**The Book of Psalms—Study Guide (Psalms 42-49)**

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.

**BOOK TWO (Psalms 42-72).**

**Psalm 42: To the Chief Musician. A Maschil of the sons of Korah.** (See Psalm 32:1 for the meaning of “Maschil”). The Korahites were part of the temple singers—2 Chronicles 20:19. (Korah died in the rebellion against Moses, but his sons did not die—Numbers 26:11). The Psalms that are similarly titled were most likely a collection of Psalms sung by the Korahites. Soncino titles this Psalm, “Lament of an Exile.”

1-3: As the deer pants for the water brooks, we too should thirst for the living God. Two questions are posed: When shall we come and appear before God? Especially when enemies ask in ridicule, “Where is your God?”

4: When these questions are asked, we are to remember “going with the multitude to the house of God (to church services), with joy and praise, with those who kept the pilgrim feast (of tabernacles).” See Isaiah 30:29.

5: Why is our soul cast down and disquieted? When that occurs, we are to hope in God and be determined to yet praise Him, and to look for the help that would come from His face.

6-8: We are to remember God from the land of the Jordan--from Mt. Hermon, and Hill Mizar (in the north and east of the Jordan). Even though waterfalls and waves go over us (symbolic of persecutions), God commands His lovingkindness in the daytime, and His song to be with us at night. Remember that God is God of our life.

9-11: We may wonder at times why Our God and Rock has forgotten us. Why do we mourn because of the oppression of our enemies--who reproach us with breaking of bones? (Their words affect us physically). The answer is that no matter what happens, we are to hope in God with our whole being. He is our help.

**Psalm 43:** This Psalm has no title, but it is thought to have been a complement to Psalm 42. The last verse is a summary of what is also found in the above Psalm. Soncino titles this Psalm: “Prayer of an Exile.”

1-2: We plead to God that we would be vindicated and that God would plead our cause against an ungodly nation. We ask God to be delivered from deceitful and ungodly men. God is our strength, even though we may feel cast off and mourn because of the oppression coming from our enemies.

3-4: We ask that God’s light (against the darkness of evil) and truth (against deceit) be sent out. We want God’s light and truth to lead us to His holy tabernacle, so that we could go to the altar of God with joy and praise.

5: This verse repeats what is found in chapter 42:5, 11. It seems to be the refrain or chorus in both Psalms. We are to hope in God (That is the advice given here that we must live by).

**Psalm 44: To the Chief Musician. A Maschil of the sons of Korah**. Soncino titles this Psalm: “A National Prayer of Intercession.”

1-2: We have heard with our ears the words of our fathers; the deeds of God when He drove out the nations with His own hand, but He planted Israel. God also afflicted the peoples of the land and drove them out.

3: Israel didn’t gain the land by their own sword, nor did their arm save them. It was God’s right hand—His arm and His countenance that saved Israel because God favored them. See Exodus 15:13-17.

4-5: God is our King and He commanded victories for Jacob. It is by God that Israel will push down (to gore) their enemies (Deuteronomy 33:17; Isaiah 14:24-26). By God, we will trample over them (Zechariah 10:5).

6-8: For we must not trust in our bow or sword to save us. It is God who saves us from our enemies and puts to shame those who hate us. In God we boast all day and praise His name forever. Selah.

9-10: The situation changed. God had now cast Israel off and put them to shame. God did not go out with their armies and so their enemies succeeded and those who hated them took spoil for themselves (Leviticus 26:17).

11-12: God gave them up like sheep for food and scattered them among the nations (Deuteronomy 4:27-30). God allowed them to be sold for next to nothing. He would not be enriched for selling them.

13-14: God made them a reproach and derision to their neighbors. They were made a byword among the surrounding nations causing a shaking of the head among the peoples. See Jeremiah 24:9-10.

15-16: God’s dishonor and shame came upon Israel because of the voices of those who reproached and reviled against Him. The enemy and the avenger were now allowed to come upon Israel.

17-19: Israel believed they had not forgotten God, nor dealt falsely with His covenant. They believed their hearts had not turned back or departed from God’s way. Yet, God severely broke them in the place of jackals (where wild beasts roam amidst desolation), and covered them with the shadow of death.

20-22: Israel had forgotten that God saw them stretch out its hands to idols, as God knows the hearts of all. For God’s sake and His righteousness, they (and we) are killed all day long and counted as sheep for slaughter (This is quoted in Romans 8:36). The righteous are persecuted because of wickedness.

23-26: Awake, O Lord. Why do You sleep? Don’t cast us off. Why does God hide His face, and forget our affliction and suffering? Our soul is cast down to the dust. Arise for our help and redeem us by Your mercy.

(God’s people still have faith in God despite what is happening to them, and they pray for His intervention).

**Psalm 45: To the Chief Musician. Set to “The Lilies”** (A melody, and is also in Psalms 60; 80). **A Maschil of the sons of Korah. A song of love** (Soncino titles this: “A royal marriage song.” Some Jewish scholars view this Psalm as referring to the King Messiah, and the marriage as an allusion to His redemption of Israel).

1-2: The author is stirred with this theme. It is a composition concerning the Lord King. His tongue (by way of singing) is the pen of the ready writer. The Lord King is fairer than the sons of men. Grace is poured from His lips (See Luke 4:22). God has blessed Him forever.

3-5: The mighty One, with glory and majesty, is girded with the sword on His thigh. In His majesty He rides prosperously because of truth, humility and righteousness. His right hand will teach awesome things. His arrows are sharp in the King’s enemies, and peoples fall under Him.

6-7: The King’s throne is forever and ever (See Psalm 93:1-2). A scepter (emblem of regal power) of righteousness is the scepter of His kingdom. He loves righteousness and hates wickedness. God, His God, has anointed the King (Jesus Christ) with the oil of gladness more than His companions. See Hebrews 1:8-9.

8-9: All of His garments are scented with myrrh and spices. Out of ivory palaces (from which music comes) make Him glad. Kings’ daughters (from neighboring kingdoms) are among His honorable women (This shows great esteem given to Him by the surrounding rulers). The gold from Ophir was valuable (1 Kings 9:28).

10-11: Listen and incline your ear, O daughter. Forget your own people and your father’s house (The bride is to identify herself with the kingdom of her husband. For Christians, notice Luke 14:25-27). The King will greatly desire your beauty, because He is the Lord, worship Him. (See Ephesians 5:25-27).

12-13: The daughter of Tyre (from the wealthiest nation which surrounded Israel) will come with a gift. The rich among the people will seek the favor of the bride. The royal daughter is all glorious within the palace. Her clothing is woven with gold (See also Revelation 19:7-8).

14-15: She shall be brought to the King in a robe of many colors. The virgins, who are her companions, will be brought to Him as well. With gladness and rejoicing they will enter in the King’s palace (Matthew 25:1, 6-10).

16-17: Instead of Your fathers, shall be Your sons, whom He will make princes in all the earth (Isaiah 49:22-23; Hebrews 2:10). God will make His name to be remembered in all generations.

**Psalm 46: To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of the sons of Korah. A Song for Alamoth** (Possibly instruments with a high-pitched tone, versus the Sheminith—of low-pitched tone. See Psalm 6:1, 1 Chronicles 15:20-21). Soncino titles this Psalm: “God the Nation’s Stronghold.”

1-3: God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in times of trouble. Therefore, we won’t fear, even though the earth is moved and the mountains are carried into the sea and the waters roar (See Isaiah 13:13; 24:19-21). Whatever happens, including the events during the Day of the Lord—we shouldn’t fear. Selah.

4-5: There is a river whose streams shall make glad the city of God (See Ezekiel 47:1-12, Joel 3:18). In the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High, God is in the midst (Isaiah 12:6). God helps at the break of dawn.

6-7: The nations raged. The kingdoms were moved. He uttered His voice, and the earth melted. The Lord of hosts is with us (Isaiah 7:14; Joel 3:16). The God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.

8-9: Behold the works of the Lord, who made desolations in the earth, and also will make wars to cease. He will cause the bows and spears to be broken and chariots to be burnt (Psalm 76:1-3, Isaiah 2:4; Zechariah 9:9-10).

10-11: Be still and know that God is the Lord. He will be exalted among the nations and in all the earth. “The Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge” Selah. (As in verse 7, this is a chorus or a refrain).

**Psalm 47: To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of the sons of Korah.** Soncino titles this Psalm: “God the King,” (It is sung by the Jews prior to the sounding of the shofar on the first of the New Year—Feast of Trumpets).

1-2: Oh, clap your hands! (Applause occurred when a king ascended the throne: 2 Kings 11:12). Shout to God with the voice of triumph. The Lord is awesome. He is a great King over all the earth.

3-4: He will subdue the nations under our feet (See Daniel 7:27). He will choose our inheritance which we will receive when Christ returns (1 Peter 1:3-4). He will also restore the excellence of Jacob whom He loves—physical Israel will receive an inheritance (Ezekiel 48:29).

5-7: God has gone up with a shout—the Lord with the sound of a trumpet. Sing praises to God and our King (Psalm 67:3-5; 68:32). For God is the King of all the earth (Zechariah 14:9). Sing praises with understanding.

8-9: God reigns over the nations on His holy throne. The princes of the people of Israel (Psalm 68:24-27), along with those of Abraham (Romans 4:11-12, 16) are gathered together to worship God. The shields of the earth belong to God (Psalm 89:18). He is greatly exalted!

**Psalm 48: A Song. A Psalm of the sons of Korah.** Soncino titles this Psalm: “The Deliverance of Zion.” A note of joy is expressed throughout the Psalm.

1-3: Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God in His holy mountain, which is beautiful in elevation (800 feet above sea level on one of the highest tablelands). The joy of the whole earth is Mt. Zion on the sides of the north, the city of the great King. God is in her palaces and is her refuge. See Isaiah 33:20-22.

4-7: The (surrounding) kings assembled and saw it; they passed by together and marveled. They were troubled and fear took hold of them, as in birth pains; as the breaking of the ships of Tarshish (Isaiah 2:12, 16) by an east wind (symbolic of a destructive force--see Ezekiel 27:25-26).

8: As we have heard, so we have seen. In the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God, His holy city

Jerusalem will be established forever. Selah.

9-11: We have thought on (to compare) God’s lovingkindness while in the midst of His temple. According to God’s name, His praise is to the ends of the earth (see Malachi 1:11). In His right hand is righteousness. Let Mt. Zion rejoice, and let the daughters of Judah be glad because of His judgments on the gods/idols (Psalm 97:7-8).

12-14: Walk about Zion and count her towers. Consider her palaces in order to tell it to succeeding generations. For this is God, Our God forever. He will be our guide even to death (or eternally). See Isaiah 58:11.

**Psalm 49: To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of the sons of Korah.** (This Psalm was appointed to be recited in a Jewish house of mourning—death affects us all—rich and poor alike, hence wealth should not breed pride). Soncino titles this Psalm: “Death the Leveller.”

1-4: The introduction to this topic. All peoples of the world, rich and poor, were to hear to what his mouth spoke and what came from the meditation of his heart. He would listen to instruction from God as in a parable, and he would present it to the accompaniment of a harp.

5-9: Why should I fear the days of evil? Those who trust in wealth and boast in their riches cannot redeem or give God a ransom for his brother. The redemption of their souls is too costly—unable to be paid. Those who trust in their wealth are not going to live eternally, avoiding the Pit (Psalm 89:48; Matthew 16:25-26).

10-12: Both the wise and the foolish die and leave their wealth to others (The only things that accompany one in death is the Torah and good works—Soncino). The foolish believe that their property will remain with their descendants. They call their lands after their own names. But, man does not remain--he perishes.

13-15: This is the way the foolish and their posterity think. The foolish though are laid in the grave. The upright shall have dominion over them. The beauty of the foolish will be consumed in the grave; far from their homes. But, God will redeem our souls from the grave (through the resurrection). He will receive us. Selah.

16-17: Do not be afraid when one becomes rich or when the glory of his house is increased; for he will carry nothing with him to the grave. His glory will not descend with him.

18-20: While he lives, he blesses himself (men also praise him as well). He shall go to the generations of his fathers, which is the grave. They never see light. A man who has honor and yet does not understand the spiritual virtues of life is like the beasts which perish.