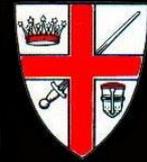


Our Word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path.
On Woord is een lamp voor mijn voet, een licht op mijn pad.
La Parole est une lampe à mes pieds, et une lumière
sur mon sentier. (Psalm, Psaume 119: 105)



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Short Study in the Psalms

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The Language of the Soul

Introduction

“And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. (Luke 24:44)” (KJV)

Jesus tells his disciples, that everything must be fulfilled that is written in the law of Moses, the five first books of the Bible, the Pentateuch, the Prophets and the Psalms. Although the Psalms are usually not referred to as part of the prophetic literature of the Old Testament, many psalms do contain prophetic material, especially regarding the coming Messiah, the Christ. As the New Testament writers cite Old Testament quotations to demonstrate how Jesus of Nazareth fulfils Old Testament prophecy, the Psalms are of the most frequently quoted books. References from the Psalms regarding prophecy and fulfilment occur in the Synoptic Gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke; Acts of the Apostles, and further the epistles of Paul, Hebrews and Revelation.

The Messianic King is one of the main prophetic themes in the Psalms. The Messianic Psalms associated with Christ recall with praise the promises made by

God to David regarding a Davidic dynasty, and as such, the Psalter describes both present and future situations. The Davidic king is praised that currently sits on the throne; however, anticipating a future Davidic king who will be greater, Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Although numerous Psalms are recalled and alluded to in the New Testament about prophetic fulfilment, five Psalms in particular have special significance because they are referred to numerous times in several books of the New Testament. Later we will consider Psalms 2, 22, 69, 110-111, and 118, among others.

Synthesis of the Psalms

We have now in front of us one of the greatest and choicest and most excellent part of all the Old Testament, as so much is there in it of Christ and His Gospel, as well of God and his law or precepts, that it has been called the abstract or summary of both Old and New Testaments.

Unquestionably, the foundation of the Psalter is Davidic. With the son of Jesse “a new era of religious poetry began. David was also the originator of the Temple liturgy, as found in 1 Chronicles, chapter 25. The earliest records, we will see later on, attest David’s skill as poet and musician, and his interest in the development of religious music.

In making the approach to the Sacred Songs, “The Praises of Israel,” there are several matters of literary and historical importance that is well we should consider. The purpose of this study renders it unnecessary that we do more than merely introduce the most important of these matters, and suggest to those who would pursue the study of them some books that will prove helpful.

The Book of Psalms is a reflection of the soul of the Jewish and Christian believers, which of old in the Old Testament were sung or chanted to the accompaniment of string, percussion, or wind instruments, or a combination thereof, mostly at the Temple of Jerusalem, on festivals, national events, or simply in the days of the week. As such, the Book of Psalms represents one of the oldest forms of formal Jewish prayer. In its words, we find the beliefs, hopes and concerns of both the individual and the nation, and by extension, the entire human race.

King David, to whom the Bible refers as the “Sweet Singer of Israel,” is considered the original author of the Book of Psalms. David was a poet and a harpist, and during his reign Temple music became a prominent aspect of the religion of Israel. The era also gave rise to many outstanding liturgical poets,

and to guilds of singers who arose from among the Levites and others, and played a prominent role in the spiritual and cultural life of the nation.

However, the Book of Psalms is not only the product of David's reign. As the national repository of Jewish liturgy, pre- as well as post-Davidic compositions found their way into this canon, dating back to the Exodus and forward to the time of the return from Babylon and possibly even to the time of the Maccabees, a period of close to one thousand years.

This poetic collection of one-hundred and fifty Psalms is also the most influential book of liturgy in the history of the world. Christianity as a whole uses it in various religious services. Liturgy is inconceivable without the Psalms. Jesus' last words before dying on the cross of Calvary, were taken from the Psalms:

“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? (Psalm 22:1). (KJV)

and:

“Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O LORD God of truth. (Psalm 31:6)” (KJV)

Jews, and also Christians, routinely recite from the Book of Psalms at all critical moments, as well as on all joyous occasions. When the decision was made at the end of the nineteenth century by the new Zionist movement to bring the Jews of the world back to Zion, the words that galvanised the delegates of the Zionist Congress and united all the various ideological factions were the famous words of the Psalmist:

“If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy. (Psalms 137: 5-6)” (KJV)

To return to what we first said about the authorship and age, these two matters quite obviously are closely related to one another, for if we could be sure who was the author of any given Psalm the date would not present any serious difficulty.

It has been fashionable in certain quarters to assume a late date for the greater number of the Psalms, in fact, to find its origin in the later Persian and Greek periods, and in the Maccabees age. However, the like view is not consistent with sound criticism.

Religious Poetry is very old, and we are not without examples of it long before David's time. It can confidently be asserted that we have no irrefragable proof that there is the Psalter a single Psalm of the Maccabees period, but, on the other hand, there is a heavy weight of evidence that the major part of the Collection say Books 1-3, originated in the period 1000 B.C.E. to 700 B.C.E., from David to Hezekiah; and the rest, in the main, belong, probably, to the Exilic and Post-Exilic periods. This does not mean that we can pronounce with any certainty on the date and authorship of many of the Psalms, or even in the case of those attributed to David, that we can say with confidence to which period of his life some of them refer, but it does mean that we are warranted in believing that the great Song period in Israel's history was the 300 years from David's time.

If we already know, a Psalm is a song of praise to God sung to the accompaniment of a string instrument, such as a lyre or a harp. This large book of one-hundred fifty chapters contains, however, many different types of songs, not only Psalms. Somehow, the word Psalms, or *Tehillim* in Hebrew (derivation from the word *tehillah*, praise), is the name by which this collection has become known.

The Psalms are primarily songs of praise to God. They are an expression of a deep religious faith that reaches a high point with King David and continues through the ages. The Book of Psalms gives us a word that does not appear anywhere else in the Old Testament of the Bible, namely, "*Hallelujah*", meaning "praise God." The word "*Hallelujah*" has found its way directly from Hebrew into many other languages and even religions.

However, the Psalms go far beyond strictly offering praise to God. They cover a wide range of human experience, both individual and national. They offer words of solace to a broken heart, and words of encouragement to a people in the middle of a national crisis. As such, they have given comfort and spiritual sustenance to many individuals and nations around the world, Jews and Christians.

Here is a summary of the Psalm-titles as they relate to authorship:

Names	Book 1	Book 2	Book 3	Book 4	Book 5	Total
	1 - 41	42 - 72	73 - 89	90 - 106	107 - 150	
David	37	18	1	2	15	73
Asaph	-	1	11	-	-	12
Korah	-	7	3	-	-	10
Moses	-	-	-	1	-	1
Solomon	-	1	-	-	1	2

Ethan	-	-	1	-	-	1
Heman	-	-	1	-	-	1
Anonymous	4	4		14	28	50
Totals	41	31	17	17	44	150

Taking them as they stand it is noteworthy that each Book is, as its beginning, given distinctiveness as a Collection, and what follows supplements preceding Collections. So Book 1 is Davidic; Book 2 is Korahite; Book 3 is Asaphic, and 4 and 5 are Anonymous.

Solomon would gather together certain of his father's Psalms. The compiler of Book 2, who had Korah in mind, added a substantial supplement of Davidic Psalms. The compilers of Book 3 had Asaph in mind. In Books 4 and 5 anonymous Psalms are collected, with a supplement of fifteen more of David's in Book V. We may never be able to say with certainty on what principle these collections were made.

The **Royal Psalms** anticipating Christ as King:

Psalms 2, 18, 20, 21, 45, 72, 89, 101, 110, 144.

Alphabetic Psalms, employing some arrangement based on the Hebrew Alphabet.

Psalms 9, 10, 25, 34, 37, 111, 112, 119, 145.

Penitential Psalms, breathing deep contrition for sin committed.

Psalms 6, 25, 32, 38, 39, 40, 51, 102, 130.

Messianic Psalms, previewing the Person and the Work of the coming Messiah.

Psalms 2, 8, 16, 22, 45, 69, 72, 89, 110, 118, 132.

Imprecatory Psalms, imploring God's vindication of His own against godless persecutors.

Psalms 52, 58, 59, 109, 140.

With regard to those Psalms, for instance Psalms 59 and 109, which invoke God's judgments on the enemies of the writer or of his people the following points should be noted:

1. The Psalmists are convinced of the absolute antithesis between that which chooses for and against God, and speak out as God's champions in a world that has rebelled against Him. Their plea for judgment is based on God's promises of protection and on the righteousness of their cause. (Psalms 83 and 137: 8) They abstain from avenging themselves, and commit their cause to God.
2. They are clothed in the thought-forms of the people and the age to which they belong. To the Hebrew mind all was personal, the sinner was identified with the sin, the man with his family, and the only way to purge a city from iniquity was to destroy the wicked.
3. Woes and imprecations are found in the New Testament as well as in the Old. (Matthew 13: 49-50; 16: 27; 23: 13-33; John 5: 29; Romans 6: 23; Revelation 6: 10 and 18: 6.) However, in the old dispensation there was no clear light as to the future life or the gospel of redeeming love, and the justice demanded seemed to belong to this life. Our Lord sanctions the principle that a higher standard is required for Christians with the fuller life. (Matthew 5: 43-44, and compare with Matthew 19: 8)

Hallelujah Psalms. Employing the term Hallelujah, meaning "Praise Jah (Jehovah)".

Elohistic Psalms, employing the name "Elohim" for God. Others use the name of Jehovah.

Psalms 42 to 83.

Ascent Psalms were recited or sung as the pilgrims went to Jerusalem to celebrate the feasts.

Psalms 120 to 134.

The First Psalm.

1: Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

2: But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

3: And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

4: The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.

5: Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

6: For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish. (KJV)

Comments on Psalm 1

The Holy Scriptures begins with the story of the first man, Adam, who is not a heroic, superhuman figure, but rather man, plain en simple. The Psalms begin with a portrait of the righteous man, the *tzaddik*. The righteous is not a saint, or someone spiritually superhuman. The portrait presented here is within everyone's reach. The purpose of the Psalm is to help every individual reach a state of righteousness. Two other compelling Psalms about the righteous person are to be found in Psalms 15 and 112:

Psalm 15

1: LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?

2: He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart.

3: He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour.

4: In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the LORD. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.

5: He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall never be moved. (KJV)

Psalm 112

1: Praise ye the LORD. Blessed is the man that feareth the LORD, that delighteth greatly in his commandments.

2: His seed shall be mighty upon earth: the generation of the upright shall be blessed.

3: Wealth and riches shall be in his house: and his righteousness endureth for ever.

4: Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness: he is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous.

5: A good man sheweth favour, and lendeth: he will guide his affairs with discretion.

6: Surely he shall not be moved for ever: the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.

7: He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the LORD.

8: His heart is established, he shall not be afraid, until he see his desire upon his enemies.

9: He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor; his righteousness endureth for ever; his horn shall be exalted with honour.

10: The wicked shall see it, and be grieved; he shall gnash with his teeth, and melt away: the desire of the wicked shall perish. (KJV)

The Place of Christ in the Psalms.

We already know that the book is prophetic in character, the period covered by the language of the Psalms extending from the rejection of Christ (Psalm 2; Acts 4: 25-28) to the Hallelujahs consequent on the establishment of the kingdom.

Psalm 2 (KJV)	Acts 4: 25-28 (KJV)
<p>1: Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? 2: The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, 3: Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. 4: He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. 5: Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. 6: Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. 7: I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. 8: Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. 9: Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. 10: Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth.</p>	<p>23: And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them. 24: And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: 25: Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? 26: The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. 27: For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, 28: For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.</p>

<p>11: Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling.</p> <p>12: Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.</p>	
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Comments on Psalm 2

The Second Psalm is ambiguous. It is not directly attributed to David, but it is believed to describe David's career. We believe that it deals with a future, the Messianic time, Jesus Christ. It describes the deliverance of God's chosen from his enemies, and it contains the following Messianic verse:

"I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. (Psalm 2:7)" (KJV)

A careful reading of those parts of the Holy Scriptures dealing with the life of David shows that, for one thing, God did not speak to David, but rather communicated with him through the prophet Nathan.

"I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men. (2 Samuel 7: 14, and further)" (KJV)

If David is indeed the one speaking here, then he is taking poetic license in saying "God said to me." As for "I gave birth to you," the meaning is metaphoric; David is spiritually reborn when he is anointed king of Israel. We are reborn when we accept Jesus Christ as our personal Saviour and Friend.

The World-wide Rebellion. Observe the wild commotion of the many (1) and of the mighty (2a); the outward tumult and the inward cause (1); the array of the kings, and the plot of the rulers (2a). Also, the object of their enmity, Jehovah and His Messiah (2b): and, their daring proposal (3), to snap the bands of divine restraint and to fling away the cords of the yoke. That is a picture of the world today; and it will bring down

The Divine Indignation. Mark here God's laughter of derision (4), His utterance of displeasure (5), and His act of disclosure (6). "Laugh-derision-wrath-displeasure!" What terrible ideas these words hold! Whatever you do, do not have God against you; and if God be for us, what matters it who is against us?

The Great Declaration. It is about God's Messianic King. He is divinely attested (7). The "begetting" here does not refer to His birth, but to His resurrection.

"God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. (Acts 13:33)" (KJV)

His dominion is to be universal (8). Compare "the uttermost parts of the earth" with Acts 1:8.

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. (Acts 1: 8)" (KJV)

The gift is in response to request "ask." Then, there is Messiah's victorious rule (9). He possesses by conquest. This, therefore, cannot refer to the evangelisation of the heathen today. Subjugation today is not breaking and dashing; but it will be some day.

The Solemn Exhortation. Be wise, be instructed, serve, rejoice, kiss, trust. Dread that "lest" (12). God's King (6) is His Son (12). It is better that you should "kiss" Him than that God should "laugh" (4) at you. Yet kiss Him not as did Judas.

Psalm 2 is used in several ways in the New Testament. It is often quotes, especially in the Synoptic Gospels, in connection with the Lord's baptism and his transfiguration.

"I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. (Psalm 2: 7)" (KJV)

In Acts 13:33 this verse is quoted in regard to the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

"God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. (Acts 13: 33)" (KJV)

Note again that Psalm 2:2 uses the term "Anointed One" (Messiah).

"The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed; (Psalm 2:2)" (KJV)

This Psalm describes the installation of the Anointed One as king in Zion. And, Psalm 2: 7 is also cited in the New Testament passages that expand on the exaltation of Christ into heaven, at the right hand of God.

“For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? (Hebrews 1: 5)” (KJV)

“So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee. (Hebrews 5:5)” (KJV)

“For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore. (Hebrews 7: 28)” (KJV)

The New Testament also sites Psalm 2 in regard to the themes concerning the threats by hostile nations against God’s Anointed One, and the triumph over these nations and their rulers by the Son of God, his Anointed.

“Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. (Acts 4: 25-26)” (KJV)

“And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne. (Revelation 12: 5)” (KJV)

The Third Psalm

1: LORD, how are they increased that trouble me! many are they that rise up against me.

2: Many there be which say of my soul, There is no help for him in God. Selah.

3: But thou, O LORD, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head.

4: I cried unto the LORD with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill. Selah.

5: I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the LORD sustained me.

6: I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, that have set themselves against me round about.

7: Arise, O LORD; save me, O my God: for thou hast smitten all mine enemies upon the cheek bone; thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly.

8: Salvation belongeth unto the LORD: thy blessing is upon thy people. Selah. (KJV)

Comments on Psalm 3

What do we learn from this Psalm about the structure of the book as a whole? Here we have the first Psalm specifically attributed to King David. What is interesting about this early Psalm is that it deals with events late in David's life, namely the rebellion of Absalom, David's son. What we learn here is that the Book of Psalms is not arranged in any particular chronological order, or in any order of authorship.

Psalm 3 is also a morning hymn (verse 5), as much as Psalm 4 is an evening hymn (verse 8). Both tell of the faith of God's Anointed when the Kingdom was opposed, not from without (Psalm 2), but from within. The writer derives comfort from past experience. It had been his habit to pray, and the Lord had always answered him (verse 4). But his present experience also, justified his confidence (verse 5). He is speaking of the morning after a night of refreshing sleep, in the open air and beneath the stars, hunted by foes! It is not a sleep of exhaustion, but of trust in the Lord God, Who sustains him all the time. Numbers are not everything (verse 6). Absalom had the crowd, but David had the Lord God, and one with Him is a majority. David ends with prayer, first for himself (verse 7), and then for the nation (verse 8). Many had risen against him (verse 1): so he asks the Lord God to arise for him. He makes his expectation to rest on his experience (verse 7b): what God had done, He could and would do. First he says, "Save me" (verse 7), then, "save them" (verse 8).

The writers of the Psalms.

The writers of the Psalms do not merely relate what others did and felt, but expressed what was passing through their own souls. And yet, their language is not simply what they felt, but that of the Spirit of Christ that spoke in them, as taking part in the afflictions, the grieves, and the joys of God's people in every phase of their experience. This accounts for Christ being found throughout the Psalms: some refer exclusively to Him, as Psalm 22; in others though the language is that of the remnant of His people), Christ takes His place with them, making their sufferings His sufferings, and their sorrows His sorrows. In no part of the Holy Scriptures is the inner life of the Lord Jesus disclosed as in the Psalms. The Psalms may be called 'the manual of the earthly choir.' They commence with "Blessed is the man," and end with "Praise ye Jehovah." Man is blessed on earth, and Jehovah is praised from earth.

1 Chronicles 16 and 2 Samuel 22 are examples of the immediate occasions on which Psalms were composed, and in the headings of the Psalms other instances are mentioned; yet these things in no way hinder the Spirit of God from leading the Psalmist to say things that would be fully accomplished in Christ alone.

David said:

“Now these be the last words of David. David the son of Jesse said, and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel, said, The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was in my tongue. (2 Samuel 23:1-2)”

Great pains have been taken sometimes to arrange the Psalms in a supposed chronological order, but the effect of this is to spoil the whole, for God has Himself ordered their arrangement, and in many places the beauty of the order can be seen.

It must not be forgotten that the Old Testament prophets did not grasp what “the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify.”

“Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. (1 Peter 1:11)” (KJV)

David’s experience could not have caused him to write Psalm 22 without viewing the future. He was a prophet, and it was clearly the Spirit of Christ that was in him that furnished words that would be pronounced by Jesus Christ on the Cross. We have in it a plain instance of a prophetic Psalm, and doubtless, the spirit of prophecy runs through all.

If this is the main characteristic of the Psalms, they have an aspect entirely different from that in which many regard the book namely, as a book of Christian Experience. The devotion that the Psalms breathe is always edifying, and the deep confidence in God expressed in them under trial and sorrow has cheered the heart of God’s saints at all times. These holy experiences are to be preserved and cherished; but who has not felt the difficulty of calling on God to destroy his enemies? What Christian can take up as his own language such a sentence as:

“Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones. (Psalm 137: 9)” (KJV)

How can such a verse be spiritualised? By such appeals are intelligible in regard to a future day, when, apostasy being universal and opposition to God open and avowed, the destruction of His enemies is the only way of deliverance for His people.

Unless the difference of the spirit of the Psalms from that of Christianity be observed, the full light of redemption and of the place of the Christian in Jesus Christ is not seen, and the reader is apt to be detained in a legal state. His progress is hindered, and he does not understand the Psalms, nor enter into the gracious sympathies of Christ in their true application. When the attitude of the Jews at the time the Lord was here is remembered, and their bitter opposition to their Messiah, which exists to this day, light is thrown upon their feelings when, under tribulation, their eyes will be opened to see that it was indeed their Messiah that they crucified. Great too will be their persecution from without, from which God will deliver a remnant and bring them into blessing. Into all their sorrows, Christ enters, and He suffers in sympathy with them. All these things, and the experiences through which they will pass, are to be found in the Psalms. However, these experiences are not properly those of the Christian.

Outline of the Book of Psalms

Book One of the Psalter

Psalm 1 The godly and the ungodly man.

Psalm 2 Messiah's kingship and kingdom.

Psalms 3 - 7 Testing of the godly

Psalm 3 Peaceful trust in God.

Psalm 4 Evening prayer in sustaining faith.

Psalm 5 Morning prayer and encouragement.

Psalm 6 The cry of the heart in distress.

Psalm 7 The cry for protection.

Psalm 8 The majesty of the Son of Man (Messianic).

Psalms 9 - 15 The godly and the Evil One

Psalm 9 The godly is praising the most high God.

Psalm 10 Supplication of the godly.

Psalm 11 Faith's possessions for troubling days.

Psalm 12 The arrogance of sinners.

Psalm 13 The faith of the godly eventuating in victory.

Psalm 14 Human apostasy and immorality.

Psalm 15 The character of the godly

Psalms 16-24 **Prophetic sights of Christ**

Psalm 16 Christ the Obedient One is resurrected.

Psalm 17 Christ the Mediator, the righteous Intercessor.

Psalm 18 God's power preserved Christ.

Psalm 19 Christ in creation and revelation.

Psalm 20 Christ and His redeeming work of salvation.

Psalm 21 Christ's kingly glory anticipated.

Psalm 22 Christ's sufferings and coming glory.

Psalm 23 Christ, the Great Shepherd.

Psalm 24 Christ, the Chief Shepherd.

Psalms 25-39 **Soul implementation of the godly**

Psalm 25 Appeal for deliverance.

Psalm 25 Prayer for justification.

Psalm 27 Prayer for spiritual orientation.

Psalm 28 Prayer for deliverance.

Psalm 29	The day of the Lord coming as a great tempest.
Psalm 30	Praise for healing.
Psalm 31	Victory outreach over enemies.
Psalm 32	The blessing of being justified.
Psalm 33	Praising the Lord
Psalm 34	Full praise of God's redeemed ones.
Psalm 35	Cry for help in time of need and distress.
Psalm 36	Contrast of the evil ones and the Lord.
Psalm 37	The righteous and the evil ones in contrast.
Psalm 38	The suffering saint and sin confessed.
Psalm 39	Human weakness.

Psalms 40-41 David's experiences prefigure Christ's

Psalm 40	The obedient Christ.
Psalm 41	Messiah betrayed.

Book Two of the Psalter

Chapters 42-49 Through tribulation to kingdom blessing

Psalm 42	Longing for God in deep agony.
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Psalm, the One-hundred-nineteenth Psalm and the One-hundred-twenty-second Psalm commented.

Psalm 8

The Eighth Psalm is a meditation on the puzzling reality of human life, at once sublime and meaningless:

“What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Psalm 8: 4-5” (KJV)

The Hebrew Bible (the Old Testament) says, “a little lower than God” which has baffled Hebrew and Christian scholars over the ages. However, the more common English translation has been “a little lower than the angels,” since the word *elohim*, or God, can also mean angels. Here again as elsewhere, it can be taken as a poetic expression, or it can be theologically challenged.

Psalm 18

David was also a warrior king. He spent most of his life waging wars against Israel’s enemies, from the Philistines in the West to the Ammonites in the East, and from as far South as Egypt and as far North as Babylonia. Clearly, some of the Psalms composed by him or in his day were war songs, intended to assure the troops God was on their side, and to inspire them to overcome great chances.

“It is God that girdeth me with strength, and maketh my way perfect. He maketh my feet like hinds’ feet, and setteth me upon my high places. He teacheth my hands to war, so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms. (Psalms 18: 32-34)” (KJV)

One may wonder why those psalms were kept as part of the holiest collection of biblical prayers. Are they not contradictory to the spirit of peace?

They may be very well be, but the Psalter is a true reflection of a people’s history, at the time it was written and in distance. Not only for the quest of peace! Both throughout the history of Christian civilisation, the Psalms have been recited during time of war as well as time of peace.

Psalm 19

In this psalm, the sky, the earth, and the sun reveal the glory of God who created and loved them all. As in Greek mythology, where Apollo, the sun god, rides his fiery chariot across the sky, here too we read:

“Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof. (Psalms 19: 4-9)” (KJV)

And, having said that, the poet concludes:

“The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. (Psalm 19: 7-9)” (KJV)

paraphrasing this psalm in ordinary English, one would say that the poet is using the motion of the sun as proof that “God’s law is perfect,” when, in effect, the motion of the sun is an optical illusion.

Psalm 22

The opening question of this Psalm, “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me,” is among the best known questions in the entire Bible, and it is also prophetic relating to the last words of our Lord on the cross of Calvary. Humanly speaking, the reason is well evident. Seemingly, being forsaken by God is one of the most common human experiences. Jews and Christians have certainly felt that way throughout the ages, and even more so during and after persecutions, holocausts, abandonment, poverty, illness, etc; In the New Testament, Jesus speaks these words while dying on the cross.

“And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? (Matthew 27:46)” (KJV)

“And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? (Mark 15:34)” (KJV)

There is here an explicit and perfect connection between Psalm 22 and the crucifixion. The forsaken one suffers disdain, as the ones passing by shake their heads.

“All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head saying: (Psalm 22:7)” (KJV)

“And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. (Matthew 27: 39-40)” (KJV)

“And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors. And they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ah, thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, Save thyself, and come down from the cross. Likewise also the chief priests mocking said among themselves with the scribes, He saved others; himself he cannot save. Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe. And they that were crucified with him reviled him. And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. (Mark 15: 28-33)” (KJV)

The bystanders threw unkind challenges to the one suffering.

“All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head saying, He trusted on the LORD that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him. (Psalm 22: 7-8)” (KJV)

“He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God. (Matthew 27:43)” (KJV)

The manner of suffering.

“I am poured out like water, and **all my bones are out of joint**: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death. For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: **they pierced my hands and my feet**. (Psalm 22: 14-16)” (KJV)

Finally, His clothes are divided and lots are cast to determine new ownership.

“They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture. (Psalm 22: 18)” (KJV)

“And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots. (Matthew 27: 35)” (KJV)

“And when they had crucified him, they parted his garments, casting lots upon them, what every man should take. (Mark 15:24)” (KJV)

Some scholars do think that many Psalms of suffering and crying out as found in Psalm 22, express also the collective suffering and pain of all God’s people. Jesus vicariously bears the pain of all God’s people. This suffering and cry is prophetic, even predictive. David is not crucified on a cross, but he did suffer greatly, describing that suffering figuratively. The suffering and cry of David is really a “type of Christ.”

Other say, that even if this Psalm is attributed to King David, the language and style are not exactly David’s. Some attribute to a much later period, such as the time of the Scroll of Esther, centuries later, when the Jews of Persia faced annihilation in the hands of Haman. However, whatever the case may be, the words have been used throughout time by people in distress, and are still used today by many who struggle with their faith and with the question of existence.

Psalm 23

Psalm 23 is the most inspirational of all the Psalms. When people are in the greatest need of faith, during time of bereavement or great stress or fear, this Psalm is commonly recited. The best known version of the 23rd Psalm is the King James Version, dating back to 1611. People still recite it today, many from memory:

1: The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

2: He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

3: He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

4: Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

5: Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

6: Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever. (Psalm 23) (KJV)

For the past hundred years or more, countless attempts have been made to render these immortal words in modern English as the whole Bible in fact, while

keeping the beauty and power of the original, but all have failed. No one to this day has been able to improve on the old traditional version, which preserves to an amazing degree the meaning and music of even the original Hebrew. It is no wonder that the King James translation of the Bible, actually borrowed from an earlier English translator named Tyndale, is considered, along the work of Shakespeare, the apex of English literature.

Psalm 37

Psalm 37 is asked the question whether the righteous is never forsaken, and their offspring never starve, facing the problem of evil. Here, the Psalmist takes on life's most troublesome question, 'why do bad things happen to good and upright people?' The author's answer is one of the most powerful statements anywhere regarding the ultimate triumph of good and evil:

“Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb. (Psalms 37:1-2)” (KJV)

The good is **eventually** rewarded, and evil eventually punished, the author asserts. How do we know? The Psalmist states:

“I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread. (Psalm 37:25)” (KJV)

We all know that, for instance, children of upright people often do go hungry, which seems to contradict this assertion. The answer seems to lie in the word “eventually.” Things can never be judged by one particular moment or situation. One must look at the greater picture. The Psalmist's point is that evil carries the seeds of its own destruction within itself, while good carries the seeds of its own reward. While this is not always apparent, in due time good always prevails.

Psalm 69

Psalm 69 is another cited Psalm. Psalm 69:21 is used as much as Psalm 22, and this in reference of the crucifixion.

“They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink. (Psalm 69:21)” (KJV)

However, Psalm 69:9 is cited after Jesus had cleansed the temple.

“For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me. (Psalm 69:9)” (KJV)

“And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem, And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise. And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up. (John 2: 13-17)” (KJV)

Psalm 72

This Psalm ends with the words: “The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.” Whether this editorial note belongs here is doubtful. What it does is separating the first seventy-two Psalms from the next group, which is attributed to a writer named Asaph.

Thematically, this Psalm does not seem to signal the end of David's career. Here, the old king is talking about his son, Solomon, who is about to succeed him. This Psalm is dedicated to Solomon, and describes the kind of king his father hopes he will be.

It is important to note that the emphasis is laid on justice for the poor and the weak. This is the supreme test of the good ruler, which Solomon, to judge from the story of the two women and the baby, passed beyond anyone's expectations.

Psalm 73

With Psalm 73 we have a group of Psalms attributed to Asaph, who was one of the poets or singers of David's time. He gave rise to an entire family of singers, the Asaphites, who are mentioned among those who returned from the Babylonian Exile some five hundred years after the time of David. It is not clear whether the ancestral Asaph mentioned here actually wrote these particular Psalms, or only sang them. It is possible that he and his successors had their own particular style of Psalm singing.

Psalm 90

It is surprising to run in the middle of the Book of Psalms into a solitary Psalm written by Moses. However, given the style and subject matter, it is quite

possible that the attribution is authentic. It is also a beautiful poem about the shortness of life against God's eternity.

“1: I will sing of the mercies of the LORD for ever: with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations.

2: For I have said, Mercy shall be built up for ever: thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very heavens.

3: I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant,

4: Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations. Selah.

5: And the heavens shall praise thy wonders, O LORD: thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints.

6: For who in the heaven can be compared unto the LORD? who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the LORD? (Psalm 90: 1-6)” (KJV)

Psalm 92

This Psalm begins by briefly introducing the Sabbath:

“A Song for the Sabbath day. It is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High: To shew forth thy lovingkindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night, Upon an instrument of ten strings, and upon the psaltery; upon the harp with a solemn sound. For thou, LORD, hast made me glad through thy work: I will triumph in the works of thy hands. (Psalm 92:1-4)” (KJV)

Having said this, the Psalmist goes on to discuss the wicked and the righteous, rather than talk about the Sabbath day itself.

Good and evil, one of the major themes of the Book of Psalms and of the entire Bible, Old and New Testament, is indeed also the theme of the Sabbath. The Sabbath is not only the day of rest, but also the day of righteousness, the day of remembrance:

“Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made. (Psalm 92: 1-3)” (KJV)

The Sabbath is a creation ordinance, that is based on the action of God in blessing, hallowing and Himself resting on the seventh day at creation, before the fall.

“And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made. (Genesis 2: 3)” (KJV)

“For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it. (Exodus 20:11)” (KJV)

“It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed. (Exodus 31: 17)” (KJV)

Keeping the Sabbath is a commandment, being included in the Decalogue (Exodus 20: 8-11, and Deuteronomy 5:12-15) as being part of God’s everlasting law.

The writer to the Hebrews in the New Testament teaches that the weekly Sabbath (*on Saturday*) points to the eschatological rest-order, anticipated by God already at creation and secured, in view of the fall, by the redemptive work of Christ, and which will not be entered by the people of God until Christ’s return.

“For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. (Hebrews 4: 3b-4)” (KJV)

“There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief. (Hebrews 4:9-11)” (KJV)

“So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation. (Hebrews 9:28)” (KJV)

The Sabbath institution is integral to the life of Israel and ours in Christ, it is a sign of our identity in God, as Christians are covenant people as well.

“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. (Matthew 5: 17)” (KJV)

“Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my Sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the LORD that doth sanctify you. (Exodus 31: 13)” (KJV)

“Moreover also I gave them my Sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the LORD that sanctify them. (Ezekiel 20:12)” (KJV)

During the week one is caught up in the rough and tumble daily struggle of bread-earning for the most among us, and problem solving for all. However, on the Sabbath one's thoughts and prayers turn to the world of the righteous, the redeemed one, the “set apart” It is a time for worship, but also of thinking deeply about the kind of person one may have been during the week, but would like to become in the days ahead.

Sabbath-rest is not only idleness or inactivity, but fully oriented to worship, as just quickly mentioned. The Sabbath is a day of “sacred assembly”. In the Pentateuch, the five first books of the Old Testament, the sacrifices appointed for the tabernacle are increased on the Sabbath:

“And on the Sabbath day two lambs of the first year without spot, and two tenth deals of flour for a meat offering, mingled with oil, and the drink offering thereof: This is the burnt offering of every Sabbath, beside the continual burnt offering, and his drink offering. (Numbers 28: 9-10)” (KJV)

How Israel worshipped on the Sabbath during the Old Testament times are difficult to say. However, some indications are found in the New Testament:

“And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read. (Luke 4:16)” (KJV)

“For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath day. (Acts 15: 21)” (KJV)

“And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three Sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures. (Acts 17: 2)” (KJV)

The Lord's Day is not the Sunday, said the first day of the week. This is a mistake. If this were referring to a day in the week, we would have to conclude

that John the Divine in Revelation 1:10, meant the seventh day, since Jesus said He was the Lord of the Sabbath, not some other day in the week (Mark 2: 28).

“I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet. (Revelation 1: 10)” (KJV)

“Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath. (Mark 2:28)” (KJV)

John the Divine, the author of the Book of Revelation was not referring to a day of the week, but his vision transported him to that time found elsewhere in the Bible where the “day of the Lord” in the Old; and in the New Testament referring to Jesus Christ as found in the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles of Paul and Peter.

The Old Testament:

“For this is the day of the Lord GOD of hosts, a day of vengeance, that he may avenge him of his adversaries: and the sword shall devour, and it shall be satiate and made drunk with their blood: for the Lord GOD of hosts hath a sacrifice in the north country by the river Euphrates. (Jeremiah 46:10)” (KJV)

“The great day of the LORD is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the LORD: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. (Zephaniah 1:14)” (KJV)

The New Testament:

“The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. (Acts 2:20)” (KJV)

“Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 1:8)” (KJV)

“To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. (1 Corinthians 5:5)” (KJV)

“As also ye have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also are ours in the day of the Lord Jesus. (2 Corinthians 1:14)” (KJV)

“For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. (1 Thessalonians 5: 2)” (KJV)

“That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. (2 Thessalonians 2:2)” (KJV)

“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. (2 Peter 3:10)” (KJV)

To conclude, the term the Lord’s Day does not indicate a day in the week, but the end of the age of man’s rule and the beginning of the age of Jesus Christ.

Psalm 103

This is a clear example of a Psalm attributed to David that was written centuries after the time of David. The clear giveaway here is the language which dates to the time of the return from the Babylonian Exile. Here the returning exiles are thanking God for divine mercy and forgiveness, and make it clear that God’s mercy is far greater than what they deserve:

“He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. (Psalm 103:10-11)” (KJV)

What one is inclined to conclude from the attribution of this Psalm to David is that is actually meant here is a Psalm written in the Davidic style.

Psalm 104

What does this Psalm really tell us about the Christian view of nature? In all cultures of antiquity, nature itself was viewed as god, or a series of gods. The ancient Egyptians, Greeks, Babylonians, Romans and others worshipped the sun, the moon, mountains, various animals, and so on and forth. The Hebrew and obviously the Christian, the Islamic religions are the only ones that realise on nature that it is not divine in itself, but rather the creation of a power which transcends nature. All of this is conveyed in this majestic poem, in which, at one point, the Psalmist exclaims:

“O LORD, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches. So is this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts. There go the ships: there is that leviathan, whom thou hast made to play therein. These wait all upon thee; that thou mayest give them their meat in due season. (Psalm 104: 24-27)” (KJV)

Nature is a marvellous creation, but not a divine force in itself controlling the destiny of man. Only the Lord God controls our destiny. And, “destiny” also depends on us whether we accept the ruling power of the Lord God, or reject it; whether we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, in yielding faith to Him, or just reject Him.

Psalm 114

The Exodus from Egypt is mentioned over and over again throughout at the Old Testament of the Bible. It is without a doubt the pivotal event in all of biblical history. Here, in this Psalm, we have a song of exaltation remembering the Exodus, unsurpassed anywhere else in the Bible.

“1: When Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language;
2: Judah was his sanctuary, and Israel his dominion.
3: The sea saw it, and fled: Jordan was driven back.
4: The mountains skipped like rams, and the little hills like lambs.
5: What ailed thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest? thou Jordan, that thou wast driven back?
6: Ye mountains, that ye skipped like rams; and ye little hills, like lambs?
7: Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob;
8: Which turned the rock into a standing water, the flint into a fountain of waters. (Psalm 114:1-8)” (KJV)

Psalm 118

This psalm is festive, sung at the Temple in Jerusalem on one of the pilgrim festivals, most likely Sukkot according to Jewish tradition. It is dated to the early days of the Second Temple, shortly after the return from Babylon. Those were difficult times for the nascent community in Jerusalem, taking its first steps after the national ordeal of the Babylonian conquest and exile. The diminished community was surrounded by old and new enemies in its own land, and had to overcome great odds to survive.

What is remarkable about this Psalm is that the religious fervour and the poetic beauty of King David’s earlier psalms are preserved here, nearly five hundred years later. Much of the text of the Psalm has found its way into the daily and festival prayers of Israel:

“O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: because his mercy endureth for ever. Psalm 118: 1)” (KJV)

“Let the house of Aaron now say, that his mercy endureth for ever. (Psalm 118:3)” (KJV)

Another interesting aspect of this and others Psalms is the borrowing of text from earlier parts of the Bible. For example, verse 14, borrowed from Moses:

“The LORD is my strength and song, and is become my salvation. (Psalm 118:14)” (KJV)

“The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him. (Exodus 15:2)” (KJV)

This Psalm appears numerous times in the New Testament, and interpreted christologically in two different situations.

Psalm 118:25 begins with the Hebrew praise “Hosanna” which means, “Lord, save”, as the KJV renders:

“Save now, I beseech thee, O LORD: O LORD, I beseech thee, send now prosperity. (Psalm 118: 25)” (KJV)

The next verse begins as such:

“Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the LORD: we have blessed you out of the house of the LORD. (Psalm 118:26)” (KJV)

In Jesus’ days, the Jews understood these verses referring to the coming Messiah. So, as Jesus enters Jerusalem triumphantly accompanied by the people shouting “Hosanna”; and as Jesus then confronts the Temple leaders over his status, the four Gospel writers make the connection to Psalm 118, as these are Messianic events.

“And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest. (Matthew 21:9)” (KJV)

“And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David; they were sore displeased. (Matthew 21:15)” (KJV)

“For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. (Matthew 23:39)” (KJV)

“And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest. (Mark 11:9-10)” (KJV)

“Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see me, until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. (Luke 13:35)” (KJV)

“Saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest. (Luke 19:35)” (KJV)

“Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord. (John 12:13)” (KJV)

Psalm 118: 22-23 is cited to explain that the irony between Israel’s rejection of Christ followed by the exaltation is indeed a fulfilment of prophecy.

“The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the LORD's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes. (Psalm 118: 22-23)” (KJV)

“Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? (Matthew 21:42)” (KJV)

“And he beheld them, and said, What is this then that is written, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner? (Luke 20:17)” (KJV)

“This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. (Acts 4:11)” (KJV)

“Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner. (1 Peter 2:7)” (KJV)

Psalm 119

This Psalm, which is in effect a love song to the Law of God as found in the Pentateuch, is remarkable in many ways. First, it is the longest chapter in the entire Bible, consisting of 176 verses. Second, it is a Hebrew alphabetic acrostic, in which each of the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet is given a section of eight verses, each beginning with that letter. This intricate poetic construction holds together and flows verse to verse, brimming with emotion and with expressions of faith for God's Law:

“Unless thy law had been my delights, I should then have perished in mine affliction. (Psalm 119:92)” (KJV)

The other remarkable thing to note about the Psalm that sets it apart, is the time of its writing and the message it conveys; it dates to the time of its writing and the message it conveys. It dates to the time of the return from the Babylonian Exile, when the written text of the Torah becomes all important to the returning exiles. This Psalm signals a point in time when little is being added to the Old Testament, which has now become the “Sacred History” of the Jews. The author exalts in this divine message written in human language.

This Psalm has been spoken of as “The Psalm of the Saints”; “The Alphabet of Divine Love”; “The Christian's Golden ABC of the praise, love, power, and use of the Word of God”; “The holy soul's soliloquy before an open Bible”; “A chest of gold rings, not a chain of gold links”; “A compendium of the whole of theology.”

Psalm 122

“I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD. Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem. 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. For there are set thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces. For my brethren and companions' sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee. Because of the house of the LORD our God I will seek thy good. (Psalm 122)” (KJV)

These words, written after the return to Jerusalem from Babylonian Exile, could have been written today. The entire Christian world today prays for peace in Jerusalem, the city holy to a vast portion of the human race, the city where King David composed his Psalms, where both Judaism and Christianity were born.

The Five Books of Psalms explained

As explained before, the Book of Psalms is in the Hebrew version divided into five books, each having its own prophetic characteristics. The more the Psalms are grasped, the clearer it becomes that God has watched over the order of the Psalms. Interesting to note that each book or part of the Psalms ends with an ascription of praise or doxology.

Book One (chapters 1-41)

This book is occupied with the state of the Jewish remnant of the future (Judah, before they are driven out of Jerusalem.

“Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains. (Matthew 24:16)” (KJV)

Christ is largely identified with this. The book recalls much of the personal history of the Lord, when He was here, though the bearing of it is future. The light of resurrection dawns for the faithful in this book. Christ having gone through death into fullness of joy at God’s right hand.

“And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled. (Revelation 6:11)” (KJV)

Psalms 1, 2 and “, are introductory to the whole first part of the 150 Psalms. We have Christ rejected by Jews and Gentiles, yet set as King in Zion, and declared to be the Son of God having the earth for His possession, and judging His enemies the nations. In a still wider sense, Psalms 1 to 8 are introductory, as from Psalms 3 to 7 giving the principles that follow on the rejection of Christ in Psalms 1 and 2, and Psalm 8 giving His exaltation as Son of man, ending with:

“O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! (Psalm 8: 9)” (KJV)

Psalm 16 brings into the personal excellence of Christ and His association with the ‘the saints in the earth.(verse 3)’

1: Preserve me, O God: for in thee do I put my trust.

2: O my soul, thou hast said unto the LORD, Thou art my Lord: my goodness extendeth not to thee;

3: But to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight.

4: Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another god: their drink offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names into my lips.

5: The LORD is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot.

6: The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.

7: I will bless the LORD, who hath given me counsel: my reins also instruct me in the night seasons.

8: I have set the LORD always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.

9: Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope.

10: For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

11: Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore. (Psalm 16)” (KJV)

In some places the appropriateness of the sequence of the Psalms as already remarked, is very apparent, as for instance, see above for Psalms 22 and 23, also Psalm 24. Psalms 22 portrays the sufferings of Christ in the accomplishment of redemption. In Psalm 23, the consequence of redemption being consummated, the Lord becomes the Shepherd and takes care of the sheep.

In Psalm 24 is celebrated is celebrated the entry of the King of Glory through the everlasting gates.

Comment on Psalm 24: 8:

Well may our God be glorious in the eyes of his people, seeing that he has wrought such wonders for them, in them, and by them. For them, the Lord Jesus upon Calvary routed every foe, breaking all the weapons of the enemy in pieces by his finished work of satisfactory obedience; by his triumphant resurrection and ascension he completely overturned the hopes of hell, leading captivity captive, making a show of our enemies openly, triumphing over them by his cross. Every arrow of guilt which Satan might have shot at us is broken, for who can lay anything to the charge of God's elect? Vain are the sharp swords of infernal malice, and the perpetual battles of the serpent's seed, for in the midst of the church the lame take the prey, and the feeblest warriors are crowned.

The saved may well adore their Lord for his conquests in them, since the arrows of their natural hatred are snapped, and the weapons of their rebellion broken. What victories has grace won in our evil hearts! How glorious is Jesus when the

will is subdued, and sin dethroned! As for our remaining corruptions, they shall sustain an equally sure defeat, and every temptation, and doubt, and fear, shall be utterly destroyed. In the Salem of our peaceful hearts, the name of Jesus is great beyond compare: he has won our love, and he shall wear it. Even thus securely may we look for victories by us. We are more than conquerors through him that loved us. We shall cast down the powers of darkness which are in the world, by our faith, and zeal, and holiness; we shall win sinners to Jesus, we shall overturn false systems, we shall convert nations, for God is with us, and none shall stand before us. This evening let the Christian warrior chant the war song, and prepare for tomorrow's fight. Greater is he that is in us than he that is in the world.

In Psalm 40, there comes forth from God the Messiah, divinely perfect, the true Ark of the Covenant, who was competent to bring into effect the will of God in all its extent; and at the same time able by the offering of Himself, to take away the whole system of sacrifices, in which God had found no pleasure.

*“1: I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry.
2: He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings.
3: And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD.
4: Blessed is that man that maketh the LORD his trust, and respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies.
5: Many, O LORD my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered.
6: Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required.
7: Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me,
8: I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.
9: I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O LORD, thou knowest.
10: I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy lovingkindness and thy truth from the great congregation.
11: Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from me, O LORD: let thy lovingkindness and thy truth continually preserve me.
12: For innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me.
13: Be pleased, O LORD, to deliver me: O LORD, make haste to help me.
14: Let them be ashamed and confounded together that seek after my soul to*

destroy it; let them be driven backward and put to shame that wish me evil.
15: Let them be desolate for a reward of their shame that say unto me, Aha, aha.
16: Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee: let such as love thy salvation say continually, The LORD be magnified.
17: But I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me: thou art my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God. (Psalm 40)” (KJV)

Book Two (Psalms 42-72)

The remnant is viewed here as being outside Jerusalem, and the city given up to wickedness; but Israel has to be brought back. In Book 1, the name of Jehovah is used all through, but now God is addressed as such: the faithful are cast more entirely on what God is in His own nature and character, when they can no longer approach where Jehovah has put His name: Antichrist prevails there. In Psalm 45 the Messiah is introduced, and the remnant celebrate with gladness what God is for His people. Though the resurrection may be slightly seen by the faithful in the circumstances of this book, yet what is before them is the restoration of Zion in Psalms 45 to 48 and Psalm 69:35.

“For God will save Zion, and will build the cities of Judah: that they may dwell there, and have it in possession. (Psalm 69:35)” (KJV)

God shines out of Zion.

“Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined. (Psalm 50:2) (KJV)

Psalms 69, 70 and 71 trace the humiliation of the remnant, and Christ with them: some of the verses clearly point to Christ individually, as in the reference to the gall and the vinegar.

“They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink. (Psalm 69: 21)” (KJV)

At the close of this book, the Psalmist in the doxology exclaim:

“And blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen, and Amen. The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended. (Psalm 72:19-20)” (KJV)

Psalm 68 shows that God’s strength and excellency for Israel was from old in the heavens. The heavens are the seat both of blessing and of rule.

Of blessing:

“Thou, O God, didst send a plentiful rain, whereby thou didst confirm thine inheritance, when it was weary. (Psalm 68:9)” (KJV)

“Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell among them. (Psalm 68:18)” (KJV)

Of rule:

“Sing unto God, sing praises to his name: extol him that rideth upon the heavens by his name JAH, and rejoice before him. A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation. (Psalm 68: 4-5)” (KJV)

“Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth; O sing praises unto the Lord; Selah: To him that rideth upon the heavens of heavens, which were of old; lo, he doth send out his voice, and that a mighty voice. Ascribe ye strength unto God: his excellency is over Israel, and his strength is in the clouds. O God, thou art terrible out of thy holy places: the God of Israel is he that giveth strength and power unto his people. Blessed be God. (Psalm 68: 32-35)” (KJV)

Christ is portrayed here as ascended up on high.

Book 3 (Psalms 73-89)

It widens out the restoration of Israel as a nation, whose general interests are in view. The “Sanctuary” is here prominent. The thought is not so much limited, as the previous books, to the Jewish remnant, though faithful ones are spoken of. In this book, we have one Psalm with David’s name as author. They are mostly ‘for, or of’ Asaph and the sons of Korah, the Levites. In Psalm 88 is the bitter cry of a soul’s expression of being subject under a broken law to the wrath of God.

“1: O LORD God of my salvation, I have cried day and night before thee:

2: Let my prayer come before thee: incline thine ear unto my cry;

3: For my soul is full of troubles: and my life draweth nigh unto the grave.

4: I am counted with them that go down into the pit: I am as a man that hath no strength:

5: Free among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, whom thou rememberest no more: and they are cut off from thy hand.

6: Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps.

7: Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves. Selah.

8: Thou hast put away mine acquaintance far from me; thou hast made me an abomination unto them: I am shut up, and I cannot come forth.

9: Mine eye mourneth by reason of affliction: LORD, I have called daily upon thee, I have stretched out my hands unto thee.

10: Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead? shall the dead arise and praise thee? Selah.

11: Shall thy lovingkindness be declared in the grave? or thy faithfulness in destruction?

12: Shall thy wonders be known in the dark? and thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?

13: But unto thee have I cried, O LORD; and in the morning shall my prayer prevent thee.

14: LORD, why castest thou off my soul? why hidest thou thy face from me?

15: I am afflicted and ready to die from my youth up: while I suffer thy terrors I am distracted.

16: Thy fierce wrath goeth over me; thy terrors have cut me off.

17: They came round about me daily like water; they compassed me about together.

18: Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness. (Psalm 88)” (KJV)

In Psalm 89 praise is rendered for Jehovah’s unchangeable covenant with David, extending to the Holy One of Israel as their King. It celebrates the sure mercies of David, though David’s house had completely failed and was cast down.

Book 4 (90-106)

The Book begins with a Psalm of Moses. In this section the eternity of Elohim, Israel’s Adonai, is seen to have been at all times their dwelling place, as declared in the first verse, of Psalm 90 (*see also above*).

“LORD, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. (Psalm 90:1)” (KJV)

It is the answer to the end of Psalm 89. Compare also Psalm 102: 23-28 with Psalm 89: 44-45.

“23:He weakened my strength in the way; he shortened my days.

24: I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days: thy years are throughout all generations.

25: Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands.

26: They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed:
27: But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.
28: The children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee. (Psalm 102: 23-28)” (KJV)

“44: Thou hast made his glory to cease, and cast his throne down to the ground.
45: The days of his youth hast thou shortened: thou hast covered him with shame. Selah. (Psalm 89:44-45)” (KJV)

In Psalm 91, the Messiah takes His place with Israel; and in Psalms 94 to 100, Jehovah comes into the world to establish the kingdom in glory and divine order. It is the introduction of the First-begotten into the earth, announced by the cry of the remnant.

Book 5 (107 – 150)

This last book gives the general results of the divine government of God. The restoration of Israel amidst danger and difficulties; also, the exaltation of the Messiah to God’s right hand until His enemies are made His footstool. God’s way with Israel, their whole condition, and the principles on which they stand with God. God’s law are written in their hearts. The book ends with full and continued praise after the destruction of the enemies, in which they have part with God.

The Psalms in the New Testament

The psalms were especially dear to Lord Jesus. Their moving phrases were in His mind even on the Cross, for His last words com from Psalm 31:5:

“Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O LORD God of truth. (Psalm 31:5)” (KJV)

And, the cry:

“**My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?** why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? (Psalm 22:1)” (KJV)

The remainder of that Psalm is as detailed a description of the sufferings of Calvary as may be found anywhere in the Holy Scriptures.

The Psalmist spoke ‘wiser than they knew’ in this and similar passages, the Holy Spirit, the real author of the Holy Scripture, illuminating their minds.

“Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into. Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance. (1 Peter 1: 10-14)” (KJV)

The Messianic hope burns brightly in Psalms 2, 45, 72, 110.

“I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. (Psalm 2: 7)” (KJV)

“Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee for ever. (Psalm 45: 2)” (KJV)

Psalm 72 to be pondered on.

“1: The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

2: The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.

3: Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.

4: The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

5: The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath.

6: He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill the places with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries.

7: He shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall he lift up the head. (Psalm 110)” (KJV)

The Messiah is described as a mighty King enjoying the support of Israel’s God. Other Psalms 96 to 100 speak of His growing kingdom, which reached universal dimensions in Psalm 47.

Quotations direct from Psalms – New Testament

All these are associated with Christ as the fulfiller of Old Testament prophecy.

Psalm 2: 7	Acts 13: 33 Hebrews 1: 5 Hebrews 5: 5	Psalm 8:2	Matthew 21: 16
Psalm 8: 4-5	Hebrews 2: 6-7	Psalm 12: 7-8, 18	Matthew 27: 35, 39-48
Psalm 31: 5	Luke 23: 46	Psalm 32: 1-2	Romans 4: 6-8
Psalm 40: 6	Hebrews 10: 5 etc.	Psalm 45:6	Hebrews 1: 8-9
Psalm 110: 1	Matthew 22:44 Acts 2:34 Hebrews 1: 13		

Your self-examination or written work.

1. Write a short introduction to a commentary on the Psalms explaining the meaning of the name of the Book and how it came to be arranged in the way that it is.
2. Using the subject classification above, draw out the teaching contained in the Psalms, subject by subject.
3. Write a short commentary on each of the following Psalms, showing their relevance to contemporary life: (a) Psalm 30; (b) Psalm 73; (c) Psalm 130.
4. Draw up a summary of the Christian Faith as it is contained in the verses of the Psalms quoted in the New Testament, as these are used to quote them.
5. From a study of Psalms 103-104 show how the Psalmist demonstrates God's presence and activity in nature and providence, and point out the lessons he draws from this.
6. Make a brief selection of verses which could be used for (1) prayer, (2) thanksgiving, (3) praise.
7. Show how each separate phrase in Luke 24: 46-48 can be found predicted in the Psalms.
8. Discuss the problem of the imprecatory Psalms. What do you consider should be the attitude of the Christian towards them?

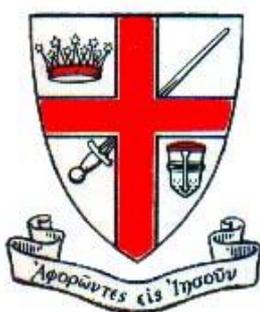
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