

The writings (1)

Home Study 8



Day 1

Read Psalm 22 and Hebrews 2:9-12.

Who is speaking? What can we learn?

Day 2

Read Psalm 146.

Who are we to put our trust in? Who are we *not* to put our trust in?

Day 3

Read Job 19:13-29.

What does Job know? Where is his help found?

Day 4

Read Proverbs 8.

What can the person who is 'Wisdom' do for you?

Day 5

Read Song of Solomon 5:1-6 and Revelation 3:14-22.

What are the parallels between these passages?

Day 6

Read Daniel 7.

What kingdoms look all powerful? Which Kingdom will last?

Day 7

Read 2 Chronicles 1.

How does Solomon understand the temple?

The writings (1) Group Study 8



- Psalms
- Job
- Proverbs
- Ruth
- Song of Songs
- Ecclesiastes

Introduction

The writings stop and look far more at our emotions. They study the proper response to the gospel preached in the Law and the Prophets, and how that response is to be worked out in a sinful world.

In Psalms the Christian through Christ claps, dances, shouts and knows frustration. In Job he is overwhelmed with sorrow. In Proverbs the emphasis is on desire. In Ecclesiastes there is frustration. In Ruth we see romance. In Lamentations we see weeping. In Esther we see strength. In Daniel - suffering but knowing hope. Who can say the Christian life is cold and dull and lifeless!

Great quotes

I consider it to be my duty to raise the affection (emotions) of my hearers as high as I possibly can provided two things: One, that I do it with truth, and two, that the emotions are proportionate to the truth that moves them.

Jonathan Edwards

In the writings we see how the truth of the gospel takes us emotionally to the edge of our limits. Jesus really does give us life to the full (See John 10:10).

Psalms

The Psalms are the church's expression of her life in this present darkness – with all her joys, sorrows, hopes, fears and sufferings. At the centre of the church's life is her Messiah – so we find his experience expressed in many of the Psalms. His life is our life – his enemies are our enemies – his sufferings are experienced by us too. Therefore, it is wonderful for us to stand with Jesus and learn how to pray – from him.

The Psalms' own introduction

Psalms 1 and 2 are the gateway to the whole book. Psalm 1 tells of the 'man' (not the 'men') who shows us how to live. Everyone else is lumped together with the wicked. They are like chaff that blows away, they do not stand, their life perishes.

*Blessed is **the man***

who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked

or stand in the way of sinners

or sit in the seat of mockers.

*But **his** delight is in the law of the LORD,*

*and on **his** law he meditates day and night.*

***He** is like a tree planted by streams of water,*

which yields its fruit in season

and whose leaf does not wither.

*Whatever **he** does prospers.*

Not so the wicked!

***They** are like chaff*

that the wind blows away.

Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,

nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.

For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous,

but the way of the wicked will perish.

(Psalm 1 NIV).

He is the one who can ascend the holy hill of the Lord. He is the only one 'who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift his soul to an idol'. He is the one we must go to for help (See Psalm 24:3-6).

Pause for thought

Have you ever been discouraged because you aren't able to meditate day and night on God's law and aren't able to have clean hands and a pure heart however hard you try. How does this Psalm and Psalm 24 help?

Questions:

1. **Read Psalm 2 and John 3:17-18.** How can we cope when the world seems against us and it seems impossible to go on?

It is the Christ, the Lord's anointed, that we put our trust in. It is the Christ who wins. It is the Son that we must kiss and it is the Son we must take our refuge in.

How can we learn to pray from Jesus in the Psalms?

2. **Read Psalm 22:1, 7-8, 15-19, 22 also Hebrews 2:11-12, Matthew 27:35, 39, 42-43, 46 and John 19:18.** Who is praying in this Psalm? What can we learn about how to pray in this Psalm?

3. **Read Psalm 16:1, 8-11 and Acts 2:25-32.** Who is praying in this Psalm? What can we learn from this Psalm?

How can we learn to respond to Jesus in the Psalms?

4. **Read Psalm 51:1-18.** Who is the speaker? Who does he look to for help? What does he see as the purpose of the sacrificial system?

David tells us not to look to him but to trust in the Lord – he is the only hope in all circumstances.

David and the Law?

David's attitude to the law might appear contradictory. We've seen this in Psalm 51 as he talks about the sacrifices. Also in Samuel he eats the show bread which is not lawful for him to eat. And yet he is concerned throughout his life for the ark to be central in Israel's life, for the temple to be built, and the sacrificial system the law speaks of, to be set up. But Jesus explains that David really understood the law. **Read Matthew 12:3-8.**

When David wanted to build the temple he could see one greater than the temple, when David enjoyed his Sabbath rest he enjoyed it because he enjoyed the Lord of the Sabbath. David loved the law only because the Christ he so often speaks of in the Psalms is the end of the law. The law never becomes an end in itself.

Psalm 119

Psalm 119 causes the believer to go into ecstasy about the law. He loves it, and in nearly every verse he tells us the reason he loves it. It is 'the law of the Lord', 'his statutes', 'your decrees', 'your commands'. He ends the Psalm, not by praising the law, but praising his Lord that the law speaks of (See Psalm 119:174-175).

5. **Read Psalm 119:174-5.** What does the law that speaks of his Saviour do for the Psalmist?

It is because of the greatness of all the Psalmist has learnt that he responds throughout the Psalms. And the end of the book, the last five Psalms are a wonderful outburst of praise.

Job

Job suffers terrible bereavement and loss. His friends ask has he *really* trusted God? Satan asks can he *still* trust God?

There is a way. He prays brutally honest prayers and yet he keeps talking to the Father, through the Son. How can he do that?

6. Read Job 19:23-27. What is the hope that keeps him talking to God?

At the end of the book, his Redeemer encourages and humbles him with a series of questions. Job knows his Redeemer has the answers, even if he doesn't. Because of his trust in Christ alone and because he keeps praying honestly, God says that Job has spoken 'what is right' (See Job 42:8).

His friends hold on to the belief throughout the book that Job is suffering because of some sin he has committed. But when the Lord comes he commands that seven bulls suffer and die individually, then seven rams suffer and die individually. They are consumed in the burnt offering (Job 42:8). All of this points to the innocent Lamb of God who suffered by enduring the wrath of God against us, so that we the guilty can receive twice the blessing that we would have had if we had never sinned! All this if we put our trust in him.

7. Read James 5:7-11. What are the lessons we are to learn from the life of Job?

Proverbs

In a world of many conflicting voices David advises his son Solomon to listen to one voice and reject all others – the voice of the person who is Wisdom.

8. Read 1 Corinthians 1:30. Who is the wisdom of God?

Chapters 9-31 are a description (like the Sermon on the Mount) of life in harmony with wisdom. It includes everything a child might face in life.

There is one theme that over arches the book and that is sex and its fulfillment in marriage and the home. This is the context for godly living. The book shows what marriage, the home and hospitality can achieve. It is little wonder the book ends with a description of the noble wife.

Ruth

Ruth is an outsider in every sense of the word. The book emphasizes how vulnerable she is. She married a man who should never have left the land of blessing, and who certainly shouldn't have married a Gentile like her. He dies and leaves her a young widow. Then she makes a decision that saves her soul.

9. Read Ruth 1:16. What is her decision?

Boaz chooses to buy her back out of her situation and into his people – even though he doesn't have to. Jesus also chooses to buy back the outsider. Who can argue that this woman doesn't belong to the people of God when we see in print she is David's great grandmother (Matthew 1).

There is hope for the outsider in the gospel – when Jesus is our kinsman redeemer.

Song of Songs

This is a book about a marriage where the husband is without sin and everything that goes wrong occurs because of the wife's sinfulness.

Many have felt this is simply a book about marriage – and those of us who are husbands can understand this! However, whilst marriage is God given it is not an end in itself. It exists to reflect a greater marriage (See Ephesians 5:32). The marriage the Song of Songs so clearly speaks of is between Christ and the Church.

Our walk with Christ is to be intimate. He does not want to be outside knocking on the door (See Song of Songs 5:2-6 and Revelation 3:20).

Ecclesiastes

This book states the opposite to Proverbs – especially Proverbs 8. Proverbs tells us to seek wisdom and explains what the wise life is like. Ecclesiastes states what life *without* God is like.

10. Read Ecclesiastes 1:14. What is life like without wisdom?

Life is futile without Christ your creator – remember him while you are young, before you make a fool of yourself.

Summary Questions:

What did this study teach me about Jesus?

What did this study teach me about the Bible?

What did this study teach me about myself?

Jesus



