The Middle of the Bible

By Thomas Thorne
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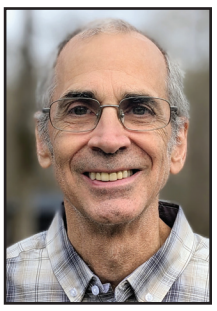

Passover is a time when we need to give special praise to God and Jesus. Passover memorializes Jesus' sacrifice for us so that our sins can be forgiven. "*For even Christ, our Passover is sacrificed for us"* (1 Cor. 5:7 KJV). John 3:16 tells us, "God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life." This is a time for us to praise God. To praise Him with all of our beings, for without the sacrifice of His son, we would truly be lost.

Many times the middle of something is very significant. One of the most beautiful and powerful passages regarding praising God is found right in the middle of the Bible.

Consider a piece of fruit: a peach, a nectarine, a plum, a cherry, or just about any fruit with a single seed. Right in the middle of the fruit is the seed. Everything grows around that seed.

Or think about a tree. In the fall or winter, you may see acorns drop to the ground. The next summer you might see a little stubble growing. Over the years, if left unattended, this little stubble grows up and out, right from the middle.
If you have a Bible nearby, pick it up and open it to what you feel is the middle. There's a good chance that you will open to the book of Psalms.

In the King James version of the Bible, there are a total of 39 books and 23,145 verses in the Old Testament, and 27 books and 7,957 verses in the New Testament. This makes for a total of 66 books and 31,102 verses. This means that the middle two verses of the Bible are verse numbers 15,551 and 15,552, as there are 15,550 verses on both sides (15,550 + 15,550 + 2 = 31,102). These two verses are Psalm 103:1-2.

Let's read this passage from the King James Version first:

"*A Psalm of David. Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits."* (Ps. 103:1-2 KJV)

And next from the New International Version:

"*Of David. Praise the LORD, my soul, and all my inmost being, praise His holy name! Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits.*" (Ps. 103:1-2 NIV).

Notice the only real difference (aside from the introduction to the chapter) is the word "bless/praise." This word is from the original Hebrew bah-re-key, which can mean either "bless" or "praise." By the way, this verb is written in Hebrew, it is a direct command and is to be an ongoing event. In other words, through David, God is telling us forcefully that we should "Praise the Lord regularly and continually!"

What a wonderful bit of instruction to be right in the middle of the instruction manual for the life of our Lord and King! A relationship with Jesus is built from praising Him, kneeling before Him, talking with Him, and listening to Him. It all grows right from the center words of the Bible.

Now let's look at these two verses a little further. Notice the following four points:

1. Both of these two verses start with the phrase "*Bless/Praise the Lord."*
2. In the King James Bible, there are a total of 28 English words in these two verses. The very four middle words form the phrase "*Bless (Praise) His holy name."*
3. There are twelve words on both sides of this middle phrase. Twelve is the number in the Bible that points to God's perfect government.
4. And let's not forget the conclusion to the second verse: "*and forget not all His benefits."*

All this is in the very middle two verses of the book that God has given us. Amazing! I feel like just shouting hallelujah (praise be to God)!

I realize that the Bible was put into divisions by man, but I think it's unlikely that the scholars who worked on the division of the Bible into chapters and verses did this collaboratively and intentionally. Our God is an awesome God. He knows the beginning from the end. His plan has been in place since before creation.

My name is Tom Thorne. My wife (Amy) and I moved to Marion from Denver, NC almost a year and a half ago. Amy and I are fellowship leaders of a small congregation of Believers called "Servants of the Most High God." Tom can be reached at servantsotmhg@gmail.com

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