The Psalms are alive with a burning devotion to God. To read through this collection of religious poetry is to be overwhelmed by the intense enthusiasm of the psalmists for God. The spirit of praise is invigorating, and I always find myself refreshed and inspired after reading through its pages. Like a fast-flowing mountain stream, the waves of faith in, and love for, Almighty God wash over our thirsty souls as we soak in its words of worship. The Psalms express negative emotions: anger, frustration, despair, jealousy and envy. They also reflect many positive emotions: love, joy, peace, hope, excitement, and exhilaration.

The heart of the Bible
Psalms is the Hymn Book and Prayer Book of the Bible. It is the longest and the middle Book in the Bible. It is also the most loved and most quoted Book in the Bible. Most of the Psalms were written by David around 1000 BC. However there is a Psalm of Moses, dating back to the time of the Exodus, and Psalms written by Ezra during the time of the return from exile in Babylon.

Some of the greatest hymns in history are based on the Psalms, including Dr. Martin Luther’s; ‘A Mighty Fortress is our God’, based on the Psalms, including Dr. Martin Luther’s; ‘A Mighty Fortress is our God’, Dr. Martin Luther described the Psalms as: “The Bible within the Bible” - the Bible in miniature. The Psalms deal with Creation, patriarchs, Exodus, history of Israel, monarchy, united kingdom and divided kingdoms, Exile and return to Jerusalem.

Joining in the worship
What is the chief end of man? Our purpose is to worship God and to enjoy Him forever! The Psalms are the songs and prayers of a man after God’s own heart. “I will extol You, my God, O King; and I will bless Your Name forever and ever... Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and His greatness is unsearchable... My mouth shall speak the praise of the Lord, and all flesh shall bless His Holy Name Forever and ever!” Psalm 145:1-3,21

The Psalms are personal, using the personal pronouns: I, me, and my. Other Psalms are collective for public worship, using we and us. King David wrote most of the personal Psalms. They are comprehensive dealing with every Biblical theme and doctrine. We see instruction, history, prophecy, repentance, thanksgiving, trust, praise and adoration. The Psalms deal with the Law of God (Psalm 1, 19 & 119), others with Creation (Psalm 29 & 110). Other Psalms deal with Judgement (Psalm 12). Many Psalms are Messianic (Psalm 2, 22 & 53). The Psalms deal with Israel’s Ruin, Israel’s Redeemer, and Israel’s Redemption.

Personal and corporate
The Psalms are personal, using the personal pronouns: I, me, and my. Other Psalms are collective for public worship, using we and us. King David wrote most of the personal Psalms. They are comprehensive dealing with every Biblical theme and doctrine. We see instruction, history, prophecy, repentance, thanksgiving, trust, praise and adoration. The Psalms deal with the Law of God (Psalm 1, 19 & 119), others with Creation (Psalm 29 & 104). Other Psalms deal with Judgement (Psalm 52). Many Psalms are Messianic (Psalm 2, 22 & 53). The Psalms deal with Israel’s Ruin, Israel’s Redeemer, and Israel’s Redemption.

Psalms is the hymn and prayer book of the Bible, full of emotion for any situation.

The middle verses in the Bible are: Psalm 118:8-9, “It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes”.

Psalms were written by David for his son, Solomon’s, coronation.
The Bible
in a nutshell
Psalms

Psalm sandwich

Psalm 22 to 24 forms an important trilogy: Psalm 22: “My God, My God, why have You forsaken me?” deals with the Cross. Psalm 23: “The Lord is my Shepherd...” deals with the cook, or shepherd’s staff. Psalm 24: “Who is this King of Glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O you gates, lift them up, you ancient doors, that the King of Glory may come in.” deals with the Crown. Psalm 22: Saviour. Psalm 23: Shepherd. Psalm 24: Sovereign.

Five books
The Psalms consist of five Books, paralleling the first five Books of the Bible: The Law of Moses, just as Genesis deals with Creation, Exodus: Salvation, Leviticus: Worship, Numbers: Rebellion, and Deuteronomy: Law, so in the five groupings of the Psalms, we see similar themes. Each of the five Books ends with a Doxology. (Psalm 41, 72, 89, 106 & 150).

When you are at a loss as to how to express yourself to God, reach for the Psalms. They are rich and full, offering words of despair, gratitude, repentance, wisdom, praise and celebration.

Hosanna to the King
Psalm 113 to 118, are known as the Hallel Psalms and were sung at the Passover. The term ‘Hosanna’ comes from Psalm 115. When Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, the people were shouting Hosanna! When Jesus entered the city, the Temple was the center of God’s worship. The people were shouting Hosanna! Jesus, the promised King, was entering the city of His Father. The people saw in Him the fulfillment of their old cry. Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna to the King. Regal Psalms
Psalm 2 and 18, 20, 21, 45, 72, 89, 101, 110, 132 & 146 have inspired numerous European national anthems. The British national anthem, for example, is based on several of these Psalms. The Lion and the unicorn, referred to in Psalm 22, are still in the English Coat of Arms. Canada remains the only nation in the world with The Dominion in its name. It is a title of God in His sovereignty. The founding fathers of Canada, named their country: The Dominion of Canada, based on Psalm 72: “He shall have dominion from sea to sea.” As Canada stretches from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean, it was called The Dominion of Canada.

Psalms of gratitude
Psalms of Thanksgiving are the second largest grouping of Psalms. These Thanksgiving Psalms have a four-part pattern:
1. A proclamation: “I will praise You...”
2. A statement of what God has done for the worshipper.
3. A testimony of God’s provision.
4. A vow to continue to praise God when deliverance comes. While many of these Lament Psalms are personal, some are written on behalf of the people. Psalms 100-113 are the second largest grouping of Psalms. These Thanksgiving Psalms have a four-part pattern:
1. A proclamation: “I will praise You...”
2. A statement of what God has done for the worshipper.
3. A testimony of God’s provision.
4. A vow to continue to praise God when deliverance comes. While many of these Lament Psalms are personal, some are written on behalf of the people.

Psalms of repentance
Thirdly, there are Psalms of Repentance (including: Psalm 6, 32, 38, 51, 130 & 143).

Royal Psalms
The Royal Psalms (Psalm 2, 18, 20, 21, 45, 72, 89, 101, 110, 132 & 146) have inspired numerous European national anthems. The British national anthem, for example, is based on several of these Psalms. The Lion and the unicorn, referred to in Psalm 22, are still in the English Coat of Arms. Canada remains the only nation in the world with The Dominion in its name. It is a title of God in His sovereignty. The founding fathers of Canada, named their country: The Dominion of Canada, based on Psalm 72: “He shall have dominion from sea to sea.” As Canada stretches from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean, it was called The Dominion of Canada.

Wise Psalms
The Wisdom Psalms deal with the right conduct of life and apparent contradictions in life. Psalm 1 begins with two ways, two types of people and two destinations. The Book of Psalms is for those who are walking in the right way, rooted in God’s Word, drawing nourishment from the streams of living waters, bearing the fruit of the Spirit.

The wise and the foolish
The foolish are those who walk with evildoers, who walk with them, being influenced by bad company. Finally they end up sitting with, and becoming friends, with the world. In His Sermon on the Mount, Our Lord Jesus Christ expounded Psalm 1 as He spoke of the wise man and the foolish man, the good tree and the bad tree, the good fruit and the bad fruit, the house built upon the rock of God’s Word and the house built upon the sand of human effort, the broad way and the narrow way, the broad gate and the narrow gate, those who stand in the day of crises and those who fall.

By bad company. Finally they end up sitting with, and becoming friends, with the world. In His Sermon on the Mount, Our Lord Jesus Christ expounded Psalm 1 as He spoke of the wise man and the foolish man, the good tree and the bad tree, the good fruit and the bad fruit, the house built upon the rock of God’s Word and the house built upon the sand of human effort, the broad way and the narrow way, the broad gate and the narrow gate, those who stand in the day of crises and those who fall.

In the light of eternity
Psalm 73, tackles the problem of bad people seeming to get away with their evil behaviour, while good people often suffer. Psalm 73 evaluates justice in the light of eternity.

Celebrating God
The Psalms celebrate the attributes of God. His omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence. God is all powerful, all knowing and everywhere present! The Psalms celebrate God’s actions in Creation and in Redemption. The Psalms tell us God is the Good Shepherd, the Commander in Chief, the Eternal Judge, the Redeemer, the Provider and the Sustainer.

Theology leads to Doxology
In the Psalms, Theology quickly leads to Doxology. Truth must inevitably lead to worship. Many of the songs in the New Testament are Psalms.

Names of God
The two main Names used for God in the Psalms are Yahweh and Elohim. Elohim means the most High God. It is plural, containing the idea of God’s Trinitarian nature. Elohim communicates to us the transcendence of God. He is far above and completely different to us. The other Name for God used throughout the Psalms is Yahweh, which communicates relationship and intimacy with God. He is immanent. This balance between the transcendence and immanence of God is seen throughout the Scriptures.
Testament are modelled on the Psalms (Luke 1:2). The Apostles turned to the Psalms when under threat (Acts 4) and used the Psalms when preaching (Acts 13). Many of the Epistles, such as Hebrews, quote prophetically from the Psalms. Our Lord Jesus Christ quoted from the Psalms throughout His public teaching, in the Sermon on the Mount, while cleansing the Temple, at the Last Supper, on the Cross and on the road to Emmaus. He reminded His disciples that the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms teach of Him.

**Psalms in our daily lives**

As Believers we are to read the Psalms. We must sing the Psalms. We must pray the Psalms. Some of the Psalms need to be shouted! The Psalms encourage us to lift up holy hands, sometimes to clap and dance, to look upwards and to kneel in humility before God.

We are commanded in the New Testament to use the Psalms in corporate worship (Ephesians 5).

**Psalms for every occasion**

There is nothing we can do that is more meaningful and beneficial on hospital visits, than to read the Psalms. At sick beds, at grave sites, before travel, on sad days and on days of rejoicing, there are Psalms designed for each occasion.

It would be a good habit to read one Psalm a day. There are 150 Psalms, so it would take just five months to pray your way through the Psalms. Read a Psalm before breakfast, or at lunch, or after supper. The Psalms are for all in danger, trouble and need. They are for the soldier, the nurse, the freeman, the doctor, the teacher, the parent and the child, for the long and the queen, for leaders and workers. For prisoners and exiles, for the persecuted, the sick and the dying, for farmers and fathers. At all times and in all situations, the Psalms are our Prayer book and our song book.

**The God we read about in the Psalms is a God worth praising.**

He is worth serving. He is worth proclaiming. He is worthy of all sacrifice, honour and glory.


The God we read about in the Psalms is a God worth praising. He is worth serving. He is worth proclaiming. He is worthy of all sacrifice, honour and glory.

**Share the Lord’s glory**

The more we praise the Lord, the more we find the burning desire to share His Glory with others. His Greatness demands my worship - not my worship only, but the worship of every creature, everywhere, in all nations, throughout the world.

The message of the Psalms is God and the very nature and perfections of God demands that He be exalted and praised, proclaimed and glorified, worldwide, to every person, in every nation, to each succeeding generation (Psalm:145:4,12).

**Our God, deserving of praise**


**Our God, deserving of praise**


"The God we read about in the Psalms is a God worth praising. He is worth serving. He is worth proclaiming. He is worthy of all sacrifice, honour and glory.

**Peter Hammond** is a missionary, Bible teacher and author. For more info: Tel: 021 689 4480; www.frontline.org.za; mission@frontline.org.za