

Monday Night Discipleship: Week 15

Overview:

1. Introduction to The General Principles of Interpretation
2. Longman Chapter 16 discussion:
 - a. Content: What Is Psalms About?
 - b. Authorship and Date: Who Wrote Psalms and When?
 - c. Genre: What Style of Literature Is Psalms?
 - d. Connections: How Does Psalms Connect to the Gospel?

Workshop:

1. “Good Biblical interpretation is better _____ [...] than taught.”¹

2. General Principles of Biblical Interpretation:
 - a. Approach in Prayer- we need God to instruct us and be our guide.
 - i. Therefore prayer is essential _____, _____, and _____ any study of the Bible.
 - ii. David’s Prayers in Psalm 119:

 - b. Read with a Christocentric Understanding - Plummer writes, “If we study or teach any part of the Bible without reference to Jesus the Savior, we are not faithful interpreters. [...] As we know how the story wraps up (in Christ’s life, death, and resurrection), we must always be asking how prior chapters lead to that culmination.”²

 - c. Scripture Should Interpret Scripture - Since the Bible is inspired by God and cannot contradict itself, unclear passages of the Bible should be interpreted with reference to passages that are more clear and understandable in meaning.
 - i. Example: Genesis 17:10-12
 1. 1 Corinthians 7:19
 2. Hebrews 10:1
 3. Acts 16:3, Galatians 2:3

¹ Plummer, Robert, Benjamin L. Merkle, *40 Questions About Interpreting the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2010), 95.

² Plummer, Robert, Benjamin L. Merkle, *40 Questions About Interpreting the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2010), 96-97.

- ii. In order to grow in this general principle of interpretation, it requires:
 - 1. Christians to be immersed in the Bible
 - 2. Some helpful tools and Biblical resources
 - 3. Christian community that can do theology together
 - 4. Lots of time and repetition

- d. Dwell on Scripture - “no biblical diet is complete without extended rumination on a smaller portion of text.”³
 - i. Luther- when you study the Bible, “you should meditate, that is not only in your heart, but also externally, by actually repeating and comparing oral speech and literal words of the book, reading and rereading them with diligent attention and reflection, so that you may see what the Holy Spirit means by them. And take care that you do not grow weary or think that you have done enough when you have read, heard, and spoken them once or twice, and that you have complete understanding. You will never be a particularly good theologian if you do that, for you will be like untimely fruit which falls to the ground before it is half ripe.”⁴

- e. Approach in Faith and Obedience- “The Bible is not a philosophy textbook to be debated; it is a revelation from God to be _____ and _____. As we believe and obey God’s Word, we will experience not only joy (Ps. 119:72) but also, more importantly, God’s blessing, or approval.”⁵

Longman Chapter 16 Discussion:

- 1. Content: What Is Psalms About?
 - a. A Collection of Works- The book of Psalms is a collection of Hebrew poetry and songs that spans a period of almost _____ years.

 - b. Descriptive Titles of the Psalms- there is much debate regarding the origin of each title because many seem to be later additions based on Hebrew tradition.
 - i. Example: Psalm 51- For instance, Psalm 51, is introduced with this title/description “**To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David, when Nathan**

³ Plummer, Robert, Benjamin L. Merkle, *40 Questions About Interpreting the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2010), 98.

⁴ Martin Luther, “Preface to the Wittenberg Edition of Luther’s German Writings” (1539), in Martin Luther’s Basic Theological Writings, ed. Timothy F. Lull, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005), 72-73. Referenced in Plummer, Robert, Benjamin L. Merkle, *40 Questions About Interpreting the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2010), 96.

⁵ Plummer, Robert, Benjamin L. Merkle, *40 Questions About Interpreting the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2010), 95.

the prophet went to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.” The reader is forced to read the Psalm with this lens, when it is possible that this psalm was meant to be a general psalm of contrition and repentance for Israel.

- ii. How do we apply the titles of the Psalms?
 “The best solution is to regard the titles as early reliable tradition concerning the authorship and setting of the psalms. The titles, however, should _____ be taken as original or canonical.”⁶
- c. Outline: According to the Hebrew Scriptures, the book of Psalms is divided into five sections. Each of these Hebrew sections concludes with a doxology, prayer or praise of God.
 - i. Book 1 (Ps. 1-41)
 - ii. Book 2 (Ps. 42-72)
 - iii. Book 3 (Ps. 73-89)
 - iv. Book 4 (Ps. 90-106)
 - v. Book 5 (Ps. 107-150)
- d. Classifications of Psalms- “[Psalms] is not organized chronologically, thematically, generically, or in any other discernible manner.”⁷ Below are ten types (or classifications) of Psalms⁸:
 - i. Individual Lament Psalms- these Psalms are an individual’s direct petition to God for His rescue and protection. Most of the Psalms fall into this type (some include Psalms “3-7; 12; 13; 22; 25-28; 35; 38-40; 42; 43; 51; 54-57; 59; 61; 63; 64; 69-71; 86; 88; 102; 109; 120; 130; 140-143”⁹).
 - ii. Communal Lament Psalms- Much like the Individual Lament Psalms, these psalms are on behalf of the nation instead of just an individual. Some include Psalms (“44; 60; 74; 79-80; 83; 85; 90; and 123”¹⁰).

⁶ Raymond B. Dillard, Tremper Longman III, *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994), 215.

⁷ Tremper Longman III. *Introducing The Old Testament: A Short Guide to its History and Message* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2012), 92.

⁸ George Knight, James Edwards, *Compact Bible Handbook*, Nelson’s Compact Series (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishing, 2004), 101-103.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 101.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

- iii. Individual Thanksgiving Psalms- these Psalms are an individual's public thanks to God for either something God's done or will do in the future. Some include Psalms ("18; 30; 32; 34; 40; 41; 66; 106; 116; and 138"¹¹).
- iv. Communal Thanksgiving Psalms- Much like the Individual Thanksgiving Psalms, these psalms are on behalf of the nation instead of just an individual.
- v. General Praise Psalms- Similar to the Thanksgiving Psalms, these seem to be more focused on exalting God and His greatness. Some include Psalms ("8; 19; 29; 103; 104; 139; 148; 150"¹²).
- vi. Descriptive Praise Psalms- these psalms focus on God's praise for His attributes and acts. Some include Psalms ("33; 36; 105; 111; 113; 117; 135; 136; 146; 147"¹³).
- vii. Enthronement Psalms- these psalms proclaim God's sovereign rule over all. Some include Psalms ("47; 93; 96-99"¹⁴).
- viii. Pilgrimage Songs- these were psalms sung by pilgrims that made the long trek up to Jerusalem for the three annual Jewish festivals. Some include Psalms ("43; 46; 48; 76; 84; 87; 120-134"¹⁵).
- ix. Royal Psalms- these psalms focused on either the earthly king or heavenly Kings. Some include Psalms ("2; 18; 20; 21; 45; 72; 89; 101; 110; 132; and 144"¹⁶).
- x. Wisdom and Didactic Psalms- these psalms gave instruction to the readers in the way of God's righteousness. Some include Psalms ("1; 37; 119"¹⁷).

2. Authorship and Date: Who Wrote Psalms and When?

- a. Author- multiple authors over a one thousand year period
- b. Date: roughly 400 B.C.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid., 103.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

3. Genre: What Style of Literature Is Psalms?

Poetry and Songs-

4. Connections: How Does Psalms Connect to the Gospel?

- a. Shepherd and Warrior- relationship metaphors that describe God and his relationship with man.
- b. Prayers to Jesus- We can read many of these psalms as our prayer to Jesus himself.
- c. Prayers of Jesus- Some psalms can be read as prayers spoken by Jesus.
- d. Kingship Psalms - In the OT period, these psalms were sung for the inauguration of the new Davidic king.

R.E.A.P.

Psalm 51

Have mercy on me, O God,

according to your steadfast love;

according to your abundant mercy

blot out my transgressions.

²Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,

and cleanse me from my sin!

³For I know my transgressions,

and my sin is ever before me.

⁴Against you, you only, have I sinned

and done what is evil in your sight,

so that you may be justified in your words

and blameless in your judgment.

⁵Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,

and in sin did my mother conceive me.

⁶Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being,

and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.

⁷Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;

wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

⁸Let me hear joy and gladness;

let the bones that you have broken rejoice.

- ⁹ Hide your face from my sins,
and blot out all my iniquities.
- ¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.
- ¹¹ Cast me not away from your presence,
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.
- ¹² Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and uphold me with a willing spirit.
- ¹³ Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
and sinners will return to you.
- ¹⁴ Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God,
O God of my salvation,
and my tongue will sing aloud of your righteousness.
- ¹⁵ O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth will declare your praise.
- ¹⁶ For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it;
you will not be pleased with a burnt offering.
- ¹⁷ The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.
- ¹⁸ Do good to Zion in your good pleasure;
build up the walls of Jerusalem;
- ¹⁹ then will you delight in right sacrifices,
in burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings;
then bulls will be offered on your altar.”¹⁸

1. **Read aloud together**

2. **Explain by answering the three questions: What does this passage teach us about _____?**
- a. God:

¹⁸ The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Psalm 51. All passages of Scripture will come from this translation unless otherwise referenced.

b. Man:

c. Christ:

3. **Ask-** What question/s would help you understand the text more fully?

4. **Pray-** Using some of your observations and questions, write out a prayer to God.