

Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs: The Master Musician's Melodies

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Psalm 105 — Keeping the Covenant

1.0 Introducing Psalm 105

- Book 4 of the Psalter concludes with four psalms calling on God's people to bless or praise Him. For their similar beginnings and endings, see the chart in "Introducing Psalm 103."
- Psalms 105 and 106 form a pair, just as Psalms 103 and 104 form a pair:

Psalm 103	Psalm 104	Psalm 105	Psalm 106
"Bless the LORD, O my soul."	"Bless the LORD, O my soul."	"Hallelujah!"	"Hallelujah!"
God as Savior.	God as Creator.	God's faithfulness.	Israel's unfaithfulness.


- In addition, Psalms 104–106 form a trilogy focused on God's faithfulness as Creator, Ruler, and Redeemer.
- Psalm 105:1-15 occurs, together with 106:47-48 and most of Psalm 96, in David's hymn in 1 Chronicles 16:8-36. David committed that hymn to Asaph and his fellow musicians when David moved the ark of the covenant into Jerusalem from the house of Obed-Edom.
- Psalm 105 is a thanksgiving psalm (see Pss 107, 118, and 136—all beginning with "give thanks"—the so-called *Hodu* Psalms) for corporate worship as well as one of three historical psalms (Pss 78, 105, and 106).

2.0 Reading Psalm 105 (NAU)

- 105:1** Oh give thanks to the LORD, call upon His name;
 Make known His deeds among the peoples.
- 105:2** Sing to Him,
 sing praises to Him;
 Speak of all His wonders.
- 105:3** Glory in His holy name;
 Let the heart of those who seek the LORD be glad.

- 105:4** Seek the LORD and His strength;
Seek His face continually.
- 105:5** Remember His wonders which He has done,
His marvels and the judgments uttered by His mouth,
- 105:6** O seed of Abraham, His servant,
O sons of Jacob, His chosen ones!
- 105:7** He is the LORD our God;
His judgments are in all the earth.
- 105:8** He has remembered His covenant forever,
The word which He commanded to a thousand
generations,
- 105:9** The covenant which He made with Abraham,
And His oath to Isaac.
- 105:10** Then He confirmed it to Jacob for a statute,
To Israel as an everlasting covenant,
- 105:11** Saying, "To you I will give the land of Canaan
As the portion of your inheritance,"
- 105:12** When they were only a few men in number,
Very few, and strangers in it.
- 105:13** And they wandered about from nation to nation,
From one kingdom to another people.
- 105:14** He permitted no man to oppress them,
And He reprov'd kings for their sakes:
- 105:15** "Do not touch My anointed ones,
And do My prophets no harm."
- 105:16** And He called for a famine upon the land;
He broke the whole staff of bread.
- 105:17** He sent a man before them,
Joseph, who was sold as a slave.
- 105:18** They afflicted his feet with fetters,
He himself was laid in irons;
- 105:19** Until the time that his word came to pass,
The word of the LORD tested him.
- 105:20** The king sent and released him,
The ruler of peoples, and set him free.
- 105:21** He made him lord of his house
And ruler over all his possessions,
- 105:22** To imprison his princes at will,
That he might teach his elders wisdom.
- 105:23** Israel also came into Egypt;
Thus Jacob sojourn'd in the land of Ham.
- 105:24** And He caused His people to be very fruitful,
And made them stronger than their adversaries.



- 105:25** He turned their heart to hate His people,
To deal craftily with His servants.
- 105:26** He sent Moses His servant,
And Aaron, whom He had chosen.
- 105:27** They performed His wondrous acts among them,
And miracles in the land of Ham.
- 105:28** He sent darkness and made it dark; *9th Plague*
And they did not rebel against His words.
- 105:29** He turned their waters into blood *1st Plague*
And caused their fish to die.
- 105:30** Their land swarmed with frogs  *2nd Plague*
Even in the chambers of their kings.
- 105:31** He spoke, and there came a swarm of flies *4th Plague*
And gnats in all their territory. *3rd Plague*
- 105:32** He gave them hail for rain, *7th Plague*
And flaming fire in their land.
- 105:33** He struck down their vines also and their fig trees,
And shattered the trees of their territory.
- 105:34** He spoke, and locusts came, *8th Plague*
And young locusts, even without number,
- 105:35** And ate up all vegetation in their land,
And ate up the fruit of their ground.
- 105:36** He also struck down all the firstborn in their land, *10th Plague*
The first fruits of all their vigor.
- 105:37** Then He brought them out with silver and gold,
And among His tribes there was not one who stumbled.
- 105:38** Egypt was glad when they departed,
For the dread of them had fallen upon them.
- 105:39** He spread a cloud for a covering,
And fire to illumine by night.
- 105:40** They asked, and He brought quail,
And satisfied them with the bread of heaven.
- 105:41** He opened the rock and water flowed out;
It ran in the dry places like a river.
- 105:42** For He remembered His holy word
With Abraham His servant;
- 105:43** And He brought forth His people with joy,
His chosen ones with a joyful shout.
- 105:44** He gave them also the lands of the nations,
That they might take possession of the fruit of the peoples' labor,
- 105:45** So that they might keep His statutes
And observe His laws,
- Praise the LORD!

3.0 Understanding Psalm 105

3.1 Outline



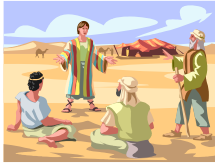
- I. God's Faithfulness Revealed by Praise (vv. 1-6)
- II. God's Faithfulness to the Patriarchs by Promise (vv. 7-15)
- III. God's Faithfulness to Joseph by Providence (vv. 16-22)
- IV. God's Faithfulness to Israel in Egypt by Protection (vv. 23-36)
- V. God's Faithfulness to Israel in the Exodus by Provision (vv. 37-41)
- VI. God's Faithfulness to Israel in the Conquest by Promise (vv. 42-45)

3.2 Notes

- **vv. 1-6** Commands to Praise
 - Eleven imperatives punctuate these verses (see the underlined words in the text above). The emphasis is obviously upon the necessity, the obligation, to praise God. The variety of verbs reveals the variety of ways in which God's people might worship Him.
 - *Object of praise:* The LORD (Yahweh = "His name") is the object of praise and worship, because of all the wondrous works He has performed. God's deeds reveal His being.
 - *Subjects of praise:* God's own people are the subjects addressed by the eleven imperatives. They are the ones with whom He has made His covenant, for whom He has performed marvelous deeds, and to whom He has fulfilled His promises.
 - *Goal of praise:* The goal is threefold: "praise magnifies the Lord," "praise intensifies an appreciation of" His redeeming work, and "praise witnesses to" the unbeliever. — Willem A. VanGemeren, "Psalms," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 12 vols., ed. by Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991), 5:666.
 - *How ought we to praise and worship the Lord?*
- **vv. 7-15** God's Covenant with Abraham
 - The section of biblical history covered by these verses can be read in Genesis 12–35.
 - The Abrahamic Covenant:
 - ✓ The relationship that God established is expressed by "He is the LORD our God" (vv. 7, 14-15).
 - ✓ The covenant is eternally valid (v. 8). Therefore, none of its fulfillment is dependent upon human beings (vv. 12-13).
 - ✓ God reconfirmed His covenant with Abraham's descendants (vv. 9-10).
 - ✓ The primary element of the covenant promises to Abraham and his descendants consists of the promised land (v. 11).
 - God is always faithful and loyal to His people and never fails to keep His promises to them.

■ *What promises has God made to you?*

● vv. 16-22 Joseph's Story is More than a "Coat of Many Colors"



■ The section of biblical history covered by these verses can be read in Genesis 37–50.

■ God controlled and timed the famine (v. 16; cp. Gen 41:28, 32).

■ God was also in control in Joseph being kidnapped and sold into slavery in Egypt (vv. 17-18; cp. Gen 50:20).

■ The fulfillment of God's word is the key to understanding what happened to Joseph (v. 19; cp. Gen 15:13).

■ Even Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, was an instrument in the accomplishment of God's plan (vv. 20-22).

■ *In what ways have you experienced God's blessing only by going through a time of trial to set it up?*

● vv. 23-36 Divine Preservation in a Foreign Land

■ The section of biblical history covered by these verses can be read in Exodus 1–12.

■ As in the case with Joseph, God brought hard times upon the Israelites, in order to bring about the fulfillment of His promises to Abraham (v. 25; cp. Gen 15:13-14, 16, 18-21).

■ Again, as in the case with Joseph, God raises up His leaders (vv. 26-27).

● vv. 28-36 Divine Plagues on the Egyptians

■ The psalmist presents the plagues on Egypt in a different order than what is recorded in the Book of Exodus. Does this indicate a contradiction or disagreement about the order of the plagues?

Exodus 7–12	Psalm 105
	<i>Darkness (#9)</i> – To bracket the account with the final two plagues, which were climactic in nature. The 9th plague was decisive for the Egyptian people (Exod 11:3) as the 10th was for Pharaoh (Exod 12:31-32).
1 – Blood	Blood
2 – Frogs	Frogs
3 – Gnats	<i>Flies (#4)</i> – Reversed order either to reflect the order of Moses before Aaron as in v. 26, or for some necessity of the poetry in the psalm.
4 – Flies	<i>Gnats (#3)</i> – See preceding comment.
5 – Livestock Disease	Perhaps omitted merely to shorten the account in the psalm.
6 – Boils	See preceding comment.
7 – Hail	Hail
8 – Locusts	Locusts
9 – Darkness	See comment above.
10 – Death of Firstborn	Death of Firstborn

■ There is no contradiction in the order of the plagues. Verse 37 opens a new stanza in the psalm by focusing on the result primarily of the plagues of darkness and death of the firstborn: Israel leaves Egypt with

the Egyptians' wealth and Pharaoh's willingness. By using the order he did, the psalmist helps to focus on the themes of decision and deliverance. God brought about both.

- **vv. 37-41** Divine Preservation in the Wilderness
 - The focus in this section is totally on God's provision: wealth (v. 37a), strength (v. 37b), His presence (v. 39, for protection and leading), food (v. 40), and water (v. 41).
 - God never leads His people where He cannot provide for them—even in the most difficult of terrains or circumstances.
 - The section of biblical history covered by these verses can be read in Exodus 13–17, Numbers 10–33, and Deuteronomy 1–3.
 - *Where can you find New Testament promises regarding God's provision for you?*
- **vv. 42-45** God Fulfills His Promises
 - "For" at the beginning of verse 42 is probably best taken as emphatic: "Indeed, He remembered His holy word."
 - God's promise to Abraham involved the gift of a land (see notes on vv. 7-15, above). God's word is holy—He can never lie (see Hebrews 6:13-18). This is the basis for our own hope (Hebrews 6:19; 10:23).
 - Fulfillment of God's promises ought to result in His people's obedience (v. 45). The first obedience we must render is His praise: "Hallelujah!"
 - ✓ Those psalms either beginning or ending with "Hallelujah!" are known as the "Hallelujah Psalms": Psalms 105, 106, 111–113, 117, 135, and 146–150.



4.0 Singing Psalm 105

O Praise the Lord, His Deeds Make Known

(Tunes: "O Little Town of Bethlehem," "I Sing the Mighty Power of God," "There Is a Fountain")

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|--|---|
| <p>1 O praise the Lord, His deeds make known,
And call upon His Name;
Sing ye to Him, His praises sing,
His wondrous works proclaim.
Let hearts rejoice that seek the Lord,
His holy Name adore;
Seek ye Jehovah and His strength,
Seek Him forevermore.</p> | <p>2 Ye children of God's covenant,
Who of His grace have heard,
Forget not all His wondrous deeds
And judgments of His Word.
The Lord our God is God alone,
All lands His judgments know;
His promise He remembers still,
While generations go.</p> |
| <p>3 While yet our fathers were but few,
Sojourners in the land,
He swore that Canaan should be theirs,
And made His covenant stand.
He suffered none to do them wrong
In all their pilgrim way;
Yea, for their sake were kings reprov'd
And covered with dismay.</p> | <p>4 His stern command restrained their foes
And filled them with alarm;
"Touch not Mine own anointed ones,
Nor do My prophets harm."
He wholly broke the staff of bread
And called for famine sore,
And He prepared His people's way
By sending one before.</p> |

5 Then Joseph, sold to slavery,
With cruel chains was bound;
Till his prediction came to pass,
Distress and grief he found.
The king released him from his bonds
And made him rule the land,
Subjecting chiefs and senators,
To his controlling hand.

7 In darkness they were taught to fear
God's great and holy Name;
On man and beast, on vine and field,
His awful judgment came.
He smote the first-born in the land,
The chief of all their strength,
Enriched His people with the spoil
And brought them forth at length.

9 At their request He sent them quails,
And bread of Heav'n bestowed;
And from the rock, to quench their thirst,
The living waters flowed.
His sacred word to Abraham
He kept, though waiting long,
And brought His chosen people forth
With joy and thankful song.

6 To Egypt Israel followed then,
And there grew great and strong,
Until their friends became their foes
And did them grievous wrong.
God sent His servant Moses then,
And Aaron, whom He chose;
Great signs and wonders they displayed
To terrify their foes.

8 He led them forth in health and strength,
None weak in all their band,
And Egypt, filled with fear, rejoiced
To see them leave the land.
He spread a cloud to cover them,
Most glorious and bright,
And made a fiery pillar shine
To give them light by night.

10 The lands and toil of wicked men
He gave them to possess,
That they might keep His holy laws,
Jehovah praise and bless.
Let hearts rejoice that seek the Lord,
His holy Name adore;
Seek ye Jehovah and His strength,
Seek Him forevermore.

— Author unknown

5.0 Praying Psalm 105

- Thank You, Lord, for all that You have done for me. [v. 1]
- Oh God, give me Your strength. [v. 4]
- Help me remain faithful and obedient even in suffering. [v. 19]
- Guide me, Father, in my rejoicing in my salvation. [v. 43]
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6.0 Applying Psalm 105

- The redeemed of the Lord ought to respond with praise.
- God is faithful to fulfill all of His promises.
- God is in control of even our times of trial and trouble.
- The Lord never leads His people where He cannot provide for them.

Redeemed by divine initiative and recipients of divine grace, what was left for Israel to do? Simply to comply with Yahweh's revealed will, constrained by his faithfulness to be faithful in turn. His revelation consisted of precepts as well as promise (vv. 10, 45). So praise and obedience were to be their twin response, as they waited upon Yahweh to continue his work of remembering the covenant.

— Leslie C. Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, Word Biblical Commentary
(Waco, TX: Word Books, Publisher, 1983), 27