

# Psalms 2023 Pt. 5

Pastor James Foley – Sunday, August 13, 2023

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## INTRODUCTION

**KEY** – Today we continue our extended summer series on the Book of Psalms. In recent weeks we have noted:

### 1) The Passion Believers Possess for the Book of Psalms (i.e., Manifold Reasons)

**NOTE 1** – Many gravitate to the psalms for their sense of artistry and beauty. Not only do the psalms offer inspired and impacting content, but they do so in a beautiful manner. These ancient works of Hebrew poetry exemplify artistry in that they are characterized by beauty, craftsmanship and technique. The Lord has spoken to humanity, but is there no significance that He has chosen to do so in such a stylized manner?

**NOTE 2** – Many gravitate to the psalms as they help to inform and impact the practices of prayer and worship. The Book of Psalms has always given believers of the Old and New Covenant eras rich verbiage and vocabulary which helps us to connect with God in the midst of life and living (e.g., public and private elements herein).

**NOTE 3** – Many find connection with the psalms because they connect with human emotion and experience! The psalms touch upon nigh every human emotion (e.g., elation and celebration to despair and despondency) and experience (e.g., lack, betrayal and opposition vs. provision, fidelity and breakthrough) with striking detail!

### 2) The Varying Types of Psalms

The psalmists contended with the complexities of human experience/emotion via an array of types of psalms: **a)** hymns; **b)** laments; **c)** psalms of thanksgiving; **d)** psalms of remembrance; **e)** psalms of confidence; **f)** psalms of wisdom; and **g)** royal (i.e., kinship) psalms.

### 3) Poetic Texture of the Psalms

The Book of Psalms is a compendium of one-hundred-and-fifty exemplars of ancient Hebraic lyric poetry. Therefore, we must come to understand the characteristics and/or hallmarks of this genre of biblical literature:

**NOTE 1** – Hence, we noted the musicality of the psalms. Lyric poetry was often connected to tune and melody.

**NOTE 2** – Also, we addressed the operation of parallelism in the psalms (i.e., foundational unit of lyric poetry).

**NOTE 3** – Last Sunday, we dedicated time to assessing the literary devices present within the Book of Psalms.

## TRANSITIONS

**KEY** – This morning I would like to continue our series by addressing the following aspects of the Book of Psalms:

- 1) Structure
- 2) Authorship

## STRUCTURE PT. 1

**KEY** – Firstly, let us consider the STRUCTURE (i.e., layout, organization and arrangement) of the Book of Psalms:

**NOTE 1** – The Book of Psalms is the longest book in the Bible (i.e., based purely on the number of chapters). The Book of Psalms is composed of 150 chapters, psalms or songs. Delving a bit deeper, these 150 psalms are divided into 5 books (i.e., sub-units).

- 1) Book 1: Psalms 1–41
- 2) Book 2: Psalms 42–72
- 3) Book 3: Psalms 73–89
- 4) Book 4: Psalms 90–106
- 5) Book 5: Psalms 107–150

**NOTE 2** – It is uncertain as to why the Book of Psalms was divided into five books. Ancient sources suggest that this five-fold division is meant to mirror the five books of the Torah (i.e., Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy). It is most likely that Ezra and/or other Jewish religious leaders compiled the psalms into their existing order in the fourth century BC.

**NOTE 3** – Each of the five books ends with a doxology or song of praise:

### **Psalm 41:13 (ESV)**

13 Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel,  
from everlasting to everlasting!  
Amen and Amen.

### **Psalm 72:18–19**

18 Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel,  
who alone does wondrous things.  
19 Blessed be his glorious name forever;  
may the whole earth be filled with his glory!  
Amen and Amen!

### **Psalm 89:52**

52 Blessed be the Lord forever!  
Amen and Amen.

### **Psalm 106:48**

48 Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel,  
from everlasting to everlasting!  
And let all the people say, “Amen!”  
Praise the Lord!

### **Psalm 150:6**

6 Let everything that has breath praise the Lord!  
Praise the Lord!

## STRUCTURE PT. 2

**KEY** – Beyond this, however, it is nigh impossible to be overly dogmatic re: organizing elements and structure. The psalms are not arranged according to authorship or chronology. However, scholars do note the following structural insights worthy of attention:

### 1) Favored Names

Each of the five books within the Psalms favor or prefer a particular name or title for God. Yahweh and Elohim are the dominant names for God in the Old Testament. Thus said, consider the recurrence of these names across the five books of the Psalter:

<u>Book</u>	<u>Yahweh</u>	<u>Elohim</u>
<b>1</b>	272	15
<b>2</b>	74	207
<b>3</b>	13	36
<b>4 &amp; 5</b>	339	7

### 2) The Story of Israel

Some commentators posit that the five books of the Book of Psalms tell the three-part story of Israel’s history: **a)** monarchy; **b)** exile; and **c)** return. The psalms of King David dominate books one and two. The beginning and end of book three highlight Israel’s exile while the fourth ends with a plea for God bring the exiles home! The fifth book celebrates that God has done so!

### 3) Matters of Movement (Tehillim)

The Hebrew name for the Book of Psalms is *Tehillim* (i.e., “songs of praise”). This is clearly a beautiful name! Yet as we consider the book, the laments clearly outnumber the hymns. In what sense, then, can this book be characterized as *Tehillim* or “songs of praise”? Consider:

**QUOTE** – “A close examination of the Psalter suggests an answer. A decided shift takes place as we move from the beginning of the book to its end. As we move toward the end, praise overtakes lament until at the very end of the book we have a virtual fireworks of praise. The last seven psalms are note only all hymns of praise but they, for the most part, concentrate on calling the whole world to praise God. . . . In a real sense, the book of Psalms moves us from mourning to joy!” –T. Longman III

## AUTHORSHIP

**KEY** – Secondly, let us consider the authorship of the Book of Psalms. Note the following:

**NOTE** – The varying 150 psalms were written over a 1,000-year period (1440–400 BC) by an array of e. authors:

### 1) David (\*73)

David is the most prolific author of the Psalms. The Book of Psalms directly credits him with writing 73 psalms: 3–9; 11–32; 34–41; 51–65; 68–70; 86; 101; 103; 108–110; 122; 124; 131; 133; and 138–145. Beyond this the New Testament lit. does credit him with an additional two psalms: Psalms 2 (cf. Acts 4:5) and 95 (cf. Heb. 4:7). Ultimately, David wrote app. half of the Psalter under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit!

### Q. Would you like a sampling of his work?

#### Psalm 23

1 The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

2 He makes me lie down in green pastures.

He leads me beside still waters.

3 He restores my soul.

He leads me in paths of righteousness

for his name's sake.

4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,

I will fear no evil,

for you are with me;

your rod and your staff,

they comfort me.

5 You prepare a table before me

in the presence of my enemies;

you anoint my head with oil;

my cup overflows.

6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me

all the days of my life,

and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord

forever.

## 2) Solomon (2)

One of the many sons of David, Solomon succeeded his father as king and became renowned for his wisdom. Solomon wrote Psalms 72 and 127. In both, he acknowledges that God is the source of justice, righteousness and power! How insightful!

### Q. Would you like a sampling of his work?

#### Psalm 72:1–4

- 1 Give the king your justice, O God,  
and your righteousness to the royal son!
- 2 May he judge your people with righteousness,  
and your poor with justice!
- 3 Let the mountains bear prosperity for the people,  
and the hills, in righteousness!
- 4 May he defend the cause of the poor of the people,  
give deliverance to the children of the needy,  
and crush the oppressor!

#### Psalm 127:1

- 1 Unless the Lord builds the house,  
those who build it labor in vain.  
Unless the Lord watches over the city,  
the watchman stays awake in vain.

## 3) Ethan the Ezrahite (1)

When the wisdom of King Solomon is described in 1 Kings 4:31, Scripture notes the following (Emphasis Mine): “he was wiser than all other men, **wiser than Ethan the Ezrahite**, and Heman, Calcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol, and his fame was in all the surrounding nations.” Imagine being so wise that your name is held up as the standard against which King Solomon is measured!

This Ethan the Ezrahite is credited with writing Psalm 89. For your information, Psalm 89 is highly interesting! Many psalms begin with a lament or complaint and culminate with worship, as the writer is comforted by thinking upon the goodness of God. When Ethan penned his psalm, he turned that pattern upside-down. Note:

#### Psalm 89

- 1 I will sing of the steadfast love of the Lord, forever;  
with my mouth I will make known your faithfulness to all generations.
  - 2 For I said, “Steadfast love will be built up forever;  
in the heavens you will establish your faithfulness.”
- 49 Lord, where is your steadfast love of old,  
which by your faithfulness you swore to David?
- 50 Remember, O Lord, how your servants are mocked,  
and how I bear in my heart the insults of all the many nations,
- 51 with which your enemies mock, O Lord,  
with which they mock the footsteps of your anointed.

#### 4) Heman (\*1)

Similar to Ethan the Ezrahite, Heman makes an appearance in 1 Kings 4 in relation to Solomon (Emphasis Mine): “31 he [Solomon] was wiser than all other men, **wiser than** Ethan the Ezrahite, and **Heman**, Calcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol, and his fame was in all the surrounding nations.” Thus, Heman was a man of noted wisdom. Heman penned Psalm 88 in concert with the Sons of Korah. This psalm is often classified as the saddest psalm:

#### Psalm 88 (Emphasis Mine)

- 1 O Lord, God of my salvation,  
I cry out day and night before you.
- 2 Let my prayer come before you;  
incline your ear to my cry!
- 3 For my soul is full of troubles,  
and my life draws near to Sheol.
- 4 I am counted among those who go down to the pit;  
I am a man who has no strength,
- 5 like one set loose among the dead,  
like the slain that lie in the grave,  
like those whom you remember no more,  
for they are cut off from your hand.
- 6 You have put me in the depths of the pit,  
in the regions dark and deep.
- 7 Your wrath lies heavy upon me,  
and you overwhelm me with all your waves. Selah
- 8 You have caused my companions to shun me;  
you have made me a horror to them.  
I am shut in so that I cannot escape;
- 9 my eye grows dim through sorrow.  
Every day I call upon you, O Lord;  
I spread out my hands to you.
- 10 Do you work wonders for the dead?  
Do the departed rise up to praise you? Selah
- 11 Is your steadfast love declared in the grave,  
or your faithfulness in Abaddon?
- 12 Are your wonders known in the darkness,  
or your righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?
- 13 But I, O Lord, cry to you;  
in the morning my prayer comes before you.
- 14 O Lord, why do you cast my soul away?  
Why do you hide your face from me?
- 15 Afflicted and close to death from my youth up,  
I suffer your terrors; I am helpless.
- 16 Your wrath has swept over me;  
your dreadful assaults destroy me.
- 17 They surround me like a flood all day long;  
they close in on me together.
- 18 You have caused my beloved and my friend to shun me;  
my companions have become darkness.

## 5) Moses (1)

Moses is a figure who needs little introduction! Called by God to lead the Israelites out of bondage in Egypt and through 40-years of wandering in the wilderness, Moses often prayed on the behalf of his people, Israel. In keeping with his love for Israel, he speaks for the whole nation in Psalm 90 (i.e., the one psalm credited to him):

### Psalm 90

- 1 Lord, you have been our dwelling place  
in all generations.
- 2 Before the mountains were brought forth,  
or ever you had formed the earth and the world,  
from everlasting to everlasting you are God.
- 3 You return man to dust  
and say, "Return, O children of man!"
- 4 For a thousand years in your sight  
are but as yesterday when it is past,  
or as a watch in the night.
- 5 You sweep them away as with a flood; they are like a dream,  
like grass that is renewed in the morning:
- 6 in the morning it flourishes and is renewed;  
in the evening it fades and withers.
- 7 For we are brought to an end by your anger;  
by your wrath we are dismayed.
- 8 You have set our iniquities before you,  
our secret sins in the light of your presence.
- 9 For all our days pass away under your wrath;  
we bring our years to an end like a sigh.
- 10 The years of our life are seventy,  
or even by reason of strength eighty;  
yet their span is but toil and trouble;  
they are soon gone, and we fly away.
- 11 Who considers the power of your anger,  
and your wrath according to the fear of you?
- 12 So teach us to number our days  
that we may get a heart of wisdom.
- 13 Return, O Lord! How long?  
Have pity on your servants!
- 14 Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love,  
that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.
- 15 Make us glad for as many days as you have afflicted us,  
and for as many years as we have seen evil.
- 16 Let your work be shown to your servants,  
and your glorious power to their children.
- 17 Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us,  
and establish the work of our hands upon us;  
yes, establish the work of our hands!

## 6) Asaph (12)

Appointed by King David as one of his chief musicians, Asaph served in the Tabernacle before the ark of God (cf. 1 Chron. 16:4–6). Forty years later, Asaph was still serving as a worship leader when the ark was brought into the Temple in the days of King Solomon (cf. 2 Chron. 5:7–14). Asaph penned 12 psalms in total: 50; 73–83.

What can we say of the psalms of Asaph? Asaph often touched upon the theme of God’s justice in the earth! Though his words communicate great sorrow and distress in the present, they are marked by the immovable conviction that the judge of the earth will do rightly in the end.

### Psalm 75 (Note the Utterance of the Lord v. 2–5)

1 We give thanks to you, O God;  
we give thanks, for your name is near.  
We recount your wondrous deeds.

2 “At the set time that I appoint  
I will judge with equity.  
3 When the earth totters, and all its inhabitants,  
it is I who keep steady its pillars. Selah  
4 I say to the boastful, ‘Do not boast,’  
and to the wicked, ‘Do not lift up your horn;  
5 do not lift up your horn on high,  
or speak with haughty neck.’”

6 For not from the east or from the west  
and not from the wilderness comes lifting up,  
7 but it is God who executes judgment,  
putting down one and lifting up another.  
8 For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup  
with foaming wine, well mixed,  
and he pours out from it,  
and all the wicked of the earth  
shall drain it down to the dregs.

9 But I will declare it forever;  
I will sing praises to the God of Jacob.  
10 All the horns of the wicked I will cut off,  
but the horns of the righteous shall be lifted up.



## 7) The Sons of Korah (\*11)

The sons of Korah are credited with 11 psalms: 42; 44–49; 84–85; and 87–88. Their background is fascinating!

Korah was the leader of an uprising against Moses and Aaron in the days following the Exodus. As a member of the tribe of Levi, Korah had the privilege of helping to care for the Tabernacle, the dwelling place of God. But that honor was not enough for Korah! He was jealous of his cousin, Aaron and tried to wrest the priesthood from him. Moses warned the Israelites to get away from the tents of Korah and his rebellious peers. In the end, fire from heaven consumed Korah and his followers, and the earth swallowed up their tents (cf. Numbers 16:1–35)!

However, the three sons of Korah were not killed in this calamity (cf. Numbers 26:8–11). Since Scripture does not tell us the age of the sons of Korah in the days of this rebellion, they were either wise enough to not follow their father unto judgment or too young to be involved. Either way, they chose a different, better path! In fact, the descendants of Korah were still serving in the house of God centuries later. In fact, 1 Chronicles 9:19–27 presents that they were entrusted with the keys to the Temple and responsible for guarding its entrances. What a wonderful end to a story with a terrible beginning!

Most of their psalms demonstrate the warm adoration of faithful servants of the Lord! Note:

### Psalm 84

1 How lovely is your dwelling place,  
O Lord of hosts!

2 My soul longs, yes, faints  
for the courts of the Lord;  
my heart and flesh sing for joy  
to the living God.

3 Even the sparrow finds a home,  
and the swallow a nest for herself,  
where she may lay her young,  
at your altars, O Lord of hosts,  
my King and my God.

4 Blessed are those who dwell in your house,  
ever singing your praise! Selah

5 Blessed are those whose strength is in you,  
in whose heart are the highways to Zion.

6 As they go through the Valley of Baca  
they make it a place of springs;  
the early rain also covers it with pools.

7 They go from strength to strength;  
each one appears before God in Zion.

8 O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer;  
give ear, O God of Jacob! Selah

9 Behold our shield, O God;  
look on the face of your anointed!

10 For a day in your courts is better  
than a thousand elsewhere.

I would rather be a doorkeeper  
in the house of my God  
than dwell in the tents of wickedness.

11 For the Lord God is a sun and shield;  
the Lord bestows favor and honor.

No good thing does he withhold  
from those who walk uprightly.

12 O Lord of hosts,  
blessed is the one who trusts in you!

## 8) Anonymous (\*50)

The remaining fifty psalms were penned anonymously. However, do not let the absence of a known author lead you to conclude that such psalms were unimportant! In fact, some of the most timeless and timely of psalms were penned by anonymous authors! Note:

### Psalm 1

1 Blessed is the man  
     who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,  
 nor stands in the way of sinners,  
     nor sits in the seat of scoffers;  
 2 but his delight is in the law of the Lord,  
     and on his law he meditates day and night.

3 He is like a tree  
     planted by streams of water  
 that yields its fruit in its season,  
     and its leaf does not wither.  
 In all that he does, he prospers.

4 The wicked are not so,  
     but are like chaff that the wind drives away.

5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,  
     nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;

6 for the Lord knows the way of the righteous,  
     but the way of the wicked will perish.

### Psalm 100

1 Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth!

2 Serve the Lord with gladness!  
     Come into his presence with singing!

3 Know that the Lord, he is God!  
     It is he who made us, and we are his;  
     we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

4 Enter his gates with thanksgiving,  
     and his courts with praise!  
     Give thanks to him; bless his name!

5 For the Lord is good;  
     his steadfast love endures forever,  
     and his faithfulness to all generations.

### Psalm 117 (Shortest Psalm)

1 Praise the Lord, all nations!  
     Extol him, all peoples!

2 For great is his steadfast love toward us,  
     and the faithfulness of the Lord endures forever.

Praise the Lord!

**Psalm 150**

- 1 Praise the Lord!  
Praise God in his sanctuary;  
praise him in his mighty heavens!
- 2 Praise him for his mighty deeds;  
praise him according to his excellent greatness!
  
- 3 Praise him with trumpet sound;  
praise him with lute and harp!
- 4 Praise him with tambourine and dance;  
praise him with strings and pipe!
- 5 Praise him with sounding cymbals;  
praise him with loud clashing cymbals!
- 6 Let everything that has breath praise the Lord!  
Praise the Lord!

**KEY** – Our next session on the Psalms will be our last, as the summer begins to wind to a close. Until that time!

**CONCLUSION**

**NOTE 1** – Feel free to give either in person or online at [www.NewLifeBarre.org](http://www.NewLifeBarre.org).

**NOTE 2** – Check out our website for any of our beyond Sunday ministries (MM, WM & CYC).

**NOTE 3** – No Thursday Evening Bible Study this Week, as Pastor will be unable to be in attendance!