

# PSALM 117



GOD, MY EXCEEDING JOY  
A JOYFUL JOURNEY THRU THE PSALMS

“A CALL TO ALL NATIONS” – September 10, 2023

## I. MAIN MESSAGE & KEY THEMES

- A. Calls all the nations to worship God for His grace.
- B. Uses God’s dealings with Israel as the great example.
- C. Uses foreign-like words to appeal to non-Hebrews.
- D. An example of Israel’s evangelism mandate.

## II. GENRE: Song of Praise

- A. Classic example of a song of praise, featuring an opening call to praise (1), a reason for praise (2a), and a closing call to praise (2b).
- B. What stands out in this psalm is the call to the nations to worship Yahweh even though they are not part of the Mosaic covenant.

## III. SETTING

### A. AUTHOR & BACKGROUND

- 1. The psalm is anonymous, an “orphan psalm.”
- 2. The appeal to the nations to worship might best suit the period of the exile or after the exile.

- B. **PLACEMENT:** Ps 117 is part of a collection of psalms that came to be known as “The Egyptian Hallel,” traditionally sung at Passover.

## III. OBSERVATIONS AND APPLICATIONS

- A. **The Shortest Psalm:** Ps 117 is the shortest psalm (or chapter) in all the Bible. The Hebrew text uses only 17 words!

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## IV. OBSERVATIONS AND APPLICATIONS

- A. **The Shortest Psalm:** Ps 117 is the shortest psalm (or chapter) in all the Bible. The Hebrew text uses only 17 words!

**B. Trivia:** Psalm 117 is the middle chapter in English Protestant Bibles. This is not significant, though, because throughout history the books of the Bible have sometimes been arranged in different orders.

**C. Rare Words:** The second line of v. 1 is synonymous with the first line, but the word choice is significant. The terms “laud” and “peoples” are rare, not used often in Hebrew. They may be borrowed from Aramaic, a more widely spoken language, adding to the appeal to the nations.

**D. Quoted:** The apostle Paul quotes this little poem in Romans 15:11 where he discusses his ministry program to the Gentiles.

**E. Great Grace:** The term “great” in v. 2 is not the common word for such but a term that refers to things that tower in size. It’s used of overwhelming armies and the massive flood of Noah’s day.

<b>PSALM 117</b> <small>© M. Scott Beshlow 2023</small>		
<b>INTRODUCTORY CALL TO WORSHIP:</b> THE NATIONS SUMMONED TO WORSHIP V. 1	<b>CAUSE FOR WORSHIP:</b> NATIONAL TESTIMONY OF YAHWEH'S GOODNESS V. 2AB	<b>CLOSING CALL TO WORSHIP:</b> FINAL EXCLAMATION OF WORSHIP V. 2C
Initial Summons Using Traditional Terms v. 1a	Yahweh's Towering Covenant Love for Israel v. 2a	Final Joyful Command: Hallelujah! v. 2c
Second Summons Using International (Borrowed) Terms v. 1b	Yahweh's Enduring Faithfulness to Israel v. 2b	
<b>Purpose:</b> The psalmist calls all peoples to praise Yahweh for his unending covenant faithfulness. The song anticipates a future inclusion of Gentile worshippers of the covenant keeping God.		
<b>Type:</b> Hymn of Praise <b>Author:</b> Unknown <b>Date:</b> Perhaps During the Exile <b>Collection:</b> Pss 113-118 traditionally called the "Egyptian Hallel"		

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