

THE GOSPEL PROJECT – CHRONOLOGICAL

A KINGDOM *established*

GOD ALL WISE

The Praises of God's People

Psalm 150:6 (ESV) ⁶ *Let everything that has breath praise the LORD! Praise the LORD!* The Bible tells us in **Psalm 22:3** that God inhabits the praises of His people. Praise is an act of worship! Praise is how we proclaim God's worth! **Revelation 4:11 (ESV)** ¹¹ *"Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created."*

The ways to praise are many. We praise Him with hands lifted high, we praise Him on our knees. We praise Jesus in song and sometimes we praise Him in reverent silence. However, the key to living a life of genuine praise is found in praising God in the bad times as well as the good. **Job 13:15 (ESV)** ¹⁵ *Though he slay me, I will hope in him...* Sometimes praise comes easy but sometimes praise becomes a sacrifice. **Hebrews 13:15 (ESV)** ¹⁵ *Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.* The words sacrifice and praise seem to be opposites. We think of sacrifice as being costly and difficult to give while praise is thought of as being easy – something bubbling from a grateful heart. However, in the spiritual life of the maturing believer, sacrifice and praise become interlinked over a lifetime of joys and sorrows.

When the Lord has blessed us as WE THINK He should, we feel generous toward Him. We sing, worship, and praise how good He is because we can see it. That kind of praise is worthwhile but it is not a sacrifice. When circumstances do not go as we hoped and we are not feeling His blessings, praising Him may be the last thing on our mind. However, those are times that we bring Him the sacrifice of our praise which is dear to the heart of God! **James 1:2 (ESV)** ² *Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds.*

As we consider the Praises of God's People, we conclude our quarterly study with a brief overview of the book of Psalms. The Hebrew word for Psalms is Tehillim which means praises. The word Psalms comes from the title given to the book by the Greek version of the Old Testament – psalmos or song. **2 Samuel 23:1** calls David the *sweet psalmist of Israel*. There are 150 psalms and 73 are associated with David. Psalms is the longest book in the Bible and the most quoted book in the New Testament. Two hundred and fifty years after the Israelites returned from the exile in Babylon, the songs and prayers were collected as they were used during the time of the Kings and put together in the form that we have today. In our overview we will examine three psalms. By the way, if you read five psalms a day, you can easily read the entire book in a month's time!

1. The Psalms call us to delight in God's Word.

Read Psalm 1:1-6 (ESV) ¹ *Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers;* ² *but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he*

*meditates day and night.*³ *He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.*⁴ *The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away.*⁵ *Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;*⁶ *for the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.*

Psalm 1 is a wisdom Psalm. There are praise Psalms, lament and royal Psalms to name a few. All naturally contain wisdom, but **Psalm 1** standing as the introduction to the rest of the book declares in just a few words some of the most basic but profound truths of the Bible.

The psalmist reveals that to be righteous we must NOT take the advice of evil people. We need to be watchful of the company we keep. Yes, we are to share the gospel with the world but we must be careful that the world doesn't overtake us. We don't need to hang out with folks who mock God. We don't have to act superior – we just focus on staying on the narrow path ourselves.

Psalm 1 contrasts the blessedness of the righteous vs. the way of the wicked. God's Word is built around the concept of two choices. For example, the choices made by Cain and Abel – Ishmael and Isaac – Esau and Jacob – David and Saul. Paul speaks of the choices of the first Adam and the last Adam (Jesus). **1 Corinthians 15:45 (ESV)**⁴⁵ *Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.* Bible history ends in the choice between Christ and Antichrist. Two men, two ways, two destinies. We each have the power to choose our eternal destiny.

Don't take **Psalm 1** to be a promise of a life without problems just because we follow a godly lifestyle. God's ultimate blessing comes on those who obey God's Word and meditate on it, and God's ultimate judgment falls on those who rebel. The mention of the tree planted by streams of water is a reflection of Jesus' words in **John 7:38 (ESV)**³⁸ *Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'*

Israel of the Old Testament was called to be a unique and separate people. New Testament Christians are called to unique and separate. **1 Peter 2:9 (ESV)**⁹ *But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.*

2. The Psalms call us to celebrate God's character and work.

Read Psalm 100:1-5 (ESV)¹ *Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth!*² *Serve the LORD with gladness! Come into his presence with singing!*³ *Know that the LORD, he is God! It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.*⁴ *Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name!*⁵ *For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.*

I have often heard people quote **Psalm 100:1** as a reason to praise the Lord vocally for someone who is not musically inclined by placing the emphasis on the words *joyful noise*. ☺ Our worship should never be passive. Whether you are able to actually ‘sing’ or just making a *joyful noise*, your voice is a vital part of worship. **Psalm 28:6-7 (ESV)** ⁶ *Blessed be the LORD! For he has heard the voice of my pleas for mercy.* ⁷ *The LORD is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts, and I am helped; my heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to him.*

And then there is verse 2. They’ve taken those words straight out of the Baptist Hymnal! *Serve the LORD with gladness – enter His courts with praise!* Oh wait! B.B. McKinney who wrote the hymn took those words from **Psalm 100**! Any time – no matter what generation we live in – what day of the week it is – we do well to use the Psalms to praise the Lord in song and in our actions! Jesus said in **Matthew 5:16 (ESV)** ¹⁶ *... let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.*

Know that the LORD, he is God! It is he who made us, and we are his. There are a lot of people who do not know that the Lord is God and it is true that many of them don’t want to know – they prefer the broad way failing to realize that it leads to destruction. But, it is still our mission – our responsibility to share Jesus with others. In the early church when the first persecution broke out, the apostles came back to the church in Jerusalem and reported what was happening. Their report moved the church to pray. They began their prayer with praise. **Acts 4:24 (ESV)** ²⁴ *And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said, “Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them. After they had prayed in the power of God, we are told in **Acts 4:31 (ESV)** ³¹ *And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.**

We are his people, and the sheep of his pasture – How do we become a sheep? We must be redeemed. In this psalm the sheep were Israel. But, they are not the only redeemed sheep. **John 10:14-16 (ESV)** ¹⁴ *I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me... and I lay down my life for the sheep.* ¹⁶ *And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.* We are the *other sheep* who Christ brought into His Kingdom. That is something to sing about – shout about – praise God about.

For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations. This verse reminds me of the words of Jeremiah in **Lamentations 3:22-23 (ESV)** ²² *The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end;* ²³ *they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.* Our God is always faithful and of course, the faithfulness of God has been sung about throughout the generations. Thomas Chisholm wrote in 1925: Great is Thy faithfulness! Morning by morning new mercies I see; All I have needed Thy hand hath provided – Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me! Yes, the Lord is faithful to His promises – He will return in glory!

3. The Psalms call us to look for the coming Messiah.

Read Psalm 110:1-7 (ESV) ¹ *The LORD says to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.”* ² *The LORD sends forth from Zion your mighty scepter. Rule in the midst of your enemies!* ³ *Your people will offer themselves freely on the day of your power, in holy garments; from the womb of the morning, the dew of your youth will be yours.* ⁴ *The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind, “You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.”* ⁵ *The Lord is at your right hand; he will shatter kings on the day of his wrath.* ⁶ *He will execute judgment among the nations, filling them with corpses; he will shatter chiefs over the wide earth.* ⁷ *He will drink from the brook by the way; therefore he will lift up his head.*

This psalm presents three pictures of the future Messiah or Christ.

(1) The Messiah’s exaltation as King. *Jehovah says to my Adonai*” is the way the psalm opens, and since David was the highest ruler in the kingdom, his *Adonai* had to be the Lord Himself. It was this fact that Jesus presented to the Pharisees. **Matthew 22:42-45 (ESV)** ⁴² *saying, “What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?” They said to him, “The son of David.”* ⁴³ *He said to them, “How is it then that David, in the Spirit, calls him Lord, saying,* ⁴⁴ *“The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet””?* ⁴⁵ *If then David calls him Lord, how is he his son?”* Jesus asked them how David’s Lord could also be David’s son (the Messiah). The only answer is by incarnation meaning the eternal Son of God had to come to earth as a human born into the family of David.

(2) The Messiah’s role of High priest: *You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek*. We read first of Melchizedek when he visited Abraham in **Genesis 14:18 (ESV)** ¹⁸ *And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. (He was priest of God Most High.)* The present high priestly ministry of Christ in heaven is described in **Romans 8:34 (ESV)** ³⁴ *...Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.* When Jesus was on earth, He could not minister as a priest because He was from the tribe of Judah and not from Levi. But since His heavenly priesthood is after the order of Melchizedek, who was both a king and priest, He intercedes on our behalf in heaven.

(3) The King-Priest is also a Conqueror: *The Lord is at your right hand; he will shatter kings on the day of his wrath*. Today is the Lord’s day of salvation when He is calling sinners to be reconciled to God. But there will come a day of wrath or the day of the Lord, when Jesus the Lamb of God will begin to roar as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and judgment will fall on the world. **Revelation 5:5 (ESV)** ⁵ *And one of the elders said to me, “Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered...”* There are more intricate details to this psalm where David looked forward to the coming of Jesus but I want to end with something simple – something we can easily apply to our daily lives.

The authors of this Gospel Project lesson observed that for centuries believers have woke up in the morning and said a psalm and have gone to bed at night just after reading a psalm. There is no reason for Christians to settle for falling asleep at night with the soft glow of the television screen or iPhone being the last thing they see. We shouldn’t be satisfied to let a late night talk show host or CNN news have the last word of our day. The way to avoid this is to finish our day by reading or listening to a few Psalms or some other favorite passage. **Psalm 4:8 (ESV)** ⁸ *In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety.*