

Notes & Outlines

PSALMS

J. Vernon McGee

PSALMS
The Book of Worship
The Hymn Book of the Temple

TITLE:

The title in Hebrew means *Praises* or *Book of Praises*. The title in the Greek suggests the idea of an instrumental accompaniment. Our title comes from the Greek *psalms*.

WRITERS:

Many writers contributed one or more psalms. They are as follows: David, 73; Moses, 1 (90th); Solomon, 2; Sons of Korah, 11; Asaph, 12; Heman, 1 (88th); Ethan, 1 (89th); Hezekiah, 10; “Orphanic,” 39.

David, “the sweet psalmist of Israel” (2 Samuel 23:1), has 73 psalms assigned to him (Psalm 2 is ascribed to him in Acts 4:25; Psalm 95 in Hebrews 4:7). Also, he could be the author of some of the “Orphanic” psalms. He had a special aptitude for and was peculiarly endowed to write these songs from experience. He arranged those in existence in his day for temple use.

THEME:

Christ (the Messiah) is prominent throughout (Luke 24:44). The King and the kingdom are the theme songs of the Psalms.

KEY WORD: Hallelujah

KEY PSALM: Psalm 150. “Hallelujah” occurs 13 times in 6 verses.

FEATURES:

The Psalms record deep devotion, intense feeling, exalted emotion, and dark dejection. The Psalms play with all the stops pulled out upon the keyboard of the human soul.

They run the psychological gamut. This book has been called the epitome and anatomy of the soul and designated as the garden of the Scriptures. The place Psalms have held in the lives of God’s people testifies to their universality, although they have a peculiar Jewish application. They express the deep feelings of all believing hearts in all generations.

The Psalms are full of Christ. There is a more complete picture of Him in Psalms than in the Gospels. The Gospels tell us that He went

to the mountain to pray, but the Psalms give us His prayer. The Gospels tell us that He was crucified, but the Psalms tell us what went on in His own heart during the crucifixion. The Gospels tell us He went back to heaven, but the Psalms begin where the Gospels leave off and show us Christ seated in heaven.

There are many types of psalms. Although all of them have Christ as the object of worship, some are technically called messianic psalms. These record the birth, life, death, resurrection, glory, priesthood, kingship, and return of Christ. The imprecatory psalms have caused the most criticism because of their vindictiveness and prayers for judgment. (Christians are told to love their enemies.) These psalms come from a time of war and from a people who, under law, were looking for justice and peace on the earth. They look to a time coming on the earth when the Antichrist will be in power. We have no reasonable basis to say how people should act and what they should say under those circumstances. Other types of psalms include penitential, historic, nature, pilgrim, Hallel, missionary, puritan, acrostic, and praise of God's Word.

OUTLINE:

(Corresponds to Pentateuch of Moses)

I. Genesis section, Psalms 1 — 41

Man in a state of blessedness, fall, and recovery (Man in View)

Psalm 1: Perfect Man (last Adam)

Psalm 2: Rebellious man

Psalm 3: Perfect Man rejected

Psalm 4: Conflict between Seed of woman and serpent

Psalm 5: Perfect Man in midst of enemies

Psalm 6: Perfect Man in midst of chastisement (bruising heel)

Psalm 7: Perfect Man in midst of false witnesses

Psalm 8: Repair of man comes through Man (bruising head)

Psalms 9 — 15: Enemy and Antichrist conflict; final deliverance

Psalms 16 — 41: Christ in midst of His people, sanctifying them to God

II. Exodus section, Psalms 42 — 72

Ruin and Redemption (Israel in View)

Psalms 42 — 49: Israel's ruin
Psalms 50 — 60: Israel's Redeemer
Psalms 61 — 72: Israel's redemption

III. Leviticus section, Psalms 73 — 89
Darkness and Dawn (Sanctuary in View)

IV. Numbers section, Psalms 90 — 106
Peril and Protection of Pilgrims (Earth in View)

V. Deuteronomy section, Psalms 107 — 150
Perfection and Praise of the Word of God

Psalm 119, an acrostic in the heart of this section, refers to the Word of God in almost every verse. It is the longest chapter in the Bible.

COMMENT:

One of the more noticeable features about the Book of Psalms is the systematic arrangement. This reveals that they were not put together in a haphazard manner; there is definite organization.

The major divisions correspond to the Pentateuch (see outline). This is not an artificial division but follows rather closely the Pentateuch of Moses. In each major division there are lesser divisions of clusters and series of psalms which develop a particular subject.

The Psalms were probably all set to music, both vocal and instrumental. It must have been a thrilling experience to hear several thousand voices singing them to the accompaniment of a great orchestra. Psalm 150, probably the theme of the book, could well be the chorus of every psalm.

I. Genesis section, Psalms 1 — 41
Man in a state of blessedness, fall, and recovery (Man in View)

It has been well stated that the Book of Genesis is the entire Bible in miniature — all great truths of Scripture are germinal in Genesis. The first few psalms cover the entire Book of Psalms in the same way.

Jehovah and Elohim are the two names for God in this section, although Jehovah occurs more often:

Jehovah (Redeemer) — 272 times

Elohim (Creator) — 15 times

Psalm 1: Perfect Man (last Adam)

The Blessed Man is contrasted to the ungodly man. This psalm, which opens the Genesis section, begins with man instead of the material universe. The Blessed Man here is not the first Adam but the last Adam. He is not in an ideal Garden of Eden but is in the midst of the ungodly, sinners, and the scornful.

vv. 1, 2 — Practice of the Blessed Man (v. 1 negative; v. 2 positive)

v. 3 — Power of the Blessed Man (“Rivers of water” is the Word of God.)

vv. 4-6 — Permanency of the Blessed Man (Ungodly will perish; the Lord knows the way of the righteous.)

Two Men — Two Ways — Two Destinies

Psalm 2: Rebellious man

Drama of the ages: man’s rebellion against God. Another has termed it “the decisive declaration concerning the outcome of events and forces at work today.”

The truly messianic character of this psalm is revealed in the fact that it is quoted as such 7 times in the New Testament. Rebellion against God and Christ began at the arrest of Jesus (Acts 4:23-26). It has gained momentum down through the ages and will finally break in a mounting and mighty crescendo.

This second Psalm can be seen like a television program with one camera on earth and another in heaven.

vv. 1-3 — The camera on earth comes on, showing the peoples and rulers raging against God and Christ.

vv. 4-6 — The camera in heaven comes on, revealing that God the Father is unmoved by this ridiculous rebellion of little man. He pursues His plan of putting His King on the throne of this earth.

vv. 7-9 — The camera in heaven shifts to the right hand of the Father. God the Son asserts His authority to carry through the decree because of His resurrection (Acts 13:33). He will come to judge the nations.

vv. 10-12 — The camera on earth comes on. God the Holy Spirit invites men to accept the Savior. “Kiss the Son” is to “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved” (Acts 16:31).

Psalms 3 — 7: Sorrows of God’s remnant

These 5 psalms form a brief series which deals with the sorrows of God’s godly remnant. The reference is directly to the Tribulation (Psalm 3:1).

Psalm 3: Perfect Man rejected

Morning prayer. The trials of the godly in Israel. Since trials are common to all of God’s people, the comfort is for all also.

Psalm 4: Conflict between Seed of woman and serpent

Evening prayer (to be sung to the accompaniment of stringed instruments). This is the plea of the Son of man and those who plead in His name.

Psalm 5: Perfect Man in midst of enemies

Morning prayer (v. 3). This is a cry of the godly in the time of great trouble. They seek a refuge (vv. 7, 8).

Psalm 6: Perfect Man in midst of chastisement (bruising heel)

Darkness, distress, and death. The first penitential psalm. Trials produce a broken spirit. The plea of David is that God will judge him in mercy and not anger.

Psalm 7: Perfect Man in midst of false witnesses

Cry for revenge. Cush, the Benjamite, may be Saul. This is prophetically the cry of the remnant during the Great Tribulation. This concludes the first cluster of 5 psalms.

Psalm 8: Repair of man comes through Man (bruising head)

Messianic psalm. God’s Man (quoted 3 times in the New Testament). It emphasizes the humanity of Christ and His ultimate victory as Man (Hebrews 2:6-8; 1 Corinthians 15:27).

Psalms 9 — 15: Enemy and Antichrist conflict; final deliverance

Most in this series of 7 psalms are written by David.

Psalm 9: Satan’s man (v. 17). The title “Muthlabben” means

“death of the son” and may refer to the death of Goliath (1 Samuel 17:4-51). The Scofield notes suggest it refers to the death of David’s son by Bathsheba (2 Samuel 12:19, 20).

It looks to the time of Jacob’s trouble and God’s deliverance from the “giant,” the man of sin (vv. 8, 9, 13).

Psalm 10: Satan’s man, “man of the earth” (v. 18) is closely identified with the 9th Psalm. “The wicked” are described: “pride” (v. 2), “boasteth” (v. 3), there is no God (v. 4), self-sufficient (v. 6), “cursing” and “mischief” (v. 7), sin with impunity (v. 11), no judgment to come (v. 13).

Psalm 11: Testing of the righteous (v. 5).

Psalm 12: The godly in the midst of the godlessness of the Great Tribulation.

Psalm 13: The desperate plight of David (1 Samuel 26:20) mirrors the plight of God’s people in the Great Tribulation (vv. 1, 3).

Psalm 14: Depravity of man in the last days — atheistic (v. 1), filthy and rebellious (v. 3). He pleads for deliverance (v. 7).

Psalm 15: Those who shall enter the kingdom. The question is asked (v. 1) and answered (vv. 2-5).

Psalms 16 — 41: Christ in midst of His people, sanctifying them to God

Psalm 16: The resurrection of the Messiah (vv. 8-11; cp. Acts 2:25-31 and 13:35-37; also Hebrews 2:13, 14). Life of Christ (v. 8), death of Christ (v. 9), resurrection of Christ (v. 10), ascension of Christ (v. 11).

Psalm 17: Prayer of David when he is being pursued by Saul and his life is in danger. It also pictures the Messiah when He was in danger.

Psalm 18: Praise of David when God delivered him from the hand of Saul. It is repeated in 2 Samuel 22. Notice the picture of the Messiah (v. 35).

Psalm 19: God’s message to man. The cosmos reveals the glory

and power of God (vv. 1-6). The commandments reveal the wisdom and righteousness of God (vv. 7-11). Christ reveals the power and redemption of God (vv. 12-14).

Psalm 20: Plea of Israel for the success of the Messiah. “The king” is the Messiah (v. 9).

Psalm 21: Messianic psalm. The ascension and coming again of Christ. “The king,” who is the subject of the psalm, is the Messiah. Psalms 20 and 21 present the same picture.

Psalm 22	Psalm 23	Psalm 24
<i>The Good Shepherd</i> <i>John 10:11</i>	<i>The Great Shepherd</i> <i>Hebrews 13:20</i>	<i>The Chief Shepherd</i> <i>1 Peter 5:4</i>
Cross Savior Foundation Dying Past Gives His life	Shepherd’s Crook Satisfier Manifestation Living Present Gives His love	Crown Sovereign Expectation Coming Future Gives His light

Psalm 22: X-ray of the cross (see author’s booklet by the same name). Eusebius called it “a prophecy of the passion of Christ.” It gives a new dimension of the cross.

vv. 1-21 — Humiliation → suffering → cross

vv. 22-31 — Exaltation → glory → crown

Psalm 23: Psalm of an old shepherd (see author’s booklet by the same name). One must know the Shepherd of Psalm 22 and have walked with Him in life to know intimately Psalm 23. “My sheep hear my voice” (John 10:27).

vv. 1, 2 — **Revelation** of the sanctuary of the Shepherd’s soul.

vv. 3, 4 — **Record** of the musings of the Shepherd’s mind.

vv. 5, 6 — **Reflection** of the happiness and hope of the Shepherd’s heart.

Psalm 24: The coming of the Chief Shepherd. Tradition says it was composed by David and sung when he brought up the ark from Kirjath-jearim to Mt. Zion (2 Samuel 6:12-23).

vv. 1-6 — Companions of the King who enter the kingdom.

vv. 7-10 — Coming of the King to set up the kingdom.

Psalms 25 — 39: The future of God’s remnant

This series of 15 psalms primarily records David’s personal experience, but they also look to the future when the godly remnant is in trouble. For the comfort of believers today, they contain the balm of Gilead.

Psalm 25: Plea for forgiveness (v. 11).

Psalm 26: Plea on the basis of personal righteousness. This could apply only to the Messiah. Written by David perhaps at the time of Absalom’s rebellion.

Psalm 27: Prayer of David.

vv. 1-6 — *Preparation* for prayer: triumphant praise in the presence of pressing problems.

vv. 1-3 — *Foundation* for prayer: God is salvation and strength.

vv. 4-6 — *Meditation* on prayer.

vv. 7-12 — *Declaration* of prayer proper: thankful prayer in pressure of painful prediction (cp. v. 10 and 1 Samuel 22:3, 4).

vv. 13, 14 — *Realization* of prayer: patience.

Psalm 28: A cry in time of trouble. In the storm of wickedness David finds God to be a rock (v. 1), strength, and shield (v. 7).

Psalm 29: The voice of the Lord. Written during a thunderstorm, Delitzsch labeled it the “Psalm of seven thunders.” “Voice of the Lord” occurs 7 times.

Psalm 30: A psalm-song at the dedication of the house of David (place of future temple). A song of deliverance and prospect for the future (v. 5).

Psalm 31: Psalm of troubles and trials, followed by prayer for deliverance, and the deliverance that follows as an answer to prayer (v. 1).

Psalm 32: “Maschil”: psalm of instruction. Written in connection with David’s sin and his confession (Psalm 51) and the restoration of the sinning saint (vv. 1, 2).

Psalm 33: Praises of redeemed people. God is worshiped as Creator, as providential Ruler. He is praised for His majestic and matchless grace. Notice the method of creation (v. 6) — God spoke into existence all of creation.

Psalm 34: A song of praise when Abimelech (a royal title; called “Achish” in 1 Samuel 21:10-15) drove David away, and he fled to the cave of Adullam. Compare vv. 15, 16 with 1 Peter 3:12. David’s experience is that of all God’s children (v. 19).

Psalm 35: A plea for God to deliver David from the hand of Saul (1 Samuel 24) and to judge the wicked.

Psalm 36: A Psalm of David as the servant of Jehovah.

Psalm 37: A promise of future blessing to the remnant of Israel in the form of an acrostic. This psalm has refreshed all of God’s saints down through the ages — it is often quoted. (See vv. 1, 4, 5, 7, 11, 23, 35, 36.)

Psalm 38: Confession and physical sickness; David in deep distress prays that God will not judge him in anger (v. 1). This is real conviction (v. 2). His physical sickness is the result of sin (v. 3). Disease, the result of his foolishness, is followed by mental anguish (vv. 5-8). Some dare to say that this refers to Christ and that He had a diseased body. They use Matthew 8:17. Jesus, however, was holy, harmless and separate from sin. He could not be the spotless Lamb offered for our sin if He were diseased — disease is the result of sin. Death is also. Jesus did not have to die — He said, “No man taketh [my life] from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again” (John 10:18). On the cross He dismissed His spirit (John 19:30).

Psalm 39: A psalm for funerals. The vanity and feebleness of humanity. This is the last psalm in the series beginning with Psalm 25.

Psalm 40: Messianic psalm, quoted in Hebrews 10:5-7 as referring to Christ (vv. 6-8). It is the experience of David when he fled from Absalom.

Psalm 41: Messianic psalm. It opens with “blessed” and closes with “blessed.” Jesus quoted this reference to Judas (v. 9) in John 13:18, and Peter referred to it in Acts 1:16.

This is the last psalm in the Genesis section. It closes on the high hope of the resurrection (v. 10). What a contrast to “a coffin in Egypt” which concludes the book of Genesis. David is the writer of 37 of these 41 psalms.

II. Exodus section, Psalms 42 — 72

Ruin and Redemption (Israel in View)

(David wrote 19 of these psalms.)

Psalms 42 — 49: Israel’s ruin

This series of 7 psalms by the sons of Korah are prophetic pictures of Israel in the last days.

Psalm 42: Heart cry of the remnant and applicable to the redeemed of all ages. It concludes with the heart cry of hope for deliverance (v. 11). This is not redemption by blood which took place in Egypt at the death of the firstborn; it is redemption by power which took place at the Red Sea.

Psalm 43: A call to God to act on behalf of the remnant.

Psalm 44: During the Great Tribulation, Israel calls upon God to deliver them as He did in Egypt in the past. It closes with a cry to redeem.

Psalm 45: Reign of the Messiah King. Shoshannim (or lily) psalm, a love song.

v. 1 — Introduction: psalmist can tell it better than he can write it.

vv. 2-5 — Messiah: His person and power.

v. 2 — “Thy beauty, O King Messiah, is greater than the sons of men.” — Chaldean Targumim

v. 4 — Truth, meekness, and righteousness are eternal principles of His kingdom.

vv. 6-8 — Messiah: His government and glory. (Heart of the psalm, vv. 6, 7.)

vv. 9-17 — Messiah: His companions and church. (“The queen” is the church in type and figure, v. 9.)

Psalms 46-47: God is our refuge. This psalm and the next 2 present a picture of the benefits of the setting up of His kingdom.

vv. 1-3 — **Sufficiency** of God

vv. 4-7 — **Security** of God

vv. 8-11 — **Supremacy** of God

Psalms 46-47: Praise and worship in the Millennium.

Psalms 48-49: Messiah’s victory which brings in the kingdom.

Psalms 49-50: Contrast of rich and poor. “Death shall feed on them” (v. 14) should be “death is their shepherd.” God delivers the redeemed from death.

Psalms 50 — 60: Israel’s Redeemer

Psalms 50-51: Judgment. God judges His people (vv. 7-15). God judges the wicked (vv. 16-23).

Psalms 51-52: David’s great penitential psalm when Nathan pointed the accusing finger with the words, “Thou art the man” (2 Samuel 12:7).

vv. 1-6 — Pardon — repentance — sorrow

vv. 7-12 — Purity — remission — sigh

vv. 13-15 — Power — restoration — service

vv. 16-19 — Pleasure — reparation — song

Psalms 52 — 55: “Maschil” (instruction) psalms

This series of 4 psalms is all about the coming of Antichrist.

Psalm 52: Mighty man of mischief — Antichrist.

Psalm 53: Antichrist denies the existence of God.

Psalm 54: A cry of faith in the times of Antichrist.

Psalm 55: The darkest days under Antichrist. Notice the deception of Antichrist (v. 21).

Psalms 56 — 60: “Michtam” (engraven; permanent) psalms

Psalm 56: Deep trouble. Souls of the saints are laid bare during the Great Tribulation.

Psalm 57: Cry for mercy (see title of psalm).

Psalm 58: Rebuke of unrighteousness (lawlessness).

Psalm 59: God’s people surrounded by enemies.

Psalm 60: Confession and victory for God’s people (see title).

Psalms 61 — 72: Israel’s redemption

Psalm 61: Cry and confidence of the godly. (Psalms 62 — 68 carry out the theme of Psalm 61.)

Psalm 62: The “only” psalm (see author’s booklet by the same name). Note the word “only” and the possessive pronoun “my.” It expresses great confidence.

Psalm 63: Thirst for the Water of Life (God). Chrysostom says that the early church sang this psalm every morning. It is a psalm of David, as also are 64 and 65.

Psalm 64: The wicked win, then God judges them.

Psalm 65: Song of the Millennium.

Psalm 66: Song (v. 1) and prayer (vv. 18, 19).

Psalm 67: Blessing and praise for the Millennium.

Psalm 68: Song of deliverance that ushers in the kingdom. A messianic psalm (cp. v. 18 with Ephesians 4:8).

Psalm 69: The silent years in the life of Christ. Next to Psalm 22, the most quoted psalm in the New Testament. (Psalm 22: the death of Christ; Psalm 69: the life of Christ.)

vv. 7-12 — Dark days in Nazareth.

vv. 20, 21 — Dark hours on the cross.

vv. 22-25 — Imprecatory: a cry for justice.

Psalm 70: Urgent cry for deliverance (duplication of the last 5 verses of Psalm 40).

Psalm 71: The suffering Savior. Jesus aged on the cross (v. 9).

Psalm 72: David speaks to Solomon. The King and the kingdom are coming (vv. 11, 17, 19).

III. Leviticus section, Psalms 73 — 89

Darkness and Dawn (Sanctuary in View)

Tabernacle, temple, house, assembly, and congregation appear in almost every psalm.

Psalms 73 — 83: “Asaph psalms” (2 Chronicles 29:30)

Psalm 73: Perplexity about prosperity. Why does God permit the wicked to prosper (vv. 3-9)? The answer is found in the sanctuary (v. 17). The state of the wicked is temporary; they are brought down suddenly (vv. 18, 19).

Psalm 74: A cry for deliverance when the temple is defiled by the enemy (vv. 7, 19).

Psalm 75: God answers the plea of Psalm 74. Help comes from God (vv. 6, 7).

Psalm 76: Prophetic of the Messiah upon the throne, and the temple open for worship.

Psalm 77: Perplexity about the mercy and goodness of God (v. 9). The answer again is in the sanctuary (v. 13). History reveals that God does not forget (vv. 11-20).

Psalm 78: The history of Israel from Moses to David.

Psalm 79: Future of Israel in the Great Tribulation. The temple is defiled (v. 1).

Psalm 80: Plea to the Shepherd of Israel to lead them again. The Shepherd is at God's right hand (v. 17).

Psalm 81: God's answer to the plea of Psalm 80. The trumpet of praise is blown (v. 3).

Psalm 82: God is in the midst of His people (the Shekinah glory in the tabernacle). He judges the judges of the people.

Psalm 83: Prayer for God to deliver His people from their enemies. Imprecatory prayer (vv. 9-12) is a cry for justice.

Psalms 84 — 89: Looking to the future

Psalm 84: Deep desire for God's house that they might look upon the face of "thine anointed" (v. 9).

Psalm 85: Future restoration of Israel. Kingdom blessing (v. 10).

Psalm 86: David prays for the future kingdom (vv. 8, 9).

Psalm 87: Glorious future of Jerusalem. The nations will come to Jerusalem to worship (see Isaiah 2:2; Zechariah 2:10, 11).

Psalm 88: Dirge of gloom, a lamentation. This is the darkest wail of woe in the Book of Psalms. The one ray of hope is "Lord God of my salvation" (v. 1).

Psalm 89: Song of the faithfulness of God in keeping the Davidic Covenant (cp. vv. 34-37 with 2 Samuel 7:8-17).

IV. Numbers section, Psalms 90 — 106

Peril and Protection of Pilgrims (Earth in View)

We do not become pilgrims until we become strangers.

Psalm 90: Dirge of death and darkness by Moses. Moses witnesses

the deaths of 1 1/2 million Israelites who came with him out of Egypt but perish in the wilderness. The wilderness becomes a vast cemetery. “Secret sin on earth is open scandal in heaven” (see v. 8).

Psalm 91: Messianic psalm (cp. vv. 11, 12 with Matthew 4:6). Song of life and light. Saints of all ages turn here for help and hope.

Psalm 92: Song of praise for the sabbath day. Verse 1 is the theme. “Most High” is a kingdom phrase.

Psalm 93: Song of sheer praise because the King is reigning (millennial kingdom).

Psalms 94 — 100: Kingdom songs (celebrating the Messiah’s reign)

Psalm 94: A call upon God to intervene in righteousness against the wicked. A cry from the remnant in the time of trouble preceding the kingdom.

Psalm 95: Song of sheer joy because the king is reigning.

Psalm 96: A hymn to Him. He fulfills prophecy, ends idolatry, banishes Satan — creation rejoices.

Psalm 97: Joy to the world, the Lord has come. This is not a hymn of His 1st coming but of His 2nd coming. (“Gods” in v. 7 should be “angels” — cp. Hebrews 1:6).

Psalm 98: Second stanza of the new song of worship.

Psalm 99: Song to the king whose throne is a throne of grace and mercy (v. 1).

Psalm 100: Chorus of the hymn to Him. Note the rendering: “It is he that hath made us, and...we are his” (v. 3).

Psalms 101 — 106: Praise to the King

Psalm 101: Song to the King who rules in righteousness and judgment. Note Gaebelein’s rendering: “Morning after morning will I destroy all the wicked of the land” (v. 8).

Psalm 102: Prayer of trouble and sorrow. This is the King in

Gethsemane — His humiliation before His exaltation (Hebrews 5:7). He can sympathize with His people.

Psalm 103: Great psalm of praise for the tender mercies of God. “I beseech you...brethren, by the mercies of God...” (Romans 12:1).

Psalm 104: Hymn to God in nature because He is Creator. Psalm of creation.

Psalm 105: Hymn to God in history from Abraham to Moses. Psalm of providence (v. 5; cp. 1 Chronicles 16:8).

Psalm 106: Hymn to God in history, confessing Israel’s failure and God’s faithfulness. This psalm is the first to begin and end with “Hallelujah.” It is the psalm of pilgrims in the wilderness of this world.

V. Deuteronomy section, Psalms 107 — 150

Perfection and Praise of the Word of God

Before we can know Him, we must know the Word.
Sin came through the broken Word;
Israel scattered through the broken Word;
Sanctuary destroyed through the broken Word.

Psalm 107: Song of the wandering Jew when he re-enters the promised land (vv. 3-6). A psalm that has blessed the hearts of saints of all ages.

4 Stanzas

vv. 1-7 — Providence: directs pilgrims (tenor solo)

vv. 8-20 — Pardon: delivers prisoners (soprano solo)

vv. 21-30 — Protection: dissolves problems (bass solo)

vv. 31-43 — Power: delights (His) people (chorus)

Psalm 108: Israel’s praise and possessions.

Psalm 109: Messianic psalm — the humiliation of Christ. The Judas Iscariot psalm (cp. Acts 1:20). Note the imprecatory prayer (vv. 6-13).

Psalm 110: Messianic psalm — the exaltation of Christ (v. 1, cp. Matthew 22:44; Acts 2:34, 35; Hebrews 1:13; 10:12, 13; also v. 4, cp. Hebrews 5:6; 6:20; 7:21).

Psalm 111: Hallelujah for the works of God (a perfect acrostic psalm — Hebrew alphabet).

Psalm 112: Hallelujah for the righteousness of God (v. 6). “Blessed with all earthly blessings” — a perfect acrostic.

Psalms 113 — 118: Hallel psalms

Psalm 113: A hallelujah chorus to God as Creator and Redeemer. This psalm to the majesty of God opens the Hallel psalms which are sung at the Passover feast.

Psalm 114: God leads His dear children along. Song of deliverance from Egypt and the origin of the nation.

Psalm 115: Glory to God because He is the opposite of the idols of the heathen (vv. 3-8).

Psalm 116: Love song because God swallows death in victory (vv. 3-15). Next to the 23rd, this psalm is the most beloved.

Psalm 117: Hallelujah because all nations and peoples will praise God. (Shortest psalm.)

Psalm 118: Messianic psalm (1 Peter 2:8; Matthew 21:42) — the hymn sung before Christ and His disciples went out into the Mount of Olives (Matthew 26:30; Mark 14:26). Imagine our Lord singing this hymn on that fatal night (vv. 6, 8, 14, 17, 22, 24, 26). This is the last of the Hallel psalms.

Psalm 119: Praise to the Word of God. Some reference to the Word of God is in every verse (except vv. 122, 132), designated *word, saying, way, testimonies, judgments, precepts, commandments, law, statutes, and faithfulness*. The psalm is a perfect acrostic (see text), in 22 sections corresponding to the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet.

Psalms 120 — 134: Pilgrim psalms

“Songs of the Pilgrim Caravans,” “Songs of Ascents,” “Songs of Degrees.” The key is Psalm 122:3, 4:

Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together, whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the LORD, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the LORD.

As the tribes of Israel go up to Jerusalem to worship at the appointed feast days — Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles — they sing these psalms. Notice the ascent. They were to be going and growing spiritually in the same way.

Psalm 120: Chanted as the pilgrim march to Jerusalem began.

Psalm 121: Hills about Jerusalem come into view. The question (v. 1) should be translated, “Shall I lift up mine eyes unto the hills ...?” (see Jeremiah 3:23; Psalm 90:2).

Psalm 122: Jerusalem comes into view (v. 2).

Psalm 123: The temple comes into view; the pilgrims turn their eyes to God in hope.

Psalm 124: They come in sight of the grace of God and offer a prayer of thanksgiving.

Psalm 125: They come in sight of Mt. Zion. The pilgrims arrive in the security of Jerusalem. Assurance is the theme of their song.

Psalm 126: A song for the return after the Babylonian captivity. They look to the future for a larger deliverance. They come in sight of the heathen.

Psalm 127: The vanity of building without God. Obviously the pilgrims are in the gates of the temple.

Psalm 128: The family is come to Jerusalem to worship.

Psalm 129: The pilgrim reviews his youth and the hand of God upon him.

Psalm 130: The pilgrim cries out of the depths and thanks God for forgiveness. Israel will be redeemed.

Psalm 131: Childlike faith and simplicity of the pilgrim (notice that David is the writer).

Psalm 132: Messianic psalm (v. 11, cp. Luke 1:32, 33; Acts 2:30). Also a Davidic psalm — David mentioned 4 times. It looks to the time when Christ will be King in Jerusalem.

Psalm 133: The pilgrim thanks God for the fellowship of other brethren who have come up to Jerusalem. David is the writer.

Psalm 134: Pilgrim's progress. Pilgrim stands in the temple and lifts his voice in praise with the multitude. This is the last pilgrim psalm.

Psalm 135: Hallelujah psalm. Israel praises God for the deliverance of the past. The name of Jehovah is praised (cp. v. 13 with Exodus 3:14, 15).

Psalm 136: Another hallelujah psalm. Praise of His mercy — in creation, in redemption, in fighting enemies, and for the future glory.

Psalm 137: By the canals of Babylon. Some captive wrote this during the Babylonian captivity as he thought of Jerusalem and the temple. It is the experience of the captives away from home and in slavery.

vv. 1, 2 — Central experience: deeply dejected in a strange land; weeping as they remember Zion. They have no heart to sing but put their harps on a willow tree.

vv. 3, 4 — Critical experience: Babylonians, having heard of the songs sung in the temple, ask the captives to sing. They cannot sing in a strange land, out of the will of God.

vv. 5-9 — Crowning experience: repentant, asking God for justice according to the Mosaic Law ("eye for eye, tooth for tooth" [Exodus 21:24]). This is an imprecatory psalm, law of retaliation, *lex talionis*.

Psalm 138: A song of wholehearted praise; a contrast to Psalm 137. Worship by the redeemed.

Psalm 139: A song of praise to the attributes of God.

vv. 1-6 — Omniscience of God (v. 6 reaction to it).

vv. 7-18 — Omnipresence of God (vv. 17, 18 reaction to it).

vv. 19-24 — Omnipotence of God (vv. 23, 24 reaction to it).

Psalm 140: Prophetic prayer for deliverance from “the evil man” (v. 1) or “man of sin” (prophetic of the remnant in the midst of their enemies). Imprecatory: cry for justice according to law.

Psalm 141: David sends out an SOS. His prayer arises from some unknown experience. The application is to the remnant in the final struggle against evil.

Psalm 142: Prayer of David in the cave of Adullam (1 Samuel 22:1, 2). Here is where David’s suffering begins. These are an adumbration of the sufferings of Christ, although some of David’s suffering resulted from his own sin and cannot represent the sufferings of the spotless Savior.

Psalm 143: Prayer of David to the faithfulness, righteousness, and lovingkindness of God. As it has been said, “David was in love with prayer.”

Psalm 144: David’s praise to God because of who He is; his prayer is for the same reason.

Psalm 145: Praise of David to God because of who He is and what He does. It looks forward to the praise of the redeemed and restored remnant in the kingdom. This is the last psalm of David.

Psalms 146 — 150: Hallelujah psalms

The Book of Psalms concludes with 5 hallelujah psalms. Each begins and ends with a “hallelujah.” The night of sin and suffering is over. Weeping is past and joy has come in the morning of the Millennium. The Book of Revelation also concludes with 4 hallelujahs (Revelation 19).

Psalm 146: “Praise ye the Lord” (v. 1) — a praise to God for His goodness.

Psalm 147: A hallelujah chorus because of God’s goodness to the

earth and to Jerusalem. He is Creator, Preserver, and Keeper.

Psalm 148: A hallelujah chorus of all God's created intelligences in the heavens and in the earth (Revelation 5:11-13; 19:1-6).

Psalm 149: A hallelujah chorus because the kingdom has come through redemption by blood and judgment by power.

Psalm 150: A hallelujah chorus with orchestra — singing and playing with all the stops pulled out. Glory to God in the highest; peace on earth has come in the person of the King.

Stops pulled out on Creation's organ:

v. 1 — Diapason

vv. 2, 3 — Flute

vv. 4, 5 — String

v. 6 — Vox Humana

God's people can sing today for He "giveth songs in the night" (Job 35:10). As one writer has said, "A psalm a day keeps worry away."

RECOMMENDED BOOKS:

- Alexander, J. A. *The Psalms*. 1864. Reprint. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1964.
- Gaebelein, Arno C. *The Annotated Bible*. 1917. Reprint. Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1970.
- Gaebelein, Arno C. *The Book of Psalms*. 1939. Reprint. Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1965.
(The finest prophetic interpretation of the Psalms.)
- Grant, F. W. *The Psalms*. Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1895.
(Numerical Bible.)
- Gray, James M. *Synthetic Bible Studies*. Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1906.
- Ironside, H. A. *The Psalms*. Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, n.d.
- Jamieson, Robert, and D. Brown and A. R. Fausset. *Commentary on the Bible*. 3 vols. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1945.
- Jensen, Irving L. *The Psalms*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1970.
(A self-study guide.)
- Morgan, G. Campbell. *Notes on the Psalms*. Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1947.
- Olson, Erling C. *Meditations in the Psalms*. Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1939. (Devotional.)
- Perowne, J. J. Stewart. *The Book of Psalms*. 1882. Reprint. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1976.
- Sauer, Erich. *The Dawn of World Redemption*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1951. (An excellent Old Testament survey.)
- Scroggie, W. Graham. *The Psalms*. Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1948. (Excellent.)

Scroggie, W. Graham. *The Unfolding Drama of Redemption*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1970.

(An excellent survey and outline of the Old Testament.)

Spurgeon, Charles Haddon. *The Treasury of David*. 3 vols. Reprint. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1974.

(A classic work and very comprehensive.)

Unger, Merrill F. *Unger's Bible Handbook*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1966. (A basic tool for every Christian's library.)

Unger, Merrill F. *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1981. (Volume 1 covers Genesis through Song of Solomon with a fine summary of each paragraph.)

These notes, prepared by J. Vernon McGee, are for the purpose of giving assistance to the listeners of the THRU THE BIBLE RADIO program. They are to be used with the Bible and will be more meaningful as you look up all the Scripture references. Due to the necessary brevity of both notes and broadcasts, a list of recommended books is included for those wanting a more detailed study. These books may be obtained from a Christian library or bookstore or ordered from the publishers.



Thru the Bible Radio Network
Pasadena, CA 91109



