

Because I remember what He has done for me.

He provides: food

The Covenant he has made with us is permanent.

He displays his power by giving us great blessings we have not earned.

He gives us trustworthy precepts, commands, guidance that we are to perform.

He delivers us, redeems us from our slavery.

Why should I give thanks with all my heart?

² Great are the works of the LORD, studied by all who delight in them.

³ Full of splendor and majesty is his work, and his righteousness endures forever.

⁴ He has caused his wondrous works to be remembered; the LORD is gracious and merciful.

⁵ He provides food for those who fear him; he remembers his covenant forever.

⁶ He has shown his people the power of his works, in giving them the inheritance of the nations.

⁷ The works of his hands are faithful and just; all his precepts are trustworthy;

⁸ they are established forever and ever, to be performed with faithfulness and uprightness.

⁹ He sent redemption to his people; he has commanded his covenant forever. Holy and awesome is his name!

Because of what I know about the LORD.

He does great things.

His works are beyond comprehension.

He is righteous (holy) always and forever.

He causes, commands our remembrance because He is gracious and merciful.

He sustains us. He never forgets the Covenant he made.

He demonstrates his massive power by giving prosperity and blessing.

His works reflect him: faithful and just.

His commands are trustworthy, and forever established

He delivers his people. His covenant is certain forever.

He is Holy and awesome



This and the next psalm form a pair: both begin with 'Hallelujah' or Praise the LORD; both are 'acrostic'. Psalm 111 is a succinct and masterful acrostic poem. It consists of twenty-two phrases (excluding verse 1a), each of which begins with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet. In a mere seventy-two words, the psalmist summarizes the whole history of God's deliverance of ancient Israel. Psalm 111 focuses on the goodness of God shown in 'the works of his hands', such as his provision of food, which links the desert journey with the harvest, celebrated particularly in the Feast of Tabernacles. Psalm 112 follows, bringing out how the man of God seeks to emulate him in generosity.

Psalm 111 is not merely about the past.

We're also directed to the future with five "forevers."

His righteousness endures forever (verse 3)

He remembers his covenant forever (verse 5)

His precepts are established forever (verse 8)

He commands his covenant forever (verse 9)

His praise endures forever (verse 10)

Psalm 111

Praise the LORD!

(א, aleph) I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart,
(ב, beth) in the company of the upright, in the congregation.

Praise the LORD [Hallelujah]:

The prophet sets himself as an example, to lead others to engage in the celebration of God's praises. His resolution to praise God consists of two parts; that he would celebrate God's praises with all his heart, and that he would do it publicly, in the assembly of the faithful. He very properly begins with heart-praise, because it is much better to praise in secret, and when no one is conscious of it, than to lift up our voice, and shout forth his praises with insincere lips.

² (ג, gimel) *Great are the works of the LORD,*
 (ד, daleth) *studied by all who delight in them.*
³ (ה, he) *Full of splendor and majesty*
is his work,
 (ו, vau,) *and his righteousness*
endures forever.
⁴ (ז, zain) *He has caused his wondrous works*
to be remembered;
 (ח, cheth) *the LORD is gracious and merciful.*
⁵ (ט, teth) *He provides food*
for those who fear him;
 (י, yod) *he remembers his covenant forever.*
⁶ (כ, caph) *He has shown his people the*
power of his works,
 (ל, lamed) *in giving them the inheritance of*
the nations.
⁷ (מ, mem) *The works of his hands are*
faithful and just;
 (נ, nun) *all his precepts are trustworthy;*
⁸ (ס, samech) *they are established*
forever and ever,
 (ע, ain) *to be performed with faithfulness and*
uprightness.
⁹ (פ, phe) *He sent redemption to his people;*
 (צ, tzaddi) *he has commanded*
his covenant forever.
 (ק, koph) *Holy and awesome is his name!*
¹⁰ (ר, resh) *The fear of the LORD is the*
beginning of wisdom;
 (ש, schin) *all those who practice it have*
a good understanding.
 (ת, tau,) *His praise endures forever!*

Great are the works of the LORD:

The works of Jehovah are overwhelmingly great; they are the grounds for our praise of God. When observed and "studied", we find them full of splendor and majesty. The Hebrew word translated "wonderful deeds" is niphla'oth." It means "something that I simply cannot understand," or "something different, striking, remarkable; something transcending the power of human intelligence and imagination." The word is used many times in recounting the events of the exodus from Egypt. We find it in the stories of the ten plagues, the crossing of the Red Sea, the manna, the provision of water in the desert. All of these are referred to as "wonderful deeds," things transcending the power of human intelligence and imagination.

Full of splendor and majesty:

When we recognize something as full of splendor and majesty, careful attention is no chore. When we are fascinated, when we marvel at some wonder, when our hearts rise with delight in some reality, the natural and unavoidable response is to move further up and further in, to seek after the object of our affection, to devote concerted effort to observing, understanding, and evaluating what we love and then to feel, apply, and express what we've seen. Ever seen a rainbow, a sunset, the milky way?

He has caused his wondrous works to be remembered:

For the LORD to cause his marvelous works to be remembered, is equivalent to the doing of works worthy of being remembered, or the renown of which shall continue forever. The LORD commanded (caused) Israel to gather in Jerusalem to celebrate 7 feasts each year (see Lev. 23). In Springtime: Passover, Unleavened Bread, First Fruits, followed 50 days later by the Feast of Pentecost. Then in the fall months there are three required feasts: Trumpets, Atonement and Tabernacles. Each gathering was a memorial to the past events where God has acted by wondrous works of majesty to deliver and lead his chosen people. Psalm 111 was probably used during the Feast of Tabernacles, which joyously celebrated harvest time and focused on the provision of God during the exodus, as well as his current enduring provision per his covenant.

He provides... he remembers his covenant: The LORD made a covenant with the people he chose to be his own and as a result he manifested great kindness towards them. In a similar way the goodness which we receive from him is the result of our adoption into his family. Just as the LORD provided daily food (manna and quail) during the exodus and then "giving them the inheritance of the nations" (defeated cities and lands they did not build), he "remembers his covenant forever", even with us who are adopted into his covenant family. The LORD is a covenant keeper and we can entrust our future to him.

He has shown... the power of his works: The possession of the Holy Land was not acquired by mere human power, but it was given to Israel by Divine power, and through the working of many miracles. This power demonstration testified to the descendants of Abraham what incomparable power he has and has invested in their future well being.

He sent redemption to his people: The deliverance of his people was the commencement of their salvation. God had established his covenant with Abraham, which also was the occasion of the redemption of the people; yet what is here mentioned refers exclusively to the law, by which the covenant was ratified, never to be dis-annulled. In the deliverance of the people, God did not act the part of a beneficial father merely for a day, but by giving the law (His standard of righteousness and holiness), he also established his grace, that the hope of eternal life might continue forever in the Church.

Holy and awesome is his name!: Who is God according to the Psalmist? He is (3) righteous, (4) gracious and merciful, (5) a provider and covenant keeper, (6) a giver of blessings, (7) faithful and just, (9) sender of redemption, holy and awesome. The language here is of God as transcendent, as surpassing any rival and indeed, of surpassing any comparison. How could this truth be neglected or forgotten?

The fear of the LORD is the beginning: Having emphasized the kindness of God, and paid a well-merited tribute to the law, the prophet goes on to exhort the faithful to revere God, and be zealous in the keeping of the law. With God described as "awesome" in verse 9, the proper response of the worshiper in verse 10 is to "fear the Lord." In the twenty-first century we tend to associate "fear" with something scary, something we want to get away from, or something we think will harm us. Yet we read in the Old Testament that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Thus, we know that "the fear of the Lord" is a good thing; it is a positive aspect of our faith. We know that the LORD is both enduringly Holy and Awesome as well as Gracious and Merciful. To serve God is the purpose for which we have been born, and for which we are preserved in life.