



Study Guide: Psalms – Chapter 135

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This study guide provides an educational overview of Psalms Chapter 135 using a verse-by-verse structure, theological context, and application-oriented insights grounded in Scripture.

Introduction

Psalms 135 serves as a powerful hymn of praise that highlights God's sovereign power and faithfulness to His covenant people. Positioned within the collection of Psalms that celebrate God's mighty acts and His enduring relationship with Israel, this chapter invites worshipers to remember and proclaim the Lord's unmatched authority over creation and idols alike. Readers should watch for the contrast between the living God and lifeless idols, as well as the repeated calls to praise that emphasize communal worship and remembrance of God's redemptive acts.

Context

Psalms 135 is part of the Egyptian Hallel Psalms (Psalms 113–118) and closely relates to the historical and covenantal context of Israel's deliverance from Egypt. It is a communal song likely used in temple worship, where the people of Israel are reminded of God's mighty acts during the Exodus and His ongoing rule over all nations. The psalmist, speaking on behalf of the worshiping community, calls attention to God's covenant faithfulness and His judgment against idols, which were prevalent among surrounding nations. This chapter reflects the theological framework of God as both Creator and Redeemer, emphasizing His unique relationship with Israel as His chosen people.

Outline

Psalms 135 can be divided into three main movements. The opening section (verses 1–4) is an exhortation to praise the Lord, focusing on His name and covenant relationship with Israel. The middle section (verses 5–12) recounts God's sovereign acts in creation and history, including His judgments on Egypt and the nations. The final section (verses 13–21) contrasts the living God with powerless idols, underscoring the futility of idol worship and reaffirming the call to praise the Lord who reigns forever.



Verse-by-Verse Study

Verses 1-3: The psalm begins with a call to the servants of the Lord to praise His name. The repetition of “praise” emphasizes the communal and continual nature of worship, inviting all who serve God to lift their voices in gratitude and honor.

Verse 4: This verse highlights the Lord’s chosen status for Israel, reminding worshipers that God has set His love upon His people and called them by name, reinforcing the covenant relationship.

Verses 5-7: These verses focus on God’s incomparable greatness as Creator. The psalmist invites the people to acknowledge that the Lord is greater than all gods, as He alone made the heavens and earth, including the sea and everything within.

Verses 8-12: Here, the psalm recounts God’s mighty acts in history, particularly His judgments on Egypt’s gods and the deliverance of Israel. The plagues and the defeat of the Egyptian deities demonstrate God’s power over false gods and His commitment to His covenant people.

Verses 13-14: The Lord’s eternal reign and faithfulness to His promises are proclaimed. The psalmist affirms that God will execute justice for His people and have compassion on His servants.

Verses 15-18: A vivid contrast is drawn between the living God and idols made by human hands. The idols are described as lifeless, unable to speak, see, hear, or act, underscoring their impotence and the futility of idol worship.

Verses 19-21: The psalm concludes with a call for all who worship idols to be silent, while the people of Israel are exhorted to praise the Lord. The final affirmation declares the Lord’s name as worthy of praise forever, bringing the psalm full circle to communal worship.

Key Themes

One key theme is the sovereignty of God as Creator and Judge, who alone deserves worship because of His unmatched power and authority. Another theme is the covenant relationship between God and Israel, which grounds the call to praise and remembrance. The psalm also highlights the futility of idol worship, contrasting lifeless images with the living God who acts on behalf of His people. Finally, the theme of communal worship and



praise is central, emphasizing the corporate nature of remembering God's deeds and proclaiming His name.

Cross-References

Psalms 135's emphasis on God's creative power parallels Psalm 104, which also celebrates the Lord as Creator. The recounting of God's judgments on Egypt connects closely with Exodus 12-15, where the plagues and the crossing of the Red Sea demonstrate God's deliverance. The contrast between the living God and idols echoes Isaiah 44:9-20, which critiques idol makers and worshipers. Finally, the call for praise in Psalm 135 resonates with Psalm 150, the culminating psalm of praise in the Psalter, reinforcing the theme of worshiping God with all one's heart and strength.

Application

Modern disciples can apply Psalm 135 by embracing a posture of continual praise rooted in the recognition of God's sovereignty and faithfulness. This psalm challenges believers to reject modern forms of idolatry—anything that replaces God's rightful place in life—and to trust in God's power to act on their behalf. It also encourages corporate worship as a means of strengthening faith and remembering God's past faithfulness. In times of uncertainty or difficulty, recalling God's mighty acts and covenant promises can provide assurance and hope. Finally, the psalm invites believers to proclaim God's name publicly, affirming His eternal reign and compassion.

Summary

Psalms 135 is a vibrant hymn that calls God's people to praise the Lord for His unmatched sovereignty as Creator and Redeemer. Through a structured movement from exhortation to historical remembrance and a stark contrast with idols, the psalm reinforces God's covenant faithfulness and eternal reign. It culminates in a communal declaration of praise that honors God's power, justice, and compassion. This chapter invites worshipers to remember God's mighty acts, reject false gods, and celebrate the living God who reigns forever.