

**Chapter 3**  
***Psalms 73 & 89 – The Crisis of Faith!***  
Jamie Grant

I sometimes wonder when it was that the contemporary church became perfect. When was it that we stopped being weak and fallible? When did we become self-sufficient? When was it that our lives and circumstances became manageable? Did I miss something? Did somebody finally discover the "secret" to the successful Christian life and from that time on we have never had a problem in our walk with God? We have never had a problem in our relationship with the world? We have never had any difficulty in deciding right from wrong? Does the church, do Christians, no longer *have* any crises of faith?

A second question: if the church has suddenly and amazingly become perfect, why do we not see the fruits of that perfection in our public worship, in our relationships with one another, in our witness and in our daily walk of faith?

Surely, if we are to be honest, we must admit that our Christian walk—both individual and corporate—is far from perfect. Truthfully, we *do* have doubts. We *are* sometimes afraid of present circumstance or future prospect. There *are* days when we do not understand why our life has taken this turn or that turn, and we are troubled by it. Sometimes it is easier for us to *speak* of the sovereignty of God than it is for us to *submit* to it.

A third and final question by way of introduction then: if the church is not perfect and if we really do experience crises of faith, *why then has the contemporary church turned its back on the psalms of lament?*<sup>1</sup>

Psalms 73 and 89 are both honest expressions of how the psalmist feels and thinks when he comes before Yahweh. There is no pretence. No façade. In today's church we have somehow developed the idea that we must always be 'up-beat' if we are true Christians. Always smiling

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<sup>1</sup> Psalms of lament are also known as *Psalms of Complaint*: both individual and corporate complaint. This description gives a fair reflection of the content which we can expect to find in the lament psalms. But note that there is a great difference between the honest expression of confusion and spiritual disorientation before God, on the one hand, and the type of murmuring and complaining which, for example, the Israelites were punished for in the wilderness.

and positive, that is the way we often feel obliged to present ourselves—regardless of how we really feel. This is an attitude unknown to the writers of the psalms. Praises are written out of a desire to praise. Torah psalms are written out of love for the LORD and his word. However, crises of faith are real, and they too find their expression in the Psalms.

### 1. Psalms 73 and 89 in Context

Psalms 73 and 89 begin and end Book III of the Psalms. A psalm of individual crisis and a psalm of public, national crisis—echoing the dual themes of the introduction to the Book of Psalms.<sup>2</sup> If we continue being honest with ourselves, we will admit that we are all too able to relate to the psalmists' expressions in both Psalm 73 and Psalm 89.

Which one of us has never looked at our own situation and despaired just a little? Who can claim to never having had a jealous thought towards those better off than ourselves? Which of us has never watched the news and thought in our hearts, "What on earth is going on in this world?" Can we not relate *all too well* to the crises of Asaph and Ethan the Ezrahite?

The English name which we use for this collection of poems and songs is, of course, the Book of *Psalms*. This name is derived from the Greek and Latin translations of the Old Testament. The original Hebrew name for this book is slightly different: it is called the book of *Praises*. In some ways this is an odd name for a book that contains more psalms of *lament* than any other kind of psalm! Yet this was the title that was chosen to describe the final form of the book, chosen for the book as a whole. This appears to be a strong point of tension, but in reality the road from lament to praise is not so far.

#### *Meditation 1*

- Do you feel under pressure always to be “happy and up-beat” in your church?
- In what ways can you relate to the expressions of doubt expressed in Pss 73 and 89?
- When you pray, do you believe that you can be 100% honest before God? Consider honestly and openly your state of being and how you see the world around about you—bring your thoughts to God in prayer.

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<sup>2</sup> We find a call to individual piety based upon delight in the *torah* of Yahweh (Ps 1) and a declaration of God's sovereign rule in every sphere of life (Ps 2). Similarly, we find expression of individual crisis and national crisis at the beginning and end of Book III of the Psalms. See Ch. 1 above.

*Prayer*

*My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.* (Ps 73:26). Thank you, Lord, that I can be honest with you about my doubts and weaknesses. Thank you also that trust in you is never misplaced. Give me eyes of faith to see as you would have me see.

Amen.

## **2. The Art of Asking Hard Questions**

This is the real essence of the psalms of lament: they are poetic expressions of hard questions which deal with daily reality. The poet who wrote Psalm 73 tells us of the hard question which he felt he had to ask and then of the answer to that question which was revealed to him, as a wave of dawning realisation when he came to worship God.<sup>3</sup> Psalm 89 just asks the hard question. The psalmist did not *see* the answer to his dilemma, but that does not mean that he did not receive assurance (89:52).

I suppose that two of the key questions which we have in relation to the laments are, why are they in the Bible and how can we make use of them today?

The laments are found in the Bible because the Scriptures deal with the totality of covenant life and experience. In many ways the Bible is simply the account of God's dealings with man—creation, fall, redemption, renewal. In each of these aspects we see the Creator entering into *covenant* relationship with his people.<sup>4</sup> A relationship that is binding on both parts. This relationship therefore leads to certain expectations from either party.

There are many accounts in the Bible of occasions when *we* fail. Take the Israelites in the desert, for example. Their covenant unfaithfulness led to punishment—God's justice poured out in response to breach of promise.<sup>5</sup> Breach of covenant is not something to be brushed under the

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<sup>3</sup> Hence Ps 73 is best described as a wisdom psalm. Its primary purpose is didactic, explaining a lesson learned, but this is a lesson born out of lament, as is acknowledged by Gunkel *Introduction to Psalms: The Genre of the Religious Lyric of Israel* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1998) p. 299.

<sup>4</sup> I would recommend O. Palmer Robertson, *Christ of the Covenants* and W. Dumbrell, *Creation and Covenant*, as excellent treatments of the whole notion of "covenant" in the Bible.

<sup>5</sup> See Num 16 or Num 25 as examples of the harsh consequences of covenant unfaithfulness. The author of the book of Hebrews picks up on such examples as warnings to New Testament believers not to be tempted to turn away from true faith in Christ.

carpet. There is always a sense in which it is something to be dealt with openly, honestly and without delay. Covenant is important, we can't just forget about it.

That is exactly the point of the psalmists who wrote the psalms of lament! Covenant is binding upon both parties, and in the psalms of lament the psalmist is honestly and openly expressing what he sees to be a breach of covenant on *God's* part. As he graciously enters into relationship with his people Yahweh makes promises as well. This is almost too amazing for our minds to grasp, but the Almighty Creator of the universe, binds himself to a certain type of relationship with his people, to a certain type of relationship with us! He makes promises, and in the laments the psalmists are secure enough in their knowledge of who God is and what he is like, to be able to say: 'But what about this? Didn't you make a promise to us? I don't see you keeping that promise?'

It sounds almost irreverent! But it is not. Such are the depths of relationship which God calls us to enter into. A bond so deep that we can be entirely honest. A bond where we can say (in all humility and with the awareness that we often are wrong), 'LORD, that's not fair!' Pious dishonesty is not something which God desires from us. It makes no sense to say to the One who sees all and knows all, 'I'm fine,' when in reality our hearts are breaking. Or to declare that, 'I will sing of your love forever,' when we are none too sure if he does love us or even if he is really there, due to the suffering which we may be experiencing at the present time. Such emptiness is not the *covenant* relationship which God has called us to enter into in Christ Jesus. Covenant relationship means that we *can* cry out and say, 'But, LORD God, you promised...'

### *Meditation 2*

- Browse through the Book of Psalms and meditate upon some of the promises which God has made to his people.
- What are the implications of being in a covenant relationship with God?
- Ask yourself the question, "Am I content with the intimacy of my walk with God? Is my relationship with Him: growing deeper or have I lost something of the closeness of walk that I once had?"

### *Prayer*

*But as for me, it is good to be near God* (Ps 73:28). Help me, Father God, to walk in your paths and to live more fully for you every day.

Amen.

### 3. Problems of Perspective

The lament psalms are all about perspective. The psalmist's perspective. Our perspective. They pronounce that *from our perspective* it appears that God has broken his side of the agreement. That is the way we feel, that is the way we see things and God wants to hear the honest expression of our hearts. Pious words will not fool him, for he sees the attitude of our hearts.

The problem for us in judging covenant unfaithfulness, however, is one of *perspective*. We are often mistaken. It's that simple. Yahweh's perspective is perfect, he knows when we have been unfaithful. Our view on things is far from perfect, is that not one of the lessons of Psalm 73.

Surely we can all relate to Asaph's dilemma. Psalm 1 makes the reality of spiritual life quite clear. There are two ways: the way of the wicked leading to death (Ps 1:1, 4-6) and the way of the 'blessed' leading to life (Ps 1:2-3, 6a). The call of Psalm 1, which (together with Ps 2) is really the paradigm for reading the whole of the Book of Psalms, is quite straightforward. 'Delight in God's instruction, walk in his ways and everything will be all right.' Justice will be done—life for those who walk with God and death for the wicked.<sup>6</sup>

But Asaph has a problem. He sees the wicked prosper! This doesn't fit within his Psalm 1 paradigm of how life should be. Take a look at verses 4 – 11. These people, the objects of Asaph's consideration, are proud, violent, hard-hearted, sinful, arrogant and, what's more, they even dare to defy God (73:11)! Yet, they prosper (vv. 3-5, 12)! How can this be? Surely, this does not square with the promise of Yahweh to his people. This must be covenant unfaithfulness on *God's* part! Or so Asaph thinks at first.

We see his loss of perspective in the verses of Psalm 73. 'They have no struggles...', I wonder if the people observed by Asaph would have said the same thing? 'Always carefree, they increase in wealth...', if we could see into their hearts, would that be the reality or merely the façade? However, this loss of perspective affected Asaph deeply, shaking his understanding of the

spiritual, and indeed the everyday, reality of his walk with God. He declares, 'Surely, in vain have I kept my heart pure... I have been plagued... I have been punished' (vv. 13-14). How often have we, at the very least, been tempted to think like that? Sometimes—from *our* perspective—it just seems that it is simply not worth being a Christian! Too much sacrifice on our part, and everyone else seems to be much better off! But we too can experience problems of perspective.

It had all become too much for Asaph (v. 16). Until he started to see things from a different perspective. From an eternal perspective. From God's perspective (v. 17). 'Till I entered the sanctuary of God.' It is amazing how different everything appears from a changed perspective. Look at a hand-made Persian rug from underneath and we see nothing but a mass of brightly coloured threads going this way and that without any apparent sense of design or reason. Only when we look from above can one see the beauty and plan and pattern of the designer. It was when Asaph came before the LORD that the rug was flipped over for him to catch a glimpse of the design.

We are not told what Asaph did in the sanctuary. Did he pray? Was it the sermon that spoke to him? Was it the public reading of the Scriptures? We don't know exactly. But we know that Asaph met with God. He did business with God, and he realised his folly. He realised that Yahweh's promise of blessing did not necessarily mean an easy life for the believer, but it did mean an eternal life (v. 24). He came to know afresh that the wicked may prosper now, but the way of the wicked still *ultimately* leads to death (vv. 17b-20). Most of all, Asaph saw that really *he* is the rich man and not the wicked. What treasures can they offer to compare with the friendship of God, his protection, his counsel and eternal security (vv. 22-23)? He came to know a contentment which the 'rich, carefree wicked' would never know—'But as for me, it is good to be near God' (v. 28).

Does this mean that his complaint was illegitimate or inappropriate? I think not. Would he ever have learnt the lesson if he had not voiced the complaint? Besides which, imagine how much deeper Asaph's praise of the Living God would be, from this point of renewed relationship with

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<sup>6</sup> The term "the wicked" has a somewhat different understanding in the OT compared to our contemporary usage of that term. It does not just refer to war criminals, murderers and the like. Rather this idea of the wicked refers to all

Yahweh. Yes, we can all offer lip praise whilst thinking about something else entirely, never asking any hard questions. Asaph offers new depths praise because he opened his heart in honesty before God, and the LORD met with him.

We do not know what happened to Asaph in the sanctuary, but this pivotal verse (Ps 73:17) does teach us one important lesson. We need to submit ourselves regularly to the means of grace. Are we reading the Word individually and meditating upon it (Ps 1)? Are we praying to God that he should help us and change us, crying out as the psalmists did? Are we coming together to worship and pray and study the Scriptures and to minister to one another? We must, because it is in these acts of faith that *our perspectives are transformed* (Rom 12:1-2).

Psalm 89 expresses another problem of perspective. What about God's promise to David? The Davidic covenant? David was not to build a house for God, rather God would build a house for David (i.e. a monarchic line).<sup>7</sup> Again the psalmist pours out his heart in all honesty. The covenant is broken. The covenant with David. So he cries out, 'How long, O LORD?' Just look at the impassioned plea laid out before God in vv. 38-41.

But again we see a problem of perspective. Ethan the Ezrahite could see the exile and the lack of a Davidic king, but he could not see 'Jesus Christ the son of David' (Mt 1:1). The covenant was not broken, the stage was being set for it to enter into its ultimate fulfilment. Our perspective is limited, God's is not. Our point of view is tied up in time and space, God's is eternal and all-encompassing. Hence, sometimes we feel that we must cry out in honest and humble complaint, because from our perspective it just seems wrong! Even as we do so, just as Ethan did, we need to remind ourselves of the amazing character of our Heavenly Father and of his loving hand controlling every area of our lives and of history.

### *Meditation 3*

- Have there been times when your perspective on life became skewed? How did that effect you? What helped you to renew a right perspective?
- Meditate upon Ps 73:22-23. Think about all the riches which the believer has as a result of relationship with God through Christ.

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those who reject the *torah* (instruction) of Yahweh and his rule over their lives.

<sup>7</sup> 2 Sam 7

- Do you regularly practice prayer and bible reading/meditation, join in public church worship etc? These things are important if we are to maintain the right perspective on life and eternity.

*Prayer*

*Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you? (Ps 73:25) Thank you, Lord, for the amazing riches that come from being your child. May my heart be more and more consumed with the desire to live to please day by day.*

Amen.

#### **4. The Legitimacy of the Lament Psalms**

Does this mean that we should not express our laments and complaints? Is it right that the church has rejected the psalms of lament? Perhaps, our outward appearance of "fine-ness" really is the way forward? Again, I think not. For several reasons.

##### **4.1 Canon**

Firstly, were such expressions of complaint inappropriate, why are there so many lament psalms in the Psalter? This is not something which we can pass-off as a Semitic peculiarity and therefore ignore. The laments make up a large part of the Book of Psalms. Gunkel highlights 39 psalms of individual lament and 19 psalms of corporate lament, not to mention passages from Jeremiah, Job and the Book of Lamentations! To ignore the laments is to cut out a large chunk of the Bible. Obviously, this is something which is significant to our theological understanding of God. What lesson does this teach us? It appears that one of the key emphases of the lament psalms is *the reality and intimacy of our relationship with God*. What was it that Asaph learnt? From his complaint he learnt, "it is good to be near God." Look at the four power-packed sentences we find in vv. 23-24:

*Yet I am always with you;  
you hold me by my right hand.  
You guide me by your counsel,  
and afterwards you will take me into glory.*

They all focus on the closeness of Asaph's relationship with Yahweh! He realises that it is in this relationship that he finds his wealth and his purpose, and that regardless of circumstances the LORD will be his sufficiency. The complaint psalms seek in essence to deepen relationship with God. James L. Mays has written:

"A cry means something only in a created universe. If there is no creator, what is the good of calling attention to yourself?" (E. M. Cioran)... The plea is addressed to the LORD, the creator of heaven and earth and of Israel. The psalm is language in which the desperate loneliness of human life is offered to God, who is its ultimate source and only final help. It is a prayer in which mortals in anxiety and anguish speak of themselves to God and in doing so speak *about* God to those of us who read the prayer as scripture.<sup>8</sup>

These psalms are not just included, but they have a prominent position in the Book of Psalms. Clearly, as Mays points out, there are lessons to be learnt from the psalms of complaint. The record of Asaph's complaint and the answer which he received is designed to be of great encouragement to us.

#### **4.2 Dependence on God**

Secondly, the lament is in itself an open confession of our finite nature and therefore a submission of self to the sovereignty of God. Even in questioning Yahweh's covenant faithfulness, we acknowledge our inability and our total dependence on his capability. Asaph confesses his inability to comprehend the realities of life round about him. He himself could not cope (73:15-16). Yet his complaint is not a rejection of God, rather it is the opposite. He is throwing himself upon God. He knew the character of his God (v. 1), yet the problem vexed him and the question had to be asked. Asaph could not work it all out. The wealth and ease of the wicked troubled him, yet v. 15 shows us that he would not reject the way of God. His lament was not rebellion, but rather an expression of the depth and reality of the crisis of faith which he was experiencing. It is like the small child, angry at his parent, who bangs his fists against his father's chest, yet at the same time does not wish to be released from his father's embrace. Somehow, even as he struggled with his complaint, Asaph knew that there must be an answer, and that there could be only one source of that answer, hence his prayer of lament.

In Psalm 89 the psalmist does not come to Asaph's privileged position of understanding. His problem is not solved. Yet even in making his plea, he forcefully and clearly acknowledges that there is a God who makes sense of the world. There is a God who *does* care for his people—both individually and corporately. The doxology at the end of Book III seems somewhat inappropriate in the light of the content of Psalm 89. Yet, in fact, it is most appropriate. The complaint is voiced (vv. 38-51). Held in tension with this lament, the character of God is known to the

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<sup>8</sup> James L. Mays, *The LORD Reigns* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994) p. 55

psalmist (vv. 1-37). Ethan knows that Yahweh is loving (vv. 1-2) and covenant-making (vv. 3-4). He is the awesome Creator (vv. 5-8) who rules in power (vv. 9-13) and does so with righteous and justice, blessing his people (vv. 14-18). What is more, Yahweh has revealed himself to his people in both word and deed (vv. 19-29). Ethan does not receive an answer to his complaint. The tension between the reality which he sees and the God whom he knows still exists. But the universal teaching of the Book of Psalms is univocal on this point—Yahweh reigns! Therefore, despite the fact that his lament still remains unanswered, it is entirely appropriate that the last words of Psalm 89 and of Book III of the Psalms are:

*Praise be to Yahweh for ever! Amen and Amen.*

### **4.3 Honesty before God**

Thirdly, why would God, 'who looks at the hearts of men' (1 Sam 16:7), seek pious deceptions from us rather than an open expression of the honest truth? We in the church have fallen into habit of 'being fine.' We never really expect anyone to answer anything else to the question, 'How are you?' There is an accepted front of 'coping' which we present to the outside world whether we *really are coping* or not. Such well-intentioned falseness in our friendships becomes absolute folly in prayer. Our Creator and Redeemer seeks intimate relationship with his people—with us! So what room is there for dishonesty in prayer. If our hearts are angry with God, does he not see that even though our words are polite? The God of covenant relationship would rather hear our anger and address it, than hear us deny the anger that he is all too well aware of. Prayer in covenant relationship must always be an exercise in honesty. All the more so since we have a high priest 'who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin.' (Heb 4:15)

### **4.4 Change of Perspective**

Fourthly, if our perspectives are wrong often it is in the expression of them that they are changed. Psalm 73 seems to be a case in point. Asaph was consumed with thoughts of betrayal. His heart was angry. He was sure that God had let him down. The rich were wealthy, he kept himself pure in vain and none of this things agree with the two ways and the promise of blessing of Psalms 1 & 2! We do not know if he expressed his complaint publicly before he had been led to see the answer or not, but we have every reason to believe that he expressed it to God. It was in meeting with God that he discovered the truth. In expressing our complaint, whilst submitting

ourselves to the sovereignty of God at the same time, we open ourselves to be changed, corrected and to learn the truth.

Ultimately, God does not want shallow praise based solely on words. He gladly receives deep praises, even those that are born out of a voiced complaint. Like with Psalm 89, we too can say, 'I do not really know why all this has happened, but I know what my God is like. Therefore: *Praise be to the LORD forever! Amen and Amen.*'

### **5. Using Laments Today**

*So is it legitimate for us to make use of the lament psalms today?*

Do we still have crises of faith? If so, then we should use these psalms to express our own hearts in honesty, opening ourselves to correction. Of course, there will be many days when singing the psalms of praise and worship better expresses our hearts and minds. But there will be days when things go wrong, when unanswerable crises arise, those are the days when the laments express ourselves better than anything else. Remember the goal of the laments: ever deeper covenant relationship with God through the Son. There were times when psalms of lament best expressed his heart (Mt 27:46), so should not his believers also be prepared to express our hearts in honesty before God?

*Can we sing them?*

We should also use them in public worship to express our own corporate limitations and our dependence upon a sovereign God. It is not just ourselves as individuals who cannot cope, the same is true of the Church as a body. Politics and the state of the world at large depress and overwhelm us, morality appears to decline around about us, it is difficult to see the hand of God in the events of the day. Such is the context of the psalms of corporate lament. When the world and the wicked seem to be getting the upper hand, we need to pour out our hearts to God, just as the exilic and post-exilic Israelites did in Psalm 89. It is his world and he still reigns, so let us learn to give these things over to God in humility, allowing him to change and challenge our perspectives. Perhaps as we do begin to present these issues in sincerity before his throne we will begin to see his hand at work all the more in the world around us.

#### *Meditation 4*

- Do you skip over the lament psalms thinking them to be somehow “less than Christian”? Instead, read them in the light of the psalmist’s desire for deep and real relationship with God—what do we learn from them when read in this way?
- Consider the four reasons given above for the inclusion of the lament psalms. How are they reflected in your life?
- Think about appropriate ways of using the psalms of lament in your personal devotions and in services of public worship.

#### *Prayer*

*How long, O Lord? Will you hide yourself for ever?* (Ps 89:46) Help me to be honest when I pray, Lord God. Help me also to seek you every day of my life, even when my heart is cold and I seem to be distant from you. As a Good Shepherd, draw my heart near to you, I pray.

Amen.

### **6. Book III in Context**

Book III of the Psalms is not the end of the story! One of the main themes of this series of articles is that we should read the psalms as a book. They are individual works, but they have been put together in a particular order to teach us lessons. Book III and Psalms 73 and 89 play a particular role in the story of the Book of Psalms. Whilst there are many different psalms with a variety of genres and contents in Book III, the reader is left with the taste of lament in his mouth. 'What about the prosperous wicked? What about the Davidic covenant and the lack of a Davidic king? What is going on?'

However, the Book of Psalms is not finished with its *torah* instruction. Psalm 73 has been highlighted as a theological centrepiece of the Book of Psalms. We start with the two ways of Psalms 1 and 2—imbibe the *torah* of Yahweh and live by it, reject the way of the wicked, follow his paths and blessing will be the result. Then comes the crisis of faith in Psalm 73—the wicked prosper and the believer suffers in vain! But this is a crisis resolved, Asaph sees the truth from an eternal perspective. Blessing does not equal wealth. Richness does not equal money and ease of life. Blessing is found in covenant friendship with the Living God. True wealth, is knowing your eternal security. The wicked unbeliever has none of these things. The complaint is answered and the walk of faith is restored in Psalm 73. The two ways of Psalm 1 still apply, but the psalmist has come to a deeper understanding of this truth. So the reader can move from introduction (Pss 1 & 2), to centrepiece (Ps 73), to conclusion (Ps 150). The conclusion is simple: *Let everything*

*that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD* (Ps 150:6). A deeper walk with God has been attained, and the praise that is offered in the end is a *deeper* praise. The result of the confrontation of the walk of faith with the reality of life still ultimately leads to honest praise because—although doubts may have been aired—the believer sees that Yahweh *is* always faithful to his covenant with his people.

Psalm 89 is another psalm in a key position for our understanding of the story of the Book of Psalms. The psalmist sees no answer to his lament, the people see no answer. At least the answer is not voiced in Psalm 89 itself. However, the answer to the crisis of Psalm 89 is revealed to the *readers* of the Psalms in Book IV! There may be no Davidic king at the moment, but Yahweh is still king! He reigns! That is the message of Book IV. God reigned in the times of Moses, he reigns through all times, even when David was king ultimately it was God who truly reigned! In many ways this is the central message of the Book of Psalms. No matter what happens: *The LORD Reigns!*<sup>9</sup> What is more, the shadow of the Davidic king does make a reappearance in Books IV and V<sup>10</sup>, but with new, supernatural overtones! The Book of Psalms ultimately points to a coming Davidic king who will fulfil the *torah* of God and who will rule over the nations, as suggested by Psalms 1 and 2! That king has been revealed to us, hence, we can voice our crises of faith, not in rebellion but in submission, because no matter how life may appear to us, the LORD still reigns in our lives and circumstances and his Son intercedes for us at his right hand (Rom 8:34).

*Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.* (Heb 4:16)

### *Meditation 5*

- Think about the various lessons which you have learnt from this book thus far—what do the psalms of lament add to these lessons?
- “The road from lament to praise is not so far.” Consider occasions when God has turned difficult circumstances into a cause for praise.
- “*The LORD reigns!*” Meditate upon the implications of this short statement both in terms of your life and your view of the world.

### *Prayer*

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<sup>9</sup> Hence, James Mays chose this as the title for his book. More on this topic will follow in the next chapter.

<sup>10</sup> The prime example of this new 'super-king' would be Ps 110.

*Praise be to the Lord for ever! Amen and Amen!* (Ps 89:52) I praise you, Lord, because of your wonderful nature and your amazing deeds on our behalf. Thank you that you never change and that you reign over all things. May this be a comforting thought in days of doubt and difficulty.  
Amen.