

The Egyptian Hallel 6

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 04 March 2022

Preacher: Malcolm Macdonald

[0 : 00] I'm going to sing Psalm 67, first version of the psalm, Psalm 67.

Lord, bless and pity us, shine on us with thy face, that the earth thy way and nations all may know thy saving grace. Let people praise thee, Lord, let people all be praised, for let the nations be glad in songs their voices raise.

Thou justly people judge, on earth rule nations all, let people praise thee, Lord, let them praise thee, both great and small.

The earth her fruit shall yield, our God shall blessings end, God shall us bless, men shall him fear, and to earth's utmost end.

The whole of Psalm 67, the first version of the psalm, to God's praise. The Lord, bless and pity us, shine on us with thy face. Lord, bless and pity us, shine on us with thy face.

[1 : 25] Let people praise thee, Lord, let people all be praised.

O let the nations be glad in songs their voices raise.

Thou justly people of Thy voice vaccinations all, let people praise thee, Lord, let them praise thee, Lord, Let people praise Him, Lord, and praise Him, O David, and song.

The earth of good John Hill, our God shall bless His hand.

O John, the blessed men shall then hear and hear the whole day.

[3 : 18] I'd like us to turn now to the book of Psalms, the Old Testament Scriptures. The book of Psalms, Psalm 117.

Psalm 117. O praise the Lord, all ye nations, praising all ye people, for His merciful kindness is great toward us, and the truth of the Lord endureth forever.

Praise ye the Lord. Most of you will know that we have been looking at this group of Psalms that follow one another in the book of Psalms, from Psalm 113 to Psalm 118.

And these Psalms are identified as Psalms of praise, and Psalms which featured at certain times within the liturgy of the people of God, as they gathered to worship God.

As you can see, this is the shortest Psalm that we have in the Psalms. And as such, we might be inclined to dismiss it, or perhaps to go to the other extremes and try and give it an importance that it may not have just to emphasize that brevity does not vacate it of meaning.

[5 : 23] Certainly it is a psalm that is not sung as often as many of the other psalms because of its brevity.

And at that surface reading, we might not see much in it. And because of that, some people have decided in their wisdom that the Psalm most probably was tacked on to either the previous Psalm, or the Psalm that comes after the Psalm 116 or Psalm 118, because it makes sense to them to do that.

However, it is not necessary, nor is it right to do so. What we can see is a psalm that speaks for itself.

It is obviously a psalm of praise. It is a psalm that gives an invitation to praise the Lord.

And it gives us two reasons for such praise to be on our lips. First of all, a psalm of praise, it's obvious from its beginning, and I suppose its middle and its end, that it is just that.

[6 : 56] And as we said before, on numerous occasions should not be something that is absent from the lives of God's people.

We are created for God's glory. We are created with this reason for living, that we should magnify and praise God.

And that is true for everyone, but it should be second nature to the believer, that they find it relatively easy to praise God.

Maybe not at every time, but it should never be too far away from us. Theologians tell us that there is a difference between the words that we have at the beginning of the psalm, O praise the Lord, and the words that conclude the psalm, praise ye the Lord, in the sense that there are two different Hebrew words used.

The first word corresponds with the cluster of psalms that we have here, which we've discovered by the title the Great Hallel, or the Egyptian Hallel rather, which is psalms of praise that are sung in the worship of God during the certain feasts and festivals.

[8 : 35] Most noticeably the sacramental occasion where the Passover is celebrated.

But the first word is Hallel, from which we get the word Hallelujah, praise the Lord. The second word, or the word that comes at the end of the psalm, is the Hebrew word Shammah, which means to boast or to declare the name of God as something that we celebrate.

We extol the name of God. And I suppose we could argue that there's no reason to have two separate words.

But you'll know yourself from how we use language, that whether it's in Gaelic or English, that the nuances that belong to the language are meaningful.

They're meaningful to ourselves. We express ourselves using words that may mean the same essentially, but because of the nuanced meaning, they either move us from one point to the other, or they bring a certain truth to bear.

[10 : 13] And that's what's true here. The commentator H.C. Leupold calls the psalm, or the words of the psalm, an exultant Hallelujah.

An exultant Hallelujah. And Professor Alan Harmon offers the description of how we are to understand this.

He takes us to the book of Revelation. He takes us into heaven. He takes us into the place where the saints are gathered in the presence of their Lord and Saviour, and they offer praises that are full of celebration even.

After these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Hallelujah, salvation and glory and honour and power unto the Lord our God.

You can see there's an emphasis there that may be lacking in the way that we speak of praising God here in the world.

[11 : 26] But the thing that should be emphasized, I suppose, with regard to this praise is that we need to remind ourselves that it is something that belongs particularly to the child of God.

And if it is lacking in the life of the child of God, the believer, then there is something lacking that is serious. There is something missing that should not be missing.

And every one of us that makes a profession of a belief in God or in Christ Jesus, that if this naught is missing from our worship, then there is something seriously amiss in our lives.

I think one of the commentators was using a description of a famous conductor of an orchestra.

And he was a renowned composer as well as a conductor. And he was asked about certain music, spiritual music, that he was invited to conduct the congregation or the people who were performing that piece.

[13 : 10] I think it was a piece like Handel's Messiah. It was a spiritual piece of music.

And he was asked the question, are you spiritually moved yourself by the performance? And he paused before he answered.

And he was an old man at that point. And the thing that the commentator was getting at was that despite the heights to which he went in getting this performance from the musicians and being moved by the music himself, he could not and did not grasp the spiritual significance that lay at the heart of the music because he wasn't a believer.

And in a sense, what was being got at there is that we may understand what is being said about the need to praise God.

But there is more than just an understanding of the need. There is an understanding of what stimulates the praise in the first instance.

[14 : 37] And when any person who is a believer reflects upon reasons for praising God, they don't need to go too far before they discover that there is ample ground for that praise to be wholesome and wholehearted and fulsome.

There is never a reason for not having something that comes to mind in praising God.

So here we have an invitation on the part of the psalmist to praise God. And not only is it directed at the reader or the singer of this psalm, but the thing that's remarkable about the psalm and many other psalms like it is the sense that while you would ordinarily accept that the believer, the Jewish believer, has reason to praise God, to extend that beyond the believer who is a Jew was something that was surprising to the Jews.

Because they believed and they understood and they restricted the blessings of God and the promises of God and the privileges of God's people.

They insisted that they belonged to this race and to this blood and to this people that bore the name of Israel.

[16 : 32] So to find a psalm that not only speaks of an invitation to praise God but extends it beyond that group of people is indeed itself a surprise.

It is an invitation to praise the Lord given to all nations and all peoples. As I said, it would not be a surprise to hear these words directed towards the Jew.

And in many psalms that would be your instinct that these words that are directed towards the people who have known God's blessing.

But in the psalm that we sang last, Psalm 67, it is a psalm that is identified as a psalm that has a much more universal application.

It is a psalm that speaks of the gospel narrative in the sense that it is a word directed to all men and all women the world over.

[17 : 55] In Psalm 67, if you remember these words that we sang, the psalmist says, let people praise the Lord, let people all thee praise, or let the nations be glad in songs their voices raise, and so on.

In the Psalm, it's Psalm 87, there's a similar sentiment which takes you beyond the Jewish nation again. Things glorious are said of thee, thou city of the Lord, Rahab and Babel, I to those that know me will record, behold, even Tyros, and with it the land of Palestine, and likewise Ethiopia, this man was born therein.

Nations that you would not typically think of as being recipients of the blessing of God, and this Psalm is a Psalm that directs praise to be on the lips of the people, of the nations.

A call for all to participate in this worship and adoration of the Lord. It's Alan Harmon that puts it like that.

A call to experience the saving power of God and to know him just as believing people know him. Just as believing people know him.

[19 : 38] We read the words of the Apostle Paul this evening in chapter 15. In that chapter he quotes from this Psalm but he also quotes from many other passages from the Old Testament and the same theme dominates the extension of the kingdom of God the extension of God's blessing to those who lie beyond the accepted borders of Israel.

Very often in the writings of the Apostle Paul did you notice he identified himself in the passage that we read as the Apostle to the Gentiles and he speaks of Jesus Christ as the Messiah the one who was promised to come and bring salvation to be a king and a ruler to Israel but at the same time he was speaking of him as the one who would bring the circumcision beyond the accepted bounds where that applied Jesus Christ being a minister of the circumcision with regard to the salvation of the Gentiles one of the best writers who speaks of the messianic promises or prophecies of the old testament he alludes to the fact that with regard to the covenant that reference is made by the apostle taking you right back to the

Abrahamic covenant which we have in Genesis 12 similarly the apostle Paul he is basing the understanding that he has of gospel blessing as not just something that is foreordained but something that God has commanded you know read this short psalm again he says praise the Lord all ye nations praise him all ye people praise ye the Lord it is not something that we are permitted not to do it's something that is required of all men to do everywhere John Murray in his comments on this epistle to the Romans I'll just paraphrase what he says in

Genesis 12 Abraham has been called to be an agent of blessing to the nations Israel as a nation had been declared and commissioned as a kingdom of priests to serve as a priestly kingdom among and on behalf of the nations that's the critical thing among and on behalf of the nations and we forget that and the Jew chooses to forget that to think that we are of Abraham we are descendants of Abraham we are of this blood we have these blessings because of our physical connection with Abraham but Jesus corrected them repeatedly and said that they needed to be of a spiritual seat not a physical seat Jesus' ministry was to the world as a whole and without exception does not mean of course even though this is written even though we could say and we

I don't know if the grammar will stand that that we can read into the psalm that the psalmist is commanding requiring that God is insisting that this be true praise him all you nations praise him all you people as if he is issuing a command just because it is said just because it is written doesn't necessarily mean that it will follow that people will do that all who hear the gospel yes they're expected to hear the gospel they're expected to believe the gospel they're expected to imbibe the truths of the gospel it doesn't mean that they do that it doesn't mean that they're converted or become believers just because the gospel is preached in their hearing but they are still called to do that they are still challenged to do that and when they do not they will be held to account faithful it doesn't mean that he is we've seen that already in earlier psalms that we've looked to the faithfulness of

[25 : 51] God is never brought into question but we find that the faithlessness of the people even the people of God is often highlighted in their failings and failures what are the reasons given for such praise well he says for his merciful kindness is great toward us his merciful kindness is great towards us again what is highlighted there is God's covenant love the thing the word has it appears in a translation I think it may well be at the heart of what is translated here anyway God's covenant love has been great to us

John Calvin suggests this is mentioned first to encourage the heart of the believer that God is mercifully kind to encourage the hearts of the believer when they are tested when they are tried he is the source of all grace he is the source for the believer of saving grace and it is out of his mercies I don't know which one of the comment it reminded me of this you find it in the book of lamentations it is of his mercies that we have not consumed great is his faithfulness which is what the psalmist is saying his grace by which he saved is a constant that you can rely on it is not something when you think about your saved position when you think about your salvation when you think about your conversion when you think about all the things that are to do with it your feelings may fluctuate regarding that you may be riddled with fears you may be questioning all the kinds of things that are in your heart and in your mind that seems to go against your position as a redeemed sinner

God doesn't change God's word doesn't change God's purposes in saving sinners doesn't change and yet you examine your heart and you think well maybe something has something has changed and more often than not it's your thinking your discernment your apprehension of what God has done in your life Warren Weersby points out that by grace each one of us is saved without which we would have remained in darkness is that not the case not one of God's chosen people would have been anything other than in a permanent state of death in darkness if

God had not intervened and the psalmist is saying we praise you because of your merciful kindness which is great toward us that word great I suppose is capable of many applications but because of what he has done there is the added assurance in the heart and mind of those who perceive it as for what it is that God is faithful and his mercy is without equal and without end the truth of the Lord endureth forever he says this God is faithful we read who promised we refer to

Philip Ross who's written specifically on this group of psalms and he asks the question how great is God's love how great is God's love and his simple answer is this his love is so great that there is nothing that will separate you from him he couldn't say that because the scripture tells us that very truth some say that the word we have here for truth is capable of a dual understanding it means a firm and unshakable grasp which is what God has said what God has said what God has promised what God has done will never be undone and John Calvin just to finish off with these thoughts with regard to this short psalm full of full of meaning that these two things must inevitably come together mercy and truth or mercy and faithfulness one is great and the other is everlasting everlasting but they are never in opposition even though they may be spoken of separately they are not meant to be considered as if they're rivals but they go hand in hand as Calvin says flowing from an everlasting stream praise he the

[32 : 22] Lord his truth endures forever his merciful kindness his covenant love is ever the same tie the psalm in now with the psalms that we were looking at and what do you find if you can put yourself into that room where the disciples along with the Lord were singing these verses as they as they prepared themselves to go forward as the Lord prepared himself to go forward how do you think these words would impact upon his heart and mind what was he saying well he was as seeing a kingdom that has no end he was seeing an everlasting kingdom a blessed kingdom a kingdom that owes its existence to the goodness and the greatness of the mercy of

God destined to continue into the endless ages of eternity his kingdom yes the cross was in the way but these words were on his lips and he knew their meaning better than anyone who had sung them before or even after and may God bless to us these few thoughts let us pray oh Lord our God we give thanks for the word that reminds us of your great love that love that knows no bounds love love that we so often curtail even in our mind's eye we see individuals before us and your love can never reach them your love can never penetrate the darkness that the existing and yet we are so wrong the Jews of old were so wrong in their thinking that the

Gentiles were anathema in the sight of God that they were accursed that they were despised by God so as never to be in receipt of your great blessings it is in Christ Jesus and yet when Messiah came he came to be a king and he came to rule over this kingdom which would have all kinds in it all kinds of nations all kind of peoples all kinds of individuals but all one in him as we bring our service to our conclusion we pray that we would have that before our minds eye even as we reflect upon the grave situation in which this world finds itself in we do not know what the future may hold we do not know what power is held in abeyance and what power may be yet unleashed by any nation on the earth but we do know that there is a power that you possess that no other possesses and to that end we come before your throne and we petition your mercy and your grace and your help in time of need seeking that you would pour out your loving kindness upon an undeserving people we remember in your presence those who are in need this evening those who have been driven from their homes those who have been terrorized those who have suffered the loss of loved ones we pray that you would mercifully undertake for them the world over we are mindful of the needs of the

Ukraine in particular at this time but we know that in other nations that are maybe forgotten for the time being that there are people there who are suffering and who have been driven from their homes also that are impoverished and starving and are demoralized and not only are they physically beaten but mentally scarred in such a way that perhaps they will never recover this world is a world that lies in the grip of sin there is only one remedy that you hold out to us and that is the passion of the great physician of souls may you mercifully lift him up before the eyes of the needy this evening and take away everything that distracts us from looking upon him grant mercy for our many transgressions even in our holy things forgive us sin in

Jesus name amen we're going to sing sam 117 we'll sing it in galic sam 117 Woah Thank you.

[39 : 08] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[41 : 38] Thank you. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit rest and abide with you all now and always. Amen.