

PSALMS 1–2; 8; 19–33; 40; 46

Over the next three weeks, we will be studying various chapters from the book of Psalms. The LDS resources are organized according to themes. We will include some of their main discussion points as we go.

The following “Witnessing Christ from the Old Testament” study covers **Psalms 1–2; 8; 19–33; 40; 46**.

[You can find the LDS outline of study and resources here.](#)

LDS Study Focus

LDS study material follows the theme, “*The Lord Is My Shepherd.*”

We don’t know for certain who wrote the Psalms. Some have been attributed to King David, but for most of them, the writers remain anonymous. Yet after reading the Psalms, we may feel as if we know the hearts of the Psalmists, even if we don’t know their names. What we do know is that the Psalms were an important part of worship among the Israelites, and we know that the Savior quoted them often. In the Psalms, we get a window into the soul of God’s ancient people. We see how they felt about God, what they worried about, and how they found peace. As believers today, all over the world, we still use these words in our worship of God. The writers of the Psalms seem to have had a window into our souls and seem to have found a way to express how we feel about God, what we worry about, and how we find peace.

PSALMS 1; 23; 26–28; 46

This section has a tremendous God-focused theme. ***“The Psalms teach us to trust the Lord.”*** So, as you work through the discussion questions, keep the emphasis on God’s faithfulness and ask, “In what (or whom) are these Psalm writers trusting?”

David wrote many of the Psalms, so it will be good to remember his life and faith. He experienced many trials, obstacles, and temptations. He committed great sins of lust, adultery, murder, and lying. Do not let your Mormon friends forget or gloss over what a great sinner David was. The forgiveness he received is shocking.

In **Psalm 26**, David claimed to have lived a blameless life. Um, what? No, he did not. So how could he write this? Can you say the same for yourself? Yes! Christ has so thoroughly forgiven those in him that they are blameless in God’s sight. In this psalm, not only was David trusting God for rescue, but he was trusting that God had gifted him the status of righteous.

LDS study resources say:

You might notice as you read the Psalms how often the writers express fear, sorrow, or anxiety. Such feelings are normal, even for people of faith. But what makes the Psalms inspiring is the solutions they offer, including complete trust in the Lord. Consider these inspiring messages as you read Psalms 1; 23; 26–28; 46. Watch for the following, and write down what you discover:

- *Invitations to trust the Lord:*
- *Words that describe the Lord:*
- *Words that describe the peace, strength, and other blessings He provides:*
- *Words that describe those who trust Him:*

Before you work through these questions with your Mormon connections, think through the concept of trust. What is trust all about? For example, how is the focus of trust always on the object rather than the subject? Why is this important to remember when it comes to trust in God? What, ultimately, is trusting all about?

Conversation Starters

- **How is the Lord like a shepherd to us? How are we like sheep? Consider what sheep can and cannot do. Discuss the sheep/shepherd metaphor. How is it humbling? How is it comforting? (Psalm 23)**
- **How did David receive clean hands and a pure heart? Is the Psalm focused on David’s work or God’s? (Psalm 24:3–5)**
- **What does it mean to “be still” (Psalm 46:10)?** Note all that *God* is doing and accomplishing in Psalm 46. “Being still” is submissive trust in an all-powerful God. Part of not working for our salvation is submissively trusting Christ’s completed work. Not working and trusting in Christ and Christ alone is no easy matter and is only made possible by God giving faith as a gift.
- **Why is it so hard to trust in Christ and Christ alone as our refuge and strength? Why is it so hard to be still and know that God is God, and we are not? (Psalm 46:10)**

Psalm 23

Psalm 23 is one of the Bible's most beloved chapters. The comfort of this psalm has consoled countless millions going through valleys of trials and tribulation, knowing that God's goodness and mercy are constant and steadfast.

[Listen to Shane and Shane's version of Psalm 23 – *Surely Goodness, Surely Mercy*](#). Then, if you haven't done so in a while, read **Psalm 23**.

What is your favorite picture of God's goodness in **Psalm 23**? What about **Psalm 23** gives you the most comfort? What phase in **Psalm 23** is most comforting to you and why?



Psalm 24

Psalm 24 describes God as the King of Glory who reigns over all the world.

The hymn [The King of Glory by Keith and Kristyn Getty](#) captures the themes of this Psalm well. Take a listen and then be sure to read **Psalm 24**.

According to **Psalm 24**, who may come to seek God's holy face? How does one become prepared for this meeting? What phrase in **Psalm 24** is most striking to you and why?

Psalm 46

Does it seem like everything is falling apart? It's not the first time or place that's been the case. Yet, in these difficult days, find strength in these words from God's people thousands of years ago in **Psalm 46**. Even if the earth gives way, even if the mountains fall into the sea, even when everything seems to be falling apart, you don't have to fear. "The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress!"

Listen now to [Shane and Shane's powerful version of Psalm 46, the Lord of Hosts](#), which captures well the main themes. Then read **Psalm 46** to learn more about how "The Almighty Lord is with us."

What part of **Psalm 46** is most comforting to you and why?

PSALMS 2; 22

These two Psalms are prophetic. ***“The Psalms point our minds to the life and ministry of Jesus Christ.”***

LDS resources suggest the following:

Several of the Psalms point to the mortal life of Jesus Christ. Christians in New Testament times saw these connections too—for example, they recognized in Psalm 2 a reference to Jesus’s trials before King Herod and Pontius Pilate (see Acts 4:24–30). Consider reading Psalms 2 and 22 along with Matthew 27:35–46; Luke 23:34–35; and John 19:23–24. Look for connections between the words in these psalms and the life of the Savior, and keep looking for similar connections as you study the book of Psalms throughout the next few weeks. Imagine that you were a Jew in Jesus’s time who was familiar with the Psalms and saw connections to the Savior’s life. How might this knowledge have been a blessing to you? See also Psalms 31:5; 34:20; 41:9; Luke 24:44; Hebrews 2:9–12.

Psalm 2 is about the warfare between God and the nations. Humans are natural enemies of God. This psalm was a great comfort to the early Christian church as they faced persecution. Discussions about the final verse will be most fruitful.

Conversation Starter

- **What does it mean to take refuge in Jesus? How is this a good description of faith?**

Psalm 22 is like a dance going back and forth between the sufferings of Christ and David. Many Christological prophecies, including the first verse, will stand out to you immediately. Studying this psalm provides an excellent opportunity to discuss what Jesus meant when he said, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” Why did God abandon Jesus on the cross? What does this mean for us?

Conversation Starter

- **How does Psalm 22 capture both what happened in the life of King David and the suffering of our Savior Jesus? How does Psalm 22 help us understand questions about God’s apparent absence in times of suffering?**

PSALMS 8; 19; 33

In these psalms, the writers marvel at the complexity of creation and the wonder of God's character. The LDS resource theme is, "***The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.***"

Reading Psalms 8; 19; and 33 may inspire you to consider the Lord's many wonderful creations. How do the Lord's creations "declare the glory of God" to you? (Psalm 19:1).

Note how many times the word all is used in [Psalm 33]. What do we learn about the Lord from the repeated use of this word, especially in verses 13–15?

All of creation testifies to the name of God. Enjoy taking time to marvel at the universe and descriptions of God. LDS believe they can one day become like God or a god themselves. Widening the gap in their understanding of God and who we are will subtly undermine this teaching.

Conversation Starters

- **How do Psalms 8, 19, and 33 lead you to marvel at the glory of the Lord? What words or phrases describing God and his majesty were 1) most convicting and 2) most comforting to you?**

Sharing Personally

Every time I read Psalm 8, it reminds me that God is God, and I am not. It also reminds me of God's constant care and concern for his creations and his creatures. The infinite Creator of the stars who also cares for human beings manifests his care for us by becoming one of us and laying down his life to make us his own. The hands that set the stars in place eternally bear the wounds of love, wounds he received when he became one of us and lived on the mote of dust we call "Earth."

[Listen now to the words of Psalm 8 read and sung by Shane & Shane.](#)

What does it mean that God's name is "majestic in all the earth"? What description of God's majesty is most comforting to you?



PSALM 8:3-4

PSALMS 19:7–11; 29

The LDS theme for these two psalms is: ***The word of the Lord is powerful, “rejoicing the heart.”*** The resources encourage readers to think about what it means to hear the word of the Lord.

In the Psalms, words like testimony, statutes, commandment, and judgments can refer to the word of the Lord. Keep that in mind as you read [Psalm 19:7–11](#). What do these verses suggest to you about the word of the Lord? What does [Psalm 29](#) teach you about His voice? In your experience, how has the word or voice of the Lord matched these descriptions?

The theme of these two psalms will present some apparent contrasts between Mormonism and Christianity as the expounded theme connected to Psalm 24 is: ***“Entering the Lord’s presence requires purity.”*** The LDS resource questions below would be valuable to work through with your Mormon friends.

Because the temple at Jerusalem was built on a hill, the phrase “hill of the Lord” (Psalm 24:3) may refer to the temple or to the presence of God. What does this add to your understanding of Psalm 24? What does it mean to you to have “clean hands, and a pure heart”? (Psalm 24:4).

In connection to these psalms, LDS members are encouraged to read David A. Bednar’s article, [“Clean Hands and a Pure Heart,”](#) *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2007, 80–83. It may be helpful for you to scan as you seek to understand what LDS believe about acquiring clean hands and a pure heart. Also, notice the doublespeak about what brings about atonement between the two paragraphs below.

Repenting and coming unto Christ through the covenants and ordinances of salvation are prerequisite to and a preparation for being sanctified by the reception of the Holy Ghost and standing spotless before God at the last day.

All of our worthy desires and good works, as necessary as they are, can never produce clean hands and a pure heart. It is the Atonement of Jesus Christ that provides both a cleansing and redeeming power that helps us to overcome sin and a sanctifying and strengthening power that helps us to become better than we ever could by relying only upon our own strength.

These conversations will be challenging because Mormons, like Christians, believe that the atonement was necessary for humans to become pure. However, they believe that covenants, ordinances, and becoming better are also required. Therefore, the atonement is not enough.

Washing and cleansing from sin is a huge biblical theme. You can share your understanding by pointing to what David wrote in Psalm 51. (This Psalm is covered next week too.)

“Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin ... Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow ... Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me” (Psalm 51:2,7,10).

Christians agree that entering God’s presence requires purity. But nothing less than absolute perfection will do. Only those washed in the Lamb’s blood are truly clean. Christians don’t do their own spiritual laundry. We rest in confidence, knowing that Jesus has done it for us.

“A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh” (Ezekiel 36:26).

Conversation Starters

- Psalm 19 talks about the purity of God and what it takes to have purity before God. What does it mean for something to be pure? What does it take for one to be pure before God?
- What does it take for the words of one's mouth and the meditations of their heart to be pleasing to God?

Sharing Personally

Psalm 19 challenges me to think about the concepts of purity and what it takes for one to be pleasing in God's sight. The psalm thankfully gives the answer. The purity I need to stand before God comes from a spiritual cleansing provided by God and God alone. The psalm leads me both to confess my sins and innate impurity to God and surrender control to him.

Read and listen to [Psalm 19 as sung by Jess Ray](#).

What phrase in Psalm 19 is most convicting to you? Which phrase is most comforting?