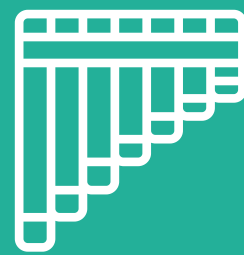




# THE PSALMS: SINGING IN THE KING'S CHOIR



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**Open my eyes that I may see  
wonderful things in your law.**

**Psalm 119:18**

# SINGING IN THE KING'S CHOIR



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# THE PSALMS: AN INTRODUCTION

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The Psalms were written over a period of about 900 years from the time of Moses (90) to after the Exile (126; 147). The Psalter in its present form was the songbook of the Second Temple after the return of Judah from Exile in the Sixth Century BC.

There is great variety in the Psalms (e.g., authorship, theme, style and tone), but it is possible to see an overarching narrative and message within the book. The editor's work is evident especially in the introduction (1-2) and conclusion (146-150), the division into five books, and at the beginning and end of those books. These all serve to focus our attention on God's anointed king, the Christ, as the central character, and give the book as a whole a gospel shape. The Psalms speak God's word to us and also give us Spirit-inspired words to speak to him, as we seek to live by faith in his promises, focused on his Son, in the ups and down of life. These are words of Christ and about him/his story (Luke 24:44), so as we repeat them, we are joining in his songs.

**“When you sing the Psalms, you are actually singing the songs of Jesus, with Jesus as your song leader.”**

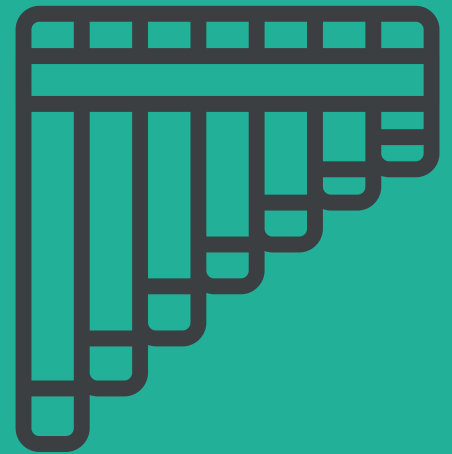
**Augustine**

# THE PSALMS: STRUCTURE & THEME

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## Introduction (1-2): The Universal King

These gateway Psalms introduce the plot and message of the Psalter. They point to the way of blessing, which is to delight in God's word (1) and trust in his Son (2). God has already installed his Son as universal King. One day all who continue to oppose him will be judged, so those who are wise will submit to him now.



## Books I (3-41) and II (42-72): The Suffering King

There are moments of triumph (e.g., 18; 20-21), but much of the reality of David's life is a long way from the promise of 2:8, as reflected in his laments (e.g., 3:1 – an abrupt change of mood from 2). In the midst of his suffering, David turns to God and trusts in him. These Psalms foreshadow the sufferings of Christ and are fulfilled in him (e.g., 22:1; 69:9,21) but, as we suffer with him, we can echo them ourselves.

As David's life comes to an end (71:18), the Psalm 2 promise of a universal king has not been forgotten and hopes are focused on the future (72).

# THE PSALMS: STRUCTURE & THEME

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## Book III (73-89): The Absent King

Book III reflects the terrible period of Judah's exile in Babylon, after the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple (74:3; 79:1) and the removal of its kings.

Laments bracket the book (73/74 & 88/89).

But the final Psalm, which mourns the destruction of the monarchy (89:38-45), also clings to God's covenant promise with David that his line will last forever (89:3-4). The Psalmist looks to the future in hope that one day God will raise up a new King, descended from David.

The book concludes with a plea: "how long, oh Lord? ... Where is your great love, which in faithfulness you swore to David?" (89:46,49).

## Book IV (90-106): The Divine King

These Psalms give hope in the midst of exile by:

- Looking back

Book IV begins with 90 – an ancient Psalm of Moses, which gives perspective to the current troubles of Israel by pointing to the "everlasting God" (90:1-2).

It ends with 105-6 – reminders of God's faithfulness through creation to the Exodus, despite Israel's sin.

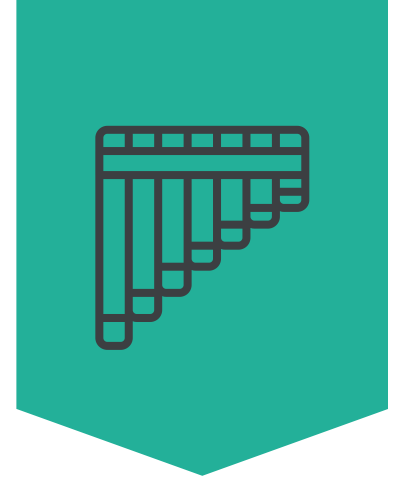
- Looking up

There may be no human king, but "the Lord reigns" (93:1; 97:1; 99:1).

The book ends with a prayer for the end of the exile – "save us, Lord our God, and gather us from the nations" (106:47).

# THE PSALMS: STRUCTURE & THEME

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## Book V (107-145): The Coming King

Book V begins with a thanksgiving for the end of the exile (107:1-3) in answer to the prayer of 106:47.

- God is faithful to his covenant promises – “his love/covenant faithfulness endures forever” (107:1; 118:2-3; 136 – refrain).

Salvation is understood as a second Exodus (113-118 – the Psalms sung at the Passover each year). Like the Israelites in the wilderness as they travel towards the Promised Land, God’s people are on pilgrimage on their way to Zion (121-134 The Songs of Ascent), the new Jerusalem, where salvation will be complete.

The Davidic king reappears (138-145). He still suffers and yet trusts in God and calls on others to do the same. One day his reign will fully come.

- “The Lord says to my Lord – ‘sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet’” (110:1).
- “The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone” (118:22).

## Conclusion (146-150): Praise the Lord!

The general trajectory of the Psalter is from lament to praise. Each book ends with praise (41:13; 71:18-19; 89:52; 106:48) and Book 5 climaxes with five hallelujah Psalms.

Even for us, who live after the first coming of Christ, God’s promise in Psalm 2 that he will establish the reign of his Son, crush his enemies and put everything right, has still not been finally fulfilled. However, we still have ample reason to praise the Lord, even in the midst of ongoing suffering, because of who he is, what he has already done, and what he will do when Christ returns.



# THE PSALMS: CHRIST & THE PSALMS

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Christ specifically mentioned the Psalms, along with the rest of the Old Testament, as pointing to him and prophesying that “the Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day” (Luke 24:44-46). He was not just referring to the more explicit prophecies of his death (e.g. 22:1, 7-8, 18) and resurrection (16:10-11), but also to the message of the Psalter as a whole, which reflects the gospel worldview of the Bible.

The Psalms are undergirded by the conviction that the Lord is the sovereign creator of the world who, despite the rebellion of sinful humanity, has made a covenant promise to judge evil and make everything right through his Son, a king of the line of David. God’s enemies continue to resist him, which results in suffering and rejection for David, his anointed king (as reflected in his Psalms of lament) and then for Christ, who sees those Psalms as pointing ultimately to his own suffering and death. As his followers, who are identified with Christ, we too will experience something of that suffering and can therefore, in him, echo the Psalmist’s words of anguish and confusion ourselves. But, even while giving voice to such feelings, the Psalms lift our hearts with reminders of God’s promises, as well as his sovereign faithfulness and love, which guarantee their fulfilment.

Although his enemies reject and kill the Christ, God will raise him to the position of ultimate honour and power in the universe (2:6; 110:1). That promise has already been fulfilled through his resurrection and ascension, and will be fully worked out when he returns to judge his enemies and establish his saving rule on earth. In the meantime, as we take up our cross and follow him, our hearts will often echo the Psalms in their cries of lament, while also being lifted by their expressions of dependence, hope and joy. The gospel story ends, not with the agony of Calvary, but with the glory of the new creation. Praise the Lord!



# THE PSALMS: DAILY DEVOTIONS

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As we go through the Psalms as a church on a Sunday, we also want to encourage using the Psalms as a daily devotional during the course of the sermon series. To that end, we have produced a reading schedule that aligns with the sermon series themes, an outline for each day with a suggested psalm, a short introduction, three questions to encourage interaction with the text, and a short prayer. Below is a model of how each day is laid out. There are no Psalms set for Sundays. You could read and pray through the Psalm due to be preached that Sunday.

## DATE - PSALM NUMBER

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### Introduction

*The introduction serves to give a short context of the psalm for the day.*

### Questions

*Each psalm has three questions to consider after reading the psalm. You could use them in your personal devotions, write down your answers in a journal, or discuss them with others as you look at the psalm together.*

### Prayer

*Use this prayer as a starting point for your own prayers each day.*

### *Recommended Books:*

- Teaching Psalms (Volume 1 and 2) – Christopher Ash
- Tyndale Commentary – Derek Kidner
- Walk His Way (Following Christ Through the Book of Psalms) – Andrew Shead (Forthcoming)
- The Psalter Reclaimed – Gordon Wenham



## 1ST MAY - PSALM 3

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The heading of this Psalm takes us straight into a situation like Psalm 2 describes; where people plot against the Lord's anointed King. But King David takes confidence and rest from the fact that the mighty God is his shield.

1. How do David's enemies say God relates to him? How does God relate to him in reality?
2. How can you tell from the Psalm that David has real confidence in the Lord?
3. The first thing the Psalms say about God's King after Psalm 1-2 are that he is opposed by many. How does this Psalm help us to see King Jesus more clearly?

### Prayer

God my shield, thank you that you sustain and care for your people to such an extent that they can even lie down and sleep when life is hard. Please help me to have confidence in you, as David did, even when I have cause to wonder whether you really will save me.

## 2ND MAY - PSALM 8

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This Psalm begins and ends by praising God for his majesty and marvels at the unexpectedly lofty place he's given to human beings in his world.

1. Looking at the world and the heavens, what position does David expect God to give to mankind?
2. What position has God in fact given to mankind?
3. Read Hebrews 2:5-9. How does Jesus reassure us that human beings will one day perfectly live out the description of v5-8?

### Prayer

Majestic Lord, it is amazing that you give such an important role in your glorious world to human beings. Thank you for Jesus, the perfect human. Please help us look to him and to praise you.



## 3RD MAY - PSALM 9

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King David faced much opposition, as Psalm 2 said God's King must. He looks to the Lord as his stronghold.

1. In v1-12 David remembers God's help in the past. Who has God shown himself to be in previous times of trouble?
2. In v13-20 David looks at present trouble. In what truths does he put his hope?
3. How does this Psalm teach us to respond when God and his King are opposed?

### Prayer

Lord who reigns forever, you are the ruler of the world and refuge for the oppressed. Please act to frustrate those who would do evil and oppose you.

## 4TH MAY - PSALM 15

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Psalm 15 begins a section in which a number of Psalms return to the question of v1. They look forward to the King greater than David, of whom this Psalm is perfectly true.

1. What qualities does the Psalm say God values?
2. Jesus is the only King on God's holy hill to fulfil this Psalm perfectly. Meditate on how each phrase is perfectly fulfilled in him.
3. None of us has done v2-5 fully and so cannot lay claim to v1 in ourselves. How does this show us our need of Jesus and his perfect obedience?

### Prayer

Holy and pure Lord, I'm sorry for the ways I fall short of this Psalm. Thank you for Jesus' perfect obedience which you count as mine by faith. Please change me to be more unshakeable in living like this.



## 5TH MAY - PSALM 19

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We are given two places that teach us about God. In both cases, they say glorious things about him that move us to praise him and treat him with reverence.

1. What does the world show us about God in v1-6? When have you most been conscious of these things?
2. What makes God's word even more wonderful than the skies and heavens? What is it like? What does it do for us?
3. How does this Psalm teach us to think about the created world and about the Scriptures?

### Prayer

My Rock and my Redeemer, the world around me tells me something of how glorious you are. Please help me to delight in your wonderful word and to take you seriously.

## 6TH MAY - PSALM 23

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Perhaps the most famous Psalm of all, Psalm 23 enjoys the fact that God is our shepherd, which is a common theme in the Psalms. It helps us to appreciate the joy and privilege of being shepherded by him.

1. How does the Lord care for us throughout life in v1-3?
2. How does the Lord care for us in the face of death in v4?
3. How does the Lord promise to care for us now and forever in v5-6?

### Prayer

Lord my Shepherd, thank you for your tender, personal care. Please refresh my soul, comfort me and follow me with your goodness and love today and always.



## 8TH MAY - PSALM 27

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The familiar problem of opposition to the King opens the Psalm, but all David's attention is on his personal desire for the Lord.

1. How would you describe David's response to his situation in v1-3, 13-14?
2. What does he long for more than anything else? Why would he want this?
3. How does knowing the perfect King help us to be confident that we too will see the goodness of the Lord?

### Prayer

Lord, my light and salvation, I do long for you and have confidence in you but not as much as I wish I did. Please help me to long more than anything else to dwell in your house and gaze on your beauty.

## 9TH MAY - PSALMS 32-33

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David's own sin comes into view as one of the problems he faces, along with opposition. But again, he looks to the power and forgiveness of the Lord for his confidence.

1. What changes in Psalm 32 when David confesses his sin to the Lord?
2. What imagery do these Psalms use to describe the power and greatness of God?
3. What blessings does 33:12-22 tell us we have as God's people, even when under opposition?

### Prayer

Lord, you are my help and shield. I don't want to hide from you the sin of this past day. Please forgive me and then please help me. Help me to fix my eyes on you as my shield rather than on my own strength.



## 10TH MAY - PSALM 39

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The Psalm reflects on our own fleetingness as humans and reminds us that we need to fear God even in the midst of weeping.

1. How would you describe the immediate situation David is in? Can you relate to this?
2. What does this illustrate about all human nature in v4-6?
3. What should our response be to this reality? Reflect on David's response in the Psalm, and what Jesus has done to secure eternal life for us breath-like people.

### Prayer

Eternal God, our lives are very brief and filled with trouble. I put all my hope in Jesus, whose death means I can enjoy eternal life. Help me now to take you seriously even as I struggle in life.

## 11TH MAY - PSALM 40

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This Psalm brings together a number of the struggles we've seen in Book 1 (see v12-15 for David's opposition, sin and frailty). Yet the emphasis is praise and thankfulness to the God who saves

1. What troubles does David experience in this Psalm? How are they familiar to you? How are they familiar to Jesus?
2. What is he grateful for about the Lord?
3. In what ways does he express this gratitude?

### Prayer

My help and my deliverer, thank you for lifting me out of the slimy pit and saving me, by lifting Jesus out of death so that I can have new life in him. Help me to trust you in the little rescues I need day by day, remembering that I am poor and needy.



## 12TH MAY - PSALM 42

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Book 2 begins with a number of Psalms of the sons of Korah. This one, perhaps written when God's people were in exile, longs for God when he seems absent.

- 1.The Psalmist clearly feels downcast. How does he deal with that feeling?
- 2.How does he relate to God in the face of his seeming absence? How might this help us channel our longing for Jesus to return?
- 3.What gives him hope in this situation? What additional reasons do we have for hope as Christians?

### Prayer

God of my life, when I don't long for you, help me to do so more. When I do, help me to put my hope in you, knowing that a day is coming when I will praise you forever. Please help bring my heart and soul into line with what I know to be true.

## 13TH MAY - PSALM 45

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The heading makes clear that this is a royal wedding Psalm, possibly for Solomon, but fulfilled in perfect King-bridegroom Jesus.

- 1.How is the King described in v2-9? Meditate on how these things are perfectly true of Jesus.
- 2.How is the bride to respond in v10-15? How does this teach us, as the Church, to respond to our King-bridegroom?
- 3.How does this help us to look forward to the perfect union of Christ and his Church?

### Prayer

Loving King, there is no-one more excellent, more gracious, more just or righteous than you. Help me to honour you alone, never looking back, as I wait for perfect union with you forever.





## 15TH MAY - PSALM 48

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The sons of Korah look back on a previous time God has rescued his city and trust that God will always preserve his people.

1. How does the Psalm emphasise the security of God's people?
2. v4 is very like Psalm 2:1-2. How does this reassure God's people when those who oppose them too strong and numerous?
3. What guarantee do we have of the security of God's people today? See Matthew 16:18.

### Prayer

Our God forever and ever, thank you for the spiritual security we have as your people now, and the unshakeable city we're heading for. Help us to meditate on your love and past acts of salvation and tell of them to the next generation.

## 16TH MAY - PSALM 53

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This Psalm observes the state, not just of Israel, but of the whole human race. All are naturally like the people of Psalm 1:1. David expresses confident longing that God will act to save.

1. What is the verdict of the Psalm on all mankind? What evidence does it give for this?
2. What does v5 say is the destiny of such evil? How does this fit with Psalm 1?
3. How has God acted to fulfil the confident longing of v6? See Luke 1:68-79

### Prayer

Righteous Saviour, I'm sorry for the ways in which I've turned away from you, even in the past day. Thank you that salvation has come out of Zion in Christ and that even corrupt fools like me can be saved. Please fill me with gladness at what you've done!



## 17TH MAY - PSALM 58

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This is one of a number of Psalms of imprecation, where the Psalmist asks God to punish the wicked. They can be hard to read, but express confidence in the ultimate justice of God.

1. What do we learn about the people David wants God to judge?
2. How do v3-5 show that it would not be hasty or impulsive of God to judge the people David has in mind?
3. What situations in the world today make you long for the day when God will come and judge the world to set everything right? How can Psalms like these help you speak to God about such injustices?

### Prayer

Judge of all the earth, there is much appalling injustice in the world that cries out to be judged and put right. Please will you come soon to end these flagrant evils and hold to account those who perpetrate them?

## 18TH MAY - PSALM 62

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Like many others, this Psalm reflects on themes from Psalm 1. Though we may feel like we are very insecure as God's people, and wicked people are very strong, the opposite will prove to be true, because God is the source of our stability.

1. What makes King David feel weak? What images are used to express this?
2. What makes David strong? What language is used in relation to God to express this?
3. v11-12 look to the power, love and justice of God as the grounds of security. How do we see these perfectly demonstrated in King Jesus?

### Prayer

My rock and my salvation, I often feel like a tottering fence, as indeed does your Church! Please help me to put my hope in your might, your unfailing love and your justice. I depend on you. Thank you that you are dependable!



## 19TH MAY - PSALM 65

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David begins by praising God for his greatest blessing of forgiveness and relationship of himself, before praising God for his fatherly provision for the whole earth.

1. How does the Psalm express God's care and provision for the whole world? How does this teach us to relate to the everyday blessings we enjoy?
2. What additional, even greater blessings has God provided for his own people in v1-4?
3. How does the Psalm emphasise the excessive, abundant way that God provides? What does this say about him?

### Church of England General Thanksgiving:

Almighty God, Father of all mercies,  
we your unworthy servants give you most humble and  
hearty thanks  
for all your goodness and loving kindness.  
We bless you for our creation, preservation, and  
all the blessings of this life;  
but above all for your immeasurable love  
in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ,  
for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.  
And give us, we pray, such a sense of all your mercies  
that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful,  
and that we show forth your praise,  
not only with our lips but in our lives,  
by giving up ourselves to your service,  
and by walking before you in holiness and  
righteousness all our days;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,  
be all honour and glory,  
for ever and ever.  
Amen.



## **20TH MAY - PSALM 68**

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As we have seen a few times, David here addresses the whole world as well as the people of Israel, both in warning and in invitation.

1. How does the Psalm warn the nations?
2. How does the Psalm provide comfort and reassurance for God's people?
3. What invitation is issued to the nations in v28-35? What does this teach us to pray for non-Christian friends and family?

### **Prayer**

Almighty God, what a privilege to be loved and cared for by such a powerful and majestic God. Please help me to put all my confidence in you, and please cause my non-Christian friend/family member to recognise who you are and humble themselves before you.

## **22ND MAY - PSALM 71**

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David's enemies seem to have concluded that his old age and weakness mean he is no longer a force to be reckoned with. But his confidence is in God's power rather than his own.

1. Why does David think God continues to be reliable, even in David's old age?
2. What language does David use to demonstrate that God is strong and reliable?  
How can this encourage us in weakness and old age?
3. If God is to have a King who rules over the whole earth (Psalm 2:8-9), it can't be someone weak and ageing. How does this Psalm help us appreciate Jesus, who is the same yesterday, today and forever?

### **Prayer**

Eternal King, you are my hope. Please help me to keep all my confidence in you even when I am old and grey (or older and greyer!). May my life-long trust in you be a sign to many that you are a strong refuge.



## 23RD MAY - PSALM 72

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Like Psalm 45, this Psalm prays for Solomon as an idealised King. It is a prayer which is only fully answered in Jesus.

1. What kind of reign does the Psalm pray the King will have? What is its nature? What is its scale? What is its longevity?
2. How do we see this Psalm being fulfilled in the reign of Jesus now?
3. How does this Psalm help us anticipate and get excited for the return of Jesus, when his reign will be fully known and celebrated?

### Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, your righteous rule will endure forever. I bow before you as the good and wise and unshakeable King that you are. Please help me to live gladly under your rule now and please may the day when your rule is acknowledged to the ends of the earth come soon.

## 24TH MAY - PSALM 73

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Book 3 begins with a Psalm that initially seems to question Psalm 1, reflecting on how wicked people seem to get on just fine in God's world, until the turning point in v15-17.

1. When have you experienced the frustration of v2-14? When have you been conscious of those who disregard God seeming to get on better than those who live for God?
2. What factor changes the Psalmist's perspective in v18-20?
3. What factor changes the Psalmist's perspective in v23-28? Use these words to meditate on the privilege of knowing God personally.

### Prayer

God my portion, it is amazing that I am always with you and that you hold me by my right hand. Please help me to count that such a privilege, and to have such confidence that one day all wrongs will be put right, that I'm not thrown when I see the prosperity of the wicked.



## 25TH MAY - PSALM 77

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This Psalm is one of many in book 3 that ask God anguished questions like, 'Why?' and, 'How long?' Sometimes, knowing there is a God can heighten the confusion that comes with suffering. But God's saving acts in history give Asaph something firm to hold on to.

1. What questions does the Asaph's suffering cause him to ask about God? Have you ever found yourself asking the same questions?
2. Surprisingly, remembering God in v3 does not seem to help. What does he remember more specifically in v10-20? Why would this help more than remembering God in a general sense?
3. Possibly this Psalm was written after God's people went into exile. What mighty deeds of the Lord do we have to look back on, even greater than the exodus that v16-20 describes?

### Prayer

God Most High, your strong right arm has saved your people from slavery to Egypt and then slavery to sin. Please help me when I'm distressed and conscious of distance from you to remember your mighty deeds and so to be confident of ultimate comfort to come.



## 26TH MAY - PSALM 80

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Another Psalm of Asaph mourns the impact of exile on God's people, some of the effects of which we feel today. It looks to the man at God's right hand for hope.

1. How does Asaph describe the current state of God's people? In what ways is this still true of us today?
2. What has God done for his people in the past? What is he asking God to do now in the refrain of v3, 7 and 19?
3. How does Asaph anticipate that God will restore his people in v17? How have we seen this fulfilled, and in what ways are we still waiting?

### Prayer

Shepherd of Israel, you've acted wonderfully to save your people in the past, most especially in the first coming of your Son. Yet we remain an object of derision, so please restore us again! May the Son of Man come again soon in power and glory to restore.

## 27TH MAY - PSALM 84

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This Psalm introduces a set which focus on a number of the blessings of being God's people which were lost at the exile but have now been restored in Christ and one day will be fully enjoyed. In this Psalm, the focus is the temple.

1. The temple was the place where God's people were symbolically near to him. How does the Psalmist feel about the prospect of being near to the Lord and relating to him?
2. Do you feel the same way the Psalmist does about relating to the Lord? If not, what do you think he is seeing more clearly than you are at the moment?
3. Jesus judged the temple and referred to himself as the new temple. How does this Psalm help us to appreciate him more, as the one in whom we encounter God?

### Prayer

Lord Almighty, there is no higher privilege than to dwell in your courts and be near to you. Thank you for securing that privilege for me in Jesus, please help me to value it more and long for its complete fulfilment all the more.



## 29TH MAY - PSALM 85

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Returning to the theme we saw in Psalm 84, this Psalm focuses on the promised land, which God gave to his people, often restored to them, and then they lost in the exile. Now he promises us not just a land but a whole new creation.

1. What has the Lord done for his people in the past in order to restore the land to them?
2. If his people have sinned against him repeatedly, how can God be both faithful to his just character and loving towards his people? How can he be both righteous and give them peace? How does this point us to the cross?
3. How does Hebrews 11:13-16 help us to make this prayer for the restoration of the promised land our own?

### Prayer

Loving, faithful God, thank you so much that you have forgiven our sin and turned away your wrath from us because of Jesus' death on the cross. Thank you for your love and faithfulness. Please will you soon restore all things and bring us to our heavenly home.

## 30TH MAY - PSALM 87

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Continuing yesterday's theme, this Psalm looks for the restoration of God's city, which will be even greater than it was before.

1. Why was it such a privilege to live in Zion (Jerusalem) before the exile?
2. What kind of people will be included in the restored Zion who were not in the old?
3. Revelation 21-22 looks forward to the perfectly restored, heavenly city. How does Psalm 87 teach us to relate to that city?

### Prayer

Heavenly Father, you have established a perfect heavenly city and made even me a citizen of it. Please help me to live as a citizen of heaven now and to long for the day when I experience it fully.





## 31ST MAY - PSALM 88

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This may be the bleakest Psalm of all. It is full of great and unrelenting suffering and gives us words to speak to God from that kind of situation.

1. Read the Psalm slowly. How does the Psalmist feel? How does he feel as though God is treating him?
2. Have you ever felt something like this? How do you feel about the fact that God caused a Psalm like this to be in the Bible?
3. What does this Psalm teach us about relating to the God who saves us when he feels far off?

### Prayer

God who saves me, I feel/have felt/may one day feel as though you have completely forgotten me. It's absolutely awful and I can't understand it. Help me to keep my prayers coming before you because of who you are, even when it feels like you're not interested.

## 1ST JUNE - PSALM 89

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Just as Psalm 73 seems to call Psalm 1 into question, this one seems to call Psalm 2 into question. After a major change of key in v38, God seems to have rejected even David, prompting the familiar question in v46.

1. The first 37 verses of the Psalm are wonderfully positive. What has God done that causes the Psalmist to sing of his great love? Praise him for these things!
2. What has happened since then from v37 to the end? How does this make the Psalmist feel?
3. How does this help us to anticipate the coming of a King who is anointed, then seemingly rejected before being vindicated and restored? See Mark 10:32-34

### Prayer

Great God, thank you for appointing an even greater King than David, whose throne you have established for even longer than the heavens will endure. Thank you that though he was defiled, you raised him from the dead to rule for eternity. May I submit all the more gladly to his good, everlasting rule!



## 2ND JUNE - PSALM 90

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Book 4 begins with the only Psalm written by Moses. It helps us to think wisely about ourselves and our need for God's love and compassion.

1. What is God like in this Psalm?
2. What do we need to realise about ourselves in order to be wise? In what ways is this surprising or counter-cultural?
3. What is the source of joy and satisfaction in our world, given what we are like?

### Prayer

Everlasting God, my life is very short and full of difficulty, but I'm prone to pretend otherwise! Please teach me to see what life is like and to feel all the more deeply my need of your unfailing love each morning. Thank you that it is indeed unfailing!

## 3RD JUNE - PSALM 93

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This Psalm is the first of a group of Psalms that give us a bigger view of the greatness and majesty of God, and so help us to trust him. They could be read alongside Isaiah 40-55.

1. What does v1-2 emphasise about God? How is this a comfort in the changing circumstances of our lives?
2. The sea represented chaos for the people of Israel. How is God compared to the chaos and evil of our lives and the world?
3. Particularly when we doubt God's ability to keep his promises and finally rescue us from the presence of all chaos and evil, how can this Psalm help us?

### Prayer

God my King, you are mightier even than the sea and all the chaos of this world. Help me to trust that your purposes are therefore completely unstoppable and that you will carry them out.



## 5TH JUNE - PSALM 95

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In the Church of England's Book of Common Prayer, this Psalm is set to be said every morning. It calls us to praise our great God and be humble before his word.

1. How does the Psalm encourage us to approach the Lord? Can you put v1-2 and v6-7 in your own words?
2. Why should we approach him this way? According to the Psalm, who is he and what has he done?
3. v7 exhorts us not to harden our hearts as we hear his word. What could this mean for you today?

### Prayer

Great King above all gods, I praise you because you are my maker and shepherd. Help me to take you seriously enough today to have a soft and humble heart as I hear you speak through your word.

## 6TH JUNE - PSALM 100

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The title of this Psalm (which, as with all the Psalm titles, is original and not a later addition by our translation) shows its purpose: to give grateful praise to God. This is our duty and joy today and every day, and this Psalm will help us.

1. Who should give grateful praise to God? How should they do it?
2. What does v3 say he has done for us? How does this fuel our grateful praise?
3. Who does v5 say he is like? How does this fuel our grateful praise in every circumstance?

### Prayer

Our maker and shepherd, you are good and loving and faithful. You deserve my worship today because you are God, because I am yours and because you are good to me. Please help me to praise you joyfully, as I should.



## 7TH JUNE - PSALM 103

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This lovely Psalm begins and ends with the Psalmist urging his own soul to praise the Lord. At the heart of it is God's faithful covenant love, from which many blessings flow to us.

1. v2 tells us not to forget all the benefits we have received from the Lord. Which benefits do v3-5 mention?
2. According to v7-12, just how forgiven are we as God's people?
3. How do v13-22 show God's greatness and also tenderness towards us?

### Prayer

Compassionate Father, it's hard to believe that a God as great as you would be this kind and compassionate towards mortal human beings. Please help me to praise you for all your blessings with all my soul, especially your full forgiveness of my sins.

## 8TH JUNE - PSALM 106

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Just as book 4 began with a Psalm of Moses, so it ends with one focussed on him. Again probably in the context of the exile, it calls on God to save and restore his undeserving people as he has before. It's another prayer that waits for Jesus for its ultimate fulfilment.

1. v4-46 tell the story of the exodus and the subsequent sin of God's people. What do we learn about God's people? To what extent do you see these patterns in your own life?
2. What do we learn about the character of God? Let's praise him for these things, even the less comfortable ones.
3. The Psalm begins and ends with confident prayers to God to fully rescue his people (v1-5, 47-48). How can we be confident that we will be fully rescued and gathered, in spite of our sin?

### Prayer

Lord my God, I recognise my own stubborn sinfulness in that of your people in this Psalm. It makes me all the more grateful for what you have done in Christ to save me, which no-one can fully declare. Help me today to turn away from sin and live in light of your great love.



## 9TH JUNE - PSALM 107

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Book 5 begins with a Psalm that anticipates what Psalm 106 prayed for: the re-gathering and rescue of God's people. This is what God is doing today in Christ and will one day complete.

1. What are some of the different situations from which God has saved people in this Psalm? Reflect on your own state when he rescued you. Verses like Ephesians 2:1-10; 1 Timothy 1:15 may help!
2. How does the Psalm express what God has done for these people? How do they respond to him?
3. What does v43 say is the wise way to respond to this Psalm? What loving deeds of the Lord do we have to ponder that not even Psalm 107 does?

### Prayer

Redeeming God, thank you that you rescue people from utterly hopeless positions. Thank you for saving me from sin and judgment. Please grow my confidence in your saving power and my thankfulness in how you have exercised it towards me.

## 10TH JUNE - PSALM 110

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This is one of a small number of Psalms of David in book 5. It reminds us that it is through his King that God will save his people. This is also one of the Psalms most often quoted in the New Testament.

1. What does v1-3 say God will do through his King? What does v5-7 say this will mean for his enemies?
2. In Mark 12:35-37, Jesus says David is speaking of one who is even greater than him in this Psalm. How does it reassure us that he will have this role of ruling and judging?
3. v4 says that the true King will also be a priest, as Hebrews 7:11-28 says he is. Why is it good news that Jesus is our priest as well as our King?

### Prayer

David's Lord and mine, you are an awesome King to be feared. Please give me more of the reverent joy that comes from having such a King. Thank you that you are also my priest, through whom I can relate to the Father. Help me to draw near to him confidently because of you.



## 12TH JUNE - PSALM 118

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v1 of this Psalm introduces an important refrain in book 5. The Psalm then shows what God's enduring love has meant for his people.

1. Why is it better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in humans?
2. In Mark 12, Jesus quotes v22-23 and says it refers to him. What light do these verses shed on what God's saving King is like?
3. v14 is a quote from Exodus 15:2 when God rescued his people from slavery in Egypt. How does this Psalm express what has happened to Christians, who have been rescued from slavery to sin?

### Prayer

Lord, you are good and your love endures forever. Thank you for the King who was rejected and became the cornerstone. Thank you that in him you have saved me. Help me to trust you as my strength and defence today.

## 13TH JUNE - PSALM 124-125

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These two Psalms are similar to the one we heard on Sunday. They fit together, the first wondering what would have happened without the Lord and the second expressing confidence about God's protection.

1. Psalm 124 literally begins, 'Except the Lord...' What does the Psalmist say would have happened without the Lord? Reflect on this question in your own life. Where would you be without him?
2. What do the two Psalms say has happened to his people since the Lord intervened? What has this looked like in your life?
3. Meditate on the image of being surrounded by the Lord in 125:2. What does this mean for us according to the Psalm?

### Prayer

Maker of heaven and earth, I dread to think where I'd be without you. Thank you for freeing me and for surrounding me. Help me as I continually try to turn from crooked ways to do what is right today.



## 14TH JUNE - PSALM 132

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Psalm 89 questioned whether God's commitment to David had wavered. This Psalm reaffirms his commitment to keep his promise to raise up a saving King from David's descendants.

1. What oath did David make to the Lord?
2. What oath did the Lord make to David?
3. How has the Lord kept his oath? What does that mean for us as his people?

### Prayer

Promise-keeping God, thank you that you have placed one of David's descendants on the throne of the universe and for his good rule over my life. Please may he be honoured and obeyed by more and more people today.

## 15TH JUNE - PSALM 139

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This famous Psalm speaks tenderly to us of God's knowledge of and care for his people, however far they seem from him and however many wicked people oppress them.

1. According to the Psalm, what does God know about us? Given his steadfast love, how does this encourage and comfort us?
2. In what situations is God close to us? How is this a particular encouragement when we feel like God is far off?
3. What does God's intimate knowledge and closeness cause David to pray in v22-24? Why do you think this might be?

### Prayer

Ever-present Lord, your care and closeness in this Psalm is too wonderful for me to get my head around. Thank you for your love and tenderness. Please make me more and more the person you want me to be, in my thoughts and actions.



## 16TH JUNE - PSALM 145

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These last six Psalms praise God for his great salvation, anticipating the eternal praise of his regathered, restored people.

1. What is the tone of this Psalm? If you were setting it to music, what kind of music would you choose?
2. How many times can you see the word 'all' in the Psalm? What does this say about how wide and deep God's grace and compassion go?
3. What response do God's deeds call for? Who does David think ought to praise him?

### Prayer

Compassionate and gracious King, you deserve praise from all the hearts of all the people in the world, because you are thoroughly good in everything you do. Help me to praise you with all my life, and call on others to do the same.

## 17TH JUNE - PSALM 146

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This Psalm, and the one that follows it, begin and end with the words, 'Praise the Lord.' They are designed to help us do just that.

1. What does praising God involve in v1-5?
2. For which of his characteristics does the Psalm praise him in v6-10? For which kinds of people does he show particular care? What does this say about him?
3. How wonderful that a God as kind as this is the one who reigns forever. How do we see his kind grace and eternal power in Jesus?

### Prayer

Praise the Lord, my soul! Please, Lord, help me to grasp more deeply your grace and power, so that I'll praise you with all of my life, for all of my life. My hope is in you, Lord my God, and it's my highest joy to praise you.



# NOTES



# SINGING IN THE KING'S CHOIR

Termcard



30th April: With Wisdom (Psalm 1 & 2)

***"Blessed are all who take refuge in him" (2:12)***

7th May: In Distress (Psalm 13)

***"How long, Lord?" (13:1)***

14th May: In Dependence (Psalm 52)

***"I trust in God's unfailing love" (52:8)***

21st May: In Penitence (Psalm 51)

***"My sin always before me" (51:3)***

28th May: In Despair (Psalm 74)

***"O God, why have you rejected us?" (74:1)***

4th June: With Confidence (Psalm 99) - All-Together Service

***"The Lord reigns" (99:1)***

11th June: On Pilgrimage (Psalm 121)

***"My help comes from the Lord" (121:1)***

18th June: In Celebration (Psalm 145-150)

***"Praise the Lord!" (150:1, 6)***



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CAN BE FOUND AT  
[STEBBES.ORG/PSALMS](https://stebbes.org/psalms)**

ST EBBE'S CHURCH, 2023.

