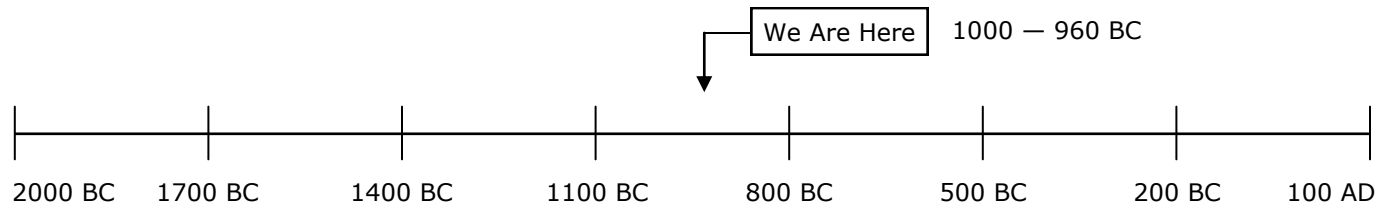


Intake to Outflow

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Week 19: May 7-13 — *Various Psalms*

36% Complete — 232 Days to Go



Helpful Resource

Overview of Bible History (p.37)

Making Sense of It All

- The Big Picture

Before proceeding, see the Preview of *Psalms* to understand the logistics of the book.

"The 150 pieces that make up the book of *Psalms* were composed independently; thus, each has integrity and meaning on its own. However, the *Psalms* were not randomly collected, rather they have been ordered and grouped in such a way that the whole carries meaning that further enhances the affirmations each makes on its own. Therefore, in the *Psalms*, one can look for meaning both in the individual psalm and in their relationship with each other. The present arrangement comes from the post-exilic period (Second Temple Era); the *Psalms* were compiled as five books, probably with the Pentateuch in mind (five books of Moses). Since the *Psalms* are hymns, they were meant to be sung; thus, we have a post-exilic Jewish song book" (Gordon Fee, Douglas Stuart).

"In all of the Old Testament, there is no more practical, instructive, beautiful, or popular book than the *Psalms*. Although the *Psalms* are largely composed of hymns, heartfelt worship, and personal testimony of praise and thanksgiving to the Lord, many of them provide far-reaching prophecy and are devotionally challenging" (Merrill Unger).

"If you were to be marooned on a desert island with only one book of the Bible, which one would you choose? I would choose the *Psalms*. Their range of subjects is so vast, their catalog of life's experiences so full, and their worship so exalted that I would be well-supplied with spiritual food and fuel for praise and prayer for a long time to come" (William McDonald).

"I may truly call this book an anatomy of the soul, for no one can feel a movement of the spirit which is not reflected in this mirror. All the sorrows, fears, doubts, hopes, pains, and stormy outbreaks by which the hearts of men are tossed are depicted here" (John Calvin).

"As you read the book of *Psalms*, you will hear believers crying out to God from the depths of despair, and you will hear them singing to him in the heights of celebration. But whether the psalmists are despairing or rejoicing, you will always hear them sharing honest feelings with their God. There are no shallow or superficial clichés in this book; and, because of the honesty expressed, people throughout history have come, again and again, to the book of *Psalms* for comfort during times of struggle and distress" (Tyndale Life Application Study Bible).

What are the *Psalms*? They are songs, no doubt; but more than that, at the very core, they are evidence of one man's personal relationship with God, they are reflections on what he had learned about the Lord, and they are the natural outflow from his time spent with Him.

Intake Must Precede Outflow: Scripture intake is essential to the Christian life; spending time with God in His Word is a foundational step in one's spiritual journey. All of us should strive to know the Lord in a more intimate way, and we do this by reading what He's said. You must get into the Scriptures, and the Scriptures must get into you; if not, then your outflow will be limited, shallow, and unhelpful.

Scripture Intake Must Lead to Outflow: Scripture intake is oftentimes meaningless unless it results in outflow. God did not intend for us to take in all that we could in our lifetime and never share it with someone else. Life is not about us; it's about Him and impacting others on His behalf. That can't happen unless there is outflow from our intake. To receive only and not to give is not to function the way God intended. To take and not to share is to fail in His divine purpose. God did not create us merely to consume but to produce or contribute in hopes of aiding others. What we know as strengths, God will use for another's weakness. What we have to supply, God will use for another's need. Even so, what we lack, God will supply through someone else, who hopefully has decided to share with us.

Outflow is physical evidence that God is getting through to us; it is putting feet to what God has taught. Just as each believer is a receiver of God's Word, each believer is a speaker of God's Word. You don't have to be a pastor; you can simply be a parent. But if God has spoken truth to you or ministered in some way to your soul, then you must pass that along to someone else, even if it's your kids. Like the book of *Psalms*, your outflow may be exactly what someone else needs; God can and will minister through you if you will let Him.

Psalm 23: A great example of outflow is *Psalm 23*. How many people over the ages have quoted this psalm? How many generations have been encouraged by its words? Perhaps no other passage in all the Bible has meant so much as *Psalm 23*. Now, just imagine if David would have never written it! God revealed Himself, His nature, His character, His care and love to one man, and that one man wrote down what he had learned; as a result, millions have gained more confidence in the provision and protection of our heavenly Shepherd.

- Prophetic Passages

1. **Betrayal of Judas** (*Ps. 41:9*): "The one who shared My food has turned against Me."
2. **Christ's Crucifixion** (*Ps. 22:16*): "They have pierced my hands and feet."
3. **People Gamble for Christ's Clothes** (*Ps. 22:18*): "They throw dice for my garments."
4. **Christ Ridiculed** (*Ps. 22:7,8*): "Is this the One who relies on God? Let Him save Him."
5. **Forsaken on the Cross** (*Ps. 22:1*): "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"
6. **Resurrection of Christ** (*16:10*): "God will not allow the Holy One to rot in the grave."

The Bottom Line

Our Scripture *intake* must lead to *outflow*; what God *shares* with us, we must *share* with others.

Questions to Consider

1. What are your thoughts about the *Psalms*? What do you appreciate most?
2. What are ways to practice the discipline of outflow? Whose outflow has blessed you?