

Israel's Hymnal  
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## PSALM ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEEN/ ONE HUNDRED EIGHTEEN

### Part 1

[Pss 117:1] O praise Jehovah, all ye nations; Laud him, all ye peoples.

[Pss 117:2] For his lovingkindness is great toward us; And the truth of Jehovah (endureth) for ever.  
 Praise ye Jehovah.

[Pss 118:1] Oh give thanks unto Jehovah; for he is good; For his lovingkindness (endureth) for ever.

[Pss 118:2] Let Israel now say, That his lovingkindness (endureth) for ever.

[Pss 118:3] Let the house of Aaron now say, That his lovingkindness (endureth) for ever.

[Pss 118:4] Let them now that fear Jehovah say, That his lovingkindness (endureth) for ever.

[Pss 118:5] Out of my distress I called upon Jehovah: Jehovah answered me (and set me) in a large place.

[Pss 118:6] Jehovah is on my side; I will not fear: What can man do unto me?

[Pss 118:7] Jehovah is on my side among them that help me: Therefore shall I see (my desire) upon them  
 that hate me.

[Pss 118:8] It is better to take refuge in Jehovah Than to put confidence in man.

[Pss 118:9] It is better to take refuge in Jehovah Than to put confidence in princes.

[Pss 118:10] All nations compassed me about: In the name of Jehovah I will cut them off.

[Pss 118:11] They compassed me about; yea, they compassed me about: In the name of Jehovah I will  
 cut them off.

[Pss 118:12] They compassed me about like bees; They are quenched as the fire of thorns: In the name  
 of Jehovah I will cut them off.

[Pss 118:13] Thou didst thrust sore at me that I might fall; But Jehovah helped me.

[Pss 118:14] Jehovah is my strength and song; And he is become my salvation.

[Pss 118:15] The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tents of the righteous: The right hand of  
 Jehovah doeth valiantly.

[Pss 118:16] The right hand of Jehovah is exalted: The right hand of Jehovah doeth valiantly.

[Pss 118:17] I shall not die, but live, And declare the works of Jehovah.

[Pss 118:18] Jehovah hath chastened me sore; But he hath not given me over unto death.

[Pss 118:19] Open to me the gates of righteousness: I will enter into them, I will give thanks unto  
 Jehovah.

[Pss 118:20] This is the gate of Jehovah; The righteous shall enter into it.

[Pss 118:21] I will give thanks unto thee; for thou hast answered me, And art become my salvation.

[Pss 118:22] The stone which the builders rejected Is become the head of the corner.

[Pss 118:23] This is Jehovah's doing; It is marvelous in our eyes.

[Pss 118:24] This is the day which Jehovah hath made; We will rejoice and be glad in it.

[Pss 118:25] Save now, we beseech thee, O Jehovah: O Jehovah, we beseech thee, send now prosperity.

[Pss 118:26] Blessed be he that cometh in the name of Jehovah: We have blessed you out of the house  
 of Jehovah.

[Pss 118:27] Jehovah is God, and he hath given us light: Bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar.

[Pss 118:28] Thou art my God, and I will give thanks unto thee: Thou art my God, I will exalt thee.

[Pss 118:29] Oh give thanks unto Jehovah; for he is good; For his lovingkindness (*endureth*) for ever.

#### ISRAEL'S RETURN TO GOD DRAMATIZED

"Oh praise Jehovah, all ye nations;  
Laud him, all ye peoples.  
For his loving kindness is great toward us;  
And the truth of Jehovah *endureth* forever.  
Praise ye Jehovah. (Ps. 117:1-2).

As I have repeatedly stated, the Psalms are the poetical version of the Prophets. No one can understand a poem, no matter how beautiful and how excellently it may have been written, unless he is acquainted with the occasion of its being written. When he understands the circumstances which gave birth to such a composition, he can feel the heart throb of the writer as he expresses himself in verse.

The Psalms fall into different categories. They must therefore be studied in order to determine their true nature. For instance, there are certain psalms which are individual, whereas others are national in their outlook. The recognition of this distinction is imperative to the proper understanding of any psalm. Psalm 1, for instance, is individual and may be appropriated to anyone, Jew or Gentile, who complies with the conditions laid down in it. Again, Psalm 23 is individual in its nature and may be claimed by anyone who sustains the relationship to God that David did. Once more, Psalm 24 is individual in the first six verses. The question is asked, "Who shall ascend unto the hill of Jehovah? And who shall stand in his holy place?" The answer is, any individual who complies with the conditions laid down. But in verses 7-10 the outlook is national and applies to Israel, for it is a call to the nation of Israel to welcome the return of her Messiah. Psalm 37, for instance, is a national hymn and applies to Israel alone. A study of the entire composition reveals this fact: This psalm is grounded upon Leviticus 26, which was spoken to Israel only. Not going any further into this phase of our subject, I shall say that most of the psalms are national in their outlook, applying to Israel alone and not yielding themselves to the individual. For instance, Psalm 46 is of this nature. In this psalm the nation of Israel is speaking to the Gentile world. The same thing is true with reference to Psalm 67 and to many others.

Some of the psalms are historical, and others are prophetic. In the former class are included all those that deal purely with or celebrate some historical occurrence in the history of the nation or of an individual of the race. Psalm 78 is purely historical. Psalm 105 and 106 likewise are historical compositions relating to outstanding events in the history of the nation. Psalm 73, on the other hand, is individual and historic; for in it the inspired writer recounts his experiences. On the other hand, many of the psalms are purely prophetic; in fact, the greater portion of them sing of the glories that await Israel in the future.

Most of the psalms are put in simple narrative form to be sung or read by an individual; but others are antiphonal and are to be sung responsively by a soloist and the choir, or by one group to another, each responding to the other.

Some are literal and others are symbolic. We are to consider a psalm as literal unless there are clear indications pointing to a figurative or symbolic character. Some few are dramatic and symbolic. For example, Psalms 117 and 118 are of this nature—especially 118. Psalm 117 is but an introduction to Psalm 118. The latter is a pageant setting forth in a dramatic manner the return of Israel to her God at the end of the Tribulation. Unless one understands this fact, this poem is but a jumble of words.

As we shall presently see, Psalm 117 sets forth the evangelistic campaign which will be conducted by the saved remnant of Israel after it has been overcome by the grace of God and has recognized Him who is the way, the truth, and the life. Psalm 117 stands in relation to 118 in a manner similar to the way in which the headlines of a well-written article do to the article itself. The headlines express the gist of the article and focus attention on the outcome of the event concerning which it is written. Thus Psalm 117 gives the outcome of the journey over which the remnant of Israel travels in its return to God in the end time.

Psalm 118:1-4 gives the prediction of the evangelization of the entire nation of Israel with its proselytes. In verses 5-20 the personal pronoun *I* figures very largely. An examination of this portion of the poem shows that this *I* refers to each individual constituting the nation of Israel of that time. This is seen very clearly in verse 10-12 where the sentiment is expressed that all nations compass *me* about. Nations cannot literally compass an individual. This type of expression should not seem strange to us, when we remember that in our hymns appear the personal pronouns, *I*, *me*, and *my* very often, and that the entire congregation sings the hymn in unison. The *I* therefore refers, not only to the individual, but to the entire group singing it. Thus it is with this passage; each individual in Israel at the time here foreseen will join in and express the sentiment of this composition. That Israel at the time of the returning to God in the end time will be encompassed by the nations of the earth is clearly set forth in various portions of the prophetic word.

Another reason pointing to the fact that this psalm is symbolic in character is, as Delizsch intimates, that it was composed in celebration of the Feast of Passover in the seventh month of the first year of the return of the exiles from Babylon (Ezra 3:1-4); or at the laying of the foundation stone of the Temple in the second month of the second year of the return (Ezra 3:8f); or at the dedication of the completed Temple in the sixth year of the reign of Darius (Ezra 6:15f). The leading conservative scholars see in this composition echoes of the events of one of these national occasions. The late David Baron, a master in Hebrew exposition, favored the symbolic interpretation. So does Perowne. Rotherham confirms the same interpretation in the following words:

"It is obviously a *processional* psalm, and in the highest degree dramatic. The general course of it is clear; and the sound of several voices can be plainly heard, though precisely *who* speaks in the several divisions of the psalm is, naturally, to some extent, a matter of conjecture. Our headlines will therefore be accepted as exegetical suggestions, rather than as authoritative determinations—which, in no case, could they pretend to be."

When a person notes that there is progress represented in verses 15-20, he will see that the entire situation in the psalm presents a processional. The nation is represented as being in distress and marching up to the Holy City. Finally, the procession reaches the temple gate and calls upon the authorities to open

it in order that pilgrims might enter. The response is given in verse 20 where the newly-arrived worshipers are told to enter the gate of Jehovah. From verse 21 to the end we observe the temple services and ritual as it is being enacted. Thus throughout the entire psalm there is set forth the thought of worshipers who journey to the national shrine, the Temple of Jehovah, and engage in worship which is accepted by the great God of the universe.

According to Franz Delitzsch, one of the greatest commentators on the Old Testament, at the Passover the pilgrims who journeyed to Jerusalem would sing the first nineteen verses of this psalm as they approached the temple area. They sang verse 19 upon their arrival. The temple choir responded from within, pointing them to the gate through which they should enter. This they did and engaged in the ritualistic worship. There are indications in the writings of the ancient rabbis that this psalm was thus used by the Jews in their worship, especially at the time of the Passover. According to David Baron and other Hebrew scholars Psalm 118 was the song which Jesus and His disciples sang at the conclusion of the last Passover Supper. It is the last of the Hallel Psalms.

Every year at the Passover the various bands of devout worshipers journeyed to Jerusalem. They would sing this hymn, as suggested above, and would enter into the temple area with their sacrifices to offer them. In the ritual in which they engaged appears a marvelous prediction concerning Israel's accepting her Messiah whom her leaders upon His first coming rejected: "The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner." These facts are sufficient to indicate that the psalm is symbolic, and that it was a processional and a dramatic representation of Israel's eventual return to her God and her Messiah whom she rejected. Thus, as she employed this hymn in her ritual yearly, she was setting forth symbolically the greatest event in all her history. The meaning of the passage will become more apparent as we go forward in the exposition of each detail.

Someone has said that, if he should be allowed to write the songs and the music used by a nation, he would control the life of the people. Song and music do effect people greatly. The Lord knew the power of song. He therefore enshrined Israel's theology in the Book of Psalms, which he was to use in her services in order to teach the truth to the people. The value and power of singing are set forth in the New Testament. For instance, Paul in the following passage exhorted the Ephesians to edify and strengthen each other with spiritual song: "And be not drunken with wine, wherein is riot, but be filled with the Spirit; speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father subjecting yourselves to one another in the fear of Christ" (Eph. 5:18-21). With these introductory observations we are now prepared to study more minutely these two psalms, spiritual masterpieces.

#### I. A vision of Israel's future position in the world (Ps. 117)

We hear converted Israel calling to the nations in their great evangelistic campaign saying, "Oh praise Jehovah, all ye nations; Laud him, all ye peoples" (Ps. 117:1). There are certain teachings lying behind this psalm which must be understood in order that one might be able to comprehend fully the message of this prophetic utterance—the shortest chapter of the Bible. In the light of these great and fundamental truths this hymn will be seen to set forth one of the greatest facts in history—the conversion of Israel and her leading the residue of men to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

### A. Israel created for God's glory and appointed the channel of world blessing

"Now Jehovah said unto Abraham, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will show thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great: and be thou a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee I will curse: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:1-3).

According to this passage God entered into a sevenfold covenant with Abraham. He promised to bless him and threatened to curse the one who mistreats him or his seed. He also promised to bless all who do good to the Hebrew people. The special reason for this is the fact that the Jew has been created to become the channel of world blessing— "... and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 22:18).

When Abraham and Sarah were past the age of parenthood, the Lord performed a biological miracle upon their bodies which made possible the birth of Isaac. Isaiah, in referring to this fact, spoke of it as an act of creation: "But now thus saith Jehovah that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel: Fear not, for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine" (Isa. 43:1). In verse 21 of the same chapter Isaiah thinks of the Hebrew race as "the people which I (Jehovah) formed for myself that they might set forth my praise."

The Lord has a plan which runs through the centuries and unfolds throughout all eternity of the future. He placed the Hebrew people in the center of this plan of the centuries and related all the nations of the earth to them, to whom He gave the land of Palestine—the center of the earth (Ezek. 38:12). That He did thus relate all nations to Israel is evident from Deuteronomy 32:8,9: "When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, When he separated the children of men, He set the bounds of the peoples According to the number of the children of Israel. For Jehovah's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance." Thus the Lord, not only created the Hebrew race to play the most important role in human history, but gave her the central position upon the stage of human activity and related all nations to her in order that she might carry out His plan of the ages.

Israel has never yielded to God in order that He might use her in the fullest way possible. Only a few courageous, pious, godly men and women throughout the long history of the race have yielded their lives and souls to God and have become the channels of world blessings. For these, of course, we praise God. Humanly speaking, we are indebted to them for all the blessings that have come from God through them to us. But the time will come when all Israel of a future day will yield to God and will become the channel of universal blessing. The Prophet Zechariah in vision saw this time and made the following revelation: "Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: In those days *it shall come to pass*, that ten men shall take hold, out of all the languages of the nations, they shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you" (Zech. 8:23).

In perfect alignment with this Old Testament teaching is that which is set forth in the seventh chapter of the Book of Revelation. In chapters 6-19 of this book we have a full and detailed description of the events that will occur during this day of wrath, which will last for seven years. Chapters 6, 8 and 9, and 16 give the chronological order of events as they will occur in this time of Jacob's Trouble. Chapter 6 describes what will occur in the first quarter of the period. Chapters 8 and 9 describe the judgments of the second quarter. But between these two chapters, in chapter 7, is a vision of 144,000 Jewish servants of God who are sealed out of the 12 tribes of Israel and who serve Him. Immediately after we see this vision, there is

given to us another one in which we observe and innumerable host of saved people from every nation, tribe, tongue, and language who turn to the Lord during the Tribulation, and wash their robes, and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. This number of saved people is so very great that no man by any method of computation can gather the statistics regarding them. From these facts we see that the world revival with all its might and power breaks forth in the first part of the Tribulation, and that it will be conducted by these 144,000 Jewish "Pauls."

These evangelists, doubtless with many of their converts, will lead the entire nation of Israel to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ at the end of the Tribulation. Then converted Israel will become the channel of universal blessing and will lead all men to a saving knowledge of the Lord. At that time will be fulfilled the promise that was made to Abraham that in him and his seed "should all nations of the earth be blessed."

#### B. Israel overcome by God's grace

In the Revised Version we have in verse 2 this sentence: "For his lovingkindness is great toward us ..." This translation is possible, but a more literal and accurate rendering of the original is, "For His lovingkindness has conquered, or overcome us ..." The principal here involved may be illustrated by Jacob's wrestling with the angel of Jehovah throughout one night when he was at the ford of the River Jabbok and account of which is found in the following passage, "and he rose up that night, and took his two wives, and his two handmaids, and his eleven children, and past over the ford of the Jabbok. And he took them, and sent them over the stream, and sent over that which he had. And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was strained, as he wrestled with him. And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for thou hast striven with God and with men, and hast prevailed. And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there. And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for, *said he*, I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved. And the sun rose upon him as he past over Peniel, and limped upon his thigh. Therefore the children of Israel eat not the sinew of the hip which is upon the hollow of the thigh, unto this day: because he touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh in the sinew of the hip" (Gen. 32:22-32).

Throughout the night Jacob wrestled with the angel, though he did not know who he was. Doubtless the angel appeared to him as a robber or a bandit who had come suddenly upon him and who had seized him. Thus the wrestling match continued throughout the night. Finally, at the break of day, when Jacob caught a glimpse of the angel, he recognized that he was wrestling with a supernatural being. When he realized this fact, he clung to the angel tenaciously, although the latter insisted that he let him go. The angel in love and grace had wrestled with Jacob throughout the night and overpowered him. When Jacob realized these facts, he yielded to God. Then the angel changed his name to Israel, which means *God has conquered*. From this meaning come the derived one, a prince of God. Thus, grace overcame him, and he became a prince of God.

This long night during which Jacob wrestled with the angel might illustrate to us the dark stormy night of Israel's dispersion while she is scattered among the nations. She was banished from her country, and her city was destroyed in 70 A.D. She has been groping her way in the dark for nineteen hundred years. This period will terminate with the Tribulation, which is called the time of Jacob's Trouble.

Throughout Israel's long night this same angel of Jehovah, the Lord Jesus Christ who is Israel's Messiah, has, figuratively speaking, been wrestling with the nation and endeavoring to overpower her by His grace, love, and mercy. That He has thus been guiding the Chosen People, even though He has been seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty on High throughout this dark night and has been steering the course of her history toward the great consummation in the Tribulation, is evident from Psalm 80. In verse 1 of this hymn we have the following language: "Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, Thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; Thou that sittest *above* the cherubim, shine forth." This is the opening sentence of a prayer that the people of Israel will utter when they see the truth concerning the Messiah, who is their shepherd, and who has been leading them throughout this dark night of trouble.

Grace will have conquered the nation at the close of the Tribulation, for at that time the spirit of grace and of supplication will be poured out upon the remnant and it will in deep contrition of heart repent of the national sin, together with all other transgressions, and look unto "me (Messiah) whom they have pierced." When grace conquers this remnant, there will be such a manifestation of genuine repentance as the world has never seen. "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication; and they shall look unto me whom they have pierced; and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of the Shimeites apart, and their wives apart; all the families that remain, every family apart and their wives apart. 13 In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness." (Zech. 12:10-13:1).

And excellent illustration in the New Testament of the overpowering grace of God is the Apostle Paul. He was an honest, conscientious, sincere man who had one objective in view; namely, to serve the true and the living God to bless humanity. He was brought up a strict Pharisee and believed that which he was taught; however, he had an open mind and was eager for truth. God can deal graciously and bountifully with such a character. As he saw new truth, he stepped out upon it. The loving-kindness, or grace of God, kept pursuing him. Finally he was brought face to face with the Lord Jesus Christ who is the way, the truth, and the life. Grace overcame and overpowered him. He immediately yielded his life to the Lord Jesus and entered His service most enthusiastically. In writing to the church at Corinth, he expressed his thanks to God, "who always leadeth us in triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest through us the savor of his knowledge in every place" (II Cor. 2:14). The nation of Israel, the remnant, in the end of the Tribulation will be overpowered when they are brought face to face with the message of grace, truth, and love, will surrender to God, and will accept the Lord Jesus Christ. Then they will let Him lead them around from place to place in triumph making known through them the savor of the knowledge of Himself in every place.

### C. Israel praying to become a blessing to the world

In Psalm 67 we have a petition, which at the same time is a prophecy, and which sets forth the attitude of mind and heart to which the remnant of Israel will be brought. Then they will ask God to be merciful to them, to cause His face to shine upon them, "that thy way may be known upon earth, thy salvation among all nations." When the remnant comes to this conclusion, God's way and His salvation will not be known

among all the nations, but Israel will realize this fact and will utter this petition from the depths of her heart.

#### D. The heart of Israel's message—grace and truth

When Israel has thus been overpowered by God's grace, she will pray to the Lord that she may give forth this message. She will also proclaim to the world this conquering grace of God that has overwhelmed her and will likewise speak to the peoples of the truth of Jehovah regarding its continuing forever.

The mention of grace and truth in our passage suggests the use of these terms in Psalm 57. Here the Psalmist David looks forward to the time when Israel will be persecuted and the judgments of God will be in the earth. Seeing this vision and identifying himself with the generation of Israel at this future day, David declares that he would cry unto the God Most High, who performeth all things for him.

Then in verse 3 of this passage he speaks of how God will work for him and for the nation. Hear him: "He (God) will send from heaven, and save me, *When* he that would swallow me up reproacheth; God will send forth his lovingkindness and his truth." Here the king looked forward to a time when God will deliver the nation of Israel. In order to do that, He will send someone forth from heaven. The one whom He will send is spoken of in these words "God will send forth his lovingkindness and his truth." According to this passage God will save Israel by His loving-kindness and truth which He sends forth from heaven to accomplish the deliverance. Certainly loving-kindness and truth are not to be thought of as abstract virtues. The facts of the context demand that we understand them to be embodied in a person. Thus this one who comes forth from heaven to deliver Israel will be the very embodiment of grace and truth. When however we turn to John 1:17, we immediately understand this prediction more perfectly. The Apostle John declared that law came through Moses, but grace and truth through Jesus Christ. Thus our Lord Jesus Christ, the Hebrew Messiah, is grace and truth—the very embodiment of these—whom God will send forth to deliver Israel from her troubles when she is overcome by grace.

Thus being overcome and knowing in a personal experimental way the meaning of grace and truth as embodied in the Lord Jesus Christ and as affecting their lives, they will proclaim the truth to all nations and plead with them to come to God, accept and worship Him.

## Part 2

### II. A pageant of Israel's return to God

We have already seen that Psalm 117 is a fitting introduction to Psalm 118. The latter concludes the *Hallel* psalms, which begin with Psalm 113. An analysis of this psalm, as we shall see, shows that it is a pageant dramatizing Israel's return to God after her long dispersion and residence among the nations.

In order for us to understand and appreciate this dramatized message, we must remember the conditions which existed during the time for the Second Temple. When Zerubbabel and Joshua led the remnant of Israel from Babylon back to the home land, they left the major portion of their brethren in exile. These did not wish to return. Only the pious and godly of Israel eagerly accepted the challenge to return to the land of their fathers and start life anew. As the decades past, many Israelites moved out into Gentile territory, and by the time of the first century they were scattered over the Roman Empire, especially in



the principal cities. Each year at the great festivals, especially at Passover, these brethren living in the *Diaspora*, the Dispersion, made their journeys to Jerusalem to worship the God of their fathers. At that time the bulk of the nation was outside the limits of the Holy Land with only a remnant of the nation dwelling there.

When the Lord gave the commission to the Apostles to go only to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel," He prophesied saying, "But when they persecute you in this city, flee into the next: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone through the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come" (Matt. 10:23). He blended the command to evangelize Israel, which was carried on by the Twelve under the restricted commission, with the preaching of the gospel to the remnant of Israel in the end time, who will be in their own cities and colonies (Matt. 10:23). In this verse He passed over the entire Christian Dispensation, blending the events of His first coming with those connected with His return. Thus this long period intervening between the two comings is Israel's long night, during which she has suffered untold persecutions and pogroms. But in this verse from Matthew we do not see this period. During the night of Israel's dispersion, very few Jews have lived in Palestine. But in the end of this age, according to the message of the prophets and the Lord Jesus, there will be a representative number of them in their own land, dwelling in their cities and colonies. But the major portion of the race will be dispersed among the nations.

The Lord used the fact of Israel's being scattered among the nations and of her making pilgrimages to the national shrine at Jerusalem as an object lesson to portray to the world in a dramatic manner her final return to God and her rehabilitation in the land of the Fathers. His using these historical facts to set forth a great spiritual lesson every year to His people should not be surprising to anyone who is acquainted with the Scriptures. At different times He used various circumstances to set forth great spiritual lessons. For instance, the Lord caused Hosea, a man of pure life and tender heart, to marry Gomer whose life was corrupt. "When Jehovah spake at the first by Hosea, Jehovah said unto Hosea, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredom and children of whoredom; for the land doth commit great whoredom, *departing* from Jehovah" (Hosea 1:2). There were children born of this union. Gomer, not appreciating her position and relationship to her husband and children, went back into the former life from which she had been rescued by her marriage with the prophet. Although she was living in sin, the Lord instructed the prophet to go, love her, and show great tenderness toward her. Though she did not return to the prophet as his wife at once, they remained apart and she was unable to become associated with any other men. Finally, she returned and the family circle was completed again. For the full details read the first three chapters of the Book of Hosea. The prophet, his wife, the children, and their lives set forth in a dramatic manner the relationship that has existed between God on the one hand and Israel on the other. Just as Gomer finally returned to her husband, after her wild escapades, so will Israel return to the Lord Jehovah, her God. Isaiah and his wife and children were likewise living symbols, setting forth the relationship between God and His true children in Israel (Isa. 8:16-18).

The desire to set forth Israel's life and position in the world with relation to God has not died down in the Jewish heart. On July 21, 1943, the pageant, "We Will Never Die," was given at the Hollywood Bowl, Los Angeles, California. This dramatic presentation was written by Ben Hecht and was a master piece of production, being well rendered. After the blowing of the *Shofar*, Deuteronomy 6:4 was repeated, affirming Israel's faith in God. The beginnings of the nation were shown, and then certain ones enacted the parts of the great ones of Israel in the past. Modern Israel was represented. Following this, there were those who impersonated the Jewish nation of the present day as they were fighting on all battle fronts

for the freedom of mankind. Then the ghosts of the ones slaughtered in the ghettos of Europe by the Nazis were portrayed most vividly. One of the final scenes represented the "Peace Table" at which the delegates of United Nations will sit—with the exception of Israel. The pageant closed with a prayer—the *Kaddish*—for the martyred dead. The various actors played their parts well and set forth in the most vivid manner the history through which Israel has past. Notwithstanding the gloomy outlook of the present day, the nation was represented as looking to the future with hope.

The occasion of the writing of Psalm 118 as stated before, is not certainly known. The rabbis of old declared that it was supposed to celebrate five different things. Without a doubt there lies back behind this dramatic presentation the deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage. With this as a sounding board, the promise of her final deliverance is set forth in this pageant.

#### A. Assumptions

As has been said before, the Psalms are unintelligible without a knowledge of the background which is afforded by the messages of the prophets. Israel's coming from all parts of the world to celebrate the Passover and her other feasts annually sets forth in a graphic manner her return to the land of the fathers, with various events and developments connected with this future restoration, and her final conversion. Let us now note the principal assumptions here presupposed.

##### 1. The selection originally of Jerusalem and Palestine as the home of the Jewish people

When God called Abram out of Ur of the Chaldees, He promised that He would bless all nations in and through him and his seed (Gen 12:1-3). Before this time, when the Almighty scattered the people at the Tower of Babel and sent them to the various portions of the world, He allotted to each group that section of territory which was to be the future home of their descendants. This thought is set forth in Deuteronomy 32:8, 9:

"When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, When He separated the children of men, He set the bounds of the peoples According to the number of the children of Israel. For Jehovah's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance."

The assignment of their inheritance to the various nations was made with reference to the children of Israel. In other words, each of the nations was related to the Chosen People. Palestine is spoken of as the center of the earth (Ezek. 38:12).

Not only did the Lord select Palestine as the home of the Jewish people, but He promised through Moses to select one of their cities to be the place where he would abide. This promise is found in such passages as Deuteronomy 12:5-12. The selection of this place is found in the following passage:

"Moreover he refused the tent of Joseph, And chose not the tribe of Ephraim, But chose the tribe of Judah, The mount Zion which he loved" (Ps. 78:67,68).

This same theme is the subject of Psalm 87:1-3:

"His foundation is in the holy mountains. Jehovah loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God."

Note that there are "glorious things" spoken of Zion, the city of our God. On the beauty of this city of the Great King, see Psalm 48:1,2. The selection of Zion as the place for the residence of Jehovah was a permanent choice.

"For Jehovah hath chosen Zion;  
He hath desired it for his habitation.  
This is my resting-place for ever:  
Here will I dwell; for I have desired it" (Ps. 132:13,14).

Psalm 118, which we are studying, cannot be appreciated without our recognizing Jewish ownership of Palestine and Jerusalem's being the city of the Great King--Messiah.

## 2. The world-wide dispersion of Israel

Our psalm presupposes Israel's world-wide dispersion. When the Lord delivered His word to Israel at Sinai through Moses, He outlined the course of Jewish history. In Leviticus 26, this delineation is set forth. Verses 1 and 2 reiterate her covenant position with God. Verses 3-13 recount the promises of unparalleled blessing vouches to Israel upon the condition that she would be faithful to Him. Verses 13-39 threaten the nation with judgment and then final expulsion from the land in the event of unfaithfulness. In the latter part of this last section, verses 34-39, the barren condition of the land of Israel is set forth as it exists during her expulsion. Verses 40-45 set forth her confession of her national sin and return to God which will be in the future. (For a detailed study of Leviticus, chapter 26 and Deuteronomy, chapter 28 see the article, ["The History of Israel in Prophecy"](#) of my volume, *The World's Greatest Library Graphically Illustrated*.)

There appears a most graphic prediction concerning Israel's entrance into the land of Canaan, her corrupting herself after remaining there for a time, her turning to idolatry, her being cast out of the land and being scattered among the nations, and her final return in the time of the end when the judgments of Almighty God will be falling upon her, in Deuteronomy 4:25-31:

"When thou shalt beget children, and children's children, and ye shall have been long in the land, and shall corrupt yourselves, and make a graven image in the form of anything, and shall do that which is evil in the sight of Jehovah thy God, to provoke him to anger; I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land whereunto ye go over the Jordan to possess it; ye shall not prolong your days upon it, but shall be utterly destroyed. And Jehovah will scatter you among the peoples, and ye shall be left few in number among the nations, wither Jehovah shall lead you away. And there ye shall serve gods, the work of men's hands, wood and stone, which neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell. But from thence ye shall seek Jehovah thy God, and thou shalt find him, when thou searchest after him with all thy heart and with all thy soul. When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, in the latter days thou shalt return to Jehovah thy God, and hearken upon his voice; for Jehovah thy God is a merciful God; he will not fail thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he swear unto them."

Deuteronomy, chapter 28, is a repetition and an enlargement of the prophecy found in Leviticus, chapter 26. It likewise outlines the course of Jewish history. Deuteronomy, chapter 32 is the national anthem of

Israel as given by Moses and delineates the whole course of Jewish history in song. These and many other passages foretell Israel's world-wide dispersion and her return to the Holy Land in the end time.

### 3. The return of Israel to the land and to God

Many are the passages which speak especially of Israel's return to the land in the latter days and of her accepting King Messiah. For instance, in Isaiah 11:11-12:6 we have a prophecy that the Lord will put forth His hand a second time to restore His people from their world-wide dispersion. The paragraph consisting of Isaiah 11:11-16 speaks of the literal restoration to the land of the fathers; but 12:1-6 foretells the spiritual return to God. We see Israel's regathering as set forth in Isaiah 49:12,13: "Lo, these shall come from far: and, lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim. Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth: and break into singing, O mountains: for Jehovah hath comforted his people, and will have compassion upon his afflicted."

Once more we have a grand and panoramic view of the gradual restoration of Israel set in forth in the vision of the valley of dry bones found in Ezekiel 37:1-14. Jeremiah also speaks of her return to the land and of their accepting God in genuine repentance (Jer. 3:16-25).

As we study Israel's return to God and to the land of the fathers, we must not forget predictions which show that many of them in the latter days will return to Egypt and build up a civilization there, whereas others will return to Assyria. The prediction regarding their return to Egypt in the end time and the building of five cities, speaking the language of Canaan, is found in Isaiah 19:18-22. The prophecy regarding the return to Assyria, as well as to Egypt, is set forth in Isaiah 27:12,13. When we take all the passages relating to the return of Israel from her sojourn among the Gentiles, we come to the conclusion that they will gather, not only in Palestine, but also in Mesopotamia, Syria, and Egypt. During the Tribulation the faithful remnant who settle in Palestine will at the persecution of the Antichrist flee into Ammon, Moab, and Edom. But at the second coming of Christ our Lord will, according to Isaiah 27:12,13, gather from the places those who survive to the land of the fathers.

This phase of the restoration, I fear, has been generally overlooked by Bible students. The Jews are now pressing their claims to rehabilitation in Palestine. The Arab situation is acute and is diametrically opposed to Zionistic national aspirations. Without doubt God is overruling and is preventing all the Jews from returning to Palestine. He is now gathering them out of the nations and will take them into the "wilderness of the peoples" (Ezek. 20:35) where He will enter into judgment with them and make them pass under the rod (Ezek. 20:37). He will thus purge the nation of the wicked and disobedient and will let only the faithful remnant return to the land. Thus the present opposition to Jewish aspirations regarding Palestine is being used of God to steer the course of Jewish migration to these places where He said that they would be gathered back in the end time.

### 4. The establishment of Jerusalem the capitol of the world

As stated in Section 1, God, when He settled Israel in Canaan, selected Jerusalem as the city of the Great King. Those of the house of David who have sat upon this throne were simply occupying it until He comes whose right it is to reign (Ezek. 21:27). If Israel had only been faithful to God, the throne and the nation would have remained intact throughout the centuries, even up to the second coming of Messiah. This fact is shown clearly in Jeremiah 17:24-27 and also Isaiah 48:17-19.

Although Israel has been unfaithful, the Davidic house has failed the Lord, and the throne of David has been overthrown, the Almighty will not alter the thing that has gone forth from His mouth; but He will perform every word and will re-establish the throne of David as He declares in Psalm 89:34-37. At that time Jerusalem will become the beauty spot of the world (Psalm 48:1,2). It will also be the praise of the whole earth (Isa. 62:6,7). It will be the center of attraction for all the peoples, who will go there in pilgrimages to see and to listen to the messages of the Great King (Isa. 2:1-4; Micah 4:1-8).

A knowledge of all these fundamental teachings concerning Israel's future are presupposed by the one who wrote Psalm 118, which is a pageant interpreting Israel's annual visits from her residence among the Gentiles to her national capitol.

#### B. A call for Israel to acknowledge God's conquering grace

Having learned the general teaching concerning Israel's return, we are now in a position to study the psalm more minutely. As we saw in our investigation of Psalm 117, Israel will be overcome by an overwhelming sense and consciousness of the grace of God and will call upon the peoples of earth to come and worship Jehovah along with her. In Psalm 118:1-4 we see and hear the leaders of the nation calling upon the people to come and return to God, worshipping Him and praising Him for His matchless grace. In these verses we do not see any reference to law or works of merit. Everything is free grace and God's loving-kindness. The call goes forth from the leaders to the people to give thanks to God because He is good and because His grace endures forever. The leaders of Israel will see, as never before, the matchless, marvelous grace of God. They will therefore call upon Israel to acknowledge and receive His grace. Then they will call upon the priestly tribe to do the same thing; and finally they will urge all Jewish proselytes to praise Him.

As the leaders in Israel dispersed among the nations encourage every Israelite who possibly could do so to make his pilgrimage to Jerusalem to worship God, thus the leaders of Israel in the end time will make their appeal to the nation, those of the house of Aaron, and all Jewish proselytes to return and make their spiritual pilgrimage back to God.

##### 1. A knowledge of Israel's confession of her national sin presupposed

The fact that the leaders will call upon the nation to come back to God presupposes that there will be a reason for their doing this. That the call set forth in the first four verses of our psalm presupposes this knowledge is certain, in view of the fact that it is clearly foretold in related passages that Israel will make the confession of the national sin. Moses was the first to foretell it: "And they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, in their trespass which they trespassed against me, and also that, because they walked contrary unto me, I also walked contrary unto them, and brought them into the land of their enemies: if then their uncircumcised heart be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity; then will I remember my covenant with Jacob ..." (Lev. 26:40-42). The remnant of Israel, in the last generation of her dispersion, will confess its own iniquity and the iniquity of the fathers, which they (the fathers) committed when they were still in the land. Included in this confession is one that they, the fathers, trespassed against God; therefore He spewed them out of their land and scattered them among the nations. When they thus make this confession, God will remember the land and the promise which He made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Lev. 26:42). Hosea likewise foretold that Israel will make this confession: "For I will be unto Ephraim as a lion, and as a young lion to the house of Judah: I even I, will

tear and go away; I will carry off, and there shall be none to deliver. I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offense, and seek my face: in their affliction will they seek me earnestly." 6 Come, and let us return unto Jehovah; for he hath torn and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days will he revive us: on the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live before him. And let us know, let us follow on to know Jehovah: His going forth is sure as the morning; and he will come unto us as the rain, as the latter rain that watereth the earth (Hos. 5:14-6:3).

When this passage is read in the light of related ones, it is seen that the prophet was impersonating Messiah, who comes to the nation, is rejected, and returns to His place, declaring that He will never return until they "acknowledge their offense" and seek His face.

The actual confession which the nation of Israel will make at this future date is set forth in Isaiah 53:1-9. A second version of it is found in Isaiah 63:7-64:12.

## 2. A knowledge of the truth

The fact that the leaders will call upon the people to come back to God because of His goodness and of His grace proves that they will know about His grace in its highest manifestation—His sending His Son to suffer and to die for the people of Israel as well as for all nations.

Who will give the facts of the truth to the Hebrew people? This question is answered by a study of Isaiah 40:1-11. The prophet calls upon certain ones who belong to God and tells them to proclaim the message of glad tidings to Jerusalem, His people. Thus there are two groups in this passage who are recognized as the people of Jehovah. The latter are the Jewish people to whom the message is to be given by the other group. The ones who are commanded to give the truth to the Jewish people can be none other than those among the Gentiles who know it and who know God. But who are they? They are none other than the believers who have accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior, have been regenerated by the Spirit of God, and in whose heart the Holy Spirit dwells.

Again, we see certain ones, in obedience to the command of the Lord, going with glad tidings to Zion. The watchmen on the walls of Zion listen to the message of the heralds who proclaim the message of the gospel. The heart of their message, according to Isaiah 51:7-10, is that they personally will see face to face when Jehovah returns to Zion. This passage presupposes that Jehovah has been to Zion that He has gone away, and that He will return during the lifetime of those bringing the message. The messengers therefore tell the Jewish leaders that the time is at hand for Jehovah to return. Of course they will explain all the circumstances. Just simply to make the announcement that He is going to return is not sufficient. Such an announcement demands a full explanation and statement of the reasons why this message is given. In other words, the proclamation presupposes a full statement of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Again, in Isaiah 62:10-12 we see a command to those who believe in prayer—those who remind God of His promises ("Jehovah's remembrancers,"—Isa. 62:6) to proclaim a certain message to the daughter of Zion, the Jewish people. According to verse 11 God has sent forth a proclamation to the whole world calling upon all who know Him and who believe in prayer to tell the Jewish people: "Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him." The facts of the context show that the prophet is speaking of an individual, who is the very embodiment of salvation for the Jewish people, and who is none other than their glorious Messiah. But what coming are they to announce?

Obviously, His second coming, because He brings His reward with Him. When He came the first time, He laid down His life for the redemption of mankind. When He comes again, He will appear in glory and power and bring His rewards with Him. This coming therefore is without question the return of our Lord. "Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift an ensign for the peoples. Behold Jehovah hath proclaimed unto the end of the earth, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward is with him, and recompense before him. And they shall call them The holy people, The redeemed of Jehovah: and thou shalt be called Sought out, A city not forsaken" (Isa. 62:10-12).

My dear friend, are you and I obeying the command to give the truth to the people of Israel? It is not only a responsibility but a privilege that is conferred upon the people of God today to give this truth to the Chosen People in order that they might see the truth, come to Him, and become the channel of world-blessing.

### Part 3

In the two installments of this series on Psalms 117 and 118 which have already appeared, we have seen a vision of Israel converted and praising God. At the same time she calls upon the world to accept Jehovah, the God of the Universe, as its God and to worship Him along with her. We have also seen in the first four verses of Psalm 118 the call that goes forth to the entire nation of Israel to come and worship God. This call has certain underlying assumptions. It will also find its fulfillment in the great evangelistic program to give the truth to all Israel, which is being done at the present time.

We are now ready to investigate verse 5 through 19 which the nation sang, as we have already seen, in its approaching the Holy City. In her doing this, she constituted a pageant, setting forth in a symbolic manner the return of the nation to God in the end of the age and its being accepted by Him.

#### C. The processional

A church processional is always very impressive, but the pilgrims going to Jerusalem from year to year and approaching the Holy City as they sang this *Hallel* presented a most striking lesson, not only for the people of Israel, but for the whole world.

##### 1. The start—a retrospect

When the preparations for a journey have been made and one actually starts on a pilgrimage, one's heart is thrilled. Every time I go to Jerusalem, as I leave our shores, my heart is thrilled in anticipation at the thought of seeing the Holy City, even as it is now in its downtrodden condition. What must be the thrill that will come to the nation of Israel, as she penitently turns from everything earthly and in a spiritual sense sets her face toward the Holy City, the new Jerusalem that will come down out of heaven from God and will rest upon earth in the Holy Land. In response to his faith, which was based upon the promises of God, the Lord granted Abraham a vision of this heavenly Jerusalem. He was therefore willing to leave the land of his nativity and all of his childhood surroundings to go to a place where eventually the vision of the new Jerusalem will become a reality.

"By faith he became a sojourner in the land of promise, as in a land not his own, dwelling in tents, with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for he looked for the city which hath the foundations, whose builder and maker is God. By faith even Sarah herself received power to conceive seed when she was past age, since she counted him faithful who had promised; wherefore also there sprang of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of heaven in multitude, and as the sand, which is by the sea-shore, innumerable.

These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them greeted them from afar and having confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things make it manifest that they are seeking after a country of their own. And if indeed they had been mindful of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return. But now they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed of them, to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city" (Heb. 11:9-16).

Where there is no vision, the people perish. Where there is a real vision, the people move forward in anticipation of the same. Thus the preaching of the message of the truth to Israel, which we have seen in our investigation of Psalm 118:1-4, will present to her this vision of her future glory when she will be established in the land of the fathers.

#### a. The deliverance from Egypt

As the pilgrims started on their way on the annual visit to Jerusalem which constitutes this pageant, they looked back to the birth of the nation:

"Out of my distress I called upon Jehovah: Jehovah answered me *and set me* in a large place" (vs. 5). We have already seen that this psalm is national in its scope and outlook. Each individual will express his own convictions as is indicated by the use of the personal pronouns, *I*, *me*, and *my*. The distress concerning which the remnant will sing and out of which their progenitors were delivered can be nothing else than the Egyptian bondage. And account of Israel's slavery while in Egypt is set forth in the first chapters of the Book of Exodus. Their lot became intolerable. They therefore cried to God. At the proper time He sent Moses, the deliverer, who led the people forth from their slavery. After their miraculous passage through the Red Sea and the destruction of their enemies by the receding waters of the sea, Moses and the children of Israel sang the song of deliverance, of which we read in Exodus 15:1-18. Israel cried; Jehovah delivered; and she was set in a large place—in the wilderness. It was large in comparison with the narrow quarters in which they had been crowded in Egypt.

#### b. Israel on Jehovah's side

"Jehovah is on my side; I will not fear: What can man do to me?"

Jehovah is on my side among them that help me: Therefore shall I see *my desire* upon them that hate me" (vss. 6,7).

In these verses the remnant of Israel of this future day will joyfully sing that God is on her side and that she will fear nothing. She will be of the profound conviction that no man can do anything against her. If God is for us, who can be against us, asked the Apostle Paul. The one concern for the people is that they know positively that they are on the Lord's side. When they are convinced of that fact, they need not fear what man can do to them. The nations of the world are but as the small dust of the balance, or as a drop



in the bucket in God's sight. And He can handle them and overrule all of their actions for the good of those who are trusting Him.

In these verses the remnant will sing that, since Jehovah is on their side, they will see their desire upon those who hate them. God does not arbitrarily get on the side of anyone. He is a holy, righteous, just, loving, Being. If people want Him to be on their side, they must forsake their sins and get on His side. Thus the remnant of Israel at the time here foreseen will have forsaken her sins and all her iniquities and will have come en masse over on God's side. Then their desires will be holy and in accord with the truth, and the Lord will meet and satisfy those desires with reference to her inveterate enemies. The Lord will do the very same thing for anyone who will give up sin and the world and will come over on His side, wholeheartedly. Then his desires will coincide with those of the Lord as revealed in His Word, and He will deal with His enemies in righteousness and in truth. King David struck this same note in Psalm 23 when he said: "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies." His enemies despised him and did all they could against him. Since his ways were pleasing to the Lord, He prepared a banquet of good things for his despised servant. We can claim that promise today whenever we get wholly on the Lord's side.

#### c. The benefit of trusting Jehovah

"It is better to take refuge in Jehovah Than to put confidence in man.  
It is better to take refuge in Jehovah Than to put confidence in princes" (vss. 8, 9).

In these verses the remnant of Israel will say that it is far better to trust in Jehovah than to put confidence in men, even in the most powerful of men. In his saying this, we are not to understand that she will have no confidence in anyone. While it is true that the bulk of humanity is unreliable and undependable, nevertheless there are characters who are true, faithful, and loyal in all of their relations with men and in all their dealings.

People are not to repose their confidence in man and stake all upon them; not because they are unreliable, but because of their frailty. I know of good men who have been loyal and true, and who have made certain plans, but who, on account of human frailty and adverse conditions were unable to carry out their good resolve and intentions. It is therefore not best to put one's trust in man and in the arm of the flesh. On the contrary, it is proper, right, wise, discreet to put one's absolute and unswerving confidence in God who changes not, and who has the ability to accomplish things and to defend and protect those who come to Him.

The nation of Israel has, from time to time, put her confidence in other nations, that have failed her. For instance the Jewish people put their confidence in the League of Nations and in the British Mandate of Palestine. Unfortunately the Chamberlain regime repudiated the Balfour Declaration and, figuratively speaking, considered it no more than a scrap of paper. According to some late reports, certain Jewish leaders have approached the Russian government to take them under their wing. Such a move is putting confidence in men who will, sooner or later, fail her for one cause or another. From the prophetic scriptures we learn that the apostate remnant of the nation of Israel will put its confidence in the Antichrist. (See Dan. 9:27.) But she will be sadly disappointed. It is therefore better to take refuge in Jehovah than to put confidence in man or princes.

## 2. On the way

After proper preparation one makes his journey. Thus the pilgrims, when they made their annual visit to the Holy City, made the preparation and then started out on their sacred journey. In the same manner the nation of Israel, spiritually speaking, will start on its way back to God.

### a. The nations rising against Israel

"All nations compassed me about: In the name of Jehovah I will cut them off.

They compassed me about; yea, they compassed me about: In the name of Jehovah I will cut them off. They compassed me about like bees; they are quenched as the fire of thorns: In the name of Jehovah I will cut them off" (vss. 10-12).

As has been noted before, the personal pronoun *I*, referring to the individual who sings this message, appears here and states that all nations have compassed "me" about. The nations cannot literally encompass one individual. This fact shows that Psalm 118 is used nationally. Note the fact that three times the expression, "compassed me about," appears. In the last occurrence the phrase "like bees," is added. This comparison is employed to indicate the great number that are involved in the action.

This prediction is confirmed by such passages as Zephaniah 3:8: "Therefore wait for me, saith Jehovah, until the day that I rise up to the pray; for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger; for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy." Note the fact that, whereas in Psalm 118 one sees the nations taking the initiative and encompassing Israel, in Zephaniah's passage the invisible hand of the Almighty is bringing them against her. Thus we see in the two passages the freedom of man and the sovereignty of God. We observe the same thing in Isaiah 10:5-7. Here the statesmen-prophet addressed the Assyrian, Sennacherib, and spoke of him simply being a rod in the hand of God to punish Israel, His disobedient people. Yet on the other hand, this same cruel, ruthless tyrant was prompted by his own motive and desires to carry out his cherished plans of conquest. Nevertheless, we see the sovereignty of God and the freedom of man in full action. We can never harmonize them, but we can accept the scriptural statements and believe them with all our hearts. Men may plot against others, and nations may launch campaigns against other races, but

"There is no wisdom nor understanding Nor counsel against Jehovah.

The horse is prepared against the day of battle; But victory is of Jehovah" (Prov. 21:30-31).

Men and nations may cast the lot of their own decision against others, but "the whole disposing thereof is of Jehovah" (Prov. 16:33).

In Zechariah, chapter 14, we have the following prediction: "Behold, a day of Jehovah cometh, when thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city" (vss. 1,2). Here we see the nations, not voluntarily taking action against Israel and encompassing her, though they are free and do act upon their own initiative; but we see, brought out in bold relief, God's overruling providence and His bringing all nations against Jerusalem to battle in the day of Jehovah, in the Tribulation. This siege here foreseen will be the last one of the many to which he has been subjected through the centuries. History

reveals the fact that the Holy City has been razed to the ground time and time again, and that her sons and daughters have suffered as possibly no other nation has. In this last great distress the odds, humanly speaking, will be against her. Half of the city will fall into the hands of the enemy, the houses will be rifled and the women ravished. Half of it therefore will go into captivity but the residue—the remnant—will not be cut off from the city. The reason for these facts will be that Jehovah in the person of King Messiah will go forth as He did in the day of battle, will fight against the enemies of Israel, and will bring final and complete victory. "Then shall Jehovah go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east; and the mount of Olives shall be cleft in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, *and there shall be a great valley*; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north and half of it toward the south" (Zech. 14:3,4).

In our psalm the author after each statement relative to Israel's being encompassed by the nations, declares, "In the name of Jehovah I will cut them off." At that time Israel will have faith and will be confident that she will be energized and strengthened by supernatural power, and will be victorious in the end. When the nations, at the very end of the Tribulation, invade Palestine with the purpose of exterminating the Jew and of wiping out every vestige of Jewish civilization, probably many in Israel will think that all of those things are against them. Jacob of old likewise thought that the trials which befell him were against him (Gen. 42:36). Instead of being contrary to him, they were being used of God for his blessing. We are assured by the Apostle that all things work together for good for those that love the Lord, and who are the called according to His purpose (Rom. 8:28-32). We know that the remnant in Israel has been called according to God's plan and purpose of the ages; we therefore are of the unshakable conviction that all the troubles which she in the end time will suffer will be designed for the purifying of the remnant and the making of them into vessels fit for the Master's use.

#### b. The Antichrist

"Thou didst thrust sore at me that I might fall; But Jehovah helped me" (vs. 13).

In this verse an individual is singled out concerning whom it is said that He has thrust sore at the nation, but that he, being thwarted in his purposes by Jehovah, will not accomplish his purposes against Israel. The reason for my saying that this is the Antichrist is that he is the one who thrusts at Israel in sending the armies of the nations against her to battle. When we read this passage in light of other prophecies referring to the same thing, we know that it is the Antichrist who does this very thing. It is he who will dictate the policy of all the nations at that time. A careful study of Isaiah 14:1-20 without doubt shows that this sinister rebel against Israel will be possessed and motivated by the great rebel against God, the devil. (Note especially verse 12-14.) This same individual is referred to under the symbolism of the "little horn" of Daniel 7:23-28. Again he appears upon the sacred page in Daniel 11:36-45. In the New Testament his portrait is given in II Thessalonians 2:1-13. Here he is called "the man of sin, the son of perdition" and then he is spoken of in terms of "the willful king" mentioned in Daniel 11:36-45. Once again we recognize this diabolical character in the person of the first beast described in Revelation, chapter 13. Finally, in the nineteenth chapter of Revelation, we see him and the false prophet leading the armies of the world at Jerusalem and arraying themselves against the Lord Jesus Christ at His second coming. In this final conflict he is slain and is cast into the lake of fire, where he, with the false prophet, remains during the thousand-year reign of our Lord. He is suffering the torments of hell at the conclusion of the Millennium in full possession of his faculties as same as when he is first put there. He will remain there forever and ever

together with all the men and women who pit their wills against the Almighty and who spurn and reject the boundless, matchless grace and mercy of God offered to them in the salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ.

### c. Divine assistance

In the triple phrase, "In the name of Jehovah I will cut them off," is expressed their conviction of the remnant that divine assistance will be given. Then in verse 13 the faith of the remnant enables them with one bound to reach the end of the conflict and to take hold of the supernatural, divine assistance that is given to the nation at the final appearance of their Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. Seeing therefore by faith the outcome, they speak of it as a reality. The Lord never disappoints genuine faith.

## III. The end of the journey

"Jehovah is my strength and song; And he is become my salvation.  
The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tents of the righteous:  
The right hand of Jehovah doeth valiantly.  
The right hand of Jehovah is exalted: The right hand of Jehovah doeth valiantly.  
I shall not die, but live, And declare the works of Jehovah.  
Jehovah hath chastened me sore; But he hath not given me over unto death" (vss. 14-18).

As we move along, we are always spurred on by anticipation of the joys that come at the end of a journey or at the completion of a task. Men are saved by hope. If this is taken from them, there is no incentive for heroic action and for enduring hardships and persecution.

The Lord has chosen Israel "in the furnace of affliction" (Isa. 48:10). This statement must be studied in the light of the entire chapter in which it appears in order that one may see its full force. (Read [chapter 5](#) of my volume *The God of Israel*.) I know however from the facts that are presented in this passage that the prophet was referring to the judgments of the Great Tribulation and compared them to a furnace into which the nation is thrown in order that the dross may be purged away, and that the remnant may come forth refined and purified. In this connection study carefully Malachi 3:1-6.

### a. Israel conscious of Divine assistance

In verses 14-18 of our song Israel, at the end of her journey, is standing before the gates of the Holy City, and is pleading that they might be opened in order that the nation might enter into the sacred precinct and worship God. Thus at the very end of the Tribulation Israel will have been purged of all her dross. Her faith will shine forth as the radiance of the noonday sun, and she will momentarily be expecting the return of her glorious Messiah to bring the final deliverance.

In verse 14 and 15 she will declare that the Lord is her strength, her song, and her salvation. He will give her supernatural strength in the final siege. Confirmation of this position is found in Zechariah 12:8. He will be her song; because in response to her faith, He will energize her, clarify her vision, and revive her hope, which will express itself in actual song in anticipation of the final outcome. The Lord will also become her salvation in that He will appear personally and will destroy all her enemies. Thus in the first part of verse 15 we see the nation rejoicing in anticipation of final deliverance.

### b. The right hand of Jehovah

In verse 15b and 16 the phrase, the right hand of Jehovah, occurs three times. This expression refers either to the power of God in the abstract sense of the term or to the Messiah personally, who is called the arm of Jehovah as in Isaiah 53:1. While in this context either interpretation accords with the facts presented, but, when we read this psalm in the light of related passages, it becomes quite probable that our phrase is a personal reference to the Messiah of Israel who at that time will go forth in the strength of His might and vanquish all of her foes.

### c. The assurance of continued life and service

In verse 17 the remnant by faith will declare, "I shall not die but live, and declare the works of Jehovah." Their faith will reach forward beyond the dark clouds which will be hovering over them at that time to that perfect day (Prov. 4:18); then it will look back upon the distresses through which they have passed and see themselves as having survived the ordeal of the ages by His grace. Then they will go forward in the work of God. Israel was called to be the missionary nation of the world. To Abraham, the great progenitor of the race, the Lord said, "in thee and in thy seed shall all families of the earth be blessed." The truth which we have has come from God through Israel to us. We who now have the truth, the believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, are to give it back to Israel now in order that, after the church is gone and the Tribulation judgments begin to fall upon the earth, this seed which we now sow in the barren soil of the hearts of indifferent Israel will germinate, spring forth, and produce the 144,000 Jewish evangelists of whom we read in Revelation, chapter 7. These will arise, will accept the Messiah, will go forth in the Tribulation, and will bring about the greatest revival in all ages, in which an innumerable host of people from every nation, tribe, tongue, and language will receive the gospel and be saved.

Not only will Israel give the truth to the nations during the Tribulation; but after the Millennium begins, the faithful remnant will be the missionary nation of the world, according to the promise of Zechariah 8:22,23: "Yea, many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek Jehovah of hosts in Jerusalem, and to entreat the favor of Jehovah. Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: In those days *it shall come to pass*, that ten men shall take hold, out of all the languages of the nations, they shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you."

Israel is the nation of destiny. All other nations as political units will come to an end; but not so with Israel, "For I am with thee, saith Jehovah, to save thee: for I will make a full end of all the nations wither I have scattered thee, but I will not make a full end of thee; but I will correct thee in measure, and will in no wise leave thee unpunished" (Jer. 30:11).

### d. Israel's interpretation of God's dealing with her

At the very end of the Tribulation the remnant having been purged by the judgment through which she has passed and having her vision clarified will be in a position to understand her checkered history. Thus she will declare, "Jehovah hath chastened me sore; but he hath not given me over unto death." According to this verse, all the Hebrews coming to the end of the Tribulation will be able to see clearly that all the pogroms, persecutions, and distresses, and sorrows through which the nation has passed have been designed for their good and that their troubles have been simply the chastening of the Lord, though she has been unable thus far to understand that phase of life. Everything that comes into the life of a nation or an individual is permitted of God, under the existing circumstances, and is designed to work out for the

good of those who love Him and who are called according to His purpose. Let us, as well as Israel, view life from the beacon height. Then we shall be able to see a holy glow resting upon every sad experience through which we are called to pass.

The chastening of Israel, especially in the end time, will have had as its objective the bringing of the nation to the point where it will make the confession of the national sin—rejecting the long-expected Messiah. That Israel will make this confession was foretold by Moses: "And they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, in their trespass which they trespassed against me, and also that, because they walked contrary unto me." From the context of this verse we see that the last generation of Hebrews scattered among the nations will confess its iniquity and the iniquity of its fathers, which they, the fathers, while they were still in the land of Israel, committed against Jehovah, and on account of which He cast them out and scattered them among the nations. According to this prediction the fathers in Israel committed a heinous crime against God. After they did that, He scattered them among the nations where they have been these nineteen hundred years. When they thus sinned against God and against themselves, He spewed them out of His sight and allowed them to remain among the nations, suffering as no other nation has. When this last generation penitently confesses its share in this national sin and confesses this crime of the fathers, the Lord will remember them and the land promised and restore them to their home and their position as the head of the nations. Hosea likewise spoke of the sin of Israel and foretold that the remnant will have to confess that sin before Messiah returns to bless her (Hos. 5:14-6:3). The detailed statement of this confession is found in Isaiah 53:1-9, which the penitent remnant will make in the year 1946 plus X. (I do not know the specific date but speak of it in algebraic terms.) Again the same penitential confession is found in Isaiah 63:7-64:12.

Israel does not know that she is guilty of committing such a heinous crime against her God. It is for those who have this information to give it to her in love—to the entire nation—in such a way that she will be brought under conviction and be led to make this confession, which she must make. When she does that, the Lord will come and restore her to her rightful position among the nations in order that she might become the channel of world blessing in the fullest sense of the term.

#### Part 4

##### THE RITUALISTIC SERVICE AND ITS SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE

When the pilgrims asked for entrance into "gates of righteousness" and promised that they would enter therein (PS. 118:19), the temple choir responded to them:

"This is the gate of Jehovah; The righteous shall enter into it."

The singers asked concerning the gates of righteousness; the response was: "This is the gate of Jehovah." The request and the response connect righteousness vitally with Jehovah. This thought immediately brings to mind such a passage as Jeremiah 23:5,6: "Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. 6 In his days Judah shall be saved, Israel shall dwell safely; and this is his name whereby he shall be called: Jehovah our righteousness." In these verses we see a prediction concerning the reign of righteousness that will be established in the land of Israel in the future. From other passages we see that it will become the world order. The King who will administer such a just and benign reign is

none other than Israel's Messiah, who will be known as, "Jehovah our righteousness." Being Jehovah in the form of a man, He will be the very embodiment of holiness, righteousness, and love. In this connection as we think of entrance into the service of God in connection with righteousness and also with Israel's Messiah, one naturally recalls the statement of the Lord Jesus Christ: "I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and go out, and shall find pasture" (John 10:9). When these passages are studied carefully in their connections, it will be seen that there is a vital bond of unity existing between them. In other words, the passages from Jeremiah and from our Savior's lips are the further explanation of the symbolic language of Psalm 118:19. From these facts we can see the typical significance of the request of the newly arrived pilgrims and the response given to them by the temple choir; namely, that it is a most beautiful representation of the fact that the Jerusalem authorities will in the future tell the people of Israel, who return to God in the spiritual sense of the term that, if they wish to enter into the service of God and communion with Him they must acknowledge and receive the Lord Jesus Christ, the Hebrew Messiah, as their Lord, Redeemer, and King. There is no other way to enter into the presence of God and into fellowship with Him other than that of coming through Him, the door of the sheep.

This thought was impressed upon my mind when I was in the Holy Land in 1939. One morning the group of students, which I took, and I went from Jerusalem to the Dead Sea. We stopped at the Samaritan inn. While we were there, a shepherd, who had his flock within the walls of the compound of the Inn, gave his call; his entire flock immediately arose and followed him to the door of the east wall. When he opened it, he stood in the passage way—where the door had been. While the door was still closed, none of the sheep could pass out. When he took his stand in the open doorway with his staff in hand, none could pass. As he stood there, with his staff in his right hand, he caught the sheep that he did not want to pass through and pushed them backward. Then he lifted his rod and allowed those sheep to pass out of the fold that he wanted to take with him into the green pastures. Thus the shepherd pulled out those sheep which were not to go out and allowed those which he wished to go out to do so. Our Lord Jesus Christ had this picture in mind when He said, "I am the door." Only those of both Jews and Gentiles that come to Him who is the door, accept Him by faith, will now be allowed to pass through into the kingdom of God as it now exists, which is the vestibule to the great kingdom of glory that will be established upon earth when our Lord returns. Let us remember that there is no other way to approach God accept through Him. "I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6), said Jesus. Those who come to Him, will receive a blessing from Jehovah even "Righteousness from the God of his salvation" (Ps. 24:5). Man, as he is in his unregenerate state, cannot acceptably serve God. He must be righteous and holy. He therefore must accept the Savior and Messiah and receive the blessing in the form of the robe of righteousness—imputed righteousness.

#### D. The Divine service

Only, by following very closely the facts presented in verses 20-29, can one see the marvelous beauty and profound teaching enshrined in the ritual of the rest of the psalm. [The best commentators recognize that, in the following verses, we have an excellent illustration of responsive singing. Perowne and Rotherham give, according to my opinion, the very best analysis of the various parts sung by different ones. In the main I have accepted their suggestions, at the same time following what seems to me to be facts at times overlooked by them.]

## 1. The beginning of the services

When the newly-arrived pilgrims entered the sacred temple enclosure, in response to the temple choir, the entire congregation began the service by singing:

"I will give thanks unto thee; for thou hast answered me, And art become my salvation" (vs. 21).

The first thing the redeemed soul, the regenerated heart, does, after accepting the Savior and His redemption, is to give thanks to God for His unspeakable gift, for saving his soul and bestowing all spiritual blessings upon him. All one is and can hope to be is by the grace of God. There is nothing in any of us to cause us to be proud or to feel independent. Everything that we are and have or may hope to have comes from His bountiful hand.

God answers prayer. Thus the pilgrims in expressing their appreciation and thanksgiving for what God had done declared, "For thou hast answered me, And art become my salvation." God does answer prayer, the prayer of faith, ascending from a heart yearning to do the will of God. If any man wills to do the will of God, He will know of the teaching of the Messiah, whether it be of himself as an individual or from God (John 7:17). Everyone who yearns for God and righteousness will be satisfied. The Lord "directs the path of the just" (Isa. 26:7). I well remember how I prayed to the Lord before I accepted Christ. Well do I recall the night when, after praying earnestly, I received the Lord by faith in a public way and He accepted me, coming into my heart and putting a new life, a new joy, into my soul that I had never experienced.

Thus the Lord became my salvation. The congregation of Israel thus began their services when the newly-arrived pilgrims entered the sacred enclosure by declaring "... thou ... art become my salvation."

The first thing one must do is to accept the Lord and let Him become one's salvation. Salvation is the first thing; service follows. All too frequently people turn the tables around and try to serve in order that they might be saved. This is not God's order. People must first be saved by the grace of God through faith and the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit. This experience of regeneration prepares them for acceptable service, for which they are rewarded both in time and in eternity. Have you, my friend, accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Savior and entered into fellowship with God through Him? If not, I urge you to do so now.

## 2. The voice of a soloist

After the congregation had sung verse 21 regarding the Lord's salvation, a soloist responded in these words:

"The stone which the builders rejected Is become the head of the corner" (vs. 22).

What is meant by "the stone?" This question immediately suggests the Golden Rule of Interpretation which is: "When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense; therefore, take every word at its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning unless the facts of the immediate context, studied in the light of related passages and axiomatic and fundamental truths, indicate clearly otherwise." Could the word "stone" here be taken literally? This would make nonsense. No literal stone can become the salvation of the soul, to say nothing of a nation and of the world. Instantly we recognize that the term "stone" is not used literally. It therefore must be used symbolically. What then is its significance? Recognizing the "law of first mention" we turn back to Genesis 49:24 and read the following:



"But his bow abode in strength,  
 And the arms of his hands were made strong,  
 By the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob  
 (From thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel ...)"

Here the word "stone" is used for the first time in a symbolic sense. Jacob, under the power of the Spirit of God when he uttered this prediction, spoke of "The Mighty One of Jacob," the Almighty. Then he said, "From thence [the Almighty] is the shepherd, the stone of Israel." Thus the Shepherd of Israel is in this passage spoken of under the symbolism of a stone. Whenever therefore the word "stone" is used in a symbolic sense, we may know that it refers to the Shepherd of Israel. Whenever the word "rock" is used symbolically, the facts of the context show that it refers to God—either God the Father or the entire Trinity. One exception to this general statement is Isaiah 8:14: "And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offense to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem." When we remember that the Book of Isaiah is written in Hebrew poetry and that the fundamental principle of this type of language is Hebrew parallelism, we see that "rock" is used parallel with "stone." Since the word "stone" is used symbolically to refer to the Shepherd of Israel, and since "rock" is here used as a symbol of Deity, we see instantly from this passage that the Shepherd of Israel is one of the divine personalities constituting the Godhead, who becomes to those who accept Him a sanctuary, a place of worshipping the God of the universe; but to those who reject Him He becomes a rock of offense, a gin and a snare. In Isaiah 28:16 appears the following prediction: "Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone of sure foundation: He that believeth shall not be in haste." Here God is represented as laying a foundation stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone of sure foundation, for the great spiritual temple which He, according to Isaiah the prophet, will erect. Stone, here, according to its first meaning in Genesis 49:24, is a reference to the Shepherd of Israel, the Messiah. Zechariah, one of the post-exilic prophets, spoke of this same shepherd in the following passage: "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith Jehovah of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered; and I will turn my hand upon the little ones" (Zech. 13:7). Here the prophet, looking into the future, invited the sword, the one wielding the sword, to do so against "my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith Jehovah of hosts." Here this stone of Israel, this Shepherd of Israel, is said to be a man and at the same time as being God's fellow. The word, fellow, is used ten other times in the Hebrew Bible. In all occurrences it refers to one who is an equal of the one concerning whom mention is made. Since God is here doing the talking and since He speaks of this shepherd as His fellow, His equal, it is clear that this Shepherd of Israel is equal to God the Father. From these and other passages, it is clear that the word "stone" used symbolically refers to the Shepherd of Israel, the Messiah of the Hebrews, who is God in human form, having entered the world, as we learn from other passages of scripture, through miraculous conception and virgin birth.

The soloist, in responding to the congregation, sang:

"The stone which the builders rejected Is become the head of the corner."

According to the late David Baron, there was among the Jews a tradition to this effect; When Solomon built the Temple, the stones for its construction were dug out of the solid rock which is now known as Solomon's quarries, under the northeastern portion of the city of Jerusalem. The stones were cut to the exact size and were transported to the Temple area. Finally, when all excavations had been made and the

time came to put the stone known as "the head of the corner" in its proper place, the leaders of the builders looked for it. They passed by one, thinking that it was too insignificant to be the one for which they were looking. They continued to pass among the stones in their search for the proper one. Finally, after a long search, they came back and found that the one by which they had passed at first was really the one for which they were looking. They therefore placed it in its position. It is quite likely that the spirit of God used this illustration, well known to the Jews of that time, in order to set forth the prediction concerning the rejection of Israel's Messiah at His first coming and of her accepting Him at His return. In other words, there are reflected in this one verse the two comings of the one Messiah: the first coming when He is rejected by his own people; the second coming when He is accepted most enthusiastically by the remnant of the nation and is given his rightfully honored position as the head of the corner of the nation. An examination of the prophetic scriptures shows that there are many passages which speak of these two great crises in the history of Israel. There are others, however, that show the entire redemptive career of King Messiah, which consists of His first coming and rejection, of His return to glory and His session at the right hand of the throne of God, and of His return at the close of this age when the nation of Israel, having learned of its national sin of rejecting Him, acknowledges the same and pleads for Him to return, which thing He will do. When they do this, He will establish a reign of righteousness upon the earth. Thus there are numbers of passages of scripture that delineate Messiah's redemptive work. But in Psalm 118:22 only the two comings are referred.

By the soloist's responding to the nation in this verse there was typified the fact that Israel will at some time learn the truth concerning her long-rejected Messiah, will repent of having rejected Him, and will, with boldness and fearlessness and yet with deep contrition and humility, accept Him and His salvation. This will be done officially. That it will be thus performed is seen from an examination of such passages as Leviticus 26:40-42: "And they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, in their trespass which they trespassed against me, and also that, because they walked contrary unto me, I also walked contrary unto them, and brought them into the land of their enemies: if then their uncircumcised heart be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity: then will I remember my covenant with Jacob; and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham I will remember; and I will remember the land." Here it is foretold that the last generation of Israel, sojourning among the nations, will confess its own iniquity and the iniquity of the fathers. This iniquitous act was committed by the fathers when they were in the land. When they committed this crime, God spewed them out of their country and scattered them among the nations. When they thus make this acknowledgment, God will remember the land promise and the children of Israel. Thus in these verses appears the prediction concerning Israel's official repudiation of the national sin and of her accepting Messiah. For a full statement of the confession which Israel will make, read Isaiah 53:1-9. This is the detailed, penitential confession which the remnant of Israel will make in the year 1946—plus x. (I am putting this definite year in the form of an algebraic expression, since I do not know when Israel will make this confession.)

### 3. The response of the congregation

Following the soloist, the congregation again sang:

"This is Jehovah's doing: It is marvelous in our eyes,  
This is the day which Jehovah hath made" (118:23,24a).

What day is here mentioned? There is but one answer—the time when Israel, having learned the truth concerning the Savior accepts Him as her personal Redeemer and Messiah. This interpretation alone accords with the facts of the context. It will be the time when that perfect day dawns about which David in his "swan song" sang (II Sam. 23:1-6). This is the perfect day mentioned in Proverbs 4:18.

Israel at that time will see, as she has never realized before, the hand of God in her history. She will recognize that He has been dealing with the nation throughout the centuries and has been steering the course of Jewish history to the end that she may see the truth and accept Him who is the very embodiment of the truth her Redeemer and Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. The Almighty never forces anyone's will. He takes him where he is and overrules providentially everything that comes into the life of the individual and at the same time allows him to make his own free choices. Thus the Lord has had a difficult problem with the nation of Israel, allowing her to pursue her own way, at the same time steering the course of the nation through the centuries and finally bringing it to the point that the remnant will see facts as they are, will acknowledge the national sin, and will accept the Messiah. There is no wonder that they will exclaim: "This is Jehovah's doing: It is marvelous in our eyes"—a miracle in their eyes!

For us to snatch this verse out of its connection and to apply it to any given day on which we feel exultant or to apply it to any special era is a misinterpretation of the passage. It is true that every day that the Lord permits us to live is His and is wonderful. He has made it; He is controlling the universe; He is causing the earth to rotate upon its axis; He is giving us the good things of life; and we can say that all which any day brings us is His doing. Hence we may marvel at His grace and at His overruling providence in our lives. But for us to ignore the context is to miss the meaning of the wonderful prediction which it contains, and which refers to the dawning of the perfect day, the glad Millennial Day, for which all creation yearns and longs.

#### 4. A second response by the soloist

"This is the day which Jehovah hath made ..." (vs. 24a). The soloist again responds to the congregation in its great praise and declares that that day, the day when Israel sees her age long mistake and accepts Messiah, is the work of Jehovah. He has made it. He has brought it to pass. Israel has suffered as no other nation upon the face of the globe. She has made a contribution to the world out of all proportion to her numerical strength among the nations. She has yet to pass through the greatest crisis of all the ages, the Tribulation. She will suffer then as never before. On account of her unwillingness to examine the Scriptures with an open mind and to search for the truth regardless of what it is, the Lord has chosen her in the furnace of affliction in order to purge forth from her all of her dross. (See Isa. 48:10; Mal. 3:1-6.) When this takes place, her troubles will be over.

#### 5. A third outburst of praise by the congregation

"We will be glad and rejoice in it. Save now, we beseech thee, O Jehovah:  
O Jehovah, we beseech thee, send now prosperity." (vss. 24b, 25)

According to these lines, the congregation again will burst forth in praise, rejoicing because of what God has done for Israel. There will instantly well up in their hearts the prayer, "Save now, we beseech thee, O Jehovah, we beseech thee, send now prosperity." When Israel thus makes her confession, pleads for mercy, she will implore Jehovah to save her and to send prosperity. Of late we have been hearing about

the Four Freedoms—freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom from fear, and freedom from want. The leaders of the world, during the great struggle of the recent war, promise the peoples these Four Freedoms. When they were first announced I said then, and I repeat it, that no man, nor any group of men, can fulfill such a hope. There can be no such thing as a warless world, as a permanent and a just peace—until the Prince of Peace returns to this earth in answer to this petition: "Save now we beseech thee, O Jehovah: O Jehovah, we beseech thee, send now prosperity."

What is the key to world peace and prosperity? to a warless world? There is but one answer: Israel must be given the truth concerning the Prince of Peace, she must be given it in such a way as to convince her of the mistake of the centuries so that she can utter this petition which she must and will gladly do. In keeping with this thought, let us remember the prediction of Isaiah: "I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offense, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me earnestly. Come, and let us return unto Jehovah: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days he will revive us: on the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live before him. And let us know, let us follow on to know Jehovah: his going forth is sure as the morning; and he will come unto us as the rain, as the latter rain that watereth the earth" (Hosea 5:15-6:3). When Jehovah in the person of the Hebrew Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, came nineteen hundred years ago, both the houses of Israel sinned against Him. In fulfillment of Hosea's prediction, He rent the nation and went back to His place from which He had come. He then declared that He would remain there in glory at the right hand of the throne of God "till they acknowledge their offense, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me earnestly." Since there can be no permanent peace and no prosperity till the Prince of Peace returns, and since He will never return until Israel acknowledges her offense against Him and seeks His face, and since she cannot do these things until she is given the facts regarding her sin and the necessity of her accepting Him, it becomes self-evident that the most important thing in the world today is to give the truth regarding Messiah to the nation of Israel. Let us do this in love. Let us do it in the most efficient manner. Let us do it by the quickest methods. This is not the duty of one person, but it is the responsibility—yes, high privilege—of every redeemed soul. Let each of us ask ourselves: Have we put Israel on our program where God put her—"For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16).

## 6. The voice of a priest

At this juncture in the services a priest standing by the alter looked up and intoned: "Blessed be he that cometh in the name of Jehovah" (vs. 26b). Thus the priest, as in a vision, saw some great dignitary, some honorable one approaching the alter in the midst of this ritualistic service. Whom did he see in vision? Who is this one that is pronounced blessed because he comes in the name of Jehovah? There is but one answer. He is the one coming in the name of Jehovah, in the nature and power of Jehovah. That this interpretation is correct is evident from the following passage: "Behold, I send an angel before thee, to keep thee by the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Take ye heed before him, and hearken unto his voice; provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgression: for my name is in him" (Ex. 23:20-21). In these verses the Lord promised Israel to send an angel before her to keep her in her way and to bring her into the Promised Land. She was warned, however, that she must give heed to him, and to hearken to his voice. Moreover she was warned not to provoke him, that is, *be not rebellious against him* (Marg. reading). The reason for this warning was, "for he will not pardon your transgression: for my name is in him." This angel had authority, power, right, and privilege to forgive or not to forgive.

But Israel was warned against being rebellious against him, for such a transgression would not be pardoned. The reason this angel would not pardon such a sin was the fact: "my name is in him." In being rebellious against him, Israel would be in rebellion against God's "name" that was in him (the angel). In other words, in sinning against this angel, they would be actually sinning against the *divine nature* in this angel. The facts show that this angel was not a created being, but was Jehovah himself, who would not forgive their rebellious transgression against Him, but would punish them, which thing He did.

In the light of the facts from the passage in Exodus which we have just examined, we can see that the statement, "Blessed be he that cometh in the name of Jehovah," is an affirmation that the one whom the priest saw approaching was none other than one in whose being was the nature of God. In other words, this one is God in human form, who enters the world, as already stated, by miraculous conception and virgin birth.

When this passage is read in the light of our Lord's lament over Jerusalem, it is seen that this interpretation is correct: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her! how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Matt. 23:37-39).

The interpretation which I have been forced by the facts to place upon this most important verse is in perfect alignment with the general trend of Hebrew prophecy, which constitutes the background of this special verse. Jacob, in Genesis 49:10, foretold the two comings of the one Messiah, blending them into a single picture:

"The sceptre shall not depart from Judah,  
Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, Until Shiloh come:  
And unto him shall the obedience of the peoples be."

Balaam, in the following passage, saw the second coming of the Messiah in glory:

"I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not nigh: There shall come forth a star out of Jacob, And a sceptre shall rise out of Israel, And shall smite through the corners of Moab, And break down all the sons of tumult" (Num. 24:17).

Isaiah foretold his virgin birth in 7:14: "Therefore the Lord himself will give to you a sign: behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." Then again the same prophet looking at his second coming, spoke of Him in these glowing terms: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of Jehovah of hosts will perform this" (Isa. 9:6,7).

Malachi, the last of the prophets, spoke of His return when He appears suddenly upon earth: "For, behold, the day cometh, it burneth as a furnace; and all the proud and all that work wickedness, shall be stubble;

and the day that cometh shall burn them up, sayeth Jehovah of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch" (Mal. 4:1).

These passages set forth the hope and the expectation of the Jewish nation, which is crystallized in Psalm 118, setting forth in pageant form the return of Israel to her God and her Messiah.

### 7. The priesthood welcoming Messiah

"We have blessed you out of the house of Jehovah.

Jehovah is God, and he hath given us light:

Bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the alter" (118:26b, 27).

As this annual service was being carried out according to the ritual as set forth here, the priests around the alter, looking toward the one impersonating the Messiah, as He approached, sang out, "We have blessed you out of the house of Jehovah." This language will find its fulfillment when the remnant of Israel, seeing the truth concerning Messiah and His redemptive work, will pronounce Him as the one blessed of Jehovah who alone can bless and bring deliverance and lasting peace.

Moreover, they will declare that Jehovah alone is God and He is the one who has given them light. All light comes from Him. All truth that we have has come to us through His prophets and finally through the Lord Jesus Christ, who alone is the light of the world. While He alone is the light of the world, we who know Him and who have the light of the gospel reflect that divine light and cause it to shine in the hearts of others in order that they might come to the light. God gives people light through the preaching of the gospel. This is seen in Romans, chapter 10. People cannot believe on Him of whom they have never heard. They cannot hear of Him without a preacher. A man cannot preach the gospel in the power of the Spirit unless he is called of God. God is depending on us who have the gospel to give it forth; to give it to His ancient people in order that they might be brought to the point that they see the light and acknowledge that He has given them the light. Dear friend, if you and I will not heed the admonition to give this light to Israel and through her to the world, God will raise someone else up who will be faithful and true to the charge here given.

"Bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the alter" (vs. 27b).

These are among the most difficult words in the Hebrew bible. What do they signify? Many guesses have been made, but none appear to me to indicate the meaning and yet I do not say that I comprehend them; but I shall give my understanding of them and submit it for the reader's consideration and wait for further light.

Since we have come in our study of this marvelous service to the point where the Messiah appears upon the scene an answer to Israel's plea for Him to return, and since the sacrifices were only typical of Him and were done away by His appearance in fulfilling them, it seems quite logical that the binding of the sacrifice to the alter indicates that all sacrifices of a typical nature cease when He appears, there being no further significance for them. A study of the book of Hebrews shows that they were types and shadows pointing forward to Him, who was their fulfillment. And yet, when He appears the second time there will be certain sacrifices that will be offered, but they will not have this significance. They will be memorial in their nature, looking back and indicating what He did when He came the first time.

### 8. The Doxology

"Thou art my God, and I will give thanks unto thee: Thou art my God, I will exalt thee" (vs. 28).

The whole congregation at this point of the service joined together in singing this verse. It is in acknowledgment that the one coming in the name of the Lord is really God, to whom they will always render thanks and whom they will exalt in their praises.

### 9. The refrain

"O give thanks unto Jehovah; for he is good; For his lovingkindness *endureth* for ever" (vs. 29)

Thus the congregation—carried into a state of ecstasy by the knowledge that Messiah is God in human form, is their Savior, and has brought them to this perfect day when all sorrow and sighing will pass away—rejoices as the choir concludes the service by singing the refrain which sets forth the blessed truth that God's goodness and grace will continue for ever and ever.

"O thou almighty Lord, Our Conqueror and King,  
Thy sceptre and thy sword, Thy reigning grace, we sing:  
Thine is the power; behold we sit In willing bonds beneath thy feet."

— *Watts*