

Valparaiso University

ValpoScholar

Walter E. Keller's Devotional Studies of Psalms

University Archives & Special Collections

2001

Psalm 135

Walter E. Keller

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.valpo.edu/kellerpsalms>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the University Archives & Special Collections at ValpoScholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in Walter E. Keller's Devotional Studies of Psalms by an authorized administrator of ValpoScholar. For more information, please contact a ValpoScholar staff member at scholar@valpo.edu.

Psalm 135

(RSV)

- ¹ Praise the LORD!**
Praise the name of the LORD,
give praise, O servants of the LORD,
² you that stand in the house of the LORD,
in the courts of the house of our God!
³ Praise the LORD, for the LORD is good;
sing to his name, for he is gracious!
⁴ For the LORD has chosen Jacob for himself,
Israel as his own possession.
- ⁵ For I know that the LORD is great,**
and that our Lord is above all gods.
⁶ Whatever the LORD pleases he does,
in heaven and on earth,
in the seas and all deeps.
⁷ He it is who makes the clouds rise at the end of the earth,
who makes lightnings for the rain
and brings forth the wind from his storehouses.
- ⁸ He it was who smote the first-born of Egypt,**
both of man and of beast;
⁹ who in thy midst, O Egypt,
sent signs and wonders
against Pharaoh and all his servants;
¹⁰ who smote many nations
and slew mighty kings,
¹¹ Sihon, king of the Amorites,
and Og, king of Bashan,
and all the kingdoms of Canaan,
¹² and gave their land as a heritage,
a heritage to his people Israel.
- ¹³ Thy name, O LORD, endures for ever,**
thy renown, O LORD, throughout all ages.
¹⁴ For the LORD will vindicate his people,
and have compassion on his servants.
- ¹⁵ The idols of the nations are silver and gold,**
the work of men's hands.
¹⁶ They have mouths, but they speak not,
they have eyes, but they see not,
¹⁷ they have ears, but they hear not,
nor is there any breath in their mouths.
¹⁸ Like them be those who make them!—
yea, every one who trusts in them!

19 O house of Israel, bless the LORD!
O house of Aaron, bless the LORD!
20 O house of Levi, bless the LORD!
You that fear the LORD, bless the LORD!
21 Blessed be the LORD from Zion,
he who dwells in Jerusalem!
Praise the LORD!

Psalm 135 is a hymn of praise to God as the Lord of creation and history. It appears to be a postexilic mosaic of other Psalms and other parts of the Old Testament beautifully woven together. Psalm 135 begins with a call to all in Israel, and particularly those who serve in the Temple, to praise the LORD for having made them his own possession (verses 1-4).

The reasons to praise the LORD are then enumerated in greater detail. The LORD is great, and has dominion over all other powers and authorities (verse 5). He is Lord over all of creation (verse 6), and graciously exercises his control over the elements (verse 7). He has displayed his authority over history through events culminating in the Exodus from Egypt (verses 8, 9), the defeat of powerful kings and nations of the Transjordan and Canaan (verses 10, 11), and his faithfulness in fulfilling his promise to give the land of Canaan to Israel as a heritage (verse 12). God's providence and deeds are not merely limited to the past, but his name and renown will continue through the ages (verse 13) as he continues to act to save his people (verse 14). In concluding the list of reasons to praise the almighty LORD, the Psalmist contrasts Yahweh with the (so-called) gods of the nations; these gods are nothings, measly and mere man made idols that are ineffective and useless, lacking even the abilities of human senses (verses 15-17). Anyone who trusts in the works of man will become as blind and insensitive as the idols themselves (verse 18). This is a warning for us to choose carefully what we worship, because we will in time take on the characteristics of whatever we do worship.

The final section of the Psalm is a concluding call to praise and bless the LORD, and is addressed to several specific groups: house of Israel (the laymen), house of Aaron (the Priests), the Levites (the Temple caretakers), and "you that fear the LORD." This final group is broadly addressed, and may refer to non-Israelite converts to Judaism or perhaps all of the groups previously named. Let all who fear the LORD, bless the LORD!

Prayer to accompany Psalm 135:

Lord God, you are great and have done mighty deeds; you have shattered the powers of darkness and have shown compassion to your servants. Keep us from being deceived by idols, for there is no god like you, and your renown endures from age to age. Blessed be the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.