

Songs In The Key Of Life: Introducing The Psalms Of Israel

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Introduction:

- I. In 1976, musician Stevie Wonder released what would become his all-time bestselling album, *Songs in the Key of Life*. It was a critical and commercial success. It has sold over 10 million copies in the USA alone. Some groups have rated it the best album of all-time. It included songs about first love and lost love, growing up, his daughter, the music that influenced him, religion, the influence of music around the world, social justice and many other grand themes.
- II. The book we are studying, “Psalms,” could easily wear the same title. The Psalms are about *spiritual life* in all its grandeur. They speak of life and death, joy and sorrow, hope and despair, little things and big things, anger and good will, envy and contentment, time and eternity, heaven and earth, lust and self-control, rich and poor, words and deeds, love and hate.
- III. This introduction will attempt to address the following issues:
 - A. **Psalms as a Book** (title, authorship, date, titles)
 - B. **Psalms as Canon** (place in the Bible, versions, collection, organization)
 - C. **Psalms as Literature** (Ancient Near Eastern literature, language and culture)
 - D. **Psalms as Liturgy** (liturgical usage, music, terminology, forms and function)
 - E. **Psalms as Poetry** (poetry, parallelism, structure)
 - F. **Some Thoughts on Studying the Psalms**
 - G. **Appendices:** (1) Psalms in translation; (2) Psalm Titles & Postscripts; (3) Pronouns & Orientation in the Psalms; (4) Psalms in the NT

Abbreviations: **ps(s)** = psalm(s); **ms(s)** = manuscript(s); **ANE** = Ancient Near East; **LXX** = Septuagint; **DSS** = Dead Sea Scrolls; **MT** = Masoretic Text (standard Hebrew Text); **OT\NT** = Old\New Testament.

Body:

I. PSALMS AS A BOOK

A. Title

1. The English title *Psalms* is a carryover from the title in Latin Bibles, *Liber Psalmorum* (*Book of Psalms*) which is derived in turn from the LXX.
2. Greek Bibles use two different designations (J. Goldingay, BOTC1 24).
 - a. LXX & Codex Vaticanus use *Psalmoi* [yalmoi] (= psalms; noun, pl of *psalmos* [yalmos] = a song sung to musical accompaniment).
 - b. Codex Alexandrinus uses *Psalterion* [yaltheron] (= a collection of songs, or a stringed instrument, Da 3.5).
 - c. Greek yalmos translates Hebrew *mizmor* [rwmzm] (57x in the titles, “something sung”, cognate with the verb *zamer* [rmz], “to sing” or “to hymn”).
 - 1) “It is possible but by no means certain that this verb [*mizmor*] designates singing accompanied by a musical instrument. It is definitely singing associated with praise or jubilation; one would never use it for the chanting of a dirge.” (Alter, *Psalms* xx; P. C. Craigie, 31)
 - 2) *Note:* Whether or not *mizmor* or *psalmos* at this point implied instrumental music is moot. In the ps titles, they are regularly associated with it.

- 3) Thus, the Greek title reflects a commonly used musical form in the Psalter.
 - 4) *Cf.*, Lk 20.42; Ac 1.20 — “book of Psalms” (= *biblo Psalmon* [biblw yalmwn]).
3. Hebrew Bibles use a different designation, *sefer tehillim* [.ylht rps] or *sefer tehillot* [twlht rps]. Both = *Book of Praises* (masc. & fem., respectively).
4. Neither title (Greek or Hebrew) is comprehensive.
 - a. *Psalms* describes the musical element, but the collection includes prayers, meditations, and instruction.
 - b. *Praises* describes the goal, but complaints and confessions abound.
5. The Hebrew title reflects the recurrent theme of the book — praising God.
 - a. All creation praises God (Ps 148). All of life is praise (104.33; 144.4; 150.6).
 - b. Overall, the pss move from complaint (laments are concentrated in the front half) to praise (e.g., the *Hallelujah Pss*, Book 5). (Futato, *Interpreting 77-80*)
 - c. Within the laments, a ps may end in praise (e.g., 17.17).

B. Authorship

1. In the ps titles, the Hebrew particle *lʿ* [l5] is prefixed to the author’s name: *lʿdavid* [dwdl] = *of David*; *lʿasaph* [sal]= *of Asaph*. Does this always denote authorship?
 - a. BDB defines *lʿ* [l5] as “With reference to” (definition 5); “denoting possession, belonging to” (5.b); “the so-called *Lamedh auctoris*” (5.b.b) — Is 38.9 (“a writing of Hezekiah”) = belonging to, of, or by; Ps 3.1 = “of or by David (but possibly denoting origin, at least in some cases a Psalm belonging to a collection known as David’s: so certainly... 42.1... probably... 50.1)”. See 24.1; 14.1.
 - b. Sometimes it does not mean authorship: Ps 91 = “for the Sabbath day” (*i.e.*, for use on; especially for); Ps 100 = “for thanksgiving”; Ps 102 = “for the afflicted” (for this person’s use).
 - c. Sometimes it is ambiguous: Ps 88 = “of the sons of Korah” *and* “of Heman”. (Joint authorship? Authorship and ownership? Authorship and dedication to?)
 - d. When applied to a group (e.g., Korah’s sons), does this denote its origin from this “school” of music? Is it in the style this group popularized?
 - e. Certainly it *can* mean authorship, and often there is no reason for denying it. However, caution should be exercised.
2. Of the 150 pss in the Hebrew text, 100 are assigned authors and 50 are anonymous (See Appendix 2). Seven, possibly eight authors are named in the titles.
 - a. **David:** 73 pss (2-10, 11-32, 34-41, 51-65, 68-70, 86, 101, 103, 108-110, 122, 131, 133, 138-145)
 - 1) LXX ascribes 84 to him; Vulgate ascribes 85.
 - 2) NT texts ascribe seven pss to him: Ps 2 (Ac 4.25); Ps 16 (Ac 2.25-28; 13.36); Ps 32 (Ro 4.6ff); Ps 69 (Ac 1.16-20a; Ro 11.9ff); Ps 95 (Heb 4.7); Ps 109 (Ac 1.20b); Ps 110 (Mt 22.42f // Mk 12.36ff // Lk 20.42ff; Ac 2.34).

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- 3) The titles of 14 pss identify historical events in David's life. Some are obscure, but not impossible, and fit his life (see Pss 3, 7, 18, 30, 34, 51, 52, 54, 56, 57, 59, 60, 63, 142). (See below, "Titles")
 - 4) He is described as a poet (2 Sa 1.17-27; 23.1-7), composer (2 Sa 22 = Ps 18) and musician (1 Sa 16.15-23; 19.9; 2 Ch 7.6; Am 6.5); hence there is no reason to doubt his status as the author of various pss.
 - a) K. Kitchen notes that in the Near East, poetry and music were commonplace among laborers and kings alike during the 2000 years before David. (Kitchen, OROT, 104-107)
- b. Sons of Korah:** 11 pss (42, 44-49, 84, 85, 87, 88). Descendants of the rebellious Levite (Nu 16; 26.11).
- 1) Included Samuel, his grandson Heman, a singer (1 Ch 6.33), Heman's brother Asaph (v 39), their kinsmen, the sons of Merari, including Ethan (v 44).
 - 2) They provided liturgy for the Ark's return (15.16-24; 16.4-7, 37-42).
 - 3) David organized a guild of musicians around them (25.1-8). Some were gatekeepers (9.19; 26.1, 19); others were soldiers (12.6); some were bakers (9.31).
 - 4) Korahites led worship in Jehoshaphat's day (2 Ch 20.19).
- c. Asaph:** 12 pss (50, 73-83). A Korahite (see above) in David's reign; brother of Heman, relative of Ethan (1 Ch 16.39, *cf.* 33, 44), singers in the tabernacle (16.37).
- 1) Sang when David moved the ark (15.16ff; 16.7-36).
 - 2) Family was set apart as musicians (25.1-9) and gate-keepers (26.1).
 - 3) Present at temple dedication (5.11ff).
 - 4) Descendants served Jehoshaphat (2 Ch 20.14), Hezekiah (29.13), and Josiah (35.15).
 - 5) He was a prophet (29.30).
- d. Solomon:** 2 pss (72, 127). See 1 Ki 4.29-34.
- e. Moses:** 1 ps (90). See Ex 15.1-18; Nu 10.35; Dt 32.1-47; 33.1-29.
- f. Heman the Ezrahite:** 1 ps (88). A sage in Solomon's day (1 Ki 4.31), of Judah (1 Ch 2.6). Not the same as Heman the Korahite (above).
- g. Ethan the Ezrahite:** 1 ps (89). With his brother Heman (above), a sage in Solomon's time (1 Ki 4.31); both from Judah (1 Ch 2.6).
- 1) Some equate him with Jeduthun (below). However, Jeduthun was apparently a Levite.
- h. Jeduthun (?):** See Ps 39, 62, 77 (titles). May be a variant of Ethan. If so, Ethan the Korahite, not the Ezrahite (above).
- 1) Before moving the ark, Heman and Asaph appear with Ethan (1 Ch 6.31-33, 39, 44; 15.16-19). Afterward, it is Jeduthun (16.37f, 41f; 25.1, 6; *etc.*).
 - 2) Jeduthun/Ethan ministered in song at the tabernacle (1 Ch 16.31f).
 - a) He was set apart in music (15.16; 16.41f; 25.1, 6). He was a prophet (25.3).
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- b*) He performed at the temple dedication (2 Ch 5.12). His descendants served Hezekiah (29.14) and Josiah (39.15).

C. Date

1. Evidence includes: authorship, internal clues, early texts, and the OT canon.
2. *Authorship:*
 - a.* Earliest named author is Moses (c. 1400 BC). Poems exist earlier (e.g., Israel's Blessing, Gn 49), but with Moses, there is a steady rise in Israel.
 - b.* David ruled about 1000 BC.
 - c.* Solomon ruled about 950 BC.
 - d.* Korah's sons (including Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun) appear from David to the Josiah (1000-600 BC).
 - e.* Authorship alone accounts for potentially 800 years, and surely no less than 400.
3. *Internal Clues:*
 - a.* OT poetry is similar to ANE literature, as early as the 3rd millennium BC (e.g., Sumerian, Akkadian, Egyptian, and Ugaritic texts).
 - 1) Ugaritic texts are close in time, distance, and language. (See below, "Literature")
 - 2) There is nothing improbable about a starting date as early as the time of Moses.
 - b.* Ps 137 speaks of exile in Babylon (v 1). This dates the composition to the early 6th cen. BC. Pss 126 (v 1, 4) and 106 (v 47) may also refer to Babylonian exile.
 - c.* Internal evidence puts the time span at 800-900 years for the whole Psalter.
4. *Early Texts:*
 - a. The Septuagint* (LXX), a Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures, dates to the 2nd or 3rd centuries BC.
 - 1) It was produced in Alexandria, Egypt for the large Jewish population there. They were sufficiently Hellenized that their native tongue was Greek, and most could not speak Hebrew.
 - 2) The Hebrew and Greek texts vary in order and number, but are essentially the same. The gap between the two was large enough that many obscure title terms were problematic.
 - b. The Dead Sea Scrolls* (DSS) also add perspective.
 - 1) The two oldest Pss manuscripts are 4QPs^a and 4QPs89, both mid-2nd century BC. (Flint 145f)
 - a)* These are Hebrew texts, not Greek. By this point, the Pss were being copied and circulated.
 - b)* Even if the canon were not yet fixed, the presence of these documents suggests that the Pss as a group existed before this point.
 - c.* Early textual evidence suggests that by the mid-second century BC, the text of the Psalter was relatively fixed.
5. *OT Canon:*

- a. There is no reason to assume that the OT canon was open later than 400-300 BC. Jews believed revelation ceased after the OT era (Josephus, *Against Apion*, I:7-8). Pss would be no different.
 - b. The OT canon spans about 1000 years from the writings of Moses to the literary prophets.
 - c. If the OT canon was complete by the 4th century BC (a consensus view), the Pss would be earlier; therefore the time span in Pss is slightly shorter than the whole OT.
6. *Conclusion:* The Psalter as a whole probably spans from about 1400 or 1300 BC to about 500 or 400 BC — no less than 800 years, and surely no more than 1000 years.
 7. *Note:* This is the evidence for the Psalter as a whole. Individual ps dates are tricky. Only 14 pss have historical notes, all from David's life. Most often we can only guess.

D. Psalm Titles

1. Do the ps titles have any value? What is their value? (*Note:* For contents and function of the ps titles, as well as Book divisions see below under "Liturgy" and "Canon.")
2. *Data:* (See Appendix 2)
 - a. **34 pss lack titles** (Ps 1-2, 10, 33, 43, 71, 91, 93-97, 99, 104-107, 111-119, 135-137, 146-150). The remaining 116 pss have titles indicating several kinds of information: author, genre, musical and liturgical notes, historical context.
 - b. **14 Davidic pss include historical references** in their titles (Ps 3, 7, 18, 30, 34, 51-52, 54, 56-57, 59-60, 63, 142).

<i>Psalm</i>	<i>Context</i>	<i>Psalm</i>	<i>Context</i>
3	2 Sa 15-18	54	1 Sa 23, 26
7	(?)	56	1 Sa 21-22, 23, 27 (?)
18	1 Sa 18.1 - 2 Sa 7.1; 22	57	1 Sa 22, 24
30	Tabernacle (?) 1 Sa 6 (?)	59	1 Sa 19
34	1 Sa 21 (?)	60	2 Sa 8, 10; 2 Ch 18
51	2 Sa 11-12	63	1 Sa 23-24; 2 Sa 15
52	1 Sa 22	142	1 Sa 22, 24

3. *Some facts:*
 - a. **The titles are old.** LXX translators had difficulty understanding and properly translating them. This was c. 250-150 BC.
 - b. **The Hebrew scribes thought they were valuable.**
 - 1) J. R. Sampey observes: "The scribes who prefixed the titles had no reason for writing nonsense into their prayerbook and hymnal. These superscriptions and subscriptions all had a worthy meaning, when they were first placed beside individual psalms... Grant, for the sake of argument, that not one of them came from the pen of the writers of the Psalms, but only from editors and compilers of exilic or post-exilic days, it would still be reasonable to give attention to the views of the ancient Hebrew scholars, before considering the conjectures of modern critics on questions of authorship and date." (Sampey, 2487)
 - 2) In centuries of transcription, they could have been changed if erroneous.

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- 3) Titled pss may have been used to shape the arrangement of the Psalter, indicating their overall reliability. (See below, “Canon”)
- c. They are not without difficulties.**
- 1) If the authors wrote the titles, we would expect greater diversity in vocabulary and style. The few we have display remarkable uniformity. In fact, later mss and versions tend to add titles and variety. Hebrew, Greek and Syriac titles show wide divergence.
 - 2) Other OT pss lack titles. Few poems outside Pss have titles (*e.g.*, Hezekiah’s Song, Is 38.9-20; Habakkuk’s prayer, Hab 3). These are late compared to most pss. By contrast, manuscripts from the DSS and LXX onward have them. Some think the titles were a late trend in OT history. (Bellinger, 8)
 - 3) They are written in a 3rd person editorial mode, not 1st person. While not decisive, it is suggestive.
 - 4) Some of the titles seem anomalous.
 - a) Ps 7 refers to someone not found elsewhere in the OT.
 - b) Ps 34 refers to Abimelech; does it mean Achish (1 Sa 21.11f)?
 - c) Ps 51 refers to David’s sin with Bathsheba, but v 18 suggests a recent destruction of Jerusalem, which did not happen in David’s reign.
 - d) Ps 56 — Was he a prisoner or did he go on his own (1 Sa 21.10)?
 - e) Ps 60 is a mangled mess compared to 2 Sa 8.13f & 1 Ch 18.12f.
 - f) Ps 88 appears to have two completely different titles.
 - 5) Many titles contain unintelligible terms minimizing their value.
4. *Conclusions:* It seems best to be cautiously confident about the various ps titles.
- a. On the one hand, they are very old. Furthermore, when scribes could have added, altered, or removed them, they did not.
 - b. On the other hand, many have obscure terms rendering them unusable. Some are vague. Some information seems suspect. They seem to be written by someone besides the author to supply a context to readers unfamiliar with the text’s origin.
 - c. D. Kidner argues that they are part of the canonical Hebrew text. They are unlike the marginal Masoretic notes, which were viewed as commentary. Also, they are included in the numbering of the verses. He notes, however, that they are later than the pss they describe. (Kidner, 14a:32f)
 - d. I would liken them to NT book titles. They are probably not inspired, but have historical value.
5. *Note:* In the MT the titles are *sometimes* treated as a verse. When this happens, the verse numbers in the MT are higher (by one verse; occasionally two verses) than the numbers in the English text.
- a. Commentaries differ in their treatment: Some use the Hebrew numbers and bracket the English. Some will follow the English and bracket the Hebrew.

- b. They are: Pss 3-9, 12-13, 18-22, 30-31, 34, 36, 38-42, 44-49, 51-52 (both titles take 2 verses), 53, 54 (2 verses), 55-59, 60 (2 verses), 61-65, 67-70, 75-77, 80-81, 83-85, 88-89, 92, 102, 108, 140, 142.

II. PSALMS AS CANON

A. **Canonicity involves a book's presence in Scripture; its inspiration; its position; its function; and its origin.**

B. Position in the OT:

1. In English Bibles, the Pss are included in the Books of Poetry (with Jb, Pr, Ec, & SS).
2. Hebrew Bibles have three sections: **Torah** (Law), **Nevi'im** (Prophets), and **Kethuvim** (Writings). Pss are in the 3^d division, "The Writings." (In Lk 24.44, Jesus refers to "the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms." Pss is usually first in the 3^d division, and is the largest book, so "Psalms" was a convenient designation.)
 - a. The Hebrew Bible is called **Tanakh** [Jnt], an acronym spelled with three letters, Tav [t], Nun [n], and Kaf [k].
 - b. Each letter is the first letter in name of each of the three divisions:
 - 1) t = **Torah** [hrt] = The Five Books of Moses (Gn, Ex, Lv, Nu, Dt).
 - 2) n = **Nevi'im** [.yaybn] = The Prophets (Jos, Jg, 1-2 Sa, 1-2 Ki, Is, Jer, Ezk, Hos, Jl, Am, Ob, Jon, Mic, Nah, Hab, Zph, Hag, Zch, Mal).
 - 3) k = **Kethuvim** [.ybwtk] = The Writings (Ps, Pr, Jb, SS, Ru, La, Ec, Est, Da, Ezr, Neh, 1-2 Ch).
3. Within the **Kethuvim**, the Jews designated three books as poetic: Job, Proverbs, and Psalms, collectively called **'emeth** [tma] = *truth* (i.e., the books of truth). *'emeth* is an acronym, using the first letters of the names of each book: alef [a] for *'yov* [bwya] (Job); mem [m] for *meshallim* [.ylvm] (Proverbs); and tav [t] for *tehillim* [.ylht] (Praises, the Hebrew name for Pss). (Young 291)

C. Psalms & Inspiration:

1. Casual readers can see a difference between Pss and other OT books, which have law tablets, priestly codes, prophetic orations, or history. Pss are poems, prayers and songs.
 - a. Other OT books show God speaking to man. Pss show men speaking to God. In what sense are they "inspired?"
2. R. B. Allen notes that while some of the pss involve revelation (e.g., Pss 65, 110, etc.) most do not.
 - a. "The Psalms generally do not center on new revelation, but rather on *response* to earlier revelation. That is, the Psalms are basically expression of the believer who has heard the sure prophetic Word of God but who lives in the troubled cauldron of society. His responses are often twofold: God is great, but life is tough!... The basic thrust of the Psalms is that of *response*." (Allen, 95)
3. P. Yancey suggests that as we read the Pss ours is the perspective of someone who is looking "over-the-shoulder" of another as he or she writes a spiritual journal. "...the intended audience was not other people, but God." (Yancey, 112)
4. Specifically, the Psalms speak from *Israel's* perspective, the vantage point of a people chosen by God for a special covenant, special blessings, and special duties.

- a. “Or what great nation is there that has statutes and judgments as righteous as this whole law which I am setting before you today?” (Dt 4.8)
 - b. They prayed and sang to God because He permitted them: “For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as is the LORD our God whenever we call on Him?” (Dt 4.7).
 - c. YHWH gave them not just the *privilege* of praying to him, but the *authority* to do so. They spoke to God as covenant people. In the Pss we see how covenant people approach their God in various ways.
5. I suspect that most Israelite prayers were first spoken, then written. I doubt that as soon as Nathan left the room, David sat down and said, “I think I’ll write two prayers. I’ll call them Psalm 51 and Psalm 32.”
- a. If he was like us, he first prayed for mercy. Later, as he pondered his sin and God’s mercy, he wrote it. (I doubt that David prayed in perfect poetic parallelism, either!) God ensured that these written reflections would help us learn to approach him.
6. J. Goldingay makes several pertinent observations:
- a. “The Bible assumes that we do not know instinctively how to talk w/God but rather need some help with knowing how to do so. The Psalter is the Bible’s book of praise and prayers to provide the answer to those questions and meet that need.” (Goldingay, BCOT1, 22)
 - b. “But the Psalter teaches not by telling us how to pray but by showing us how to pray.” (23)
 - c. “The Psalms speak *from* God by showing us how to speak *to* God.” (23)
 - d. “They do not document so much their [Israel’s] seeking of God as their responding to God’s seeking of them, though this response is a spluttering and awkward one. Its incorporation in the Scriptures suggests the conviction that God accepted these prayers and praises, which could therefore provide God’s people with 150 examples of things one can say to God.” (23)

D. Collection & Organization of the Psalter:

1. Why were 150 pss chosen? When were these poems collected as a unit? What determined their organization? The answer is, “We don’t know!” Well, not with certainty, but we can infer some things by observation.
2. *Why were there 150 psalms?*
 - a. Actually, the 150 is a bit arbitrary. LXX has 151 pss; while MT has 150. Some rabbinic literature has 147, some 149. (Harrison, 987)
 - b. LXX combines MT’s 9-10, 114-115, and adds #151, which is “outside the number” (*i.e.*, noncanonical). MT combines LXX’s 114-115, 146-147.
 - c. This also means the two versions vary in their enumerations.

<i>MT</i>	<i>LXX</i>	<i>MT</i>	<i>LXX</i>
1-9	1-9.21	117-146	116-145
10	9.22-39	147.1-11	146
11-113	10-112	147.12-20	147
114-115	113	148-150	148-150

116.1-9	114	—	151
116.10-19	115		

- d.* There are also duplications within the Psalter: 14 = 53; 70 = 40.13-17; 108.1-5 = 57.7-11; 108.6-13 = 60.5-12. Also, Ps 18 = 2 Sa 22. (See below, “Divine Names.”)
3. *When did the “Book of Psalms” come into existence?*
- a.* Two Pss mss among the DSS date to the mid-2nd century BC. They have many of the Pss in some of the same groupings we have now.
- b.* 1 Chr 16.7-36 (by Asaph) contains the text of 3 pss (all anonymous): v 8-22 = Ps 105.15; v 23-33 = Ps 96.1-13; v 34ff = Ps 106.1, 47f.
- 1)* These Pss use several perfect verbs (denoting completion), so they may be later than Asaph’s hymn.
- 2)* They are from Book 3 of the Psalter, suggesting that when Chronicles was written (after exile began), three Books were extant (G. H. Wilson, 185, following B. S. Childs; Kidner, 14a:4).
- 3)* Also, at least one ps (136) dates to the exile. The collected Pss could not be earlier than the 6th century BC.
- c.* Hezekiah (three centuries after David) used Davidic material (2 Ch 29.25-30). Ezra, often credited with the formation of the canon, had Davidic material available for use 5-6 centuries after David (Ezr 3.10f).
- d.* Most conservative scholars accept a date of not later than the 4th century BC. (Young, 306; Archer, 448; Harrison, 287; Craigie, 31)
4. *Why were the Pss arranged the way they were?*
- a.* The Psalter has only one explicit statement regarding its organization: “The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended” (Ps 72.20).
- 1)* There are no other explicit indicators as seen in Proverbs (1.1; 10.1; 24.23; 25.1; 30.1; 31.1).
- 2)* We can only infer organization based upon observation of the Pss (individually and collectively).
- 3)* Probably the most complete approach to this was by the late G. H. Wilson (*The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter*, Scholar’s Press, 1985)
- b.* Various criteria seem to have been used in the collection process. Many scholars have noted many of the following observations. I am borrowing largely from Wilson without, however, attempting to reconstruct his complex argument. Wilson’s distinction was his synthesis of the data. (See Appendix 2 for title data)
- 1)* *The Pss include organizational information.*
- a)* **The Pss are arranged into five “Books”.** Jewish tradition says this corresponds with the “Five Books of Moses” (*Torah*).
- 1)* This may have merit, since Ps 1.2 blesses the man who meditates on YHWH’s law (*torah*).
- 2)* The Pss, then, are a “Torah of Praise” — Israel’s response to the Torah.

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- 3j) Beyond this, however, nothing more should be read into it. It is like the 12 apostles corresponding to the 12 tribes of Israel.
- b) **The Ps titles include the authors' names; liturgical and musical information; genre information; and historical information.**
- c) **The Pss include key words & themes used organizationally.** *E.g.*, "Hallelujah" and the "Give thanks to the Lord" (thanks = *hodu*).
- 2) *The Pss exhibit careful structure within the five Books.*
- a) **Each Book ends with a doxology.** Book 1 @ 41.13; Book 2 @ 72.18f; Book 3 @ 89.52; Book 4 @ 106.48; Book 5 @ Ps 150.
- b) **Some material is organized around authorship.**
- 1j) **Book 1 is decidedly Davidic.** Only 1, 2, 10, & 33 are anonymous (MT).
- a) The LXX combines 9 (Davidic) & 10 — together they form an alphabetic ps.
- b) Some manuscripts combine 32 & 33. They have verbal ties at the end of 32 and beginning of 33.
- 2j) **Book 2 has four authors:** Korah, Asaph, David, & Solomon, plus two anonymous authors.
- a) Korah accounts for 7 of the first 8 pss in the book.
- b) Asaph separates the Korah pss from the David group.
- c) The book ends with Solomon.
- 3j) **Book 3 has 5 authors:** Asaph, Korah, David, Heman, Ethan.
- a) The first 11 are from Asaph.
- b) Korah pss are grouped 2-2 around a David ps.
- c) Heman and Ethan, both Ezrahites, finish the book.
- 4j) **Books 4 & 5 have other authors, but are mostly anonymous.**
- a) There are 2 clusters of David pss in Book 5: Pss 108-110, 138-145.
- 5j) **Authorship changes at the beginning of Books 1-4.**
- a) Book 1 to Book 2 goes from David to Korah
- b) Book 2 to Book 3 from Solomon to Asaph
- c) Book 4 to Book 5 from Ethan to Moses.
- I} Book 4 begins with a Moses ps (90). He appears again @ 99.6; 103.7; 105.26; 106.16, 23, 32. Elsewhere only at 77.20.
- c) **Title terminology is used to combine units within the Books.**
- 1j) Pss 3-6, 19-23, 29-31, 38-41, 62-68, 82-88, 108-110, and 139-141 are all groups of *mizmor* pss.
- 2j) Pss 4-6, 11-14, 18-22, 39-42, 44-47, 51-62, 64-70, 75-77 are groups of *choir director* pss.
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- 3] Pss 49-50 go from Korah to Asaph to David. However each of those is a “psalm” (*mizmor*), thus grouping 3 authors by genre.
 - 4] Pss 52-55 are *maskil pss*. Pss 56-60 are *mikhtam pss*. Pss 83-84 go from Asaph to Korah; but each is a *mizmor*.
 - 5] Pss 87-89 are linked by **overlapping author and genre data**: the authors are Korah (87), Korah & Heman the Ezrahite (88), Ethan the Ezrahite. The genre are *mizmor/shir* (87), *shir/mizmor/maskil* (88), and *maskil* (89). It’s a bit like lining up your dominoes!
 - 6] Book 4 ends with a cluster of *hallelujah pss* (104-106). Book 5 has 2 clusters of *hallelujah pss* at each end: 111-117 (bracketed by *hodu pss* at 111, 118) and 146-150.
 - 7] Pss 118 and 136 are *hodu pss* that bracket a large section.
 - 8] Pss 120-134 (all *Pss of Ascent*) are grouped.
- 3) *The Pss use themes & words to join parts of the book.*
- a) **The Divine names appear to be clustered into groups.**
 - 1] English Bibles use two primary words for God in the OT: “LORD” (usually capitalized) and “God.” “LORD” is the “covenant name” (*Yahweh* [hwhy] or *Yah* [hy]). “God” is a more generic word. (’el [la], ’elohim [.yhla], ’eloah [hwla]).
 - 2] Pss uses both in a way that suggests an organizational principle (titles not included).
 - a] Book 1: *Yahweh*, 274x; ’el, 67x.
 - b] Book 2: *Yahweh*, 34x; ’el, 214x.
 - c] Book 3: *Yahweh*, 46x; ’el, 83x.
 - d] Book 4: *Yahweh*, 111x; ’el, 28x.
 - e] Book 5: *Yahweh*, 268x; ’el, 39x.
 - 3] This may account for duplicate material in Pss.
 - a] Ps 14 = Ps 53 — but 14 (Book 1, dominated by *Yahweh*) uses *Yahweh*; 53 (Book 2, dominated by ’elohim) uses ’elohim.
 - b] Ps 70 = Ps 40.13-17 — Both are Davidic, but 40 (Book 1) uses *Yahweh*; 70 (Book 2) uses ’elohim in several places.
 - c] Ps 108.3 (Book 5, dominated by *Yahweh*) uses *Yahweh*; the duplicate text, 57.9 uses *Adonai*.
 - b) **“Hallelujah” is used to organize the end of the Pss.**
 - 1] Each Book ends with a doxology (above).
 - a] Either they were added to the end of the pss to mark the Book boundaries; or they were originally part of the pss that precede them.
 - b] If the latter, then the pss themselves were selected to make use of the doxologies.
 - 2] There are three groups of *Hallelujah pss*: 111-113, 115-117, and 146-150.
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- a)* The first two are sandwiched between a small cluster of Davidic pss (108-110) and the *Ascent pss* (120-134).
 - b)* The final group is the formal ending of the Psalter: a response to David's imperative at 145.21b: "And all flesh will bless his holy name forever."
 - 1)* Thus, in 146, "I will praise the Lord"; in 147, Israel & Jerusalem; in 148, all creation; in 149, his godly ones; in 150, all flesh. (G. H. Wilson, 188f)
 - c) Key words are used to join various Pss.*
 - 1)* F. Delitzsch used this approach to link successive pss. Examples: Pss 50 & 51 both disparage animal sacrifice; Ps 55.7 & 56 (title) refer to the dove; 34.7 & 35.6 mention "the angel of Yahweh"; 85-86-87 are linked by the "way" of God (85.13; 86.11); the "lovingkindness" of God (85.7; 86.16); and God's inclusion of the nations (86.9; 87.4ff). (Delitzsch, 21f)
 - 2)* Other examples include: Pss 3-4-5 (morning prayer, evening prayer, morning prayer); Pss 42-43 (compare 42.9 & 43.2 — "Why do I go mourning"; also 42.5, 11; 43.5 — "Why are you in despair"); 103-104 ("Bless the Lord, O my soul").
 - 4) Placement of individual pss is deliberate.*
 - a)* Virtually all agree that Pss 1-2 were placed at the front (possibly even composed) as an introduction. Ps 150 functions as a conclusion.
 - b)* Pss 93, 95-99 are enthronement pss ("the Lord is King"). Pss 65-68 emphasize praise. Pss 105-106 are historical, with opposite emphases.
 - c)* Wilson argues that Royal pss are placed deliberately at the Book divisions to emphasize the theme of the Davidic covenant. Compare Pss 2, 41, 72 & 89.
 - 1)* He sees in this the overarching theme of the Psalter — the promise and failure of the Davidic covenant (Pss 1-89); the restoration of God as king (Pss 90-150). (Wilson, 209ff)
 - d)* Pss 118 and 136 are *hodu* pss bracketing a large section that includes the *Ascents*. Pss 118 & 135 are also similar, reinforcing the grouping — 118.2ff & 135.17ff; also 118.26 & 135.1f.
 - e)* Some pss are joined by structure.
 - 1)* Pss 9 & 10 appear to be two halves of a single alphabetic ps.
 - 2)* Pss 111 & 112 are both alphabetic, placed side-by-side.
 - 3)* Alphabetic pss are found only in Books 1 (9-10, 25, 34, 37) & 5 (111, 112, 119, 145).
 - 5. Conclusions:* The cumulative effect of these patterns is to show that the Pss are anything but random and haphazard. Their arrangement is thoughtful and purposeful. Even if we do not fully grasp the plan, these patterns should help us appreciate the Psalter: its unity, its beauty, and how the book as a whole speaks to us.
 - a.* "Its structure is perhaps best compared with that of a cathedral built and perfected over a matter of centuries, in a harmonious variety of styles, rather than a palace displaying the formal symmetry of a single and all-embracing plan." (Kidner, 14a:7)
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III. PSALMS AS LITERATURE

- A.** The pss stand in a long line of literary tradition in the ANE. Scrutinizing the affinities between the Bible and the ANE traditions helps us better understand the uniqueness of the biblical documents. Over 150 years of biblical archaeology have made this possible.
- B.** This relationship is not surprising. From Abraham's arrival in Canaan onward, God's people constantly interacted with their neighbors. Abraham traveled the extent of the Fertile Crescent. Job was apparently Arabian. Joseph and Moses lived in both Canaan and Egypt. Israel lived in Egypt for 400 years. David's ancestors came from Moab. Solomon's commerce extended from Mesopotamia to Egypt (1 Ki 4.21, 24), including Phoenicia, Syria and Hattusa (1 Ki 5; 10.29; 2 Ch 1.15ff), Egypt (1 Ki 9.24), Arabia (2 Ch 9.14), Ethiopian (1 Ki 9.26ff; 10.11f), Spain (1 Ki 10.22), and Kue (Roman Cilicia, 2 Ch 1.16). Jonah could take a boat to Spain or travel to Nineveh. Ahab married a Phoenician, Baal-worshiping princess (1 Ki 17.29-34). Israel worshipped pagan gods throughout her history (Gn 31.19; 35.1-4; Ex 32; Jg 17-18; 1 Ki 11.1ff; 25.25-33; 2 Ki 16.1-4; Am 5.25ff). They made military treaties with foreigners (1 Ki 15.16-22; 2 Ki 12.19ff; 2 Ki 16.5-20; Jer 42-45). To borrow from Paul, "this did not happen in a corner" (Ac 26.26).
- C. Palestinian Setting for the Psalms:**
- 1.** The Pss are set squarely in what we call Palestine.
 - a.** "The Psalms do not belong in Egypt, in the land of the Hittites, in the lands east of the Euphrates River, or in the islands of the sea. They belong precisely in the land of Canaan/Israel. They fit that land as a hand fits in a glove. The references to the land in the Psalms reflect a perfect knowledge of the topography and geography of the land of Israel. The climate, agriculture, animals, religious practices and culture reflect a period of time we know as the United and Divided Kingdom." (F. Jenkins, 302)
 - 2.** Jenkins' superb essay neatly categorizes the evidence. His references reflect the setting of the Pss in Palestine. Briefly, his subjects include: Geographical & Topographical References (terrain, water, earthquakes, and climate); Agriculture & Plants (crops, trees, plants); Animals (wild animals, shepherds & sheep, birds, fish); Cities (walls, gates, palaces); Metals; Housing; Music; Warfare; Religious Concepts (idols, cherubim); Neighbors of Israel. (Jenkins ,290-302)
- D. Near Eastern Setting for the Psalms:**
- 1.** As the Pss are set within the land of Israel, Israel is set within the ANE.
 - 2.** Comparable to, but larger than, Jenkins' essay is Othmar Keel's exhaustive *The Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms*. Like Jenkins, Keel finds cultural, geographical, and conceptual references in the Pss. He relates them, however, to the larger world of the ANE (Sumerian, Akkadian, Hittite, Babylonian, Egyptian, etc.).
 - a.** He emphasizes the conceptual world of Pss: Conceptions of the Cosmos; Destructive Forces; The Temple — Place of Yaweh's Presence & Sphere of Life; Conceptions of God; The King; Man Before God. (Keel, 3ff)
 - b.** Photos and sketches of statues, paintings, friezes, sculptures, pottery, obelisks, inscriptions, stelae, tombs, ossuaries, walls, gates, etc., accompany each citation.
 - 3.** The value is manifold.
 - a.** It illuminates such mundane things as the appearance of ancient structures.
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- 1) For example, the section on “The Temple” provides a visual reference for ancient religious structures and their accoutrements. (p 111-176)
 - 2) The section on “Music & Song” is loaded with sketches of ancient musical instruments. (p 335-352)
- b. It helps us better understand pagan practices.
 - c. It illuminates the ancient conceptual world. Example: falling into or being pulled from the “pit” (Heb *bor* [rwb]) refers to a cistern or abandoned well (Ps 7.15; Jer 38.6). If muddy at the bottom one would sink into the mire (Jer 38.6). If it held water, there was a danger of drowning, hence a cry for help (Ps 69.1f, 14f). It becomes a metaphor for danger (Ps 7.15; 40.2) and for death and Sheol (30.3; 28.1; 143.7). Sketches of ancient cisterns vividly bring this to life. (Keel, 71f)
 - d. Remember, however, that polytheistic pagans did not always think like monotheistic Hebrews.
 - 1) “How does one distinguish a vivid figure of speech from a cultic act? Not, surely by enquiring whether in Babylon or Ugarit the words were cultically acted out, for their gods were many, and visible, and sexual, and hungry; susceptible to magic, and revealed by omens. One might borrow their language, but it would suffer a sea-change. To ‘see the face of God’ the Israelite would need no eyes; to consult Him, no divination.” (Kidner, 14a:16)

E. Hebrew Language:

1. Hebrew is related to several ANE Semitic languages: Arabic & Ethiopic (South Semitic); Akkadian (East Semitic); Amorite, Aramaic, Syriac (North Semitic); Canaanite, Moabite, Phoenician, Ugaritic, and Hebrew (West Semitic).
2. The discovery of the Ugaritic language in the 1920s & 1930s greatly advanced our understanding of Hebrew.
 - a. Ugarit (modern Ras Shamra — Arabic for “Fennel Head”) was an independent city-kingdom that flourished from the 15th to 12th centuries BC. It was destroyed about 1200 BC. It was discovered in 1928, and subsequently excavated.
 - b. The discovery of Ugaritic, a close cousin to Hebrew (chronologically, geographically, & linguistically), was among the most significant results. The deciphering of the language, and subsequent translation of numerous texts show affinities between the languages and their poetry. (Pfeiffer, 19-23)
3. Perhaps the most important figure in the relationship of Ugaritic to Hebrew poetry was the late Mitchell Dahood. His three-volume *Anchor Bible Commentary* on the Pss was, by his admission, a translation and philological commentary on the influence of Ugaritic upon the Psalms. (Dahood, AB1 xv, xvii)
4. As with all things, however, caution is in order. The best critique of Dahood was from his colleague and friend, the late P. C. Craigie. He acknowledged the value of Ugaritic studies (he himself was an Ugaritic scholar), but offered four “controlling factors” that should be weighed in these studies: matters of chronology, geography, literary forms, and the nature of the Ugaritic textual evidence. (Craigie, 53ff)
 - a. *Chronology*: There are “...two to seven centuries which separate the Ugaritic texts from the Hebrew Psalms. The Ugaritic texts were composed, for the most part, between the fifteenth and thirteenth centuries BC; in contrast, the majority of the psalms were probably composed between the tenth and sixth centuries BC.” (53f)

- 1) *Note*: This would be like judging current American English by Elizabethan standards. A biblical example is a comparison of Aramaic and Hebrew, sister languages with the same alphabet that are different. See 2 Ki 18.26.
- b. *Geography*: “The Ugaritic poetic texts were all found in the libraries of the ancient city of Ugarit... on the Mediterranean coast of northern Syria... The Hebrew texts come from the far south, the geographical region of Palestine, from a culture and environment very different from that of Syria. At no point was there direct cultural or historical interchange between the Kingdom of Ugarit and the Hebrew Kingdoms, for the former had ceased to exist before the latter came into existence.” (54)
- 1) *Note*: A short distance can make a big difference in language. Recall the story of “Sibboleth & Shibboleth” at Jg 12.1-6. In that case the geographical difference was a matter of a few miles and crossing a river.
- c. *Literature*: “Stated simply, there are no Ugaritic psalms.” (55)
- 1) Dahood acknowledged this (AB1 xvii, xxxii)
- 2) Obviously, there is some poetry, and some poetic elements, but nothing directly comparable to a psalm. This is like comparing a legal document like the Constitution with a haiku
- d. *Textual Evidence*: “The Ugaritic texts, by virtue of the manner of their survival, are frequently broken, incomplete, partially illegible, and consequently difficult to interpret. They are written in a language which still contains words of uncertain meaning and grammatical structures which are not fully understood.” (55)

F. Near Eastern Literature:

1. Biblical skeptics claim that Israel’s religion was not revealed — it was invented. Many doubt that the early figures of Hebrew history existed (Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Samson, and even David).
 - a. If early Israel did exist, her religion was a pastiche of Near Eastern religious thought. Israel simply incorporated the religious concepts and practices of her many neighbors, and adapted them to their liking.
2. This claim is also applied to the Pss: they are unoriginal adaptations of ANE poetry.
 - a. Perhaps the best-known example of this is Ps 29. In 1935, H. L. Ginsberg, in a now-oft-cited essay, “A Phoenician Hymn in the Psalter,” argued that Ps 29 was an adaptation of a Phoenician Baal hymn. It was based upon his study of the recently discovered Ras Shamra Ugaritic texts.
 - 1) “Ginsberg based his hypothesis on features such as the following: the ‘pagan notions’ in the psalm (e.g., the emphasis on the glorification of the Lord’s ‘voice’), the Phoenician nature of the topography and toponymy, Canaanite linguistic features, and the ‘formula of Baal’s triumph’ (v10).” (Craigie, 244) The label has stuck ever since.
 - b. Craigie notes two main problems: (1) The evidence is fragmentary. No single poem exists that looks like Ps 29. The original Phoenician poem is purely theoretical. (2) There is no such thing as a Phoenician or Ugaritic hymn. They do not exist. Any comparison will be flawed. (244)
3. I would argue that, in fact, the psalmists consciously employed the literary character of other Near Eastern sources as a polemic against the gods of these nations.

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- a. An example (Ps 96.4f.)
 - 1) ⁴For great is the LORD and greatly to be praised;
He is to be feared above all gods.
⁵For all the gods of the peoples are idols,
But the LORD made the heavens.
 - b. V. 4-5 employ both a rhyme and a pun.
 - 1) “gods” in v 4 is *'elohim* [.yh3loa0]; “idols” in v 5 is *'elilim* [[.yl3yl3a0].
 - 2) The pun is in the meaning of these two words. *'elohim* is an intensive plural of a word meaning *might* or *strength* (*'el*), hence “most mighty”; *'el* is also the name of the chief Canaanite deity (father of the gods and creator). The word *'elilim* is an intensive plural of a word meaning *nothing*, hence, “nothingnesses.” The idols are a bunch of zeroes! (R. B. Allen, 84)
 - 3) Thus, Israel’s YHWH is above all gods (including *'el*); in fact, those gods are less than nothing! Israel’s YHWH (not *'el*) is the true creator!
 - 4. It is no embarrassment to say that Israelite poetry may have borrowed elements from ANE sources.
 - a. Its emphasis on YHWH as the true God; its rejection of idols; its affirmation of Israel as distinct from the nations by the gracious choice and covenant initiated, arbitrated, and maintained by YHWH — in all these ways it was uniquely Israelite.
 - b. ANE parallels are no denial of inspiration. Inspiration is not concerned with the literary character of these poems — it is concerned with their theological character.
 - c. (See the discussion in D. Berry, 221-232).
 - 5. Assessments of Near Eastern literature in relation to the Pss:
 - a. “The Old Testament psalms also differ from other psalms in the ancient Near East. The immediate distinctiveness of Hebrew psalms is their vision of faith in the one God, Yahweh (the Lord). The book of Psalms is a central expression of ancient Israel’s distinctive faith and as such encourages the community of faith to remain loyal to the one God, Yahweh.” (Bellinger, 6)
 - b. “Psalms, in short, come from a socio-historical setting in the ancient Near East and reflect Israel’s encounter with God in that setting. Theology and culture interact in the Psalms as God uses the ancient Near Eastern setting as the medium and place of revelation... The Psalms called for belief in Yahweh rather than in the Canaanite deities.” (Bellinger, 6)
 - c. “In Babylon the psalms primarily praise the one who exists, the god who exists in his world of gods. In Israel they primarily praise the God who acts marvelously by intervening in the history of his people and in the history of the individual member of his people. The gods praised in Babylon have their history among the gods. In Israel’s praise from beginning to end the basic theme is the history of God with his people.” (Westermann, Praise & Lament, 42)
 - d. “When the Egyptian psalms speak to the gods there is a preponderance of self-confident assurance, which pushes the lament and supplication into the background in favor of a contemplative or pictorial narration that rejoices in the splendour and beauty of the gods.” (Westermann, Praise & Lament, 43)
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- e. "In Egypt descriptive praise had before it as in a picture of the god, his appearance, his history, and it was then his beauty that was praised. In this praise it is not so much a question of God's being for us as it is of God's being for himself in his world of gods and in his own history." (Westermann, *Praise & Lament*, 53)
- f. "...the Egyptian never achieved a true concept of sin in the OT sense. For him evil was not rebellion against the divine command, but merely an aberration from *ma'at*, the cosmic order — it was evidence of ignorance on his part... Hence it is not surprising to find the Egyptian totally devoid of a sense of true contrition." (Thomas, 151)
- g. "Babylonian prayers show none of the noblest features of OT psalms, such as monotheism, love of the deity, and trust in divine love, nor is there any consciousness of an obstacle to God's forgiveness in the sinner's moral character and outlook." (Thomas, 112)
- h. "...Yahweh differed from the pagan gods in his essential nature. The ancient paganisms were nature religions, the gods being for the most part identified with the heavenly bodies, or the forces and functions of nature, and, like nature, without particular moral character... Through reenactment of the myth, and the performance of ritual acts designed for the renewal of cosmic powers, they were appealed to as maintainers of *status quo*... Yahweh, on the contrary, was a God of wholly different type. He was identified with no natural force, nor was he localized at any point in heaven or on earth... Yahweh was powerful over all of nature, but no one aspect of it was more characteristic of him than was another. In Israel's faith nature, though not thought of as lifeless, was robbed of personality and 'demythed.'... Yahweh's power was not, in fact, primarily associated with the repeatable events of nature, but with unrepeatable historical events. And in these events he acted purposively... Yahweh was no benign maintainer of *status quo* to be ritually appeased, but a God who had called his people from the *status quo* of dire bondage into a new future, and who demanded of them obedience to his righteous law." (Bright, 161f)

IV. PSALMS AS LITURGY

A. Liturgical Use:

1. Liturgy relates to the forms and rituals of public worship. Pss (canonical or otherwise) were used for liturgical purposes in ancient Israel. (See Ex 15.1-21; Dt 31.19, 22, 24-30; 32.1-47; 2 Sa 1.17-27; 1 Ch 16; 2 Sa 22; Is 38.9-20; Ezr 3.10ff; Neh 12.22-47).
2. *Rabbinic literature* records a variety of liturgical uses for the Pss. (NEJ, 626f)
 - a. Levites recited a **daily ps** in the temple: Ps 94 (Sunday); 48 (Monday); 82 (Tuesday); 94 (Wednesday); 81 (Thursday); 93 (Friday); 92 (Sabbath).
 - b. **The *Hallel Pss*** (113-118) were used during pilgrim festivals (Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles). Most think that the *Songs of Ascent* were used by travelers on their journey to these festivals.
 - c. Ps 24 was chanted when the Torah scroll was carried back to the Ark after the reading of the Law. Ps 29 was used if this occurred on Sabbath or festivals coinciding with Sabbath.
 - d. ***Songs of Ascent*** (120-134) are used after Sabbath afternoon services in winter. Pss 144 and 67 precede the evening service that terminates the Sabbath.
 - e. Ps 145 is recited twice each morning and at the commencement of afternoon prayers. Pss 137, 126, or 23 are used at mealtime.

3. *Liturgy in the ps texts:*

- a. The verb “praise” (*hallelu* [wllh]), a plural imperative, occurs 49x in Pss (1x in Book 1; 5x in Book 4; 43x in Book 5). This presupposes the presence of a congregation or at least a group of singers. (Broyles, 2)
- b. Some 36 pss use both singular and plural pronouns (I/me to we/us). What may begin as a personal experience is thought to have relevance to the group (e.g., Pss 44, 66). (See Appendix 3).
- c. Temple or tabernacle sacrifices are referenced, whether personal (Ps 20.1ff; 54.6; 66.13ff) or corporate (Ps 50; 107.21f; 118.26f).
- d. Jerusalem, Zion and the temple are frequent referents (Ps 2.6; 5.7; 51.18).
- e. Goldingay notes the high occurrence of words related to worship in the Pss:
 - 1) *barak* [rb] = to bow the knee (cf., 16.7); *darash* [vrd] = to have recourse to, consult, seek guidance and help from (cf., 24.6); *halal* [llh] = to make a “lalalalala” noise (cf., 22.23); *zakar* [rkz] = cause people to think about, commemorate (cf., 20.7); *zamar* [rmz] = to make music (cf., 21.13); *yadah* [hdy] = confess (cf., 30.10); *yare’* [ary] = revere (cf., 33.8); *kara’* [erk] = kneel (95.6); *abad* [dbe] = serve (cf., 100.2); *qadam* [.dq] = come near (cf., 95.2); *ranan* [nr] = make a n-n-n-n noise (cf., 33.1); *rua’* [ewr] = shout (cf., 95.1); *shabbach* [jbv] = commend (cf., 63.3); *chava* [hwj] = bow prostrate (cf., 5.7).
 - 2) He then adds: “These terms combine body words, sound words, attitude words, and words for the purpose expressed in the praise. They are notably short on references to feelings; the feelings come out in the actions... One word (*abad*) coheres with the idea that worship is something that involves the whole of life; most of the terms refer to the distinctive acts characteristic of worship in the narrow sense.” (Goldingay, BCOT1 50).

4. *Liturgy in the ps titles:*

- a. “to the choir director” (*l^mnatseach* [jxnml]): Appears in 55 Ps titles (4-6, 8-9, 11-14, 18-22, 31, 36, 39-42, 44-47, 49, 51-62, 64-70, 75-77, 80-81, 84-85, 88, 109, 139-140).
- b. “at the dedication of the house” (Ps 30); “for the Sabbath” (Ps 92); “for thanksgiving” (i.e., the thank offering) (Ps 100).

B. Music:

1. Consistently throughout the OT the Pss were used with music in both public (Ex 15.1-21; 1 Ch 16; Ezr 3.10ff; Neh 12.22-47) and private (1 Sa 16.14-23; 18.10) settings.
 - a. Several pss appear to be responsive or antiphonal choruses (Ps 20, 24, 118, 136).
 - b. Some pss have what appear to be refrains (107.1, 8, 15, 21, 31, 43).
 - c. David instituted a tradition of instrumental accompaniment that endured through Israel’s history (1 Ch 16; 2 Ch 29.25ff; Ezr 3.10ff; Neh 12.27, 36, 45f; Am 6.5).
2. A large variety of musical terms appear in the various Ps titles. (See Appendix 2).
 - a. **Genre Terms:** (i.e., the kind of composition or song)
 - 1) *mizmor* [rwmzm] = “psalm” = a song, possibly with instrumental accompaniment; possibly used only with sacred music; 57 titles (3-6, 8-9, 12-13,

15, 19-24, 29-31, 38-41, 47-51, 62-68, 73, 75-80, 82-85, 87-88, 92, 89, 100-101, 108-110, 139-141, 143); occurs with *shir* (below) 13x.

- 2) *shir* [ryv] = “**song**” = a more general term for vocal music, sacred or secular; not counting “ascents” (below), used in 16 titles (18, 30, 45-46, 48, 65-68, 75-76, 83, 87, 88, 92, 108); 13x with *mizmor*; 2x with *maskil*.
- 3) *shir hama`alot* [twlehm ryv] = “**song of ascents**” = 15 titles (120-134); “ascents” is uncertain; most think it was a pilgrim song, sung as worshippers went to Jerusalem for annual festivals; the only genre grouped in one place.
- 4) *maskil* [lykcm] = uncertain meaning; may be didactic, meditative, or skillful; 13 titles (32, 42, 44-45, 52-55, 74, 78, 88-89, 142); grouped with *shir* 2x; with *mizmor* 1x.
- 5) *miktam* [.tkm] = uncertain; some think “golden”; some think “to cover” (*i.e.*, to atone); some think “memorable”; 6 titles (16, 56-60), all Davidic.
- 6) *tefillah* [hlpt] = “**prayer**” = 5 titles (17, 86, 90, 102, 142).
- 7) *tehillah* [hlht] = “**praise**” = 1 title (145).
- 8) *shiggaion* [,wygv] = 1 title (7; *cf.* Hab 3.1); root may mean to go astray, wander, reel; some think it is a song with an irregular rhythm; some think it is penitential. (Craigie, 97)
- 9) *hazkir* [rykzh] = “**remembrance**” = 2 titles (38, 70); a memorial.
- 10) *hodu* [wdwh] = “**bless**” — not actually in the titles; however, it is the first word of 105, 107, 118, 136; it may be a distinctive type of ps.
- 11) *hallelujah* [hywllh] = “**praise Yhwh**” — not actually in the titles; the first word of 106, 111-113, 135, 146-150; seems to be a distinctive type of ps.

b. Musical Terms: (*i.e.*, musical instructions)

- 1) “**for the choir director**” (See above).
- 2) “**stringed instruments**” = *neginoth* [twnygn] — 7 titles (4, 6, 54, 55, 61, 67, 76); a generic term for stringed instruments (*cf.* the title of Ps 6); always with “choir director”.
- 3) “**flute**” = *nehiloth* [twlyjn] — Ps 5 only; a flute or pipe.
- 4) “**eight-string lyre**” = *sheminith* [gynymv] — Pss 6, 12; lit, “eighth”, so possibly means an octave (perhaps sing an octave lower than *alamoth* [sopranos]); more likely, an 8-stringed instrument; appears on lists of instruments, esp. with other stringed instruments (like a string ensemble; *cf.* 33.2; 57.8; 81.2; 92.3; 98.5; 149.3; 150.3).
- 5) “**gittith**” = [tytg] — 3 titles (8, 81, 84); related to the word Gath, which can refer to the Philistine city, or can mean “winepress”; possibly means an instrument associated with Gath; possibly a song connected with the moving of the Ark from Gath (2 Sa 6.11ff); possibly a song related to harvest (*i.e.*, the Feast of Tabernacles). (Kidner, 14a:41)
- 6) “**al-muth-labben**” = [bl twm-le] — Ps 9 only; lit, upon the death of a son; if *almuth* is taken as a single word, it could mean (Ps 46 title), for boys’ (*i.e.*, high-pitched voices); probably a tune name or a musical instruction. (Kidner, 14a:41; Craigie, 114)

- 7) *“ayeleth ha-shachar”* = [rjvh tlya] — Ps 22 only; lit., the hind of the morning; apparently a particular melody.
- 8) *“shoshannim”* = [.ynvwv] — Pss 45, 60, 69, 80 titles; “lilies”; a melody; this is not, however, without problems. (Kidner, 14a:42)
- 9) *“alamoth”* = [twmle] — Ps 42 only; “maidens”; possibly a melody; possibly an arrangement for high voices.
- 10) *“mahalath”* = [tlhm] — Ps 53, 88; “sickness” or “grief”; possibly a lament; in Ps 88, with *leannoth* [twnel], “to humble or afflict”.
- 11) *“yonath ’elem rechoqim”* = [.yqjr .la tnwy] — Ps 56 only; depending on the vocalization of *’elem*, it probably means “the dove of the far-away terebinth”, most likely a melody.
- 12) *“al-tashcheth”* = [tjvt le] — Pss 57, 58, 59, 75; lit, “do not destroy (corrupt)”; see Is 65.8; possibly a harvest song, or a “vintage” song (golden oldie?)
- 13) *“eduth”* = [twde] — Pss 60, 80 (with *shushan* or *shoshannim*); “testimony” (possibly in the sense of covenant). (Kidner, 14a: 42)
- 14) *“mahalath leannoth”* — (See above).

c. **Other terms:**

- 1) *“selah”* [hls] = uncertain meaning; 71x in all five Books; mostly in Davidic pss; mostly in pss “for the choir director”; within the text, it tends to mark important places or divisions within the text; most likely means some kind of musical interlude. (Craigie, 76f)
- 2) *“higgaion”* [,wygh] = 1x (Ps 9.16), a detached notation alongside *selah*; also in the text of 19.14 (*meditation*); 92.3 (*resounding music*); may be related to a root meaning “to moan, sigh, muse”; probably means a soft musical interlude (to allow reflection) from this point onward in the music. (Craigie, 116; Kidner, 14a: 37)

C. **Function:**

1. There are two questions related to the function of the Pss.
 - a. Were the Pss primarily for personal, private, devotional use, or for corporate, public, worship? What is their *collective* function?
 - b. What were these Pss intended to accomplish? What were the writers trying to do by means of them? What are their *individual* functions? (See below, “Forms”).
2. Personal or Corporate?
 - a. Some writers emphasize the personal aspect. They stress the placement of Ps 1 as an introduction that gives readers a hermeneutical clue to the book’s contents and purpose. The Pss are for meditation, personal use and application.
 - 1) “... in its ‘final form’ the Psalter is a book to be *read* rather than to be *performed*; to be *meditated over* rather than to be *recited from*.” (G. H. Wilson, 207; cf., Young, 309f)
 - 2) “... the Book of Psalms is fundamentally a manual for abundant living, experienced through godly living.” (Futato, Transformed, 55)
 - 3) “The message of the Psalms is simple: the Lord reigns. And the Psalms are ultimately psalms about life in God’s kingdom.” (Futato, Transformed, 101)

- b.* Others emphasize the corporate aspect. Here, form critics such as H. Gunkel and S. Mowinckel remain influential. They stressed the cultic use and origins of the Pss (described as Israel’s hymnal), emphasizing their use in public worship.
- 1) “... they were not merely read; they were performed — publicly within some kind of group.” (Broyles, 3)
 - 2) “We should not imagine that a psalm was composed when an individual encountered distress or deliverance and then wrote a psalm as a direct reflection of that experience and resulting personal feelings. Psalms, as distinct from spontaneous prose prayers, were written for worshippers to use. They are thus models of prayer for a wide variety of circumstances. They do not report on particular, actual circumstances; they sue images that befit typical situations of distress or deliverance. Psalms are not descriptive poems; they are prescriptive liturgies.” (Broyles, 3)
 - 3) “Hence, the key question is not, ‘Where does this psalm fit into David’s life?’ but ‘Where does this psalm fit into Israel’s worship?’” (Broyles, 4)
- c.* My answer is, “Both!”
- 1) The Psalter begins with an invitation to meditate upon *Torah*, and has other wisdom or didactic pss throughout. But it also ends with several corporate hymns of praise. Perhaps the idea is that personal meditation on God’s law leads us to praise and into a relationship with others who do the same.
 - 2) There are pss that clearly reflect individual, personal experiences. There are also pss that clearly reflect corporate experiences. Why emphasize one to the potential neglect of the other? (See Appendix 3).

D. Forms:

1. Broadly, I categorize the Pss in terms of three functions: **Prayer, Praise, and Prescription**. That is, each pss is an example of praying to God, worshiping God, or instruction on living before God.
 - a.* Some pss don’t easily fit these categories; some seem to fit more than one. But these help us remember what the Pss try to do.
2. Much of the discussion of form in the Pss should be traced to the late 19th and early 20th century discussion of form criticism. Form critics (most notably H. Gunkel, S. Mowinckel, and Claus Westermann) attempted to identify different kinds of pss and the settings in which they most likely occurred (the *Sitz em Leben*, “life setting”).
 - a.* Both of these are valid concerns of exegesis, and some fruit has been borne. We have a better grasp of the different types of pss, and a clearer idea of how they were used, especially in ancient Israelite worship.
 - b.* Some, however, have read too much into the cultic setting of the pss. Some get bogged down in the classification schemes. See the discussions in Craigie & Tate (WBC1s 43-48, 371-483); Kidner (14a:7-18); and the extensive references in Klein, Blomberg & Hubbard (Bib Interp, 273-319).
3. **Psalm Types:**
 - a.* Of much greater importance is being able to recognize what a ps is trying to accomplish and how it is arranged. Pss follow somewhat predictable forms in attempting to communicate their messages. But, with any of these forms, the

structure may vary from one ps to the next. Some pss are a mixture of types. (See Broyles, 9-22; Futato, *Interpreting*, 139-182; Longman, 19-36). Here I am following, with some adaptation, Longman's outline.

b. *Hymns or Songs of Praise:*

- 1) Examples: Pss 8, 19, 65, 67, 89, 113, 146-150.
- 2) Basic structure: Call to worship; followed by the reason for praise (the greatness and goodness of God); followed by a vow or another call to praise.
- 3) They can be personal (Ps 8) or corporate (Ps 113). Pss of Zion and Enthronement are sometimes included in this group.

c. *Laments or Complaints:*

- 1) This is by far the most common type of ps. Examples: Pss 4, 42, 88, 142.
- 2) Basic structure: Invocation; followed by plea for help; followed by a complaint; followed by a confession of sin or assertion of innocence; followed by a petition or curse upon the enemy; followed by a confession of confidence in God; followed by a blessing or hymn.
- 3) They can be personal (Ps 22) or corporate (Ps 80, 137). Imprecatory pss are included here (*e.g.*, Ps 35, 58, 69, 83, 109, 137). Penitential pss are usually included here (*e.g.*, Pss 51, 32, 130). Sometimes, the psalmist is angry with God (Ps 42.9).

d. *Thanksgiving Pss:*

- 1) Similar to hymns. A thanksgiving is a response to an answered lament. Claus Westermann called hymns "descriptive praise" (praise of God's attributes); he called thanksgiving pss "declarative praise" (praise of God's good works). (Westermann, *Praise & Lament*, 31f) Examples: Pss 30, 34, 48, 98, 118.
- 2) Basic structure: Declaration of intent to extol God; blessing & thanksgiving to God; restatement of the lament & account of God's dramatic deliverance; resumes his praise of God.
- 3) They can be personal (Ps 18) or corporate (Ps 118).

e. *Pss of Confidence or Trust:*

- 1) Some writers have this category. "Tone and content, rather than structure, bring them together." (Longman, 31; see also, Futato, *Interpreting*, 160-165) Examples: Pss 16, 23, 27, 62, 91, 125.
- 2) Not as urgent as laments; more confident than jubilant. The writers are calm and peaceful in the face of trouble, because of their great trust in YHWH.

f. *Pss of Remembrance or Salvation History:*

- 1) Tend to lack specific historical settings. Tend to expound upon God's deliverance of Israel from Egypt and the Davidic covenant (2 Sa 7). Examples: 78, 105, 106, 135, 136.
- 2) Similar in form to the Thanksgiving Pss. They can be lengthy. They give vivid, graphic images of God's dramatic deliverance of Israel.

g. *Wisdom or Torah Pss:*

- 1) Numerous pss look more like excerpts from Proverbs. They are samples of poetry designed to make the reader contemplate the wise and right way. Examples include Pss 1, 37, 73, 119, 127-128.
- 2) Three traits: an emphasis on living (not on worship); wisdom terminology (“Blessed is the man...”, numerical sayings, exhortations, proverbs, acrostics); common wisdom themes (contrast the wicked and the upright; problem of evil and injustice; the value of the law of God). (Broyles, 21)

h. Kingship Pss (Enthronement or Royal Pss:

- 1) Most of these may be counted as hymns. Structurally they are similar. The difference is the pronounced emphasis on the Israelite monarchy. Many of these are also interpreted as Messianic pss.
- 2) Involve both YHWH as Israel’s king and Israel’s Davidic king.
 - a) **YHWH as king**: see Pss 47, 93, 96-99. These begin with or contain the phrase *YHWH malak* [ׁלמ הוּחַ] — “The LORD reigns!”
 - b) **Davidic king**: see 2, 20, 21, 45, 72, 110. These praise God or ask God for blessings on Israel’s human king.

V. PSALMS AS POETRY

A. R. Stein describes two kinds of language in the Bible: “referential” and “commissive”.

1. The goal of referential language is to pass on information. It is descriptive, non-emotional, and factual.
2. The goal of commissive language is “evoking decisions, conveying emotions, eliciting feelings, and arousing the emotions...” It appeals to the heart, the emotions.
3. He compares the effects of reading a love letter versus reading an auto repair manual. Pss deals with commissive language couched in poetic literature. (Stein, 73f)

B. Poetry & Prose:

1. Prose is the kind of writing seen in Genesis, Exodus, Joshua, Kings, Matthew, or Acts. It is more or less straightforward narrative. It tells a story in complete sentences, paragraphs, and chapters. It has characters and plot. And although it may employ some of the same devices, it is a particular way of presenting a story.
2. When you read the Pss (except from the KJV), they *look* different. There are indentations on the left side of the text. The right side of each line does not always go all the way to the end. The right margin is jagged. There is a lot of white space. The Pss look different because they are different — they are poems. Poetry is also a way of telling a story, but it is a different way from prose.
 - a. “Prose language majors on clarity; poetic language majors on suggestiveness.” (Goldingay, BCOT1, 43)
3. Hebrew poetry has four distinctive traits: It is terse; it has a kind of rhythm; it makes extensive use of vivid imagery; it uses parallelism as its primary structural device.

a. Terseness

- 1) Most poetic lines have 3 words; occasionally they will have more or less.

- 2) Poetry achieves this with compact syntax. The definite article “the” (*ha* [h]) is frequently omitted. The relative pronoun “which” (*’asher* [rva]) is used less frequently. The direct object marker *et* [ta] is used less.
 - a) Berry compares the prose account of Deborah’s victory in Jg 4 with the poetic account in Jg 5. In Jg 4, the three grammatical markers occur > 60x; in Jg 5, they occur < 20x. (Berry, 179f)
 - b) Futato does the same with Gn 1 and Ps 104: The direct object marker occurs 26x in Gn 1, 2x in Ps 104. The relative pronoun occurs 9x in Gn 1, 2x in Ps 104. The definite article occurs 79x in Gn 1, 27x in Ps 104. (Futato, *Interpreting*, 25f)
 - c) Look at Ps 118.22 (omitted words bracketed): [The] stone [that] the builders rejected / became [the] head of [the] corner. (Long, 114)
- 3) J. Kugel calls this telegraphic communication. Example: “URGE SUPPORT TAX REFORM PACKAGE FOR INCREASE HOUSING STARTS 1980.” (Cited by Long, 114). Think of the Pss as text messages with better spelling!
- 4) Consequently, the Hebrew text is more compact than its English translation. Example: Ps 23.1 = 2 lines: Hebrew = 2 per line; 3 syllables per line. KJV = 5 words, 6 syllables in line 1; line 2 = 4 words, 4 syllables.

b. *Rhythm*

- 1) This is probably the least important aspect of Hebrew poetry. It is also hotly debated. Even if it had a rhythmic system, it could not be faithfully reproduced in English. Unless you are proficient in Hebrew, it is largely irrelevant. (See Craigie, 35-39; Alter, *Poetry*, 3ff).
- 2) Nonetheless, Hebrew does have a rhythmic character, though nothing like classic English poetry. It seems to be an incidental feature of the language. Since most lines of Hebrew poetry have 3-4 words, and most words have 2-3 syllables, a certain rhythm may be present. Commentaries may indicate the “stresses” (accents) in a line. What patterns emerge are lost in translation, so it is largely irrelevant. (Harrison, 968-972).


c. *Vivid Imagery*

- 1) M. Futato notes several characteristics about the imagery in the Pss. (See Futato, *Transformed*, 39ff; Futato, *Interpreting*, 41-49)
 - a) **Images are concrete pictures of actions or things.** The righteous are like watered, fruitful trees (Ps 1.3). The Lord is like a shepherd feeding his sheep (Ps 23.2). God’s word is like a lamp for a path (Ps 110.105).
 - b) **Images work by creating associations.** One thing is equated with another. Ps 47.9, princes = shields; Ps 127.4, sons = arrows.
 - c) **Images can have multiple meanings.** Snow can represent purity (Ps 51.7) or scattering (68.14). The “right hand” can represent honor (Ps 110.1) or power (17.7; 138.7)
 - d) **Images need to be analyzed.** Every image has a source and a target. The *source* is the literal object of comparison. “White as snow” is meaningful because we know what snow looks like. The *target* is the thing that takes on the property of the source. David (his conscience) needs to be “white as snow” (Ps 51.7).

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- 2) The Pss use **standard figures of speech** and **literary devices** in employing imagery. Some common devices include:
- a) **Simile:** Using “like” or “as” to compare 2 things. Ps 2.9 — enemies are “shattered like earthenware.” Ps 14.4 — wicked eat the righteous “as they eat bread.”
 - b) **Metaphor:** A simile without “like” or “as”. Ps 18.2 — the Lord is a rock or a fortress.
 - c) **Personification:** Human attributes are given to something nonhuman. Ps 98.8 — rivers clap their hands.
 - d) **Apostrophe:** Directly addressing someone who is absent as if he or she was present. Ps 2.10 — God in heaven addressing kings on earth.
 - e) **Hyperbole:** Overstatement or exaggeration for effect. Ps 22.14 — the psalmist’s heart melts and his bones are out of joint.
 - f) **Metonymy:** Substituting one thing for another one closely related to it. “The White House said...” means that the President said something. Ps 5.9 — “throat” = speech. Ps 17.7 — hand = power.
 - g) **Synechdoche:** Substituting a part for the whole. “I won’t give you a *dime* of my money!” Ps 44.6 — bow, sword = military might.
 - h) Several devices cannot be reproduced in English:
 - 1) **Alliteration:** Repetition of consonant sounds.
 - 2) **Assonance:** Repetition of vowel sounds.
 - 3) **Paronomasia:** Puns or plays on words.
 - d. **Parallelism** (See below)
4. Comparing prose & poetry:
- a. Probably between 1/3 and 1/2 of the OT is poetic.
 - b. Numerous poetic texts are outside Pss.
 - 1) Large portions, probably most, of the Major and Minor Prophets are poetic.
 - 2) Many poems are inserted into prose texts: The Song of the Sea (Ex 15); The Song of Moses (Dt 32); The Blessing of Moses (Dt 33); The Oracles of Balaam (Num 23-24); Deborah’s Song (Jg 5); Hannah’s Song (1 Sa 2); David’s Deliverance Hymn (2 Sa 22); Asaph’s Dedication Hymn (2 Ch 16); Hezekiah’s Song (Is 38.9-20); *etc.*
 - c. A good exercise is to compare prose and poetic accounts of the same event. For example: The Creation Story (Gn 1 & 2 — Ps 104); The Exodus of Israel from Egypt (Ex 13-14 — Ex 15); Deborah’s Victory (Jg 4 — Jg 5); The Temple Dedication (2 Ch 5.11-15 — Ps 136)

C. Parallelism:

1. The most significant characteristic of biblical poetry is parallelism. Robert Lowth’s *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews* (1753) was the first post-Reformation scholarly treatment of the subject. He demystified Hebrew poetry by suggesting the concept and identifying three basic forms: **synonymous**, **antithetic**, and **synthetic**.

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2. Though his views have been refined and modified, they remain influential. Recent criticisms suggest that his system is too simplistic; or parallelism does not work that way; or parallelism is not the key to Hebrew poetry.
 - a. To me, Lowth-bashing is like criticizing Isaac Newton for not figuring out black holes when he invented calculus. (See M. Tate, WBC1s, 371-414; Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard, Bib Interp, 284-303; Longman, How To, 94-110; Alter, Poetry, 3-26; Futato Dorsey, Structure, 18ff).
 3. *Definitions:*
 - a. Parallelism is the relationship between lines of poetry where an idea in one line is developed in successive lines.
 - 1) The idea may be developed by **repetition**, by **contrast**, by **specification**, by **addition**, by **comparison**, *etc.*
 - 2) The lines also include correspondence of **words** (semantics), **structure** (syntax), and **rhythms** (accent).
 - b. The development of the idea extends not only from line to line, but also across the **verses**, the **groups of verses**, and the **entire poem**.
 - c. At its heart, parallelism is taking an idea and looking at it in several different ways or from several different perspectives, and then developing that idea (or relating it to other ideas) throughout the poem.
 4. *Units:*
 - a. Since parallelism is a correspondence between the lines of a poem, the obvious question is, "What is a line?" Brace yourself: the terminology on this gets confusing. I describe it in this way (from small units to bigger units): the **line**; the **couplet** (or **triplet** or **quartet**, etc); the **verse**; the **strophe**; the **stanza**; the **poem**.
 - 1) The **line** is the basic unit. It corresponds to a complete clause or sentence. Some call it a *stich* (pronounced *stick*; German for "line"; plural is *stichoi*); some say *verset* (part of a verse); some say *colon* (plural is *cola*; remember Coca-Cola is tasty, Hebrew cola is good for you).
 - 2) The **couplet** is 2 lines parallel with each other. You can also have a **triplet** (3 lines), **quartet or quatrain** (4 lines), *etc.* Normally, a couplet is the same as a verse, but if verse breaks don't occur where we want, we need a way to describe a related group of lines.
 - 3) The **verse** is what we normally think of. Most of the time, verses have parallel units, but sometimes not.
 - 4) The **strophe** is a collection of related lines or couplets. "The strophe is in poetry what a paragraph is in prose." 
 - a) Fokkelmann suggests these criteria for the internal cohesion of a strophe: a complete syntactical unit; a single thought; a clear series of cola; could be a unit embedded within a speech; present a simile or metaphor; demarcate itself by an *inclusio*. (Fokkelmann, 89)
 - b) He suggests a change of strophe when there is a change in characters; verb tense; mode of sentences; grammatical person; nature of the language; subject matter; tone or genre. (Fokkelmann, 99)
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- 5) The *stanza* is a collection of related strophes. They generally occur only in longer poems. Criteria are similar to strophes. (See Dorsey, 21-41)
- b. Examples of units:
- 1) **Ps 1 (NASB95):** (See Appendix 1). V 1-2 = 2 lines each; v 2-5 = 3 lines each; v 6 = 2 lines. Same in MT (except MT v 6 has 4 lines). Has 2 strophes based upon 2 metaphors: Lord as shepherd (v 1-4); Lord as host (v 5-6).
 - 2) **Ps 46:** “selah” occurs 3 times (v 3, 7, 11). Each ends a strophe.
 - 3) **Ps 19:** Changes in style and subject mark 3 strophes: v 1-6 (hymn of creation); v 7-10 (wisdom / torah); v 11-14 (from 3rd per. to 1st & 2nd per.).
 - 4) **Ps 148:** Subject matter & location mark 3 strophes: v 1-6 (heaven); v 7-13a (earth); v 13b-14 (Israel).
 - 5) **Ps 139:** 2 stanzas marked by change of viewpoint — v 1-18 (reflection on God’s nature); v 19-24 (response to God’s nature). Strophes change subject: Stanza 1 — v 1-6 (God’s knowledge); v 7-12 (God’s presence); v 13-16 (God’s power). Stanza 2 — v 19-22 (petition to remove evildoers); v 23-24 (petition to remove evil from David)
5. *Understanding Parallelism:*
- a. Brother John Clark compared parallelism with instant replay in football. Each replay is from different angles: One shows the defender; another, the receiver; another, the actual touchdown. It is like looking at the same thing several times, gaining insights with each view. Compare Ps 1.1; 32.1f; 115.4-8.
 - b. With slight modification, we can make the analogy more useful. Imagine an ESPN summary of a close game won in the final seconds. They show a few plays from the first half. They show some plays several times (a controversial play; an injury). But, they keep moving toward the climactic 99-yard winning drive. Here, they show only key plays, some more than once. It culminates with several views of the winning score, and the final statistics.
 - 1) Now imagine Ps 1 as an ESPN summary (WWED?): (v 1-3) The righteous team made no mistakes, wasted no time, had no penalties. They had better conditioning and were flawless. (v 4-5) The wicked team was doomed. They didn’t deserve to be on the same field. (v 6) Look at these final statistics. There’s a right way to play and wrong way. In this game we saw both!
 - 2) What you see is movement through the poem. Parallelism is not static. It selectively and purposefully highlights certain things, connects them with others, and through this process guides us to a certain conclusion.
6. *Types of Parallelism:*
- a. **Synonymous** (2nd line essentially repeats 1st line): Ps 6.9; 24.1; 49.1; 117.1.
 - b. **Antithetic** (2nd line contrasts 1st line): Ps 1.6; 20.7f; 90.6.
 - c. **Climactic** (successive lines add to or complete 1st line): Ps 29.1; 48.7; 77.16; 96.1f, 7f; 137.1.
 - d. **Emblematic** (one line uses simile or metaphor): Ps 42.1; 103.13.
 - e. **Interlinear** (every other line is //): Ps 27.3; 33.13f; 127.1; 128.3.

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- f. Intensification** (successive lines intensify imagery): Ps 1.1; 48.5f; 110.6a-b.
- g. Alphabetic or Acrostic** (successive lines, verses or strophes begin with successive letters of the alphabet): Pss 9 & 10; 25; 34; 37; 111; 112; 119; 145.
- h. Chiasm or Inverted Parallelism:** Several things are stated in order; then they are restated or developed in reverse order (A-B-C & C'-B'-A').
- 1) Example: Apples, Bananas, Grapes & Sour Grapes, Mushy Bananas, Rotten Apples.
- 2) Within a verse: Ps 51.1: (A) Be gracious... (B) according to your lovingkindness // (B') according to your compassion... (A') blot out...
- 3) Within a strophe: Ps 105.1-6 (modified from J. Wilson, 44f, citing A. R. Ceresko):
- a — “among the peoples” (1)
- b — “His wonders” (2)
- c — “seek the Lord” (3)
- c' — “seek the Lord” (4)
- b' — “His wonders” (5)
- a' — “seed of Abraham; sons of Jacob” (6)
- 4) Within a poem: Ps 86 (Dorsey, 184)
- a — Opening plea (1-4): be gracious; save your servant
- b — God’s love in times of trouble (5-7): you, O Lord / abound in love
- c — Praise (8-10): O Lord / nations will glorify your name
- d — Prayer for guidance and help (v 11)
- c' — Praise (12-13): O Lord / I will glorify your name
- b' — God’s love before enemies (14-15): you, O Lord/abound in love
- a' — Closing plea (16-17): be gracious; save maidservant’s son
- i. Complex:** Several things may be happening at once. R. Chisholm⁽¹⁴⁵⁾ provides this example from Ps 5.4-6:
- 4a-4b = progressive parallelism
- 4b-5a = reiterative parallelism
- 5a-5b = explanatory parallelism
- 5b-6a = progressive parallelism
- 6a-6b = explanatory parallelism
7. *Thoughts on Parallelism:*
- a.** Pay close attention to the comparisons and contrasts. You will often be surprised at the things that are placed side-by-side.
- b.** Pay close attention to how the parallelism works. Is the 2nd part more specific? Is it an explanation? Is it comparing? Is it identifying?
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- c. Look for parallelism beyond 1 or 2 verses. Check for parallel thoughts or phrases that run throughout the strophe, stanza, or poem.
- d. Sometimes a 1-line or 3-line verse marks an important point in a psalm.

VI. SOME THOUGHTS ON STUDYING THE PSALMS

- A. The oldest complete copy of the Psalter is the Cairo Codex, a 4th century AD Coptic text. It is a 490-page leather-bound book with wooden boards. It was found in 1984 in the grave of a 12-year-old girl, nestled beneath her head. What a powerful metaphor for the comfort afforded by these songs, prayers, and meditations to innumerable saints across the centuries!
- B. It takes no expertise to enjoy the ps. Their unique content and vivid imagery easily engage readers. But with a bit of study, we can enhance our enjoyment by learning to better appreciate their artistry, careful construction, and powerful messages.
- C. However, we cannot let exegesis stand in the way of usefulness.
 - I. P. C. Craigie expressed this concern in his magisterial commentary on Pss 1-50: “The investigation of Hebrew poetry, albeit fascinating, became so complex that it was easy to lose sight of the vitality of the Psalms, not only as a part of the Bible, but also as a vehicle of worship. An immense body of scholarship devoted to the Psalms has accumulated over the centuries, and to that must be added the wealth of new knowledge flowing from archaeological discovery. But a surfeit of knowledge in the *minutiae* may lead to confusion as surely as shortage.” (Craigie, 9)
- D. Form, function, setting, and parallelism are handy exegetical tools. But they are only tools; they provide a starting point and a process. Pity the carpenter who cares more for his tools than his work!
 - I. “Interpreting a poem is not coterminous with simply identifying the various types of parallelism at work, even though the latter task can help with the former. Instead, the task of interpretation entails discerning how these parallelisms function, how they provide structure to the poem, and how the structure of these parallelisms contribute to the poem’s meaning, much of which is not contingent solely upon parallelism.” (LeMon, 512)
- E. Here are some suggestions that can help your reading of the Psalms.
 - 1. **Read the text several times from several versions.** Other versions may provide an interesting perspective. (See Appendix 1).
 - 2. **Read the text aloud.** Many of these poems were intended for public use, so they should be heard. Hearing is different from seeing, so the impact can be different.
 - 3. **Think about the text.** The Pss are designed for meditation. Think about it!
 - 4. **Study the titles carefully.** How does information about the author, the composition, the music, and the setting affect your reading and application?
 - a. “The implication is: If David responded to such events by expressing himself in a psalm, then what better way for me to respond to similar conflicts in my own life than to appropriate the words of his classical utterance?” (G. H. Wilson, 143)
 - 5. **What can you infer about the author and his circumstances from the text?** Why did he write? What was his situation? What did he hope to find?
 - 6. **What is the viewpoint of the speaker?** Is he speaking only for himself? Is he speaking as part of a group? Is he speaking as a king for his people? Is the speaker a group?

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-
7. **How is the psalm structured?** What is its form? What is its function? Can you identify the structural elements, strophes, and stanzas?
 8. **What are the key words and themes?** How are they developed within the psalm? How is parallelism used to express the theme? How does it move you through the text?
 9. **How is your own situation similar or dissimilar to the psalmist's?** What applies to you? What does not? Why?
 - a. For example, J. Goldingay (citing M. V. Rienstra) lists how a woman might apply several of the pss: "... Ps. 6 'might be the prayer of a woman who was raped,' Ps. 11 'might be the prayer of an abused woman against her inner enemies,' Ps. 16 'might be the prayer of a devout elderly widow,' Ps. 54 'might be the prayer of a woman who was the victim of slander,' and Ps. 69 'might be the prayer of a woman prophet and reformer.'" (32)

10. Finally, how could you pray this psalm? Or sing it? Or meditate upon it?

Conclusion:

- I. "Only a Philistine could fail to love the Psalms."** (R. B. Allen, 17)
- II.** Indeed, the Psalms are probably the most beloved book in the Bible. Even the marginally religious find blessing and comfort in them. Little wonder. Across barriers of time, language, and culture, they still inspire, comfort and challenge. For God's covenant people today, the Psalms should occupy a special place in our thinking, petitions, and praise.
- III.** If the Pss teach anything, it is that God's people may call upon their God and King any place at any time under any circumstances. We are assured of his power, wisdom, and care over all creation, over all nations, and especially over his own people.
- IV.** Our God reigns! Our God hears! Our God cares! Our God answers! Praise the Lord!

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Appendix 1
Psalms in Translation

This is a comparison of several major translations of the Psalms. For each translation, I have included the texts of Psalm 1 and Psalm 23. I have attempted to preserve the original formatting and layout where possible.

King James Version (KJV)

Psalm 1

- 1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.
- 2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.
- 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.
- 4 The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.
- 5 Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.
- 6 For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

Psalm 23

- 1 The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.
- 2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.
- 3 He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
- 4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.
- 5 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.
- 6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

Updated New American Standard (NAS95)

Psalm 1

- 1 How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked,
Nor stand in the path of sinners,
Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!
- 2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD,
And in His law he meditates day and night.
- 3 He will be like a tree *firmly* planted by streams of water,
Which yields its fruit in its season
And its leaf does not wither;
And in whatever he does, he prospers.
- 4 The wicked are not so,
But they are like chaff which the wind drives away.
- 5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
Nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.
- 6 For the LORD knows the way of the righteous,
But the way of the wicked will perish.

Psalm 23

- A Psalm of David.
- 1 The LORD is my shepherd,
I shall not want.
 - 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures;
He leads me beside quiet waters.
 - 3 He restores my soul;
He guides me in the paths of righteousness
For His name's sake.
 - 4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I fear no evil, for You are with me;
Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.
 - 5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
You have anointed my head with oil;
My cup overflows.
 - 6 Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life,
And I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

Holman Christian Standard Bible (HCSB)*Psalm 1*

- 1 How happy is the man
who does not follow the advice of the wicked,
or take the path of sinners,
or join a group of mockers!
- 2 Instead, his delight is in the LORD's instruction,
and he meditates on it day and night.
- 3 He is like a tree planted beside streams of water
that bears its fruit in season
and whose leaf does not wither.
Whatever he does prospers.
- 4 The wicked are not like this;
instead, they are like chaff that the wind blows
away.
- 5 Therefore the wicked will not survive the
judgment,
and sinners will not be in the community of the
righteous.
- 6 For the LORD watches over the way of the
righteous,
but the way of the wicked leads to ruin.

Psalm 23

- 1 The LORD is my shepherd;
there is nothing I lack.
- 2 He lets me lie down in green pastures;
He leads me beside quiet waters.
- 3 He renews my life;
He leads me along the right paths
for His name's sake.
- 4 Even when I go through the darkest valley,
I fear [no] danger,
for You are with me;
Your rod and Your staff — they comfort me.
- 5 You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
- 6 Only goodness and faithful love will pursue me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD
as long as I live.

English Standard Version (ESV)*Psalm 1*

- 1 Blessed is the man
who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,
nor stands in the way of sinners,
nor sits in the seat of scoffers;
- 2 but his delight is in the law of the LORD,
and on his law he meditates day and night.
- 3 He is like a tree
planted by streams of water
that yields its fruit in its season,
and its leaf does not wither.
In all that he does, he prospers.
- 4 The wicked are not so,
but are like chaff that the wind drives away.
- 5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the
judgment,
nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;
- 6 for the LORD knows the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked will perish.

Psalm 23

- 1 The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.
- 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures.
He leads me beside still waters.
- 3 He restores my soul.
He leads me in paths of righteousness
for his name's sake.
- 4 Even though I walk through the valley of the
shadow of death,
I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.
- 5 You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
- 6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD
forever.

New Century Version (NCV)*Psalm 1*

- 1 Happy are those who don't listen to the wicked,
who don't go where sinners go,
who don't do what evil people do.
- 2 They love the Lord's teachings,
and they think about those teachings day and
night.
- 3 They are strong, like a tree planted by a river.
The tree produces fruit in season,
and its leaves don't die.
Everything they do will succeed.
- 4 But wicked people are not like that.
They are like chaff that the wind blows
away.
- 5 So the wicked will not escape God's punishment.
Sinners will not worship with God's people.
- 6 This is because the Lord takes care of his people,
but the wicked will be destroyed.

Psalm 23

- 1 The Lord is my shepherd;
I have everything I need.
- 2 He lets me rest in green pastures.
He leads me to calm water.
- 3 He gives me new strength.
He leads me on paths that are right
for the good of his name.
- 4 Even if I walk through a very dark valley,
I will not be afraid,
because you are with me.
Your rod and your shepherd's staff comfort
me.
- 5 You prepare a meal for me
in front of my enemies.
You pour oil of blessing on my head;
you fill my cup to overflowing.
- 6 Surely your goodness and love will be with me
all my life,
and I will live in the house of the Lord forever.

New International Version (NIV)*Psalm 1*

- 1 Blessed is the man
who does not walk in the counsel of the
wicked
or stand in the way of sinners
or sit in the seat of mockers.
- 2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD,
and on his law he meditates day and night.
- 3 He is like a tree planted by streams of water,
which yields its fruit in season
and whose leaf does not wither.
Whatever he does prospers.
- 4 Not so the wicked!
They are like chaff
that the wind blows away.
- 5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in
the judgment,
nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.
- 6 For the LORD watches over the way of the
righteous,
but the way of the wicked will perish.

Psalm 23

- 1 The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want.
- 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters,
3 he restores my soul.
He guides me in paths of righteousness
for his name's sake.
- 4 Even though I walk
through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.
- 5 You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies.
You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
- 6 Surely goodness and love will follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD
forever.

New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)*Psalm 1*

- 1 Happy are those
 who do not follow the advice of the wicked,
 or take the path that sinners tread,
 or sit in the seat of scoffers;
- 2 but their delight is in the law of the LORD,
 and on his law they meditate day and night.
- 3 They are like trees
 planted by streams of water,
 which yield their fruit in its season,
 and their leaves do not wither.
 In all that they do, they prosper.
- 4 The wicked are not so,
 but are like chaff that the wind drives away.
- 5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the
 judgment,
 nor sinners in the congregation of the
 righteous;
- 6 for the LORD watches over the way of the
 righteous,
 but the way of the wicked will perish.

Psalm 23

- 1 The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.
- 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures;
 he leads me beside still waters;
- 3 he restores my soul.
 He leads me in right paths
 for his name's sake.
- 4 Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
 I fear no evil;
 for you are with me;
 your rod and your staff—
 they comfort me.
- 5 You prepare a table before me
 in the presence of my enemies;
 you anoint my head with oil;
 my cup overflows.
- 6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
 all the days of my life,
 and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD
 my whole life long.

Revised English Bible (REB)*Psalm 1*

- 1 Happy is the one
 who does not take the counsel of the wicked for a
 guide,
 or follow the path that sinners tread,
 or take his seat in the company of scoffers.
- 2 His delight is in the law of the Lord;
 it is his meditation day and night.
- 3 He is like a tree
 planted beside water channels;
 it yields its fruit in season
 and its foliage never fades.
 So he too prospers in all he does.
- 4 The wicked are not like this;
 rather they are like chaff driven by the wind.
- 5 When judgement comes, therefore,
 they will not stand firm,
 nor will sinners in the assembly
 of the righteous.
- 6 The Lord watches over the way of the righteous,
 but the way of the wicked is doomed.

Psalm 23

- 1 The Lord is my shepherd; I lack for nothing.
- 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures,
 he leads me to water where I may rest;
- 3 he revives my spirit;
 for his name's sake he guides me in the right
 paths.
- 4 Even were I to walk through a valley of deepest
 darkness
 I should fear no harm, for you are with me;
 your shepherd's staff and crook afford me
 comfort.
- 5 You spread a table for me in the presence of my
 enemies;
 you have richly anointed my head with oil,
 and my cup brims over.
- 6 Goodness and love unfailing will follow me
 all the days of my life,
 and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord
 throughout the years to come.

Jerusalem Publication Society (JPS)*Psalm 1*

- 1 Happy is the man who has not followed the
counsel of the wicked,
or taken the path of sinners,
or joined the company of the insolent;
- 2 rather, the teaching of the LORD is his delight,
and he studies that teaching day and night.
- 3 He is like a tree planted beside streams of water,
which yields its fruit in season,
whose foliage never fades,
and whatever it produces thrives.
- 4 Not so the wicked;
rather, they are like chaff that wind blows away.
- 5 Therefore the wicked will not survive judgment,
nor will sinners, in the assembly of the righteous.
- 6 For the LORD cherishes the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked is doomed.

Psalm 23

- 1 A psalm of David.

The LORD is my shepherd;
I lack nothing.
- 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures;
He leads me to water in places of repose;
- 3 He renews my life;
He guides me in right paths
as befits His name.
- 4 Though I walk through a valley of deepest
darkness,
I fear no harm, for You are with me;
Your rod and Your staff — they comfort me.
- 5 You spread a table for me in full view of my
enemies;
You anoint my head with oil;
my drink is abundant.
- 6 Only goodness and steadfast love shall pursue me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD
for many long years.

Robert L Alter's translation (Alter)*Psalm 1*

- 1 Happy the man who has not walked in the
wicked's counsel,
nor in the way of offenders has stood,
nor in the session of scoffers has sat.
- 2 But the LORD's teaching is his desire,
and His teaching he murmurs day and night.
- 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by streams of
water,
that bears its fruit in its season,
and its leaf does not wither —
and in all that he does he prospers.
- 4 Not so the wicked,
but like chaff that the wind drives away.
- 5 Therefore the wicked will not stand up in
judgment,
nor offenders in the band of the righteous.
- 6 For the LORD embraces the way of the righteous,
and the way of the wicked is lost.

Psalm 23

- 1 A David psalm.
The LORD is my shepherd,
I shall not want.
- 2 In grass meadows He makes me lie down,
by quiet waters guides me.
- 3 My life he brings back.
He leads me on pathways of justice
for His name's sake.
- 4 Though I walk in the vale of death's shadow,
I fear no harm,
for You are with me.
Your rod and Your staff —
it is they that console me.
- 5 You set out a table before me
in the face of my foes.
You moisten my head with oil,
my cup overflows.
- 6 Let but goodness and kindness pursue me
all the days of my life.
And I shall dwell in the house of the LORD
for many long days.

Appendix 2
Psalms Titles & Postscripts

Psalm	Author	Genre	Liturgy	Context	Postscript
1.					
2.					
3.	David	mizmor (psalm)		fleeing Absalom	
4.	David	mizmor	choir director; strings		
5.	David	mizmor	choir director; flute		
6.	David	mizmor	choir director; strings; 8-string lyre		
7.	David	shiggaion		sang <i>re</i> Cush the Benjamite	
8.	David	mizmor	choir director; gittith		
9.	David	mizmor	choir director; muth-labben		
10.					
11.	David		choir director		
12.	David	mizmor	choir director; 8-string lyre		
13.	David	mizmor	choir director		
14.	David		choir director		
15.	David	mizmor			
16.	David	miktam			
17.	David	tefillah (prayer)			
18.	David	shir (song)	choir director	deliverance from Saul & enemies	
19.	David	mizmor	choir director		
20.	David	mizmor	choir director		
21.	David	mizmor	choir director		
22.	David	mizmor	choir director; ayeleth ha-shahar		
23.	David	mizmor			
24.	David	mizmor			
25.	David				

Psalm	Author	Genre	Liturgy	Context	Postscript
26.	David				
27.	David				
28.	David				
29.	David	mizmor			
30.	David	mizmor; shir		dedication of the house	
31.	David	mizmor	choir director		
32.	David	maskil			
33.					
34.	David			insanity before Abimelech	
35.	David				
36.	David		choir director		
37.	David				
38.	David	mizmor; hazkir (remembrance)			
39.	David	mizmor	choir director; Jeduthun		
40.	David	mizmor	choir director		
41.	David	mizmor	choir director		doxology (v 13)
42.	beni-Korah	maskil	choir director		
43.					
44.	beni-Korah	maskil	choir director		
45.	beni-Korah	maskil; shir	choir director; shoshannim		
46.	beni-Korah	shir	choir director; alamoith		
47.	beni-Korah	mizmor	choir director		
48.	beni-Korah	shir; mizmor			
49.	beni-Korah	mizmor	choir director		
50.	Asaph	mizmor			
51.	David	mizmor	choir director	Nathan, David & Bathsheba	
52.	David	maskil	choir director	Doeg the	

Psalm	Author	Genre	Liturgy	Context	Postscript
				Edomite	
53.	David	maskil	choir director; mahalath		
54.	David	maskil	choir director; strings	Ziphites, Saul & David	
55.	David	maskil	choir director; strings		
56.	David	miktam	choir director; yonath elem rechoqim	David, Philistines, Gath	
57.	David	miktam	choir director; al-tashcheth	David fleeing Saul in cave	
58.	David	miktam	choir director; al-tashcheth		
59.	David	miktam	choir director; al-tashcheth	Saul guarding David's house	
60.	David	miktam	choir director; shushan eduth	David & Joab against enemies	
61.	David		choir director; strings		
62.	David	mizmor	choir director; Jeduthun		
63.	David	mizmor		wilderness of Judah	
64.	David	mizmor	choir director		
65.	David	mizmor; shir	choir director		
66.		shir; mizmor	choir director		
67.		mizmor; shir	choir director; strings		
68.	David	mizmor; shir	choir director		
69.	David		choir director; shoshannim		
70.	David	hazkir	choir director		
71.					
72.	Solomon				doxology (v 18f); prayers of David are ended
73.	Asaph	mizmor			
74.	Asaph	maskil			
75.	Asaph	mizmor; shir	choir director; al-tashcheth		
76.	Asaph	mizmor; shir	choir director; strings		
77.	Asaph	mizmor	choir director; Jeduthun		
78.	Asaph	maskil			

Psalm	Author	Genre	Liturgy	Context	Postscript
79.	Asaph	mizmor			
80.	Asaph	mizmor	choir director; el shoshannim; `eduth		
81.	Asaph		choir director; gittith		
82.	Asaph	mizmor			
83.	Asaph	shir; mizmor			
84.	beni-Korah	mizmor	choir director; gittith		
85.	beni-Korah	mizmor	choir director		
86.	David	tefillah			
87.	beni-Korah	mizmor; shir			
88.	beni-Korah; Heman the Ezrahite	shir; mizmor; maskil	choir director; mahalath leannoth		
89.	Ethan the Ezrahite	maskil			doxology (v 52)
90.	Moses	tefillah			
91.					
92.		mizmor; shir	for the Sabbath		
93.					
94.					
95.					
96.					
97.					
98.		mizmor			
99.					
100.		mizmor	for thanksgiving		
101.	David	mizmor			
102.		tefillah	affliction & complaint		
103.	David				
104.					hallelujah (v 35)

Psalm	Author	Genre	Liturgy	Context	Postscript
105.		hodu (v 1)			hallelujah (v 45)
106.		hallelujah (v 1)			doxology (v 47f); hallelujah (v 48)
107.		hodu (v 1)			
108.	David	shir; mizmor			
109.	David	mizmor	choir director		
110.	David	mizmor			
111.		hallelujah (v 1)			
112.		hallelujah (v 1)			
113.		hallelujah (v 1)			hallelujah (v 9)
114.					
115.					hallelujah (v 18)
116.					hallelujah (v 18)
117.					hallelujah (v 18)
118.		hodu (v 1)			hodu (v 29)
119.					
120.		shir hama`a lot (ascents)			
121.		shir hama`alot			
122.	David	shir hama`alot			
123.		shir hama`alot			
124.		shir hama`alot			
125.		shir hama`alot			
126.		shir hama`alot			
127.	Solomon	shir hama`alot			
128.		shir hama`alot			
129.		shir hama`alot			
130.		shir hama`alot			

Psalm	Author	Genre	Liturgy	Context	Postscript
131.	David	shir hama`alot			
132.		shir hama`alot			
133.	David	shir hama`alot			
134.		shir hama`alot			
135.		hallelujah (v 1)			hallelujah (v 21)
136.		hodu (v 1)			hodu (v 26)
137.					
138.	David				
139.	David	mizmor	choir director		
140.	David	mizmor	choir director		
141.	David	mizmor			
142.	David	maskil		David in trouble	
143.	David	mizmor			
144.	David				
145.	David	tehillah			
146.		hallelujah (v1)			hallelujah (v 10)
147.		hallelujah (v1)			hallelujah (v 20)
148.		hallelujah (v1)			hallelujah (v 14)
149.		hallelujah (v1)			hallelujah (v 9)
150.		hallelujah (v1)			doxology (v 1-6) hallelujah (v 6)

Appendix 3

Pronouns and Orientation in the Psalms

Below are lists of personal pronoun usage in the Psalms. The personal pronouns are used to help establish the “orientation” of the psalm: Is the psalmist concerned with himself? Is a group being represented? Is the psalmist speaking about himself and a group? Is the psalmist speaking to or about someone else?

Orientation usually involves more than pronouns. For example, context may suggest a primary and secondary perspective. Pronoun usage, however, is an obvious starting point. Also, when a personal pronoun is used in discourse (*e.g.*, when the psalmist quotes an opponent), this does not affect orientation.

- **“1st Person Singular Orientation”**: the psalmist uses 1st person singular pronouns exclusively to express his perspective.
- **“1st Personal Plural Orientation”**: the psalmist uses 1st person plural pronouns exclusively to express his perspective.
- **“Dual Orientation”**: the psalm uses both singular and plural pronouns to express his perspective.
- **“Narrative Orientation”**: means that the psalmist speaks in the 2nd or 3rd person as an observer.

Two conclusions are suggested:

1. It is precarious to argue that the Psalms are *primarily* corporate and liturgical (*i.e.*, for public worship), or *primarily* personal and devotional (*i.e.*, for personal meditation). It seems clear, based upon their orientations, that the Psalms serve *both* purposes.
2. First person singular psalms (largely personal complaints) are weighted toward the front end of the Psalter. Corporate psalms tend to be weighted toward the end. This progressive arrangement suggests an editorial motive in the arrangement of the book as a whole.

Book I (Pss 1-41):

- **1st Person Singular Orientation** (25): 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 13, 14, 16, 19, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 30, 31, 32, 35, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41
- **1st Person Plural Orientation** (2): 21, 33
- **Dual Orientation** (7): 8, 17, 18, 20, 22, 34, 36
- **Narrative Orientation** (7): 1, 2, 10, 12, 15, 24, 29

Book II (Pss 42-72):

- **1st Person Singular Orientation** (16): 42, 43, 45, 49, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 61, 63, 64, 69, 70, 71
- **1st Person Plural Orientation** (5): 46, 47, 48, 50, 67
- **Dual Orientation** (7): 44, 59, 60, 62, 65, 66, 68

- **Narrative Orientation** (2): 58, 72

Book III (Pss 73-89):

- **1st Person Singular Orientation** (5): 73, 82, 83, 86, 88
- **1st Person Plural Orientation** (2): 79, 80
- **Dual Orientation** (8): 74, 75, 77, 78, 81, 84, 85, 89
- **Narrative Orientation** (2): 76, 87

Book IV (Pss 90-106):

- **1st Person Singular Orientation** (4): 91, 101, 102, 104
- **1st Person Plural Orientation** (6): 90, 95, 98, 99, 100, 105
- **Dual Orientation** (4): 92, 94, 103, 106
- **Narrative Orientation** (3): 93, 96, 97

Book V (Pss 107-150):

- **1st Person Singular Orientation**
(14): 109, 110, 111, 120, 121, 130,
131, 138, 139, 140, 142, 143, 145,
146
- **1st Person Plural Orientation (9):**
113, 114, 115, 117, 124, 126, 132,
136, 147
- **Dual Orientation (10):** 108, 116,
118, 119, 122, 123, 135, 137, 141,
144
- **Narrative Orientation (11):** 107,
112, 125, 127, 128, 129, 133, 134,
148, 149, 150

Appendix 4
Psalms in the NT

This list includes direct quotations of the Psalms, paraphrases, allusions and similarities of phrasing. Some references may be questionable. The first part (arranged by Psalm texts) is from UBS-2 (906-909). A similar list is found in B. Anderson (243ff). The second part is in order of NT texts.

In order of Psalm texts

2.1 — Rv 11.18	19.9 — Rv 16.7; 19.2	32.2 — Rv 14.5	43.5 — Mt 26.38; Mk
2.1f — Ac 4.25f	21.9 — Jas 5.3	32.5 — 1 Jn 1.9	14.34
2.2 — Rv 19.19	22 — 1 Pe 1.11	33.2f — Eph 5.19	44.22 — Ro 8.36
2.7 — Mt 3.17; 17.5;	22.1 — Mt 27.46; Mk	33.3 — Rv 5.9; 14.3	45.6f — Heb 1.8f
Mk 1.11; 9.7; Lk	15.34	33.6, 9 — Heb 11.3	46.2f — Lk 21.25
3.22; 9.35; Jn	22.1-18 — Mk 9.12;	34.8 — Heb 1.14; 1	46.6 — Rv 11.18
1.49; Ac 13.33;	Lk 24.27	Pe 2.3	47.8 — Rv 4.2, 9, 10;
Heb 1.5; 5.5	22.5 — Ro 5.5	34.12-16 — 1 Pe	5.1, 7, 13; 6.16;
2.8 — Heb 1.2	22.7 — Mt 5.27.39;	3.10ff	7.10, 15; 19.4;
2.8f — Rv 2.26f	Mk 15.29	34.13 — Jas 1.26	21.5
2.9 — Rv 12.5; 19.15	22.7f — Lk 23.35f	34.14 — Heb 12.14	48.2 — Mt 5.35
2.11 — Php 2.12	22.7, 8 — Mt 26.24	34.15 — Jn 9.31	50.6 — Heb 12.23
4.4 — Eph 4.26	22.8 — Mt 27.43	34.19 — 2 Co 1.5; 2	50.12 — Ac 17.25; 1
5.9 — Ro 3.13	22.15 — Jn 19.28	Tm 3.11	Co 10.26
6.3 — Jn 12.27	22.16 — Php 3.2	34.20 — Jn 19.36	50.14 — Heb 13.15
6.8 — Mt 7.23; Lk	22.16ff — Mt 26.24	35.8 — Ro 11.9f	50.16-21 — Ro 2.21
13.27	22.18 — Mt 27.35;	35.13 — Ro 12.15	50.23 — Heb 13.15
7.9 — Rv 2.23	Mk 15.24; Lk	35.16 — Ac 7.54	51.1 — Lk 18.13
7.12 — Lk 13.3, 5	23.34; Jn 19.24	35.19 — Jn 15.25	51.4 — Lk 15.18; Ro
7.13 — Eph 6.16	22.20 — Php 3.2	36.1 — Ro 3.18	3.4
8.3 LXX — Mt 21.16	22.21 — 2 Tm 4.17	36.9 — Rv 21.6	51.5 — Jn 9.34; Ro
8.5ff LXX — Heb	22.22 — Heb 2.12;	37.4 — Mt 6.33	7.14
2.6ff	22.23 — Rv 19.5	37.11 — Mt 5.5	53.1ff — Ro 3.10ff
8.6 — 1 Co 15.27;	22.28 — Rv 11.15;	37.12 — Ac 7.54	55.22 — 1 Pe 5.7
Eph 1.22	19.6	38.11 — Lk 23.49	62.10 — Mt 19.22; 1
9.8 — Ac 17.31	23.1 — Jn 10.11; Rv	39.1 — Jas 1.26	Tm 6.17
10.7 — Ro 3.14	7.17	39.12 — Heb 11.13; 1	62.12 — Mt 16.27;
10.16 — Rv 11.15	23.2 — Rv 7.17	Pe 2.11	Ro 2.6; 2 Tm
11.6 — Rv 14.10;	23.5 — Lk 7.46	40.3 — Rv 5.9; 14.3	4.14; 1 Pe 1.17;
20.10; 21.8	24.1 — 1 Co 10.26	40.6 — Eph 5.2; Heb	Rv 2.23; 20.12f;
14.1ff — Ro 3.10ff	24.3f — Mt 5.8	10.8	22.12
14.7 — Ro 11.26f	25.11 — 1 Jn 2.12	40.6ff — Heb 10.5ff	65.7 — Lk 21.25
16.8-11 — Ac 2.25-28	25.20 — Ro 5.5	40.7 — Lk 7.19; Heb	66.10 — 1 Pe 1.7
16.9 — Jn 20.9	25.21 — Lk 6.27	10.9	66.18 — Jn 9.31
16.10 — Ac 2.31; 1	26.6 — Mt 27.24	41.9 — Mt 26.23; Mk	67.2 — Ac 28.28
Co 15.4	26.8 — Mt 23.21	14.18; Lk 22.21;	67.36 LXX — 2 Th
16.10 LXX — Ac	28.4 — Mt 16.27; 2	Jn 13.18; 17.12;	1.10
13.35	Tm 4.14; 1 Pe	Ac 1.16	68.8 — Heb 12.26
17.15 — Rv 22.4	1.17; Rv 20.12f;	41.13 — Lk 1.68; Ro	68.18 — Eph 4.8
18.2 — Lk 1.69	22.12	9.5	69.4 — Jn 15.25
18.4 — Ac 2.24	29.3 — Ac 7.2	42.2 — Rv 22.4	69.9 — Jn 2.17; Ro
18.6 — Jas 5.4	31.5 — Lk 23.46; Ac	42.5, 11 — Mt 26.38;	15.3
18.49 — Ro 15.9	7.59; 1 Pe 4.19	Mk 14.34; Jn	69.21 — Mt 27.34,
19.1 — Ro 1.20	31.24 — 1 Co 16.13	12.27	48; Mk 15.23, 36;
19.4 — Ro 10.18	32.1f — Ro 4.7f		

Lk 23.36; Jn 19.29
 69.22f — Ro 11.9f
 69.24 — Rv 16.1
 69.25 — Ac 1.20
 69.28 — Php 4.3; Rv 3.5; 13.8; 17.8; 20.12, 15; 21.27
 72.10f — Rv 21.26
 72.10, 11 — Mt 2.11
 72.15 — Mt 2.11
 72.18 — Lk 1.68
 74.2 — Ac 20.28
 75.8 — Rv 14.10; 15.7; 16.19
 78.2 — Mt 13.35
 78.4 — Eph 6.4
 78.8 — Ac 2.40
 78.15 — 1 Co 10.4
 78.24 — Jn 6.31; Rv 2.17
 78.24-29 — 1 Co 10.3
 78.31 — 1 Co 10.5
 78.37 — Ac 8.21
 78.44 — Rv 16.4
 79.1 — Lk 21.24; Rv 11.2
 79.3 — Rv 16.6
 79.6 — 1 Th 4.5; 2 Th 1.8
 79.10 — Rv 6.10; 19.2
 82.6 — Jn 10.34
 86.9 — Rv 15.4
 88.8 — Lk 23.49
 88.8 LXX — 2 Th 1.10
 89.3f — Jn 7.42
 89.4 — Jn 12.34
 89.10 — Lk 1.51
 89.11 — 1 Co 10.26
 89.20 — Ac 13.22
 89.26 — 1 Pe 1.17
 89.27 — Rv 1.5
 89.36 — Jn 12.34
 89.50f — 1 Pe 4.14
 90.4 — 2 Pe 3.8
 91.11 — Lk 4.10; Heb 1.14
 91.11f — Mt 4.6
 91.12 — Lk 4.11
 91.13 — Lk 10.19
 92.5 — Rv 15.3
 93.1 — Rv 19.6
 94.1 — 1 Th 4.6
 94.11 — 1 Co 3.20
 94.14 — Ro 11.1f
 94.19 — 2 Co 1.5
 95.7f — Heb 3.15; 4.7
 95.7-11 — Heb 3.7-11
 95.11 — Heb 3.18; 4.3, 5
 96.1 — Rv 5.9; 14.3
 96.11 — Rv 18.20
 96.13 — Ac 17.31; Rv 19.11
 97.1 — Rv 19.6
 97.3 — Rv 11.5
 97.7 — Heb 1.6
 98.1 — Rv 5.9; 14.3
 98.3 — Lk 1.54; Ac 28.28
 98.9 — Ac 17.31
 99.1 — Rv 19.6
 102.4, 11 — Jas 1.10f
 102.25ff — Heb 1.10ff
 103.3 — Mk 2.7
 103.7 — Ro 3.2
 103.8 — Jas 5.11
 103.13, 17 — Lk 1.50
 104.2 — 1 Tm 6.16
 104.4 — Heb 1.7
 104.12 — Mt 13.32
 105.8f — Lk 1.72f
 105.21 — Ac 7.10
 105.40 — Jn 6.31
 106.10 — Lk 1.71
 106.14 — 1 Co 10.6
 106.20 — Ro 1.23
 106.25ff — 1 Co 10.10
 106.37 — 1 Co 10.20
 106.45f — Lk 1.72
 106.48 — Lk 1.68
 107.3 — Mt 8.11; Lk 13.29
 107.9 — Lk 1.53
 107.20 — Ac 10.36
 109.4, 5, 7, 8 — Jn 17.12
 109.8 — Ac 1.20
 109.25 — Mt 27.39; Mk 15.29
 109.28 — 1 Co 4.12
 110.1 — Mt 22.44; 26.64; Mk 12.36; 14.62; 16.19; Lk 20.42f; 22.69; Ac 2.34f; Ro 8.34; 1 Co 15.25; Eph 1.20; Col 3.1; Heb 1.3, 13; 8.1; 10.12f; 12.2
 110.4 — Jn 12.34; Heb 5.6, 10; 6.20, 7.3, 17, 21
 111.2 — Rv 15.3
 111.4 — Jas 5.11
 111.9 — Lk 1.49, 68
 112.9 — 2 Co 9.9
 112.10 — Ac 7.54
 113-118 — Mt 26.30
 114.3-7 — Rv 20.11
 115.4-7 — Rv 9.20
 115.13 — Rv 11.18; 19.5
 116.3 — Ac 2.24
 116.10 — 2 Co 4.13
 116.11 — Ro 3.4
 117.1 — Ro 15.11
 118.6 — Ro 8.31; Heb 13.6
 118.18 — 2 Co 6.9
 118.20 — Jn 10.9
 118.22 — Lk 20.17; Ac 4.11; 1 Pe 2.4, 7
 118.22f — Mt 21.42; Mk 12.10f
 118.25f — Mk 11.9; Jn 12.13
 118.26 — Mt 21.9; 23.39; Lk 13.35; 19.38
 119.46 — Ro 1.6
 119.137 — Rv 16.5, 7; 19.2
 119.165 — 1 Jn 2.10
 122.1-5 — Jn 4.20
 125.5 — Ga 6.16
 126.5f — Lk 6.21
 128.6 — Ga 6.16
 130.8 — Ti 2.14; Rv 1.5
 132.1-5 — Ac 7.45f
 132.11 — Ac 2.30
 134.1 — Rv 19.5
 135.1 — Rv 19.5
 135.14 — Heb 10.30
 135.15ff — Rv 9.20
 137.8 — Rv 18.6
 137.9 — Lk 19.44
 139.1 — Ro 8.27
 139.14 — Rv 15.3
 139.21 — Rv 2.6
 140.3 — Ro 3.13; Jas 3.8
 141.2 — Rv 5.8; 8.3f
 141.3 — Jas 1.26
 143.2 — Ro 3.20; 1 Co 4.4; Ga 2.16
 144.9 — Rv 5.9; 14.3
 145.17 — Rv 15.3; 16.5
 145.18 — Ac 17.27
 146.6 — Ac 4.24; 14.15; 17.24; Rv 10.6; 14.7
 147.8 — Ac 14.17
 147.9 — Lk 12.24
 147.18 — Ac 10.36
 147.19f — Ro 3.2
 149.1 — Rv 5.9; 14.3

In order of NT texts

(The first text is the NT text; the text following the hyphen is the Psalm text.)

<i>Matthew</i>	16.19 — 110.1	9.31 — 34.15; 66.18	28.28 — 67.2; 98.3
2.11 — 72.10, 11, 15		9.34 — 51.5	
3.17 — 2.7	<i>Luke</i>	10.9 — 118.20	<i>Romans</i>
4.6 — 91.11f	1.49 — 111.9	10.11 — 23.1	1.16 — 119.46
5.5 — 37.11	1.50 — 103.13, 17	10.34 — 82.6	1.20 — 19.1
5.8 — 24.3f	1.51 — 89.10	12.13 — 118.25f	1.23 — 106.20
5.35 — 48.2	1.53 — 107.9	12.27 — 6.3; 42.5, 11	2.6 — 62.12
6.33 — 37.4	1.54 — 98.3	12.34 — 89.4, 36;	2.21 — 50.16-21
7.23 — 6.8	1.68 — 41.13; 72.18;	110.4	3.2 — 103.7; 147.19f
8.11 — 107.3	106.48; 111.9	13.18 — 41.9	3.4 — 51.4; 116.11
13.32 — 104.12	1.69 — 18.2	15.25 — 35.19; 69.4	3.10ff — 14.1ff;
13.35 — 78.2	1.71 — 106.10	17.12 — 41.9; 109.4,	53.1ff
16.27 — 28.4; 62.12	1.72 — 106.45f	5, 7, 8	3.13 — 5.9; 140.3
17.5 — 2.7	1.72f — 105.8f	19.24 — 22.18	3.14 — 10.7
19.22 — 62.10	3.22 — 2.7	19.28 — 22.15	3.18 — 36.1
21.9 — 118.26	4.10 — 91.11	19.29 — 69.21	3.20 — 143.2
21.16 — 8.3 LXX	4.11 — 91.12	19.36 — 34.20	4.7f — 32.1f
21.42 — 118.22f	6.21 — 126.5f	20.9 — 16.9	5.5 — 22.5; 25.20
22.44 — 110.1	6.27 — 25.21		7.14 — 51.5
23.21 — 26.8	7.19 — 40.7	<i>Acts</i>	8.27 — 139.1
23.39 — 118.26	7.46 — 23.5	1.16 — 41.9	8.31 — 118.6
26.23 — 41.9	9.35 — 2.7	1.20 — 69.25; 109.8	8.34 — 110.1
26.24 — 22.7, 8, 16ff	10.19 — 91.13	2.24 — 18.4; 116.3	8.36 — 44.22
26.30 — 113—110	12.24 — 147.9	2.25-28 — 16.8-11	9.5 — 41.13
26.38 — 42.5, 11; 43.5	13.3, 5 — 7.12	2.30 — 132.11	10.18 — 19.4
26.64 — 110.1	13.27 — 6.8	2.31 — 16.10	11.1f — 94.14
27.24 — 26.6	13.29 — 107.3	2.34f — 110.1	11.9f — 35.8; 69.22f
27.34 — 69.21	13.35 — 118.26	2.40 — 78.8	11.26f — 14.7
27.35 — 22.18	15.18 — 51.4	4.11 — 118.22	12.15 — 35.13
27.39 — 22.7; 109.25	18.13 — 51.1	4.24 — 146.6	15.3 — 69.9
27.43 — 22.8	19.38 — 118.26	4.25f — 2.1f	15.9 — 18.49
27.46 — 22.1	19.44 — 137.9	7.2 — 29.3	15.11 — 117.1
27.48 — 69.21	20.17 — 118.22	7.10 — 105.21	
	20.42f — 110.1	7.45f — 132.1-5	<i>I Corinthians</i>
<i>Mark</i>	21.24 — 79.1	7.54 — 35.16; 37.12;	3.20 — 94.11
1.11 — 2.7	21.25 — 46.2f; 65.7	112.10	4.4 — 143.2
2.7 — 103.3	22.21 — 41.9	7.59 — 31.5	4.12 — 109.28
9.7 — 2.7	22.69 — 110.1	8.21 — 78.37	10.3 — 78.24-29
9.12 — 22.1-18	23.34 — 22.18	10.36 — 107.20;	10.4 — 78.15
11.9 — 118.25f	23.35f — 22.7f	147.18	10.5 — 78.31
12.10f — 118.22f	23.36 — 69.21	13.22 — 89.20	10.6 — 106.14
12.36 — 110.1	23.46 — 31.5	13.33 — 2.7	10.10 — 106.25ff
14.18 — 41.9	23.49 — 38.11; 88.8	13.35 — 16.10 LXX	10.20 — 106.37
14.62 — 110.1	24.27 — 22.1-18	14.15 — 146.6	10.26 — 24.1; 50.12;
14.34 — 42.5, 11;		14.17 — 147.8	89.11
43.5	<i>John</i>	17.24 — 146.6	15.4 — 16.10
15.23 — 69.21	1.49 — 2.7	17.25 — 50.12	15.25 — 110.1
15.24 — 22.18	2.17 — 69.9	17.27 — 145.18	15.27 — 8.6
15.29 — 22.7; 109.25	4.20 — 122.1-5	17.31 — 9.8; 96.13;	16.13 — 31.24
15.34 — 22.1	6.31 — 78.24; 105.40	98.9	
15.36 — 69.21	7.42 — 89.3f	20.28 — 74.2	<i>2 Corinthians</i>

1.5 — 34.19; 94.19
4.13 — 116.10
6.9 — 118.18
9.9 — 112.9

Galatians

2.16 — 143.2
6.16 — 125.5; 128.6

Ephesians

1.20 — 110.1
1.22 — 8.6
4.8 — 68.18
4.26 — 4.4
5.2 — 40.6
5.19 — 33.2f
6.4 — 78.4
6.16 — 7.13

Philippians

2.12 — 2.11
3.2 — 22.16, 20
4.3 — 69.28

Colossians

3.1 — 110.1

1 Thessalonians

4.5 — 79.6
4.6 — 94.1

2 Thessalonians

1.8 — 79.6
1.10 — 67.36 LXX;
88.8 LXX

1 Timothy

6.16 — 104.2
6.17 — 62.10

2 Timothy

3.11 — 34.19
4.14 — 28.4; 62.12
4.17 — 22.21

Titus

2.14 — 130.8

Hebrews

1.2 — 2.8
1.3 — 110.1
1.5 — 2.7
1.6 — 97.7
1.7 — 104.4
1.8f — 45.6f
1.10ff — 102.25ff
1.13 — 110.1
1.14 — 34.8; 91.11
2.12 — 22.22
2.6ff — 8.5ff LXX
3.7-11 — 95.7-11
3.15 — 95.7f
3.18 — 95.11
4.3, 5 — 95.11
4.7 — 95.7f
5.5 — 2.7
5.6, 10 — 110.4
6.20 — 110.4
7.3, 17, 21 — 110.4
8.1 — 110.1
10.5ff — 40.6ff
10.8 — 40.6
10.9 — 40.7
10.12, 13 — 110.1
10.30 — 135.14
11.3 — 33.6, 9
11.13 — 39.12
12.2 — 110.1
12.14 — 34.14
12.23 — 50.6
12.26 — 68.8
13.6 — 118.6
13.15 — 50.14, 23

James

1.10f — 102.4, 11
1.26 — 34.13; 39.1;
141.3
3.8 — 140.3
5.3 — 21.9
5.4 — 18.6
5.11 — 103.8; 111.4

1 Peter

1.7 — 66.10
1.11 — 22
1.17 — 28.4; 62.12;
89.26
2.3 — 34.8
2.4, 7 — 118.22
2.11 — 39.12
3.10ff — 34.12-16
4.14 — 89.50f
4.19 — 31.5
5.7 — 55.22

2 Peter

3.8 — 90.4

1 John

1.9 — 32.5
2.10 — 119.165
2.12 — 25.11

Revelation

1.5 — 89.27; 130.8
2.6 — 139.21
2.17 — 78.24
2.23 — 7.9; 62.12
2.26f — 2.8, 9
3.5 — 69.28
4.2, 9, 10 — 47.8
5.1, 7, 13 — 47.8
5.8 — 141.2
5.9 — 33.3; 40.3;
96.1; 98.1; 144.9;
149.1
6.10 — 79.10
6.16 — 47.8
7.10, 15 — 47.8
7.17 — 23.1, 2
8.3, 4 — 141.2
9.20 — 115.4-7;
135.15ff
10.6 — 146.6
11.2 — 79.1
11.5 — 97.3
11.15 — 10.16; 22.28
11.18 — 2.1; 46.6;
115.13
12.5 — 2.9

13.8 — 69.28
14.3 — 33.3; 40.3;
96.1; 98.1; 144.9;
149.1
14.5 — 32.2
14.7 — 146.6
14.10 — 11.6; 75.8
15.3 — 92.5; 111.2;
139.14; 145.17
15.4 — 86.9
15.7 — 75.8
16.1 — 69.24
16.4 — 78.44
16.5 — 145.17
16.5, 7 — 119.137
16.6 — 79.3
16.7 — 19.9
16.19 — 75.8
17.8 — 69.28
18.6 — 137.8
18.20 — 96.11
19.2 — 19.9; 79.10;
119.137
19.4 — 47.8
19.5 — 22.23;
115.13; 134.1;
135.1
19.6 — 22.28; 93.1;
97.1; 99.1
19.11 — 96.13
19.15 — 2.9
19.19 — 2.2
20.10 — 11.6
20.11 — 114.3-7
20.12 — 69.28
20.12f — 28.4; 62.12
20.15 — 69.28
21.5 — 47.8
21.6 — 36.9
21.8 — 11.6
21.26 — 72.10f;
72.10f
21.27 — 69.28
22.4 — 17.15; 42.2
22.12 — 28.4; 62.12

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- *Psalms has more chapters than any other book (150).*
 - *It has the shortest chapter in the Bible (Ps 117, with 2 verses).*
 - *Psalms 117 is also the middle chapter of the Bible (of 1189 chapters).*
 - *It has the longest chapter in the Bible (119, with 176 verses).*
 - *The middle verse in the Bible is Ps 118.8 (of 31,173 v).*
 - *It has the most authors.*
 - *It took the longest amount of time to complete (1000 years).*
 - *It is the most quoted in the NT (about 112 times).*

Steven J. Lawson, Psalm 1-75 (Holman OT Commentary, p 1f)

