

PSALM 118

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Christ Church - Moscow, ID

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OVERVIEW

Part 1 (v. 1-4) Enduring Mercy - First, the author of the Psalm begins with an exhortation to contemplate God's goodness and his enduring mercy.

Part 2 (v. 5-18) A Godly Confidence in Turmoil - Here the Psalmist remembers a time when he was surrounded on all sides by entire nations that wanted him dead. But, in the name of the Lord, he had the victory and conquered them. And God has become his salvation.

Part 3 (19-24) A Triumphant Entry - Now he enters through the Gate of the Lord, triumphant, praising God for having saved him from his enemies. Again he declares that God has become his salvation. But the onlookers are startled by this triumphant entry.

Part 4 (25-29) Hosanna - And now the author calls to God, "O please send salvation O Lord." It's strange because he has just finished describing several cases where God has sent salvation. But, it's as if the author is begging for another salvation, a salvation still to come.

KING DAVID

Traditionally, this Psalm has been assigned to King David. The events described in the Psalm seem to resonate with the events in David's life – a man surrounded by enemies on all sides, who puts his trust in the Lord and, as a result, has his right hand strengthened so that he conquers all his enemies.

FEAST OF BOOTHES

But there was another aspect to this Psalm for the Jewish reader. Look at Leviticus 23 where you will see a list of the Old Testament festivals. The last feast listed is the Feast of Booths, which celebrated God's bringing the Israelites into the Promised Land of Israel. This feast became closely associated with Psalm 118 and the cry "Hosanna."

FAILURE

In a very important way, however, both the Exodus and the anointing of David failed to bring about the salvation of Israel. This Psalm describes something much bigger than what happened with Moses or with David.

NEW TESTAMENT

Psalm 118 is quoted at least a dozen times in the New Testament, and is used in all four of the Gospels to describe Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. See – Mt. 21:9,42, 23:39; Mk. 11:9; 12:10-11; Lk. 13:35, 19:38, 20:17; Jn. 12:13. This Psalm found its real fulfillment in Jesus, who has become the salvation of the Lord. (See also – Acts 4:11, Heb. 12:5-6, 13:6, I Pet. 2:7.)

APPLICATION

There is a kind of moral outrage and indignation that worshipers are capable of generating that is devoid of godly fear and filled with a hard-hearted self-righteousness. This is a self-deception that we are just as capable of as the first century Pharisees. Fortunately, we worship a God whose mercy endures forever.



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