

## Quarter one: The Book of Psalms

### Lesson 1—How to Read the Psalms

#### Sunday: The Psalms in Ancient Israel's Worship

December 31, 2023

- **Last Quarter:** “God’s Mission: My Mission”
  - The missionary heart of God & how we can develop the spirit of being a missionary
  
- **This Quarter:** “The Book of Psalms”
  - Psalms:
    - The Psalter was the hymnal for ancient Israel’s worship
      - Can be spoken or sung in public or private
      - Musical annotations found throughout the psalms suggest they were mostly sung as hymns in the context of worship
  
    - Explore the attributes & acts of God
      - He is King, Judge
        - Creator, Sustainer
        - Savior / Redeemer
        - Healer, Refuge, Shepherd
      - He is great, powerful, eternal, holy
        - Omnipresent, Omniscient
        - Righteous, just, faithful, gracious
        - Patient, merciful, compassionate, loving
        - Forgiving, good
  
    - Explore the gamut of human emotion, esp as it relates to God
      - Conflicting themes of God’s presence & absence
      - Joy & sadness
      - Fear & frustration
      - Repentance & forgiveness
      - Peace & anxiety
      - Depression & praise
      - Everything comes back to praise – central theme of book = praise
  
    - Most of the Bible speaks to us
      - Prayer is us talking to God
      - God’s Word is God talking back to us
  
    - The Psalms speak for us and with us
      - Expresses our heart to God
  
  - From lesson: “The Psalms have served as the prayer book and hymn book to generations of believers.”
  
  - Martin Luther: “Where can one find nobler words to express joy than in the Psalms of praise or gratitude? In them, you can see into the hearts of all the saints as if you were looking at a lovely pleasure-garden, or were gazing into heaven...or where can one find

more profound, more penitent, more sorrowful words in which to express grief than in the Psalms of lamentation? In these, you see into the hearts of all the saints as if you were looking at death or gazing into hell... it is therefore easy to understand why the Book of Psalms is the favourite book of all the saints. For every man on every occasion can find in it Psalms which fit his needs, which he feels to be as appropriate as if they had been set there just for his sake.”

- Psalms = collection of 150 poems
  - Both Hebrew & the Septuagint contain 150 Psalms but numbers differ slightly
    - Most English translations follow the Hebrew numbering of the Psalms
  - The Psalter focuses on the inner attitude & spiritual experience of the sanctuary worshipers
  
- 2 ways to divide the book of Psalms: books or types
  - 5 books of the Psalms (& corresponding theme for book of the Torah)
    - Each section concludes with a doxology
    - Book 1: Ps 1 – 41 = Genesis
    - Book 2: Ps 42 – 72 = Exodus
    - Book 3: Ps 73 – 89 = Leviticus
    - Book 4: Ps 90 – 106 = Numbers
    - Book 5: Ps 107 – 150 = Deuteronomy
  
  - Types of Psalms
    - Individual prayers for help (or “laments”)
    - Community prayers for help (or “laments”)
    - Individual songs of thanksgiving & praise
    - Community songs of thanksgiving & praise
    - Hymns honoring God the Creator
    - Hymns honoring God the King
    - Songs of trust
    - Songs of Zion
    - Royal psalms
    - Pilgrimage songs
    - Liturgies (rituals for public worship)
    - Wisdom psalms
    - Torah psalms
  
  - Psalms
    - Author: most written by David
      - Some by other authors, contributors, musicians
    - Time period: most written during the time of King David
      - But others written from the Exodus to the Exile
      - Probably collected by scribes like Ezra after the exile to produce the final compilation
  
- Author, Dragoslava Santrac, PhD in Old Testament
  - Managing editor of the *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists* at the GC

- **This week: “How to Read the Psalms”**
  - Are the Psalms the Word of God?
    - Are they inspired?
    - 2 Tim 3:16, 17 – “**All** Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, (17) that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”
      - All = *pas* = each and every one
    - 2 Pet 1:21 – “for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”
    - **Memory Text:** “Then He said to them, ‘These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.’ And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.” (Luke 24:44, 45, NKJV)
      - Jesus, speaking to disciples in the upper room (day of His resurrection)
        - After Emmaus
      - 3 main sections of Hebrew Scriptures
        - Law
        - Prophets
        - Writings
          - Included 3 poetry books
          - 5 rolls
          - Historical books
      - Psalms was considered the most important of the Writings – title made to stand for the group
  - This week, “how to read the Psalms”
    - Inspiration of the Psalms
    - Purpose of Psalms in worship
    - Authors of the Psalms
    - Types of Psalms
    - Poetry of the Psalms
    - Emotions of the Psalms
    - Prayers of the Psalms
    - God-centeredness of the Psalms

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The week in brief:

- 1. **Sunday:** The Psalms in Ancient Israel’s Worship (Jill)
  - Purpose of the Psalms in worship
- 2. **Monday:** Meet the Psalmists (Ryan)
  - Who wrote the Psalms - & the Holy Spirit who inspired them
  - Names in the superscription: 8 names listed
    - Authors, contributors, compilers, musicians, etc

- 3. **Tuesday:** A Song for Every Season (James)
  - Types of Psalms & poetry of the Psalms
    - Parallelism, Imagery, Merism, Wordplays, musical annotation (Selah)
- 4. **Wednesday:** Inspired Prayers (John D)
  - The emotions & prayers that the Psalms contain
- 5. **Thursday:** The World of the Psalms (SQ)
  - The God-centeredness of the Psalms – both in life & in worship
    - Centrality of worship in the entire community’s life

## Sunday: The Psalms in Ancient Israel’s Worship

1 Chron 16:7; Neh 12:8; Ps 18:1; Ps 30:1; Ps 92:1; Ps 95:2; Ps 105:2; Col 3:16; James 5:13

- **7 Purposes of the Psalms in worship**
  - 1 Chron 16:7 – “On that day David first delivered this **psalm** into the hand of Asaph and his brethren, to thank the Lord:”
    - David author of this Psalm – gave lyrics to Asaph
    - Asaph = one of three leaders of the temple singers
      - Psalms connected with worship
      - Music connected with worship
      - Music connected with the Psalms
    - Following **Psalm** quotes from Ps 105
    - Ark was just brought to Jerusalem & placed in the midst of the tabernacle
      - Vs 37: “So he (David) left Asaph & his brothers there before the ark of the covenant of the Lord to minister before the ark regularly, as every day’s work required.”
    - **Takeaway #1: Music is an integral part of worship**
      - Make the Psalms a part of your daily worship
    - Ps 95:1 – “Oh come, let us sing to the Lord! Let us shout joyfully to the Rock of our salvation.”
    - Ps 105:2 – “Sing to Him, sing psalms to Him; talk of all His wondrous works!”
  - Neh 12:8 – “Moreover the Levites were Jeshua, Binnui, Kadmiel, Sherebiah, Judah, and Mattaniah who led the thanksgiving psalms, he and his brethren.”
    - In the restoration of Jerusalem, not just the wall restored, but worship was restored
    - **Takeaway #2: Thanksgiving is an integral part of worship**
      - Make thankfulness (through the Psalms) a part of your daily worship
  - Ps 18:1 – “I will love You, O Lord, my strength.”
    - David author of this Psalm – as seen from 2 Sam 22
      - David wrote the words of “this song, on the day when the Lord had delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul.” (2 Sam 22:1)

