

LESSON 5

PSALMS 15—18

PSALM 15: WHO CAN DWELL IN GOD'S PRESENCE?

Presented in this short psalm of five verses is a question posed by God Himself: "Do you have the qualities that I require for My worship and for My presence?" The psalm was most likely connected in some way with public worship as is indicated by the superscription. Perhaps as many as thirty of the psalms fall into this category of worship.

1. What kind of dwelling is being discussed?
2. What are the negative traits that are mentioned?
3. What are the positive traits that are listed?
4. What is the core trait that seems to overshadow all of the traits?
5. What promise is given in the final verse to those who possess these qualities?

PSALM 16:

GOD: THE SUPREME GOOD

The writer of this psalm sings of how good God has been and is being to him. As he does so, he says the greatest blessing that he has received from the Lord is the Lord Himself. He is more blessed by receiving the Giver than His gifts. His anthem of praise describes the good life he has with God, the joys he has known, and the pleasures that he anticipates in the days to come. In a deeper sense, as substantiated by the New Testament's interpretation of the psalm, it gives a prophetic picture of the walk that the Messiah would have with God.

6. What is the supreme good?
7. How are the saints described?

8. Explain how God was David's portion.
9. How are verses 8 through 11 used in the New Testament?
10. How do we make God our refuge?

PSALM 17: A PRAYER FOR PROTECTION

The content of this psalm indicates that the writer, perhaps David, is in imminent danger. Although his exact circumstances are almost impossible to determine, he is clearly surrounded by conflict and turmoil.

As he prays, he knows he is surrounded by a band of warlike men set on killing him. Perhaps he can hear them as they walk about, planning their methods of attack and watching for an opportunity to ensnare him. The psalm is basically, from beginning to end, a petition to God with its chief characteristic being supplication. His prayer is a plea for protection, a request for refuge.

11. What does the writer ask God to do?
12. Is there a difference between blamelessness and perfection?
13. How do the men of the world live?
14. What is the aspiration of the writer as indicated in the final verse?

PSALM 18: A SONG OF THANKSGIVING

The longest psalm in Book I of Psalms and practically identical to the psalm of praise in 2 Samuel 22, this psalm recounts how David gave God the credit for his successes. It is almost a continuous stream of praise for what God had done in David's life. In light of verse 50, it should be thought of as a royal (or king-related) psalm of thanksgiving.

As free-flowing praise, it is without much organization or outline. One thought leads to another, weaving back and forth from addressing God to giving joyous descriptions of His power, mercy, and lovingkindness. From this psalm we receive implicational instruction on the importance of praising God for our blessings.

15. How does David describe God?
16. How are God's actions on behalf of His people pictured?

17. How does God act toward men in harmony with the way they act toward Him?
18. Describe the way that God puts David on the throne.
19. What does David say he will do to show his gratitude for God's kindness?
20. Apply this psalm to the Christian's life.