

PRAISE THE SAVIOR OF EARLY ISRAEL (Psa 105) CBC-14 Feb 2021

Praising God is our high calling; remembering His saving work stirs us to it. “His saving work” is vast, extending to the beginning of human history. Psa 105 focuses on the Lord’s saving work in Israel’s early history. But why would Christians around the world today be deeply moved by this? First, it reveals OUR God’s greatness and goodness. Second, it is OUR history as God’s chosen people. When I was a Dispensationalist, this was totally lost on me. That error that completely divides God’s OT people (generally called “Israel”) from His NT people (generally called the “church”), but sometimes these are swapped in Scripture (e.g., Acts 7.38; Gal 6.16). Believing Jews and Gentiles are now spiritually one in Christ (Eph 2.14), fused in organic union (Rom 11.17). Circumcision is nothing (1 Cor 7.19)!

So OT Israel’s history is OUR history as Christians today, revealing OUR God. We know this partly because Paul writes this way without even calling special attention to it (e.g., 1 Cor 10.1-4). God’s chosen people in all ages is *one people in Christ!* Realizing this helps us to use Psa 105 as we should.

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Praise the Savior of early Israel, our spiritual forefathers.
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We will read and expound this longer psalm (35 vv.) in six shorter parts. Initial call to praise (1-5) followed by five epochs of the OT church: Abraham/Isaac/Jacob (6-15), Joseph (16-22), 400 years in Egypt (23-25), Moses (26-36), exodus to conquest (37-45)—a period of about 700 years.

Exposition, God’s message to us

- Let Us Praise Him (1-5). Focus on “the Lord” and His “deeds,” “wondrous works,” “marvelous works” in the past. You ought to respond 1) outwardly (“give thanks” [rehearse with gratitude], “call upon” Him [prayer], “make known his deeds” [publish to your children and others], “sing psalms” [like this one], “talk of all His wondrous works” [holy conference with other people]) and 2) inwardly (“glory” or “exult,” “rejoice,” “seek” [worship] Him, “remember” [i.e., celebrate] His works). Outward praise to be the fruit of inward faith. We properly celebrate national heroes; the Church, our Savior God!
- He Saved the First Fathers of our People (6-15). Now the HS addresses you as “seed of Abraham” and “children of Jacob” to remind you of your roots and all that God did in this early history of your people. A-I-J are our “patriarchs” (fathers)—physically of OT Israel, spiritually of NT Israel/the church (Rom 4.11; Gal 3.7). God made a covenant with us in A-I-J, “an everlasting covenant,” with a “promised land” as our inheritance—Canaan being the earthly type and shadow, Christ/eternal life being the spiritual fulfillment. Abraham knew this (Heb 11.8-10). Meanwhile God protected/preserved them (e.g., Gen 20.6, 7).
- He Saved our Joseph in Egypt (16-22). God ordained famine for Jacob’s dwelling place. Bread supports life like a staff (stick) does a man leaning on it (16). Joseph’s brothers sold him into slavery but God was

in it (17; Gen 50.20). Joseph in prison (18) until God’s Word came (19, dreams). God exalted him (20-22, cf. Gen 41.40). *God must control all these to be praised for them.* Scripture is very bold about this.

- He Formed Us a People for Himself in Egypt (23-25). Shortly Jacob’s (renamed Israel) 70 family members all moved to Egypt/Goshen (23). There they multiplied so much Egyptians feared them (Exod 1.9, 10). God even made the Egyptians hate our people (25) but this was only a prelude to a great deliverance. “It is the express object of the inspired writer to put the whole government of the Church under God, so that nothing may happen but according to his will. . . . Those who reject this doctrine, because it is not very grateful to the human understanding, are inflated with a perverse arrogance” (Calvin, in loc.).
- He Gave Us Moses to Represent Us in Egypt (26-36). Moses sent by God (26), then the ten plagues (27-36): blood, frogs, gnats, flies, animal pestilence, boils, hail, locusts, darkness, death of firstborn (Exod 4-12).
- He Brought Us into the Promised Land (37-45). Again, “He” (God) “brought them forth” (37), terrified Egyptians (38), gave pillar of cloud/fire (39), quails/manna to eat (40), water (41), and brought them out of Egypt in faithfulness to His covenant (42, 43; cf. Gen 15.13, 14) and graciously gave them the Promised Land (44; Exod 3.8) for their worship of their Savior in faith and obedience (45).

Application, our response to God

- Know the history of your people, spiritually, and identify with them. DNA kits are popular to learn of your own ancestors. How much more significant are your spiritual ancestors as a Christian! So much of Scripture is historical narrative and you need to know it for your spiritual good. “Pop Christianity” is so narcissistic! Don’t buy it! Christians are united with the vast, ancient family of God.
- Appreciate this as God’s saving work, God Incarnate in Jesus Christ. “That Rock [in the wilderness] was Christ” (1 Cor 10.4), and that sandal-clad Savior who was crucified is Jehovah, revealed to Moses in the burning bush, speaking to Him on Mount Sinai, and leading Israel in the wilderness. Christ’s NT redeeming work is a continuation of the OT work, and its consummation. This may revolutionize your Bible reading.
- Obey this psalm’s call to worship. How can you believe this Psalm as a Christian and not be deeply stirred to rejoice in your soul and celebrate the Savior of early Israel with thanksgiving and joyful songs? “Quench not the Spirit” (1 Thess 5.19)! Christ has come “to give us beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that we might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified” (Isa 61.3). Ω