

PSALMS

Chapter 75

We give thanks to you, O God; we give thanks, for your name is near. We recount your wondrous deeds. ²“At the set time that I appoint I will judge with equity.

³When the earth totters, and all its inhabitants, it is I who keep steady its pillars. *Selah* ⁴I say to the boastful, ‘Do not boast,’ and to the wicked, ‘Do not lift up your horn; ⁵do not lift up your horn on high, or speak with haughty neck.’” ⁶For not from the east or from the west and not from the wilderness comes lifting up, ⁷but it is God who executes judgment, putting down one and lifting up another. ⁸For in the hand of the LORD there is a cup with foaming wine, well mixed, and he pours out from it, and all the wicked of the earth shall drain it down to the dregs. ⁹But I will declare it forever; I will sing praises to the God of Jacob. ¹⁰All the horns of the wicked I will cut off, but the horns of the righteous shall be lifted up.

Ps 75 A song of reassurance when arrogant worldly powers threaten Israel’s security. The psalm may date from the time of the Assyrian menace (see 2Ki 18:13–19:37). See also Ps 11; 76. Thematic parallels to the song of Hannah (1Sa 2:1–10) are numerous. The worshiping congregation speaks (v. 1), perhaps led in its praise by one of the descendants of Asaph (v. 9). The psalm is framed by thanksgiving (v. 1) and praise (vv. 9–10). Two stanzas of four (Hebrew) lines each form the body of the psalm, and each stanza is composed of two couplets. The first stanza contains a reassuring word from heaven; the second contains a triumphant response from earth. (CSB)

Seems to have been written when Israel was assaulted by unbelieving enemies (e.g., 2Ki 18–19). *choirmaster*. See p 993. *Do Not Destroy*. See Ps 57 intro. *Asaph*. See intros, Ps 73; 74. *Song*. See Ps 46 intro. (TLSB)

Format: V 1, giving thanks; vv 2–3, God will judge; vv 4–5, do not be proud; vv 6–8, recounting God’s judgment; vv 9–10, God promises justice. (TLSB)

This psalm answers the question raised by Psalm 74, “How long will the enemy mock?” We see how this psalm was fulfilled in history: God raised up Assyria to crush the idolatrous northern kingdom of Israel and to chastise the wayward kingdom of Judah. But when the time was right he raised up Babylon to destroy both arrogant Assyria and unrepentant Judah. After seventy years of Judah’s captivity in Babylon were fulfilled, God raised up Cyrus of Persia to destroy Babylon and to restore his people to their land. (PBC)

75 title *For the director of music*. See note on Ps 4 title. (*To the tune of*). See note on Ps 9 title. *Do Not Destroy*. See Ps 57; 58; 59 titles. *Asaph*. See note on Ps 73 title. (CSB)

75:1 The congregation begins with thanksgiving in the form of praise (see 7:17; 28:7; 30:12; 35:18). (CSB)

This psalm is a proclamation of God’s rule over history. This rule provides a theme for the hymns of Gods’ people throughout time and into eternity. The children of Israel sang of victory on the shores of the Red Sea (Exodus 15). Hannah, Mary and Zechariah all rejoiced in the Lord’s triumph over the enemies of his people (1 Samuel 2; Luke 1). Saints and angels in heaven will echo their song (Revelation 15 & 19). (PBC)

Name. God's name often means God Himself (Ex 3:14); cf Mt 28:19–20. (TLSB)

wonderful deeds. To this is usually added a call to praise, summoning all who hear to take up the praise—to acknowledge and joyfully celebrate God's glory, his goodness and all his righteous acts. (CSB)

Cf 1Pt 2:9, where “excellencies” could be rendered “wonderful deeds.” (TLSB)

75:2–5 A reassuring word from above: God will not fail to call the arrogant to account. It is not clear whether a new word from the Lord is heard or whether these verses recall (and perhaps summarize) earlier prophetic words (such as those of Isaiah in 2Ki 19:21–34). (CSB)

75:2 God will not fail to judge—but in his own time. (CSB)

The Lord acts according to His own timetable, also with respect to judging the wicked. (TLSB)

75:3 When, because of the upsurge of evil powers, the whole moral order of the world seems to have crumbled, God still guarantees its stability. (CSB)

Crises often make everything about this life uncertain. (TLSB)

pillars. A figure for that which stabilizes the world order. (CSB)

Figurative way of referring to the Creator's ability to preserve the world and hence keep His people in His care. (TLSB)

The idea probably includes both the moral order of life as well as the physical stability of the world. God has established an order to creation that he maintains by his powerful word (see also Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:3). The Lord keeps everything in balance; ultimately he will remove the things that are always throwing life out of balance. (A Commentary on the Psalms - Ross)

75:4 *boastful ... wicked.* To the psalmists the wicked are both arrogant (see especially Ps 10; 73:4–12; 94:4) and foolish (see 14:1; 74:18, 22; 92:6; 94:8). (CSB)

This is not trivial boasting; it is the attitude of arrogance and self-sufficiency of people who do not think they owe God anything. The injunction to stop boasting is therefore a command to stop putting their trust in themselves and acknowledge there is someone greater than they. (A Commentary on the Psalms - Ross)

lift up your horns. A figure for defiant opposition, based on the action of attacking bulls. “Horn” (see also v. 10) is a common Biblical metaphor for vigor or strength. (CSB)

An image of power. Animals with horns are bold; in Israelite thought, a horned animal with its head held high symbolized strength and triumph. (TLSB p. 842)

75:5 *outstretched neck.* A sign of defiance. (CSB)

Symbol of arrogance. (TLSB)

75:6–8 Triumphant echo from earth: perhaps spoken by the Levitical song leader in elaboration of the comforting word from God. (CSB)

75:6 *east ... west ... wilderness.* “Wilderness” may refer to the area south of Jerusalem; if the original occasion of this psalm was the event of 2Ki 18–19, then the attackers would have come from the north. Hence, the other directions would be potential avenues for help; however, all help comes from the Lord (cf vv 7–8). (TLSB)

75:8 *cup.* A metaphor referring to what the host offers his guests to drink. To the godly the Lord offers a cup of blessings or salvation; he makes the wicked drink from a cup of wrath. (CSB)

Thick wine was mixed with water. The cup of God’s wrath is a common and vivid biblical picture of divine judgment. (TLSB)

mixed with spices. The spices used increased the intoxicating effect (see Pr 9:2, 5; 23:29–30; SS 8:2; Isa 65:11). (CSB)

cup of His wrath. The devastating effects and injuries that came with drunkenness (Pr 23:29–35) illustrated the devastating effects of God’s wrath. The cup from the Lord was too much for them to bear (29:9; 63:6; Ps 75:8; Lm 4:21; Ezk 23:32–34; Ob 16; Hab 2:16; Rv 14:10), causing their sons to faint or fall down drunk. *dregs.* Sediment of the grapes, which settles to the bottom of the container. Cup of God’s wrath will give them their fill of idolatrous self-destruction. (TLSB Note from Isaiah 51:17)

drain it down. Because God pours it out, they have no choice. (CSB)

75:9 Concluding vow to praise God forever for his righteous judgments. (CSB)

Believers respond to God’s judgment with proclamation and praise. (TLSB)

I. Probably the Levitical song leader speaking representatively for the people, but the pronoun may be a communal use of the singular, as in 74:12. (CSB)

Jacob. A synonym for Israel (see Ge 32:28). (CSB)

75:10 It is unclear who is speaking. The action pledged appears unlikely for a Levite but appropriate for a king (see Ps 101). This is not, however, a royal psalm. It seems best, then, to suppose that the speaker(s) of v. 9 recall(s) another word from the Lord. The connection would be: “... the God of Jacob/(who declares,) ‘I will’ ” (CSB)

By proclaiming God’s Word, believers become agents of God’s work (of both judging the wicked and exalting the believing. (TLSB)

Ps 75 God judges the wicked and delivers the believer according to His timetable, not ours. His seeming delay in this should not cause us to lose heart but to continue in repentance and faith. As He has fulfilled all His promises in the past, so He will act in both judgment and salvation. • We give thanks to You, O God, and recount Your wondrous deeds. Amen. (TLSB)