

Psalm 135

This psalm is paired with the readings in Deuteronomy 23:21 – 24:18. Coming as it does in the week preceding Passover, its mention that God "smote the firstborn of Egypt" (verses 8-9) is significant. [Although our Passover has been postponed/ cancelled because of coronavirus]

Psalm 135 begins and ends with praise.

The psalm's critique of idolatry in **verses 15-18** recalls **Psalm 115**.

Psalm 135:1 - "Praise ye the LORD. Praise ye the name of the LORD; praise him, O ye servants of the LORD."

"Praise ye the Lord" = *Hallelu-jah* or "*Yah*" an abridged name for Yahweh

The three "praises" similar to **Psalm 113** could be seen as directed toward Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The more we understand God's grace toward us, the more we are inclined to praise Him.

"servants" - we were once slaves to sin and Satan (**Romans 6:16-18**) we are now slaves to righteousness and Christ.

Psalm 135:2-3 - "Ye that stand in the house of the LORD, in the courts of the house of our God, Praise the LORD; for the LORD is good: sing praises unto his name; for it is pleasant."

Tis refers to the priests and Levites, who stood (thy were forbidden to sit) serving in the Tabernacle and later the Temple's Court of Priests, as well as the people who would crowd into the Temple's Court of Israel and Court of Women. Believers now are a "royal priesthood" in service to God (**1 Peter 2:9, Revelation 1:6, 5:10**).

"pleasant" = *na`iyim* - pleasant, sweet, agreeable

Psalm 135:4 - "For the LORD has chosen Jacob to himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure."

Jacob, later called Israel, represents "all Israel" - believers of the Old Covenant and the New.

- **Exodus 19:5-6** - "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine, And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation."

God's Greatness and Power

Psalm 135:5 - "For I know that the LORD is great, and that our Lord is above all gods. Whatsoever the LORD pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places."

The Lord is unique and above every god and idol, as well as Creator of the heavenly bodies and natural forces the idols were thought by the heathens to represent.

"Whatsoever the LORD pleased" - He is sovereign, and His control and authority extends throughout His creation, even to the "deep places" unfathomable by man. He can calm the sea, walk on its surface, lead his people through it on dry ground, or make the seas overflow the earth in a flood. He even controls the abyss, the bottomless pit where Satan and his cohorts will be cast at the end of time.

Psalm 135:7 - "He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings for the rain; he bringeth the wind out of his treasuries."

- **Zechariah 9:14** - "And the LORD shall be seen over them, and his arrow shall go forth as the lightning: and the Lord GOD shall blow the trumpet, and shall go with whirlwinds of the south."

Psalm 135:8-9 - "Who smote the firstborn of Egypt, both of man and beast. Who sent tokens and wonders into the midst of thee, O Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his servants."

- **Exodus 12:22** - "And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the bason, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the bason; and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning. For the LORD will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the LORD will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you."

"...Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us." (1 **Corinthians 5:7**)

"tokens" - *owth* - sign, signal, banner, mark

"wonders" = *mowpheth* - conspicuous sign, miracle

Signs and wonders were the plagues, the parting of the Red Sea, etc.

Psalm 135:10-11 - "Who smote great nations, and slew mighty kings; Sihon king of the Amorites, and Og king of Bashan, and all the kingdoms of Canaan."

Spiritually the driving out of the Canaanites points to Christ's victory over Satan, the antichrist and his minions:

- **Colossians 2:15** - "And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it."

Psalm 135:12 - "And gave their land for an heritage, an heritage unto Israel his people."

"heritage" = *nachalah* - inheritance, possession

For Christian believers, the Promised Land inheritance is a spiritual "Rest."

- **Deuteronomy 12:9** - "For ye are not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance, which the LORD your God giveth you."

But in Hebrews, it states that Joshua, although conquering the Canaanites and settling the people, did not fulfill the promise:

- **Hebrews 4:8-11** - "For if Jesus (Joshua) had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief."

Psalm 135:123 - "Thy name, O LORD, endureth for ever; and thy memorial, O LORD, throughout all generations."

YHWH - "I am that I Am" or "I will be Who I will be" - A name beyond human modifiers, God's name that could only be uttered once a year by the high priest in the Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur.

- **Exodus 23:20-21** - "Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in him."

This is the pre-incarnation appearance of Christ:

- **Philippians 2:9-11** - "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

"memorial" = *zêker* - memory, recollection, commemoration

Just as Amalek was to be put out of remembrance (*zeker*) forever (**Exodus 17:14**), so God's memory would remain "throughout all generations."

- **1 Corinthians 11:24** - "...This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

Psalm 135:14 - "For the LORD will judge his people, and he will repent himself concerning his servants."

...or better, "and yet he will repent himself"

Targum: "for the Lord will judge the judgment of his people by his word, and to his righteous servants will return in his mercies."

Chastisement (presumably because of the idolatry discussed below), if responded to by repentance, yields mercy and forgiveness.

Psalm 135:15-18 - "The idols of the heathen are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not; They have ears, but they hear not; neither is there any breath in their mouths. They that make them are like unto them: so is every one that trusteth in them."

See **Psalm 115**. Idols are not powerful, but rather powerless, and are made by human hands. They can't speak to us, they can't see into the future, they don't hear our prayers, they have no life in them at all.

Psalm 135:19-21 - "Bless the LORD, O house of Israel: bless the LORD, O house of Aaron: Bless the LORD, O house of Levi: ye that fear the LORD, bless the LORD. Blessed be the LORD out of Zion, which dwelleth at Jerusalem. Praise ye the LORD."

.. and Who dwells in the New Jerusalem:

- **Revelation 21:2-3** - "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God."