

LAMENT IN THE PSALMS

Why are so many of the psalms, especially those of David, full of the complaints and laments of God's people? Psalms of lament actually form the largest number of psalms. Why are not all of the songs focused on praising God for his great redemption? First of all, the psalms, like the rest of Scripture, express many of the realities of life, and those realities include pain and lament. Like the books of Job and Ecclesiastes, the book of Psalms shows God's people struggling, not only with the black-and-white issues of life, but also with the gray. These psalms show God's people doing right yet still suffering at the hands of powerful but lawless people. That is the context for all the encouragement given to believers to wait through the difficult times for God's deliverance. The idea is not to ignore evil; rather, it means that believers should do all they can and then wait for God to act.

Second, all psalms that begin by lamenting over the pain and injustice of life always end their lament with praise to God. So why does God take his people through all the pain? Because God wants his people to watch the psalmists time after time show trust during the trials of life. It is one thing to praise God when the pain has gone. But it is more profound to praise him when the pain is still present.

An individual's lament: Psalms 6; 13; 22; 102; 142

A national lament: Psalms 74; 79; 80

SPECIAL VARIATIONS ON LAMENT AND PRAISE

Alphabetical psalms: Psalms 9; 25; 34; 37; 111; 112; 119; 145

Creation psalms: Psalms 8; 33; 104; 148

Exodus psalms: Psalms 44; 66; 68; 74; 77; 78; 80; 81; 95; 105; 106; 114; 135; 136

Imprecatory psalms: Psalms 7; 35; 58; 59; 69; 83; 109; 137; 139

Penitential psalms: Psalms 6; 32; 38; 51; 102; 130; 143

Pilgrim psalms: Psalms 120-134

Royal psalms: Psalms 47; 93; 96-99

Didactic psalms: Psalms 14; 15; 24; 50; 52; 53; 75; 78; 81; 95; 105

Torah psalms: Psalms 19; 119

Messianic psalms: Psalms 2; 8; 16; 22; 41; 45; 69; 72; 89; 102; 109-110; 118; 132

¹ Praise the LORD.

*Praise God in his sanctuary;
praise him in his mighty heavens.*

² Praise him for his acts of power;
praise him for his surpassing greatness.

³ Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet,
praise him with the harp and lyre,

⁴ praise him with tambourine and dancing,
praise him with the strings and flute,

⁵ praise him with the clash of cymbals,
praise him with resounding cymbals.

⁶ Let everything that has breath praise the LORD.

Praise the LORD. Psalm 150