

October 12 Su Reading A285 — Psa. 125, 128-130 — *Songs of Ascents* **Audio:** [Psa. 125, 128-130](#)

Waiting in Hope — Three of these four psalms may fit better in a future timeframe because they mention Mount Zion, or Jerusalem, which David conquered years later. They are timeless in another sense, however, and apply also to us today. Psalm 125 features God's surrounding protection for the upright who "*trust in the LORD*" (v. 1). Psalm 128 is about God's blessing on the one who "*fears the LORD, who walks in his ways*" (v. 1). Those blessings include enjoying the fruit of your labor, having a loving wife and children, and living long enough to enjoy your grandchildren. Psalm 129 remembers Israel's temporary oppression by enemies who "*have not prevailed*" (v. 2) because of God's intervention. Psalm 130 cries out for mercy and is grateful for God's forgiveness. We are to respectfully fear the Lord (v. 4), to wait for Him, and to hope while we wait for His answer (v. 5). Will you run into some serious difficulty today? Remember to pray for help, and then trustingly hope in your divine Source while you wait for Him to answer your prayer.

October 13 M Reading A286 — 2 Samuel 1 — Saul and Jonathan Die **Audio:** [2 Samuel 1 \(ESV\)](#)

How the Mighty Have Fallen — This book of 2 Samuel is mostly about the rise and reign of David. We see three men in this first chapter who featured very different character qualities. First was the hoping and lying Amalekite, who was selfishly seeking favor from the future king of Israel (v. 10). He lied by saying that he killed Saul, unknowingly putting his own life in jeopardy. Not understanding David's heart, he assumed that David was also selfish, being anxious to become king. The second man was David, who genuinely grieved not only over his close friend, Jonathan, but also for Saul, who had been his greatest human threat. Praising both Saul and Jonathan, three times in his lament David declared, "*How the mighty have fallen!*" (vv. 19, 25, 27). David had the characteristic of genuineness in his grief and praise. The third man was Jonathan, whom David described as being "*very pleasant ... [whose] love to me was extraordinary, surpassing the love of women*" (v. 26). This had nothing to do with sexual involvement but expressed Godlike love, which is unselfish and genuine. The Amalekite is remembered as being selfish, David as being genuine, and Jonathan as being loving. What will people remember about you after you are gone?

October 14 Tu Reading A287 — 2 Samuel 2 — David Begins as King **Audio:** [2 Samuel 2 \(ESV\)](#)

Inquiring of the Lord — I love what might be called the first step of David's kingdom: "*David inquired of the LORD...*" (v. 1). He sought God's direction regarding where he should go after his city of Ziklag was burned. God sent him to the important city of Hebron in southern Judah where he was anointed king over Judah (v. 4). David's second step was to thank Jabesh-gilead for respectfully burying Saul's body and to ask for God to bless them with His love and faithfulness (v. 6). Most of the story of this chapter, however, is devoted to senseless competition between army commanders Abner and Joab, each supporting a different king. Including the poolside competition, Joab lost 20 men compared to Abner's 360 soldiers. David knew nothing of these skirmishes that accomplished nothing good. The first part of the chapter showed godly action, while the second half was filled with the tragic consequences of actions fueled by selfishness. You will likely have to make a decision today that you are not sure about. Remember David and stop to inquire from the Lord.

Lights of Innocence — David stands out in the story of this chapter as being innocent in comparison with the powerful army commanders, Joab and Abner. Abner's power is seen in his control of Ish-bosheth, the son of Saul whom Abner made king over most of Israel. After Ish-bosheth challenged him regarding an apparent affair with Saul's concubine, Abner threatened to hand all of Israel over to David. The result was that *"Ish-bosheth could not answer Abner another word, because he feared him"* (v. 11). Abner seemed to be genuine in going to David to ask him to make a covenant with the rest of Israel and become king over all the tribes. Joab challenged Abner's sincerity, however, and ended up deceiving and killing him in revenge over the death of his brother. He may have also feared Abner's military leadership if all the tribes should reunite. Although David did not punish Joab, he asked God to *"repay the evildoer according to his wickedness!"* (v. 39). In the midst of the ungodly actions of Abner and Joab, David's innocence was stressed: *"But David did not know about it"* (v. 26); *"when David heard of it, he said, 'I and my kingdom are forever guiltless before the LORD for the blood of Abner'"* (v. 28); and *"So all the people and all Israel understood that day that it had not been the king's will to put to death Abner"* (v. 37). Hopefully, we also stand out as being innocent in the ungodly community that surrounds us. We are the lights of the world, standing out as examples in the crowd.

Unusually Righteous — Further evidence of Abner's strength and Ish-bosheth's weakness is shown in this chapter, in that when Israel's king heard that Abner was dead, *"his courage failed, and all Israel was dismayed."* (v. 1). Ish-bosheth was like Abner's puppet king. He didn't even have guards at his house to protect him while he took a nap. Jonathan's son, Mephibosheth, would not be a likely candidate for Israel's next king because he was still a child and was crippled. Two scheming captains of Israel's army thought they would gain advantage with David if they killed Ish-bosheth, which they did in a cowardly way while their king slept. So anxious they were to bring his head to David, that they travelled all night, only to be rebuked and killed by Judah's king. David called them *"wicked men [who] have killed a righteous man"* (v. 11). Once again, David showed godly character in living in a way that he knew would please God. We have seen many times that David was unusual in his righteous attitudes and actions, even in contrast to some of the men in his own small army. We also ought to be striving to please God in every aspect of our lives. If we do, we will be unusual, too.

Righteous Judgment — All three of these psalms were written by David, but they are not connected to any particular event. Psalm 9 seems to have been written after David conquered Jerusalem because it mentions *"Zion"* (v. 11). Psalm 6 was likely written during a time when David felt that God was disciplining him because of some sin (v. 1). He was greatly troubled and asked God, *"O LORD—how long?"* (v. 3). Waiting for answers is a problem that all of us share with David. God has His reasons, and they are good. Psalm 8 is a praise sandwich, where David opens and closes it with, *"O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!"* Yahweh is supreme and, in contrast, David asked, *"what is man that you are mindful of him ... that you care for him?"* (v. 4). The separation between God and man is so great that David acknowledged in wonder that God has given mankind the great privilege of being placed only a little lower than angels, being *"crowned ... with glory and honor"* (v. 5) and being given dominion over God's created animals (v. 6). Psalm 9 is closely tied to Psalm 10, which we will read tomorrow. Together, they form a single acrostic, with roughly each verse beginning with successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet. What stood out to me

in Psalm 9 was God's righteous judgment, mentioned five times (vv. 4, 8 [2x], 16, 19). The Judge is on our side. Although we might have to wait for it, God's judgment is always righteous and good.

October 18 Sa Reading A291 — Psalm 10 — The Wicked Oppress

Audio: [Psalm 10 \(ESV\)](#)

Unanswered Whys — Poor and helpless people in Israel were being oppressed by wicked brothers who had turned away from God. The attitudes of the wicked are shown in "*his thoughts ... in his heart ... [saying] There is no God*" (v. 4), "*I shall not be moved*" (v. 6), and "*God has forgotten*" (v. 11). The inconsistency of the wicked person can be seen in his denying the existence of God in verse 4 and his acknowledgement of God in verse 11. They know there is a God, but He doesn't seem to be responsive in judging their sin. It is repulsive to us that God does not punish sin more speedily until we think about our own sin; then we are grateful for His patience and mercy. When we are on the receiving side of another's sin, we become impatient with God, praying, "Why don't you do something?!" Psalm 10 begins with this kind of question: "*Why, O LORD, do you stand far away? Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?*" (v. 1). The answer might be His mercy toward those who are oppressing us. So, we receivers of the abuse of others need to maintain our faith in God that, in His timing, He will make it right. This faith is shown in the psalmist's last statement: "*O LORD, you hear the desire of the afflicted ... you will incline your ear to do justice*" (vv. 17-18).