**The Book of Psalms—Study Guide (Psalms 8-16)**

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 8: A Psalm of David. To the Chief Musician. On the instrument of Gath** (“Gittith”—Gath, means winepress—a possible tune associated with vintage songs). Soncino titles this Psalm: “The paradox of man.”

1: God’s name—His nature and character—is excellent in all the earth, not just in Israel. God’s glory is above the heavens. Notice what Israel will sing in the future: Isaiah 12:4-6.

2: Out of the mouth of babes and infants refers to the fact that God gave humans the ability to speak, and is a proof of His creative powers. The speech of a child is a powerful argument which God provides to refute His enemies. See Matthew 21:15-16.

3-4: David considered the nightly heavens, the work of God’s fingers, with the moon and stars. He asked, what is man that God would be mindful of him? The son of man means “earth-born” from Adam. God visits, or takes notice of man. See Exodus 3:16.

5: God made man a little lower than the angels, yet He has crowned him with glory and honor, which are attributes of God. See Psalm 104:1. We will be like God in the future (1 John 3:1-2).

6-9: God made man to have dominion over all the works of His hands. Paul expands on this in Hebrews 2:5-8. Man now has the animals, birds and fish under his feet, but eventually all things. These verses rehearse what God said in Genesis 1:26-28. The last verse is a repetition of verse one, which summarizes this Psalm.

**Psalm 9: A Psalm of David (To the Chief Musician; to the tune of a known melody at that time: “Death of the Son”).** Soncino titles this Psalm: “Song of Thanksgiving.”

1-2: David praised God with his whole heart, and told others of God’s wonderful works. He was glad and rejoiced in God.

3-6: After David’s enemies turn back in defeat, they would fall at God’s presence at Christ’s return. God sits on His throne judging in righteousness, and He rebukes the nations and destroys the wicked—their names will be blotted out forever; their memory will perish (Proverbs 10:7).

7-8: The Lord, in contrast to the wicked, will endure forever. He has prepared His throne for judgment, and He shall judge the world in righteousness. He will administer judgment for the peoples. See Isaiah 9:7.

9-10: The Lord will also be a refuge (a high tower) for the oppressed. He is a refuge in times of trouble. Those who know God will put their trust in Him. The Lord does not forsake those who seek Him.

11-12: Sing praises to God, who dwells in Zion. He is the avenger of blood (Genesis 9:5), but He remembers the humble (afflicted) and doesn’t forget their cry. See Psalm 72:12-14.

13-14: David asked God to have mercy on Him, to lift him up from the gates of death, and to consider those who hate him. David wants to praise Him in Jerusalem. (This will happen in the resurrection: Ezekiel 37:24).

15-16: The nations sink down in their own mess, and are caught in their own net. In contrast, the Lord is known by the judgment He executes. The wicked is snared in the work of his own hands. (The word “meditation” here refers to a solemn sound—it is a musical interlude as is Selah).

17-18: The wicked will be turned to the grave (Sheol) as well as the nations which forget God. In contrast, the needy (oppressed) will not be forgotten, and their expectation (looking to God for aid) will not perish.

19-20: Arise, O Lord, don’t let man prevail; Let the nations (Gentiles) be judged in Your sight, so that the nations may know themselves to be but men. Selah. Notice Joel 3:12-14.

**Psalm 10: No title** (Some scholars believe that this Psalm was added later as an appendix to Psalm 9). Soncino though titles this Psalm: “A Prayer of the Oppressed.”

1-2: A question: Why does God appear to stand afar off and hide in times of trouble (of the righteous being persecuted by the wicked)? The wicked, in his pride, persecutes the poor. The prayer is that God would let the wicked be caught in the plots which they’ve devised (See Isaiah 33:1).

3-4: The wicked man boasts of his heart’s desires. He blesses the greedy and renounces (defies) God. The wicked in their proud countenance do not seek God—He is in none of their thoughts. (The atheist scorns the belief that God cares how men act—see Psalm 14:1).

5: The ways of the wicked are always prospering because the wicked don’t consider God’s judgments. They think that God doesn’t see or care about their actions. The wicked sneers at all of his enemies.

6-7: The wicked one says in his heart, “I shall not be moved; I shall never be in adversity.” His mouth is full of cursing, deceit and oppression. Under his tongue is trouble and iniquity (See also Romans 3:14).

8-9: In secret, the wicked murders the innocent. He lies in wait and eyes the helpless. As a lion in his den, the wicked catches the poor when he draws him into his net.

10-11: He crouches low like a lion, and the helpless fall by his strength. The wicked says in his heart that God has forgotten, that He hides His face and never sees the injustices that the wicked have done.

12-13: Arise, O Lord. Do not forget the humble—this shows that God will not forget His people. Why do the wicked renounce God? They say in their hearts that God will not require an accounting for their evil deeds.

14-15: But, God does see. He observes trouble and grief and will repay by His hand. The helpless commit themselves to the Lord. God will break the arm of the wicked, and will seek out wickedness until He finds none.

16-18: The Lord is King forever—this is millennial. The nations will have perished out of His land. The Lord heard the desire of the humble. He will prepare their heart and will do justice for the fatherless and the oppressed so that “the man of the earth” will not oppress (or terrify) anymore.

**Psalm 11: A Psalm of David (To the Chief Musician).** Soncino titles this Psalm: “A Song of Steadfastness.”

1-3: David trusted in God, but he questioned, “Why am I asked to flee, as a bird flees to a mountain?” The wicked do attack the righteous. They bend their bow, and make ready their arrow so that they can shoot at the upright in heart. If the foundations of the society are destroyed, what can the righteous do?

4-5: David knew that the Lord was in His holy temple, which is in heaven. His eyes behold—closely scrutinizes the righteous. But God hates the wicked and the one who loves violence.

6-7: God will rain coals upon the wicked. Fire, brimstone and a burning wind shall be the portion of their cup (their fate). See Genesis 19:24 and Revelation 14:10. Notice also 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9. The Lord is righteous. He loves righteousness. His face beholds the upright (Psalm 80:19).

**Psalm 12: A Psalm of David (To the Chief Musician; on an eight-stringed harp).** Soncino titles this Psalm: “A Prayer Answered.”

1-2: A cry to God for help because the godly man is being exterminated. The faithful are disappearing from the sons of men (See Luke 18:8). People are speaking idly (falsely) with their neighbor—with flattering lips (of smooth things) and with a double heart. (This refers to thinking one thing but expressing the opposite).

3-4: May God cut off the flattering lips and the tongue which speaks proud things (big words). Some boasted: “With our tongue, we will prevail as our lips are our own; who is Lord over us?” (Soncino: “They forge their tongue into a powerful weapon to secure their ends, and are armed with lies and deceit”).

5: Because of the oppression of the poor and the sighing of the needy, God will arise (Isaiah 33:10). (Soncino: “In His wisdom, God allows the oppressors to have the upper hand for a while although it means hardships for innocent victims”). God decides when to assert His will and to set the innocent in safety for which he yearns.

6-7: Unlike the deceitful words of men, the words of the Lord are pure words—like silver refined in a furnace, purified seven times (symbolic of thoroughness). God shall keep the righteous, and will preserve them from the sinful generation.

8: The wicked prowl on every side and vileness is exalted among the sons of men. (Soncino: “Wicked men are to be found everywhere when they who are set in authority are of vile character…Corruption spreads from the higher to the lower levels of society”).

**Psalm 13: A Psalm of David (To the Chief Musician).** Soncino titles this Psalm: “From Despair to Hope.”

1: David cries out asking God three questions: “How long?” And: “Will You forget me forever?” And: “How long will You hide Your face from me?

2: David asks two more questions: “How long shall I take counsel in my soul?” (Meaning: How long do I have to devise plans to escape the net that is set for me?). There was sorrow in David’s heart daily. And: “How long will my enemy be exalted over me?” (This may be referring to the time David was escaping from Saul).

3-4: David then asked God to consider him and to revive him, lest his enemy prevail over and defeat him. He didn’t want his enemies to rejoice in his defeat. (The antidote for anxiety and hopelessness is prayer).

5-6: Despite his questioning, David trusted in God’s mercy. His heart rejoiced in His salvation. He sang to the Lord because God had dealt bountifully with him (Soncino: “Nowhere in the whole realm of literature is the doctrine of hope so pronounced as in the Hebrew Scriptures and especially the Psalms”).

**Psalm 14: A Psalm of David (To the Chief Musician).** This Psalm is repeated again in Psalm 53 with a few variations. Soncino titles this Psalm: “A Corrupt World.”

1: The fool (Hebrew: “nabal” connotes a moral, not an intellectual deficiency) has said in his heart that there is no God. They are corrupt. (See Isaiah 32:5-8).

2: God, however, does look down from heaven upon the sons of men to see if any understand or seek after Him (Psalm 73:11—the fool questions whether God has any knowledge).

3: They are all corrupt. They are tainted like sour milk. There is none who does good, No, not one. This verse is quoted again in Romans 3:10-12; 23.

4-6: Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge? They eat up (oppress) His people as they eat bread, and do not call on the Lord. The wicked will eventually acknowledge that God is with the righteous—especially when He intervenes for them. In spite of what the wicked think, the Lord is the refuge of the poor (oppressed).

7: When God intervenes, salvation and refuge will come out of Zion! The Lord will bring back the captivity of His people. Let Jacob rejoice and Israel be glad (This is millennial—Amos 9:14-15).

**Psalm 15: A Psalm of David.** \*\*Note: In addition to Psalm 23, this Psalm is very popular as well, and is known as “God’s Gentleman.” It describes the ideal of godly character. Soncino titles the Psalm: “God’s Guest.”

1-2: David asks God who may abide (have access to Him) in His tabernacle, and who may dwell in His holy hill. The answer: one who walks uprightly (blameless: Genesis 17:1), works righteousness, and speaks the truth in his heart, meaning one who has inward sincerity.

3: Also, one who doesn’t backbite (slander) with his tongue, nor does evil to his neighbor, nor takes up a reproach against his friend (See Leviticus 19:18). Notice also James 3:8-10.

4: Continuing: one who despises a vile person (judged—not shown favor to, and is avoided), but instead honors those who fear the Lord (See Proverbs 9:10), one who swears to his own hurt (holds to the sanctity of his word, even if it is disadvantageous to him) and doesn’t change (doesn’t go back on his word).

5: In addition: one who doesn’t put out his money for usury (Deuteronomy 23:19-20), nor takes a bribe (Deuteronomy 16:19) against the innocent. The conclusion is that one who does these things shall never be moved. (He benefits from God’s protection and successfully withstands the attacks from the wicked).

**Psalm 16: A Michtam of David.** (A Michtam is a style of poem or a musical title). Psalms 56-60 are Michtams. Soncino titles this Psalm: “Happiness through God.”

1-3: David asks God to preserve him, for it is in God that he puts His trust. He acknowledged that his own goodness was nothing apart from God (Isaiah 64:6-8). The saints, who are on the earth, are the excellent ones. David delighted in them. See Psalm 119:63.

4: Those who hasten after other gods will have their sorrows multiplied. David would not take up their drink offerings or even mention their pagan names. Notice the command given to Israel in Exodus 23:13.

5-6: David noted that the Lord was the portion of his inheritance and cup (Psalm 73:26). God maintained his lot (The land was apportioned by lot—Numbers 26:55). David acknowledged that the lines (the measuring cords that marked off the lot) had fallen to him in good places and that he had a good inheritance from God.

7-9: God is the One who gives us counsel. David’s mind also instructed him during the night seasons. The Lord is always before us, and because He is at the right hand, we won’t be moved. Our heart is glad, our glory rejoices, our flesh rests in hope (of the resurrection).

10: This verse refers to the fact that Jesus Christ would die, but that God would not allow His Holy One to see corruption—He would be resurrected. The Apostle Peter quotes this in the sermon he gave on Pentecost (Acts 2:27). See also Acts 13:34-37.

11: God will show us the path to life, and in His presence is the fullness (satisfaction) of joy. At God’s right hand are pleasures forever more.