

He cannot resist exclaiming in wonder at the earth's prolific evidence of Yahweh's activity and planning skill behind it. He is the sole creator, and also the sole sustainer, vv 24, 27. The poet weaves into his praise even the sea, traditional object of dread to the Israelite landlubber. He sketches its vastness and teeming life, its population of foreign boats and marine giants. His fear of the latter is transmuted by his portrayal of them as frisky, puppylike beings, as much a product of Yahweh's creative work as anything else.

All creatures, great and small, depend upon Yahweh. The psalmist develops most fully in vv 27-30 the theme of divine sustenance. God is their father-figure and they are members of his extended family. They are at the mercy of his outstretched hand or averted face. The power of life and death is his: Yahweh's own breath is the secret of physical life (cf. Gen 2:7; 6:17). Whenever this life-force is withdrawn, the animate reverts to dust (cf. Gen 3:19). Each new generation is evidence of a renewal of Yahweh's creative activity, replenishing human and animal stock.

In his closing strophe the poet reverts to his initial motif of Yahweh's power. He expresses a hope that his glorious power will never cease to be revealed in the natural world. He prays that his creatures may continue to receive his smile of favor, as once he took delight in his creation (cf. Gen 1:31). How wary man should be: one look from Yahweh and the earth quakes, one touch and the mountains erupt! The psalmist is again using the material of theophany to portray Yahweh's awesome power (cf. 97:4-5). For himself he takes a vow of lifelong praise. He offers his meditations as a sacrifice acceptable, he trusts, to God (and also implicitly as an aid to congregational worship, which the appended Hallelujah in v 35 makes explicit). His final prayer is that man-made flaws in Yahweh's beautiful handiwork may be removed. Those who by flouting his moral order deliberately spoil the harmony of creation forfeit their God-given privilege of sharing in it. But the psalmist cannot end on such a somber note: direct praise is man's due response to so great a God.

The psalm speaks from within its own culture, but its basic view of the world as evoking awe, appreciation and fear transcends cultural barriers. Uncanny fear is recognized and overcome in principle via the concept of chaos put to flight. Awe and appreciation are set in a religious context: the world and its phenomena are regarded as windows through which divine activity of love and power may be glimpsed. One cannot accuse the psalmist of blindness. That he was aware of "nature red in tooth and claw" may be gleaned from v 21. He knew, too, of natural disasters such as earthquake (v 32), but it became grist for his mill, in this case for the mills of divine judgment (cf. v 35). He is deliberately selective in his citation of material and subordinates nature to his basic belief in an unchanging God. The world's stability is divine stability writ large (cf. divine/human joy, vv 15, 31, 34). He does not so much deduce theological truth from the world of nature as portray that world in a way consistent with his theology (cf. "my God," vv 1, 33). His philosophy is a response to God, just as a sacrifice is (v 34). Its expression in the psalm is an act of religious commitment. He is able to combine divine transcendence and separateness from the natural world with a strong sense of God's direct involvement in its processes. He produces a sketch rather

than an analysis, but he does lay down guidelines to stimulate his fellow believers to devotion and doubtless to further enquiry. As such, it is a key part of the OT heritage which underlies Paul's statement in Rom 1:20 concerning the relation between God and the natural world, and also Peter's exhortation to his readers to "entrust their souls to a faithful creator" (1 Pet 4:19).

God's Faithfulness (105:1-45)

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Translation

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| ¹ Give thanks to Yahweh, proclaim his name, ^a
make known his actions among the peoples. | (4+3) |
| ² Sing to him songs, celebrate him with music,
make all his wonders your theme. | (3+3) |
| ³ Praise with pride his sacred name.
Let those who seek Yahweh rejoice in heart. | (3+3) |
| ⁴ Come to Yahweh and his might, ^a
Seek his presence always. | (3+3) |
| ⁵ Remember ^a the wonders he has performed,
his portents and the judgments from his mouth, | (3+3) |
| ⁶ you descendants of his servant ^a Abraham,
his chosen ^b sons of Jacob. | (3+3) |
| ⁷ He is Yahweh our God:
his judgments are pronounced throughout the world. | (3+3) |
| ⁸ He always remembers his covenant, ^a
for a thousand generations his commanded word, | (3+3) |
| ⁹ the covenant he made with Abraham, ^a
and the promise he swore to Isaac. | (3+3) |
| ¹⁰ He confirmed it to Jacob as a permanent ruling,
to Israel ^a as an everlasting covenant, | (3+3) |
| ¹¹ saying, ^a
"I will give you ^b Canaan, ^c
allocating it to you to possess." | (4+3) |

and the Land. *Early Christianity and Jewish Territorial Doctrine*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974); W. Brueggemann, *The Land: Place as Gift, Promise and Challenge in Biblical Faith*. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977).

14.a. The main clause begins here (D. Michel, *Tempora*, 71).

14.b. The kings were Pharaoh (Gen 12:17) and Abimelech (Gen 20:3; 26:11). S. Holm-Nielsen (*ASTI* 11 [1978] 24) has suggested that the psalmist's freedom in using the verb קָשַׁשׁ "oppress" may be explained by its associations with Israel's experience at the hands of foreign nations: cf. Isa 52:4; Jer 50:33.

15.a. Heb. מְשִׁיחִי "my anointed ones" is used in a secondary sense (cf. Isa 45:1); it carries the thought of inviolability (cf. 2 Sam 1:14, 15). The psalmist is transferring to the patriarchal period a term especially associated with the Davidic monarchy: cf. T. N. D. Mettinger, *King and Messiah*, 229.

15.b. Cf. Gen 20:7.

16.a. Does לֶחֶם לַחֵם "staff of bread" refer concretely to a stick upon which ring-shaped loaves were hung or figuratively to bread as the staff of life?

17.a. S. Holm-Nielsen (*ASTI* 11 [1978] 24-25) has noted the applicability of the verb מָכַר "sell" to the exilic situation (cf. Isa 50:1; 52:3 [in the niph'al as here]), apart from echoing Gen 37:28, while the stress upon Joseph's sufferings in prison in v 18 he has compared with Isa 42:22, as intentionally evoking Israel's experience in exile.

18.a. D. Winton Thomas (*JTS* 16 [1965] 444-45) suggested a meaning "imprisoned" in accord with Arab. *'aniya* "became a captive" (also 107:10; Job 36:8), but the usage in Judg 16:5 seems to support the normal etymology.

18.b. Is בַּרְזֶל subject or object? See the discussion of J. Brinktrine (*ZAW* 64 [1952] 251-58), who renders "iron [= a sword] pierced his soul [till . . .]." But more naturally the cola of the line are synonymously parallel and reference is made to an iron collar. For צַוֵּן with the sense of "neck" cf. H. W. Wolff, *Anthropology*, 14. A reading בַּרְזֶל (Gunkel *Die Psalmen*, 460; Kraus, *Psalmen*, 890) is not necessary: cf. 100:4, etc. for an accusative after בָּוֵא (Thomas, *JTS* 16 [1965] 444-45). M. Dahood (*Psalms III*, 57) has aptly compared Jer 27:12 for the sense.

19.a. The second colon could be a main clause (" . . . tested him, put him on his mettle"), but "the surrounding lines point to a direct parallelism" (Holm-Nielsen, *ASTI* 11 [1978] 29 note 12). The explicit יָהוָה differentiates from the suffix וּלְיָהוָה in v 19a and indicates that it refers to Joseph. The reference in v 19a is to Joseph's prophetic dreams (Gen 37:5-11) and/or his interpretations of his fellow prisoners' dreams (Gen 40:5-23); v 19b refers to Joseph's interpretations of Pharaoh's dreams (Gen 41:1-32, esp. 25, 28).

20.a. Is Yahweh the subject of שָׁלַח "send" and מָלַךְ "king" the object (Kraus, *Psalmen*, 890; Dahood, *Psalms III*, 58)? The suggestion is attractive in view of v 17 (cf. vv 26, 28) and the overall stress on divine providence, but Gen 41:14 points otherwise, and the king is clearly the subject of v 21.

22.a. LXX, S, Hier seem to imply לִיטֵר "to instruct"; MT לִאֲסֹר normally means "to bind." Dahood (*Psalms III*, 58) interestingly points לִאֲסֹר an aph'el infinitive construct, which labors under the difficulty that the hiph'il of סָר occurs only in Hos 7:12, where the pointing has been doubted. G. R. Driver (*JTS* 44 [1943] 20) harmonized MT with the versions in a plausible manner by interpreting as לִאֲפָר , a byform of לִיטֵר ; he compared Syr. *'sr/ystr* "bind."

22.b. Ezek 16:27 supports MT. Two Heb. mss. read and the Versions may imply נִכְפַּשׁ adopted by BHK and Kraus, (*Psalmen*, 890).

23.a. For this designation of Egypt cf. 78:51; 106:22; Gen 10:6.

24.a. Dahood (*Psalms III*, 59) is probably correct in interpreting the preposition thus with Gunkel and Ehrlich. The meaning "be numerous" seems to be determined by Exod 1:7, 20.

25.a. The second colon presumably refers to Exod 1:10.

26.a. The "choice" of Aaron is an instance of the psalmist's poetic freedom.

27.a. The colon is a textual crux. MT וַיִּשַׁב takes Moses and Aaron as subject, while LXX S imply וַיִּשַׁב with Yahweh as subject, which suits the contextual stress on his providential actions. Commentators usually follow LXX S, but cf. perhaps v 18 (after v 17). For וַיִּשַׁב A. F. Kirkpatrick (*Psalms*, 621) compared 145:5, but the text is not certain there. The omission of וַיִּשַׁב in S most probably reflects the translator's difficulty. Perhaps the sense is "set among them the words" i.e. "announced": cf. Exod 19:7. NEB ("They were his mouthpiece to announce," reading a singular verb) plausibly sees a reference to Exod 4:15. For וַיִּשַׁב E. J. Kissane

(*Psalms II*, 162) and Kraus (*Psalmen*, 890) read בְּמִצְרַיִם , a good parallel to v 27b but palaeographically not convincing. Closer to MT is the emendation בְּמִדְבָּר "in the wilderness" (M. Scott, *Textual Discoveries in Proverbs, Psalms and Isaiah* [London: SPCK, 1927] 152, with reference to Exod 4:8; cf. Dahood, *Psalms III*, 59).

27.b. The reading וַיִּשַׁב "his marvels" (cf. BHS) is hardly necessary: the force of the pronominal suffix earlier ($\text{וַיִּשַׁב$) easily carries over (Dahood, *Psalms III*, 60). The verse echoes a traditional formula, for which see Childs, "Deuteronomical Formulae of the Exodus Tradition," in *Hebräische Wortforschung* (VTSup 16; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967) 30-39.

28.a. LXX and S omit the negative, seeing a reference to Pharaoh's hardness of heart. Implausibly H. Schmidt (*Die Psalmen*, 191, following E. König) reached the same end by taking v 28b as a question. Heb. וַיִּשַׁב is often viewed as a corruption of וַיִּשַׁב "they did (not) keep" (Gunkel, *Die Psalmen*, 461, following F. Hitzig; Kraus, *Psalmen*, 890; et al.), but Holm-Nielsen (*ASTI* 12 [1978] 30 note 18) pertinently asks why the Egyptians should be expected to keep Yahweh's words. Kirkpatrick (*Psalms*, 621) may be right in seeing a reference to Exod 11:2-3. Worth consideration is his suggestion that this plague appears first because it resulted in the submission of the Egyptians to the fact of Yahweh's power. In view of the general closeness of the passage to the Exodus plague sequence and the poetic freedom with which the psalmist has evidently treated the Genesis material it is hardly justified to invoke here a separate tradition with J. W. Rogerson and J. W. McKay (*Psalms 101-150*, 39). As to the absence of the fifth and sixth plagues, B. Margulis (*Bib* 50 [1969] 493-96) has attempted to restore the fifth via evidence of a longer text in 11QP^a than in MT. He has also explained the omission of the sixth as an exegetical device to harmonize with the apparent destruction of its victims already in the fifth plague (Exod 9:6), finding it significant that vv 32-33 restrict the effect of the hail to trees and plants and exclude animals (cf. Exod 9:25). S. E. Loewenstamm (*Bib* 52 [1971] 34-38) has plausibly objected that Margulis's restoration of the fifth plague of Exodus would insert it between the first and second, unlike the traditions of both Exodus and Ps 78.

30.a. The plural וַיִּשַׁב in BMS is best explained as a double plural in a genitival phrase (cf. GKC § 124q), although Dahood's suggestion of a plural of majesty (*Psalms III*, 61) is also a possibility.

31.a. The identification of the insects is uncertain: cf. Childs, *Exodus*, 129.

33.a. Holm-Nielsen (*ASTI* 12 [1978] 30 note 16) interprets the free reference as a "Palestinization" of the tradition.

34.a. In v 34a וַיִּשַׁב is apparently derived from the root רַבַּה "be many" and refers to the gregarious habit of the insect. In v 34b probably וַיִּשַׁב (not used in Exod 10:1-21, but necessary here for poetic parallelism) properly refers to the first larval form of the young locust as a wingless, jumping insect (P. Haupt, "The Book of Nahum," *JBL* 26 [1907] 34).

35.a. The proposal to read וַיִּשַׁב (cf. BHK, BHS) or for the verb in v 35a (G. R. Driver, *JTS* 44 [1943] 20) is unnecessary (cf. Kraus, *Psalmen*, 890). The stylistic structure of vv 33-36 supports MT (see *Form/Structure/Setting*).

37.a. For the formula here echoed see Childs, "Deuteronomical Formulae," 30-39.

37.b. Exodus says nothing about stumbling, but Isa 63:13 provides a parallel.

38.a. Or "at, over their leaving" (W. Gross, "Die Herausführungsformel—zum Verhältnis von Formel und Syntax," *ZAW* 86 [1974] 438 note 73).

39.a. The conception of the cloud as a protection differs from its representation as a guide in Exod 13:21; Ps 78:14, but it does accord with Exod 14:19, 20.

40.a. MT וַיִּשַׁב "he asked" is simply explained as due to haplography and mechanical harmonization to adjacent singular verbs. The Versions preserve a plural (וַיִּשַׁב).

40.b. Heb. וַיִּשַׁב is a paraphrase of Exod 16:4. Contrast the looser paraphrase of 78:25. The psalmist is deliberately selective in that no reference is made to the people's complaining.

40.c. D. A. Robertson (*Linguistic Evidence*, 47, 51) regards the isolated preterite as an archaism.

41.a. Holm-Nielsen (*ASTI* 11 [1978] 26) has related the heightened description to Isa 41:18, set in a divine promise concerning a second Exodus, the return from exile.

42.a. Heb. וַיִּשַׁב is the preposition, echoing v 9 (Dahood, *Psalms III*, 62), rather than the object sign: cf. וַיִּשַׁב "spoke with," Gen 17:3, 22, 23; 21:2 (P).

44.a. The plural—contrast the singular in v 11—suggests a post-exilic provenance for the psalm: cf. Ezra 3:3; 9:1-2 (cf. Exod 15:15); Neh 10:29, 31-32 (28, 30-31).

45.a. For the didactic note cf. 78:7; 95:7b.

45.b. See the comment on 104:35.

Form/Structure/Setting

In form Ps 105 is an expanded hymn of the imperatival type (C. Westermann, 122-24, 140; F. Crüsemann, *Studien zur Formgeschichte*, 76). It begins with a summons to praise, vv 1-6, naming its addressees in v 6, and continues with the ground for praise, vv 7-11. The long historical section, vv 12-44, represents an expansion of vv 7-11, as the resumptive v 42 makes clear. The psalm concludes with an implicit exhortation, v 45.

The literary Gattung of the psalm is that of Ps 78 and 106: a selective review of Israel's history, here with the accent on Yahweh's work on his people's behalf and his faithfulness to his ancient promise. The psalm was placed next to the creation-oriented Ps 104 in the collection doubtless because the themes of Yahweh's lordship of creation and history are frequently juxtaposed within psalms.

As to the original setting of the psalm, S. Mowinckel ("Psalms and Wisdom," in *Wisdom in Israel and the Ancient Near East*, ed. M. Noth and D. W. Thomas [VTSup 3; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1955] 213-14) regarded these historical psalms as noncultic: Ps 105 is a product of learned psalmography and merely adopts the style of a hymn. R. E. Murphy ("A Consideration of the Classification 'Wisdom Psalms,'" in *Congress Volume Bonn 1962* [VTSup 9; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1963] 164) has rightly countered this conclusion as too extreme: a didactic purpose does not turn the historical psalms into wisdom psalms. W. I. Wolverson (*CJT* 10 [1964] 166-76) assigned the psalm to a cultic setting of rejoicing: it is an adaptation of what was originally a sermon, vv 1-6 being a hymnic replacement of earlier appeals. F. Baumgärtel (*ZAW* 65 [1953] 263-65), followed by Weiser (*Psalms*, 674), has traced the original setting to a covenant renewal ceremony, finding a parallel with the covenant renewal liturgy of the Qumran sect described in the Community Rule, IQS 1:16-2:1. The psalm would then accord with the priests and Levites praising "the God of salvation and all his faithfulness" (IQS 1:19). The link is a slender one, and the reconstruction of setting depends very much on connecting the psalm closely with Ps 106.

A pointer toward cultic use is afforded by the citation of vv 1-15 in 1 Chr 16 (vv 8-22) in association with David's installation of the ark in Jerusalem. D. Kidner (*Psalms 73-150*, 347 note 1) pertinently observes that 1 Chr 16:7 leaves the exact relation of the psalm(s) to the narrative undefined. It is not likely that the psalm goes back to the Davidic period. Nor is it necessarily to be concluded from its citation that it is pre-exilic, *pace* Dahood (*Psalms III*, 51). Rather, the Chronicler was evidently supplying from cultic material used in his own day words suitable for the occasion, linking it with the promise of the land given to the patriarchs. The use of the psalm probably points to a cultic origin, though it could theoretically have been re-used in a cultic setting.

Upon what historical traditions does the psalm rely? The question has been investigated fully by A. Lauha (*Die Geschichtsmotive*, 39-50). He has concluded that in the patriarchal material the psalm is little different from Genesis in its completed redactional form. The psalmist by his use of the plural in vv 14-15 betrays an awareness of repeated references to the endangering

of patriarchal lives. But his treatment was a free one. The oath of v 9 harks back loosely to Gen 26:3, though it was not sworn to Isaac himself. The promise of v 11 is not found in this exact wording: it is the psalmist's own free reformulation. The references to "anointed ones" and "prophets" in v 15 are heightened descriptions of the patriarchs' relation to Yahweh. The rigors of Joseph's imprisonment in v 18 seem to be due to poetic license. But overall it appears that the psalmist used the source material combined in its present form in Genesis and that he did not have at his disposal separate traditions. Likewise, in the plagues material Lauha finds the composite form of Exodus behind the psalm in its representation of Yahweh, Moses and Aaron as executors of the plagues and in its enumeration of the plagues. Despite the omission of the fifth and sixth, the inversion of the third and fourth and the priority given to the ninth, the account is so similar that it can reflect only a free handling of the source material arranged as in the book of Exodus. B. Margulis (*Bib* 50 [1969] 492) and Holm-Nielsen (*ASTI* 11 [1978] 25) have concurred in this judgment. On the other hand S. E. Loewenstamm (*Bib* 52 [1971] 38) has concluded that the plagues account represents a tradition prior to the Pentateuch, whether the psalm itself is later or earlier. He finds it significant that both Pss 78 and 105 have a total of seven (different) plagues, seven being a traditional number of completeness. He achieves this total for Ps 105—instead of eight—by taking v 31 to refer to one plague. But the fact that some plagues are covered in one line and others in two makes it feasible to conclude that two plagues may be included in a single line. Moreover, he appears to underestimate the much greater closeness of Ps 105 to the Exodus narratives and to overlook the significance of the use of the Genesis material. Kraus (*Psalmen*, 892) is surely right to follow Gunkel (*Die Psalmen*, 458) in concluding that a knowledge of the Pentateuch in its canonical final form must be presupposed; accordingly a post-exilic date is implied (cf. the note on v 44). Kraus allows too for the use of separate traditions, but whether it is necessary to invoke these is doubtful. The work of Holm-Nielsen has done much to clarify apparent deviations.

As to structure, commentators have been content to let form and subject matter dictate their outlines. That of Kraus is typical: vv 1-6, 7-11, 12-15, 16-23, 24-38, 39-41, 42-45. Dahood has pointed to the device of inclusion in the double reference to Abraham and the covenant "with" him, vv 9, 42; he also notes the stylistic use of chiasmus at vv 15, 22, 43-45 (*Psalms III*, 51, 62). A. R. Ceresco (*CBQ* 38 [1976] 305) has seen a more complex chiastic word pattern in vv 2-5, יהוה : בקשו : נפלאותיו :: יהוה : מבקשי : יהוה (repeating "his wonders," "seek" and "Yahweh"; in *CBQ* 40 [1978] 2 Ceresco widens the extent of the chiasmus unconvincingly). Similar patterns emerge at vv 5-8, זכרו : משפטיו :: משפטיו : זכרו (repeating "remember" and "judgments") and at vv 7-11, ברית : עולם : ארץ :: ברית : לעולם : ארץ (repeating "land," "[for]ever" and "covenant." This latter case in vv 7-11 has been noted by Ceresco (*CBQ* 40 [1978] 2-3). Thus vv 1-11 are tightly interlocked with these three chiastic structures. The call to praise and its content belong together as an opening strophe. The second is vv 12-23, which is marked by the inclusion of גר ("sojourn" at vv 12, 23 and the triple occurrence within it of the stem מלך "reign" at vv 13, 14, 20. It too has extended

chiasmus, in vv 18-22, בנפשו : ומשל :: חשל : נפשו (repeating "his soul" and "rule"). The verb שלח "sent" is repeated, though probably with different subjects, at vv 17, 20. A reference to "Israel . . . Jacob" ends the strophe, relating chiasmatically to the ending of the first (v 10). Vv 24-36 comprise the third strophe. It echoes and develops חת בארץ of v 23 in vv 27, 30, 32, 35, 36. It has two instances of chiastic grouping, vv 25-29, שלח : הפך :: הפך : שלח (repeating "sent" and "turned") and vv 33-36, ויך : ויאכל :: ויאכל : ויך (repeating "devoured" and "struck"). The repetition of אמר "spoke" in vv 31, 34 is also to be noted. The fourth strophe, vv 37-45, is dominated by the triple use of the stem יצא "go out" in vv 37-38, 43. By way of overall inclusion it echoes the first strophe at a number of points: זכר "remembered," vv 8, 42; דבר "word," vv 8, 42 again; קדשו "his holiness," vv 3, 42; את-אברהם "with Abraham," vv 9, 42; אברהם עבדו, vv 6, 42; בחיריו "his chosen ones," vv 6, 43; ויתן "and he gave," v 44, echoes אתן, v 11; חקיו "his rulings," v 45, echoes קח, v 10. Moreover, עמו "his people," v 43, supplies the second part of a standard covenant formula, of which the first has been given in v 7a.

There are then four strophes, of eleven, twelve, thirteen and nine lines. The first incorporates the introductory call to praise and the last the conclusion after the historical narrative. The last three fall into a tripartite narrative scheme. The historical movement of the psalm exhibits balance: it moves from Canaan to Egypt (second strophe), lingers in Egypt (third strophe) and eventually moves back from Egypt to Canaan in the fourth.

Explanation

Psalm 105 has the triple aim of inciting the people of God to praise, encouraging them in their faith in his continuing purpose and exhorting them to live in accordance with his revealed will. Its overall theme is Yahweh's faithfulness to his eternally valid promises concerning the land.

The post-exilic congregation is invited to give grateful voice to Yahweh as they look back to the historical origins of their religion. Surrounded as they were by pagan peoples, they were an enclave dedicated to him and bearing witness to the revelation of his activity on their behalf. They are called to meet with him, to appreciate afresh his power and presence, and to bring home to their hearts the ancient proofs of Yahweh's marvelous intervention. Time could not deaden these proofs, for they had a once-and-for-all significance. The present generation of Israel were contemporary bearers of a heritage which stretched back to Abraham. It was their privilege to look back with gratitude to the laying of their religious foundations as God's chosen people.

Yahweh is Israel's covenant God. To establish the covenant he made use of his universal authority for the benefit of Israel. His relationship with his people and the land of Canaan constituted an eternal triangle. It was grounded in a promise made to each patriarch in turn (cf. Gen 17:8; 26:3; 28:13). In a recital of historical traditions the rest of the psalm relates how that promise was kept or remembered (cf. Exod 2:24).

After the call to praise and statement of the theme of praise in the first

strophe, the second (vv 12-23) presents the providential intervention of God by word and deed within a framework of the patriarchs' movements. To the little group of patriarchal clans the hope must have seemed an unattainable dream, surrounded as they were by alien peoples. The psalmist is surely speaking implicitly to the hearts of the post-exilic community at this point, and seeking to encourage them as he goes on to represent the few as standing under Yahweh's protection. For even then he was at work. When kings would endanger the succession, he intervened on behalf of those who enjoyed with him a special relationship of inviolability. Even a famine was the tool of his providence (cf. Hag 1:11).

In the bitter fortunes of Joseph he was preparing the way for eventual blessing not only for him but for his kin. Joseph's experience was that of Israel in miniature. The path to glory lay through suffering—and had not Israel suffered in the exile? The prophetic word came true in the end—take heart!—and made all the trial and testing worthwhile. The strophe ends at the climatic point of Jacob's arrival in Egypt. The promise was seemingly as far off as ever: the homelessness of v 12 is forcefully repeated.

The third strophe, vv 24-36, is centered in Egypt and majors in Yahweh's control of events. Even the enmity and wily schemes of the Egyptians—and did not post-exilic Israel know such treatment all too well?—were Yahweh's intended means of proving his power on his people's behalf. In the throes and wake of victimization the key terms of v 6 flash out in vv 25-26, giving the assurance of election and divine patronage. Yahweh did and would work out his purposes for and through his own. As Joseph was God's man for an earlier need, so Moses and Aaron were raised up for this hour of need. In v 27 the formula of signs and marvels, around which the strophe is clustered, serves as an introduction to the detailed plague account and also echoes v 5. His power was at work to execute his covenant promise. Plague after plague came at his command to force the submission of the Egyptians to the universal Overlord (v 28, cf. v 7). The strophe ends impressively with the triple use of כל "all" to express the totality of the effect of Yahweh's might.

If the second strophe ended with Jacob's coming to Egypt and the third was pervaded with the people's stay in Egypt, the fourth (vv 37-45) opens with their departure, the Exodus event, taking up another traditional formula and later echoing it in v 43. Both the third and fourth strophes open with mention of God's physical/material blessing as the pledge of his love (cf. Ezra 7:15; Hag 2:7, 8). But now in reaction Egyptian hatred has given way to dread of Israel, who are recognized as being under the championship of this powerful God.

He went on protecting, guiding and supplying their daily needs by dynamic means. Such then was the outworking of Yahweh's faithfulness to his covenant promise. They were liberated from Egypt with a song on their lips. Their joy was to be echoed down the ages till the present generation took up the strain (v. 3), who indeed had fresh cause for exultation as they could look back to their second Exodus, the return from exile. The promise of the land had finally come true as a package of divine gifts (cf. Deut 6:10-11). By implication Yahweh's present people could also look forward to a fresh fulfillment of the promise, the land actually theirs. Redeemed by divine initiative

and recipients of divine grace, what was left for Israel to do? Simply to comply with Yahweh's revealed will, constrained by his faithfulness to be faithful in turn. His revelation consisted of precepts as well as promise (vv 10, 45). So praise and obedience were to be their twin response, as they waited upon Yahweh to continue his work of remembering the covenant.

The psalm takes up a constant OT complex in celebrating the interrelatedness of Yahweh, the people and the land. Here it is set in a context of promise and power, of hope and realization. The NT argues for a continuance of the covenant relationship and the fresh fulfilment of God's promise to Abraham (Luke 1:72, 73). The Church in turn is the seed of Abraham via Jesus Christ (Gal 3:16-29) and the recipient of a new covenant (1 Cor 11:25). In him too it receives its own election (Eph 1:4). Unlike Judaism, Christianity turns its back upon a geographically and politically localized promise. The motif of the land is generally superseded in the NT, apart perhaps from Luke 21:24. Christ is the inheritance: kinship in the land is replaced by fellowship in Christ (cf. Gal 3:18). The Letter to the Hebrews seeks to justify this Christian shift in theological emphasis since it transcends the older hope with a new dimension. The promise to Abraham was not exhausted by Israel's temporal occupation of the land. Canaan was a shadow of the reality, which is a heavenly country destined to be the final home of God's people of the covenants old and new (Heb 3:7-4:1; 11:13-16, 39, 40).

Penitential Prayer (106:1-48)

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Translation

- ¹ *Hallelujah* ^a
Give Yahweh thanks for ^b his goodness,
for the everlastingness of his loyal love.^c (3+3)
- ² Who can tell of Yahweh's great deeds
or declare all his praiseworthiness? ^a (3+3)

- ³ How fortunate ^a are those who maintain justice,
who do ^b what is right ^c all the time. (3+3)
- ⁴ Remember me, ^a Yahweh, when you show your people favor,
notice me when you save them (4+3)
- ⁵ so that I may witness the good enjoyed by your chosen ones, ^a
join in your nation's ^b joy (3+3+3)
and proudly praise together with your own people.^c
- ⁶ We have sinned along with our forefathers,
we have done wrong, we are guilty.^a (3+2)
- ⁷ Our forefathers in Egypt
failed to appreciate your wonders.^a (2+3)
They did not remember your many acts of loyal love,
but rebelled against the Most High ^b by the Reed Sea. (3+3)
- ⁸ Yet he saved them for the sake of his name,
to reveal his greatness. (3+3)
- ⁹ He shouted ^a at the Reed Sea and it dried up,
he led them through its depths as through a desert.^b (3+3)
- ¹⁰ From the power of the adversary he saved them,
from the enemy's power he redeemed them. (3+3)
- ¹¹ Water covered their foes,
not one of them survived.^a (3+3)
- ¹² They believed his promises
and sang ^a his praise.^b (3+3)
- ¹³ They soon forgot what he had done,
they did not wait to learn his intention.^a (3+3)
- ¹⁴ They got a craving in the wilderness
and put God to the test in the desert.^a (3+3)
- ¹⁵ He gave them what they asked for,
then let loose a wasting disease ^a upon them. (3+3)
- ¹⁶ In the camp they grew jealous of Moses
and of Yahweh's holy one, Aaron. (3+3)
- ¹⁷ The earth opened up and swallowed Dathan
and covered Abiram's group. (4+3)
- ¹⁸ Fire broke out against their group,
flames burned up those wicked people. (3+3)
- ¹⁹ At Horeb they constructed a calf
and worshipped it, cast metal.^a (3+3)
- ²⁰ They exchanged their glorious One ^a
for a copy of a grass-eating ox!
²¹ They forgot the God who had saved them,
who had done great deeds in Egypt, (3+3)
- ²² wonders in Ham's country,
awesome exploits by the Reed Sea. (3+3)
- ²³ So he threatened to destroy them—
only his chosen one Moses
stood in the breach before him
to stop his anger doing away with them.^a (3+3)

- 24 Then they refused the land, desirable though it was,
and put no faith in his promise.^a (3+3)
- 25 They grumbled inside their tents
and would not obey Yahweh. (3+3)
- 26 So he lifted up his hand,
swearing he would overthrow them in the wilderness,^a (3+3)
- 27 scatter^a their posterity among the nations
and disperse them throughout the world.^b (3+3)
- 28 They took the yoke of Baal of Peor
and ate sacrifices offered to dead things!^a (3+3)
- 29 They provoked anger^a by their deeds
and a plague broke out against them. (3+3)
- 30 Phineas stood up in mediation,
and the plague was stopped. (3+3)
- 31 It has been regarded by God as a virtuous act^a
throughout all generations forever.^b (3+3)
- 32 At Quarrel Waters they provoked wrath
and Moses suffered on their account: (3+3)
- 33 they had made him so bitter^a
that he spoke with temerity.^b (3+3)
- 34 They failed to destroy the peoples,
as Yahweh had told them to,^a (3+3)
- 35 but entered into partnership with the nations
and learned to do as they did. (3+3)
- 36 They worshiped their idols,
and these proved their snare: (3+3)
- 37 they sacrificed their own sons
and daughters to demons!^a (3+3)
- 38 They shed innocent blood,
the blood of their own sons and daughters,^a
whom they sacrificed to Canaanite idols,^b (3+3)
- and the country was defiled by the bloodshed. (3+3)
- 39 They became unclean through what they did
and unfaithful by such behavior. (3+3)
- 40 So Yahweh's anger flared up against his people
and he showed how he loathed his own. (3+3)
- 41 He handed them over to the nations
so that their adversaries ruled them.^a (3+3)
- 42 Their enemies oppressed them
and they were brought into subjection^a under their control. (3+3)
- 43 Many times he would rescue^a them,
although they persisted^a in a policy of rebellion
and sank deeper into their wrongdoing.^b (3+3+3)
- 44 Yet he paid regard to their distress
on hearing their cry.^a (3+2)

- 45 He recalled his covenant with^a them
and relented^b in accord with the abundance of his
loyal love.^c (3+3)
- 46 He made all their captors
treat them with kindness. (3+3)
- 47 Save us, Yahweh our God,
gather^a us from among the nations
so that we may give thanks to your holy name
and tell proudly of your praiseworthiness. (3+3)
- 48 Blessed be Israel's God Yahweh
from everlasting to everlasting,
and let all the people say "Amen."^a
Hallelujah (4+3+3)

Notes/Comments

1.a. See the comment on 104:35. The addition at the beginning and end of the psalm echoes its strong element of praise, which was reinforced by the doxology of v 48.

1.b. Heb. ׀ is generally taken as causal, giving reasons for thanksgiving. But H. Grimme ("Der Begriff von hebräischem הוֹדָה und תוֹדָה," *ZAW* 58 [1940/41] 236) construed it as "that" and F. Crüsemann (*Studien zur Formgeschichte*, 32-35) as a deictic particle, "ja," initiating the reply of those who are summoned to praise Yahweh.

1.c. K. Koch ("... denn seine Güte währet ewiglich," *EvT* 21 [1961] 531-44) has traced the history and range of the liturgical formula of v 1a^b-b, which functioned as an introduction to the thank offering and also to the history psalms, Pss 106, 107. Cf. also K. D. Sakenfeld, *The Meaning of Heseb*, 165-68.

2.a. A question of this kind is normally rhetorical and expresses the inadequacy of praise to match God's praiseworthiness. In the light of vv 3, 6 it seems also to take on a further meaning. "The guilty conscience of the community already casts . . . a shadow which lies on the whole psalm" (A. Weiser, *Psalms*, 680; cf. W. Beyerlin, *ZAW* 86 [1974] 59).

3.a. The beatitude formula has been investigated especially by W. Janzen ("Ašrê in the OT," *HTR* 58 [1965] 215-26); cf. E. Lipinski, *RB* 75 (1968) 321-67. It describes a state to be emulated and here it functions not simply as an exhortation to obey (A. A. Anderson, *Psalms*, 737) but also as an answer to the question of v 2.

3.b. Heb. הָשִׁיב can be regarded as a collective singular harking back to v 2; the well-attested plural הָשִׁיבוּ (cf. *BHS*) represents an easier reading.

3.c. For הָשִׁיבוּ and הָשִׁיבוּ see the discussion of Th. C. Vriezen (*An Outline of OT Theology* [Tr. S. Neuijen; 2nd ed.; Newton, MA: C. T. Branford, 1970] 388-89) and his definition of them as consequences of Israel's relationship with Yahweh, "that true relations [within the community] are not disturbed and that the integrity of each man in the community is maintained fully."

4.a. The readings זכרונו "remember us" and פקדונו "notice us" despite wide attestation (see *BHS*) are to be rejected as cases of assimilation to the first plural suffixes of vv 6, 7. The representative of the religious community who has issued to them the summons to praise now prays on his own account.

5.a. See the comment on 105:6.

5.b. Heb. גו "nation" here functions merely as a parallel for "people" (A. Cody, "When Is the Chosen People Called a *gôy*?" *VT* 14 [1964] 2).

5.c. For the suggested deletion of vv 4, 5 as secondary and the attachment of vv 1-3 to Ps 105 see *Form/Structure/Setting*.

6.a. For this formula of confession cf. 1 Kgs 8:47. The line is significantly in the (*qinah*) meter of complaint.

7.a. This is the first of a series of negative archetypes presented in the psalm: see A. C. Tunyogi, *JBL* 81 (1962) 388-90. Weiser (*Psalms*, 681) compares Exod 14:10-12, but sees here a variation from the Pentateuch and evidence of use of an independent tradition. Similarly but

more explicitly G. W. Coats (*Rebellion*, 225) is surprised that the Exodus generation are accused of forgetting Yahweh's mighty acts while in Egypt and envisages a broadening of the wilderness rebellion tradition. But the latter bicolon of the verse is to be distinguished from the first as a separate stage. The first bicolon is adequately explained by his references to Exod 4:1, 8; 5:20, 21; 6:9.

7.b. MT עַל־יָם "by the sea" is generally conjecturally emended to עַל־יָרֵךְ (cf. 78:17, 56). G. R. Driver (*JTS* 44 [1943] 20) suggested an original בְּךָ עַל־יָם־סוּרִי "against you by the Reed Sea," comparing v 22 and the second person suffix of v 7a, but a third person reference is acceptable as a transition to v 8. Probably a marginal reading עַל־יָם, relating to יָם either as a ms. variant or as a gloss comparing v 22, displaced the similar-looking עַל־יָם. For this type of error see the note on 102:18.

8.a. The vindication of Yahweh's "name" is here the motivation for deliverance: cf. Exod 14:18.

9.a. See the comment on 104:7. Here the *Chaoskampf* is echoed in a historicized form relating to the Exodus. The poetic term expands rather than replaces the prose narrative of Exod 14:21, 22: cf. F. M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 134-35.

9.b. Coats (*Rebellion*, 226-27; cf. NEB) interprets כַּמְדוֹר as "as (he led them) through the wilderness," seeing a relation between the Reed Sea tradition and that of Yahweh's help in the wilderness. But GKC § 1260 adequately explains the use of the definite article, and the expanded comparison in the parallel Isa 63:13 which interpreted in terms of surefooted progress cannot be ignored.

11.a. Cf. Exod 14:28.

12.a. D. A. Robertson (*Linguistic Evidence*, 47, 51) regards the preterite verbs here and in vv 17-19 as archaisms.

12.b. Cf. Exod 14:31; 15:1.

13.a. Heb. תַּעֲבֹד "plan" refers to Yahweh's intention to supply their material needs.

14.a. For vv 14-15 cf. Num 11:4, 31-33. The desolate desert functions as a foil for God's grace (R. P. Carroll, *ZAW* 89 [1977] 188). Carroll has observed that the rebellion motif serves to heighten the graciousness of Yahweh and to introduce the motif of judgment in reaction to Israel's negative archetypal behavior (cf. Jer 7:25-26); the judgment functions as a model for divine judgment throughout Israel's history (*ZAW* 89 [1977] 189, 197).

15.a. Underlying LXX S is evidently a misreading וַיִּבְרַח* "abundance" (cf. E. J. Kissane, *Psalms II*, 171), with allusion to Num 11:20.

20.a. MT כְּבוֹדָם "their glory" is traditionally listed as one of the *Tiqqune sopherim* or "scribal corrections" for כְּבוֹדוֹ "his glory" or כְּבוֹדִי "my glory," changed out of reverence for God. O. Eissfeldt ("Die Psalmen als Geschichtsquelle," in *Near Eastern Studies in Honor of William F. Albright*, ed. H. Goedicke [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1971] 106) has related כְּבוֹדָם to the ark, as in 1 Sam 4:21-22, and viewed the golden calf as a threat to the ark as a symbol of Yahweh. More commonly it is regarded as a metonym for Yahweh, as in Jer 2:11, on which the psalm may well depend here. K. H. Fahlgren (*S*daqa, nahestehende und entgegengesetzte Begriffe im AT*. [Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1932] 148 note 3) finds an implicit contrast with בִּשְׁמָה "shame" used of idols (cf. Hos 9:10 and H. W. Wolff, Tr. G. Stansell; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, *Hosea* [1974] 165). J. W. Rogerson and J. W. McKay (*Psalms* 101-150. 44) draw attention to the explicit contrast between a created object dependent on created things and the Lord of nature of v 21.

21.a. The perfect שָׁכַח does not function as a summary of vv 7b-20, as D. Michel (*Tempora*, 37) claims. The break reflects emotional shock.

23.a. For vv 19-23 cf. Deut 9:8-21.

24.a. For vv 24-27 cf. Deut 1:21-33 (and also Num 13:25-14:45).

26.a. The oath of Num 14:28 is vividly introduced by a reference to a gesture of oath-taking (cf. Deut 32:40).

27.a. MT וְלֹהֲפִיל "and to cause to fall" is generally corrected to וְלֹהֲפִיץ with the support of S Tg. in the light of the parallel Ezek 20:23. MT has suffered assimilation to the preceding verb.

27.b. Cf. Ezek 20:23 and the doubtless underlying covenant curses of Lev 26:33; Deut 28:64-65 (cf. Deut 4:26-27). Coats (*Rebellion*, 229) has observed that an explanation is here provided for the theological problems caused by the exile: the current generation are held responsible for the sins of their forefathers (cf. v 6).

28.a. For vv 28-31 cf. Num 25:1-3, 11-13. In v 28b Weiser (*Psalms*, 677) renders "sacrifices for the dead" (cf. Deut 26:14), but מַתִּים seems to be a comment on אֱלֹהֵיהֶם "their gods" in Num 25:2, characterizing them as lifeless (cf. Lev 26:30).

29.a. For the absolute use of the verb cf. J. A. Montgomery and H. S. Gehman (*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Kings* [ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1951] 522, 541) with reference to 2 Kgs 21:6; 23:19.

31.a. This originally cultic and subsequently spiritualized formula has been analyzed by G. von Rad in *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays*, 125-30.

31.b. The special honor bestowed on Phineas is to be associated with the later preeminence of the Zadokite priests (cf. 1 Chr 24:4 and N. H. Snaith, *Leviticus and Numbers* [London: Nelson, 1967] 13, 304). For a study of the verb פָּלַל see E. A. Speiser, *JBL* 82 (1963) 301-6.

33.a. MT וְהָרָה "defied" is better pointed וְהָרָה with two Heb mss. LXX S Hier: cf. Job 27:2.

33.b. For vv 32-33 cf. Num 20:8-13. The episode historically belongs earlier but is placed here because Moses's failure prevented his entering the promised land. For suggested explanations of the precise fault of Moses see Snaith, *Leviticus and Numbers*, 276. Here the psalmist expresses his sympathy for Moses by stressing his provocation.

34.a. For vv 34-39 cf. Judg 1:21; 2:3, 17; 3:6.

37.a. Cf. Deut 32:17 and F. Stolz, *Strukturen*, 206.

38.a. The repetition expresses emotional shock: cf. 2 Kgs 18:4-5. For the association of child sacrifice with innocent blood cf. Jer. 19:4-5.

38.b. The two cola are often deleted as a gloss (cf. BHK, BHS). H. -J. Kraus (*Psalmen*, 899, 905) regards it as a misinterpretation of "innocent blood," but vv. 38-39 may be compared with Ezek 20:30-31. The text is vindicated by its stylistic role in the context (see *Form/Structure/Setting*). Moreover, M. Dahood (*Psalms III*, 75) has observed the break up of a composite phrase אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן "land of Canaan" in v 38aγ-b, and a word play וַיִּכְנַע/כִּנְעַן in vv 38, 42.

41.a. cf. Judg 2:14; 3:1.

42.a. The word play with כְּנָעַן "Canaan," v 38, ironically makes the punishment fit the crime.

43.a. In the context the verbs are probably frequentative (Robertson, *Linguistic Evidence*, 49) rather than preterite (Dahood, *Psalms III*, 75).

43.b. The final colon is frequently deleted as a gloss on the preceding one (cf. BHK, BHS). The emendation וַיִּמָּח "and pined away" for וַיִּמָּח (cf. Lev 26:39; Ezek 4:17; 24:23; 33:10) is interesting but unnecessary.

44.a. Cf. Judg 3:9; 6:7.

45.a. The preposition ל qualifies בְּרִית "make a covenant with" (Dahood, *Psalms III*, 76).

45.b. Dahood (*Psalms III*, 76) follows S in pointing וַיִּנְהַל "and led." But the psalmist is surely echoing the phrase עַל־הַרְעָה וְנָחַם רַב־חַסֵּד "abundant in loyal love and relenting over punishment" (Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2). Accordingly K וַיִּנְהַל is to be followed: Q has been influenced by the plural in v 7.

45.c. Allusion is made in vv 45-46 to the liturgical formula of Joel 2:13. For Yahweh's remembering see the note on 105:8, 42. With v 45 cf. Judg 2:18; with v 46 cf. 2 Kgs 8:50. The "covenant" is not elucidated, but is presumably that with Abraham (cf. Exod 2:24; Ps 105:8).

47.a. The addition in 1 Chr 16:35 (and thence in mss. of Psalms) וְהוֹצִילֵנוּ "and rescue us" represents a conflated text in MT. LXX in Chronicles omits וְהוֹצִילֵנוּ, which in MT seems to be an intrusion from the text of Psalms. The two verbs are recensional variants (see L. C. Allen, *The Greek Chronicles* [VTSup 25; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1974] 217).

48.a. For congregational response to a doxological benediction cf. 41:14 (13).

Form/Structure/Setting

The limitations of the form-critical method are evident from the fact that Ps 106 has been regarded both as a hymn (Kraus, *Psalmen*, 900) and as a communal complaint (C. Westermann, *Praise*, 57, 141; cf. H. Gunkel, *Die Psalmen*, 464-65). An assessment depends on the relative weight given to elements of praise and complaint. There is of course a close and fluid relationship between the two in the Psalter. It is quite possible to fit the psalm into

the flexible pattern of the complaint, although this classification does not necessarily determine its function. V 1 is a hymnic call to praise, underlined by the question of v 2. It looks back to Yahweh's ancient work on his people's behalf, as the development in vv 8-12 shows (cf. 89:1-18). In between is what corresponds to the normal introductory petition, vv 4-5, here dislodged from first place by the element of praise and spoken in the name of the representative of the community. This personal factor explains the imperative nature of the praise of v 1, as the representative addresses his fellow worshippers. The imperative "remember" addressed to God in v 4 is characteristic of the complaint (cf. B. S. Childs, *Memory and Tradition*, 33, 44). The development of praise in vv 8-12, together with vv 43-46, also has the role of a confession of trust, a normal constituent of the complaint, and functions too as an appeal for God's intervention (Westermann, *Praise*, 55, 57). Interwoven with the praise of vv 8-12 (cf. too vv 21b, 22) is a confession of guilt in vv 6, 7, 13-21a, 24-39, which serves to enhance Yahweh's praiseworthiness (cf. the summary in v 43) and also to preface the complaint proper of vv 40-42, which has both Yahweh and the nations as subject and so contains two of the three standard constituents of this element (cf. Westermann, *Praise*, 53). A final petition follows in v 47a, which develops into a vow of praise in v 47b. (V 48 is unrelated to the psalm: it forms a closing doxology to the fourth book of the Psalter.) Formally then the psalm can be defined as a communal complaint strongly marked by hymnic features. Direct address of God occurs in vv 4-7, 47 and first plural suffixes in vv 6, 7, 47. The beatitude of v 3 reveals a didactic, moralizing function comparable with 105:45; so too does the historical account of vv 8-46 with references to Yahweh in the third person.

What was the function of such a psalm with its checkered mixture of elements? Crüsemann (*Studien zur Formgeschichte*, 77), following Gunkel, *ibid.*, has characterized the psalm as a general confession, noting that Israel's acts rather than Yahweh's are the central feature. F. Baumgärtel (*ZAW* 65 [1953] 263-65) has compared the annual renewal of the covenant described in the Qumran Community Rule (1QS 1:16-2:18). The first four of the seven elements of this liturgy were as follows: 1. The priests and Levites praise God; 2. The priests proclaim his righteousness displayed in his mighty deeds; 3. The Levites recite Israel's sins; and 4. Those entering upon the covenant confess their sins and those of their forefathers, and praise him for his mercy. Baumgärtel saw a reflection of these four elements in vv 1, 8-12, 13-43 and 6, 7 respectively, and deduced an older cultic use behind the Qumran liturgy. Weiser (*Psalms*, 679-80) gladly seized upon these parallels as evidence for his covenant festival and placed the psalm within the covenantal liturgy, along with Ps 105.

An apparent difficulty in stressing the notes of confession of sin and complaint arises from the interpretation of the psalm in terms of praise revealed by the secondary framework of Hallelujahs with which the psalm has been supplied in vv 1, 48. W. Beyerlin (*ZAW* 86 [1974] 56-64) has been able to interpret Ps 106 in a manner consistent with the framework. He finds the introductory call to praise of v 1a^β-b decisive for the understanding of the psalm. It takes up the promise of Jer 33:10-11, which associates the praise

formula with the promise of return to the land. But first the (exilic) community must endure the exile and recognize that it is suffering due punishment for its sins. V 2 reflects present inadequacy to praise, because of the sins of v 6 and the unattained standards of v 3. Vv 6-46 function not only as a confession of sin and an interpretation of the exile as divine punishment; they also stress God's grace and past help, which prompted praise, and so they give confidence that present deportation and dispersal would also end in praise. The focal point of the psalm is not the narrative but vv 1, 47b, the renewal of praise which only Yahweh's reversal of the people's present circumstances can bring about. There is a tension between guilt and praise which only divine forgiveness can resolve. Kraus (*Psalmen*, 900) also makes praise the center of the psalm, with the motif of Israel's guilt set in a context of penitence and prayer playing a less important role. He accordingly has classified the form of the psalm as a hymn. As to the setting of the psalm, with its accent on thanksgiving and praise it served as introduction to a post-exilic liturgy of confession (cf. Zech 7:1-4; 8:19).

One must still ask whether even the place given to praise does not fit better into an overall complaint. V 1 calls for praise for what Yahweh did in the past (vv 8-12; cf. Isa 63:7), which constitutes hope for his intervention in the future. Beyerlin (*ZAW* 86 [1974] 61) has noted that טוב "good" in v 1 is taken up in טוֹבוֹ "goodness" in v 5. The vow of praise in v 47 looks to the future. These two types of praise, here organically linked, are well attested elements of the complaint (cf. Westermann, *Praise*, 55-57, 59, 60). In this complaint the community praises Yahweh for what he has done in the past and looks forward to praising him again in the future when he has provided fresh grounds for praise. The perspective of the psalm was subsequently altered from complaint to praise by subsequent additions, the doxology and the Hallelujahs (cf. Ps 115).

As to its literary Gattung Ps 106 is a historical psalm like Ps 78 and 105. (See *Form/Structure/Setting* of Ps 105 for this categorization and also for suggested classifications of both as wisdom psalms.) The treatment of history in vv 7-46 is different from that of Ps 105: it is an expansion of the confession of sin in v 6 set in a framework of Yahweh's salvation and grace (vv 8-12, 44-46). W. I. Wolverson (*CJT* 10 [1964] 166-76) explained the psalm like Ps 105 as originally a sermon. The speaker identified himself with his audience and his task was to induce lament rather than to lament. To achieve this end Wolverson had to prune the psalm of vv 1-5 and view v 47 as a congregational response. It is doubtful whether the psalm ever existed in this truncated form.

Can the relation of the treatment of Israel's history to the canonical historical books be established? The Deuteronomistic structure underlying the psalm is evident, especially in vv 40-46, and Coats (*Rebellion*, 225-30) has noted Deuteronomistic influence elsewhere in the psalm. Evidence pointing to a period when Pentateuchal material had received its final redaction comes from vv 16-18, where older material in Num 16 is supplemented with reference to (Aaron's) holiness and to judgment by fire, as in the priestly sections of 16:3, 5, 7, 35, and from vv 28-31, where similarly different traditions have already been combined, as in Num 25 (A. Lauha, *Die Geschichtsmotive*, 88-

90; Coats, *Rebellion*, 227-29). Coats (*Rebellion*, 227-29) also observes that in contrast to Ps 78 this psalm betrays no trace of conflict between the Northern and Southern Kingdoms. He concludes that the psalm presupposes the exile, without necessarily being post-exilic. Probably the origin of the psalm is in fact to be set in the exilic period with Beyerlin and Coats (cf. Dahood, *Psalms III*, 76; Rogerson and McKay, *Psalms 101-150*, 41). The two Aramaisms, ללל and שׁב (vv 2, 43; כָּךְ, v 47, need not be an Aramaism: cf. Robertson, *Linguistic Evidence*, 127, 128) are thus easily accommodated. The psalm was doubtless used in a service of penitence. It lent itself naturally to re-use in the Post-exilic period, in hope of the return of the Diaspora Jews. Weiser's contention (*Psalms*, 682) that v 47 need refer only to the deportation of the people of the Northern Kingdom becomes unlikely in the light of the total evidence.

Other factors which deserve consideration are the use of vv 47-48 in 1 Chr 16:35-36, the close affinity of the psalm with Isa 61:7-14, the link between v 45 and Joel 2:13 and the parallel with Ezek 20:23 in v 27. The last factor again suggests at least an exilic date for the psalm. The implications of the links with Isa 61 are not at all clear, and deserve close investigation. The link with the post-exilic Joel does not necessarily indicate a post-exilic provenance since the form of the confessional formula evidently employed cultically in Joel's time is itself rooted in the Jeremian and the related Deuteronomistic traditions (H. W. Wolff, *Joel and Amos* [Tr. W. Janzen, S. D. McBride, and C. A. Muenchow; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977] 49) and it need not be post-exilic in origin. For the use of the psalm in 1 Chr 16 see the comments in *Form/Structure/Setting* of Ps 105. Remarkably the doxology and call for congregational response, v 48, are included, although the usual corollary that a division in the Psalter is presupposed by the use in Chronicles has been vigorously disputed (see H. Gese, "Die Entstehung der Büchereinteilung des Psalters," in *Wort, Lied, und Gottespruch*, ed. J. Schreiner [Forschungen zur Bibel 2; Würzburg, Stuttgart: Echter Verlag, 1972] 61-62; Weiser, *Psalms*, 682-83).

The structure of Ps 106 seems hardly to have been studied hitherto beyond divisions based on formal and exegetical considerations. Dahood (*Psalms III*, 76) does note that in v 47 להודות "to give thanks" and תהללתך "your praise" form an inclusion with vv 1, 2, הודו and תהלתו. In fact there is evidence of extended inclusion, to some of which R. L. Alden (*Journal of the Evangelical Society* 21 [1978] 202) has pointed: טו "loyal love," vv 1, 7, 45; עַם "people," vv 4, 40; נחלה "property," vv 5, 40; the stems זכר "remember," vv 4, 7, 45, and שׁו "save," vv 4, 47; בּוּ רֵא "look upon," vv 5, 44; גוים "nation(s)," vv 5, 47; (ו)יָרִיבוּ "they rebelled," vv 7, 43; שׁו "name," vv 8, 47. Moreover the threefold occurrence of the divine name in vv 1, 2, 4 is matched in vv 34, 40, 47. Direct address to Yahweh occurs in vv 4-7, 47; and the first person plural pronominal references of vv 6, 7 recur in v 47.

All these parallels point to a complementary pair of passages, vv 1-12, 34-47. They comprise two strophes of thirteen and fifteen lines respectively. The first is marked by a repetition of the sequences חסד-גבורה-תהלה in vv 1/7, 2/8, 2/12 and also by a threefold occurrence of the stem שׁו "save" in vv 4, 8, 10. The final strophe, which coincides with the division in *BHS*,

is tied together by a threefold use of גוים "nations" at vv 35, 41, 47. As already noted, Dahood has pointed out the word play כנע/כנע at vv 38, 42. In addition vv 34-40 are interwoven by an extended chiasmic pattern of the type noted in Ps 105:

:: יהוה : מעשיהם : עצביהם : את-בניהם ואת-בנותיהם : דם
 דם : בניהם ובנותיהם : לעצבי : במעשיהם : יהוה

(repeating "Yahweh," "their deeds," "idols," "their sons and daughters" and "blood"). And what of vv 13-33? A triadic division for the psalm is indicated by the three cases of the stem שמע "hear" at vv 4, 25, 43 and by the positioning of the stem ישׁ "save": after the cluster in vv 4-10 it recurs at vv 21, 47. Accordingly a long central strophe of twenty-two lines is to be envisaged. An obvious break in the flow of the narrative does take place at v 13 (Michel, *Tempora*, 36, 37). The strophe is marked by a double play on the stem מרה "rebel" used in vv 7, 43: מהרו "hastened" and המרו "embittered" occur at beginning and end, vv 13, 33. Moses features three times, in vv 16, 23, 32. Repeated terms are במדבר "in the wilderness," vv 14, 26, 47 עמד "stood," vv 23, 30, יהוה, vv 16, 25, and אל "God," vv 14, 21.

Psalm 106 has obviously been placed next to Ps 105 as an intended double statement (W. Zimmerli, *Zwillingpsalmen*, 109-11). Both psalms review Israel's history, but this one presents a reverse side of the coin. Israel, bound to a faithful God and yet herself unfaithful, is called to a deepened self-understanding, to praise and to trembling hope.

For the use of the psalm in Rom 1:23-28 via the LXX see L. C. Allen, "The OT in Romans 1-8," *Vox Evangelica* 3 (1964) 28-29; M. D. Hooker, *NTS* 13 (1966/69) 181-83. Paul not only quoted v 20 in Rom 1:23 but echoed v 14 at 1:24, v 39 in 1:26, 27, and v 48 in 1:26 (cf. vv 23, 32, 40 with 1:18). Moreover, he used v 41 as the basis for a threefold refrain in 1:24, 26, 28. The apostle described sin and its consequences in terms of Israel's experience, which was mirrored and magnified in the Gentile world.

Explanation

The worship leader calls upon the exiled religious community to praise, using time-honored words which carry their own message of reassurance. Yahweh's loyal love is everlasting: this is the ground of their hope that he will save. Who can praise? His praiseworthiness is too great for any mortal lips to capture. The question is asked with a sigh. Right living must ever be the preface to worship (cf. Ps 15). At present a barrier lies across the way of fullness of praise, a barrier to be mentioned in v 6. But the leader looks forward to a new manifestation of Yahweh's goodness in the form of national restoration, when full praise too will be restored. He prays that he personally may be privileged to see that day. Thereby he expresses his own assurance that eventually it will dawn.

The present experience of exile is described deuteronomistically as punishment for a backlog of sins. It has piled up over the centuries and been added to by each generation in turn, not excluding the contemporary one. They form no island but are joined to the continent of history by national solidarity. They are victims of their own and their predecessors' sins, they confess.

The psalmist looks back to the great archetype of salvation, the complex of the Egyptian plagues and the Exodus, and finds even that to be sin-stained. It inaugurated a pattern of heedlessness and rebellion. But, thank God, where sin abounded, grace much more abounded. He still proceeded to save. From this viewpoint the Exodus was a key positive factor for the future: it revealed Yahweh as Savior of his sinning people. It provided hope for the penitent. Just as the people of old trusted and praised Yahweh, this generation may implicitly look forward to the creation of a new context for the exercise of faith and praise.

In the first strophe, vv 1-12, Yahweh is praised for his loyal love, power and salvation, active attributes which are duly enhanced by the failures of their recipients. The second, vv 13-33, is concerned with Yahweh, Moses and Israel in the wilderness. From the wilderness narratives the psalmist extracts six episodes of sin and punishment. These further negative archetypes constitute an expansion of the confession of v 6 and an implied affirmation that they are justly under sentence of condemnation since they are receiving the due reward of their deeds. The forgotten Savior ever turns judge, and they have borne the rod of his judgment. Thus, when the wilderness generation challenged his will and ability to provide for their hunger, they received a two-edged settlement of their complaints. When mutiny broke out against Moses and Aaron, Yahweh's appointed leaders, the instigators had to be exterminated. At Horeb, of all places, Israel's career of ingratitude reached an all-time low, in the golden calf incident. The psalmist pauses to reflect: the themes of Yahweh's wonders in Egypt and of election which clustered around the confession at the heart of the first strophe (vv 5, 7) now reappear at the center of the second, but in reverse order (vv 22, 23). The sin against Yahweh is seen to be all the more heinous in that it was a deliberate loss of memory, a willful rejection of salvation history and of the meaning it ought to have had. The people behaved as if they had never been chosen—Moses was the only exception and through this narrow door of intercession Israel's survival had to pass. The covenant mediator threw himself into the breach, like a courageous soldier defending a gap in the defenses of a beleaguered city. And so they were relieved.

But they had not yet learned their lesson. They actually refused the promised land. In cowardly disbelief and discontent they stayed stubbornly inside their tents. They fully deserved Yahweh's curse barring them from the land, a curse whose long-range effect Israel had recently experienced. Just as this middle strophe looked back to the first, it now looks forward to the next (v 41). The present generation are caught up in the outworking of the divine word.

Again the wilderness generation defected from Yahweh's service and got involved in Moabite rites. Provoking divine wrath, they were spared once more only by one man's intervention. A living memorial to Phineas existed thereafter among the people, the special priestly work of his descendants, which was Yahweh's accolade of appreciation. Meribah was the scene of further trouble, with tragic repercussions. The people's provocation of Moses led to his own fall from grace and debarring from the promised land.

The theme of the third strophe, vv 34-47, is a triangular one: Yahweh, Israel and the nations. But it also takes up the positive themes of the first strophe. First it continues the tragic story of Israel's defection, once they had reached Canaan, and divine punishment. The people's sin is considered in vv 34-39, separately from the reaction of Yahweh, in vv 40-42, which leads on to an account of Yahweh's positive dealings, in vv 43-46. Involvement with the nations of Canaan led to exile among nations outside Canaan, from which the community prays to be delivered in v 47.

Entry into the promised land proved a disaster: it exposed the people to fresh temptation to religious syncretism, as the narrative of Judg 1-3 disclosed. Here again ancient history held up a mirror to more recent events. The psalmist deliberately paints the Judges period in colors borrowed from the fateful last pre-exilic centuries (cf. 2 Kgs 17:17; 21:16; Jer 3:1-3). Yahweh had to punish his own people. As nations featured in their sin, he fittingly used nations as agents of his punishment. As they had become Canaanized, they fell into a canyon of disaster, declares the psalmist with a word play (more effective on the ancient Hebrew ear than upon the modern Western one). Israel suffered national humiliation, which was no stranger to recent generations, including the psalmist's own.

But that was not the end of the story: Israel's history had had happier turns. Yahweh's "many acts of loyal love" (v 7) were not exhausted in ancient Egypt. They kept on appearing in the form of deliverance down the ages, despite Israel's rebellion. The traditional formula of Yahweh's character kept coming true in their experience: "Yahweh is kindly, lavish in loyal love and ready to relent over punishment" (cf. Joel 2:13). Forgetful though his people had been, he remembered and implemented his covenant promises.

And, humanly speaking, it was the people's penitent cry that inaugurated a turn for the better. The present generation dare to take these past deliverances as precedents for their own future and to bring their own cries to the God of the covenant. They plead for deliverance and restoration to their own land. They vow thanksgiving if their prayer is answered, promising to make Yahweh's praise their pride. The psalm has come round full circle to the theme of praise (cf. vv 1, 5, 12). The community waits upon Yahweh, all too aware of their own sin and its wages, but conscious too of their waiting Savior.

The psalmist speaks as heir of the deuteronomic history and weaves its themes into the fabric of the penitential history of the exilic community. He stands too in the interim period foretold by the pre-exilic prophets, between God's judgment and salvation of his people. He is able to recreate a cultic representation of the past to fit contemporary needs, to be the vehicle of both deep repentance and assured hope.

The use of the Egyptian experience to provide a negative archetype together with its echoes in the wilderness period finds partial parallels elsewhere in the OT, notably in Pss 81 and 95, and thence in the NT, in 1 Cor 10:1-11; Heb 3:7-4:11. Paul uses the saga of human failure and divine wrath and abandonment found in this psalm as a pattern for sin worldwide (Rom 1:18-28). The Exodus complex of events had not only a once-and-for-all significance

for salvation and election but also a shadow side. Likewise there is for Christians a looking back to the cross as a signpost both to God's saving love and to human sin (Rom 5:6-8).

Manifold Mercies (107:1-43)

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Translation

- ¹ Give Yahweh thanks for his goodness,
for the everlastingness of his loyal love.^a (3+3)
- ² Let Yahweh's redeemed ones say so,^a
whom he has redeemed from the enemy's power,
³ gathering them from other countries,
from east and west,
from north^a and overseas.^b (3+3)
- ⁴ They wandered^a in the wild wastelands,
unable to find their way to an inhabited town.
⁵ They were hungry and thirsty,
their inner vitality^a was sapped. (3+3)
- ⁶ In their distress they cried to Yahweh:
he rescued them from their predicament,
⁷ leading them on their way
straight to an inhabited town. (3+3)
- ⁸ Let them give Yahweh thanks for his loyal love,^a
for his wonders on behalf of men,^b
⁹ for the way he satisfied ravenous thirst
and filled hungry stomachs with good things. (3+3)
- ¹⁰ Those who lived^a in darkness grim as death,^b
fettered to misfortune's^c iron chains
¹¹ because they had defied God's commands
and despised the will of the Most High— (3+3)
- ¹² he wore down their spirit with hard labor,
they stumbled about helplessly. (3+3)
- ¹³ In their distress they cried to Yahweh:
he saved them from their predicament, (4+3)

- ¹⁴ releasing them from darkness grim as death
and snapping their fetters— (3+3)
- ¹⁵ let them give Yahweh thanks for his loyal love,
for his wonders on behalf of men, (3+3)
- ¹⁶ for the way he broke down bronze doors
and hacked away iron bars.^a (3+3)
- ¹⁷ Those fools^a who had indulged in rebellious ways,
who were suffering for their misdemeanors^b— (3+3)
- ¹⁸ all food their stomachs rejected with loathing
until they reached the gates of death.^a (3+3)
- ¹⁹ In their distress they cried to Yahweh:
he saved them from their predicament, (4+3)
- ²⁰ sending his message^a of healing
to rescue them^b from their Pit^c— (3+3)
- ²¹ let them give Yahweh thanks for his loyal love,
for his wonders on behalf of men.^a (3+3)
- ²² Let them offer thanksgiving sacrifices
and recount in loud song what he has done.^a (3+3)
- ²³ Those who embarked^a on ships to go to sea
whose business took them onto the ocean— (3+4)
- ²⁴ they too saw what Yahweh could do,
his wonders in the deep. (4+3)
- ²⁵ He gave the word, and roused
a storm wind,
and it raised its waves.^a (2+2+2)
- ²⁶ Up to the sky, down into the depths they went,
their hearts melting in anguish. (4+3)
- ²⁷ They reeled^a and staggered like drunks,
all their expertise wrecked. (3+3)
- ²⁸ In their distress they cried to Yahweh
and he brought them out of their predicament, (4+3)
- ²⁹ He made the storm fall silent
and their waves^a grew still. (3+3)
- ³⁰ They were glad to be at peace
and he brought them to the port^a they wanted— (3+3)
- ³¹ let them give Yahweh thanks for his loyal love,
for his wonders on behalf of men. (3+3)
- ³² Let them extol him in the congregation of the people,
at the session of the elders^a give him praise. (3+3)
- ³³ He can turn^a rivers into desert,
springs of water into parched ground,^b (3+3)
- ³⁴ fertile land into a salt marsh,
so wicked are the people who live there.^a (3+3)
- ³⁵ He can turn desert into pools of water,
dry land into springs of water,^a (3+4)