

Preface

Growing up in the Netherlands in a Christian Reformed Church, the Psalms, as hymns to be sung, became part of my cultural and religious heritage. It was the singing of these Psalms with their almost Gregorian tunes that drew me back to the church after I met the Lord Jesus in a personal way during a Youth Retreat.

Years later, while in the jungle of Irian Jaya (Papua), Indonesia, I turned to the Psalms for my personal devotions and wrote extensive notes on each of them over a period of time.

Recently, I returned again to this Treasury of David, as Spurgeon calls them, and began to write a daily devotional on each Psalm. In doing so, I received the first and greatest blessing myself. It is my prayer that some of this blessing will flow over in your life as you go through this daily devotional.

The text used is the New International Version, unless otherwise indicated.

For more complete commentaries on the Psalms and other Bible books, go to www.bible-commentaries.com

John Schultz

ENDORSEMENTS

“A daily walk through the Psalms with John Schultz is an experience not to be missed. It is spiritually invigorating and soul refreshing. One year on and you’ll never be the same again.”

Dr. Sam Gordon, international Bible teacher, Trans World Radio

“Walking Through The Psalms This Year is an excellent and insightful daily devotional which takes one through the Psalms each day. I have no doubt it will be a significant experience to anyone who follows John Schultz through the Psalms. His background in the Netherlands Reformed Church, where the Psalms were sung every week, and his experience in the jungles of Irian Jaya, combine to make him a Christian with a deep love and insight into the Psalms.”

Dr. D. James Kennedy, Ph.D. Senior Minister Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church.

“A daily devotional based upon the Psalms can certainly turn our hearts and minds to the Lord. While John Schultz was serving the Lord in the beautiful yet dangerous jungles of West Papua (formerly Irian Jaya), God gave him the unique context for the thoughts he shares in Walking Through The Psalms This Year. John’s keen insights and powerful applications help us appreciate God’s glory, understand God’s beauty, and worship God’s majesty. I wholeheartedly recommend this thoughtful devotional guide to The Christian and Missionary Alliance family and to the larger Christian community.”

Dr. Peter N. Nanfelt (President of The Christian and Missionary Alliance 1998-2005)

“In my many years of travel and speaking, missionaries have played a special role in my life. Thus, how good to see a devotional of the Psalms from a seasoned missionary. The rich truths gleaned from the Scriptures during John Schultz’s years of serving our Lord in the field will encourage and strengthen you in your own place of calling.”

Ravi Zacharias, author and speaker

Psalm 1

“Blessed is the man...”

Like the Sermon on the Mount, the Book of Psalms opens with a blessing. As we can choose to be saved so we can choose to be blessed. This Psalm mentions two kinds of persons, one who has accepted what Jesus has done for him and who wants to act upon it, and one who walks away from God’s grace and is swept away by the current of life’s temptations.

I say “swept away” but actually there is decline and stagnation in this rat race. Walking on the wrong path leads to standstill and, eventually, to sitting down. Wrong choices will lead to a dead end.

The alternative is to walk with God and to take the Bible seriously. To many people the law of God is not a delight and even fewer people meditate upon the Bible day and night. The only way to delight in God’s Word is to delight in God and love Him with all our heart.

We will appreciate the Book if we know the Author.

If we make knowing the Bible our serious business, some amazing things will happen. We will be free from peer pressure. We will “not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers.”

We will lead fruitful lives and always be successful in the important things of life. “Whatever he does prospers.”

We will occupy one of the highest offices in the universe and become members of God’s supreme court. “The wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.”

Picture the two paths depicted in this Psalm, one going down to futility, the other leading to the highest bench in creation. The difference is in the love for One Book and for its Author.

Psalm 2

“Kiss the Son, lest he be angry.”

Psalm One emphasizes our relationship with God and His Word. The Second Psalm places us in the world in which wars are fought and politics govern nations. We have long since moved away from David’s world, from the age in which each nation had his own deity and Israel alone confessed to be governed by God Almighty, the Lord of heaven and earth. In our time, kings and queens no longer reign by the grace of God, even though their titles may say so.

David may have written this Psalm on the occasion of his conquest of the city of Jerusalem, one of the last pockets of resistance by the original inhabitants of Canaan. It is just as difficult for us in our time to imagine ourselves in a theocracy, in which humans are directly governed by God, without significant human intervention, as it is to form an objective opinion about David’s ethnic cleansing of the land of Israel, which is what the capture of Jerusalem amounted to. When we hear the words “conquest” and “ethnic cleansing,” we think of world wars and crimes against humanity. Our modern day tolerance in a pluralistic society prevents us from finding any justification for David’s deeds that form the basis of this Psalm.

It may also prevent us from getting the divine message this Psalm proclaims. Since the kings of the earth are no longer there or have anything to say, we do not discern that the powers that be “take their stand against the LORD and against his Anointed one.” A president may profess to be a born-again Christian, but that does not make a nation “One under God.”

David knew that God had appointed him as His representative on earth. He knew that there were powers behind the secular political bodies that were directed against God and His revelation in Christ. Although he did not know Jesus as the Christ, he spoke of an “Anointed one,” which is the literal meaning of the word “Christ.”

David knew that the solution to the problems of this world lay in embracing this Christ. We have no hope that every single human being on earth would ever come to this point, but that does not invalidate the premise.

We will either be the subject of God’s scorn and scoffing, or Christ will embrace us if we allow Him to.

“Blessed are all who take refuge in him.”

Psalm 3

“But you are a shield around me, O LORD; you bestow glory on me and lift up my head.”

Surgical interventions may save lives but they leave scars. David wrote this Psalm as he was fleeing for his life from a *coup d'état* by his son, Absalom. David knew that this flight was part of the punishment he had brought upon himself by his sin of adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband, Uriah. When David confessed his sin, God forgave him and spared his life. But David spent the rest of his life dealing with this forgiveness. God may have forgiven him, but David must have found it very hard to forgive himself. The scars of his sins were there to remain.

This Psalm was probably written on the occasion of David's first night outside the palace. As a fugitive, he turned to God and he discovered that, not only, did God protect and honor him, but that God Himself was that protection. Let us pause and allow the wonder of this discovery to penetrate: God guarantees, with His own Person, David's safety; He is the shield that covers David. What does this mean to someone who had to flee for his life because of his own fault? David must have been overwhelmed by the realization of what God's forgiveness would bring about. The greatest joy one can experience is the discovery that Christ died specifically for those things about which we feel so guilty.

In the three images David uses in verse 3, “a shield,” “my glory” and “the lifter up of my head,” he says: “God is my protection, my honor and my courage to face life.” The lifting up of the head takes away the feeling of shame David must have had.

With these words David, unwittingly, proclaims the Gospel. If God is our shield, the arrows and bullets that are fired upon us will hit Him instead of us. There is no better image to describe what Christ did for us. “He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed” (Isaiah 53:6).

David was the object of God's severe mercy. Though he may not have understood this, he was correct in stating: “From the LORD comes deliverance. May your blessing be on your people.” Those words are written for us. The only hope for healing of our guilt is an act of divine intervention.

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