



Series: Bible Survey

Lesson: 24. Psalms

- **Introduction**

- Author: At least seven named; ~half by David
- Date: Contributions from Moses through the post-Exile period covering ~900 years of Israel's history (majority from David–Solomon's reigns)
- Important features:
 - The Hebrew name (*Tehillim*) means ' _____,' and the word we translate 'psalm' (*mizmor*) shows up in many titles and means 'song,' showing that this is a collection of inspired worship songs.
 - One hundred sixteen of them contain titles that are part of the inspired text, so they are important to note.
 - Psalms is the largest book in the Bible and most frequently quoted Old Testament book in the New Testament.
 - The Psalms are organized into five books each ending in a doxology, but there is no compelling explanation for why they are arranged this way.
 - Some of the Psalms are written as _____ poems (each line begins with the next letter in the alphabet).

- Context:
 - Israel has had worship music as a part of their culture for as long as they have been a nation.
 - David was an accomplished musician and inspired prophet who sought to worship God with his music and gave extensive guidance for how musical worship in Israel should be conducted, so it's not surprising that most of the Psalms came from his era.
 - In the New Testament, Ephesians 5 and Colossians 3 command us to use music to express the filling of that Spirit and to teach and admonish one another, showing some of its importance and why there is a book of the Bible devoted to worship songs.
- Main theme: Connecting human experience with spiritual realities
- **How to Read Psalms**
 - There are several kinds of psalms:
 - Lament (e.g., 4)
 - Praise (e.g., 145)
 - Thanksgiving (e.g., 9)
 - Celebration of God's Law (e.g., 119)
 - Wisdom (e.g., 37)
 - Royal (e.g., 72)
 - Historical (e.g., 78)
 - Imprecatory (e.g., 58)

- Israel was a largely agrarian and rural society whose lives were often affected by war and whose worship was centered in the Holy City of Jerusalem, so the language of the Psalms reflects that context.
 - Even though our context is largely different, the _____ behind their responses to their circumstances still gives universal applications for us today.
- The Psalms were written in Israel while looking forward to the _____; we are reading them as the Church resting in Christ's accomplished work.
 - There are any statements that need to be interpreted in that light before we can apply them to ourselves.
- Even if details and contexts may differ, because these are poetic expressions of worship, we can still get to the core message of any psalm and find a way to help us better understand and give voice to our own worship today.
- Even though theological development is not the main focus of Hebrew poetry, the Psalms are still full of theology that other biblical authors recognized and used for their own development.

Ps. 14:1–3 – The fool has said in his heart, “There is no God.”

*They are corrupt, they have committed abominable deeds;
There is no one who does good.*

*²The Lord has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men
To see if there are any who understand,
Who seek after God.*

*³They have all turned aside, together they have become corrupt;
There is no one who does good, not even one.*

(cp. Rom. 3:10–12)

- Because these are inspired songs for either congregational or individual worship, it is right and appropriate for the Church to continue using them today in worship services, but the New Testament gives us the freedom to use other sources of music too.

- How do we read _____ psalms?
 - David writes many psalms as a follower of God with whom we can readily relate, but in many others, he is writing as the king of Israel who is both a prophet and a _____ of Christ.
 - Jesus Christ is the Davidic king *par excellence*, so He is the ultimate fulfilment of what was prophesied about Davidic kings.
 - This means Israel could tell when reading certain psalms that even though David was certainly experiencing something that led him to write them, they were really pointing ahead to the Messiah.

- That is why the Apostles so readily connected Christ to certain psalms (e.g., Acts 1:20; 2:25–28, 34–35; 4:25–26; etc.)
- When we read them, we can certainly empathize with certain aspects, but our main focus should be on what they say about

- This happened at various levels: Psalms like 110 are purely pointing to Christ, whereas ones like 34 are mainly about David but contain details fulfilled in Christ to show that He is the antitype of David.

Discussion:

1. What does it tell us that the largest book of the Bible is a collection of worship music?
2. How can we apply imprecatory psalms as Christians today?

FOR REFLECTION: Do you have songs you can sing to God in *every* circumstance in life or only a select few? How can you address that?

Blanks: praises, acrostic, heart, Messiah, Messianic, type, Christ