

The Book of Psalms

Psalm 30

Opening Prayer

Read Psalm 30

Overview

Psalm 30 is one of 14 psalms that gives us an historical context in its title. Here the title says that it was written on the occasion of “the dedication of the house”. Most likely this is a reference to the establishment of the house of the Lord by the entrance of the Ark of the Covenant into Jerusalem. ***Read 2 Samuel 6:1-19***

What happened to Uzzah?

How did this make David feel?

Where did the ark stay for three months and what was the result?

What did David do as the ark was brought into Jerusalem?

Psalm 30 is sung or recited at Hanukkah every year. Hanukkah is the celebration of the rededication of the temple in 164 BC after it was desecrated by Antiochus Epiphanes. Appropriate that the psalm sung at the establishment of God’s presence in Jerusalem by the entrance of the ark would be sung again at the re-establishment of that presence in the temple.

Psalm 30 is also a psalm of trust and thanksgiving in David’s life personally. The psalm espouses that God had delivered him. Whether that deliverance was physical or spiritual is a matter of some debate. By the end of the psalm, David’s deliverance was a call to praise for all the “holy ones” who have also been delivered.

Outline/Structure

- I. Reason for the Psalmist’s Praise – 30:1-3
- II. Call for Others To Praise the Lord – 30:4-5
- III. Narrative of the Psalmist’s Circumstances – 30:6-10
- IV. God’s Response – 30:11-12

Reason for the Psalmist's Response – 30:1-3

- :1-2 - David exults the Lord not only because the Lord is worthy of praise, but because the worship completes the joy. Like someone with news that is simply bursting out of them, worship flows forth from a heart that has been saved.

"I had never noticed that all enjoyment spontaneously overflows into praise...the world rings with praise-lovers praise their mistresses, readers their favourite poet, walkers praise the countryside, players praising their favourite game- praise of weather, wine, dishes,rare stamps, rare beetles, even sometimes politicians or scholars...Praise almost seems to be inner health audible. I think we delight to praise what we enjoy because the praise not merely expresses but completes the enjoyment; it is its appointed consummation. It is not out of compliment that lovers keep on telling one another how beautiful they are; the delight is incomplete until it is expressed." (C.S. Lewis, Reflections on the Psalms)

How does this add meaning to our worship?

- "lifted up" – the same Hebrew phrase is used with the idea of drawing water from a well, lifting the water out of the well. Here David expresses the reason for his exultation of the Lord: he has been lifted up and healed by the Lord.
- :3 - "Sheol" and "pit" – Both of these words refer to the same place, the place where an individual will go following death without the help of the Lord.
- Why does the Christian church hesitate to talk about hell and what happens to the unbeliever who dies?*

Call for Others to Praise the Lord – 30:4-5

- :4 - "His godly ones" – the Hebrew word here is *hasadi*, "holy ones". It is also the base word for the group known as the "Hasidic" Jews. David will now build upon his own deliverance and the resulting praise to call others who are faithful to praise as well. God has delivered them and so praise will complete their joy.
- :5 - David now gives the reason for the "holy ones" to praise of the Lord. Our troubles are temporary but the joy of the Lord is eternal. Thus, *For His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for a lifetime.*
- What also does this verse acknowledge?*
- Why is this hard for us to accept?*

Read Isaiah 38:1-8

What was Isaiah's first prophecy to Hezekiah and who was it from?

What was Isaiah's second prophecy to Hezekiah and who was it from?

What sign did God give to Hezekiah that He would be certain of what was said?

Narrative of the Psalmist's Circumstances – 30:6-10

- :6 - How are we to understand David saying, "I will never be moved"?
1. We could understand it as a looking back when he lived in pride of himself. In that case the "prosperity" was a material prosperity and he came to rely on it falsely.
2. We could also understand the "prosperity" as a product of God's doing. Then his statement, "I will never be moved/shaken", becomes a statement of faith. **Read Psalm 63:2; 16:8**
- This second understanding fits better contextually with the rest of the psalm and especially the next verse.
- :7 - This verse really demonstrates the valleys and mountains of faith. It begins with a declaration of faith in the power of what God can do, *by Your favor You have made my mountain stand strong*. Yet the verse also descends into the valley of the human experience, *You hid Your face, I was dismayed*.
How is this verse similar to verse 5?
How are we to deal with a God who allows us to experience valleys?
Read Job 5:17-18; Hebrews 12:6
What do these verses teach us about the nature of our Father's love?
- :8-10 - David calls on the Lord and he makes an interesting argument for why the Lord should help him. We might call it the "Pirates of the Caribbean" argument.
What is the common saying you hear while riding the Pirates of the Caribbean ride?
How is David's argument with the Lord in verse 9 similar? See also Isaiah 38:18; Psalm 88:10

God's Response – 30:11-12

:11-12 – Now David goes on to celebrate the deliverance that God has brought about and what it means for David. David dances before the Lord as he did before the ark as it was led into Jerusalem. (See the Overview above)

- “sackcloth” – this was a garment worn at times of mourning (***Genesis 37:34***) and at times of repentance (***Jonah 3:5***). God has replaced David's mourning/repentance cloth and girded him with gladness. God does the same for us with eternal life. ***Read 1 Corinthians 15:50-57***

Summary

Psalms 30 is a celebration of God's deliverance for David. He sings and writes it in commemoration of the ark coming into Jerusalem. The ark's presence reminded David that God is always with him. God is always with us as well. In Jesus Christ, we have access to God the Father and whatever troubles our hearts and minds, through Christ we can take it to our Father who answers. In God's answers our mourning is turned to dancing and our weeping lasts only for the night because joy comes in the morning.

Closing prayer