

# PSALMS 42-72

## (Book 2)

The title “Psalms” comes from the Greek term “psalmos” which means “song sung to harp music.” The Hebrew title is Tehillim which means praises. The words Hallelujah/Alleluia and the Tehillim are based on the Hebrew verb “to praise.”

This collection of praise songs to YHWH, the creator whose name is too holy to be spoken, is divided into five sections by summary doxologies. In many translations, these sections are called “Books.” The first summary doxology is at the end of Psalm 41. The second summary doxology is at the end of Psalm 72:

*Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who  
alone does wondrous deeds!  
And blessed be his glorious Name for ever  
And may all the earth be filled with his glory.  
Amen. Amen.*

The most important guidance that I can give you about reading (or singing) the Psalms is PRAY THE PSALMS. Do not just read them. Pray them.

Psalms are the voice of God’s people. When you pray/sing the Psalms, you do so with all other believers. These songs have been prayed and sung over and over by Jews and Christians for over 3,000 years. (Some Psalms are older, some are younger.) The melodies have changed, but the words have remained. They have been used in almost every Christian prayer and worship service since the first Pentecost. They are the basis for many hymns including “A Mighty Fortress” – Psalm 46.

When you do not know the right words or question how to express your feelings to God, search the Psalms. You will find something and perhaps in bolder words than you might choose.

If the Psalms you are reading/singing/praying are not your prayer for that day, you can be sure that is the

prayer, the experience, the emotion of someone, somewhere within the body of Christ. Pray it for them and with them.

Book 2 of the Psalms is full of sadness, of lament, of “the blues”: enemies, depression, betrayal, confession, repentance and despair. At the same time, they are full of trust. God’s mighty acts of the past are remembered. God is praised because the creator is good. Out of the depths of lament, God is praised while waiting for deliverance.

Eight of these Psalms are identified with events in King David’s life, especially in the days before he became king and King Saul was trying to kill him.

One of the best-known Psalms from Book 2 is Psalm 51. You may know it as a Psalm of repentance, a Psalm for Lent. You may know it as David’s Psalm when he realizes he has sinned horribly. Or, you may just know it from singing verses 11-13 during worship:

*Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a  
right spirit within me.*

*Cast me not away from your presence and take not  
your holy spirit from me.*

*Restore unto me the joy of your salvation and renew  
a right spirit within me.*

Whenever God’s people sing the blues, the honest expression of suffering always includes praise and trust. God will restore joy, punish the evil-doers, forgive those who repent and protect the faithful. Psalms give us words to express real and difficult feelings within the awareness that God is good and caring. Faith is not feeling good and therefore praising God; faith is knowing that God will take care of you even when you feel bad.