

## Psalms of Thanksgiving

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The great Psalms of God's inspired Word have consoled, comforted, and lifted the spirit of many a righteous man. Where we possess God's communication with men of old in the five books of law (the books of Moses), in the Psalms we possess five books as divided by the Jews. Yet, these books are more the communication of the righteous man with his God under the various circumstances that surround his life and emotions that play a role in the shaping of his character. The Psalms are certainly inspired of God and revealed by Him, but it is man that learns how he should approach God in a practical way on a daily basis.

In our study, we will look at one particular division of the Psalms and that would be Psalms of Thanksgiving. Though this is one division of the Psalms, this section of Psalms can be divided into two categories. First would be "National Psalms of Thanksgiving," and the second would be "Individual Psalms of Thanksgiving." In the National Psalms we see Israel expressing gratitude to God for that which He had provided, usually in the area of the defeat of their enemies. It is interesting that in these Psalms there is usually a call for the nations to acknowledge that Israel's God is the universal God. In Psalms 124:1-5 and 129:1-4, we see the thought of that deliverance. Ultimately these Psalms were not just expressing thanks to God, but also they were a confession of their own weakness and their inability to gain the victory without the aid of Jehovah.

On the other hand, there are several Psalms that express the gratitude of an individual for that which Jehovah provided. Many of these Psalms expressed thanksgiving for deliverance from some terrible danger. It may have been severe illness (30:2,3,9) or perhaps they had been delivered from an adversary (71:4,10,11). Yet, there was much more expressed than just thanksgiving. Notice Psalm 18:16-19:

He sent from above, he took me, he drew me out of many waters. He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them which hated me: for they were too strong for me. They prevented me in the day of my calamity: but the LORD was my stay. He brought me forth also into a large place; he delivered me, because he delighted in me.

In this Psalm of individual thanksgiving we see an acknowledgement of the author's inability to deliver himself and the fact that he would have been consumed or destroyed without the Lord's intervention. In these Psalms there is also a remembrance of their petition to Jehovah and an appreciation for the remnants of that deliverance. Notice Psalm 41:4, 11, 12:

I said, Lord, be merciful unto me: heal my soul; for I have sinned against thee.... By this I know that thou favourest me, because mine enemy doth not triumph over me. And as for me, thou upholdest me in mine integrity, and settest me before thy face for ever. Then, finally, we see praise heaped upon Jehovah in the last verse: "Blessed be the LORD God of Israel from everlasting, and to everlasting. Amen, and Amen" (Psa. 41:13).

As New Testament Christians, we are well aware that our God has given us innumerable reasons to be thankful. As James wrote, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (James 1:17). Whether we consider the physical blessings, or

especially the spiritual blessings, we as Christians have much for which to be thankful. Paul wrote, "But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 5:57). Again he wrote, "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place" (2 Cor. 2:14). As the recipients of so much, how should we respond to our God? We learn from the Psalms of Thanksgiving that there are certain elements that must be present in our humble approach to Jehovah. First, we should praise our God as the Great God He is. Second, we should express our appreciation for that which He has provided. And third, we should express our smallness and inadequacies and inability to deliver ourselves.

May we never take the blessings of our God for granted, and may we follow the example of righteous men who have gone before in our expressions of thanksgiving to Him, as we study our Bibles more and more.