

HEARING THE WORD



NIGEL BARGE

Psalms (2) Leader's Guide

Hearing the Word Psalms (2) Leader's Guide

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Email: info@hearingtheword.org.uk

Website: <https://hearingtheword.org.uk>

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Nigel Barge, January 2014

Scripture Quotations taken from

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Resources

The *New Bible Dictionary* 3rd edition, published by Inter Varsity Press
The *New Bible Commentary* 21st century edition. A commentary on every Bible book, IVP

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DIFFERENT TYPES OF WRITING IN THE BIBLE

Whenever we read, we approach different forms of writing in different ways, sometimes without noticing. We would not expect to read Shakespeare, a newspaper report, a car manual, a rule book and a poem in the same way! In each we would take into account the purpose for which it was written and the way in which words were used.

We should do the same with the Bible. God's word was given in many different types of writing – Law, Poetry, History, Wisdom, Prophecy, Letters, 'Apocalyptic' (symbolic dreams and visions of end times), Story (narrative) etc

While acknowledging God's truth throughout, we need to take into account the medium in which his Word is given, to discern what he says and what we should do with it.

READING POETRY

Use of words

One of the great reformers held, that 'Scripture cannot be understood theologically unless it be first understood grammatically' ie we need to take into account the devices the poet uses if we are to understand him.

a) Parallelism

The Psalmist often makes a point twice. He repeats it in a different way, not to add anything, but simply to accentuate the point. The reader is meant to note the emphasis but not try to find new meaning in the repetition e.g.

"The heavens declare the glory of God

The skies proclaim the work of his hands." Ps 19:1

b) Figures of speech

A poet may use words in a way that is not literal but which reveals meaning in another way. So we often see

Metaphors e.g. 'God is a fortress' (Ps 46)

This is not expressing the belief that God is made of stone. Rather, it expresses the Psalmist's confidence in the security that he has in God.

When danger looms, he runs to God and is safe.

Similes e.g. the mountains skipped like rams,
the hills like lambs (Ps 114:4)

The simile (and the parallel statement) does not suggest there was an earthquake; just that the physical world complied with God's will to release his people from Egypt.

Hyperbole (exaggeration) is a device used to make a point. It must be taken into account when we are learning from the Psalms. Their teaching cannot be extracted line for line as in law but must be taken in context.

eg 'In sin did my mother conceive me' (Ps 51:5)

This does not imply that sex is sinful, or teach 'original sin'; rather, it expresses the weight of sin the poet feels: he has *always* been sinful!

POETRY and the Word of God

All Scripture is written by man and inspired by God; it is for making us wise for salvation and for building us up (2 Tim 3:16-17). This 'tension' is seldom more evident in the Bible than when we are reading its poetry. We need to take both aspects into account:

1) Written by man

a) The Psalms are Poetry

Poetry expresses emotion. It conveys how the writer felt at the time of writing. Rather than simply stating feelings the writer lets his words, and the pictures they convey, express his feelings. In seeking to understand any poem, it is therefore useful to ask about

(i) The timing

a) General: At what point in the history of Israel is it written?

b) Specific: What was the event/occasion that prompted it?

NB This may be specified in the title of the poem or it may be implied by the content as we 'read between the lines'.

(ii) The emotion What was the writer's underlying feeling?

Anger/ pleasure, sadness/ joy, confidence/ anxiety, hope/ despair?

(iii) The purpose: What is the writer's single target or goal?

b) The Psalms are songs

They express openly the emotion of the writer and encourage us to respond sympathetically and identify with him. i.e. What parts of this Psalm can I or should I say myself?

2) Inspired by God

The Psalmists, whether they knew it or not, were 'prophets carried along by the Holy Spirit.' (2 Peter 1:21) As well as expressing human emotion, they are also the means of God speaking to his people. So, according to God's purpose in Salvation, we ask what God is saying to *us* through this Psalm.

How does it a) Make us wise for Salvation?

how does God reveal himself in this Psalm?

How does he help us understand his plan of salvation in Jesus?

b) Equip us? What does God want me to do in response to this?

JESUS in the Psalms

All Scripture speaks of Jesus (Luke 24:27; John 5:39) Psalms do this

1) Directly

The book of Psalms is one of the most frequently quoted OT books in the NT. There are 70 quotes introduced by a formula eg 'David says concerning him'. There are 60 quotes without a formula and a further 220 references.

Some Psalms which deal with the subject of the King can be seen as anticipating the Messiah. Psalm 2 is mentioned 17 times in the New Testament, where it is applied to Jesus' baptism, transfiguration, resurrection, final rule and judgment.

So there are many verses that speak directly & prophetically about Jesus.

2) Indirectly

The Scriptures describe the unfolding revelation of God in salvation history which culminates in his exact representation in Jesus (Heb1:1-3).

So the Psalmist writes within in his own historical situation but also anticipates and foreshadows Jesus who is to come. Therefore as we read the Psalms we ask ourselves:

What does this Psalm show us of the gift of God in Jesus?

SHARING THE WORD TOGETHER

There are great benefits in sharing together round God's Word: knowing we will meet with others *weekly* can help us to be disciplined; we learn from insights God gives to others; the fellowship enriches our lives.

Set aside time through the week (if possible, 10 minutes each day), read the passage carefully then work through the questions. *Write down* your answers and turn the passage over in your mind all week.

When you meet, for an hour or so each week, read the passage together. Work through the **Look, Learn, Listen, Live** pattern on page 3, sharing the thoughts you have written down during the week. Try to get all the questions out in the open first; don't jump to offer answers. If one reader has more knowledge than others, resist the temptation to dominate!

Leave plenty of time for the **Live** section at the end: the application is the point of the study!

The Book of the Psalms

The traditional titles of the Psalms suggest that David wrote half of them (73), Moses wrote one, Solomon two, sons of Asaph and Korah several.

They were used in private and public worship, and it is suggested that after the return from exile and the reconstruction of the Temple by Ezra in the 5th Century, they were formed into its official 'Hymn book'.

The Psalms have been arranged into 5 'books'. There is no pattern in this organisation. The following types of Psalms are found intermingled in them

1. Lament – an expression of distress and suffering to God
eg 3, 22, 31, 39, 57, 71, 120, 139, 142
2. Thanksgiving - an acknowledgement of gratitude to God
eg 65, 75, 124, 138
3. Praise – an appreciation of God
eg 8; 19, 66, 103, 114, 145, 148
4. Salvation History – a remembering of God's past deliverance
eg 75, 105, 135
5. Celebration / affirmation – a ritual for acknowledging God's rule.
eg 2, 18, 29, 47, 87, 89, 122
6. Wisdom – a consideration of Godly living
eg 36, 49, 112, 133
- 7 Songs of Trust - a profession of hope in God
eg 16, 62, 121, 125

Psalms covered in this Guide

Psalm 45	page 5	Psalm 2	page 21
Psalm 115	page 9	Psalm 37	page 25
Psalm 95	page 13	Psalm 110	page 29
Psalm 83	page 17	Psalm 90	page 33

The Lord is eternally married to His church

Background information

This “Wedding Psalm” shares a great deal with Song of Solomon. The king is the bridegroom and the poet praises him before addressing the bride. The psalm concludes with the prospect of many ‘sons’.

Word List

	<i>maskil</i>	probably a musical term
	<i>Sons of Korah</i>	group of sacred musicians
6	<i>sceptre</i>	rod, often ornate, carried as symbol of personal sovereignty
7	<i>anointing</i>	pouring oil on body, to signify divine favour
8	<i>myrrh</i>	aromatic resinous gum
	<i>aloes</i>	resin from a fragrant wood
	<i>cassia</i>	aromatic bark
9	<i>Ophir</i>	country from which gold was imported to Judah, perhaps in Arabia or E. African coast
12	<i>Tyre</i>	principal seaport on Phoenician coast, wealthy place

Bible connections

2	<i>gracious words</i>	Luke 4:22
4	<i>ride forth</i>	Revelation 6:2
6	<i>throne and sceptre,</i>	Hebrews 1:8 (ascribed to Jesus)
6-7	<i>God loves righteousness and justice</i>	Psalm 11:5-7; 89:14
7	<i>anointed</i>	Psalm 2:2; Isaiah 45:1, 65:1
9	<i>royal bride</i>	Ephesians 5:22-33; Rev 19:7-8
13-14	<i>glorious garments</i>	Isaiah 61:10
16	<i>many sons</i>	Hebrews 2:10-13

LOOK

1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

- 1 *What is the noble 'theme'?*
Who is the King?
- 2 *When did God anoint him / bless him forever?*
- 3 *Why did he need his sword?*
- 4 *Why is the king representing these things (not glory, power etc)?*
- 6 *Why is it called 'God's throne'?*
- 7 *Who are his companions?*
What is an honoured woman?
- 10 *Who is the daughter?*
Why should she forget her people and her father's house?
- 12 *Why the daughter of Tyre?*
- 14 *Why are her virgin companions brought in too?*
- 16 *Who were her sons?*
Did they rule?
- 17 *How was his memory perpetuated?*

What surprises or confuses you?

The insertion of one verse that speaks to God (6)

There is no subjective response in the poem except (17)

There is no mention of the crowds / the people

2) The Context

a) Immediate

What are the circumstances that have prompted this poem?

(from the title or from 'reading between the lines')

The impending wedding of the King to a beautiful bride who is prepared.

Verses are spoken out in song.

In the first instance this is a song of praise for the king's ears but then for generations to come. (17)

Who was this poem written to/addressed for

The King / the Lord (6) and the bride to be (10 -11) The King (12 -17)

b) General Bible

Are there other parts of the Bible with common themes?

<i>Ezekiel 37</i>	<i>Tyre is the epitome of wealth</i>
<i>Ephesians 5:25-32</i>	<i>(Christ and his bride the church)</i>
<i>Revelation 19:7ff</i>	<i>The wedding of the Lamb Jesus and the church</i>
<i>Hosea 1:2</i>	<i>God and his Bride Israel</i>
<i>Song of Songs</i>	<i>Love poem of King Solomon and his bride</i>

- 2 *Jesus- full of grace and truth (John 1:18)*
- 3 *The Lord is clothed with majesty and strength. (Psalm 93:1)*
The splendid sight of Jesus (Revelation 1:14)
- 4 *God deeds are awesome. (Psalm 65:5)*
- 5 *The Lord rules over the nations. (Psalm 43:3, 8, 9)*
- 6 *The everlasting Kingdom of justice righteousness (Isaiah 9:7)*
- 7 *Above all names (Philippians 2:9)*
King of Kings and Lord of Lord's (Revelation 19:16)
- 10 *Leave your father's house (Genesis 2:24)*
- 16 *Many sons to glory (Hebrews 2:10, 13)*
- 10 *Solomon's marriage to a princess (1 Kings 3:1)*

LEARN

How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?

- 1 *The theme is praise of the King at the event of his marriage.*
The King is Solomon (?)
- 2 *God anointed him / blessed him forever at his coronation.*
- 3 *His sword was a sign of his power(?)*
- 4 *These things are the values of Kingdom.*
- 6 *The King rules under God over His people.*
- 7 *His companions are all other earthly rulers.*
- 9 *Honoured woman are his courtiers.*
- 10 *The daughter is the queen – princess of Egypt (1 Kings 3:1)?*
She forgets her people as she is fully united with the King.
- 12 *Tyre was the epitome of wealth.*
- 14 *Her virgin companions are her court.*

- 16 *His sons were future kings, Rehoboam and Jeroboam.
They ruled but the earthly kingdom split and ultimately failed.*
- 17 *His memory was perpetuated through his greater son, King Jesus.*

What emotion(s) are expressed in this poem? Which is the main one?
Joy, wonder, pride, amazement, relief (heirs in prospect)

- 3) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

This is primarily for/ unto God.

The writer is an 'objective' commentator.

The focus is on the king and his bride, not the wider response

- 4) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

An observer writes a wonderful poem for the King on the day of his wedding that praises the king and acknowledges God's sovereign purpose in his marriage and God's everlasting Kingdom.

LISTEN

- 1) What is the lesson or the main point?

The kings marriage ensures his splendid kingdom will last for ever

- 2) Which verse best sums up the passage's message?

Your throne O God will last forever (6)

- 3) How do you think it does this?

The wedding of the King and his bride ensures that the Kingdom / throne, will be passed on

LIVE

- 1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

- a) In general?

6 *God is omnipotent - He will rule for ever*

God is just in all his ways

7 *God exalts the righteous*

b) His grace

2 The Lord/ Jesus lips have been anointed with grace.

c) Jesus / His salvation

2 J is the anointed one full of grace and truth (John 1:18)

4/5 J triumphed over his enemies in the cross (Colossians 2:15)

J is the humble one (Matthew 11:29);

J is the name before whom all bow (Philippians 2:9)

6 J is God (John 1:1) his Kingdom and His marriage (to the church) will last forever

7 J for the joy set before (love of the church) him endured the cross (Hebrews 12:2)

11 J is enthralled with church (Ephesians 5:25)

13 Js' bride is the church beautifully prepared (Ephesians 5:27; Rev 19:8)

15 J dwells with man (Revelation 21:3) the relationship is consummated (John 17:20-23; 1 Corinthians 15:28)

16 Js' 'sons' are the princes / rulers in Kingdom for ever (Luke 22:29)

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

2) What should I do?

1 Speak about the glories of the king (Jesus), not about his beautiful bride (the church).

Speak out your praise to God (and Man)

Begin praising and your heart will be stirred

4 Note -The values of God's Kingdom are truth, humility & righteousness.

6/10,11 Yield to Jesus; He is your Lord.

10 In marriage, leave and cleave.

14 Note - Marriage is the virgin entering the home of the husband.

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

Study 2

Psalm 115

The Lord is faithful and trustworthy

Background information

Psalms 113-118 are known as the 'Egyptian Hallel' Psalms because they celebrate the deliverance from Egypt. They were sung at the great festivals of Passover, Weeks (Pentecost) and Tabernacles. The 'Hallel' may come either at the beginning or the end of each Psalm.

113-114 were sung *before* the Passover meal and 115-118 *after* it. So Jesus and his disciples would have sung them in the Upper Room.

'Hallelujah' is a Hebrew word with three parts; *Hallel* (praise) -*u-* (to) *Yah* (Yahweh, never spoken; Jews always said 'the Lord' instead)

Psalm 115 probably dates not from the Exodus from Egypt, but much later, after the Exile. i.e. the Jewish exiles have returned from Babylon to Jerusalem and are under pressure, with their enemies taunting them. However, God is in control.

Word List

4	<i>idols</i>	man-made objects or statues worshipped as God
	<i>house of Israel,</i>	another name for Jacob = 'he struggles with God'
	<i>house of Aaron</i>	the priestly clan
18	<i>Praise the Lord</i>	the Hebrew is Hallel-u-jah, see above.

Bible connections

1	<i>God's faithfulness</i>	Exodus 34:6
2	<i>"Where is their God?"</i>	Psalm 42:3; 79:10; Joel 2:17; Micah 7:10
3-7	<i>God and idols</i>	Jeremiah 10:1-5
9-11	<i>Trust in the Lord</i>	Psalm 37:3; 62:8
12	<i>God remembers his people and will bless them.</i>	1 Chronicles 16:15; Genesis 12:2
16	<i>earth given to man</i>	Genesis 1:28

LOOK

1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

- 1 *Who are 'us'?*
 How has he shown his love and faithfulness?
- 2 *Why are they asking this question?*
- 3 *What is the relevance of having 'our God in heaven'?*
- 4 *What is the issue with idols?*
- 9 *Why are they needing to 'trust in the Lord'?*
 Why 1st person - Israel but then 3rd person - 'He is their...'?
- 12 *What does 'bless' involve?*
- 14 *What does 'increase' involve?*
- 16 *Why does it say this about the earth –cf (Ps 24:1)*
- 18 *How can 'we' extol him for ever- when we die?*

What surprises or confuses you?

The change of person in the verb (9-11)

They are in a situation that requires trust but there is no request to God for themselves.

2) The Context

a) Immediate

What are the circumstances that have prompted this poem?
(from the title or from 'reading between the lines')

The people of God are facing adversity and other nations are questioning the love and faithfulness of their God. (1,2)

Who was this poem written to/addressed for?

God's (struggling) people and their priestly leaders

b) General Bible

Are there other parts of the Bible with common themes?

- 1 *Giving Glory to God (John 14:13; Romans 4:20)*
 Seeking first the Kingdom of God (Matthew 6:33)
 Fix our eyes on Jesus (Hebrews 12:2)
- 2 *God's presence / provision questioned (Numbers 14:3)*

- 3 *The Lord in Heaven rules. (Psalm 103:19)*
- 5 *The Word became flesh. (John 1:14; 1 John 1:1-3)*
- 9 *Trust in the Lord. (Proverbs 3:5,6)*
- 11/13 *Fear the Lord. (Deuteronomy 10:12; Psalm 34:9; Proverbs 9:10)*
- 12 *God remembers His Covenants. (Exodus 2:24)*
- 14 *Increase in number (Genesis 1:22)*
 Increase in grace and knowledge (2 Peter 3:18)
- 16 *The heavens, the highest heavens (Deuteronomy 10:14)*
- 18 *Now and forever – resurrection (John 11:25)*

LEARN

- 2) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?
 - 1 *'Us' are the Lord's people*
 He has saved and redeemed us from slavery (in Egypt)
 - 2 *They are asking question about God's provision*
 - 3 *'Our God in heaven' reigns is all powerful*
 - 4 *Idols? – who are they to talk with their inanimate Gods*
 - 9 *They need to 'trust in the Lord' because they cannot see..*
 Why the 1st person - Israel but then 3rd person - 'He is their...'
 - 12 *Bless = increase in Grace and knowledge*
 - 14 *What does 'increase' involve?*
 - 16 *The given as stewards*
 - 18 *'we' can extol him for ever if we are resurrected.*

What emotion(s) are expressed in this poem? Which is the main one?

Worship, disdain, confidence, resolve

- 3) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?
 - (9f) *contrasts and sharpens the blessing in (14,15) i.e. may you fear the Lord (13) and enjoy his blessing (15) as your 'help & shield' (11)*

- 4) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

In adversity and in the face of taunts from outsiders (2), the psalmist seeks to inspire trust in God(9-11) in the expectation that hearers will prove his love and faithfulness and bring God glory. (1) The promise is that those who fear

God will know his blessing. (13) The privilege is everlasting life to praise the living God forever. (17,18)

LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

God's followers are focused not on themselves but on His Glory and faithfulness.

2) Which verse best sums up the passage's message?

"Not to us, O Lord, not to us but to your name be glory because of your love and faithfulness". (1)

3) How do you think it does this?

'Us' are those who fear the Lord and trust in Him. (12) They are confident that His love and faithfulness will result in blessing and expect to praise and glorify Him forever.

LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) In general?

2/3 God does not have to 'perform'; he rules in Heaven.

9 God is a help (ezer) / supporter and a shield / protector.

12 God remembers / observes His covenants.

13 God is impartial to men's status.

b) His grace

1 Mankind are the beneficiaries of His love and faithfulness.

c) Jesus / His salvation through the cross

5 Jesus, God the son, has mouth, eyes, ears etc

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

2) What should I do

1 Humbly enjoy God's favour

8 Note -Those who create idols will end up like them – helpless.

9 O trust in the Lord...!

14 Expect the blessing of the Lord.

16 Note - Mankind are stewards of earth.

17/18 Note - Only those who live forever / are resurrected, will praise God forever.

18 Praise the Lord.

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

The Lord alone is worthy of your worship

Background information

Worshippers on the way to the Temple may have sung this Psalm. It is first a call to joyful worship and secondly a solemn warning. The warning is expounded and applied in Hebrew 3:7 - 4:13.

Word List

- | | | |
|----|--------------------|---|
| 1 | <i>Rock</i> | term to describe God |
| 7 | <i>Today</i> | word is emphatic, critical character of present moment |
| 8 | <i>Meribah</i> | Hebrew means quarrelling |
| | <i>Massah</i> | Hebrew means testing |
| 9 | <i>fathers</i> | ancestors |
| 10 | <i>forty years</i> | the time the Israelites spent in wilderness because of their disobedience |

Bible connections

- | | | |
|------|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1-2 | <i>exuberant praise</i> | c.f. first Palm Sunday Luke 19:37-38 |
| 1 | <i>Rock of our salvation</i> | 2 Samuel 22:47 |
| 3 | <i>God as King</i> | Psalm 47:2; John 1:49; 1 Timothy 6:15 |
| 4-5 | <i>God as Creator</i> | c.f. Romans 8:39; Phil 2:10; Col 1:16 |
| 7 | <i>God as Shepherd</i> | Psalm 23; John 10:1-16 |
| 8 | <i>Meribah and Massah</i> | Exodus 17:1-7; Numbers 20:1-13 |
| 8-11 | <i>solemn warning</i> | Hebrews 3:7 - 4:13 |
| 10 | <i>forty years</i> | Exodus 16:35; Numbers 14:34 |

LOOK

1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

- 1 *Who are 'us'?*
 What was the 'salvation'?
- 2 *Why with 'music and song'?*
- 3 *Who are the other god's?*
- 6 *Why should we kneel before our maker / shepherd?*
- 7 *What is his voice saying?*
- 8 *Who are 'you'?*
 What does a hardened heart do?
- 10 *What did God's anger for 40 years mean?*
 What are God's 'ways'?
- 11 *What is his rest?*

What surprises or confuses you?

Why the very sudden change in mood?

Why does the person change – come let us (6)today if you hear his voice(7b) ..though seen what I did?

2) The Context

a) Immediate

What are the circumstances that have prompted this poem?

Corporate worship of God

Who was this poem written to/addressed for?

The sons of Israel (9)

b) General Bible

Are there other parts of the Bible with common themes?

- 1 *Come (Matthew 11:28; Rev 22:17)*
 It is good to sing praise to God (Psalm 147:1)
 The rock of our salvation (Matthew 7:25; 16:18)
 Jesus is the rock (1 Corinthians 10:4)
- 2 *Thanksgiving always (1 Thessalonians 5:17; Philippians 4:4)*

- 6 Kneel before God (Philippians 2:10)
- 8 Hard hearts (Exodus 7:13 ff)
Impenetrable to Word (Luke 8:11,12)
- 10 Anger of God (John 2:15ff)
- 11 Excluded from 'rest' (Matthew 7:21ff; 25:1ff)
Covenant people being lost (Hebrews 6:4)

LEARN

- 1) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?
 - 1 'Us' are the sons of Israel. (9)
Salvation means from slavery in Egypt to promised land (death to life).
 - 2 Why with 'music and song'?
 - 3 Other gods are idols. (c.f. Psalm 115:4-8)
 - 6 Kneeling is an act of submission.
 - 7 His voice saying – 'bow in worship'.
 - 8 'You' means sons of Israel.
A hardened heart means rebellion (Hebrews 3:8) unbelief (Hebrews 3:12) no faith (Hebrews 4:2) does not believe God's Word.
 - 10 God's anger meant they did not enter his promised land.
God's ways are his love and faithfulness (Psalm 115:1)
 - 11 His rest in the Old Testament is the promised land (Hebrews 3:17), NT - it is Heaven (Hebrews 4:9)

What emotion(s) are expressed in this poem? Which is the main one?
Joy, enthusiasm, wonder, awe, submission, concern, anger, determination

- 2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?
*Exuberant joy and reverent fear are compatible in the worship of God.
 The psalmist is shown to be man and God speaking at the same time.*

- 3) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.
The Psalmist exhorts the people of God to praise God together in song, to consider the majesty of their creator and to submit to his loving care. God warns them through the Psalmist against disbelieving and ignoring His word and being excluded from His presence as were their ancestors in the wilderness.

LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

Decide to submit to worshipping our creator.

2) Which verse best sums up the passage's message?

Come let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our maker.(6)

3) How do you think it does this?

The Psalm enjoins us to submit to and worship the God who is created and rules all things, and it warns us of rebellion against Him.

LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) In general?

3 He is THE God above all other gods.

6 He is to be submitted to as the maker of all things.

11 He can be angered.

b) His grace

6 He created everything in grace.

7 He cares for his creatures.

c) Jesus / His salvation

1 Jesus is the Rock of our salvation

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

2) What should I do?

1,3,6 Note the progression – Praise Acknowledge worship

1 Chose to praise God together.

2 Use music as an effective vehicle for praise.

6 Join with His people in worshipping your creator

8 Note that belief is a choice – you may harden your heart.

11 Note - Some of God's people did not / may not enter his rest.

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

The Most High rules over ALL the earth

Background information

Enemies named in v6-7 surround Kingdom of Israel. Assyria is a major power to the north-east of them. They want to destroy it. Asaph's reaction is to pray - to ask God to save them as He had done in the past. He recognises that it is God's battle.

Calvin links this Psalm with King Jehoshaphat (vs 6-7 = 2 Chron 20:1,10,22; vs 12 = 2 Chron 20:11; Asaph = 2 Chron 20:14)

Nations mentioned **surround** Israel : eg Assyria in North; Ammon and Moab in East; Amalek, Edom and Midian in the South. Philistia and Tyre (sea power) in East. NB **all** are involved allied against Israel

Some nations are also relatives - descendants of Abraham

Edom –	Esau's descendants
Ishmaelites -	Descendants of Ishmael, Abraham's illegitimate son (Esau married one of his daughters)
Ammonites	Descendants of Lot's younger son by his daughter;
Amalek	Grandson of Esau,
Moab	Descendants of Moab (son of Lot's incestuous union with his daughter).

Word List

<i>Asaph</i>	of levite family, serving musically in Temple 1Chr16:4-5
<i>Sisera(Jabin)</i>	canaanites commander – defeated (Judges 4:1,22)
<i>Kishon</i>	River near Mt Carmel where Israel defeated Sisera
<i>Endor</i>	Town 6km S of Mt Tabor
<i>Oreb/ Zeeb/ Zebah/ Zalmunna</i>	Midianite leaders routed by Gideon (Judges 7:25)

Bible connections

3	<i>effect of God's enemies</i>	Psalm 31:9-13
4	<i>attempt to destroy God's people</i>	Esther 3:6
9-12	<i>dealing with God's enemies</i>	Judges 4-8
	<i>Psalmist knew his Bible!</i>	See also Ps 42:6, 77:10-12
	<i>cf Sadducees</i>	Matthew 22:29
18	<i>"You alone are the Most High."</i>	Philippians 2:9-11

LOOK

1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

- 1 *Why is God silent?*
- 2 *Why does he need to tell God?*
- 3 *Who are his 'people'?*
- 5 *Where are these people / places?*
Who was the leader? Why was none mentioned?
- 9ff *Why has he cited these people?*
- 16 *What men does he hope will seek God's face?*
- 17 *What is their shame?*
Why does he want them to know..?

What surprises or confuses you?

The Psalmist does not mention himself / his plight.
The vitriol – not simply victory but destruction.

2) The Context

a) Immediate

What are the circumstances that have prompted this poem?

The Psalmist is surrounded by his enemies who are allies in seeking his destruction.

God is not in evidence.

Who was this poem written to/addressed for?

God, Himself.

b) General Bible

Are there other parts of the Bible with common themes?

- 1 *Forsaken by God (Psalm 22:1; Matthew 27:46)*
Zeal for God's honour (Psalm 69:9; John 2:17)
- 2 *Love for your enemies (Matthew 5:44)*
Enemies are the principalities and powers (Ephesians 6:12)
- 3 *Touching God's people, the apple of his eye (Zechariah 2:8; Ps 105:15)*
- 5 *The nation rage against God (Psalm 2:1)*
The enemy, the Devil (Luke 10:19)

- 16 All nations seeking God (Psalm 67)
 17 Disgraced and shamed and crushed (Isaiah 53)
 18 Honour God's name. (Exodus 32:11; 2 Chronicles 14:11)
 For his names sake (Psalm 23:3)
 God is gracious and forgiving but punishes sin. (Exodus 34:6)

LEARN

- 1) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?
 1 God is silent for no apparent reason.
 2 Articulating the need is part of prayer.
 3 His people are Israel.
 5 These people are all the nations all around Israel.
 The leader was the devil – there was no earthly leader.
 9ff These people are enemies who have been defeated /destroyed.
 16 All men / all nations
 17 Their shame is they have fought against the living God / his people.
 He wants them to know so that they will acknowledge / bow down.

What emotion(s) are expressed in this poem? Which is the main one?
Earnestness, urgency, indignation, hatred, pride

- 3) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?
*The Psalmist is consumed by desire for God's glory.
 So implacable are the enemies that only death will remove the threat.*

- 4) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.
Fearing defeat due to God's in action, the writer tells God that His people are in danger of annihilation. To avoid this he calls on God to destroy them totally and so demonstrate his sovereign power.

LISTEN

- 1) What is the lesson or the main point?
Seek God for victory over His enemies for His names sake.

2) Which verse best sums up the passage's message?

Let them know that you whose name is the Lord – that you alone are Most High over the earth (18)

3) How do you think it does this?

By crushing those who seek to destroy his people, God shows the power of His Name.

LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) In general?

1 He may be silent / appear detached.

2 He has enemies.

9 He destroys enemies.

18 He is personal – the Lord.

He alone is the most High and bears all authority.

b) His grace

Jesus became sin / the enemy of God, that we (enemies of God) might become friends of God (2 Corinthians 5:21; John 15:13-15).

c) Jesus / His salvation

Jesus made a spectacle of his enemies on the cross (Colossians 2:15)

We were enemies (Romans 5:10) He became sin (2 Corinthians 5:21)

He was pierced for our transgressions (Isaiah 53:5)

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

2) What should I do?

Iff Sing / pray to God laying the battle before him.

2 In prayer, describe the situation you pray for.

4 Note - God's enemies seek to destroy his people.

9 Remember his victory and public triumph in Jesus.

16 Note - To oppose God is shameful.

18 Seek in adversity to bring glory to His Name.

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

The Lord is fearsome

Background information

The first singers of this Psalm were probably thinking of the period when David was making his conquests of the surrounding nations. Its allusions are Messianic and apply to our Lord

Word List

2	<i>Anointed One</i>	Hebrew Messiah, (the King)
6	<i>Zion</i>	another name for Jerusalem; David captured fortress of Zion and made it his city 2 Samuel 5:6-7
7	<i>decree</i>	the will or purpose of God i.e. an order with power
12	<i>kiss the Son</i>	submit to Him
	<i>Blessed</i>	when applied to man it denotes a state of happiness

Bible connections

1-3	<i>Used by believers in their prayer after Peter and John had been grilled by the Sanhedrin</i> Acts 4:25-26	
6	<i>King</i>	Psalm 10:16; 24:7-10
	<i>Zion</i>	2 Kings 19:31, Psalm 9:11; 48:2; 110:2
	<i>David installed in Zion</i>	2 Samuel 5:6
7	<i>'You are my Son'</i>	Matthew 3:17; Acts 13:32-33; Hebrews 1:5
8	<i>the king's enthronement</i>	Philippians 2:9; Revelation 2:26
9	<i>the king's rule</i>	Revelation 2:26-27; 12:5; 19:15
10	<i>God's wrath</i>	Deuteronomy 9:8, Revelation 6:15-17

LOOK

1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

- 1 *What were the nations plotting?*
- 2 *Who was the Lord's anointed one?*
- 3 *What were their chains?*
- 4 *Why does the Lord laugh?*
- 7 *Who is 'I'?*
What is today?
Why did he have to ask?
- 12 *Who is 'the son'?*
Who may be angry
In whom is refuge taken?

What surprises or confuses you?

- 1 *Who is talking?*
- 7 *How can the King become the God's Son?*

2) The Context

a) Immediate

What are the circumstances that have prompted this poem?

The instalment of the King (7-9) in Jerusalem (6)

Who was this poem written to/addressed for?

It was addressed to the 'kings of the earth'.

b) General Bible

Are there other parts of the Bible with common themes?

- 1 *Rebellion against God's constraints (Genesis 3:1)*
- 2 *God's chosen authorities (Romans 13:1 ff)*
Cords of kindness (Hosea 11:4); easy yoke (Matthew 11:30)
Rulers rejecting / crucifying Jesus (1 Corinthians 2:8)
Rebellion against the King (Luke 19:14)
- 6 *King Jesus 'installed' (John 19:18,19)*
- 7 *Jesus, the only begotten son (John 1:14)*

- Little flock given the keys of the kingdom (Luke 12:32)*
Linked with resurrection of Jesus (Acts 13:33; Romans 1:4)
 8 *Ask and it shall be given. (Luke 11:9)*
Nations and ends of the earth (Matthew 28:18,19; Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8)
 9 *The Gospel breaks down strongholds. (2 Corinthians 10:4)*
 12 *To honour the Son is to honour the Father (John 5:23)*
The Work of God to believe in the Son (John 6:29)

LEARN

- 1) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?
 1 *The nations plotting were plotting to break the chains (vassal states?)*
 2 *The Lords' anointed was the king – David? (2 Samuel 5:6)*
 3 *'Chains' were treaties forced to sign with David?*
 4 *He laughs scornfully at the futility of resisting him.*
 7 *'I' is the King – who the Lord spoke to.*
Today is the capture of Zion / the instalment of his king there.
Asking is praying. If you ask and receive you acknowledge the benefactor.
 12 *'The son' is the King.*
The Lord may be angry if his son is not kissed.
Refuge is taken in the Father and the Son.

What emotion(s) are expressed in this poem? Which is the main one?
Disdain (1); amusement (4) confidence (9) earnestness (10)

- 3) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?
David is the one writing the poem (sometimes he speaks of himself in the third person).
- 4) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.
The King comments on the resistance of the nations around to him.
He acknowledges the authority and appointment of God.
He reports on God's covenant to him.
He warns the nations to submit to Him / the Lord.

LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

From the highest to the lowest – be joyful and fearful of the Lord

2) Which verse best sums up the passage's message?

Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling

3) How do you think it does this?

God is in total control. All the earth should therefore fear Him and rejoice.

LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) In general?

1 God has a sense of humour

6 God authorises who he wants and where he wants them

8 God wants his people to ask for what he has promised

11 God is causes fear and joy in His people

12 God is angry when his Son is rejected

b) His grace

10 He warns those who rebel

c) Jesus / His salvation

2 Jesus is the anointed one.

6 J - The king installed in Zion.)

7 J - The Son of the Father.

8 J - The one to whom all authority is given.

12 J - The one who the Father wants honoured.

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

2) What should I do

1 Note - Resistance to God's authority is futile.

2 Note - to fight against the Lords chosen one is to fight against God.

10 *Accept the warnings of God.*

11 *Note - joy and fear unite in the presence of God.*

Serve the Lord with fear and trembling

12 *Kiss the son / submit to the King*

Go to Him for refuge

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

Study 6

Psalm 37

The Lord is worthy of our patient trust

Background information

This psalm of David is an acrostic poem, i.e. each stanza begins with successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet. The NIV uses spacing to show the progression. (You can see all 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet at Psalm 119, where each group of 8 verses begins with the same letter.)

Psalm 37 uses paradoxes to show the blessing of trust in God.

Word List

1 *do not fret* literally, do not get heated,
37 *future* or posterity

Bible connections

2	<i>cf Hezekiah's prayer</i>	2 Kings 19:26
3-5	<i>God's trustworthiness</i>	Psalm 55:22
9	<i>reward for obedience</i>	Leviticus 26:1-13
10-22	<i>cf Revelation 17:16-17</i>	
11	<i>Meek will inherit the land</i>	Numbers 14:24, Matthew 5:5
16	<i>compare true wealth/poverty</i>	Proverbs 28:6
31	<i>God's law in our hearts</i>	Jeremiah 31:33

Also, there are many parallels with the book of Job

LOOK

1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

- 1 *What are the wrong doers doing?*
- 3 *What is 'safe pasture'?*
- 4 *What are the 'desires of your heart'?*
- 6 *When & How will your righteousness shine?*
- 10 *When will the wicked be no more?*
- 13 *When is the day of the wicked coming?*
- 24 *How will he stumble?*

What surprises or confuses you?

It promises that children of righteous will never beg for bread?(25)

2) The Context

a) Immediate

What are the circumstances that have prompted this poem?

(from the title or from 'reading between the lines')

The righteous who are suffering at the hands of the wicked

Who was this poem written to/addressed for?

Righteous people who were suffering at the hands of the wicked

b) General Bible

Are there other parts of the Bible with common themes?

- 1 *Do not be anxious. (Matthew 6:22ff)*
- 3 *Trust in the Lord. (Proverbs 3:5,6)*
- 7 *Be still before the Lord. (Exodus 14:14; Ps 46:10)*
- 9,11,22,29,34 *Inherit the land (Joshua 1:6)*
- 10 *The wicked are no more. (Revelation 20:15)*
- 27 *Turn from evil and do good. (1 Peter 3:11)*
- 28 *The wicked will be cut off. (Proverbs 2:2)*
- 33 *Brought to trial (Luke 12:11)*
- 34 *Humble yourself before the Lord and he will lift you up (James 4:10)*

LEARN

1) What type of literature is this?

Poetry

2) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?

1 Evil men are opposing the will of God.

3 Safe pasture is living within God's will.

4 The 'desires of your heart' are the things that delight the Lord.

6 At the end of time when God judges all the earth, righteousness shines.

10 The wicked will be no more when the Lord judges the earth.

13 The day of the wicked comes at the end of time.

24 The righteous man 'stumbles' when confronted by sin but will not fall as Jesus deals with the consequences.

What emotion(s) are expressed in this poem? Which is the main one?

Patience (1,7); confidence

3) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

Bread of Heaven (c.f. John 4:34; 6:33)

4) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

Trust in the Lord and don't be troubled by evil; He ultimately will prevail (1-9)

In the end, the wicked and their schemes come to nothing but those who trust in the Lord will persevere and triumph.

LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

When confronted by evil, remain true to the Lord; He will prevail.

2) Which verse best sums up the passage's message?

Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for Him; do not fret when men succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes. (7)

3) How do you think it does this?

Triumph over sin comes through trusting God.

LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) In general?

3-9 *The Lord is dependable. (3-9)*

7 *The Lord acts in His time*

9,13 *The Lord will triumph. (9,13)*

17 *The Lord upholds the righteous. (17)*

18 *The Lord ignores and misses nothing if His people. (18)*

23f *The Lord sustains the faithful. (23,24)*

28 *The Lord will not forsake His faithful ones. (28)*

31 *The Law of the Lord in your heart prevents you from slipping. (31)*

34 *The Lord exalts those who trust him to inherit the land. (34)*

b) His grace

Trust (3) delight (4) commit (5) be still (7) and He will....!

c) Jesus / His salvation

39 *Salvation of the righteous comes from the Lord (39)*

40 *The Lord helps / delivers/ saves them because they take refuge in Him (40)*

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

2) What should I do?

1 *Evil withers away.*

4 *Delight in the Lord (It PRODUCES the right desires which are inevitably fulfilled.)*

5 *Righteousness will be vindicated at the last day.*

7 *Don't fret; wait on the Lord.*

8 *Anger and wrath lead (inevitably) to evil.*

10 *Evil is transient; Righteousness is for ever.*

12 *No scheme of evil ever prevails against God.*

14 *Evil plans always ultimately backfire.*

18-20 *Righteousness prevails; evil vanishes.*

23 - 29 *The Lord sustains his own.*

32 *The Lord will not allow his children to be defeated.*

34 *Trust the Lord to exalt you and to cut off the wicked.*

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

Study 7

Psalm 110

God is in complete charge

Background information

This Psalm is quoted in the New Testament more than any other. It is directly prophetic of the Messiah and him alone. Jesus himself uses it (Matthew 22:41-45, Mark 12:35-37, Luke 20:41-44)

Word List

- | | | |
|---|--------------------|---|
| 2 | <i>Zion</i> | another name for Jerusalem |
| 4 | <i>Melchizedek</i> | King of Salem (an early name for Jerusalem) and priest of 'God Most High' |

Bible connections

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | <i>Jesus uses this verse in conversation with Pharisees: see refs above</i>
<i>Peter quotes it in his Pentecost sermon</i> | Acts 2:34
<i>Quoted to show Jesus is greater than angels</i> |
| 3 | <i>troops will be willing...</i>
<i>freshness of youth</i> | cf Deborah's Song Judges 5:2; Rom 12:1
cf Isaiah 40:28-31 |
| 4 | <i>Melchizedek, who blessed Abraham</i>
<i>applied to Jesus</i> | Genesis 14:18-20;
Hebrews 5:5-6,10; 6:19 - 7:28 |
| 5 | God's wrath | Psalm 2:5; Romans 2:5;
Revelation 6:16-17, 11:18 |
| 7 | <i>drink from brook...</i> | ? allusion to Gideon and his 300 Judges 8:4 |

LOOK

1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

- 1 Who is 'my Lord'?
- What does sit at right hand mean?
- Why a footstool?
- 2 Why a sceptre
- 4 Why did the Lord have to swear?
- 5 When will be 'the day of his wrath'?

What surprises or confuses you?

Why is it so triumphant and blood thirsty?

2) The Context

a) Immediate

What are the circumstances that have prompted this poem?

(from the title or from 'reading between the lines')

He is embattled. His enemies are not subdued. He may be being tempted to doubt God commitment to him

Who was this poem written to/addressed for?

It was written by David, for himself(?)

b) General Bible

Are there other parts of the Bible with common themes?

- 1 *Jesus at the right hand of the Father (Colossians 3:1)*
- Seated with Jesus (Ephesians 2:6)*
- A table in the presence of your enemies (Psalms 23:5)*
- The battle belong to the Lord (1 Samuel 17:45-47; 2 Chronicles 20:15)*
- God give us the victory through Jesus (1 Corinthians 15:57)*
- 2 *King extending sceptre to Esther (Esther 5:2)*
- 3 *Willing for service (Judges 5:2)*
- 4 *The Lord swears by himself (Hebrews 6:13)*
- The Lord doesn't change his mind (Numbers 23:19; Hebrews 7:21)*
- A royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:9)*

- Kings not Levitical priests 2 Chronicles 26:16-21)*
- 5 *Judging mankind (Revelation 20:11)*
- 6 *All rulers and authorities (Ephesians 2:2; 6:12)*
- 7 *Lifting his head (Psalm 3:3)*

LEARN

- 1) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?
- 1 *David is 'my Lord' – he is speaking to himself.*
Sitting at right hand means power and glory.
A footstool implies total domination.
- 2 *Extending the sceptre implies acceptance to those coming in peace.*
- 4 *The Lord swore to demonstrate his absolute commitment to His Word.*
- 5 *'The day of his wrath' will be the day of judgement.*

What emotion(s) are expressed in this poem? Which is the main one?

Confidence, anticipation, aggression

- 3) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?
- The triumph of good over evil will be brutal*
- 4) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.
- God said to me - Watch me bring your enemies under your control.*
Through the King and His subjects, He will bring peace.
The King will always enjoy God's gracious fellowship.
The King will judge and crush the rebellious, swiftly.

LISTEN

- 1) What is the lesson or the main point?
- God is committed to graciously give us his victory over all our enemies.*
- 2) Which verse best sums up the passage's message?
- The Lord says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet." (1)*

3) How do you think it does this?

God invites and privileges us to join him and watch him completely subdue our enemies so that we can rest our feet on them

LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) In general?

Iff God has appointed, authorised and empowered Jesus over all his enemies

b) His grace

4 *God gives us access to Himself.*

c) Jesus / His salvation

Iff Speaks of Jesus (Matthew 22:41-45; Mark 12:35-37; Luke 20:41-44)

Every knee bow (Philippians 2:9)

All authority retrieved (1 Corinthians 15:24)

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

2) What should I do?

1 Be confident in the victory the Lord has given Jesus over all evil

2 Recognise the Lord's authority.

3 Be confident in the 'troops' His troops.

4 Know that He is always working on your behalf.

5f Thank be to God for His victory.

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

The Lord is compassionate, always.

Background information

This Psalm is a prayer of Moses the man of God. There are many echoes of Moses' words in Deuteronomy, especially chapters 32-33.

It is suggested by some that it might have been written in the context of Numbers 21:4-7

The Psalm tells us that man's mortality and his sin are surrounded on every side by the unchanging grace of God. The thoughts about man's mortality are also seen in the book of Job.

Word List

<i>Moses</i>	The leader who was used by God to lead the Jews out of Egypt and across the desert, up to the Promised Land
9,11 <i>wrath</i>	God's righteous anger

Bible connections

1 <i>God is our security</i>	Ecclesiastes 1:27; Psalm 9:9; 84:1; 91:9
2 <i>everlasting God</i>	Isaiah 9:6, 57:15; Gen 21:33; Ps 102:24-27
3-5 <i>mortal man</i>	Genesis 3:19f; Job 34:14-15; 1 Cor 15:47; Isaiah 40:6-8; James 1:10-11
4 <i>God's timing</i>	Job 10:5; 2 Peter 3:8
7-12 <i>may be a reference to the years wandering in the wilderness</i>	
7 <i>no sin is hidden from God</i>	Hebrews 4:13; Ephesians 5:12-13
11 <i>God's fearful wrath</i>	Psalm 7:11; 76:7
13 <i>God's compassion</i>	Exodus 34:6; Deuteronomy 13:17, 32:36; Nehemiah 9:17-19; Psalm 51:1, 86:15, 103:8,13; Isaiah 54:7-10; Lamentations 3:22; Joel 2:3; Luke 13:34; Romans 9:15; 2 Cor 1:3

LOOK

1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

- 1 *Who is 'our'?*
What does it mean to have God as a dwelling place?
- 7 *Why is God angry with them?*
- 10 *Do they have no pleasure?*
- 12 *What does it mean to 'number our days'?*
- 14 *Why in the morning?*
- 15 *How has God afflicted them?*
- 17 *How might God 'establish the work of their hands'?*

What surprises or confuses you?

The pessimism of the writer

2) The Context

a) Immediate

What are the circumstances that have prompted this poem?

(from the title or from 'reading between the lines').

*The Psalmist / God's people are under the righteous anger / judgement of God.
Possible a specific incident e.g. (Numbers 21:4-7)*

Who was this poem written to/addressed for?

It was a prayer to God.

b) General Bible

Are there other parts of the Bible with common themes?

- 1 *Dwelling place of God among his people if obedient (Leviticus 26:3, 11)*
Dwelling of people in God (Psalm 91:2; Deuteronomy 33:27)
Cf (John 14:20,23; 14:1)
- 3 *Formed from the dust (Genesis 2:7)*
Subject to death (Genesis 3:19; Ecclesiastes 12:7)
- 5 *Like grass (1 Peter 1:24)*
- 10 *Trouble and sorrow (Ecclesiastes 1:18; 12:1)*
- 11 *Disasters don't normally result in reverent fear (Rev 9:20)*

- 12 *A heart of wisdom is discerning (Prov 14:33)*
- 13 *Jesus had compassion (Matt 9:36; 14:14; 15:32; 20:34)*
- 17 *Success in work (Gen 39:3)*

LEARN

- 1) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?
 - 1 *'Our' is the Israelites who Moses was leading.*
Dwelling place speaks of identity and safety.
 - 7 *God is angry with them because of their iniquity.*
 - 10 *Pleasure is a part of life but taken as a whole, ending in death, there is trouble and sorrow.*
 - 12 *'Number our days' means to count them as a gift of God.*
 - 14 *'In the morning' means at the start of the day – the 'right marker' from which the rest take their line.*
 - 15 *God is in absolute control of all our days and even our afflictions are given by Him.*
 - 17 *God might 'establish the work of their hands' if His favour rest on them – they act according to His will*

What emotion(s) are expressed in this poem? Which is the main one?

Awe, resignation, fear, contrition, hope

- 3) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

He is under judgement / in a dark place. Light is not evident.

- 4) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

The everlasting God has been the privileged home of Israel. (1,2)

He has given man a very brief life span. (3-6)

Death is the result of the wrath of God against sin. (7-12)

On the basis of his compassion and love we may seek joy, a Godly heritage, success in our endeavours. (12-17)

LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

Mankind needs compassion to save us from the righteous anger of God against his sin.

2) Which verse best sums up the passage's message? **v 13**

Relent, O Lord! How long will it be? Have compassion on your servants.

3) How do you think it does this?

This verse is a hinge between the situation of man under God's judgment and his need for God's compassion and mercy.

LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) In general?

2 *God was before He created*

5 *God sweeps men away in the sleep of death.*

7f *God is angry with man / his sin*

11 *God's wrath should be feared*

13 *God's compassionate may be appealed to.*

17 *God's favour may rest upon us*

b) His grace

13 *God's compassion is the benefit of His servants.*

c) Jesus / His salvation

1 *Jesus / His church is our dwelling place*

7ff *The Spirit of Jesus convicts us of sin, righteousness and judgement (John 16: 8)*

Jesus suffered the wrath of God against sin (2Cor 5:21; Matt.27:45,46)

14 *God's love is shown in Jesus (1 John 4:10)*

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

2) What shall I do?

3 *Man (without God) is insignificant*

10 *Life (apart from God) is brief and empty*

12 *A perspective of our mortality is needed to make us wise*

13 *Know that you are the beneficiary of God's compassion and mercy*

14 *Knowing God's love is the source of joy*

16 *God's works are for sharing with our children*

17 *God's favour brings success on our endeavours*

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

Sharing the Word

Use

'Hearing the Word' can be used alone, with one other person, or in a group

Preparing for a group

Time put in alone beforehand will greatly benefit time spent together.

Work through the stages - LOOK, LEARN, LISTEN, LIVE.

Write down your own questions and answers *

A format

If you have 45 mins together, you might like to try dividing it up like this.

(If longer or in a large group, you can extend the times)

- 1) Drink, bite to eat, chat (10 mins)
- 2) A Bible reading (2 mins)
- 3) A Bible study
 - a. Any questions? (Whether answer is known or not!) (2 mins)
(Don't answer any, till all questions noted!)
 - b. Any relevant cross references? (2 mins)
 - c. Discussion of answers (13 mins)
 - d. Conclusion (10 mins)
 - i. A Key verse and Main Point?
 - ii. What does it show about God / Jesus?
 - iii. What should I do?
- 4) Sharing (Trials and joys – family, work, self) (5 mins)
- 5) Prayer (1 min)

Remember!

As we gather round God's Word

- a) Listen to the views of others
- b) Make room for the novice. They can join in too when you start by listing 'Any questions'
- c) Don't let the 'knowledgeable' dominate. Encourage everyone to think for themselves.
- d) Try to include others' especially, 'seekers' in your sharing together.

* The **process** is explained and practised in a four-hour course, suitable for all, called '**An Introduction to 'Hearing the Word'**'. Email: office@tpc.org

“I can read the Bible for myself!”

To show that the Bible is accessible to all,
the Rev Nigel Barge, minister of Torrance Parish Church,
has devised a tool called ‘Hearing the Word’.
The Manual explains the basic principles of Bible reading,
teaches them by means of an interactive course,
and practices them on a single passage, Mark 10:35-45,
Participants follow in a Workbook: *Hearing the Word - Introduction*,
which includes the next six passages in Mark,
so they may follow on for themselves.

As the principles apply equally to all, the course will both
instruct the novice and refresh the ‘hardened’ Bible student!