

PSALMS 117-118 – PRAISING OUR MERCIFUL GOD

Introduction

- 1) **Psalms 117-118** are part of the “Hallel” group of psalms (113-118) sung during the Jewish Passover and other occasions throughout the year
- 2) These psalms were designed to “Praise the LORD” (Heb. *Halal Yahweh*, Eng. *Hallelujah*) for all that He has done for mankind, especially as it pertains to salvation

Psalm 117

- 1) **Psalm 117** is the shortest psalm (and shortest chapter in the Bible)
- 2) While containing only two verses, it has plenty to say about praising the Lord!
 - I) **The Gentiles are to Praise God (v. 1)**
 - A) God is the Creator and Judge of all nations and peoples (Gen. 18:25; Acts 17:26)
 - B) The hope of all Gentile peoples is found in seeking God (Deut. 32:43; Psa. 86:9)
 - 1) Ultimate salvation of Gentiles found in Christ (Gen. 12:3; 22:18; Eph. 2:11-12; Rom. 15:7-13 [Psa. 117:1 quoted in v. 11])
 - II) **God’s Merciful Kindness and Eternal Truth (v. 2)**
 - A) God’s lovingkindness/mercy is great toward us (Eph. 2:4; 1 Pet. 2:9-10; Titus 3:5)
 - B) God’s truth [His word and faithfulness] is forever (Psa. 100:5; 1 Pet. 1:23-25)
 - C) We should still be praising the Lord for these wonderful things!

Psalm 118

- 1) **Psalm 118** has been considered a messianic psalm since it is quoted in twelve New Testament passages that have a prophetic reference to Jesus
- 2) This is an impressive psalm of praise with many great truths to teach us
 - I) **Thanksgiving to God for His Goodness and Mercy (vv. 1-4)**
 - A) The words of verse 1 are the beginning and ending thoughts of the psalm
 - 1) Same words are found in David’s psalm in 1 Chronicles 16:34
 - B) “His mercy endures forever” – quoted four times in these verses
 - 1) A responsive phrase repeated for emphasis (compare Psalm 136)
 - 2) To be expressed by Israel, the house of Aaron [priests], and those who fear the Lord
 - 3) Our God is the “Father of mercies” to all men (2 Cor. 1:3)
 - II) **Trusting in the LORD (vv. 5-9)**
 - A) In distress, the Lord is our help when we call upon Him (Psa. 46:1)
 - 1) Set in a “broad place” – a firm, strong place (not in a dangerous, difficult place)
 - B) If the Lord is on our side there is no need to fear man!
 - 1) Quoted in Hebrews 13:6 to emphasize the necessity of continually trusting in God
 - C) The Lord is for His people (cf. Rom. 8:31)
 - 1) It is always better to trust in God than in man, even great men
 - 2) One doesn’t have to understand or even agree with God to trust and submit to Him
 - a) Trust and submission mean the most when there is lack of understanding or agreement
 - III) **The Deliverance of the Lord (vv. 10-18)**
 - A) The psalmist trusted God to deliver him from those who would harm him
 - 1) The Lord is our help against our adversary, Satan (2 Pet. 2:9; 1 Pet. 5:8-9)
 - B) God’s right hand – powerful and effective
 - 1) Causes rejoicing and salvation in the tents of the righteous

- C) Psalmist experienced chastening by the Lord – hardship, testing
1) Chastening can teach and help us (Heb. 12:5-11; Jas. 1:2-4)

IV) The Gates of Righteousness (vv. 19-21)

- A) “Gates” are an entranceway – a pathway into the fellowship of God
1) Access for the righteous to the salvation provided by God
B) Jesus is our means of access today (Rom. 5:1-2; Eph. 2:16-18; 3:10-12)

V) The Rejected Stone Becomes the Chief Cornerstone (vv. 22-24)

- A) The stone rejected by the builders became the chief cornerstone
1) This has a clear messianic fulfillment – the “Lord’s doing” and marvelous!
a) Jesus quoted this in the parable of the wicked vinedressers (Matt. 21:42; Mk. 12:10-11; Lk. 20:17); He was the “son” that was killed in the parable
b) Peter quotes and applies it to Jesus and the Jewish council (Acts 4:11)
c) Peter quotes it again (1 Pet. 2:7) and applies it to Jesus along with two parallel quotes from Isaiah 28:16; 8:14
d) Paul refers to Jesus as the “chief cornerstone” (Eph. 2:20)
2) Did the psalmist see himself at first as the fulfillment of these word (trouble from men then deliverance by God)? Did he know of the messianic connection?
a) This is a mystery of prophecy – how much did these authors know about the ultimate fulfillment of their inspired words? (cf. 1 Pet. 1:10-12)
B) This is the “day which the Lord has made” – the day of salvation
1) Truly a reason for rejoicing and gladness!

VI) Blessed is He who Comes in the Name of the Lord (vv. 25-29)

- A) “Save, I pray!” (Heb. *yasha anna*) = Hosanna
1) Vv. 26 quoted with “Hosanna” [“Save, we pray!”] by the people at Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem on the final week (Matt. 21:9; Mk. 11:9-10; Lk. 19:38; Jn. 12:13)
2) Jesus is the ultimate fulfillment of all the righteous who come in the “name of the Lord”
B) God gives light and we are to respond with obedient sacrifices (cf. Rom. 12:1-2)
C) The psalmist exclaims his personal and close relationship with His God – “You are My God!”

Conclusion

Psalm 118 ends (v. 29) the way it begins, giving thanks to God for His goodness and eternal mercy. Along with **Psalm 117**, these psalms of praise should be in our minds and on our lips continually now and into eternity.