THE BOOK OF Psalms

God's Handbook
of Doctrine, Emotions
and Responses

SELECTED NOTES & STUDY HELPS

by Charles R. Gianotti

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August 1999
Reprinted October 2001

Version 1.2

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Special thanks go to Chris Borghi-Cavallaro and Pauline Hawkins for editing this text and to Ron Brancato for the cover design. Thanks ultimately goes to the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, my Rock (Ps 18:2) and my Salvation (Ps 27:1)

BOOK OF PSALMS

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Blessed is the man who does not walk in
the counsel of the wicked.
Psalm. 1:1

PREFACE

The scope of these notes is to help you understand the book of Psalms and equip you for further in depth study and application of its great truths[1]. You will learn about the basic structure of the whole book as well as individual psalms. You will understand why the Psalms were written, how they were written, what they talk about and how they can be applied to our lives today.

Because of the vastness of the Book of Psalms, the emphasis here will be on helping you to study the psalms for yourself.

INTRODUCTION

The Significance of the Psalms

The book of Psalms is a collection of Hebrew poetry and it stands unique in the world of literature. Its beauty has won an elite status, far surpassing all other poetic literature. Many of the classical poets (e.g. Chaucer, Milton, etc.) were Hebrew scholars steeped in Old Testament poetry. On the popular level, what man or woman has never heard at least part of the 23rd Psalm: "*The Lord is my Shepherd...*"?

The Psalms also stand unique in the Word of God, for as W. Graham Scroggie comments,

> ...they express the doubts, fears, joys, longings, gratitude, and hopes of generations of pious souls, and in so doing they reveal the heart of God's people in all ages. They are as Calvin said: "An anatomy of all the parts of the soul; for no one will find in himself a single feeling of which the image is not reflected in this mirror" . . . They are the many-toned voice of prayer in the widest sense as the soul's address to God in confession, petition, intercession, meditation, thanksgiving and praise, both in public and private. [2]

Above all, the Psalms are God's revelation of His character and His ways in response to the common experiences of life. Ultimately, they point to the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

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[1] *See the bibliography for other resources that can help in studying the Psalms.*
[2] *Kidner, Psalms, p. 33*

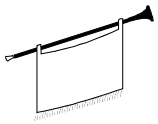
The Problem
Aside from the more familiar Psalms (e.g. 23, 139, etc.) many Christians find this book a mystery, abounding in figures of speech, obscure historical references, strange terms, unfamiliar lyric forms, and mystic-like pietism. Many people tend to read right over much of this with little thought. In these notes, you will find a helpful orientation to the psalms as well as some "tools" and resources for digging on your own.

The Title - "Psalm"
The term "Psalms" comes from the Greek word "psalmos" which means "song of praise." This was the title used by the translators of the first Greek translation of the Old Testament around the 3rd century B.C. The term "Psalter" refers to the collection of psalms. Clearly, this is a collection of writings which exude praise (even the lament psalms) for the God of Israel and are clearly to be sung in worship.

THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE PSALMS

How did the Book of Psalms come into existence? While we affirm that God is the Divine Author, determining human authorship and the organization of the parts as well as the whole helps us understand the individual psalms.

The Compilation into the Whole
Many see a four-fold historical development resulting in its current form.

1. ***First Stage***
   
   The initial work began with the composition of individual psalms which were later selected for corporate worship in the temple. Some were included, while others were not (see below on Biblical Psalms outside of the Book of Psalms). The criteria for including certain psalms and not others can only be speculated upon. Some such as Psalm 90 were written as early as the time of Moses (1525-1485 BC) while others were from late in the Babylonian captivity (ca. 605-535 BC).

2. ***The Second Stage***
   The individual Psalms were collected in groups. The first formally collected group probably originated during or shortly after the reign of David. According to II Chr. 29:30 there were collections of compositions of David and Asaph in circulation at the time of Hezekiah (c.a. 715 - 695 B.C.). There are other hints of collections, such as those by Korah, and also certain psalms categorized as the "songs of ascents."

3. ***The Third Stage***
   These smaller collections were brought together into larger groupings.

4. ***The Fourth Stage***
   Finally, an inspired editor arranged the collection into the final form giving

order to the whole. Most commentators recognize the role of Pss. 1 and 2 as the fitting introduction to the Psalter, and Pss. 145-150 as the grand finale to the book. The final product bears evidence of ordering by author. Also, noticeable are similar or contrasting situations from one psalm to the next, words or phrases leading from one psalm to another, etc. In all, God was working through the various writers and collectors to compile the book as a whole to be preserved to the present day. Some have suggested that Ezra was the one who compiled the collections in the final stage (458-445 B.C.) but this is not certain.

APPROACH TO INTERPRETATION

One's approach to the book of Psalms will often affect his understanding of it. The objective should be to find out what God is communicating through the psalms and learn how we can communicate back to Him. It has been said that while the Bible has to do with scripture speaking ***to*** us, the book of Psalms also has to do with the scripture speaking ***for*** us.

> Do your best to present yourself to God as one … who correctly handles the word of truth. 2Tim 2:15

With the goal of ordering our own responses to God through our study of the psalms, we must properly understand them as they were written and determine 1) What they meant to the original author(s) 2) How they were understood by the original audience 3) What God wants us to understand from them now.

There are four things we should be aware of:

The Historical/Musical Background

The question is, "What is the historical setting and background for any given psalm." Numerous psalms supply some background indicators in the superscriptions; these give us clues to what provided the impetus for writing those psalm.

The Literary Form

As C.S. Lewis points out, "The Psalms must be read as poems, as lyrics, with all the license and all the formalities, the hyperbola, the emotion rather than logical connections, which are proper to lyric poetry." If this is not recognized then our interpretations will be hopelessly inadequate. Studying poetry includes identifying figures of speech, literary structures and the prevalent use in Hebrew of what is called "parallelism."

The Theological Focus

The term "theology" simply refers to the study of God or the things pertaining to God. Here we want to answer the question: "What do the Psalms say about God

and His ways?" This is important because a right response to God is based on a right understanding of Who He is! Psalms are a store house of theology!

The Messianic-Eschatological Hope
Our Lord and His apostles taught us to interpret the psalms as referring to the Lord Jesus Christ. Ultimately, they are fulfilled in Christ (one writer counts ninety three times in which the New Testament quotes the psalms--more than any other Old Testament book).

THE HISTORICAL & MUSICAL BACKGROUND

Superscriptions are included in many psalms. These are a sentence or two containing historical notes and musical instructions for using the psalm in worship. These notations are found just before verse 1 in some psalms. If they are not italicized, they are part of inspired scripture. Italicized parts are the translators' notes or additions to help the reader understand the text.

Historical
The following list identifies psalms which specifically include historical indicators in the superscriptions and gives the corresponding Biblical texts which record that background. Some are clear -- for example Psalm 51 is rooted in David's affair with Bathsheba. Others are a bit more obscure -- Psalm 57 could refer to David's stay in the cave of Adullum (I Sam 22) or to his stay at Engedi (I Sam 24). Many psalms have no historical information supplied and in these cases it is best not to speculate. Psalms with historical references are the following:

> Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. 1Cor 10:6

Ps. 3	II Sam 15:1-18:33
Ps. 7	The specific incident is obscure, but see I Sam 23:24-29
Ps. 18	I Sam 19:1ff, 24:1ff, II Sam 5:17ff,8:1ff,10:1ff,15:1-18:33,21:15ff, ch. 23
Ps. 30	possibly I Chr. 21:1-22:1 or 21:10-22:2
Ps. 34	I Sam 19:1ff possibly
Ps. 51	II Sam 11-12
Ps. 52	I Sam 22:6ff
Ps. 54	I Sam 23:14ff
Ps. 56	I Sam 21:11ff, 22:1, 27:1ff or similar incident
Ps. 57	I Sam 22:1ff or 24:1ff
Ps. 59	I Sam 19:8ff
Ps. 60	II Sam 8:3ff, 10:15, I Chr. 18:9-12
Ps. 63	I Sam 24:1ff, II Sam 15:1ff
Ps. 142	I Sam 22:1ff or 24:1ff

Musical/Inscriptional

Often, the superscriptions contain terms which designate the type of writing, melody indicators, musical notations and liturgical indicators. These instructed the music directors of ancient Israel for leading the congregation in the use of the psalms in worship. Though these are of limited value today, we list them here because their presence confuses many. The following lists will help explain these terms and remove the "mystery" of their meaning.

1. ***Terms Designating the Types of Psalms***
   a. Song [*Heb. shir*]: simply "song" (29 psalms) This term is almost indistinguishable from the next.
   b. Psalm [*Heb. mizmor*]: "a song accompanied by the plucking of the strings of an instrument" (57 psalms).
   c. Maskil: "a contemplative poem," though disputed. (13 psalms).
   d. Miktam: disputed meaning, possibly refers to an "inscription poem," or "poem containing pithy sayings" (6 psalms all written by David).
   e. Prayers [*Heb. tephillah*]: "prayer" (5 psalms).
   f. Praise [*Heb. tehillah*]: "praise" (only Ps. 145).
   g. Shiggaion [*Heb. shiggayon*]: obscure meaning (only Ps. 7).
   h. 39 psalms bear no title of any kind.

2. ***Musical Notation.*** These terms or phrases occur in certain psalms, many of which are obscure**.**
   a. To the chief musician or To the choir leader [*Heb: lam-menasseah*]: Disputed meaning (50 psalms).
   b. Sons of Korah: disputed whether the term refers to authorship or to musical rendition (Pss. 42, 44-49, 84, 87-88).
   c. Jeduthun: disputed meaning, possibly referring to a guild of musicians who rendered the psalms (Pss. 39, 62, 77)
   d. Niginoth: "with stringed instruments" (Pss 4,6,54,55 67,76,61).
   e. Almoth: possibly meaning "upon lyrics tuned to the voice of maidens" (Ps. 46).
   f. Sheminith: obscure meaning but possibly "with an eight stringed lute" (Ps. 6, 12).
   g. Nehilloth: obscure meaning but possibly "wind instrument" (Ps. 5).
   h. Gittith: obscure meaning but possibly "wine song" or "instrument from Gath" (Pss. 8, 81, 84).
   i. Selah (not in superscriptions): disputed meaning but possibly "lifted up". May denote the place within the psalm where worshippers were to lift up their voices or to pause for reflection (found throughout psalms).
   j. Higgaion (not in the superscriptions): obscure but possibly refers to meditative music with quieter instrument (Ps. 9:16, 19:14, 92:3).

3. ***Indicators.*** These are terms in inscriptions which indicate the melody to which the psalm is to be sung (of course, the melodies are lost).
   a. Shushan or Upon Shoshannim: "to the lilies" (Ps. 45, 60).
   b. Mahalath: obscure, may also be a liturgical term (Pss. 53, 88).
   c. Upon Aijeleth Shahar: "to the hind of the morning" (Ps. 22).
   d. Upon Jonath-elem-rehokim: possibly "according to a silent dove of distances" (Ps. 56).
   e. Altashheth: "Do not destroy" (Pss. 57, 58, 59, 75).
   f. Muth-labben: obscure meaning (Ps. 9).

4. ***Liturgical Indicators***. These terms give the setting in which the psalm is to be used or simply how it is to be used.
   a. Sabbath: used to indicate use on the Sabbath day (92).
   b. Thanksgiving [*Heb. todah*]: indicates the psalm is to be used at the time of the acknowledgment/thanksgiving offering. The todah offering was one of the peace offerings given as a result of God's blessing (Ps. 100).
   c. To bring to remembrance: indicates the psalm is intended to bring the lamentor to God's remembrance (Ps. 38, 70).
   d. Prayer of the afflicted when he pines away and pours forth his complaint before God (Ps. 102).
   e. A song of degrees or A song of ascending/ascents: some understand it to be "a song for the pilgrimages." Possibly referring to a processional ascent up to the temple in Jerusalem (Pss 120-134).
   f. For the dedication of the house (Ps. 30).

LITERARY FORM

Categorization of the Psalms

The psalms can be categorized in different ways. Some of the different groupings are as follows:

1. ***Five books.***
   The oldest classification is to group psalms into five "books", each of which ends in a doxology (extended praise concerning God's glory) with Ps. 150 serving as a doxology for the whole Psalter. This dates back as early as the Qumran scrolls before the time of Christ, or possibly as early as 200 B.C. The grouping is as follows:

Book I	Psalms 1-41
Book II	Psalms 42-72
Book III	Psalms 73-89
Book IV	Psalms 90-106
Book V	Psalms 107-150

   The reason for these five divisions is not clear. Some believe the fivefold structure mirrors the five books of Moses (Pentateuch).

2. ***Groupings According to Author***

The human author identifies himself in some of the psalms:

Moses: Ps. 90.

David: 73 psalms mostly found in the first two sections of the book.

Asaph: Ps. 50, 73-83 (see I Chr. 16:5, II Chr 29:30).

Heman, the Ezrahite: Ps. 88 (see I Chr. 2:6, 6:33).

Ethan, the Ezrahite: Ps. 89, same as Jeduthun I Chr 15:19, II Chr 5:12.

Solomon: Ps. 72, 127.

Sons of Korah: Ps. 42-49, 84-85, 87-88 (descendants of Korah who died of wicked rebellion, see Num. 26:10f, I Chr. 9:17ff, 6:31,33,39,44).

3. ***Groupings According to Themes***

Creation Psalms	8,19,29,33,104,148
Exodus or Salvation History Psalms	44,66,68,74,77,78,80,81,83, 95,105, 106,114,135,136
Imprecatory Psalms about psalmist's hatred for wicked.	7,35,55,58,69,79,83,109, 137,139
Innocence Psalms proclaim the psalmist innocence	7,15,17,26
Penitential Psalms confession of sin	6,32,38,51,102,130,143
Pilgrim Psalms sung on way up to Jerusalem	15?,24?,42,43, 50?, 78?, 81?, 84,87?,91?,95?,100?, 120-134
Alphabetic Psalms written in acrostic fashion	9,10,25,34, 37,111,112, 119,145
Torah Psalms, speak about the Law	1,15?,19,24,119,134?

4. ***Traditional Groupings***.[3]

a. An original Davidic collection (3-41)
b. Psalms of the Korah musical guild (42-49)
c. A second Davidic collection (52-72)
d. Psalms of the Asaph musical guild (73-83 and 50)
e. Additional psalms of musical guilds (84-89)
f. Various other collections (1-2,90-150)
g. Jehovah's kingship (93-99)

5. ***Messianic Classification*** (see below)

6. ***Classification according to literary theme and structure***

When we compare various psalms according to theme and structure we note that they can be grouped into four main categories or types: Lament/trust, Declarative praise, Descriptive praise, Instructive.

[3] See Out of the Depths, by Anderson, p. 13

An Analysis of Psalm Structure

As mentioned above, the psalms can be classified by literary theme and structure. Appendix 1 contains the generalized structure for psalms in each category. Appendix 2 classifies them according to the four types. All the psalms in any given category will have very similar structures. This is not exact and there may be some differences in structures, however most will correspond fairly closely.

The emphasis on structure becomes important because in poetry not only do words and sentences convey meaning, but so also does structure. This can help us understand why a psalm is written in the way it is and why the author includes certain things. We mean here only to provide a method for helping to discern how the writer intended to organize his poem.

At times a psalm may differ in part from the generalized structure for the category in which it is found. For example, one structural item may not be included in the psalm, or two may be combined into one. At this point, the generalized structure serves to identify an exceptional or unusual divergence to the typical flow of structure for the psalm being studied.

The categories and their meanings are explained as follows:

1. ***Lament/trust Psalms.*** Numerous psalms are prayers to God primarily reflecting a great need or burden in the life of the psalmist or the community which he represents. They are purposely general, even though the psalmist was writing from within specific difficulties. In this way others can use the psalms, whether in temple worship or in private meditation. Thus, many of the details of the predicament are left out, or generalized through the abundance of imagery and figures of speech**.**

   This category is characterized by such phrases as "Oh Lord...". The writer turns to God for help. Frequently there is an introductory lament and petition which is expanded in the body of the psalm.

   > My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from the words of my groaning? Psalm 22:1

   In either a brief or extended fashion the psalmist then describes his lamentable state or circumstances, such as bad harvest, mocking of enemies, doubt, epidemics, burden of sin, etc. Often you will notice references to God, the writer and his foes in this section.

   Following his lament, the writer may express in an extended section his confidence in God. At this point, it sometimes becomes difficult to determine if the psalm is primarily a lament or a song of trust. A few psalms have only a small section on trust.

Following the trust section, comes the petition. The psalmist asks God to do something about his situation. Two kinds of petitions can be present: 1) for God to be favorable and 2) for God to intervene. Sometimes, he gives reasons why God should intervene or answer his prayer.

Finally, the psalmist will often close with a vow of praise or thanksgiving. An abrupt change of mood is frequently evident. He is so confident that God will answer his prayer, that he outlines what he will do when God's help comes to pass. Other times, the psalmist simply expresses that his attitude upon hearing the Lord's answer will be to give God the praise. Sometimes, this last section contains an assurance of being heard by God.

This basic scheme of lament should not be seen as forced. Expect variation.

2. ***Declarative Praise***. The essential feature of this category is that the psalmist will tell others what God has done for him. He begins with an introductory statement of thanksgiving or praise. Then he reflects on a past need which God has met -- which is his reason for praising God. Finally, he usually concludes with a report of deliverance, or vow of praise, instruction or exhortation.

> Praise the Lord. I will extol the Lord with all my heart. Psalm 11:1

3. ***Descriptive Praise***. This category is similar to the last except here the praise results not from something God has specifically done in the life of the psalmist. Rather, the focus is upon God's characteristics or his general dealings in the past. A call to praise often begins this type followed by the reason we all should praise God. The reason may be a summary statement about God's dealings in general and/or some specific illustrations. The conclusion frequently contains a call to praise, a blessing or an instruction.

4. ***Instructive***. This category has such a variety in structure and form, that it is impossible to determine a generalized structure. Mainly these psalms have to do with teaching or instructing the reader concerning some facet of life, law or God. It differs from the preceding categories in that the main thrust seems to be instructive rather than direct praise or lament.

Poetic Devices and Figures

The psalms contain the greatest collection of poetry the world has ever known. To understand them, a working knowledge of basic poetical devices and figures is essential. We use figures of speech in almost every sentence we breath. However, we are rarely conscious of them. But if we fail to correctly discern the psalmists poetic language, we may error greatly in our interpretation. The tendency may be to glide right over the poetics without analyzing what they really mean. Yet these are the very things which the writer uses to achieve his end result: advancing the reader into the experience and viewpoint of the poet.

The following are descriptions of some frequent poetic features of the psalms:

1. Parallelism

One of the primary poetic features used in psalms is "parallelism". This is the phenomena of using two or more phrases or clauses to compare, contrast or emphasize thoughts. This feature is most evident in Proverbs and Psalms, though it is frequently found elsewhere in the Bible (particularly in the prophetical books). The six kind of parallelisms are as follows:

a. Synonymous: Two consecutive lines or clauses containing statements very close in meaning. By doing this, the writer gives greater emphasis and expression to his subject. Failure to recognize this results in the erroneous effort of trying to dig out a different meaning from each statement or else the reader dismissing the second verse as redundant. The primary use of synonymous parallelism is for emphasis.

Ps. 3:1 *O Lord, how many are my foes!*
How many rise up against me!

b. Synthetic: The second line takes up and develops further a thought begun in the first line.

Ps. 95:3 *For the Lord is the great God*
the great King above all gods.

c. Emblematic: One line conveys the main point, the second line illuminates it by an image.

Ps. 42:1 *As the deer pants for streams of water,*
so my soul pants for you, O God.

d. Antithetical: The second line contrasts with the first.

Ps. 1:6 *For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous,*
but the way of the wicked will perish.

e. Climactic: Second line repeats first with exception of last term/phrase.

Ps. 29:1 *Ascribe to the Lord, O mighty ones;*
Ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.

f. Formal: Two lines are joined solely by metric considerations.

Ps. 2:6 *I have installed my king*
on Zion, my holy hill

2. General Figures of Speech

Though the following list might seem lengthy, it is by no means complete.[4] However, the effort expended in grasping the following will be well worth the

[4] *See Bullinger's Figures of Speech Used in the Bible, for an exhaustive compilation and analysis of literature devices.*

discipline. The ability to identify figures of speech is the key to unlocking difficulties. Great insights await the diligent student.

a. Figures Involving Comparisons

1) Simile: A declaration that one thing explicitly (by the presence of "like" or "as") resembles another.
   Ps. 1:3 *He is like a tree planted by the streams of water.*

2) Metaphor: A declaration that one thing is or represents another. Meaning is similar to a simile, but the words "like" or "as" are absent.
   Ps. 23:1 *The Lord is my shepherd.*
   (The Lord is to me like a shepherd is to sheep).

3) Hypocatastasis: A declaration that strongly implies a comparison.
   Ps. 22:16 *Dogs have surrounded me*
   (that is, evil men who are very much like "dogs")

4) Personification: the giving of personal characteristics to inanimate objects, ideas, or animals.
   Ps 98:8 *Let the rivers clap their hands, let the mountains sing together for joy.*.

5) Anthropomorphism: the representation of God in the form of, or with the attributes of a man.
   Ps. 130:2 *Let your ears be attentive to my cry for mercy.*
   (God being spirit does not have physical ears).

b. Figures Involving Substitution

1) Metonymy: the changing of a word naming an object for another word closely associated with it.
   Ps. 51:14b *"...my tongue will sing of your righteousness."*
   (It is the individual who sings, but uses his whole mouth including his tongue).

2) Synechdoche: the exchange of one idea for another associated idea.
   Ps. 44:6 *"I do not trust in my bow"*
   (meaning he won't trust in physical warfare).

3) Merism: the totality of something is expressed by two contrasting parts or opposing ideas.
   Ps 139:8 *"If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there."*
   (meaning everywhere I could possible go, God is with me).

4) Apostrophe: a turning aside from the direct subject matter to address others (who or which may not actually be present).

Ps. 6:8 *"Away from me, all you who do evil"*
(David turns from his prayer toward God to address those--though they are not present--who caused the trouble).

THEOLOGICAL FOCUS

The Unifying Theme of the Book of Psalms
At the heart of the study are the questions "What is the book of Psalms all about?" and "How does the book relate to the unifying theme or theology of the Bible as a whole?"

The overall message of the Bible concerns the glory of God. He reveals his glory through creation, His people, His person (Christ) and His word. This is the message. Subsumed under this are the great doctrines of the faith, all designed to help us understand who God is and to understand His relationship with creation and man.

Within the psalms we see a great storehouse of doctrine revealed. The overriding theme is God's glory as it is revealed in His rule over creation and his people. Every psalm drips with these ideas. We see constant zeal for the rule of God in creation as opposed to the rule of false gods (see for example, Ps. 19 as a polemic or statement against the sun god of justice, Ps. 29 as a polemic against Hadad or Baal, the storm god of the Syrians).

We see the imprecatory zeal for God's justice as expressed by anger or hatred toward wicked men. Many are the royal psalms, songs of Zion and pilgrim songs which represent the primacy of God's theocratic center of rule, Jerusalem. Many are the historical psalms dealing with God's rule and deliverances in the past. There are also the wisdom psalms and psalms that extol God's law as His instrument of rule. There are the songs of lament which wrestle with a seeming lack of God's effective rule, yet normally conclude with praise that God's rule will indeed be vindicated. Finally, the many Messianic psalms speak of the coming rule in His righteousness.

The psalms as sung in the worship of Israel were constant reminders of God's righteous rule both in the past, in the present and in the *eschaton* to come. We in the Church age also benefit greatly from the theological study of this book as we are reminded of these magnificent themes.

Note: Many passages refer to Jerusalem or Zion as being the place of rule from which God's dealings radiate out. According to Pss. 84:2, 76:1-3, God dwells in Zion. We see in Revelation that in the new heavens and new earth the New Jerusalem will again be the abode of the Messiah, who will reign on the throne of David (Rev. 21). In the Hebrew mind, the location of God's rule was important and thus the emphasis upon Jerusalem as the Holy City.

The term, Zion, itself, seems to refer more specifically to the temple, or the hill on which the temple stood. In the psalms, the designation for the Hebrew center of worship is Jerusalem or Zion.

Unifying Theme of Each Psalm

With each psalm being an individual unit of writing, it is natural to seek the overriding idea the psalmist is trying to convey. As Ryken points out[5] "unless one is aware of the unifying theme, an individual psalm has a tendency to remain a series of fragments..." It may be an idea or an emotion. Sometimes the theme is difficult to identify and in some cases it is necessary to determine Jesus' and the New Testament writers' understanding of the psalm.

Discerning the Theology

In determining the theological truths of a psalm, the simplest method is to ask three questions:

a. What does this psalm say about God?
b. What does this psalm say about man?
c. What does this psalm say about the relationship between God and man.

These questions will serve to initiate the student into a wide open spectrum of insight. From these, other question are easily raised which become "mental crow-bars" that help us unlock the great treasures found.

Application of Theology

The bottom line in studying the theology of the psalms is "How should I then live or respond to God?" All the analysis of structure, poetical interpretations and theology must lead us to this point. We must apply what we learn with the goal of becoming more pleasing to God. Two frequent applications are that we should trust God and praise Him.

MESSIANIC HOPE

Messianic prophecies (i.e. concerning the Messiah--Jesus Christ, the coming deliverer of God's people) should be expected in the Psalter because of the prevalent theme of David's ruling dynasty, a theme which lies at the heart of messianic prophecy. Franz Delitzsch distinguished five categories of messianic psalms, which seem useful for our consideration.

Purely Prophetic

These refer only to Jesus Christ, not to David or some other Old Testament person (Ps. 110).

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[5] *Leland Ryken, Literature of the Bible, p. 124.*

Typically Messianic
In these the psalmist speaks of himself and his own experiences but in certain features he is a type of Christ (compare Ps. 69:4,21,25, John 15:25, 19:28-30, Acts 1:15-20; also compare Ps. 41:9. John 13:18).

Typico-Prophetically Messianic.
This combines features of the first two categories. The psalm refers initially to the writer's own experience but described in hyperbolic (or extreme) language things which are directly fulfilled only in Jesus Christ (Ps. 16:8-10, 22:11-18).

Indirectly Messianic
These refer to David or his descendant on the throne in relation to the promises of the Davidic covenant which awaits its final fulfillment in Jesus Christ in whom the Davidic dynasty culminates (Ps. 2, 45, 72, 89).

Eschatologically Yahwistic
These are named after the future kingdom of the Lord (Hebrew: Yahweh) which forms their theme (e.g. Ps. 96).

ISSUES IN THE PSALMS

Imprecation by the Psalmists[6]

1. ***Definition.*** Imprecatory psalms are those psalms which have a strong element of imprecation (i.e. calling for judgment, calamity, curse against one's or God's enemies) Ps. 7, 35, 55, 58, 59, 69, 79, 83, 109, 137, 139.

2. ***Problem.*** Critics devalue the imprecatory aspects of the OT as being unchristian and contrary to the teaching of Jesus who taught us to "love your enemy and pray for those who persecute you."

3. ***Wrong ways to understand imprecatory psalms.*** Many have suggested unsatisfactory solutions to the problem? These are as follows:

    a. That the imprecations are really those of David's enemies and not David's. But, this changes the clear meaning of the verses involved.

    b. That they express David's personal sentiments but not those of the Holy Spirit. But, this raises a problem with inspiration.

    c. That spiritual life in the Old Testament is inferior to that in the New Testament. But, these same sentiments are expressed by the Lord Himself in Deut. 32:35 "To me [i.e. Yahweh] belongeth vengeance, and recompence; their foot shall slide in due time. For the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste." Certainly, the Lord's

[6] *Adapted from F.D.Lindsey, DTS, Psalms Arranged by Special Groupings.*

"spiritual life" is no less in the OT than the NT. It is also noteworthy that some of the imprecatory psalms are quoted in the New Testament [e.g. Ps. 69 five times!].

d. That they are addressed to spiritual foes -- evil principles personified as evil men. But, the plain reading of the passages presume a normal meaning. Also, psalms such as 109 refer to families and descendants of wicked men -- hardly understandable if evil principles were in mind.

e. That they are prophetic, thus relieving the psalmist of any responsibility at all (opposite of "b" above). But, Hebrew grammar in numerous cases requires the interpretation as a wish or prayer.

4. Proper Understanding of Imprecatory Psalms

a. The purpose of imprecations:

1) To demonstrate God's justice and righteous judgment to the wicked.

The righteous will be glad when they are avenged, when they bathe their feet in the blood of the wicked. Then men will say, 'Surely the righteous still are rewarded; surely there is a God who judges the earth.' Ps 58:10-11

2) To demonstrate the sovereign authority of God to the wicked:

Consume them in wrath, consume them till they are no more. Then it will be known to the ends of the earth that God rules over Jacob. Selah. Ps. 59:13 (also 83:17-18)

3) To lead the wicked to seek Yahweh.

Cover their faces with shame, so that men will seek your name, O Lord. May they ever be ashamed and dismayed; may they perish in disgrace. Let them know that you, whose name is the Lord -- that you alone are the Most High over all the earth. Ps. 83:16-18

4) To establish the righteous:

Oh righteous God, who searches minds and hearts, bring to an end the violence of the wicked and make the righteous secure. Ps. 7:9

5) To lead the righteous to praise God:

Rescue my life from their ravages, my precious life from these lions. I will give you thanks in the great assembly; among throngs of people I will praise you. Ps. 35:17-18

b. Unity of the Theme. One should be careful not to isolate the imprecation from the context. A passage must be understood within its context.

c. Form of Literature. Hebrew poetry contains many figures of speech. One of these is hyperbole, which is a way of emphasizing a point by stating it in an extreme form. This should temper our understanding of the psalmist's

expression of imprecation.

d. Objections to imprecation frequently rest on two faulty assumptions: 1) the welfare of man is the chief end of life and 2) man has rights which even God is bound to respect. Both of these are false statements.

5. ***Justification.*** Several factors combine to account for and justify the psalmists' use of imprecatory language***:***

   a. The vindication of God's righteousness (Ps. 7:6-11; 58:11). The psalmist wants both the good and the wicked to see that God is a just God. Fuller NT revelation reveals that God's vindication is not necessarily required in this life, but one day God will be shown to be absolutely just!

   b. The psalmists' zeal for God and His kingdom (not personal revenge) (Ps. 139:21-22). David as king was God's representative; thus, he saw personal attacks against himself as attacks against God!

   c. The abhorrence of sin and evil. These are often prayers for temporal, not eternal, judgment. The psalmist saw the sinner as the cause of his sins, not the victim of his sins.

   d. The Avenger is Yahweh (Ps. 7:6, 35:1, 58:6, 59:5). The psalmist never asks permission to take vengeance himself.

   e. Vindication is never confused with vindictiveness.

   f. The Abrahamic Covenant establishes a divine basis for a curse on Israel's enemies (Gen 12:1-3).

6. ***Conclusion.*** Those who consider the facts but still have problems with the imprecations in the psalms probably have problems also with the concept of divine wrath on sin which is revealed in both the Old and New Testaments. Imprecations do occur in the New Testament but are not normal because of fuller revelation and emphasis during the Church age on God's grace.[7]

The Self-righteousness of the Psalmists[8]

Some people are startled by what seems to be a self-righteous attitude depicted in the psalmists' view of themselves (for example, Ps. 7:8, 17:1, 18:20, 26:2ff). It seems to smack of pharisaicalism (see Luke 18:9). How do we account for these as being the inspired responses of godly men? A few considerations are in order

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[7] *For New Testament passages which support this see Luke 18:1-8, Rev 6:16, 2:27, 12:5, 19:15, Ro. 2:5, 2 Thess 1:8, Mt 7:23 (compare with Ps 6:8), etc.*

[8] *This material adapted from Kirkpatrick, The Book of Psalms in CBSC, ch. X*

which will clarify the issue.

1. Some of the utterances are merely statements or assertions that the writer is innocent of the charges laid against him by his enemies. (See Ps. 7:3ff)

2. Some of the utterances are general professions of purity of purpose and single hearted devotion to God (See Ps. 17:1ff). When comparing the psalmists' attitude with that of the Pharisees, we observe a world of difference. The Pharisees would hardly submit themselves to God's careful scrutiny:

   > "*Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me...*" Ps. 139:23-24

   The psalmists' do not claim for themselves sinless perfection. However, they do wrestle with suffering injustice when they know they had done nothing which deserved such circumstances. This was due to the belief that suffering and sin were proportionally related. In the national or communal sense, the statements could be thought of as reflecting the attitude: "*We know of no national apostasy which can account for this defeat as well-merited judgment.*" The psalmist frequently expressed in so many words that he simply belonged to the class of people who may expect God's favor and that these people do disclaim all fellowship with the wicked.

   In keeping with the doctrine of progressive revelation, the psalmists did not have the further New Testament teaching of the pervasiveness of sin, its full nature and man's accountability for even the smallest of sins (James 2:10). We do find in the psalms however a full recognition of:

   a. Personal sinfulness when it is identified (51:5, 69:5)
   b. Man's inability to justify himself before God (130:3, 143:2)
   c. Man's need for pardon, cleansing and renewal (32, 51)
   d. Man's dependence on God for preservation from sin (19:13)
   e. The barrier which sin erects between him and God (50:16)

LOGISTICAL MATTERS

Organization of Musical Guilds for Singing

1. ***The organization under David.*** I Chr. 15:16-28, 16:4-43, 23:1-5, 25:1-31
2. ***Execution under Solomon.*** II Chr. 5:11-14, 7:6, see II Chr. 9:11, Ec 2:8
3. ***Re-organization/restoration by Jehoshaphat.*** II Chr. 20:21-22 and Jehoiada the priest II Chr. 23:18
4. ***Re-institution in the reform of Hezekiah.*** II Chr. 29:25-30, 30:27-31:2
5. ***Re-institution in the reform of Josiah.*** II Chr. 35:15 Note: in this verse, David, Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun (i.e. Ethan) are all (cf. II Chr. 5:12, 35:25). Women as well as men were employed in professional music (II Ch 35:15, Ez 2:65, Neh 7:67)

Gestures/Postures in Worship

References to position and gesture in the psalms reveal the liturgical background. Some feel these are references to positions of worship.

1. ***Bowing/prostration/kneeling:*** a sign of humility 95:6, compare with I Kings 8:54, II Chr. 6:13, 29:27-30, II Chr. 20:18-19**.**
2. ***Standing:*** attentively, in reverence; or in service 122:2, 106:23.
3. ***Raising the hands:*** especially the palms in entreaty or blessing 28:2, 44:20, 63:4, 134:2, 141:2, 143:6, cp I Ki 8:22,38,54, Lam. 1:17, Job 11:13.
4. ***Clapping the hand:*** in exultation (Note: this was applauding God, not man!) 47:1, 98:8, compare with Is. 55:12.
5. ***Ritual dance***: 149:3, 150:4.

APPENDIX 1: Frequent Structures In the Psalms

Lament/Trust

1. Individual Lament/Trust

a. Introduction: Address and/or turning to God, Cry for help
b. Lament: Foes, I, Thou
c. Confession of trust
d. Petition: Hear, Save, Punish, etc.
e. (Confidence of being heard)[9]
f. Vow of Praise or renewed trust, or blessing, or instruction
g. (Report of deliverance - declarative praise)

2. Communal Lament/Trust

a. Introduction: Address, ,cry for help, report of former saving deeds
b. Lament: Foes, We, Thou
c. Confession of Trust
d. Petition: Hear, Save, Punish, etc.
e. Vow of praise

Declarative Praise

1. Individual

a. Proclamation: intention to praise God or introductory summary
b. Reflection on past need
c. Report of deliverance: I cried, He heard, He delivered
d. Renewed vow of praise
e. Praise and/or instruction

2. Communal

a. Introduction: Exhortation, Praise
b. Reflection on past need
c. Report of deliverance

Descriptive Praise

a. Call to praise: Hallelujah, Proclamation or invitation
b. Cause for praise
c. Conclusion

Instructive - no common discernible structures

[9] *Parenthesis indicate the element may not always be present.*

APPENDIX 2: Psalms Arranged By Type

Lament/Trust		Declarative Praise	
Individual	Communal	Individual	Communal
3 4 5 6 7			
9 10 11 12			
13 14 16 17		18	
22 23		21 (22)	
26 27 28 31		30 32 34	
35, 37?			
38 39			
(40:1-10)		(40:1-10)	
40:11-17			
(41)		(41)	
42 43	44 46?		46?
51 53 54		52?	
55 56 57	58		
59 61 62	60		65
63 64		66:13-20	66:1-12
69 60			67 68?
71 77	74 79 80 82?		75?
86 88	85 90 (94)	92	
102 108 109	106	107	(107)
	115	116 118	
120 (121)	123 125 126		124 (126)
130 131	129?		129?
139 140 141	137	138	
142 143			

PSALMS ARRANGED BY TYPE (cont.)

Descriptive Praise				Instructive		
Hymns Proper	Songs of King - ship	Songs of Zion	Royal Psalms	Wisdom Psalms	Torah Psalms	Others
			2	1	(1)	
8					15?	
19:1-6			18		19:7-14	
			20 21			
24 29						
33						
36?				36?		37?
		46?	45			
	47	48		49		50
						52?
				(62)		
(66)						68?
78?		76	72	73		
				82?		81
		84				
		87	89			
				91		
95	93			(94)		
100	96 97		101			
103 104	98 99					
105						
111			110	112		
113 114						
117		122		(119)	119	121?
				127		
				128		
			132	133		
135, 136					134	
			144			
145-150						

APPENDIX 3: Psalms Descriptions

1. Wisdom: contrast between righteous and wicked.
2. Folly of rebellion against God/King.
3. Confidence in the Lord in the face of enemies.
4. Benefit of trusting God in midst of conflict.
5. Cry for help and grace; anger against evil doers.
6. Weary of being hassled with conflict, but ends in confidence.
7. Call for God help in face of adversary.
8. God is great because he created man.
9. Lord's righteousness praised.
10. Cry for help for the oppressed and the orphaned.
11. Faced with temptation to flee, psalmist trusts in righteousness of God.
12. Cry for help in midst of lack of faithful people.
13. Trust in the midst of unanswered prayer concerning enemies.
14. Lament concerning the moral foolishness.
15. Conditions for fellowship with God.
16. Delightful relationship with the Lord.
17. Based on right relationship with God, we can cry out for help.
18. Praise for God's enablement in trouble based on psalmist's righteousness.
19. Praise re: natural revelation and written revelation (the Law).
20. Call to trust the Lord, not implements of war.
21. Praise for God's blessing on the king and anger toward kings enemies.
22. Suffering Messiah.
23. Good Shepherd.
24. Royal psalm: Holy King of Glory.
25. Cry for forgiveness and help in trouble.
26. Commitment and resolve to stand firm with the Lord.
27. Confidence in the strength and goodness of the Lord.
28. Prayer for and rejoicing in God's strength and help.
29. Praise and prayer re: God's thunderstorming power.
30. Deliverance brings glory and praise to God.
31. Cry for help and confidence in Lord.
32. Blessedness of forgiveness.
33. Praise to God: his character, power, sovereignty, help.
34. Praise: God does good for the righteous.
35. Prayer that wicked will not rejoice against the righteous.
36. Character of God as opposed to the wickedness of man.
37. Benefits of being righteous and faithful.
38. Burden of sin and burning desire for God's forgiveness.
39. Hope in the Lord in midst of shortness of life.
40. Confidence in God's answering, followed by prayer to do so.
41. Mercy begets mercy.

42. Hope in face of God's silence or death.
43. Questioning in midst of trouble; but, hope in God.
44. Calling up past victories to bring hope in present distress.
45. Delight in the Messianic King.
46. Knowing the all-powerful God in the midst of difficulties.
47. Sing praise to God the King.
48. Praise to the King of Zion.
49. Wisdom: can't take anything with you to the grave.
50. God's attitude toward insincerity and wickedness.
51. Repentant heart.
52. Teleonic justice for those who refuse refuge in God.
53. Foolishness of unbelief.
54. God our help in face of enemies.
55. Trusting God in face of a personal traitor.
56. Trusting God in face of stalking enemies.
57. Trust and praise in midst of conflict.
58. Plea for God's vengeance on wicked.
59. Trust in God's lovingkindness and strength.
60. Fear of God's rejection in defeat.
61. Prayer for strength and refuge.
62. Wait on the Lord for strength.
63. Thirsting after and meditating on God.
64. God will bring justice to the wicked.
65. Thanksgiving for God's goodness on the land.
66. Joyful reminder of God's deliverance.
67. Simple praise for God's blessing.
68. Praise to our awesome God who gives strength.
69. Praise and trust in midst of unjust persecution.
70. Prayer for deliverance.
71. Cry for deliverance so that I can show God's praises.
72. Solomon's psalm asking for success as king.
73. Envy of the wicked like being on slippery ground.
74. Why God has let enemies defame His temple and name.
75. Praise of God who is Judge of all.
76. Call to worship/thank God because of his glory and victories.
77. Reviewing God's works cures the questioning of God's character.
78. Warning generations: remember God's works in past despite rebellion.
79. Call to Lord to return judgment to those that oppress Israel.
80. Pleading with God to restore favor to his choice vine - Israel.
81. God's reason for judgment is disobedience.
82. God condemns unjust judgments.
83. Pleading with God to deal with Israel's oppressors.
84. Passion for God's house.

85. In midst of setback, a cry to God to turn away from anger.
86. Requests in the midst of adoration and thanksgiving.
87. In praise of Jerusalem.
88. Total despair: “God, please do something!”
89. Davidic covenant, praise of God, why has God deserted Israel.
90. Desiring the most from a brief life.
91. Security of the one who trusts in the Lord.
92. Praise and thanksgiving for what God does for a righteous man.
93. LORD’s majestic power and holiness.
94. Trust in God amidst wicked doers and anxious thoughts.
95. Call to worship and praise God.
96. Call to sing a new song to the LORD.
97. Exaltation to a righteous, glorious King.
98. Praise the Lord for his righteous judgment.
99. Exalt and worship the Holy King for his grace to Israel.
100. Exhortation to praise God.
101. Profession of uprightness.
102. Prayer of the afflicted for mercy on self and Israel.
103. Bless the Lord because of his compassion, grace, love, etc.
104. Bless the Lord of creation for all his works.
105. Outworking of God’s covenant to bring Abraham’s descendants to the land.
106. Review: God’s anger/compassion during Exodus w/request for deliverance.
107. Consider the lovingkindness of the LORD by remembering his deeds.
108. Praise and petition for deliverance.
109. Deprecatory: calling for judgment on the wicked who betray love.
110. Royal Psalm: Messiah will defeat enemies.
111. Exaltation in the nature of God’s great works.
112. The righteousness of a man who fears the LORD.
113. Praise the Lord for his humble attention to the humble.
114. Tremble earth before God who brought Israel out of Egypt.
115. Because God is the only God, He can be trusted and praised.
116. Expression of love/gratitude to LORD for his compassionate deliverance.
117. Praise the LORD for his lovingkindness.
118. Gratitude and rejoicing in Lord’s past work and future coming.
119. The Law of the Lord is exalted.
120. Prayer for deliverance from war-mongers.
121. Focus on Lord’s help and protection.
122. Rejoicing and prayer for peace of Jerusalem.
123. Seeking God’s grace in face of contempt.
124. Recognition of God’s help in escape from defeat.
125. Stability of believers versus instability of unrighteous.
126. Rejoicing in God’s deliverance from exile.
127. Life and children are dependent upon the LORD.

128. Blessedness of a man who fears the LORD.
129. Judgment on those who persecute Israel.
130. Waiting on the LORD for forgiveness.
131. Humble childlike hope in LORD.
132. Requests and praise based on Davidic covenant.
133. Unity of brethren exalted.
134. Bless and be blessed by the LORD.
135. Bless the LORD for he is above all “so-called” gods.
136. Lovingkindness as exhibited in Exodus is exalted.
137. Lament over exile away from Jerusalem.
138. Thanksgiving for God’s greatness in what He does for me.
139. God’s omniscience/omnipresence/omnipotence in my life.
140. Petitioning God to maintain justice by punishing the wicked.
141. Request for God to keep me from wicked ways and wicked people.
142. Cry for help and refuge in distress.
143. Plea for speedy, yet faithful help.
144. Praise for past deliverance and present and future blessings.
145. Praise God for His great attributes.
146. Praise God for his graciousness.
147. Praise God for his works of creation and in Israel.
148. Praise God, all heavens and earth.
149. Praise God, all His people: God will judge.
150. Praise God, everything!

APPENDIX 4: Descriptions of God In the Psalms

1. God's Anointed 2:2.
2. My confidence 71:5.
3. My Counselor 16:7.
4. My Cup 16:5.
5. Defense of my life 27:1.
6. My Deliverer 18:2, 70:5, 144:2.
7. My Exceeding joy 43:4.
8. My Fortress 18:2, 31:3, 71:3, 91:2, 144:2.
9. My Glory 3:3.
10. God of Jacob 81:1, 84:8.
11. My Help 22:19, 30:10, 34:20, 46:2, 54:4, 70:5, 115:9.
12. God's Holy One 16:10, (of Israel) 71:22, 78:41.
13. My Hope 71:5.
14. Horn of my salvation 18:3.
15. Judge 75:7, 94:2.
16. Your Keeper 121:5.
17. My King 5:2, 10:16, 44:4, 74:12.
18. Lifter of my head 3:3.
19. My Light 27:1.
20. My Lovingkindness 144:2.
21. Might One 45:3, 50:1, 132:2.
22. Most High 9:2, 18:13, 21:7, 46:4, 50:14, 77:10, 78:17.
23. Most High Lord 7:17, 47:2.
24. My Mountain 30:7.
25. My Portion 142:5, (of my inheritance) 16:5.
26. Priest 110:4.
27. My Redeemer 19:14.
28. My Refuge 11:1, 14:6, 46:1, 59:16, 61:3,62:8, 70:7, 91:2, 94:22, 142:5.
29. God of my righteousness 4:1.
30. My Rock 18:2, 19:14, 28:1, 31:3, 42:9, 62:2,6, 62:7, 71:3, 89:26, 95:1.
31. My Salvation 27:1, 38:22, 62:2,6, (God of my) 25:5.
32. Savior 17:7.
33. Your Shade 121:5.
34. My Shepherd 23:1, (of Israel) 80:1.
35. My Shield 18:3, 28:7, 34:20, 59:11,16, 84:11, 115:10, 144:2.
36. My Song 118:14.
37. God's Son 2:7, 12.
38. My Strength 18:1, 28:7, 31:4, 46:1, 59:17, 74:26, 118:14.
39. My Stronghold 9:9, 18:3, 59:9,17, 62:2,6, 94:22, 144:1.
40. Sun 84:11, Sustainer of my soul 54:4, Tower of strength 61:3.

APPENDIX 5: Some Themes In the Book of Psalms

1. Atheism 14, 36:1, 53:1.
2. Betrayal of friends 35:12-15, 55:13ff.
3. Burden of sin and burning desire for God's forgiveness 38.
4. Conditions for fellowship with God 15.
5. Delightful relationship with the Lord 16.
6. Expressing resolve and commitment to the Lord 26.
7. Giving God credit in our victories 18.
8. God as our parent 27:10.
9. Help for widows, orphans, lonely 68:5-6, 10.
10. God bears our burdens 68:19.
11. Grief 30.
12. Helping the helpless gains us favor in our sickness 41:1-3.
13. Hope in face of God's silence (death?) 42:5,11.
14. Long-term suffering 30:9ff.
15. Prayer that opposition won't win 35:19.
16. Prayer to deliver from death 30:9.
17. Public testimonies 40:9-10.
18. Redemption 49:7-9, 15.
19. Refraining for speaking in midst of conflict 39:1ff.
20. Sheol in the OT 49:14-15.
21. Strength of God can be trusted 46, 68:28.
22. Thirsting after God 42.
23. Unanswered prayer 13, 18:41, 22:1-5,21.
24. Weariness of the battle 6.
25. Praying three times daily 55:17.
26. When afraid, trust God 56:3.
27. Trust God in face of conflict with others 56:3-5.
28. Wicked are like that from birth 58:3.
29. God's vengeance demonstrates there is justice 58:11.
30. Thanksgiving Day psalm 65:9ff.
31. Farmers' psalm of thanksgiving 65:9ff.
32. Youth and age 71:17ff, 103:5.
33. Questioning God's character 77.
34. Passion and value for temple of God 84.
35. Jerusalem/Zion 87.
36. Purpose of psalms so that people can praise God 102:18.
37. Wonderful description of God's compassion, grace, love, etc. 103.
38. Creation 104, Betrayed love 109:4-5.
39. Funeral verses 116:15.
40. Lovingkindness of the LORD exalted 136.

APPENDIX 6: Other Psalms in the Bible

Other Old testament psalms

Besides the 150 psalms in the Book of Psalms there are at least 11 other passages in the Old Testament that have unmistakable features of the psalms:

The Song of the Sea (Ex. 15:1-18).
The Song of Moses (Deut. 31:30-32:43).
The Song of Deborah (Jud. 5:1-31).
The Prayer of Hannah (I Sam 2:1-10).
David's Song of Deliverance (II Sam 22:2-51, preserved also in Ps 18).
The Prayer of Asaph (I Chr. 16:7-36).
A Song of Thanksgiving (Is. 12:1-6).
The Song of Hezekiah (Is. 38:9-20) Hymn of Habakkuk (Hab 3:1-19).
The Psalm of Jonah (Jonah 2:1-9).
The Prayer of the Levites (Neh. 9:5-37, compare Ezra 9:6-15).
Fragments found in Isaiah, Amos, Hosea and in Job.

New Testament Psalms, Hymns and Songs

The New Testament contains psalms, hymns and songs, either in part or in whole. These may have originated in the early church worship and fellowship and subsequently were included in the NT writings. Though writers differ as to the exact delineation, the following list[10] presents a suggested catalog.

Matt 11:17, Luke 1:13-17,30-33,35,42,46-55,68-79, 2:14,29-32,
6:20-22,24-26, 7:32, 8:10, 11:2-4, 19:38, John 1:1-14.
Rom 1:3-4, 4:25, 6:1-11, 8:31-39, 10:9, 11:33-36.
I Cor 8:6, Chapter 13, 15:3-5, II Cor 8:9.
Gal 4:4-6, Eph. 1:3-14, 2:14-16,19-22, 4:5-7, 5:14.
Phil. 2:6-11, Col. 1:15-18, I Thess 5:16-22.
I Tim 2:5-6, 3:16, 6:7-8,11-12,15-16, II Tim 1:9-10, 2:11-13.
Titus 3:4-7, Heb. 1:3-4.
I Pet. 1:18-21, 2:21-25, 3:18-21.
I John 2:12-14, 4:7-10.
Rev. 1:7, 4:8b,11, 5:9-10,12,13, 7:10,12,14-17, 11:15,17-18, 12:10-12, 13:9-10, 14:4-5,7,8,12,13,15b, 15:3-4, 16:5-6,7,18:2-3,4-8,10,14,16, 19-20,21-24,19:1-2,3, 4b, 5,6b-8, 21:3-4.

NOTE: The above list is only a suggestion, as NT poetry is not as easily identified as OT poetry and is subject to much debate.

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[10] *Taken from T. Ralston, "The Hymnic Genre and the Pauline Corpus: Its Criteria and Importance For Exegesis" ThM. DTS, 1983.*

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Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.
Praise the Lord.
Psalm 150:6