**The Book of Psalms—Study Guide (Psalms 28-33)**

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 28: A Psalm of David.** Soncino titles this Psalm: “Prayer and Thanksgiving.”

1-2: David cried out to his Rock (Psalm 18:2-3). If God had been silent to him, he would have become like those who go down into the pit (grave). See Psalm 143:7. He asked God to hear him when he lifted his hands toward God’s sanctuary (Psalm 63:4). See also Lamentations 3:41.

3: David asked not to be taken away (drawn away) with the wicked who speak peace to their neighbors, but evil

(lawlessness, enmity, and hypocrisy) is in their hearts. Notice Psalm 62:4 and Matthew 23:27-28.

4-5: This is one way David prayed for his enemies. He asked God for the wicked to be recompensed according to their deeds, and receive what they deserve because they didn’t regard the works or operations of the Lord. God will destroy them and not build up the wicked.

6-7: The Lord is blessed because He hears the voice of our supplications. The Lord is our strength and shield. We are helped and greatly rejoice because our heart trusts in God.

8-9: The Lord is the strength of His people and the saving refuge of His anointed. Therefore David cried to God to save His people, bless His inheritance, shepherd (tend) and bear (carry) them up forever (See Isaiah 40:11).

**Psalm 29: A Psalm of David.** The voice of the Lord (mentioned seven times) is likened to a storm with thunder. This Psalm was also sung on the Sabbath. Peace (noted at the end) is apt for the day of rest which comes after the storm of everyday life and conflict during the week. Soncino titles this: “A Storm Picture.”

1-2: Give glory and strength unto the Lord (see Psalm 68:32-34). Give Him the glory due His name. Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness (The priests wore their vestments for this purpose—see Exodus 28:2).

3-4: The voice of God is over the waters. He thunders and is over many waters. God’s voice is powerful and is full of majesty. (His voice is likened to thunder in Psalm 18:13). See Isaiah 30:30-31 of a future occurrence.

5-7: His voice breaks cedars—splintering even the cedars of Lebanon (the prince of trees). See Isaiah 2:12-13. He makes them skip like a calf. Lebanon and Sirion (ancient name for Mt. Hermon, the highest in the land—Deuteronomy 3:8-9) skip like a young wild ox. The voice of the Lord divides the flames of fire (lightning).

8: God’s voice shakes the wilderness—even the wilderness of Kadesh (on the border of Edom. See Numbers 20:14-16). This will happen in the future too: Jeremiah 25:30-31 and Joel 3:16.

9: His voice makes the deer give birth (there are instances when the terror of thunder causes animals to bring forth their young prematurely) and strips the forests bare (because of the wind and battering rain, and lightning strikes). And in God’s temple, all say, “Glory.” See Isaiah 6:3.

10-11: The Lord sat enthroned at the Flood—during the most devastating storm in history. He sits as King (and Judge) forever. The Lord will give strength (and mercy) to His people, and He will bless His people with peace.

**Psalm 30: A Psalm: A Song at the dedication of the house of David.** The phrase “a song at the dedication of the house” may have been added later. It was sung during the dedication of the second temple (time of Ezra). It is a fervent hymn of gratitude for redemption. Soncino titles this Psalm: “Thanksgiving for Deliverance.”

1-3:David praised God for lifting him up (like drawing water from a well) and for not allowing his foes to rejoice over him. God healed him and he was kept from the grave, so that he should not go down into the pit.

4-5: The saints of God are to sing praises and give thanks at the remembrance of His holy name (to the memorial of His name, see Exodus 3:15). God’s anger is but for a moment, His favor though is for life. Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning.

6-7: When God was prospering and blessing David, he was not moved (See Psalm 125:1). By God’s favor, He made David’s mountain stand strong.

8-10: However, when David thought God hid His face from him, David cried out to God and asked what profit would there be if he went to the grave. The dust and the grave can’t declare God’s truth. (Hezekiah basically said the same words in Isaiah 38:18-19). David asked for God’s mercy and that God would be his helper.

11-12: God turned David’s mourning into dancing, instead of sackcloth. God clothed him with gladness, and therefore, David was able to continue to sing praises to God, and would give Him thanks forever.

**Psalm 31: A Psalm of David: To the Chief Musician.** Soncino titles this Psalm: “Faith of the Persecuted.” Some have suggested the background of this Psalm is when David hid from Saul in the wilderness of Maon (1 Samuel 23:24-26).

1-2: King David once again asked God to deliver him in His righteousness. (See Psalm 71:1-2). He asked God to bow down His ear to him, and to be His rock of refuge, His strength, and a defense to save him.

3: God is our Rock and fortress (1 Corinthians 10:4). Therefore, David asked that God, for His name’s sake, would lead and guide him.

4-5: David asked God to pull him out of the net that his enemies had secretly laid for him. He acknowledged that God was his strength, and into His hand he committed his spirit (Jesus quotes these words just prior to His death--see Luke 23:46). The God of truth redeemed David.

6-8: David hated those who regarded useless idols. He, on the other hand, trusted in God. David was glad and rejoiced in God’s mercy. He knew God considered his troubles, and knew about the adversities he faced. David also acknowledged that God didn’t shut him up into the hand of his enemies, but set him in a wide (free) place.

9-10: In his prayers, David asked God to have mercy on him since he was in trouble. He experienced grief in his whole body, and his life was spent in sighing. His strength was failing because of the iniquity he knew he had committed, and his bones were wasting away.

11: He believed that he was a reproach among his enemies and especially to his neighbors. He felt that he was repulsive to his close acquaintances and felt that those who saw him wanted to flee away from him.

12-13: He also felt forgotten like a dead man (out of sight, out of mind). He heard the slander on every side and fear was present as they took counsel together to take his life. See a similar concern that Jeremiah experienced (Jeremiah 20:10).

14-15: But, David trusted in God. He knew that his times were in God’s hands. He asked God to deliver him from his enemies and from those who were persecuting him.

16-18: He asked God to make His face shine upon him, and not let him be ashamed as he called upon God. He asked that the wicked would be ashamed and silenced by the grave. Lying lips would also be silenced in the grave. They spoke of insolent things, proudly and contemptuously, against the righteous.

19: How great is God’s goodness which is laid up for those who fear Him, and prepared for those who trust in Him! This goodness will be brought forth publicly in the presence of men. See John 14:2-3; 1 John 3:2.

20: God promises to hide those who fear Him in the secret place and pavilion of His presence (not in a physical place, but in the security of God’s presence), from the plots (schemes) of men, and from the strife of tongues. Notice God’s willingness to protect in Job 5:19-21.

21-22: Blessed be God as He shows His marvelous kindness like a fortified city. David had said in his haste that he was cut off from God; nevertheless He acknowledged God did hear his supplications when he cried to Him.

23-24: Love the Lord, all you His saints. The Lord preserves the faithful, and repays the proud person. Be of good courage (Joshua 1:7-9), and God will strengthen the heart of those who hope in the Lord.

**Psalm 32: A Psalm of David. A Contemplation (“Maschil”).** There are 13 Psalms with this title, and it could mean a teaching or instructing poem, or it could denote a special kind of musical rendering. Some connect this Psalm of repentance after David’s sin with Bathsheba. Soncino titles it: “Happiness of the Forgiven.”

1-2: Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered (pardoned). Blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity, in whose spirit is no deceit (guile). See Psalm 103:3, 11-12. These verses are also quoted in Romans 4:7-8.

3-4: When David kept quiet (about his sin), his bones grew old through his groaning. For day and night God’s hand was on him (pressure to confess and repent), and his vitality (strength) was as a drought in the summer.

5: David acknowledged his sin before God and he did not hide his iniquity. He confessed his transgressions to the Lord, and God forgave him. (Three steps toward real repentance: 1. Acknowledge the sin; 2. Do not hide it any longer; 3. Speak of it to God in confession to Him). See Psalm 51:3-4.

6-7: For this cause, of receiving God’s forgiveness, everyone who is godly should pray to God—in a time when He may be found (Isaiah 55:6-7). The flood of great waters shall not come near him. God is our hiding place. He will preserve us from trouble and will surround us with songs of deliverance. See Revelation 12:14-16.

8-9: God will instruct us in the way we should go and will guide us with His eye (Psalm 33:18). Don’t be like the mule or horse, which has no understanding. They must be harnessed with bit and bridle, otherwise they wouldn’t heed us. We should submit voluntarily to God’s discipline. See Matthew 11:28-30.

10-11: Many sorrows shall be to the wicked (Isaiah 57:20-21), but he who trusts in God, mercy shall surround him. So, be glad in the Lord and rejoice you righteous. Shout for joy all you upright.

**Psalm 33: No title.** This Psalm continues the theme from the previous Psalm. The first verse is similar to the last verse in Psalm 32. The Soncino titles this Psalm: A song of deliverance.

1-3: The praises to God which come from the upright are beautiful to Him. Praise the Lord with the harp (lyre) and instrument of ten strings (harp or psaltery). Sing to God a new song (hymn of praise), and play skillfully with a shout of joy.

4-5: For the word of the Lord is right, and all of His work is done in truth. God loves righteousness and justice. (In Hebrew ethics, these are the foundations of a stable society. When applied, peace reigns. See Isaiah 32:16-17. When there is a violation of these principles, strife enters). The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.

6-7: By the word (decree) of the Lord, the heavens were made (Hebrews 11:3), and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth. He gathers the waters of the sea as a heap, and lays the deep in storehouses (Genesis 1: 9-10; Job 38:8-11).

8-9: Let all the earth fear the Lord. Let the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. For God spoke and it was done. He commanded and it stood fast.

10-11: The Lord brings to nothing the counsel of the nations. He makes ineffective the plans of the people. See Isaiah 8:9-10. (Man proposes, God disposes). The counsel of the Lord though, stands forever. The plans of His heart—remain for all generations. See Psalm 2:1-6.

12: Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord. The people He has chosen are His own inheritance. This promise was first given to Israel in Exodus 19:5-6. (This blessing can also apply to the Israel of God—the Church).

13-15: The Lord looks down from heaven and sees all the sons of men. From His dwelling He looks on all the inhabitants of the earth (not just Israel). He fashions their hearts individually, and considers all their works.

16-17: No king is saved by a multitude of armies (Exodus 14:17). A mighty man (Goliath) is not delivered by great strength. A horse is a vain hope for safety, and it shall not deliver any by its strength. See Proverbs 21:31.

18-19: Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon those who fear Him, on those who hope in His mercy, to deliver them from death (from the destructive sword of the invader), and to keep them alive in famine.

20-22: (This section was sung by the people or by a chorus of Levites). Our soul waits for the Lord. He is our help and shield (Deuteronomy 33:29). Our hearts will rejoice in Him—because we trust in His holy name. “Let Your mercy be upon us, O Lord, just as (even as) we hope in You!”