

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown

Bible Study Notes Book of Psalms

2-8-12

PSALM 143

The Story Behind the Psalm

This Psalm is one of the seven penitential Psalms. They are sometimes also called the "special" Psalms. Someone has suggested that these Psalms are directed against the seven deadly sins; for example, Psalm 6 is directed against wrath, Psalm 32 against pride, Psalm 38 against gluttony, Psalm 51 against impurity, Psalm 102 against covetousness, Psalm 130 against envy and Psalm 143 against indifference.

Since it is a penitential Psalm, it is a Psalm where David is asking for forgiveness. Picture the sweet psalmist after having sinned seeking God's forgiveness and mercy.

The Way It Was Used by God's People

This was used for years for Ash Wednesday observances, but more important than that, it was used by the Jews when confessing sins and seeking God's forgiveness.

Theme: A prayer in the midst of hopelessness and depression. Our prayers should fit into what we know is consistent with God's character and plans.

Author: David

PSALM 143:7

David was losing hope, caught in paralyzing fear and deep depression. At times we feel caught in deepening depression, and we are unable to pull ourselves out. At those times we can come to the Lord and, like David, express our true feelings. Then we will find help as we remember his works (143:5), reach out to him in prayer (143:6), trust him (143:8), and seek to do his will (143:10).

PSALM 143:10

David's prayer was to be taught to do God's will, not his own. A prayer for guidance is self-centered if it doesn't recognize God's power to redirect our life. Asking God to restructure our priorities awakens our minds and stirs our will.

PSALM 144

The Story Behind the Psalm

The first part of Psalm 144 is very similar to Psalm

18. Unknown are the conditions under which David wrote the Psalm, but it does fall into a beautiful outline. Verses 1 and 2 find the psalmist singing to God because of God's strength.

In verses 3 and 4 he wonders at the Lord's regard for insignificant man. In verses 5-8 he reminds us of God's blessings in the hour of battle. In fact, God is called a Man of war. In verses 9-11 he again blesses God and extols His greatness. In the remainder of the Psalm God's people are congratulated because they have such a wonderful God.

The Psalm also bears a strong resemblance to David's last song in II Samuel 22.

The best conjecture is that this Psalm refers to the slaying of Goliath by the young stripling, David.

The Way It Was Used by God's People

When an Israelite felt extremely insignificant and wanted to praise the virtues of his great God, he would read and sing Psalm 144.

Theme: Rejoicing in God's care. Whether in times of prosperity or adversity, blessed are those whose God is the Lord.

Author: David

PSALM 144:3, 4

Life is short. David reminds us that it is "like a breath" and that our "days are like a passing shadow." James says that our life is "like the morning fog—it's here a little while, then it's gone" (James 4:14). Because life is short, live for God while you have the time. Don't waste your life by selecting an inferior purpose that has no lasting value. Only God can make your life worthwhile, purposeful, and meaningful.

PSALM 145

The Story Behind the Psalm

Probably it was written upon conquering Goliath. It is an alphabetical Psalm. It is David's favorite. It is a Psalm of praise, and the praise was always pitched in a high key. It is called David's "crown jewel of praise." It was designated as a "tehillah~' or a "Psalm of praise."

It outlines beautifully as it concerns the righteousness and goodness of God: first, to the men in general; second, to his own people; and third, to those who suffer.

Picture David as a lad having conquered Goliath composing this Psalm and then envision him in years to come singing it and remembering his marvelous victory.

The Way It Was Used by God's People

Of course, they used it when they wanted to praise the Lord. It is one of the greatest of the Psalms of praise and as was aforementioned, it was David's favorite.

The ancient Jews when very, very happy uttered this Psalm three times a day with the mouth, with the harp and with the tongue.

This is one of the Psalms that the Jews liked to memorize. It was easier for them to memorize an alphabetical Psalm; that is, one in which different sections were preceded by different letters of the alphabet.

Theme: A time will come when all people will join together in recognizing and worshiping God. Because God is full of love, he satisfies all who trust in him.

Author: David

PSALM 145:14

Sometimes our burdens seem more than we can bear, and we wonder how we can go on. David stands at this bleak intersection of life's road and meditates on the Lord, the great burden bearer. God is able to lift us up because (1) his greatness is beyond discovery (145:3); (2) he does mighty acts for each generation (145:4); (3) he is full of glorious splendor and majesty (145:5); (4) he does awe-inspiring deeds (145:5, 6); (5) he is righteous (145:7); (6) he is kind, merciful, patient, loving, and compassionate (145:8, 9); (7) he rules over an everlasting Kingdom (145:13); (8) he is our source of all our daily needs (145:15, 16); (9) he is righteous and kind in all his dealings (145:17); (10) he remains close to those who call on him (145:18); (11) he hears our cries and rescues us (145:19, 20). If you are bending under a burden and feel that you are about to fall, turn to God for help. He is ready to lift you up and bear your burden.

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Bible Study Notes Book of Psalms

2-15-12

The Story Behind the Psalms – 146 to 150

These form a new group of Psalms called the "Hallelujah Psalms." Hallelujah means "Praise ye Jah," or "Praise ye Jehovah." An interesting thing about the word "hallelujah" is that it is the same in every language. It is the one word in all languages that becomes the common denominator. We cannot all speak the same language about most subjects, but when it comes to praising the Lord, we all speak the same language.

These Psalms are divided into three groups—group one ends with hallelujah. In this group are Psalms 104 and 105. Group two begins with hallelujah. This includes Psalms 111 and 112. Group three both begins and ends with hallelujah. Included are Psalms 106, 113, 135, and 146 through 150.

It is interesting that with the passing of the years David's praise becomes greater. The term, "Praise ye the Lord," is included more and more in the Psalms written near the end of David's life. He once said, "I will praise Him more and more," and so he did. As these Psalms are read, the reader should picture an aged David lifting his hands and voice Heavenward thanking God for His grace, for His mercy, for His lovingkindness and for His faithfulness.

The Way They Were Used by God's People

The Jews would use these as doxology Psalms when they wanted to praise the Lord. They were used at any time. They were much like our songs, "Praise Him, Praise Him, Jesus Our Blessed Redeemer," "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name," etc. In other words, they were general songs of praise used at any occasion the heart leaped with joy.

PSALM 146

Theme: The help of people versus the help of God. Help from people is temporal and unstable, but help from God is lasting and complete.

Author: Anonymous

PSALM 146–150

These last five psalms overflow with praise. Each begins and ends with "Praise the LORD." They show us where, why, and how to praise God. What does praise do? (1) Praise takes our mind off our problems and shortcomings and helps us focus on God. (2) Praise leads us from individual meditation to corporate worship. (3) Praise causes us to consider and appreciate God's character. (4) Praise lifts our perspective from the earthly to the heavenly.

PSALM 146:3-8

The psalmist portrays powerful people as inadequate saviors, making false promises they cannot deliver (146:3). God is the hope and the help of the needy. Jesus affirms his concern for the poor and afflicted in Luke 4:18-21; 7:21-23. He does not separate the physical needs from spiritual needs but attends to both. While God, not the government, is the hope of the needy, we are his instruments to help here on earth.

PSALM 146:9

God's plans frustrate the "plans of the wicked" because his values are the opposite of society's. Jesus turned society's values upside down when he proclaimed that "many who seem to be important now will be the least important then, and those who are considered least here will be the greatest then" (Matthew 19:30). "If you try to keep your life for yourself, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for me, you will find true life" (Matthew 16:25). Don't be surprised when others don't understand your Christian values; but don't give in to theirs.

PSALM 147

Theme: What gives God joy? Although God created everything, his greatest joy comes from our genuine worship and trust.

Author: Anonymous, written when the exiles returned to Jerusalem

PSALM 147:5

Sometimes we feel as if we don't understand ourselves—what we want, how we feel, what's wrong with us, or what we should do about it. But God's understanding has no limit, and therefore he understands us fully. If you feel troubled and don't understand yourself, remember that God understands you perfectly. Take your mind off yourself and focus on God. Seek to become more and more like him. The more you learn about God and his ways, the better you will understand yourself.

PSALM 147:10, 11

We may spend a lot of effort trying to sharpen our skills or become physically fit. There is nothing wrong with doing so, and, in fact, our gifts can be used to glorify God. But when we use our gifts with no regard for God, they are indeed worth little. It is our honor and trust that God desires. When he has those, then he will use our gifts and strengths in ways far greater than we can imagine.

PSALM 147:19, 20

The nation of Israel (the descendants of Jacob) was special to God because to its people God brought his laws, and through its people he sent his Son, Jesus Christ. Now any individual who follows God is just as special to him. In fact, the Bible says that the real nation of Israel is not a specific people or geographic place but the community of all who believe in and obey God (see Galatians 3:28, 29).

PSALM 148

Theme: Let all creation praise and worship the Lord.

Author: Anonymous

PSALM 148:5-14

All creation is like a majestic symphony or a great choir composed of many harmonious parts that together offer up songs of praise to the Lord. Each part (independent, yet part of the whole) is caught up and carried along in swelling tides of praise. This is a picture of how we as believers should praise God—individually, yet as part of the great choir of believers worldwide. Are you singing your part well in the worldwide choir of praise?