Magnificent Goodness

Readings, prayers, and hymns

Ken Bible

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Magnificent Goodness

The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord. (Psalm 33:5, NASB)

Taste and see that the Lord is good. (Psalm 34:8)

They shall give thanks to the Lord for His mercy, And for His wonders to the sons of mankind! For He has satisfied the thirsty soul, And He has filled the hungry soul with what is good. (Psalm 107:8-9, NASB)

~

"Our trials teach us the falseness and emptiness of all that is not God. Nothing is real, nothing is good outside of Him." (paraphrased from Francois Fenelon)

Go Beyond

Go beyond thinking of God as merely a means to an end, as a way to obtain more loving relationships or inner peace or even everlasting life.

He Himself is the end of all things. He is our greatest blessing, our glorious reward, our eternal destiny, the ocean of all goodness.

Love,

inner peace, and everlasting life are merely partial descriptions of all that He is.

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Everything I want, everything I need comes from You, Father, the Source of all. I long for YOU! I wait for YOU! I hope in YOU!

~

Hymn recording: The Upward Call



WORDS: Ken Bible MUSIC: Traditional Folk Tune and Ken Bible HAZELGREEN C.M.D.

Alt. Tunes: CLEANSING FOUNTAIN; CAROL

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God of All

God of all reality...

God of all time and all eternity, of all that has been, all that is, and all that will be...

God of every wonder ever seen, every truth ever known, every mystery ever pondered, every good ever desired and so much that is beyond imagining...

You are the One who calls to me. You are the One who calls me to Yourself. You are the One who offers me full knowing and unbroken fellowship with You.

How can a creature like me respond to such an offer? All I can do is bow to You here and now, and simply say, "Here I am."

> Father, Your realm is all reality. Your time is all eternity. Whenever and wherever I am, I am engulfed in You.

> > ~

Hymn recording: God of the Universe



WORDS & MUSIC: Ken Bible

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GOD OF THE UNIVERSE Irregular

God Introduces Himself

Exodus 33:12 - 34:7

God has given Moses a huge responsibility:

to share in leading His people through a vast wilderness and forming them into a nation,

indeed, into the people of God.

At a particularly stressful point in their journey,

Moses feels the deep need

to know God better and

to be assured of His continuing presence.

So Moses prays:

"Let me know Your ways that I may know You" and *"Show me Your glory!"* (Exodus 33:13, 18, NASB)

God responds:

""I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you, and will proclaim the name of the Lord before you;...You cannot see My face, for mankind shall not see Me and live!" Then the Lord said, "Behold, there is a place by Me, and you shall stand there on the rock; and it will come about, while My glory is passing by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock and cover you with My hand until I have passed by. Then I will take My hand away and you shall see My back, but My face shall not be seen." (Exodus 33:19-23, NASB)

God does as He promised, and as He does.

He describes Himself in a few words.

So how does God summarize Himself?

Then the Lord passed by in front of him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in faithfulness and truth; who keeps faithfulness for thousands, who forgives wrongdoing, violation of His Law, and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, inflicting the punishment of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations." (Exodus 34:6-7,NASB)

What does God most want His people to understand about Him?

- He is the eternal God, the Source of all existence.
- He is unfailing love and
 - absolute dependability.
- He freely, eagerly forgives sin,
- But He will never ignore sin.
 - A loving Father cannot ignore

what threatens His children. Sin and all its fruits must be pursued and destroyed.

This is the God

we fear and love and serve.

~

Father, when I begin to realize who You are, Your lavish gifts are not enough. I want to know You and please You and worship You. I want to love You and walk with You and trust You every moment. I want to live in You and for You and to You alone.

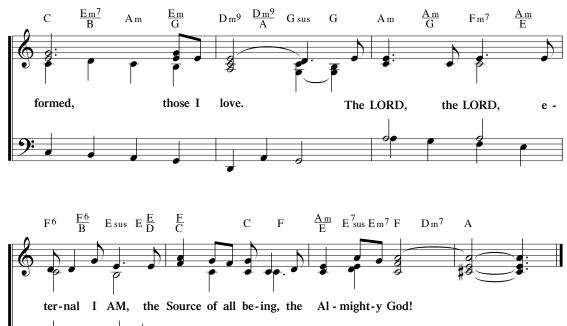
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Hymn recording: God Introduces Himself

God Introduces Himself Exodus 3:13-15; 34:6-7



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God's Gentle Whisper

1 Kings 18:20 – 19:18

Elijah was fresh off his spectacular victory over the 450 prophets of Baal. Through him, God had proven again that He is the one true God, the one who answers by fire. But when wicked Queen Jezebel heard what had happened, she swore that she would kill Elijah, and he ran for his life. He fled into the wilderness, where God ministered to him with food and rest. Then on the strength of that food, Elijah traveled for forty days to Mt. Sinai, "the mountain of God". Elijah was weary, discouraged, and hungry to encounter God. So God told him, ""Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord." And behold, the Lord was passing by! (1 Kings 19:11, NASB) Then came a mighty wind that tore the mountain and broke the rocks, but God was not in the wind. Then an earthquake, but God was not in the earthquake. Next, a fire, but God was not in the fire. Finally, Elijah heard a gentle whisper. He immediately recognized the presence of God. So he wrapped his face in his cloak and stood in the entrance of his cave, ready for the encounter he had long sought.

Sometimes God reveals Himself most

unmistakably and beautifully, not with overt displays of power and emotion, but with the gentle whisper of His intimate presence.

~

During our times of deepest need, when other sources of supply fail us, God allows us to experience Himself.

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Hymn recording: <u>Just You</u>



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Reflection on Psalm 92

Father, how good it is to praise You and thank You! As I wake in the morning and face the new day, I bask in the light of Your unfailing love. As I complete the day and look back, I smile in the glow of Your faithfulness, Your absolute, unwavering dependability. As I reflect on all You have done in the wide world and in my own life, Father, how can I help but love You and thank You? Your works and ways give me a glimpse into Your mind and Your thoughts. How deep! How high! How can I help but trust You? How can I help but worship You? Focused on You, I get a perspective high above my daily struggles. I see You working all things for good, far beyond my fearful, childish understanding. Planted in You, growing in You, I am tree. immovable, always green,

always fruitful.

Almighty God, I am deeply rooted in You.

 \sim

You are unfailing love and absolute dependability, and as I praise You, trust You, and live in You, I share the healthful vitality of all You are!

 \sim

Hymn recording: Psalm 92

Psalm 92



WORDS: Ken Bible MUSIC: Scottish Folk Tune; arr. by Ken Bible BARBARA ALLEN C.M.

Alt. Tunes: AMAZING GRACE; AZMON; ST. ANNE

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Reflection on Psalm 96

Creator, Savior, Sovereign King, our Father, may our songs be forever fresh and forever new, forever rising as our living response to Your living presence. Your love is new every morning. Keep the song in our hearts fresh and new every day. O Father, Your power and goodness are universal. They bless every living being. So may all of us every nation, every culture, every individual worship You. Only universal praise is fitting for all You are. And Almighty God, our songs are only the beginning. All of creation, every corner of the world will soon explode with rejoicing. For You Yourself are coming to us! You are coming to bring justice, to bring all the beauty of holiness, to make this earth Your eternal home. O Father, we are waiting for that day! Our rejoicing has already begun!

~

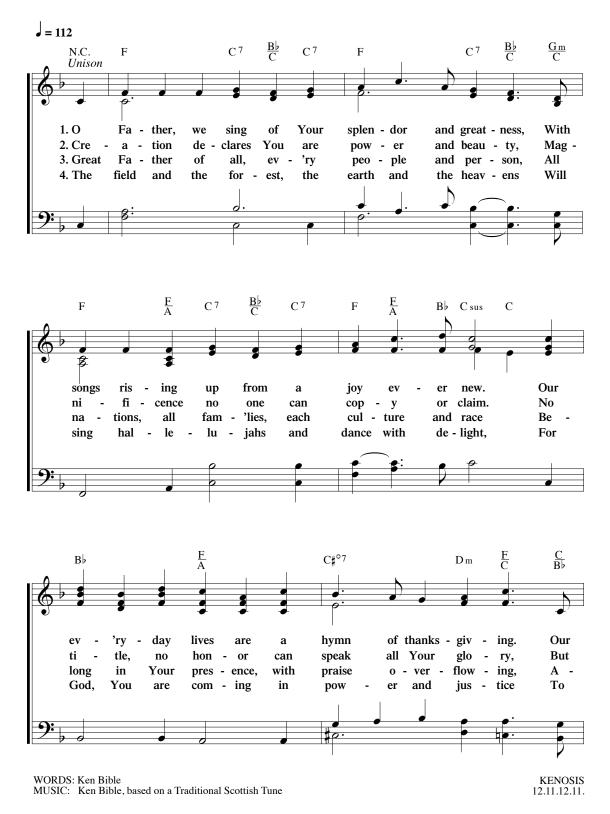
O my Father,

my Creator, help me to give You all the glory that is due You. Help me to see You and worship You in all the splendor of Your holiness. For creation itself will rejoice when You come to put everything right!

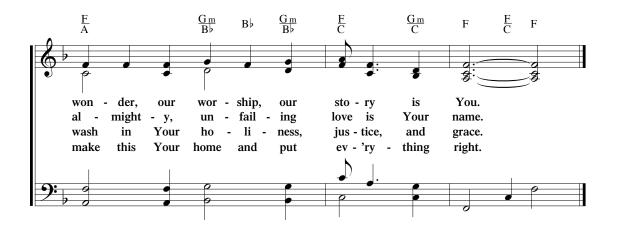
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Hymn recording: Psalm 96

Psalm 96



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Reflection on Psalm 103

O my Father, my God, Your love and Your goodness resound through every time and every place. Your kindness and patient compassion fill all history. Father, Your love resounds in me. Your goodness has filled every time and every place in my life. You forgive, You heal, You buy me back from my sinful choices. You satisfy me completely with all that is best. You renew me, body, mind, and spirit. Your compassionate love is boundless. persistent, tough, and tender. You kiss away all the guilt I so richly deserve. You look at me. not as an angry judge, but as a proud father, patient and forbearing, with untiring mercy.

Your love will long outlast my few days on earth.

When this frail body returns to dust, my life in You – Your life in me – will have only just begun.

Praise to You, O my God! I bless You, I thank You, I love You, my dear Father!

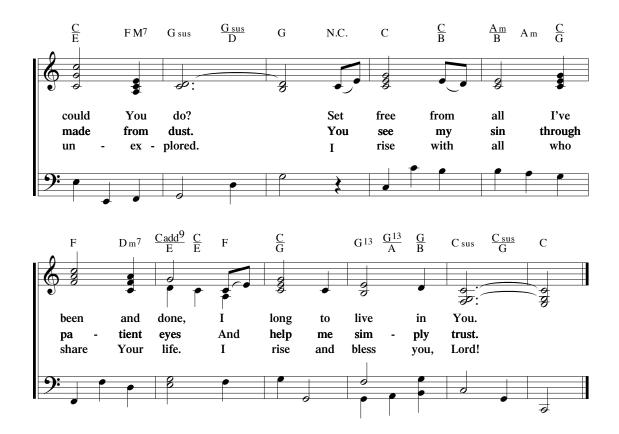
> O Father, You always have been and always will be unfailing love, good and right, faithful and true. You are unfailing love to me, and I praise and bless and worship You!

> > ~

Hymn recording: Psalm 103



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Reflection on Psalm 150

Lord our God, how can we possibly respond to You for all You are almighty, all-wise, all-loving, holy, unsearchably great and eternally, thoroughly good? How could we ever thank You for all You have done creating us, redeeming us, forgiving us, cleansing us, adopting us as Your own children, providing for us in absolutely every way, filling us with Yourself, and giving us an eternal future with You? We cannot. Our response to You will always be inadequate.

always be inadequate. But with everything we are and everything we have, with every breath and together with all You have created, we can praise You, full-heart and full-voice, forever and ever.

Praise to You, PRAISE to You, PRAISE TO YOU, OUR GOD! Father, consume my life with Your praise! Use all I have and all I am to glorify Yourself!

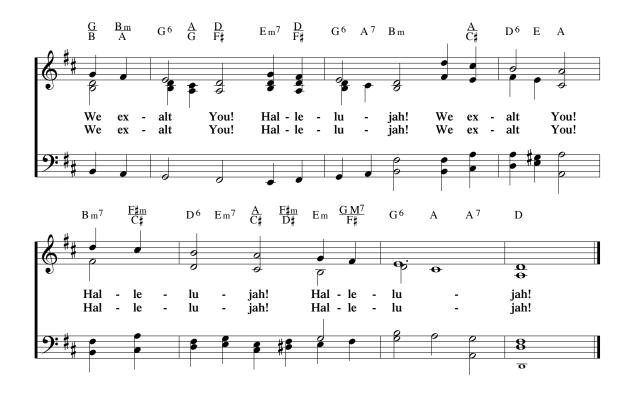
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Hymn recording: Psalm 150



WORDS: Ken Bible MUSIC: Geistliche Kirchengesange, 1623; arr. by Ralph Vaughan Williams LASST UNS ERFREUEN L.M. w. refrain lines

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Mercy

Almighty God, I don't need a major moral failure to experience Your mercy. I experience Your mercy every time you give me what I don't deserve.

You are an unbounded Being, complete in Yourself,

the source of all life and all that is.

My existence is a mercy.

You are infinite in excellence, perfect in power, wisdom, and love. You graciously gave me fellowship with You. I rejected You and chose myself: a speck of dust, a breath, utterly corrupt. I chose death, yet You continue to give me life.

Every moment is a mercy.

I am insignificant. Living in Your presence, sharing existence with You,

I deserve to be completely ignored. Your attention is a mercy. Even Your anger, Your judgment, Your condemnation are mercies.

Holy and just God, You know all that I have thought and said and done. Condemned, I deserve whatever punishment can be inflicted

on such a miserable creature as me.

Your total forgiveness is an unspeakable mercy.

Though I am marvelously forgiven,

my response to You continues to be lukewarm, inconsistent, and ungrateful. I deserve Your disgust.

Instead, in mercy You fill me with Yourself and tenderly grow me toward You.

Day by day, every breath is a mercy.

This beautiful earth is a mercy.

Every chance to know You better is a mercy.

Your faithful Spirit is such a mercy!

The amazing privilege of prayer is a mercy.

Your unfailing patience with my ignorance, weakness, and selfishness is a mercy. Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning. (Lamentations 3:22-23, NIV)

Almighty God, my Father, You are compassion.

You are kindness and goodness. You are deep and enduring love.

My entire existence, every moment and forever, is enfolded in Your unending mercy.

Praise to You! All praise to You, my Savior and my God!

God gives grace when it is least expected and least deserved.

~

Hymn recording: <u>Sea of Mercy</u>

Sea of Mercy

Exodus 34:6-7; Deuteronomy 7:9; Psalm 36:5-6a; 100:5; 118:1; 145:8-9; Lamentations 3:22-23; Micah 7:18-19; Romans 11:32; Ephesians 2:4-7; Titus 3:4-5; Hebrews 4:16



WORDS: Ken Bible MUSIC: Traditional Scottish Tune and Ken Bible SEA OF MERCY 8.7.8.6.7.6.8.6.6.

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Our Single-minded Father

Father, this morning You helped my heart to grasp what my mind had dimly known:

Everything You have allowed me to go through in my life, everything I am going through even now, is to build my relationship with You:

all the years of frustration, all the loneliness, all the financial struggles, all the endless waiting, all those disappointments.

You have isolated me to Yourself.

You have hemmed me in.

You have enclosed me behind and before, And laid Your hand upon me (Psalm 139:5, NASB). By my circumstances and by Your Spirit within me You have turned me repeatedly, persistently toward You. You have made Yourself

my only comfort, my only hope, my only unchanging Rock of truth, my only refuge.

Father, the unfailing faithfulness of Your eternal love swamps my tiny attention span, my childish self-centeredness, my meager, stumbling faith.

I am a child learning to walk.

Like any eager parent, You

call me, lift me, point me, hold my hands, and draw me toward Yourself.

Sometimes we wonder whether faith is entirely a gift of Your sovereign choice, or whether it is our doing.

But You are like one building a campfire.

You work to create a tiny spark,

then patiently blow it into flame by Your mighty but gentle breath.

I have to respond,

but all the doing is Yours, my loving Father.

Continue to patiently, persistently draw me. And when I am tempted to despair or complain, help me to remember and look to You again. You are my Father, and I am gladly, proudly, humbly Your child.

~

God's greatest blessings often come disguised as difficulties. These difficulties are opportunities to trust Him in a new way, and thus to know Him in a new way.

~

Hymn recording: <u>Good Gifts</u>



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A Living Hymn

The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. Day to day pours forth speech, And night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words; Their voice is not heard. Their line has gone out through all the earth, And their utterances to the end of the world. (Psalm 19:1-4, NASB)

Father, the heavens sing of Your greatness so beautifully and constantly.
Even their silence is eloquent and majestic.

Can I, Your child, do any less? May my daily kindness sing of Your warm smile and open-armed acceptance. May my generosity sing of Your great bounty and eagerness to share. Let my patience under pressure sing of Your faithfulness and gentle strength and unshakable peace.

Let my joy in every situation remind those around me that You are always near and always good.

Father, make my life a hymn to Your great love.

O Father, my Father, may I always respond to all You are! Like the mountains, may I quake at Your footsteps. Like the green earth, may I bear rich fruit because of Your presence in me. May all pride melt away before the fire of Your magnificence and Your holiness.

~

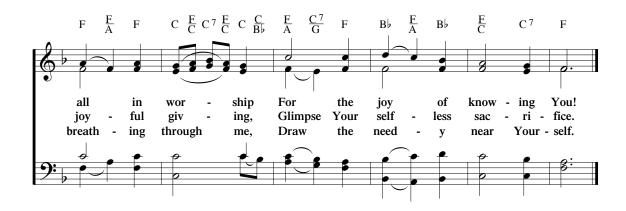
Hymn recording: Joyfully Giving All



WORDS: Ken Bible MUSIC: Rowland H. Prichard



HYFRYDOL 8.7.8.7.D.



From Every Nation

"People will come from east and west and north and south, and will take their places...in the kingdom of God. (Luke 13:29, NIV)

We were at the Church of the Annunciation in Nazareth, which commemorates the place where the angel announced to Mary that Messiah would be born of her.

I was struck by the many languages, nationalities, and religious traditions that filled the church. They were like children on their first day in heaven, rushing from place to place, bubbling with excitement. Most had traveled long distances at great expense to be there.

What a vivid reminder that people come to faith in Christ through many avenues. Those avenues are as varied as the cultures and personalities of all the people of all the ages.

With each of us, our understanding of God is so partial and so marred by ignorance. But God's goodness comes in many flavors, and His incarnation has so many beautiful faces.

Father, You don't rank individuals by importance or respectability, and neither should we. Each one is Your dearly-loved child, and we should treat each one as such.

~

Hymn recording: God of All People

God of All People

TUNE: Morning Has Broken (BUNESSAN) Exodus 34:5-7; Psalm 104:27-30; Isaiah 40:25; Matthew 5:43-48; 10:7-8; Acts 17:24-28; Ephesians 3:14-15



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Good to All

The Lord is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made. (Psalm 145:9, NIV)

When someone else is "lucky," I sometimes feel a little jealous. It's not a storm of jealousy...just a whisper.

But God has many children, and He is lavish with them all. They are my brothers and sisters, dearly loved by the One I love. Because they are dear to Him, they are dear to me.

I see my Lord in them. I love Him in them. I serve Him in them.

There is no place for jealousy.

Lord, let praise always be my reaction to Your goodness.

Father, I will rejoice in all our blessings, even when they fall on the next person, not on me.

~

Hymn recording: A Thankful Heart

A Thankful Heart



Alt. Tunes: GERMANY, OLD 100th

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