

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)."

Psa. 117:1 O praise the LORD, all ye nations: praise him, all ye people.

Psa. 117:2 For his merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the LORD endureth for ever. Praise ye the LORD.

As I read this psalm, I couldn't help but think of the following verses in Thessalonians.

1Th. 5:16 Rejoice evermore.

1Th. 5:17 Pray without ceasing.

This psalm seems to be a spontaneous exclamation of praise and gratitude to the Lord. The psalmist is definitely on a spiritual mountaintop. He is so joyful that he doesn't understand why everyone else isn't expressing the same joy. He is encouraging everyone to praise the Lord.

Verse two indicates that the psalmist has gone through a time in which he had personally experienced God's mercy, His kindness—in fact, to a great degree. He knows he didn't deserve it. His reference to "the truth of the Lord" makes me think that he is referring to one or more of God's promises.

This should be the attitude and expression that is recognized in every child of God by the watching world. I know I far too often take God's blessings for granted. We should be bursting at the seams to share the blessings of God in our life with others. Every time God inspires me with a new poem or gives me a new understanding of scripture that I've never seen before, I can hardly wait to share that blessing with others. The truth is that I should be eager to share the truth of God's goodness and faithfulness ALL the time.

I was about to end my thoughts on this session, when I decided to check the Hebrew for the word *praise*. Two different words are used in verse 1. The first *praise* states "to be clear, to shine, to make a show, to boast." The second *praise* states "to address in a loud tone, i.e. (specifically) loud; figuratively, to pacify (as if by words):—commend, glory." The psalmist is basically saying that we shouldn't be shy or hesitant in declaring our praise. We should speak with the intent to influence others. I was intrigued by the use of the phrase "to pacify." When I looked it up in Webster's, I got the idea that our

expression of praise would give us a sense of peace and calm. Again, my life verse comes to mind.

Is. 26:3 Thou wilt keep *him* in perfect peace, *whose mind is stayed on thee*: because he trusteth in thee.

You can't be truly praising God without having your mind focused on Him in faith.