

COMMENTARY

BACKGROUND OF THE BOOK OF PSALMS:

This particular book was written by several men. 73 of the Psalms were credited to David; 12 to Asaph; 11 to the sons of Korah; 2 to Solomon (72,127); 1 to Moses (90); 1 to Ethan (89); and 50 are Anonymous. They are divided into 5 books: Psalms 1-41, 42-72, 73-89, 90-106, 107-150. This breakdown was given, even before the time that Jesus walked the face of the earth.

The content of this book; expresses the vast range of human emotions and feelings. Some prophesy the coming of Christ, some are based on historical events, some are the feeling of a repentant individual, some are prayers for the writer or someone else, some were acrostic [each line would begin with the next letter in the Hebrew alphabet, some praised God and some taught more about Him.

BOOK OF PSALMS

Psalm 1:

This particular psalm shows the blessings from studying and obeying the word of God. It accomplishes this by, contrasting the happiness of the one who turns from evil and serves God, with the one whose life is wicked.

Psalm 2

The Psalm shows man, as a whole, to be rebellious to God; whereas God is the one who is actually and decisively in control. Those ruling conspire against God which is seen as being futile due to the power of God and His Son. Man is warned against such rebellion.

Psalm 3:

This Psalm sees David crying out to God for help when his son Absalom tries to overthrow David and take over the kingdom. The situations for the request is given, followed by the realization that God who answers will protect and David can find security and freedom from fear, when he trusts in the Lord. Finally, David calls on God to help.

Psalm 4:

Here we find the writer demonstrating that trust in God allows one to truly rest and to have reason for confidence. God has proved Himself in the past and one who believes will find joy and peace because of their unwavering faith.

Psalm 5:

We find the writer convinced that those around are lying and flattering, while they are in the process of plotting against him. The writer call to God, who despises such evil, to defend him. The writer will worship and serve the Rewarder of the good.

Psalm 6:

In this psalm, the writer is ill and is troubled at the thought of dying. [Sheol, was the place that they felt they would go when they died. Here, they would be separated from God] The psalmist pleads with God for his life.

Psalm 7:

The psalmist turns himself over to God and asks God to vindicate him, since he is just. He wants God to punish the wicked and speaks of the fate of those who refuse to repent. He finally closes with a word of thanksgiving.

Psalm 8:

The psalmist marvels at God's creation and wonders as to why man, who appears so insignificant is given dominion over the other creatures. The psalms ends, as it began, with praise to God.

Psalm 9:

(This is one of the acrostic poems, where each line begins with the next letter of the 22 letter Hebrew alphabet. Here, though, the last letter is omitted)

This psalm is one of praise for God had executed justice and upheld the case of the righteous. The trouble was not totally past, but past experience gave the writer reason for hope.

Psalm 10:

The times were bad and it appeared that the evil were getting away with their deeds. The psalmist calls on God to help the poor, who appear the helpless victims. The writer is confident that God will defend the innocent and overturn the wicked.

Psalm 11:

The writer reminds that no matter what the danger, if one will trust in God they have no need to fear for God is still in control and will vindicate the righteous and judge the wicked.

Psalm 12:

The psalmist places his faith in the dependable promises of God compared to the empty promises and words of those around him.

Psalm 13:

It appears that through all the misery of the writer, he begins to wonder if God has forgotten about him. How much longer does he need to endure, he wonders. He wonders if death alone will bring an end to his suffering. He realizes though, that his past has taught him that he will again be blessed and have reason to praise and thank God.

Psalm 14:

The writer sees society as being vile and feels that all of mankind leans towards that type of lifestyle. He sees men going up against God, who not only exists, but will punish and avenge such behavior.

Psalm 15:

Here the writer answers the question of, "What does God expect from man?" He concludes that man needs to act right, speak right and have right relationships with others along with using his wealth in the proper way.

Psalm 16:

This psalm shows that the man who will follow God completely will find joy and security for the present and can rest assured about the future.

Psalm 17:

Here we see a man pleading his innocence and calling for God to punish those who are accusing and attacking him. (This psalm contains two items which are difficult to many: self-justification and vengeance. It needs to be realized that those who are writing are expressing their thoughts and not the will of God in the matter!)

Psalm 18:

Here David praises God for his victory (see also 11 Samuel 22). The love and praise that he expresses towards God shows how desperate David had felt. He owes all that he has to God.

Psalm 19:

God's universe is seen as displaying the glory of God. The psalmist goes from there to God's law which is so pure and brings wisdom to man. He then realizes his need for protection and cleansing from sin.

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Psalm 20:

This is a prayer by the writer and those who would later recite it, for the Lord to grant the victory to the king.

Psalm 21:

Here the psalmist and those who would recite, thank God for the king they have who rejoices in all of God's goodness and as for God's help so that the king will overcome his enemies. The king and the people join to praise God.

Psalm 22:

The opening words of this psalm were used by Jesus on the cross to express his anguish (Matthew 27:46). The terms that the psalmist used to describe his own agony of mind and body became an accurate picture of the last hours of Jesus. The psalmist only felt himself deserted by God (his confidence returned in verse 22), whereas Jesus experience of complete separation was real.

The psalmist despaired at God's silence and the situation he was facing. He alternates between this and hope, recalling how God has cared for him in the past. He concludes with a new assurance which he expresses through praise.

Psalm 23:

Here God is pictured as the Good Shepherd who provides His people with all that they need. He leads them through life and protects them from harm.

God is also pictured as the perfect host who feasts His people with good things.

Psalm 24:

This is a processional hymn (used by Israel as they marched towards Jerusalem or the place they were to worship). It is suggested that this may have been written when the ark was first carried into Jerusalem (II Samuel 6:12-15).

The whole world and everything in it is God's. The question is put forth, "Who is worthy to stand in His presence?" But, because God is the God of Jacob, who being a deceiver, God still used and made the founder of Israel, there is hope. All are to praise God for He is about to enter the city.

Psalm 25:

This is an acrostic psalm. It finds the writer being harassed by repeated attacks of his enemy and bothered by his own conscience. He turns to God for help and guidance, seeking to enjoy the love of God and the forgiveness from Him again.

Psalm 26:

The psalmist claim a consistent life of trust and obedience to God.

Psalm 27:

Here we find that the one who trusts and obeys God has nothing to fear for he knows where to turn and his hope is sure.

Psalm 28:

The psalmist is in danger and cries out for help and for God to punish the wicked who are the reason for his distress. His prayer turns to praise as he feels assured that God has heard and answered his prayer.

Psalm 29:

In the sounds of nature the psalmist hears the voice of God. Since God is the creator of all these things, all of heaven should sing His glory. He prays that God might bless His people.

Psalm 30:

The psalmist feels that he has a second chance at life, following his life being in danger. The easy times in his life had led to an independence but he now has things back into perspective and realizes his own helplessness. He now gladly and openly thanks God for what He has done for him.

Psalm 31:

The psalmist, in trial, turns to God as His refuge. Recalling the past, his trust is strengthened. He again returns to the present and turns to God with such renewed trust in God's goodness and love; that he is able to encourage others.

Psalm 32:

Having hid his sins, the psalmist feels a heavy burden of guilt. Having confessed and received forgiveness from God, he finds a new lightness as the old burden has been removed. Because of his experience, the psalmist encourages others also to pray to God with confidence.

Psalm 33:

Here, the writer calls for the use of instruments and for all people to praise God's character and power. He encourages them to stand in awe and to praise his complete rule over the affairs of men. He is to be praised for his constant care for his servants.

Psalm 34:

This is another acrostic psalm. The psalmist feels compelled to share with others, his experience of God's faithfulness to him. The psalmist had seen, in his life, that God gives life to those who honor Him, even if there are trials, God will care and bring that person through.

STUDY GUIDE

Book of Psalms:

Psalm 1:

1. Who does the psalmist say is blessed?
2. What does this individual delight in and meditate on day nad night?
3. What will happen to the way of the wicked?

Psalm 2:

4. Who do kings and rulers gather against?
5. What does God do in response?
6. What does God say to His Son?
7. What does verse 11 tell these rulers to do?

Psalm 3:

8. What did David feel were many?
9. What did David say, the Lord was around him?
10. Why did David lie down, sleep and then awake again?
11. What comes form the Lord?

Psalm 4:

12. What 3 things did David ask of God, in verse 1?
13. Who has the Lord set apart for Himself?
14. Who make David to dwell in safety?

Psalm 5:

15. How often did David pray and lay his requests before God?
16. Who does God destroy and abhor?
17. What did David ask God to do to his enemies?
18. What did David ask for those who take refuge in God?

Psalm 6:

19. Why did David want the Lord to be merciful to him?
20. Why did David tell those who were evil to leave him?

Psalm 7:

21. What was David afraid, those pursuing him, would do?
22. What did David ask God to bring an end to and what did he ask to make secure?
23. Why would David give thanks to the Lord?

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Book of Psalms:

Psalm 8:

24. From what, had God ordained praise?
25. What did David consider?
26. What question did David then ask?
27. What responsibility or authority did God entrust to man?

Psalm 9:

28. What would David tell?
29. What had God done to the nations and the wicked?
30. How will God judge and govern?
31. Who had the Lord never forsaken?
32. What will not perish and what will never be forgotten?

Psalm 10:

33. What did the writer think God was doing?
34. What does the wicked say to himself about God?
35. What does the writer call for God to do to the wicked and the evil man?
36. What does God do for the afflicted?

Psalm 11:

37. What does the Lord examine?
38. What will the Lord do to the wicked?
39. Who will see the Lord's face?

Psalm 12:

40. What did David feel, no longer existed?
41. What does David say the Lord will do for His people?

Psalm 13:

42. What did David feel that God was doing to him?
43. What did David trust and rejoice in?

Psalm 14:

44. What does the fool say in his heart?
45. What have all done?
46. Where is God present?

Psalm 15:

47. Who does David say may dwell in the Lord's sanctuary?

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Psalm 16:

48. What did David say he had, apart from God?
49. Whose sorrows will increase?
50. Why will David not be shaken?
51. What 2 things did David say God would not allow to happen?
52. What had God done for David, according to verse 11?

Psalm 17:

53. What had David resolved that his mouth would not do?
54. Who does the Lord save by His right hand?
55. What was David convinced that he would see?

Psalm 18:

56. What 5 things does David say God is to him?
57. What did David do in his distress?
58. Why did God rescue David?
59. What is perfect and flawless?
60. Who did God exalt David above?
61. Since God had exalted David, what did David say he would do?

Psalm 19:

62. What declare and proclaim the glory of God and the work of His hands?
63. What will make even the simple, wise?
64. What did David want to be pleasing in God's sight?

Psalm 20:

65. What was wished upon the king when he was in distress?
66. What did Israel trust in?

Psalm 21:

67. What had the Lord granted the king?
68. What would Israel sing and praise?

Psalm 22:

69. What question is first asked?
70. What did all who saw David, do?
71. What did David say they did to his hands & feet, and also his garments?
72. Where would David declare the Lord's name and praise Him?
73. What belongs to the Lord?

Psalm 23:

74. What does the Lord restore?
75. Why would David fear no evil?
76. What would follow David all the days of his life?

Psalm 24:

77. What is the Lord's?
78. Who can stand in the Lord's holy place?
79. Who is the King of Glory?

Psalm 25:

80. Who would never be put to shame?
81. What did David want the Lord to teach him?
82. What did David want the Lord, not to remember?
83. What are the ways of the Lord?

Psalm 26:

84. Why did David want the Lord to vindicate him?
85. What did David walk continually in?
86. What did David abhor?
87. Since David led a blameless life, what 2 things did he request of God?

Psalm 27:

88. Why did David have no need to fear or be afraid?
89. What one thing did David ask of the Lord?
90. Even though his parents might forsake him, who did David say would receive him?

Psalm 28:

91. Who did David want the Lord to repay?
92. Why did David say, "Praise be to the Lord"?

Psalm 29:

93. What are the mighty to ascribe to the Lord?
94. What of the Lord's is described over and over, as being powerful?
95. What does the Lord do for His people?

Psalm 30:

96. Why did David say he would exalt the Lord?
97. How long does the Lord's favor last?
98. What did the Lord turn David's wailing and sackcloth, into?

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Psalm 31:

99. Into whose hands, did David commit his spirit?
100. What did the Lord know, of David's?
101. What did David become, because of all his enemies?
102. What did the Lord show to David when he was in a besieged city?
103. What does the Lord do for the faithful and for the proud?

Psalm 32:

104. Who is blessed?
105. What happened when David confessed his transgressions to the Lord?
106. Who does the Lord's unfailing love surround?

Psalm 33:

107. How are the righteous to sing to the Lord?
108. What is the word of the Lord?
109. What happened when the Lord spoke and commanded?
110. Upon whom, are the eyes of the Lord?

Psalm 34:

111. What happened when David sought the Lord?
112. What do those who fear the Lord, lack?
113. What did David tell them to do if they loved life & desired to see many good days?
114. What happens when the righteous cry out?
115. Who does the Lord redeem?