

Adam Clarke:

Introduction

All nations are exhorted to praise the Lord, Psalm 100:1, Psalm 100:2; to acknowledge him to be the Sovereign God and their Creator and that they are his people and the flock of his pasture, Psalm 100:3; to worship him publicly, and be grateful for his mercies, Psalm 100:4. The reasons on which this is founded; his own goodness, his everlasting mercy, and his ever-during truth, Psalm 100:5.

This Psalm is entitled in the Hebrew מִזְמוֹר לְתוֹדָה (mizmor lethodah), not "A Psalm of Praise," as we have it, but "A Psalm for the confession, or for the confession-offering," very properly translated by the Chaldee: מִזְמוֹר לְתוֹדָה (shibcha al kurban todetha), "Praise for the sacrifice (or offering) of confession." The Vulgate, Septuagint, and Ethiopic have followed this sense. The Arabic attributes it to David. The Syriac has the following prefixed: "Without a name. Concerning Joshua the son of Nun, when he had ended the war with the Ammonites: but in the new covenant it relates to the conversion of the Gentiles to the faith." It is likely that it was composed after the captivity, as a form of thanksgiving to God for that great deliverance, as well as an inducement to the people to consecrate themselves to him, and to be exact in the performance of the acts of public worship.

Verse 1

Make a joyful noise - מְשִׁיחִים (hariu), exult, triumph, leap for joy.

All ye lands - Not only Jews, but Gentiles, for the Lord bestows his benefits on all with a liberal hand.

Verse 2

Serve the Lord with gladness - It is your privilege and duty to be happy in your religious worship. The religion of the true God is intended to remove human misery, and to make mankind happy. He whom the religion of Christ has not made happy does not understand that religion, or does not make a proper use of it.

Verse 3

Know ye that the Lord he is God - Acknowledge in every possible way, both in public and private, that Jehovah, the uncreated self-existent, and eternal Being, is Elohim, the God who is in covenant with man, to instruct, redeem, love, and make him finally happy.

It is he that hath made us - He is our Creator and has consequently the only right in and over us.

And not we ourselves - מֵאֵין אֵין (velo anachnu). I can never think that this is the true reading, though found in the present Hebrew text, in the Vulgate, Septuagint, Ethiopic, and Syriac. Was there ever a people on earth, however grossly heathenish, that did believe, or could believe, that they had made themselves? In twenty-six of Kennicott's and De Rossi's MSS. we have מֵאֵין אֵין (velo anachnu), "and His we are;" אֵין (lo), the pronoun, being put for אֵין (lo), the negative particle. This is the reading of the Targum, or Chaldee paraphrase מֵאֵין אֵין (vedileyh anachna), "and his we are," and is the reading of the text in the Complutensian Polyglot, of both the Psalters which were printed in 1477, and is the keri, or marginal reading in most Masoretic Bibles. Every person must see, from the nature of the subject that it is the genuine reading. The position is founded on the maxim that what a man invents, constructs out of his own materials, without assistance in genius, materials or execution from any other person, is His Own and to it, its use, and produce, he has the only right. God made us, therefore we are His: we are his people, and should acknowledge him for our God; we are the sheep of his pasture, and should devote the lives to him constantly which he continually supports.

Verse 4

Enter into his gates with thanksgiving - Publicly worship God; and when ye come to the house of prayer, be thankful that you have such a privilege; and when you enter his courts, praise him for the permission.

The word מִזְמוֹר (bethodah), which we render with thanksgiving, is properly with the confession-offering or sacrifice. See on Psalm 100:1-5 (note).

Bless his name - Bless Jehovah, that he is your Elohim; see Psalm 100:3. In our liturgic service we say, "Speak good of his name;" we cannot do otherwise; we have nothing but good to speak of our God.

Verse 5

For the Lord is good - Goodness the perfect, eternal opposition to all badness and evil, is essential to God.

Mercy and compassion are modifications of his goodness; and as his nature is eternal, so his mercy, springing from his goodness, must be everlasting. And as Truth is an essential characteristic of an infinitely intelligent and perfect nature; therefore God's truth must endure from generation to generation. Whatsoever he has promised must be fulfilled, through all the successive generations of men, as long as sun and moon shall last. As this is a very important Psalm, and has long made a part of our public worship, I shall lay it before the reader in the oldest vernacular Versions I have hitherto met with, - the Anglo-Saxon and the Anglo-Scottish, with a literal interlineary translation of the former.

The Anglo-Saxon Hundredth Psalm

Rhyme ye the Lord all earth, serve the Lord in bliss;

Infare in sight his in blithness;

Wit ye, for that Lord he is God, he did us & not self we;

Folk his & sheep leese way his; fare into gates his in confession, into courts is in hymns confess him.

Praise name his, for that winsom is; Lord thro' eternity mildheartedness his, & unto on kindred & kindred sothfastnes his

The reader will see that, in order to make this translation as literal as possible, I have preserved some old English words which we had from the Anglo-Saxon, and which have nearly become obsolete: e.g., Infare, "to go in;" blithness, "joy, exultation;" wit ye, "know ye;" did, the preterite of to do, "made, created;" the literal translation of the Hebrew, "asah," he made; leese way, "pasture on a common;" winsom, "cheerful, merry;" mildheartedness, "tenderness of heart, compassion;" sothfastness, "steady to the sooth or truth, fast to truth." I might have noticed some various readings in Anglo-Saxon MSS.; e.g., Psalm 100:1 for (idrymeth), "rhyme ye;" (winsumiath), "be winsom, be joyful." And Psalm 100:5, for (winsom), "cheerful;" (swete), "sweet."

Anglo-Scottish Version of the Hundredth Psalm

1. Joyes to God al the erth; serves to Lord in gladnes.

2. Enters in his sight with joying.

3. Wittes for Lorde he is God; he made us and noght we;

4. Folke of hym, and schepe of his pasture; enters the gates of hym in schrift; hys Halles in ymynys; schryves to hym.

5. Loues his name, for soft is Lorde; withouten end in his mercy; and in generation and generation the sothfastnes of hym.

Thus our forefathers said and sung in heart and mouth and with their tongues made confession to salvation. There are but few words here which require explanation: Psalm 100:3, Wittes, "wot ye, know ye." Psalm 100:4, Schrift, "confession;" schryves, "confess ye." Verse 6, Loues, "praise ye, laud ye." Sothfastness, as above, steadfastness in the truth.