



Provided by the Church of the Lutheran Confession - Board of Missions

## Old Testament Survey

### Lesson 19 – The Early Psalms of David (Various Psalms)

#### The Book of PSALMS

The Book of Psalms is God's own Hymnal and Prayer Book. The Holy Spirit guided various men of various ages of history to write down their religious feelings in the form of poetry that all believers of all ages can use in their own worship.

In Lesson 13 we already considered Psalm 90 (the Psalm of Moses) and nine other psalms of Israel's history written by later poets.

The chief writer of Psalms was David. When Saul disobeyed God, the Holy Spirit left Saul. When Samuel then anointed David, **"the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward"** (1 Samuel 16:13), and he played his harp in Saul's court. David continued composing and singing psalms of the Holy Spirit to the end of his life. Thus, he became known as **"the sweet psalmist of Israel"** (2 Samuel 23:1), and he himself said of his psalms: **"The Spirit of the LORD spoke by me, and His word was on my tongue"** (2 Samuel 23:2).

The Bible does not give us enough information to determine who the author of every psalm is, nor do we always know the circumstances in which certain psalms were written. The psalms of this lesson, however, could all have been written by David in the years before he became king, that is, in the years corresponding to the history recorded in First Samuel.

Choose fifteen of the psalms in this section to read carefully. If you have any questions, ask them.

Note: The Psalms listed below appear in the order of the events to which they refer (as best as we can determine, starting with Creation), rather than in numerical order.

#### Psalm 8 – *The Starry Heavens Reveal God's Glory*

At night David reflects on God's creation. He considers it amazing that God should put all this great world in the care of puny man. **"What is man that you are mindful of him?"** (v. \_\_ This psalm is quoted in Hebrews 2:6-8, where the writer shows that the glory man lost by his fall into sin was restored by **JESUS**, the Son of Man. Jesus quoted this psalm on Palm Sunday (Matthew 21:16).

#### Psalm 23 – *The LORD Is My Shepherd*

This is no doubt the most familiar of all the psalms. David, a shepherd of sheep, knew that he also had a Shepherd who took care of him. Ten centuries later, **JESUS**, the Son of David, said: **"I am the Good Shepherd... I lay down My life for the sheep"** (John 10:11, 15). Many hymns and spiritual songs have been based on Psalm 23.

#### Psalm 29 – *Thunder Is the Voice of God's Glory*

David reflects on God's might and glory as revealed in a severe thunderstorm. Consider the incident recorded in 1 Samuel 12:16-18.

Psalm 11 – *The LORD Is a Righteous Judge*

Psalm 14 and Psalm 53 – *The Universal Corruption of Mankind*

These two very similar psalms are used by the apostle Paul in Romans 3 to establish the sinfulness of man: **“There is none who does good, no, not one”** (Romans 3:12).

Psalm 40 – *The King after God’s Own Heart Is Obedient*

Saul was rejected from being king because of his disobedience to God’s command. Although Saul defended his disobedience by saying he wanted to sacrifice to the LORD, the prophet Samuel said: **“To obey is better than sacrifice”** (1 Samuel 15:22). David agreed with Samuel and made it his aim as God’s anointed king to be obedient. But there is only One who is fully obedient, and that is the Son of David, **JESUS** Christ. It is of Jesus that David is speaking when he says: **“My ears You have opened... I delight to do Your will, O My God”** (vv. \_\_\_\_ Hebrews 10 points out that Jesus carried out God’s will completely and perfectly for us through His obedient life and sacrificial death. See also Psalm 70.

Psalm 59 – *David Prays for Deliverance from Saul* (Compare 1 Samuel 19)

David wrote this psalm in connection with Saul’s sixth attempt to take David’s life. **“They lie in wait for my life; the mighty gather against me”** (v. \_\_\_\_

Psalm 109 – *A Terrifying Curse on Those Who Curse God’s Anointed*

As Doeg, Saul, Shimei, or anyone else cursed David, God’s anointed king, so a curse will fall on him. As Judas Iscariot cursed **JESUS**, David’s Son, God’s anointed King, so the curse fell on him (Acts 1:20). It is true, as Jesus said (John 3:18), that those who do not believe in Him will be condemned.

Psalm 35 – *David Prays for Rescue from Those Pursuing Him*

**“They reward me evil for good”** (v. \_\_\_\_ As this was true of David, it is also true of **JESUS**, David’s Son.

Psalm 56 – *David Prays for Deliverance When He Is with the Philistines* (1 Samuel 21)

**“In God I have put my trust; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?”** (v. \_\_\_\_

Psalm 34 – *David Thanks God for Deliverance from the Philistines* (1 Samuel 21)

**“Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him out of them all”** (v. \_\_\_\_

Psalm 52 – *David Expresses His Faith in God’s Mercy* (against Doeg, 1 Samuel 22)

**“I trust in the mercy of God forever and ever”** (v. \_\_\_\_

Psalm 57 – *David Prays for Help against Saul* (1 Samuel 22)

**“In the shadow of Your wings I will make my refuge, until these calamities have passed by”** (v. \_\_\_\_

Psalm 142 – *David Prays for Help against Saul* (1 Samuel 22)

**“Deliver me from my persecutors, for they are stronger than I”** (v. \_\_\_\_

Psalm 54 – *David Prays for Help against the Ziphites* (1 Samuel 23)

**“Oppressors have sought after my life... Behold, God is my Helper”** (vv. \_\_\_\_

Psalm 31 – *David Prays for Help against Saul* (1 Samuel 23)

In this grand psalm David expresses his trust in the LORD in words that are worthy to be remembered: **“In You, O LORD, I put my trust; let me never be ashamed”** (v. \_\_, **“Into Your hand I commit my spirit”** (v. \_\_, **“My times are in Your hand”** (v. \_\_, **“Save me for Your mercies’ sake”** (v. \_\_\_\_

The last words of **JESUS** from the cross are taken from words in this psalm.

Psalm 17 – *David Prays for Help against Saul* (1 Samuel 23)

**“Keep me as the apple of Your eye; hide me under the shadow of Your wings”** (v. \_\_

**“I will see Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness”** (v. \_\_\_\_

Psalm 12 – *David Prays for Help against Lying Men* (1 Samuel 23-26)

This psalm was converted into a Reformation hymn against proud false teachers by Martin Luther.

Psalm 7 – *David Prays to the Lord against Cush*

Psalm 16 – *Victory over Death*

This psalm predicts the glorious resurrection of our Lord **JESUS** on Easter Sunday. **“You will not leave My soul in Sheol, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. You will show Me the path of life”** (vv. \_\_\_\_ It was quoted by the apostle Peter on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2).

Psalm 6 – *One of the Seven Penitential Psalms*

**“O LORD, do not rebuke me in Your anger... Have mercy on me, O LORD”** (vv. \_\_\_\_

Psalm 13 – *A Psalm of One Who Seems to Be Forgotten*

**“How long, O LORD? Will You forget me forever?”** (v. \_\_

Psalm 25 – *A Sinner’s Cry for Help against Enemies*

**“Look on my affliction and my pain, and forgive all my sins”** (v. \_\_\_\_

Psalm 69 – *David Speaks of the Shame and Disgrace of the Son of David*

This psalm is quoted at least ten times in the New Testament referring to **JESUS** and His betrayer.

Psalm 144 – *God Gives Strength to the Warrior*

**“Blessed be the LORD my Rock, who trains my hands for war”** (v. \_\_ This psalm recalls David’s amazing victory over the giant Goliath, because the LORD God was with him.

## Questions

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1. What did David claim was true of his psalms?
2. How does Hebrews 2:6-8 explain the meaning of Psalm 8?
3. Name a hymn or song based on Psalm 23, if you are familiar with one.
4. What do Psalms 14 and 53 say about atheists?
5. What does Psalm 40 teach us about Jesus?
6. What does Psalm 109 say about Judas Iscariot?
7. What can we learn about suicide from Psalm 31?
8. How do we know that David was speaking of Jesus in Psalm 16?
9. If there is any psalm in this section that fits your feelings right now, which one is it, and why?