

## **Thankfulness for the Present and the Future**

In my last article entitled, “Thankfulness for the Word of God,” we looked in verses 1-3 of Psalm 138. There we saw the preeminence of God’s word as well as prayers answered. No matter what’s going on in the world around us at any given moment Christians, ultimately, have nothing to fear and everything to praise God for. Today we want to begin to look at verses 4-6 under the heading:

### **—Thankfulness for the Kingdom—both Present and Future**

In these verses we get a limited glimpse of something that’s yet to come—for David as well as for all Christians. David is writing of something that “shall” happen in the future. Notice verse 4: “All the kings of the earth shall give you thanks, O LORD, for they have heard the words of your mouth....” King David is speaking of an expectation that kings and rulers would one day lead their people in the worship of this “faithful” God. David longed to see this happen in his day as Christians do in our world today. David is reminding us of what theologians call the “already and not yet.” Like David, we should look forward to the “not yet,” a future time when all kings and rulers shall bow down and give God the praise he deserves.

In 1 Chronicles 16:23-26, David is given a prophecy which spoke of God’s worthiness to be praised by all peoples. The Psalms also speak of a time when obedience to God would spread throughout the earth and would include both Jews and Gentiles (Ps. 67; 97). The prophets speak of this truth as well (Isaiah 52:7-15; Nahum 1:15). And yet, scripture is clear that, before this will fully and finally happen, those who have chosen not to worship God will be judged. Still, by God’s grace, both rulers and other people are, even now, streaming into his kingdom—a kingdom that awaits a future consummation. As we look at verse 6 of our Psalm, David goes back to what’s happening in his lifetime. “....though the LORD is high, he regards the lowly....” These are God’s people who, by his grace, recognize their need for redemption from their sins. Those who are truly God’s people will want to worship him and yet, those who live in “pride” he keeps at a distance (vs. 6b). Let’s move on now from Thankfulness for the Kingdom—both Present and Future, to:

### **—Thankfulness for God’s Providential Care and Purpose for Us**

Notice now that David gives praise and thanks for God’s providential watch-care over all of the events of his life. “Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve my life; you stretch out your hand against the wrath of my enemies, and your right hand delivers me.” (vs. 7) David—like Christians today—knows that life is filled with troubles and that we’ll face suffering until we go home to be with the Lord. And yet, what a great comfort it is to know that God is providentially caring for us always. We rest in the knowledge that everything that happens has a purpose in God’s plan for us. The “right hand” (vs. 7) of God signifies his power and strength to intercede for us as well as to sustain us in every situation (Ps. 60:5; 139:10). “The LORD will fulfill his purpose for me; your steadfast love, O LORD, endures forever. Do not forsake the work of your hands.” (vs. 8) David knows that God will “fulfill his purpose.” Interestingly, the purpose of

God for King David and his kingdom was both present and future. "And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever."  
(2 Samuel 7:16)

Earlier I mentioned that the consummation of the kingdom was yet future. Christians know that this promise of a kingdom that will be established forever points forward from king David's time to great David's greater Son, the only perfect king, Jesus Christ (Matthew 2:2; 9:27; 27:11) who deserves to be worshiped. Presently, the genuine worship of the triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is taking place in the church (John 4:20-26; 1 Tim. 2; 3:14-16) where God's true people love to be under the rule of our King. What a blessing to know that King Jesus is in complete control of his kingdom. He has "all authority in heaven and on earth." (Matthew 28:18) With all that's going on in our world today; with all of the uncertainty and discontentment, what a blessing to know that Christians have so much to be thankful for, both for the present and the future.

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