

Psalm 114

God's power demonstrated in the Exodus

Psalm 114:

A highly poetic description of the Exodus, this psalm emphasizes both God's power displayed (verses 3-6), and His provision supplied (verse 8).

The God of Israel's deliverance (verses 1-2), is still their God (verse 7), the implication being that He can still unfurl His power.

The world must therefore take notice.

Verses 1-8 (see note on Psalm 113:1-9).

This psalm is the one most explicitly related to the Exodus (Exodus chapters 12-14).

It recounts God's response to a captive nation (Israel in Egypt), in order to honor His promises in the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 28:13-17), given to Jacob (compare 114:1), "The house of Jacob" (114:7), "the God of Jacob".

- I. God Inhabits Israel (114:1-2).
- II. God Intimidates Nature (114:3-6).
- III. God Invites Trembling (114:7-8).

An exhortation to fear God.

Let us acknowledge God's power and goodness in what he did for Israel, applying it to that much greater work of wonder, our redemption by Christ; and encourage ourselves and others to trust in God in the greatest straits.

When Christ comes for the salvation of his people, he redeems them from the power of sin and Satan, separates them from an ungodly world, forms them to be his people, and also becomes their King.

There is no sea, no Jordan, so deep, so broad, but, when God's time is come, it shall be divided and driven back.

Apply this to the planting of the Christian church in the world.

What ailed Satan and his idolatries, that they trembled as they did?

But especially apply it to the work of grace in the heart.

What turns the stream in a regenerate soul?

What affects the lusts and corruptions, that they fly back; that prejudices are removed, and the whole man becomes new?

It is at the presence of God's Spirit.

At the presence of the LORD, not only mountains, but the earth itself may well tremble, since it has lain under a curse for man's sin.

As the Israelites were protected, they were provided for by miracles; such was that fountain of waters into which the flinty rock was turned, and that rock was Christ.

The Son of God, the Rock of ages, gave himself to death, to open a fountain to wash away sins, and to supply believers with waters of life and consolation; and they need not fear that any blessing is too great to expect from his love.

But let sinners fear before their Just and Holy Judge.

Let us now prepare to meet our God, that we may have boldness before him at his coming.

This psalm celebrates God for delivering His people from bondage and leading them to the Promised Land, with references to several of the wilderness miracles, including the parting of the waters (Red sea, Jordan), and the “water from the rock” (Exodus 17:5-6; Num. 20:8-11).

God's gracious work is spoken of with exultation, joy and triumph.

Psalm 114:1 "When Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language;"

The people of Israel in a body, publicly, openly, and not by stealth; freely and willingly, not forced and drove out.

Though urged by the Egyptians to go, through the hand of God upon them.

And so went out with the mighty hand and outstretched arm of the LORD, and with great riches, and in health, not one feeble or sick among them.

"The house of Jacob from a people of strange language":

Or barbarous; as every language was reckoned by the Jews but their own.

The Egyptian language they did not understand (see Psalm 81:5).

No doubt many of them learned it during their long stay there, but in general they retained their own language.

This was an emblem of the Lord's people in effectual calling, coming out of bondage into liberty, out of darkness into light.

Out of superstition, and idolatry and profaneness, to the service of the true God in righteousness and true holiness.

And from a people of a strange language to those that speak the language of Canaan.

A pure language, in which they can understated one another when they converse together, either about experience or doctrine.

And the manner of their coming out is much the same, by strength of hand, by the power of divine grace.

Yet willingly and cheerfully, with great riches, the riches of grace, and a title to the riches of glory, and with much spiritual strength.

For, though weak in themselves, yet are strong in Christ.

This is speaking of the miraculous deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt.

God sent Moses to bring them out.

It was through ten plagues that God delivered Israel.

The family of Jacob had gone into Egypt, but just over 400 years later the mighty nation of Israel came out.

The name Jacob was used when speaking of him as the father of the twelve sons.

The name Israel was His name when his twelve sons became the twelve tribes of Israel.

The Hebrews were in the land of Egypt, but they were not Egyptians.

They were Hebrews.

They spoke Hebrew.

The strange language here, is the language of the Egyptians.

Psalm 114:2 "Judah was his sanctuary, [and] Israel his dominion."

"Judah ... Israel":

Judah/Benjamin and the norther ten tribes respectively.

“Sanctuary ... dominion”:

God dwelt among the peoples as a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night (compare Exodus 13:21-22; 14:19).

Judah is the tribe that the LORD was descended from in the flesh.

He was the Lion of the tribe of Judah.

Judah led the march out of Egypt, as well.

God's presence was with His people on their journey.

The LORD dwelled with them (was His sanctuary), and He ruled over them (His dominion).

Psalm 114:3 "The sea saw [it], and fled: Jordan was driven back."

“The sea ... Jordan”:

Two miracles of God, i.e., separating the waters began and ended the Exodus.

On the way out of Egypt, God parted the Red sea (Exodus 14:15-31), and 40 years later He parted the Jordan River in order for the Jews to enter the Promised Land (Joshua 3:1-17).

It was the presence of the LORD in the ark of the Covenant that caused the sea to part, and the Jordan to part.

In the case of the Jordan, it did not go back until the feet of the bearers of the ark had stepped into the water.

The water bowed to the presence of God in both instances.

Psalm 114:4 "The mountains skipped like rams, [and] the little hills like lambs."

“Mountains ... hills”:

Refers to the violent appearance of God to Israel at Sinai (compare Exodus 19:18; Judges 5:4-5; Psalm 68:17-18).

This is speaking of the mountain quaking at the presence of God.

Verses 5-6:

In poetic imagery, God questioned why the most fixed of geographical features, i.e., water and mountains, could not resist His power and will.

Psalm 114:5 "What [ailed] thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest? thou Jordan, [that] thou wast driven back?"

What was the matter with thee?

What appeared to thee?

What didst thou see?

What didst thou feel, which caused thee to flee in such haste?

"Thou Jordan, that thou wast driven back?":

What is the meaning that thou didst not continue to flow as usual?

What was it that stopped thy flowing tide?

That cut off thy waters?

That drove them back as fast or faster than they came?

There was no explaining to the human understanding just why the Red sea opened at the command of God.

The sea, like all other creation must bow to its Creator.

There was no unusual phenomenon to explain away this miracle of God.

Psalm 114:6 "Ye mountains, [that] ye skipped like rams; [and] ye little hills, like lambs?"

Not for joy, but fear.

What caused these trembling motions, these violent agitations, and quaking, and moving to and fro like the skipping of rams?

"And ye little hills, like lambs?"

What was it that disturbed you, and put you into a panic, that you skipped like frightened lambs?

These questions are put, by a beautiful and poetical figure, to inanimate creatures.

The Red sea, the river of Jordan, the mountains of Sinai and Horeb, and the hills about them; to which an answer is turned in the next verse.

When the majesty of Almighty God was on the mountain, it smoked, and there was nothing to touch the mountain lest it die.

Only the one God called to the mountain could go up.

Moses was the only one who could go near the presence of God, and he only when he was called to do so.

Psalm 114:7 "Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob;"

Or, "the earth has trembled at the presence of the Lord".

The only proper response of helpless nature before omnipotent God.

The imperative is sometimes put for the imperfect or past tense (see Psalm 22:9).

Likewise, the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions thus render it, "the earth is moved at the presence of the Lord.

Is it to be wondered at, that we, the sea, the river of Jordan, the mountains and hills, have fled.

Or have been driven back, or have skipped like rams and lambs, when the whole earth, of which we are a part, has trembled at the presence of God?

Who, when he does but look, the earth trembles; and when he touches the hills, they smoke (Psalm 104:32).

It is at the same presence of God we have been thus moved, especially the power of which we have felt, even;

"At the presence of the God of Jacob":

Who brought Jacob out of Egypt, led him through the sea, and gave him the law on Sinai.

This is not to be understood of the general and common presence of God, which is everywhere.

And with all his creatures for this is not attended with such wonderful phenomena as here mentioned, either in the literal or mystic sense.

But of the majestic, powerful, and gracious presence of God; such as he sometimes causes to attend his ministers, his word, his churches, his martyrs and confessors.

And so as to strike an awe upon, and terror into, their greatest enemies, as well as to convert his own people.

The Lord is ruler of, not only the people, but all of nature as well.

It is no small thing for the earth to tremble before its Creator.

Psalm 114:8 "Which turned the rock [into] a standing water, the flint into a fountain of waters.

“The rock”:

Referring to the first incident at Massah/Meribah (Exodus 17:5-6), and/or the second (Numbers 20:8-11).

The Rock is symbolic of the Lord.

When Moses struck the Rock as God had told him to do, the water flowed freely from the Rock.

Jesus is the water and the Rock.

The water that flowed was like a river.

It was enough to quench the thirst of these estimated 3 million people.

This is that same water that flows from the throne of God.

We have seen in this lesson, the marvelous provision that God has made for His people.

Psalm 114 Questions

1. What two names in 114:1 are the same person?
2. How long had the family of Jacob been in Egypt, when God sent Moses to bring them out?
3. A _____ went into Egypt, and a _____ came out.
4. What is intended by, was His sanctuary?
5. In the same verse, what is the dominion speaking of?
6. What caused the sea to part?
7. What is verse 4 speaking of?
8. What was unusual about the mountain, when the presence of God was on it?
9. Who was the Rock in verse 8?

10. How much water came from the Rock?

11. What is the major lesson to be learned here?