees them as so similar that he can refer to the grave as “thither,” whose antecedent is the womb.⁶

16 Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book ~~all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned~~ [all of them were written, days were fashioned], when as yet there was none of them.--The literal translation shows that his thoughts shift from his body to his fate. God not only formed him, but also planned the course of his life. Nothing that happens to us is an accident; all is by the gracious purpose of our God.

17 How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! 18 If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee.--Now he has completed his pilgrimage. God’s “thoughts unto me” no longer form a besieging army that he fears, but a precious comfort that he treasures.

In the final stanza, now comfortable in his intimacy with the Lord, David declares his loyalty to the Lord, and abandons any association with the wicked.

19 Surely thou wilt **slay the wicked, O God: depart from me therefore, ye bloody men. 20 For they speak against thee wickedly, and thine enemies take *thy name* in vain.⁷ 21 Do not I hate them, O LORD, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? 22 I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies.**--His attitude is that commended in Psalm 1: he will not “walk[] ... in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stand[] in the way of sinners, nor sit[] in the seat of the scornful.” His hatred for them is not emotional, or even a desire for revenge—this is not a lament.⁸ Rather, he is cleaving so closely to the Lord that he will have nothing to do with those who oppose his great God.

23 Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: 24 And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.--Thus dominated by his love for the Lord, David not only acknowledges the Lord’s knowledge of him, but desires it. Done with fleeing from it, he now desires that it might probe ever more deeply into him, to purge him from all wickedness and walk in the way of righteousness.

To the chief Musician

6 Formerly I interpreted this expression as a genitive of apposition, “the lowest parts [of God’s creation], that is, the earth,” but the other two uses of the expression in the OT, Ps 63:10 (v. 9 ET) and Isa 44:23, are more likely to refer to Sheol. Thus these texts do not support reading the similar (but not identical) expression in Eph 4:9 as apposition. However, recognizing the metaphor of “womb = tomb” allows us to see Eph 4:9b as a reference to the incarnation, with a direct allusion to this text.

7 As punctuated, “enemies” should be translated “cities.” Two proposals for retaining this reading have been offered. G. Rice, *CBQ* 46:1 (1984), 28-30 understands נָשַׁן in the sense of “carry away,” to refer to destruction of the cities, and thus links the Psalm to the captivity, rejecting the Davidic ascription. Junker (*Biblica* 30 (1949) 207) retains “in vain” and thinks of an oath in the name of the city, cf. Matt 5:34f; Amos 8:14, a result that is semantically close to the AV.

8 E. Peels, *Tyndale Bulletin* 59:1 (2008), 35-51.

Psalms 140-143, Final Laments

The five books of Psalms trace Israel’s history (Table 3, chart) from the founding of David’s kingdom in confrontation with Saul (Book 1), through communication of his rule to Gentiles (Book 2), then into judgment by the nations (Psalm 89). In Book 4, during the captivity and deprived of temple and palace, the nation realizes that God is their king. In Book 5, led by Ezra and Nehemiah, they return to the land and regather in the temple to worship the Lord.

This sequence was historical from the perspective of the compiler, perhaps Ezra, during the restoration. But it is also prophetic of what was yet to come.⁹ The establishment of David over Saul anticipates the coming of David’s son, the Messiah, and the book of communication reflects our Lord’s earthly ministry. But his rejection by the Jews seems to mark the end of God’s covenant mourned in Psalm 89 at the end of Book 3. His people today must cling to the same hope of a heavenly king that sustained Israel during the captivity in Book 4, looking forward to the reestablishment of God’s rule in the coming kingdom in Book 5.

Robertson	History	Prophecy
1-41, Confrontation	Establishment of David over Saul	Coming of Messiah
42-72, Communication	Solomon’s rule over all the earth	Our Lord’s Earthly Ministry
73-89, Devastation	Assyria and Babylon	Rejection of Messiah
90-106, Maturation	Faith without Temple or Palace	Present Evil Age
107-150, Consummation	Restoration of Ezra-Nehemiah	Millennium

Table 3: *Eschatology in the Psalter*

A striking feature of the coming kingdom in Revelation 20 is its interruption by Satan’s final attack (20:7-9). The four Psalms at the heart of the final Davidic collection anticipate this final surge of opposition. These are all laments, describing the opposition faced by the Davidic king in the face of his adversaries. He describes the opposition he faced, his petitions to the Lord for deliverance, and his confidence in the Lord’s help, but the deliverance is yet to be realized.

David faced Saul and Absalom. During the restoration, Ezra and Nehemiah faced Sanballat and Tobiah, who sought to stop construction of the wall and thus the reestablishment of Jerusalem as a political power. Satan will seek to overthrow the restored kingship of our Lord during the coming kingdom. The sober tone of these Psalms reminds us of Satan’s final attempt to destroy the Messiah before the establishment of the new heavens and the new earth.

There is a progression as we move through these Psalms in the use of the terms “righteous” and “righteousness.” In 140, these terms describe the group with which David identifies himself, contrasted with the wicked. In 141, this contrast is considerably softened. A single righteous man appears, who rebukes David so he will meet the moral requirements to call on the Lord. In 142,

⁹ This case is made most strongly by D.C. Mitchell, *The Message of the Psalter: An Eschatological Programme in the Book of Psalms*. JSOT Supplement Series 252, 1997. Reprinted Newton Mearns, Scotland: Campbell Publications, 2017. He exhibits an alignment between the organization of the Psalter and the yet-future program outlined by the post-exilic prophet Zechariah, showing that even during the restoration there was anticipation of future rejection and ultimate restoration. Mitchell’s argument that the Psalms of Asaph and Korah bracket books 2 and 3 into an essential unity reinforces their joint prophetic application to our Lord’s earthly ministry.

the righteous are once again a group, but this time they gather around David in his distress when they see how the Lord has delivered him. In 143, the term is used only of the Lord, and 143:2 says that righteousness is unattainable to anyone else. This movement is reinforced by the words he uses to describe those who threaten him. In 140 and 141 they are described by their moral failings toward God, as evil and wicked. In 142 and 143, as he realizes his own moral needs, they are described only as his persecutors and enemies, in terms of their opposition to him.

Psalm 140, Confronting the Wicked

140:1 A Psalm of David.--Three Selahs divide the Psalm into four parts (Figure 3, chart). The first two are parallel, consisting of invocations followed by complaints. In the third, the Psalmist takes his stand with God against the wicked; the fourth begins with an imprecation against the wicked, and ends with a declaration of the Psalmist's confidence.

A noteworthy feature of the Psalm is its ethical descriptions of people in two groups. David's adversaries are morally defective: they are evil (1), violent (1, 4, 11), wicked (4, 8), and slanderous (11). Then the Psalm closes with a list of titles of the morally approved; the afflicted and poor (12), the righteous and upright (13). Thus the Psalm portrays the final conflict as a stark confrontation between good and evil.

Deliver me, O LORD, from the evil man רע; preserve me from the violent man חמס; 2 Which imagine mischiefs in their heart; continually are they gathered together for war. 3 They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent; adders' poison is under their lips. Selah.--First, the wicked are "evil," intrinsically in violation of God's law, manifesting this character in violence. They continually seek war, and resort to slander and deception to discredit their enemies.

4 Keep me, O LORD, from the hands of the wicked רשע; preserve me from the violent man חמס; who have purposed to overthrow my goings. 5 The proud גאה have hid a snare for me, and cords; they have spread a net by the wayside; they have set gins for me. Selah.--The second paragraph is more focused and concrete. Now the adversaries are "wicked," a more concrete term than "evil." (See note.) They not only prepare for war in general, but focus their rebellion against "my goings." They are "the proud," one of a group of words that describe divine prerogatives that men sinfully claim.¹⁰ This particular root is used favorably of God (Ex 15:1, 21; Isa 12:5) to describe how exalted he is. But when people exalt themselves, they are usurping his privilege. Now their actions go beyond verbal abuse to physical malice.

6 I said unto the LORD, Thou art my God: hear the voice of my supplications, O LORD. 7 O GOD the Lord, the strength of my salvation, thou hast covered my head in the day of

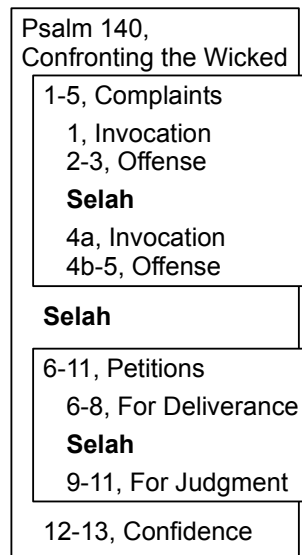


Figure 3: Structure of Psalm 140

¹⁰ Compare עלל, and see further discussion in <https://cyber-chapel.org/blog/god-is-haughty>. One might also consider the root רום, as in v. 8.

battle. 8 Grant not, O LORD, the desires of the wicked: further not his wicked device; lest they exalt themselves. Selah.--Unlike the proud, David eagerly declares his dependance on the Lord. Encouraged by his past deliverance, he asks the Lord to frustrate the plans of the wicked.

9 As for the head of those that compass me about, let the mischief of their own lips cover them. 10 Let burning coals fall upon them: let them be cast into the fire; into deep pits, that they rise not up again. 11 Let not an evil speaker איש לישון be established in the earth: evil shall hunt the violent חמס man to overthrow him.--David prays for the Lord to bring judgment on these adversaries, focusing again on their verbal abuse (“evil speaker,” cf. v. 3) and violence. He expects a punishment by fire, which is the outcome in the final judgment in Rev 20:7-9.

12 I know that the LORD will maintain the cause of the afflicted, and the right of the poor. 13 Surely the righteous צדיק shall give thanks unto thy name: the upright ישר shall dwell in thy presence.--Like many laments, this one ends with confidence in the Lord. Answering the numerous titles for the wicked, he gives four names for those whom God protects. Unlike the “proud” who “exalt themselves,” God’s people are often afflicted and poor. Instead of evil, they reflect righteousness; wicked conduct is replaced with uprightness that follows the Lord’s law.

Psalm 141 Overcoming the Flesh

141:1 A Psalm of David.--The stark contrast between the wicked and the righteous in Psalm 140 softens in 141. In 140, David calls on the Lord, but in 141 he faces the conditions for this access.

He refers repeatedly to his body (hands, mouth, lips, head, bones, eyes).¹¹ The enemy’s opposition is physical (7; 140:5), and David commits his physical being to the Lord. But this focus reminds him of the weakness of the flesh, and his need to be pure in order to approach the Lord. Psalm 143 shows a corresponding emphasis on his inner life (the soul, spirit, heart).

LORD, I cry unto thee: make haste unto me; give ear unto my voice, when I cry unto thee.

2 Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.--In the spirit of the previous Psalm, he cries to the Lord for help, though he says nothing about the adversaries. He mentions wicked men in v. 4, but only as company that he rejects. Not until 9-10 do they emerge as his enemies. The focus has shifted from them to him.

3 Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips.--With that focus, his concern is now that the cry he gives to the Lord would be acceptable. He recognizes that if his speech and actions are not pure, he will have no claim on the Lord:

Psa 66:18 If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:

4 Incline not my heart to any evil thing, to practise wicked works with men that work iniquity: and let me not eat of their dainties.--He will claim the blessing that Psalm 1 proclaims on those who do not associate with the wicked.

5 Let the righteous [s] smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be

¹¹ I owe this observation to A. Parunak.

an excellent oil, which shall not break my head:--In 140:12-13, he sees himself as one of the righteous. Here, the righteous man (singular) is a distinct person, whose rebuke he gladly welcomes, if only it will bring him to the purity from which he can call on the Lord.

The shift from the singular of “the righteous” (singular) back to the plural of v. 4, “men that work iniquity,” shows that the pronouns in 5b-6 refer to the wicked, rather than to the righteous.

for yet my prayer also shall be in their calamities.--“Calamities” רעות (Strong 7451) is from the same root as “evil man” (140:1), and often refers to wicked actions. Confronted with their ungodliness, he resolves to continue to resort to prayer.

6 When their judges are overthrown in stony places, they shall hear my words; for they are sweet.--“Their judges” unjustly support the actions of the wicked. David expects that they will be overthrown, and those who relied on them will learn to value what David has to teach them.

David’s attitude is far from vengeance. He recognizes the just judgment that awaits the wicked (v. 10), but his desire is that at least some of them would turn from their wicked ways. The mixture of compassion and imprecation in this Psalm recalls Psalm 35, where David one moment is praying for his enemies, and the next asking for God’s judgment on them.

7 Our bones are scattered at the grave’s mouth, as when one cutteth and cleaveth wood upon the earth.--Meanwhile, David and his associates are trodden down.

8 But mine eyes are unto thee, O GOD the Lord: in thee is my trust;--The declaration of his trust in the Lord is like 140:6 and 142:5.

leave not my soul destitute. 9 Keep me from the snares which they have laid for me, and the gins of the workers of iniquity. 10 Let the wicked fall into their own nets, whilst that I withal escape.--But he cries once more to the Lord, both to protect him, and to bring appropriate judgment on the wicked. The “gins” and “nets” recall the attacks he described in 140:5.

Psalm 142 Thou art my Refuge

142:1 Maschil of David; A Prayer when he was in the cave.--

Compare Ps 57. That was probably when hiding from Saul at En Gedi, when he spared Saul’s life; this shows no evidence of that triumphal event. More likely this was written during his time in the cave of Adullam (1 Samuel 22), when, pursued by Saul and rejected in his quest for refuge with Achish king of Gath, he hides with his band of outcast followers in continual fear of discovery. In vv. 4-5 he confesses that his true refuge is not the cave, but the Lord.

The main division in the Psalm is marked by a shift in references to the Lord, from third person in vv. 1-2, to first person in the rest of the Psalm (Figure 4, chart). He begins with a summary to his fellows about how he cried to the Lord in time of need. Then he

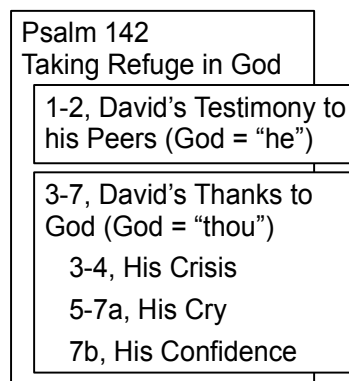


Figure 4: Structure of Psalm 142

turns to the Lord himself, and recalls the Complaint that drove him to the Lord, the actual Cry that he uttered, and his Confidence in the Lord's deliverance.

I cried unto the LORD with my voice; with my voice unto the LORD did I make my supplication. 2 I poured out my complaint before him; I shewed before him my trouble.-- With four different verbs, David tells his listeners how he cast himself on the Lord. The worldling wants to appear brave and independent to his peers. David is willing to show them his vulnerability and dependence on the Lord.

Now he turns to the Lord to recall his crisis.

3 When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knewest my path. In the way wherein I walked have they privily laid a snare for me. 4 I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul.--First, he recalls his crisis, opposed by hostile enemies, without any human help. But his difficulties were not beyond God's knowledge. "Thou knewest my path."

Next, he reminds the Lord of his petition, which consists of a statement and three requests.

5 I cried unto thee, O LORD: I said,--Now begins a quotation of what he prayer.

Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living.--First, as in 140:6 and 141:8, he declares his commitment to the Lord. The Lord is gracious to all of his creatures, but if we would call upon him for help, we must first commit ourselves to him.

6 Attend unto my cry; for I am brought very low:--Next, he declares his need for God to hear him. Many self-help visions of God encourage us that "you can do it with God's help." The biblical approach is to confess our helplessness apart from God.

deliver me from my persecutors; for they are stronger than I.--Here is the actual request for help. This Psalm, alone of these four, includes no imprecation, but just a cry for the Lord's deliverance.

7 Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name:--The fourth part of his prayer is a promise to praise the Lord. "Prison" again recalls the cave.

the righteous shall compass me about; for thou shalt deal bountifully with me.--The lament ends with a declaration of confidence that God's care for him will draw the righteous to join him.

Psalm 143 Delivering the Spirit

143:1 A Psalm of David.--The Selah divides the Psalm into two parts (Figure 5, chart). In both, David petitions the Lord, and gives motives. But the parts differ in theme, and in structure. Thematically, the first seeks to rectify David's own relation with the Lord, while in the second the focus is more on delivering him from the enemy. Structurally, the first part moves once from petition to motive, while the second is a chiasm and alternates between them.

Two features distinguish the Psalm from 140-142.

Psalms 138-145

1. It is based on God’s attributes (faithfulness, righteousness 2x, loyal love 2x, name). “Righteous” is no longer a description of men, but of God, linked to “loyal love,” see notes on 119:121-144.
2. It focuses on David’s subjective feelings (spirit, soul, heart), contrasting with the focus on his flesh in 141.

The first half deals with David’s own moral need.

Hear my prayer, O LORD, give ear to my supplications: in thy faithfulness answer me, and in thy righteousness. 2 And enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.--His first need is that God would not enter into judgment with him. As in 141, he must remedy his own moral failing before God will hear him.

3 For the enemy hath persecuted my soul; he hath smitten my life down to the ground; he hath made me to dwell in darkness, as those that have been long dead. 4 Therefore is my spirit overwhelmed within me; my heart within me is desolate.--The first part of

the motive is his spiritual agony, compared to death (cf. vv. 7, 11), stimulated by an adversary.

5 I remember the days of old; I meditate on all thy works; I muse on the work of thy hands. 6 I stretch forth my hands unto thee: my soul thirsteth after thee, as a thirsty land. Selah.--The second is his confidence, based on God’s past works.

Now consider the second half chiastically, working from the outsides in.

7 Hear me speedily, O LORD: my spirit faileth: hide not thy face from me, lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit. 8 Cause me to hear thy lovingkindness in the morning; for in thee do I trust: ... 11 Quicken me, O LORD, for thy name's sake: for thy righteousness' sake bring my soul out of trouble. 12 And of thy mercy cut off mine enemies, and destroy all them that afflict my soul: for I am thy servant.--The outer members appeal to God’s loyal love (8 lovingkindness, 12 mercy). David’s soul and spirit, in focus in the motive of the first half, reappear here. David now seeks deliverance from death (7 the pit, 11 quicken me), and commits his enemies to God’s judgment.

8b ... cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto thee. ... 10 Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness.--In the second member of the chiasm, recalling his own vulnerability from v. 2, he asks that God would direct him in a righteous life.

9 Deliver me, O LORD, from mine enemies: I flee unto thee to hide me.--Finally, in the center, he asks for deliverance from his enemies.

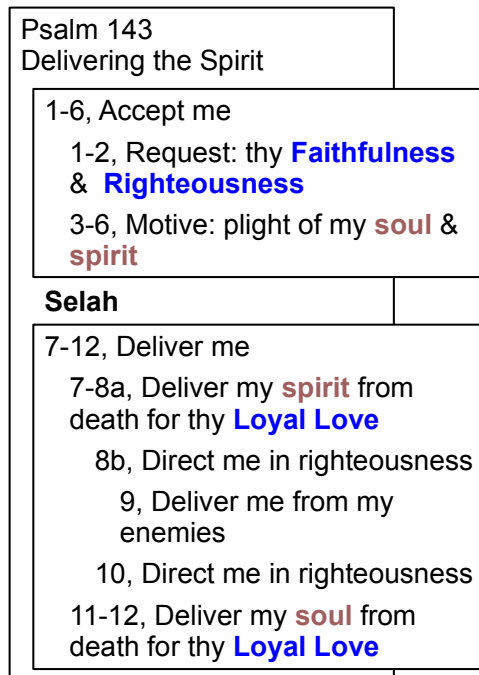


Figure 5: Structure of Psalm 143

Psalm 144 Under God’s Care

From the laments of Psalms 140-143, we return to confidence as in 139 (Table 2). Answering to the all-knowing eye of God there, here we consider his past deliverance. The first part of the Psalm is drawn from earlier Psalms, mainly 18, but including 8, 12, 33, 39, and 104 (Table 4, chart).¹² These all either call on the Lord for deliverance or celebrate his past victories.

Psalm 144	Earlier Psalms
1 Blessed be the LORD my strength, which teacheth my hands to war , and my fingers to fight: 2 My goodness, and my fortress ; my high tower, and my deliverer; my shield, and he in whom I trust; who subdueth my people under me .	18:1 I will love thee, O LORD, my strength . 18:2 The LORD is my rock, and my fortress , and my deliverer; my God, my strength , in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower. ... 34 He teacheth my hands to war , so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms. ... 47 It is God that avengeth me, and subdueth the people under me .
3 LORD, what is man, that thou takest knowledge of him! or the son of man, that thou makest account of him!	8:4 What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?
4 Man is like to vanity: his days are as a shadow that passeth away.	39:5 Behold, thou hast made my days as an handbreadth; and mine age is as nothing before thee: verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity .
5 Bow thy heavens, O LORD, and come down: touch the mountains, and they shall smoke.	18:9 He bowed the heavens also, and came down: 104:32 he toucheth the hills, and they smoke.
6 Cast forth lightning, and scatter them: shoot out thine arrows, and destroy them.	18:13 The LORD also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave his voice; hail stones and coals of fire. 14 Yea, he sent out his arrows, and scattered them; and he shot out lightnings, and discomfited them.
7 Send thine hand from above; rid me, and deliver me out of great waters , from the hand of strange children ;	18:16 He sent from above, he took me, he drew me out of many waters 45 The strangers [strange children] shall fade away ...
8 Whose mouth speaketh vanity, and their right hand is a right hand of falsehood.	12:2 They speak vanity every one with his neighbour: with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak.
9 I will sing a new song unto thee, O God: upon a psaltery and an instrument of ten strings will I sing praises unto thee,-	33:2 Praise the LORD with harp: sing unto him with the psaltery and an instrument of ten strings. 3 Sing unto him a new song; play skilfully with a loud noise.
10 It is he who givest salvation unto kings: who deliverest David his servant from the hurtful sword.	18:50 Great deliverance giveth he to his king; and sheweth mercy to his anointed, to David, and to his seed for evermore.

Table 4: Allusions to Earlier Psalms in Psalm 144

¹² Psalms 8, 12, 18, and 39 are attributed to David. Psalm 33, in the middle of a long series of Davidic Psalms, may also be Davidic. but 104, the beginning of the first Hallelujah section, is probably not.

Psalms 138-145

In v. 9 David promises a “new song,” and at verse 12, new material replaces the echoes. The Psalm appears to be a recollection by David of God’s past care for him, and a final offering of new praise in fulfillment of the command in 33:2 (Figure 6, chart). The message is that we must acknowledge God’s answers to our pleas.

The anthology of past deliverances (1-10) has three parts, marked by changes in theme (praise vs. petition) and pronouns referring to the Lord (third vs. second person) (Table 5): a public declaration of God’s blessing, past laments and pleas to the Lord, and a promise of the new song.

144:1 A Psalm of David.

Blessed be the LORD my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight: 2 My goodness, and my fortress; my high tower, and my deliverer; my shield, and he in whom I trust; who subdueth my people under me.--The opening blessing praises God for victory in war and his royal position over the people, and spans most of Psalm 18. (v. 50 is cited in 144:10.)

Vv. 3-8 combines past Psalms into a lament with complaint and petition. The focus of this compilation is not any specific enemy, but the feeble human condition in itself. In view of vv. 11-15 and the fact that these verses are almost all citations, we should understand this lament as a recollection, not necessarily reflecting current difficulties.

3 LORD, what is man, that thou takest knowledge of him! or the son of man, that thou makest account of him!--He begins with the confession of human weakness and insignificance from Psalm 8, when he, as a young lad, faced Goliath.

4 Man is like to vanity: his days are as a shadow that passeth away.--He backs this up with the later Psalm 39 that laments the shortness of human life.

5 Bow thy heavens, O LORD, and come down:--From Psalm 18 he asks God to intervene.

touch the mountains, and they shall smoke.--Like the anonymous Psalm 104, he longs for the return of the evidence of God’s presence seen on Sinai during the giving of the law.

6 Cast forth lightning, and scatter them: shoot out thine arrows, and destroy them. 7 Send thine hand from above; rid me, and deliver me out of great waters,--He recalls the cosmic scope of deliverance that he celebrated in Psalm 18.

from the hand of strange children;--The expression is literally “sons of foreignness,” from 18:45, 46. This is the first reference to a human adversary, and only in the most general terms.

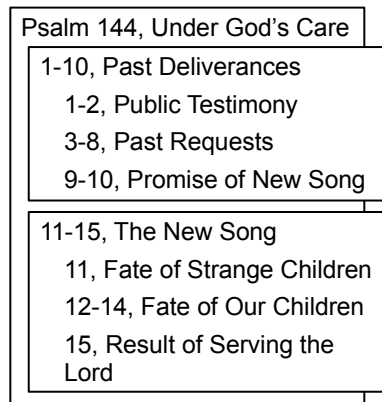


Figure 6: Structure of Psalm 144

vv.	The Lord	Theme
1-2	3 rd Person (“He”)	Praise
3-8	2 nd Person (“Thou”)	Lament & Petition
9-10		Praise

Table 5: Structure of vv. 1-10

8 Whose mouth speaketh vanity, and their right hand is a right hand of falsehood.--He laments their pride and prevarication by recalling Psalm 12.

Now he turns from lament to the promise of praise.

9 I will sing a new song unto thee, O God: upon a psaltery and an instrument of ten strings will I sing praises unto thee,--The promise itself is from Psalm 33.

10 ~~It is he~~¹³ who givest salvation unto kings: who deliverest David his¹⁴ servant from the hurtful sword.--To summarize his praise, he recalls 18:50, celebrating God's establishment of him in his position as the anointed king, and completing his recollection of Psalm 18.

11 Rid me, and deliver me from the hand of strange children, whose mouth speaketh vanity, and their right hand is a right hand of falsehood:--The repetition of this citation from Psalm 18, quoted earlier in vv. 7-8, is strange. It doesn't fit with the promise of praise of vv. 9-10, but as a quotation from Psalm 18, it also doesn't fit with 12-15. Perhaps it is added to set up a contrast between "strange children" (literally, "sons of foreignness") and "our sons" (v. 12). We might set it in quote marks, to indicate that it is a reference to vv. 7-8, and then paraphrase,

A moment ago I recalled my prayer that God would bring judgment on alien sons. Now let me recount the blessings he brings on our progeny.

12 That¹⁵ our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth; that our daughters may be as corner stones, polished after the similitude of a palace: 13 That our garners may be full, affording all manner of store: that our sheep may bring forth thousands and ten thousands in our streets: 14 That our oxen may be strong to labour; that there be no breaking in, nor going out; that there be no complaining in our streets.--"That" links to "such" in v. 15.

15 Happy is that people, that is in such a case: yea, happy is that people, whose God is the LORD.

Psalm 145 Concluding Promise of Praise

The final Psalm in this Davidic collection, and the last Psalm attributed to David, is a promise of praise, like 138 (Table 2, chart). There, all kings were gathered to praise the Lord; here, all of the Lord's works join the chorus. The Psalm uses the particle כל "all" (Strong 3605) very often, emphasizing the universality of God's praise. Another key word is "works" (מעשה, Strong 4639), which it shares with 111, the matching acrostic in the parallel panel of Book 5 (Table 1).¹⁶ The Psalm is an acrostic, with one letter missing (see note).

The Psalm is a series of thematic stanzas, within an inclusio that promises to praise the Lord for

13 The participles continue the second person pronouns of v. 9.

14 Allen: The Heb. 3 sg. references in ptc. clauses after a vocative. are idiomatic (see GKC §144p).

15 Probably not purpose for the request of v. 11; See Booij, *VT* 59 (2009) 176 for summary of options, concluding that it anticipates "such" in v. 15. He suggests it is "expressive by its outward similarity to 'asrè ('happy,' v. 15)," and recommends leaving it untranslated. BDB 3: We whose sons ...

16 See note on these key words.

ever and ever (Figure 7, chart). The first four stanzas (3-16) are addressed to the Lord (“thou”), but each includes a third-person statement about the Lord, three of which quote previous Scripture, while the fourth quotes this Psalm. The final stanza summarizes the first four with three statements about the Lord in the third person (“The Lord is / does ...”).

145:1 David's Psalm of praise.

1-2, 21, Promise of Eternal Praise and Blessing

I will extol thee, my God, O king; and I will bless thy name for ever and ever. 2 Every day will I bless thee; and I will praise thy name for ever and ever. ... 21 My mouth shall speak the praise of the LORD: and let all

flesh bless his holy name for ever and ever.--David begins and ends by declaring his *intent* to *bless* and *praise* the Lord for ever, pointing us to vv. 10-13. V. 1 calls God “king,” the theme of 10-13, while the conclusion exhorts “all flesh,” recalling the universal praise of v. 10, “All thy works shall praise thee.” These details recall the first Psalm in this final Davidic cluster,

138:4 All the kings of the earth shall praise thee, O LORD, when they hear the words of thy mouth.

The two clauses of v. 21 summarize the two main parts of the Psalm, David’s personal praise (3-16) and summary statements that others can proclaim (17-20).

3-16, Speaking To the Lord (with quotations)

In each stanza, David supports his second-person praise to the Lord with a third-person statement, based in three cases on earlier Scripture.

3-6, God is Great

The first stanza begins and ends with references to the Lord’s greatness (with variants of גדל). This is the only stanza that does not use the word “all.”

3 Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable.--David begins with a quotation from one of the Psalms of the sons of Korah, a group of Levites who were, as we have seen in our study of Psalms 42-43, particularly close to him:

Psa 48:1 Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness.

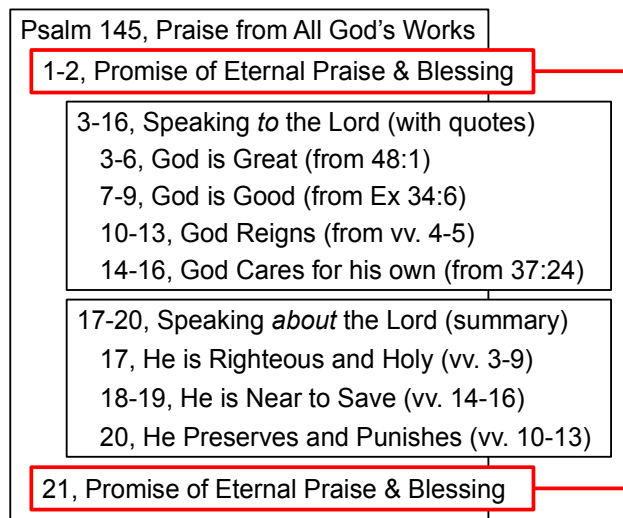


Figure 7: Structure of Psalm 145

4 One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts גבורה. **5 I will speak of the glorious honour כבוד of thy majesty, and of thy wondrous works (פלא N ptc).** **6 And men shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts (אירא N ptc): and I will declare thy greatness.**--He piles up words to describe God's works, the things he has done. *Mighty acts* are the kind of things done by a גבר, a mighty man. *Glory and honor* are associated with royalty. His works stimulate *wonder* and inspire *fear*.

7-9, God is Good

Many religions have a notion of a God who is great, and whose power is seen in creation. But our God is distinctive in his goodness.

7 They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness, and shall sing of thy righteousness.--This power is not impersonal, like the Force of Star Wars, but permeated with intrinsic goodness. In support of this claim, David takes us back once more to Ex 34:6.

8 The LORD is gracious חנן, and full of compassion רחום; slow to anger, and of great¹⁷ mercy חסד. **9 The LORD is good to all: and his tender mercies רחם are over all his works.**

Exo 34:6 The LORD God, **merciful** and **gracious, longsuffering**, and abundant in **goodness** and truth,

This verse explains the statement that God is good and righteous. As we saw in our study of Psalm 119, God is righteous because he conforms to his own self-revelation in Exodus 34.

10-13, God Rules: majesty, kingdom

This stanza takes us a step further. This all-powerful God, who exercises his power not maliciously but in keeping with the character revealed in Exodus 34:6, is not an absentee landlord. He exercises this power through his rule over all the earth. Four times David celebrates God's kingdom over all his works (v. 10) and enduring through all time (v. 13).

10 All thy works shall praise thee, O LORD; and thy saints shall bless thee. **11 They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power; 12 To make known to the sons of men "his mighty acts גבורה, and the glorious majesty כבוד of his kingdom."** **13 Thy kingdom is an everlasting [of all eternity] kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations.**

Like the other stanzas, this one has a third person statement about the Lord: when the Lord's saints bless him, they tell the sons of men of "his mighty acts and the glorious majesty of his kingdom."¹⁸ We should put this phrase in quotes: the third person pronouns mark it as direct discourse, a quotation of what the saints tell the sons of men.

The third person statement in this case is a quotation, not from other Scripture, but from this

17 A link back to the theme of 3-6

18 A. Parunak pointed out this feature.

Psalm. The only other place in the Bible that we find “mighty acts,” “glory,” and “majesty” within two verses of each other is vv. 4-5, setting forth the Lord’s greatness.

14-20, God cares for his own.

The fourth stanza tells us that God’s great and good rule is exercised beneficently over all his creation. The stanza begins with the third person allusion from an earlier Psalm of David:

14 The LORD upholdeth **all that fall, and raiseth up **all** those that be bowed down.**

Psa 37:23 The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way.
24 Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth him with his hand.

15 The eyes of **all wait upon thee; and thou givest them their meat in due season. 16 Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of **every** living thing.**--All creation looks to him for their needs.

17-20, Speaking About the Lord

Thus far, the Psalm has been predominantly in the second person. In keeping with his promise in vv. 1-2 and 21a, David is speaking to the Lord, reinforcing his praise with a third person statement in each stanza. But he wants to attract others to praise the Lord as well (21b), and in the last stanza he offers seven statements about the Lord, in three groups marked by the divine Name. Throughout, he emphasizes the universality that characterizes the Psalm.

The first group of two describes God’s intrinsic character

17 The LORD is righteous in **all his ways,**--“Righteous” takes us back to the description of God’s goodness in 7-9.

and holy in **all his works.**--“Holy,” set apart, emphasizes that the Lord is unique in his great power, and thus recalls the first stanza.

Next, four statements tell us of his care for those who cry to him, amplifying 14-20.

18 The LORD is nigh unto **all them that call upon him, to **all** that call upon him in truth. 19 He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and will save them.**

The final two statements take us back to the third stanza, describing God’s kingdom, in which he will reward the righteous and punish the wicked. Note the similarity to the end of Psalm 1 (Kselman).

20 The LORD preserveth **all them that love him:**--In keeping with Deut 6:5, those who are accepted in the kingdom are those who love him.

but **all the wicked will he destroy.**--But he brings just judgment on those who reject his rule.

Notes

רע vs רשע (Ps 140:1, 4)

AV usually translates רע as “evil” and רשע as “wicked.” The two often appear in parallel in poetry, as in

Psa 5:4 For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness רשע: neither shall evil רע dwell with thee.

Psa 10:15 Break thou the arm of the wicked רשע and the evil רע man: seek out his wickedness till thou find none.

Pro 4:14 Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men.

Pro 14:19 The evil bow before the good; and the wicked at the gates of the righteous.

Pro 24:20 For there shall be no reward to the evil man; the candle of the wicked shall be put out.

But where there is a distinction, רע is the abstract character, while רשע describes how it is brought into practice:

Psa 7:9 Oh let the wickedness רע of the wicked רשע come to an end; but establish the just: for the righteous God trieth the hearts and reins.

Psa 28:3 Draw me not away with the wicked רשע, and with the workers of iniquity און, which speak peace to their neighbours, but mischief רעה is in their hearts.

Psa 94:13 That thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity רע, until the pit be digged for the wicked רשע.

Psa 97:10 Ye that love the LORD, hate evil רע: he preserveth the souls of his saints; he delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked רשע.

Pro 12:21 There shall no evil happen to the just: but the wicked רשע shall be filled with mischief רע.

Pro 13:17 A wicked רשע messenger falleth into mischief רע: but a faithful ambassador is health.

Pro 21:10 The soul of the wicked desireth evil

Pro 21:12 God overthroweth the wicked רשע for their wickedness רע.

Eze 13:22 Because with lies ye have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and strengthened the hands of the wicked רשע, that he should not return from his wicked רע way,

Consistently, it is the wicked רשע man who follows after evil רע, and not an evil man following

after (abstract) wickedness. רע is more common (both as noun and as adjective) than רשע.

יהוה אדון in 141:8

The earliest instances are in the Psalms of David. These are all ascribed to David:

Ps. 8:1 A Psalm of David. O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens.

Ps. 8:9 O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!

Ps. 68:20 He that is our God is the God of salvation; and unto GOD the Lord belong the issues from death.

Ps. 109:21 But do thou for me, O GOD the Lord, for thy name's sake: because thy mercy is good, deliver thou me.

Ps. 140:7 O GOD the Lord, the strength of my salvation, thou hast covered my head in the day of battle.

Ps. 141:8 But mine eyes are unto thee, O GOD the Lord: in thee is my trust; leave not my soul destitute.

Note emphasis on obedience in Nehemiah's use of the term, consistent with the meaning of אדון. This distinguishes the phrase from the much more common יהוה אלהים (which has 891 hits).

Neh. 10:29 They clave to their brethren, their nobles, and entered into a curse, and into an oath, to walk in God's law, which was given by Moses the servant of God, and to observe and do all the commandments of the LORD our Lord, and his judgments and his statutes;

Hab. 3:19 The LORD God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places. To the chief singer on my stringed instruments.

Key Words in Psalm 145

כל "all" has a density of 8.1% (17 instances in 208 words), higher than any other Psalm except 117 (2/20), where the short length of the Psalm makes the ratio less reliable. מעשה "work, deed" (Figure 8) appears first in Psalm 8, then peaks in 104 at the end of Book 4 and in the matching acrostics of Psalms 111-112 and 145.

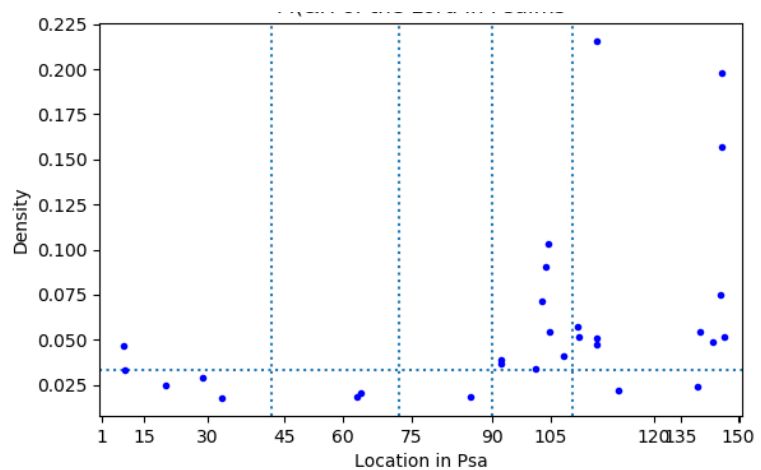


Figure 8: מעשה of the Lord in Psalms

The נ Verse in Psalm 145

The LXX, Syriac, one Hebrew mss, and 11QPs add a line for נ: “Faithful is Yahweh in his words: and loyal in all his works” (נאמן יהוה בדבריו והסיד בכל מעשיו), a nice inclusio with v. 10. But this line uses הסיד of the Lord, while everywhere else it describes the Lord’s people (as in 145:10).

If the line is genuine, it might recall Psa 33:4, “For the word of the LORD is right; and all his works are done in truth.” Alternatively, the LXX reflex of הסיד is σσος, which translates ישר as an attribute of God in Deu 32:4, “He is the Rock, his work פעל is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.” So the line may be intended to supply the missing quotation to match the other three “thou” stanzas. But the anomalous use of הסיד and the fact that the stanza already has a third person statement about the Lord make it likely that it is a later attempt to improve the symmetry of the Psalm.