

"How often do we come into God's presence with all praise and no prayer?" (Clarke, p. 285).

We know neither the author nor the background of this Psalm. This fact concentrates attention on its message.

It is unique for at least three reasons:

- (1) It is the shortest Psalm in the Bible.
- (2) It has to do with Gentiles - not Jews (except for the fact that we can be sure that it was written by a Jew).
- (3) It is all given to worship. There are no petitions in it.

Note in the make-up of the Psalm that:

- (1) There are two words for PRAISE.
- (2) " " " " " THE GENTILES.
- (3) " " " " " THE ATTRIBUTES

OF GOD.

- (4) There are two words for GOD (but God is an abrev. of Jehovah)

**117:1** "Praise" - 144. That God is a stranger to His creatures is a foregone conclusion. It is no wonder that some have concluded that "God is dead." All of this is not God's fault, but man's.

GOD HAS ORDAINED THAT THE PRAISE OF HIS PEOPLE SHOULD HELP TO MEET THIS NEED

This verb contains three ideas:

- (1) It speaks of making a sound. So praise is meant for others to hear.
- (2) It is to be a clear sound. It must be a sound which can be understood.
- (3) It is to be a bright and shining sound, i.e., attractive, pleasing - a sound which will win a hearing for the Lord with men.

note how  
David uses  
Bxw: "117:1 is  
Rm. 15:11"

## Psalm 117 (2)

"The Lord" - יהוה - שׁם. This is the familiar JEHOVAH.

"all ye nations" - כָּל־עַמִּים - כָּל־עַמִּים. "all peoples without distinction," as compared with "all ye people" - כָּל־בָּנָה - כָּל־בָּנָה, "all nations without exception" (Delitzsch, III, 221).

Hindlestone says these nations refers to "outside nations" (p. 256). Possibly Paul's description of Gentiles in Eph. 2:11,12 would provide a definition. Though God chose the Jews by grace, the Gentiles are in a far better position to see that they are excluded from everything apart from the grace of God. They are outside.

But they are also "people," which Hindlestone defines as "literally those of one mother" (p. 257). So, although the Gentiles are outside, there is no preference given to any. They are all considered as of "one blood" (Acts 17:26).

"Praise him" - לְבָנָה. The ASV has, "Laud him." This word is used in Psalms 89:9 for God stilling the waves,

"Thou rulest the raging of the sea:  
when the waves thereof arise, thou  
stillest them."

Man is here called upon to still, or to restrain God by praising Him - THE ONE THING THAT WILL REALLY SATISFY HIM! This word pictures God in His holiness, that man will have to deal with Him in His wrath IF they reject His grace. A worshipper in the Biblical sense is, first of all, one who has been redeemed.

(117:2) The reasons for praise are now given.  
There are two of them.

"His merciful kindness" - יְאֹדָה. The Hebrew reads, "For great upon us (is) his merciful kindness."

These words are found in Ps. 103:11,  
"For as the heaven is high ... so great is his mercy ..."

It finds its illustration in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:37). It is the Heb. word for God's mercy to undeserving sinners. "The primary idea seems to be that of eager and earnest desire, ardour, zeal by which one is actuated" (Gesenius, p. 331).

"Great" - יְמַלֵּךְ. This expresses the idea of power, might, the fact that God's mercy is capable of accomplishing what He sets out to do.

So, in summary, we have three things about God's mercy:

- (1) It does exist. God will condescend to human need.
- (2) God earnestly desires to meet man's need.
- (3) He is perfectly capable of meeting every human need.

"Upon us" - עֲלֵיכֶם. The idea of down upon is here (Gesenius, p. 778).

HERE, THE WRITER (WHOM WE MUST ASSUME IS A JEW), JOINS HIS GENTILE BROTHERS IN THE LORD IN ACKNOWLEDGING THE MERCY OF GOD.

"The truth of the Lord" - יְמִימָתָר. The word truth is derived from the Hebrew root, יְמִימָה, from which we get the word, AMEN.

The main ideas are "firmness, stability...  
certainty... faithfulness" (Gesenius, p. 69).

It points to "firmness and constancy in oneself,  
in keeping and executing one's promises" (*Ibid.*).

For this word joined with <sup>98:3; 100:5</sup> תְּזִקֵּנָה, cf. Psa. 25:10;  
40:11; 51:3,10; 108:4; 138:2.

Hirstystone <sup>(P. 103)</sup> says "truth" should have been  
translated faithfulness in the following passages:  
Deut. 32:4; Psa. 33:4; 96:13; 98:3; 100:5; 119:30!

These two words seem to encompass all of  
the attributes of God where His people are  
concerned.

"For ever" - וְלֹא־יַחֲדַת. ("Endureth" is not in  
Heb. text.) Gesenius says that this is actually  
a "hidden time" in which neither the  
beginning nor end can be specified. Therefore,  
it is the equivalent of our eternal.

"Praise ye the Lord" - וְלֹא־יַחֲדַת. "Hallelujah!"  
The verb has been discussed under v. 1.  
But here we have the second name used  
for God in the Psalm.

The best authorities agree that וְלֹא is an  
abbreviation of וְלֹא־יַחֲדַת.