



DAILY
B I B L E G U I D E

The Book of Psalms

Days 168-195 of a Yearly Bible Reading Program

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Daily Bible Reading Plan

Day	Passage	☒
Day 168	Psalm 1-8	☐
Day 169	Psalm 9-16	☐
Day 170	Psalm 17-20	☐
Day 171	Psalm 21-25	☐
Day 172	Psalm 26-31	☐
Day 173	Psalm 32-35	☐
Day 174	Psalm 36-39	☐
Day 175	Psalm 40-45	☐
Day 176	Psalm 46-50	☐
Day 177	Psalm 51-57	☐
Day 178	Psalm 58-64	☐
Day 179	Psalm 65-68	☐
Day 180	Psalm 69-72	☐
Day 181	Psalm 73-77	☐
Day 182	Psalm 78-79	☐
Day 183	Psalm 80-85	☐
Day 184	Psalm 86-89	☐
Day 185	Psalm 90-95	☐
Day 186	Psalm 96-102	☐
Day 187	Psalm 103-105	☐
Day 188	Psalm 106-107	☐
Day 189	Psalm 108-114	☐
Day 190	Psalm 115-118	☐
Day 191	Psalm 119	☐
Day 192	Psalm 120-132	☐
Day 193	Psalm 133-139	☐
Day 194	Psalm 140-145	☐
Day 195	Psalm 146-150	☐

Introduction to Hebrew Poetry

The books of Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, and Lamentations are all written as Hebrew poetry. There are of course other portions of Scripture that contain poetry, but these are almost entirely that. In modern English, we use patterns of rhymes and accents to add artistic beauty to our poetry. In ancient Hebrew there is no rhyme or rhythm. The way I like to describe it is that it rhymes ideas. Each verse is either a couplet or triplet of ideas and imagery that enhances the meaning.

Welcome to the Book of Psalms!

The Book of Psalms is a collection of 150 Hebrew songs. There is a wide range of types and purposes among them. Practically, the Psalms serve to form our mind and affections. We see honest and true expressions for practically any human emotion, and these are guided to turn the heart and head back toward God. Put yourself in the place of the writer of each. See how well these words guide us when in situations like them.

A few quick facts about Psalms:

- There are multiple authors of these Psalms. About half can be attributed to David. Other named writers are Asaph, Moses, Heman, Ethan , and Solomon. Close to one third are anonymous, though many of these are unofficially attributed to David also.
- Psalms is divided into 5 books. Not all Bibles that are printed have these divisions. Some try to link these thematically to the five books of Moses, but I honestly fail to see that connection.
 - Book 1 – Psalms 1-41
 - Book 2 – Psalms 42-72
 - Book 3 – Psalms 73-89
 - Book 4 – Psalms 90-106
 - Book 5 – Psalms 107-150
- There is much to be said not just about the Psalms themselves, but also about how they are ordered and presented. Each book has thematic elements that are introduced in their first psalm and concluded in the final psalm. These are sometimes very faint and difficult to discern, but the psalms are not just randomly placed where they are.
- Some psalms include a superscription with information about the psalm, its author, its setting, or its purpose.
- I believe the key verses are the contents of Psalm 1.

Psalm 1 Notes

This psalm is the key to the entire book. Everything that follows is built on the themes introduced here of the righteous being blessed and the wicked being cursed. I think of these as two paths which man may choose to travel.

vs. 1-2 – The opening lines establish a division between the righteous and the wicked. The righteous man is blessed by God. He is separated from sinners. He loves the Law of God and allows it to guide to his steps.

vs. 3-4 – We now contrast the righteous and the wicked. The righteous are compared to a tree that is healthy and growing. They are succored by God, established firmly, produce fruit, and are faithful. The wicked, on the other hand, are the complete opposite. They are like the chaff, the dried husks that fell away from harvested grain and were counted worthless.

vs. 5-6 - The ends of righteous and wicked are displayed. God will uphold the righteous in this life or the next. God will punish the wicked in this life or the next.

Psalm 2 Notes

Psalm 2 is attributed to David in Acts 4:25. It is meant to be paired with Psalm 1. The connections between the two are numerous. Here we see the climax between the two paths in Psalm 1. It is also prophetic in pointing to the Messiah and the establishment of His kingdom.

vs. 1-3 – The wicked of the earth are united in their rebellion against God. They rebel against His authority. In contrast to the righteous who meditate on the Word of God, these spend their time trying to free themselves from the dictates of an almighty God.

vs. 4-6 – God responds to the rebellion of the wicked by laughing at them. Did they possibly think they could do anything against Him? His plans will still be accomplished. This is specifically seen in the establishment of a king in Jerusalem. Who is this king? It is not David or the other historical kings. It is Christ the Messiah.

vs. 7-9 – God proclaims the coming of the Messiah and His work. He is the Son of God. He will rule over the entire world. He will vanquish all His enemies before Him. This was not fulfilled when Christ first came but will be true when He returns to establish His Millennial Kingdom.

vs. 10-12 – Here is the declaration of God's expectations from mankind. They are to cease their rebellion and surrender to Him. They are to serve Him and fear Him. How is this done? By embracing Christ the Son. He is the division between the righteous and the wicked.

Psalm 3 Notes

This psalm was written while David was on the run during Absalom's rebellion (II Samuel 15:17-23). David is drawing a parallel between his situation and the machinations of the wicked from 2:1-3.

vs. 1-2 – David surrounded by his enemies and all hope seems lost. There is some debate on the meaning of *Selah*, but I believe it means to pause and meditate on what was just said. In this case, to consider how those around David lack the faith he has.

vs. 3-4 – David expresses his faith in God, that God will hear and respond in his time of distress.

vs. 5-6 – Here is the fruit of David's confidence in God. He could rest peacefully. He would not fear though surrounded by what seems a hopeless situation.

vs. 7-8 – David calls on God to deliver him and defeat his enemies. He knows that his only hope is in God and that He cares for His own (the righteous).

Psalm 4 Notes

This psalm by David is addressed to the chief musician of the Levites, showing that it was purposed as a song to be used in public worship in the Temple. It is to be accompanied by stringed instruments (*neginoth*). It appears to be paired with Psalm 3, fulfilling its calls for deliverance with calls to witness it.

vs. 1 – David desires that the Lord hear his present and future cries for aid just as He had in the past.

vs. 2 – David calls the wicked to turn from their empty pursuit of him. It is a vain thing to attempt to destroy the righteous.

vs. 3-5 – David calls on the wicked to stand and see the Lord's power in his deliverance. They should stop and ponder the evidence and turn their hearts to God.

vs. 6 – Still there were many who denied God. To these David calls for God to shine his favor on and reveal his goodness to them.

vs. 7-8 – David compares the joy of the Lord to that of thanksgiving celebrations after harvest time. He declares his confidence in God and rests in His care.

Psalm 5 Notes

This psalm of David was to be used in the Temple accompanied by wind instruments (*Nehiloth*). In this psalm the differences between the righteous and wicked are contrasted.

vs. 1-2 – David calls on God to hear his not only his prayer but the content of his meditation. His mind has been consumed with the things of God, and it is now overflowing.

vs. 3-7 – David recognizes the character of the God on whom he calls. God will not uphold the wicked and will punish them. David knows he is not among them and confidently approaches God.

vs. 8-11 – David appeals directly to God. He asks for deliverance and guidance among his numerous enemies. He draws a line between himself and them. He is the righteous that will be blessed, they are the wicked that will be cursed.

vs. 12 – David closes his prayer in the confidence of God's character and promises. God will deliver David and the righteous.

Psalm 6 Notes

This psalm by David is another for singing in the Temple. It is to be accompanied with instruments on *Sheminith*, (“eighth”) . The exact meaning is obscure, probably having something to do with the manner the psalm was sung and played. Some think this is the name of a tune, but the pairing of tune and text like that was unknown in ancient Israel and impractical with Hebrew poetry. This psalm may be classified as penitential, being the words of one humbly seeking forgiveness and deliverance from God. David is pleading that God does not treat him like the wicked that attack him.

vs. 1-3 – The purpose and setting of these words is not given. If it to be observed in context of the psalms building to this, it may be related to David being attacked and oppressed by the wicked. He does not point any blame at them directly but acknowledges that they are moving at God’s approval. Therefore, he pleads with God for mercy and not his enemies.

vs. 4-5 – David calls on God to turn from chastening him to blessing him. He pleads that God will not receive glory if he is killed.

vs. 6-7 – What dramatic words here describe David’s state! David is broken, lacking the confidence he stated in Psalm 5.

vs. 8-10 – David ends with a call for God to deliver him. God would hear his prayer and his enemies would be vanquished.

Psalm 7 Notes

This psalm was written by David as a *Shiggaion*. The exact meaning of that term is obscure; it has something to do with the structure and purpose of the psalm. The occasion for its composition is not immediately clear. Cush the Benjaminite is not found in Scripture. He could be one that accused David before Saul while he was on the run from him. There are some parallels to the words of Shimei in II Samuel 16:5-8, but the evidence is not conclusive to resolutely tie it to that event. David had many enemies and many that plotted against him throughout his life, and this very well could be an occasion not preserved in the record of Scripture. The content of the psalm is a cry for deliverance and punishment of the wicked that oppress him.

vs. 1-2 – David trusts in God and relies on Him to deliver him from his enemies. He acknowledges that without God he would easily be destroyed.

vs. 3-5 – Here it is revealed that the accusation made against David was that he had hurt someone who was in good standing with him. David knows his innocence in regards to the charges. He calls on God to punish him if it were true. He only says that because he is confident it is not. He would otherwise readily submit to God's judgment.

vs. 6-8 – David calls God to action to judge the wicked as promised in Psalm 1. He puts himself at God's mercy knowing that he would not be judged as the wicked.

vs. 9-10 – David's desires are not selfish. He is calling for justice to be done. He knows that he is safe from God's fury because he is among the righteous.

vs. 11-13 – God is the supreme Judge. The wicked will be punished and cannot escape it. But notice here also in vs. 12 that God gives the wicked the opportunity to repent. No man is fated to remain wicked. All may repent of the sin and find salvation in God.

vs. 14-16 – While David was innocent and avoiding the traps set by his enemies in the opening of this psalm, he now sees the machinations of the wicked turning on their maker. The evil they thought to pour out on David would be returned to them.

vs. 17 – David will praise the Lord when His righteous judgment is poured out, so that the wicked are punished and the righteous exalted. He is confident in his faith that this will happen.

Psalm 6 Notes

This psalm is another by David that was written for use in the Temple. It is to be sung with *Gittith*, which are stringed instruments that originated in Gath. This psalm is an outpouring of praise, perhaps that which was promised by David in 7:17.

vs. 1 – David praises God for His marvelous name and acknowledges His exalted position above all creation.

vs. 2-4 – This is a most interesting section. Out of the weakness of infants God gives strength to overthrow the enemy. It is an artistic way of saying, “my strength is made perfect in weakness.” (II Corinthians 12:9). Could man deliver himself? No more than a helpless infant could! The contrast is set up and expounded on between the weakness of man and the might of God.

vs. 5-8 – Through His grace, God exalted feeble man to a place “a little lower than the angels” in strength and empowered them to subdue the earth. All other life on earth was made inferior to man. How did this happen? Because God willed it and performed it. Otherwise, we could not accomplish anything beneficial to our race.

vs. 9 – The psalm closes with a repetition of its opening words of praises.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 168

I close today by reinforcing a claim I made. I am convinced that the key to understanding the psalms is Psalm 1. Everything that follows may be categorized into its discussion of the righteous and the wicked. The best life is to walk in the way of righteous set forth in 1:1 and both illustrated and described in everything that follows in the next 149 psalms. I go so far as to say that if I had to choose one book of the Bible to guide the Christian life it would be Psalms. If I had to choose one chapter, it would be Psalm 1 (as a side note, do not refer to these as chapters because they are rightfully identified as psalms). In God's eyes there are only two classifications of man as shown in these verses. Walk in the way of righteous and abhor the seat of wickedness.

Hymn for Day 168

Our hymn today is a metrical versification of Psalm 1 by Isaac Watts. I chose it first, because I want to again reiterate the importance of that psalm to understanding everything that follows it, and second, because I think it illustrates how beautiful the psalms are. These words were penned by perhaps the greatest English hymn writer, yet they are no match for David's own. I love the idea of adapting the texts of the psalms into our poetical and music styles, but they remain pale imitations of the original masterpiece.

*Blest is the Man who shuns the Place
Where Sinners love to meet;
Who fears to tread their wicked Ways,
And hates the Scoffer's Seat:*

*But in the Statutes of the Lord
Has plac'd his chief Delight;
By Day he reads or hears the Word,
And meditates by Night.*

*He like a Plant of gen'rous Kind,
By living Waters set,
Safe from the Storms and blasting Wind,
Enjoys a peaceful State.*

*Green as the Leaf, and ever fair
Shall his Profession shine;
While Fruit of Holiness appear
Like Clusters on the Vine.*

*Not so the Impious and Unjust;
What vain Designs they form!
Their Hopes are blown away like Dust,
Or Chaff before the Storm.*

*Sinners in Judgment shall not stand
Amongst the Sons of Grace,
When Christ the Judge at his right Hand,
Appoints his Saints a Place.*

*His Eye beholds the Path they tread,
His Heart approves it well;
But crooked Ways of Sinners lead
Down to the Gates of Hell.*

Psalm 9 Notes

This psalm is by David and meant for use in public worship in the Temple. There is a further description in the superscription of “upon Muthlabben”. Once again, the exact meaning and purpose of this term is not immediately clear and there are various interpretations offered. It literally means “death of a son” or “death of a champion”. I think it is not a musical term but describing the setting when the psalm was composed. It could refer the death of Absalom, but that is conjecture based the psalms and themes preceding it. This psalm is a triumphal song of praise.

vs. 1-2 – An outpouring of praise opens the psalm. We will see why as we progress.

vs. 3-4 – David anticipates that God will deliver him and God will be the Righteous Judge.

vs. 5-6 – We see the enforcement of the judgment David just foresaw. The wicked are crushed by God.

vs. 7-8 – God sits on high and will be the Judge of all.

vs. 9-10 – Though God executes judgment, the righteous need not fear him. He is a refuge for all that seek Him.

vs. 11-12 – Praise for God for executing judgment and delivering the innocent.

vs. 13-14 – Seeing God’s past deliverance and the praise poured out for it, David begins God for deliverance in his present condition and promises praise to follow it.

vs. 15-16 – God turns the machinations of the wicked against them. Reminds me of Haman’s gallows.

vs. 17-18 – God may be longsuffering, but His patience has an end. The cries of the oppressed will be answered.

vs. 19-20 – The psalm closes with an urgent appeal for God to move to judge the wicked and deliver the righteous.

Psalm 10 Notes

This psalm has no author, setting, or direction given with it. It is a call for God to deliver the oppressed.

vs. 1-5 – The psalm begins with an indictment of the wicked for their pride. That pride is manifested in their rebellion against God.

vs. 6-11 – Next, we see the plans of the wicked, how he lays in wait to pounce and do evil.

vs. 12-15 – Here is the cry of the righteous against the wicked for God to execute justice and end their evil ways.

vs. 16-18 – God is exalted through His dispensing of justice. The response of the righteous is both to praise Him and to reinforce their humility. This humility is contrasted to the pride of the wicked earlier.

Psalm 11 Notes

This psalm of David for public worship. It describes the confidence of the righteous in God's character when the evil men lurk about.

vs. 1-3 – David describes being threatened by the wicked and responds to those who tell him to not trust in God's deliverance. The foundations being destroyed in vs. 3 alludes to the destruction of defensive walls. David is being attacked and there is no earthly shield to find refuge under.

vs. 4-7 – God looks down and sees the situation. He delivers the righteous and crushes the wicked.

Psalm 12 Notes

This psalm is by David and is meant for public worship. Like, Psalm 6, it is to be performed “upon Sheminith”, that is, “the eighth”, for which we have no sound definition. This psalm is an expression of faith amid dark times.

vs. 1 – David sees himself among the dwindling numbers of the faithful, sort of like Elijah in I Kings 19. Darkness seems to be winning the day as the light is dimming.

vs. 2-4 – The wicked work their evil through their words. Flattery and deception are their tools. They believe they can talk themselves out of any situation.

vs. 5 – God moved to deliver the oppressed from the wicked.

vs. 6-7 – David responds to God’s words of action. He compares them to the purest silver. This is contrast to the corruption of the words of the wicked previously. There is not misdirection in God’s declarations. Now vs. 7 is interpreted two ways, depending on who you interpret “them” to be. It could be about the words of God in vs. 6, which is plausible and true. It could also be about the oppressed in vs. 5, which to me is the better fit in context.

vs. 8 – This verse is a mirror to vs. 1 describing the setting. The righteous are few and the wicked are many. Not only are they numerous, but they are prosperous.

Psalm 13 Notes

This psalm is by David and is meant for public worship. This psalm is a cry to God for aid.

vs. 1-2 – David opens by asking “how long” four different times. He has been oppressed for some time and longs for God to deliver him.

vs. 3-4 – David now requests three things of the Lord: to consider him, to answer him, and to “lighten mine eyes” (give strength or understanding to him). Three reasons are given for these requests: that he not die, that the enemy not boast against God, and the enemy to celebrate David’s destruction.

vs. 5-6 – David closes by acknowledge three of his own actions: he had trusted in God, he will rejoice in God’s deliverance, and he will praise God for His goodness.

Psalm 14 Notes

This psalm is by David and is meant for public worship in the Temple. This psalm exposes the vanity of wickedness.

vs. 1-3 – It is the biggest fool who not only denies God existence but lives their life without regard to Him. Without God, there is no hope for man to prevent him from fulfilling the depths of his depravity. Paul will quote in Romans 3 from these verses to establish the fact that all men are sinners.

vs. 4-6 – Here is described the guilt of the wicked. They are caught red-handed and can offer no excuse.

vs. 7 – Here David looks beyond some temporary deliverance to the ultimate deliverance of the Jews when the Messiah reigns.

Psalm 15 Notes

This psalm is by David. This psalm described the character and relationships of the righteous.

vs. 1-3 – The description here of the righteous is not about their actions, or lack thereof. Those actions are based on the heart. The character of a person is both who they are and what they do. Someone who is not righteous may mimic someone that is for a short time, but they cannot deny their nature.

vs. 4-5 – Here the relationships of the righteous are examined. The wicked are justly condemned while the righteous are respected. He keeps his word to his fellow man and does not abuse them for gain. The person who walks the path of righteousness is blessed by God (compare to Psalm 1).

Psalm 16 Notes

This psalm is by David and is described as a *michtam*. Once again, there is some debate as to the meaning and purpose of this. Some translate it as “writing” or even “engraving”. Some find relation to the word for gold and call these “golden psalms”. This psalm concerns the blessedness of refuge in God for the righteous.

vs. 1-4 – David calls on God to protect him. He speaks to God and tells him that he has been good to the people God loves (the righteous). He has separated from the idolators.

vs. 5-9 – Here are described the blessings found in God. We see in vs. 5-6 a description of receiving an inheritance of land, such as when the land was divided out by Joshua. The wicked may inherit destruction, but the righteous have a forever home with God. God gives instruction that guides his steps. The Lord is present with the believer and will not lose him. Finally, in vs. 9 is the hope of the resurrection.

vs. 10-11 – These final verses describe the resurrection mentioned in vs. 9. It is both personal and prophetic. It is personal in that it is the hope of the believer to be raised to eternal life and the beauty of heaven. I believe that the Old Testaments saints did not go directly to Heaven but stayed in a temporary place until Christ’s resurrection (see Luke 16:19-31 as one evidence for this). It is prophetic, in that is applied to Christ in Acts 2:27-31 and 13:35-38. Christ died, but before His body could decay He was raised from the dead.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 169

One of the common themes we have seen is that of deliverance. So often we express with our words that we have faith in God but do not actually rely on Him. Have an unexpected bill? No need to pray, just put it on a credit card! There are so many situations like this where believers become what I call practical atheists. It is not that they do now know or even believe in God, but their lives are too often lived as if He is not there or is powerless.

Hymn for Day 169

Our hymn today is “Oh, To Be Over Yonder!”, written by Florence Armstrong in 1862 and first published in 1865. We closed our reading with the blessed hope of the resurrection and life in Heaven, so it seemed only fitting to carry on that theme.

*Oh, to be over yonder!
In that land of wonder,
Where the angel voices mingle,
And the angel harpers ring;
To be free from pain and sorrow,
And the anxious, dread tomorrow,
To rest in light and sunshine
In the presence of the King.
Oh, to be over yonder,
In that land of wonder,
There to be forever
In the presence of the King.*

*Oh, to be over yonder!
My yearning heart grows fonder
Of looking to the east, to see
The blessed daystar bring
Some tidings of the waking,
The cloudless, pure day breaking;
My heart is yearning--yearning
For the coming of the King.
Oh, to be over yonder,
In that land of wonder,
There to be forever
In the presence of the King.*

*Oh, to be over yonder!
Alas! I sigh and wonder
Why clings my poor, weak, sinful heart
To any earthly thing;
Each tie of earth must sever,
And pass away forever;
But there's no more separation
In the presence of the King.
Oh, to be over yonder,
In that land of wonder,
There to be forever
In the presence of the King.*

*Oh, when shall I be dwelling
Where angel voices, swelling
In triumphant hallelujahs,
Make the vaulted heavens ring?
Where the pearly gates are gleaming,
And the morning-star is beaming?
Oh, when shall I be yonder,
In the presence of the King?
Oh, to be over yonder,
In that land of wonder,
There to be forever
In the presence of the King.*

*Oh, I shall soon be yonder,
Tho' lonely here I wander,
Yearning for the welcome summer--
Longing for the bird's fleet wing;
The midnight may be dreary,
And the heart be worn and weary,
But there's no more shadow yonder
In the presence of the King.
Oh, to be over yonder,
In that land of wonder,
There to be forever
In the presence of the King.*

Psalm 17 Notes

This psalm is a prayer of David. It is an appeal for heavenly aid from earthly enemies.

vs. 1-7 – David calls out to the Lord. We do not see it until later but once again he is troubled by the wicked around him. He makes the case for the Lord to hear him based on the character of God and David's integrity. David is not being boastful but establishing himself among the righteous.

vs. 8-12 – The reason for David's plea is shown. He is surrounded by the wicked and desires that God should shield him from their attacks.

vs. 13-15 – David's request is made clear. He asks for deliverance from the wicked and for their plans to be disappointed in defeat. In vs. 14 the wicked are described, who focus on this life and greedily devour the blessings of God which should turn them to faith.

Countering the wicked, in vs. 15 David says that he will focus on God's presence and sees beyond this world into Heaven.

Psalm 18 Notes

This psalm is by David and intended for public worship. It was composed when David finally had peace from his enemies and Saul, Reese's Chronological Bible places it after Saul stopped chasing David in I Samuel 27:2-4. There is another version of this psalm found in II Samuel 22. I think this was something of a theme song for David that he used through much of his life and went through some variations based on his experiences. It is a song of grateful praise.

vs. 1-3 – God is exalted in the opening verses as David's sure hope and refuge. Through faith and experience he knew that the Lord would hear and answer prayers in desperate situations.

vs. 4-5 – Here the gravity of the situation is described that David had been delivered from. He is not speaking poetically. His life was in danger so many times.

vs. 6 – In that desperate hour, David's prayer is heard. The temple mentioned here I either referring to Heaven or the Tabernacle because this certainly predates Solomon's Temple. Sometimes David speaks of the coming Temple in way that anticipates its existence, but this does not seem to be the case here.

vs. 7-15 – God responded to David's call in an awe-inspiring display of this might and power. The description harkens back to events when Moses and the children of Israel were camped at Sinai.

vs. 16-19 – God responds to David prayer and rescues him from his calamity.

vs. 20-24 – David states that the reason for God's rescue is based on his being righteous. He is not boasting in these verses. He is establishing himself to be righteous and not wicked. God would not move so to save a wicked man, but for His own child He would.

vs. 25-29 – David reinforces that his deliverance was based on him being righteous. He then goes on to describe how the Lord reacts to the righteous and how He aided David's escape.

vs. 30-36 – It is God who strengthened and empowered David in his day of distress. He still does so for us today.

vs. 37-42 – God is gracious and not only delivers David but gives him a great victory. His foes are obliterated.

vs. 43-45 – God also expands David's kingdom to foreign people. This shows God's greatness was not just over His people Israel but over all peoples.

vs. 46 – Here is a burst of praise toward the mighty God who works in the lives of His children.

vs. 47-50 – David describes God's personal blessings upon him. Every believer should be able to echo this sentiment.

Psalm 19 Notes

This psalm is by David and intended for use in public worship in the Temple. It is a song of praise for God's revelation of Himself through creation and His Word.

vs. 1-6 – David appeals to the wonders of the heavens as proof of God's glory. He points to the cycle of day and night and the path of the sun. The sun appears every morning with the joy of a newly married man and the eagerness of a runner about to race. It testifies of God throughout all the earth through what theologians call general revelation, which is God showing Himself indirectly, which in this case it through Creation.

vs. 7-9 – David now turns from the general revelation of Creation to the special revelation of God's Word. That God who created all things and through them His glory is shown, He has revealed His mind and will to us in His Word. The special revelation of God's Word is greater and that the general revelation of Creation.

vs. 10-14 – The effects of God's Word upon man are shown. The righteous find sweetness therein. The Scripture guides the thoughts and actions of the righteous.

Psalm 20 Notes

This psalm is by David and is meant for public worship in the Temple. It is an anthem of war and deliverance in battle. We can also see in this the hope of deliverance through Christ.

vs. 1-5 – The structure of this psalm is like a blessing pronounced upon a soldier going to war. It is addressed to a singular person. Upon that person is pronounced the blessings of the Lord and the reinforcement of their righteousness. It anticipates victory through the strength of the Lord.

vs. 6-8 – The coming victory is celebrated as if already completed. It is vain to trust in human strength and the powerful weapons of war when the Almighty God fights against you.

vs. 9 – The psalm ends with a final plea for God to deliver. The king in the final part of the verse is believed to refer to the Messiah.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 170

It is sad today how so many can look at the wonders of this world and the universe and not see the fingerprints of their Creator in them. The general revelation of Creation loudly proclaims that it the product of a Master Creator. Yet, today people use God's masterpieces as proof that He does not exist. Imagine seeing the Mona Lisa and doubting that Da Vinci existed! Creation tells us there is a God, but He has gone beyond that and tells us in His Word details about Himself.

Hymn for Day 170

Our hymn today appeared in early hymnals under the heading "Of the Glory of God in the Starry Heavens". It was written in 1712 by Joseph Addison, and picks up on the opening theme of Psalm 19 of God's glory seen in Creation.

*The spacious Firmament on high,
With all the wide, etherial Sky,
And spangled Heav'ns, a shining Frame,
Their great Original proclaim.
Th' unwearied Sun, from Day to Day,
Does his Creator's Power display;
And publishes to every Land
The Work of an Almighty Hand.*

*Soon as the Evening Shades prevail
The Moon takes up the wondrous Tale,
And, nightly to the listning Earth,
Repeats the Story of her Birth:
While all the Stars that round her burn
And all the Planets in their Turn
Confirm the Tidings as they roll,
And spread the Truth from Pole to Pole.*

*What tho' in solemn Silence all,
Move round the dark terrestrial Ball;
What tho' nor real Voice nor Sound,
Amidst their radiant Orbs be found;
In Reasons Ear they all rejoice,
And utter forth a glorious Voice,
For ever singing, as they shine,
The Hand that made us is divine.*

Psalm 21 Notes

This psalm is by David and given for use in public worship. It is a fit companion to the preceding psalm. It is song of victory.

vs. 1-2 – We see the king mentioned as in the closing of Psalm 20. We could be seen as either the earthly king such as David or the coming Messiah.

vs. 3-7 – The king only prospers and succeeds through the power of the Lord.

vs. 8-12 – The king is delivered and victory won through the power of the Lord.

vs. 13 – God's might is celebrated in the victory.

Psalm 22 Notes

This psalm is by David and for public worship in the Temple. It is to be performed “upon Aijeleth Shahar”. This is yet another Hebrew term of debated meaning. It literally means “the hind/doe of the dawn”. Many assume this is the name of a tune but as I have already stated that is not how Hebrew music worked. More likely it refers to the spirit in which the psalm was to be presented. It is a song of distress and hope. It also has a prophetic interpretation because it is intrinsically linked to the Crucifixion as Christ quotes from the first verse while on the cross. We may then interpret it as a glimpse into the suffering of our Savior.

vs. 1-2 – A desperate cry for aid that God seems to be ignoring. The opening words of verse 1 are quoted by Christ in Matthew 27:46 and Mark 15:34 while on the cross. This is the cry of a despairing heart that feels such terror though the head may know it cannot be so that God ignores His children.

vs. 3-5 – I must point out that vs. 3 is one of the most misinterpreted Scriptures today. It was taken by some Pentecostal/Charismatics to mean that God dwells in the praises we offer, so if we praise God, He will be present, often with miraculous signs. That is not what the meaning of this verse. It is a contrast built on the low point of the speaker in vs. 1-2. He is saying that God is so far away from his danger, specifically in where the praises of God (the opposite of the lament just offered), that is, the Tabernacle/Temple. There is nothing prescriptive in this descriptive verse. To that God who seems so far away and who had aided men in the past the psalmist now cries.

vs. 6-8 – The plight of David is described. He is a laughingstock and is used to dishonor God.

vs. 9-11 – A cry that the God who gave him life would be near to hear and answer his prayer.

vs. 12-13 – The danger of David is described. He is surrounded as if by wild and dangerous beasts. This is also a picture of Christ’s agony on the cross.

vs. 14-15 – How desperate was the hour? The body has failed and death is near. Prophetically, this is a graphic description of Christ’s agony on the cross. It is said to be very accurate to what one being crucified would endure.

vs. 16-18 – The setting of his terror is described. He is wounded, surrounded, reviled, and his possessions are stolen. We have here two clear prophecies of the Crucifixion. First, the piercing of hands and feet in vs. 16. Second, the parting of the garments and gambling

for them in vs. 18. Overall, these verses artistically and accurately describe the scene at Calvary.

vs. 19-21 – Where is hope in such a terrible, hopeless place? Only through God.

vs. 22-25 – Now that salvation is realized, praises flow toward the mighty God who delivers His own.

vs. 26-28 – Through the deliverance of the speaker, the undisputed rule of God over all men is revealed. This leads many to serve and praise God. We see here prophetically a glimpse of the effects of the Gospel and of the coming of His Kingdom.

vs. 29-31 – We began in lonely despair. We conclude in choruses of praise from all men and from generations to come.

Psalm 23 Notes

This psalm was written by David and is one of the most beloved portions of Scripture. It is a tender expression of God's care for us illustrated through the relationship of a shepherd and his sheep.

vs. 1 – God cares for us in all things and there is nothing we will lack. All we need is supplied by His grace.

vs. 2 – This is the tender care of shepherd. It is not just an idyllic setting but also a place where the sheep may be nourished and prosper. Not every day is spent here, but the Lord will bring you here when needed.

vs. 3 – This is an overview of the work of our Great Shepherd. He cares not only for the mortal body but also nourishes our true and eternal being, our soul. It is for His glory that He so diligently cares for us in guiding us in the way that He has declared the righteous should go.

vs. 4 – Not every place the Shepherd leads is delightful. Sometimes it is in the midst of danger and peril that He leads us. We may rest peacefully in His care when He does. At all times He guides us with His rod and protects us with His staff.

vs. 5 – Blessings are poured out on believers, even in the midst of evil. The descriptions here go beyond the necessities of life. This describes the bountiful goodness of God heaped upon us.

vs. 6 - The best life is the blessed life living as the righteous under God's care. Then when this life is over, we have the promise that we will dwell with Him forevermore.

Psalm 24 Notes

This psalm is by David. It is a song of victory of the King of Glory.

vs. 1-2 – God's ownership of the earth is established. He made all things and therefore owns all things. No spot in this universe may claim exception from His rule.

vs. 3-6 – The pinnacle of God's Creation is mankind, but these fell into sin. How may men be reconciled to God? Holiness is necessary, which we do not possess on our own. Therefore, He grants us His righteousness to make us holy. It is those that seek the Lord for salvation - confessing their sins and trusting on Him – that find salvation. We then, being made holy in the sight of God, should strive to live in the way of righteousness.

vs. 7-10 – The still seems barred for the righteous man in the preceding verses. The gates (of Heaven? of access to God?) are closed shut. They do not open at the call of a mortal. But here comes the King of Glory, fresh from battle and leading His host of followers. We see pictured here the work of Christ in bringing men into God's presence.

Psalm 25 Notes

This psalm is written by David. Lost in translation is the fact that psalm is in an acrostic form. It has some variation from following the traditional order of the 22 Hebrew letters, which I will spare you the technicalities of. It is a prayer of David, the righteous but imperfect king.

vs. 1 – David is lifting his heart up to God.

vs. 2-3 – David calls on God to be his refuge and deliver him for his enemies.

vs. 4-5 – David trusts in the Lord's instruction and leading. Because of his enemies and his own sinfulness, he calls on God to lead him.

vs. 6-7 – As I have reiterated multiple times, the righteous that we have seen since Psalm 1 are not perfect. It is not their righteousness that matters. They trust in the Lord and He grants them forgiveness and His righteousness. In great humility David asks forgiveness again for his many failures. He prays for both mercy and grace from God.

vs. 8-9 – God does not leave man to find truth and right on his own. He reveals to us His ways and teaches us what is good and what is evil. We must submit in humility to His direction and not trust in our own judgment.

vs. 10-11 – It is to God's eternal glory that it is an intrinsic part of His character to forgive the sins of mankind.

vs. 12-13 – Those that seek God find Him and He reveals His will to them. Through obedience to Him we find peace and blessing.

vs. 14-15 – The covenant spoken of here is not one of the historic covenants we have seen so far, such as those made with Noah or Abraham. This is something greater. It is the salvation He offers mankind and its effects. Because David knew he was counted among the righteous, he knew that he need not fear man. God would be his deliverance.

vs. 16-19 – David calls to God for deliverance. He is in a troublesome place through his own failures.

vs. 20-21 – David declares his trust in the Lord and prays that it is not in vain.

vs. 22 – There is an intrinsic link between the spiritual state of a ruler and his nation. David has sinned and needs deliverance. By extension, it appears that His kingdom is also in trouble. Historically, this seems to fit with the time of Absalom's rebellion. David knew his sin with Bathsheba and subsequent error had led to him having to flee his palace for safety.

His nation and his family were divided. He prays here for his people, knowing he is the cause of their grief.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 171

Psalms 22, 23, and 24 are some of the most famous psalms that deal with the coming Messiah. In 22, we saw His suffering. In 23, we saw His care for His own. In 24, we saw His victory. Take time to carefully meditate on the psalms and also to see how they are quoted in the New Testament. Many have multiple interpretations that are correct, such as we have seen in 22 as David's prayer for deliverance being also a prophecy of the suffering of Christ. This adds to the beauty and depth of this amazing book.

Hymn for Day 171

"O Sacred Head Now Wounded" is one of the oldest hymns still in use today. It was originally a Latin poem attributed to Bernard of Clairvaux and the English translation is thanks to James Alexander. I think it pairs well with the words of Psalm 22 that describe Christ's agony on the cross.

*O sacred Head, now wounded,
with grief and shame weighed down,
Now scornfully surrounded
with thorns, Thine only crown;
O sacred Head, what glory,
what bliss till now was Thine!
Yet, though despised and gory,
I joy to call Thee mine.*

*What Thou, my Lord, hast suffered,
was all for sinners' gain;
Mine, mine was the transgression,
but Thine the deadly pain.
Lo, here I fall, my Savior!
'Tis I deserve Thy place;
Look on me with Thy favor,
vouchsafe to me Thy grace.*

*Men mock and taunt and jeer Thee,
Thou noble countenance,
Though mighty worlds shall fear Thee
and flee before Thy glance.
How art thou pale with anguish,
with sore abuse and scorn!
How doth Thy visage languish
that once was bright as morn!*

*Now from Thy cheeks has vanished
their color once so fair;
From Thy red lips is banished
the splendor that was there.
Grim death, with cruel rigor,
hath robbed Thee of Thy life;
Thus Thou hast lost Thy vigor,
Thy strength in this sad strife.*

*My burden in Thy Passion,
Lord, Thou hast borne for me,
For it was my transgression
which brought this woe on Thee.
I cast me down before Thee,
wrath were my rightful lot;
Have mercy, I implore Thee;
Redeemer, spurn me not!*

*What language shall I borrow
to thank Thee, dearest friend,
For this Thy dying sorrow,
Thy pity without end?
O make me Thine forever,
and should I fainting be,
Lord, let me never, never
outlive my love to Thee.*

*My shepherd, now receive me;
my guardian, own me Thine.
Great blessings Thou didst give me,
O source of gifts divine.
Thy lips have often fed me
with words of truth and love;
Thy Spirit oft hath led me
to heavenly joys above.*

*Here I will stand beside Thee,
from Thee I will not part;
O Savior, do not chide me!
When breaks Thy loving heart,
When soul and body languish
in death's cold, cruel grasp,
Then, in Thy deepest anguish,
Thee in mine arms I'll clasp.*

*The joy can never be spoken,
above all joys beside,
When in Thy body broken
I thus with safety hide.
O Lord of life, desiring
Thy glory now to see,
Beside Thy cross expiring,
I'd breathe my soul to Thee.*

*My Savior, be Thou near me
when death is at my door;
Then let Thy presence cheer me,
forsake me nevermore!
When soul and body languish,
oh, leave me not alone,
But take away mine anguish
by virtue of Thine own!*

*Be Thou my consolation,
my shield when I must die;
Remind me of Thy passion
when my last hour draws nigh.
Mine eyes shall then behold Thee,
upon Thy cross shall dwell,
My heart by faith enfolds Thee.
Who dieth thus dies well.*

Psalm 26 Notes

This psalm is by David. It is about strength against unfounded slander.

vs. 1-2 – David asks God to search him out for sin. He has been accused of wrongdoing and is appealing his case before the Omniscient God.

vs. 3-5 – David submits that he has faithfully followed the way of the righteous as commanded in Psalm 1. Compare the claims of David against the description of the righteous in that psalm.

vs. 6-8 – After vindication from God, of which David is sure, he will praise and honor Him.

vs. 9-12 – David calls on God to deliver him from the fate of the wicked as he is on the path of righteousness.

Psalm 27 Notes

This psalm is by David and is a call for deliverance.

vs. 1 – David declares his faith in God who upholds him.

vs. 2-3 – The wicked are described as vainly attacking the righteous.

vs. 4-5 – David desires for closer communion with God, hinting at his deliverance.

vs. 6 – Praise for deliverance.

vs. 7-10 – David calls on the Lord for deliverance.

vs. 11-12 – David prays for deliverance and safety from his enemies.

vs. 13-14 – David's sure faith is observed as he commends others to trust in the Lord who delivers from trouble.

Psalm 28 Notes

This psalm is by David is the cry of one oppressed by the wicked.

vs. 1-2 – David asks God to hear his desperate cry.

vs. 3 – David prays he is not caught up in the doom of the wicked.

vs. 4 – A prayer that the wicked receive their just reward.

vs. 5 – Why do the wicked deserve judgment? Because they do not consider the Lord.

vs 6-9 – A burst of praise toward the God who delivers His own.

Psalm 29 Notes

This psalm is by David and shows God's majesty and might in the illustration of a thunderstorm.

vs. 1-2 – A call to worship and glorify the Lord Almighty.

vs. 3-9 – The might of God is seen here through the imagery of a thunderstorm. He controls the storm and His voice is thunder. The fury of the storm shakes the world beneath it. We can also trace its pass southward: it begins over the Mediterranean Sea, breaks forth on Lebanon in the north, then goes south to the wilderness of Kadesh. The effects of the storm on the natural world are noted, including how it causes animals to give birth.

vs. 10-11 – God's power is seen in the flood that the storm brings. Also interesting here is that the Hebrew word for flood in vs. 10 is *mabbul* (Strong's H3999) which is only used 12 other times in the Bible, all of these in Genesis speaking in Noah's Flood.

Psalm 30 Notes

This psalm is by David for the dedication of his house. This is his personal house built in II Samuel 5:11 and not the Temple. He was no longer on the run hiding in caves but was firmly established in Jerusalem.

vs. 1-3 – David acknowledges and praises God for lifting him up and delivering him from trouble.

vs. 4-5 – A call for all of God's children to praise the one Who delivers and turns weeping into joy.

vs. 6-7 – David makes a mistake in lifting himself up when God had done the actual lifting. He had to be humbled again to rightly proclaim that all He had was because of God.

vs. 8-10 – David recalls God's salvation. He was in a deadly position, but God delivered him, so now he knows to trust in God.

vs. 11-12 – Who else but God can radically change things? David moves from grieving his state to glorifying his Savior. The God who changes things for the better deserves eternal praise.

Psalm 31 Notes

This psalm is by David and was intended for use in the Temple. This is a cry for deliverance and song of praise for it.

vs. 1-5 – David trusts in God's strong hand to deliver him from his troubles.

vs. 6-8 – David praises God for saving him from the wicked and placing him in a safe and secure place.

vs. 9-13 – David describes the place of torment that God delivered him from. He was an outcast and alienated from any support. His enemies sought his life.

vs. 14-18 – David calls on the Lord to deliver him. He pleads for justice to be done, so that his enemies fall and he be saved.

vs. 19-20 – David describes the place of blessing that the Lord has for the righteous.

vs. 21-24 – A burst of praise to God and call for the faithful to join in it.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 172

Note how so many of these psalms begin in cries for aid and end in outbursts of praise. Never neglect giving God the glory that He deserves for His mercy and grace in your life.

Hymn for Day 172

Our hymn today is “Give to the Lord, Ye Sons of Fame”. It is a metrical adaption of Psalm 29 by Isaac Watts. It appears in his hymnal under the heading “Storm and Thunder”.

*Give to the LORD, ye sons of fame,
give to the LORD renown and pow'r;
ascribe due honors to His name,
and His eternal might adore.*

*The LORD proclaims His pow'r aloud
o'er the vast ocean and the land;
His voice divides the wat'ry cloud,
and lightnings blaze at His command.*

*He speaks, and howling tempests rise,
and lay the forest bare around:
the fiercest beast, with piteous cries,
confess the terror of the sound.*

*His thunders rend the vaulted skies,
and palaces and temples shake.
The mountains tremble at the noise,
the valleys roar, the deserts quake.*

*The LORD sits sov'reign o'er the flood;
the Thund'rer reigns forever King;
but makes His temple His abode,
where we His awful glories sing.*

*We see no terrors in His name,
but in our God a Father find.
The voice that shakes all nature's frame,
speaks comfort to the pious mind.*

Psalm 32 Notes

This psalm is by David. It is believed to be written around the same times as Psalm 51 in the aftermath of his sin with Bathsheba. It is a song of thanksgiving for the forgiveness of sins.

vs. 1-2 – The righteous are not perfect. They fall and they sin. The difference between the righteous and the wicked is that God has forgiven the sins of the righteous. The blessing of the Lord is the forgiveness of our sins.

vs. 3-4 – The state of the righteous when convicted for their sin.

vs. 5 – The conviction of the Lord brings confession of sin.

vs. 6 – The righteous must seek the Lord before judgment may fall.

vs. 7 – Note that the Lord is the personal hiding place for David, but

vs. 8-9 – The difference between the righteous and the wicked is as wide as from the beast to the human. The difference is the wisdom and truth of the Lord.

vs. 10-11 – The diverging fates of the righteous to blessing and of the wicked to destruction.

Psalm 33 Notes

No author or setting is given for this psalm. It is a song of praise.

vs. 1-3 – The previous psalm closed with a call for praise and this psalm answers. All of the righteous are called to join in songs of praise to God.

vs. 4-5 – The universality of the truth and reach of God's Word.

vs. 6-7 – Creation is given as an example of the power of God's Word. He did not have to lift a finger, all He had to do was say, "Let there be" and there was. Mankind is the only part of Creation that God did not simply speak into existence.

vs. 8-9 – The testimony of God's Word, especially as seen in Creation, should be sufficient for all men to fear Him.

vs. 10-12 – The wisdom of God trumps the devices of the wicked. The people that love and serve Him find blessing. Many take vs.12 out of context. It is not a conditional statement saying that if a nation chooses God, then they will be blessed. It is the opposite of that. This is a statement of fact. Primarily it applies to Israel, but may also be applied to the hosts of the righteous.

vs. 13-14 – The Mighty God is omniscient. He sees all and knows all. There is no escape from Him.

vs. 15-17 – There is not exemption to be found for man when the judgment of God is poured out on the wicked.

vs. 18-19 – The God who witnesses all the evil of the wicked also pays special attention to the righteous and delivers them from their plights.

vs. 20-22 – The psalm closes with declaration of faith and plea that God respond to it.

Psalm 34 Notes

This psalm is by David and was composed when he escaped from Abimelech by pretending to be insane in I Samuel 21:1-15. It is the second psalm to be composed as an acrostic using the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet. There is a variation to the order of letters as the fifth letter, *vav*, is omitted and the last verse is a repetition of the 17th letter *pe*. There are only 10 entries for words found the Bible in Strong's Concordance that begin with *vav*. It is generally used as a conjunction meaning "and". This is the practical reason it is omitted in some acrostics in Scripture. Think of it as trying to find an English word that starts with X. The psalm itself is another of praise for deliverance.

vs. 1-3 – The psalm opens with David's praise and call to join it.

vs. 4-7 – The righteous seek the Lord in prayer, He hears them, and He delivers.

vs. 8-14 – David invites others to "taste and see" the goodness of God. When put to the experimental test, the Lord is good to His own. All should seek and serve Him.

vs. 15-18 – The formula from vs. 4 is repeated in vs. 17: the righteous cry out, the Lord hears, and the Lord answers. One of my favorite verses is vs. 18, which promises the nearness of God to the righteous in their despair.

vs. 19-22 - We see again the contrasting fates of the righteous and the wicked. John 19:36 quotes vs. 20 as a prophecy concerning Christ's death.

Psalm 35 Notes

This psalm is by David and is a call for God the wicked to be punished. These types of psalms are called imprecatory.

vs. 1-3 – The psalm opens with a righteous call for aid in battle against the wicked enemy.

vs. 4-8 – David gets specific about what he wants to happen to the wicked. This is not cruelty or malice on his part. These are things that God has said will be poured out on the wicked. It is a cry for justice and judgment.

vs. 9-10 – A response of praise to the judgment of God and deliverance of David.

vs. 11-12 – Specifics of David's situation are given. People he had trusted have turned against him and now make slanderous claims against him.

vs. 13-14 – David contrasts his own righteous actions against those of the wicked that attack him. He prayed for them; they preyed on him.

vs. 15-16 – More description of the evil deeds of the wicked. They plotted against David and spoke vile things about him behind his back.

vs. 17-18 – The response of praise to the deliverance of the righteous.

vs. 19-26 – David calls out the wicked for their actions and prays for their judgment to come.

vs. 27-28 – The psalm closes with a prayer to God that His praises be sung in response to His deliverance.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 173

One of the biggest misconceptions many modern Christians have about the Old Testament and the ancient Jewish faith is the place of sacrifices in finding forgiveness of sins from God. You will note in Psalm 32 there is not mention of the blood of sacrifices being offered to atone for David's sin. What you do see is faith, confession, and repentance. I will steadfastly contend that the Old Testament saints were saved like us by God's grace through our faith. The sacrifices made were prompted by the penitent heart, not the other way around.

Hymn for Day 173

Our hymn today is "Come, Ye Disconsolate". The first two verses were written by Thomas Moore in 1816 and the third by Thomas Hastings in 1832. It echoes the calls for Psalm 34 to seek comfort and safety in the Lord.

*Come, you disconsolate, where'er you languish;
come to the mercy seat, fervently kneel.
Here bring your wounded hearts, here tell your anguish;
earth has no sorrows that heaven cannot heal.*

*Joy of the desolate, light of the straying,
hope of the penitent, fadeless and pure!
Here speaks the Comforter, in mercy saying,
"Earth has no sorrows that heaven cannot cure."*

*Here see the bread of life; see waters flowing
forth from the throne of God, pure from above.
Come to the feast prepared; come, ever knowing
earth has no sorrows but heaven can remove.*

Psalm 36 Notes

This psalm is by David and intended for use in the Temple. David is described as “the servant of the Lord” and the theme of the psalm is the blessedness of serving God.

vs. 1-2 – Here is described the mindset of the wicked. It is delusional and destructive.

vs. 3-4 – Here is described the actions of the wicked.

vs. 5-6 – The mercy and goodness of God is contrasted against the ways of the wicked previously described. How infinitely better are these His ways than the depravity of man!

vs. 7-9 – The blessedness of serving God is described.

vs. 10-12 – A prayer for God’s grace to be shown to the righteous.

Psalm 37 Notes

This psalm is by David. It is the third acrostic psalm. Instead of every verse being used in the succession of letters, it is every second verse. There are some other variations from the form that are more technical which I will spare you. This psalm examines how the wicked prosper while the righteous suffer.

vs. 1-11 – The fates of the righteous and the wicked are contrasted. These may seem to be reversed in this life, but the final tally has not been made.

vs. 12-15 – The wicked plot violence against the righteous.

vs. 16-20 – It is the wicked that will ultimately fall to violence, not the righteous. The righteous will receive blessing and not destruction.

vs. 21-24 – The contrasting paths and fates of the righteous and the wicked. There is a difference in how they live on earth and in eternity.

vs. 25-31 – The bountiful blessings of God that are poured out on the righteous.

vs. 32-33 – The wicked plot violence against the righteous.

vs. 34-40 - One of my favorites sayings is, “Time will tell.” If you examine human experience in only a small segment, it may seem that the wicked prevail and the righteous fall. If you take a larger view, the trends begin to favor the righteous. If you look at it from an eternal viewpoint, there is not comparison that can be made: the righteous are blessed by God and the wicked are destroyed.

Psalm 38 Notes

This psalm is written by David for the purpose of remembering. What exactly he is remembering is not initially clear. The psalm itself is a mournful lament of personal sin and its effects. This seems to indicate a connection with his sin with Bathsheba.

vs. 1-2 – David is confessing his sin. He acknowledges his guilt and the judgment against him as both being right. He knows he deserves to be righteously judged but God. Here he prays for mercy in that judgment.

vs. 3-7 – A striking description of the effects of sin in a believer's life. We read in Romans that the "wages of sin is death". To me, sin is a deadly poison. Though it may not rob the saint of eternal life, it is still a deadly and destructive force to be reckoned with in our earthly life. It is self-destructive.

vs. 8-10 – The desperate cry of the righteous soul afflicted by sin.

vs. 11-12 – Here are some of the practical effects of sin. It causes isolation as friends withdraw from us. It encourages the wicked in their machinations against us.

vs. 13-14 – Sin makes us helpless. It blinds us to the snares in our path and silences our ability to defend ourselves.

vs. 15-16 – Our only hope for victory over sin is through Christ. This is for both salvation from the penalty of sin and victory over the power of sin in our daily lives.

vs. 17-20 – Sin saps the believer of their spiritual strength and incites the wicked to attack us.

vs. 21-22 – A final desperate cry for the Lord to have mercy and aid the stumbling saint.

Psalm 39 Notes

This psalm is written by David and for use in public worship, addressing it specifically for Jeduthan (I Chronicles 15:6). This psalm pairs thematically and possibly chronologically with the preceding Psalm 38.

vs. 1-3 – David has made it a priority to guard his speech. He has remained silent now when most would have spoken. His heart is burning within him so that he can no longer refrain from speaking. The cause of this appears to be the wicked's attacks against him which were encouraged by his sin.

vs. 4-5 – David speaks in a prayer that God would reveal to him just how small he is. He desires to see his insignificance before the Eternal God. This is a surprising move but a deeply wise one, nonetheless.

vs. 6 – How vain are many of our actions and priorities in light of the brevity of human life? It also causes pause to consider how pointless the defenses and rebuttals are that we feel obligated to offer against the wicked.

vs. 7-11 – How is there hope to be found from sin and its deadly effects? Only in God and not in human strength and wisdom.

vs. 12-13 – A final plea for God to hear and forgive him for his sins. There is an urgency to this call because of the shortness of time available for man to receive forgiveness, thus repeating the theme of the frailty of man from earlier in the psalm.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 174

The final two psalms we examined today deal with sin in the life of a believer. The righteous on earth are not made perfect until they are transformed after death. David, described as a “man after God’s own heart”, has some of the highest highs and the lowest lows in his life. All the great victories and beautiful psalms are there, but so is the adultery and murder. Through David, we see first hand the agony of a saint distressed by their sin. This contrition is rare today. We have gotten far too complacent and comfortable with the deadly poison of sin. We shrug off its effects in our lives and relationships. If we could only see that sin as God does, it would change our outlook completely.

Hymn for Day 174

Our hymn today is “O God, Forsake Me Not”. It was originally written in German by Salamo Franck and was translated into English by August Crull. It draws themes from many psalms, but the opening refrain directly references 38:21-22.

*O God, forsake me not!
Your gracious presence lend me;
Lord, lead Your helpless child;
Your Holy Spirit send me
That I my course may run.
O be my light, my lot,
My staff, my rock, my shield--
O God, forsake me not!*

*O God, forsake me not!
Take not Your Spirit from me;
Do not permit the might
Of sin to overcome me.
Increase my feeble faith,
Which You alone have wrought.
O be my strength and pow'r--
O God, forsake me not!*

*O God, forsake me not!
Lord, hear my supplication!
In ev'ry evil hour
Help me resist temptation;
And when the prince of hell
My conscience seeks to blot,
Be then not far from me--
O God, forsake me not!*

*O God, forsake me not!
Lord, I am Yours forever.
O keep me strong in faith
That I may leave You never.
Grant me a blessed end
When my good fight is fought;
Help me in life and death--
O God, forsake me not!*

Psalm 40 Notes

This psalm is written for David for us in the Temple. Its theme is thanksgiving for deliverance.

vs. 1-3 – David describes his deliverance by God’s hand and his response of public praise.

vs. 4-5 – What begins like a beatitude turns into praise. The fulness of blessing has nothing to do with the righteous, but with the Almighty God who blesses them.

vs. 6-8 – It may seem that God desired the blood and burned bodies of animals for sacrifices, but truly he desired the faith behind those sacrifices. Compare this to I Samuel 15:22. The true answer to the reconciliation of God and sinful man was in the Messiah to come. Hebrews 10:1-10 takes these verses and shows their true fulfillment is in Christ. The Scripture that guided David showed him what God truly desired and its fulfillment in Christ. He then gladly responds in humble obedience.

vs. 9-11 – David will not keep the truth bottled up within himself. He declares it to all by word and example of his trust in God.

vs. 12-13 – After viewing the glory of God’s plan, David is moved to confession. This is the constant and proper reaction to being exposed to God’s glory, such as in Isaiah 6:5

vs. 14-15 – God’s blessing of the righteous and judgment of the wicked are two sides to the same coin. You cannot have one without the other. It is altogether fitting to see imprecatory statements appear in a psalm of praise.

vs. 16-17 – David ends with another outburst of praise. This includes in vs. 17 a statement by him confessing his lowly state. True worship both exalts God and humbles man.

Psalm 41 Notes

We close here Book I of the psalms. This psalm is by David and was intended for use in the Temple. It is about hope in distress for the righteous.

vs. 1 – God will bless and sustain the righteous, seen here by their actions of charity.

vs. 2 – The righteous are not sustained in themselves but are upheld by God.

vs. 3 – The Great Physician cares for the righteous in their illnesses.

vs. 4 – A prayer for mercy from an undeserving saint.

vs. 5 – The wicked and their slander.

vs. 6 – The deceitfulness of the wicked.

vs. 7 – The wicked united in their machinations against the righteous.

vs. 8 – The accusations of the wicked against David, saying that he is beyond hope of deliverance.

vs. 9 – David had been betrayed by a close friend. This is prophecy concerning Judas according to John 13:18.

vs. 10 – The Lord will not treat the righteous as an enemy. He will deliver and bless them.

vs. 11 – The very fact that we are still alive is proof God is on our side!

vs. 12 – Without God we could do nothing.

vs. 13 – The highest praises offered to the God who will always be worthy of them.

Psalm 42 Notes

We begin here Book II of the Psalms. This psalm has no author attributed but every indication points to David. It is intended for use in the Temple by the sons of Korah. This family traces back to the rebellion against Aaron in Numbers 26. These descendants had remained faithful and were integrated into the music program of the Temple. The psalm is described as a Machil, or song of instruction. It is a song of hope in despair.

vs. 1-5 – Here is so wonderfully described the hunger of a righteous soul for God. The writer has been removed from the place of worship, either Jerusalem or the Tabernacle, and longs to return.

vs. 6-11 – The writer says that they are removed to a place over Jordan near Mt. Hermon, which is roughly 30 miles north of the Sea of Galilee. It is tempting to link this to David's flight from Abasalom, but he did not make it this far north. The writer is likely speaking poetically about a far-off place. There he is, knowing the goodness of God but not experiencing it as his enemies mock him. His only hope is to keep looking to God for deliverance, even though we do not see it in this psalm.

Psalm 43 Notes

This psalm is linked with the previous. It is not placed here by accident. It is the natural fulfillment of the setting of Psalm 42, with a prayer for deliverance and praise anticipating it.

vs. 1-3 – The writer calls for vindication of their righteousness and deliverance from the wicked. He longs for God's aid and a return to place of worship.

vs. 4 – Here is praise given in anticipation of the coming deliverance.

vs. 5 – A call for his soul to feel hope again in the God who will deliver him from his troubles.

Psalm 44 Notes

This psalm is for use in the Temple by the sons of Korah. It is described as Maschil, or song of instruction. The theme of the psalm is enduring persecution.

vs. 1-3 – Past deliverance is called to mind, specifically that of the conquest of Canaan under Joshua and the establishment of the children of Israel in it.

vs. 4-8 – Faith is declared in the God who delivers His own.

vs. 9-12 – We deal here with the subject of persecution. Evil has befallen the righteous. This seems to occur with no purpose, as later the case is made for their innocence. Still, they understand that all this occurs by God's plan and purpose.

vs. 13-16 – The humbled state of the righteous under persecution is described.

vs. 17-19 – The persecuted respond in pleading their innocence. They remain faithful and hopeful for God's deliverances.

vs. 20-22 – A cry for justice in their case.

vs. 23-26 – A call for God to deliver his persecuted children.

Psalm 45 Notes

This psalm has quite a superscription! It is for the sons of Korah to be sung in the Temple and is described as a Maschil, or song of instruction. It is described as “upon Soshannim”, which means “lilies”. This same word appears in the title of Psalm 80. Theories concerning its meaning include the name of the tune (impossible) or an instrument to be used (plausible, but unproven). I think it may describe the style of the psalm in that it is meant to be beautiful. We also see it described as “A Song of loves”, possibly marking it for use in celebrating a wedding. One theory is that it was written for the marriage of Solomon and Pharaoh’s daughter. There are many thematic and linguistic links between this psalm and the Song of Solomon. On its surface, it is a song praising the king of Israel. However, its deeper meaning I hope is clear in that it celebrates Christ the Messiah.

vs. 1 – The author declares his noble intentions of writing on this subject.

vs. 2 – The king is seen as fair and blessed.

vs. 3-4 – The king is mighty in battle. Compare to Revelation 19:15-16.

vs. 5 – The king’s enemies fall in battle against him.

vs. 6 – God is declared to be over the king, and the honor of being king is through Him.

vs. 7 – The anointing of the king is described. The ancient kings of Israel were set apart for their work by the anointing of oil. The deeper meaning is evident here because the literal meaning of Messiah is “anointed one”.

vs. 8 – The splendors of the royal raiment and palace.

vs. 9 – Here is described the wedding party, in particular the bride’s attendants. The queen is revealed in shining gold. For Solomon, these descriptions are practical. For Christ the Messiah, they are prophetic and speak of the Church as the Bride.

vs. 10-12 – These are addressed to the queen. She is to forget her former state and fully belong to the king. She will be exalted and honored.

vs. 13-16 – The glory of the queen is described as she marries the king. We jump ahead in vs. 16, anticipating the arrival of sons to this union. It is to be reminded that we are going to rule and reign with Christ in Revelation 20:6.

vs. 17 – The psalm closes with another statement of intent by the writer. His purpose is to bring everlasting praise to the king and queen.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 175

It The Psalms are like expertly cut diamonds. It seems that no matter how you view them they sparkle with the light of truth. Just in today's reading we saw psalms to give hope for the hopeless and prophecies of the Messiah. Sometimes those can even occur in the same verse! There were a couple of times today that I started treating a psalm one way, only to get to the end and realize I needed to redo all the notes I had written. My point is, Psalms may be the most versatile book in the Bible. If you do not immediately understand a passage, try looking at it through a different light. In fact, even when you do understand it, there is probably more truth to be found when approached in a different direction.

Hymn for Day 175

Our hymn today is "Ivory Palaces", written by Henry Barraclough in 1915. It uses the imagery of Psalm 45 to remind us of the Savior who left Heaven to redeem mankind.

*1. My Lord has garments so wondrous fine,
and myrrh their texture fills;
its fragrance reached to this heart of mine,
with joy my being thrills.*

*Refrain:
Out of the ivory palaces
into a world of woe,
only his great eternal love
made my Savior go.*

*2. His life had also its sorrows sore,
for aloes had a part;
and when I think of the cross he bore,
my eyes with teardrops start.*

*3. His garments, too, were in cassia dipped,
with healing in a touch;
each time my feet in some sin have slipped,
he took me from its clutch.*

*4. In garments glorious he will come,
to open wide the door;
and I shall enter my heavenly home,
to dwell forevermore.*

Psalm 46 Notes

This psalm has no author given. It was composed for use in the Temple by the sons of Korah. Additionally, it is noted that is to be performed upon Alamoth, which literally means “virgins”. Again, this cannot be the name of a tune . It perhaps could indicate the highest voices in choir were to be used. The theme of the song is the safety of refuge in God. but it also contains prophetic shadows of the end of this world and the beginning of the Eternal State (Revelation 21:1).

vs. 1-3 – God is seen as a sure refuge even as the world crumbles around the saint. There is imagery of a flood here reminiscent of Noah’s flood, where God was the refuge for Noah’s family.

vs. 4-7 – This section foresees a city where God dwells as the present world is melted away. The descriptions have an uncanny resemblance to the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21-22.

vs. 8-11 – The ultimate victory of God is seen in the utter annihilation of his enemies. Refuge and safety are to be found with the undefeatable God.

Psalm 47 Notes

This psalm is for use in the Temple by the sons of Korah. This is a song of praises to the victorious God.

vs. 1 – All peoples are called to praise the Almighty God.

vs. 2-3 – God's reign over the earth and all things will be manifest in the rule over all peoples. This is Christ's Millennial Kingdom

vs. 4 – God will reserve a special place for His chosen people Israel in His kingdom.

vs. 5 – The shout and trumpet blast indicate the victory of God.

vs. 6 – The proper response to the mighty God is to sing His praises.

vs. 7-8 – God's rule over the earth and its peoples is reiterated.

vs. 9 – The peoples gather to praise God.

Psalm 48 Notes

This psalm is for the sons of Korah to be sung in the Temple. It is called both a song and a psalm, which Charles Spurgeon states is because it is both joyful and reverent. The theme of the psalm is the blessedness and safety of the city of God. This might be seen historically in Jerusalem (II Chronicles 20?) and prophetically in the New Jerusalem.

vs. 1-3 – The grandeur and safety of the city of God is described.

vs. 4-7 – The kings of the wicked see the impenetrable city of God and hasten away in retreat. They are destroyed in their retreat.

vs. 8 – The promises of God are made manifest in the city of God.

vs. 9-11 – The character and actions of God are exalted.

vs. 12-14 – The majesty of the city of God exalts God.

Psalm 49 Notes

This psalm is intended for use in the Temple by the sons of Korah. The theme of the psalm is the vanity of the wicked's worldly wealth.

vs. 1-4 – This section serves as preface to the moral instruction to follow. It invites all to heed the wise lesson to follow.

vs. 5 – The way of the righteous leads to peace even when troubled times arrive. The second half of the verse is speaking of the sins of the righteous coming to bear on them.

vs. 6-9 – The vanity of riches is displayed. No earthly price can buy the redemption of a man from his sin debt and grant them eternal life.

vs. 10-12 – Wealth cannot keep death at bay forever. Sooner or later the hoarded riches are passed on to another. The money and estates dwindle and are forgotten by future generations.

vs. 13-15 – The wicked foolishly trust in their wealth but still succumb to death. Note in vs. 13 that their heirs encourage them, surely because they seek to gain those treasures after the rich die. The righteous sees beyond the vanity of wealth and trusts in God who can give eternal life.

vs. 16-17 – Encouragement to not let the prosperity of the wicked discourage us. The final count of the saint's wealth is not made until after death, and these riches are infinitely greater than the things of this world that perish.

vs. 18-20 – The wicked rich may be celebrated on the earth, but their fate is dismal. In the end, true wisdom reveals them no better than beasts. True wealth is found in the blessings of God bestowed on the righteous.

Psalm 50 Notes

This psalm is attributed to Asaph, one of the Temple musicians trained by David. There are 12 psalms associated with him. This psalm plays out something like a court case, as the God calls men to stand before Him and then declares His verdict concerning them.

vs. 1-3 – The arrival of God in His overwhelming majesty.

vs. 4-6 – The worshippers of the true God are called to stand before God in judgment.

vs. 7-11 – God seeks to correct misconceptions about worshipping Him through sacrifice. In vs. 8 God states that He is not calling them to judgment for failing to offer the prescribed sacrifices. The sacrifices were not made for God's benefit. He did not need their animals. All that is in the world belongs to Him. This implies that the sacrifices were for Israel's benefit, not God's.

vs. 12-15 – God did not need the sacrifices to survive like humans need food. He reveals His true desire: the hearts of the people. He wanted their hearts to be thankful and faithful. He wanted their praise and not a burned animal carcass.

vs. 16-21 – The actions and attitudes of the wicked are displayed. God may delay judgment for these for a time, but eventually they will receive their reward.

vs. 22-23 – The great divide between the righteous and wicked. The wicked will be destroyed while the righteous find salvation in the God they serve.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 176

We have had quite the journey in our psalms today! We began with glimpses of End Times and ended with calls to trust only in God for salvation. In light of the fate of the wicked that is looking, there is no time for delay in putting our faith in Christ.

Hymn for Day 176

Our hymn today is by Isaac Watts and in his 1766 edition of *The Psalms of David* it has the heading “The Value of Christ and His Righteousness”. You will find echoes in it of Psalm 49’s call to not trust in anything but God for eternal salvation.

*No more, my God, I boast no more
Of all the duties I have done;
I quit the hopes I held before,
To trust the merits of Thy Son.*

*Now, for the love I bear His name,
What was my gain I count my loss;
My former pride I call my shame,
And nail my glory to His cross.*

*Yes, and I must and will esteem
All things but loss for Jesus’ sake:
O may my soul be found in Him,
And of His righteousness partake!*

*The best obedience of my hands
Dares not appear before Thy throne;
But faith can answer Thy demands
By pleading what my Lord has done.*

Psalm 51 Notes

This psalm is written by David and given to be used in the worship of the Temple. That may be surprising as you see that this psalm is about his repentance being confronted over his affair with Bathsheba in II Samuel 11. It may be the most moving of any of David's compositions, filled with raw emotion and regret. The theme of the psalm is the confession and repentance of sin.

vs. 1-2 – A plea for mercy and forgiveness from God for sin. This is coupled with the desire for the sin and its effects to be purged from the sinner.

vs. 3-4 – Every sin is ultimately against God. Yes, sin hurts us and those around us, but it is still reduced down to a crime against God's righteous Law.

vs. 5-6 – Every human is born in depravity. We are broken and bent toward sin. We simply cannot be as righteous as God on our own merit and ability.

vs. 7-8 – The longing for our sin be purged so that we could be holy and enjoy the favor and blessing of God.

vs. 9 – A cry for the forgiveness of sins.

vs. 10-11 – The renewal in a believer's heart after they repent from their sins.

vs. 12-13 – The believer modeling and proclaiming God's forgiveness is one of the most powerful tools for evangelism. No counseling, rehabilitation, or medication can compare to the transformation brought about by God's mercy and grace.

vs. 14-15 – The celebration of praise toward a God Who delivers from sin.

vs. 16-17 – Again we see behind the curtain surrounding the sacrifices of the Law. It is not the body and blood of a beast that God desires. He desires our repentance and humble faith in Him.

vs. 18-19 – The joy of restoration after repentance is described.

Psalm 52 Notes

This psalm was composed by David and was given for use in the Temple. It is a Maschil, or song of instruction. It was written in the distress David felt after Doeg revealed to Saul that he had sought refuge at Nob with Ahimelech (see I Samuel 21:7 and 22:9). This psalm is a cry for justice against the wicked.

vs. 1-4 – The attitude and actions of the wicked.

vs. 5 – The promise of God's judgment to come upon the wicked.

vs. 6-7 – The righteous are made to rejoice in the judgment against the wicked.

vs. 8-9 – The place of the righteous contrasted with the destruction of the wicked already seen. Seeing the entire matter of the righteous and the wicked, the psalm ends with a burst of praise.

Psalm 53 Notes

This psalm is a variation of the text Psalm 14 with a handful of changes. The title adds two elements: that is a Maschil or song of instruction, and that it was to be performed upon Malalath. The latter literally means “disease”, though some translate it as a type of stringed instrument. The theme of the psalm is the foolishness of the wicked in denying God.

vs. 1-3 – The vanity and guilt of the wicked before the righteous and omniscient God.

vs. 4-5 – There is no deliverance from the guilt of the wicked.

vs. 6 – A look forward to the ultimate deliverance of the Jews by the Messiah when His kingdom is established.

Psalm 54 Notes

This psalm was written by David after the people of Ziph reported his position to Saul, which he did twice in I Samuel 19-20 and 16:1. It is a Maschil, or song of instruction, that was given for use in the Temple. It is a plea for deliverance.

vs. 1-2 – David begs for God to hear his prayer and deliver him.

vs. 3 – David identifies the chief reason his countrymen became his enemies in that they did not seek God's direction.

vs. 4 – David declares his faith and confidence in God.

vs. 5 – The destruction of David's enemies is foreseen.

vs. 6-7 – David promises praise after his deliverance.

Psalm 55 Notes

This psalm was written by David and given for use in the Temple. It was to be accompanied by Neginoth (stringed instruments) and is a Maschil, or song of instruction. It is a plea for deliverance.

vs. 1-3 – David cries for deliverance from his enemies.

vs. 4-8 – David describes his hopeless state. He longs to escape and be anywhere but where he is at.

vs. 9-11 – David calls for justice against the wicked.

vs. 12-15 – The source of David's troubles is identified as a friend that had betrayed him. Many believe this is about his counselor Ahithophel who sided with Absalom. David prays for justice to be done against him.

vs. 16-19 – David declares his faith that God will deliver him.

vs. 20-21 – The treachery of the betrayer is described. He had broken a sacred covenant of peace.

vs. 22-23 – Another contrast of the righteous and the wicked. The righteous trust in the Lord and He delivers them. The wicked are destroyed.

Psalm 56 Notes

This psalm was written by David as a Mictham (“golden song”, see notes on Psalm 16) that was to be sung in the Temple. It was to be performed “upon Jonathelemrechokim”, which literally means “the silent dove in far off places”. Again, this cannot be the name of a tune as they did not use such things at this time. Likely it is a musical term describing how the psalm was to be sung, or possibly a description of how David felt as he wrote this. It was written after David attempted to find refuge among the Philistines as he fled from Saul in I Samuel 21:10. The theme of the psalm is another cry for deliverance.

vs. 1-3 – David prays in faith that God will deliver him.

vs. 4 – David declares his faith in God.

vs. 5-6 – The machinations of David’s enemies are described.

vs. 7 – A call for God to execute justice against the wicked.

vs. 8-9 – The confidence that God knows the suffering of the righteous and will deliver them.

vs. 10-11 – A declaration of trust in God.

vs. 12-13 – The promise of praise to the God who delivers the righteous from their troubles.

Psalm 57 Notes

This psalm is by David and given for use in the public worship of the Temple. It is another Michtam, or “golden psalm”. David wrote this after his encounter with Saul in the cave when he forbids Abishai from slaying the king, saying, “Destroy him not” (I Samuel 26:9). It is called an Altaschith, literally meaning “destroy not”. This term is also found in the headings of Psalm 58, 59, and 75. This describes the theme of these psalms, which is, according to Charles Spurgeon, is “the destruction of the wicked and the preservation of the righteous”.

vs. 1 – A call for God to be gracious to His afflicted children.

vs. 2-3 – The familiar pattern of calling on God, He hears, and He delivers.

vs. 4 – The danger of David’s situation described.

vs. 5 – The greatest desire of David is not deliverance, but the exaltation of God. This is a tremendous testament to David’s faith and his love for God.

vs. 6 – The traps and snares of the wicked laid for the righteous.

vs. 7-10 – Praise for the God who delivers.

vs. 11 – A repetition of vs. 5, calling for God to be exalted.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 177

Psalm 51, as sober as it may be in its theme, is one of the greatest of the psalms. It is not a license to sin, but a warning against sinning. It is a model for the believer who succumbs to sin to find restoration with God. We are far too flippant with such things today. If we could only see our sin through God's eyes, we would weep over it.

Hymn for Day 177

Our hymn today is "A Broken Heart, O Lord, Thou Never Wilt Despise" by Thomas Raffles. It carries the tremendous themes of Psalm 51.

*A broken heart, O Lord!
Thou never wilt despise;
'Tis written in thy word,
This is the sacrifice:
The sacrifice that thou wilt own--
It is the broken heart alone.*

*Break thou my heart, O Lord!
The rock within me break;
To tremble at thy word,
And at thine anger quake:
Let me in deep contrition lie,
And heave the penitential sigh.*

*For mercy dwells with thee--
Compassion, all divine;
That mercy show to me;
Be that compassion mine:
For sinners did not Jesus bleed?
And Jesus' blood alone I plead.*

Psalm 58 Notes

This psalm is the second Altashith, or “Destroy Not” psalm. It was written by David as Michtam, or “golden psalm”, and given for use in the Temple. The theme is judgment against the wicked.

vs. 1-2 – The wicked are numerous and fail to properly dispense justice.

vs. 3 – Man is depraved from birth. Without divine intervention he is destined to be wicked.

vs. 4-5 – The wicked are dangerous and untamed. They are compared to a snake that cannot be charmed by movement and sound. This shows they are unable of being convinced to stop their evil ways.

vs. 6 – I have to admit that of all the imprecatory statements in psalms, breaking the enemy’s teeth is my favorite. It is a graphic description that calls for God to “de-fang” them and remove their ability to do harm.

vs. 7-9 – The empty destiny of the wicked.

vs. 10-11 – The blessing of the righteous and the destruction of the wicked are two sides of the same coin. You cannot have one without the other.

Psalm 59 Notes

This psalm is another Altashith (“Destroy Not”) and Michtam (“golden”) psalm. It was written by David when he was hunted by Saul in I Samuel 19:11. David gave this composition to the chief musician for use in the Temple. It is David’s prayer for deliverance from his enemies.

vs. 1-5 – David calls for deliverance from the wicked men that wait to ambush him. He pleads his righteousness and calls on God to intervene in sending judgment against the wicked.

vs. 6-13 – The guilt of the wicked is displayed and God is called in vs. 13 that God reveal Himself to them in judgment.

vs. 14-17 – David contrasts his future blessedness against the future humiliation of his enemies.

Psalm 60 Notes

This psalm was written by David and presented for use in the Temple as performed “upon Shushaneduth”, which literally means “the lily of testimony”. Charles Spurgeon notes: “The forty-fifth [psalm] was on the lilies, and represented the kingly warrior in his beauty going forth to war; here we see him dividing the spoil and bearing testimony to the glory of God.” This psalm was composed during his campaign against Edom in II Samuel 8:13-14 and I Chronicles 18:12-13. The specific occasion seems to be the six-month occupation by Joab in I Kings 11:15-16.

vs. 1-5 – A prayer for deliverance from a scattered and disheartened people.

vs. 6-8 – God’s sovereignty over the nations is declared.

vs. 9-12 – A prayer for Divine aid when no earthly aid can be found.

Psalm 61 Notes

This psalm was written by David and presented for use in the Temple accompanied by stringed instruments.

vs. 1-3 – A very personal cry for aid. David pictures himself as far removed from God's presence and desires refuge in it.

vs. 4-5 – David's hope rests in the God who will deliver him.

vs. 6-8 – The delivered king dedicates himself to the service and praise of the Lord.

Psalm 62 Notes

This psalm was written by David and presented to Jeduthun (I Chronicles 9:16) for use in the Temple.

vs. 1-2 – David's faith is shown in waiting for God to deliver him. Often, we rush into situations and try to solve them by our own strength. God can handle these far better than we can if we would only have the faith and patience to wait on Him to move.

vs. 3-4 – The wicked are like an unstable wall or fence in that they are ready to fall with the slightest of pressure. To God it is not a hard task to defeat them. In their arrogance they refuse to confess their weak state and continue to plot against God.

vs. 5-6 – David reminds himself to continue trusting and waiting on God.

vs. 7-8 – A call for others to find the same trust in God as David was modeling.

vs. 9-10 – The vanity of the machinations of the wicked.

vs. 11-12 – Only in God is found true strength and power. The righteous need not fear it as He is also the one that shows mercy to them.

Psalm 63 Notes

This psalm was written by David while he was on the run from Saul, maybe around the time of I Samuel 23. It is a song of deliverance from the wicked.

vs. 1-2 – In all the danger that David was in, his chief desire was to see the glory of God again. Most of us would place survival above worship, but not David.

vs. 3-5 – God is the one who satisfies and upholds the righteous. He does not do this through the bare minimum or provisions. He pours the blessings of His grace out abundantly.

vs. 6-8 – David remembers the goodness of God, and it gives him courage in the darkest of nights.

vs. 9-11 – The wicked would fall and David would stand blessed among the righteous.

Psalm 64 Notes

This psalm was written by David and given to the chief musician of the Temple for use in the worship there. It is a prayer for justice to be done against the wicked.

vs. 1 – An opening prayer for deliverance from the enemies that threaten.

vs. 2 – A plea for safety and refuge from the machinations of the wicked.

vs. 3 – The wicked attack with their words. These are often more dangerous than military arms.

vs. 4 – The wicked lay in wait to attack the righteous.

vs. 5 – The wicked gather and work their evil plots.

vs. 6 – The depths of human depravity are described.

vs. 7 – The wicked may have had words like arrows that sting, but God sends His arrows to destroy them.

vs. 8 – Through judgment the true nature of the wicked is revealed to all.

vs. 9 – As people witness the downfall of the wicked, they are moved to fear God.

vs. 10 – The righteous trust in God and are blessed. This statement contrasts the fate of the wicked previously described.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 178

I find the Psalms to be extremely practical. A common theme in many of these psalms we have been looking at is deliverance from the wicked. Ultimately, Satan is our great enemy. However, most of troubles come from people who do not know or fear God. How do we deal with these? These psalms tell us: take the situation to God and let Him handle it. He does a far better job at handling these types of things than we ever will.

Hymn for Day 178

Our hymn today was written by William Hunter and appears in some hymnals under the simple title of “The Rock”. It takes up David’s call from Psalm 61:2 and looks for refuge in life and death in “the Rock that is higher than I”.

*In seasons of grief, to my God I'll repair,
When my heart is o'erwhelmed in sorrow and care;
From the ends of the earth unto thee will I cry,
Lead me to the Rock that is higher than I.*

*When Satan, the tempter, comes in like a flood,
To drive my poor soul from the fountain of good,
I'll pray to the Saviour who kindly did die,
Lead me to the Rock that is higher than I.*

*And when I have ended my pilgrimage here,
Clad in Jesus' pure righteousness let me appear,
In the swellings of Jordan to thee I'll reply,
And look to the Rock that is higher than I.*

*And when the last trumpet shall sound through the skies,
When the dead from the dust of the earth shall arise,
With bright millions I'll join, far above yonder sky,
To praise the dear Rock that is higher than I.*

Psalm 65 Notes

This psalm is written by David and given to the chief musician for use in the Temple. It is described as both a psalm and a song. It is a celebration of God's goodness.

vs. 1-4 – An outburst of praise to the God who hears prayer, purges sin and allows us to worship Him.

vs. 5-8 – The power of God in responding to the call of righteous.

vs. 9-13 – Recognition of God's blessing the earth and the harvest.

Psalm 66 Notes

No author is given for this psalm, but it was given to the chief musician for use in the Temple. It is described as both a psalm and a song. This is a song of praise to God.

vs. 1-4 – A call for all to join in worshipping the Almighty God.

vs. 5-7 – A call to witness the power of God, as illustrated in the Red Sea crossing.

vs. 8-12 – An acknowledgement that God works all things for good.

vs. 13-15 – A commitment to worship God in the Temple.

vs. 16-20 – A testimony of God answering prayer.

Psalm 67 Notes

No author is given for this psalm, but it was given to the chief musician for use in the Temple accompanied by stringed instrument (Neginoth). It is described as both a psalm and a song. It is

vs. 1 – A cry for God to be bless His people.

vs. 2 – Through the testimony of His blessing, the goodness of God is a witness to the world.

vs. 3 – Seeing the goodness of God, all people are to respond in worship.

vs. 4 – The joy of those that serve God and are in His service.

vs. 5 – A repetition of vs. 3's call to praise.

vs. 6 – The blessing of God seen through His blessing of the harvest.

vs. 7 – A declaration of the sureness of God's blessing and its witness to the world.

Psalm 68 Notes

This psalm is written by David and given to the chief musician for use in the Temple. It is described as both a psalm and a song. This psalm is believed to have been written to sing as the Ark was moved to Jerusalem.

vs. 1-4 – Praise to the God who destroys His enemies.

vs. 5-10 – The goodness of God is illustrated through His deliverance of Israel from Egypt and placement of them in the Promised Land.

vs. 11-14 – The victory of God described as His enemies flee and the righteous spoil them.

vs. 15-18 – The hill of God is described and compared to Sinai. As God's presence had been seen at Sinai, David looked forward to it in the Temple at Jerusalem. In vs. 18 we see the spoils of war after God's victory. This verse is quoted in Ephesians 4:8 as a prophecy of Christ's ascension and the gifts He left for the church.

vs. 19-20 – The God who blesses and delivers us from death.

vs. 21-23 – God will destroy His enemies. His people will be restored and will rejoice.

vs. 24-27 – The enemies of God have witnessed the triumphal procession of the Ark being moved and the celebration surrounding it. We could broaden this to mean the progress of God's work and the praises of His saints.

vs. 28-31 – The greatness of God seen as the nations of the world submit to Him or are destroyed. This was the hope of the Temple era but will be realized in the Millennial Kingdom.

vs. 32-35 – Praise to the Almighty God.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 179

How big is your God? So often we fail to properly consider the infinite power and majesty of God. If we did, it would change how we live in act. So often we think, or at least act like, God is too small for our problems. We may know His greatness in our head, but getting it into our heart is another matter. We should seek to be in awe of God.

Hymn for Day 179

Our hymn today is “The Lord Ascendeth Up on High”, published in 1851 by Arthur T. Russell. It is in part inspired by 68:18.

*The Lord ascendeth up on high,
The Lord hath triumphed gloriously,
In power and might excelling;
The grave and hell are captive led,
Lo! He returns, our glorious Head,
To His eternal dwelling.*

*The heavens with joy receive their Lord,
By saints, by angel hosts adored,
O day of exultation!
O earth, adore thy glorious King!
His rising, His ascension sing
With grateful adoration!*

*Our great High Priest hath gone before,
Now on His Church His grace to pour,
And still His love He giveth;
O may our hearts to Him ascend;
May all within us upward tend
To Him who ever liveth!*

Psalm 69 Notes

This psalm is written by David and given for use in the Temple. Like Psalm 45, it is to be performed “upon Shoshannim”, meaning “lilies”. It is quoted from 5x in the New Testament.

vs. 1-4 – The desperate situation of David. He is drowning with no hope as God has not moved to his aid.

vs. 5-7 – David confesses his own sins but prays that the faithful not be harmed by his shortcomings.

vs. 8-12 – David describes his rejection from his family and friends.

vs. 13-15 – David prays for deliverance from his situation. There are many callbacks to his words in the first verses of the psalm.

vs. 16-21 – David presses God to hear his pleas for help and to move on his behalf.

vs. 22-28 – David prays an imprecatory prayer against the wicked.

vs. 29-33 – David offers his praises in return for deliverance. He notes that these are more desirable to God than sacrifices and that they are a testimony to others of God’s goodness.

vs. 34-36 – A call for all the earth to praise the God that delivers His children.

Psalm 70 Notes

This psalm is written by David and given for use in the Temple worship. The purpose of its composition is to be a reminder of God's deliverance. It is a slight variation on the final verses of Psalm 40.

vs. 1 – A prayer for God to quickly move and deliver David from his distress.

vs. 2-3 – A prayer that his enemies be defeated and humiliated by God.

vs. 4 – The praise that follows deliverance.

vs. 5 – An echo of the plea for aid from vs. 1.

Psalm 71 Notes

This psalm has no title or superscription. It is prayer for the wicked to be put to shame.

vs. 1-3 – A prayer for God to deliver the righteous and be their refuge.

vs. 4-6 – A testimony of David's trust in God since his youth.

vs. 7-9 – A call for God not to forsake him in his old age.

vs. 10-11 – The enemy point to David's state and say that God has abandoned him.

vs. 12-13 – A prayer for the enemy to be treated as David was in the opening verses of this psalm.

vs. 14-16 – The praises that will flow once he is delivered.

vs. 17-18 – A prayer that God does not forsake the one that has been faithful from his youth to old age.

vs. 19-21 – David sees victory even if he dies. He has the hope of the resurrection.

vs. 22-24 – Praise because the enemy had the tables turned on them, as he prayed for in vs. 12-13.

Psalm 72 Notes

This psalm is either for or by Solomon. Those two do not have to be mutually exclusive, but the contents seem to indicate it being written by David for his son. It is a prayer that God bless the new king, but also prophetically points to the Messiah.

vs. 1-4 – David prays for righteousness and judgment for his son. These two go together as you cannot have true justice without righteousness.

vs. 5-7 – The scope of these verses looks beyond just Solomon. It sees the peace and prosperity of Christ's Millennial Kingdom.

vs. 8-11 – The global scope of the reign of the king. Solomon may have been famous internationally in his day, but again this looks beyond him to the Messiah.

vs. 12-14 – The execution of righteous judgment in justice.

vs. 15-17 – We glimpse the eternal reign of Christ and the bounty of His kingdom as David prays that Solomon's kingdom be blessed.

vs. 18-20 – This psalm is not just a blessing pronounced on Solomon. David sees beyond him and blesses God. It is God who truly deserves the glory. We see in vs. 20 that this is probably the last psalm composed by David. This psalm closes the second book of psalms.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 180

David's believed in the promises of the covenant God made with him in II Samuel 7. He was promised that his son would succeed him on the throne. He also believed that his family would be the singular dynasty that would reign over Jerusalem forever. He understood this meant that the promised Messiah would come through his family. When Christ ministered on earth it was vitally important that He be of the lineage of David, which He was through both Mary (physically) and Joseph (legally). Though the throne of David is empty today, Christ will reclaim it and establish His kingdom.

Hymn for Day 180

Our hymn today is "Jesus Shall Reign Where'er the Sun", written by Isaac Watts in 1719. Since we have seen references to Christ's reign in the Millennial Kingdom, I think this wonderful song is appropriate.

*Jesus shall reign where-e'er the Sun
Does his successive Journeys run;
His Kingdom stretch from Shore to Shore,
Till Moons shall wax and wane no more.*

*Behold the Islands, with their Kings,
And Europe her best Tribute brings;
From North to South the Princes meet,
To pay their Homage at his Feet.*

*There Persia, glorious to behold,
There India shines in Eastern Gold;
And barb'rous Nations at his Word
Submit, and bow, and own their Lord.*

*For him shall endless Pray'r be made,
And Praises throng to crown his Head;
His Name like sweet Perfume shall rise
With ev'ry Morning Sacrifice.*

*People and Realms of ev'ry Tongue
Dwell on his Love with sweetest Song,
And Infant-Voices shall proclaim
Their early Blessings on his Name.*

*Blessings abound where'er he reigns,
The Pris'ner leaps to loose his Chains;
The Weary find eternal Rest,
And all the Sons of Want are blest.*

*Where he displays his healing Pow'r,
Death and the Curse are known no more;
In him the Tribes of Adam boast
More Blessings than their Father lost.*

*Let ev'ry Creature rise and bring
Peculiar Honours to our King:
Angels descend with Songs again,
And Earth repeat the loud Amen.*

Psalm 73 Notes

This psalm by Asaph opens the third book of Psalms. The narrative of this psalm is very important. It teaches us to not view the wicked's present prosperity to mean that they will avoid God's wrath.

vs. 1-12 – Asaph is discouraged that the wicked prosper while the righteous suffer. It has caused him to doubt the veracity of God's Word which promises the opposite.

vs. 13-17 – Asaph begins to believe that being righteous and living according to God's direction has been futile. This changes when he visits the Temple and gains understanding.

vs. 18-28 – Asaph learns that the wicked may prosper now, but their judgment still is promised. Likewise, the righteous may suffer, but their blessing is also promised. He has learned to judge the situation in light of eternity and now the present moment.

Psalm 74 Notes

This psalm is a Maschil (“song of instruction”) written by Asaph. It is a lament for the suffering of God’s people. It pictures the destruction of the Temple, which makes some think it was written after the Babylonian Captivity. However, this discounts the prophetic nature of many psalms. It is more than plausible that this song was written centuries before the event it foresees actually occurs.

vs. 1-3 – The suffering righteous ask God why they suffer and call on Him to remember them in their affliction.

vs. 4-8 – The destruction of the Temple is seen. Axes destroy its woodwork, fire burns the sanctuary, and the stonework is pulled down. What we see is an attempt to eradicate God’s name from the land.

vs. 9-11 – To human understanding, it made no sense that God would not act and protect the honor of His name.

vs. 12-17 – The greatness of God is extolled. His might and power are displayed. We see in vs. 14 an appearance of the leviathan from Job 41.

vs. 18-19 – A call for God to defend His name and deliver His people.

vs. 20-21 – A call for God to remember the promises and agreements He had made with the righteous and to act upon them.

vs. 22-23 – A call for God to move to action and punish those that despise His name.

Psalm 75 Notes

This psalm is a Altashith (“destroy not”) psalm that was written by Asaph. The structure of this song is the psalmist speaks and God responds, a pattern repeated twice. It speaks of the promise of God’s judgment against the wicked.

vs. 1 – The praises offered to God.

vs. 2-5 – God declares His judgment against the wicked and the fallen world.

vs. 6-9 – God is praised for the judgment He pours out.

vs. 10 – God declares the sureness of His judgment of the wicked and the blessing of the righteous.

Psalm 76 Notes

This psalm is by Asaph and was intended for use in the Temple performed with stringed instruments (“Neginoth”). This is a call for the righteous to worship God.

vs. 1-3 – The greatness of God is known in Israel. His past victories show His power and majesty.

vs. 4-6 – God is seen as a victorious and mighty warrior.

vs. 7-10 – God is seen as the righteous judge of the earth.

vs. 11-12 – God’s greatness is known to the world as its leaders fear and honor Him.

Psalm 77 Notes

This psalm is written by Asaph and given to Jeduthun for use in the Temple. It is a call for God to deliver as His past deliverances are remembered.

vs. 1-3 – A call for God to deliver from troubles.

vs. 4-6 – No sleep can be found as the writer contemplates God's past dealings.

vs. 7-9 – Questioning where God is while the writer suffers.

vs. 10-12 – More remembrance of God's past deliverances.

vs. 13-15 – An outburst of praise for the God who is mighty and delivers. The example of the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt is in vs. 15. This sets the theme for the following verses. This last section has some resemblance to Psalm 114.

vs. 16 – The Red Sea crossing is described.

vs. 17-18 – God's power seen in the storm with its thunder and lightning. This could refer to Sinai.

vs. 19 – Another allusion to the Red Sea crossing.

vs. 20 – God leading the Israelites from Egypt to the Promised Land.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 181

Psalms 73 is one of my favorite psalms. We can so easily lose sight of the goodness of God and despair that it does not matter whether we serve Him or not. This is the importance of God's Word, and I think in particular the psalms. Here we learn to see the world as it truly is. The prosperous wicked? They will be brought low before a holy God. The afflicted righteous? The best is always ahead for them.

Hymn for Day 181

Our hymn today is a reworking of Psalm 73 by Isaac Watts. It first appeared with the heading, "Afflicted Saints Happy, and Prosperous Sinners Cursed." Could not have said it better myself.

*Now I'm convinc'd the Lord is kind
To men of heart sincere,
Yet once my foolish thoughts repin'd,
And border'd on despair.*

*I griev'd to see the wicked thrive,
And spoke with angry breath,
"How pleasant and profane they live!
How peaceful is their death!"*

*With well-fed flesh and haughty eyes,
They lay their fears to sleep;
Against the heavens their slanders rise,
While saints in silence weep.*

*In vain I lift my hands to pray,
And cleanse my heart in vain;
For I am chast'ned all the day,
The night renews my pain."*

*Yet while my tongue indulg'd complaints,
I felt my heart reprove;
"Sure I shall thus offend thy saints,
And grieve the men I love."*

*But still I found my doubts too hard,
The conflict too severe;
'Till I retir'd to search thy word,
And learn thy secrets there.*

*There as in some prophetic glass,
I saw the sinner's feet
High mounted on a slipp'ry place
Beside a fiery pit.*

*I heard the wretch profanely boast,
'Till at thy frown he fell;
His honours in a dream were lost,
And he awakes in hell.*

*Lord, what an envious fool I was!
How like a thoughtless beast!
Thus to suspect thy promis'd grace,
And think the wicked blest.*

*Yet I was kept from full despair,
Upheld by pow'r unknown;
That blessèd hand that broke the snare
Shall guide me to thy throne.*

Psalm 78 Notes

This psalm is a Maschil (song of instruction) by Asaph. This is a very important psalm. It rehearses much of Israel's history and gives Divine insight into it. Someone wisely said that history is truly "His story". God is glorified through His past dealings with man. One of the primary reasons for this psalm is an explanation of the rise and importance of the house of David. I think this psalm may have been composed to mark Jeroboam and the Northern Kingdom as traitors to God for rebelling against David's heirs.

vs. 1-8 – A call to pass down the history and heritage of the forefathers to the coming generations. These need to learn from the successes and mistakes made in the past. The primary lesson that needs to be remembered is that the best life is loving and serving God.

vs. 9-16 – The exact time that the tribe of Ephraim failed in battle is not certain. This could be in regard to the conquest of Canaan, but there are other viable options. The destruction of Shiloh in I Samuel 4 is mentioned latter and this could be related to that loss. Whatever the occasion was, it is diagnosed here as a symptom of their falling away from God and His Law. They forgot the might of God that had brought them out of Egypt.

vs. 17-32 – The rebellious nature of the Israelites during the Exodus is highlighted. They doubted God could provide food in the wilderness in Exodus 16:2-3. They grew tired of the manna and demanded meat in Numbers 11:4-6. God judged them by fire in Numbers 11:1-3. He gave them manna in Exodus 16. He gave them the flesh of fowls and then judged them for their lust for it in Numbers 11:31-34. All the miracles, all the provisions, and all the judgments could not prevent the people's hearts from turning against God.

vs. 33-40 – That vicious cycle of backsliding, judgment, repentance, and restoration that continually repeated for the Jews. They did not deserve the goodness and grace of God that He showed to them. Before we point any fingers at them, remember that we are all guilty of the same.

vs. 41-56 – They had forgotten the power God displayed in delivering them from Egypt and establishing them in the Promised Land. The Ten Plagues are rehearsed as well as the Red Sea crossing. The settlement of Canaan is mentioned. All of these they forgot and turned away from God.

vs. 57-64 – Once settled in Canaan, the Israelites forgot God and turned to idols. For this, God allowed the capture of the Ark of the Covenant and the destruction of Shiloh by the Philistines in I Samuel 4.

vs. 65-72 – The plagues that befall the Philistines when they held the Ark in I Samuel 5 are recalled. God reveals that it was His Providence that brought the Ark to the tribe of Judah and not another like faithless Ephraim. God chose both Judah and Jerusalem. He chose to have the Temple there. He chose the house of David to be the royal family of Israel. He called David from being a shepherd to be the king who shepherded God's chosen people.

Psalm 79 Notes

This psalm was written by Asaph. It is a song of lament for the judgment of God on His people.

vs. 1-4 – God has allowed foreign powers to invade and capture Jerusalem. The Temple is desecrated and the people are slain without number. Enemies mock the downtrodden Israelites.

vs. 5 – The burning question is how long God would allow such a horrible thing to stand. Would He not avenge the crimes against His people. Would He not restore them again?

vs. 6-9 – A call for God to destroy His enemies, restore His people, and glorify His name.

vs. 10 – A call for God to defend His honor against the slanders of the wicked.

vs. 11-13 – A call for God to deliver His people and pour out His wrath against their persecutors. The result of these actions is that praise offered by His people for generations.

Devotional Thoughts for Day

There is an interesting juxtaposition between these two psalms. Psalm 78 talks about people who forgot God and were judged. Psalm 79 has people who are being judged but do not forget God. There is hope for that second group that after they repent and God has purified them that they will be restored to a place of blessing. That first group cannot find restoration until they remember God. We need to remember this lesson. Stay faithful to God and do not forsake His Word. In doing so even our darkest hours have purpose and hope.

Hymn for Day 182

Our hymn today was written by George Kingsley and first published in 1912 in “The Psalter”. In that book, it has the title “Religious Training”. It takes up the themes of the opening section of Psalm 78 and encourages in our duty to train future generations.

*O come, my people, to my law
Attentively give ear;
With willing heart and teachable
The words of wisdom hear.*

*My mouth shall speak in parables
Of hidden truths of old,
Which, handed down from age to age,
To us our fathers told.*

*We will not from their children hide
Jehovah's worthy praise,
But tell the greatness of His strength,
His wondrous works and ways.*

*A testimony and a law
The Lord our God decreed,
And bade our fathers teach their sons,
That they His ways might heed.*

*He willed that each succeeding race
His deeds might learn and know,
That children's children to their sons
Might all these wonders show.*

*Let children learn God's righteous ways
And on Him stay their heart,
That they may not forget His works
Nor from His ways depart.*

Psalm 80 Notes

This psalm is written by Asaph and was given for use in the Temple. It is to be performed “upon Shoshannimeduth”, which literally means “lilies of testimony”. It is a lament and call for God to restore His people.

vs. 1-3 – A call for God to deliver His people. There is imagery here of the Ark of the Covenant (“between the cherubims”) and to the marching order of the tribes during the Exodus. According to Numbers 10:21-24, the tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin followed behind the Kohathites carrying the Tabernacle furniture. These three tribes are also linked to Rachel, with Benjamin as her son and Ephraim and Manasseh her grandsons through Joseph.

vs. 4-7 – The oppressed call out to God: “How long will this go on?”

vs. 8-14 – Israel is compared to a plant that God brought out of Egypt and planted in the Promised Land. He tended to it and it grew greatly. Now it was as if God had stopped caring for and let it be ravaged by her enemies.

vs. 15-19 – This section carries on the analogy of Israel as a plant that God had tended but was now forsaken. Beginning in vs. 15 a new figure is introduced. There is a “branch” in vs. 15. There is the “man of thy right hand” and “the son of man” in vs. 17. These are all allusions to the Messiah.

Psalm 81 Notes

This psalm is written by Asaph for use in the Temple. It was to be performed “upon Gittith”, which is a musical instrument mentioned here in and in Psalms 8 and 84. The psalm is a call to worship at a feast day but also warns the worshippers to be faithful to God.

vs. 1-3 – The call to join the feast with praise and music. Two types of feasts are mentioned in vs. 3. First are the feasts at the new moon to begin each month. Second is a “solemn feast day” which context shows as Passover.

vs. 4-5 – We see now more about the Passover. It was THE defining feast for Israel. It remembered what God did in delivering His people out of Egypt.

vs. 6-7 – The beginning of the journey out of Egypt is seen. The incident where God provided water at Meribah in Exodus 17:6-7 is mentioned.

vs. 8-10 – The time at Sinai is seen in these verses. Exodus 20:2-5 is the basis for vs. 9-10.

vs. 11-12 – The rebellion against God that caused God to forsake His people. We have numerous examples of this in the Exodus, notably with the Golden Calf in Exodus 32.

vs. 13-14 – Because of Israel’s lack of fidelity to Him, God could not bless them as He desired. He had initially promised to drive out the inhabitants of Canaan before them, but instead they had to fight to conquer it.

vs. 15-16 - The contrasting fates of the righteous and the wicked.

Psalm 82 Notes

This psalm is written by Asaph and is an exhortation for judges and magistrates to serve in holiness before the Almighty God.

vs. 1-2 – The greatness and righteousness of God’s judgment is compared to that of the unfaithful human judges.

vs. 3-4 – The duty of the mortal judges that they had forsaken. This passage reflects Deuteronomy 10:18.

vs. 5 – The willful blindness and ignorance of the mortal judges to do right has unsteadied the nation.

vs. 6-7 – The unfaithful judges had been granted authority to act in God’s name. They failed in their duties and faced judgment. This verse is famously referenced in John 10:34-36.

vs. 8 – A call for God the Righteous Judge to execute judgment in the earth.

Psalm 83 Notes

This psalm was written by Asaph and is the final work attributed to him in Psalms. This is a call for deliverance from an enemy conspiracy.

vs. 1-2 – A call for God to act as the wicked rage.

vs. 3-5 – The conspiracy of the wicked against Israel.

vs. 6-8 – A roster of the nations in the conspiracy

vs. 9-12 – A reminder of past deliverances. The Midianites were defeated in Numbers 31:7-8 and Judges 7:22-25. Sisera was defeated in Judges 4:15-24. Oreb and Zeeb were defeated in Judges 7:25. Zebah and Zalmunna were defeated in Judges 8:12-21.

vs. 13-15 – A call for the utter defeat of the enemy.

vs. 16-18 – A call for God to be glorified in His victory over the enemy conspiracy.

Psalm 84 Notes

No author is given for this psalm. It was given to the sons of Korah for use in the Temple and was to be performed “upon Gittith”, a musical instrument mentioned here in and in Psalms 8 and 81. This psalm shows a longing to worship God in the Temple.

vs. 1-4 – The writer longs to worship at the Temple. He counts the birds that have nested there to be truly blessed to dwell there continually.

vs. 5-8 – A pronouncement of blessing on the righteous as they walk in the ways of the Lord. An allusion is here to the great processions of worshippers on their pilgrimages to the Temple. God’s provision is seen in vs. 6 and His empowerment in vs. 7.

vs. 9-12 – Praising God and longing to experience His goodness without end.

Psalm 85 Notes

No author is given for this psalm. It was given to the sons of Korah for use in the Temple. It is a prayer for the restoration of God's blessings on His people.

vs. 1-3 – The writer recalls times in the past when Israel when Israel saw the blessings of God restored after they repented of their sins.

vs. 4 – A call for God to restore His people and deliver them.

vs. 5-6 – There is a question of doubt here. Would God restore them?

vs. 7 – A call for God to be merciful and deliver His people.

vs. 8-9 – Faith is confessed that God will restore His people.

vs. 10 – We have here a wonderful picture of restoration. We may link mercy and peace together. These two are the things the writer desires for a sinful people that were turning back to God. On the other side, we may link truth and righteousness. These two demand judgment against the sinfulness of the people. The forgiveness of sin by God is accomplished by the concerted effort of His character. Just because He shows mercy does not mean that He compromises truth. Just because He restores peace with sinful man does not mean that He has forfeited His righteousness.

vs. 11-13 – As God's righteousness is restored in the land so is His hand of blessing.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 183

Many of today's psalms refer to past events as guides or as examples of what God can do. George Santayana famously said, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." Israel was rooted in their identity as the people God delivered for Egypt. They look back as tried to learn lessons from their past. Sadly, they did often repeat the mistakes of turning away from God. These stark examples of human nature should be a warning for us today to remain faithful.

Hymn for Day 183

Our hymn today is a paraphrase of Psalm 80.

*Great Shepherd, who ledest Thy people in love,
'Mid cherubim dwelling, shine Thou from above;
In might come and save us, Thy people restore,
And we shall be saved when Thy face shines once more.*

*O haste, Lord, to hear us and pity our woes,
Afflictions our portion, despised by our foes;
O Lord God Almighty, in mercy restore,
And we shall be saved when Thy face shines once more.*

*A place for Thy people, Thou, Lord, didst prepare,
Thy vine deeply rooted rewarded Thy care;
Its branches like cedars, majestic and free,
Spread over the mountains from river to sea.*

*Thy vineyard no longer Thy tender care knows,
Defenseless, the victim and spoil of her foes;
O turn, we beseech Thee, all glory is Thine,
Look down in Thy mercy and visit Thy vine.*

*The branch of Thy planting is burned and cut down,
Brought nigh to destruction because of Thy frown;
The man of Thy right hand with wisdom endue,
The son of man strengthen Thy pleasure to do.*

*When Thou shalt revive us Thy name we shall praise,
And nevermore turning, depart from Thy ways;
O Lord God Almighty, in mercy restore,
And we shall be saved when Thy face shines once more.*

Psalm 86 Notes

This psalm is written by David and described as a prayer. 5 psalms are described as such in their superscriptions. It is both a call for, and praise for, God's mercy and grace.

vs. 1-7 – A call for God to hear David's prayer and be merciful to him in times of distress.

vs. 8-13 – God's greatness is described.

vs. 14-17 – A call for God to deliver.

Psalm 87 Notes

This psalm has no author given. The heading is clear: it is both psalm and a song for the sons of Korah to use in the Temple. It is a song of praise for God's blessings on Zion (Jerusalem).

vs. 1 – A reference to the hills of Zion and Moriah upon which Jerusalem and its Temple were built.

vs. 2 – God had specially chosen Jerusalem to be the place of worship, honoring it above all other places in Israel.

vs. 3 – So much can be said about Jerusalem. We could talk about its history and its kings. We could talk about our Lord's ministry there. We could talk about the prophecies that center there. It is not that the city itself is the greatest or largest, but that it is the place that God chose to work specially with mankind.

vs. 4 – The surrounding nations will know the glory of God in Jerusalem. *Rahab* here is not the woman from Jericho in Joshua 2. Here it is to be understood as meaning "pride" and is a reference to Egypt.

vs. 5 – The place and its people are blessed.

vs. 6 – The place and its people are blessed.

vs. 7 – The springs of joy and sounds of praise echo through Jerusalem.

Psalm 88 Notes

This psalm was written by Heman the Ezrahite, a grandson of Samuel (I Chronicles 6:33). It is described as a song or psalm for the sons of Korah for use in the Temple. It has the curious description of “upon Mahalath Leannoth”, which most translate as something similar to “sung concerning sickness”. It is a rare psalm that is negative in outlook with little to no positivity in it.

vs. 1-2 – Begging for God to hear the constant cries of the suffering.

vs. 3-4 – The singer believes himself to be a hopeless case and that death surely is near.

vs. 5-6 – The singer describes himself as already buried in the grave, pit, or depths. All these are common poetical descriptions of death.

vs. 7-8 – The onslaught of suffering has caused separation from God, friends, and hope.

vs. 9-10 – A call for God to hear and answer the cries of the sufferer before death robs Him of the praise that would be returned.

vs. 11-12 – Rhetorical questions pressing for God to act soon.

vs. 13-14 – The sufferer awakes and prays first thing for God to aid him that day.

vs. 15-16 – The singer again describes himself as being on the brink of death if God did not intervene.

vs. 17-18 – The loneliness of the sufferer as all seems to press in on him.

Psalm 89 Notes

This psalm was a Maschil, or song of instruction, by Ethan the Ezrahite. This is thought to be the wise man mentioned in I Kings 4:31, who is possibly also one of the musicians mentioned in I Chronicles 15:19. The theme of the song is the faithfulness of God. This psalm is the final psalm of Book III.

vs. 1-4 – The faithfulness of God is seen in His covenant with the house of David.

vs. 5-16 – God's power and mercy are praised. *Rahab* in vs. 10 is not the woman from Jericho in Joshua 2. Here it is to be understood as meaning "pride" and is a reference to Egypt.

vs. 17-37 – The faithfulness of God is seen in His covenant with the house of David.

vs. 38-48 – Though God had made covenant promises to David, unfaithful Israel had stirred Him to judge them.

vs. 49-52 – A call for God to remember His covenant with David and restore the nation to its place of honor and blessing. It is pointed out that the enemies of God had been incited in their wickedness when seeing Israel judged.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 184

I believe that there are psalms that relate to every aspect of life. Sometimes we rejoice, and there are many psalms for that. Sometimes we suffer, and there are also many psalms for that. I feel that one area that modern Christian music shies away from is that of suffering or times of affliction. Most songs today are happy and encouraging, but life is not always that way. Sometimes we need a song, not to cheer or distract us from suffering, but to allow us to lament and grieve properly. God has given us psalms like Psalm 88 to aid us in our expressions of hopelessness and despair. He knows that we will at times walk through the dark valleys of life and He has given us songs in minor keys to guide our hearts through them.

Hymn for Day 184

Our hymn today is a metrical rendition of Psalm 88 by Joel Barlow. It first appeared in an American psalter that he produced in which he edited Watts's "Psalms of David" or produced new texts for passages Watts had not covered.

*O God of my salvation, hear
My nightly groan, my daily pray'r,
That still employ my wasting breath;
My soul, declining to the grave,
Implores thy sov'reign Pow'r to save
From dark despair and lasting death.*

*Thy wrath lies heavy on my soul,
And waves of sorrows o'er me roll,
While dust and silence spread the gloom:
My friends, belov'd in happier days,
The dear companions of my ways,
Descend around me to the tomb.*

*As, lost in lonely grief, I tread
The mournful mansions of the dead,
Or to some throng'd assembly go;
Thro' all alike I rove alone,
While, here forgot and there unknown,
The change renews my piercing woe.*

*And why will God neglect my call?
Or who shall profit by my fall,
When life departs and love expires?
Can dust and darkness praise the Lord?
Or wake, or brighten at his word,
And tune the harp with heav'nly quires?*

*Yet, thro' each melancholy day,
I've pray'd to thee, and still will pray,
Imploring still thy kind return—
But oh! my friends, my comfort's fled,
And all my kindred of the dead
Recall my wand'ring thoughts to mourn.*

Psalm 90 Notes

This psalm is the first of Book IV of the Psalms. It was written by Moses, who here contrasts the eternal God against frail man.

vs. 1-2 – God had no beginning. He simply always was. He always will be.

vs. 3-6 – The feeble existence of man is contrasted with God's eternalness.

vs. 7-11 – The mighty God judges sinful man and destroys him.

vs. 12 – A prayer for wisdom that we may use the limited time we have wisely.

vs. 13-16 – A prayer for God to restore His blessing on His children.

vs. 17 – A prayer that the will of God be done.

Psalm 91 Notes

No author is given for this psalm. It describes the refuge that God is for the righteous.

vs. 1-2 – The situation of the righteousness in the protection of God.

vs. 3-8 – The protection of God described. In vs. 4 is a wonderful word picture of God gathering us as a mother bird shelters her young beneath her wings.

vs. 9-13 – The place of protection for the righteous.

vs. 14-16 – The grace of and love of God is the source of our protection.

Psalm 92 Notes

No author is given for this psalm that is set for use on the Sabbath. It is a song of praise.

vs. 1-3 – The flow of praise from a heart in awe of God.

vs. 4-5 – The prompt of the praise is the mighty works of God.

vs. 6-9 – The wicked will not prosper long until the mighty God judges them.

vs. 10-11 – The hand of God raising the righteous.

vs. 12-15 – The state of the righteous with God's blessing. Note the callbacks to Psalm 1 with the use of trees as metaphors for the righteous.

Psalm 93 Notes

No author or superscription is provided for this psalm. It is a song of praise for the God who reigns over all.

vs. 1 – The majesty of God described.

vs. 2 – God's reign is eternal. It always has been and always will be.

vs. 3-4 – One of the strongest forces on earth is the rushing of mighty waters. God is infinitely greater than the mighty forces of nature.

vs. 5 – Two of the greatest descriptions of God are that He is true and that He is holy.

Psalm 94 Notes

No author or superscription is given for this psalm. It deals with the question of the righteous being afflicted for their sins.

vs. 1-3 – We open with a declaration of God’s sovereignty over the affairs of man. All is in His hands. But if that is the case, who can the victories of the wicked over the righteous be accounted for?

vs. 4-7 – The brazen and depraved acts of the wicked are encouraged because they do not believe the Lord sees them or will execute justice.

vs. 8-11 – The foolishness is displayed of doubting God does not see the actions of the wicked.

vs. 12-15 – The Lord works even with the hands of the wicked. Through affliction He purges His children of the sins. The principle of Romans 8:28 is not that everything is good that we face, but that those things have a purpose for our good.

vs. 16-19 – The confidence of the believer in trusting in God’s providence.

vs. 20-23 – This final section opens with a question: are the wicked in league with the holy God? The answer is no. Just because God works through them does not redeem them from their guilt. In the end, the righteous will still be blessed and the wicked will be punished.

Psalm 95 Notes

No author or superscription is given for this psalm, but it is attributed to David in Hebrews 4:7. Charles Spurgeon describes it vividly, saying, “It has about it a ring like that of church bells, and like the bells it sounds both merrily and solemnly, at first ringing out a lively peal, and then dropping into a funeral knell as if tolling at the funeral of the generation which perished in the wilderness.”

vs. 1-5 – A call to worship the mighty God who created all things.

vs. 6-7 – A call to worship the God who shepherds His people. The final phrase of vs. 7 transitions to the final section of warning.

vs. 8-11 – A warning that the current generation should not follow the failures of the unfaithful generation that left Egypt but failed to enter the Promised Land.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 185

A few times today we have seen references to the boundless scope of God's existence. Someone once said that God is so infinitely beyond our understanding that we cannot properly understand His vastness. We resort to comparing Him to concepts we understand, then saying He is not like those. We cannot comprehend something without beginning or ending. Everything we see has both. But God? He has no beginning or end. He always has been and always will be. That is His eternal nature.

Hymn for Day 185

Our hymn today is "O God, Our Help in Ages Past" was written by Isaac Watts and first printed in 1719. It is a paraphrase of the opening verses of Psalm 90. It is considered by many to be among Watt's finest texts. This is the original text which has seen later modifications by Charles Wesley and others.

*Our GOD, our Help in Ages past,
Our Hope for Years to come,
Our Shelter from the stormy Blast,
And our Eternal Home.*

*Under the Shadow of thy Throne
Thy Saints have dwelt secure;
Sufficient is thine Arm alone,
And our Defence is sure.*

*Before the Hills in Order stood,
Or Earth receiv'd her Frame,
From Everlasting thou art GOD,
To endless Years the same.*

*Thy Word commands our Flesh to Dust,
Return, ye Sons of Men:
All Nations rose from Earth at first,
And turn to Earth again.*

*A thousand Ages, in thy Sight
Are like an Ev'ning gone;
Short as the Watch that ends the Night
Before the rising Sun.*

*The busy Tribes of Flesh and Blood,
With all their Lives and Cares,
Are carried downwards by the Flood,
And lost in following Years.*

*Time, like an ever-rolling Stream,
Bears all its Sons away;
They fly, forgotten, as a Dream
Dies at the op'ning Day.*

*Like flow'ry Fields the Nations stand
Pleas'd with the Morning-Light;
The Flow'rs beneath the Mower's Hand
Lie with'ring e'er 'tis Night.*

*Our GOD, our Help in Ages past,
Our Hope for Years to come,
Be thou our Guard while Troubles last,
And our Eternal Home.*

Psalm 96 Notes

No author or superscription is provided for this psalm. It is a song of praise.

vs. 1-6 – Praise for the True God based on His character and characteristics.

vs. 7-10 – A call for all the peoples of the world to worship God.

vs. 11-13 – Creation praises God for His coming judgment on the world.

Psalm 97 Notes

No author or superscription is provided for this psalm. It is a psalm of praise for God's rule over the earth.

vs. 1-6 – God's rule is absolute as seen through the display of His power. There are allusions here to the descriptions of His presence on Sinai (Exodus 19:9, etc.).

vs. 7-9 – The wicked and their idols will be revealed for their vanity and will be ashamed. The righteous will be blessed by the True and Living God.

vs. 10-12 – The practical aspect of the psalm. Seeing that the Mighty God rules over all things, we should serve Him faithfully and give Him the praise due to Him.

Psalm 98 Notes

This psalm is simply described as “a psalm” and no author is provided. It is a song of call for the world to praise the Sovereign God who judges all in the End Times. Interestingly, this psalm is the basis for Isaac Watts’ famed “Joy to the World”. While we traditionally sing that song about Christ’s first coming, it is actually about His second coming.

vs. 1-3 – The salvation of the Lord is made known to all the world. It is tempting to see this as salvation from sin, but the application here is that it is the salvation of the Jews. This fits with the End Times when the Jews will turn and embrace Christ, their Messiah.

vs. 4-6 – The world is called to worship the God who saves the Jews.

vs. 7-9 – All nature rejoices with the arrival of the Righteous Judge.

Psalm 99 Notes

No author or superscription is provided for this psalm. It is psalm of praise for the Holy God.

vs. 1-3 – The God Who reigns is holy.

vs. 4-5 – God is holy in His judgment and justice.

vs. 6-9 – God is holy in His dealings with men and in forgiving them of their sins.

Psalm 100 Notes

No author is given for this psalm, but the superscription aptly describes it: “A Psalm of praise”.

vs. 1 – A call for the world to praise the Lord.

vs. 2 – A call to gather before Him with praise.

vs. 3 – God is rightly our Lord because He created us and He cares for us.

vs. 4 – A call to gather before Him with praise.

vs. 5 – God deserves praise simply because of Who He is. He is good, merciful, and true.

Psalm 101 Notes

This psalm was written by David and is a declaration of intent to serve the Lord faithfully.

vs. 1-2 – A commitment to serve the Lord with heart and hands.

vs. 3-5 – To serve God is in part to shun evil.

vs. 6-8 – The actions of the righteous king.

Psalm 102 Notes

No author is given for this psalm. The superscription aptly describes it: “A Prayer of the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and poureth out his complaint before the LORD”.

vs. 1-2 – The suffering saint calls for deliverance.

vs. 3-11 – The suffering saint is described. God has caused this suffering in vs. 10, meaning this is the chastening to purge the saint from sin.

vs. 12-17 – The suffering saint looks to God expecting the mercy from His goodness.

vs. 18-22 – The deliverance of the suffering saint will be a cause for praise to God in the future.

vs. 23-28 – The fates of the suffering saint and the wily wicked are contrasted. God will destroy the wicked and bless the righteous for eternity.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 186

We were reminded in Psalm 99 that God is holy. I believe this to be His chief attribute. There are three aspects to His holiness: perfection (He cannot be anything other than holy), purity (He cannot be defiled), and partition (God cannot contact sin or be corrupted by it). The problem of His holiness is that it bars sinful man from His presence. But Christ's sacrifice restores that access because He imputes His righteousness to us.

Hymn for Day 186

Our hymn today is the classic “Holy, Holy, Holy”, written in 1823 by Reginald Heber.

*Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee;
Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty!
God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!*

*Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore Thee,
Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;
Cherubim and seraphim falling down before Thee,
Who was, and is, and evermore shall be.*

*Holy, holy, holy! though the darkness hide Thee,
Though the eye of sinful man Thy glory may not see;
Only Thou art holy; there is none beside Thee,
Perfect in power, in love, and purity.*

*Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
All Thy works shall praise Thy name, in earth, and sky, and sea;
Holy, holy, holy; merciful and mighty!
God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!*

Psalm 103 Notes

This psalm was written by David and is a song of praise to God. There are 31,102 verses in the Bible, making the first two verses of this psalm the middle verses of the Bible.

vs. 1-5 – Personal praise to God for His goodness to the individual.

vs. 6-14 – Corporate praise for His goodness to his people. Note the character of God's forgiveness here.

vs. 15-18 – Praise to Eternal God for His mercy to frail mankind.

vs. 19-22 – A call for all to join in praising the sovereign God.

Psalm 104 Notes

No author or superscription is given for this psalm. It is a song of praise.

vs. 1-4 – Praise to the God who created all things.

vs. 5-9 – Praise to the God who created land and sea.

vs. 10-13 – Praise to the God who provides water and life.

vs. 14-18 – Praise to the God who provides for abundantly for life.

vs. 19-23 – Praise to God who created the sun and moon.

vs. 24-30 – Praise to the God who created land and sea.

vs. 31-35 – Praise to the God who is greater than His creation.

Psalm 105 Notes

No superscription is provided for this psalm. However, the first fifteen verses were penned by David in I Chronicles 16:8-12 so we can be confident that this psalm was written by him. It is a song of praise and thanksgiving for God's past dealings with Israel.

vs. 1-7 – A call for Israel to praise the Lord.

vs. 8-11 – The covenant with Abraham is remembered, quoting the promises made to him in such verses as Genesis 12:7.

vs. 12-15 – Abraham and the patriarchs are remembered from their time before the sojourn in Egypt. There is a reference in vs. 15 to Genesis 26:11.

vs. 16-23 – Joseph and his rescue of Egypt during the famine is remembered.

vs. 24-25 – The growth of the Hebrew nation in Egypt and the growth of the Egyptian hatred against them.

vs. 26-38 – Moses and the deliverance from Egypt is remembered.

vs. 39-41 – The wilderness journey is remembered.

vs. 42 – The covenant with Abraham is recalled for the second time.

vs. 43-45 – The conquest of Canaan is remembered. God is praised for blessing Israel with the fruitful land to dwell in.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 187

The ideas of praise and thanksgiving are practically synonymous in the Psalms. The Hebrew verb *yadah* (Strong's H3034) is translated as both praise and thanks. If we look back at what God has done for us, what He is doing for us, and what He will do for us, our thanksgiving surely will turn manifest in praises.

Hymn for Day 187

Our hymn today is “Sing of Jesus, Sing Forever”, written in 1815 by Thomas Kelly. Psalm 105 called for Israel to praise God for His past dealings with them. This song calls Christians to praise God for what Christ has done for us.

*Sing of Jesus, sing forever
Of the love that changes never;
Who, or what from Him can sever
Those He makes His own?
With His blood the Lord hath bought us;
When we knew Him not, He sought us,
And from all our wand'rings bro't us;
His the praise alone.*

*Patiently and persevering,
Let us labor, never fearing,
While we wait for His appearing;
All will then be well.
By His word our fears allaying,
All our feeble footsteps staying,
Let us never cease our praying;
All will then be well.*

*Tho' we pass thro' tribulation,
Christ will be our consolation,
Ours will be a full salvation;
All will then be well.
Happy still in God confiding,
Fruitful if in Christ abiding;
Holy thro' the Spirit's guiding,
We with Him will dwell.*

Psalm 106 Notes

No author or superscription is given for this psalm. The first verse and last two verses, however, match a song by David in I Chronicles 16:34-36. Therefore, it is highly likely that this psalm is written by David as an expansion on those earlier verses. The psalm highlights God's goodness to Israel despite their many failures in their history. This psalm concludes Book IV of the Psalms.

vs. 1-5 – A prayer for personal deliverance based on God's past deliverance of Israel.

vs. 6-12 – The Red Sea crossing is remembered, not as a glorious victory but as God's goodness towards an undeserving people. Israel had already forgotten God's might displayed in the plagues and were ready to surrender themselves back to Egypt in Exodus 14:11-12.

vs. 13-18 – Israel and even forgot the Red Sea crossing and continued complaining to God. Historical incidents recalled here concern judgment against Korah's rebellion in Numbers 16:29-35.

vs. 19-23 – The creation of the Golden calf is recalled from Exodus 32.

vs. 24-27 – The failure to take the Promised Land after the report of the 12 spies in Numbers 13-14 is recalled.

vs. 28-33 – Israel's embracing of idolatry at Baalpeor in Numbers 25 and their murmuring at Meribah in Numbers 20 are recalled.

vs. 34-46 – The failure to drive the Canaanites out of the Promised Land and the effects of it are recalled. Israel continually turned from God and embraced the idolatry of these nations, forcing God to judge them in order to purge the wickedness from His people.

vs. 47-48 – A prayer for the merciful God – a God so merciful that He could forgive this litany of failures in Israel's past – to deliver in the present. Praise is offered to God who is gracious, merciful, and longsuffering toward man.

Psalm 107 Notes

This psalm opens Book V of the Psalms. No author or superscription is provided for this psalm. There is some debate whether this was written by David or much later as the exiles returned from the Babylonian Captivity. It is a song of thanksgiving for deliverance.

vs. 1-3 – The redeemed, those who had been delivered by God, are called to praise the Lord.

vs. 4-9 – The first example of God's deliverance is to those that wander the wilderness with no home. When they cry to the Lord, He provides them with home, safety, and provision.

vs. 10-16 – The second example of God's deliverance is to those imprisoned. These are shown to be guilty, but when they repent God sets them free.

vs. 17-22 – The third example of God's deliverance is to the sinner. These find salvation, satisfaction, and deliverance in the Lord when they repent.

vs. 23-32 – The fourth example of God's deliverance is to the sailor. In ancient times this was especially perilous and is still quite risky today. I love the wonderful word pictures here of a ship riding the waves and of sailors staggering on an unsteady deck. These cry to the Lord and He delivers them.

vs. 33-38 – A fifth example of God's deliverance is found here, though it is not as explicitly stated. Here we see God's provision in blessing the lands, harvests, and livestock.

vs. 39-43 – The power of God that subverts human understanding is displayed. In delivering the righteous and humbling the wicked His might is shown to the world. This is one of the great practical pieces of evidence for God's existence and power. The fact that Christianity has not been eradicated by the world proves the hand of God. The same can be said for the Jews. If they were not God's chosen people, how could they have survived through the centuries and millennia maintaining their identity?

Devotional Thoughts for Day 188

There is a definite pattern in the many examples of God's deliverance in Psalm 107: danger, repentance, prayer, then deliverance. When we find ourselves in trouble, mainly by our own doing, what is our first response? Sadly, it is often to blame God for allowing it or not delivering us. We miss those crucial steps in between danger and deliverance. We must first search ourselves for sin that needs to be repented of and do so. Then we need to actually ask God to intervene. Too often we just expect Him to, but God wants us to humbly come before Him and make our petitions known to Him. Once these are done, the mighty Hand of God is brought to action on our behalf.

Hymn for Day 188

Our hymn today is a personal favorite. "The Haven of Rest", written in 1885 by H.L. Gilmour, parallels that picture of God delivering the sailor in 107:23-32, making it an allegory for salvation and our Savior's loving care.

*1 My soul in sad exile was out on life's sea,
So burdened with sin, and distressed,
Till I heard a sweet voice saying, "Make Me your choice,"
And I entered the haven of rest.*

Refrain:

*I've anchored my soul in the haven of rest,
I'll sail the wide seas no more;
The tempest may sweep o'er the wild stormy deep,
In Jesus I'm safe evermore.*

*2 I yielded myself to His tender embrace,
And faith taking hold of the word,
My fetters fell off, and I anchored my soul:
The haven of rest is my Lord. [Refrain]*

*3 The song of my soul, since the Lord made me whole,
Has been the old story so blessed,
Of Jesus who'll save whosoever will have
A home in the haven of rest. [Refrain]*

*4 How precious the thought that we all may recline,
Like John, the beloved and blessed,
On Jesus' strong arm, where no tempest can harm,
Secure in the haven of rest. [Refrain]*

*5 Oh, come to the Savior, He patiently waits
To save by His power divine;
Come, anchor your soul in the haven of rest,
And say, "My Beloved is mine." [Refrain]*

Psalm 108 Notes

This psalm is written by David. The basis for it appears to be two previous psalms. We see that vs. 1-5 largely mirror 57:7-11 and vs. 6-13 largely mirror 60:5-12. There are minor variations that add freshness. The theme of the song is praise for the God who strengthens.

vs. 1-4 – A call for personal praise.

vs. 5-6 – God glorified through delivering Israel.

vs. 7-9 – God's victory over the territories in and surrounding the Promised Land.

vs. 10-13 – A call for God to help His warrior in battle against His foes.

Psalm 109 Notes

This psalm was written by David and given to the chief musician for use in the Temple. It is plea for deliverance against someone who betrayed the psalmist. Prophetically, this is linked to Judas by Peter in Acts 16-26. Historically, it is likely written about Ahithophel.

vs. 1-5 – A call for god to move against the lies and schemes of the wicked.

vs. 6-15 – A call for judgment against the wicked.

vs. 16-20 – The way of the wicked in choosing cursing over blessing.

vs. 21-25 – That sad state of the petitioner begging for God's deliverance.

vs. 26-31 – A plea for deliverance.

Psalm 110 Notes

This psalm was written by David. This is a Messianic psalm.

vs. 1 – This opening verse is quoted by Christ, applying it to Himself, in Matther 22:42-46 and Mark 12:35-37. The opening words are “The LORD [Jehovah, referring to the Father] said unto my Lord [Adoni, referring to Christ]”. It pictures the culmination of the victory of the Messiah seen in Psalm 2 as He rules the world.

vs. 2 – Pictures the Millennial Kingdom.

vs. 3 – The glory of the Millennial Kingdom.

vs. 4 – Though some modern historians disagree, David was a king only and did not serve in a priestly role. Christ is the one true King and one true Priest. He is said to be of the order of Melchizedek, the mysterious priest of Jerusalem who simply appears without any credentials or lineage in Genesis 14:18. This phrase is expounded on in Hebrews 7 to show that Christ could be greater priest than the Levitical priesthood.

vs. 5 – The “day of wrath” is the conquest of Armageddon preceding the establishment of His throne in Jerusalem.

vs. 6 – The complete and utter defeat and domination of the Messiah over the world.

vs. 7 – This verse is difficult to interpret as it is more poetically descriptive than any other in this psalm. The idea is that that Christ in His campaign against the wicked will be relentless. The picture is that the soldier barely pauses for water as he passes by a stream so that his pursuit of the enemy might continue.

Psalm 111 Notes

No author or superscription is provided for this psalm. It is composed as an acrostic poem, which is totally lost in translation. All the verses have one letter per line, not including the open “Praise ye the LORD”. The first eight verses have two lines each and the final two have three lines each, thus making up the total of the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet. It is a song of praise to God for His mighty works.

vs. 1 – The righteous man praises God in the assembly of the righteous.

vs. 2-3 – The glory of God’s works and character.

vs. 4-6 – God’s power is showed in the Exodus.

vs. 7-8 – The glory of God’s works and character.

vs. 9-10 – Praise returned to God for His redemption.

Psalm 112 Notes

No author or superscription is provided for this psalm. It is composed as an acrostic poem, which is totally lost in translation. All the verses have one letter per line, not including the open “Praise ye the LORD”. The first eight verses have two lines each and the final two have three lines each, thus making up the total of the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet. It is a song of praise to God for His mighty works. It is a song of praise to God for His blessings and grace upon the righteous.

vs. 1-2 – The righteous and their children are blessed by God.

vs. 3-4 – The bounty of God’s blessing on the righteous.

vs. 5-6 – The righteous man is firmly established and generous in his giving.

vs. 7-8 – The security and confidence of the righteous.

vs. 9 – The character and state of the righteous.

vs. 10 – In contrast to the blessing of the righteous, the wicked are punished by God and destroyed.

Psalm 113 Notes

No author or superscription is provided for this psalm. It begins a series of psalms (113-118) that are called the Hallel, which are recited by Jews at Passover and other times. It is a song of praise to God.

vs. 1-3 – Praise to the name of the Lord.

vs. 4-6 – The greatness of God described as above all.

vs. 7-9 – The great God reaches down and raises the state of the humble.

Psalm 114 Notes

No author or superscription is provided for this psalm. It is the second psalm of the Hallel. It is a song of remembrance for the power of God experienced in the Exodus.

vs. 1 – The deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt.

vs. 2 – The sovereignty of God over Israel.

vs. 3-4 – God's presence of the Lord shakes the world.

vs. 5-6 – The psalmist asks the world why they react so to God.

vs. 7 – The world is encouraged to respond just as it did to its Creator's presence

vs. 8 – This verse appears to allude to God's provision for Israel in the wilderness. It could also simply refer to God's power to change Creation for the better, such as seen in Isaiah 35.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 189

The psalms are arranged with purpose. Themes blend and develop as we move through them. Sometimes they are paired for emphasis. Such is the case of Psalms 111 and 112. Both are written in acrostic forms. The two themes are complimentary: the praise of God and His blessings upon the righteous. The righteous never lack for reasons to praise Him because He is always good to them. If you cannot count your blessings then you need an eye exam!

Hymn for Day 189

Today's hymn, "Thy Kingdom Come", was written by Benjamin Beddome. It speaks of the victorious and conquering Messiah that we saw in Psalm 110.

*Ascend thy throne, almighty King,
And spread thy glories all abroad;
Let thine own arm salvation bring,
And be thou known the gracious God.*

*Let millions bow before thy seat,
Let humble mourners seek thy face,
Bring daring rebels to thy feet,
Subdued by thy victorious grace.*

*Oh, let the kingdoms of the world
Become the kingdoms of the Lord!
Let saints and angels praise thy name.
Be thou through heaven and earth adored.*

Psalm 115 Notes

No author or superscription is provided for this psalm. It is the third psalm in the Hallel. The theme is praise to God.

vs. 1 – Glory and praise are directed to God.

vs. 2 – The wicked surrounding the righteous ridicule them by asking to see the invisible God.

vs. 3 – God is too great to stoop to the demands of the wicked.

vs. 4-8 – The vanity of idols is revealed. They may appear to have life and power, but they are inanimate objects of no value.

vs. 9-11 – The righteous are called to put their faith in the true God and not false idols.

vs. 12-15 – The blessings of serving God.

vs. 16 – God is greater than man. He dwells in the universe while He has gifted man one small portion of it.

vs. 17 – A call to praise the Lord while there is life in us.

vs. 18 – The resolution to continue to praise the Lord for all time.

Psalm 116 Notes

No author or superscription is provided for this psalm. It is the fourth psalm in the Hallel. It is a song of praise and thanksgiving for deliverance.

vs. 1-2 – The psalmist goes beyond mere dutiful service to God. God had heard and answered his prayer, and he returns God's favor with earnest love.

vs. 3-6 – The place of terror and the prayer for deliverance from it.

vs. 7-11 – The deliverance from God and the response to it.

vs. 12-19 – The acts of worship from a thankful heart.

Psalm 117 Notes

No author or superscription is provided for this psalm. It is the fifth psalm in the Hallel. This is the shortest chapter/psalm in the Scriptures and the middle chapter of the Bible. There are 1,189 chapters in the Bible, and this is the 595th. Though brief, it is a powerful call to praise the Lord.

vs. 1 – Praise to God from His people and from the world.

vs. 2 – The reasons for praise: His mercy and grace toward us, and His steadfast and unchanging character.

Psalm 118 Notes

No author or superscription is provided for this psalm. It appears to have been sung at the dedication of the Second Temple in Ezra 3:10-11 as the words recorded there match the opening and closing verses of this psalm. It is the sixth and final psalm in the Hallel. It is

vs. 1-4 – The psalmist calls all of God’s people to join in praising the Lord for His enduring mercy and love.

vs. 5-7 – A memory of God’s deliverance prompts greater faith in Him.

vs. 8-9 – God’s care is compared to that of men, and there is simply no comparison.

vs. 10-12 – The wicked nations that encircled and threatened the righteous are destroyed.

vs. 13-18 – The deliverance by God’s Hand from trouble and chastening prompts further praise.

vs. 19-21 – There seems to be an allusion here to a king returning from a victory. There is an air of celebration as he enters Jerusalem and the Temple to praise and thank God.

vs. 22-23 – Once again God subverts expectations. What man rejected, God exalted. Matthew 21:42 and Acts 4:11 quote vs. 22 and apply it to Christ the Messiah.

vs. 24-25 – The celebration of God’s deliverance.

vs. 26-29 – An outpouring of praise and thanksgiving. We see in vs. 27 an allusion to offering a lamb for a peace offering (Leviticus 7:12).

Devotional Thoughts for Day 190

One of the most common errors made in interpreting the Psalms is to divorce them from their setting. Many writers and commentators have tried to remake them in image of New Testament revelation. This robs them of their beauty and often misrepresents what they are saying. While the truths are eternal, there are details that are founded and rooted in the Old Testament system of worship. We do not offering sacrifices today at a Temple, but they did. So, when we come to a passages like Psalm 118 that speak of gates and sacrifices, these were not meant to be interpreted as allegories. They are literal gates and sacrifices. Today we speak of offer praise and thanksgiving as a sacrifice that pleases God. This may not be completely false theology, but too many times I see erroneous doctrine and practice based on reading modern definitions into words and phrases in psalms that were never meant to be used with them.

Hymn for Day 190

Our hymn today is “Christ Is Our Cornerstone”, written by John Chandler in 1837. It is based on 118:22 with allusions to that psalm.

*Christ is our cornerstone;
On him alone we build;
With his true saints above
The courts of Heav'n are filled:
On His great love
Our hopes we place
Of present grace
And joys above.*

*Oh, then, with hymns of praise
These hallowed courts shall ring!
Our voices we will raise,
The Three in One to sing;
And thus proclaim
In joyful song,
Both loud and long,
That glorious name.*

*Here, gracious God, we pray,
Forevermore draw nigh;
Accept each faithful pray'r,
And mark each humble sigh:
In copious stores,
On all who pray,
Each holy day,
Your blessings pour.*

*Here may we gain from Heav'n
The grace we now implore,
And may that grace, once giv'n,
Be with us evermore.
Until that day
When all the blest
In endless rest
Are called away.*

*Praise to the God of Heav'n,
Praise to his holy Son,
And praise to him be giv'n
Who joins them both in One:
The Holy Dove,
Who gives us grace
To find our place
With God above.*

Psalm Notes 119

No author or superscription is provided for this psalm. It is an acrostic poem, with each letter beginning the eight lines of each section devoted to it. The singular theme of these verses is the Word of God. There are many synonyms used for it, such as law, testimony, way, precept, statute, commandment, and judgment. It is often erroneously stated that all 176 verses mentioned the Word of God. This is not true: see vs. 84, 90, 121, 122, and 132.

vs. 1-8 – ALEPH – The way of blessing is to obey the Word of God.

vs. 9-16 – BETH – The internal effects of the Word of God.

vs. 17-24 – GIMEL – True understanding through the Word of God.

vs. 25-32 – DALETH – Deliverance through the Word of God.

vs. 33-40 – HE – Prayer to learn the Word of God.

vs. 41-48 – VAU - Deliverance through the Word of God.

vs. 49-56 – ZAIN – Comfort in troubled times through the Word of God.

vs. 57-64 – CHETH – Hope in troubled times through the Word of God.

vs. 65-72 – TETH – The value in troubled times of the Word of God.

vs. 73-80 – JOD – The security of being rooted in the Word of God.

vs. 81-88 – CAPH - Hope in troubled times through the Word of God.

vs. 89-96 – LAMED – The eternal, unchanging Word of God.

vs. 97-104 – MEM – True wisdom and understanding through the Word of God.

vs. 105-112 – NUN – The guiding light of the Word of God.

vs. 113-120 – SAMECH – The judgment of God revealed through the Word of God.

vs. 121-128 – AIN - Deliverance through the Word of God.

vs. 129-136 – PE – Desire for the Word of God.

vs. 137-144 – TZADDI – The righteousness of the Word of God.

vs. 145-152 – KOPH – The cry for deliverance based on the Word of God.

vs. 153-160 – RESH - Deliverance through the Word of God.

vs. 161-168 – SCHIN – The treasure of the Word of God.

vs. 169-176 – TAU – A cry for deliverance based on the Word of God.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 191

Back when I was in Bible college I worked for a couple of years at a Sears Auto Center. I was trained to do alignments on cars. Sometimes through use or abuse the wheels get out of alignment and the vehicle will drift in a direction other than straight. We attached sensors to the wheels and a machine would tell us how far out of alignment the wheels were and how much they needed to be adjusted. You may not realize it, but as we journey through the Bible the alignment of your heart and mind is being measured against its perfect wisdom. It reveals to us where we need to adjust to faithfully walk in the way that is straight and narrow.

Hymn for Day 191

Our hymn today is “Holy Bible, Book Divine”, written by John Burton in 1803.

Holy Bible, book divine,
precious treasure, thou art mine;
mine to tell me whence I came;
mine to teach me what I am:

Mine to chide me when I stray,
mine to show a Savior's way;
mine art thou to guide my feet;
mine to judge, condemn, acquit.

Mine to comfort in distress,
if the Holy Spirit bless;
mine to show by living faith,
we can triumph over death.

Mine to tell of joys to come,
and the rebel sinner's doom;
Holy Bible, book divine,
precious treasure, thou art mine.

Psalm 120 Notes

No author is given for this psalm. It is described as “a song of degrees/ascents”, the first of 15 psalms with this description. These are believed by many to have been sung by the Jewish travelers making their pilgrimages to Jerusalem to worship. It is a plea for relief from baseless slander.

vs. 1-2 – A cry for deliverance from lies.

vs. 3-4 – Foreseeing the wicked’s fate.

vs. 5-6 – The place of the psalmist is among the heathen tribes. Mesech is associated with Gog and Magog (Ezekiel 39:1), placing it in the far north from Israel around Russia. Kedar was a son of Ishmael (Genesis 25:13) whose descendants live in Arabia near Israel.

vs. 7 – The desire for peace against the threats of war.

Psalm 121 Notes

No author is given for this psalm, the second “song of degrees/ascents”. It is a song of praise for confidence in the Lord’s care.

vs. 1-2 – Our hope is not in our selves or in man, but in the Lord.

vs. 3-4 – The ever-vigilant God watches over the righteous.

vs. 5-6 – The Lord is our comfort and protection.

vs. 7-8 – The Lord preserves the righteous from the evil way and the evildoer.

Psalm 122 Notes

David is the author of this third “song of degrees/ascents”. It is a song of prayer and praise for Jerusalem.

vs. 1-2 – The pilgrim’s journey to Jerusalem is described.

vs. 3-4 – The purpose of the journey is to gather and worship God.

vs. 5 – The nation is ruled by the house of David, foreshadowing the Messiah’s rule.

vs. 6-7 – A prayer for peace in the city God chose for His people to worship in.

vs. 8-9 – Concern for the wellbeing of others and of the Temple. Someone said that the key to happiness is J-O-Y: Jesus, others, then you. That is reflected in these verses.

Psalm 123 Notes

No author is given for this psalm, the fourth “song of degrees/ascents”. It is a prayer for expected deliverance.

vs. 1-2 – The attention of the psalmist is fastened on the Lord in expectation of Him moving on his behalf.

vs. 3-4 – A prayer for relief from those that despise the righteous.

Psalm 124 Notes

David is the author of this fifth “song of degrees/ascents”. It is a psalm of thankfulness for deliverance.

vs. 1-2 – The only reason the righteous may stand against the wicked is because of the Lord.

vs. 3-5 – The wicked are pictured as a raging flood that threatens to drown the righteous.

vs. 6-8 – Praise to God for delivering the righteous.

Psalm 125 Notes

No author is given for this psalm, the sixth “song of degrees/ascents”. It expressed confidence in the Lord’s protection.

vs. 1-2 – The protection of the Lord for the righteous.

vs. 3 – The promise that the wicked will not rule because it would drive the righteous to sin. It does not mean that there are never any troubles for the righteous, but rather that they will surely pass in God’s timing.

vs. 4-5 – A prayer for peace and blessing on the righteous.

Psalm 126 Notes

No author is given for this psalm, the seventh “song of degrees/ascents”. It is a song of praise for the God who delivers the righteous.

vs. 1-2 – Recalling the awe at being delivered by God. This is specifically written to describe the return from the Babylonian Captivity but is applicable in other situations as well.

vs. 3 – The joy of seeing the Lord move on behalf of the righteous.

vs. 4 – A prayer to relive the deliverance already experienced but from a present difficulty. The “streams in the south” refer to the seasonal streams called *wadis* in southern Judah. These are dry for much of the year but flow vigorously in the rainy seasons.

vs. 5-6 – A description of the deliverance God provides. These wonderful promises show that God can turn our turmoil into triumph.

Psalm 127 Notes

David appears to be the author of this psalm that is dedicated to Solomon. It is the eighth “song of degrees/ascents”. It describes the blessing of the Lord, especially through children.

vs. 1-2 – It is vain to trust in anything or anyone other than the Lord. The mention of a house being built likely refers to Solomon’s construction of the Temple.

vs. 3 – Just as we saw a house established by the Lord in vs. 1, so is the family established by Him.

vs. 4-5 – The blessings of family.

Psalm 128 Notes

No author is given for this psalm, the ninth “song of degrees/ascents”. It is song of thanksgiving for the blessings of family.

vs. 1-3 – The blessings from the Lord on the righteous who labor and raise their families.

vs. 4-6 – The blessings from the Lord of long life and a steadfast nation.

Psalm 129 Notes

No author is given for this psalm, the tenth “song of degrees/ascents”. It is an imprecatory psalm against the wicked oppressor.

vs. 1-3 – The long history of oppression is recalled. It is vividly compared to a plow digging into a person’s back. This could possibly be an allusion to being whipped and lashed.

vs. 4 – The Lord will repay the wicked for their evil treatment of the righteous.

vs. 5-8 – The fate of the wicked is compared to grass that briefly sprouted from the flat roofs but soon died due to lack of nutrients. They are worthless as there is no value in their harvest. There is no joy in their demise.

Psalm 130 Notes

No author is given for this psalm, the eleventh “song of degrees/ascents”. It is a prayer of hope in the Lord for deliverance.

vs. 1-2 – The desperate cry for deliverance.

vs. 3-4 – The Lord’s forgiveness allows men to call on Him and to fear Him.

vs. 5-6 – The patient, expectant waiting for the Lord to move.

vs. 7-8 – The confidence in the character and promises of God that He will redeem His people from their afflictions.

Psalm 131 Notes

David is the author of this twelfth “song of degrees/ascents”. It

vs. 1 – The psalmist humbles themselves before the Lord and trusts in Him to care for the matters beyond his control.

vs. 2 – The psalmist compares his trust in the Lord to that of a child in their mother’s care.

vs. 3 – A call for Israel to join in the psalmist’s confidence and trust in the Lord.

Psalm 132 Notes

No author is given for this psalm, the thirteenth “song of degrees/ascents”.

vs. 1 – A prayer for God to remember David and how He chose and exalted Him from his trials.

vs. 2-5 – This recalls David’s desire to bring the Ark to Jerusalem and build the Temple there.

vs. 6-8 – This recalls the Ark being brought to Jerusalem. Ephratah refers to the territory where the Ark was rumored to be (compare to I Samuel 1:1, 17:12 for examples of places with this name). The “fields of the wood” refers to Kirjath-Jearim (“the city of forests”) where the Ark stayed in I Samuel 7:1-2)

vs. 9-17 – A call for God to bless the priests, place, and prince where the Ark would stay.

vs. 18 – David and his house are exalted by God and their enemies put to shame.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 192

God sees and notes our tears (Psalm 56:8). He can turn them in to joy (Psalm 126:5). One day, he will wipe them all away (Revelation 21:4).

Hymn for Day 192

Our hymn today is “He that Goeth Forth with Weeping”, written by Thomas Hastings in 1836.

*He that goeth forth with weeping,
Bearing precious seed in love,
Never tiring, never sleeping,
Findeth mercy from above.*

*Soft descend the dews of heaven,
Bright the rays celestial shine;
Precious fruits will thus be given
Through an influence all divine.*

*Sow thy seed; be never weary;
Let no fears thy soul annoy;
Be the prospect ne’er so dreary,
Thou shalt reap the fruits of joy.*

*Lo! the scene of verdure brightening,
See the rising grain appear:
Look again; the fields are whitening,
For the harvest time is near.*

Psalm 133 Notes

David is the author of this fourteenth “song of degrees/ascents”. It is song of thanksgiving for brotherly unity.

vs. 1 – The blessing of peace among the righteous.

vs. 2 – The unity of the brethren is compared to the sweet fragrance of the anointing oil of the High Priest. A most vivid description.

vs. 3 – The source and spread of the blessing of unity.

Psalm 134 Notes

No author is given for this psalm, the fifteenth and final “song of degrees/ascents”. It is addressed to the priests in their service.

vs. 1-3 – A call for the priesthood to praise the Lord in their service.

Psalm 135 Notes

No title or superscription is provided for this psalm. Charles Spurgeon writes of its composition: “It is mainly made up of selections from other Scriptures. It has been called a mosaic, and compared to a tessellated pavement. At the outset, its first two verses (Psalm 135:1-2) are taken from Psalm 134:1-3; while the latter part of Psalm 135:2 and the commencement of Psalm 135:3 put us in mind of Psalm 116:19; and Psalm 135:4 suggests Deuteronomy 7:6. Does not Psalm 135:5 remind us of Psalm 95:3? As for Psalm 135:7, it is almost identical with Jeremiah 10:13, which may have been taken from it. The passage contained in Psalm 135:13 is to be found in Exodus 3:15, and Psalm 135:14 in Deuteronomy 32:36. The closing verses, Psalm 135:8-12, are in Psalms 136. From Psalm 135:15 to the end the strain is a repetition of Psalm 115:1-18.”

vs. 1-3 – A call to praise the Lord.

vs. 4-5 – The mighty God chose Israel unto Himself.

vs. 6-7 – The power of God seen in Creation.

vs. 8-9 – The plagues on Egypt and the Exodus are recalled.

vs. 10-11 – The conquest of Canaan is recalled.

vs. 12-13 – The Promised Land is given to Israel.

vs. 14-18 – The vanity of idols compared to God’s dealings with Israel.

vs. 19-21 – A call to praise the Lord.

Psalm 136 Notes

No author or superscription is provided for this psalm. It does appear to be written by David (I Chronicles 16:41), sung at the dedication of Solomon's Temple (II Chronicles 7:3), and sung by Jehoshaphat's army (II Chronicles 20:21). It was to be used as a "call and response" format, where one singer or group would sing the first part of the verse and then another group would answer with "for His mercy endureth forever". It is a song of resounding praise.

vs. 1-3 – Praise and thanksgiving to God.

vs. 4-9 – Praise to God for Creation.

vs. 10-16 – Praise to God for His deliverance of Israel from Egypt and the Exodus.

vs. 17-22 – Praise to God for the conquest of Canaan.

vs. 23-25 – Praise to God for His merciful, continuing care.

vs. 26 - Praise and thanksgiving to God.

Psalm 137 Notes

No author or superscription is provided for this psalm. By its content we know that it was written during the Babylonian Captivity. It is one of my favorites, the plaintive cry of the exile as they remember their far-off home.

vs. 1-2 – The mourning of the Jewish captive in Babylon.

vs. 3-4 – The loss of the captive's song.

vs. 5-6 – The pledge to never forget home and heritage.

vs. 7 – Remembering the evil words of the Edomites when Judah fell. See Lamentations 4:21-22 and Obadiah 1:11.

vs. 8-9 – Looking forward in glee to the fall of the Babylonian captors. The expectation is that their violence will be returned to them in judgment.

Psalm 138 Notes

This psalm was written by David. It is a song of praise to God. It is the natural response to God hearing the cry of Psalm 137.

vs. 1 – The public praise of God.

vs. 2 – Praising God's name and word.

vs. 3 – Remembering the deliverance of God.

vs. 4-5 – The rulers of the world are caused to praise God after seeing David's deliverance.

vs. 6 – The character of God.

vs. 7-8 – Confidence in God's deliverance and care.

Psalm 139 Notes

This psalm was written by David and given for use in the Temple. It is a meditation on the omniscience and omnipresence of God.

vs. 1-4 – Prayer for the all-knowing God to search our hearts.

vs. 5-6 – The fact that God is all around us, in all things, and controlling all things is beyond our human understanding.

vs. 7-12 – It is impossible to escape from God.

vs. 13-16 – The wonder of God's design of human development is beyond our understanding.

vs. 17-24 – The concern of God for the righteous and His hatred of the wicked.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 193

I've mentioned before that there is meaning to be found in the order and arrangement of the Psalms. If you do not take the time to discern this, something like Psalm 137 appears out of place. Why would such a sad lament in the midst of songs of praise? I think if you look at the psalms that surround it you will see the reason. In Psalm 136 we are reminded that God's mercy endures forever. What about in the dark places such as Psalm 137? Yes, He still cares and loves for His own in the hardest of times. Psalm 138 is a song of praise for the deliverance that Psalm 137 longed for. Thus, we see that Psalm 137 is perfectly placed and enhanced by its surroundings.

Hymn for Day 193

Our hymn today is "Far From My Heavenly Home", written in 1834 by Henry Francis Lyte. It is based on Psalm 137 but is personalized to the Christian experience.

*Far from my heavenly home,
Far from my Father's breast,
Fainting I cry, blest Spirit, come
And speed me to my rest.*

*Upon the willows long
My harp has silent hung:
How should I sing a cheerful song
Till Thou inspire my tongue?*

*My spirit homeward turns
And fain would thither flee;
My heart, O Zion, droops and yearns,
When I remember thee.*

*To thee, to thee I press,
A dark and toilsome road;
When shall I pass the wilderness,
And reach the saint's abode?*

*God of my life, be near;
On Thee my hopes I cast:
O guide me through the desert here,
And bring me home at last.*

Psalm 140 Notes

This psalm is written by David and was given for use in the Temple. It is a song of prayer and praise for deliverance.

vs. 1-3 – An opening cry for deliverance from the attacks of the wicked.

vs. 4-5 – A prayer for protection from the wicked and their machinations.

vs. 6-8 – A declaration of faith in God, who is the strength and shield for the righteous, and a prayer for His justice to meted out.

vs. 9-11 – An imprecatory section praying for judgment against the wicked.

vs. 12-13 – Confidence of future praise for God's deliverance and blessing of the righteous.

Psalm 141 Notes

This psalm was written by David. It is a cry of desperation for deliverance.

vs. 1-2 – A call for the desperate prayer to be heard. In vs. 2 the prayer is compared to the offering of incense with the evening offering in the Tabernacle/Temple.

vs. 3-4 – A prayer that God protect the embattled saint's tongue, heart, and hands from evil.

vs. 5-6 – A prayer that God chastise David through the hands of the righteous, who will do so with the motivation of helping David instead of destroying him. We see in vs. 6 the destruction of the false judges as David is delivered.

vs. 7-8 – A prayer for God to protect the saint from deadly threats as their trust is in Him.

vs. 9-10 – A prayer for God to protect from the wicked's machinations and let them be consumed by their own devices.

Psalm 142 Notes

This psalm is a Maschil (song of instruction) written by David when hiding in a cave. Whether this is Adullam (I Samuel 22:1-2) or Engedi (I Samuel 24:1-3) is uncertain, but also immaterial as the situation would be of similar nature. It is a desperate song of distress to God that ends with confidences in His deliverance.

vs. 1-2 – The prayer of a desperate person.

vs. 3-4 – No earthly hope or help to be found.

vs. 5-7 – A cry for deliverance to the Lord.

Psalm 143 Notes

This psalm was written by David. It is call for God to hear and deliver the psalmist from his enemies.

vs. 1-2 – A call for God to hear and respond to David through His grace and not in judgment.

vs. 3-4 – The desperation of David's case. The enemy overwhelmed him and he lost hope.

vs. 5-6 – In the desperate hour, David turns his attention to God. He reaches to God for aid.

vs. 7-8 – A call for God to move on behalf of his troubled servant.

vs. 9 – The prayer for deliverance and refuge.

vs. 10-12 – Trust in God for deliverance. More than that, it is a statement of consecration of the saint toward his saving Lord.

Psalm 144 Notes

This psalm was written by David and has considerable parallels to Psalm 18 until the final three verses. It is a prayer for deliverance and a promise of praise for it.

vs. 1-2 – An outpouring of praise opens this psalm.

vs. 3-4 – The nothingness of man compared to God.

vs. 5-8 – A call for God to powerfully deliver David from his enemies.

vs. 9-11 – A new song of praise is promised to God when David is delivered.

vs. 12-15 – After their deliverance, the blessings of God upon His people are highlighted.

Psalm 145 Notes

This psalm was written by David and is a song of praise.

vs. 1 – Everlasting praise to God.

vs. 2-3 – The infinite God deserves infinite praise.

vs. 4-7 – Men share the praises of God with one another.

vs. 8-9 – The goodness of God, reusing Exodus 34:6-7.

vs. 10-13 – Men share the praises of God with one another.

vs. 14-20 – The goodness of God is further described.

vs. 21 - Everlasting praise to God.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 194

In 144:9 we saw the words “new song”, which occur 9x in the Scriptures. Many people look at this and think that for praise to be powerful it must be new. That misses the point of why these “new songs” were composed. In most cases, these “new songs” are composed and sung in reaction to the mighty works of God. We see this in Psalm 40:1-3, 98:1, 144:9; Isaiah 42:10; and Revelation 5:9, 14:3. Most of these are songs of praise and thanksgiving for God’s deliverance. When God does something for us, He deserves the praise for it. That praise should be fresh when it is served.

Hymn for Day 194

Our hymn today is “O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing”, written by Charles Wesley in 1739.

*O for a thousand Tongues to sing,
My great Redeemer's Praise;
The Glories of my God and King,
The Triumphs of his Grace!*

*My gracious Master and my God,
Assist me to proclaim,
To spread thro' all the Earth abroad,
The Honours of thy Name.*

*Jesus, the Name that charms our Fears,
That bids our Sorrows cease;
'Tis Musick in the Sinner's Ears,
'Tis Life, and Health, and Peace.*

*He breaks the Power of cancel'd Sin,
He sets the Pris'ners free;
His Blood can make the Foulest clean;
His Blood avail'd for me.*

*He speaks, and, list'ning to his Voice,
New Life the Dead receive;
The mournful broken Hearts rejoice,
The humble Poor believe.*

*Hear him, ye Deaf; his Praise ye Dumb,
Your loosen'd Tongues employ;
Ye Blind your Saviour's come,
And leap, ye Lamé for Joy.*

*Look unto Him, ye Nations, own
Your God, ye fallen Race;
Look and be sav'd thro' Faith alone,
Be justified by Grace.*

Psalm 146 Notes

No author or superscription is provided for this verse. It is a song of praise to the God who is trustworthy.

vs. 1-2 – A commitment to personal praise.

vs. 3-4 – The untrustworthiness of the strongest of mankind.

vs. 5-6 – Blessed are those who trust in the Creator.

vs. 7-9 – Examples of the trustworthiness of God.

vs. 10 – Praise to the eternal God.

Psalm 147 Notes

No author or superscription is provided for this verse. It is a song of praise to the Almighty God.

vs. 1 – The beauty of praising God.

vs. 2-9 – Praise to the God of Creation, nature, and Israel.

s. 10-11 – The Lord desires our faith and fear above all else.

vs. 12-18 – Praise to the God of Creation, nature, and Israel.

vs. 19-20 – Praise to the God of Israel.

Psalm 148 Notes

No author or superscription is provided for this verse. It is a song of praise to the God of the universe.

vs. 1 – A call to praise the Lord.

vs. 2-6 – A call for praises to resound in the celestial realms.

vs. 7-13 – A call for praises to resound in the terrestrial realms.

vs. 14 – A call for Israel and believers to praise the Lord.

Psalm 149 Notes

No author or superscription is provided for this verse. It is a song of praise to the victorious God.

vs. 1 – A call for the saints to sing a new song in response to God’s goodness, likely in deliverance.

vs. 2-5 – A call for Israel as a community to joyously celebrate God’s goodness toward them.

vs. 6-9 – A call for the warrior to praise the Lord as he executes God’s justice.

Psalm 150 Notes

No author or superscription is provided for this verse. It is a call to praise the Lord.

vs. 1 – A call to praise the Lord in His holy Temple.

vs. 2 – A call to praise the Lord for His character and actions.

vs. 3-5 – A call for musical instruments to be used in God's praise.

vs. 6 - A call for all that lives to join in the praises of their Creator.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 195

We began our journey through Psalms in Psalm 1 with the description of the two paths: the way of righteousness and the way of the wicked. We have seen these two paths described throughout the book. Now we come to the end of the way of righteousness which is the outpouring of praise to God. The old Westminster Shorter Catechism opens with the question: "What is the chief end of man?" This is answered: "Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever." That is the message of Psalms. We are to trust in the Lord in this life and faithfully serve, not for our praise but for His. Then in the endless eons of eternity we will continue to praise Him. For the child of God, nothing could be sweeter.

Hymn for Day 195

Our hymn today is "Sing Praise to the Lord", written in 1875 by H.W. Baker. It echoes the numerous calls to praise God in the closing of the Book of Psalms.

*Sing praise to the Lord! Praise Him in the height;
Rejoice in His Word, you angels of light.
You heavens, adore Him by whom you were made,
And worship before Him in brightness arrayed.*

*Sing praise to the Lord! Praise Him on the earth
In tuneful accord, you saints of new birth.
Praise Him who has brought you His grace from above;
Praise Him who has taught you to sing of His love.*

*Sing praise to the Lord! All things that give sound,
Each jubilant chord, re-echo around.
Loud organs, His glory tell forth in deep tone,
And trumpets, the story of what He has done.*

*Sing praise to the Lord! Thanksgiving and song
To Him be outpoured all ages along!
For love in creation, for Heaven restored,
For grace of salvation, sing praise to the Lord!*