

# Grace Notes

## Selah

05.20.09



***“I will sing to the Lord, for He has been good to me.” (Psalm 13:6)***

Teaching the Sunday night discipleship classes has been an outright joy. This past Sunday we wrapped up *“The Bible Jesus Read: An Adventure Through the Old Testament”* with an up-close look at what some scholars call *“the faith of Israel set to music:”* the Psalms.

The latest psalm was written almost 2500 years ago. The earliest psalm was probably written about 3500 years ago. (That’s like someone in A.D. 5500 reading something written today!)

Interestingly, the first actual translation of the Bible into English was the work of Aldhelm (d. 709), and the portion of Scripture translated was the book of Psalms. Historian, Paul Johnson, describes the Psalms as one of the great unifiers of Christian history: Benedictines and Puritans, Luther and Xavier, Wesley and Newman and Calvin all loved and recited the Psalms. In addition, the New Testament authors quote no other book more frequently than the Psalms.

In my Bible, more pages are worn and falling out in the book of Psalms than anywhere else. I guess it’s because the Psalms, which read like “spiritual journals,” is “the stuff of life.” Author, Philip Yancey, writes: Raw with emotion, “the 150 psalms are as difficult, disordered, and messy as life itself – a fact that can bring unexpected comfort. Doubt, paranoia, giddiness, meanness, delight, hatred, joy, praise, vengefulness, betrayal – you can find it all in the Psalms. (38:10 sounds a lot like a panic-attack: *“My heart pounds, my strength fails me; even the light has gone from my eyes.”*) More than any other book in the Bible, Psalms reveals what a heartfelt, soul-starved, single-minded relationship with God looks like—containing the anguished journals of people who want to believe in a loving, gracious, faithful God while the world keeps falling apart around them.” The very verse quoted at the top (13:6) actually closes a Psalm where David is at the end of his rope wondering if God has forgotten about him.

Indeed, the Psalms are a part of the Bible Jesus read, knew well, and quoted. When Satan quoted Psalm 91 to Jesus in Matthew 4, Jesus had no problem recognizing that the enemy had misused it by jerking the passage out of context. And when Jesus, from the cross, cried out, *“My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?”* He was quoting Psalm 22:1.

Throughout the Psalms, intermittently, you’ll find the word “selah,” which most scholars agree to be an ancient music term meaning “pause and give thought to what you’ve just read.” So, find a minute to “selah” - and pause & consider the power of God’s Word in the Psalms.



***Soli Deo Gloria, Nick***