

The Book Of Psalms



**A Study Guide With Introductory Comments,
Summaries, And Review Questions**

STUDENT EDITION

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The outlines were developed in the course of my ministry as a preacher of the gospel. Feel free to use them as they are, or adapt them to suit your own personal style.

To God Be The Glory!

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The Book Of Psalms

Table Of Contents

Introduction To The Psalms	3
Psalm 1 - The Truly Happy Man	12
Psalm 2 - The Ultimate Victory Of The Messiah	15
Psalm 3 - A Morning Prayer For God's Protection	18
Psalm 8 - The Song Of The Astronomer	21
Psalm 15 - The Marks Of A True Worshiper	24
Psalm 16 - David's Golden Secret	26
Psalm 19 - God's Two Books	29
Psalm 22 - The Victorious Sufferer	33
Psalm 23 - The Shepherd Psalm	37
Psalm 27 - Light And Salvation In Dark Times	40
Psalm 32 - The Blessedness Of Confessing Sin	43
Psalm 37 - The Meek Shall Inherit The Earth	46
Psalm 38 - The Penitent Plea Of A Sick Man	50
Psalm 51 - The Penitent's Prayer	53
Psalms For Living And Worship	57

This study guide was developed in preparation for teaching adult Bible classes.

Note: The Lord willing, I intend to add more outlines on various psalms sometime in the future.

- ◆ The objectives for each section are usually things I plan to emphasize during the class.
- ◆ I have found that summarizing and outlining helps me to better understand the Word of God. It is a practice I highly recommend to others.

The Book Of Psalms

Introduction To The Psalms

The value of the Old Testament to the Christian is expressed several times in the New Testament:

For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. (Ro 15:4)

Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. (1 Co 10:11)

Paul reminded Timothy of the importance of the Old Testament scriptures he had learned as a child:

But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Ti 3:14-17)

Of the books of the Old Testament, this is especially true of the book of Psalms! The value of the Psalms for the Christian is so great, we should do what we can to become more familiar with them. Allow me to elaborate...

WHY STUDY THE PSALMS?

As Christians, we are commanded to utilize the Psalms:

Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, (Ep 5:19)

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. (Co 3:16)

Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms. (Ja 5:13)

Thus the Psalms are useful for singing praises to God. They are also useful for teaching and confirming that Jesus is the Christ or Messiah. Note the use Jesus made of them (Lk 24:44-47), and also Peter's use of them in his first gospel sermon (Ac 2:25-28,34-35).

It has been said that in the Psalms one finds “expressed the eager yearning and longing for God's presence.” It certainly contains “prayers and songs of joyous trust and praise.” Indeed, every emotion

known to man is expressed in beautiful and inspired terms (e.g., joy, anger, praise, repentance, trust, even doubt). Filled with some emotion for which you cannot find the words to express it? It is likely you will find it expressed in the book of Psalms!

I would therefore suggest that the Psalms are capable of serving as:

- ♦ **The Christian's "hymnal"** to assist us in our praise to God
- ♦ **The Christian's "prayer book"** in which we learn how to approach God in prayer
- ♦ **The Christian's "book of evidences"** to strengthen our faith in Jesus Christ
- ♦ **The Christian's "training guide"** for living holy and righteous lives before God

THE AIM OF THIS STUDY

It is my prayer that as we study this book we will accomplish the following goals:

- ♦ **Become more familiar with Old Testament poetry** - This is essential to getting more out the Psalms, and important if we are to avoid misinterpreting them
- ♦ **Develop an appreciation and working knowledge of the Psalms** - So one may utilize them for his or her own comfort and encouragement, and in counseling and comforting others
- ♦ **Glean a clearer picture of God's character** - To better understand His love, mercy and deliverance towards the righteous, but also His wrath and judgment against the wicked
- ♦ **Learn more of the Christ in prophecy** - To note descriptions of His suffering and glorious reign found in the Psalms, some of which are not found elsewhere in Scripture
- ♦ **Consider examples of fulfilled prophecies** - To see in fulfilled prophecy irrefutable arguments for the inspiration of the Scriptures, and for the claim that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah

These are just a few of the reasons why the Book of Psalms should be read and studied by every Christian, and hopefully this study will help to meet these objectives.

CHARACTERISTICS OF HEBREW POETRY

Before we get into the background of the Psalms themselves, it may prove beneficial to consider some things about Hebrew poetry. Not only will this help to better understand the nature of the Psalms, but it can also assist in proper interpretation of this portion of Scripture.

One of the things that makes Hebrew poetry different is...

The Use Of "Thought Rhyme"

Also known as “parallelism”, thought rhyme involves arranging thoughts in relation to each other. This is done without a concern as to whether certain words rhyme with each other (as found in most modern poetry). In the Psalms, we find several different kinds of thought rhyme:

- ♦ **Synonymous parallelism**- The thought of first line is repeated in the second line, expressed in different words for the sake of emphasis. A good example is found in **Psa 24:2...**

*For He has founded it upon the seas,
And established it upon the waters.* (same idea, reworded)

- ♦ **Antithetical parallelism**- The truth presented in one line is strengthened by a contrasting statement in the next line. Consider this example from **Psa 1:6...**

*For the LORD knows the way of the righteous,
But the way of the ungodly shall perish.* (note the contrast)

- ♦ **Synthetic parallelism**- The first and second lines bear some definite relation to each other (such as cause and effect, or proposition and conclusion). A good example is **Psa 119:11...**

Your word I have hidden in my heart, (cause)
That I might not sin against You! (effect)

- ♦ **Progressive parallelism**- There are several varieties of this form, the most common being:

Stair-like - Composed of several lines, each providing a complete element of the aggregate or composite thought. Notice **Psa 1:1...**

Blessed is the man...
Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly,
Nor stands in the path of sinners,
Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; (note the progression)

Climatic - Here the principal idea in the first line is repeated and expanded to complete the thought. An example is found in **Psa 29:1...**

Give unto the LORD, O you mighty ones (give what?)
Give unto the LORD glory and strength. (the answer)

- ♦ **Introverted parallelism**- The first line is closely related in thought to the fourth, and the second to the third. For example, consider **Psa 91:14...**

Because he has set his love upon Me, (note line 4)
therefore I will deliver him; (note line 3)
I will set him on high, (note line 2)

because he has known My name. (note line 1)

It is often fascinating to note how creative the Hebrew poets were as they composed their poetry using “thought rhyme” rather than “word rhyme.” In some cases it even helps in interpreting difficult expressions or phrases. Another characteristic of Hebrew poetry is...

The Lack Of Poetic Rhythm

Much modern poetry has standard measures of identifiable rhythm, as in the poem “Mary Had A Little Lamb.” With the Hebrews, however, the art of poetic rhythm was of secondary consideration. Some suggest that it is not likely that the Hebrew poets had standard measures, worked out and carefully defined. Again, their focus was on “thought rhyme,” not “word rhyme.”

Finally, an important characteristic of Hebrew poetry is...

The Use Of Figurative Expression

The Psalms are filled with figurative expressions, and as such it is important to keep certain principles of interpretation in mind...

- ◆ The figure must be accepted and dealt with as a figure of speech, not as a literal statement

For example, in **Psa 18:31**, the Lord is called “a rock.” He is like a rock, but not one literally. In **Psa 51:4**, David says “Against You, You only, have I sinned.” Yet he is confessing his sin of adultery with Bathsheba, in which he sinned not only against the Lord, but against his wife, against Uriah, and many others. David was speaking figuratively for the sake of expressing his deep grief in sinning against God, and we must allow for figurative expressions including hyperbole in poetic writings. One needs to be careful and not develop doctrinal beliefs upon what may be figurative expressions not intended to be taken literally.

- ◆ The figure must be interpreted in light of its meaning in the setting in which it was used

For example, in **Psa 23:4**, we find the well-known phrase: “the valley of the shadow of death.” It is not uncommon to hear the phrase applied at funerals to the act of dying. In the setting of the psalm, however, it refers to a treacherous place (such as a steep valley, where deep shadows can easily cause a misstep resulting in death), where the guiding hand of a shepherd would be very helpful to sheep to avoid death. It is therefore applicable to any time one is in perilous straits and in need of God's guiding hand.

Appreciating these characteristics of Hebrew poetry can help the Psalms become more meaningful, and understanding these characteristics can also help avoid misinterpreting the Psalms to teach doctrines the psalmist had no intention of teaching!

BACKGROUND MATERIAL ON THE PSALMS

Having examined some of the unique characteristics of Hebrew poetry in general, let's now focus on the book of Psalms itself...

The Origin Of The Word “Psalm”

The Greek word is “psalmos,” from the Hebrew word “zmr” meaning “to pluck;” i.e., taking hold of the strings of an instrument with the fingers. It implies that the psalms were originally composed to be accompanied by a stringed instrument. “Psalms are songs for the lyre, and therefore lyric poems in the strictest sense.” (Delitzsch, Psalms, Vol. I, p. 7) David and others therefore originally wrote the Psalms to be sung to the accompaniment of the harp.

In New Testament worship, we are told to sing the psalms to the accompaniment of the heart:

“...in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Ep 5:19)

The phrase, “making melody,” comes from the Greek word “psallontes” (literally, plucking the strings of). Therefore, we are to “pluck the strings of our heart” as we sing the psalms (i.e., to sing with emotion).

The History Of The Psalms

The oldest of the Psalms originate from the time of Moses (1400 B.C.). We have three psalms penned by Moses:

- ◆ **Exo 15:1-15** - a song of triumph following the crossing of the Red Sea
- ◆ **Deu 32, 33** - a song of exhortation to keep the Law after entering Canaan
- ◆ **Psa 90** - a song of meditation, reflection, and prayer

After Moses, the writing of Psalms had its “peaks” and “valleys”:

In **David** (1000 B.C.), the sacred lyric attained to its full maturity.

With **Solomon**, the creation of psalms began to decline; this was “the age of the proverb.”

Only twice after this did the creation of psalms rise to any height, and then only for a short period: under **Jehoshaphat** (875 B.C.) and again under **Hezekiah** (725 B.C.).

The Authors Of The Psalms

- ◆ **David** - Commonly thought to be the author of the book of Psalms, but he actually wrote only about seventy-three (73), less than half.
- ◆ **Asaph** - The music director during the reigns of David and Solomon (**1 Chr 16:1-7**). He wrote twelve (12) psalms.

- ♦ **The Sons of Korah** - These were Levites who served in the Temple (**1 Chr 26:1-19**). They wrote twelve (12) psalms.
- ♦ **Solomon** - At least two (2) psalms are attributed to him (**Psa 72, 127**). That he wrote many more is stated in **1 Kin 4:29-32**.
- ♦ **Moses** - As indicated above, he wrote the earliest psalms; one is included in Psalms (**Psa 90**).
- ♦ **Heman** - Contemporary with David and Asaph, and is known as “the singer” (**1 Chr 6:33**). He wrote one psalm (**Psa 88**) that has been preserved.
- ♦ **Ethan** - A companion with Asaph and Heman in the Temple worship (**1 Chr 15:19**). He wrote one psalm (**Psa 89**).
- ♦ **Anonymous** - The authorship of forty-eight (48) of the psalms is unknown.

The Arrangement Of The Psalms

The Psalms were originally collected into five “**books,**” apparently according to the material found within them:

Book I (Ps 1-41)
Book II (Ps 42-72)
Book III (Ps 73-89)
Book IV (Ps 90-106)
Book V (Ps 107-150)

The Psalms can also be arranged into chief “**groups**”:

- ♦ **Alphabetic or Acrostic** - These psalms have lines which in Hebrew start with words whose first letters follow a certain pattern. For example, in **Psa 119** the first eight lines start with words beginning with the Hebrew letter ALEPH, the second eight lines with words beginning with BETH, etc. This may have been done to aid in the memorization of the psalm.
- ♦ **Ethical** - These psalms teach moral principles (e.g., **Psa 15**).
- ♦ **Hallelujah** - These are psalms of praise, beginning and/or ending with “hallelujah” or “praise Jehovah” (e.g., **Psa 103**).
- ♦ **Historical** - Psalms which review the history of God's dealings with His people (e.g., **Psa 106**).
- ♦ **Imprecatory** - These psalms invoke God to bring punishment or judgment upon one's enemies (e.g., **Psa 69**).
- ♦ **Messianic** - Psalms pertaining to the coming Messiah (e.g., **Psa 2, 110**).

- ♦ **Penitential** - These are psalms expressing sorrow for sins that have been committed (e.g., **Psa 51**).
- ♦ **Songs Of Ascent (or Songs Of Degrees)** - These psalms were possibly sung by pilgrims on the way to Jerusalem to observe the feasts. They are grouped together as **Psa 120-134**.
- ♦ **Suffering** - These psalms are cries of those suffering affliction (e.g., **Psa 102**).
- ♦ **Thanksgiving** - Psalms of grateful praise to Jehovah for blessings received (e.g., **Psa 100**).

The various “**styles**” of the psalms can be described as...

- ♦ **Didactic** - Psalms of teaching and instruction (e.g., **Psa 1**).
- ♦ **Liturgical** - Responsive readings, for use in special services (e.g., **Psa 136**).
- ♦ **Meditation** - The ancient Hebrews were given to meditation, which spirit finds expression in many of the psalms (e.g., **Psa 119**).
- ♦ **Praise and Devotion** - Psalms of joyful praise (e.g., **Psa 148**).
- ♦ **Prayer and Petition** - Psalms which were sung in an attitude of prayer (e.g., **Psa 51**).

Hopefully, this brief background of the Book Of Psalms will help one gain a better feel and appreciation for this type of Scripture.

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE INTRODUCTION

- 1) **According to Ro 15:4, why was the Old Testament written?**
- 2) **According to 1 Co 10:11, why were the events in Old Testament times recorded?**
- 3) **As Paul reminded Timothy, of what value were the Scriptures (Old Testament) he had learned as a child? (cf. 2 Ti 3:14-15)**
- 4) **What is Scripture profitable for, including the Old Testament? (cf. 2 Ti 3:16-17)**

- 5) **What three Scriptures teach Christians to utilize the Psalms?**
- 6) **What are the Psalms capable of serving for the Christian?**
- 7) **What will be the aim of this study in the Psalms?**
- 8) **What three characteristics of Hebrew poetry were pointed out in this introduction?**
- 9) **List the five different types of “parallelism” described in this study.**
- 10) **What was the original meaning of the word "psalm"?**
- 11) **In New Testament worship, what is the instrument upon which melody is to be played? (cf. Ep 5:19)**
- 12) **Who wrote some of the earliest Psalms?**
- 13) **When did the writing of Psalms reach its peak?**
- 14) **List some of the authors who penned the Psalms in our Bible.**

15) List different “groups” into which the Psalms can be placed.

16) List the different “styles” of the Psalms.

The Book Of Psalms

Psalm 1 - The Truly Happy Man

OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS PSALM

- 1) To examine the blessedness of the righteous, in stark contrast to the desperation of the wicked
- 2) To note both the negative and positive elements that lead to the truly happy life
- 3) To note four examples of parallelism that are indicative of Hebrew poetry

SUMMARY

The first psalm, didactic in style, serves as an appropriate preface to the entire collection of psalms. Its theme can be described as “**The Truly Happy Man**” as it depicts the blessedness, or happiness, of the righteous man in contrast to the wicked.

The blessedness of the righteous man is described first from a negative perspective, in what he will not do. With the aid of stair-like progressive parallelism, the truly happy man is depicted as not allowing himself to be in the presence or under the influence of the wicked. Instead, he finds delight in meditating day and night on the law of the Lord. His blessedness is pictured as a healthy, fruitful tree, nourished by rivers of water. Whatever he does, he prospers (**1-3**).

The wicked, in stark contrast, are not so blessed. They are like chaff driven by the wind. In the judgment, they shall not be able to stand. Nor shall they be blessed to be in the congregation of the righteous (**4-5**).

The psalm ends with a contrast between the two “ways.” The way of the righteous is known (blessed, providentially cared for) by the Lord. The way of the ungodly shall perish, like a trail leading into a swamp that eventually disappears (**6**).

OUTLINE

I. THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE RIGHTEOUS MAN (1:1-3)

A. HIS CHARACTER (1-2)

1. Described from a negative point of view
 - a. Walks not in the counsel of the ungodly
 - b. Nor stands in the path of sinners - **Pro 4:14-15**
 - c. Nor sits in the seat of the scornful - **Psa 26:4-5**
2. Described from a positive perspective
 - a. His delight is in the law of the Lord - **Psa 40:8; 119:47,48; Jer 15:16**
 - b. In God's law he meditates day and night - **Psa 119:97-99**

B. HIS PROSPERITY (3)

- 8) **What example of parallelism, or thought rhyme, do we find in verse two?**
- 9) **What will such a blessed person be like? (3)**
- 10) **What example of parallelism, or thought rhyme, do we find in verse three?**
- 11) **What else is said about this blessed man? (3)**
- 12) **What are the ungodly like? (4)**
- 13) **What will not happen to the ungodly and sinners? (5)**
- 14) **How are the righteous and the wicked contrasted at the end of this psalm? (6)**
- 15) **What example of parallelism, or thought rhyme, do we find in verse six?**

The Book Of Psalms

Psalm 2 - The Ultimate Victory Of The Messiah

OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS PSALM

- 1) To note the Messianic nature of this psalm
- 2) To consider its fulfillment as expounded by Jesus and His apostles in the New Testament
- 3) To take comfort in knowing that the Messiah has ultimate control over world affairs

SUMMARY

This psalm is Messianic in nature, with its theme being “**The Ultimate Victory Of The Lord's Anointed.**” It is quoted by the apostles and early church in their prayer for help against persecution (cf. **Ac 4:24-30**), in which they applied it to the efforts of Pontius Pilate along with Gentiles and those of Israel who crucified Christ. From this reference in Acts we also learn that David was the author.

The psalm is divided into four sections (or strophes), in each of which there is a different voice that speaks. The first strophe begins with the psalmist observing the efforts of the nations and their leaders to resist the Lord and His Anointed. They declare their desire to break away from the cords that bind them (**1-3**). The second strophe depicts the Lord in heaven as laughing in derision over their futile efforts. In righteous anger He declares that despite their resistance He has installed His King (i.e., His Anointed One) on Zion, His holy hill (**4-6**).

In the third stanza or strophe, the Anointed One speaks, in which He declares the decree of the Lord. He is God’s begotten Son, who upon request is given the nations and ends of the earth as an inheritance which He will rule with a rod of iron (**7-9**). From Jesus and His apostles, we learn that this rule began when He ascended to heaven and sat down at the right hand of God (cf. **Mt 28:18; Ep 1:20-22; 1 Pe 3:22; Re 1:5; 2:26-27**).

The psalm ends with the fourth strophe containing the psalmist’s counsel of what the leaders of the nations should do: Worship the Lord with reverence, and do homage to the Son lest they incur His righteous anger. For all who put their trust in the Anointed One, they shall be blessed (**10-12**).

OUTLINE

I. THE NATIONS’ RESISTANCE (2:1-3)

A. THE PSALMIST’S INQUIRY (1)

1. Why do the nations rage?
2. Why do the people plot a vain thing?

B. THE PSALMIST’S OBSERVATION (2-3)

1. Against the Lord and His Anointed...

- a. The kings of the earth set themselves
- b. The rulers take counsel together
2. Against the Lord and His Anointed they say...
 - a. "Let us break Their bonds in pieces"
 - b. "(Let us) cast away Their cords from us"

II. THE LORD'S REJOINER (2:4-6)

A. THE LORD'S REACTION (4)

1. He who sits in the heaven shall laugh
2. The Lord shall hold them in deep derision

B. THE LORD'S REPLY (5-6)

1. He shall speak to them in His wrath
2. He will distress them in His deep displeasure
3. He will proclaim: "Yet I have set My King on My holy hill Of Zion"

III. THE MESSIAH'S RESPONSE (2:7-9)

A. THE DECREE GIVEN HIM (7)

1. "You are My Son"
2. "Today I have begotten You"

B. THE AUTHORITY GIVEN HIM (8-9)

1. The extent of His rule
 - a. "The nations for Your inheritance"
 - b. "The ends of the earth for Your possession"
2. The power of His rule
 - a. "You shall break them with a rod of iron"
 - b. "You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel"

IV. THE PSALMIST'S REPROACH (2:10-12)

A. TO KINGS AND JUDGES (10-11)

1. Be wise, be instructed
2. Serve the LORD with fear
3. Rejoice with trembling

B. TO THEM AND ALL (12)

1. Kiss the Son lest He be angry
 - a. And you perish [in] the way
 - b. When His wrath is kindled but a little.
2. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE PSALM

1) What are the main points of this psalm?

- 2) **Against whom are the kings and rulers taking counsel? (2)**
- 3) **What are the kings and rulers saying? (3)**
- 4) **What reaction does this prompt from the Lord in heaven? (4-5)**
- 5) **What will the Lord say to these kings and rulers? (6)**
- 6) **How will the Anointed One (i.e., the Messiah) respond? (7)**
- 7) **Who is the Anointed One? (7)**
- 8) **As applied by Paul, what “day” was the Messiah “begotten” by God? (7; cf. Ac 13:33)**
- 9) **What did the Lord promise His Anointed One? (8)**
- 10) **According to Jesus and His apostles, has He been given this authority? If so, when? (cf. Mt 28:18; Ep 1:20-22; 1 Pe 3:22; Re 1:5; 2:26-27)**
- 11) **What will He do to the nations with this authority? (9; cf. Re 2:26-27)**
- 12) **What wisdom and instruction does the psalmist give to kings and judges? (10-12)**
- 13) **What of those who put their trust in the Son? (12)**

The Book Of Psalms

Psalm 3 - A Morning Prayer For God's Protection

OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS PSALM

- 1) To note how historical events often served as the impetus for the writing of particular psalms
- 2) To observe the use and possible meaning of the word "Selah"
- 3) To consider how David trusted in the Lord to deliver him from his enemies

SUMMARY

The heading attributes this psalm to David, composed as he was fleeing from his son Absalom (cf. **2 Sam 15-18**). It is commonly called "**a morning hymn**" (cf. v. **5**) in which the psalmist prays for God's protection.

David addresses his complaint to the Lord, how there be many who trouble him. They even taunt him by saying there is no help from God for him (cf. the curses of Shimei, **2 Sam 16:5-8**). In this psalm (and in many others) we find the word "**Selah**." The exact meaning is unknown, but it may have served the purpose of providing some musical notation. It seems to be inserted where a pause is desirable for the singer or reader of the psalm to reflect upon the thought or statement just made (**1-2**).

Following his complaint is an expression of comfort received from the Lord in the past. Such consolation prompts him to view the Lord as a shield and his glory, the One who is able to lift up his head. Indeed, the Lord has heard his earlier cry and enabled him to sleep and awake. This gives him renewed courage to face his many enemies (cf. **2 Sam 18:7**), even though they numbered in the thousands (**3-6**).

As he starts the new day, he yet again calls upon the Lord to save him, even as He has done in the past. His "morning hymn" ends with the acknowledgment of God as the source of salvation and blessing for His people (**7-8**).

OUTLINE

I. DAVID'S COMPLAINT (3:1-2)

A. MANY TROUBLE HIM (1)

B. MANY RISE UP AGAINST HIM (2)

C. MANY SAY THERE IS NO HELP FROM GOD FOR HIM (2)

II. DAVID'S COMFORT (3:3-6)

A. WHAT GOD IS TO HIM (3)

1. His shield and glory
2. The One who lifts his head

B. WHAT GOD HAS DONE FOR HIM (4-6)

1. Heard his cry from His holy hill
2. Sustained him during sleep
3. Given him courage against ten thousands of men

III. DAVID'S CRY (3:7-8)

A. FOR DELIVERANCE BY GOD (7)

1. To arise and save him
2. As God has done in the past
 - a. Having struck his enemies on the cheekbone
 - b. Having broken the teeth of the ungodly

B. OF PRAISE TO GOD (8)

1. Salvation belongs to God
2. His blessing is upon His people

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE PSALM

- 1) **What are the main points of this psalm?**
- 2) **Who is the author of this psalm, and what occasion led to its composition?**
- 3) **What was David's complaint? (1)**
- 4) **What were people saying about David? Who in particular said such things? (2)**
- 5) **What is the meaning of the word "Selah"? (2)**
- 6) **How did David view God? (3)**

- 7) **What did David do, and what was God's response? (4)**

- 8) **What was David able to do because of God's sustaining him? (5)**

- 9) **What else did God make possible for David? (6)**

- 10) **For what does David pray? (7)**

- 11) **What had God done for David in the past? (7)**

- 13) **What does David attribute to the Lord? (8)**

The Book Of Psalms

Psalm 8 - The Song Of The Astronomer

OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS PSALM

- 1) To consider a beautiful example of a hymn of praise
- 2) To observe the use and possible meaning of the word “Gittith”
- 3) To note man’s dominion over the earth when created by God, but also that he lost it and has now been regained by Jesus Christ

SUMMARY

The heading attributes this psalm to David, with instructions to the Chief Musician to be sung “**upon Gittith.**” This may mean “after the tune of the treaders of the winepress” (Leupold) and refer to the joyful nature in which the workers sung. The psalm is certainly a hymn of delight, as are others with this word in the heading (**Psa 81, 84**). I second Spurgeon’s suggestion that this psalm can be called “**The Song Of The Astronomer**” as it seems to have been prompted while contemplating the night skies.

It begins praising God for His excellent name (i.e. character) and His glory in the earth and above the heavens. God’s glory is illustrated in the way He is able to use “babes” and “infants” (i.e., the frailest and weakest of men, e.g., **Mt 11:25; 1 Co 1:27**) to silence the enemy and the avenger (**1-2**).

David’s praise appears to have been sparked by comparing the work of God in the heavens with the seeming insignificance of man on the earth. Amazed that God would even be mindful of man, David noted that God created man a little lower than the angels, and even set man over the works of His hands, including the animals, birds, and fish (**3-8**). Of course, after the fall of man that dominion was lost, and has since been regained by Jesus Christ following His resurrection and ascension to heaven (cf. **He 2:5-9; Mt 28:19; Ep 1:20-22; 1 Pe 3:22**).

The psalm ends the way it began, praising the excellence of God’s name in all the earth, which is the proper response of His creation, especially man (**9**).

OUTLINE

I. GOD’S MAJESTY IN CREATION (8:1-2)

A. HIS NAME AND GLORY (1)

1. His name (character) exalted in all the earth
2. His glory set above the heavens

B. HIS POWER OVER ENEMIES (2)

1. Able to ordain strength from the mouths of babes and infants

2. And thereby silence the enemy and the avenger

II. MAN'S DIGNITY OVER CREATION (8:3-9)

A. MAN'S INSIGNIFICANCE (3-4)

1. In contrast to the heavens, the moon and stars
2. Amazed that God would consider man, even less care for him

B. MAN'S EXALTATION (5-8)

1. By virtue of his creation by God
 - a. Made a little lower than the angels
 - b. Crowned with glory and honor
2. By virtue of his place in creation
 - a. Given dominion over the works of God
 - b. All things placed under his feet
 - 1) Sheep, oxen, the beasts of the field
 - 2) The birds of the air
 - 3) The fish that pass through the paths of the sea

C. MAN'S RESPONSE (9)

1. To praise God!
2. For His excellent Name in all the earth!

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE PSALM

- 1) **What are the main points of this psalm?**
- 2) **Who is the author of this psalm?**
- 3) **For what does the Psalmist praise God? (1)**
- 4) **How has God chosen to silence the enemy and the avenger? (2)**
- 5) **What prompted the Psalmist's amazement over God's concern for man? (3-4)**
- 6) **How was man exalted when God created him? (5-6)**

7) What things were placed under man's feet? (7-8)

8) Has man maintained his dominion over the earth? (cf. He 2:5-8)

9) Who now has all authority over heaven and earth? (cf. He 2:9; Mt 28:19; Ep 1:20-22; 1 Pe 3:22)

10) Contemplating God's majesty and man's dignity, how does David end his psalm? (9)

The Book Of Psalms

Psalm 15 - The Marks Of A True Worshiper

OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS PSALM

- 1) To note the character of those whom God would have worship Him
- 2) To be reminded of basic principles of righteous conduct required by God

SUMMARY

The heading attributes this psalm to David, and may have been written in anticipation of the ark's restoration to Israel and establishment of public worship in Jerusalem (cf. **2 Sam 6:1-19**). It is didactic in nature, and is entitled by Leupold as “**The Marks Of A True Worshiper.**”

The psalm begins with two questions addressed to Jehovah (LORD), perhaps prompted by the incident involving Uzzah touching the ark when it was being transported improperly on the back of a cart (cf. **2 Sam 6:3-7; Num 4:5-15; 7:9**). Since no one could actually take up residence in the tabernacle, the inquiry could be paraphrased “Whom will You accept when he comes to Your house, O Lord?” (**1**).

The answer provided begins with a general description of a true worshiper as one who walks uprightly and works righteousness. More specifically, the true worshiper is one who does not lie (cf. **Ep 4:25**), backbite with his tongue (cf. **Ja 4:11**), do evil to his neighbor, or take up a reproach against his friend (cf. **Psa 101:5-8**). He despises a vile person, but honors those who fear the Lord (cf. **Psa 16:3; 119:63**). His upright character is illustrated by his unwillingness to go back on his word even if he has sworn to his own detriment (e.g., **Josh 9:18-20; Jud 11:35**). He also will not loan money at interest (cf. **Exo 22:25; Deu 23:19,20**), or take bribes (cf. **Exo 23:8**) against the innocent (**2-5a**).

The psalm ends with a declaration that one who does these things shall never be moved. This is because he is privileged to draw near to God (cf. **Psa 16:8**), and is reminiscent of the blessed man of Psalms 1 who prospers in every thing he does (**5b**).

OUTLINE

I. THE QUESTION POSED (15:1)

A. WHO MAY ABIDE IN THE LORD'S TABERNACLE? (1a)

B. WHO MAY DWELL IN HIS HOLY HILL? (1b)

II. THE ANSWER PROVIDED (15:2-5)

A. IN GENERAL TERMS (2a)

1. He who walks uprightly
2. He who works righteousness

The Book Of Psalms

Psalm 16 - David's Golden Secret

OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS PSALM

- 1) To observe the use and possible meaning of the word "Michtam"
- 2) To consider David's trust in the Lord and his preference for God's people
- 3) To note the Messianic prophecy of the resurrection of Christ

SUMMARY

The heading describes this psalm as **A Michtam of David**. The meaning of "Michtam" is uncertain, though rabbinical sources guess it to mean "a golden poem" (ISBE). Another suggestion is that it means "a mystery poem" (Leopold). The psalm does reveal David's refuge in life and hope in death, and so I have called it "**David's Golden Secret**".

David's secret was that he placed his trust in the LORD (Jehovah), along with delighting in His saints on the earth (God's people). He found the LORD to be a good inheritance, and sought to bless Him for His counsel. Having set the LORD always before him and at his right hand, David was confident he would not be moved (**1-8**).

David's secret was also that he had great joy and hope for the future, even for his flesh (body). The basis for his confidence appears at first that he (David) would not be left in Sheol (Hades, the realm of the dead) nor would he see corruption. Yet we learn from Peter and Paul that David was prophesying of the resurrection of the Messiah (cf. **Ac 2:25-31; 13:33-37**). Of course, Jesus' resurrection ensures that one day we (and David!) will also be raised from the dead (cf. **1 Co 15:20-23**), which serves as the basis for our hope (**1 Pe 1:3**). The psalm ends with a statement of confidence in the Lord's future provision and the blessings in His presence (**9-11**).

OUTLINE

I. HIS REFUGE IN LIFE (16:1-8)

A. THE LORD IS HIS LORD (1-4)

1. An introductory plea...
 - a. For God to preserve him
 - b. For he has placed his trust in God
2. The LORD is his Lord...
 - a. His goodness is nothing apart from Him
 - b. He delights in His saints, the excellent ones on the earth
3. Those who hasten after another god...
 - a. Their sorrows will be multiplied
 - b. He will not offer their drink offerings of blood

- c. He will not take up their names on his lips

B. THE LORD IS HIS PORTION (5-6)

1. His inheritance and his cup
2. Who maintains his lot...
 - a. The lines have fallen in pleasant places
 - b. He has a good inheritance

C. THE LORD IS HIS STRENGTH (7-8)

1. Whom he will bless for His counsel, and the instruction of his heart in the night seasons
2. Whom he has set before him at his right hand, so he shall not be moved

II. HIS HOPE IN DEATH (16:9-11)

A. HIS JOY AND ASSURANCE (9)

1. His heart is glad, his glory rejoices
2. His flesh also rests in hope

B. HIS HOPE OF THE RESURRECTION (10)

1. God will not leave his soul in Sheol
2. God will not allow His Holy One to see corruption

C. HIS ANTICIPATION OF THE FUTURE (11)

1. God will show him the paths of life
2. In His presence is fullness of joy
3. At His right hand are pleasures forevermore

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE PSALM

- 1) What are the main points of this psalm?
- 2) What are the possible meanings of the word “Michtam”?
- 3) Who is the author of this psalm?
- 4) In whom did David place his trust? (1)
- 5) In whom did David find great delight? (3)
- 6) What happens to those who hasten after another god? (4)

7) What did David consider as the portion of his inheritance? (5)

8) Why does David bless the Lord? (7)

9) What had David done? What was the result? (8)

10) What was David's attitude regarding the future? (9)

11) To whom is verse 10 applied to by Peter in Acts 2?

12) What will be found in God's presence and at His right hand? (11)

The Book Of Psalms

Psalm 19 - God's Two Books

OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS PSALM

- 1) To note two ways God has made Himself known to mankind
- 2) To be impressed with the value of God's revealed Will, i.e., the Word of God
- 3) To be reminded of the need for sanctification, and not just forgiveness

SUMMARY

This well-known psalm of David might be appropriately titled “**God's Two Books,**” for in it we are told how God has expressed Himself in two different ways.

Through the **book of creation**, the glory and handiwork of God are made known as one observes the heavens and firmament. Day and night “speaks” to the whole world if people will just listen (cf. **Ro 1:20**). As an illustration of the pervasive nature of this revelation, the sun passes through the heavens from one end to the other, like a joyful bridegroom or a strong runner. There is no place hidden from its heat (**1-6**).

While one might learn of God's power and the fact of His deity through nature, we learn of His Will for man only through His **book of revelation**, i.e., the Word of God. Using different synonyms for God's Word (law, testimony, statutes, etc.), David extols its virtue and impact upon the soul and well-being of man. He praises its value as worth more than much gold, and sweeter than honey (**7-11**).

The psalm ends with a prayer that is a proper response of one who has been influenced by both “books.” Acknowledging the challenge of knowing one's own secret sins (cf. **Psa 40:12; Lev 5: 15-17**), and the danger of sinning presumptuously (cf. **Num 15:30-31; Deu 17:12-13**), David prays for cleansing and help that he might be blameless and innocent. But he desires more than just forgiveness, David prays that his future words and thoughts will always be acceptable in the sight of the Lord, the source of his strength and redemption (**12-14**).

OUTLINE

I. THE GLORY OF GOD IN CREATION (19:1-6)

A. DECLARED BY THE SKIES (1-4a)

1. The heavens declare God's glory
2. The firmaments shows His handwork
3. The days and nights speak of His knowledge
 - a. Such speech is universal
 - b. Its distribution is worldwide

B. DEMONSTRATED BY THE SUN (4b-6)

1. The skies are like a tabernacle for the sun
2. The sun passes through the skies
 - a. Like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber
 - b. Like a strong man rejoices in anticipation of his race
3. The effect of the sun is universal
 - a. From one end of heaven to the other
 - b. Nothing is hidden from its heat

II. THE GIFT OF GOD IN REVELATION (19:7-11)

A. THE VIRTUE OF GOD'S WORD (7-9)

1. The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul
2. The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple
3. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart
4. The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes
5. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever
6. The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous forever

B. THE VALUE OF GOD'S WORD (10-11)

1. More desirable than much fine gold
2. Sweeter than honey and the honeycomb
3. By them God's servant is warned
4. Keeping them has great reward

III. THE GRACE OF GOD IN SANCTIFICATION (19:12-14)

A. A PRAYER FOR PURIFICATION (12)

1. The difficulty of understanding (knowing) one's errors
2. Plea for cleansing from secret faults (sins of which one is not aware)

B. A PRAYER FOR PREVENTION (13)

1. Plea to be kept from the domination of presumptuous sins (sins of which one is aware)
2. Then one shall be blameless and innocent of great transgression

C. A PRAYER FOR PERFECTION (14)

1. That the words of his mouth and the meditation of his heart be acceptable in His sight
2. Addressed to the Lord, the source of his strength and his redemption

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE PSALM

1) **What are the main points of this psalm?**

2) **Who is the author of this psalm?**

- 3) **What is the character or style of this psalm?**
- 4) **What declares God's glory, and shows His handiwork? (1)**
- 5) **What speaks knowledge about God's glory? (2)**
- 6) **Where is this knowledge of God's glory heard? (3-4)**
- 7) **What provides an illustration of the pervasive reach of God's glory? (4b-6)**
- 8) **What six synonyms are used for the Word of God? (7-9)**
- 9) **What six attributes and benefits describe the Word of God? (7-9)**
- 10) **How does David compare the value of God's Word? (10)**
- 11) **What two things are true of the words of God? (11)**
- 12) **What concern does David have regarding "secret faults"? (12)**
- 13) **For what does he pray concerning "presumptuous sins"? (13)**

14) What is David's prayer as he closes the psalm? (14)

15) How does David view God? (14)

The Book Of Psalms

Psalm 22 - The Victorious Sufferer

OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS PSALM

- 1) To note the messianic nature of this psalm fulfilled in the crucifixion of Jesus
- 2) To be impressed with its literal fulfillment, and the insight it gives us into how Jesus must have felt as
He hung on the cross
- 3) To see what gave the psalmist confidence that God would hear his cry for deliverance

SUMMARY

This psalm of David could be called “**The Psalm Of The Cross,**” as much of the suffering described in it was literally fulfilled in the crucifixion of Jesus Christ (though it may also relate to sufferings experienced by David). Where the four gospel writers provide a description of Jesus’ sufferings from the viewpoint of witnesses, this messianic psalm reveals His suffering from the viewpoint of Jesus Himself.

The heading indicates the psalm was set to “**The Deer of the Dawn.**” No one really knows what this refers to, though it may be the name of a tune known by the Chief Musician.

The psalm begins with a cry that was uttered by Jesus on the cross (**Mt 27:46**). The first half of the psalm depicts a sufferer surrounded by enemies who feels forsaken by God. While much of the suffering is described figuratively (“Many bulls have surrounded me”), some of it was literally fulfilled. Not only the words of Jesus in verse 1, but also the very words of the chief priests and scribes who mocked while Jesus hung on the cross (**Mt 27:43**). There is also the piercing of the hands and feet, the dividing of the garments (**Mt 27:35**). As the psalmist cries out for deliverance, he also expresses hope based upon God’s faithfulness in the past. At the end of the first half, the psalmist declares that God has answered him (**1-21**).

The second half of the psalm expresses the joy of “**The Victorious Sufferer.**” He will gladly praise God for hearing him and providing deliverance. He encourages all those who fear God to praise and glorify Him, confident that God’s blessings will extend to many nations and to people not yet born. This is because the kingdom is the Lord’s, and He rules over the nations (**22-31**).

OUTLINE

I. THE SUFFERER FORSAKEN BY GOD (22:1-21)

A. HIS FORLORN CRY (1-2)

1. Why has God forsaken him? Why does God not help?
2. Day and night his cry is made...why does God not hear?

B. HIS HOPE FOR DELIVERANCE (3-5)

1. God is holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel
2. The fathers trusted in God, and He delivered them
3. They cried to Him, and God did not disappoint them

C. HIS TORMENT BY OTHERS (6-8)

1. Reduced to be like a worm, not a man
2. The object of derision, despised by others
3. Ridiculed, he is taunted by those who mock his trust in God

D. HIS FAITH IN GOD (9-11)

1. He acknowledges that God has been with him since birth
2. He looks to God as his only helper

E. HIS SUFFERING DESCRIBED (12-18)

1. Depiction of his enemies
 - a. They surround him like strong bulls of Bashan
 - b. Their mouths opened like a raging and roaring lion
2. Depiction of his suffering
 - a. Poured out like water, bones out of joint
 - b. Heart like wax, melted within him
 - c. Strength dried up, tongues clinging to his jaws
 - d. Brought to the dust of death
3. The suffering imposed by his enemies
 - a. Like dogs, they surround him; like evildoers they encircle him
 - b. They have pierced his hands and feet
 - c. He can count all his bones, while they feast their eyes on him
 - d. They divide his garments, and cast lots for his clothing

F. HIS FINAL CRY (19-21)

1. For God not to be far off
 - a. For He who is his strength to hasten and help him
 - b. For Him to deliver his life from the sword, his precious life from the power of the dog
 - c. For Him to save him from the lion's mouth and horns of wild oxen
2. A sudden declaration that God has answered him!

II. THE SUFFERER DELIVERED BY GOD (22:22-31)

A. GOD BE PRAISED! (22-25)

1. The sufferer will praise God
 - a. Proclaiming His name to his brethren
 - b. Praising Him in the middle of the assembly
2. Let those who fear God praise Him
 - a. Let the descendants of Jacob honor Him
 - b. Let the descendants of Israel stand in awe of Him
3. Reasons for such praise
 - a. God has not despised or abhorred his affliction

- b. God has not hidden His face from him, but hearkened to his cry
- 4. The sufferer will praise God and pay his vows
 - a. In the great assembly
 - b. Before them that fear Him

B. GOD BE WORSHIPPED! (26-31)

- 1. By the meek, and those that seek the Lord
 - a. They shall be eat and be satisfied
 - b. They shall praise Him
- 2. By those from the ends of the earth
 - a. Who shall bear these things in mind and return to the Lord
 - b. All families of the nations will bow down before Him
 - c. For the kingdom is the Lord's, and He is the Ruler among the nations
- 3. By the prosperous and the dead
 - a. The prosperous will eat, and worship Him
 - b. The dying shall bow before Him
- 4. By the generations to come
 - a. Posterity shall serve him
 - b. For men shall tell of what God has done
 - c. People yet born shall hear of God's justice

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE PSALM

- 1) **What are the main points of this psalm?**
- 2) **Who is the author of this psalm?**
- 3) **What is the nature of this psalm?**
- 4) **When did Jesus quote the first verse of Psalm 22?**
- 5) **Upon what basis does the psalmist hope for deliverance? (3-5)**
- 6) **What scornful remark in the psalm were also expressed at Jesus' crucifixion? (8)**
- 7) **Upon what basis does the psalmist have faith in God's help? (9-11)**
- 8) **What two metaphors are used to describe the enemies of the psalmist? (12-13)**

- 9) **How does the psalmist describe his bodily suffering? (14-15)**

- 10) **What two things did the enemies do to the psalmist that were literally fulfilled at the crucifixion of Jesus? (16-18)**

- 11) **As the psalmist makes another cry for deliverance, how does he indicate that God has helped him? (19-21)**

- 12) **What does the psalmist promise to do in response to God's deliverance? (22,25)**

- 13) **What does the psalmist call upon people to do? Why? (23-24)**

- 14) **As the psalm nears its end, what eight things does the psalmist say will happen? (25-31)**

- 15) **Why is the psalmist confident that such things will occur? (28)**

The Book Of Psalms

Psalm 23 - The Shepherd Psalm

OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS PSALM

- 1) To remind ourselves of the wonderful provision, protection, and preservation the Lord furnishes His people
- 2) To note how this psalm foreshadows the blessings provided by “The Good Shepherd”, Jesus Christ

SUMMARY

This much-beloved psalm of David makes use of the **Shepherd** motif to describe the deep faith and hope available to the child of God, made possible the watchful care of the Lord. It also mixes other metaphors, especially that of a gracious **Host**.

As outlined below, David begins by illustrating the **provision** of the Lord, both physical and spiritual (**1-3**). David then describes the **protection** of the Lord, as he travels through dangerous places and in the presence of enemies (**4-5**). The psalm ends with an expression of faith and hope in the Lord’s **preservation**, that God will furnish the goodness and mercy needed throughout life, so that he made abide in the house of the Lord forever (**6**).

The Christian sees in this psalm a wonderful foreshadowing of “**The Good Shepherd**”, Jesus Christ, who gave His life for His sheep and even now watches over them (cf. **Jn 10:11-15; He 13:20; 1 Pe 2:21-25; 5:4**).

A good follow-up to this psalm is **Psalm 100**, which expresses the praise we should render to God as His people and the sheep of His pasture.

OUTLINE

I. THE SHEPHERD’S PROVISION (23:1-3)

A. NO LACK OF PHYSICAL NECESSITIES (1-2)

1. The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want (cf. **Lk 12:22-32**)
2. He makes me to lie down in green pastures
3. He leads me beside the still waters (cf. **Re 7:17**)

B. NO LACK OF SPIRITUAL NECESSITIES (3)

1. He restores my soul (cf. **Re 3:19**)
2. He leads me in the paths of righteousness, for His name’s sake (cf. **1 Co 10:13**)

II. THE SHEPHERD’S PROTECTION (23:4-5)

A. THROUGH THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH (4)

1. I will fear no evil, for He is with me (cf. **He 13:5-6**)
2. His rod and staff comfort me (cf. **He 12:5-11**)

B. IN THE PRESENCE OF ENEMIES (5)

1. He prepares a table before me in their presence (cf. **Jn 16:33**)
2. He anoints my head with oil, my cup runs over (cf. **Ep 3:20**)

III. THE SHEPHERD'S PRESERVATION (23:6)

A. ALL THE DAYS OF ONE'S LIFE (6a)

1. Surely goodness and mercy will follow me
2. All the days of my life (cf. **2 Ti 4:18**)

B. FOREVER (6b)

1. I will dwell in the house of the Lord
2. Forever (cf. **Jn 14:1-3**)

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE PSALM

- 1) **What are the main points of this psalm?**
- 2) **Who is the author of the psalm?**
- 3) **What is the main figure used in this psalm? The main idea? (1)**
- 4) **How does David illustrate the physical necessities provided by the Lord? (2)**
- 5) **How does David describe the spiritual necessities provided by the Lord? (3)**
- 6) **What protection or comfort does the Lord provide when one walks through the valley of the shadow of death? (4)**
- 7) **What provisions does the Lord furnish in the presence of one's enemies? (5)**

8) What does the Lord provide to ensure that He will preserve us in this life? (6)

9) What wonderful hope do we have for eternity? (6)

The Book Of Psalms

Psalm 27 - Light And Salvation In Dark Times

OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS PSALM

- 1) To glean David's source of strength and courage in difficult times
- 2) To learn where to turn when persecuted by enemies or forsaken by family

SUMMARY

This psalm is ascribed to David, evidently written in a time of danger (12). It may have been prompted by the help provided by Ahimelech the priest, and the opposition of Doeg the Edomite, who saw David at the tabernacle and later reported him to Saul (cf. **1 Sam 21:1-10; 22:9**). This was also a time when David sought protection for his parents (cf. **1 Sam 22:3**) which may have left David feeling abandoned (10).

As always, David found the LORD to be his **"Light And Salvation In Dark Times"**. The first part of the psalm expresses **his confident trust** in the LORD for blessings received in the past, and his desire to dwell in the house of the LORD who will protect him in the future (1-6). In the second part David offers **an anxious plea** for God's mercy and deliverance from his enemies (7-12). It ends with **a confession** that he would have lost heart without faith in God's goodness, and **an exhortation** to wait on the Lord for strength and courage of heart (13-14).

OUTLINE

I. CONFIDENT TRUST IN TIME OF DANGER (27:1-6)

A. CONFIDENCE IN THE LORD (1-3)

1. Of whom shall David be afraid?
 - a. When the LORD is his light and salvation
 - b. When the LORD is the strength of his life
2. The LORD's help in the past
 - a. When the wicked, his enemies and foes came against him
 - b. They stumbled and fell
3. The LORD's help in the future
 - a. Though encamped by an army in time of war
 - b. His heart will not fear, it remains confident in the LORD

B. COMMUNION WITH GOD (4-6)

1. The one thing he desires of the LORD
 - a. To dwell in His house all his life
 - b. To behold His beauty, and inquire in His temple
2. The reason for David's fervent desire
 - a. In time of trouble the LORD will hide him

- 1) In His pavilion
- 2) In the secret place of His tabernacle
- b. The LORD will set him high upon a rock
3. His response to being lifted high above his enemies
 - a. To offer sacrifices of joy in His tabernacle
 - b. To sing praises to the LORD

II. ANXIOUS PRAYER IN TIME OF DANGER (27:7-12)

A. PLEA FOR MERCY (7-10)

1. David's cry to the LORD
 - a. To hear when he cries with his voice
 - b. To have mercy and answer him
 - c. For his heart responded to the LORD saying "Seek My face"
2. David's plea to the LORD
 - a. Do not hide His face from him
 - b. Do not turn His servant away in anger, for He has been his help
 - c. Do not leave or forsake him, for He is the God of his salvation
3. David's hope in the LORD
 - a. When forsaken by his parents
 - b. The LORD will take care of him

B. PLEA FOR DELIVERANCE (11-12)

1. David's request for guidance from the LORD
 - a. To teach him His way
 - b. To lead him in a smooth path, because of his enemies
2. David's reason for asking the LORD for deliverance from his adversaries
 - a. For false witnesses have risen against him
 - b. Such as breathe out violence

III. REASSURING SELF IN TIME OF DANGER (27:13-14)

A. NEED FOR FAITH IN THE LORD (13)

1. He would have lost heart unless he believed
2. That he would see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living

B. NEED TO WAIT ON THE LORD (14)

1. To be of good courage
2. He shall strengthen your heart

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE PSALM

- 1) **What are the main points of this psalm?**

- 2) **What does David offer as the solution to fear? (1)**

- 3) **Why would David not fear though an army may encamp him? (2-3)**

- 4) **What did David earnestly desire of the Lord? (4)**

- 5) **Why did David desire such fellowship with God? (5)**

- 6) **How would David respond to victory over his enemies? (6)**

- 7) **Why did David hope for the LORD to hear his prayer and have mercy on him? (7-9)**

- 8) **Who would take care of David when forsaken by his parents? (10)**

- 9) **What did David ask for when enemies and false witnesses rose against him? (11-12)**

- 10) **What prevented David from losing heart? (13)**

- 11) **What is the key to being of good courage? (14)**

The Book Of Psalms

Psalm 32 - The Blessedness Of Confessing Sin

OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS PSALM

- 1) To note the connection between this psalm and **Psalm 51**
- 2) To observe the use and possible meaning of the word “Maschil”
- 3) To be impressed with the importance of confessing our sins to God

SUMMARY

This psalm was written by David (cf. **Ro 4:6-8**) and is generally thought to have been composed after he received forgiveness in the matter of Bathsheba (cf. **2 Sam 11:1-12:15**). In seeking forgiveness, he had promised to “teach transgressors Your ways” (cf. **Psa 51:13**), and with this psalm he fulfill his promise. The heading calls this psalm a “**Maschil**,” possibly meaning a poem of contemplation or meditation. It certainly qualifies as a didactic or instructive psalm (cf. **Psa 32:8**).

It begins with stating the blessedness or joy of forgiveness, where the Lord does not count one's sins against him, and in whose spirit there is no guile (**1-2**). What led David to this conclusion was first the curse of remaining silent, in which he experienced both physical and emotional stress. This was partly due to the guilt of sin itself, but David also mentions the chastening hand of the Lord upon him (**3-4**).

But then he confessed his sin to the Lord, and the Lord forgave him. This prompts Dave to bless (speak well of) God as a source of protection easily found by the godly in time of trouble, Who will surround him with songs of deliverance (**5-7**).

The psalm ends with David (though some think it is God speaking) offering to instruct and teach one in the way he should go (cf. **Psa 51:13**). With a caution not to be like the mule or horse which lacks understanding and must be drawn near, David contrasts the sorrows of the wicked with the mercy that will surround him who puts his trust in the Lord. This ought to cause the righteous to be glad in the Lord, and the upright in heart to shout for joy (**8-11**).

OUTLINE

I. THE JOY OF FORGIVENESS (32:1-2)

A. THE BLESSED MAN (1-2a)

1. Is the one whose transgression is forgiven
2. Is the one whose sin is covered
3. Is the one to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity

B. THE GUILLELESS MAN (2)

1. Is the one whose sins have been forgiven as described

2. In whose spirit there is no deceit (for he has nothing to hide!) - cf. **Re 14:5**

II. THE CURSE OF SILENCE (32:3-4)

A. SUFFERING THE EFFECTS OF SIN (3)

1. The psalmist remained silent about his sin
2. The psalmist groaned all day long, his bones wasting away

B. EXPERIENCING THE CHASTISEMENT OF THE LORD (4)

1. The heavy hand of the Lord was upon him day and night - cf. **Psa 38:1-11; 39:10-11**
2. His strength sapped as in the heat of summer

III. THE BENEFIT OF CONFESSION (32:5-7)

A. DAVID CONFESSED HIS SIN (5a)

1. He decided to acknowledge his sin to God
2. He chose to no longer hide his sin
3. He confessed his transgressions to the Lord

B. THE LORD FORGAVE, AND DAVID BLESSED (5b-7)

1. The Lord forgave David the iniquity of his sin
2. David blesses (speaks wells of) God for His forgiveness
 - a. For this reason everyone who is godly shall pray to Him
 - 1) In a time when He may be found
 - 2) In a flood of great waters, they shall not come near
 - b. God is his hiding place
 - 1) He shall preserve him from trouble
 - 2) He shall surround him with songs of deliverance

IV. THE VALUE OF TRUST (32:8-11)

A. DAVID PROPOSES TO INSTRUCT THE READER (8-9)

1. To teach one the way he (or she) should go
2. To guide one with his eye (his insight? perspective?)
3. With a caution not to be like the horse or mule
 - a. Which has no understanding
 - b. Which has to be harnessed, or they will not come near

B. THE VALUE OF TRUSTING IN THE LORD (10-11)

1. Many sorrows will be to the wicked
2. Mercy will surround the one who trusts in the Lord
 - a. Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, you righteous!
 - b. Shout for joy, all you upright in heart!

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE PSALM

- 1) What are the main points of this psalm?

- 2) **What is the condition of the blessed man described in this psalm? (1-2)**

- 3) **What had been the affect of keeping silent about his sin? (3-4)**

- 4) **What did he then decided to do? What was the result? (5)**

- 5) **What will the godly do when in need of forgiveness? (6)**

- 6) **What blessings does God provide for those who put their trust in Him? (6-7)**

- 7) **What does David (or perhaps God) offer to do in this psalm? (8)**

- 8) **What warning is given concerning those who read this psalm? (9)**

- 9) **What antithetical statements are made concerning the wicked and those who trust in the Lord? (10)**

- 10) **What are the righteous and upright in heart called upon to do? (11)**

The Book Of Psalms

Psalm 37 - The Meek Shall Inherit The Earth

OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS PSALM

- 1) To learn why we should not fret, become angry, or be envious of the wicked when they prosper
- 2) To see the importance of trusting in the Lord and committing our ways to Him
- 3) To note the context from which came the beatitude “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.”

SUMMARY

This psalm of David is didactic in nature, filled with instruction for God’s people. It was evidently written late in life, in which David shares his observations (25). A recurring theme is who will inherit the earth (9,11,22,29,34), and the answer of the psalmist is one of the beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount (cf. Mt 5:5). From the context of the psalm, we might understand the beatitude to refer to blessings in this life for those who trust in God (cf. Mt 6:33; Mk 10:29-30). Not that they may literally possess more of this earth’s riches, but their ability to enjoy it is blessed by God (16; cf. Ecc 5:19-6:2).

Acrostic in the original Hebrew, the psalm is somewhat difficult to outline. It begins with a series of exhortations directed to the righteous, to trust in the Lord and not fret or be angry when the wicked prosper (1-8). It continues with an exposition contrasting the wicked and the righteous, illustrating the futility of the wicked and the steadfastness of the righteous (9-26). It ends with counsel for one to do good and depart from evil, to wait on the Lord and keep His way, and to take careful note of the future of the righteous as opposed to the end of the wicked (27-40).

OUTLINE

I. EXHORTATION FOR THE RIGHTEOUS (37:1-8)

A. DO NOT ENVY EVILDOERS (1-2)

1. Do not fret nor be envious of the workers of iniquity
2. They shall soon wither and be cut away

B. PUT YOUR FAITH IN THE LORD (3-8)

1. Trust in the Lord and do good
 - a. Dwell in the land, feeding on His faithfulness
 - b. Delight in the Lord, who will give you the desires of your heart
2. Commit your way to the Lord, trusting in Him
 - a. He shall bring your plans to pass
 - b. He shall bring forth your righteousness and justice
3. Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him
 - a. Do not fret because of the prosperous or wicked

- b. Cease from anger, wrath and worry, it only causes harm

II. EXPOSITION ON THE WICKED AND RIGHTEOUS (37:9-26)

A. THE FUTILITY OF THE WICKED (9-17)

1. The wicked shall be cut off and be no more
 - a. While those who wait on the Lord shall inherit the earth
 - b. While the meek shall inherit the earth and enjoy an abundance of peace
2. The wicked shall be defeated
 - a. Despite their plots against the just and gnashing of teeth
 - 1) The Lord laughs
 - 2) He sees their day coming
 - b. Despite their weapons against the poor and righteous
 - 1) Which they have drawn to cast down and slay
 - 2) Which shall enter their own hearts and be broken
3. Better than the riches of the wicked is the poverty of the righteous
 - a. The arms of the wicked shall be broken
 - b. The Lord will uphold the righteous

B. THE STEADFASTNESS OF THE RIGHTEOUS (18-26)

1. The LORD knows the days of the righteous
 - a. Their inheritance shall be forever
 - b. They shall not be ashamed in the evil time
 - c. They shall be satisfied in the days of famine
2. The wicked and enemies of the LORD shall perish
 - a. They shall vanish like the splendor of the meadows
 - b. They shall vanish away like smoke
3. The righteous shows mercy and gives, the wicked who borrows and does not repay
 - a. For those blessed by the Lord shall inherit the earth
 - b. While those cursed by Him shall be cut off
4. The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD
 - a. The Lord delights in his way
 - b. Even though he falls, he is not utterly cast down
 - c. For the Lord upholds him with His hand

III. COUNSEL FOR THE RIGHTEOUS (37:27-40)

A. DEPART FROM EVIL, DO GOOD, AND DWELL IN THE LAND (27-33)

1. For the LORD loves justice and does not forsake His saints
 - a. They are preserved, while the wicked shall be cut off
 - b. The righteous shall inherit the land and dwell in it forever
2. The virtues of the righteous
 - a. His mouth speaks wisdom, his tongue talks of justice
 - b. The law of his God is in his heart, none of his steps shall slide
3. The protection of the LORD
 - a. Despite the attempts of the wicked to slay the righteous
 - b. The LORD will not leave him in his hand, nor condemn him when he is judged

- 9) **What will happen to the wicked and the enemies of the LORD? (20)**

- 10) **What difference is noted between the wicked and righteous concerning money? (21)**

- 11) **What is said about the steps of a good man? (23-24)**

- 12) **What observation has the psalmist made in life? (25-26)**

- 13) **Why should we depart from evil and do good? (27-29)**

- 14) **What is noted about the mouth and heart of the righteous? (30-31)**

- 15) **Who protects the righteous from the wicked? (32-33)**

- 16) **What is one exhorted to do in verse 34? Why?**

- 17) **What has the psalmist seen? (35-36)**

- 18) **What are we told to notice about the blameless and upright man? The wicked? (37-38)**

- 19) **What is said about the righteous in the last two verses? (39-40)**

- 20) **Why will the LORD save the righteous? (40)**

The Book Of Psalms

Psalm 38 - The Penitent Plea Of A Sick Man

OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS PSALM

- 1) To note the physical consequences that may often follow sin
- 2) To consider the connection David made between his illness and God's chastening for sin

SUMMARY

This is a penitential psalm, a prayer for deliverance from God's chastening for his sins. Physical ailments have come upon David because of sin, which he perceived as God's righteous anger (3). The impact of the illness on his body was devastating (5-10). It affected his relationship with family and loved ones (11), while his enemies used it as opportunity to plot against him (12,16,19-20).

The heading says **"To Bring To Remembrance."** This may mean to remind God of His mercy, as its preface here and in Psalm 70 both introduce pleas for God to make haste in providing deliverance (cf. 22; 70:1,5). Leupold suggests that **Psalms 38** may have been written after **Psalms 51** and **32**, following the events surrounding David's sin with Bathsheba. While forgiven of his sin, David was told he would still suffer consequences (2 Sam 12:10-14). If David contracted a venereal disease due to his sin (7), he may have viewed it as a form of chastening from which he sought deliverance. Whatever the nature of his illness, this psalm is the penitent plea of a sick man who understood that he was suffering because of his sin and God's anger.

OUTLINE

INTRODUCTORY PLEA FOR MERCY (38:1-2)

A. THAT THE LORD NOT... (1)

1. Rebuke him in His wrath
2. Chasten him in His hot displeasure

B. FOR THE LORD HAS... (2)

1. Pierced him deeply with His arrows
2. Pressed him down with His hand

I. THE WRETCHEDNESS OF HIS CONDITION (38:3-12)

A. ILLNESS BECAUSE OF SIN AND GOD'S ANGER (3-10)

1. Because of his foolish sin and God's anger...
 - a. There is no soundness in his flesh, no health in his bones
 - b. His iniquities are a heavy burden
 - c. His wounds are foul and festering
2. Description of his illness

- a. Troubled, bowed down greatly, mourning all day long
- b. Loins full of inflammation, no soundness in his flesh
- c. Feeble and broken, groaning because the turmoil of his heart
- d. Heart pants, strength fails him
- e. The light of his eyes has gone from him

B. MISTREATMENT BY FRIENDS AND ENEMIES (11-12)

1. Forsaken by those close to him
 - a. Loved ones and friends stand aloof from his plague
 - b. Relatives stand far off
2. Plotted against by his enemies
 - a. Those who seek his life lay snares
 - b. Those who seek his hurt speak of destruction

II. THE BASIS FOR HIS HOPE THAT GOD WILL HEAR (38:13-20)

A. OTHERWISE ENEMIES WILL REJOICE (13-16)

1. His response to this abuse
 - a. Like a deaf man he does not hear
 - b. Like a mute he does not respond
2. His hope is the Lord that He will hear
 - a. Since his enemies will rejoice if he falls
 - b. Since they will exalt themselves if he slips

B. SORROW AND CONFESSION OF SIN (17-18)

1. He is ready to fall, his sorrow continually before him
2. He will declare his iniquity, be in anguish over his sin

C. PERSISTENCE IN DOING GOOD (19-20)

1. His enemies are strong, those who hate him wrongfully are multiplied
2. They render evil for good, they are his adversaries because he follows what is good

CONCLUDING PLEA FOR HELP (38:21-22)

A. TO NOT FORSAKE HIM NOR BE FAR FROM HIM (21)

B. TO MAKE HASTE TO HELP HIM (22)

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE PSALM

1) What are the main points of this psalm?

- 2) **For what does David plead? Yet what has already occurred? (1-2)**
- 3) **To what two things does David attribute his poor condition? (3)**
- 4) **What does David acknowledge as the cause of his “heavy burden” and “wounds”? (4-5)**
- 5) **What two descriptive phrases may imply some sort of venereal disease? (6-7)**
- 6) **What other symptoms does David describe? (8-10)**
- 7) **What is said of his loved ones, friends, and relatives? (11)**
- 8) **What about those who seek his life? (12)**
- 9) **How does David respond to this mistreatment by others? (13-14)**
- 10) **In whom does David put his trust? (15)**
- 11) **Upon what three things does David base his plea to be heard? (16-20)**
- 12) **What is David’s concluding plea? How does David view the LORD? (21-22)**

The Book Of Psalms

Psalm 51 - The Penitent's Prayer

OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS PSALM

- 1) To learn “the art of confessing our sins” from the example of David confessing his sins
- 2) To consider whether one can rightly argue for “total hereditary depravity” based upon the figurative language in verse 5

SUMMARY

This psalm was written by David when Nathan had come to him after committing adultery with Bathsheba and murdering her husband Uriah (cf. **2 Sam 11:1- 12:15**). It is an outstanding example of a “penitential psalm” (cf. also **Psa 6, 38, 130**) in which David confesses his sin and prays for forgiveness. We do well to learn from it “the art of confessing our sins” to help us when we have sins to confess to God (cf. **1 Jn 1:9**).

David begins with **his plea** for God to forgive him, appealing to His loving kindness and tender mercy. Note that he does not ask God to forgive him based upon any good he may have done in the past. He acknowledges his sin against God (in very figurative terms), and how it is contrary to God's desire for him. He prays not only for God to cleanse him, but also to renew and restore to him the joy of salvation (**1-12**).

David's plea is followed by **his promise** to teach other sinners, that they too might be converted to God. He promises also to sing aloud of God's righteousness, for he knows that God delights in such when it comes from a broken and contrite spirit (**13-17**).

The psalm ends with **his prayer** for God to do good for Zion and Jerusalem, that He might be pleased by the burnt offerings offered on the altar. Note that David has not forgotten to pray for God's interest, while praying for his own (**18-19**).

This penitential psalm should be studied along with **Psalm 32**, in which David describes the blessedness and joy of one who has received the forgiveness prayed for in this psalm.

OUTLINE

I. DAVID'S PLEA (51:1-12)

A. HIS APPEAL TO GOD'S LOVE AND MERCY (1-2)

1. He pleads mercy according to God's loving kindness
2. He implores forgiveness according to God's tender mercies
3. He begs washing and cleansing from his sin

B. HIS CONFESSION OF SINFUL CONDUCT (3-4)

1. He admits his sin which is ever before him
2. He confesses that he has sinned against God, and done evil in His sight
3. God is just and blameless in judging him

C. HIS ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF GOD'S DESIRE (5-6)

1. His expression of sinfulness
 - a. He was brought forth in iniquity
 - b. In sin his mother conceived him
2. His awareness of what God's desire
 - a. God wants truth in the inward parts
 - b. God wills to make him know wisdom in the hidden part

D. HIS PRAYER FOR FORGIVENESS AND RESTORATION (7-12)

1. He prays for forgiveness, for God to...
 - a. Purge him with hyssop, that he might be clean
 - b. Wash him, that he might be whiter than snow
 - c. Hide His face from his sins
 - d. Blot out all his iniquities
2. He prays for restoration, for God to...
 - a. Make him hear joy and gladness
 - b. Make his broken bones rejoice
 - c. Create in him a clean heart
 - d. Renew a steadfast spirit in him
 - e. Not cast him away from His presence
 - f. Not take His Holy Spirit from him
 - g. Restore to him the joy of His salvation
 - h. Uphold him with His generous Spirit

II. DAVID'S PROMISE (51:13-17)

A. TO TEACH OTHERS (13)

1. He will teach transgressors the ways of God
2. Sinners will be converted to God

B. TO OFFER PRAISE (14-17)

1. If the God of his salvation will deliver him from bloodguiltiness and open his lips...
 - a. He will sing aloud of God's righteousness
 - b. His mouth will show forth His praise
2. For he knows in what God delights
 - a. Not sacrifice or burnt offering, or he would have offered it
 - b. But a broken spirit and a contrite heart, God will not despise

III. DAVID'S PRAYER (51:18-19)

A. FOR ZION AND JERUSALEM (18)

1. That God do His good pleasure to Zion
2. That God build the walls of Jerusalem

B. THEN GOD WILL BE PLEASED (19)

1. With the sacrifices of righteousness
2. With burnt offering and whole burnt offering
- Then they shall offer bulls on His altar

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE PSALM

- 1) **What are the main points of this psalm?**

- 2) **What is David praying for in this psalm? (1-2)**

- 3) **Upon what does David base his appeal for God's forgiveness? (1-2)**

- 4) **How does David describe the extent of his guilt? (3-4)**

- 5) **How does David further describe the extent of his sinfulness? (5)**

- 6) **What does God desire of David? (6)**

- 7) **In praying for forgiveness, what does David ask God to do? (7-12)**

- 8) **In praying for restoration, what does he ask God to do? (7-12)**

9) What two things does David promise to do when forgiven? (13-15)

10) What does God desire more than burnt offering? (16-17)

11) For what does David pray as he concludes this psalm? (18-19)

The Book Of Psalms

Psalms For Living And Worship

OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS PSALM

- 1) To illustrate the value of Psalms in our lives in different ways and at different times
- 2) To provide a quick reference guide for using the Psalms

PSALMS FOR LIVING AND WORSHIP

Like the skilled fingers on the strings of a harp, the Psalms touch and move the hearts of those individuals who will read and meditate upon them. Every emotion known to man is expressed in the Psalms, including fear and faith, hope and doubt, trust and anxiety, as inspired men of God shared their personal spiritual journeys in the service of God. The Psalms should be a constant resource to help the Christian learn how to praise and pray, to meditate and contemplate, to face life and death.

In an attempt to illustrate the value of the Psalms and encourage their frequent reading, I offer the following sampling of what Psalms might be read at different times in your life.

Are you remorseful and penitent for your sins? Read Psalms 51, 32

Are you experiencing affliction, and remain comfortless? Read Psalm 22

Are you steadfast in times of distress, and want encouragement? Read Psalms 27, 31

Are you under various mental strains? Read Psalms 41, 70

Are you falsely accused? Read Psalm 7

Are you in trouble? Read Psalms 54, 63

Are you tempted? Read Psalm 130

Are you wanting in confidence? Read Psalms 61, 91

Are you envious of the wicked? Read Psalm 73

Are you in a position of authority and need to be reminded of your responsibilities? Read Psalms 82, 101

Do you need to be reminded of the importance of humility? Read Psalm 131

Do you need to be reminded of the futility of this life? Read Psalms 39, 49, 90

Do you desire to pray for others? Read Psalm 20

Do you wish to praise God for His mercies in helping people through adverse circumstances?
Read Psalms 34, 40

Do you wish to praise God for common blessings He has bestowed upon people? Read Psalm 46,
48, 66, 67

**Do you desire to meditate upon the characteristics of God and praise Him especially for His grace
and mercy?** Read Psalms 23, 103, 121, 145, 146

Do you desire to meditate upon the attributes of God, such as His power? Read Psalms 8, 19, 65,
66, 97, 99, 104, 111, 139

Do you desire to mediate upon the magnificence of the Scriptures? Read Psalms 19, 119

Do you wish to gain instruction regarding the contrast between the righteous and the wicked?
Read Psalms 1, 15, 25, 32, 34, 36, 37, 52, 127, 128

Do you wish to reflect upon the Messiah and His kingdom? Read Psalms 2, 16, 22, 40, 45, 72, 110

Do you desire to review the history of Israel? Read Psalms 78, 105, 106

To Accompany Morning Prayer - Read Psalms 5, 94, 95

To Accompany Evening Prayer - Read Psalms 4, 90, 139, 141

To Prepare For Private Devotion - Read Psalms 23, 27, 91, 103, 104, 138, 146

To Prepare For Public Worship - Read Psalms 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 122, 133, 134, 145, 147, 148

To Enhance The Observance Of The Lord's Supper - Read Psalm 22

To Enhance The Collection For The Saints - Read Psalms 41, 112