

## THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

### **Psalms: God's Nurture Of The Inner Man In The Life Of Faith**

#### **CXXXVIII: Praising God For Fulfilling His Word**

**(Psalm 138:1-8)**

#### **I. Introduction**

- A. God has revealed basic truths about His divinity and power in creation (Romans 1:20), but only through His special revelation of written Scripture do we know Him and His heart in a personal way, Psalm 19:7-13.
- B. Psalm 138:1-8 was David's expression of praise to the Lord for fulfilling His Word so as to exalt its importance in his walk. We view this psalm for our insight and edification (as follows):

#### **II. Praising God For Fulfilling His Word, Psalm 138:1-8.**

- A. The numbering system of the psalm in the Hebrew text matches that of the English Bible (Kittel, Biblia Hebraica, p. 1094), so we stay with the English Bible's numbering system for this lesson.
- B. We then translate Psalm 138:1-8 (as follows):
  - 1. "A psalm of David. I will praise You; with my whole heart conspicuously in front of (*neged*, B. D. B., A Heb. and Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 617) the [pagan] gods I will sing Your praise," Psalm 138:1.
  - 2. "I will bow down toward Your holy temple and will praise Your name for Your loyal love and for Your faithfulness, because You have exalted above all your name (i. e., "all the previous manifestations of thy nature," J. A. Alexander, The Psalms, 1975, p. 536) Your word," Psalm 138:2.
  - 3. "When I called, You answered me; You made me bold and stouthearted," Psalm 138:3.
  - 4. "May all the kings of the earth praise You, O Jahweh, when they hear the words of Your mouth," v. 4.
  - 5. "May they sing of the ways of Jahweh, for the glory of Jahweh is great," Psalm 138:5.
  - 6. "For Jahweh is on high, and He looks upon the lowly, but the proud He knows from afar," Psalm 138:6.
  - 7. "Though I walk in the midst of trouble, You preserve my earthly life; You stretch out Your hand against the anger of my foes; with Your right hand [of ability] You save me," Psalm 138:7.
  - 8. "Jahweh will complete on my behalf (what He has begun); Your loyal love, O Jahweh, endures forever -- do not abandon the works of Your hands," Psalm 138:8.
- C. We note significant observations regarding this psalm (as follows):
  - 1. This psalm highlights the value of God's Word, most likely that of a personal promise to David, v. 3.
  - 2. David clarified that he greatly exalted the Lord even conspicuously before all of the false pagan gods around him (v. 1) for His loyal love and faithfulness (v. 2a) for *specifically* exalting His **Word above all** of the Lord's manifestations of His attributes and nature implied by reference to His "Name"! David thus realized that God had worked to reveal that His Word was more important and valuable in David's existence and life than all the attributes and characteristics of God's nature themselves!
  - 3. God had answered David when he had called on the Lord for help, and God had made David both bold and stouthearted amid intimidating circumstances, what had impressed David that the Lord had greatly wanted to honor His promise to David that David had trusted in making his prayer, v. 3.
  - 4. David thus anticipated all the kings of the earth [in Christ's Messianic Kingdom] praising the Lord, hearing the words of His mouth, singing of the Lord's ways as the glory of the Lord was great, v. 4-5.
  - 5. God's greatness is measured not only in terms of raw divine power, but in His capacity to favor the lowly while distancing Himself from the arrogant wicked, in preserving the lives of those who walk in the midst of trouble, preserving them from the anger of their foes, v. 6-7. Only a God of compassion and grace very unlike the selfish, capricious pagan gods, would do such considerate things for the helpless and infirmed!
  - 6. David thus believed that God would complete what He had begun to perform in his life (v. 8a), and David closed the psalm by asking God to continue with that work in him and not to abandon it, v. 8b.

***Lesson:*** *David praised the Lord for exalting His Word above even all His other aspects of attributes and nature by wonderfully fulfilling it in David's life in a time of great personal need. David anticipated the time when the kings of the earth would join in this praise in Christ's future Kingdom and he looked forward to God's continuing to work in his life and heart and thus complete His discipling work in David's life.*

***Application:*** *(1) May we praise God for the great ways He supports His Word, and thus keep trusting its message. (2) May we rest in the reality that what God has said He will do for us He will indeed perform so as to finish His work in our lives! (3) May we praise God for His condescension to help us in our times of helplessness.*