

SUMMER 2025 SPECIAL SERIES IN PSALMS

Introduction to Psalms

The Book of Psalms has 150 chapters, and they can be divided into five major parts: Part 1 is Psalms 1–41, which mainly describe personal laments and struggles to trust in God’s presence and faithfulness. Part 2, Psalms 42–72, focuses on redemption and God’s hope for the coming Messiah. Part 3, Psalms 73–89, are community laments about the seeming injustice of their suffering and national calamities, and questions about God’s covenant promises. Part 4, Psalms 90–106, proclaim God’s eternal kingship and sovereignty over all creation and history. And Part 5, Psalms 107–150, praise God for his faithfulness, redemption, and for the power of his word.

Variety of Psalms: The word “psalm” means “song.” So this Book of Psalms is kind of like a hymnbook included in the Bible. It’s good to read the Psalms aloud as prayers. Most of them, over a third, are laments, expressing grief or despair at what is happening. Some are personal laments, others are by the community, and some are in repentance. Many Psalms are hymns of sheer praise to God for who he is. Many thank God for his deliverance or blessings. Royal Psalms focus on David or his descendants. Some are called “wisdom Psalms,” others, “trust Psalms,” and some are even “imprecatory Psalms,” asking God to judge one’s enemies. There is also a set of pilgrimage Psalms, “songs of ascents” (120–134).

David’s Psalms: Over a third of the 150 Psalms have notes at the beginning. Seventy-three of them, almost half, were written by or for David, who was known as “the sweet psalmist of Israel” or “the favorite of the songs of Israel” (2 Sam.23:1).¹ Some notes refer to historical events in David’s life: as he fled from his son Absalom (Psalm 3); but mostly as he was fleeing from Saul (Psalms 18,34,52,54,56,57,59); or simply when he was in a cave or in the desert (Psalms 63 and 142). David wrote one after the prophet Nathan rebuked him for his adultery with Bathsheba (Psalm 51). David faced suffering from without, and from

¹ A man named Asaph wrote 12, the sons of Korah, eleven, Solomon, two, Moses, Heman and Ethan, one. Forty-nine of these songs are anonymous. Some notes tell us the type of song it is. Fifty-seven of them are called “a psalm,” meaning likely to be sung with instruments. Thirty are described generally as “a song.” Others are called a “Maskil” or a “Michtam.” Other notes mention the tune or instruments to be used. Fifty-five were addressed to “the chief musician,” used in Israel’s temple worship, where musicians would play the tune and a choir would sing it.

within due to his own sin, but through it all he turned to the living God in repentance and faith. We learn much from him.

Psalms as Poetry: The Psalms were written as Hebrew poetry. As such, they include a diverse vocabulary and rich literary devices like synonyms and antonyms, metaphors, similes and images. A key function of poetic language is to appeal to our emotions. So as we study the Psalms, we should seek to grasp not only the meaning of the words but also the emotional content of the verses. The poetry of the Psalms is meant to resonate with us and help us learn to come to God honestly, to know and love him. As we learn the words of the Psalms, we should let them shape us to have real faith in God, as well as godly emotions. In history many believers have used the Psalms in their personal devotions as well as in their worship together.

Psalms as Prophecy: As poetry, the Psalms are also considered prophetic. Up to 15 of them are prophecies about Jesus. Most famous are Psalms 2, 16, 22, 69, and 110. Psalm 118:22–23 predicts how Jesus, the rejected stone, will become the cornerstone. Many more are prophetic teaching on how to struggle spiritually, how to trust in God in adversity, how to experience deliverance from enemies, and in all of life's ups and downs how to simply long for God. As prophecy, the Psalms reveal God's character and his plans for salvation and justice—his sovereignty, love, righteousness, and ultimate triumph. As prophecy, the Psalms give us hope.

Our special Summer 2025 series in Psalms

This Summer we will study ten Psalms, focusing on the ways God our Shepherd helps us. We pray that through these studies we may learn how to love and trust him more, and in all our struggles, weaknesses and challenges, to draw closer to him. We especially want to let these Psalms draw us closer to the One they all point to: our Lord Jesus Christ.

Summer 2025 Special Series in the Psalms:

June 1: Psalm 8, "Made Like Him"

June 8: Psalm 18, "He Equips Us"

June 15: Psalm 22, "He Hears Us"

June 22: Psalm 23, "He Shepherds Us"

July 6: Psalm 27, "Light and Salvation"

July 13: Psalm 46, "Refuge and Fortress"

July 20: Psalm 55, "Cast Your Burden on the Lord"

July 27: Psalm 86, "Steadfast Love"

August 3: Psalm 121, "Helper and Keeper"

August 10: Psalm 139, "Search Me and Know Me"