

TEXTUAL ISSUES PSALM 138

Psalm 138. *YAHWEH is sovereign, yet my savior.* I AM is praised with all that I am. Whether among in the heavens among heavenly beings or among the gods others worship, I will sing praises to THE LORD GOD YAHWEH.

I will bow down toward Your holy temple;⁹ I will praise Your name—for Your love, and for Your faithfulness. Above everything in creation, You have exalted Your authority, and Your word. When I called out to You, You answered. When I called out to You, You made me bold, vociferously so.

When all the powers of earth hear Your words, may they praise You, O YAHWEH. May they sing of the ways of THE LORD GOD YAHWEH, for the glory of YAHWEH is great.

Even though Yahweh is above us all, He experiences¹⁰ the lowly—as for the proud, He keeps His distance. Though

I walk in the midst of trouble, You preserve my life, for Your hand is stretched out in front of the anger of my enemies—Your right hand saves me.

THE LORD GOD YAHWEH ALMIGHTY will fulfill His purpose for me. Your love, O YAHWEH, endures forever. Do not abandon the work of Your creation.

Q What do you think of the psalmist using God's name so often (7 times) here?

Q What does it mean to praise YAHWEH with "all your heart?"

Q Which gods need to hear your praise of YAHWEH?

PSALM 138

I will praise you, O LORD, with all my heart; before the "gods" I will sing your praise.

²I will bow down toward your holy temple and will praise your name for your love and your faithfulness, for you have exalted above all things your name and your word.

³When I called, you answered me; you made me bold and stouthearted.

⁴May all the kings of the earth praise you, O LORD, when they hear the words of your mouth.

⁵May they sing of the ways of the LORD, for the glory of the LORD is great.

⁶Though the LORD is on high, he looks upon the lowly, but the proud he knows from afar. ⁷Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve my life; you stretch out your hand against the anger of my foes, with your right hand you save me.

⁸The LORD will fulfill his purpose for me; your love, O LORD, endures forever—do not abandon the works of your hands.

⁹ If David is the author, then "the holy temple" is a reference to the tent he set up for the ark (2Samuel 6:17)

¹⁰7200(e) yir-eh, הִירָא, *see*; so as to learn to know: with accusative of person. Deuteronomy 33:9 (רַהֲבִי עֵינַי); with accusative of thing Deuteronomy 1:19,31; Deuteronomy 11:2; Job 11:11 (עֵינַי), Psalm 16:10; Psalm 49:10; "have experience of," Jeremiah 5:12; Jeremiah 14:13; Jeremiah 20:18; Jeremiah 42:14; Zephaniah 3:15; Psalm 89:49; Ecclesiastes 5:17, הִירָא אֲנִינִי בְּעֵינַי שָׁנָה Ecclesiastes 8:16; תִּראַי מָה Genesis 20:10 i.e., *what hast thou encountered, that . . . ?* See <http://biblehub.com/interlinear/psalms/138.htm>

2

- Q Why did the psalmist note “bowing down toward” the holy temple?
- Q On what basis did he praise the Lord God? What was unique about these attributes?

3

- Q When he called, YAHWEH answered. How so?
- Q How has YAHWEH answered your calls, and for what did you call on Him?

4-5

- Q What words of YAHWEH should evoke praise from earthly powers?
- Q Of what is YAHWEH’S glory which should be sung about?

6-7

- Q What is unique about YAHWEH’S approach to humankind? [Above yet below.] With whom does He prefer to be with? Why? Why not the proud?
- Q When in trouble, He preserves us. From what? Why?

8

- Q What purpose is being fulfilled for you? What enduring attribute of YAHWEH effectuates this purpose?
- Q What is the psalmist asking when calling on the LORD GOD to abandon not the work/works of His hands?