

The Psalms of David



This is a chronological study of some of the Psalms written by David, the King in association with the historical events that contributed to their composition. This study is best suited to be a companion to that of 1 and 2 Samuel. Emphasis will be given to the Messianic Psalms written in this period with a view to familiarizing the student with that aspect of Old Testament prophecy concerning the coming of the Son of God into the world.

The Psalms of David

Lesson One: *The Shepherd's Hymn*

Lesson Aim: Understand this first Psalm of David probably written shortly after he was anointed to be king while he still kept his father's flocks in Bethlehem.

Lesson Text: Psalm 23

Background Text: 1 Samuel 16:1-23 and 17:20,32-37

Questions About This Psalm

1. What events in David's life form the background for this psalm?
2. What is the significance of designating Jehovah as "My Shepherd"?
3. What does the Psalmist portray by picturing the shepherd causing his sheep to "lie down" in green pastures or being led by "still waters"?
4. How does our Shepherd restore the soul?
5. What is the "valley of the shadow of death"?
6. What distinction in function is to be made between the "rod" and the "staff" of the shepherd? How do they "comfort" the flock? To what does this refer in giving comfort to the believer?
7. What is the "table" to which David refers?
8. In what sense did David's cup "run over"?
9. Why is David convinced of continual blessings in his life?
10. What is the "house of the Lord" to which David refers? What does it mean to "dwell" there? How could he dwell there "forever"?

Summary

Summarize the message of this Psalm for the child of God today.

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Lesson Two: *The Lord Our Shield*

Lesson Aim: Understand this Psalm that David wrote when Saul sent assassins to watch his house in order to kill him.

Lesson Text: Psalm 59

Background Text: 1 Samuel 18:11-18

Questions About This Psalm

1. What particular experience of David forms the background of this Psalm?
2. How does David describe his enemies in this Psalm?
3. How do David's enemies sin against him?
4. How does David describe himself with respect to his own righteousness?
5. What does David ask God to do to his enemies?
6. Why does he ask God to "slay them not"?
7. What does Jehovah's authority over the nations have to do with David's desire upon his enemies? (See: vv. 5,8,13,16)
8. What does David mean when he says God will "laugh" at the heathen?
9. What does "grudge" mean in verse 15?
10. In what terms does David describe his relationship to Jehovah?

Summary

Summarize the message of this Psalm for practical application in the life of the Christian.

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Lesson Three: *The Man That Made Not God His Strength*

Lesson Aim: Understand this Psalm that David wrote after Doeg the Edomite bore false witness against David and the priests of Nob before Saul.

Lesson Text: Psalm 52

Background Text: 1 Samuel 21:1-9 and 22:6-23

Questions About This Psalm

1. What events in the life of David provide the background circumstances of this Psalm?
2. How does David describe Doeg the Edomite?
3. With what sins does David charge Doeg?
4. What did David predict God would do to Doeg?
5. What effect would Doeg's punishment have upon the righteous?
6. In what did Doeg trust?
7. What does David mean when he says, "The goodness of God endureth forever"?
8. What did Doeg love more than good and righteousness?
9. How does David describe himself?
10. What three things does David say he did which assure his standing with God?

Summary

Summarize in your own words the practical message of this Psalm for the Christian.

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Lesson Four: *I Will not Be Afraid of What Man Can Do to Me*

Lesson Aim: Understand this Psalm that David wrote after he was taken by the Philistines in Gath.

Lesson Text: Psalm 56

Background Text: 1 Samuel 21:10-15; 29:1-5

Questions About This Psalm

1. What event in the life of David was the basis for this Psalm? (See: 1 Samuel 21:12; cf. v. 3)
2. How does David describe his condition in Gath?
3. What evil do the men of Gath work against him?
4. How do you reconcile David's fear with his faith in God? (Matthew 8:26)
5. What attributes does David ascribe to God in this Psalm?
6. To what "wandering" does David refer?
7. What "bottle" and "book" does God have?
8. What does David predict these enemies will do in the future? (See: v. 9) Did this happen?
9. What promise did God make to David? What confidence does he have in this promise? (See: v. 10).
10. To what conclusion does David come concerning God's activity on his behalf?

Summary

Summarize the message of this Psalm so that you can make practical use of it today.

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Lesson Five: *The Eyes the Lord Are Upon the Righteous*

Lesson Aim: Understand this Psalm that David wrote after he fled from Saul to Achish in Gath and feigned madness for fear of losing his life.

Lesson Text: Psalm 34

Background Text: 1 Samuel 21:10-15

Questions About This Psalm

1. What events are in the background of this Psalm?
2. Why was David praising Jehovah? Was he alone in this praise?
3. Why would the “humble” be glad to hear it?
4. Identify the blessings that David had as a servant of Jehovah? (Use the back of this sheet to list them.)
5. What does David mean by a good life? (See: vv. 12,14)
6. What is David’s formula for a “good” life?
7. According to David, upon what conditions does God bestow his blessings? (See: v. 18) Are the conditions the same today?
8. What does it mean to be delivered out of our troubles and afflictions? (See: vv. 17,19)
9. What does David say is the destiny of those who hate the righteous?
10. What does it mean to be “desolate”? (v. 22)

Summary

Summarize the message of this Psalm in order to know a good life and be acceptable to God.

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Lesson Six: *My Heart Is Fixed, O God*

Lesson Aim: Understand these Psalms that David wrote while he was hiding from Saul in the Cave of Adullam when Gad, David's seer, came to him.

Lesson Text: Psalms 57 and 142

Background Text: 1 Samuel 22:1-5; 2 Samuel 23:13-16; 1 Chronicles 11:15-19

Questions About This Psalm

1. What circumstances in the life of David provide the historical background of these psalms?
2. For what does David pray in Psalm 57?
3. How does David describe his enemies in this psalm?
4. What does the psalm reveal about David's convictions at this time in his life?
5. What has faith given to David?
6. In Psalm 142, how does David view himself?
7. Who was David's only help in this world?
8. How does David characterize his enemies in Psalm 142?
9. What is David's state of mind in this psalm?
10. However, of what is David still confident?

Summary

What is the message of Psalm 57? What is the message of Psalm 142?

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Lesson Seven: *Psalm of the Slandered Saint*

Lesson Aim: Understand this Psalm that David penned after some kinsman of Saul slandered him.

Lesson Text: Psalm 7

Background Text: 1 Samuel 24:6-8; 26:13-25

Questions About This Psalm

1. What event in the conflict between David and Saul was the experience from which David drew in order to pen this psalm?
2. How does David begin this psalm?
3. What does David acknowledge would justify the treatment he is receiving? Does David admit any guilt?
4. In verse six, when David pleads for God to “arise” does he think that God is asleep? (Cf. Psalm 121:3,4)
5. To what attribute of God does David appeal in his prayer for deliverance?
6. What is David willing for God to do? (See: vv. 8,10)
7. Who are the congregation of the people in verse seven? What will they do as they “compass” God about?
8. Whose sword is “whetted” and whose bow is “bent” in verse 12 and 13?
9. What two figures does David use to describe the judgment of the wicked?
10. What important truth do we learn about evil from this psalm?

Summary

Summarize the message of Psalm 7.

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Lesson Eight: *The Lord is My Rock, My Fortress, My Buckler and My Tower*

Lesson Aim: Understand this Psalm that David wrote after he was delivered from Saul and all his enemies.

Lesson Text: Psalm 18

Background Text: 2 Samuel 22:1-51

Questions About This Psalm

1. What does David state as his intent in the first three verses of this psalm?
2. How does David describe the peril he faced from his enemy Saul? (Note: vv. 4,15,16)
3. How is God pictured in this psalm? (Consider: vv. 6-17)
4. Where is the Temple to which David refers in verse six?
5. What is the character of the man whom God rescues from trouble? (Vv. 20-27)
6. Unto whom does David ascribe his success in all his conflicts?
7. To what does David refer in verse 43?
8. Who is the "violent man"?
9. Where in the New Testament is this psalm quoted?
10. What great blessing does David have in his view in verse 49 and 50?

Summary

What message do you derive from this psalm to give you comfort in your struggles against your enemies?

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Lesson Nine: *Vain Is the Help of Man*

Lesson Aim: Understand this Psalm that David wrote upon coming to the throne in the wake of the disorder that followed the removal of Saul as King over Israel.

Lesson Text: Psalm 60

Background Text: 1 Chronicles 17:16 through 19:19 also 2 Samuel 3,4 and 21:1-14

Questions About This Psalm

1. What is the historical background of this psalm?
2. When did God afflict the land of Canaan during the reign of David? Why?
3. With what was God displeased in Israel at this time? What had God done in His displeasure?
4. What is the “wine of astonishment”?
5. What is the “banner” God had given to them that feared Him?
6. Who are the beloved of God in verse five?
7. What did God speak to David?
8. What is the significance of mentioning Shechem, Succoth, Manasseh, Ephraim, Judah, Moab, Edom and Philistia in this psalm?
9. When did the events mentioned in verse ten occur?
10. What does David conclude about the power and superiority of Israel over the nations?

Summary

What practical message does this psalm contain for the Church of Christ today?

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Lesson Ten: *Have Mercy Upon Me, O God*

Lesson Aim: Understand this Psalm written by David after being confronted by Nathan the prophet in the matter of Bathsheba and Uriah the Hittite.

Lesson Text: Psalm 51

Background Text: 2 Samuel 11 and 12

Questions About This Psalm

1. What event in the life of David occasioned the writing of this psalm?
2. What does David do in the very beginning of this psalm?
3. Upon what attribute of God is David relying as he pleads with Him?
4. Since David had sinned against not only Uriah, but also Bathsheba and Joab, how do you explain the statement of David in verse four?
5. To what does David refer in verse five?
6. How does David describe the forgiveness of sins?
7. What is the fruit of repentance in a believer? (Vv. 12-15)
8. What did David know that the Pharisees of Jesus' day did not? (See: Matthew 12:7)
9. What are the sacrifices God wants and accepts? What does this mean?
10. For what is David praying in verse 18 and 19? (Cf. 2 Samuel 12:12-14)

Summary

What message of hope and assurance is there in this psalm for us today?

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Lesson Eleven: *Blessed Is the Man Whose Sin Is Covered*

Lesson Aim: Understand this Psalm written by David when he had time to reflect upon the mercy of God extended to him after his sin with Bathsheba.

Lesson Text: Psalm 32

Background Text: 2 Samuel 11 and 12

Questions About This Psalm

1. When did David probably write this psalm?
2. Unto whom does David ascribe “blessedness”?
3. What is “guile”? To what in his own life does David refer here?
4. What affect did David’s sin have upon his conscience?
5. Unto whom does David say God forgives sin?
6. In an earlier psalm the floods of waters referred to the oppressions of David’s enemies; to what do they refer in this psalm?
7. How does David describe Jehovah in this psalm? (v. 7)
8. What does David say he will become to men who have had troubles similar to his?
9. Against what does David warn others when it comes to seeking forgiveness of sins?
10. Where in the New Testament is this psalm quoted? What application does the writer make of it?

Summary

Summarize the message of this psalm for men seeking forgiveness of their sins and errors today.

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Lesson Twelve: *I Will Not Be Afraid of Ten Thousands of People*

Lesson Aim: Understand this Psalm written by David as he fled from Absalom during his attempt to wrest the Kingdom away from him.

Lesson Text: Psalm 3

Background Text: 2 Samuel 15 through 18

Questions About This Psalm

1. What is the historical background of this psalm?
2. Who are among those whom David has in mind in verse one?
3. How does David describe Jehovah in this psalm? (v. 3)
4. What was the opinion of David's enemies about him?
5. What is the significance of lifting up the head?
6. Unto what place did David pray? Why? Where is this place?
7. Was David exaggerating in verse six?
8. How was David able to sleep at night?
9. Is verse seven to be understood literally?
10. What does David mean when he says, "Salvation belongeth unto the Lord"?

Summary

Summarize the message of this psalm for practical use by Christians.

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Lesson Thirteen: *In the Shadow of His Wings*

Lesson Aim: Understand this Psalm which David wrote while he was hiding in the wilderness of Judah having fled from Absalom.

Lesson Text: Psalm 63

Background Text: 2 Samuel 15 through 18

Questions About This Psalm

1. What evidence is there in this psalm that suggests a later rather than an earlier date of origin?
2. How does David describe his yearning for God? Have you ever felt like this?
3. Where had David seen the power and glory of God? What does this imply?
4. What did David think was better than life? How would such a thought be comforting in his circumstances?
5. When and where did David refresh his spirit with thoughts of Jehovah?
6. To what does the “shadow of his wings” refer? Why would David rejoice there?
7. What is the significance of God’s “right hand”?
8. What are the “lower parts of the earth”?
9. What is a “portion for foxes”? What does this mean?
10. What does David believe will be the outcome of his trial?

Summary

Summarize the message of this psalm in order to have a word of comfort for your day of trial.