

Psalm 114-1 - Holy Fear

1. The Exodus.

Ps 114:1-8 When Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language;

2Judah was his sanctuary, *and* Israel his dominion.

3The sea saw *it*, and fled: Jordan was driven back.

4The mountains skipped like rams, *and* the little hills like lambs.

5What *ailed* thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest? thou Jordan, *that* thou wast driven back?

6Ye mountains, *that* ye skipped like rams; *and* ye little hills, like lambs?

7Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob;

8Which turned the rock *into* a standing water, the flint into a fountain of waters.

It's not hard to see why the reading of this Psalm would be part of the Sabbath services leading up to Passover. This Psalm uses a common motif in the Psalms of rehearsing God's deliverance of His people from Egypt. Psalms 77, 78, 105, 134, 135 are other Psalms that prominently feature the Exodus, but there are references to the Exodus in numerous allusions all throughout the Psalms.

We might normally think of the Exodus as referring to Israel only fleeing from Egypt and crossing the Red Sea. But the Psalms show us that more is included.

Psalm 114

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

2Judah was his sanctuary, *and* Israel his dominion.

Notice that God is not only emphasizing who His people are, but vs. 2 is also a forward looking beyond the Exodus to the descendants of Judah having dominion and ruling over Israel. This was something that Israel, formerly known as Jacob, had prophesied regarding Judah:

Gen 49:8-10 Judah, thou *art he* whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand *shall be* in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee.

9Judah *is* a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up?

10The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh

come; and unto him *shall* the gathering of the people *be*.

Psalm 114

3The sea saw *it*, and fled: Jordan was driven back.

This is a reference to how the Red Sea parted, but also is included was a second parting of the waters that occurred 40 years *later* when Israel would pass through the Jordan river.

Psalm 114

4The mountains skipped like rams, *and* the little hills like lambs.

Included here is the time when Israel stood in fear at the shaking of the mountains to the hills when they stood before Mt. Sinai where Moses received the Law.

Vs. 5-7 repeat vs. 3 and 4, but that will be for a purpose I will mention later.

Psalm 114

8Which turned the rock *into* a standing water, the flint into a fountain of waters.

Vs. 8 refers to two events that occurred while they were in the wilderness where Israel was miraculously given water. They are both considered to be related as one because they have the same name of Massah and Meribah. The first time was at Rephidim

Exod 17:6 Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.

Here Moses was supposed to *strike* the rock after which the waters came out. The next time they would receive water was in Kadesh, where Moses was supposed to only *speak* to the rock.

Num 20:8 Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink.

So these are the events and the scope of the Exodus. Just as there are two separate identifications of the people of God, two partings of waters, two terrains that are affected by the quaking of the earth, there are two times water came forth.

2. The salvation message of the

Exodus.

Almost all the historical Psalms recap the story of the Exodus with a view to contemplating Jehovah as the Lord of history. By repeating the key aspects of the Exodus in the Psalms, we can see the weight that God gives to the message of the Exodus. Psalm 114 can be considered typical of the soteriological, or salvation, message of the Exodus.

As we look at the movement of the Psalm, we can see the progression of the Exodus towards a very specific purpose that it points the way to and is ultimately fulfilled in Christ. Col 2 and Heb 10 are two passages which refer to how the Old Testament is fulfilled in Christ.

Col 2:16-17 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath *days*:

17 Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body *is* of Christ.

Heb 10:1 For the law having a shadow of good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.

The salvation message is identified in Psalm 114:1,2 by identifying Judah as Israel's sanctuary.

Psalms 114

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

2 Judah was his sanctuary, *and* Israel his dominion.

From Abraham to Isaac and then finally to Jacob, God had set forth His principle of taking away the first and establishing the second (according to Heb 10), Ishmael and Isaac, Esau and Jacob, Manasseh and Ephraim, the Law and grace, Levi and Judah. Judah is most specific because it was from Him that Shiloh and the scepter would come, as we saw in Gen 49.

Declaring that Judah was His sanctuary refers to how God was sanctified in Israel. That is, God is *revered* and set above all others by His the work He did in the children of Israel through Judah.

Ezek 20:41 I will accept you with your sweet savour, when I bring you out from the people, and gather you out of the countries wherein ye have been scattered; and I will be sanctified in you before the heathen.

Six times in Ezekiel God told Israel that He would be sanctified in them.

God is sanctified when he is manifested and recognized as holy...That recognition would be the consequence of the restoration of Israel [which would be seen] even by the heathen. [They will see] that the God of Israel had been holy and just and true in his judgments, and that he seeks to make men partakers of his holiness. (*The Pulpit Commentary*)

The scepter would not depart from Judah until Shiloh prophetically identifies Jesus Christ. Shiloh means peace.

Acts 10:36 The word which *God* sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:)

Eph 2:13-14 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

14For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*;

The people of God would be narrowed down to Isaac and not Ishmael, and then further refined through Jacob and not Esau, but then Israel as a nation would ultimately be established through the tribe of Judah and King David and the reign of Christ on the throne of David as his descendent. So we immediately see in the first two verses that the salvation message of the Exodus is to find its fulfillment in the coming of Jesus as the Messiah.

Psa 114

3The sea saw *it*, and fled: Jordan was driven back.

Here we have two partings of water. Egypt is always understood to be a type of the world. Similarly, the Promised Land is a type of heaven. Passing through the Red Sea, then, has been a picture of salvation, just as baptism is a picture of our salvation. However, the Israelites did not enter the Promised Land. Instead, especially because of their sin, they spent the next forty years being purged in preparation for the Promised Land. The second parting that took place at the River Jordan is a picture of our passing through death and glorification. It represents the perfection of our salvation as we go on into glory. So here we see salvation message of the Exodus through the ultimate parting of the waters.

Psa 114

4The mountains skipped like rams, *and* the little hills like lambs.

At Mt. Sinai the Israelites received the Law where the earth shook from the presence of God.

Exod 19:16-18 And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that *was* in the camp trembled.

17And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount.

18And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.

By referring to the shaking extending to the hills, I only want to make a salvation *application* of this part of the message of the Exodus and point out the pervasive power of God when the Law was given. The real part of the salvation message regarding the quaking of the hills comes later when we look at Psalm 114:5-7.

Psalm 114

8Which turned the rock *into* a standing water, the flint into a fountain of waters.

The final part of the salvation message is in vs. 8. Just as Moses struck the rock first, Jesus, the rock of our salvation, was once stricken to save us by His death on the cross.

Heb 7:26-27 For such an high priest became us, *who is* holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;

27Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself.

Heb 9:12 Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption *for us*.

Heb 9:27-28 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

28So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

In the second encounter Moses had with the rock, he was only to speak to the

rock. This is a picture of the ongoing relationship we have with Jesus. We can only be saved one time because Christ's one time death was sufficient for all eternity. He could not and would not be smitten twice.

John 10:10 The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have *it* more abundantly.

Jesus' one sacrifice provided the perfection of our salvation and also for our sanctification, or spiritual growth *in* Christ.

3. The Foundation of the salvation message of the Exodus.

Imagine, for a moment, several fearful times. If you are at the beach and you saw the ocean drain away, would you run in land in fear? If you did know what was coming next and went out to collect seashells you would certainly be afraid when you saw the tidal wave of a tsunami coming at you. It has been reported that people experiencing major and even not so major earthquakes are stricken with fear and terror. If you saw a tornado coming, fear would seize upon you because you wouldn't quite know where to turn for safety.

Psalm 114 provides a very powerful picture of salvation. However, in looking at how each piece is associated with things that are truly terrifying, the Psalmist establishes the underlying message. It is identified in vs. 5-7 which we have been passing over so far.

Psalm 114

5What *ailed* thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest? thou Jordan, *that* thou wast driven back?

6Ye mountains, *that* ye skipped like rams; *and* ye little hills, like lambs?

7Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob;

In Hebrew poetry, something is repeated in order to emphasize a point either by comparison or contrast. Here we have a *double* repeat. The quaking of mountains is repeated in the quaking of the hills in vs. 4 and the parting of water at the Red Sea is repeated at Jordan in vs. 3, but these two items are repeated *again* in vs. 5-7. Here, the psalmist adds on a couple of phrases that brings out the fearfulness of the salvation message: What ailed thee, and Tremble. When the Law was given, it *was* a fearful thing. Right after the Ten Commandments were given, Moses came down to the people who were "quaking in their boots."

Exod 20:18-20 And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of

the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw *it*, they removed, and stood afar off.

19And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die.

20And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not.

There is a missing dimension of the fear of God in our world today. In trying to manage society, there is a concerted effort to diminish and dismiss fear.

Today, modern culture's latest challenge instead of fearing God has been trying to figure out how to make everyone equal. They suggest that the only way to demonstrate that no one's rights have been violated is if everyone has equal substance. They would suggest that in a truly neutral world that if 17% of the populace has large ears then they would only have 17% of the wealth. If they have less than 17%, then it must be because they were discriminated against or if they have more than 17% of the wealth then they had some unfair advantage. The first problem with this is that there are *numerous* reasons for disparities that have nothing to do with discrimination or cheating. And they are changing all the time. The second problem is that, since the reasons are always changing, solutions that only worry about wealth often end up contributing to problems. The attitude that can cause people to miss out on advancement is the lack of fear of God.

For another example, some say that we need prison reform because it is discriminatory. Others point out the rise in crime when there are no real consequences for criminal behavior. There is a lot of interesting debate on the role of discrimination and what the solutions are, but on this and many other issues, what gets consistently left out is *the lack of the fear of God that creates crime!*

No amount of money, no amount of placing people in different settings, no amount of job opportunities, no amount of government intervention, no amount of education, is going to change the conditions of life for those who have no respect for the morality and life principles founded on God and His Word.

Larry Elder shares this story and analysis from *Ten Things You Can't Say in America*:

A chaplain in a federal prison decided to improve morale. With Mother's Day approaching, he made a deal with one of the major greeting card companies. Supply us, he asked the company, with five hundred

Mother's Day cards, one for each man. Sensing good PR, the card company went along.

The inmates enthusiastically sent each mom a card. Morale improved so dramatically that the chaplain decided to repeat the success on Father's Day. Again, the greeting card company agreed to supply five hundred Father's Day cards. The chaplain offered the cards to the inmates.

But not one inmate sent a card to his father. Not one.

In his book *My Father's Face*, author James Robison wrote about the chaplain's experience. The majority of men in prison come from a home with an absentee father, or one in which he doesn't even know his father, or one in which the father was present but abusive. What does this tell us? This demonstrates the importance of fathers, especially for male children.

[Larry Elder suggests that there is] damage done to society and the family by the welfare state, an institution that says to young pregnant women, "marry the government." To the father, the welfare state says, "Get lost. You're not needed, we will enable you to abandon your moral, spiritual, and financial responsibilities. We're in charge here."

...The nuclear family remains the best vehicle to inculcate values, goals, and morals into the young. But the modern welfare state leads to the breakdown, or nonformation, of nuclear, intact families.

Did you notice what is missing from this story? It is the fear of God. It is not just that the family is important, but also what *should be* important to the family: the fear of God.

Later, Mr. Elder shared this story that brings the importance of the fear of God into focus:

Rachel Scott was one of the teenagers killed in the Columbine High School shooting tragedy in Littleton, Colorado. Her brother, Craig, survived. Their father, Darrell Scott, addressed a House Judiciary Committee's subcommittee. He urged that the schools allow children to pray in school. "We do need a change of heart and a humble acknowledgment that this nation was founded on the principle of simple trust in God!

"As my son Craig lay under that table in the school library and saw his two friends murdered before his very eyes, he did not

hesitate to pray in school. I defy any law or politician to deny him that right! "I challenge every young person in America and around the world to realize that on April 20, 1999, at Columbine High School, prayer was brought back to our schools. Dare to move into the new millennium with a sacred disregard for legislation that violates your conscience and denies your God-given right to communicate with Him.

Now someone might suggest that there are plenty of atheists and non-religious people who are doing quite well. However, they are merely piggy-backing and coasting on a morality that was founded on Godly fear, even if they won't acknowledge that that is where morality comes from. They might not be willing to *admit* that it is *God's* law they are respecting.

It is only a fool who does not fear God.

Ps 14:1-3 The fool hath said in his heart, *There is* no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, *there is* none that doeth good.

2The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, *and* seek God.

3They are all gone aside, they are *all* together become filthy: *there is* none that doeth good, no, not one.

Prov 1:7 The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of knowledge: *but* fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Prov 9:10 The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy *is* understanding.

Pro 15:33 The fear of the LORD *is* the instruction of wisdom; and before honour *is* humility.

Prov 3:5-6 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

6In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

We should not dare to live our lives in a way that says "I don't care what God thinks. I'm going to do whatever I want." We should fear what God thinks about the mind altering toxic things we inhale or drink. We should fear what God thinks about what we put in front of our eyes. We should fear what God thinks about our lack of love for the brethren by avoiding being with them. We should fear what God thinks about our casual to non-existent concern for the lost. We

should fear what God thinks about letting children getting ruined by the world. Nothing says fool like ignoring God.

There are those who criticize Christianity and religion in general for attempting to use fear to scare them into heaven. To that, I would plead guilty.

Heb 10:31 *It is* a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Luke 12:5 But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.

2Cor 5:11 Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.

1. The Exodus. Ps 114:1-8, Gen 49:8-10, Exod 17:6, Num 20:8
2. The salvation message of the Exodus. Col 2:16-17, Heb 10:1, Ps 11, Ezek 20:41, Acts 10:36, Eph 2:13-14, Exod 19:16-18, Heb 7:26-27, Heb 9:12, Heb 9:27-28, John 10:10,
3. The foundation of the salvation message of the Exodus. Psalm 114, Exod 20:18-20, Ps 14:1-3, Prov 1:7, 9:10, 15:33, 3:5-6, Heb 10:31, Luke 12:5, 2Cor 5:11