

Typical Hebrew Poetic Techniques

Synonymous parallelism	Contrasting parallelism
Word Pictures	Rhythm
Psalms' Audience Changes	Attributes of God

Intro: Possibly discuss history of Hallel. Psalms 113-118. Sung @ Passover, special events.

I. A Clear Message and Call To Give Thanks to God Vs. 1-4

The Call

Vs. 1 *"Give Thanks to the Lord, for He is good; For His lovingkindness is everlasting."*

- The very nature of God is good. It is His essence.
- His lovingkindness (covenant loyalty) is eternal, everlasting. Cannot be measured.

The Audience

Vs. 2 *"Oh let Israel say His lovingkindness is everlasting."*

- This is a general plea or call to God's people to praise God.
- God chose Israel out of all the nations to be His people.
- God's love for them will never end.

Vs. 3 *"Oh let the house of Aaron say His lovingkindness is everlasting."*

- The Psalmist identifies the levitical priesthood.
- God installed Aaron & his sons as the first tabernacle priests
- Moses had interceded for the people on numerous occasions, but when God established the sacrificial Law He called Aaron from the tribe of Levi to the priesthood.
- We might ask "Why is it necessary to say this to the priests? Isn't this already understood?"
- Similar to Paul's qualification in Timothy for Elders & deacons.

Vs. 4. *"Oh let those who fear the Lord say His lovingkindness is everlasting."*

- Now the psalmist directs this call to all who fear the Lord.
- This should include Israel and its priests but also those who recognize Yahweh.
- God's lovingkindness has always included those who have sought Him.
- God has ALWAYS made provision for those on the outside (gentiles) to be in a covenant relationship with Him if they so desire.

- Rahab, Ruth

- **Ezra 6:21** *"The sons of Israel who returned from exile and all those who had separated themselves from the impurity of the nations of the land to join them, to seek the Lord God of Israel, at the Passover."*

- **Isaiah 56:3-8**

- **Galatians 3:28** *"Now there is neither Jew nor Gentile, slave nor free, nor is there male or female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."*

II. God's Personal Lovingkindness Vs. 5-18

Vs. 5 *"In my distress I called upon the Lord, the Lord answered me and set me in a large place."*

- Psalm 40 *"I waited patiently for the Lord, He inclined to me and heard my cry. He brought me up out of the pit of destruction and set my feet upon the firm rock."*
- We are given this image of the Lord leaning in and hearing our plea for help. He inclines.
- **Literal translation:** God answered from a huge expanse.
- **Supplied Meaning:** *God brought me into a spacious place* (NIV)
The Lord set me free (ESV)
Brought me into a wide open place (NET)

Both Treatments Are Important

- Image of a sovereign God external to creation hearing the plea of one Whom He loves.
- Image of being rescued from enemies breathing down your neck and set in a place of refuge

Vs. 6-9 Psalmist Shifts to a Very Personal Tone w/ Interesting Rhythm

- Verses 6,7 two line statements, verses 8,9 are singular statements similar to Verses 2,3,4.
- There's also a subtle connection with Vs. 6,8 & Vs. 7,9
 - Vs. 6 *"The Lord is for ME, I will not fear; What can man do to me?"*
 - Vs. 8 *"It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in man."*
 - Vs. 7 *"The Lord is for ME as my helper, I will look in triumph over my enemies."*
 - Vs. 9 *"It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in princes."*

- The verse grouping clearly reveals futility of trusting in corrupt mortal men for protection.
- These verses also serve as a **prelude to verses 10-14**

Vs. 10-13 Progressively Builds with Emphasis.

- There is both image and urgency that we can feel in the words of the poem

Vs. 10 Connects us back to Vs. 5 about the distress of the Author

- -A- *"All nations surrounded me;*
- -B- *"In the name of the Lord I will surely cut them down."*

Vs. 11

- -A- *"They surrounded me,"*
- -A *"yes, they surrounded me;*
- -B- *"In the name of the Lord I will surely cut them down."*

Vs. 12

- -A- *"They surrounded me like bees;"*
- -C- *"they were extinguished like a fire of thorns;"* (squelched quickly)
- -B- *"In the name of the Lord I will surely cut them down."*

Vs. 13 Now The Climax....The Accusation

- *"YOU pushed me violently so that I was falling, BUT the Lord helped me."*

Vs. 14 *"The Lord is my strength and song, And He has become my salvation."*

- Likely understood as a natural salvation. He has been saved from enemies.
- He has been rescued from the princes of nations who can't be trusted
- From enemies surrounding him like bees

- From enemies trying to push him over but the Lord helped him

III. A Response to The Lord's Goodness & Lovingkindness

- Vs. 1-4 was a plea to give thanks to the Lord for His lovingkindness.
- **Psalmist gives 3 ways that God is lifted up for His Goodness & Lovingkindness**
 1. **Vs. 15** Joyful shouting in the tents of the righteous
 2. **Vs. 16** The right hand of the Lord is exalted, valiant (military success)
 3. **Vs. 17** The author will tell of the works of the Lord because He has saved him.
- **Vs. 18** *"The Lord has disciplined me severely, but He has not given me over to death."*
 - Reminder of a great truth the author recognizes about the character and nature of God.
 - God is sovereign and He may choose to use natural circumstances to discipline us.
 - Even the Lord's discipline is an act of goodness and love by Him.

Hebrews 12:5-6

Duet. 8:5 *"just as a man disciplines his son, so the Lord your God disciplines you."*

Psalm 94:12 *"Blessed is the man You discipline, O Lord, and teach from Your Law."*

Psalm 119:75

Proverbs 3:11-12 *"Do not reject the discipline of the Lord, and do not loathe His rebuke; for the Lord disciplines the one He loves, as does a father the son in whom he delights."*

- This is a twofold praise.
 1. The Lord has not given this man over to death
 2. The Lord used these circumstances for discipline.

Challenge: How often do we view our difficult circumstances as possibly the Lord's discipline?

If we do, then do we embrace them as God's love or do we grumble and complain?

IV. God's Lovingkindness Through A Future Messiah Vs. 19-27

Most Commentaries Generally Agree that These Verses Have Dual Meaning
We have the Psalmist continuing to describe God's deliverance of Himself
Yet at the same time, we have a picture of Jesus who will come to deliver us all.

Vs. 19-21 Psalmist Begins with a Petition to Enter The Gates of Righteousness

The Petition: *"Open to me the gates of righteousness, I shall enter through them, I shall give thanks to the Lord. This is the gate of the Lord; The righteous will enter through it. I shall give thanks to Thee, for Thou hast answered me; And thou hast become my salvation."*

The Immediate: Let me enter the gates of justice. The entrance to the just king's palace. King sat to rule justly for the people. The author here has been vindicated by the Lord, and enthusiastically desires to enter through the gates of justice.

The Prophetic: The gate will be God Himself. The gate will be the Messiah. We enter God's palace through Jesus who establishes our righteousness.

- *"He became sin who knew no sin so that we might become the righteousness of God."*
- *"I will give thanks to thee for thou hast answered me."*
- Is this not true of us? Thank You God for answering my prayer of salvation.

Vs. 22 The Stone The Builders Rejected

"The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone."

- Explain Chief Cornerstone

The Immediate: This is likely a self reference as the psalmist saw himself. He was rejected.

The Prophetic: The NT reveals Jesus became the Ultimate cornerstone the builders rejected.

Isaiah 28:16, Matt. 21:42, Mark, Luke, Acts 4:11, Eph. 2:20, I Pet. 2:4-7

Vs. 23 *"This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes."*

The Immediate: God's delivered the Psalmist from his military oppression
God's vindicated the Psalmist before his enemies. He extinguished them.
This is not something mankind can accomplish.
Psalmist already told us that trusting in mortal men is futile.

The Prophetic: Jesus was rejected and despised by his Own whom he came to save.

- The religious leaders rejected him. They charged him with blasphemy
- The Romans rejected him. They accused him of stirring up a revolt
- The crowds rejected him when they had a chance to choose rebellious Barabbas
- Only God can vindicate & select a Messiah when mankind rejects.

Vs. 24 This is the Day the Lord Has Made

"This is the day that the Lord has made; Let us rejoice and be glad in it."

The Immediate: Every day has been made by the Lord. Every day is to be celebrated.
The Psalmist has the literal day of his deliverance in mind.
This is the day God gave me victory over my enemies.

The Prophetic: This is the day God vindicated Jesus in the eyes of men.
He was despised and rejected by men, and arose and ascended to the right hand of God the Father.
This is the day God has granted us salvation in Christ Jesus.

We don't merely wake up and say *"Thank you Lord for waking me up today."*

While there is nothing inherently wrong with that, it is just incomplete.

"Thank you Lord that this is another day in which I get to walk in the reality of salvation. Thank you for giving me Your righteousness today. Thank you for vindicating me today before those who persecute me and don't understand my faith. I will rejoice and be glad in these truths today."

Vs. 25-27 Celebrating the Lord's Deliverance

Read 25-27

The Literal: This is both a petition and a continuation of praise for God's deliverance
God has give His people light.
Light is often a metaphor for deliverance

- Psalm 37:6 *"he will bring forth your righteousness as the light"*
- Psalm 97:11 *"Light is sown for the righteous."*
- Micah 7:8 *"Rejoice not over me, O my enemy; when I fall, I shall rise; when I sit in darkness, the LORD will be a light to me."*

The Psalmist calls for a sacrifice to be bound and offered at the altar.

The Prophetic: These are the scriptures the crowds chanted at the triumphal entry.

"Hosanna, Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord."

- The Lord is God and He has given us light.
- John 1:4 *"In him was life, and that life was the light of all men."*
- I John 1:7 *"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus purifies us from all sin."*
- Jesus referred to himself as the Light of Life.
- John 8:12 *"Jesus spoke to them saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."*
- Jesus became the sacrificial offering bound and offered on the cross

V. Reiteration of the Call to Give Thanks to God for His Goodness **Vs 28,29**

Vs. 28 ***"You are MY God, and I give thanks to You, You are MY God, I extol You."***

- Psalmist comes back to this very personal declaration
- God, You know ME, You have called ME, You rescued ME, You have saved ME
- I give You praise and I exalt You.

Vs. 29 ***"Give Thanks to the Lord, for He is good; For His lovingkindness is everlasting."***

- The author reiterates this call to give thanks just as he began this song.

Summary

God is still good today and every day. His kindness is everlasting. He is worthy of our praise.

We may not face the same kind of military struggles this author had.

We may not have nations and princes surrounding us and breathing down our necks.

But we do fight a spiritual battle. We battle not against flesh and blood.

God is faithful to hear our cries of distress and answer our prayers.

He is faithful to rescue us, to give us rest, and to extinguish the fires around us.

Most importantly, He became the gates of justice. We may enter His throne room by His righteousness, and He will vindicate us.