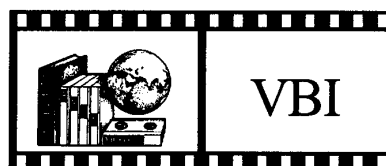
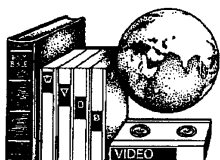


World Video Bible School®

Established 1986



P S A L M S

This set of notes is designed to be used by non-credit students of World Video Bible School® and correspondent students enrolled in the Video Bible Institute (VBI). VBI students should pay particular attention to the syllabus. Students not taking the course for credit may bypass the syllabus and use the notes as they see fit for their spiritual enrichment.



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PSALMS

∞ Syllabus ∞

I. GENERAL INFORMATION.

- A. Instructor: Dr. Denny Petrillo.
- B. This course consists of 21 lessons on 7 DVDs or 7 SP videotapes.
- C. Each class is approximately 38 minutes long.

II. DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE.

- A. This is an overview study of the book of Psalms, with special emphasis on practical application.
- B. Students will acquire a working knowledge of the text.
- C. Students will be able to refute error which uses this book for its basis.
- D. Students will be able to teach these truths to others.
- E. This course will help in understanding God's purpose in preserving this material.
- F. It will help students become men and women "after God's own heart" by learning from David.

III. INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS.

- A. Required.
 - 1. Bible (ASV, KJV or NKJV).
 - 2. Twenty-one video lessons.
 - 3. Spiral bound course notes.
- B. Optional: Any good (conservative) commentary on Psalms.

IV. REQUIREMENTS.

- A. Read the entire book of Psalms at least once.
- B. View all twenty-one video lessons in their entirety.
- C. Read the class notes in their entirety.
- D. Complete all memory work (explained below).
- E. Submit a term paper (explained below).
- F. Take one written test.
- G. Have a combined grade average of at least 70.

V. MEMORY WORK.

- A. Memory verses must be written (or typed) from memory, then mailed to VBI for grading. Verses must come from the ASV, KJV or NKJV, according to what you indicated on your VBI enrollment application.
- B. All verses must be written out or typed at one sitting. You may study more and start over if you make a mistake, but you must still start again from the beginning and write all the verses at one sitting.
- C. For this course, the following verses must be memorized:
 - Psalms 1:1-6
 - Psalms 19:1
 - Psalms 23:1-6
 - Psalms 53:1
- D. Memory work is due when you mail VBI your written test.
- E. Hint: A good method of memorizing is to write the verses on flash cards that can be easily reviewed throughout the course.

VI. TESTS.

- A. There is one written test covering Psalms.
- B. When you near the end of the course, contact us and request the test.

- C. When you receive the test, you have permission to look at it and study it.
- D. However, when you take the test, you must do so completely from memory, with no help from notes, Bible, etc.

VII. TERM PAPER.

- A. Write a paper describing the seven different types of Psalms, giving examples of each. Do not just list the different types—rather, explain their characteristics to demonstrate that you understand them.
- B. The paper should be a minimum of seven pages, typed and double spaced. If handwritten, the paper should be a minimum of ten pages, single-spaced.
- C. The paper is due when you mail VBI your test and memory work.

VIII. GRADING.

- A. Memory work, term paper and test will be graded separately.
- B. Final grade is based on an average of all assigned work, with the test counting twice.
- C. You may request that a grade be explained or reconsidered, but in any case VBI will have the final say.

IX. CREDIT.

Credit will be issued, including a certificate, only after all work has been successfully completed, tapes have been returned (if rented) and all fees for this particular course have been paid in full.

THE BOOK OF PSALMS

INTRODUCTION

I. Wisdom Literature.

This is the type of literature that appears very early in the ancient near east. We have examples of this type of literature that go beyond the Old Testament literature, but it is still very much like the Old Testament literature.

For example a book published in 1923 entitled The Teaching of Amen-Em-Opet by Wallis Budge created wide interest because it showed Egyptian wisdom literature that had similarities to that of the Old Testament. For example, Amen-Em-Opet said: "Give thine ears, hear what is said, give thy heart to understand them. To put them in thy heart is worth while..."

Compare this to Prov 22:17-18, "Incline your ear, and hear the words of the wise, and apply your mind to my knowledge; for it will be pleasant if you keep them within you."

Also, here is a list of some similarities in ancient wisdom literature and the Hebrew wisdom literature.

- A. Father to son form of moral instruction.
- B. Proverbs and precepts used as teaching tools.
- C. A high value is placed on the scribe as a wise man.
- D. Virtues and vices discussed are much the same.
- E. Ethics are based on religion.
- F. Problems about value of life and the meaning of justice.

POINT: This shows that human wisdom conforms to a divinely established order. These principles, which originate from God, are universal in application.

II. Hebrew Wisdom Literature.

The Hebrews did write other books classified as wisdom literature not found in the inspired books of the Old Testament. These Apocryphal books are named Sirach and the Wisdom of Solomon.

III. The Meaning of “wisdom” as we use it in Wisdom Literature.

It is a collection of maxims which tell how to live in such a way as to assure success and happiness. It involves insight and good judgment as to what one should do in a given situation, in the light of human values and goals.

Material from John H. Hayes “Israelite Wisdom Literature” Introduction to Old - Testament Study, pp. 325ff.

There are four places a person in Old Testament society would go to acquire wisdom. God is excluded on purpose, since study of His word is assumed, plus it would be expected that each of these categories would teach about God.

- A. **Family** - What one would learn, a majority of that would be learned from the family.
- B. **The community itself** - The Scriptures often allude to the community “gate” where people would gather and talk. In addition, the gate would be where the elders and community leaders would meet to decide things concerning the city. In today’s society, people learn from all kinds of gathering places.
- C. **Teachers** - Every society has had an educational structure of some kind. Paul Simon’s song, “When I think of all the crap I learned in high school it is a wonder I can think at all” Songs like that, it seems, undermine the main fabric of our society. It is not perfect, but nevertheless when you encourage children that High School has nothing to offer and that they will not be able to function, it is a lie and it fosters ignorance and laziness and other things that are detrimental to society.
- D. **Scribes and Scholars** - Someone who would develop thought. In the world today, this might be those teachers and preachers at church.

These four categories will be referred to in one way or another throughout the wisdom books of the Old Testament.

IV. Forms of Wisdom Sayings.

- A. Proverbs.
- B. Numerical Sayings (Prov 6:16-19; Prov 30:29-31).
- C. Riddles (Psa 49:5; Hab 2:6; Prov 1:6).
- D. Fable and Allegory (Jud 9:7-15; Prov 5:15-23; Eccl 12:1-6).

- E. Dialogue (book of Job).

V. General Characteristics of Wisdom Literature.

- A. It is human and universal in outlook, rather than national and particularistic. Since the major focus does not concern Jewish history, the Psalms and Proverbs can be universally applied to any people and any nation. This shows inspiration, since the Jews were very nationalistic, yet these books transcend that view.
- B. It is primarily practical rather than abstract or speculative. These writings are not theological treatises. They devote their attention to the workings of every day life and its many problems and concerns.
- C. There is no systematic development of thought. Generally speaking, there is no context in wisdom writings. Often times, especially in the Proverbs, each proverb is a thought unit itself, independent of the next proverb. In the Psalms there may be a general theme, but not necessarily an organized developed thought (like we might find in the book of Amos, Habakkuk or Romans).
- D. It is primarily practical rather than ceremonial. There is no emphasis on ritualistic observances. Rather, it focuses on the day to day realization of God as creator and Lord of all. It also is concerned with the every day grind, of getting along with wife, parents, children and workers, etc. It just deals with life.

VI. Exegeting Wisdom Literature.

- A. Four points from Walter Kaiser's book on exegesis.
 - 1. Determine the character of the wisdom material first of all. Is it a parable (Eccl 9:13-18), allegory (Prov 5:15-18), a simile (Prov 25:13, 19,20,25) or some other category?
 - 2. Where the context is helpful, use it. Such as Prov 16 where we have a series of lines that are all based on "man purposes, but God disposes." This is one of the few places, as mentioned earlier, when there is a context.
 - 3. When no connections can be made from context, then use the more obvious line of the Hebrew parallelism to unlock the more difficult line.

4. Always remember that wisdom literature is not meant to cover every situation. It is the nature of proverbial speech to assume that, all things being equal, what is stated will be true. So there may very well be exceptions to the rule being stated.
- B. The Hebrew Bible was divided into three categories:
1. The law,
 2. The prophets and
 3. The writings.
- C. The **writings** were divided into three sub-categories, two of which are relevant to our discussion.
1. Book of truth - which included Job, Proverbs and Psalms.
 2. Megilloth - Which was five scrolls that were read at the feasts of the Jews. This included the **Song of Solomon** which was read at the Passover, the book of **Ruth** that was read at Pentecost, and **Ecclesiastes** which was read at the feast of the Purim, and the 5th was **Lamentations** which was read on the anniversary of the destruction of the city of Jerusalem.
 3. This division included Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah and the Chronicles.
- D. Two-fifths of the Old Testament is poetry. A chief characteristic of Hebrew poetry is parallelism. For a good discussion of this parallelism see R. K. Harrison, Old Testament Introduction.
1. Definition of **parallelism**: A balanced thought pattern in which the thought of one line of poetry is compared with the thought of a succeeding line or lines.
 2. The primary types of parallelism are these:
 - a. **Synonymous parallelism** - From Greek word "soun" meaning "together," so we are looking at things together, so the first line is repeated in other words in the second line. I.E. Psa 24:1:

 "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof;
 The World, and they that dwell therein."

Nothing new is stated in the second line. See also Prov 19:5, 15; 22:17; Psa 83:14.

- b. **Antithetic parallelism** - The second line contrasts the thought of the first line.

Example - Psa 20:8:

"They are bowed down and fallen
But we are risen, and stand upright."

Cf. Psa 1:6; Prov 10:1,5,12; 12:4; 14:30.

- c. **Synthetic parallelism** - This is where the second line adds something to the thought of the first line.

Cf. Psa 2:6; 91:10; Job 23:10; Prov 26:4-5.

VII. Main Areas of Focus in Wisdom Literature.

- A. Contrast between the just with the wicked,
- B. The two ways or choices: life or death,
- C. Practical advice (proper conduct, diligence, responsibility, integrity, etc.) and
- D. Fear of the Lord .

THE BOOK OF PSALMS

I. The General character of the Psalms is deeply emotional and God centered.

- A. Yoder, p. 157 said, "The Psalms are songs that come from the soul of worshipers, they are not the work of school men or theologians."

Exactly right. This is not a theological treatise. God did not intend for man to base his doctrine on the teachings of the Psalms. They are clearly in a different class than the Torah.

- B. The Hebrew title for the book is "TEHILLIM," meaning "Praise Songs."

1. Our Bibles have Psalms which come from the Greek which is Psalmos - songs that are sung with the accompaniment of an instrument.
2. Our Hebrew and English Bibles correspond here. There are 150 Psalms although the verse numbers differ in a number of places. Unfortunately the LXX, followed by the Latin Vulgate, has 151 Psalms. Some suppose there is an extra Psalm, but they have taken some Psalms and divided them into smaller parts.

C. Divisions:

Book I: Psalms 1-41.

Book II: Psalms 42-72.

Book III: Psalms 73-89.

Book IV: Psalms 90-106.

Book V: Psalms 107-150.

This division seems to have been present since ancient times. Perhaps the five books correspond to the five books of the Torah. Each division ends with a Doxology.

1. Illustrations of the breakdown: If you can remember this breakdown it will serve you well in trying to find some Psalms. The idea of Psalm 19 corresponds with the book of Genesis. Psalm 8 also carries the same idea. Things that deal with the law cause some trouble. Psalm 119 corresponds with Deuteronomy in the Ten Commandments given the second time.

2. Authorship and Date:

In most cases the texts of the Psalms do not indicate the author by name. For the most part the only definite information about authorship is found in the Psalm titles. Not all of these titles contain the author's name, but those which do present us with the following tradition:

- a. David - 73 Psalms (Mostly in book I and book II).
- b. Asaph - 12 Psalms (50, 73-83).

- c. Descendants of Korah - 10 Psalms (42, 44-49, 84, 87,88).
- d. Solomon - 1 or 2 (72?, 127).
- e. Moses - 1 (90).
- f. Heman the Ezrahite (88).
- g. Ethan the Ezrahite (89).

DATES: Moses - 1405 B.C.; David - 1020-975 B.C.; Asaph - 1000 B.C. Remainder? But not after 500 B.C.

3. See the Theme Sheet of the Psalms.

A series of devotional songs designed to instruct man concerning the two choices in life:

The spiritual person is concerned about living one's life pleasing to the Lord and there are Psalms that are directed that way: thinking righteously and hearing and obeying the Lord, about salvation and praising Him. The righteous make a concerted effort to stay away from the wicked.

The TWO key elements:

- a. Soul (132 times).
- b. Heart (128 times).

Key Words and the number of their occurrences:

- a. Righteous / ness (120 times).
- b. Hear / Obey (65 times).
- c. Save / Salvation (80 times).
- d. Praise (4 words).
- e. Mercy (93 times especially in 127 where it occurs in every verse).
- f. Face (36 times).

- g. Eye (54 times).

Psalms 1 introduces the theme repeated throughout the entire book:

“For the Lord knows the way of the righteous. But the way of the wicked will perish.”

II. Technical terms in the Psalms.

- A. Mizmor - a song accompanied by a musical instrument (found in 57 Psalms).
- B. Shir - a general term for vocal music (found in 27 Psalms).
- C. To the Choir Leader - provides special instruction concerning speed, inflection and other stylistic concerns.

III. Major Psalm Categories.

- A. Scholars generally recognize four major Psalm categories: **Praise, Lament, Didactic and Royal.**

However, the Psalms are easily divided into far more categories (as illustrated by the 32 categories found in the 3 page sheet in the syllabus).

- B. For our purposes, we will focus on seven Psalm categories. We will not be able to go through all of the Psalms in order. However, we will attempt to give somewhat of a detailed examination of several Psalms from each of the seven Psalm categories.
- C. The seven Psalm categories we will look at are:
 - 1. Didactic (Psa 1, 119, 139),
 - 2. Praise (Psa 8, 19, 46, 47, 48, 115, 136),
 - 3. Thanksgiving (Psa 30, 34, 40, 65, 67, 118, 138),
 - 4. The Individual Lament (Psa 13, 17, 51, 73),
 - 5. Trust (Psa 3, 4, 16, 23, 25),
 - 6. Royal/Messianic (Psa 2, 24, 101, 110) and
 - 7. Imprecatory Psalms (35, 69, 109).

In numerical order, Psalms we will give special attention to are:

1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 13, 16, 17, 19, 23, 24, 25, 30, 34, 35, 40, 46, 47, 48,
51, 65, 67, 69, 73, 101, 109, 110, 115, 118, 119, 136, 138, 139.

DIDACTIC PSALMS

DIDACTIC PSALM #1

PSALM 1

This is a didactic Psalm used for teaching or instruction. This Psalm is often called the door to the Psalms, because one needs to carefully go through it before he can fully appreciate what the other Psalms are teaching.

1:1 How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!

“How blessed is the man”

Uses an important word - “Blessed.” The word occurs 26 times in the Psalms. See the sheet in the syllabus. We can see who the blessed are from the sheet. #1 on the sheet describes the person we are looking at here. The word does not mean “happy” in the way we use it, because happiness often depends on external circumstances. This is describing a person who is approved of God (and because of that approval has an inner peace and contentment). This is also the meaning of the word “blessed” in the beatitudes in Mt 5.

I. Walk in the counsel of the wicked.

In the Bible, walk is a description of a life style. So he does not walk in the counsel of the wicked. Counsel is a word that means “advice.” When the word “council” is used it means advisors. The blessed man does not accept, live or follow the advice or teaching of the counselors. This is a good verse to use as an illustration in talking to young people, because in our society today we have many counselors. The word in its basic definition is someone who is offering suggestions to a person about how they should live. Therefore, with teenagers, they have as counselors their peers, the T.V., the rock groups, various teen magazines. The person who is approved of God chooses his counselors carefully. We live when people assume this position when they have no business being such. As Jesus said it is the blind leading the blind (Mt 15:14). You do not want someone like you to guide you. Why is it we use our peers to influence behavior and to lay down the standard of morality we embrace? So if we want to be approved of God, we will not walk in the counsel of the wicked. Then whose counsel do we walk in? Line two tells us.

II. He does not stand in the path of sinners.

This seems to be indicating that the person is choosing very carefully where he spends his time. Where the sinners trod is not where he is. It is like "flee every appearance of evil (1 Thess 5:22). David says in Psa 17:4 "...I have kept from the paths from the violent." That is what the blessed man does.

III. He does not sit in the seat of scoffers.

He is not going to be one who belittles the work of others. It is very easy to criticize the mistakes of others. But to get out and try it ourselves is sometimes a completely different thing. Perhaps 1 Cor 15:33 is worthy to summarize this verse. The blessed man is one who chooses very carefully with whom he goes and with whom he associates.

1:2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night.

In contrast, His delight - this word has the idea of finding a deep rooted pleasure or contentment, a genuine source of satisfaction. This person finds ultimate fulfillment in this and in the law of the Lord.

"Delight in the law of the Lord."

Psa 119 is a good commentary on this verse, because the entire Psalm deals with God's law. It is not the law of man, but the law of the Lord he delights in. Man's laws are important, but God's laws are eternal and are the ones that deserve the full attention of God's people. One approved of God does this and finds delight in God's law. The thought is similar to that of Jas 1:19. The blessed man comes to God's word with a disposition to listen from it, not becoming angry or slow to listen to it.

"In His law he meditates day and night."

The person approved of God does not just give lip service to God's word, but thinks about it often. What we have described is what the blessed man does not do in v. 1, and in v. 2 what he does do. Now in v. 3 we describe what he is like as a result of what he does in v. 2.

1:3 And he will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, Which yields its fruit in its season, And its leaf does not wither; And in whatever does, he prospers.

I. "He is going to be like a tree firmly planted."

A tree, firmly planted, is one that has a healthy root system. It reflects stability. Because of that the tree is not likely to be blown over by the storms of life.

II. “He is like a tree planted by streams of water.”

As long as a tree has a steady access to the life-giving water, it remains strong. So it is with the word of God. So long as a person continues to take in that word, he will find strength from God's word on a continual basis.

III. “He is like this tree that yields its fruit in its season.”

Those approved of the Lord are “fruit yielders.” God has never in any generation expected His children to not have an impact on others. Our constant exposure to, and meditation on, God's word makes us more fruitful. It is God's word that teaches about the fruit of the Spirit, Gal 5:22; cf. Mt 7:18-20. In season, you would expect fruit at its appropriate time. God's people do this. They produce fruit at its appropriate time.

IV. “This trees leaves do not wither.”

A tree such as this is one that is healthy, free from infection and disease. In describing the blessed of the Lord, he is one who is spiritually strong and healthy.

The conclusion is:

“In whatever he does, he prospers”

As long as we seek first the kingdom of God, then prosperity will be ours. That is, ultimate prosperity (cf. James 1:25). This is not saying that the godly man will never have any failures, but that the general course of his life will be successful.

V. The writer considers the wicked.

1:4 The wicked are not so, But they are like chaff which the wind drives away.

The Hebrew word RASHA (“wicked”) is found 77 times in Psalms. It presents a key concept in the Psalms, because it is the word that describes the type of life-style which continually resists the will of God.

“The wicked are not so.”

So = they do not have the four things that are benefits which belong to the strong man of God. The wicked are not like that.

“They are like chaff which the wind drives away.”

The wicked are like dried leaves with no substance. The wind comes and blows them away. The Bible often talks about one's stability, having character of genuine value. Wickedness is that which takes away one's true value. The wicked are the detriment to society because they have no value in and of themselves.

1:5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.

“They will not stand in the judgment.”

Cf. Rev 6:15-17; 2 Cor 5:10; Rev 20:11-15, there will be wicked in the judgment. They just will not stand because they are not in a sound relationship with God.

“Nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.”

God has a plan of bringing all the righteous together (cf. 2 Pet 3:13). Here is another predominant word in the Psalms. Righteous (Hebrew TSEDEQ) occurs 180 times.

1:6 For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the wicked will perish.

“The Lord knows the way of the righteous.”

God's seeing and being aware of what man does is a common theme in the Bible. Here it means that God gives favorable recognition to what the blessed man does, and he will be rewarded accordingly in the judgment because God was satisfied with his life (cf. Nah 1:7; 2 Pet 2:9; 2 Tim 2:19).

“But the way of the wicked will perish.”

The wicked are not going to be able to continue because ultimately God is going to put a stop to their life style and practices.

This first Psalm is not one filled with difficult theological concepts. It is clear and straight forward, and is a typical style for the didactic Psalms.

It is also easy to see how this Psalm sets the stage for the entire book of Psalms.

DIDACTIC PSALM #2

PSALM 119

This is the grand Psalm extolling the magnificence of the word. See the handout "Psalm 119." There are a number of acrostic Psalms, 29; 34; 37; 111; 112; 119; 145. They are not like this one exactly. This has 22 letters in the Hebrew alphabet and 8 verses belonging with each letter. This information is extremely helpful in explaining the different meaning of words used to describe God's Word.

The second sheet, the "Benefits of God's Word," breaks down the teachings of Psalm 119 in such a way that enables us to see how David personally benefitted from studying God's Word. All of these points hold true for the child of God today, who stands to benefit considerably from studying the Bible.

DIDACTIC PSALM #3

PSALM 139

THE CONCEPTION OF GOD AS IS FOUND IN THE BOOK OF PSALMS:

At the heart of the Psalms is the personal God of Israel.

- I. The Psalmists never tire of praising God as creator, sustainer, lawgiver, ruler, vindicator and judge.
- II. The personality of God is presented in such concrete and realistic terms that one who reads these poems knows their authors trusted in the Lord and took refuge in Him.
- III. The direct and earnest prayers they prayed were natural outpourings of hearts which were intimate with the Almighty.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF GOD AS THEY ARE PRESENTED IN THE PSALMS:

His divine Attributes: Psalm 139 A-D.

- I. He is omniscient (v. 1-6).
- II. He is omnipresent (v. 7-12).
- III. He is omnipotent (v. 13-18).
- IV. He is infinite in righteousness (v. 19-24).

- V. His goodness (Psa 103).
- VI. His justice (Psa 5).
- VII. His forgiving nature (Psa 51).
- VIII. His loving care for His people (Psa 23).

- 139:1** Searched is a word often used for digging for precious metals. The result of God's research is conclusive, for David says that God has known him.
- 139:2** Sit down equals passive movement; rise up demonstrates active movement, thus illustrating that God knows everything we do. When David says God understands his thoughts "from afar" he perhaps means (1) from heaven; or (2) God knows his thoughts even before he thinks them.
- 139:3** There is nothing one does or says that God misses. He has a complete knowledge of our schedules.
- 139:4** God knows what a man will say before the man himself knows what he will say. Thus, He knows man better than man knows himself. It is this complete knowledge that makes God uniquely qualified to be the judge of all mankind (cf. Jas 4:11-12; Heb 4:13).
- 139:5** God does not just passively observe the things we do in our lives, He is involved. His hand is indicative of His loving care and protection.
- 139:6** David correctly concludes that his knowledge is no match for God's. Thus, he will not try to out-think or out-reason God. The logical conclusion of such a point is that man will openly accept all God teaches, simply because He knows so much more than any man.

Section Two: God's Omnipresence (vss. 7-12).

- 139:7** David knows that as a spirit-being God does not have the limitations of flesh and blood. Just being a spirit, He is in every place. Thus, anywhere David might try to go to get away from God would be a foolish (and vain) attempt.
- 139:9** As in verse 8, if he were to go up high (wings of dawn) or low (remotest part of the sea) God would still be present.
- 139:10** How does David view God's omniscience? As a source of fear and dread? Not at all! To him it is a source of comfort that God will always be with him.

Such knowledge gave David the confidence to proceed into the unknown with boldness.

139:11,12 David attempts to illustrate his point. Let us assume it was pitch black out side, a darkness we had never before experienced. Would God equally be limited with the absence of any light? No, David says. God sees as well in the blackness as He does in the light.

We would do well to remember this point. Adam and Eve tried to hide from God, and men have attempted to do it ever since. Yet, such is futile. Since God clearly sees all, we should live in such a way as to welcome His careful examination of our lives (cf. vss. 23-24).

Section three: God's omnipotence (vss. 13-16).

139:13 God's power is such that he was able to form all of David, from his emotional makeup (inward parts/kidneys) or perhaps, meaning here, his complicated physical body. When he notes how God weaved him, it illustrates the intricate handiwork and craftsmanship of God.

139:14 As one gives serious consideration to the wonders of the human body, he is left with only one inescapable conclusion - it was designed by a supreme designer!

139:15 Even in the darkness of the womb (the "depths of the earth") David acknowledges that God somehow was able to skillfully (literally "embroider") construct his body.

139:16 God's knowledge of man extends to the days even before conception. This knowledge is used by God to make plans for the individual. The Bible does teach that God does at times plan a person's life to enable him to serve God's divine purposes (Jer 1:5; Acts 9:15; Gal 1:15,16). Yet the Bible also makes clear that one can exercise his own free will in disrespect to the plans God may have had for his life (Deut 5:16; Eph 6:2,3; Prov 3:1,2; 4:10; 9:10-11; 10:27).

Section four: God's Infinite Righteousness (vss. 17-24).

139:17 David is thankful to know of God's thoughts (cf. 1 Cor 2:10-13). He knows that God's thoughts far outnumber his own. It truly is a blessing to have God reveal His thoughts to us in His word. Whereas He knows everything we think, we know nothing of His thoughts outside of what He has revealed.

139:18 It is unclear as to what David means by this last phrase, "when I awake, I am still with thee." Perhaps the thought is that when he goes to sleep he is numbering God's great attributes, and when he wakes up, he still has thousands to

count. Or, he may be saying that he remains in God's presence, even though he has been in a deep sleep for many hours (and God could have left him).

139:19 In thinking of God's greatness, David's thoughts go to those who willingly oppose Him. He wishes that God would display His awesome power against the wicked. Also, he personally wishes the wicked would leave him alone.

139:20 David's righteousness is seen here. He is truly disturbed when men foolishly say things against God. How do we react when others take God's name in vain?

139:21 David harbors no personal malice toward anyone, even the wicked. Yet, he does not care for those who oppose God. David does not fellowship those who are not on God's side (see notes on Psalm one; cf. 2 Cor 6:14-18).

139:22 David's feelings towards God's enemies run deep. It is not being hypercritical. He is truly offended, hurt and upset by what others are doing. He does not like them or what they do. It truly is a sign of righteousness to love what God loves and hate what God hates (Rom 12:9).

139:23 In contrast to the wicked, David sincerely wants to be known by God, and wants to be right with God. David has no fear of inviting God to examine him. He knows that God will find a soul sincerely trying to do what is right.

139:24 If God's examination should yield some weaknesses in David's character, he invites God to lead him to yet higher levels of righteousness.

KEY IDEAS SET FORTH IN PSALM 139

- I. God has an intimate knowledge of us.
- II. God searches man's ways as a judge scrutinizes evidence in his courtroom.
- III. God's investigation of man makes Him the perfect judge, and gives the righteous confidence to give themselves fully to doing right.
- IV. God is a personal God who is interested in individuals.

PRAISE PSALMS

PRAISE PSALM #1

PSALM 8

This Psalm is also considered a Messianic Psalm because of its numerous quotations in the New Testament (cf. verse 2 = Mt 21:16; verse 4 = Heb 2:6-8; verse 6 = 1 Cor 15:27).

8:1 David begins this Psalm by identifying two common Old Testament names for God: The first word translated “Lord” is the Hebrew YHWH, the personal name of God. The second word translated “Lord” is the Hebrew ADONAI. Both of these terms convey how only YHWH is worthy to be one’s lord. Specifically, when God’s power is seen in creation and how He deals with man, only one logical conclusion will result. He deserves to be my Lord.

David declares that His name is the most **majestic** out of the literally thousands of names that exist on the earth (including both man and beast).

David also declares that God has displayed His splendor **above the heavens**. It is noteworthy that the heavens often proved to be an area of idolatry with the worship of the sun, moon and stars (i.e. the “queen of heaven” - Jer 44:17; Ezek 8:16).

8:2 When one observes the wonder of childbirth it speaks volumes concerning God’s awesome power. Jesus uses this verse to let the Pharisees know that the Son of God must receive praise (Mt 21:16). Equally, when one sees the greatness of God in creation he will immediately **cease** being an **adversary** of God’s. Why? Because he can see that he is no match for one as powerful as God.

8:3 Certainly God wants man to give serious thought to the wonders of the creation. The vastness and greatness of the skies, the planets and the stars are fitting testimony to God’s omnipotence.

8:4 David has identified several reasons to acknowledge God’s greatness:

- I. His great name (v. 1).
- II. His power seen in creation of man (v. 2).
- III. His power seen in the heavens (v. 3).

In view of these points, it would be easy for man to consider himself small and

insignificant. There are two points David finds incredible:

- I. That God would even **think** about man and
- II. That God would **care** about man. Why would such a great God care about someone as small as I?

The Hebrew writer quotes this remarkable section (running through verse six) to illustrate the superiority of Jesus over mankind (Heb 2:6-8).

8:5 Out of all of the elements of God's creation, from the planets to the plants, from the animals to the birds, man is God's crowning act. It is man who has been given **glory and majesty**. It is man who was made in the likeness of God (Gen 1:26).

8:6 God's love for mankind is seen in the position He placed man. All of the creation was to be subject to man (Gen 1:26, 28).

Paul uses this verse to talk about the supreme power Jesus has in His kingdom. He is presently reigning, and will continue to do so until **all things** are put under His feet, and then He Himself will step down (1 Cor 15:27).

8:7,8 David here illustrates those creatures God has placed at man's disposal. The "paths of the sea" phrase is that which encouraged sailor Matthew Fontaine Maury to look for underwater currents that could benefit ocean travel. He found those "paths" and mapped them and they are still used today.

8:9 In order to complete the thought of this Praise Psalm, David repeats the clause he began with. God is certainly worthy to be praised, and this Psalm has given man a multitude of reasons to do so!

PRAISE PSALM #2

PSALM 19

This Praise Psalm logically breaks down into two categories. David wants to praise God for:

- I. His creation (vss. 1-6).
- II. His Word (vss. 7-14).

19:1 David begins by acknowledging how God's creation tells a significant truth: God's glorious nature is seen in the beauty and perfection of what He has made. Using Hebrew parallelism (see introduction), the second line repeats the thought of the first line. Thus, the word **heavens** is the same as the word **firmament** in the second line. Actually the word firmament is a poor translation, because it is based on the ancient (and false) concept that the heavenly bodies are fixed, or firm, in the heavens. Actually the Hebrew word means wide open spaces.

19:2 If one is inclined to listen, God's creation tells an amazing story every day - the story of God's tremendous attributes. Think about it. **Knowledge** is obtained by observation, because one is able to see:

- I. God's power (to simply call things into existence),
- II. His perfect knowledge (by being able to make a perfect dwelling for man),
- III. His love (by making a dwelling so suitable and beautiful); And yet this is just a small sample of what the creation can teach the careful observer!

19:3 The teachings of creation are silent teachings. No words are necessary. The sheer splendor of it all speaks volumes.

19:4 The Hebrew of this verse has caused some confusion. There are actually two possible thoughts depending on the translation of the word "line." If one goes with the word "line" (as does the NASV), then the thought is that the creation displays careful design and construction, following its architectural lines. If the word is translated "sound" then the thought is that God's thunder is a powerful voice that is heard throughout the world.

Paul quotes this verse to demonstrate the widespread influence the preaching of the Gospel has had (Rom 10:18).

19:5 This verse seems to support the translation of "line" in verse four, since this verse continues the thought. The heavens provide a beautiful backdrop for the magnificent entrance of the sun each morning. The sun seems unstoppable as it marches across the sky.

19:6 The sun truly is a remarkable testimony to God's wondrous power. It's **heat** benefits all below it, and it has proven to be a consistent workhorse, rising and setting each day as God has ordained it.

David now moves into the second section of this praise Psalm. In a style similar to Psalm 119, he praises God for His Word (vss. 7-14).

One immediately notices the adjectives David uses to describe God's Word.

He says the Word is:

- I. Perfect (v. 7),
- II. Sure (v. 7),
- III. Right (v. 8),
- IV. Pure (v. 8),
- V. Enlightening (v. 8),
- VI. Clean (v. 9),
- VII. Enduring (v. 9),
- VIII. True (v. 9) and
- IX. Righteous (v. 9).

Because of these nine qualities, David notes that the Word then becomes:

- I. A source of joy (v. 8),
- II. Desirable (v. 10),
- III. Sweet (v. 10) and
- IV. Rewarding (v. 11).

19:7 When David describes God's Word, he calls it **perfect**. The idea here is that it is "blameless" or without fault. David sees no imperfections in the law of God. If there are any problems, the problems are with him, not with God's Holy Word. If man today could be wise enough to see that there are no faults with God's Word, and that by following it they would be following a perfect guide, then they would see how it is able to **restore** one's soul.

David also describes God's testimony as **sure**. He means that God's Word is reliable and trustworthy. In what way? It is able to take one who is **simple** (naive or uneducated) and make him **wise**.

19:8 **Right** means fair, just or equitable. David does not consider God's commands to be unreasonable or harsh. He also knows that one finds true inner joy when he lives according to God's instructions. **Pure** carries the idea of perfection or without fault. However, it can also mean that it is bright or radiant (perhaps

making a comparison to vss 4-6). David also says that God's word **enlightens** the eyes, meaning that with study one can see more clearly God's truths as well as the meaning of life. When one is able to see clearly where they are going, they are less likely to stumble (cf. 2 Pet 1:9-10).

19:9 **Fear** is not normally a word used to qualify the Word of God, but perhaps the idea here is the same as found in Proverbs 1:7. God's Word is fear-causing. This fear is **clean**, which parallels David's words in Psalm 12:6. David also acknowledges it is God's Word that is **enduring forever**, which stands in contrast to the temporal words and thinking of man (cf. 1 Pet 1:24-25). God's judgments (in His Word) are also **true** judgments. There are no wrong decisions made by God. As God, what he declares is always perfectly equitable and fair. Man, however, has the tendency to be unfair in judgments (cf. Mt 7:1-2). It is still true, however, that when we make judgments based on God's Word, they are righteous judgments (Jn 7:24). If God has condemned a certain practice, and we fail to also condemn such, then we are not acting the way God would have us act. We are responsible for being a pillar and support of God's truth as stated in 1 Tim 3:15.

19:10 When one's heart is right, he is sincerely interested in knowing how God has decided concerning things. To him, knowing what God has said is more valuable than the finest **gold**. In addition, God's word provides as much pleasure as the sweet tasting **honey**.

19:11 As one goes through life, he encounters many dangers. Yet, if he has exercised wisdom, he knew about those dangers beforehand. How? He has learned from God's Word (cf. Psalms 17:4). The **reward** David has in mind is probably a temporal reward, including all that he has mentioned up to this point. Truly we receive great blessings in this life when we try to live according to God's directives.

19:12 Since God's law details what sin is, if one is ignorant of what the law says he may be sinning and not know it. Yet, the responsibility has always fallen upon man to find out God's laws (cf. 2 Tim 2:15). When David speaks of **hidden faults**, it is unclear whether he means:

- I. Sins unnoticed because they are so common to man,
- II. Lesser sins that have received less attention or
- III. Sins of ignorance or inadvertence.

The Law of Moses addressed sins committed unwittingly or unintentionally in contrast to sins committed defiantly (Num 15:27-36).

19:13 In continuing with the thought of verse 12, David expresses concern with **pre-sumptuous sins**. These types of sins are done deliberately and with fore-thought, perhaps assuming that there will be no consequences for the action. Yet, David is interested in being God's **servant**, not Satan's. He wants God to **rule**, not sin (cf. Rom 6:12-13).

It is important to note the overriding idea in this discussion. David clearly believes continued exposure to God's precepts will lead him away from sinful behavior and to God. We would all do well to embrace the same belief. David was a man after God's own heart because he did not want to have sin in his life. He truly wanted to be **blameless**, having been **acquitted** of transgression.

19:14 This great Psalm concludes with a prayer. David wants all that he says and does to be **acceptable** to God. He has no desires of being a man-pleaser. He wants to be a God-pleaser. David was concerned with being what God wanted him to be rather than what he might have wanted for himself. This was also the selfless attitude of Paul in Gal 2:20. To David, God was his:

- I. Rock - the solid, stabilizing influence in his life,
- II. Redeemer - the One who would come and purchase David for Himself and be his defender.

PRAISE PSALM #3

PSALM 46

This Psalm was selected because of two reasons:

- I. It was written by the sons of Korah;
- II. It is a Psalm that seems to have been written during a time of a significant national crisis. Thus, this affords us an opportunity to look into how people of faith dealt with difficult times.

The Psalm is easily outlined as follows:

- I. God's power over nature (vss. 1-3).
- II. God's power over the nations (vss. 4-7).
- III. God's power over the warring world (vss. 8-11).

Section One: God's power over nature (vss. 1-3).

46:1 The confidence one has when He is God's child is the basis for this Psalm. He has a threefold description of God.

- I. **Refuge** - a sure, impenetrable defense. This word illustrates how God will not allow outside enemies to defeat us (cf. Jn 10:28-29; Rom 8:37-39).
- II. **Strength** - This is the working of God in the inner man. When one has God's word in his heart and is led by the Holy Spirit, he has incredible strength (cf. Eph 3:16,20).
- III. **A present help** - Describes the aid that God gives when we need it the most, and the perfect timing of that aid. For the Psalm says that the help comes when we are in **trouble** (literally "tight places").

One would therefore miss a key element of this verse if he failed to observe the availability of God for His people. He does not let His awesome power go to waste. He uses it for His people. It is this verse that prompted Martin Luther's great song, "A Mighty Fortress."

46:2 On the basis of verse one, God's child will not **fear**. This implies that, without God, one would have sufficient reason to be afraid. But not with God. God instills confidence, even when catastrophic events such as the earth **changing** and the **mountains slipping** should occur. This apocalyptic language is typical for Jewish writers who used this literary technique of exaggeration to express that any disaster is not sufficient to move God's child away from his faith and confidence.

46:3 The thought of verse two continues, adding the roaring of the **waters** and the mountains **quaking**, encouraging some commentators to suggest that the people had recently endured a violent earthquake.

Section Two: God's Power over the Nations (vss. 4-7).

46:4 In contrast to the raging waters of verse 3, God's people enjoy the life-giving stream. Since there was no river that flowed through Jerusalem, the Psalmist is describing the constant flow of blessings God provides for His city. It is also noteworthy that attacking armies would often cut off a city's water supply, thereby forcing the people to either die of thirst or surrender. God, however, will not allow His people to suffer such a fate.

46:5 With God in the midst of His city, she will not be **moved**. This is certainly the key word in this Psalm, occurring three times in verses 2-6 (the word "slip" in v. 2;

and the word “tottered” in v. 6). With God, one has stability that nothing else has. One is able to see God’s deliverance as a new day **dawns**, perhaps after a difficult night when it appeared there would be no tomorrow (same terminology found in Ex 14:27 - reflecting on the first great deliverance).

- 46:6** The **nations** may attempt to display their power, but it is feeble compared to that of God. As God was able to speak the world into existence, He can equally speak it into oblivion (cf. 2 Pet 3:7). The nations are no match for such power.
- 46:7** **Hosts** is a typical Old Testament word meaning “armies.” God is over not just one army, but many. The expression can refer to earthly armies (1 Sam 17:45), or angelic armies (1 Kgs 22:19). The word **stronghold** (cf. v. 11) is different from the word refuge in verse 1. This word means an inaccessible height, or a high stronghold.

Section Three: God’s Power over the Warring World (vss. 8-11).

- 46:8** This section begins with an invitation to come and observe God’s mighty power. Implied is that, upon observation, one will cease trying to fight against Him. When one sees God’s **works**, and how He easily causes **desolations** (referring to the destruction of wicked nations?), one will not do that which will cause God to oppose him.
- 46:9** James 4:1 notes that men fight to get what they want rather than what God wants. However, it is God’s will that men cease the evil fighting. Thus, God will bring about this peaceful end by doing away with three noteworthy implements of war: the **bow**, the **spear** and the **chariot**. It seems from verse 8 that God will use even violent measures to bring this peace. We know that in the judgment God will bring about peace by destroying the world and punishing evil men (cf. 2 Pet 3:8-13).
- 46:10** This great verse encourages man to **cease** his resisting of God. God will be **exalted**, and it is a demonstration of wisdom to exalt Him now (cf. Phil 2:11). Since God will be exalted, if one does not cease then he will be destroyed.
- 46:11** The Psalm concludes with the assurance that the Great God is with His people. It is in this concept that the Psalm finds its rightful place as a Psalm of praise. These people welcome the presence of God. And how do they welcome it? By humbly submitting to God’s power and authority. They know that God will not be a **stronghold** for them if they are disobedient, because those who are disobedient are not His people.

PRAISE PSALM #4

PSALM 47

As we continue to look at some of the Psalms of the sons of Korah, this Psalm demonstrates the excitement spiritual people had when God was their King. Certainly these people knew the pitfalls of having a king short in spirituality and weak in leadership qualities. God, however, has no such weaknesses.

- 47:1** The universal application of this Psalm is seen in its opening admonition to **all peoples**. Everyone should demonstrate the actions of praise, in ancient times with the **clap** of the hands and the **shout** of joy. One can imagine the festive, exciting atmosphere such a gathering would have had.
- 47:2** The reasons for the call to praise the King are now given.
- I. He is to be **feared**, since He is the Lord Most High (a phrase often used by Daniel).
 - II. He is **over all the earth**, emphasizing the universal influence and power of God (cf. Dan 2:21; Rev 17:14).
- 47:3** III. He subdues **peoples** and **nations**, a point clearly illustrated in the conquest of Canaan.
- 47:4** IV. He chooses the **inheritance** for His people, referring to the promised land. This land was the pride (or **glory**) of the people, and was a continual demonstration that God **loved** them.
- 47:5** The meaning of God having **ascended** in some significant way for the people could refer to:
- I. The procession of the ark to Jerusalem (2 Sam 6:15; Psa 24:7-10; 68:25-28).
 - II. The beginning of a new year (Lev 23:24; Num 29:1).
 - III. The coronation of a new king for God's people (1 Kgs 1:39).

Regardless of how one looks at this, it is clear that the people want to praise God for His having acted in behalf of His people. Clearly these people saw God in their lives (at least the spiritual did).

- 47:6** Since God has done so much for us, what will be our response? It is clearly seen in the five-fold repetition of the imperative **praise God** (vss. 6,7).
- 47:7** The praise offered to God is simply because God is the **King of all the earth**. This verse ends with the Hebrew word MASKIL, meaning a Psalm written and performed with wisdom and skill, rather than something that is carelessly thrown together and then offered to God. Paul did not want to offer such careless worship to God (1 Cor 14:15).
- 47:8** While even ancient people appreciated the great size of the earth, they certainly were not as aware of its vastness as are people of today. Yet they knew that this great earth, with its many peoples, had only one King, and that King is presently reigning (**sits**) on His throne.
- 47:9** In view of God's universal reign, it is only logical that all the **princes** of the earth assemble to become one nation. In a clear application of the promise to Abraham (Gen 12:1-3), the Psalmist understands that the God of Abraham is the God of all nations. The **shields** are the various leaders of the nations (cf. Psalms 89:18). These leaders all belong to God, therefore they should acknowledge Him as the one who is **highly exalted**.

PRAISE PSALM #5

PSALM 115

This Psalm of praise finds its basis in God's character, specifically His name and His attributes, as opposed to those of the pagan idols. The Psalm offers a twofold reason to praise God, followed by a call to praise Him. It is outlined as follows:

- I. Praise God because of His uniqueness (vss. 1-8).
- II. Praise God because of His blessings (vss. 9-15).
- III. A summons to praise (vss. 16-18).

- 115:1** God's people are continually aware of their unworthiness to receive worship of any kind. Man ought not to be praised, but only God. For it is God who has demonstrated His perfect **lovingkindness**, and only He who has proven to be **faithful** (truthful) in all things.
- 115:2** This question, asked in a taunting way by the enemies of Israel, might find its context after a bitter defeat of God's people. It was not unusual for the conquering nation to ask: "So what happened to Israel's great God?" The righteous of

Israel never liked to see God mocked in this way, even though they might understand that their defeat was because of their own wickedness. Yet they would wish that God would act for His own name's sake (cf. Ezek 36:21-22).

115:3 A conquering army would return home to worship and praise their false god for giving them victory. Meanwhile, they would be taunting Israel with the question of verse 2. Now we get to Israel's response. Israel's God is not limited to a certain place like the pagan gods, but has His abode **in the heavens**. Whereas their gods had to be carried from place to place, Jehovah does whatever **He pleases**.

115:4 The true God does not possess obvious weaknesses like having to be created by the **hand** of man.

115:5 The true God can both speak and see (cf. Hab 2:18-20).

115:6 The true God can hear all that men say. In addition, he can **smell** (cf. Gen 8:21), whereas the idols have fashioned noses - yet for what purpose? Those noses do not function.

115:7 The false gods are incapable of doing anything for themselves, even though they are fashioned with **hands** and with **feet**. They are unable to say anything, whereas Jehovah has spoken in many ways (Heb 1:1).

115:8 This verse contains the conclusion to this section, and also the key thought. The idols are dead, and so will everyone be who **trusts** in those idols. The people who trust in those idols will be as impotent as the idols themselves. Against the true God they cannot stand.

115:9 This section is especially interesting because it contains a "responsive" reading, where a call to trust was spoken by a temple official and the response given by the congregation. This is clearly seen in the repetition of the word **their** (as in "their" help, shield, etc.)

This section also demonstrates the threefold breakdown of the Israelite congregation:

- I. All Israel (non-priests?).
- II. House of Aaron (priests).
- III. God-fearers (Gentile converts, cf. 1 Kgs. 8:41-43; or the truly devout of Israel, cf. Psa 111:10; 112:1; or a general term for priest and people alike).

The use of the word **trust** here gives us a clearer understanding of how the Hebrews understood this word. To them, trusting God was viewing Him as their **help** as well as their **shield**. When things were going poorly, they believed God would help them. When they needed protection, they believed God would provide it.

115:10 The second group, the **house of Aaron**, is given the same admonition.

115:11 The third group, those who **fear the Lord**, are equally encouraged to live their lives in **trust**.

115:12 Now the three groups of worshipers are reminded that they have indeed been a part of God's thoughts. And if God is thinking about them, He will certainly **bless** them.

115:13 After naming the three groups, they are all reminded that it makes no difference if they are **small** (poor, orphaned, sick, frail, etc.) or **great** (rich, powerful), they are all a part of God's thoughts and are recipients of His blessings. It is significant to note that all men receive His blessings, even though the specific blessing may not be the same. Therefore, if the poor man would question whether God has blessed him or not he would do well to consider the vast number of ways God blesses.

115:14 Specifically, the blessings asked for fall under the general title of **increase**. This would certainly involve material blessings (cf. Deut 28); but could include a wide spectrum of gifts (cf. Deut 1:11) including health, children, peace, etc.

115:15 Since God is the **maker** of all, He is certainly able to bestow all of these desired blessings. This seems to be a fitting parallel to Jesus' teaching on trust (instead of worry) in Mt 6:25-34.

115:16 This last section now calls upon all to actively enter into the praise of God. His worthiness of such worship is clear: He is the creator of all and the Lord of all. And if someone would doubt that God has blessed them at all, the Psalmist reminds them that God has, in fact, given them **the earth**.

115:17 If someone does not praise God they must be dead! The Psalmist is not attempting to be theological here as to whether there is life after death. It was common in the Old Testament to view the grave (Sheol) as a place where there was no activity (6:5; 30:9; 88:4-6, 10-12; Isa 38:18; Eccl 9:10).

115:18 In contrast to the dead, the living cannot refrain from offering praise (cf. Rev 4 and 5; 7:9-17; 11:17-18; 21:1-4; 22:1-5). They intend to offer it now and in the future and forever.

PRAISE PSALM #6

PSALM 136

This Psalm, along with Psalm 135, is known as The Great Hallel (praise). In these Psalms are found some of the most beautifully expressed, yet concise statements for praising God. The repetitive phrase “for His mercy endureth forever” is a cumbersome translation of the Hebrew, which has only six syllables and flows much more smoothly and quickly. One author has suggested “for His love has no end” as a substitute. Yet even with this drawback, the Psalm is incredibly beautiful and powerful in its thoughts. One can hardly read the Psalm without being moved to praise God with the Psalmist.

The Psalm has a number of unique features:

- I. It was written so the entire congregation could participate. As the elder or priest would read the first line, the entire congregation would follow with the repeated line.
- II. Each verse contains a quotation or paraphrase from some other Old Testament passage.
- III. The Psalm beautifully includes most (if not all) of the great events of Old Testament history.
- IV. It emphasizes, more so than any other Psalm, God's covenant love (translated “lovingkindness” from the Hebrew word CHESED).

It is not really necessary to give commentary on each verse, but this beautiful Psalm can be outlined as follows:

- I. God of gods (vss. 1-3).
- II. Creator (vss. 4-9).
- III. Rescuer (vss. 10-16).
- IV. Victor (vss. 17-22).
- V. Friend in need (vss. 23-25).
- VI. God of heaven (v. 26).

THANKSGIVING PSALMS

THANKSGIVING PSALM #1

PSALM 30

The Psalm of Thanksgiving. See the handout on this category of Psalm.

Psalm 30 has a title that reads: a Song at the Dedication of the House. It is unknown whether this means God's House (RSV) or David's own house (cf. 2 Sam 5:11). Either of these would fit well with the Psalm, because the Psalm reflects happier days of David's life.

The Psalm might be divided as follows:

- I. Thanksgiving section #1 (vss. 1-5).
- II. A confessional interlude (vss. 6-10).
- III. Thanksgiving section #2 (vss. 11-12).

30:1 I will extol Thee, O Lord, for Thou hast lifted me up, And hast not let my enemies rejoice over me.

David's praise immediately begins based on God's **lifting him up**, clearly reflecting how depressed David had been, but how elated he feels now. David was not foolish enough to suppose his victories were accomplished by his own might. He knows that it is the Lord who kept his **enemies** from claiming victory over him.

30:2 O Lord my God, I cried to Thee for help, and Thou didst heal me.

Again we see the personal aspect appearing in the Psalms. The Psalmists did not separate God from the daily events in their lives. This is the way it always is with spiritual people. In addition, spiritual people are not disappointed when God does respond (even though He may not always respond the way we would have preferred (cf. 2 Cor 12:7-9). When we call on Him to be the deliverer, He delivers. Notice, though, that God did not spare the worshiper from the wound but He did provide the healing ointment.

30:3 O Lord, Thou hast brought up my soul from Sheol; Thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit.

God did not protect David from the depths of Sheol, but He delivered him from it nevertheless. **Sheol** is the Hebrew counterpart to the Greek HADES, meaning the grave. David considered the circumstances to be life threatening. Yet he believes God had given him another day of life and he was genuinely grateful for what God had done.

30:4 Sing praise to the Lord, you His godly ones, And give thanks to His holy name.

He now calls on others to participate in the worship. Righteous people encourage other righteous people to do righteous things. Here we have another key phrase, "Let us praise" the Lord. On what basis?:

30:5 For His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for a lifetime; Weeping may last for the night, But a shout of joy comes in the morning.

There was a time of anger. This is an example of where taking the Psalms literally will find one hopelessly puzzled and confused. We do know of periods where the righteous suffer and there is no shout of joy the next morning, the next week or the next month. But that is not the point. We are talking about the ultimate care of God. Revelation 4-5, the great room scene, shows the ultimate shouting of victory and joy when all are worshiping Him.

There is also another aspect to this great verse illustrated often in the New Testament. That is, how sorrow can produce joy (2 Cor 4:17; Jn 16:20-22; Psa 126:5-6), how temporal struggles are not to be compared with the eternal (Rom 8:18).

30:6 Now as for me, I said in my prosperity, I will never be moved.

The Scriptures often warn of the false security that comes from **prosperity**. David himself was not immune to such trappings (cf. Jer 22:21; Prov 1:32).

30:7 O Lord, by Thy favor Thou hast made my mountain to stand strong; Thou didst hide Thy face, I was dismayed.

When the truth is known, David acknowledges that any success he had, whenever his mountain (probably his kingdom) stood **strong**, it was only because God made it strong. Equally, David knows that when God hides His **face** there can only be negative results (cf. Isa 59:1-2; 2 Thess 1:7-9; 1 Pet 3:12).

30:8 To Thee, O Lord, I called, And to the Lord I made supplication.

Again you can turn to many places wanting help, but the righteous turn to God (cf. 1 Pet 5:7, Phil 4:6).

30:9 What profit is there in my blood, if I go down to the pit? Will the dust praise Thee? Will it declare Thy faithfulness?

This sounds like Job. If I am dead I will not do you much good then. David says as long as I am living I will praise God, I can do no good in the grave.

30:10 Hear, O Lord, and be gracious to me; O Lord, be Thou my helper.

David again returns to his words of thanksgiving, acknowledging that God has (a) heard him; (b) been gracious to him; and (c) has been his helper. David, thanks the Lord for those blessings, and requests that they be continually supplied from the Lord.

30:11 Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing; Thou has loosed my sackcloth and girded me with gladness;

Note that David does not hide the fact that he has experienced difficult times. This does not, however, detract from this being a thanksgiving Psalm. As a matter of fact, it seems that the greatest expressions of gratitude arise out of the background of difficulties and troubles!

30:12 That my soul may sing praise to Thee, and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks to Thee forever.

Here is the difference between one who is strong spiritually and one who is weak spiritually. One who undergoes trials and remains strong, makes it through the trials singing God's praises. Those who are weak harbor resentment toward God for having treated them in such a way. Anything that would keep one from wanting to praise God demonstrates a flaw in faith.

THANKSGIVING PSALM #2

PSALM 34

This great Psalm fully illustrates the gratitude one would have after enjoying a remarkable escape from one's enemies. The Psalm has a title that identifies the occasion:

A Psalm of David when he feigned madness before Abimelech, who drove him away and he departed.

This event takes place in 1 Sam 21:10-15. See notes on Psalm 3 for references to other Psalms that have titles.

There are a number of important features to note with this Psalm:

- I. It is an acrostic Psalm (all verses, except the last, begin with the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet). This organization was simple to do and a very popular style with Hebrew writers.
 - II. The Psalm was very important to New Testament writers (with numerous references and quotations).
 - III. It is one of only fourteen Psalms linked to historical events (cf. notes on Psalm 3).
- 34:1** This beautiful verse lays the foundation for all of the words of thanksgiving. Truly David believes that God should receive thanks **at all times** (or “at every time”). This thought becomes more powerful when we consider what David has been through. God’s people everywhere should find time to offer thanks, regardless of external circumstances (cf. 1 Thess 5:18).
- 34:2** David’s humility was genuine. He would not presume to **boast** in himself. (Perhaps Paul was remembering these words when he wrote 2 Cor 11:30-33). Also, others who are likewise humble will appreciate the selfless attitude of David, for they are the same way. Again, this humble attitude is what God wants (cf. 1 Pet 5:6).
- 34:3** This is one of many calls of David to others to join him in this Psalm of thanksgiving. God’s people enjoy worshiping together.
- 34:4** As David invites others to worship with him, he gives here the reasons why he wants to worship, and implies that his reasons can be their reasons as well.
- 34:5** Things looked bleak for the people, but God justified their faith in Him by delivering them. Their **radiant** faces clearly show the joy they feel having been delivered. It is a true Biblical truth that when one places his confidence in God he will not be **ashamed** (or disappointed). See Rom 10:11; 1 Pet 2:6.
- 34:6** Beginning here and continuing through verse ten we have a personal testimony that thanks God for one’s deliverance. Imagine David, the **poor man**, having to act like a madman to save his own life (see the title). Yet God saved him from these **troubles**.

- 34:7** **The angel of the Lord** is a term used in the Old Testament to refer to God Himself (cf. Gen 16:7ff; Ex 3:1ff). Thus, God is seen as providing a protective barrier around His children (as seen with Elisha and his servant, 2 Kgs 6:15ff).
- 34:8** The challenge is issued to give God an opportunity to prove that He is, in fact, **good**. His goodness is seen in that when one looks to Him for **refuge** He will not disappoint him. It is worthy to note that one must **taste** and see God's goodness. The word taste in the Scripture never means a small sampling. It describes a full involvement (cf. Heb 6:5; 1 Pet 3:3). Many have given God one chance for Him to do something they want, and when it does not happen when or how or to the degree they asked, they give up on God. This is not tasting (it is more like testing!)
- 34:9** As in so many passages of Scripture, the call of the spiritual is to **fear** God. It is the beginning of knowledge and wisdom (Prov 1:7). It was taught by Jesus (Mt 10:28). It is the fear that leads to proper behavior, and the proper behavior that, ultimately, will leave God's **saints** (holy ones) lacking nothing.
- 34:10** Some of the lesser of God's creatures may endure hardships, but the crowning act of God's creation, man, is given God's attention. Yet David knows that all mankind does not enjoy God's providential care. That care is devoted to those **who seek the Lord**. Paul reminds us that those who love the Lord and are called according to His purpose will not be separated from God's love (Rom 8:28,39).
- 34:11** David has learned a valuable lesson in his own life by **fearing** God. Now he wants the **children** to come so that he might teach them that same valuable lesson.
- 34:12** Verses 12-16 are quoted by Peter in 1 Peter 3:10-12. David knows that true living is found in God. It is natural for people to want to have long lives in which they see **good**. Yet this will only come about by following the admonitions of the following verses.
- 34:13** James warns us of the dangers of the tongue (Jas 3:8; 1:26). Jesus was one who was able to observe this principle (1 Pet 2:22), even though He had the power and authority to curse His persecutors.
- 34:14** Spirituality, in its purest form, is stated here. The spiritual person focuses on two fundamental concepts. He **departs from evil** and he **does good**. This is the same basic principle given in Rom 12:9. In addition, the Christian is one who seeks **peace**, although it may not be possible to be at peace with all men (cf. Rom 12:18; 14:19; Heb 12:14).

- 34:15** There is special attention devoted to the child of God. It is he who enjoys the watchful **eyes** and listening **ears** of God. It is always comforting to the righteous to know that God is aware of all that they are going through, and that their prayers are reaching the Great God (cf. 1 Jn 5:14,15).
- 34:16** **Face** is often used in Scripture to describe one's interest and involvement. God's interest in the evildoer is only in punishment, not in blessings (cf. Isa 59:1,2).
- 34:17** The fact that the righteous are **crying** shows that they were not spared some pain. Yet the true comfort comes by knowing that God **hears** those cries, and will **deliver** them out of their **troubles**. We need to be reminded from passages like this promises of deliverance are always true eternally, but not so temporally (for example, Lazarus was not delivered from his troubles in this life, Lk 16).
- 34:18** The **brokenhearted** are those who have endured some terrible loss, probably of a loved one. It is comforting to know that this loss was not indicative of God's absence. David assures us, that even in this tragic event, God is **near**. The **salvation** promised here seems to be from the prolonged sadness that comes from enduring this loss. God can mend every broken heart.
- 34:19** Because this is Satan's world, his workers are busy inflicting the righteous with many sufferings. Yet God is also active in providing **deliverance**.
- 34:20** Even the **bones** of the righteous are protected by God (again stating a general principle, since many of God's children have sustained injury). This verse may have been in mind, along with Ex 12:46, when John referred to the "Scripture" concerning the bones of the crucified Christ (Jn 19:36).
- 34:21** It is a part of God's design that **evil** people end up destroying themselves. It is also part of His plan that those who **hate** His children will face Him in judgment and be **condemned**. The Christian is thankful for the promise made in Romans 8:1.
- 34:22** While David probably looked at the Lord's **redemption** in a temporal sense (**soul** meaning one's life), he was still addressing a great New Testament truth. God is our redeemer. It is He, and He alone, who can and will save His elect. David also acknowledges that **none** of the righteous, those who take **refuge** in God, will see God's **condemnation**.

THANKSGIVING PSALM #3

PSALM 40

This Psalm seems to be the conclusion of a thought begun with Psalm 37. In that Psalm David begins his discussion on the topic of waiting for the Lord. Psalms 38 and 39 demonstrate the painful application of waiting, with Psalm 40 giving the victorious outcome of such waiting. What is unique about the Psalm is that it returns to the theme of trouble and the painful process of waiting for the Lord. This shows that God's children continually go through a growing process of learning to trust in God, having that trust vindicated, and then having that trust challenged again.

The Psalm can be outlined as follows:

- I. Waiting rewarded (vss. 1-10).
- II. Waiting renewed (vss. 11-17).

Part One: Waiting rewarded (vss. 1-10).

- 40:1** David begins this Psalm immediately thanking God for rewarding his **patient** trust in God. The man of faith does not always receive the answer he desires, nor does he always receive the answer when he desires it. God requires that we learn to adjust ourselves to His timetable, and trust that He knows what is best. David's trust was vindicated, and the hours of patient **waiting** proved to be justified. For God **inclined** His ear to David and **heard** his cry. What blessings might David have forfeited had he lost his patience and given up? Truly God expects His children to endure trials while patiently waiting His deliverance (cf. Jas 1:2-4; 1 Pet 3:12). This is not to say that the spiritual do not have their low points, when they feel that God may have abandoned them. Contrast Psalm 22:1,2 with the thought of this Psalm.
- 40:2** David uses two figures to illustrate how bad his plight was: (1) the **pit of destruction** (or desolate pit); and (2) the **miry clay** (which reminds us of the plight of Jeremiah (38:6ff). Yet God delivers, setting His child upon the **rock**. Not only does He save him from a difficult situation, but goes even further. God completely restores.
- 40:3** When one is in agony, he sings the song of complaint. Yet God replaced that song with a **new song**, the song of deliverance and a song of **praise**. David is also confident that the spiritual will see what happened to him, and will appropriately respond in two ways: (1) They will **fear** and (2) they will **trust**.

40:4 David realizes that the **blessed man** (cf. Psa 1) is the one who has **made** (notice the conscience choice) the Lord the direction of his **trust**. God will challenge that trust sometimes by not answering the way we want or making us wait (v. 1). But ultimately we will be rewarded for our trust. David also seems to reveal two common alternatives to which people turn when they abandon their trust in God:

- I. They turn to the **proud**, probably meaning those who have obtained wealth and power. It is a constant danger for God's people to turn to the world to help them solve their problems. As David noted in Psalm 118:8, it is better to trust in the Lord than in man.
- II. They turn to **falsehood**, or false gods. In this case they are under the mistaken notion that if the true God will not save them, perhaps these false gods will!

40:5 God's **wonders** are indeed many. David could easily name the creation as one of those wonders, yet in context he considers it a marvel that God would think about him and deliver him. In response to the weak in faith turning to "falsehood," David confesses that there is **none** to compare with Jehovah (cf. Rom 11:33). He cannot even begin to number all of God's wondrous deeds.

40:6 Spiritual people know appropriate ways to express their gratitude for God's blessings. In verses 6-8 David determines to offer the greatest sacrifice to God that he possibly can - himself. Certainly the words of David took on greater significance in the Christ, as illustrated by the Hebrew writer's quotation of this section (Heb 10: 5-7).

Men such as king Saul did not appreciate the truth expressed here, that God does not **desire** endless and mindless sacrifices, separate and apart from the offerer's heart (cf. 1 Sam 15:22; Mic 6:6-8). David claims that he has heard what God has been telling him, for his **ears** have been opened (cf. Rev 13:9). It is a timeless lesson for God's people - listen to what God has to say in His holy word! Then, and only then, can we fully know and appreciate what is God's will for us.

40:7 Like the statement of commitment given by Isaiah (Isa 6:8), David willingly **comes** to do God's will. He notes that in the **scroll** of the book (probably a reference to the Law), it is **written** of him. This statement probably reflects that David considered himself personally accountable to obey what God has spoken, as if it was spoken directly to him. The word translated **written** can be translated "prescribed for" (NASV footnote). Thus, for David, God's law was personal. He viewed it as if God prescribed it just to him. In its New Testament application to Christ, it was a reference to His delight to fulfill what was prophesied about Him (cf. Jn 5:46; Lk 24:27).

40:8 What is the attitude righteous people develop? They **delight** in doing what God wants them to do. Jesus was one totally committed to obeying the will of the Father. He is the perfect example for us as to how we should feel about God's will. David also writes that God's Law is **within my heart**. This indicates it is more than a passive, shallow understanding of God's word. To place the Law within one's **heart** is to allow it to become a part of, and controlling force, of what one thinks and feels. According to Jeremiah 31:31-34, this is what God requires of all those in the new covenant. James 1:21 tells us that this implanted word is what saves us.

40:9 Spiritual people do not keep the news of God's blessings and redemptive acts to themselves. They joyously tell of those blessings.

40:10 When David preaches his sermons about the greatness of the Lord, what are his points? Here he lists five great attributes of God:

- I. His **righteousness** - God always does the right thing for His people,
- II. His **faithfulness** - God is always true to His word,
- III. His **salvation** - which David has personally experienced many times, and about which God's people today should boldly proclaim (cf. Rom 1:14-16),
- IV. His **lovingkindness** - which is God's covenant love, demonstrated to His people with abundant blessings when they are true to the covenant. Equally, people in the new covenant find God's covenant love demonstrated by providing all spiritual blessings in Christ (Eph 1:3; cf. Rom 5:8-9) and
- V. His **truth** is yet another of God's great blessings to mankind. David has appreciated God's word as truth, in contrast to the lies of pagan religions. Jesus teaches us that God's word is truth (Jn 17:17) and it is the truth that frees one from sin (Jn 8:32).

These are all attributes that David determines must not be **concealed** from God's people. Equally, the saving acts of God must not be kept from the world (Mt 28: 18-20).

Part two: Waiting renewed (vss. 11-17).

Whereas the first section demonstrated the joy and confidence instilled by God's deliverance, the second section shows that David is not yet free from all trouble, and again appeals to God to answer his pleas.

40:11 Having preached about these great attributes in verse 10, David now appeals to God to again grant these blessings to him, adding **compassion** to his list.

40:12 What events have transpired to again plunge David into what he describes as **surrounding evils** is unknown. Yet David clearly realizes that the present trouble is of his own doing, crediting the problems to his **iniquities**. This “man after God’s own heart” was well aware that he had sinned, and sinned often. He knew that he had been overcome with sin, yet David also knew forgiveness (cf. 1 Sam 12:13). David also notes that his **heart** had failed him, perhaps indicating that he had not been as loyal to God as he would like to be. Yet, when the heart is filled with God’s laws (v. 10), it cannot help but reveal its many weaknesses.

40:13 Even though David knows there is sin in his life, he does not feel that his enemies should have victory over him. David is willing to accept discipline from the Lord, and acknowledges the Lord’s right to render that discipline. Yet, being a child of God (albeit a sinful one), is reason to look for God to **deliver** and to **help**.

40:14 David wishes for four results to come upon his enemies. He wants them to be:

- I. Ashamed,
- II. Humiliated,
- III. Turned back and
- IV. Dishonored.

Each of these David hopes will come about because his enemies have boldly attacked one of God’s children, enjoying whatever pain and **hurt** they can inflict upon him.

40:15 He wishes for them to be **appalled** (desolated or stunned) at how shameful they now appear having challenged one of God’s elect.

40:16 The joy the enemies experience in seeing David suffer pales in comparison with the rejoicing and gladness one has **in Thee**. David is truly thankful for those who are faithful to the Lord. When people fully appreciate God’s **salvation** they want to **continually** praise and magnify God’s glorious name.

40:17 In contrast to the magnificence of the Lord, David looks to his pitiful self, one who is **afflicted and needy**. Such a statement is especially noteworthy coming from the mouth of a powerful king (if written during David’s monarchy). Nevertheless, David worked at maintaining the humility that quickly deserted Saul. He knows that he desperately needs the Lord to be **mindful** of him, since it is only

God who can be his **help** and his **deliverer**. This is truly one of the great truths in the Old Testament and the New Testament. It is only God who is our help. It is only God who can truly deliver us from difficulties. Spiritual people know this, and live lives that reflect that confidence. David concludes this great Psalm with a request that God not **delay**, although he knows that, either way, he will patiently wait for the Lord (whether he delays or not).

THANKSGIVING PSALM #4

PSALM 65

This Psalm is certainly a fitting one to illustrate a thanksgiving Psalm. Notice the numerous areas of thanks:

- I. For God hearing prayers (vss. 1-2).
- II. For God's forgiveness (v. 3).
- III. For the privilege of worship (v. 4).
- IV. For God's answers to prayer (v. 5).
- V. For God's creation (vss. 6-8).
- VI. For abundant crops (vss. 9-13).

As we can see, God's spiritual people of old had no trouble finding an abundance of reasons to offer thanks to God. Equally, God's people today ought "in everything give thanks" (1 Thess 5:18).

65:1 When worshipers come before God, there are two appropriate actions:

- I. **Silence** (cf. Hab 2:20; Jas 1:19) and
- II. **Praise** (Jas 5:13).

Importantly, the worshiper needs to make sure that his worship is not vain because he has failed to fulfill **vows** that he has made to God (cf. Eccl 5:4-5).

65:2 People of faith do not doubt that their Father in heaven hears them when they pray (cf. 1 Jn 5:14-15).

- 65:3** Also, people of faith know that they sin (cf. Rom 3:23), but that God is rich in mercy and **forgives** when people repent of their sins and are baptized (Acts 2:38), or, if they are already Christians, when they repent and pray (1 Jn 1:9).
- 65:4** It is a terrible thing to be one whom God has rejected, yet it is a tremendous blessing to be one God has **chosen**. In the Old Testament people were chosen based on their faithfulness to God's covenant. In the New Testament, one is chosen by their acceptance and obedience to the Gospel of Christ (1 Thess 2:14). When one is chosen, they are then allowed to approach God in worship, or to **dwell in Thy courts**, and to enjoy all the **goodness** that God bestows from His holy dwelling place.
- 65:5** A moment of reflection caused the Psalmist to realize that God's actions are **awesome** (or "dread" in some translations). This is probably referring to certain historical events (Ex 34:10; 2 Sam 7:23; Psa 66:3; 106:21-22; 145:6; Isa 64:3). Yet David may also be thinking to some more recent actions of God. The focal point of this reflection causes David to fittingly see God as the **God of our salvation**, and worthy of every single man's **trust**.
- 65:6** Perhaps the creation serves as the greatest demonstration of God's **strength**. It is unclear if David is saying whether God or the mountains **are girded with might**. Yet the point is still to praise God for His power.
- 65:7** God can, with a word, **still the roaring of the seas**, which was demonstrated by Jesus, God in the flesh (Mt 8:26). Also, if God can calm the troubled seas, He can also calm the troubles that reside in the hearts of the **peoples**. We ought to appreciate the peace that God gives (Phil 2:6).
- 65:8** God's **signs** seem to refer to the creation in context, yet they might also refer to the blessings given to His people. Even people who are dwelling **in the ends of the earth** should be able to recognize God's works (cf. Rom 1:20).
- 65:9** Every farmer focuses on three vital elements to a successful crop: (a) water, (b) grain and (c) soil. This verse identifies all three, and easily relates to all who have ever attempted to work the land.
- 65:10** Notice the beautiful emphasis on what God does. He **waters**, He **settles**, He **softens with showers**, and then eventually He will **bless** its growth. Palestine's rainy season was October to May, with December to March receiving the heaviest amounts. The fall rains were vital to soil preparation, and the spring rains for the maturing of the crops.
- 65:11** So what is the result of God's doings? **Bountiful** crops that are dripping with **fatness**.

65:12 There are no limits to God's blessings. The bountiful crops are found in the **pastures** as well as the **hills**.

65:13 Everywhere one looks they see the abundance of God's blessings. It is evident in the numerous **flocks** and the valleys which are **covered with grain**. All of these areas **shout for joy** in their praise to God, for it is the creation's desire to be fruitful and abundant in its produce (cf. Rom 8:20-21).

THANKSGIVING PSALM #5

PSALM 67

This Psalm serves as a good example of how spiritual people find reasons to offer thanks to God. The setting for this Psalm seems to have come just after another successful harvest (v. 6). Yet the Psalm does not limit itself to that theme. As all thanksgiving Psalms, God's people find abundant reasons to thank God. It takes a certain mind set to always be thankful, yet spiritual people develop it well, continually seeing things on a daily basis for which they give God thanks.

67:1 Based on the promise to Abraham (Gen 12:1-3), these people see the fulfilling of that promise with God's blessings. The words of this verse are like the priestly benediction of Numbers 6:24-26. God's shining **face** is an expression illustrating God's satisfaction with His people (cf. Psa 44:3; 89:15).

67:2 Spiritual people respond to God's blessings by thinking about how they can, in turn, be a blessing for God. This verse wishes that all the **nations** learn about the **way** (works) of God and of His **salvation**.

67:3 This verse is repeated again in verse 5. Its call to **praise** is a bold desire that all the **peoples** of the earth arise to offer appropriate worship to Jehovah. By adding the word **all** in the second line, it amplifies the magnitude of this call, reminding us of Phil 2:11 where all the creation will offer praise to Jesus.

67:4 Two emotions should come forth from the nations: (a) gladness and (b) joyous singing. The reasons for these? Because God will judge the peoples with **righteousness** (fairness) and will **guide** them.

67:5 Repeat of verse 3, in order to emphasize the importance of the nations praising God. Verse 4, however, has provided further rationale for this praise and thanksgiving.

67:6 What proof does the spiritual people offer as to why the world should praise Jehovah? The **produce** of the earth. Whereas the pagan gods are powerless to

control anything, let alone the crops, the only true God can easily call the earth to **yield its produce**. The spiritual Israelites did not view God as theirs alone. He is truly the God of all the earth, and He blesses all the **earth**.

67:7 The spiritual do not confuse the source of blessings. They know that they come from God (not from their own might or chance or luck). They also acknowledge that the **blessings** of God should evoke a natural response (perhaps in view of the tremendous power that had to be demonstrated by the giving of those blessings). That response is **fear**. Everyone everywhere should fear God.

THANKSGIVING PSALM #6

PSALM 118

This thanksgiving Psalm fully indicates the excitement a worshiper has as he approaches Jerusalem. The "I" found in a number of verses (5-14,19,21,28) seems to come from an individual of importance, perhaps a king (David?) who has enjoyed a great deliverance. Yet the Psalm has a community ring to it, perhaps demonstrating how it was incorporated into a Psalm of thanksgiving for all the people.

Because of the number of quotations from this Psalm in the New Testament, it could also be properly classified as a Messianic Psalm.

118:1 Offering thanks to God finds a simple reason offered: He is **good**. This is general enough that each worshiper can identify with God's goodness. Yet all can equally raise their voices to recognize those good blessings. Thus this call to worship demonstrates the excitement also seen in Jer 33:11.

A second reason offered for the thanksgiving is God's **lovingkindness**. This is certainly one of the key words in the Psalms, occurring 93 times. It refers to God's love for Israel based on His covenant.

118:2-4 Beginning here, and through verse 4, the threefold division of the people (cf. notes on 115:9-13) are all called to come and give thanks.

Verses 5-18 - The Reason for the Praise of vss. 1-4

118:5 A single voice now presents personal reasons for praising God - specifically, God delivered him from a seemingly impossible situation. What especially impresses the Psalmist is that when he was in **distress** (cf Psa 116:3) he cried to God and found help there. Thus he praises God for His timely deliverance. When he notes that God set him in a **large place**, he may be saying that God saved him

from death (since Sheol was considered a confining place). It is possible he is merely saying that God saved him from a difficult situation.

118:6 When God is on one's side, there is no reason to fear (cf. 1 Jn 4:18). Instead he relies on his faith and trusts that God will bring him the victory (1 Jn 5:4). The Hebrew writer quotes this verse to emphasize the Christian confidence (Heb 13:6). With this bold trust in God, the Psalmist recognizes that man cannot truly harm him (cf. Mt 10:28; cf. Psa 56:4,11).

118:7 Out of all those whom the Psalmist considers his supporters, the Lord is clearly among them. For this he is thankful. This enables him to have confidence when he is before (**looks on**) his enemies.

118:8,9 Through the avenue of repetition, the Psalmist shows how it is **better** (a superior choice) to trust in God, even though he may have some seemingly impressive alternatives. The two verses are exactly the same except for the words **man** and **princes**. These verses provide a valuable lesson for us today. We so often look to so many different things to deliver us (our own ability, wealth, friends, family, etc.) None of these can be completely trustworthy. Only God is worthy of one's complete trust and confidence.

118:10 If the speaker is a king, then one can understand the distress he feels. If he represents the nation, then it is clear that there is a major crisis confronting the people of God. It seems possible that this Psalm is reflecting upon a time when the nation of Israel was threatened by one or more of its many enemies.

It is clear that the Psalmist feels confident with the Lord on his side. He can be **surrounded** (cf. vss. 10,11,12), yet **the Lord** will provide deliverance.

118:11 The repetition of the word **surround** emphasizes that the Psalmist is not facing an imaginary foe. The opposition is real, but so is the deliverance from the Lord. The Lord's deliverance is decisive, for the foe is **cut off** (second of three times this phrase is used), indicating that their surrounding of God's people failed.

118:12 The swarming of **bees** illustrates the closeness and intensity of the enemy's attack. When a thorn bush catches **fire** it burns quickly and is soon extinguished. This theme also finds support in the New Testament, where the power of evil will be intense, but short lived (cf. Rev 20:9-10).

118:13 Now the enemy is addressed directly, where the Psalmist notes that he attempted to make him **fall**, but the Lord, who was stronger, **helped** him. Notice how the Lord does not keep his children from trouble. They do face difficult times. Yet these difficult times develop important qualities in God's people (Jas 1:2-3).

118:14 This verse quotes exactly the words of the victory song sung by the Israelites after their delivery from Egyptian bondage (Ex 15:2). Thus, that ancient delivery serves as an example of present and future redemptive acts of God.

118:15 Now other voices join theirs to that of the king in thanking God for the victory. These verses reflect the excitement and joy that a community would have upon the return of their victorious army. It is clear why the Lord gave them victory - they were **righteous**. This is equally true for the ultimate victory (2 Pet 3:13). The reference to God's **right hand** (three times) is a typical phrase referring to power and strength (cf. 110:1,5).

118:16 The power of God, having been personally witnessed by the people is worthy of praise.

118:17 When trouble comes, one often wonders if this day might be his last. The Psalmist considered the present distress to be life threatening, and even thought he might die. Yet he did not die, convincing him that it was in God's plan that he live to tell others of what God had done for him.

118:18 The Psalmist is not blind to how God worked in his life. He knows he has been **disciplined**, and intends to allow that discipline to produce God's desired result. In the same way God disciplines His children today (Heb 12:11).

118:19 The gatekeeper is encouraged to open the gates for the victorious king and nation. The gates are gates of **righteousness**, allowing only those who are faithful to God to enter. Once entered, the victors intend to offer **thanks** to the Lord.

118:20 This seems to be the gatekeeper's response and he acknowledges that only the **righteous** will enter.

118:21 Again we see why this is called a thanksgiving Psalm. The worshiper offers thanks to God for His answering him (accomplished in the **salvation** God provided).

118:22 This verse may be giving us a hint of the problem the king faced. Perhaps the **builders**, the men of power and authority in Israel, had been the king's enemies. This would make the king the **stone** which they rejected, but through God's vindication, proved to be the **chief** stone. Another theory is that the nations (cf. v. 10) are the builders, but they did not consider Israel an important nation in their building process. This would prove to be a fatal mistake, since Israel was God's chosen. The **cornerstone** could either be the main stone in the foundation or the key stone in the arch which held the entire arch together.

It is known to every student of the New Testament that this verse was an extremely popular verse with New Testament writers. Why? Because the stone foreshadowed Christ in two important respects:

- I. He was rejected by many as insignificant (cf. Mk 12:10-11; Acts 4:11; 1 Pet 2:7) and
- II. He was the cornerstone which held God's entire plan of salvation together (Eph 2:20-22; cf. 1 Cor 3:11; Col 1:15-20).

118:23 God's **marvelous** doing was to vindicate the king (or nation) despite the enemies. Ultimately in its New Testament application of Christ, God's marvelous act was to raise Christ from the dead (Acts 4:10-11).

118:24 The **day** referred to here seems to be the festive day of celebration for the victory secured in the past. This beautiful verse can ring true for any and every day. God's people should continually be thankful for every gift, including the gift of a new day.

118:25 In praise to God the people also offer a plea to God for salvation. The word HOSANNA, translated here "save now" or "do save" is the word used upon Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem (Mt 21:9).

118:26 The people in Mt 21 also used this verse to complete their words of praise to Jesus, for they said, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord." The verse in its Old Testament context seems to be the blessing the priest is pronouncing upon the people as they enter the temple to worship. Certainly all who come to God's presence with the distinction of being His people are truly blessed.

118:27 As the words of thanksgiving continue to flow, the worshipers now express their gratitude to God for giving them **light**, probably meaning here deliverance (cf. Psa 43:3; Esther 8:16). Also the worshipers encourage the sacrificial animal to be offered, indicating that this was probably one of the three major Jewish feast (**festival**) days (Passover, Pentecost or Tabernacles). It is interesting how this section, with its quotations in the New Testament, fittingly echo the perfect sacrifice, the Lamb of God.

118:28 With synonymous parallelism, the worshiper announces why he is here to worship God - He is **my God**.

118:29 This seems to be the response by the congregation, repeating the refrain of verse one. There is nothing inappropriate about repetition if the congregation

can say these things sincerely - truly from the heart. Jesus encourages us to do things with our heart (cf. Mt 15:8-9).

THANKSGIVING PSALM #7

PSALM 138

138:1 David begins this Psalm by saying that he will offer thanks to God with all his **heart**. This would indicate the sincerity of David's praise, rather than the surface, heartless words offered by the hypocrite. In addition, he willingly praised God before the false **gods**. The truly thankful are not afraid to openly express their loyalties.

138:2 David is also willing to **bow down** or worship the Lord in His **temple**, forsaking the idolatrous places of the foreign peoples. The truly thankful are always interested in worshiping Jehovah. He also has no trouble finding reasons to offer that thanks. In this Psalm David offers thanks for:

- I. God's **lovingkindness** - referring to God's covenant love, fulfilling those promises that were a part of His covenant,
- II. God's **truth** - referring to how God has dealt truthfully or faithfully with man.

Certainly any true worshiper today could equally thank God for these very blessings!

David also is grateful for how God has **magnified** His word in a way that is consistent with His **name**. He is probably referring to God's promises, and how those fulfilled promises give the observer a better understanding of the greatness of God's name.

138:3 As an illustration of God's faithfulness to His word, David here says that when he called for God's help, he received an **answer**. That answer gave David a **boldness** and inner strength. When one is able to see the true love of God, and His genuine care for man, he cannot help but feel a certain confidence. Having the all-powerful God as Father would give any child boldness.

138:4 As noted in earlier Psalms (cf. Ps 67), the spiritual are interested in all the nations coming to praise God. As one studies the Old Testament he sees times when foreign peoples had heard what the Lord had said and done, and were impressed (cf. Rahab, Josh 2:8-11).

- 138:5** When the nations come, they will **sing** in worship to the Lord, because they have come to know that the **glory** of the Lord is **great**. Truly when they have seen the ineffectiveness of their gods, in comparison with the great acts of Jehovah, they will genuinely know how great God truly is.
- 138:6** When men rise to positions of power and greatness, they often yield to the temptation of disregarding or mistreating the poor, orphans and widows. The Lord, however, again demonstrates His true greatness. He **regards** (is aware of and cares for) the **lowly**, while also carefully observing the evil deeds of the **haughty**. By saying that God **knows** the haughty from **afar**, David indicates that while God is aware of what they do, He is not near them to bless.
- 138:7** Having acknowledged deliverance from earlier dangers (v. 3), the Psalmist has full confidence that in future **trouble** God will **revive** (protect him), while at the same time will extend His powerful **right hand** to punish the **enemies** of David. In like manner that same right hand will then turn to **save** God's child.
- 138:8** God is aware of the **concerns** of His people. However, it is more than just awareness. The Psalmist says that the Lord will **accomplish** what they need. The reason is offered in the second line: God's **lovingkindness**. God has promised to come to the aid of His people, and David sees that He has done that with him. He always has, and He always will, since God's love is **everlasting**. David's last wish in this Psalm is that God not forsake him, the **works of Thy hands** (cf. 100:3; Job 10:3; 14:15).

LAMENT PSALMS

LAMENT PSALM #1

PSALM 13

This lament Psalm follows perfectly the points given on the lament sheet, each verse of the Psalm corresponding with six points of the sheet.

13:1 David here asks, for the first of four times, “**How long?**”

The fact that David asks “how long” is sufficient proof that he is in anguish (a fact confirmed in the following verses). When David says that God **forgot** him, he is certainly aware that God cannot literally forget any man. His meaning is that God has, for some reason, chosen to not extend to David the help he desperately needs. David also knows that when God hides His **face**, it means a withdrawal of all blessings and care. Therefore he calls out to God to look to him once again.

Notice also that two times David uses the word **me**, indicating that his hurt was personal. When righteous people perceive the absence of God, it is very troubling (e.g. Job 29:1ff; 30:20ff).

13:2 David would prefer to take **counsel** from God, but is unable to do so with God’s silence. He has great **sorrow** caused by God’s absence.

David’s mention of the **enemies** and their success over him would be troubling to David for a number of reasons:

- I. Personal humiliation,
- II. A threat to his kingdom,
- III. A threat to David’s faith in God’s justice and
- IV. A threat to the reputation of God.

13:3 Perhaps the problem is that God has not given proper **consideration** to David’s plight. Yet David knows in his heart that God is fully aware of what is happening to him. Therefore, it is agonizing to him because God has not **answered** him. The man of faith must always learn to trust in the ways of God, and know that God will ultimately do the right thing for His children.

David also asks that God **enlighten** his eyes, lest he sleep the **sleep of death**. Some have suggested that David's distress over these events have made him seriously ill.

13:4 Again David is fearful that the enemies would gain a victory over him. The enemies of God's people always enjoy seeing the righteous fall. There are two major concerns of David:

- I. For himself - since David wants to live and prosper (as God said he would - cf. 2 Sam 7).
- II. For God - Since the reputation of God would be questioned if He allows His righteous servants to lose.

13:5 David knows that his request is based on the only thing it could be based on - God's **lovingkindness**. This refers to God's covenant love in which He promised to bless those who were righteous. David knows that, although he is not perfect, he is righteous. And being righteous, David is very confident he will be rewarded with God's **salvation**.

However great the pressure on David, it is still his choice to trust in God. He is exercising his trust in God and His covenant. He firmly believes that God is still in control.

13:6 David is not **singing** right now, yet he is so confident that God will save him that he knows he will again be singing soon. When David uses the past tense in saying God **has dealt** bountifully with him, he is revealing the basis for his confidence - past events. David has been in trouble before, and God always delivered him. Yet, God did even more than that. He dealt **bountifully** with David, indicating the completeness and abundance of God's salvation - even exceeding what David had asked for (cf. Eph 3:20).

LAMENT PSALM #2

PSALM 17

It is always troubling when God's children are falsely accused. This Psalm seems to find its origin from the heart of such a sufferer (cf. Deut 17:8-11; 1 Kgs. 8:31).

When one suffers at the hands of evil men, he usually prays for two events:

- I. For the suffering to end and

II. For justice to be done.

17:1 David's appeals for God to answer because his appeal is:

- I. Just - David is not just being a "cry baby" - he has a legitimate case, and
- II. Not from deceit - that is, he is not wishing for God to give him what he does not deserve.

17:2 David is not looking from a deliverance from man. He knows that only God can be completely **equitable**.

17:3 Spiritual people do not fear God's careful investigation, whether in the day or **night**. Also, David is willing for God to examine him thoroughly, even his **heart** (which goes beyond merely an external examination). David is so confident he knows that when God tried him He found **nothing** amiss. How was David able to speak so confidently? He had determined, literally **purposed**, that he would not sin! This is the only way for God's children to avoid sin - to make a conscience, concerted effort to keep from sinning (cf. 1 Jn 2:1).

17:4 Notice the things David did here:

- I. He studied to see what God's word demanded; and then
- II. He determined to follow what he had learned.

Notice also how spiritual people assume responsibility for their own actions. David says **I have kept** from evil people - showing that he made a determined effort to stay from sin. And, if he had gone with sinful men, he would have had no one to blame but himself.

17:5 David's confident prayer is based on his own righteousness (cf. Jas 1:6-7; 5:16). God hears those who have heard and obeyed His word (cf. 1 Jn 5:14-15). Also, righteous people know the truth, and know they are doing it. God wants us to know what pleases Him (Eph 5:10), and then be confident that we are saved if we are doing it (1 Jn 3:18-21; 5:13).

17:6 Having established his innocence, David returns to his appeal for deliverance. And he is confident he will receive it! Again, notice the faith being demonstrated here.

17:7 While this verse has been difficult for translators to put into English (only six words in the Hebrew!), it is nevertheless a beautiful expression of confidence. That confidence is based upon:

- I. His trust in God to be his **refuge**, and
- II. God's **lovingkindness**, which has to do with God's covenant promise to bless those who are faithful to Him.

17:8 The **apple of the eye** is the pupil, and is an expression referring to that which is most precious and in need of protection. Another expression, the **shadow of Thy wings**, suggests the watchful protection of the mother bird (cf. Mt 23:37).

17:9 David now notes the specific problem he is dealing with (and from which he seeks God's deliverance). He is faced with **enemies** who are serious about killing David, for they are called **deadly** enemies. Assuredly, this threat is crucial, because they have David **surrounded**.

17:10 David now describes the enemies:

- I. They are insensitive - having closed their heart - literally "fat" - an ancient expression referring to a fat person being overindulgent and self-concerned, as is evidenced by their appearance,
- II. They are arrogant - they speak with a boldness and confidence, even though they defy God and His children,

17:11 III. They seek to destroy - having **surrounded** God's children,

- IV. They are vengeful - seeking to cast the righteous to the ground, thus bringing about their destruction and

17:12 V. They are vicious - demonstrating no compassion or concern, they seek only to kill and consume.

17:13 This verse is an illustration of the type of expression that harmonizes with the imprecatory Psalms. David uses the force of several imperatives, wishing God to **confront** him (stand before him, not allowing him to progress); to **bring him low** (to overthrow and defeat by death). David, an accomplished warrior himself, knows that God, as the ultimate warrior, can easily defeat any enemy. His **sword** has no match!

17:14 David does not seek salvation from the hand of man, but from the **hand** of the Almighty God.

The remainder of this verse is difficult to translate. It appears, by contrasting it with verse 15, that David is calling for a curse on his enemies based on their selfishness. If this is the correct sense, then David is noting that the men of the

world find ultimate satisfaction only in material goods. Indeed, those material goods will be the only **portion** they will ever receive from God (cf. Mt 6:3-4; Col 3:1,2). They certainly do not enjoy the blessings of having fellowship with God. Yet God still allows them to fill their bellies with His **treasure** (cf. Psa 49:6). Ultimately their lives will end with its shallow, meaningless existence and their **abundance** will be left for their children.

17:15 David, however, is more interested in beholding the **face** of God then looking upon great treasures. He will be **satisfied** with nothing more than having a close relationship with God. The thought of these two verses is similar to that of Paul in Phil 3: 19-20. It is thought by some commentators that **awake** is a reference to David's continued relationship with God after a night of sleep, while others argue that this is a reference to seeing God after the resurrection (cf. Isa 26:19; Dan 12:2).

LAMENT PSALM #3

PSALM 51

This is a penitential Psalm as well as a lament Psalm.

This has to be one of the most heartfelt, moving prayers for forgiveness in the Bible. We have the privilege of being told that this is what David wrote after being convicted of sin by Nathan the prophet (as recorded in 2 Sam 12:1). How did David feel after this? What did he think? Again here is a man after God's own heart.

The following is an example of a sermon outline based on this great Psalm. It demonstrates how one does not have to be defeated by the presence of sin in his life. He simply needs to deal with the sin in a positive way like David demonstrates in this Psalm.

FAILURE IS NOT FATAL!

A Study of Psalm 51

Notice the following stages found in David's life, and the steps taken to prevent failure from overcoming him.

STAGE ONE: THE FAILURE

Step One - Be willing to admit that we failed.

STAGE TWO: THE FIXING

Step Two - Pray to God to remake us and restore us. Man cannot fix his own problem. David tried to fix his own problem. We have to go to God and let Him fix the problem.

STAGE THREE: THE FUTURE

Step Three - Gratefully serve God in response to His forgiving nature.

51:1 Be gracious to me, O God, according to Thy lovingkindness; According to the greatness of Thy compassion blot out my transgressions.

He immediately appeals to God's nature, using terminology that has to do with the cancellation of a debt, the wiping away of defilement. There is something often lost in Christianity today, and that is the deep sense of hurt and mourning when we have done wrong. Spiritual people take sin very seriously, and do not quickly dismiss it when we know we are guilty.

When we are overcome with the sense of wrong doing, we realize at that point that we approach God as a beggar asking from Him that for which we have no right to ask. It is not God's fault that we have sinned. He does not owe us forgiveness. So we are indeed beggars before God.

51:2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sins.

How dirty does David feel? Very dirty! He wants to be thoroughly washed. David is not concerned with just the sin, but the sinful character. It is not just what he has done, but why he has done it. He is asking: What got inside me that made me do such a heinous thing such as this?

51:3 For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.

It takes two to commit the sin of adultery, but David is not concerned about Bathsheba, he is focusing completely upon his own sin. He could have reasoned before God: "Well, she was the one bathing there in open view of everyone!" He did not make excuses or shift the blame to another. The fact of the matter is that he sinned. His conscious is always accusing him. You can sense the agony David is feeling here.

51:4 Against Thee, Thee only, I have sinned, And done what is evil in Thy sight, So that Thou art justified when Thou dost speak, And blameless when Thou dost judge.

What happened to Uriah and Bathsheba? Did David not sin against them? It is true that he sinned against them, but David knows all wrongdoing is ultimately

against God. He knows others are hurt but ultimately it is an offense against God. He knows he is guilty and he knows that he should get what he deserves. If God chooses to punish him, He is **just** in doing so.

51:5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me.

This is a controversial verse in this Psalm. All translations have to be explained so that one does not think David is supporting the false doctrine of inherited sin or original sin. These are the words of a man in dark despair. He is saying as we would say, "I have never been any good, even when I was born." Does he mean this literally? No, but this a good demonstration of poetic expression and overstating the case for emphasis. For example, contrast this verse with Psalm 22:9-10. That Psalm and this one are in direct contrast to one another. We need to understand that both Psalms reflect different moods David was in. In Psalm 22 David was feeling good and confident in his relationship with God. In Psalm 51 David is feeling depressed and is not confident in his relationship with God. As mentioned in the introduction, it is imperative for the student of the Psalms to understand the type of literature this is. The wisdom literature should be understood as poetic literature in contrast to doctrinal treatises like Romans or Hebrews.

Concerning the doctrine of original sin, there are several passages that demonstrate the error of this doctrine:

- I. Ezek 18:20 - every individual is responsible only for his/her sin;
- II. 1 Tim 2:4 - how could God desire all men to be saved when He has given them the burden of sin from birth?
- III. Mt 19:14 - would Jesus have said this about children if they inherited sin?
- IV. Ex 32:33 - only the one who sins will be blotted out.

51:6 Behold, Thou dost desire truth in the innermost being, And in the hidden part Thou wilt make me know wisdom.

He wants the spirit, attitude and disposition within man to be converted. The **innermost being** is where the truth should dwell. David has not had the proper view of God's wisdom. Once God's children go to God's word to receive God's viewpoint, then he can take the prescribed steps (given by God), and once those steps are taken, then the cleansing will take place. But not before then! In the New Testament one has to repent and be baptized (Acts 2:38), and then (as Christians) they should repent and pray when they sin (Acts 8:22; 1 Jn 1:9).

51:7 Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

David knows God's great forgiving nature is able to make him as clean and pure as he can possibly be. For more on **hyssop** see Ex 12:22; Lev 14:4; Num 19:18; Heb 9:19. Isaiah also noted how powerful God's forgiving nature is in Isa 1:18. David knows that he is black with sin, but he also knows the greatness of God's love and His forgiving nature. God can make him **white**, that is, free from sin.

51:8 Make me to hear joy and gladness, Let the bones which Thou hast broken rejoice.

He wants to know again that his wrong doing has been taken away. Sin is what separates one from the source of real joy. If one is really concerned about being righteous, then sin makes the heart sad.

51:9 Hide Thy face from my sins; And blot out all my iniquities.

David realizes that God's omniscience enables Him to see all that he has done. Yet, he also knows that God is willing to forgive and forget about his sins. This would be how God would **blot** out David's sins. Notice how the spiritual man does not try to hide or minimize his own sinfulness. Since God is all knowing, it is foolish for us to not openly confess our sins to God. This verse identifies the use of parallelism in the Psalms. When God **blots out** David's iniquities, He **hides His face** from those iniquities. Therefore, to hide His face is the same as blotting out iniquity.

51:10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me.

David views himself to be so wicked that he needs to be created anew. He does not want God to rebuild the heart he already has, but give him a brand new one that would be **clean**, instead of defiled like the heart he has now. He wants to be strong. He does not want to vacillate back and forth between righteousness and unrighteousness. Every child of God should have the resolve to be faithful to God day after day (cf. 1 Cor 15:58; Gal 6:9).

51:11 Do not cast me away from Thy presence, And do not take away Thy Holy Spirit from me.

David's appeal to God is wanting to have a relationship of worship. In order to be in the **presence** of God he would have to enjoy God's forgiveness. David's reference to the **Holy Spirit** is equal here to the **presence** of God (and is not a reference to his being an inspired writer).

51:12 Restore to me the joy of Thy salvation, And sustain me with a willing spirit.

David lists here the two keys to avoiding sin:

I. Recognize the joy of God's salvation.

God's children appreciate the significance of being saved. They do not want to jeopardize that salvation in any way. Are we willing to forfeit our eternal home in heaven for this sin?

II. Have a willing spirit.

Those who successfully resist temptation are those who have a determination and commitment. They have a willingness to serve God and His will, instead of Satan and his will.

51:13 Then I will teach transgressors Thy ways, And sinners will be converted to Thee

Those who are the most evangelistic are those who have personally tasted the forgiveness of God. David now knows how great was his sin, therefore he also knows how great is God's forgiveness (cf. Lk 7:47; 22:32).

51:14 Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, Thou God of my salvation; Then my tongue will joyfully sing of Thy righteousness.

David cannot speak to others until his personal problem with sin is resolved. Yet, once **delivered**, he will have no restraint in proclaiming God's goodness.

51:15 O Lord, open my lips, That my mouth may declare Thy praise.

How can God open his **lips**? By forgiving his sins.

51:16 For Thou dost not delight in sacrifices, otherwise I would give it; Thou are not pleased with burnt offering.

There was no sacrifice for sins such as adultery and murder. He needed to repent and beg for God's forgiveness. It is the hypocrite who goes through the motions of sacrifice without genuine repentance whom God despises (cf. Mic 6:6-8).

51:17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.

A **broken** spirit and **contrite** heart. These are what He wants from us. There is no arrogance, no self-justifying, no ignoring of the sin. David is throwing himself upon the mercy of God.

51:18 By Thy favor do good to Zion; Build the walls of Jerusalem.

While thinking about praising God, David is reminded of the present inadequacy of the place of worship. David would like to build a suitable place to praise God. However, that task was given to Solomon.

51:19 Then Thou wilt delight in righteous sacrifices, In burnt offering and whole burnt offering; Then young bulls will be offered on Thine altar.

David was not ignorant of the requirements of the law of sacrifice in verse 16. He fully intends to implement all that God has asked of him. Yet the spiritual man knows that going through the motions without the proper attitude of heart is worthless. But when one has the proper attitude, and then does what God has asked (the particulars), then God accepts his worship.

LAMENT PSALM #4

PSALM 73

This lament Psalm reminds the Bible student of the struggles of Job and Jeremiah - why does God allow the wicked to prosper and the righteous to suffer? Even people today have difficulty with this concept.

The Psalm is noted to be a Psalm of **Asaph**. See the introduction for more on this writer.

73:1 Asaph begins by expressing his belief that God is **good** to Israel, especially to those who are **pure in heart**. Yet, when one considers the entire Psalm, it seems even Asaph had his doubts about the truthfulness of this statement. Those who are **pure in heart** are those who are totally committed to God, and that commitment is more than external allegiance. His **heart** belongs to God (cf. Mt 5:8). This phrase will take on greater importance as one considers the argument of the whole Psalm. Asaph will demonstrate the relative unimportance of external circumstances. The real key is one's attitude toward external events.

This verse seems to be out of place in the Psalm, yet we shall see how it actually stands as the key to understanding the point of the Psalm.

- 73:2** Asaph admits that his view of external circumstances almost caused him to lose his faith. It is important for the child of God to see things from God's perspective, not man's. Failure to do so could cause one to have a tainted view of life.
- 73:3** Asaph admits that he was **envious** of what the **arrogant** had, wishing that he had it. He would observe their **prosperity** and desire to be equally prosperous. Certainly Asaph is characteristic of all of us. It is easy to see what others have and wish we had the same. Paul offers a stern caution to one who desires wealth (1 Tim 6:9-10), as did Jesus (Mk 10:23).
- 73:4** In ancient times most people survived by strenuous labor, which in turn kept their bodies slim and healthy. So when one was **fat** he was generally considered to have an easy life. Asaph would have been comforted somewhat if they had at least suffered a painful **death**, but he has not seen such suffering.
- It is interesting to note that in ancient times, as well as modern, believers seem to think that good health and prosperity are guaranteed promises of God. Such was not the case with Lazarus (cf. Lk 16) and many others who would have to face poverty in their lives (Rom 8:35). It is crucial for spiritual people today to realize their physical circumstances have no bearing on God's love for them!
- 73:5** The righteous always seem to have problem after problem. The wicked, however, seem to have the good life with few difficulties (cf. Job 21:9).
- 73:6** A **necklace** is worn to be seen by others. Therefore, the wicked are not ashamed to wear their **pride** as a necklace over their **garments of violence**. All can see these items, and yet God does not strike them down for such arrogance.
- 73:7** The wicked have not only wealth, they have an overabundance, demonstrated by their being obese. Asaph also notes that the **imagination**s of their wicked heart **run riot** - that is, doing what ever they want. It is true that when people have the ability, availability and money to do evil, they will often do it. For example, when prostitutes are available, more men will commit fornication. When abortion is legalized, more women will abort children. The child of God, on the other hand, is warned to flee (cf. 1 Tim 6:11).
- 73:8** When people are surrounded with wealth and power, they are not afraid to say things that are improper to say. This is a demonstration of their arrogance noted earlier (cf. Jude 16).

73:9 Also, when one begins to say things that are out of place, they become more bold with each statement, eventually challenging the very authority of God Himself. God will allow such blasphemy to continue for a time, but He will eventually close every evil mouth (Mt 15:11).

73:10 The meaning of this verse is unclear. The problem lies in the interpretation of the pronoun **his**. There are basically two possibilities:

- I. Refers to the sons of fatness who return to their place of arrogance and pride, or
- II. Refers to the sons of God, who return to the place of evil because God has done nothing to correct them.

73:11 An illustration of the lack of respect they have for God (cf. verse 9) is given here. The idea seems to be if God is so intelligent, why does He not do something? Apparently God does not even know what is happening on the earth (perhaps this implies that they do not even believe in the existence of God).

73:12 As Asaph concludes his discussion concerning the **wicked**, he notes that they are **always** doing well. Thus the point is clear: why doesn't God do something? If He would strike them down in their wickedness it would bring a quick and satisfying end to the problem as far as Asaph is concerned.

73:13 In view of the great life the wicked enjoys, Asaph concludes that his righteous life was in **vain**. It is not unusual for God's children to ask: what is in it for me? Peter and the disciples did this, and Jesus did not chastise them for it (cf. Mt 19:27; Mk 10:30). Yet God's word encourages us by letting us know that our labor is not in vain in the Lord (1 Cor 15:58).

73:14 Asaph seems to note that God has not been ignoring him, but instead has been **chastening** him. So his sacrificial life for God has not reaped blessings but has, instead, made his life miserable.

It is at this point we see a radical change in Asaph's thinking. It seems to suddenly dawn on Asaph that God knows all that he has said and has a plan to address it in His own way.

73:15 Asaph knows that there are many people who are faithfully living according to God's Word. Surely they are not deserving of one like Asaph to so quickly dismiss their faithfulness.

73:16 Asaph admits that he does not have all the answers to this dilemma. He would, though, like to **understand** why things are this way.

- 73:17** Asaph shows us what spiritual people do when they do not have the answers to life's troubling questions: they go to God (cf. Jas 1:5). It was only when Asaph went to God that he **perceived their end**. This was the key, because God has addressed, in His Word, what would eventually happen to the wicked.
- 73:18** The wicked's security and prosperity are merely delusions. When God acts, their fall will be quick and decisive (and thorough!).
- 73:19** Again Asaph notes that their destruction takes place in a **moment**, and that their punishment will be filled with unthinkable suffering (1 Cor 15:50-51; Mt 24:48-51).
- 73:20** God's anger toward the wicked has been **asleep**, but the time will come when He will awaken, and when He does, He will **despise** the wicked. Those whom the Lord despised will be sent from His presence (cf. 1 Thess 1:7-10) with the Lord saying, "depart, I never knew you" (Mt 7:23).
- 73:21** It seems the more Asaph thought about the "good life" of the wicked, the angrier it made him. It was upsetting that God would allow such people to prosper!
- 73:22** Asaph shows his spiritual nature here. He openly admits that his thinking was based on **ignorance**, and he was not using the cognitive abilities God has blessed man with, as opposed to the **animals**. God truly expects His people to think things through and consider them from God's perspective.
- 73:23** To Asaph's credit he did not allow his pride or his anger with God to completely blind him. He stayed with God and allowed God to guide him through this problem.
- 73:24** The spiritual man wants to be guided by God's **counsel** instead of man's counsel (cf. Psa 1:1).
- 73:25** Like Job, Asaph realizes that all he really wants (or needs) is God. If the wicked have all that material wealth, so be it. Asaph would rather have God. Can we today say that we desire nothing but a covenant relationship with God?
- 73:26** Asaph is willing to accept physical failure (as well as financial failure - v. 25). Others may have superior health and be wicked, yet Asaph would be willing to face extreme sickness and still have God.
- 73:27** Asaph has truly grasped the whole picture. The wicked will perish. Their prosperity and health is only a temporary state. Indeed, all who have opposed God have been **destroyed**.

73:28 What is the best thing you can say about yourself? Would it be, as with Asaph, “I am close to God”? Asaph has made his relationship with God his **refuge**. Not money or fame. In addition, he wants to **tell** of God’s mighty deeds. The works of God are too important to keep silent about. God’s people, of every age, have taken seriously the task of telling others about God.

TRUST PSALMS

TRUST PSALM #1

PSALM 3

The trust Psalms basically have four elements to them. The third Psalm serves as a fitting illustration of these elements.

- I. An expression of anxiety: 3:1,2.
- II. An expression of confidence: 3:3,4.
- III. The reaction to or the result of that confidence, which would be either:
 - A. A feeling of peace; and
 - B. A feeling of contentment. For example, in Psalm 3 it is sleep. No tossing and turning: 3:5,6.
- IV. Often reflect on God's deliverance in times past: 3:7,8.

Psalm 4 divides this same way. Not all the Psalms do this but these two Psalms do. We would do well to be reminded of the value of material like this, because it is devotional material and we are to be devotional beings. We have a private part of our life with God. We walk with God. Religion is powerful as it becomes personal. True spiritual men and women make personal application to their daily lives. Their faith and trust in God is more than lip service. It is a true, genuine attribute of their lives. The Psalms are good when reading the Bible devotionally, because you are able to do something with the Psalms that you can not do with the rest of the Bible. Methods of hermeneutics etc. are not necessary. One can understand the things the Psalmists are saying and relate to these same concerns and anxieties and can gain confidence in having the same trust. The same things David has experienced, we have experienced. Sometimes we should chastise ourselves for a lack of trust. Here is a man who has had the same problems, so it is a great blessing to have the Psalms.

Look at your introduction to Psalm 3. This is the first Psalm to have a title (making it one of 14 that are related to historical events in David's life). It is a Psalm written when he fled from Absalom his son. Now we can couple it with a historical event which occurs in 2 Sam 15. Absalom has been allowed to come back to Jerusalem by David after Joab talks him into it. Absalom wants power for himself, and as he secures power he forces his father, David, to leave Jerusalem. What is the spiritual man David thinking? God promised stability in Jerusalem. A lasting kingdom. What has happened to those promises? (Cf. 2 Sam 7). We have an opportunity to see how David feels and

what is going through his mind. This is his anxiety. The text in 2 Samuel shows Absalom had many followers, showing that the threat was real.

3:1 O Lord, how my adversaries have increased! Many are rising up against me.

David takes the perspective as a king. As we study we see his adversaries are evil men. It is in that point we can relate to the problems David is having. The Psalms provide us a unique glimpse into the thinking and life of a godly man, more than any other Biblical character. We can know more about David than anyone else in the Bible. The reason is because we have 1 and 2 Samuel, which tells what happened in David's life, and the first part of Kings, but we have the Psalms to tell us what David is thinking and feeling. We do not enjoy this with other Biblical characters. We have some with Moses when the people grumbled but nothing of the level we have with David.

In the Psalms David's adversaries are God's adversaries. Because David is determined to stand up for the truth, he has many who rise up against him (cf. 2 Sam 15: 12). How true it is in the scripture that when one stands for the truth he suddenly feels very alone (cf. Elijah).

3:2 Many are saying of my soul, There is no deliverance for him in God.

The enemies are saying God will not rescue him this time. David says, "Are you hearing this God? Are you hearing what they are saying or are you aware that my adversaries have increased?" Also this takes the idea often seen in Job and elsewhere: does God want to jeopardize His reputation by not coming to the defense of those who trust in Him? David has given himself to God, while others are saying God will not deliver him. Do you want to be like that God? Will you abandon those who belong to you? David did not want people to believe God had left him.

3:3 But Thou, O Lord art a shield about me, My glory, and the One who lifts my head.

He expresses his confidence. Here is the old military man using a military word. How many times in the heat of battle did David carry the **shield**? Perhaps he remembers the time when the enemy sword was deflected off of his shield. Maybe he remembers the arrows that have glanced off. Here is one who knows the benefit of the shield. The idea of God being a shield is an important concept in the Psalms. Cf. Ps 3:3; 18:35; 28:7; 33:20; 35:2; 47:9; 59:11; 76:3; 84:9,11; 115:9,10,11; 119:114; 144:2.

He also calls God, "My glory, and the one who lifts my head." Here is one fleeing for his life and his confidence is waning a little bit, but God will lift his counte-

nance (i.e. he will be vindicated). David is not about to lose his confidence in God! This is faith in action.

3:4 I was crying to the Lord with my voice, And He answered me from His holy mountain.

David's **cry** shows the pain he is in. Yet his crying to the Lord was justified, because the Lord **answered** David from His **holy mountain**. This is a reference to Mt Zion, the place of the Ark of the Covenant (cf. 2 Sam 6:2). Today man finds comfort from God's answers in His word (cf. Jas 1:5).

3:5 I lay down and slept; I awoke, for the Lord sustains me.

One weak in faith lies down without the confidence that he will survive the night. David was one who was able to steal Saul's spear while he was sleeping and could have killed him. David is aware that same thing could easily happen to him. Did that cause him to lose sleep? No, because of his confidence in God. It was vindicated. Who knows what God did through the night to preserve the life of David? So David slept, and he **awoke**, vindicating his faith in God. Knowing God loves us gives us peace of mind (cf. Phil 4:6; Jn 14:27).

3:6 I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people Who have set themselves against me around about.

He said God was a shield about him and his enemies have made a circle about him. Thus, he is encircled twice. But the most important is God (his shield), so he is not afraid. Fear paralyzes one from doing what he should (cf. Jn 19:38). David will proceed and not let fear paralyze him. The **ten thousands of people** may be poetic exaggeration, but it is conceivable David is facing a large army assembled by Absalom. The righteous always have many enemies (Jn 7:7; 15:18-20; 1 Jn 3:13).

3:7 Arise, O Lord; save me, O my God! For Thou hast smitten all my enemies on the cheek; Thou hast shattered the teeth of the wicked.

By using the past tense, David may be remembering past events in which God delivered him. Or he could be so confident God will destroy these present enemies that he speaks as if it has already taken place.

Again, here is a man who is reflecting on what he has seen in battle: teeth shattering on impact of a club. David is saying here there are those who are opposing me and You are smiting with your Powerful Hand.

3:8 Salvation belongs to the Lord; Thy blessing be upon Thy people.

Save is one of the key words in the Psalms, occurring 46 times. Often times it is not salvation from sin, although there are some texts that mean this. Usually it is the idea of salvation from the present crisis.

TRUST PSALM #2

PSALM 4

4:1 Answer me when I call, O God of my righteousness! Thou hast relieved me in my distress; Be gracious to me and hear my prayer.

The first line of this Psalm of trust has to do with the “now.” Right now, God, answer me! The second line appeals to the past. Thou has relieved me in my distress. The third line returns us to the now and the future. What David does in the first line is interesting. The foot note says something to the effect “who maintains my right.” The point is that he is appealing to God’s character as an upholder of justice, that which is right. He appeals to God as one who protects His own. When he says thou hast **relieved me**, it is literally made room for me. The word means “give me some space” and has the idea of being in a tight corner and the need to get out of this tight corner. David has worked himself into a corner. He is in distress and does not have many options left as to where to go and what to do.

4:2 O sons of men, how long will my honor become a reproach? How long will you love what is worthless and aim at deception?

What do you think David would be referring to? The **honor** God has bestowed upon him is his kingdom. He is the anointed of God. Now he has become a reproach. It should be an honor to be God’s anointed king, but it is a **reproach**. David is appealing to the people’s giving nature and common sense. It does not make sense that they would attack someone who is trying to serve God. He believes the people’s problem is a problem of priorities. They **love** that which is of no value.

4:3 But know that the Lord has set apart the godly man for Himself; The Lord hears when I call to Him.

David says: “You need to be convinced and know for yourselves that it is the Godly man whom the Lord reserves to be His.” This is always David’s greatest comfort, that God **hears**. Not that God always answered the way he wished, just

as we will not have our prayers answered the way we want. But the comfort that God hears is something we can relate to.

4:4 Tremble, and do not sin; Meditate in your heart upon your bed, and be still.

This trembling carries the idea of trembling because of fear and because of that fear it keeps one from sinning. Ex 20:20 - the 20/20 vision of Exodus: Fearing God that you may not sin.

This idea is to think about it on your bed before you wake up and act. It angers David that people can so openly oppose right and openly oppose those who try to do right.

4:5 Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, And trust in the Lord.

The Lord will vindicate. Offer the sacrifices that righteous people should, then **trust** in the Lord. This is a Psalm of trust because that word is in the text. Perhaps, from verse 4, the person spent the night thinking about the direction his life was going and decided to repent, offer sacrifices for sin, and then believe in the promises of God.

4:6 Many are saying, “Who will show us any good?” Lift up the light of Thy countenance upon us, O Lord.

David’s friends are wishing for better times and they wonder if the good days will ever return.

David knows that if the good days do return, they will return because God has sent them. So David appropriately makes his appeal to the Lord who can send those blessings.

4:7 Thou hast put gladness in my heart, More than when their grain and new wine abound.

Despite the difficult times he is going through, he still has a gladness of heart. A key word in the Psalms is **heart**, occurring 128 times. He may not have the gladness of the outer man because of the opposition, but he has gladness of heart. One who trusts has this gladness of heart.

4:8 In peace I will both lie down and sleep, For Thou alone, O Lord, dost make me to dwell in safety.

This aligns itself with v. 5 of the last Psalm, in which David expresses confidence he can lie down and have a restful night’s sleep. The restful sleep comes after David has placed everything in the hands of God.

In Matthew 6 Jesus talks about being anxious for various physical needs. That is not what godly people do. David did what righteous men and women do today. The difference between the righteous and the unrighteous is what we do with our problems. Do we try to bear up and take it all or do we lay them at the feet of God (cf. 1 Pet 5:7; Phil 4:6)? If we worry about things to the point we cannot sleep, then we are not demonstrating the faith and trust that spiritual people do. David had problems as bad as any today, yet he was able to sleep. Why? Because he gave his problems to God. Equally, we must develop the same level of trust and confidence. It is a sin to worry.

Notice in this Psalm all that God has provided:

- I. Deliverance (v. 1),
- II. Assurance in prayer (v. 1),
- III. Favor (v. 3),
- IV. Joy (v. 7),
- V. Peace (v. 8) and
- VI. Safety (v. 8).

The Christian can rejoice in that we have all these blessings in Christ!

TRUST PSALM #3

PSALM 5

This Psalm is also a prayer and petition Psalm. It is similar in form to Psalm 7. We can look at the text of Psalm 5 and see there is a specific concern on the mind of the Psalmist. He voices that concern and then gives a specific request to God of how he would like this concern dealt with. He expresses his trust that the Lord will answer his prayer.

5:1 Give ear to my words, O Lord. Consider my groaning.

This is David's appeal to God to hear him out. David often begins his Psalms in this way. David was one who liked to begin his day with prayer according to verse 3.

5:2 Heed the sound of my cry for help, my King and my God, For to Thee do I pray.

5:3 In the morning, O Lord, Thou wilt hear my voice; In the morning I will order my prayer to Thee and eagerly watch.

David gets to the point of his concern in vss. 4-7. God is one who hates and despises all sorts of wickedness from being boastful to shedding blood and the things he mentions through these verses.

5:4-9 Paul quotes this in Romans 3:13. David tells God in v. 10 what he would like Him to do.

5:10 Hold them guilty, O God; By their own devices let them fall! In the multitude of their transgressions thrust them out, For they are rebellious against Thee.

This is what he wants God to do to them. This is another example of a imprecation (see the Imprecatory Psalms). David does not want the wicked to succeed in life.

5:11 But let all who take refuge in Thee be glad, Let them ever sing for joy; And mayest Thou shelter them, That those who love Thy name may exult in Thee.

After David expresses what he would like God to do to the wicked, he then expresses what he would like God to do for the righteous. He wants them to:

- I. Be given a heart of gladness with which they would sing with joy.
- II. Be provided a shelter, so they might have just cause for exulting in the Lord.
- III. He wants the Lord to bless the righteous. The idea of blessing is expressed in "Surrounding him with favor" - protection - that allows him to not have any discomfort whatsoever.

5:12 For it is Thou who dost bless the righteous man, O Lord, Thou dost surround him with favor as with a shield.

David again returns to the theme of God being a **shield** (cf. Psalms 3:3). David does not believe the Lord would **surround** a wicked man, although temporary blessings may cause one to doubt. The key is God's **favor**. David knows that the loving God intends to bestow His great blessings on those who are His (cf. Matthew 7:9-11).

TRUST PSALM #4

PSALM 16

We do not know the background for this Psalm, but verse one indicates David was again in some kind of difficulty. David again demonstrates his faith in God, and his confidence that God will take care of him.

This Psalm could also be classified as a Messianic Psalm, with four of its eleven verses quoted in the New Testament. Peter uses a large section in his sermon on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:25-28 = vss. 8-11), and Paul uses verse ten in his noteworthy sermon in the synagogue of Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:35).

The first section of the Psalm has David thanking God for three things:

- I. His God (vss. 1-2),
- II. His friends (vss. 3-4) and
- III. His inheritance (vss. 5-6).

16:1 David considers himself to be in a life-threatening danger as he asks God to **preserve** him, or to keep him alive. David is thankful that in spite of the bleakness of the situation he still has a **refuge** to turn to.

16:2 When one truly has attempted to be a child of God, he then can legitimately claim God as his **Lord** (cf. 1 Sam 30:6; 2 Tim 2:19). David notes that the only way his life will ever be by any **good**, or worth anything, is if he has God. Equally, our lives are worthless unless God is in them (Phil 3:7f).

16:3 This verse has been said to be one of the most beautiful verses on fellowship in all the Bible. It is especially meaningful when considered with verses one and two. In those verses David stated how his life is meaningful. Now he notes what makes his day to day associations meaningful. David truly enjoys being with God's people (in contrast to the wicked path described in Psa 1:1).

David says two things about fellowship with God's people:

- I. It is what makes him truly happy, and
- II. The reason is makes him happy is:
 - A. They are holy people, and
 - B. They are majestic people (quality people).

- 16:4** In contrast to the joy brought to David by God's people, this verse demonstrates the sorrow brought by the wicked. David determines that he will not have anything to do with those who shed **blood**, nor will he even talk about those who practice unrighteousness (cf. 1 Cor 10:20-23).
- 16:5** While David was a wealthy man, it was not his inheritance that gave him security. It was the **inheritance** that he found with the Lord. That inheritance is the only lasting one! God takes care of David's inheritance, or **lot**, assuring its protection.
- 16:6** David continues to use property/land terminology to illustrate what the Lord has given him. He considers his inheritance to have been the best available, and the most **beautiful**. This is similar to the concept in Num 18:20, where the Levites have God as their inheritance.

In this second section, David gives us a good view of the way spiritual men respond to God's gifts (those given in vss. 1-6).

- 16:7** First, David begins by offering praise to God.

When one has been the recipient of God's great gifts, he should naturally turn to God in praise. Even in the **night** David is aware enough of God's word to know what he should do. This verse serves as a good reason for one to memorize God's word. This way even in the night with its darkness one can meditate on God's book.

- 16:8** Second, David states his conviction to God.

David would never set God aside, that is, move Him away from the focus and central part of his life. David wants his every move to have God **before** him. The **right hand** is a typical illustration of power, and David's conviction is stronger having God to strengthen him.

Beginning here and concluding with verse 11, the apostle Peter quotes these verses and notes that David was here speaking of Christ (Acts 2:25-28).

- 16:9** Third, David states the security he has with God.

Here is a man who, on several occasions, fled for his life and was forced to hide in caves. Yet David appreciated the security God provided him. He believed God would take care of him.

- 16:10** David continues his thought on security by stating that God will never abandon him, even in remote places like **Sheol** (note parallelism - Sheol = the pit). As Peter quotes this verse it takes on a much fuller meaning in Christ. Peter

demonstrates how this verse predicted the resurrection of Christ. Paul also uses this verse to prove the resurrection of Christ in Acts 13:35.

16:11 Forth, David states that he is ready to receive instruction. He wants to learn where the **path of life** is from God and no other. Where men may find a shallow joy in the various sinful pleasures of life, David knows the **fullness of joy** is found when you are in the **presence** of God (in worship). Therefore, in God's **right hand** (cf. v. 8) are **pleasures forever**. This stands in contrast to the temporary or passing pleasures of sin (cf. Heb 11:25).

In its New Testament application, Peter uses this verse to prove that Christ was again going to be given life, and that He would again be in the presence of God. This supports the prophecy of the resurrection even further.

TRUST PSALM #5

PSALM 23

This Psalm is one that would fall into the Psalm of Praise or Trust category. It really falls into both.

23:1 The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

This is the starting point for any relationship, that is, any valuable relationship. We begin with the Lord. With friends, relatives, co-workers, our relationship begins with the Lord. Our ultimate worth and value is when we begin with the Lord.

MY Shepherd - of all the descriptions of God, **shepherd** is often repeated. We see him portrayed as a shepherd many times in the Psalms, Isaiah, Ezekiel and Jeremiah. In John 10 Jesus is portrayed as the Good Shepherd, and God is called the Great Shepherd in 1 Pet 2:25, and the Guardian of our souls. The reasons for this term, and the repetition of this term, is because it is the most comprehensive term for God. It is comprehensive because God is everything to the sheep. He is the sheep's guide, the sheep's physician, protector, feeder, etc. He personalizes it by saying **MY** shepherd. Righteous people view God as their personal shepherd. The power is when we personalize it. That is why David's religion is so powerful, God was his shepherd. These are the words of a shepherd boy who understands and knows what God is for him just as he was for his flock.

"I shall not want."

A good shepherd is one who does not allow his sheep to want for anything. The reasons David says this is because his Shepherd has supplied his all.

23:2 He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside quiet waters.

“He makes me to lie down in green pastures.”

You only get sheep to lie down when you fill them up. They lie down, and where they lie is in **green pastures**. What a beautiful way of illustrating a place of comfort! We are not talking about rocky cliff areas where the sheep could not find the necessary comfort and rest, but this is lush and green.

“He leads me beside quiet waters.”

Sheep will not drink from rushing waters. The shepherd has the responsibility of damming up a river so the water is still and they can drink. He is always thinking of the welfare of the sheep. Ezekiel 34:14 applies to this idea of the green pastures and quiet waters. God is The Shepherd and contrasts Himself with the wicked shepherd.

23:3 He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.

“He restores my soul.”

Sheep often get lost and need to be brought back. David certainly understands in his own life how he has wandered away from the fold of God.

“He guides me in the paths of righteousness.”

The shepherd has predetermined **paths** and if the flock stays on those they get to where they need to go. So the shepherd leads them on the right path. There is nothing here indicating these are the easy paths. For example, they may be rocky, curvy and adjacent to cliffs. In v. 4 he is in the valley of the shadow of death. This does not sound like an easy path. We follow where the Shepherd leads us, knowing the way may not be easy. Jesus said in Mt 7:13 that the way is not easy (cf. Psa 119:105, Jer 10:23 - It is not in man to direct his steps).

“For His name's sake.”

We belong to God and He wants to keep it that way.

23:4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil; for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me.

“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death.”

The footnote says this could be the valley of deep darkness. It is a way of describing a path that is filled with all sorts of terrors and dangers. Death is near by, one false step and off you go. Only the Lord can lead a person through the shadow of death or the valley. Only the Lord can lead us through death itself. David is going to say in Psalm 139 that even in Sheol God is there. Peter says in Acts 2 that Jesus was not abandoned to Sheol. God would come to lead Jesus out of the grave, and so He did!

“I fear no evil for Thou art with me.”

God’s presence overcomes the worst of all ideas, from fear and anxiety, - whatever might be considered evil or harmful. With God as our Shepherd we need not concern ourselves. We continue to trek through death knowing that God is with us. Remember the poem of the foot prints in the sand? There is only one set of foot prints. God carries us the whole time during trials. Mt 6:13 is a good passage of God being with us and caring about us.

“Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me.”

The rod - was that which was carried for defense, able to smite the wolf or any kind of attacker.

The staff - was that with a crook at the top that could reach down and go around a sheep’s neck. If he got caught in a crevice or such he could be pulled out. It was also that which would prod the sheep to return to the fold. It was for discipline and direction. We have the shepherd here that is armed and ready and willing to use the implements he has at his disposal for the benefit of the sheep.

They provide comfort because of the knowledge that our shepherd will defend us. We do not have to be anxious about the wolf or any kind of attacker.

23:5 Thou dost prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; Thou hast anointed my head with oil; my cup overflows.

This is where commentators disagree. Some think the entire Psalm carries the idea of the shepherd, while others say we leave that in v. 4 and in vss. 5,6 talk about other things. There are some analogies to the shepherd and sheep. Then again, the idea of a table may have nothing to do with the shepherd metaphor but simply describes God’s provisions for His own.

“He prepares a table before me in the presence of my enemies.”

There are two interpretations of “in the presence of my enemies:”

- I. He is talking about security in the midst of trouble. With enemies all around I sit here fully satisfied or:
- II. He is talking about a victory celebration where the enemies are present as captives.

Sometimes in the great banquet rooms the prisoners were in stocks and as the victorious feasted the enemy is looked on, locked up, humbled, humiliated.

“Thou hast anointed my head with oil.”

Those who believe this is speaking of sheep say that oil is used for medicine. Often times a sheep would scar his head or his ears would get caught on thickets and the oil was for medicinal purposes. Some shepherds note that the oil also keeps the bugs from getting in the eyes and ears. They say that the sheep can get infections from these bugs and the oil keeps them away. So he puts that on them to keep them from danger.

If it is talking about what God does for man - the idea is that we have become someone whom God has anointed as His own. For example, whenever a king was selected, the prophet would pour oil over his head to symbolize his selection. Thus here the Psalmist could be talking about his selection by God. Either one makes sense.

“My cup overflows.”

Idea of blessings in abundance. A person is happy to have a cup with a little in it sometimes, but here is one with a cup that is **overflowing**. The analogy that some make to the sheep is that a shepherd, in places where there was no running water, would have a cup from which the sheep would drink out of individually. They lapped the water up quickly but there was an abundance. A good New Testament application of this is found in Lk 6:38.

**23:6 Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life,
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.**

Two concepts are going to belong to those of God.

- I. Goodness carries the idea of good things - such as material blessings and prosperity.

- II. Lovingkindness which is a key word in the Psalms - 93 times it is used - mercy in other places. This has to do with the relationship with God; that His love is being shed in abundance upon the person.

These two things "Will surely follow...life."

He does not have to worry about being shepherdless one day.

"I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

The idea of **dwelling**, has been confusing to some commentators. Yet the concept seems to be that of permanent residence. The word for "forever" is the word YAMIM which means on and on and on.

ROYAL / MESSIANIC PSALMS

SEE THE COPY OF THE ROYAL PSALMS AND THE MESSIANIC PSALMS INCLUDED IN THE NOTES.

It is easy to see how a theme like royal/messianic Psalms would naturally fit into this type of literature. Since Christ is going to sit on the throne of David, and be a type of king like David, it is natural for the king David to say many things about himself that will find a fuller meaning in the work and person of Christ.

ROYAL / MESSIANIC PSALM #1

PSALM 2

This is ascribed to David in Acts 4:25, and is why we think that more of the Psalms not ascribed to David were still written by him. In Acts 13:33 this is said to be the “second” Psalm, there was some division of the Psalms even in the first century.

2:1 Why are the nations in an uproar, And the peoples devising a vain thing?

The more famous rendering is “Why do the heathens rage?” The idea is that the Gentile nations are in a fit of rage against God, standing against the will of God. Interestingly, Acts 4:25 quotes this verse saying it is a prediction of Calvary. So the Psalm begins by challenging anyone who would question the plan or word of God. If you are **devising** something against God’s plan it will fail. In a mocking question, why is everyone getting so excited in planning to oppose God? That is foolishness!

2:2 The kings of the earth take their stand, And the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against His Anointed.

The kings and the rulers come together to confer on how they might overthrow the rule of the Lord. Once again this is how it applies in Acts 4:24-28. The rulers are being accused of trying to overthrow that which is a plan of God and it may have very well been this reasoning that struck home with Gamaliel in Acts 5:33-42. He says if this is from God we cannot overthrow it. In Revelation 19:19 the beast and the kings of the earth are assembled to make war against Him on the white horse, to fight against the anointed one, the Lamb. But it will not be successful. Heathens can be in a rage against God, but it will not accomplish anything. Man cannot **stand** against God and win. Neither are men intelligent enough to **counsel together** and devise with a plan to defeat God and His **anointed** (that is, the king whom the Lord will select), whether the nations approve of him or not.

2:3 “Let us tear their fetters apart, And cast away their cords from us.”

This is what the rulers are saying - We do not want the dominance and the control from the Lord anymore. In their arrogance they think that can choose to resist the Lord's will. Such foolishness causes God to laugh in the next verse.

2:4 He who sits in the heavens laughs, The Lord scoffs at them.

Only God knows just how ridiculous it is to challenge Him. He finds it humorous that the puny little men who are so full of themselves think they could challenge God in any way. In Revelation 20 Satan assembles a huge army to fight against the Lord and His people. Satan foolishly thinks he can win. Yet God so easily and simply does away with Satan and his followers. No one in heaven or on earth or under the earth is capable of standing against the Almighty.

2:5 Then He will speak to them in His anger And terrify them in His fury.

When God deals with them, He deals with them in His **anger** and **fury**. The part that really angers God is the arrogance of the rulers. What God laughs about is the foolishness of anyone trying to oppose Him. But what is not funny is the coming judgment. It is not a laughing matter to fall into the hands of the angry God!

We have seen in verses 1-5 how men are busy at making their own divisive plans and schemes, but God is in ultimate control and He is going to do that which is in accordance with His plan. His plan is discussed in v. 6.

2:6 “But as for Me, I have installed My King upon Zion, My holy mountain.”

It is not who the people want to be king that is important, but who God wants. He has **installed** His choice. The One with the power is speaking, and He declares He has already chosen someone. He is going to be the one who will reign, and it will be from Zion. The prophecy is indicating that this king will be a Davidic-like king, which is a key element in Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah (cf. 2 Sam 7:12-16; Psa 89:3-4; Isa 11:1, etc.).

2:7 “I will surely tell of the decree of the Lord; He said to Me, Thou art My Son, Today I have begotten Thee.

In verse six God spoke. Now the Son speaks. This passage is quoted directly three times; Heb 1:5 talks about the deity of Christ; Heb 5:5 for the priesthood of Jesus; and Acts 13:33 as proof of the resurrection of Jesus. It has some definite allusions to the baptism of Jesus, Mt 3:17 “This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.” In Mt 17:5 with the transfiguration. **Beloved** is a Messianic title (cf. Isa 42:1), **Son** is a Messianic title from this Psalm. This verse also provides

good evidence for the divinity of Jesus: Thou art My Son. The fact that He had been begotten of God could be proof for the resurrection.

The connection with the baptism is important to understanding the Messiahship of Jesus. This Psalm tells us that when God installs His king, He proclaims that He is His beloved Son. It was at Jesus' baptism that this declaration was made. So when Jesus was baptized, God then anointed Him as the Messiah, and the anointing was done with the Holy Spirit who descended upon Him. However, Jesus did not actually assume His position as king until after the resurrection, for it was after that great event Jesus said, "All authority has been given to me" (Mt 28:18). This is not unusual, because God's prophet Elijah anointed both Saul and David, but they did not immediately assume the position as king after the anointing. Some time passed before either took the throne.

2:8 'Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Thine inheritance, And the very ends of the earth as Thy possession.'

This is what God said to Christ. He (God) was promising to give all authority to Jesus, and give the entire creation to Him as His **inheritance**. With this in mind, it makes the offer of Satan in the temptation (Mt 4:8,9) considerably weaker. Why accept Satan's offer when God, who truly owns everything, has promised the **very ends of the earth** to you? Equally, Christians should look at the temptations of Satan the same way. Why should we yield to Satan and accept his meager offers when our God, who owns everything, has promised to give us such a great inheritance (1 Pet 1:4)?

2:9 Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, Thou shalt shatter them like earthenware.'"

A **rod of iron** is talking about hard and strict discipline. This terminology is found three times in the Revelation (cf. 2:27; 12:5; 19:15). Premillennialists use this to say that Christians will rule with a rod of iron, yet our ruling will be through Christ. That ruling will be with the rod of iron that is in the hand of Christ. **Earthenware** has to do with their ultimate defeat and overthrow. Earthenware is easily broken apart when struck (especially with a rod of iron!).

2:10 Now therefore, O kings, show discernment; Take warning, O judges of the earth.

In view of God's supremacy, and the foolishness of their devising a vain thing against God, the nations are offered their only hope - submission.

2:11 Worship the Lord with reverence, And rejoice with trembling.

They need to worship the Lord with **reverence**. This is fear. Note the Hebrew parallelism, **trembling** and **reverence** mean the same thing. Therefore, the idea of just a “healthy respect for God” is not strong enough. There needs to be the trembling - the shuddering before the awesome power of God. The word **worship** is the word serve, thereby encouraging all nations to serve the only true God. The nations are encouraged to come to the Lord and bow down to His authority rather than provoke His anger with their own pride and arrogance.

2:12 Do homage to the Son, lest He become angry, and you perish in the way, For His wrath may soon be kindled. How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!

“Do homage to the Son, let He become angry”

This is in addition to the above. Jesus says he who does not honor the Son, does not honor the Father (Jn 5:23). That is the idea here. You can not honor the Father without doing **homage** to the Son. He is going to have a rod of iron and you are required by the Father to honor Him, and to yield to His authority.

There is some difficulty in translating this phrase. Some translations have left out the phrase “the son,” and replaced the word with the idea of sincerity or purity. Thus the idea would be to “worship sincerely” or “pay true homage.” Since the **son** was the subject earlier, it does not change the sense here. The **Son** is still to be worshiped (cf. Heb 1:5-6).

“And you perish in the way, for His wrath may soon be kindled”

His wrath may **soon** be kindled. There is a limit to how much rejection the Son is going to tolerate. He is going to eventually come to judge the earth (2 Cor 5:10). While Jesus is one who displayed perfect patience, His patience will eventually reach its logical limit. He cannot continue to tolerate continued disobedience. So when He does act and His wrath is kindled, all those who receive His wrath will **perish**.

“How blessed are all take refuge in Him!

All who take **refuge**. It is open to any and all and they are going to be approved if they take refuge in the Son. Some might refuse to pay homage to the Son, seeking to find **refuge** in some temporary shelter. Yet eventually God’s stored up wrath is going to be released (cf. Rom 2:6).

ROYAL / MESSIANIC PSALM #2

PSALM 24

The background for this Psalm is difficult to identify precisely, but it is apparent that it is celebrating the arrival of the king to Jerusalem. It seems logical to conclude that the Psalm marks the entrance of the king into Jerusalem escorted by the Ark of the Covenant (2 Sam 6:12-15; cf. Ps 132).

- 24:1** The Psalm beautifully begins by proclaiming the complete sovereignty of God. God is the one who is the founder and sustainer of the **earth**, which vividly describes the magnitude of His power. This statement also immediately and conclusively eliminates any pride on our part for what we have accomplished.

This verse is quoted by Paul in 1 Cor 10:26 to support the argument that all foods are clean.

- 24:2** The Lord has been able to found the earth on a seemingly unstable element, the **seas**. Yet, with God's power this was a simple task (cf. Gen 1:9-10; 2 Pet 3:5).

- 24:3** Since God is so great (vss. 1-2), only He can set the conditions for those who may approach Him. It would be foolish to believe that anyone may **ascend** to where God is, and **stand** before His holy throne (cf. Isa 33:14-16).

Today, only those cleansed by the blood of Christ can approach God in acceptable worship (cf. Heb 4:16; Jn 4:24; 1 Pet 2:5).

- 24:4** The acceptable worshiper has the following traits:

- I. **Clean hands** - is one who has conducted his life in accordance to God's word. This would involve kind treatment of others, honest business practices, etc. (cf. Ps 26:6; Isa 1:15; 33:15; 1 Tim 2:8).
- II. **Pure heart** - is one who has not filled his mind and his life with thoughts and deeds that are evil and defiled (cf. Mt 5:8).
- III. **Not lifted up his soul to falsehood** - describes one who has not engaged in idolatry or one who has not sworn falsely (cf. Col 3:9; Eph 4:25).
- IV. **Not sworn deceitfully** - is one who has not made promises that he/she has no intention of keeping. One who is not true to his word (cf. Mt 5:33-37; 23:16-22; Ex 20:7; Jas 5:12). When one becomes a Christian, he makes a promise to God that he will be faithful to Him and that Jesus will

be his Lord (cf. Rom 10:9-10). God expects us to be true to our confession (cf. 1 Tim 6:12).

24:5 What will the true worshiper receive from God? This verse describes two gifts:

- I. He will receive a **blessing** from the Lord. This means he will be God-approved and God-accepted. He can live his life with the assurance and confidence knowing he is truly one of God's children.
- II. He will receive **righteousness** from the Lord. This means that he will be justified or forgiven his sins by God. This justification will result in his most desired possession: God's **salvation**.

24:6 This verse ends on a positive note, observing that there is an entire race of people who are qualified to ascend the hill of the Lord because they **seek** God, and those who seek Him will find Him (cf. Isa 55:6). To seek God's **face** is to desire to be in His presence and have Him openly observe all that one is and has done. Unfortunately this does not seem to be true today - but it is more like Jud 21:25.

The use of **Jacob** here certainly means the nation of Israel, but probably uses the name Jacob to draw upon the text of Gen 32:22-32 where Jacob wrestled with God - seeking Him.

24:7-10 This last section is based heavily upon the first six verses. As the king (and the Ark) arrive in the Holy City, it is imperative that all who dare approach the Lord and His Ark do so with the right kind of attitude. The text repeats the important phrase **king of glory** five times and identifies this king of glory as **the Lord**. Thus, it may be king David who is entering the city, but the call is not to honor him. It is to honor the one true king, the Lord, who was exalted in verse one.

ROYAL / MESSIANIC PSALM #3

PSALM 101

This Psalm beautifully illustrates David's resolve to stay on the correct spiritual track as king of God's people. His resolve here transcends that which should be for a king only. All spiritual people should look to this great Psalm and learn from it.

We will approach this Psalm in a slightly different way. Instead of studying verse by verse, we will outline David's points one by one, going in the same order that he gives

them. This will enable us to capture the entire spirit and determination that David manifests to keep himself pure.

Perhaps the most appropriate title of David's points would be this. **How does David resolve to keep himself pure?**

I. By actively engaging in spiritual activities (v. 1).

David wants to **sing** about what the Lord has done for him, specifically about the Lord's **lovingkindness** (His faithfulness to His covenant), and the Lord's **justice** (His rewarding those who do right and punishing those who do evil). The pure person then knows about the Lord's great attributes, and responds to that knowledge by singing **praises** to the only One worthy of his worship.

II. By committing himself to the godly life (v. 2).

David knows that the Lord requires him to **give heed** (literally "behave prudently in") the lifestyle God has prescribed. David is determined to follow God's instruction. One cannot possibly hope to succeed in the Christian life if he/she does not determine to be **blameless** (be one of integrity), as did so many great spiritual people of the Bible (cf. 1 Tim 4:16).

III. By purposely avoiding the sinful - to the extent of not even looking at it (v. 3a).

David knows what is evil. He has educated himself in that which God abhors. Therefore, he has determined that he will not allow himself to be in the same area as that which God deems as **worthless**. There are things in every person's life that have no true, genuine value to his/her spirituality. It is truly of no value or worth spiritually. Therefore, the pure person avoids these things. One does not have to look at everything there is to look at. Sometimes we need to decide that we will not look at something (cf. Job 31:1). There are many books, magazines, TV programs, etc. that are not worthy of the attention of any child of God. If we hope to be spiritual, we will indeed decide to stay away from every appearance of evil.

IV. By developing a genuine hatred for evil things (v. 3:b).

It is the challenge of every child of God to love only what God loves, and to hate everything that God hates (cf. Rom 12:9). Specifically here David resolves to have nothing to do with the values and lifestyles of those who

have abandoned their faith in God. He simply states that they will not have an influence on his life, or **fasten** themselves to him and his thinking.

V. By developing a genuine hatred for evil people (v. 4).

As king, David had to choose his companions carefully. There were many wicked men who wished to enrich themselves at the expense of the king and the people. These were those who were not spiritual men, but evil men. David was not naive enough to think that his kingdom was free from such.

Equally, God's people today are not unaware that this is the devil's world. It is filled with wicked people (cf. Jer 9:4-6). It is imperative that God's child remove himself from the presence of wicked people (1 Cor 15:33; 2 Cor 6:14-18). While one might operate on the principle to "hate the sin, love the sinner," it is clear that God gets to the point where He does, in fact, hate the sinner (cf. Hos 9:15; Isa 1:14; Zech 8:17; Jer 12:8). The second part of verse 4 also indicates an important spiritual principle - to **know no evil**. The child of God purposely remains ignorant about the ways of the world (cf. Eph 5:12; Josh 23:7).

VI. By defending the ways of righteousness (v. 5).

It has always been God's plan for His people to "fight the good fight of faith" (cf. 1 Tim 6:12; 2 Tim 4:7). We are all soldiers in the Lord's army. David will do more than close his eyes to the evil. He will oppose it (cf. Eph 5:11).

VII. By spending time with spiritual people (v. 6).

David knew the value of being with God-fearing people. He wanted to be with others who had resolved to be **faithful**. Those who **minister** to David (i.e. be his closest companions/advisors) are to be **blameless** people (that is, people of integrity and genuine spirituality).

Christian people desire to be with other Christian people. They know that those Christian people will encourage them to do what is right (Heb 3:13; 10:23-25).

VIII. By resolving to protect himself and his family from evil men (v. 7).

David is not even willing to have wicked people **dwell** within his own house! This would include not allowing his family to marry evil people, and not allowing those who turn evil to continue to dwell with him. This seems

to follow the same lines of the division loyalty to Jesus causes, even within one's family (cf. Mt 10:34-37).

IX. By making daily commitments to the Lord (v. 8).

As king, David would need to remind himself of his obligations to God. David knew that God could easily remove him from this position of authority. Also, David knew that God would establish his kingdom if that kingdom was established on righteousness.

So also, with all of God's people, they must **daily** renew their commitment to God. Since Satan does not take a day off, then neither should the child of God. We must daily put on the full armor of God. If we do not, then rest assured Satan will be ready to attack! One will also notice the subject of David's daily resolve: to eliminate the wicked. David again (see verse 5) determines that he will personally fight the good fight of faith. He is willing to engage the enemy for His God. Are we?

ROYAL / MESSIANIC PSALM #4

PSALM 110

There is tremendous significance found in the title "A Psalm of David" for Psalm 110. It is in this designation that we are able to see the surpassing greatness of this Psalm. It has been noted that this is an "enthronement Psalm." Yet it is not the enthronement of David that is being discussed. David is noting the enthronement of the one true king, one who is far greater than himself.

Jesus emphasized that this Psalm was written by David (Mk 12:36f) as did Peter on Pentecost (Acts 2:33-35). Both emphasized that David had in view the coming Messiah, but that his view of that Messiah contradicted the common viewpoints of the Jewish people.

This Psalm has provided the foundation of three crucial teachings the apostles taught concerning Christ:

- I. His exaltation,
- II. His ascension and
- III. His royal priesthood.

This Psalm is certainly one of the most quoted in the New Testament. Its true significance is found in the role of being a priest-king, in which Jesus fulfills many Old Testament prophecies (cf. Zech 6:12-13).

110:1 Immediately we notice that David has three individuals in mind here:

- I. The Lord (Yahweh),
- II. David's Lord (the Messiah) and
- III. David himself.

It is important to note that king David has a king who is his **lord**. It is this important truth that Jesus challenged the Jews to figure out, and the apostles to explain.

After the first line we are able to hear what God had to say to David's Lord. **Sit at my right hand** clearly and vividly illustrates the power and authority given to the Son. This power will be more fully explained throughout the Psalm, and will then be given even greater explanation in the New Testament. The following points are identified in the Psalm and explained in the New Testament:

- I. He is greater than David (Acts 2:34), but greater than the angels (Heb 1:13),
- II. God exalted Him, although man rejected him (Acts 5:30f),
- III. Jesus reigns as Savior and Intercessor (Acts 5:31; Rom 8:34),
- IV. Jesus completed His task and was therefore able to sit at God's right hand (Heb 10:11f) and
- V. He will reign until all is surrendered to Him (Heb 10:13; 1 Cor 15:25f).

110:2 This verse demonstrates the unity displayed by God and His installed king. God intends that the **rule** of the king be **strong**. There is no weakness in the monarchy of Christ, and He is not fearful of taking his stand in the middle of His **enemies**.

110:3 The king's army is a volunteer army, one in which subjects willingly dedicate themselves to the will of their king (cf. Rom 12:1,2; Phil 2:17). This commitment is pleasing and refreshing to the King.

It is admitted that there are a variety of translations (and subsequent meanings) of this verse, but the above seems to fit well with the text and context.

110:4 This verse now includes the second of the direct oracles from the mouth of God. There is nothing more significant (or powerful) than a word from God Himself especially when that word is coupled with an oath (cf. Heb 6:17f; 7:20ff). This oath is so sure because God **will not change His mind**.

The unchangeable oath is that God's king will also be a **priest forever** after the order of Melchizedek. Melchizedek, whose name means "king of righteousness," is discussed in a number of Biblical texts (cf. Gen 14:18-20; Heb 5:5-10; 6:19-7:28). The text in Genesis notes two important features of Melchizedek that will be fully realized in Christ:

- I. He was a "priest of God Most High," and
- II. He was the "king of Salem" (thought to be Jerusalem, but the key is found in the word "salem" which means "peace" - cf. Heb 7:2).

Thus the significance is found in the fact that Jesus, like Melchizedek, united two very important offices: priest and king. Those who claim that Jesus has not yet assumed His position as king (or who recently assumed it) completely miss the significance of this doctrine. Jesus did not occupy the office of priest for several centuries before he assumed the office of king. The point is, that like Melchizedek, He will occupy both at the same time. The book of Hebrews makes it abundantly clear that Jesus is now (and has been since his ascension) serving as our High Priest. Equally, as He claimed "all authority" (Mt 28:18), he has been serving as our king over His kingdom the church (Mt 16:16-18; Col 1:13; Rev 1:5ff). The importance of this verse is seen in its frequent usage by the Hebrew writer.

110:5 Just being announced as a priest-king does not mean He will be without conflict. Indeed the enemies of righteousness will rise up to oppose the Lord's appointee. Yet that opposition will be futile, because He has the Lord at His **right hand**, a common reference to power as well as protection (cf. 16:8; 109:31).

Beginning with the second line of verse five, we note six actions of the successful priest-king. Each action is seen in the phrase "He will....:"

- I. He will shatter kings in the day of His wrath.

Indicates that He will meet in battle powerful **kings** but will utterly destroy them (**shatter**). He meets these kings in battle because He is filled with **wrath**, no doubt because they have pursued a course of wickedness.

110:6 II. He will judge among the nations.

Jesus is one who, as king, will judge the wicked (cf. Jn 12:48; 2 Cor 5:10).

III. He will fill them with corpses.

The nations will have ample evidence of the king's superiority over them. Their land will be filled with the slain of those who foolishly chose to oppose God's king.

IV. He will shatter the chief men.

Even the most powerful, the **chief men**, will pose no serious threat to His kingdom. He again will easily defeat them.

110:7 V. He will drink from the brook.

This last verse indicates the two benefits derived from a successful military campaign.

He will be able to refresh himself, drinking the cool water from the brook.

VI. He will lift up His head.

Because God has given Him victory, He will be able to enter the city with confidence and boldness, with head lifted high, since He is the victorious king.

The thought here goes along beautifully with the theme of the Revelation, where there will be victory for those who follow the Lamb of God. And, as Paul noted, we "overwhelmingly conquer" with Christ (Rom 8:31-39).

What lessons can be learned from this great Psalm? Certainly that we would be wise to follow God's priest-king. We are either with Him as He secures victory, or we are counted among His enemies whom He will **shatter**. The choice is ours.

IMPRECATORY PSALMS

INTRODUCTION:

- I. The most noted imprecatory Psalms are: 18, 35, 69, 109, 137, although there are no Psalms that are entirely imprecatory.
- II. Imprecatory Psalms are those that involve appealing to God for a judgment, curse or destruction of the Psalmist's adversaries (e.g. Psa 69:22-28; 109:6-19).
- III. Some scholars have considered this element of the Psalms to be the most difficult to explain out of all the Bible. It is difficult, they argue, to justify prayers that call for the destruction of others (cf. Mt 5:44 - "love your enemies").

UNSATISFACTORY SOLUTIONS:

I. THEY ARE UNINSPIRED, VINDICTIVE EXPRESSIONS OF SINFUL MEN.

This approach is not acceptable in view of the following:

- A. It ignores the teaching of 2 Sam 23:2 which notes that David was inspired by the Holy Spirit, and
- B. It ignores that Jesus quoted these Psalms, confirming their inspiration:
 1. Psa 137:9 = Lk 19:44.
 2. Psa 69:4 = Jn 15:25.
- C. It ignores the use of these Psalms by inspired New Testament writers.
 1. Psa 69:9 = Jn 2:17.
 2. Psa 69 & 109 = Acts 1:20 (attributed to Holy Spirit).
- D. It ignores the often charitable attitude displayed by David (to Saul - 1 Sam 24:1-15; 26:1-25; to Abishai - 2 Sam 16:10,11; to Saul descendants - 2 Sam 9:3; to Shimei - 2 Sam 19:16ff).

II. THEY INDICATE AN INFERIOR ETHICAL STANDARD.

This approach is not acceptable in view of the following:

- A. The Old Testament forbade personal vengeance (Deut 32:25; Prov 25:21,22 - also quoted by Paul in Rom 12:19ff).

- B. The Old Testament did not allow one to bear a grudge (Lev 19:18).
- C. The Old Testament taught to deal kindly with others (Ex 23:4,5; Job 31:29-30).
- D. The New Testament also includes imprecations (Rev 6:10; Gal 5:12; 2 Tim 4:14).

III. THEY ARE MERELY PREDICTING WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO WICKED MEN.

While it is true that “whatsoever a man sows, that he shall also reap,” this approach is not acceptable in view of the following:

- A. The actual wording of the Psalms usually do not indicate a future event.
- B. The imprecations are prayers to God (and it would not make sense to be predicting things to God).
- C. There are also imperatives involved in the imprecations. Would one be commanding God to do these things? (Cf. Psa 109:6).

IV. THEY ARE REFLECTING THE DESIRE THAT GOD BE JUST AND CONDEMN THE WICKED AS HE HAS PROMISED.

While it is true the souls under the altar cried for justice (Rev 6:10), it is difficult to explain the Psalmist’s desire for the destruction of children (Psa 109:12; 137:9).

There are also some additional factors that one must take into account when studying the imprecatory Psalms:

- A. The Psalms employ poetic language, which often includes exaggeration and overstatement (cf. 3:7; 57:4; 58:6,10).
- B. The Psalmists were spiritual men who desired that God’s name be glorified (139:19,20). They saw wickedness as an affront to the reputation of God.
- C. The Psalmists were spiritual men who truly were appalled by the wickedness of their contemporaries (139:23-24).

One commentator appropriately noted:

“Perhaps we would not find these prayers so strange if we took right and wrong more seriously. The self-centered person who faces God and yet

deliberately turns away...can only come into judgment.” (Page H. Kelley, “Prayers of Troubled Saints,” Review and Expositor 81:377-83).

PURPOSES OF THE IMPRECATORY PSALMS

- I. They demonstrate how the righteous truly desired vindication for their own life-choice.

Paul also desired that his choice to believe in the resurrected Christ be vindicated (cf. 1 Cor 15).
- II. They demonstrate how the righteous hoped that a temporal punishment would evoke genuine repentance (Psa 83:16; cf. Rev 9:20-21).
- III. They demonstrate how the righteous are continually concerned about the sovereignty of God (83:18; cf. Mt 6:10; 1 Cor 16:22).

IMPRECATORY PSALM #1

PSALM 35

This Psalm can be outlined as follows:

- I. Threats to David’s life and possessions (vss. 1-10).
- II. The opposition (vss. 11-18).
- III. The false accusations (vss. 19-28).

Each section has a:

- I. Lament,
- II. Petition and
- III. Final Vow.

35:1 David views God as a great warrior who will arise to **contend** against the enemy on his behalf. God has always promised to take care of His children - especially the oppressed. God has long predicted opposition to those who try to be faithful (cf. 2 Tim 3:12).

- 35:2** The **buckler** (cf. Psa 3:3) was a well-known part of the ancient armor, specifically designed to combat such weapons as the sword, spear and arrow. This shield was usually made of tough and thick animal skins, or perhaps even wood, and were fastened to the left arm for quick movement (cf. 1 Kgs. 10:17). The **shield** was a larger shield designed to protect the whole body (cf. 1 Kgs. 10:16).
- 35:3** David appeals to God to take serious action - using serious weapons against those who oppose him.
- 35:4** This verse more specifically illustrates the nature of an imprecation. David is not here indicating a personal vindictiveness. He is being persecuted because of his righteousness, and wishes for God to intervene on his behalf because of this fact.
- 35:5,6** David here reflects what God had already said in Psa 1:4. Notice how David wishes for the punishment to come from **the angel of the Lord**, indicating that he does not think it his place to personally attack his persecutors.
- 35:7** This verse clearly identifies David's desire for God's involvement, they are persecuting him without cause. When this happens to us, we follow in the steps of Christ (1 Pet 2:19ff).
- 35:8** God has continually assured His children that He will repay (cf. Rom 12:19-20; Heb 10:30). He has also said that in the final judgment there will be a **sudden** destruction (1 Thess 5:3). David would much rather the enemy turn into a friend. He does not desire the ultimate destruction of others. Yet if they choose to persist in their wickedness, then David's will blends with that of the Lord. They will receive the payment for their life choice (cf. Rom 6:23).
- 35:9** David is not going to yield. He is going to remain steadfast in the Lord and in **His Salvation**.
- 35:10** This explains why David is pleading with God so passionately. His enemy is stronger than he - yet God is stronger than the enemy (cf. Ex 15:11).

Lessons from Section One (vss. 1-10):

- I. God's faithful do suffer (cf. 2 Tim 3:12).
- II. God's faithful call upon God for justice rather than assume to enact justice themselves.
- III. Discouragement is a continual foe of spiritual people.

- 35:11** David's innocence is seen in that he is completely unaware of what he is being accused of. He knows nothing of the charges. Equally, David knows that the witnesses are **malicious**, wanting to destroy David without just cause (cf. Psa 27:12).
- 35:12** David has tried to do what is right - but it has not worked (cf. Jn 10:32; Rom 12:17,21).
- 35:13** On the other hand, David has not repaid evil for evil. He did not rejoice at their misfortune, but genuinely mourned with **sackcloth** and with **fasting**. When he prays on their behalf, he does not then forget about their misfortune. His concern for them returns again and again - thus making him incapable of thinking about anything else. This is demonstrating a true and heartfelt concern for others, even one's enemies (cf. Mt 5:44). One should keep these verses in mind when they charge the authors of the imprecatory Psalms with insensitivity and cruelty.
- 35:14** David cared for their sickness as much as he did for his own mother's death. His prayers and concerns for these were as intense and genuine as those for his closest companions.
- 35:15** David prayed for them when they were down and out. Now that the tables are reversed, do they do the same for David? Not at all. Instead of sorrow, they **rejoice**.
- 35:16** The Hebrew in this verse is very difficult to understand, probably because it contains an ancient expression unknown to modern translators. The Hebrew of the first line reads literally, "Like mockers of a cake" and thus, at face value, means little to the modern mind. Yet the overall meaning is clear. These enemies of David are debased and insensitive. Just how much they hated David is seen in the last line with the **gnashing** of teeth (cf. Stephen, Acts 7:54).
- 35:17** Sometimes (many times?) we have to exercise patience when God seems to be slow to act (cf. 2 Pet 3:9).
- 35:18** David's personal struggles do not distract him from his public worship, nor his public proclaiming of his God. For more on the Thank Offering see Leviticus 3.

Lessons from Section Two (vss. 11-18):

- I. The truly spiritual always keep things in proper perspective and pray for others' souls.
- II. One should not anticipate justice in this life, but should maintain confidence that God will make it right (vss. 17-18).

35:19 David wishes that God would intervene and stop the **malicious** behavior of his **enemies**. This verse was fulfilled by those who hated Christ in Jn 15:25.

35:20 There will always be those who have no integrity and fight against others unjustly. They do not wish for **peace** (well-being and prosperity). Instead they disrupt that peace by using the power of **words** against the **quiet** (those who are minding their own business, just trying to get along).

35:21 The enemies have either seen his supposed wrong or they are just gloating over his problems.

35:22 The enemies may have not **seen** anything, but God has **seen** it all. Therefore, David cries for Him to act. The truly spiritual are always aware of God's presence - and they welcome it. David does not want God to be **far** from him.

35:23 As a child would call upon his father to come to his aid, David calls upon his God to defend him. This verse begins a lengthy series of requests - many of which fall into the "imprecatory" category discussed above. Our **cause**, like David's, will be taken care of in due time (cf. 1 Pet 5:6).

35:24 The crucial appeal of David is seen here. He does not expect God to act because David is worthy. His appeal is based in the promise of God, His **righteousness**, to aid His children. Truly God blesses those who put their trust in Him. He does not expect perfection from them in order for Him to act on their behalf.

35:25 David wants God to close their mouths from claiming the victory over him and gloating over him. He does not want them to sing the song of victory.

35:26 David requests that God make them:

- I. Ashamed,
- II. Humiliated,
- III. Clothed with shame and

IV. Dishonored.

Clearly all of these reveal what David feels would be just and appropriate punishments for these individuals. He wants their pride removed (in order for them to humbly come to God?).

35:27 David's friends, other righteous people, have not had much to cheer about lately. David knows, however, that if God would punish the enemies his friends would **shout for joy**. Such **vindication** would be clearly seen if the enemies receive the prescribed punishments of verse 26. When those punishments are meted out, then the righteous friends will glorify God, because God does care and desire good for His servants.

35:28 David will join with his friends in their praise of God and His **righteousness**. It will not be a simple, short song of praise. It will last **all day long**. This verse seems to indicate that David has full confidence the deliverance will come.

Lessons from section three (vss. 19-28):

- I. The child of God must wait for the Lord to act (Rom 12:19-21).
- II. The child of God must believe that God desires the ultimate success of His children.
- III. The child of God will remain steadfast in his/her faith and continue to praise and worship God.

IMPRECATORY PSALM #2

PSALM 69

69:1 David clearly admits that he is in serious trouble. Yet his response to the trouble is noteworthy. He turns to God to **save** him. We know that God loves His children, so why allow suffering? (see 1 Pet 1:6-7).

69:2 David is trying to find the best way to express his trouble, perhaps to convince God of the desperateness of the situation. By looking at the last line one might wonder if David looked for alternatives before turning to God.

69:3 Sometimes God will test the limits of our endurance - but never beyond what we can handle (1 Cor 10:13).

69:4 David again notes that the opposition to him is unfounded (cf. 35:19). And not only that, but the opposition is numerous, even more than the **hairs** on his head. David also compared his sins to the number of hairs on his head (cf. 40:12). Apparently David's was not a bald head!

He also notes the **power** of the opposition. Indeed they must be powerful to do such damage to a king like David. Yet the situation has grown so bad David is paying the price for what he did not do (or **steal**).

69:5 Whenever David was in trouble he invariably thought of his sinfulness. Was he afraid that God was punishing him for his sins? Perhaps, but David does not try to hide from, justify or excuse his sins. He freely and openly admits that he has sinned. And he is willing to face God's judgment. But he will not yield for a moment to the judgments of the enemies. Note the parallelism between **folly** and **wrongs**. There is no attempt to minimize his sins. They were stupid, foolish acts.

69:6 David is concerned about his example. When he sinned with Bathsheba, Nathan the prophet reminded him of his bad example (2 Sam 12:14). While concerned about his own plight, David was even more concerned how his suffering might discourage the faithful, or even bring suffering upon them.

69:7 **Dishonor** (cf. 38:11) has covered the **face** of David. He does not look like a beloved child of God. Yet David knew that there was special honor for the one who suffers solely because of his faith (Mt 5:10-11).

69:8 What is the price David has paid for his faithfulness? In addition to the **dishonor** mentioned in verse 7, he now notes being **estranged** from his family. One's suffering is compounded when his own family abandons him. This virtually leaves him without a support group.

69:9 While this verse was obviously popular to New Testament writers, it is important to first consider it in the context of David's life. David has a **consuming** concern for God's **house** (which could refer to God's family, but more likely refers to the temple which was yet to be built). David is also suffering because people hate God - that is why the **reproaches** of others have been directed to him. Since people cannot directly get to God, they find a perverted comfort in making His followers suffer. There is value, however, in God's eyes when His people suffer for His name (cf. Acts 5:41).

As mentioned, both parts of this verse are referred to in the New Testament. John uses the first half to refer to Jesus' zeal for the temple (Jn 2:17), and Paul uses the second half to refer to the selfless love of Christ and His commitment to the will of God (Rom 15:3).

- 69:10** David tried some drastic measures to secure God's favor, such as **weeping** and **fasting**.
- 69:11** Nothing David tries restores him to God or draws compassion from men. He is truly frustrated by his inability to find help and support.
- 69:12** From the top (those who sit in the **gate**) to the bottom (the **drunkards**), everyone in the society makes fun of David. The elite of the society as well as the dregs of society.
- 69:13** David has not limited his prayers to God just when it suited him. He is a praying man. Yet he now hopes that his request comes at an **acceptable time**, meaning that it will please God to answer him now. A good lesson is found here. We must pray to God when He will hear us - not at a time when we have continually rebelled or on judgment day (cf. Psa 32:6). David asks God to **answer** him, a request which he will repeat two more times (vss. 16 and 17).
- 69:14** David repeats the metaphors he mentioned earlier - the **mire** and the **deep waters** (cf. vss. 1 and 2). He again is attempting to alert God to the serious trouble he is in.
- 69:15** David is fearful that this might be the end, and he does not want it to end with the enemies thinking they had won.
- 69:16** David does not consider himself worthy of God's care. His appeal is based completely on God's character.
- 69:17** As God's **servant**, he needs his master to notice his plight and come help him, and help him **quickly**.
- 69:18** The word **redeem** is an important word in the Hebrew Old Testament. It has to do with one's next of kin who comes to defend his troubled relative (cf. in death - Num 35:19; buying land or liberty - Lev 25:25,48f; Ruth 3:1ff). David has known God to **redeem** him in the past (cf. 2 Sam 4:9), now he needs God to do it again.
- 69:19** Although he has attempted to alert God to his plight in earlier verses, David here attests that God knows his:
- I. Reproach,
 - II. Shame and
 - III. Dishonor.

All David's **adversaries** are clearly seen by God. So, will He please now deal with them?

69:20 David truly feels alone and his troubles have apparently affected him physically. David's **broken heart** indicates that he is very discouraged.

69:21 While David looked for some love and compassion, he found only those who wanted to contribute to his grief. What David experienced symbolically, Jesus experienced literally (cf. Mt 27:34,48; Mk 15:23; Lk 23:36; Jn 19:28-30).

In view of verses 1-21, David now begins his imprecation.

69:22 His enemies are comfortable now, but David wishes God would suddenly attack them in their prosperity.

69:23 David also wishes God would make them old before their time.

69:24 When he wishes for God to **pour out** His **indignation**, he is asking for the maximum amount be dispensed to the enemies. He does not want God to hold back at all. David knows enough of God's word to know how God feels about these sinners, so why not go ahead and punish them now?

69:25 He wishes that they would have no children, no possessions, no army - nothing. This passage is quoted in Acts 1:20 and applied to Judas.

69:26 Why does David desire their downfall? Because they have tried to take the place of God. In addition, they are happy when people suffer.

69:27 The way they have treated David adds one more sin to their already full accounts.

69:28 David here does not express a hope of repentance in the heart of the wicked. He is convinced that they are beyond help. Therefore, he wishes for the punishment that God Himself has already declared - removal from the **book of life** (Ex 32:33; Phil 4:3; Rev 3:5; 13:8; 20:15). David knows that God has a record of all the righteous. He also knows the wicked have lost their names being recorded in that precious book.

69:29 This verse serves as a link from the imprecation to the last section of praise. David is the one being **afflicted**, instead of the unrighteous. But he still is strong in faith that God's **salvation** will come and rescue him, setting him in a secure spot (**on high**).

69:30 If David is restored, what will he do? Worship God! What do the wicked do in their prosperity? They continue to worship self.

69:31 God is always more pleased with those who offer true, heartfelt worship, in contrast to those who simply go through the motions (cf. Mt 15:8,9).

69:32 Discouragement has destroyed many people's zeal, but it is up to us to press on and not become discouraged (1 Cor 15:58; Gal 6:9).

69:33 Why should we not become discouraged? Because God knows what we are going through, and He hears our cries. He will not abandon His children.

David now concludes with a word of praise and hope for better days to come.

69:34 If the creation praises God - then should not man join also?

69:35 The reason for the praise - God's blessings. Some see in the reference to **Judah** an obvious proof that this Psalm is postexilic. However, it is not completely unreasonable that David would wish for the building up of the cities surrounding his kingdom in **Zion**. Note also how this verse moves from the personal concerns of David to those of a national level.

69:36 Blessings will be given to all the faithful and their children. Notice that the blessings belong only to those who:

I. Serve God and

II. Love His name.

It is fitting to note that David, even in the midst of one of his most desperate prayers, was able to close with a word of praise.

IMPRECATORY PSALM #3

PSALM 109

This Psalm, like Psalm 69, is the strongest of the imprecatory Psalms. David leaves nothing here to the imagination. He clearly and openly wishes for the punishment of the unrighteous. We need to remember that David understood the forgiving nature of God - but only to the penitent. David sees no effort of these wicked people to repent. Their lives have taken a clear and consistent turn to evil. We need to remember that the Old Testament did not allow taking personal vengeance on one's enemies (Lev 19:18; Deut 32:35; Prov 25:21-22; cf. Rom 12:19-21).

This Psalm will not be studied verse by verse, but a general overview will be considered.

109:1-5 Detail David's complain to God. The wicked have:

- I. Spoken against him (v. 2),
- II. Lied (v. 2),
- III. Hated (v. 3a),
- IV. Fought against him unjustly (v. 3b) and
- V. Repaid evil for good (v. 4-5).

On the basis of those sins, David now wishes for God to act in punishment and judgment. We need to remember that this section is credited to the Holy Spirit in Acts 1:16. We also need to notice the similarity here to Jer 18:19-23.

109:6-20 Detail David's imprecation. He wishes that they would have:

- I. Wicked rulers and judges (v. 6a),
- II. False accusers (v. 6b),
- III. Been found guilty (v. 7a),
- IV. Sinful prayers (v. 7b; cf. Psa 50:16; Prov 28:9),
- V. A short life (v. 8a),
- VI. A supplanter (v. 8b).

Verses 9-15 detail what David wishes to happen to the man's children and **wife**. This section makes the imprecation all the more difficult to understand. Yet we still must understand that God's judgment does occasionally include one's family (cf. Jud 9:57), and the Old Testament does mention how the father's sins can adversely effect the other members of his family (Ex 20:5; 1 Sam 2:31ff; Lk 19:41ff).

- VII. An orphaned family and widowed wife (v. 9),
- VIII. Children forced to beg (v. 10),
- IX. Lost all possessions (v. 11),

- X. No friends or defenders (v. 12),
- XI. Suffered the disgrace of no posterity (v. 13),
- XII. No blessing of forgiveness (v. 14) and
- XIII. Not overlooked by the angry God (v. 15).

109:16-18 Again David repeats why he is wishing for this punishment. These wicked individuals showed no mercy, persecuted the innocent mercilessly, killed the weak, cursed others, and failed to be a blessing to anyone else. Instead they **clothed** themselves with all kinds of evil characteristics.

109:19,20 Therefore David returns to his imprecation, wishing that they receive what they have given to others.

109:21-29 A major change in direction. David now enters into a prayer for deliverance. He gives God three reasons to deliver him:

- I. It would help God's reputation (v. 21),
- II. He is too weak to help himself (vss. 22-24) and
- III. God does not want His child to endure public disgrace (v. 25).

109:30-31 These verses end this Psalm with a promise to **give thanks** to God for being one who comes to the aid of His children.

BENEFITS OF GOD'S WORD

* * * *

A Study of Psalm 119

1. Keeps way pure (9,101).
2. Keeps one from sin (11,101).
3. Encourages (14,16,25,28,35,70,77,92,93,149).
4. Produces reverence (38).
5. Gives hope (43,49-50,74,81,114,147).
6. Promotes gratitude (62).
7. Gives wisdom (98,100,104).
8. Gives direction (24,105,130,155).
9. Gives life (25,37,40,88,107,149,159).

**"I shall delight in Thy statutes;
I shall not forget Thy word."**

(16)

* * * *

**"The law of Thy mouth is better to me
than thousands of gold and silver pieces."**

(72)

* * * *

**"Thy word is a lamp to my feet,
and a light to my path."**

(105)

THE BLESSED

**WHO ARE “THE BLESSED” (צשס - TWENTY-SIX TIMES)
IN THE PSALMS?**

- 1. THOSE WHO CAREFULLY CHOOSE THEIR ASSOCIATES (1:1).**
- 2. THOSE WHO TAKE REFUGE IN THE LORD (2:12; 34:8; 40:4; 85:5,12).**
- 3. THE FORGIVEN (32:1,2).**
- 4. THE NATION WHOSE GOD IS THE LORD (33:12; 144:15).**
- 5. THOSE WHO ARE CONSIDERATE OF THE POOR / OPPRESSED (41:1).**
- 6. THE ONE WHO, BECAUSE OF FORGIVENESS, CAN OFFER ACCEPTABLE WORSHIP (65:4; 84:4).**
- 7. THOSE WHO KNOW AND HAVE EXPERIENCED THE VICTORY OF BEING THE LORD’S (89:15; 146:5).**
- 8. THOSE WHO ARE DISCIPLINED BY THE LORD (94:12 Cf. HEB 12:5,6).**
- 9. THE JUST AND THE RIGHTEOUS (106:3).**
- 10. THE ONE WHO FEARS THE LORD (112:1; 128:1-5).**
- 11. THE ONE WHO WALKS BLAMELESSLY - WITH INTEGRITY (119:1,2).**
- 12. THOSE WHO HAVE CHILDREN (127:3-5).**
- 13. THOSE WHO ARE WEAPONS AGAINST EVIL (137:8,9).**

DIDACTIC PSALMS

- I. THEY ARE GENERALLY DIRECTED TOWARD MAN (RATHER THAN TO GOD) FOR PURPOSES OF EDIFICATION.**
- II. TOPICS TREATED IN DIDACTIC PSALMS:**
 - A. KNOWLEDGE (19, 119) AND FEAR (112, 128) OF THE LORD COUPLED WITH OBEDIENCE**
 - B. CONTRAST BETWEEN RIGHTEOUS AND WICKED (1, 14, 36).**
 - C. TRUST IN GOD (49, 91).**
 - D. JUSTICE IN SOCIETY (52, 82).**
 - E. BROTHERHOOD AMONG MEN (127, 133).**

**THESE PSALMS OF WISDOM PROVIDE BOTH
PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL INSTRUCTION.**

**THEY SERVE TO AID THE STUDENT IN
UNDERSTANDING A NUMBER OF TROUBLING
EVENTS (PROSPERITY OF THE WICKED, THE
SUFFERING OF THE RIGHTEOUS) AND IN
OBTAINING A BETTER GRASP OF GOD AND HIS
WORKS (WITH MAN, NATURE, NATIONS, KINGS
AND HISTORY).**

**THE INDIVIDUAL
LAMENT**

* * * *

A STUDY IN THE PSALMS

**THIS PARTICULAR STYLE IS FELT TO BE THE
MOST COMMON IN THE PSALMS**

* * * *

**THE INDIVIDUAL LAMENT HAS THE
FOLLOWING ELEMENTS OR FORM:**

1. An initial calling upon the Lord;
2. A complaint, specifying the occasion giving rise to the lament;
3. A prayer requesting the Lord to hear and respond with respect to the source of the lament;
4. The expression of wishes or desires concerning the fate of friends or enemies;
5. The grounds upon which the appeal to God is based; and
6. A concluding expression of confidence that the appeal will be heard and responded to by God.

Examples: Psalms 13, 17, 51, 73.

MESSIANIC PSALMS

THE PSALMS AND ISAIAH ARE THE
MOST QUOTED OLD TESTAMENT BOOKS.
THE MOST QUOTED PSALMS ARE:
2, 8, 16, 22, 34, 69, 110, 118.

THE FOLLOWING ARE THE MAJOR POINTS OF EMPHASIS CONCERNING THE
COMING MESSIAH:

- I. IS THE ANOINTED KING.
 - A. IS APPOINTED BY GOD HIMSELF AND REIGNS IN BEHALF OF GOD WHOSE THRONE IS IN THE HEAVENS (2:4).
 - B. HAS A HOLY STATUS AND HAS BEEN EMPOWERED FOR HIS TASK (89:20ff).
 - C. IS OVER ALL (8:6).
 - D. IS ZEALOUS TO DO GOD'S WILL AND PAYS THE PRICE FOR THAT ZEAL (69:9).
 - E. WILL BE A PRIEST/KING (110:1-4).
 - F. WILL BE REJECTED BY MEN (118:22).
- II. IS THE "SON" OF GOD (2:7).
- III. IS GOD HIMSELF (45:6 = HEB 1:8).
- IV. IS THE LORD (102:25ff).
- V. IS THE SERVANT OF THE LORD (69).
- VI. IS THE VICTOR (68:17, 18 = EPH 4:8).

**FOR DAVID SAYS OF HIM
(ACTS 2:25-28 = PSA 16:8-11)
FOR IT WAS NOT DAVID WHO ASCENDED INTO
HEAVEN, BUT HE HIMSELF SAYS
(ACTS 2:34, 35 = PSA 110:1).**

CORRECT SPIRITUAL POSTURE

*** * * ***

PSALM 25

**MAINTAINING A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD
IS A TASK WHICH INVOLVES SPIRITUAL
COMMITMENT AND CONSTANT
ATTITUDE ADJUSTMENT.**

SPIRITUAL ADJUSTMENT BEGINS WITH AN ATTITUDE OF TRUST (1, 15, 21).

- I. DAVID UNDERSTOOD THAT GOD WAS THE ANSWER FOR HIS LIFE.**
- II. DAVID HAD THE FUNDAMENTAL FAITH THAT IF HE KEPT EVERYTHING RIGHT WITH GOD, EVERYTHING ELSE WOULD TAKE CARE OF ITSELF.**

SPIRITUAL ADJUSTMENT INVOLVES CONFESSION (7, 11, 18).

- I. DAVID WAS OPEN AND HONEST WITH GOD ABOUT HIS SINS AND HIS DESPERATE NEED FOR GOD'S MERCY.**
- II. HE DID NOT MINIMIZE HIS SIN.**

SPIRITUAL ADJUSTMENT INVOLVES BEING GUIDED BY GOD (4, 5, 8-10).

- I. DAVID KNEW HIS LIFE NEEDED GOD'S DIRECTION.**
- II. HE WAS OPEN TO LEARN THE WILL OF GOD AND TO CHANGE WHATSOEVER WAS NECESSARY TO WALK IN GOD'S WAYS.**

SPIRITUAL ADJUSTMENT INVOLVES OVERCOMING CURRENT PROBLEMS (2, 3, 16-22).

- I. DAVID STRUGGLED WITH HIS ENEMIES.**
- II. HE ASKED GOD'S SPECIFIC HELP IN SPECIFIC SITUATIONS, TRUSTING GOD WOULD SUSTAIN HIM THROUGH HIS STRUGGLES.**

PSALMS OF PRAISE

THE PEOPLE OF ANCIENT ISRAEL
FOUND MANY REASONS TO PRAISE GOD.
THEIR PRAISE PSALMS USUALLY HAD
THE FOLLOWING FEATURES:

- I. AN INTRODUCTION - WHICH INVITED PEOPLE TO COME AND PRAISE THE WORTHY GOD. THE INVITATION MIGHT BE OFFERED TO:
 - A. THE CONGREGATION IN THE SANCTUARY,
 - B. TO CHOIRS or
 - C. TO SOME PERSON OR GROUP.

- II. A MAIN SECTION - GIVING THE GROUNDS FOR PRAISE:
 - A. GOD'S GREAT ATTRIBUTES,
 - B. HIS HOLY WORD,
 - C. HIS VIRTUES (SUCH AS HIS LOVINGKINDNESS AND COMPASSION)
or
 - D. HIS MIGHTY ACTS (SUCH AS HIS SALVATION ON BEHALF OF ISRAEL OR HIS GREAT WORK IN CREATION).

- III. A CONCLUSION - WHICH REPEATS WHY THIS PSALM OF PRAISE WAS A WORTHY AND LOGICAL THING TO DO.

HYMNS CELEBRATING GOD AS CREATOR (8, 19, 29, 104).

HYMNS OF SACRED HISTORY (78, 81, 105, 106, 111, 114, 135, 136).

HYMNS OF THE KINGDOM (24, 47, 68, 75, 93, 95-100).

HYMNS OF ZION (46, 48, 76, 84, 87, 122, 137).

MIXED HYMNS (33, 103, 115, 133, 145-150).

PSALM 119

The “delight” in the law of the Lord (Psalm 1) is fully illustrated in this beautiful Psalm.

It is an acrostic Psalm, an alphabet of prayers and praise to God for His Holy Word. Each Hebrew letter receives its turn in twenty-two rounds of eight verses each.

WORDS MOST OFTEN USED

1. **LAW** (torah - 25 times) - which means “to teach” or “direct,” and coming from God it means inspired revelation. It can be used of the entire Pentateuch or of just one law.
2. **TESTIMONIES** (edoth - 14 times) - the direct and bold high standards set by God.
3. **PRECEPTS** (piqqudim - twenty-one times) - office or overseer, items that are concerned with every detail.
4. **STATUTES** (huqqim - twenty-one times) - the binding force and permanence of Scripture.
5. **COMMANDMENTS** (misvoth - twenty-two times) - emphasizes the direct authority of what is said. God has the right to give orders.
6. **ORDINANCES** (mispatim - twenty-one times) - judgments and decisions of the all wise Creator.
7. **WORD** (dabar - forty-three times) - general word embracing all of God’s truths.
8. **PROMISE** (imra - nineteen times) - God’s directives that, if followed, have the hope of future blessings.

PSALMS OF THANKSGIVING

**THESE WERE NORMALLY A PART OF
FORMAL WORSHIP. THEY WERE
USUALLY OFFERED BY A PERSON WHO
RECEIVED SOME SPECIFIC BLESSING
FROM GOD AND WHO IS NOW COMING
TO THE SANCTUARY TO OFFER THANKS,
PROBABLY WITH RELATIVES AND FRIENDS.**

**THIS TYPE OF PSALM WOULD USUALLY
HAVE THE FOLLOWING ELEMENTS:**

- I. AN INTRODUCTION - IN WHICH THE PERSON ACKNOWLEDGED
THAT HE / SHE HAS SUFFERED IN THE PAST OR HAS HAD GENERAL
MISFORTUNE.**
- II. A DISCUSSION OF WHY HE IS NOW BEFORE GOD PRAISING HIM -
HE HAS DELIVERED ME.**
- III. A CONCLUDING WORD OF PRAISE - BECAUSE OF HIS CARE AND LOVE
FOR ME I RECOGNIZE THE HAND OF GOD IN MY LIFE.**

EXAMPLES

**INDIVIDUAL (30, 34, 40, 52, 66, 92, 116, 138).
COMMUNAL (65, 67, 107, 118, 124).**

THE THEME OF THE PSALMS

THE PSALMS ARE A SERIES OF DEVOTIONAL SONGS
DESIGNED TO INSTRUCT MAN CONCERNING
THE TWO CHOICES IN LIFE:

1.

To live one's life
pleasing to the Lord.

KEY WORDS

Righteous/ness (120 times)
Hear/Obey (65 times)
Save/Salvation (80 times)
Praise (4 words 158 times)
Mercy (93 times)

2.

To live one's life
pleasing self.

KEY WORDS

Wicked/ness (77 times)
Enemy (70 times)

KEY ELEMENTS

Soul (132 times)
Heart (128 times)
Face (36 times)
Eye (54 times)

Psalm 1 sets the stage for the entire group
of Psalms. It clearly lets all mankind know they
will have to answer to the Lord (732 times).

It ends with the thematic phrase:
For the Lord knows the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked will perish.