
PSALM 106: 1 Praise the LORD! Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his loving kindness endures forever.

God is praised for his manifold mercies, Psa 106:1-3. The prophet prays for himself, Psa 106:4, Psa 106:5. A recapitulation of the history of the Hebrew people: of God's mercies toward them, and their rebellions, vv. 6-39. The judgments and afflictions which their transgressions brought upon them, Psa 106:40-42. God's mercy to them notwithstanding their transgressions, Psa 106:43-46. He prays for their restoration, Psa 106:47, Psa 106:48.

As a part of the preceding Psalm is found in 1 Chronicles 16, so the first and two last verses of this are found in the same place, (1Chr 16:34-36), and yet it is supposed by eminent commentators to be a prayer of the captives in Babylon, who acknowledge the mercies of God, confess their own sins, and those of their forefathers, and implore the Lord to gather them from among the heathen, and restore them to their own country. In none of the Versions except the Syriac has it any title, except Hallelujah, Praise ye the Lord, the word with which the original commences. The Syriac gives us a sort of table of its contents; or rather shows us the subjects to which it may be applied, and the uses we should make of it. After stating that it has no title, it says, "It calls upon men to observe the Divine precepts, and teaches us that the more the Jews transgressed, the more we should fear. That we should not talk together in the church, nor ever contend with our brethren on any account; and especially when we assist in the celebration of the Divine mysteries and in prayer: and that when we sin we should repent." All this is very good: but it would be difficult to find these subjects in the Psalm, or any thing on which they could be rationally founded. But it shows us that the Scriptures were very easily accommodated to particular uses, not originally intended: and hence arose much of the practice of spiritualizing and allegorizing; which, to say the least of it, has been of no use to the Church of Christ.

Verse 1

Praise ye the Lord - This, which is a sort of title, is wanting in several MSS., and in the Syriac Version.

O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good - Ye who live by his bounty should praise his mercy. God is the good Being, and of all kinds of good he is the Author and Dispenser. That the term God among our Anglo-Saxon ancestors, expressed both the Supreme Being and good or goodness, is evident from the Anglo-Saxon version of this clause: "Confess Lord for that God, (or good), for that on world mildheartness his." Which the old Psalter thus translates and paraphrases: -

Trans. Schifes to Lorde for he is gude; for in worlde the mercy of him.

Par - Schryfes synes, and louyns to God. for he is gude of kynde, that nane do bot aske his mercy; for it lastes to the worlds ende in wriches whame it comfortes and delyvers: and the blysfelhede that is gyfen through mercy is endles. That is: -

Confess your sins, and give praise to God, for he is good in his nature to all that ask his mercy; for it lasts to the world's end in comforting and delivering the wretched: and the blessedness that is given through mercy is endless.

PSALM 106: 2 Who can utter the mighty acts of the LORD, or fully declare all his praise?

Verse 2

Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? - His acts are all acts of might; and particularly those in behalf of his followers.

PSALM 106: 3 Blessed are those who keep justice. Blessed is one who does what is right at all times.

Verse 3

Blessed are they that keep judgment, and he that doeth righteousness at all times - How near do the Anglo-Saxon, the ancient Scottish Version, and the present translation, approach to each other!

Anglo-Saxon. "Blessed they that holdeth doom, and doth righteousness in ilkere tide."

Anglo-Scottish.

Blisful tha that kepes dome, and duse rightwisnes in ilk tyme.

Those are truly blessed, or happy, whose hearts are devoted to God, and who live in the habit of obedience. Those, the general tenor of whose life is not conformed to the will of God, have no true happiness.

PSALM 106: 4 Remember me, LORD, with the favour that you show to your people. Visit me with your salvation,

Verse 4

Remember me - This and the following clauses are read in the plural by several MSS.: Remember Us - that We may rejoice, - that We may glory, etc.: and thus all the Versions except the Chaldee; and this is more agreeable to the context.

PSALM 106: 5 that I may see the prosperity of your chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of your nation, that I may glory with your inheritance.

Verse 5

That I may see the good of thy chosen - That I may enjoy the good, for so the word see is understood among the Hebrews. "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God," - they shall enjoy him, possess his favor, and be made like unto him.

PSALM 106: 6 We have sinned with our fathers. We have committed iniquity. We have done wickedly.

 Verse 6

We have sinned - Here the confession begins; what preceded was only the introduction to what follows: Our forefathers sinned, and suffered; we, like them, have sinned, and do suffer.

PSALM 106: 7 Our fathers didn't understand your wonders in Egypt. They didn't remember the multitude of your loving kindnesses, but were rebellious at the sea, even at the Red Sea.

Verse 7

Our fathers understood not - They did not regard the operation of God's hands; and therefore they understood neither his designs nor their own interest.

At the sea, even at the Red Sea - Some of the rabbins suppose that the repetition of the words point out two faults of the Israelites at the Red Sea.

1. They murmured against Moses for bringing them out of Egypt, when they saw the sea before them, and Pharaoh behind them.

2. When the waters were divided, they were afraid to enter in, lest they should stick in the mud which appeared at the bottom.

The word seems to be added by way of explanation, and perhaps may refer to the above: they provoked *על ים* al yam, "At the sea;" *בַּיָּם סוּף* beyam suph, "In the sea Suph," or Red Sea. They provoked him at it and in it.

PSALM 106: 8 Nevertheless he saved them for his name's sake, that he might make his mighty power known.

Verse 8

He saved them for his name's sake - *למען שמו* lemaan shemo, "on account of his name;" to manifest his own power, goodness, and perfections. There was nothing which he could draw from them as a reason why he should save them; therefore he drew the reason from himself. There is a singular gloss in the old Psalter on this verse: "Whan thai cam oute of Egypt to the rede Se, whare thai were closed on a syde with a hylle that na man mygt passe: on another side was the rede See: behynde tham was men of Egypt foluand; and for this thai began to gruch, forgetand Gods mygt: bot than he safed tham, depertand the Se in twelfe, to ilk kynde of Isrel a passage." It seems as if this author thought there were twelve passages made through the Red Sea, that each tribe should have a passage to itself.

PSALM 106: 9 He rebuked the Red Sea also, and it was dried up; so he led them through the depths, as through a desert.

Verse 9

He rebuked the Red Sea - In the descriptions of the psalmist every thing has life. The sea is an animated being, behaves itself proudly, is rebuked, and retires in confusion.

PSALM 106: 10 He saved them from the hand of him who hated them, and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy.

Verse 10

The hand of him that hated them - Pharaoh.

PSALM 106: 11 The waters covered their adversaries. There was not one of them left.

PSALM 106: 12 Then they believed his words. They sang his praise.

Verse 12

Then believed they - Just while the miracle was before their eyes.

PSALM 106: 13 They soon forgot his works. They didn't wait for his counsel,

Verse 13

They soon forgot his works - Three days afterwards, at the waters of Marah, Exo 15:24.

They waited not for his counsel - They were impatient, and would not wait till God should in his own way fulfill his own designs.

PSALM 106: 14 but gave in to craving in the desert, and tested God in the wasteland.

PSALM 106: 15 He gave them their request, but sent leanness into their soul.

Verse 15

Sent leanness - They despised the manna, and called it light, that is, innutritive, bread. God gave flesh as they desired, but gave no blessing with it; and in consequence they did not fatten, but grew lean upon it. Their souls also suffered want.

PSALM 106: 16 They envied Moses also in the camp, and Aaron, the LORD's saint.

Verse 16

They envied Moses - A reference to the case of Korah and his company.

Aaron the saint - The anointed, the high priest of the Lord.

PSALM 106: 17 The earth opened and swallowed up Dathan, and covered the company of Abiram.

PSALM 106: 18 A fire was kindled in their company. The flame burned up the wicked.

PSALM 106: 19 They made a calf in Horeb, and worshipped a molten image.

PSALM 106: 20 Thus they exchanged their glory for an image of a bull that eats grass.

Verse 20

Thus they changed their glory - That is, their God, who was their glory; and they worshipped an ox in his stead. See the use St Paul makes of this, Rom 1:23 (note); see also the note there. The incorruptible God was thus served by all the heathen world.

PSALM 106: 21 They forgot God, their Saviour, who had done great things in Egypt,

PSALM 106: 22 Wondrous works in the land of Ham, and awesome things by the Red Sea.

Verse 22

Wondrous works in the land of Ham - The plagues inflicted on the Egyptians. Egypt is called the Land of Ham or Cham, because it was peopled by Misraim the son of Cham.

PSALM 106: 23 Therefore he said that he would destroy them, had Moses, his chosen, not stood before him in the breach, to turn away his wrath, so that he wouldn't destroy them.

Verse 23

Moses his chosen - Or elect; (Vulgate, electus ejus; Septuagint, ὁ εκλεκτος αυτου); the person that he had appointed for this work. It would be very difficult to show that this word in any part of the Old Testament refers to the eternal state of any man, much less to the doctrine of unconditional election and reprobation.

PSALM 106: 24 Yes, they despised the pleasant land. They didn't believe his word,

PSALM 106: 25 but murmured in their tents, and didn't listen to the LORD's voice.

PSALM 106: 26 Therefore he swore to them that he would overthrow them in the wilderness,

PSALM 106: 27 that he would overthrow their seed among the nations, and scatter them in the lands.

PSALM 106: 28 They joined themselves also to Baal Peor, and ate the sacrifices of the dead.

Verse 28

They joined themselves also unto Baalpeor - The Vulgate, Septuagint, and others, have Belphegor; the Syriac and Arabic, the idol Phegor, or Phaaur; the ו ain in the word being pronounced as gh.

Ate the sacrifices of the dead - מתים methim, of dead men. Most of the heathen idols were seen, who had been deified after their death; many of whom had been execrated during their life.

PSALM 106: 29 Thus they provoked him to anger with their deeds. The plague broke in on them.

PSALM 106: 30 Then Phinehas stood up, and executed judgement, so the plague was stopped.

PSALM 106: 31 That was credited to him for righteousness, for all generations to come.

PSALM 106: 32 They angered him also at the waters of Meribah, so that Moses was troubled for their sakes;

PSALM 106: 33 because they were rebellious against his spirit, he spoke rashly with his lips.

Verse 33

They provoked his spirit - המרו himru, from מרה marah, to rebel: they brought it into a rebellious state; he was soured and irritated, and was off his guard.

So that he spake unadvisedly with his lips - For this sentence we have only these two words in the Hebrew, ויבטא בשפתיו vayebatte bisephathaiv, he stuttered or stammered with his lips, indicating that he was transported with anger. See the notes on Num 20:10-12 (note).

PSALM 106: 34 They didn't destroy the peoples, as the LORD commanded them,

PSALM 106: 35 but mixed themselves with the nations, and learned their works.

PSALM 106: 36 They served their idols, which became a snare to them.

Verse 36

They served their idols - עצביהם atsabbeyhem, their labors or griefs - idols, so called because of the pains taken in forming them, the labor in worshipping them, and the grief occasioned by the Divine judgments against the people for their idolatry.

PSALM 106: 37 Yes, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters to demons.

Verse 37

They sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils - See 2Kgs 16:3; Isa 57:5; Eze 16:20; ezeiel Eze 20:26. That causing their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire to Moloch did not always mean they burnt them to death in the flames, is very probable. But all the heathen had human sacrifices; of this their history is full. Unto devils, לַשִּׁדְדִים lashshedim, to demons. Devil is never in Scripture used in the plural; there is but One devil, though there are Many demons.

PSALM 106: 38 They shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan. The land was polluted with blood.

PSALM 106: 39 Thus were they defiled with their works, and prostituted themselves in their deeds.

Verse 39

And went a whoring - By fornication, whoredom, and idolatry, the Scripture often expresses idolatry and idolatrous acts. I have given the reason of this in other places. Besides being false to the true God, to whom they are represented as betrothed and married, (and their acts of idolatry were breaches of this solemn engagement), the worship of idols was frequently accompanied with various acts of impurity.

The translation in the Anglo-Saxon is very remarkable: and they fornicated. In Anglo-Saxon, signifies to fire, to ignite; to commit adultery. So is a prostitute, a whore; and is to go a whoring, to fornicate; probably from, or to fire, and to lie, or a glutton, - one who lies with fire, who is ignited by it, who is greedily intent upon the act by which he is inflamed. And do not the words themselves show that in former times whoredom was punished, as it is now, by a disease which produces the sensation of burning in the unhappy prostitutes, whether male or female? And to this meaning the following seems particularly to be applicable.

PSALM 106: 40 Therefore the LORD burned with anger against his people. He abhorred his inheritance.

Verse 40

Therefore was the wrath of the Lord kindled - God kindled a fire in his judgments for those who by their flagitious conduct had inflamed themselves with their idols, and the impure rites with which they were worshipped.

PSALM 106: 41 He gave them into the hand of the nations. Those who hated them ruled over them.

PSALM 106: 42 Their enemies also oppressed them. They were brought into subjection under their hand.

PSALM 106: 43 Many times he delivered them, but they were rebellious in their counsel, and were brought low in their iniquity.

Verse 43

Many times did he deliver them - See the Book of Judges; it is a history of the rebellions and deliverances of the Israelites.

PSALM 106: 44 Nevertheless he regarded their distress, when he heard their cry.

PSALM 106: 45 He remembered for them his covenant, and repented according to the multitude of his loving kindnesses.

PSALM 106: 46 He made them also to be pitied by all those who carried them captive.

Verse 46

He made them also to be pitied - This was particularly true as to the Babylonish captivity; for Cyrus gave them their liberty; Darius favored them, and granted them several privileges; and Artaxerxes sent back Nehemiah, and helped him to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple. See the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah; and see Calmet.

PSALM 106: 47 Save us, LORD, our God, gather us from among the nations, to give thanks to your holy name, to triumph in your praise!

Verse 47

Save us, O Lord - and gather us - These words, says Calmet, are found in the hymn that was sung at the ceremony of bringing the ark to Jerusalem, 1 Chronicles 16; but it is supposed they were added by Ezra or some other prophet: here they are in their natural place. The author of the Psalm begs the Lord to gather the Israelites who were dispersed through different countries; for at the dedication of the second temple, under Nehemiah, (where it is probable this Psalm, with the 105th and the 107th, was sung), there were very few Jews who had as yet returned from their captivity.

PSALM 106: 48 Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, from everlasting even to everlasting! Let all the people say, "Amen." Praise the LORD!

Verse 48

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel - Here both gratitude and confidence are expressed; gratitude for what God had already wrought, and confidence that he would finish the great work of their restoration.

From everlasting to everlasting - מן האולם ועד האולם min haolam vead haolam, "from the hidden term to the hidden term," from the beginning of time to the end of time, from eternity and on to eternity. Fra worlde and into worlde, old Psalter; which it paraphrases thus: Fra with outen beginning, &withouten endyng.

And let all the people say, Amen - Let the people join in the prayer and in the thanksgiving, that God may hear and answer. Anglo-Saxon: "And, quoth all folk, be it, be it." Hallelujah - Praise ye Jehovah! Let his name be eternally magnified! Amen.

This is the end of the fourth book of the Psalms.