

# *Psalms Notes*

## Book One: Psalms 1–41

### **1. *Two Ways of Life Contrasted***

**Theme:**

Two roads for life

**Summary:**

Blessed is the righteous person (1:1)

What the righteous person does (1:2,3)

The fate of the ungodly person (1:4,5)

The Lord knows the way you walk (1:6)

**Capsule Thought:**

The way of the righteous leads to God and eternal life; the way of the ungodly leads to ruin and death.

**Thought Questions:**

How is the righteous person like a tree?

How is the ungodly person like chaff?

### **2. *Coronation of the Lord's Anointed***

**Theme:**

The coronation of God's King

**Summary:**

A Royal Psalm

Plotting against the new king (2:1-3)

God laughs and makes promises to the new king (2:4-9)

An exhortation to submit (2:10-12)

**Capsule Thought:**

God laughs at the foolishness of rebellious people. Those who rebel against God's anointed will face his judgment. We find an important reference here in vs. 12, the king is God's Son.

**Thought Question:**

Why is this considered to be a messianic psalm?

### **3. *Victory in the Face of Defeat***

**Theme:**

God is our shield

**Summary:**

David's trouble (3:1-2)

The Lord hears his prayers and gives peace (3:3-6)

Salvation belongs to God (3:7-8)

**Capsule Thought:**

David is brought peace, refreshing and knowledge of salvation through his prayer to God

**Thought Question:**

Who has risen up against David? You will find the background of this in 2 Sam 15-19.

#### **4. *Evening Prayer for Deliverance***

**Theme:**

Trust in God and do the right thing

**Summary:**

A plea to God and God's answer (4:1-3)

Put your trust in God (4:4-5)

The joy of a happy heart (4:6-8)

**Capsule Thought:**

In contrast to the doubts and anxieties expressed by his enemies David sings about joy and peace during adversity.

**Thought Question:**

What did David want God to do for him when he prayed in the midst of his trouble?

#### **5. *Morning Prayer for Guidance***

**Theme:**

A morning prayer for protection

**Summary:**

A morning petition (5:1-3)

A prayer to cast away his enemies (5:4-12)

**Capsule Thought:**

After describing his enemies David acknowledges God's grace and protection for the righteous.

**Thought Question:**

What is the character of David's enemies?

#### **6. *Prayer for God's Mercy***

**Theme:**

A prayer for healing

**Summary:**

A prayer for healing (6:1-7)

Confidence in answered prayer (6:8-10)

**Capsule Thought:**

David is confident that because God has heard his prayer it will be done.

**Thought Question:**

When does David become confident God will answer his supplication?

#### **7. *Wickedness Justly Rewarded***

**Theme:**

A prayer for vindication from false accusations

**Summary:**

Cry for deliverance (7:1-2)

Declaration of innocence (7:3-5)

God, the righteous judge (7:6-11)

The boomerang of evil (7:12-16)

A vow to God (7:17)

**Capsule Thought:**

David calls upon God to judge him if he has been wrong.

**Thought Question:**

Why is David so confident he will be vindicated?

## 8. *God's Glory and Man's Dominion*

**Theme:**

The greatness of God and man's place in His creation

**Summary:**

The praise of children (8:1-2)

God's glory in creation (8:3-4)

What is man? (8:4)

Man, the crown of creation (8:5-8)

**Capsule Thought:**

Man is crowned with glory and given dominion over the creation because we have been made in the image of God and a little lower than the angels.

**Thought Questions:**

Why might someone consider man to be insignificant in all creation?

## 9. *Praise for Victory over Enemies*

**Theme:**

Praise for God's protection and a plea to judge the ungodly nations

**Summary:**

A promise to praise and rejoice and speak of God (9:1-2)

The nations have destroyed but God will endure and protect the weak (9:3-10)

A plea for praise, remembrance and mercy (9:11-14)

Judge the nations, O God (9:15-20)

**Capsule Thought:**

God protects the helpless and humble from the wicked who will be judged by God

**Thought Questions:**

What do we learn about God's judgment?

## 10. *Petition for God's Judgment*

**Theme:**

The arrogance of the wicked

**Summary:**

The apparent absence of God (10:1-2)

The boasts of the wicked (10:3-13)

But God does see (10:14-18)

**Capsule Thought:**

The wicked have misread God's patience for uncaring

**Thought Questions:**

Why do we wonder where God is when evil is being done?

## ***11. God Tests the Sons of Men***

**Theme:**

Trust in God when all seems hopeless

**Summary:**

**1-3** Warning to flee - what else can the righteous do?

**4-7** Even if the foundation is destroyed the righteous will be upheld by God.

**Capsule Thought:**

This Psalm is a response to "friends" advice

**Thought Questions:**

How relevant is this for you today?

## ***12. The Pure Words of the Lord***

**Theme:**

Human flattery versus faithful words

**Summary:**

**1, 8** the trend of the society

**2-4** the tongue of the wicked

**5-7** Trust in God's promise to keep you safe for his Words are pure, they will not fail.

**Capsule Thought:**

A cry for help, honesty has disappeared and flattery rules the day

**Thought Questions:**

What are the characteristics of the speech of the wicked?

## ***13. The Prayer for God's Answer—Now***

**Theme:**

A desperate plea for God's deliverance

**Summary:**

**1,2** How long? before God will lift David up

**3,4** A plea to hear, consider and enlighten David.

**5,6** A reminder of his trust and assurance in God shall cause David to rejoice and sing in the LORD.

**Capsule Thought:**

After a plea for help, he affirms his trust in God

**Thought Questions:**

Why does David still trust God when he is wondering how long?

## ***14. The Characteristics of the Godless***

**Theme:**

A meditation on the fool

**Summary:**

**1** the iniquity of men

**2-4** God's inquiry of the people

**5,6** Fear comes upon the righteous

**7** A plea for divine intervention

**Capsule Thought:**

The fool lives as if God does not exist

**Thought Questions:**

What is the definition of a fool?

**15. *The Characteristics of the Godly*****Theme:**

Who can live with God?

**Summary:**

1 Who can dwell with God?

2-5 He who does...

**Capsule Thought:**

To dwell with God one must live ethically

**Thought Questions:**

How might this Psalm been used in worship?

**16. *Eternal Life for One Who Trusts*****Theme:**

Confidence in God in the face of death

**Summary:**

1-4 The marks of faithfulness

5-8 The present blessings of the faithful.

9-11 the future of the faithful

**Capsule Thought:**

A relationship with God brings security and joy

**Thought Questions:**

How are we tempted to serve other "gods"?

**17. *“Hide Me under the Shadow of Your Wings”*****Theme:**

A prayer for deliverance from unjust persecution

**Summary:**

1-5 David pleads to be heard, with a reminder of his integrity, he has been tested.

6-12 David pleads for God's lovingkindness like a mother bird takes its chicks under its wings for protection.

13-15 Then for his deliverance from his deadly enemies. He is not asking for their goods but to awake in His likeness.

**Capsule Thought:**

He prays in confidence of God's care

**Thought Questions:**

What does the expression shadow of your wings mean?

**18. *Thanksgiving for Deliverance by God*****Theme:**

Thanksgiving for victory

**Summary:**

**1-3** What God has been to David during his years hunted by Saul.

**4-19** David's dire peril and deliverance by God.

**20-27** God gives to man what he gives to God.

**28-45** God works in him.

**46-50** David's conclusion then is to give thanks and praise Him among even the Gentiles.

**Capsule Thought:**

David acknowledges God as the source of victory and sings praises to Him

**Thought Questions:**

How do you respond to victories God gives you?

## ***19. The Works and Words of God***

**Theme:**

The revelation of God in nature and His Word

**Summary:**

1-6 The glory of the heavens God has made.

7-13 The perfect glory of the Law of God.

14 Concluding Prayer

**Capsule Thought:**

The scriptures reveal what God is like and how he cares for His Creation

**Thought Questions:**

Why do we wonder where God is when evil is being done?

## ***20. Trust Not in Chariots and Horses but in God***

**Theme:**

Prayer for a king as he departs for battle

**Summary:**

1-5 The people plead to God to answer, protect, send...help, give...support, remember, regard.

6 Assurance of the king

7-9 The peoples commitment and request to God.

**Capsule Thought:**

God will help His anointed

**Thought Questions:**

Whom has God anointed?

## ***21. Triumph of the King***

**Theme:**

A thanksgiving song for victory

**Summary:**

**1-7** They acknowledge the Lord's goodness to the king.

**8-13** The Power of God

**Capsule Thought:**

Linked with Ps 20; compare 20:4 with 21:2. 20 is the request 21 is the thanks for answering the request.

**Thought Questions:**

Who is thanking God?

**22. *Psalm of the Cross*****Theme:**

Prayer of Anguish and Praise

**Summary:**

**1-11** Despair and appeals to the past

**12-21** Intense Anguish in the immediate distress

**22-31** Assurance and testimony

**Capsule Thought:**

This psalm is inextricably linked with the crucifixion because Jesus quotes from it and its description of his suffering.

**Thought Questions:**

Why does the psalm turn from anguish to praise?

**23. *Psalm of the Divine Shepherd*****Theme:**

God is with us always, even in the valley of despair

**Summary:**

**1-6** God's Provision

**Capsule Thought:**

David's description of the protection, guidance, and comfort of the LORD who is and acts like His Shepherd. We are told in John 10 that Jesus is the true Shepherd.

**Thought Questions:**

What do you think of when you read this psalm?

**24. *Psalm of the King of Glory*****Theme:**

A hymn to the king of glory

**Summary:**

**1-6** Approaching the hill of Yahweh

**7-10** Entering the Gates of Zion

**Capsule Thought:**

Some think this may have been one of those Psalms David was singing when he brought the Ark up to Jerusalem. Because this is a picture of the King of Glory entering through the everlasting gates.

**Thought Questions:**

Who is the King of Glory?

**25. *Acrostic Prayer for Instruction*****Theme:**

A plea for divine guidance

**Summary:**

**1-7** A plea for guidance

**8-15** The goodness of the Lord

**16-22** A prayer for deliverance

**Capsule Thought:**

The psalmist asks for divine grace so he may be delivered from his anguish.

**Thought Questions:**

Upon what does the psalmist base his confidence in verses 8-15?

## **26. *“Examine Me, O LORD, and Prove Me”***

**Theme:**

Preparation for entering the Temple

**Summary:**

**1-2** His Approach to God

**3-10** His determination to avoid wicked men

**11-12** His dedication and assurance

**Capsule Thought:**

The psalmist is convinced that God will judge him fairly.

**Thought Questions:**

What evidence do we have of the psalmist's devotion to God?

## **27. *Trust in the Lord and Be Not Afraid***

**Theme:**

Trust in God

**Summary:**

**1-3** Whole hearted trust

**4-6** A supreme desire

**7-12** A prayer for deliverance

**13-14** The unfailing Lord

**Capsule Thought:**

The psalmist is not overcome by his fears but rather trusts in the Lord.

**Thought Questions:**

What does David encourage us to do at the end of the psalm?

## **28. *Rejoice Because of Answered Prayer***

**Theme:**

Hope is in God alone

**Summary:**

**1-5** A cry for help

**6-9** Thanks for God's response

**Capsule Thought:**

David closes with a shift in focus from himself to the nation

**Thought Questions:**

Why does David want God to destroy his enemies?



## 29. *The Powerful Voice of God*

**Theme:**

The glory of God revealed in nature

**Summary:**

1-4 The Approach of the Storm

5-7 The Onset of the Storm

8-11 The Storm passes away

**Capsule Thought:**

God is in control of the powerful forces of nature.

**Thought Questions:**

How does God use the storm to reveal himself?

## 30. *Praise for Dramatic Deliverance*

**Theme:**

Praise to the Lord for His lovingkindness

**Summary:**

1-5 What God hath wrought

6-10 The Psalmist's Plight

11-12 A memorable resolve

**Capsule Thought:**

Through experience The psalmist strengthens his faith and understanding of God

**Thought Questions:**

What can we learn from his experiences?

## 31. *"Be of Good Courage"*

**Theme:**

Trial and Trust

**Summary:**

1-8 Put your Trust in the Lord

9-24 Deliver me from my trial

**Capsule Thought:**

Despite grief the psalmist reaffirms his trust in God

**Thought Questions:**

What does "my times are in your hand" mean?

## 32. *The Blessedness of Forgiveness*

**Theme:**

The joy of forgiveness

**Summary:**

1-2 Blessed are the forgiven

3-4 Burden of guilt

5 Confession and forgiveness

6-9 Follow David's example

10-11 Rejoice in the Lord's mercy

**Capsule Thought:**

David recalls his confession of sin and joy of forgiveness for an example for the godly to follow.

**Thought Questions:**

What happened to David when he would not confess his sin?

### ***33. God Considers All Man's Works***

**Theme:**

Praise and thanks for God's works

**Summary:**

**1-3** Rejoice, praise and sing

**4-9** God's word of creation

**10-12** God's plans will overcome the plans of people

**13-19** God's care for those who fear him

**20-22** The Lord is our help and shield

**Capsule Thought:**

Man should be in awe and rejoice in the power of God to create and care for everything

**Thought Questions:**

What does it mean that "our soul waits for the LORD"?

### ***34. Seek the Lord***

**Theme:**

Praise and trust the LORD

**Summary:**

**1-7** Let us exalt God's name together

**8-11** Experience that the LORD is good

**12-14** What to do if you desire life and good days

**15-22** The LORD sees and protects the righteous

**Capsule Thought:**

The LORD will cut off the wicked and will redeem the soul of those who trust in Him

**Thought Questions:**

What does it mean to "glorify" or "magnify" the LORD?

### ***35. Petition for God's Intervention***

**Theme:**

A plea and praise for God's deliverance from enemies

**Summary:**

**1-10** Fight against those who fight against me

**11-18** LORD, how long must I wait?

**19-28** Vindicate me, LORD and I will speak of your righteousness

**Capsule Thought:**

Three times David pleads for God's vindication from his enemies and the praise that will come from his lips

**Thought Questions:**

Why does David plead his case three times?

### ***36. The Excellent Lovingkindness of God***

**Theme:**

The way of the wicked contrasts with the goodness of God

**Summary:**

**1-4** The way of the wicked

**5-9** The lovingkindness of God

**10-12** A closing prayer

**Capsule Thought:**

The wicked man does not hate evil, but God is good, faithful, loving and kind at all times.

**Thought Questions:**

Where does the way of the wicked begin?

### ***37. “Rest in the LORD”***

**Theme:**

Do not fret over or envy the apparent prosperity of evildoers

**Summary:**

**1-11** Do not fret

**12-22** The LORD laughs at the wicked

**23-33** God directs the way of the righteous

**34-40** Wait (have patience) for the LORD to help you

**Capsule Thought:**

We don't need to fight with the wicked to destroy them, God will throw down the wicked and exalt the righteous in due time

**Thought Questions:**

How should we deal with the prosperity of the wicked?

### ***38. The Heavy Burden of Sin***

**Theme:**

Prayer for help in a time of suffering and chastening

**Summary:**

**1-10** The physical toll he suffered due to his sin

**11-20** Rejected by friends and oppressed by enemies

**21-22** An appeal for God's help

**Capsule Thought:**

This is an appeal for comfort in a time of repentance from sin when loved ones and friends won't comfort him and his enemies delight

**Thought Questions:**

How might our sin affect our physical health?

### ***39. Know the Measure of Man's Days***

**Theme:**

Prayer for wisdom and deliverance

**Summary:**

**1-3** I will guard my ways

**4-6** Help me to know my frailty

7-11 My hope is in you

12-13 Hear me and help me LORD

**Capsule Thought:**

This is a commitment to due right and a plea for help in terrible distress

**Thought Questions:**

What help is there in knowing the end of your days and the frailty of your life?

## ***40. Delight to Do God's Will***

**Theme:**

Faith perseveres during trial

**Summary:**

1-10 Praise to God for lifting his spirits

11-17 Faith that God will deliver him from trouble

**Capsule Thought:**

This is a prayer of thanks that God has heard him, lifted his spirits and trust in God's deliverance.

**Thought Questions:**

How can a new song of praise be on our lips before we have been delivered from a difficult situation?

## ***41. The Blessedness of Helping the Poor***

**Theme:**

The blessing and suffering of the godly

**Summary:**

1-4 Rewards of the compassionate

5-10 My friend has turned against me

11-12 God will lift me up

13 Benediction for the end of Book One

**Capsule Thought:**

God restores him from his sin and vindicates him from his enemies and friend that have turned against him.

**Thought Questions:**

What blessings does God give to those who consider the poor?