

RESONATE

Book of the Month

May 2022: *Psalms 1-75*

Author and Date

Individual psalms come from diverse periods of Israel's history, but at every stage they served as the songbook of God's people. David wrote about half of the Psalms. His role as king was more than that of a ruler. He was to represent and even embody the people, and their well-being was tied to his faithfulness. David, then, writes as a representative, and the readers must discern whether the emphasis of a psalm is more on his role as ruler or more on his role as ideal Israelite, in which he is an example for all. The historical occasions mentioned in the psalm titles help the reader see how faith applies to real-life situations.

Key Themes

The Psalter is fundamentally the hymnbook of God's people. It takes the basic themes of OT theology and turns them into song:

- I. *Monotheism*. The one God, Maker and Ruler of all, will vindicate his goodness and justice in his own time. Everyone must know and love this God, whose purity, power, wisdom, faithfulness, and unceasing love are breathtakingly beautiful.
- II. *Creation and fall*. Though God made man with dignity and purpose, all people since the fall are beset with sins and weaknesses that only God's grace can heal.
- III. *Election and covenant*. The one true God chose a people for himself and bound himself to them by his covenant. This covenant expressed God's intention to save his people, and through them to bring light to the world.
- IV. *Covenant membership*. In his covenant, God offers grace to his people: forgiveness of their sins, the shaping of their lives to reflect his own glory, and a part to play as light to the Gentiles. Each member of God's people is responsible to believe God's promises and to grow in obeying his commands. Those who do this enjoy the full benefits of God's love and find delight in knowing him. The well-being of God's people as a whole affects the well-being of each member. Each one shares the joys and sorrows of the others. When believers suffer, they should not seek revenge but should pray. They can be confident that God will make all things right in his own time.
- V. *Eschatology*. The story of God's people is headed toward a glorious future, in which all kinds of people will come to know the Lord. The personal faithfulness of God's people contributes to his ultimate purpose. The Messiah, the ultimate heir of David, will lead his people in the great task of bringing light to the Gentiles.

Types of Psalms

The Psalms can be identified according to some basic categories:

- *Laments*, which lay a troubled situation before the Lord, asking him for help. There are community ([Psalm 12](#)) and individual ([Psalm 13](#)) laments. This category is the largest by far, including up to a third of all Psalms.
- *Hymns of praise*, which call God's people to admire his great attributes and deeds. Examples include [Psalms 8; 93; and 145](#).

- *Hymns of thanksgiving*. As with laments, there are community ([Psalm 9](#)) and individual ([Psalm 30](#)) thanksgiving psalms.
- *Hymns celebrating God's law* ([Psalm 119](#)).
- *Wisdom psalms* ([Psalms 1; 37](#)), which reflect themes from the Wisdom Books ([Job](#), [Proverbs](#), [Ecclesiastes](#), [Song of Solomon](#)).
- *Songs of confidence*, which enable worshipers to deepen their trust in God amid difficult circumstances ([Psalm 23](#)).
- *Royal psalms*, which present the Davidic monarchy as the vehicle of blessing for God's people. Some of these are prayers ([Psalm 20](#)), some are thanksgivings ([Psalm 21](#)). All relate to the Messiah, the ultimate heir of David, either by setting a pattern ([Psalms 20–21](#)) or by portraying the king's reign in such a way that only the Messiah can completely fulfill it ([Psalms 2; 72](#)), or by focusing on the future ([Psalm 110](#)).
- *Historical psalms*, which take lessons from the history of God's dealings with his people ([Psalm 78](#)).
- *Prophetic hymns*, which echo the Prophets, calling people to covenant faithfulness ([Psalm 81](#)).

NOTE: This month is going to have a big portion of reading each day. You may need to give yourself a little extra time to make it through.

Reading Plan

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|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. Psalm 1-2 | 11. Psalm 26-27 | 22. Psalm 53-55 |
| 2. Psalm 3-5 | 12. Psalm 28-30 | 23. Psalm 56-57 |
| 3. Psalm 6-7 | 13. Psalm 31-32 | 24. Psalm 58-60 |
| 4. Psalm 8-10 | 14. Psalm 33-35 | 25. Psalm 61-62 |
| 5. Psalm 11-12 | 15. Psalm 36-37 | 26. Psalm 63-65 |
| 6. Psalm 13-15 | 16. Psalm 38-40 | 27. Psalm 66-67 |
| 7. Psalm 16-17 | 17. Psalm 41-42 | 28. Psalm 68-69 |
| 8. Psalm 18-20 | 18. Psalm 43-45 | 29. Psalm 70-71 |
| 9. Psalm 21-22 | 19. Psalm 46-47 | 30. Psalm 72-73 |
| 10. Psalm 23-25 | 20. Psalm 48-50 | 31. Psalm 74-75 |
| | 21. Psalm 51-52 | |

**Content adapted from the ESV Study Bible*