

Psalm 118:19-21

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/ps/ps-118/psalm-11819-21/>

With this portion of scripture, the psalmist continues his poetic narrative with a triumphal parade of the righteous entering the LORD's gate. The lines of this song are prophetic of Jesus the Messiah's triumphal entrance into Jerusalem.

As mentioned throughout the commentary of Psalm 118, this psalm is the "Hosanna Hallel." The expression "Hosanna" is simultaneously a petition and a praise. As a petition it is a cry for help meaning "Save!" or "Deliver us!" As a praise it is a shout of joy meaning "Salvation!" or "Deliverance has come!"

Psalm 118 is the "Hosanna Hallel" for two reasons:

1. The twin sentiments of "Hosanna" are strongly felt throughout the psalm.
2. The crowds quote Psalm 118 when they shout "Hosanna" as Jesus the Messiah triumphantly enters Jerusalem (Psalm 118:26, Matthew 21:9).

In the previous two verses of this psalm, the psalmist, likely King David, publicly praised *the LORD* for restoring him from death to life, and depicts a joyful victory celebration in the battle tents of the righteous (Psalm 118:17-18). In this section, the psalmist now moves from the night after the victory which celebrated the LORD delivering him from his enemies, to a parade as he and his army triumphantly *enter through the gates of righteousness*:

Open to me the gates of righteousness; I shall enter through them, I shall give thanks to the LORD. This is the gate of the LORD; The righteous will enter through it (v 19-20).

Throughout the ancient world, triumphant kings would gloriously *enter* their city *gates* in a victory parade. For instance, in the city Rome, several victory arches still stand that were built to commemorate the successful campaigns of its generals and emperors.

Because cities in the ancient world were surrounded by walls to defend from invaders, *gates* were the only ways to *enter* or exit them. *Gates* were *open* for allies to *enter through*, but closed to enemies. The expression *the gate of the LORD* most likely refers to *the gate of Jerusalem, the LORD's city*. Because *the LORD is righteous*, they are also referred to as *the gates of righteousness*.

As a man after God's own heart (1 Samuel 13:14, Acts 13:22), David is an ally of *the LORD*. Therefore, *the gates of His city are open to him*.

The psalmist declares *I shall enter through them* and *I shall give thanks to the LORD*. The psalmist will *give thanks to the LORD* for what He has done for him (rescued him from death

(Psalm 118:17-18) and for allowing him to *enter the gates of His city*. This suggests the psalmist will offer sacrifice and worship inside the city. This sacrifice is described in Psalm 118:27.

The psalmist affirms that he is thanking God for rescuing him in the next verse:

I shall give thanks to You, for You have answered me, And You have become my salvation (v 21).

In a larger sense, these lines of praise are for anyone who has been declared *righteous* and was rescued from death to life by God, anyone who seeks to come to praise *the LORD* in His presence. *The gates* of God's city are always open for *the righteous* to *enter in through it* to praise and *give thanks to the LORD*.

A person is declared *righteous* when *the LORD* personally becomes their *salvation*.

Interestingly, the word that is translated as *salvation* in Hebrew is *יְשׁוּעָה* (H3444)—pronounced: “Yesh-oo'-aw”). It is the same root as “Yeshua,” the Hebrew name for Jesus the Messiah. Jesus is literally our *salvation* (Matthew 1:21).

A person is declared to be *righteous* when he receives the gift of *salvation*/Jesus by believing in Him as the Son of God (John 3:16, Romans 4:1-3).

[To learn more about the Gift of Eternal Life, see the Bible Says article: “What is Eternal Life? How to Gain the Gift of Eternal Life”.](#)

In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus the Messiah encouraged His followers to:

“Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.”
(Matthew 7:13-14)

There seems to be a special Messianic fulfillment of this prophecy. The lines *this is the gate of the LORD...And You have become my salvation* are seen in the life of Jesus as He triumphantly entered *the gate* of Jerusalem on “Palm Sunday” (Matthew 21:6-11).

The gates of righteousness is a metaphor for Jesus the Messiah. Christ made this clear when He said,

“I am the door [gate]; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.”
(John 10:9)

Jesus also said,

“I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through me.”
(John 14:6)

The psalmist goes on in verse 21 thanking God for answering his prayer. Our *LORD*, the author and subject of the Bible answers prayer. We see this time and again throughout the pages of scripture.

God heard the prayers of Israel in the past. He heard the prayer of the psalmist as reflected in this psalm. He heard the prayer of Jesus the Messiah in Gethsemane and on the cross in the ultimate fulfillment of this psalm. And He hears the prayers of His *righteous* children today. His children are *righteous* because of the imputed *righteousness* of the Lord Jesus Christ that is theirs by faith alone in His perfect atoning work and glorious resurrection.

Call on Jesus today for *salvation*. He will hear you, and *the LORD* will answer your prayers.

Biblical Text

¹⁹ Open to me the gates of righteousness;

I shall enter through them, I shall give thanks to the LORD.

²⁰ This is the gate of the LORD; The righteous will enter through it.

²¹ I shall give thanks to You, for You have answered me, And You have become my salvation.