

## Following Christ in an Age of Impatience

Songs for The Journey

Psalms 120-134\*

In our contemporary society, the work of Christians in the way and walk of faith is most difficult and is what Gore Vidal has analyzed as “today’s passion for the immediate and casual.” We are all in a hurry.

The tendency is to want shortcuts in the life of faith and when the latest book, song, conference, podcast, blog, sermon doesn’t deliver on instant spirituality we become impatient. Shockingly (for some) the Christian life cannot mature under such conditions and in such ways. The walk on the ‘pilgrim pathway’ is lifelong, arduous at times, with only glimpses of the serene vista of arrival.

Today we begin a sixteen part series unwrapping the Psalms of Ascent (120-134). These Psalms guide those who have ears to hear in the conscious and continuous journey that develops people of faith into maturity in Christ. Are you ready and willing to ‘ascend’ and discover what God has for you?

*This world is no friend of Grace*

*Tourists or Pilgrims*

*Songbook for today*

## Overview & Unity of the Psalms

The psalter was carefully edited and . . . shows [that] there are five “books” of psalms. Each book ends with a doxology, marking the collection (Ps 41:13; 72:18–19; 89:52; 106:48; 145:21). With this we can distinguish five books:

- **Introduction (Ps 1–2)**—Some consider these to be a single psalm framed by the beatitudes of Psalm 1:1; 2:11. The first invites the righteous to meditate on the psalms, and the second centers on the anointed king on Mt. Zion.
- **Book 1 (Ps 3–41)**—These center on David, and ask for divine protection in light of his enemies. Most of the psalms are attributed to David.
- **Book 2 (Ps 42–72)**—There is a good chance that the first two books were originally one, as sixty of the seventy center on David. Psalms 42–49 are attributed to the “sons of Korah,” probably a family in charge of temple music, with Psalms 51–65; 68–70 Davidic.
- **Book 3 (Ps 73–89)**—These are mainly attributed to Asaph (Ps 73–83) and form a series of laments centering on the breaking of the covenant and the sad state of the nation.
- **Book 4 (Ps 90–106)**—A new hope is presented, as Yahweh is king (Ps 93; 95–99) and performing his mighty acts on behalf of his people. Moses takes central stage (mentioned seven times), showing that the same God who rescued Israel then can do so now. Though the monarchy is gone, Yahweh can save them.
- **Book 5 (Ps 107–45)**—God has indeed brought them out of their troubles (perhaps the exile), and it is time to return to the model of David (Ps 108–110; 138–45). Psalms 120–143 are “songs of ascent centering on pilgrimage to Jerusalem for worship.
- **Conclusion (Ps 146–50)**<sup>2</sup>

\* These notes are prayerfully provided to aid, not replace, your personal study of God’s Word.

<sup>2</sup> Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, Rev. and expanded, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 223.