

SBC – Aug. 13, 2023

Psalm 118:1-29 (NKJV)

“The Stone the Builders Rejected”

Intro:

Psalm 118 is clearly a Messianic Psalm as the contents clearly reveal as so interpreted by the New Testament Scriptures.

Neither the author or the occasion for the Psalm is mentioned. However, many scholars suggest it may have been king David because the some of the phraseology in the Psalm is closely linked to David in relation to the founding of the second temple as seen in Ezra 3:10. But that is uncertain. Others think it may have been written by Moses in conjunction with the Exodus. But again we don't really know.

Many think the occasion for the Psalm was probably the rebuilding of the temple after the exile. But again we can't say for certain. The contents would seem to indicate it was written with the occasion of a festal procession to the sanctuary of God in view.

Psalm 118 completes the grouping of Psalms which are known as the Hallel (Praise) Psalms. That group of Psalms is Psalm 113-118.

Many believe it likely that this Psalm (which was part of songs that were commonly sung at the Passover meal) may well have been the song that Jesus and His disciples sang after Christ introduced the Lord's Supper the night before His crucifixion (Mt. 26:30; Mk. 14:26).

Psalm 118 is quoted directly 11 times in the NT which is more than any other Psalm – and is alluded to a number of other times (cf. Mt. 21:9, 42; 23:39; Mk. 8:31; 11:9, 10; 12:10, 11; Lk. 13:35; 19:38; 20:17; Jn. 10:9; 12:13; Acts 4:11; 19:7; 22:14; Rm. 8:31; 2 Cr. 6:9; Heb. 13:6; 1 Pet. 2:4, 7).

Slide # 1

Psalm 118

- Theme: God's Loyal Love
- Outline
 - A. A Call to Worship – vv. 1-4
 - B. Testimony to God's Deliverance – vv. 5-21
 - C. God's Marvelous Messianic Doing – vv. 22-26
 - D. Commitment to Worship – vv. 27-29

Psalm 118 (NKJV)

1 Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever.

This Psalm begins and ends the exact same way. It both begins and ends with a call to give thanks to the LORD – YHWH – the faithful covenant God of Israel. And the reason is twofold: 1) He is good in His essence and nature; and 2) His mercy (lit hesed) endures forever. God’s hesed is His unchanging faithfulness. It is often translated as “God’s loyal love”; His “steadfast love” or His “lovingkindness”.

What a wonderful truth. People are fickle but God is not. People change but God doesn’t. He is totally trustworthy. He is perfectly loyal. You can count on Him to be 100% faithful 100% of the time. This is “hesed” translated here as “mercy”. God’s hesed “loyal covenant love” – endures forever.

And this refrain goes on for 4 verses – just to make the point that God’s people should thank Him for WHO He is as an ever and forever faithful God.

2 Let Israel now say, “His mercy endures forever.”

3 Let the house of Aaron now say, “His mercy endures forever.”

4 Let those who fear the LORD now say, “His mercy endures forever.”

Slide # 2

- v. 1 – His mercy endures forever.
- v. 2 - His mercy endures forever.
- v. 3 – His mercy endures forever.
- v. 4 – His mercy endures forever.

The repetition indelibly makes the point. The BIG IDEA in this call to worship is God’s enduring faithful love! We can’t make to much of this – as it is everything to us.

Three categories of people are called on to say, “His mercy endures forever”: 1) the whole house of Israel; 2) the house of Aaron which is to say the priests – the spiritual leaders; and 3) all those who fear (reverence) the LORD including the Gentiles Who have come to take refuge in YHWH the God of Israel.

5 I called on the LORD in distress; The LORD answered me and set me in a broad place.

This basic thought of God's deliverance carries on through verse 21. In distress where do we go? To the Lord! And the testimony of the Psalmist is that God answered him and set him in a broad place.

This could be rendered as "answered me in expansiveness". He was in a narrow place that was about ready to crush him, but God delivered him and gave him room to breathe.

**6 The LORD is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me?
7 The LORD is for me among those who help me; Therefore I shall see my desire on those who hate me.**

The Psalmist is giving God all the glory for his deliverance. It was God that made all the difference. God was for him. God intervened for him. And note God uses people in the process of helping His people.

Note the phrase, "The LORD is for me among those who help me". God shows He is for us in using those who help us in times of distress.

And verse 6 has special application even for us today as this very verse is quoted in the NT in Heb. 13:6 which is set in the context of God's faithfulness to be with us and care for us.

Slide # 3

Hebrews 13:5–6 (NKJV)

5 Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

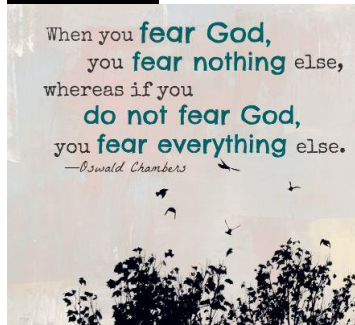
6 So we may boldly say: "The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?"

God will never leave us! God is our helper and therefore we don't have to be afraid of what people might do to us. God is bigger. God is faithful – for how long? FOR FOREVER! "His mercy (loving faithfulness) endures forever!

Note he does not say he would never suffer or experience hard times, but rather "I will not fear". The Bible emphasizing fearing God and then you need fear nothing else.

Slide # 4**Matthew 10:28 (NKJV)**

28 And **do not fear those who kill the body** but cannot kill the soul.
But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

Slide # 5

8 It is better to trust in the LORD Than to put confidence in man.

9 It is better to trust in the LORD Than to put confidence in princes.

As a brand new Christian I quoted this text to an older Christian and he threw it back in my face as almost being insulted – and that of course everyone knows that. But in truth most people – often including professing Christians carry on like they trust in people and what they can do for them rather than the Lord. We tend to gravitate to depending on what people can do for us – on what those in authority (princes) can do for us?

It is easy to look to people in positions of power to be our “savior” but that is deceptive. No matter what they are unreliable. They too are frail and limited. And often they lack consistent integrity. Spurgeon reportedly once remarked of princes: “A weathervane covered with gold turns in the wind just as easily as a weathervane made of tin.” How true! People of all stripes are consistently very fickle and cannot be relied on.

No one is worthy of our ultimate TRUST! We are to depend ultimately ONLY upon God. That is where God brought this Psalmist.

I don’t know about you but there have been times in my life where God has taken me so low that I no longer trusted in people and what they could do for me at all. It all comes back to God. And sometimes He takes us through deep valleys – just to bring back to this point of relying ONLY on God.

It is better – far better – to trust in the LORD than in anyone else. It is wiser because God can actually help you in supernatural ways. It is safer because He is all powerful and all faithful. It is better morally because God asks us to TRUST Him and He honors faith. It is better in every way.

Footnote: There are 31,174 verses in the Bible and Psalm 118:8 is the middle verse of the entire Bible. Now chapter and verse divisions are not inspired but in the sovereignty of God how fitting is it that the emphasis of Psalm 118:8 would be the direct center of the Bible – as this is the ultimate CENTER core issue.

Slide # 6

Psalm 118:8 (NKJV)

8 It is better to trust in the LORD Than to put confidence in man.

Keep this verse in the center of your thoughts and practice because TRUST is the central issue of life. We receive Christ by faith and we are to walk by faith (Col. 2:6; Jer. 17:5-8). Eternal life begins with trust in the Lord and this is then how we are to live. Constantly the struggle in life is who or what are we going to place our trust in. TRUST IN THE LORD is the central issue.

The Psalms now further develops the level of distress God had delivered him from without given specifics.

10 All nations surrounded me, But in the name of the LORD I will destroy them.

11 They surrounded me, Yes, they surrounded me; But in the name of the LORD I will destroy them.

12 They surrounded me like bees; They were quenched like a fire of thorns; For in the name of the LORD I will destroy them.

Again an emphasis is being made through repetition. As the enemy surrounded him he declares in the name of the LORD he will destroy them. "I will destroy them" is more literally "I will cut them off".

"cut them off" – This verb is typically translated "circumcised" ... It is not a literal circumcision in view here but a poetic image of his enemies being cut off and cast aside.

– *The Moody Bible Commentary*

Slide # 7

- v. 10...in the name of the LORD I will destroy them.
- v. 11...in the name of the LORD I will destroy them.
- v. 12 ... in the name of the LORD I will destroy them.

The sense is that with God's help and for God's glory he will cut them off – which is to say destroy them. This is only happening with God's help.

**13 You pushed me violently, that I might fall, But the LORD helped me.
14 The LORD is my strength and song, And He has become my salvation.**

The enemies pushed violently in an all out effort to destroy him, but the LORD helped him. There is the KEY to his prevailing. God is behind this victory.

He says YHWH is his strength. His power is sourced in God. His resources are divine. God is his song meaning He is the source of his joy. And God has become his salvation – in that God is the One Who has delivered him.

God in effect is his ALL – his strength, song, and salvation.

This verse is a direct quote from Exodus 15:2 where the children of Israel celebrated their God-given victory over the Egyptians and is repeated again in Isa. 12:2.

Slide # 8

Exodus 15:2 (NKJV)

2 The LORD is my strength and song, And He has become my salvation; He is my God, and I will praise Him; My father's God, and I will exalt Him.

Isaiah 12:2 (NKJV)

2 Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; 'For YAH, the LORD, is my strength and song; He also has become my salvation.' "

Salvation is the Hebrew word "Yeshua" which is the name translated as Jesus in the New Testament. The last words "my salvation" could legitimately be translated as "my Jesus".

Slide # 9

“The LORD is my strength and song, and He has become my Jesus.”

15 The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tents of the righteous; The right hand of the LORD does valiantly.

16 The right hand of the LORD is exalted; The right hand of the LORD does valiantly.

Note the double emphasis here that the “right hand of the LORD does valiantly” (mighty things). God’s right hand emphasizes His power and skill. And this causes God’s people to rejoice in the deliverance He mightily brings to pass.

17 I shall not die, but live, And declare the works of the LORD.

The writer was confident that God would preserve his life to the end that he might declare the works of the LORD.

Psalm 118:17 was precious to John Wycliffe: “John Wycliffe, the Protestant Reformer, fell sick at one point as the result of his incessant labors for the gospel. The friars [Roman Catholic religious order similar to a monk] heard that their enemy was dying and hastened to his bedside. Surely Wycliffe would be overcome with remorse for his Protestant heresies. Surely he would renounce his views and ask for God’s forgiveness and the friars’ blessing. A crowd of monks representing four major orders of the friars gathered around him. They began by wishing him health, then quickly changed their tune and urged him to make a full confession since he would soon have to give an accounting of himself to God. Wycliffe waited patiently until they had ended. Then, asking his servant to raise him a little so he could speak better, Wycliffe fixed his keen eyes on them and said in a commanding voice, ‘I shall not die but live and proclaim...*the evil deeds of the friars.*’”

(James Montgomery Boice)

This in effect was what the Psalmist was saying in reference to his enemies who wanted to destroy him – but he said he would declare the works of the LORD. Martin Luther who faced constant threats on his life because of his reformation movement had Psalm 118:17 written on the wall of his study. It has been a great blessing to God’s people who faced persecution and threats on their life through the ages.

18 The LORD has chastened me severely, But He has not given me over to death.

The LORD uses hard times to hone us – to mold and make us. Even in those situations that are grievously wrong God is at work. But until our time is done He continues to preserve us no matter what we are going through. Truly our times are in His hands (Ps. 31:15). As the old saying goes, “We are immoral until our work is done” - and even then death will ultimately be swallowed up in victory (1 Cor. 15:54).

How glorious that even in death (in Jesus) we are not given over to death. The last word on death for the believer is Jesus and He is life eternal!

19 Open to me the gates of righteousness; I will go through them, And I will praise the LORD.

20 This is the gate of the LORD, Through which the righteous shall enter.

The “gates of righteousness” are the gates that only the righteous can go through. And all praise to God for it. The “gates of righteousness” are the “gate of the LORD”.

Many think the gates of righteousness here figurately portray a liturgical procession into the place of worship – it pictures an entrance into the presence of the Lord that those who are right with the Lord may enter through. The sense of it is given in Psalm 100.

Slide # 10

Psalm 100:4 (NKJV)

4 Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, And into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name.

Interestingly, Jesus spoke of the narrow gate that one must enter through to have life (Mt. 7:13-14). In John 10 Jesus described Himself as the door (the gate) through whom one must enter in order to be saved.

Through faith we enter into a relationship with God through Jesus. In that sense we enter into His presence. And then in worship we draw near through faith (Heb. 10:22). And then when we come to the end of our lives we enter into God’s most intimate presence as we pass from this life into glory.

By way of application each of these represents the “gate of the Lord” which are a series of “the gates of righteousness”. Each phase is a gate of righteousness which only the people of faith can enter through. And thinking through this prism I love these verses.

Slide # 11

Psalm 118:19–20 (NKJV)

19 Open to me the gates of righteousness [*that ushers one into the presence of the LORD*]; I will go through them, And I will praise the LORD.

20 This is the gate of the LORD [*into the presence of the LORD*] Through which the righteous shall enter.

21 I will praise You, For You have answered me, And have become my salvation.

Verse 5 and verse 21 are bracketed by “answered me” and in between is spelled out God’s deliverance.

Slide # 12

v. 5 – “The LORD answered me...”

v. 21- “You have answered me...”

And then we have repeated again from verse 14 that God has “become my salvation”. God has answered his prayer in delivering Him and for this he praises the LORD.

Remember this was probably the last song ever sang by Jesus at the last supper. This is what He had in His mind as He went to the cross. Yes, He would be betrayed, Yes, He would suffer and die horribly, but yet at the end of it all there would be deliverance in the resurrection (cf. Ps. 22:20-22).

Slide # 13

Psalm 22:20–22 (NKJV)

20 Deliver Me from the sword, My precious life from the power of the dog.

21 Save Me from the lion’s mouth And from the horns of the wild oxen!

You have answered Me.

22 I will declare Your name to My brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will praise You [answered in the RESURRECTION].

And now in verses 22-26 we come to the section that is intensely Messianic as shown in the New Testament.

22 The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone.

Ultimately this has Jesus the Messiah in view and is fulfilled in Him.

Jesus quoted this of Himself in Matthew 21:42, Mark 12:10-11, and Luke 20:17. Peter quoted it in reference to Jesus in Acts 4:11. Paul alluded to this verse in Ephesians 2:20, and Peter also referred to it in 1 Peter 2:7-8. No text in the Old Testament is quoted more in the New Testament. – **David Guzik**

In Acts 4:11 as Peter applied this verse to the religious leaders under inspiration he added the word “you” emphasizing the guilt of Israel’s leaders (cf. Mt. 21:42-43; Mk. 12:10-11; Lk. 20:17; Acts 4:11; 1 Pet. 2:7).

Slide # 14

Acts 4:11 (NKJV)

11 This is the ‘stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.’

The “builders” are the leaders who influence and mold society. They are supposedly the ones who know how to build. But in this case they completely misjudged. They rejected Christ as having a legitimate purpose in what God is building, and yet God chose Him to be the cornerstone!

The Jews recognized Psalm 118 as a Messianic Psalm and yet ironically they did not see that themselves were fulfilling it in rejecting Jesus as Messiah. And yet, in the sovereign plan of God Jesus is the chief cornerstone of God’s great plan of redemption. The cornerstone is the main part of the entire building. Everything aligns to it. Everything is centered with it. Everything rests upon it. Jesus is this cornerstone. Everything fits in accordance with Him. Everything depends on Him. To miss this is to miss the central component of God’s entire plan.

There are two great themes about the Messiah in the OT Scriptures. 1) He would suffer; and number 2) His glory that would follow. Those are the two great general themes. And both are perfectly fulfilled in the person of Christ.

Slide # 15

Luke 24:25–26 (NKJV)

25 Then He said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!

26 Ought not the Christ to have **suffered** these things and to enter into His **glory**?”

1 Peter 1:11 (NKJV)

11 searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the **sufferings of Christ** and the **glories that would follow**.

23 This was the LORD’s doing; It is marvelous in our eyes.

And all God’s people said AMEN! It is marvelous what God has done in the person of Jesus the Messiah. It is wonderful! And it is all God’s doing! All the glory goes to God ALONE! God taking that which was totally REJECTED and making it the cornerstone of His plan is awesomely marvelous! Only God could do this! Only He could prophesy this and then bring it to pass with exquisite precision in every detail. Marvelous, marvelous, marvelous.

Psalm 118:23 (NKJV)

23 This was the LORD’s doing; It is marvelous in our eyes.

24 This is the day the LORD has made; We will rejoice and be glad in it.

Jesus quoted this surrounding text in reference to His triumphal entry (cf. Dan. 9:26; Lk. 19:40-44). “This day” in that context refers to the general time of Christ’s crucifixion followed by His resurrection glory. It relates ultimately to the “time” of God’s fulfillment in making the rejected one the cornerstone and then building His program of redemption on this reality. This is the day of fulfillment as found in Jesus. And that is something to celebrate! “We will rejoice and be glad in it.”

25 Save now, I pray, O LORD; O LORD, I pray, send now prosperity.

“Save now” in the Hebrew is literally “Hosanna”. This is looking to the LORD to be Savior – Deliverer. This is what the crowd shouted to Christ in the course of His triumphal entry (cf. Mt. 21:9; Mk. 11:9, 10; Jn. 12:13). Of course the crowd was fickle but it represents the Jewish Messianic hope.

26 Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD! We have blessed you from the house of the LORD.

The sentiment expressed here is one of WELCOMING God’s Messianic deliverer. This recognizes Jesus as the One Who comes representing God and fulfilling His Messianic plan (cf. Mt. 21:9; Mk. 11:9; Jn. 12:13).

Slide # 16

Matthew 21:9 (NKJV)

9 Then the multitudes who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: “Hosanna to the Son of David! ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!’ Hosanna in the highest!”

This Messianic Deliverer is pictured as receiving blessing from the worshipers as He approaches the temple – the house of the Lord. And this is where Jesus went as He entered into Jerusalem in the Triumphal Entry. But in the case of His first coming, He had to cleanse the temple. Even so the children were crying out in the temple, “Hosanna to the Son of David!” (Mt. 21:15). This was necessary:

Earlier as the people were crying out, “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the LORD” (Lk. 19:38) the Pharisees called on Jesus to rebuke His disciples and He said, “I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out.” (Lk. 19:40). They cried out the truth which could not be silenced.

As Jerusalem rejected Him (led by their builders) Jesus said:

Slide # 17

Matthew 23:38–39 (NKJV)

38 See! Your house is left to you desolate;

39 for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!’ ”

The Jews as a nation will not see Jesus again until they WELCOME Him as the true Messiah which He is. And then He will come to His temple in fulfillment of Mal. 3:1.

Slide # 18

Malachi 3:1 (NKJV)

1 “Behold, I send My messenger, And he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, **Will suddenly come to His temple**, Even the Messenger of the covenant, In whom you delight. **Behold, He is coming,**” **Says the LORD of hosts.**

27 God is the LORD, And He has given us light; Bind the sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar.

This is a most interesting verse following on the heels of one of the strongest Messianic texts in the whole of the OT. God is YHWH – the faithful covenant God of Israel and He has given His people light.

And then it goes on to speak of the sacrifice that is bound to the altar. We have no record of any sacrifice ever being bound to the altar. However, Jesus was fastened to the cross which Heb. 13:10 speaks of as an altar.

As God’s people we have seen the light and that is that in the Messiah Jesus He has provided the perfect sacrifice for our sins. The light is that in His rejection Jesus died for our sins. The light is that in His resurrection He becomes the cornerstone. This is gospel light. The Messiah is the Savior! And it is Jesus Who comes in the name of the LORD! This is the light! And it is marvelous in our eyes!

28 You are my God, and I will praise You; You are my God, I will exalt You.

29 Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever.

The Psalm ends exactly as it began with thanks to YHWH for His goodness and His mercy (hesed) that endures forever. Verses 1 and 29 are the bookends to the great truth of God’s deliverance which culminates in the Messiah.

Indeed it is marvelous in our eyes! Indeed, “Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever.” Amen!