

The Prayers of the People

Reflections on the Psalms

“In the Psalms, the human soul extends itself beyond its confining, sheltering, impermanent house of clay. It strives for contact with the Ultimate Source of all life. It gropes for an experience of the divine Presence. The biblical psalms are essentially a record of the human quest for God.”

Nahum Sarna, *On the Book of Psalms*

Genres & Functions

- Genres: Hymns, Praise/Thanksgiving, Wisdom, Royal/Messianic, Supplication, Historical, Lament/Complaint, Liturgical
- Functions
 - Devotional
 - Formational
 - Liturgical

1 The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it; **2** for he has founded it on the seas, and established it on the rivers. **3** Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in his holy place? **4** Those who have clean hands and pure hearts, who do not lift up their souls to what is false, and do not swear deceitfully. **5** They will receive blessing from the Lord, and vindication from the God of their salvation. **6** Such is the company of those who seek him, who seek the face of the God of Jacob. (Selah) **7** Lift up your heads, O gates! and be lifted up, O ancient doors! that the King of glory may come in. **8** Who is the King of glory? The Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord, mighty in battle. **9** Lift up your heads, O gates! and be lifted up, O ancient doors! that the King of glory may come in. **10** Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory. (Selah)

Psalm 24

Psalm 23

1 The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. **2** He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; **3** he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name's sake. **4** Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff— they comfort me **5** You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. **6** Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long.

Psalm 136

- 1 O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever.
- 2 O give thanks to the God of gods, for his steadfast love endures forever.
- 3 O give thanks to the Lord of lords, for his steadfast love endures forever;
- 4 who alone does great wonders, for his steadfast love endures forever;
- 5 who by understanding made the heavens, for his steadfast love endures forever;
- 6 who spread out the earth on the waters, for his steadfast love endures forever;
- 7 who made the great lights, for his steadfast love endures forever;
- 8 the sun to rule over the day, for his steadfast love endures forever;
- 9 the moon and stars to rule over the night, for his steadfast love endures forever;

Psalm 136

10 who struck Egypt through their firstborn, for his steadfast love endures forever;

11 and brought Israel out from among them, for his steadfast love endures forever;

12 with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, for his steadfast love endures forever;

13 who divided the Red Sea in two, for his steadfast love endures forever;

14 and made Israel pass through the midst of it, for his steadfast love endures forever;

15 but overthrew Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea, for his steadfast love endures forever;

16 who led his people through the wilderness, for his steadfast love endures forever;

17 who struck down great kings, for his steadfast love endures forever;

18 and killed famous kings, for his steadfast love endures forever;

19 Sihon, king of the Amorites, for his steadfast love endures forever;

20 and Og, king of Bashan, for his steadfast love endures forever;

21 and gave their land as a heritage, for his steadfast love endures forever;

22 a heritage to his servant Israel, for his steadfast love endures forever.

Psalm 136

23 It is he who remembered us in our low estate, for his steadfast love endures forever;

24 and rescued us from our foes, for his steadfast love endures forever;

25 who gives food to all flesh, for his steadfast love endures forever.

26 O give thanks to the God of heaven, for his steadfast love endures forever.