

What Can We Learn From Psalm 86

1. It is one of 5 Psalms known as a Tephillah or prayers. This type of prayer was to be a “service of the heart,” a song of praise.
2. This is the prayer of an afflicted and humble soul in a time of persecution (Psalms 86:14), intermixed with outbursts of praise (Psalms 86:5, 8-10, 15) and thankfulness (Psalm 86:12, 13).
3. It seems to be divided into three sections. Verses 1-5 **David’s Humble Plea to God who Hears His People**; 6-10 **An Expression of Trust and Confidence in God’s Character**; and 11-17 **A Humble Commitment to Obedience and Worship**.
4. Five different names are used for God in this Psalm.

Meaning of God’s Names

1. ADONAI - It means, “my Master.” It conveys the idea of rulership or dominion. Lord, the one who rules over others. In the English translation, it is spelled with a capital L “Lord”, when it refers to God. It is used 7 times in this Psalm. When it refers to rulership over humanity, lord is spelled with all lower case letters.

2. Yahweh - means, “I AM”, "to be", "to exist", "to cause to become", or "to come to pass".– He had no beginning and will never end. Everything relies on Him. God is constant. – Strictly speaking this is the only proper name for God. (YHWH) is the name of God in the Hebrew Bible. The four letters, the Tetragrammaton, is written and read from right to left (in Hebrew), are *yodh, he, waw, he*, and was translated in our English Bibles as “LORD” (all capitals) to distinguish it from Adonai, “Lord.” It is used 4 times in this Psalm. Yahweh is present, accessible, near to those who call on Him.

3. Eloah - Singular form of Elohim – Mighty Powerful One. (God) – Used 2 times in this Psalm.

4. El - God, Strong Controller or Sovereign – In the English translation, an abbreviation, that is used to address the Almighty God. (El Shaddai) Used once in this Psalm.

5. Elohim - God “Creator, Mighty and Strong” – it is a plural term of Eloah and El.– Used once in this Psalm. From the Bible’s first sentence, the superlative nature of God’s power is evident as God (Elohim) speaks the world into existence.

Psalm 86 With the Names of God Highlighted.

To help us appreciate how David the Psalmist would have used the names of God, they are switched out of the English translations of God's names, for the Hebrew originals. Sometimes it helps us to do this in our minds as we read the Old Testament to cause us to slow down and reflect on how much God's names reveal about Him. Here is Psalm 86, divided Into 3 Sections.

Verses 1-7 A Prayer of David: His Humble Plea to God who Hears His People

- 1 Incline your ear, **O YAHWEH**, (LORD) and answer me, for I am poor and needy.
- 2 Preserve my life, for I am godly; save your servant, who trusts in you— you are my **ELOAH**. (God)
- 3 Be gracious to me, **O ADONAI**, (Lord) for to you do I cry all the day.
- 4 Gladden the soul of your servant, for to you, **O ADONAI**, do I lift up my soul.
- 5 For you, **O ADONAI**, are good and forgiving, abounding in steadfast love to all who call upon you..
- 6 Give ear, **O YAHWEH**, to my prayer; listen to my plea for grace.
- 7 In the day of my trouble I call upon you, for you answer me.

Verses 8-10 David's Praise: An Expression of Trust and Confidence in God's Character.

- 8 There is none like you among the gods, **O ADONAI**, nor are there any works like yours.
- 9 All the nations you have made shall come and worship before you, **O ADONAI**, and shall glorify your name.
- 10 For you are great and do wondrous things; you alone are **ELOHIM**. (God)

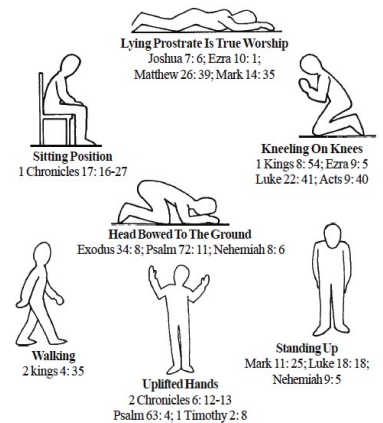
Verses 11-17 David's Devotion: A Humble Commitment to Obedience and Worship

- 11 Teach me your way, **O YAHWEH**, that I may walk in your truth; unite my heart to fear your name.
- 12 I give thanks to you, **O ADONAI** my **ELOAH**, with my whole heart, and I will glorify your name forever.
- 13 For great is your steadfast love toward me; you have delivered my soul from the depths of Sheol.
- 14 O **ELOHIM**, insolent men have risen up against me; a band of ruthless men seeks my life, and they do not set you before them.
- 15 But you, **O ADONAI**, are **EL** merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.
- 16 Turn to me and be gracious to me; give your strength to your servant, and save the son of your maidservant.
- 17 Show me a sign of your favor, that those who hate me may see and be put to shame because you, **YAHWEH**, have helped me and comforted me

I. **Psalm 86: 1-7 David's Prayer: His Humble Plea to God who Hears His People.**

What posture do you take when you pray? Do you kneel, stand or lie prostrate? Do you bow your head, or raise your head and look heavenward? Do you fold your hands or raise them to God?

The Bible describes people taking various positions or postures in prayer. We cannot be certain of the physical position that David took when he prayed the words of Psalm 86, but we can be sure of this, in his heart David assumed a position of humility.



David's opening statement reveals a man with a humble heart. **"Incline your ear, O YAHWEH, (LORD) and answer me, for I am poor and needy. 2 Preserve my life, for I am godly; save your servant, who trusts in you— you are my ELOAH. (God)**

What does godly mean in verse 2? godly in Hebrew -/ḥāsīd̄ khaw-seed/: faithful, kind, godly, holy one, saint, pious

What position do you take when you pray?

3 Be gracious to me, O ADONAI, (Lord) for to you do I cry all the day.

4 "Gladden the soul of your servant, for to you, O ADONAI, do I lift up my soul."

David places himself in the position of a servant, seeking the help of his Master. Even though David was a king, he recognized that God is the greater King, before whom David is only a servant. In this psalm, David petitions the LORD for help (vv 1-4). But after presenting his petitions, as always, he makes sure to praise the Lord .

Look in verse 5, **"For you, O ADONAI, are good and forgiving, abounding in steadfast love to all who call upon you.."** So David is declaring the character of God in this psalm. And he declares that God is good, ready to forgive, and that His love does not change.

Verse 6 **"Give ear, O YAHWEH, to my prayer; listen to my plea for grace."**

In our relationship with God, it is important that we understand His character. We have to know that God is merciful, if we want to ask for mercy. If we do not realize that God is gracious, then it's difficult to know we can receive His grace. Knowing the character of God gives us the confidence to pray to Him. That is why David could say, 7 **"In the day of my trouble I call upon you, for you answer me.**

II. Psalm 86:8-10 David's Praise: An Expression of Trust and Confidence in God's Character

In verse 8 David switches from request to confidence in who God is. **“There is none like you among the gods, O ADONAI, nor are there any works like yours.”**

This verse presents God as incomparable, without equal. He is in a class of His own, especially when compared with other beings who were said to be gods. The Canaanites and the nations around Israel worshipped other gods: Baal, Asherah, and Molech. These idols are demons, spirit-beings, organized under Satan, with great power over individuals and entire nations. However, when compared to these gods, YHWH stands out. He is not limited like they are, nor is He limited to a particular nation. He is God, over all creation. **Read Isaiah 44:6-8 Message Bible**

Rabbi Johnathan Cahn, in his book, The Return of the Gods, questions, “Is it possible that ancient gods have come back and are behind what is currently happening in America? Could their existence be transforming culture, families, children, businesses, government, technology, and even our very lives?” He argues that, “the deities of other nations are demonic, spiritual entities.” He writes, “They are coming back under different names, or under no particular theological name at all.” He says that the de-Christianization of our society in the twentieth century has brought back all the old demons, and many more. The Return Of The Gods, centers on Cahn's belief that three particular Ancient Near East gods, Baal, Ishtar (also known as Asherah), and Molech, have now been enthroned, in some sense, over the post-Christian West, and that the West (the United States in particular) is going to face the same fate as ancient Israel when it whored after false gods.”

The nation of Israel, according to Cahn, turned to idol worship, the embodiment of paganism. The idol became their substitute god, and warred against the true God. Baal was the god that Israel turned to when it turned away from the Almighty God. You might ask, **“In what way is America bowing to Baal, Asherah, and Molech?”**

Have you ever considered that some foods purchase from a restaurant were offered to idols? An excerpt of the article, [Do You Drink the Cup of Devils? – Food Sacrificed To Idols Everywhere](#), bibleunderground.com, April 21, 201_.

Next time you go to a Chinese restaurant, just peak in the door first and look around. Many of them have a Buddha statue with little offering bowls set before them. One has fruit, one has coins or money and one has flowers. They do this in their restaurants to dedicate the restaurant and food to their “god” in hopes of it bringing prosperity. Sometimes you will see a ceramic cat with a paw lifted at the register or a ceramic pig. These serve the same purpose but without offerings set before them. The Indian stores and restaurants often have a Shiva Statue with incense burning next to it instead of a Buddha statue with offerings in front of it.”

Have you ever paid attention to the logo on Starbucks cup? Excerpt from the article : [The Hidden Evil and Perversion Behind Starbucks' Logo](#) By: Dr. David Friedman.

“Starbucks is the largest coffee maker and retailer in the world with close to 36,000 locations! Whether you’re a regular java customer or have just driven past a Starbucks on your way to work, you’ve seen their logo; that green mermaid image with long, wavy hair. There are some details behind that famous logo that could make you think twice before ever ordering that Starbucks hot, steamy, tall blonde vanilla latte, oozing with caramels and topped with succulent whipped cream.

That image in the center of the Starbucks logo is not a mermaid. She’s actually a mythological Siren, a female creature (seductress) that lured mariners to destruction by her sex appeal and singing. (Ship wrecks and death occurred because the men fell under her spell.) Today, statues of Sirens can be found at graveyards in Greece, Italy, and Asia, as they are believed to accompany the dead to the afterlife.



In 1987, Starbucks’ logo went from brown to green and the Siren’s fully exposed perky breasts were now covered by her hair... Her arms aid in helping spread apart her two twisting tails into a yoga pose position. A Christian group based in San Diego created a movement calling for a national boycott of the coffee-selling giant. Spokesperson Mark Dice stated, “The Starbucks logo has a naked woman on it with her legs spread like a prostitute... the company might as well call themselves Slutbucks.”

Ashteroth is alive and well and living at your local Starbucks. It is important for you to be able to recognize Ashtoreth, for this is one of the things God has told you in his Word that He consistently hates. **“And they forsook the LORD, and served Baal and Ashtaroth.”** (Judges 2:13). Many false gods, idols, or sin are temptations that blindly pull our hearts away from Father God?

The Apostle Paul wrote, **“...the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord’s table and the table of demons.”** [1 Corinthians 10:20-21]



II. Psalm 86:8-10. An Expression of Trust and Confidence in God's Character

9 All the nations you have made shall come and worship before you, **O ADONAI**, and shall glorify your name.

10 For you are great and do wondrous things; you alone are **ELOHIM**. (God)

Revelation 7:9-12. New International Version

The Great Multitude in White Robes.

9 "After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. 10 And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."

11 All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, 12 saying: "Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!"



III. Psalm 86:11-17 David's Devotion: A Humble Commitment to Obedience and Worship

In Verse 11, David is praying, " Teach me your way, **O YAHWEH**, that I may walk in your truth; unite my heart to fear your name. 12 I give thanks to you, **O ADONAI** my **ELOAH**, with my whole heart, and I will glorify your name forever.

1. What two things does David, the writer of verse 11, request from the Lord?
2. Why would someone ever want to ask this of God?
3. How does a pure heart bring honor to the Lord?



David understood he needed to learn from this Great God. **(1a.) Teach me Your way, O LORD.** It brought him to say, “Don’t give me *my way*, Lord; teach me *Your way*.” **(2a)** David wanted to be taught so that he could **live** and so that he could **walk** in God’s truth.

The plea to **(1b.) “unite my heart to fear Your name”** can also be rendered “**give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name**” (NIV) or “**grant me purity of heart, (2b.) so that I may honor you**” (NLT).

Like all of us, David was flawed. He admitted that he had a divided heart, perhaps, part of his heart towards God, and part of it was towards his flesh. Many of God’s children experience a divided heart.

Just as David, our prayer should be, “**unite my heart to fear Your name. (3.)** David’s words suggest, he ***will live and act in accordance with what Adonai declares to be true.*** Whatever that may be, David will pursue it, having no will of his own. This is how a pure heart honors God. ***What an excellent prayer of surrender, to include in our daily prayers.***

Verse 12 indicates that David had a whole heart towards Yahweh.

God said of David, in Acts 13:22 “... **He raised up David to be their king, of whom he testified and said, ‘I have found in David, the son of Jesse, a man after my heart, who will do all my will.’**”

We bring honor to God when we do His Will. Was David a perfect man? No, by no means! However, he was quick to repent, with a broken heart, fasting and praying, he waited for restoration.

13 For great is your steadfast love toward me; you have delivered my soul from the depths of Sheol.

14 O ELOHIM, insolent men have risen up against me; a band of ruthless men seeks my life, and they do not set you before them.-

Sheol, refers to the grave or the abode of the dead. Steven J. Cole in his writings of Psalm 86 states, “the meaning in verses 13 and 14 refers to how Yahweh kept David alive, so many times, from imminent danger. His enemies were insolent men, (rude, uncivil), ruthless men (merciless, heartless), who sought after his life. At the same time David could say, as every child of God can say, that God had delivered his soul, from the penalty of sin, death, and hell itself.”

So verse 15, "**But you, O ADONAI, are EL merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.**"

Compare the words of this psalm with the phrasing of [Exodus 34:6-7](#), the great revelation, how God described Himself to Moses: "**The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.**" It is interesting, in verses 5, 10 and 15, David declares the character of God. It is woven throughout Psalm 86.

Then David makes a request: v. 16, "**Turn to me and be gracious to me; give your strength to your servant, and save the son of your maidservant.**" 17 **Show me a sign of your favor, that those who hate me may see and be put to shame because you, YAHWEH, have helped me and comforted me.**

Knowing the character of God gives us the confidence to pray to Him. Only those who oppose Him, will see God as the God of wrath and vengeance. But to those that love Him, to those that call upon Him, He is merciful, He's long suffering, He's gracious, He's tender, He's kind, He's good, And so David calls upon the LORD.

Show me a token for good, one visible to others, even to his enemies, by which they might know that God was on his side. God gives us signs when He thinks we need them

His request that God would show him a sign for good (86:17), does not stem from doubt. David is **not** saying, "Lord, if you give me a token for good, then I'll trust in You." Rather, David has been in this trial for some time now, without any hint of God's deliverance. His enemies are gloating, "Ha! He trusted in God, but God hasn't delivered him!" So David asks for an encouraging sign that God is going to answer him and shame his enemies, who were really mocking God Himself. Yahweh gives us signs when He thinks we need them.

References:

Rabbi Johnathan Cahn, [The Return of the Gods.](#)

David DeBorer, [Psalm 86:8 - There is No God Like You](#), Christian Library.

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[Food Sacrificed To Idols Everywhere.](#) bibleunderground.com, April 21, 2013.

[The Hidden Evil and Perversion Behind Starbucks' Logo](#) By: Dr. David Friedman.

O'Bible.org., Psalm 86 Steven J. Cole, 2009.

