



SING WITH
Jesus

SIX BIBLE STUDIES ON THE PSALMS



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YOU ARE MY SON || LUKE 3, 20; ACTS 4

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HE WILL COMMAND HIS ANGELS || MATTHEW 4, 27

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MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME? || MATT 27, 28

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*“Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me
in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.”*

Jesus in Luke 24:44

Usage data from BibleGateway.com confirms: the book of Psalms is the world's favourite book of the Bible! Other books of the Bible have laws, or narrative, or prophecy. But Psalms is a book of songs, some of the richest, most resonating, most influential song lyrics ever composed. It's great to be doing a whole series on the Psalms!

But if you've ever tried singing the Psalms yourself, or making them your personal prayers, you might have noticed it's not always easy. Christians have of course done that over the centuries with real benefit. But there are problems. For a start, many of the Psalms make claims which obviously aren't true of us personally.

***“I have been blameless before God
and have kept myself from sin.”***

Psalm 18:23

Can you sing or pray that - without fingers crossed behind your back? And it's not just what these songs would have you singing about yourself, it's also about others:

***“Strike all my enemies on the jaw;
break the teeth of the wicked.”***

Psalm 3:7

You might feel that way sometimes, but didn't Jesus say to love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you (Matthew 5:44)? So how can we simply take these songs upon our own lips? At the very least, we need to think more about what we're doing if we're going to try.

Through this study series, we're going to learn how to use the Psalms by looking at the life of Jesus. At key points in the gospel accounts we'll see quotes from the Psalms, and there's an interesting trend. It's as if the real singer of the Psalm is actually *Jesus*. Not David or whoever originally wrote the Psalm. Just *Jesus*.

The book of Psalms is in fact a song-based depiction of the *ideal Israelite* - particularly the ideal Israelite King. And that ideal is only fulfilled by Jesus. As the ideal Israelite King, Jesus can sing the Psalms like no one else can. And yet we *can* sing them too, if we're connected to him. So in each study we'll think through three aspects of a particular Psalm:

1. The **Israelite ideal** the Psalm presents.
2. **Israel's failure & Jesus' fulfilment** of that ideal.
3. How we can take this Psalm and **sing with Jesus**.

As we look at the Psalms this way, we'll no longer hear these songs in mono, but in surround sound!

My prayer is that you'll come to love the Psalms, in all their strange beauty. More than that, I pray you'll come to love Jesus, the true Psalm-singer, the one who has all the righteous innocence claimed by the Psalms, and suffered all the bitter anguish poured out in the Psalms, all to win you that great salvation for which the Psalms so desperately hope.

Jeremy Wales and the MPC team || January 2016

STUDY ONE

PSALM 2 || YOU ARE MY SON

The Psalms come alive when they are sung. That's what they were originally meant for. But you probably didn't come to Growth Group thinking you'd have to sing! So we should be grateful to Ted Pearce for his joyous rendition of Psalm 2, which we can listen to instead. You'll find a video online at <http://new.mpc.org.au/singwithjesus>. Click on the link to Psalm 2 and listen for what the psalm is so happy about.

How did the song make you feel?

Think back over the news stories you've seen, heard, or read over the past few weeks. Have you seen evidence of hostility to Christianity? Where and how?



ISRAELITE IDEAL

1. Listen to or read Psalm 2 aloud in your group, listening for the source of its certainty. Write a sentence to summarise each three verse stanza.

Verses 1-3 summary:

Verses 4-6 summary:

Verses 7-9 summary:

Verses 10-12 summary:

2. For an ancient Israelite, what would be the ideal response to this psalm?

ISRAEL'S FAILURE & JESUS' FULFILMENT

Note that in Psalm 2, God calls the King of Israel his “son.” It’s a remarkably close and special relationship! At the start of Luke’s account of Jesus, he records a number of songs (*psalms*) about the birth of Jesus, celebrating that he’ll be King in the line of David - e.g. Luke 1:69. And as Jesus starts his public activity, **God himself quotes Psalm 2** to Jesus:

Read Luke 3:21–22

Jesus himself is the Son of God, the ideal King of Psalm 2. But will Israel live up to the ideal of Psalm 2? Will they take refuge in Jesus and be blessed... or will they rebel like the nations? At the other end of his public activity, Jesus tells a parable about a man who lets his vineyard out to tenants, expecting to receive from them some of the fruit as part of their rent. But the tenants rebel and refuse the owner his right. So...

Read Luke 20:13–14

3. What motivates opposition to Jesus here? How does that mirror Psalm 2?

Israel – and indeed all the nations – were urged by the Psalm to ‘kiss the son’, to be on good terms with God’s King. Instead, when Jesus comes, **his own people conspire to kill him!**

4. How do you respond to the authority of Jesus? Give some practical examples.
5. From your experience, how do others around you (e.g. at work) respond to claims of the authority of Jesus?
6. We know that Psalm 2 is fully fulfilled by *God’s son Jesus*, so what warning is there for those who reject Jesus’ claims?

“When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven:

‘You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.’ ”

“Then the owner of the vineyard said, ‘What shall I do? I will send **my son, whom I love**; perhaps they will respect him.’
“But when the tenants saw him, they talked the matter over. ‘This is the heir,’ they said. ‘Let’s kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.’ ”

SING WITH JESUS

The book of Acts, Luke's sequel, picks up the story of the first followers of Jesus after his resurrection. Early on some of these followers are arrested and put on trial for preaching about Jesus. And that's when Psalm 2 crops up again:

Read Acts 4:23-29

7. If you trust in Jesus, do you ever worry that the opponents of his mission are winning? Which opponents of Jesus concern you most as you hear and see opposition in the media and around us in daily life?
8. If Psalm 2 is ultimately about Jesus, what does it say to that fear?
9. Should Jesus' fulfilment of Psalm 2 encourage us to speak more boldly for him? How so?

Because Psalm 2 is ultimately about Jesus, have someone in the group read it aloud, inserting the name of Jesus into it:

- v2 against **Jesus** his anointed
- v6 installed my king, **Jesus**
- v7 **Jesus** says, "I will proclaim ..."
- v12 Kiss his son, **Jesus**

10. How could Psalm 2 shape our closing prayers as a group?

23 On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. 24 When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. "Sovereign Lord," they said, "you made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. 25 You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David:

'Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain?

The kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together against the Lord and against his anointed one.'

27 Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. 28 They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. 29 Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness."