

Part 1 – We Love Him Because He First Loved Us

Now we come to the *fourth* of the ‘Great Hallel’ Psalms (Psalms 113-118). In olden times, Psalms 113-114 were sung by the congregation at the *beginning* of the Passover celebration while Psalms 115-118 were sung by the congregation at the *end* of the Passover celebration. As Math 26:30 tells us, after Jesus Christ, and the disciples, partook of the *first* Holy Communion, they “*sung an hymn*” and then went out to the mount of Olives to pray, before Jesus was then arrested and, eventually crucified. Therefore, it was likely one of these precious “Great Hallel” (Great Praise) Psalms that they sung. The *Companion Bible* suggests it may have been Psalm 118, which prophesies of Jesus becoming the ‘head stone’ (capstone, 1 Pt 2:1-10) of the Temple (i.e. the King of kings). This means that, our Lord and Savior (Jesus Christ) *prepared Himself to endure the sufferings* He would soon experience *by singing* praise for the *enduring* loving-kindness of our Heavenly Father (YHVH)! So, these “Great Hallel” (Great Praise) Psalms should certainly be important for us today too (John 13:15, 1 Pt 2:21).

And let’s remember, in **Psalm 111** we saw the Lord (YHVH) praised for His wonderful (and righteous) ‘works’, while **Psalm 112** praised the Lord (YHVH) for His wonderful (and righteous) ‘ways’. These two Psalms were also ‘linked together’ through the perfect, and complete, Acrostics within them. And then, **Psalm 113** praised the Lord (YHVH) ‘*Himself*’, which means His honorable (and righteous) character *and* His great power (authority). For while our Heavenly Father is ‘high above all nations’, He *still* cares for His creation *so much* He humbles Himself to watch what goes on in heaven, *and* in earth. And He does so to help those who are oppressed. And, prophetically, Jesus Christ will raise the afflicted ones up to reign with Him *because* they were spiritually barren because they did not worship the *false* Christ (Satan).

And then, **Psalm 114** praised the Lord (YHVH) by speaking of some of the *mighty* works the Lord (YHVH) did when He delivered Israel from Egypt. And that’s why this Psalm also praised the Lord (YHVH) for His *great* power, and great *faithfulness* to free Israel *and* provide for them. Yet, this Psalm was also *prophetic* of how the Lord will *again* show His mighty works, during the ‘great tribulation’, for He will *also* free those who *remain* loyal to Him (spiritual Israel) *just as* He freed ‘Israel of old’ from bondage. And then **Psalm 115**, taught us the *vanity* (uselessness) of making, and worshiping, idols versus the *blessings* that come from *sincerely* worshiping (*and* obeying and trusting in) the *true* God, Yehovah (YHVH). And thus, it also taught us that we become like what (or who) we worship! Therefore, it’s to our benefit to *wholeheartedly* worship (fear, love, hear *and* obey) the one (and only) *true* (and Living) God, YHVH.

And now we come to **Psalm 116**, which has the subject/title “*Praise for Deliverance*”, so we could even consider this a ‘*thanksgiving* Psalm’. So, it will not only teach us how to *trust* in the Lord (YHVH) in time of troubles, temptations, and affliction, but also how to *praise* Him for His gracious deliverance. Special emphasis is also given to how we should *not* be ashamed to praise

the Lord (YHVH) *in front of others*, for truly, that's one of the ways we can truth with others! And, while this Psalm praises the Lord (YHVH) for *physical* deliverance, we should also remember to praise Him for the *spiritual* deliverance He gives us (via Jesus Christ) from our sins *and* the confusion of this world. For our Heavenly Father not only forgives us, when we earnestly repent and believe in Jesus Christ, but He *also* delivers us from confusion of this world through His Holy Spirit helping us to learn God's Word, which is the *only* truth there is (John 17:17). Additionally, this chapter (again) has neither any subtitle, nor subscription. So, we don't know *who* wrote it, nor even at *what point in time* it was written. But regardless, we know that *all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works* (2 Tim 3:16-4:1). So, this Psalm (as with the others) is *still* an *incredibly* instructive Psalm, which makes it well worth our studying it...

Psalm 116

1 I love the LORD, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications.

2 Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live.

So, the Psalmist begins by explaining *why* he's so committed to praising the '**Lord**' which is God's sacred (and covenantal) name **Yehovah** [<https://t.me/BibleStudyTruth/946>], and means (the) **self-Existent** or **Eternal** (#3068) because He is the *only* one who has *always* existed and *always* will (Rev 1:8, 4:9, 11:17, 16:5, 22:13). Now, the word '**love**' here means **to have affection for** (#157). And we certainly *should* have *deep* affection for our Heavenly Father, *more than* for anyone else! But there's more to *true* love than just the *feelings* of affection; for the Scriptures explain that, **if** we truly love the Lord (YHVH) **then** we **will** also *wholeheartedly* strive to **obey** Him (*from the heart*) (Deut 10:12-13, 11:1, John 14:15, 23, etc.). As Jesus said, in John 15:9-10, "*As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love*". And these Scriptures point out the critical fact that, we can only *truly* learn to love, by experiencing God's Love for us! As John so profoundly wrote...

*9 In this was **manifested the love of God toward us**, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.*

*10 **Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.***

11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

1 John 4:9-11

19 We love him, because he first loved us.

20 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

*21 And this commandment have we from him, That **he who loveth God love his brother also**.*
1 John 4:19-21

So again, to truly love God (or anyone else), we *must* understand that we cannot really learn to love *until* we experience God's love for us. And that love is *certainly* felt when the Holy Spirit *takes away* the guilt in our conscience (Heb 9:13-14, 10:2, 22) - *when* we believe in Jesus Christ, *and sincerely* repent for our sins (being committed to changing them) - which leaves us with an *amazing* peace inside our 'inner man'! And *that* fact - that God loved us *first* - is *what* then teaches us *how* to truly love others, as John pointed out. For while God's law does teach us how to love others *in action* (Lev 19:18, Rom 13:10), it is the Holy Spirit that teaches us how to love people *from the heart* by *getting rid of* the negative feelings (such as bitterness, anger and hate), which is what true forgiveness really is. In Mth 18:21-35 Jesus gave us a really good example (via a parable) of *why* it's so important we forgive others (from the heart); and it centers upon the fact that God forgives *us* when we *earnestly* repent, and are *firmly* committed to turn away from our sins (from the heart), i.e. not to go back to habitual sinning (sinning as a lifestyle). Therefore, *because* God forgives us so graciously, we *should* do the same to others. Yet, this doesn't mean we *must* verbally tell others we forgive them (especially if they *don't* ask for forgiveness); what it means is that, in our own heart and mind, we should forgive them so the negative feelings (anger, bitterness, hate, etc.) don't corrupt our inner man and *cause us* to sin (Heb 12:15).

Now, this does *not* mean we should be 'walking matts' for people, i.e. we shouldn't let others abuse us, or 'run over' us, for we do have the right to defend ourselves (Ec 22:22). And there are truly some very *evil* people in the world, who simply will not respect you (or stop harming you) *unless* you *stand up to them*. But our Heavenly Father doesn't want us to try and 'get back' at others, for that's taking vengeance into our hands - something which God is sternly *against*, for vengeance belongs to Him *alone* (Detu 32:35, Ps 94:1, Rom 12:18-21). So, as we continue to study God's Word, the Holy Spirit will not only teach us *how* to forgive others (from the heart), but also teach us *when* and *how* (or if) we should defend ourselves - such as in taking someone to court or even just verbally standing up for ourselves. But, the bottom line is that, we should strive to *live peaceably with all people* (Rom 12:18) and *overcome evil with good* (Rom 12:20-21; Mth 5:39-48), by obeying God's Laws the best we can, *from the heart*.

So again, to truly love God (or anyone else), we *must* first experience God's love for us. And that's the *very* reason the Psalmist said that he loved the Lord (YHVH), for He indeed heard (*with attention*, #8085) the Psalmist's '**voice and supplications**', which simply means his *earnest prayer* (#8469, fig of speech *Hendradys*, apx 6). And then, in verse 2, the Psalmist goes on to explain that, *because* the Lord (YHVH) 'inclined' His ear to the Psalmist (i.e. bent His ear to hear him, #5186), he promised to 'call upon' (call out to, #7121) the Lord (YHVH) 'as long as he lived' (i.e. all the rest of the days of his life, #3117). Again, this goes back to how we learn to love *by experiencing* our Heavenly Father's love *towards us*. And, the more love, mercy and

grace He gives us, it just *encourages* us to *continue* to call out to Him when we need help. And truly, that's also what helps our faith (and trust) in Him to grow! As we experience His love, mercy, grace and help – over and over again – our trust (and love) just *continues* to grow...

Psalms 116

3 The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow.

The Psalmist is now giving us an *example* of the Lord's (YHWH's) grace (and love) towards him. For, at one point (or more) in his life, he was having *great* troubles. And, the translation of this verse is a bit hard to understand, so let's look at the Hebrew for clarification. The word '**sorrows**' here can mean several things: **a rope** (as twisted), especially **a measuring line**; by implication, **a district or inheritance** (as measured); or **a noose** (as of cords); figuratively, **a company** (as if tied together); also **a throe** (especially of parturition); and it can also mean **ruin** (#2256). And the word '**death**' does mean **death** (natural or violent) but (concretely) can also mean **the dead** or **their place or state** (hades) and, figuratively, it can also mean **pestilence** or **ruin** (#4194). And the word '**compassed**' means **to surround** (#661). So, the 'sorrows of death' could also be rendered as **the 'noose' (cord) of death (ruin) compassed (surrounded) me**. In other words, he felt as though someone had (metaphorically) put a noose around his neck and was tightening it up! The *Companion Bible* also points out that the word 'sorrows' is a figure of speech (*Metonymy*, of cause, apx 6) which is when one name, or noun, is used instead of another, to which it stands in certain relation. So, the word 'sorrows' was likely used 'in leu of' *the pains* he was feeling from his troubles 'closing in' on him.

And that's why the Psalmist then goes on to say that "**the pains of hell gat hold upon me**". The word '**pains**' means **something tight** and can thus mean (figuratively) **trouble** (#4712). And the word '**hell**' means **Hades** or **the world of the dead** (as if a subterranean retreat), including its accessories and inmates (#7585). This word has also been rendered as a '**pit**', so the word 'hell' is likely being used here in a *very similar* way we do today. For people often say they 'went through hell', when speaking of a *very* troubling time they've gone through. One example is how soldiers say that 'war is hell' to explain the terrible things that happen during battles. And then the words '**gat hold**' mean **to come forth to**, i.e. **appear** or **exist**; and (transitively) it can also mean **to attain**, i.e. **find** or **acquire**; and (figuratively) it can also mean **to occur, meet or be present** (#4672). So, "**the pains of hell gat hold upon me**" could also be rendered as '**the troubles of hell found me**'. And lastly (in verse 3), the Psalmist says that **I found trouble and sorrow**. The word '**found**' is the same Hebrew word as 'gat hold' in this same verse (#4672), so **found** really is a good translation. And then the word '**trouble**' means **tightness** and (figuratively) **trouble** (#6869), so 'trouble' is another good translation here. Lastly, the word '**sorrows**' here means **affliction** (#3015). Thus, when the Psalmist said "I found trouble and sorrow", he was saying "**I found troubles and afflictions**".

So, when we put what we've learned together (in this verse 3) we see the Psalmist is saying that: ***the noose of ruin*** (even death) ***surrounded me, the troubles of hell found me and I found troubles and afflictions***. Said another way, the Psalmist was having *so many* troubles, and afflictions, he felt like he was 'going through hell' and *the pains* he was feeling from his troubles were 'closing in' on him (like a nose around his neck). Now, of course, we don't know *what* his troubles were because we don't know *when* this Psalm was written, nor even *who* wrote it. But, whatever his troubles were, they were clearly quite terrible - insomuch he even feared for his own life. But, what did he do? Thankfully, he tells us...

Psalm 116

4 Then called I upon the name of the LORD; O LORD, I beseech thee, deliver my soul.

When the Psalmist was having *so many* troubles, and afflictions, he felt like he was 'going through hell' and *the pains* he was feeling from his troubles were 'closing in' on him (like a nose around his neck) he turned to the only true source of deliverance there is, the Lord (YHVH)! And that is *why* he's praising the Lord (YHVH) in this Psalm, as the title of this chapter explains. Now, the word '**called**' here means ***to call out to*** (#7121) and the word '**Lord**' *both times* is still God's Sacred (and covenantal) name, ***Yehovah*** (#3068, i.e. YHVH). And the word '**beseech**' here actually means '***oh now!***' (#577) while the word '**deliver**' means (in the context of this verse) ***to rescue*** (#4422). And the word '**soul**' actually means ***a breathing creature*** (#5315) but is often used for our 'inner man' because your soul is your spiritual "self." And your soul has a spirit within it, which is your intellect. Thus, our soul is simply the 'embodiment of our spirit' (heart and mind, i.e. our will and intellect). And, while our spirit *does* reside in our flesh body, we actually have a *spiritual* body (which **is** our 'soul'). So, our 'soul' refers to our *spiritual* body that dwells within our flesh body. Thus, when our spirit departs our flesh body, and goes back to the heavenly dimension we came from (Ecc 12:6-7), our soul *automatically goes with it* because our spirit (heart and mind) *always* dwells in our soul (spiritual body), regardless if we're in a flesh body or have passed on back to the heavenly dimension (2 Cor 5). To learn more about these differences, check out this link [<https://t.me/BibleStudyTruth/1017>].

So, when the Psalmist was having *so many* troubles, and afflictions, he felt like he was 'going through hell' - and *the pains* he was feeling from his troubles were 'closing in' on him (like a nose around his neck) - he turned to the one (and only) true God (YHVH) can called out for Him to rescue him *now!* This shows the *dire* situation he was truly in, for he wouldn't have asked for the Lord (YHVH) to help him 'now' had it not been vitally serious for his very life (physically and/or spiritually). And, while it is good for us to want to live in the flesh (for as long as our Heavenly Father wants us too), we should always remember that the life of our 'inner man' (soul and spirit) is *far more* important than our flesh body. As Jesus told us, "*fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul*

and body in hell” (Matt 10:28). So, because flesh people can only kill our flesh body (but not our spiritual body, i.e. our soul) we *should* fear Him *far above* anyone else! That’s why we should strive hard *not* to sin (Prov 16:6). But, we should also remember that, when we serve our Heavenly Father (Jesus Christ), He will indeed help us when we *earnestly* call out to Him for help (as this Psalmist did). And that’s because we are *His* servants! So, He’ll make sure we’re able to stay on earth, *to serve Him*, for as long as it’s *within His will* that we do so. And, when it’s ‘our time to die’, *we shouldn’t fear it*; for we know when our flesh body dies our soul (and spirit) goes back to our Heavenly Father in the ‘heavenly’ (i.e. spiritual) dimension (Ecc 12:6-7; 2 Cor 5), as the parable of Lazarus (Lev 16) also explains.

Further, another Psalm gives us important details as to who the Lord helps, and why. For in Ps 145:18-20 we’re told that: “*The LORD is **nigh** unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth. He will fulfil the desire **of them that fear him**: he also will hear their cry, and **will save them**. The LORD preserveth all them that love him: but all the wicked will he destroy”.* So, there is a stipulation to the Lord (YHVVH) helping us (no matter how dire the situation, physical or spiritual). And that is we *must* call upon Him ‘in truth’, which means we must be earnestly seeking Him – not playing games. As Prov 1:22-33 explains, if we have long refused to hear the Lord’s call for us to repent, and turn away from our sinful ways, *He won’t answer* our calls for help, even though He hears us (Prov 1:24, 28). So, even if we’ve previously been rebellious towards Him, we can still call upon Him. But we *must* be sincere about changing from our sinful ways (from the heart), *and* serving the Lord (YHVVH), when we call upon Him - which this Psalmist most certainly was!

Moreover, it was *because* the Lord (YHVVH) helped the Psalmist (when he was in the most terrible distresses), that he learned to love the Lord (YHVVH) so very deeply. And that means the Psalmist must have also truly repented for his sins. For, as Jesus taught us in Luke 7:40-47, we who have *sincerely* repented for our sins *cannot help but* to love the Lord (YHVVH) *fervently*; for when our many sins are forgiven, that *naturally* generations *more* love for our Heavenly Father. Again, that’s why John wrote that *we love Him because He first loved us* (1 John 4:19). But those who *think they don’t sin* (self-righteous hypocrites they are, Mth 23) they simply *won’t* have any fervent love for our Heavenly Father. In fact, they may not even appreciate the great price Jesus Christ paid, on the cross, for us! Therefore, praising our Heavenly Father for His great ‘deliverance’ isn’t *just* about praising Him for saving us *when we have troubles*; it’s also about how He *saves us from our sins*. And in doing so, He also saves us from the one who has *power over death* [<https://t.me/BibleStudyTruth/2799>] (Heb 2:14), i.e. the one who deceives us into sinning *willfully* against our Heavenly Father, who is Satan himself! And that’s yet *another* reason to praise the Lord (YHVVH) for the great (and many) ways He ‘saves us’...

*9 And this I pray, that **your love may abound yet more and more** in knowledge and in all judgment;*

*10 That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may **be sincere** and **without offence** till the day of Christ;*

*11 Being filled with **the fruits of righteousness**, which are by Jesus Christ, unto **the glory and praise of God**.*

Phil 1:9-11

O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.

Ps 118:1 & 136:1

We'll pick this up in part 2...

AMEN.