

PSALMS 116 AND 117

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. This is a very personal psalm. Who wrote it?
2. How has the apparent abruptness of the opening of the psalm been explained?
3. Rotherham seems to think verse eleven expresses a thought not compatible with the experience of Hezekiah (or anyone else). What is the thought? Do you agree?
4. There seems to be much indication of a lack (or at best fluctuating) of faith in the psalms. Why so? We either believe or we do not believe. Discuss.
5. Verse 15 offers a good proof-text for the death of some faithful, fruitful servant of the Lord. "The death of His saints is not cheap to God." Discuss this beautiful thought. Read Isa. 38:18, 19.

PSALM 117

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

All Nations Invited to Join in Israel's Tribute of Praise.

ANALYSIS

By Synonyms of Unmistakable Universality, All Nations are Invited to Praise Jehovah for his Kindness and Faithfulness to Israel.

(P.R.I.) Praise ye Yah!

- 1 Praise Jehovah all ye nations,
laud him all ye tribes of men:
- 2 For his kindness hath prevailed over us,
and the truth of Jehovah is to the ages.

(Nm.)¹

PARAPHRASE

PSALM 117

Praise the Lord, all nations everywhere. Laud Him, all the peoples of the earth.

2 For He loves us very dearly, and His truth endures. Praise the Lord.

1. See Ps. 118 (beginning).

STUDIES IN PSALMS

EXPOSITION

This is the shortest psalm, and it has frequently been described as the grandest: it certainly is very significant. On the one hand, its appeal for universal praise to Jehovah is unequivocal: in the other, the ground of that appeal is abundantly worthy, though perhaps not at once perceived to be so special as it really is. As soon, however, as due prominence is given to the undoubted facts—that Israel as a nation is the speaker giving this invitation to the other nations of the earth; that the invitation comes from the heart of a nation met in solemn festival especially to memorialise and celebrate the Divinely achieved triumphs of her own history; and then the precise terms are given their proper value by which the especial reason for universal praise is conveyed, then it must be admitted by the candid and trained reader—trained in the history of Israel and in the course of the psalms hitherto—that the pronoun *us* of the psalm means specifically ISRAEL. The speakers say—*His kindness hath prevailed over US*, and there is no reason to doubt that they mean exactly what they say; and though to some minds, this conclusion may occasion a feeling of momentary disappointment, that the basis of invited praise is not made wider, as by saying—*For His kindness hath prevailed over YOU*, yet a few moments' reflection may suffice to convert this feeling into one of admiration for the very precision of the reference to Israel. There need, of course, be no apprehension—that the nations whose mouths are to be opened to celebrate Israel's mercies will be closed to the joyful acknowledgement of their own. But the point of the psalm is,—and it is in every way a triumphant point—a note worthy to be resounded through all the earth,—that Israel belongs to the nations, that her triumph is their triumph and benediction; that in her national history more than in their own, the *kindness* and *faithfulness* of Jehovah will have been displayed in a manner worthy to occasion, not only universal, but never-ending, adoration. We of the nations to whom the privilege has been given to anticipate that coming triumph,—how can we enter into the spirit of this psalm unmoved? By all our grief over Israel's long-protracted obstinacy, and over the suffering judicially permitted for that obstinacy,—are we moved with joy to look forward to this coming Divine triumph: when Jehovah's kindness will—deep down in Israel's heart, and all abroad in unmistakable openness of national demonstration—PREVAIL OVER ISRAEL. To look forward to such a

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Victory of Love, is to know a feeling akin to ecstasy; and that we should receive an invitation to indulge in so unselfish an anticipation from Jewish lips, in Jewish homes and Jewish synagogues, is to be conscious of an additional satisfaction which will one day be appreciated by our brethren of the Twelve-tribed nation. We heartily thank them for this their Passover Invitation preserved in their Hallel.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. This is the shortest psalm and in some way the grandest. In what way? Discuss.
2. Is there here a promise of the general turning of Israel to Jehovah in some future time? If so what effect is it to have on the rest of the nations?

PSALM 118

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

The Passover "Hosanna"-Song.

ANALYSIS

(See bracketed Headlines let into the Psalm).

(P.R.I.) Praise ye Yah!

(PART I.—INVITATIONS TO PRAISE.)

(First in Standing Refrain: then in Appeal to Three Classes.)

- 1 *Give ye thanks to Jehovah for he is good,
for to the ages is his kindness.*
- 2 Pray you let Israel' say—
For to the ages is his kindness.
- 3 Pray you let the house of Aaron' say—
For to the ages is his kindness.
- 4 Pray you let them who revere' Jehovah say—
For to the ages is his kindness.

(PART II.—THE PROCESSION SONG.)

(Answer to Prayer Acknowledged.)

- 5 Out of the strait called I on Yah,