

THE
DISCIPLESHIP
PLACE



Book of Psalms

CHURCH OF  THE NAZARENE

CLT Bible Study

BOOK OF PSALMS

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SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

Welcome to the Continuing Lay Ministries series of Bible studies. You are engaged in a study venture that will be both helpful and enjoyable. Here are a few suggestions that will make this Bible study the most beneficial to you.

1. Since this is a Bible study, have your Bible near you at all times. This study outline is only designed to help you read the Bible.
2. The Bible version used for this study is the New International Version (NIV). The editor primarily used the language of the NIV to prepare the lessons. You may use other versions of the Bible if you choose. While the language may be different, the meaning will be the same.
3. Before you begin each section, read the entire Scripture passage. This is very important. The study outline will help you understand the particular Bible verses, but it does not tell what they say.
4. **IMPORTANT:** Note that scriptures from the Book of Psalms may not have the book's name. In sections referring specifically to the Book of Psalms, if the Bible reference is (1:4-6), you will find these verses (4-6) in the first Psalm. Whereas other books of the Bible will include the name in the reference, for example, Isaiah 53:1 and John 17:1.
5. Go through the study outline carefully. Take time to look up all the Scripture verses in the outline.
6. You may want to mark your study Bible as you go. Marking your Bible will help the words become more and more your own. It will be well if you have colored pencils at hand to mark the Bible as you go along. A simple system is to mark promises in blue and warnings in red. But, however you do it, mark your Bible and it will become more and more your very own.
7. Finally, read the Bible passage again to better understand its meaning. Perhaps you may benefit from listening to the reading of the Book of Psalms.
8. The editor has also included how to pronounce some of the more difficult proper names and other important words. The first time the word is introduced, the pronunciation will follow the word. At the end of each chapter, you will find a list of the words in the order in which they were introduced. Additionally, at the end of the document, all of the words and pronunciations will be listed alphabetically. For pronunciation of additional terms and their definitions, please refer to *A Dictionary of the Bible & Christian Doctrine in Everyday English* (Eby et al., 2004).

If a family or a few friends decide to take this study together, here are two suggestions.

1. Have one person read the Bible passage and another person read the Continuing Lay Training outline.
2. Then discuss the Scripture and outline. Ask questions of each other to help clarify the meaning of the Scripture.

OUTLINE

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction to the Book of Psalms



NOTES

The Book of Psalms [SAAMZ] is the hymnbook of the Bible. The English word “psalms” comes from a Greek term, *Psalmoi* [PSAL-moi], and means “songs” or “sacred songs.” The original Hebrew title of the book, *Tehillim* [te-HEE-leem], means “praises” or “songs of praise.”

There are 150 pieces in the hymnbook of the Bible. Each is a separate composition, and with very few exceptions, each is complete in itself. While the psalms are full of truth, there is no thread of narrative or argument running through them. We find it difficult to outline the book, just as it would be difficult to outline the hymnbook we use at church unless the hymns were arranged according to type or subject matter.

Psalms is the best-known and most loved of all Old Testament books. It has made a deep impression on the New Testament, and was the hymn book of the early Christian Church as well as of the Jewish synagogue. One-third of all quotations from the Old Testament, which we find in the New Testament, are taken from the Book of Psalms. There is a good reason why, so often, the psalms are printed and bound in one cover with the books of the New Testament.

The psalms yield their beauty and inspiration even to the casual reader. Yet there is a hidden treasure in them to be found only by the one who studies them with understanding and care. This study is designed to help you appreciate more and understand better this priceless portion of the Word of God.

A. THE STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

While each of the psalms was independently composed, they were early gathered into what has come down to us as five “books” or divisions. Although not shown in some of the English versions, these divisions are found in the original Hebrew texts and are indicated in most of the modern translations.

To some extent, these “books” represent early collections, although there is some overlapping. Our present Book of Psalms gives evidence that it is a collection of collections. This is shown by such a comment as is found in 72:20, “The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended,” and by the nature and groupings of the titles at which we shall look later.



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Book 1 includes Psalms 1 - 41. With the exception of Psalms 1, 2, 10, and 33, these are credited to David in their titles. Book 1 was probably the oldest of the sub-collections, which now make up the entire book.

Book 2 includes Psalms 42 - 72. Seven of these (42; 44 - 49) are inscribed, "For the sons of Korah [KOHR-ah]," in their titles. One is identified with Asaph [AY-saf] (50). Eighteen are credited to David, one to Solomon (72), and four (43, 66, 67, 71) are without titles. That Book 2, or portions of it, originally circulated independently of Book 1 seems sure from the repetition of Psalm 14 in Psalm 53 and part of Psalm 40 in Psalm 70. Also, the term "God" is most often used as the name for Deity rather than "the Lord," which is a feature also of the "Asaph" psalms (73 - 83) in Book 3.

Book 3 is made up of Psalms 73 - 89. As we have noted above, Psalms 73 - 83 are credited to Asaph, who was David's choirmaster (1 Chronicles 16: 4-7). The remaining psalms of the third book bear titles relating them to "the sons of Korah" (84, 85, 87, and perhaps 88), David (86), Heman [HEH-man] (88), and Ethan the Ezrahite [ES-ra-high] (89) - the latter two known from 1 Kings 4:31 as men of outstanding wisdom.

Book 4 includes Psalms 90 - 106. Most of these psalms are without titles, although Psalm 90 is associated with the name of Moses, 101 and 103 with David. Psalms 90 - 99 are a group of 10 Sabbath psalms, and Psalm 100 is the traditional psalm for the weekday.

Book 5. The remainder of the psalms comprise Book 5. Here we have two small groups attributed to David (108 - 10, 138 - 45), as well as two single psalms (112, 133). Psalms 113 - 18 are known as the Egyptian Hallel [HAL-el]. A "Hallel" is a song of praise - "Praise the Lord" being *Hallelu-Yah* (Hallelujah!) in the original Hebrew. Psalms 120 - 134 are known as "songs of degrees" or "ascents" and are pilgrim songs commemorating the return from exile and used by the devout on their annual pilgrimages to Jerusalem. Psalms 146 - 150 are known as the "Great Hallel". Each of the five begins and ends with the Hebrew *Hallelu-Yah*.

B. THE TITLES

We have already mentioned the titles found in connection with many of the psalms. These are the notes often printed in smaller type before the first verse. In all, about two-thirds of the psalms have titles. While not part of the original text,



they are very ancient.

In general, there are five kinds of titles. Most of them relate either to authorship or dedication. Seventy-three contain the name of David. Other titles refer to the kind of poem, such as psalm, song, prayer, praise, *maschil* [mas-KEL], *michtam* [MIK-tam], or *shiggaion* [shi-GEYE-uhn]. Still, others are connected with the musical setting or performance of the psalms - such as “to the chief musician”; “on *Neginoth*” [neh-GIN-ath]; “upon *Nehiloth*” NEE-uh-loth], “*Alamoth*” [AL-uh-moth], or “*Sheminith*” [SHEH-min-ith] (probably the names of musical instruments); and set to *Muthlabben* [muth-LAH-ben], *Aijeleth* [EYE-juh-leth] *Shahar* [SHA-har], etc. (representing tunes). Some titles refer to the use of the psalms in worship - for example, dedication (30), for the Sabbath (92), and the “songs of ascents” (120 - 134). A final sort of title refers to the occasion on which the psalm was composed. These are found chiefly in connection with psalms credited to David (for example, 3, 7, 18, and 34).

C. TYPES OF PSALMS

Even a casual reading shows that not all psalms are alike in form or type. There is great variety within the Psalter [SAAL-tur]. There are many psalms of adoration, worship, praise, and thanksgiving. But there are also almost as many songs of lament, distress, and sorrow. There are teaching psalms expressing the wisdom of the good life. There are kingly psalms and psalms that find their fulfillment in the Messiah.

There are songs of penitence and sorrow for sin. There are psalms used for public worship. Psalms of anger, invoking the direct punishments on evildoers and persecutors, are called “imprecatory [im-pri-KAY-tuh-ree] psalms” (35; 58; 69; 83; 109; 137). While some have found it difficult to reconcile these psalms with the prayer of Jesus for the forgiveness of his enemies and his teaching that we should love our enemies, we should remember that judgment is a part of the total biblical faith, and evil people do reap the consequences of their deeds. The psalmists’ words do not necessarily reflect personal spite or cruelty. Their enemies were also God’s enemies, and a zeal for God’s righteous cause rather than a desire for personal revenge lies behind these imprecatory psalms.

Finally, in Hebrew grammar it is very difficult to tell the difference between the forms “Let this happen” and “This *will* happen.” That is, we cannot be sure the psalmists did not mean their bitter words as predictions of what must inevitably come to the godless rather than as expressing the desire that it should come.



NOTES

Psalms [SAAMZ]
Psalmoi [PSAL-moi]
Tehillim [te-HEE-leem]
Korah [KOHR-ah]
Asaph [AY-saf]
Ezrahite [ES-ra-hight]
Heman [HEH-man]
Hallel [HAL-el]
maschil [mas-KEL]
michtam [MIK-tam]
shiggaion [shi-GEYE-uhn]
Neginoth [neh-GIN-ath]
Nehiloth [NEE-uh-loth]
Alamoth [AL-uh-moth]
Sheminith [SHEH-min-ith]
Muthlabben [muth-LAH-ben]
Aijeleth [EYE-juh-leth]
Shahar [SHA-har]
Psalter [SAAL-tur]
imprecatory [im-pri-KAY-tuh-ree]

CHAPTER 2

Book 1: Psalms of David (1:1 - 41:13)



NOTES

PSALM 1: A STUDY IN CONTRASTS

The first psalm is, in a sense, a prelude to the entire collection. It is a perfect little gem of wisdom. It vividly contrasts the two great ways of life, the righteous and the wicked.

The godly person is blessed both in what one does not do and in what one does. One does not walk in the counsel of the ungodly or stand in the way of sinners, nor does one sit - as if at home - with the scornful who make a mockery of the ways of God. As a result, one is established in one's ways and prospers in one's efforts.

On the other hand, the sinner is blown away like the worthless chaff beaten from the wheat and carried off by the wind. Such a person is, therefore, excluded from the true community of faith. The Lord cares for the righteous, but the ungodly shall perish.

PSALM 2: PEOPLE'S SINFUL REBELLION AGAINST THE LORD

The second psalm is what is known as a Messianic [mes-ee-AN-ik] psalm. That is, its final fulfillment is found in Christ, the Messiah. All people in rebellion against the Lord are urged to repentance and promised blessing if they put their trust in him.

The psalm has four stanzas. The first (2:1-3) deals with the rebellion of the nations against the Lord God and his anointed One, the Messiah, or Christ. The second (2:4-6) shows the response of the Lord, holding in derision and scorn those who revolt against him. The third (2:7-9) is the reassurance given to the One designated to be King of Kings. His cause will surely triumph. The fourth stanza (2:10-12) is a call for repentance on the part of the rebels. Those who serve the Lord and trust him are truly happy.

PSALM 3: A MORNING PRAYER OF TRUST

Psalm 3 is closely related to the song that follows. It is a morning prayer, as Psalm 4 is a prayer for evening. The Psalmist cries out in his distress (3:1-2). *Selah* [suh-LAA] (3:2) is apparently a musical sign, calling for an interlude in which



instruments would play. For us, it means to pause and meditate.

David also expresses his desire that the Lord will hear his cry (3:3-4). In the face of danger, he expresses his faith in deliverance from the Lord (3:5-6) and closes with a note of confidence that God will give him the blessing of salvation (3:7-8).

PSALM 4: AN EVENING PRAYER

As Psalm 3 is a morning prayer, Psalm 4 is a prayer for the evening hour. *Neginoth* in the title means “stringed instruments” and indicates the musical accompaniment.

While there is distress in the psalm, like so many others, it ends with a note of victory. In his time of trial, the Psalmist calls on God and expresses his confidence that the Lord will hear (4:1-4). His trust is in God alone, and his triumph is sure. The gladness of the Lord is greater than the prosperity of the wicked, and David goes to his rest in quiet confidence in God’s watchful care.

PSALM 5: PRAYER FOR THE MORNING SACRIFICE

Verse 3 shows us that Psalm 5 is a morning prayer, and verse 7 connects it with the worship at the Temple. *Nehiloth* in the title means “wind instruments”. The psalm has four stanzas.

Stanza one is the Psalmist’s appeal to the Lord for a hearing (5:1-3).

Verses 4-7 express the confidence that God will not tolerate the wicked.

The third stanza describes the unfaithfulness of the Psalmist’s enemies (5:8-10).

Verse 6 says the LORD destroys “those who tell lies.” The closing verses (11-12) voice David’s confidence in the Lord’s vindication of his cause.

PSALM 6: A PRAYER FOR DELIVERANCE

Psalm 6 is one of the seven psalms known as “penitential [peh-nuh-TEN-shul] psalms,” expressing repentance and sorrow for sin. The immediate occasion for this prayer seems to have been a prolonged and dangerous illness.

Upon Sheminith in the title means “the eighth” or an octave. It is a musical notation the meaning of which is not now clear. The psalm has three sections.



Verses 1-5 present the Psalmist's painful illness.

The second section continues his description of suffering and grief (6:6-7).

The final three verses sound like a note of confident trust.

PSALM 7: A CRY FOR HELP

Psalm 7 is a song of lament and is associated with David's flight from King Saul.

Shiggaion in the title possibly means "a song with intense feeling." Nothing is known about *Cush, the Benjamite* named in the title, although he may have been one of Saul's close associates who had brought false charges against David. After a brief invocation (7:1-2), the Psalmist protests his innocence of any wrongdoing (7:3-10). The last seven verses are more general and deal with God's wrath against the iniquity of David's foes.

PSALM 8: THE PARADOX OF MAN BEFORE GOD

This is a perfect gem of adoration, praise, and worship. It is full of the sense of one's humble estate while at the same time being the most highly honored creature in God's world. It has been called "Genesis 1 set to music". *Gittith* [Gittith] in the title is another word whose meaning is uncertain, but it may indicate a melody to be used with the words. The psalm begins and ends with the same words: "O LORD our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!" Verses 1-2 exalt the majesty of God, and verses 3-9 set forth the measure of mankind.

PSALM 9: THANKSGIVING AND TRUST

Psalms 9 and 10 are generally thought to have been a single composition originally and are so written in some of the ancient versions of the Bible. But Psalm 9 glories in the sovereignty of God, particularly in relation to the heathen enemies of the nation, while Psalm 10 deals with infidelity and wickedness within the nation itself.

Muth-labben in the title is probably the name of a familiar tune to which the song could be sung.

In the face of the present threat, the Psalmist thanks God for past deliverances (9:1-6). He expresses his confidence in the sovereignty and justice of God (9:7-12). A personal plea is entered in verses 13-14, and the wickedness and



destruction of the heathen are contrasted with the hope and prospect of the righteous (9:15-18). There is a closing summary prayer (9:19-20).

PSALM 10: PRAYER FOR THE DEFEAT OF THE WICKED

As with so many others, this psalm opens in the complaint and closes in confidence. The author vividly describes the character and conduct of the wicked and cries for divine deliverance from them. God seems to be far off (10:1-2) while the wicked practice their evil ways (10:3-11). In the face of such danger, the righteous can only cry out to God (10:12-15). But, it is not a vain cry, for the psalm closes with an expression of confidence and faith in the ultimate triumph of righteousness (10:16-18).

PSALM 11: THE COURAGE OF FAITH

This short psalm has two stanzas.

Stanza one expresses the writer's faith in the face of treachery (11:1-3).

The second and longer stanza (11:4-7) tells of the trial and triumph of the trusting heart. While the wicked are destined for destruction, the righteous Lord loves righteousness. The last sentence says, "Upright men will see his face," one of the glimpses of immortality given in the Psalms.

PSALM 12: GOD'S HELP IN AN UNGODLY WORLD

This is what would be known as a "wisdom psalm" because of its sharp contrast of the righteous with the wicked and the high estimate it places on "the words of the Lord." The cry for divine help (12:1-2), the condemnation of evil (12:3-5), and confidence in God's keeping power (12:5-7) express faith that looks beyond circumstances to a heavenly Helper.

PSALM 13: FEARFUL BUT NOT FORSAKEN

This psalm of lament passes through the familiar stages of despair, desire, and deliverance. It may have come from the period in David's life when he was a hunted fugitive from King Saul.

In verses 2 and 4, one enemy stands out above all others as both powerful and



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relentless. But, the psalm reflects the dark night of the soul through which many of God's people pass. It ends in a beautiful expression of faith (13:5-6).

PSALM 14: THE BITTER FRUIT OF GODLESSNESS

Psalm 14 is repeated as Psalm 53, with the exception that Psalm 53 uses the term "God" instead of "the Lord" as here. In the title of 53, *Maschil* means a teaching psalm, and *Mahalath* [MAY-ha-lath] refers to the tune. The poem is composed of two stanzas of three verses each and a closing stanza of one verse.

It describes the folly (14:1-3) and fear (14:4-6) of the godless and the faith (14:7) of the truehearted.

PSALM 15: THE LIFE OF HOLINESS

This psalm is the first of several connected with public worship. It describes both positively and negatively the characteristics of the one who abides in the Lord's tabernacle and dwells in his holy hill.

The positives of holy living (15:1-2) are abiding or dwelling in the Lord's presence, walking uprightly before him, working righteousness, and speaking the truth.

The negatives (15:3-5) are no backbiting, no evildoing, no slander, no condoning of sin, no changing one's word, no charging exorbitant interest, no bribery, and no indecisiveness.

PSALM 16: THE GOODLY HERITAGE OF THE GODLY

Psalm 16 is another Messianic psalm (see Acts 2:25-28, 31; 13:35 in relation to verse 10). Its joyous faith and expression of praise are typical of the Savior.

Michtam in the title probably means a poem of unusual beauty, for such it is. The psalm opens with prayer (16:1-4) and continues with praise (16:5-8). The prospect is not limited to this earth (16:9-11) but has the assurance of "fulness of joy" and "pleasures for evermore" at God's right hand. Here or hereafter, no real harm can befall the one who puts one's trust in the Lord and who walks with him.



PSALM 17: AN URGENT PRAYER FOR PROTECTION

Some occasions of unusual peril confronted the Psalmist. It is suggested that David's flight from Saul in the wilderness of Maon (1 Samuel 23:25-26) may have been the time. David appeals for vindication and justice in view of the threats made against his life (17:1-5). He expresses his confidence in the Lord and spells out in detail the dangers that beset him (17:6-12). The prayer takes on a tone of confident hope and ends in a triumphant conclusion (17:13-15). Here, again, is a glimpse of the eternal life that is to be.

PSALM 18: A SONG OF VICTORY

This psalm is virtually identical to 2 Samuel 22, where the historian presents it as an illustration of the best in David's psalm-writing. It is almost pure praise. The long struggles are ended. The flight from Saul's vengeance is past. The psalm breathes an atmosphere of impromptu praise. There is no tight-knit structure. One thought leads to another, alternating between direct address to God and joyous exclamations over his power and mercy.

PSALM 19: GOD'S WORKS AND GOD'S WORD

The two divisions of this magnificent song magnify the glory of God's works (19:1-6) and the glory of God's Word (19:7-14). God's Word is perfect, sure, right, pure, clean, true, righteous, and of infinite value. The prayer of verses 12-14 is a prayer for cleansing from the secret or hidden sin of the heart.

PSALM 20: PRAYER FOR VICTORY

Perhaps on the eve of battle, Psalm 20 breathes an atmosphere of confidence and trust. When sacrifices and prayer have been offered (20:1-5), the king responds with an affirmation of faith in the victory the Lord will give (20:6-9). Not chariots and horses, but the name of the Lord is the strength of his people.

PSALM 21: PRAISE FOR VICTORY

This psalm carries the same title as the one preceding and celebrates the victory anticipated in Psalm 20. God has been good to his people (21:1-7), and his wrath will be unleashed against his enemies (21:8-12). The concluding prayer (21:13)



exalts God in his strength and rejoices in his power.

PSALM 22: SUFFERING AND SONG

This psalm will forever be loved by Christians for the fact that its opening words were uttered by Christ on the Cross (Matthew 27: 46; Mark 15:34). It is the first of three that have been respectively titled “The Savior,” “The Shepherd” and “The Sovereign”; or the *Cross*, the *Crook*, and the *Crown*.

The first part of Psalm 22 (verses 1-21) centers around the theme of suffering. The second (22:22-31) breaks forth into a song of the joy of deliverance. *Aijelet* *Shahar* in the title means “The Doe of the Dawn,” and was probably the name of a melody to which the song was to be sung.

PSALM 23: SHEPHERD AND HOST

Only the “Lord’s Prayer” is better known than this “Shepherd Psalm”. While it may all be interpreted as the song of a shepherd and his sheep, it is more natural to view it as having two settings. The first four verses view the Lord as a Shepherd. The last two speak of him as the Host. Outdoors or indoors, the Lord cares and provides for his own.

PSALM 24: WORSHIPPING THE KING OF GLORY

This is a song for the sanctuary. The first six verses speak of the character of true worship: the One worshiped (24:1-2), and the clean hands, pure hearts, and holy lives required of those who worship (24:3-6). The King of Glory comes to his house and receives the adoration of his people (24:7-10).

PSALM 25: SONG OF PRAYER AND PRAISE

In the original Hebrew, each verse of this psalm begins with a successive letter of the alphabet. It is, therefore, known as an “acrostic” psalm. There are three stanzas. The first (25:1-7) is a prayer; the second (25:8-15) proceeds to praise and contemplation of the goodness of God; and the third returns again to renewed petition (25:16-22).



PSALM 26: PROFESSION AND PRAYER

The psalm is a protestation of innocence on the part of one accused (26:1-7) and a prayer for intervention on the part of the Lord as Judge (26:8-12). While the Psalmist affirms his righteousness, he is quite free from the smug satisfaction of the Pharisee. He glories in the Lord as the Source of his integrity.

PSALM 27: SUNSHINE AND SHADOW

Psalm 27 is composed of two contrasting parts expressing very different moods. The first part (27:1-6) is almost pure praise, opening with the familiar lines, "The Lord is my light and my salvation." The second part (27:7-14) is an urgent prayer for deliverance from lying tongues. This is the proper order: praise God, then pray for added blessings.

PSALM 28: TROUBLE AND THANKSGIVING

This is another song of lamentation. It may have had its occasion in David's flight from Absalom's army (2 Samuel 15:1). In this psalm, the order of prayer and praise is reversed from that found in Psalm 27. Here, prayer (28:1-5) precedes praise (28:6-9).

PSALM 29: A PSALM FOR PENTECOST

This song of adoration for the Lord is used in the synagogue on the Day of Pentecost. It speaks of the wind, the fire, and the voice of the Lord as in Acts 2:1-4. Beginning with a call to worship (29:1-2), the Psalmist speaks of the coming of the Lord as in a great storm (29:3-9) and the concluding peace after the tempest (29:10-11). It begins with "glory to God in the highest" and ends with "peace on earth."

PSALM 30: THANKSGIVING FOR GOD'S HEALING TOUCH

Psalm 30 is a fervent expression of praise to God for deliverance from death, perhaps in a very severe illness. The Psalmist vividly speaks of his restoration from the brink of the grave (30:1-3) and calls on all to glorify God for his divine touch (30:4-6). He moves from the thought of his despairing prayer (30:7-9) to



his joy in the answer given (30:10-12).

PSALM 31: TESTED YET TRUSTING

This has been described as a “great song of trust struggling through tears to triumph” as in “the seasons of the soul”:

Autumn, “with its winds and gathering clouds, yet having sunlight and a golden fruitage,” is represented in 31:1-8.

Winter, “chilly and lifeless, full of sobs and sighing,” is pictured in 31:9-13.

Spring, “with its hope and expectation and its sweeping rains and bursting sun gleams,” is found in 31:14-18.

Summer, “glad and golden,” is found in 31:19-24.

We need them all – not just to complete our calendar years.

PSALM 32: THE JOY OF SINS FORGIVEN

This is the second of the seven “penitential” psalms (see Psalm 6). The term *Maschil* in the title probably means “to instruct” and would identify what we might call a “teaching psalm.” Its theme is the joy of the forgiven heart, reflecting covering (32:1-2), conviction (32:3-4), confession (32:5), confidence (32:6-7), and counsel (32:8-11).

PSALM 33: PRAISE FOR GOD’S GREAT ACTS

This hymn of praise and adoration stresses the sovereign power of God’s words and his works. It is a fitting answer to the call of joyous praise found in the last verse of the preceding psalm and echoed in the opening verses of this one. God is praised for his great works in creation (33:1-9), in history (33:10-17), and in redemption (33:18-22).

PSALM 34: A PSALM OF DELIVERANCE

Psalms 34 is universally loved and is one of the most beautiful in the Psalter. It is properly a song of deliverance from fear, danger, trouble, and affliction (34:4, 7, 17, 19). The title gives 1 Samuel 21:10-13 as a setting, perhaps an illustration of



the kind of deliverance in mind here. Like Psalm 25, this is an acrostic poem with each successive verse beginning with a different letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

PSALM 35: PRAYER IN PERSONAL PERIL

This is the first of the “imprecatory” psalms (see the introduction - Psalms of anger, invoking the direct punishments on evildoers and persecutors). While the note of wrath and judgment is particularly strong in 35:3-8, 25-26, yet the major emphasis is on the Psalmist’s lament in his trouble and his strong cry for divine help. Each of the major divisions of the psalm (1-10, 11-18, 19-28) ends with a vow of thanksgiving.

PSALM 36: WICKEDNESS AND WISDOM

Psalm 36, one of the “wisdom” psalms, contrasts the two ways of life - the way of wickedness and the way of wisdom or righteousness. Its three divisions are the corruption of the godless (36:1-4), the character of God (36:5-9), and a prayer for the continuance of divine grace (36:10-12).

PSALM 37: THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE WICKED

This psalm is one of three (see 49; 73) that deal with the ever-perplexing problem of the prosperity of the wicked and the oppression of the righteous. The solution here is found in the fact that the prosperity of the wicked is but temporary. The key to the entire psalm is the opening phrase, “Do not fret.” The stark contrast between the present attitudes and the future destinies of the righteous and the wicked runs all through the poem.

PSALM 38: THE PRAYER OF THE PENITENT

This is another “penitential” psalm (see 6; 32). Sick in soul and body, the Psalmist feels punished for his own sin (38:1-8) and forsaken by his friends (38:9-14). At the end of himself, he pleads for salvation from the Lord (38:15-22).

PSALM 39: ANOTHER PENITENTIAL PRAYER

Although not considered one of the penitential psalms, Psalm 39 is a proper



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sequel to Psalm 38. *Jeduthun*, mentioned in the title, is named with Heman and Asaph as one of the directors of the Temple music (1 Chronicles 16:41; 25:1). Silence and speech (39:1-5) are followed by surrender (39:6-11). The poem closes with strong supplication (39:12-13) that God will hear his servant's prayer and be moved by his tears.

PSALM 40: THE NATURE OF TRUE WORSHIP

Psalm 40 may be a combination of two pieces since verses 13-17 are practically identical to Psalm 70. Verses 6-8 of this psalm are referred to Christ in Hebrews 10:5-9. The psalm is often used in Good Friday services. Its three divisions may be called Song (40:1-5), Submission (40:6-12), and Supplication (40:13-17).

PSALM 41: BENEVOLENCE AND BETRAYAL

This is a song of lamentation, but it actually deals with a number of subjects, such as the value of charity, penitence for sin, oppression from enemies, betrayal by friends, and a prayer for healing. Compassion (41:1-3), Contrast (41:4-9), plus Cry and Confidence (41:10-12) make up its three divisions. Verse 13 is a doxology marking the close of Book 1 of the Psalter.

Messianic [mes-ee-AN-ik]
Selah [suh-LAA]
penitential [peh-nuh-TEN-shul]
Gittith [GI-tith]
Mahalath [MAY-ha-lath]

CHAPTER 3

Book 2: Psalms of the Temple (42:1 - 72:20)



NOTES

PSALMS 42-43: THE DEEP LONGINGS OF THE SOUL

There is virtually unanimous agreement among Bible scholars that Psalms 42 and 43 were originally one. Several Hebrew manuscripts combine them, and the same refrain is found throughout (42:5, 11, and 43:5). These are the first of the psalms credited in their titles to “the sons of Korah” (see the introduction). The combined psalm is a *Maschil* (see Psalm 32). Three divisions mark this combined psalm, each closing with the same refrain: Separation (42:1-5), Condemnation (42:6-11), and Restoration (43:1-5).

PSALM 44: FAITH AND FACT

This psalm has been called the lamentation of one caught “between his theology and the facts of life.” It may well be the reaction of a man innocent of personal sin who suffers with those who are guilty. The psalm is divided into five sections: The Past (44:1-3), The Present (44:4-8), The Problem (44:9-14), The Persecutors (44:15-21), and The Petition (44:22-26).

PSALM 45: THE BRIDEGROOM AND HIS BRIDE

This is one of the royal or kingly psalms with a strong Messianic meaning. It may be interpreted on two levels. There was an immediate and local application to the wedding of one of Israel’s kings. But, there is a higher and universal application to the King of Kings and his spiritual bride, as is seen by the use of verses 6-7 in Hebrews 1:8-9. *Shoshannim* [SHO-sha-nuhm] in the title means “The Lilies,” apparently a tune title.

PSALM 46: THE STRONG REFUGE

This has come to be known as “Luther’s Psalm” and is the probable inspiration for his great hymn “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God.” It has three rather well-marked stanzas, each ending with *Selah*, and a sort of refrain in verses 7 and 11. The stanzas are The Protection (46:1-3), The Presence (46:4-7), and The Power of God (46:8-11). *Alamoth* in the title possibly means “for soprano voices.”



PSALM 47: THE LORD IS KING OF ALL

Like Psalm 46, this psalm glories in the sovereignty of God, “a great King over all the earth” (46:2). Two divisions are The Sovereign (46:1-4) and The Song (46:5-9).

PSALM 48: GOD’S HOLY CITY

The praise of Zion as the Lord’s holy mount is the theme of this song. Zion was the place where the Temple was built. For Christians, Zion stands as a type of the Church, the “city of God” (see Hebrews 12:18-24). What is said here about Zion is true of the spiritual temple, which is the Church.

PSALM 49: DEATH THE GREAT LEVELLER

This is a wisdom psalm that deals with the problem of the wicked who prosper and the righteous who are poor and afflicted (see Psalms 37 and 73). While the inequities of life may never be corrected here in this world, death equalizes all. When once we see that riches hold no assurance for eternity, the entire problem takes on a different appearance. People are fools to trust in wealth, and it shall be well with the righteous forever (49:15).

PSALM 50: GOD THE JUDGE OF ALL

This is the first of 12 psalms whose titles use the name Asaph (see the introduction). Psalm 50 stresses the inwardness of true religion and the futility of sacrifices without obedience and faith. The psalm opens with a call to recognize that God is the Judge of all (50:1-6). It voices the Lord’s complaint against his people (50:7-15) and ends with a stinging condemnation of the wicked (50:16-23).

PSALM 51: PRAYER FOR PARDON AND PURITY

Psalm 51, where the Old Testament comes to its highest view of sin and the remedy of sin, is the third of the “penitential psalms.” The title relates it to the repentance of David for his sin with Bathsheba, and his prayer for restoration and cleansing. A cry for pardon (51:1-4), a confession of the problem of inner sin (51:5-9), a call for purity and its significances (51:10-13), and the promise of true faith and obedience (51:14-19) make up the substance of the psalm.



PSALM 52: THE CONTRAST OF SINNER AND SAINT

In some ways, this psalm reminds us of Psalm 1 in the sharp contrast into which it throws the wicked and the righteous. Its tone is more severe than Psalm 1, however, expressing the resentment felt by the godly against those who have no fear of the Lord. The character and fate of the wicked (52:1-5) are contrasted with those of the righteous (52:6-9).

PSALM 53: THE DANGER OF PRACTICAL ATHEISM

This is a revision of Psalm 14, substituting only the name “God” for “the Lord” and making one specific change in verse 5 (see 14:6). Mahalath in the title, like other similar terms, is probably the name of the tune to which the psalm could be sung.

PSALM 54: A CRY FOR HELP

This short psalm of lamentation, like Psalm 4, was designed for use with stringed instruments (*Neginoth* in the title). The poet cries for help (54:1-3), and although still endangered, expresses his confidence that God will deliver him (54:4-7).

PSALM 55: A BALLAD OF BETRAYAL

This is a psalm of betrayal in which the pain is increased a thousand-fold by the fact that a trusted friend has turned against the Psalmist (55:13-14). David expresses his fear (55:1-8) and speaks the fury of God’s wrath against his enemies (55:9-15) and his faith in God (55:16-23).

PSALM 56: TROUBLE AND TRUST

Jonath-elem-rechokim [joh-nahth-eelem-REE-koh-kim] in the title of this psalm is again probably the name of the tune. It means “the silent dove in distant places.” The psalm is a cry of suffering (56:1-7) rising into the serenity of truth (56:8-13).

PSALM 57: PERIL AND PRAYER

This is another psalm of lamentation in which the poet voices his plea for protection (57:1-5) and makes his promise of praise (57:6-11). *Altaschith* [al-TAS-



kith] in the title is Hebrew for “Destroy not” and is probably a tune title.

PSALM 58: THE DOOM OF THE GODLESS

This is classed with the imprecatory psalms (see the introduction - Psalms of anger, invoking the direct punishments on evildoers and persecutors) chiefly because of the sevenfold curse against the wicked in verses 6-9. The Psalmist writes his description of the evil around him (58:1-5) and the divine vengeance which will fall upon evildoers (58:6-11).

PSALM 59: PRAYER FOR PROTECTION IN THE NIGHT

This song of lamentation has a sort of refrain in verses 6 and 15 that suggests the dangers that lurk in the darkness. A second refrain, “God is my defense” (59:9, 17), summarizes the positive faith that overcomes fear. Three divisions are Danger (59:1-5), Deliverance (59:6-13), and Defense (59:14-17).

PSALM 60: A PSALM IN DEFEAT

The occasion of this lamentation was apparently a defeat suffered by Israel’s army in battle. *Shushan-eduth* [shoo-SHAN-ed-uth] in the title - literally, “The Lily of Testimony” - is again, probably, a tune title. Defeat (60:1-5), Declaration (60:6-8), and Deliverance (60:9-12) are the three divisions. Verses 6-12 are repeated in Ps. 108:6-13.

PSALM 61: PRAYER OF AN EXILE

This appears to be the prayer of one exiled from home (61:2), longing for access to the Tabernacle of the Lord (61:4). It follows the normal pattern of psalms of lament, the plea, the plight, the petition, and the promise. *Neginah* in the title is a singular form of *neginoth* and means “a stringed instrument.”

PSALM 62: GOD ALONE IS A SURE DEFENSE

There is in this psalm the same background of conflict we find in a number of the psalms. Yet a strong note of confidence prevails. This is depicted in Moffatt’s



paraphrase of verse 1, “Leave it all quietly to God, my soul.” The Psalmist faces his enemies (62:1-4) in expectation (62:5-8) that God will be his Refuge. To trust God is better than to trust rank and money (62:9-12).

PSALM 63: GOD IS ALL IN ALL

This is a hymn-type poem in which the words are addressed entirely to, and not about, God. The fellowship of God (63:1-8) is Old Testament religion at its best. The fate of the godless (63:9-11) is a passing shadow, but “the king shall rejoice in God” (63:11).

PSALM 64: THE FOLLY AND FATE OF THE FOE

The background of this psalm seems to be malicious slander directed against the Psalmist. Yet his distress is not despair, for he sees the defeat of evil counsel by the working of God. Although subject to slander (64:1-6), the issues of life are never left to the designs of the wicked (64:7-10).

PSALM 65: A SONG OF WORSHIP

This is a psalm of adoration at the harvest festival or on the occasion of an especially bountiful harvest. It centers around the duty and privilege of worship. It stresses the glory of God in his Temple (65:1-4), among the nations (65:5-8), and in nature (65:9-13).

PSALM 66: A PSALM OF DELIVERANCE

This psalm of adoration is marked in verse 13 by a change of pronoun from plural (“we,” “our,” “us”) to singular (“I,” “my,” and “me”). What begins as public praise (66:1-12) concludes as personal devotion (66:13-20).

PSALM 67: A HYMN OF PRAISE

The Psalmist gives the reason for praise in God’s righteous providence (67:1-4), and the result of praise in the continued bounties of the Lord as seen in fruitful harvests, spiritual blessings, and reverence and awe for the Lord from the ends of the earth (67:5-7).



PSALM 68: GOD AND HIS WORSHIPING HOST

This long psalm treats a number of subjects. The opening section (68:1-6) declares God's praise; 68:7-14 surveys the blessings of the past. God's presence and power in the present are the theme of 68:15-23. A procession to the sanctuary (68:24-29) and an expression of confidence for the future (68:30-35) conclude the composition.

PSALM 69: DESPAIR AND DESIRE

This is a song in minor key. The Psalmist's agony of spirit was deep and intense. He was beset by enemies, troubled by sickness, and all but overwhelmed by the sense of despair. Probably, no psalm in the whole collection expresses deeper or more intense sorrow than this. It was a time of extreme need (69:1-5) suffered for the Lord's sake (69:6-13). Prayer is fervent (69:14-20); anger against evildoers is strong (69:21-28); but as so often, the poet rises through the gloom to a glimpse of hope (69:29-36).

PSALM 70: AN URGENT CRY FOR HELP

This psalm is identical to 40:13-17. The poet feels keenly the opposition of his enemies but finds in God his "help" and "deliverer" (70:5).

PSALM 71: "EVEN DOWN TO OLD AGE"

A line from a hymn is the best title for this psalm, the prayer and testimony of an aged man who loved the Lord (71:9, 18). God is a strong Refuge for all of life (71:1-8). The perils of advancing age are noted (71:9-16), but the Lord still sustains, though his servant is now "old and grey-headed" (71:17-24).

PSALM 72: THE IDEAL KING

Entitled "A Psalm for Solomon" (as also Psalm 127), this poem has been interpreted both in relation to an earthly king and in reference to Christ, the King of Kings. The Psalmist speaks of the king's righteousness (72:1-6), his rule (72:7-11), his redemption (72:12-14), and recognition (72:15-17). Verses 18-19 are the doxology that closes Book 2, and verse 20 is an editorial note that says, "The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended." The note obviously had reference to



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the preceding psalms before they were gathered into the larger whole since there are a number of other Davidic psalms in the last three books of the Psalter.

Shoshannim [SHO-sha-nuhm]

Jonath-elim-rechokim [joh-nahth-eelem-REE-koh-kim]

Altaschith [al-TAS-kith]

Shushan-eduth [shoo-SHAN-ed-uth]

CHAPTER 4

Book 3: Psalms of Asaph and Other (73:1 - 89:52)



NOTES

All the psalms of this group have titles indicating personal names:

11, Asaph;

three, Korah; and

one each, David, Heman, and Ethan.

Some of the finest and most dearly loved pieces in the Psalter are found here.

PSALM 73: THE PROBLEM OF THE WICKED WHO PROSPER

This is the third psalm dealing with the problem of why a just God would permit the wicked to prosper and the righteous to suffer (see Psalms 37 and 49). It is the deepest and most penetrating of the three and is like the Book of Job. Four divisions indicate the scope of the psalm: The Problem of the Righteous (73:1-3), The Prosperity of the Wicked (73:4-12), Progress toward the Solution (73:13-20), and The Prospect for Eternity (73:21-28), which provides the clue to the answer.

PSALM 74: LAMENT FOR THE DESOLATION OF THE CITY

If Psalm 73 reminds us of Job, this psalm reminds us of Lamentations [la-muhn-TAY-shunz]. Except for the one gleam of light in the retrospect of verses 12-17, it is almost pure lament, written in a sad minor key. We see the tragedy of the present (74:1-11) contrasted with the testimony of the past (74:12-17), leading to the thought of the prospect of the future (74:18-23).

PSALM 75: A LITURGY OF PRAISE

This hymn of thanksgiving is in happy contrast to the gloom of Psalm 74. Its divisions are Recognition of God (75:1), Response of the Lord (75:2-3), Retribution for the Wicked (75:4-8), and Rejoicing in the God of Jacob (75:9-10).



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PSALM 76: A SONG OF CELEBRATION

This psalm rejoices in a great victory and is filled with praise for the power of God. It may have to do with the deliverance of Jerusalem from Sennacherib [sen-AKH-er-ib] in 701 B.C. (2 Kings 19:35-37; Isaiah 37:36-38). God makes even man's evil wrath and its works to praise him (76:10).

PSALM 77: SONG INSTEAD OF SORROW

This is another lamentation that, like so many of its kind, begins in the shadow of sorrow and rises to the sunshine of song. The turning point is in verse 10. Sorrow (77:1-3) and searching (77:4-9) are followed by surrender (77:10, 15) and recognition of God's sovereignty (77:16-20).

PSALM 78: THE HAND OF GOD IN HISTORY

This is the longest of what are sometimes called "historical psalms" - others being Psalms 105, 106, 114, and 136. Its theme is the central fact of Israel's history, the deliverance from Egypt. Tracing the history of his people down to the establishment of the kingdom under David, the poet warns against the dangers of forgetting God.

PSALM 79: THE FUNERAL ANTHEM OF A NATION

Some great national disaster, perhaps the same one mourned in Psalm 74, is the occasion for what one Old Testament scholar has called "the funeral anthem of a nation." The Psalmist utters his complaint (79:1-4). He cries out for vengeance (79:5-12), and he commits himself to praise (79:13) for anticipated deliverance.

PSALM 80: A CRY FOR RESTORATION

The prayer for the restoration of the fortunes of the people is marked by the refrain, "Restore us, O God; make your face shine upon us; we may be saved" (80:3, 7, 19). Each time, the appeal to God is a little stronger: "O God" (80:3); "O God of hosts" (80:7); "O Lord God of Hosts" (80:19). The Lord is viewed as Shepherd (80:1-3), Judge (80:4-7), and Husbandman (80:8-19) or Gardener.



PSALM 81: THE MEANING OF RELIGIOUS RITUAL

This is a psalm of adoration to be used in the fall festivals of the people of Israel and in connection with their Day of Atonement. It seeks to interpret to the people the meaning and practical lessons of their ceremonial observances. Absolute loyalty to God is an indispensable condition for success and prosperity.

PSALM 82: A VISION OF JUDGMENT

This short psalm is concerned with God's demand for justice and equity on the part of all who direct the affairs of the nation. The term "gods" in verses 1 and 6 translates into a Hebrew word that can also stand for "men of exalted rank and responsibility." That this is what it means here is clear from John 10:34. God is the Judge of the judges.

PSALM 83: PRAYER IN A TIME OF NATIONAL PERIL

The nation was threatened by a vast coalition of evil powers arrayed with overwhelming odds against the people of God. The first part of the psalm (83:1-8) describes the situation. The second part (83:9-8) invokes God's divine wrath against the enemies of the Lord and his people.

PSALM 84: HUNGER FOR THE HOUSE OF GOD

This poem has few equals for depth of feeling and beauty of expression. It is thought that it may have been the song of pilgrims coming for the fall festival after a long and dry summer. It expresses longing for the house of the Lord (84:1-4), the anticipation of faith (84:5-8), and the reward of God's own presence with his people (84:9-12).

PSALM 85: PRAISE AND PROSPECT

This psalm seems to have been written after the return from Babylonian captivity and is like Psalm 126 in this respect. There is in it also an earnest prayer for revival and continued mercy. Praise (85:1-3), prayer (85:4-7), and prospect (85:8-13) are its three divisions.



PSALM 86: PRAYING THE PRAYER OF FAITH

This is the only psalm of David included in Book 3. It recognizes the goodness of God (86:1-5) and the greatness of God (86:6-10), relies on the grace of God (86:11-15), and seeks the gifts of God (86:16-17). A notable prayer is the request that God will “Give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name.” (86:11). This is the hope of the double-minded (James 4:8) and those with divided loyalties (Hosea 10: 2).

PSALM 87: THE GLORIES OF ZION

This is a beautiful poetic gem in praise of Zion, the site of the Temple of the Lord and the symbol of his Church in the New Testament. It speaks of the city (87:1-3) and the citizens (87:4-6) of Zion. The concluding verse apparently means that there is joy in Zion over the repentance and conversion of sinners.

PSALM 88: THE DARK NIGHT OF THE SOUL

This has been called the darkest, saddest psalm in the entire Psalter. It is a wail of sorrow from end to end. *Leannoth* [LEE-an-oth] in the title means “for singing.” The Psalmist feels himself to be failing (88:1-7), friendless (88:8-10), and forsaken (88:11-18). Even the Lord seems to have cast him off. Such experiences as this have long been called “the dark night of the soul.”

PSALM 89: THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD

Here is a total contrast to the preceding. It is used in the New Testament in reference to Christ. Praise (89:1-4) for the past (89:5-12) and the present (89:13-18) lead to promise (89:19-37) for the prospect of the future (89:38-45) and a petition (89:46-51) that God will remember his own. Verse 52 is the doxology that closes Book 3 of the Psalms. The repetition of “Amen” intensifies the meaning of “May it be so” or “So let it be.”

Lamentations [la-muhn-TAY-shunz]
Sennacherib [sen-AKH-er-ib]
Leannoth [LEE-an-oth]

CHAPTER 5

Book 4: Miscellaneous Psalms (90:1 - 106:48)



NOTES

This is the shortest of the five books identified within the Psalms. While most of the varied psalm types are included, there is a strong leaning toward psalms of adoration and worship.

PSALM 90: MORTAL MAN AND ETERNAL GOD

Widely praised as one of the most sublime passages in human literature, this psalm praises the sovereignty of God (90:1-6), recognizes the shortness of human life (90:7-12), and closes with a supplication for God's continued favor (90:13-17). For God to "relent" (90:13) is to be understood - in contrast to 1 Samuel 15:29 - as a change from wrath to mercy.

PSALM 91: THE SECURITY OF THE TRUSTING HEART

This psalm reminds us in many ways of Paul's exclamation in Romans 8:31, "If God is for us, who can be against us?" expressed in striking poetry. The writer first professes his own faith (I, me) and, on the basis of his own faith, speaks words of comfort to the people (you). His trust (91:1-8), his triumph (91:9-13), and God's pledge (91:14-16) are the three divisions of the poem.

PSALM 92: GOD'S SOVEREIGN JUSTICE

This is a wisdom psalm dealing in broad terms with the same problem raised in Psalms 37, 49, and 73 and the Book of Job - Why do the wicked prosper while the righteous suffer and are oppressed? The answer is found in God's justice (92:1-8) and the final overthrow of the wicked (92:9-15).

PSALM 93: THE GOD OF HOLINESS REIGNS

Along with Psalms 47 and 96 - 99, this psalm is marked by the repetition of the words, "The LORD reigns," or "God is King." The Psalmist here praises the strength of the Lord (93:1-2) and the sovereignty of the Lord (93:3-5) over all the floods that threaten the people of God.



PSALM 94: GOD ALONE IS OUR HELP

This is another psalm dealing with the injustices of life. The Psalmist utters his complaint (94:1-7). He seeks to correct false notions of the Lord (94:8-11). He recognizes the chastening of the Lord in hardships faced (94:12-15). He cries aloud to plead his own cause (94:16-21) and speaks again of his confidence in the God who is the Rock of his refuge (94:22-23).

PSALM 95: PRAISE AND PATIENCE

This is one of the special psalms used for morning prayer in the synagogue on the Sabbath. It divides naturally into two sections in the middle of verse 7. The first half is a call to worship. The second half is a warning against unfaithfulness and is quoted in Hebrews 3:7-11, 14; 4:7 as a warning to Christians who fail to go on into the “rest of faith” provided for them in the sanctifying will of God.

PSALM 96: “SING ... A NEW SONG”

Psalm 96 is taken from 1 Chronicles 16:23-33, where it is part of a longer composition attributed to David. The two divisions of the psalm speak of the glory of the one God (96:1-6) and the duty of people to worship the Lord (96:7-13).

PSALM 97: GOD OF JUDGMENT AND GRACE

Here, we have pictured in striking contrast the awesome judgments of the Lord (97:1-7) and the great joy of the righteous (97:8-12). The holiness of God assures the certainty of his judgments against evil and provides the basis for the blessing of those who put their trust in him.

PSALM 98: THE WAY AND HOW OF WORSHIP

As Psalm 97 emphasizes the righteous judgments of the Lord, this psalm stresses his mercy and his salvation. Again, the elements of nature are called upon to glorify God. The reasons for divine worship are given (97:1-3), and the means of divine worship are enumerated (98:4-9).



NOTES

PSALM 99: THE GOD OF HOLINESS

Each of the three sections of this psalm ends with a similar refrain: “It is holy” (99:3), “He is holy” (99:5), and “Our God is holy” (99:9) - from which fact it has been called “a hymn to the God of holiness”. God is holy in power (99:1-3), in justice (99:4-5), and in his mercy (99:6-9).

PSALM 100: THE LORD IS THE TRUE GOD

This brief song is similar to Psalm 94, and was probably sung by the procession of worshippers as they approached the Temple with their thank offerings. It praises the works of the Lord (100:1-3) and delights in the worship of the Lord (100:4-5).

PSALM 101: THE KING’S NOBLE PURPOSE

This psalm expresses King David’s ideal for himself and for his descendants as they would rule over the Lord’s people. The king speaks of his purpose for himself (101:1-4) and his desire for his court (101:5-8).

PSALM 102: A PRAYER OF THE AFFLICTED

The title of this psalm is unusual: “The prayer of an unhappy soul who is overwhelmed and pours out his complaint before the Eternal” (Moffatt’s translation). The Psalmist pleads his misery and cries for help (102:1-11). He lifts his face and thinks of the purpose of the Lord (102:12-22). Then for a moment the vision fades, and the Psalmist’s own predicament comes back into focus - only to pass from view with the thought of the permanence of God’s presence (102:23-28).

PSALM 103: THE SONG OF A FULL HEART

This is a hymn of pure praise whose beauties have been universally recognized. It is acclaimed as one of the noblest hymns in the Old Testament. It begins with a personal testimony (103:1-5), speaks of past blessings (103:6-12) and present help (103:13-18), and concludes as it begins, with a call for praise to the sovereign Lord (103:19-22). What a transformation there would be in this generation if the church could recapture this spirit of going forth from their sanctuaries with a song like that in their hearts!



PSALM 104: THE GLORY OF OUR GREAT GOD

Psalm 104 is often paired with 103 as a companion piece. It does indeed share the same almost breathless sense of adoration. There is one difference, however, in that this psalm - with the exception of the first sentence and the last five verses - is addressed directly to God as a magnificent hymn. Its central theme is the majesty of God in creation, and it is almost a poetical commentary on Genesis 1.

The Psalmist speaks of God's glory in creation (104:1-23), in the conservation of nature (104:24-30), and in the correction of evil men (104:31-35).

PSALM 105: GOD'S WONDROUS WORKS

This is the first of two magnificent historical psalms with which Book 4 closes. The lessons of the past are used to correct and encourage the people of God. Psalm 105 stresses God's power and faithfulness, and 106 the people's failure. The divisions of Psalm 105 are God's Holy Name, 105:1-6; God and the Patriarchs, 105:7-22; God and the Egyptians, 105:23-36; and God and the Exodus, 105:37-45.

PSALM 106: SIN AND SALVATION

The theme of this psalm is the continued mercy of the Lord in the face of Israel's constant lapsing into sin and unbelief. It is a monument to the utter realism of the Bible. It opens with a prayer of confession (106:1-6), lists seven sins committed in the wilderness (106:7-33), mourns the disobedience in Canaan (106:34-39), and pictures God's repeated judgments and mercy in the times of the judges (106:40-46). The psalm closes with a prayer (106:47) and the doxology that marks the end of Book 4 (106:48).

CHAPTER 6

Book 5: Psalms for Worship (107:1 - 150:6)



NOTES

The last book within the Psalter is the longest, both in terms of content and in the number of psalms it contains. Most of the psalms are oriented toward public worship. Few of them have titles. Four minor collections are:

“The Egyptian Hallel” (113 – 118);

“Songs of Degrees, or Ascents” (120 – 137);

“A Little Davidic Collection” (138 – 145), since each of these groups contains the name of David in the title and

“The Great Hallel” (146 – 150).

PSALM 107: SONG OF THE REDEEMED

This psalm deals with the many ways God’s deliverances of his people are to be seen. There is a strong conviction that when people seek help from God in times of trouble, he is there to help. The divisions of the psalm are Praise for Restoration from Afar (107:1-7); Praise for Renewal of Hope and Joy (107:8-14); Praise for the Revelation of God’s Power (107:15-20); Praise for Rescue from Physical Peril (107:21-30); Praise for Righteous Judgments (107:31-43).

PSALM 108: A MEDLEY OF PRAISE

This psalm is composed entirely of excerpts from two earlier psalms. The first, “Adoration” (108:1-5), is taken from 57:7-11. The second, “Appeal” (108:6-13), is taken from 60:5-12.

PSALM 109: A CRY FOR VINDICATION AND JUSTICE

This is the last of the “imprecatory psalms” (see the introduction - Psalms of anger, invoking the direct punishments on evildoers and persecutors) and one of the strongest. We should remember that the Psalmist looks upon those who had made themselves his enemies as chiefly the enemies of God. He describes his enemies (109:1-5) and their leader (109:6-20), his own sad state (109:21-25), and his hope of vindication (109:26-31).



PSALM 110: SONG OF THE SOVEREIGN LORD

This jewel among the Psalms is one of the outstanding Messianic passages in the Old Testament and is quoted a total of 21 times in the New Testament in relation to Christ and his kingdom - most notably by Jesus himself. Christ is the divinely ordained King (110:1-3) and the divinely ordained Priest (110:4) and is assured of his final triumph (110:5-7).

PSALM 111: THE TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE LORD

Psalms 111 and 112 belong together. Each consists of 10 verses, and each contains 22 lines or phrases, each beginning with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The themes are parallel. Psalm 111 deals with the character of the Lord God. Psalm 112 deals with the character of the godly man. God's righteous works (111:1-5) and his trustworthiness (111:6-10) are the two divisions of Psalm 111.

PSALM 112: THE TRUSTFULNESS OF THE GODLY

Following the pattern of Psalm 111, this psalm deals with the character of God's people. It also divides into two equal stanzas: The Character of the Godly (112:1-5) and The Trustfulness of the Servant of God (112:6-10).

PSALM 113: "PRAISE THE LORD"

This and the five psalms that follow are commonly known as the "Egyptian Hallel," from the reference to the Exodus in 114:1. These psalms of praise were used in the synagogue during the special annual festivals. Psalm 113 has three divisions: God Alone Is Worthy of Praise (113:1-3), The Greatness of Our God (113:4-6), and The Mercy of the Lord (113:7-9).

PSALM 114: THE GREAT DELIVERANCE

Two great acts of deliverance on the part of God for his people underlie this psalm. The first is the crossing of the Red Sea, and the second is the crossing of the Jordan [JOHR-dihh] into the Promised Land. Its two stanzas describe the miracle of redemption (114:1-4) and glorify God as the Source of redemption (114:5-8).



PSALM 115: OUR GOD IS FAR ABOVE IDOLS

This and the three concluding psalms of the Hallel (115 - 118) were sung after the Passover meal was finished. This would, therefore, begin the particular portion identified in Matthew 26:30 as being the hymn sung by Jesus and his disciples. It speaks of the scoffing of unbelievers (115:1-3), the emptiness of idolatry (115:4-8), the need to trust God supremely (115:9-13), and closes with the expectation of the promised blessing of the Lord (115:14-18).

PSALM 116: A SONG OF PERSONAL TESTIMONY

The intensely personal nature of this psalm is indicated by the exclusive use of the first-person pronouns "I," "my," and "me." It speaks of praise for answered prayer (116:1-4) and for deliverance from death (116:5-9). The Psalmist's faith is shaken but steadfast (116:10-14), and he promises to give the sacrifice of thanksgiving (116:15-19).

PSALM 117: DOXOLOGY

This is the shortest psalm in the Psalter. It is pure doxology or praise to God. It is a true Messianic psalm and is quoted by Paul in Romans 15:11 as a prediction of the worldwide reach of the gospel.

PSALM 118: STRENGTH, SONG, AND SALVATION

The last of the "Hallel" psalms (see Psalm 113) has been called a "litany of thanksgiving." Its "text" and outline are given in verse 14. The Psalmist praises God as his Strength (118:1-14), his Song (118:15-20), and his Salvation (118:21-29). The poem ends as it began, with a call to give thanks unto the Lord.

PSALM 119: WHOLEHEARTED LOVE FOR THE LAW

This is both the longest psalm and the most carefully worked-out acrostic. It is divided into 22 sections, one for each letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Each section is composed of eight verses, and each verse in the original begins with a word in which the initial letter is the letter heading the section.

The theme of Psalm 119 is the glorious law of the Lord and the need for



wholehearted observance of that law (see verses 2, 10, 34, 58, 69, 145). The word translated as “law” is *torah*, and it carries the idea of guidance, teaching, and instruction. It stands for the whole revealed will of God as made known in the Bible.

The divisions of the psalm are the blessedness of keeping the law (119:1-8), the cleansing Word of God (119:9-16); the aim of life (119:17-24); the great choice (119:25-32); prayer for establishment (119:33-40); unashamed of the Word (119:41-48); the life-giving Word (119:49-56); the company of the committed (119:57-64); the value of affliction (119:65-72); the cry for soundness of soul (119:73-80); support under pressure (119:81-88); God’s established Word (119:89-96); wisdom through the Word (119:97-104); the light of life (119:105-12); the way of life and the way of death (119:113-20); tribulation and testimony (119:121-28); freedom in the light of the law (119:129-36); God’s everlasting righteousness (119:137-44); truth helps overcome trouble (119:145-52); prayer for revival and deliverance (119:153-60); persecuted, yet in peace (119:161-88); and a closing prayer for help and guidance (119:169-76).

PSALM 120: THE LAMENT OF AN EXILE

This is the first of 15 psalms that bear the title *Shir hamaaloth*, [shir-ha-mah-AY-lot] literally, “song of the goings-up (ascent).” They are also called pilgrim songs, or “songs of ascents” from the approach to Jerusalem, which is always spoken of in Scripture as “up.” It is thought that they were so called because they were used in pilgrimages to Jerusalem, although they deal with a variety of subjects. In Psalm 120, the writer utters a prayer for deliverance (120:1-2), warns of retribution for the wicked (120:3-4), and voices his longing for peace (120:5-7).

PSALM 121: THE TRAVELER’S PSALM

This is an ode to God’s keeping and preserving grace for the journey. Its two major divisions state that the Lord will help (121:1-4), and the Lord will keep (121:5-8). Many scholars believe that the second clause of verse 1 should be translated as a question: “From where shall my help come?” It is not from the mountains, but from the Lord.

PSALM 122: “JERUSALEM THE GOLDEN”

Jerusalem, the city of the Most High, was the delight of the devout heart. Here,



we read the feelings of one approaching the city of his dreams after a long and perilous journey. It describes the pilgrim's joy (122:1-2), his love for Jerusalem (122:3-5), and his prayer for its peace and well-being (122:6-9).

PSALM 123: LAMENT UNDER THE LASH OF SCORN

The Psalmist, feeling the scorn of his neighbors, looks up with the eyes of hope (123:1-2) and utters his cry for mercy (123:3-4). He keenly senses the contempt of his proud and godless neighbors.

PSALM 124: DELIVERANCE FROM DESPAIR

From the depths described in Psalm 123, the soul of the Psalmist begins to rise. He is convinced that the Lord is on his side (124:1-5) and will provide a way of escape (124:6-8), as a bird delivered from the nets of the "fowlers" or bird hunters.

PSALM 125: THE SECURITY OF THE TRUSTING HEART

This psalm pursues the theme of the two preceding. While danger has not disappeared (see verses 3 and 5), serenity has come to the poet's trusting heart. He speaks of the encircling mountains as symbols of God's presence (125:1-3) and the contrasting ways of those who serve the Lord and those who live in sin (125:4-5).

PSALM 126: THE SONG OF A FULL HEART

The setting of Psalm 126 is the return from exile in Babylonia, as described in the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah. The wonder of the return (126:1-3) is the basis for the poet's prayer for revival (126:4-6). The last two verses of the psalm are the inspiration for the gospel song "Bringing In the Sheaves."

PSALM 127: A SECURE HABITATION

Some of the practical needs and blessings of the returned exiles are given in Psalm 127. Acknowledging that God is their only Safety (127:1-2), the poet speaks of the blessings of family life (127:3-5).



PSALM 128: THE BLESSEDNESS OF THOSE WHO FEAR GOD

The thought of the last part of Psalm 127 is continued here and considers the blessedness of those who fear the Lord. Their many children will add to the population and, thus, the prosperity of Jerusalem. The godly man is blessed with a happy home (128:1-3) and a long life (128:4-6).

PSALM 129: PRESERVATION AND PRAYER

This psalm speaks in the first person, but the poet represents his whole nation and describes the long history of opposition and oppression to which it was subjected. He speaks of the sorrows of Israel's past (129:1-4) and prays for God's vindication of his people against their enemies (129:5-8).

PSALM 130: PENITENCE AND PARDON

This is another of the "penitential psalms" (see the introduction) and expresses a sense of sin and penitence as deep and sincere as anywhere in the Old Testament. Combined with the cry of penitence (130:1-4) is the hope of pardon (130:5-8). So it must always be. Confession must be followed by faith in God's forgiving grace (1 John 1:9).

PSALM 131: THE CONFESSION OF CHILDLIKE TRUST

This short psalm voices the renunciation of human pride (131:1) and expresses the serene faith of a child (131:2-3).

PSALM 132: A PRAYER FOR THE HOUSE OF GOD

This is the longest of the "songs of degrees" or pilgrim psalms (120 - 134). It is concerned with the house of God originally the Temple at Jerusalem, but symbolically the Church in all ages. Its three stanzas are: Determination to Build the House of God (132:1-7); Dedication of the House of God (132:8-12); and Divine Blessing on the House of God (132:13-18).



PSALM 133: THE BLESSINGS OF BRETHREN UNITED

Here is a brief song in praise of the joys of unity among brethren, both in the sense of the natural family and of God's spiritual family. The unity of brethren is "good" and "pleasant" (133:1), "like the precious ointment" (133:2), and "as the dew of Hermon" (133:3).

PSALM 134: MINISTERING IN THE HOUSE OF THE LORD

The last of the pilgrim psalms brings us into the very sanctuary of the house of the Lord. Its three verses call on the people to praise the Lord (134:1) with uplifted hands (134:2) in the assurance of his blessing upon them (134:3).

PSALM 135: THE GREATNESS OF OUR GOD

This psalm opens and closes with "Praise the LORD." In Hebrew, this is one word, *Hallelu-Yah*, from which our familiar English form "Hallelujah!" comes. The first half of the psalm is a call to praise the Lord (135:1-3) for his love (135:4), his creative power (135:5-7), and his rule in history (135:8-12). The Lord alone is God (135:13-18), and again all are called upon to praise God (135:19-21).

PSALM 136: GOD'S ENDURING MERCY

In this unique psalm, the last half of each verse consists of the same phrase: "For his love endures forever." This is just three words in Hebrew. The first half of each verse was apparently sung by one of the priests or by the choir, and the response was then given by the congregation. The song praises God as Creator (136:1-9) and as Redeemer (136:10-26).

PSALM 137: THE LAMENT OF AN EXILE

This song reveals the clash of emotions in human nature: the yearning of one in exile for one's homeland (137:1-6) and a bitter prediction of doom for Zion's foes (137:7-9). Behind the harsh condemnation of Israel's enemies is a strong conviction that wicked people must reap what they sow - a thought not foreign to the New Testament (Galatians 6:7-8).



PSALM 138: A PSALM OF THANKSGIVING

This is the first of eight psalms whose titles attribute them to David - perhaps the last poems the great king wrote. A threefold note of praise is sounded here: praise for God's Word and name (138:1-3), for his sovereign rule (138:4-6), and for his help in times of trouble (138:7-8).

PSALM 139: THE WONDER OF THE LORD

This magnificent psalm has been called "The Crown of All the Psalms." It is a pure hymn (addressed to God alone) from beginning to end. The Psalmist speaks of God's omniscience [ahm-NISH-uns] (139:1-6), his omnipresence [ahm-ni-PREZ-uns] (139:7-12), his personal concern for the poet (139:13-16), his providential control of all of life (139:17-22). It concludes with a searching prayer from which the words of one stanza of "Cleanse Me" have been taken: *"Search me, O God, and know my heart today; Try me, O Saviour, know my thoughts, I pray; See if there be some wicked way in me: Cleanse me from every sin, and set me free."* J E Orr

PSALM 140: A PRAYER FOR DELIVERANCE

This psalm reveals the presence of cross-currents within the life of the people of God, resulting in the persecution of the righteous by wicked people. The recital of the violence of the wicked (140:1-3) leads to prayer for preservation (140:4-5) in the assurance that in God alone is salvation (140:6-8). The respective destinies of the evil and the righteous are contrasted in the last stanza (140:9-13).

PSALM 141: DELIVERANCE FROM SIN AND WICKED MEN

This is the prayer of one who sees that his only hope of survival in the face of bitter assault by his enemies is to keep himself free from sin. Its general structure and setting are the same as Psalm 140. The Psalmist writes of his desire for preservation from evil (141:1-4) and the fellowship of the righteous (141:5-8). He closes with another prayer for deliverance from the subtle traps set by workers of iniquity (141:9-10).

PSALM 142: FROM TROUBLE TO TRIUMPH

Here is another heart cry for help in the time of trouble. The poet speaks of his



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problem (142:1-2), utters his prayer (142:3-5), and closes with an expression of the prospect of deliverance (142:6-7).

PSALM 143: LONGING AND LIVING FOR THE LORD

This is the last of the seven penitential psalms (see the introduction). It expresses utter desolation of spirit and a deep longing for the Lord (143:1-6), together with the sincere prayer for help to live in ways pleasing to the Lord (143:7-12). It teaches us that there is no real penitence without a purpose to live right in the future.

PSALM 144: NATIONAL BLESSINGS

This psalm deals with some of the issues of national life. It is a poem that has much to say to our nation in our times. The Psalmist speaks of the Lord as our Strength (144:1-2) in contrast with the weakness and wickedness of people (144:3-8). The poet would sing a new song (144:9-10) and give the conditions under which the nation is a happy nation (144:11-15).

PSALM 145: "GREAT IS THE LORD"

This is the last acrostic or alphabetical psalm in the Psalter. Each of the verses begins with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet with the omission of the letter nun, which should come between verses 13 and 14. It is a psalm of daily praise in the synagogue. Its four stanzas are A Hymn of Praise (145:1-7); The Goodness and Grace of God (145:8-9); God's People Declare His Glory (145:10-16); and The Availability of God's Help (145:17-21).

PSALM 146: GOD IS OUR HELP

This is the first of the "Hallelujah Psalms" (146 – 150), so called because each of the five begins and ends with the Hebrew *Hallelu-Yah*, "Praise the Lord!" All five have been used daily in the morning synagogue service from very early times. Psalm 146 speaks of God as our only Help (146:1-4), and glories in the fact that he is able to preserve his own (146:5-10).



PSALM 147: MEASURELESS POWER AND MATCHLESS GRACE

The wide range of God's mercy and grace is the theme of this poem. The Psalmist sings of God's power in redemption (147:1-6), of God's power in nature (147:7-11), and of God's power in history and providence (147:12-20).

PSALM 148: "HALLELUJAH, PRAISE YAHWEH!"

This beautiful piece is the biblical basis for the gospel song entitled "Hallelujah Praise Jehovah!" which follows the unfolding thought of the psalm. Both the heavens (148:1-6) and the earth (148:7-14) are called upon to praise the Lord. God's name alone is excellent and worthy of all glory (148:13).

PSALM 149: PRAISE FOR SALVATION AND VINDICATION

This brief song in two stanzas presents sharply contrasting moods. In the first four verses, we have a beautiful call to worship. In the last five, there is a strong note of judgment against the enemies of the people. There is nothing to indicate an occasion in the history of Israel to which the psalm may relate. Indeed, many interpret the victory of which it speaks as that which saves from any kind of distress - not necessarily a military victory.

PSALM 150: DOXOLOGY - PRAISE THE LORD

The last psalm is a fitting doxology, or song of praise, to the whole collection. It is very probable that it was composed for just that purpose. It is a sort of "Hallelujah Chorus" in which voices and musical instruments blend in praise to God. Voices are lifted in praise to God (150:1-2), and a variety of instruments (such as wind, stringed, and percussion) join in a grand finale of praise and adoration (150:3-6). "Praise the Lord!"

Jordan [JOHR-dihn]
Shir hamaaloth,[shir-ha-mah-AY-lot]
omniscience [ahm-NISH-uns]
omnipresence [ahm-ni-PREZ-uns]

STUDY QUESTIONS



NOTES

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION TO PSALMS

1. The Book of Psalms is the hymnbook of the Bible.
 - A. True
 - B. False
2. What is true of the Book of Psalms?
 - A. The English word “psalms” comes from a Greek term, *Psalmoi*.
 - B. The original Hebrew title of the Book of Psalms means “praises” or “songs of praise.”
 - C. There are 150 pieces in the hymnbook of the Bible.
 - D. all of these are true
3. While each of the psalms was independently composed, they were early gathered into what has come down to us as five “books” or divisions.
 - A. True
 - B. False
4. What is true of Book 1 of the Psalms?
 - A. It includes Psalms 1 -41.
 - B. It is primarily credited to Solomon.
 - C. It is probably the newest of the sub-collections of the Psalms.
 - D. Psalms 1, 2, 10, and 33 are credited to David.
5. What is true of Book 2 of the Psalms?
 - A. It includes Psalms 42 - 72.
 - B. Seven of these (42; 44 - 49) are inscribed, “For the sons of Korah”, in their titles.
 - C. The term “God” is most often used as the name for Deity rather than “the Lord.”
 - D. all of these are true



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6. What is true of Book 3 of the Psalms?
 - A. It includes Psalms 62 - 72.
 - B. Eleven Psalms are credited to Asaph, who was David's choirmaster.
 - C. David did not write any of these psalms.
 - D. The sons of Korah did not write any of these psalms.

7. What is true of Book 4 of the Psalms?
 - A. It includes Psalms 62 - 72.
 - B. Most of these psalms are without titles.
 - C. There are 10 Sabbath psalms in this group.
 - D. all of these are true

8. What is true of Book 5 of the Psalms?
 - A. Psalms 103 - 108 are known as the Egyptian Hallel.
 - B. Psalms 110 - 114 are known as "songs of degrees" or "ascents."
 - C. There are two small groups attributed to David.
 - D. Psalms 136 - 140 are known as the "Great Hallel."

9. What is true of titles in the Psalms?
 - A. These are the notes often printed in smaller type before the first verse.
 - B. About two-thirds of the Psalms have titles.
 - C. In general, there are five kinds of titles.
 - D. all of these are true

10. What is true of titles in the Psalms?
 - A. Even a casual reading shows that not all psalms are alike in form or type.
 - B. There are many psalms of adoration, worship, praise, and thanksgiving.
 - C. There are many songs of lament, distress, and sorrow.
 - D. all of these are true

CHAPTER 2. BOOK 1: PSALMS OF DAVID (1:1 - 41:13)

11. The first psalm is, in a sense, a prelude to the entire collection.
 - A. True
 - B. False

12. The second psalm is an example of a Messianic psalm.
 - A. True
 - B. False



13. Psalm 3 is a prayer for the evening hour, while Psalm 4 is a prayer for morning.
 - A. True
 - B. False

14. Psalm 5 is one of the seven psalms known as one of the “penitential psalms.”
 - A. True
 - B. False

15. Psalm 8 is a song of lament.
 - A. True
 - B. False

16. Psalms 9 and 10 are generally thought to have been a single composition originally.
 - A. True
 - B. False

17. Which of the following is a psalm of lament?
 - A. Psalm 12
 - B. Psalm 13
 - C. Psalm 14
 - D. Psalm 11

18. Which of the following is a psalm connected to public worship?
 - A. Psalm 15
 - B. Psalm 16
 - C. Psalm 17
 - D. Psalm 18

19. Which of these psalms have the title “Prayer for Victory”?
 - A. Psalms 19 and 20
 - B. Psalms 20 and 21
 - C. Psalms 21 and 22
 - D. Psalms 22 and 23

20. Only the “Lord’s Prayer” is better known than this “Shepherd Psalm.”
 - A. Psalm 26
 - B. Psalm 25
 - C. Psalm 24
 - D. Psalm 23



21. Which of these psalms is a song of adoration for Pentecost?

- A. Psalm 27
- B. Psalm 28
- C. Psalm 29
- D. Psalm 30

22. Which of these is a “penitential” psalm?

- A. Psalm 31
- B. Psalm 32
- C. Psalm 33
- D. Psalm 34

23. Which of these is an “imprecatory” psalm?

- A. Psalm 35
- B. Psalm 36
- C. Psalm 37
- D. Psalm 38

24. Which of these psalms is often used in Good Friday services?

- A. Psalm 39
- B. Psalm 40
- C. Psalm 41
- D. Psalm 42

CHAPTER 3. BOOK 2: PSALMS OF THE TEMPLE (42:1 - 72:20)

25. There is virtually unanimous agreement among Bible scholars that Psalms 42 and 43 were originally one.

- A. True
- B. False

26. Psalm 45 has come to be known as “Luther’s Psalm.”

- A. True
- B. False

27. Psalms 46 and 47 glorify in the sovereignty of God, “a great King over all the earth.”

- A. True
- B. False



28. The praise of Zion as the Lord's holy mount is the theme of Psalm 49.
- A. True
 - B. False
29. Psalm 50 stresses the inwardness of true religion and the futility of sacrifices without obedience and faith.
- A. True
 - B. False
30. Psalm 52 is where the Old Testament comes to its highest view of sin and the remedy of sin.
- A. True
 - B. False
31. Which Psalm is a revision of Psalm 14, substituting only the name "God" for "the Lord"?
- A. Psalm 56
 - B. Psalm 55
 - C. Psalm 54
 - D. Psalm 53
32. Which of these psalms is not a lamentation?
- A. Psalm 60
 - B. Psalm 59
 - C. Psalm 58
 - D. Psalm 57
33. Which Psalm is considered a prayer of an exile?
- A. Psalm 61
 - B. Psalm 62
 - C. Psalm 63
 - D. Psalm 64
34. Psalm 65 is a psalm of adoration at the harvest festival.
- A. True
 - B. False
35. Psalm 67 is a psalm of deliverance.
- A. True
 - B. False



36. Psalm 68 is a song “in a minor key.”
- A. True
 - B. False
37. Psalm 71 is identical to Psalm 40:13-17.
- A. True
 - B. False
38. What is true of Psalm 72?
- A. It speaks of “the ideal King.”
 - B. It is entitled “A Psalm for Solomon.”
 - C. The Psalmist speaks of the king’s righteousness, rule, redemption, and recognition.
 - D. all of these are true

CHAPTER 4. BOOK 3: PSALMS OF ASAPH AND OTHERS (73:1 - 89:52)

39. What is true of the psalms in this group?
- A. All the psalms of this group have titles indicating personal names.
 - B. Some of the finest and most dearly loved pieces in the Psalter are found here.
 - C. Only one psalm is attributed to David.
 - D. all of these are true
40. Which of these psalms deals with the problem as to why a just God would permit the wicked to prosper and the righteous to suffer?
- A. Psalm 76
 - B. Psalm 75
 - C. Psalm 74
 - D. Psalm 73
41. Which of these psalms is the funeral anthem of a nation?
- A. Psalm 77
 - B. Psalm 78
 - C. Psalm 79
 - D. Psalm 80



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42. Psalm 81 is a psalm of adoration to be used in the fall festivals of the people of Israel and in connection with their Day of Atonement.
- A. True
 - B. False
43. Psalm 82 is a prayer in a time of national peril.
- A. True
 - B. False
44. Psalm 84 seems to have been written after the return from Babylonian captivity.
- A. True
 - B. False
45. Psalm 87 is a beautiful poetic gem in praise of Zion.
- A. True
 - B. False
46. Psalm 89 is a total contrast to Psalm 88.
- A. True
 - B. False

CHAPTER 5. BOOK 4: MISCELLANEOUS PSALMS (90:1 - 106:48)

47. Which psalm reminds us in many ways of Paul's exclamation in Romans 8:31, "If God is for us, who can be against us?"
- A. Psalm 90
 - B. Psalm 91
 - C. Psalm 92
 - D. Psalm 93
48. Which of these is a special psalm used for morning prayer in the synagogue on the Sabbath?
- A. Psalm 97
 - B. Psalm 96
 - C. Psalm 95
 - D. Psalm 94
49. Which of these psalms deals with the "way" and "how" of worship?"
- A. Psalm 101
 - B. Psalm 100
 - C. Psalm 99
 - D. Psalm 98



50. Which of these psalms deals with a prayer of the afflicted?
- A. Psalm 102
 - B. Psalm 103
 - C. Psalm 104
 - D. Psalm 105
51. What is true of Psalm 106?
- A. It deals with sin and salvation.
 - B. The theme of this psalm is the continued mercy of the Lord in the face of Israel's constant lapsing into sin and unbelief.
 - C. This psalm is a monument to the utter realism of the Bible.
 - D. all of these are true

CHAPTER 6. BOOK 5: PSALMS FOR WORSHIP (107:1 - 150:6)

52. The last book within the Psalter is the longest, both in terms of content and in the number of psalms it contains.
- A. True
 - B. False
53. Psalm 107 deals with the many ways God's deliverances of his people are to be seen.
- A. True
 - B. False
54. Psalm 108 is composed entirely of excerpts from Psalms 57 and 60.
- A. True
 - B. False
55. Which of these is an "imprecatory" psalm?
- A. Psalm 109
 - B. Psalm 110
 - C. Psalm 111
 - D. Psalm 112
56. Which of these psalms are among those commonly known as the "Egyptian Hallel"?
- A. Psalms 113 and 114
 - B. Psalms 115 and 116
 - C. Psalms 117 and 118
 - D. all of these



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57. What is true of Psalm 119?
- A. It is the longest psalm.
 - B. It is the most carefully worked-out acrostic.
 - C. It is about wholehearted love for the Law.
 - D. all of these are true
58. What is true of Psalm 120?
- A. It is the first of 15 psalms that bear the title *Shir hamaaloth*.
 - B. It was used in pilgrimages to Jerusalem.
 - C. It utters a prayer for deliverance, warns of retribution for the wicked, and voices longing for peace.
 - D. all of these are true
59. Psalm 122 is the traveler's psalm.
- A. True
 - B. False
60. Psalm 123 deals with deliverance from despair.
- A. True
 - B. False
61. Psalm 125 is the song of a full heart.
- A. True
 - B. False
62. Some of the practical needs and blessings of the returned exiles are given in Psalm 127.
- A. True
 - B. False
63. The thought of the last part of Psalm 127 continues in Psalm 128.
- A. True
 - B. False
64. Which of these is a "penitential" psalm?
- A. Psalm 129
 - B. Psalm 130
 - C. Psalm 131
 - D. Psalm 132



NOTES

65. What is true of Psalm 133?
- A. Unity of brethren is “good.”
 - B. Unity of brethren is “pleasant.”
 - C. Unity of brethren is “like precious ointment.”
 - D. all of these are true
66. Which psalm opens and closes with “Praise the LORD”?
- A. Psalm 134
 - B. Psalm 135
 - C. Psalm 136
 - D. Psalm 137
67. Psalm 138 contains a threefold note of praise.
- A. True
 - B. False
68. Psalm 139 has been called “The Crown of All the Psalms.”
- A. True
 - B. False
69. Psalm 141 is a prayer for deliverance.
- A. True
 - B. False
70. Psalm 143 is a cry for help in times of trouble.
- A. True
 - B. False
71. Psalm 145 deals with some issues of national life.
- A. True
 - B. False
72. Psalm 146 is the last acrostic or alphabetical psalm in the Psalter.
- A. True
 - B. False
73. What is true of Psalm 148?
- A. It is the biblical basis for the gospel song entitled “Hallelujah Praise Jehovah!”
 - B. Both the heavens and the earth are called upon to praise the Lord.
 - C. God’s name alone is excellent and worthy of all glory.
 - D. all of these are true



74. What is true of Psalm 150?

- A. It is a fitting doxology, or song of praise, to the whole collection.
- B. It is a sort of "Hallelujah Chorus."
- C. Voices and musical instruments are enjoined to blend in praise to God.
- D. all of these are true

METHODS OF STUDY

Have you enjoyed this study of the Book of Psalms? Do you wish to study further? If so, here are a few more suggestions.

1. Examine the authorship of the Book of Psalms.
2. Compare the “Hallel” psalms in Book 5.
3. Compare the “imprecatory psalms (see 35, 58 and 109).
4. Carefully examine the psalms with “Messianic” implications (see 2, 16, 45, 110, and 117).
5. Compare the “penitential” psalms (see 6, 32, 38, 39, 51, 130 and 142).
6. Compare the psalms that consider “God as King” (see 2, 24, 45, 47, 72, 93 and 110).

Allow God to examine your concept of worship as you study the Book of Psalms!

PRONUNCIATION GUIDE



NOTES

Aijeleth [EYE-juh-leth]
Alamothe [AL-uh-moth]
Altaschith [al-TAS-kith]
Asaph [AY-saf]
Ezrahite [ES-ra-hight]
Gittith [GI-tith]
Hallel [HAL-el]
Heman [HEH-man]
imprecatory [im-pri-KAY-tuh-ree]
Jonath-elem-rechokim [joh-nath-eelem-REE-koh-kim]
Jordan [JOHR-dihn]
Korah [KOHR-ah]
Lamentations [la-muhn-TAY-shunz]
Leannothe [LEE-an-oth]
Mahalath [MAY-ha-lath]
maschil [mas-KEL]
Messianic [mes-ee-AN-ik]
michtam [MIK-tam]
Muthlabben [muth-LAH-ben]
Neginoth [neh-GIN-ath]
Nehilothe NEE-uh-loth]
omnipresence [ahm-ni-PREZ-uns]
omniscience [ahm-NISH-uns]
penitential [peh-nuh-TEN-shul]
Psalmoi [PSAL-moi]
Psalms [SAAMZ]
Psalter [SAAL-tur]
Selah [suh-LAA]
Sennacherib [sen-AKH-er-ib]
Shahar [SHA-har]
Sheminith [SHEH-min-ith]
shiggaion [shi-GEYE-uhn]
Shir hamaaloth,[shir-ha-mah-AY-lot]
Shoshannim [SHO-sha-nuhm]
Shushan-eduth [shoo-SHAN-ed-uth]
Tehillim [te-HEE-leem]