

Summer Psalms  
**LESSONS FROM THE EXODUS**

Tuesday, August 12

Reading: Psalm 114

**Psalm 114:7** Tremble, earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob

Though this psalm does not contain an actual Hallelujah or “praise the Lord” within its verses, it is an important part of these “Hallel” psalms sung by the Jewish people. Remember, these songs were sung during the great feasts days, especially Passover. Psalm 114 is another retelling of that Exodus event. Traditionally, Psalm 113-114 were sung before the start of the Passover meal.

The first verses remind us of Israel’s deliverance from Egypt and God’s purpose in redeeming them (114:1-2). The names “Israel...Jacob...and Judah” are different ways of referring to the nation as a whole. When God delivered them, His purpose was to make them His special (“dominion”) and holy people (“sanctuary”). It reminds us of the words God spoke from Mount Sinai shortly after the Exodus:

Exodus 19:5 “Now if you obey Me fully and keep My covenant, then out of all nations you will be My treasured possession. Although the whole earth is Mine, 6 you will be for Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”

The next verses tell how God led and protected them (114:3-6). When they were trapped between the Red Sea and the Egyptian army, God parted the waters so they crossed on dry ground and then drowned the pursuing Egyptian army in the sea. At the border of the Promised Land 40 years later, God parted the waters of the Jordan River to allow His people to cross and begin the conquest of their new home. The poetic reference to leaping mountains and hills refers to the power God displayed in Israel conquering their enemies.

The final verses speak of God’s provision for His people (114:7-8). Two times it is recorded how God provided water from a rock to quench the people’s thirst (Exo. 17; Num. 20).

What I find interesting in this psalm is that no mention is made of Israel’s attitude in these events. While the earth is told to tremble at the presence of the Lord, the response of the nation is silent. It is as if God is appealing to His people to respond as creation does – with obedience. When we read the events of the Red Sea and water from the rock, each time it is preceded by grumbling, complaining, and a lack of faith. Only after the miracle do the Israelites respond positively (and then only for a short time).

Two lessons come to mind when I consider these things. One, God longs for us to worship Him because we are His people and not just because of what He does for us. Our response to God should be like that of creation that instantly bows to His will.

A second lesson comes from the absence of the negative in the psalm. The Exodus was the event that defined Israel as God’s people. The psalmist wants them to remember this and not the negative attitudes of the people. So, the great event that made us God’s people is Jesus’ death and resurrection that freed us from the power and penalty of sin. To dwell on past sins that have been forgiven is to minimize the power of the cross in our lives. Like this psalm, we should focus on what Jesus has done for us and live in victory over our past.