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Psalm 114

(2019)

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Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Psalm 114.

Topics.

- Israel went out from Egypt, from a people of strange language.
- Judah became God's sanctuary, Israel His dominion.
- The sea fled and the Jordan turned back.
- The mountains skipped like rams, the hills like lambs.
- Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the LORD and of the God of Jacob.

FOR INFORMATION: concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

INTRODUCTION

Psalms are songs and prayers offered to God by the nation Israel, they cover the range of human emotion, expressing praise, faith, victory, sorrow, despair, depression, frustration and the troubled heart of a mourner. They contrast the righteous with the wicked, and include the wisdom and the treasure of God's word. Psalms were written at the beginning of the 15th century BC and probably collected in their final form in the 3rd century.

BOOK FIVE (PSALM 107-150)

1

PSALM 114:1

Israel went out from Egypt, from a people of strange language.

- **Psalm 114:1:** When Israel went out from Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language.

This Psalm shines a brilliant spotlight upon the truth that God controls His creation. The Psalm covers Moses leading the Hebrew people out from their four hundred and thirty years of slavery in Egypt (called the house of bondage) through the Red Sea, into the wilderness, across the River Jordan and into the Promised Land. The people of a strange language refer to the Egyptians. The Hebrew people that were in bondage to the Egyptians and who God delivered from their bondage and slavery became known as Israel.

The house of Jacob: refers to the twelve sons of Jacob and their offspring who became known as the twelve tribes of Israel.

PSALM 114:2

Judah became God's Sanctuary, Israel His Dominion.

- **Psalm 114:2:** Judah became his sanctuary, Israel his dominion.

The idea here is that the congregation of the house of Judah was united to God's holiness and Israel to God's power. Near the end of King Solomon's reign, the united nation of Israel split into the following two nations:

1. Judah consisting of the two tribes who remained in the land of Judah and the city of Jerusalem; they are known as the Southern Kingdom and the faithful Kingdom because they remained faithful to the Levitical priesthood and in bringing sacrifices to the temple of God in the city of Jerusalem. In Psalms it is written, "The LORD loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwelling places of Jacob." (Psalm 87:2). The dwelling places of Jacob refers to the ten tribes of Israel that broke away from the twelve united tribes leaving two (called the Southern Kingdom) in the land of Judah and at Jerusalem and ten in the land of Samaria (called the Northern Kingdom). God is saying that He loves Jerusalem and the land of Judah more than the ten tribes of Israel and the land they are dwelling in. This was because Jerusalem was God's chosen place of worship and sacrifice it was here the temple stood and the Levitical priesthood were established to serve the people before God.
2. Israel consisting of the remaining ten tribes dwelling in the land of Samaria; they are known as the Northern Kingdom. They are spoken of as being the LORD'S dominion because they were the larger and more powerful Kingdom, but they set up a golden calf in the land of Bethel and one in the land of Dan to be worship centres for the ten tribes (2 Kings 10:29) (2 Chron. 13:8). Bethel and Dan were at opposite ends of the land of Samaria. Jeroboam's original motivation for establishing these worship and sacrifice centres was so that the people from the ten tribes would have no need to go up to Jerusalem at the appointed feast times since they could go to one of these two centres. Jeroboam feared if those with him did the right thing and went to Jerusalem at the appointed times they may return to the land of Judah. These two worship centres were of course totally opposed to the will of God. This is the reason the LORD says, "He loves Zion more than all the dwelling places of Jacob (symbolising the ten tribes of Israel). The two golden calves Jeroboam made in the land of Samaria became a permanent stumbling block for the children of the, Northern Kingdom of Israel.

Judah was his sanctuary: meaning God's home; His abode; His sacred dwelling-place this is because within the land of Judah was the city of Jerusalem which God put His name upon. The following verses show how much God valued Jerusalem. There is no other city on earth that God has said:

- I have heard your prayer (Solomon) and your plea, which you have made before me. I have consecrated this house that you have built, by putting my name there forever. My eyes and my heart will be there for all time. (1 Kings 9:3).
- Manasseh built altars in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD had said, "In Jerusalem will I put my name." (2 Kings 21:4).
- I (the LORD) have chosen and consecrated this house that my name may be there forever. My eyes and my heart will be there for all time. (2 Chron. 7:16).

The Temple of God was in Jerusalem (called the Holy city of God) and was the only place ordained by God for sacrifices and worship. Judah remained faithful to God's ordained place of worship and for this reason was recognised by God and all future generations as the chief and leading tribe of all the tribes of Israel in which the kingdom was to be seated. It was from this tribe that the Messiah, the Christ, the Son of God and Saviour of the world came:

- The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples. ¹¹Binding his foal to the vine and his donkey's colt to the choice vine, he has washed his garments in wine and his vesture in the blood of grapes. ¹²His eyes are darker than wine, and his teeth whiter than milk. (Gen. 49:10-12).

Jesus said, Jerusalem is the city of the great King (Matt. 5:34-35) and Zechariah prophesied that Jerusalem's King will come on a donkey and unite Judah and Israel and speak peace to the nations (Gentiles) and his rule will be to the ends of the earth (Zech. 9:9-10), but prior to the latter

half of this verse a time will come when the inhabitants of Jerusalem are surrounded by their enemies and look to the Lord for their strength. The Lord will protect them and destroy all nations that come against Jerusalem, then the inhabitants Jerusalem will look on him whom they have pierced and mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn and Jerusalem will again be inhabited in its place. The inhabitants of Jerusalem will become victorious over all people in the Middle East (Zechariah 12:5-11). Jesus will end all forms of war and speak peace to the nations (Zech. 9:9-10) and his rule will be to the ends of the earth (Zech. 9:9-10). Then the kings of the nations will bring their glory into the glorious and majestic New City of Jerusalem (Rev. 21:24) (Rev. 21:10)

Israel was his Dominion: though the ten tribes were not looked upon as being as faithful as Judah was, they were the far larger of the two and because of this they had far greater power over the surrounding nations.

Judah God's sanctuary and Israel God's dominion: over time the name Judah evolved to the name Jews which means all the tribes of Israel are now embraced in the names of Judah and Israel and in the name Jews which today embraces the whole body of the people of Israel. The expression, "Judah was God's sanctuary and Israel His dominion," does not mean that all the tribes of Israel were internally holy or righteous, there were many that came out of Egypt that were extremely unholy, rebellious, and disobedient, and whose carcasses fell in the wilderness. The expression carries the idea that they were externally holy in the sense that when they were brought out of Egypt they were separated from all other people, and in this sense sanctified, and became a holy and special nation selected by the LORD to be His chosen people with whom, He made a covenant and to whom He gave holy laws and righteous statutes. The following verses show that the United Kingdom of Israel has always been God's special and unique nation unlike any other nation. God said:

- Israel was his son who he called out of Egypt and he loved them when they were a child (Hosea 11:1).
- He gave birth to Israel and carried them from the womb even to their old age. (Isaiah 46:3-4).
- Israel is his allotted heritage (Deut. 32:9) and the apple of his eye (Deut. 32:10).
- Israel is a people holy to him (Deut. 7:6) and his treasured possession (Deut. 14:2).

The LORD has not spoken this way with any other nation, but God has not only spoken of Israel differently, but always dealt with them differently to any other nation:

- To Israel God gave the Ten Commandments and showed his great power. (Exodus 20:1-17).
- To Israel God declared his word, statutes and his rules. (Rom. 9:4)
- To Israel God gave the prophets, the worship and the promises. (Romans 3:4)
- To Israel belonged the covenant, the adoption, the patriarchs and the glory. (Rom. 3:5)
- To Israel the oracles of God were entrusted. (Rom. 3:2)
- The people of Israel are the offspring of Abraham the father of faith. (Romans 9:7)
- From Israel's race came the Christ the Saviour of the world. (Rom. 9:5)

Added to these God said:

- Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine (Exod. 19:5).

- The LORD has declared today that you are a people for his treasured possession, as he has promised you, and that you are to keep all his commandments (Deut. 26:18).

The Psalmist wrote:

- God declared his word to Jacob, his statutes and rules to Israel. He has not dealt thus with any other nation; they do not know his rules. Praise the LORD! (Psalm 147:19-20).

The LORD has not given any other nations such great privileges. These are the many reasons the Jews (especially the religious leaders of Jesus generation) considered themselves to be the holy race with God and the Gentile nations to be the unclean race without God.

The thermometer of God's prophecy: it is true that Israel has been and still is a special nation to God, but since Christ death and resurrection salvation for both Jews and Gentiles is in the Lord Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, Israel remains a clear sign of where we are in prophecy concerning Christ's return. It could be said that they are the thermometer of God's prophecy much like the mercury on a natural thermometer measures the heat of the day and moves up the vertical red line warning us of impending danger when the heat of the sun is reaching temperatures that are dangerous for the good health of the skin and our well-being. Likewise Israel can be seen as the mercury of Bible prophecy in the sense that world events that come upon the nation of Israel (especially Jerusalem) are signs that give us some insight as to how close we are to that glorious breathtaking and world changing day when the Lord Jesus Christ returns in glory. But God's focus during our present age for eternal salvation is upon creating a new nation in Christ made up of Jews and Gentiles. This new nation is also called a new creation in Christ, the body of Christ, the Bride of Christ, the church and the Kingdom of God.

PSALM 114:3

4

The Sea Fled and the Jordan turned Back.

- **Psalm 114:3:** The sea looked and fled; Jordan turned back.

The expression, "the sea looked and fled," clearly refers to the awesome and miraculous parting of the Red Sea to allow the Hebrew people to flee the fierce armies of Egypt. The expression, "the Jordan turned back," refers to that period of time in Israel's history when the forty years of wilderness wanderings ended and the rebellious generation had died off and the new generation were standing at the River Jordan and God parted the waters of the river as He did the Red Sea so that the new generation that grew during the wilderness wanderings could cross the River and enter the Promise Land under the leadership of Joshua.

PSALM 114:4

The Mountains Skipped like Rams, the Hills like Lambs.

- **Psalm 114:4:** The mountains skipped like rams, the hills like lambs.

Skipped comes from the Hebrew word (*raqad*) and means to *spring* about it carries the idea of dancing, jumping, skipping and wildly leaping (generally for joy), but in verse seven it is written, "Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord," which shows that the word skipped in this context is not symbolising skipping for joy, but the power of God to shake the earth which means it could embrace the following four things:

- 1 To the trembling and quaking, the thunders and lightning's of Horeb and Sinai, (two tops of one mountain), and other surrounding hills and mountains peaks when the Omnipotent God descended from heaven and came down to the mountain to deliver the law.

- On the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud on the mountain and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people in the camp trembled. ¹⁷Then Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they took their stand at the foot of the mountain. ¹⁸Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke because the LORD had descended on it in fire. The smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain trembled greatly. (Exodus 19:16-18).
- 2 To the people of Israel trembling as they stood at the foot of the mountain watching the spectacular and awesome quaking and trembling of the mountain and the thunders and lightening's.
- Now when all the people saw the thunder and the flashes of lightning and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking, the people were afraid and trembled, and they stood far off. (Exodus 20:18).

3 David's great victories and triumphs in battle:

- In my (David's) distress I called upon the LORD; to my God I cried for help. From his temple he heard my voice, and my cry to him reached his ears. ⁷Then the earth reeled and rocked; the foundations also of the mountains trembled and quaked, because he was angry. (Psalm 18:6-7).

The mountains in this context refer to David's enemies, the Psalm pictures God riding swiftly on a cherub on the wings of the wind with devouring fire from his mouth destroying those who hate David. It is a picture of God equipping David with strength for the battle and rewarding and exalting him above those who hate him.

4 The people of Israel and Judah.

- He stood and measured the earth; he looked and shook the nations; then the eternal mountains were scattered; the everlasting hills sank low. His were the everlasting ways. (Habakkuk 3:6).

Here the eternal mountains were scattered refers to Israel being invaded by Assyria and the everlasting hills sank low refers to Judah being judged and punished by Babylon and taken into captivity for seventy years.

PSALM 114:5-8

Tremble, O Earth, at the Lord's Presence and of the God of Jacob.

- **Psalm 114:5-8:** What ails you, O sea, that you flee? O Jordan, that you turn back? ⁶O mountains, that you skip like rams? O hills, like lambs? ⁷Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob, ⁸who turns the rock into a pool of water, the flint into a spring of water.

This is a picture of creation fearing and trembling at the presence of the LORD of all glory, the waters of the Red Sea and the Jordan River fled at the power of God Mount Sinai and the surrounding mountains trembled and quaked, fierce and powerful enemies of God's people were destroyed, solid rock in deserts of the wilderness brought forth rivers of water at God's command.

NOTICE: the writer of this Psalm asks the question what causes the sea, the Jordan River and the mountains to tremble and be moved so easily? So easily he likens it to rams and lambs skipping. Then he answers his own question saying, "It is the power of God's presence. This shines a brilliant spotlight upon the truth that God's controls all creation, which means He controls the horror and terror of natural disasters such as earthquakes, volcano's, violent storms and tsunamis etc. Certainly there are natural laws that control our climate and conditions on earth, but God created these laws and set them in place, which means He at any given time has the power to supersede them as He did with the ten plagues of

Egypt the Red Sea and River Jordan parting, the river flowing from a rock in the wilderness and of course the many other miracles spoken of in Scripture that defy the laws of nature that govern us. This knowledge should humble mankind and turn the human population from their pride, so that they fall to their knees and confess that they are but dust and a breath of wind before the awesome God who by creating Adam from dust gave birth to them. Sadly, they not only continue to embrace a doctrine of evolution that denies the very existence of their own creator, but also live in a manner that is contrary to God's holiness and character.

The Bible definition of a fool: the Bible calls those who consciously proclaim in their heart, there is no God, fools, furthermore the Scriptures say, because they have turned from the LORD and do not seek after Him, He has rejected them (Psalm 53). There is no sea so deep, no river so broad, that when God's time is come it cannot be divided and driven back. At the presence of the LORD, not only mountains, but the earth itself may well tremble, since it lays under a curse because of man's sin. While the people of Israel obeyed the covenant of the LORD they were protected, and provided for by miracles; such as the life-giving river that flowed out from the rock in the midst of the wilderness and that rock symbolised Christ.

- All drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ. (1 Cor. 10:4).

The Son of God, the King and Saviour surrendered his life to a brutal, bloody and cruel death so that a spiritual river of life would wash away the sins of all who come to him and deliver them from the fear of judgment and from any doubt that God would withhold his love, grace and favour from them. In contrast to this those who deliberately and consciously deny the Son of God, the King and Saviour of the world have every cause to fear before the just and Holy Judge.

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.
