

Solid Rock Christian Church Manassas, Virginia

Bible Study - December 1, 2022

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Title: Introduction To The Book of Psalms - Part VIII

I. Introduction

A. Thank you for your continued participation in our Bible Study sessions and it is my sincere desire that you are being blessed.

B. In our last session, we looked at Psalms of Repentance and Psalms of Remembrance. Here are just a few questions for review and you can locate all of the answers in Part VII of the Study Notes.

C. Review Questions:

1. The psalms of repentance are sometimes termed what?

2. Psalms of Repentance may be considered a subtype of what type of Psalm?

3. In expressing repentance, the psalmist typically speaks of what? (Please give a complete response, based on your study handout - Part VII.) //Use the remaining space on this page for your response.//

4. Psalms of Remembrance are also known as what type of Psalms?

5. What two events in the history of Israel express remembrance the most?

a. _____

b. _____

D. Thank you for responding to the above questions and now let's move into this sessions material.

II. Psalms of Retribution

A. Psalms of retribution come under the general category of petitions, but they are a specific kind of petition in which the psalmist requests the LORD not only to deliver him (and/or God's people), but also to punish the wicked.

B. This small group of psalms plus a number of scattered verses sometimes perplex Bible readers because they appear to be curses in the form of prayers.

C. In them, the psalmist calls upon God to bring judgment upon his enemies, especially those who are persecuting him or his people. It sounds as if he is pleading with the LORD to take revenge on behalf of the oppressed faithful.

D. There are those who say such words and feelings of hatred do not belong in the Holy Scriptures since they are contrary to God's Command to love our enemies and pray for them, rather than against them (see Matt. 5:43-48).

E. However, it is important to read these prayers (sometimes called **Imprecatory Psalms**) in their total context. //Please follow along closely.//

F. These types of psalms need to be understood not from our perspective today, but from the point of view of the cultural and religious setting of their own time. A careful study will show that the psalmist is not really asking God to wreak vengeance or punishment for his own sake.

G. Rather, it is for the sake of the honor and reputation of God. It is the will and righteousness of the LORD God Almighty Himself that the ungodly oppressors have violated. God's punishing them will demonstrate His justice for all to see.

H. Consequently, what the psalmist is praying for is an act of righteous "retribution" (a just judgment) by which God defends His good name and shows that He is truly God.

I. Such an act of retribution will fulfill God's many promises of deliverance made to the obedient as well as His warnings to punish the wicked (e.g., Deut. 27:24-26 and 28:15-29).

J. By attacking God's Covenant people, the enemy were, in effect, insulting God Himself, and God will not tolerate such behavior (Ps. 9:11-12).

K. In these psalms we usually find an urgent call for the LORD to judge the wicked swiftly and severely. Should the enemy continue to afflict God's people, the faithful might begin to doubt or even despair of ever receiving help from the LORD.

L. However, the Psalmist leaves the entire matter completely in

God's hands, knowing that He will act justly (see Ps. 37:8-9; 92:11, 15). It is never right for God's people to take vengeance on their own.

M. Similar prayers for God to exercise righteous judgment upon evildoers are found in the Old Testament, especially in the Book of Jeremiah (e.g., 11:20; 15:15; 18:19-23; 20:11-12).

N. In these appeals for justice, the psalmist often uses very strong speech, for example, "Do not I hate them, O Lord that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies." (Ps. 139:21, 22).

O. With such strong words the faithful are expressing their great hatred of sin and evil more than hatred of the people who were doing wicked things (Ps. 101:8).

P. The language they use emphasizes the outrage they feel over the injustice and oppression. They are especially angry at those who violate the commands of the Torah.

Q. These words are not to be taken literally: they should rather be viewed as hyperbole, deliberate exaggeration, the purpose of which is to make the communication more effective.

R. There are four psalms, for the most part, that can be categorized as petitions for retribution, 35, 69, 83, and 109.

S. In addition, there are psalms that contain passages of this kind. Examples are seen in Psalms 54, 55, 58, 59, 68, 79, 94, 129, 137, 139, and 140.

III. Royalty Psalms

A. The royalty psalms speak either of Israel's earthly, human

ruler - the LORD's anointed (chosen) one - or of God as King. Royal Psalms for Israel's earthly, human ruler are petitions to the LORD for His blessing on the king in some special way (e.g., Ps. 20:9).

B. These petitions have to do with situations that were important in the king's life and rule, such as his coronation or enthronement (e.g., Psalm 2), his wedding (Psalm 45), his war against the enemies of God (Ps. 21), his work as a righteous judge and defender of the oppressed (Ps. 72), his just punishment of the wicked (Ps. 101), his overall reign (Ps. 18). And even those times when he had to be punished for unfaithfulness to Yahweh (Ps. 89).

C. The songs of royalty - of kingship - that glorify Yahweh as the glorious King who rules over all nations are, in essence, psalms of praise (Ps. 47:7-9). Most of the royal psalms are of this type. Psalms 67, 96, 97, 98, and 99 are examples.

D. There is a natural connection between the two types of Royalty Psalms, in that the Davidic king was supposed to be the LORD's representative on earth and act as an intermediary, as a "priest," when the people wanted to make their needs known to God (see Ps. 110:4).

E. Some royal psalms speak of God as a mighty Warrior who is strong in battle, particularly in defense of Zion (Ps. 98:1), that is, Jerusalem, the holy city where the temple and the ark of the Covenant were located (e.g., Ps. 46, 48, 76, 84, 87, 132).

F. As King, however, the LORD has no earthly counterpart; He alone is Creator (Ps. 97:2-6) and He alone is the righteous Lawgiver (Ps. 99:7).

G. Many of these royal psalms, or at least certain

passages within them, are strongly *prophetic* in nature and are to be interpreted as referring either directly or indirectly to the coming Messiah, God's anointed Savior.

H. There was hope for the future in the person of an ideal king who would someday rule perfectly and powerfully on behalf of the LORD and His people.

I. It should be noted that most of these psalms which speak of God or His Messiah as King, belong to the category of songs of praise. They follow the basic threefold structural pattern of a song of praise: (a) opening praise, (b) reasons for praise, and (c) concluding praise.

Comment: Many of the royal songs also express a strong profession of trust in the LORD.

J. The importance of these psalms is indicated by the fact that they are found in key positions throughout the Psalter, for example, at the very beginning (Psalm 2) and at the end of Books II (Psalm 72) and III (Psalm 89).

K. The main theme of the entire Psalter could be summarized in terms of the LORD's kingship: "**Pray**" in the day of trouble to the merciful King who rules all things; "**thank**" the King for delivering you; "**Praise**" the King for who He is and what He does; "**teach**" others about the King's great wisdom and mighty works; and finally, always "**profess your trust**" in the King through words and deeds that are in keeping with His royal covenant of grace.

It is now interactive time. Please respond to each question.

1. Read through Psalms 35, 69, 83, and 109. These are the four primary Retribution Psalms. Find a verse within each psalm in which the LORD is forcefully called upon to carry out justice by punishing the unrighteous.

Comment: Notice that, at times, the punishment the psalmist calls down upon his enemies correspond to the evil they did against him (see Psalm 109:17-18).

2. After reading Psalm 10, list three sinful actions for which the wicked deserve to be judged by the LORD according to verses 3, 5, and 9. How does the wicked person condemn himself by his own words (10:6, 11, 13)?

3. Carefully study Psalm 110. Why would you classify this as a song of royalty? What are some of the main characteristics of a royal psalm that are evident? Notice that this praise for the Messiah King is in the form of a prediction.

4. Look up the following passages in the psalms and find where they are mentioned in the New Testament: Psalm 2:7, 8:4-6, 16:10, 22:1, 22:18, 34:20, 40:6-8, 45:6-7, 68:18, 69:9, 78:2, 110:4, 118:22. Write out the distinct messianic references.

I truly hope that you have been blessed.

Jude 3

Pastor Austin