

Subject: *Know Your Bible – Part 5*

Scripture: *Psalms 1:1-6*

Books of Wisdom and Poetry: Job through Song of Solomon

- These are books of wisdom because of their subject matter
- These are books of poetry because of their literary style

English poetry is known for its rhyme and repetition of words or sounds. Hebrew poetry uses repeated, related, or contrasting thoughts and expressions.

As we saw in our last study of the historical books, this section of the Bible does not follow in a chronological order. These five wisdom books fit into different stages of Biblical history. These books have a different historical setting:

- Job – in the time of Abraham (2100 BC)
- Psalms – half of them during the life of David (1000 BC)
- Proverbs—Song of Solomon – in the life of Solomon (950 BC)

Song of Solomon was likely written in Solomon's youth, Proverbs in his mid-life years, and Ecclesiastes was written as reflections of an older man.

Book of Job:

The book of Job contains 329 questions, more than any other Bible book. In chapter 38 alone there are 40 questions. Job examines the problem of human suffering and God's sovereignty.

Job deals with a hard question: Why do good people suffer?

Job deals with a harder question: Why is God silent when good people suffer?

Job 1-2: Attacks of Satan (He attacks Job's integrity, his family, and his health.)

Job 3-37: Accusations of friends (There are several cycles of debate and defense.)

Job 38-42: Authority of God (God finally speaks and Job repents.)

If the best man of his time needed to repent (Job 42:5-6), where does that leave the rest of us?

We must submit to God and trust Him even when we don't understand His ways. The story of Job reveals what it means to fear God.

Book of Psalms:

Psalms is perhaps the most loved book of the Bible. Psalms is the largest book in the Bible and is probably read more often than any other book. Psalms is often included in editions of the New Testament (for example, Gideons' *New Testament and Psalms*).

The Importance of Psalms:

1. Jesus referred to the Psalms during His earthly ministry

He quoted from Psalms on the cross.

Psalms 22:1 *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*

He spoke of Psalms on the day of His resurrection.

Luke 24:44 *And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.*

2. The early church used the Psalms in their preaching

When Peter preached on the Day of Pentecost, he made the point that Christ's resurrection had been predicted in Psalm 16.

Acts 2:23-25 ²³ *Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:* ²⁴ *Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.* ²⁵ *For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved.*

3. The early church used the Psalms in their praying

When Peter and John met with the church for prayer they remembered Psalm 2.

Acts 4:24-25 ²⁴ *And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is:* ²⁵ *Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things?*

4. Singing psalms was a regular part of New Testament worship

Ephesians 5:19 *Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.*

Colossians 3:16 *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*

Psalms reveals a full range of human emotions and experiences. David and others pour out their hearts to the Lord. The writers confess their sins, admit their doubts and fears, and ask God for help, sometimes out of sheer desperation. The honesty of the Psalms should lead us into a deeper and more transparent relationship with God.

Many psalms focus on God's character.

Psalm 119 is the longest chapter of the Bible (176 verses). This psalm is a powerful tribute to the Word of God and is also an example of an acrostic psalm. Each of the 22 sections contains eight verses and each verse begins with the same letter of the Hebrew alphabet. This literary device was an aid in memorization and suggested that the content of the psalm covered the subject comprehensively "from A to Z."

116 psalms out of 150 have titles or superscriptions (things written above). These titles often provide important historical background or context for the psalms.

Seven writers are mentioned by name. Half of the psalms (75 out of 150) were written by David. His experiences as shepherd, songwriter, soldier, and statesman are revealed in these psalms. Two of David's psalms (Ps. 2, 95) do not mention him in the title, but are attributed to David in the New Testament (Acts 4:25-26; Heb. 4:7). One third of the psalms (50) have unknown authors. Some of these are thought to have been written by Ezra.

Psalms were written and compiled over a period of 1000 years. The earliest psalm was Psalm 90, written by Moses around 1410 BC. The latest was Psalm 126, written after Israel returned from captivity around 430 BC.

Psalms are quoted more often in the New Testament than any other OT book.

Classification of the psalms:

- *Messianic* – describe the life and ministry of Christ (Ps. 2; 22; 110)
- *Penitential* – confess sin and ask for God's mercy (Ps. 32; 51)
- *Historical* – review the history of Israel (Ps. 78; 105-106)
- *Praise* – exalt God's character and works (Ps. 100; 103; 139)
- *Instruction* – teach God's wisdom and ways (Ps. 1; 119)
- *Imprecatory* – plead for God's judgment on enemies (Ps. 35; 55; 58-59)
These psalms should be interpreted in the light of God's earthly ruler (often David) acting as God's agent on earth to ask for and accomplish His will.
- *Pilgrimage* – promote worship during religious feasts (Ps. 120-134)

The Book of Psalms easily lends itself to personal application, so a wise student should ask the following questions:

- ✓ Is there a sin to confess?
- ✓ Is there a promise to claim?
- ✓ Is there an attitude to change?
- ✓ Is there a command to obey?
- ✓ Is there an example to follow?
- ✓ Is there a prayer to pray?
- ✓ Is there an error to avoid?
- ✓ Is there a truth to believe?
- ✓ Is there an attribute to praise God for?
- ✓ Is there a blessing to thank God for?

Know Your Bible – Part 5

Job and Psalms

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We must submit to God and _____ even when we don’t understand His ways.

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The Importance of Psalms:

1. Jesus referred to the Psalms during _____

He quoted from Psalms on the cross (Ps. 22:1) and on the day of His resurrection (Lk. 24:44).

2. The early church used the Psalms in _____

When Peter preached on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:23-25), he made the point that Christ's resurrection had been predicted in Psalm 16.

3. The early church used the Psalms in _____

When Peter and John met with the church for prayer (Acts 4:24-25) they referred to Psalm 2.

4. Singing psalms was a regular part of _____
(Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16)

Psalms reveals a full range of human _____

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