



IGNITED *BY THE WORD*

MUSIC: GOD'S GIFT

VOL 3 | ISSUE 4
April 2024

Ignited by the Word (ISSN 2769-7819) is published quarterly in January, April, July, and October by Reformed Free Publishing Association, 1894 Georgetown Center Drive, Jenison, MI 49428-7137. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Reformed Free Publishing Association, 1894 Georgetown Center Drive, Jenison, MI 49428-7137. Subscription rate is \$15.00 annually.

Ignited by the Word is prepared for publication by Carin Krestakos.

Postmaster

Send address changes to Ignited by the Word, 1894 Georgetown Center Drive, Jenison, MI 49428-7137.

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6TH – 8TH GRADE

- 6 **He Shall Purify**
The Musical Scale
By Emma Minderhoud
- 8 **Mining for Gems**
Singing the Hallel
By Mike Velthouse
- 10 **Bible Characters**
Bach's Coffee Cantata
By Mike Velthouse
- 12 **The Beauty of the Earth**
The Earth Shall Sing Thy Praises
By Kayla Kuiper
- 14 **Feature Article**
Instruments in the Bible
By Matt Elzinga
- 16 **Every Nation Under Heaven**
The History of the 1912 Psalter
By Prof. Doug Kuiper
- 18 **Heart Work**
Youth Submissions

3RD – 5TH GRADE

- 20 **He Shall Purify**
Songs of Degrees
By Lynnae Miedema
- 22 **Apples of Gold**
At the Sound of the Trumpet
By Steve Kuiper
- 24 **Here I Stand**
Song – A Weapon of War
By Gracia Schipper
- 26 **Heart Work**
Youth Submissions
- 28 **Reflections**
On a Life in Music
By Steve Kuiper

PK – 2ND GRADE

- 30 **He Shall Purify**
*Overflowing with Praise:
A Look at Psalm 148*
By Annica Kuiper
- 32 **The Lamplighters**
Messiah
By Steve Kuiper
- 34 **The Beauty of the Earth**
The Rocks Cry Out
By Lynnae Miedema
- 36 **Short Fiction Story**
The Recital
By Annica Kuiper
- 38 **Oil for my Lamp**
Paul and Silas' Praise
By Gwen Birkett
- 40 **Heart Work**
Youth Submissions

ACTIVITIES

- 41 **Spark Your Interest**
Activities for All Ages

MINING FOR GEMS

SINGING THE HALLEL

BY: MIKE VELTHOUSE

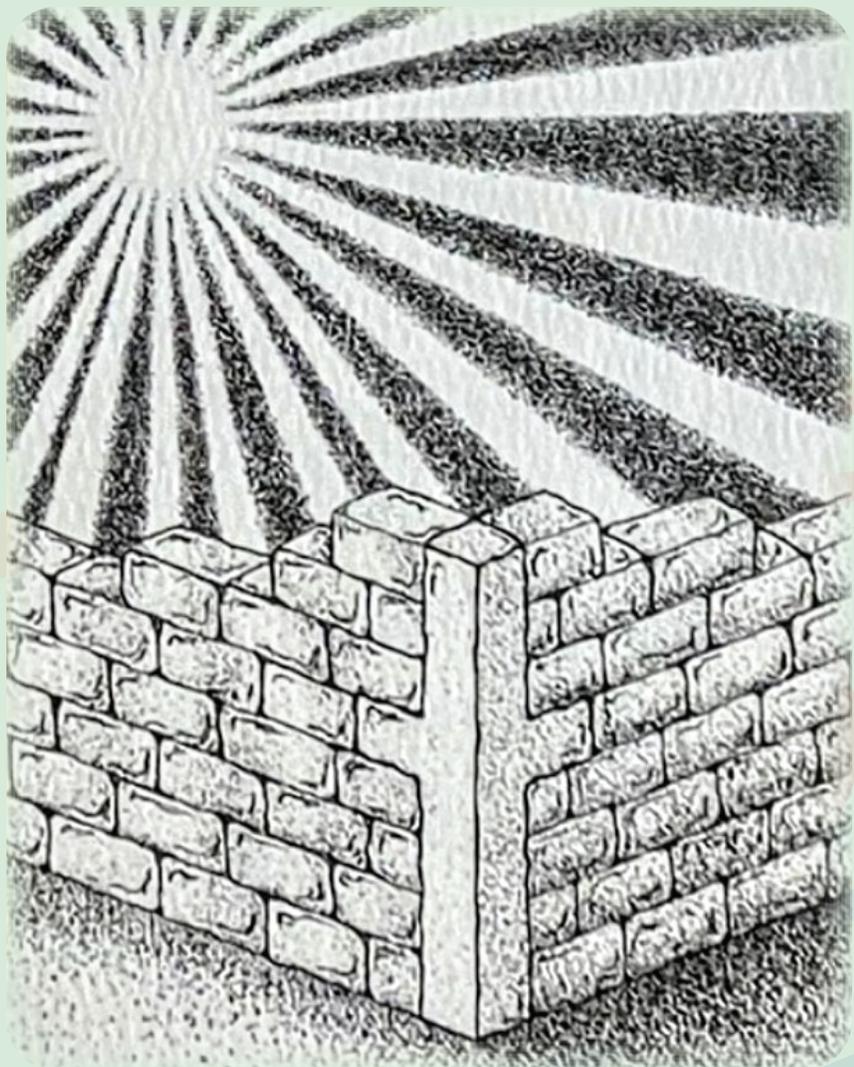
PSALMS 113-118: SINGING THE HALLEL

The early April night had given Jesus and his disciples a full, bright moon overhead as they walked together through the streets of Jerusalem. The moon and its companions, the countless stars, provided them with a guiding light, overtaking the darkness of the approaching midnight hour. What a night it had already been. Jesus and his twelve disciples had gathered in the upper room of a house to celebrate the Passover meal. But as the night progressed, events had taken place that confused the disciples and left them very troubled.

First, Jesus, the disciples' Master, much to their amazement, had acted as a servant and washed their feet. Then Jesus announced that one of the twelve disciples would betray him. Is it I? Is it I? Is it I, Lord? So confusing to the disciples. After Judas got up and left mysteriously, Jesus informed the disciples that he would be going away and they could not come with him. When Peter replied that he would follow Jesus anywhere, Jesus not only told Peter "No," but that Peter would deny Jesus three times before morning. How unsettling for the disciples!

Now Jesus and the remaining eleven disciples were on the move. As they left the upper room and began their journey of more than a mile through Jerusalem, out the city gate, meandering among the rocks, bushes,

and trees of the Kidron Valley to the garden of olive trees called Gethsemane, Jesus and his disciples did something you and I often do in our homes and on the Lord's Day. They sang hymns (Matt. 26:30). But not just any hymns. They sang Psalms 113-118, known as the Hallel Psalms. In Hebrew, Hallelu Yah means "praise the Lord" (you would spell it Hallelujah). Hallel Psalms were sung by the Old Testament Jews during Passover week and were



meant to be songs of praise and blessing to God for delivering them out of the bondage of Egypt and through the Red Sea. Read Psalms 113-118 and count how often the words "praise" and "bless" are used. Over 20 times!

Thursday now turned into very early on Friday. Think of all the events about to take place. As they walked with Jesus, the disciples had no idea what lay ahead. But Jesus knew every detail. As God, he ordained these things to occur from before the beginning of the world. In a few hours, Jesus would be arrested. The disciples would abandon Jesus and flee into the darkness of the night. Jesus would be illegally placed on trial where he would be beaten, slapped, and mocked. He would be made to bleed, he would be lied about, and finally condemned to death by crucifixion. With the help of Simon the Cyrene, Jesus would then carry his cross to the hill of Calvary, to be nailed to that cross and hang there to die in the sight of all who walked by.

Yet, Jesus and the disciples sang this song as they walked: "The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice

and be glad in it" (Psalm 118:22-24). This Passover song, sung by generation after generation of Jews, would shortly be fulfilled right before the disciples' eyes. Jesus, the rejected stone, rejected not only by the Jewish leaders and the Jewish people but also by his disciples, would become the cornerstone of their salvation. As evidence of their confusion, the disciples did not even know that they were singing about Jesus' sovereign control over all the events about to take place. "This is the Lord's doing." No wonder this is marvelous in our eyes! The disciples would spend the rest of their lives marveling over Jesus' sacrificial death and proclaiming all over the world that Jesus is the triumphant Savior.

Imagine Jesus singing this song also, knowing that in the next fifteen hours, he would suffer not only at the hands of the Jews and Romans but also under the wrath of God for the sins of his people. "This is the day that the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it!" That Friday became The Day. It's not just Good Friday. But one of the greatest days ever! Will you also rejoice and be glad because of this day? Will you sing "Hallelu Yah" with all your heart for the salvation Jesus accomplished for you?

PSALTER 318:3-4

THE STONE REJECTED AND DESPISED IS NOW THE CORNERSTONE:

HOW WONDROUS ARE THE WAYS OF GOD, UNFATHOMED AND UNKNOWN!

**IN THIS THE DAY THAT THOU HAST MADE
TRIUMPHANTLY WE SING:**

**SEND NOW PROSPERITY, O LORD.
O LORD, SALVATION BRING.**

THE EARTH SHALL SING THY PRAISES



When you think about music,
What enters your mind?
Instruments of brass,
Or maybe another kind.

Or do you think,
Of human voices
Joining in song,
Creating beautiful noises?

Have you gone to the Bible
To Psalm 104,
To read about birds singing songs
Their Maker to adore!

Have you read Song of Solomon,
Which tells of new spring,
When the turtledove sings
To give thanks to its King?

And have you read other Psalms
Like Psalm 96,
Where the sea meets the shore
Oh the psalmist depicts

Scenes in creation
Where wind rustles the grass,
And blows through the trees
Making music that lasts,

Which can be heard throughout earth,
These songs being raised,
Since Psalm 66 tells us
All earth joins in Thy praise.

So join the creation
With birds let song ring,
Praise to the One
Who made voices to sing.



HEART WORK

YOUTH SUBMISSIONS



ARTWORK BY: ALLISON KEY,
7TH GRADE, ADAMS CHRISTIAN

ALLISON
KEY 1-13-11

PRAISING GOD THROUGH MUSIC

Psalter 52 verse 2 says, For Thy Name's sake Thou dost guide me In the paths of righteousness; Though I walk the vale of shadows, Fears no more my soul oppress; Thou art with me, With Thy rod and staff to bless.

This is my favorite psalter number because it speaks about how God guides and protects us through everything. He will never guide us into sin. God will always guide us into righteousness, and even when we start falling into sin, he pulls us out and puts us back on the path he has chosen for us. Even when we are walking in "The vale of shadows" we will have no more fear because He is with us and protects us from wickedness. He is our shepherd and will guide us through all the troubles we face in this life.

BY: MELANIE WESTRA, 8TH GRADE, HERITAGE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

HE SHALL PURIFY

SONGS OF DEGREES

BY: LYNNAE MIEDEMA

Imagine that you are a child in ancient Jerusalem, and your family is making a trip to the temple to worship God. You walk out your door and see the golden shimmer of the temple on the ridges of Mount Moriah. As you begin to walk toward the temple, you think of Father Abraham who made a similar walk centuries ago to obey God's command to sacrifice his son Isaac. You remember how your father told you about Abraham and Isaac as you stood in front of your house when you were very little. How miraculous that God provided the ram as a substitute for Isaac!

Now you remember all of the lambs that have been offered in the temple. They remind you that your sins need to be washed away. You think of the promised Messiah, the Son of David, whom all the lambs are a picture of. You remember the great God who you go to worship at the temple; the God who has made all of these promises and given you all of these signs of the Savior.

So far you have been lost in your thoughts, but now you begin to hear something. It is quiet at first, but unmistakable. People are singing. "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills," they sing. As you get nearer to the group of people ahead, the singing gets louder. Your family starts to join the singing: "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord." This singing intensifies as more and more people join in, singing song after song until you get closer to the temple. "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"

When you stand within the outer gates, the final song is sung with the priests and all the people. "Behold, bless ye the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord, which by night stand in the house of the Lord. Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, and bless the Lord. The Lord that made heaven and earth bless thee out of Zion."

Children of God, the title "Song of Degrees" appears on top of Psalms 120-134 in your Bibles. Have you ever wondered what those words mean? The word "degrees" is sometimes translated as "ascent" or "going up." There are many ideas about what these songs were used for. Some say that these are the songs that people of God would sing as they went up to the temple at times of worship and for special feasts. Others suggest that perhaps the Levites sang these songs as they went about their work in the temple. Still others wonder if these songs may have been sung as the people of God returned with Nehemiah from captivity in Babylon. Perhaps these songs were sung at each of these occasions. How amazing that we can still sing these songs today with our families as a way to worship the God who never changes!

