

A Study of Six PSALMS

**Including an INTRODUCTION to the Study of the
BOOK of PSALMS**



Exposition of Psalms 1, 2, 8, 84, 91 and 145

Prepared for the Safe Haven Berean Fellowship, Ministry of the Word
by Pastor David Braden

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Requests for permission should be made in writing and addressed to Pastor David S. Braden
7pastordavid7@gmail.com

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Introduction and Purpose

Introduction: “At the center of the Bible is the book of Psalms. This great collection of songs and prayers expresses the heart and soul of humanity. In them, the whole range of human experience is expressed. There are no clichés in this book. Instead, David and other writers honestly pour out their true feelings, reflecting a dynamic, powerful and life-changing friendship with God. The psalmists confess their sins, express their doubts and fears, ask God for help in times of trouble and praise and worship Him.

As you read the book of Psalms, you will hear believers crying out to God from the depths of despair, and you will hear them singing to Him in the heights of celebration. But whether despairing or rejoicing, you will always hear them sharing honest feelings with their God. Because of the honesty expressed by the psalmists, men and women throughout history have come, again and again, to the book of Psalms, for comfort during times of struggle and distress. And with the psalmists, they have risen from the depths of despair to new heights of joy and praise as they also discovered the power of God’s everlasting love and forgiveness. Let the honesty of the psalmists guide you into a deep and genuine relationship with God.” (A quote from the Life Application Study Bible introduction to the book of Psalms)

Purpose: This workbook has been prepared as a tool to be used during a psalms study course.

My goals for this study course are many, but principally two:

1. to provide an exposition of the psalms selected with the hope of ministering life to those taking the course; and
2. provide a process that can be used for studying other psalms not addressed in this course.

In this course, I want to show a process for studying the psalms. It’s one that I’ve developed and used effectively over the years.

It is not my intention that each student embrace my process legalistically and do everything exactly as I have done. My hope is that the student will review the course materials, and, through their own studies and experimentations, arrive at a process that works for them.

“Studying God’s Word is a delight but it is also work. Mining the gold from the pages of the Scriptures can be a laborious task. But, as I’ve experienced, you will be blessed and will be more and more fruitful in your knowledge of our great God, making the journey well-worth the time and energy invested.

BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

Purpose: The purpose of this chart is to illustrate the great, literary diversity of the Old Testament. In particular, note within the grouping of Psalms, the variety of literary genres (styles).

Law:

"The Torah"
Genesis
Exodus
Leviticus
Numbers
Deuteronomy

History:

Joshua
Ruth
I/II Samuel
I/II Kings
I/II Chronicles
Ezra
Nehemiah
Esther

Poetry:

Job
Psalms
Proverbs
Ecclesiastes
Song of
Solomon

Major Prophets:

Isaiah
Jeremiah
Lamentations
Ezekiel
Daniel

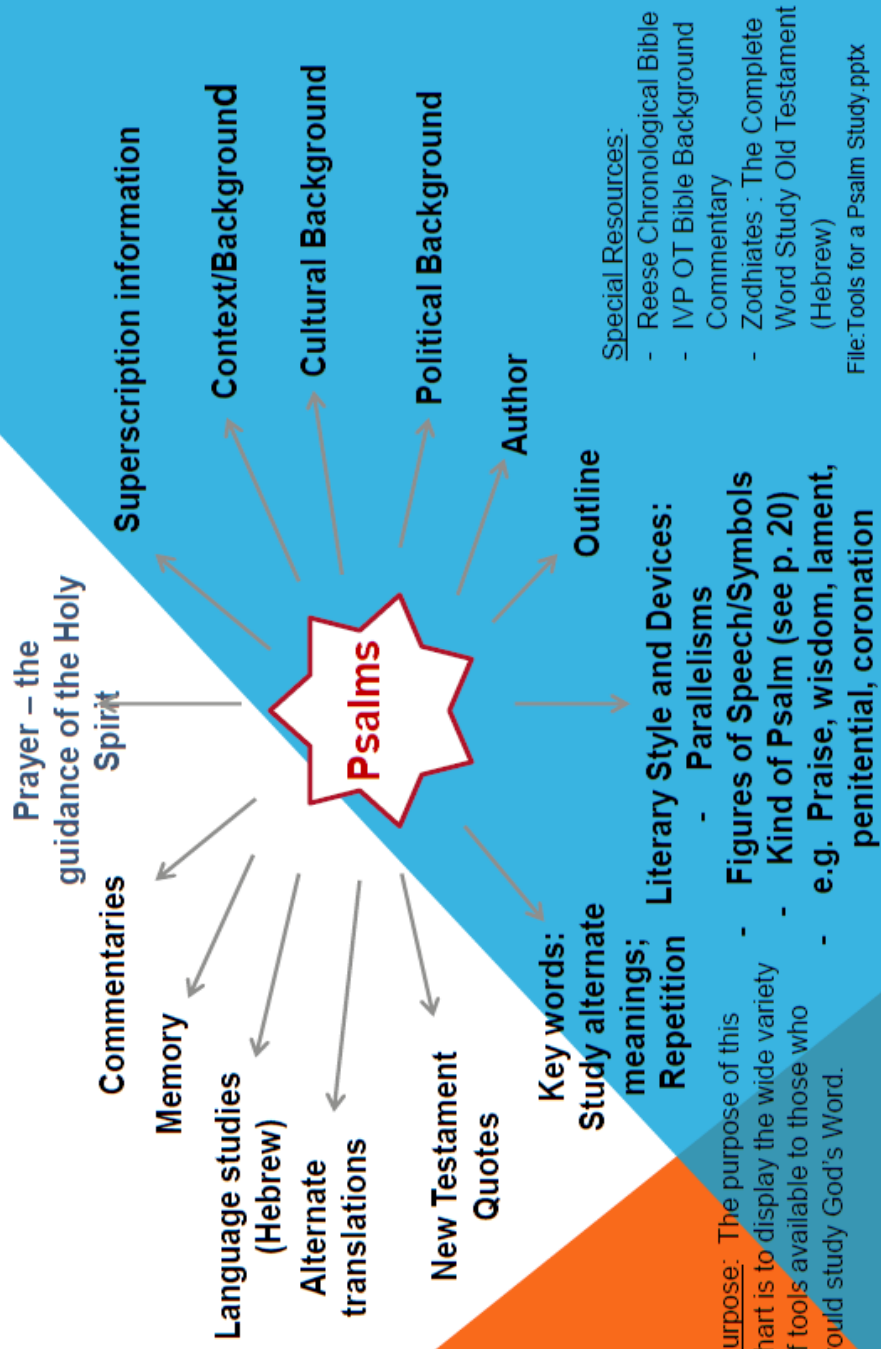
Minor Prophets:

Hosea
Joel
Amos
Obadiah
Jonah
Micah
Nahum
Habbukkuk
Zephaniah
Haggai
Zechariah
Malachi

Literary Styles of Poetry:

Job – Dramatic Speech, Narrative
Psalms – Israel's Song and Prayer Book
Poetry – parallelisms, figures of speech... a great variety
Proverbs – Wisdom Sayings
Ecclesiastes – Wisdom, Narrative/Quest
Song of Solomon – Love Story/Epithalamion (a wedding poem that celebrates a specific occasion)

“TOOLS FOR A PSALM STUDY”



Purpose: The purpose of this chart is to display the wide variety of tools available to those who would study God's Word.

A PSALMS ANALYSIS PROCESS

Stage 1:

Preparation

- A. Pray
- B. Select a psalm
- C. **Initial read-through**

Stage 2:

Identify

- A. Context
- B. Superscription
- C. Literary type
- D. Cultural & Political
- E. Author & Date

Stage 3:

Observation

- A. **2nd read-through**
- B. Outline
- C. Key words, Figures of speech
- D. Prophetic Passages
- E. theme, goals, purpose, emotional content

Stage 4:

Research

- A. research findings from stage 3
- B. key words
- C. figures of speech

Stage 5:

Interpretation

- A. Prophetic passages
- B. Verse-by-verse

Stage 6:

Application

- A. How does it apply to me?
- B. Commentaries
- C. What can we learn about God, His purposes, mankind

Stage 7:

Recording

- A. Record your findings, results & recommendations

Chapter #1: Introduction

Outline:

- I. Why study the Psalms?
- II. An Introduction to Literary types
- III. An Introduction to the book of Psalms
- IV. Characteristics of the Psalms
- V. Kinds of Psalms
- VI. Guidelines for Interpretation
- VII. Do's and Don'ts for reading the psalms
- VIII. A process for studying a Psalm
- IX. Psalms by Author (a chart)

I. Why study the Psalms?

1. The Psalms provide us a unique tool which can be used to exalt our God.
2. The Psalms are the Word of God and provide us instructions for godly living.
3. The Psalms remind us of who our God is and provide us with words to pray and worship Him. They remind us of what God has done and will do.
4. The Psalms provide us with models of devotion. In them we see Immanuel (God with us) people who are wrestling and struggling with their relationship with God just as we are. In them, we see a wide range of individual situations and need which often fit the very experiences we are having.
5. The Psalms teach us truth in terms of human experience and not abstractly as much of our training today does.
6. The Psalms are a part of "the Sword of the Spirit" and, in praying them, we employ this spiritual weapon in warring against our enemies.
7. Meditating on God's Word in the Psalms can be a deterrent to sin.
8. As we consider the spiritual lives of those who have gone before us, we can be encouraged and gain hope for our own spiritual lives.
9. Studying the Psalms will enable us to become more familiar with the literary types of the Bible thereby making us better interpreters of the Bible.
10. By studying the Psalms, we will gain an expanded appreciation for the beauty, depth, height and extent of the wisdom of God's Book.

There is no other book like it...none come close!

II. **An Introduction to Literary Types** (also called styles or forms)

Literature is a body of writings in prose or verse in which the authors choose words and forms to communicate what they are thinking or what they have experienced. (Note that our 3 principle forms of activity are thinking, speaking and acting.) In the case of literature, we write instead of speak.

The two principle literary forms in which the Bible is written are narrative and poetry. The primary form of the Bible is anthology, a collection of books. In fact, the name "Bible" comes from the Greek "Biblia" which means "little books."

There are a number of general literary styles utilized by the biblical authors in addition to narrative and poetry; e.g. prophecy, wisdom, apocalyptic, parables, gospels, allegories, doctrinal treatise, to mention a few. Even these styles often have a secondary tier such as "hero story," "love story" and "tragedy" which are sub-categories of the narrative form. In all, there are more than 100 literary forms, if one counts the sub-categories. This course of study will focus on poetry. In it, we will examine 6 psalms which display unique features of the literary style of poetry.

It is important to recognize that the content of a literary work is communicated through its form and it is the form that provides the meaning. Without an appropriate recognition of the literary form, the meaning cannot be properly determined.

For example, there is a great deal of difference between how one interprets the narratives of the Old Testament and the Apocalypse (Revelation) of the New Testament.

A parable is interpreted differently than an allegory. (One has a principle theme while the other may focus on the symbolism of the details in the story.)

The wisdom literature of Proverbs is interpreted much differently than the lament Psalms which are filled with images, figures of speech and symbols while Proverbs is replete with one and two-line wisdom sayings that often have nothing to do with the verses before and after them.

Each literary style has its own guidelines for proper interpretation.

So, understanding the literary type of a passage and the rules for its interpretation become an important part of the biblical interpretation process, i.e. determining the meaning of a passage and its appropriate application.

Abstract versus real life experience:

Abstract: expressing a quality apart from an object
 theoretical, not applied or practical

Another important element in the literary field is that the Bible presents both abstract information in the form of principles and then demonstrates that information in the terms of real life human experience. For example, one of the 10 commandments is “You shall not commit adultery.” This command is the abstract principle. The account of David and Bathsheba is a real-life human experience which shows the results of failing to keep this command. In this story, we see the physical actions and the verbal exchanges as David eventually is confronted with his sin and then accepts the consequences for breaking the law of God.

We see a similar illustration with the command: “You shall have no other gods before me.” Idolatry is the abstract forbidden practice. And the Old Testament is filled with real life situations both on an individual and national level where idolatry was embraced. We then see the results of violating a commandment of God.

A goal of literature:

One of the goals of literature is to enable the reader to share in the experience of the story. We want to learn from it in a way that provides a positive life-experience for us. It can also help us to guard against life-choices that would be detrimental and damaging.

The truths of scripture are not just ideas that are true but they are true for human experience. We are not simply learning to store up “nice-to-know” facts of knowledge in the dusty annals of our minds. We learn from God’s Word in order to live a holy and God-fearing life.

The goal of all of the Biblical learning process is the application of the truths of scripture to our real-life experiences. And as we do, depending on our faithfulness to the biblical revelation, we will experience the fruitfulness and formation that true scriptural behavior yields.

At this point it is important to note that it is Scripture “rightly interpreted” that has life and power. God has no obligation to respond to wrongful ideas about what His Word says or means. In fact, wrongful interpretations can be very damaging no matter how sincere the interpreter.

The uniqueness of biblical language:

One final area of comment: The Scriptures utilize distinct literary features that set it apart from the ordinary literature that we peruse, e.g. the use of images, figures of speech and idioms that are unique to the culture at the time they were written. Some of these figures of speech are metaphors, similes, hyperbole, euphemisms, irony, personification and word play to mention a few.

A good example of hyperbole is used by Jesus in his sermon on the mount when he exhorts his listeners that “if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away.” Obviously, cutting off my hand will not change my heart which is the root of the problem of sin. I might even become more embittered because my drastic action did not achieve the desired result.

He is using “exaggeration for effect” to demonstrate the importance of getting sin out of your life. (This also demonstrates the importance of the appropriate handling of the Scriptures.) If we believed this passage was literal, there would be a number of one-handed Christians in the church today.

So, it becomes important to determine what the figures of speech and symbols meant in the culture at the time the passage was written.

III. An Introduction to the Book of Psalms:

The book of Psalms is an anthology, a collection of lyric poems designed to express the thoughts or feelings of the writer. These poems were designed to be sung. From this definition, we can see the evident characteristics of lyric poetry that they are musical, emotional, personal and mostly brief. (They average 16 verses per psalm, 15 verses per psalm if we exclude psalm 119, and generally, can be read in one minute.)

In this poetry, the writers interpret their personal experiences and describe them in artistic forms. The writers of the psalms are inspired by the Spirit and are lovers of God who used their God-given creative abilities to contribute to the greatest collection of poetry ever penned. They are “Immanuel” people like us.

Psalms were a part of the everyday life of the Hebrew. They had certain Psalms that they sang on certain days of the week as they were going to the temple. S – 24, M – 48, T – 82, W – 94, kT – 81, F - 93, S – 92

They sang on special occasions:

- the song of Moses (Red Sea) (Exodus 15)
- the song of Deborah (Sisera) (Judges 5)

Bible are from God for people. But the Bible does include words spoken to God or about God. This is what the psalms are.

Thus we confront a unique problem in Biblical hermeneutics:

“How do I apply words spoken to God or about God to myself?”

This will be discussed as we work our way through the six psalms of this study.

Because of the unique character of the psalms, they do not primarily function in such a way as to teach us doctrinal or moral behavior.

Nevertheless, they are profitable for the purposes God designed them...to learn to express ourselves when talking with Him, to learn how to appropriately talk with God in unique circumstances (e.g. imprecatory psalms, psalms where the author feels like God has deserted him) and to learn about His ways in the world with mankind.

IV. Characteristics of the Psalms:

In the poetry of our culture, we often look for rhythm and rhyme. Repetition for instructional purposes is generally disdained.

Some important features of Biblical poetry:

1. Figurative Language:

The Psalms are far more inclined to use “figurative language” and not rhythm and rhyme.

e.g. the Psalms – are filled with vivid imagery and figures of speech

Ps 1 “like a tree, like chaff” = a simile, a comparison

Note: Chaff has no life, no root nor substance.

Ps 2 “break them with a rod of iron”

“kiss the Son” = idiom for worship = act of bowing down before a ruler and kissing the ring on his hand – a demonstration of submission to his rule

Ps 3 “broken the teeth of the ungodly”

Some passages talk about those who bite and devour.

In this passage, God has dealt with them in such a way that they no longer have the ability to bite and devour.

Ps 23 “makes me lie down in green pastures”

“walk through the valley of the shadow of death”

“my cup runneth over”

Two alternate translations (modern) for this phrase are:

- fills my life with good things
- He blesses my socks off

So...part of our concern with Hebrew poetry will be to learn how to interpret figures of speech and imagery.

2. Parallelisms:

The Hebrews were not so much interested in rhythm and rhyme as we find in our poetry but in expansion and explanation of wisdom and knowledge. As a result, the style of writing parallel thoughts became a key feature of their poetry.

Note also that the NT writers were Jewish and so were trained in the Hebrew poetry processes. As a result, we find this style of parallelisms surfacing in the NT writings. Paul and even Jesus used parallelisms.

There are several kinds of parallelisms. I have included a brief description of five of the more common styles below.

- A. similarity (also called synonymous) – in which the theme of the second line is similar to the first, but has different word choices with the same idea:

Ps. 3:1 “Lord, how they have increased who trouble me!
Many are they who rise up against me.”

- B. contrast (also called “antithetic parallelism”) In this form of parallelism, the second line provides a contrast to the first line.

Ps. 1:6 “For the Lord knows the way of the righteous,
But the way of the wicked shall perish.”

Clue: Note the “but.”

- C. synthetic At times, the following lines add to the information of the first line:

Ps. 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: This psalm shows a progression (negative) in the relationships of the ungodly.

D. completion (also called climactic) in which the second line partially repeats the first line and then completes the theme:

Ps. 96:7 “Give to the Lord, O families of the peoples,
 Give to the Lord glory and strength.”

E. metaphoric A fifth type of parallelism can be called metaphoric (sometimes called emblematic) in which the first line gives a figure of speech and the lines following explain the figure of speech.

In the following case, the metaphor is a simile:

Ps. 1:3 He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water,
 That brings forth its fruit in its season,
 Whose leaf shall not wither;
 And whatever he does, shall prosper.

3. Emotional:

One of the chief features of lyric poetry is its emotional nature. These musical poems are designed to appeal to the emotions and not to reasoned thinking. The author wants to evoke a response from the reader that goes beyond cognitive thinking and the knowing of facts. He is appealing to the heart and not the mind. (Not so with much of the writings today)

This is not easy to achieve. Hebrew writers made good use of such writing techniques as hyperbole, frequent use of emotional words and vivid descriptions of the emotional stimuli.

It should become obvious that the writer wants the reader to share in the emotion of the experience he is retelling.

It is important to note that the different types of psalms (e.g. lament, praise, thanksgiving, enthronement) will have varying forms.

e.g. By comparing the lament psalms, scholars have been able to identify six elements that appear in nearly all of the lament psalms:

1. Address – to the Lord
2. His complaint – He identifies his trouble and why he is asking for God’s help.
3. Trust – He very quickly expresses his trust in God.

4. Plea for deliverance from the difficulty
5. Confidence – He expresses his confidence that God will hear and answer him.
6. Praise – He expresses worship and praise towards God.

So, when evaluating a psalm such as the lament psalm, it will be useful to identify the different elements as in the form above. This will facilitate your understanding of the psalm.

4. Superscriptions:

Many of the psalms have superscriptions along with the biblical text. These superscriptions have been referred to as titles but also include additional information regarding the psalm.

They were not included in the original manuscripts but were added sometime later, some suppose around 200 B.C.

The superscriptions contain information such as the occasion of the psalm (see Ps. 3...David fleeing from Absalom), the type of psalm and musical instructions to the choir master (Ps 6 – “to the chief musician, with stringed instruments, on an eight-stringed harp.”)

The superscriptions do not carry the weight of inspiration as we see in the actual biblical text. However, the better position recommended regarding these instructions is to regard them as accurate as they stand.

Additional Characteristics of the Psalms:

1. Psalms is both a prayer book and a song book. The Psalms were written for singing and for public worship in the temple.
2. The Psalms were also intended to have a given function in the life of Israel; e.g. royal psalms were intended for use in celebrating Israel’s kingship or the inauguration of a new reign.
3. The Psalms are written in the language of the human spirit. They are not reasoned prose but deeply emotional responses filled with heart rending cries of anguish, exuberant expressions of praise and thanksgiving, dramatic language and numerous figures of speech.
4. The writings of the Psalms were spontaneous expressions of the life of the Israelites. They were written in the language of response. An individual surveys the wreckage of Jerusalem and pours out his heart in sorrow before God. Another witnesses the miraculous crossing of the sea and

the drowning of the army of Pharaoh and breaks out into a song of celebration and great rejoicing.

- In Ex. 15, Moses sings a song to the Lord.
- Deborah, Hannah, David and Mary were others who also composed spontaneous songs to express their devotion and thankfulness to God or to celebrate a significant event in their life or the life of Israel.

5. The Psalms revolve around two vastly different poles: on one side is the desperate, human condition, fallen man, unable to help himself, unable to achieve redemption and life by his own abilities.

The opposite pole is the greatness and the glory and the majesty of the all-sufficient God who has no limit to his abilities. Plus...He has a willing heart that "none should perish."

The Psalms are a magnet in that their poetic forms coupled with their profound insight into the human condition draw them even to unbelievers.

The unparalleled way in which the psalms put into words the experiences of praise and worship, thanksgiving and adoration, grief over dire circumstances or happenings, repentance and sorrow over sin, make them available to everyone. The psalms give us words and expressions which we might never think of but can utilize given circumstances similar to that of a psalm.

In speaking of contrasts, I should also mention that the psalms often address the conflict between good and evil, the righteous and the wicked, the wise and the foolish.

6. The Psalms provide us a window into the heart of a person experiencing the Immanuel life. As such, they are useful for us as we make our way along the tortuous (twisting, bending) paths of life.

7. Prophetic – prophecies concerning the Messiah

In Luke 24:44, Jesus spoke to his disciples and those who were gathered together with them:

"These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still 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."

This tells us that some of the psalms will contain prophecies concerning Jesus the Messiah.

Therefore, we should be alert to identify psalm passages which speak prophetically of the Messiah and learn what they are telling us.

The following quote is taken from the Tim LaHaye Prophecy Study Bible, Introduction to the Psalms:

“Of special interest are the Messianic Psalms and the psalms that allude to Christ’s Millennial Kingdom. Major Messianic Psalms predicting the first or second advents of Christ include: 2, 8, 16, 22, 24, 40, 45, 69, 72, 89, 102, 109, 110, 118, 132. In addition, Psalms 96-99 are millennial, referring to the enthronement of the King. Other psalms such as 9, 21, and 50 seem to be Messianic. Quoted in the New Testament more than any other Old Testament writing, Psalms was specifically mentioned by Jesus as containing prophecies to be fulfilled in His ministry (Luke 24: 44-53).”

V. **Kinds of Psalms:**

The Psalms employ 3 principle themes:

1. A portrait of God, who He is and what He does,
2. Examples of a personal relationship with God, and
3. A contrast of the ways of the righteous and the ways of the wicked

Along with these principle themes, we see the following categorizations of the Psalms according to the type of Psalm:

Ascent or pilgrimage – psalms which were sung by pilgrims while traveling to Jerusalem for Israel’s feasts

Enthronement – celebrates the reign of God

Imprecatory– petitions God to execute a righteous judgment against the enemies of God or Israel

Individual Lament –speaks with God about a desperate personal situation and requests His help

Messianic – contains prophetic language related to the coming Messiah

National Lament – speaks with God about a national emergency and requests his intervention

Penitential – expresses sorrow and repentance over sin

Praise – exalts God for his character or works

Royal – describes and compares the reign of an earthly king with our heavenly king

Songs of Zion – songs which speak of Zion, the city of God

Thanksgiving – expresses a person’s gratitude to God for His acts of kindness and benevolence

Wisdom – provides wisdom for living a godly life

Worship – a psalm in which the individual bows in worship and adoration of God...does not necessarily include petition

Table: Our 6 Psalms – Key Features

#	Type	Key Features	Emotion
1	Wisdom	Instruction in the 2 ways/Parallelisms	Thoughtful/reflective, the righteous delight in God’s Law
2	Messianic	4 Literary styles	Rebuke/Exhortation
8	Nature	Celebration/Praise/Messianic/ “Inclusio”	Awe
84	Praise	Holy longing	Heart desire/passion
91	Wisdom	Key words/repetition, use of figures of speech, built-in outline	Bright, confident, trust, assuring
145	Praise	High praise Multiple superlatives	Legacy, final words of a faithful man in his last days

VI. Guidelines for Interpretation

1. Keep in mind the nature of Scripture, that it is divinely inspired (God-breathed) and inerrant in all of its parts.
2. Keep Christ central in all interpretations.
3. The “Golden Rule” – When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense. Therefore, take every word at its primary, ordinary, usual, literary meaning unless the facts of the immediate context, studied in the light of related passages and fundamental truths, clearly indicate otherwise.
4. Determine the context of the Psalm

This should include the 3 levels of context (world, nation, individual), the cultural and physical setting and any information you can obtain describing the occasion for the psalm. (At times, the OT superscription will include a quick summary of the circumstances leading to the Psalm.)

5. Determine the literary type of Psalm (e.g. lament, praise, enthronement, Songs of ascent, etc.) and observe the general guidelines for each literary type.
6. Search for the meaning intended by the author for the original audience.
7. Follow the appropriate grammar and syntax (the word meanings and the way words are arranged in a sentence.)
8. Keep in mind that the Psalms are poetry which most often contain images, symbols, figures of speech and other emotive devices.

You will need to study these special literary devices and determine the literal meaning. e.g. Ps. 19: “The heavens declare the glory of God...their line has gone out into all the earth.”

Interpretation: This is a personification where the author is ascribing to the creation the ability to communicate as humans do. A line in this instance is a sentence. Therefore, the heavens communicate (speak sentences) about the glory of God throughout the whole earth.

9. Research the author of the psalm to determine his frame of mind when he wrote the psalm. Often the superscription of a psalm will tell you what event had just happened in the life of the author. e.g. Ps. 3 “A psalm of David when he fled from his son Absalom.” Now you can review the historical events leading up to his flight and get a sense of the urgency, humiliation, disappointment and anxiety he must have felt when fleeing.
10. Identify non-literal text (i.e. figures of speech, symbols) and provide a literal translation.
11. Let Scripture interpret Scripture. Examine how other scriptures use the same original language word. e.g. from Ps.84 – “loved” vs. “lovely”
12. Remember that the psalms are the writings from a believing heart.
13. Each psalm is a complete unit and therefore, should be studied as an individual unit.

Each of these is like a single piece in the puzzle of God’s redemptive plan. Context should help you to see how a particular psalm contributes to God’s overall plan of redemption.

14. Regarding the imprecatory psalms:
 - a. The Hebrew loves the concrete and sometimes encouches sin in the cloak of a sinner.
 - b. The imprecations of the psalm express the desire of the OT saint for the vindication of God's holiness.
 - c. They show us God's attitude towards those who are hostile towards Him and His kingdom.
15. Don't spend time looking for the hidden meaning in a psalm.
16. Some psalms are prophetic (e.g. 2, 22, 45, 110) and therefore, attention should be given to the quotations in the NT and the subsequent fulfillment of them in the NT. (e.g. Jesus on the cross...Ps 22)
17. Be alert for italicized words in the text. These words have been inserted by the translator to assist in providing meaning but are not in the original text (i.e. Greek) e.g. Jn. 18:5 – "I am *He*." Notice how this simple addition drastically changes the interpretation of this passage.
18. When doing word studies, look up the word being researched in a word study Bible which identifies the specific word in the original language.

VII. Do's and don'ts for reading the Psalms (from Literary Bible)

1. Do's:

- Anticipate a flow of feelings and reflections rather than narrative events.
- Anticipate that the poet will share more and more of his feelings as the psalm progresses.
- Accept that the poems are self-contained units and not chapters in an on-going saga.
- Be ready for sudden movement from one topic or feeling to another (C.S. Lewis spoke of the emotional rather than the logical connections in the psalms.)
- Begin with the premise that poets think in images rather than abstractions and that they prefer the figurative to literal language.
- Slow down your speed of reading. Be meditative and thoughtful.
- Consider that the psalms are a chapter in the master story of the Bible. This master story is the record of what God and people do in history. The Psalms show us what God does in the three areas of creation,

history and in the personal lives of people. The primary actions of God recorded by the Psalms are creation, providence, judgment and redemptions/rescue.

Additionally, many of the Psalms express messianic expectations.

2. Don'ts:

- Try to read the psalms as stories. (They are not narratives.)
- Speculate unduly about the details of the life situation that may be the context of the poem. Often, the context is unknown.
- Ignore the images and figures of speech. You will need to make a literal interpretation of the figurative speech; e.g. Ps 19 "Their line has gone out into all the world" could be "their words and sentences have been spoken throughout the world."

VIII. A Process for studying a Psalm

1. Pray
2. Select a psalm
3. Read through
4. Research:
 - Identify the theme of the Psalm.
 - Kind/Category – lament, praise, enthronement, pilgrimage, etc. (see Section V. Kinds of Psalms in this Lesson.)
 - Political background, especially Israel (a chronological Bible such as Reese will assist in providing this.)
 - context –
 - superscription information (from heading) – setting, musical information
 - author
5. Review cultural information (see IVP Bible background Commentary OT.)
6. Outline the psalm.
7. Look for and study key words and repetition.
8. Identify figures of speech, symbols, etc.
Prepare literal interpretations.
9. Identify prophetic passages (often the margins of a study Bible will indicate NT references to an OT passage.)
10. Identify parallelisms and evaluate (what kind, information to be understood.)

11. Examine the emotional (feeling) and reflective (thoughts) content of the psalm.
12. Identify connections to other psalms (if any) ...sequence, by topic e.g. Ps 1 and 2, 11 and 12
13. Identify NT quotes and their interpretation.
14. Read a commentary on the Psalms; e.g. Boice – devotional, Leupold – devotional plus language difficulties focus.
15. What can we learn about God, His plan, a “saved” person, an “unsaved” person?
16. Verse-by-verse analysis
17. Prepare applications.
18. Other options – e.g. language studies

PSALMS by AUTHOR									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50
51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60
61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70
71	72-S	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80
81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88-H	89-E	90-M
91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100
101	102	103	104	105	106	107	108	109	110
111	112	113	114	115	116	117	118	119	120
121	122	123	124	125	126	127-S	128	129	130
131	132	133	134	135	136	137	138	139	140
141	142	143	144	145	146	147	148	149	150

David		73
Asaph		12
Solomon	#-S	2
Sons of Korah		10
Heman	#-H	1
Ethan	#-E	1
Moses	#-M	1
Unknown		50

Chapter #2: Exposition of Psalm 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*;
2. But his *delight* is in the law of the Lord,
And in His law he *meditates* day and night.
3. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water,
That brings forth its fruit in its season,
Whose leaf also *shall not wither*;
And whatever he does shall prosper
4. The *ungodly* are not so,
But are like the *chaff* which the wind drives away.
5. Therefore the *ungodly* shall not stand in the judgment,
Nor *sinners* in the congregation of the righteous.
6. For the Lord *knows* the way of the righteous,
But the way of the *ungodly* shall *perish*.

Type: Wisdom
 Theme: "The two ways"
 Use: Instructional: Teach children godly ways
 Emotion: Thoughtful
 Reflective
 Key feature: parallelism, *
 Recommended for memory
 Dominant theme: "the blessedness of the godly person"

* note use of a "foil":
 (one that serves as a contrast to another)

I. Studying a Psalm:

Note: A. For homework assignments, do the highlighted (in green) items.

B. You are free to do any and as many of the remaining items I you choose.

1. Pray.
2. Select a Psalm. 1
3. Read through the psalm.
4. Research:
 - Theme: _____
 - Kind/Category: _____
 - Use: _____
 - Political background: _____
 - Superscription information: _____
 - Author: _____
 - Date: _____
 - Context: _____

5. Cultural information: _____
6. Outline: _____

7. Key words: _____

8. Fig. of Speech: v.3 a metaphor "like a tree"

9. Prophetic: _____
10. Parallelisms: _____

11. Emotional feel: _____
12. Other Psalms: _____
13. NT quotes: _____

14. Commentary: _____

15. Learn about God: _____
16. Applications: _____
 - A. The 2 ways – Which will you choose?
 - B. Delighting and meditating in God's Word is the path of a fruitful life that "does not wither."
 - C. Note the empty life of the ungodly: no life, no root, no substance
 - D. Psalm 1 is a strong encouragement to live a godly life.
 - E. Psalm 1 is a strong deterrent to choosing the way of the ungodly.
 - F. The blessedness of the righteous begins with delighting in the Law of the Lord.
 - G. _____
 - H. _____
17. Additional questions/Comments:
 - A. Why has this psalm been placed first in the Psalter? _____

 - B. Note the progression of the ungodly in verse 1. What does this tell us?

II. Verse-by-verse analysis:

v.1

blessed - some interpretations – happy, to be congratulated, blessed

I prefer: the experience of having God's face "smile upon you"

Of special interest – Jesus begins the Sermon on the Mount (Mt. chs. 5-7) with the word blessed. Could this be a reference to Psalm 1 which shows who the truly wise man is?

is - verb, state-of-being

the man – a wider application? A male person, maleness as opposed to femaleness

To whom does this apply? _____

who does not walk in the path of ungodly

nor stands in the path of sinners

nor sits in the seat of the scornful

Note the progression from walk, stand and sit = growing in ungodliness

Also, teachers in Biblical times often sat as they taught.

From Rom. 1:32, they become "teachers of ungodliness."

Note the parallelism of the wicked (3 lines) - synthetic, adding information to the previous line/s; (see Lesson #1, Section IV, item 2.C of this workbook)

This verse gives you a powerful view of the kind of people you don't want to keep company with.

Word studies:

Ungodly - **7563** *rasha* morally wrong, bad, wicked, unrighteous

Sinners - **2400** *chatta* sinner, criminal, offender, one who sins habitually and is subject to the consequences of his actions

Scornful – **3887** *luts* to mock, deride, to scorn, "to make mouths at" (sneer would be a good word)

Note: the progression from being morally wrong to becoming one who is actually mocking God. (see also Ps. 2)

As they increase in ungodliness, their physical actions take a decided turn for the worse. (walk- stand- sit)

From Contemporary English Version:

God blesses those people
who refuse evil advice
and won't follow sinners
or join in sneering at God

v.2

But – introduces a contrast

his delight – a special affection 2656: *chephets*: pleasure, delight, desire, pursuit is in the Law of the Lord.

In His Law he meditates day and night. – the evidence of his affection

Meditate: 1897B *haghah*

to murmur, mutter, sigh, moan, meditate, muse

to speak, to whisper

This word describes a low moaning sound like that of a dove.

What are two keys to the life of the blessed person?

1. _____
2. _____

v.3

introduces another parallelism (a contrast with the first parallelism)

o that brings forth its fruit in its season

o whose leaf does not wither

o in all that he does, he prospers

Each line of the parallelism adds new information to what has been previously provided. Therefore, it is synthetic.

What does “leaf does not wither” mean? _____

Notice how each parallel line adds to the previous information already provided.

Who wouldn't want a life that is fruitful, prosperous and doesn't wither which is to say it doesn't stop producing fruit.

vv. 4-5

the author returns to the ungodly he introduced in the first verse.

What is chaff and why is it of no value? _____

Note: You can't buy chaff in a store.

From v.5, what judgment is the author talking about? _____

Note 5b nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous

This may be a little puzzling since Jesus' parables in Matthew 13 indicate that there will be wheat and chaff growing together until the end of the age. See also the dragnet with fish to keep and those to discard.

How would you answer this question? (clue: What is the verb of this phrase?) _____

v.6

A third parallelism...this time contrasting (anti-thetic)

What does it mean to be known by the Lord? _____

Hebrew note: “perish” from *avadh*

This is one of the most important Hebrew words describing this result.

It is a very strong word, a very sober pronouncement.

- destroy, destruction, perish
- It describes the downfall of nations as follows:
 - o withering away of crops
 - o fading away of strength, hope wisdom, knowledge and wealth
 - o applied to destruction of temples, images, pictures
 - o It suggests utter defeat.
 - o It suggests to wander about aimlessly without orientation, to be lost literally or morally.

Note: *Avadh* is also used in the last verse of Psalm 2.

III. Psalm 1 – A Summation

Theme: “The Two Ways”

The Psalmist begins with a powerful word designed to get our attention, “blessed.” Who doesn’t want to be blessed?

Not only is this word an “attention getter,” it is also a summary of what is to follow.

Then, he secures our complete attention when he says: “Whatever he does prospers.”

How can we resist his rhetoric? He has captured our thoughts.

Who would not respond: “That’s what I want; how can I be that person?”

What can I do to have a blessed life?”

He then proceeds to lay down five conditions for this blessedness, three negatives and two positives.

From the negative side he says: “don’t!”

- don’t walk in the counsel of the ungodly and listen to their instructions,
- don’t stand in the path of sinners to be guided, and
- don’t sit (dine = intimate fellowship) with those debased fellows (see Romans 1:18-31) who would mock God and encourage evil.

And notice the increasing fellowship with evil as you walk, stand and then sit. The issue here is “From whom do you receive your counsel?”

This is of primary importance and, later in the psalm, he will describe these worthless fellows and tell you about their tragic ending.

Next, he tells us of the positive steps we must take:

- delight (take great pleasure in) the law of the Lord, and
- invest significant time day and night in “meditating” on the law of the Lord. (The best illustration I have found to define this mysterious word is a cow chewing her cud.)

The ultimate source of all wisdom and wise counsel can only be found in the Word of God. Prosperity is found in her pages.

If you fill your mind and heart with the Word of God, then you shall prosper and be fruitful, old age will not rob you of blessings and, best of all, you will be known by God.

The unspoken question that lingers in the air: “Will you follow the wise advice of this “lover of God?”

IV. Conclusion:

How would you summarize this psalm? _____

Why did the psalmist write this psalm? _____

Where might we apply or use this psalm? _____

V. Some Final Comments on chapters #1 and #2 of this workbook:

1. How to study a psalm is a process that we learn over time with practice and endurance. You may or may not choose to utilize all of the process steps which I've outlined in this chapter.
2. Exposition of any psalm requires work and dedication.
3. There are a number of tools that I use when studying a psalm:
 - A. Biblical Interpretation Guidelines (see Lesson #1, Section VI, Guidelines for Interpretation)
 - B. The Complete Word Study Old Testament (Hebrew) by Dr. Spiro Zodhiates
Dr. Zodhiates also has a similar book for the New Testament (Greek).
 - C. The IVP Bible Background Commentary (both OT and NT are available) (provides cultural commentary)

- D. Reese Chronological Bible (principally for dates which then assists in determining the historical situation)
 - E. Commentaries on the Psalms – I like Boice and Leupold.
4. A help to studying a psalm is to memorize it. This way, no matter where you are or what time it is, you have immediate access to the text.
 5. People who have problems with their minds have found help and healing for their minds through scripture memorization. (especially recovering drug users)
 6. Scripture memorization facilitates the use of the Word as a weapon against our enemy.
 7. Note the psalmist' comment: "Thy Word have I hid in my heart **that** I might not sin against Thee." (Ps. 119:11 KJV) Therefore, scripture memorization is a deterrent to sin. (**that**: in order that; to the end that)

Notes: _____

Chapter #3: Exposition of Psalm 2

“The Coronation of the Messiah”

1. *Why do the nations rage and the people plot 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 bonds in pieces
And cast their cords away from us.”*
4. *He who sits in the heavens shall laugh;
The Lord shall hold them in derision.*
5. *Then He shall speak to them in His wrath
And distress them in His deep displeasure.*
6. *“Yet, I have set My King on my holy hill of Zion.”*
7. *“I will declare the decree the Lord has said to me:
‘You are My Son, today I have begotten You.*
8. *Ask of me and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance;
And the ends of the earth for Your possession.*
9. *You shall break them with a rod of iron;
You shall dash them to pieces like a potter’s vessel.”*
10. *Now therefore, be wise, O kings;
Be instructed you judges of the earth.*
11. *Serve the Lord with fear
And rejoice with trembling*
12. *Kiss the Son, lest He be angry,
And you perish in the way,
When His wrath is kindled but a little.*

Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.

*Type: Enthronement
Messianic*

Use: Instruction to rulers

*Theme: “The futility of
conspiring against God”*

Emotion: Rebuke

*Unique feature: use of a
variety of literary devices**

Recommended for memory

- * Literary devices in this psalm: 1. rhetorical question, 2. figures of speech,
3. dramatized speeches, 4. apostrophe

Other suggested titles: “The Wrong Path and its Consequences” (Boice)
“The Futility of Conspiring Against God” (ESV)
“The Ultimate Victory of the Lord’s Anointed” (Leupold)

Studying a Psalm:

1. Pray.
2. Select a Psalm. 2
3. Read through the psalm.
4. Research:
 - Theme _____
 - Kind/Category _____
 - Use _____
 - Politics: _____
 - Superscription information _____
 - Author _____
 - Date _____
 - Context _____
5. Cultural information: _____
6. Outline: _____

7. Key words: _____

8. Figures of Speech: _____

9. Prophetic: _____
10. Parallelisms: _____

11. Emotional feel: _____
12. Other Psalms: _____
13. NT quotes: _____

14. Commentary: _____

15. Learn: _____
16. Applications: _____
 - A. _____
 - B. _____
 - C. _____

17. Verse-by-verse analysis:

Questions to Answer:

1. Is there a relationship between this psalm and Psalm 1?

2. Is this psalm Messianic? _____
3. Why were the nations raging against God and His anointed? _____

4. Is this psalm prophetic? If yes, of what? _____

5. What are the bonds and cords that these rulers are trying to break?

6. Who were “those” who raged against God? _____

7. What is the significance of the Acts 4: 25-28 quotation of this psalm?

8. What does it mean “to kiss the son?” _____

9. What is a primary lesson/application for us from this psalm?

Author: David (from superscription)

Date: 1014 B.C. (Reese Chronological Bible)

Now we can go to the historical books and determine what was happening in Israel during this time. (We will discover that David has been king for 11 years.)

Literary Style (genres): Poetry

It employs a variety of literary devices (4): a rhetorical question (Can you spot where the rhetorical question is?), description, dramatized speeches and apostrophe (a figure of speech in which the writer addresses someone absent as though present and capable of responding) to help us feel the futility of the planned rebellion against God.

In trying to visualize this idea, I thought of a small cluster of ants who were secretly convening and plotting as to how they will stamp with their feet upon and eliminate the elephant who is watching them from a position nearby.

Outline: Note the very clear delineation of the psalm into four distinct strophes (a stanza, a division of a poem) of three verses each. (Many of the psalms are not so easily outlined.)

v. 1-3 Why do the nations rage?

- (note the angry, bitter, rebellious opposition of the Lord's enemies)
- vv. 4-6 God's laugh and His decree
(God is calm and unmoved by their angry rhetoric.)
- vv. 7-9 Jesus declares God's decree.
(the amazing, appointment of the Lord's anointed)
- vv. 10-12 A wise counsel and warning to the rulers of the earth
(the merciful exhortation to "flee this path")
- Note: This stern warning to the angry kings and rulers is mercy in the light of the consequences they will incur if they follow through with their plan.

I. **Background:**

- A. Historical – David was crowned king in 1025 B.C. and within 5 years he was king over a united Israel.

As we will see shortly, this is a prophetic psalm and the New Testament (Acts) identifies who the raging nations and people are.

It has a double prophetic application in that God's Son is identified as the Messiah.

- B. The psalm background – At one time, Psalms 1 and 2 were considered to be one Psalm. (earliest Hebrew manuscripts) If this was true, then David would also have been the author of Psalm 1 since it is already established that he wrote Psalm 2.

The doctrine of the 2 ways in our present Psalm 1 is carried to a higher level in Ps 2...a revolt of the nations against God and His Anointed (Heb. Messiah)

So we see a revealing of the consequences of taking the wrong path:

- o counsel of the ungodly,
- o path of sinners, and
- o seat of the scornful.

The judgment awaiting these wicked men can only be averted by taking refuge in the Messiah which is the sense of verses 11 and 12, kiss the Son, surrender fully and submit to Him.

Is this Psalm Messianic:

1. Hebrews 11:3 says that the worlds (literally "ages") were framed by the Word of God. This indicates that God, during His creative processes, also created history, each of the ages that mankind would encounter as he travels through time.

And, in this process, he determined the characters of history and the parts they would play in each of the ages.

How does this apply to us? _____

Now read item 2 below.

2. For the answer to the question above, let's turn to Acts 4:25 - 28 where the early Christians quoted Psalm 2.

v.25 "...who by the mouth of your servant David have said:

Why did the nations rage and the people plot vain things?

The kings of the earth took their stand and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against His Christ?"

Now, notice their interpretation of this passage:

"For truly against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together to do whatever your hand and your purpose determined before to be done."

So, this passage, written approximately 1000 years before it occurred, identifies the people and nations that will do to Jesus what God had prophesied that they would do.

This is definitely a Messianic Psalm.

II. Verse-by-verse analysis:

- vv. 1-3 The rhetorical question (a question for which no answer is expected or for which there is only one answer):

A speaker asks why would the rulers engage in something so useless as trying to break/cast away the cords of God's anointed.

This is not just earthly kings rebelling against an Israelite king such as David.

This is a rebellion of the human heart against God.

The earthly rulers do not want the authority of Jesus Christ over them.

They want to be their own bosses.

The bonds and cords which they despise are the rule of God. (See Israel's rebellion against God which resulted in the appointment of Saul as king over Israel.)

And therefore, their rebellion is against God Himself.

"We have, in these 3 verses, a description of the hatred of human nature against the Christ of God." (Spurgeon)

Spurgeon's Treasury of David quotes a passage from William S. Plumer dated 1867. It is partially reproduced here:

Following is a listing of the end of some rulers who distinguished themselves by their zeal in persecuting Christians:

- became speedily deranged
- slain by his own son
- one became blind
- one was drowned
- one was strangled
- one died in a miserable captivity
- two committed suicide
- five were assassinated

What does this tell us about the “wisdom” of plotting against God’s people?

vv. 4-6 God speaks:

God is not in the least moved by these ravings of mortal men.

He simply laughs at these “fools.” (This is the only place in the Bible that says that God laughs.)

But it is not a laugh of mirth or of enjoyment, but of derision.

And this is what any attempts by humans to throw off the rule of God deserve. He has already determined what He will do.

The folly displayed here is actually ludicrous. How can the created discard the Creator? And yet, this is what mankind is still trying to do today.

What are some of the ways man rejects the rule of God?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

After laughing at them, God speaks to rebuke and terrify them.

His wrath and deep displeasure are enough to distress them.

Note: Early in the Psalms, the wrath of God is introduced.

3. vv. 7-9 God’s anointed (Jesus) proclaims God’s decree:

“You are my son...” Note that in Mt. 3:17 (baptism) and 17:5 (transfiguration), God speaks of Jesus: “This is my son, whom I love...”

In the 2nd part of v.7, note that Paul quotes this Psalm in Acts 13:33, but refers to Jesus’ resurrection from the dead and not to the eternal begetting by the Father.”

vv. 8-9 have a bearing on our evangelizing activities of today.

In v.6, God says He has set (past tense) His King on His holy hill.

vv.8-9 speak in the future tense. I will make the nations... you will rule...you will dash them...

Note that in Heb. 2, the author quotes Ps. 8:4-6 saying that the Father has placed all things under His feet. He continues..."At present we do not see everything subject to Him." (Heb. 2:8)

Jesus is Lord but there are still many like these rebellious rulers who resist Him.

Our part: declare the kingdom of God which is to proclaim the rule (reign) of Christ in the hearts of those who will receive Him.

Note below how each of the following verses reference this psalm:

1. Rev. 1:5 _____
2. Rev. 2:27 _____
3. Rev. 12:5 _____

4. vv. 10-12 The Speaker of 1-3 speaks again.

This time He warns, instructs and exhorts those who have not yet bowed the knee to King Jesus.

I think it is not unreasonable to assume that the speaker of stanzas 1-3 and 9-12 is actually the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, the 4 voices we hear in the Psalm are the world, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

In 1-3 we hear the voice of the rebellious (told by the Speaker.)

in 4-6 God speaks.

In 7-9 , Jesus speaks

In 10-12 the Speaker is drawing people to Jesus. He does this in a loving, tender but firm way.

This is the Holy Spirit at work, just as He does in our lives.

The Spirit gives several instructions:

1. be wise
2. be instructed
3. serve the Lord with fear.
4. rejoice with trembling
5. "kiss" the son which was a Hebrew idiom for full surrender and submission

Hebrew note: "kiss" from *nashaq*

an active imperative

shows homage

Conquered people kiss to show submission and respect.

However...this is what these rulers will not do.

And their refusal sets themselves on a path that will end in eternal suffering they can't even imagine. (see Great White throne Judgment in Rev. 20:11-15)

But...can we not take these as wise exhortations to those who will embrace God's Son as Messiah and Lord?

The final verse is a reminder that our only refuge from the wrath of God is in Jesus, the Messiah.

Hebrew note: "perish" from *avadh* (Same word used at the end of Psalm 1)

This is one of the most important Hebrew words describing this result.

It is a very strong word, a very sober pronouncement.

See lesson # 2, at the end of Section II, for a detailed description of "avadh."

A final comment: This psalm is a reminder that we are not to walk in the counsel of the ungodly, stand in the path of sinners nor sit (dine and fellowship) with the scornful. (see Psalm 1) If we do, we will become like them.

The blessing of God is not with these. In fact, their eternal destiny is in the lake of fire that God has prepared for the rebellious angels. I cannot begin to imagine the terror of dwelling in the company of demons for eternity.

III. Psalm 2 – A summation

Theme: The Coronation of the Messiah

In Psalm 1, we saw the 2 ways that a person can live upon the face of the earth, wisely or foolishly, wickedly or righteously.

In Psalm 2, the individuals of Psalm 1 have grown up to be "full-scale" rebels against God. We will now see the 2 ways that nations (and their kings) can live on the earth, either in rebellion against God's king or in submission with the appropriate homage and service to God's "Chosen One."

This psalm begins with an incredulous rhetorical question: "Why are the rulers of the nations raging and conspiring against the Creator?" It's one thing to be angry towards God, but to plan to dispose of Him? How ridiculous is that.

Why does anyone rage against a loving, benevolent Creator? Because they don't want Him to rule over them. Is that not the height (or depth) of foolishness.

Where Psalm 1 was a reasoned, calm discourse, this psalm is filled with emotion, the rage of the kings, and God's wrath, anger and deep displeasure toward these foolish mortals.

God captures them in His derision, a word which shows scorn for their vain babblings. God laughs, not in mirth, but with incredulity at the height of their folly.

They want to be rulers of themselves but He has already installed the king of His choosing. His very voice puts them in distress.

In the third stanza, the anointed king speaks telling of God's decree. God has installed Him as king over the nations. He has given Him dominion and victory over the rebellious lot.

Suddenly, the vain babblings of these foolish men and their character are exposed. They shall be no more than empty, broken shards of pottery, no longer good for even the menial purpose for which they were created.

But, all is not lost. There is a hope.

They don't have to go down the road of rebellion.

An alternate course of action is provided:

- be wise (not foolish or stupid)
- receive instruction
- fearfully serve the king God has installed
- rejoice with trembling for the opportunity of life which can be yours
- kiss the son, a figure of speech which means to show homage and submission

But, these are the very ones who will not do these things.

And, just as in Psalm 1, the wicked individual will perish, so also will these kings and nations perish if they neglect to put off their own self-reliance and put their trust in God's anointed one.

Major lessons of this psalm:

1. The futility of rebellion against God
2. Note the courses of action provided in verses 10-12 for those who would enjoy God's blessing.

IV. Application:

Identify at least one application from each of the 4 stanzas of this psalm:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Now...go back through our process and see if we have answered our questions and completed the process. Did we? _____

Is there anything else you need to know or would like to know to complete our analysis of Psalm 2? _____

A final thought:

One day, as I was reading in the initial Psalms of the Psalter, another thought took my attention. At the end of Ps. 2, v.12b, there is a focus on trust.

But David is not through with the issue of trust.

He also wrote Psalms 3-5.

Notice:

Ps 3:

As I go through a psalm, I try to summarize the psalm with a single word (not always possible.) In this case, my summary word is "trust.

And...the theme from my study Bible: "Confidently trusting God for protection and peace.

Ps 4:

My theme: trust

Study Bible: We can place our confidence (trust) in God because He will listen when we call on Him.

See also v.3b and 8b

Ps 5: another trust theme

see also v.11a "But let all those rejoice who put their trust in you."

In most cases, I consider that each Psalm is an individual Psalm not specifically connected to the psalms before and after them.

But in cases like this, we would be amiss to overlook the reoccurring theme of trust which is seen in psalms 2-5. (all authored by David)

It appears as a continual thought and focus of David's communications.

Can we not trust the God of creation who spoke the world into existence and created and populated the ages the earth would endure?

What an amazing God we serve.

David, writing 3000 years ago, focuses on a theme that is just as appropriate for us today.

For thought: If I sense that my trust in God is not what it needs to be, what can I do to build upon the trust that I do have?

Notes

Chapter #4: Exposition of Psalm 8

1. *O LORD, our Lord, how excellent is Your name in all the earth,
Who have set Your glory above the heavens.*
2. *Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have ordained strength,
Because of your enemies that You might silence the enemy and the avenger.*
3. *When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers,
The moon and stars which You have ordained,*
4. *What is man that You are mindful of him,
And the son of man that You visit him?*
5. *For You have made him a little lower than the angels,
And You have crowned him with glory and honor.*
6. *You have made him to have dominion over the works
of Your hands;
You have put all things under his feet.*
7. *All sheep and oxen, the beasts of the field,*
8. *the birds of the air and the fish of the sea that pass through the paths of the seas.*
9. *O LORD, our Lord, how excellent is Your name in all the earth.*

Type: Nature
Use: Celebration/Praise
Theme: "High praise for the Creator"
Emotion: Awe
Key feature: An "inclusio"
Recommended for memory

"This psalm is an unsurpassed example of what a hymn should be, celebrating as it does the grace and glory of God, rehearsing who He is and what He has done, and relating us and our world to Him, all with a masterly economy of words and in a mingled spirit of joy and awe. The range of thought takes us not only above the heavens, and back to the beginning, but, as the New Testament points out, to the very end. The psalm's theme is the greatness of God and the place of man within God's universe."

A Quote from D. Kidner from his study of this psalm

"There is none of this belabored piety with David. Jehovah is his God. So he begins with that name, maintaining that Jehovah is so majestic and His glory is so great that the latter is above the heavens. This means, as David's son, Solomon would say later in his great prayer at the dedication of the temple: "The heavens, even the highest heavens cannot contain you. How much less this temple that I have built!" (I Kgs. 8:27) The reason the creation, wonderful as it is, cannot exhaust the glory of God is that God is its maker. So, although creation expresses His glory, revealing His existence, wisdom and great power, as well as other attributes, it is only a partial revelation of the surpassingly greater God who stands behind it. If God has set His glory above the heavens, it is certain that nothing under the heavens can praise Him adequately."

A quote from J.M. Boice in his commentary on Psalm 8.

Studying a Psalm:

1. Pray.
2. Select a Psalm. _____
3. Read through the psalm.
4. Research:
 - Theme _____
 - Kind/Category _____
 - Use _____
 - Politics _____
 - Superscription information _____
 - Author _____
 - Date _____
 - Context _____
5. Cultural information: _____
6. Outline:

7. Key words: _____

8. Fig. of Speech: _____

9. Prophetic passages: _____
10. Parallelisms: _____

11. Emotional feel: _____
12. Other Psalms: _____
13. NT quotes: _____

14. Commentary: _____

15. Learn about God: _____

16. Applications: _____

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

17. Verse-by-verse analysis:

Questions to Answer:

1. What is the cultural/political background of Psalm 8?

2. What is the theme of the psalm? _____

3. When did David write Psalm 8? _____

4. Was there any significant event that may have affected his writing of this Psalm? _____

5. What is David's objective in writing this psalm? _____

6. Is he successful in achieving his objective? _____

7. Is this psalm "Messianic? (pertaining to the Messiah)" _____

8. What is a "gittith?" _____

9. What is an "inclusio?" _____

I. Background:

In God's grand plan of the ages, this psalm takes place during the age of the Law under the monarchy ruled by King Saul, the monarchy's first king.

A. Saul & David:

Saul was born in 1105 B.C. He became king in 1065 B.C.

He reigned for 40 years.

David was born in 1055 B.C.

According to the Reese Chronological Bible, David was anointed to be king in 1030 B.C.

How old was Saul at this time? _____

How old was David at the time (of his anointing)? _____

Does this give us a clue as to what part of the problem between Saul and David might have been? (clue: calculate the difference in their ages.)

The Reese (Chronological Bible) also provides the following:

David wrote the following psalms in:

- o 1030 B.C. Psalms 8, 19, 39
- o 1029 B.C. Psalms 5, 7, 11, 12, 23, 25, 26, 34, 56
- o 1028 B.C. Psalms 13, 31, 35, 52, 54, 57, 64, 108, 109, 140, 141

David is credited with writing 73 of the 150 Psalms (the most by any author.)

There are approximately 50 psalms for which the author is unknown.

There is no record that David wrote any biblical psalms prior to 1030 B.C.

Why not? _____

At the time of the writing of Psalm 8, David had not yet been called to minister to Saul with his musical skills. Saul did not know David at that time.

B. National Setting

Israel was not in a good place at this time. Israel had asked Samuel to give them a king. They wanted a king "like the ones the other nations have." And that's exactly what God gave them...a self-serving, egotistical king.

And now Saul was behaving just as God had said he would.

Note: God had explained to Samuel that they were not rejecting him but God, Himself.

C. Author: David

D. Date: Reese places this psalm at 1030 B.C., shortly after David was anointed king by Samuel (see I Sam. 16:12-13.) This is one of the first of David's scriptural psalms.

(I use the Reese Chronological Bible for most of my dating.)

Reese also places Ps. 19, another creation/praise psalm at this time.

This is just before the Spirit departs from Saul and Saul's request to have a musician console him. (I Sam. 16:14-23)

- E. Theme: 1st verse which displays the **high praise** of the author for God whom he identifies as Jehovah Adonai. (O LORD, our Lord)

Leupold entitles this psalm: "God's glory revealed in man's dignity."

- F. Key Words: see verse-by-verse scripture analysis

- G. National Setting of Israel: Israel has rejected the rule of Yahweh...and hence the major shift from a theocracy to a monarchy. And Saul wasn't doing very well.

- H. A cultural comment on Psalm 8 from the IVP Bible background Commentary of the Old Testament, p. 519

"The status of the human race in Israelite thinking was very high when contrasted with the status people were given in Mesopotamian thinking. In the Mesopotamian view, the gods had no plan to create people as an integral part of the world that they had set up for themselves. People were only brought into existence as a consequence of the gods becoming tired of working so hard to provide for themselves. Humans were made to be servants of deities who had no interest in hard labor. In this way of thinking, human dignity was achieved through the idea that the gods needed them. Here (in Ps. 8) instead, people rule over all other creatures."

- I. Other details:

1. The heading (superscription) information shows that this psalm was to be given to the chief musician indicating that it was to be prepared and used for group singing.
2. The heading also indicates that this was to be "on the instrument of Gath." (The information provided in the heading is not scripture. These are notes added by a scribe to provide information regarding the use of the psalm.) It's not clear as to what this specific instrument was.

Now read through the psalm and identify the theme and provide an outline.

II. Theme: What is the theme of the psalm? Select below

1. The dignity of man as originally created.
2. What is man that God is mindful of him?

3. The greatness of God and the place of man in the universe.
4. David expounds on God's most striking demonstration that can be offered to show the greatness of God.

(What was that demonstration? _____)

In Psalm 8, we see a man, David, who :

- knows God
- loves God and
- honors God

III: Outline:

Your outline:

Suggestion A:

- | | |
|--------|--|
| vv.1-2 | In celebration of the glorious majesty of God. |
| vv.3-4 | In recognition of the <u>insignificance</u> of man (with reference to the creation.) |
| vv.5-8 | In awe of the <u>significance</u> of man. |
| v.9 | In celebration of the glorious majesty of God. |
- Note that each summary above features the personal activity of the author.

Suggestion B*:

- | | |
|---------|---|
| vv. 1-2 | Assertion that God's glory in the creation silences His detractors. |
| vv. 3-4 | human <u>smallness</u> in relation to the immensity of the heavenly bodies |
| vv. 5-8 | Celebration of <u>man's greatness</u> in having been made only a little lower than the angels and given dominion over the natural creation. |

* This outline quoted from the ESV Bible introductory notes to Psalm 8.

IV. Verse-by Verse analysis:

vv.1-2

Verse 1a is repeated exactly at the end of the psalm. This is a Hebrew writing technique called “inclusio” in which the two repeated verses act as “book ends” for all of the verses between them. Its use is designed to show that information contained in the book ends applies to all of the included verses.

Therefore...the entire psalm is high praise for the Creator.

See also Mt. 5:3-10 for another example of an inclusio: “For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

v.1 O Lord, our Lord is literally translated Jehovah, our Adonai.

What is the significance of these 2 names of God. _____

(covenant God and Lord/master)

What other words are translated in the place of excellent? _____

This comes from the Hebrew word *yaddir* and is loaded with meaning:

- majestic, glorious, great, powerful, mighty, splendid, stately, distinguished. And, since God is God, all of these words can be applied to Him.

So, how does the translator decide which word to use? _____

Note: This word (*yaddir*) in Hebrew is a good illustration as to why we have different translations of the Bible. (All of the words are applicable to God...so which one do you choose?)

This verse tells me that David knows something about God. He is in awe of Him.

If this psalm is written shortly after his anointing to be king, he may also be in awe that God has chosen him for this assignment.

- “in all the earth”: displays God’s omnipresence
- “glory” from Heb. hodh – splendor, majesty, glory, honor, renown, ornament

v.2 ordained – from *yasadh* means to establish, fixing something firmly
Seen also in Is. 28:16, I Pet. 2:4-8 association – “the chief cornerstone”
“...ordained strength (also “praise”) because of your enemies to silence the enemy and the avenger.”

What does this mean? (clue: See Jesus’ quote of this passage in Mt. 21:16) _____

Who are the enemies? _____

vv. 3-4

v.3 Explain “the work of your fingers.” _____

Does God have hands and fingers? _____

v.4 mindful from Heb. *zakhar* - has 3 focuses

1. to remember, recollect, reflect upon
2. to mention, declare, proclaim
3. to record, commemorate

What does this tell us about God’s attitude towards us? _____

(One answer: He has not nor will He ever forget us.)

In this verse, David is saying: “Who is man that God should remember or think upon him?”

We might paraphrase this: Who is this great God that He should even bother to think about man (us)?

When we see the greatness of God, we also begin to perceive and understand the littleness of man.

vv.5-8 Summarize what David is saying in these verses: _____

First: God has given us significance and honor above all of creation.

Note in v.5, he uses the word “glory,” which he first used of God, but now of mortal man. “You have set your glory above the heavens.” (v.1b) This is a glory that surpasses the heavens. This is an effective way of saying

that God has made man in His image and he (man) reflects God's glory in a way that nothing else in creation can do.

Second: He also speaks of man and his special role of having dominion (ruling) over all of creation. God has shared his "rule" with mankind.

In a special way, God has placed man in a mediating position in the universe...he is between the angels (above him) and the beasts (below him.)

Angels have spirits but no bodies. Beasts have bodies but no spirits.

But man has both spirit and body.

Note that God refers to man as "a little lower than the angels."

He could have referred to man as slightly higher than the beasts.

Why might God have chosen the former descriptive than the latter?

Note: In verse 5, "lower than the angels." The word translated angels is actually the Hebrew word Elohim, the plural word for God. This word is occasionally translated "spirit beings." However, due to the references in vv. 5-8 to Genesis 1 and the emphasis of this section on man being created in the image of God, the appropriate translation for this word in this verse is God.

"paths of the seas" = ocean currents

v.9 David again cites his theme of the excellence of God's name. By the initial use of this statement in verse 1, he now closes his book marks and the psalm.

So, how do you answer questions 5 and 6 from "Questions to Answer" provided earlier in this chapter (repeated below)?

5. What is David's objective in writing this psalm? _____

6. Is he successful in achieving his objective? If yes, how did he do it? _____

V. Is the psalm Messianic?

Obviously, David didn't know that what he was writing was Messianic.

But God revealed later, through the inspiration of the Spirit in the writings of Paul and the author of Hebrews, that this psalm had “Messiah and End Times Content.”

Read:

I Cor. 15:27 “For he has put all things under His feet.”

This is a clear reference to David’s psalm.

And if you back up to v.24 it says: “Then comes the end when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father.

See also Ps. 110:1 which is definitely a Messianic psalm.

Heb. 2:6-8 Here the author quotes the psalm verses 4-6, again giving Messianic and End Times content to the verse.

Note also v. 5 the reference to “the world to come.”

So, David wrote a psalm of high praise to the God he had come to know.

New Testament writers came along later and (by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit) identified the Messianic and End Times contents in the psalm.

Pretty amazing, wouldn’t you say?

Read: Mt. 21:16 Note that children were “crying out” their praises and Jesus turns to the chief priests and scribes and quotes Ps. 8:2.

Who are the enemy and the avenger? Answer: the chief priests and scribes who were silenced by the adoring praises of the children for the king.

A question: Do the pronouns 'him' and 'his' in Hebrew refer to the man in verse 4a, or the son of man in verse 4b?

A Response: Man and son of man (verse 4a and b) are 2 different Hebrew words, “enosh” and “ben-adam,” but essentially mean the same thing...mankind.

As a first reading, I would say that David, in his writing, is referring to the original man, Adam. He was given dominion over the whole earth. He was crowned with glory and honor. At this time, he ruled over all things even the beasts of the field. This is a “pre-fall” picture.

Gen.1:26-28. This is consistent with the creation theme he established in the earlier verses. The pronouns would have referred to mankind (the original creation, not fallen.) David would have been familiar with the creation accounts in Genesis.

It isn't until over a thousand years later that the NT authors (Paul and author of Hebrews) writing by the Spirit of God, gave a second prophetic level of meaning to this psalm.

This is not uncommon in Scripture. Another example is Rachel weeping for her children (she was in her tomb) when they were being carried into exile to Babylon (587 BC) and then again, almost 600 years later, when Herod slaughtered the baby boys in Bethlehem.

Note: Rachel's tomb was in the near proximity of the final departure point for the children of Israel when they were being taken into captivity to Babylon.

Some scholars say this is a Messianic psalm, do you agree? _____

Could verses 5 and 6 refer BOTH to Jesus Christ and also to man in general (cf Gen 1:26, 28), so that there are two levels of meaning? _____

Now read the psalm again and reflect on what we have learned in our study.

VI. Psalm 8 – A Summation

This psalm is a celebration of high praise for our God.

It begins with a curious Hebrew literary device called an "inclusio."

The first and last verses of the psalm are identical, indicating that the theme of all the verses between these "book ends" is the same, i.e. in high praise of our Creator.

The subject line of the psalm traces a path from our Creator God to man who is in the middle between God and angels and the beasts of the field and then to the beasts. Man is less than the angels but greater than the beasts.

The poem begins in verse 1 with a very pregnant adjective, yaddir (Hebrew) describing Jehovah, our Lord. This word has a plethora of alternate meanings...majestic, glorious, great, powerful, mighty, splendid, stately, to name a few.

And He is these and much, much more.

His radiant glory is high, far above the heavens.

This exalted God displays His might by establishing praise (also strength) from the mouths of babies and infants to silence our enemies and Satan (the avenger).

What an amazing, powerful God who has the ability to infuse strength and overcoming power into the weakest of mortals to overcome our greatest enemies.

David now meditates on God's creative work in the heavens and is astounded and marvels that this great God even gives thought to the creature man upon the earth.

This man whose position is beneath the angels, but above the creatures, is however, the special attention of the Deity.

God has given him dominion over all of the creatures on the face of the earth, air and sea.

How amazing is this incredible God.

Man has dignity and worth, but God alone is majestic and glorious.

Key lessons from this psalm:

1. How great is our God!
2. He is worthy of our praise.

VII. Application:

Record five lessons we can learn from this psalm.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Notes

Chapter #5: Exposition of Psalm 84

1. *How lovely is Your tabernacle, O Lord of hosts!*
2. *My soul longs, yes, even faints for the courts of the Lord;
My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.*
3. *Even the sparrow has found a home,
and the swallow a nest for herself,
where she may lay her young – even Your altars,
O Lord of hosts, my King and my God.*
4. *Blessed are those who dwell in Your house;
they will still be praising You. Selah*
5. *Blessed is the man whose strength is in You, whose heart is set on pilgrimage.*
6. *As they pass through the Valley of Baca, they make it a spring;
The rain also covers it with pools.*
7. *They go from strength to strength; every one of them appears before God in Zion.*
8. *O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer; give ear, O God of Jacob!
Selah*
9. *O God, behold our shield, and look upon the face of Your anointed.*
10. *For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand.
I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of
wickedness.*
11. *For the Lord God is a sun and shield;
The Lord will give grace and glory;
No good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly.*
12. *O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man who trusts in You!*

Type: *Worship*
Use: *Devotions*
Theme: *Longing for the
place where God dwells*
Emotion: *Heart desire*
Key feature: *qualities of
the worshipping heart*
Recommended for
memory

Studying a Psalm:

1. Pray.
2. Select a Psalm. _____
3. Read through the psalm.
4. Research:
 - Theme: _____
 - Kind/Category _____

- Use _____
 - Politics _____
 - Superscription information _____
 - Author _____
 - Date _____
 - Context _____
5. Cultural information: _____
 6. Outline: _____

 7. Key words: _____

 8. Fig. of Speech: _____

 9. Prophetic passages: _____
 10. Parallelisms: _____

 11. Emotional feel: _____
 12. Other Psalms: _____
 13. NT quotes: _____

 14. Commentary: _____

 15. Learn about God: _____
 16. Applications: _____
 A. _____
 B. _____
 C. _____

Lesson Outline:

- I. Titles for this psalm
- II. Theme
- III. Background
- IV. Outline of Psalm 84
- V. Table of worshipper qualities
- VI. Exposition: Verse-by-verse
 - 1. vv. 1-4 The blessing of dwelling in God's house
 - 2. vv. 5-7 The blessing of those who center their life in God
 - 3. vv. 8-9 A prayer for blessing on the king
 - 4. vv. 10-12 The blessing of trusting in the Lord of the sanctuary
- VII. The blessings of a heart of worship
- VIII. How do I get this heart of worship?
- IX. Lessons from the psalm
- X. Application

Questions to answer:

- 1. What is the context of this psalm? _____
- 2. What is the theme of this psalm? _____
- 3. How did the "sons of Korah" get this heart of worship? _____

- 4. What qualities does God desire in those who worship Him? _____

- 5. What are the blessings of the heart revealed in this psalm? _____

- 6. How do we get this "heart of worship"? _____
- 7. What is the "valley of Baca?" _____

I. Titles for this Psalm:

1. The heart of worship
2. Yearning for God's House (Word Study Old Testament (OT))
3. The Psalm of the Janitors (Boice Commentary on Psalms: note that the word for gatekeepers can also be translated porter or janitor.)
4. Love for the place where God dwells (Leupold)
5. A Psalm of Blessing (see outline)
6. A Psalm of a Longing Heart

II. Theme: God's living presence is our greatest joy.

His radiant presence helps us grow in strength, grace and glory.

(from Application Study Bible)

III. Background: Dates are from The Reese Chronological Bible

The exact context is not clearly defined in the text. There are several options for the setting of this psalm as follows:

Option 1:

This psalm is designated as "for/to the sons of Korah." (from Heb. text)

Korah was one of those who led a revolt (1461 B.C.) against Moses in Numbers 16 and was swallowed up by the earth. (Num 16:32) Note that Num. 26:9-11 indicates that the children of Korah did not die.

I Chron. 26 (985 B.C.) tells us that the sons of Kore (Korah) were assigned by David to positions as gatekeepers for the temple. They are described as mighty men of valor, strong men, able men for strength for the service (vv. 6-9 KJV), a service which included "prevention of unqualified intrusion."

So, the descendants of Korah wrote Psalm 84 approximately 500 years after God's judgment on Korah. (If this psalm was written at that time.)

And now, approximately 3000 years later, we have access to this beautiful, passionate psalm.

Makes me wonder if the descendants of Korah ever told their children: "Don't be like grandpa Korah."

Note especially the heart of psalm 84. This is not the heart of Korah in his rebellion.

One possible answer is that the children of Korah saw the catastrophe of the earth opening (something they had never seen before) and swallowing their father and they gained the fear of the Lord.

An objection to the sons of Korah as being the descendants of rebellious Korah is: "How could this longing heart be a descendent of one who was so obviously rebellious and far removed from the tenderness of this psalm?"

However, we would only need to look at the kings of Judah to see that within one generation an evil king had a good son, then a good king had an evil son, etc.

It would not be unlike our God to allow this record to exist to show his great mercy in allowing Korah's descendants to have this major "change of heart."

Option 2:

The person writing the psalm has, for unknown reasons, been away from the sanctuary for a period of time. (Leupold) He longs for that which he knows from having dwelt in the temple.

Option 3:

It is a psalm of people who were present in the temple, who served in God's house, and who are expressing here how intensely their very souls yearned and even fainted for God. (Boice)

Option 4:

The actual setting is undefined.

So...which setting would you select? _____

My choice would be a combination of options 1 and 2.

IV. Outline of Ps 84:

- vv. 1-4 The blessing of dwelling in God's house
- vv. 5-7 The blessing of those who center their life in God (although not abiding in the sanctuary)
- vv.8-9 A prayer for blessings on the king
- v.10-12 The blessing of trusting in the Lord of the sanctuary

V. Table of Worshipper Qualities:

Verse	Key word	Quality	Comment
1	Lovely, greatly loved	Admiration/loving	The sons of Korah were true worshippers.
2a	Longs	Longing	See v.2 notes below on longing
2b	Heart, sing for joy	Joyful song	Note that it is the heart that is doing the singing.
3	Sparrow, swallow	Humility	“Are you not of more value than they?” (Mt. 6:26) God cherishes and cares for all of His creation.
4	Dwell	Abiding	“in His presence”
5	Strength/highways of Zion	Strong in the Lord/pilgrim heart	They have the ways of God in their hearts.
6	Baca/place of springs	weeping, sorrow for sin, persevering, fruitful	They pass through their “Bacas” and, in the process, minister to others
7	Strength to strength	Increasing,	growing in their faith
8/9	Prayer	Prayerful life	Concern for others
10	A day in your courts is better...	Humility	They have a clear understanding of spiritual values.
11/12	Walk uprightly	A righteous life	And God blesses them: sun, shield, favor, honor, good things
12	Trust	Faith	faith/confidence in God

From the table of worshipper qualities above, how can someone get for themselves the qualities shown?

VI. Verse-by-verse analysis:

vv. 1-4 The blessing of dwelling in God's house

v.1 *lovely* – 6 of 7 OT usages indicate this is predominantly used to show that an object is “greatly loved.” (However, lovely is also an acceptable translation of the Hebrew word *yadhidh*.)

places - This word is plural. First the tabernacle (wilderness tent), then the temple, next the synagogue, now, in our hearts. But, for this psalm, I believe the focus of the sons of Korah is on the physical temple in Jerusalem.

Love for the place where God dwells is a key theme of this psalm.

Hosts – is a divine name – He is Lord of all things in heaven and on earth.

Note the exclamation mark at the end of the sentence indicating strong emotion.

v.2 *longs* – to become pale, pine after, desire

This indicates they were totally focused on God, that they were whole-hearted.

Apparently, the author/s didn't have access to the temple for a period of time.

faints - spent, consumed entirely, take away until there is nothing left

These words show strong emotions.

cries out –“*ranan*”: to shout joyfully

Note that his soul, heart and flesh (all of him) are involved in the longing.

v.3 *sparrows* – 2 for a penny (see Mt. 10:29, Jesus speaking.)

swallows – little birds that flit about...they are busy little creatures until their nest is constructed. Then they settle down to attend to their parenting duties.

This is not an allegory but is a simple illustration from the real, physical world of God's all-reaching love and care...they are simply birds that the author observes in the sanctuary and comments about the “at-home” behavior they display. He longs to be “like them” in this respect.

A simple observation: The author sees these little birds flitting and darting about the temple with great liberties. This shows God's love and concern for even the smallest of creatures.

“...Are you not of more value than they?” (Mt. 6:26) (a rhetorical question)

My king and my God - ruler, Lord, master, creator

v.4 v.4 is a continuation of the thought and application of v.3.

Just as there are birds who find a sanctuary in the holy place, so also there are those appointed by God who also have the privilege of abiding there.

Theirs is a joyful life.

They are ever, continually praising God.

Need for special revelation: If one considers the day-to-day, repetitive activities of the temple...slaughtering animals, lighting lamps, washings, etc., it would seem (to the natural man) that these are vain and empty exercises. It takes the special revelation and work of God to transform these “seemingly meaningless” tasks into something that is a blessing and joy.

Think of this statement in terms of the routine, daily tasks we perform in the home and in our work. Without God’s divine opening of our understanding, these become meaningless, monotonous and fruitless tasks that take up space in the empty hours of our days.

But God is always at work in these activities, in ways we don’t understand, working out His plans and purposes for us.

And, with the enlightening work of the Holy Spirit, these tasks can become a joy and we will find ourselves in the “place we want to be.”

blessed – In the OT, those who served in the “courts of the Lord” experienced the presence of the Lord.

Because they “knew” God’s presence, they also valued working and abiding where they were far above all other occupations. This is where they wanted to be.

The Lord is the source and strength of their love, not the sanctuary itself.

“ever singing your praise” (ESV) – current and on-going

The Selah at the end of the verse suggests a pause for reflection. (although the exact meaning of selah seems to be elusive.) It can also mean “to give attention to” and “to heed.”

vv.5-7 The blessing of those who center their life in God

Verse 5 takes up the theme of the previous verse of blessing, this time applying it to those not physically abiding in the sanctuary, yet they have the ways of God in their hearts.

Close fellowship with God makes them strong.

Their life is rooted and grounded in God.

v.6 *Baca* – weeping; the word is symbolic of difficult trials.

An Arabic parallel *bakha* is interpreted “lack of springs” or “dryness.”

Also interpreted: “parched valleys.”

“ways” – direction or course of action to be taken in a specific situation.

When a pilgrim goes on a trip, they are determined to reach their destination.

And no matter the obstacles encountered, they are on a mission and determined to be successful in overcoming each barrier.

When pilgrims pass through a *Baca*, they make it a spring which means it will refresh and nourish others.

In our walk with God, as pilgrims, we should consider each of our *Bacas* and set our hearts to master this crisis and find peace in the midst of it. This is where strong growth in Christian character occurs.

early rain (ESV) – SN 4175 (translation from Zodhiates The Complete Word Study OT) - a symbol of many basic and essential blessings

“We pass through many valleys of Baca and many autumns with falling, brown leaves and cold slashing rains. But we are not disheartened by these things. On the contrary, we rise above them and go on from strength to strength, strengthening one another along the way and blessing all we meet.” (Boice, “An Expositional Commentary on Psalms” p. 692)

Note the flow of blessing:

1. in the sanctuary
2. those whose strength is in Him, but are not abiding in the sanctuary
3. valley of Baca (trials)
4. early rains
5. go from strength to strength (growing stronger)
6. appear before God in Zion

Analysis of verse 84:6: Illustration of a parallelism

Ps 84:6 “As they pass through the Valley of Baca, they make it a spring; the rain also covers it with pools.”

This is a parallelism in which two things are united in two lines of poetry:

1. wells coming from the valley of Baca, and 2. rains which fill the land with pools

In order to understand this passage, we need to know:

What is the valley of Baca?

Baca is a plant that grows in the desert.

But is this a physical location?

A physical location called 'the valley of Baca' has not been identified in the Palestine area.

We also know that Baca means "weeping." So could this be a place of sorrow, of tears?

In fact, in the earlier part of the Psalm we see a soul in search of God's presence.

V. 5b is helpful. When translated literally it reads: "In whose heart the ways."

"The road being traveled is a heart experience."

The person of Ps 84 is on a spiritual pilgrimage and passes through this place or circumstance called "the valley of Baca."

Also, the phrase "make it a spring or well" is a figure of speech.

Our traveler does not dig a well or make a physical spring of water.

It is likely, therefore, that the valley of Baca is not a literal place but a figure of speech by the Psalmist describing his longing search for the place of God's presence.

Could the valley of Baca be something like the valley of the shadow of death which we see in psalm 23?

Is there a correspondence between tears and rain? Is this the thought of the 2nd line?

Or...is this a contrast?

From the Psalm, we know that Ps 84 is the longing cry of one who wants to go to Jerusalem to be in God's presence.

The context gives us a strong clue that the parallelism is contrasting.

- tears from within a man
- rain that falls from heaven

So, we have a figure of speech of a dry, desert place (the valley of Baca) and a contrasting place of refreshing rains.

We have contrast, not similarity.

- the struggles of a person of faith
- the help of God

So what does all of this lead to?

My interpretation :

1. The valley of Baca is symbolic of a difficult time in a Christian's life, perhaps sorrow, separation, or dry and desert-like.

When someone is going through hard times, dry times, desert times, perhaps even times of separation where God doesn't seem to be near or His voice heard, but has the heart determination to get to God, God gives experiences during the desert journey that are a refreshment that strengthens the traveler for the rest of their journey.

He sends rain until it stands in pools. This speaks of an overflow, an abundance, more than the land can immediately absorb.

Thus, He gives strength and enables one to reach Him.

It tells me that even in the midst of difficult times of reaching out to God, God sees the weary traveler and provides times of refreshment. God knows the length of the journey and provides the renewal needed and strengthening along the way.

To me, one of the remarkable things about this passage is that it also teaches that, as a person is going through difficult times, they can, at the same time, be a well of refreshment to those around them. (v.6a: They make it a spring.)

In summary: Understanding the parallelism as contrasting and not similarity helps to open up the meaning of the passage.

If I had determined that the tears of the valley and the rain which makes pools were similar (a similarity and not a contrast), then the meaning of the Psalm would be something very different.

[End of Ps 84:6 Analysis](#)

vv.8-9 [A prayer for blessing on the king](#).

The tone of the psalm now moves from one of Godly reflection to prayer.

As the pilgrim passes through his trials, he is moved to pray for the king.

Note also that he knows God as Jehovah, God of hosts, the God of Jacob and *Elohim* - the strong One.

Shield - protector

Anointed – Heb. word Meshiach (Messiah)

Since the psalmist refers to his shield, I believe the context of the psalm indicates that his prayer is referring to the king of Israel during his time.

However, we cannot overlook the “foreshadowing” of our shield for eternity, our Messiah, Jesus our king.

v.10-12 The blessing of trusting in the Lord of the sanctuary

v.10 The “for” that begins verse 10 refers back to verse 7, skipping over the prayer for the king in verses 8 and 9.

gatekeeper – “one who stands at the threshold” also “doorkeeper”

also porter or janitor

Note that gatekeepers were men of valor. (1 Chron. 26) They had to be because they guarded the portals of the temple where treasures such as gold and silver (offerings) were stored. Additionally, they had to guard against the unscrupulous who were unclean and had no regard for the holiness of God.

Note that a single day as a doorkeeper is regarded as a matter of rare and intense joy. It far surpasses any benefits of dwelling in the house of the wicked or anywhere else for 1000 days.

v.11 The psalmist now continues to show why this blessing of the gatekeeper is so.

Note the extreme value of the blessings of God to the righteous:

He is a sun (light) and shield (protection)

He gives grace and glory.

He doesn't withhold any good (*tov* – big word in Hebrew) thing for those who walk *uprightly*, a word that means entire, complete, perfect, morally whole, free from blemishes.

The fruitfulness of godly lives is now traced to love for the sanctuary which is, in fact, love for God Himself.

uprightly – **8549** *tamim* entire, complete, perfect, morally whole, free from blemishes, faultless, upright in one's conduct

Note: The number provided above (8549) is the Strong's Number which corresponds to the original Hebrew word in *Strong's Dictionary of the Hebrew Bible*. This provides a consistent reference for all Hebrew words in scholastic studies for all societies.

The alternate definitions provided for the Hebrew words are taken from *The Complete Word Study Old Testament*, Dr. S. Zodhiates.

v.12 This verse is a beatitude.

beatitude – **835** *ashar* or *esher* translated “happy”

Compare with New Testament (NT) *makarioi* 3107 Mt. 5:3-11 from the sermon on the mount, which means to be fully satisfied, a state of blessedness which begins at the moment a person receives Christ as their Savior and is born into the kingdom of God.

This would indicate that the NT blessing has a beginning and is progressive as we embrace the qualities Jesus identifies in Mt. 5:3-11.

The chief ingredient in all worship and every relationship with the Lord is that one trust in Him. The most fortunate of the children of men are those who have learned this lesson.

trust **982** *batach* qpta qal participle active 98, 2, 63, 92 (These numbers, from Zodhiates, provide additional descriptions of the unique functions of the grammatical forms.) In this instance, they describe the qal, participle, active verb.

qal – the most basic Hebrew verbal action (2/3 of all Hebrew verb forms)

participle – a verbal form used as an adjectival noun

definition - to attach oneself, to trust, to confide in, feel safe, be confident, secure;

The basic idea is associated with firmness or solidity.

VII. The blessings of a heart of worship:

1. God's dwelling – sing for joy, great praise
2. All are welcome, even the tiniest of birds.
3. great value
4. water others
5. blessings – sun, shield, favor, honor, good things

VIII. How do I get this heart of worship?

1. I believe the sons of Korah, who passed this heart of worship down to their descendants, got it through the cataclysmic earthquake that opened the earth and swallowed their father to his death.

So...we can learn from Korah and his sons.

We can also learn from others of our close associates who are going through difficult seasons.

2. Seek first the kingdom of God and all of these things shall be added to you. Mt. 6:33
3. Ask, seek, knock for it. (and keep asking... for it) (Note: Greek present tense is one of continuous action) Mt. 7:7
4. Meditating on God's Word, especially passages like Proverbs chapters 1-9 and Psalm chapter 119.
5. We increase in the heart of worship by faithfully following after God, living according to His Word.
6. Embrace difficulties with the objective of honoring God in the trial and you, yourself, having peace in the midst of it.
7. God designed our trials for our good. You will reap the benefits of your perseverance if you keep on to the end of the trial.

Keep this in mind as you wrestle with the unique circumstances He has allowed into your life.

Also recall that God, who is infinite in wisdom and understanding, designed our trials and allows them. The trials He allows are one of the ways that He conforms us to the likeness of Jesus.

"And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose." (ESV) Rom. 8:28

And don't neglect the next verse: "For those whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son..."

We are predestined...that means, since God is the predestinator, it's going to happen. "It's a done deal."

If we are bitter and complaining or neglectful in a trial, we are actually complaining about something that God has designed for our good.

I can't help but believe that God is pleased when we embrace our difficulties with a thankful heart.

IX. Psalm 84 – A Summation

In this Hebrew poetry, we are given the unique experience of viewing the heart of a man who intensely loves God. This psalm expresses strong emotion.

Note: The introductory word, most often translated “lovely” can also be translated “greatly loved.” I prefer this translation as it agrees with nearly every other place in Scripture which uses this Hebrew word (yadhidh). In addition, this psalm is about strong feeling and not particularly about physical attractiveness.

The psalmist has been away from the house where God dwells for a period of time. There was a time when it was his daily habitation.

He expresses his strong and intense desire to come once again to the place where God dwells.

His longings for God make him physically faint. His physical energy has been drained from his body of flesh.

He recalls the small birds that dwell near the altar and is envious of their privilege.

Is this not where the true believer must find his home, near God?

The altar: Godward side – propitiation and reconciliation
 Manward side – surrender, commitment, true peace and rest

He has in his heart the highway to Zion and sets off on a pilgrimage in that direction.

As he travels, though dry and expended, he is refreshed.

And though the land around him is parched and barren, he not only is watered, but also overflows with springs of refreshment for the weary pilgrims traveling with him.

He cries out to God for others, specifically Israel's anointed king.

He reflects on the value of dwelling in God's courts and realizes that nothing can compare with it.

In fact, it is a more favored position to simply be a doorkeeper or janitor to God's house than to live a long life in the company of the wealthy wicked.

As he meditates, he considers the blessings of God to the righteous:

- He is light.
- He is protection.
- He withholds nothing beneficial from the upright.
- He gives grace and glory.

The exceedingly great rewards of the godly have now been traced to the sanctuary of God which indeed, is love for God Himself.

X. Lessons from this Psalm:

1. In this Psalm, we see a picture of a true, worshipping heart, a heart that loves the place where God dwells.

(And if we are interested in worshipping God with all of our heart, it would be very useful to learn where this worshipping heart of the sons of Korah came from.)

2. Where God is, that's where I want to be.

3. We see a picture of a pilgrim growing stronger in trials.

They have undertaken a quest to master each crisis (obstacles of the journey) and find peace in the midst of each one. (This is my interpretation of a pilgrim who has determined to reach his destination. He will not allow any obstacles along the path to keep him from his objective.)

4. An upright (righteous, morally whole, free from blemishes) walk is a blessed walk.

5. God values all areas of service.

No person or assignment is insignificant in God's eyes.

6. With God's touch, even the repetitive and uninteresting tasks can be a joy.

7. A right heart towards God is a key to being successful in difficult times.

X. Application:

Identify at least one application for us from each of the 4 stanzas of this psalm:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Notes

Chapter #6: Exposition of Psalm 91

A Psalm of Immeasurable Comfort and Assurance “Under the Shadow of God’s Wings”

1. *He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.*
2. *I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust."*
3. *Surely **He shall deliver you** from the snare of the fowler and from the perilous pestilence.*
4. ***He shall cover you** with His feathers, and under His wings you shall take refuge;
His truth shall be your shield and buckler.*
5. *You shall not be afraid of the terror by night,
nor of the arrow that flies by day,*
6. *nor of the pestilence that walks in darkness,
nor of the destruction that lays waste at noonday.*
7. *A thousand may fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand;
but **it shall not come near you.***
8. *Only with your eyes shall you look, and see the reward of the wicked.*
9. ***Because (#1)** you have made the LORD, who is my refuge, even the Most High, your dwelling place,*
10. ***no evil shall befall you, nor shall any plague come near your dwelling;***
11. *for He shall give His angels charge over you, **to keep you in all your ways.***
12. *In their hands **they shall bear you up**, lest you dash your foot against a stone.*
13. *You shall tread upon the lion and the cobra,
The young lion and the serpent you shall trample underfoot.*
14. ***"Because (#2)** he has set his love upon Me,
therefore
I will deliver him;
I will set him on high,
because (#3) he has known My Name.*
15. *He shall call upon Me, and
I will answer him;
I will be with him in trouble;
I will deliver him and honor him.*
16. *With long life **I will satisfy him**, and **show him** My salvation.”*

Type: Praise/
Exhortation
Use: In times of
trouble
Theme: Trust in the
God who protects
Emotion: Confident
trust
Key Features:
figures of speech
Key words: “I will”
abide, because
Recommended for
memory.

See also: II Sam. 22:2-3 "...*The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; The God of my strength, in whom I will trust;... My stronghold and my refuge...*"
Psalm 46:1 "*God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble...*"

1. Background:

The book of Psalms is an amazing book. Each of its 150 psalms is unique and special in its own way and for the purposes for which it was created.

Some psalms have endeared themselves to many because their content is especially comforting in times of difficulties such as troubles, sickness and loneliness where heart consolation and comfort is a desperate need.

Psalm 91 is one of these special psalms. It has been committed to memory by many and has been a source of encouragement and comfort in the difficult seasons of life.

This is a psalm about confident trust on the part of the worshipper and the faithful God who rewards those who trust and abide in Him.

The rewards promised in this psalm illustrate that, no matter what your circumstances, if you are trusting and abiding in the Almighty, "**God has you covered.**" (See early figures of speech of the shadow and the hen in the text.)

Note: This is a psalm about righteous living by the saint and is not about initial salvation.

The opening verse identifies the subject of the poem (the person who trusts and abides in God). The second verse narrows the theme to the confidence that comes to a person who trusts in God. Beginning with verse three, the author shows the reason for this confidence, a listing of God's faithful, sovereign acts of provision and protection.

The author chooses examples of increasing and heightened dangers, e.g. snares, diseases, battle and, as a collection, they show the total range of God's protection.

In the great "I will" section of verses 14-16, we see the full range of protection and provision that God gives to the person who abides and trusts in Him.

In verses 9 and 14, He provides the secrets (3) of access to the blessings of His protection. (hint: because)

A side note: I have included an Appendix at the end of this lesson to provide an example (using Ps. 91) of text structuring. This tool (a simplified sentence

diagramming tool) can be very helpful, especially in some of the lengthy sentences of Paul in the New Testament. We will discuss this tool in class.

2. Purpose:

An important question we should ask when beginning a psalm study is: “What does the author intend to accomplish in the writing of this psalm?” What is his purpose?

And we can also ask: How can I use this psalm? _____

In the case of Psalm 91, I suggest the following:

- A. The author wants to tell us about God’s provision for the faithful believer. He will present numerous difficult problem situations that may occur in a person’s life and then show us how God will deal with them.
- B. He (the psalmist) wants to share with us what he has learned about securing the blessings of God. He will tell us what the steps, secret or keys to a blessed relationship with God are.
- C. He wants to give us assurances of God’s protection for those who are going through difficult seasons.
- D. He wants to encourage us to “abide in Christ.” This is something that each individual in Christ must learn to do.

3. Outline:

Note that this psalm has a distinct feature that provides a clear outline of the topic under discussion:

Verse 2 uses the personal pronoun “I” to express the author’s personal faith in God.

Verses 3-13 use the pronoun “you” to address comments to the reader.

Verses 14-16 use the Divine pronoun “I” to show what God will do for those who trust in Him.

Using this “natural outline plus the observation that there is a change in focus beginning at verse 9, I chose to use the following four-fold outline.

My outline:

- A. vv. 1-2 Abiding (Theme): the confidence of the person who abides in and trusts God
- B. vv.3-8 Commendation: The psalmist commends his faith to us.

- C. vv.9-14 Conditions: the conditions and the resulting protection of making God your dwelling place
- D. vv.14-16 God's promises: "I will..." to those who set their love on God
Note especially the "3 because" in verses 9 and 14. These give us clues as to how to secure the blessings promised in this psalm.

Other outlines:

- A. From ESV Study Bible:
 - The confidence of the person who trusts/abides in the Lord (1-2)
 - The reasons for this confidence (3-13)
 - God confirms that He will protect the person who abides in Him (14-16)
- B. From Wycliffe Bible Commentary:
 - Divine Protection (1-2)
 - Divine Providence (3-8)
 - Divine Reward (9-13)
 - Divine Promise (14-16)
- C. From J.M. Boice Commentary on the Psalms
 - The Psalmist's personal faith in God (1-2)
 - Trust in God is commended (3-8)
 - Protection from dangers: the condition (9-13)
 - God's promises for those who trust in Him (14-16)

Two questions: Which outline would you choose?
What motivates your choice?

Theme: "the confidence that comes to the person who trusts in God"

Your theme: _____

4. Key words, phrases and repetition:

dwell, abide
 shall (19 times), because (3 times) , I will (6 times), deliver (3 times)

Notes from Nelson Study Bible:

"This poem has a very strong Messianic thrust."

vv. 9-13 promises of God's protection to the coming One
vv. 14-16 a description of the Lord's protection of the coming One

In this study, I have prepared two charts from Psalm 91 that show the troubles a person may encounter and God's provision for those faithful ones who have set their hearts to "abide in Christ."

In the following charts, I have extracted data from the text and expanded the meanings by providing the alternate word definitions given in Spiros Zodhiates' "The Complete Word Study Old Testament."

I. Word Definitions (Troubles):

Summary: This chart provides a summary from Psalm 91 of the many different, troubles and difficulties the psalmist (or faithful servant of God) might experience.

Verse	Word	SN	Heb. word	Definition
3	<u>Snare</u> of the	6341/	<i>pach</i>	A snare, a trap-net anything that causes one to fall (fig. of speech)
	<u>fowler</u>	3353	<i>yaquwah</i>	entangler
	<u>perilous</u>	1698/	<i>dever</i>	destruction, pestilence, plague. It is a punishment from God that results in death.
	<u>pestilence</u>	1942	<i>hawwah</i>	Calamity, perverse things, wickedness, mischiefs
5	<u>Terror</u> by	6343/	<i>pachadh</i>	fear, terror, dread, awe
	<u>night</u>	3915	<i>layelah</i>	night
	<u>Arrow</u> that flies by	2671/	<i>chetz</i>	a piercer...an arrow, a wound
	<u>day</u>	3119	<i>yomam</i>	from <i>yom</i> = day
6	<u>Pestilence</u> that	1698/	<i>dever</i>	See v.3 # 1698 (likely literal)
	walks in <u>darkness</u>	652	<i>ophel</i>	darkness, gloom, calamity, spiritual darkness
	<u>Destruction</u> that lays	6986/	<i>qetev</i>	"to cut off," destruction, ruin, defeat
	<u>waste</u> at noonday	7736	<i>shuwd</i>	devastate, waste
7	A <u>thousand</u> shall fall at your side	505	<i>eleph</i>	One thousand; This word is often used to illustrate the extreme. In this psalm, it is a figure of speech.
10	No <u>evil</u> shall befall you	7451	<i>ra</i>	Bad or inferior quality, wicked, evil
12	<u>Dash</u> your foot against a stone	5062	<i>naghaph</i>	To smite, strike, to stumble, routed; describes a blow which is fatal or disastrous
13	<u>Lion</u> ,	7826/	<i>shachal</i>	To roar, a lion
	<u>cobra</u> ,	6620/	<i>pethen</i>	To twist, an asp (from its contortions),
	<u>dragon</u> (KJV)	8577	<i>tannin</i>	A huge fish, a land monster, a dragon, a sea serpent (NKJV)

II. Word Definitions: (God's Provision for those abiding in Him)

This chart summarizes God's provisions to those who ASK. (See Section III following.)

Verse	Word	SN	Heb. word	Definition
1	under the <u>shadow</u>	6738	<i>tsef</i>	Shadow, shade – depicting protection
2	<u>refuge</u>	4268	<i>machaceh</i>	Refuge, shelter, trust
	<u>fortress</u>	4686	<i>matsuwd</i>	Fort, stronghold, castle
3	<u>deliver</u>	5337	<i>natsal</i>	To snatch away, be saved, to free
4	<u>Cover</u> , under His wings	5526	<i>cakak</i>	To entwine, cover over, pictures the protection a mother hen gives to her chicks
	<u>Shield/buckler</u>	6793/ 5507	<i>tsinnah</i> <i>cocherah</i>	A large shield Something surrounding a person, a shield, = the protecting armor of the warrior
11	<u>Angels</u> charge,	4397/	<i>mal'akh</i>	To dispatch someone as a messenger (could be an angel)
	<u>keep</u>	8104	<i>shamar</i>	To keep safe, to guard, preserve, protect
12	<u>Bear</u> thee up	5375	<i>nasah</i>	To raise, lift up, to support, help
14	<u>Deliver</u> him	6403/	<i>palat</i>	To slip out, to escape, to deliver
	<u>Set</u> him <u>on high</u>	7682	<i>sagab</i>	To make lofty, safe, strong
15	<u>Answer</u> him	6030	<i>'anah</i>	To eye, to pay attention to, to heed, to respond, to answer
	Will be <u>with him</u> in trouble	5973 6869	<i>'im</i> <i>tsarah</i>	With, accompany, beside Trouble, tightness, adversity, distress
	<u>Deliver</u> him	2502	<i>chalats</i>	Rescue, to draw out, extricate
	<u>Honor</u> him	3513	<i>kavedh</i>	Be honored, be esteemed, main idea = to be heavy)
16	<u>Satisfy</u> with long life,	7646	<i>Saba</i>	Fill to satisfaction, have plenty, be filled
	<u>Show</u> him my <u>salvation</u>	7200 3444	<i>ra'ah</i> <i>yeshu'ah</i>	To see, look at, to view, understand Help, deliverance, salvation

III. How do I gain this favored position with God? note: “3 because” in vv. 9, 14

1. v.1,9: **Abide/dwell**, make God your dwelling place
2. v.14: **Set** your love upon Him.
3. v.14 **Know (3045)** His Name.
yadha = know - personal knowledge (of God), not simply intellectual knowledge

IV. Observations:

- Author: Unknown, although some think that Moses wrote the Psalm as a companion to Psalm 90. (Note the reference to God as the dwelling place of His people.)
Note Psalm 90: somber and stately/deep insight
Psalm 91: bright and simple, cheerful trust
Reese places this Psalm after Deuteronomy 33, Moses last words, thus the year of Moses’ death.
- Literary style – Wisdom (Instructional)/ Praise
- Political background: (if Mosaic authorship)
Moses has been Israel’s leader for 80 years and he is about to die. Joshua will succeed him as Israel’s leader.
Israel has wandered in the desert for 40 years due to their rebellion when the first opportunity to enter was rejected by the people. Those who rebelled have died in the desert, never to see “the promise fulfilled.”
Israel, with God’s second chance, is about to enter the land of promise where they will war with its inhabitants for 25 years.
Israel is a theocracy, having entered into a covenant with Yahweh, their Suzerain, on Mt. Sinai some 40 years previous to this time.
- Context –
Level 1: text before and after:
If preceded by Psalm 90, a psalm of Moses.
Psalm 92 is a psalm of praise in which the author rejoices that God has exalted “his horn” and the righteous flourish.
Level 2: the book: The book of psalms has been divided into 5 sections or smaller books (1-41, 42-72, 73-89, 90-106, 107-150. Psalm 90 begins the 4th book of psalms and serves as an introduction to the 4th book.

Level 3: the whole Bible:

Israel has lived in the desert for 40 years as punishment for their refusal to enter the promised land.

Moses, their leader for 80 years is about to die.

Joshua will become the new leader of Israel and lead them in conquering the land God has given them.

Names of God in Psalm 91:

v.1 “most high” – 5945B *Elyon*: elevated, high, exalted, used of the Most High, the Supreme Being

“Almighty” - 7706B *Shaddai*: the powerful one, the all sufficient One

v.2 “the Lord” – 3068B *Yahweh*: the covenant name of God, Lord, indicates relationship with the nation of Israel

“God” – 430B *Elohim*: 1st word for God in Gen. 1:1, creator God most common Hebrew word translated God in the OT

Cultural information:

v.1 “shadow of the Almighty” – The metaphor of taking refuge under the wings of deity is also found in other psalms (36:7, 57:1, 61:4, 91:4) and is consistently related to issues of care and protection within the terms of a covenant.

v.11 “guardian angels’ – This is the only place in the Old Testament where there is any reference to guardian angels. Angel can also be translated “messenger.”

Theme: “the confidence that comes to the person who trusts in God”

Key words and repetition: Dwell, abide, “I will,” because

Identify prophetic passages – The prophetic “sense” of this psalm is contained in the promises God has provided...if you do..., then these things will occur for you. See verses 14-16.

From Nelson Study Bible:

“This poem has a very strong Messianic thrust.”

vv. 9-13 promises of God’s protection to the coming One

vv. 14-16 a description of the Lord’s protection of the coming One

Identify parallelisms – verses 5 and 6 provide parallel statements describing the kinds of difficulties a believer might encounter.

Verses 14-16 provide parallel statements of the blessings to those abiding in the secret place.

Examine the emotional (feeling) and reflective (thoughts) content of the psalm.

- bright and simple, cheerful trust

Identify NT quotes and their interpretation – none noted

Word studies:

See charts on pages 78 and 79

Figures of speech, symbols – see charts for expanded definitions

Shelter v.1

Shadow v.1: protection

Refuge, fortress v.2

Snare of the fowler v.3

A mother hen (feathers and wings) v.4

Shield and buckler v.4: defensive weapons of war

Terror of the night v. 5

Arrow that flies by day v.5

Pestilence v.6

Destruction v.6

A thousand may fall v.7

In their hands they will bear you up v. 12

Strike your foot against a stone v.13

Tread on the lion and the adder v.14

V. Interpretation:

Verse-by-verse study and comment:

At the end of each verse, I have included a line for the student's additional comments.

Also, for this workbook, I have, for the most part, only provided a single comment on each verse. Obviously, several comments may be made on many of the verses.

v.1 *He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High
shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.*

This is a statement by the author identifying the subject of the psalm, i.e. abiding in God. He speaks of God as a shelter and a shadow.

This theme is repeated both in the 2nd verse (but different wording) and in verse 9.

Key words: dwell, abide, secret place

Note in vv. 1 and 2 the use of 4 different names for God: Most High, Yahweh, Shaddai, Elohim: God is exalted, covenant maker, all-sufficient, creator.

v.2 *I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress;
My God, in Him I will trust."*

The author provides a statement of his faith and trust in the Lord as his great protector.

v.3 *Surely **He shall deliver you** from the snare of the fowler and
from the perilous pestilence.*

Surely = certainly, doubtless, shows causal relationship;
This is the same Hebrew word as used later in this psalm but translated because. (vv. 9 and 14)

v.4 *He shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings
you shall take refuge;
His truth shall be your shield and buckler.*

v.5 *You shall not be afraid of the terror by night,
nor of the arrow that flies by day,*

In vv. 5 and 6, the psalmist shows that God has us covered at all times of the day and night.

v.6 *nor of the pestilence that walks in darkness,
nor of the destruction that lays waste at noonday.*

Note the parallelisms in verses 5 and 6 that reinforce the author's conviction of the protection of God.

v.7 *A thousand may fall at your side,
and ten thousand at your right hand; but it shall not come near you.*

The figures of speech indicate extreme conditions and are not, in most cases, to be taken literally.

v.8 *Only with your eyes shall you look, and see the reward of the wicked.*
The picture provided shows the “abiding person” to be surrounded by difficulties, literally “close at hand,” and yet the plagues mentioned will not touch him.

v.9 **Because (#1)** *you have made the LORD, who is my refuge, even the Most High, your dwelling place,*
The author now begins to show us how we can be in position to receive these amazing blessings from God.

v.10 *no evil shall befall you, nor shall any plague come near your dwelling;*
This begins the great “I will” section where God provides the blessing “because” of active decisions made by the believer.

v.11 *for He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways.*
Angels can also be translated “messengers.”

v.12 *In their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone.*
Note the strength of the word “dash” from the table of definitions. (This is not a simple “stubbing of the toe.”)

v.13 *You shall tread upon the lion and the cobra,
The young lion and the serpent you shall trample underfoot.*
Serpent is translated “dragon” in the Authorized King James Version, an indication that dinosaurs were on the earth at the same time as man.

v.14 **"Because (#2)** *he has set his love upon Me, therefore
I will deliver him;
I will set him on high,*
because (#3) *he has known My name.*
Here is the second “because” indicating the path of blessing.

v.15 *He shall call upon Me, and
I will answer him;
I will be with him in trouble;
I will deliver him and honor him.*

Note the power of the parallelisms as the author “heaps up” the blessings of God to those abiding in Him and setting their love upon Him.

v.16

With long life I will satisfy him, and I will show him My salvation.”

Deliverance, exalted, answers, presence, honor...what more could person desire from the hand of God.

Certainly, this great “I will” section should be a powerful motivator to righteous living.

Additionally, if the believer who abides, sets his love on God and knows the Maker of heaven and earth, he will be preparing himself as a bride prepares for the groom when approaching the time of marriage.

VI. Psalm 91 – A Summation

Attitude - confident trust

The psalmist (unknown, but suggested to be Moses) begins his song of trust by affirming God’s protective covering over those who dwell with Him.

He immediately assures us that this is where he has placed his trust.

He calls forth metaphors (a mother hen and a shield) to assure us of His protection.

He then provides a listing of differing, escalating situations which might occur in one’s life, but are covered by God’s protective wings. Even in war, surrounded by thousands, God’s protection continues firm.

Next he gives us three steps (because) we can take to remain under God’s care:

1. abide in the Lord, make Him your dwelling place,
2. set your love upon Him, and
3. know Him (His name)

The reward to the person who embraces these actions is staggering:

1. deliverance,
2. exaltation,
3. answered prayer,
4. God’s presence during troubles,
5. honor,
6. victory,
7. long life, and

8. He will see God's salvation.

These blessings, and many more, will come to those who abide with God, love Him and know Him.

VII. Applications:

1. The first question we should ask is: "Does this psalm, written over 3000 years ago, apply to me?"

I believe the answer is:

If you abide in Christ, set your love upon Him and are taking steps to "know Him," then this psalm and the protection and provisions that it identifies are definitely for you

2. What can we learn about God?

A. He can be trusted for protection in all of the circumstances of life.

B. He is able to deliver us – powerful, strong, all-sufficient

C. He provides His protection to those who love Him and dwell/abide in Him.

3. Applications for ourselves

The psalmist shows us how to gain access to God's protection:

A. Abide in Him (vv. 1, 9)

B. Set your love upon Him. v.14

C. Know His name – know is to have an intimate knowledge of someone, not simply to know his physical name.

4. It is important to note that this psalm does not guarantee that you will not have difficulties. (See v.15: I will be with him in trouble.)

Jesus said we would have troubles/difficulties.

But it does say that God is watching over you and that He will provide and protect you in the midst of difficulties. You will even see others around you going through trials that will not touch you.

Remember: Our walk is a faith walk and you will not always immediately see the results and answers to your prayers.

5. In my own personal life, I have found immeasurable spiritual benefits from the practice of memorizing and meditating on different psalms.

If you are having difficulties with fear and worry in your personal life, I highly recommend taking this psalm into your heart and then using it as a tool for meditation. (See Ps 119:11 "Thy word have I hid in my heart...")

Trials and Difficulties we encounter in our World

On the lines provided below, list issues such as troubles and trials that we face in this world. Also, list any particular issues that are a concern to you. e.g. terrorist activities, apostasy in the church, etc.

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____
- D. _____

- 6. Also note the “3 because” in vv. 9 and 14. This provides 3 specific actions that we can take as we look to obtain the blessings of protection and provision promised in this psalm to those who “abide, set and know.”
- 7. Take a look at the issues you identified on the list above. Are any of them, according to Psalm 91, outside the scope of God’s provision or protection? Does this give us the hope of being free from fear?
- 8. We don’t need to be fearful when we encounter a multitude of problems and difficulties (i.e. ISIS, earthquakes, apostasies, wars, personal health and needs, etc.) going on around us. God has said:

*“I will deliver him;
I will set him on high,
because (#3) he has known My Name.
He shall call upon Me, and
I will answer him;
I will be with him in trouble;
I will deliver him and honor him.
With long life I will satisfy him, and show him My salvation.”*

VIII. Summary:

In summary, the psalmist has shown us illustrations of many diverse dangers and troubles that a child of God could experience.

However, he has also shown us the immeasurable greatness of God’s protection and provision for those who seek and serve Him.

And how do we find our place under the shadow of His wings? We **ASK**.

- 1. By Abiding in Him, by making Him our continuous dwelling place,
- 2. By Setting our love upon Him; (an initial and continuing choice)

3. By Knowing His name.

This is more than just knowing many of the personal names ascribed to God, e.g. Yahweh, Elohim, El Shaddai, El Rapha, Most High, etc.

It means that we devote ourselves to “getting to know Him” in an intimate, personal relationship.

It means spending time in fellowship with Him in the secret place through prayer and being in the Word.

It means setting our heart’s desire on Him.

It means devoting our lives to the knowledge and service of our great God and King.

And, in doing as the psalmist did, we will be positioning ourselves to be the recipients of the great (can I say “astronomical and unfathomable”) blessings shown to us in this Psalm.

Appendix: Text Structuring of Psalm 91

- Psa 91:1 He
who dwells
in the secret place (where)
of the Most High (who)
shall abide
under the shadow (where)
of the Almighty. (who)
- Psa 91:2 I will say of the LORD,
"He is my refuge and my fortress;
My God, in Him I will trust."
- Psa 91:3 Surely
He shall deliver you
from the snare
of the fowler (who)
and
from the perilous pestilence. (what)
- Psa 91:4 He shall cover you
with His feathers, (how)
and
under His wings (where)
you shall take refuge;
His truth shall be your shield
and
buckler.
- Psa 91:5 You shall not be afraid
of the terror (what)
by night, (when)
nor
"shall you be afraid"
of the arrow (what)
that flies by day, (when)
- Psa 91:6 nor
"shall you be afraid"
of the pestilence (what)
that walks in darkness, (when)
nor
"shall you be afraid"
of the destruction (what)
that lays waste at noonday. (when)
- Psa 91:7 A thousand may fall

- at your side, (where)
and
ten thousand "may fall"
at your right hand; (where)
but
it shall not come near you. (where)
- Psa 91:8 Only with your eyes (how)
shall you look,
and
"shall you" see
the reward (what)
of the wicked. (who)
- Psa 91:9 **Because** you have made the LORD,
who is my refuge, (who)
even the Most High,
your dwelling place,
- Psa 91:10 no evil shall befall you,
nor shall any plague come near
your dwelling; (where)
- Psa 91:11 for He shall give
His angels (who)
charge over you, (what)
To keep you (why)
in all your ways. (where)
- Psa 91:12 In *their* hands (how)
they shall bear you up,
lest you dash your foot (why)
against a stone. (where)
- Psa 91:13 You shall tread upon the lion (what)
and
the cobra,
The young lion
and
the serpent (who)
you shall trample underfoot.
- Psa 91:14 "**Because** he has set his love upon Me,
therefore
I **will** deliver him;
I **will** set him on high,
because he has known My name.
- Psa 91:15 He shall call upon Me,

and
I **will** answer him;
I **will** *be* with him
in trouble; (where)

I **will** deliver him

and

I **will** honor him.

Psa 91:16

With long life (how)

I **will** satisfy him,

and

I **will** show him

My salvation. (what)

Chapter #7: Exposition of Psalm 145

Our Great God - A Psalm of Highest Praise David's Tapestry of the Character of God

1. *I will extol You, my God, O King;
and I will bless Your name forever and ever.*
2. *Every day I will bless You,
and I will praise Your name forever and ever.*
3. *Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised;
and His greatness is unsearchable.*
4. *One generation shall praise Your works to another,
and shall declare Your mighty acts.*
5. *I will meditate on the glorious splendor of Your majesty,
and on Your wondrous works.*
6. *Men shall speak of the might of Your awesome acts
and I will declare Your greatness.*
7. *They shall utter the memory of Your great goodness,
and shall sing of Your righteousness.*
8. *The Lord is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and great in mercy.*
9. *The Lord is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works.*
10. *All Your works shall praise You, O Lord, and Your saints shall bless You.*
11. *They shall speak of the glory of Your kingdom, and talk of Your power,*
12. *To make known to the sons of men His mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of
His kingdom.*
13. *Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and Your dominion endures throughout
all generations.* (see note below for explanation of the missing Hebrew character)*
14. *The Lord upholds all who fall, and raises up all those who are bowed down.*
15. *The eyes of all look expectantly to You, and You give them their food in due
season.*
16. *You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing.*
17. *The Lord is righteous in all His ways, gracious in all His works.*
18. *The Lord is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth.*
19. *He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He also will hear their cry and save
them.*

*Type: High, jubilant praise**

*Use: In worship, both
individual and corporate*

*Theme: the character of
God – “Great is the Lord.”*

*Emotion: exuberant joy**

*Key feature: Words used
to describe God.*

*Recommended for
Memory*

** This is a legacy psalm!*

20. *The Lord preserves all who love Him, but all the wicked He will destroy.*

21. *My mouth shall speak the praise of the Lord, and all flesh shall bless His holy name forever and ever.*

* This psalm is an acrostic except the author did not include the letter “nun” (our letter “n”.) Some later manuscripts include the following verse: “The Lord is faithful in all his words and holy in all His works.”

Studying a Psalm:

1. Pray.
2. Select a Psalm. 145
3. Read through the psalm.
4. Research:
 - Theme _____
 - Kind/Category _____
 - Use _____
 - Politics _____
 - Superscription information _____
 - Author _____
 - Date _____
 - Context _____
5. Cultural information: _____
6. Outline: _____

7. Key words: _____

8. Fig. of Speech: _____

9. Prophetic passages: _____
10. Parallelisms: _____

11. Emotional feel: _____
12. Other Psalms: _____
13. NT quotes: _____

14. Commentary: _____

15. Learn about God: _____
16. Applications: _____
 - A. _____
 - B. _____
 - C. _____
17. Verse-by-verse analysis

Note: In the first five psalms we have studied, we have created an information file of all that we have discovered and concluded about each psalm.

In this psalm, I have provided an expanded text which shows the next stage of proceeding from the “Learning/Studying/Recording” stage to the preparation of a spoken message from the information we have gathered about the psalm.

Lesson Outline:

- I. Introduction
- II. Background
- III. Observations about this psalm
- IV. Outline
- V. Application
- VI. Appendix
- VII. Final Conclusion

Questions to Answer:

1. What is the context of this psalm? _____
2. What effect might the context have upon the author? _____

3. What is the purpose/goal of this psalm? _____

4. How does the author achieve his purpose? _____

5. What is the literary style of this psalm? _____
 6. How might we benefit from this psalm? _____
 7. What applications can this psalm have for us? _____
-
-

I. Introduction:

Jn. 17: 3 says: “And this is eternal life that they may know You, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.”

In the Scriptures, when you see the word “know” it doesn’t mean accumulating facts about someone or something.

It means to have an intimate relationship with someone.

The focal point of the Christian faith is an intimate relationship with God. This is also referred to as “the knowledge of the holy.”

And, because God wants to have a relationship with us, it’s not surprising to learn that God has put a longing in our hearts to know Him.

Paul, after 25 years of serving God in 3 missionary journeys, writes to the church that he wants to know Him better. (Phil. 3:7-11)

The sons of Korah, in Ps 84, express their longing desire:

“How lovely is your tabernacle, O Lord of Hosts.

My soul longs, yes even faints for the courts of the Lord.

My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.”

So, our quest during this life should be a continuing search to grow in our relationship and in the knowledge of God. Our task becomes: “How do I do this?”

One of the primary ways we “get to know God” is in His Word because in His Word God reveals who He is and what He does.

In His Word, we can also examine the lives of Immanuel (God with us) people and see what they had learned about God. (similar to what we are doing in this study)

Ps 1: tells us that the man is blessed who delights in the Law of the Lord

But...**his delight** (an issue of the heart) is in the law of the Lord.

So we can say...a first objective might be to get a heart that delights in God’s Word.

That’s the first step: Then, Ps 1 goes on to say:

...and he meditates on it day and night.

A quick trip to the longest Psalm, 119: 1-16:

Walk in the law of the Lord v.1a

Keep his commandments v.2a

Seek him with their whole heart v.2b

Learn your statutes v.7

Taking heed according to God's Word (letting God's Word guide you) v.9

With my whole heart have I sought you v.10

vv.15-16

- meditate on your precepts
- contemplate your ways
- delight myself in your statutes
- not forget your Word.

Bottom line: love God's Word, keep it in your heart

Meditate, contemplate, keep, delight, do not forget, look into,
let it be your guide

As an example of doing these things, I want to look briefly at God's gold mine of the knowledge of God in Ps. 145.

II. Background:

At the point of writing this psalm, David is nearing the end of his life.

He has lived a rich, full life although not without many major difficulties, some of his own doing.

It didn't begin that way. His humble origin as a simple shepherd in the field, taking care of his father's flock, gave no indication of where the footsteps of life would take him.

As a child, no one boasted of his "killing his ten thousands."

No one was anointing him with oil, except perhaps for an occasional need for healing for wounds, scratches and insect bites.

No one was calling him king.

Family members looked down on him.

Being the youngest of eight brothers was a tough row to hoe.

Nevertheless...God had his hand on him and had placed him exactly where He wanted him so he could prepare him for the life that lay ahead, the life that God had chosen for him from the beginning of time.

One of the mysteries of life was that, if you had surveyed the occasions of his life, his environment, his place in the family, you would never have suspected that these humble beginnings would lead to one of the most beloved, most known characters in all of God's Word.

Even now, in our lives, most of us with humble beginnings, God is preparing us for something we don't yet know. But, if God is our shepherd and guide, even though we don't understand the trials, we can be assured that our end will be worth the trials endured on the earth.

Psalms 145, written by this man with humble beginnings, is one of the great praise Psalms in the book of Psalms. I personally don't know of a psalm that is more eloquent or more insightful or more effusive in its praise of the one true God.

But...how could this humble shepherd boy become a man who could write in this manner?

How could he make the choices that he made, choices that would form him into one of Israel's most beloved kings?

A part of the answer has to be that he had a heart (a desire) after the living God.

He knew the living God and had walked with him throughout his days.

This was no head knowledge of God but an evidence of one who had an intimate relationship with God and as a result knew His character and the things that He desired from His servants. His knowledge of God was a practical, experiential knowledge.

So, when he comes to the end of his life, David has something in his heart. He wants the people of Israel to know the true, the living God!!!

What better way to help his people than by leaving the people one last Psalm which would tell them who God is and what He does.

Psalm 145 is David's living legacy.

Date: Psalms 145 was written in 985 B.C. (Reese) the last year of David's life.

Literary style: High Praise.

It has a built-in aid for memorization...it's an acrostic.

The first word begins with the 1st letter of the Hebrew alphabet, aleph.

The first word in each successive verse begins with the next letter of the alphabet...aleph, beth, gimel, dalet and so on. (with a couple of exceptions)

His style includes the Hebrew high praise format, being filled with extravagant descriptions of God and His works.

The frame of mind of the author is joyful praise, worship and adoration.

This Psalm is a summary of many of the things David had learned after a lifetime of following hard after the Almighty.

Key Words: is, works, great, gracious, good, merciful, faithful, righteous, all.

Theme/Titles: In praise of the great and mighty God

A psalm of highest praise

David's tapestry of the character of God

III. **Observations about this psalm:**

1. This "song of praise" is an appropriate introduction to the final 5 psalms of the book of Psalms which comprise the "Halal" psalms (psalms that begin and end with "Praise the Lord").
2. David uses many different words for "praising:"
extol (1), bless (1), praise (2), commend (4), declare (4), speak (6),
pour forth (7), sing aloud (7), make known (12)
3. David is intent on telling his readers who God is and what He does. It appears (to me) that he is "pulling out all of the stops" and giving it his best shot at leaving a legacy of exalted praise worthy of his King.
4. He begins and ends his symphony of praise declaring his intention to praise God forever and ever.

IV. **Outline:**

- | | |
|--------|---|
| 1-2 | Opening Statement |
| 3 | Theme: Great is the Lord |
| 4-7 | Each generation shall declare God's praises to the next generation. |
| 8-13a | The Lord is gracious. |
| 13b-16 | The Lord is faithful. |
| 17-20 | The Lord is righteous. |

How can I make this psalm my own?

How can I pray this psalm?

1. Commit the psalm to memory
2. Meditate on the greatness of God as described in the psalm.
3. Pray the psalm to God. This can be done with a minimum amount of changes, e.g. v.8 "the Lord is gracious" – change to "Lord, You are gracious." (change the 3^d person singular to the first person singular)
4. Ask God for a heart of praise such as David has.

In Psalm 145, David focuses on 2 primary areas – who God is and what He does

We see the phrase "God is" used many times. (Note: "is" - a state of being verb)

After the introductory statement and theme in verse vv. 1-2, David gives us 4 paragraphs that tell us key attributes of the God he praises.

V. Verse-by-verse analysis:

As we examine this Psalm, look for the use of the word "is." For this and the verbs describing God's actions are what we want to meditate on and move these revelations from our minds into our hearts.

vv. 1-2 Opening statement

Verses 1 and 2 are an introduction to the psalm telling us what David intends to do.

1: *I will extol You, my God, O King; and I will bless Your name forever and ever.*

This opening statement tells us what David does.

I will – David exercises his free will choosing to praise God.

He doesn't wait until he feels like it...he chooses by an act of his will.

extol – to lift up, to hold high for everyone to see, he is not ashamed to be seen praising God even though some around him might disapprove of his praise form, i.e. Saul's daughter, Michal. (II Sam. 6:16)

you – He is speaking to God.

Here is a clue to his intimacy with God, a private prayer and praise life.

my God, O King – The Lord is his God and his King.

Here, the word for God is Elohim so he is thinking of the creator God, the God of power and might.

Even though David is the anointed king, he acknowledges that God is the

King of all the universe.

He is our King too, even though some may not acknowledge it.

He created the whole universe...it's all his...all the animals, all the gold, the silver, the mountains and valleys. They all belong to Him.

What does He deserve...what can we bring into his presence that isn't already His? **Our praise.**

We come before Him to worship the one true, great, good, gracious, faithful, sovereign, holy, righteous, just, merciful, loving, awesome, majestic God.

We don't come to get things from Him. We come to acknowledge God to be God and to praise and thank Him for who He is and what He does.

and I will bless Your name - this means to praise with personal affection

This is not just lip service, going through the ritual, singing the songs from our minds. **David's heart is engaged in this worship.**

forever and ever - This means a lot more than just "I'll praise you every day until I die." David knows that he will be worshipping God after his life on earth is ended. He will be in heaven along with the rest of the saints who have gone before him, praising God forever.

This means we'll get to see David in heaven when we leave this life.

2. *Every day I will bless You and I will praise Your name forever.*

Worship is not a "just on the Sabbath" experience for David. Every day is a day of worship. His cathedral of worship is his every day surroundings in the world.

This is the new life that we have in Christ.

Again, he repeats his intent to praise God throughout eternity.

A Selah (for the reader):

These 2 verses are likely an instruction for the reader to pause and reflect on what has just been said.

Think about your attitude in worship.

What is your heart about worship?

Do you share the same exuberance that David had for worship?

Is worship a day-to-day experience for you?

vv. 3-7 The Lord is great.

3. "Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and His greatness is

unsearchable.”

Note the three-fold emphasis on the word great.

Unsearchable doesn't mean you can't discover something about God.

It means that you can never find out all there is to know about God.

Great: gadol – great, high, large, exceeding, far, long, loud, mighty, noble

David is thinking here about God's mighty works in nature. The following verses make this clear...use of words: works, acts, deeds.

He could also be referring to God's mighty acts of salvation history with the nation Israel, e.g. delivery from slavery in Egypt.

For us, above everything else, we should praise God for His work in Christ of saving us from sin. (Note his reference to abundance goodness and righteousness at the end of this segment which are attributes of God not revealed in His creation acts.) Note: David says that the greatness of God can never be searched out to its limits, but I think he makes a good start at it.

4. *One generation shall praise Your works to another, and shall declare Your mighty acts.*

Not only will we rehearse the great lessons of history in the Bible, but we will add to it from our own experiences.

We are all part of God's great story of redemption.

What will God's history book say about you?

5. *I will meditate on the glorious splendor of Your majesty, and on Your wondrous works.*

He's searching for every great superlative that lies within his vocabulary to describe our great God.

Superlative – an extreme of unsurpassed level = a super adjective

great, greater, greatest

Glorious - 3519 - weight, honor, esteem, glory, abundance, wealth

Splendor - 1926 - goodly, glory, beauty, majesty, excellency, comeliness

Majesty - 1935 - splendor, majesty, glory, honor, renown

Wondrous - 6381 - to be wonderful, to be separate, distinguished, extraordinary, astonishing, to act marvelously and

miraculously

This verse, in particular, displays the beauty and depth of the Hebrew language.

God is all of these things and more.

6. *Men shall speak of the might of Your awesome acts, and I will declare your greatness.*

Awesome – 3372 to be afraid, to fear, to revere, to be dreadful, to be revered – all words that we use to define worship

David is saying in the most ethereal terms – God is worthy to be worshipped.

Ethereal – celestial, heavenly

7. *They shall utter the memory of Your great goodness, and shall sing of Your righteousness.*

Righteous – indicating that He is just, lawful and right in all that he does.

vv. 8-13a The Lord is **gracious**.

8. *The LORD is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and great in mercy.*

This verse is a very close repetition of God's words to Moses in Ex. 34:6.

It is one of the most-quoted verses of the Old Testament.

We could write this another way:

God is: Gracious – his actions towards us are full of grace...giving us what we don't deserve.

Full of compassion

Slow to anger – long-suffering

Great in mercy – not giving us what we do deserve.

(Other translations provide: "abounding in steadfast love.")

One of the unfathomable characteristics of God is his mercy towards those who have rejected Him. We would expect God to be mighty, powerful and omniscient, but mercy towards those who killed His only-begotten Son is difficult to fathom.

9. *The LORD is **good** to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works.*

Good - **tov** – I call this "one of God's big-little words." It has a plethora of

meanings: to be good, beneficial, well, pleasing, be favorable, to be lovely, to be cheerful, to be happy, be comfortable, to be right, to make good, to do well, to adorn, to cheer up, to please. It ranges from practical, economic or material good to abstract good (desirability, pleasantness and beauty.) It may refer to moral goodness or what is good philosophically. It can also refer to good quality, expensive. (from Zodiates "The Complete Word Study Old Testament.)

10. *All Your works shall praise You, O LORD, and Your saints shall bless You.*

We are His workmanship.

Ps. 19 "words to the ends of the earth"

11. *They shall speak of the glory of Your kingdom, and talk of Your power,*

12. *To make known to the sons of men His mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of His kingdom.*

13a. *Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and Your dominion endures throughout all generations.*

We see here the kingdom of God in the OT.

Just as David celebrated God's greatness in the first stanza by referring to words related to greatness such as deeds, acts and works, so also in this second stanza, he calls up words associated with mercy...compassion, love, goodness, gracious

vv. 13b-16 The Lord is **faithful**.

Faithful – firmness, reliable, to be supportive, to be enduring

expresses the total dependability of His character and promises.

(13b *The Lord is faithful to all of his promises, and loving towards all that he has made.*) (See previous note on the Hebrew character "nun.")

14 *The Lord upholds all who fall, and raises up all who are bowed down.*

15. *The eyes of all look expectantly to You, and You give them their food in due season.*

16. *You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing.*

In this segment we see the faithfulness of God demonstrated as He:

- v.13 keeps his promises
 - v.14 helps those who have fallen
 - v.15 gives food to the hungry
 - v.19 answers prayer
 - v.20 protects
- } actions of a shepherd

Note that God's faithfulness is extended to every living thing. This includes the provision of needs for both the animal and plant kingdoms.

Also note the extensive use of the word "all" in verses 10-21, 16 times (includes "every"). He is the originator and creator of all things and is also the provider and sustainer of all things.

vv. 17-21 The Lord is **righteous**.

17. *The LORD is righteous in all His ways, gracious in all His works.*

Righteous – *tsaddiq* just lawful, righteous, honest, God is the standard of ethics and morality.

He does what is just and right, even if we don't understand what He is doing.

Abraham was between a rock and a hard place. (Gen. 22) But God had him exactly where He wanted him. Later, Abraham could look back at this event (command to sacrifice Isaac) and understand what God was doing.

18. *The LORD is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth.*

He assures us that He will never leave us nor forsake us.

Also notice the caveat of praying "in truth."

19. *He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He also will hear their cry and save them.*

20. *The LORD preserves all who love Him, but all the wicked He will destroy.*

Shamar - keep, guard, preserve, protect, watch, hedge about

Note: These are the things that a shepherd does.

In verses 19 and 20 we see the rewards of the fulfillment of our desires and preservation.

21. *My mouth shall speak the praise of the LORD, and all flesh shall bless His holy name forever and ever.*

David's final recorded words: "I will praise the Lord!"

VI. Psalm 145 – A Summation

King David knows that a key to a successful life is the "knowledge of the Holy." He has not gained this by reading a plethora of books or by sitting at the feet of Israel's best teachers, he has learned it in fellowship with God, Himself.

This psalm, written in the last days of his life, is simultaneously a victorious celebration of David's life-enduring faith and an exhortation to all people everywhere to live for and glorify the God of heaven that he knows.

In acrostic form (except for the Hebrew letter "nun" (נ) (pronounced like noon), he begins by declaring his commitment to praise God every day of his life and throughout eternity. His praise will never cease. (Note his relationship with God in the words my God and my king.)

Verse 3 is the theme of his eloquent praise: "Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised."

In the verses that follow, he shows God's greatness in:

- His mighty works,
- His glorious splendor,
- His great goodness,
- His gracious compassion,
- His tender mercies,
- His everlasting kingdom, and
- His providential care.

All of these have been his experience as he has spent his days on this planet.

He continues by speaking of God's righteousness and holiness and that they are available to all who call upon His name.

He fulfills the desire of those who fear Him.

He preserves those who love Him, but will destroy the wicked.

David closes his final words by repeating his commitment to praise his Lord all of his days.

What an amazing benediction (the entire song) from a man who had lived the heights and depths of life on earth with a faith that endures.

VII. Application:

Identify at least one application from each of the 4 stanzas of this psalm:

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____

VIII. Descriptive words from verses:

- 3. great, greatly to be praise, greatness, unsearchable
- 4. mighty
- 5. glorious, splendor, majesty, wondrous
- 6. might, awesome, greatness
- 7. abundant, goodness, righteousness
- 8. gracious, merciful, slow to anger, abounding, steadfast
- 9. good, mercy
- 11. glory, power
- 12. mighty, glorious splendor
- 13. everlasting, endures
- 17. righteous, kind
- 18. near

IX. Final Conclusion: Utilizing the key words provided in this psalm

The Lord is: great, good
 gracious, merciful
 long-suffering
 faithful, and
 righteous

} equals a great way to pray!!!

Notes

ABOUT PASTOR DAVID

I grew up in Illinois; my wife, Brenda, in Oregon. It was a path of many twists and turns to get the two of us connected in California! We entered into our marriage covenant in 1986 after she had agreed to my proposal for a life of adventure. Brenda claims that she scarcely comprehended the adventure that our life would be simply by saying those two little words (I do).



We had both been Christians for a number of years and determined to make God the center of our marriage. In order to make a good beginning, we structured our wedding vows around the instructions of Scripture. We are convinced that this is the reason for our successful, growing relationship.

I received my BS in Civil Engineering in 1966 from the University of Missouri. Having taken ROTC in college, I next served as an officer in the U.S. Army, stationed in Germany.

After returning home to the states, I attended Golden Gate Seminary in California and received a Master of Divinity in 1972.

I worked for three Engineering companies before settling in with GE Nuclear Energy in San Jose, California. I finished my engineering career with 25 years of service at GE.

I was ordained a minister of the gospel in 1991.

Brenda is blessed with musical gifts and has played numerous instruments, e.g. bassoon, flute, guitar, piano, bass. She taught piano to children for 14 years until our move to Wilmington, NC. I also had some musical inclinations, growing up in a musical family in which everyone played at least one instrument. Brenda also has a heart for and is involved in a local "Special Touch" ministry, a ministry to people with disabilities.

Several years ago, we began attending Calvary Chapel San Jose, CA where Don McClure was pastoring. The emphasis on God's Word and the presence of God's Spirit in the worship kept us coming back until we felt confident that this was to be our church home.

Brenda became involved with the Praise team playing flute and singing. She also led the worship for two Women's Bible studies. I became involved in the teaching ministry working principally with the mature adults class (ages around 50-95, they called themselves the "Sonshiners") and also a young married couples class.

Even though we felt like we were settling into the San Jose Fellowship, in early 2004 we were presented with a company relocation, and we began to feel that God was leading us to a significant change, relocating from the West Coast to the East Coast. Little did we know what was in store for us in Wilmington, NC.


We often felt like Abraham who was told to leave his homeland but was given no information regarding what he would encounter when he arrived at his destination.

The next very shocking surprise was my early retirement, something we had not even considered when planning the move to the east coast. Nevertheless, God made it very clear that my engineering career of 37 years was soon to be ended. The retirement occurred almost 5 years in advance of my plan. But God had a bigger (and better) plan. One of my reoccurring supplications to God has been that I would rather be expending the main energy of my life teaching the Word of God than pouring it into the management of engineering projects and writing technical engineering reports. Now, God was giving me the desire of my heart.

I eventually came on staff with a local church and served for 7½ years as an associate pastor teaching Bible studies and ministering principally in the Equipping the Saints ministry. Brenda was involved in several ministries... Praise Team, Special Touch, hospitality/helps, Home Fellowships, to mention a few.

After a 1-year sabbatical in 2014, God has led us to begin a new fellowship which is called Safe Haven Berean Fellowship. Our focus is principally on the Word of God, with both Bible book studies and doctrinal teachings in progress at this time. Principal focuses are on the assurance of salvation, knowing what God in Christ has done for us, learning to live in a way that honors and glorifies God, and a continual focus upon our End Times preparations for our coming King.

Looking back now over the years that led us to this place in life, we are amazed at the Sovereignty of God and how he has orchestrated the events that have brought us to this place in this time. His loving and merciful hand has been seen time and again as he has opened doors and brought us quickly to where He wants us to be. He is, without question, an awesome God.



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