

540 Praise ye the LORD

The first few verses of Psalm 105 provide a joyful “Jobs List” for the Lord’s covenant people, the children of Israel: “O give thanks unto the LORD; call upon his name; make known his deeds ... Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him; talk ye of all his wondrous works. Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the LORD. Seek the LORD, and his strength: seek his face evermore. Remember his marvellous works that he hath done ... his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth ... O ye seed of Abraham his servant, ye children of Jacob the chosen. He is the LORD our God: his judgments are in all the earth” (from Psalm 105.1-7, KJV).

The psalm then continues with a wonderful roll-call of remembrance covering the Lord’s gracious dealings with His chosen people. In the first seven verses of the psalm we have those four mentions of “the LORD” (see above, in the Hebrew, “Yahweh” or “Jehovah”, meaning “Self-existent” or “eternal”). Then from verses 8 to 45 we read of the Lord’s constant, faithful involvement with His people, culminating in the final triumphal mention of His Lordship again, “Praise ye the LORD” (v.45b).

How much there is for us to learn about the Lord from these verses of remembrance! For a start we see that the remembering is two-way, for He Himself remembers His people and His covenant with them (Psalm 105.8,42), and this covenant “he commanded to a thousand generations” (v.8b). Such references expose the fallacy of a long-held view in parts of the Church known as “Replacement Theology”. This view assumes firstly that the Lord God has finally given up on the Jews for their rejection of His Son, their Messiah, and secondly, that therefore all the scriptural promises He has made to the Jews now apply to the Church instead. Were this view to be correct, it would mean that God breaks His promises, meaning in turn that no-one could actually trust any promise He has ever made on any subject! But, praise God, of course He keeps His promises: truly and confidently we can say, “I will trust and not be afraid” (from Isaiah 12.2)

Concerning the Lord’s ongoing love for the Jews, how else can be explained, firstly, the Jews’ miraculous emergence as an independent nation in May 1948, (though still largely in unbelief regarding their Messiah, see Romans Chapter 11), after nigh on two thousand years of rejection and stateless wandering? Secondly is their miraculous 75-year survival against repeated efforts by hostile neighbours to “drive them into

the sea”? - (a frequent boast of the present Iranian regime). Thanks be to God, the words of Psalm 105.11-15 still stand tall.

Then, in vv.16-22, we read of the Lord’s forward planning. “He called for a famine ...” (v.16a) – as a punishment, and as a reminder of His existence and of His authority over the affairs of sinful humanity. We do well to regard the many such “natural disasters” of our own day as being either allowed by the Lord or directly sent by Him: for surely He is still speaking today to the human race with His warnings and call to repentance. Crucially in Psalm 105, the Lord in His planning then “sent a man before them ...” (v.17a) – Joseph, being such a clear “type” pointing forward unknowingly to the “Antitype”, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. For Jesus too came here as a Servant (eg., Isaiah 52.13ff); He too was “sold” and betrayed by one of His own (eg., Matthew 26.14-16); He too was hurt with “fetters and iron” (eg., Luke 22.52-54;23.33 / John 19.34).

Then, gloriously, Jesus too was “loosed”, and allowed to “go free”, from death and the grave! He too, as “lord of his (His Father’s) house” (Psalm 105.20-21), ascended back into glory and is seated at the right hand of His Father in heaven, where, as our great High Priest, He intercedes for us. So too does the Holy Spirit, whose outpouring we remember at Pentecost, intercede for us, as “the Comforter ... the Spirit of truth”, who testifies to us of Jesus, (egs., Hebrews 4.14-16; 7.24-25 / Revelation 5.1-14 / Romans 8.26-34 / John 15.26 / Acts 2.1-4).

Psalm 105 continues with the Lord’s faithful dealings with His people in Egypt, in the Exodus, in the wilderness years, and then into “the lands of the heathen” (vv.43-45a). Throughout, truly, the Lord “remembered his holy promise, [and] Abraham his servant” (v.42), whose belief in the Lord and His promises was so crucially “counted to him as righteousness” (egs., Genesis 15.1-6 / James 2.23).

As members of the new covenant of grace, wrought by God the Father through the sacrifice of Jesus His Son, in the power of Holy Spirit; and in our own remembrances of God’s faithfulness to His Church and to ourselves in times past, present and yet to come – may we too join heartily in the simple, closing words of Psalm 105, “Praise ye the LORD”!

© May 2023 Faithful Sheep Ministries – www.fsmins.org