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Finally, brethren
WHATEVER THINGS are true
 are noble
 are just
 are pure
 are lovely
 are of good report
 IF THERE IS ANY VIRTURE AND IF THERE IS ANYTHING PRAISEWORTHY –
meditate on these things.

PHILIPPIANS 4:8

You can download this month's Meditate On These Things as a PDF file by clicking [here](#). Also, an archive of past MOTT issues is available at christistheway.com.

"The preacher who does not first preach his sermon to himself is not worthy of his name" (Marshall Patton [quoting Don DeWelt], **Truth Commentaries: The Books of 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon**, 187)

Works

"God has never saved any person by works... **of any law**" (Matthew Allen, **From Fear to Faith**. 60).

"A failure to distinguish between a work of faith and a work of merit is a problem for some of a great multitude. When the Scriptures say Christians are not saved by works, the reference is to works of merit (Eph. 2:8,9; Tit. 3:5). When the Scriptures say they are saved by works, the reference is to works of faith (Acts 10:34,35; Jas. 2:24). A work of faith is a condition met, or a command obeyed, which manifests one's faith, yet is not sufficient to earn the reward. For example, the city of Jericho was a gift to the children of Israel (Josh. 6:2). Yet, there were conditions to be met, commands to be obeyed (Josh. 6:3-5), after which the walls fell by faith (Heb. 11:30). So it is with salvation: one shows his faith and God gives him the reward. In doing so, he has not earned or merited his salvation (cf. Luke 17:10)" (Marshall Patton, **Truth Commentaries: The Books of 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon**. 172)

Preach the Word!

Keith Sharp | Mountain Home, Arkansas, USA

"I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and

the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry” (2 Timothy 4:1-5).

Consider the gravity of the command. Paul calls God and His Son, Christ Jesus, Who shall judge us on that last great day, as His witnesses. The work is God’s work (2:24), the divine message has the power to save (3:14-17), and the purpose is the salvation of men (1:8-11).

The dying words of a great man are cherished and long remembered. Every gospel preacher should make these, the last words of perhaps the greatest servant of Christ, his theme of life. They should be so etched in his mind and soul that they constitute the sum of his life’s work and the purpose of his daily tasks. Only by faithful fulfillment of this commission may he with clear conscience whisper in death Paul’s magnificent summary of his own life: “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.” (4:7) Only then may he, with the beloved apostle, lay claim to the victor’s crown, the crown of life (4:8).

How Much Should We Give to the Church?

Keith Sharp | Mountain Home, Arkansas, USA

Most denominations teach their members that they are obligated to tithe to the Lord. The noun “tithe” means “tenth,” thus, the requirement is that people give a tenth of their income to their church. Moses in the Law commanded Israel to give a tithe of all the produce of the land (Leviticus 27:30-33; Deuteronomy 14:22). The tithe was to be given to the Levites, those of the tribe of Levi who ministered to the Lord as helpers to the priests (Numbers 18:21-24). The Levites then were to give the priests a tithe of the tithe (Numbers 18:25-26). The tithe was to be taken to the house of the Lord where the priests and Levites served (Deuteronomy 12:5-6; 14:22-26). Every third year Israelites were to give an additional tithe to be shared with Levites, strangers, fatherless, and widows (Deuteronomy 14:27-29; 26:12-15).

The tithe, as part of the Law of Moses, was done away when Christ died (Colossians 2:14-17; Hebrews 7:5). Nowhere does the Lord in the New Testament command Christians to tithe. Rather, Christians are to give to the local church each first day of the week (1 Corinthians 16:1-2). We are to contribute of our own free will (2 Corinthians 8:3-5), as we have been prospered (2 Corinthians 8:12), bountifully (2 Corinthians 9:5-6), as we have purposed (2 Corinthians 9:7), and cheerfully (2 Corinthians 9:7; cf. 8:1-2). “For if there is first a willing mind, it is accepted according to what one has, and not according to what he does not have” (2 Corinthians 8:12).

An Amazing Bible Chapter - Isaiah 53

Jefferson David Tant | Hendersonville, Tennessee, USA

The Old Testament is not only an historical record of God’s creation and the story of the human race through the centuries until the coming of Christ. The Old Testament also contains literally hundreds of prophecies concerning the coming of Christ to offer himself as a sacrifice for our sins and inaugurate the new pathway for our journey through this life to the place God has prepared for those who love and serve Him. Some Bible scholars have counted well over 300 prophecies about Christ in the Old Testament. And Isaiah 53 is filled with prophecies about what was to come some 700 years later. The language is written in the past tense.

Isaiah 53—the Suffering Servant

1. “Who has believed our message? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?”

Obviously, there were many who rejected Christ when he was on the earth, and countless multitudes today either reject Him and/or His message.

Verses 2-3 – *“For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, And like a root out of parched ground; He has no stately form or majesty That we should look upon Him, Nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him. 3 He was despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.”*

Isaiah refers to those who were offended at His humble state and treated Him with contempt. Ancient and modern unbelieving Jews deny the Messianic implications, claiming that the chapter refers to the Babylonian captivity of Israel or modern persecutions. But note: (1) Personal pronouns are used which would not apply to the nation, and He is distinguished from the nation later in verse 8. (2) The victim is innocent of any wrongdoing. Not so the nation of Israel, for it went astray more than once. (3) The Servant suffered passively, but the nation often fought against its enemies.

Verses 4-6 -- *“Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted. 5 But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed. 6 All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him.”*

In all this, the Messiah has a passive spirit, humbly submitting to suffering vicariously for humanities' sins, which the nation could not have done. The New Testament writers ascribed this chapter in Isaiah to Christ. “But though He had performed so many signs before them, yet they were not believing in Him. 38 This was to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet which he spoke: **“Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the lord been revealed?”** (John 12:37-38)

Acts 8:32-35 - 32 “Now the passage of Scripture which he was reading was this: **“He was led as a sheep to slaughter; and as a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he does not open his mouth. 33 “in humiliation his judgment was taken away; who will relate his generation? For his life is removed from the earth.’** 34 The eunuch answered Philip and said, ‘Please tell me, of whom does the prophet say this? Of himself or of someone else?’ 35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture he preached Jesus to him.”

From what Scripture was Philip reading? Isaiah 53! The New Testament writers applied this chapter to Jesus, never to Israel.

Verses 7-9 – *“He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He did not open His mouth; Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, So He did not open His mouth. 8 By oppression and judgment He was taken away; And as for His generation, who considered That He was cut off out of the land of the living For the transgression of my people, to whom the stroke was due? 9 His grave was assigned with wicked men, Yet He was with a rich man in His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was there any deceit in His mouth.”*

The “suffering servant” submissively accepts death. This hardly describes the Israel nation’s attitude when it was attacked by its enemies.

Verses 10-12 – *“But the LORD was pleased To crush Him, putting Him to grief; If He would render Himself as a guilt offering, He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, And the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in His hand. 11 As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied; By His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, As He will bear their iniquities. 12 Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, And He will divide the booty with the strong; Because He poured out Himself to death, And was numbered with the transgressors; Yet He Himself bore the sin of*

many, And interceded for the transgressors.”

The subject of this prophecy ultimately triumphs over His foes, and thus His mission is successful. Note what John wrote about what Christ did for us.

“My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world”
(1 John 2:2).

Christ is unique. There is no other religious founder or leader who has such a record. Not Zoroaster, not Buddha, not Muhammad, not Joseph Smith, not Mary Baker Eddy, not Charles Taze Russell... Well, I don't have enough time or space to list the multitudes who have claimed to found some religion. The solid and irrefutable evidence points to Jesus Christ. There is none like Him.

May The Divorced Remarry If Their Original Spouse Dies?

Patrick Donahue | Harvest, Alabama, USA

Jesus teaches in Luke 16:18 that divorced people commit adultery if they remarry, but Romans 7:2-3 teaches one may remarry if their spouse dies. Is there any conflict between the two passages? What about a divorced person whose former spouse dies, may they remarry?

When we realize Romans 7:2-3 tells us the reason it is wrong for a divorced person to remarry, because they are still bound (obligated) to their original spouse (http://www.bibledebates.info/Articles/DivorceAndRemarriageMOTT/02_Matt19.9StatesTheFactsOfTheCaseRom7.2-3StatesTheReason.docx), then we will understand a divorced person whose former spouse dies is eligible for remarriage. If the reason a divorced person commits adultery when they remarry is because they are still bound/obligated to their original spouse, then if that original spouse dies, the marriage “bound” (obligation) is gone, therefore it would not be adultery at that point if remarriage occurs.

God's rule is not that a person can scripturally enter a second marriage if they divorce their original spouse for fornication and if their original spouse dies. Instead, the rule is that a person can scripturally enter a second marriage if they divorce their original spouse for fornication or if their original spouse dies. If the and option were true, then a person who divorces their spouse for fornication would still have to wait for the death of that fornicating spouse before they could remarry, and if a sound marriage ends in death, the remaining spouse would not be eligible for remarriage because their spouse never committed fornication. But since the or option is correct, a person can remarry in either case: if they divorce their spouse for fornication or if their spouse dies. Only one of the two circumstances must come into play.

If a divorced person is still under the rule of Romans 7:2-3 (adultery upon marrying another), then the part of the rule that says remarriage after death is not adultery would also apply. You can't have it both ways just to fit the way you think it ought to be.

Many will agree with me if talking about an innocent person who has been put away against their will, but won't go along if we are talking about one who has put away their innocent spouse or one who has been put away for fornication (as they don't think that would be fair). But neither Matthew 19:9 nor Romans 7:2-3 makes a distinction in those cases. Matthew 19:9 teaches both the one who puts away unjustly and the one who is put away unjustly commit adultery upon remarriage. If Romans 7:2-3 does not say the one who puts away for a reason other than fornication is still bound to their original spouse and that is why they commit adultery if they remarry, then neither would Romans 7:2-3 say the same about the one who is put away for a reason other than fornication. You can't have it both ways to suit your fancy. And if Romans 7:2-3 says they are still bound (obligated) while their former spouse is living in both cases, then Romans 7:2-3 would then also say they are loosed (free to remarry) upon the death of their original spouse in both cases.

Similarly, it is wrong for a put away person to remarry because the phrase “whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery” in Matthew 19:9b (and Matthew 5:32b and Luke 16:18b) condemns the remarriage of put away persons regardless of why they were put away, fornication, burning the biscuits, or any other reason. And so if a wife put away for fornication cannot remarry when her former spouse dies, then neither can a wife put away for burning the biscuits remarry when her former spouse dies. Romans 7:2-3 is either the reason a put away person (for whatever reason) may not remarry or it isn't. You can't have your cake and eat it too. Repeating: Matthew 19:9b applies to the one put away for a reason other than fornication just as much as it does to the one put away for fornication. They both (the non-fornicator and the fornicator) are in the same boat in this verse. The verse either proves any put away person (fornicator or innocent) may never remarry, or the verse proves any put away person (fornicator or innocent) may not remarry while their former spouse still lives.

I Corinthians 7:27-28 shows the same thing. This passage indicates a person is either bound or loosed, one or the other. If they are loosed, then Paul says in verse 28 they can marry and not sin. Can a person who puts away for incompatibility or the one put away for fornication remarry? Matthew 19:9a and b say they can't. That shows they are still bound to that former spouse (remember, either bound or loosed). Therefore, if that former spouse dies, they are loosed (free to remarry). As least according to I Corinthians 7:27-28 and Romans 7:2-3 they are.

The word “adultery” as used by Matthew 19:9 also indicates the divorced are still bound to their former spouse. Romans 7:2-3 says an adulteress (the Bible dictionaries define it similarly) is a woman who marries when still maritally bound to another. Matthew 19:9 calls the marriage to a divorced person “adultery,” therefore from Romans 7:2-3 we see the divorced person is still bound to their original spouse (or their remarriage wouldn't be called “adultery”). Therefore, when that original spouse dies, the divorced person is loosed and free to marry (I Corinthians 7:27-28). And adultery is always “against” (Mark 10:11) someone else; who would a divorced person be committing adultery against if their original spouse is dead?

It is very important that we hold to Jesus' strict truth on Divorce And Remarriage. But we can't make our teaching stricter than what Jesus taught simply because I want to be known as conservative, or this makes sense to me, or this is the way I think it ought to be, or this is what I think is fair. We have to learn to stand for what Jesus actually said on this topic (whether we are called conservative or liberal for it) because God's thoughts and ways are much higher than our thoughts and ways (Isaiah 55:8-9)

The Right Medicine For The Illness

Jim Mickells | Lewisburg, Tennessee, USA

Have you ever taken the wrong medication for some sickness or disease? I am sure some have at one time or another. If I am nauseated taking something for allergies is not going to help. Taking flu medication will not help a migraine headache. There are some pills which look so similar to others, one has to be very cautious, or they will take the wrong medicine. I preached a lady's funeral in July of 2022 whom the doctor gave a drug which she was allergic to, killing her. How tragic! Just as taking the wrong medication for some physical ailment can be devastating, following the wrong prescription for sin can be even more dreadful. One can lose their soul!

Jesus the Great Physician (Luke 4:23; 5:31-32) gives the prescription for curing the problem of sin in the lives of those accountable to God. The problem is, many don't want to take the prescribed medicine, wanting to play doctor themselves. It becomes “what I think or what I feel” instead of listening to the real Doctor! Some listen to those who claim to be an assistant to the Great Physician, who give their remedy for the sin problem. The only one who has the power to forgive sin is the Lord (Matthew 9:1-6). Yet He gives all the remedy to be taken, the directions to be followed, and the end results of listening to His instructions. Notice with me a few verses of what He said must be observed and the results of a failure to

do so.

"No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me" (John 6:44-45).

How are people drawn to God? Through teaching. The apostles were instructed to go into all the world and make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15). Faithful men were told to teach others (2 Timothy 2:2). The first medication to be taken, one must be taught of God.

"Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins" (John 8:24). If I don't believe Jesus is the Christ, the results would be I will die in my sins. Many verses in the Bible tell us of the necessity of belief or faith (Mark 16:16; Ephesians 2:8; Hebrews 11:6, etc.). There is even one which tell us that faith is a work of God (John 6:29). It is not a work which the Father does for us, but one which He requires of us. The second which is prescribed, faith in our Lord.

"I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3; verse 5 as well). The simple definition of the word "repent" is a change of mind as the results of sorrow for the sins committed, turning from sin to God. The results of a failure to turn from iniquities is one would perish. Those who crucified the Son of God were told to repent (Acts 2:38). Even churches which were guilty of sin were told to turn from their sinful ways and do their first works (Revelation 2:5,16,21; 3:3,19). So, the third medicine prescribed is repentance.

"Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 10:32-33).

In John 12:42-43, some of the Jews who believed would not confess Him for fear of being put out of the synagogue by the Pharisees. They loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. What would be the results of their failure? He would deny them before the Father. Notice these verses as well (Acts 8:37; Romans 10:9-10). On the list of things to partake of for remission of sins, the fourth is a confession with the mouth that Jesus is Lord.

"Jesus answered, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God'" (John 3:5). In verse 3, the Lord points out that one must be born again, so He is not speaking about one's mother giving birth to the child initially. There are two elements involved in this new birth, water and Spirit. Water is baptism. The eunuch said to Philip, "See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized" (Acts 8:36). Born of the Spirit is when we listen to the words spoken by the Spirit, following His instruction. Peter says we are born again from the incorruptible seed, which is the word of God (1 Peter 1:22-23). It was given under the direction of the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:19-21). This is the one medication, the fifth, which most object to taking. Yet if one does not take it, they cannot enter the kingdom.

"And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved" (Matthew 10:22). After we have been baptized into the death of our Lord, we rise a new creature in Christ Jesus to walk in newness of life. The old man of sin has been crucified; the new man emerges who is now a slave of righteousness (Romans 6:1-18). He puts off the old garment of sin, fornication, uncleanness, evil desires, etc. (Colossians 3:5-9). He puts on the new, which is tender mercy, kindness, humility, etc. (Colossians 3:10-13). Just as the other medication is necessary for salvation, this sixth one, is needed to remain in a saved relationship with our God.

Will you listen to the Great Physician? Partake of what He prescribes to be the cure of sin? It is only through Him, following the prescription given in His word, when you consume His teaching, you can be healed.

CHRIST IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

William Stewart | Kingston, Ontario, Canada

As we have noted already in previous articles, "...no one has seen God at any time..." (John 1:18; cf. 6:46; 1 John 4:12). Yet there are times in the Old Testament where we read about God appearing to man. This is not the Father, but the Son, who has come to declare the Father to us (John 1:18; 14:9-10).

Exodus 3 speaks of the Angel of the LORD appearing to Moses in the burning bush. This person is described through the text as "the LORD" (v 4) and "God" (v 4, 6). As we have noted before, when we see a reference to the Angel of the LORD, we should understand it to be the pre-incarnate Christ. The Lord Jesus appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the book of Genesis as the Angel of the LORD—now, in Exodus 3, that has become part of His identity. Verse 6 reads, "...I am the God of your father—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' And Moses hid his face for he was afraid to look upon God." NOTE – when Bible translations capitalize the word "LORD", it is because the original Hebrew language read YHWH (Jehovah). This distinguishes it from "Lord" (Hebrew, Adonai) which is a generic term for one with authority.

In addition to being the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the Angel of the LORD called Himself, "I AM WHO I AM" (Exodus 3:13-15). This is a statement of eternal existence. Jesus identified Himself as I AM (John 8:24, 28, 58; 9:9; 13:19; 18:5, 6, 8).

As the text continues, Moses suggested that perhaps the Israelites might not believe that the LORD had appeared to him (Exodus 4:10). This would not be a concern if Moses did not plan on claiming that the LORD had appeared to him. But the LORD did appear to him—the Christ.

In Acts 7:30, Stephen clearly stated of Moses that the "Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire in a bush." Again, Moses is said to be the ruler and deliverer who was sent "by the Angel who appeared to him in the bush" (Acts 7:35).

The Angel of the LORD, the pre-incarnate Christ, showed Himself to Moses at Mount Horeb, sending him to Egypt to bring the Israelites away from their captivity, and promising that he would again serve God on that mountain (Exodus 3:12).

A PILLAR OF FIRE

After the final plague in Egypt, Pharaoh let the people of Israel go. Exodus 13:17-18 tells us,

Then it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, 'Lest perhaps the people change their minds when they see war, and return to Egypt.' So God led the people around by way of the wilderness of the Red Sea. And the children of Israel went up in orderly ranks out of the land of Egypt.

This text tells us that God led the people, but does not specify whether it was the Father, the Son, or the Spirit. However, just a few verses later we find that

...the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night. He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day or the pillar of fire by night from before the people. (Exodus 13:21-22)

Still, the text does not say who the LORD is here, but does indicate an appearance which was visible. A chapter later, when the Egyptians came after the Israelites, we read the following:

...the Angel of God, who went before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud went from before them and stood behind them. So it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel. Thus, it was a cloud of darkness to the one, and it gave light by night to the other, so that the one did not come near the other all

that night. (Exodus 14:19-20)

The One identified as God in Exodus 13:17-18 and the LORD in Exodus 13:21-22 is here revealed to be the Angel of God, which would be the pre-incarnate Christ. He went from leading them to following behind them, that they might be protected from the Egyptians. Notice, the apostle Paul wrote about the exodus from Egypt in 1 Corinthians 10: "Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ (v 1-4).

With Paul's description of the exodus, there is no doubt who it was that led the people out of the land of Egypt. It was the Christ. Yet again, we've seen an appearance of the Christ in the Old Testament.

TAKEAWAY POINTS

- The Christ appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in Genesis. His appearance to them was used to identify Himself to Moses also.
- Moses first met the Angel of the LORD in the burning bush, where He identified Himself as I AM – the eternally existing one. The LORD continued to interact with Moses in Exodus.
- The New Testament corroborates that it was the Christ who led the people of Israel from Egypt and through the Red Sea.

Psalm

Keith Sharp | Mountain Home, Arkansas, USA

Definition

A "psalm" is any poem capable of being set to music. There are psalms outside the Book of Psalms (e.g., Exodus 15:1-18, 21; Deuteronomy 32:1-43; chapter 33; 2 Samuel 22:1 - 23:7). The psalms are the inspired poetry of the Hebrew people.

Purpose

In the Scriptures every spiritual need of man is supplied (2 Timothy 3:16-17). One of those needs is emotional expression. The psalms touch upon every spiritual emotion felt by man. They have been aptly described as "mirrors of the soul." When correctly understood, the psalms can touch and express our proper emotions, more so than any other literature.

Authors

Usually David is thought of as the author of the book of Psalms. It is true that David is correctly remembered as "the sweet psalmist of Israel" (2 Samuel 23:1), but just less than half the psalms (73 of 150) are definitely ascribed to David. Other authors are Asaph (12 psalms), the sons of Korah (12), Solomon (2), Moses (1), Hemen (1), and Ethan (1). Forty-eight psalms are anonymous.

Dates

The psalms were written over a span of approximately one thousand years, from Moses to the time of the Restoration from Babylonian Captivity. But the age of the psalms was definitely the reign of David, when the majority of the recorded, inspired psalms were written and when the Levites were divided into the choruses to perform the psalms in the Temple. Perhaps no poetry of greater beauty and comfort has ever been written than Psalm 23, the sublime "Shepherd Psalm," a psalm of David.

Characteristics

Since the psalms are Hebrew poetry, one must understand the characteristics of such poetry to comprehend the psalms. There are three primary characteristics of ancient, Jewish poetry.

The first is parallelism. "Parallelism" is saying the same thing twice in different words (cf. Psalm 33:6). If the psalms seem repetitious, it is because they are! The psalmist repeats the thought in varying words. Thus, rather than having word rhyme, as in poetry in the English language, the Hebrew poets used thought rhyme.

Jewish poetry also used rhythm or accentuation. There was a beat to the poem. This was secondary to parallelism.

Equal to parallelism in importance was the use of figurative language. To understand the meaning of the psalms, we must accept their figures as figures and not try to literalize them.

Also, figures must be interpreted in the light of their meaning in the time the psalm was written (cf. Psalm 23).

The longest and shortest chapters of the Bible are in the psalms. Psalm 117 is the shortest. Psalm 119 is the longest (176 verses) but is better remembered as the great Psalm in praise of the Word of God.

Divisions

The Book of Psalms is actually a compilation of five books of psalms. Thus, there are five volumes to the Book of Psalms:

Book 1: Psalms 1 - 41,

Book 2: Psalms 42 - 72,

Book 3: Psalms 73 - 89,

Book 4: Psalms 90 - 106, and

Book 5: Psalms 107 - 150.

Theme

The theme of the Book of Psalms is **Praise**. Twenty-eight of the psalms especially emphasize the praise of the Lord. Whereas this praise reaches its crescendo in the magnificent Psalm 100, the call to praise reaches its height in the "Hallelujah" ("Praise the Lord") psalms, especially Psalms 148 and 150.

Several of the psalms are messianic (pointing to Christ). The last section of this introduction outlines some of them.

How to Study

The psalms are excellent for marking and committing to memory. As you read the psalms, underline or high-light the verses which have deep meaning to you. Several old Bibles of mine are all marked up in the Book of Psalms from classes I have taught on them. Why not memorize Psalms 1, 23, and 100?

The psalms were written to be sung in worship. The twenty-third psalm is found in edited form in most hymnals. There are some good "psalmodies," song books which contain the psalms set to modern vocal music form, available.

The Messiah in the Psalms

Introduction

- A. Israel looked for the Son of David to rule on the throne of David. - 2 Samuel 7:12-16
- B. He would be the Lord's "Anointed" ("chosen," Hebrew - "Messiah"). - Psalm 2:2-3
- C. Several of the psalms speak of the Messiah. - Psalms 2, 16, 22, 45, 69, 72, 89, 110
- D. Some provide evidence for faith. - John 5:39; Luke 24:44

I. Nature of Messiah's Rule

- A. Just - Psalm 72:2-4; cf. Isaiah 11:1-5
- B. Universal - Psalm 72:8 -11; cf. Zechariah 9:9-10

C. Certain - Psalm 2

1. The Nations Try to Prevent the Rule of Messiah (**The Rebels Speak**) - verses 1-3; Acts 4:24-28
2. God Nevertheless Sets Up Christ as King (**God Speaks**) - verses 4-6 (Zion - 2 Samuel 5:6-9; 2 Chronicles 5:2; Isaiah 2:3; Hebrews 12:22-25)
3. Christ Rules the Nations with a Rod of Iron (**Christ Speaks**) - verses 7-9; Acts 13:32-33; Hebrews 1:5; 5:5
 - a. Son - verse 7; Matthew 3:17; 17:5
 - b. Nations His Inheritance - verse 8; Matthew 28:19; Revelation 1:5
 - c. Rules with Rod of Iron - verse 9; Revelation 12:5; 19:15-16
4. Practical Application: Serve the Lord and Worship His Son (**The Psalmist Speaks**: Exhorts the Rulers) - verses 10-12 ("Kiss" = Worship)
5. The attempts by both Jews and Gentiles to prevent the rule of Christ as King were foreseen foretold, and foredoomed!

D. Triumphant - Psalm 110

Outline (Background - 2 Samuel 7:12-16; 23:1-7)

1. Messiah the King - verses 1-3
 - a. Coronation - verse 1; cf. Matthew 22:41-45; Mark 12:35-37; Luke 20:41-44; 22:69; Acts 2:34-36; 7:55; Hebrews 1:1-3,13; 8:1; 1 Corinthians 15:24-26
 - b. Rule - verse 2; cf. Revelation 19:15
 - c. Subjects: Those Who Are Willing - verse 3; cf. Revelation 22:17
2. Messiah the Priest After the Order of Melchizedek -verse 4; cf. Hebrews 5:6; 6:20 -7:28 (esp. 7:17,21)
3. Messiah's Triumph Over His Enemies - verses 5-7

II. Messianic Promise Not Fulfilled in Solomon or Any Other Old Testament King - Psalm 89

- A. The Lord's Covenant with David - verses 3-4
- B. The Lord's Promises to David - verses 19-37
- C. The Seed of David Cast Down - verses 38-45
- D. Plea to God to Remember the Covenant - verses 46-51

III. The Path to Rule: Suffering - Psalm 22

- A. Suffering (Crucifixion) - verses 1 - 21b
 1. verse 1; cf. Matthew 27:46
 2. verse 6; cf. Isaiah 53:3; Matthew 27:22-23
 3. verse 7; cf. Matthew 27:39
 4. verse 8; cf. Matthew 27:43; Luke 23:35
 5. verse 16; cf. Mark 15:25; Luke 23:33; John 19:18
 6. verse 18; cf. Matthew 27:35; Luke 23:34; John 19:23-24
- B. Deliverance (Resurrection) - verses 21c - 31
 1. verse 22; cf. Hebrews 2:10-12
 2. verses 25, 27; Isaiah 11:9; Acts 17:30; Romans 15:9

IV. Messiah Raised to Rule - Psalm 16:8-11; cf. Acts 2:22-29; 13:35-37

V. The Wedding of Messiah - Psalm 45; cf. Ephesians 5:22-33

- A. Introduction: the Writer's Purpose - verse 1
- B. Praise Addressed to the King - verses 2-9
 1. Personal Fairness - verse 2
 2. Mighty in Battle - verses 3-5
 3. His Rule Based on His Character- verses 6-7; cf. Hebrews 1:8-9
 4. the Beauty of His Garments and Attendants -verses 8-9
- C. Exhortation to the Bride - verses 10-17
 1. Forget Your Own People and Honor the King -verses 10-11

2. Her Glory and Joy - verses 12-15

3. She Shall Be Remembered in All Generations -verses 16-17



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