

Two Year Bible Trek
Week 50
Week 50 – Psalms 134, 136, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150

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: As we reach the end of the fifth book of Psalms we find ourselves, appropriately enough, in a section of Psalms of praise. This allows the reader to end on a high note with the word Hallelujah being front and center in Psalm 150.

Psalm 134 – this is a very short Psalm which is a call to the priests to come and bless God in the Temple, followed by a blessing of the congregation.

Psalm 136 – What we find in this Psalm is an ode of praise to God for God’s liberating work in the wilderness. The recurring phrase is “his steadfast love endures forever.” The Psalm begins with a retelling of the creation story (showing God’s love), followed by God’s leading the people out of Egypt (showing God’s love), defeating powerful kings (showing God’s love) and then remembering Israel when times are tough (showing God’s love).

Psalm 146 – this Psalm is another Psalm of praise to God. It praises God for caring for the least in society; the poor, the widow, the hungry, the oppressed, the blind and the orphan. At the same time God drives the wicked away.

Psalm 147 – this is a Psalm of praise to God for God’s care over Jerusalem. This Psalm is evidently composed at a time of great peace and prosperity. God provides everything that the nation needs from peace, to wheat, to wool and water. It also includes praise for God’s providential care of creation as well.

Psalm 148 – this is a Psalm calling on all of creation to praise God. From mountains, to hills, to beasts and cattle, to all nations and people; everyone and everything is to praise the Lord. This Psalm is a powerful reminder that the earth is not seen as an inanimate object but it is God’s good creation. And as God’s good creation it has an obligation to praise its creator and sustainer. In addition the people are to praise God because God has given them power (as represented by the term, horn).

Psalm 149 – we again find ourselves with a Psalm of praise to God and to God’s king. The people are to use everything at their disposal to praise God. They are to use timbrel and lyre. They are to dance and sing for joy. Although, one of the things for which they are to give praise is that God has given the king the ability to “wreak vengeance on the nations and chastisement on the peoples; to bind their kings with chains and their nobles with fetters of iron.” We can sense that this Psalm is written in a time of the ascendancy of the nation.

Psalm 150 – This is the last Psalm in the book of Psalms (though there are still a few we will examine in later articles). It is appropriately enough a Psalm of praise. It closely resembles Psalm 148 in that it is a call to praise God 1) for all of God’s mighty deeds, 2) to praise God with trumpet, lute, harp, strings, pipe and with loud clashing cymbals 3) to encourage everything that breaths (humans and animals) to praise God. In other words, we are to use instrumental as well as vocal music to praise God because God is worthy of our adoration. As noted above the word for praise here is hallelujah.

1. Why do you think it is appropriate to end the Psalms with a word of praise?
2. How do these Psalms fit the moment in 1 Kings and 2 Chronicles in which we find ourselves?
3. What gifts from God would you list as those for which you would give thanks?