

Introduction-- Though there is slight uncertainty about the exact authorship of 2-3 psalms, we know that they were compiled over a period of time that stretches from Exodus to the Babylonian captivity. Of the 150 psalms, David composed nearly half; Asaph (David's worship leader) wrote 12, as did the worship team (the sons of Korah); Moses is credited with one (Ps. 90), Solomon with two; and, a number of others were written anonymously or by obscure poets (Ethan, Jeduthun, etc.).

The psalms are poems put to music, which is to say, they're songs. In the Hebrew, there are several different commands and instructions for the musicians who would be accompanying the soloists or the choirs that would be singing them.

Hebrew poetry is based on parallelism rather than rhyme, so it takes a little getting used to for us. It dwells on the same thought or event by making pairs of statements about it. Usually, the second statement is a synonymous declaration to the first, saying the same thing in different words; other times, the second phrase is a contrast to the first emphasizing what is not being said; and, once

in a while, the original idea is developed or expanded upon by what follows it.

Psalms is a great book to read on almost any occasion because it honestly portrays the real life struggle of individual believers. In Psalms you will find profound doctrine, incredible patterns for worship, deep assurances of God's sovereignty and protection, prophecies, prayers and some of the most comforting passages in the whole Bible. When I'm lost, discouraged, frustrated, worn out or just curious about God's ways, Psalms is my first Book of choice.

Ancient editors divided the Psalms into 5 sections, roughly around different themes, but I have never found those divisions particularly meaningful. By the way, the most common mistake people make about this Book is the way they speak about the individual psalms: when you talk about one, you say *psalm* (no "s" at the end) not *psalm_s*. For example, our study will be in Psalm 119, the longest psalm of all the psalms in the Book of Psalms.

I have selected verses that speak specifically of the Bible's spiritual dynamic. ♥

Psalm 119: Select Verses

¹⁸Open my eyes, that I may behold wonderful things from Thy law.

¹⁹I am a stranger in the earth; do not hide Thy commandments from me.

²³Even though princes sit and talk against me, Thy servant meditates on Thy statutes.

²⁴Thy testimonies also are my delight; *they are* my counselors.

⁴⁹Remember the word to Thy servant, in which Thou hast made me hope.

⁵⁰This is my comfort in my affliction, that Thy word has revived me.

⁶⁵Thou hast dealt well with Thy servant, O LORD, according to Thy word.

⁶⁶Teach me good discernment and knowledge, for I believe in Thy commandments.

⁸¹My soul languishes for Thy salvation; I wait for Thy word.

⁸²My eyes fail *with longing* for Thy word, while I say, "When wilt Thou comfort me?"

⁸⁵The arrogant have dug pits for me, *men* who are not in accord with Thy law.

⁸⁶All Thy commandments are faithful; they have persecuted me with a lie; help me!

⁸⁷They almost destroyed me on earth, but as for me, I did not forsake Thy precepts.

⁸⁹Forever, O LORD, Thy word is settled in heaven.

⁹²If Thy law had not been my delight, then I would have perished in my affliction.

⁹³I will never forget Thy precepts, for by them Thou hast revived me.

⁹⁸Thy commandments make me wiser than my enemies, for they are ever mine.

⁹⁹I have more insight than all my teachers, for Thy testimonies are my meditation.

¹⁰⁵Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path.

¹⁵³Look upon my affliction and rescue me, for I do not forget Thy law.

¹⁵⁴Plead my cause and redeem me; revive me according to Thy word.

¹⁶⁰The sum of Thy word is truth, and every one of Thy righteous ordinances is everlasting.

¹⁶⁵Those who love Thy law have great peace, and nothing causes them to stumble.