

EBC Abridged: "The *Hallel* psalms are found in three separate collections: the "Egyptian Hallel" (113-118), the "Great Hallel" (120-136), and the concluding Hallel psalms (146-150)...The Egyptian Hallel and the Great Hallel were sung during the annual feasts (Lev 23; Nu 10:10). The Egyptian Hallel psalms received a special place in the Passover liturgy, as 113-114 were recited or sung before and 115-118 after the festive meal (cf. Mt 26:30; Mk 14:26). The concluding Hallel psalms (146-150) were incorporated in the daily prayers in the synagogue after the destruction of the temple (A.D. 70)."

In this psalm, the composer is giving thanks and praise to the LORD for healing him.

Psalms 116:1 ¶ I love the LORD, because he hath heard my voice *and my supplications.*

Psalms 116:2 Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon *him* as long as I live.

"I love the LORD because" alludes to an inescapable truth as expressed by John.

1 John 4:19 "We love him, because he first loved us."

In this instance the psalmist declares his love for the LORD to be rooted in the fact that God had answered his prayers. He had been praying earnestly (from the Hebrew). Because God had answered his prayer (in accordance with his expectation is implied), he was committed to depending upon God in prayer for the rest of his life.

God shows His love to us in so many ways! Answered prayer is just one of those ways. Frankly, however, if my love for God depended upon His answering my prayers according to my expectations, that love would be very fickle. Our love for God should be rooted in who He is, knowing that He will always act for the good, whether that be according to our expectations or not. Our faith in and love for God should be constant—even when it appears that He isn't listening.

Psalms 116:3 The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow.

Psalms 116:4 Then called I upon the name of the LORD; O LORD, I beseech thee, deliver my soul.

The psalmist tells us that he felt he was at the point of death; he was drowning in anguish and grief. "Then" he prayed for the LORD to deliver him.

Why did he wait so long? Don't we often do the same? He should have been talking to the LORD from the very outset. So often our first instinct when we get sick is to go to the doctor; our first appointment should be with the LORD. When we have relationship problems, we tend to seek human counselors for help. Our first thought should be to seek the LORD and ask Him to reveal how we can best honor Him in trying to mend that relationship. Too often, we wait until circumstances become overwhelming before taking our burden to the LORD.

Psalms 116:5 Gracious is the LORD, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful.

At this point, the psalmist begins to praise the LORD. He acknowledges that God is gracious, righteous and merciful. The Hebrew for "gracious" paints a picture of God bending down to show kindness and pity to an inferior. That He is "righteous" is a reference to the fact that He acts justly in accordance with His moral law. The Hebrew for "mercy" states, "to fondle, to love, compassionate." All of this paints a picture to me of a very loving Father.

Spurgeon: "...the figure seems to be that of a tender physician or loving friend leaning over a sick man whose voice is faint and scarcely audible, so as to catch every accent and whisper."

Psalms 116:6 The LORD preserveth the simple: I was brought low, and he helped me.

The Hebrew for the word "simple" is from a root that refers to one who is easily deceived, enticed or flattered. The psalmist declares that the LORD watches out for and protects that person that is trusting Him. In fact, he identifies with that person and acknowledges that God rescued him from the depths of his trouble.

Psalms 116:7 Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee.

Psalms 116:8 For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling.

Psalms 116:9 I will walk before the LORD in the land of the living.

It would seem that the psalmist is giving himself a pep talk in these verses. He is basically telling himself to "return" to a state of rest and quiet in light of what the LORD had done for him. The psalmist knew what it was like to rest in the LORD from previous experience.

The psalmist acknowledges that the LORD had provided for him bountifully. This makes me think of the words of Paul to the Ephesians.

Ephesians 3:20 "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us...."

I liked this observation from the EBC Abridged: "Only the Lord can change 'death,' 'tears,' and 'stumbling' into a 'walk before the LORD' and a joyful celebration of life 'in the land of the living.'"

Psalms 116:10 ¶ I believed, therefore have I spoken: I was greatly afflicted:

Psalms 116:11 I said in my haste, All men *are* liars.

I liked the translation from the CJB: "*I will keep on trusting even when I say, 'I am utterly miserable,' even when, in my panic, I declare, 'Everything human is deceptive.'*"

The psalmist is being transparent. He is struggling with dealing with his circumstances. It seems he has suffered betrayal from those he loved and/or trusted. In spite of everything, he is determined to keep trusting the LORD. Many would interpret his circumstances to indicate that he was being punished for great sin, as did the friends of Job, never considering that he was being purified and sanctified to the glory of God.

Psalms 116:12 What shall I render unto the LORD *for* all his benefits toward me?

Psalms 116:13 I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD.

Psalms 116:14 I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people.

The psalmist wonders how can ever thank the LORD appropriately in light of His many blessings. Obviously, we can never thank God appropriately for all He does for us. So, he pictures lifting up (from Hebrew for "take") a cup representing his salvation and praising the LORD; I get the picture of what we do when give a toast to someone. He declares publicly that he will make good on every vow he makes to the LORD.

Psalms 116:15 Precious in the sight of the LORD *is* the death of his saints.

"Precious" is a reference to something that is valuable, beloved and prized. "Saints" are a reference to godly men and women, evidenced by their kindness, their likeness to Him. God highly prizes each person that enters eternity as part of His family.

How often we hear this verse at funerals and what comfort it brings! I often think of it hand in hand with another verse in Isaiah.

Isaiah 57:1 "The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart: and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come."

God treasures each one of His saints. Sometimes their death is intended to spare them evil lurking in their future. How blessed we are that our Father knows everything, including every detail about our future. Sometimes, and I would dare say always (based on the word of God through Paul), what appears to be bad in the life of the child of God is meant for good.

*Romans 8:28 "And we know that **all** things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."*

Psalms 116:16 O LORD, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds.

The psalmist declares himself a voluntary slave to the LORD, the son of a mother who was also a bondservant to the LORD. What does he mean by saying that God had set him free? It think it means that he had learned that to serve God in love gives one freedom; it provides parameters that ensure His provision and protection.

Psalms 116:17 I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the LORD.

Psalms 116:18 I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people,

Psalms 116:19 In the courts of the LORD'S house, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem. Praise ye the LORD.

The psalmist declares his intent to offer his thanksgiving to the LORD just as he would any sacrifice. Again, he publicly declares on the temple grounds in Jerusalem before God's people that he will make good on every vow he makes to the LORD. Hallelujah!