

Bible Reading Notes
Psalms 73~150

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Psalm 73

Asaph recounts his struggles when he is overcome with envy (v. 3) and notices that the wicked do not seem to suffer as the righteous do.

73:4ff – reflect the same language as Job 21 when Job responds to the false assertion that the wicked do not prosper.

73:17 – It is in the presence of the Lord and in light of his revelation that the righteous gain a right perspective.

73:25-26 – The righteous will find that earthly wealth is nothing in comparison to a relationship with the Lord.

Psalm 74

This psalm and the next were written after the fall of Jerusalem.

74:4-8 – These verses reflect the destruction the Babylonians brought on Jerusalem.

74:8ff – God my King – In spite of the circumstances around him, the psalmist confirms that the Lord is still King of all things.

74:20 – covenant – The Lord had not forgotten his covenant. Part of the covenant was the curses that the Lord had promised if his people were unfaithful. Asaph wants the Lord to have regard in the sense of restoring the covenant blessings to his people.

Psalm 75

75:1 – Contrast to the sense of rejection in Psalm 60

75:6-8 – It is God alone who determines who is lifted up and who is brought down.

Psalm 76

This psalm is focusing on the glory of Zion as the place where God dwells.

76:2 – Salem – This was the former name of the city of Jerusalem in the days of the patriarchs (Genesis 14:18).

76:3 – Asaph is reflecting on the times that the Lord has spared and protected his people from their enemies.

76:10-12 – At some point even the wicked will be forced to recognize the glory of the Lord.

Psalm 77

77:1-9 - Asaph feels overwhelmed with his trouble, and it seems that the Lord is not coming to his aid.

77:10-20 – In faith, Asaph responds by remembering what God has done in the past (especially the exodus) and expresses confidence in the Lord for his future.

Psalm 78

78:1 – teaching – The psalm is meant to provide instruction for future generations so they will avoid the sin of their forefathers.

Psalm 78 recounts from the exodus to the reign of David the history of redemption and God's dealings with his people.

Notice the pattern of the psalm – God was good to his people (vv. 9ff), yet they responded with sin (vv. 17ff). Yet, in spite of Israel's sin, the Lord blessed them in the wilderness (vv. 21ff). But Israel still sinned (vv. 22ff). The Lord responded by saving his people (vv. 38ff), but Israel tested and rebelled against the Lord (vv. 56ff).

Psalm 79

79:9 – Asaph's motivation for prayer is that the glory and honor of God's name would be lifted up and recognized among the nations.

How much of your prayer life is motivated by your desire to see God glorified in contrast to having your desires met?

Psalm 80

80:3, 7, 19 – let your face shine – Language from the Aaronic Blessing in Numbers 6:24-26. Prayer is for the presence of God among his people, particularly to restore them.

80:8ff – Israel is described as a vine planted by the Lord.

80:12 – Why then – The answer is because of Israel's great sin and idolatry.

Psalm 81

Psalm 81 is a plea from the Lord for Israel to listen to him and walk in his ways.

81:3 – New moon...full moon – Some commentators believe this psalm was used at the Feast of Trumpets and Feast of Booths.

81:8 – if you would listen to me – A similar lament is mentioned three times in the psalm (vv. 8, 11, 13).

81:14-16 – Blessings which flow from listening to the Lord and his Word.

Psalm 82

82:1, 6 – gods – The gods here are the rulers that God has placed in authority and who rule as his servants.

82:6 – You are gods – Jesus quoted this in John 10:34.

82:8 – Because human rulers often fail to support the weak and afflicted, the psalmist prays that God will come to their rescue.

Psalm 83

Psalm 83 – Today this psalm would not be properly used as a prayer if America was going to war, but rather as a prayer for the defeat of our spiritual enemies who seek to destroy the church.

83:6-8 – This great army is reminiscent of the nations which came up against Jehoshaphat in Thursday's reading from 2 Chronicles 20.

83:9-11 – The psalmist prays that the Lord will destroy Israel's enemies as he did in the days of the Judges.

Psalm 84

Psalm 84 is one of the songs we use to open our worship service expressing our desire to be in the Lord's presence.

There is no building in which God especially dwells as he did in the Old Testament tabernacle/temple. But we still share the longing of the psalmists to experience the presence of the Lord.

Psalm 85

Psalm 85 is the song of a people who had once been forgiven and blessed by the Lord (vv. 1-3). Now they do not feel that same blessing and ask the Lord to once again restore his blessings to them (vv. 4-7). The song ends with confidence that the Lord will once again come to his people with blessings (vv. 8-13).

Psalm 86

86:1-7, 16-17 – Notice that the psalm begins and ends with a plea for God to save.

86:8 – none like you – He looks to God for salvation because none of the other so-called gods can help him.

86:9 is used in the song of the saints in heaven recorded in Rev. 15:4.

Psalm 87

Psalm 87 is the basis for the well-known hymn, “Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken” (v. 3).

Psalm 87 is a song focusing on the glory of the church, the people of God, and looks forward to the time when the church will include people from all the nations (v. 4).

Psalm 88

Psalm 88 is the most depressing song in the psalter. There is no positive ending as most psalms have.

88:3 – soul is full of troubles – Some of the troubles are physical and he believes he is near death.

88:6 – You – Five times in vv. 6-8 and six times in vv. 14-18 the psalmist points to God as the cause of his troubles.

This psalm is a recognition that there are times where a believer can be so overwhelmed and depressed that they feel beyond hope and can find nothing to hold on to. The encouragement is that in those times, God holds on to us.

Psalm 89

Psalm 89 Title – Ethan the Ezrahite – Ethan is mentioned as a wise man in 1 Kings 4:31 and as a Levite.

89:1-37 – Reflects on the great promises and blessings that the Lord had given to the descendants of David who would reign over Israel.

89:38-51 – An abrupt change in tone. The blessings of the Davidic reign have been replaced with the sense that the Lord has abandoned them. We are not sure of the date of this psalm.

Psalm 90

The psalm was written by Moses during Israel's forty years wandering in the wilderness. Israel is not in the promised land but they are dwelling with the Lord.

90:1-6 – The Lord is infinite and eternal, whereas man is finite and his days are short.

90:7-11 – Man, because of his sin has a fleeting life. Death comes to those who live in rebellion against the Lord, just as it did to the generation who died in the wilderness.

90:12 – number our days – In this short life it is imperative to be mindful of our few days so we can use them well.

Psalm 91

Psalm 91 has themes that are similar to the song of **Deut.**

32: God as shelter, suffering plague, finding refuge under His wings because you seek the Lord and hold fast to Him.

Ps **91:12** was quoted by Satan when he tempted Jesus in the wilderness (Mt. 4:6).

Psalm 92

92 Title – For the Sabbath – The psalm starts out the way you would expect – praise to the Lord – but then the focus shifts to the destruction of the enemies of the Lord – a very biblical focus for praise.

92:8 is at the center of the psalm and conveys the psalm's main point.

92:10 – horn – is often used as a symbol of power in the Scriptures.

92:12-15 – In contrast to the wicked who do not know God and will perish (vv. 6-7), the righteous will flourish.

Psalm 93

93 – This psalm focuses on the Lord's kingship. He is an everlasting king (v. 2) who is mightier than creation (vv. 3-4) and who rules through his decrees or law (v. 5).

Psalm 94

Psalm 94 is a call for the Lord to act as the righteous judge against the wicked.

94:1 – vengeance – This is not revenge but righteous retribution for the wicked’s rebellion and sin.

Psalm 95

Psalms 95-100 are all Royal Psalms which celebrate the Lord’s kingship over all things.

According to Hebrews 4:7, David is the author of Psalm 95.

Psalm 95 has two stanzas, both of which begin with a call to worship the Lord. Note that the reasons to do so are because the Lord is a great God (vv. 3-5) and because he is our God (vv. 6-7).

95:8-11 – These verses are a warning to not follow Israel’s example in the wilderness.

95:11 is quoted in Hebrews 4 as a warning to follow the Lord’s word or face the same consequences as that generation.

Psalm 96

Psalm 96 was the inspiration for Isaac Watts’ hymn, “Joy to the World.”

Psalm 96 calls on all the nations to recognize the Lord as their king.

Psalm 97

97:1-5 – The glory of the Lord in his reign.

97:6-9 – The contrast between the Lord and the idols and false gods of the nations.

97:10-12 – The king's care of his people and their response to him.

Psalm 98

Psalm 98 was the inspiration for Isaac Watt's hymn, "Joy to the World."

98:1-3 – **Salvation** is mentioned in each verse. We joyfully worship our king for he is our Savior.

98:7-9 – All creation joins in praising the King for when he comes in judgment, it will mean the redemption of creation as well (Romans 8:20-22).

Psalm 99

99:3, 5, 9 – Note the repeating refrain, "Holy is he!"

99:6-7 – This psalm may have been used at the Feast of Tabernacles.

Psalm 100

Psalm 100 – Note that vv. 1-2 & 4 give the commands and vv. 3 & 5 give the reasons for the commands.

This is the final Royal Psalm focusing on the Lord's kingship.

Psalm 101

- 101:1 – steadfast love and justice** – Most would not put these together, but in the Lord they are perfectly balanced. His love to us is seen in Christ being the object of his justice in our place.
- 101:3 – worthless** – Anything that does not bring glory to God.

Psalm 102

- 102:1-11** – The psalmist is suffering from discouragement, physical problems as well as the taunts of his enemies and recognizes that these have come from the Lord.
- 102:12-17** – In contrast to the shortness of human life (v. 11), the Lord and his reign are forever (v. 12). He will care for his people.
- The theme of **v. 25** is found in Psalm 90:1-2 and is quoted in Hebrews 1:10-12.

Psalm 103

- Psalm focuses on the greatness of the Lord's blessings to his people.
- 103:1-3 – All** occurs four times. We worship with all our whole being (v. 1) because of all the benefits the Lord has given to us (vv. 2-3).
- 103:4 – Steadfast love** – The Lord's covenant love for his people is the basis of all our blessings (also vv. 8, 11, and 17).
- 103:17** – Our days here will end but the love of God towards us will never cease (Romans 8:35ff).

Psalm 104

Psalm 104 – The greatness of God is seen in the creation, which reveals his glory.

Psalm 104 generally follows the order of the days of creation in Genesis 1.

104:31-35 – The righteous' response to God's greatness should be to rejoice in him through song (33) and meditation (34).

Psalm 105

105:1-15 are also recorded in 1 Chronicles 16 in reference to the moving of the Ark of the Lord to Jerusalem.

Psalm 105 is a song celebrating the Lord's faithfulness to his covenant promises (vv. 8-11). The song does so by recounting the Lord's care of his people from the days of the patriarchs until they entered the Promised Land.

Psalm 106

106 – We do not know who the author of the psalm was, but v. 47 indicates that it was written during the exile.

106:6 – This verse embodies the theme of the psalm as a whole. The rest of the psalm fleshes out this theme.

106:7-33 – These verses summarize Israel's disobedience from the time of the exodus from Egypt to the conquest of the land.

106:34-46 – The period of the judges and following, when Israel turned to the idols.

Psalm 107

107 – Has been called the “Pilgrim Psalm” because of the great love the Pilgrims had for it.

107:1 – steadfast love – This covenant love of God for his people will be the theme of the psalm. This love is seen in the Lord’s dealing with four different situations in the psalm.

107:3 – This is a postexilic psalm as God’s people rejoice in the Lord bringing them back from the nations to the land of promise.

107:8 – This is the refrain of the song and will be repeated in vv. 15, 21, 31, and with variation in v. 43.

Psalm 108

Psalm 108 is a combination of two psalms. Verses 1-5 are from Psalm 57:7-11 and vv. 6-13 are from Psalm 60:5-12.

The context is an unknown crisis from which Israel needs deliverance (v. 6), related to a military defeat (vv. 11-12).

108:13 – we shall do valiantly – Because it will be done in the power of the Lord.

Psalm 109

Psalm 109 – Like Psalm 69, this is a psalm that deals with the situation of being innocent and falsely accused.

109:8 – Quoted in Acts 1:20 when the apostles determined to find a replacement for Judas Iscariot.

109:6-20 – Deuteronomy 19:16-21 says that a false witness is liable to the sentence of the accused. David is pleading for the Lord to act justly in this case.

Psalm 110

110:1 is quoted several times in the New Testament in reference to Christ.

110:4 is quoted four times in Hebrews in reference to Christ's office of priest.

Psalms 111-112

111:5, 9 – covenant – Psalm 111 focuses on the great works of the Lord for his covenant people.

Psalm 112 describes the faithful covenant member.

Psalms 113-114

Psalms 113-118 are Hallel or praise psalms used for Holy Days, especially Passover. Psalms 113-114 were sung before the Passover, while Psa. 115-118 were sung afterwards.

113 – The Lord ought to be worshiped by all nations (v. 3) for he is a great God who cares for the poor and those overlooked (vv. 7-10).

114 reflects on the Lord's parting of the Red Sea and Jordan River for his people during Moses' leadership.

Psalms 115-116

115 focuses on the theme of Lord being Israel's help and shield (vv. 9-11) in contrast to the idols of the nations who can provide no help (vv. 4-8).

116 – The unknown psalmist has had a near death experience from which the Lord saved him (vv. 3, 8). He wrote the psalm in thanksgiving to the Lord.

Psalms 117-118

117:1 – Paul quotes this psalm in Romans 15:11.

118:22 – This verse is quoted several times in the NT in reference to Christ.

118:25-26 – This is the basis of the crowd's cry on Palm Sunday. Save us = Hosanna.

Psalm 119:1-40

The psalm is an acrostic of 22 stanzas of 8 verses each, with each stanza corresponding to the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet.

119:11 – Memorization of Scripture is a key defense in times of temptation.

119:27 – **understand** – It is the Lord who gives understanding of his Word and that understanding ordinarily comes through the practice of meditating on the Word.

Psalm 119:41-88

119:41 – **steadfast love** – The Word of God reveals the steadfast love the Lord has for his people.

119:47-48 – We see how much we delight and love the Word by how much time we spend meditating on it.

119:71 – **afflicted** – The Lord sometimes uses affliction in our lives to teach us the meaning and application of his Word.

119:84 – A rare verse in the psalm in that it does not mention the Word of God.

Psalm 119:89-128

119:97 – Another reminder that our love for God's Word can be tested by how much we interact with it.

119:98-104 – The results of meditating on the Word of God.

119:1-5 – **lamp...light** – The Word of God positively shows us how we are to live a life of obedience that conforms to God's will.

Psalm 119:129-176

119:136 – **tears** – When we love God’s Word, it brings great sorrow to see it ignored or rejected.

119:164 – **seven times** – i.e. many times. He often pauses in his day to praise the Lord for his Word.

119:176 – **astray** – The reason we need the Word of God so desperately is because of our sin.

Psalm 120

Psalm 120 is the first of the Songs of Ascents that Israel sang on their way to Jerusalem.

120:5 – **Meshech** = Asian Minor; **Kedar** = Arabia.

Psalm 121

121:1 – **hills** – Imagine walking towards Jerusalem as you sing, lifting your eyes up to the hills of the city where the Lord dwells among his people.

121:3 – **Keeps** – Various forms of this word appear in vv. 3, 4, 5, 7, 8.

Psalm 122

122 Title – **Song of Ascents** – One of the songs sung by Jews as they traveled to Jerusalem to worship at the temple.

122:2 – **Jerusalem** – The focus of the psalm is on the glory of Jerusalem, where the house of the Lord is found.

Psalms 123-124

123:1 – lift up our eyes – The people of God look unto the Lord until he shows mercy to them (vv. 2-3). Sometimes mercy does not come immediately.

124:8 – our help is in the name of the Lord - This song ends as Psalm 121 begins.

Psalm 125

125:4 – those who are good – not sinless, but faithful to the Lord and his Word.

Psalm 126

126 – This psalm looks back on a time when the Lord restored his people in a significant way, perhaps in the return from exile (vv. 1-3). That memory moves the psalmists to ask the Lord to restore them once again (vv. 4-6).

126:5 – sow...reap – We do not know how soon the joy will follow our tears, it may be a short time or many years as it was for Israel. But we are promised that the sorrows and tears of this life will end and turn to eternal joy.

Psalm 127

Psalm 127 – There is a uselessness in endeavors without the Lord and a great blessing in building a family with the Lord's help.

Psalms 128-129

128 – focuses on the covenant blessings that come to those who are faithful to the Lord.

129:3 – **plowed upon my back** – The imagery provides a graphic picture of suffering that had been endured.

129:6 – **grass on the housetops** – Sod was used at times as roofing material.

Psalm 130

130:1-2 – The psalmist is suffering. The context of the psalm suggests that it may be due to the consequences of sin in his life.

130:5-6 – **waits for the Lord** – with a sense of expectancy for him to come and bring salvation and mercy (v. 1).

Psalm 131

Psalm 131 – The song of a worshipper going up to Jerusalem to worship the Lord. He approaches the Lord with humility as he prepares to worship the Living God.

131:3 – **hope in the LORD** – This is the quiet confidence of the one who is not arrogant or proud.

Psalm 132

132 Title – Psalm of Ascents – This was one of the songs Israel sang as they journeyed up to Jerusalem. The song focuses on God’s choice of Jerusalem as the place of his dwelling.

Psalm 133

133:1 – brothers – This refers to the Jews who are gathered to worship together in Jerusalem. Today in the new covenant those united together are people from every tongue, culture, and nation.

133:2-3 – The imagery of oil and dew are meant to convey the rich blessings experienced when God’s people live in a state of unity.

Psalm 134

134 – bless – Note that this word is used in each verse of the song. First the people bless the priests (vv. 1-2), and then the priests bless the people (v. 3).

134:1 – servants – The priests who are ministering at the temple.

Psalm 135

135:1-6 – The LORD is to be praised for his greatness, seen in his sovereign control over all things (v. 6).

135:7-12 – These are examples of the Lord's sovereign control.

135:15-18 – In contrast to the LORD are the idols who can do nothing.

Psalm 136

The theme of this psalm is the steadfast love of God towards his covenant people which is seen in his historic blessings for Israel.

Commentators believe the psalm was to be sung with two choirs – one singing the first part of the verse while the second choir responds with the repeated chorus, “for his steadfast love endures forever.”

This was a theme that would have been very appropriate for the dedication of the temple as is seen in 1 Chronicles 7:3.

I suggest you read the psalm a second time, reading only the first half of each verse to see the historical movement of the song.

Psalm 137

137 – An exilic psalm in which God’s people are longing to return once again to Zion.

137:9 – *dashes them against the rock* – This language is troubling for us. It must be remembered that the longed-for judgment was in the context of Babylon being the enemy of the church and the Lord of the church. The psalmist is praying for the victory of the people of God.

Psalm 138

138:1 – *gods* – In the Old Testament this is often a reference to the angelic beings.

138:8 – The believer’s confidence in the Lord is based on his sovereignty and steadfast covenant love.

Psalm 139

139:1-6 – Praise for the Lord’s omniscience (infinite knowledge).

139:7-12 – Praise for the Lord’s omnipresence (infinite presence).

139:13-16 – Praise for the Lord’s omnipotence (infinite power) seen in his work in the womb.

139:17-24 – The proper response to such an infinite God.

Psalm 140

140:1 – evil men...violent men – If written during the days of fleeing from Saul the evil and violent men include Saul, the Lord's anointed.

Psalm 141

141:2 – Incense – Setting is probably the evening offering when incense would be brought into the Holy Place.

141:3 – It is easy in hard times to speak rashly and sinfully.

Psalm 142

Today's psalm was written in the context of 1 Samuel 24 during the days that Saul was seeking David's life.

142 – As you read you can sense David's emotional and physical state – He is exhausted (v. 3) and feels imprisoned by Saul's relentless pursuit that made him hide in a cave (v. 7). But the Lord is his refuge (v. 4).

Psalm 143

Psalm 143 – David is praying for mercy in the context of his own sin (v. 2) and the pursuit of his enemies (v. 3).

143:5 – When overwhelmed, the proper response is to remember and ponder the great works of the Lord.

Psalm 144

144:3-4 – Reflection of Psalm 8:4. Any time the Lord brings deliverance it is a matter of grace and condescension.

144:7, 8, 11 – The refrain of asking for deliverance is repeated twice.

144:12-15 – These verses summarize some of the covenant blessings the Lord gives his people.

Psalm 145

Psalm 145 is a song of praise to the Lord as the King who reigns over his people. It is an acrostic song with each letter of the Hebrew alphabet starting a verse.

145:3 – Great is the Lord...unsearchable – He is infinite in his being and his greatness is beyond our ability to comprehend.

145:10-13 – The Lord's kingdom is also an everlasting kingdom which will endure forever.

Psalm 146

146 – Great contrast between trusting in human rulers and the almighty God.

146:1 – Praise the Lord! – Every psalm from Psalm 146-150 begins and ends with this phrase.

146:10 – reigns forever – In contrast to the princes whose reign ends at their death (v. 4).

Psalm 147

147 – Another psalm of praise. The Lord is to be praised for his universal works (vv. 1-11) as well as his particular works for his covenant people (vv. 12-20).

147:2 – **builds up Jerusalem** – Some believe this refers to the post-exilic restoration of Jerusalem.

Psalm 148

148 is a universal call for all of creation to render the Lord the praise that is his due.

148:1-6 – Call for the heavens to praise the Lord.

148:7-12 – Call for the earth and its inhabitants to praise the Lord.

Psalms 149-150

149 – Is a call for the covenant people in particular to praise the Lord.

149:6-9 – Faithful Israelites are not only called to praise the Lord, but also to take part in God's work against the ungodly nations around them that the Lord has determined to judge.

150 – A fitting closing song to the psalter as “everything that has breath” (v. 6) is called upon to praise the Lord.

