


God's Faithfulness

God deserves our worship because of His faithfulness toward His people.

PSALM 105:1-11,42-45

“Great Is Thy Faithfulness” has been a favorite hymn of believers for over a century. It was written in 1923 by Thomas Chisholm, a pastor in Kentucky. The title comes from Lamentations 3:23, but throughout the Bible it is evident that the people of God recognized the faithfulness of God. Psalm 105 not only demonstrates that we need to remember God’s faithfulness in keeping His promises, but we also need to recognize He deserves our worship because He is faithful to do so.

 **What is the best example of faithfulness you have witnessed in your lifetime?**


UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

PSALMS 105–106

There are a number of things to consider when looking at Psalms 105–106. First, there is no indication who wrote these psalms. Second, the first fifteen verses of Psalm 105 and the last two verses of Psalm 106 are quoted in 1 Chronicles 16, which is an account of the procession David led when he brought the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem. Third, Psalms 105–106 are the last two psalms in Book IV of the book of Psalms (Pss. 90–106). Therefore, Psalm 106 concludes with a doxology of praise, as all five books do. Finally, these two psalms go together. They are one of a handful of psalms that appear to be paired together with a focus on historical information recognizing God’s faithfulness to His people.

Psalm 105 focuses on God’s calling Abraham into a covenant relationship and the promises He made to Abraham. God made seven promises to Abraham: (1) a great nation would come from Abraham, (2) blessing, (3) a great name, (4) Abraham would be a blessing to others, (5) those who blessed Abraham would be blessed, (6) God’s curse on those who mistreated Abraham, and (7) God would use Abraham and his descendants to be a blessing to the nations. In Psalm 105, the psalmist praised the Lord for how faithfully He kept His promises to Abraham and his descendants. The psalmist repeatedly recalls events in Israel’s history, especially the nation’s time in Egypt and exodus from Egypt, to demonstrate how the Lord had been faithful to the Abrahamic covenant through His providential care of his descendants (Ps. 105:42).

While Psalm 105 emphasizes God’s faithfulness, Psalm 106 highlights Israel’s history of repeated unfaithfulness to Him. Psalm 106 appears to have been written when the people were in exile and yearning for a new exodus so that they could return to the land of their inheritance, the land of promise that had been given them in accord with the covenant God had made with Abraham.

 **As you read Psalm 105:1-11,42-45, highlight the ways God demonstrated His faithfulness to His people. What was the proper response of the people to God’s faithfulness?**

EXPLORE **THE TEXT**

CALL TO WORSHIP (PS. 105:1-6)

¹ Give thanks to the LORD, call on his name; proclaim his deeds among the peoples. ² Sing to him, sing praise to him; tell about all his wondrous works! ³ Boast in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice. ⁴ Seek the LORD and his strength; seek his face always. ⁵ Remember the wondrous works he has done, his wonders, and the judgments he has pronounced, ⁶ you offspring of Abraham his servant, Jacob's descendants—his chosen ones.

VERSE 1

Ten imperatives are directed to the people of God in verses 1-5. Three of those imperatives are found in verse 1. First, the psalmist called upon them to ***give thanks to the LORD***. Giving thanks to God is central to worship. The call to give thanks also lays the foundation for the rest of the psalm. The psalmist is about to list several instances in Israel's history when God demonstrated His lovingkindness and faithfulness to Israel—all of them reasons to give thanks to the Lord. To ***call on his name*** is a call to magnify His name in praise. To ***proclaim his deeds among the peoples***—meaning the nations—demonstrates there is a missional aspect to praising God.

DID YOU KNOW?

Global missions did not start with the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20). God's heart for all nations is revealed throughout the Old Testament. See, for example: Genesis 12:1-3; 26:4; 28:14; Exodus 9:16; Joshua 4:23-24; 1 Chronicles 16:23; 2 Chronicles 6:32-33; Psalm 67:1-2; Isaiah 49:6; and Daniel 7:13-14.

VERSE 2

Of the various literary types of psalms, Psalm 105 is a hymn. While not as clear-cut as other types of psalms, hymns typically include a call to ***sing*** and to ***praise*** God. Then they usually describe the reasons for praising God, which are connected to His deeds, greatness, and majesty. Finally, hymns usually conclude with a word of praise, a statement of trust, or an explanation of why God did what He did. Verse 2 contains

an exhortation. Corporately, the people of God are to sing praises to God and give witness to **his wondrous works** that He has done for them.

VERSES 3-4

The psalmist implored the people of God to **boast** in the Lord's **holy name**. People are prone to boast in themselves, but here the call is to extol and express admiration for God. The Lord's *name* is to be the object of this boasting because He is holy and worthy of such praise. The Lord is above everything; He is transcendent. Through His prophet Isaiah, God said: "I am the LORD, and there is no other" (Isa. 45:18). Understanding this truth, in Psalm 148:13 the psalmist exhorted all of creation to "praise the name of the LORD, for his name alone is exalted. His majesty covers heaven and earth." The Lord's holy name represents all that He is in His character and attributes, all He alone has done, and all He will do.

His magnificent power and abiding presence are reasons to rejoice in Him.


When Moses foretold of Israel's disobedience to God and their exile into foreign lands, he used two synonyms meaning "to seek" to encourage the people to seek the Lord. He promised them that if they would do so with all of their heart and soul, then they would "find him" (Deut. 4:25-29). Here in verses 3-4, the psalmist uses both of these Hebrew words to call the people once again to **seek the LORD**. To seek His **strength** means to trust in His undergirding might so that they will be able to endure difficulty and go forward in faithful obedience to Him. To **seek his face always** is to look continually to His lovingkindness and direction rather than allowing their attentions to be diverted to lesser things. As the people of God focus their attention and endeavors on persistently seeking the Lord whose name is holy, they will discover His magnificent power and abiding presence are reasons to rejoice in Him.

VERSES 5-6

Verse 5 provides examples of ways in which one is to seek the Lord. In the remainder of Psalm 105, the psalmist emphasized the need of God's people to remember the wondrous things God has done for them in the past. Therefore, if praising God involves acknowledging who God is and what He has done, then remembering the past is essential both to seeking the Lord and also to praising Him. **His wonders, and the**

judgments call to mind how God saved Israel in Egypt with wondrous plagues and judgments upon the Egyptians (Ex. 3:20; 12:12). Here, the psalmist anticipated verses 23-36 later in the psalm. What's more, the record of these events is in God's Word. Consequently, seeking the Lord also entails time spent in God's Word, learning what it says, meditating on its meaning, applying it in one's life, and trusting God to continue to be faithful to it going forward.

It is not until verse 6 that the psalmist indicated who his intended audience was. Given Abraham and Jacob are their forefathers, the **offspring of Abraham** and **Jacob's descendants** refer to the people of Israel. Elsewhere in the Old Testament, the biblical writers refer to the people of Israel as the Lord's **chosen ones** (1 Chron. 16:13; Ps. 106:5; Isa. 43:20; 45:4; 65:9,15,22). The language here recalls Moses's words to Israel in Deuteronomy 7:6-9. Moses stated that God graciously chose Israel to be His holy people. Then Moses said, "Know that the LORD your God is God, the faithful God who keeps His gracious covenant loyalty" (v. 9). In like manner, God's faithfulness to His covenant with Israel is the psalmist's focus in the remainder of Psalm 105.

 Which of the imperatives found in these verses come easy to you? Which are more challenging?

KEY DOCTRINE: *Man*

Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God. (See Ephesians 2:1-10; Colossians 1:21-22.)

COVENANT MADE (PS. 105:7-11)

⁷ He is the LORD our God; his judgments govern the whole earth.

⁸ He remembers his covenant forever, the promise he ordained for a thousand generations— ⁹ the covenant he made with Abraham, swore to Isaac, ¹⁰ and confirmed to Jacob as a decree and to Israel as a permanent covenant: ¹¹ "I will give the land of Canaan to you as your inherited portion."

VERSE 7

The main body of this psalm begins with a declaration of faith: ***He is the LORD our God.*** The psalmist recognized that the Lord is not a localized, national deity who has authority only within the confines of its borders, like the pagan nations believed about their gods. Rather, the Lord God of Israel has all authority and ***his judgments govern the whole earth.*** Therefore, wherever the people of God are, they are under God's rule and in His domain. What's more, He is always near to them.

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VERSES 8-11

In verses 8-10 the psalmist recalled God's covenant with Abraham, a covenant He also confirmed with Isaac and Jacob (Gen. 26:3-5; 28:13-15). In Genesis 12, God began laying the foundation for the Abrahamic covenant, but it is in Genesis 17 that He established this covenant with Abraham. The word ***covenant*** occurs thirteen times in 17:2-19. The Abrahamic covenant refers to everything the Lord declared and obligated Himself to do for and through Abraham and his offspring. The details of the covenant are found in Genesis 12; 15; and 17.

In the Old Testament, a covenant was the establishment of a bond between two parties both legally and relationally. The agreement to establish a covenant may involve responsibilities required by both parties for the covenant to stand (often called a bilateral covenant). The covenant of marriage is a great example of this. God's covenant with Israel at Mount Sinai was a bilateral covenant, one which Israel broke almost immediately after the covenant had been made. In other cases, the initiation and fulfillment of the covenant expectations may fall primarily on only one of the participants (often called a unilateral covenant). The Abrahamic covenant was a unilateral covenant because God initiated it and committed Himself alone to fulfilling it (see also Gen. 15:1-21), while at the same time God expected Abraham's obedience within the confines of its terms (see also Gen. 17:9; 18:19).

Here are aspects of this covenant: First, God initiated the covenant with Abraham. Second, God made promises to Abraham. Note the promises God made to Abraham and his descendants in the "Understand the Context" section on page 70. Third, God pledged Himself to fulfilling His covenant promises to Abraham and his descendants,

as demonstrated in the ceremony in Genesis 15:9-21. Fourth, God’s purpose for blessing Abraham was not for Abraham’s sake alone. God chose Abraham to be His instrument of blessing to people from every nation, which is communicated twice for emphasis in Genesis 12:1-3. Fifth, in Genesis 17:1-13, God promised that His covenant with Abraham would be a permanent covenant. It is this promise the psalmist emphasized in verses 8 and 11. The apostle Paul recognized the fulfillment of all of these promises in Jesus (see Gal. 3).

In verse 11, the psalmist highlighted God’s promise to give Abraham’s descendants the land of Canaan (Gen. 13:15; 15:18; 17:8). The rest of the psalm highlights God’s faithfulness to keep this promise.

 **How does an understanding of God’s sovereignty influence your faith?**

COVENANT FULFILLED (PS. 105:42-45)

⁴² For he remembered his holy promise to Abraham his servant. ⁴³ He brought his people out with rejoicing, his chosen ones with shouts of joy. ⁴⁴ He gave them the lands of the nations, and they inherited what other peoples had worked for. ⁴⁵ All this happened so that they might keep his statutes and obey his instructions. Hallelujah!

VERSES 42-44


Psalm 105:12-41 recounts the history of the Israelites and details the ways God provided for them and guided them out of Egypt, through the wilderness, and to the promised land. Therefore, the psalmist stressed that the Lord ***remembered*** His covenant with Abraham. This means that God was faithful to do everything He promised Abraham He would do.

God had protected their forefathers in foreign lands (vv. 12-15). He used a famine to ultimately lead Jacob’s family to Egypt. God had raised up Joseph to become a ruler in Egypt and a savior to his people (vv. 16-23). Next, the Lord “made his people very fruitful,” and they multiplied, causing the Egyptians to turn against them (vv. 24-25). Nevertheless, God sent Moses and Aaron to deliver them from their oppressors and bring Israel out of Egypt through wondrous deeds (vv. 26-38). After that, the Lord led them and provided for them through the wilderness to the promised land. Therefore, as they entered Canaan,

the people rejoiced because the Lord was faithful. They inherited from Him ***what other peoples had worked for***—cities and houses they did not build, cisterns they did not dig, and lush vineyards and olive groves they did not plant (Deut. 6:10-11).

VERSE 45

The psalmist concluded with two important declarations. First, everything God did for Israel was so that they would ***keep his statutes and obey his instructions***. In response to His faithfulness to them, God expected them to be faithful to Him. Second, the final word is the plural imperative exhorting the people to praise the Lord, ***Hallelujah!*** How could they not, given the faithfulness of their Lord to them?

 **Why is it important that God has made and keeps significant promises to His people?**

BIBLE SKILL: *Use multiple Scripture passages to understand a key biblical concept.*

Psalm 105 focuses on God’s covenant with His people. Study the following Bible passages and take note of the insights that you gain regarding the covenants that He made with His people: Genesis 17:1-8; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Luke 22:19-20; and Hebrews 9:11-15. What do these verses reveal about God’s faithfulness?

APPLY THE TEXT

- + Believers should be ready to tell others of what God has done.
- + Believers can praise God for His sovereignty over all things.
- + God’s past faithfulness motivates believers to trust Him and obey Him.

○ **As a group, recount to each other the things God has done. Discuss ways you can proclaim His deeds among people who do not yet know Him.**

○ **Practically speaking, how does God’s past faithfulness affect your life today? What reasons do you have to give thanks to the Lord? What hinders you from giving thanks to God and praising Him?**

○ **Memorize Psalm 105:1-2.**

Prayer Needs
