

# Chronological Bible Study

Week 37:

## Repentance for Revival

Songs of Ascent (Psalms 120-134)

Praise Songs (Psalms 104, 107, 111 -118, 135-136, 145-150)

Psalm 92

Nehemiah 12:31, 13:1-23

Joel

Isaiah 56:1-66:24

# Psalm 147

[Video Link](#)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qHX1yFlaV\\_4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qHX1yFlaV_4)





## **Introductions**

What is one of your favorite hymns?

# Questions?

# Comments?

## **Summary of This Week's Readings**

- Songs of Ascent
- Nehemiah and the Levites
- Psalms of Praise
- Nehemiah's Religious Reforms
- The Sabbath After Exile
- Nehemiah and Foreign Wives
- Joel
- Isaiah and the Restoration
- God's Glory upon God's City

## Psalms of Ascent

[Video Link](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bi33PtWVcfQ>



# The Songs of Ascent



- 15 psalms that all start with the same phrase “Song of the Ascent” or “Song of Pilgrimage;” In Hebrew “shir hama’aleh”
- These short songs appear to be written at various times and settings. They were likely compiled in the middle Greek period. They reflect the everyday life of a lay pilgrim.
  - Psalms 126 and 129 seem to be of a much later date, exile or post exile.
  - Psalms 120 and 130 seem to be for a private audience.
  - Psalms 127, 128 seem to be for a family setting.
  - Psalms 122, 134 are for a public assembly.
  - Psalms 124, 132 seem to recall specific occasions.
- Of the 15 Psalms, Psalms 122, 124, and 131 are psalms of David, Psalm 127 is of Solomon, and the rest are unknown authors.
- A large mix of genres
- Of the Songs of Ascent, only Psalm 132 is referenced in the New Testament.
- The LORD is mentioned 57 times directly and 50 times via pronoun in these psalms: a total of 107 times! These are God-centered prayers.

## The Songs of Ascent: Purpose



- The words Jerusalem, Zion, Israel, House of the LORD are frequent in these psalms
- God's blessing, protection, and judgment are prominent themes in these psalms. They express dependence on God and a seeking of peace with and from God.
- The pilgrimage
  - Some believe that these Psalms were sung on the 15 steps that were said to lead up to from the court of the women to the court of the men. This come from the Talmud reference to such steps. However the Talmud says nothing of such a ritual and these Psalms are really not suitable to be sung.
  - According to others there is a stair like parallelism of advancing steps or degrees of metrical significance. However not all of the 15 Psalms have this kind of parallelism.
  - In the Syriac Peshitto Version of the Old Testament they are called "the songs of the homeward marches" which would indicate that they were recited on the way back from Babylon, or in great processions of people making the pilgrimages to the temple on the High Holy Days. We know that such processions happened as people naturally broke into songs, shouts, and sacred dancing on such travels.

## The Songs of Ascent: Themes

Psalm 120: God's presence during distress  
Psalm 121: Joyful praise to the Lord  
Psalm 122: Prayer for Jerusalem  
Psalm 123: Patience for God's mercy  
Psalm 124: Help comes from the Lord  
Psalm 125: Prayer for God's blessing upon His people  
Psalm 126: The Lord has done great things  
Psalm 127: God's blessing on man's efforts  
Psalm 128: Joy for those who follow God's ways  
Psalm 129: A cry for help to the Lord  
Psalm 130: A prayer of repentance  
Psalm 131: Surrender as a child to the Lord  
Psalm 132: God's sovereign plan for His people  
Psalm 133: Praise of brotherly fellowship and unity  
Psalm 134: Praise to God in His temple







## Discussion

Has anyone ever taken a pilgrimage? How did it help grow your relationship with God?

How would the pilgrimages described in the Bible help the people honor God?



## Dedication of the Wall of Jerusalem

- Nehemiah writes of dedicating the wall
- Two processions in opposite directions meet at temple square.
- The procession comprised of priests, Levites, musicians, and lay leaders. Nehemiah led one procession and Ezra led the other.
- A service of praise and thanksgiving held in the temple court to celebrate a task well done.

We read Nehemiah's personal memoir, the culmination of Nehemiah's work on the wall. Handing over the work of human hands to God's ownership powerfully acts out a parable of the spiritual significance of all the hard and tedious work. It also completes the period of resettlement. The final paragraph (vv. [44–47](#)) is a bridge to the final chapter. Nehemiah, ever practical, realizes that it is one thing to be overwhelmed with the emotion of a great occasion but quite another to channel that enthusiasm into plans for the work to continue.

Two processions, each consisting of a group of leaders accompanied by a choir, were to set out in opposite directions; they were to complete a half circuit of the city, and meet at the temple square. The procession comprised of priests, Levites, musicians, and lay leaders. Nehemiah led one procession and Ezra the other. Archaeological evidence suggests that the top of the wall was about nine feet (2.7 meters) wide, allowing people to walk two or three abreast. The first procession followed the route of Nehemiah's original nocturnal expedition ([2:12–16](#)).

The choirs, Nehemiah, lay leaders, and priests join forces in the temple court for a service of praise and thanksgiving to celebrate a task well done. Walking on the walls probably led them to recall the effort they had invested in the work.

## Songs of Praise

- These psalms are mostly of unknown authorship.
- May have been written during the Persian era, to be sung in the rebuilt temple.
- These later praise hymns are songs of thanksgiving and praise.
- There are both declarative praise psalms and descriptive praise songs.
- The songs of praise celebrate God's greatness and mercy



Most of the songs of praise we read this week are of unknown authorship, not ascribed to David or other known psalmists. They are considered later songs, perhaps written during the Persian era to be sung in the rebuilt temple.

One Hebrew word for “praise” is *yadah*, meaning “praise, give thanks, or confess.” A second word often translated “praise” in the Old Testament is *zamar*, “sing praise.” A third word translated “praise” is *halal* (the root of *hallelujah*), meaning “to praise, honor, or commend.” All three terms contain the idea of giving thanks and honor to one who is worthy of praise.

Many of the psalms this week are declarative praise psalms that declare a clear intention to praise God. In these, the psalmist tells what God has done and include a vow to praise in public as testimony to God. Others are descriptive praise psalms that contain information about why praise is given and what it is about God that draws the praise. They express a spontaneous expression of hallelujah or praise and are often used as a call to worship. The main body of the psalm sets forth the reason(s) God is to be praised and often express the wonder of God's grace.

Praise Psalms celebrate God's greatness and mercy in the following ways:  
1.They begin by offering words of praise or calling on others to recognize

and praise God.

2. They enumerate and describe the things God has, is, and will do, that are signs of His greatness and mercy.

3.They repeat the exhortation for others to begin or continue in their praise of God.

4.They finish with a teaching or final word of praise.

Psalm	Summary
104	Draws our minds from earth to heaven, from the worldly to the divine. We are captivated by the power of God. The Lord, who created the heavens and the earth and beneficially ordered them, and should be feared and praised. It's a poetic version of Genesis 1. "Praise the LORD, my soul!"
107	This psalm recites examples of God's steadfast love. God saves his people through reversals. God will save those who humbly cry out to him, but will judge the proud and arrogant. God's steadfast love applies to individuals It is not reserved for corporate salvation. It is the cry to the LORD that sets God's <i>hesed</i> in motion. "Whoever is wise, let him consider the steadfast love of the LORD."
111	The subject of this psalm is God and His actions: God's works are great; God does not passively wait in heaven for us to get his attention. He cannot be bribed into action, God is not distant and aloof, but is on the move, acting in gracious and merciful ways toward his people. Everything about God and his works is eternal. This psalm praises the works of God by those who fear the LORD. Fear of the LORD is a work of the LORD.
112	Psalm 112 is an extended beatitude that walks us into the steadiness of trust in God. Those who walk with God are putting their deepest hopes onto God himself. God intends for us to take all of our anxiety and cast it upon him. The blessed person in this psalm redefines human live – when lived well, human life reflects the divine life. The shape of our lives is meant to reflect that of God's. To live like this is wisdom.
113	A hymn that calls on believers to praise God, who cares for and helps people in need. It describes how God helps people in need and says that God's name should be praised in all places, from east to west, because of the evidence of his wisdom, power, and goodness.

## Hallel Psalms

[Video Link](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cyqm6tYyQoU&t)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cyqm6tYyQoU&t>



Hallel in Hebrew means “Praise.” It is the Jewish liturgical designation for Psalms 113–118. While many psalms praise God, this set of psalms became associated with [Passover](#) due to the mention of the deliverance from Egypt in [Psalm 114](#). The focus on the [exodus](#) is the reason these psalms are also sometimes referred to as the Egyptian Hallel. These psalms were recited at Jewish feasts, especially Passover. Depending upon which tradition was being followed, one or two of the psalms were recited before the meal, and the rest after.

At the end of the Passover meal, Matthew and Mark state that the disciples sang a hymn with Jesus before departing. While Scripture doesn’t explicitly state which hymn was sang, Jewish tradition reveals that the Passover meal was concluded by singing the last portion of the *Hallel* in joyous celebration of praise and thanksgiving to God. By looking at these Psalms, we see that there were many references to the eventual salvation of the Lord’s people brought by the death and resurrection of Christ. This is especially true of Psalm 118, which served as the conclusion of the Passover meal.

Psalm	Summary
114	Psalm 114 tells how the LORD came to be the holy Presence amid Israel and how the God who is sovereign of the whole earth came to have this particular people as his dominion. It is a song about deliverance. God has control over His creation and uses the natural element to care for us, to serve us. While we are sinners and deserve to be overwhelmed, Scripture assures us of God's grace.
115	This is a song about idolatry. ? Idolatry is having or inventing something in which one trusts in place of or alongside of the only true God, who has revealed himself in his Word. Idols are powerless compared to God. The psalmist uses language not of worship but of trust. We are called to give up trust in our idols and trust God instead.
116	God comes out of heaven and into our pain. We do not come to God on the other side of pain; God comes to us in our pain. The psalm is a narrative of salvation. This psalm is often used as part of a communion service, particularly on Maundy Thursday as a thanksgiving for the promise of life given in Jesus' salvation from death.
117	Psalm 117 is the shortest psalm and shortest chapter of the Bible. It calls for the nations to rejoice in God's love for Israel. It admonishes both the nation and the individual to praise the Lord and expresses confidence that the Lord will save those who call on Him. There are two major theological points: God is Lord over all nations and God is related to his people, not just a land. Grace is precious – we are permanently forgiven, liberated, rinsed clean. This message is intended to be shared. To hoard God's grace is to demonstrate you do not understand God's grace. Grace is free – open to all, indiscriminately.

# How Were People Saved in Old Testament Times?

[Video Link](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cQUfkCm7Xqc>



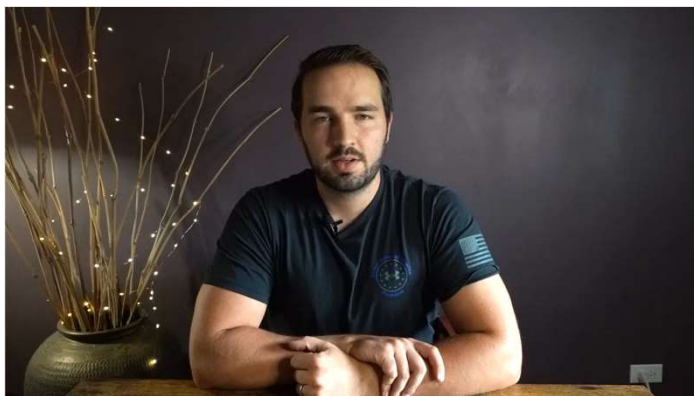


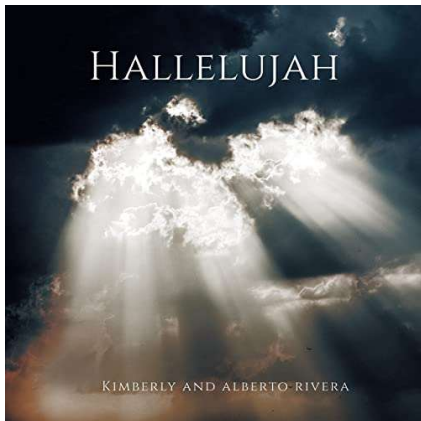
Psalm	
118	This is a psalm of joy, full of exclamations and exultations. God has rescued the psalmist out of deadly peril, and He has reversed the peril into a triumph. This is how God works. This psalm exemplifies God's grace. We stand in awe of the supreme God who takes what the world rejected and turns it into an occasion for eternal significance. Jesus Christ was rejected by the religious elite, yet has become the cornerstone of the true and final temple, the church, of which each of us believers is a fellow stone.
135	This psalm reminds us of the greatness of God, his sovereignty, and his unfailing love. We are to shift our focus from futile idol worship to the rewarding worship of the God who controls the universe and cares for his people. We are to live a life of gratitude, worship, and faith.
136	The psalm is a salvation-history liturgy of praise to God as Creator and as Israel's Redeemer. It was most likely a psalm that was led by the Levitical song leader. The priest would read the reason to praise God and the choir/congregation responds with "His Love Endures Forever." The psalm remembers Gods acts in: the creation (v 4-9), the exodus (v 10-15), the wilderness journey (v 16), conquest of the Promised Land (v 17-22), and history for His people (v 23-25).
145	A magnificent hymn to God for His mighty acts and benevolent virtues. This psalm uses a variety of words and traditional language to praise God: extol, bless, praise, commend, speak of, pour forth, sing aloud, give thanks, make known. Praise should be a natural response to a glimpse of God. The Talmud states that "everyone who repeats this psalm (the Tehillah of David) three times a day may be sure that he is a child of the world to come."

## Why is Jesus Called the Cornerstone?

[Video Link](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z9PoZLzkhv8>





## The Final Hallel: Psalms 146-150

- The Book of Psalms began with ‘Blessed is the man’; it ends with the sustained, five-fold equivalent of ‘Blessed be the Lord’.
- These psalms are focused on praising God; there is no reference to needs, no petitions, no historical allusion.
- These psalms begin with the praise of the individual and continue with the praise of wider groups. A similar progression is used in the Book of revelations (throne, throne angels, all angels, all nations, everything with breath)
  - 146: My Soul (the individual)
  - 147: Jerusalem (the community)
  - 148: Heaven and Earth
  - 149: Israel/Redeemed (Saints) (people committed to mission)
  - 150: Everything that has breath
- Each psalm begins and ends with Hallelujah (Praise the LORD).

The Book of Psalms began with ‘Blessed is the man’; it ends with the sustained, five-fold equivalent of ‘Blessed be the Lord’. Some call the last psalms of the Bible “The Final Hallel.” They are focused on praising God, with no reference to needs, no petitions, no historical allusion. These psalms begin with the praise of the individual and continue with the praise of wider groups. A similar progression is used in the Book of revelations (throne, throne angels, all angels, all nations, everything with breath)

146: My Soul (the individual)

147: Jerusalem (the community)

148: Heaven and Earth

149: Israel/Redeemed (Saints) (people committed to mission)

150: Everything that has breath

Each psalm begins and ends with Hallelujah (Praise the LORD). They are carefully constructed and review the major themes of the psalms. All genres of psalms are used in these closing psalms, except for lament.

Eugene Peterson states : these psalms “put all the acts of God’s salvation and deliverance, his creation and providence on display and festoon them with hallelujah garlands.”

Psalm	
146	A commitment to lifelong praise of God is made. The contrast between human transience and divine power provides hope. While we can't trust in earthly leaders, God, who created the universe can be trusted. The psalmist associates himself with those who are down and out, weary and weak, poor and impoverished and reminds us that our only hope is in God. We cannot save ourselves. God has a heart for the weak and weary. Perfect power meets perfect compassion. This is why we can trust God. He is powerful and thus able to deliver us. He is loving and thus wants to.
147	Praise begins to reflect God's attributes. His goodness is apparent. In praising, the singers experience pleasure over the delightfulness of the LORD. God is praised for his wide-ranging care for all of creation, especially his people. The God of the Bible is not a God who delights in giving us orders and then waits for us to fail. The God of the Bible finds his deepest delight in meeting the needs of those in desperate straits. God dwells high in heaven and also low with the destitute. The world runs after strength, slickness, outward appearance and impressiveness. God runs to the brokenhearted. God's power always leans toward the restoring, sustaining, and shaping of his creation.
148	Psalm 148 calls the entire universe itself to praise God. It is the midpoint of the final praise hymns. God is praised because he made everything. Each element praises by doing its assigned purpose. Praise is our place and purpose. To praise God rightly we need to understand God rightly. We are asked to do more than just sing a song...we are asked to declare what is true and right about God. We are asked to reorient our worship, our words, and our lives toward God.

# Psalm 148

[Video Link](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XgCrFl4Mc5Q>



Psalm	
149	<p>While Psalm 148 spoke of creation's role in praising God, this psalm turns to speak of his people's role in praising him and executing his decrees. God takes what is low and ignored by the world and uses them to judge the cosmos, executing judgment on the kings and rulers of the world. Israel was granted salvation (in fact and promise) and were called on God to execute God's sentence of judgment on world powers that launched attacks against the Kingdom of God. There is an eschatological dimension of anticipation of a warfare of the faithful that will settle the conflict between the kingdoms of this world and the kingdom of God in the end times. It was often used as a prayer when going to battle. This psalm has a lot of parallels with Psalm 2. The two psalms together reveal the close connection between the anointed king and his people. God's anointed king represents his people, and the people reflect the godly anointed king.</p>
150	<p>The Psalter ends on a triumphant note of praise: "Let everything that has breath praise the LORD." It is a picture of complete celebration of who the LORD is and what he does. All of heaven is a display of God's infinite power and wisdom. We are called to ponder the character of God and the extent of his great grace toward his people. The God of the Psalms – the God who meets the desperate, the God who hears the distraught—took on flesh and blood. He came for us. This is who he is!</p>

## Nehemiah's Reforms

- The Pentateuch read aloud in public, likely at the end of the dedicatory celebrations
- Nehemiah returns to Persia, and then returns to Jerusalem
- In return to Jerusalem finds internal conflict and a breakdown of order. People were not keeping their promises to God.
- Nehemiah institutes reforms related to the Sabbath and mixed marriage.
- Nehemiah prays for his people and for his own sinfulness.



The Pentateuch was read aloud in public, likely at the end of the dedicatory celebrations. The specific passage is [Deut 23:3–6](#), which bans Ammonites and Moabites from the assembly of Israel. These people had now ceased to exist as distinct groups, but their spirits lived on in the various groups who opposed Nehemiah. The extent of exclusion of non-Jews is unclear; perhaps they were excluded from the temple rather than completely banned. Foreigners (notably Ruth) were always welcome if they were prepared to become part of the believing community.

Nehemiah returns to Persia and then returns to Jerusalem (probably about a three year absence). When he returns to Jerusalem he finds internal conflict and a breakdown of order.

Tobiah, who was housed in the temple, was an Ammonite and one of the opponents of Nehemiah building the wall. Since wealth, power and prestige were all connected to the temples of the ancient world, it was not uncommon for unsavory and undesirable individuals to infiltrate and exploit the temple for their own gain. Reformers would naturally want to expel such people.

Nehemiah also found the temple neglected...the Levites and other temple servants broke



the promises they made in Chapter 10 of Nehemiah at the celebration of the rebuilding of the wall. This is a reminder of the need for continual reform.

Nehemiah's concluding reforms include Sabbath observance (vv. [15–22](#)) and mixed marriages (vv. [23–29](#)). The Sabbath issue is related particularly to commercial activity, an issue that had already surfaced ([10:31–32](#)). This was a problem before the exile that Jeremiah had preached against. At least 30 years had passed since Ezra dealt with mixed marriages ([Ezra 9–10](#)), and a new generation had emerged with a steady erosion of the community's identity, exemplified in the confusion of languages.

Nehemiah's prayer expresses his faithfulness to God and asks for redemption for his own sinfulness. He was not a legalist imposing on others what he was unprepared to do himself.

## Psalm 92

# OVERVIEW

- This is a psalm meant for the Sabbath, which was built into the creation of the world.
- The Sabbath shows us that God is a God of rest and that in trusting in him we ourselves find our true rest.
  - The Sabbath is not just another rule; it's a gift that allows God's people to flourish
  - God offers rest from a hurried culture, frantic paces, and internal distress.
  - The wicked are so caught up in the delusion that they don't see the truth of the rest God provides.
- Read in parallel with Psalm 73: in both the righteous win out over the wicked, regardless of how it seems.
- One of the few psalms assigned to a particular day – the Sabbath. The Sabbaths in time are a foretaste of the final Sabbath rest for God and the righteous that comes at the end of time.
- The creation of the world and the salvation of the people of the LORD are assurance that life belongs to the righteous, not the wicked.

Joel

[Video Link](#)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_TzdEPuqgQg&t](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_TzdEPuqgQg&t)



## Overview of Joel

- God uses a natural catastrophe, a locust plague, to call his people to repentance.
- All nations are under God's judgment
- God speaks through Joel, whose name means "Yahweh is God"
- Difficult to date but likely after Israel fell and either precedes the destruction of Jerusalem or is written after Jerusalem is rebuilt. But the message is timeless.
- Joel calls for not only lamentation of the people, but also repentance and assures them God will restore his people while also judging their enemies. God dwells among this people.
- Mainly a poetic writing, which uses a lot of similes and metaphors.
- The day of the Lord is a key theme.
- The events take place in Zion – the location of the temple.

## Big Ideas in JOEL

God promises to judge his enemies

Sincere repentance brings God's forgiveness and restoration

God promises to pour out his Holy Spirit on everyone

God promises salvation to everyone who calls on him



God, through his prophet, uses a natural catastrophe to call his people to repentance, reminding them that they are not alone in suffering, since all the nations are under God's judgment.

Joel, whose name means "the LORD [Yah(weh)] is God," is the prophet through whom God speaks. He cannot be identified with any of the 12 others with the same name in the OT. His only identification in the book is through his father, who is otherwise unknown, but no date or geographic location is given. He does not appear to be strictly a court or temple prophet but one for the people since the woes he describes and the blessing he envisions affect all levels of society. His only mention outside this book is the reference to his prophecy in [Acts 2:16](#).

The book is difficult to date but was likely written after Israel fell and either precedes the destruction of Jerusalem or is written after Jerusalem is rebuilt. But the message is timeless.

A natural catastrophe such as this locust swarm, threatening Judah's very existence, would have driven them to their knees, literally and theologically. How could God let this happen to his chosen people? Joel affirms the people in their emotional reaction, telling them to

not only lament but repent. God will restore his people while also judging their enemies. The end focus of the prophecy is not on despair but on the God who dwells among his people. Rather than simply being the reminder of a catastrophe, the prophecy also serves as a model. Destruction, lamentation, and repentance leading to restoration are steps applicable to many periods of existence, both for a nation and for an individual. The prophecy can well serve as a liturgy for life.

s prophecy, Joel is mainly poetic, and as such employs techniques such as simile ([1:8](#), [15](#); [2:2](#), [3b-5](#), [7](#), [9](#)) and metaphor ([1:6](#), [10](#), [12](#), [19](#); [2:3a](#), [13](#), [21](#), [25](#), [28-29](#); [3:13](#), [16](#), [18](#)). It remembers times of calamity past ([1:2-2:27](#)) in anticipation of future judgment ([2:28-3:21](#)), frequently reusing words and motifs throughout the book, showing its conceptual unity. It twice details the precipitating event for Judah, a devastating swarm of locusts ([1:2-12](#); [2:1-11](#)), with subsequent calls to lament and repent ([1:13-20](#); [2:12-17](#)), after which the Lord promises restoration and blessing ([2:18-27](#)). The pattern is modified, though on a more global scale, with the impending judgment upon the nations ([2:28-3:16](#)). This judgment is not mitigated since there is no mention of international repentance, though God will restore and bless his people who repent ([3:17-21](#)).

The “day of the LORD” plays an important part in the theology of Joel. Israel anticipated it as a time for God to bless his people ([Amos 5:18](#)). False prophets twisted the concept, suggesting that simply being God’s chosen people, Israel, was sufficient to trigger this blessing. It did not matter how the people acted in relation to the covenant requirements; sinner or saint, Israel would be blessed. But faithfulness, not ancestry, brings blessing. A lack of faithfulness, whether by Israel ([2:31-32](#)) or anyone else ([3:11-16](#)), brings judgment and punishment. The day can focus on different time periods, depending on its context. In some cases it refers to an eschatological, epoch-changing event at the end of this age that ushers in the age to come ([2:31](#)), while at other times it refers to smaller and closer cataclysmic events in which God intervenes in history.

A key location is Zion -- the location of the temple in Jerusalem. As the site of God’s dwelling ([3:17](#)), the temple is the source of blessing when God’s people follow him. The prophecy also warns of destructive judgment when God’s people turn their back on their covenant promises to him



## Discussion

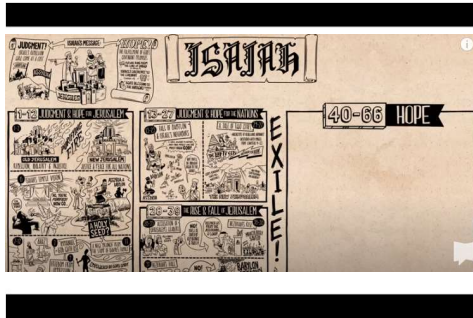
How does the idea of divine justice resonate with you personally?

Waiting on God  
God's character  
Faith in God's justice  
Comfort in personal trials

## Isaiah Part II

[Video Link](#)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_TzdEPuqgQg&t](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_TzdEPuqgQg&t)





## Righteousness: The Character of Servanthood

- Israel is to be a light to the nations
- The people of Israel are unable to live righteous lives, hindering their completion of the mission.
- God has the power to enable them to live righteously and complete their mission.
- Redemption is a spiritual rebirth and Gentiles as well as Jews can live righteously with faithfulness in God
- God makes righteous living possible through his grace, but justice requires that we do what is right.

This last division of the book of Isaiah, especially its central unit ([60:1–62:12](#)), reveals the completion of Israel’s mission to be a light to the nations (just as Isaiah’s declaration of God’s word to the nation fulfilled his experience of revelation and cleansing). However, the people’s inability to live righteous lives hinders their completing that mission ([56:9–59:15a](#); [63:7–66:17](#)). It is only as God enables them to live such lives by his mighty power that they are able to complete the mission ([59:15b–21](#); [63:1–6](#)). The goal of that mission is to produce righteous, worshiping Gentiles, which the opening and closing units signal ([56:1–8](#); [66:18–24](#)).

While it is probable that Isaiah wrote this with the return from exile in mind, its primary purpose is completing the book’s theological message. Thus, while we could understand [56:9–59:15a](#) and [63:7–66:17](#) as describing sinful behavior by the unregenerate, the order of the materials in the book makes it more likely that it describes the behavior of those who have been restored to fellowship with God ([54:1–55:13](#)) but have not availed themselves of the Servant-Warrior’s power to give them victory over sin in their lives.

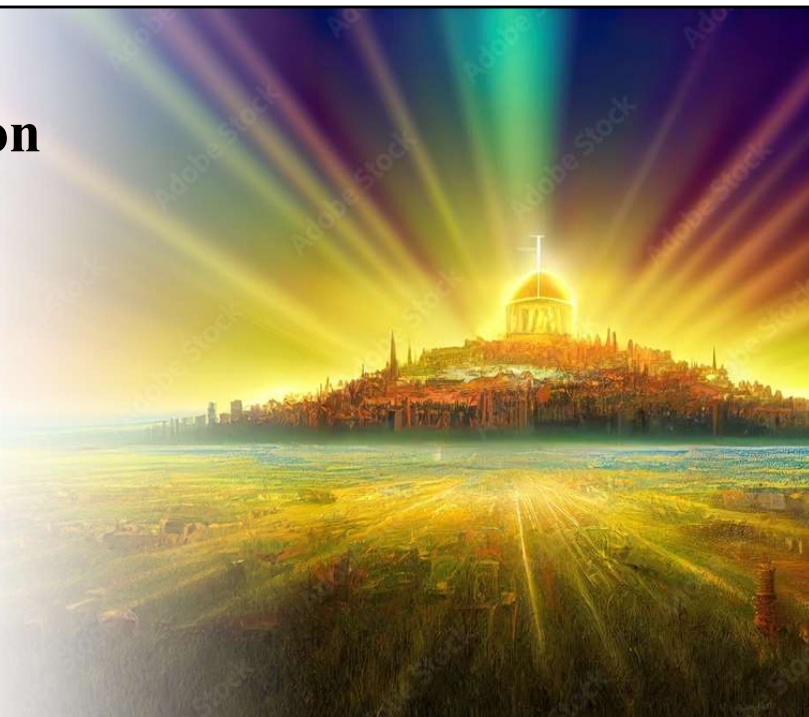
Redemption is not primarily a judicial proclamation; it is a spiritual rebirth issuing in changed behavior. Thus, people who are not part of the community by birth (foreigners) but yet keep the terms of God’s covenant for love’s sake are fully pleasing to God, as are



persons who have no hope of ever having children to carry on the national heritage (eunuchs, v. 3). This corrects a possible misunderstanding of [40:1—55:13](#), namely, that grace is available to Israel merely because of election and therefore the people need not concern themselves with godly behavior. God makes righteous living possible through his grace, but justice requires that we do what is right.

## The Glory of Zion

- The light of God shines through redeemed Israel and all nations see it.
- The glory of Zion will make it apparent that Zion is the place of God's favor.
- Isaiah promises the continuation of the nation in spite of attempts to destroy them.
- The Messiah will set his people free from the guilt and power of sin.
- Zion is the place that God favors and the salvation of the Israelites is a sign to all the world.



The light of God shines through redeemed Israel, and all the nations see it. Some come to worship with Israel. Those who do not come to worship will come to serve the redeemed or to perish. The Spirit-anointed Messiah accomplishes all this.


In dramatic contrast to the descriptions of the darkness of sin in Israel in [56:9—59:15a](#), here Israel is a bearer of Yahweh's "light" (vv. [1](#), [3](#), [19](#), [20](#)). That light will draw the nations to his "sanctuary" (v. [13](#)). They will bring back Israel's children (vv. [4](#), [9](#)), bring wealth to adorn the temple (vv. [5–9](#)), and help to rebuild the city (vv. [10–14](#)). As a result it will be apparent that Zion is the place of God's favor. Yahweh gives light in place of darkness. Israel is not the source of the light == the light is the glory of God displayed in them.

Isaiah promises the continuation of the nation in spite of the attempts by enemies to destroy them. Nations will come to praise the Lord and use their wealth to adorn his temple and provide offerings to it. Nations that do not join in worship will be brought in chains either to serve or to perish, just as they once led the Israelites.

Yahweh sets his people free from both the guilt and the power of sin through the Spirit-anointed Servant-Messiah. Jesus Christ uses Isaiah 61:1-3 to announce his ministry ([Luke 4:16–21](#))—just as the text intends. He is the servant who has taken upon himself the condemnation of our sins ([52:13—53:12](#)), and he is the Warrior ([59:15b–21](#); [63:1–6](#)) who

has broken the power of sin. As such he is the King who comes to establish the kingdom of peace ([9:1-7](#); [11:1-16](#)). The Messiah made Israel Yahweh's chosen servant so that the nations might be brought to him.

Isaiah goes on to describe the new condition of Israel that the world sees. She will no longer be seen as "Deserted" and "Desolate" (v. [4](#)), but will be a source of special delight to the Lord. Their "salvation" (v. [1](#)) will be a sign ("banner," v. [10](#)) to all the world.



## Discussion

How does the future glory of Jerusalem relate to the idea of Christian hope?

Waiting on God  
God's character  
Faith in God's justice  
Comfort in personal trials

much of Isaiah 60-66 was fulfilled with the **inauguration** of the Messianic age in the first coming of Christ. Yet in view of the words of Peter and the vision of John, Isaiah may have also looked forward to the future glory of Zion (spiritual Israel, i.e., the church) to be experienced at the **culmination** of the Messiah's reign at the end of time, following the resurrection and final judgment. The difference is that Isaiah couched his description of the new heavens and new earth in terms to which the Babylonian captives could easily relate, while John was shown the eternal destiny of God's people in pictures especially comforting to the persecuted Christians of the first century A.D.



**The Hope of a Future Deliverer**

Zechariah 9-14  
Daniel 7:1-12:13  
John 1 Luke 1-2  
Matthew 1-2

## Closing Hymn

[Video Link](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=71BTE1Wvat8)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=71BTE1Wvat8>



Based on Psalm 114

# Repentance for Revival

PS 92, 104, 107, 111-118, 120-134-136, 145-150; NE 12-13,  
 JOEL 1-3, ISA 56-66

July 16-22, 2024

We begin our reading this week with songs of worship – songs that ascents that speak of the joy of worship and the call for God’s blessings. These songs may well have been sung as Jerusalem was rebuilt with the leadership of Nehemiah and Ezra. The prophet Joel appeals for a change of heart – making us contemplate our own tendency to wander away from God when life seems to be going well. Joel reminds us that a close relationship with God is vital not only in bad times, but in good times as well. Isaiah’s prophecy does not end with horror, but with victory, with promises of everlasting deliverance, hope and restoration in God’s future kingdom – not just for Israel but for the Gentiles as well.

### Weekly Reading Plan (pg. 1022-1058)

Day 1: PS 120-134; NE 12:31-47  
 Day 2: PS 104, 107, 111-118  
 Day 3: PS 135-136, 145-150;  
 Day 4: NE 13:1-22; PS 92;  
           NE 13:23-31;  
 Day 5: JOEL 1:1-3:21;  
 Day 6: ISA 56:1-59:21  
 Day 7: ISA 60:1-66:24

### Outline

Songs of Ascents [Day 1]  
 Nehemiah and the Levites [Day 1]  
 The Last Word in Praise [Day 2-3]  
 Nehemiah’s Religious Reforms [Day 4]  
 Joel [Day 5]  
 Isaiah and the Restoration [Day 6]  
 God’s Glory upon God’s City [Day 7]

### Key Characters

Nehemiah	Levites
Eliashib	Tobiah
Artaxerxes	Joel
Isaiah	

### Key Locations

Jerusalem  
 Judah  
 Gates of Jerusalem  
 Tyre  
 Zion

### Key Terms

Worship	Trust
Blessings	Praise
Thanksgiving	Sabbath
Lamentations	Judgment
Salvation	Comfort
Justice	Redemption
Hope	

### Key Verses

The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy. [PS126:3]

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow his precepts have good understanding. To him belongs eternal praise. [PS 111:10]

In my anguish I cried to the Lord, and he answered by setting me free. The Lord is with me; he is my helper. I will look in triumph on my enemies. [PS 118:5-7]

Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity. [JOEL 2:13]

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. [ISA 55:8]

## Repentance for Revival

PS 92, 104, 107, 111-118, 120-134-136, 145-150; NE 12-13,  
JOEL 1-3, ISA 56-66

July 16-22, 2024

### Chapter Summaries (from @biblesummary)

**Ps120:** In my distress I cry to the LORD. Deliver me from a deceitful tongue. Woe to me! Too long have I lived among those who hate peace.

**Ps121:** I lift up my eyes to the hills; my help comes from the LORD. He who keeps you will not slumber. The LORD will keep you from all evil.

**Ps122:** I was glad when they said, "Let us go to the house of the LORD!" The tribes go up to give thanks. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.

**Ps123:** As the eyes of servants look to their master, so our eyes look to the LORD. Have mercy on us! For we have endured much contempt.

**Ps124:** If the LORD had not been on our side, attackers would have swallowed us alive. We have escaped. Our help is in the name of the LORD.

**Ps125:** Those who trust in the LORD are like Mount Zion, which cannot be moved. Do good, O LORD, to those who are good. Peace be upon Israel.

**Ps126:** When the LORD brought back the captives, we were like dreamers. He has done great things. Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy.

**Ps127:** Unless the LORD builds the house, the builders labour in vain. Children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb a reward.

**Ps128:** Blessed are all who fear the LORD. You will eat the fruit of your labour. May the LORD bless you from Zion all the days of your life.

**Ps129:** They have greatly oppressed me from my youth. But the LORD has cut the cords of the wicked. May all who hate Zion be put to shame!

**Ps130:** I cry to you, O LORD! If you kept a record of sins, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness. O Israel, hope in the LORD!

**Ps131:** My heart is not proud, O LORD. I have quietened my soul, like a weaned child with its mother. O Israel, put your hope in the LORD.

**Ps132:** Remember, O LORD, how David vowed, "I will find a place for the LORD." The LORD has chosen Zion: "This is my resting place forever."



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## Chapter Summaries (from @biblesummary)

Ps133: How good it is when brothers live together in unity! It is like precious oil upon the head. There the LORD commanded his blessing.

Ps134: Come, bless the LORD, all you servants of the LORD! Lift up your hands to the sanctuary. May the LORD bless you from Zion.

Ne12: All the Levites and leaders gathered to dedicate the wall. They made offerings and rejoiced. Men were appointed over the storerooms.

Ps104: O LORD, you are very great. You set the earth on its foundations. All your creatures look to you for food. Bless the LORD, O my soul!

Ps107: Oh give thanks to the LORD! Let the redeemed say so. He brought them out of darkness. He stilled the storm. He raises up the needy.

Ps111: Praise the Lord! Great are his works. He is ever mindful of his covenant. All his precepts are sure. His praise endures forever.

Ps112: Blessed are those who fear the LORD. Their righteousness endures forever. They are not afraid of evil tidings. The wicked melt away.

Ps113: Praise the LORD! Blessed be the name of the LORD forever. He is exalted over all the nations. He lifts the needy from the ash heap.

Ps114: When Israel came out of Egypt, Judah became God's sanctuary. The sea looked and fled. Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord.

Ps115: Not to us, O LORD, but to your name give glory. Idols have eyes, but they cannot see. O Israel, trust in the LORD. He will bless us.

Ps116: I love the LORD, for he heard my cry. When I was brought low, he saved me. What can I give for all his goodness? I will keep my vows.

Ps117: Praise the LORD! For great is his love towards us.

Ps118: Give thanks to the LORD; for his love endures forever! The nations surrounded me; I cut them off! The LORD has become my salvation.

Ps135: Praise the LORD! He is above all gods. He struck down many nations. Their idols are but silver and gold. O Israel, bless the LORD!

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## Chapter Summaries (from @biblesummary)

Ps136: Give thanks to the LORD, his love endures; who spread out the earth, his love endures; who led Israel out of Egypt, his love endures.

Ps145: I will exalt you, my God and King. All you have made will praise you. The LORD is faithful. He is near to all who call upon him.

Ps146: Praise the LORD, O my soul! Do not trust in mortal men. The LORD executes justice for the oppressed. He watches over the fatherless.

Ps147: It is good to sing praises to our God! He counts the stars. He lifts up the humble. Praise the LORD! He declares his word to Israel.

Ps148: Praise the LORD from the heavens! Praise him, sun and moon! Praise the LORD from the earth! Young and old together, praise the LORD!

Ps149: Praise the LORD! Let Israel rejoice in their maker. The LORD takes delight in his people. Let swords be in their hands for judgement.

Ps150: Praise the LORD! Praise him with trumpet and strings! Praise him with loud cymbals! Let everything that has breath praise the LORD!

Ne13: I cleared Tobiah out of the temple. I confronted those who profaned the Sabbath and who married foreign women. Remember me, O God.

Ps92: It is good to give thanks to the LORD. How great are your works! Your enemies shall perish. The righteous flourish in your courts.

Joel1: What the locust swarm has left other locusts have eaten. The fields are destroyed. Lament, O priests! The day of the LORD is near.

Joel2: A great army is on the mountains. Return to the LORD for he is merciful. "Fear not, I will restore you. I will pour out my Spirit."

Joel3: "I will gather all the nations for judgement. For the day of the LORD is near. Jerusalem will be inhabited for all generations."

Isa56: Keep justice, for salvation is near. I will bring the outcasts of Israel to my house and gather still others. The watchmen are blind.

Isa57: The righteous find peace in death. As for you rebels, you make your bed wide. Let your idols save you! But I will not accuse forever.

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## Chapter Summaries (from @biblesummary)

Isa58: You seek pleasure on your fast days. Is this not the fast I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice? Then your ruins will be rebuilt.

Isa59: Your sins have separated you from God. Justice is far from us. Truth is nowhere. So the LORD put on garments of salvation and fury.

Isa60: Arise, shine, for your light has come! The nations will come to you. I will make you majestic forever. Your God will be your glory.

Isa61: The Spirit of the LORD is on me. He has sent me to proclaim freedom. My people will inherit a double portion. I delight in the LORD.

Isa62: For Zion's sake I will not keep silent. You will be given a new name. Your God will rejoice over you. Raise a banner for the nations!

Isa63: Why are your robes red? I have trampled the nations. Israel remembered who brought them through the sea. You, O LORD, are our father.

Isa64: Oh that you would rend the heavens! You meet those who do right. We are all the work of your hand. Do not remember our sins forever.

Isa65: I held out my hands to an obstinate people. My servants will eat, but you will go hungry. I will create new heavens and a new earth.

Isa66: Listen! The LORD is repaying his enemies. Rejoice with Jerusalem and be comforted. All flesh will worship before me, says the LORD.

# Repentance for Revival

PS 92, 104, 107, 111-118, 120-134-136, 145-150; NE 12-13,  
JOEL 1-3, ISA 56-66

July 16-22, 2024

## Teachings About God

- Psalm 92 shows that God is a God of rest
- Psalm 104 shows the power of God from earth to heaven, from worldly to divine.
- God's works are great. He is involved in his creation, not distant and aloof. He has an eternal nature (PS 111).
- God is a righteous judge and on the Day of the Lord will bring sure and swift devastation on all who opposed him.

## Teachings About Humanity

- The wise understand the steadfast love of God and cast their anxiety to Him.
- Joel explicitly denied the (usual) tendencies of God's people to presume that God is lenient with them concerning their lifestyles and that they are immune from the times he comes in judgment.
- God's judgment will utterly destroy the pagan nations, and it will be a decisive turning point that his people must go through—on the way to ultimate blessing.
- Isaiah 40-66 meant to comfort exiles returning to the land after exile, yet speaks to all people who long for God's kingdom to be revealed in its holiness and righteousness.

## Teachings About Salvation

- Everyone who calls on the LORD will be saved.
- Joel describes repentance as a tearing of one's heart rather than external actions such as tearing clothes.
- Salvation includes the restoration of Zion (ISA 62) as well as the nations (ISA 60). The goal is for the nations to proclaim the praises of the Lord, which will be brought to completion in the eternal state.

## Reflections of Christ/Holy Spirit

- Peter and Paul taught that prophecies about the "Day of the Lord" applied to the second coming of Jesus.
- Joel prophesied the coming of God's spirit on all flesh (Joel 2:28). This prediction was fulfilled at Pentecost.

## Literary Genres/Techniques

- The psalms are Biblical poetry.
- This section of Nehemiah is narrative prose and appears to be copied from "Memoirs of Nehemiah."
- Joel is prophecy written entirely in Hebrew poetry. It is one of the shortest prophetic works. Joel uses sarcasm in his poetry.

## Author/Date of Writing/Audience

- The songs of Ascent (PS 120-134) were recited by the pilgrims going to Jerusalem.
- Psalms 113-118 are Hallel Passover psalms.
- Nehemiah occurred c446-430BC during Artaxerxes rule of Persia. The book was probably written by Ezra c430 BC to the Israelites in Jerusalem after they returned
- There is no personal information about Joel, who wrote the book either in the 9<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> century BC to the people of Judah living in Jerusalem.
- The author of this section of Isaiah is written by an unknown postexilic prophet and was addressed to later generations.

# Repentance for Revival

PS 92, 104, 107, 111-118, 120-134-136, 145-150; NE 12-13,  
JOEL 1-3, ISA 56-66

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## What did I learn about God?

- What does the infinite variety of creation say about God?
- How does God provide for you physically? Spiritually? Emotionally?
- What does total dependence on God mean? How does it relate to self-reliance or reliance upon others? Is it possible to benefit from God's care without a total dependence on his provisions?
- What name of God means the most to you? Why?

## What did I learn about human nature?

- In PS 104, David praises nature as God created it. What is the ultimate purpose of nature? What is mankind's role? Should Christians take a special role in preserving creation? How?
- What human attitude is emphasized in PS 107? Why is it a prerequisite for being delivered? For change and growth?
- If God always exalts the poor and needy, why are they so dishonored in society? How should the Christian act toward them?
- What behaviors and attitudes characterize trust in God?
- How do ancient and modern day idols differ? How are they alike? What are some modern day "gods" and "lords"? How do they vie for your attention?

## What did I learn about my life/relationship with God?

- How do you express spiritual joy?
- Do Sunday's help you grow spiritually? If so, how? If not, what is lacking?
- What do you think of religious statues and paintings? Is it wrong to depict Jesus in art? Why do you think the early church departed from the Jewish interpretation of the second commandment?
- What thank offerings can you give to God?