

Two Year Bible Trek
Week 29
Psalms 88, 92, 93, 102, 103, 104, 106, 107, 133

Key Concepts: The key concepts here are that the Psalms are a complex mix of genres which were composed over an extended period of time.

Stories: As with many of the Psalms we are not sure when they were composed or the exact situation in which they were written. Fortunately they can speak and have spoken to people across the centuries.

Psalm Themes: In this section of Psalms we find themes ranging from cries for help to praises for God's amazing creation.

Psalm 88 – This appears to be a Psalm offered by one who is close to death. There is a palpable fear that death will soon overcome them and all will be lost as they go to Sheol. What is interesting in this Psalm is that the writer tries to convince God to act by reminding God that the dead cannot praise him. Additionally there is no confidence that God will act. The Psalmist cries out in prayer, but there is no relief.

Psalm 92 – In some ways this Psalm is almost a polar opposite of Psalm 88. While illness and death are not the enemies in this Psalm, there are those who tried to assail the writer. God however, intervened and saved the author. Thus the Psalmist gives praise to God because God has rescued him because of his righteousness.

Psalm 93 – This Psalm breaks the pattern of Psalms which focus on illness and oppression. It is a Psalm used at a religious festival. It is a celebrative reminder that God rules over all the powers of the world including primordial chaos.

Psalm 102 – Though the topic of this Psalm is once again pain and illness, it is filled with some of the most amazing imagery in the Psalms. *“For my days pass away like smoke.” “I lie awake. I am like a lonely bird on the housetop.”* At the same time, unlike in Psalm 88, the writer professes that God will act and will deliver. *“The children of thy servants shall dwell secure.”*

Psalm 103 – This Psalm is one with which we should all be familiar. It begins, *“Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and do not forget all his benefits – who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases...”* It is an affirmation that God heals.

Psalm 104 – God as creator is the focus of this hymn. In soaring lyrical language the Psalmist praise God for the magnificence of his creation as well as God's continuing efforts at ordering of all that creation contains.

Psalm 106 – This Psalm begins with praise and a reminder of God's love, followed by a corporate prayer of confession (for the sins of the people across time), then a request that God will save the people and is completed by the words, *“Praise the Lord.”*

Psalm 107 – This is a marvelous hymn which recounts the myriad of ways in which God has saved God's people (from the desert, darkness, sickness, storms and hunger). The final affirmation is that God will protect the powerless.

Psalm 133 – Though this Psalm is only three verses long, it has become a beloved Psalm about unity. *“Behold how good and pleasant it is when brothers and sisters dwell in unity.”*

1. How willing are you to cry out to God when you are in distress?
2. For what part of creation would you give the most praise to God?
3. From what dangers or difficult times has God saved you?