

Lesson 21: Psalms

Reading Preparation:

- Psalms

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Lesson Notes:

[1. Introduction to the Psalms](#)

The Old Testament Institute Student Manual states,

"The Hebrew name for Psalms was Tehillim, or songs of praise. The same root forms the word hallelujah, meaning 'praise to Yah' (Jehovah)... Our title comes from the Greek psalterion, which is formed from the root psallo, meaning 'to sing'... Unlike some modern songs that tend to depress the spirit, the psalms have the power to lift one toward God. The psalms are a collection of some of the very finest of the world's inspirational literature." (Old Testament Institute Student Manual Genesis-2 Samuel. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1980, [Second Edition, Revised, 1981], 309).

Adam Clarke states,

"... the major part of the psalms have for their subject the praises of the Lord... the psalms were sung in the Jewish service, and frequently accompanied by musical instruments." (Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible. Abridged by Ralph Earl. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1967, [Nineteenth Printing, March, 1991], 461).

The LDS Bible Dictionary adds,

"No book of the Old Testament is more Christian in its inner sense or more fully attested as such for the use made of it than the Psalms. Out of a total of 283 direction citations from the Old Testament in the New [Testament], 116 have been counted from this one book." (Psalms. LDS Bible Dictionary, in Holy Bible . Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 1979, 754-755).

Hebrew division of Psalms:

The Old Testament Institute Student Manual notes,

"Anciently the Hebrews divided the one hundred and fifty psalms into five separate books that include, in today's Bible, Psalms 1-41; 42-72; 72-89; 90-106, and 107-150. At the end of each division, the break is marked with a doxology, or formal declaration of God's power and glory (see Psalms 41:13; 72:19; 89:52; 106:48). Psalm 150 is itself a doxology, using the Hebrew Hallelujah, 'praise ye the Lord,' at its beginning and end, as well as the word praise, eleven other times. It is a fitting conclusion to the Tehillim, 'songs of praise.'" (Old Testament Institute Student Manual: Genesis-2 Samuel 1. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1980, [Second Edition, Revised, 1981], 311).

[2. Who Wrote the Psalms?](#)

The Old Testament Institute Student Manual states,

"Although modern critics... customarily deny the Davidic authorship of the Psalms, there is ample internal evidence that David, the great poet and musician of Israel, was the principal author of the Psalter... Superscriptions on many of the Psalms themselves attribute them to various ancient authors [with seventy being attributed to David]." (Old Testament

Institute Student Manual: Genesis-2 Samuel 1. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1980, [Second Edition. Revised, 1981], 310).

Adam Clarke states,

“... the collection as it now stands, was made long after David’s death is a general opinion among learned men; and Ezra was the collector and compiler is commonly believed. As to the inscriptions, they are of slender authority; several of them do not agree with the subject of the psalm to which they are prefixed, and not a few of them appear to be out of their places. Supposing that the persons mentioned are the authors of those psalms to which their names are prefixed, there are still fifty-three which, as bearing on no proper name, must be attributed to uncertain authors, though it is very probable that several of them were made by David.” (Adam Clark’s Bible Commentary. Abridged by Ralph Earle. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1967, [Nineteenth printing, March, 1991], 461).

There are in the King James Bible, 150 Psalms, many which were set to music. As noted previously, their purpose was to sing praises to God. While they cover a variety of topics, including prophecy, temples, suffering, and trust in the Lord, each are designed to lift and inspire the reader.

Of the many psalms available, I have selected those which to me are the most important to address. I understand that all may not agree with the selection I have chosen, as we all have our favorites.

3. Psalms About the Messiah

First and foremost on my list of favorites are those that deal with the prophecy of the coming Messiah. These include the following:

PROPHECY	FULFILLMENT
Psalms 107:23-30	Matthew 8:23-27 Jesus calms the winds and the waves.
Psalms 69:8	John 1:11; 7:5 Jesus was not received by His own people.
Psalms 41:9; 55:12-14	John 13:18, 21 Jesus was betrayed by a friend.
Psalms 69:20	Mark 14:32-41 Jesus suffered alone in Gethsemane.
Psalms 22:7-8	Matthew 27:39-43 Jesus was mocked.
Psalms 22:16	Mark 15:25 Jesus was crucified.
Psalms 22:18	Matthew 27:35 The soldiers cast lots for Christ’s clothes.
Psalms 22:1	Matthew 27:46 Jesus asked the Father why He had forsaken Him.
Psalms 69:21	John 19:28-30 Jesus was given vinegar for His thirst.
Psalms 34:20	John 19:33-36 None of Jesus’ bones are broken.
Psalms 31:5	Luke 23:46 Jesus commended His spirit to the Father and died.
Psalms 16:10	Acts 2:31-32; 13:34-35 The Savior’s flesh did not see corruption, raised in the Resurrection”

Reference: Old Testament Gospel Doctrine Teacher’s Manual. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1996, 118).

The Old Testament Gospel Doctrine Teacher’s Manual states,

“Jesus Christ is the only person whose birth, life, death, and resurrection were prophesied before his birth... [Possible reasons why?] (1) These prophecies made it clear that Jesus was the promised Messiah; (2) The prophecies helped people learn of the Savior and gain testimony of him even before he was born, and (3) The prophecies also helped some people to recognize him when he came.” (Old Testament Gospel Doctrine Teacher’s Manual. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1996, 118).

4. Psalms and the Scriptures

One of the most important means the Lord has given us in order to help us to understand Him and to enlighten our minds regarding heavenly truths is the scriptures. Without a knowledge of the word of the Lord as found in the scriptures, we would spiritually lose our way in the world in which we live. We would have no source to whom to look for guidance and direction in our lives. Confronted with the evils and temptations that are so prevalent in the world today, we would soon get caught up with the attitude of “all that really counts is me,” and “do unto others, before they do unto you first.” While there surely are some who are able to live lives of kindness and thoughtfulness to others along with complete honesty, without the scriptures in their lives, even their journey is made more difficult.

There are three psalms that exemplify David's expression of gratitude for the scriptures. The first two are Psalms 19:7-11, with Psalm 8:4-6 inserted after Psalm 19:4 and Psalms 119.

Psalms 19:1-4

**1 The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.
2 Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.
3 There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.
4 Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun.**

In these first four verses, we learn the creation of the universe is evidence of the glory and presence of God. We also learn whenever there is speech or language spoken, their voice is present.

Psalm 8:4-6

**4 What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?
5 For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.
6 Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet:**

In this psalm, we learn the focus of God's creation is man. Their main focus is us and all that we do. All of God's creations are important, but man is given primary importance.

Psalm 19:7

7 The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.

The word of the Lord, the scriptures as revealed through his servants, the prophets, is without error. His words were given in order to guide the soul of man to do that which is good. Those who read the word of the Lord will become wise as to the ways of the Lord and that which will bring them happiness.

Psalms 19:8

8 The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.

As we read the word of the Lord, our heart rejoices within us as the spirit bears witness that we are reading the words of truth. It is the spirit that enlightens our minds, and gives us hope in our lives.

Psalms 19:10

10 More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

To the sincere reader, the scriptures become more precious than their temporal possessions. Why? Because they bring enlightenment and speak peace to our souls. We find comfort from our daily struggles and confirmation that the Lord is looking over us. Whatever challenges we may face, we are not alone.

Psalm 19:11

11 Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.

The scriptures also give a warning as to those areas of life that may bring us momentary pleasure, will soon pass and we will find ourselves in misery. Through our reading of the scriptures, we may learn from both the successes and failures of those that have lived before us. We need not re-invent the wheel, but can benefit from their experiences, if we will be wise.

Psalm 119:1-3

**1 Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD.
2 Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart.
3 They also do no iniquity: they walk in his ways.**

How different are the lives of those who act by choice rather than by commandment. When we choose to follow the way of the Lord, we find a peace that is absent when we are compelled to act. The absence of choice often brings both resentment and rebellion. To choose to walk in the way of the Lord is like walking in the rain with an umbrella. Even though it is still raining, the umbrella makes the journey more pleasant.

Psalm 119:97, 105

**97 O how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day.
105 Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.**

Here the Psalmist highlights the joy that comes from reading the scriptures. The words begin to enlighten the mind and to give direction to the individual's life. This enlightenment and direction does not come from any other source.

Psalm 119:33-35, 40

**33 Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end.
34 Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart.
35 Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight.
40 Behold, I have longed after thy precepts: quicken me in thy righteousness.**

Anyone who has ever been lost for any period of time, knows the gratitude they feel when they are finally rescued. Someone cared enough about them to keep looking even when continuing seemed futile. Those who have noted the change in their life that comes when they choose to follow the direction of the Lord, as opposed to their previous life experiences, knows they never want to go back to their former life again. This change in attitude is followed by an accompanying resolve and determination to stay on the path they have now chosen. When they compare their life before and now, there is no comparison which they prefer.

Psalm 119:49-50

**49 Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.
50 This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me.**

The scriptures bring hope to those whose hope may be faltering. Despair and discouragement are two of the most difficult emotions that we have to face in life. It is "as if" the light that was penetrating the darkness has now gone out. All is dark around us. What joy comes when another lights our way and we can again see the path before us. Despair and discouragement are gone. Hope and comfort reign again.

Psalm 119: 92, 104

**92 Unless thy law had been my delights, I should then have perished in mine affliction.
104 Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way.**

What a challenge life can be when there appears to be no answer for the dilemma you are in. There appears to be no way out of the pain you are presently experiencing. How you now wish you had made other choices that would have prevented you from having to experience your present circumstances. There are times in our lives when we may feel that the law is only an obstacle keeping us from experiencing the happiness we feel we deserve. However, if we chose to circumvent it, we learn that the law was to protect us from the loss of the freedoms we had taken for granted. We have learned through our foolish choice that laws also have benefits. This is true regarding keeping God's commandments.

Psalms 119:174

174 I have longed for thy salvation , O LORD; and thy law is my delight.

It is through our obedience to God's law that we obtain the peace and happiness we seek on this earth and the promise of an eternal reward in the life to come. For many, it is a win-win solution. The scriptures serve as our instruction manual.

5. Psalms and the Holy Temple

We have previously discussed how sacred the Holy Temple or House of the Lord was and is still to the Israelites. Beginning with the Tabernacle of Moses and the Temple that will be built by Solomon, to be later followed by the Temple of Zerubbabel, and Herod's Temple, temples are important to the Israelites. This important concept is also reflected in the Psalms. The Jews of today still anticipate a day when a temple will be built in Jerusalem. For most

religions of the world, the importance of the temple has been lost. The exception is the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. There are now approximately 151 temples scattered throughout the world. Following their dedication, these holy edifices are closed on Sundays and only open to those who are determined to be worthy. Unlike the temple, Latter-Day chapels are opened on Sundays to anyone who wishes to visit.

Let us now note some of the Psalms and the verses that give attention to the temple of the Lord and its importance.

Psalm 5:7

7 But as for me, I will come into thy house in the multitude of thy mercy: and in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple.

The importance of the individual going into the temple is noted in this psalm. The temple is truly a place set apart for the worship of the Lord and is unlike any other place on earth.

Psalm 15:1-3

**1 LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?
2 He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart.
3 He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour.**

Here it is assumed entrance into the temple requires a higher level of personal conduct than what one might generally find in society. Personal righteousness and kindness to others is the minimum standard of conduct.

Psalm 24:3-5

**3 Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place?
4 He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.
5 He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.**

These verses appear to dovetail with the previous verses from Psalm 15. Here we learn that those who would ascend unto the Lord or stand in his holy place (temple?), must have clean hands and a pure heart. Their hands and heart, or their actions and motives, beginning with themselves and extending to others, must be forthright and sincere.

Psalm 27:4

4 One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in his temple.

The place where the spirit of the Lord dwells on earth is in his holy house, his temple. Here He receives those who have made sacred covenants of cleanliness and commitment to serve him. It is in his temple sacred ordinances can occur that can't be done elsewhere. Eternal marriage and work for those who have passed beyond, including proxy baptism, are among those ordinances that can only be done in the Lord's house.

Psalm 65:4

4 Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple.

It is true not all desire to live lives that bring them into contact with the spiritual matters of life. Those who do make this choice seek a closeness with the Lord that brings them into his service. In the Lord's temple, they are able to do work on behalf of their kindred dead. This unselfish service to others in turn brings rewards of peace and satisfaction to the individual. In this regard, both the one in need and the one who provides the service is blessed.

Psalm 84:1, 4, 10-11

**1 How amiable are thy tabernacles, O LORD of hosts!
4 Blessed are they that dwell in thy house; they will be still praising thee. Selah.
10 For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.**

11 For the LORD God is a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.

The spirit that permeates the house of the Lord, in contrast to the spirit of wickedness that prevails in the world, provides a refuge to those who enter therein. Just by going to the temple, one feels a spirit of renewal that enables them to better deal with the challenges they face in their daily lives. It truly does feel that through their attendance, the Lord has provided them with a protective shield that serves to fortify them against evil and the temptations of the world.

Psalms 122:1, 3-4, 9

1 I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD.
3 Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together:
4 Wither the tribes go up, the tribes of the LORD, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the LORD.
9 Because of the house of the LORD our God I will seek thy good.

The Ark of the Covenant had been brought to Jerusalem by King David. Jerusalem is where his son, Solomon, will build the Holy Temple. To Jerusalem is where the faithful will come to worship the Lord. Here they will offer their sacrifices and perform their offerings unto the Lord. Jerusalem and the temple of the Lord are inseparably connected. Here Israel renews her covenants with the Lord.

Psalms 134:1-3

1 Behold, bless ye the LORD, all ye servants of the LORD, which by night stand in the house of the LORD.
2 Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, and bless the LORD.
3 The LORD that made heaven and earth bless thee out of Zion.

Where did ancient Israel go to receive the blessings of the Lord? They went to the temple. Here they came to worship the Lord and to renew their covenants. Here they sought direction and guidance in their lives and a blessing upon their crops and livestock. If they were righteous, they knew the Lord would hear their prayers.

[6. Psalms and the Savior's Love, Mercy, and Forgiveness](#)

The first psalm I ever heard as a youth was the 23rd Psalm. It was a hymn in the LDS hymn book, titled, "The Lord is My Shepherd, (Hymn No. 108). The words, originally penned by David, gave me comfort and assurance that the Lord was looking over me and He would hear my prayers. In spite of the passing of the years, I still find comfort in those familiar words. More than any other, this psalm epitomizes for me, the attributes of the Savior's love, mercy, and forgiveness.

Psalms 23:1-6

1 The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.
2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.
3 He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.
5 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.
6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

How grateful I am for the comfort and strength I have received from these special words through the years.

Psalms 51:1-3, 9-11, 16-17

1 Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.

2 Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.
3 For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.
9 Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.
10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.
11 Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me.
16 For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering.
17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

I have chosen these words of David's psalm that pertain to our focus, however all verses can be read with profit. It is my opinion these words were written by David, later following his interview with Nathan. They are words of pertinence written in full and complete recognition of the gravity of his sin. They provide addition insight into David's feelings of remorse as expressed to the Lord. The value for us is in their conveyance of sorrow one feels who had committed grievous sins before the Lord and is now in the process of seeking forgiveness. The remorse and recognition of transgression is acknowledged. The wish to make amends is present as is the recognition of one's impurity in the presence of He who is completely pure. There is finally the acknowledgement that all one has to personally provide is "a broken heart and a contrite spirit," on their behalf with the resolve that he will never repeat the sin again. Given our humble contribution, we believe the Lord will accept our desire for forgiveness, and provide the difference required for our complete exoneration. Through his tender mercy, this is his promise to the repentant sinner whether his sin be small or great.

Psalms 59:16

16 But I will sing of thy power; yea, I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning: for thou hast been my defence and refuge in the day of my trouble.

Anyone who has experienced trouble and difficulties in their lives, knows the comfort that can come when the individual knows that they can turn to a higher power than their own for guidance and direction. Abraham Lincoln is quoted as having said, "I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go. My own wisdom seemed insufficient for the day." The comfort is knowing there is someone else to turn to who will provide guidance beyond our own understanding.

Psalms 78:35-38

35 And they remembered that God was their rock, and the high God their redeemer.
36 Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues.
37 For their heart was not right with him, neither were they steadfast in his covenant.
38 But he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not: yea, many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath.

While this entire psalm may be read with profit, for our purposes, I have noted those particular verses that express both the failure of the Israelites to keep their covenants, and the love, mercy, and forgiveness the Lord exercised on their behalf. "He, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not," providing them with yet another opportunity to become his chosen people. As with Israel, it can also be with us, as in our weaknesses, if we will seek repentance for our sins and, once again, turn to our Lord.

Psalms 86:5, 13

5 For thou, LORD, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.
13 For great is thy mercy toward me: and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell.

As it was with David, it may also be with each of us. The Lord stands ready to forgive us, even if our sins are great. He is willing to be merciful unto us if we will call upon him and he will deliver our repentant soul from hell.

Psalms 100:3-5

3 Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

4 Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.

5 For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.

Surely one of the reasons why our God is merciful unto us is because we are his spirit children. He is our creator. We are his children. We did not evolve. We were created. His only begotten son in the flesh, the Lord Jesus Christ is our Brother and Redeemer. He came to this earth for the express purpose to die for our sins and transgressions. He suffered so that upon our repentance, we may be forgiven and return to live with Him and our Father again. He is good. His mercy is everlasting. This truth is for all generations.

Psalms 103:2-4; 8-11; 17-18

2 Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits:

3 Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;

4 Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies;

8 The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.

9 He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever.

10 He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.

11 For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear [respect] him.

17 But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear [respect] him, and his righteousness unto children's children;

18 To such as keep his covenants, and to those that remember his commandments to do them.

There is no promise to those who choose not to keep his covenants or to repent from their sins. . In order to obtain the Lord's mercy and forgiveness, each of us must do our part to know him and keep our covenants with him. As we strive in every way to become like Him, He will continue to bless and strengthen us as we strive to overcome our weaknesses. After we have done all that we can do, He will make up the difference. His love, mercy, and forgiveness is sufficient to make up for any of our deficiencies.

7. Psalms and Trust in the Lord

One of the basic foundational building blocks in human personality development is the establishment of basic trust. Erik H. Erickson, one of the leading figures in the field of psychoanalysis and human development, developed what he termed as "Eight Ages of Man." His first stage is entitled, "Basic Trust vs. Basic Mistrust."

Erick H. Erickson states,

"The general state of trust... implies not only that one has learned to rely on the sameness and continuity of other providers, [mother/other], but also that one may trust oneself and the capacity of one's organs to cope with urges and that one is able to consider oneself trustworthy enough so that the providers will not need to be on guard lest they be nipped." (Childhood and Society. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1950, [Second Edition. Revised and Enlarged], 248).

For those who develop the quality of trust in self and in others, their trust usually includes a belief in a heavenly being. There are many examples of trust in the Lord in the Psalms. We will address some of them.

Psalms 4:5

5 Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the LORD.

Our first psalm offers us an invitation to become our best selves and trust in the Lord. As we do so, our confidence will grow in our relationship with others for if one desires trust, we must offer trust to others. It is true that trust often leads to trust by the other. Trust may be seen as a two-way street. As we trust others they in turn will trust us. And, as others trust us, we will in turn trust them. This truism, some have learned, also works in the reverse for when trust is not given or offered, mistrust then develops.

Psalms 5:11

11 But let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy, because thou

defendest them: let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee.

As Israel learned, when they put their trust in the Lord, He defended them from the enemies. The Lord will also strengthen us as we battle our enemies. He will send his angels to give us strength in times of pain and sorrow. These angels may be both seen and unseen as friends and neighbors who are sent to us to give us aid during our times of need.

Psalms 9:10

10 And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, LORD, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.

Those that "know thy name," are those that have come to know Him and are striving to keep His commandments. As we turn to the Lord and seek His guidance and direction, while He will not prevent our sorrow, He will be there to dry our tears and to give us the strength to go forward. He will not abandon us when the trial is difficult.

Carolyn Joyce Carty's poem entitled, "Footprints in the Sand," expresses this truth.

"Footprints in the Sand"

One night a man had a dream. He dreamed
he was walking along the beach with the LORD.

Across the sky flashed scenes from his life.
For each scene he noticed two sets of
Footprints in the sand: one belonging
to him, and the other to the LORD.

When the last scene of his life flashed before him,
he looked back at the footprints in the sand.

He noticed that many times along the path of
His life there was only one set of footprints.

He also noticed that it happened at the very
Lowest and saddest times in his life.

This really bothered him and he
questioned the Lord about it.

"Lord, you said that once I decided to follow
you, you'd walk with me all the way.
But I have noticed that during the most
troublesome times in my life,
there is only one set of footprints.
I don't understand why when I needed you most
you would leave me."

The Lord replied:

"My son, my precious child,
I love you and I would never leave you.
During your times of trial and suffering,
When you only see one set of footprints,
it was then that I carried you."

(quotationsbook.com/quote/6516/#sthash.iV4VPI4p.dpbs)

Psalms 16:1

1 Preserve me, O God: for in thee do I put my trust.

"Preserve me, O God." It is often when our lives or those whom we love, are in danger that even those who are among the least spiritual seek protection and guidance from heaven. Though one may at times be tempted to question our nation's current belief in God, it is a fact that during times of calamity and disaster, even the nation's leaders, turn to God for peace, comfort, and the preservation of this nation. Unfortunately, it also seems when the calamity or disaster has passed, so has their faith in God... until the next tragic event.

Psalms 18:2-3

**2 The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer;
my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler,
and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.**

**3 I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised:
so shall I be saved from mine enemies.**

It is noteworthy that when we or those we love are in need of heaven's blessings we graciously petition the Lord for guidance and comfort. It would be so much more meaningful if each day we would seek heaven's guidance as we begin our day. When we make Him our foundation, even the rock upon which we build our lives, we will be more apt to see his hand in our lives, not just when disaster strikes.

Psalms 56:11

**11 In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what
man can do unto me.**

When we put our trust in God on a daily basis, we will be amazed at the difference it makes in our lives. We will treat all who are within our sphere of influence with kindness. We will seek to make friends of our enemies and we in turn will be kinder to our friends. When we put our trust in God, we "will fear no evil: for thou art with me" (Psalm 23:4).

Psalms 62:8

**8 Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your
heart before him: God is a refuge for us. Selah.**

Prayer is not just for times of disaster. It is for any time of the day. As we "pour out [our] heart before him," he will hear our petition and give us answers to our concerns. Knowing another is there and is listening can be of great assistance to us. He is there twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. Anytime, we wish to speak, He is always there to listen. While He is not there to take orders, He will, in time, give answers to our concerns that will enable us to go forward in peace. It is we who must learn in patience to trust and to recognize and accept his direction, even when the answer is "No." Someday we will come to learn His answer was also the right one even though we may not have recognized it at the time.

Psalms 84:12

**12 O LORD of host, blessed is the man that trusteth in
thee.**

As we come to know the Lord and the qualities of his character, our love and trust in him is strengthened. He will never let us down. He will never leave us alone. He understands all that we are experiencing and how to bless our lives for good. He knows how to lift us so we may become better than we are now, no matter how good or bad we may be. He sees all that is good in us, even when we can't see it ourselves. He offers us hope for a better day if we are just willing to take his hand and trust in him. Why would we hesitate?

Psalms 118:8-9

**8 It is better to trust in the LORD than to put
confidence in man.
9 It is better to trust in the LORD than to put
confidences in princes.**

One of the main differences between our fellowman or woman, is that sometimes they disappoint us. They forget or get delayed or something interferes with their being able to attend to our needs. Like our loved ones, those whom we have selected to be our leaders, also disappoint us. Sometimes we understand, for the same things happen to us, in spite of our best intentions. While the Lord may not give us the answer we want to hear on our time schedule, He never fails to hear and in His time, give us answers to our needs. He is never too busy, or forgets, or gets side-tracked. Our needs are important to Him and He will give us an answer to our sincere petitions. Our task is to patiently listen for His soft answer.

8. Psalms and Music

As noted previously, many of the psalms were originally written to music.

The Old Testament Institute Student Manual states,

In fact, most of the unusual words found as subtitles throughout the psalms are "generally... seen to have been specific instructions to the singer or the musicians or to have served as a note about the nature of the particular song... [for example] 'Selah' is found seventy-three times in the Psalms, generally at the end of a sentence or paragraph; but in [Psalms 50:19 and 57:3] it stands in the middle of the verse... most authors have agreed in considering this word as somehow relating to the music... ..Probably selah was used to direct the singers to be silent, or to pause a little, while the instruments played an interlude or symphony." (Old Testament Institute Student Manual: Genesis-2 Samuel. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1980. [Second Edition. Revised, 1981], 310-311).

In the Hymns of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we read,

“Inspirational music is an essential part of our church meetings. The hymns invite the Spirit of the Lord, create a feeling of reverence, unify us as members, and provide a way for us to offer praise to the Lord. Some of the greatest sermons are preached by the singing of hymns. Hymns move us to repentance and good works, build testimony and faith, comfort the weary, console the mourning, and inspire us to endure to the end.” (Hymns of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1985, ix).

We can safely assume the use of the psalms anciently was for a similar purpose as hymns are used today.

What are some of the ways the singing of hymns can continue to bless us today?

The Old Testament Gospel Doctrine Teacher’s manual states,

- “a. Hymns lift our spirits.*
- b. Hymns inspire us to live more righteously.*
- c. Hymns remind us of our blessings.*
- d. Hymns give us an opportunity to sing praises to the Lord.*
- e. Hymns give us a way to bear testimony.*
- f. Hymns help us to recommit ourselves to the Lord.*
- g. Hymns help us to feel the Spirit.*
- h. Hymns help us to be more in tune with our Heavenly Father.*
- i. Hymns help us to learn and teach the gospel.”*

(Old Testament Gospel Doctrine Teacher’s Manual. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1996, 121).

The Old Testament Gospel Doctrine Teacher’s manual continues,

“Some of the latter-day hymns inspired by the psalms include: ‘The Lord is My Shepherd’ (Hymns, No. 108; Psalm 23); ‘The Lord Is My Light’ (Hymns, No. 89; Psalms 27:1), ‘How Great Thou Art’ (Hymns, No 86; Psalms 8:3-9; 9:1-2) and ‘Praise to the Lord, the Almighty’ (Hymns, No. 72; Psalms 23:6; 150).” (Old Testament Gospel Doctrine Teacher’s Manual. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1996, 121).

9. Conclusions

There are 150 Psalms in the King James Bible. As noted, the author is presumed by many to be David. Many, if not all, were set to music and were part of the worship service of the Israelites. They cover a broad range of topics including prophecies of the Messiah, the scriptures, the importance of the Holy temple, the Savior’s love, mercy, and forgiveness, and trust in the Lord as well as others. The value the psalms have to each of us depends upon our familiarity with their messages. As we meditate upon their meaning, whether through song or study, our lives will be enhanced as we draw even closer to our Lord. Thank you David, and others, for your words of guidance, comfort, and direction. Your words continue to bless our lives today.