

# PSALM 1

---

---

**Context:** This psalm acts as the first of two introductions to the entire book of Psalms. It's the "wisdom introduction", highlighting God's law. The opening verses have a progression: walk, stand, sit. It's the progression of the foolish person getting more and more comfortable with sin. The wise man is, in contrast, meditating on the law of God. This introduction book really sets the tone that the whole book of Psalms is going to be about walking according to God's ways.



# PSALM 2

---

---

**Context:** This psalm serves as the second introduction to the book of Psalms. It's the "Son of God" or royal introduction. The background for Psalm 2 is the Davidic covenant and the filial relationship God has established with David & his line. God the Father uses the words of Psalm 2 in the Transfiguration and Baptism of Jesus. The kingship over the world that God promises in Psalm 2, he actually makes happen in the New Testament through the establishment of the Church to reign. Verses 11-12 can be translated "kiss his feet" or "kiss the son" - take refuge in the son, the king, Jesus! You are blessed if you take refuge in Jesus. Acts 4:23-29 quotes this.





# PSALM 3

---

---

**Context:** Author: David. This is about when he is fleeing from his son Absalom in the late years of his life, who is trying to usurp his power. Because the first two psalms really serve as introduction, this is really the first psalm of Book 1 of the Psalter. Book 1 has a sad & depressive vibe to it. “Selah” is a musical note instructing you to “lift up your voice.” The verse that says “you are a shield around me” reminds us of Genesis 15:1 when God tells Abraham that he is Abraham’s shield, and Exodus 14 when God acts as a shield around his people with his cloud of fire and smoke. Psalm 121 talks about God as the guardian of Israel similarly to this one. Salvation “belongs to the Lord” - it all comes from God, in God’s timing.





# PSALM 4

---

---

**Context:** Author: David. This is a psalm about David being chased by his enemies and persecuted. He cries out to God and starts with his distress, but notice that by the end of the psalm, he declares that he can trust God and sleep in peace, because God has heard his cry. Verse 8 (depending on the translation you have) says that God has granted David greater joy than grain and wine - more than material success. This is the background of Jesus' Matthew 6 teaching to 'seek first the kingdom of God'.





# PSALM 5

---

---

**Context:** Author: David. David makes a plea for God to help him against his enemies, and he identifies himself as innocent. He appeals to and puts his trust in God's mercy in verse 7. It reminds us of Exodus 34:6-9 when God describes himself as a merciful God, slow to anger. Verse 8 starts with "lead me", which reminds us of Song of Songs 1:4 "draw me", and the reality of God leading his people into the Promised Land and out of the desert in the Pentateuch (especially Exodus 14-16). In verse 12, there is more shield imagery, a reference to God promising Abraham to be his shield (Genesis 15:1), the way God physically shielded his people in the Exodus with the pillar of fire and smoke, and Ephesians 6 on the armor of God (which of course was written later.)





# PSALM 6

---

---

**Context:** Author: David. This psalm has Job and Jeremiah themes in it, though it was written beforehand. Jeremiah is the weeping prophet. This psalm talks about tears and drenching the couch with tears. This was used in the early Church as part of a penitential liturgy, and in association with forgiveness. The question “how long, Oh Lord?” is also found in Revelation 6:10 and in Job’s questioning of God in his suffering.





# PSALM 7

---

---

**Context:** David pre-praises God. He praises him BEFORE he sees God do what he asks. Notice the confidence and faith he needs to do that! The phrase “like a lion” is bad, and implies the enemy. This is unlike the similar phrase “lion of Judah” - this is good and in reference to Jesus, Judah, and in Revelation 5. The lines “arise Oh Lord” are used in the desert when it was time to pick up the Ark and the Tabernacle and move - it implies that God is on the move to conquer.





# PSALM 8

---

---

**Context:** Verse 4-5 can be taken multiple ways, references to Original Man & his son (Adam & Seth), David himself and his son Solomon, generally mankind, or St. Joseph and Jesus. Jesus calls himself “Son of Man”, a name referring to Daniel’s prophecy about seeing ‘one like a Son of Man’ coming on the clouds. This Psalm, David’s words, were written before Daniel’s prophecy. Whenever we see “Son of Man”, we should think this is a Messianic psalm about Jesus!





# PSALM 9

---

---

**Context:** Author: David. 2 Sam 19, David mourns for his son Absalom who dies (while trying to kill him.) There is speculation that this psalm is about the death of Absalom, and other speculation that it's about the death of Goliath. 2 Samuel 7: 17+, right after his covenant, David praises God with 'all of his heart' (verse 1) and this reminds us of the Shema in Deuteronomy 4:6. The enthronement psalms uses this language (verse 7-8) of God sitting on his throne and judging the world. This is a word of hope that God reigns, no matter what happens. Revelation 4 and 5 also have imagery of God on his throne.





# PSALM 10

---

---

**Context:** Author: David. Psalm 9 and 10 were combined into one psalm in the Septuagint (the Greek Old Testament), so you'll notice the themes are very similar. The beginning ("Why do you stand far off, God?") is a rhetorical question that reminds us of the people grumbling against Moses when they didn't understand what God was doing and they suffered in the desert. Verse 2, look to how Hamaan (the enemy of the Jews) was hung on the very gallows he created to hang Mordecai in Esther 5:7. This psalm is about the wicked trusting himself and seemingly prospering. Verse 7 highlights the trouble with the speech of the wicked. The book of Proverbs is specifically about the importance of right speech. In verse 9, the wicked goes after the poor - which refers to the four categories of poor that the Israelites must care for: widows, orphans, sojourners, and poor. Ruth, interestingly, is in this category when she meets Boaz. Pay attention to the way the psalm turns to hope at the end!



# PSALM 11

---

---

**Context:** Author: David. This short psalm emphasizes the trust David places in God even when he's experiencing suffering at the hands of others.



# PSALM 12

---

---

**Context:** Particularly dark psalm. But notice that he's STILL PRAYING in the midst of his "darkest hour." Uncharacteristic of most psalms, God answers and speaks to him mid-verse with a promise. God says he will "arise", which is the word that the Israelites said when they moved the Ark of the Covenant in the desert, "Arise Oh Lord." This word implies that God is arising to move in conquest.





# PSALM 13

---

---

**Context:** Author: David. Heartfelt lament psalm. As usual with David's psalms, the last line is a statement of praise or hope, even amid the troubles.



# PSALM 14

---

---

**Context:** Author: David. This psalm is about the wicked persecuting the 'righteous poor', whom David identifies as his kingdom and his people. He prays for their deliverance.



# PSALM 15

---

---

**Context:** Author: David. This short psalm is about a person at the gate of the temple (at that time there was no temple, so the tabernacle or tent where the Ark was housed), asking the temple official for entry and receiving instruction at who can enter. The 'lending money at interest' refers to the law of caring for the poor. 'Lending' was not about investment, but about giving to the poor, so charging interest on a donation was not permitted. (Exodus 22:24, Leviticus 25:36-7, Deuteronomy 23:30).





# PSALM 16

---

---

**Context:** Author: David. The word 'Mitkam' is used in six psalm superscriptions always with David; the term is unknown! Verse 6's 'pleasant places' refers to the plot of land given to his family - it is pleasing to the psalmist and enough to pass on to the next generations. Verse 10 was a favorite preaching of the Apostles! (Acts 2:27, 13:35) Verse 10's 'Sheol' means Hell and 'the pit' refers to that same thing - the underworld, corruption, etc.



# PSALM 17

---

---

**Context:** Author: David. He cries out to God to save him from his enemies, and ends the psalm with a word of trust even in his distress (a pattern for David). Notice verse 8 referencing God's shadow as a safe place. This theme is repeated in Psalm 57:1, 91:1, Hosea 14:8 and Song of Songs 2:3.

# PSALM 18

---

---

**Context:** Author: David. This is a military thanksgiving psalm for the events in 2 Samuel 22. Verses 5-20 are a 'heavenly perspective' of the victory, and verses 36-46 are 'earthly'. Both parts have an introduction and conclusion to them. Notice the imagery of the sea and rain - these are Israel idioms for chaos, destruction, enemies, Gentiles, etc. Verse 6's "cords" are a bit of hunting imagery. Verse's 15 'arrows' means 'lightening'. Verse 35's 'bow of bronze' means that the bow is so strong and difficult to bend that the arrow shot from it comes at amazing force.



# PSALM 19

---

---

**Context:** Author: David. This psalm is about order and wisdom. The first verses are about how it's shown in creation without any words. The sun's imagery here is significant because in other cultures, the sun is the "judge" or "lawgiver" (it "sees all" from its place in the sky). In verse 8, David transitions to praising the law of God, which is another way God shows his power and order and wisdom.





# PSALM 20

---

---

**Context:** Author: David. The people pray to God before a battle. In the Old Testament, when the Lord remembers or is asked to remember, (like in verse 4), 'remember' is not a passive remembering, but an action, a readiness-to-act, a movement. Notice that the psalm opens and closes in the same way.



# PSALM 21

---

---

**Context:** Author: David. A military / king psalm. Notice that the first and last line are the same. Verses 1-8,14 address THE LORD, and verses 9 - 13 address My Lord, the king. When the Davidic line lost its power on the throne, they sang this as a Messianic prophecy about the king to come.



# PSALM 22

---

---

**Context:** This is a hugely Messianic Psalm. Jesus quotes it on the cross (Mark 15:34). Verse 43 is quoted by the crowd in Matthew 27:43. Verse 14 happens (the pierced side) in John 19:34. Verse 16 happens in John 20:25. Verse 18 happens in John 19:23-24. The ending of the psalm is significant though; the whole thing is quoted and “brought to fulfillment” by the crucifixion, and the Psalm ends with praising God, the earth converting to the Lord, and God being faithful! It’s not just about the crucifixion; it’s about the resurrection too! ‘To the deer at the dawn’ in the subscript is apparently a melody this is set to.





# PSALM 23

---

---

**Context:** This may be the most famous Psalm of all! This is about Jesus the Good Shepherd. There is a prophecy about Jesus being a Good Shepherd in Ezekiel 34:11-16, 23 and Jesus calls himself the Good Shepherd in John 10, and in Mark 6:34 he uses another shepherding analogy when he feeds them in the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves! Psalm 23 points forward to the feeding of the five thousand! Also significant in this psalm are common shepherding practices. Experienced shepherds avoided leading their sheep to running water, because they might fall in. The rod of the shepherd was used to beat predators and the staff to guide the sheep. The sheep were slathered with oil to protect them from bugs. There are sacramental connections too! The “still waters” refer to baptism, the “head anointed with oil” to confirmation, and the “overflowing cup” to the Eucharist!





# PSALM 24

---

---

**Context:** Author: David. This psalm is about the entry of God (in the Ark) into the temple - or back into the temple after military victory. Even the gates are asked to bow down, and verses 3-4 describe who can go into the temple in the Lord's presence.





# PSALM 25

---

---

**Context:** Author: David. A lament psalm. David confesses his sins when he feels abysmal. He at least receives forgiveness, despite his feelings. Each verse begins with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet.





# PSALM 26

---

---

**Context:** Author: David. David seeks God's protection by entering the temple and being in God's presence. (David was a priest and was able to approach closer the Ark than most, but the official temple with the Holy of Holies, the Holy Place, the priest courts, etc was not yet built.) Exodus 30:17-21 is about the necessity of the priests washing their hands, 40:31-32 is about how Moses carried it out, and Isaiah 1:16 is about washing yourself exteriorly as a sign of interiorly.



# PSALM 27

---

---

**Context:** Author: David. Verses 1-6 and 7-14 used to be two different psalms, but they have been handed down together. Verse 8's idiom 'seek his face' comes from the practice of making a journey to seek the Lord.

# PSALM 28

---

---

**Context:** Author: David. David is in the temple, petitioning God to help him and give him refuge.



# PSALM 29

---

---

**Context:** Author: David. This psalm uses the imagery of a storm moving in to describe God's glory and power in terms of the physical storm. The seven repetitions of "The voice of the LORD" imitates the sound of crashing thunder, and may allude to the Canaanite mythological seven-headed beast the Leviathan, whom God will crush with his power.





# PSALM 30

---

---

**Context:** Author: David. Verse 11 becomes the foundation for the beatitude “blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted,” in Matthew (5:4). This psalm was used for the rededication of the temple after the Maccabean Revolt.



# PSALM 31

---

---

**Context:** Even when he's upset, notice that David verbally states his trust in God. This is an act of faith, even when he doesn't feel it. Jesus quotes this psalm (verse 5) on the cross.



# PSALM 32

---

---

**Context:** Author: David. A psalm about forgiveness and repentance from sin. Verse 3's 'kept silent' means 'did not confess my sin', and the psalmist describes the relief and joy from having confessed it (verse 5) and encourages others to repent as well.



# PSALM 33

---

---

**Context:** Author: David. A psalm of praise to God. The power of God's word is emphasized here, as the power of man's word and plan (verse 10-11) are contrasted. God's word can do anything; man's word cannot. See Isaiah 55:11



# PSALM 34

---

---

**Context:** Author: David. This psalm is written directly after the events of 1 Samuel 21:13-16. The name Abimelech is a scribal error for Achish, whom David feigned madness for. This psalm is a thanksgiving in acrostic form, each line beginning with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet.



# PSALM 35

---

---

**Context:** Author: David. He laments betrayal by his friends. The first six verses are figurative language (hyperbole) and imagery for the actual betrayal, which is through words (verse 21). It reminds us of the Agony in the Garden in Matthew 26:57



# PSALM 36

---

---

**Context:** Author: David. This psalm brings together two contradicting ideas: the wicked sinner (verses 1-5) and the kindness of God & his mercy. Verse 3's word "hated" more accurately means "punished by God". It doesn't carry the connotation that God wishes evil or hates in the sense that humans do - vindictively, angrily, forcefully, etc.





# PSALM 37

---

---

**Context:** This psalm is in alphabetical order, and it's a collection of sayings about the wise and the wicked. Verse 11 and verse 29 are the foundation for the beatitude "blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth."





# PSALM 38

---

---

**Context:** This psalm is about a man stricken with sickness and mortification. He is a 'New Job' who does not complain but accepts that this is what he deserves for his sin. He is penitential. Lamentations 3:26-29 seems to repeat this same theme. The Christian liturgy also recognizes Jesus, the silent 'man of sorrows' in this psalm.





# PSALM 39

---

---

**Context:** Author: David. This is a lament psalm. David is trying not to complain, but ends up crying out to God the anguish in his heart - admitting that life seems void of meaning and completely full of despair. He reflects on and mourns the brevity of life as he asks God for help.





# PSALM 40

---

---

**Context:** David purposefully seems to call to mind GOOD things God has done for him when he doesn't feel happy, in order to boost his faith. The second half, starting at verse 12, is a lament (look to Psalm 70 for something similar.) Like other laments, hyperbole is employed to accentuate the suffering. Hebrews 10:5-10 cites this psalm.





# PSALM 41

---

---

**Context:** Jesus quotes this psalm when talking about the betrayal by Judas.





# PSALM 42

---

---

**Context:** This begins Book II of the psalms, and the first few psalms (42-49) are written by the Sons of Korah, the Levite choir David appointed to keep a sort of “perpetual adoration”. 1 Chronicles 9:19-22, 16:7, and 2 Chronicles 20:19 have information about this choir.) Psalm 42 and 43 are really two parts of one psalm.



# PSALM 43

---

---

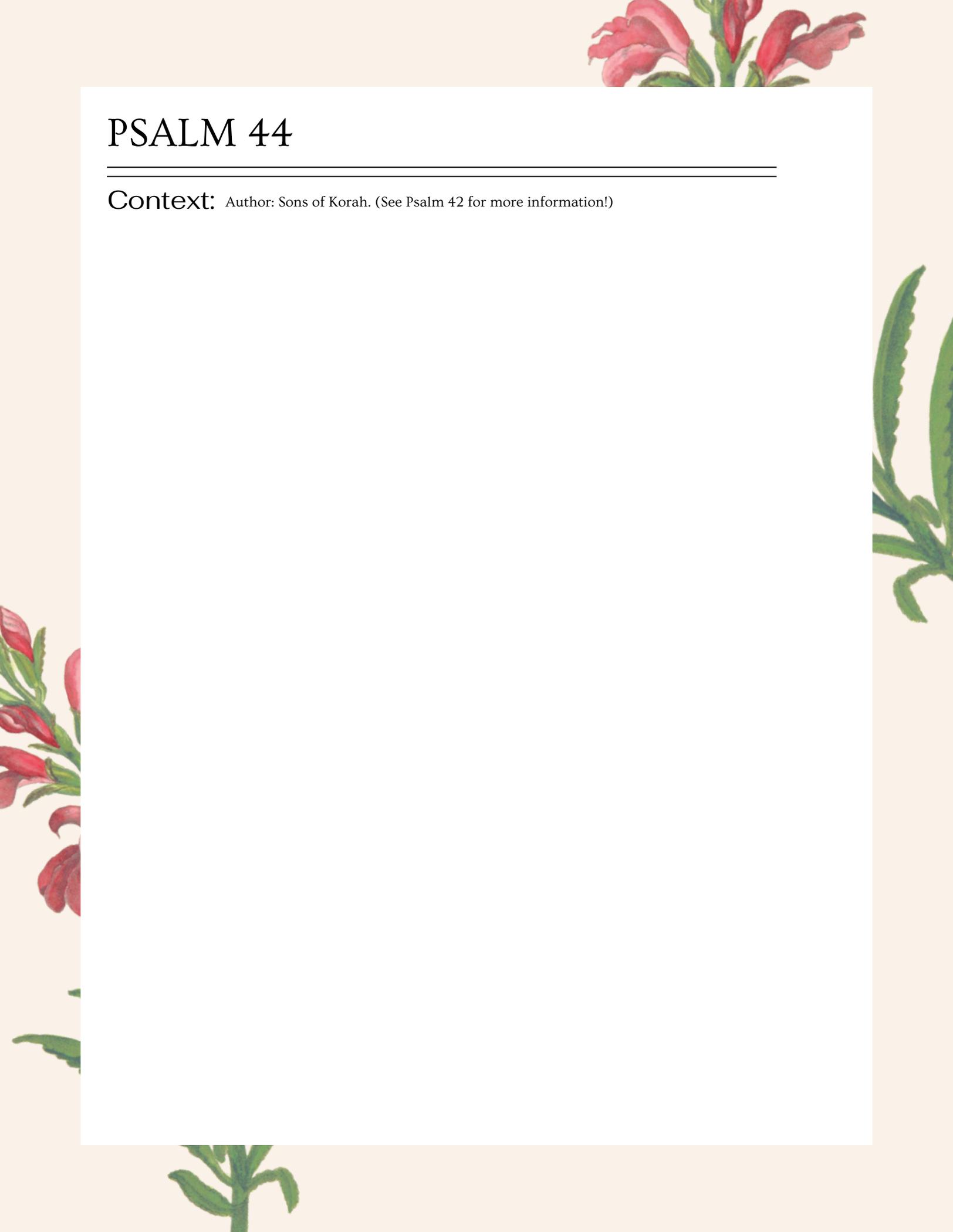
**Context:** Author: Sons of Korah. (See Psalm 42 for more information!) This is the “second half” of the melancholy start in Psalm 42.

# PSALM 44

---

---

**Context:** Author: Sons of Korah. (See Psalm 42 for more information!)





# PSALM 45

---

---

**Context:** Author: Sons of Korah. (See Psalm 42 for more information!) This psalm marks a mood shift in Book II of Psalms, from sad to rejoicing! This psalm is about a wedding, and it's really unlike other psalms. It's closer to the Song of Songs than to any other psalm written. It's written and sung as if to the king on his wedding day, and at the end (16-17), the bride herself speaks. Verse 9 has references to Mary (more specifically, to the Queen Mother, the role King Solomon established in the Davidic Kingdom. Mary is Jesus' Queen Mother, so it's both.) This psalm is used for Marian feast days. This also points forward to the way Jesus is Bridegroom to his people. A royal wedding anywhere in Scripture should remind us of Revelation and Jesus' marriage to us.





# PSALM 46

---

---

**Context:** Author: Sons of Korah. (See Psalm 42 for more information!) This marks the first of the Zion psalms. There are many of them. Zion essentially is a name for Jerusalem as a whole, though it specifically refers to where the royalty lived within Jerusalem (on a ridge), it's generally taken to mean the whole city. 2 Samuel 5-7 show David choosing Jerusalem (Zion) as the heart of the kingdom. Verse 4 is about a river that 'makes glad the city of God'. This literally refers to the Gihon River in Jerusalem (which they named for the river flowing out of Eden, the sacred mountain of God). It spiritually refers to the river of blood and water coming from Jesus' side, since Jesus is the "new temple". It also spiritually refers to the river of life in Revelation that flows from the throne of God - the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit flows from the Church through the sacraments, and that's where our refuge is!



# PSALM 47

---

---

**Context:** Author: Sons of Korah. (See Psalm 42 for more information!)

# PSALM 48

---

---

**Context:** Author: Sons of Korah. (See Psalm 42 for more information!)



# PSALM 49

---

---

**Context:** Author: Sons of Korah. (See Psalm 42 for more information!) This is the last of a series of Zion psalms (see 46 for more information), and it emphasizes the message that all of these psalms have been giving: trust in Jerusalem & her God! This one is more explicit and says to not trust money.





# PSALM 50

---

---

**Context:** Author is Asaph. The psalm is about the “thank offering” and how it’s better than the “burnt offering” established by the Mosaic Covenant (Leviticus 1-7). Leviticus 7:11-15 mentions the “thank offering”. It’s not offered to amend for a sin, but to thank God for what he has done. Most people offered “thank offerings” after first begging God for help, then receiving the help. The whole book of Psalms is like this - it starts sad and crying out to God and ends in a “thank offering”! Asaph, the author, is correcting the people in this psalm in their assumption that a sin offering is better. There are no more sin offerings, but the “thank offering” continues: the Eucharist means “thanksgiving”.





# PSALM 51

---

---

**Context:** This is the first of a series of psalms written by David about his early life/career and all the sufferings he endured at the hands of Saul and his enemies. This is also the psalm David wrote and prayed after his great sin: his affair with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband Uriah. (2 Samuel 11-12). This is a penitential psalm. It's prayed every Friday morning of the Divine Office. Notice the doctrine of Original Sin assumed in verse 7 - that he was born into sin. This psalm is really helpful to take into confession.



# PSALM 52

---

---

**Context:** Author: David. Subject: God saving him from Saul.

# PSALM 53

---

---

**Context:** Author: David. Subject: God saving him from atheists.

# PSALM 54

---

---

**Context:** Author: David. Subject: God saving him from Saul.





# PSALM 55

---

---

**Context:** \*No information yet - research this psalm before you pray!



# PSALM 56

---

---

**Context:** Author: David. Subject: God saving him from the Philistines.



# PSALM 57

---

---

**Context:** Author: David. Subject: God saving him from Saul. Notice verse 1 referencing God's shadow as a safe place. This theme is repeated in Psalm 17:8, 91:1, Hosea 14:8 and Song of Songs 2:3.





# PSALM 58

---

---

**Context:** \*No information yet - research this psalm before you pray!





# PSALM 59

---

---

**Context:** Author: David. Subject: God saving him from Saul. Read in context of 1 Samuel 19:11.





# PSALM 60

---

---

**Context:** Author: David. Subject: God saving him from the Edomites.



# PSALM 61

---

---

**Context:** Author: David. Subject: God saving him from wicked enemies in general.



# PSALM 62

---

---

**Context:** Author: David. Subject: God saving him from wicked enemies in general.



# PSALM 63

---

---

**Context:** Author: David. Subject: God saving him from wicked enemies in general. Read in context of 1 Samuel 24.



# PSALM 64

---

---

**Context:** Author: David. Subject: God saving him from wicked enemies in general.





# PSALM 65

---

---

**Context:** A psalm of praise, written by David, after a lot of psalms about how God saved him from his enemies (psalms 51-64).



# PSALM 66

---

---

**Context:** A psalm of praise, written by David, after a lot of psalms about how God saved him from his enemies (psalms 51-64).

# PSALM 67

---

---

**Context:** A psalm of praise, written by David, after a lot of psalms about how God saved him from his enemies (psalms 51-64). This psalm anticipates the conversion of the Gentiles - it longs for the time when all nations praise God. (Isaiah also has these themes as well as other royal psalms.)



# PSALM 68

---

---

**Context:** A psalm of praise, written by David, after a lot of psalms about how God saved him from his enemies (psalms 51-64). Numbers of the verses might vary depending on your translation! Numbers 10:33-36 is the chapter when Israel left Mount Sinai and this line 'Let God Arise!' was what was said when they picked up the Ark and God led them to scatter their enemies. The image of the Lord 'riding on the clouds' appears in 2 Kings 2 (when Elijah is assumed into Heaven), Ezekial 1's vision of the throne of God, Daniel 7:10-14's vision of the Son of Man on the clouds. There's a lot of imagery of the exodus and the conquest of the Promised Land. Bashan is a beautiful big mountain nearby but God chose Mount Zion; he didn't choose the most prestigious mountain he could. he chooses to dwell in the humble and the 'prideful' will look upon this with envy. 'Thousands upon thousands' is imagery in Revelation - TONS of people, as well as stars of Abraham.





# PSALM 69

---

---

**Context:** \*No information yet - research this psalm before you pray!



# PSALM 70

---

---

**Context:** \*No information yet - research this psalm before you pray!



# PSALM 71

---

---

**Context:** Written by David near the end of his life, when he is old and gray. He speaks about a life of trusting God (verses 9 and 18 show this).





# PSALM 72

---

---

**Context:** A psalm written by David about his son Solomon, to whom he is passing the birthright and the kingdom. It's a prayer for his son's reign (which is mostly awesome! He reaches the high point of the whole kingdom's history in 1 Kings 4-10) before his demise. Abraham's promises from God are fulfilled in the Davidic Covenant and Solomon's kingship: great name, great nation, worldwide blessing! But Solomon falls, so Jesus ultimately is the fulfillment of Psalm 72, including verses like 8-15 about the shepherd and kings worshipping the King. (Think of the nativity story!)





# PSALM 73

---

---

**Context:** Author: Asaph. This is the first psalm of Book III. This psalm is a commentary on the hard truth that bad things happen to good people. The first 16 verses of the song are just grappling with this reality, but when he goes to worship, he realizes that the wicked only are successful a short time, and ruin is in store for them. He gains Heavenly perspective from visiting the sanctuary! In verse 25, he concludes by placing his hope and trust and desire in God, not in the successes of the world.





# PSALM 74

---

---

**Context:** Author: Asaph. This psalm describes the enemies of Israel destroying the Jerusalem temple (which the Babylonians eventually do.) This psalm comes only two after the glorious Psalm 72 about the heights of Solomon's reign! It's a quick turnaround. Many of these following psalms are laments from the whole kingdom. The whole nation is crying out to God, from Asaph's authorship.



# PSALM 75

---

---

**Context:** \*No information yet - research this psalm before you pray!



# PSALM 76

---

---

**Context:** \*No information yet - research this psalm before you pray!





# PSALM 77

---

---

**Context:** Author: Asaph. This psalm (and many others nearby it) is a lament from the whole kingdom. The whole nation is crying out to God, from Asaph's authorship.





# PSALM 78

---

---

**Context:** Author: Asaph. This is one of the longest psalms in the Psalter. This is a long detailed history of Israel's sins against God, but it isn't in chronological order, but trying to underline how patient and merciful God is with the disobedient people. This psalm is in the theme of Deuteronomy: remember and teach your children what God has done for you! This is the psalm for the Exultation of the Cross feast day! The surrounding psalms are "communal lament" psalms written to describe the entire nation's struggles. Matthew 13 - Jesus refers to verse 1 here when he speaks about teaching in parables.





# PSALM 79

---

---

**Context:** Author: Asaph. This psalm (and many others nearby it) is a lament from the whole kingdom. The whole nation is crying out to God, from Asaph's authorship.





# PSALM 80

---

---

**Context:** Author: Asaph. This psalm (and many others nearby it) is a lament from the whole kingdom. The whole nation is crying out to God, asking for restoration. This psalm builds on Psalm 23 with the Good Shepherd imagery, but instead of just the KING (David) recognizing God as Shepherd, now the whole Kingdom recognizes it. (Refer to that for more information!) The reference to 'cherubim' is how God is seated on angel wings - this is from the Ark of the Covenant and Tabernacle, which were built based on the Heavenly vision Moses saw! The God of angels...shepherds us! There is speculation that this psalm is written after the Northern Kingdom fell in 722 AD because the three closest North tribes to Judah are mentioned by name here.





# PSALM 81

---

---

**Context:** The surrounding psalms are “communal lament” psalms written to describe the entire nation’s struggles. This psalm, almost in response to the “confession of the Israelite people for centuries of infidelity to God” psalm (78), is unique. God addresses Israel in this psalm. He rebukes them for their sin, specifically idol worship (verse 9). The words “finest wheat” are Eucharistic image.





# PSALM 82

---

---

**Context:** Author: Asaph. This psalm (and many others nearby it) is a lament from the whole kingdom. The whole nation is crying out to God, from Asaph's authorship.





# PSALM 83

---

---

**Context:** Author: Asaph. This psalm (and many others nearby it) is a lament from the whole kingdom. The whole nation is crying out to God, from Asaph's authorship.





# PSALM 84

---

---

**Context:** Among a lot of sad psalms, this is a joyful one about God's house! The Temple is presented here as the place to find refuge and joy even in a troubling world. Verse 10 implies the reality of spiritual consolation: a thousand days of earthly pleasure is not comparable to one day of spiritual consolation and being with the Lord.





# PSALM 85

---

---

**Context:** Author: Asaph. This psalm (and many others nearby it) is a lament from the whole kingdom. The whole nation is crying out to God, from Asaph's authorship.



# PSALM 86

---

---

**Context:** \*No information yet - research this psalm before you pray!



# PSALM 87

---

---

**Context:** This is the only psalm of David in Book III of the Psalter. It is, like the surrounding psalms, a lament to God in times of distress. The two saddest psalms come directly after this one.



# PSALM 88

---

---

**Context:** This is the first of two psalms (88 and 89) that are the saddest of the entire Psalter. This is the “low point” of the book, and it concludes Book III. Hemen is the author, who describes himself as dead and in the afterlife. This psalm ends without a thank or praise moment at the end. This is generally taken to be a Holy Thursday-Good Friday psalm. Though it was written by Hemen, the emotions paint a portrait of Jesus’ sufferings immensely. Notice that even in the darkest pain, the psalmist prays.





# PSALM 89

---

---

**Context:** Author: Asaph. This psalm (and many others nearby it) is a lament from the whole kingdom. The whole nation is crying out to God, from Asaph's authorship. This is the second of two psalms (88 and 89) that are the saddest of the entire Psalter. This is the "low point" of the book, and it concludes Book III. The psalm starts off with hope and confidence and sounds similar to psalm 72 about Solomon, even referencing the Davicic filial covenant (verse 26) by saying God calls him father, but at line 37 it cuts off into sorrow and describes the Davidic king being thrown off the throne (which does happen in almost 600BC). Whenever we see the words "your mercies" (plural), know that the translation is singular, referring to "God's mercy" (hesed) or his "covenant faithfulness". Praising God's 'mercies' is praising his refusal to give up on a people-who-have-given-up-on-him-through-sin. Notice the longing for the Messiah, for the promise of God to come, for the Davidic Covenant to be renewed.





# PSALM 90

---

---

**Context:** Author: Moses. This psalm begins Book IV of the Psalter. It follows a dramatically tragic end in psalm 89, which describes the Babylonian exile and the fall of the great King Solomon. This book of psalms doesn't have any climaxes or dramatic points. It's a steady slog of contemplative psalms, which we can see paints the Israelite history story of the Exile. Abraham and Moses are mentioned in this book of psalms, almost as if the Israelites are trying to find meaning, advice, and hope from another leader besides their fallen king. This psalm is firm and stern, but full of good advice. Because the people are in exile and have just lost their home, the focus is on God as the dwelling place of the people. "Teach us to number our days" is a line about how fast life passes and the importance of using our time well.





# PSALM 91

---

---

**Context:** This psalm is an “exorcism” psalm, or a psalm of “spiritual warfare”. It’s used for exorcisms and in deliverance ministry. This is the psalm famously quoted by the Devil himself in Matthew 4:6. There is reference to guardian angels here (see CCC 336). Because the people are in exile and have just lost their home, the focus is on God as the dwelling place of the people. Notice verse 1 referencing God’s shadow as a safe place. This theme is repeated in Psalm 17:8, 57:1, Hosea 14:8 and Song of Songs 2:3.



# PSALM 92

---

---

**Context:** Because the people are in exile and have just lost their home, the focus is on God as the dwelling place of the people.





# PSALM 93

---

---

**Context:** Because the Davidic Kingdom has just fallen (Psalm 89) and the people are in exile, this psalm has themes of God as King, and his authority never failing. Because the kingdom is no longer the focus of God's glory, this psalm turns to see God's glory in creation.





# PSALM 94

---

---

**Context:** Because the people are in exile and have just lost their home, the focus is on God as the dwelling place of the people. Because the Davidic Kingdom has just fallen (Psalm 89), this psalm has themes of God as King, and his authority never failing.





# PSALM 95

---

---

**Context:** Because the Davidic Kingdom has just fallen (Psalm 89) and the people are in exile, this psalm has themes of God as King, and his authority never failing. Because the kingdom is no longer the focus of God's glory, this psalm turns to see God's glory in creation. Notice the emphasis that God is above all other gods; this is very relevant to the people who live in foreign cities surrounded by false gods. This psalm may sound very familiar since it's been turned to worship songs and hymnals for years in the church! It's a simple and straightforward call to worship God, even in the exile.





# PSALM 96

---

---

**Context:** Because the Davidic Kingdom has just fallen (Psalm 89) and the people are in exile, this psalm has themes of God as King, and his authority never failing. This psalm calls for a “new song” because since the old Jerusalem songs seem irrelevant in a new land (see Psalm 137:3). Notice the emphasis that God is above all other gods; this is very relevant to the people who live in foreign cities surrounded by false gods.





# PSALM 97

---

---

**Context:** Because the Davidic Kingdom has just fallen (Psalm 89) and the people are in exile, this psalm has themes of God as King, and his authority never failing. Because the kingdom is no longer the focus of God's glory, this psalm turns to see God's glory in creation. Notice the emphasis that God is above all other gods; this is very relevant to the people who live in foreign cities surrounded by false gods.





# PSALM 98

---

---

**Context:** This psalm calls for a “new song” because the people are in exile, waiting to be delivered by God. This series of psalms is meditative and contemplative on the reality of the exile, and the need for a new song, since the old Jerusalem songs seem irrelevant in a new land (see Psalm 137:3).





# PSALM 99

---

---

**Context:** Because the Davidic Kingdom has just fallen (Psalm 89) and the people are in exile, this psalm has themes of God as King, and his authority never failing. Because the kingdom is no longer the focus of God's glory, this psalm turns to see God's glory in creation.





# PSALM 100

---

**Context:** This is a “thank offering” psalm! (See more information in Psalm 50). This psalm was set to music and became so popular that the melody was called the “Old Hundredth”. (It’s the same melody for ‘Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow’, or the ‘doxology’.) Giving thanks to God is not just in psalm, it’s now Eucharistic for us, since the ‘thank offering’ for the church today is the Mass.



# PSALM 101

---

---

**Context:** Because the people are in exile and have just lost their home, the focus is on God as the dwelling place of the people.



# PSALM 102

---

---

**Context:** Because the Davidic Kingdom has just fallen (Psalm 89) and the people are in exile, this psalm has themes of God as King, and his authority never failing. Because the kingdom is no longer the focus of God's glory, this psalm turns to see God's glory in creation. Notice the hope in verse 13, that the exile will end!





# PSALM 103

---

---

**Context:** Because the Davidic Kingdom has just fallen (Psalm 89) and the people are in exile, this psalm has themes of God as King, and his authority never failing. Notice the home in verse 9, that the exile will end!





# PSALM 104

---

---

**Context:** The people are in exile after Psalm 89, and these psalms in Book IV reflect that. Because the kingdom is no longer the focus of God's glory, this psalm turns to see God's glory in creation. This psalm more than any other in the whole Psalter, details the creation/creator relationship. Read this in context of Jesus' words of care for the animals and even more for his people! (Matthew 6:26). Jesus uses the Psalm 104 theology in this preaching. Hebrews 1:7 quotes verse 4. Traditional Catholic prayers use verse 30. This is the psalm used at Easter Vigil after the creation story, and at Pentecost.





# PSALM 105

---

---

**Context:** This psalm is a history of Israel's story with God. It is a reflection on God's hesed, his covenant faithfulness. Read this alongside Psalm 106.





# PSALM 106

---

---

**Context:** This psalm, to be read alongside Psalm 105, details Israel's history with God, and concludes that Israel has been an unfaithful nation to God. It's a realization that the sin of the people brought the exile upon themselves. Verse 47 ends with a prayer to be released from the exile. Notice the emphasis on criticizing idols; this is very relevant to the people who live in foreign cities surrounded by false gods.





# PSALM 107

---

---

**Context:** This is the first psalm of Book V, and there is a dramatic mood shift from Book IV's exile contemplative psalms. This psalm begins with high energy! Thanking God for bringing people back from the exile, as they prayed for in Psalm 106!



# PSALM 108

---

---

**Context:** \*No information yet - research this psalm before you pray!

# PSALM 109

---

---

**Context:** \*No information yet - research this psalm before you pray!



# PSALM 110

---

---

**Context:** This is a triumphant song of the Davidic Kingship! This is the first time a Davidic King has been mentioned in the Psalter since Psalm 89 and the fall of Solomon! We are truly out of the exile now. (Though, this was about the time of David.) The New Testament refers to this psalm often, specifically Hebrews. The singer of the psalm addresses the king directly (The Lord is God, and my lord is the King.) The line of Melchizedek referenced here is about the first-son kingship of Adam and Noah and Abraham, as opposed to the Levitical priesthood (God's plan B) of the Exodus. David's (and thus Jesus') kingship goes back to the original one.



# PSALM 111

---

---

**Context:** \*No information yet - research this psalm before you pray!  
Todah Psalm

# PSALM 112

---

---

Context: todah psalm



# PSALM 113

---

---

**Context:** Psalms 113-118 are the Passover Psalms, the “Egyptian Hallel”. They are recited at Passover to remember how God freed them from slavery. This is the “hymn” mentioned in Matthew 26:30.





# PSALM 114

---

---

**Context:** Psalms 113-118 are the Passover Psalms, the “Egyptian Hallel”. They are recited at Passover to remember how God freed them from slavery. This is the “hymn” mentioned in Matthew 26:30. This psalm uses highly rhetorical language and there is a focus on God’s presence & God making his sanctuary and dominion in the midst of his people. All of nature is ‘getting out of the way’ because the Lord is here - just like the bodies of water parted at God’s command.





# PSALM 115

---

---

**Context:** Psalms 113-118 are the Passover Psalms, the “Egyptian Hallel”. They are recited at Passover to remember how God freed them from slavery. This is the “hymn” mentioned in Matthew 26:30.





# PSALM 116

---

---

**Context:** Psalms 113-118 are the Passover Psalms, the “Egyptian Hallel”. They are recited at Passover to remember how God freed them from slavery. This is the “hymn” mentioned in Matthew 26:30.



# PSALM 117

---

---

**Context:** Psalms 113-118 are the Passover Psalms, the “Egyptian Hallel”. They are recited at Passover to remember how God freed them from slavery. This is the “hymn” mentioned in Matthew 26:30.



# PSALM 118

---

---

**Context:** Psalms 113-118 are the Passover Psalms, the “Egyptian Hallel”. They are recited at Passover to remember how God freed them from slavery. This is the “hymn” mentioned in Matthew 26:30. Notice verse 22 about the cornerstone. Jesus was crucified on Golgotha, which had been a quarry mining stone. The stone left behind wasn’t good for mining. He was literally crucified on the stone that the builders rejected. (This line is quoted in Mark 12:10, Matthew 21:42, Luke 20:17, Acts 4:11, 1 Peter 2:7) This psalm is also an Easter psalm, because it prophecies the resurrection! Hosanna - palm sunday people quoted psalm 118 :25-26 asing for gods salvaton





# PSALM 119

---

---

**Context:** The longest psalm, and the longest chapter of the whole Bible! It's got one stanza per letter of the Hebrew alphabet, 8 lines long (this is a ginormous literary feat, to use the entire alphabet to praise God one stanza at a time). It seems this psalm was the original "end" to the book! It matches nicely with Psalm 1, meditating on God's law. But more psalms were added later to conclude the Psalter at Psalm 150. When you see these words, they all mean "law": word, promise, command, precept, statute, ordinance, testimony.





# PSALM 120

---

---

**Context:** This is the first of the “songs of Ascent” (120-134) that were likely added after Psalm 119 was the conclusion of the book. These psalms of Ascent were sung as the Israelites returned from exile to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple. They literally climbed up the hill to Jerusalem (ascent). They are pilgrimage songs.

Pentecost Passover Tabernacles - required for men over a certain age to go to  
jerusalem -

calling to the lord in distress - we dont know if its of david or not

image of someone who is on the run and not belonging in a foreigner - the locations  
mentioned are far away, indicated wandering





# PSALM 121

---

---

**Context:** One of the Psalms of Ascent. (See Psalm 120 for information.)





# PSALM 122

---

---

**Context:** One of the Psalms of Ascent. (See Psalm 120 for information.)





# PSALM 123

---

---

**Context:** One of the Psalms of Ascent. (See Psalm 120 for information.)





# PSALM 124

---

---

**Context:** One of the Psalms of Ascent. (See Psalm 120 for information.)





# PSALM 125

---

---

**Context:** One of the Psalms of Ascent. (See Psalm 120 for information.)

comparing the place to themselves - just as the place we are traveling to is  
UNMOVABLE let us be the same way. mountains are physically around jerusalem and  
god is around his people





# PSALM 126

---

---

**Context:** One of the Psalms of Ascent. (See Psalm 120 for information.)





# PSALM 127

---

---

**Context:** Author: David. One of the Psalms of Ascent. (See Psalm 120 for information.) This is a psalm of “how to live life”.





# PSALM 128

---

---

**Context:** One of the Psalms of Ascent. (See Psalm 120 for information.)





# PSALM 129

---

---

**Context:** One of the Psalms of Ascent. (See Psalm 120 for information.)





# PSALM 130

---

---

**Context:** One of the Psalms of Ascent. (See Psalm 120 for information.)





# PSALM 131

---

---

**Context:** One of the Psalms of Ascent. (See Psalm 120 for information.)





# PSALM 132

---

---

**Context:** One of the Psalms of Ascent. (See Psalm 120 for information.)





# PSALM 133

---

---

**Context:** One of the Psalms of Ascent. (See Psalm 120 for information.)





# PSALM 134

---

---

**Context:** One of the Psalms of Ascent. (See Psalm 120 for information.)





# PSALM 135

---

---

**Context:** This is a psalm of the New Temple, being rebuilt by Zerubbabel after the exile. It's a praise litany used in worship in the temple, like Psalm 136 after it.





# PSALM 136

---

---

**Context:** Known as the “Great Hallel” in Jewish tradition. This is a psalm of the New Temple, being rebuilt by Zerubbabel after the exile. It’s a praise litany used in worship in the temple, like Psalm 135 before it. (The congregation would respond ‘his mercy endures forever’ and the priest would sing the lines.) This was at one point the “ending” to the Psalter. It ends on a high note, and it wraps up the Songs of Ascent (120-134) and Temple Worship! But more were added.





# PSALM 137

---

---

**Context:** A Davidic psalm of lament, seemingly misplaced in this triumphant happy Book VI! After Psalm 119, the Psalter doesn't follow the storyline of Israel as much, and some of David's psalms that hadn't found a home in the book yet were inserted. This is one example.





# PSALM 138

---

---

**Context:** \*No information yet - research this psalm before you pray!





# PSALM 139

---

---

**Context:** One of the most beloved psalms of all time - this is by King David, and reveals his intimacy with God and how he really was a “man after God’s own heart”. (1 Samuel 13:14)



# PSALM 140

---

---

**Context:** \*No information yet - research this psalm before you pray!

# PSALM 141

---

---

**Context:** \*No information yet - research this psalm before you pray!



# PSALM 142

---

---

**Context:** Author: David. This psalm is written when David is 'in the cave'. Read in context of 1 Samuel 22.





# PSALM 143

---

---

**Context:** A Davidic psalm of lament, seemingly misplaced in this triumphant happy Book VI! After Psalm 119, the Psalter doesn't follow the storyline of Israel as much, and some of David's psalms that hadn't found a home in the book yet were inserted. This is one example.





# PSALM 144

---

---

**Context:** \*No information yet - research this psalm before you pray!





# PSALM 145

---

---

**Context:** \*No information yet - research this psalm before you pray!





# PSALM 146

---

---

**Context:** The first of the 'LAST FIVE PSALMS' which each begin and are filled with 'Hallelujah' and over-the-top praise, like a finale of a firework show. It is a clear end to the book, after the book originally ended at Psalm 119 and 136.





# PSALM 147

---

---

**Context:** The second of the 'LAST FIVE PSALMS' which each begin and are filled with 'Hallelujah' and over-the-top praise, like a finale of a firework show. It is a clear end to the book, after the book originally ended at Psalm 119 and 136.





# PSALM 148

---

---

**Context:** The third of the 'LAST FIVE PSALMS' which each begin and are filled with 'Hallelujah' and over-the-top praise, like a finale of a firework show. It is a clear end to the book, after the book originally ended at Psalm 119 and 136.





# PSALM 149

---

---

**Context:** The fourth of the 'LAST FIVE PSALMS' which each begin and are filled with 'Hallelujah' and over-the-top praise, like a finale of a firework show. It is a clear end to the book, after the book originally ended at Psalm 119 and 136.



# PSALM 150

---

---

**Context:** The fifth of the 'LAST FIVE PSALMS' which each begin and are filled with 'Hallelujah' and over-the-top praise, like a finale of a firework show. It is a clear end to the book, after the book originally ended at Psalm 119 and 136. The command to "Praise!" is given twelve times, one for each of the tribes.