

- **\*Read Acts 2:29-36/Prayer\*** As Peter is building up to the climax of his message that Jesus, the man the Jews had killed, was actually the Son of God and both Lord and Christ, Peter mentions something that might sound familiar to you if you are familiar with Matthew's Gospel account. Peter isn't the first person in Scripture to talk about his Lord sitting down next to God and having his enemies be made His footstool. In fact, Jesus himself mentions this back in **Matthew 22:41-46**.
- **Read Acts Matthew 22:41-46** In this Text, we find Jesus questioning the Pharisees concerning who they think the Christ is the son of. They answer that He is the son of David, but Jesus says that this couldn't be true and then states what we also find in **Acts 2:36**. So what is the source of these two verses? It is actually from the 110th Psalm which is a Psalm of David.
- **Read Psalm 110** As we have just read, this Psalm of David is actually a Messianic Psalm and both Jesus and Peter refer back to it in key points of their teaching of God's plan for redemption. It is clear to me that these two individuals put a lot of stock in what is contained within the Psalms, and it is clear to me that we ought to take seriously what is contained within the Psalms. Our daily Bible reading this year is consisting of the Psalms and other wisdom literature. As we are engaged in this endeavor to read through the Psalms in 2017, I thought it wise to take a lesson in preparation for how we ought to view and come to understand the Psalms as we read through them. We'll begin this evening by considering a few true OR false statements concerning the Psalms. Much of the information that I will share tonight is a result of hearing an impressive lecture from Tom Hamilton on the Psalms last year that really helped me to view the Psalms in a different light than I ever have before.

### Common Misconceptions About The Psalms

#### A. The Psalms were written as a single work. **FALSE**

- 1) The Psalms are written unlike any other book in the Bible. We could probably say that the Psalms are a Bible inside the Bible because they are a collection of different writings.
- 2) Most other books of the Bible are single works composed by one writer that details a historical event or is a letter written to an individual. Therefore context (the writings before and after the portion focused on) is of the utmost importance. As we look from Psalm to Psalm (not chapter to chapter) context isn't as important because they were not written with a single train of thought from Psalm to Psalm.

#### B. The Psalms were all written by David. **FALSE**

- 1) This is another one of the aspects about the Psalms that makes it unique. Most of our other books of the Bible were written by a single author, but that just isn't true of the Psalms.
- 2) King David is by far the most famous of the authors of the Psalms, but at least 7 other men are also credited with authoring Psalms within the Biblical collection. Moses wrote **Psalm 90 (1st Psalm)**, Asaph a song worship leader in the temple, Heman the grandson of Samuel, Ethan a Levitical musician, King Solomon, the sons of Korah, and King Hezekiah are all credited with writing some of the Psalms contained in the Bible.
- 3) These men lived many years apart and therefore gives credence to the fact that this is a collection of writings and not just a single writing.

#### C. The Psalms are the longest book of the Bible. **TRUE & FALSE**

- 1) It is true that Psalms contains the most divisions at 150, but if we're going on true length of words then Psalms isn't even in the top 3, but comes in at #4 in length.
- 2) Jeremiah: 30,264.....Genesis: 28,865.....Ezekiel: 26,621.....Psalms 25,476

#### D. Psalm 119 is the longest chapter/division in the Bible. **TRUE & FALSE**

- 1) Again, if we're talking verses, then yes **Psalm 119** is the longest division in the Bible, but if we're measuring words then it is, again, the 4th longest in the Bible.
- 2) Deuteronomy 28: 1,409..... Numbers 7: 1,373..... Leviticus 1,347.....Psalm 119 1,340
- 3) But you are correct if you believed that **Psalm 117** is the shortest. It is by about 20 words.

#### E. The Psalms were meant for reading by every Jew. **FALSE**

- 1) The assumption is often that the Psalms were used as a daily devotional book for the Jew to pull out every morning, noon, or night to use as a means of quiet time, but this just isn't true for the simple fact that the majority of Jew's couldn't read. That along with the fact that a copy of the Scriptures wasn't as easy to come across as it is today.

- 2) Instead, the pattern was for there to be a dedicated person or small group of individuals who would have special times of gathering and reading from their Scriptures. "Literacy in the Land of Israel in the First Centuries AD" by Meir Barilan tells us that only 1% of rural people, 5% of townfolk, and 15% of city dwellers could read.
  - 3) For this reason the Psalms were written in such a way that they could be memorized and another reason why so many of them were set to music or written as prayers.
- F. The Psalms were meant simply for devotional and worship use. **FALSE**
- 1) While these things are certainly a way for the Psalms to be used (some people refer to it as the song book of the Jews), we must also be sure we recognize that the Psalms were used as a means of teaching the Jew the will of God. The same is true for us, today. In fact, there are many beliefs that we hold to that are founded in the Psalms. This is one of the reasons that the Psalms are the most quoted Old Testament book. (79 quotations and 333 allusions)
  - 2) One of the reasons we tend to not give great authority to the Psalms is because of the teaching of Paul and others that the authority of the Law of Moses has been dissolved. (**Gal. 3:23-25**) This is absolutely true. We are under a New Covenant today in Christ, but we fail to recognize that there is a distinction between the Old Testament and the Old Law.
  - 3) Just within the the great sermon in **Acts 2**, we find the Apostle Peter using Old Testament writings as his source of authority for arguing for Jesus and the resurrection. (**Psalm 16, 132, 110**) Paul also makes mention of the authority that is held within the Old Testament when he writes to Timothy. (**II Timothy 3:16,17**) All Scripture is good for teaching. We can learn valuable lessons from the Old Testament and show God's will for us. Obviously, the power is in the full Word of God and we reconcile the differences between the covenants by understanding that the Old Law is fulfilled in the Covenant of Jesus. The Apostles recognized the authority of the Psalms and other parts of the Old Testament because they used them as proving points in teaching Christ and the way of God.
  - 4) Just as the Jews used the songs and prayers for teaching the will of God, so too we can use them and do use them to teach one another and we do so often when we sing the songs in our worship assembly. (**Eph. 5:19 & Col. 3:16**)

### **I. They teach us about right and wrong.**

- A. The very first Psalm is a perfect case study for God's child to recognize the necessity of following God and doing that which is right and staying away from that which God deems as being wrong. (**Psa. 1**)
- B. As we read through the Psalms, time and time again we will see that there is righteous Godly behavior that leads to blessings and evil behavior that will be punished by God.
- C. We even use the same kind of means of standards for establishing authority when it comes to the Psalms. When the Psalmist gives us an example of righteous behavior that is rewarded by God then we know this thing is good. When we see the Psalms directly tell us something then we know it is true. (**Psa. 16:10 & Acts 2:27**) And we necessarily infer the evil that is abortion because we believe that life begins in the womb, and we often give evidence for that based upon what David writes in **Psalm 139:13-16**.
- D. As we read through the Psalms, pay close attention to those things we learn are right and wrong in the sight of the Lord.

### **II. They teach us about quality prayer.**

- A. We have a few examples of quality prayer within the New Testament, but nowhere do we have the quantity of quality prayer as we do in the Psalms. This makes sense this is a collection of prayers and songs that were sung together by God's people.
- B. In my opinion, one of the best examples of quality prayer that we can learn much from is David's prayer of repentance that is **Psalm 51**. David's attitude and contrite heart ought to impress upon us the weight of sin and how it is that we ought to approach God when asking for forgiveness for the wrong we have done.
- C. As we read through the Psalms, give attention to the good attributes that are seen in the prayers of the Psalmists.

### **III. They teach us about quality praise.**

- A. As was mentioned in our Bible class this morning, the latter portion of the Psalms (**Psalms 120-150**) are Psalms that were often sung as groups of people traveled or as they gathered for sacrifices to God.

- B. These were obviously songs that praised God for who He was and what He had done for them, but just like our songs they were teaching tools for learning about God and how to serve Him well. The second song of Ascents, **Psalms 121**, is a great example of a song that praised God while simultaneously teaching proper living as a person of God.
- C. As we read the Psalms, give attention to the way in which the songs praise God and what they also teach us about serving Him well.

#### **IV. They teach us about God.**

- A. Much of what we know about God can be learned within the Psalms. **Psalms 2** is a great example of showing the nature and power of God.
- B. While the nations of earth give efforts to gather against God, He just sits up in heaven and laughs at their useless efforts. He scoffs and is angered by their rebellion, but it won't deter his plans for the world. (**Psalms 2:1-6**)
- C. All throughout the Psalms, we see the writers recording different qualities about the God of heaven. It could benefit us keep a running list of the different attributes listed so that we might come to know our God even just a little better.

#### **V. They teach us about the Messiah.**

- A. The New Testament writers often quoted the Psalms as a means of proving God's will about the Messiah and it isn't difficult to understand why. The second half of **Psalms 2** is all about the Messiah.
- B. **Psalms 2:6-12** teaches us about God's Messiah and what His mission will be once He comes and what the benefit will be for all the nations who give their trust and loyalty to Him. Messianic Psalms are sprinkled all throughout the Psalms, and they teach us much about how the Jews viewed the coming Messiah and what we ought to know and recognize about Him.

I am fully convinced that giving effort to read 3 Psalms a week will do nothing but serve us well. The commitment really isn't that much. of the first 50 Psalms only 14 will take longer than 2 minutes to read. But even in these short readings we will gain much in our faith. The writers of the New Testament saw the Psalms as extremely useful in their faith as a means of devotion, praise, and also teaching. May we give strong efforts to work our way through the Psalms this year so that we might grow in knowledge of God and His will for us in all things. May God bless us this year as we are dedicated to the daily reading of His Word.