

(How to Understand the KJV Bible) 13 Psalm 114

by Keith Simons

Psalm 114 reminds us of God's power and greatness, and the importance of giving him his proper place in our lives.

Duration: 20:54

Scripture: Exodus 12:31

Topics: "KJV Bible", "God's Power", "Historical Lessons from Scripture"

Description

Keith Simons teaches on Psalm 114, emphasizing the historical significance of Israel's exodus from Egypt and the miraculous events that followed. He explains how this psalm serves as a reminder of God's power and presence among His people, drawing parallels between Israel's national experience and the personal experience of Christians today. Simons highlights the importance of recognizing God's sovereignty and the need for His people to give Him the proper place in their lives. The psalm illustrates that nature itself responds to God's authority, trembling at His presence and performing extraordinary acts. Ultimately, the message is that God is powerful and great, and His people must honor Him accordingly.

Transcript

Welcome, my name is Keith Simons. I'm a Bible teacher from England and you're listening to the next in our series of talks on how to understand the King James Version of the Bible. Today we're looking at Psalm 114 and as always we'll go through it line by line, verse by verse and word by word, looking at the meanings of the words and looking at what we can learn from them and at the same time gaining a grasp of some of the curious language that is in the King James Bible.

So Psalm 114 is structured in four sections of two verses each. So I'm going to read you the first two verses and then we'll go back over it and explain it. It's a psalm, we've been looking at several psalms of prophecy, psalms about the future.

This is the opposite, this is a psalm of history. Here's the first two verses. When Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language, Judah was his sanctuary and Israel his dominion.

When we talk about history in the Bible, yes it's past events, but the Bible doesn't record past events simply to tell us about what happened many years ago. It records those past events because there are

lessons to be learned for today and for the future from it. And the writer of the psalms, writers of the psalms, and indeed right through the Bible, you see a great awareness of the history of Israel as a nation, the history of God's people, because that is also the history of how God deals with his people and it is lessons about how God deals with his people, not just with the Jews, but with all his people to this day.

So it begins when Israel went out of Egypt. That's a reference to the occasion called the Passover. Israel's people were slaves in Egypt and God freed them from that.

God took the whole nation in a single day out of Egypt to take them to the promised land, although they were 40 years in the desert on the way to the promised land. And that opening phrase, when Israel went out of Egypt, sets our time frame for this entire psalm. We're going to hear about the wonderful miracles that God did for Israel's people after they left Egypt.

We're going to hear about how present God was with them. God was there, they were wandering through the desert, but God was with them and that made tremendous difference to everything around them. You don't think of a nation living in a desert.

You don't think there's enough food for it, enough pasture for the animals. The Sinai desert at that time was not a completely dry desert. A little earlier Moses had been leading a flock of sheep through the desert, finding the places where pasture was available, the oases they're called, the places where there's water.

But there's a lot of difference between there being enough water and enough pasture for a shepherd and his flock and an entire nation. How did that nation manage in that 40 years in the desert? Well we're going to find out. The house of Jacob from a strange language.

We often see parallelism in the book of Psalms. What that means basically is that the second line in some way repeats or emphasizes or builds up on the first line. And so Israel is called in the second half of the verse the house of Jacob and Egypt is called a people of strange language.

So the house of Jacob really means the family of Jacob and Israel's people were Jacob's family. We've got Abraham and his son Isaac and his son Jacob and it is from Jacob that Israel's people were all descended. Jacob had 12 sons and their families became the 12 tribes of Israel.

So the house of Jacob simply means Israel. They're one family but they've become a great nation because over the years they've had children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Egypt's people are called a people of strange language.

Obviously this is a strange language for Israel's people. In other words Israel's people never really understood Egypt's people. Their language seemed strange and difficult to understand.

They weren't at home there. They were in Egypt but God had given them a home. He'd already promised them the promised land Canaan which later became Israel and so there they were living in Egypt as foreigners and eventually as I've already said I think reduced to slavery there but God set them free and God set them free in a powerful way to rescue them from there and they looked back at this event in their history as if it were the birth of their nation.

Well God's people today, the Christians today, also look back at a great event in their history when God set them free from the slavery of sin to have a right relationship with him and for them of course it's very

much an individual experience. Jesus called it being born again. The point when God rescued them from the power of sin and the devil to be his own people.

So we've got a parallel there and it's a parallel which we can draw between Israel's people in their national experience and Christians in their personal experience of God but let's concentrate on Israel's experience as we move into verse two. It declares Judah was his sanctuary. Whose sanctuary? God's sanctuary and Israel his dominion.

Okay Judah was his sanctuary. A sanctuary means a holy place. God had chosen Judah as his holy place and Israel his dominion.

A dominion means the country over which a king rules. So when they were rescued out of Egypt, Judah was God's holy place and Israel was his kingdom and we might say well why does he talk about Judah and Israel? They later became the separate parts of the nation of Israel after Solomon the country split in two. One part was Judah in which was God's sanctuary, his holy place, his temple and the other part was Israel but that's later in history.

What did it mean at the time when Israel went out of Egypt? Verse one. Well when we look at the history we find that Judah was appointed to lead the tribes. They led the tribes of Israel.

Judah was one of the twelve sons of Jacob and his family became the tribe called the tribe of Judah and they were appointed to lead Israel's people into battle or when they marched forward. So we're saying that those who took the first place in Israel's people as they marched forward through the desert, they were God's holy place. God was present among them.

God was there with them and Israel was not a country rebelling against God. Israel was God's people. God was ruling over them.

God was their king and so if we are God's holy place and if God is our king then we can expect extraordinary things to happen. Verse three. The sea saw it and fled.

Jordan was driven back. The mountains skipped like rams and the little hills like lambs. Yes extraordinary things happened when God was at work.

God's great power over nature They reached the Red Sea and they had no way to cross it. There were no boats and the army of Egypt gathered behind Israel's people and it looked like they would all be killed. But the sea saw it and fled because Israel's people were moving forward in the power of God.

To flee means to run away. The sea saw that God's holy people had come and it ran away. Well of course the sea doesn't run away but there's a record in the book of Exodus as to what actually did happen at the shore of the Red Sea.

There was a strong east wind that blew and separated the sea and the people walked through on dry land. That was how they entered the desert and when their families left the desert to go across into the promised land, the land of Canaan, 40 years later the same miracle. The river Jordan was driven back.

It was forced back so that Israel's people could walk through where the river normally goes on dry land. Verse four. And between that time extraordinary things were happening.

The mountains skipped like rams, male sheep. The mountains moved around like male sheep do on the field and the little hills moved around like lambs as if they were playing. Well when God declared his commands on Mount Sinai, we read that the entire mountain, and it was seen on every side as Israel's people went through.

Verse five asks a question and it continues into verse six. Let me read you them. So it's repeating verses three and four and it's asking the question, what ailed thee? What was it that caused the sea to do this? What was it that caused the Jordan to do this? So that Israel's people could walk through them on dry land.

What was it that shook the mountains and the hills? Well it's about to answer that question. What ailed thee means what troubled you, what disturbed you, what made you ill that such extraordinary things happened. But let me just speak a little about the King James Version and its language here.

We've got a passage here where the writer is speaking to the sea and to the Jordan and to the mountains. O thou sea, thou Jordan, ye mountains, ye little hills. And because there's only one red sea it's called thou.

That's the singular form of the word and the plural form of the word is ye and so we get ye mountains. Today we would replace all those by you. O you sea, you Jordan, you mountains, you little hills.

It makes language much easier. And we also see the verb forms that go with thou in verse five. Thou fleddest, thou wast driven back.

That means what troubled you? Well you see that you fled, you ran away. You Jordan, that you were driven back. That's what we would say today.

And this question, that nature has done an extraordinary thing, the sea has done an extraordinary thing, the mountains have done an extraordinary thing. What power was it that disturbed, that shook up the world and its environment so greatly for these things to happen? And the author hasn't given the answer yet. The name of God has not yet appeared in this psalm.

There's been no reference to God yet. And so we might well ask if we see the sea separating, why did it do that? We might well ask if we see mountains shaking, why did they do that? What extraordinary power was it that caused it? Verses seven and eight tell us, Tremble thou earth at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob, which turned the rock into a standing water, the flint into a fountain of waters. Yes, of course, the earth should tremble.

Yes, of course, it should shake and be frightened because a truly powerful one has come to it, the Lord God, the God who is Jacob's God, the God who is this, the God of these people, the house of Jacob, they're called in verse one. So the God of Jacob is present. And if God is present, God who created heaven and earth and all that is in them, then everything that is in them should give him honor.

They should tremble with fear at the great power of God. They mustn't stand against God when God has come to them. And yet God did come to them in his people because Judah was his sanctuary, his holy place, and Israel his dominion, his kingdom.

So the earth trembles. Why does it tremble? It trembles in fear because of the greatness of God. God is present.

His face is looking upon it. And with his face looking upon it, it cannot remain still. It must tremble to give honor to God.

And God shows his power in an even more extraordinary way in verse eight. Again, this is another of the miracles which accompanied Israel's people through the desert. We asked how you could find water in the desert.

Well, they didn't. But God told Moses to take his rod and to strike the rock with it, and waters poured forth. And so the passage declares that the God of Jacob, verse eight, turned the rock into a standing water.

In other words, the rock became a pool of water. The flint, that's the name of very hard rock, into a fountain of waters. Not just stagnant water, not just a pool of water that is standing still, but a fountain of moving water is coming from the hardest of rock.

It is God who changes things. It is God who turns about things completely. And so we look at this, and I said that this was not just history as in a record of what happened in the past.

This is relevant to God's people at the time when the psalmist wrote it and today. What is the message of this psalm? It's that God is powerful and God is great and there's nothing in all of nature that can stand against him. All it can do is tremble to give him honour.

But what requirement is there for that? The requirement for that is verse two, Judah was his holy place and Israel his dominion. That God has to have his proper place and his right place in our world and in these situations. That we must give God his proper place.

And we might say, well, did Israel's people give God his proper place? And the answer to that question is no. Often they didn't. Often they were in rebellion against him.

Often they were complaining against him. But there was one person at least in Israel who was giving God his proper place and that was Moses, the man who prayed, who interceded, who stood on behalf of Israel in front of God. And they prayed and he prayed and God answered his prayer.

He prayed and God separated the sea. He prayed and God moved the mountains. He prayed and God caused water to come from the rock.

And when Moses had died and when Joshua was there to rule Israel or to look after Israel in his place, then the Jordan was driven back. It didn't depend on Moses. It was the work of God in answer to the prayers of his people.

Let me give you my email address. You won't go on a mailing list if you write. You won't get appeals for money.

I'd just love to hear from you that you've heard this talk. It's 333kfv at gmail.com. 333kfv at gmail.com. Let me read to you the whole psalm then. When Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language, Judah was his sanctuary and Israel his dominion.

The sea saw it and fled. Jordan was driven back. The mountains skipped like rams and the little hills like lambs.

What ailed thee? O thou sea, that thou fleddest. Thou Jordan that thou wast driven back. Ye mountains that ye skipped like rams and ye little hills like lambs.

Tremble thou earth at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob, which turned the rock into a standing water, the flint into a fountain of waters. Amen.

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