



Bible Study
Biblical Theology of Psalms
Lesson 5: Psalm 5

INTRODUCTION

Psalm Summary:

Psalm 5 teaches God's universal kingship, which brings destruction to his enemies and blessing to those who trust in him.

Outline

1. 1-3 Approaching God
2. 4-7 Praising God
3. 8-10 Petitioning God
4. 11-12 Confidence in God

OBSERVATION

Psalm 5 was written by David, as the superscription indicates. There is no mention of the occasion. Some call it a morning Psalm because of the mention of morning prayer (3) and have thought it was sung in connection with the morning sacrifice.

The Psalm is directed to the chief musician, or choirmaster per some translations. The term *nehiloth* most likely refers to particular instruments. It is commonly thought to refer to wind instruments, such as the trumpet, flute, horn, cornet, etc.

Psalm 5 is often categorized as a lament Psalm, but it doesn't exactly fit that form. It certainly is a prayer, featuring praise to God, request, and imprecatory prayers. Imprecatory prayers call on God to judge enemies (10). As a prayer, it also includes an expression of confidence.

Walk Through Psalm 5

Verses 1-3 begin the prayer/Psalm by approaching God and requesting a hearing. David asks God to give ear, consider, and hearken. The word for *meditation* is related to the word used in Psalm 1:2 positively and Psalm 2:1 negatively. The word refers to low tone muttering. When read with the usage in Psalms 1 and 2, we infer the idea of continuance. This is consistent with the mention of "morning" in verse 3, as a daily practice.

Verse 2 explicitly introduces a major theme in the Psalms as a whole—the universal, sovereign, supreme kingship of God—by addressing God as God and King. David acknowledges his subjection to God as King. (See section on interpretation for more on this).

Verses 4-7 praise God's character. God doesn't take pleasure in wickedness and will not dwell with evil, or abide evil dwelling with him. This asserts God's holiness, stated from the negative perspective. God is separate from all wickedness, evil, foolishness, iniquity, lying, violence, and treachery. It reminds us of how he told Moses that no man could see him and live (Exodus 33:20). All such will not be able to before him and that reminds us of the plight of the wicked in Psalm 1:1, 5-6 & 2:1-2.

In verse 7, David contrasts himself with those listed in verses 4-6. Given the strong statement of God's holiness, these verses might provoke the question of how David could come into God's presence, house or holy temple. The Psalm answers that question with the use of the Hebrew *hesed*, which is translated *mercy* in the verse. David enters God's presence through God's abundant covenant mercy. His mercy, love, and grace have been given to David through God's covenant.

Verses 8-10 petition God with two requests. First, David asks for guidance in God's righteousness when he asks for God's straight way. He wants to avoid the wrong way of the ungodly (Psalm 1:1, 6). Second, he asks for God to hold the rebellious accountable for their sins in verse 10. He describes them as opposing God's truth and speaking lying wickedness that destroys like the grave. He prays for the revelation of God's wrath against them, much like Paul describes it in Romans 1:18-32.

Verses 11-12 close the prayer with confidence expressed in God through expected blessings. Putting trust in God, as also mentioned in Psalm 2:12, is to experience the blessings of salvation from God's wrath. The blessings are here listed as joy (11), protection (11), blessing (12), God's favor (12), and God surrounding shield (12).

INTERPRETATION

What does Psalm 5 teach?

God's Unchanging Character

Psalm 5 teaches the unchanging character of God as the foundation for hope in him. The dominant attribute is God's holiness. His holiness is expressed through contrasting actions of hatred and love. God's hatred is evidenced toward the wicked through separating judgment. Verses 4-6 state how God will not abide evil in his presence. It must be put away from him. Verses 9-10 show the revelation of his wrath against the wicked, leading their being held accountable for their sins and ultimately destroyed, being cast out of God's presence forever. They are like the chaff being driven away by the wind (Psalm 1:4-5). It is God's uncompromising holiness that drives them away.

God's love is contrasted through divine protection and deliverance that draws near to him. Verses 7-8 show the righteous coming into God's presence, pictured as his house and holy temple. Verses 11-12 show the righteous taking refuge, or trusting, in God, being defended by him, and covered with God's favor.

Standing in God's Presence

Psalm 5 delivers a strong message concerning the casting of the wicked out of God's presence, which provokes a question addressed in other Psalms, such as Psalm 15 and 24. Paul quotes Psalm 5:9 in Romans 3:13 as part of his case that all men, Jews and Gentiles alike, are guilty and unrighteous before God. David would be included as a son of Adam in the universal unrighteousness of men, so how could he or anyone else stand in God's presence? How could he dwell with God since God's holiness cannot abide unrighteousness?

Verse 7 gives the key difference between David and the rebelling wicked, between those who put their trust in God (11) and those who have rebelled against him (10). The difference is God's abundant mercy. It is not David's acts of righteousness or any means of self-purification. Dwelling with God is a gracious gift of God's mercy. Coming into God's presence requires a mediator between God and men, which is spoken of elsewhere (Psalm 68:18).

Messianic Hope

David points to the Messianic hope when he addresses "my King, and my God" in verse 2. David was God's anointed king, but because of God's covenant with him (2 Samuel 7:8-17), David knew he was only a figure of the future King who would come of David's seed.

David explicitly introduces the universal kingship of God here. That kingship is implied through God's position and actions in Psalm 2. He is above the nations, kings, and rulers of the earth as he sits in the heavens and holds them in derision (Psalm 2:1-2, 4). God will install his mediatorial king in Zion (Psalm 2:6). God is the owner and ruler of the nations such that he will give them as a possession to his Son/King for him to rule over them on the earth from Zion (Psalm 2:7-8). God's Anointed King will break the rebellious nations and they must submit to Yahweh's Son/King (Psalm 2:9-12). God's Son/King is the instrument of judgment and salvation to come.

God's universal kingship is developed throughout the Psalms. The limitations of merely human kings and God's eternal kingship are contrasted in Psalm 146:3-5, 10. The overall supremacy of God's kingship is exclaimed in Psalm 89:5-10; 95:3; and 145:13. God's position over all creation highlights the fact he will not fail to place his Son/King on the mount in Zion and give him the kingdoms of the earth.

APPLICATION

What does Psalm 5 say to modern readers?

1. Understanding Psalm 5 helps us understand how to pray. We approach God with humble appeal (1-3). We praise God for his revealed character, realizing his unchanging character is why we have hope (4-7). We request God to act to fulfill his will and deliver us from death to life (8-10). We express our confidence in him and rest in him

to do all he has said he will do (11-12).

2. Understanding Psalm 5 helps us understand something of God's holiness. His holiness means judgment to all who rebel and salvation to all who trust in him.
3. Understanding Psalm 5 relieves us of the crushing burden of running the universe. God is King of the universe. His Son Jesus Christ will rise from his seat at the right hand of God's universal throne to take his seat on David's throne in Jerusalem and rule over this earth through David's kingdom. God will accomplish that, not us. As troubles and distresses come and go, we rest content under the shield of his favor.

ABOUT THIS STUDY

This series is a study in biblical theology of the book of Psalms. Each lesson typically covers one Psalm. This PDF is provided for personal study, small group study, or use in a church class. Unless otherwise noted, all lessons have been prepared by Jeff Short, the pastor of Harmony Baptist Church.

Harmony Baptist Church

3012 W Delmar Ave
Godfrey, IL 62035

618-466-2631

Harmonybaptist3014@gmail.com

www.hbcgodfrey.com

www.facebook.com/HarmonyBaptistGodfrey