

The Bible Jesus Read

Lesson 4

Psalms

The Psalms were sung in the Temple in Jerusalem accompanied by musical instruments. The Book of Psalms served as a Temple hymnbook and devotional guide and was gradually collected over hundreds of years. About half of the Psalms were written by David. The Psalms explore the full range of human experience. They reflect a multitude of audiences, conditions and moods. The main theme is worship. God is worthy of praise and worship because of who He is, what He has done and what He will do.

Read Psalms 22 and 23

1. Who wrote Ps 22-23? What is the tone of each? Compare “My God why have you forsaken me, I cry out but you don’t answer” (Ps 22:1-2) to “The Lord is my shepherd I shall not want... He restores me... He guides me... I fear no evil...” (Ps 23:1-4).
2. Psalm 22 is a lament Psalm with a feeling of rejection, despair and abandonment. How can people feel thankful when there seems so little to feel thankful about (Ps 22:4-5)? This is like the journal of people who want to believe in a loving God while the world falls apart around them. How will it turn out (Ps 22:26-31)?
3. What image does David use to picture the Lord in Ps 23? Pick out the verbs in each verse of Ps 23 which describe God’s care for us.
4. Read Ps 102:1-11 and Ps 103:1-5. What are the two points of view expressed here? Do you notice the many moods and emotions from despair to elation in Psalms? Does this seem inconsistent to you, or isn’t that how life really is? The 150 Psalms are as difficult and disordered as life is!
5. Compare Psalm 88 and 89:1-10. Is it possible to cry out to God in anguish and despair at one time in your life but later to praise God for His loving kindness and faithfulness? Aren’t the authors wrestling with God over every aspect of life?

Read Psalm 100

6. The key word in the Psalms is worship. Comment on the following quote, “Worship is the strategy by which we interrupt our preoccupation with ourselves and attend to the presence of God. Our self-importance is so insidiously relentless that if we don’t interrupt ourselves regularly we have no chance of keeping ourselves in perspective with God”, by Gene Peterson.

7. Observe the verbs in Ps 100:1-4 as they serve commands. How do we worship? What are the attributes of the Lord in Ps 100:5? Will the Lord change? Will He give up on us? Will He fulfill His promises?

8. There are three basic types of Psalms: lament, thanksgiving and praise. Categorize the following Psalms:

3	4	5	8
9	10	18	19
27	29	32	33
42	48	51	60
66	79	90	102
103	118	136	139

9. There are also numerous imprecatory Psalms, meaning a call to curse one’s enemies. They seem problematic, like Ps 7:6; 35:1; 40:14; 55:15 and 109:8-15. Upon further review, do these enemies deserve judgment (7:9; 35:7, 12; 40:12; 55:9-11; 109:2-3)? Does the author seek personal vengeance or is he appealing for divine righteous justice to be done?

10. The Lord Jesus Christ is very much in view in the Psalms. Psalms is quoted heavily in the New Testament. Locate and match some of the prophecies of Jesus in Psalms:

Ps 2:7	The Incarnation	Acts 13:33
Ps 16:10	Resurrection	Acts 2:25-28; 13:35
Ps 22:16-18	Crucifixion	Jn 19:18, 24
Ps 41:9	Betrayal	Luke 22:47
Ps 118:22	The cornerstone rejected	Math 21:42
Ps 118:25-26	Palm Sunday	Math 21:9