



STUDY FOUR

PSALM 118 || THE STONE THE BUILDERS REJECTED

This is a longer psalm, so this time, with Psalm 118 open in front of you, listen to David Suchet reading it, listening for the reason everyone is so happy. There's a link on the usual page of our website. www.new.mpc.org.au/singwithjesus.

ISRAELITE IDEAL

1. What was the psalmist's prior situation? v10-13
2. Why was the psalmist not worried about it? v6-9
3. When the psalmist's situation is reversed, how do others in Israel respond? v15-16, 22-27
4. The thematic statement of the psalm is at the start and repeated at the end: v1-4 & v29. How does the body of the psalm support that thematic statement?
5. For an ancient Israelite, what ideal response to God's salvation does this psalm portray?

ISRAEL'S FAILURE & JESUS' FULFILMENT

Midway in Luke's account of Jesus, Jesus is warned of danger and he responds, perhaps not surprisingly, by quoting Psalm 118:

Read Luke 13:31–35

6. When Jesus is warned of mortal danger, how worried does he seem? Which part of Psalm 118 does this fulfil?
7. How can Jerusalem fulfil the Israelite ideal from Psalm 118?

As Jesus finally reaches Jerusalem, his followers do indeed shout out: "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" (Luke 19:38). But the Pharisees, the ones he was talking to in Luke 13, are furious. They tell Jesus to rebuke his followers, and redouble their efforts to kill him.

Three weeks ago we saw Jesus telling a parable about a vineyard owner and the rebellious tenants who conspired to kill his son. As the parable goes on, Jesus quotes Psalm 118 in a surprising way.

Read Luke 20:15–19

In the psalm, those rejecting God's cornerstone seem to be Israel's enemies – but safe refuge is found in the gates of Jerusalem. But now, as Jesus enters the gates of Jerusalem, it seems he's not coming **out of danger** (as in Psalm 118). Rather, he's coming **into it**. Even so, Jesus is confident of the outcome.

8. What does Jesus say will happen to those who oppose him?
9. Which role from Psalm 118 have the leaders of Israel taken?
10. From Psalm 118, what is Jesus confident will happen despite his imminent death?

31 At that time some Pharisees came to Jesus and said to him, "Leave this place and go somewhere else. Herod wants to kill you." 32 He replied, "Go tell that fox, 'I will keep on driving out demons and healing people today and tomorrow, and on the third day I will reach my goal.' 33 In any case, I must press on today and tomorrow and the next day—for surely no prophet can die outside Jerusalem! 34 "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing. 35 Look, your house is left to you desolate. I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'"

15 "What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them? 16 He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others." When the people heard this, they said, "God forbid!"

17 Jesus looked directly at them and asked, "Then what is the meaning of that which is written:

"The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone?"

18 Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces; anyone on whom it falls will be crushed."

19 The teachers of the law and the chief priests looked for a way to arrest him immediately, because they knew he had spoken this parable against them.

SING WITH JESUS

The vineyard in Jesus' parable represents Israel, and the tenants are Israel's leaders. What a role reversal! Israel's leaders have put themselves in the role of the enemy nations of Psalm 118! When Jesus is raised from the dead – when “the stone the builders rejected” is made the “cornerstone” of God's new people – Israel's leaders will be shut out of the party. By rejecting Jesus, they've cut themselves off from God's people like the enemy nations of Psalm 118. The good news for us is that when Jesus says “the vineyard will be given to others” he's talking about people like us! We can join in the Psalm 118 celebration!

11. How does the story of Jesus prove that “God's love endures forever” (Psalm 118)?

12. Have your circumstances ever made you feel that God's love has left you? Share your experiences.

13. What does Jesus' fulfilment of Psalm 118 say to that feeling?

Read Psalm 118 aloud together, consciously making an effort to encourage one another. Read it just as is with a minor change to v17: “I shall not die **forever** but live **forever**.” Remember that the death and resurrection of Jesus is the reason we can use this psalm to rejoice.