

OUR STORY: THE EXODUS

Water from Rock, June 20, 2017, Tim Smith

Psalm 106

1. Psalm 106 completes Book Four of the Psalms.
2. The Psalms were organized by theme, language, and time of appearance into five books: Psalms 1-41, Book II: Psalms 41-72, Book III: Psalms 73-89, Book IV: Psalms 90-106, Book V: Psalms 107-150.
3. The final form of the text into these five books might be intended to link the whole of the Psalms to the five books of the Torah. The five books of Moses correlate to the five books of Moses.
4. The five books are easily recognizable because each book concludes with a climatic doxology (41:13; 72:18-19; 89:52; 106:48; 150:6).
5. “Book Four of the Psalter features two major characteristics. Moses and God. At this juncture in the story of the Psalter, the Israelites are in exile in Babylon; Jerusalem and the temple are destroyed; and the only hope of survival in these bewildering circumstances is for the people of God to go back --- to remember --- a time in their past when God not an earthly king, was sovereign over them. ...The exile in Babylon was a new wilderness, and the means of survival was to once again rely completely on Yahweh.” (Nancy L. DeClaisse-Walford *Introduction to the Psalms: A Song from Ancient Israel*)

Overview of Psalm 106 (from Tremper Longman, David E. Garland, *Psalms*)

- A. Invocation to Praise (vv. 1-2)
 - B. Prayer for God’s Salvation (vv. 3-5)
 - C. Acts of God’s Love: Salvation (vv. 6-12)
 - D. History of Israel’s Unbelief and God’s Judgment (vv. 13-43)
 - C. Acts of God’s Love: Restraint (vv. 44-46)
 - B. Prayer for God’s Salvation (v. 47)
 - A. Invocation to Praise (v. 48)

NOTES ON PSALM 106

1. Psalm 106 works from analogy. The psalmist reads Israel's history as analogous to the contemporary situation leading people to deep repentance and prayerful hope.
2. The psalmist wants people to know that God's steadfast love (hesed) endures forever. The present generation can therefore continue to pray the petition of verse 47 that God save His people so they can offer praise to the One whose steadfast love endures forever.
3. "Israel remembers its past: in this particular account, that past is not a good memory. It is a story of unmitigated distrust and disobedience on the part of Israel." (*Texts for Preaching: Year A*, ed., Walter Brueggemann, Charles Cousar)
4. Time and again the pattern is repeated in the history of God's people. God delivers His people, and for a short while they are thankful. Then they do not remember and their failure to remember leads them into sin and despair. Although they do not remember God remembers! God remembers the covenant and acts according to His steadfast love.
5. Confident of Yahweh's steadfast love, the psalmist invite repentance by reciting eight instances of Israel's history of sin, judgment, and forgiveness:
 - Rebellion at the Red Sea (106:7-12; see Ex 14–15)
 - Craving for meat in the desert (106:13–15; see Nm 11)
 - Challenge to Moses' authority (106:16–18; see Nm 16)
 - Golden calf episode (106:19–23; see Ex 32–34)
 - Refusal to enter the Promised Land (106:24–27; see Nm 13–14 and Dt 1–2)
 - Rebellion at Baal-Peor (106:28–31; see Nm 25:1–10)
 - Anger of Moses (106:32–33; see Nm 20:1–13)
 - Mingling with the nations (106:34–47)
6. "For all its exposure of man's ingratitude, this is a song of praise, for it is God's extraordinary long-suffering that emerges as the real theme. This is the basis of the final prayer (verse 47), and this gives reality to the doxology that closes not only the psalm but the fourth book of the Psalter." (Derek Kidner, *Psalms 73-150*)