**The Book of Psalms—Study Guide (Psalms 113-118)**

The Bible always takes precedence in our study of God’s Word (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21). This guide is just a “help” compiled from the Soncino commentary, Ambassador College notes, & personal study.

**Psalm 113:** Soncino titles this Psalm: “Praise God.” (Psalms 113-118 are a grouping of Psalms which emphasize the greatness of God in His leading of Israel out from Egypt).

1-3: Praise the name of the Lord, O servants of the Lord. Blessed be the name of the Lord, from this time forth and forevermore. From the rising of the sun to its going down (throughout the world, wherever one may live), the Lord’s name will be praised. The praising of the Lord will continue in the future (Psalm 45:17).

4-6: The Lord is high above the nations, and His glory above the heavens. Who is like the Lord our God? (See Isaiah 40:15-17, 22). He (looks down low) to behold things that are in the earth (Psalm 11:4-5, Matthew 6:26).

7-8: These verses are from Hannah’s prayer--1 Samuel 2:8. God raises the poor out of the dust (from a time of poverty or mourning), and lifts the needy out of the ash heap (dunghills, where beggars often sat upon), so that He may seat them with princes, the princes of His people (Job 36:7).

9: God grants the barren woman a home, like a joyful mother of children (as Hannah was blessed). This also refers to Israel. See Isaiah 54:1-3; 66:8-10—Zion will flourish once again.

**Psalm 114:** Soncino titles this Psalm: “The Exodus.” From the viewpoint of poetry, this Psalm is a lyric of surpassing beauty in describing the deliverance from Egypt at the Red Sea.

1-3: When Israel went out of Egypt, from a people of a strange (unintelligible) language (see Psalm 81:5), Judah became God’s sanctuary, and Israel His dominion (see Exodus 15:17). The Red Sea saw it—Israel coming out of Egypt (Exodus 14:21-22), and later the Jordan River turned back (Joshua 3:13-16).

4-6: The mountains skipped like rams and the hills like little lambs. (It happened when God was giving the commandments at Mt. Sinai—see Psalm 68:7-8). What ailed the seas that they turned back and the mountains that they skipped like rams? (The answer is in the next verse: the presence of God was there).

7-8: Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord, the God of Jacob, who also turned the rock into a pool of water, the flint into a fountain of waters (Exodus 17:6).

**Psalm 115:** Soncino titles this Psalm: “National Trust in God.”

1-3: Not unto us (for our benefit), but to God’s name is glory to be given, because of His mercy and truth. Why should the Gentiles say, “So where is their God?” But, our God is in heaven, and He does whatever He pleases.

4-7: (In contrast to the Living God), their idols are silver and gold, the work of men’s hands. They have mouths, but don’t speak; eyes, but they don’t see; ears, but they don’t hear; noses, but they don’t smell; as for their hands and feet, they don’t handle (touch) or walk. Nor do they mutter through their throat.

8: Those who make the idols are like them (senseless and unperceiving), and so is everyone who trusts in them (see Isaiah 44:9-11).

9-11: O Israel, trust in the Lord. He is their help and shield. O house of Aaron, trust in the Lord. He is their help and shield. You who fear the Lord, (all repentant peoples--including Gentiles: 1 Kings 8:41-43; Isaiah 56:6-7), trust in the Lord. He is your help and shield.

12-15: The Lord has been mindful of us and He will bless us. He will bless the house of Israel and the house of Aaron. He will bless those who fear the Lord, both small and great (total inclusiveness). May the Lord give you increase more and more, you and your children. May you be blessed by the Lord who made heaven and earth.

16-17: The heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord’s. But the earth He has given to the children of men (not heaven). The dead do not praise the Lord (no human is in heaven praising God), nor any who go down into silence (Psalm 30:9, Ecclesiastes 9:5-6).

18: But, we (the living; the repentant—Isaiah 38:18-19) will bless the Lord from this time forth and forevermore (Psalm 86:12)—praise the Lord!

**Psalm 116:** Soncino titles this Psalm: “Personal Thanksgiving to God.” The author, and when this personal thanksgiving was written, is unknown.

1-2: I love the Lord because He has heard my voice and supplications. Because (for) He inclined His ear to me; therefore I’ll call upon God as long as I live.

3-4: The pains of death surrounded me, and the pangs of Sheol (the grave) laid hold of me. I found trouble and sorrow. Then I called upon the name of the Lord, “I implore You, deliver my soul!” (Job 38:28-30).

5-7: Gracious is the Lord and righteous. He is merciful. He preserves the simple. I was brought low, and He saved me. Return to your rest, O my soul (cease to be anxious), for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you.

8-9: For You have delivered my soul from death and my eyes from tears and my feet from falling. I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living.

10-11: I believed, therefore I spoke (quoted in 2 Corinthians 4:13). “I am greatly afflicted” (yet I still trusted in God). I said in my haste (alarm or panic) that all men are liars (their power to assist is unreliable: Psalm 60:11).

12-14: What shall I give the Lord for all His benefits toward me? Answer: I will take up the cup of salvation (see Psalm 16:5) and will call upon the name of the Lord (openly proclaim Him). I will pay my vows to the Lord in the presence of all His people.

15: Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints. (God does not regard their deaths lightly). See also Psalm 72:13-14 and Isaiah 57:1-2.

16-17: O Lord, truly I am your servant. You loosed my bonds (no longer hemmed in by suffering). I will offer to You the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon God (See Hebrews 13:15; Ephesians 5:20).

18-19: (Verse 18 repeats verse 14). In the courts of the Lord’s house (where the Israelites assembled), in the midst of you, O Jerusalem, I will pay my vows. Praise the Lord!

**Psalm 117:** Soncino titles this Psalm: “Summons to all nations to praise God.” A further description: “The shortest of the Psalms is one of the grandest.”

1-2: Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, Laud Him (with an act of praise), all you peoples (Quoted in Romans 15:11). His kindness is great (has been mighty upon us), and the truth (and mercy) of the Lord endures forever (See Psalm 115:1). Praise the Lord! (Soncino: “A hallelujah writ large in two verses.”)

**Psalm 118:** Soncino titles this Psalm: “National Thanksgiving.”

1-4: Oh, give thanks to the Lord. Let Israel now say, “His mercy endures forever.” Let the house of Aaron say, “His mercy endures forever.” Let those who fear the Lord now say, “His mercy endures forever.” (Similar phraseology to Psalm 115:9-11—three different categories: Israel, house of Aaron, and those who fear God).

5-6: I called on the Lord in distress. He answered and set me in a broad place (See Psalm 18:17-19). The Lord is on my side. I will not fear—what can man do to me? (This phrase is quoted in Hebrews 13:6).

7-9: The Lord is for me among those who help me. Therefore I shall see my desire on those who hate me. It is better to trust in the Lord, than to put confidence in man, or in princes (See Psalm 146:3).

10-12: All nations surrounded me, but in the name of the Lord I will destroy them (as David said in 1 Samuel 17:45-47). They surrounded me like bees. They were quenched like a fire of thorns (their destruction is by fire, Psalm 106:18, but lasts only a short time). This is also a prophecy for the future: Isaiah 10:17-18; 33:10-12.

13-14: You (the nations) pushed me violently, that I might fall, but the Lord helped me. “The Lord is my strength and my song. He has become my salvation” (Quoted from Exodus 15:2). See also Isaiah 12:1-2.

15-16: The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tents of the righteous. The right hand of the Lord does valiantly. The right hand of the Lord is exalted (See Exodus 15:6).

17-18: I shall not die (or be annihilated), but live, and declare the works of the Lord. The Lord has chastened me severely, but He has not given me over to death (See Hebrews 12:5-6).

19-21: Open to me the gates of righteousness, for I will go through them, and will praise the Lord. There is a similar gate (narrow gate and door) through which the righteous will need to enter (See Matthew 7:13-14; John 10:9). I will praise You, for You have answered me and have become my salvation.

22-23: The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the Lord’s doing. It is marvelous in our eyes. This refers to Jesus Christ and is quoted in Matthew 21:42 and in 1 Peter 2:7.

24: This is the day (of national rejoicing and thanksgiving) that the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it. (My dad had a stunning picture of the sun and clouds hanging in our basement/workshop with this verse printed on it).

25: Save now (The Hebrew word in its contracted form is “hosha-na;” which appears in the name given to the seventh day of the Feast of Tabernacles—Hoshana Rabbah). I pray, O Lord. Send now prosperity.

26: Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. (This is quoted about Jesus when He came into Jerusalem in Mark 11:9-10, and will be stated again when Christ returns--see Luke 13:34-35).

27-29: God is the Lord, He has given us light. Bind the sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar (bringing an offering to the Lord). You are my God and I will praise and exalt You. Give thanks to the Lord for He is good, and His mercy endures forever. (The Psalm concludes with how it began).