**The Book of Psalms—Study Guide (Psalms 38-41)**

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 38: A Psalm of David. To bring to remembrance.** To make memorial; this is also the title of Psalm 70.

It is possible that this Psalm was sung during the grain offering, part of which was a memorial (Leviticus 2:2). Some Levites were to sing and praise God (1 Chronicles 16:4). Soncino titles this Psalm: “A Penitent’s Prayer.”

1-2: David asked God not to rebuke or chasten him in His wrath or displeasure. Notice Jeremiah 10:24: Jeremiah asked God not to punish him in His anger. God’s arrows can pierce deeply and His hand can press down. See Psalm 32:4.

3: David knew that because of his sin, there was no soundness in his flesh or health (peace) in his bones because of God’s anger for his sin. (Sin can affect one’s health, even to the bones: See Proverbs 14:30).

4-5: David’s iniquities overwhelmed him like a flood. They were like a heavy burden to him. His wounds were foul and festering because of his own foolishness. Sin is the result of folly. “A man does not commit a transgression until a spirit of madness has entered into him” (From the Jewish Talmud).

6-8: He was troubled, and went about mourning all day. His loins were full of inflammation, and he was feeble and broken. David groaned because of the turmoil in his heart.

9-10: David knew that all his desire was open to God, and that his sighing was not hidden from Him. David’s heart panted; his strength failed (mental exhaustion); and the light of his eyes (zest for life) went from him.

11-12: His loved ones and friends stood aloof from his plague. Those who sought his life laid snares for him. Those who sought his hurt spoke of his destruction and planned deception all the day long.

13-14: Despite all the accusations against him, David reacted with silence. He likened himself to a man who didn’t hear, and in whose mouth there was no response. He waited and hoped in God quietly.

15-16: David hoped in God. He knew that God heard him and asked God to help him lest the enemies rejoiced over him; lest his foot would slip and they then would exalt themselves over him.

17-18: David also knew that because of his sins, he was ready to fall, and his sorrow would be continually before him. He was willing to declare his iniquity and be in anguish and sorrow over those sins.

19-20: But, his enemies did not admit to sin. They were vigorous (healthy) and strong against him. Those who wrongly hated him rendered evil for good. They were his adversaries because he followed what was good.

21-22: David asked God to not forsake him. He asked God to not be too far from him, and he asked God to make haste to help him.

**Psalm 39: A Psalm of David. To the Chief Musician. To Jeduthun.** He is mentioned in 1 Chronicles 25:1, 3 as being a chief musician. This same title is also in Psalms 62 and 77. It means for the leader Jeduthun, or that this was to be sung in the style of Jeduthun. Soncino titles this Psalm: “An Elegy” (serious reflection).

1: David said (determined in his heart) that he would guard his ways (emotions), lest he sin with his tongue. He would restrain his mouth with a muzzle while in the presence of the wicked. (So that his words against the wicked would not be an offense against God).

2-3: He was mute with silence, and held his peace from even saying something good. His sorrow was stirred up, and his heart was hot within him as he kept himself from speaking. While he mused (meditated), the fire burned within him and he finally spoke the following:

4-5: He asked God to make him know his end (to consider the end result of his words or actions). He realized how frail and fleeting life was, and that his days were like handbreadths. He also acknowledged that every man, even at his best state, is but vapor.

6: Surely every man walks about as a shadow. They busy themselves in vain (people toil and worry about things which have no permanency). They heap up riches to themselves, but don’t know who will eventually use them.

7-8: David then asked God, “What do I wait for?” He answered his own question. His hope was in God and he asked that God would deliver him from his sins, and that he would not be the reproach of the foolish.

9-11: He didn’t open his mouth, because God had brought about the consequence of sin. David asked that the sins be removed. as he was consumed by the blow from God’s hand. When God corrects a man’s iniquities with rebukes, He causes the sinner’s beauty (his strength) to melt away like a consuming moth. Every man is vapor.

12-13: David asked God to hear his prayer, and not be silent over his tears. He felt like a stranger—a sojourner, knowing that his life span was limited and temporary. He asked that God remove His gaze (correction) from him, so that he could gain strength and comfort lest he go away and be no more.

**Psalm 40: A Psalm of David. To the Chief Musician.** In the first part of the Psalm, David praises God over his past deliverances, and the second part is a petition for God’s help in his present situation (which was most likely during the time when Saul was chasing him). Soncino titles this Psalm: “Praise and Prayer.”

1-3: David waited patiently for the Lord, and He heard his cry. God brought him out of the horrible pit and the miry clay and set his feet on a rock. God put a new song in his mouth—an additional praise to our God. Many will see and fear and trust God.

4-5: Blessed is the man who makes the Lord his trust, and doesn’t respect (or compromise with) the proud, nor turn aside to lies (fall away to falsehood). God has done many wonderful works. All His thoughts toward us cannot be recounted back to Him in order. If we try to declare them, they are more than can be numbered.

6-8: Sacrifice and offering God did not desire. (Obedience is more than sacrifice—1 Samuel 15:22). This section of scripture (which refers to Christ) is quoted in Hebrews 10:4-10. Christ came to do His Father’s will.

9-10: David publicly proclaimed the good news of righteousness in the great assembly. He did not restrain his lips, or hide God’s righteousness. He declared God’s faithfulness and salvation. David did not conceal God’s lovingkindness and truth from the assembly.

11-12: David now asked God not to withhold His tender mercies and that God’s lovingkindness and truth would continually preserve him. Why?--because numerous evils surrounded him, and his own iniquities had overtaken him so that he couldn’t even look up. They were more than the hairs on his head, and his heart (courage) failed.

13-15: King David pleaded—that the Lord would be pleased to intervene and deliver him. He asked that those who sought to destroy his life would be ashamed (appalled) and be brought to mutual confusion, and that those who wished him evil would be driven backward and be brought to dishonor and be confounded (Isaiah 66:5).

16-17: Let those who seek God rejoice and be glad in Him. Let those who love His salvation say, the Lord be magnified. We are poor and needy, but God thinks of us and is our help and deliverer. Do not delay, O Lord.

**Psalm 41: A Psalm of David. To the Chief Musician.** This Psalm is possibly referring to the time when Absalom forced David to flee Jerusalem. Soncino titles this Psalm: “A Sufferer’s Prayer.”

1-3: Blessed is he who considers (deals wisely with) the poor (or the feeble); the Lord will deliver him out of trouble and will preserve him. He will be blessed (accounted happy) in the earth and will not be delivered to the will (greed) of his enemies. The Lord will strengthen him in his illnesses and will sustain him on his sickbed.

4-6: David asked God to be merciful to him, as he had sinned. His enemies spoke evil against him. They hoped that he would die and that his name would perish. They spoke lies: their hearts gathered iniquity to invent a lie and proclaim it as truth.

7-8: All who hated him whispered against him. They said an evil disease clung to him and that he would not rise from his laying down.

9: Even his faithful friend in whom he trusted and ate with, had lifted his heel and betrayed him. Absalom did this with David, but this is also a prophecy of what Judas would do against Christ. See Matthew 26:47-50; John 13:18. This is also a prophecy in the future of what would happen among family and friends (Matthew 10:21).

10-12: In contrast, David’s true friend was the Lord. He asked Him to be merciful and raise him up. By this David would know God was pleased with him—that his enemy didn’t triumph over him. He asked to be upheld in his integrity and be set before God’s face forever.

13: This verse may have been added to the Psalm later. It concludes Book One: “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting! Amen and Amen.” **End of Book One.**