

9. In the Psalms: Part 2 (2Q 2025 Allusions, Images, Symbols)

Biblical material: Psalm 46, Jer. 4:23–26, Ps. 47:1–4, 1 Thess. 4:13–17, Psalm 75, Rev. 14:6–12, Psalm 67:3, 4.

Quotes

- People have always approached the Book of Psalms with a touch of curiosity. They not only want to know what they say, but also why we have the Book of Psalms, and what we are to learn from it. I'm sure there is no one person who can give you the complete answer to that question. In the Book of Psalms, we have a virtual kaleidoscope of presentations. There are a thousand or more interesting, fascinating things; gems in the great stones of history, that God would use to brightly illuminate our minds about many things... We shall think together about the last days, as foretold in the Psalms. *Dave Breese*
- Today's headlines are ripped right out of the verses in Psalm 83. *Joel C. Rosenberg*
- Theological thinking should not be abandoned to the masters of elusiveness. *Rik Torfs*.
- Theologians always try to turn the Bible into a book without common sense. *Georg C. Lichtenberg*
- Before accepting any belief one ought first to follow reason as a guide, for credulity without enquiring is a sure way to deceive oneself. *Celsus*
- Don't wait for the last judgment –it takes place every day. *Albert Camus*

Questions

Why is it important to see the eventual end portrayed in Psalms without making improbable links to current events? In what way do the Psalms describe prophetic events, and in what way do they not? While the great controversy is not spelled out in the Psalms, what evidence do they show as to its existence and relevance? How do we relate to this?

Bible summary

Psalm 46 praises the supremacy of God. Jeremiah 4:23–26 speaks of the destruction caused by God. Psalm 47:1–4 claims God as the one who subdues Israel's enemies and who gave them their land. 1 Thessalonians 4:13–17 describes Jesus' coming and how we will rise to meet him. Psalm 75 speaks of God as a fair judge in the end-time judgment. Revelation 14:6–12 are the three angels' messages. Psalm 67:3, 4 praises God's salvation and judgment.

Comment

This study looks at the subject of judgment in the Psalms, particular how God will resolve everything in the end. While not so specific as the New Testament (for example 1 Thessalonians 4), there is clearly the expectation of and the desire for God to end this unfair evil world.

There are a lot of speculative ideas out there—YouTube videos and books, stating that Psalms give a direct commentary on what is happening in the Middle East right now. Psalm 83 is particularly referenced—the coalition of ancient enemies attacking Israel, and then linking these old names to current participants such as Hamas and Hezbollah.

Yet this is not where we're going. These populist and misguided attempts that seek to interpret prophecy do great damage. We as a faith community are not exempt from making some mistaken claims—such as Turkey as the “king of the north” and the invention of airplanes as a sign of the end. We have also said that the generation that saw “the signs” would live to see Jesus come. He didn't.

So a word of caution is essential here. We need to look at the big picture rather than whether a verse in a Psalm talks about rockets. The real issue is the great controversy that continues, of which warfare and violence is an integral part. Satan knows that by creating conflict he can sow deceptive ideas about God and malign his character. So we need to go back to the Psalms and gain the

confidence they give that in the end the controversy will be resolved, not by might or power, but by God's spirit who works to bring it to a conclusion.

What is God really like? That's been the question for a long, long time! Before our world was created the argument raged in the heavens—God is unjust, hostile, cruel. Lucifer, the great Deceiver, accused God and set himself up as the great “Liberator” from the divine tyrant.

The Psalms gives us a picture of God that though influenced by human thinking gives us hope for the future. The controversy could not be settled by charge and counter-charge like two adversaries in a battle of words. The only way God could clearly show what he was really like was through his actions. That's what the Bible is all about. It demonstrates the way God thinks, acts and behaves in dealing with those who are rebelling against him. The Bible is the proof of God's true character, ultimately demonstrated in the record of how he came and lived with us and died at our hands—Jesus, the Son of God, the Crucified.

Knowing what God is truly like and wanting to trust this wonderful Person is the key to salvation. All other aspects of what Adventists believe have their origin in this central truth: “Eternal life is this: to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you sent.” John 17:3. We know that the Devil has been ‘a liar from the beginning’. We know that God's true character of love has been defamed: ‘an enemy has done this’. And we know that only as the real “Face of God” is shown to the world will the great controversy be settled. As the final decisions are made, as people choose whether to accept this wonderful God or to reject him, the last act in the drama will come to an end.

At the heart of what we want to say about God is this: God truly is good, kind, loving, open, honest, trustworthy... He is the total opposite of the uncaring, unjust ogre the Devil has made him out to be. God is not out to terrify us. On the contrary, our privilege is to call God “Friend.”

Ellen White Comments

The psalms of David pass through the whole range of experience, from the depths of conscious guilt and self-condemnation to the loftiest faith and the most exalted communing with God. His life record declares that sin can bring only shame and woe, but that God's love and mercy can reach to the deepest depths, that faith will lift up the repenting soul to share the adoption of the sons of God. Of all the assurances which His word contains, it is one of the strongest testimonies to the faithfulness, the justice, and the covenant mercy of God. {PP 754}

Here are the words of David, “It is time for Thee, Lord, to work: for they have made void thy law” (Psalm 119:126). David refers to the last days, the very time when we are to know and be sanctified by the truth. We must cling to the truth. We must not let go the truth for friend or foe. There is a time coming when there will be great tribulation, such as never was or ever will be. Men will come claiming to be Christ. And here is a class that say, “I am sinless, I am holy.” I have never heard one claim that who was not a sinner. They are not doers of the Word. {1SAT 18.2 }

You need not be lost in seeking your way to heaven. Jesus said to Thomas, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me.” Then look away from self to Jesus; for in Christ the character of the Father is revealed. Paul says, “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.” The character of God as revealed by Christ invites our faith and love; for we have a Father whose mercy and compassion fail not. At every step of our journey heavenward he will be with us to guide in every perplexity, to give us help in every temptation. Then be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, and render praise unto him who is the light and health of your countenance. { YI September 29, 1892 }