**The Book of Psalms—Study Guide (Psalms 18-23)**

The Bible always takes precedence in our study of God’s Word (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21). This guide, therefore, is just a “help” and is compiled from commentaries, Ambassador College notes, & personal study.

**Psalm 18: To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David, the servant of the Lord, who spoke to the Lord the words of this song on the day that the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul [This Psalm is also written in 2 Samuel 22]. And he said:**

1: David began by emphasizing his love (deep and fervent affection) for God, his strength.

2-3: He also noted that God was his rock (a mountain crag “Sela”—1 Samuel 23:25-26, 28), his fortress and his deliverer. God was his shield, horn (irresistible strength) of his salvation, and his stronghold in which he trusted. He called upon God, who is worthy to be praised, and so he was saved from his enemies.

4-6: The pangs of death surrounded him, the floods of ungodliness made him afraid, the sorrows of the grave and the snares of death confronted him (See 1 Samuel 20:3). In his distress he called upon God, and God heard his voice from His temple, and his cry came to Him, even to His ears.

7-9: Then the earth shook; the foundations of the hills were shaken because God was angry. Smoke went up from His nostrils and fire from His mouth. He bowed the heavens and came down with darkness under His feet.

10-12: He rode upon a cherub (Ezekiel 2:22-28) and flew upon the wings of the wind. He made darkness His secret place, and His canopies around Him were dark waters, and thick clouds. From the brightness before Him, His thick clouds passed with hailstones and coals of fire. See Psalm 97:1-6—which refers to Christ’s return.

13-15: God thundered from heaven. He uttered His voice and sent out His arrows and scattered the foes. Lightning was in abundance and He vanquished the enemies. The channels of the sea were seen, the foundations of the world were uncovered--at God’s rebuke, and a blast from His nostrils. See also Exodus 15:8.

16-19: God sent from above and drew David out of many waters (Psalm 144:7), delivered him from his strong enemies and from those who hated him. The enemies confronted him in the day of his calamity, but the Lord was his support. God brought him out into a broad place, and delivered him because God delighted in him.

20-24: God rewarded and recompensed David according to his righteousness, and the cleanness of his hands (unstained by wrong—Psalm 24:4, 26:6). David kept the ways of God; he did not wickedly depart from Him. God’s judgments were before him, and he didn’t put away His statutes. He was blameless and kept himself away from iniquity. Therefore God recompensed him according to his righteousness and cleanness.

25-27: With the merciful, God will show Himself merciful. With the blameless, God will show Himself blameless. With the pure, God will show Himself pure, and with the devious, God will show Himself shrewd (adverse--to the sins of the wicked). God will save the humble people and will bring down the haughty looks.

28-30: The Lord God will light our lamp and will lighten our darkness. By God, we can run against a troop, and by Him, we can leap over a wall. As for God, His way is perfect (Deuteronomy 32:3-4). His word is proven and He is a shield for all those who put their trust in Him.

31-34: Who is a rock except for our God? (Notice 1 Corinthians 10:4). It is God who arms us with strength, makes our ways perfect, makes our feet like a deer (to be swift and agile), and sets us up on high places. See Habakkuk 3:18-19. He taught David how to make war and bend a bow of bronze (no glorification of war is intended; only the fact that God divinely equipped David for his self-defense—see also Psalm 144:1-2).

35-36: God gives us the shield of salvation. His right hand holds us up, and His gentleness makes us great. He enlarges our path under us so that our feet do not slip.

37-39: David pursued his enemies until they were gone. They were wounded and unable to rise again. God was the One who armed him and subdued those under him.

40-42: God gave David the necks of his enemies. They cried out, but none was able to save them. Even to the Lord, they cried out, but He didn’t answer them. David beat them as fine as dust before the wind, and they were cast out as dirt into the streets.

43-45: God delivered David from the strivings of the people. David was made the head of nations. People that he never knew would serve him and foreigners would come from their hideouts and submit to him. (See 2 Samuel 8:1-2ff). Notice the end-time fulfillment of this in Jeremiah 30:8-9, Micah 7:17, and Ezekiel 34:23-24.

46-47: The Lord lives. Blessed be our Rock. The God of our salvation is to be exalted. It is God who avenges us and subdues those under us.

48-49: God lifts us up above those who rise against us. He delivers us from violent men. Therefore, I will give thanks to You, O Lord, among the Gentiles. (This is quoted in Romans 15:9—that the Gentiles would rejoice and glorify God through Jesus Christ).

50: God had given great deliverance to David. He showed mercy to David and his descendants forevermore.

**Psalm 19: A Psalm of David (To the Chief Musician).**

1: The heavens (the stars and galaxies) and the firmament (the expanse of the sky above the earth) declare God’s glory and His handiwork.

2-4: Both day and night reveal the knowledge and might of God to the whole world.

5-6: In them (day and night) He has set a tabernacle for the sun, which is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and as a strong man ready to run his race. The rising of the sun is from one end of heaven with its circuit to the other end—where nothing is hidden from its heat.

7-8: The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul. God’s testimony is sure and makes the simple wise. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart, and His commandment is pure, enlightening the eyes.

9-11: The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever. God’s judgments are true and righteous altogether. They are to be desired more than gold, and are sweeter than honey. Moreover, they warn us how we ought to live, and in keeping them is great reward. See Proverbs 22:4.

12-13: Who can understand one’s errors? So we have to ask God to cleanse us from secret faults, and to keep us back from presumptuous sins so they don’t have dominion over us. Then we will be innocent and blameless.

14: David asked that his words and the meditation of his heart would be acceptable in God’s sight. The Lord is our strength and our Redeemer.

**Psalm 20: A Psalm of David (To the Chief Musician).**

1-3: May the Lord answer you in the day of trouble; may the God of Jacob defend you, may He send help from the sanctuary, and may He remember all your offerings and accept your burnt sacrifice. Selah. (According to Soncino, this Psalm is titled, “A prayer before a battle.”)

4-5: May He grant you according to your heart’s desires, and fulfill your purpose. In the name of God we will set up our banners (See Isaiah 11:12; 13:2-3). May the Lord fulfill all of your petitions.

6: The Lord will save His anointed. He will answer him from heaven with the saving strength of His right hand.

7-8: Some trust in chariots and horses (as did Pharaoh in Exodus 14:6-7, and as the Syrians in 2 Samuel 10:18), but we will remember the name of the Lord our God. They (chariots and horses) have bowed and fallen, but we have risen and stand upright.

9: Save, Lord! May the King answer us when we call.

**Psalm 21: A Psalm of David (To the Chief Musician).**

1-2: The king (David) shall have joy in God’s strength, and will rejoice in His salvation. God gave David his heart’s desires and did not withhold the request of his lips. Selah.

3-4: God meets him with blessings of goodness and sets a crown of gold on his head (See 2 Samuel 12:29-30). This will also occur in the future. David asked life from God, and God will give it to him—length of days forever and ever.

5-7: David’s glory will be great in God’s salvation. God will place upon him both honor and majesty. God made him most blessed forever, and will make him exceeding glad in His presence. The king trusts in God, and it is through God’s mercy that the king shall not be moved.

8-9: God’s hand will find all of His enemies, and will find those who hate Him. They will be made as a fiery oven in the time of God’s anger. The Lord will swallow them up in His wrath, and fire will devour them.

10-11: God will destroy the wicked’s offspring and descendants because they intended to do evil against God. They devised a plot which they were unable to perform. See Psalm 83:1-8 as an example of a devious plot.

12: God will make them turn their back, and He will make ready His arrows toward their faces. (He will cause His enemies to flee, but He’ll get ahead of them to aim His arrows at their faces).

13: Be exalted, O Lord, in Your strength. We will sing and give praise to Your name.

**Psalm 22: A Psalm of David (To the Chief Musician). Set to the melody of “The Deer of the Morning.”**

1: These are the words Jesus spoke just before He died: “My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?” See Mark 15:34 and Matthew 27:46.

2: David then speaks of His crying out to God in the daytime, and of not being silent in the night, but that God does not hear.

3-5: But, David knows God is holy, enthroned in the praises (and prayers) of Israel (over the years). The fathers trusted in Him and He delivered them. They cried out to Him and were delivered. They trusted in Him and were not ashamed.

6-8: Here is another prophecy about the sacrifice of Christ: He was a worm (meaning being trodden underfoot and treated with contempt, and disfigured as a man by cruelty—Isaiah 52:14). He was a reproach to men and despised (See Isaiah 53:3). He was ridiculed, and was taunted by the words: “He trusted in the Lord, let Him rescue Him; Let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him.” See Matthew 27:39-43.

9-11: God was with Christ from the womb. Christ trusted God from the womb and God was His God from the womb. Trouble was near—His upcoming death—and no one was able to help except for God.

12-13: Strong bulls of Bashan (an area east of the Jordan River famous for its pastures and cattle) surrounded Christ. They gaped at Him with their mouths like a roaring lion. (Bulls will circle and charge someone).

14-15: He was poured out like water. His bones were out of joint. His heart melted like wax. His strength was dried up. His tongue cleaved to His jaws (because of thirst—John 19:28). He was brought to the dust of death.

16-18: Dogs (referring to cruel and fierce persons) surrounded Him. They pierced His hands and His feet (See Luke 24:38-40). He could count (see) His own bones. They divided His garments, and cast lots for His clothing (Matthew 27:35, John 19:23-24).

19-21: Christ prayed asking God not to be far from Him. God was His strength to be delivered from the sword and the power of the dog (verse 16); to be saved from the lion’s mouth and the horns of the wild oxen (verses 12-13). God answered Him.

22: Christ would declare God’s name to His brethren, as well, in the midst of the assembly (Hebrews 2:12).

23-24: You, who fear the Lord, praise Him. All the descendants of Jacob glorify Him, and the offspring of Israel, fear Him. For God has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted. (Hebrews 4:15-16).

Nor did God hide His face from Him, and when He cried to Him, God heard (See Luke 22:41-43).

25-26: My praise will be of God in the great assembly. My vows to God will be paid before those who fear Him. The poor will eat and be satisfied. Those who seek Him will praise the Lord. Let your heart live forever. (This is all millennial when Christ returns).

27-28: All the ends of the world will remember and turn to the Lord. The nations shall worship God. The kingdom is the Lord’s and He rules over all nations. See Zechariah 14:9, 16-17; Isaiah 66:23.

29-31: All the prosperous of the earth shall eat and worship. All those who go down to the dust shall worship Him (in the resurrection). A posterity shall serve Him, and it will be recounted of the Lord to the next generation. They will come and declare His righteousness to a people who will be born, that He has done this. (This is the theme that will be transmitted throughout all times).

**Psalm 23: A Psalm of David.**

1: The Lord is our Shepherd (Isaiah 40:11) and will provide for all our needs. See Philippians 4:19.We shall not suffer want or deprivation.

2-3: God gives us green pastures (Ezekiel 34:14-15), and leads us by still waters (peace of mind—see John 14:27). He restores our soul, and leads us in the paths of righteousness. He does this all for His name’s sake.

4: Though we walk through the valley of the shadow of death (or deep gloom), we will fear no evil; for the Lord is with us. God’s rod and staff comforts us. See Isaiah 43:1-2.

5: God prepares a table (a bounteous feast and security) even in the presence of our enemies. He anoints our head with oil—as rulers (kings and priests) in the future. (Also, with the oil of gladness: Psalm 45:6-8).

6: Goodness and mercy will follow us all the days of our life, and we will dwell in God’s house forever.