

# Themes of the Psalms

(Taken from BookOfHours.org)

God the Creator.	8, 19, 33, 65, 111, 104, 145, 147.
God the Redeemer.	15, 33, 102, 103, 111, 113, 114, 126, 130, 138.
God the Judge.	1, 7, 11, 46, 50, 62, 75, 76, 82, 90, 96, 97, 98.
God's Glory.	18, 29, 99, 36, 46, 148, 150.
God's Sovereignty.	24, 46, 47, 72, 89, 93, 96, 97, 98, 99, 112, 146, 145.
God's Wisdom.	33, 104, 111, 113, 139, 145, 147.
God's Law.	19, 50, 62, 111, 119, 147, 23, 33, 34, 37, 89, 121, 124, 139, 145, 146, 147.
God's Mercy.	23, 32, 57, 61, 62, 63, 73, 77, 85, 86, 100, 103, 118, 130, 145.
The Incarnation of Jesus.	2, 8, 85, 89, 102, 110, 111, 113, 132.
The Passion of Jesus.	22, 40, 42, 54, 69, 88, 116, 130.
The Church.	46, 48, 84, 111, 122, 133, 147.
Worship.	5, 26, 43, 63, 65, 66, 67, 84, 96, 100, 102, 116, 122, 138.
Thanksgiving.	30, 65, 67, 92, 98, 100, 111, 103, 107, 116, 134, 138, 145, 147, 148, 150.
Prayer.	4, 5, 17, 20, 28, 31, 54, 61, 84, 86, 102, 141, 142.
Trust in God.	27, 31, 57, 62, 63, 71, 73, 77, 91, 118, 121, 123, 124, 125, 143, 146.
God our Refuge.	4, 17, 20, 37, 46, 49, 54, 61, 71, 91, 103, 121, 146.
Divine Guidance.	25, 43, 80, 85, 111, 112.
In Time of Trouble.	3, 11, 12, 13, 18, 20, 30, 40, 46, 49, 57, 62, 63, 80, 85, 86, 90, 107, 118, 144, 146.
Righteousness.	1, 11, 12, 15, 18, 19, 26, 34, 40, 92, 111, 112.
Peace.	29, 46, 76, 85, 98, 100, 124, 125, 126.
The Shortness of Life.	39, 49, 90, 102.
The Hope of Immortality.	16, 30, 42, 49, 66, 73, 103, 116, 121, 139, 146.
Morning.	3, 5, 20, 63, 90, 143.
Evening.	4, 13, 16, 17, 31, 77, 91, 121, 134.
Penitential Psalms.	6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143.
Preparing for Communion.	23, 25, 26, 36, 41, 43, 63, 84, 85, 86, 122, 130, 133, 139.
Thanks after Communion.	8, 15, 18, 19, 27, 29, 30, 34, 100, 103, 110, 118, 145, 150.

## Praise & Worship

Putting God Back on His Throne  
by Pr. Michael Taylor

Imagine if I were to talk about what makes my wife special to me. If I told you that it was all about her cooking or her cleaning, then what happens if she doesn't cook or clean that week? Or what if I found another way to get a meal or wash my laundry besides through her? I wouldn't have much of a reason to stick around if it was all about what she *did*, especially if she ever *didn't*. Instead, what makes my wife special to me is who she is. She's a loving, caring, kind, and considerate woman (among many other things). And it's because of who she is that she then turns around and does what she does.

Same thing is true with God. Because of who He is, we can count on Him to do what He does. We'll talk more about it during the lesson on prayer, but we tend to focus mainly on God's actions rather than His character. In our attempts to take time to grow in our walk with God, we might actually be setting ourselves up to walk away from Him. How?

God's character is constantly under attack by Satan. He has been spreading propaganda since the very beginning in order to undermine our trust in Him (see Gen. 3:1-6). Satan's "fake news" campaign continues to this day, with a simple goal: he wants to dethrone God. In Isaiah 14:12-14, we find that Satan (referred to symbolically as "the King of Babylon" and literally as "Lucifer") has a goal to set up his own counterfeit throne against God's true throne. He'll do whatever it takes to strip God of His authority in our lives, and he has even managed to get us to play along even when we think we're doing something spiritual (like praying). When our prayers are just a list of "pleases" (in the form of requests) and "thank yous", we flip roles. We put ourselves on the throne, with us giving God a list of demands (or a pat on the head for a job well done). We need to make sure to keep things straight: He is God, and we are not.

By focusing on who God is, apart from what He does, this also gives us a chance to do something else: trust Him when He *doesn't*. Is He still God when He says "no"? Is He still the Lord God Almighty if He tells you "not yet"? Is He still your Savior, Redeemer, Creator, or the Lord of Love if He doesn't seem to give you an obvious and immediate answer to your prayers? We'll deal more with prayer in another lesson, but for now, take a moment and reflect on something you appreciate about God's character.

What is 1 thing that stands out to you about who God is? \_\_\_\_\_

For me, God's creativity is one thing that stands out about His character. He's very creative. Instead of using giant cookie cutters to make all the trees or flowers or fish or humans the same, we see incredible diversity. There are gigantic redwoods and tiny banzai shrubs. My kids love snacking on apples and bananas and clementines, and on avocados and brussel sprouts and carrots. My friend list on social media is full of people with different hair, eye, and skin colors, with different heights and accents and all kinds of other distinctions. When I was a teenager, I thought I was supposed to do whatever I could to fit in and be like everyone else. I now realize that I wasn't made to be just like everyone else; I am "\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ made" (Psalm 139:14). I wasn't made to fit in; I was made to stand out by a creative God who decided that this world wasn't complete without me.

There's a story that demonstrates how Jesus addresses this creativity and diversity in humanity in the Gospels. In the 11<sup>th</sup> chapter of the Gospel of John, a man named Lazarus died. We often make the story all about the way that Jesus comes and spectacularly ruins the funeral (I won't ruin the ending if you're not familiar with the story). What we often miss, however, is Jesus ministering to Lazarus's grieving sisters, Martha and Mary. Martha can't wait to meet Jesus as soon as He approaches town; meanwhile, Mary can't even leave the house (v. 20). Martha meets Jesus face-to-face, but Mary crumples to the ground at His feet (v. 32). Interestingly, both sisters make the exact same statement about the situation (v. 21 & v. 32), almost as if they both heard the same attack against Jesus's character (which was masked as an attack on what He did or didn't do). As Jesus ministers to the sisters, we see His creativity in action. He doesn't use the exact same method to reach Mary that He used for Martha. Martha had questions, so Jesus guided her to answers. (Notice that Martha doesn't feel better about the situation until she's reassured about who Jesus is in v. 27; her grief about her brother is secondary to her relationship with Jesus and the attacks she had heard about His character.) On the other hand, Jesus treated Mary for her broken heart. He shows empathy for her pain, and He shows some of His own pain too. In the shortest verse in the Bible, John 11:35 records that "\_\_\_\_\_." Jesus values our unique expressions from our heart, because He knows our hearts and how to heal our broken hearts like He did for Martha and Mary that day.

It's this unique and one-of-a-kind creativity that drives my worship experience. My appreciation of God will look and sound slightly different than that of

others, because I'm wired just a little differently than others. Diversity in worship isn't just a matter of personal preference, however. It's biblical, and the model given from the throne room of Heaven. In the book of Revelation, we get a glimpse into an angelic worship experience in chapters 4 & 5. We'll talk more about how to understand prophecy later, but for now it's enough to know that this section deals with Jesus returning to Heaven after the Cross. In chapter 4, we see worship as usual in Heaven; in chapter 5, the slain Lamb of God emerges to take His place on the throne. In these 2 chapters, we hear 5 songs. The major theme of each of these songs is unique from the others.

Song #1 (4:8)'s theme is how God is \_\_\_\_\_.

Song #2 (4:11) is a song about God as \_\_\_\_\_.

Song #3 (5:9-10) focuses on Jesus specifically, celebrating Him as Redeemer.

Song #4 (5:12) focuses on the reason that Jesus is worthy of worship. It's

because He was \_\_\_\_\_.

Song #5 (5:13) is a new direction for their music going forward, remixing the previous songs to include the \_\_\_\_\_ who sits on the throne.

When dealing with the subject of worship, the Bible is full of examples but rarely gives rules. We're encouraged to keep God as the focus of our worship (Exodus 20:3-5), and that we should remember that He is holy (Isaiah 6:3). Being in His presence is so awe-inspiring that even the angels cover their face and feet (Isaiah 6:2). We should treat our time with God as different, perhaps even when considering what to wear when we're near Him (Exodus 3:5). We should take regular time for Him; especially on His weekly holy day, called the \_\_\_\_\_ (Exodus 20:8-11; more on this in another lesson). We are encouraged to "gather together" (Hebrews 10:24-25) for worship. When we're together, the guiding principle is in 1 Corinthians 14:26, when Paul says, "Let all things be done for \_\_\_\_\_." (That's a big fancy word that means "to lift everyone up to be better".)

If you're curious about how to praise and worship God, however, there is a book in the Bible that is known as "the song book that Jesus used". The book of Psalms is a collection of 150 songs and poems from a few dozen different authors as they reflect on who God is (praise) and what He does (thanksgiving). Psalms are often written about how grand and majestic God is, giving the readers all kinds of new ways to describe who He is. However, as you read through the Psalms, one thing quickly becomes clear: they're not all written by people going through times of "blue skies and butterflies". Some Psalms are full of hurt and pain and confusion and tragedy. I've heard the suggestion to read a Psalm a day to help you learn more about who God is in your walk with Him. Celebrate His character, not just His acts. Keep Him on His throne.