

Life Lesson 101

Psalms

Text: Psalm 23

Introduction

So far in our study of our “Bible library” we have studied the books of the law and the books of history. Now we are in another wonderful section of the library – the books of poetry.

We learned about Job in the long story poem by that name last week. Today we will look at the next book of poetry, Psalms.

The Story

The five books of poetry are Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon. It may surprise to find out that these are poetry books, because they don't look or sound like the poetry we know. They don't have the regular rhyme and rhythm that we are used to seeing in poetry. The Hebrew people had a different type of poetry, which is beautiful in its own way.

Instead of a rhythm of *words*, the Jewish people wrote poetry with a rhythm of *thought*. Sometimes they would first express a thought, then say its opposite side in the next line.

For example, Psalm 30:5 says, “Weeping may endure for a night,

But joy cometh in the morning.”

Another example of opposite thought is in Proverbs 27:6: “Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.”

Another style of thought rhythm is one that expresses a thought, then adds to it in the next line. For example, Psalm 46:1 says “God is our refuge and strength,

A very present help in trouble.”

The poetry books are beautiful to read and hear, but the truth we read in them is even more beautiful! Job, which we studied last week, is a long story poem, telling how God teaches his children through trials. This week, let’s take a look at the book of Psalms.

Psalms is the longest book in the Bible. It has 150 chapters. The longest chapter in the Bible is also in the book of Psalms. Psalm 119 is the longest with 176 verses.

Not only does Psalms have the longest chapter in the Bible, it has the shortest chapter, too. Psalm 117 has just two verses.

I hope you remember these Bible facts because we should know all about the Bible. It's the best and most important book in the world. I hope you'll remember something more important about the book of Psalms, though. It is a book of prayers. Men who loved God wrote down their prayers in poem form and sang them over and over to God.

If you are a Christian, you will find that these psalms express your heart to God, too. Let’s look at one of the many psalms that King David wrote, and maybe you will see what we mean. Turn in your Bible to Psalm 23.

We read that “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.”

David knew all about how a shepherd takes care of sheep, because he had been a shepherd or a long time. He was telling the Lord, “You take good care of me, just like a good shepherd takes care of his sheep. There is not anything I lack (want).

We read that, “He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. He leadeth me beside the still waters.”

David knew that the shepherd was responsible for making sure that the sheep had good food and water. He thought about how God had given him everything he needed. Can you think of things the Lord has supplied for you? Can you think about ways God has been watching over you like a good shepherd?

As we read the rest of the chapter, we see David telling of God’s protection, His goodness, and His mercy. Does God protect you? Has He been good and merciful to you?

When you read Psalm 23, and the other psalms, too, read them as your prayer to God, thinking of what He has done for you.

Some of the psalms are happy psalms. There are times when you feel sad and sorrowful. There are psalms that tell God those feelings, too. Psalm 51 is a good psalm to pray when you have sinned and want to ask God for forgiveness. Psalm 27 is good to pray when you are afraid. There is a psalm for everything you need to pray about!

The Life Lesson

I hope you will read these psalms often and that you will pray them in your heart to the Lord.

Review Questions

What is the longest book in the Bible?

Psalms

How many chapters does the book of Psalms have?

150

In what section of the Bible library do we find the book of Psalms?

The books of poetry

What is the longest chapter in the Bible?

Psalms 119

What is the shortest chapter?

Psalms 117

The book of Psalms is a book of _____.

Prayers

Who wrote many of the Psalms?

David