

# Advent Psalms

By Bernard Gabbott

'Advent' is the Latin word for 'waiting'. It is a description of what God's people do a lot of throughout history—we wait! This waiting can be viewed in one of two ways: boring and frustrating; or, an occasion for learning of, and depending upon, the faithfulness of God. I think the latter is God's intent as he subjects his people to waiting so often. Moreover, in that waiting, we not only look forwards (to the fulfilment of what we are waiting for) - we also look backwards: to the promises made, and the history of God's consistent promise-keeping. 'Advent' is also a time in the church calendar when we are reminded of 'waiting', and its goodness. It is the lead-up to Christmas, which was the climax of so much waiting, when the promises of God came to a climactic fulfilment in the birth of the God-man: Jesus.

Each year, amidst what we have created as the hurtling train of preparation and frenetic activity in the lead-up to Christmas, it is worthwhile pausing and enjoying some 'advent', some 'waiting', some pausing and reflecting (looking forwards and backwards) to be reminded of the goodness of the God who always fulfils his promises. In this, we can be reminded again of the worth of depending upon him!

**Psalm 16:**  
**'Not abandoned'**

*A Davidic Miktam.*

Protect me, God,  
for I take refuge in You.

<sup>2</sup> I said to the LORD, "You are my Lord;  
I have no good besides You."

<sup>3</sup> As for the holy people who are in the land,  
they are the noble ones in whom is all my delight.

<sup>4</sup> The sorrows of those who take another *god* for themselves  
multiply;

I will not pour out their drink offerings of blood,  
and I will not speak their names with my lips.

<sup>5</sup> LORD, You are my portion and my cup *of blessing*;  
You hold my future.

<sup>6</sup> The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places;  
indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance.

<sup>7</sup> I will praise the LORD who counsels me--  
even at night my conscience instructs me.

<sup>8</sup> I keep the LORD in mind always.

Because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.

<sup>9</sup> Therefore my heart is glad, and my spirit rejoices;  
my body also rests securely.

<sup>10</sup> For You will not abandon me to Sheol;  
You will not allow Your Faithful One to see the Pit.

<sup>11</sup> You reveal the path of life to me;  
in Your presence is abundant joy;  
in Your right hand are eternal pleasures.

**Psalm 16:1-11**

**Then...**

1. Who wrote the psalm?
  
2. What does the psalmist ask? (vs.1)

What/who does the psalmist commit to? (vs.2,7)

Who does the psalmist have community with? (vs.3-4)

What might tempt the psalmist to waver?

What does the psalmist recognize? (vs.5-6,8-9)

What does the psalmist hope for, as certain? (vs.10-11)

### **Jesus...**

3. Read Acts 13:13-41

How does Peter apply Psalm 16 to both its original author, and Jesus?

Is this a reasonable understanding—why/why not?

How does a passage like Matthew 6:25-34 help us see why this is a reasonable understanding?

### **Now...**

4. If Jesus has fulfilled Psalm 16, and we are 'waiting' now, how does his fulfilment help us sing/live this psalm now:

- as we deal with the waiting of life in an anxious world?  
(Phil.4:4-7)

- as we deal with the pressures of this age?  
(Matt.6:25-34)

- as we deal with the fear of death?  
(Col.1:15-20)

**Psalm 24:  
Who may meet God?**

*A Davidic psalm.*

The earth and everything in it, the world and its inhabitants,  
belong to the LORD;

<sup>2</sup> for He laid its foundation on the seas and established it on the  
rivers.

<sup>3</sup> Who may ascend the mountain of the LORD?  
Who may stand in His holy place?

<sup>4</sup> The one who has clean hands and a pure heart,  
who has not set his mind on what is false,  
and who has not sworn deceitfully.

<sup>5</sup> He will receive blessing from the LORD,  
and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

<sup>6</sup> Such is the generation of those who seek Him,  
who seek the face of the God of Jacob. Selah

<sup>7</sup> Lift up your heads, you gates!

Rise up, ancient doors!

Then the King of glory will come in.

<sup>8</sup> Who is this King of glory?

The Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord, mighty in battle.

<sup>9</sup> Lift up your heads, you gates!

Rise up, ancient doors!

Then the King of glory will come in.

<sup>10</sup> Who is He, this King of glory?

The LORD of Hosts, He is the King of glory. Selah

**Psalm 24:1-10**

**Then...**

1. Who wrote the psalm?
  
2. What does the psalmist recognize? (vs.1-2)

What question does this recognition raise? (vs.3)

What answer does he arrive at? (vs4-6)

What does this reveal about what the psalmist is 'waiting' for?

How does the psalmist express the resolution of his 'waiting'? (vs.7-10)

Who is at the heart of this resolution?

### **Jesus...**

3. Read the following passages and see how they reasonably display Jesus as 'the King of glory'...

- Mark 1:21-28:

- Mark 4:35-41:

- Mark 5:1-20:

- Mark 2:1-12:

- Matthew 5:17-20:

4. Read Colossians 1:15-23—how does this shed light on Jesus as one who is at the heart of the resolution of the waiting of Psalm 16?

### **Now...**

4. Do you sometimes ask the 'waiting' question of Psalm 16—why/why not?

5. Looking at Colossians 2:20-3:11—how does this help

you understand how to apply the resolution of this waiting?

6. Read Hebrews 10:19-25—how does this help you understand how to apply the resolution of this waiting?

**Psalm 28:  
'My strength'**

*Davidic.*

LORD, I call to You; my rock, do not be deaf to me.  
If You remain silent to me,

I will be like those going down to the Pit.

<sup>2</sup> Listen to the sound of my pleading when I cry to You for help,

when I lift up my hands toward Your holy sanctuary.

<sup>3</sup> Do not drag me away with the wicked, with the evildoers, who speak in friendly ways with their neighbors, while malice is in their hearts.

<sup>4</sup> Repay them according to what they have done-- according to the evil of their deeds.

Repay them according to the work of their hands; give them back what they deserve.

<sup>5</sup> Because they do not consider what the LORD has done or the work of His hands,

He will tear them down and not rebuild them.

<sup>6</sup> May the LORD be praised, for He has heard the sound of my pleading.

<sup>7</sup> The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in Him, and I am helped.

Therefore my heart rejoices, and I praise Him with my song.

<sup>8</sup> The LORD is the strength of His people; He is a stronghold of salvation for His anointed.

<sup>9</sup> Save Your people, bless Your possession, shepherd them, and carry them forever.

**Psalm 28:1-9**

**Then...**

1. Who wrote the psalm?
  
2. What does the psalmist plead for? (vs.1-4, 9)

What does the psalmist fear, even wait for? (vs.1, 3)

What does the psalmist definitely look forward to? (vs.6-7)

What does the 'certainty' of this 'waiting' being fulfilled lead the psalmist to do, and to conclude? (vs.6-8)

### **Jesus...**

3. Read the following passages and see how Jesus 'is' Psalm 28...

- Matthew 16:21-23

- Matthew 26:36-46

- Matthew 27:45-46

- Matthew 28:1-10

### **Now...**

4. Read Romans 8:18-39 and see how we experience/live Psalm 28 now, because Jesus 'is' Psalm 28...

What are we waiting for? How should we wait?