



Psalm 105 - God's Faithfulness to Israel

Introduction

This is a hymn celebrating God's faithful dealings with his people, particularly reflecting on episodes from the Pentateuch in which the people interacted with powerful foreigners who might have harmed them: Abimelech (Genesis Chapter 20), Potiphar (Genesis Chapters 39-41), and Pharaoh (Exodus, especially Chapters 7-14).

The tone of Psalm 105 is one of gratitude: each member of the singing congregation should recognise that he is an heir and beneficiary of all these great deeds that God has done, so that each one will embrace his calling to live as a member of God's holy people. It is the only psalm to recall explicitly the promises to the patriarchs.

Psalm 105 is a 'historical psalm' like Psalms 78 and 106. Psalm 106 takes up events that follow those of Psalm 105, stressing God's patience with his people when they disbelieved and rebelled. The theme of the people's disbelief is absent from Psalm 105. Verses 28-36 recount eight of the ten plagues sent upon the Egyptians, leaving out the fifth and sixth; refer to Exodus 9:1-12. The psalm mentions the ninth plague first, and has the third and fourth in reverse order. There is no doubt that the psalm depends on Exodus; the difference between the two accounts is due to the different purposes behind the accounts. Exodus gives the fuller narrative, while Psalm 105 focuses on features that display God's faithfulness.

The first 15 verses of Psalm 105 are also found in 1 Chronicles 22:8-22 and presented there as a composition of David, written and sung for the bringing of the Ark of the Covenant into Jerusalem. It is reasonable to therefore conclude that although this psalm is specifically attributed to King David, he is the author of it.

Psalm 105:1-6 - Call to Give Thanks to the Lord.

The opening section invites the congregation to celebrate what the Lord has done, setting a tone of gladness with terms such as give thanks, sing, sing praises, tell, glory, and rejoice. The foundation of gratitude is remembering the wondrous works that the Lord has done, particularly those on behalf of his people, the offspring of Abraham.

- 1 O give thanks to the Lord, call on his name,
make known his deeds among the peoples.
- 2 Sing to him, sing praises to him;
tell of all his wonderful works.
- 3 Glory in his holy name;
let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice.

Psalm 105:1-3

O give thanks to the Lord. Recent psalms in the collection focused on stirring one's soul to bless the Lord. Now David encouraged himself and others to give thanks to the Lord and Psalm 105 will give many reasons for this thanks. This is the first of ten quickly stated encouragements to honour and worship God.

Call on his name is an expression for seeking the Lord in public worship: <<*To Seth also a son was born, and he named him Enosh. At that time people began to invoke the name of the Lord*>> (Genesis 4:26), and: <<*From there he moved on to the hill country on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and there he built an altar to the Lord and invoked the name of the Lord*>> (Genesis 12:8). This probably has the idea of calling upon Yahweh and not upon the idols of the nations. He alone deserves to be called upon in the sense of praise towards and reliance on.

Make known his deeds among the peoples. David will recount the amazing deeds God has done in the sight of all peoples, and he encouraged all who heard him to do the same. God's people should tell of all his wonderful works, as confirmed in: <<*Sing praises to the Lord, who dwells in Zion. Declare his deeds among the peoples*>> (Psalm 9:11), <<*And you will say on that day: Give thanks to the Lord, call on his name; make known his deeds among the nations; proclaim that his name is exalted*>> (Isaiah 12:4).

Sing to him. As in many other places in the psalms, God's people are told the importance of praising him in song. The songs should be sung to him and not to an audience or merely for one's own pleasure.

Glory in his holy name. People can glory in many things. Some glory in wealth or status, others glory in pleasure or entertainment. God's people rightly find their greatest glorying in his holy name.

- 4 Seek the Lord and his strength;
seek his presence continually.
- 5 Remember the wonderful works he has done,
his miracles, and the judgements he has uttered,
- 6 O offspring of his servant Abraham,
children of Jacob, his chosen ones.

Psalm 105:4-6

Seek the Lord and his strength. God's people are invited to not only seek God himself but also his strength. This strength is given to God's people as they seek him, as Paul would later write: <<***Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power***>> (Ephesians 6:10). Spurgeon commented, "Seek, seek, seek, we have the word three times, and though the words differ in the Hebrew, the sense is the same. It must be a blessed thing to seek, or we should not be thus stirred up to do so."

Remember the wonderful works he has done. There is the constant danger among God's people to forget his marvellous works. It dishonours God when people forget his great works and Christians will always drift to forgetfulness if they do not actively remember. Spurgeon observed, "Alas, we are far more ready to recollect foolish and evil things than to retain in our minds the glorious deeds of Jehovah. If we would keep these in remembrance our faith would be stronger, our gratitude warmer, our devotion more fervent, and our love more intense."

O offspring of his servant Abraham. This psalm is especially directed towards God's covenant people, the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and **Jacob**. These were **his chosen ones** in the outworking of his covenant plan.

The Jews are rightfully proud of their heritage but Jesus warned those who claimed that right but did not act towards God as they should: <<They answered him, 'Abraham is our father.' Jesus said to them, 'If you were Abraham's children, you would be doing what Abraham did, but now you are trying to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did'>> (John 8:39-40).

Psalm 105:7-11 - The Lord Makes and Keeps His Covenant.

The next section describes in general what the Lord has done: he has displayed his judgements throughout the entire earth and he remembers his covenant forever. The rest of the psalm will give specific examples to back up this claim.

7 He is the Lord our God;
his judgements are in all the earth.
8 He is mindful of his covenant for ever,
of the word that he commanded, for a thousand generations,
9 the covenant that he made with Abraham,
his sworn promise to Isaac,
10 which he confirmed to Jacob as a statute,
to Israel as an everlasting covenant,
11 saying, ‘To you I will give the land of Canaan
as your portion for an inheritance.’

Psalm 105:7-11

He is the Lord our God. From a Christian perspective Adam Clarke wrote, “He is Jehovah, the self-existent and eternal God. He is our God, he is our portion; has taken us for his people, and makes us happy in his love.”

His judgements are in all the earth. Before focusing on the works and promises God made unto the people of Israel, David reminds the reader that the Lord is God over the entire earth. His covenant focus on Israel does not take away from his interest and lordship over the earth.

He is mindful of his covenant for ever. God made a significant covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that was passed to the nation of Israel. It is an everlasting covenant, and Israel’s role as God’s covenant people remains until the end of the age. For this expression, refer also to Genesis 9:15, Exodus 2:24, and 6:5, Leviticus 26:42 and 26:45, Psalm 106:45, and 111:5, Jeremiah 14:21 and Ezekiel 16:60. For God remembering, refer to the comment made on Psalm 25:6-7.

Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, seems to have paraphrased vv.8-11 as recorded in: <<*Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors, and has remembered his holy covenant, the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham, to grant us that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all our days*>> (Luke 1:72-75).

For a thousand generations. Exodus 34:7 says that God keeps his steadfast love for a thousand generations. The worshippers delight to think of the people of God being preserved forever, and of the prospect of their own descendants being members of that people: <<*I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your offspring after you throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you*>> (Genesis 17:7),

<<But the steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him, and his righteousness to children's children, to those who keep his covenant and remember to do his commandments>> (Psalm 103:17-18); this, too, is the measure of God's enduring love. The brief psalm ends on the thought of God's unending mercy and truth. These are everlasting reasons to give thanks and praise to God.

An everlasting covenant. Here this refers to the promise that Israel will possess the land and remain as God's people, again: *<<I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your offspring after you throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you>> (Genesis 17:7), and: <<God said, 'No, but your wife Sarah shall bear you a son, and you shall name him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him'>> (Genesis 17:19).*

To you I will give the land of Canaan as your portion for an inheritance. One aspect of this everlasting covenant is the land God appointed for Israel. It is the allotment of their inheritance, given to them when they were few in number. God promised the land to Abraham when he and his family were only a few people and living as nomads in the land of Canaan.

Psalm 105:12-15 - He Watched over His People While They Wandered in Canaan.

The first specific example comes from Genesis Chapter 20, where Abraham stayed in Gerar. The reference to 'my prophets' recalls: *<<for he [Abraham] is a prophet>> (Genesis 20:7b).* When the king of Gerar took Abraham's wife Sarah to be his wife, believing her to be Abraham's sister, he placed in jeopardy God's promise to raise up a son for Abraham from Sarah, but God ensured the integrity of the promise.

- 12 When they were few in number,
of little account, and strangers in it,
13 wandering from nation to nation,
from one kingdom to another people,
14 he allowed no one to oppress them;
he rebuked kings on their account,
15 saying, 'Do not touch my anointed ones;
do my prophets no harm.'

Psalm 105:12-15

When they were few in number, of little account, and strangers in it, wandering from nation to nation. The patriarchs had their seasons of wandering. Abraham came from Ur of the Chaldeans (refer to Genesis 11:31-12:4) and journeyed to Egypt as recorded in Genesis 12:10-20. Jacob also lived for many years in Chaldea: *<<Then Jacob went on his journey, and came to the land of the people of the east>>* (Genesis 29:1). There he worked for Laban, taking two of his daughters as wives and seeing the birth of most of his children.

Strangers or sojourners are resident aliens, who do not have citizenship rights: *<<I am a stranger and an alien residing among you; give me property among you for a burying-place, so that I may bury my dead out of my sight>>* (Genesis 23:4).

He allowed no one to oppress them. In all their wanderings among the nations, God protected them. He even rebuked kings on their account; refer to Genesis 12:17-20 and Genesis Chapter 26 for examples of this.

Do not touch my anointed ones. This, along with the companion 1 Chronicles 16:22, is the only place in the OT that uses the plural of ‘anointed one,’ applying it here to the family of Abraham, perhaps treating the descendants as included in the ancestor. God calls Abraham and his offspring his ‘anointed ones’ because he specially selected them to be his people. God protected Abraham and Sarah before King Abimelech, and did not let Abimelech touch Sarah: *<<Then God said to him in the dream, ‘Yes, I know that you did this in the integrity of your heart; furthermore it was I who kept you from sinning against me. Therefore I did not let you touch her’>>* (Genesis 20:6). God protected Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as his prophets. Spurgeon suggested, “The words here mentioned may not have been actually spoken, but the impression of awe which fell upon the nations is thus poetically described.”

Do my prophets no harm. In Genesis 20:7, Abraham, as a prophet, is both under God’s special care and a worthy intercessor on behalf of others. Adam Clarke stated, “It is supposed that the patriarchs are here intended; but the whole people of Israel may be meant. They were a kingdom of priests and kings unto God; and prophets, priests, and kings were always anointed.”

Psalm 105:16-22 - He Brought Israel to Egypt to Sojourn.

The next example is the account of Joseph from Genesis Chapters 39-41: Joseph went from being a slave in Potiphar’s house (v.17) to prison (Genesis 39:20), where he interpreted dreams (Genesis 41:13). He then became next in command to Pharaoh (Genesis 41:40). Following Joseph’s words: *<<Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as he is doing today>>* (Genesis 50:20), the psalm interprets the way Joseph was sold into slavery (the psalm does not need to add, ‘by his own

brothers' for the account is well documented) and rose to power in Egypt as an expression of God's faithful care for his people.

16 When he summoned famine against the land,
and broke every staff of bread,
17 he had sent a man ahead of them,
Joseph, who was sold as a slave.
18 His feet were hurt with fetters,
his neck was put in a collar of iron;
19 until what he had said came to pass,
the word of the Lord kept testing him.
20 The king sent and released him;
the ruler of the peoples set him free.
21 He made him lord of his house,
and ruler of all his possessions,
22 to instruct his officials at his pleasure,
and to teach his elders wisdom.

Psalm 105:16-22

When he summoned famine against the land. The great famine that came upon the greater region in the days of Joseph was no accident: <<*The seven years of plenty that prevailed in the land of Egypt came to an end; and the seven years of famine began to come, just as Joseph had said. There was famine in every country, but throughout the land of Egypt there was bread. When all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread. Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians, 'Go to Joseph; what he says to you, do.'* And since the famine had spread over all the land, Joseph opened all the storehouses, and sold to the Egyptians, for the famine was severe in the land of Egypt. Moreover, all the world came to Joseph in Egypt to buy grain, because the famine became severe throughout the world>> (Genesis 41:53-57). God called the famine, and destroyed all the provision of bread, i.e. broke every staff of bread: <<*Thus the sons of Israel were among the other people who came to buy grain, for the famine had reached the land of Canaan*>> (Genesis 42:5).

He had sent a man ahead of them. The psalm sees Joseph's troubles with the eye of faith, saying that God had sent Joseph: <<*And now do not be distressed, or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you*

to preserve life>> (Genesis 45:5), i.e. before the famine, God had already planned it. David understood the injustice and misfortune that came upon Joseph was ordained by God, so that in his plan he could be sent ahead to Egypt to save the patriarchs and the whole region from famine.

His feet were hurt with fetters. Joseph's pain in his slavery was real, yet did not make void the plan of God. His season of affliction was a time when **the word of the Lord kept testing him.** Spurgeon commented, "The iron fetters were preparing him to wear chains of gold, and making his feet ready to stand on high places. It is even so with all the Lord's afflicted ones, they too shall one day step from their prisons to their thrones."

He made him lord of his house. Joseph was brought low, but also lifted up in God's timing. He was given authority over all the **possessions** of the house, and authority over **officials** and **elders.**

Psalm 105:23-38 - He Brought Them out of Egypt by the Hand of Moses.

The next section recounts events from the Book of Exodus, focusing on how God used Moses to lead the people out of Egypt, in keeping with his promises: ***<<Then the Lord said to Abram, 'Know this for certain, that your offspring shall be aliens in a land that is not theirs, and shall be slaves there, and they shall be oppressed for four hundred years; but I will bring judgement on the nation that they serve, and afterwards they shall come out with great possessions. As for yourself, you shall go to your ancestors in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age. And they shall come back here in the fourth generation; for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete'>>*** (Genesis 15:13-16).

- ²³ Then Israel came to Egypt;
Jacob lived as an alien in the land of Ham.
- ²⁴ And the Lord made his people very fruitful,
and made them stronger than their foes,
- ²⁵ whose hearts he then turned to hate his people,
to deal craftily with his servants.

Psalm 105:23-25

Then Israel came to Egypt. After God sent Joseph ahead, he brought the people of Israel into the land of Egypt for their own provision and protection as a people: ***<<Then Jacob set out from Beer-sheba; and the sons of Israel carried their father Jacob, their little ones, and their wives, in the wagons that Pharaoh had sent to carry him. They also took their livestock and the goods that they had acquired in the land of Canaan, and they came into Egypt, Jacob and all his offspring with him, his sons, and his sons' sons with him, his daughters,***

and his sons' daughters; all his offspring he brought with him into Egypt>>
(Genesis 46:5-7).

Jacob lived as an alien in the land of Ham. The primary purpose of this was to allow the Israelites to grow in number over a period of more than four hundred years. As aliens they had no social contact with the Egyptians and were therefore not tainted by their beliefs and lifestyle as they would have been had they remained in Canaan during that period. It was also meant to teach them to treat any aliens that came to live with them in accordance with the Lord's statutes: *<<The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God>>* (Leviticus 19:34).

And the Lord made his people very fruitful. In Egypt, God's covenant people multiplied with very little intermarriage with the Egyptians. They were able to grow greatly: (Exodus 1:7-11), and eventually became stronger than their enemies.

Whose hearts he then turned to hate his people. The people of Israel were welcomed into the land of Egypt in the days of Joseph, but in later generations were hated and made into slaves for the Egyptians: (Exodus 1:8-12). Spurgeon observes, "God cannot in any sense be the author of sin so far as to be morally responsible for its existence, but it often happens through the evil which is inherent in human nature that the acts of the Lord arouse the ill-feelings of ungodly men."

- 26 He sent his servant Moses,
and Aaron whom he had chosen.
- 27 They performed his signs among them,
and miracles in the land of Ham.
- 28 He sent darkness, and made the land dark;
they rebelled against his words.
- 29 He turned their waters into blood,
and caused their fish to die.
- 30 Their land swarmed with frogs,
even in the chambers of their kings.
- 31 He spoke, and there came swarms of flies,
and gnats throughout their country.
- 32 He gave them hail for rain,
and lightning that flashed through their land.

- 33 He struck their vines and fig trees,
and shattered the trees of their country.
- 34 He spoke, and the locusts came,
and young locusts without number;
- 35 they devoured all the vegetation in their land,
and ate up the fruit of their ground.
- 36 He struck down all the firstborn in their land,
the first issue of all their strength.

Psalm 105:26-36

He sent his servant Moses. With Israel under slavery and bondage in Egypt, at the appointed time God raised up deliverers for his people. These were Moses, given the wonderful title his servant, and his brother Aaron. God gave these the ability to perform his signs to authenticate their work.

Many of the disciples of Jesus were willing to be known as servants, Greek *doulos*, which also means bond servant or slave: <<Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God>> (Romans 1:1), <<Think of us in this way, as servants of Christ and stewards of God's mysteries>> (1 Corinthians 4:1), <<Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus>> (Philippians 1:1), <<Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ>> (Titus 1:1), <<James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ>> (James 1:1a), <<Simeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ>> (2 Peter 1:1a), and: <<Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James, To those who are called, who are beloved in God the Father and kept safe for Jesus Christ>> (Jude 1).

The combination signs and miracles can also be rendered 'signs and wonders' <<But I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and I will multiply my signs and wonders in the land of Egypt>> (Exodus 7:3); these are the mighty deeds Moses and Aaron did before Pharaoh to demonstrate that God had sent them.

The following verses show that the psalmist regarded the record of the Book of Exodus as historically true. He recounted the plagues God sent upon Egypt, all according to the word God gave to Moses and Aaron.

He sent darkness, and made the land dark, they rebelled against his words. This is the ninth plague: <<Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Stretch out your hand towards heaven so that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, a darkness that can be felt.' So Moses stretched out his hand towards heaven, and there was dense darkness in all the land of Egypt for three days. People could not see one another, and for three days they could not move from where

they were; but all the Israelites had light where they lived>> (Exodus 10:21-23). The NRSVA take the Septuagint version for the Hebrew has it as: <<they did not rebel against his words>>. The Syriac also omits the word 'not'. Perhaps the psalm puts this plague first because it seems to have overcome the resistance of most Egyptians: <<The Lord gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover, Moses himself was a man of great importance in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's officials, and in the sight of the people>> (Exodus 11:3), although not yet that of Pharaoh; that is, the Egyptian populace did not rebel against God's words any further, only Pharaoh and his advisers resisted.

He turned their waters into blood was the first plague: *<<Moses and Aaron did just as the Lord commanded. In the sight of Pharaoh and of his officials he lifted up the staff and struck the water in the river, and all the water in the river was turned into blood, and the fish in the river died. The river stank so that the Egyptians could not drink its water, and there was blood throughout the whole land of Egypt>> (Exodus 7:20-21).*

Their land swarmed with frogs was the second plague: *<<Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Go to Pharaoh and say to him, "Thus says the Lord: Let my people go, so that they may worship me. If you refuse to let them go, I will plague your whole country with frogs. The river shall swarm with frogs; they shall come up into your palace, into your bedchamber and your bed, and into the houses of your officials and of your people, and into your ovens and your kneading bowls. The frogs shall come up on you and on your people and on all your officials.'" And the Lord said to Moses, 'Say to Aaron, "Stretch out your hand with your staff over the rivers, the canals, and the pools, and make frogs come up on the land of Egypt.'" So Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt; and the frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt>> (Exodus 8:1-6).*

He spoke, and there came swarms of flies, and gnats throughout their country. Flies were the fourth plague: *<<Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Rise early in the morning and present yourself before Pharaoh, as he goes out to the water, and say to him, "Thus says the Lord: Let my people go, so that they may worship me. For if you will not let my people go, I will send swarms of flies on you, your officials, and your people, and into your houses; and the houses of the Egyptians shall be filled with swarms of flies; so also the land where they live. But on that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, where my people live, so that no swarms of flies shall be there, that you may know that I the Lord am in this land. Thus I will make a distinction between my people and your people. This sign shall appear tomorrow.'" The Lord did so, and great swarms of flies came into the house of Pharaoh and into his officials' houses; in all of Egypt the land was ruined because of the flies>> (Exodus 8:20-24), while gnats were the third: <<Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Say to Aaron, "Stretch out your staff and strike the dust of the earth, so that it may become gnats*

throughout the whole land of Egypt.”’ And they did so; Aaron stretched out his hand with his staff and struck the dust of the earth, and gnats came on humans and animals alike; all the dust of the earth turned into gnats throughout the whole land of Egypt>> (Exodus 8:16-17).

He gave them hail for rain, and lightning that flashed through their land. This was the seventh plague: <<*The Lord said to Moses, ‘Stretch out your hand towards heaven so that hail may fall on the whole land of Egypt, on humans and animals and all the plants of the field in the land of Egypt.’ Then Moses stretched out his staff towards heaven, and the Lord sent thunder and hail, and fire came down on the earth. And the Lord rained hail on the land of Egypt; there was hail with fire flashing continually in the midst of it, such heavy hail as had never fallen in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. The hail struck down everything that was in the open field throughout all the land of Egypt, both human and animal; the hail also struck down all the plants of the field, and shattered every tree in the field. Only in the land of Goshen, where the Israelites were, there was no hail>> (Exodus 9:22-26).*

He spoke, and the locusts came refers to the eighth plague: <<*Then the Lord said to Moses, ‘Stretch out your hand over the land of Egypt, so that the locusts may come upon it and eat every plant in the land, all that the hail has left.’ So Moses stretched out his staff over the land of Egypt, and the Lord brought an east wind upon the land all that day and all that night; when morning came, the east wind had brought the locusts. The locusts came upon all the land of Egypt and settled on the whole country of Egypt, such a dense swarm of locusts as had never been before, nor ever shall be again. They covered the surface of the whole land, so that the land was black; and they ate all the plants in the land and all the fruit of the trees that the hail had left; nothing green was left, no tree, no plant in the field, in all the land of Egypt>> (Exodus 10:12-15).*

God not only sent these plagues to punish Pharaoh and the Egyptians for not releasing the Israelites but also to show that he was much more powerful than the make-believe gods of the Egyptians:

- When God sent darkness, he showed himself greater than Ra, the sun God, and Nut, the sky goddess.
- When God turned their waters into blood, he showed himself greater than Osiris, god of the Nile, and Khnum, the guardian of the Nile.
- When God made their land abound with frogs, he showed himself greater than the goddess Hekt, the frog-goddess of fertility.
- When God sent swarms of flies and gnats, he showed himself greater than fly-god Uatchit.
- When God sent hail for rain, he showed himself greater than Geb, the god of the earth and Nepri, the goddess of grain, and also Anubis, the guardian of the fields.

- When God sent locusts without number, he showed himself greater than Shu, the god of the atmosphere and Min, the deity of the harvest.

He struck down all the firstborn in their land was the tenth and climactic plague: <<At midnight the Lord struck down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the prisoner who was in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of the livestock. Pharaoh arose in the night, he and all his officials and all the Egyptians; and there was a loud cry in Egypt, for there was not a house without someone dead>> (Exodus 12:29-30), which is also referenced in: <<He struck all the firstborn in Egypt, the first issue of their strength in the tents of Ham>> (Psalm 78:51). The final and greatest plague against the Egyptians was the terrible death of the firstborn in every household that was not protected by the blood of the Passover lamb. The ‘firstborn’ as the first fruits of all their strength are reflected in: <<Reuben, you are my firstborn, my might and the first fruits of my vigour, excelling in rank and excelling in power>> (Genesis 49:3), and: <<He must acknowledge as firstborn the son of the one who is disliked, giving him a double portion of all that he has; since he is the first issue of his virility, the right of the firstborn is his>> (Deuteronomy 21:17).

³⁷ Then he brought Israel out with silver and gold,
and there was no one among their tribes who stumbled.

³⁸ Egypt was glad when they departed,
for dread of them had fallen upon it.

Psalm 105:37-38

Then he brought Israel out with silver and gold. This was the plundering of the Egyptians who were willing to give away their valuable items to ensure that the Israelites left: <<The Israelites had done as Moses told them; they had asked the Egyptians for jewellery of silver and gold, and for clothing, and the Lord had given the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they let them have what they asked. And so they plundered the Egyptians>> (Exodus 12:35-36).

There was no one among their tribes who stumbled. It is quite remarkable that in a group of more than one million Israelites of all ages that none of them were ill or too weak to travel. It is all the more remarkable given that they were worked mercilessly as slaves and provided with very little food other than that which they could gather for themselves. Spurgeon observed, “See the contrast between Egypt and Israel – in Egypt one dead in every house, and among the Israelites not one so much as limping.”

Egypt was glad when they departed. The Egyptians were so crushed by the many plagues that they wanted the Israelites to go: <<The Egyptians urged the people

to hasten their departure from the land, for they said, 'We shall all be dead'>> (Exodus 12:33).

For dread of them had fallen upon it is reflected in: <<*You brought them in and planted them on the mountain of your own possession, the place, O Lord, that you made your abode, the sanctuary, O Lord, that your hands have established*>> (Exodus 15:17).

Psalm 105:39-41 - He Cared for His People in the Desert.

The next section continues with a few more examples from Exodus that support the claim of vv.7-11.

- 39 He spread a cloud for a covering,
and fire to give light by night.
- 40 They asked, and he brought quails,
and gave them food from heaven in abundance.
- 41 He opened the rock, and water gushed out;
it flowed through the desert like a river.

Psalm 105:39-41

He spread a cloud for a covering, and fire to give light by night. As they journeyed through the wilderness, God gave Israel protection of a cloud by day and fire to give them light in the night. These remarkable emblems of God's presence and care led Israel through the wilderness: <<*The Lord went in front of them in a pillar of cloud by day, to lead them along the way, and in a pillar of fire by night, to give them light, so that they might travel by day and by night. Neither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people*>> (Exodus 13:21-22).

They asked, and he brought quails; And gave them food from heaven in abundance (Exodus 16:4); and he opened the rock, and water gushed out. God miraculously supplied the needs of Israel in the wilderness, providing quail: <<*The whole congregation of the Israelites set out from Elim; and Israel came to the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they had departed from the land of Egypt. The whole congregation of the Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. The Israelites said to them, 'If only we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate our fill of bread; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.'* Then the Lord said to Moses, 'I am going to rain bread from heaven for you, and each day the people shall go out and gather enough for that day. In that way I will test them, whether they will follow my

instruction or not. On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather on other days.’ So Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, ‘In the evening you shall know that it was the Lord who brought you out of the land of Egypt, and in the morning you shall see the glory of the Lord, because he has heard your complaining against the Lord. For what are we, that you complain against us?’ And Moses said, ‘When the Lord gives you meat to eat in the evening and your fill of bread in the morning, because the Lord has heard the complaining that you utter against him—what are we? Your complaining is not against us but against the Lord.’ Then Moses said to Aaron, ‘Say to the whole congregation of the Israelites, “Draw near to the Lord, for he has heard your complaining.”’ And as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the Israelites, they looked towards the wilderness, and the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud. The Lord spoke to Moses and said, ‘I have heard the complaining of the Israelites; say to them, “At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall have your fill of bread; then you shall know that I am the Lord your God.”’ In the evening quails came up and covered the camp; and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp>> (Exodus 16:1-13), and manna, the bread of heaven: <<I will be standing there in front of you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it, so that the people may drink.’ Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel>> (Exodus 17:6), and water that gushed forth from rocks: <<He split rocks open in the wilderness, and gave them drink abundantly as from the deep>> (Psalm 78:15).

The psalmist gave a distinctly positive remembrance of Israel in the wilderness, not mentioning their many sins, rebellions, and examples of unbelief. This is because his purpose is to remember the great works of God, and not to focus on the failings of man.

Psalm 105:42-45 - He Gave Them Canaan as He Had Promised.

The final section rushes ahead from the events of Exodus to the time of Joshua, recalling that God remembered his holy promise to establish his people in the land, in order that they might keep his statutes and observe his laws, living faithfully under God’s care: (2 Kings 17:37), and deeply grateful to their faithful God.

- 42 For he remembered his holy promise,
and Abraham, his servant.
- 43 So he brought his people out with joy,
his chosen ones with singing.
- 44 He gave them the lands of the nations,
and they took possession of the wealth of the peoples,
- 45 that they might keep his statutes

and observe his laws.

Praise the Lord!

Psalm 105:42-45

For he remembered his holy promise. God's faithfulness to Israel in bringing them out of Egypt, through the wilderness, and into Canaan was all based on a fulfilment of his holy promise. God binds himself by his promises, and regards them as holy.

So he brought his people out with joy. It could be said that this joy both belonged to Israel and to Yahweh, their covenant God. It pleased both God and his people for him to rescue Israel from their bondage and to bring them into their inheritance, the lands of the nations.

That they might keep his statutes and observe his laws. At almost the end of the psalm, David brought home a point of moral obligation. God rescued Israel and brought them into the land, setting them free not for the ultimate purpose of personal indulgence, but so they could observe his statutes and keep his laws.

Praise the Lord! Psalm 105 ends just as the previous psalm, with the Hebrew word *Hallelujah*. It is right and worthy for God's people to remember his marvellous works and to praise him for all he has done.