

Week Five – Notes on Book V and the Message of the Book of Psalms

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The Structure of Book V

The Function of Psalm 107

Notes from the Past on Psalm 119 (From Keil & Delitzsch's Commentary)

The whole Psalm is a prayer for steadfastness in the midst of an ungodly, degenerate race, and in the midst of great trouble, which is heightened by the pain he feels at the prevailing apostasy, and a prayer for ultimate deliverance which rises in group Kaph to an urgent how long! If this sharply-defined physiognomy of the Psalm is recognized, then the internal progression will not fail to be discerned.

After the poet has praised fidelity to the word of God (Aleph), and described it as the virtue of all virtues which is of service to the young man and to which he devotes himself (Beth), he prays, in the midst of the scoffing and persecuting persons that surround him, for the grace of enlightenment (Gimel), of strengthening (Daleth), of preservation (He), of suitable and joyful confession (Vav); God's word is all his thought and pursuit (Zajin), he cleaves to those who fear God (Heth), and recognizes the salutary element of His humbling (Teth), but is in need of comfort (Jod) and sighs: how long! (Kaph). Without the eternal, sure, mighty word of God he would despair (Lamed); this is his wisdom in difficult circumstances (Mem); he has sworn fidelity to it, and maintains his fidelity as being one who is persecuted (Nun), and abhors and despises the apostates (Samech). He is oppressed, but God will not suffer him to be crushed (Ajin); He will not suffer the doings of the ungodly, which wring from him floods of tears, to prevail over him (Phe) - over him, the small (still youthful) and despised one whom zeal concerning the prevailing godlessness is consuming away (Tsade). Oh that God would hear his crying by day and by night (Koph), would revive him speedily with His helpful pity (Resh) - him, viz., who being persecuted by princes clings fast to Him (Shin), and would seek him the isolated and so sorely imperiled sheep! (Tav). This outline does not exhaust the fundamental thoughts of the separate [sections], and they might surely be still more aptly reproduced, but this is sufficient to show that the Psalm is not wanting in coherence and progressive movement, and that it is not an ideal situation and mood, but a situation and mood based upon public relationships, from which this manifold celebration of the divine word, as a fruit of its teaching, has sprung.

The Songs of Ascent (120-134)

How the Psalms Finish (146-150)

The Message of the Book