

# Psalms

## Thematic Comments

- The Psalms were used initially as songs for the congregation to sing in the temple, but were eventually arranged into a unified book- **this implies intention and meaning behind their structuring.**
- **There is a story to the Psalms-** David (8)(19) and the temple is established (Book I), David and the Temple fail (51) leading to a hope for a future king (72) (Book II), the city and the temple are rejected and sent to exile (89) (Book III), causing the people to long for Yahweh to return and establish himself as king (Book IV), which will usher in an enduring kingdom that restores the entire world and is handed to the Father (145) (Book V) and praise forever (Conclusion). See especially (Peter C. W. Ho, "The Macrostructural Design and Logic of the Psalter: An Unfurling of the Davidic Covenant," in *Reading the Psalms Theologically*, ed. David M. Howard Jr. and Andrew J. Schmutzer, *Studies in Scripture & Biblical Theology* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Academic, 2023), 62.)
- "What then is the Psalter? **The Psalter is a carefully crafted postexilic anthology with a narrative structure reflecting Israel's historical hope for the restoration of the Davidic kingdom** whose establishment would consummate the purposes and promises embedded in God's covenants with Abraham, Israel, and David." (David "Gunner" Gundersen, "A Story in the Psalms? Narrative Structure at the 'Seams' of the Psalter's Five Books," in *Reading the Psalms Theologically*, ed. David M. Howard Jr. and Andrew J. Schmutzer, *Studies in Scripture & Biblical Theology* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Academic, 2023), 95.)
- My contention in this section is that David's understanding of both God's promises and the patterns of earlier Scripture led him to present himself in the Psalms as a type of the one to come. That is to say, **David consciously and intentionally speaks of his own experience, and yet he means to present himself as a type, a foreshadowing prefiguration of the seed from his line whose throne God promised to establish forever** (2 Sam 7:12-14). (Hamilton, James M., Jr. "David's Biblical Theology and Typology in the Psalms: Authorial Intent and Patterns of the Seed of Promise." In *Reading the Psalms Theologically*, edited by David M. Howard Jr. and Andrew J. Schmutzer, 63-78. *Studies in Scripture & Biblical Theology*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Academic, 2023.)
- "wisdom psalms (Psalms 1, 73, 90, 107, 145) and royal psalms (Psalms 2, 72, 89, 144) are placed at critical junctures, and often together, to demarcate the structure of the Psalter"  
Quinn
- Torah, Temple, King, Kingdom

## Structure

- Introduction (Psalms 1-2)

- How blessed is the one who meditates on Torah (5 books, matches structure of Psalms)
- Blessed is he who takes refuge in Yahweh's messiah
- **Book 1** (Psalms 3-41) Center: 22- *The true king must suffer for his people to bring them into Yahweh's presence.*
  - Four Little Books (center of each= king, temple, torah)
  - Dead Center= Psalm 22
  - 3-14 (12)
  - 15-24 (10)
  - 25-34 (10)
  - 35-41 (7)

Psalms	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41									
Superscription	Tr	Kg	Lament						Lament					EL			EL	Individual lament				Thanksgiving hymn				Sup																		Sup						
Shape of collection Genre classification and special SS notations			D	N	D	N	D				D	N	D	N	D		Cf							Cf	PJ											H						Thk								
			EH	PD	EH	PD	EH	N	D	CL	IL	CL	IL	CL			L						L			W																Sap		Sap		Thk				
			<b>Kingship &amp; judgment</b>									<b>Cosmic &amp; Torah praise</b>							<b>Kingship &amp; temple hymns</b>				<b>A memorial</b>																											
			Supplication				H	Thk		Supplication																																								
			To Zion				YHWH	Kg		Away from Zion																																								
		<b>Group 1</b> (12 psalms)									<b>Group 2</b> (10 psalms)									<b>Group 3</b> (10 psalms)									<b>Group 4</b> (7 psalms)																					
Group motif		<b>Lament</b> Reign of man																											<b>Lament</b> The servant of YHWH																					
											<b>Torah</b> Reign of messianic king					<b>Torah</b> Reign of messianic king					<b>YHWH-kingship, Zion</b> Reign of YHWH																													

Abbreviations	<b>Cf</b> confidence psalm	<b>D</b> day psalm	<b>H</b> hymn	<b>L</b> lament	<b>PJ</b> motif of the poor and justice	<b>Thk</b> thanksgiving hymn
	<b>CL</b> communal lament	<b>EH</b> external hostilities	<b>IL</b> individual lament	<b>N</b> night psalm	<b>Sap</b> sapiential	<b>Tr</b> Torah
		<b>EL</b> entrance liturgy	<b>Kg</b> kingship	<b>PD</b> personal distress	<b>Sup</b> supplication	<b>W</b> motif of the wicked

- **Book 2** (Psalms 42-72) Center: 57- *"let your glory be over all the earth!"*
  - While Book I highlights the establishment of the human king, Torah, and Zion temple, Books II-III highlight the reverse: a Davidic king who lacked Torah piety, leading to a broken kingship and Zion temple.
    - Peter C. W. Ho, "The Macrostructural Design and Logic of the Psalter: An Unfurling of the Davidic Covenant," in Reading the Psalms Theologically, ed. David M. Howard Jr. and Andrew J. Schmutzer, Studies in Scripture & Biblical Theology (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Academic, 2023), 47.
  - Book 2 and 3 for another grouping of four with each Book containing two smaller books. The main way we see this is from the superscriptions.
  - 42-49 (Korah)
    - The king and his people lament because they are in exile.
    - Center: 45-46 King and Kingdom
  - 50-72 (Asaph-David)
    - David is rejected because of his sin.
    - Center: 61- "may his days endure to all generations"
- **Book 3** (Psalms 73-89) Center: 81- *"if you would listen to me!"*

- 73-83 (Asaph)
  - The Temple is rejected because of sin.
  - Center: 78- God punished before but then brought a king and temple- implied: so he'll do it again.
- 84-89 (Korah)
  - The king and his people lament because they are in exile.
  - Center: 86-87- He will come because of his steadfast love.
- **Book 4** (Psalms 90-106) Center: 98- *He will come for us*
  - Section 1: A righteous one walks in Torah (90-92), manifesting Yahweh's kingship (93-100), and inaugurating blessing on the world (101-103)
- **Book 5** (Psalms 107-145)
  - Section 2: Recounting of biblical history (104-107), ushering in a new Davidic Priest King (108-110), exploding in praise (111-117), as he brings the new community into the new temple (118), who worship at the temple by rejoicing in Torah with a new heart (119).
  - Section 3: Yahweh Builds a New Jerusalem/City-Temple (center 127 a house not built with hands), 130-134 the eschatological Zion
  - Section 4: (135-145) An explosion of great praise (135-136) looking back across history, but this devolves back into lament over the current situation of Exile, culminating in hope of the king coming (145) which will one day echo into eternal praise (146-150).
- **Conclusion** (Psalms 146-150)
  - 146-150= 5 psalms that all begin and end with "hallelu- yah"
- 41:13, 72:18-19, 89:51, 106:48 "May the Lord the God of Israel be blessed forever and ever Amen"

#### Exegetical Notes

- Introduction (Psalms 1-2)
  - Psalms 1-2
    - Contained in Psalms 1-2 is a snapshot of the biblical storyline. God's creation project to establish his kingdom through a royal son sets the trajectory for the entire Psalter. In Psalm 1, the blessed man dwells in what appears to be a restored Eden. He is a royal priestly figure whose existence echoes primal humanity in the garden of God. He is a student of Torah, meditating on God's instruction in God's garden palace. Psalm 2 develops the identity and mission of this royal priestly figure by establishing him as a Joshua-like conqueror whose conquest will be global. This messianic king will reign over all the kingdoms of the earth from the heavenly location of God's sacred mountain. He will live in a covenant relationship to Yahweh as Yahweh's own son. He therefore appears to embody the role set out for Adam and Israel. Adam bore the image of God in the garden-sanctuary, where he was to learn God's law before exercising global

dominion. Like Adam (and Israel), the messiah must meditate on Torah before mediating God's rule to the rest of the world. As the covenantal son of God, the messiah is God's image planted on God's mountain to establish God's kingdom by mediating God's reign. All those who take refuge in the royal son will have the privilege of entering into the state of אֲשֵׁרִי along with the messiah (Ps 2:12). This state of human flourishing is only possible as people live in a right relationship with God. In this sense, the messianic priest-king will accomplish God's creation plan of extending the borders of divine dwelling space to the ends of the earth to maximize God's glory as others become willing and blessed subjects of God's rule. Psalms 1–2, therefore, look backward and forward. They powerfully draw the reader into the storyline that has been developing since Genesis 1, while simultaneously projecting the messianic shape of the remaining Psalms. When Psalms 1–2 are allowed to fulfill their canonical purpose, the apparent novelties of the messiah's identity in Psalm 110 are already hinted at in the opening of the Psalter. The royal Melchizedekian priest of Psalm 110 is the blessed man and Davidic messiah of Psalms 1–2. (Emadi 115)

- [[Psalm 1]]
- [[Psalm 2]]
- Book 1 (Psalms 3-41)
  - Psalms 15-24
    - "The collection exhibits movement toward the consummation of YHWH's kingdom, with the deliverance of the faithful Davidic king being the turning point in the collection. This message is significant because it defines the messianic expectation in terms of the suffering and deliverance of the Davidic king and the ingathering of all nations into the kingdom of YHWH as the result.... That this collection and its storyline were preserved through a time when there was no human king creates the expectation of a future king, beyond the time of David or the early Israelite kings ()Carissa M. Quinn Richards, "The King and the Kingdom: The Message of Psalms 15–24" (PhD diss., Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, 2015), 253. Forthcoming, Lexham Academic.)
    - "is it a coincidence that the only two entrance liturgies in the entire Psalter, Psalms 15 and 24, exist in close proximity? Likewise, four of the five occurrences of the phrase "I/he will not be shaken" in Book I of the Psalter exist within Psalms 15-24"
    - "The correspondence between Psalms 20 and 21 is striking: In the former, the community petitions YHWH to give the king his heart's desire, and in the latter, the community rejoices that YHWH has given the king his heart's desire. Shall we dismiss these correspondences as mere coincidences?"
    - "Psalms 15 and 24 each begin with the twin phrases, "Who may sojourn/ascend to your tent/mountain? Who may dwell/stand in your holy mountain/place?" (Pss

15:1; 24:3), which are followed by many shared distinctive lexemes describing inward and outward righteousness, such as [bv, hqn, vdq, qdc, and bbl. Both of these sections conclude with a promise of blessing (Pss 15:5; 24:5)"

- "These distinctive corresponding elements create a strong cohesion between Psalms 15 and 24, so that the entire collection is framed with the aim of accessing YHWH's presence—access that comes through righteous character."
- Psalm 19 as the core of the chiasm reveals that the path to the necessary righteous character is Torah.
- "The setting of Psalm 15 is the holy hill in Jerusalem (v. 1); in Psalm 19, the revelation of YHWH goes out into all creation (vv. 2-5); in Psalm 24, all of creation is under his dominion (vv. 1-2). In addition to spatial expansion, there is expansion to the community in Psalm 24: The focus of Psalms 15 and 19 is on the righteous individual, but in Ps 24:6, all "those who seek YHWH" are present for his arrival."
- Psalm 24 closes with Yahweh's arrival as king of the world- the question of Psalm 15 is resolved by Yahweh coming to humanity.
- 16 & 23
  - One ring in- Themes of Psalm 16 Psalm 23
    - General statement of trust vv. 1-2/ v. 1
    - Description of provision using land imagery vv. 5-6/ vv. 2-3a
    - YHWH as the psalmist's guide v. 7/ v. 3b
    - Security within distress because of YHWH's presence vv. 8-10/ v. 4
    - Everlasting joy in YHWH's presence v. 11/ vv. 5-6 (These concluding statements also contain the phonological link, ~yyx xra path of life (Ps 16:11) and ~ymy \$ra length of days (Ps 23:6).)
  - "In addition to their corresponding structures, every single shared lexeme between Psalms 16 and 23 is a rare lexeme. In other words, each shared lexeme occurs at a higher rate in this psalm pair than in the rest of the collection. The result is that Psalms 16 and 23 are joined together as psalms expressing trust in YHWH and emphasizing security in his presence even when trouble, described as death in both psalms, is very near.<sup>43</sup>"
- 17 & 22
  - There is an increase in confidence between Psalms 16 and 23..what caused this..Psalms 17 and 22 answer...The Messiah suffers.
  - "Each point of contact between Psalms 17 and 22 not only involves correspondence but also heightening, or intensification, which is consistent with the pattern of intensification within the framework and between Psalms 16 and 23. For example, the distress of Psalm 22 is systematically intensified from Psalm 17. This sense of heightened distress is signaled by the structural doubling in Psalm 22 (see figures 4 and 5 above): The description of distress occurs twice in Psalm 22, and the second

occurrence of distress increases from three verses to seven verses in length, indicating an escalation.<sup>61</sup> There is also doubling of the motivation for God to answer the psalmist, which frames the distress in verses 7-9 so that it stands out for emphasis. In addition to structural doubling, the psalm opens with the double cry, "my God, my God," and the petition "do not be far" is repeated twice (vv. 12, 20). Likewise, while both psalms compare the psalmist's enemies with deadly animals, this comparison is intensified in Psalm 22 by repetition of this imagery in three places, as compared to its one occurrence in Psalm 17,<sup>62</sup> and the alternation between this imagery and the psalmist's body wasting away toward death.<sup>63</sup> The final petition in Psalm 22 also intensifies the distress of the psalm by repetition of lexemes from previous sections"

- The strongest example is the repetition of a phrase constructed from the lexemes *arq*, *la*, and *hn[*. In Psalm 17, the psalmist uses these lexemes affirmatively: "I cry out to you, for you answer me, O God"; in Psalm 22, these lexemes express the exact opposite: "O my God, I cry out daily, but you do not answer."
- 22 closes with 10 (!) verses of praise to Yahweh.
- "Perhaps the most profound movement from Psalm 17 to 22 is the introduction of the theme of YHWH's kingdom (*hkwlm*) and his rule (*lvm*), which extend to all ends of the earth (# *kl-ySPA-ra* ) and affect all the families of the nations (~*ywg lktwxpvm* ) in verses 27-32"
- **As such, Psalm 22 function as a climactic point in the plotline of Psalms 15-24, where the most intense distress, resolute praise, and clear vision of the inclusion of all nations is presented.**
- 18 & 20-21
  - "To summarize, the royal psalms 18, 20, and 21 are closely connected at the center of the collection. The "twin psalms" 20 and 21 demonstrate a special relationship of petition and fulfillment. These psalms base their petition and praise on the deliverance of the Davidic king in Psalm 18 and focus especially on the promise of YHWH's enduring faithfulness to future Davidic kings in Ps 18:51. Psalm 21 confirms YHWH's faithfulness to continue to act on behalf of the Davidic king. Perhaps this confirmation of YHWH's faithfulness to deliver is the reason why the great abandonment in the next psalm, 22, creates such distress for the psalmist."
  - It makes sense that surrounding the center Torah Psalm are these royal Psalms- this mirrors Psalms 1-2 and Deuteronomy 17- the ideal king will be a Torah centric king.
  - "In other words, Psalms 18-21 serve as the hinge of the collection, where YHWH's deliverance of his king inaugurates his kingdom and the inclusion

of the wider community in his benefits."

- 
- Book 2 (Psalms 42-72)
  - [[Psalm 47]]
  - [[Psalm 50]]
    - three things unbelievers do (what they ignore, their words, their) and believers ought to be thankful
- Book 3 (Psalms 73-89)
  - [[Psalm 78]]
    - God's Vice-Regent Rules from Jerusalem The link between Mount Zion as God's sanctuary and the Davidic dynasty is emphasized in Psalm 78 where God's choice of David as ruler over Israel is intimately bound to his choice of Mount Zion. The concluding section of the psalm underscores this close connection Is-type:: annotation hl-page:: 74 hl-color:: yellow
- Book 4 (Psalms 90-106)
  - [[Psalm 99]]
    - Of the many passages that speak of God as king, Psalm 99 provides one of the most striking descriptions of God reigning from Mount Zion, his holy mountain abode Is-type:: annotation hl-page:: 70 hl-color:: yellow
- 
- Book 5 (Psalms 107-150)
  - Psalms 107-118
    - Psalms 108-110 (A Davidic Triad)
      - Evidence of linkage for these psalms, see below
        - At the textual level, the repetition of the word ימין ("right hand") throughout Psalms 108–110 hooks these Psalms together. In Psalm 108, David pleads for salvation from the enemies of God's people by making reference to the "right hand" (ימין) of Yahweh (Ps 108:6). In Psalm 109, ימין occurs in verses 6 and 31. David appeals to God for a wicked accuser to stand at the "right hand" (ימין) of his enemy (Ps 109:6). In the final verse (Ps 109:31), David states that Yahweh stands at the "right hand" (ימין) of the needy one to save him from his enemies. This statement is followed immediately by the opening of Psalm 110, which depicts David's Lord at the "right hand" (ימין) of Yahweh (Ps 110:1; see below). The term occurs once more in Psalm 110:5 where David's lord is again depicted at the "right hand" of Yahweh executing judgment on the kings of the earth. Psalm 109:31–110:1: For he stands at the right hand (ימין) of the needy one, to deliver his soul from those who condemn. Yahweh said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand (ימין) until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet. The

close proximity between ימין at the end of Psalm 109 and the beginning of Psalm 110, along with the repeated uses of ימין in Psalms 108–110, demonstrate that these Psalms were intentionally grouped together for interpretive value. In other words, Psalms 108–110 develop a narrative strategy. Jinkyu Kim suggests these three psalms “indicate the stages of the Messiah’s eschatological warfare against his enemies.”<sup>9</sup> Psalm 108 introduces the reality of enemy threat against the Davidic king and the people of God (Ps. 108:6, 12–13). Psalm 109 develops the theme of enemy threat through David’s petitions for deliverance. <sup>10</sup> David is a righteous sufferer (Ps. 109:1–5) in need of vindication from Yahweh (Ps. 109:26–29). David’s word of praise at the end of Psalm 109 coupled with his confidence that Yahweh “stands at the right hand of the needy one” leaves the reader with an expectation that Yahweh will vindicate the Davidic king.<sup>11</sup> But how will vindication come? Psalm 110 provides the answer. The Lord will station a Davidic priest-king at his right hand until he has removed every enemy threat from the face of the earth (Ps. 110:1, 6). In the words of Crutchfield, “The answer given to the expectation created by Psalm 109 is clear: God will vindicate the psalmist by putting the psalmist at his own right hand and conquering the psalmist’s enemies.” <sup>12</sup> Underlying Yahweh’s actions on behalf of the king in Psalm 108–110 is Yahweh’s own covenantal faithfulness. The covenantal term דון appears five times in Psalms 108–109. <sup>13</sup> In 109:21 and 109:26, the king’s appeal for deliverance is rooted in Yahweh’s דון. Yahweh’s answer to the king’s covenantal request is found in Psalm 110 and picks up a theme woven into every biblical covenant thus far: a royal priest will establish God’s global kingdom by eradicating Yahweh’s enemies from the earth. The response to the priest-king’s victory in Psalm 111 makes explicit the covenantal overtones of the narrative development—Yahweh remembers his “covenant forever” (בריתו לעולם, Ps 111:5) and commanded his “covenant forever” (בריתו לעולם, Ps 111:9).<sup>14</sup> God will finally establish his king, who is also a “priest forever” (לעולם כהן, Ps 110:4), to fulfill the creation project of global dominion instituted in the original covenant given to the primal priest-king in the garden. (Emadi Diss. 100-101)

- [[Psalm 110]]

#### [[Recommended Resources]]

- For studies on a canonical reading of the Psalms, see Norman Whybray, *Reading the Psalms as a Book*, JSOTSup 222 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996); David C. Mitchell, *The Message of the Psalter: An Eschatological Programme in the Book of Psalms*, JSOTSup 252



(Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997); Michael Patrick Barber, *Singing in the Reign: The Psalms and the Liturgy of God's Kingdom* (Steubenville: OH: Emmaus Road Publishing, 2001); Nancy L DeClaissé-Walford, *Reading from the Beginning: The Shaping of the Hebrew Psalter* (Macon: GA: Mercer University Press, 1997); Nancy L. DeClaissé-Walford, *The Shape and Shaping of the Book of Psalms: The Current State of Scholarship, Ancient Israel and Its Literature 20* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014); J. Clinton McCann, *The Shape and Shaping of the Psalter*, JSOT 159 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993); Erich Zenger, ed., *Composition of the Book of Psalms*, BETL 238 (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 2010); Owens, "The Concept of Canon in Psalms Interpretation"; Jamie A. Grant, *The King as Exemplar: The Function of Deuteronomy's Kingship Law in the Shaping of the Book of Psalms* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2004) [[Psalms]]