

From the Garden to Glory

Psalms

Author: David, Asaph, the sons of Korah and others

Timeline: c. 1410 - 430 B.C.

Category: Poetical

Theme: Prayer, Praise and Worship

Overview:

The Psalms were written over a period of about a thousand years; however, most of them were written during the three hundred years from David to Hezekiah (about 1000–700 B.C.). The Psalms are often called “The Psalms of David,” but only about half (seventy-three) are directly attributed to the “sweet psalmist of Israel.”

The word *psalm* comes from a Greek word that means “a poem sung to musical accompaniment.” The book of Psalms served as the temple hymnal for the Jewish people.

Introduction:

Before beginning your study of the Psalms, consider the following questions and write your answers:

1. Which of the following is the most meaningful method of worship for you: singing worship songs, reading the Bible, prayer, memorizing and meditating on Scripture, other?
2. What is your favorite Psalm? Why?

3. Do you tend to be honest and sincere with God, speaking to Him as a treasured friend or do you usually just tell Him what you think He wants to hear?
4. Are you comfortable sharing all your thoughts and emotions with the Lord or do you hold back in certain areas?

As you read the book of Psalms, consider the following dedication from David Hocking's Meditations in the Psalms:

"For years the Psalms have been the early morning diet of the author of this volume. They have given him encouragement and hope when nothing else would. They have ministered to him in difficult situations, and at times when he felt he could not take another step. Through the study of these wonderful words of worship, praise and adoration, words of comfort, hope and deliverance, he came to the conclusion of what is now a principle for his life and understanding:

The root of every problem in the believer's life is a misunderstanding or a misapplication of Who God is or what He can do!

It seems only appropriate, therefore, to dedicate this volume to the great and wonderful God Who is exalted on every page. He is MAJESTY beyond every imagination; He is GLORY beyond all human understanding; He is LORD of all, the KING of the universe, and He is my SHEPHERD!"

Psalms of Law

Read Psalm 1 and Psalm 9

1. The Amplified Bible defines *blessed* as "happy, fortunate, prosperous and enviable." According to Psalm 1:1-3, what leads to being blessed? To whom do you look for wisdom and guidance? List one specific way that you are blessed today.

2. Look at the four "I wills" found in Psalm 9:1-2. What is one specific blessing for which *you* can...
 - ...praise the Lord with your whole heart?
 - ...tell of the Lord's marvelous works?
 - ...be glad and rejoice in the Lord?
 - ...sing praise to the Most High?

3. Meditate on Psalm 9:9. Look up the word *refuge* in a dictionary and write the definition. What "trouble" are you currently experiencing? How is the Lord your refuge?

Psalms of Creation

Read Psalm 29 and Psalm 104

1. Look at Psalm 29:11. How has the Lord given you strength? How has He blessed you with peace?

2. Look at Psalm 104:1-5. Commenting on these verses, David Hocking said:

Obviously there is nothing too hard for (God) to do. Perhaps the obstacles, problems or difficulties of life right now seem insurmountable. We usually feel that way when our focus is on our circumstances rather than on the greatness of God.

Make a list of the obstacles, problems or difficulties you are facing today. Take your list to the Lord, "casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you" (1 Peter 5:7)!

3. Read Psalm 104:33-34. For what are you "singing praise" to God today? What makes you "glad in Him?"

Psalms of Judgment

Read Psalm 52 and Psalm 53

1. Look at Psalm 52:1-5. How is the "mighty man" described? What will the Lord do to him? Comment on this quote from John MacArthur, "Ultimately, the wicked are in the hands of a holy God."
2. What does Psalm 52:7 say about the wicked man? Think about your own life. In what are you putting your trust today? How are you being strengthened?
3. Look at Psalm 53:1. What evidence would you give to the fool to prove the existence of God?

Psalms of Christ

Read Psalm 22, Psalm 40 and Psalm 41

1. Psalm 22 is one of the great Messianic psalms. Although David was writing about himself, these words also foreshadow the agony and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. As you meditate on this psalm, think about all that the Lord suffered because of His love for you. Make a note of any new insights you receive.
2. Look at Psalm 40:16. What happens to something when it is magnified? How is the Lord magnified in your life?
3. Read Psalm 41:1 from The Amplified Bible:
Blessed (happy, fortunate, to be envied) is he who considers the weak and the poor; the Lord will deliver him in the time of evil and trouble.

What does it mean to *consider the weak and the poor*? List one way you can do this today.

Psalms of Life

Read Psalm 3 and Psalm 31

1. Look at Psalm 3:3. How has the Lord been a shield for you? How has He lifted your head? Take time today to thank Him for His protection and provision.
2. Read Psalm 31:1-2. Look up the word *fortress* in a dictionary, and write the definition. How has the Lord been your fortress in times of adversity?
3. Look at Psalm 31:15. How does it impact your life to know that your *times are in the Lord's hand*? Comment on this quote from David Hocking:

David's remark, "My times are in Thy hand" is a wonderful reminder that God is in control of the events and circumstances of our lives. Our need is to trust Him fully.

Psalms of the Heart

Read Psalm 37 and Psalm 42

1. Look at Psalm 37:4. How do you *delight yourself in the Lord*? What *desires* has the Lord put in your heart?
2. Look at Psalm 37:1, 7, and 8. What do these verses say about fretting? What happens to you when you fret? List one thing you can do to avoid fretting.
3. Read Psalm 42:5-6. What was the psalmists' "cure" for discouragement? What does this mean in practical terms?

Psalms of God

Read Psalm 90 and Psalm 139

1. Look at Psalm 90:12. What does it mean to *number your days*? How do you do this? Be specific.
2. Look at Psalm 90:17. Ask the Lord to establish the work of your hands today. Write down anything He directs you to do. Later, make a note of what happened when you followed His direction.
3. Read Psalm 139 aloud as a prayer to the Lord. What does it mean to you to know that you are fully known and fully loved by God? What is your favorite verse in this psalm? Why is it meaningful to you?

Summary

As you conclude your study of the book of Psalms consider the following questions and write your answers:

1. What is the most important lesson you have learned from your study of this book? How can you apply this lesson in your life this week?
2. What "new insights" did you learn about the Lord and yourself from your study?
3. List one way in which your study caused you to do each of the following:

Praise and worship the Lord:

Confess an area of sin to the Lord:

Thank the Lord:

Ask for something from the Lord: