



# PSALMS OF EASTER

## Psalms 113-118 • March 2024

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### Overview

The resurrection is the cornerstone of our faith and the historical moment around which the whole of human history and the story of salvation pivots. The gospels hold the inerrant facts of Jesus' death and resurrection, but the themes of Easter were laid out centuries before - this leads us to the Psalms.

Psalms 113-118 were sung at the Passover meal; this means that these are the Psalms that Jesus would have sung with his disciples at the Last Supper. These Psalms take on a greater depth and weight when we imagine what was going through Jesus' heart and head as he knew he was about to die and bring about the ultimate Passover and exodus.

The overwhelming theme of the Psalms is praise. They teach us to praise in all circumstances. They are loud, corporate, and accompanied by instruments. This seems to be a fitting way to celebrate Easter together.

### Outline

1. Psalm 113 & 114
2. Psalm 115 & 116
3. Psalm 117 & 118

# PSALMS OF EASTER

Week 1 • 17 March 2024 • Psalm 113 & 114

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This week's key theme: Deliverance

1. Do you have any traditions around Easter? Did you have any growing up? Did they help you celebrate Jesus?
2. Read Psalms 113 and 114 aloud.
  - a. What aspects of God's character does the Psalmist focus on in 113? List them down.
  - b. What are some examples from scripture, or your life, of God "lifting the needy from the ash heap"?
  - c. Psalm 114 is about God rescuing his people from slavery in Egypt and bringing them to the Promised Land. What do you think it would have been like for Jesus to sing these lyrics as he contemplates what was about to happen at the cross?
3. It's amazing to think of Jesus singing these words and worshipping before going to the cross. How easy or difficult do you find it to worship in good and bad times?
  - a. What can you learn from Jesus about focusing on the character of God in times of trouble?



4. In the Wholehearted Praise sermon, we learned that praise is a natural response to beholding who God is.
  - a. What sort of responses does God receive from the secular world today, especially in situations of pain and difficulty (e.g. war, natural disaster, heinous crimes etc.)
  
5. How do I respond to God in times of difficulty? How can I call his character to mind and trust him more fully in the days ahead?
  
6. Praise is powerful. Read the Psalms together again and then choose a worship song to sing together in response to God's character and salvation plan.

# PSALMS OF EASTER

Week 2 • 24 March 2024 • Psalm 115 & 116

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This week's key theme: Salvation

1. Plan ahead for one or two people in your group to share their testimony of salvation this week. Follow the simple structure:
  - a. My life before Jesus
  - b. How I met Jesus
  - c. My life with Jesus
  
2. Read Psalms 115 and 116 aloud.
  - a. What contrasts does the psalmist use to show the difference between idols (vv4-8) and Yahweh (vv 2, 9-18)?
  - b. Psalm 115 is a corporate Psalm, using 'us' language. How do corporate Psalms encourage us differently from personal Psalms (I and me language)?
  - c. Psalm 116 sounds like someone's testimony of God rescuing them. What do you think would have stood out to Jesus when singing this song before the cross?
  
3. Psalm 116:12-13 says the right response to God's goodness is worship.

- a. How do thanksgiving and worship play a role in your life as you consider God's goodness toward you?
  - b. How do you see non-believers reacting to the good things in their life? What do you think they miss out on when thanksgiving isn't returned to its rightful place in God?
  - c. How do the idols of Psalm 115 show themselves in our world today?
4. Are there things other than God that I trust in for deliverance or provision? Are there idols in my life that I'm more thankful for than God?
- a. Ask the Holy Spirit to gently reveal these, repent of them, and ask him to build your trust in him.
5. Share with each other how God "has been good to you" (116:7), and let this turn to worship again as you contemplate his glory and goodness!

# PSALMS OF EASTER

Week 3 • 31 March 2024 • Psalm 117 & 118

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This week's key theme: Celebration

1. In week one, we discussed Easter traditions. Have you thought any more about how you can develop your own Easter traditions in the future? How will you make Resurrection Sunday a celebration in the future?
2. Read Psalms 117 and 118 aloud together.
  - a. Psalm 117 references “all nations and peoples”. What reasons are given for the whole world praising Yahweh?
  - b. What might Jesus have thought about “all nations and peoples” as he sang this before the cross?
  - c. How does Simeon’s praise in Luke 2:30-31 align with Psalm 117?
3. Read Psalm 118:22-24 and Luke 20:17-19
  - a. How would singing these lyrics at the Last Supper have encouraged and reminded Jesus of what he would accomplish through the cross?



- b. 118:24 calls for joy and gladness - how does Hebrews 12:2 speak into this for Jesus?
4. Often, the secular west calls Christian missions and evangelism to the nations as another form of colonialism.
  - a. How would you respond to that based on what you've discussed today?
5. Easter, at least in the West, is celebrated purely as a long weekend with chocolate and buns. How can you share the true message of Easter with someone far from Jesus this year?
6. Resurrection Sunday is all about celebration! Can we do something as a group in the future to mark this occasion together?