

Psalm

Psalms

...I have been accustomed to call this book, I think not inappropriately, "An Anatomy of all the Parts of the Soul;" there is not an emotion of which any one can be conscious that is not here represented as in a mirror. Or rather, the Holy Spirit has here drawn ... all the griefs, sorrows, fears, doubts, hopes, cares, perplexities, in short, all the distracting emotions with which the minds of men are wont to be agitated. The other parts of Scripture contain the commandments which God enjoined his servants to announce to us. But here the prophets themselves, seeing they are exhibited to us as speaking to God, and laying open all their inmost thoughts and affections, call, or rather draw, each of us to the examination of himself in particular...

- John Calvin, Commentary on the Psalms, Author's Preface

LESSONS

<u>WEEK</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>
1	Introduction to the Psalms / I Trust in the Lord
2	Remembering My Salvation
3	God Save Me
4	Give Thanks to the Lord
5	This Is My Father's World / God Avenge Me
6	Shout for Joy in the Lord
7	Worshipping My God
8	Remembering Who We Are
9	You Guide Me With Your Counsel
10	Your Word Is A Lamp Unto My Feet
11	My King Is Set On Zion
12	They Sang When My Savior Was Born

Introduction to the Psalms

The Bible is written in a wide variety of styles. God knows our innermost thoughts and appeals to us with a variety of styles in scripture. There are many poems throughout the Bible and the Psalms is an entire collection of poems.

Psalms is a collection of prayers and hymns used by Israel in their worship of God. Imagine yourself being summoned to worship at the temple. The service begins with a Levite rising to address the audience:

Ps 81:1-4

- 1 Sing aloud to God our strength;
shout for joy to the God of Jacob!
 - 2 Raise a song; sound the tambourine,
the sweet lyre with the harp.
 - 3 Blow the trumpet at the new moon,
at the full moon, on our feast day.
 - 4 For it is a statute for Israel,
a rule of the God of Jacob.
- ESV

The music begins in the background, perhaps the audience gives a shout at the words in verse 1, and then the Levite launches into a reflection on Israel's relationship with God down through the years. In verses 6-10, he tells the audience how God brought Israel into being. Then in verses 11-15, he admonishes the audience for their unfaithfulness to God. In verse 16, he closes by reminding them how much God cares for them and longs to bless them.

Many other psalms do not address a congregation. They instead express the deepest thoughts and feelings of an individual to God. We usually think of the Bible as a message delivered from heaven down to men. However, throughout the Bible we have conversations between people and God recorded for us and there are numerous examples of this in the Psalms. Strangely, many of these deeply personal reflections found their way into Israel's "song book." The Psalms show us how to express our "joys and sorrows, successes and failures, hopes and regrets" (Fee and Stuart, 2003).

Some poetry can be intimidating. Some of us are much more comfortable with and frequent other styles of literature. Poetry requires a "more contemplative approach and requires more continuous interpretation than ordinary language" (Ryken, 1992). Our society interacts with poetry extensively through popular music. The effect of the lyrics of modern music on our thinking is undeniable. Hopefully, there are several spiritual songs and hymns we use in our worship that resonate with you. We have our personal favorites from the song book, and perhaps our favorite psalms as well. Our response to the lyrics and even the mood conveyed by the tempo and tune of the song is shaped by our individual experience. We individually respond to different psalms in different ways. We will find ourselves living out some of them in our own lives.

I think the Psalms have an overlooked power for evangelism. Jesus concluded a series of parables on the kingdom with:

Matt 13:51-52

51 "Have you understood all these things?" They said to him, "Yes." 52 And he said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house, who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old."

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God's word is full of treasures for us to share with others. Even if a particular psalm doesn't strike you, there may be a time when your child, grandchild, spouse, friend, or neighbor would profit greatly from the message of that psalm. It will resonate exactly with their experience and help them to express what they are feeling to God. The right psalm can provide them with an avenue to "seek God, in the hope that they might feel their way toward Him, and find Him" (Acts 17:27).

How Are the Psalms Organized?

The Psalms were organized into five books going all the way back to at least the Septuagint (2nd century BC). The Psalms are not in chronological order. You might think of the books as successive volumes in a common song book. The five books are:

- Book 1: Psalms 1-41
- Book 2: Psalms 42-72
- Book 3: Psalms 73-89
- Book 4: Psalms 90-106
- Book 5: Psalms 107-150

Books 1 and 2 have a focus consistent with the early monarchy. The Psalms of the 3rd book emphasize some common themes to God's people in exile and includes several lament and wisdom psalms. Book 4 is a bit of a response to Book 3 with a strong emphasis on the unchanging sovereignty of God regardless of the state of the monarchy in Judah. Book 5 varies widely in content, but begins with a psalm of praise celebrating the return of the exiles. It ends with the five "Hallelujah" psalms.

These five books include some subsections that are also of interest. These include:

- Asaph Psalms: Psalms 73-83, share a common author
- Songs of Ascent: Psalms 120-134, likely sung by Israel as they journeyed to Jerusalem for the feast of tabernacles.
- Hallelujah Psalms: Psalms 146-150, all begin with an imperative to praise the Lord

Hebrew Poetry

The Psalms do not rhyme as we are accustomed to seeing in English and even if some had a rhythm in Hebrew, it is often lost in translation into English.

Hebrew poetry makes extensive use of images. The psalmist expresses terror in a series of images in Psalm 124.

Ps 124:1-5

If it had not been the Lord who was on our side—
let Israel now say—

2 if it had not been the Lord who was on our side
when people rose up against us,

3 then they would have swallowed us up alive,
when their anger was kindled against us;

4 then the flood would have swept us away,
the torrent would have gone over us;

5 then over us would have gone
the raging waters.

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We see another series of images used to describe prosperity in Psalm 144.

Ps 144:12-14

12 May our sons in their youth
be like plants full grown,
our daughters like corner pillars
cut for the structure of a palace;

13 may our granaries be full,
providing all kinds of produce;
may our sheep bring forth thousands
and ten thousands in our fields;

14 may our cattle be heavy with young,
suffering no mishap or failure in bearing;
may there be no cry of distress in our streets!

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The Psalms make extensive use of similes and metaphors.

- A simile announces a comparison with the formula like or as (Ps. 42:1).
- A metaphor more boldly asserts that one thing is another (Ps. 57:4).

They "ask us to *experience* the topic at hand by giving us a picture" (Ryken, 1992).

Other figures of speech are also used. These include:

- Hyperbole - a conscious exaggeration (Psa. 42:3)
- Personification - treating something inhuman, perhaps even inanimate, as though it is a person (Psa. 98:8).

Images, metaphors, hyperbole, and personification are all examples of poetic license. It is possible to misinterpret a Psalm by interpreting it too literally.

The Psalms use a distinctive sentence structure called parallelism. It can be defined as using two or more lines to express the same idea. C.S. Lewis described it as "the practice of saying the same

thing twice in different words" (Lewis, 1958). Dietrich Bonhoeffer said that thoughts were sustained in Hebrew poetry, like a note of music is sustained by the human voice, giving more time to contemplate ideas. That which seems to be unnecessary repetition to us, who are inclined to pray too hurriedly, is actually proper immersion and concentration in prayer (Bonhoeffer, 1970).

There are several kinds of parallelism, including

- Synonymous Parallelism - the psalmist introduces a thought in the first line and then focuses us upon the thought in a more specific way in the following line (Psa. 27:1).
- Antithetical Parallelism - the author introduces a topic and then contrasts it (Psalm 1). This is used far more extensively in Proverbs than it is in Psalms.
- Climatic Parallelism - the second line completes the first by repeating part of it and then adding to it (Psa. 96:7)
- Constructive Parallelism - the next line adds something fresh to the first, building on it (Psa. 19:8-10)

In addition to seeing the psalmists using poetry in successive lines, they sometimes used poetic devices in larger stanzas or strophes. Sometimes these are set off by a refrain. One of the best examples is Psalm 42 and 43. There are three strophes.

- Psalm 42:1-5
- Psalm 42:6-11
- Psalm 42:1-5

Each of these three strophes is completed with the common refrain, "Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God."

An acrostic is a special kind of strophe where the Hebrew alphabet provides the structure for the psalm. Psalms 9, 10, 25, 34, 37, 111, 112, 119, and 145 are acrostics. Other psalms use a chiasmic structure. Psalm 8 provides one of the best models for a chiasmic psalm:

- A. Benediction (Ps. 8:1)
- B. God's Rule (Ps. 8:2-3)
- C. Human Frailty (Ps. 8:4)
- C. Human Blessing (Ps. 8:5)
- B. Humanity's Rule (Ps. 8:6-8)
- A. Benediction (Ps. 8:9)

Interpreting the Psalms

C. Hassell Bullock recommends six principles for use in interpreting the Psalms (Bullock, 2001).

1. Determine Who Is Speaking - it may be the psalmist, but sometimes God is the one speaking.
2. Determine if the Psalm Is Personal or Community - the psalmist sometimes speaks as an individual, but may also speak on behalf of the entire community or nation
3. Determine for What Purpose the Psalm Was Written - in rare cases, the title provide the historical context to help with this
4. Determine the Emotional Orientation of the Psalm

5. Determine the Genre of the Psalm If Possible (trust, praise, lament, thanksgiving, Torah, wisdom, nature, imprecatory, messianic, affirmation/covenant, salvation history, penitent)
6. Determine if There Is a Refrain or Recurring Words and Phrases

I Trust in the Lord

There are several genres that can be used to classify the psalms. Examples include thanksgiving, praise, nature, and lament psalms. Some psalms are difficult to classify and may fit into more than one genre.

Several of the psalms have been characterized as trust psalms. These psalms assure us that we can have confidence in God. Even when we find ourselves in the most difficult circumstances, God can be relied on. He is faithful. His goodness and compassion never fail. Some of these psalms express the trust of the individual psalmist and others express the trust of the entire community.

The psalms of trust have some similarity to the psalms of thanksgiving. The psalms of thanksgiving always describe a trial and then express thanksgiving to God for deliverance. Although trouble always seems to be lurking in the psalms of trust, the trouble usually remains vague and the focus is instead on the psalmist expressing his trust in God.

Exercises

Can you identify one song we sing from our song book that might be considered a trust song? If so, what is the intent of this song?

Study Psalm 23

1. Who is speaking?
2. Is this a personal or community psalm?
3. For what purpose was the psalm written ?
4. What is the emotional orientation of the psalm?
5. What genre(s) is the psalm?
6. Is there a refrain or recurring words or phrases? Are there any other obvious poetic structures?

Psalm 23

The Lord Is My Shepherd

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 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.

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Study Psalm 90

1. Who is speaking?
2. Is this a personal or community psalm?
3. For what purpose was the psalm written ?
4. What is the emotional orientation of the psalm?
5. What genre(s) is the psalm?
6. Is there a refrain or recurring words or phrases? Are there any other obvious poetic structures?

Psalm 90

From Everlasting to Everlasting
A Prayer of Moses, the man of God.

1 Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations. 2 Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

3 You return man to dust and say, "Return, O children of man!" 4 For a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday when it is past, or as a watch in the night.

5 You sweep them away as with a flood; they are like a dream, like grass that is renewed in the morning: 6 in the morning it flourishes and is renewed; in the evening it fades and withers. 7 For we are brought to an end by your anger; by your wrath we are dismayed. 8 You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your presence. 9 For all our days pass away under your wrath; we bring our years to an end like a sigh. 10 The years of our life are seventy, or even by reason of strength eighty; yet their span is but toil and trouble; they are soon gone, and we fly away. 11 Who considers the power of your anger, and your wrath according to the fear of you?

12 So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom. 13 Return, O Lord! How long? Have pity on your servants! 14 Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. 15 Make us glad for as many days as you have afflicted us,

and for as many years as we have seen evil. 16 Let your work be shown to your servants, and your glorious power to their children. 17 Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands upon us; yes, establish the work of our hands!

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Remembering My Salvation

This week we will look at is the salvation-history psalms. These psalms look at Israel's history in retrospect. Contemplating God's relationship with His people in the past provides us with insight into where we stand with God. We reflect on our past for a lot of different reasons. Similarly, the intent of these psalms as the author considers Israel's history varies from psalm to psalm. Israel may have been warned, moved to thanksgiving, or encouraged to celebrate as a result of meditating on their past history as the people of God.

Exercises

Identify one song we sing that rehearses God's actions in either the Old or New Testament. What is the intent of this song?

Study Psalm 105.

1. Who is speaking?
2. Is this a personal or community psalm?
3. For what purpose was the psalm written ?
4. What is the emotional orientation of the psalm?
5. What genre(s) is the psalm?
6. Is there a refrain or recurring words or phrases? Are there any other obvious poetic structures?

Psalm 105

1 Oh give thanks to the Lord; call upon his name; make known his deeds among the peoples! 2 Sing to him, sing praises to him; tell of all his wondrous works! 3 Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice! 4 Seek the Lord and his strength; seek his presence continually! 5 Remember the wondrous works that he has done, his miracles, and the judgments he uttered, 6 O offspring of Abraham, his servant, children of Jacob, his chosen ones!

7 He is the Lord our God; his judgments are in all the earth. 8 He remembers his covenant forever, the word that he commanded, for a thousand generations, 9 the covenant that he made with Abraham, his sworn promise to Isaac, 10 which he confirmed to Jacob as a statute, to Israel as an everlasting covenant, 11 saying, "To you I will give the land of Canaan as your portion for an inheritance."

12 When they were few in number, of little account, and sojourners in it, 13 wandering from nation to nation, from one kingdom to another people, 14 he allowed no one to oppress them; he

rebuked kings on their account, 15 saying, "Touch not my anointed ones, do my prophets no harm!"

16 When he summoned a famine on the land and broke all supply of bread, 17 he had sent a man ahead of them, Joseph, who was sold as a slave. 18 His feet were hurt with fetters; his neck was put in a collar of iron; 19 until what he had said came to pass, the word of the Lord tested him. 20 The king sent and released him; the ruler of the peoples set him free; 21 he made him lord of his house and ruler of all his possessions, 22 to bind his princes at his pleasure and to teach his elders wisdom.

23 Then Israel came to Egypt; Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham. 24 And the Lord made his people very fruitful and made them stronger than their foes. 25 He turned their hearts to hate his people, to deal craftily with his servants.

26 He sent Moses, his servant, and Aaron, whom he had chosen. 27 They performed his signs among them and miracles in the land of Ham. 28 He sent darkness, and made the land dark; they did not rebel against his words. 29 He turned their waters into blood and caused their fish to die. 30 Their land swarmed with frogs, even in the chambers of their kings. 31 He spoke, and there came swarms of flies, and gnats throughout their country. 32 He gave them hail for rain, and fiery lightning bolts through their land. 33 He struck down their vines and fig trees, and shattered the trees of their country. 34 He spoke, and the locusts came, young locusts without number, 35 which devoured all the vegetation in their land and ate up the fruit of their ground. 36 He struck down all the firstborn in their land, the firstfruits of all their strength.

37 Then he brought out Israel with silver and gold, and there was none among his tribes who stumbled. 38 Egypt was glad when they departed, for dread of them had fallen upon it.

39 He spread a cloud for a covering, and fire to give light by night. 40 They asked, and he brought quail, and gave them bread from heaven in abundance. 41 He opened the rock, and water gushed out; it flowed through the desert like a river. 42 For he remembered his holy promise, and Abraham, his servant.

43 So he brought his people out with joy, his chosen ones with singing. 44 And he gave them the lands of the nations, and they took possession of the fruit of the peoples' toil, 45 that they might keep his statutes and observe his laws. Praise the Lord!

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Study Psalm 78

1. Who is speaking?
2. Is this a personal or community psalm?
3. For what purpose was the psalm written ?
4. What is the emotional orientation of the psalm?
5. What genre(s) is the psalm?

6. Is there a refrain or recurring words or phrases? Are there any other obvious poetic structures?

Psalm 78

1 Give ear, O my people, to my teaching; incline your ears to the words of my mouth! 2 I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings from of old, 3 things that we have heard and known, that our fathers have told us. 4 We will not hide them from their children, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might, and the wonders that he has done.

5 He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers to teach to their children, 6 that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children, 7 so that they should set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments; 8 and that they should not be like their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation whose heart was not steadfast, whose spirit was not faithful to God.

9 The Ephraimites, armed with the bow, turned back on the day of battle. 10 They did not keep God's covenant, but refused to walk according to his law. 11 They forgot his works and the wonders that he had shown them. 12 In the sight of their fathers he performed wonders in the land of Egypt, in the fields of Zoan. 13 He divided the sea and let them pass through it, and made the waters stand like a heap. 14 In the daytime he led them with a cloud, and all the night with a fiery light. 15 He split rocks in the wilderness and gave them drink abundantly as from the deep. 16 He made streams come out of the rock and caused waters to flow down like rivers.

17 Yet they sinned still more against him, rebelling against the Most High in the desert. 18 They tested God in their heart by demanding the food they craved. 19 They spoke against God, saying, "Can God spread a table in the wilderness? 20 He struck the rock so that water gushed out and streams overflowed. Can he also give bread or provide meat for his people?"

21 Therefore, when the Lord heard, he was full of wrath; a fire was kindled against Jacob; his anger rose against Israel, 22 because they did not believe in God and did not trust his saving power. 23 Yet he commanded the skies above and opened the doors of heaven, 24 and he rained down on them manna to eat and gave them the grain of heaven. 25 Man ate of the bread of the angels; he sent them food in abundance. 26 He caused the east wind to blow in the heavens, and by his power he led out the south wind; 27 he rained meat on them like dust, winged birds like the sand of the seas; 28 he let them fall in the midst of their camp, all around their dwellings. 29 And they ate and were well filled, for he gave them what they craved. 30 But before they had satisfied their craving, while the food was still in their mouths, 31 the anger of God rose against them, and he killed the strongest of them and laid low the young men of Israel.

32 In spite of all this, they still sinned; despite his wonders, they did not believe. 33 So he made their days vanish like a breath, and their years in terror. 34 When he killed them, they sought him; they repented and sought God earnestly. 35 They remembered that God was their rock, the Most High God their redeemer. 36 But they flattered him with their mouths; they lied to him with their tongues. 37 Their heart was not steadfast toward him; they were not faithful to his covenant. 38

Yet he, being compassionate, atoned for their iniquity and did not destroy them; he restrained his anger often and did not stir up all his wrath. 39 He remembered that they were but flesh, a wind that passes and comes not again. 40 How often they rebelled against him in the wilderness and grieved him in the desert! 41 They tested God again and again and provoked the Holy One of Israel. 42 They did not remember his power or the day when he redeemed them from the foe, 43 when he performed his signs in Egypt and his marvels in the fields of Zoan. 44 He turned their rivers to blood, so that they could not drink of their streams. 45 He sent among them swarms of flies, which devoured them, and frogs, which destroyed them. 46 He gave their crops to the destroying locust and the fruit of their labor to the locust. 47 He destroyed their vines with hail and their sycamores with frost. 48 He gave over their cattle to the hail and their flocks to thunderbolts. 49 He let loose on them his burning anger, wrath, indignation, and distress, a company of destroying angels. 50 He made a path for his anger; he did not spare them from death, but gave their lives over to the plague. 51 He struck down every firstborn in Egypt, the firstfruits of their strength in the tents of Ham. 52 Then he led out his people like sheep and guided them in the wilderness like a flock. 53 He led them in safety, so that they were not afraid, but the sea overwhelmed their enemies. 54 And he brought them to his holy land, to the mountain which his right hand had won. 55 He drove out nations before them; he apportioned them for a possession and settled the tribes of Israel in their tents.

56 Yet they tested and rebelled against the Most High God and did not keep his testimonies, 57 but turned away and acted treacherously like their fathers; they twisted like a deceitful bow. 58 For they provoked him to anger with their high places; they moved him to jealousy with their idols. 59 When God heard, he was full of wrath, and he utterly rejected Israel. 60 He forsook his dwelling at Shiloh, the tent where he dwelt among mankind, 61 and delivered his power to captivity, his glory to the hand of the foe. 62 He gave his people over to the sword and vented his wrath on his heritage. 63 Fire devoured their young men, and their young women had no marriage song. 64 Their priests fell by the sword, and their widows made no lamentation. 65 Then the Lord awoke as from sleep, like a strong man shouting because of wine. 66 And he put his adversaries to rout; he put them to everlasting shame.

67 He rejected the tent of Joseph; he did not choose the tribe of Ephraim, 68 but he chose the tribe of Judah, Mount Zion, which he loves. 69 He built his sanctuary like the high heavens, like the earth, which he has founded forever. 70 He chose David his servant and took him from the sheepfolds; 71 from following the nursing ewes he brought him to shepherd Jacob his people, Israel his inheritance. 72 With upright heart he shepherded them and guided them with his skillful hand.

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God Save Me

There are more laments than any other type of psalm. Over 60 of the psalms express suffering, disappointment, frustration, anger, guilt, and struggles to the Lord. These psalms are basically prayers for deliverance. Many of these psalms express individual suffering, but others "complain" to God on behalf of a group of people. The psalmist may express frustration with himself, with an enemy, or even with God. The laments can shock us with their boldness. Without inhibition, the psalmists expressed their pain and bewilderment. In spite of the hurt, they always came back to trusting in God.

The psalms of lament often begin with a petition, followed by a lament, a confession of trust, a petition, and a commitment to praise God.

Exercises

Can you identify one song we sing from our song book that is a lament? What is the intent of this song?

What is the difference between a lament and murmuring? How does God feel about both of these?

Study Psalm 3

1. Who is speaking?
2. Is this a personal or community psalm?
3. For what purpose was the psalm written ?
4. What is the emotional orientation of the psalm?
5. What genre(s) is the psalm?
6. Is there a refrain or recurring words or phrases? Are there any other obvious poetic structures?

Psalm 3

Save Me, O My God

A Psalm of David, when he fled from Absalom his son.

3 O Lord, how many are my foes! Many are rising against me; 2 many are saying of my soul, there is no salvation for him in God. Selah

3 But you, O Lord, are a shield about me, my glory, and the lifter of my head. 4 I cried aloud to the Lord, and he answered me from his holy hill. Selah

5 I lay down and slept; I woke again, for the Lord sustained me. 6 I will not be afraid of many thousands of people who have set themselves against me all around. 7 Arise, O Lord! Save me, O my God! For you strike all my enemies on the cheek; you break the teeth of the wicked.

8 Salvation belongs to the Lord; your blessing be on your people!

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Study Psalm 10

1. Who is speaking?
2. Is this a personal or community psalm?
3. For what purpose was the psalm written ?
4. What is the emotional orientation of the psalm?
5. What genre(s) is the psalm?
6. Is there a refrain or recurring words or phrases? Are there any other obvious poetic structures?

Psalm 10

10 Why, O Lord, do you stand afar off? Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble? 2 In arrogance the wicked hotly pursue the poor; let them be caught in the schemes that they have devised. 3 For the wicked boasts of the desires of his soul, and the one greedy for gain curses and renounces the Lord. 4 In the pride of his face the wicked does not seek him; all his thoughts are, "There is no God." 5 His ways prosper at all times; your judgments are on high, out of his sight; as for all his foes, he puffs at them. 6 He says in his heart, "I shall not be moved; throughout all generations I shall not meet adversity." 7 His mouth is filled with cursing and deceit and oppression; under his tongue are mischief and iniquity. 8 He sits in ambush in the villages; in hiding places he murders the innocent. His eyes stealthily watch for the helpless; 9 he lurks in ambush like a lion in his thicket; he lurks that he may seize the poor; he seizes the poor when he draws him into his net. 10 The helpless are crushed, sink down, and fall by his might. 11 He says in his heart, "God has forgotten, he has hidden his face, he will never see it."

12 Arise, O Lord; O God, lift up your hand; forget not the afflicted. 13 Why does the wicked renounce God and say in his heart, "You will not call to account"? 14 But you do see, for you note mischief and vexation, that you may take it into your hands; to you the helpless commits himself; you have been the helper of the fatherless. 15 Break the arm of the wicked and evildoer; call his wickedness to account till you find none.

16 The Lord is king forever and ever; the nations perish from his land. 17 O Lord, you hear the desire of the afflicted; you will strengthen their heart; you will incline your ear 18 to do justice to the fatherless and the oppressed, so that man who is of the earth may strike terror no more.

ESV

Study Psalms 42 and 43

1. Who is speaking?
2. Is this a personal or community psalm?
3. For what purpose was the psalm written ?
4. What is the emotional orientation of the psalm?
5. What genre(s) is the psalm?
6. Is there a refrain or recurring words or phrases? Are there any other obvious poetic structures?

Psalms 42-43

42 As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. 2 My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God? 3 My tears have been my food day and night, while they say to me continually, "Where is your God?" 4 These things I remember, as I pour out my soul: how I would go with the throng and lead them in procession to the house of God with glad shouts and songs of praise, a multitude keeping festival.

5 Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation 6 and my God.

My soul is cast down within me; therefore I remember you from the land of Jordan and of Hermon, from Mount Mizar. 7 Deep calls to deep at the roar of your waterfalls; all your breakers and your waves have gone over me. 8 By day the Lord commands his steadfast love, and at night his song is with me, a prayer to the God of my life. 9 I say to God, my rock: "Why have you forgotten me? Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?" 10 As with a deadly wound in my bones, my adversaries taunt me, while they say to me continually, "Where is your God?"

11 Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God.

Send Out Your Light and Your Truth

43 Vindicate me, O God, and defend my cause against an ungodly people, from the deceitful and unjust man deliver me! 2 For you are the God in whom I take refuge; why have you rejected me? Why do I go about mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?

3 Send out your light and your truth; let them lead me; let them bring me to your holy hill and to your dwelling! 4 Then I will go to the altar of God, to God my exceeding joy, and I will praise you with the lyre, O God, my God.

5 Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God.

ESV

Give Thanks to the Lord

These psalms are at the opposite end of our emotional spectrum from the laments, expressing thankfulness and joy to the Lord for his protection, blessings, and faithfulness. There are six community psalms of thanksgiving where a group expresses its thankfulness to God. Another ten psalms are included that are individual psalms of thanksgiving.

Psalms of thanksgiving vary widely in form, but often include a description of some crisis that has passed thanks to God's deliverance. The format can be very similar to a lament, but the laments were written during a trial while a thanksgiving psalm was written after the trial. Some thanksgiving psalms begin with an encouragement to worship God for His goodness in appreciation for deliverance.

Exercises

Can you identify one song we sing from our song book that is a song of thanksgiving? What is the intent of this song?

Study Psalm 67

1. Who is speaking?
2. Is this a personal or community psalm?
3. For what purpose was the psalm written ?
4. What is the emotional orientation of the psalm?
5. What genre(s) is the psalm?
6. Is there a refrain or recurring words or phrases? Are there any other obvious poetic structures?

Psalm 67

1 May God be gracious to us and bless us
and make his face to shine upon us,
Selah

2 that your way may be known on earth,
your saving power among all nations.

3 Let the peoples praise you, O God;
let all the peoples praise you!

4 Let the nations be glad and sing for joy,
for you judge the peoples with equity
and guide the nations upon earth.
Selah

5 Let the peoples praise you, O God;
let all the peoples praise you!

6 The earth has yielded its increase;

God, our God, shall bless us.
7 God shall bless us;
let all the ends of the earth fear him!
Study Psalm 107

1. Who is speaking?
2. Is this a personal or community psalm?
3. For what purpose was the psalm written ?
4. What is the emotional orientation of the psalm?
5. What genre(s) is the psalm?
6. Is there a refrain or recurring words or phrases? Are there any other obvious poetic structures?

Psalm 107

1 Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever! 2 Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he has redeemed from trouble 3 and gathered in from the lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south.

4 Some wandered in desert wastes, finding no way to a city to dwell in; 5 hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted within them. 6 Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress. 7 He led them by a straight way till they reached a city to dwell in. 8 Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love, for his wondrous works to the children of men! 9 For he satisfies the longing soul, and the hungry soul he fills with good things.

10 Some sat in darkness and in the shadow of death, prisoners in affliction and in irons, 11 for they had rebelled against the words of God, and spurned the counsel of the Most High. 12 So he bowed their hearts down with hard labor; they fell down, with none to help. 13 Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress. 14 He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and burst their bonds apart. 15 Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love, for his wondrous works to the children of men! 16 For he shatters the doors of bronze and cuts in two the bars of iron.

17 Some were fools through their sinful ways, and because of their iniquities suffered affliction; 18 they loathed any kind of food, and they drew near to the gates of death. 19 Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress. 20 He sent out his word and healed them, and delivered them from their destruction. 21 Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love, for his wondrous works to the children of men! 22 And let them offer sacrifices of thanksgiving, and tell of his deeds in songs of joy!

23 Some went down to the sea in ships, doing business on the great waters; 24 they saw the deeds of the Lord, his wondrous works in the deep. 25 For he commanded and raised the stormy wind, which lifted up the waves of the sea. 26 They mounted up to heaven; they went down to the depths; their courage melted away in their evil plight; 27 they reeled and staggered like

drunken men and were at their wits' end. 28 Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress. 29 He made the storm be still, and the waves of the sea were hushed. 30 Then they were glad that the waters were quiet, and he brought them to their desired haven. 31 Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love, for his wondrous works to the children of men! 32 Let them extol him in the congregation of the people, and praise him in the assembly of the elders.

33 He turns rivers into a desert, springs of water into thirsty ground, 34 a fruitful land into a salty waste, because of the evil of its inhabitants. 35 He turns a desert into pools of water, a parched land into springs of water. 36 And there he lets the hungry dwell, and they establish a city to live in; 37 they sow fields and plant vineyards and get a fruitful yield. 38 By his blessing they multiply greatly, and he does not let their livestock diminish.

39 When they are diminished and brought low through oppression, evil, and sorrow, 40 he pours contempt on princes and makes them wander in trackless wastes; 41 but he raises up the needy out of affliction and makes their families like flocks. 42 The upright see it and are glad, and all wickedness shuts its mouth.

43 Whoever is wise, let him attend to these things; let them consider the steadfast love of the Lord.

ESV

Study Psalm 138

1. Who is speaking?
2. Is this a personal or community psalm?
3. For what purpose was the psalm written ?
4. What is the emotional orientation of the psalm?
5. What genre(s) is the psalm?
6. Is there a refrain or recurring words or phrases? Are there any other obvious poetic structures?

Psalm 138

Give Thanks to the Lord
Of David.

1 I give you thanks, O Lord, with my whole heart;
before the gods I sing your praise;
2 I bow down toward your holy temple
and give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your faithfulness,
for you have exalted above all things
your name and your word.
3 On the day I called, you answered me;
my strength of soul you increased.

4 All the kings of the earth shall give you thanks, O Lord,
for they have heard the words of your mouth,
5 and they shall sing of the ways of the Lord,
for great is the glory of the Lord.
6 For though the Lord is high, he regards the lowly,
but the haughty he knows from afar.

7 Though I walk in the midst of trouble,
you preserve my life;
you stretch out your hand against the wrath of my enemies,
and your right hand delivers me.
8 The Lord will fulfill his purpose for me;
your steadfast love, O Lord, endures forever.
Do not forsake the work of your hands.
ESV

Study Psalm 66

1. Who is speaking?
2. Is this a personal or community psalm?
3. For what purpose was the psalm written ?
4. What is the emotional orientation of the psalm?
5. What genre(s) is the psalm?
6. Is there a refrain or recurring words or phrases? Are there any other obvious poetic structures?

Psalm 66

1 Shout for joy to God, all the earth; 2 sing the glory of his name; give to him glorious praise! 3 Say to God, "How awesome are your deeds! So great is your power that your enemies come cringing to you. 4 All the earth worships you and sings praises to you; they sing praises to your name."Selah

5 Come and see what God has done: he is awesome in his deeds toward the children of man. 6 He turned the sea into dry land; they passed through the river on foot. There did we rejoice in him, 7 who rules by his might forever, whose eyes keep watch on the nations—let not the rebellious exalt themselves. Selah

8 Bless our God, O peoples; let the sound of his praise be heard, 9 who has kept our soul among the living and has not let our feet slip. 10 For you, O God, have tested us; you have tried us as silver is tried. 11 You brought us into the net; you laid a crushing burden on our backs; 12 you let men ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water; yet you have brought us out to a place of abundance.

13 I will come into your house with burnt offerings; I will perform my vows to you, 14 that which my lips uttered and my mouth promised when I was in trouble. 15 I will offer to you burnt offerings of fattened animals, with the smoke of the sacrifice of rams; I will make an offering of bulls and goats. Selah

16 Come and hear, all you who fear God, and I will tell what he has done for my soul. 17 I cried to him with my mouth, and high praise was on my tongue. 18 If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened. 19 But truly God has listened; he has attended to the voice of my prayer.

20 Blessed be God, because he has not rejected my prayer or removed his steadfast love from me!

This Is My Father's World

There are five psalms where nature is the chief subject, but many other psalms have references to nature. The psalmists impress upon us the awe that we should have for the Lord by reminding us that the forces of nature were established and continue to be governed by God. Nature reveals the power and wisdom of its Creator, but it also reminds us of His care.

Exercises

Can you identify one song we sing from our song book that might be considered a nature song? What is the intent of this song?

Study Psalm 104

1. Who is speaking?
2. Is this a personal or community psalm?
3. For what purpose was the psalm written ?
4. What is the emotional orientation of the psalm?
5. What genre(s) is the psalm?
6. Is there a refrain or recurring words or phrases? Are there any other obvious poetic structures?
7. **Extra:** Identify each aspect of nature that the psalmist references in this psalm.

Psalm 104

1 Bless the Lord, O my soul! O Lord my God, you are very great! You are clothed with splendor and majesty, 2 covering yourself with light as with a garment, stretching out the heavens like a tent. 3 He lays the beams of his chambers on the waters; he makes the clouds his chariot; he rides on the wings of the wind; 4 he makes his messengers winds, his ministers a flaming fire.

5 He set the earth on its foundations, so that it should never be moved. 6 You covered it with the deep as with a garment; the waters stood above the mountains. 7 At your rebuke they fled; at the sound of your thunder they took to flight. 8 The mountains rose, the valleys sank down to the place that you appointed for them. 9 You set a boundary that they may not pass, so that they might not again cover the earth.

10 You make springs gush forth in the valleys; they flow between the hills; 11 they give drink to every beast of the field; the wild donkeys quench their thirst. 12 Beside them the birds of the heavens dwell; they sing among the branches. 13 From your lofty abode you water the mountains; the earth is satisfied with the fruit of your work.

14 You cause the grass to grow for the livestock and plants for man to cultivate, that he may bring forth food from the earth 15 and wine to gladden the heart of man, oil to make his face shine and bread to strengthen man's heart.

16 The trees of the Lord are watered abundantly, the cedars of Lebanon that he planted. 17 In them the birds build their nests; the stork has her home in the fir trees. 18 The high mountains are for the wild goats; the rocks are a refuge for the rock badgers.

19 He made the moon to mark the seasons; the sun knows its time for setting. 20 You make darkness, and it is night, when all the beasts of the forest creep about. 21 The young lions roar for their prey, seeking their food from God. 22 When the sun rises, they steal away and lie down in their dens. 23 Man goes out to his work and to his labor until the evening.

24 O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom have you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures. 25 Here is the sea, great and wide, which teems with creatures innumerable, living things both small and great. 26 There go the ships, and Leviathan, which you formed to play in it.

27 These all look to you, to give them their food in due season. 28 When you give it to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are filled with good things. 29 When you hide your face, they are dismayed; when you take away their breath, they die and return to their dust. 30 When you send forth your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the ground.

31 May the glory of the Lord endure forever; may the Lord rejoice in his works, 32 who looks on the earth and it trembles, who touches the mountains and they smoke! 33 I will sing to the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have being. 34 May my meditation be pleasing to him, for I rejoice in the Lord. 35 Let sinners be consumed from the earth, and let the wicked be no more! Bless the Lord, O my soul! Praise the Lord!

ESV

Study Psalm 19

1. Who is speaking?
2. Is this a personal or community psalm?

3. For what purpose was the psalm written ?
4. What is the emotional orientation of the psalm?
5. What genre(s) is the psalm?
6. Is there a refrain or recurring words or phrases? Are there any other obvious poetic structures?
7. **Extra:** Identify each aspect of nature that the psalmist references in this psalm.

Psalm 19

1 The Heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. 2 Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. 3 There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard. 4 Their measuring line goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them he has set a tent for the sun, 5 which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber, and, like a strong man, runs its course with joy. 6 Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them, and there is nothing hidden from its heat.

7 The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; 8 the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; 9 the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the rules of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether. 10 More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb. 11 Moreover, by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.

12 Who can discern his errors? Declare me innocent from hidden faults. 13 Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me! Then I shall be blameless, and innocent of great transgression.

14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.

ESV

God Avenge Me

No matter how sad or how happy we are, there is a psalm that is in tune with what we feel. There are even psalms that express anger and frustration, sometimes flirting with bitterness and even hatred. These are called imprecatory psalms. They are a special kind of lament.

Anger is an emotion we live with and sometimes struggle with. Paul cautioned the Ephesians not to sin when they were angry. The psalms provide some clues on how to strike the proper balance. We have the words of men who channeled their anger to God in prayer. If the psalms teach us anything, it is that we can be completely open and honest with God in expressing our deepest frustrations and anger. We can take our anger to God instead of taking it out on other people.

Exercises

Can you identify one song we sing from our song book that might be considered an imprecatory song? If so, what is the intent of this song? If not, why do you think we don't have any songs like this?

Study Psalm 137

1. Who is speaking?
2. Is this a personal or community psalm?
3. For what purpose was the psalm written ?
4. What is the emotional orientation of the psalm?
5. What genre(s) is the psalm?
6. Is there a refrain or recurring words or phrases? Are there any other obvious poetic structures?

Psalm 137

How Shall We Sing the Lord's Song?

1 By the waters of Babylon, there we sat down and wept, when we remembered Zion. 2 On the willows there we hung up our lyres. 3 For there our captors required of us songs, and our tormentors, mirth, saying, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion!"

4 How shall we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land? 5 If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its skill! 6 Let my tongue stick to the roof of my mouth, if I do not remember you, if I do not set Jerusalem above my highest joy!

7 Remember, O Lord, against the Edomites the day of Jerusalem, how they said, "Lay it bare, lay it bare, down to its foundations!" 8 O daughter of Babylon, doomed to be destroyed, blessed shall he be who repays you with what you have done to us! 9 Blessed shall he be who takes your little ones and dashes them against the rock!

ESV

Study Psalm 35

1. Who is speaking?
2. Is this a personal or community psalm?
3. For what purpose was the psalm written ?
4. What is the emotional orientation of the psalm?
5. What genre(s) is the psalm?
6. Is there a refrain or recurring words or phrases? Are there any other obvious poetic structures?

Psalm 35

Great Is the Lord Of David

1 Contend, O Lord, with those who contend with me; fight against those who fight against me! 2 Take hold of shield and buckler and rise for my help! 3 Draw the spear and javelin against my pursuers! Say to my soul, "I am your salvation!"

4 Let them be put to shame and dishonor who seek after my life! Let them be turned back and disappointed who devise evil against me! 5 Let them be like chaff before the wind, with the angel of the Lord driving them away! 6 Let their way be dark and slippery, with the angel of the Lord pursuing them!

7 For without cause they hid their net for me; without cause they dug a pit for my life. 8 Let destruction come upon him when he does not know it! And let the net that he hid ensnare him; let him fall into it—to his destruction!

9 Then my soul will rejoice in the Lord, exulting in his salvation. 10 All my bones shall say, "O Lord, who is like you, delivering the poor from him who is too strong for him, the poor and needy from him who robs him?"

11 Malicious witnesses rise up; they ask me of things that I do not know. 12 They repay me evil for good; my soul is bereft. 13 But I, when they were sick—I wore sackcloth; I afflicted myself with fasting; I prayed with head bowed on my chest. 14 I went about as though I grieved for my friend or my brother; as one who laments his mother, I bowed down in mourning.

15 But at my stumbling they rejoiced and gathered; they gathered together against me; wretches whom I did not know tore at me without ceasing; 16 like profane mockers at a feast, they gnash at me with their teeth.

17 How long, O Lord, will you look on? Rescue me from their destruction, my precious life from the lions! 18 I will thank you in the great congregation; in the mighty throng I will praise you.

19 Let not those rejoice over me who are wrongfully my foes, and let not those wink the eye who hate me without cause. 20 For they do not speak peace, but against those who are quiet in the land they devise words of deceit. 21 They open wide their mouths against me; they say, "Aha, Aha! our eyes have seen it!"

22 You have seen, O Lord; be not silent! O Lord, be not far from me! 23 Awake and rouse yourself for my vindication, for my cause, my God and my Lord! 24 Vindicate me, O Lord, my God, according to your righteousness, and let them not rejoice over me! 25 Let them not say in their hearts, "Aha, our heart's desire!" Let them not say, "We have swallowed him up."

26 Let them be put to shame and disappointed altogether who rejoice at my calamity! Let them be clothed with shame and dishonor who magnify themselves against me!

27 Let those who delight in my righteousness shout for joy and be glad and say evermore, "Great is the Lord, who delights in the welfare of his servant!" 28 Then my tongue shall tell of your righteousness and of your praise all the day long.

ESV

Shout for Joy in the Lord

You can find verses where God is praised in all of the genres of psalms. Like the prayers that are recorded in the New Testament, whenever we approach God it is appropriate to pause to give Him the praise he is due. Some psalms are particularly focused on praising God from start to finish. They praise God for a variety of reasons. He is praised as the Creator. He is praised for His goodness and care for His people. He is praised for being in control of history. These are all appropriate reasons for us to praise God today. Some of the praise psalms are the heartfelt praise from individuals and others are meant to encourage an assembly of God's people to praise Him.

Exercises

Identify one song we sing that would be considered a song of praise. What reasons does the song give for our praising God?

Study Psalm 93.

1. Who is speaking?
2. Is this a personal or community psalm?
3. For what purpose was the psalm written ?
4. What is the emotional orientation of the psalm?
5. What genre(s) is the psalm?
6. Is there a refrain or recurring words or phrases? Are there any other obvious poetic structures?

Ps 93

3 The Lord reigns; he is robed in majesty;
the Lord is robed; he has put on strength as his belt.
Yes, the world is established; it shall never be moved.

2 Your throne is established from of old;
you are from everlasting.

3 The floods have lifted up, O Lord,
the floods have lifted up their voice;
the floods lift up their roaring.

4 Mightier than the thunders of many waters,
mightier than the waves of the sea,
the Lord on high is mighty!

5 Your decrees are very trustworthy;
holiness befits your house,
O Lord, forevermore.

ESV

Study Psalm 33.

1. Who is speaking?
2. Is this a personal or community psalm?
3. For what purpose was the psalm written ?
4. What is the emotional orientation of the psalm?
5. What genre(s) is the psalm?
6. Is there a refrain or recurring words or phrases? Are there any other obvious poetic structures?

Psalm 33

1 Shout for joy in the Lord, O you righteous! Praise befits the upright. 2 Give thanks to the Lord with the lyre; make melody to him with the harp of ten strings! 3 Sing to him a new song; play skillfully on the strings, with loud shouts.

4 For the word of the Lord is upright, and all his work is done in faithfulness. 5 He loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of the steadfast love of the Lord.

6 By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and by the breath of his mouth all their host. 7 He gathers the waters of the sea as a heap; he puts the deeps in storehouses.

8 Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him! 9 For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm.

10 The Lord brings the counsel of the nations to nothing; he frustrates the plans of the peoples. 11 The counsel of the Lord stands forever, the plans of his heart to all generations. 12 Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people whom he has chosen as his heritage!

13 The Lord looks down from heaven; he sees all the children of man; 14 from where he sits enthroned he looks out on all the inhabitants of the earth, 15 he who fashions the hearts of them all and observes all their deeds. 16 The king is not saved by his great army; a warrior is not delivered by his great strength. 17 The war horse is a false hope for salvation, and by its great might it cannot rescue.

18 Behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear him, on those who hope in his steadfast love, 19 that he may deliver their soul from death and keep them alive in famine.

20 Our soul waits for the Lord; he is our help and our shield. 21 For our heart is glad in him, because we trust in his holy name. 22 Let your steadfast love, O Lord, be upon us, even as we hope in you.

ESV

Study Psalm 145

1. Who is speaking?
2. Is this a personal or community psalm?

3. For what purpose was the psalm written ?
4. What is the emotional orientation of the psalm?
5. What genre(s) is the psalm?
6. Is there a refrain or recurring words or phrases? Are there any other obvious poetic structures?

Psalm 145

Great Is the Lord

A Song of Praise. Of David.

1 I will extol you, my God and King, and bless your name forever and ever. 2 Every day I will bless you and praise your name forever and ever. 3 Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable.

4 One generation shall commend your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts. 5 On the glorious splendor of your majesty, and on your wondrous works, I will meditate. 6 They shall speak of the might of your awesome deeds, and I will declare your greatness. 7 They shall pour forth the fame of your abundant goodness and shall sing aloud of your righteousness.

8 The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. 9 The Lord is good to all, and his mercy is over all that he has made.

10 All your works shall give thanks to you, O Lord, and all your saints shall bless you! 11 They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom and tell of your power, 12 to make known to the children of man your mighty deeds, and the glorious splendor of your kingdom. 13 Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations.

[The Lord is faithful in all his words and kind in all his works.] 14 The Lord upholds all who are falling and raises up all who are bowed down. 15 The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season. 16 You open your hand; you satisfy the desire of every living thing. 17 The Lord is righteous in all his ways and kind in all his works. 18 The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. 19 He fulfills the desire of those who fear him; he also hears their cry and saves them. 20 The Lord preserves all who love him, but all the wicked he will destroy.

21 My mouth will speak the praise of the Lord, and let all flesh bless his holy name forever and ever.

ESV

Worshipping My God

Some psalms are more focused on the practice of worship than directly on praising God. The psalmists expressed their feelings about worship and provided instruction to the people on how to better worship God. The Israelites came to refer to these as psalms as Songs of Zion (Psa. 137:3). The temple is a frequent subject throughout the psalms. We can learn a lot about Jewish worship and some principles to guide our own worship by considering these psalms.

Exercises

Can you identify one song we sing from our song book that might be considered a call to worship or a song that teaches us how to worship? If so, what is the intent of this song?

What can you learn about worship from the following passages in Psalms?

Ps 11:4

4 The Lord is in his holy temple;
the Lord's throne is in heaven;
his eyes see, his eyelids test, the children of man.
ESV

Ps 26:8

8 O Lord, I love the habitation of your house
and the place where your glory dwells.
ESV

Ps 63:1-4

63 O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you;
my soul thirsts for you;
my flesh faints for you,
as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.
2 So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary,
beholding your power and glory.
3 Because your steadfast love is better than life,
my lips will praise you.
4 So I will bless you as long as I live;
in your name I will lift up my hands.
ESV

Ps 132:13-17

13 For the Lord has chosen Zion;
he has desired it for his dwelling place:
14 "This is my resting place forever;
here I will dwell, for I have desired it.
15 I will abundantly bless her provisions;
I will satisfy her poor with bread.

16 Her priests I will clothe with salvation,
and her saints will shout for joy.

17 There I will make a horn to sprout for David;
I have prepared a lamp for my anointed.

ESV

Ps 27:4-6

4 One thing have I asked of the Lord,
that will I seek after:
that I may dwell in the house of the Lord
all the days of my life,
to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord
and to inquire in his temple.

5 For he will hide me in his shelter
in the day of trouble;
he will conceal me under the cover of his tent;
he will lift me high upon a rock.

6 And now my head shall be lifted up
above my enemies all around me,
and I will offer in his tent
sacrifices with shouts of joy;
I will sing and make melody to the Lord.

ESV

Ps 100:4

4 Enter his gates with thanksgiving,
and his courts with praise!
Give thanks to him; bless his name!

ESV

Ps 27:6

6 And now my head shall be lifted up
above my enemies all around me,
and I will offer in his tent
sacrifices with shouts of joy;
I will sing and make melody to the Lord.

ESV

Ps 48:9-14

9 We have thought on your steadfast love, O God,
in the midst of your temple.

10 As your name, O God,
so your praise reaches to the ends of the earth.

Your right hand is filled with righteousness.
11 Let Mount Zion be glad!
Let the daughters of Judah rejoice
because of your judgments!

12 Walk about Zion, go around her,
number her towers,
13 consider well her ramparts,
go through her citadels,
that you may tell the next generation
14 that this is God,
our God forever and ever.
He will guide us forever.
ESV

Ps 42:4
4 These things I remember,
as I pour out my soul:
how I would go with the throng
and lead them in procession to the house of God
with glad shouts and songs of praise,
a multitude keeping festival.
ESV

Study Psalms 121 and 122

1. Who is speaking?
2. Is this a personal or community psalm?
3. For what purpose was the psalm written ?
4. What is the emotional orientation of the psalm?
5. What genre(s) is the psalm?
6. Is there a refrain or recurring words or phrases? Are there any other obvious poetic structures?

Psalms 121

1 I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? 2 My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. 3 He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber. 4 Behold, he who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. 5 The Lord is your keeper; the Lord is your shade on your right hand. 6 The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night. 7 The Lord will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life. 8 The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore.

Psalm 122

Let Us Go to the House of the Lord

A Song of Ascents. Of David.

1 I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the Lord!" 2 Our feet have been standing within your gates, O Jerusalem! 3 Jerusalem— built as a city that is bound firmly together, 4 to which the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, as was decreed for Israel, to give thanks to the name of the Lord. 5 There thrones for judgment were set, the thrones of the house of David. 6 Pray for the peace of Jerusalem!" "May they be secure who love you! 7 Peace be within your walls and security within your towers!" 8 For my brothers and companions' sake I will say, "Peace be within you!" 9 For the sake of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek your good.
ESV

Study Psalm 84

1. Who is speaking?
2. Is this a personal or community psalm?
3. For what purpose was the psalm written ?
4. What is the emotional orientation of the psalm?
5. What genre(s) is the psalm?
6. Is there a refrain or recurring words or phrases? Are there any other obvious poetic structures?

Psalm 84

1 How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of hosts! 2 My soul longs, yes, faints for the courts of the Lord; my heart and flesh sing for joy to the living God.

3 Even the sparrow finds a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, at your altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God. 4 Blessed are those who dwell in your house, ever singing your praise! Selah

5 Blessed are those whose strength is in you, in whose heart are the highways to Zion. 6 As they go through the Valley of Baca they make it a place of springs; the early rain also covers it with pools. 7 They go from strength to strength; each one appears before God in Zion.

8 O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer; give ear, O God of Jacob! Selah

9 Behold our shield, O God; look on the face of your anointed!

10 For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness. 11 For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord bestows favor and honor. No good thing does he withhold from those who walk uprightly. 12 O Lord of hosts, blessed is the one who trusts in you!

ESV

Remembering Who We Are

Sometimes parents encourage their children to make good choices by telling them to remember who they are. There are several psalms that rejoice in God's blessings, reflect on His promises, and encourage the people to rededicate themselves to the covenant. A wide variety of psalms can be put into this category, including:

- Covenant renewal services
- Davidic covenant psalms
- Royal psalms
- Coronation psalms
- Jerusalem psalms

Your first reaction to these "categories" may be that these don't have much to say about who we are today; however, these psalms reminded the people of the covenant they were obligated to observe, who they were, who their kings were, and where God's chose to dwell with them. We live under a new covenant with a new counterpart to each of these characteristics that define who we are.

Exercises

Can you identify one song we sing from our song book that celebrates who we are as Christians or reminds us of our identity? If so, what is the intent of this song?

Remembering the Covenant

Study Psalm 81

1. Who is speaking?
2. Is this a personal or community psalm?
3. For what purpose was the psalm written ?
4. What is the emotional orientation of the psalm?
5. What genre(s) is the psalm?
6. Is there a refrain or recurring words or phrases? Are there any other obvious poetic structures?

Psalm 81

1 Sing aloud to God our strength; shout for joy to the God of Jacob! 2 Raise a song; sound the tambourine, the sweet lyre with the harp.3 Blow the trumpet at the new moon, at the full moon, on our feast day.

4 For it is a statute for Israel, a rule of the God of Jacob. 5 He made it a decree in Joseph when he went out over the land of Egypt. I hear a language I had not known: 6 "I relieved your shoulder of the burden; your hands were freed from the basket. 7 In distress you called, and I delivered you; I answered you in the secret place of thunder; I tested you at the waters of Meribah. Selah 8 Hear, O my people, while I admonish you! O Israel, if you would but listen to me! 9 There shall be no

strange god among you; you shall not bow down to a foreign god. 10 I am the Lord your God, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt. Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.

11 "But my people did not listen to my voice; Israel would not submit to me. 12 So I gave them over to their stubborn hearts, to follow their own counsels. 13 Oh, that my people would listen to me, that Israel would walk in my ways! 14 I would soon subdue their enemies and turn my hand against their foes. 15 Those who hate the Lord would cringe toward him, and their fate would last forever. 16 But he would feed you with the finest of the wheat, and with honey from the rock I would satisfy you."

ESV

Remembering God's Covenant with David

Study Psalm 132

1. Who is speaking?
2. Is this a personal or community psalm?
3. For what purpose was the psalm written ?
4. What is the emotional orientation of the psalm?
5. What genre(s) is the psalm?
6. Is there a refrain or recurring words or phrases? Are there any other obvious poetic structures?

Psalm 132

1 Remember, O Lord, in David's favor, all the hardships he endured, 2 how he swore to the Lord and vowed to the Mighty One of Jacob, 3 "I will not enter my house or get into my bed, 4 I will not give sleep to my eyes or slumber to my eyelids, 5 until I find a place for the Lord, a dwelling place for the Mighty One of Jacob."

6 Behold, we heard of it in Ephrathah; we found it in the fields of Jaar. 7 "Let us go to his dwelling place; let us worship at his footstool!"

8 Arise, O Lord, and go to your resting place, you and the ark of your might. 9 Let your priests be clothed with righteousness, and let your saints shout for joy. 10 For the sake of your servant David, do not turn away the face of your anointed one. 11 The Lord swore to David a sure oath from which he will not turn back: "One of the sons of your body I will set on your throne. 12 If your sons keep my covenant and my testimonies that I shall teach them, their sons also forever shall sit on your throne."

13 For the Lord has chosen Zion; he has desired it for his dwelling place: 14 "This is my resting place forever; here I will dwell, for I have desired it. 15 I will abundantly bless her provisions; I will satisfy her poor with bread. 16 Her priests I will clothe with salvation, and her saints will shout for joy. 17 There I will make a horn to sprout for David; I have prepared a lamp for my anointed. 18 His enemies I will clothe with shame, but on him his crown will shine."

ESV

Remembering the King (Royal Psalms)

Study Psalm 21

1. Who is speaking?
2. Is this a personal or community psalm?
3. For what purpose was the psalm written ?
4. What is the emotional orientation of the psalm?
5. What genre(s) is the psalm?
6. Is there a refrain or recurring words or phrases? Are there any other obvious poetic structures?

Psalm 21

1 O Lord, in your strength the king rejoices, and in your salvation how greatly he exults! 2 You have given him his heart's desire and have not withheld the request of his lips. Selah 3 For you meet him with rich blessings; you set a crown of fine gold upon his head. 4 He asked life of you; you gave it to him, length of days forever and ever. 5 His glory is great through your salvation; splendor and majesty you bestow on him. 6 For you make him most blessed forever; you make him glad with the joy of your presence. 7 For the king trusts in the Lord, and through the steadfast love of the Most High he shall not be moved.

8 Your hand will find out all your enemies; your right hand will find out those who hate you. 9 You will make them as a blazing oven when you appear. The Lord will swallow them up in his wrath, and fire will consume them. 10 You will destroy their descendants from the earth, and their offspring from among the children of man. 11 Though they plan evil against you, though they devise mischief, they will not succeed. 12 For you will put them to flight; you will aim at their faces with your bows.

13 Be exalted, O Lord, in your strength! We will sing and praise your power.
ESV

Remembering Our Heavenly King

Study Psalm 24

1. Who is speaking?
2. Is this a personal or community psalm?
3. For what purpose was the psalm written ?
4. What is the emotional orientation of the psalm?
5. What genre(s) is the psalm?
6. Is there a refrain or recurring words or phrases? Are there any other obvious poetic structures?

Psalm 24

1 The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein, 2 for he has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers.

3 Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in his holy place? 4 He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully. 5 He will receive blessing from the Lord and righteousness from the God of his salvation. 6 Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek the face of the God of Jacob. Selah

7 Lift up your heads, O gates! And be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. 8 Who is this King of glory? The Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord, mighty in battle! 9 Lift up your heads, O gates! And lift them up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. 10 Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory!

ESV

You Guide Me With Your Counsel

Wisdom psalms use admonitions, comparisons, illustrations, wisdom precepts and rewards/retributions to encourage us to make wise choices. Unlike most psalms, the intent of the wisdom psalms is to teach us something. Some of the wisdom psalms have been referred to as penitential psalms because the psalmist encourages us to avoid the hurt that he experienced as a result of sin in his life. Like Proverbs, these psalms address wisdom and folly and identify who will be blessed in life.

Exercises

Can you identify one song we sing from our song book that might be considered a wisdom song? If so, what is the intent of this song?

Study Psalm 32

1. Who is speaking?
2. Is this a personal or community psalm?
3. For what purpose was the psalm written ?
4. What is the emotional orientation of the psalm?
5. What genre(s) is the psalm?
6. Is there a refrain or recurring words or phrases? Are there any other obvious poetic structures?

Psalm 32

1 Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. 2 Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit.

3 For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. 4 For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. Selah

5 I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord, "and you forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah

6 Therefore let everyone who is godly offer prayer to you at a time when you may be found; surely in the rush of great waters, they shall not reach him. 7 You are a hiding place for me; you preserve me from trouble; you surround me with shouts of deliverance. Selah

8 I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you. 9 Be not like a horse or a mule, without understanding, which must be curbed with bit and bridle, or it will not stay near you.

10 Many are the sorrows of the wicked, but steadfast love surrounds the one who trusts in the Lord. 11 Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!

ESV

Ps 73

Study Psalm 73

1. Who is speaking?
2. Is this a personal or community psalm?
3. For what purpose was the psalm written ?
4. What is the emotional orientation of the psalm?
5. What genre(s) is the psalm?
6. Is there a refrain or recurring words or phrases? Are there any other obvious poetic structures?

Psalm 73

God Is My Strength and Portion Forever
A Psalm of Asaph

1 Truly God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart. 2 But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled, my steps had nearly slipped. 3 For I was envious of the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

4 For they have no pangs until death; their bodies are fat and sleek. 5 They are not in trouble as others are; they are not stricken like the rest of mankind. 6 Therefore pride is their necklace; violence covers them as a garment. 7 Their eyes swell out through fatness; their hearts overflow with follies. 8 They scoff and speak with malice; loftily they threaten oppression. 9 They set their mouths against the heavens, and their tongue struts through the earth.

10 Therefore his people turn back to them, and find no fault in them. 11 And they say, "How can God know? Is there knowledge in the Most High?" 12 Behold, these are the wicked; always at ease, they increase in riches. 13 All in vain have I kept my heart clean and washed my hands in innocence. 14 For all the day long I have been stricken and rebuked every morning. 15 If I had said, "I will speak thus, "I would have betrayed the generation of your children.

16 But when I thought how to understand this, it seemed to me a wearisome task, 17 until I went into the sanctuary of God; then I discerned their end.

18 Truly you set them in slippery places; you make them fall to ruin. 19 How they are destroyed in a moment, swept away utterly by terrors! 20 Like a dream when one awakes, O Lord, when you rouse yourself, you despise them as phantoms. 21 When my soul was embittered, when I was pricked in heart, 22 I was brutish and ignorant; I was like a beast toward you.

23 Nevertheless, I am continually with you; you hold my right hand. 24 You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will receive me to glory. 25 Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you. 26 My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

27 For behold, those who are far from you shall perish; you put an end to everyone who is unfaithful to you. 28 But for me it is good to be near God; I have made the Lord God my refuge, that I may tell of all your works.

ESV

Study Proverbs 8 (It is a wisdom psalm)

1. Who is speaking?
2. Is this a personal or community psalm?
3. For what purpose was the psalm written ?
4. What is the emotional orientation of the psalm?
5. What genre(s) is the psalm?
6. Is there a refrain or recurring words or phrases? Are there any other obvious poetic structures?

Proverbs 8

1 Does not wisdom call? Does not understanding raise her voice? 2 On the heights beside the way, at the crossroads she takes her stand; 3 beside the gates in front of the town, at the entrance of the portals she cries aloud: 4 "To you, O men, I call, and my cry is to the children of man. 5 O simple ones, learn prudence; O fools, learn sense. 6 Hear, for I will speak noble things, and from my lips will come what is right, 7 for my mouth will utter truth; wickedness is an abomination to my lips. 8 All the words of my mouth are righteous; there is nothing twisted or crooked in them. 9 They are all straight to him who understands, and right to those who find knowledge. 10 Take my instruction instead of silver, and knowledge rather than choice gold, 11 for wisdom is better than jewels, and all that you may desire cannot compare with her. 12 "I, wisdom, dwell with prudence, and I find knowledge and discretion. 13 The fear of the Lord is hatred of evil. Pride and arrogance and the way of evil and perverted speech I hate. 14 I have counsel and sound wisdom; I have insight; I have strength. 15 By me kings reign, and rulers decree what is just; 16 by me princes rule, and nobles, all who govern justly. 17 I love those who love me, and those who seek me diligently find me. 18 Riches and honor are with me, enduring wealth and righteousness. 19 My fruit is better than gold, even fine gold, and my yield than choice silver. 20 I walk in the way of righteousness, in the paths of justice, 21 granting an inheritance to those who love me, and filling their treasuries. 22 "The Lord possessed me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of old. 23 Ages ago I was set up, at the first, before the beginning of the earth. 24 When there were no depths I was brought forth, when there were no springs abounding with water. 25 Before the mountains had been shaped, before the hills, I was brought forth, 26 before he had made the earth with its fields, or the first of the dust of the world. 27 When he established the heavens, I was there; when he drew a circle on the face of the deep, 28 when he made firm the skies above, when he established the fountains of the deep, 29 when he assigned to the sea its limit, so that the waters might not transgress his command, when he marked out the foundations of the earth, 30 then I was beside him, like a master workman, and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always, 31 rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the children of man.

32 "And now, O sons, listen to me: blessed are those who keep my ways. 33 Hear instruction and be wise, and do not neglect it. 34 Blessed is the one who listens to me, watching daily at my gates, waiting beside my doors. 35 For whoever finds me finds life and obtains favor from the Lord, 36 but he who fails to find me injures himself; all who hate me love death."

ESV

Your Word Is A Lamp Unto My Feet

How do you feel about the Bible? There are several psalms where the psalmists express their appreciation for God's word. Three psalms, sometimes referred to as Torah psalms, take the law of Moses as a central theme. Instead of focusing on the ceremonial aspects of the law, these psalms praise the ethical grandeur of the law of Moses. We have already looked at Psalm 19. The other two Torah psalms are Psalm 1 and Psalm 119.

Psalm 119 is an alphabetical acrostic. It proceeds systematically through the Hebrew alphabet from beginning to end to provide the ABCs of God's word. Concerning this psalm, C.S. Lewis (*Reflections on the Psalms*, 1959) said "this poem is not, and does not pretend to be a sudden outpouring of the heart like, say, Psalm 18. It is a pattern, a thing done like embroidery, stitch by stitch, through long, quiet hours, for love of the subject and for the delight in leisurely, disciplined craftsmanship."

Exercises

Can you identify one song we sing from our song book that praises God's word or describes its value?

Study Psalm 119

1. Who is speaking?
2. Is this a personal or community psalm?
3. For what purpose was the psalm written ?
4. What is the emotional orientation of the psalm?
5. What genre(s) is the psalm?
6. Is there a refrain or recurring words or phrases? Are there any other obvious poetic structures?

Psalm 119

Your Word Is a Lamp to My Feet

Aleph

1 Blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the Lord! 2 Blessed are those who keep his testimonies, who seek him with their whole heart, 3 who also do no wrong, but walk in his ways! 4 You have commanded your precepts to be kept diligently. 5 Oh that my ways may be steadfast in keeping your statutes! 6 Then I shall not be put to shame, having my eyes fixed on all your commandments. 7 I will praise you with an upright heart, when I learn your righteous rules. 8 I will keep your statutes; do not utterly forsake me!

Beth

9 How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word. 10 With my whole heart I seek you; let me not wander from your commandments! 11 I have stored up your

word in my heart, that I might not sin against you. 12 Blessed are you, O Lord; teach me your statutes! 13 With my lips I declare all the rules of your mouth. 14 In the way of your testimonies I delight as much as in all riches. 15 I will meditate on your precepts and fix my eyes on your ways. 16 I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word.

Gimel

17 Deal bountifully with your servant, that I may live and keep your word. 18 Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law. 19 I am a sojourner on the earth; hide not your commandments from me! 20 My soul is consumed with longing for your rules at all times. 21 You rebuke the insolent, accursed ones, who wander from your commandments. 22 Take away from me scorn and contempt, for I have kept your testimonies. 23 Even though princes sit plotting against me, your servant will meditate on your statutes. 24 Your testimonies are my delight; they are my counselors.

Daleth

25 My soul clings to the dust; give me life according to your word! 26 When I told of my ways, you answered me; teach me your statutes! 27 Make me understand the way of your precepts, and I will meditate on your wondrous works. 28 My soul melts away for sorrow; strengthen me according to your word! 29 Put false ways far from me and graciously teach me your law! 30 I have chosen the way of faithfulness; I set your rules before me. 31 I cling to your testimonies, O Lord; let me not be put to shame! 32 I will run in the way of your commandments when you enlarge my heart!

He

33 Teach me, O Lord, the way of your statutes; and I will keep it to the end. 34 Give me understanding, that I may keep your law and observe it with my whole heart. 35 Lead me in the path of your commandments, for I delight in it. 36 Incline my heart to your testimonies, and not to selfish gain! 37 Turn my eyes from looking at worthless things; and give me life in your ways. 38 Confirm to your servant your promise, that you may be feared. 39 Turn away the reproach that I dread, for your rules are good. 40 Behold, I long for your precepts; in your righteousness give me life!

Waw

41 Let your steadfast love come to me, O Lord, your salvation according to your promise; 42 then shall I have an answer for him who taunts me, for I trust in your word. 43 And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth, for my hope is in your rules. 44 I will keep your law continually, forever and ever, 45 and I shall walk in a wide place, for I have sought your precepts. 46 I will also speak of your testimonies before kings and shall not be put to shame, 47 for I find my delight in your commandments, which I love. 48 I will lift up my hands toward your commandments, which I love, and I will meditate on your statutes.

Zayin

49 Remember your word to your servant, in which you have made me hope. 50 This is my comfort in my affliction, that your promise gives me life. 51 The insolent utterly deride me, but I do not turn away from your law. 52 When I think of your rules from of old, I take comfort, O Lord. 53 Hot indignation seizes me because of the wicked, who forsake your law. 54 Your statutes have been my songs in the house of my sojourning. 55 I remember your name in the night, O Lord, and keep your law. 56 This blessing has fallen to me, that I have kept your precepts.

Heth

57 The Lord is my portion; I promise to keep your words. 58 I entreat your favor with all my heart; be gracious to me according to your promise. 59 When I think on my ways, I turn my feet to your testimonies; 60 I hasten and do not delay to keep your commandments. 61 Though the cords of the wicked ensnare me, I do not forget your law. 62 At midnight I rise to praise you, because of your righteous rules. 63 I am a companion of all who fear you, of those who keep your precepts. 64 The earth, O Lord, is full of your steadfast love; teach me your statutes!

Teth

65 You have dealt well with your servant, O Lord, according to your word. 66 Teach me good judgment and knowledge, for I believe in your commandments. 67 Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep your word. 68 You are good and do good; teach me your statutes. 69 The insolent smear me with lies, but with my whole heart I keep your precepts; 70 their heart is unfeeling like fat, but I delight in your law. 71 It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I might learn your statutes. 72 The law of your mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver pieces.

Yodh

73 Your hands have made and fashioned me; give me understanding that I may learn your commandments. 74 Those who fear you shall see me and rejoice, because I have hoped in your word. 75 I know, O Lord, that your rules are righteous, and that in faithfulness you have afflicted me. 76 Let your steadfast love comfort me according to your promise to your servant. 77 Let your mercy come to me, that I may live; for your law is my delight. 78 Let the insolent be put to shame, because they have wronged me with falsehood; as for me, I will meditate on your precepts. 79 Let those who fear you turn to me, that they may know your testimonies. 80 May my heart be blameless in your statutes, that I may not be put to shame!

Kaph

81 My soul longs for your salvation; I hope in your word. 82 My eyes long for your promise; I ask, "When will you comfort me?" 83 For I have become like a wineskin in the smoke, yet I have not forgotten your statutes. 84 How long must your servant endure? When will you judge those who persecute me? 85 The insolent have dug pitfalls for me; they do not live according to your law. 86 All your commandments are sure; they persecute me with falsehood; help me! 87 They have almost made an end of me on earth, but I have not forsaken your precepts. 88 In your steadfast love give me life, that I may keep the testimonies of your mouth.

Lamedh

89 Forever, O Lord, your word is firmly fixed in the heavens. 90 Your faithfulness endures to all generations; you have established the earth, and it stands fast. 91 By your appointment they stand this day, for all things are your servants. 92 If your law had not been my delight, I would have perished in my affliction. 93 I will never forget your precepts, for by them you have given me life. 94 I am yours; save me, for I have sought your precepts. 95 The wicked lie in wait to destroy me, but I consider your testimonies. 96 I have seen a limit to all perfection, but your commandment is exceedingly broad.

Mem

97 Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day. 98 Your commandment makes me wiser than my enemies, for it is ever with me. 99 I have more understanding than all my teachers, for your testimonies are my meditation. 100 I understand more than the aged, for I keep your precepts. 101 I hold back my feet from every evil way, in order to keep your word. 102 I do not turn aside from your rules, for you have taught me. 103 How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! 104 Through your precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way.

Nun

105 Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. 106 I have sworn an oath and confirmed it, to keep your righteous rules. 107 I am severely afflicted; give me life, O Lord, according to your word! 108 Accept my freewill offerings of praise, O Lord, and teach me your rules. 109 I hold my life in my hand continually, but I do not forget your law. 110 The wicked have laid a snare for me, but I do not stray from your precepts. 111 Your testimonies are my heritage forever, for they are the joy of my heart. 112 I incline my heart to perform your statutes forever, to the end.

Samekh

113 I hate the double-minded, but I love your law. 114 You are my hiding place and my shield; I hope in your word. 115 Depart from me, you evildoers, that I may keep the commandments of my God. 116 Uphold me according to your promise, that I may live, and let me not be put to shame in my hope! 117 Hold me up, that I may be safe and have regard for your statutes continually! 118 You spurn all who go astray from your statutes, for their cunning is in vain. 119 All the wicked of the earth you discard like dross, therefore I love your testimonies. 120 My flesh trembles for fear of you, and I am afraid of your judgments.

Ayin

121 I have done what is just and right; do not leave me to my oppressors. 122 Give your servant a pledge of good; let not the insolent oppress me. 123 My eyes long for your salvation and for the fulfillment of your righteous promise. 124 Deal with your servant according to your steadfast love, and teach me your statutes. 125 I am your servant; give me understanding, that I may know your testimonies! 126 It is time for the Lord to act, for your law has been broken. 127 Therefore I love

your commandments above gold, above fine gold. 128 Therefore I consider all your precepts to be right; I hate every false way.

Pe

129 Your testimonies are wonderful; therefore my soul keeps them. 130 The unfolding of your words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple. 131 I open my mouth and pant, because I long for your commandments. 132 Turn to me and be gracious to me, as is your way with those who love your name. 133 Keep steady my steps according to your promise, and let no iniquity get dominion over me. 134 Redeem me from man's oppression, that I may keep your precepts. 135 Make your face shine upon your servant, and teach me your statutes. 136 My eyes shed streams of tears, because people do not keep your law.

Tsadhe

137 Righteous are you, O Lord, and right are your rules. 138 You have appointed your testimonies in righteousness and in all faithfulness. 139 My zeal consumes me, because my foes forget your words. 140 Your promise is well tried, and your servant loves it. 141 I am small and despised, yet I do not forget your precepts. 142 Your righteousness is righteous forever, and your law is true. 143 Trouble and anguish have found me out, but your commandments are my delight. 144 Your testimonies are righteous forever; give me understanding that I may live.

Qoph

145 With my whole heart I cry; answer me, O Lord! I will keep your statutes. 146 I call to you; save me, that I may observe your testimonies. 147 I rise before dawn and cry for help; I hope in your words. 148 My eyes are awake before the watches of the night, that I may meditate on your promise. 149 Hear my voice according to your steadfast love; O Lord, according to your justice give me life. 150 They draw near who persecute me with evil purpose; they are far from your law. 151 But you are near, O Lord, and all your commandments are true. 152 Long have I known from your testimonies that you have founded them forever.

Resh

153 Look on my affliction and deliver me, for I do not forget your law. 154 Plead my cause and redeem me; give me life according to your promise! 155 Salvation is far from the wicked, for they do not seek your statutes. 156 Great is your mercy, O Lord; give me life according to your rules. 157 Many are my persecutors and my adversaries, but I do not swerve from your testimonies. 158 I look at the faithless with disgust, because they do not keep your commands. 159 Consider how I love your precepts! Give me life according to your steadfast love. 160 The sum of your word is truth, and every one of your righteous rules endures forever.

Sin and Shin

161 Princes persecute me without cause, but my heart stands in awe of your words. 162 I rejoice at your word like one who finds great spoil. 163 I hate and abhor falsehood, but I love your law. 164 Seven times a day I praise you for your righteous rules. 165 Great peace have those who love your law; nothing can make them stumble. 166 I hope for your salvation, O Lord, and I do

your commandments. 167 My soul keeps your testimonies; I love them exceedingly. 168 I keep your precepts and testimonies, for all my ways are before you.

Taw

169 Let my cry come before you, O Lord; give me understanding according to your word! 170 Let my plea come before you; deliver me according to your word. 171 My lips will pour forth praise, for you teach me your statutes. 172 My tongue will sing of your word, for all your commandments are right. 173 Let your hand be ready to help me, for I have chosen your precepts. 174 I long for your salvation, O Lord, and your law is my delight. 175 Let my soul live and praise you, and let your rules help me. 176 I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek your servant, for I do not forget your commandments.

ESV

My King Is Set on Zion

The messianic psalms are not a genre. Each of these psalms falls within another genre. However, there is a lot of teaching about the coming messiah to be found within the psalms. Some of the psalms had prophecies embedded within them. In Luke 24:44, Jesus told his disciples "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." This study will focus on a few of the psalms that are quoted in the New Testament.

Exercises

Study Psalm 2

1. Who is speaking?
2. Is this a personal or community psalm?
3. For what purpose was the psalm written ?
4. What is the emotional orientation of the psalm?
5. What genre(s) is the psalm?
6. Is there a refrain or recurring words or phrases? Are there any other obvious poetic structures?

Ps 2

The Reign of the Lord's Anointed

1 Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? 2 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his anointed, saying, 3 "Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us."

4 He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision. 5 Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying, 6 "As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill."

7 I will tell of the decree: The Lord said to me, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you. 8 Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. 9 You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."

10 Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. 11 Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. 12 Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

ESV

Study Psalm 22

1. Who is speaking?
2. Is this a personal or community psalm?

3. For what purpose was the psalm written ?
4. What is the emotional orientation of the psalm?
5. What genre(s) is the psalm?
6. Is there a refrain or recurring words or phrases? Are there any other obvious poetic structures?

Psalm 22

Why Have You Forsaken Me?

To the choirmaster: according to The Doe of the Dawn. A Psalm of David.

1 My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning? 2 O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer, and by night, but I find no rest.

3 Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel. 4 In you our fathers trusted; they trusted, and you delivered them. 5 To you they cried and were rescued; in you they trusted and were not put to shame.

6 But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by mankind and despised by the people. 7 All who see me mock me; they make mouths at me; they wag their heads; 8 "He trusts in the Lord; let him deliver him; let him rescue him, for he delights in him!" 9 Yet you are he who took me from the womb; you made me trust you at my mother's breasts. 10 On you was I cast from my birth, and from my mother's womb you have been my God. 11 Be not far from me, for trouble is near, and there is none to help.

12 Many bulls encompass me; strong bulls of Bashan surround me; 13 they open wide their mouths at me, like a ravening and roaring lion.

14 I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast; 15 my strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws; you lay me in the dust of death.

16 For dogs encompass me; a company of evildoers encircles me; they have pierced my hands and feet—17 I can count all my bones—they stare and gloat over me; 18 they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.

19 But you, O Lord, do not be far off! O you my help, come quickly to my aid! 20 Deliver my soul from the sword, my precious life from the power of the dog! 21 Save me from the mouth of the lion! You have rescued me from the horns of the wild oxen!

22 I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will praise you: 23 You who fear the Lord, praise him! All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him, and stand in awe of him, all you offspring of Israel! 24 For he has not despised or abhorred the affliction of the afflicted, and he has not hidden his face from him, but has heard, when he cried to him.

25 From you comes my praise in the great congregation; my vows I will perform before those who fear him. 26 The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek him shall praise the Lord! May your hearts live forever!

27 All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations shall worship before you. 28 For kingship belongs to the Lord, and he rules over the nations.

29 All the prosperous of the earth eat and worship; before him shall bow all who go down to the dust, even the one who could not keep himself alive. 30 Posterity shall serve him; it shall be told of the Lord to the coming generation; 31 they shall come and proclaim his righteousness to a people yet unborn, that he has done it.

ESV

Study Psalm 110

1. Who is speaking?
2. Is this a personal or community psalm?
3. For what purpose was the psalm written ?
4. What is the emotional orientation of the psalm?
5. What genre(s) is the psalm?
6. Is there a refrain or recurring words or phrases? Are there any other obvious poetic structures?

Psalm 110

Sit at My Right Hand

A Psalm of David

1 The Lord says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool."

2 The Lord sends forth from Zion your mighty scepter. Rule in the midst of your enemies! 3 Your people will offer themselves freely on the day of your power, in holy garments; from the womb of the morning, the dew of your youth will be yours. 4 The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, "You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek."

5 The Lord is at your right hand; he will shatter kings on the day of his wrath. 6 He will execute judgment among the nations, filling them with corpses; he will shatter chiefs over the wide earth. 7 He will drink from the brook by the way; therefore he will lift up his head.

ESV

Study Psalm 16

1. Who is speaking?
2. Is this a personal or community psalm?
3. For what purpose was the psalm written ?
4. What is the emotional orientation of the psalm?
5. What genre(s) is the psalm?

6. Is there a refrain or recurring words or phrases? Are there any other obvious poetic structures?

Psalm 16

You Will Not Abandon My Soul
A Miktam of David.

1 Preserve me, O God, for in you I take refuge. 2 I say to the Lord, "You are my Lord; I have no good apart from you."

3 As for the saints in the land, they are the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight.

4 The sorrows of those who run after another god shall multiply; their drink offerings of blood I will not pour out or take their names on my lips.

5 The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot. 6 The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance.

7 I bless the Lord who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me. 8 I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.

9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices; my flesh also dwells secure. 10 For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption.

11 You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

ESV

They Sang When My Savior Was Born

We will end with three "psalms" that were recorded in the New Testament by Luke as he described the birth and infancy of the Lord. Zacharias, Mary, and Simeon recited poems for the Savior. In Latin, they are known as the *Benedictus*, the *Magnificat*, and the *Nunc Dimittis*. They are beautiful expressions of faith and reveal much concerning the purpose and work of the newborn child who had left the glory of heaven to dwell among men.

Exercises:

Define the terms *Benedictus*, *Magnificat*, and *Nunc Dimittis* in English. How did these songs get their individual names?

Study Luke 1:67-79

1. Who is speaking?
2. Is this a personal or community song?
3. For what purpose was the song written ?
4. What is the emotional orientation of the song?

Luke 1:67-79

Zechariah's Prophecy

67 And his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, saying,
68 "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,
for he has visited and redeemed his people
69 and has raised up a horn of salvation for us
in the house of his servant David,
70 as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,
71 that we should be saved from our enemies
and from the hand of all who hate us;
72 to show the mercy promised to our fathers
and to remember his holy covenant,
73 the oath that he swore to our father Abraham, to grant us
74 that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies,
might serve him without fear,
75 in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.
76 And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,
77 to give knowledge of salvation to his people
in the forgiveness of their sins,
78 because of the tender mercy of our God,
whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high
79 to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the way of peace."

ESV

Study Luke 1:46-55

1. Who is speaking?
2. Is this a personal or community song?
3. For what purpose was the song written ?
4. What is the emotional orientation of the song?

Luke 1:46-55

The Magnificat

46 And Mary said,
"My soul magnifies the Lord,
47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
48 for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant.
For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed;
49 for he who is mighty has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.
50 And his mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.
51 He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts;
52 he has brought down the mighty from their thrones
and exalted those of humble estate;
53 he has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich he has sent empty away.
54 He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
55 as he spoke to our fathers,
to Abraham and to his offspring forever."
ESV

Study Luke 2:25-35

1. Who is speaking?
2. Is this a personal or community song?
3. For what purpose was the song written ?
4. What is the emotional orientation of the song?

Luke 2:25-35

25 Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. 26 And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. 27 And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law, 28 he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said,

29 "Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace,
according to your word;

30 for my eyes have seen your salvation

31 that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,

32 a light for revelation to the Gentiles,
and for glory to your people Israel."

33 And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him. 34 And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, "Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is opposed 35 (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed."

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