

SBC – Aug. 9, 2026
Psalm 115:1-18 (NKJV)
“To God be the Glory”

Psalm 115 is part of the Hallel Psalms (113-118) that were sung at Passover -some before the meal and some after. Therefore, many commentators believe that most probably Jesus and His disciples sang this song the night before He was crucified (cf. Matt. 26:30; Mk. 14:26).

It is also thought by many that this was an antiphonal Psalm – meaning it was sung responsively with the people (worshippers) singing some, and then the priests responding in alternating fashion.

Slide # 1

Psalm 115

vv. 1-8 The people
vv. 9-11 The priests
vv. 12-13 The people
vv. 14-15 The priests
vv. 16-18 The people

We can't be sure of this, but many think the arrangement suggests something like this.

We aren't sure of the occasion. Some suggest after the time of the exile – perhaps at the dedication of the second temple. But again we are not specifically told this.

Slide # 2

Psalm 115 (Antiphonal)

“To God be the Glory”

vv. 1-2 Glory to God Alone
vv. 3-8 Contrasting False gods with the True God
vv. 9-11 A Call to Trust in the LORD
vv. 12-15 The Blessing of God
vv. 16-18 Praise the LORD forevermore

Psalm 115 (NKJV)

**1 Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, But to Your name give glory,
Because of Your mercy, Because of Your truth.**

LORD here is YHWH – the covenant-keeping God of Israel.

This first line is the motto of the godly, “Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but to Your name give glory.” In short, to God be all the glory! It’s never about us – it’s all about Him!

Again, some suggest this was written after the time of the exile, and the emphasis here is to give God all the glory for their being restored.

Twice in Isaiah God says He will not share His glory with another (cf. Isa. 42:8; 48:11). It is most serious to rob God of His glory – claiming credit for what God ALONE has brought to pass.

Remember Harod....

Slide # 3

Acts 12:21–23 (NKJV)

21 So on a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat on his throne and gave an oration to them.

22 And the people kept shouting, “The **voice of a god** and not of a man!”

23 Then immediately an angel of the Lord **struck him, because he did not give glory to God.** And he was eaten by worms and died.

Okay, nice speech. Give God the glory. He gave you breath. He gave you a mind. He gave you the position to even be able to give this speech. As Paul told the Corinthians, “What do you have that you did not receive?” (1 Cor. 4:7)

The Chinese are said to teach their young pastors: “***Don’t touch the gold, don’t touch the girls, and don’t touch the glory.***” That is pretty good! Do this, and it will go a long way on the road of sanctification.

But then the writer says WHY we should give God all the glory. He says, “***because of Your mercy, because of Your truth.***”

Mercy here is the rich Hebrew word “hesed,” meaning God’s unfailing love for His people, sometimes translated as God’s “covenant love”, “His loyal love,” or His “steadfast love.”

Truth can be understood as “faithfulness.” So the sense is God’s unfailing love and faithfulness! God’s “hesed” gave the promise; His faithfulness keeps it.

How encouraging and strengthening it is to know the character of God is totally faithful! He will never fail us! Never!

And we should constantly give Him glory for this because all of His actions toward us are borne out of this reality.

2 Why should the Gentiles say, “So where is their God?”

The sense here is that sometimes when God allows His people to go through hard times (for whatever reason), the unbelieving Gentiles are quick to mockingly jump on this saying, “***Where is your God? He must be missing in action.***” (Psalm 42:3).

Slide # 4

Psalm 42:3 (NKJV)

3 My tears have been my food day and night, While they continually say to me, “**Where is your God?**”

The writer, in effect, shows that they are totally ignorant of the truth of the covenant God of Israel. Here is his response...

3 But our God is in heaven; He does whatever He pleases.

The Gentiles might mock when troublesome times come to God’s people; we might not even understand, but one thing is for sure...

Our God is in heaven; He does whatever He pleases.

We know where our God is. He is in heaven. He is transcendent, exalted far above the whole universe.

And as such He is totally sovereign – doing whatever He pleases (cf. Isa. 46:10). He is the living God and totally in control of all things.

Nebuchadnezzar, the powerful pagan king who had to be converted the hard way learned this lesson well.

Slide # 5**Daniel 4:35 (NKJV)**

35 All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; He does according to His will in the army of heaven And among the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His hand Or say to Him, **“What have You done?”**

No one can call God to account. No one can challenge Him. He is transcendentally above all and does whatever He pleases. So someone doesn't like what He does. What are you going to do about it? NOTHING! Absolutely nothing!

The pagans believed in local gods, but the true God, YHWH, the God of Israel, lives and reigns from heaven and does whatever He pleases!

In contrast are the idolatrous gods of the pagans. Verses 4-8 are a sarcastic satire on idolatry. These verses are also reflected in Psalm 135:15-18.

4 Their idols are silver and gold, The work of men's hands.

The true God is the Creator of all, but idols are the work of men's hands. The irony is rich.

People worship that which is made with their own hands. They literally have a god of their own making. How absurd is that? They definitely have a god beneath them!

Their idols are fashioned with corresponding “human body parts,” but those parts are non-functional. They have “body parts,” but yet they can't even do with those parts what their makers can do. That is, they can't speak, see, hear, smell, handle, or walk. These are totally worthless gods – which should be self-evident.

Slide # 6**Revelation 9:20 (NKJV)**

20 But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the **works of their hands**, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk.

Idolatry is to worship a god of your own making. An idol is anything you put above god and superstitiously look to it to help you. It, in effect, is your higher power. But as shown, that is absurd.

5 They have mouths, but they do not speak; Eyes they have, but they do not see;

6 They have ears, but they do not hear; Noses they have, but they do not smell;

7 They have hands, but they do not handle; Feet they have, but they do not walk; Nor do they mutter through their throat.

God as a Spirit does not have a body (Jn. 4:24). When the writers of Scripture use “human language” to describe God, it is called an anthropomorphism.

Slide # 7

Anthropomorphism

Anthropo = human

Morphos = form/shape

Anthropomorphism: To attribute human traits to God in a figurative manner to illustrate His divine attributes. It is a compensation to human weakness to help us understand.

But in view here are actual idols that people make in their own image.

John Trapp related how an ancient city, under siege, put a chain on their idol statue of Hercules, so he would not abandon them in their time of need. Hercules did not go anywhere, but they were still conquered. – **David Guzik**

The [smallest] insect has more power of [movement] than the greatest heathen god. – Charles Spurgeon

“A beautiful contrast is formed between the God of Israel and the heathen idols. He made everything, they themselves are made by men; he is in heaven, they are upon earth; he doeth whatsoever he pleaseth, they can do nothing; he seeth the distress, heareth and answereth the prayers, accepteth the offerings, cometh to the assistance, and effecteth the salvation of his servants; they are blind, deaf, and silent senseless, motionless, and impotent.”

– **George Horne**

8 Those who make them are like them; So is everyone who trusts in them.

Those who make idols are like them, and so are all those who trust in them. How are they? Well, they are totally powerless and helpless! They can do NOTHING! NOTHING!

People who have an idol for their higher power have no higher power! They are totally without any power. They have no help! They don't have a prayer. They have nothing. An idol does nothing for them, leaving them with nothing (cf. Isa. 44:9-20). People who turn to idolatry have NO spiritual power. They have no god that can act on their behalf!

Slide # 8

Isaiah 44:9 (NKJV)

9 Those who make an image, all of them are useless, And their precious things shall not profit; They are their own witnesses; They neither see nor know, that they may be ashamed.

If you want a God that can truly HELP you, then you need the One true living God – the God of Israel. And so he says...

9 O Israel, trust in the LORD; He is their help and their shield.

10 O house of Aaron, trust in the LORD; He is their help and their shield.

11 You who fear the LORD, trust in the LORD; He is their help and their shield.

Note the recurring emphasis on God being their help and shield.

Slide # 9

v. 9 He is their help and shield.

v. 10 He is their help and shield.

v. 11 He is their help and shield.

Shield is the idea of protection! God is the protector of all those who TRUST in Him!

To TRUST in the LORD means to put our confidence, our reliance in Him and not in anything else.

Again, LORD here is YHWH – the covenant God of Israel who has revealed Himself to the world through Israel.

Note the progression here. First in verse 9 Israel is exhorted to trust in the LORD. Then in verse 10 the spiritual leaders (the house of Aaron) is exhorted to trust in the LORD, and then in verse 11 all those who fear the LORD are exhorted to trust in the LORD.

God's people as a whole should trust in Him, and the house of Aaron (the priesthood) should lead by example in this. But then provision is made for all beyond the Jews.

Those who “fear” (reverence) the LORD in verse 11 are thought to be Gentile proselytes who were not Jewish but yet believed in the God of Israel.

In the New Testament, such people are known as *God fearers* (Acts 10:1-2, 13:16, 13:26), and the title may have come from such Old Testament passages as these. The Old Testament writers recognized Gentiles who honored the God of Israel (1 Kings 8:41, Isaiah 56:6).

– **David Guzik**

The common denominator is that God is the help and shield of all those who trust in Him! This is what God wants from people. He wants their trust.

Some folks ask me, “What is the answer to atheism? What is the answer to materialism? What is the answer to all of the immorality around us? Well, don't bother visiting a psychiatrist and lying on his couch. He doesn't have the solution. The answer is simple, so simple that many people have passed right by it: trust the LORD. That's the solution. [Trust in the LORD.] – **J. Vernon McGee**

One holiday, a dear elderly saint was involved in a terrible automobile accident that severely injured his dear wife. As I met him at the hospital with trembling hands, he said to me...

Slide # 10

Nahum 1:7 (NKJV)

7 The LORD is good, A stronghold in the day of trouble; And He knows those who trust in Him.

He is their help and their shield, stated three times here for emphasis (v. 9, 10, 11).

Idols do NOTHING for those who trust in them (v. 8), but the true living God is a help and shield to those who trust in Him!

And realize that the blessing of God rests on His people who trust in Him!

12 The LORD has been mindful of us; He will bless us; He will bless the house of Israel; He will bless the house of Aaron.

13 He will bless those who fear the LORD, Both small and great.

14 May the LORD give you increase more and more, You and your children.

15 May you be blessed by the LORD, Who made heaven and earth.

The word “bless” is used 5 times in verses 12-15. The living God loves to bless His people, and He does in so many ways! He has blessed and He will bless!

No matter what the future holds, you can be sure the blessing of God will be there resting on those who trust in Him. God is ever mindful of us! He knows all about us and will bless us.

He blesses all His people. He blesses His people Israel. He blesses God-ordained spiritual leadership. He blesses all those who fear Him, both small and great! We are blessed in so many ways. God is in the blessing business! It is what He does for those who fear Him – for those who reverently trust Him!

Count Your Blessings by Johnson Oatman (1897)

1 When upon life's billows you are tempest tossed,
When you are discouraged, thinking all is lost,
Count your many blessings, name them one by one,
And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done.

“It is his nature to bless, it is his prerogative to bless, it is his glory to bless, it is his delight to bless; he has promised to bless, and therefore be sure of this, that he will bless and bless and bless without ceasing.” - **Charles Spurgeon**

The pagans looked to their idolatrous fertility gods to make them prosper in terms of their fields, flocks and families, but those who fear the true God recognize that it is He who is the source of all such blessings. And so the Psalmist writes...

14 May the Lord give you increase more and more, You and your children.

15 May you be blessed by the Lord, Who made heaven and earth.

God the Creator is the source of all our blessings.

Slide # 11

James 1:17 (NKJV)

17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.

As God is the Creator, the Blessor, and the Protector of all those who trust in Him, we should in response, worship Him as the Psalm concludes.

16 The heaven, even the heavens, are the LORD's; But the earth He has given to the children of men.

This is an interesting statement. The heavens are the LORD's, and of course everything is the LORD's in the ultimate sense, but an emphasis is being made here when he says, "***But the earth He has given to the children of men.***" A unique blessing and stewardship responsibility is given to mankind in relation to the earth.

God has uniquely created mankind in His image and given dominion over the earth to man. This dominion mandate was stated in the very first chapter (cf. Gen. 1:26-30).

Slide # 12

Genesis 1:28 (NKJV)

28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and **subdue it; have dominion** over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

[Here we have] Strong implications that planet earth alone is the dwelling place of life. – John MacArthur

There is no evidence in either science or Scripture that intelligent beings (other than angels) exist in other worlds... It is expensive foolishness to attempt to reach such worlds in space ships or to [try and] communicate with them... Such projects make man vulnerable to demonic deception by the Satanic...wickedness in (the heavenly realms) [Eph. 2:2; 6:12] – **Henry M. Morris**

Slide # 13

Isaiah 45:18 (NKJV)

18 For thus says the LORD, Who created the heavens, Who is God, Who formed the earth and made it, Who has established it, Who did not create it in vain, Who **formed it to be inhabited**: “I am the LORD, and there is no other.

This is said about no other planet! Earth would seem to be unique in this regard. The emphasis of Scripture is that God has given the realm of earth to mankind – no other realm!

So God created heaven and earth, but He has uniquely given the realm of earth to mankind. It is here that we are protected and blessed.

And what should our response be? Well, one of praise! One key reason we exist here on planet earth is to sing God’s praises! In fact, all that God will do for us in eternity is rooted in what happens on planet earth. It was here Jesus died for us. It is here we are saved. It is here we come to know God. This is the forum in which God has chosen to work with people.

17 The dead do not praise the LORD, Nor any who go down into silence.

Old Testament theology was cloudy at certain points, but the point here is that in terms of our earthly experience, when we die we can no longer praise God in this life.

The emphasis in context is about this life, but that is not to say he is saying we will not praise God in the next life. In fact, the very next verse indicates that we will.

We were created for earth, and we are created to worship God in this context. That is a KEY reason we are here!

Even though we can only praise God in this life as long as we are here there is a HOPE beyond this life – even in the Old Testament.

18 But we will bless the LORD From this time forth and forevermore. Praise the LORD!

Yes, in death we cease to praise God in this life here, but on the other hand we will bless (praise) the LORD (YHWH) from this time forth and forevermore. This is a way of saying we will never stop praising God for all eternity.

In death our praise is transferred to another realm – a heavenly realm. In Revelation 5, the saints in heaven are praising God for what He has done for them. In Revelation 7, a great multitude who have died are found praising the Lord!

Our praise most certainly will continue on after this life!

Praise the LORD is the translation of the Hebrew word “Hallelujah!”

All the false gods of the world are useless. But our God is the living God. He is sovereign! He protectively cares for His own! He blesses us here in this life. And therefore He is worthy of all our praise from this time forth and forevermore. Praise the LORD!

“Though the dead cannot, and the wicked will not, and the careless do not praise God, yet we will shout ‘Hallelujah’ for ever and ever. Amen.” - **Charles Spurgeon**

Amen!