

## STUDIES IN PSALMS

correct as the "accusative of definition"=*in holiness*, with R.V. margin; although the reason given by Aglen for the latter is scarcely conclusive. He says: "Since the servants of Jehovah are here addressed as standing in the sanctuary, this direction seems unreasonable." The unreasonableness disappears if we remember that the ministrants might be already standing within the Temple courts, and yet direct their uplifted hands toward the holy shrine. Still, *in holiness* appears the more obvious rendering; which becomes doubly acceptable when viewed as supplying the idea of "holy hands" in 1 Tim. 2:8. It remains only to add: that the simple structure of this psalm by no means pre-supposes the elaborate ritual of perambulating the Temple courts during the night, which the Talmud connects with the Second Temple. There is nothing here which the reforming King Hezekiah might not have arranged or restored.

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. This is the last of the fifteen psalms devoted to the *Song of the Steps*—it is appropriate that it be a night service in the temple—Read I Chronicles 9:33 and Numbers 6:24 to aid in visualizing the circumstances.
2. Delitzsch seems to see some objections to an in the temple worship. How does Rotherham answer the objection?
3. Are we to actually "lift up our hands" in the worship of our Lord? cf. I Timothy 2:8.

## PSALM 135

### DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

A Call to Temple-Worship.

### ANALYSIS

Stanza I., vers. 1-4, A Charge to the Levites to Lead in the Delightful Duty of Praise. Stanza II., vers. 5-7, A Personal Enforcement of this Duty—based on the Works of Creation. Stanza III., vers. 8-12, The Same—based on Israel's History. Stanza IV., vers. 13, 14, Jehovah's Name and Memorial a Guarantee of Future National Blessing. Stanza V., vers. 15-18, Reproach cast on Idols. Stanza VI., vers. 19-21, Four Classes called upon to Bless Jehovah.

PSALM 135

(P.R.I.) Praise ye Yah.<sup>1</sup>

- 1 Praise ye the name of Jehovah,  
praise O ye servants of Jehovah:
- 2 Who stand<sup>2</sup> in the house of Jehovah,  
in the courts of the house of our God.
- 3 Praise ye Yah for good is Yahweh,<sup>3</sup>  
make melody to his name for it is full of delight.
- 4 For Jacob hath Yah chosen for himself,  
Israel as his own treasure.<sup>4</sup>
- 5 For I know that great is Jehovah,  
and our sovereign Lord is beyond all gods:
- 6 All that Jehovah pleased hath he done—  
in the heavens and in the earth,  
in the seas and all resounding deeps:
- 7 Causing vapours to ascend from the end of the earth,  
lightnings for the rain hath he made,  
Bringing forth wind out of his treasuries.
- 8 Who smote the firstborn of Egypt—  
from man unto beast,
- 9 He sent signs and wonders into thy midst O Egypt  
on Pharaoh and on all his servants.
- 10 Who smote great nations,  
and slew mighty kings:
- 11 Reaching to Sihon king of the Amorites,  
and to Og king of Bashan,  
and to all the kingdoms of Canaan;
- 12 And gave their land as an inheritance—  
an inheritance to Israel his people.
- 13 Jehovah! thy name is to the ages,  
Jehovah! thy memorial<sup>5</sup> is to generation after generation;
- 14 For Jehovah will vindicate his people,  
and on his servants have compassion.<sup>6</sup>
- 15 The idols of the nations are silver and gold,  
the work<sup>7</sup> of the hands of men:
- 16 a mouth have they—but do not speak,  
eyes have they—but do not see,

1. See Ps. 105 headline (P.R.I.).

2. For this word, see Exp. of Ps. 134.

3. =Jehovah; both spelled thus to shew its relationship to "Yah."

4. Cp. Exo. 19:5.

5. Cp. Exo. 3:14, 15.

6. Cp. Deu. 32:36.

7. Some cod. (w. Sep., Vul.): "works" (pl.)—Gn.

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- 17 ears have they—but do not give ear,  
nay there is no breath at all in their mouth.  
18 Like them shall become they who make them—  
every one who trusteth in them.  
19 O house of Israel bless ye Jehovah,  
O house of 'Aaron bless ye Jehovah,  
20 O house of Levi bless ye Jehovah.  
O ye who revere Jehovah bless ye Jehovah.  
21 Blessed be Jehovah out of Zion—  
who inhabiteth Jerusalem.

(Nm.)<sup>s</sup>

## PARAPHRASE

### PSALM 135

Hallelujah! Yes, let His people praise Him, as they stand in His Temple courts.

3 Praise the Lord because He is so good; sing to His wonderful name.

4 For the Lord has chosen Israel as His personal possession.

5 I know the greatness of the Lord—that He is greater far than any other god.

6 He does whatever pleases Him throughout all of heaven and earth, and in the deepest seas.

7 He makes mists rise throughout the earth and sends the lightning to bring down the rain; and sends the winds from His treasures.

8 He destroyed the eldest child in each Egyptian home, along with the firstborn of the flocks.

9 He did great miracles in Egypt before Pharaoh and all his people.

10 He smote great nations, slaying mighty kings—

11 Sihon, king of Amorites; and Og, the king of Bashan; and the kings of Canaan—

12 And gave their land as an eternal gift to His people Israel.

13 O Jehovah, Your name endures forever; Your fame is known to every generation.

14 For Jehovah will vindicate His people, and have compassion on His servants.

8. See Ps. 136 (beginning).

## PSALM 135

15 The heathen worship idols of gold and silver, made by men—

16 Idols with speechless mouths and sightless eyes.

17 And ears that cannot hear; they cannot even breathe.

18 Those who make them become like them! And so do all who trust in them!

19 O Israel, bless Jehovah! High priests of Aaron, bless His name.

20 O Levite priests, bless the Lord Jehovah! Oh bless His name, all of you who trust and reverence Him.

21 All people of Jerusalem,<sup>1</sup> praise the Lord, for He lives here in Jerusalem. Hallelujah!

### EXPOSITION

With this psalm, we return to the series distinctively named "Hallels"; and may, from that circumstance, judge with considerable probability as to the bearings of the contents we may find in them. They are pre-eminently Temple psalms, almost certainly composed and not merely adapted for that purpose; and were probably written or collected and edited by King Hezekiah for the re-opening of the Cleansed Temple. How well—let us ask—do they answer to such an origin and design? Do they contain any features from which fitness for such an intention can fairly be inferred? Leaving these questions to receive incidental answers, let us look at the psalm now before us.

It is obviously fitted for its purpose. It is, as to contents, manifestly a *public* psalm, appealing to the whole people. It celebrates their favoured position (ver. 4); extols their covenant God, both as the God of all Creation (vers. 5-7), and as Author of their national Redemption, in bringing them out of Egypt and into the Promised Land (vers. 8-12); it brings up from Mosaic times (Ex. 3:14, 15), in its rich significance, the "Memorial" Name of their covenant God, which it sets forth in its promissory significance (vers. 13, 14); it pours reproach upon the idols of the nations, in a manner fitted to impress on Israelites the preciousness of their knowledge of the one Living and True God (vers. 15-18); and then, having previously at the outset, charged the Levites to lead in such delightful worship, it closes by solemnly calling upon the whole people, even including Gentile proselytes, to sustain *the house of Aaron and the house of Levi* in Jehovah's praise (vers. 19-21). It is, therefore, emphatically

1. Literally, "the Lord be blessed from Zion."

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a *national* song. Indeed, it has not a private or personal allusion in it—with one exception. That exception, however, is very observable. It consists of the sudden introduction, at ver. 5, of a personal note, on which probably no one lower than a King would have adventured. Who is this that presumes to say—*I know that great is Jehovah?* Any godly monarch in Israel, it is true, might thus have made prominent his own individuality. A Jehoshaphat, for example, on the one hand, or a Josiah, on the other, might have thus *authenticated* Jehovah's praise; or, of course, a Hezekiah—no smaller man nor less godly. Indeed, even for Hezekiah, one could almost wish for circumstantial evidence, dating this psalm late enough to clothe the speaker with such a strong assurance as would naturally spring from a recent recovery from sickness or a recent rescue from a foreign invader; and it is only when we recall our late conclusions respecting Hezekiah's youth, and the strong presumption thence arising that he experimentally *knew* Jehovah's power,—that we became reconciled to his thus magnificently saying "*I know.*" But recalling this, we do feel content to leave it as the greater probability that the good King did, for the occasion named, compose this psalm: the more so, for that we have no knowledge of the poetic and musical accomplishments of either Jehoshaphat or Josiah.

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What is meant by saying some psalms are "Hallels"?
2. What indications are in this psalm of its being a "public" psalm?
3. This is also a "national" song. Discuss such indication.
4. There is an exception to the public and national aspect of this psalm. What is it?

## PSALM 136

### DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

A Second Call to Temple-Worship, with Responses Inserted.

### ANALYSIS

Stanza I., vers. 1-3, A Threefold Call for Thanks, based on the three leading Divine Names. Stanza II., vers. 4-6, the Call Continued, based on