

THE BIBLE in a nutshell



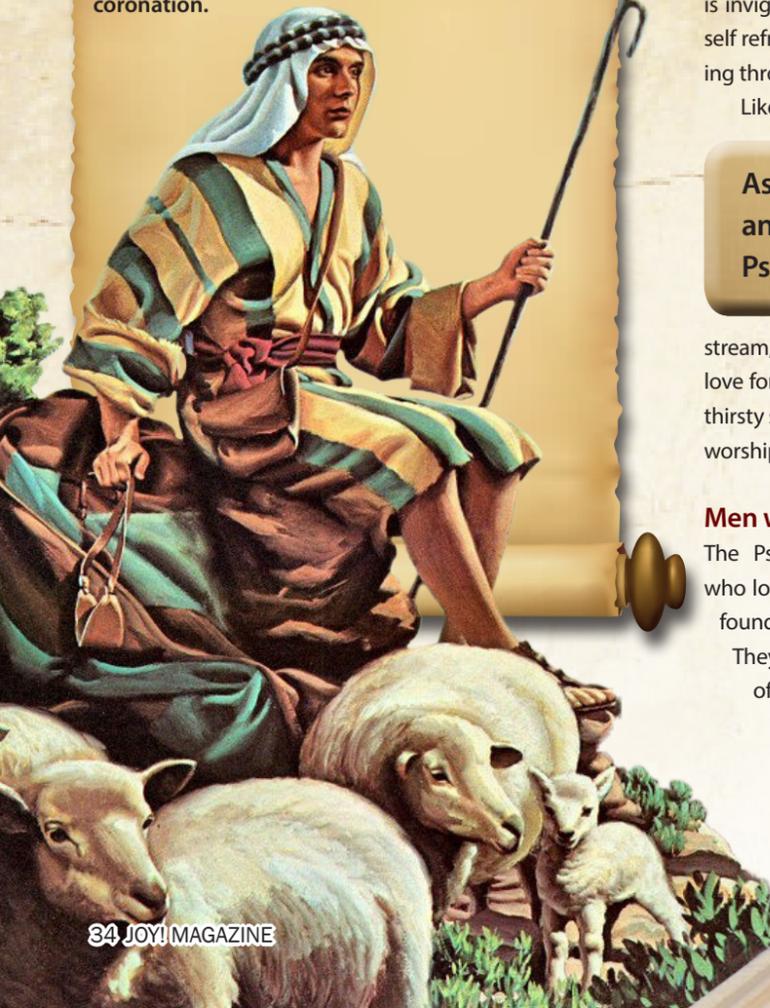
*Psalm*s

—by Peter Hammond

“Give unto the Lord the glory due to His Name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.” Ps 29:2

Treasury of David

David wrote more than half of the Psalms. David's experiences as a shepherd, a musician, soldier, refugee and king, are reflected in many of his Psalms, such as the Shepherd Psalm 23. Psalm 2 was written by David for his son, Solomon's, coronation.



The Psalms are alive with a burning devotion to God. To read through this collection of religious poetry is to be overwhelmed by the intense enthusiasm of the psalmists for God. The spirit of praise is invigorating, and I always find myself refreshed and inspired after reading through its pages.

Like a fast-flowing mountain

God, their meditations on God's Law, and their songs of worship to, and about, the Lord God in this devotional Prayer Book of the Bible. David was described as a man after God's own heart. Reading, singing and praying the Psalms shows us why.

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stream, the waves of faith in, and love for, Almighty God wash over our thirsty souls as we soak in its words of worship.

Men who deeply loved God

The Psalms were written by men who loved God with a depth seldom found in today's superficial society. They are vibrant with the faith of those who knew God in their own experience. Men like David, Moses and Ezra recorded their prayers to

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Joining in the worship

What is the chief end of man? Our purpose is to worship God and to enjoy Him forever! The Psalms are the songs and prayers of a man after God's own heart.

“I will extol You, my God, O King; and I will bless Your Name forever and ever... Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and His greatness is unsearchable... My mouth shall speak the praise of the Lord,

Personal and corporate

The Psalms are personal, using the personal pronouns: I, me, and my. Other Psalms are collective for public worship, using we and us. King David wrote most of the personal Psalms. They are comprehensive dealing with every Biblical theme and doctrine. We see instruction, history, prophecy, repentance, thanksgiving, trust, praise and adoration. The Psalms deal with the Law of God (Psalm 1, 19 & 119), others with Creation (Psalm 29 & 104). Other Psalms deal with Judgement (Psalm 52). Many Psalms are Messianic (Psalm 2, 22 & 53). The Psalms deal with Israel's Ruin, Israel's Redeemer, and Israel's Redemption.



and all flesh shall bless His holy Name Forever and ever.” Psalm 145:1,3,21

The heart of the Bible

Psalms is the Hymn Book and Prayer Book of the Bible. It is the longest and the middle Book in the Bible. It is also the most loved and most quoted Book in the Bible. Most of the Psalms were written by David around 1 000 BC. However there is a Psalm of Moses, dating back to the time of the Exodus, and Psalms written by Ezra, during the time of the return from exile in Babylon.

Dr. Martin Luther described the Psalms as: “The Bible within the Bible” - the Bible in miniature. The Psalms deal with Creation, patriarchs, Exodus, history of Israel, monarchy, united kingdom and divided kingdoms, Exile and return to Jerusalem.

Inspiring hymns

Some of the greatest hymns in history are based on the Psalms, including Dr. Martin Luther's; ‘A Mighty Fortress is our God’, (Psalm 46) and Isaac Watt's, ‘Jesus Shall Reign’, (Psalm 72).

The emotions in Psalms

The Psalms cover every emotion and situation, from sorrow to joy, from failure to

victory. The Psalms express **negative** emotions: anger, frustration, despair, fear, jealousy and envy. They also reflect many **positive** emotions: love, joy, peace, hope, excitement, and exhilaration.

The Prophets

The prophets quoted from the Psalms repeatedly. Jonah's prayer quoted from

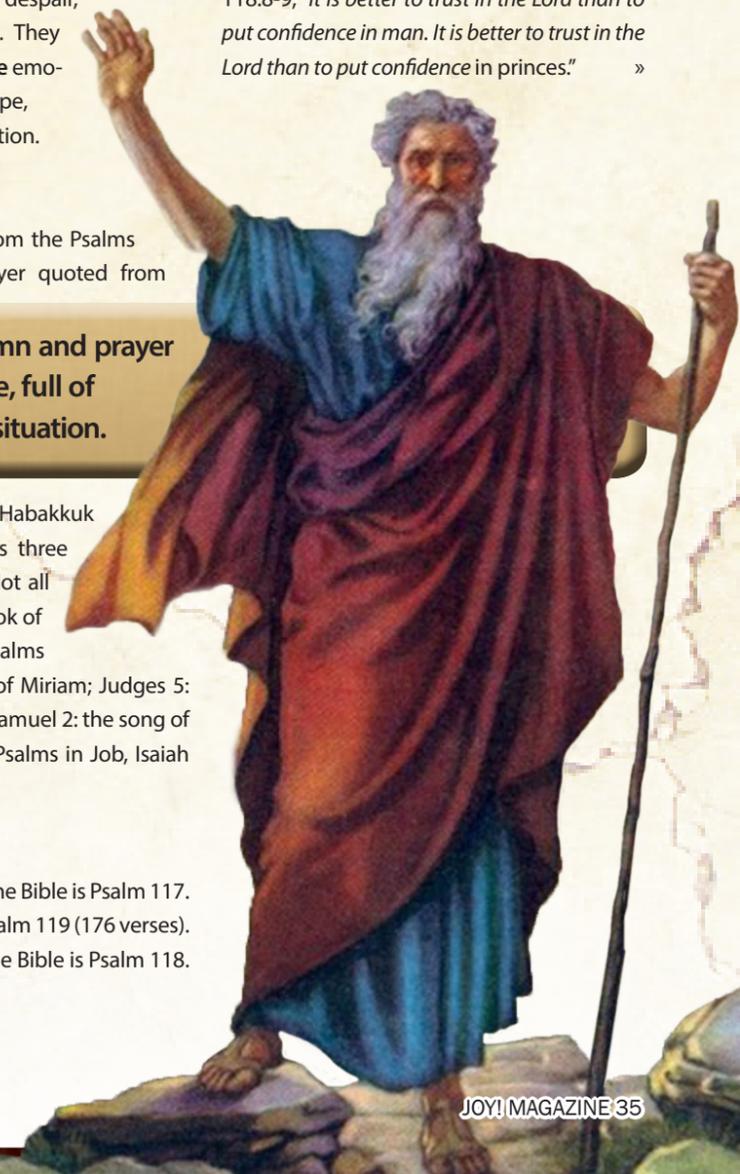
Psalms is the hymn and prayer book of the Bible, full of emotion for any situation.

five different Psalms. Habakkuk quoted from the Psalms three times in his prophecy. Not all the Psalms are in the Book of Psalms. We also see Psalms in Exodus 15: the song of Miriam; Judges 5: the song of Deborah, 1 Samuel 2: the song of Hannah. There are also Psalms in Job, Isaiah and Revelation.

Long and short

The shortest chapter in the Bible is Psalm 117. The longest chapter is Psalm 119 (176 verses). The middle chapter of the Bible is Psalm 118.

The middle verses in the Bible are: Psalm 118:8-9, *“It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes.”* »



THE BIBLE

in a nutshell

Psalms



The God of the Psalms demands my worship - and not my worship only, but the worship of every creature, everywhere, in all nations, throughout the world.

Psalm sandwich

Psalm 22 to 24 forms an important trilogy: Psalm 22: "My God, My God, why have You forsaken me?" deals with the **Cross**. Psalm 23: "The Lord is my Shepherd..." deals with the **crook**, or shepherd's staff. Psalm 24: "Who is this King of Glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O you gates, lift them up, you ancient doors, that the King of Glory may come in." deals with the **Crown**.
Psalm 22: **Saviour**.
Psalm 23: **Shepherd**.
Psalm 24: **Sovereign**.

Five books

The Psalms consist of five Books, paralleling the first five Books of the Bible: The Law of Moses. Just as Genesis deals with **Creation**, Exodus - **Salvation**, Leviticus - **Worship**, Numbers - **Rebellion**, and Deuteronomy - **Law**, so in the five groupings of the Psalms, we see similar themes. Each of the five Books ends with a Doxology. (Psalm 41, 72, 89, 106 & 150).

of personal despair, turmoil and tragedy. In the 42 Lament Psalms we see frustration, despair, concerns and complaints presented to God. Each of the Lament Psalms follows a five-fold form:
1. A cry to God.
2. A complaint about what is wrong.
3. A confession of trust in God.
4. A petition calling on God to intervene.

When you are at a loss as to how to express yourself to God, reach for the Psalms. They are rich and full, offering words of despair, gratitude, repentance, wisdom, praise and celebration.

Hosanna to the King

Psalm 113 to 118, are known as the Hallel Psalms and were sung at the Passover. The term 'Hosanna' comes from Psalm 118. When Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, the people were shouting Hosanna! The crowd then fell silent when the Lord took a whip and drove out the Jewish moneychangers from the Temple.

Other authors

Solomon wrote Psalm 72 and 127. **Ezra** wrote Psalm 49, 50 and 119. Psalm 90 was written by **Moses**. Psalm 92 encourages the observance of the Sabbath.

Lament Psalms

There are Lamentation Psalms written out

5. A promise to thank and praise God when deliverance comes.
While many of these Lament Psalms are personal, some are written on behalf of the nation (Psalm 44, 74, 79, 80, 83, 85 and 90).

Psalms of gratitude

Psalms of **thanksgiving** are the second largest grouping of Psalms. These thanksgiving Psalms have a four-part pattern:
1. A proclamation: "I will praise You..."
2. A statement about what the worshipper is going to praise God for.
3. A testimony of God's provision.
4. A vow to continue to praise God for what He has done.

These Psalms thank God for who He is and what He does, for His Creation, sover-

eignty, intervention, provision, protection, deliverance and Revelation.

Psalms of repentance

Thirdly, there are Psalms of Repentance (including: Psalm 6, 32, 38, 51, 130 & 143).

Royal Psalms

The Royal Psalms (Psalm 2, 18, 20, 21, 45, 72, 89, 101, 110, 132 & 144) have inspired numerous European national anthems. The British national anthem, for example, is based on several of these Psalms. The lion and the unicorn, referred to in Psalm 22, are still in the English Coat of Arms.

Canada remains the only nation in the world with The Dominion in its name. The founding fathers of Canada named their country: The Dominion of Canada, based on Psalm 72: "He shall have dominion...from sea to sea." As Canada stretches from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean, it was called The Dominion of Canada.

Wisdom Psalms

The Wisdom Psalms deal with the right conduct of life and apparent contradictions in life. Psalm 1 begins with two ways, two types

of people and two destinations. The Book of Psalms is for those who are walking in the right way, rooted in God's Word, drawing nourishment from the streams of living waters, bearing the fruit of the Spirit.

The wise and the foolish

The foolish are those who stand with evildoers, who walk with them, being influenced

In the light of eternity

Psalm 73, tackles the problem of bad people seeming to get away with their evil behaviour, while good people often suffer. Psalm 73 evaluates justice in the light of eternity.

Celebrating God

The Psalms celebrate the attributes of God: His omnipotence, omniscience, and om-

The Book of Psalms is for those who are walking in the right way, rooted in God's Word, drawing nourishment from the streams of living waters and bearing the fruit of the Spirit.

by bad company. Finally they end up sitting with, and becoming friends, with the world.

In His Sermon on the Mount, Our Lord Jesus Christ expounded Psalm 1 as He spoke of the wise man and the foolish man, the good tree and the bad tree, the good fruit and the bad fruit, the house built upon the rock of God's Word and the house built upon the sand of human effort, the broad way and the narrow way, the broad gate and the narrow gate, those who stand in the day of crises and those who fall.

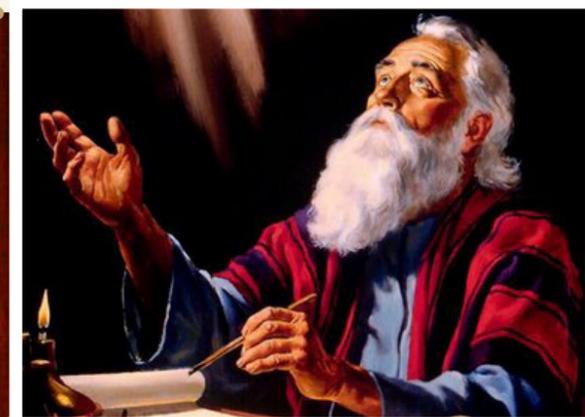
nipresence. God is all powerful, all knowing and everywhere present! The Psalms celebrate God's actions in Creation and in Redemption. The Psalms tell us God is the Good Shepherd, the Commander in Chief, the Eternal Judge, the Redeemer, the Provider and the Sustainer.

Theology leads to Doxology

In the Psalms, Theology quickly leads to Doxology. Truth must inevitably lead to worship. Many of the songs in the New »

Names of God

The two main Names used for God in the Psalms are **Yahweh** and **Elohim**. Elohim means the most High God. It is plural, containing the idea of God's Trinitarian nature. Elohim communicates to us the transcendence of God. He is far above and completely different to us. The other Name for God used throughout the Psalms is **Yahweh**, which communicates relationship and intimacy with God. He is immanent. This balance between the transcendence and immanence of God is seen throughout the Scriptures.





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Psalms

Testament are modelled on the Psalms (Luke 1-2). The Apostles turned to the Psalms when under threat (Acts 4) and used the Psalms when preaching (Acts 13). Many of the Epistles, such as Hebrews, quote prolifically from the Psalms. Our Lord Jesus Christ quoted from the Psalms throughout His public teaching, in the Sermon on the Mount, while cleansing the Temple, at the Last Supper, on the Cross and on the road to Emmaus. He reminded His disciples that the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms teach of Him.

Psalms in our daily lives

As Believers we are to read the Psalms. We must sing the Psalms. We must pray the Psalms. Some of the Psalms need to be shouted! The Psalms encourage us to lift up holy hands, sometimes to clap and dance, to look upwards and to kneel in humility before God.

We are commanded in the New Testament to use the Psalms in corporate worship (Ephesians 5).

Psalms for every occasion

There is nothing we can do that is more meaningful and beneficial on hospital visitations, than to read the Psalms. At sick beds, at grave sites, before travel, on sad days and on days of rejoicing, there are Psalms designed for each occasion.

ship, discipleship, missions and worship. Read the Psalms. Meditate on the Psalms. Pray the Psalms. Sing the Psalms. Delight in the Psalms. Proclaim the Psalms.

The God we read about in the Psalms is a God worth praising. He is worth serving. He is worth proclaiming. He is worthy of all sacrifice, honour and glory.

Share the Lord's glory

The more we praise the Lord, the more we

The God we read about in the Psalms is a God worth praising. He is worth serving. He is worth proclaiming. He is worthy of all sacrifice, honour and glory.

It would be a good habit to read one Psalm a day. There are 150 Psalms, so it would take just five months to pray your way through the Psalms. Read a Psalm before breakfast, or at lunch, or after supper. The Psalms are for all in danger, trouble and need. They are for the soldier, the nurse, the fireman, the doctor, the teacher, the parent and the child, for the king and the queen, for leaders and workers. For prisoners and exiles, for the persecuted, the sick and the dying, for farmers and fathers. At all times and in all situations, the Psalms are our Prayer book and our song book.

find the burning desire to share His Glory with others. His Greatness demands my worship - and not my worship only, but the worship of every creature, everywhere, in all nations, throughout the world.

The message of the Psalms is God and the very nature and perfections of God demands that He be exalted and praised, proclaimed and glorified, worldwide, to every person, in every nation, to each succeeding generation (Psalm:145:4,12). ■

Our God, deserving of praise

Revelation leads to relation-

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