**The Book of Psalms—Study Guide (Psalms 101-104)**

The Bible always takes precedence in our study of God’s Word (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21). This guide is just a “help” compiled from the Soncino commentary, Ambassador College notes, & personal study.

**Psalm 101: A Psalm of David.** Soncino titles this Psalm: “An Ideal Kingship.” It was also called “The Prince’s Psalm” and the “Mirror for Magistrates,” as there are guiding principles in the Psalm to help a king in his reign.

1-2: (Soncino indicates this Psalm was written by David at the beginning of his reign). I will sing of mercy and justice (foundation of God’s throne—Psalm 89:14). I will behave wisely in a perfect (blameless and undefiled) way. I will walk within my house with a perfect (complete) heart.

3-4: I will set nothing wicked (a base thing—such as a matter of Belial) before my eyes. I hate the work of those who fall away (doing things crooked--swerving from doing right)—it shall not cling to me. A perverse heart (literally: crooked, see also Proverbs 11:20) shall depart from me. I will not know wickedness.

5-6: God will destroy whoever secretly slanders his neighbor. He (and David) would not endure (put up with) one who has a haughty look and a proud heart. God’s eyes shall be on the faithful of the land and on those who walk in a perfect way (in a way of integrity).

7-8: He who works deceit shall not dwell within God’s house. He who tells lies shall not continue or be established in His presence (see Psalm 15:1-3). Early (in the morning--see Jeremiah 21:12), God will destroy the wicked of the land and all the evildoers will be cut off from the city of the Lord (Jerusalem).

**Psalm 102: A Prayer of the Afflicted, when he is overwhelmed and pours out his complaint before the Lord.** Soncino titles this “An Exile’s Plaint.”

1-4: Hear my prayer (a sufferer seeking relief). Do not hide Your face from me in the day of my trouble (Psalm 69:17-18). My days are consumed (in) smoke (like a sick man), and my bones (bodily frame) are burned like a hearth. My heart is withered so that I forget to eat my bread (loss of appetite or having no interest in food).

5-7: Because of the sound of my groaning, my bones cling to my skin (Job 19:20). I am like a pelican of the wilderness (a picture of expressive solitude) and an owl of the desert (which makes its home in ruined places). I lie awake (watch in the night), and am like a sparrow alone on the housetop (as one who has lost a mate).

8-11: Enemies reproach (taunt) and swear an oath against me. I’ve eaten ashes like bread (mourning), and mingled my wine with weeping. You have cast me away (as in a tornado). My days are like a shadow that lengthens (in the evening before sunset, and soon darkness—symbolic of being swallowed up in death).

12-13: But the Lord endures forever, and the remembrance of His name for all generations (Lamentations 5:19). You will arise and have mercy on Zion. For the set (appointed) time to favor her has come (Isaiah 14:1).

14-17: Your servants take pleasure in her (Zion’s) stones and her dust—they will rebuild. The nations shall fear the name of the Lord (Isaiah 60:1-3). The Lord shall build up Zion. He shall appear in His glory (Zechariah 1:16-17). He shall regard the prayer of the destitute (the exiles returning from captivity). See also Isaiah 61:2-4.

18-22: This will be written for the generation to come, that a people yet to be created may praise the Lord (Psalm 22:31). For He heard the groaning of the prisoners, and released those appointed to death (Psalm 79:11-13). After the peoples are gathered together, they will declare God’s name in Zion, and His praise in Jerusalem.

 23-24: God weakened my strength in the way (journey through life) and shortened my days (death was near). I said, “Do not take me away in the midst of my days.” (In contrast: God’s years are throughout all generations).

25-26: You laid the foundation of the earth of old, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. They will perish, but You will endure. They grow old like a garment. (This section is quoted in Hebrews 1:10-12).

27-28: But You are the same (Malachi 3:6, Hebrews 13:8), and Your years have no end (Isaiah 57:15). The children of Your servants will continue, and their descendants will be established before You (Psalm 69:35-36).

**Psalm 103: A Psalm of David.** Soncino titles this Psalm: “Hymn of Praise.” A very encouraging Psalm indeed, as it points out the benefits which come from God.

1-5: Bless the Lord and don’t forget all of his benefits: He forgives all of our iniquities; He heals our diseases; He redeems our life from destruction; He crowns us with loving kindnesses and tender mercies. He satisfies our mouth with good things, so that our youth is renewed like the eagle (which can live up to 50 years).

6-10: The Lord executes (righteous acts), and justice. He made known His ways to Moses and to Israel. The Lord is merciful and is slow to anger. He abounds in mercy and will not (contend—refers to bringing a lawsuit before a judge). He has not dealt with us according to our sins (See Isaiah 57:15-16).

11-12: As the heavens are high above the earth (immeasurable distance), so great (beyond measure and description) is His mercy toward those who fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, so far (very far) has He removed from us our transgressions (which are acts of rebellion against God).

13-16: As a father pities his children, so the Lord pities those who fear Him. For He knows our frame, He remembers that we are dust (Genesis 3:19). Man’s days are like grass, as a flower of the field, he perishes (Isaiah 40:6-8). For the wind passes over it and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more (Job 7:9-10).

 17-19: The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon those who fear Him. His righteousness extends to their children’s children—those who keep His covenant, and remember His commandments (Exodus 20:6). The Lord has established His throne in heaven, and His kingdom rules over all.

20-22: Bless the Lord, O you His angels, who excel in strength. They do His word, and heed His voice. Bless the Lord, all you His hosts (the host of heaven numbers into the millions—Daniel 7:10). They are His ministers who do His pleasure (See Hebrews 1:14). Bless the Lord all His works, in all places of His dominion.

**Psalm 104:** Soncino titles this Psalm: “God the Creator.” An 18th century scientist, Alexander van Humboldt, wrote: “A single Psalm, the 104th, may be said to present a picture of the entire Cosmos.”

1-2: The words “Bless the Lord, O my soul” are repeated from Psalm103:1, 22, suggest that David was the author. (This Psalm continues the thoughts of Psalm 103). God is clothed with majesty. The creation is described: He covers Himself w/light, and stretches out the heavens (Genesis 1:2-6: first light, then firmament).

3-4: He lays the beams of His upper chambers in the waters (above the firmament). He makes the clouds His chariot, and walks on the wings of the wind (Amos 9:6). He makes His angels spirits, His ministers a flame of fire (Hebrews 1:7; they were created prior to the original creation of the earth/heavens—Job 38:4-7).

5-9: God laid the foundations of the earth so that it would not be removed forever (Genesis 1:1). He covered it with waters (Genesis 1:2). At His rebuke, they fled (Genesis 1:9-10). God set a boundary that they may not return to cover the earth. (The waves of the ocean can’t overtake the earth—see Job 38:8-11).

10-13: God sends the springs into the valleys. They give drink to every beast of the field. (A further description of wild donkeys is in Job 39:5-8). By those springs, the birds of heaven have their homes, and they sing among the branches (foliage). God waters the hills. The earth is satisfied by the fruit of His works (the effect of rain).

14-18: God causes the grass to grow for the cattle, and vegetation for the service (labor) of man; and wine that gladdens the heart of man (Ecclesiastes 10:19). The stork has her home in the fir trees (best suited tree for its nests). The high hills are for the wild goats; the cliffs are a refuge of rock badgers (rock hyrax--Leviticus 11:5).

19: God appointed the moon to divide the year into seasons (Genesis 1:14). God established the moon for calendar purposes including when the Holy Days start. (The first month is Abib--Exodus 12:2. The seventh month begins on the first day of the month, the new moon, the Feast of Trumpets—Leviticus 23:24).

20-23: God made the darkness and the night in which all the beasts of the forest creep about. The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their food from God. When the sun rises, they lie down in their dens. Man (on the other hand), goes out to his work and to his labor until evening.

24-26: How manifold (many in number and variety) are the Lord’s works! The earth is full of His possessions

(God is the Possessor of all—Genesis 14:22). The sea contains innumerable teeming things and there is that Leviathan (a huge sea monster—identity unknown) which You have formed (Job 41; Isaiah 27:1—a serpent).

27-29: These (all creatures) wait for God to give them their food in due season (Psalm 145:15-16). What God gives them, they gather in and they are filled with good. When He hides His face they are troubled; and when their breath is taken away, they die and return to dust.

V. 30a: You send forth Your Spirit and they are created (Genesis 1:1-2, and Hebrews 11:3). God’s spirit energy was transformed into a physical material creation. Jeremiah 32:17: the creation was made by God’s power.

V. 30b: God renewed the face of the earth (after the formlessness and void that had occurred). He renewed the creation by His spirit. He commanded and they were created: (Psalm 33:8-9, Psalm 148:5, Nehemiah 9:6.).

V. 31-32: May the glory of the Lord endure forever, and may the Lord rejoice in His works (as He did in Genesis 1:31). He looks on the earth, and it trembles. He touches the hills and they smoke.

V. 33-34: I will sing to the Lord as long as I live. I will sing praises to my God while I have my being (Psalm 146:1-2). May my meditation be sweet to Him (Psalm 19:14). I will be glad in the Lord.

V. 35: May the wicked be no more (Soncino: this is a prayer for the restoration of the harmony of creation by the banishment from it of all things and people that cause stumbling and iniquity). See Psalm 37: 9-11, 20, 38.

“Praise the Lord!” (In Hebrew, it means: “Hallelujah”—and this is the first occurrence found in the Psalms).