

Home Church Discussion Guide for Sunday, September 20

“Psalms and the Reign of God”

Last week, we began a new study on the Book of Psalms. Ben began the study by acknowledging some of his difficulties in reading and interpreting the Book of Psalms. If you didn't last week, have your group share a little bit about how they approach the Book of Psalms: do you find it easy to relate to this book of the Bible? If not, what are some of the things you find difficult? Spend a few minutes in dialogue, reminding group members that the words written in the Book of Psalms are indeed ancient saints' reflections of God, but they are also God's word to us, and they are God-breathed and useful for our training and equipping in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Each week, we're looking at different themes throughout the Book of Psalms, and today's theme is “Psalms and the Reign of God.” We'll look at Psalm 2, Psalm 95, and Psalm 96 as we consider what it means that God reigns – both now and in the age to come.

These psalms are examples of **enthronement psalms**. Ask people in your group what they might guess about enthronement psalms based on their name alone (or on what they might recall from the video). Share that enthronement psalms were probably used in ceremonies when kings were anointed.

The Book of Psalms was assembled and put together after the exile, when God's people were no longer ruled by a Davidic king but by foreign nations, sent by God to punish His people for failing to keep their covenant promises. Does this mean that these psalms were no longer applicable for God's people living during and after the exile? No, they were included in the Book of Psalms to encourage God's people and to remind them that, even though their earthly king was no longer sitting on the throne in Jerusalem, their heavenly king, God, would always be sitting on His throne in heaven, reigning over the world.

Psalm 2

Ask someone from your group to read Psalm 2, which is an example of an enthronement psalm. Here are some commentary points you may want to highlight as you look over Psalm 2:

- How is the world characterized in verses 1-3? In these verses, we see that the world arrogantly sits opposed to God and His ways. Things are not as they should be. How do you see this truth continue to be played out in the world today? In what ways are things “not as they should be” in our world?
- As the nations rage and the peoples plot, our instinct could be to ask the question, “Is God really reigning?” Yet how does Psalm 2 characterize God (beginning in verse 4)? God laughs at those who think they have thwarted His ways and will get away with their evil deeds, because God reigns from heaven. He looks down on the earthly kings who may have set themselves on the throne unjustly, and He laughs, because He alone is the God who rules from the heavens, over all things!

- No matter what you are suffering, or how terrified you may be, Psalm 2 reminds us that the Lord Almighty is reigning – He is reigning here and now, and His reign will be fully fulfilled in the life to come. Evil will not have the last word.
- In verses 6-12, we learn that those who were put into place to rule as earthly kings were called to seek the rule and reign of God, as His agents. They recognized that they had been appointed by God and that “whatever peace and prosperity the nation experienced was effected by the LORD, and not by the king himself” (Allen Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms*, Volume 1, 140).

Psalms 95 and 96

Have group members read Psalm 95 and Psalm 96, which Ben referenced in the Home Church video and make a few brief comments, encouraging group members to share their impressions of each psalm.

- In Psalm 95, we are reminded that God is always faithful and forever reigning – but often God’s people are faithless and fickle (the illustration given in Psalm 95 reminds us of the unfaithfulness of the Israelites after they were redeemed from slavery in Egypt).
- Psalm 95 is a challenge for us – as we look at the world, will we be driven to despair or to complaining, or will we respond in faithfulness, recognizing that we worship a faithful God? Will we come to a place where we can trust God, recognizing that He is in control over today and tomorrow?
- In Psalm 96, we are reminded that God forever reigns. Every other god falls short of His glory, majesty, and power. If you put your trust in anything else, you will be let down.
- Our hope is not in this life but is in the Lord who reigns and who is coming again. These psalms ultimately find their fulfillment in Jesus Christ, who is seated at the right hand of God and reigns with Him, and who will come again.

Concluding Discussion/Application Questions

- How has the truth that God reigns been a comfort to you in a time of distress?
- How is the truth that God reigns a comfort to you today, in whatever you might be facing?