



Women's Bible Study
**Our Refuge & Strength:
Walking Through the Psalms**

 **Women**

Our Refuge & Strength – Walking Through the Psalms

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Psalms of Praise
Lesson 1

Without a doubt, the mightiest thought the mind can entertain is the thought of God, and the weightiest word in any language is its word for God. ~ A.W. Tozer

There is only one response when confronted with majesty of the Lord, adoration. God's divine attributes and works demand worship. Psalms of praise are exactly that – exuberant praise of the Lord. Praise is the act of acknowledging God as the King of the universe and responding to him with trust and dependence. These psalms are not always connected to a personal experience or as a response but can be meant simply for praising God. It's a blend of joy and awe at the privilege of drawing near to our Creator.

The people of ancient times set praise psalms to music as they were meant to be used in worship. Just as God himself speaks in poetry, they extol His virtue and power through poetry. The God of Israel is praised for His handiwork in nature, His deliverance of His chosen people, and His wonderful attributes, such as loving kindness and patience, toward them. This week we will be invited to praise the Lord with all creation and expand our view of our majestic God.

Step One – Observation

First read through the entire passages aloud. Then read again using a pen and highlighter and engage with the text. Underline repeated words and phrases. Look for patterns, parallelism, and bookend thoughts expressed. Circle imagery, metaphors, and similes, identifying the emotions and comparisons. Journal your observations with insights and questions in the space on the right.

Psalm 148

¹ Praise the Lord.

Praise the Lord from the heavens;
praise him in the heights above.

² Praise him, all his angels;
praise him, all his heavenly hosts.

³ Praise him, sun and moon;
praise him, all you shining stars.

⁴ Praise him, you highest heavens
and you waters above the skies.

⁵ Let them praise the name of the Lord,
for at his command they were created,

⁶ and he established them for ever and
ever—

he issued a decree that will never pass
away.

⁷ Praise the Lord from the earth,
you great sea creatures and all ocean
depths,

⁸ lightning and hail, snow and clouds,

stormy winds that do his bidding,
⁹ you mountains and all hills,
fruit trees and all cedars,
¹⁰ wild animals and all cattle,
small creatures and flying birds,
¹¹ kings of the earth and all nations,
you princes and all rulers on earth,
¹² young men and women,
old men and children.
¹³ Let them praise the name of the Lord,
for his name alone is exalted;
his splendor is above the earth and the
heavens.
¹⁴ And he has raised up for his people a horn,
the praise of all his faithful servants,
of Israel, the people close to his heart.
Praise the Lord.

Psalm 8

**For the director of music. According
to *gittith*. A psalm of David.**

¹ Lord, our Lord,
how majestic is your name in all the
earth!
You have set your glory
in the heavens.
² Through the praise of children and infants
you have established a stronghold against
your enemies,
to silence the foe and the avenger.
³ When I consider your heavens,
the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars,
which you have set in place,
⁴ what is mankind that you are mindful of
them,
human beings that you care for them?
⁵ You have made them a little lower than the
angels
and crowned them with glory and honor.
⁶ You made them rulers over the works of
your hands;
you put everything under their feet:
⁷ all flocks and herds,

and the animals of the wild,
⁸ the birds in the sky,
and the fish in the sea,
all that swim the paths of the seas.
⁹ Lord, our Lord,
how majestic is your name in all the
earth!

Step Two – Key Verse

Looking back over this week’s reading, pick one verse that stands out to you. Write it down below and explain why you chose it. Commit it to memory as your verse for the week.

Step Three –Questions

1. In Psalm 148 “Praise the Lord” or *Hallelujah*, is not used to praise God directly, but rather as an invitation to join in praising God. This psalm tells us in verse 1 and 7 that God is to be praised by those in the heavens and on earth. Make a list of who is called to praise God. The parallel verses 5-6 and 13-14 give specific reasons for the praise. What are they? The author surely had the creation narrative in mind when writing—beginning with “the heavens” continuing on until “the children.” Read Genesis 1:1-27 with fresh awe of our Creator, imagining each creation giving Him praise. Consider why created beings might praise their Creator. From the passage, what about our Creator strikes you as praiseworthy? Pray it out to Him today.

2. The conclusion of Psalm 148 is deeply personal for God’s people. They are called to praise God because He has raised “a horn” for them. This imagery is of a bull lifting his horns after winning a battle (Psalm 92:10) and is a common biblical symbol of victory, especially for those oppressed. What victory had God achieved for His people, Israel? (List anything you can think of from Old Testament events.) Israel’s horn of victory also points us to a future triumph. Read Luke 1:62-75. Upon hearing about Jesus’ imminent birth, Zechariah praises God for coming

to redeem His people, calling Jesus the “horn of salvation.” In what ways has Jesus brought victory to His people? To you, personally? How might this victory motivate you to share Jesus with others who are in need?

3. Psalm 8 begins and ends the same, praising God’s majesty. Reflect on the definition of “majesty” from a dictionary or thesaurus. Using anthropomorphism (giving human characteristics to the divine), the psalmist depicts God creating the vast heavens with his *fingers*. (Fun fact: there are 10,000 stars for every grain of sand on earth!) Picture a time when you made something by hand. What care and detail were used and how did you feel at its completion? Read verses 3-8 imagining God’s hands and fingers at work, carefully placing each masterpiece. Ponder the thoughts or feelings this evokes. How might this view of God bring a change of perspective to a current problem or fear you’re facing? Cast your cares before Him in prayer and declare that He is at work in this issue!

4. Read the first two verses of Psalm 8 and note the contrast: God’s glory seen *above the heavens* and heard in the *praise of infants*. Contrast God’s actions in this psalm, to man’s actions (look for verbs). These contrasts reveal the psalmist’s startling point. To help you, read 1 Corinthians 1:26-31, where this same idea is made clear. Who does God like to use for His purposes on earth? Jesus makes this point by quoting Psalm 8 in Matthew 21:12-17. Here, children are crying out as Jesus passes by, “Hosanna to the Son of David!” and the important religious teachers are indignant, as their words claim Jesus is the Messiah. Jesus replies by quoting Psalm 8:2. (It’s amazing that Jesus memorized the same Psalms we read today!) The praise of children will silence God’s enemies. How are the powerful silenced in this passage by the praise of the weak? Where have you seen God using the weak or unimportant for His glory? Does this truth humble or encourage you?

5. Both Psalm 148 and 8 depict God being glorified by His creation. From the far reaches of the universe, to the smallest nursing babe, God inspires praise. Who could be more worthy of our praise? Praise is not merely a quiet thought, but must be spoken, or in the case of the Psalms, sung. It is to be heard, yes by God, but also by humanity. How could sharing with others about who God is and what He has done *increase* the praise He receives? Think about a time you have heard someone passionately speaking/singing about God. How did it impact you? How have you seen praise or worship music make a difference in your environment (at church, your car, at home)? In your own body? Consider A.W. Tozer's quote, "Put God in his rightful place, and a thousand problems are solved all at once." Do you agree? Why or why not?

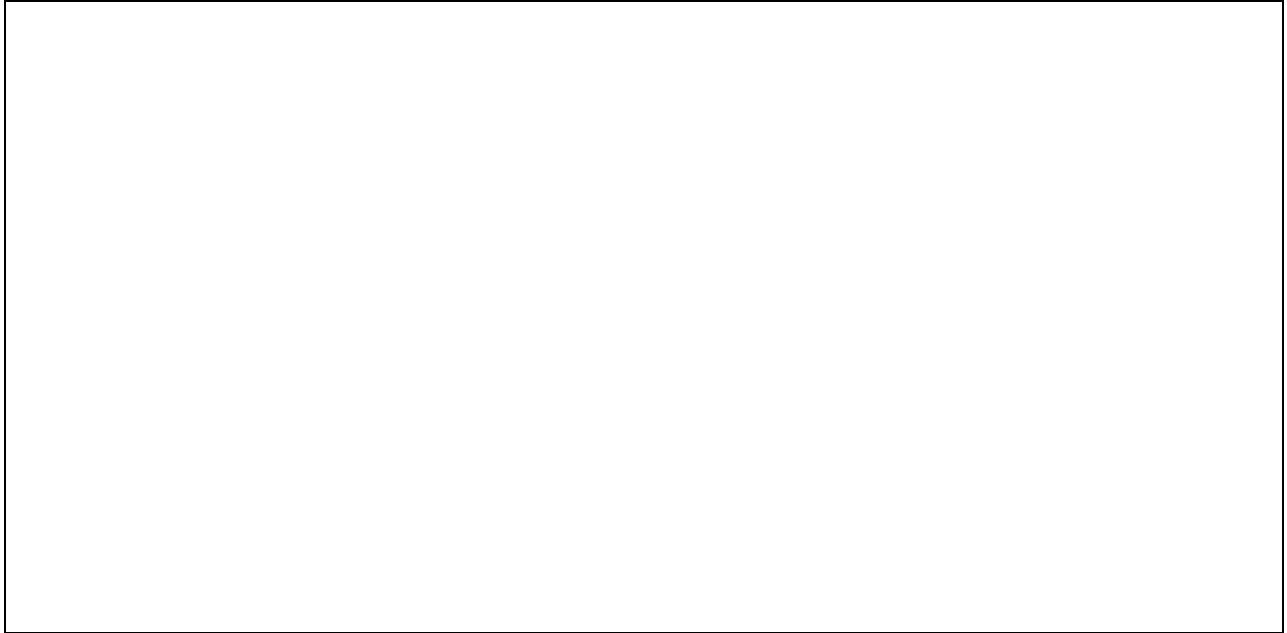
Step Four – Application & Prayer

Consider what you've learned from reading and journaling this week and apply it to your own life. Take some time with the Lord – pray, seek Him, and listen. How might this week's reading impact your thinking and actions?

Considering this week's genre as your template, write your own psalm or rewrite an existing one surrounding this theme.

Step Five – Digging Deeper in Psalms

Use the space below to enrich your experience. Perhaps take a deeper dive and further explore other psalms centered around this week's Praise theme (e.g. Psalms 8, 19, 66, 100, 103, 145-150). Or pursue any other endeavor, creative or academic. Find a song, poem, or drawing, or create one of your own. Or share your findings from outside study. This exercise is purposefully open-ended so have some fun!



NOTES

Psalms of Wisdom
Lesson 2

If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. ~ James 1:5

Wisdom Psalms are a distinct category of poetic literature within the Book of Psalms that focuses on themes of morality, meaning, and principles to live by. These psalms often emphasize the importance of living a righteous life, the pursuit of godly knowledge as a plumb line and the consequences of folly. They are characterized by their didactic nature (that is, written with the purpose of instruction), often contrasting the righteous and the wicked, as we will see in the two psalms featured in this week's lesson.

Written by the worship leader Asaph, Psalm 73 takes us on a journey of seeing the events of the world from two different vantage points – that of the world's and one where God's presence is at the center. It asks and ultimately answers the age-old question seen throughout Scripture – why does life so often seem unfair? Is God really in control and/or does He even care? Psalm 112 is shorter and more straight-forward, extoling the blessings and virtues of the righteous and the eventual punishment of the wicked. While both psalms ultimately affirm the value of living in a way that pleases God, their tones and perspectives are different. In this week's study we will look at these two approaches and discover important truths about growing in wisdom.

Step One – Observation

First read through the entire passages aloud. Then read again using a pen and highlighter and engage with the text. Underline repeated words and phrases. Look for patterns, parallelism, and bookend thoughts expressed. Circle imagery, metaphors, and similes, identifying the emotions and comparisons. Journal your observations with insights and questions in the space on the right.

Psalm 73

A psalm of Asaph.

- ¹ Surely God is good to Israel,
to those who are pure in heart.
- ² But as for me, my feet had almost slipped;
I had nearly lost my foothold.
- ³ For I envied the arrogant
when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.
- ⁴ They have no struggles;
their bodies are healthy and strong.
- ⁵ They are free from common human
burdens;
they are not plagued by human ills.
- ⁶ Therefore pride is their necklace;
they clothe themselves with violence.
- ⁷ From their callous hearts comes iniquity;
their evil imaginations have no limits.

⁸ They scoff, and speak with malice;
with arrogance they threaten oppression.
⁹ Their mouths lay claim to heaven,
and their tongues take possession of the
earth.
¹⁰ Therefore their people turn to them
and drink up waters in abundance.
¹¹ They say, "How would God know?
Does the Most High know anything?"
¹² This is what the wicked are like—
always free of care, they go on amassing
wealth.
¹³ Surely in vain I have kept my heart pure
and have washed my hands in innocence.
¹⁴ All day long I have been afflicted,
and every morning brings new
punishments.
¹⁵ If I had spoken out like that,
I would have betrayed your children.
¹⁶ When I tried to understand all this,
it troubled me deeply
¹⁷ till I entered the sanctuary of God;
then I understood their final destiny.
¹⁸ Surely you place them on slippery ground;
you cast them down to ruin.
¹⁹ How suddenly are they destroyed,
completely swept away by terrors!
²⁰ They are like a dream when one awakes;
when you arise, Lord,
you will despise them as fantasies.
²¹ When my heart was grieved
and my spirit embittered,
²² I was senseless and ignorant;
I was a brute beast before you.
²³ Yet I am always with you;
you hold me by my right hand.
²⁴ You guide me with your counsel,
and afterward you will take me into glory.
²⁵ Whom have I in heaven but you?
And earth has nothing I desire besides
you.
²⁶ My flesh and my heart may fail,
but God is the strength of my heart
and my portion forever.
²⁷ Those who are far from you will perish;
you destroy all who are unfaithful to you.

²⁸ But as for me, it is good to be near God.
I have made the Sovereign Lord my
refuge;
I will tell of all your deeds.

Psalm 112

¹ Praise the Lord.

Blessed are those who fear the Lord,
who find great delight in his commands.

² Their children will be mighty in the land;
the generation of the upright will be
blessed.

³ Wealth and riches are in their houses,
and their righteousness endures forever.

⁴ Even in darkness light dawns for the
upright,

for those who are gracious and
compassionate and righteous.

⁵ Good will come to those who are generous
and lend freely,

who conduct their affairs with justice.

⁶ Surely the righteous will never be shaken;
they will be remembered forever.

⁷ They will have no fear of bad news;
their hearts are steadfast, trusting in
the Lord.

⁸ Their hearts are secure, they will have no
fear;

in the end they will look in triumph on
their foes.

⁹ They have freely scattered their gifts to the
poor,

their righteousness endures forever;
their horn will be lifted high in honor.

¹⁰ The wicked will see and be vexed,
they will gnash their teeth and waste
away;

the longings of the wicked will come to
nothing.

Step Two – Key Verse

Looking back over this week's reading, pick one verse that stands out to you. Write it down below and explain why you chose it. Commit it to memory as your verse for the week.

Step Three –Questions

1. Asaph begins Psalm 73 with a declaration of the goodness of God to His people. He *knows* this is true, yet he goes on to write about something that troubles him greatly. Why, he asks, do the wicked seem to have no troubles? This question feels as relevant today as ever. Write down some observations from verses 3-12 that stand out to you. Looking at the lives of the “rich and famous” why do you think it is tempting to see them from this perspective? Do you struggle with envy over people whose lives seem easier than yours? Why or why not. Now read James 3:13-18. What are the dangers of envy and what is the antidote found here?
2. Asaph inserts a curious phrase in verse 15. Write out what he says and considering the previous verses (3-14) reflect on what you think he means by this. Our culture is confessional to a fault – if we’re not declaring all feelings no matter the situation or circumstance, we are accused of being inauthentic. Asaph however has another perspective. He knew his influence as a leader and didn’t want to lead those of weaker faith astray, so he takes his doubts to the Lord. On the overshare/under share continuum, where do you tend to land and how has this affected your relationships? How are some ways you can grow in turning first to God with your doubts and questions?
3. The tone shifts considerably in verse 17 as Asaph enters the sanctuary of God. This may be a literal or a figurative “entering,” but what is obvious is he is now seeing the world through God-tinted lenses, and his perspective is transformed. Notice the shift in pronouns as you move through this psalm (they/I/you). How did redirecting his focus impact the psalmist’s outlook? Asaph’s purposeful and humble posture before God changed everything. Share a time when you have intentionally redirected your focus towards the Lord and gained a new perspective. How can you posture yourself in humility and stay in this “sanctuary space” before the Lord?

4. Psalm 112 has a very different orientation. Rather than focusing on those who dishonor God, it speaks of the blessing of righteous living. How would you juxtapose the false prosperity of the wicked in Psalm 73 with God's true blessings found in 112? Write down a couple of the declarative statements the psalmist lays out and elaborate on them. How have they proven true in your own life?

5. Many verses and themes in Psalm 112 point to the long lasting, multi-generational and even eternal value of living a life that is pleasing to God. Jesus speaks of this, as well, in Matt 6:19-21. Look up this passage and jot down the similarities. What are some ways you can align your priorities to reflect this? Is there anything the Lord has been convicting you about in this regard?

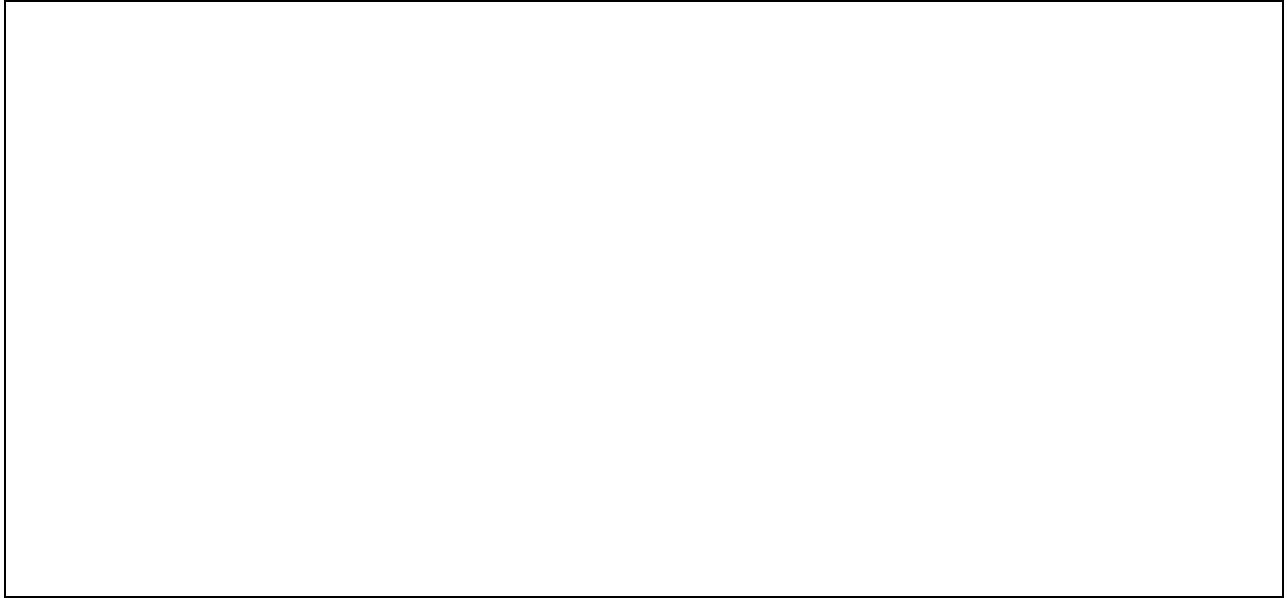
Step Four – Application & Prayer

Consider what you've learned from reading and journaling this week and apply it to your own life. Take some time with the Lord – pray, seek Him, and listen. How might this week's reading impact your thinking and actions?

Considering this week's genre as your template, write your own psalm or rewrite an existing one surrounding this theme.

Step Five – Digging Deeper in Psalms

Use the space below to enrich your experience. Perhaps take a deeper dive and further explore other psalms centered around this week's Wisdom theme (e.g. Psalms 33, 37, 49, 127, 128, 133). Or pursue any other endeavor, creative or academic. Find a song, poem, or drawing, or create one of your own. Or share your findings from outside study. This exercise is purposefully open-ended so have some fun!



NOTES

Psalms of Lament *Lesson 3*

The Psalter filled the life of early Christianity. But more important than all of this is that Jesus died on the cross with words from the Psalms on his lips. ~ Dietrich Bonhoeffer

More than half of the Psalms are laments. A lament invites us to bring grief, sorrow, and complaint to God and will intentionally incorporate praise, trust, and assurance of God's deliverance. This clues us into the prayer practices of ancient Israelites—they model the importance of a *balanced* prayer life. King David authors many of the laments and you will notice his honesty and detailed descriptions of pain and suffering. And laments *should* be honest and even uncensored – God can handle it! – but the authors will also purposely structure their lament to declare God's love, power, sovereignty, and faithfulness.

While 40 or so of the lament psalms are considered individual laments to offer a personal prayer to God, 16 of them are communal laments, allowing a community to mourn and grieve together in response to a military conflict or community tragedy. Songs of communal lament have a long history in ancient Near Eastern cultures. They often reused older songs in new contexts with themes of guilt/divine abandonment, physical suffering, emotional pain and shame, and loss of friendship.

This week we will experience how the psalmist moves through deep anguish, making deliberate choices that ultimately point back to God's holiness. We will discover how laments can guide us through the disappointments and heartaches of life and teach us to pray with hope and expectation for the everlasting kingdom that Jesus will bring.

Step One – Observation

First read through the entire passages aloud. Then read again using a pen and highlighter and engage with the text. Underline repeated words and phrases. Look for patterns, parallelism, and bookend thoughts expressed. Circle imagery, metaphors, and similes, identifying the emotions and comparisons. Journal your observations with insights and questions in the space on the right.

Psalm 22

For the director of music. To the tune of "The Doe of the Morning." A psalm of David.

¹ My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Why are you so far from saving me,
so far from my cries of anguish?

² My God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer,

by night, but I find no rest.

³ Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One;
you are the one Israel praises.

⁴ In you our ancestors put their trust;

they trusted and you delivered them.
⁵ To you they cried out and were saved;
in you they trusted and were not put to
shame.
⁶ But I am a worm and not a man,
scorned by everyone, despised by the
people.
⁷ All who see me mock me;
they hurl insults, shaking their heads.
⁸ “He trusts in the LORD,” they say,
“let the LORD rescue him.
Let him deliver him,
since he delights in him.”
⁹ Yet you brought me out of the womb;
you made me trust in you, even at my
mother’s breast.
¹⁰ From birth I was cast on you;
from my mother’s womb you have been
my God.
¹¹ Do not be far from me,
for trouble is near
and there is no one to help.
¹² Many bulls surround me;
strong bulls of Bashan encircle me.
¹³ Roaring lions that tear their prey
open their mouths wide against me.
¹⁴ I am poured out like water,
and all my bones are out of joint.
My heart has turned to wax;
it has melted within me.
¹⁵ My mouth is dried up like a potsherd,
and my tongue sticks to the roof of my
mouth;
you lay me in the dust of death.
¹⁶ Dogs surround me,
a pack of villains encircles me;
they pierce^[e] my hands and my feet.
¹⁷ All my bones are on display;
people stare and gloat over me.
¹⁸ They divide my clothes among them
and cast lots for my garment.
¹⁹ But you, LORD, do not be far from me.
You are my strength; come quickly to
help me.
²⁰ Deliver me from the sword,
my precious life from the power of the

dogs.

²¹ Rescue me from the mouth of the lions;
save me from the horns of the wild oxen

²² I will declare your name to my people;
in the assembly I will praise you.

²³ You who fear the LORD, praise him!
All you descendants of Jacob, honor him!
Revere him, all you descendants of Israel!

²⁴ For he has not despised or scorned
the suffering of the afflicted one;
he has not hidden his face from him
but has listened to his cry for help.

²⁵ From you comes the theme of my praise in
the great assembly;
before those who fear you I will fulfill my
vows.

²⁶ The poor will eat and be satisfied;
those who seek the LORD will praise
him—

may your hearts live forever!

²⁷ All the ends of the earth
will remember and turn to the LORD,
and all the families of the nations
will bow down before him,

²⁸ for dominion belongs to the LORD
and he rules over the nations.

²⁹ All the rich of the earth will feast and
worship;

all who go down to the dust will kneel
before him—

those who cannot keep themselves alive.

³⁰ Posterity will serve him;
future generations will be told about the
Lord.

³¹ They will proclaim his righteousness,
declaring to a people yet unborn:
He has done it!

Psalm 3

**A psalm of David. When he fled from his
son Absalom.**

¹ Lord, how many are my foes!

How many rise up against me!

² Many are saying of me,

“God will not deliver him.”

and he answers me from his holy

mountain.

⁵ I lie down and sleep;

I wake again, because the Lord sustains me.

⁶ I will not fear though tens of thousands assail me on every side.

⁷ Arise, Lord!

Deliver me, my God!
Strike all my enemies on the jaw;
break the teeth of the wicked.

⁸ From the Lord comes deliverance.

May your blessing be on your people.

Step Two – Key Verse

Looking back over this week's reading, pick one verse that stands out to you. Write it down below and explain why you chose it. Commit it to memory as your verse for the week.

Step Three – Questions

1. Look up Psalm 13, a short psalm that features six common elements of a lament: an *address* (verse 1), a *complaint with a description of suffering* (verses 1-2), a *cry for help or deliverance* (verse 3), an *assurance that God will deliver* (verse 4), an *affirmation of trust* (verse 5), and a *vow to praise* (verse 6). Now read Psalm 3 again and practice identifying the elements of a lament. Write what you discover in the space below. As you pray this week with a concern of any kind, try including the elements of a lament. It's okay if your cry for help seems small in comparison to the detailed suffering of the lament psalms – God wants to hear your process regarding *all* of life's challenges.
2. Psalm 22 is a lament psalm so unique it is also referred to as the passion psalm, the crucifixion psalm, and the shepherd psalm. This is because Jesus used this psalm to articulate his anguish on the cross. David originally wrote the psalm, depicting a highly detailed journey of pain and deliverance that helped him and countless Israelites, including Jesus, to lament. We may see the descriptions of suffering and pain as dramatic but consider the alternative approach, one

the early Israelites in Exodus took when it came to difficulty. Rather than lament, they complained and numbed their pain. After suffering in bondage under harsh Egyptian masters, Moses led them out of slavery, which included God forging a path through the Red Sea as part of their escape. They remembered this victory for a short while before complaining about their conditions as they wandered in the wilderness. Read the Israelite's complaint in Exodus 16:1-3 and compare with David's lament in Psalm 22. What is the difference between complaint and lament? Is there a circumstance in your life that can move from complaint to lament?

3. Psalm 22 is applicable for anyone experiencing suffering, especially a suffering that includes the seeming abandonment of God. Thus, the gospel authors used Psalm 22 multiple times to allude to the agony of Christ's crucifixion. We will look at one of these allusions to the cross: "They hurl insults, shaking their heads. 'He trusts in the Lord,' they say, 'let the Lord rescue him.'" (Psalm 22:7-8)." Notice how David must have been scorned in some way as he wrote those words. Now read the gospel accounts of the mockery and rejection of Jesus (Matthew 27:28-30, 38-43 and Mark 15:29-31), paying attention to how Matthew and Mark use similar language to David. Write down your observations about David and Jesus feeling scorned, humiliated, and insulted. Although their circumstances differ, note how suffering can include feeling abandoned by God. If you have ever felt abandoned by God, what does it mean for you that Jesus also felt this way?

Step Four – Application & Prayer

Consider what you've learned from reading and journaling this week and apply it to your own life. Take some time with the Lord – pray, seek Him, and listen. How might this week's reading impact your thinking and actions?

Considering this week's genre as your template, write your own psalm or rewrite an existing one surrounding this theme.

Step Five – Digging Deeper in Psalms

Use the space below to enrich your experience. Perhaps take a deeper dive and further explore other psalms centered around this week's Lament theme (e.g. individual laments in Psalms 31, 39, 42, 57, 71, 88; communal laments in Psalms 12, 44, 80, 94, 137). Or pursue any other endeavor, creative or academic. Find a song, poem, or drawing, or create one of your own. Or share your findings from outside study. This exercise is purposefully open-ended so have some fun!

NOTES

Psalms of Trust
Lesson 4

Relying on God has to begin all over again everyday as if nothing had yet been done.
~ C.S. Lewis

Throughout the entirety of Scripture, the paramount theme of trusting the Lord is reflected in every book from Genesis to Revelation. In the Psalms, one genre concentrates specifically on this topic. The Trust Psalms, also known as the Psalms of Confidence, are a collection of poems and praise hymns that express unwavering trust in God – in His faithfulness and steadfast love. Most of these psalms were written during times of distress and hardship when the author was experiencing uncertainties about the future, often in times of persecution and fear. Despite acknowledging the challenges and trials faced by individuals, these Psalms ultimately highlight the importance of trusting in God's sovereignty.

Because of their multifaceted nature, Trust Psalms often overlap into other genres like Praise, Thanksgiving, Wisdom, and Lament. However, they uniquely express profound confidence in God, focusing on themes of refuge, deliverance, and unshakable faith in His goodness. David wrote most of these, including the famous and beloved Psalm 23, which in its portrayal of God as a protective shepherd has offered comfort to generations for the last 3000 years. Similarly, the two psalms in this lesson, Psalm 27 (also written by David) and Psalm 91 (of an unknown author), echo similar themes of God's presence and protection.

This week we will view how the psalmist find hope by continually returning to foundational truths, making declarations about God's nature and character. We will explore how to surrender self, have perseverance in the wait, and seek the one true source of refuge as we learn to fully trust and rely on Him.

Step One – Observation

First read through the entire passages aloud. Then read again using a pen and highlighter and engage with the text. Underline repeated words and phrases. Look for patterns, parallelism, and bookend thoughts expressed. Circle imagery, metaphors, and similes, identifying the emotions and comparisons. Journal your observations with insights and questions in the space on the right.

Psalm 27
Of David.

¹ The LORD is my light and my salvation—
whom shall I fear?

The LORD is the stronghold of my life—
of whom shall I be afraid?

² When the wicked advance against me
to devour me,
it is my enemies and my foes
who will stumble and fall.

³ Though an army besiege me,
my heart will not fear;

though war break out against me,
even then I will be confident.
⁴ One thing I ask from the LORD,
this only do I seek:
that I may dwell in the house of the LORD
all the days of my life,
to gaze on the beauty of the LORD
and to seek him in his temple.
⁵ For in the day of trouble
he will keep me safe in his dwelling;
he will hide me in the shelter of his sacred
tent
and set me high upon a rock.
⁶ Then my head will be exalted
above the enemies who surround me;
at his sacred tent I will sacrifice with shouts
of joy;
I will sing and make music to the LORD.
⁷ Hear my voice when I call, LORD;
be merciful to me and answer me.
⁸ My heart says of you, "Seek his face!"
Your face, LORD, I will seek.
⁹ Do not hide your face from me,
do not turn your servant away in anger;
you have been my helper.
Do not reject me or forsake me,
God my Savior.
¹⁰ Though my father and mother forsake me,
the LORD will receive me.
¹¹ Teach me your way, LORD;
lead me in a straight path
because of my oppressors.
¹² Do not turn me over to the desire of my
foes,
for false witnesses rise up against me,
spouting malicious accusations.
¹³ I remain confident of this:
I will see the goodness of the LORD
in the land of the living.
¹⁴ Wait for the LORD;
be strong and take heart
and wait for the LORD.

Psalm 91

¹ Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most
High

will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.
² I will say of the Lord, "He is my
refuge and my fortress,
my God, in whom I trust."
³ Surely he will save you
from the fowler's snare
and from the deadly pestilence.
⁴ He will cover you with his feathers,
and under his wings you will find refuge;
his faithfulness will be your shield and
rampart.
⁵ You will not fear the terror of night,
nor the arrow that flies by day,
⁶ nor the pestilence that stalks in the
darkness,
nor the plague that destroys at midday.
⁷ A thousand may fall at your side,
ten thousand at your right hand,
but it will not come near you.
⁸ You will only observe with your eyes
and see the punishment of the wicked.
⁹ If you say, "The Lord is my refuge,"
and you make the Most High your
dwelling,
¹⁰ no harm will overtake you,
no disaster will come near your tent.
¹¹ For he will command his
angels concerning you
to guard you in all your ways;
¹² they will lift you up in their hands,
so that you will not strike your foot
against a stone.
¹³ You will tread on the lion and the cobra;
you will trample the great lion and the
serpent.
¹⁴ "Because he loves me," says the Lord, "I
will rescue him;
I will protect him, for he acknowledges
my name.
¹⁵ He will call on me, and I will answer him;
I will be with him in trouble,
I will deliver him and honor him.
¹⁶ With long life I will satisfy him
and show him my salvation."

3. Revisit verses 4 & 8 in Psalm 27. Look how David repeats the word “seek” four times, making an emphatic statement that the one thing he most desires was to be in the Lord’s presence (*face* in Hebrew also means presence). This idea of seeking God, to intimately know Him and experience Him, is not a passive one – it implies action and perseverance. Read 1 Chron. 16:11 & Matt. 7:7. Reflect on the difference between actively pursuing God’s presence and simply desiring it. Are you currently in a state of active pursuit or passive longing? Consider Jesus’ teaching in Matthew 6:33, echoing the theme of seeking God and putting His Kingdom first. What is the primary focus of your pursuit right now? How can you intentionally make room in your life this week to actively seek the Lord?

4. Using vivid imagery and metaphorical language, Psalm 91 describes an onslaught of various dangers and serious threats to believers – deadly plagues (physical illness), pestilence (often alluding to evil forces), terrors of the night, and strategic attacks from a myriad of enemies. Highlighting these dangers, the psalmist exposes that we are dependent, vulnerable people. Reread how the Lord offers protection against these threats. In moments of vulnerability, how do you first respond – do you seek refuge under God’s protective wings, rely on your own strength, or something else? Reflect on a time when you experienced God’s protection in your life and share what you learned about His character and faithfulness.

5. For centuries, Psalm 91 has offered peace and hope, promising that no harm will overtake those who make the Lord their refuge. Yet, these promises do not guarantee a life without suffering. In fact, Jesus in John 16:33 assures us that we *will* have troubles – but *He* is our peace. It’s

evident the psalmist makes these statements from a personal, intimate relationship with the Lord, revealing he knows from a foundation of experience and faith that the Lord is good, perfect, and trustworthy. How about you – when circumstances are difficult, what helps you remember God’s goodness and trustworthiness, and believe that He desires what’s best for you? Or is even believing He is good and trustworthy a struggle? Next, turn your attention to verses 14-15, noticing how the narrator changes from the psalmist speaking to *God* speaking. Look closely at each of the many “I will” statements God makes, and then read His promises in Matthew 28:20 & 2 Tim 4:18. How do these words encourage your heart today, living in the present, while awaiting eternity?

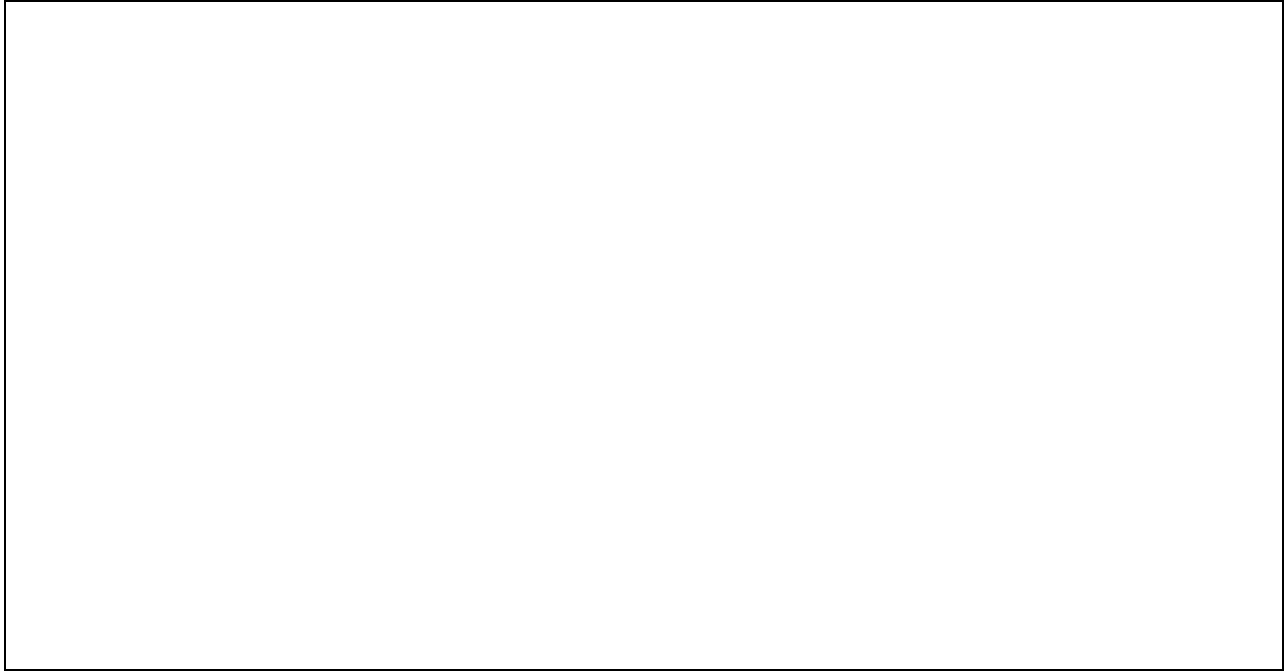
Step Four – Application & Prayer

Consider what you’ve learned from reading and journaling this week and apply it to your own life. Take some time with the Lord – pray, seek Him, and listen. How might this week’s reading impact your thinking and actions?

Considering this week’s genre as your template, write your own psalm or rewrite an existing one surrounding this theme.

Step Five – Digging Deeper in Psalms

Use the space below to enrich your experience. Perhaps take a deeper dive and further explore other psalms centered around this week's Trust theme (e.g. Psalms 11, 16, 23, 62, 63, 121, 125, 131). Or pursue any other endeavor, creative or academic. Find a song, poem, or drawing, or create one of your own. Or share your findings from outside study. This exercise is purposefully open-ended so have some fun!



NOTES



Women's Bible Study
**Our Refuge & Strength:
Walking Through the Psalms**

Psalms of Salvation History
Lesson 5

[The Psalter] might well be called a little Bible. In it is comprehended most beautifully and briefly everything that is in the entire Bible.... Anyone who could not read the whole Bible would here have almost an entire summary of it, comprised in one little book... The Psalter ought to be a precious and beloved book. ~ Martin Luther

As “a little Bible,” the Book of Psalms offers a beautiful retelling of God’s work through the ages. Many psalms remind us of God’s plan and action beginning with Creation, but five psalms in particular give total focus to His redemptive relationship with humanity through the nation of Israel. These History Psalms call the listener to celebration, thanksgiving and caution. They remember God’s faithfulness through generations yet warn of repeating past sins.

Because the written word was hard to come by through most of history, songs were a memorable way to orally transfer stories: recalling the plagues, the Exodus, the wilderness, the pillars of cloud and fire, the Promised Land, past battles, and the chosen king. Not surprisingly, these five History Psalms are read aloud during Passover, and many are quoted in the daily prayers of practicing Jews. This week we will look at a Salvation History Psalm in Psalm 105 and be reminded ourselves of the power in remembering the past.

Step One – Observation

First read through the entire passages aloud. Then read again using a pen and highlighter and engage with the text. Underline repeated words and phrases. Look for patterns, parallelism, and bookend thoughts expressed. Circle imagery, metaphors, and similes, identifying the emotions and comparisons. Journal your observations with insights and questions in the space on the right.

Psalm 105

¹ Give praise to the Lord, proclaim his name;
make known among the nations what he
has done.

² Sing to him, sing praise to him;
tell of all his wonderful acts.

³ Glory in his holy name;
let the hearts of those who seek
the Lord rejoice.

⁴ Look to the Lord and his strength;
seek his face always.

⁵ Remember the wonders he has done,
his miracles, and the judgments he
pronounced,

⁶ you his servants, the descendants of
Abraham,
his chosen ones, the children of Jacob.

⁷ He is the Lord our God;
his judgments are in all the earth.

⁸ He remembers his covenant forever,
the promise he made, for a thousand
generations,
⁹ the covenant he made with Abraham,
the oath he swore to Isaac.
¹⁰ He confirmed it to Jacob as a decree,
to Israel as an everlasting covenant:
¹¹ “To you I will give the land of Canaan
as the portion you will inherit.”
¹² When they were but few in number,
few indeed, and strangers in it,
¹³ they wandered from nation to nation,
from one kingdom to another.
¹⁴ He allowed no one to oppress them;
for their sake he rebuked kings:
¹⁵ “Do not touch my anointed ones;
do my prophets no harm.”
¹⁶ He called down famine on the land
and destroyed all their supplies of food;
¹⁷ and he sent a man before them—
Joseph, sold as a slave.
¹⁸ They bruised his feet with shackles,
his neck was put in irons,
¹⁹ till what he foretold came to pass,
till the word of the Lord proved him true.
²⁰ The king sent and released him,
the ruler of peoples set him free.
²¹ He made him master of his household,
ruler over all he possessed,
²² to instruct his princes as he pleased
and teach his elders wisdom.
²³ Then Israel entered Egypt;
Jacob resided as a foreigner in the land of
Ham.
²⁴ The Lord made his people very fruitful;
he made them too numerous for their foes,
²⁵ whose hearts he turned to hate his people,
to conspire against his servants.
²⁶ He sent Moses his servant,
and Aaron, whom he had chosen.
²⁷ They performed his signs among them,
his wonders in the land of Ham.
²⁸ He sent darkness and made the land
dark—
for had they not rebelled against his
words?

²⁹ He turned their waters into blood,
causing their fish to die.
³⁰ Their land teemed with frogs,
which went up into the bedrooms of their
rulers.
³¹ He spoke, and there came swarms of flies,
and gnats throughout their country.
³² He turned their rain into hail,
with lightning throughout their land;
³³ he struck down their vines and fig trees
and shattered the trees of their country.
³⁴ He spoke, and the locusts came,
grasshoppers without number;
³⁵ they ate up every green thing in their land,
ate up the produce of their soil.
³⁶ Then he struck down all the firstborn in
their land,
the firstfruits of all their manhood.
³⁷ He brought out Israel, laden with silver
and gold,
and from among their tribes no one
faltered.
³⁸ Egypt was glad when they left,
because dread of Israel had fallen on
them.
³⁹ He spread out a cloud as a covering,
and a fire to give light at night.
⁴⁰ They asked, and he brought them quail;
he fed them well with the bread of
heaven.
⁴¹ He opened the rock, and water gushed out;
it flowed like a river in the desert.
⁴² For he remembered his holy promise
given to his servant Abraham.
⁴³ He brought out his people with rejoicing,
his chosen ones with shouts of joy;
⁴⁴ he gave them the lands of the nations,
and they fell heir to what others had
toiled for—
⁴⁵ that they might keep his precepts
and observe his laws.
Praise the Lord.

Step Two – Key Verse

Looking back over this week's reading, pick one verse that stands out to you. Write it down below and explain why you chose it. Commit it to memory as your verse for the week.

Step Three –Questions

1. In the first 7 verses, the psalmist calls the listener to praise, proclaim, and sing about the Lord. The call to praise is not only to say it was good, but to detail the miracles and workings of God. From verse 1-7 make a list of all the things about God we are directed to praise. What about God is worthy of praise? Meditate on verses 3-4, imagining what it means to “glory in his holy name.” How does this stir up your heart? Describe a time you looked to “his strength.”

2. The rest of this psalm reflects on significant moments in Israel’s history. List all the Old Testament stories you can recognize. (If you are unfamiliar with the Old Testament, read Acts 7:2-22, 30-45, where Stephen recounts these stories.) Next, give special attention to the repeated words in Psalm 105:8-11. Underline “covenant” and all its synonyms (promise, etc.). What is the promise God has spoken (v. 11)? Jump to verses 42-45, did He fulfill His promise? We are not Israel waiting for the Promised Land, but we *are* a continuation of the story. Read John 14:1-4 and Rev 22:1-5. What big covenant promise are we as Christians waiting for today? How does this history become our history as we wait to come “home?”

3. Much of this long psalm details how God preserved that promise even when it seemed impossible. From famine, to slavery, to wandering, God’s word was true. Look through each story, how did God protect His promise in that situation? Think on verse 19. Other versions say, “the word of the Lord tested him.” Why is waiting on God to fulfill a promise like “testing?” When have you been tested like this? How can this psalm encourage you in the waiting?

4. Beginning in verse 11, underline every use of “the land” and its synonyms. How does this repetition reveal the main focus of this psalm? The first 15 verses of this Psalm were sung, with much fanfare, when David brought the Ark of the Covenant into the Temple in Jerusalem (1 Chronicles 15 & 16). Imagine the Ark of the Covenant, representing God’s traveling presence with His people, being marched into the Temple, God’s house in the sacred city of the Promised Land. Crowds surrounded the singing, trumpets, fine robes, and ritual sacrifices. This was a great celebration of God’s *fulfilled promise* (vs. 42-44)! Why would this psalm be important at that moment? When have you seen God’s faithfulness even when it seemed impossible? How did you celebrate?

5. In this psalm, the nation of Israel is a *passive recipient* of God’s promise and protection. Other History Psalms go on about the rebellion of Israel or give caution about persisting in unfaithfulness. Here, they are hardly mentioned. When speaking of Moses and Aaron in verse 26-27, how does the psalmist describe them and their miracles? Psalm 105 ends with a simple reason *why* God delivered them to the Promised Land. Look at verse 45. How can Israel honor this great fulfillment and gift of God? God’s part is big, difficult, and miraculous. Our part is a simple response in gratitude. What is your ‘why’ for following Jesus? Does gratefulness motivate you towards obedience? How could remembering His faithfulness over *your* lifetime stir up holy living?

Step Four – Application & Prayer

Consider what you’ve learned from reading and journaling this week and apply it to your own life. Take some time with the Lord – pray, seek Him, and listen. How might this week’s reading impact your thinking and actions?

Considering this week's genre as your template, write your own psalm or rewrite an existing one surrounding this theme.

Step Five – Digging Deeper

Use the space below to enrich your experience. Perhaps take a deeper dive and further explore other psalms centered around this week's Salvation History theme (e.g. Psalms 78, 106, 135, 136). Or pursue any other endeavor, creative or academic. Find a song, poem, or drawing, or create one of your own. Or share your findings from outside study. This exercise is purposefully open-ended so have some fun!

NOTES

HOW TO READ BIBLICAL POETRY

The Psalms are Ancient Hebrew Poems and should be read as such. This differs from how we read Biblical narrative or prose. For modern readers, it can be especially difficult to read poetry from a different time and culture. Here are a few things to keep in mind to make reading the Psalms more meaningful.

The Psalms are

1. meant to be read and re-read, prayed, memorized, imagined, and meditated upon.
2. characterized by parallelism and parallel lines should be read together to form one complete thought.
3. not teaching a system of doctrine, but are poems, intentionally imaginative and emotive.
4. first and foremost about God, not us. Look for God first.

A SUGGESTED PROCESS FOR STUDY

1) Read for understanding. Discover the “big idea” or primary theme.

-determine genre, interpret parallels, look for repetition, basic imagery, names and places

2) Reread and meditate. Reflect on the imagery, imaging the picture it creates. Be slow and thoughtful. Consider the intentional structure.

-look for structure, metaphor, simile, comparisons, contrasts, lists

3) Go back to dig deeper. Find additional insights.

-New Testament references, historical use, author, historical setting, musical instructions

TERMS AND HELPS

Genre –

- Praise, Thanksgiving, Lament, Trust, Wisdom, History, or Covenant/Royal

Parallel Lines –

- Repeating lines (synonymous): the second line makes a similar statement
- Contrasting lines (antithetic): the second line makes an opposite statement
- Developing lines (synthetic): the second line further enhances the first

Imagery –

- Metaphor and simile express ideas in artistic pictures. Reflect with imagination.
- Look for comparisons and contrasts made by the author.

Repetition –

- Repeated words can reveal the “big idea” or focus of the psalm.

Names and Places –

- Names and places take on symbolic meaning in poetry. Consider what these people and places may represent because of their roles, characteristics or what happened there.
- List everyone mentioned in the passage (ex: God, Messiah, Israel, angels, creation, individuals, etc.)

Structure –

- Acrostic: the letters of the Hebrew alphabet mark the beginning of verses or thoughts
- Bookends/Framing (chiasm): the first and last verses are similar, the center verse reveals the primary theme
- Grouping (strophes): look for cohesive content to be divided into paragraph-like breaks

Lists – Make lists of descriptions, attributes, commands, emotions, actions, people, events, etc.

Author –

- David: shepherd, musician, poet, military strategist, Israel's greatest king
- Asaph and family: Levitical (priestly) family, temple singers and musicians
- Sons of Korah: Levitical (priestly) family, leading others in praise and song
- Other: Solomon, Moses, unknown

Historical Setting –

- Pre-exilic: before the exile of the Jews to Babylon
- Exilic: during Babylonian exile
- Postexilic: after the exile of the Jews to Babylon

Superscript – Consult a commentary or Bible Dictionary to learn from the musical instruction in the superscript (the italics that precede the first verse).

New Testament references – Look up cross references for New Testament passages

Historical uses – Consider outside research on how this psalm has been used in traditional Jewish or Christian contexts.

Psalter – the Book of Psalms