

Psalm 114:1-8
The Presence of God

Introduction: Part of the Egyptian Hallel psalms (Ps. 113-118), designed to be sung during the Passover, Pentecost, the New Moon, and Hannukah. During Passover it was sung, along with Ps 113, before the actual meal.

1) God's presence among His covenant people—114:1-2

- a) The exodus from bondage—114:1
 - i) Foreign politically: ¹ *When Israel went out from Egypt,*
 - ii) Foreign verbally: *the house of Jacob from a people of strange language,*
 - (1) The language barrier would have been a constant reminder to the people of Israel that (after 400 years) they were (distinct, unassimilated) aliens in a strange land, and this would have deepened their feeling of isolation and hopelessness. (Allen Ross and Alec Motyer)
 - iii) Note that God is not mentioned, yet.
- b) The gracious results—114:2
 - i) Demonstrates His presence religiously: ² *Judah became His sanctuary [qodesh],*
 - (1) He did not rescue them and then abandon them.
 - ii) Demonstrates His authority politically: *Israel, (became) His dominion [mem'shalah].* (realm of authority)

2) Nature witnesses to God's presence—114:3-6

- Their Creator has arrived. They had better get ready!
 - These responses were not because of the **people** of Israel, but because of the **God** of Israel! Their responses are contrary to their nature.
 - There was no need for God to fight them. The presence of the sovereign creator of the universe was enough for the elements of nature to flee. (Allen Ross)
- a) The visible responses—114:3-4
 - i) Crossing bodies of water—114:3
 - (1) Ex. 14:21-22: ³ *The sea looked and fled;* (cf. Ps. 77:16)
 - (2) Forty years later in Josh. 3:13-17: *the Jordan turned (itself) back.*
 - ii) Mt. Sinai (Ex. 19:18)—114:4
 - (1) ⁴ *The mountains skipped like rams,*
 - (2) *the hills, like lambs.*
 - b) Rhetorical questions for both groups—114:5-6

- The psalmist appears to pretend not to know what nature responded this way. (Allen Ross)
- i) Bodies of water—114:5
 - (1) ⁵ *What disturbs you, O sea, that you flee?*
 - (2) *Jordan, that you turn back?*
- ii) Mt. Sinai—114:6
 - (1) ⁶ *O mountains, that you skip like rams?*
 - (2) *hills, like lambs?*

3) The appropriate response to the presence of the covenant God—114:7-8

- a) Obey the command—114:7 ⁷ **Tremble** [*yahal*], *O earth*,
 - i) Emphasis on His sovereignty: *before* (from the presence of) *the Lord* [*Adonai*],
 - ii) Emphasis on His grace: *before* (from the presence of) *the God of Jacob*,
- b) Two examples of His powerful presence—114:8 ⁸ *Who turned* [*hapak*] ...
 - i) At Horeb and Meribah: *the rock into a pool of water*, (cf. Ex. 17:6; Num. 20:11)
 - ii) *the flint into a spring of water*. (cf. Deut. 8:15)

4) Things to remember:

- a) God is able and willing to rescue His people.
- b) God is able and willing to provide for His people.
- c) All creation is the stage on which God's providence is enacted.
Providence is God's gracious outworking of his eternal purpose in the details of human life. The world is not ruled by blind chance or impersonal fate, but by God. It is God orchestrating both big things and small things, carrying out everything according to his divine plan. God does this, even in difficult, dark days. (Steven Lawson)
- d) Prayer: Father, You are the God of the storm and the dark places, Lord of the trembling earth. We praise You for being our refuge and fortress in times of darkness and danger. Thank You for Your presence and Your providence demonstrated in our lives. Grant us grace to trust You in the darkness as we also trust You in the light.