

Two Year Bible Trek
Week 39
Week 39 - Psalm 5, 38, 41, 42, 95, 97, 98, 99

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.

Psalm Themes: This group of Psalms contains pleas and praises to God

Psalm 5 - with this Psalm we return again to a lament. In it we see the usual themes of a request for God to hear the writer's cry for deliverance as well as for the destruction of those who "have no truth in their mouths" and whose "throat is an open grave." The basis for this request is not only the righteousness of the speaker but God's own sense of justice. God destroys the wicked and upholds the righteous.

Psalm 38 - here we have a Psalm which contains two pleas to God. The first is for healing. The writer has associated his illness, "my wounds grow and fester", with sin and so seeks forgiveness and healing. At the same time the writer is faced with people around him who are taking advantage of his illness to bring him to ruin. The plea is that God will protect the writer from his enemies even as God is healing him.

Psalm 41 - the Psalmist begins with an affirmation of God's and the writer's goodness (the writer cares for the poor and God rewards him). Yet the writer is ill and on his sickbed. From the sickbed, just as in Psalm 38, the writer finds himself abandoned by his friends and lied about by his enemies. He seeks deliverance from both conditions.

Psalm 42 - this is one of the most famous of the Psalms and begins, "As a hart longs for flowing waters, so my soul longs for thee, O God." The writer remembers going with the throngs on a procession to the Temple and songs and shouts for joy that accompanied that pilgrimage. The writer also knows of God's steadfast love. Yet in the end he feels abandoned and yet still desires to trust in God.

Psalm 95 - we move from Psalms of lament to a Psalm of praise. The writer of this Psalm begins with a proclamation of praise that God is king over all of the earth. God is king over all of the gods. This kingship was demonstrated in God's lordship over both creation and God's people. The Psalm concludes with a reminder that the people listen to God and not be like their ancestors who refused to listen.

Psalm 97 - once again in this Psalm we encounter an ode to God's kingship and glory. There are a couple of very interesting parts to this Psalm. First there is a call for creation itself to give praise to God, "Let the earth rejoice; let the many coastlands be glad." Second it reminds us that the writer still exists in a polytheistic culture because all other gods bow down. Finally there is a quid-pro-quo relationship in which the righteous are always rewarded.

Psalm 98 - this Psalm is one of the great Psalms for praise. People are commanded to praise God with song, lyre, trumpets and horn. The people are to make a joyful noise before God. Even the "floods" are to clap their hands. All of this is to take place because God will come and judge the nations and establish God's kingdom.

Psalm 99 - this Psalm allows us to see the connection between God and justice. People are to praise God not simply because God is powerful, but because God is the king who is a "lover of justice" and has "established equity." Even when God's leaders such as Moses, Aaron and Samuel did wrong, God acted.

1. How do you understand righteousness in your own life?
2. Where do you see creation giving praise to God?
3. What does justice look like to you?