

**Psalm 118: 1, 2, 19-29 “To what tunes do you hum?”**

**“Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever. (2) Let Israel say: ‘His love endures forever.’**

**(19) Open for me the gates of righteousness; I will enter and give thanks to the LORD. (20) This is the gate of the LORD through which the righteous may enter. (21) I will give you thanks, for you answered me; you have become my salvation.**

**(22) The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone; (23) the LORD has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes.**

**(24) This is the day the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. (25) O LORD, save us; O LORD, grant us success.**

**(26) Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD. From the house of the LORD we bless you.**

**(27) The LORD is God, and he has made his light shine upon us. With boughs in hand,**

**join in the festal procession up to the horns of the altar.**

**(28) You are my God, and I will give you thanks; you are my God, and I will exalt you.**

**(29) Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.”**

**If you knew this psalm divulged secrets to finding joy, would you more likely keep reading?**

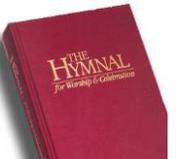
**Think about the *Old Testament* Book of Psalms as a 150 song hymnal.**

Some of those psalms (songs) shared the same melody.

- **For example, a notation in Psalm 75 states: “For the director of music. To the tune of ‘Do Not Destroy.’”**

Note the hymn entitled “Cleanse Me” (#420) in our hymnal.

New Zealand aborigines of Polynesian background known as Maoris developed the tune for this hymn.



- **I heard this tune in Oregon (1948), when Frank Sinatra’s pop song, “Now Is the Hour” became a hit.**



Four different song writers got credit for the lyrics, but the melody was this same old Maori farewell song.

**Most of our hymns originated in our grandparents’ and great-grandparents’ day.**

**We sometimes sing “Jesus, the Very Thought of Thee,” which music experts attribute to Bernard of Clair Vaux (France), 12th century AD.**

**Scholars ascribe a hymn entitled “Of the Father’s Love Begotten” to a 4th century AD dude, Aurelius C. Prudentius.**

I think he lived in Damascus, Syria.

**Despite how his name sounds, he did not establish the town of Aurelia, IA, and start The Prudential Insurance Co.**

We can trace “Shepherd of Tender Youth,” one of the oldest Christian hymns, to Clement of Alexandria (Egypt), who lived about 200 AD.

**Christian writers (e.g. the Gaithers), still produce some beautiful hymns, often basing them on old melodies.**

**The Psalms came from different eras, too.**

**Moses probably wrote Psalm 90 and 91 about 1400 years before Christ.**

David penned many psalms about 1000 BC. Many were written during the Babylonian Captivity and after (sixth century BC).

**We probably wouldn’t recognize the tunes or their style, yet we might prefer them over some of today’s music.**

**Psalm 118 gets attention for other reasons:**

- **Some think Jesus and the disciples sang Psalm 118 at the close of the Last Supper.**
- **Psalm 118 stands between the longest chapter and shortest chapters in the Bible.** Psalm 117’s two verses make it the shortest and Psalm 119’s 176 verses make the longest chapter in the Bible.

**Being noticed for that fact compares to getting attention because you sit between the skinniest and the fattest person in class.**

- **Psalm 118 comes to mind on Palm Sunday because it tells of a procession.**

**Norma and I drove in a long procession between Kingsley and Moville, IA last week.**

The family of a WW II veteran asked me to officiate at his funeral.

**The gentleman held membership in the American Legion for nearly 70 years and was a volunteer fireman for many years.**

**The American Legion Riders escorted the procession to the cemetery.**

A Kingsley fire truck came second.

They gave us the honor of following the huge fire engine.



People probably wondered how our not-so-clean 12 year-old Ford pickup got into that otherwise immaculate procession.

As Norma and I drove, we recalled some California funeral processions that gave more excitement than most Disneyland attractions.

**Imagine trying to stay in procession at 60 mph on Southern California freeways through interchanges and changing lanes?**

**In the Ps. 118 procession, most folks likely walked.**

**Suppose all of us gather some day at the Coop station on Highway 3.**

- We cut some trees branches.
- Carrying those branches, we walk north over the railroad tracks, to Jim’s Cycle Shop, where we turn east and walk to the building.
- We shout thanks to God.
- We tell how good God is.
- We proclaim that God’s love goes forever.

**We march up the front steps, through the front door, down the aisle, and past the communion table.**

- We keep thanking God and telling him what a beautiful day he has made.
  - This is only an illustration; I’m not advocating we do this.

**Would townspeople think we’d lost it?**

**Scholars do not agree on the occasion that led to the writing of Psalm 118.**

**It could have occurred in King David’s time around 1000 BC.**

**It possibly happened about 457 BC during the time of Ezra and Nehemiah.**

**Notice Psalm 118’s format.**

**Graduation processions will soon occur around the country.**

Formats often include:  
presentation of the class;  
speeches by class valedictorians;  
special acknowledgements;  
awarding of diplomas and then  
tossing mortarboards.



Yale University

**Their themes are: “Congrats to the Grads.”**

**What is Psalm 118’s agenda?**

**Psalm 118’s theme is:**

**“Give thanks to God for his goodness.”**

Graduation exercises often limit attendance to family members.

Psalm 118 invites the entire nation, worship leaders, and all who fear God.

**Verse 5 indicates a change to the first person; as if a soloist sings on behalf of every one else; (Jim) sings for all of us.**

**The solo’s first verse:**

**“In my distress I called to the Lord; he answered me and set me free.”**

**The solo continues through verse 21.**

In verse 19, the procession reaches the Temple.

A wall and gates block access to the Temple.

**Imagine a huge wall around your church building with massive security gates.**

**You’d like to enter so you can worship—so you can thank God.**

**You want to praise the Lord.**

**Security guards announce:**

**“You enter only if you are righteous.”**

**Verse 20 - “This is the gate of the Lord; only the righteous can come in.”**

**What would you say?**

**Would you answer, “I’m righteous. I deserve entrance!”?**



**Here’s a truth many people disregard.**

**We’ll stand before God the judge, who will say: “Why should I allow you into heaven?”**  
**When the Lord asks why he should allow you to enter heaven, how will you answer?**

Many will give the wrong answer and be turned away.

**No one gets a second chance.**

**“People are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment . . .”<sup>1</sup>**

**Will you say, “I’m a good person. I’m better than most”?**

**Recall these Scriptures from last week?**

- **Isaiah 64:6 “All our righteousness is like filthy rags” – literally menstrual rags.**
- **Or Ephesians 2:9 “not by works so that no one can boast”?**

**The Lord might well ask: “Did you read and heed these scriptures?”**

**In other words;**

**“I informed everyone that human works don’t cut it. For gaining heaven, all human effort amounts to zilch.”**

**We earlier noted the solo that started in verse five of our text and ended in verse 21.**

**The soloist sang for everyone else.**

**The solo’s last verses (20, 21), tells us how to answer the Lord’s entry question:**

**“This is the (only) gate of the LORD through which the righteous may enter. I will give you thanks, for you answered me; you have become my salvation.”**

**These verses provide our answer.**

**Are you thinking, “Nonsense, Bob, you’re talking in circles!”?**

**No, this verse contains a vital secret.**

English speaking people refer to the Savior, the Son of God, who is Jesus.

In English, we pronounce the Savior’s name as Jesus, but that’s not how Hebrew speaking folks: Mary, Joseph, Peter, James, and John, and his enemies, uttered his name.

**They pronounced it Yeshua.**

---

<sup>1</sup> Hebrews 9:27 NIV

**Remember what the angel said to Joseph when he told Joseph that Mary was pregnant by the Holy Spirit?**

The order: **“Give this baby the name Jesus.”**

**Why the name Jesus?**

**“Because he will save his people from their sins.”<sup>2</sup>**

**The angel spoke in Joseph’s language and would have said, “Yeshua.”**

In Hebrew, **“Yeshua”** means savior-salvation.

**“You are to give him the name “Yeshua,” because he will save his people from their sins.”**

**Yeshua = The Lord’s salvation.**

**The folks in the procession were questioned about their righteousness--their qualifications to enter the Temple:**

**The question was:**

**“How do you get through the gate?”**

**Our entrance into heaven depends on our ability to answer the same question:**

**“This is the gate of the LORD through which the righteous may enter. I will give you thanks, for you answered me; you have become my salvation.”**

Goodness and righteousness do not qualify us to enter the gate; we don’t earn either one.

**The last Hebrew word in Psalm 118:21 is “Yeshua”=Jesus=The Lord’ salvation.**

**Whether this Psalm was written 1000 years or 500 years before Jesus, its prediction stuns us, doesn’t it?**

**It foretold that (Yeshua) Jesus is the gate.**



Top left is ancient script Hebrew; top right, Aramaic; next line, center Jesus (Iasous) in Greek; bottom left, Latin.

**Would you like more amazing info?**

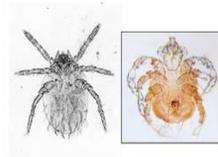
**Spring will soon bring green to the grasses.**

**With green grasses, come little biting bugs.**

**Some wag wrote:**

<sup>2</sup> Matthew 1:21

Here's to the chigger,  
The bug that's no bigger  
Than the point of an undersized pin;  
But the welt that he raises  
Sure itches like blazes,  
And that's where the rub comes in!



**Our “rub” is the stone the builders rejected.**

**Verse 22** refers to a stone the builders tossed.

Centuries before Jesus came, Psalm 118 revealed his name: Salvation-Yeshua-Jesus. Yet when Jesus-Yeshua, the Lord’s salvation appeared, not many accepted him.

**The majority rejected Jesus; many despised him**

You can imagine their complaints about Jesus.

**“He doesn’t look like or act like a savior!”**

**“He lacks gravitas!”**

**“Only hillbilly losers hang around him!”**

**So they tossed him, threw him out.**

Because Jesus didn’t look talk or act as they thought a messiah should, they crucified him.

**In truth, his enemies envied Jesus.**

**Let’s say that all church buildings in this area crumble.**

**The residents want to build a single church building for everyone.**

**They ask a contractor to build the new structure.**

**He tells them: For the building to last, it requires a good foundation.**

**The contractor suggests a really solid, proven foundation, but it has a drawback.**

**The leaders say,**

**“The foundation you propose isn’t attractive. We want to an imposing, impressive structure. We’ll use a builder who will give us what we want; a beautiful facade.”**

**So using a different contractor, they build a huge edifice with an inferior but more appealing foundation.**

**A powerful tornado hits shortly after.**

**The twister demolishes the beautiful building with great loss of life.**

Had the leaders used the first foundation, the building would have easily stood.

**That first contractor represents the Lord, who now tells us: “This present world will**

**not last. I have built something permanent on another plane of existence, in a different dimension. To enter it you must follow Jesus, My son, your Savior.**

That's what the next verse means:

**"The stone (the foundation stone) the builders rejected has become the capstone; the LORD has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes."**

**We short-lived beings process through life in this "temporary" Cosmos God created.**

- **We must stay thankful to God, stay focused on Christ, and act as he acted.**

**We come to the gates of eternity.**

- **If we've depended on Jesus, we go in.**
- **If we've rejected him, we can't enter.**

**On what foundation are you building?**

**Do your life-songs honor Jesus?**

**Do you hum tunes of thanksgiving and praise?**

**In Jesus, joyful processions last forever.**

**Are depending on him for righteousness?**

- **If not, there'll be a long wait at the gate.**



**"The LORD is God, and he has made his light shine upon us. With boughs in hand, join in the festal procession up to the horns of the altar. You are my God, and I will give you thanks; you are my God, and I will exalt you. Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever."**

Bob Blair  
PO Box 176  
Cleghorn, IA 51014

[www.robertblairbooks.com](http://www.robertblairbooks.com)