

This psalm is similar to the previous one in that the psalmist is recounting the history of Israel's relationship with God. In this psalm, he focuses on the many ways they had sinned against Him in spite of the many ways in which He blessed them.

Clarke: "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, (1Chronicles 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."

Spurgeon: "While we are studying this holy Psalm, let us all along see ourselves in the Lord's ancient people, and bemoan our own provocations of the Most High, at the same time admiring his infinite patience, and adoring him because of it."

Psalms 106:1 ¶ Praise ye the LORD. O give thanks unto the LORD; for *he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.*

The psalmist opens with a big Hallelujah! (from the Hebrew for "Praise ye the LORD.") He encourages the hearer to give thanks to the LORD for His goodness and mercy—characteristic traits of His eternal being.

Spurgeon: "Since man ceases not to be sinful, it is a great blessing that Jehovah ceases not to be merciful."

Psalms 106:2 Who can utter the mighty acts of the LORD? *who can shew forth all his praise?*

The questions in this verse are meant to make one realize that we can never fully understand or adequately praise Him for the many wonders He works on our behalf.

Psalms 106:3 Blessed *are they that keep judgment, and he that doeth righteousness at all times.*

The psalmist recognizes—probably from personal experience or observation—that men are happy when they obey God's commandments and live righteously before Him.

Psalms 106:4 Remember me, O LORD, with the favour *that thou bearest unto thy people: O visit me with thy salvation;*

Psalms 106:5 That I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, that I may glory with thine inheritance.

The psalmist breaks out in a personal prayer to the LORD, asking for his favor and salvation. He wants to experience the pleasure and blessings that accompany being one of God's chosen people, to be able to rejoice and celebrate their inheritance in accordance with His covenant.

Deuteronomy 32:9 "For the LORD'S portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance."

Those who have placed their faith in Jesus as their LORD and Savior are blessed to know that we are also inheritors of the blessings of God.

Ephesians 1:3, 7 & 11 "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ...In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace... In whom also we have obtained an inheritance...."

Romans 8:14–17 "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God....The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ...."

Psalms 106:6 ¶ We have sinned with our fathers, we have committed iniquity, we have done wickedly.

With these words, the psalmist begins acknowledging the sins of the current generation who had basically followed in the footsteps of their forefathers. He confesses the national sin and wickedness of his people, with specific admission of personal guilt.

It should be noted that the psalmist does not make a chronological presentation.

Psalms 106:7 Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt; they remembered not the multitude of thy mercies; but provoked *him* at the sea, *even* at the Red sea.

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

The psalmist notes that their forefathers did not respond wisely to the miracles with which God delivered them from Egypt. They quickly forgot the multitude of ways that God demonstrated His mercy toward them. Even after witnessing the evidence of His power and authority over His creation, they provoked Him at the Red Sea when they saw the armies of Pharaoh bearing down upon them. Instead of responding in anger and judgment, the LORD worked another miracle to the glory and honor of His own name and in yet another demonstration of His mighty power over His creation and ability to take care of His people. (Exodus 14)

Psalms 106:9 He rebuked the Red sea also, and it was dried up: so he led them through the depths, as through the wilderness.

Psalms 106:10 And he saved them from the hand of him that hated *them*, and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy.

Psalms 106:11 And the waters covered their enemies: there was not one of them left.

Psalms 106:12 Then believed they his words; they sang his praise.

The psalmist recounts how God divided the waters of the Red Sea and provided a way through it on dry ground to escape the Egyptian army. When the Egyptian army followed them, the LORD caused the waters to fall back into place, drowning every single Egyptian soldier. When they witnessed this great deliverance, they sang the praises of God. (Exodus 15)

Psalms 106:13 ¶ **They soon forgot his works; they waited not for his counsel:**
Psalms 106:14 **But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert.**

Psalms 106:15 **And he gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul.**

I liked Spurgeon's comment: "This is a common fault in the Lord's family to this day; we are long in learning to wait for the Lord, and upon the Lord. With him is counsel and strength, but we are vain enough to look for these to ourselves, and therefore we grievously err."

Despite the fact that they had witnessed many miracles from the LORD, it wasn't long before they "forgot" them. Every time they encountered a major need, their response was to complain; and still God provided for their needs.

I had a hard time understanding the last part of verse 15. Adam Clarke's comment made sense: "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."

Psalms 106:16 **They envied Moses also in the camp, and Aaron the saint of the LORD.**
Psalms 106:17 **The earth opened and swallowed up Dathan, and covered the company of Abiram.**

Psalms 106:18 **And a fire was kindled in their company; the flame burned up the wicked.**

At one point in their wanderings, a few influential men led a group of 250 in rebellion against the leadership of Moses and Aaron; they were jealous.

Numbers 16:1–3 "Now Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men: And they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown: And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD?"

The LORD made examples of the three main leaders—Korah, Dathan and Abiram—by having the ground open up and swallow these men, their families and all their possessions. The others God killed by fire.

Numbers 16:23–33 "And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying....And he spake unto the congregation, saying, Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be consumed in all their sins....And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods. They, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation."

Numbers 16:35 "And there came out a fire from the LORD, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense."

You would think the people would have responded in fear and humility. Sadly, they continued to grumble. They blamed Moses instead of recognizing these actions as a righteous judgment of God.

Numbers 16:41 "But on the morrow all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying, Ye have killed the people of the LORD."

**Psalms 106:19 They made a calf in Horeb, and worshipped the molten image.
Psalms 106:20 Thus they changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass.**

The psalmist next recounts the incident when they convinced Aaron to make a golden calf, declaring it to represent the gods that had brought them out of Egypt.

Note: Horeb is another name for Sinai.

**Psalms 106:21 They forgot God their saviour, which had done great things in Egypt;
Psalms 106:22 Wondrous works in the land of Ham, and terrible things by the Red sea.
Psalms 106:23 Therefore he said that he would destroy them, had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach, to turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy them.**

It was like they had completely forgotten all the miracles the LORD had done on their behalf. God was so angry that He would have destroyed them had it not been for Moses intervening for them, appealing in behalf of the honor of God's name.

Exodus 32:9–12 "And the LORD said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people: Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation. And Moses besought the LORD his God, and said, LORD, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand? Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people."

Note from Clarke: "Egypt is called the Land of Ham or Cham, because it was peopled by Misraim the son of Cham."

VanGemeren as quote by Guzik: "The metaphor 'stood in the breach' derives from military language, signifying the bravery of a soldier who stands in the breach of the wall, willing to give his life in warding off the enemy (cf. [Ezekiel 22:30](#)). So Moses stood bravely in the presence of Almighty God on behalf of Israel."

**Psalms 106:24 Yea, they despised the pleasant land, they believed not his word:
Psalms 106:25 But murmured in their tents, and hearkened not unto the voice of the LORD.**

The psalmist next makes reference to the events at Kadesh-Barnea when the people refused to believe that the LORD could make them victorious over the giant people in the land. They were ready to go back to Egypt rather than trust the LORD. (Numbers 13)

Psalms 106:26 Therefore he lifted up his hand against them, to overthrow them in the wilderness:

Psalms 106:27 To overthrow their seed also among the nations, and to scatter them in the lands.

Again, the LORD became angry with the people and determined to disinherit them and start over again with Moses. Once again, Moses interceded for the people, appealing to guarding the honor of God's name. Once again, the LORD showed mercy; however, He declared that none of this generation would get to enter the Promised Land. Only those under 20 years of age would be allowed to take possession of the land. (Numbers 14)

Psalms 106:28 They joined themselves also unto Baalpeor, and ate the sacrifices of the dead.

Psalms 106:29 Thus they provoked *him* to anger with their inventions: and the plague brake in upon them.

Psalms 106:30 Then stood up Phinehas, and executed judgment: and so the plague was stayed.

Psalms 106:31 And that was counted unto him for righteousness unto all generations for evermore.

These verses make reference to the time when Balaam counseled Balak, king of Moab, to have the women of Moab lure the men of Israel into disobedience to God.

Interestingly enough, we don't learn the specifics about Balaam's involvement in this until revealed by John in the book of Revelation.

Revelation 2:14 "But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication."

Once again, the LORD became very angry. When God told Moses to eliminate the perpetrators, the actions of Phineas were singled out as appeasing God's anger. God rewarded Phineas by promising to establish him and his seed with an everlasting priesthood.

Numbers 25:5-13 "And Moses said unto the judges of Israel, Slay ye every one his men that were joined unto Baalpeor. And, behold, one of the children of Israel came and brought unto his brethren a Midianitish woman in the sight of Moses, and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, who were weeping before the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And when Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he rose up from among the congregation, and took a javelin in his hand; And he went after the man of Israel into the tent, and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her belly. So the plague was stayed from the children of Israel. And those that died in the plague were twenty and four thousand. And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Phinehas, the son of

*Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, while he was zealous for my sake among them, that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy. Wherefore say, Behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace: And he shall have it, and his seed after him, **even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood**; because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel."*

Significant—24,000 people died as a result of their rebellion and disobedience.

Spurgeon regarding Phineas: "No personal ambition, or private revenge, or selfish passion, or even fanatical bigotry, inspired the man of God, but zeal for God, indignation at open filthiness, and true patriotism urged him on."

Psalms 106:32 They angered *him* also at the waters of strife, so that it went ill with Moses for their sakes:

Psalms 106:33 Because they provoked his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips.

These verses make reference to events at Kadesh when the people were in need of water. God told Moses to speak to the rock before the people, and He would provide water from a rock once again. Because Moses was so angry with the people, he misrepresented God by speaking in anger and striking the rock twice instead of speaking to it. God still provided the needed water in abundance, but Moses was told he would not be allowed to enter the Promised Land.

*Numbers 20:10–12 "And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also. And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, **to sanctify me** in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them."*

Psalms 106:34 ¶ They did not destroy the nations, concerning whom the LORD commanded them:

Psalms 106:35 But were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works.

Psalms 106:36 And they served their idols: which were a snare unto them.

The psalmist jumps ahead in time to recall how the people disobeyed the LORD when taking possession of the Promised Land. He had commanded them to destroy all the inhabitants of the land, but they did not do so. Eventually, they were living side by side with the heathen people of the land and began to adopt their customs; they even began worshipping their idols.

*Deuteronomy 7:1–2 & 5 "When the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou; And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, **and utterly destroy them**. . . . thus shall ye deal with them; ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire."*

*Judges 2:11–12 “And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim: And they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, **and followed other gods**, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the LORD to anger.”*

This was a hard command from the LORD, but it was a command born of love for His people. He wanted to protect them from being tempted to serve other gods—actions that would bring them under His curse instead of His blessing.

Deuteronomy 7:4 “For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly.”

Deuteronomy 30:15–19 “See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; In that I command thee this day to love the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the LORD thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it. But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them; I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it. I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live:”

Psalms 106:37 Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils, Psalms 106:38 And shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan: and the land was polluted with blood.

Sadly, it even got to the point that the people of Israel sacrificed their own children to the false gods of the Canaanites.

2 Kings 17:16–17 “And they left all the commandments of the LORD their God, and made them molten images, even two calves, and made a grove, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served Baal. And they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger.”

That anyone would do such a thing is beyond this mom’s understanding! Frankly, it is no different than the awful sin of abortion today.

Psalms 106:39 Thus were they defiled with their own works, and went a whoring with their own inventions.

Psalms 106:40 Therefore was the wrath of the LORD kindled against his people, insomuch that he abhorred his own inheritance.

These verses are basically saying that it was because of their wickedness in the worship of heathen idols (equated with adultery before the true God), defiling themselves in the process, that the LORD became angry with His people, those He had set apart as His own inheritance among the nations on planet earth.

Spurgeon made a good comparison: "The feeling described is like to that of a husband who still loves his guilty wife, and yet when he thinks of her lewdness feels his whole nature rising in righteous anger at her, so that the very sight of her afflicts his soul."

And gave a good word of warning: "They joined the heathen in their wickedness, and they did not win their hearts, but rather provoked their contempt. If we mix with men of the world they will soon become our masters and our tyrants, and we cannot want worse.

Psalms 106:41 And he gave them into the hand of the heathen; and they that hated them ruled over them.

Psalms 106:42 Their enemies also oppressed them, and they were brought into subjection under their hand.

In judgment, the LORD gave them over to the heathen and allowed their enemies to rule over them and afflict them.

Psalms 106:43 Many times did he deliver them; but they provoked *him* with their counsel, and were brought low for their iniquity.

Psalms 106:44 Nevertheless he regarded their affliction, when he heard their cry:

Psalms 106:45 And he remembered for them his covenant, and repented according to the multitude of his mercies.

Psalms 106:46 He made them also to be pitied of all those that carried them captives.

In spite of their rebellion, the LORD delivered them many times (as recorded in the book of Judges), but each time they eventually chose to again rebel in wickedness against Him. Every time they cried out in their distress, He would remember His covenant and respond in mercy.

God also often caused their captors to treat the Israelites with compassion. I think this is one reason many commentators believe the author of this psalm was among the captives taken to Babylon.

Lamentations 3:22–23 "It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness."

Psalms 106:47 Save us, O LORD our God, and gather us from among the heathen, to give thanks unto thy holy name, *and* to triumph in thy praise.

Psalms 106:48 Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting: and let all the people say, Amen. Praise ye the LORD.

The psalmist closes the psalm with a prayer for the LORD "our" God to gather them together once again from among the heathen so that they can declare their thanks and praise His holy name. "Blessed be the LORD God of Israel" is another way of saying "Praise the LORD." The psalmist references God as eternal (having no beginning or end) as he praises Him and urges the people to join Him as he does so.

Yes, the LORD is the God of all peoples, but His relationship with Israel will endure forever in accordance with His covenant with Abraham—and God always keeps His covenant.

*Genesis 17:3–7 “And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying, As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And **I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant**, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.”*

Numbers 23:19 “God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?”

Isaiah 55:11 “So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.”

“Amen” = so be it, truly

“Praise ye the LORD” = Hallelujah