

# Lesson 5: Psalms

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GROW University - Old Testament 102

## Introduction

*"An anatomy of the parts of the soul"*

### I. \_\_\_\_\_ Are the Psalms?

- All were written in \_\_\_\_\_
- Some unfamiliar words that appear in the psalms - such as Selah - are probably notes for musical or worship direction.
- Many of them have inscriptions which we can treat as reliable.<sup>1</sup>
- The traditional Hebrew title: *tehillim* ("songs of \_\_\_\_\_").
  - The title "Psalms" taken from the word *psallo* "to pluck," a word used in context of stringed instruments.<sup>2</sup>
- Many of the Psalms used were composed for and sung on special occasions. For example, at least five psalms (2, 21, 72, 101, and 110) were created for the coronation of the king.
- Some of the Psalms appear to have been connected with historical \_\_\_\_\_. Fourteen psalms are linked to historical episodes in the life of David (Psalms 3, 7, 18, 30, 34, 51, 52, 54, 56, 57, 59, 60, 63, and 142)

The Psalms are entirely poetry, which means that the language is condensed and conveys its meaning through image and structure.

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<sup>1</sup> We should recognize that those introductory titles are part of our Bible as it has come down to us and are not just surplus. However, they are not necessarily inspired. The LXX was translated c. 200 BC. Not all are present yet. However, Jesus himself seems to give these superscriptions great weight, basing on of his arguments with the Pharisees on them. Cf. Matt. 22:41-46 & Psalm 110.

<sup>2</sup> The Greek word "Psallo" comes from the Septuagint (LXX), a tremendously helpful early translation of the OT into Greek.

- English poetry tends to work through sound, rhythm, and rhyme.

Example:

*Mary had a little lamb  
Her fleece was white as snow  
And everywhere that Mary went  
Her lamb was sure to go*

- Hebrew poetry uses "\_\_\_\_\_ism" to reinforce, contrast or develop and expand an idea.

Example of reinforcement: Psalm 103:10

*He has not dealt with us according to our sins,  
Nor punished us according to our iniquities.*

Example of contrast: Psalm 63:8

*My soul follows close behind You;  
Your right hand upholds me.*

God has arranged the verses of the Psalms very deliberately, and used rhetorical devices that makes them accessible to all kinds of people, in all kinds of languages.

*"...the poetry of the Psalms has a broad simplicity of rhythm and imagery which survives transplanting into almost any soil. Above all, the fact that its parallelisms are those of sense rather than of sound allows it to reproduce its chief effects with very little loss of either force or beauty. It is well fitted by God's providence to invite 'all the earth' to 'sing the glory of his name'. (Derek Kidner, Psalms 1-72, 4.)*

## II. \_\_\_\_\_ Wrote the Psalms, and \_\_\_\_\_?

The Psalms were written by many different people over a long period.

- \_\_\_\_\_ wrote Psalm 90 in the 14th century B.C.
- \_\_\_\_\_ may have written Psalm 119 and a few other Psalms after the exile—about 1000 years after Moses.
- In addition to Moses and (maybe) Ezra, authors include:

- The Sons of \_\_\_\_\_ (temple worship leaders who wrote Psalms 42-49, 84-85, and 87-88)
- Asaph (another worship leader who wrote 12 psalms, including Psalm 50 and Psalms 73-83)
- \_\_\_\_\_ - David's son, who wrote Psalm 72
- David: 73 Psalms have been written by David, according to the superscriptions.

### III. \_\_\_\_\_ **Are the Psalms Structured?**

The Psalms are divided into five books:

- Each book concludes with a doxology— a special song of praise to God.
- Book 5 ends with five doxologies (145-150), which aren't properly part of that book, but rather serve as a climax to the whole, with Psalm 150 serving as the conclusion to the whole Psalter.

#### **Book 1 — Psalms \_\_\_\_\_ — \_\_\_\_\_**

Psalm 1 — Two types of people: a righteous man, and a wicked man.

- The righteous man (**v1-3**; Ezekiel 47)
- The tree imagery reminds us, perhaps, of the garden, or maybe the eschatological temple we will see when we get to Ezekiel 47.

Psalm 2 —

- v2: The kings of the nations take their stand against the Lord and His Anointed One (Messiah).
- v5: He rebukes them
- v6: He's installed his King.
- **v7-8:**

#### **Book 2 — Psalms \_\_\_\_\_ — \_\_\_\_\_**

- These psalms often address distress and difficulty experienced by individual people.

- Speaking generally, these are psalms of great comfort.

### **Book 3 — Psalms \_\_\_\_\_ — \_\_\_\_\_**

- Many of these psalms were probably written after the exile to Babylon, and may have been written as a source of comfort and solace in this time of national catastrophe.
- These Psalms help us understand the apparent triumph of evil men, and how fleeting it is in light of God's greater purposes.

### **Book 4 — Psalms \_\_\_\_\_ — \_\_\_\_\_**

- This book shows the importance of worship in the wake of the exile.
- In general, this section stresses divine kingship and contrasts it with human kingdoms.

### **Book 5 — Psalms \_\_\_\_\_ — \_\_\_\_\_**

- Also stresses divine kingship
- This section is the longest section in the Psalms.
- Its main theme is praise to God.

Theme verse — Psalm 150:6, "*Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord!*"

## **IV. What Are the Different \_\_\_\_\_ of Psalms?**

- 1.) Psalms of lament
- 2.) Psalms of thanksgiving
- 3.) Psalms of praise
- 4.) Enthronement Psalms
- 5.) Royal Psalms
- 6.) Psalms of Zion
- 7.) Psalms of wisdom: *like we looked at in Psalm 1.*
- 8.) Psalms of Trust

9.) Liturgies

10.) Torah Psalms- Psalm 119

11.) Imprecatory Psalms

Let me give an example of just three, which make up the vast majority of the psalms:

### **I. Psalms of Lament (Psalm 3)**

- The psalmist \_\_\_\_\_ God in v. 1a "Lord..."
- The Psalmist lays out his *complaint* to God. vv. 1b-2: "...how they have increased who trouble me!..." "There is no help for him in God."
- The psalmist then turns and confesses his \_\_\_\_\_ in God vv. 3-6: "But You, O Lord, are a shield for me...I will not be afraid"
- The psalmist cries out for God to *deliver* him from his troubles. v. 7: "Arise, O Lord; Save me, O my God!..."
- This is usually followed by an \_\_\_\_\_ of God's merciful and faithful character. v. 8a: "Salvation *belongs* to the Lord..."
- A *concluding prayer*, generally of praise, but sometimes a repetition of the need for deliverance. v. 8b: "...Your blessing is upon Your people"

The psalms of lament do not pretend that everything goes well for those who trust in God. Rather, they encourage us to take out cares to God, and trust Him to deliver us.

### **2. Psalms of thanksgiving (Psalm 30)**

- Psalms of thanksgiving are expressions of gratitude to God for what he has accomplished.
- Like Psalms of Lament, these typically follow a standard form.
  - v. 1 He \_\_\_\_\_ God —"I will extol You, O Lord..."
  - vv. 2-3: The Psalmist lays out *his motive* for giving thanks.
  - vv. 4-10: The Psalmist \_\_\_\_\_ God, often remembering his original plea. v. 8: "I cried out to You, O Lord"
  - vv. 11-12a: He recounts God's *response*: "You have turned for me my mourning into dancing."

- v. 12b: Finally, the psalmist ends by giving God \_\_\_\_\_: "O Lord my God, I will give thanks to You forever"

### 3. ***Psalms of Praise (Psalm 148)***

- Psalms of praise are similar to thanksgiving psalms, but are distinguished by their lack of reference to the worshiper's earlier problems or God's recent intervention. Psalms of praise are centered on the praise of God for his own sake.
- Structure — "SRR"
  - \_\_\_\_\_ to praise. (vv. 1-4, 7-12)
  - *Reasons* for praise. (vv. 5-6, 13-14a)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ of praise. (v. 14b)

## V. How do the Psalms Point Us to Jesus?

**Psalm 18:20-21** — Can you read and pray this in your quiet time?

*"Does the Christian simply identify with the Psalmist (in praise of God or in cry for help)? If we identify with the Psalmist, to what extent and on what grounds? To ask the latter question is to inquire of the biblical-theological link between the Psalm and the Christian believer" —Graeme Goldsworthy<sup>3</sup>*

What did Jesus and the New Testament authors say about the Psalms? **(Luke 24:44)**

***Psalms \_\_\_\_\_ the Messiah<sup>4</sup>***

- **Psalm 21:3-4**

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<sup>3</sup> *Preaching the Whole Bible*, p. 200

<sup>4</sup> In his book *The Ancient Love Song: Finding Christ in the Old Testament*, Charles Drew titles his chapter on the Psalm "Songs of the Messiah." He divides the songs of the Messiah into two types: songs *about* the Messiah and songs *by* the Messiah. I think the division helps us now how Jesus "fulfills" the Psalms, as well as how to read them as Christians. (This draws heavily from Drew.)

- **Psalm 45:1-2, 6, 17**
- **Psalm 72:8, 11-12, 17**
- **Psalm 110:1-2<sup>5</sup>**

### ***Psalms \_\_\_\_\_ the Messiah***

In the New Testament we also hear words and experiences of David in the mouth and life of Jesus (Drew, 88). There's a sense in which we read the Psalms as if they were *by* the Messiah, and here especially we find ourselves drawn into far more than the kingly and enthronement Psalms, but the Psalms which represent the broad range of human experience and emotion.

- Jesus clears the \_\_\_\_\_ (John 2:14-17; Psalm 69:9)
- Jesus goes to his death (John 15:25; Psalm 35:19; 69:4).
- Jesus describing his own \_\_\_\_\_ turmoil (John 12:27; **Psalm 6:3-4**)
- A number of Jesus' last words are taken from the Psalms:
  - "*My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?*" (Matt 27:46; Psalm 22:1);
  - "*I thirst*" (John 19:28; Psalm 69:21)
  - "*Into Your hand I commit my spirit;*" (Luke 23:46; Psalm 31:5)
- Jesus' vindication:
  - Peter points to Psalm 16 to explain the resurrection (Acts 2:22-36; Psalm 16:10).
  - Paul seems to describe the Gentiles to the nations as the work of the exalted Christ (Romans 15:8-9; Psalm 18:49)
  - Psalm 22, which Jesus quotes on the cross, is used to describe his ministry today in the church by the author of Hebrews (2:11-12; Psalm 22:22)

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<sup>5</sup> Jesus quotes this Psalm several times (Matt: 22:41-45, Mark 12: 35-37.) Peter explicitly says it points to Jesus in his Pentecost sermon (Acts 2:32-36). The author of Hebrews does the same (Heb. 1:13; 4:14-5:10; 7:11-28)

## Hebrews 2:14, 17, 18

### VI. How Do We Read the Psalms as Christians?

1.) We read them with \_\_\_\_\_ to the Psalm type, original Old Testament meaning, and its location in the canon (Psalm 2, 3, 51)

*"In the process of exegesis we will seek to understand the unique features of the individual psalms and their significance in their canonical and historical context" (Goldsworthy, Whole Bible, 201).*

2.) We read them (selectively) as the songs of the perfect God-fearing man —the \_\_\_\_\_ **(Hebrews 4:15; 5:7, 8)**

*"we must listen for the voice of the Messiah, which will open up new depths of understanding for us. Often, we can work so hard at protecting his divinity, we distance ourselves from his humanity." —Charles Drew*

Drew Writes,

*"When we turn to the words of the Psalter and read them as Christ's very words, his humanity suddenly comes to life for us. We understand more fully what it means that our Lord submitted himself to the yoke of our flesh in order to redeem us. Read the words of Psalm 84:1-2—"How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord Almighty! My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the Lord"—and then picture Jesus at age twelve sitting with the rabbis in his Father's house...Hear the boy's quiet words of rebuke to his frantic parents, 'Why were you searching for me? Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?' And then wonder with fresh insight at the words of Psalm 27:4, "One thing I ask of the LORD, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD...Jesus understands human suffering"*

#### **Jesus Understands Human Suffering:**

- "Jesus knew the \_\_\_\_\_ of betrayal and desertion..." **(Psalm 38:11; 41:9)**
- "Jesus knew the fear and loneliness that \_\_\_\_\_ us in desperation to God for help..." **(Psalm 25:1-2)**



- "Jesus knew, in the face of great suffering, the temptation to doubt God's love:" **(Psalm 22:1-2)**.
- "Jesus knew physical \_\_\_\_\_ and death..." **(Psalm 22:14-16)**.
  - Jesus was the second Adam.
  - Jesus is the new federal head for all who would be sons of God (Romans 5)
  - He is the true Israel.
  - Jesus, in his birth, life, ministry, death, and resurrection, redoes redemption history.

Who is that paradigmatic righteous man in Psalm 1? \_\_\_\_\_

*"We can derive immense comfort from reading the Psalms as the word of our Mediator. Read this way, they remind us that there exists a man who lived for us the life that we should live, but fail to do so. There lives a man who loved to be continually in the courts of the Lord—unlike me. There lives a man who knows the full range of human sufferings—better than I do. There lives a man whose sufferings were entirely undeserved—unlike mine. There lives a man who could say, "I wash my hands in innocence, and go about thy altar, O Lord, singing a song of thanksgiving," a man with "clean hands and a pure heart," a man who could truly protest his full righteousness and innocence. That man was not David (Psalms 32 and 51 make this plain), and it certainly is not I. It is my great Redeemer, the man Jesus, who not only died in my place, but also lived in my place. —Charles Drew*

*"The next time you read, 'I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the Lord!"' (Psalm 122:1) and are tempted to feel horribly guilty because you would rather be playing golf than worshiping God, remember that these are first and foremost the words of the one true Worshiper who fulfilled all righteousness on your behalf. More likely than not, when you perceive the matter this way, you will want to put your bags aside and go with thanks to praise the One who has so fully saved you" — Drew, p94-95.*

3. We read them for ourselves \_\_\_\_\_ the Mediator.

As Christians, we know to only approach the throne of our holy God through Christ our mediator, and in him we can approach with confidence!

*"We should not be seduced into thinking that the Psalms can speak from and of themselves to us. If they speak to us of God, they must speak to us of the God who has finally revealed himself in Jesus Christ. If they speak to us of sinners, they speak to us of those who are outside of Christ. If they speak of the judgment of God, they speak to us of the curse of the law that Christ suffered for his people on the cross. If they speak to us of the faithful, the godly, or the righteous, they speak to us first of Christ, and only then of those who are redeemed in Christ" — Graeme Goldsworthy (Whole Bible, 200).*

*"Waltke concludes that the Psalms now stand as the prayers of Jesus Christ who, as the corporate head of the church, represent all believers in their own prayers. It is because we are in Christ that we can appropriate these prayers as our own." — Graeme Goldsworthy (Whole Bible, 202).*

**4. We read them (selectively) as a glimpse into the \_\_\_\_\_ between the Father and Son.**

Hear the Father and the Son as they interact with one another (**Psalm 18:4-5, 7-8, 13, 16-17, 19-24, 27, 37-39, 50**).

*"At the most profound theological level, worship is a spectator sport. We gather to watch the Father vindicate his Son in the preaching of the gospel and to watch the Son give praise to his Father in the praises of our lips. For the Spirit Christ indwells us, and that Spirit lives to extol the Father and the Son" — Charles Drew (100).*

Use the Psalms as God's perfect gift to gain access to that marvelous theater of worship.