

The Egyptian Hallel 4

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[0 : 00] We are going to sing now to God's praise from Psalm 84. Psalm 84, verse 8, to the end of the psalm.

Lord God of hosts, my prayer hear, O Jacob's guard, give ear. See, God, O shield, look on the face of thine anointed dear.

For in thy courts one day excels a thousand. Rather in my God's house will I keep a door than dwell in tents of sin. For God the Lord's a sun and shield.

He'll grace and glory give, and will withhold no good from them that are brightly to live. O thou that art the Lord of hosts, that man is truly blessed, who by assured confidence on thee alone doth rest.

These verses, Psalm 84, Lord God of hosts, my prayer hear, O Jacob's guard, give ear. O Jacob's guard, give ear.

[1 : 12] O Jacob's guard, give ear. O Jacob's guard, give ear.

Liure him. O Jacob's guard, give ear. O Jacob's guard, give ear. These verses, Psalm 84, verse 8, to the end of the psalm.

to the air. Haught in thy courts one day excels a person to dwell in my God's will I be the Lord that dwells in the church of sin.

For God the Lord does not cheer in the grace of glory give and will no will no good from them that just rightly do.

O thou the dark the Lord knows that man is purely blessed her body and surely part in his hands on the alone of the rest.

[3 : 14] Amen. We can turn now for a short while to the book of Psalms and Psalm 115.

Psalm 115. And we're going to look at the Psalm in its entirety not unto us O Lord not unto us but unto thy name give glory for thy mercy and for thy truth's sake.

At the prayer meeting over these last few weeks we're looking at six Psalms which appear in sequence in the book of Psalms we can't say with any certainty who composed the Psalm who the author of the Psalms are or when they were composed but as we saw another connection that these Psalms have is that they form a cluster of Psalms that were sung as part of the liturgy of the Passover and other of the great festivals of Israel such as the Feast of Weeks and the Feast of Trumpets and the Feast of Tabernacles and so on.

As you know the first of the main feasts was the Feast of Passover and you remember when God gave to the people of Israel that ordinance to be observed that was just prior to their leaving Egypt and the Passover was designed to be something something that they looked back to and something that they used to look forward to see its fruition in its fullness.

They looked back to the deliverance that God was responsible for in taking them out of Egypt and also the ultimate salvation of its people by way of the lamb that bore his name which was to take away the sins of the world.

[6 : 03] Now looking at the Psalms we are not meant to understand that each one will have particular application with reference to the Passover or any other of the feasts but their suitability for their inclusion in that act of worship cannot be lost on any one of us who read the Psalms.

us. And here we are reminded that the God of Israel is their God and those who call him their God they know the privilege and the blessing of being able to speak of him in that way.

some have some of the translators some of the early translations of this book of Psalms they reckoned that Psalm 114 and Psalm 115 was part of one Psalm.

Now there's no reason given for that belief and I don't think there's any theological reason for giving way to such speculation.

While there is no certainty as to when this particular psalm was composed some theologians are of the opinion that it was composed following the return from exile of the children of Israel when you'll find the account in the book of Ezra and the book of Nehemiah where the construction of the temple was taking place and the worship that is associated with the psalm is the worship of the temple.

[8 : 36] Now that cannot be established with any degree of certainty but there's no reason for doubting that.

We may question the legitimacy of tying the psalms together as one, the previous psalm and this one but there's no reason for us to think that this psalm here did not bring into their thinking their relationship with God and how God impacted upon their lives as they lived in exile and upon their return.

For example, it would be easy enough for us to think of the idols that are spoken of here as idols that were remembered as part of their experience of bondage and that can be identified even in the bondage in Egypt because the gods of Egypt were many and Israel were worshipping the only living and true God and the redemption from Egypt was a redemption that brought to mind the idolatrous history of their bondage and some who submitted to that or who were guilty of falling into that kind of worship and the same can be said about the redemption from

Babylon where they returned to Israel and the worship of God once again they were reminded of the idolatrous practices of Babylon now the fact is that while we cannot with any certainty insist upon the time frame that belongs to the psalm the truths that are contained within the psalm are self evident and in the first instance what we have is a call to worship a call to identify God as the God to whom praises belong and in the original

Hebrew the identity of God is the identity of the God of the covenant that is the name of the God of the covenant that is spoken of and his relationship is the relationship of the God of the covenant to the people with whom he is in covenant and their worship is dedicated to him and to him apart from any other God and to him exclusively as God in fact you could argue that there is a two two prompt way in which the psalmist identifies this call to worship in that they are reminded that the praises and the worship that they ascribe to God are meant to be what they are engaged in any case and that there is no praise afforded to them because they engage in that worship as if they are being reminded that not unto us but unto thy name give glory there is no glory that belongs to us when we worship

[13 : 11] God simply because we worship God there are many ways in which we succumb to that kind of thinking when we pat ourselves on the back and say well we're doing we're doing what God wants us to do and that is something that opens the door of self praise but we should remember and remind ourselves often that what we are doing is what we should be doing and that we are not that we are not meant to think of this in itself as praiseworthy we may think that we may compare ourselves to others who don't do it at all but that itself is not something that is sufficient to make our actions praiseworthy we are reminded in the shorter catechism that we are created in the image of God we are created in order to man's chief end is to glorify him and to enjoy him forever ever itself created that's the reason for being created to glorify

God and to enjoy forever and if we do what we expect as created beings then why should we think that this is in some way praiseworthy but the psalmist begins this not unto us but unto thy name give glory for thy mercy and for thy truth sake the commentator Joseph Alexander sees this is a word of rebuke I would say that that's what he means by it the implied petition is that God would interpose for the deliverance of his people not to do them however not to do them however but to glorify himself not to give them the glory but to give himself the glory to vindicate his mercy and fidelity what he is doing in the salvation of his people while we may see it and we may believe it to be for our benefit entirely and there is benefit there for us there is blessing there for us but ultimately he is doing what is glorifying to his great name he is the God of the covenant as I said and if any have broken the covenant it is not

God it is not him and in the psalmist highlights for us the foolishness of the worship of idols according to some those idols are ridiculed I think there was some booklet that was published attract and it had the question where was

God on 9-11 and the question is asked as a challenge to the Christian faith a challenge to the God of the Christian if God is God why does he permit such violence to be done and not prevent it and those who ask the question are asking that question in the same spirit that the heathen are challenging God the same people that saw God work miraculously in Egypt the same people that saw the God of Israel work powerfully in the lives of his people when the appropriate moment comes as far as they see it they'll challenge

God in that way but the answer is always the same the answer is always God is where he's always been our God is in the heavens he has done whatsoever he hath pleased he's not been displaced by circumstance he has not been displaced by providence he's the God of providence nothing has changed as far as God is concerned the psalmist is not placing God as it were within a physical location that's not the point of what he is saying he is simply saying this God our God is the same he has not changed Jeffrey Grogan writes the God of the psalmist is an active God always at work for his people he is creator redeemer savior shepherd and father that doesn't change his activity is the activity of the only living and true

[19 : 39] God as I said and however that activity is demonstrated as the creator God he not only has created he sustains his creation he upholds his creation by the word of his power he directs it he is responsible for the redemption of this world in its fallenness he has brought salvation into the orbit so that sinners can apply to Christ for salvation he is God at all times but the idols that are served that are worshipped that are described and it's interesting he the psalmist when he composes the psalm he identifies God and yet his description of God is is very limited he says about

God where is your God our God is in the heavens and he does whatever he pleases but you're idols and then you've got four verses to describe the idols I don't think there is a better word of derisory scorn than what we have here in the psalm that we first sang a description of men's idols whether they are

Paul identifies that very thing Remember the passage in Romans chapter 1 where he is describing the decadence that he surveys in the world and he says they changed the truth of God into a lie and worshipped and served the creature more than the creator who is blessed forever

[24 : 49] It's not something that, you know, if you think of a chair and you remove the occupant, you may have an empty chair, but you cannot remove God from the throne, which is his rightful place, without enthroning someone else or something else.

And the psalmist understands this, and the psalmist says, O Israel, trust thou in the Lord. More or less, you can almost, you know, when you read certain words, when you hear certain words read, maybe the nuance that is contained in the word, in the word may be overlooked.

When you read the foolishness, the emptiness of the worship that idolatry has at its heart, and you, when you're speaking to people who know what it is to worship God as God, and they have chosen to worship idols instead of God, it's almost an affront to your understanding that that would ever happen.

Ye that fear the Lord, trust in the Lord. He is their help and their shield. And whether there is significance attached to the threefold repetition there, the separation that there is.

Why does he separate them out and yet bring them all together in the one? Because he wants this to be the very thing that is marking them out.

[28 : 05] Secretary of Congress. And Janet, say, he is the one who is the one who is the one who is
the one who is the one who is the one who is the one who is the one who is the one who
is the with God.

But Spurgeon says God has never overlooked his people. He has never overlooked them.

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There is never an occasion when any one of these people are put to one side or put put in such a place because there is something else or someone else who has a priority.

[29 : 40] The nature of the relationship that exists between God and his people is such that every one of them is in the same relationship and not one of them is overlooked to the exclusion of another.

I think Spurgeon says if you think of a mother and a child, whatever the relationship the mother has with the child, she's not going to she's not going to give special favour to one over against another.

They may do, in certain circumstances, have to devote attention to one in certain situations, but God is even more sensitive than the mother in that situation.

it continues. He continues because he remains the same. Even though the circumstances may change, his relationship does not.

His people may go cold or may change but he does not. He remembers not just those that are in a close relationship with him.

[31 : 02] if you think about it, I suppose, if I put it like this, when we remember, we are inclined to remember the good things about times when we were privileged to enjoy special dispensations of God's favour, when we had a nice warm fellowship with God and the remembering that we do is a remembering of these good things but God is remembering the covenant and his own covenant faithfulness with a people that he is not going to be separated from.

Remember how the psalm begins? It reminds us of that faithfulness and God remembers his promises to his people.

they are never forgotten, they are never overlooked. They are recalled in order to be enacted. I think the words of verse 12 are so encouraging.

And you read them in the metrical version, the Lord of us has mindful been and he will bless us still, he will the house of Israel bless, bless Aaron's house, he will.

The Lord of us has mindful been and when you can say that and say it with the certainty that arises out of God's ministration, but God's treatment of you when you are wounded or when you are hurt or when you are in need of counsel or light upon certain situations that you may find yourself in.

[33 : 00] The blessing is a blessing that is precious. He will bless us, he will bless the house of Israel, he will bless the house of Aaron.

Think again the triple blessing there. If we think of three, I suppose we think of the perfection of the blessing.

It's usually what we associate with a word of encouragement to the people of God. Ye that fear the Lord, trust in the Lord.

He will bless them that fear the Lord. Both small and great. Again, various commentators think that this is just a hybris, both small and great.

It's designed to cover everybody, no matter who they are, if they're God's people, God will bless them, God will prosper them, God will encourage them.

[34 : 10] others see this as a God who is not in any way one who is tempted to favor the rich over the poor.

He is not distracted by royal robes or a golden curl. He visits all who are His with equal blessing, with equal favor, and He doesn't hold anything back.

Professor Alan Harmon calls this the priestly blessing, which continues the assurance of an increase of progeny, not just to increase their number, which is what is at the heart of it, I suppose, but not just numerical increase, but the increase of those who will be numbered amongst those who praise God, those who worship God, those who observe God, and we forget that, I suppose, we forget that, that, when we think about God doing something for His own glory, if we put ourselves in that situation, we do something for our glory, we see the selfishness of that, we see the sinfulness of that, because we can't accept extrapolate from what we're considering there, the possibility that we can be selfish in our aims, while a

God who is holy, who desires the praises of men, can do so, not just as someone who is selfish in his aims, but someone who is wanting to bring his people to where they rightly belong.

If you remind yourself again, God is the one who is to be worshipped, God is the one who is to be praised, because that is the order of things, that's why he created man, that's why man is to be redeemed, to restore them to this relationship that is a blessed relationship, they will not, we will not suffer loss because of it.

[37 : 07] And here again, the promise of increase is to the glory of God, the addition, the increase, the multiplication of those who would worship is certainly to the benefit of those who belong to the kingdom of God.

We pray for an increase in the numbers of our fellowship, and sometimes we must question, well, what is behind our desire?

Is it to the glory of God? Are we entirely persuaded in our mind that we want the congregation here in Calanish to prosper for God's glory?

Or do we have self-interest somewhere in grandiness that we don't like to see our numbers go down, we don't like to see the cause of Christ go down?

Is it entirely something we want for selflessly and for the glory of God? And that's what God wants.

[38 : 26] The Lord shall increase you more and more, you and your children. and first and foremost that increase is for his glory for our benefit no doubt.

And then he says the heaven, even the heavens are the Lord's but the earth he hath given to the children of men. God and that is his prerogative to do that.

Finally, the dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down to silence, but we will bless the Lord from this time forth and forever more.

Some say that what he means there is the spiritually dead, and because the spiritually dead are incapable of praising God then he requires to quicken them, he requires to enliven them so that they are engaged in this praising of God.

The grave is the land of silence. I think St. Spurgeon again in his treasury, he quotes one of the divines, if not two of the divines, who say that in the grave it is the land of silence, it is the land of stillness, and that will be the case until the silence is broken by the sound of the last trump.

[40 : 10] He quotes Hexenberg who says the people of God cannot die because the praise of God would die with them and that would be impossible.

The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence, but we will bless the Lord from this time forth and forever. Praise the Lord.

The words that the psalmist has is an encouragement to us to be engaged in this activity, praising his name.

Again, when we think of the Lord having these words upon his lips on the night leading up to his crucifixion, these words are meaningful to him and to us when we think that beyond the grave is the resurrection and the glory of God would not have the Son of God under the dominion of the grave any longer than was necessary because the praises of God come from the living Redeemer who died and rose again.

We will bless the Lord from this time forth and forevermore. Praise the Lord. May God help us so to do. Let us pray. Ever blessed God, we give thanks for the words of encouragement that the psalmist brings to our attention.

[41 : 54] Words that are prompted and provoked by the challenges that the Lord brings to bear upon their life.

The futility of trusting in idols, serving what is immobile, impassionate, without passion, without power.

We pray that you would teach us what it is to serve the only living and through God who ever lives and through is and was and will be the God who is in the heavens.

Hear our prayers and pardon our sins and go before us in Jesus' precious name. Amen. We're concluding Psalm 115 and we're going to sing in Gaelic the last two verses of the psalm.

Psalm 115 the last two verses in Gaelic. As biannig shai fo'n yt hir n' sa' nye fys l'ar gydir yndhalif hwc toch lawn ynd slysh chen ar t' nye fn sbir nym ynd ddech nwn drawn my tost o'r slysh dand yw chabol ath ddea ach madder leyn yn yst sgwb brach mally gwy hard yn tria sbrian eitig siai fo'n yn hyr nyr anieff slyr gydir hyn y on t' i n

[43 : 54] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[46 : 24] Thank you.

Now may grace, mercy and peace from God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit rest and abide with you all, never and always. Amen.