

Psalm 117:1-2

“O Praise the LORD, all ye nations: praise him, all ye people. For his merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the LORD endureth for ever. Praise ye the LORD.”

Introduction

Psalm 117, the shortest Psalm in the Bible, two verses, in the Hebrew, seventeen words. Remember these Psalms, 113 to 118, the Hillel Psalms, sung certainly through the Passover dinner, some of them at the Feast of Tabernacles. You have to imagine Jesus and the disciples the night of the Passover, dinner, the Last Supper, as he's instituting these things, speaking to them. And Matthew 26:30 says they sung a hymn as they went out unto the Mount of Olives, these were the things they were looking at. These are the things that they were singing. So let's look at these two verses. If someone ever challenges you that you need to memorize a Psalm to pass a grade somewhere, pick this one.

“O Praise Ye The LORD, All Ye Goyim’

“O praise the LORD, all ye nations: praise him, all ye people. For his merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the LORD endureth for ever. Praise ye the LORD.” These challenges to praise, in verse 1, and the end of verse 2. “Praise ye the LORD” is not an invitation, it would be like an imperative, it's a challenge, it's a command, something that the writer is saying to do, it's a challenge, an obligation to praise. There in **verse 1, “praise the LORD” hillel** then down in the end of **verse 2, hillel**. Interesting, where it says **“praise the LORD” in verse 1, “all ye nations:”** then it says again, **“praise him, all ye people.”** that second word “praise” *sabback*, means “to loudly adore.” So this praise that they're asking for is not bashful. I know God is not hard of hearing, but he isn't nervous either. And I have a feeling, in the Temple, the Tabernacle and then the second Temple, just the sound, the volume, the wonder of these songs that rose off of the Temple courts before the LORD, with the smoke and the incense. A challenge here to praise, the object of the praise in this Psalm is the LORD, over and over, the LORD. The reason that they're to praise, is **“his mercy”** and **“his truth”**, and the ones that are

to praise, interesting, are **“all ye nations: all ye people.”** Look, this is a very interesting Psalm, here’s Jesus and the disciples, Passover night, leaving the upper room, singing no doubt, these would be the end Psalms, as they head out into the Mount of Olives, and you and I read this, we think it’s wonderful. But you have to understand, for the Jew, in Israel, it must have grated on them, in the middle of their Seder, every time they had to sing this, **“praise ye the LORD, all ye nations:”** yours might say *‘all ye Gentiles’*, that’s the idea, **“praise ye the LORD. all ye nations: praise him all ye people”**, because the Jews of Jesus’ day, again the Pharisees every morning prayed *‘Thank God I’m not a Gentile, a dog, or a woman.’* They felt that Gentiles [*Goyim*] were just fuel for the fires of hell, Gentiles were PrestoLogs as far as they were concerned. And here in the middle of their Seder, when they would sing these Psalms, these ancient sacred songs at the Passover, one of them they would sing would say **“praise the LORD, Jehovah, all ye nations.”** **‘Sing aloud, adore him out loud, all ye people,’** the reason, **“for his merciful kindness is great toward us:”** now the Hebrew kind of reads like this, **“his merciful kindness has been great towards,’** the idea is, **‘is mighty upon’** or **‘it has prevailed upon us,’** it gives us the idea that his great mercy endures, it says **“his mercy endureth for ever.”** It endures our nonsense, it endures our hardheadedness, it endures our failings. So the idea is, this is for all people, all nations, this is a global challenge **“For his merciful kindness has been mighty upon us, or has prevailed upon us”** no trickle here, this is a great outpouring of the mercy of God upon all people, all nations, **“and the truth of the LORD endureth for ever.”** goes on forever, so **“Praise ye the LORD.”** One author I read, Alexander McClaren said *“Mercy is love that stoops down and is kind, when justice asks otherwise.”* Mercy is love that stoops down to us, and is kind, when justice is asking for something else. And truth, without mercy is penal, it’s just punishment. And here of course, we have also in **Psalm 85**, there it says **‘Mercy and truth are met together.’** And certainly we see that on the cross, justice, mercy, truth, holiness, that God’s wrath being satisfied, all of it meeting there. But here, wonderfully in this Psalm, two verses, **“praise the LORD,”** **“O praise the LORD, all ye nations: praise him, all ye people. For his merciful kindness has been mighty upon us, it’s prevailed upon us: and the truth of the LORD endureth for ever. Praise ye the LORD.”**

Psalm 118:1-29

“O give thanks unto the LORD; for *he is good*: because his mercy *endureth* for ever. Let Israel now say, that his mercy *endureth* for ever. Let the house of Aaron now say, that his mercy *endureth* for ever. Let them now that fear the LORD say, that his mercy *endureth* for ever. I called upon the LORD in distress: the LORD answered me, *and set me* in a large place. The LORD *is* on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me? The LORD taketh my part with them that help me: therefore shall I see *my desire* upon them that hate me. *It is* better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man. *It is* better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in princes. All nations compassed me about: but in the name of the LORD will I destroy them. They compassed me about; yea, they compassed me about: but in the name of the LORD I will destroy them. They compassed me about like bees; they are quenched as the fire of thorns: for in the name of the LORD I will destroy them. Thou hast thrust sore at me that I might fall: but the LORD helped me. The LORD *is* my strength and song, and is become my salvation. The voice of rejoicing and salvation *is* in the tabernacles of the righteous: the right hand of the LORD doeth valiantly. The right hand of the LORD is exalted: the right hand of the LORD doeth valiantly. I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the LORD. The LORD hath chastened me sore: but he hath not given me over unto death. Open to me the gates of righteousness: I will go into them, *and* I will praise the LORD: this gate of the LORD, into which the righteous shall enter. I will praise thee: for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation. The stone *which* the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the LORD’s doing; it *is* marvellous in our eyes. This *is* the day *which* the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it. Save now, I beseech thee, O LORD, I beseech thee, send now prosperity. Blessed *be* he that cometh in the name of the LORD; we have blessed you out of the house of the LORD. God *is* the LORD, which hath shewed us light: bind the sacrifice with cords, *even* unto the horns of the altar. Thou *art* my God, and I will praise thee: *thou art* my God, I will exalt thee. O give thanks unto the LORD; for *he is good*: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.”

“Psalm 118 now, which is quoted over a dozen times in the New Testament. It is not an acrostic in that it is laid out according to the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet. But it is set in a number of different pairs to make it easy to memorize. If you’ll look, well let’s read through it, and then we’ll look at it. **“O give thanks unto the LORD; for *he is good*: because his mercy *endureth* for ever. Let Israel now say, that his mercy *endureth* for ever. Let the house of Aaron now say, that his mercy *endureth* for ever. Let them now that fear the LORD say, that his mercy *endureth* for ever.** That’s us. **“I called upon the LORD in distress: the LORD answered me, *and set me* in a large place. The LORD *is* on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me? The LORD taketh my part with them that help me: therefore shall I see *my desire* upon them that hate me. *It is better* to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man. *It is better* to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in princes. All nations compassed me about: but in the name of the LORD will I destroy them. They compassed me about; yea, they compassed me about: but in the name of the LORD I will destroy them.”** I get the feeling he was compassed about as you read through this. **“They compassed me about like bees; they are quenched as the fire of thorns: for in the name of the LORD I will destroy them. Thou hast thrust sore at me that I might fall: but the LORD helped me. The LORD *is* my strength and song, and is become my salvation. The voice of rejoicing and salvation *is* in the tabernacles of the righteous: the right hand of the LORD doeth valiantly. The right hand of the LORD is exalted: the right hand of the LORD doeth valiantly. I shall not die,”** Now remember, Jesus is singing this as he’s heading into Gethsemane. **“I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the LORD. The LORD hath chastened me sore: but he hath not given me over unto death. Open to me the gates of righteousness: I will go into them, *and* I will praise the LORD: this gate of the LORD, into which the righteous shall enter. I will praise thee: for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation. The stone *which* the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the LORD’s doing; *it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day *which* the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.*” Imagine again, Jesus saying this. **“Save now, I beseech thee, O LORD, I beseech thee, send now prosperity. Blessed *be* he that cometh in the name of the LORD; we have blessed you out of the house of the LORD. God *is* the LORD, which hath shewed us light: bind the sacrifice with cords, *even* unto****

the horns of the altar. Thou art my God, and I will praise thee: thou art my God, I will exalt thee. O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.” Martin Luther, when he translated this Psalm, it says Luther dedicated his translation of this Psalm to the Abbot, Frederick of Nuremburg, and in the dedication, he said, *“This is my Psalm, my chosen Psalm, I love them all, I love all holy Scripture, which is my consolation and my life. But this Psalm is nearest to my heart, and I have a peculiar right to call it mine. It has saved me from many oppressing dangers, from which neither emperors or kings nor sages nor saints could have saved me. It is my friend, dearer to me than all the honours and the power of the earth. But it may be objected that this Psalm is common to all. No one has a right to call it his own. Yes, but Christ is also common to all, and yet Christ is mine. I am not jealous of my property, I would divide it with the whole world, and would to God that all men would claim this Psalm as especially theirs.”* So, weighty, wonderful and beautiful this Psalm 118.

First Reason To Praise The LORD, His Mercy Endures Forever”

It begins by saying **“Give thanks unto the LORD”** and what’s repeated four times here is because **“his mercy endures forever.”** **“O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good:”** Most evidence of that, **“because his mercy endureth for ever. Let Israel now say, that his mercy endureth for ever.” (verses 1-2)** we have a bunch of “now says.” Let Israel say that. I hope they’re saying that tonight over there. **“Let the house of Aaron now say, that his mercy endureth for ever.” (verse 3)** and now this includes us, **“Let them now that fear the LORD say, that his mercy endureth for ever.” (verse 4)** Is that us? Look, do you fear the LORD? You know, the Bible says “the fear of the LORD is clean,” you know, the kind of fear that we have of the Lord as his children is not the kind of fear that has torment, but it is clean, it is sobering. Anybody’s whose had a good dad, I loved my dad, but I feared him too. Mom would always whack us, if she was just in a bad mood she’d whack you. She would whack us for anything. But when she had to say *“I’m telling your father,”* that was very sobering. So here, we should praise the LORD, he’s good. Major evidence of that, **‘his mercy endures forever.’** He’s not patient for a month, he’s not patient for six months, you can really wear out a human being if you expect him to be patient with you for six months [and yet, at times, God’s asked us to be patient about

unanswered prayer for years at times, so I guess God's trying to develop his patience within us]. It says **'He's good, his mercy endures forever.'** "Let the house of Israel now say, that his mercy endureth for ever. Let the house of Aaron now say, that his mercy endureth for ever. Let them now that fear the LORD say, that his mercy endureth for ever." (verses 2-4) does that sound right? Sounds good? Are you those that fear the LORD? Well let's say it. "*His mercy endures forever.*" Now everybody else whose just being uncooperative, you know, this means I'm getting into heaven. I have this pilgrimage I'm on, I haven't performed perfectly. I've made many mistakes, I've failed, I've found myself on my knees so many times before him. And the closer you walk with the Lord, the more into his light you come, the more aware you are of your imperfections [or if you really want to know your imperfections, get married, your wife will point them out to you]. The greatest experiences again, that I've had in the Lord's presence, is the more overwhelming sense *'I am such a sinful man.'* But the crushing weight of his presence was his love, his grace. And the wonderful thing for me, is **'his mercy endures forever, his mercy endures forever.'** You know, some of us, it says, we're gonna get into heaven [into the kingdom of heaven, which will end up on earth, Revelation 21], and our works will be done, our attitudes are going to endure the fire, you know, gold, silver, precious stones (cf. 1st Corinthians 3), and it says some of us, our works are going to be burnt up like wood, hay and stubble, but the soul itself shall be saved. Some of us are getting in with our rear-ends smoking. That's not the way you want to go. Peter prays that we would receive an abundant entrance into the kingdom of God. And there's no reason not to, because **'his mercy endures forever.'** Look, his grace, you know I hear people often say this, *'The gospel of grace, or up there in Calvary, the gospel of grace is a cheap, it's a cheap grace.'* There is no such thing as cheap grace, it cost the Father his own beloved Son, to watch his Son bleed his life into the ground, to lay upon him the sin of the world, to fire all of his holy wrath down on his own Son, when he could have stopped that process at any time, and was a Father who loved his Son more than any father that's ever lived has ever loved his son. There is nothing "cheap" about God's grace. The other side of that coin is, it is the most demanding Gospel that it is, because when you blow it today, you have no excuse not to get on your knees, confess your sins, ask him for forgiveness, and get up tomorrow with a fresh start, and go back at it again. You have no excuse, because the gospel of grace picks you up, dusts you off, and kicks you in

your rear end and says *'Let's get moving.'* And it's a wonderful thing, **'his mercy endures forever.'** I can understand why Luther enjoyed this, he got in a bad mood sometimes.

'God Is Our Real Ally, Trust In Him Not In Man Or Politicians'

Verse 5 says **"I called upon the LORD in distress: the LORD answered me, and set me in a large place."** These verses, 5 through 9 are going to tell us that God is an ally to those who trust him. **"the LORD answered me, and set me in a large place."** in a broad place, the Scripture in contrast to a narrow place, pressure, **'the LORD has set me in a wide place, or a broad place of advantage.'** **"The LORD is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?" (verse 6)** Sometimes we have to convince ourselves of that, don't we? **"I will not fear: what can man do unto me?"** the fear of man brings a snare, and some of us, we spend a major part of our lives afraid. You know, sometimes it's because of abuse when we were kids, sometimes we're in a situation where we never measured up sometime, and all of a sudden we have a God whose all-loving, whose telling us, **'I love you, my mercy endures forever. I don't see any spot or wrinkle in you.'** And we have to convince ourselves, you know, because we're so afraid of men and what they think. He says, **"The LORD taketh my part with them that help me: therefore shall I see my desire 'upon them that hate me.'" (verse 7)** the enemy is not going to triumph over me. And please listen, you know as Christians, we're not to rejoice in the destruction or the dismantling of any human being around us, you're supposed pray for those who despitely use you. [A proverb, yes, in the Old Testament, says we're not to laugh at the calamity of your enemy when he falls. So it's in the Old Testament too, you've just gotta look a little harder for it.] The truth is, there are principalities and powers and rulers of darkness in high places that are around us all the time. And you, as God's son or daughter, we are a specific target of spiritual warfare and of the enemy, and wonderfully here, you know **"the LORD taketh my part with them that help me."** he's on my side, **"therefore shall I see my desire upon them that hate me."** (verse 7) we're gonna see the LORD deal with principalities and powers. **"It is better"** and we're going to hear that twice now, **"It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man."** (verse 8) Anybody agree with that? **"It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man."** Anybody here

been let down by a man, disappointed by a man [or a woman]? I could write my list. I'm not supposed to, I'm supposed to forgive, I'm not supposed to be historical. I get hysterical once in a while, but I shouldn't be historical. Now here's the interesting thing about this verse, at least in our King James Bible, King James Bible, this is just free information, there's 3,568,489 letters, 810,697 words, 31,175 verses, 1,189 chapters, but the middle verse in all of that is **verse 8, "It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man."** I don't think that's just coincidental, I don't think there's any coincidence with God's Word. **"It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man."** How about this one? **"It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in princes"--politicians (verse 9)** News flash, right? I mean, you look at what's going on, this is a no-brainer. You know, the princes were the political leaders, **"It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in politicians."**

'God Has Our Back, Even On A National Level'

"All nations compassed me about: but in the name of the LORD will I destroy them." (verse 10) He's saying, listen to this, **"All nations"** plural, **"compassed me about:"** now probably this Psalmist is talking about possibly Nebuchadnezzar, the greatest forces in the world that surrounded Jerusalem, and through that lens no doubt he's seeing something even greater than that. But **"All nations compassed me about:"** this is not saying the crabby neighbor who always gives me a hard time. He's saying **"All nations compassed me about"**, they surrounded me with ill intention. **"but in the name of the LORD will I destroy them. They compassed me about; yea, they compassed me about: but in the name of the LORD I will destroy them." (verses 10-11)** **"They compassed me about like bees; they are quenched as the fire of thorns: for in the name of the LORD I will destroy them." (verse 12)** "like bees," that's bad. I don't know about you guys, I like honey, and I can deal with honey bees, I don't particularly like cicada killers, wasps, hornets, the whole family there that I could do without. They must have something to do with the fall. **"They compassed me about like bees; they are quenched as the fire of thorns: for in the name of the LORD I will destroy them." (verse 12)**

We're All In Spiritual Warfare If We're Real Christians

Now verse 13 and 14 have interesting verbs here. **“Thou hast”** now this is the Psalmist speaking at the enemy, thinking about how he’s been surrounded, **“Thou hast thrust sore at me that I might fall” (verse 13a)** [comment: having just watched the BBC’s *“The Last Kingdom”* and read four of Bernard Cromwell’s books about king Alfred the Great fighting the sword-Danes who had invaded the British Isles during the 800’s AD, this term “thrust sore at me” is an English term for sword-warfare, which was also extant during David’s time and Biblical times, and right up to the 1500s when muskets first appeared.] Any of us who have been in spiritual warfare should be able to embrace part of that statement. This is what the enemy wants, wants us to fall. And understand this, there is no spiritual progress without warfare. And understand this, if you’re not in sexual sin, you’re not watching pornography, you’re not in substance abuse, you’re not a hit-man, you’re not living in sin, then the way the enemy is going to come at you, is the tongue, the mouth. James tells us the tongue is set on fire of hell. He says here, **“Thou hast thrust sore at me that I might fall: but the LORD helped me. The LORD is my strength and song, and is become my salvation.” (verses 13-14)** [see <http://www.unityinchrist.com/Does/TheMatrix.htm>]

*“The Voice Of Rejoicing And Salvation Is In The
Tabernacles Of The Righteous”*

“The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous: the right hand of the LORD doeth valiantly.” (verse 15) in the homes of the righteous, in the tents of the righteous. So, the voice of rejoicing and salvation should be in the homes, the dwelling places of the righteous, your home, your family, your children, part of what should be part of that environment is rejoicing, salvation. [Comment: This same thought is reflected in **Deuteronomy 6:4-9**, **“Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God is one LORD: and thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy**

gates.” This would apply to having quality Christian music in our homes as well, Praise & Worship music.]

*Jesus And The Disciples Were Singing This As They
Crossed The Kidron To Gethsemane*

“The right hand of the LORD is exalted: the right hand of the LORD doeth valiantly. I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the LORD.” (verses 16-17) Imagine Jesus with the disciples, crossing into Gethsemane, crossing the Brook of Kidron. Kidron means “black.” It was called “black” because over 100,000 lambs would be sacrificed on the Temple courts, and the drainage system would drain all of that blood down into the Kidron, and then it would be washed away. There was an odor to it. And you crossed that brook, that valley at certain times of the year, and it was just black with blood. And imagine Jesus as a child, you know, he was up in the Temple precincts when he was 12, when Mary and Joseph had to go back and find him, he said **‘Didn’t you know I had to be about my Father’s business?’** Just think of him, year after year, going there and realizing **‘One day all of this is a picture of the blood that I’m going to shed here.’** And Jesus said to his disciples **“I have a baptism to be baptized with, and I am straightened till it is accomplished, that is what I am here for. I have not come to be served, but to serve and lay down my life a ransom for many.”** And imagine Jesus now, crossing Kidron, the smell, they had just sacrificed, Josephus tells us, about 200,000 lambs, the day before [this would have been the 13th Nisan, which the evening of, going on into the 14th Nisan, was the day/evening, the 13th/14thNisan, when Jesus held his Passover meal with the disciples. That’s the day when the majority of lambs would be sacrificed, before the daylight portion of the 14^h Nisan.] And they’re singing together, **“The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous: the right hand of the LORD doeth valiantly.” (verse 15)** they had no idea what was on the heart of Jesus. **“The right hand of the LORD is exalted: the right hand of the LORD doeth valiantly. I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the LORD.” (verses 16-17),** headed to Gethsemane. Isaiah 53 tells us the same thing, **“he shall see the travail of his soul.” “I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the LORD. The LORD hath chastened me sore: but he hath not given me over to death.” (verses 17-18)** isn’t that interesting?

This Speaks Of Jesus' Ascension To Heaven

“Open to me the gates of righteousness: I will go into them, and I will praise the LORD: this gate of the LORD, into which the righteous shall enter.” (verses 19-20) just access, **“Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be lift up ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in” (Psalm 24:7)** Imagine what it was like when he ascended. **“I will praise thee: for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation.” (verse 21)**

*“The Stone Which The Builders Refused Is
Become The Headstone Of The Corner”*

And now this last group of verses, so many of us are familiar with them, so relative to the Lord. **“The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the LORD’s doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day which the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.” (verses 22-24)** You know that Jesus would say to the Pharisees and the Sadducees, Jesus said to them, **“Did you never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner. This is the LORD’s doing, it is marvelous in our eyes. Therefore I say unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.”** Jesus quotes it, as he’s headed up to his crucifixion, and the religious leaders of the day are rejecting him, and he says **‘I am that very stone.’** Listen, of course in those days, they didn’t have blueprints specifically the way we have them, they had drawings. They didn’t have lasers for pouring foundations and stuff the way we do, they did it all with stone. And they of course would begin everything they did with a cornerstone. That was laid first. Then the floor, of whatever they were making, would be measured off of that cornerstone. Then the walls would be measured off of that cornerstone, and every other stone in the construction, and you and I are a living Temple (and living stones within that Temple God is building) and every other stone is relative to the cornerstone, it’s position, its function, where it was, how it stood, every other stone was relative to the cornerstone. [Comment: see <http://www.unityinchrist.com/prophets/Zephaniah/Zephaniah1.htm> and scroll to and start reading from Zephaniah 2:1-3 for an interesting study about God’s spiritual Temple construction project, and what is Jesus’ desire for the greater

Body of Christ in these end-times.] And as we go through Scripture we find Jesus Christ described as the smiting stone, the stumbling stone, or the cornerstone.

Jesus Christ, The Smiting Stone

In Daniel's prophecy, as he and his three friends are in Nebuchadnezzar's court, Nebuchadnezzar has a dream. And when he has this dream he calls for all his magicians and soothsayers, everybody there on his government payroll, and he says ***'I want you to interpret for me the dream that I just had.'*** And they say to him, ***'Well, you tell us the dream, then we'll interpret it.'*** He says, ***'No, I inherited all you cronies from my dad, if you're really soothsayers and magicians, you tell me the dream and what it means, or I'm going to cut off your heads and make your house a dunghill.'*** That was on his chariot, his bumper-sticker, ***'I'll cut off your heads and make your house a dunghill.'*** So, they say ***'There's one kid here who might be able to interpret it, Daniel.'*** Daniel says ***'O king, give me time here,'*** and he goes back to Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and says, ***'I think probably we should have a prayer-meeting.'*** And they say ***'What's up?'*** and he says ***'The king's had a dream, and if we don't come back with the right info he's going to cut off our heads and make our house a dunghill,'*** and they pray. You would too. And Daniel of course comes back, and he says ***'This was your dream, ok. And God gave it to you because he wants you to understand that the God who rules in heaven lifts up one ruler and he puts down another. And sometimes he sets over a nation even the basest, the most ungodly people as rulers in some nations. That's his business.'*** And he said, ***'You had a dream, and you saw this great image, O king, had a head of gold, chest and arms of silver, belly and thighs of bronze, and legs of iron, and then feet of with ten toes of iron and clay,'*** and he said, ***'you O Nebuchadnezzar are the head of gold.'*** He said, ***'After you shall come another kingdom, the Medes and the Persians, and then after them another kingdom, which was the Greeks, after them this iron, the Roman empire. And then in the very last days, some type of re-unification of the Roman Empire, with ten different characters to it,'*** whatever that might be, we're looking at the European Union here and we're seeing a reality in some of these things in the day that we live in. And what happens there is because God used Babylon to judge Israel, to destroy the Temple in

Jerusalem and so forth. At that point in time the empires of Gentile rule began to move forth [see <http://www.unityinchrist.com/kings/6.html> and <http://www.unityinchrist.com/ezra/ezra1.html> and http://www.unityinchrist.com/prophecies/2ndcoming_4.htm]. And they move through all of those hundreds of years and all of those empires, and all the way up to the last days, when God will finally remember his ancient people, take out his Church, and work again with his ancient people, who we see on the news today [i.e. the Israelis]. If you want to know what's going on in Israel, and you have an iPhone, just google "Red Alert" and put the app on your phone, and every time a missile is fired over there your phone will buzz. And you can sit by your phone and all day long it's going *zzz, zzz, or beep, beep*, while missiles are hitting in Israel, Red Alert, put it in. And every time that happens it should remind you of Daniel, Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 21, 2nd Thessalonians, Book of Revelation, every time you hear that beep it should say *Prophecy, Prophecy*, in fact you should see it, if you're more technical, if you could program your phone instead of beeping, to say the word '*Prophecy!*' every time a missile hits over there. But this is the world we're living in. And the end of that interpretation was ***'and then I saw O king, a great stone, falling from heaven, and it struck the image on the feet, and it destroyed that great image, and then grew into a great mountain, and filled the all of the earth.'*** So for some, Jesus Christ is the smiting stone. Listen, don't be disheartened when we look at the world, look what's going on around us, there are people who hate Christians, they hate Christ, they hate the Bible, they hate morality, they hate marriage as defined by the Bible, they hate Creation as defined by the Bible, they hate the fact that we say that Jesus is the only way to come to God. And there are nations, and they are in power now, this is their day, and they are rebelling against the truth. But if they don't repent and turn to him, they shall meet Jesus Christ the smiting-stone, and he will come. So we should pray for the lost world that we live in, so I hope there's great revival before he comes, because he will come, and when he comes, it tells us in ***Revelation chapter 19, 'Thou art faithful, thou art just, and what they're doing, they shed the blood of the prophets, now you're giving them blood to drink,'*** all of the horrendous things that will finally come, angels, saints, all say ***'Lord, you did everything you could to turn the hearts of men, you even sent finally an angel flying around the planet, preaching the everlasting Gospel in every language and tongue on the planet, and men will***

be shaking their fist at the sky, cursing the God of heaven.' And for them Jesus Christ is the smiting-stone.

Jesus Christ, The Stumbling Stone

For religious people, and the religious people in his day, he's a stumbling-stone. These Pharisees and Sadducees, the Sanhedrin who were running things, the problem was, they were building their own thing, and it wasn't what he was building. They were religious, they were building their own edifices and their own religious system, and they wanted things to work a certain way, and you had to keep the law of Moses and these are the rules you had to keep, and if you did all these things then you were righteous. And the Pharisees, some of them remarkably, had the first five books of Moses memorized. Some of them keeping the Law to the best of their ability. And yet Jesus would say ***"Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven."*** His disciples, their minds were blown when he said this. And it is the same today, there are religious people, they got their own thing going on, and because they have years of their lives invested in it, they can't stand the fact that you're saying *'All you need to do is trust Jesus, repent of your sins, ask his forgiveness and you'll have eternal life,'* they don't want to hear that. He's a stumbling-stone to them. *'You're mother, grandmother, we put the stained glass windows in, we got our name on the end of the pew, we've done this every week, we helped put the carpets in, we did this, and there you go to that stupid place in that old meter factory, and you and all your junkie friends are trying to tell me that they're going to heaven and we're not?'* and you say, *'Well that is what I'm trying to tell you, ya.'* And he's a stumbling-stone to the religious. [Comment: There are three categories of Christians within the greater Body of Christ. To see a description of them, see <http://www.unityinchrist.com/history/IntroChurchHistory.htm>] Because they want to earn something, they want to hold onto something, they're building something that he's not building, and his grace stumbles them.

Jesus Christ Is Our Cornerstone

Because we mess up, we get back on our feet again, we mess up, we get back on our feet again, we mess up, we get back on our feet again, because it's love, his mercy that stoops down in

kindness when justice wants something else. And he picks us up and he puts us back on our feet again. But to those who trust him, and those who believe, he's the chief cornerstone. And they're able to say, **'You know, this is the LORD's doing, and its marvelous in our eyes, this is the LORD's doing, it's marvelous in our eyes, the very stone the builders rejected because they were building something else, has become the headstone of the corner, and for me, my life now is measured off of Jesus Christ. What I do, where I go, what I say, how I treat my wife, how I treat my children, my grandchildren, what I do with my time, what I put before my eyes, our lives now should be measured off of him, he's the cornerstone.'** And the wonder of it is, his mercy endures forever. The wonder of it is, we're measuring off of a gracious, loving heavenly Father. And he is committed to continue the good work he's begun, and bring it to completion. He has set before us, we're not just going to a destination, we're going to an image, and he's conforming us into the image of his Son. **"The stone which the builders refused"** imagine Jesus now, he's headed into Gethsemane, he knows the religious leaders are going to kill him, because they're building some other thing, **"The stone which the builders refused, the Pharisees, the Sadducees refused is become the head stone of the corner."** (verse 22) I wonder what Jesus was thinking, because his disciples didn't even know, they would flee. They still didn't get it. And for him to sing these words, **"This is the LORD's doing, Jehovah's doing, it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day which the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it."** (verses 23-24)

What The Church Needs Now Is REVIVAL!

They cried this on Palm Sunday [which in reality of the timing of the event, actually occurred on Friday of the week] **"Save now, I beseech thee, O LORD: O LORD, I beseech thee, send now prosperity. Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the LORD: we have blessed you out of the house of the LORD."** (verses 24-26) A week earlier they were crying that out, they were screaming, and it tells us in **Luke 19, verse 41** that Jesus looked at the city, and he convulsed, the weeping there, as he convulsed, he was heaving, he was crying out loud. And he said, **'If you had only known, this day, the things that belong to your peace. But now your house is left unto you desolate.'** It was a specific day, the day prophesied again from the time that Artaxerxes gave the command to rebuild the walls

of Jerusalem, March 14th, 445BC, you add 173,880 days to that, and it comes out to Palm Sunday [actually Palm Friday, see <http://www.unityinchrist.com/lamb/lastsix.htm> for the precise timing of events leading up to and through the crucifixion of Jesus Christ]. The day that Jesus rode into Jerusalem, they should have known that day, the crowds are screaming **'Save now, blessed is he that comes in the name of the LORD.'** and it says Jesus, you read **Luke 19:38-41**, he's sobbing, he's sobbing. He says **'Your children are going to be slaughtered in the streets,'** they refused, they rejected the cornerstone, because they were building something different than what the Lord was doing. [While 70AD was a massive destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, a far greater destruction of Jerusalem and all Judea occurred from 132 through 135AD, called the Bar Kochba Revolt. For a description of this, log onto this link and scroll to the paragraph title **The Bar Kochba Revolt** and read through that account. <http://www.unityinchrist.com/history2/earlychurch1a.htm> this was a continuation of the fulfillment of what Jesus spoke.] **"Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the LORD: we have blessed you out of the house of the LORD. God is the LORD, which hath shewed us light: bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar."** (verses 26-27) how remarkable, look, there are, they say, almost 200 specific prophecies about the 1st coming of Jesus Christ [see <http://www.unityinchrist.com/prophecies/1stcoming.htm>]. They argue those numbers back and forth. But they believe that there's twice as many that speak of the 2nd coming [see <http://www.unityinchrist.com/prophecies/2ndcoming.htm> and http://www.unityinchrist.com/Prophets_Prophecy.html].

You know, and we can be in the Church long enough and be around all that long enough, familiarity breeds contempt, we can get desensitized. I remember, I got saved in '72, everybody's reading *Late Great Planet Earth* and *Satan Is Alive And Well*, you know, Hal Lindsey's books, and everybody was excited, you know, 1972, '73, '74, you shared Jesus with everybody, everybody was an evangelist, everybody was a pastor, everybody was in ministry, everybody was engaged, because we believed Jesus was coming, everyday it was a huge part of evangelism, there was a *Revival*, the Holy Spirit was moving, incredible things were happening, and there was conviction, you weren't just reading the Bible, *'Ok, I'll put it down in the Lost & Found until next Sunday,'* people read the Bible, *'How do I be a husband? How do I be a wife? How do I*

raise kids? What should I do with my drugs, what should I do with the alcohol? What should I do with my sexual activity? Everybody was looking, there was conviction, there were remarkable things happening. And we thought for sure Jesus was going to come by 1980, he didn't come. 1981, he didn't show up. 1990 he wasn't here. 1995, 2004, what's the deal? Now here we are at 2014. Pretty soon we'll be so hard of hearing, when the Trumpet blows I'm not going to be able to hear it. [laughter] No, you'll hear that with other than eardrums, I guarantee ya. What we have to be careful of, I look at the news today, and I know that he could come at any moment [for the Church, that is, either taking them to a place of safety or a rapture to the New Jerusalem, that heavenly city Abraham was looking for, prior to our coming back to earth with Jesus Christ to rule the world and put down WWII. It is debatable as to whether this rapture/place of safety removal from harms way occurs just before the 7 year tribulation or just before the start of WWII, which occurs 3.5 years into the tribulation period of time. People can debate and speculate all they want, I'm just gonna wait and see how God does it. He will do it, one way or the another, he said so in Revelation 3:10].

I'm praying that we'll see a great revival before he comes.

I think of so many lost. But we have become desensitized to the world we live in, we've become desensitized to sin, we've become desensitized to the world, the heathen world that's around us. I was listening to somebody the other day, and he said *'You know, raising kids, he said, years ago I thought one thing, but now, have your kids in home-school or a Christian school,'* or he said, *'these days not putting your kids in a Christian school, it's kind of like Abraham saying to Sarah, 'Did you go down and enroll Isaac in the Canaanite school yet? You know, the Canaanite bus is going to start coming to pick him up, and we need to get him down there,'* and just the way the world has changed, and what they're teaching in public schools, and just 55 million abortions since Roe v. Wade, think of what we've turned to, and we're desensitized to it, we've become numb to it. You say, *'The Canaanites were terrible, what they did,'* the Canaanite's record doesn't even come close to what's happened here since 1973, it doesn't even come close to the blood that is flowing here in the world that we live in. And I look around, and I realize, and his goodness and his mercy endures forever, I love reading that, *'Praise you the Lord, sing his mercies,'* because I know he's coming, and he's justified to come at any moment. I pray that we might see one more great ingathering before he comes, I pray that, I think of the revival in Wales in

1904, that was an inside-out revival. The Church was so cool, the Church needed to be set ablaze, and it poured out into the community, and evangelism was a byproduct, and millions turned to Christ. 1969-70, the Jesus Movement was an outside-in revival, just Hippies and just the whole counter-culture, everybody started getting saved, I remember witnessing to people high on LSD and they would pray the sinners prayer, and be straight, the Lord would bring them *right down!* And people were getting saved coming into the Church, it was an outside-in revival. I think we're ready for an inside-out revival again. The Church needs to be set ablaze again. And if you don't need that, pray for me, because I do, I need to be set ablaze, I need my heart to be on fire again. Because I can be very selfish and very comfortable...I can be very selfish and very comfortable, and there's people going to hell all around me. There's things in my life that are not Christlike. On the other side, I am so encouraged, because his mercy does endure forever. He loves me, he's called me, as he's called you. My life has a purpose, like yours does, we're all measured off of the chief cornerstone, every one of us here is relative to that cornerstone. It should determine how we get up, how we go to bed, what we do during the day, what we say to people, what we think of morality, what we do with our children, what we do with our spouses, we should be measuring our life off of that chief cornerstone. Because God is building something that the world isn't [see <http://www.unityinchrist.com/prophets/Zephaniah/Zephaniah1.htm> and start reading from Zephaniah 2:1-3]. **“Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the LORD: we have blessed you out of the house of the LORD. God is the LORD, which hath shewed us light:”** here's the light that he has showed us, **“bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar.” (verses 26-27)** imagine Jesus himself singing this. That is the light that God has given to us, that he so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever would believe on him would not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16). God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might have life. Men don't come to the light, because they love darkness, and very interesting, they agape darkness more than light. They're dedicated to darkness, committed to it more than light. But any that come to the light, and he is the light of men, they find life. How wonderfully, because God gives them light. What is the light? **“bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar.”** That's the light that God gives, the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ [see

<http://www.unityinchrist.com/misc/WhatIsTheGospel%20.htm>]. Isn't it wonderful to end then like this? **“Thou art my God, and I will praise thee: thou art my God, I will exalt thee. O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.” (verses 28-29)** you've bound your Son with cords to the altar. You art my God, I will praise you, you are my God, I will exalt you, the cry, O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is good. How do we know that? Because his mercy endures forever. Let's bow our hearts, we'll have the musicians come...[transcript of a connective expository sermon on Psalm 117:1-2 and Psalm 118:1-29, given by Pastor Joe Focht, Calvary Chapel of Philadelphia, 13500 Philmont Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19116]

related links:

“Thou hast thrust sore at me that I might fall”—we're all in spiritual warfare. See, <http://www.unityinchrist.com/Does/TheMatrix.htm>

“The stone which the builders refused”---Jesus' Temple construction project, see <http://www.unityinchrist.com/prophets/Zephaniah/Zephaniah1.htm>

Three types of Christian churches, see, <http://www.unityinchrist.com/history/IntroChurchHistory.htm>

For the glorious light God gives, see <http://www.unityinchrist.com/misc/WhatIsTheGospel%20.htm>