

# The Egyptian Hallel 2

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- [ 0 : 00 ]     And to the Lord, O God, that dwells on high, who can compare himself that humble things to see in heaven and earth that are.
- And so on. We can sing the whole of Psalm 113 to God's praise. Praise God, ye servants of the Lord. O praise the Lord's name. Praise.
- Praise God, ye servants of the Lord. O praise the Lord's name.
- Praise. Yea, blessed be the name of God. From this time for always.
- Praise. From rising sun to where it sits, God's name is to be praised.
- [ 1 : 17 ]     The fervor nation, God is high. From heaven's glory reigns.
- And to the Lord, O God, that dwells on high, who can compare himself that humble things to see in heaven.
- And to the Lord, O God, that dwells on high, who can compare himself that dwells on high. that dwells on high, who knows all things to see in heaven. O God, that dwells on high, who knows not how to tell them God's name.
- With all the slouches of his people, the chiefly princesses great.
- [ 3 : 21 ]     The power of woman has to keep, he may give them to thee.
- Of sins and men, full of joy, praise to the Lord, hear ye.
- We can turn to the psalm that we have read and that we have just sung. Those of you who are here last Thursday will remember that we intend over the next few weeks to look at six psalms.
- Beginning with this psalm here. Collectively they have been given the name, the Egyptian Hallel.
- The psalm that we are looking at this evening, and I suppose every other psalm as well that we are going to look at.
- [ 5 : 10 ]     They were sung during the time of Passover. Where the people of God observed that sacrament as God had given it to them.
- For some, interest in these psalms lies in the fact that we can, with certainty, believe that these were the psalms that were sung by the Lord Jesus along with his disciples on the night where the Passover was observed by them.
- And the Lord's Supper was instituted. It seems fairly certain that because of the set liturgy that was observed by them, that these psalms would have been sung at appropriate points during the Passover meal.
- And when we think of the Lord, we can easily say that he had an interest in the psalms, because not only are the psalms part of scripture, so we know that he had an interest in the scripture, but the psalms were very often words that he quoted and referred to during his life ministry.

And we can observe that during his last hour, the words of the psalms were on his lips, even on the cross itself.

[ 7 : 01 ] And we may depend on extra-biblical evidence for emphasis being placed on the use of these psalms in these times, and there is evidence for that, which we may not give the same weight to as we would give to biblical evidence.

Nevertheless, it is fair. And the church, the Old Testament church, observed set forms of liturgical worship.

We may be dismissive of any form of liturgy, but we do ourselves have a liturgy. Which we observe, maybe not as strictly or as formally, as we would see other denominations observe forms of liturgy.

But, for example, when we observe the Lord's Supper, we observe the singing of three psalms.

In my memory, in my memory anyway, we've always attired to the practice within our island communities of singing Psalm 103 and Psalm 118 and Psalm 72.

[ 8 : 36 ] Now, there may be a slight variation on that on our times, but usually these are the psalms which some people are given the name, the psalms of the table.

Now, it's not, it's our tradition, it's our liturgy, but there's no biblical warranty for it. There's no insistence.

There's no insistence. The psalms are very appropriate, and they are exactly what they're meant to be. They're directing our thoughts and our attention and our affection to the Christ of the Gospels, the Christ who is being remembered in his death.

But in other congregations within our denomination, other psalms which are equally appropriate might be part of their liturgy.

Now, that's a minor issue, but it seems apparent from the scripture itself that there were psalms that they identified for such a location as this.

[ 9 : 45 ] And as we indicated the last time, having sung a psalm, and most have agreed that this was one of the psalms that would have been sung, they took their leave of the Passover meal.

Now, we're looking at these psalms, and if we look at the psalms themselves, they stand alone, and they are easily understood as they stand alone.

They don't depend upon their use in order to give meaning to them. But at the back of your mind, you should at least have the thought that the person that we're mindful of, who sang these verses, as he prepared to fulfill the role that he had as the Lamb of God, was the person of whom these psalms speak most particularly.

And you can't believe that the Lord was oblivious to the fact that the content of the psalms was remote from himself, or of no relevance to himself.

You can't think like that. They probably were more meaningful to him, and especially when we think of the fact that as he observed with his disciples this Passover, which he desired to eat with them, that these words were speaking to him in that situation.

[ 11 : 54 ] Philippos, who we referred to last week, said this, it was not simply Jewish oral tradition that chose his final hymns.

God did that for him. Just as his disciples would look back and see him nailed to the cross according to the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, that evening Jesus saw himself not as a tragic victim of circumstance, but as following a path that God had determined.

And if we have a picture, which is a big picture, of the cross and Christ on it, that's fine and well.

But the big picture requires us to be aware and knowledgeable about the minutiae of what goes into that big picture.

And all the detail of it, when you think about the whole of Scripture, as it leads us up to and away from the cross of Christ, that there are references, multiple references to Christ in his person, Christ in his life, in his ministry, in his sufferings, that are alluded to, that are spoken of clearly within the Scripture.

[ 13 : 48 ] And all of them must come together to give weight and give understanding to us as we think on these things. Well, as you can see, the psalm that we're looking at this evening is a psalm of praise.

It begins and ends with a call to praise. The word hallelujah or hallelujah is exactly that.

And it is a call to praise the Lord, to praise the name of the Lord, and to exhort him because of what the name says.

And we are familiar, every one of us, I would imagine, with the teachings of the Shorter Catechism. Man's end, we are told, is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever.

And that is immediately followed on by the teaching concerning the Scripture, the way that we are to do that.

[ 15 : 05 ] How are we to glorify God? How are we going to enjoy God? How are we going to praise God? And the Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament are what we are directed to.

Now, it's accepted, I would imagine, by all of us here, that everyone is caught up and brought, is thought of as being necessarily required to be involved, engaged, habitually practicing the praise and the worship of God.

That's why we are created. That's why God gave us being, in order to praise him and to worship him. God's God.

But we know that that is not how things are. And the psalmist here, he calls the servants of the Lord to praise the name of the Lord.

And in a sense, I suppose, he is reminding us that this can only come from those who are servants of the Lord.

[ 16 : 25 ] Even though there is a requirement placed upon all who are of the race of Adam to be involved in praising God.

Because of the nature of sin, they will not do that. But the servants of God cannot but do that. And the understanding that we should have of the word servant, there is not an official designation as such meaning those who are in office of some description, those who are elders, those who are deacons, those who are ministers, but all who serve God as his church, as his people here in the world.

And the psalmist very simply reminds us of the fact that those who are engaged in the praise of God come from all over every generation and be it past, present or future, those who serve God will be involved in the praise of that God.

It's often something that is belied by our experience. We think that this world of ours which is so obviously opposed to God and in denial about God or of God and numbered amongst those who have no praise for God that we would forget that this is not something that will be worth remembering or even being alert to.

but we cannot be oblivious to it because this is what is going to be the stated aim that God is pleased to honour.

[ 18 : 38 ] He will not ever leave himself without witnesses and always in the experience of this world there have been those who praise him.

There are those who are praising him and there will be those who praise him. And even though we would think that the church is shrinking and that the believing constituents of this world are diminished to the extent that you would hardly be aware of their existence that is not what is important God will be praised and while we are encouraged by the psalmist to be engaged in that it is in the face of fear that it is not something that others are engaged in or that is really of the essence of our existence in this world it is always the case and what we see here he says blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth and forever more from the rising of the sun and the going down of the same the

Lord's name is to be praised who will praise the name of God and the psalmist that declares the who the when and the where of this praise so as to leave us in no doubt praise ye the Lord you said and so the Lord these are they who will praise him blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth and forever always never and from the rising of the sun and to the going down of the same everywhere without exception north south east or west nowhere in this world will

God be without someone who will praise his name in the next section of the Lord is spoken of as the one who is higher than all I suppose if you take the thoughts before your mind and think of Christ as these words are being sung by him as he approached imminent death as the opposition that is in the world against him increases the enmity becomes so real and yet this psalm is on its lips a psalm that fills full of encouragement any person who is in danger of being as we may at times be overwhelmed with the thought of our puniness of our meaninglessness

I don't think we can assume that Christ would not be invulnerable from the assaults of the evil one as he approached the cross and as he viewed the things that were in the world that was so dark and so much a world of opposition so the psalm is full of hope full of full of encouragement to praise the Lord of this heaven and earth he is high above all nations and his glory above the heavens now there you see it's easy for you to understand the first part of that statement the Lord is high above all nations that's what he is he's sitting on the throne of the universe

[ 23 : 33 ] I came across a sermon by Dr. Jarmusch and I've never really got to grips with the thinking of Dr.

Jarmusch because he's got a philosophical mindset that often I lose track of but in a series of sermons he was talking about the creation and the cosmology of this world and this universe and in his discussion he was looking not just at this world but at the planets and the stars and all that existed that man knew about but at some point in his sermon he said not only must we believe that God knows this world and that God is aware of this world and that God is caring about this world and you put the world into a context where there are many worlds not just the world we know or the planets that we may be aware of that surround us that there is a

God who is over all of these and at the same time he is a particular and a minute interest in every one of us that occupy this planet he knows our life he knows our heart he knows our going in and going out so the aim that he had I suppose in that discourse was to elevate the name of God and the Lord is high above all nations and we think thereof the nations that we know this world and all the nations that occupy this world and his glory is above the heavens now do we think again that he's talking about the heavens there as simply as we know them as if we're talking about planet earth and the outer atmosphere and God sitting above the heavens looking down upon the earth above above above above which you will find anything but

God God is above all the highest exalted creatures or whatever it is his name is the holy one of Israel he is the king he is the almighty the lord of hosts one one translation of the bible i have the lord of hosts is translated the lord of god's armies the lord of god's armies whatever they may be Isaiah says i am the first i am the last besides me there is no god he is a god who is without equal there are many gods who are created works of man's imaginations but god is a god overall before whom there is none and after whom there is none one of the writers puts it like this this incomparable god is worthy to receive man's adulation affection and allegiance and then in the same breath almost we have this contrast we have the mystery of the same god who is high and lifted up humbling himself who humbleth himself to behold the things that in heaven and in the earth that's a difficult verse to understand i suppose in the sense in which we understand language it's as if there is humility required on the part of god simply to survey what is before him in heaven and earth that's the way literally you would interpret these words but if we understand the teaching of scripture i think the psalmist is here alluding to the fact that there is a god whose interest in his own people will involve him in the experience of humiliation as we have it described to us in the new testament in philippians 2 where he made himself of no reputation and took upon him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men and being found in fashion as a man he humbled himself and became obedient and to death even the death of the cross familiar with these words of the apostle paul surely doesn't require too too much taxing of our imagination to link in these words of the psalmist whether these are the words these are the thoughts he had in mind when he composed these words but again link this into the person of the

Lord Jesus and he's reading these words who humble himself to behold the things that did in heaven and in earth he raises up the poor out of the dust and lifteth the needy out of the downhill you would think that these words simply mean that he extends a helping hand to the person to to the dust needs to be lifted up so those who are like the rich man and Lazarus Lazarus is there lying in the roadside and begging for alms depending on the passerby to extend the hand of friendship and minister to his needs and it may correspond to the interpretation that some would place on these verses that that is simply what is meant that this God raises up the poor out of the dust but

[ 30 : 59 ] I think there's more to it than that simply if these words speak about Christ we remind ourselves of the incarnation and if we remind ourselves of the incarnation we remind ourselves of that humiliation that he experienced and endured not only does he see the needy he raises them up out of the dust and those who are raised up by him are established and established permanently can you not see Christ coming into the dust of death which is what he did the image that we have here is an image of of someone who goes to the very extreme to where he finds those who are in extremity and takes them out of this extremity one of the preachers

I referred to made the following observation we do not need a handbook about ancient Israel to understand the downhill these words are a striking metaphor for utter degradation and shame if only we saw sin as God sees it in all its ugly defilement he raises up the poor out of the dust and lifteth the needy out of the downhill is that not what Christ did did he not come if you haven't seen yourself in that position of vileness and ugliness well maybe you have had no need of that but when Christ in his mercy shows to us the damage dropped in his bison and the awfulness of what our heart is like who can actually bear to look at it whoever that preacher was who was saying that we would see sin as God sees it we could not see it as

God sees it and be able to to bear it but that is who Christ came into the world to save and he came to the downhill he came into the dust of the world and he came literally to be in the dust when he was interred there temporarily and yet the truth is paupers have been made princes we may not feel as much but that's what the psalmist says he raises up the poor out of the dust and lift the needy out of the dungan that he may set them as princes with princes even the princes of his people we may not feel ourselves to be royal or regal or anything that would dare to be mentioned in the same breath but that's what Christ does for his people

Calvin wrote it is not all nearness to him but his nearness to us that makes us the object of his loving care and when we are the object of his loving care he exalts he raises us up Paul the apostle puts it he gives he makes us meet he makes us right and proper to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light he gives grace and he gives glory to his own and the final verse may appear to us to be adults with the spirit that we have said governs this psalm but I think it is simply the promise of a miracle such as was extended to

Sarah and Hannah and I did to these thoughts but on my own mind I came across someone else who made a connection between the childless Sarah and the childless Hannah visited by God and endowed with that blessing and every such would rejoice at the prospect but we need to understand that for them barrenness brought rejection and barrenness brought embarrassment and shame and rejection all of these things all of these things are what Christ removes in his misery and many see the words as a direct quotation from the song of Hannah which was a song of praise a song of a great hallel and again bring your thoughts to bear upon the passion of the

[ 37 : 09 ] Lord Jesus Christ as he prepares a psalm sung as they partook of this meal that involved the sacrifice of a lamb a psalm of praise and the God that he praised was providing for a people one who would fulfil such a wonderful provision if we dare call it that and may God bless these few thoughts let us join in prayer ever blessed God we give thanks that you are a God who is worthy to receive our praises far more and we are able to offer them mercy fully undertake for us by your spirit that we may be stirred up within to come with these words of thanksgiving for all that you are in yourself and all that you mean to your people we give thanks for the salvation wrought in us by christ cleanse from sin in his name amen i'm going to sing in conclusion in gala sound 40 at the beginning sound 40 at the beginning from just so for

Je m'ine arles, Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[ 41 : 19 ] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Let Him all again.

Now make this mercy and peace from God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit rest in a bite with you all, never and always.