



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



The Holy Book of Psalms

Psalm 118

Metropolitan Youssef



Introduction

- This Psalm has no title, nor the name of the author
- Many believe the author is David based on what is suggested in Ezra 3:10-11 that Psalm 118 was sung at the founding of the second temple, and when they sang it, they attributed it to David
- In addition, the Psalm carries David's spirit
- But many think it was written after the captivity
- The Psalm, seems to describe either David or some other man who was appointed by God to a high and honorable office in Israel
- The theme of this Psalm, as a Temple song, is thanksgiving for recent deliverance



Introduction

- The psalmist praises God for His delivery from evils; puts his whole trust in Him, and prophesies the coming of Christ
- In terms of its occasion, some connect the Psalm with the great celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles recorded in Nehemiah 8
- But it is generally thought to be written by David, after he was established in the kingdom, and had brought the ark of the Lord into the city
- He then invites his friends to join with him, not only in a cheerful acknowledgment of God's goodness, but in a believing expectation of the promised Messiah



Introduction

- It is very manifest that the Psalmist had a prophetic view of our Lord Jesus; the frequent quotations from this Psalm in the New Testament prove this beyond all questions
- In the New testament, we find quotations from it in: Hebrews 13:6; Mark 11:9,12:10-11; Acts 4:11; and 1 Peter 2:7
- Christ Himself applies verse 22 to Himself, *“Jesus said to them, ‘Have you never read in the Scriptures: ‘The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone. This was the LORD’s doing, And it is marvelous in our eyes?’”* (Matthew 21:42)



Introduction

- And the multitudes, receiving the Lord Christ on His triumphant entry into Jerusalem, cried out with verses: 25 and 26 *“Hosanna to the Son of David! ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!’ Hosanna in the highest!”* (Matthew 21:9)
- The Psalm was a liturgical one, complete with speaking parts for leaders and congregation
- The Psalm was evidently intended to be sung by the procession of worshippers on their way to the Temple at the Passover and other festivals
- This is the last Psalm of six Egyptian Hallel Psalms that were recited during the Passover and other major Jewish festivals



Introduction

- The Egyptian Hallel Psalms commemorated the deliverance of Israel from Egyptian slavery
- Worshipers recited Psalms 113-114 at the beginning of the service and Psalms 115-118 at the end
- Though this was likely David's Psalm, it was also Jesus' Psalm
- This is above all, is the triumph song of Christ
- He is the ideal Servant, the perfect Priest, the Leader of the people
- These words meant so much to Him as He sang them on that night in the upper room



Introduction

- Verses 24-26 of this Psalm are used in the prayer of the Offering of the Lamb every Sunday in the Divine Liturgy of the Coptic Church
- The same verses are prayed as part of the Psalm of the Divine Liturgy of the Feast of the Resurrection
- In addition, it is used by the Coptic church in the readings of the second day of the Feast of the Cross; based on the fact that the cross is seen as a glorification of the name of the crucified Jesus Christ: (verses 15, 16, and 28)
- The church prays it at the beginning of the sunset Vespers (the 11th hour), the hour in which the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ was taken down from the Cross



Introduction

Psalm Outline

- Praising God for His Great Mercy 118:1-4
- Relying on God the Savior 118:5-18
- The Song of the Great Deliverer 118:19-29

Praising God for His Great Mercy 118:1-4



- The Psalm begins by a collective thanksgiving said by the whole congregation with the spirit of joy, giving thanks to the Lord, for the riches of His mercy
- The whole congregation stand, calling the priestly house of Aaron, and all those who fear the Lord, to give Him thanks for His abundant and forever enduring mercies
- Many of the Psalms call upon God's people to thank Him
- This Psalm opens with a heart spirited call, indicated by the word *Oh*
- God's goodness is so great and apparent that it deserves fervent passionate thanks

Praising God for His Great Mercy 118:1-4



- David invites all to praise God, and gives a reason for their doing so, *for He is good* nothing shorter and at the same time more exalted, uplifting, and holy could be said of Him
- St. Augustine says, “The praise of God could not be expressed in fewer words than these, *for He is good* I see not what can be more solemn than this brevity, since goodness is so uniquely the quality of God, that the Son of God Himself when addressed by someone as “Good Master,” ... considered Him as man only, replied, ‘Why do you call Me good? There is none good but One, that is, God.’ And what is this but to say, If you wish to call Me good, recognize Me as God?”

Praising God for His Great Mercy 118:1-4



- This reason is enough for giving Him thanks
- Goodness is His essence and nature, and therefore He is always to be praised whether we are receiving anything from Him or not
- It is such goodness only that deserves to be praised; so, he adds, *For His mercy endures forever*
- *For His mercy*, To show that God, in His actions, is good, and as such, is deserving of praise; for the wretched have no better way of coming at a knowledge of God's goodness than through His mercy
- For it was His mercy that created, redeemed, protects, and will crown us; and, thus, *His mercy endures forever*

Praising God for His Great Mercy 118:1-4



- This Psalm begins and ends with the declaration, *His mercy endures forever*
- As Jesus sang the words *for His mercy endures forever*, He did it with complete knowledge that the endurance of God's mercy would be tested to the utmost in the work to come the next day at the cross
- Then three groups are called on
- He invites first Israel to remember God's works with them, and to offer to Him a sacrifice of thanksgiving, having set them free from the bondage of Pharaoh, brought them to the promised land

Praising God for His Great Mercy 118:1-4



- Perhaps he invites the whole house of *Israel*, first because the Apostles were descended from them, and they were the first believers in Jesus Christ
- Then he invites, *the house of Aaron*, the priests, because God has chosen them for the priestly work
- God made miracles for them, as when the fire descended from heaven, and when the earth opened up, a rod blossomed, and countless other things happened for their sake
- St. John Chrysostom says, “Here he invites the priests as a distinct group to singing of praise, showing to what extent the priesthood outrank others.”

Praising God for His Great Mercy 118:1-4



- Some think that he puts the names the house of Aaron in the second place, next to the Apostles, because: "*a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.*" (Acts 6:7)
- Then at last the psalmist invites *those who fear the Lord*, the real Israel, the true worshippers of God
- Some believe that this group points to all the gentiles who believed and united with the rising Church and thus invites the whole Church, formed of Jews and gentiles, to praise God
- Some commentators think this suggests that the Psalm was written with distinct parts meant for different groups in the congregation

Relying on God the Savior

118:5-18



- The never-ending mercy of God was shown when *the Lord answered* the psalmist's cry of *distress*
- God answered by setting the Psalmist in a secure, *broad place* where he could confidently stand
- As if he had given an example of the divine mercy in him who was in great dangers, but, imploring God's protection and help, He answered him, and *set him in a broad place*
- God not only delivered him, but placed him in a secure condition, free from all such persecution
- This is applicable to David; he faced so many tribulations

Relying on God the Savior

118:5-18



- God delivered him from all his troubles, placed him on the throne of Israel, and gave him rest from all his enemies, Psalm 31:8
- As this may also refer to the Messiah, His distresses in the garden, *“He was withdrawn from them about a stone’s throw, and He knelt down and prayed, saying ... And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.”* (Luke 22:39-46)
- Jesus was glorified; He sits at the right of God, Hebrews 1:3
- And may be applied to His members, the Church
- The Church faced many persecutions from which she was delivered

Relying on God the Savior

118:5-18



- Prayers is necessary; and nothing is more proper than to call upon the Lord
- As when Herod threw St. Peter into prison, *“Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church.”* (Acts 12:7)
- The church prayer was heard at once, *“And when Peter had come to himself, he said, ‘Now I know for certain that the Lord has sent His angel, and has delivered me from the hand of Herod and from all the expectation of the Jewish people.’”* (Acts 12:11)
- He was saved from the depth of tribulation to the fullest extent of peace and consolation

Relying on God the Savior

118:5-18



- *The Lord is on my side*, The Lord is with me; He is my helper and defense
- The never-ending mercy of God was shown by God's open favor and help to the one who called upon Him
- God is on the side of His people, to fight their battles for them, to support them under all their afflictions, to supply all their needs, to deliver them from all evil
- David, or God's people, being taught by experience, exults in great confidence
- Knowing God was on his side, he could live free from the *fear* of man, knowing *what can man do to me?*

Relying on God the Savior

118:5-18



- But he does not say, the Lord is my helper, and I shall suffer no more; he knows that while he is a sojourner here on earth, he will have much to suffer from his daily enemies
- But, he says, *The Lord is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me?*
- I will not be troubled in regard to any difficulty I may face from man, for so he reminded us of Christ has said, *“And I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do.”* (Luke 12:4)
- The Lord will turn all such things to good, *“all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”* (Romans 8:28)

Relying on God the Savior

118:5-18



- St. John Chrysostom says, “He did not say, ‘I shall not suffer,’ but *I will not fear What can man do to me*, that is, even if I should suffer, I am not afraid, which is what St. Paul also said, ‘*if God is for us, who is against us?*’”
- *those who help me*, The psalmist had friends who stood by him
- He relied, indeed, on their aid, but not on their aid without God
- The psalmist had nothing to fear, even from *those who hated* him
- St. John Chrysostom says, “Do you see him not taking revenge or using retribution but leaving to God that taking vengeance on his enemies.”

Relying on God the Savior

118:5-18



- *It is better to trust in the Lord*, This is stated apparently as the result of his own experience
- He had found people weak and faithless; he had not found God so
- David knew that by experience, for he entrusted Saul his king, at another time in Ahithophel, his own most prudent minister, besides several others, and they all failed him, but he never confided in God, without feeling the benefit of it
- He, therefore, says, strongly advising all, *It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man*
- The psalmist draws a useful counsel from what he has said, on placing all our hope in God, and not in man, however powerful

Relying on God the Savior

118:5-18



- Neither the common *man* or even *princes* among men could help the way God can help
- Princes are only men; often as faithless and deceitful as other men
- It *is better to trust* Him
- For God is always both able and willing to help those who put their trust in Him
- While men are very often unable, or when they are able, being influenced by various desires, are not always willing to offer any help

Relying on God the Savior

118:5-18



- According to St. John Chrysostom, such a comparison is just suited to man's wretchedness
- He explains that people are well acquainted with the power of man, and especially of princes; while God's power is hidden to many, who neither see it, nor reflect upon it; perhaps, even disbelieve God's greatness
- Perhaps he should have had to say, it is good to hope in the Lord, and evil to hope in man
- So, Jeremiah says, "*Cursed is the man who trusts in man.*" (Jeremiah 17:5)

Relying on God the Savior

118:5-18



- From his own example, the psalmist shows the advantage of putting one's trust in God; for it was not once, but several times, that he was surrounded by a most powerful enemy on all sides, and was most miraculously so rescued by God
- If we refer the passage to David, everyone knows how often he was overpowered by Saul with a numerous army, and most unexpectedly and miraculously rescued
- *surrounded me, Yes, they surrounded me*, the idea is repeated for emphasis, and it signifies the frequency and strength of their attacks, and their adamant persisting therein

Relying on God the Savior

118:5-18



- *in the name of the Lord I will destroy them*, which also is repeated to show the strength of his faith, and its endurance, despite his numerous enemies, and their violent efforts against him
- One may picture Jesus singing these words, knowing that only a few hours later He would be truly surrounded by those who would mock, torture, and kill Him – with, no doubt, a multitude of *nations* surrounding Him
- The image of the *bees* may be derived from Deuteronomy 1:44
- His enemies were in great numbers; as a swarm of bees, which, being irritated, will fly upon people and with great fury

Relying on God the Savior

118:5-18



- *They surrounded me like bees*, so as to leave no chance of escape
- And to show their fury, he says, *They were quenched like a fire of thorns*
- Their fury dies away and goes out suddenly, like a fire burnt among thorns, which blazes up with vast heat and noise, but in a short time dies down and disappears
- The Psalmist uses expressive imagery to show how he exalts the protection of the divine hand, that can protect the just and righteous even when invaded by cruel adversaries

Relying on God the Savior

118:5-18



- St. John Chrysostom says, “He did not simply say, *They surrounded*, but *like bees*, and *like a fire of thorns*, suggesting by the *bees* the intensity of their anger, and by the thorns the intolerance character of that anger ... Who after all, will extinguish fire in the middle of thorns? Yet despite such intensity, such rapidity in their being inflamed and encircling me, not only did I escape but I even obtained vengeance... God’s name, invincible armor, irresistible support, drove them all off.”

Relying on God the Savior

118:5-18



- Having previously illustrated the multitude and the cruelty of his enemies, he now acknowledges his own weakness, as being quite unable to compete with them, that God may thus have greater glory in the matter
- The psalmist, as if he sees the enemy again before him, addresses him as if he was present
- As Saul was to David; who tried to take away his life by speaking to his servants to kill him
- *But the Lord helped me*, may have reference to the various dangers David had from time to time to encounter

Relying on God the Savior

118:5-18



- St. John Chrysostom says, “The adversities so prevailed over me, he says, that I was close to falling and being brought down. I was pushed and driven backwards, in fact, to the point of falling down; but just when I was about to be brought to my knees and laid low, and all human support was despaired of, then He made manifest His assistance. Now, God does this lest anyone claim the credit for themselves.”
- And as was Judas to Christ, who lifted up his heel against Him, and betrayed Him into the hands of His enemies
- And so Satan *pushes violently*, at the members of Christ, to cause them to fall into sin

Relying on God the Savior

118:5-18



- *The Lord is my strength and song, and He has become my salvation*, He is the source of strength to the psalmist
- There is no ground of praise in anything that the psalmist has done, but all is due to Him
- This marvelous praise is the song of victory, often sung by the prophets (Exodus 15:2; Isaiah 12:2); and is sung by the church, especially during the rites of the great Friday
- When the *Lord* is our *salvation*, it means we put our trust for help and deliverance in none other
- He is our rest and rescue and the author of temporal, spiritual, and eternal salvation

Relying on God the Savior

118:5-18



- *The voice of rejoicing*, Of thanksgiving for the salvation and deliverance which God has done for him
- Applying verse 15 to the account of David's appointment to the throne; his deliverance from Saul; and his victories over all his enemies; this may mean that nothing was heard throughout the land of Israel, in all the dwellings of good men, but the voice of joy
- The reference may be to *the tents* of pilgrims constructed for the feast outside Jerusalem at which the song was probably sung
- He seems to connect the Psalm with the Feast of Tabernacles

Relying on God the Savior

118:5-18



- *The right hand of the Lord does valiantly*, In helping and assisting David, in protecting and defending him, in raising him to the throne, and in giving him rest from all his enemies
- Some commentators think that this joy here expressed refers to future times, the times of the Messiah
- And in an old writing of the Jews *the right hand of the Lord*, three times mentioned in this verse and verse 16, is interpreted of the Messiah

Relying on God the Savior

118:5-18



- The power of God is superior to all enemies; and is beyond comprehension and expression; and is able to do for His people above all they are able to ask or think
- *The right hand of the Lord does valiantly*, This is repeated for confirmation and to show how much the righteous were affected with it
- Repeating *The right hand of the Lord*, three times may refer to the Trinity
- Also, *The right hand of the Lord*, is the might and power of the Son of God, Who has done His work bravely and powerfully

Relying on God the Savior

118:5-18



- The Son of God is called in Scripture the right hand of the Lord, because it is through the Son that the Father has done, and still does, everything, *“All things were made through Him.”* (John 1:3)
- *“through whom also He made the worlds;”* Hebrews 1:2)
- *“Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?”* (Isaiah 53:1)
- Here *the right hand of the Lord* has given strength, inasmuch as it exalted him, and lowered his enemies, which is just as applicable to the Church as to David
- *I shall not die, but live,* The psalmist saw that he was in danger, and he was surrounded by enemies, and sought his life

Relying on God the Savior

118:5-18



- But he had the assurance that they would not be victorious
- The psalmist was confident that God would keep him from death in the present crisis and he would live to declare what God had done for him
- As Jesus sang this song at the upper room with His disciples, He could proclaim this confidently – that death would keep no hold upon Him, but He would *live, and declare the works of the Lord*
- According to St. John Chrysostom in saying *I shall not die*, he means the other death referred to by the Lord saying: *“He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live, And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die.”* (John 11:25-26)

Relying on God the Savior

118:5-18



- The psalmist had been greatly afflicted, and he now looked upon his affliction in the light of a fatherly *chastisement* or correction
- The psalmist understood that God had a corrective purpose in allowing the present crisis, but God would not allow it to destroy him
- Rather, the crisis would be of benefit
- St. John Chrysostom says, “The psalmist not only gives thanks because he is free, but he is also aware of the great grace he had in falling, and he mentions the advantage of temptation. What, in fact? *The Lord has chastened me*, he says. This is the value of perils, that they make one better.”

The Song of the Great Deliverer

118:19-29



- At this point it seems that the procession reaches the end and the psalmist suggests with the image of *the gates of righteousness*, that is the Holy Door of the Temple of Zion
- The procession accompanies the hero to whom God has granted victory
- The gates of the Temple are called *gates of righteousness* because it is the dwelling of the righteous God (Jeremiah 31:23), from where (Psalm 20:2) He manifests His righteousness in the salvation of His people
- He asks that the gates be opened to him, so that he may *praise the Lord*

The Song of the Great Deliverer

118:19-29



- So, the psalmist probably had in mind a triumphal entry into the holy city with those gates *open*, he would *go through them*, full of *praise to the Lord*
- *the gates of righteousness*, The gates of the kingdom of heaven which is all justice
- It may point to the heavenly Jerusalem, where no sinners are to be found
- *And I will praise the LORD*, because, according to Psalm 84:4, *“Blessed are those who dwell in Your house; They will still be praising You.”*

The Song of the Great Deliverer

118:19-29



- As Jesus praised with this Psalm, He proclaimed His entrance into the ultimate reality of heaven, of which Jerusalem was only a shadow
- After His completed work on the cross, after His deliverance from death in the resurrection, He would be received in glory at the ascension
- *This is the gate of the Lord*, Now one may picture the singer actually passing through the open gate, declaring God's great works for *the righteous*
- This gate of justice is the true gate, the only gate that leads to the Lord, and, therefore, only the just shall enter through it

The Song of the Great Deliverer

118:19-29



- In verse 19, the psalmist mentions *the gates of righteousness*, in plural and then in verse 20 in singular, *the righteous shall enter*
- It probably refers to the entrance of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the Firstborn of those risen from the dead; to Him who precedes us by His ascension to heaven, to open up its gates to His believers, for through Him they are counted as righteous
- He now in verse 21, explains what he said in verse 19, *I will go through them, and I will praise the Lord* for he says, *I will praise You*
- Having passed into the holy city, he openly praised God for the answer and the salvation previously mentioned in this Psalm

The Song of the Great Deliverer

118:19-29



- For though the just ask for many and various things in this world, they all tend to one petition, of which Psalm 27:4, says, *“One thing I have desired of the Lord, that will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.”*
- Concerning this petition, then, he says, *I will praise You, for You have answered me* which is explained more fully when he adds, *And have become my salvation*, You that were my hope have become my salvation
- St. Clement of Rome commented on *the gates of righteousness* and says, “For many gates stand open: the gate of justice is the gate of Christ, and all are blessed who enter by it and direct their way ‘in holiness and justice’, accomplishing all things without disorder”

The Song of the Great Deliverer

118:19-29



- A metaphor from building, as if a stone should be cast away by workmen as unfit
- The figure would then be applicable to anyone who, for any purpose, was rejected
- The *cornerstone* connecting the walls together was a most important part of the structure
- A large and strong stone was needed for the purpose
- The primary and literal meaning may seem to be Israel, which the world have rejected, nevertheless, despite their rejection, reached such a position, that it may be regarded as the head cornerstone

The Song of the Great Deliverer

118:19-29



- According to St. John Chrysostom, *The stone which the builders rejected* is evident and clear to everyone that it refer to Christ
- Our Lord applies it to Himself in His sincere warning to the Pharisees of the consequences of rejecting Him (Matthew 21:42; Mark 12:10-11; Luke 20:17)
- St. Peter also quotes it (Acts 4:11; 1 Peter 2:7), also (Ephesians 2:20)
- Christ is the corner stone, that unites angels and godly men together, Jews and Gentiles, Old and New Testament saints, and He is the head stone, *the chief cornerstone*

The Song of the Great Deliverer

118:19-29



- The psalmist spoke here on behalf of those redeemed by the Lord and whose life and future is built upon that *chief cornerstone*
- They rejoice in God's *marvelous* work, despite the rejection of the builders
- *Lord's doing* by His plan, without any intervention on the part of man, and, therefore, *It is marvelous in our eyes*
- It is a matter for wonder, for rejoicing, and for praise, that one, despised, rejected, crucified, has been raised from the grave; that His teaching has spread so far over the world

The Song of the Great Deliverer

118:19-29



- And that He Himself is exalted to a rank *“far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.”* (Ephesians 1:21)
- *This is the day* on which such a thing was accomplished, the day of the resurrection, beyond doubt is really the day *the LORD has made*, and, therefore, for such a favor *We will rejoice and be glad in it*
- When Jesus quoted Psalm 118:22 in Matthew 21:42, Mark 12:10-11, and Luke 20:17, He did so in response to the praise and hosannas given to Him

The Song of the Great Deliverer

118:19-29



- Some think that since this Psalm is prophetically connected with that event, *the day* mentioned here may be prophetically understood as the day Jesus formally entered Jerusalem as Messiah and King
- St. John Chrysostom comments on the word day and says, “Here he gives the name day not to the sun’s course but to the achievements wrought in it: as speaking of an evil day does not refer to the course of the sun but to the evils in it, so too a good day means the achievements in it.”

The Song of the Great Deliverer

118:19-29



- These are the very praises that the crowd saluted our Savior with as He entered Jerusalem, with the exception of using the word “Hosanna,” instead of, *Save now, I pray, O Lord; O Lord* as we have it here
- Thus, the Lord on that day wished to make a visible exhibition of, and to anticipate the invisible triumph He was about to enjoy on the day of His resurrection
- The psalmist is praying that God will continue and carry forward the work which He has begun
- *I pray, send now prosperity*, Very similar to the words of Nehemiah’s prayer (Nehemiah 1:11)

The Song of the Great Deliverer

118:19-29



- The context of the open gates in verse 19, and the coming into the city, as well as the arrangement of this Psalm give the sense that these are words from different speakers or parts of a choir
- *Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord*, The priests, or the Levite in charge, in the Temple bless the entering procession
- These words were used by the multitude that followed Christ, as He went into Jerusalem, in order to eat His last Passover, and suffer and die for His people
- *We have blessed you from the house of the Lord*, These are the words of the priests, one part of whose office it was to bless the people, Numbers 6:23

The Song of the Great Deliverer

118:19-29



- *God is the Lord*, This is a brief but important focus on God as the true God, above all idols
- It is a summary of all, as much as to say, our Lord is the true God, and He has shone upon us by showing us the light of His mercies
- The Lord might be said to show them light, by sending the Messiah to them, who came a light into the world
- These are the words of the people, acknowledging divine favors; particularly that the Lord had caused His face to shine upon them, as the priest wished for, Numbers 6:25

The Song of the Great Deliverer

118:19-29



- Having received the priestly benediction, the procession resumes
- They have entered within the courts; they are approaching the altar of sacrifice; they have brought their offering
- *God, they say, is the Lord, and He has given us light*
- That is, He has enlightened our spirits to see and acknowledge His mercies
- Or, perhaps, He has led us, as He did the people, by a pillar of fire in the wilderness, (Exodus 13:21; Nehemiah 9:12,19); and to the priestly blessing (Numbers 6:25), and now we stand before the altar with our offering

The Song of the Great Deliverer

118:19-29



- *Bind the sacrifice with cords*, Take a lamb for sacrifice, and bind it with cords; and being bound, lead it to the altar; there slay it, and then pour the blood upon the horns of it; which were the usual rites in sacrifice
- Or bring a large number of sacrifices bound, as many as will fill the court, even up to the horns of the altar, upon this joyful occasion
- For the sacrifice was not bound to the horns of the altar; but it signifies here such a number of sacrifices as would fill the court, and reach there

The Song of the Great Deliverer

118:19-29



- There might be a reference to the Feast of Tabernacles
- As if he is asking to appoint a feast day, by bringing in lots of green branches to ornament the temple to the very horn of the altar
- St. Jerome explain the word 'cords' to mean *strong branches*, (Ezekiel 19:11 and in Leviticus 23:40, '*boughs of leafy trees*') with reference either to the boughs of which the booths were made, or to the bundles of branches, known in later times as Lulab, which the worshippers at the Feast of Tabernacles carried
- It is remarkable to consider and understand that *Jesus sang these words with His disciples a few hours before His crucifixion.*

The Song of the Great Deliverer

118:19-29



- He invited God the Father to *bind* Him to the cross in making a holy sacrifice for sins at God's appointed *altar*
- Hebrews 13:10 makes reference to the sacrifice of Jesus at an *altar*, probably speaking of the cross
- As we follow Jesus our forerunner, we also *bind* ourselves *with cords to the horns of the altar* of living sacrifice to Jesus (Romans 12:1-2)

The Song of the Great Deliverer

118:19-29



- This is the acknowledgment made by each and all, and probably repeated many times, while the sacrifice is being consumed upon the altar
- These words may be taken to be in the mouth of the deliverer who arrived through the open gates
- He rightly surrendered Himself to God, filled with praise in view of the ultimate triumph
- The voice of Jesus singing this praise and exaltation of God echoed through the upper room as evidence of His submission and obedience

The Song of the Great Deliverer

118:19-29



- *Oh, give thanks to the Lord*, This Psalm began with cheerful and heartfelt praise, and it ends with the same – recognizing once again the goodness of God at the end of it all
- He concludes this Psalm as he began it, for God's glory must be the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, of all our addresses to Him
- St. Augustine says, “With this the Psalm commences, with this it ends; since, as from the commencement which we have left behind, so in the end, whither we are returning, there is not anything that can more profitably please us, than the praise of God, and Alleluia evermore.”



Discussion

- What call introduces the Psalm?
- On which main character trait of God does this Psalm focus?
- The Psalmist says in verse 6 that he will not be afraid of man. Why should we have no fear of man according to Isaiah 51:11-13; Jeremiah 20:10-13; Matthew 10:28 and Romans 8:31-39? Whom should we fear and why?
- How did the psalmist depend on the Lord in his time of need?

Discussion



- How did the psalmist respond to God's deliverance?
- How did the Israelites respond to the psalmist's song of praise?
- What can we learn from the psalmist about how to deal with hardship and adversity?
- What attitude should we have toward our own difficult circumstances?

Discussion



- Read Matthew 21:42; Mark 12:10-11; Luke 20:17; Acts 4:10-11; Ephesians 2:20-22, and 1 Peter 2:4-8. What do these verses have in common? Who is the chief cornerstone? Why do you think this truth is mentioned in Psalm 118:22-23?
- What are the Messianic references in this Psalm that are quoted in the Holy Gospels?
- Which verse might indicate that the psalmist believes in the Resurrection?