

Praise

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Date: 25 August 2024

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[0 : 00] A few minutes together. The book of Psalms is viewed as a precious book to many Christians.

! We can turn to a psalm in the various changing scenes of our lives as we travel through this world. But often I wonder if we view the psalms too much as sort of stand-alone, that the psalms don't really have very much to do with each other.

But actually when we come to this final psalm, this great psalm of praise, every verse being full of praise, it's good just to remember that the psalms are a book.

In fact, they're five books in one. And they have a logical order to them. They begin obviously with Psalms 1 and 2, which sort of work as the introduction to the psalms.

[1 : 23] Psalm 1 focusing on our individual needs to be walking with God and in His ways of righteousness. And also ones of judgment if we're not walking with God.

And Psalm 2 shows us the reality of our worlds, which finds rulers and nations raging against God. But God has installed His forever King, His Son, on His throne in Zion. And then there's lots of psalms in between, about 147.

Many full of pain, recording hardship. Some have cries of, how long, Lord? Some recording bitterness and anguish.

Whilst others are full of great hope and joy and praise. And yet even in the psalms of deep pain and anguish, there is still praise.

[2 : 29] There is still recognition that things are okay, will be okay because God has installed His King on His throne. That He will deal with the wicked.

I helpfully heard some teaching on the psalms earlier this month. And Vaughan Roberts, a minister in Oxford, summarized the different books of the psalms in this way.

Psalm 1 and 2, the introduction, showing us the universal King. Books 1 and 2, psalms 3 to 72, show us the suffering King.

Particularly show us David, God's King. Amongst His people, often rejected. And ultimately, people rejecting God as King.

Book 3, psalms 73 to 89, showing us the absent King. God's people are in exile at this point, and God seems so far away and distant from their situation.

[3 : 42] Book 4, psalms 90 to 106, shows us the divine King. Still in exile, but the mood sort of changes. It's hard in exile, but God does not change.

And He is still His people's King. And finally, book 5, 107 to 150, shows us the coming King.

They've returned from exile, and they are looking forward to God's coming King.

And just helpful, just for a moment, to look at the last psalm in each book, and just see that every book of the psalms ends with praise.

And so, first of all, Psalm 41. Psalm 41, verse 13. Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting.

Amen. Psalm 72, the end of Psalm 72. Verse 18 says, Praise be to the Lord God, the God of Israel, who alone does marvelous things.

[4 : 58] Praise be to His glorious name forever. May the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen and amen. Amen. At the end of book 3.

Where God's people are in exile. Where God seems far away. In Psalm 89, verse 52, it still says, Praise be to the Lord forever.

Amen and amen. Amen. And then Psalm 106, the end of Psalm 106. Verse 48.

Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Let all people say amen. Praise the Lord. And then comes this final psalm.

Psalm 150. As people are looking forward to God's coming King. It's full of praise.

[6:12] And so that's where the psalms are going. They are leading us to praise. The last few psalms are full of rapturous praise to God.

Because that's where God is leading His people. That is where God is leading us. Through this world. Through the troubles and hardships and joys into His kingdom.

Where we will praise God forever. And so this final psalm of praise is something we can do now. And something we look forward to doing.

Forever in the new creation. Where there will be no more songs of trouble and pain and hardships. That will be over. Rather eternal joys.

As we'll be forever. With our God and with His people. So Psalm 150. Let's look at it briefly. Why do we...

[7:09] Sorry. Who do we praise? Who do we praise? This psalm calls us to praise the Lord. It begins and ends. Praise the Lord.

That the Lord, Yahweh, the covenant God. Who has been and is always good to His people. The God who is faithful to His promises.

The call is to praise Him. And where do we praise? Praise. Verse 1. Praise God in His sanctuary. And praise Him in His mighty heavens. Praise Him in His sanctuary. Or a better translation might be praise Him in His holiness. For His people.

The worship of God took place in the temple. His holiness dwelt there in the Holy of Holies. Very specially. And for us as Christians.

[8:12] Under the new covenant. We now look to Jesus. Jesus, God come down. The Holy God come down. Jesus, the Son of God come to dwell amongst us.

And as Christopher Ash helpfully points out. It is only in and through Jesus. That our praises can be acceptable to God. So if we are in Christ this evening.

We praise God through the Lord Jesus Christ. And this isn't a call just for us on earth to praise Him. This is a call for the mighty heavens to praise Him.

Let angels, heavenly creatures and earthly creatures unite together in this great song of praise. Praise to the Lord whose glory fills the heavens and the earth.

Thirdly, why do we praise? Just thinking about things that we praise in life. Perhaps we've seen an amazing goal in a football match.

[9:22] And we go, wow. Did you see that? And people cheer their name. The name of the scorer. That Albion fans at the moment might be praising their whole team.

Two wins at the start of the season. Two wins in a row. We praise that team. Or perhaps you were shown an incredible act of kindness.

And you praise that person. I just can't sing their praises enough, you might say. The other day, I put out an email request to the Calvary group about clearing ivy on the city missions fire escape. And a few hours later, Steve Swain turned up to do it. I can't sing his praises enough for his kindness. Why do we praise God?

The psalm tells us why. Verse 2. Praise him for his acts of power. Praise him for his surpassing greatness. Have you considered God's acts of power?

[10:29] His people Israel could praise him for his great acts of power time and time again over their enemies.

One which is often referred to in the Psalms as his act of power over the Egyptians in the Exodus. That great rescue. How he hurled Pharaoh's army, the horses and chariots into the sea.

Praise God for his mighty acts of power. His kind acts of power. For his people. And today, as God's people, we look back to the cross and we see God's acts of power over Satan, over evil, over sin.

We look back to the resurrection and see his mighty act of power as Jesus rose as conqueror over death. And we also praise his surpassing greatness.

There's many people we might praise in life. But there is nobody greater than our gods. Our great God.

[11:34] Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The great three in one. The great creator and sustainer of our world. The one who has given us breath in our bodies. God who has given us.

God who has incredible mercy and compassion on sinful people. We praise our great God. His greatness surpasses everybody.

Surpassing greatness. And finally, how do we praise? Well, in this sum, there are seven instruments mentioned.

The sounding of the trumpet, the harp, the lyre, the tambourine, strings, pipe, and the clash of cymbals. And cymbals even gets mentioned twice.

So many instruments. And seven is the number of completeness. Maybe we could say, praise him with everything.

[12 : 29] Praise him with all instruments. Praise him with everything that makes a tuneful noise. Praise him with pianos and guitars. That's mainly what we do here. Praise him with everything. And even praise him with your body.

Dancing is mentioned. Though I might not dance in church, there's permission in this psalmy. We can praise him with everything.

And praise him with our breath. Look at what verse 6 says. Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. He fills our lungs with breath.

And so whilst we have breath, let's use it. What a great way to use it. In praise of our God rather than in that burst of anger or that nasty words.

Let's use our voices to praise God. And it says, not just people, but everything that has breath. All of creation. Praise the Lord.

[13 : 28] Praise your creator. God is gathering. He is bringing together a worldwide orchestra and choir from across the globe and across the generations to sing his praise.

To our mighty and our great eternal Lord. This is where we're heading. Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea and order that is in them.

Saying to him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb. Be praise and honor and glory and power forever and ever.

Amen. So shall we join in another song of praise? Come praise.