



AUTHOR

- The most well-known human author is David.
-Seventy-three psalms are ascribed to him.
-He is called the "sweet psalmist of Israel."

DATE

- Most of the psalms were written about 1,000 B.C.
- Ezra likely had much to do with the arrangement of the Psalms within the book.

THEME

"PRAYER & PRAISE"

- The book of Psalms was the national hymnbook for Israel and was used in public worship.
- Prayer and praise are the keynotes of the Psalms.
"In the psalms, we see how *sighing* is turned into *singing* through *praying*." - J. Sidlow Baxter
- Every experience in the life of the believer is reflected in the book of Psalms--sorrow, sin, fear, joy, love, faith, etc.
- *The book of Psalms strikes every note in the chord of human experience, and yet it is not a book about experiences; it is a book about the God we come to know in the experiences of life.

OUTLINE

- I. The Genesis Psalms (1-41)
- II. The Exodus Psalms (42-72)
- III. The Leviticus Psalms (73-89)
- IV. The Numbers Psalms (90-106)
- V. The Deuteronomy Psalms (107-150)

KEY VERSE

"Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name;
worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness."

Psalm 29:2

SPECIAL FEATURES

- Different themes of the Psalms:
 1. Instructive psalms
 2. Historical psalms
 3. Hallelujah psalms
 4. Penitential psalms
 5. Impeccatory psalms
 6. Supplication psalms
 7. Thanksgiving psalms
 8. Messianic psalms
 9. Nature psalms
 10. Pilgrim psalms

CHRIST IN THE BOOK

- The Psalms are full of Jesus Christ (Lk. 24:44).
*Primary Messianic Psalms -- 2, 8, 16, 22-24, 40-41, 68-69, 72, 87, 89, 102, 110, 118

Book of Psalms

Author: The brief descriptions that introduce the psalms have David listed as author in 73 instances. David's personality and identity are clearly stamped on many of these psalms. While it is clear that David wrote many of the individual psalms, he is definitely not the author of the entire collection. Two of the psalms (72) and (127) are attributed to Solomon, David's son and successor. Psalm 90 is a prayer assigned to Moses. Another group of 12 psalms (50) and (73—83) is ascribed to the family of Asaph. The sons of Korah wrote 11 psalms (42, 44-49, 84-85, 87-88). Psalm 88 is attributed to Heman, while (89) is assigned to Ethan the Ezrahite. With the exception of Solomon and Moses, all these additional authors were priests or Levites who were responsible for providing music for sanctuary worship during David's reign. Fifty of the psalms designate no specific person as author.

Date of Writing: A careful examination of the authorship question, as well as the subject matter covered by the psalms themselves, reveals that they span a period of many centuries. The oldest psalm in the collection is probably the prayer of Moses (90), a reflection on the frailty of man as compared to the eternity of God. The latest psalm is probably (137), a song of lament clearly written during the days when the Hebrews were being held captive by the Babylonians, from about 586 to 538 B.C.

It is clear that the 150 individual psalms were written by many different people across a period of a thousand years in Israel's history. They must have been compiled and put together in their present form by some unknown editor shortly after the captivity ended about 537 B.C.

Purpose of Writing: The Book of Psalms is the longest book in the Bible, with 150 individual psalms. It is also one of the most diverse, since the psalms deal with such subjects as God and His creation, war, worship, wisdom, sin and evil, judgment, justice, and the coming of the Messiah.

Key Verses: Psalm 19:1, Psalm 22:16-19, Psalm 23:1, Psalm 29:1-2, Psalm 51:10, Psalm 119:1-2,

Brief Summary: The Book of Psalms is a collection of prayers, poems, and hymns that focus the worshiper's thoughts on God in praise and adoration. Parts of this book were used as a hymnal in the worship services of ancient Israel. The musical heritage of the psalms is demonstrated by its title. It comes from a Greek word which means "a song sung to the accompaniment of a musical instrument."

Foreshadowings: God's provision of a Savior for His people is a recurring theme in the Psalms. Prophetic pictures of the Messiah are seen in numerous psalms. Psalm 2:1-12 portrays the Messiah's triumph and kingdom. Psalm 16:8-11 foreshadows His death and resurrection. Psalm 22 shows us the suffering Savior on the cross and presents detailed prophecies of the crucifixion, all of which were fulfilled perfectly. The glories of the Messiah and His bride are on exhibit

in Psalm 45:6-7, while Psalms 72:6-17, 89:3-37, 110:1-7 and 132:12-18 present the glory and universality of His reign.

Practical Application: One of the results of being filled with the Spirit or the word of Christ is singing. The psalms are the "songbook" of the early church that reflected the new truth in Christ.

God is the same Lord in all the psalms. But we respond to Him in different ways, according to the specific circumstances of our lives. What a marvelous God we worship, the psalmist declares, One who is high and lifted up beyond our human experiences but also one who is close enough to touch and who walks beside us along life's way.

We can bring all our feelings to God—no matter how negative or complaining they may be—and we can rest assured that He will hear and understand. The psalmist teaches us that the most profound prayer of all is a cry for help as we find ourselves overwhelmed by the problems of life.

Notable Psalms

PSALM 1

The theme of this psalm is the happiness of the godly and the judgment of the ungodly. Verse 1 can be translated, "O the *happinesses* of the man." No matter where we turn in the Bible, we find that God gives joy to the obedient (even in the midst of trial) and ultimately sorrow to the disobedient. God sees but two persons in this world: the godly, who are "in Christ," and the ungodly, who are "in Adam." See 1 Cor. 15:22, 49. Let us look at these two persons.

I. The Person God Blesses (1:1-3)

From the beginning of creation, God blessed mankind (Gen. 1:28); it was only after sin had entered the world through Adam's disobedience that we find the word "curse" (Gen. 3:14-19). It has always been God's desire that mankind should enjoy His blessings. Ephesians 1:3 tells us that the believer in Christ has been "blessed with all spiritual blessings." How rich we are in Him! In these verses we have a description of the kind of Christian God is able to bless.

A. A person who is separated from the world (v. 1)

The Christian life is compared to a walk (see Eph. 4:1, 17; 5:2, 8, 15). It begins with a step of faith in trusting Christ and it grows as we take further steps of faith in obedience to His Word. Walking involves progress, and Christians are to make progress in applying Bible truths to daily life. But it is possible for the believer to walk "in the darkness," outside the will of God (1 John 1:5-7). The people God blesses are careful in their walk: though they are in the world, they are not of the world. By contrast, it takes little imagination to see the person walking near sin, then standing to consider it, and finally sitting down to enjoy "the pleasures of sin for a season" (Heb. 11:25).

B. A person who is saturated with the Word (v. 2)

Those whom God blesses are not delighted with what pertains to sin and the world; they delight in the Word of God. It is love for and obedience to the Bible that brings blessing on our lives. See Josh. 1:8. The people God blesses not only read the Word daily, but they study it, memorize it, and meditate on it during the day and night. Their mind is controlled by the Word of God. Meditation is to the soul what "digestion" is to the body. It means understanding the Word, "chewing on it," and applying it to our lives, making it a part of the inner person. See Jer. 15:16, Ezek. 3:3, and Rev. 10:9.

C. A person who is situated by the waters (v. 3)

Water for drinking is a picture of the Holy Spirit of God (John 7:37-39). The Christian is here compared to a tree that gets its water from the deep hidden springs under the dry sands. This world is a desert that can never satisfy the dedicated believer. We must send our "spiritual roots" down deep into the things of Christ and draw upon the spiritual water of life. See Jer. 17:7-8, Ps. 92:12-14. There can be no fruit without roots. Too many Christians are more concerned about the leaves and the fruit than they are the roots, but the roots are the most important part.

II. The Person God Judges (1:4-6)

“Not so!” This means that all that the godly person enjoys and experiences is not true in the life of the ungodly. The godly are compared to a tree—strong, permanent, beautiful, useful, fruitful. The ungodly are compared to chaff—they have no roots; they are blown with the wind; they are useless to the plans of God; they are neither beautiful nor fruitful. John the Baptist used a similar picture in Matt. 3:10-12 when he described God as a harvester, visiting the threshing floor and separating the grain from the chaff. *“He will burn up the chaff!”* What a tragedy for people to spend their whole life on earth as chaff and, as far as eternal things are concerned, amount to nothing.

Is there a future judgment? Verse 5 informs us that there is. When v. 5 says the wicked “shall not stand” in the judgment, it does not mean they will be absent; rather, it means they will not be able to endure the judgment. When the books are opened, these individuals will be flung to their knees in confession of sin and of the truth of God’s Word and God’s Son (Phil. 2:9-11).

The life of the godly person is an eternal plan of God! What he says, where he goes, what he does—all of these have eternal consequences. But the ungodly have *“turned every one to his own way”* (Isa. 53:6). The path of the righteous leads to glory (Prov. 4:18), but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

Verse 6 sets before us the familiar teaching of the “two ways”. We see it mentioned throughout the Book of Proverbs (Prov. 2:20; 4:14; 4:24-27; etc.). Why are the ungodly lost? Because they will not submit to Christ and His Word. They think they are secure in the earth—but they are only chaff!

How can the believer practice Ps. 1:1-3? It begins with daily surrender to the Lord of all that we are and all that we have (Rom. 12:1-2). It involves spending time with God’s Word, reading it and meditating upon it. It means living a life separated from the world. It demands a life with roots that draw upon the hidden resources of God. What a blessed life, one that gives satisfaction here and hereafter.

Psalm 1 - The Blessed Man

This first psalm is a fitting introduction to the Psalms. It constitutes a perfect summation of the whole book of Psalms, for it describes man as God intends him to be. Like the Sermon on the Mount, this hymn begins with the word “blessed,” and then goes on to show how blessedness and godliness are inseparably joined together. The psalmist then concludes with a striking contrast in which the ungodly man is portrayed both as to his character and his ultimate condemnation.

I. **NEGATIVELY**

“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful” (1:1). We must remember that there is a negative side to godliness. There are some things which the man of God will not do. There is a divine nature within his personality which is diametrically opposed to that which is godless, sinful and scornful.

1) He Is Opposed to **Godless Thinking**

“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly” (1:1). His manner of life is

not directed by the wisdom of this world, but rather by the wisdom which is from above. His philosophy of life is not sensual or earthly, but rather spiritual and divine. Instead of going to the world for his advice he daily seeks his counsel from heaven.

2) He Is Opposed to Lawless Living

"Nor standeth in the way of sinners" (1:1). While godlessness may be defined as the ignorance of God, sinfulness is the deliberate violation of the divine law. John declares in his epistle that "sin is the transgression of the law [or literally, lawlessness]" (1 John 3:4).

3) He Is Opposed to Careless Speaking

"Nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful" (Ps. 1:1). Those who begin to walk in the counsel of the ungodly usually end up sitting in the seat of the scornful. This is the chief seat in the kingdom of Satan. Those who occupy this position are filled with pride and contempt, and therefore regard the things of God with utter carelessness and scornfulness.

II. POSITIVELY

"But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night" (1:2). Let us leave the negative side and look at the positive side.

1) He Appreciates the Word of God

"His delight is in the law of the Lord" (1:2). The life blessed by God can never be separated from reading and studying the Bible. One of the greatest sins of our age is our neglect of God's Holy Word. That is why we have such weak and ineffective Christians in our churches. God make us like Thomas à Kempis, who often said, "I have no rest, but in a nook with the Book."

2) He Appropriates the Word of God

"And in his law doth he meditate day and night" (1:2). It is one thing to appreciate the Bible for its literary excellence, and its theological concepts, but quite another thing to appropriate its message and live out its doctrine in daily obedience. The art of meditation involves appropriation; indeed, meditation is as needful to our spiritual health and strength as mastication and assimilation are to the physical. Jeremiah knew something about this when he said, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart" (Jer. 15:16).

PSALM 8

Hidden in this beautiful psalm's poetic description of man's place in creation lies much teaching for practical people today. With the aid of the NT references to Ps. 8, we will be able to discover some of the lessons found here.

I. THE SETTING HISTORICALLY

You have noted that there are two types of inscriptions in the psalms: historical and musical. For example, at the beginning of Ps. 8 we read, "To the chief Musician upon Gittith, a psalm of David." *Gittith* means "winepress" and probably referred to the use of the psalm in the harvest season.

The psalm could refer to David's slaying of Goliath (1 Sam. 17). It is easy to see young David alone with God that evening after he had killed the giant, looking up to heaven and marveling at God's concern for His own. David was but a "babe and suckling" compared to the giant, yet God used the babe to silence the enemy. When David offered to silence the enemy, Saul said, "You are but a youth" (17:33,)—a babe, a suckling. Note another parallel between 1 Sam. 17 and Ps. 8 in "the fowl of the air" and "the beasts of the field" (1 Sam. 17:44). Also, Ps. 8 glorifies the "name of the Lord" (8:1, 9), and David defeated Goliath in the "name of the Lord" (17:45). Here we have youthful David praising the Lord for the great victory that He gave. "What is man that You are mindful of him?" Why would God pay any attention to a shepherd boy? What a wonderful type of Jesus Christ we see in David: (1) both were born at Bethlehem; (2) both were shepherds; (3) both were rejected temporarily by their brethren; (4) both faced an enemy in the wilderness and won; (5) both were exiles before being made kings; (6) both took a bride while in exile; and (7) both were beloved—for the name David means "beloved."

II. THE MEANING DOCTRINALLY

Any time a psalm is quoted in the NT and applied to Christ, this makes it a messianic psalm. Psalm 8 is applied to Christ in several places in the NT: Matt. 21:16; Heb. 2:6-8; 1 Cor. 15:27; and Eph. 1:22. Read these references carefully, especially Heb. 2.

The main teaching from Ps. 8 in Heb. 2 and 1 Cor. 15 is this: Christ has regained all that Adam lost because of sin. Christ has been exalted above the heavens and thus has glorified God's name (Eph. 1:19-23; Heb. 1:1-3). God's glory is no longer in a tent or a temple; it is "above the heavens" in Christ and in the hearts of ordinary believers. When Christ was ministering on earth, He was not praised by the priests or kings; it was the little children who praised Him in the temple.

Read Gen. 1:26-28 carefully, and note that God gave the first man dominion (rule) over the fish, the fowl, and the cattle. Actually, man was made "a little lower than God" and was appointed God's deputy to rule over the earth. But when Adam sinned, he lost that dominion. Romans 5 points out that there was a change of "kings": death reigned (5:14, 17), and sin reigned (5:21), but Adam no longer reigned. Instead of a king, Adam had become a slave! One final thought: Christ's work on the cross did not merely undo Adam's sin and put us back where Adam was. Rather, it gave us much more: it made us like Christ. Note the repetition of "much more" in Rom. 5:9-21.

III. THE LIVING PRACTICALLY

A. PRAISE... If David had reason to praise God for his position and his victory, how much more should we praise Him. Who are we that God should visit us? Who are we that Christ should die for us and lift us with Him above the heavens?

B. POSITION... This psalm exalts the DIGNITY of man. Man is certainly the greatest of God's creations, for man is made "in the IMAGE of God." Let us never forget our obligation as creatures made in God's image, and our greater obligation as saints being renewed in this image through Christ (Col. 3:9-10; Rom. 8:29).

C. POWER... Christ has given us dominion; this means that we reign as kings. We can reign in life through Christ (Rom. 5:17), getting victory over sin and temptation. We reign in death (1 Cor. 15:54-57), for death no more has dominion over us. We shall reign in His kingdom here on earth, our place of service to be determined according to our life and faithfulness here today (Matt. 25:14-30; Luke 19:12-27).

D. PROMISE... This psalm makes it clear that God is concerned with CREATION, and the interpretation in Heb. 2:6-9 indicates that Christ will one day deliver creation from the bondage of sin. See Rom. 8:18-24. This will include the "redemption of our body" (Rom. 8:23) when we shall see Christ and become like Him (1 John 3:1-3; Phil. 3:20-21). The fact that Jesus Christ is today on the throne is proof that one day all creation will be redeemed. What a glorious promise!

Of course, Ps. 8 applies only to BELIEVERS in Jesus Christ. The LOST may admire God's creation, the work of His HANDS but those who are saved have experienced the power of His HEART, "Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" (Isa. 53:1) How wonderful that God should visit this earth for MERCY, but one day He will visit it in JUDGMENT Have you trusted Christ as your Savior? Are you permitting Him to rule and reign in your life?

Psalm 19

God's revelation to man is the theme of this psalm. It is amazing that God speaks to us at all. Men and women are sinners and have no desire to listen to God, yet He graciously continues to speak. God speaks to us in three ways:

I. HE SPEAKS IN THE **SKIES** (19:1-6)

God's wisdom, power, and glory are seen in His creation. Modern science would have us study "natural laws" and leave God out, but the psalmist looked at the marvels of heaven and earth and saw God. See also Pss. 8 and 29, as well as Isa. 40:12-31. Jesus saw His Father's handiwork in the lilies and the birds (Matt. 6:24-34). Both by day and by night, God's creation is speaking (v. 2), but this speech is not heard with the human ear. Verse 3 should read, "There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard" (NIV). We hear the voice of God in creation by seeing His wisdom and power. Certainly so complex an entity as our universe (and the universes beyond our own universe) demands a Creator and Sustainer. To believe that the universe evolved out of nothing and arranged itself in this orderly manner is folly.

Creation speaks a universal language to all nations (vv. 3-4). It is this fact that Paul used in Rom. 1:18-32 to prove that all people everywhere are under the wrath of God. "Are the heathen lost?" is an oft-repeated question, and the answer is "Yes." On what basis are they lost if they have never heard the Gospel? On the basis of God's revelation in creation. The heathen see God's power and wisdom, His "eternal Godhead," in creation and know that they have a responsibility to Him. Paul uses Ps. 19:4 again in Rom. 10:18.

Nature preaches a thousand sermons a day to the human heart. Each day begins with light and moves to darkness, from waking to sleeping, a picture of life without God. Each year moves from spring to winter, from life to death. We see the grass mowed down (Isa. 40:6-8), the tree cut down (Luke 13:6-9; Matt. 3:10), the fire destroying the waste (Matt. 13:40-42). The activities of nature, under the hand of God, are vivid object lessons to the hearts of sinners but, alas, many do not want to see or hear. The lost sinner, wherever he or she may be on this globe, stands condemned before the throne of God.

II. HE SPEAKS IN THE **SCRIPTURES** (19:7-11)

The heavens declare God's glory, and the Scriptures declare His grace. See Heb. 1:1-3. This law, testimony, commandment, word, of course, is a personal revelation from God, for the name used is not "God" but "LORD," meaning "Jehovah." This is the personal, covenant name for God.

A. What the Bible is

(1) The **PERFECT** law—There is no error in the Bible, either in historical fact or in spiritual truth. Of course, the Bible records the lies of men and of Satan, but the total message of the Bible is that of truth. See Ps. 119:128 and 160.

(2) The **SURE** testimony—The Word does not change; it is sure and steadfast, Ps. 119:89. It is God's testimony to man, His witness of what is true and right. See Matt. 5:18.

(3) The **RIGHT** statutes—"Statutes" means "precepts, rules for daily living." Some rules are

wrong rules; God's Word is right. Obeying the Word brings blessing to daily life.

(4) The **PURE** commandment—See Pss. 12:6; 119:140; Prov. 30:5. The “sacred books” of some world religions are anything but pure, but God's Word is pure, even when dealing with sin. Nothing in the Bible, rightly understood, could lead a person into sin.

(5) The clean **FEAR** of the Lord—The phrase “fear of the Lord” (v. 9) is another reference to “the Law,” since the Word of God produces a reverence for God. See Deut. 4:10; Ps. 111:10. To fear God makes a person clean; to worship heathen idols makes a person filthy.

(6) True, righteous judgments—God's evaluations of men and things are true; He knows all things completely. It pays for the Christian to believe what God says and not to depend on his own evaluation. Lot made this mistake and lost everything.

(7) Better than **GOLD**—What a treasure is the Bible (Ps. 119:72; Prov. 8:10; 16:16).

(8) Sweeter than **HONEY** (Ps. 119:103)—The spiritual Christian does not need the artificial things of this world for satisfaction; the Word satisfies the spiritual appetite.

B. What the Bible does

(1) **CONVERTS**—This is the same as “restores” in Ps. 23:3. The Word converts the sinner from his ways and restores the saint when he wanders. It refreshes and heals.

(2) **MAKES WISE**—Read Ps. 119:97-104; Isa. 8:20; Jer. 8:9; Col. 1:9; James 1:5.

(3) **REJOICES**—The spiritual believer finds joy in the Word (Jer. 15:16).

(4) **ENLIGHTENS**—“The entrance (opening) of Your words gives light” (Ps. 119:130, NKJV).

(5) **ENDURES**—Other books fade and are forgotten, but God's Word remains. Many a hammer has been worn out on the anvil of God's Word!

(6) **ENRICHES**—It is better than gold or silver (Prov. 3:13-15).

(7) **SATISFIES**—The honey satisfies the body; the Word satisfies the soul.

(8) **WARNS**—It is better to prevent sin and avoid trouble than to confess sin and try to remedy mistakes. Knowing the Word and obeying it guides the believer on the safe path. See Prov. 2.

(9) **REWARDS**—Money cannot buy the rewards of a godly life: a clean conscience, a pure heart, joy, peace, and answered prayer. Note that v. 11 says there is a reward *in* keeping the Word, not *for* keeping it. The reward comes in the doing: “This man shall be blessed in *his doing*” (James 1:25).

III. HE SPEAKS IN THE SOUL (19:12-14)

No person can understand his or her own heart (Jer. 17:9). We need the mirror of the Word to reveal our sins to us (James 1:22-25). The psalmist closes by asking God to reveal his secret sins to him; see Ps. 139:23-24. The OT law provided for sins of ignorance (Lev. 4-5; Num. 15:22ff). But for sins of open defiance and rebellion, there was no sacrifice; see Num. 15:30-31. David asks not only to be cleansed of secret faults, but to be restrained from running head-long into open sin. “Watch and pray, that you enter not into temptation.” This kind of wicked abandonment to sin leads to slavery, and sin becomes the master of the life. Romans 6 tells us that sin should not have dominion over us. Of course, it is by allowing the Word of God to control our lives that we get victory over sin. By “great transgression” in v. 13, the psalmist seems to mean a “sin unto death” or a repeated rebellion against God that brings forth His wrath. It is by an accumulation

of the little secret sins of v. 12 that the person gradually walks into the great sin. It is important that Christians confess their sins immediately and allow the Word and the blood to cleanse the heart.

The prayer of v. 14 ought to be on our lips and in our hearts all day long. The meditation of the heart controls the words of the mouth (Mark 7:14-23). The word "meditation" here has the image of a musician plucking the strings of a harp. Who controls the music of your heart, God or Satan? Meditation is to the heart what digestion is to the body; it is the taking in of the Word of God and making it a part of the inner being. As the heart and mind think on the Word all day long, the Spirit guides the life. This is what it means to walk in the Spirit (Gal. 5:16) and to have the spiritual mind (Rom. 8:1-8).

Is your Bible all to you that God wants it to be? Read this psalm again and ask God to enable you to love the Word, live in it, and obey it—and He will bless you.

Psalm 19

1) The Authority of Scripture

"The law of the Lord is perfect" (19:7). The psalmist used no less than six titles to underscore the authority of Holy Scripture. Like a condensed edition of Psalm 119, these words express the broad and varied authority of the Word of God.

1. Law tells of the Divine instruction relative to character and conduct.
2. Testimony tells of the Divine witness to what God is, and what we should be.
3. Statute tells of Divine directions designed to secure obedience or check disobedience.
4. Commandment tells of the Divine decrees, authoritative and imperious.
5. Fear tells of the settled habit of the soul which is informed by the Law.
6. Judgments tell of the judicial decisions and sentences of Jehovah - (Scroggie, p. 125).

2) The Inerrancy of Scripture

"The law of the Lord is perfect" (19:7). Once again David selected six words, this time to describe the inerrancy of Scripture. He spoke of the law as being

1. "perfect" (19:7)—without flaw or defect;
2. "sure" (19:7)—reliable and worthy of absolute trust;
3. "right" (19:8)—presenting the road to man's true destiny;
4. "pure" (19:8)—shining like the sun in a clear sky and highlighting duty;
5. "clean" (19:9)—without corruption; and
6. "true" (19:9)—inerrant and faithful.

Oh that God would give us a similar conception of the inerrancy and infallibility of His precious Word!

3) The Validity of Scripture

“The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul” (19:7). Once more the psalmist described six effects that the Word of God has in the experience of the believer.

1. It restores the soul (19:7);
2. It makes wise the simple (19:7);
3. It rejoices the heart (19:8);
4. It enlightens the eye (19:8);
5. It endures forever (19:9);
6. It is righteous altogether (19:9).

Because of the validity of Holy Scripture David exclaimed: “More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward” (19:10-11). In other words, the Holy Scriptures are to be loved, learned and lived; and in the obeying of God’s Word there is great reward. Our supreme satisfaction is our increasing knowledge of God, as the Holy Spirit leads us into *all truth* as revealed in the Scriptures.

The Shepherd Psalm

Psalm 23

I. THE SECRET OF A HAPPY LIFE (23:1-3)

A. Its Roots in a Spiritual Relationship

B. Its Results in a Spiritual Reality (23:1-3)

The Good Shepherd: 1. Shares His Life with Us 2. Gives His Life for Us 3.

Puts His Life in Us

II. THE SECRET OF A HAPPY DEATH (23:4-5)

David talks about: A. The Tomb B. The Table

III. THE SECRET OF A HAPPY ETERNITY (23:6)

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

A. Preservation

B. Place

Psalms 22, 23, 24 as a TRILOGY (grouping of three)

These three familiar and beloved psalms present Christ as the Shepherd, each one emphasizing a different aspect of His Person and His work. Psalm 22 pictures the Good Shepherd dying for the sheep (John 10:11); Ps. 23 the Great Shepherd caring for the sheep (Heb. 13:20-21); and Ps. 24 the Chief Shepherd coming for the sheep (1 Peter 5:4). In other words, Christ died for us (past), Christ lives for us (present), and Christ will come for us (future).

I. THE GOOD SHEPHERD (22)

This psalm presents the crucifixion of Christ in vv. 1-21 and His resurrection in vv. 22-31. Since the Jews did not know of crucifixion back in David's time, this vivid description of Christ's death on the cross could only have been penned by inspiration of the Spirit. It is interesting to contrast the two sections of this psalm. In vv. 1-21 we see Christ's suffering and crucifixion, while in vv. 22-31 we see His glory and resurrection. The first passage depicts pain and prayer; the second passage depicts praise and promise. And the first shows Christ in the midst of His enemies; the second, Christ in the midst of the church.

It is not difficult to see the fulfillment of this chapter in the NT story of the cross:

v. 1—Matt. 27:46; Mark 15:34—Christ spoke these words

v. 2—Alternate light and darkness; Matt. 27:45

vv. 6-8—The reproach of the people; Matt. 27:39-44

vv. 11-12—No help was offered Him; Matt. 26:56

v. 16—His hands and feet pierced; Matt. 27:35

v. 17—People staring at Him; Luke 23:35

v. 18—Gambling for His garments; John 19:23-24

At v. 22, the scene changes, and we move into resurrection. See Heb. 2:11-12 for the NT explanation of this. Christ is no longer on the cross; He is in the midst of His brethren (the church) declaring the glory of God. Verse 24 must be read in connection with Heb. 5:7. This final section is filled with praise: in the church (v. 22), in Israel (vv. 23-26), and among the Gentiles (vv. 27-31). Verse 31 () ends, "He has done this," paralleling Jesus' words, "It is finished." Because of Christ's work on the cross, salvation has been accomplished and all who come to Him by faith will be saved.

II. THE GREAT SHEPHERD (23)

Hebrews 13:20-21 informs us that today Jesus is the Great Shepherd who cares for the sheep. We are His sheep, and as we follow Him He ministers to us. Christ did not simply die for us; He rose again and lives for us. He is the Great Shepherd, the Great High Priest. "I shall not want" is the theme of Ps. 23. "I shall not want" for: rest and refreshment (v. 2), restoration and righteousness (v. 3), protection in trouble (v. 4), provision in the wilderness (v. 5), and a home to go to at the end of the day (v. 6).

Of course, the picture here is that of the Oriental shepherd and his flock. Such a shepherd knows each sheep by name. The shepherd goes before the sheep and makes sure they are not walking into danger (John 10:27-28). The sheep never need worry when they follow the shepherd, for he will protect them and provide for them. Even when they go through a dangerous valley (v. 4), the shepherd is beside them, and beyond the valley is the house of rest. At the end of the day, the shepherd leads the flock back to the fold and stands by the open door

to examine each one as it enters. If he sees one that is bruised or weary, he puts the refreshing oil upon it to soothe and heal it, and gives it a drink of cool water. How gracious our Shepherd is to care for us!

Each of the OT names for God is seen in this psalm: **Jehovah-Jireh**, "The Lord will provide" (Gen. 22:13-14); **Jehovah-Rapha**, "The Lord will heal or restore" (Ex. 15:26); **Jehovah-Shalom**, "The Lord our peace" (Jdg. 6:24); **Jehovah-Tsidkenu**, "The Lord our righteousness," (Jer. 23:6); **Jehovah-Shammah**, "The Lord is there," (Ezek. 48:35); **Jehovah-Nissi**, "The Lord our banner" (Ex. 17:8-15); and **Jehovah-Raah**, "The Lord my shepherd" (Ps. 23:1). In other words, Jesus Christ is to His sheep all that they ever need.

III. THE **CHIEF** SHEPHERD (24)

Jewish tradition says that this psalm was written to commemorate David's returning the ark to Jerusalem (1 Chron. 13-15). It was probably sung by different choirs and soloists, each answering the other. The choir would sing vv. 1-2, a voice would respond with v. 3, and then another voice would answer with v. 4. Then the chorus would sing vv. 5-6. As the people entered the gates of the city, the chorus would sing out vv. 8-9, and the voice would ask again, "Who is this king of glory?" Then the entire group would shout, "The Lord of hosts! He is the king of glory!" What a wonderful spectacle it must have been!

But an even greater wonder awaits Jerusalem when the Chief Shepherd, Jesus Christ, appears to claim David's throne. This psalm describes the return of the King to Zion; see Rev. 19:11-16. This present earth is under the sway of sin and Satan. Though it is the Lord's by creation and redemption, it has not yet been delivered from bondage. But thank God, one day Jesus will return to the earth to claim His inheritance. Then the earth will be filled with the glory of the Lord.

If Christ is your **Good** Shepherd because you have received Him as Savior, then let Him be your **Great** Shepherd to guide and bless your life. Then when He returns as the **Chief** Shepherd, you will be ready to meet Him.

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A Thanksgiving Psalm

Psalm 100

Introduction: One of the most striking Psalms of thanksgiving is Psalm 100. Psalm 100 is the summons to universal worship of the Lord with gladness and praise.

I. THE BASIS OF OUR THANKSGIVING

The 100th Psalm was written for the people of Israel. God said to them, "When you come into the Promised Land, & settle down in your warm homes, & you have plenty to eat, don't forget Me. I led you out of the wilderness & I brought you into a land flowing with milk & honey."

But it doesn't take very long to realize that the people of Israel needed a reminder, and I am afraid that we need it, too. Maybe God had us in mind, too, when this Psalm was written. Did you notice to whom it is addressed? The first verse says that it is addressed to "all the earth," & the last verse says that it includes "all generations." This message of thanksgiving is so deep & wide that it applies to every person in every era in every stage of life.

ILL. It's sad, isn't it, that we are the only country in the world, except for Canada & the Philippines (as far as I know), that has a Thanksgiving Day? I wonder how our world would be changed if suddenly **all nations** observed Thanksgiving?

Just scan the Psalm and see what it emphasizes. In **vs. 1** you'll find ***the name of the Lord***. In vs. 2 you'll find ***the name of the Lord***. In **vs. 3** you'll find ***the name of the Lord***. In **vs. 4** it says, "Enter His gates with thanksgiving." And in **vs. 5** you'll find ***the name of the Lord***.

II. FIVE THANKSGIVING COMMANDS

1. **Command #1** is in vs. 1, "Make a **joyful** noise unto the LORD, all ye lands."

It means to "shout with the force of a trumpet blast," a shout of joy to the Lord that comes from the very depths of your being.

2. **Command #2** is, "Serve the Lord with **gladness**."

It doesn't say "serve the church" or serve the preacher, or serve the leaders, or serve the organization." It says, "serve the Lord."

3. **Command #3** is, "Come before his **presence** with **singing**."

Have you noticed? In these first 3 commands, God has said, "I want you to be happy. Shout with joy, serve with gladness, & come with joyful songs.".....Take a moment & look at people around you. Do they look happy? Or are they sitting there with scowls on their faces?

4. **Command #4** is, " Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath **made** us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the **sheep** of his **pasture**."

God took every bone, every joint, & He welded them together with sinews & muscles & covered them with skin & gave us eyes that see, brains that think, & fingers that can pick things up. God made us, inside & out. He made you the way He wanted you to be. And He made me the way He wanted me to be. ***And He is still making us.*** He's not satisfied with the unfinished product. He's not satisfied with your temper. He's not satisfied with the weak areas of your life where you are giving in to temptation. So He's still making us.

5. **Command #5** is this, " Enter into his gates with **thanksgiving**, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name. For the LORD is **good**; his mercy is everlasting; and his **truth** endureth to all generations."

In the O.T. the temple symbolized the presence of God. So whenever the people came to the temple & entered the courtyards they knew that they had come into the presence of God. Now that temple no longer exists. But oftentimes the place where we meet to worship God is called a "*sanctuary*," indicating that God is there. But God is everywhere. You know that. He is with you as you drive on the highway. He is with you when you work. He is with you as you care for your children. He is with you every moment of your life.

What if He wouldn't bless us today because we didn't thank Him yesterday? What if God answered our prayers the way we answer His call for service? What if God decided to stop leading us tomorrow because we did not follow Him today?

**"He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities."
[Psalm 103:10].**

CONCLUSION: Take time to read the 100th Psalm again. And if you'll listen to those commands, your heart will overflow with thanksgiving to the Lord.

Psalm 119

This psalm is special in several ways. It is the **longest** psalm (176 verses), and it is an **acrostic** psalm, following the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. In most editions of the Bible, the **twenty-two sections** of this psalm are headed by the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet (Aleph, Beth, Gimel, etc.).

I. What the Bible **Is**

A. **Water for cleansing** (v. 9)

This whole section (vv. 9-16) deals with victory over sin. Young people in particular need to learn to heed and hide the Word that they might overcome temptation. As you read the Word and meditate on it, it cleanses your inner being, just as water cleanses the body. See John 15:3 and Eph. 5:25-27.

B. **Wealth and treasure** (vv. 14, 72, 127, 162)

Many people do not know the difference between prices and values. Your Bible may cost but a few dollars, but what a treasure it is. How would you feel if you lost God's Word and could not replace it?

C. **A companion and friend** (v. 24)

The writer was a stranger (v. 19), rejected by the proud (v. 21) and by princes (v. 23), but he always had the Word to be his counselor. Read Prov. 6:20-22.

D. **A song to sing** (v. 54)

Imagine making a song out of statutes—laws! The songs of the world mean nothing to us, but God's Word is a song to our hearts.

E. **Honey** (v. 103)

The sweetness of the Word is like honey to the taste.

F. **A lamp** (vv. 105, 130)

This is a dark world and the only dependable light is the Word of God (2 Peter 1:19-21). It leads us a step at a time, as we walk in obedience. First John 1:5-10 tells us we walk in the light as we obey His Word.

II. What the Bible **Does**

A. **It blesses** (vv. 1-2)

It is the book with a blessing (Ps. 1:1-3). We are blessed in reading the Word, understanding the Word, and obeying the Word. We are also blessed when we share the Word with others.

B. **It gives life** (vv. 25, 37, 40, 50, 88, 93)

"Quicken" means "to give life." The Word gives us eternal life when we believe (1 Peter 1:23). It is the living Word (Heb. 4:12). But the Word also quickens us when we are weak, discouraged, and defeated. Revival comes when we yield to God's Word.

C. **It gives strength** (v. 28)

Trusting the Word encourages us (Matt. 4:4). God's Word has power (Heb. 4:12) and can empower us when we believe and obey.

D. **It gives liberty** (v. 45)

A law that gives liberty—what a paradox! Sin would have dominion over us (v. 133), but the Word sets us free (John 8:32). True liberty comes in obeying God’s will. His Word is “the perfect law of liberty” (James 1:25).

E. It imparts wisdom (vv. 66, 97-104)

We may get knowledge and facts in other books, but true spiritual wisdom is found in the Bible. Note in vv. 97-104 that there are various ways to discover truth—from your enemies, from your teachers, from your older friends—and all of these are good. But above them all is a knowledge of the Bible. Teachers may know from books, and elders may know from experience (both deserving respect), but these without the Bible are not sufficient.

F. It creates friends (v. 63)

Knowing and obeying the Bible will bring into your life the very finest friends. Those who love God’s Word are friends indeed. There are false friends who may dazzle you with their worldly wisdom and wealth, but their friendship will lead you astray. Stick with those who “stick” with the Bible (v. 31).

III. What We Must Do with the Bible

A. Love it (vv. 97, 159)

The way you treat your Bible is the way you treat Christ. To love Him is to love His Word. The Word is a delight (vv. 16, 24, 16, 35, 47, 70) and not a disappointment; we rejoice to read it (vv. 14, 162).

B. Prize it (vv. 72, 128)

To hold the Bible in high esteem is the mark of a true saint. It should be more precious to us than any earthly treasure.

C. Study it (vv. 7, 12, 18, 26-27)

At least twelve times the psalmist prays, “Teach me.” The Christian who daily studies his Bible will be blessed of God. Bible study is not always easy, for it takes the “whole heart” (vv. 2, 10, 34, 69, 145).

D. Memorize it (v. 11)

“The best Book, in the best place, for the best purpose!” is the way Campbell Morgan explained this verse. All ages need to memorize the Word, not children and young people alone. Joshua was not a youth when God commanded him to memorize the Law (Josh. 1:8).

E. Meditate on it (vv. 15, 23, 48, 78, 97, 99, 148)

Meditation is to the soul what digestion is to the body. To meditate means to “turn over” God’s Word in the mind and heart, to examine it, to compare Scripture with Scripture, to “feed on” its wonderful truths. In this day of noise and confusion, such meditation is rare but so needful. Meditation is impossible without memorization.

F. Trust it (v. 42)

We trust the Bible about everything, because it is right about everything (v. 128). It is true and can be trusted wholly. To argue with the Bible is to argue with God. We test every other book by what God says in His Word.

G. Obey it (vv. 1-8)

To keep the Word is to obey it, to walk in its commandments. If we know God’s truth and fail to obey it, we are only fooling ourselves.

