

The Psalms: Worship in Living Color

I. Why the Psalms?

A. The Psalms are virtually comprehensive of God's self-revelation in the salvation of sinners.

1. Athanasius, 4th century - "...an epitome of the whole Scriptures..."
2. Basil, 4th century - "...a compendium of all theology..."
3. Martin Luther (1483-1546) - "[The Psalms] could well be called 'a little Bible', since it contains, set out in the briefest and most beautiful form, all that is to be found in the whole Bible." (Preface to Psalms, 1528)

B. The Psalms bring to life the intellectual, emotional, and volitional realities of the joyful, aching, despairing, hopeful, confident, confessing, mourning, worshipping members of Christ's church without any hypocrisy or pretense.

"I have been accustomed to call this book, I think not inappropriately, The Anatomy of all the Parts of the Soul... there is not an emotion of which any one can be conscious that is not here represented as in a mirror. Or rather, the Holy Spirit has here drawn ... all the griefs, sorrows, fears, doubts, hopes, cares, perplexities, in short, all the distracting emotions with which the minds of men are wont to be agitated."
- John Calvin. *Commentary on the Psalms*. xxxviii

"Where does one find finer words of joy than in the Psalms of praise and thanksgiving? There you look into the hearts of all the saints, as into fair and pleasant gardens, yes, as into heaven itself. . . . On the other hand, where do you find deeper, more sorrowful, more pitiful words of sadness than in the Psalms of lamentation? There again you look into the hearts of all the saints, as into death, yes, as into hell itself. . . . It teaches you in iob. fear. hope. and sorrow to think and speak as all the saints have thought and spoken." (Luther's Works.

C. The Psalms model praise and devotion of people who know the living God, and so serve as a Spirit-inspired antidote for the modern church's self-consumed confusion in corporate worship.

D. The Psalms are about Jesus!

"Then he said to them, 'These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.'" (Luke 24:44)

E. The Psalms enhance the teaching of the New Testament

Paul quotes Ps 69:9 to encourage Christ-like humility – "For Christ did not please himself, but as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me." (Rom 15:3)

Peter quotes Ps 16:10 to prove the resurrection – "For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One see corruption." (Acts 2:27)

Paul quotes Ps 14:1-3; 53:1-3; 5:9; 140:3; 10:7; 36:1 to explain the depravity of man – "For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin, as it is written: 'None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.' 'Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive.' 'The venom of asps is under their lips.' 'Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness.' 'Their feet are

swift to shed blood; in their paths are ruin and misery, and the way of peace they have not known.' 'There is no fear of God before their eyes.'" (Rom 3:9-18)

II. Psalm I – In Praise of the Godly Person

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.

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

1. If this Psalm reveals that there are really only two ways to live (and I think it does), how does it describe those two ways in terms of a) loyalty, b) fruitfulness, and c) outcome?

2. What do you think is the significance that Psalm 1 serves as the "gateway" into the entire book?

This psalm "is the text upon which the whole of the Psalms make up a divine sermon." – Spurgeon

3. What does verse 6 indicate is the reason for the godly person's blessing and fruitfulness? Does the word "know" connote more than just "be aware of"?

"Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived..." (Gen 4:1)

"You only have I known of all the families of the earth..." (Amos 3:1)

"During those many days the king of Egypt died, and the people of Israel groaned because of their slavery and cried out for help. Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God. ²⁴ And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. ²⁵ God saw the people of Israel--and God knew." (Ex 2:23-25)

"On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' ²³ And then will I declare to them, 'I never

