

Psalms Lesson 4 – Psalm 32-41

Psalms 1-3 introduced us to a God who teaches, elects, and saves. The remainder of the psalms in Book 1 (Psalms 4-41) focus on David's deliverance by God from troubles from sin (Psalm 32) and enemies (Psalm 41).

1. Psalms, like Psalm 32, sing of forgiveness. Paul, in Romans 4:6-8 quotes from this psalm. What verses does he quote? How does David express the nature of one whose sins have been forgiven? Does it matter if sins are confessed? Why?
2. Psalm 34 is another psalm that follows an acrostic pattern. Due to verse 8, "Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good!" Origen, a late second century Christian leader, claimed that Psalm 34 was sung as a communion hymn in the early church. However, how does Peter use verse 8 in 1 Peter 2:3?
3. Psalm 35 shows how the faithful should pray when they know that malicious people are seeking to harm them. The prayer recounts the evil schemes of the persecutors of David and asks God to fight on his behalf. "Draw the spear and javelin against my pursuers!" (verse 3a). It seems that David expresses joy in God's destruction of his enemies (verses 9 and 27). Is it proper to rejoice in the destruction of the wicked?
4. The Lord's "steadfast love" is a major theme in the Psalms. According to Psalm 36:7-9, how is that attribute illustrated?
5. Psalm 37 is another acrostic psalm, where about every other verse begins with successive letters in the Hebrew alphabet. It is also a wisdom psalm because it shares themes found in the wisdom books of the bible. The opening stanza establishes the overall theme of the righteous persevering through persecutions (vv. 1-4). First, what shall happen to the wicked? Second, what shall happen to the righteous? Third, in the meantime, what should the righteous do?
6. When the psalmist writes, "those who wait for the Lord shall inherit the land" (Ps. 37:9), "the meek shall inherit the land" (v. 11), and "The righteous shall inherit the land" (v. 29), what piece of real estate is he talking about? Jesus uses the first half of verse 11 in the third beatitude (Matt. 5:5). Is he referring to the same land?

7. The title of Psalm 38 associates the psalm with “the memorial offering”. This is the portion of the grain offering that the priest burns on the alter (Lev. 2:2). Its purpose was to remind God that the worshiper had consecrated these gifts of God’s own abundant providence and to remind the worshiper of his sins. What are the synonyms for sin in Psalm 38:1-8? What are the images for iniquities? In your own words and in your own life, how would you describe sin? Go ahead and take a poetic stab at it!

8. Admission and confession of sin are major themes in Psalms 38-41. List some verses to this effect. Also, list verses that state the remedy to our sin situation.