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“Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, the people he chose for his inheritance.”

Psalm 33:12

Main Idea: We are called—and are called to—wholeheartedly sing with extreme joy and celebration that God is real, He is Righteous, and He is Ruler of all! We can worship Him with steadfast confidence that our God is purely Holy and Worthy of our adoration and reverence. As followers and children of God Almighty, it is a duty that should come to us voluntarily and with gratitude. We can use our mouths as well as with musical instruments (think of the lyre, harp, anything musical that gives a beautiful sound), and we are to use our skill and joy to do so with the best ability we can deliver. We are to praise and honor Him because He is True and Right. Since He is faithful to us, we can also be faithful to Him with our appreciation and obedience. Since God is Righteous, He loves us. Furthermore, He desires that we strive to be righteous, too. He loves Justice and wants us to love it, too. He gives us His unfailing love, grace, and mercy; and, He gives His marvelous creation that He spoke into being, all for us to use and enjoy. So, we can praise and revere Him for His deeds. God gives us protection we do not see or understand, and His ways will stand for all time and places. We can trust Him and praise Him. He will bless those who place Him first and foremost, and He will bless nations that do the same. He watches over us. He alone knows our hearts and will. He desires us to be our best; we do that when we honor Him as Lord. Our trust should not be in what we make and do, but in what God has done and can and will do. Thus, our confidence, help and hope is in God. We can trust in and depend on His unfailing love and plan for our lives!

Contexts and Background:

This Psalm shares the same background as Psalm 32. Although not an acrostic, it has twenty-two lines or verses, the same as the Hebrew alphabet. It was used not just in worship, but also as a how to guide for those who have fallen into sin and forsook God's perfect plan. This shows us a God who cares, knows and forgives. It is a call to drop to our knees, repent and come back to Him. His forgiveness is a great comfort for our composure as He eases our guilt and gives us real peace in our thinking. Nothing is greater than to be right with God and knowing He does know and care for us.

Commentary—Word and Phrase Meanings:

Verses 1-5: This is all about the theme of respect we owe a sovereign king, and ever more so to a Sovereign Lord God. We become the offering, a sacrifice of praise.

- *Sing joyfully to / shout / rejoice in the LORD.* To sing aloud, to shout out in gratitude with jubilation because we have been delivered. We must allow the Word of God to impact us, live in us, and temper us so we can live joyfully, worshiping God (Num. 23:21; Psalm 32:7; Col. 3:15-17).
- *You righteous.* A declaration of Trust and our humble response.
- *Harp.* This was a small, bowed, stringed instrument used in Jewish worship (not to be confused with the large, modern European harps from the 12th century), and were considered the most beautiful musical instruments of that time; here, they are presented as an image of something used to praise God with sincerity and reverence (1 Chron. 25:1-6; 2 Chron. 5:12; 29:25; Neh. 12:27; 1 Sam. 10:5; Psalm 33:2).

- *Make music / melody.* This is an image of an offering of “fresh” gratitude for our salvation and used to express our deliverance or blessing. Here, it denotes being inspired by the Spirit and/or being spontaneous in worshipping Christ, the opposite of something “canned,” or obligatory (Psalm 33:1-3; 40:1-3; 96:1-6; 98:1; 144:7-9; 149:1; Is. 42: 8-12; 2 Cor. 12:2-4; Rev. 5:8-9; 14:3).
- *Ten-stringed lyre.* A small handheld musical instrument made of wood, similar to the harp, but with 2 sides of five strings, *played by plucking* (Isa. 14:9-12 9; 23:15-16).
- *New song.* A shout of victory. Means being inspired by the Holy Spirit and/or to be spontaneous in worshipping. It is an image of real music used as an offering to express our deliverance or blessing. It also denotes the opposite of something “canned,” or obligatory. In our planning of worship, we must allow the Holy Spirit to direct us. It is OK to compose, plan, and rehearse our praise and music, but we should not allow a rhetoric of worship to be a performance or a show of personalities. Rather, we are called to be an offering of praise to the main and only audience, who is Christ our Lord (Psalm 33:3; 40:3; 96:1; 98:1; 144:9; 149:1; Isa. 42:10; Rev. 5:9; 14:3).
- *Word of the LORD.* Means God’s Truth communicated with character and speech to His people, with just and honorable intentions without deception. Refers to God as Maker and so much more, His ability and authority to command, create, and be Lord. By God's word, the universe was created out of nothing. We were created and saved. God is involvement and action. He is not passive; there is no reason or need to doubt God! All that God has to say has a reason and meaning and is necessary. The Bible is the Word of God and shows us His character (Gen. 1:1-30; Psalm 33:6-9; 111:2; Heb. 11:3; 2 Pet. 3:5-9).

Verses 6-9: God that is eternal, always was, is and always will be, who fulfills His purpose and plan. He is Holy and worthy of our sacrificial worship and praise (Psalm 33:6-9; Col. 1:16-17; Rev. 4:11).

- *Heavens.* This refers to God's power as Creator, Who set the courses of the stars, the universe, in place (Ex. 31:18; Deut. 9:10; Job 7:17-21; Psalm 8:1-4; 33:6-9; 102:25; 136:5; 144:3-4; Isa. 2:8).
- *Starry / all their host.* Meaning, “*the universe was formed at God's command.*” Referring to all of creation and that God is in command and is the Creator of all that is, seen and unseen. Even though we did not see Him create the universe, the evidence is obvious and is a testimony to His power and provision. Thus, we have confirmation of things not seen, real substance by which to have faith and apply it (Gen. 1; Psalm 33:6-9; Prov. 3:19-20; 8:22-31; Heb. 11:1-16).
- *Breath of his mouth.* Means that He made the universe and all that exists, His supremacy predates time and history. He is the Eternal Creator; He always has been and always will be, in contrast to the universe which was created. God is displayed throughout the universe. However, the universe is not God; that would be *pantheism* (Psalm. 33:6; 102: 25-27; Prov. 8:30; Rom. 1:18-20; Heb. 11:3).
- *Gathers the waters.* God is showing us the exercising of His Command of His creation (Ex. 15; Psalm 18:16).
- *Springs of water,* an image of great comfort. In context, this assures the Faithful of who God is and what He can do. This contains the images of a God who is forever faithful, remains true, is worthy of praise, and whose love endures forever, so we can realize and grasp that our help comes from the LORD (Psalm 33:6; 89:11-13; 96:4-5; 104:2-9; 124:8; 134:3; 136:4-9; 146:6)!

- *Fear the LORD.* Meaning to love, honor and obey God with utmost respect. This epic statement of faith refers to the awe and reverence we must have to God, so that our response is to trust, revere, serve, place first and foremost and worship God as LORD of all. Then, live life as it relates to faith and honor to God (Gen. 20:11; Deut. 6:4-5; Psalm 25:11-15; 27:1; Prov. 1:7; Eccl. 12:13; Matt. 6:19-24, 33; John 10:22-42).
- *Revere him.* We can trust and obey Him! He is a God of involvement and action, there is no reason or need to doubt God. This means we are totally dependent on Him for life and liberty, for faith and even the air we breathe (Gen. 1:1-30; Psalm 33:6-9; Heb. 11:3).
- *Blessed is the nation.* *Nations* refers to godless immorality, and who seek their own, while *nation* refers to those who seek God's will.
- *LORD looks down.* God is indeed involved and relates to us and wants us to relate to Him. A character of God is His providence, in which He acts in His free will. He does not have to create or give us life, yet He does. He does not have to be involved, yet He is. God is not incomplete without us or creation; we are only complete when we are in Christ (Psalm 33:9; Col. 1:16-17; 1 Thess. 2:13; Rev. 4:11).

Verses 10-17: This section is about God's triumphant will, our call to obedience, to serve His purpose and our willingness to be disobedient. God acquired us, 'purchased' and 'preserves' us as His inheritance to do His work and give Him glory and make Him *known*. We belong to God as His children. We have special status before our Lord! We are His! Our identity in Him must affect us personally and publicly, and we synergize into a community (Gen. 12:1-3; Deut. 7:6; 32:9; Psalm 33:12; Isa. 40: 1 Thess. 5:9; 2 Thess. 2:14; 1 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 1:6; 5:10; 20:6).

- *Fear him.* A warning is given that allegiance must be pure loyalty to Christ and His Kingdom and must come first in our lives. When we are in Christ, we are part of His greater Kingdom--more than just our race or nationality (Psalm 33:10; Phil 3:20; Rev. 5:9; 8:13; 13:3-14; 17:2-8).
- *Unfailing love.* Means personal devotion, how God is deeply bound and devoted with His love and care for us as His children, as a covenant. This points us to what Christ has done for us, God's special and unfailing favor being poured out to us. This favor is His love, kindness, and mercy as promised in the OT and fulfilled here in the NT. (Deut. 7:9, 12; 2 Sam. 7:15; Isa. 55:3; Psalm 6:4; 89:24, 28, 33; Isa. 26:4; Matt. 8:28-34).
- *Inheritance in the kingdom of Christ.* This means we are "assigned a portion," because we belong to God as His children (Gen. 12:1-3; Deut. 7:6; 32:9; Psalm 33:12; Hag. 2:5; Matt. 5:5; 25:34; Rom. 8:17-23; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; Eph. 1:11-14; 1 Thess. 5:9; 2 Thess. 2:14; James 2:5; 1 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 1:6; 5:10; 20:6).
- *Our help and our shield.* God's restraint and the protection of Israel. It now refers to the means of the destruction and judgment of those who persecute God's people and now His Church (Psalm 33:16-17; Prov.21: 31; Isa. 31:1; Zech. 9:10).

Verses 18-20: God has perfect knowledge and discernment, sees all, knows all, is totally Sovereign and Omnipresent. There is no tyranny in Him. He only has our best in mind, it is us who do the worse and ignore Him.

- *Eyes of the LORD.* God's watchful care. God is all-knowing and there is nothing hidden from Him. He sees the dangers and warns us to avoid them, He sees the opportunities and desires to encounter them (Ex 34:5-7; Psalm 32:8; Rom. 8:18-25).
- *Deliver them from death.* This means God is the One Who redeems us. He chooses us to be regenerated. If we were not chosen and redeemed, we would stay in our sins and be eternally separated from God. He loves you and chooses you (Gen. 45:8; 50:20; Job 14:5; Psalm 33:13-14; 115:3; 147:5; Prov. 5:21; 15:3; 16:1, 4, 9, 33; Is. 14:26-27; Dan. 4:33-34; John. 1:13; 13:18; Acts 2:23; Rom. 8:29-30; 9:9-18; Eph. 1:2-14; 2 Thess. 2:13-15; 2 Tim. 1:9; 1 Pet. 1:1-3, 20).
- *Wait in hope.* This is about patience, the willingness to wait on God's timing without using our will or control. To gain this, we must have peace and direction from God. It is allowing God the room and time to work through us to others around us. It is like perseverance and the endurance to not give up; it is about actively overcoming our situation--not just sitting, accepting, and doing nothing (Hos. 2:19-23; Psalm 33:20; Hosea 2:19-23; Matt. 27:14; Rom. 2:4; 5:3; 12:12; Gal. 5:1; Eph. 4:2; Col. 1:11; 1 Tim. 1:16; James 1:3-4, 12; 5:10-11).
- *Our help and our shield.* God will never disappoint us if we are discerning to His Word and call.

Devotional Thoughts and Applications:

Have you ever really contemplated your place in God's deliverance, all that He has done for you? How has this really affected you and those around you. Look carefully at this Psalm and let it sink in and grab you and convict you. You can be moved further to understand the incomprehensible: That we are not just a part of the universe, we know the One who made it and gave command to it; what is unseen can be seen by seeing Him. In so doing, we have can have a deep trust and faith for living our lives in God's way. Because God is in command of all that is, God has a purpose and plan to make us His children. He is the good parent who guides His children and protects them. Therefore, He is worthy to be trusted and feared, and to be worshipped. We have confirmation of things not seen, real substance by which to have faith and apply it.

Christian Life Principle: God's will is simple, it is all about to know Him, trust in Him and grow in Him. And He will go to the limits to show us. What gets in the way of this? Our will, our desires. Remember, what we seek is happiness, which is predicated on our happenings, whereas real joy looks to Christ.

The Essential Inductive Questions (for more Inductive questions, see Inductive Bible Study):

1. What does this passage say?
2. What does this passage mean?
3. What is God telling me?
4. How am I encouraged and strengthened?
5. Is there sin in my life for which confession and repentance is needed?
6. How can I be changed, so I can learn and grow?
7. What is in the way of these precepts affecting me? What is in the way of my listening to God?
8. How does this apply to me? What will I do about it?
9. What can I model and teach?
10. What does God want me to share with someone?

Additional Questions:

1. What gives you confidence?

2. What does God's unfailing love mean to you? Why is it important?
3. How does it make you feel that God watches over us and knows our hearts and will?
4. What does this Psalm teach us about worship and our place in God?
5. How does this Psalm show us a God who cares, knows and forgives?
6. How can you worship God with steadfast confidence? What does this Psalm tell you on that? What gets in the way?
7. How is God worthy of our adoration and reverence?
8. How does this Psalm show us that we can trust Him and praise Him?
9. How does this Psalm show us that what happens when we do not trust Him and praise Him?
10. Do you realize that when we devote ourselves more to Christ, we have more opportunities in life and ministry? Why would any Christian not want that?
11. What do you need to do to gain more confidence in God's will for your life?
12. What kind of song can you compose to praise the Lord?