# Commentary on Psalm 145

## Introduction

Psalm 145 is the only psalm labeled, up front, as a “praise”: *tehillah*. The title is not window dressing. This poem organizes praise—its scope, its grammar, its timing—into an architecture that expands from one voice to all voices, from one moment to always. It is an acrostic (each verse begins with the next letter of the Hebrew alphabet), a form that implies completeness; yet the poem is also candid about the limits of human speech in the face of the divine: “Great is the LORD… and his greatness is unsearchable” (v.3). To borrow the psalm’s own terms, praise can be alphabetized but not exhausted.

Two formal features guide the reader. First, the acrostic. Psalm 145 proceeds letter by letter—except for one famous omission: the verse for the letter nun is missing in the Masoretic Text (the standard medieval Hebrew Bible, often abbreviated “MT”). Ancient readers noticed. The Babylonian Talmud (Berakhot 4b) says David omitted nun because of the line “Fallen, no more to rise, is maiden Israel” (Amos 5:2)—then “supported her” with the next verse: “The LORD supports all who fall” (v.14). The Greek translation (the Septuagint, “LXX”) includes a nun-line between vv.13 and 14: “Faithful is the Lord in all his words, and holy in all his works.” Several medieval Hebrew manuscripts supply a similar Hebrew line. Whether or not that was the original text, the effect is instructive. If the nun-line is absent, the gap functions like a dramatic caesura that lets the next verse (“supports all who fall”) answer a fall. If present, the added line (“faithful/holy”) harmonizes with v.17 (“righteous/hasid”), creating a thematic seam down the middle of the poem.

Second, the anaphora—the repeated “all” (*kol*) that sounds eleven times. The poem moves outward in widening circles: from “every day” (v.2) to “generation to generation” (v.4), from “all your works” (v.10) to “all flesh” (v.21). This is not mere rhetoric. The repetition argues that the God Israel knows in covenant is, by nature, good “to all” (v.9), close “to all who call” (v.18), feeding “every living thing” (v.16), keeping “all who love” (v.20), and holding the moral order so firmly that even judgment is universal: “all the wicked he will destroy” (v.20). Divine universality encompasses both mercy and accountability.

At the poem’s theological heart stands a formula from Exodus 34:6: “The LORD is gracious and compassionate, *erekh appayim*—literally “long of nostrils,” a Hebrew idiom for patient anger—and abounding in *hesed* (steadfast love)” (v.8). In its first biblical setting, this is God’s self-description at Sinai. Psalm 145 repurposes it for praise, not law; and universalizes it: immediately after the formula, the psalm says, “The LORD is good to all” (v.9). An Israelite confession becomes a cosmic claim.

This universal reach is balanced by domestic nearness. The poem’s metaphors draw God’s reach into familiar gestures. “The eyes of all look to you” (v.15) is a personification that culminates in a concrete action: “You open your hand” (v.16). That open hand picks up Israel’s ethical idiom for generosity in Deuteronomy—“you shall open your hand” to the poor (Deut 15:8, 11)—and applies it to God. Divine kingship here does not extract tribute; it furnishes rations with perfect timing (“in its season,” v.15). Psalm 104:27 uses the same picture: creatures wait and are fed. Praise, then, is not flattery. It is recognition that the world lives by grace, every day.

The temporal structure of the poem reinforces this movement. We pass from daily practice (“every day,” v.2), to intergenerational teaching (“generation to generation,” v.4), to eschatological reach (“forever and ever,” vv.1–2, 21). In literary terms, the poem is framed by an inclusio (a repeated phrase that brackets a section): “forever and ever” appears in the opening couplet and returns in the last line. Within that frame, the psalm rehearses both divine character (vv.8–9) and divine governance (vv.11–13), culminating in the royal acclamation: “Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion is for all generations” (v.13). Scholars note ancient Near Eastern royal acclamations behind this language: the Canaanite and Ugaritic epics often praise a deity’s kingship in sweeping terms. Psalm 145 uses that stock language, but disallows a pantheon: there is one king, whose reign is both eternal and intimate.

Finally, Psalm 145 models a discipline of speech. It alternates voices (“I” will praise; “they” will say), and it moves from public proclamation (“they will speak of your might,” v.11) to teaching outsiders (“to make known to human beings,” v.12). Praise becomes witness. The poem ends where it began—with one mouth. But by then “all flesh” has been invited to bless God’s holy name “forever and ever” (v.21). The last line suggests the simplest theology Psalm 145 has to teach: the world is the right size for a single sentence of praise to resonate in it without end.

Definitions for lay readers:

- Acrostic: a poem whose lines begin with successive letters (here, of the Hebrew alphabet).

- Inclusio: a framing device where a poem opens and closes with similar language.

- Anaphora: the deliberate repetition of a word or phrase at the start of successive lines (here, “all”).

- Colon: one poetic line in a parallel pair; Hebrew poetry often sets meaning in two cola that balance and develop each other.

- MT (Masoretic Text): the standard medieval Hebrew text of the Bible.

- LXX (Septuagint): the ancient Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible; where it differs from MT, it sometimes preserves an earlier form of the text.

## Psalm 145

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| **1.** תְּהִלָּ֗ה לְדָ֫וִ֥ד אֲרוֹמִמְךָ֣ אֱלוֹקַ֣י הַמֶּ֑לֶךְ וַאֲבָרְכָ֥ה שִׁ֝מְךָ֗ לְעוֹלָ֥ם וָעֶֽד׃ | A song of praise. Of David. I will extol You, my God and king, and bless Your name forever and ever. |
| **2.** בְּכׇל־י֥וֹם אֲבָרְכֶ֑ךָּ וַאֲהַלְלָ֥ה שִׁ֝מְךָ֗ לְעוֹלָ֥ם וָעֶֽד׃ | Every day will I bless You and praise Your name forever and ever. |
| **3.** גָּ֘ד֤וֹל ה׳ וּמְהֻלָּ֣ל מְאֹ֑ד וְ֝לִגְדֻלָּת֗וֹ אֵ֣ין חֵֽקֶר׃ | Great is the LORD and much acclaimed; His greatness cannot be fathomed. |
| **4.** דּ֣וֹר לְ֭דוֹר יְשַׁבַּ֣ח מַעֲשֶׂ֑יךָ וּגְב֖וּרֹתֶ֣יךָ יַגִּֽידוּ׃ | One generation shall laud Your works to another and declare Your mighty acts. |
| **5.** הֲ֭דַר כְּב֣וֹד הוֹדֶ֑ךָ וְדִבְרֵ֖י נִפְלְאֹתֶ֣יךָ אָשִֽׂיחָה׃ | The glorious majesty of Your splendor and Your wondrous acts-a will I recite. |
| **6.** וֶעֱז֣וּז נֽוֹרְאֹתֶ֣יךָ יֹאמֵ֑רוּ (וגדלותיך) [וּגְדֻלָּתְךָ֥] אֲסַפְּרֶֽנָּה׃ | Men shall talk of the might of Your awesome deeds, and I will recount Your greatness. |
| **7.** זֵ֣כֶר רַב־טוּבְךָ֣ יַבִּ֑יעוּ וְצִדְקָתְךָ֥ יְרַנֵּֽנוּ׃ | They shall celebrate Your abundant goodness, and sing joyously of Your beneficence. |
| **8.** חַנּ֣וּן וְרַח֣וּם ה׳ אֶ֥רֶךְ אַ֝פַּ֗יִם וּגְדׇל־חָֽסֶד׃ | The LORD is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in kindness. |
| **9.** טוֹב־ה׳ לַכֹּ֑ל וְ֝רַחֲמָ֗יו עַל־כׇּל־מַעֲשָֽׂיו׃ | The LORD is good to all, and His mercy is upon all His works. |
| **10.** יוֹד֣וּךָ ה׳ כׇּל־מַעֲשֶׂ֑יךָ וַ֝חֲסִידֶ֗יךָ יְבָרְכֽוּכָה׃ | All Your works shall praise You, O LORD, and Your faithful ones shall bless You. |
| **11.** כְּב֣וֹד מַלְכוּתְךָ֣ יֹאמֵ֑רוּ וּגְבוּרָתְךָ֥ יְדַבֵּֽרוּ׃ | They shall talk of the majesty of Your kingship, and speak of Your might, |
| **12.** לְהוֹדִ֤יעַ ׀ לִבְנֵ֣י הָ֭אָדָם גְּבוּרֹתָ֑יו וּ֝כְב֗וֹד הֲדַ֣ר מַלְכוּתֽוֹ׃ | to make His mighty acts known among men and the majestic glory of His kingship. |
| **13.** מַֽלְכוּתְךָ֗ מַלְכ֥וּת כׇּל־עֹלָמִ֑ים וּ֝מֶֽמְשַׁלְתְּךָ֗ בְּכׇל־דּ֥וֹר וָדֹֽר׃ | Your kingship is an eternal kingship; Your dominion is for all generations. |
| **14.** סוֹמֵ֣ךְ ה׳ לְכׇל־הַנֹּפְלִ֑ים וְ֝זוֹקֵ֗ף לְכׇל־הַכְּפוּפִֽים׃ | The LORD supports all who stumble, and makes all who are bent stand straight. |
| **15.** עֵֽינֵי־כֹ֭ל אֵלֶ֣יךָ יְשַׂבֵּ֑רוּ וְאַתָּ֤ה נֽוֹתֵן־לָהֶ֖ם אֶת־אׇכְלָ֣ם בְּעִתּֽוֹ׃ | The eyes of all look to You expectantly, and You give them their food when it is due. |
| **16.** פּוֹתֵ֥חַ אֶת־יָדֶ֑ךָ וּמַשְׂבִּ֖יעַ לְכׇל־חַ֣י רָצֽוֹן׃ | You give it openhandedly, feeding every creature to its heart’s content. |
| **17.** צַדִּ֣יק ה׳ בְּכׇל־דְּרָכָ֑יו וְ֝חָסִ֗יד בְּכׇל־מַעֲשָֽׂיו׃ | The LORD is beneficent in all His ways and faithful in all His works. |
| **18.** קָר֣וֹב ה׳ לְכׇל־קֹרְאָ֑יו לְכֹ֤ל אֲשֶׁ֖ר יִקְרָאֻ֣הוּ בֶאֱמֶֽת׃ | The LORD is near to all who call Him, to all who call Him with sincerity. |
| **19.** רְצוֹן־יְרֵאָ֥יו יַעֲשֶׂ֑ה וְֽאֶת־שַׁוְעָתָ֥ם יִ֝שְׁמַ֗ע וְיוֹשִׁיעֵֽם׃ | He fulfills the wishes of those who fear Him; He hears their cry and delivers them. |
| **20.** שׁוֹמֵ֣ר ה׳ אֶת־כׇּל־אֹהֲבָ֑יו וְאֵ֖ת כׇּל־הָרְשָׁעִ֣ים יַשְׁמִֽיד׃ | The LORD watches over all who love Him, but all the wicked He will destroy. |
| **21.** תְּהִלַּ֥ת ה׳ יְֽדַבֶּ֫ר־פִּ֥י וִיבָרֵ֣ךְ כׇּל־בָּ֭שָׂר שֵׁ֥ם קׇדְשׁ֗וֹ לְעוֹלָ֥ם וָעֶֽד׃ {פ} | My mouth shall utter the praise of the LORD, and all creatures shall bless His holy name forever and ever. |

## Verse-by-Verse Commentary

### Verse 1

“*Tehillah le-David*… *aromimkha*, my God, the king.” The lone superscription *tehillah* (“praise”) announces a program: this poem is not complaint, petition, or lament, but crafted adoration. The verb *aromimkha* (“I will exalt you”) comes from *rum* (“to be high”), and in this intensive usage means to lift God above comparison. The address “my God, the king” sets the psalm’s paradox in a phrase: the intimate possessive (“my God”) and universal sovereignty (“the king”). The four-word refrain “forever and ever” creates the poem’s inclusio (vv.1–2; 21): the individual vow is set in unending time. That the acrostic begins at aleph is no surprise; the surprise is that it ends, intentionally, with the world (“all flesh,” v.21).  
  
- Parallelism: synonymous (“I will exalt… I will bless your name”), with the second colon specifying praise as the habitual blessing of the divine name.  
- Terms: “Bless” (barakh) in Hebrew often flows downward—God blesses creatures—but here a human “blesses” God, meaning “to ascribe blessing,” to name God as the source of good.

### Verse 2

“Every day” gives the eternal vow a daily practice. The anaphora of time runs through the psalm: day (v.2), generation (v.4), forever (vv.1–2, 21). Radak draws an instructive distinction: daily blessing fits “this world,” while “forever” gestures toward the world to come. Malbim couples the grammar and the calendar: because God “renews daily the work of creation,” praise is renewed daily. The two verbs—*avarekh* (“I will bless”) and *ahallelah* (“I will praise”)—stand in staircase parallelism: blessing leads to praise, praise confirms blessing. The rhythm habituates the singer: eternity is practiced one day at a time.  
  
- Parallelism: climactic (staircase), with the repeated object “your name” anchoring both cola.

### Verse 3

A paradox made into music: “Great is the LORD and much acclaimed; and his greatness is unsearchable.” The Pual participle *mehullal* (“much acclaimed”) hints at a chorus already underway. *Heqer* (“searching, fathoming”) is wisdom vocabulary (Job 5:9; 9:10): human inquiry meets its boundary. The acrostic’s ambition—to range from aleph to tav—meets its theological limit: however far language runs, God’s “greatness” outruns it. Ibn Ezra catches the tone: however high one raises God in speech, God is already raised beyond all speech. This is why praise here is honest work: necessary, yet knowingly inadequate.  
  
- Parallelism: synthetic: God’s greatness invites praise; and what’s more, that greatness cannot be fully probed.

### Verse 4

“*Dor la-dor*”—“generation to generation”—signals a social turn: praise must be transmitted. The two nouns distinguish kinds of testimony: *ma’asekha* (“your works”) are God’s regular deeds of creation and providence; *gevurotekha* (“your might”) are the power-events that interrupt the ordinary (plagues, deliverance, rescue). The verbs likewise differ: *yeshabach* (to acclaim publicly) and *yaggidu* (to tell, to narrate). The line thus binds celebration to instruction: praise is preserved through storytelling. Radak makes the ethical point: human lives are short; hence the obligation to pass along both what we have seen and what we have been told.  
  
- Parallelism: synthetic: public acclamation of “works” is completed by narrated “mighty acts.”

### Verse 5

“*Hadar kevod hodekha*”—“the splendor of the glory of your majesty.” The piling up of honor-words is deliberate. *Hadar* suggests beauty or ornament; *kavod* is weight or substance; *hod* is a shining majesty. The construct chain (“splendor of the glory”) followed by “your majesty” makes a cascade. The first-person verb *asiah* (“I will muse/ponder”) marks a shift from public proclamation (v.4) to private contemplation. The parallel phrase “*divrei nifle’otekha*” (“the words of your wonders”) blurs action and speech: God’s wonders are “utterances,” deeds that teach. The line traces a move: from God’s acts to God’s character, from what God does to who God is.  
  
- Parallelism: synthetic: contemplation of glory is paired with recounting wonders; inner meditation feeds public speech.

### Verse 6

“*Ezuz noro’otekha yomeru; u-gedullatekha asaprennah*.” *Ezuz* (“might”) is a rare, weighty word; *noro’ot* (“awesome acts”) connotes deeds that summon awe, even dread. Note the pronouns: “they will say” (third person, communal) and “I will recount” (first person, personal). Praise is both corporate and individual. The shift suggests how public acts of God (“they will say”) become personal testimony (“I will recount”). A minor textual note: manuscripts vary in spelling “your greatness” in the second colon. The effect is not semantic; the theology is. The “awesome” (which can intimidate) is reframed as “greatness” the singer delights to tell.  
  
- Parallelism: antiphonal: the community’s brief acclamation is extended by the singer’s detailed narration.

### Verse 7

“*Zekher rav tuvkha yabbi’u; vetzidqatekha yeranenu*.” The verb *yabbi’u* (“bubble up, pour forth”) belongs to a semantic field of springs and speech. Day “pours forth” speech in Psalm 19:3; the wicked “pour forth” arrogance in Psalm 94:4; lips “pour forth” praise in Psalm 119:171. Here memory itself bubbles: recalling God’s goodness becomes irrepressible utterance. *Rav tuvkha* is not merely “great goodness,” but the “magnitude of your goodness” (as BDB notes), a substantive. The second colon uses *ranan*, a verb of exuberant singing, to name God’s *tzedaqah* (righteousness). That pairing—goodness and righteousness—answers a suspicion that runs through human experience: is divine generosity soft on justice? Psalm 145 says the two belong together, and when they are recognized, the right response is joy.  
  
- Parallelism: synonymous/complementary: inward “remembrance” becomes outward song; goodness and righteousness form a merismus of moral beauty.

### Verse 8

“*Hannun verahum YHWH, erekh appayim u-gedol-hesed*.” The psalm quotes the Sinai formula (Exod 34:6) and brings it into praise. Two notes open the idiom:  
- *Erekh appayim*, literally “long of nostrils,” is the Hebrew image for patience; anger flares the nostrils, patience lengthens them. Compare the “burning nose” of anger (Exod 32:10).  
- *Hesed* is covenantal kindness: loyal love that acts.   
Placed here, this ancient confession becomes the engine for what follows: if God is patient and abounding in steadfast love, then it makes sense to hear v.9: “The LORD is good to all.” The psalm stitches a tapestry from attributes: gracious, compassionate, patient, steadfastly loving—and, in v.17, righteous and *hasid* (faithful/kind).  
  
- Parallelism: synonymous: attributes accumulate rather than compare.

### Verse 9

“*Tov YHWH la-kol; ve-rahamav al kol ma’asav*.” The statement is as simple as it is sweeping: the LORD is “good to all,” and divine compassion extends “over all his works.” Ibn Ezra contrasts this with human rule: earthly kings are good to a few; God’s mercy covers all He has made—animate and inanimate, people and creatures. This line is the pivot from confession to universalism: Israel’s creed, universal in scope. Its temple echo is Psalm 100:4: “Enter his courts with praise”; here, the courts are the world.  
  
- Parallelism: synonymous, intensifying: “all” in the first colon becomes “all his works” in the second, universalizing beyond humanity.

### Verse 10

“*Yodukha YHWH kol ma’asekha; va-hasidekha yevarkhukha*.” Creation is personified: “All your works will thank you.” Radak offers a humane gloss: the entire creation “thanks” God through the human beings who perceive and speak that thanks. The second colon narrows from “all works” to *hasidim* (the faithful)—the people who practice and receive *hesed*. Their response is “to bless,” a richer verb than thank: it ascribes God as the source of the blessing they receive and enact. The two cola trace representative praise: creation sings via human gratitude; the faithful bless in covenant fidelity.  
  
- Parallelism: synthetic: the general thanksgiving of “all works” is specified by the covenant blessing of “your faithful.”

### Verse 11

“*Kevod malkhutekha yomeru; u-gevuratkha yedabberu*.” Here the psalm borrows the idiom of royal acclamation: “the glory of your kingship” and “your might.” In ANE court language, *kavod* (glory) signals the visible weight of legitimate rule; *gevurah* (might) is the capacity to act. The verbs are carefully chosen: *yomeru* (they will say) fits a shout of acclaim; *yedabberu* (they will speak) implies extended discourse. In other words, kingship can be acclaimed quickly; divine governance requires sustained instruction.  
  
- Parallelism: synthetic/climactic: acclamation (“they say”) leads to explanation (“they speak”).

### Verse 12

“*Lehodi’a livnei ha’adam…*”—“to make known to human beings.” The mission is explicit: praise is pedagogy. The audience is not just “the nations” (*goyim*) but “the children of Adam,” a universal designation. The content is twofold: God’s mighty acts (*gevurotav*) and “the glorious splendor of his kingdom” (*kevod hadar malkhuto*). That twofoldness prevents either a dry chronicle of wonders or an abstract theology of kingship. The faithful tell both what God has done and what it means.  
  
- Parallelism: synthetic: purpose clause binds v.11 to a missional aim—witness extends praise.

### Verse 13

“*Malkhutekha malkhut kol olamim; u-memshaltkha be-khol dor va-dor*.” Two different royal nouns appear: *malkhut* (kingship), the status of rightful reign; and *memshalah* (dominion), the active exercise of rule. The first colon’s *kol olamim* may be temporal (“everlasting”) and, by suggestive ambiguity, spatial (“worlds”). The second colon resolves the ambiguity into time: “in every generation.” The LXX inserts a nun-verse here—“Faithful is the Lord in all his words, and holy in all his works”—perhaps to complete the acrostic. That line foreshadows v.17’s moral claim (“righteous” and “hasid”) and, whether original or not, fits Psalm 145’s insistence that royal sovereignty is morally reliable.  
  
- Parallelism: synonymous: kingship/dominion, eternity/generations—two ways of saying forever.  
  
Text note: The missing nun-line in MT functions meaningfully with v.14’s “The LORD supports all who fall”: a fall (nun) answered by a hand (samekh). Where the LXX supplies “faithful/holy,” MT supplies enacted fidelity in the next verse.

### Verse 14

“*Somekh YHWH le-khol ha-noflim; ve-zoqef le-khol ha-kephufim*.” The two verbs come from daily life. *Somekh* is to steady someone who is stumbling; *zoqef* is to straighten someone bent under a load. Note the universality: not merely Israel, but “all who fall/bend.” The royal theology is thus sharply drawn: the cosmic king expresses rule in acts of support. The Talmud’s midrash on the missing nun (Amos 5:2) makes the point homiletically: where a fall is implied, God provides a lift.  
  
- Parallelism: synonymous/intensifying: “falling” (acute crisis) and “bent” (chronic burden) are both met by divine aid.

### Verse 15

“*Einei kol eilekha yesabberu; ve-atah noten lahem et-okhlam be’itto*.” The verb *sabar* means to look toward in hopeful expectation. The line personifies “the eyes of all”—a sweeping image also used in Ps 104:27: “All of them look to you to give them their food in due season.” The second colon answers hope with measured care: “you give… in its time.” Ibn Ezra contrasts God’s rule with human rule: we feed kings; this king feeds us. The timing—“in its season”—promises precise sufficiency, not indulgence.  
  
- Figurative parallels: Ps 104:27 (waiting for food); Deut 15:8, 11 (human “open hand” as ethical counterpart in v.16).  
- Parallelism: synthetic: hope is answered by provision.

### Verse 16

“*Pote’ach et-yadekha; u-masbi’a le-khol chai ratzon*.” The “open hand”—a common biblical idiom for generosity in Deut 15:8, 11—is now ascribed to God. Two readings of *ratzon* are possible (and both are theologically suggestive): God “satisfies every living thing with [God’s] favor,” or God “satisfies the desire of every living thing.” Malbim hears a gracious escalation across vv.15–16: sometimes God gives “in measure” (food “in its time”), and sometimes God “opens his hand” in abundance, satisfying beyond bare need. Either way, the image completes a social reversal already underway: divine kingship is not extractive. It is open-handed.  
  
- Figurative parallels: Deut 15:8, 11 (open-hand generosity); Ps 104:28 (receiving sustenance from God’s hand).  
- Parallelism: synthetic/intensifying: giving becomes opening; provision becomes satisfaction.

### Verse 17

“*Tzaddiq YHWH be-khol derakhav; ve-hasid be-khol ma’asav*.” Two moral terms: *tzaddiq* (righteous) speaks to right-ordered relations and judgments; *hasid* (kind/faithful) to active benevolence rooted in loyalty. The parallel nouns broaden scope: *derakhav* (“ways”)—God’s customary modes of acting; *ma’asav* (“works”)—the specific deeds that punctuate history. Ibn Ezra uses a doctor’s image: whether one receives “wheat” or “barley,” God knows what each needs. Radak faces the harder problem: predation in creation—cats and mice, lions and prey—and insists that divine righteousness governs even these grim exchanges. This is the psalm’s calibration point: the open hand (v.16) is not capricious; it is morally consistent.  
  
- Parallelism: synonymous/complementary: righteousness names what kindness feels like from the inside.

### Verse 18

“*Qarov YHWH le-khol qore’av; le-khol asher yiqra’uhu be’emet*.” The nearness of the transcendent king is conditional: “to all who call… in truth.” *Be’emet* (“in truth”) is not an abstract sincerity test alone; it points to integrity (mouth and heart aligned), coherence of life with prayer. In a book full of prayers, Psalm 145 tucks in a theology of prayer: God is accessible, but not manipulable. The generosity of vv.15–16 is not mechanical; it is relational.  
  
- Parallelism: synonymous, with the second colon adding the condition.

### Verse 19

“*Retzon yere’av ya’aseh; ve’et shav’atam yishma veyoshi’em*.” The circle narrows from “all who call” (v.18) to “those who fear him” (*yere’av*). Fear here is reverent awe. The progression—God does their desire; hears their cry; saves them—moves from alignment of will to rescue from crisis. The implied ethic is not transactional (say the right words, get the desired goods). Rather, those who fear God desire what God desires; thus their “desire” is fulfilled without distortion. When distress arises, God hears (a covenant verb: hearing implies acting) and delivers.  
  
- Parallelism: synthetic: desire → cry → salvation, ascending engagement.

### Verse 20

“*Shomer YHWH et-kol ohavav; ve’et kol haresha’im yashmid*.” Here the universal “kol” cuts both ways. Those who love God are “kept” (*shomer*)—a verb of steady protection. The wicked (*resha’im*) face destruction—a word used across the Bible for extirpation, social or physical (see BDB on *shamad*). Ibn Ezra contrasts divine power with human rulers’ limits: an earthly king may fear conspiracies or fail to detect hidden wickedness; God’s justice is neither ignorant nor anxious. The psalm’s moral dualism does not contradict v.9 (“good to all”). Rather, it insists that universal benevolence is not indulgence. A world fed by an open hand is also a world with a spine.  
  
- Parallelism: antithetic: the line clarifies love by its opposite and frames mercy with judgment.

### Verse 21

“*Tehillat YHWH yedabber pi; vi-yevarekh kol basar shem qodsho le’olam va’ed*.” The inclusio closes: the individual mouth that vowed in v.1 speaks again. But the last word belongs to “all flesh.” Two final nuances:  
- The jussive “may/let all flesh bless” can be wish or confident forecast; the poem sustains both—the imperative of mission and the promise of consummation.  
- The object is “his holy name,” not the unsayable essence. The world blesses what it can know: God’s reputation, character, and deeds as they have arrived in the world.  
With that, the alphabet of praise has done its work. It hasn’t finished the subject—“his greatness is unsearchable”—but it has made a world in which such searching is joyful.  
  
- Parallelism: synthetic: the single voice summons all flesh, and time expands to “forever and ever.”  
  
Technical glossary (consolidated):  
- Parallelism: the core engine of Hebrew poetry; the second colon develops the first (synonymous, antithetic, or synthetic/staircase).  
- Merism: expressing a whole by naming its extremes (e.g., “generation to generation”).  
- Anaphora: repeated opening word or phrase (here, “all”).  
- Inclusio: opening and ending with similar language to frame a unit.  
- LXX/MT: Greek and Hebrew textual traditions that sometimes preserve different lines; differences can illuminate how ancient readers understood a psalm’s structure and meaning.  
  
Figurative language cross-references cited:  
- “Long of nostrils” (patience): Exod 34:6; cf. anger as “burning nose” Exod 32:10, 12, 19.  
- “Pour forth” speech: Ps 19:3; Ps 94:4; Ps 119:171; Prov 15:2.  
- “Eyes of all wait”: Ps 104:27.  
- “Open hand”: Deut 15:8, 11 (human ethics), applied to God here.  
- Food from God’s hand: Ps 104:28.  
  
With these in place, Psalm 145 becomes what its title promises: not abstract “praise,” but a crafted, spacious house where daily blessing, intergenerational teaching, royal confession, and creaturely dependence are all welcomed—until “all flesh” can bless.

## Methodological & Bibliographical Summary

### Research & Data Inputs

**Psalm Verses Analyzed**: 21

**LXX (Septuagint) Texts Reviewed**: 21

**Phonetic Transcriptions Generated**: 21

**Ugaritic Parallels Reviewed**: 1

**Lexicon Entries (BDB/Klein) Reviewed**: 37

**Traditional Commentaries Reviewed**: 111 (Ibn Ezra (21); Malbim (20); Meiri (20); Metzudat David (17); Radak (20); Rashi (6); Torah Temimah (7))

**Concordance Entries Reviewed**: 29

**Figurative Language Instances Reviewed**: 226

**Master Editor Prompt Size**: 223,196 characters

### Models Used

**Structural Analysis (Macro)**: claude-sonnet-4-20250514

**Verse Discovery (Micro)**: claude-sonnet-4-20250514

**Commentary Synthesis**: claude-sonnet-4-20250514

**Editorial Review**: gpt-5

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