

Pastor Steven J. Cole  
Flagstaff Christian Fellowship  
123 S. Beaver Street  
Flagstaff, Arizona 86001  
[www.fcfonline.org](http://www.fcfonline.org)

## GOD FANATICS

Psalm 145

By

Steven J. Cole

November 8, 2009

© Steven J. Cole, 2009

For access to previous sermons or to subscribe to weekly sermons via email go to: [www.fcfonline.org/sermons](http://www.fcfonline.org/sermons)

Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture  
Quotations are from the New American  
Standard Bible, Updated Edition  
© The Lockman Foundation

November 8, 2009  
Psalms 2008-09, Lesson 39

## God Fanatics Psalm 145

We've all been around fanatics. Maybe you are one! Baseball fanatics are quick to talk about baseball. They know all of the key players and their statistics. They can describe all the game-winning plays. They can tell you how the manager of their favorite team should have done something differently to win the championship. The same can be said of any sports fanatic. They are consumed with their favorite sport.

Others are fanatics about cars or music or art or politics. Whatever their passion, they talk about it quickly, enthusiastically, and repeatedly to anyone who will listen. No matter where the conversation may be, they take every opportunity to turn it towards their favorite subject.

There is nothing wrong with being passionate about any of those subjects within proper limits. But as those who have experienced the grace and love of our Savior, *He* should be our main passion. We who know our glorious God should be first and foremost *God fanatics*. We should always be ready to talk about God's greatness, grace and goodness. Everywhere we look, we should see evidences of His glory, which should spill over in endless praise.

That is the subject of Psalm 145, the last specifically identified psalm of David. It is the only psalm with the title, "of praise." It introduces the grand finale of praise that runs through Psalm 150. It is also the last of 8 acrostic psalms (Psalms 9-10, 25, 34, 37, 111, 112, 119, 145), where each verse begins with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet. So Psalm 145 is the A to Z of praise.

For some unknown reason, Psalm 145 is missing the Hebrew letter *nun*, which should go at the end of verse 13. The LXX, one Hebrew manuscript, and one of the Dead Sea Scrolls insert the missing verse, which some of our English translations add. The ESV puts it in brackets and renders it, "The Lord is faithful in all his words, and kind in all his works." In Hebrew, it only varies in two words from verse 17, "The Lord is righteous in all His ways

and kind in all His deeds.” It may have been in the original, as it is hard to understand why David would deliberately have skipped it. But we cannot be certain. Some of the other acrostics have irregularities as well. The main idea of Psalm 145 is,

If you are captivated with God as your King and Savior, you will be fanatical about praising Him.

The acrostic structure of the psalm makes it somewhat difficult to outline, in that there are many repetitions of themes. Some of the repetition may be due to the fact that David is not approaching the subject in a calm, logical manner. Rather, he's a raving God fanatic! But we can roughly divide it into four main sections, plus a concluding summary: (1) Praise God because He is so great (1-7); (2) Praise God because of His grace (8-9); (3) Praise God because of His glorious kingdom (10-13); (4) Praise God because of His goodness toward all who call upon Him (14-20); and, (5) Praise God forever and ever (21).

1. Praise God every day forever and ever because He is so great (145:1-7).

We can break this down into three components:

A. Praise God because He Himself is great.

“I will extol You, my God, O King, and I will bless Your name forever and ever. Every day I will bless You, and I will praise Your name forever and ever. Great is the Lord, and highly to be praised, and His greatness is unsearchable” (145:1-3).

Although David was the most powerful king in that part of the world in that day, he does not hesitate to bow before God and acknowledge Him to be his King. In a day when great kings lived in splendor and often demanded that their subjects bow before them as God, it is significant that David proclaims, in effect, “I am not God. In fact, I am nothing in comparison with the living and true God. He is my King. He alone is great. He alone is worthy of all praise. I extol Him!”

Don't miss the little pronoun, *my*, in verse 1. You cannot praise God unless He is *your* God. It is not enough if He is your parents' God. He must be *your* God. Your wife's God won't do. He must be *your* God. For Him to be *your* God, you must come as a

needy sinner to the cross, where God sent His own Son to bear the penalty for sin that you deserve. God set His seal of approval on the substitutionary death of Jesus by raising Him from the dead. You must trust in the crucified and risen Savior as your Lord God.

When Thomas, who was doubting the resurrection, saw the risen Lord Jesus, his doubts turned instantly to faith as he proclaimed (John 20:28), "My Lord and my God!" John goes on (20:31) to tell us that all of the signs that are written in his gospel "have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name." So for you to join David in this psalm of praise, you must have put your faith in the risen Lord Jesus, so that you know him as *your* Lord and *your* God.

David is compelled to praise God because He Himself is so great (v. 3): "Great is the Lord, and highly to be praised, and His greatness is unsearchable." As David goes on to say (v. 5), God is glorious in the splendor of His majesty. It's as if David is piling up all of the words that he can think of to describe God's greatness! But as the word *unsearchable* shows, words fall short. God is far greater than all of the great words that we can think of combined! The apostle Paul uses similar language when he talks about "the unfathomable riches of Christ" (Eph. 3:8). Or when he exclaims (Rom. 11:33), "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!"

Where do you suppose David got his understanding of the unsearchable greatness of God? Later, the prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel would have dazzling visions of God in His glory, but there is no record of David ever having such a vision. Twice the Lord would appear to David's son, Solomon (1 Kings 11:9), but David never had such an experience. So where did he get his understanding of God's greatness?

In Psalm 19, he tells us that he had two sources: God's creation and God's revealed word, which for David probably consisted mainly of the five books of Moses. As David meditated on the glory of God as revealed in His creation, he realized how great God is. He spoke the universe and all of life into existence by the word of His power (Ps. 33:6, 9). Marla and I have been watching

the "Planet Earth" DVD's, which show many amazing facts about the earth and the creatures on it. If David had seen these films, which tell of many wonders that he didn't know, he would have been even more in awe of God's unsearchable greatness!

We know that David had the Law of Moses, because in verse 8 he quotes from Exodus 34:6. It comes from that great scene when Moses asked God to reveal His glory to him (Exod. 33:18). The Lord responded by telling Moses that no one can see His face and live. But he would pass by and let Moses get a glimpse of His back. As He passed by, God proclaimed the words that David cites here in verse 8, which is the most frequently repeated verse in the Old Testament (also in Neh. 9:17; Ps. 86:15; Ps. 103:8; Joel 2:13; and, Jonah 4:2). By meditating on God's word, David came to realize that God's greatness is unsearchable.

As I often say, one of the most important lessons for each of us to learn is, "God is God; I am not God!" *Only* He is great! In 1715, Louis XIV of France died. He called himself, "Louis the Great." His court was the most magnificent in all of Europe. He even planned his funeral to be spectacular. To dramatize his greatness, his body was put in a golden coffin. He had given orders that the cathedral be dimly lit, with only a special candle set above the coffin. Thousands waited in hushed silence. Then Bishop Massillon began to speak. Slowly reaching down, he snuffed out the candle, saying, "Only God is great!" David would have shouted, "Amen!"

B. Praise God because His mighty works are great.

"One generation shall praise Your works to another, and shall declare Your mighty acts. On the glorious splendor of Your majesty and on Your wonderful works, I will meditate. Men shall speak of the power of Your awesome acts, and I will tell of Your greatness. They shall eagerly utter the memory of Your abundant goodness and will shout joyfully of Your righteousness" (145:4-7).

God's mighty acts certainly include the work of creation. It is not by accident that Satan has sought to undermine God's greatness as Creator through the evil myth of evolution. As you know, the Bible begins by confronting us with the fact of God as Creator. The universe, our planet, and all life on our planet are not the result of sheer chance plus time. It is utterly ludicrous to think so, in that

all the evidence points to intricate design. Those who attribute creation to anything other than the greatness of God are robbing Him of a good part of the praise due to His name.

God's mighty works also include His work of redeeming His people and judging the wicked. Redemption began after the fall in the garden, when God graciously clothed Adam and Eve with animal skins and promised that the seed of the woman would crush the head of the serpent (Gen. 3:15). It continued in God's gracious call to Abram, when He promised to make a great nation from his descendants and to bless all nations through him (Gen. 12:1-3). It was further demonstrated in the exodus, when the blood of the Passover lamb protected the firstborn in Israel and God parted the Red Sea to lead His people out of bondage. That same episode also demonstrated His judgment on those in spiritual darkness, as the Egyptians experienced His wrath. Both redemption and judgment would supremely be seen when God sent His own Son to be the final, sufficient sacrifice for our sins. In that sacrifice, God reveals Himself as being both abundantly good and absolutely righteous (Ps. 145:7).

Obviously, for David to be so caught up with God's greatness as revealed in His creation and His mighty works, he had to spend a fair amount of time studying and thinking about these things. If we want to be moved by these truths, we must also take time regularly to meditate on God's Word and His mighty works.

- C. Because God Himself and His mighty works are so great, we should praise Him every day, from generation to generation, forever and ever.

Three times in this psalm (1, 2, 21) David resolves to praise or bless God "forever and ever." It's as if forever isn't long enough! He has to add, "and ever." The book of Revelation indicates that the song of praise will go on throughout eternity, because God is infinitely worthy of our praises.

But David doesn't just project things out into some far away eternity. He also resolves to bless God every day (v. 2). Last week, we looked at David's lesson on prayer (Ps. 143). I would guess that while most of us would admit that our prayer lives are not all that they should be, at least we do pray every day, often many times a

day. But do we praise God every day, many times a day? If He is as great as David affirms, shouldn't we praise Him every day? If we don't, the root cause may be that we are not captivated by His glorious majesty and unsearchable greatness.

David also affirms that one generation shall praise God's works to another (v. 4). Parents will tell their children, who will tell their children, as long as human life shall last, of the greatness of God. Again, this implies that the parents have experienced personally something of God's greatness in saving them from their sins. If we do not rejoice daily in Christ as *our* Savior, we can't pass it on to our children. So David's first lesson is, praise God every day forever and ever because He is so great.

## 2. Praise God because of His grace (145:8-9).

"The Lord is gracious and merciful; slow to anger and great in lovingkindness. The Lord is good to all, and His mercies are over all His works" (145:8-9).

As I said, verse 8 cites Exodus 34:6. It's a verse of great hope for sinners! John Calvin (*Calvin's Commentaries* [Baker], on Ps. 145:8, p. 275) calls this verse "as clear and satisfactory a description of the nature of God ... as can anywhere be found." He adds (*ibid.*) that the proper view of God "is that which invites us to seek after him." He asks (*ibid.*), "If it be true that God is not only willing to befriend us, but is spoken of as touched with sympathy for our miseries, so as to be all the kinder to us the more that we are miserable, what folly were it not to fly to him without delay?"

So if verse 8 is not your mental image of God, if you think of God as out to zap you for your sins, you do not have the biblical picture of God. He went to extreme cost to provide a way that He could be both righteous and merciful in forgiving your sins. He maintained His righteousness in that Jesus paid the full penalty for sin on the cross. If you will trust in Christ's sacrifice on your behalf, you will praise God forever because of His abundant grace.

## 3. Praise God because of His glorious kingdom (145:10-13).

"All Your works shall give thanks to You, O Lord, and Your godly ones shall bless You. They shall speak of the glory of Your kingdom and talk of your power; to make known to the sons of men Your mighty acts and the glory of the majesty of Your king-

dom. Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and Your dominion endures throughout all generations" (145:10-13).

As we have seen, the Psalms repeatedly proclaim that God is the rightful Sovereign over the universe: "The Lord has established His throne in the heavens, and His sovereignty rules over all" (103:19). "But our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases" (115:3). While not every enemy is yet subject to the Lord's Messiah, the Lord scoffs at those who think they can overthrow His rule (Ps. 2:1-4). He has seated David's Lord, Jesus Christ, at His right hand until He makes His enemies a footstool for His feet (Ps. 110:1). When King Jesus comes in power and glory to crush every enemy and to reign on the throne of David, the earth will know the glory and majesty of His everlasting kingdom.

In the meanwhile, make sure that your heart and your home are in submission to the King. Things would go so much more smoothly in our lives and Christ would be exalted if we subjected every thought, word, and deed to the lordship of King Jesus!

4. Praise God because of His goodness towards all who call upon Him (145:14-20).

I do not have time to read all these verses here, but they ooze with the goodness, kindness, and mercy of God toward all of His creatures. David's observation about God opening His hand and giving food to satisfy the desire of every living thing (vv. 15-16) goes beyond people to every animal on earth. If He cares for the sparrow, surely He will care for His children, as Jesus pointed out (Matt. 6:26; 10:29-31).

Note, also, verse 17 which affirms *both* God's righteousness and His kindness. They are *not* in opposition, as we might think. His righteous standards *are* kind, because they are for our good.

Also, verses 18 & 19 are worth memorizing and claiming often, "The Lord is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth. He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He will also hear their cry and will save them." If we fear Him, our desires will be in line with His will. So when we call upon Him, He will be near to us and hear our cry to save us. A. R. Fausset comments (*A Commentary Critical, Experimental, and Practical on the Old and New Testaments*, [Eerdmans], 2:406), "God hears His people as truly

when He withholds what is for their hurt as when He grants what is for their good.”

Verse 20 is also a wonderful promise, “The Lord keeps all who love Him, but all the wicked He will destroy.” Those who fear God (v. 19) also love Him (v. 20). There is no tension between the holy fear of God and heartfelt love for Him. God’s promise to keep us unto the day of salvation is a great comfort. His promise to judge the wicked is also a comfort to those who rejoice in His righteous judgment.

Thus David has told us to praise God always because both He and His works are so great. Praise Him because of His grace. Praise Him because of His glorious kingdom. Praise Him because of His goodness towards all who call upon Him. He ends with a final determination to praise God:

5. Praise God forever and ever (145:21).

“My mouth will speak the praise of the Lord, and all flesh will bless His holy name forever and ever.” There is a sense of determination in David’s words. In fact, he repeatedly states, “I will” in this psalm (vv. 1 [2x]; 2 [2x]; 5; 6; 21). He also affirms repeatedly that others will testify of God’s greatness and sing His praises.

It is interesting that in nearly every psalm, David (or other psalmists) are in some overwhelming trouble (143:3-4). And yet the psalms are filled with praises to God. The only way that we will join the psalmists in praising God every day, even in times of trial, is if we resolve to do so. To do that, we must focus on His glorious majesty and splendor. Then we can join David in becoming God fanatics—those who can’t stop speaking of His glorious name.

### Conclusion

I compiled a list from this psalm of who God is and of what God fanatics look like:

Characteristics of God:

- He rules as King over all forever (1, 11-13).
- His greatness is unsearchable (3).
- He does mighty works (4-6).
- He is glorious in His majestic splendor (5).
- He is full of abundant goodness to all (7, 9).

- He is righteous in all His ways (7, 17).
- He is gracious and merciful (8).
- He is slow to anger and great in lovingkindness (8).
- He sustains all who fall and raises up all who are bowed down (14).
- He gives food to the hungry (15-16).
- He is kind in all His deeds (17).
- He is near to all who call upon Him in truth (18).
- He fulfills the desire and saves those who fear Him (19).
- He keeps all who love Him (20).
- He will destroy all the wicked (20).
- His name is holy (21).

Characteristics of God fanatics:

- They extol God and bless His name continually (1-2).
- They are enthralled with His greatness (3).
- They tell the next generation about His mighty works (4).
- They meditate often on God's glorious majesty and wonderful works (5).
- They tell others about God's greatness (6).
- They bubble over with God's abundant goodness and His righteousness (7).
- They are awed by His grace, love, goodness, and mercy (8-9).
- They rejoice in the majesty of His kingdom (11-13).
- They are touched by His kindness to the needy (14-20).
- They look to God to meet their daily needs (15-16).
- They know God as both righteous and kind (17).
- They call upon the Lord in prayer (18).
- They both fear and love God (19-20).
- Their desires are satisfied in the Lord as their Savior and keeper (19-20).
- They know that He will judge the wicked (20b).
- They determine to speak God's praise and bless His holy name forever (21).

I pray that we all join the ranks of unabashed God fanatics!

## Application Questions

1. What has helped you most to get a bigger view of God's greatness? What has most hindered you from it?
2. Some Christians claim that God used evolution to create the world. How does this view undermine God's greatness?
3. Shouldn't praise be spontaneous? How, then, can we resolve to do it? How can we do it if we don't feel like doing it?
4. Why is the fear of God not opposed to loving Him? Which needs more emphasis in your life?

Copyright, Steven J. Cole, 2009, All Rights Reserved.