

Lesson 16

The Penitential Psalms or Songs of the Sinner



Introduction



- Psalms of penitence – *Psalms 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143*
- “It is difficult to totally separate physical illness, spiritual anguish, and sin...we will look at psalms where the writer clearly understands sin to be his major issue and the cause of his suffering.” (pg. 64)
 - *Psalms 6:2, 6; 32:3-4; 38:3-5, 7-8, 11*
 - *Cf. James 5:14-16; 1 Corinthians 11:30; Hebrews 12:5-6, 11*
- Admitting guilt through confession, and forgiveness from God are hallmarks of these Psalms.



Value to Today's Reader



“Observable in the penitential psalms is the great difference between biblical model and modern therapies for misbehavior and its consequences.” (pg. 64)

- **Bible** – the problem is sin and the consequence of spiritual death. (*cf. Isaiah 59:1-2; Romans 6:23*)
- **Psychology** – the problem is the feeling and effects of guilt.
 - Can the feeling of guilt be removed, and the sin remain? (*cf. Isaiah 3:8-9; Jeremiah 6:14-15; 1 Timothy 4:1-3*)



Psalm 51: David's Psalm of Penitence



I. A Prayer for Forgiveness and Restoration (vv. 1-12)

- A. Acknowledgment of Sin, and Appeal to God for Forgiveness (vv. 1-4)
- B. Acknowledgment of Dependence on God, and Appeal to Him for Restoration (vv. 5-12)

II. A Promise of Faithfulness (vv. 13-17)

- A. A Promise to Testify of God's Grace (vv. 13-15)
- B. Acknowledgment of God's True Desire (vv. 16-17)

III. A Prayer and Promise Extending Beyond Self (vv. 18-19)





Psalm 32: David's Expression of Joy in Forgiveness



I. Rejoicing After Penitence (vv. 1-4)

A. The Blessing of Forgiveness (vv. 1-2)

B. The Weight of Sin (vv. 3-4)

II. Confession and its Result (vv. 5-7)

A. Confession (v. 5)

B. Encouragement to Others, and Resultant Protection (vv. 6-7)

III. The Psalmist's Instruction to Others (vv. 8-11)

A. Do Not Be Stubborn Like an Animal (vv. 8-9)


B. Trust in the Lord and Find Joy (vv. 10-11)





Psalm 130: Awaiting the Lord's Redemption



- I. The Psalmist's Plea (vv. 1-2)
 - II. Assertion that Forgiveness is a Gift of God (vv. 3-4)
 - III. Description of how the psalmist “waits” on the Lord for redemption (vv. 5-6)
 - IV. Declaration that Israel's hope of mercy and redemption is in the Lord (vv. 7-8)
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National or Congregational Psalms of Penitence



Oh, do not remember former iniquities against us! Let Your tender mercies come speedily to meet us, For we have been brought very low. Help us, O God of our salvation, For the glory of Your name; And deliver us, and provide atonement for our sins, For Your name's sake! Why should the nations say, "Where is their God?" Let there be known among the nations in our sight The avenging of the blood of Your servants which has been shed.

Psalm 79:8-10