

Psalms Lesson 5 – Psalm 42-56

The Psalms are not a religious textbook, however, though taken collectively they teach us much about topics found in a more traditional study. In the first half of the second book of the Psalms (42-56) we are taught that our souls find rest and salvation in God alone. We move from despair (42:1-5) to praise-filled resolution (56:10-13)

1. Both Psalm 42 and 43 share a common refrain. What verse contains the refrain in each chapter? Because they share a common refrain many scholars believe the two chapters make up one poem and thus contain a progression of thought. Can you outline that progression?
2. It is often difficult to tell if the individual writer of a psalm speaks for himself or as a representative of all Israel. Who is the speaker in Psalm 44? Is it a personal lament or a national one? What event is described in verse 2 and 3? On what basis does the psalmist appeal to God to “awake” (v. 23).
3. Most all the psalms are addressed to Jehovah God but not Psalm 45. Who is addressed in this psalm? Hebrews 1:8-9 cite Psalm 45:6-7. How are those verses used to teach about Christ?
4. What is the refrain in Psalm 46? How does the refrain summarize the poem’s theme?
5. Psalm 49 sounds more like a proverb than the typical Psalm. What proverb is expressed in this psalm and how does the psalmist answer?
6. In reading the Psalms, we must never forget to ask the question, “What is said about God?” Answer that question for Psalm 50. In view of what is said about God, how are God’s covenant people then and now to live? How shouldn’t we live? Why should we live the way God wants us to?

Lesson 5 continued

7. Psalm 51 is the most famous of the “Penitential Psalms.” What specific sin is implied in this psalm? While this psalm is based on a historical situation in David’s life, therefore intensely personal, it also contains instructional elements (see vv. 16-19) and serves as a model for all repentant believers. How so?

8. Psalm 53 is called a “duplicate psalm” because it is almost identical to Psalm 14. However, there are differences. What are the differences? What do those differences emphasize?

9. Some of these psalms, like Psalm 54, can seem far removed from those of us who are not suffering, especially not suffering religious persecution. How might we be able to pray such psalms on behalf of other Christians around the world who may be suffering?

10. We have read plenty of psalms about the godly suffering under the hands of their Gentile enemies. What is unique about who harms David in Psalm 55? Any idea who David has in mind? Have you ever had a painful betrayal? How should you pray during such a sad situation? How can verses 22 and 23 help?

11. Find where the word trust is used in Psalm 56. How is the concept of trust expressed in imagery?