

# The Psalms

A Bible Study to more fully appreciate the Psalms and use them as a model of worship.



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## Session One: Introduction

### Watch The [Bible Project Video](#) on The Book of Psalms

This Bible study aims to:

- Help us see God’s care for each of us, both as individuals and as His people.
- Show us how we can relate to God with our deepest emotions.
- Encourage us to read and meditate on the Psalms daily.

### About the Psalms

The word “psalm” originates from the Greek word “psalmos,” which is derived from the Hebrew term “mizmor” or “song.” They are a collection of 150 poems, hymns, songs, and prayers written by several authors. Moses wrote Psalm 90 around 1406 BC, and other authors wrote psalms through the post-exilic period. The book was compiled and edited into its present form in the fifth century BC.

There are several categories, or genres, of psalms, and scholars and commentators do not agree firmly on classification. Refer to the chart on page 29, which lists the categories used in this study and the psalms assigned to each, along with their respective authors. We will learn about each category in future sessions.

### The Psalms as a Model of Worship

The way the psalmists cry out to God serves as a model we can learn from and apply. So often, the psalmist’s heart is stripped bare, exposed and vulnerable as he pours out his emotions to God. God is not shocked or condemning of our emotions. He gave us the ability to have emotions; that is one of the ways we are made in his image. We see throughout the Bible how God has deep emotions, from the joy of his creation to when he grieved he had even made man, to the depth of anguish and sorrow Jesus felt going to and dying on the cross, to the triumphant confidence of Jesus vanquishing sin and death.

**Besides the psalm in this session, please read these psalms this week.**

13 (Lament, David)	48 (Liturgical, Sons of Korah)	77 (Lament, Asaph)
133 (Wisdom, David)	141 (Lament, David)	150 (Praise, Anonymous)

Notes and questions about the psalms read this week

### Psalm 23

Psalm 23 is one of the best-known psalms and was written by David, who was a shepherd long before he became a king.

Read this psalm from beginning to end out loud. Then, read each passage and answer the questions that follow.

- <sup>1</sup> The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.
- <sup>2</sup> He makes me lie down in green pastures.  
He leads me beside still waters.

Domesticated sheep are pretty much defenseless and are not the most intelligent animals on the planet. Left alone, they can wander off into potentially dangerous areas and become easy prey. The shepherd protects the sheep, keeps them together, and brings them to safe places to graze and water.

**1. In what ways can you identify with viewing yourself as a sheep?**

**2. What does it mean to you to view the Lord as your shepherd?**

The psalmist now shifts from using sheep as a metaphor to what the Lord does for him.

<sup>3</sup> He restores my soul.  
He leads me in paths of righteousness  
for his name's sake.

**3. The phrases 'He restores' and 'He leads' are present tense – not he *restored* or *led*, or he *will restore* or *lead*. What is the significance of that?**

**4. We can be assured that the Lord does lead us in paths of righteousness. The psalmist gives us a reason why the Lord does this – what is that, and why is it important for us to understand that point?**

The psalmist shifts back to using sheep as a metaphor.

<sup>4</sup> Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death  
I will fear no evil,  
for you are with me;  
your rod and your staff,  
they comfort me.

Narrow, deep valleys were dangerous places to herd sheep through. The high rock walls on either side could conceal predators or thieves. The ground could be strewn with boulders, and loose rock could tumble down without notice. And, in certain seasons, flash floods could send a torrent of water that would carry away anything in its path.

**5. Why would the shepherd choose to go through a dangerous valley?**

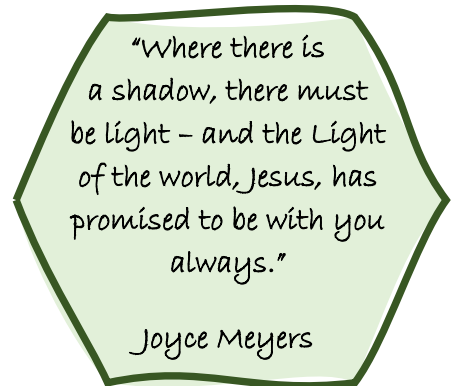
**6. Does the sheep know why the shepherd is leading it through this valley?**

The rod is a sturdy wooden stick used as a weapon to fight off wild animals. The staff is a long, slender stick, often hooked at the tip. If a sheep started wandering off or became trapped somewhere, the shepherd would loop the curved end of the staff around the neck of the sheep and retrieve it back to safety.

7. **In the psalm, what is the attitude of the sheep going through the valley, and why does it have this attitude?**
  
8. **When we go through perilous times, where physical, emotional, and/or spiritual danger are very real and we cannot see the way out, what is often our natural reaction? What does verse four imply about how we can respond in these times?**

Again, the psalmist shifts away from using sheep as a metaphor.

<sup>5</sup> You prepare a table before me  
in the presence of my enemies;  
you anoint my head with oil;  
my cup overflows.  
<sup>6</sup> Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me  
all the days of my life,  
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD  
forever.



9. **How does verse five portray the Lord (see Luke 12:37), and what are your thoughts about that?**
  
10. **What does it mean that we eat a banquet amongst our enemies?**
  
11. **This psalm paints several pictures in our minds. What are the emotions, or moods, these pictures evoke within you?**
  
12. **Connect with the Lord.** Using the psalms you read this week as inspiration, write your own psalm. Be honest about your emotions – both uplifting and sorrowful. Use imagery that resonates with you and illustrates your thoughts and emotions. Consider sharing your psalm, or parts of it, with the group (this is voluntary).

## Session Two: Wisdom and Law Psalms

### Wisdom Psalms

While many psalms touch on aspects of wisdom, the wisdom psalms focus on the theme of wisdom. These psalms teach us to cultivate our hearts and minds, focusing on what truly matters — our eternity and our relationship with God — rather than living for short-term gain.

**Besides the psalms in this session, please read these psalms this week.**

19 (David)	37 (David)	49 (Sons of Korah)
73 (Asaph)	112 (Anonymous)	

Notes and questions about the psalms read this week.

### Psalm 1

The first psalm leads the psalter by emphasizing that to worship God genuinely, we must find delight in his law.

Read this psalm from beginning to end out loud. Then, read each passage and answer the questions that follow.

<sup>1</sup> Blessed is the man  
who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,  
nor stands in the way of sinners,  
nor sits in the seat of scoffers;  
<sup>2</sup> but his delight is in the law of the Lord,  
and on his law he meditates day and night.

**1. In your own words, what does the blessed person do and not do?**

<sup>3</sup> He is like a tree  
planted by streams of water  
that yields its fruit in its season,  
and its leaf does not wither.  
In all that he does, he prospers.

**2. What does it mean that the tree yields its fruit in season, and what is the importance of this timing? (E.g., what is fruit like that is picked too early or too late?)**

3. **What is the “fruit” that the tree bears, and who benefits from it?**
  
4. **“Blessed” people are not always prosperous; indeed, many are not. What then does it mean in verse three that the blessed person prospers in all that he does?**

<sup>4</sup> The wicked are not so,  
but are like chaff that the wind drives away.  
<sup>5</sup> Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,  
nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;  
<sup>6</sup> for the Lord knows the way of the righteous,  
but the way of the wicked will perish.

When we hear the term “wicked” to describe someone, we may think of the Wicked Witch of the West or someone who embodies evil.

5. **According to Psalm 10:2-4, what are the character traits of a wicked person?**
  
6. **If the wicked are like chaff that is blown away, what would the righteous then be compared to?**
  
7. **Can someone be both blessed and wicked at the same time, or are some people in between?**
  
8. **What does it mean that “the Lord knows the way of the righteous?”**

### **Law (or Torah) Psalms**

Law psalms are those that focus on God’s law as a source of wisdom.

#### **Psalm 119:33-40**

Psalm 119 is not only the longest psalm, but at 176 verses, it is also the longest chapter in the Bible. It has an acrostic pattern, which means its structure follows the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. This psalm has 22 stanzas, one for each letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and each stanza has eight verses. Psalm 119 has been called a love letter to God’s law.

Read these verses from beginning to end out loud. Then, read each passage and answer the questions that follow.

**He**

- <sup>33</sup> Teach me, O LORD, the way of your statutes;  
and I will keep it to the end.
- <sup>34</sup> Give me understanding, that I may keep your law  
and observe it with my whole heart.
- <sup>35</sup> Lead me in the path of your commandments,  
for I delight in it.

**9. What does it mean to observe God's law with a whole heart?**

- <sup>36</sup> Incline my heart to your testimonies,  
and not to selfish gain!
- <sup>37</sup> Turn my eyes from looking at worthless things;  
and give me life in your ways.

**10. What are some of the "worthless things" that our eyes (mind) can get distracted with, and how do we remedy that?**

- <sup>38</sup> Confirm to your servant your promise,  
that you may be feared.
- <sup>39</sup> Turn away the reproach that I dread,  
for your rules are good.
- <sup>40</sup> Behold, I long for your precepts;  
in your righteousness give me life!

What is *Sheol*?

In the Hebrew Scriptures, the word *sheol* usually refers to the grave or the abode of the dead. Occasionally it means hell; the place of eternal punishment for the unrepentant.

- 11. Underline all the things the psalmist asks God to do in verses 33-40 and circle the things the psalmist says he will do or does. What are your thoughts on these?**
- 12. What is the reproach the psalmist dreads, and how can we be confident that God turns it away? (See Col 1:21-23)**
- 13. Connect with the Lord.** Using the psalms you read this week as inspiration, write your own psalm, being honest about your emotions. Consider sharing your psalm, or parts of it, with the group (this is voluntary).

## Session Three: Laments - General

Laments are the largest group of psalms. These prayers and songs express the human struggles of anguish, depression, heartbreak, sadness, and injustice or convey complaints against God's enemies. These often include a plea to God to intervene and help. Laments can be meant for the community to sing together or for an individual to express their emotions to God.

**Besides the psalm in this session, please read these psalms this week.**

5 (Individual – David)	36 (Individual – David)	42 (Individual – Sons of Korah)
56 (Individual – David)	61 (Individual – David)	74 (Community – Asaph)

Notes and questions about the psalms read this week

### Psalm 142

The setting of this psalm is “in a cave.” David sometimes hid in a cave when fleeing King Saul, who wanted him dead. Possible occasions for this psalm are found in 1 Samuel 22:1 and 1 Samuel 24:3.

- 1. Describe what it would be like hiding in a cave from someone who wants to kill you. What would you be thinking and feeling? Have you ever felt like that?**

Read this psalm from beginning to end out loud. Then, read each passage and answer the questions that follow.

#### **A Maskil of David, when he was in the cave. A Prayer.**

- <sup>1</sup> With my voice I cry out to the LORD;  
with my voice I plead for mercy to the LORD.
- <sup>2</sup> I pour out my complaint before him;  
I tell my trouble before him.

- 2. List the four actions that the psalmist does in verses one and two. What do they have in common?**

- <sup>3</sup> When my spirit faints within me,  
you know my way!  
In the path where I walk

What is a *Maskil*?

Many Bible translations suggest that *maskil* is a literary or musical term most likely relating to the purpose of specific psalms or how they were to be performed or recited.



they have hidden a trap for me.  
<sup>4</sup> Look to the right and see:  
there is none who takes notice of me;  
no refuge remains to me;  
no one cares for my soul.

**3. In verses three and four, David expresses his peril and feelings of abandonment, but what does he say with confidence at the beginning of verse three?**

**4. What do verses one through four speak to you?**

<sup>5</sup> I cry to you, O LORD;  
I say, "You are my refuge,  
my portion in the land of the living."  
<sup>6</sup> Attend to my cry,  
for I am brought very low!  
Deliver me from my persecutors,  
for they are too strong for me!  
<sup>7</sup> Bring me out of prison,  
that I may give thanks to your name!  
The righteous will surround me,  
for you will deal bountifully with me.

**5. There are quotes around a portion of verse five but not the other things David says to God. How would you explain that?**

**6. What is David's tone in these last three verses? Why is it important to conclude the psalm this way?**

**7. What is our reaction often when we feel alone and endangered, and what can we learn from this psalm?**

**8. Connect with the Lord.** Using the psalms you read this week as inspiration, write your own psalm, being honest about your emotions. Consider sharing your psalm, or parts of it, with the group (this is voluntary).

## Session Four: Laments – Penitential

Penitential laments appeal to God's gracious character as the grounds for the psalmist's plea for forgiveness.

**Besides the psalm in this session, please read these psalms this week.**

3 (General – David)	6 (Penitential – David)	70 (General – David)
94 (General – Anonymous)	130 (Penitential – Anonymous)	143 (Penitential – David)

Notes and questions about the psalms read this week

### Psalm 51

This psalm is probably the best-known penitential psalm. Here, David pleads for forgiveness after Nathan the prophet confronts him with his sin of committing adultery with Bathsheba and then when she got pregnant, arranging her husband's murder to try and cover it up. Read this psalm from beginning to end out loud. Then, read each passage and answer the questions that follow.

**To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet went to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.**

<sup>1</sup> Have mercy on me, O God,  
according to your steadfast love;  
according to your abundant mercy  
blot out my transgressions.

<sup>2</sup> Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,  
and cleanse me from my sin!

#### 1. What does David base his appeal for God's forgiveness on?

<sup>3</sup> For I know my transgressions,  
and my sin is ever before me.

<sup>4</sup> Against you, you only, have I sinned  
and done what is evil in your sight,  
so that you may be justified in your words  
and blameless in your judgment.

<sup>5</sup> Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,  
and in sin did my mother conceive me.

2. Why does David say in verse four that he only sinned against God when he obviously sinned against Bathsheba, Uriah (her husband), and many others?

3. What does verse five mean?

<sup>6</sup> Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being,  
and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.

<sup>7</sup> Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;  
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

<sup>8</sup> Let me hear joy and gladness;  
let the bones that you have broken rejoice.

<sup>9</sup> Hide your face from my sins,  
and blot out all my iniquities.

<sup>10</sup> Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
and renew a right spirit within me.

<sup>11</sup> Cast me not away from your presence,  
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

<sup>12</sup> Restore to me the joy of your salvation,  
and uphold me with a willing spirit.

What is *Hyssop*?

*Hyssop* is an herb in the mint family and was prolific in the Middle East. In the Bible, *Hyssop* was used for ritual cleansing purposes; making things or people 'clean' or holy or pure.

4. What is the significance of David asking to be purged with Hyssop?

5. In this section, David prays for both forgiveness and restoration. What is the difference between forgiveness and restoration?

6. In the table below, list what David asks God to do for forgiveness and for restoration.

Forgiveness	Restoration

7. When we ask for forgiveness from the Lord, we should always also seek restoration. What about when we wrong each other; which comes first? Do they always go together?

- <sup>13</sup> Then I will teach transgressors your ways,  
and sinners will return to you.
- <sup>14</sup> Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God,  
O God of my salvation,  
and my tongue will sing aloud of your righteousness.
- <sup>15</sup> O Lord, open my lips,  
and my mouth will declare your praise.
- <sup>16</sup> For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it;  
you will not be pleased with a burnt offering.
- <sup>17</sup> The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;  
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

**8. What are all the things David promises to do when he is forgiven?**

**9. Which of these things do you think is the most difficult, and why is this the most critical thing for David to do to demonstrate his repentance?**

**10. When we sin, what does God desire of us?**

- <sup>18</sup> Do good to Zion in your good pleasure;  
build up the walls of Jerusalem;
- <sup>19</sup> then will you delight in right sacrifices,  
in burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings;  
then bulls will be offered on your altar.

**11. Verse 16 states that God will not delight in sacrifices, but verse 19 then says God will delight in sacrifices. What is the explanation for this apparent contradiction?**

**12. The psalm ends asking God to build up Zion – the community of God. How is this an appropriate ending for an individual penitent lament?**

**13. Connect with the Lord.** Using the psalms you read this week as inspiration, write your own psalm, being honest about your emotions. Consider sharing your psalm, or parts of it, with the group (this is voluntary).

## Session Five: Laments – Imprecatory

Imprecatory psalms are probably the most challenging type of psalm to understand. The psalmist identifies with God's righteous purpose to judge all evil by crying out to God with passionate emotions of grief and anger and often using striking images. Ultimately, these prayers leave justice and vengeance in God's hands alone.

**Besides the psalm in this session, please read these psalms this week.**

4 (General – David)	10 (General – Anonymous)	26 (General – David)
88 (Imprecatory – Heman the Ezrahite)	126 (General – Anonymous)	140 (Imprecatory – David)

If imprecatory psalms are hard to understand, Psalm 137 is the prime example. It expresses with ferocity its final wish that has caused many doubts and questions in the hearts of sincere believers.

As Judah continued to reject the words of the prophets and seek after other gods, God used the Babylonians to destroy Jerusalem in 586BC. Many were killed in the siege, and then most of those that survived were exiled to Babylon. While God sanctioned Jerusalem's fall, the Babylonians were exceedingly cruel in carrying this out by plundering, raping, and violently murdering the old, young, and infants alike.

### Psalm 137

Read this psalm from beginning to end out loud. Then, read each passage and answer the questions that follow.

- <sup>1</sup> By the waters of Babylon,  
there we sat down and wept,  
when we remembered Zion.
- <sup>2</sup> On the willows there  
we hung up our lyres.
- <sup>3</sup> For there our captors  
required of us songs,  
and our tormentors, mirth, saying,  
“Sing us one of the songs of Zion!”

- 1. What is the setting and situation of this psalm?**
- 2. What is the mood expressed in these verses?**
- 3. What are the songs of Zion?**

<sup>4</sup> How shall we sing the LORD's song  
in a foreign land?  
<sup>5</sup> If I forget you, O Jerusalem,  
let my right hand forget its skill!  
<sup>6</sup> Let my tongue stick to the roof of my mouth,  
if I do not remember you,  
if I do not set Jerusalem  
above my highest joy!

#### **4. Why would singing songs of Zion in Babylon be wrong?**

<sup>7</sup> Remember, O LORD, against the Edomites  
the day of Jerusalem,  
how they said, "Lay it bare, lay it bare,  
down to its foundations!"  
<sup>8</sup> O daughter of Babylon, doomed to be destroyed,  
blessed shall he be who repays you  
with what you have done to us!  
<sup>9</sup> Blessed shall he be who takes your little ones  
and dashes them against the rock!

#### **5. Who are the Edomites in verse seven, and what situation is this referring to? (See Obadiah 10-14.)**

Several of the prophets had said that Babylon would be punished for how cruel they had been to God's people. Read Isaiah 13:16 and Jeremiah 51:56-58 which both prophesy about the destruction of Babylon.

#### **6. How do these prophecies shed light on the words in verses eight and nine?**

#### **7. What is the psalmist's attitude as the psalm concludes? Is he concerned about his cause or God's cause?**

8. **How can this request of God be reconciled with Jesus' command to love our enemies?**
  
9. **Should Christians pray for the destruction of their enemies? Why or why not?**
  
10. **Connect with the Lord.** Using the psalms you read this week as inspiration, write your own psalm, being honest about your emotions. Consider sharing your psalm, or parts of it, with the group (this is voluntary).

Notes and questions about the psalms read this week.

## Session Six: Songs of Zion and Temple Liturgies

This collection of psalms was used for public worship. These include entrance or benediction hymns, liturgy celebrating prescribed feasts, or songs commemorating Zion as the city of God.

**Besides the psalm in this session, please read these psalms this week.**

15 (David)	24 (David)	50 (Asaph)
84 (Sons of Korah)	87 (Sons of Korah)	97 (Anonymous)

### Psalm 46

This psalm exalts God to a high and lofty position in our minds and hearts and was paraphrased by the reformist Martin Luther in the song "A Mighty Fortress is our God," written circa 1527.

The psalm is attributed to "the Sons of Korah." Korah lived during the time of the Exodus and was the great-grandson of Levi, and therefore a cousin of Moses and Aaron. The Sons of Korah were descendants of Korah and are noted as authoring almost a dozen psalms.

Read this psalm from beginning to end out loud. Then, read each passage and answer the questions that follow.

**To the choirmaster. Of the Sons of Korah. According to Alamoth. A Song.**

- <sup>1</sup> God is our refuge and strength,  
a very present help in trouble.
- <sup>2</sup> Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way,  
though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea,
- <sup>3</sup> though its waters roar and foam,  
though the mountains tremble at its swelling. *Selah*

What does *Alamoth* Mean?

The meaning of the word *alamoth* is uncertain, although it has been suggested that it refers to the music's pitch being high or soprano, since its Hebrew root refers to young women or virgins.

- 1. Describe a time when you felt like the world around you was disintegrating. What is our typical reaction to an overwhelming impending disaster?**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 2. Why do we need not fear when these catastrophes threaten?**



- <sup>4</sup> There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,  
the holy habitation of the Most High.
- <sup>5</sup> God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved;  
God will help her when morning dawns.
- <sup>6</sup> The nations rage, the kingdoms totter;  
he utters his voice, the earth melts.
- <sup>7</sup> The LORD of hosts is with us;  
the God of Jacob is our fortress. *Selah*

3. In the table below, contrast the imagery and mood in verses two and three with verses four and five.

	Imagery	Mood
46:2-3		
46:4-5		

4. Since Jerusalem did not have a river of any size, what is verse four talking about? (See Ezekiel 47:12 and Revelation 22:1)

- <sup>8</sup> Come, behold the works of the LORD,  
how he has brought desolations on the earth.
- <sup>9</sup> He makes wars cease to the end of the earth;  
he breaks the bow and shatters the spear;  
he burns the chariots with fire.
- <sup>10</sup> "Be still, and know that I am God.  
I will be exalted among the nations,  
I will be exalted in the earth!"
- <sup>11</sup> The LORD of hosts is with us;  
the God of Jacob is our fortress. *Selah*

What does *Selah* Mean?

*Selah* is the most frequently used musical term in the Psalms. Most scholars believe it refers to a pause or silence.

5. What are the works of the LORD listed in verses eight and nine, and why are these called his works?
6. Verse 10 takes a turn from the tumultuous situations in verses six through nine. Explain what it means to "Be still, and know that I am God."

7. List all the aspects of God's character that are revealed in this psalm.
  
8. **Connect with the Lord.** Using the psalms you read this week as inspiration, write your own psalm, being honest about your emotions. Consider sharing your psalm, or parts of it, with the group (this is voluntary).

Notes and questions about the psalms read this week

"The secret of the confidence is the consciousness of the nearness of God."

Campbell Morgan

## Session Seven: Psalms of Thanksgiving – General

Thanksgiving psalms thank God for blessings and provision. They can be meant for the community or for an individual to express their emotions to God. Two sub-categories include historical and confidence thanksgiving psalms.

**Besides the psalm in this session, please read these psalms this week.**

30 (David)	40 (David)	66 (Anonymous)
67 (Anonymous)	75 (Asaph)	138 (David)

### Psalm 92

Read this psalm from beginning to end out loud. Then, read each passage and answer the questions that follow.

#### **A Psalm. A Song for the Sabbath.**

- <sup>1</sup> It is good to give thanks to the LORD,  
to sing praises to your name, O Most High;  
<sup>2</sup> to declare your steadfast love in the morning,  
and your faithfulness by night,  
<sup>3</sup> to the music of the lute and the harp,  
to the melody of the lyre.  
<sup>4</sup> For you, O LORD, have made me glad by your work;  
at the works of your hands I sing for joy.  
<sup>5</sup> How great are your works, O LORD!  
Your thoughts are very deep!

**1. When are we to praise and give thanks to the Lord?**

**2. Why should praising God make *us* glad or jubilant?**

- <sup>6</sup> The stupid man cannot know;  
the fool cannot understand this:  
<sup>7</sup> that though the wicked sprout like grass  
and all evildoers flourish,  
they are doomed to destruction forever;  
<sup>8</sup> but you, O LORD, are on high forever.  
<sup>9</sup> For behold, your enemies, O LORD,  
for behold, your enemies shall perish;  
all evildoers shall be scattered.

- <sup>10</sup> But you have exalted my horn like that of the wild ox;  
 you have poured over me fresh oil.
- <sup>11</sup> My eyes have seen the downfall of my enemies;  
 my ears have heard the doom of my evil assailants.

Why all this talk about horns in the Bible?

In the Bible an animal's horn represents strength, power, and victory in battle. We still use the symbolism today in the names and logos of our sports teams: Rams. Buffaloes. Bulls. and even the Vikings.

**3. Fill in the table below with several ways oil can be used and represented in the Bible.**

Scripture	Oil Use or Represents	Scripture	Oil Use or Represents
Exodus 27:20		Exodus 29:4-7	
Exodus 40:9		Leviticus 2:1-2	
1 Samuel 16:13		Isaiah 61:3	
Mark 6:12-13		Acts 10:38	

**4. What do you think the psalmist had in mind when the word oil is used in verse 10?**

- <sup>12</sup> The righteous flourish like the palm tree  
 and grow like a cedar in Lebanon.
- <sup>13</sup> They are planted in the house of the LORD;  
 they flourish in the courts of our God.
- <sup>14</sup> They still bear fruit in old age;  
 they are ever full of sap and green,
- <sup>15</sup> to declare that the LORD is upright;  
 he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.

5. Fill out the table below for what the wicked and righteous are compared to and the characteristics of that thing.

	Compared to	Characteristics
Wicked (vs. 6-9)		
Righteous (vs. 12-14)		

6. What do you think it means to be planted and flourish in the house and courts of God?

7. What does it mean to you that God is your rock and there is no unrighteousness in him?

8. What are all the things the psalm thanks God for?

9. **Connect with the Lord.** Using the psalms you read this week as inspiration, write your own psalm. Be honest about your emotions. Consider sharing your psalm, or parts of it, with the group (this is voluntary).

Notes and questions about the psalms read this week.

## Session Eight: Psalms of Thanksgiving – Historical and Confidence

### Historical Thanksgiving Psalms

These psalms express thanks for God’s faithful dealings with his people through Israel’s history.

**Besides the psalms in this session, please read these psalms this week.**

16 (Confidence – David)	27 (Confidence – David)	62 (Confidence – David)
91 (Confidence – Anonymous)	106 (Historical – Anonymous)	

### Psalm 95

Read this psalm from beginning to end out loud. Then, read each passage and answer the questions that follow.

- <sup>1</sup> Oh come, let us sing to the LORD;  
let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!
- <sup>2</sup> Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving;  
let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!
- <sup>3</sup> For the LORD is a great God,  
and a great King above all gods.
- <sup>4</sup> In his hand are the depths of the earth;  
the heights of the mountains are his also.
- <sup>5</sup> The sea is his, for he made it,  
and his hands formed the dry land.
- <sup>6</sup> Oh come, let us worship and bow down;  
let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker!
- <sup>7</sup> For he is our God,  
and we are the people of his pasture,  
and the sheep of his hand.

- 1. List all the things these verses mention to be thankful for.**
- 2. What are some things you can personally be thankful for?**
- 3. What are the emotions and attitudes portrayed in these verses?**

- Today, if you hear his voice,  
<sup>8</sup> do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah,  
as on the day at Massah in the wilderness,  
<sup>9</sup> when your fathers put me to the test  
and put me to the proof, though they had seen my work.  
<sup>10</sup> For forty years I loathed that generation

and said, "They are a people who go astray in their heart,  
and they have not known my ways."  
<sup>11</sup> Therefore I swore in my wrath,  
"They shall not enter my rest."

4. **What happened at Meribah and Massah? (see Exodus 17:1-7)**
5. **What is the event that vs. 10 and 11 refer to? (see Numbers 13:25 – 14:4)**
6. **What did God mean by saying they would not enter his rest? (see Numbers 14:20-23)**

Despite this generation's disobedience, God did what He promised and led the next generation of Israelites to the Promised Land.

7. **This psalm seems to end abruptly with the solemn warning. How does this fit with the opening verses?**

Read Hebrews 3:7-19 where the New Testament writer uses this psalm to teach Christians.

8. **According to Hebrews, what was the root of the hardening of hearts?**
9. **What are we exhorted to do to prevent the hardening of our hearts?**

### **Confidence Thanksgiving Psalms**

These psalms anticipate opposition, but they rise to declare their trust in God and His guidance.

#### **Psalm 121**

Psalms 120 through 134 are grouped and all labeled as 'Songs of Ascents'. They are a diverse group of psalms, including laments, psalms of thanksgiving, a song celebrating Zion, wisdom psalms, a royal psalm, and a psalm for a liturgical occasion. It has been suggested that these songs were sung by pilgrims as they ascended toward or into Jerusalem and the temple for worship.

Read this psalm from beginning to end out loud. Then, read each passage and answer the questions that follow.

#### **A Song of Ascents.**

- <sup>1</sup> I lift up my eyes to the hills.  
From where does my help come?
- <sup>2</sup> My help comes from the LORD,  
who made heaven and earth.

**10. It is easy to attribute the resolution of issues we face to ourselves, others, circumstances, or just plain luck. What does the psalmist recognize as the ultimate source of help?**

**11. How should this affect our prayers, praise, and thanksgiving?**

<sup>3</sup> He will not let your foot be moved;  
he who keeps you will not slumber.

<sup>4</sup> Behold, he who keeps Israel  
will neither slumber nor sleep.

<sup>5</sup> The LORD is your keeper;  
the LORD is your shade on your right hand.

<sup>6</sup> The sun shall not strike you by day,  
nor the moon by night.

<sup>7</sup> The LORD will keep you from all evil;  
he will keep your life.

<sup>8</sup> The LORD will keep  
your going out and your coming in  
from this time forth and forevermore.

**12. What are the reasons this psalm uses for why we can have confidence in the Lord?**

**13. Since Christians are not immune to troubles, sickness, and death, how are we to understand the protection and care stated in this psalm?**

**14. Connect with the Lord.** Using the psalms you read this week as inspiration, write your own psalm. Be honest about your emotions. Consider sharing your psalm, or parts of it, with the group (this is voluntary).

Notes and questions about the psalms read this week.



## Session Nine: Royal Psalms

Royal psalms emphasize God's promise to King David that he would have an eternal kingdom. David and his descendants were called to bless Israel and the nations of the world. Some of these psalms are praises, some are thanksgivings, and some are confessions of sin. The promises to David point to the Messiah, the ultimate heir of David.

**Besides the psalm in this session, please read these psalms this week.**

2 (Anonymous)	72 (Solomon)	21 (David)
101 (David)	132 (Anonymous)	144 (David)

### Psalm 110

Read this psalm from beginning to end out loud. Then, read each passage and answer the questions that follow.

#### A Psalm of David.

- <sup>1</sup> The LORD says to my Lord:  
"Sit at my right hand,  
until I make your enemies your footstool."  
<sup>2</sup> The LORD sends forth from Zion  
your mighty scepter.  
Rule in the midst of your enemies!  
<sup>3</sup> Your people will offer themselves freely  
on the day of your power,  
in holy garments;  
from the womb of the morning,  
the dew of your youth will be yours.  
<sup>4</sup> The LORD has sworn  
and will not change his mind,  
"You are a priest forever  
after the order of Melchizedek."  
<sup>5</sup> The Lord is at your right hand;  
he will shatter kings on the day of his wrath.  
<sup>6</sup> He will execute judgment among the nations,  
filling them with corpses;  
he will shatter chiefs  
over the wide earth.  
<sup>7</sup> He will drink from the brook by the way;  
therefore he will lift up his head.

**1. In Matthew 22:41-46 what point does Jesus make using verse one of this psalm?**

2. According to verse three, what should be the outcome when the Davidic king vanquishes enemy kings, executes judgment among the nations, and rules over them?
3. What does “holy garments” imply?
4. Who was Melchizedek, and what was unique about him? (See Genesis 14:17-20)
5. What does it mean then that the Davidic king should be like Melchizedek?
6. What do you think verse seven means?
7. Besides pointing to the Messiah, why was it necessary to have songs about the Davidic king?
8. How does this psalm foreshadow the future and give us hope?
9. **Connect with the Lord.** Using the psalms you read this week as inspiration, write your own psalm. Be honest about your emotions. Consider sharing your psalm, or parts of it, with the group (this is voluntary).

Notes and questions about the psalms read this week.

## Session Ten: Psalms of Praise

These psalms focus on praising God for who he is and what he has done. Six of these close out the book (Psalms 145 – 150), an appropriate ending to the psalter. Five of these psalms begin and end with the words "Praise the LORD!" which is the translation of the word *hallelujah* in the Hebrew Bible. "Hallelujah" means "praise Jah/Yah," though it carries a deeper meaning, as the word "halel" in Hebrew translates to a joyous praise in song or to boast in God.

**Besides the psalm in this session, please read these psalms this week.**

8 (David)	33 (Anonymous)	96 (Anonymous)
98 (Anonymous)	103 (David)	111 (Anonymous)

### Psalm 149

Read this psalm from beginning to end out loud. Then, read each passage and answer the questions that follow.

- <sup>1</sup> Praise the LORD!  
Sing to the LORD a new song,  
his praise in the assembly of the godly!
- <sup>2</sup> Let Israel be glad in his Maker;  
let the children of Zion rejoice in their King!
- <sup>3</sup> Let them praise his name with dancing,  
making melody to him with tambourine and lyre!
- <sup>4</sup> For the LORD takes pleasure in his people;  
he adorns the humble with salvation.

- 1. What does the word 'new' invoke in verse one?**
- 2. Who are the godly?**
- 3. Verse four uses the word adorn. What does it mean to adorn something?**
- 4. What emotion do these verses encourage?**
- 5. Why and where is this praise given?**

When we think of events where people dance, rejoice, and make a lot of noise, we probably think of sports events or concerts.

**6. God is worthy of exuberant corporate praise. Do we display this kind of praise in church? If not, why?**

<sup>5</sup> Let the godly exult in glory;  
let them sing for joy on their beds.  
<sup>6</sup> Let the high praises of God be in their throats  
and two-edged swords in their hands,  
<sup>7</sup> to execute vengeance on the nations  
and punishments on the peoples,  
<sup>8</sup> to bind their kings with chains  
and their nobles with fetters of iron,  
<sup>9</sup> to execute on them the judgment written!  
This is honor for all his godly ones.  
Praise the LORD!

Notes and questions about  
the psalms read this week.

**7. What does it mean to “Let the godly exult in glory?”**

**8. Where else are we to sing praises?**

**9. In verse six, what do you think the sword refers to? (see Hebrews 4:12)**

**10. What does it mean to execute vengeance, and when will this happen? (see Jude 14-15, 1 Corinthians 6:2-3, and Revelation 19:13-15)**

**11. What about the scripture that says vengeance belongs to the Lord (Romans 12:19)? How do you explain this apparent contradiction?**

**12. Why is judgment an honor?**

**13. Connect with the Lord.** Using the psalms you read this week as inspiration, write your own psalm. Be honest about your emotions. Consider sharing your psalm, or parts of it, with the group (this is voluntary).

## Psalm Chart

Category	Author					Total
	Anonymous	David	Asaph	Sons of Korah	Other	
<b>Laments</b>						
<b>Community</b>	94, 123, 126, 129*	12, 58, 60	74, 77, 79, 80, 82, 83	44, 85	89* (Ethan the Ezrahite), 90 (Moses)	<b>17</b>
<b>Individual</b>	10, 43, 71, 120	3, 4, 5, 7, 13, 14, 17, 22, 25, 26, 28, 31, 36*, 39, 41, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 59, 61, 64, 70, 86, 139, 141, 142		42		<b>33</b>
<b>Penitential</b>	102, 130	6, 38, 51, 143				<b>6</b>
<b>Imprecatory</b>	137	35, 69, 109, 140			88 (Heman the Ezrahite)	<b>6</b>
<b>Thanksgiving</b>						
<b>Community</b>	67*, 107, 136*	65*, 124	75			<b>6</b>
<b>Individual</b>	66, 92, 116, 118	30, 32*, 34, 40*, 108*, 138				<b>10</b>
<b>Historical</b>	95*, 105, 106		78			<b>4</b>
<b>Confidence</b>	91, 121, 125	11, 16, 23, 27*, 52, 62, 63, 131				<b>11</b>
<b>Praise</b>	33, 93, 96, 98, 99, 100, 104, 111, 113, 114, 117, 135, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150	8, 9, 29, 103, 145				<b>22</b>
<b>Liturgical</b>	97, 115, 134	15, 24, 68*, 122	50, 76, 81	46, 48, 84, 87		<b>14</b>
<b>Royal</b>	2, 132	18, 20, 21, 101, 110, 144		45, 47	72 (Solomon)	<b>11</b>
<b>Wisdom and Law</b>	1*, 112, 119, 128	19*, 37, 133	73	49	127 (Solomon)	<b>10</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>150</b>

\* These Psalms can be listed in multiple categories

Note: The psalms assigned to each category are approximate, at best, since many psalms span several categories and could be classified just as easily in one versus the other.