

A TASTE OF THE PSALMS

A TASTE OF THE PSALMS LESSON 1

PSALMS 22: A MESSIANIC PSALM

1. Jesus told His disciples that things were written about Him in the Psalms. (Lk 24:44-48). He showed them from the Psalms that He is the "Christ" who was predicted to come. List other Psalms besides Psalms 22 which tell of the Christ or Messiah.

2. Psalms 22 is said to be written by David. So approximately when was it written?

3. Psalms 22 was written in the "first person", that is from the standpoint of the writer. "I" and "Me", and "My" are used throughout most of the Psalm. Since this Psalm is said by the writer of Hebrews to refer to Jesus (Heb 2:9-13), who is the real "writer" of Psalms 22? What then is so amazing about the "writer's" description of his suffering? Is there any other passage in the Bible which tells us more about how Jesus felt when He suffered for our sins?

4. Where is 22:1 quoted in the N.T.? What did Jesus mean when He said it? What does this statement show about Jesus humanity? Is it possible to despair and trust at the same time? (cp. 2 Cor 1:8-10)

5. Give N.T. references which explain how 22:7-8, 12-13, 16a, 17b were fulfilled in Jesus' suffering on the cross and comment on them. Think of these events in terms of 1 Pet 2:22-24.

6. How did the Christ describe His physical suffering? (22:14-15, 16b, 17a). Give N.T. references which show that Jesus endured these things in His crucifixion. Think of this suffering in terms of Gal 2:20.

7. How was 22:18 fulfilled at the cross? Give a N.T. reference. Think of the detail of this prediction!

8. Who are the Christ's "brethren"? (22:22) Find a N.T. reference which explains this and comment on its personal significance to you.

How did God respond to the prayers of the Christ? (22:24) Comment on this in light of Jesus' prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane and Heb 5:7-9. What do we learn about our own prayers?

A TASTE OF THE PSALMS LESSON 2: PSALMS 31

DISTRESSED BY ENEMIES: "IN THEE, O LORD, I HAVE TAKEN REFUGE"

1. Describe David's distress and its two causes (9-13). (Have I, too, not faced the same griefs?) Which one of these distresses is the main focus of this Psalm?

2. In what characteristics of God did David trust and how would each one mentioned help in the distress caused by his enemies? (Do I believe that God is this way?)

a. (1)-

b. (5)-

c. (7-8, 16, 21)-

d. (19)-

3. David cried out to God with his supplications (22), asking God to hear him and save him (2) because he saw God as a: (Do I see God in this way? If so, do I turn to Him like I believe it?)

a. (1)

b. (2)

c. (2)

d. (3)

e. (20)

4. Discuss the meaning of verse 5 in the context of Psalms 31 and as spoken by Jesus on the cross (Lk 23:46). What light does the context of Psalms 31 shed on Jesus' last words?

5. David asked what for himself? For his enemies? (1, 17-18) Does shame always fall in the right place in this life? Will it ultimately fall in the right place? (Is this where trust comes in?) How is it possible for me to remain unashamed when I have been maliciously and falsely attacked?

6. David ends the Psalm with what word of encouragement to the godly who face attacks from the proud? (23-24) (Can I be strong without believing in His strength?)

A TASTE OF THE PSALMS LESSON 3: PSALMS 42

A SOUL IN DESPAIR

(Read the psalm all the way through before answering the questions. Notice the psalmists' inward struggle as they poured out their soul within them. The psalm alternates between statements of despair and trust. It is like the psalmists are reminding themselves of truths which will pull themselves out of their very emotional despair. In our study, we will first study all the verses on despair and then the verses which give the remedy).

THE DESPAIR OF THE SOUL

1. What question do the sons of Korah (the authors according to the heading) repeatedly ask? 42:5, 11 (see also 43:5, Psalms 42 and 43 may have at one time gone together to form one Psalm)

2. How do the authors describe the intensity of their sorrow? (3)

3. Where do the psalmists see their trial coming from and how do they feel? (7)

4. As the psalmists suffer, what are their enemies saying and doing to them? (3, 9-10)

5. The psalmist's despair reaches the point that they ask what question? (9)

THE REMEDY: HOW DOES A SOUL ESCAPE FROM DESPAIR?

1. Describe the psalmists' desire for God and the worship of God (1-2). Should our troubles lessen or intensify this desire?

2. What do the psalmists remember joyfully doing? (that they were now unable to do because of captivity) (4) Do we tend to remember the brighter days of joy and thanksgiving while in the midst of trial? When and if we do, do we remember them in a way to lessen our despair or increase it? How can remembering the joyful, edifying assemblies of the past sustain us in despair?

3. Though he was separated from the house of God and Jerusalem, what did the psalmists do? (6) Is it always easy to remember the Lord from "where you are at"? (cp. Job 1:21)

4. What would get the psalmists through the daytime (cp. Rom 8:35-39) and how would they make it through the night (cp. Acts 16:25) (8)

5. Who is the help of our countenance (our emotions which are written all over our face)? (11) (cp. Phil 4:4-7, 11-13; Ps 46:1-3, song "Sing and Be Happy")

A TASTE OF THE PSALMS LESSON #4

PSALMS 51: THE RIGHT WAY TO DEAL WITH SIN

Background

2 Samuel 11:26-12:7. Read and then comment on 1) how David reacted to his sin with Bathsheba and against Uriah at first and 2) what it took for him to see and acknowledge his sin.

I.SEE WHERE I AM

1.Why is it important for me to think about my sin for more than a fleeting moment? (3)

2.As David, I sin against others, so why must I confess as he did, "Against Thee, Thee only, I have sinned?" (4)

3.What must I fully accept is due me because of my sin? (4)

4.Oftentimes we explain by other passages what this verse does not mean, but just what does David acknowledge here that I must also acknowledge? (5)

5.God desires what part of me to be in harmony with His will? (6)

6.What physical illustration is used which shows how I should feel when I become aware of my sin and feel the guilt of it? (8)

7.What should I not want to lose because of my sin? (11)

II. SEE WHERE I WANT TO BE

1.What condition do I want to be in before God? (7)

2.What emotion do I long to feel when I know I am forgiven? (8,12)

3.What kind of spirit must I have in order to return to God and to continue in fellowship with Him? (12)

III.HOW CAN I GET THERE?

A. God

1.What about God gives us hope that He will forgive us? (1)

2.What figures are used to describe what God is willing to do in order that I might return to a right state before Him after (and despite) my sin? (2,7,9,10,14)

B. Me

1.What doesn't God want from me? (16) (God commanded animal sacrifices in David's day, so think about what this statement means. Consider it in light of vs. 17)

2.What kind of sacrifices does God desire from me? (17)

IV.WHAT SHOULD I DO ONCE I AM FORGIVEN?

What two responses should naturally follow upon God's forgiveness of my sins?

1.(vs. 14,15)-

2. (v. 13)-

A TASTE OF THE PSALMS LESSON #5 PSALMS 73: WHY DO THE WICKED PROSPER? IS IT WORTHWHILE TO SERVE GOD?

Background: A look at the songwriter

1. During what time period did Asaph live? What roles did he serve in Israel?

1 Chron 16:5,7,37; 2 Chron 29:29-30

2. Which Psalms did Asaph write? How many in all?

Questions From the Text

1. The Psalm begins (1) and ends (28) with the Psalmist stating what truth about God's blessing upon those who serve Him?

2. What attitudes and actions did Asaph see in the lives of wicked men? (6-11)

3. What observations did Asaph make about the financial condition and health of the wicked? (3-5,7,10,12)

4. How had life treated Asaph? (14) Why did he almost stumble and slip? (2-3, 13-14) Have you ever made the same observations about your life and the wicked around you and questioned or doubted?

5. Did Asaph ever abandon his faith or did he just have a struggle within himself that he had to work out? (15-16) Do godly men and women sometimes go through such times in their lives?

6. Asaph struggled until when? (17) What is meant by "coming into the sanctuary of God"? How had he been looking at life before? How did he now realize that he needed to look at it? Why is it hard for us to keep the right perspective?

7. How did Asaph now see the condition of the wicked? (18-20)

8. How did Asaph feel about having ever doubted? (21-22)

9. Describe Asaph's newfound confidence 1) in God, 2) that God would bless him both in life and in eternity and 3) that God would give the wicked what they justly deserved (23-27)

10. In our relationship with God is there a time to be silent (15) and a time to tell (28)?

A TASTE OF THE PSALMS LESSON 6: PSALMS 84

A DOORKEEPER IN GOD'S HOUSE

Background: A Psalm of the Sons of Korah

1. Who was Korah? (Num 16:1)

2. What kind of responsibilities did Korah have in the service of God, being of the house of Kohath? (see Num 3:27-31)

3. What did he and others do against Moses and Aaron? (16:1-3)

4. He and others were seeking what role in the worship of God? (16:4-11)

5. What did the Lord tell the congregation of Israel to do? (16:23-27)

6. What then happened to Korah? (16:28-33) Was this the end of all of his family? (see Num 26:9-11)

7. From the time of David and Samuel, the sons of Korah had served in what capacity in the service of God? (1 Chron 9:17-27) What were some of their other responsibilities? (9:26, 28-32)

Overview of Psalm 84

1. What does the psalmist yearn and long for? Who are the only ones dwelling in God's house and praising Him at the time of their writing? (vs. 1-4)

2. What journey did those whose strength was in God make in highway of their hearts? (vs. 5-8)

3. Given a choice, where would the psalmist rather be? Why? (vs. 9-12)

Looking at Psalms 84:10 from Different Angles

1. Think of the rebellion of Korah and the instruction of the Lord for the congregation to "Depart now from the tents of these wicked men". If these sons of Korah had been living in the time of Korah, what would they have done? Did they value their work more than he did?

2. Think of their present circumstances- living in wicked Babylon. Interpret the verse in this light.

3. Think of the verse more generally, faced personally with the choice of serving God or living wickedly, what was their decision?

Applications: Questions for Discussion

1. Is there room in the kingdom of God for the question, "Who is the greatest? Mt 20:20-28

2. Is any work in the body of Christ unnecessary and unimportant? 1 Cor 12:14-20

3. Which is the better choice, to engage in humble service to the Lord or to remain in the "tents" of wickedness? Mt 11:28-30

Is our attitude "a day in God's courts is better than a thousand outside"? (Ps 84:10) Does our life reflect it?

A TASTE OF THE PSALMS LESSON 7: PSALMS 104

BLESS THE LORD, O MY SOUL

1. What does it mean to "bless" the Lord? (1)

2. What is God "clothed" with? (1)

3. What parallel do you see between Ps 104 and the Genesis account of Creation? See how many days of the Creation you can find in the Psalm and list references.

4. The Psalm not only emphasizes God's role as Creator, but as Wise Designer, who provided for the Creation. Discuss God's provision in water (10-13), plants (14-17), mountains (18), moon and sun (19-24).

5. Discuss the "circle of life" which is under God's control (27-30)

6. What is the connection between God's works and God's greatness and glory? (1, 24, 31)

7. Describe God's awesome power (32)

8. We observe that there is a Creator and see His glory, so what are we compelled to do? (33-34)

9. Who did the psalmist request be removed from the earth? What will be so great about the new heavens and earth as compared to the present Creation discussed in this chapter? (2 Pet 3:13; Rev 21:27; 22:14-15)

A TASTE OF THE PSALMS LESSON 8: IMPRECATORY PSALMS:

A LESSON IN GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS (JUSTICE)

Introduction

To "imprecate" means to "invoke a curse upon". Read Psalms 109:1-20 for a good example of this type of Psalm.

"Psalms of this nature have been called 'vindictive' and said to breathe a most unchristian spirit of revenge and hatred. To some truly pious persons they seem shocking; and to a much larger number they are more or less a matter of difficulty... It is not the spirit of Zion, but of Sinai which here speaks out of the mouth of David. This is not the spirit of the N.T. This wrathful spirit is overpowered in the N.T. by the spirit of love."

-- Keil and Delitzch Commentary

1. What is your reaction to Psalms 109? Could you imagine yourself (and the congregation) singing a song which expresses the desire for your wicked enemy to die and that his orphaned children be forced to wander about and beg?

2. Does Psalms 109 sound like it was penned by a man after God's own heart? (Acts 13:22)

3. Does Psalms 109 seem consistent with the historical information we have about David's attitude toward Saul? 1 Sam 24:1-7, 11; 26:1-9, 11-12, 18; 2 Sam 1:15-17, 23-24

4. Is the language of Psalms 109 consistent with the N.T. and the attitudes which Christians are supposed to have? If so, explain. If not, does the Bible contradict itself? Is there a "wrathful spirit" in the O.T. which is "overpowered in the N.T. by the spirit of love"?

The answer to the apparent dilemma posed by the imprecatory Psalms is found in understanding the righteousness or justice of God and, therefore, in coming to see sin and the sinner as He does. Answer the following questions from other imprecatory Psalms:

1. What attitude did David share with God concerning sin and the sinner? 5:8-10; 7:9-13; 10:15; ch 58.

2. What did David firmly believe that God would do to the wicked? 7:14-17; 28:4-5

3. What did David have confidence that God would ultimately do for him, though for the moment he was being unjustly and maliciously attacked? 35:11-28

4. Did David plan to act in revenge against his enemies or was he waiting for God to act in His vengeance? 7:6; 35:1-3; Ch. 54.

The apparent dilemma resolved:

1) Based on the above, when David penned the imprecatory Psalms was he doing so as a "man after God's own heart"?

2. Are the imprecatory Psalms really so different from the historical accounts of David's dealings with Saul? 1 Sam 24:12,15; 26:10

3. Are the imprecatory Psalms really so different from the N.T. and the spirit of Christianity? Compare each of the following passages with the four points above:

a. Gal 1:8-9

b. 2 Tim 4:14

c. 2 Thess 1:6-9

d. Rom 12:19

A TASTE OF THE PSALMS LESSON 9: PSALMS 119

O HOW I LOVE THY LAW! (47-48, 97, 113, 159, 167)

1. Find out what you can about the arrangement of this Psalm. How is it divided and why ?

2. Read verses 1-16. Write down 8 different words (9 NASV) which are used interchangeably to describe God's communication to man. At least one of these words is used in nearly every verse of the entire Psalm.

3. What word is oftentimes used to speak of the Psalmist's appreciation for God's statutes?
16,24,35,47,70,77,92,143,174 (Does this word describe the way that you look upon His judgments?)

4. What figures of speech does the Psalmist use to speak of his appreciation of God's law 103; 72,127 (Do you feel this way about God's ways?- How does this appreciation show itself in your life?)

5. Describe the Psalmist's desire for the Word of God 20, 40, 82, 123, 131, 174 (Do you desire God's testimonies this much? How does it show in your life?)

6. Read each group of references below. Then comment as to why the commandments of God were so desirable to the Psalmist (and should be to you).

a. 19, 24, 36-37, 45, 98-100, 105, 130

b. 5-6, 9-11, 80, 165

c. 25, 37, 40, 50, 88, 93, 156, 159

d. 41, 94, 155, 174

7. What request does the Psalmist make throughout the Psalm? 12, 26, 33, 64, 66, 68, 108, 124, 135. Do you have the same attitude? Does it cause you to study God's precepts? Is this attitude present when you study God's ordinances?

8. What did the Psalmist continually do with the Word of God? 15, 23, 27, 48, 78, 97, 99, 148. How is this more than "study" and different than "study"? Does this have a place in your life?

9. Describe the Psalmist's determination to keep obeying God's law despite how men might mistreat him. 51, 61, 69, 83-87, 95. How does this show his love for God's law? Do you have such determination (love)?

10. What attitudes did the Psalmist have toward those who disobeyed God's words? 53, 126, 136, 139. Can one truly love God's precepts and be any other way? What are your attitudes? How then is your love of His ways?