

God's Faithfulness

Psalm 105:1-11, 42-45

FIRST THOUGHTS

"Great is Thy Faithfulness" has been a favorite hymn of believers for over a century. It was written in 1923 by Thomas Chisholm, a pastor in Kentucky. The title comes from Lamentations 3:23, but throughout the Bible it is evident that the people of God recognized the faithfulness of God. Psalm 105 not only demonstrates that we need to remember God's faithfulness in keeping His promises, but we also need to recognize He deserves our worship because He is faithful to do so.

UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT

Psalm 105-106 serve well as examples of hymns. Psalms in this category supply worshipers with expressions of praise and thanksgiving. They enable God's people to shout and sing out loud that He's worthy of our worship.

Studying these two psalms together would be beneficial because they get at the heart of the same truth, but in different ways.

KEY DOCTRINE

Man

Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purposes of God. (See Ephesians 2:10; Colossians 1:21-22).

Taken together, they help worshipers declare God's faithfulness. Psalm 105 directs worshipers to affirm God's faithfulness to His people from one generation after another. Psalm 106 points to the painful reality that God's people can be unfaithful to Him. Even so, He never tops being faithful to us.

CALL TO WORSHIP (PSALM 105:1-6)

The Lord: God alone deserves our worship. Therefore, the psalmist

used the Hebrew word (Yahweh) to identify Him as the one true God who reigned over everything (Ps. 93:1-2; Isa. 52:7). In addition, his call to worship centered exclusively on His presence among His people. From them, He stood completely apart, enthroned on their praises (see Ps. 22:3). This call to worship God included both acknowledging the glory of who He is and thanking Him for **His deeds among the peoples**.

Sing to Him: The worshiping community has been prompted to **sing** as they came into his presence (Ps. 100:2). In ancient Israel, singing played a vital role in worshipping the Lord. Song gave a voice to the eagerness and anticipation growing in the hearts of the worshipers. Singing about Him helped them to worship, but singing praises directly to Him inspired them even more.

His holy name: Testifying about God's incredible actions would give way to honoring Him for how He revealed Himself to His people. The psalmist's perception of God as **holy** moved him to give God glory and exalt Him wholeheartedly. The Lord remained completely separate from the lifeless idols that the pagan people in the neighboring nations worshiped. Focusing on His **name** emphasized the holiness of His character. Therefore, the hearts of His worshipers would be stirred to **rejoice** as they entered His presence.

Seek the Lord: For God's people, meaningful worship involved gathering with others at a particular time and place to focus on Him. However, it also included the discipline of personal worship. Such a lifestyle of personal worship placed a high priority on pursuing Him every day. Their confidence in Him grew as their efforts to **seek the Lord** became a regular feature of their lives. For this reason, the psalmist encouraged his readers to pursue His **strength** and His **face**.

Remember: God's people ran the risk of forgetting everything He had done for them. To diminish the risk the psalmist challenged the Israelites to recall them intentionally. For example, refreshing their memories about His actions on their behalf in Egypt would renew their trust in Him.

In those days, he commissioned Moses to lead them from Egyptian bondage. He also sent supernatural plagues against Egypt (Ex. 4:21; 7:3-9; 11:9-10). Those plagues served to reflect His judgment and bring Him glory (6:6; 7:1, 12:12).

His chosen ones: Having pointed to the Lord as the proper object of worship, the psalmist shed light on the worshipers themselves. There were Abraham's **offspring** and Jacob's **descendants**. Just as important, he referred to Abraham's offspring and Jacob's descendants. Just as important, he referred to **Abraham** as a **servant** of the Lord. Abraham obeyed the Lord by leaving his home and settling in Canaan. There God made a covenant with Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3), which He later confirmed

to Abraham's son, Isaac, and to his grandson, Jacob (Ex. 2:24; Deut. 9:27). He declared that Abraham's entire family belonged to Him (Deut. 7:6-9).

COVENANT MADE (PSALM 105:7-11)

His judgments: In God's relationship with His people, He gave personal attention to them through His wise **judgments**. As a result of the judgments that He rendered, He brought salvation to the people who devoted themselves to Him. However, anyone who lived in rebellion against Him could count on being accountable to Him.

Abraham: Initially, God established His covenant with Abram (Abraham). According to Genesis 12:1-3, God called him to leave his home country and move into a new land. He promised Abram that he would become a great nation. In turn, that blessed nation would bless everyone in the world. Abraham obeyed God's call and followed His leadership, and God repeatedly demonstrated His commitment to honor His covenant (Gen. 13:14-18; 15:18-21; 17:1-21).

Isaac: When God made His covenant, Abram had no children. In fact, his wife, Sarai (Sarah), was barren and both were past normal child-bearing years. This raised the question of how God would use him to build a nation when having children seemed impossible.

Jacob . . . Israel: Isaac's son, **Jacob** became the next member of Abraham's family to receive the covenant. Absolutely nothing in God's heart had changed. But Jacob also received a new name from the Lord: **Israel** (35:9-12). Jacob's new name called to mind a person who struggled with God. It also came to the name of the nations that had come from Abraham.

Canaan: Through the psalmist, God called attention to His covenant with Abraham and his descendants. Across the centuries that followed, the Israelites could trace the fulfillment of His promise. In fact, they were living in the specific territory that God promised (13:15). This is what made **Canaan** the "promised land."

COVENANT FULFILLED (PSALM 105:42-45)

He remembered: The psalmist provided a brief account of God's leadership of His people as they made their way to the land that He promised them. Across long centuries, God never forgot His covenant with Israel. In fact, the Hebrew wording suggests keeping something in mind, rather than recalling something that was forgotten. The psalm affirmed that God's actions toward Israel were always based on His interaction with His people.

His holy promise: The Hebrew term for holy (qados) suggests being separated. In the context of God's relationship with His people, it also carries the connotation of being dedicated. For example, God used the term to declare that Israel had been dedicated to Him (Ex. 19:6).

With rejoicing: Unparalleled **rejoicing** in the hearts of the Israelites sprang up after their miraculous escape from Egypt. They knew for certain that God had delivered them, as evidenced by the miracle He performed at the Red Sea (Ex. 14:5-31). Their panic gave way to **shouts** of awe and wonder as they crossed the Red Sea to the safety of the wilderness. Moses led them to rejoice with his song of gratitude to God for saving their lives (15:1-19).

They inherited: God fulfilled His promise to the Israelites and gave them the Land of Canaan as an inheritance. However, pagan nations inhabited the land. However, pagan nations inhabited the land. When He called Abraham, ten nations occupied the land. When He called Joshua to lead the conquest centuries later, seven nations lived there (Josh. 3:10). The presence of the pagan nations did not prevent God from keeping His promise to Israel. He blessed His people and made sure they **inherited** all He had for them (Deut. 6:10-12; Josh. 5:10-12). They were able to live in houses they had not built and eat food they had not planted. In a nutshell, the psalmist noted, the children of Israel enjoyed the benefits **what other peoples had worked for**.

Keep his statutes: The psalmist noted that God had a larger purpose when He established His covenant with Abraham, and that purpose did not change once He fulfilled His promise and granted Israel its inheritance. Ultimately, He intended for Israel to grow spiritually as His people.

Next Week – God's Conviction, Psalm 38:1-8, 18-22