

The book of Psalms are divided in five basic books, each closing with a doxology or benediction. What we find in the psalms is a number of different authors writing for different reasons.

Book 1 (Psalms 1-41); Book 2 (Psalms 42-72); Book 3 (Psalms 73-89); Book 4 (Psalms 90-106); Book 5 (Psalms 107-150).

Many of the psalms were written to be sung and so we find musical directions contained within some of them.

Psalms 4:1 ^{NAU} For the choir director; on stringed instruments. A Psalm of David.

Psalms 67:1 ^{NAU} For the choir director; with stringed instruments. A Psalm. A Song.

Psalms 76:1 ^{NAU} For the choir director; on stringed instruments. A Psalm of Asaph, a Song.

And so, the obvious intent is that these were written to be part of the worship of the God of Israel. And in some of the psalms the actual event for worship is stated.

Psalms 30:1 ^{NAU} A Psalm; a Song at the Dedication of the House. A Psalm of David.

Psalms 38:1 ^{NAU} A Psalm of David, for a memorial.

David seems to be a major contributor to the psalms, but others including Asaph, the sons of Korah and Solomon are also contributors.

Psalms 42:1 ^{NAU} For the choir director. A Maskil (*Contemplative, or Didactic, or Skillful Psalm*) of the sons of Korah.

Psalms 72:1 ^{AU} A Psalm of Solomon.

Psalms 77:1 ^{NAU} For the choir director; according to Jeduthun. A Psalm of Asaph.

A number of the people involved in the writing of the psalms were actually chosen by God to minister in the house of the Lord, which in essence meant they were to lead or direct the people in worship, what we might call worship leaders today.

We find some of their names in the book of Chronicles.

1 Chronicles 16:36-43 ³⁶ Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, From everlasting even to everlasting. Then all the people said, "Amen," and praised the LORD. ³⁷ So he left Asaph and his relatives there before the ark of the covenant of the LORD to minister before the ark continually, as every day's work required; ³⁸ and Obed-edom with his 68 relatives; Obed-edom, also the son of Jeduthun, and Hosah as gatekeepers. ³⁹ *He left* Zadok the priest and his relatives the priests before the tabernacle of the LORD in the high place which *was* at Gibeon, ⁴⁰ to offer burnt offerings to the LORD on the altar of burnt offering continually morning and evening, even according to all that is written in the law of the LORD, which He commanded Israel. ⁴¹ With them *were* Heman and Jeduthun, and the rest who were chosen, who were designated by name, to give thanks to the LORD, because His lovingkindness is everlasting. ⁴² And with them *were* Heman and Jeduthun *with* trumpets and cymbals for those who should sound aloud, and *with* instruments *for* the songs of God, and the sons of Jeduthun for the gate. ⁴³ Then all the people departed each to his house, and David returned to bless his household.

And so, there were entire families who were set apart to pass down to their children, the responsibility to direct worship to the one true God. And these would have been musical families where there was formal teaching of music and the use of instruments.

And so, it was likely, as we saw in the case of Jeduthun, they would have been trained in being able to play many different instruments as well as how to write lyrics and music.

And as in the case of the psalm we saw in Psalm 77, they even exercised creative license with someone else's work.

Psalm 77:1 ^{NAU} For the choir director; according to Jeduthun. A Psalm of Asaph.

Jeduthun evidently liked the psalm that Asaph wrote and possibly gave his own spin to it, either changing the music to it, or the tempo or some other musical aspect to it to meet the need for worship in a particular worship setting.

According to the website Psalms and Affirmations, there are 6 main categories of Psalms.

Lament and Petition Psalms which would be those psalms where the author is pouring his heart out to God in sorrow and approaching His throne of grace for help and strength.

Praise and thanksgiving psalms, where the psalmist is demonstrating thankfulness to God for all provisions, most important of which is salvation.

Trust Psalms that include the faithfulness of God who can be trusted with all aspects of our lives, again the most important aspect is our eternal futures.

Hymn psalms, which are psalms that are used to raise the spirits of men to praise their God in music which shows how God Himself has hard wired us for music and rhythm and a sense of expressing ourselves in creative ways that go beyond mere words and address the emotional aspect of how we communicate with our Lord.

Royal psalms, which acknowledge the majesty of our God as Lord and King and Creator, as how His almighty character is emphasized which deserves our worship.

Wisdom and didactic psalms which teach us of our great God's attributes and power and give us a sense of the very God we are called to worship.

And so, what I thought we would do is to go through each one of these categories and address some of the psalms in each of these categories, which would enable us to touch on most of the psalms without having to go through every psalm.

And so, today we'll touch on the first category: ***Lament and petition psalms***.

Lament and petition is a category that includes both an acknowledgement that there are times in life where grief, sorrow, regret or mourning come to the forefront in a person's life for a variety of reasons, along with approaching the only One who is in control of all of life who can either eliminate the problem or give us the strength to go through the situation as we go through it with Him and His grace and strength.

Some of the psalms that fall into this category include 31 different psalms.

Today we'll be looking at psalm 5.

Psalm 5:1-12 ^{NAU} For the choir director; for flute accompaniment. A Psalm of David. Give ear to my words, O LORD, Consider my groaning. ² Heed the sound of my cry for help, my King and my God, For to You I pray. ³ In the morning, O LORD, You will hear my voice; In the morning I will order *my prayer* to You and *eagerly* watch. ⁴ For You are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness; No evil dwells with You. ⁵ The boastful shall not stand before Your eyes; You hate all who do iniquity. ⁶ You destroy those who speak falsehood; The LORD abhors the man of bloodshed and deceit. ⁷ But as for me, by Your abundant lovingkindness I will enter Your house, At Your holy temple I will bow in reverence for You. ⁸ O LORD, lead me in Your righteousness because of my foes; Make Your way straight before me. ⁹ There is nothing reliable in what they say; Their inward part is destruction *itself*. Their throat is an open grave; They flatter with their tongue. ¹⁰ Hold them guilty, O God; By their own devices let them fall! In the multitude of their transgressions thrust them out, For they are rebellious against You. ¹¹ But let all who take refuge in You be glad, Let them ever sing for joy; And may You shelter them, That those who love Your name may exult in You. ¹² For it is You who blesses the righteous man, O LORD, You surround him with favor as with a shield.

What is the first thing we notice about this psalm according to verse 1?

It was written as a song or a reading where a flute was to accompany it. And so, the psalm could have been read out loud before the congregation of Israel and a flute would be the background music, or it may have been sung to that accompaniment.

By the way, the titles of many of these psalms were added later and are thus not part of the original psalm, but were designed to be helpful aids in helping to understand something about the psalm.

^{KJV} **Psalm 5:1** To the chief Musician upon Nehiloth, A Psalm of David. Give ear to my words, O LORD, consider my meditation.

^{NET} **Psalm 5:1** *For the music director, to be accompanied by wind instruments; a psalm of David.* Listen to what I say, LORD! Carefully consider my complaint!

But as with a psalm that is identified with lament and petition it would naturally be a prayer to be brought before the living God describing a situation found in the life of the one writing it.

What would be the apparent situation David finds himself in here in this psalm that he would have to approach the Lord, according to what we see in verses 8-10?

David's foes. We're not told who these foes are, only that they are wicked and evil, according to verse 4. They are liars and men full of bloodshed and deceit according to verse 5.

These could have been the surrounding peoples of Israel, or they could have been people who were trying to destroy David within his own nation.

Or it could simply be a generalization of those who belong to God and those who don't, and the characteristics of each group as they are described in the psalm.

And this leads to the over-all point of the psalm that there is a gulf between those who rebel against the living God and those who are righteous according to the grace and mercy of God.

David is crying for help and by extension, as this psalm is meant to be sung or read with musical accompaniment, it would have had an audience which assumes that they too were crying out with David.

And of course, as the Holy Spirit is the One who has inspired this psalm for the people of God what does this assume as to our participation in this psalm?

In our case what foes might we be battling where we would need to cry out to God for help?

They could be foes in the world who would place themselves in our paths at any point in life who either directly or indirectly cause us to see a need for God's grace and strength to come along side us to enable us to overcome them or the worldly system they represent.

You can find this at work, you can find this with leaders in government or even family and friends who fall into the category of foes as they are defined in this psalm, specifically the end of verse 10 where they are described as rebellious against God.

Being rebellious against God doesn't have to include those who shed blood or are liars, but anyone who does not bow the knee to the Lord and Savior of His people.

But the foes could also include those whom we fight who are spiritual in nature.

Ephesians 6:11-12 ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.

This goes all the way back to the Garden of Eden after the fall when the Lord promised to Adam and Eve that there would be a battle between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. In other words, there would be warfare to the end until the Messiah sets all things right at His last coming into this world.

David understood this battle that was being waged all around him and his prayer is that God would be with him in the battle and deliver him from his foes, be they spiritual or physical.

But notice how David ends his prayer.

Psalms 5:11-12 ¹¹ But let all who take refuge in You be glad, Let them ever sing for joy; And may You shelter them, That those who love Your name may exult in You. ¹² For it is You who blesses the righteous man, O LORD, You surround him with favor as with a shield.

What does it mean to take refuge in something or someone?

To rest with assurance that the One in whom you take refuge has the ability and the desire to hold you and protect you. To say we take refuge in God and yet continue to be anxious or fret is not fully understanding the ability of God as protector.

And unlike the psalmist, when we misunderstand or don't fully trust in the ability and the love of God for His people, we may say we are taking refuge in Him, but when the storm or the battle is raging around us we will not be able to say with the psalmist, that we are glad, that we sing with joy, that we exult in Him.

Instead we will be stuck at the first part of the psalm where we are constantly seeking Him for help and crying out to Him, but not being able to arrive at the realization that God is a true refuge.

David learned this through his own life experiences with the Lord. It doesn't come naturally, but it comes to the one who has received

mercy and grace from the Lord, knowing that we have access to the One who has given us life and who has every intention of teaching us through the trial.

This is what David means when he says, **Psalm 5:7** ⁷ But as for me, by Your abundant lovingkindness I will enter Your house, At Your holy temple I will bow in reverence for You.

No one enters the house of God unless they have access and David understood that his own righteousness would never allow that, but by the shed blood of an innocent sacrifice put to his account he could. And so, not only does David have access to the house of God but access to the inner sanctuary where an intimate meeting takes place in the holy temple where David bows in reverence.

This is the only place where any believer can rest and find mercy and grace, and this is the only place where we can look at the situation we find ourselves in life, as the world seems to be caving in on us, and proclaim with David that God will judge the unrighteous, but will show mercy and favor to the ones who have already been judged and found not guilty because of the sacrifice of another.

Only with this understanding could David look at all of his foes and arrive at the conclusion that for all of the grief and anxiousness that he experienced in life it did not compare to the joy and relief of knowing that God was his Savior and protector and guide.

And so, our prayer must begin with a willingness to follow wherever the Lord leads.

Psalm 5:8 ⁸ O LORD, lead me in Your righteousness because of my foes; Make Your way straight before me.

It is His righteousness and His ways that we must keep our eyes on, not on the foes of this world or the wickedness of this world that we fight against on a daily basis.

Rather, we must be confident in the One who holds us to the end.

Psalm 5:11-12 ¹¹ But let all who take refuge in You be glad, Let them ever sing for joy; And may You shelter them, That those who love Your name may exult in You. ¹² For it is You who blesses the righteous man, O LORD, You surround him with favor as with a shield.

Up to this point David has been speaking in the first person.

Psalm 5:1-2 give ear to my words, O LORD, Consider my groaning. ² Heed the sound of my cry for help, my King and my God, For to You I pray.

Psalm 5:7-8 ⁷ But as for me, by Your abundant lovingkindness I will enter Your house, At Your holy temple I will bow in reverence for You. ⁸ O LORD, lead me in Your righteousness because of my foes; Make Your way straight before me.

Remember, this is a psalm of David that was put to music for the benefit of others to join with him in this lament and petition. And now, as we approach the end of the psalm David is inviting those who are part of this public worship to join him and be a larger part of this one who is declared righteous by the righteousness of the Lord that is put to his account.

Psalm 5:11-12 ¹¹ But let all who take refuge in You be glad, Let them ever sing for joy; And may You shelter them, That those who love Your name may exult in You. ¹² For it is You who blesses the righteous man, O LORD, You surround him with favor as with a shield.

It is assumed that David is glad and that he sings for joy as he knows that God shelters him as he takes refuge in the Lord. But now David says, let all who take refuge in you do the same. And he ends the psalm with the blessing that God is fully aware of his cry and his petition and assures all who would take refuge that God will most assuredly bless the righteous man and surround him with favor as with a shield.

What is the imagery of a shield?

A form of protection. But that shield is God Himself who stands between us and our foes and the one foe who would love to destroy us. The same foe Jesus prayed against to the Father just before He was crucified and resurrected back to the Father.

John 17:13-22 ¹³ "But now I come to You; and these things I speak in the world so that they may have My joy made full in themselves. ¹⁴ "I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. ¹⁵ "I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil *one*. ¹⁶ "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. ¹⁷ "Sanctify them in the truth; Your word

is truth. ¹⁸ "As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. ¹⁹ "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth. ²⁰ "I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; ²¹ that they may all be one; even as You, Father, *are* in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me. ²² "The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one;

This same resurrected Jesus continues to not only pray for you and me today, He lives and is able and willing to make sure He will not lose any.

Hebrews 7:24-25 ²⁴ but Jesus, on the other hand, because He continues forever, holds His priesthood permanently. ²⁵ Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

David understood this and his *lament and petition* turns to praise and worship because of this understanding. This is the theme and outcome of all of those psalms that fall into this category, which by the way is the second largest category with 31 psalms that are similar in nature.

Can anyone guess what the largest category is?

Praise and thanksgiving, Trust, Hymn, Royal, Wisdom and didactic.

Praise and thanksgiving with 48 different psalms, and the category we'll look at next week.