

Royal psalms are those psalms that emphasize God's rule as sovereign Lord and Judge. They acknowledge Him as King and Creator and elicit our worship for so great a God and Savior.

The psalm we'll look at today is the 144th psalm.

Psalm 144:1-15 ^{NAU} *A Psalm of David.* Blessed be the LORD, my rock, Who trains my hands for war, *And* my fingers for battle; ² My lovingkindness and my fortress, My stronghold and my deliverer, My shield and He in whom I take refuge, Who subdues my people under me. ³ O LORD, what is man, that You take knowledge of him? Or the son of man, that You think of him? ⁴ Man is like a mere breath; His days are like a passing shadow. ⁵ Bow Your heavens, O LORD, and come down; Touch the mountains, that they may smoke. ⁶ Flash forth lightning and scatter them; Send out Your arrows and confuse them. ⁷ Stretch forth Your hand from on high; Rescue me and deliver me out of great waters, Out of the hand of aliens ⁸ Whose mouths speak deceit, And whose right hand is a right hand of falsehood. ⁹ I will sing a new song to You, O God; Upon a harp of ten strings I will sing praises to You, ¹⁰ Who gives salvation to kings, Who rescues David His servant from the evil sword. ¹¹ Rescue me and deliver me out of the hand of aliens, Whose mouth speaks deceit And whose right hand is a right hand of falsehood. ¹² Let our sons in their youth be as grown-up plants, And our daughters as corner pillars fashioned as for a palace; ¹³ Let our garners be full, furnishing every kind of produce, *And* our flocks bring forth thousands and ten thousands in our fields; ¹⁴ Let our cattle bear Without mishap and without loss, *Let there be* no outcry in our streets! ¹⁵ How blessed are the people who are so situated; How blessed are the people whose God is the LORD!

David begins by blessing God. Often we think that only God can bless and we will ask God for the kind of blessings that enable us to go forward in this world to His honor and glory. But to bless is not necessarily something we do but what we say from a grateful heart.

The word bless in verse one could also be translated to kneel. And so, when David opens this psalm he is in fact opening with an attitude of worship. The word bless in the N.T. could be translated to speak well of, or to praise.

In fact, it's the Greek word *eulogeo*.

Any thoughts on what English word follows this Greek word?

Eulogy. It's a word most associated with speaking well of those who have died as we recount their lives before friends and family at a funeral.

And so, when we bless God we are speaking well of Him which is to say that we are praising and bowing to Him in humbleness out of thanks for so great a salvation.

In the psalms, be they royal, thanksgiving, hymn or whatever, they are all designed to bless God and lift up His holy name. And so, we in turn, as we use these psalms in song or prayer, are to lift our hearts and lips to God to bless His name and give Him thanks.

Psalm 144:1-2 my rock, Who trains my hands for war, *And* my fingers for battle; ² My lovingkindness and my fortress, My stronghold and my deliverer, My shield and He in whom I take refuge, Who subdues my people under me.

In this portion of the psalm David is using the imagery of a warrior, but not just any warrior, rather, God's warrior.

In what sense do you suppose David sees himself as a warrior in this context?

While it is true that David was a warrior within Israel and while it is true that he physically fought God's battles against those who would come against Israel, the context here has more to do with all of God's enemies coming against God's people in all times.

And we know that these battles are spiritual in nature and this is part of what Paul points out.

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 ³ For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, ⁴ for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. ⁵ *We are* destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and *we are* taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.,

Does this mean that spiritual warfare is limited to the spiritual sphere?

No. In fact, you cannot separate the spiritual from the physical since we operate in both spheres at all times. Our very natures bear this out as we are physical/spiritual beings as God has created us. And so, what happens in the physical world affects our spiritual world and vice versa.

This is why Paul told the Corinthians that the spiritual warfare of his ministry often affected his very physical being at different times.

2 Corinthians 6:1-7 ^{NAU} And working together *with Him*, we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain-- ² for He says, "AT THE ACCEPTABLE TIME I LISTENED TO YOU, AND ON THE DAY OF SALVATION I HELPED YOU." Behold, now is "THE ACCEPTABLE TIME," behold, now is "THE DAY OF SALVATION" -- ³ giving no cause for offense in anything, so that the ministry will not be discredited, ⁴ but in everything commanding ourselves as servants of God, in much endurance, in afflictions, in hardships, in distresses, ⁵ in beatings, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in hunger, ⁶ in purity, in knowledge, in patience, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in genuine love, ⁷ in the word of truth, in the power of God; by the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and the left,

And this is what David is saying. He knew that the physical battles of Israel were spiritually motivated as the seed of the serpent warred against the seed of the woman as promised in the garden after Adam and Eve were confronted by God after they sinned, as He meted out the justice for that act.

But the difference between a soldier being trained by another soldier for physical battle and a soldier being trained to serve God is that God Himself is the One doing the training.

Psalm 144:1-2 Blessed be the LORD, my rock, Who trains my hands for war, *And* my fingers for battle; ² My lovingkindness and my fortress, My stronghold and my deliverer, My shield and He in whom I take refuge,

There is no aspect of our lives in Christ in which God is not personally involved, and that includes our training in righteousness. And it is a training process and part of that process involves the means that God uses for our training.

What would be one of the most important elements that God uses in our training?

John 17:14-17 ¹⁴ "I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. ¹⁵ "I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil *one*. ¹⁶ "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. ¹⁷ "Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.

Sanctification is God's means of training His people and Jesus makes it clear that the word of God is central in that endeavor as the Lord trains us and builds us up in our most holy faith.

But this training is designed by God to involve our obedience to His word in the grace and power of the Holy Spirit.

Jude 1:17-21 ¹⁷ But you, beloved, ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁸ that they were saying to you, "In the last time there will be mockers, following after their own ungodly lusts." ¹⁹ These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit. ²⁰ But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, ²¹ keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life.

Notice what Jude says in verse 20, as he addresses the people of God, in regards to this building up of our faith.

In this verse who is doing the building up?

The saints are held responsible for building themselves up in their most holy faith, but it is not divorced from the real power working in their lives as they submit to this building up process, which Jude makes clear and that is in the Holy Spirit, in the love of God and the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And so, what David is doing is blessing God for being His lovingkindness and fortress, his stronghold and deliverer, along with being his shield in whom he takes refuge.

This is spiritual warfare for David in the midst of the physical enemies surrounding Israel at that time, which by the way, is a picture of what we encounter in this world as we are the Israel of God, surrounded by the enemies of God on every side, but as with David, God is our fortress, our stronghold and deliverer.

Nothing has changed and our God will be faithful to the end.

But notice David's amazement at God's grace toward His people and that translates into more praise from David.

Psalm 144:3-4 ³ O LORD, what is man, that You take knowledge of him? Or the son of man, that You think of him? ⁴ Man is like a mere breath; His days are like a passing shadow.

What is David realizing here as he considers sinful man and a holy righteous God?

Why would God even bother with us, we who hate and rebel against Him by our very natures?

And yet in this very verse we have the answer written out for us because it is this very verse that speaks to God's condescending to man by sending the son of man to redeem a people for Himself.

In speaking of those who will inherit eternal salvation at the end of Hebrews chapter one, the writer of Hebrews continues that thought in the next section of Hebrews two.

Hebrews 2:1-11 ^{NAU} For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away *from it*. ² For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty, ³ how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, ⁴ God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will. ⁵ For He did not subject to angels the world to come, concerning which we are speaking. ⁶ But one has testified somewhere, saying, "WHAT IS MAN, THAT YOU REMEMBER HIM? OR THE SON OF MAN, THAT YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT HIM?" ⁷ "YOU HAVE MADE HIM FOR A LITTLE WHILE LOWER THAN THE ANGELS; YOU HAVE CROWNED HIM WITH GLORY AND HONOR, AND HAVE APPOINTED HIM OVER THE WORKS OF YOUR HANDS;" ⁸ YOU HAVE PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET." For in subjecting all things to him, He left nothing that is not subject to him. But now we do not yet see all things subjected to him. ⁹ But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, *namely*, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone. ¹⁰ For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through

sufferings. ¹¹ For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one *Father*; for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren,

The writer of Hebrews in verse 6 is quoting David in our psalm and in doing so makes clear that this portion of psalm 144 is Messianic in nature thus showing us that despite the fact that man deserves nothing from God, as he is a mere breath and his days are like a passing shadow, God has loved His people enough to take on flesh as the Son of man/Son of God humbled Himself to rescue a people who deserve nothing.

David is amazed at such a proposition, but realizes that only God can deliver him out of the hands of his enemies.

Psalm 144:5-8 ⁵ Bow Your heavens, O LORD, and come down; Touch the mountains, that they may smoke. ⁶ Flash forth lightning and scatter them; Send out Your arrows and confuse them. ⁷ Stretch forth Your hand from on high; Rescue me and deliver me out of great waters, Out of the hand of aliens ⁸ Whose mouths speak deceit, And whose right hand is a right hand of falsehood.

David is assuming that God will do such a thing for him, but he is assuming according to faith and so should we. But as he considers the God who rescues him he then breaks out in more worship and adoration.

Psalm 144:9-11 ⁹ I will sing a new song to You, O God; Upon a harp of ten strings I will sing praises to You, ¹⁰ Who gives salvation to kings, Who rescues David His servant from the evil sword. ¹¹ Rescue me and deliver me out of the hand of aliens, Whose mouth speaks deceit And whose right hand is a right hand of falsehood.

David fully understands that there are residents of God's kingdom and there are aliens who attempt to storm the doors of that kingdom to destroy it, but David knows that God cannot be defeated and that His kingdom will endure with the King of kings ascending to the throne and we His subjects reigning with Him.

And this is seen as David realizes that in God's kingdom there are blessings and honors forever.

Psalm 144:12-15 ¹² Let our sons in their youth be as grown-up plants, And our daughters as corner pillars fashioned as for a palace; ¹³ Let our garners be full, furnishing every kind of

produce, *And our flocks bring forth thousands and ten thousands in our fields;*¹⁴ Let our cattle bear Without mishap and without loss, *Let there be no outcry in our streets!*¹⁵ How blessed are the people who are so situated; How blessed are the people whose God is the LORD!

This is what the world would characterize as a fairy tale land, as they consider Christians living in a fairy tale world.

Notice what David is describing here. He is describing the perfect place and circumstances in which God's people will live. Let's consider the first phrase in verse 12, Let our sons in their youth be as grown-up plants.

What does he mean by this?

NAU Psalm 92:12 The righteous man will flourish like the palm tree, He will grow like a cedar in Lebanon.¹³ Planted in the house of the LORD, They will flourish in the courts of our God.¹⁴ They will still yield fruit in old age; They shall be full of sap and very green,

And then you have the next phrase, And our daughters as corner pillars fashioned as for a palace;

This speaks of beauty, of royalty, of design for a function in the house of God and Solomon uses similar language when speaking of his beloved.

NAU Song of Solomon 4:4 "Your neck is like the tower of David, Built with rows of stones On which are hung a thousand shields, All the round shields of the mighty men.

You might not want to describe your wife in such terms, but the woman Solomon describes is actually the church, the people of God who are described as the bride of Christ as we will rule and reign with Him forever as He has built us into a spiritual house for His glory.

1 Peter 2:4-5 ⁴ And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, ⁵ you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Psalm 144:13-14 ¹³ Let our garners be full, furnishing every kind of produce, *And* our flocks bring forth thousands and ten thousands in our fields; ¹⁴ Let our cattle bear Without mishap and without loss, *Let there be* no outcry in our streets!

In a world where there is famine, and disease and drought David dreams of a place and a time where all things flourish without limit and there is no mishap or loss or outcry in the streets. He speaks of a future that is blessed and peaceful.

Psalm 144:15 ¹⁵ How blessed are the people who are so situated; How blessed are the people whose God is the LORD!

What do you suppose David is speaking of?

Revelation 21:1-7 ^{NAU} Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer *any* sea. ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, ⁴ and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be *any* death; there will no longer be *any* mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away." ⁵ And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." And He said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true." ⁶ Then He said to me, "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost. ⁷ "He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son."

David's Royal psalm speaks to the royalty of God and His people who share in that kingdom and inheritance, whose God is the Lord. And we are blessed.