

## “Monumental Movie” (Ps. 118)

### 1. Praise (Pervasive) (1-4)

- a. Procession of Praise – a procession of redemption triumphant. This multilayered psalm is a song, it is prophesy, it is a procession, and it is a panoramic portrait (a movie, see title explanation at the end) of the King praising, trusting, persevering, conquering, and procuring redemption, which ultimately ends in a cycle of praise.
- b. Goodness and Grace – Praise for His righteousness. Praise for His mercy. He is not good because of His mercy. He is good *plus* He is also merciful. It is because He is good that we require His mercy! If He was good yet not merciful, we would still owe Him praise – as the angels praise Him without experiencing His mercy. Yet we sinners must thank Him, for His mercy is indispensable to our relationship with Him.
- c. Four-Fold – the leader prompts praise from all Israel:
  - i. The Congregation (presumably) (1)
  - ii. The Nation (2)
  - iii. The Priesthood (3)
  - iv. The Believer (4)
- d. Pinnacle of Priorities – Before all, in all, and after all, we ought to praise His holy name! I have learned to be a ‘glass half full’ person. In several arenas of my life, I’ve recently and currently experience loss of loved one (albeit not unto death), loss of abilities (physically), loss of transportation,
- e. Messianic Magnification – Jesus always glorified the Father and it was His heartbeat to please Him and do His will e.g. Jn. 8:29 – even accomplish our salvation via the Cross! Eph 5:2

### 2. Protection (5-9)

- a. Desperate Distress (5) We oft don’t call on the LORD until we are at our end – which is where He lovingly will take us, for He is not willing that any perish but all come to repentance. The syntax connotes: from a narrow or ‘tight’ place or constriction, He brought ‘broad’ to open space. He delivers us out of tight spots and brings us into the open fields of freedom. Cf. Heb. 5:7
- b. Continual Conflicts: Israel the nation among the hostile nations sang such songs of deliverance. In fact, the song of Moses is quoted in v. 14 cf. Exod. 15:2. Furthermore, King David living temporarily as a refugee sang such a song of distress and redemption (~~2 Sam. 22~~ cf. Ps. 18). Finally, Jer. 33:11 echoes vv. 1-4 while in the context of v. 5 because Jeremiah and Israel were held captive.
- c. Supreme Savior (6-7) He is able to save to the uttermost (Heb. 7:25 Cf. 2:3). When the Almighty is for you, who can be against you? Read Ro. 8:31-39. Though this is a celebratory proclamation, we must hold such with an attitude of amazement and humility. Oh, how supremely blessed to have God on “my side!” That YHWH is for me is both supremely humbling and supremely emboldening.
- d. Heavenly Hope (8-9) Our problem is oft that we have the wrong foci. We are looking to secure position, live in peace, hold on to luxury, and be esteemed. However, to be friends with the world is to be at enmity with God and to fear man is a snare; yet to fear the LORD is salvation. To lose it all for His sake is to gain everything. To become the greatest is to serve the most etc.

### 3. Power (10-12)

- a. Power under Pressure (10-11) Surrounded by nations (10a). In the Messianic layer of this proclamation, we can see that He was surrounded and crucified by Romans (~~Jn. 18:3-6~~;

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19:16ff.), yet it was His own who were responsible (19:11ff. cf. Lu. 22:5). He was also encompassed by principalities cf. Ps. 22:12, 16.

- b. Power in the Name: “In YHWH’s name.” Surrounded by \_\_\_\_\_ (11). The second time “surrounded” is used there is no specific subject identified, unless “nations” are implied. No matter what the encompassing threat, when we are trusting in the name of the LORD (Phil. 2:11), though we are hard pressed on all sides (cf. v. 5a “distress”), we can “ward off” the pressure (see 2 Cor. 4:8).
- c. Power in Perspective (12).
  - i. A vapor in eternity. Ominous threats turn out to be but bees (which sting for a time) or a quickly consumed fire of thorns (“fierce but short-lived” Alec Motyer). Again cf. 2 Cor. 4 and verse 17.
  - ii. Perspective is critical. Because His power is perfected in our weakness (2 Cor. 12:9), means that we must be brought to trust in Him and He is best magnified in such ‘jars of clay.’ Life may be but a vapor though it may last a century. Israel may have suffered long in the wilderness, during the time of the Judges, and even as a monarchy, indeed much longer than she prospered under David and Solomon’s reigns. Furthermore, Christ sacrificed glory to come to the lowest parts of humility and suffer the most excruciating torment of God’s wrath – and yet it became His victory procession (Col. 2:13-15) as partly portrayed here.

### 4. Perseverance (13-14)

- a. Malevolent Motive (13) Pushed by an individual foe – a violent attack to destroy me (Jn. 14:30; Lu. 22:3-4).
- b. Tried & True (14). He is my strength (to endure any attack) **and** song, which praise drowns out the threats which can only harm the body (Mat. 10:28); for “what can man do unto me” v. 6? He is not only my strength and song but my ultimate Salvation! Not even death can conquer me → vv. 17-18.

### 5. Proclamation (15-16)

- a. Rejoicing of the Righteous (15a)
  - i. This alternating procession of praise goes from the personal pronouns “I” and “me” to the plural voices of the “tents of the righteous.”
  - ii. The salvation of the king, as it were, extends to his people “the righteous,” thus they join in chorus acknowledging the power and glory of God. Only those in King Jesus can enjoy and enjoin the universal chorus of His praise. →
  - iii. In fact, the progressive choir in vv. 1-4 somewhat parallels the progressive four-fold choir of creatures (fourfold groups signifying completeness on earth) in Rev. 4:8, 10-11; 5:11-13 symbolizing all creatures in heaven and earth.
  - iv. An exclusive song! However, this song of redemption can only be sung by those who have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb cf. Rev. 14:3-4.
- b. Resolution and Reverence (15b-16b)
  - i. This choir’s chorus acknowledges not only YHWH’s power but His valor and majesty.
  - ii. A tri-fold praise of the courage of the triumphant LORD. Why would the LORD need courage as He sits on heaven’s throne with the earth as His footstool? He had to prevail by first descending to earth in the flesh and living by faith in the Father’s provision, protection, and prevailing →

### 6. Prevailing (17-18)

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- a. King David: Before considering how the LORD proved courageous in our salvation, let’s consider other levels of this psalm starting with David. In our focal verse, the King proclaims victory over death and we have seen such a proclamation is due to his trust in the name of the LORD. Let’s consider two psalms of David. Firstly, Psalm 56 declares his delivery from his soul’s death due to his trust in YHWH (13). What’s more, he uses the same phrase seen in v. 6 of our passage two times (4, 11) and proclaims that “God is for me” which is also stated in v. 6 of our passage. Furthermore, the context includes being encompassed by foes. Secondly, Psalm 103 echoes both this deliverance from death and the praise for YHWH’s “steadfast love and mercy” v. 4.<sup>1</sup>
  - b. Israel: The most obvious rescue from destruction is when God delivered Israel via parting the Red Sea and then closing it back in on the Egyptians.
  - c. Jesus: The true Israel of God (e.g. Mat. 2:15 cf. Hos. 11:1 expound) conquered the grave (Mat. 28:5-7 cf. Acts 2:24; Ps. 16:10 & Acts 13:35). And before overcoming death He had to suffer anguish and pain from the rod of God’s wrath (Lam. 3:1; Gal. 3:13)! Who but Jesus Messiah can say this with utter integrity? However, He prevailed in the chastisement *meant for us* e.g. Isa. 53:10; Jn. 18:11; Heb. 5:8.
  - d. Church: All those in Messiah (Jn. 5:21-29 cf. 11:25-26; Eph. 2:5-6; Ro. 6:5).
  - e. You: Because of Jesus’ victory, you too not merely conquer over death in Him but also overcome in life. We can overcome sin via mortifying the flesh (1 Tim. 4:16; Col. 3:4-5ff.). You and I can overcome by resolving His will be done in our lives. In fact this is how Jesus overcame via perfect faith in God’s will (cf. Mat. 26:38-44). Incidentally, it was this struggle and prevailing in Gethsemane which was indispensable to Jesus’ procession of passion in that holy week where He procured our salvation. →
7. Procurement (19-27)
- a. The Gate (19-21)
    - i. King (19) Progression of Procession: Representative of the King, the worship leader of the procession proclaimed victory via YHWH, and thus comes to the gates and requests entrance. The response of the gatekeepers is that only the righteous enter through the gates of righteousness (see Ps. 24:3-4, 7-10).
    - ii. Jesus: Jesus alone is our gate key so to speak. He claimed to be the “Gate” to the sheep pen so as to prohibit the illegitimate sheep/shepherds from entrance and secure safety for His sheep cf. Jn 10:1-3, 9; Rev. 21:25-27.
    - iii. Priest (20)
      1. Not unlike Psalm 24, the requirement for entrance/ascension is righteousness. Heb. 7:26-28; 6:19-20.
      2. Jesus the High Priest has opened the gate for us. It is an open entrance to the most Holy One only because Jesus’ sacrifice was a righteous perfect one (see Mat. 27:51; Heb. 9:24).
      3. Although it is an open gate PRAISE BE UNTO YHWH! – it is a narrow gate for only those who come through Jesus may enter into the gates of YHWH (Jn. 10:9; 14:6).
    - iv. Warrior (21) The pictured king is given entrance because righteousness has been provided for Him in YHWH Himself cf. Ps. 24 again. “You have proved to be my

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<sup>1</sup> The content of these mentioned *Psalms* makes it clear that the ultimate death from which David and others is saved is spiritual death due to sin e.g. Pss. 103:3; 51:14; 130:1-8.

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- salvation” not the safety of the gates but in the battles, turmoil, and attacks (which had been overcome by trusting in YHWH. YHWH had proven to be his salvation.
- v. Leader (21) The procession leader is envisioned to praise YHWH for answering his cry and for trusting in His salvation to enter the gates of righteousness. “Blessed are those who hunger for righteousness for they shall be filled” (Mat. 5:6).
  - vi. YHWH
    1. There is a direct correlation with the gate of righteousness and salvation. Our salvation is that we have been given God’s righteousness. It is vital that we understand this nature of our salvation. So many today have been given a false gospel and we need to go to the Word to get the saving Gospel of Christ. Consider these passages/verses: Ro. 1:16-17; 3:10 (cf. Pss. 14:1 & 53:1); 4:3 (cf. Gen. 15:6); 1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 5:21; Phil. 3:9; & Jer. 33:15-16! “YHWH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS” He is our salvation because He is our righteousness. Such is why there is no condemnation for those in Christ alone (Ro. 8:1). And this is why Jesus said to first seek righteousness before all else (Mat. 6:33).
    2. Picturing ultimately Jesus here, it was in the Father He trusted; yet in His own righteousness, He secured our salvation (hence Jer. 23:6). Only the righteous enter in and we have been given nothing less than Messiah’s own perfect righteousness, otherwise entrance is prohibited (Rev. 21:25-27). Therefore, because we are in Christ, we too are portrayed here in the procession; which itself portrays the consummation of the Messianic Wedding depicted in Rev. 21. →
  - vii. Church: Taking the motif further, we can see that Jesus is the key/gate and He has given it to the Church (Mat. 16:18-19). Furthermore, the gates of the New Jerusalem *are* the Church (Rev. 21:2, 9-10, 21-24). This explains how only the righteous can enter; yet no one is righteous, save the LORD viz. He makes us righteous via His self-offering which opened the gates for us. Hence, each repentant soul comes to Jesus (the Key/Door) who carries us into heaven’s open gates (Rev. 21:25-27) over the threshold of Jordan into the consummation of the marriage which resides in the ultimate Promised Land. Words and pictures cannot explain.
  - viii. Nations: One more note: Although it is a personal pledge of praise “I will...” when coupled with Psalm 117’s two verses which segue well with vv. 1-4; the entourage includes those of all nations (cf. back to Rev. 21:24).
- b. The Temple (22-26)
- i. Progression: Whether picturing the Procession Worship Leader, the King, the believer, or Jesus, we have seen that the LORD has given the warrior strength to ward off enemies, secure victory over death, and thus enter the gates which lead to the Temple.
  - ii. Paradox: v. 22 Here a divine paradox is proclaimed viz. the rejected becomes the most honored. Not unlike David who was at first dismissed and even maligned, Jesus had come to His own and was not received (Jn. 1:11), yet became the indispensable cornerstone of the Church (1 Pet. 2:4-9 cf. Isa. 28:16). His purpose: Zech. 6:12-13.
  - iii. Person: Jesus is the foundational agent of our salvation (Acts 4:11-12)!
  - iv. Praise: Such a paradoxical salvation is “marvelous in our eyes” v. 23, and thus we exult in the LORD and rejoice in this day v. 24.

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- v. Plea: It is the ‘day of salvation’ because Jesus has torn the veil of separation between us and God and Jew and Gentile. 2 Cor. 6:2 quoting Isa. 49:8 states that today is the day of salvation. Now the gate is open albeit narrow. The week Jesus entered Jerusalem’s gates was indeed the time when the day of salvation was procured and appropriately (although largely ignorantly) many cried out this request (25-26) on Palm Sunday.
- c. The Altar (27)
  - i. Pictured Offering: The procession proceeds to the altar where the “festival is decorated?” Thank God for study resources. The Hebrew term translated “cords/ropes” actually means branches, as in decorative wreaths. I thought it strange that the depicted “sacrifice” was bound. On initial readings before doing an exegetical word search, my mind automatically goes to the depiction of Christ continuing the procession of His life’s work. Yet He willingly laid down His life cf. Jn. 10:18, so I was curious as the need for cords. →
  - ii. Prescribed Offering: Furthermore, there is no evidence for the actual animal sacrifices being tied down to the altar. The offerings had to be without blemish.
  - iii. Parade Offering: Furthermore, the Hebrew term translated “sacrifice” means “festive procession.” How would one tie down a festival with cords? The more accurate translation may seem more confusing in the immediate but it makes perfect sense when the structure of the psalm is considered.
  - iv. Perfect Offering: Finally, my mind went to multiple passages in *Hebrews*. Jesus did not go into the Temple made with human hands. Just like the Cornerstone which was rejected was not a physical bolder; Jesus the “Rock” unhewn by human hands (Dan. 2:34), offered the perfect sacrifice in the perfect Temple of His body to the heavenly places (Heb. 9:24). Thus the unhewn Rock became the Cornerstone. What’s more, He offered Himself “outside the gate” (Heb. 13:12).
  - v. Priestly Offering: Although the Priests likely proceeded literally into the gates, to the Temple, and thus ultimately to the altar – it all points to the person and work of Messiah.
    - 1. Though *rejected* by His own – He was true Israel the individual (Ps. 42:1ff. and subsequent point 3 below).
    - 2. Though leaving the Temple *desolate* – He became the chief Cornerstone v. 22 of the living Temple.
    - 3. Though marching in cruel procession *outside* the gates of Jerusalem to a cross – Jesus offered the perfect sacrifice on the heavenly altar.
    - 4. Though Killed by His own people (Mat. 26:3-4; 27:22-25; Jn 18;36) – Jesus is the Messiah for Jews *and* all nations (e.g. Ro. 1:16; Ps. 117; Isa. 42:1-7; 49:1-7 & v. 8 which echoes our v. 24 above). →
  - vi. Personal Offering: Therefore, unto those whom the light has “shown” (Isa. 9:1-2; 42:7; Mat. 4:12-16), the procession continues with the sacrifice of praise. We do not tie up nor even bring sacrifices to the altar, but rather (as this verse reads) bind the procession with the festive wreath as it were. Our lives are a procession for the LORD and we offer our bodies as living sacrifices daily and joyfully unto Him. →
    - 1. Consider also these verses from Hebrews which echo our passage. **Heb. 13:6** (cf. v. 6), **12-15** (cf. vv. 19-20 re: gates, v. 27 re: altar, and vv. 28-29 re: sacrifice of praise).

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2. Jesus’ altar of sacrifice was the Cross. Ours is the daily sacrifices of the flesh (Ro. 8:13; 12:1-2).

### 8. Praise (Personal) (28-29)

#### a. Inclusio

- i. Context: This psalm began with a chorus of praise and is even prefaced by a call for all nations to acclaim YHWH (Ps. 117). The first and last verses are verbatim but the first promotes a choir while the last is prefaced by the personal testimony.
  - ii. Christ: Jesus came from above and at the end of His circuit (Dan 7:13-14) ascended back on high. He is all in all. What is of note is that the term sacrifice (as noted above) indicates festival procession and circular dance **procession, round dance, festival**<sup>2</sup> And like the circuit of the procession, this psalm ends where it began. Our salvation is from faith to faith, including Jesus’ to ours and our little faith to greater faith. And our salvation is from God and back to God. Only Jesus who is from above could offer the acceptable sacrifice and ascend back to heaven (cf. Eph. 5:2). He is “all in all.” Read 1 Cor. 15:28.
- b. Invitation: Can you produce such a personal sacrifice of praise unto the LORD and Savior? Do you desire the goodness of the LORD? Have you cried to Him, Hosanna? Have you entered into Jesus the living temple and partaken of His sacrifice? [If so and if you are not living contrary to the clear instruction of the Word (1 Cor. 11:27-29), you may partake.]

### PC Part 1

I don’t know how Michael Angelo felt when he chose the larger stones from which he would chisel out his masterpieces. It’s likely he had a vision of the finished product in mind. But what of the logistics of transporting, protecting, positioning, chiseling, etc.? Was it intimidating or exciting? It was likely both. When I approach a scriptural passage to study and preach, I have no idea how it will form nor what the end product will be. Psalm 118 is one large stone which is to be carefully sculpted to bear a portrait of Messiah. And though I know it is about Him, attempting to discover and disclose such a multilayered pericope (particular passage) is an intimidating endeavor. I approach such a passage as an unchiseled sculpture which will only emerge as resolve, reverence, and reliance are employed. For these sculpting (interpretive) tools are vital virtues necessary to carefully chisel out what is hidden in plain sight. And though such is a solemn task, it is one done with joy and excitement.

Series Title: It’s difficult to sum up in several words what this psalm conveys. After days just trying to outline this passage, I still could not adequately find a concise and cohesive title to convey the span and depth of it. There is a procession and pattern of praise, protection, power, perseverance, proclamation, prevailing, and procurement of prescribed praise therein. This multilayered profound, paralleled, paradoxical, prophetic, portrayed procession of praise parallels: nations, the worship leader priest, the king, Israel, and Messiah. Hence, we see multiple portrayals of journeys of redemption. Today, such could be conveyed in a masterpiece via motion picture. The “moving pictures” were later called “movies” morphing the first four letters of moving with the last letter or letter of picture(s). And because this Old Testament literal moving portrait includes marching, singing, praise, sacrifice, prophesy, and plea, it is rightfully a motion of portraits i.e. “moving pictures.” And because there is nothing more important to us than our redemption and praise to our Redeemer and His “marvelous” and “valorous” conquest, this Old Testament movie is indeed monumental.

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<sup>2</sup> Holladay, W. L., & Köhler, L. (2000). In [\*A concise Hebrew and Aramaic lexicon of the Old Testament\*](#) (p. 95). Brill.