

GOD'S COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM, ISAAC, AND JACOB**Psalm 105**

Memory Verses: *Oh give thanks to the LORD; call upon his name; make known his deeds among the peoples!* (Ps. 105:1 ESV)

Background Helps:

We take a one-week break from the historical books of the Old Testament and focus on an historical psalm. Psalm 105 poetically remembers much of the history we have covered thus far in our study of “God’s Covenant Story”:

- Psalm 105:5-22 is based on the narrative of Genesis 12–50, including the nomadic wanderings of the patriarchs—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—in the land Canaan (vv. 5-15) and the enslavement and later enthronement of Joseph in Egypt (vv. 16-22).
- 105:23-41 is based on the narrative of Exodus–Deuteronomy, including the enslavement of the people of Israel in Egypt (vv. 23-25), the plagues and Israel’s deliverance through Moses and Aaron (26-38), and Israel’s subsequent journey through the wilderness (vv. 39-41).
- 105:42-45 is based on the book of Joshua, including Israel’s possession of the Promised Land.

It is important to notice that the LORD is the subject of most of the verbs in this psalm. He is the one taking initiative and acting on behalf of his people. And all his initiative and activity are aimed at keeping the covenant he made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, particularly his promise to give them the land of Canaan (vv. 8-11). By the time we reach the end of the psalm, God has fulfilled his promise to Israel, and they possess the land (vv. 42-44).

Psalm 105 is a hymn of praise to God for his faithfulness to his covenant. In verses 1-4 in a series of imperatives, we are exhorted to “give thanks . . . call upon . . . make known . . . sing to . . . tell of . . . glory in . . . rejoice . . . and seek”—all in relation to the LORD and his deeds. In the last verse, we discover the purpose of God’s promise of the land of Canaan: “that [Israel] might keep his statutes and observe his laws” (v. 45).

This historical psalm is not of interest to Israel only. All Christians, both Jew and Gentile, are the offspring of Abraham by faith (Gal. 3:6-9, 26-29), and we have all been promised “a better country . . . a heavenly one,” of which Canaan was the shadow (Heb. 11:16).


Lesson Helps:

A possible lesson aim: My students will learn about God’s covenant promise of the land of Canaan to the patriarchs, so that they will praise God for his faithfulness.

Use Psalm 105 as an opportunity for historical review. For example, make a miscellaneous list of key events that are recorded in this psalm and see if your students can put them in chronological order. Can they identify in which of the first six books of the Old Testament each event is found? Then show them from the psalm how these events all play a significant role in God’s faithfulness to his covenant promise to the patriarchs.

In your application, be sure to show your students that, by faith, we are all the children of Abraham and, therefore, promised a heavenly inheritance through Jesus (Heb. 11:16). Spend time at the end of class praising God for his faithfulness in prayer and perhaps in song (see Ps. 105:2). Use the memory verse. Also, remind your students that we have been made heirs of this promise so that we too will obey the LORD (105:45).

Home Assignment:

 Read Judges 2–4.

 Memorize Judges 21:25 ESV.

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