

Psalms: Book Two (Part One)

Pentecost, Redemption, and Conversion

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Given 03-May-14; Sermon #1211

Most of you who have been around for a long time, at least the last couple of years, will remember that I gave several sermons on the Psalms. I concentrated on the Psalms right near the end of the book, Book Five, Psalms 107-145. I concentrated mostly on explaining the book and how it was appropriate for the winter season. In later sermons I went and talked about the psalms of ascents, Psalms 120-134. We also went over, in a different sermon, the Hallel, which was the psalms of praise, Psalms 113-118. That left Psalm 119, which in that whole group of psalms we did not go over, so I decided to do a sermon on Psalm 119 too.

There are a lot of the psalms that we went over but that still leaves a lot of the book to study. We actually just went over part of one of Book Five. As I explained in the first of those sermons—the one on Book Five overall and how it applied to winter—the Psalms have an internal organization all to themselves and most people who read the Bible are either ignorant of it or they miss the fact that a lot of the Bibles actually put Book One, Book Two, three, four etc, as headings in there. In not treating these sections of the Psalms as a whole, I think they miss some very helpful insight. Of course people in the world do not understand the holy days and how all that goes together with these things, as well in the plan of God, so a lot is missed.

There is a reason that there are five books of the Psalms. They were split in antiquity into these five sections and there must have been a reason for it. No one actually knows the reason for it. There is no definite explanation of why it was done. We have to make guesses of why this organization is there.

But if you think about it, splitting this very book of 150 psalms into five generally similar sizes, makes a lot of sense. It is helpful in many ways to organize these things and take them in smaller chunks. It helps you to memorize things better, it helps in terms of thematic organization, and there is a good indication that there is some sort of liturgical origination within them too. They use them for, as we will see, different times of the year and for different reasons. Even though it is cut into five chunks, it does not hurt the overall integrity of the book of Psalms.

So, this most basic element of the organization is that the Psalms is divided into five sections that they call books, as I have already mentioned. In biblical numerology, the number five is associated with divine grace. I went over that quite a bit more in the

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“Psalms for the Winter Blues” sermon I gave, so I will not go into that now, but I am sure that there is something to that just from the standpoint that there are five. I believe that we are supposed to associate it with God's grace.

They are songs of praise to God for the things that He gives, the things that He provides to us, so these are supposed to remind us then of all of His grace. Jesus Christ is said to be full of grace and truth. God's plan is one act of grace after another and the Psalms reflect those things.

There is even a more fundamental element of organization here because you have this—your hand. The hand has five fingers, and five then becomes a very easy way to memorize and organize things because you can count them off on each one of your fingers. You can say that it is a “handy” bit of organization, if you count the books and associate the themes that are in there, it is easy to remember.

It is not just the books of Psalms that are arranged in fives. As a matter of fact, this arrangement or organization of five goes throughout the Old Testament. Each one of these sets of fives generally correspond with the other sets of five. It is not a perfect correlation, but you can put these things together and see similarities of themes as you go through.

So if you remember that sermon a couple of years ago, I told you to make a 6” x 6” chart where we put these groups of five down and their themes. I will go over them again briefly here: There are the five books of Psalms, then at the end of the book there are five summary Psalms: 146-150, and those correspond to the five books. So, chapter 146 goes with book 1, chapter 147 goes with book 2, chapter 148 goes with book 3, etc. Those are two sets of five that correlate.

Then you have the five books of Moses—the Pentateuch: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Genesis correlates with the first book of Psalms and Psalm 146. Exodus correlates with the second book of Psalms and Psalm 147 and so on.

There are also what they call the five festival scrolls, The Megilloth. They are associated with five festival seasons, or the five seasons of the year. So the book of Song of Songs is associated with the first book of Psalms, Psalms 146, and the book of Genesis. They are all correlative to each other. The same thing for the second book of the Megilloth, which is the book of Ruth. Ruth corresponds with the book of Exodus, the second book of Psalms, and Psalm 147. Lamentations is the next one, Ecclesiastes the next one after that, and the book of Esther rounds out that set of five. So you have Song of

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Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, and Esther in the third group.

Now there are also a series of five seasons. We normally think of the year as four seasons, but the Israelites were more inclined to correlate the year to the festival seasons. They had chopped the year into five unequal times, so the first season was the Passover season, the beginning of the year, as God said in Exodus 12.

Exodus 12:1-2 Now the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, "This month shall be your beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you.

So the first season of the year, Passover, correlates with those other firsts; Book One of Psalms, Psalm 146, Genesis, and Song of Songs. Then the second season is Pentecost. Pentecost is actually a longer season than Passover, it is 50 days. That is why these are unequal because the Passover season includes the whole feast of Unleavened Bread as well as from the beginning of the sacred year, so it is about half to three-quarters of a month long. Pentecost, Ruth, Exodus, Psalms Book Two, and Psalm 147 all go together.

The next season is the summer season, between Pentecost and the fall feast. This is a time of growth before the harvest. This season goes with the book of Lamentations. Lamentations is all about the fall of Jerusalem and that is when it happened, in the summer time. It is also associated with Leviticus, Book Three of the Psalms, and Psalm 148.

The fourth season is the season of the fall festivals from Trumpets through what we call the Last Great Day. It is the time of the fall harvest. The festival scroll associated with that is Ecclesiastes and it correlates with the book of Numbers, the fourth book of the Psalms, and Psalm 149.

The final one, which we went over quite a bit, is winter time, the long season between the end of the fall feast and the beginning of the spring feast. This correlates with the book of Esther. Purim occurs at the end of that period just before the Passover time and that is what is what happens at the end of Esther. It correlates with the book of Deuteronomy, Book Five, and Psalm 150.

Those are the five things that correlate with one another, but we have not talked about the themes. The themes come out of what is in these particular correlations between these books and these chapters. For instance, the first season, the season of Passover,

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and Book One of Psalms, Song of Songs, the book of Genesis, and Psalm 146 talk about things like Christ's life and death; Christ's sacrifice, salvation, deliverance. All those things are part of the theme of this set of correlative things.

We are going to focus today on the second book of Psalms, Psalms 42-72, the summary Psalm 147, the book of Exodus, the book of Ruth, and the season of Pentecost, which is what we are in right now. If we look at the themes of these thirty-one psalms, we will find that they line up quite well with the lessons of Pentecost and especially with the spiritual application to us as Christians preparing for the harvest as firstfruits.

We are going to look at Book Two, Psalm 147, and we are going to bring things in from Exodus and Ruth and all of the lessons that we have learned in the past. There is one caveat that I need to make sure we understand as we go forward here. These groups of five generally correspond with each other. I want to make sure that we understand that it is *general*. In other words there is not a perfect one-on-one correlation, they are not going to be perfectly aligned all the time.

There are things in Exodus that you will not find in Ruth, and there are things in Psalms 42-72 that we will not find in Psalm 147, which is the summary psalm. The summary psalm is more general so it is not going to bring out every little detail. So, their agreement is overall while some of the details do not exactly fit.

This is the same thing when you study parables. The parables that Jesus taught do give specific teachings, but He wants us to grasp the overall lesson. Some of the details may not be all that important, or maybe we are just not looking at them right, but God wants us first to grasp the overall understanding that He wants us to get. So the caveat is to try not to cram things into the themes that do not belong. Just look at it in an overall sense. That is pretty much all I am going to be able to give you today—the overall themes of this section of the Psalms.

Now, this is the Pentecost season. The fifty days began a couple of weeks ago during the Days of Unleavened Bread. We began the count on the day after the Sabbath within the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

We have been on the count for a couple of weeks now, so we should be thinking about Pentecost already because God wants us to count and to look at this particular time of the year in a particular way. He wants us to be focused on the counting. He wants us, whether day by day or week by week, to realize that we are approaching the day of Pentecost. So He makes us, every year, count toward Pentecost. Some of you mark off

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the fifty days on the calendar to remind yourselves, which is not a bad idea.

The Pentecost time is special for us (not that the other times are not special too), but Pentecost is especially focused on us because this is the time that we focus on the harvest of the firstfruits and we believe that we are the first-fruits of God. So there is something special going on that this period of time represents. Let us go to Leviticus 23. What I want you to do as we go through this is just pick up various thoughts that God includes in this day, and I have already mentioned one of the big ones.

Leviticus 23:15-16 'And you shall count for yourselves [that is one of the big things, there is a count here; days are passing and we are going toward, as he says here:] from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering: seven Sabbaths shall be completed. Count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a new grain offering to the Lord.

What we see here is that God commands us to count for ourselves, it is supposed to be a personal thing, toward a goal, and the goal is the fiftieth day. The goal is the festival that commemorates the harvest. So we are counting down time to the harvest.

Leviticus 23:17 You shall bring from your dwellings two wave loaves of two-tenths of an ephah. They shall be of fine flour [so we understand here that if it is fine flour then the flour had to be refined, it had to have been ground down till it was very fine and of top quality of flour]; they shall be baked with leaven.

This is an unusual thing in the sacrifices, that even though this fine flour had been refined by grinding till it was of the best quality, it was still mixed with leaven, leaven being a symbol of corruption and sin. And it was baked into these wave loaves that were waved before God for acceptance before Him.

Leviticus 23:17c They are the firstfruits to the Lord.

So this is the first major crop and it is to the Lord, it is to Him and for Him and everything is supposed to be directed toward Him. Verse 18 has to do with offerings being made, so there is a lot of sacrifices going on, burnt offerings, grain offerings, drink offerings, made by fire as a sweet aroma to the Lord.

Leviticus 23:18-22 And you shall offer with the bread seven lambs of the first year, without blemish, one young bull, and two rams. They shall be as a burnt offering to the Lord, with their grain offering and their drink offerings, an offering made by fire for a sweet aroma to the Lord. [These are the things that typify the life that we are supposed to be living at this time, as a life of sacrifice that God accepts as something that pleases Him.] Then you shall sacrifice one kid of the goats as a sin offering, and two male lambs of the first year as a sacrifice of a peace offering. The priest shall wave them with the bread of the first-fruits as a wave offering before the Lord, with the two lambs. They shall be holy to the Lord for the priest. [Just keep some of these things in the back of your mind. The holiness and the priesthood is all very important in all of this.] And you shall proclaim on the same day that it is a holy convocation to you. You shall do no customary work on it. It shall be a statute forever in all your dwellings throughout your generations. [Verse 22 seems misplaced, but it is not] When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field when you reap, nor shall you gather any gleaning from your harvest. You shall leave them for the poor and for the stranger: I am the Lord your God.”

Tacked on to the end of the Pentecost instructions is this important instruction not to glean the edges of your field but to leave it for the poor and the stranger. So you have this idea of helping the needy and that the poor and the stranger will be able to feed from your labors. All of these are very important concepts. They are just thrown in here one after another and we have had to make sense of them over the years.

But that is not all. This is just the Pentecost command we are talking about here. We also get themes of the Pentecost season from elsewhere. We do not need to go there, but remember what happened on Mt. Sinai at this time of the year. The Israelites had left under Moses at Passover time on the first day of Unleavened Bread and they had journeyed out of Egypt, and by the time they got the Red Sea, it was the end of Unleavened Bread. Once they crossed the Red Sea, they were in the wilderness. This was then the beginning of the count to Pentecost, when they started to trek toward the mountain of God.

So they spent the count to Pentecost in the wilderness getting to Sinai, and by tradition, the giving of the law, starting in chapter 19, when they were all gathering there, God told Moses to tell the people after three days, “I’m going to appear and this is what I want the people to do: make sure everyone is clean; don’t touch the mountain, etc.” So after three days, God comes down and He gives the law—the Ten Commandments.

By tradition that was done on the day of Pentecost. You can logistically work it out that it would take them all that time to cross Sinai to wherever the mountain of God was. So the giving of the law happened on the day of Pentecost, but we should not forget that at the end of chapters 20-23, were are all these laws that God gave to Israel for how they should act under Him as His people, and then they ratify the covenant and there is a possibility that this could all have been done on the day of Pentecost. You can read chapters 21-23 easily in one day and all that is given by God, and God said let us ratify this before the people. Blood was sprinkled and the Old Covenant was made. Now what book was this in? Exodus.

What we seen in Exodus, especially in this particular section, between chapters 19 and 23 or 24, is the law and the covenant, how important the law is to the covenant, and how important the law and the covenant are to the relationship between Israel and God. And let us not forget that the covenant was not just a treaty, it was a marriage covenant and the Israelites became married to God.

When we come into the church, we accept the New Covenant and we become betrothed to Jesus Christ, the Messiah. It is also a marriage covenant and sealed by His blood. So we have this idea of marriage coming into the idea of Pentecost through the covenant and through the giving of the law. We do not need to go any further there, so now let us go to Acts 2.

Acts 2:1-4 When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Another major part of the understanding of Pentecost, as we have come to know it, is that God also gave the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. So now God gives His church—His bride—the tools they need to go forward to become the actual bride of Christ in the resurrection so that they can have full salvation and be prepared for what they will be doing in the Kingdom of God.

What we find here is God, supplying through His providence, everything we need as we go through this trek through the wilderness to the Kingdom of God and to become His bride in the Kingdom.

We have all of these themes cropped up here and others as well that I am not going to mention here, but specifically we have the counting of the days and that is an awareness of the movement of time. There is the waving of the leavened loaves before God for acceptance, the harvesting of the grain as the theme of the harvest of firstfruits; the giving of the law on Mt. Sinai and the making of the Old Covenant, prefiguring the making of the New Covenant and finally the giving of the Holy Spirit. So we have overriding themes of marriage, law, covenant, and redemption (obviously).

I have already showed you how these correlate very well with the way that we have to live and walk as converted people. So this festival period of Pentecost symbolizes the Christian life under the New Covenant, where we are guided by the law and by the Holy Spirit and given the strengths and gifts, through the Holy Spirit, as we prepare for the resurrection and for full acceptance into the family of God.

So the fifty days that we count toward Pentecost parallels a typical length of conversion for a Christian, a day for a year. Fifty years may seem like a long time, but if we are converted at a young age, fifty years is not hard to get to. If you get baptized at around 18 or 20 years old, we will in fifty years be about the age of 70 years old. That is the period of a Christian's redemption, it is not just that we are redeemed at the beginning. We are redeemed from our sins, but it takes that whole process to fully redeem us from this world and make us into the sons and daughters of God and prepared to be the bride of Christ.

As I said, the major themes are: redemption, law; spirit; covenant; marriage; and also separation or exile. I did not mention this one very much before, but is that not what the Israelite did when they left Egypt? They were suddenly separated from the rest of the world and they went through a forty year period of exile in the wilderness where they hardly came in contact with anybody. They were totally separated out and God worked with them in the wilderness. That is what happens when we are called out of this world ourselves—we are separated or set apart and God works with us in the “wilderness.”

If we were to make a study of Ruth, and I do not want to go into all of that because I did a sermon on that many years ago, but as I mentioned that is the book of the Megilloth that corresponds with Psalms book 2. We see that these same themes are right there in the book of Ruth. It opens up with Naomi's family in self exile in Moab. They go there because of a famine and they have to come back because the men all die, so Naomi says she is going to return to Bethlehem and Ruth goes with her and she has accepted Israel's ways.

She makes a covenant with Naomi and says that, “I will never leave you; where you go I

will go." And she promises then to remain with Naomi and live as she does. Now this is the idea of covenant coming in here in the book of Ruth. Then we see that the work that she does is part of reaping the harvest. She goes to Boaz's field and she gleans the corners of the fields, which is interesting because that is what is tacked on to the Pentecost command in Leviticus 23.

She is one of the poor, one of the aliens that are drawn into the orbit of Israel and Boaz then sees her in the field and he begins to do a work of redemption. He becomes the redeemer, the goel, who buys her and the property that is associated with Naomi's family. So he then becomes a type of Christ who redeems.

Then at the end of the book, she marries Boaz and they have a child and what you see is Ruth's full acceptance, not only into the family of Boaz, but into all of Israel. It shows Gentiles being brought into the church and not only does she get accepted, but she bears the child that will eventually result in such luminaries as David and Jesus Christ Himself. So what you see here is a family being made brought about by redemption, and by the good works that were done here throughout the book, so obviously Ruth fits very well with the theme of Pentecost.

Now we went over a little bit of how Exodus fits in here. It is a good parallel to Ruth and to the Pentecost season and to Psalms book two and also Psalm 147. But think about the book of Exodus, what is its name? It is Exodus, it means going out, leaving, or departing. So immediately when you think about the title of the book, it is about being separated, about Israel being separated from Egypt. And of course the entire book is about God's redemption of Israel. He brought them out in order to redeem them or He redeemed them in order to bring them out, whichever way you want to look at it.

These themes are also coming up in the book of Exodus. And we also saw that it included the giving of the law, it included the making of the covenant, and what I found most interesting when I was thinking this through, is the last part of Exodus. They get to Mt. Sinai and there is all this action and drama and then suddenly you are hit with commands. Moses was told to tell the people how to make the priestly garments and how to make all these things for the tabernacle. It seems like nothing else happens except that they are making things. They are sewing, constructing, putting up a tent, etc. But you know that fits the theme here.

What do those things represent? The tabernacle represents the church, it is the Temple. You are the temple of the living God. What are they doing? They are building the tabernacle, they are constructing it, they are making, completing it, they are perfecting it. How about the priestly garments? What is God's goal? He is making a nation of priests.

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So He is giving instructions of how these people—not clothes, but people—will be made to serve Him and to serve others.

So all the themes of Pentecost start coming together into this whole book, because Pentecost is all about the growing of wheat, as it were, though leavened; grinding them down; making them into a perfect loaf to be waved before God. It is all this harvest symbolism coming through in order to prepare the people. That is the major overall theme that we are getting at. This time, the count to Pentecost and Pentecost itself are all about the conversion process and finally the harvest at the end—the resurrection from the dead, and in that, the waving before God as being acceptable, even though we have leaven in us, but that has been forgiven. That is what those sacrifices were about in Leviticus 23, representing a lot of the sacrifices being done to make us acceptable.

So we have here a whole bunch of themes that come together at once and is it not amazing that they all fit together? There are all these fives in Scripture and they all correlate so well that the second book of the Pentateuch correlates with the second book of the festival scrolls, book two of the Psalms, the summary Psalm, and the second season of the sacred year. It is really amazing how all of these things fit together and only the mind of God could have made it all happen.

What I would like to do now is go to another one of these five and that is to the summary psalm, Psalm 147, just so that we can get an idea of how these themes all come together and how, as we leave the book of Psalms, God wants to remind us of these themes. I want you to think about these themes that we have just gone through as we read this and try to spot them.

The title here that may be in some Bibles is: "Praise to God for His Word and Providence." I think that is a pretty good summation of what He is trying to get across here, but you have to think and you have to understand that this is all distilled down into just a few verses and this, "Praise to God for His Word and Providence," is distilled down even further. But what he is really getting at here is what is needed to make a people that God is happy with and that please Him. What we see is God has given His word, His instruction, and then He gives us all kinds of other gifts so that it can get done.

Psalm 147:1-20 Praise the Lord! For it is good to sing praises to our God; for it is pleasant, and praise is beautiful. The Lord builds up Jerusalem; He gathers together the outcasts of Israel. He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds. He counts the number of the stars; He calls them all by name. Great is our Lord, and mighty in power; His understanding is

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infinite. The Lord lifts up the humble; He casts the wicked down to the ground. Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving; sing praises on the harp to our God, Who covers the heavens with clouds, Who prepares rain for the earth, Who makes grass to grow on the mountains. He gives to the beast its food, and to the young ravens that cry. He does not delight in the strength of the horse; He takes no pleasure in the legs of a man. The Lord takes pleasure in those who fear Him, in those who hope in His mercy. Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem! Praise your God, O Zion! For He has strengthened the bars of your gates; He has blessed your children within you. He makes peace in your borders, and fills you with the finest wheat. He sends out His command to the earth; His word runs very swiftly. He gives snow like wool; He scatters the frost like ashes; He casts out His hail like morsels; who can stand before His cold? He sends out His word and melts them; He causes His wind to blow, and the waters flow. He declares His word to Jacob, His statutes and His judgments to Israel. He has not dealt thus with any nation; and as for His judgments, they have not known them. Praise the Lord!

Some of those things may have been difficult to see, but I think, as I point them out to you, you will see how they fit. What He does in focusing on giving His word to His people, which appears very prominently in verse 19, and also the bulk of the psalm here is about the things that He gives, the things that He does to make things work, His providence as we would say. These two things are the two major advantages that the people of God have.

First of all, His instruction, His word. That is a major advantage there that they have that no one else has. Amos 3:1-2 tells us that of all the nations, they are the only ones that He has worked with. He said, "I have not know anyone else," and He has given them His word, His law, the instructions that would help them as His people. The second thing is the supply, the care, and the oversight, because God is their God and He is strong in their behalf and He does whatever it is that is needed to bring them to whatever He wants, whatever His will is for them.

So we have these two major overall things: they have His instruction and they have Him caring for them and providing everything they need. So we have the two biggies: we have law and the Spirit. Does not His providence come through His Spirit? These two major overall themes are within the day of Pentecost. We can see that it fits in quite seamlessly with book two of the Psalms and the themes and symbolism of Pentecost. Let us notice verse 2 here:

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Psalms 147:2 The Lord builds up Jerusalem; He gathers the exiles of Israel.

What is Jerusalem a symbol of? The church? Is not the church called Jerusalem in Galatians 4. It is also a symbol of the New Covenant. What we see here, as we immediately get into this psalm, is that God is engaged in a project. He has a plan to build up the city of Jerusalem. His overall plan is here in Revelation 21.

Revelation 21:2 Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned [beautifully dressed] for her husband.

What we see in Psalms 147:2 is that God keys us in saying, "This is My project. I am building Jerusalem. And do you know who's going to be in Jerusalem?" He says it in the next phrase, "He gathers together the outcasts of Israel." Who does He make a part of His church? The remnant. We could go to I Corinthians 1, where He talks about the weak and the base. That is who He gathers, they are the ones that He has included in His great project in building Jerusalem. And immediately what do we see in verse 3?

Psalms 147:3 He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.

Do you know what this is? This is a reference to the work of Jesus Christ. My margin has here Isaiah 61:1 and Luke 4:18. These are the words that Jesus said when he came into Capernaum as He started His ministry:

Luke 4:18 "The Spirit of the Lord is on Me, because He has anointed Me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight for the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed."

He does these things. So what we have is the work of redemption and of salvation through Jesus Christ. In these two verses in Psalms 147, we have the plan of God, who is going to be there, and how it is going to happen, through Jesus Christ, through the Messiah.

Psalms 147:4-5 He counts the number of the stars; He calls them all by name. Great is our Lord, and mighty in power; His understanding is infinite.

What we find here then is that, if you know these things, you can say, well, how is this going to happen, it is an impossible thing. But He says, look who it is who is trying to do this! This is the Great God, the Almighty—He counts the stars, He gives them all names, He is mighty in power, and His understanding is infinite. Who else could bring this about? You do not need to worry. This is God at work here. We could then think, wow this great Being, He is too much for us. Then we get verse 6:

Psalms 147:6 The Lord lifts up the humble [that is the key, that we are humbled before Him]; He casts the wicked down to the ground.

We are getting here a great deal of encouragement that we have been included in this project and that it needs to go forward and we need to just be humble before God and follow through and He will take care of everything else.

Psalms 147:7-9 Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving; sing praises on the harp to our God [because He has done all these things and He will keep doing them]. Who covers the heavens with clouds; who prepares rain for the earth, who makes grass to grow on the mountains. He gives to the beast its food, and to the young ravens that cry.

He just gives us everything we need. If He gives the beasts everything they need, He is going to give us everything we need to grow into His Kingdom. Now we could think that He wants us to be a great nation of this world, that He is putting together a physical nation. That is what Israel thought, but they were wrong. Verses 10-11 tell us that very clearly.

Psalms 147:10-11 He does not delight in the strength of the horse [He is not interested in armies, in conquering.]; He takes no pleasure in the legs of a man [That is not what He is trying to do here. He is not trying to make a great army that is going to run across the world conquering nation after nation. He does not need to do that.]; the Lord takes pleasure in those who fear Him [He is looking inside man, not on what they can do for Him with a spear or an ax, or a sword. He wants them to fear Him. He wants us to learn humility and He wants us to learn the fear of the Lord.], in those who hope in His mercy.

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Do we have a confident expectation of God's mercy? Of not only in His mercy in terms of forgiveness of sin, but His mercy in bringing us through all the trials throughout life and His mercy in changing us into spirit in the resurrection? Mercy throughout all of our conversion and we have this hope going forward throughout this entire time that He is going to be there to provide all of these things.

Psalms 147:12-14 Praise the Lord, Jerusalem; praise your God, Zion! He has strengthened the bars of your gates [He is making you stronger, He is making you able to withstand the enemy as we go through life.]; He has blessed your children within you. [This talks about continuation, going on into other generations and our fruit is good because of being connected to the vine, as it were.] He makes peace in your borders and fills you with the finest wheat.

Now what does that make you think of? Leviticus 23 and that fine wheat that was part of the wave loaf. That is what He is doing. And does it not say in James that the only way that we can learn righteousness is in peace? So there is more here about what He does.

Psalms 147:15-18 He sends out His command to the earth; His word runs swiftly. He gives snow like wool; He scatters the frost like ashes; He casts out his hail like morsels. Who can stand before His cold? He sends out His word and melts them; He causes His wind to blow, and the waters flow.

Verse 15-18 are all of these things in the weather: snow, frost, hail, cold. We see God over them or behind them. These words—the snow, frost, hail, etc—are all difficulties, they are trials that come upon us, things that we do not like. Snow is difficult to work in, cold is hard on us, even frost is hard because it kills plants.

They are not all the same, they do not all work the same, but they are things that come at us that we have to overcome, they are destructive things and the psalmist is saying here that God is above all of this, He is going to turn all of these bad things into good things. He melts the ice and makes the waters flow. God takes the adverse circumstances and makes them into something good and useful.

Psalms 147:19-20 He declares His word to Jacob, His judgments and statutes to Israel. He has done this for no other nation; they do not know his laws. Praise the Lord.

What we have here in verses 19-20 is that He declares His word to Jacob and His statutes and judgments to Israel. He is saying that He is given them specifically to these people. And we should not forget Galatians 6:16. Paul calls us there “we are the Israel of God.” We have specifically been given His word, His statutes, and His judgments so that we can be a model nation. He says in verse 20 that He has not done this for any other nation. Only we have the truth and it makes us special to God, we are His own special people. We can see in I Peter 2 where it says what He is trying to do with His people, with the church.

I Peter 2:4-5 Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

I Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.

So this is a major theme of Psalms book two, Psalms 147, the day of Pentecost, and the season of Pentecost. All of these themes are coming together, that God is creating a people. He is putting it together by choosing out the humble, the weak, the base, and then grinding them down finely so that they can be made into something useful—a nation of priests.

So what we see here then is that the summary psalm (147) gives us all of the themes and pointers that we need to understand the rest of the psalms in book two. In Romans 9 we will see a little bit more of this just to make the connection between Israel, what He had done with Israel on the physical plane, and what He is doing with the church of God on the spiritual plane.

Romans 9:6-8 But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. For they are not all Israel who are of Israel, nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, “In Isaac your seed shall be called.” [What He is doing is narrowing down who He is working with. It is not just all of Israel, it is not just all of those who may be the seed of Abraham, but a certain few that

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are called in Isaac, as it were.] That is, those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed.

So it is the children that God promised spiritually to Abraham that are the real seed.

Romans 9:25 As He says also in Hosea: “I will call them My people, who were not My people, and her beloved, who was not beloved.”

Romans 9:27-28 Isaiah also cries out concerning Israel: “Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, the remnant will be saved. For He will finish the work and cut it short in righteousness, because the Lord will make a short work upon the earth.”

This is talking about the work that He does with the church, and the work that He is trying to do in order to make a people.

Romans 11:2-7 God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel, saying, “Lord, they have killed Your prophets and torn down Your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life”? But what does the divine response say to him? “I have reserved for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.” Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work. What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect have obtained it, and the rest were blinded.

What He is saying here is that He has ceased to work with Israel for the present time and has really made a quick work, as it were, working through the promised seed of Abraham—the church, those who have been elected or chosen by grace. So we see that God is working with a people towards holiness and He is taking the humble and making them into a people that will please Him and work with Him through all eternity.

Now let us go to Psalm 42. These themes that I have talked about here are ones that

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will come out throughout these psalms, but remember that God is working with the people and He is trying to refine the people to be the bride of Christ. That is essentially the overall theme of this and you have to put in these other themes of how it gets done: through the law, through the spirit, through God's province, through the covenant He makes with them and so on and it ends up in a marriage.

Most of these psalms are psalms of David. We see David, not as the king in all his glory and strength, but we see David in distress and in trouble. We see David having to face circumstances that seem to be too much for him to overcome, we see him persecuted, we see him depressed, we see him under one trial after another and the only way that he can be saved is through God's work of redemption. God has to do things for him and essentially all he does, it seems, is hope, trust, pray, and praise. Otherwise there is not a whole lot he can do because he is in distress.

So we see him working through these trials that he has and what these trials do is, they help him to see God better in what He is trying to do. It helps him to grow in character and it helps him to see that his present circumstance is not the end, that God has promised him more, that there are glorious times ahead and he needs to persevere through these things and there will come a time when he will be able to look back and praise God for all the wonderful things that He has done for him. But while he is under stress and pressure, it is hard. How does he get through these rough times? That is what this particular set of psalms is all about. Almost every psalm is like that.

He knows that the resurrection is ahead, he knows that the Kingdom of God is ahead, he knows that there is good out in the future, but he cannot see it because he is neck deep in trouble and it gets him down.

Here are some technical details about book two, chapters 42-72. You can see that it is different from the rest of the books in the Psalms. It is made up of thirty-one psalms, it has various authors. Book one was almost completely written by David, but book two is a little different.

Book two has psalms from the sons of Korah, the same Korah in Numbers 16. Not all of his children died, there were some that lived and they became song masters in Israel. There is one psalm of Asaph, that is Psalm 50, there are several psalms of David once again, they are Psalms 51-65 and 68-70. Solomon wrote Psalm 72 which is the summary psalm at the end of the section. There are three anonymous psalms, Psalm 66-67 and 71, which may also be David's psalms that are just not titled as his, and in Psalm 72:20 there is an editorial statement that says:

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Psalms 72:20 The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.

Which gives us a good indication that, originally when the book was put together, all of his psalms were in the first 72 chapters, but there has been some rearranging in the meantime.

Now I want to say here that the psalms of David are the vast majority of these psalms and there is one way of looking at these eight psalms of the sons of Korah, chapters 42-49. They actually may be David's psalms that may have been written to or given to the sons of Korah to be played or to be sung in the Temple service. So they may actually be David's psalms too and the anonymous ones as well may be his. If that were the case, then David had all of the psalms in this section except for the ones by Asaph, Psalm 50, and the one by Solomon, Psalm 72. It may very well be that the editors just added a couple to this section.

There is one very interesting detail here and that is, book two almost exclusively uses the term Elohim instead of Yahweh. To get the difference between book one and book two, book one uses the name Yahweh 272 times and Elohim only 15 times. But in book two Elohim appears 164 times and Yahweh only appears 30 times.

Now one would think that in a section of psalms with the covenant as the themes you would see a lot of Yahweh, because Yahweh is the covenant name that God gave Israel to call Him, but it concentrates on Elohim instead. However Elohim is the name most associated with God as Creator with His great power, His omniscience, and with His providence, that He has the strength to do all of these things. He is over all and Almighty.

So that gives us a clue about what is happening here. That God has a project, He is creating and what He is creating is the bride of Christ. It is these qualities of God, His power, His omniscience, His providence that we rely on as we walk the wilderness towards the Kingdom of God. We need that, more than the fact that He is the covenant God, we need the fact that He is the Creator God and has all of this power to work things out for us. So Elohim here is used because this is the name of God in charge of our spiritual creation.

I want to recommend that since we have 31 psalms here in book two, I suggest that over the next 31 days we should read one of these psalms every day and think about it, meditate on it in terms of these themes that I have given you, especially the overall theme of God creating the bride, of God making a spiritual creation, as we see here,

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through trial, through overcoming, through growing and learning to trust in Him, and hope in what He has promised us for the future.

If you go through these psalms one by one you will see how this just keeps coming up time and time again—that David is in distress and in a trial, it is a deep trial and he can see no way out, but he knows that if he trusts God and hopes in His promises for the future that God is going to make something good come out of this. We see it time and time again and then David, or whoever the other author is, gives us advice on how we should handle these situations. And these situations are not the same every time. In my next sermon I will show you how each one of these situations is a little bit different, but David tells us how he himself worked through these things as they came upon him and how it strengthened him.

You also know that Psalm 51 is in here, his psalm of his repentance and how that fits in. And Psalm 72 which is about the glories of the Kingdom, which is what he was looking toward the whole time and it gave him motivation and hope for the future.