

PSALMS

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BACKGROUND

The book of Psalms is a collection of poems and songs written by various Israelites over a period of about 900 years (see [Date](#)). Most of the psalms were obviously meant for public worship, while others seem more suitable for private worship or reflection.

Psalms is divided into five "books" (see [Outline](#)), each ending with a similar doxology. Many scholars believe this division reflects the historical development of the Psalms, with Books One and Two being compiled during or shortly after the time of David, Books Three and Four being added after Israel's fall, and Book Five coming after the return from exile. Others have seen in the division an effort to match Israel's five books of Law with five books of praise.

The Psalms deal with a wide variety of themes and historical events (see [Purpose](#), below, and [A Topical Overview of the Psalms](#)). Most of the psalms include titles, some of which explain their purpose or historical background.

AUTHOR

Many of the psalms mention their authors by name:

- David, king of Israel, authored at least half of the psalms; 73 are ascribed to him within the psalm, and two others are credited to him in the NT ([Psalm 2](#), see [Acts 4:25-26](#); and [Psalm 95](#), see [Hebrews 4:7](#)).
- Either Asaph, a Levite in charge of worship music in the Tabernacle ([1 Chron. 15:16-17](#)), or one of his descendants authored at least 12 psalms ([Psalm 50](#); [Psalm 73-83](#)).
- The "descendants of Korah," the priest who led a rebellion against Moses ([Numbers 16](#)), authored at least 12 psalms. [Psalm 88](#) lists Heman the Ezrahite (see [1 Chron. 6:33](#)) as an author along with them.
- Solomon, king of Israel, wrote [Psalm 72](#) and [Psalm 127](#).
- Moses, Israel's lawgiver and deliverer, authored the oldest psalm, [Psalm 90](#).
- Some scholars have suggested King Hezekiah as author of the unattributed "songs of ascents."
- Ethan the Ezrahite wrote at least one psalm ([Psalm 89](#)).
- 34 of the psalms are unattributed.

DATE

The Psalms were written over a period of about 900 years, from the time of Moses ([Psalm 90](#), written about 1405 B.C.) to the time of Israel's return from Babylonian exile ([Psalm 126](#), [Psalm 147-150](#), written c. 500 B.C.).

PURPOSE

The purpose of the various psalms differs somewhat, depending on the author and the occasion of writing:

- Almost all of the psalms in some way called the believer's attention to some characteristic of God and the role he plays or should play in the believer's life. These may be expressions of either public or private worship.
- Many of the psalms taught Israel about God's work in their history (see "Special-Event Psalms" in [A Topical Overview of the Psalms](#)). As the *Overview* illustrates, the psalms taught about many other issues of faith as well. (Paul saw Christian hymns as well as OT psalms as teaching tools—see [Ephes. 5:19](#).)
- The original purpose of many psalms is overshadowed by their messianic prophecies (see "Messianic Psalms" in the [Topical Overview](#)).
- Several psalms, such as [Psalm 6](#); [Psalm 32](#); and [Psalm 51](#), are prayers of personal confession and repentance.
- Many psalms, such as [Psalm 7](#); [Psalm 35](#); [Psalm 55](#); and [Psalm 109](#), are "imprecatory," calling on God to punish the wicked. While the violent language of these psalms may sometimes seem out of keeping with a God of grace and love, the following should be kept in mind:
 - The hatred expressed reflected concern over violation of God's laws, not personal grievances.
 - The psalmists were right in expressing these things to God in prayer rather than seeking their own vengeance (see [Deut. 32:35](#); [Romans 12:19](#)).
 - The psalmists were motivated as much by concern for the victims of sin as by hatred for the sinners themselves (see [Psalm 10:8-10](#)).
 - Though the psalmists prayed against their enemies, they prayed *for* them as well (see [Psalm 9:20](#) and exposition on [Psalm 35](#)).
 - Even NT writers, with their more complete knowledge of grace, pronounced curses on people under certain circumstances (see [Galatians 1:8-9](#); [2 Peter 2:12](#)).

UNIQUE FEATURES

- With its devotional emphasis, Psalms is one of the most personal of all Bible books as it focuses on the relationship between God and the believer.
- Psalms is the most messianic of OT books and is second only to Isaiah for the number of times it is quoted in the NT. Jesus quoted from it at both the beginning and the end of his earthly ministry ([Psalm 69:9](#), see [John 2:17](#); John 31:5, see [Luke 23:46](#)).
- Notable individual psalms include
 - the most beloved and widely quoted OT chapter ([Psalm 23](#)),
 - the most vivid description of God's omnipresence, omnipotence, and omniscience ([Psalm 139](#)),
 - the Bible's longest ([Psalm 119](#)) and shortest ([Psalm 117](#)) chapters,
 - the Bible's most personal prayer of confession ([Psalm 51](#)).

COMPARISON WITH OTHER BIBLE BOOKS

1, 2 Samuel:

- Both recount key events in the life of David (see "Events in the life of David" in the [Topical Overview](#)).

Isaiah:

- Both speak of Christ's suffering on the cross ([Psalm 22:6-18](#); [Psalm 69:20-21](#); [Isaiah 52:13-53:12](#)).
- Both speak of the restoration of God's people through the Messiah ([Psalm 14:7](#); [Psalm 53:6](#); [Isaiah 49:6](#)).
- Both speak of Christ's judging the nations ([Psalm 2:8-9](#); [Psalm 72](#); [Psalm 96:13](#); [Psalm 110:6](#); [Isaiah 2:4](#); [Isaiah 11:4](#); [Isaiah 42:1, 4](#)).
- Both speak of Christ's eternal reign ([Psalm 18:50](#); [Psalm 45:6](#); [Psalm 102:26](#); [Isaiah 51:6-8](#); [Isaiah 60:20](#)).

The Pentateuch:

See [Background](#).

OUTLINE

1. BOOK ONE ([Psalm 1-41](#))
2. BOOK TWO ([Psalm 42-72](#))
- III. BOOK THREE ([Psalm 73-89](#))
- IV. BOOK FOUR ([Psalm 90-106](#))
- V. BOOK FIVE ([Psalm 107-150](#))

TIMELINE

1406 ? B.C.:	Moses writes Psalm 90
1041 B.C.:	Birth of David, shepherd, musician, king, psalmist
538 B.C.:	Israel returns from exile (Psalm 126?)

Psalm 1 *Fruitful trees, useless chaff.* The person who delights in God's Word and lives by its precepts will prosper ([Psalm 1:1-3](#)); the ungodly will be condemned ([Psalm 1:4-6](#)).

Psalm 2 *Rebels unite, but the Son will reign.* National leaders throughout history have rebelled against God and promoted ungodliness, but God merely laughs at their feeble attempts to defeat him ([Psalm 2:1-4](#)). Meanwhile, he has set in motion his plan to give all kingdoms of the earth to his Son ([Psalm 2:5-9](#); see [Hebrews 1:5-9](#), which applies it to Christ). Those kings who choose to honor the Son will be blessed; those who reject him will perish ([Psalm 2:10-12](#); see [Joel 3:9-11](#); [Zech. 14:2](#); [Rev. 6:15-17](#); [Rev. 17:14](#)).

Psalm 3 *"Now for a good night's sleep!"* When his son Absalom rebelled ([2 Samuel 15](#)), David's friends advised him to expect no help from God ([Psalm 3:1-2](#)). Yet David declared his faith in God and looked to him for help ([Psalm 3:3-4](#)). With this assurance he could lie down in peace, though 10,000 enemies surrounded him ([Psalm 3:5-8](#)).

Psalm 4 *Set apart with joyful heart.* In spite of occasional distress and opposition from the ungodly, the upright believer can rejoice, knowing that he or she occupies a special place in the heart of God. (Compare [Psalm 4:4](#) and [Ephes. 4:26](#).)

Psalm 5 *"Destroy the godless; deliver the godly!"* As he prayed in the morning ([Psalm 5:1-3](#); see [Psalm 55:17](#)), David declared his loyalty to God ([Psalm 5:2](#)), expressed his concern about all the ungodly people around him ([Psalm 5:4-6](#)), and prayed that God would deliver him from their evil control ([Psalm 5:8-12](#)).

Psalm 6 *"He has heard me! Let my enemies depart!"* Weary both in body and spirit, David prayed earnestly for deliverance ([Psalm 6:1-7](#)). Then, confident that the Lord had heard his pleas, he addressed his enemies, telling them to leave him alone ([Psalm 6:8-10](#)).

Psalm 7 *"Rise up, Lord, and save the righteous!"* Describing his enemies as ravenous lions, David rhetorically asked the Lord if there was some sin in his life that had brought on their attacks ([Psalm 7:1-5](#)). Then he answered his own question, declaring his innocence and calling on God to judge his enemies and vindicate the righteous ([Psalm 7:6-13](#)). He noted how often the schemes of the ungodly backfire on them ([Psalm 7:14-16](#)). This theme—that we reap what we sow—appears often in Psalms and elsewhere in Scripture (see [Psalm 9:16](#); [Psalm 35:7-8](#); [Psalm 140:5-10](#); [Esther 9:25](#); [Gal. 6:7-8](#)).

Psalm 8 *Mortals and the Milky Way.* As David contemplated the majesty of creation, he expressed amazement that God would even bother with such insignificant creatures as mortals ([Psalm 8:1-4](#)). What's more, God has given humans a significant place in the universe as the caretakers of his creation ([Psalm 8:5-9](#); see [Genesis 1:28](#)). As God's glory is seen in the created order, it is also seen in the praise of children ([Psalm 8:2](#)), which in its simplicity confounds God's enemies (see [Matthew 21:15-16](#); [1 Cor. 1:27-29](#)).

Psalm 9 *The eternal Helper of the helpless.* David praised God for preserving and protecting the righteous and destroying the very memory of the ungodly ([Psalm 9:3-16](#)). He prayed that God would cause the nations to fear him so that they would repent and be spared eternal punishment ([Psalm 9:17-20](#)).

"The grave" ([Psalm 9:17](#)) is *Sheol* in Hebrew and in various English Bible versions is translated either "hell," "Sheol," "the Pit," or "the grave." Various NT versions translate it "hell" or "Hades" (see exposition on [Luke 16:19-31](#)). It is the place of the dead, both righteous and unrighteous (see [Psalm 16:10](#)), where the weary find peace and rest ([Job 3:17, 22](#)). God would in due time rescue his people from Sheol ([Psalm 16:10](#)). Sheol has no relationship to the various Greek words translated "hell" in the NT. (See exposition on [Eccles. 9:1-8](#).)

Psalm 10 *"Why do you allow injustice?"* The psalmist asked one of life's most perplexing questions: Why does God permit the godless to persecute the godly ([Psalm 10:1-11](#))? He reminded the Lord of his past faithfulness in delivering the oppressed and urged him to do so once again ([Psalm 10:12-18](#)).

Psalm 11 *The faithful need not flee.* David's friends had urged him to flee from his oppressors, but he saw no need to do so, since he had committed his soul to God, who was still "in his holy Temple" and would still deal justly with both the righteous and the ungodly.

Psalm 12 *Few good people, and becoming fewer!* David lamented the dwindling number of virtuous people ([Psalm 12:1-4](#)) but expressed confidence that the Lord, through the power of his word, would preserve the righteous who must live in such a godless society ([Psalm 12:5-8](#)).

Psalm 13 *"How long, O Lord?"* How long, David asked, would God allow evil to triumph over him ([Psalm 13:1-4](#))? He answered his own question, expressing faith that God would deliver him ([Psalm 13:5-6](#)).

Psalm 14 *God's final triumph over godless fools.* David expressed utter contempt for those who deny God's existence ([Psalm 14:1](#); see [Psalm 53:1](#)). He noted the sad spiritual state of humankind ([Psalm 14:2-3](#); see [Romans 3:10-12](#)), expressed wonder that they did not see how God favored the righteous ([Psalm 14:4-6](#)), and longed for the day when God would bring final victory to his people ([Psalm 14:7](#); see [Ezekiel 11:17](#)).

The word *salvation* ([Psalm 14:7](#)) occurs frequently in the Psalms. While Christians define salvation primarily as deliverance from sin, the psalmists would have understood it primarily in its OT sense of deliverance from earthly danger.

Psalm 15 *"Who may dwell on your holy hill?"* What kind of person, asked David, could expect to enjoy fellowship with God? Such a person would be loyal to God and his people ([Psalm 15:4](#)) and would be just and generous in all his or her human relationships.

Psalm 16 *"No God but you!"* David expressed his love for God and his people ([Psalm 16:1-3](#)) and vowed not even to mention the names of the pagan gods ([Psalm 16:4](#)). He expressed his appreciation for God's providence in his life ([Psalm 16:5-9](#)) and his confidence that the blessings would continue ([Psalm 16:10-11](#)). Both Peter and Paul saw [Psalm 16:10](#) as a prophecy of Christ's resurrection (see [Acts 2:27-28](#); [Acts 13:35](#)).

Psalm 17 *"Keep me as the apple of your eye."* Reminding God of his sincere efforts to live a godly life, David asked him to hear his prayer ([Psalm 17:1-6](#)). He asked for protection from and triumph over his enemies ([Psalm 17:7-14](#)) and expressed confidence that God would answer his prayers and would resurrect him after death ([Psalm 17:15](#); see exposition on ^s[Isaiah 26:1-19](#)).

Psalm 18 *A lifetime of victory.* Toward the end of his life, David praised God for having delivered him from all his enemies, especially from Saul (see parallel passage, [2 Samuel 22](#)).

"He thundered from heaven" (18:1-19). David praised God for delivering him ([Psalm 18:1-3](#)), then described that deliverance with breathtaking imagery; God had drawn David "out of deep waters" and led him to a place of safety.

"He has rewarded my righteousness!" (18:20-29). David saw God's faithfulness to him as the just reward for his own faithfulness to God. He, rather than his devious enemies ([Psalm 18:26-27](#)), had been rewarded.

What a glorious God! ([18:30-50](#)). David resumed his praise of the God who had protected, empowered, and led him, giving him victory over all his enemies. David's victories were substantial indeed (see [2 Samuel 8:1-14](#); [2 Samuel 10:19](#)), but they would be only a foretaste of Christ's victory over all nations of the earth (see [Psalm 2:8](#); [Isaiah 52:15](#); [1 Cor. 15:24](#); [Phil. 2:10-11](#)).

Psalm 19 *Silent, written, and spoken witnesses.* David expressed wonder at how the sun, moon, and stars bear witness to the awesome glory of God ([Psalm 19:1-6](#)). Even more wonderful, however, is God's revealed word, which is to be savored more than gold or tasty food ([Psalm 19:7-11](#)). David prayed that his study of God's Law would keep him from sin, so that he, too, would be a suitable witness to his Lord ([Psalm 19:12-14](#)).

Psalm 20 *"Some trust in chariots. . . ."* The priests prayed that God would protect King David, granting him all his desires, including success over his enemies ([Psalm 20:1-5](#)). David then expressed his own confidence that God would grant victory—through supernatural means ([Psalm 20:6-9](#)).

Psalm 21 *A victory won, and more to come.* David praised God for a military victory and the peace, prosperity, and honor that had followed ([Psalm 21:1-7](#)), and expressed his trust that God would continue to help him defeat his enemies, who were also God's enemies ([Psalm 21:8-13](#)).

Psalm 22 *Forsaken, for now . . .* Feeling forsaken by God and despised by fellow humans ([Psalm 22:1-8](#)), David pleaded with God to deliver him ([Psalm 22:9-21](#)) and promised to publicly praise him for the deliverance ([Psalm 22:22-26](#)). He foresaw a time when the whole earth would worship God and participate in his kingdom ([Psalm 22:27-31](#)). NT writers and even Christ himself saw in this psalm many prophecies concerning Christ:

- His incarnation would enable him to minister to other humans and to become the perfect sacrifice for their sins ([Psalm 22:22](#); [Hebrews 2:12, 17](#)).
- At his crucifixion, his garments would be divided and gambled for ([Psalm 22:18](#); [Matthew 27:35](#)).
- On the cross he would
 - echo David's cry of anguish ([Psalm 22:1](#); [Matthew 27:46](#))
 - be ridiculed ([Psalm 22:7-8](#); [Matthew 27:42-43](#))
 - suffer the piercing of his hands and feet ([Psalm 22:16](#); [Luke 24:39-40](#))
 - be publicly stared at ([Psalm 22:13, 17](#); [Matthew 27:39, 47](#))
- In general, [Psalm 22:1-26](#) foreshadows Christ's crucifixion and resurrection, while [Psalm 22:27-31](#) foreshadows his millennial reign (see exposition on [Phil. 2:9-11](#)).

Psalm 23 *My shepherd in life, in death, and forever.* David described God as his shepherd:

- In *life*, the Lord had provided for his every need, giving him rest, guidance, and strength.
- As he approached *death*, he could count on God's comforting presence.
- After death, David would live with his wonderful shepherd *forever*.

Psalm 24 *Who may go up with the King of glory?* Noting God's greatness as King of the earth, David described the kind of person who might be invited to ascend with this King to his royal city to enjoy fellowship with him. Such a person would be godly in his or her relationships both with God and with fellow humans ([Psalm 24:4](#)). David then imagined the triumphant reception as the King entered

his royal city ([Psalm 24:7-10](#)). One can imagine the angelic hosts reciting David's grand poetry as Christ entered heaven following his death and resurrection (see [Acts 1:9-11](#)).

[Psalm 25](#) *"Save, guide, forgive."* David asked the Lord for deliverance, guidance, and forgiveness. He asked God to overlook the sins of his youth, looking at him instead through eyes of mercy and forgiveness ([Psalm 25:1-7](#)). David expressed his belief that God does, indeed, deliver, guide, and forgive those who fear him ([Psalm 25:8-15](#)). He ended with another plea for deliverance from both outward enemies and inward affliction and that God would protect his people ([Psalm 25:16-22](#)).

[Psalm 26](#) *Separated from sin and to God.* David proclaimed his innocence before the Lord and his desire to serve him and testify of his goodness. He asked the Lord to help him fulfill that desire.

[Psalm 27](#) *Confidence amid the conflict.* David had found that the person who lives his life daily in the presence of God, gazing upon his beauty, has no need to fear ([Psalm 27:1-6](#)). He asked the Lord for mercy and expressed confidence that such mercy would always be there, even if his own parents should abandon him ([Psalm 27:7-10](#)). He asked for guidance and deliverance and encouraged himself to be patient and courageous, knowing that God would always help him ([Psalm 27:11-14](#)).

[Psalm 28](#) *His reliable rock.* Addressing the Lord as his "rock," David prayed that God would punish the ungodly ([Psalm 28:1-5](#)), and he thanked him for his gracious protection. God had filled his heart with singing and had given him strength and victory ([Psalm 28:6-9](#)).

The writers of Scripture, especially the psalmists, often refer to the Lord as a "rock" (see [Psalm 18:2](#); [Psalm 42:9](#); [Psalm 61:2](#); [Psalm 95:1](#); [Deut. 32:15](#), [18](#), [30](#); [1 Samuel 2:2](#); [2 Samuel 22:47](#); [1 Cor. 10:4](#)).

[Psalm 29](#) *The sovereign sound of his voice.* David compared God's majestic and mighty voice to a thunderstorm, which breaks down the cedars of Lebanon and shakes the mountains and wilderness ([Psalm 29:1-10](#)). He called on this mighty God to give his people strength and peace.

[Psalm 30](#) *Overconfident . . . overwhelmed . . . overjoyed.* In a time of prosperity, David had become overconfident ([Psalm 30:6](#)). When illness came, he was overwhelmed ([Psalm 30:1-5](#), [7-10](#)). Then came the healing, and his mourning turned to joy.

[Psalm 31](#) *Praise for protection and peace.* In a time of great adversity, David asked God to deliver him ([Psalm 31:1-5](#)). He was confident that God would help him ([Psalm 31:6-8](#), [14-18](#)) but nonetheless confessed that he was afraid ([Psalm 31:9-13](#)). He then moved beyond his doubts ([Psalm 31:22](#)), praising God for his protection and peace and urging others to share his renewed sense of trust in God ([Psalm 31:23-24](#)).

"I entrust my spirit into your hand" ([Psalm 31:5](#)) may have been a familiar prayer for David in battlefield situations. Christ would pray that prayer once, not as a cry of desperation, but as a shout of victory (see [Luke 23:46](#)).

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[Psalm 33](#) *Victory through worship, not warfare.* David called on all righteous people to praise God, whose words are truth, who spoke all things into existence, and who controls history ([Psalm 33:1-11](#)). The nation that follows this God is blessed, for he will protect it as the best-equipped army could not. Victory is assured not by a nation's warriors but through its worshipers ([Psalm 33:12-22](#)).

[Psalm 34](#) *"Just put him to the test."* David acknowledged the Lord's continued blessing and protection ([Psalm 34:1-7](#)) and urged others to put him to the test, assuring them they would find him to be a good God who provides for his children and protects them from all danger ([Psalm 34:8-22](#)).

The protection of the "angel of the LORD" ([Psalm 34:7](#)) recalls the experience of Elisha and his servant ([2 Kings 6:15-17](#)). The promise of [Psalm 34:20](#) was literally fulfilled as Christ hung on the cross ([John 19:32-36](#)).

[Psalm 35](#) *"I'll give you glory in the Great Assembly!"* David pleaded for God's help against enemies who had attacked him without any just cause ([Psalm 35:7](#)), promising that when victory came, he would publicly praise him for it ([Psalm 35:9-10](#), [18](#), [28](#)). Shortly before his death, David did offer such public praise for military victories (see [1 Chron. 29:10-15](#)).

Though David now prayed *against* his enemies, he had also prayed *for* them in their hour of need ([Psalm 35:12-14](#)). Christ commanded prayer for enemies ([Matthew 5:43-48](#)) and taught it by example ([Luke 23:34](#)), as did Stephen ([Acts 7:60](#)) and Paul ([2 Tim. 4:16](#)).

[Psalm 36](#) *Sleepless sinners, satisfied saints.* God gave David a revelation concerning ungodly people: They are so godless, self-centered, and deceitful that they lie awake at night hatching evil plots ([Psalm 36:1-4](#)). The righteous, on the other hand, enjoy abundant blessings from God ([Psalm 36:5-9](#)), who is both the life and light of humankind ([Psalm 36:9](#)). David prayed for continued blessings and protection from the ungodly ([Psalm 36:10-12](#)).

[Psalm 37](#) *Prosperous sinners, poor saints.* David encouraged his hearers not to be distressed by all the wealthy sinners around them, who often tried to do them harm:

Frustrated or fruitful? ([37:1-8](#)) Though evildoers may seem to prosper ([Psalm 37:7](#), [16](#)), they will ultimately fail ([Psalm 37:2](#)), while those who trust God, though seemingly not as prosperous ([Psalm 37:16](#)), will find justice and the desires of their heart.

Laughed at or lifted up? ([37:9-33](#)) God laughs at the ungodly, for he knows their judgment is coming ([Psalm 37:13](#)). Meanwhile, he enables the "gentle and lowly" to "possess the land" ([Psalm 37:11](#), [22](#); see [Matthew 5:5](#)), however much the ungodly seek to harm them ([Psalm 37:12-17](#)). Even though a righteous person may suffer a temporary setback, he will not be permanently defeated ([Psalm 37:23-24](#)).

Destroyed or delivered? ([37:34-40](#)) Once more David urged his hearers to patiently seek God's way: Proud and evil people would be cut down like trees, while the righteous would enjoy peace and deliverance.

Compare [Psalm 49](#) and [Psalm 73](#).

[Psalm 38](#) *Sin, suffering, supplication.* David was suffering great physical distress because of some sin he had committed ([Psalm 38:1-8](#)). Both friends and relatives were keeping their distance ([Psalm 38:11](#)). Rather than trying to excuse his sin ([Psalm 38:13-14](#)), David confessed it and cried out to God for deliverance ([Psalm 38:9-10](#), [15-22](#)).

[Psalm 39](#) *"Remove my sickness. I'm only a shadow!"* Having tried in vain to keep silent about his suffering ([Psalm 39:1-3](#)), David asked God to impress upon him both the brevity and uncertainty of human life ([Psalm 39:4-9](#)). Feeling that he had suffered enough for his sin, he asked God to cease disciplining him, for he was but a pilgrim passing through this earth ([Psalm 39:10-13](#)). Moses, writing five centuries before David, expressed similar thoughts ([Psalm 90:12](#)).

[Psalm 40](#) *Double trouble demands double deliverance.* David thanked God for lifting him out of "the pit of despair," setting him "on solid ground," and giving him "a new song" ([Psalm 40:1-3](#)). He pledged himself to serve and speak for God ([Psalm 40:4-10](#)).

Recognizing, however, that his sins were "more numerous than the hairs on my head" ([Psalm 40:12](#)), David prayed once more that God would come quickly to his aid ([Psalm 40:13-17](#)).

Christ shared David's delight in doing God's will ([Psalm 40:6-8](#); see [Hebrews 10:4-7](#)).

[Psalm 41](#) *"He helps those who help the helpless."* David declared that the Lord would bless and honor those who ministered to the poor and weak ([Psalm 41:1-3](#)). He then told the Lord of his own need for healing and deliverance from his enemies ([Psalm 41:4-9](#)) and asked him to come to his aid ([Psalm 41:10-12](#)).

The close friend who had turned against David ([Psalm 41:9](#)) may have been Absalom (see [2 Samuel 15:4-12](#)) or Ahithophel (see [2 Samuel 16:15](#), [20-23](#)), but Christ saw in David's lament a prophecy of his own betrayal by Judas (see [John 13:18](#)).

[Psalm 41:13](#) is apparently the doxology for the psalms comprising Book One.

[Psalm 42](#) *Hope in God, part 1.* As he grieved and his enemies taunted him, the psalmist, one of the "descendants of Korah," longed for God like a thirsty deer seeks water ([Psalm 42:1-4](#)). As he pondered his desperate situation, he realized that the only solution was to "hope in God" ([Psalm 42:5](#), [11](#)).

[Psalm 43](#) *Hope in God, part 2.* In what appears to be a continuation of [Psalm 42](#), the psalmist expressed his feeling that God had forsaken him. He prayed that God's light and truth would both illuminate and instruct him, allowing him to "hope in God."

[Psalm 44](#) *"Why don't you do it again, Lord?"* The psalmist had heard how God freed Israel from Egypt ([Psalm 44:1-3](#)) and expressed the hope that God would once again "command victories" for his people ([Psalm 44:4-8](#)). Yet in reality, it seemed as though God not only had rejected his people but was actually fighting against them! They had been scattered to the wind and were ridiculed by the nations ([Psalm 44:9-16](#)). The psalmist was even more perplexed because he was not aware of any great sin

among the people. Why would God withhold victory from those who were trying to honor him? He pleaded with God to awake from his apparent sleep and help his people ([Psalm 44:17-26](#)).

[Psalm 45](#) *Praise for a groom, advice for a bride.* The psalmist praised the bridegroom at a royal wedding for both his military skill and his spiritual leadership ([Psalm 45:1-9](#)). He then urged the bride, evidently from another land, to transfer her loyalty from her own people to her husband's people ([Psalm 45:10-15](#)). He closed with a benediction of praise to the king ([Psalm 45:16-17](#)).

This psalm may actually describe two weddings: The wedding of Solomon to Pharaoh's daughter ([1 Kings 3:1](#)), and the future wedding of Christ to his church ([2 Cor. 11:2](#); [Ephes. 5:31-32](#); [Rev. 19:6-9](#)). Both call for a transfer of loyalties!

[Psalm 45:6-7](#) is quoted in [Hebrews 1:8-9](#), where God the Father addresses God the Son as his divine equal.

[Psalm 46](#) *Jerusalem's divine citizen.* God is the believer's refuge in every storm of life ([Psalm 46:1-3](#)). He dwells among his people, therefore they are joyful, secure, and victorious ([Psalm 46:4-11](#)).

[Psalm 47](#) *Pride of Jacob, God of Abraham.* The worship leader called on Israel to praise their God, who would lead them to victory. God had personally selected the choicest blessings for Jacob (Israel) and had received the worship of nations as the God of Abraham.

[Psalm 48](#) *Celebrating the city of God.* Jerusalem was a great city because God dwelled within it ([Psalm 48:1-3](#)). Realizing God's place in the city, a visit to Jerusalem by foreign kings brought both admiration and fear ([Psalm 48:4-8](#)). The psalmist invited the people of Jerusalem to walk around their beautiful city, counting its towers and viewing its palaces ([Psalm 48:9-13](#)), and he encouraged them to preserve their faith for future generations ([Psalm 48:9-11](#), [13-14](#)).

[Psalm 49](#) *How much silver to save a soul?* The psalmist argued that the wealthy of this world were really worse off than the poor: The wealthy trust in their wealth but die anyway, just like animals ([Psalm 49:12](#), [20](#)). No amount of money can save their souls ([Psalm 49:7-8](#); see [Matthew 16:26](#)). The righteous are the real winners, for they "will rule over" the wealthy in the afterlife ([Psalm 49:14](#)). Therefore there is no reason to envy or fear the rich ([Psalm 49:16-20](#); see [Ps. 37](#); [Ps. 73](#); [James 5:1-5](#)).

[Psalm 50](#) *The Judge in his courtroom.* Someday, said Asaph, the great Judge of the universe will appear in glory to evaluate the deeds of his people ([Psalm 50:1-6](#)). As he judges their worship, he will not be concerned primarily about the correctness of their sacrifices, for all animals are his anyway; rather, he will be concerned with their obedience ([Psalm 50:7-23](#)).

[Psalm 51](#) *A sinning saint pleads for mercy.* David pleaded for God's mercy, acknowledging that he had sinned ([Psalm 51:1-6](#); see [2 Samuel 11](#)). He longed for cleansing ([Psalm 51:7](#)) and for the restored joy ([Psalm 51:12](#)), renewed ministry ([Psalm 51:13](#)), and heartfelt praise ([Psalm 51:15](#)) that would surely follow. He understood that God desired repentance, not sacrifice ([Psalm 51:16-17](#)). He believed that if God would forgive and restore him, it would bring revival to the whole nation ([Psalm 51:18-19](#)).

[Psalm 52](#) *A prediction of retribution.* David expressed righteous indignation at a man the title identifies as Doeg, who betrayed David and killed 85 priests and their families at Nob ([1 Samuel 22](#)).

David predicted that God would make Doeg a public example of his wrath ([Psalm 52:5-7](#)), while he himself would become like a productive olive tree ([Psalm 52:8](#)).

[Psalm 53](#) *"No, not one."* God had scanned the entire human race and found that none were righteous ([Psalm 53:1-3](#)). David recognized that this indicated a heart problem, not a head problem ([Psalm 53:1](#); see [Psalm 14:1](#)). He longed for God's kingdom to be established on this sin-filled earth ([Psalm 53:6](#)).

[Psalm 53](#) is very similar to [Psalm 14](#) and may have been a revision of that earlier psalm. Paul quoted these psalms to show the depravity of the human race and its desperate need for salvation ([Romans 3:10-12](#)).

[Psalm 54](#) *"Their brutality will boomerang!"* David sought divine deliverance from "strangers" the title identifies as the Ziphites, who betrayed him to Saul when he hid among them (see [1 Samuel 23:14-24](#)). Confident that God was on his side and would repay his enemies ([Psalm 54:4-5](#)), David praised God for victory.

[Psalm 55](#) *"Oh, for the wings of a dove!"* Distressed by the constant plots and persecution of his enemies, David longed to escape to some far-off desert place ([Psalm 55:1-8](#)). He called on God to destroy the conspirators, one of whom had been his close friend ([Psalm 55:9-15](#)). Even as he expressed his faith in God's deliverance ([Psalm 55:16-19, 22](#)), he couldn't forget the cruelty of his friend's betrayal ([Psalm 55:20-21, 23](#)).

[Psalm 56](#) *God keeps his tears in a bottle.* David felt himself to be in danger all day long from his foes, who slandered him and hid beside the trail to ambush him ([Psalm 56:1-2, 5-6](#)). Nonetheless, he trusted in God, who kept a careful record of his every sorrow and had always come to his rescue.

[Psalm 57](#) *Safe from the lions, in the shadow of God's wings.* As David hid from Saul in a cave (see [1 Samuel 24:3](#)), he began each anxious day by playing his harp and singing songs of praise ([Psalm 57:7-11](#)), expressing his confidence that God would save him ([Psalm 57:3](#)).

[Psalm 58](#) *"Turn these serpents into snails!"* David rebuked certain unjust religious or political leaders, who in their very lifestyles were as dangerous as snakes ([Psalm 58:1-5](#)). He asked God to judge them and render them as powerless as "snails that dissolve into slime" ([Psalm 58:6-8](#)). He expressed confidence that God would punish these evildoers and reward the righteous ([Psalm 58:9-11](#)).

[Psalm 59](#) *"They're back! Please help!"* David sought God's protection from his many enemies, who were attacking him repeatedly ([Psalm 59:6, 14](#)). He was confident that God would defeat them and asked that, instead of killing them, God would let them live on in defeat as an object lesson to other opponents ([Psalm 59:11](#)).

[Psalm 60](#) *"Lord, you have hurt us; now heal us!"* Seeing his people defeated due to God's displeasure, David prayed that God would restore them ([Psalm 60:1-3](#)). He was confident that if Israel would truly march under God's banner ([Psalm 60:4](#)), the very one who had cast them off ([Psalm 60:10](#)) would lead them to victory ([Psalm 60:12](#)) over all their enemies ([Psalm 60:8-9](#)).

Psalm 61 *A high rock of refuge.* Feeling overwhelmed, David sought refuge in the "rock" of God's strength ([Psalm 61:1-2](#); see exposition on ^s[Psalm 28](#)). His past experience of this refuge ([Psalm 61:3-7](#)) encouraged him to keep putting his trust in God. Despite the constant dangers David faced, God did "add many years to the life of the king" ([Psalm 61:6](#)), prolonging his life to the 70 years promised by Scripture (see [Psalm 90:10](#); [2 Samuel 5:4](#)).

Psalm 62 *Weightless warriors and a rock of refuge.* As David's enemies conspired to dethrone him ([Psalm 62:4](#); see [2 Samuel 15](#); [2 Samuel 20](#)), he found refuge in God ([Psalm 62:1-3](#)). He had learned that from God's perspective, his seemingly powerful enemies were no more than mere vapor ([Psalm 62:9](#)). On the other hand, he had learned to trust in God as "a rock where no enemy can reach me" ([Psalm 62:7](#)), and he wanted his readers to learn such trust as well ([Psalm 62:8](#)).

Psalm 63 *Desiring the Lord in a dry land.* While hiding from King Saul in the wilderness ([1 Samuel 21-26](#)), David longed to spend time with God in his sanctuary ([Psalm 63:1-2](#)). Memories of that sanctuary filled his mind as he lay awake at night thinking of God and his faithfulness ([Psalm 63:3-8](#)). He regained his assurance that God would uphold his cause and defeat his enemies ([Psalm 63:9-11](#)).

Psalm 64 *"His arrows will avenge me!"* David prayed for God's protection against an especially vicious and cunning group of conspirators, who spewed bitter words like arrows and congratulated themselves on their perfect schemes ([Psalm 64:1-6](#)). David knew that God would shoot his own arrows, causing their very cleverness to be their undoing ([Psalm 64:8](#)). Their defeat would bring great fear to other would-be rebels and great rejoicing to all the righteous ([Psalm 64:9-10](#)).

Psalm 65 *He hears! He forgives! He satisfies!* God hears those who pray to him; he forgives them and provides abundantly for them ([Psalm 65:1-4](#)). They can only respond by praising him for his great power ([Psalm 65:5-8](#)) and provision ([Psalm 65:9-13](#)).

Psalm 66 *Flood and fire: To purify, not punish.* The psalmist praised God for his great works ([Psalm 66:1-4](#)), specifically for his salvation of Israel at the Red Sea ([Psalm 66:5-7](#); see [Exodus 14](#)). God had subjected his people to many painful ordeals—both flood and fire—not to punish but to purify them ([Psalm 66:8-12](#)). While in great difficulty, the psalmist had promised God many offerings. He now kept his vows as he witnessed to his hearers about God's great mercy ([Psalm 66:13-20](#)).

Psalm 67 *"Bless the Lord, and he will bless our land."* Israel should praise their God, because of his righteous rule over the land ([Psalm 67:1-5](#)). If they would do this, God would bless them with rich harvests ([Psalm 67:6-7](#)), which would be a testimony to all nations ([Psalm 67:2, 7](#)).

Psalm 68 *The march of the Almighty.* David praised God for both his power and his goodness. He "rides the clouds" but also is a "father to the fatherless" ([Psalm 68:1-6](#)). David recalled the Lord's mighty power and miraculous provision throughout his nation's history ([Psalm 68:7-27](#)) and asked God to continue defeating their enemies ([Psalm 68:28-31](#)).

"Bashan" ([Psalm 68:15](#)) probably refers to Mount Hermon, while "Mount Zion, where God has chosen to live," ([Psalm 68:16](#)) is Jerusalem. The prophecy of [Psalm 68:29](#) was fulfilled during the time of Solomon (see [1 Kings 10](#)) and will be fulfilled again during the millennial reign of Christ (see [Isaiah 60:3-6](#)).

Psalm 69 *"Pull me out of this mire!"* Both David's own sins and the attacks of his enemies had caused him terrible and continuous grief ([Psalm 69:1-5](#)); he was sinking in the "mire" ([Psalm 69:2, 14](#)). Yet he felt that he was suffering primarily because of his loyalty to God ([Psalm 69:6-12](#)). He called on God to rescue him and defeat his enemies ([Psalm 69:13-29](#)). He expressed confidence that deliverance would come ([Psalm 69:30-36](#)) and that this would be a powerful testimony to the whole nation ([Psalm 69:32-33](#)); on [Psalm 69:31](#), see [1 Samuel 15:22](#)).

[Psalm 69](#) is rich in prophecies about Christ and comparisons between David and Christ:

- Both were hated without cause ([Psalm 69:4](#); [John 15:25](#)).
- Both were misunderstood by their families ([Psalm 69:8](#); [1 Samuel 17:28](#); [John 7:5](#)).
- Both displayed great zeal for God ([Psalm 69:9](#); [2 Samuel 6:14-15](#); [John 2:17](#)).
- Though it was probably metaphorical in David's case, Christ was literally offered sour wine (or vinegar) for his thirst ([Psalm 69:21](#); [Matthew 27:48](#)).

Psalm 70 *Praise and an SOS.* Surrounded by his enemies, David offered up an urgent prayer for deliverance, taking time to praise God while doing so. To acknowledge and adore God in the hour of trouble is to be rescued and restored by him.

Psalm 71 *His help in youth and in old age.* "I've trusted you, O LORD, from childhood," David prayed. "Now, in my old age, don't set me aside. Don't abandon me when my strength is failing." David was saying, in effect, "Take care of this old man, so that I might declare your power to the next generation!" ([Psalm 71:1-18](#)). Though always in danger, David knew God would answer this prayer. Therefore, he would continue to praise God and testify concerning his justice, goodness, and forgiveness ([Psalm 71:19-24](#)).

Psalm 72 *The king and the King.* Solomon asked the Lord for wisdom so that during his reign the poor would receive justice ([Psalm 72:2-7](#)). He would reign over a vast empire ([Psalm 72:8-11](#)), which would be characterized by peace, justice, and prosperity, bringing universal and everlasting fame to its king ([Psalm 72:12-17](#)).

Though many of the things Solomon predicted would become true of his own reign ([1 Kings 10:23](#)), they refer ultimately to the millennial reign of Christ (see [Luke 1:30-33](#)). Many of the psalm's themes are echoed in Isaiah's description of the Messiah ([Isaiah 2:4](#); [Isaiah 9:7](#); [Isaiah 11:4](#); [Isaiah 32:1](#); [Isaiah 49:23](#)).

[Psalm 72:18-19](#) is apparently the doxology for the psalms comprising Book Two.

Books One and Two contain 56 of the 75 psalms attributed to David and may have been compiled during or shortly after David's lifetime (see [Background](#)). The compilers of these books would not have known that later generations would include other psalms of David in the three later books, thus the remark of [Psalm 72:20](#).

Psalm 73 *Envy in the city; answers in the sanctuary.* Asaph wondered why God allowed so many ungodly people to accumulate great fortunes, enjoy good health, and live long lives ([Psalm 73:1-12](#)). But that was only half the problem, for all too often exactly the opposite was true of godly people ([Psalm 73:13-15](#)). While worshiping one day, he realized that the ungodly were not so well off after all, since they were destined for eternal destruction ([Psalm 73:16-20](#)). With this new understanding, he worshiped enthusiastically, declaring that he desired nothing on earth besides his relationship with God

([Psalm 73:21-28](#)). "Leading me to a glorious destiny" ([Psalm 73:24](#)) suggests that Asaph looked forward to life after death (see exposition on ^s[Isaiah 26:1-19](#); see [Isaiah 37](#); [Isaiah 49](#)).

[Psalm 74](#) *"How could this have happened?"* A descendant of Asaph, apparently his namesake, looked back on the destruction of Jerusalem and wondered how God could have let it happen ([Psalm 74:1, 10-11](#)). He asked God to remember his people during this time of calamity ([Psalm 74:2, 19-21](#)) and to take measures to defeat the enemy and restore the honor of his name ([Psalm 74:10-23](#)). Surely the one who created the world and divided the Red Sea could handle the present situation ([Psalm 74:12-17](#))! The psalmist's question ([Psalm 74:1](#)) was answered in [2 Chron. 36:14-16](#).

[Psalm 75](#) *God promotes and punishes.* Asaph thanked God for his sovereign judgment: He elevates one and deposes another according to his will. God will, in his own time and way, destroy the ungodly and exalt the righteous.

[Psalm 76](#) *More majestic than the mountains.* The everlasting mountains cannot compare to God's glory, nor the most powerful army to his strength ([Psalm 76:1-10](#)). In light of God's character, his people are to fulfill their promises to honor and serve him ([Psalm 76:11-12](#)). On "human opposition only enhances your glory" ([Psalm 76:10](#)), see exposition on ^s[Ezra 6:1-12](#).

[Psalm 77](#) *The good old days.* In a time of great distress, Asaph recalled "the good old days" and wondered why God had seemingly forgotten his people ([Psalm 77:1-9](#)). Rather than dwell on the depressing present, however, he chose to find comfort in God's mighty acts in times past, such as the Red Sea crossing ([Psalm 77:16-20](#)).

[Psalm 78](#) *A history lesson.* Recalling perhaps the admonition of [Deut. 4:9](#), Asaph was determined to pass on to Israel's next generation some of the lessons he had learned from history. He didn't want to be like some former generations, who had forgotten those lessons and therefore had been defeated ([Psalm 78:1-11](#)):

The more they received, the more they rebelled ([78:12-33](#))! Asaph recalled the amazing things God had done for his people, such as the plagues in Egypt ([Psalm 78:12](#)) and his provisions during their journey to the Promised Land. Sadly, however, God's bounty had been rewarded by ingratitude and rebellion ([Psalm 78:17-20, 30-33](#)). Therefore, God sentenced them to "failure" as they wandered in the desert ([Psalm 78:33](#); see [Numbers 14:29-30, 35](#)).

Retribution, repentance, rebellion: A vicious cycle ([78:34-41](#)). Whenever God would discipline his people they would repent ([Psalm 78:34-35](#)), yet soon they would rebel again ([Psalm 78:36-37](#)), and he, being "merciful," would forgive them again ([Psalm 78:38](#)). This cycle was repeated many times ([Psalm 78:38, 40-41](#); see [Numbers 14:22](#)).

"They rebelled because they didn't remember" ([78:42-64](#)). Asaph stressed once again that Israel kept rebelling because they kept forgetting God's marvelous deeds, such as the plagues in Egypt ([Psalm 78:42-51](#)), his guidance and provision in the wilderness ([Psalm 78:52-54](#)), and the conquest of Canaan ([Psalm 78:55](#)). After all this, they continued to test his patience.

A loving shepherd for his sheep ([78:65-72](#)). Asaph, who lived in David's time, saw David's kingship as another example of God's grace. He ended his psalm with high hopes that the wandering sheep of Israel would follow this king who had a shepherd's heart.

Psalm 79 *"Cleanse our iniquities, consume our enemies!"* Asaph's namesake (see exposition on ^s[Psalm 74](#)) lamented the terrible destruction of God's city, his Temple, and his people (see [2 Chron. 36:15-19](#)). He prayed that God would forgive and restore his people and destroy their enemies, for the honor of his name.

Psalm 80 *A shepherd and his vineyard?* Asaph appealed to Israel's great shepherd to save his people, whom he was disciplining by allowing them to be dishonored by their neighbors ([Psalm 80:1-7](#)). Switching metaphors, Asaph spoke of Israel as a vine that God had carefully planted, but had now allowed to be harvested and even destroyed by passersby and animals ([Psalm 80:8-16](#); see [Isaiah 5:1-10](#)). Once again, he called on God to restore his people.

Psalm 81 *Sin spoils the celebration.* During one of Israel's regular festivals, Asaph exhorted the people to praise God for his acts of national deliverance ([Psalm 81:1-7](#)). He lamented, however, the people's constant sin, reminding them of the blessings that could have been had they only obeyed ([Psalm 81:8-16](#); see [Matthew 23:37](#); [Luke 19:41-42](#)).

Psalm 82 *He judges the judges.* God, the judge of all the world, called on human judges to stop favoring the ungodly and defend the poor and helpless. God had elevated those judges to lofty positions, calling them "gods" (see [John 10:34](#)), yet they would be judged as surely as the lowliest person.

Psalm 83 *Crush their conspiracy!* Asaph spoke to the Lord concerning several nations that had formed a conspiracy against Israel ([Psalm 83:1-8](#)). He called on him to do to those nations as he did to various other nations in times past so that those nations, too, would realize that Israel's God is the true and only God ([Psalm 83:16, 18](#)).

Psalm 84 *From the valley of sorrow to the home of the sparrow.* The psalmist longed to enter the Temple courtyard and find sweet refuge near the altar, as the sparrows and swallows had done ([Psalm 84:1-4](#)). He imagined the thoughts of pilgrims as the Lord helped them through the valley of sorrow and they grew ever stronger as they approached the palace ([Psalm 84:5-7](#); see [Psalm 23:4](#)). Finally, he contemplated again the joy of just 24 hours in God's presence, even as a lowly doorkeeper ([Psalm 84:8-12](#)).

Psalm 85 *"Revive us again!"* Having thanked God for forgiveness of sins ([Psalm 85:1-3](#)), the psalmist prayed that God would revive his people and set aside his anger so that Israel might once again have cause to rejoice ([Psalm 85:4-7](#)). He then expressed confidence that the Lord would indeed bless the land (see [Habakkuk 3:2](#)).

Psalm 86 *Wanted: Holiness, strength, and a sign.* Having acknowledged God's greatness and mercy ([Psalm 86:1-7](#)) and that he alone is God ([Psalm 86:8-10](#)), David asked the Lord for moral instruction ([Psalm 86:11-13](#)), for supernatural strength ([Psalm 86:16](#)), and for a sign to reassure him amid all his enemies ([Psalm 86:14-15, 17](#)).

Psalm 87 *A blessing just to be born there!* Jerusalem is praised as the most blessed of all cities. Someday the highest imaginable honor will be to have been born in Jerusalem.

Psalm 88 *In the depths of deepest despair.* Heman the Ezrahite expressed to God a deep despair that had plagued him all his life and had brought him great physical distress, even though he had prayed often about it ([Psalm 88:1-9](#)). Mustering what little faith he had left, he wondered if God would rescue him before it was forever too late ([Psalm 88:10-14](#)). Despite this flicker of hope, he ended on a note of total pessimism as he returned to reciting his troubles ([Psalm 88:15-18](#)).

Psalm 89 *God's covenant with David.* Ethan the Ezrahite wrote in celebration of God's everlasting covenant with David and his descendants ([Psalm 89:1-4](#); see [2 Samuel 7:10-16](#); [Luke 1:30-33](#)).

Glorious for who he is and what he does ([89:5-18](#)). He began by praising God for his faithfulness, power, and sovereignty over creation ([Psalm 89:5-13](#)). He praised God for perfectly balancing love and truth, which walk before him as attendants ([Psalm 89:14-18](#)).

David's reign to remain, regardless ([89:19-37](#)). God had promised David that his enemies would all be defeated and his descendants would rule forever ([Psalm 89:19-29](#)). God would keep this promise no matter how much David or his descendants might sin ([Psalm 89:30-37](#)).

But has he changed his mind ([89:38-52](#))? Noting the current state of affairs in Israel, however, Ethan wondered if God had broken his covenant with David ([Psalm 89:38-51](#)).

[Psalm 89:52](#) could be seen either as an upbeat ending to Ethan's psalm, matching his earlier optimism, or as a doxology for all the psalms of Book Three.

Psalm 90 *Wisdom for a brief life.* Book Four begins with a psalm by Moses, probably the oldest of all the psalms. Moses wrote of the stark contrast between God's eternity and humankind's short life span, which, due to the effects of sin, is often spent in emptiness and pain ([Psalm 90:1-11](#)). Moses asked God to give his people the wisdom to make their brief lives happy and productive ([Psalm 90:12-17](#)).

Psalm 91 *The shadow of the Almighty.* God will provide protection, reassurance, and warmth to anyone willing to trust him ([Psalm 91:1-6](#)). He will protect believers from every conceivable danger ([Psalm 91:7-13](#)). The psalm ends in the words of God himself, promising deliverance and long life to all who "call on" him ([Psalm 91:14-16](#)).

When the devil quoted [Psalm 91:12](#) to Christ in the wilderness, Christ corrected his misapplication of its promise by quoting another Scripture (see [Matthew 4:6-7](#); [Deut. 6:16](#)).

Psalm 92 *Like bulls and cedars.* For the believer, it is a joy to praise God for his

- kindness in the morning and faithfulness in the evening ([Psalm 92:1-4](#));
- omnipotence and omniscience ([Psalm 92:5](#));
- victories over the ungodly ([Psalm 92:6-9](#));
- and for the victories of the righteous, to whom he gives the strength of a bull and the might of the cedars of Lebanon ([Psalm 92:10-15](#)).

Psalm 93 *The splendor and statutes of God.* All creation speaks of the greatness of God. He is the eternal King, robed in majesty and strength, and his creation reflects those attributes ([Psalm 93:1-4](#)). His laws, likewise, are firmly established and unchanging ([Psalm 93:5](#)).

Psalm 94 *How firm a foundation!* The psalmist called on God to judge the ungodly, who were persecuting his people while proudly declaring that God couldn't see their evil deeds ([Psalm 94:1-7](#)). He pointed out the folly of such insolence ([Psalm 94:8-11](#)) and the joy awaiting the godly: Whenever his foot began to slip ([Psalm 94:18](#)), he would find peace, mercy, victory, comfort, and security on the firm foundation of God's word ([Psalm 94:12-22](#)). Meanwhile, proud sinners would only find God's wrath and judgment ([Psalm 94:23](#)).

Psalm 95 *Better to worship than to wander!* Israel was called to bow the knee in worship before their great King, Creator, and Shepherd ([Psalm 95:1-7](#)). They were admonished to have soft hearts and not to be like the Israelites during the Exodus, who rebelled against God and were condemned to 40 years of restless wandering ([Psalm 95:8-11](#)).

Psalm 96 *Idols and the Infinite.* The psalmist invited all creation to praise God, who is above all gods ([Psalm 96:1-6](#)). He invited all nations to acknowledge God's glory and uniqueness, to bring offerings to him, and to give testimony to his name ([Psalm 96:7-10](#)). He called on all nature to worship him and to look forward to the day when he would come at last to bring justice to the earth ([Psalm 96:11-13](#)).

Psalm 97 *When his fire goes forth, the mountains melt!* All creation bears witness to God's righteousness ([Psalm 97:1-6](#)). All who love the Lord should rejoice in his power and justice and should stand against the forces of evil ([Psalm 97:7-12](#)).

Psalm 98 *Joy to the world!* As the psalm's title indicates, the psalmist praised God for both his salvation ([Psalm 98:1-6](#)) and his righteous judgment ([Psalm 98:7-9](#)). He imagined all creation joining with him in his praise. Isaac Watts based his famous hymn "Joy to the World" on this psalm.

Psalm 99 *Three satisfied customers.* God, who is supreme above all rulers of the earth, is to be worshiped for his holiness, justice, and forgiveness. When Moses, Aaron, and Samuel called to him for help, he answered them ([Psalm 99:6-7](#)). He forgave them, even when he had to discipline them ([Psalm 99:8](#)).

Psalm 100 *Creator and Shepherd.* The psalmist called on the people to come joyfully into God's presence, knowing that he is both their Creator and their Good Shepherd and that his goodness, love, and faithfulness will last forever.

Psalm 101 *The company we keep.* David committed himself to personal integrity ([Psalm 101:1-2](#)) and promised to support those with high moral standards and to oppose the ungodly ([Psalm 101:3-8](#)). He vowed not even to entertain in his home those who are proud, selfish, or slanderous.

Psalm 102 *An end to his suffering in sight.* With his health broken, his heart sick, and his enemies attacking, the psalmist begged God to intervene ([Psalm 102:1-11](#)). He expressed hope in Jerusalem's Messiah, who would hear the cry of his people and city ([Psalm 102:12-22](#)) and would put off the old clothing of this present heaven and earth and create all things new ([Psalm 102:23-28](#); see [Isaiah 65:17-18](#); [Rev. 21:1](#)).

Psalm 103 *"Don't forget to praise him!"* Remember what God has done, said David: He forgives sins, heals diseases, redeems lives, satisfies desires, and renews our youth ([Psalm 103:1-5](#)). He executes justice but also displays great compassion, for he knows our frailties ([Psalm 103:6-18](#)). All things everywhere—his angels and "everything he has created," including humans—should praise this great God ([Psalm 103:19-22](#); see [Psalm 148](#)).

Psalm 104 *"What a wondrous world he has made!"* God's power and glory are seen in natural phenomena ([Psalm 104:1-4](#)), such as the universal Flood ([Psalm 104:5-9](#)). Creation also shows God's compassion as he satisfies the hunger and thirst of both humans and animals and provides light and darkness to order their lives ([Psalm 103:10-30](#)). Praise is the only fitting response to such wonder ([Psalm 103:31-35](#)).

Psalm 105 *History 105: God's faithfulness.* The writer called on Israel to thank and praise God for his marvelous works ([Psalm 105:1-5](#)). He reminded them of their national history, noting God's faithfulness to his covenant with Abraham ([Psalm 105:6-15](#)). God had been faithful in providing salvation through Joseph ([Psalm 105:16-24](#)) and through the miracles during Moses' ministry:

- the 10 plagues ([Psalm 105:25-38](#); [Exodus 7-12](#))
- the cloudy and fiery pillar ([Psalm 105:39](#); [Exodus 13:21](#))
- the deliverance from Egypt ([Psalm 105:37](#); [Exodus 14](#))
- the manna ([Psalm 105:40](#); [Exodus 16](#))
- the water from the rock ([Psalm 105:41](#); [Exodus 17](#))

Finally, God had given them the Promised Land ([Psalm 105:43-45](#)), fulfilling his promise to Abraham ([Psalm 105:42](#); see [Genesis 17:1-6](#)).

Psalm 106 *History 106: Israel's unfaithfulness.* In an apparent continuation of [Psalm 105](#), the writer once again called the nation to praise God ([Psalm 106:1-5](#)). He then reviewed their history again, focusing this time on their own unfaithfulness as seen, for instance, in

- the Red Sea crossing ([Psalm 106:6-12](#); [Exodus 14:10-12, 21-30](#))
- the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram ([Psalm 106:16-18](#); [Numbers 16:31-33](#))
- the golden calf ([Psalm 106:19-23](#); [Exodus 32:1-4](#))
- Moses' striking the rock ([Psalm 106:32-33](#); [Numbers 20:2-13](#))
- their compromises with the Canaanites during the time of the judges ([Psalm 106:34-46](#))

Despite this repeated unfaithfulness, the Lord had saved his people again and again ([Psalm 106:43](#)), both to defend his own honor ([Psalm 106:8](#)) and to show his mercy ([Psalm 106:44-46](#)). The writer ended his history lesson by asking God to deliver his people once again ([Psalm 106:47](#)).

[Psalm 106:48](#) is apparently the doxology for the psalms comprising Book Four.

Psalm 107 *Gathered from around the globe.* The psalmist called on the redeemed to acknowledge their Redeemer ([Psalm 107:1-3](#)). He told four stories of lostness and redemption, beginning at [Psalm 107:4](#), [10](#), [17](#), and [23](#), each ending with the same plea: "Let them praise the LORD for his great love and for all his wonderful deeds to them." The stories seem to describe Israel's history, with Israel sinning ([Psalm 107:11](#), [17](#)) and God punishing them but then delivering them because of his love.

The psalm ends with another two images of desolation and redemption ([Psalm 107:33-38](#) and [Psalm 107:39-43](#)).

"He has gathered the exiles from many lands" ([Psalm 107:3](#)) suggests that this psalm was composed after Israel's return from exile, making it a fitting first psalm of this final book, which many believe was compiled after the exile (see [Background](#)). Israel's regathering was, of course, only a dim foreshadowing of the great regathering the Messiah will bring about in the last days (see [Mat.24:31](#)).

[Psalm 108](#) *Confident of his help in conflict.* David could praise God with a "confident" heart because of his confidence in him ([Psalm 108:1-5](#)). He prayed for God's help in battle ([Psalm 108:6-9](#)), sure that the one who had cast them off ([Psalm 108:11](#)) would now lead them to victory ([Psalm 108:13](#)) over all their enemies ([Psalm 108:8-9](#)). Israel needed God's aid, for they knew that human help was worthless ([Psalm 108:12](#)).

This psalm appears to combine material from two earlier psalms ([Psalm 57:7-11](#) and [Ps. 60:5-12](#)).

[Psalm 109](#) *"Give them a taste of their own medicine!"* David prayed that God would punish those who were persecuting him ([Psalm 109:1-5](#)) and that the punishment they received would match the grief they had caused him and many others ([Psalm 109:6-20](#)). Describing again his own embattled condition, David urged God to deal with his enemies in a way that would unmistakably demonstrate his great power ([Psalm 109:21-31](#)). On [Psalm 109:8](#), see [Acts 1:20](#).

[Psalm 110](#) *A Messiah like Melchizedek.* David spoke of "my Lord," to whom God would give a place at his right hand, while giving him victory over all his enemies and making him "a priest forever in the line of Melchizedek." The book of Hebrews reveals this "Lord" to be Jesus Christ (see [Hebrews 5:6, 10](#); [Hebrews 6:20](#); [Hebrews 7:11-19](#); see exposition on [Genesis 14:17-24](#)).

Peter quoted [Psalm 110:1](#) at Pentecost, affirming that David had the Messiah in mind when he wrote those words (see [Acts 2:34-35](#)).

[Psalm 111](#) *Praise for his power and precepts.* The psalmist praised God for his mighty and miraculous works ([Psalm 111:1-6](#)); God fed his people in the wilderness and led them into the Promised Land ([Psalm 111:5-6](#)). He also praised God for his law. All 613 OT commandments are faithful, just, and trustworthy ([Psalm 111:7-10](#)).

[Psalm 112](#) *The family that fears God.* This psalm says that people who fear the Lord will, along with their families, enjoy both financial and spiritual prosperity ([Psalm 112:1-9](#)). The godless, meanwhile, will look on with envy ([Psalm 112:10](#)).

[Psalm 113](#) *Sunrise-to-sunset praise.* The believer is to praise God's name during every waking hour ([Psalm 113:1-4](#)). Indeed, who else is like God, who is enthroned in the heavens yet stoops down to help the poor and needy ([Psalm 113:5-9](#))?

[Psalm 114](#) *Two partings for his special people!* Though they were already his chosen people (see [Genesis 12:1-3](#)), when God led the Israelites out of Egypt they became his nation in a more special way ([Psalm 114:1-2](#)). The Red Sea parted to let them out of bondage; the Jordan parted to let them into their Promised Land ([Psalm 114:3-8](#)). God will do whatever it takes to get us where he wants us to be.

Psalm 115 *Impotent gods, omnipotent God.* The psalmist compared the idols of the nations with Israel's God and called on all Israelites to worship their God only. Idols have mouths, eyes, ears, noses, hands, and feet, but only the true God can speak, see, hear, smell, feel, and walk ([Psalm 115:1-13](#)).

Psalm 116 *Death had him surrounded!* Death was staring the psalmist in the face when God stepped in and saved him ([Ps 116:3-12](#)). He praised God for this timely protection ([Ps 116:1-2](#), [13-19](#)).

Psalm 117 *Who should praise him? Why?* This shortest chapter of the Bible calls on all the world to praise God for his unfailing love and faithfulness.

Psalm 118 *"He has become my salvation!"* Even if the psalmist was surrounded by all nations of the earth, he was confident that the Lord would save him and that he would see a great victory celebration ([Psalm 118:1-21](#)). He praised God in words the NT applies to the Messiah:

- "The stone rejected by the builders has now become the cornerstone" ([Psalm 118:22](#); see [Matthew 21:42](#); [1 Peter 2:6-8](#)).
- "Bless the one who comes in the name of the LORD" ([Psalm 118:26](#); see [Mark 11:9](#)).

Psalm 119 *God's word in the believer's life.* [Psalm 119](#) is devoted entirely to praise of God's word and its role in the life of the believer. The psalm is an amazing acrostic poem in which each of the verses in each of 22 eight-verse segments begins with the same letter of the Hebrew alphabet, thus covering all 22 Hebrew letters. For instance, in [Psalm 119:1-8](#), each verse begins with *aleph*, in [Psalm 119:9-16](#) each verse begins with *beth*, and so forth.

The other unique feature of the psalm is its repeated use of nine different words to describe God's revelation. These appear in random order and with differing frequency.

Joy in his judgments ([119:1-8](#)). Those who keep God's law "with all their hearts" are assured of great blessing.

Purity in his precepts ([119:9-16](#)). "How can a young person stay pure?" By "hiding" God's word in his or her heart—studying, meditating on, and even memorizing Scripture.

Security in his statutes ([119:17-24](#)). Amid persecution, the psalmist felt like a stranger in the world but found comfort in God's word.

Deliverance in his decrees ([119:25-32](#)). Lying "in the dust, completely discouraged," the psalmist knew that deliverance from his sinful nature would come as the Lord helped him understand his laws.

Worth in his word ([119:33-40](#)). If the psalmist could truly learn God's law and keep from desiring the "worthless things" of this life, then he would find delight, revival, and reassurance.

Liberty in his law ([119:41-48](#)). The person who trusts in God's word will "walk in freedom," fearing no one and even speaking of his or her faith "to kings."

Comfort in his commands ([119:49-56](#)). Because the psalmist had kept God's laws ([Psalm 119:55-56](#)), they were a comfort in the hour of pain and persecution.

Meeting with God at midnight ([119:57-64](#)). The psalmist declared his loyalty to God and his word: God was his portion; he was loyal to God's people ([Psalm 119:63](#)); he hurried, "without lingering," to keep God's commandments, even arising at midnight to spend time with the Lord.

"Thank God for my affliction!" ([119:65-72](#)). The psalmist's affliction was a good thing ([Ps. 119:65, 68, 71](#)) because it had turned him from his wayward life back to God and his word ([Psalm 119:67](#)).

"You did it because you loved me!" ([119:73-80](#)). Again the writer expressed his belief that God had afflicted him for his own spiritual good, because it had turned him to his word.

Worn out like a wineskin (119:81-88). Though worn out by persecution, the psalmist was also wearing himself out seeking comfort in God's word ([Psalm 119:81-82](#))!

Forever standing firm in the heavens (119:89-96). As surely as the earth itself endures, so also will God's word stand firm ([Psalm 119:89-91](#)). The psalmist hoped God's word would bring that same endurance to his own life ([Psalm 119:92-96](#)).

Wiser than his enemies, instructors, and elders (119:97-104). The psalmist had surpassed all his associates in wisdom ([Ps. 119:98-100](#)) because he studied and practiced God's law ([Ps. 119:99-100](#)).

A lamp and a light (119:105-112). God's word offered the psalmist both illumination and inspiration. Though his enemies always threatened, God's word was his heritage and joy ([Psalm 119:111](#)).

Depart, all you double-minded! (119:113-120). The psalmist would separate himself *from* the ungodly that he might separate himself *to* God's word ([Psalm 119:113, 115](#)).

A time for action! (119:121-128). While pleading for mercy for himself as a lover of God's law, the psalmist implored God to exercise justice against those who disregarded God's law.

"Easily understood, even by the uneducated!" (119:129-136). Even the "simple" can become wise through God's word. The writer "panted" for more of this wisdom ([Psalm 119:131](#); see [Psalm 42:1](#)) and expressed great sorrow over the widespread disobedience to God's law.

The Scriptures in the time of storm (119:137-144). Though consumed with anguish over the wickedness around him ([Psalm 119:139](#)), the psalmist found delight in God's word ([Psalm 119:143](#)).

Delighting in them day and night (119:145-152). Though many sinful people were near him, the psalmist found the Lord near as well ([Psalm 119:150-151](#)) as he arose before dawn and stayed awake at night contemplating the Scriptures.

Error-free and eternal (119:153-160). Amid persecution, the true believer can trust in a God whose words are totally trustworthy and will not change ([Psalm 119:160](#)).

"I pray seven times a day!" (119:161-168). In spite of persecution, the psalmist found peace and hope ([Psalm 119:165-166](#)) through his faithful and frequent practice of prayer.

"Come seek me," said the straying sheep to the Shepherd! (119:169-176). Confessing that he had gone astray, the psalmist declared that, nonetheless, he had not forgotten God's word, and he hoped that God would seek him ([Psalm 119:176](#)) and would hear, help, and save him ([Psalm 119:169-170, 173-174](#)).

[Psalm 120](#) *"I prefer peace; they want war!"* Describing himself as being "for peace," the psalmist prayed for deliverance from his neighbors, all of whom seemed to want war.

[Psalm 120-134](#) are titled "songs for the ascent to Jerusalem." Though the origin of this term is not known, these psalms may have been sung by pilgrims "ascending" to Jerusalem to worship at the Temple. If the 10 "songs" that are anonymous were authored by Hezekiah (see *Author*), these psalms may have had another purpose.

[Psalm 121](#) *Kept safe by the Creator of stars.* The psalmist was confident of being protected 24 hours a day by the very God "who made the heavens and the earth!"

[Psalm 122](#) *"If you pray for this place, may you prosper!"* Having come to Jerusalem to worship, the psalmist admired the city, prayed for its peace and prosperity, and invited others to do so as well, asking the Lord to bless those who so prayed.

Psalm 123 *Humbly seeking his heavenly hand.* Feeling the contempt of the rich and proud around him, the psalmist expressed humility before God, looking to him for help as a servant would look to his or her master.

Psalm 124 *Had he not helped, what would have happened?* Without the Lord, Israel would have been "swallowed alive" by its enemies ([Psalm 124:1-5](#)). The psalmist praised God for his protection.

Psalm 125 *A mountain surrounded by mountains.* Those who trust God are as unmovable as a mountain ([Psalm 125:1](#)) and are surrounded by the even greater mountains of the Lord's presence ([Psalm 125:2](#)). With this assurance, the psalmist was sure that God would overcome all evil ([Psalm 125:3-5](#)).

Psalm 126 *Rejoicing at their return.* The psalmist rejoiced with some people freed from captivity ([Psalm 126:1-3](#)) but also apparently prayed for those still held captive ([Psalm 126:4-6](#)). Many scholars have seen in this a description of Israel's first return from Babylonian exile ([Ezra 1-3](#)), following which they still faced much opposition as they tried to rebuild the Temple ([Ezra 4-6](#)).

Psalm 127 *Big houses, many children.* The person who builds without God's support labors in vain; the person who builds with God's support experiences his blessings even as he rests from his work. Likewise, he can experience the blessing of many children, who will protect him from his enemies as he gets older.

Psalm 128 *A fruitful vine and young olive trees.* The psalmist wished prosperous employment and a happy home to all who obeyed God's will.

Psalm 129 *Down often, but never out!* Israel had been persecuted many times but never totally destroyed ([Psalm 129:1-4](#)). The writer asked God to destroy Israel's enemies just as grass withers when it sprouts in the shallow soil on an ancient Mideastern housetop. Some scholars see in [Psalm 129:3](#) a prophecy of the scourging Christ endured before his crucifixion (see [John 19:1](#)).

Psalm 130 *There's hope! He doesn't keep score!* Sure that God was not interested in keeping a record of sins, the psalmist eagerly awaited his forgiveness and urged all Israel to share his confident "hope in the LORD."

Psalm 131 *"Be still, my soul."* David stood before God in quiet, humble contemplation, as a child before its mother, making God the focus of his hope and trust and urging his hearers to do likewise.

Psalm 132 *David's promise to God; God's promise to David.* The psalmist recalled David's promise to build a house for the Lord ([Psalm 132:1-5](#); see [2 Samuel 7:1-3](#)) and the return of the Ark to Jerusalem prior to that time ([Psalm 132:6-7](#); see [2 Samuel 6](#)). He then recalled the Lord's response to David's promise, as he promised to build David an everlasting house ([Psalm 132:11-18](#); see [2 Samuel 7:4-16](#)).

Psalm 133 *Fragrant like oil and dew.* David found in fragrant anointing oil and the dew on a mountain two fitting pictures of the blessedness of unity.

Psalm 134 *Worship him, all his servants!* The Songs of Ascents end with an exhortation to all who serve the Lord to praise him as well.

Psalm 135 *The bottom line: He lives; they don't.* The psalmist called the people to praise the Lord for his mighty works in history ([Psalm 135:4, 8-14](#)) and in creation ([Psalm 135:5-7](#)). The true God made his people, while the false gods were made *by* their people ([Ps. 135:15-18](#); see [Ps. 115:4-8](#)).

Psalm 136 *Thank him for Creation and redemption.* God is praised for his work in Creation ([Psalm 136:1-9](#)) and redemption ([Psalm 136:10-26](#)), with each successive recitation of his miraculous deeds calling forth the repeated response: "His faithful love endures forever."

Psalm 137 *Hanging up their silent harps.* An exile from Israel described the sorrow he and fellow exiles felt as they reached Babylon ([Psalm 137:1-6](#); see [2 Kings 25](#)). He prayed that God would severely punish their captors ([Psalm 137:7-9](#)).

Psalm 138 *"All kings would praise you if only . . ."* David declared that surely all kings of the earth will praise God when they hear the truth about him ([Psalm 138:4-5](#)). All kings of the earth, in fact all people both small and great, saved and unsaved, *will* someday bow before the King of kings (see [Phil. 2:10-11](#); [Rev. 5:13](#))!

Psalm 139 *A great king, amazed by a great God.* David praised God because God is

- *omniscient*: He knows our thoughts, our words, and our ways ([Psalm 139:1-6, 17-18](#)),
- *omnipresent*: His presence is felt in heaven, at the hour of death, in the most remote places, and in the darkest of nights ([Psalm 139:7-12](#)),
- *omnipotent*: He forms the delicate and complex human body within the mother's womb ([Psalm 139:13-16](#)).

David then called on the Lord to apply all his divine qualities to eradicating the ungodly people of the earth ([Psalm 139:19-22](#)). At the same time, he invited divine scrutiny of his own life and asked for the Lord's continued guidance ([Psalm 139:23-24](#)).

Psalm 140 *"Free me, capture them!"* David prayed that he would be delivered from slanderous enemies who planned to entrap him ([Psalm 140:1-5](#)) and that they would become trapped by their own plots ([Psalm 140:6-11](#)). Knowing God's goodness, he was sure that justice would prevail ([Psalm 140:12-13](#)).

Psalm 141 *"Remove me from the rebellious; rebuke me by the righteous!"* David prayed for inward sanctification ([Psalm 141:3-4](#)) and for outward separation from the ungodly ([Psalm 141:4](#)). He invited the rebuke of righteous people; when it is needed, said David, such rebuke is like "soothing medicine" ([Psalm 141:5](#)).

Psalm 142 *Refuge, rescue, and release.* Overwhelmed and all alone ([Psalm 142:1-4](#)), David was sure that God would hear his cry for refuge, rescue, and release ([Psalm 142:5-7](#)).

[Psalm 143](#) *Deliver! Guide! Revive!* Crushed by his enemies, David longed for time alone with God ([Psalm 143:3-6](#)) and for a victory such as God had brought Israel in "the days of old" ([Psalm 143:5](#); see [Psalm 77:5](#)). He prayed for deliverance and for spiritual guidance and revival ([Psalm 143:7-12](#)).

[Psalm 144](#) *A "passing shadow" prays for paradise.* Noting the greatness of God and the insignificance of humans ([Psalm 144:3-4](#)), David asked for God's divine help against his human enemies ([Psalm 144:5-7](#)). He envisioned a time of perfect peace and prosperity, with healthy children and livestock, and acknowledged that such a paradise could come only from God ([Psalm 144:12-15](#)).

[Psalm 145](#) *His majesty, might, and mercy.* David praised God for his mighty acts ([Psalm 145:1-7](#)), his mercy ([Psalm 145:8-9](#)), his everlasting kingdom ([Psalm 145:10-13](#)), his compassion ([Psalm 145:14-16](#)), and his mercy, provision, and protection ([Psalm 145:17-21](#)). Perhaps David's praise was for the benefit of his son Solomon (see [Psalm 145:4](#); compare [Deut. 4:9](#); [Deut. 6:7](#); [Isaiah 38:19](#)).

[Psalm 146](#) *"Trust him who is all and does all!"* Do not put your faith in humans, who will soon die ([Psalm 146:3-4](#)). Rather, trust the Lord, who created the universe and who defends the oppressed, feeds the hungry, restores sight to the blind, and protects the helpless ([Psalm 146:5-10](#)).

[Psalm 147](#) *Creator and Redeemer.* The same God who heals hurting hearts also numbers and names the stars ([Psalm 147:4-6](#)). The same God who sustains all of nature ([Psalm 147:7-18](#)) has also revealed himself in a special way to his chosen people ([Psalm 147:19-20](#)). God is both Creator and Redeemer, and takes special delight in those who hope for his redemption ([Psalm 147:11](#)).

[Psalm 148](#) *Recruiting a choir from heaven and earth.* The psalmist enlisted all the heavenly hosts ([Psalm 148:1-6](#)) and everything on earth, both animate and inanimate ([Psalm 148:7-12](#)), to praise the Lord.

[Psalm 149](#) *With a song and a sword.* Israel was to joyfully exalt the person of God while at the same time exacting punishment from God on nations that rejected him.

[Psalm 150](#) *"Let everything praise him!"* This last psalm calls God's people, along with "everything that lives," to praise him—with the voice plus any available musical instrument. [Psalm 150](#) in its entirety is apparently the doxology for the psalms comprising Book Five.

A TOPICAL OVERVIEW OF THE PSALMS

ATTRIBUTES OF GOD PSALMS

The following are just a few of the Psalms' descriptions of God:

Eternality ([Psalm 90](#); [Psalm 102](#))

Glory ([Psalm 96](#); [Psalm 113](#))

Goodness ([Psalm 27](#); [Psalm 107](#))

Holiness ([Psalm 99](#))
Justice ([Psalm 75](#); [Psalm 82](#); [Psalm 94](#))
Majesty ([Psalm 18](#); [Psalm 93](#); [Psalm 97](#))
Mercy ([Psalm 86](#); [Psalm 136](#))
Omnipotence ([Psalm 18](#); [Psalm 33](#); [Psalm 76](#); [Psalm 146](#))
Omnipresence ([Psalm 139](#))
Omniscience ([Psalm 139](#); [Psalm 147](#))
Providential care ([Psalm 65](#); [Psalm 104](#))
Unfailing Love ([Psalm 36](#))
Uniqueness ([Psalm 115](#); [Psalm 135](#))

MESSIANIC PSALMS

Passages from the Psalms reveal many things about the coming Messiah, including his

Creative power ([Psalm 102:25-27](#); [John 1:3](#), [10](#); [Hebrews 1:10-12](#))
Obedience to the Father ([Psalm 40:6-8](#); [Hebrews 10:5-7](#))
Zeal for the Father ([Psalm 69:9](#); [John 2:17](#))
Faithfulness as a shepherd ([Psalm 23](#); [John 10](#))
Rejection by Israel ([Psalm 118:22-23](#); [Matthew 21:42](#))
Praise by little children ([Psalm 8:2](#); [Matthew 21:16](#))
Betrayal by a friend:
 the treachery of Judas ([Psalm 41:9](#); [Psalm 55:12-14](#); [Matthew 26:47-50](#); [John 13:18](#))
 the tragedy of Judas ([Psalm 69:25](#); [Psalm 109:6-8](#); [Acts 1:18-20](#))
Slander by false witnesses ([Psalm 27:12](#); [Psalm 109:2-3](#); [Matthew 26:59-61](#))
Suffering and death:
 forsaken by God ([Psalm 22:6-8](#); [Matthew 27:39-43](#))
 ridiculed ([Psalm 22:6-8](#); [Matthew 27:39-43](#))
 beaten ([Psalm 129:3](#); [John 19:1](#))
 prayed for his enemies ([Psalm 109:4](#); [Luke 23:34](#))
 hands and feet pierced ([Psalm 22:16](#); [Luke 24:39-40](#))
 given sour wine to drink ([Psalm 69:21](#); [Matthew 27:34](#), [48](#))
 garments gambled for ([Psalm 22:18](#); [Matthew 27:35](#))
 none of his bones broken ([Psalm 34:20](#); [John 19:36](#))
Resurrection ([Psalm 16:8-11](#); [Matthew 28:1-6](#); [Acts 2:25-32](#); [Acts 13:35](#))
Ascension ([Psalm 68:18](#); [Luke 24:50-51](#); [Ephes. 4:8](#))
Victorious entrance into heaven ([Psalm 24:7-10](#); [Rev. 7:9-12](#))
High Priestly work ([Psalm 110:1](#), [4](#); [Matthew 22:44](#); [Hebrews 5:6](#); [Hebrews 7:17](#))
Marriage to the church:
 description of the bridegroom ([Psalm 45:2](#), [6-8](#); [Luke 4:22](#); [Hebrews 1:8-9](#))
 description of the bride ([Psalm 45:9](#), [13-15](#); [Rev. 19:7-9](#))
Destruction of the heathen ([Psalm 2:1-9](#); [Acts 4:25-26](#); [Rev. 6:12-17](#))
Millennial reign ([Psalm 45:6](#); [Psalm 72:17](#); [Psalm 98:4-9](#); [Hebrews 1:8](#); [Rev. 11:15](#))

RELATIONSHIP PSALMS

___ Psalm ___ *The Shepherd and his flock (22-24)*

The Good Shepherd ([Psalm 22](#)) describes the sacrifice of Christ—his past work ([John 10:11](#))

The Great Shepherd ([Psalm 23](#)) describes the sufficiency of Christ—his present work ([Hebrews 13:20-21](#))

The Chief Shepherd ([Psalm 24](#)) describes the sovereignty of Christ—his future work ([1 Peter 5:4](#))

— Psalm *The Son and his Father* (2, 40, 45, 102, 110)

Five conversations between God the Father and God the Son are recorded in these five psalms relating to:

- his role at Creation ([Psalm 102:25-27](#); [Hebrews 1:10-12](#))—words of the Father to the Son
- his earthly obedience ([Psalm 40:6-8](#); [Hebrews 10:5-9](#))—words of the Son to the Father
- his anointing ([Psalm 45:6-7](#); [Hebrews 1:8-9](#))—words of the Father to the Son
- his eternal priesthood ([Psalm 110:1, 4](#); [Hebrews 7:17, 21](#))—words of the Father to the Son
- his victory at Armageddon ([Psalm 2:6-9](#); [Rev. 2:27](#))—words of the Father and Son to each other

SPECIAL-EVENT PSALMS

Events in Israel's history

- Departure from Egypt and arrival in Canaan ([Psalm 114](#); [Exodus 12-14](#); [Joshua 1-3](#))
- Sin at Kadesh-barnea ([Psalm 90](#); [Numbers 13-14](#))
- Marriage of King Solomon ([Psalm 45](#); [1 Kings 3:1](#))
- Death angel deliverance of Jerusalem ([Psalm 48](#); [Psalm 67](#); [Psalm 121](#); [2 Kings 19](#); [Isaiah 37](#))
- Destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar ([Psalm 74](#); [Psalm 79](#); [Psalm 80](#); [2 Kings 25](#); [2 Chron. 36](#))
- Babylonian captivity ([Psalm 137](#); [2 Kings 25](#); [2 Chron. 36](#))
- Return from Babylonian captivity:
 - Praise by the returning remnant ([Psalm 126](#); [Ezra 1-2](#))
 - Prayer by the returning remnant ([Psalm 85](#); [Ezra 3-5](#))
- Dedication of the second Temple ([Psalm 92](#); [Ezra 6](#))

Events in the life of David

- Living in Saul's court ([Psalm 11](#); [1 Samuel 18](#))
- Saved from Saul by Michal ([Psalm 59](#); [1 Samuel 19:11-18](#))
- Fleeing from Saul ([Psalm 63](#); [Psalm 143](#); [1 Samuel 19-31](#))
- Escape from Achish ([Psalm 34](#); [Psalm 56](#); [1 Samuel 21](#))
- Slaughter of priests at Nob ([Psalm 52](#); [1 Samuel 22:17-23](#))
- Living in cave of Adullam ([Psalm 57](#); [Psalm 142](#); [1 Samuel 22](#))
- Betrayal by Ziphites ([Psalm 54](#); [1 Samuel 23](#))
- End of Saul's efforts to kill him ([Psalm 18](#); [1 Samuel 26-31](#); see [2 Samuel 22](#))
- Return of Ark to Jerusalem ([Psalm 15](#); [Psalm 24](#); [Psalm 68](#); [Psalm 132](#); [2 Samuel 6](#))
- Joab's victory over Edomites ([Psalm 60](#); [2 Samuel 8](#))
- Establishment of David's kingdom ([Psalm 21](#); [2 Samuel 8](#))
- Sin with Bathsheba ([Psalm 32](#); [Psalm 51](#); [2 Samuel 11-12](#))
- Flight from Absalom ([Psalm 3](#); [Psalm 4](#); [Psalm 35](#); [Psalm 41](#); [2 Samuel 15-18](#))
- Cursed by Shimei ("Cush") ([Psalm 7](#); [2 Samuel 16:5-14](#))
- Dedication of building materials for Temple ([Psalm 30](#); [1 Chron. 29](#))
- Coronation of Solomon ([Psalm 72](#); [1 Chron. 29:21-25](#))

Future events

- Tribulation ([Psalm 46](#); [Matthew 24](#); [Rev. 6-19](#))
- Millennium ([Psalm 47](#); [Psalm 98](#); [Rev. 20](#))