

Psalm 117
Universal Praise to Yahweh

Introduction: The fifth book of the Psalms (107-150) focuses on the conquest of the future king in the line of David. This psalm is part of the smaller unit of Egyptian Hallelujahs (Ps. 113-118) to be recited at Passover. It is, of course, the shortest of the Psalms.

As Derek Kidner states: It is a tiny psalm with an enormous reach. Its message was still too big for some of Paul's readers to have grasped.

Martin Luther said this psalm is so short so that everyone could grasp its meaning.

1) Commands we must obey—117:1

- a) Large scale: ¹ *Praise* [*halelu*] *Yahweh* [*Yah*], *all nations* [*goyim*];
 - The Hebrew term *hallu-yah* appears 23x in Pss.: 104–106; 111–117; 135, and 146–150.
 - i) Those living outside the nation of Israel should praise Israel's God.
 - ii) The nations must reject the foolish and sinful notion that different people groups have a right to different faiths.
 - iii) Therefore, it is a sin to disobey this command and praise other gods and goddesses.
- b) Smaller scale: *Laud* [*shabah*] *Him*, *all peoples* (tribes?) [*ummim*]!
 - i) To "laud" someone is to make public commendations as to the excellence of someone.
 - ii) The original word behind "Laud" appears to be Aramaic, which would be the dominant language of the non-Jewish nations.
 - iii) These are the smaller units within a nation.
 - iv) All nations owed him praise before Christ came, and all nations owe him praise now. (James Hamilton)
- c) Quoted in Romans 15:11 as evidence of Jewish and Gentile followers of Messiah Jesus worshiping together. (MBC)
- d) This is clearly related to evangelism.
 - i) Steven Lawson says it this way: The loftiest motivation behind the believer's duty in evangelism should be for the promotion of the glory of God. The greatest incentive in missions around the world is that God might have more worshippers of his supreme majesty. This must be the chief force behind the fulfillment of the Great Commission. There must be more voices added to the hallelujah choir of those who worship God. Worship is the ultimate goal of global outreach.

2) Reasons we must obey—117:2ab

- These are two aspects of the same grace. Cf. Ps. 89:1
- a) His loyal love: ² *For His lovingkindness [hesed] prevails [gabar] over us,*
 - i) Refers to the stronger army in a battle. As Kidner says, it is a vigorous, formidable lovingkindness.
 - ii) This is a covenant word for God's relationship with His covenant people.
- b) His reliability: *And the truth (trustworthiness, faithfulness?) [emeth] of Yahweh is everlasting.*
 - i) In what He says (truth) and what He does (faithfulness).
 - ii) Kidner writes: God's plans and promises are as fresh and intact now as on the day they were made; and they will remain so.

3) The first invitation is restated—117:2c

- a) *Praise [halelu] Yah!*
 - i) Join the choir singing Hallelujah! You already know the words!

4) Things to remember:

- a) One God, one world, one joy. (Alec Motyer)
 - i) Or to rephrase Motyer: Their God is Our God.
- b) We see partial fulfillment of this in Rev. 7:9.
- c) Everyone everywhere must praise the LORD for his faithful covenant love to Israel. (Allan Ross)