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|  |  | *The* |
| *Book of* |
| *Psalms* |
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Scripture quotations, except quotations from others, are from

the New Revised Standard Version, unless indicated otherwise.

# Introduction

## The Books of the Old Testament

## in Canonical Order

**LEGAL & HISTORICAL BOOKS**

**Pentateuch**

Genesis Gen

Exodus Exod

Leviticus Lev

Numbers Num

Deuteronomy Deut

**Deuteronomistic History**

Joshua Josh

Judges Judg

Ruth Ruth

1 Samuel 1 Sam

2 Samuel 2 Sam

1 Kings 1 Kgs

2 Kings 2 Kgs

**Chronicler’s History**

1 Chronicles 1 Chr

2 Chronicles 2 Chr

Ezra Ezra

Nehemiah Neh

**Three Stories**

Tobit\* Tob

Judith\* Jdt

Esther Esth

**Maccabean History**

1 Maccabees\* 1 Macc

2 Maccabees\* 2 Macc

**WISDOM LITERATURE**

Job Job

Psalms Pss

Proverbs Prov

Qoheleth Qoh

[= Ecclesiastes] Eccl

Song of Songs Cant

Wisdom\* Wis

Sirach\* Sir

[= Ecclesiasticus] Ecclus

**PROPHETIC BOOKS**

**Major Prophets**

Isaiah Isa

Jeremiah Jer

Lamentations Lam

Baruch\* Bar

Ezekiel Ezek

Daniel Dan

**Minor Prophets**

Hosea Hos

Joel Joel

Amos Amos

Obadiah Obad

Jonah Jonah

Micah Mic

Nahum Nah

Habakkuk Hab

Zephaniah Zeph

Haggai Hag

Zechariah Zech

Malachi Mal

\* Books in the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic Old Testament but not in the Protestant Old Testament

## Major Events in Old Testament History

**4004 — creation**

The Old Testament (OT) does not give a date for creation, but in ad 1650 Archbishop James Ussher determined that, according to OT chron­ological referen­ces, it must have occurred in 4004 bc (October 23 at 9 a.m., in fact!). The universe actually began about 14 billion years ago, but the 4004 date does help us see that to the ancient Jews, creation was not so far in the past as we now think. The first 11 chapters of Genesis (called the “primitive his­tory”) relate events from creation to Abraham; these events include the creation of the world, the fall in the Garden of Eden, Cain and Abel, Noah, and the tower of Babel.

**1850 — Abraham**

Abraham (Gen 12-25) probably lived c. 1850 bc (“c.” stands for “*circa*,” Latin for “approxi­mately”). God made a covenant (an “agree­ment” or “treaty”) with Abraham (Gen 12) in which God promised that (1) Abra­ham’s descendants will be numerous, (2) they will dwell in Pales­tine, the “Holy Land,” and (3) all nations of the earth will be blessed through him. Abra­ham’s sons were Ishmael and Isaac (Gen 21-26); Isaac’s sons were Esau and Jacob (Gen 25-36); and Jacob’s 12 sons were the forefathers of the 12 tribes of Israel: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph, and Benjamin. One of these forefathers, Joseph, became the right-hand man of the Pharaoh in Egypt; when a famine struck the Middle East, Joseph’s relatives, the Israelites, moved to Egypt, where Joseph fed them.

**1250 — exodus**

Over the centuries the Israelites grew in number in Egypt; they were seen as a threat and enslaved. But God used Moses to send ten plagues on the Egyptians, so the pharaoh allowed them to leave (the exodus, Exod 1-14). Moses led the Israelites through the wilderness (the first half of the “wilderness wanderings,” Exod 15-19) to Mount Sinai, where he received 613 laws, many of which he immediately told to the Israelites (Exod 20-Num 10). Afterward Moses led the Israelites through the wilderness (the second half of the “wilderness wanderings,” Num 11-36) to the east bank of the Jordan river; there he delivered the remainder of the 613 laws to the Israelites (Deut 1-33), just before he died (Deut 34).

**1220 — conquest**

Joshua then became leader. He and the Israelites conquered the Canaanites (Josh 1-11), and divided up the land—formerly “Canaan,” now “Israel”—into twelve plots, one for each tribe (Josh 12-24). (Since members of the Levi tribe were priests and lived throughout the tribes, they received no land; but the Joseph tribe split into Manasseh and Eph­raim, so there still remained twelve tribes).

**1220-1020 — judges**

The conquest ushered in the period of the “judges” (Judg 1-21, 1 Sam 1-7). These judges, though they did settle legal disputes, primarily functioned as charismatic military leaders. Whenever one of the six surround­ing nations—Phoeni­cia, Aram, Ammon, Moab, Edom, and Philistia—would attack one of the tribes, the others would send young men to that tribe to form an ad hoc army; then the army would accept someone charismatic as their general. After the Israelite army would fend off the attacking nation, the leader would continue as judge of all the tribes until his death. The book of Judges records the deeds of twelve judges.

**1020 — Saul**

Finally, the tribes decided to form a centralized government so that they would be less suscepti­ble to attack. The first king was Saul (1 Sam 8-21); he consolidated the tribes into a federation, a single nation.

**1000 — David**

The second king, the most glorious Israel ever had, was David (2 Sam 1-1 Kgs 2). He conquered the six surrounding nations; he established a capital at Jerusalem (until then, a Canaanite village in the mountains of Judah); he built a palace; and he intended to build a temple, but God instructed him to let his successor build it.

**960 — first temple**

Solomon, David’s son (1 Kgs 3-11), built the first temple; it was dedicated in 960 bc. He was a wise and good king; under him Israel experienced a cultural flowering.

**922 — division of the kingdoms**

But Solomon’s son, Rehoboam, was a bad king who failed to take care of tribes other than his own, Judah. So the northern ten tribes rebelled against the central government (Simeon, the eleventh tribe, was surrounded by Judah and unable to rebel); they quickly won the civil war (1 Kgs 12-16). Consequently, there were now two kingdoms: Israel in the north, and Judah in the south (Simeon became part of Judah).

**721 — Assyrian exile**

During the 800s and 700s, Assyria waxed powerful; it soon conquered Babylonia (Assyria and Babylonia form present-day Iraq, northeast of Israel) Asia Minor (present-day Turkey, northwest of Israel), and Phoenicia (present-day Lebanon, north of Israel). In 721, Assyria conquered the northern kingdom, the kingdom of Israel (2 Kgs 15-19). Most of the population was de­ported else­where and thus became “the lost ten tribes of Israel”; those that remained became the Samari­tans, whose religion was considered deviant by the Jews of the southern king­dom.

**587 — Babylonian exile**

During the 600s, Assyria waned as Babylonia waxed in power; in 612, Babylonia conquered the Assyrian capital, Nineveh. In 587, the Babylonians defeated the southern kingdom, the kingdom of Judah, and carried off its nobility and scribes to their capital, Babylon (2 Kgs 23-25).

**539 — restoration**

In 539, however, the Persians conquered Babylonia. When King Cyrus of Persia discovered the Jewish exiles living in Babylon, he put forth an edict granting them permission to return to Jerusa­lem (Ezra 1), a return called “the restoration.”

**518 — second temple**

The first thing that the Jews did after their return was to rebuild the temple (Ezra 3-6); it was rededicated in 518. Though little more than a “log cabin” to begin with, it was renovated over the centuries until, by the time Jesus “cleansed” it in ad 30, it was more magnificent than Sol­o­mon’s had been. (The Romans destroyed the second temple in ad 70, and no third temple has ever been erected; pres­ently there stands on Mount Zion an Islamic holy site, “the Dome of the Rock.”)

**332 — Greek domination**

The Jews lived peaceably under the Persians for almost two hundred years, but in 332 Alexander the Great, on his way to take over most of the then-known world, conquered Judah (1 Macc 1). Judah lived under Greek domina­tion for about a century and a half.

**165 — Maccabean kingdom**

The Jews lived peaceably under the Greeks until in 170 there arose a ruler, Antiochus IV Epi­phanes, who believed he was Zeus (he was probably insane). He demanded that all of his subjects wor­ship the Greek gods and goddesses, including himself. In 167 the Jews rebelled and formed a guerrilla army under the leader, Judas Maccabeus (“Maccabeus” means “the hammer”); and, surprisingly, the guerrillas expelled the much larger Greek army. In 165 (for the first time since 587), Israel became independent, with Judas Maccabeus as king. That same year he rededicated the temple (which the Greeks had deliberately profaned), proclaiming that thereafter all Jews were to celebrate the rededication every year; and that is the origin of the Jewish feast of Hanukkah (1-2 Maccabees).

**63 — Roman domination**

The Jews lived independently for about a hundred years, but in 63 bc the Roman general Pompey conquered Judah and made it the Roman province of Judea (Latin for “Judah”). That is why in the gospels the background of Jesus’ public ministry (c. ad 27-30) is the Roman Empire: Caesar Augustus, Pontius Pilate, etc.

# The Book of Psalms

# as a Whole

## The Title of the Book of Psalms

Gillingham, S[usan] E. *The Poems and Psalms of the Hebrew Bible*. Oxford Bible Series. Oxford: OUP, 1994.

Wansbrough, Henry, gen. ed. *The New Jerusalem Bible*. New York: Doubleday, 1986.

1. **Hebrew titles**
   1. *tehilla*
      1. *Tehilla* means “song of praise.”
      2. *Tehilla* is a feminine singular noun, but the plural is masculine: *tehillim*. Several ancient Hebrew manuscripts of Psalms give it the title, *sepher tehillim*, “Book of Praises.”
      3. Yet the only psalm called a *tehilla* in its superscription is Ps 145, where it means “hymn.” (Gillingham 249). And only about one-fifth of Psalms is hymns. (Gillingham 209)
      4. Perhaps *tehillim* became the title “because the verb h-l-l (meaning ‘praise’) occurs with such frequency throughout the psalms; it may also be that, because most of the hymns of praise are found in the latter half of the Psalter, this was to signify the major note which ends the collection: a paean of praise (see especially Pss. 146-50).” (Gillingham 209)
2. *tepilla*
   * 1. *Tepilla* means “prayer.”
     2. The word is found in the superscriptions of Pss 17, 86, 90, 102, and 142.
     3. A smaller number of ancient Hebrew manuscripts of Psalms give it the title, *sepher tepillot*, “Book of Prayers.” This title was “taken from Ps. 72:20: ‘The prayers of David, the son of Jesse, are ended.’” (Gillingham 233)
     4. The word “is from the root p-l-l, meaning to pray (in terms of request or lament).” (Gillingham 233)
   1. *mizmor*
      1. In the superscriptions, the usual term for a psalm is *mizmor*, “which implies musical accompaniment.” (*New Jerusalem Bible* 809)
      2. *Mizmor* “occurs fifty-seven times, thirty-five of which are in psalms with Davidic headings.” (Gillingham 249)
      3. *Mizmor* is from the verb *zamar*, which occurs over 40 times in Psalms. *Zamar* means “to accompany the singing,” possibly on a stringed instrument. (Gillingham 45)
3. **Greek titles**
   1. *psalmos*
      1. *Psalmos* means “hymn” or “song to music.” (Gillingham 249)
      2. The LXX translates the Hebrew word *mizmor* with the Greek word *psalmos*; so *psalmos* is the usual Greek word for one of the psalms.
      3. Some ancient Greek manuscripts give the book the title, *psalmoi*. (Gillingham 232)
   2. *psaltērion*
      1. Some ancient Greek manuscripts give the book the title, *psaltērion*.
      2. *Psaltērion* is “possibly a translation from the [232] Hebrew n-b-l, meaning ‘stringed instrument’ . . .” (Gillingham 232-33) A *psaltērion* was “the stringed instrument used for the accompaniment of such songs or psalms . . .” (*New Jerusalem Bible* 809)
      3. English “psaltery” and “Psalter” come from *psaltērion*. So the Psalter “is, in brief, a book of praises to be sung to an instrumental accompaniment.” [45] “. . . the word Psalter refers to songs accompanied by a stringed instrument.” [233] (Gillingham 45, 233)

## The Canon of Psalms

Gillingham, S[usan] E. *The Poems and Psalms of the Hebrew Bible*. Oxford Bible Series. Oxford: OUP, 1994.

1. **Psalms’s placement in the canon**
   1. In the Masoretic text “there is no specific literary category called ‘Poetic Books’; rather, the threefold division is that of Law, Prophets, and Writings.” (Gillingham 19)
   2. “This is in clear contrast to the threefold division in the Greek translation of the Scriptures, which subdivides the biblical books into categories of History, Prophecy, and Poetry.” (Gillingham 19)
2. **non-canonical psalms**
   1. The canonical psalms “have a certain distinctiveness, in style and in content, from their later imitations . . .” (Gillingham 261)
   2. Ps 151
      1. Ps 151 “is found in variant forms in all the early Greek versions, as also in the Vulgate (and in Qumran). [It is a] psalm concerning David’s slaying of Goliath . . .” (Gillingham 257)

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| *nrsv translation* | *Gillingham*’*s translation of an excerpt*  (*pp*. *257-58*) |
| This psalm is ascribed to David as his own composition (though it is outside the number [“other ancient authorities add *of the one hundred fifty*”], after he had fought in single combat with Goliath.  1I was small among my brothers,  and the youngest in my father’s house.  I tended my father’s sheep.  2My hands made a harp;  my fingers fashioned a lyre.  3And who will tell my Lord?  The Lord himself; it is he who hears.  4It was he who sent his messenger  and took me from my father’s sheep,  and anointed me with his anointing oil.  5My brothers were handsome and tall,  but the Lord was not pleased with them.  6I went out to meet the Philistine,  and he cursed me by his idols.  7But I drew his own sword;  I beheaded him, and took away disgrace from the people of Israel. | This Psalm is a genuine one of David, though supernumerary, when he fought in single combat with Goliad.  I was small among my brothers,  and youngest in my father’s house;  I tended my father’s sheep.  My hands formed a [?] pipe,  and my fingers tuned a psaltery . . . My brothers were handsome and tall, but the Lord did not take pleasure in them . . .  I went forth to meet the Philistine,  but he cursed me by his idols.  But I drew his own sword, and beheaded him,  and took away reproach from the children of Israel. |

* + 1. “The parallelism, though evident, is somewhat forced; and the subject-matter is rather more specific—almost like narrative . . .” (Gillingham 258)
    2. “Its claim to Davidic authorship . . . shows how this was a claim to authenticity, even after the five books of the Psalter appear to have been fixed: the confession that it is ‘supernumerary” is further evidence of a fixed tradition. The addition of the psalm means that the whole Psalter is now interpreted in the light of its being ‘of David’, from beginning (Ps. 2) to end (Ps. 151).” (Gillingham 258)
  1. The *Thanksgiving Scroll* from Qumran (1QH; in Hebrew, *Hôdayôt*, from ‘ôdekâ ‘adônây, *sic*, no italics “I thank you, Lord”) has about 25 thanksgiving songs. They tend to be “a mosaic of deliberate borrowings from earlier psalms, with two dominant themes: the importance of salvation, and the acquisition of knowledge of God. Their theology is reflective, individualistic, and more overtly pious . . .” (Gillingham 261)
  2. The *Psalms of Solomon* are 18 psalms in Greek and Syriac (the Hebrew original has never been found), probably from 100-1 bc (there are references to the struggle against the Romans). “Their use of parallelism, their conscious imitation of early psalmic formulas, yet also their preoccupation with more eschatological issues (not least, a coming deliverer) and their more explicitly individualistic concerns show them to be later copies of the earlier psalms:

See Lord, and raise up for them their king,

the son of David, to rule over your servant Israel

in the time known to you, O God.

Undergird him with the strength to destroy the unrighteous rulers

to purge Jerusalem from gentiles . . . (‘Psalms of Solomon’ 17:21-5, in J. H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ii.667.)” (Gillingham 263)

* 1. New Testament psalms
     1. Luke’s four “canticles”
        1. the Magnificat, by Mary (1:46-55)
        2. the Benedictus, by Zechariah (1:67-79)
        3. the Gloria in Excelsis, by the angels (2:13-14)
        4. the Nunc Dimittis, by Simeon (2:28-33)
     2. Paul apparently quotes early Christian hymns on occasion.
        1. Eph 5:14, “for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, “Sleeper, awake! Rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”“
        2. Phil 2:6-11, “Christ Jesus, 6who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, 7but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, 8he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross. 9Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, 10so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”
        3. Col 1:15-20, “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; 16for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. 17He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. 19For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, 20and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.”

1. **conclusion**: “The many variations are overall from one recension—in content, if not in number and order . . . [So] a normative text is beginning to emerge.” (Gillingham 259)

## Psalm Superscriptions

Gillingham, S[usan] E. *The Poems and Psalms of the Hebrew Bible*. Oxford Bible Series. Oxford: OUP, 1994.

1. **introduction**
   1. “Clearly there is some interpretative framework—for example, the superscriptions which identify particular psalms with events in the life of King David, and the interrelationship between one psalm and its neighbour within the collection . . .” (Gillingham 173)
   2. “All but twenty-four psalms have some sort of heading in the Hebrew. The LXX (Greek version) adds a heading to each psalm without one, with the exception of Pss. 1 and 2, and makes changes to several other” superscriptions. (Gillingham 245)
   3. “The Greek often appears not to understand some of the Hebrew titles . . . the rendering of ‘Gittith’, and the strange translation of ‘to the choirmaster’ as ‘to eternity’ . . . suggest that the superscriptions derive from an ancient (no longer understood) tradition.” (Gillingham 245)
   4. “However, the fact that the LXX translators effected changes also shows that the headings were not entirely fixed or finalized by the second century bce.” (Gillingham 245)
   5. “. . . that duplicate psalms such as 14 and 53 each have a different superscription shows that the headings do not relate only to content . . .” (Gillingham 245)
   6. “The headings serve more as ascriptions than titles—that is, they ascribe a psalm to a particular collection. This is more in evidence in Books One to Three: . . . the last two books have far fewer superscriptions.” (Gillingham 245)
   7. “Only occasionally do they describe the function of a psalm: exceptions include Ps. 100, ‘A [245] Psalm for the thank-offering’; Ps. 92, ‘A song for the Sabbath’; Ps. 30, ‘A song at the dedication of the Temple’; Ps. 38, ‘for the memorial offering’; and Ps. 102, ‘A prayer of one afflicted, when he is faint and pours out his complaint before the Lord’.” (Gillingham 245-246)
   8. “. . . no psalms are specifically assigned to particular festivals in the Hebrew; and even in the Greek, this is also rare: Ps. 29 is a notable exception—‘for the Festival of Tabernacles’.” (Gillingham 246)
2. **historical superscriptions**
   1. “These all occur within the Davidic Collections (Pss. 3, 7, 18, 30, 34, 51, 52, 54, 56, 57, 59, 60, 63, 142: the LXX adds several more).” (Gillingham 246)
   2. “Each title relates to an event in the life of David . . .” This was similar to Ps 18 being inserted at 2 Sam 22 (the only Davidic instance; see also Hannah’s song, Jonah’s song, etc.). (Gillingham 246)
   3. A good number of psalms associated in their superscriptions with David and Solomon’s time suggest “historical situations and theological ideas long after the time of David and Solomon (for example, Ps. 89B must be exilic) . . . [Therefore the superscriptions] are additions to the psalm.” (Gillingham 248)
   4. “. . . the historical headings in Pss. 51-72 (the second Davidic collection) suggest . . . a separate tradition from the accounts in 1 and 2 Samuel: there are several discrepancies in the details. (For example, in Ps. 34, the Philistine king is Abimelech, whilst in 1 Sam. 21:20 it is Achish; and in Ps. 56, David is supposedly captured, whilst in 2 Sam. 21 he goes to the Philistines on his own initiative.)” (Gillingham 247)
   5. “. . . rather than suggesting Davidic authorship, the superscriptions reflect a literary device (as part of a later process of theological interpretation of the psalms) from a much later period . . .” (Gillingham 247)
      1. Pss 3 and 63 fit after 2 Sam 16:13 (the superscription is, “when David fled from Absalom his son”). (Gillingham 246)
      2. Pss 34 and 56 fit after 2 Sam 21:10 (“when David feigned madness before Abimelech”). (Gillingham 246)
      3. Ps 51 fits after 2 Sam 12:13 (“when Nathan the prophet came to David, after he had gone in to Bathsheba”). “. . . there is also a catchword link in Ps. 51:6 with 2 Sam. 12:13.” (Gillingham 246)
      4. Ps 54 fits after 1 Sam 23:4 (“when the Ziphites went and told Saul, “David is in hiding among us””). A reference to “insolent men” in Ps 54:3 suggested “the Ziphites betraying David to [246] Saul.” (Gillingham 246-47)
      5. Pss 57 and 142: “reference to God as ‘refuge’ in Pss. 57:1 and 142:5 suggests David ‘in the cave’ as in the heading . . .” (Gillingham 246)
      6. Ps 63: “the reference to the ‘dry and thirsty land’ in Ps. 63:1 suggests David ‘in the wilderness of Judah’, again in the heading . . .” (Gillingham 246)
3. **personal superscriptions**
   1. *David*
      1. Seventy-three psalms are ascribed to King David. “. . . the Hebrew preposition *le* (translated ‘to’ David) has a variety of meanings: ‘for’ and ‘of’ and ‘belonging to’ are all equally possible. Thus the psalm could be dedicated to the memory of David, or associated with a tune or royal style from a Davidic tradition, or linked to the ‘Davidic’ guilds of singers.” (Gillingham 247)
      2. “. . . later Hebrew tradition assumed that the titles implied actual Davidic authorship: one of the Qumran Psalms Scrolls, 11 QPsa 2:4-5, 9-10, refers to David as the author of 3,600 psalms (*tehillîm*) and 450 songs (??*shîrîm*).” (Gillingham 247)
      3. “So too in Rabbinic tradition, a Midrash on the Psalms (1:2) clearly affirms David as the author of the Psalter in the same way that Moses was the author of the Law.” (Gillingham 248)
      4. “. . . it is more appropriate to read the ‘To David’ headings as a means of seeing how different psalms are to be read personally: they address not only the life of one of the most important figures in Israel’s history, but also the lives of any who choose to apply the psalm to their own situation. . . . the psalms have been made specific so that, paradoxically, they can also become typical and general for use in other life-settings.” (Gillingham 248)
   2. *Moses*: Ps 90 is “A prayer of Moses,” probably “by fitting various verses with events in the life of Moses—see 90:1/Deut. 33: 27; 90:10/Exod. 7:7; 90:13/Exod. 33:12.” (Gillingham 248)
   3. *Asaph*: twelve psalms are “of Asaph,” “supposedly a contemporary of David . . .” (Gillingham 248)
   4. *Solomon*: two psalms are “of Solomon” (“Ps. 72, whose contents might be associated with the wisdom of this king, and Ps. 127, whose first verse ‘unless the Lord build the house’ might suggest a link with Solomon’s building of the Temple”). (Gillingham 248)
   5. *Korah*: eleven psalms are “of Korah,” “a cultic official known at the time of Jehoshophat [c 873-849 bc].” (Gillingham 248)
   6. *Heman*, *Ethan*: one psalm (88) is “of Heman” and another (89) “of Ethan”—“musicians or wise men associated in different traditions with both David and Solomon.” (Gillingham 248)
   7. *Jeduthun*: three psalms (39, 62, 77) are “to Jeduthun.” In Chronicles (1 Chr 9:16; 16:38, 41-42; 25:1, 3, 6; 2 Chr 5:12; 29:14; 35:15), “this was a musician associated with David and Solomon; however, the dual superscription in Pss. 39 and 62 (‘to Jeduthun’; ‘of David’) and in Ps. 77 (‘to Jeduthun’; ‘of Asaph’) as well as the Hebrew preposition `*al* (rather than *le*) might suggest that this is in fact a musical instrument rather than a person.” (Gillingham 248)
4. **liturgical** **superscriptions**
   1. “The liturgical headings fall into four general categories: the type of psalm; the tune to accompany it; the instruments to be used; and the role of the choirmaster, possibly in leading antiphonally.” (Gillingham 249)
   2. types of psalm
      1. *Mizmôr* (57 superscriptions, 35 in Davidic headings): “The Greek translates this as *psalmos*, meaning ‘hymn’, or ‘song to music’.” (Gillingham 249)
      2. ??*Shîr* (once ??*shîrâ*) (29 superscriptions, 13 with *mizmôr*): “song.” (Gillingham 249)
      3. *Maskîl* (17 superscriptions): “. . . Ps. 32:8 suggests that it refers to the instructional value of a psalm.” (Gillingham 249) Ps 32:8, “I will instruct you and teach you the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you.”
      4. *Miktām* (6 superscriptions [16, 56-60]): “its root means ‘hidden’.” Perhaps it means a psalm written for a private person rather than for public recitation. (Gillingham 249)
      5. *Tepillâ* (5 superscriptions [17, 86, 90, 102, 142]): “prayer.” (Gillingham 249)
      6. *Tehillâ* (Ps 145): “hymn.” (Gillingham 249)
      7. ??*Shiggayôn* (Ps 7): “its root suggests ‘wail’, ‘howl’” so perhaps meaning “lament.” (Gillingham 249)
   3. tunes of psalms
      1. “the Gittith” (Pss 8, 81, 84): “one meaning is ‘winepress’; hence this possibly refers to some vintage song.” (Gillingham 249)
      2. “Do not destroy” (57-59, 75): “this may be some vintage tune.” (Gillingham 249)
      3. “To the lilies” (or “lilies of testimony”) (45, 60, 69, and 80): perhaps “the words of a song whose tune is an accompaniment to the psalm.” (Gillingham 249)
      4. “On the hind of the dawn” (Ps 22): perhaps “the words of a song whose tune is an accompaniment to the psalm.” (Gillingham 249)
      5. “To the dove on far-off Terebinths” (Ps 56): perhaps “the words of a song whose tune is an accompaniment to the psalm.” (Gillingham 249)
      6. ??`*al-mût labben* (Ps 9): this “may indicate a male soprano, or another cue-word from a song . . .” (Gillingham 249)
      7. `??*al-*`*allamôt* (Ps 46): this “may indicate the accompanying voices of women, or again may serve as a cue-word.” (Gillingham 249)
      8. “In most cases above we may note the link between psalmody and ‘secular’ singing.” (Gillingham 249)
   4. instruments
      1. *Negînôt* (Pss 4, 6, 54, 55, 67, 76) “suggests some stringed instrument (see 1 Sam. 16:16, 23).” (Gillingham 250)
      2. ??*Shemînît* (6, 12) “may refer to an eight-stringed instrument, or even eight voices . . .” (Gillingham 250)
      3. *Māhalat* (53, 88) “may be a wind instrument (see 1 Kgs. 1:40).” (Gillingham 250)
   5. choirmaster’s role
      1. The Hebrew preposition *le* is also found in *la menasse´ah* (55 superscriptions). “One possible root [of *menasse´ah*] is n-s-h—‘to supervise’, suggesting this is to be sung by the leader of the assembly—hence the translation ‘To the choirmaster’. . . . this indicates further that the Davidic psalms are more to do with use than with authorship . . .” (Gillingham 250)
      2. *La menasse´ah* occurs 55 times. (Gillingham 250)
      3. “Its use in Ps. 18 but not in the duplicate psalm 1 Sam. 22 suggests it has to do with the performance of a psalm.” (Gillingham 250)
      4. “The ascription occurs almost entirely in Books One to Three (exceptions are Pss. 109, 139, and 140); thus in every case this is linked with the psalms of Davidic orientation.” (Gillingham 250)
      5. The LXX “did not understand the meaning, translating this *eis to telos*—‘for the end’ or ‘to eternity’.” (Gillingham 250)
5. **conclusion**: “The superscriptions give clear evidence both of the liturgical/cultic appropriation of the Psalter and of the theological/literary interpretation. Both complement each other; the combination of both types in the longer headings [250] to psalms such as 22, 45, 46, 54, 56, 57, 58, 59, and 60 illustrates this point well.” (Gillingham 250-251)

## Psalms as Songs, Prayers, and Poems

Gillingham, S[usan] E. *The Poems and Psalms of the Hebrew Bible*. Oxford Bible Series. Oxford: OUP, 1994.

1. **introduction**
   1. There are “three different yet interrelated processes which have influenced the composition and transmission of biblical verse.” (Gillingham 276)
      1. *psalms as songs*: “The most significant is a *setting-in-liturgy*—mainly at the Temple but also at less formal, public, cultic occasions.” (Gillingham 276)
      2. *psalms as prayers*
         1. “Important too is a *setting-in-life*, whereby ordinary human experiences (corporate and individual) were ordered and expressed through the poetic medium.” (Gillingham 276)
         2. “. . . Semitic poetry often has a ‘setting-in-life’ prior to its ‘setting-in-literature’.” (Gillingham 121)
         3. The psalms have “a particular ‘setting-in-life’ or a ‘setting-in-liturgy’—either that of the public Temple liturgy, or the private lives of individuals. They have a different orientation from other Old Testament poems which are more integrated with narrative, and so have a ‘setting-in-literature’.” (Gillingham 232)
      3. *psalms as poems*
         1. “Equally critical is the *setting-in-literature*, where the theological concerns of the editors have given us a fixed text and a coherent framework in which to effect our own interpretation.” (Gillingham 276)
         2. “. . . later adaptation of an ancient poem into a literary framework gives it a very different emphasis . . . ‘Poetry-in-life’, on the one hand, is repeatable [91] . . . ‘Poetry-in-literature’ . . . becomes particularized, as it is adapted by the specific theological interests of the editor . . .” (Gillingham 91-92)
   2. “All of these three processes—liturgical, personal, and literary—are complementary ways of enabling the reader to appreciate ancient Semitic verse.” (Gillingham 276)
2. **evidence the psalms were songs**
   1. *shir*
      1. “The noun ??*shir* (‘song’) is found in its various forms nearly forty times in the psalms . . .” (Gillingham 45)
      2. A *shir* “was generally accompanied by music; it has the further nuance of a cultic song, something carried out in the liturgy.” (*Jerome Biblical Commentary* 1.570)
   2. *mizmor*
      1. *Mizmor* occurs in 57 superscriptions. “The Greek translates this as *psalmos*, meaning ‘hymn’, or ‘song to music’.” (Gillingham 249)
      2. *Mizmor* is “from the root ??*zamar* [and means] ‘a song to a stringed instrument’.” (Gillingham 45)
      3. “. . . the verb ??*zamar* (‘to accompany the singing’, possibly on a stringed instrument) occurs over forty times” in the psalms. (Gillingham 45)
   3. ??*Tehilla* (“song of praise,” found in the superscription of Ps 145) for a psalm and its plural ??*tehillim* for the book of Psalms indicate the psalms were songs.
   4. Greek *psalmos* (translating Hebrew *mizmor*, song to a stringed instrument) for a psalm and *psalterion* (book of praises) for the book of Psalms indicate the psalms were songs.
   5. Levitical musicians of the second Temple appear in the superscriptions.
      1. 55 psalms refer to the “choirmaster.”
      2. 12 psalms (50, 73-83) refer to the choir guild of Asaph.
      3. 11 psalms (42, 44-49, 84-85, 87-88) refer to the choir guild of Korah.
      4. 3 psalms (39, 62, 77) refer to Jeduthun.
      5. Ps 88 refers to Heman the Ezrahite.
      6. Ps 89 refers to Ethan the Ezrahite.
      7. Ps 46 refers to the Alamoth—possibly women’s voices.
   6. hymn tunes in superscriptions
      1. 4 superscriptions (57-59, 75) refer to “Do Not Destroy.” (Probably a vintage song. See Isa 65:8, “Thus says the Lord: As the wine is found in the cluster, and they say, “Do not destroy it, for there is a blessing in it,” so I will do for my servants’ sake, and not destroy them all.”)
      2. 3 superscriptions (45, 69, 80) refer to “Lilies.”
      3. 3 superscriptions (8, 81, 84) refer to the “Gittith” (“possibly a vintage tune,” Gillingham 45).
      4. 2 superscriptions (53, 88) refer to “Mahalath.”
      5. Ps 22 refers to “Hind of the Dawn.”
      6. Ps 56 refers to “Dove of the Far-off Terebinths.”
      7. Ps 60 refers to “Shushan Eduth.”
   7. musical instruments (Gillingham 46)
      1. stringed instruments (Pss 4, 6, 54, 55, 67, 76 superscriptions; 61:8)
      2. lyre (or harp?) (33:2 etc.)
      3. trumpet (?) (47:5 etc.)
      4. timbrels (81:2, 149:3, 150:4)
      5. *sheminith* (eight-stringed instrument?) (6, 12 superscriptions)
      6. harp (57:8, 150:3)
      7. flutes (5 superscription)
      8. pipes (150:4)
      9. cymbals (150:5)
   8. concluding remarks
      1. “. . . the previous survey demonstrates that musical accompaniment to psalmody was essentially rhythmic and accentual.” (Gillingham 46)
      2. Probably “on account of the prohibition regarding graven images . . . poetry and music were the most appropriate media for permissible creativity. ‘Art’ in its narrower, representational sense was, of course, not a feature of early Judaism. Instead of art, we find the sacred text becoming the focus for cultural creativity, not only in terms of reading (through the various interpretations of the text, which the rabbis called ??*midrashim*) but also through poetic recitation and through singing.” (Gillingham 47)
3. **the psalms as prayers**
   1. “The language of theology needs the poetic medium for much of its expression, for poetry, with its power of allusion, reminds us of the more hidden and mysterious truths which theology seeks to express.” (Gillingham 278)
4. **the psalms as poetry**
   1. poetry as drama: “. . . Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren [discuss] lit­er­ary narratives as “dra­mas” (*Understand­ing Poetry* 16-18). They do not mean, of course, that all works of literature are plays but that all works of literature have a “dramatic” quality: the reader of any liter­ary work (poem, play, short story, or nov­el) observes—from a vantage point where the fourth wall is mis­sing, so to speak—characters in a situation at the very moment at which the characters are engaged with the situation.” (Hahn)

# Psalms as Poems

## The Psalms as Poems

1. **introduction**: Hermann Gunkel, “in a seminal article on Israelite literature, written in German in 1906 . . ., [argues that poetry,] linked to the music and dance of popular religion and folk-culture, was easier to memorize . . .” (Gillingham 91)
2. **lexical level and performance level**: Frances Young in *The Art of Performance* “speaks of the ‘lexical level’, whereby we focus primarily on the score, [and] the ‘performance level’, when the musicians bring the score to life . . .” (Gillingham 3)
3. **understanding and appreciation**: in appreciation, “the poetry is the active element and we are the recipients”; in understanding, “we, as readers, become the subjects of the exercise, and the poem and the poet are the objects.” (Gillingham 4)
4. **setting in life and setting in literature**
   1. “. . . later adaptation of an ancient poem into a literary framework gives it a very different emphasis . . . ‘Poetry-in-life’, on the one hand, is repeatable [91] . . . ‘Poetry-in-literature’ . . . becomes particularized, as it is adapted by the specific theological interests of the editor . . .” (Gillingham 91-92) “. . . Semitic poetry often has a ‘setting-in-life’ prior to its ‘setting-in-literature’.” (Gillingham 121)
   2. “. . . poetry outside the Psalter is effective on account of its literary context, which gives it a more specific orientation; poetry within the Psalter is effective on account of its open-endedness, which gives it a performative quality.” (Gillingham 92)
   3. “The absence of a narrative context means that . . . a ‘setting-in-life’ has to some extent still been preserved. . . . [But it is] difficult to establish the precise life-setting for which a psalm was composed.” (Gillingham 173)
   4. The psalms have “a particular ‘setting-in-life’ or a ‘setting-in-liturgy’—either that of the public Temple liturgy, or the private lives of individuals. They have a different orientation from other Old Testament poems which are more integrated with narrative, and so have a ‘setting-in-literature’.” (Gillingham 232)

## Poetry as Drama

“. . . deciding wherein lies the precise distinction between narration which is *belles let­tres* and nar­ration which is rhetorical is notoriously dif­ficult. The best attempt I have yet seen, though it too remains dis­quietingly vague, is Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren’s discussion of lit­er­ary narratives as “dra­mas” (*Understand­ing Poetry* 16-18). They do not mean, of course, that all works of literature are plays but that all works of literature have a “dramatic” quality: the reader of any liter­ary work (poem, play, nov­el, or whatever) observes—from a vantage point where the fourth wall is mis­sing, so to speak—characters in a situation at the very moment at which the characters are engaged with the situation.”

Paul Hahn, *Structure in Rhetorical Criticism and the Struc­ture of the Sermon on the Plain* (*Luke 6:20-49*)

“You experience it in poetry . . . but recall it in prose.”

Michael Gruber, *Tropic of Night* (New York: Harper Torch-HarperCollins, 2003, 433)

“Although it is not customary to think of rhetorical persuasion and poetic insight and appreciation as subjects for logical analysis, they do have a logic of their own.”

See: Ashley, Benedict A., OP. *The Arts of Learning and Communication*. Dubuque: Priory, 1958. (A “description of the various structures of human communications,” Nogar 213 n. 10.)

## Distinguishing Verse and Prose

## in the Hebrew Bible

1. **the need to distinguish poetry and prose**
   1. “A few scholars have attempted (unsuccessfully) to show that the entire Old Testament, properly accented, could be written in verse.” (Gillingham 28)
   2. Others have attempted to show that the entire Old Testament is prose. “The suggestion that Hebrew verse is simply a developed prose style with rhetorical tendencies has been made by James Kugel in *The Idea of Biblical Poetry* [1981]. Kugel’s theory is in part convincing. . . . [Some psalms] lack the compact style of poetry.” (See below, “poetry that verges toward prose,” for some of Kugel’s evidence from Pss 87, 103:17-18, 106, and 136:5.) (Gil­ling­ham 32)
   3. There are “no clear-cut distinctions between prose and poetry in Hebrew.” (Gillingham 19)
2. **criteria to distinguish Hebrew poetry**
   1. *terse style*
      1. Usually “a maximum of four Hebrew words serves each clause . . .” (Gillingham 21)
      2. An example is Exod 15:12-13, “Thou-dost-stretch-out thy-right-hand, | (the-)earth swallowed-them. | Thou-hast-led in-thy-steadfast-love (a-)people | whom thou-hast-redeemed.” (Gillingham 21)
   2. *omission of certain particles*
      1. “This feature is a more specific example of the general characteristic of terseness of style.” (Gillingham 23)
      2. “. . . the most frequent [are] the definite article *h*-, the relative pronoun ´*asher*, and the sign of the definite object *et*.” (Gillingham 23)
      3. Ps 118:22 (words in brackets are omitted), “[The-]stone [which] the builders rejected | has become [the-]head [of-the-]corner.” (Gillingham 23)
   3. *figurative language*
      1. Ps 46:1-3, “God is our refuge and strength, | a very present help in trouble. | 2Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, | though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea; | 3though its waters roar and foam, | though the mountains tremble with its tumult.” (Gillingham 21)
   4. *ellipsis*
      1. This is “the omission of a word in a second phrase when it is the same as the one used in the first.” (Gillingham 23)
      2. “Again this is related [23] to poetry’s terseness of style.” (Gillingham 23)
      3. Amos 5:12, “For I know how many are your transgressions, and how great are your sins . . .”
   5. *lines*
      1. “T. Collins (*Line-Forms in Hebrew Poetry*) proposes that one standard verse-line consists of a subject (NP1), an object (NP2), a verb (V), and modifiers of the verb (M) . . .” (Gillingham 24)
      2. Jer 12:6, “For even your kinsfolk and your own family, | even they have dealt treacherously with you [NP1 V M]; they are in full cry after you [NP1 V M NP2]; | do not believe them [V M], | though they speak friendly words to you [V M NP2].
   6. *unusual word order*
      1. “. . . instead of the normal verb-subject-object sequence, the verb occurs in the middle or at the end of a clause.” (Gillingham 24)
      2. Num 23:7, “From-Aram has-brought-me Balak, | the-king-of-Moab [ ] from-the-mountains-in-the-east.” (Gillingham 24)
   7. *word pairs*
      1. *ordinary word pairs*
         1. “. . . evening/morning, light/dark, land/sea, bread/meat [are] an obvious way of expressing ideas in some balanced binary form.” (Gillingham 24)
         2. Ps 30:5, “For *his anger* is but for *a moment* | and *his favour* is for *a lifetime*. | [24] *Weeping* may tarry for *the night*, | but *joy* comes with *the morning*.” (Gillingham 24-25)
      2. *phonic word pairs*
         1. Gen 1:2, Jer 4:23, *tohu*/*bohu* (“waste and void)
         2. Isa 22:5, *mebusa*/*mebuka* (“trampling and confusion) (Gillingham 25)
      3. g*ender-matched word pairs*
         1. “. . . the pairing is a deliberate interplay of masculine and feminine nouns. . . . sometimes these words occur in alternate forms, at others in symmetrical pairs, echoing each other.” (Gillingham 25)
         2. “Several examples occur in Genesis 1 (which hence suggests a reading of poetry, not prose)—for example, Gen. 1:10: “God called the-dry-land [f. sing.] earth [f. sing.] | and the-gathering-together of-the-waters [m. pl.] he called seas [m. pl.]” (Gillingham 25)
   8. *rhyme*
      1. “Although less frequent in Hebrew, this is usually achieved by the use of suffixes.” (Gillingham 25)
      2. “Examples include the third-person feminine plural -nâ, the first person plural -nû, and the repeated use of the first person singular -î.” (Gillingham 25)
      3. Jer 12:7, “I-have-forsaken my-house (*`azabtî et-bêtî*) | I-have-abandoned my-heritage (*natastî et-nahalatî*) | I-have-given the-beloved of-my-soul (*natatî et-yedidût napshî*) | into-the-hands of-her-enemies.’” (Gillingham 26)
   9. *repetition*
      1. “. . . by way of a similar phrase acting as an ‘envelope figure’ at the beginning or ending of a sequence . . .” (Gillingham 26)
      2. “. . . by the use of refrains at the end of a stanza.” (Gillingham 26)
         1. The “refrain in Isa. 5:25, 9:12, 17, 21, and 10:4 . . . creates a clear poetic unit.” (Gillingham 26)
         2. “So too the refrain in Pss. 42:5, 11 and 43:5 brings together the two psalms as one whole poem.” (Gillingham 26)
         3. Jer 15:2, “Those destined for pestilence, to pestilence, | and those destined for the sword, to the sword; | those destined for famine, to famine, | and those destined for captivity, to captivity.” (Gillingham 26)
   10. *unusual vocabulary and archaisms*
       1. Examples include “the ‘enclitic *mem*’ (used for emphasis), the ‘vocative *lamed*’ (used in address), and the ‘emphatic *waw*’ (‘but’ . . .).” (Gillingham 26)
       2. “Another example is the variation of tenses within two balancing lines: the imperfect (incompleted) tense—called the *yiqtol*—may occur in one colon, whilst the perfect (completed) tense—called the *qatal*—may occur in the other colon. Psalm 38:11 is a good example of this.” (Gillingham 26)
       3. change of voice, e. g. passive to active, as in Ps 24:7 (Gillingham 26)
   11. *chiasmus*
       1. Here “each of the lines leads up to one climactic point and recedes back down again . . . One typical pattern might be ABCDCBA.” (Gillingham 27)
       2. “Psalm 46 is thought to have this chiasmus overall, with the central focus in vv. 5 and 6, regarding God’s presence in the city.” (Gillingham 27)
       3. “So too has Ps. 56, where the chiasmus is developed between God, the ‘I’ who speaks, and the enemies, interspersed with the refrain in vv. 5 and 11-12.” (Gillingham 27)
       4. “Other examples include Isa. 1:21-6; Jer. 2:5-9; Amos 9:1-4; Ps. 136:10-15; Job 32:6-10; and Eccles. 3:2-8.” (Gillingham 27)
   12. *tricola*
       1. Here “three similar phrases occur one after the other.” (Gillingham 27)
       2. Ps 27:14, “Wait for the Lord; | be strong, and let your heart take courage; | wait for the Lord!” (Gillingham 27)
3. **prose that verges toward poetry**
   1. “. . . prose passages also make use of some of the specific features listed above.” (Gillingham 27)
      1. “Word-pairs, for example, are found in Genesis 1 (e.g. light and darkness; sea and dry land; earth and heaven) . . .” (Gillingham 27)
      2. “Chiasmus is found in many narrative passages . . .” (Gillingham 28) Examples:
         1. Gen 6-9 (flood narrative)
         2. Exod 12-15 (Red Sea crossing) (Gillingham 28)
   2. prose prayers
      1. “Prose prayers occur throughout the various literary sources of the Old Testament.” (Gillingham 28)
         1. J (Gillingham 28)
            1. Gen 4:13-14 (Cain)
            2. Gen 15:2-3 (Abraham)
            3. Gen 32:9-12 (Jacob)
            4. Exod 3:11, 13; 4:1, 10, 13; 5:22-3; 17:4 (Moses)
         2. P (Gillingham 28)
            1. Gen 17:18 (Abraham)
            2. Exod 6:12, 30 (Moses)
         3. D
            1. Deut 3:24-5 (Moses)
            2. Judg 6:36-7, 39 (Gideon)
            3. Judg 11:30-1 (Jephthah)
            4. Judg 13:8 (Manoah)
            5. Judg 15:18, 6:28, 30 (Samson)
            6. 1 Sam 1:11 (Hannah)
            7. 1 Sam 3:10, 16:2 (Samuel)
            8. 2 Sam 5:19, 15:31 (David)
            9. 1 Kgs 3:6-9 (Solomon)
            10. 1 Kgs 17:20, 21, 18:36-7, 19:4, 10, 14 (Elijah)
            11. 2 Kgs 20:3 (Hezekiah)
         4. in the prophets (Gillingham 28)
            1. Isa 6:5, 8 (Isaiah)
            2. Jer 1:6, 14:13, 15:10-12 (Jeremiah)
            3. Jer 45:3 (Baruch)
            4. Amos 7:2, 5
            5. Jon 1:14 (pagan sailors)
            6. Jon 4:2-3, 8-9 (Jonah)
      2. Prose prayers “are conscious imitations of poetic prayer forms. Yet their literary context is unmistakably prose narrative: they form an intrinsic part of their story, and the characters are invariably introduced in the third person.” (Gillingham 29)
      3. “Prayer of this nature [is] neither simple conversational form, nor is it at first sight an obvious poem; [it] could certainly be termed ‘poetic’ . . .” (Gillingham 30)
4. **poetry that verges toward prose**
   1. “. . . psalms where the dividing-lines between prose and poetry are somewhat blurred . . . include Pss. 87 and 106, 103, and 136 . . .” (Gillingham 191)
   2. The historical psalms “rehearse the story of God’s dealings with his people from past to present. For example, Ps. 106 is a confession of God’s saving work through the people’s history, ending with an acknowledgement of sin and a prayer for God’s grace. However, another way of reading Ps. 106 could also suggest a narrative passage, set in a credal form like that found in Exod. 13:14-16; Deut. 6:20-5; and particularly in Deut. 26:5-10.” (Gillingham 32)
   3. In Pss 103:17-18 and 136:5, “the verses are exceptionally long; the rhythm and pattern of the psalm are broken, as if the actual contents were more important than the vehicle of presentation . . . the terse style is nowhere evident. Apart from some indication of parallel ideas earlier in the psalm, the use of . . . other listed poetic devices is hardly apparent. . . . it would be relatively easy to interpret this as prose, and to assign it to Deuteronomistic style (cf. Deut. 5:10; 7:9).” (Gillingham 32)
   4. “Another example is Ps. 87:1ff. . . .” (Gillingham 32)
5. **conclusions**
   1. “. . . the overcompartmentalizing of prose and poetry is not a Semitic phenomenon.” (Gillingham 34)
   2. “Ultimately, the difference between Hebrew prose and poetry is more one of degree than of kind, and the distinction does not imply a value-judgement of one over the other.” (Gillingham 36)
   3. “We may think we know that there are two forms of literature, labelled prose and poetry—two languages, two ways of communicating experience and reality—but we cannot help but suspect that the labelling never arose in Hebrew, because questions were not asked about form, language, and intention in the way we ask them . . .” (Gillingham 43)

## Psalms and Ancient Near-Eastern Poetry

1. **epic poetry**
   1. “Comparisons with other ancient Near Eastern poetry reveal an interesting feature: an element lacking in Hebrew poetry, but [36] evident elsewhere, is the continuous narrative presented through a poetic medium—what might be called ‘epic poetry’.” (Gillingham 36-37)
   2. In “Pss. 103 and 106, poetry ‘rehearses’ aspects of a story, without relating the story itself. . . . This is not, however, epic poetry, for there is no characterization and interplay of story and dialogue, no background detail, no playing on human curiosity through the art of narration.” (Gillingham 37) (Gillingham classifies 103 as a hymn and 106 as a lament. 213, 218)
   3. Pss “103 and 106 seem to assume that the audience already knows the story, . . . whereas in other cultures, epic poetry was used as a means of telling stories *about* the names and attributes of their deities, Israel’s poetry was composed more as a means of encouraging the people to respond directly *to* their God. This liturgical and performative context for Israelite poetry may suggest one reason why Israel possessed no epic poetry as such.” (Gillingham 37) “. . . Hebrew poetry was a means of encouraging the people to encounter their God, rather than a way of relating stories about him.” (Gillingham 39)
   4. “Hebrew literature contains a far greater percentage of prose material anyway, and because of this, much of the peculiar poetic diction is spread also throughout the prose of Hebrew. In [Hebrew] religious and sacral stories (the narratives, which, in Ugaritic, are epic poetry) were expressed mainly in prose.” (Gillingham 42)
   5. “By contrast, there are many epic accounts told through the medium of poetry in ancient Near Eastern cultures outside Israel. We could refer to examples from Mesopotamia (in both Sumerian and Akkadian), from the Hittites, or from the Egyptians; but perhaps the most helpful examples are from Ras Shamra, an ancient trading city on the Mediterranean coast of Syria. Since the late 1920s, a team . . . has been deciphering alphabetical cuneiform tablets, written in Ugaritic and in [37] Akkadian, dating from between the fourteenth and twelfth centuries bce—at least three centuries before the poetry of the Old Testament was popularized.” (Gillingham 37-38)
2. **Ras Shamra/Ugarit literature**
   1. “Some of these tablets could be termed ‘prose’. They include letters, royal grants, legal texts, financial and administrative lists. Nevertheless, the bulk of the material in Ugaritic is in poetry, and the greatest proportion of the poetry deals with religious and mythological themes. . . . The best known of the Ugaritic epics include *The Ba‘l and ‘Anat Cycle, The Legend of Krt, The Legend of Aqht, The Birth of the Good Gods of Fertility,* and *The Marriage of ??Yarih and Nikkal.*” (Gillingham 38)
   2. “. . . Keret, an ancient king of Ugarit, . . . like the biblical Job . . . loses his possessions and family, to be healed and restored by the most high god, El.” (Gillingham 38)
   3. “. . . these epics, written in cuneiform on clay tablets, [are] often in continuous script because of the lack of space (a feature similar to that of the findings at Qumran) . . .” (Gillingham 38)
   4. “The clearest correspondence to these epics in Hebrew poetry, is found in victory songs celebrating the nation’s military success. Examples include God’s control of chaos by the slaying of the dragon monster of the sea, as in Pss. 74:13-14 and 89:10-11, and in [38] Isa. 51:9-10; God’s power and glory associated with his dwelling and/or appearing on sacred mountains, as in Pss. 48:1-3; 68:7-10; and Hab. 3:2-3; God’s control over nature, whereby he is heard through the elements of thunder and lightning, as in Pss. 29:3-9 and 93:3-4; God’s world rule, established from an ancient throne from time immemorial, as in Pss. 44:1-4; 47:8-9; and 93:1-2. But this is still not epic poetry; they are basically songs, performed in the cult, even though, like the poetry of Ugarit, they go beyond history and utilize various motifs from ancient mythological tales. The difference is that in the Hebrew songs, the story element and character portrayal are entirely absent. Even the mythical motifs are developed more in metaphorical terms . . . It is as if the biblical writers needed to use mythological motifs in order to explain the mysteries of life before human time, but they only borrowed the vestiges of the myths: to depict a mythical story normally associated with a pantheon of deities and display it in epic and poetic form would have been too much of a theological compromise for an essentially monotheistic faith.” (Gillingham 39)
   5. “. . . Ugarit had ceased to exist before Israel’s own literary output developed. The poems of Ras Shamra give us good evidence of a more distinctive *poetic* tradition out of which other Semitic poetry developed, including that of the Hebrews.” (Gillingham 39)
   6. “. . . word-pairs, chiasmus, and refrains are repeatedly used.” (Gillingham 38)
3. **word pairs**
   1. “The best examples are found in the word-pairing. The example below . . . is from a description of a fight between Ba‘l and Mot, the god of death.

yt‘n kgmrm they shake each other like gmr-animals;

mt ‘z b‘l ‘z Mot is strong, Ba‘l is strong;

??ynghn krumm they gore like buffaloes;

mt ‘z b‘l ‘z Mot is strong, Ba‘l is strong; [39]

??yntkn ??kbtnm they bite like serpents;

mt ‘z b‘l ‘z Mot is strong, Ba‘l is strong.

(*Ba`l and `Anat Cycle*)” (Gillingham 39-40)

Cf. Ps 136:4-6:

“to him who alone does great wonders,

for his steadfast love endures for ever;

to him who by understanding made the heavens,

for his steadfast love endures for ever;

to him who spread out the earth upon the waters,

for his steadfast love endures for ever” (Gillingham 40)

* 1. “. . . the use of word-pairs often results in . . . a certain balance of sounds.” (Gillingham 41)
     1. “One form is of a line with two words and two stresses . . .” (Gillingham 40)
     2. “Another poetic form in Ugaritic is of a cola with three words and three stresses: . . .

ydn dn almnt he judges the cause of the widow

??ytpt ??tpt ytm and adjudicates the cause of the fatherless (*2 Aqht*) . . .

This three/three rhythm is more popular in Hebrew . . .” (Gillingham 40-41)

ht ibk b‘lm now, thine enemies O Ba‘l

ht ibk ??tmhs now, thine enemies thou shalt smite,

ht ??tsmt ??srtk now, thou shalt destroy thy foes . . .

(*Ba`l and `Anat Cycle*) . . . note also the word-pair enemies (??ebim) and evildoers (??sarim), which is found repeatedly in Hebrew poetic texts, [e. g.] Ps. 92:9 . . .:

For, lo, thy enemies, O Lord,

for, lo, thy enemies shall perish

all evildoers shall be scattered.” (Gillingham 41)

* 1. “Word-pairing is, in fact, the most obvious correspondence between Ugaritic and Hebrew poetry. Scholars claim to have found over one hundred such examples, not only in the use of nouns (e. g. light/darkness; sea/river; earth/deep; thunder/­light­ning; laughter/joy; death/life; silver/gold; tent/dwelling; strength/might; jus­tice/­righteousness), [41] but also in the use of verbs (e. g. smite/destroy; build/­raise; eat/consume; reign/sit enthroned). In Ugaritic poetry, unlike Hebrew, this feature is found almost entirely in the epic poems; it is hardly evident in the prose tablets. This again highlights the sharper differences between prose and poetry in Ugaritic. By contrast, in the biblical literature word-pairs are found throughout both the poetic and prose material. For example, ‘earth and the deep’ [is found] in Gen. 1:2; ‘death and life’ [in] Deut. 30:15, 19; Jer. 21:8; and Ezek. 18:13, 17, 32; ‘tent and dwelling’ [in] Exod. 39:32; 40:34; Num. 24:5; Isa. 54:2; and Jer. 30:18.” (Gillingham 42)

ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN

INFLUENCE ON THE PSALMS

Gillingham, S[usan] E. *The Poems and Psalms of the Hebrew Bible*. Oxford Bible Series. Oxford: OUP, 1994.

1. **Exod 15**:**21** (not in Psalms, but a psalm)
   1. Exod 15:21 is “a brief fragment celebrating the victory at the Red Sea, being placed after a longer literary poem composed to celebrate the same event (15:2-18). The poem is attributed to Miriam but is very similar to v. 1, which is attributed to Moses. Here we may note the rhythm (2:2; 2:2) used in the call to praise God . . .” (Gillingham 118)
   2. There are “correspondences with Ugaritic poetry, including the allusions to the deity fighting the chaotic forces of the sea. An interesting correspondence [118] is the epic poem describing the fight between Ba’al and Yam. . . .

Sea (Yam) fell, He sank to earth,

His joints trembled, His frame collapsed.

Ba’al destroyed, Drank Sea!

He finished off Judge River.

yamma la-mitû Sea is indeed dead

ba’ lû-mi yamlû(ku) Ba’al indeed rules!” (Gillingham 118-19)

* 1. “The motif of the deity’s fight against the power of the sea is common throughout the ancient Near East. Several examples also occur in the biblical accounts (cf. Pss. 74:15ff.; 77:17-20; 89:10ff.; 93:1-4; Isa. 27:1; 51:9-11; Hab. 3:8-9).” (Gillingham 119)

1. **Judg 5**:**2-31** (not in Psalms, but a psalm)
   1. Judg 5:2-31, “probably composed close to the event,” is “an ancient text which is so corrupt that in places it is difficult to ascertain its meaning.” (Gillingham 119)
   2. “Verses 12-30 (and perhaps vv. 6-8 also) form the core of the song, celebrating tribal victory. The introduction (vv. 1-11) and the conclusion (v. 31) are more hymnic in style, attributing the victory not to tribal prowess but to the God of Israel. The earlier verses demonstrate again the use of ancient Near Eastern mythology, in their depiction of God coming from the desert region, probably of Kadesh, in the Sinai peninsula. God marches to defend his people; his coming is described in the anthropomorphic terms of a warrior-god . . .” (Gillingham 120)
   3. “Like Exod. 15, Ugaritic motifs are evident: examples include the heavens and clouds dropping water . . . and the mountain-god appearing on earth in a violent thunderstorm . . . The correspondences of this poem with other biblical poems reflecting Canaanite influence (e. g. Ps. 29:6/Judg. 5:3; Ps. 68:7-8, Deut. 33:2; Hab. 3:4-5/Judg. 5:4-5) suggest further the possibility of some ‘borrowing’.” (Gillingham 120)
2. “**ancient Near Eastern correspondences with the hymns of praise**” (Gillingham 209)
   1. In Ps 19, “two hymns have been later placed together: 19A (vv. 1-6) is an independent hymn praising God’s order through nature, and 19B (vv. 7-13, 14) is a separate hymn celebrating God’s order by his giving of the law. [209] Part of Ps. 19A (vv. 4*c*-6) is a hymn of praise to the sun; the imagery here (of the sun as a bridegroom emerging out of a ‘tabernacle’, or ‘marriage tent’ to circle the earth in the daylight hours) has many associations with Babylonian hymns praising the sun-god Shamesh (the Hebrew word for sun, ??*shemesh,* suggests further affinities), who was also known as the ‘lordly hero’ or the ‘strong man’ (cf. v. 5). The difference in the Hebrew hymn is that praise is offered to God as Creator of the sun, rather than to the sun itself.” (Gillingham 209-10)
   2. Ps 29 “echoes an ancient Canaanite hymn to Ba`l-Hadad, the weather-god. This psalm celebrates God as Creator through his power and majesty expressed in the storm; the imagery, of the sevenfold voice of God coming through the clouds, and the references to the cedars of Lebanon and Sirion (from which the temple of Ba`l was built) echo the same ideas as the Canaanite hymn.” (Gillingham 209)
   3. Ps. 104 “has several correspondences (very clearly in vv. 20-30) with the Egyptian Hymn to Aton (the sun-god), which is attributed to Pharaoh Akhenaten, who in the fourteenth century bce established a new monotheistic cult in Egypt which worshipped only the sun-disc. The difference in Ps. 104 is that God’s providence extends beyond the daylight hours: Israel’s God rules over the night as well.” (Gillingham 210)
   4. Some scholars “date Pss. 29 and 68, which appear to have several Canaanite borrowings, earlier” than 1000 bc. Gillingham considers them monarchical. (Gillingham 252)
3. **the Zion hymns** (46, 48, 76, 84, 87, 122)
   1. The Zion hymns “also suggest an early date. They appear to borrow from early Canaanite mythology, concerning the deity’s dwelling on a mountain (Pss. [*sic*] 48:2), with rivers of healing flowing through the city (Ps. 46:4), and the appearing of the deity to protect his people and judge the nations (Pss. 46:6; 48:8; 76:8-9).” (Gillingham 251)
   2. Pss 46 and 48 “include the use of the Canaanite name for God (El Elyôn, the Most High God), as well as the Canaanite allusions to the dwelling-place of their deities [46:4-5; 48:2] . . .” (Gillingham 182)
4. “**descriptions about God’s theophany**” (Gillingham 204)
   1. “Much of this [God’s theophanies] takes up the mythological and archetypal imagery found in hymns from Babylon and Canaan: examples include the earth reeling and shaking, God’s appearing in thunder, on the clouds, in thick darkness, with lightnings, through the seas and deep, God fighting for his people, and his dwelling on his holy mountain.” (Gillingham 204)

## Early Hebrew Poetry

Gillingham, S[usan] E. *The Poems and Psalms of the Hebrew Bible*. Oxford Bible Series. Oxford: OUP, 1994.

1. **etiological sayings** (“fragments of poetry in aetiological sayings,” Gillingham 106)
   1. place names
      1. Etiological sayings concerning “the meaning of place-names, often serving to defend disputed territorial claims, [are] sometimes set in poetic line-forms. . . . Many of these pertain to disputes over wells and watering rights . . .” (Gillingham 106)
      2. date: the contents “suggest an early origin amongst clans and tribes as they defended their possession of new terrain.” (Gillingham 106)
      3. “Four such sayings are found in Genesis 26:20, 21, 22, 32. The best example is [26:­22: “he called it Rehoboth, saying, “Now the Lord has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land.””] The earlier life-setting of the poetic saying is concerned with the quarrels of herdsmen over the right of access to water. This has been readapted by the editor of Gen. 26 to make a different point concerning the superiority of the people of Israel (represented by Isaac) over the Philistines (represented by Abimelech).” (Gillingham 106)
      4. Similar examples are “Genesis 16:13-14; 21:31; 31:46-9; [106] 32:2-3; Exodus 17:7; and Numbers 11:3, 34.” (Gillingham 106-107)
      5. Exod 17:15-16 “could relate to the period of enmity with the Amalekites (see Num. 24:20 and Deut. 25:17-19) . . .” (Gillingham 107)
         1. Exod 17:15-16, “And Moses built an altar and called it, | The Lord is my banner. | 16He said, “A hand upon the banner of the Lord! | The Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.””
         2. “The earliest poetic fragment is probably the ‘Banner Song’ in v. 16 (‘A hand upon the banner of the Lord’). The editor has taken this fragment of early war poetry and combined it with an aetiological saying about the antiquity of a cultic site from the time of Moses (v. 15). The composite poetic unit has been further developed to fit into the larger narrative about the murmurings in the wilderness (Exod. 17:1-16), to illustrate God’s faithfulness in contrast to the people’s complaints.” (Gillingham 107)
   2. children’s names
      1. Children’s names in Israel, as in surrounding cultures, were often theophoric (“God-bearing”): they are phrases that include a reference to God.
      2. examples
         1. Gen 16:11b, “you shall call him Ishmael, for the Lord has given heed to your affliction.”
         2. Gen 21:6, “Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. 6Sarah said, “God has brought laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh with me.””
         3. The prophets sometimes their children symbolic names: Hos 1:4-5, 6-7, 8-9, 2:1; Isa 7:3-5, 8:1-4.
   3. “Another aetiology concerned with the meaning of names” is Gen 2:23: “this one shall be called Woman, for out of Man this one was taken.”
2. **tribal blessings and curses** (“fragments of oral poetry,” Gillingham 115)
   1. blessings
      1. Gen 14:19-20 is “a blessing for Abram spoken by a non-Israelite priest-king, Melchizedek . . .” (Gillingham 115)
         1. Gen 14:19-20, “Blessed be Abram by God Most High, | maker of heaven and earth; | 20and blessed be God Most High, | who has delivered your enemies into your hand!”
         2. “The poetic nature of this blessing is clear, both in the repetition of ‘blessed’ (lines 1 and 3), and in the parallelism A > B (lines 1 and 2 with lines 3 and 4). That this has liturgical connotations is evident in the references to ‘God Most High’, which was a title for God used in the psalms sung at the Jerusalem Temple (cf. Pss. 46:4; 47:2).” (Gillingham 115)
         3. date: “It is probably quite ancient, and may have once been a liturgical blessing from the pre-Israelite Jebusite cultus in Jerusalem (on which account it postdates Abraham by some five hundred years).” (Gillingham 115)
         4. “. . . it has been adapted into the narrative of Genesis 14 to justify the ancient claims of the people of Israel to the land, placed in the mouth of a non-Israelite priest-king in order to create a more universal sense of authority.” (Gillingham 115)
      2. Gen 27:27-29, 39-40
         1. Gen 27:27-29, “26Then his father Isaac said to him, “Come near and kiss me, my son.” 27So he came near and kissed him; and he smelled the smell of his garments, and blessed him, and said, “Ah, the smell of my son is like the smell of a field that the Lord has blessed. 29Let peoples serve you, and nations bow down to you. Be lord over your brothers, and may your mother’s sons bow down to you. Cursed be everyone who curses you, and blessed be everyone who blesses you!” . . . 39Then his father Isaac answered him [Esau]: “See, away from the fatness of the earth shall your home be, and away from the dew of heaven on high. 40By your sword you shall live, and you shall serve your brother; but when you break loose, you shall break his yoke from your neck.””
         2. “As an early tribal blessing, it would have pertained to the conflicts between the Edomites (who traced their ancestry back to Esau) and the Israelites (who were the ‘house of Jacob’: cf. Gen. 25:23, 30). [115] . . . the writer inverts the former blessing on Esau/Edom (vv. 27-9), so that it now falls on Jacob/Israel (vv. 39-40).” (Gillingham 115-116)
      3. Gen 49:2-28
         1. Gen 49 is “a collection of tribal blessings” by Jacob to his sons, on his deathbed. (Gillingham 116)
         2. date: it is “from several different stages in Israel’s history, compiled at a time after the prominence of the tribe of Judah in the south (vv. 8-12) and of Joseph in the north (vv. 24-6).” (Gillingham 116)
         3. “The writer has brought these together . . . to emphasize the early unity of the disparate tribes.” (Gillingham 116)
      4. Deut 33:1-29
         1. Like Gen 49, this is a deathbed speech, though by Moses. (Gillingham 116)
         2. date: it is probably later than Gen 49: “there is clear evidence of the divided kingdom (vv. 7 and 17—Judah and Joseph); furthermore Dan has moved to the north (v. 22) and Simeon has disappeared.” (Gillingham 116)
   2. poems of cursing
      1. Gen 9:25-27
         1. “. . . he [Noah] said,

“Cursed be Canaan;

lowest of slaves shall he be to his brothers.”

26He also said, “Blessed by the Lord my God be Shem;

and let Canaan be his slave.

27May God make space for Japheth,

and let him live in the tents of Shem;

and let Canaan be his slave.””

* + - 1. “Verse 25 is probably the earliest part of this saying, and suggests a form of curse on the disobedient son (cf. Exod. 21:15, 17). By adding vv. 26-7, the Yahwistic writer demonstrates the uneasy relations between Israel and Canaan during his own time. The context here is a story about Canaan’s sexual depravity, which implies the writer’s animosity to the Canaanites’ fertility practices. The later literary adaptation, concerning the increase of hostilities during the growth of civilizations, has again changed the impact of the earlier saying of the simple curses against Canaan.” (Gillingham 116-117)
    1. Num 23:7-10, 18-24; 24:3-9, 15-24 (Balaam)
       1. “These [oracles] probably date from before the time of the monarchy. The view of prophecy here, and its link with military concerns, suggest an early period. One fragment [Num 24:20] is undoubtedly ancient in that it concerns the enmity between the Israelites and Amalekites, and has links with the hatred of the Amalekites in the ‘Banner Song’ in Exod. 17:16, referred to earlier . . .” (Gillingham 117)
       2. “The literary adaptation has heightened the effectiveness of these ancient curses by adding to them the power of the prophetic word. The editor has also woven into the story the irony of Balaam who is supposed to speak on behalf of the Moabites against Israel, but instead blesses Israel and (by implication) curses Moab: the motifs found in Gen. 27 and the Jacob/Esau blessing are again apparent.” (Gillingham 117)

1. **law poetry**
   1. “. . . some of the briefer sayings may be traced back to the teaching of the elders of the clans and tribes in early settlement times [c 1200 bc] . . .” (Gillingham 92)
   2. In Gen 4:23-24 Lamech asserts “the ancient law of blood revenge:

1. Adah and Zillah, hear my voice:

2. you wives of Lamech, hearken to what I say:

3. I have slain a man for wounding me,

4. a young man for striking me. [92]

5. If Cain is avenged sevenfold,

6. truly Lamech seventy-sevenfold. . . .

“The parallelism is evident in lines 1, 2 and 3, 4 [A = B] and in lines 5 and 6 [A > B] [should be A < B—Hahn]. The rhythm is also clear: it has a 3:3 stress. [This legal saying’s] earliest purpose would have been to assert the importance of vengeance to protect certain family and clan groups. Yet . . . The verse has been appropriated by the writer . . . to demonstrate the spread of violence throughout humankind . . . and is one explanation for the inevitability of judgement by Noah’s flood in Genesis 6.” (Gillingham 92-93)

* 1. Gen 9:6, “Whoever sheds the blood of a human, | by a human shall that person’s blood be shed,” “is another poetic legal saying expounding the ancient law of blood revenge [also found in Exod 21:12-17]. However, in its present literary context of Genesis 9:1-19, it is used to justify God’s command to Noah to exercise dominion over the earth but not to become defiled by eating animal flesh with its blood.” (Gillingham 93)
  2. “Several ancient legal sayings are . . . in the law-code of Exod. 22:18-23:19 . . . they are found in independent legal collections, rather than being integrated with any narrative . . . hence their later literary adaptation is of a different kind. For a more general overview of such poetry, the reader should look at Blenkinsopp’s study.” (Blenkinsopp, Joseph. *Wisdom and Law in the Old Testament*. Oxford Bible Series. Oxford: OUP, 1989.) (Gillingham 93)

1. **songs**
   1. Songs “which one would expect from any ancient Near Eastern culture [are] working songs, harvest songs, love songs, and funeral dirges . . ., often accompanied by music. . . .” (Gillingham 106)
   2. work songs
      1. “One example of a *working song* is found in Num. 21:17-18:

Then Israel sang this song:

###### A ‘Spring up, O well!—Sing to it!

B the well which the princes dug,

C which the nobles of the people delved,

D with the sceptre and their staves.’

* + 1. The *New Jerusalem Bible* (809) calls this “the Song of the Well . . .”
    2. “This song begins with an acclamation at the ‘springing-up’ of the water in a freshly dug well. There is good reason to suggest this is [107] ancient poetry, and the occurrence of other poetic fragments in this chapter in Numbers (see vv. 14-15, 27) would further confirm this observation. The parallelism (A = B) is evident in lines two and three, whilst the final line [fits] with the images of ‘princes/ nobles’ and ‘dug/delved’ in the preceding lines. . . . a general working song has been given a specific orientation by the editor, to ratify the divine provision of water as the people journeyed through the wilderness.” (Gillingham 107-108)
  1. drinking songs
     1. “Isaiah 22:13 quotes from one (‘let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die’) . . .” (Gillingham 108)
     2. “Wisdom 2:6-9 . . . are akin to Isa. 22:13.” (Gillingham 108)
  2. funeral songs
     1. The reference to ‘The Book of Jashar [the upright]’ as a source-book for such laments in 1 Sam. 1:18 (also in Josh. 10:13) indicates that these songs, sung over the fallen, were preserved in particular collections of war poetry. The interesting feature about both of these poems concerns their lack of any religious reference.” (Gillingham 109)
     2. “two long . . . funeral dirges for great heroes fallen in battle”
        1. 2 Sam 1:19-27, David’s lament over Jonathan (“note the typical features of parallelism and (despite a corrupted text) a discernible 4:4 rhythmic stress,” e.g. 1:22, 23, 27) (Gillingham 109)
        2. 2 Sam 3:33-34, David’s lament over Abner. (Gillingham 109)
     3. The prophets applied the funeral-dirge form ironically “to the enemy nations and so sang proleptically of their downfall and death.” (Gillingham 109) See Num 21:27-30 (Balaam), Isa 14:4-21, 23:15-16; Ezek 27:2-10, 25-36; 28:12-19; 32:2-16. (Amos 5:2 applies the funeral dirge to Israel.)
  3. love songs (wedding songs)
     1. Ps 45 is “a secular wedding song composed for a royal marriage.” (Gillingham 110)
     2. The prophets use love songs to depict the relationship between God and Israel.
     3. See especially Song of Songs.

1. **war poetry**
   1. Exod 15:21 is “a brief fragment celebrating the victory at the Red Sea, being placed after a longer literary poem composed to celebrate the same event (15:2-18). The poem is attributed to Miriam but is very similar to v. 1, which is attributed to Moses. Here we may note the rhythm (2:2; 2:2) used in the call to praise God:

And Miriam sang to them:

/ / / /

‘Sing to-the-Lord, for-he-has-triumphed gloriously;

/ / / /

[the] horse and-his-rider he-has-thrown into-the-sea.’” (Gillingham 118)

* + 1. “The cultic background to this song is apparent not only in the larger literary unit (chs. 12-15, which recount the events connected with the festival of Passover) but also in the smaller unit (15: 2ff.), which speaks of the celebration in music and dance after military victory (v. 20). The antiquity of the poem is evident not only on account of its brevity, but also because of its various correspondences with Ugaritic poetry, including the allusions to the deity fighting the chaotic forces of the sea. An interesting correspondence [118] is the epic poem describing the fight between Ba’al and Yam. . . .

Sea (Yam) fell, He sank to earth,

His joints trembled, His frame collapsed.

Ba’al destroyed, Drank Sea!

He finished off Judge River.

yamma la-mitû Sea is indeed dead

ba’ lû-mi yamlû(ku) Ba’al indeed rules!” (Gillingham 118-119)

* + 1. “The motif of the deity’s fight against the power of the sea is common throughout the ancient Near East. Several examples also occur in the biblical accounts (cf. Pss. 74:15ff.; 77:17-20; 89:10ff.; 93:1-4; Isa. 27:1; 51:9-11; Hab. 3:8-9).” (Gillingham 119)
  1. “Ancient collections [of lyric poetry] once existed of which only the name or a few scraps survive: the Book of the Wars of Yahweh . . . and the Book of the Just . . .” (*New Jerusalem Bible* 809)
     1. Num 21:14, “Wherefore it is said in the Book of the Wars of the Lord, “Waheb in Suphah and the wadis. The Arnon 15and the slopes of the wadis that extend to the seat of Ar, and lie along the border of Moab.””
     2. Josh 10:12-13, “On the day when the Lord gave the Amorites over to the Israelites, Joshua spoke to the Lord; and he said in the sight of Israel,

“Sun, stand still at Gibeon,

and Moon, in the valley of Aijalon.”

13And the sun stood still, and the moon stopped,

until the nation took vengeance on their enemies.

Is this not written in the Book of Jashar? The sun stopped in mid-heaven, and did not hurry to set for about a whole day.” (Line divisions are from Gillingham 118)

Josh 10:12-13 “takes up two ancient ideas—Israel’s God is not only a ‘holy warrior’, but also he controls the forces of nature . . .” (Gillingham 118)

* + 1. 2 Sam 1:18, “He ordered that The Song of the Bow be taught to the people of Judah; it is written in the Book of Jashar.”
  1. “. . . songs of military victory indicate . . . territorial and nationalistic concerns.” (Gillingham 118)
  2. Judg 5:2-31, “probably composed close to the event,” is “an ancient text which is so corrupt that in places it is difficult to ascertain its meaning.” (Gillingham 119)
     1. Judg 5, “Then Deborah and Barak son of Abinoam sang on that day, saying: 2“When locks are long in Israel, when the people offer themselves willingly—bless the Lord! 3Hear, O kings; give ear, O princes; to the Lord I will sing, I will make melody to the Lord, the God of Israel. 4Lord, when you went out from Seir, when you marched from the region of Edom, the earth trembled, and the heavens poured, the clouds indeed poured water. 5The mountains quaked before the Lord, the One of Sinai, before the Lord, the God of Israel. 6In the days of Shamgar son of Anath, in the days of Jael, caravans ceased and travelers kept to the byways. 7The peasantry prospered in Israel, they grew fat on plunder, because you arose, Deborah, arose as a mother in Israel. 8When new gods were chosen, then war was in the gates. Was shield or spear to be seen among forty thousand in Israel? 9My heart goes out to the commanders of Israel who offered themselves willingly among the people. Bless the Lord. 10Tell of it, you who ride on white donkeys, you who sit on rich carpets and you who walk by the way. 11To the sound of musicians at the watering places, there they repeat the triumphs of the Lord, the triumphs of his peasantry in Israel. Then down to the gates marched the people of the Lord. 12Awake, awake, Deborah! Awake, awake, utter a song! Arise, Barak, lead away your captives, O son of Abinoam. 13Then down marched the remnant of the noble; the people of the Lord marched down for him against the mighty. 14From Ephraim they set out into the valley, following you, Benjamin, with your kin; from Machir marched down the commanders, and from Zebulun those who bear the marshal’s staff; 15the chiefs of Issachar came with Deborah, and Issachar faithful to Barak; into the valley they rushed out at his heels. Among the clans of Reuben there were great searchings of heart. 16Why did you tarry among the sheepfolds, to hear the piping for the flocks? Among the clans of Reuben there were great searchings of heart. 17Gilead stayed beyond the Jordan; and Dan, why did he abide with the ships? Asher sat still at the coast of the sea, settling down by his landings. 18Zebulun is a people that scorned death; Naphtali too, on the heights of the field. 19The kings came, they fought; then fought the kings of Canaan, at Taanach, by the waters of Megiddo; they got no spoils of silver. 20The stars fought from heaven, from their courses they fought against Sisera. 21The torrent Kishon swept them away, the onrushing torrent, the torrent Kishon. March on, my soul, with might! 22Then loud beat the horses’ hoofs with the galloping, galloping of his steeds. 23Curse Meroz, says the angel of the Lord, curse bitterly its inhabitants, because they did not come to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty. 24Most blessed of women be Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, of tent-dwelling women most blessed. 25He asked water and she gave him milk, she brought him curds in a lordly bowl. 26She put her hand to the tent peg and her right hand to the workmen’s mallet; she struck Sisera a blow, she crushed his head, she shattered and pierced his temple. 27He sank, he fell, he lay still at her feet; at her feet he sank, he fell; where he sank, there he fell dead. 28Out of the window she peered, the mother of Sisera gazed through the lattice: ‘Why is his chariot so long in coming? Why tarry the hoofbeats of his chariots?’ 29Her wisest ladies make answer, indeed, she answers the question herself: 30‘Are they not finding and dividing the spoil?—A girl or two for every man; spoil of dyed stuffs for Sisera, spoil of dyed stuffs embroidered, two pieces of dyed work embroidered for my neck as spoil?’ 31So perish all your enemies, O Lord! But may your friends be like the sun as it rises in its might.” And the land had rest forty years.”
     2. “Verses 12-30 (and perhaps vv. 6-8 also) form the core of the song, celebrating tribal victory. The introduction (vv. 1-11) and the conclusion (v. 31) are more hymnic in style, attributing the victory not to tribal prowess but to the God of Israel. The earlier verses demonstrate again the use of ancient Near Eastern mythology, in their depiction of God coming from the desert region, probably of Kadesh, in the Sinai peninsula. God marches to defend his people; his coming is described in the anthropomorphic terms of a warrior-god:” (Gillingham 119)

5:4Lord, when you went out from Seir,

when you marched from the region of Edom,

the earth trembled,

and the heavens poured,

the clouds indeed poured water.

5The mountains quaked before the Lord, the One of Sinai,

before the Lord, the God of Israel.”

* + 1. “The rhythmic stress is less regular, although a pattern 3:3 (common to hymns of praise) is in evidence. The parallelism is A = B (lines 1 and 2), with staircase parallelism in the tricola (lines 3-5) and A > B in the bicola (lines 6-7). Like Exod. 15, Ugaritic motifs are evident: examples include the heavens and clouds dropping water . . . and the mountain-god appearing on earth in a violent thunderstorm . . . The correspondences of this poem with other biblical poems reflecting Canaanite influence (e.g. Ps. 29:6/Judg. 5:3; Ps. 68:7-8, [*sic*] Deut. 33:2; Hab. 3:4-5/Judg. 5:4-5) suggest further the possibility of some ‘borrowing’. Like Exod. 15:21, it is more than likely that such songs would have been composed for a celebration of victory within the liturgy of the cult.” (Gillingham 120)
  1. “Another example . . . occurs three times (1 Sam. 18:7; 21:11; 29:3) . . .: “Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.”” (Gillingham 120)
  2. “. . . a similar fragment occurring twice . . . is in 2 Sam. 20:1 and 1 Kgs. 12:16:” (Gillingham 120)

“We have no portion in David,

no share in the son of Jesse!

Everyone to your tents, O Israel!”

* 1. The “‘last words of David’ in 2 Sam. 23:1-7 . . . is probably a literary copy of earlier war songs, compiled to highlight David’s military exploits as recounted in 2 Sam. 23:8-39.” (Gillingham 120)

2 Sam 23:1-7, “Now these are the last words of David: The oracle of David, son of Jesse, the oracle of the man whom God exalted, the anointed of the God of Jacob, the favorite of the Strong One of Israel: 2The spirit of the Lord speaks through me, his word is upon my tongue. 3The God of Israel has spoken, the Rock of Israel has said to me: One who rules over people justly, ruling in the fear of God, 4is like the light of morning, like the sun rising on a cloudless morning, gleaming from the rain on the grassy land. 5Is not my house like this with God? For he has made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and secure. Will he not cause to prosper all my help and my desire? 6But the godless are all like thorns that are thrown away; for they cannot be picked up with the hand; 7to touch them one uses an iron bar or the shaft of a spear. And they are entirely consumed in fire on the spot.”

* 1. “. . . the prophets used war poetry in order to dramatize the coming judgement on Israel . . .” (Gillingham 122)
  2. 1 Macc 14:4-15 (100s bc) “is another literary copy of war poetry used centuries earlier:” (Gillingham 120)

14:4The land had rest all the days of Simon.

He sought the good of his nation;

his rule was pleasing to them,

as was the honor shown him, all his days.

1. **early proverbs (outside Proverbs)**
   1. “. . . as with the legal sayings, proverbial sayings would have been used by clan and tribal elders from as early as settlement times (*c.* 1250-1000 bce).” (Gillingham 96)
   2. “Not every proverbial saying (called ??*mashal*, a term with a wide range of meanings) was poetic in form. Often the proverb was a simple one-line sentence.” (Gillingham 93) Examples (Gillingham 94):
      1. Judg 8:21, “as the man is, so his strength.”
      2. 1 Sam 24:13, “As the ancient proverb says, ‘Out of the wicked comes forth wickedness’ . . .”
      3. Ezek 12:22, “Mortal, what is this proverb of yours about the land of Israel, which says, “The days are prolonged, and every vision comes to nothing”?”
      4. Ezek 16:44, “See, everyone who uses proverbs will use this proverb about you, “Like mother, like daughter.””
   3. the “sour grapes” proverb
      1. Ezek 18:2, “What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, “The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge”?”
         1. “Here the prophet is emphasizing that every individual is accountable before God; no one can blame the previous generation for their own predicament.” (Gillingham 96)
      2. Jer 31:29, “In those days they shall no longer say: “The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge.””
         1. “. . . it has again been adapted theologically, but in a different way. In Jeremiah, it serves a more positive purpose—declaring that any who open themselves to God’s goodness will eventually be restored by him . . .” (Gillingham 96)
2. **riddles**
   1. Judg 14:13-14, “they said to him, “Ask your riddle; let us hear it.” 14He said to them, “Out of the eater came something to eat. Out of the strong came something sweet.” But for three days they could not explain the riddle.”
      1. This “is a good illustration of the interest in the recitation of riddles in early Israel, and the context implies that riddles were used in an early clan setting . . .” (Gillingham 98)
      2. “. . . the riddle in its literary context serves a different purpose [than it had in] an earlier life-setting.” (Gillingham 98)
3. **cultic poetry**
   1. introduction: “In this chapter the extensive influence of cultic poetry will be assessed under two headings: first, the *fragments of cultic poetry* which [136] have been incorporated into a narrative framework; and second, the *more developed cultic poems* . . .” (Gillingham 136-137)
   2. fragments of cultic poetry
      1. cultic sayings used by the priests
         1. “An illustration of [the] pervasive influence of cultic poetry” is Num 10:35-36:

“Whenever the ark set out, Moses would say,

“Arise, O Lord, let your enemies be scattered,

and your foes flee before you.”

36And whenever it came to rest, he would say,

“Return, O Lord of the ten thousand thousands of Israel.”” . . .

“This saying would be spoken by cultic officials (priests or prophets) before and after battle, as in the stories in 1 Kgs. 22 and 2 Kgs. 6; it probably dates from the early monarchy, if not before. That it is early is suggested by the depiction of God as a ‘warrior’, defeating Israel’s enemies (Exod. 15:3; Judg. 5:4-5). Its cultic associations are further illustrated by its occurrences in some psalms, for example Pss. 68:1-2 and 132:8.” (Gillingham 136)

* + - * 1. Ps 68:1-2 Let God rise up, let his enemies be scattered; let those who hate him flee before him. 2As smoke is driven away, so drive them away; as wax melts before the fire, let the wicked perish before God.”
        2. Ps 132:8, “Rise up, O Lord, and go to your resting place, you and the ark of your might.”
      1. “A well-known priestly saying, most probably from the Temple liturgy, is the so-called ‘Aaronic Blessing’ in its tricola form [Num 6:24-26] . . .” (Gillingham 137)

“The Lord bless you and keep you;

25the Lord make his face to shine upon you,

and be gracious to you;

26the Lord lift up his countenance upon you,

and give you peace.”

* + - 1. “In spite of the absence of any regular rhythmic pattern, the parallelism of A > B > C, set out in three pairs of jussive clauses, is very clear. Again we may note the ways in which the phrases of the blessing have been taken up into the psalms (e.g. ‘make his face to shine’: see Pss. 31:16; 80:3, 7, 19), thus illustrating further the cultic associations. When or where this was used by the priest and community is unclear; but that it eventually became incorporated into [137] the liturgy of the Temple is almost certain. In its present literary context, the blessing is set amongst various ancient ritual laws concerning the holiness of the cultic com­munity (Num. 6) and of the appropriate dedication offerings for the altar (Num. 7). The priestly writer has transformed the liturgical setting for the blessing so that it now serves a different purpose: that of emphasizing the rewards due for such ritual propriety.” (Gillingham 137-138)
    1. cultic sayings used by the people
       1. “Cultic poetry was not the preserve of the priesthood. It would have been learnt and recited by the people as well. Deuteronomy 26:5-6 was [perhaps] once an early credal saying . . . The cultic context suggested by this saying would have been the harvest service of first-fruits, performed at the central sanctuary:

And you shall make your response before the Lord your God,

A ‘A wandering Aramean was my father;

###### B and he went down into Egypt

C and sojourned there, few in number;

B and there he became a nation,

C great, mighty and populous.’ (Deut. 26:5-6)

This saying compresses together several diffuse traditions from the people’s his­tory, from Abraham to Moses, and thus cannot be very ancient; its summary form suggests some editing by the Deuteronomists. But it could, nevertheless, point to an earlier saying in poetic form. For example, we may note the parallelism, which after the first line A is: B > C, B > C. It may well have developed into a poetic creed, recited by the people at harvest thanksgiving but developed for different theological reasons into a Deuteronomistic literary context, as a fitting preamble to Moses’ speech before the people in Deut. 28ff.” (Gillingham 138)

* + 1. “Another credal saying [is] Deut. 6:4-9. This is the Shema—so called because [138] the first word is ??*shema*, which in Hebrew means ‘hear’—and it begins as follows:

A Hear, O Israel:

B The Lord our God is one Lord;

###### C and you shall love the Lord your God

D with all your heart,

E and with all your soul,

F and with all your might. (Deut. 6:4-5)

Its poetic form (for example, the tricola pattern in lines D, E, and F) would facilitate it being learnt and recited. It may well have had an independent life-setting before being incorporated in Deut. 6 . . . Its purpose here is to explain the meaning of the first of the Ten Commandments set out in Deut. 5.” (Gillingham 138-139)

* 1. cultic sayings spoken on behalf of God
     1. “As well as cultic sayings sung or spoken by priests to the people, or by the people to the priests, there are other such sayings whereby the priest or prophet mediates in oracular form to the people on behalf of God.” (Gillingham 139)
     2. “One example is found in Exod. 33:19:

I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious,

and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.

[This phrase] occurs several times in prose prayers and narratives throughout the Old Testament (e.g. Exod. 34:6; Deut. 4:31; Neh. 9:17; Jonah 4:2). It is probably a prayer developed by the Deuteronomists. Its occurrence in many of the psalms testifies further to its having become a cultic saying (e.g. Pss. 86:15; 103:8; 111:­4; 112:4; 116:5; 145:8), as does its use in texts with cultic associations as far apart as Joel 2:13; Nahum 1:3; and 2 Chr. 30:9.” (Gillingham 139)

* 1. developed cultic poetry
     1. “Having assessed examples of short cultic verses, we now turn to the longer liturgical poems. These can be categorized into four groups:” hymns, laments, thanksgivings, and royal. (Gillingham 140)
     2. hymns
        1. “These are poems which focus on the goodness of God not only in creation, but also throughout history. A large proportion of psalms (a fifth of the Psalter) fit this category; non-psalmic hymns are found in some of the prophets, in some narrative passages, and in the later wisdom material.” (Gillingham 140)
        2. For hymns in the prophets, see “Hymns, Laments, and Other Forms of Poetry in the Prophets.”
        3. “Four other hymns deserve particular mention, in so far as they are lengthier poems, each combining ancient cultic material and interweaving it into a composite literary whole. These are Exod. 15:1-18; Deut. 32:1-43; Judg. 5:2-31; and Hab. 3:2-19.” (Gillingham 143)
           1. Exod 15:2-18 (“? twefth century bce,” Gillingham 148)

Exod 15:2-18 “has been placed within the particular literary context of the Passover Festival [Exod 12-13]. . . . Passover was celebrated in spring, at the time of the creation of a new order, and the hymn uses mythological motifs . . . psalms which similarly celebrate the crossing of the Red Sea are Pss. 77 (vv. 17ff.); 89 (vv. [143] 10ff.); and 93 (vv. 1ff.) [*sic*] Psalm 114 is another interesting example: it combines the victory over the sea (as here in Exod. 15) with the crossing of the river Jordan into the promised land (as told in Josh. 5). It also takes up the ancient mythological motifs from Ugarit regarding Ba’al’s victory over ‘Judge River and Prince Sea’ (‘The sea looked and fled, Jordan turned back’) . . .” (Gillingham 143-144)

“Several other psalms on the same theme as Exod. 15 were used in the Temple liturgy. Two examples are Pss. 78 and 105. This then raises the question: why has Exod. 15 not been included in the Psalter, particularly given its close associations with the Passover Festival? The opening verses [Exod 15:2-3] could be those of any psalm, and indeed are found in Ps. 118:14, taken up similarly in Isa. 12:2 . . . Then follows [Exod 15:11] a description of the drowning of Pharaoh’s host (vv. 4-6, full of Holy War imagery); this leads into a description, using mythological language, of a divine battle with the sea (vv. 7-10), which concludes, in the language of Pss. 86:8 and 89:7-8 . . . The psalmic influence is further demonstrated in the closing verses [Exod 15:17-18], which suggest a much later tradition about God’s kingly rule in Zion—hardly a theme relevant to the Exodus, before Zion (Jerusalem) was even known about . . .” (Gillingham 144)

“Exodus 15 offers a good example of an ancient brief hymn (v. 21—the Song of Miriam) expanded later on account of some cultic use (parts of vv. 1-16), and adapted for Temple liturgy (vv. 17-18). Nevertheless, it was *not* included in the Psalter: instead it became associated more particularly with a specific narrative framework.” (Gillingham 145)

* + - * 1. Deut 32

“Deuteronomy 32, like Exodus 15, is one of the few poems in which the Hebrew is presented in distinct line-forms; this is probably more because of the link with Moses than because of the nature of the poetry.” (Gillingham 145)

“It is a lengthy didactic hymn, probably once associated with the cult, although in its literary framework it serves as a prophetic sermon which forms part of the conclusion of the book of Deuteronomy.” (Gillingham 145)

* + - * 1. Judg 5 and Hab 3

“Judges 5 and Habakkuk 3 . . . were once brief fragments of war poetry, but have grown into composite works serving more literary than liturgical purposes. [145] [E.g., see Hab 3:10, 12, 15.] . . . That [Hab 3] once had cultic associations is also clear from the introduction (3:1—‘A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, according to the Shigionoth’), the middle section (3:9—‘Selah’), and the conclusion (3:19*d*). However, . . . it is now placed within a literary framework: Hab. 3 serves as a collection of prophecies uttered on the eve of the exile, compiled under the theme that God will march for his people and will overthrow the might of Babylon.” (Gillingham 145-146)

* + - * 1. the Chronicler (“The Chronicler’s adaptation of various psalms from the Psalter,” Gillingham 146)

“1 Chronicles 16 records a feast of dedication which purports to be set in Davidic times (1000 bce) . . . In 1 Chr. 16:8-22 we find parts of Ps. 105:1-15; in vv. 23-33, Ps. 96:1-13; and in vv. 34-6, Ps. 106:1, 47-8.” (Gillingham 146)

“2 Chronicles 5:13 similarly picks up a common psalmic refrain, which occurs, for example, throughout Ps. 136: “For he is good, | for his steadfast love endures for ever.”” (Gillingham 146)

“The Chronicler’s purpose in including such psalms is to demonstrate that the worship of the post-exilic community in Judah drew its authority from hymns associated with ‘the house of David’ in the first Jerusalem Temple, some seven hundred years earlier.” (Gillingham 146)

* + - * 1. Daniel

“. . . there are four hymns in Dan. 1-6, three times spoken by Gentile kings, using the style and language of psalms which would have been used in the cult . . . Dan. 2:20-3, which has several themes from Ps. 103, and also Pss. 41:14 and 139:12—all quite late psalms; Dan. 4:3, linked to Pss. 77:19 and 145:3; Dan. 4:34-7, linked to Pss. 102:24 and 145:13; Dan. 6:26-7, linked to Ps. 145:12-13.” (Gillingham 147)

Dan 6:26-27 reads, “he is the living God, enduring forever. His kingdom shall never be destroyed, and his dominion has no end. 27He delivers and rescues, he works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth; for he has saved Daniel from the power of the lions.” “We may note here the familiar theme of God’s world-rule and kingly power—a theme popular in the exile, as seen in the hymns of second Isaiah . . .” (Gillingham 148)

“The use of the hymn is intended to reinforce the flagging hopes of the restoration community in the second century bce . . .” (Gillingham 178)

“. . . other hymnic additions to the text of Daniel are found only in the Septuagint. These are Dan. 3:25-45, the Prayer of Azariah, and 3:46-90, the Song of the Three Young Men; they both draw extensively from Pss. 136 and 148, and make the same point about God’s kingly rule and the frailty of human powers.” (Gillingham 148)

* + - * 1. hymns in wisdom literature

“. . . cultic hymns in wisdom literature [are mostly] later literary compositions rather than developments of earlier liturgical fragments.” (Gillingham 148)

Prov 8, Prov 30, and Job 28 “are not really ‘cultic’ hymns at all, for their praise concerns not so [148] much the community before God, as the individual and the pursuit of wisdom.” Sir 39:14-35 and 42:15-43:33 “also illustrate this point.” (Gillingham 148-149)

* + 1. laments
       1. introduction
          1. The lament “is recognizable in two ways . . .” (Gillingham 149)

First is the 3:2 (*qinâ*) rhythm, which “on account of its “limping” rhythm, is a phonetic illustration of suffering).” (Gillingham 149)

“Second, the contents (usually set in the two-line form of parallelism A = B) depict a context of distress . . .” (Gillingham 149)

* + - * 1. For laments in the prophets, see “Hymns, Laments, and Other Forms of Poetry in the Prophets.”
      1. communal laments

1 Macc 2:7-13, 3:45, 50-53: “the lament form continued long in Israel’s history . . .” (Gillingham 153)

* + - * 1. individual laments

Job

Job 3 “has many similarities with Jer. 20,” particularly Jer 20:14-20 and Job 3:3-4. (Gillingham 155)

Both “the imagery of complaint and distress [and] the *qinâ* rhythm . . . is found in Job 6:1-12; 7:1-l0; 9:4-12; 10:8-12; 12:14-25; 14:1-15; and 16:1-17:16.” (Gillingham 155)

“The lament, being well established in liturgical tradition, and having been popularized by the prophets, is used in Job to depict the tension between piety and experience of life. As [with] hymnic forms in Job, this lament form also serves to create a stark contrast between Job’s fearless honesty before God, and the bland superficiality of the friends.” (Gillingham 156)

* + 1. thanksgivings
       1. communal thanksgivings: “A large number of communal thanksgivings have been incorporated into Isaiah 40-55.” See “Hymns, Laments, and Other Forms of Poetry in the Prophets.”
       2. individual thanksgivings
          1. “In each case, they are set within a particular narrative context, which results in the readaptation of the poem . . . Setting aside a very late example of this form in 1 Macc. 14:4-15, there are four clear biblical examples.” (Gillingham 157)
          2. Hannah’s song (1 Sam 2)

“. . . very little of the substance of the poem is apt for Hannah’s own situation . . . The thanksgiving is more nationalistic in its [157] connotations, for it concerns military victory and the success of the king (v. 10). Nevertheless, the brief phrase in v. 5: ‘The barren has borne seven, | but she who has many children is forlorn’ is most probably the reason for its inclusion within this particular narrative. This phrase, alongside the theme of the reversal of fortunes of the downtrodden and oppressed (compare here Luke’s Magnificat, in Luke 2, almost certainly influenced by this song), would suggest its appropriateness in spite of the irrelevant allusions in other verses.” (Gillingham 157-158)

* + - * 1. David’s song (2 Sam 22)

David’s song “is a song of thanksgiving by David . . . David’s successes were not due to human might but rather to the sovereign power of God.” (Gillingham 158)

“. . . evidence that this was a particular thanksgiving song which was used in cultic worship [is that] it is found in an almost identical form in the Psalter, as Psalm 18.” (Gillingham 158)

* + - * 1. Hezekiah’s song (Isa 38): “This is a prayer of thanksgiving attributed to Hezekiah after his recovery from illness . . . very little of it relates at all to Hezekiah’s particular situation.” (Gillingham 159)
        2. Jonah’s song

Jon 2:2-9 “is put into the mouth of Jonah in the belly of the fish. It serves not so much to express Jonah’s distress, as to anticipate his deliverance.” (Gillingham 159)

It “has little to do with Jonah’s own story. The end of the song (vv. 7-9) certainly reads rather anachronistically, as it concerns praying and making vows in the ‘holy temple’. The references in the lament form in vv. 2-6 are the only really appropriate motifs, referring to ‘the belly of Sheol’ in v. 2, and to being ‘cast into the deep’, ‘into the heart of the seas’, and into ‘the flood’ in v. 3; similarly, v. 5, perhaps originally intended to be understood metaphorically, corresponds literally with Jonah’s plight . . . Frequently in the psalms the poet speaks of his distress in terms of ‘drowning’ and being ‘overwhelmed’ by the waters of despair (cf. Pss. 42:7; 69:1-2).” (Gillingham 159-160)

* + 1. royal cultic poetry
       1. “The earliest [are] from the tenth to the seventh centuries bce.” (Gillingham 160)
       2. “Within the Psalter, such poems are called ‘royal psalms’. After the demise of the monarchy [in 187 bce], they were given a future orientation, where the ‘deliverer’ was a Messianic figure . . .” (Gillingham 161)
       3. Outside Psalms, royal cultic poetry became the messianic prophecies in the prophetic books. See “Messianic Prophecies.”

1. **Christian tradition** singles out “fourteen canticles” for special liturgical singing, besides the psalms: Exod 15, Deut 32, 1 Sam 2, Hab 3, Isa 26, Jon 2, Dan 3 (including the Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Young Men), Isa 38, the Prayer of Manasseh, Luke 1:68-79, Luke 1:46-55, Luke 2:29-32, and the Gloria. (Gillingham 50)

## Psalm Forms

Gillingham, S[usan] E. *The Poems and Psalms of the Hebrew Bible*. Oxford Bible Series. Oxford: OUP, 1994.

1. **hymns**
   1. three-part structure
      1. “The hymns within the Psalter follow, in the most general terms, a very simple threefold form.
         1. The introduction is a call to praise;
         2. the middle section gives the reasons for the praise; and
         3. the conclusion usually returns to the initial call to praise.” (Gillingham 208)
      2. Ps 117, “the briefest psalm in the Psalter, offers a good illustration of [the basic three-part] structure:
         1. Praise the Lord, all nations!
         2. Extol him, all peoples!
         3. For great is his steadfast love toward us;
         4. and the faithfulness of the Lord endures for ever.
         5. Praise the Lord!” (Gillingham 209)
      3. “A further clear example is found in Ps. 113: vv. 1-3 are the call to praise; vv. 4-9 the reasons for the praise; and v. 9*c* the conclusion.” (Gillingham 209)
      4. “There are some thirty examples (8, 29, 33, 100, 103, 104, 111, 113, 114, 117, 135, 136, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 47, 93, 96, 97, 98, 99, 46, 48, 76, 87, 122, 78, 105) and all but eight are found in the latter part of the Psalter.” (Gillingham 208)
   2. Themes typical of the hymns are: “God as Creator, sustainer of Israel’s history, king of heaven and earth, protector of Zion . . .” (Gillingham 216)
      1. general hymns: God as creator (8, 19:1-6, 29, 33, 104)
      2. narrative hymns: God in salvation history (78, 105 [the two “historical psalms”], 114, 135, 136)
      3. kingship hymns: celebrate “the kingship of God, enthroned in the heavens, ruling over heaven and earth.” (Gillingham 212) (47, 93, 96-99)
      4. Zion hymns: “God is praised . . . for his specific, particular rule in Zion, ‘the city of God’.” (Gillingham 212) (46, 48, 76, 84, 87, 122)
      5. hallel hymns: have *hallelu* (“Praise the Lord”) at beginning and end (146-50)
      6. other hymns (Pss 100, 145)
2. **laments**
   1. structure
      1. usual sections
         1. “The introduction is usually a call on the name of God.” (Gillingham 214)
         2. “The middle section . . . can comprise [214] some or all of the following parts:
            1. “a description of need, which serves as the heart of complaint, where the subject is either ‘I’ or ‘We’, or ‘They’ (the enemies) or ‘You’ (God);
            2. “a request for help, often set in the imperative form (e. g. ‘Hear’, ‘Arise’);
            3. “reasons why God should hear and answer the suppliant; and
            4. “affirmation of trust in God—often recalling previous acts of deliverance.” (Gillingham 214-215)
         3. “The conclusion ends with a vow to offer praise or sacrifice once the prayer is answered.” (Gillingham 215)
      2. But the order is not fixed: a lament “contains *some* of the above elements, in *any* sort of sequence.” (Gillingham 215)
   2. The laments have several themes.
      1. “national concerns”
         1. “failure in war (44:9-12; 60:1-3; l08:10-13)”
         2. “the destruction of the sanctuary” in 587 bc (74:3, 7-8; 79:1-4)
         3. “conspiracies by the nation’s enemies (83:5)”
         4. “exile” (137:1-6). (Gillingham 216)
      2. “individual concerns”
         1. “illness (31:9-10; 38:3ff., 10-11; 41:3ff., 8ff.)”
         2. “death (6:4-5; 13:3-4; 22:6-8, 14ff.; 39:4ff.; 69:15; 71:9, 18; 88:4ff.; 143:3)”
         3. “physical dangers of a personal nature (7:1-2; 17:10-12; 25:19-20; 27:2, 12; 35:1ff.; 40:13-15; 54:3; 55:3ff., 10ff.; 56:1ff.; 57:4, 6; 59:3-4; 62:3-4; 64:3ff.; 69:4ff., 22; 71:4; 86:14ff.; 109:2ff.; 140:1-5; 142:1-4).” (Gillingham 216)
3. **other psalm forms** (“derivations of the basic praise and lament forms,” 219)
   1. royal psalms: “. . . the designation ‘royal psalms’ is one made on account of content (because the king is either the speaker, or the focus of attention) rather than form. Gunkel listed ten psalms in this category: 2, 18, 20, 21, 45, 72, 101, 110, 132, and 144. To this we might add the latter part of Ps. 89.” (Gillingham 220)
   2. thanksgiving psalms
      1. “The *thanksgivings* are related . . . to the lament (in so far as a number of the laments often include thanksgivings as examples of prayers previously answered, e. g. 6:9-1; 7:18; 13:6; 31:21-3) . . .” (Gillingham 219)
      2. structure
         1. The introduction reflects their liturgical context.” (Gillingham 222)
         2. “The middle section [tells] how the deliverance occurred.” (Gillingham 222)
            1. “If the crisis was due to unconfessed sin, the [222] thanksgiving often includes some confession of sin (e. g. 32:5; 103:6-14).” (Gillingham 222-223)
            2. “If the innocence of the suppliant was beyond question, the psalmist pleads instead for God’s justice (28:6-7; 92:5-9).” (Gillingham 223)
            3. “Sometimes the middle section also contains didactic elements, so that the congregation might learn from the suppliant’s restoration (34:12-15, 138:6).” (Gillingham 223)
         3. conclusion: “Occasionally the psalm concludes with a call to praise (32:11; 138:8).” (Gillingham 223)
   3. psalms of confidence
      1. “The *psalms of confidence* [are] related to the lament (being expansions of the ‘confessions of trust’ found in the lament psalms, e. g. 17:15; 28:6; 130:5; 140:14).” (Gillingham 219)
      2. “‘Psalms of confidence’ are only evidenced within the Psalter. They are really an integral part of the lament. If the thanksgiving is connected to the lament in that it speaks of an earlier deliverance, the psalm of confidence is an even more intrinsic part of the lament because it speaks of trust in spite of all appearances—a confidence within the present uncertainties, for those caught in the conflict between faith and experience.” (Gillingham 224)
   4. liturgies
      1. “The *liturgies* and *historical psalms* are closely related to the hymns, with their main theme being praise of God.” (Gillingham 219)
      2. “. . . the main criterion [is] their antiphonal features. This, then, includes psalms occurring in other categories.” (Gillingham 225)
   5. prophetic exhortations
      1. “The influence of the prophets [is] seen in the oracular material . . . in the royal psalms (2, 18, 20, 21, 89, 110, 132) and also within the laments (12, 60).” (Gillingham 226)
      2. “The so-called ‘form’ is yet again discernible not so much in terms of structure, as in terms of style and content. The criterion [is] prophetic oracles.” (Gillingham 227)
   6. didactic psalms
      1. The “cultic influence in didactic poetry” can be seen in Job and Proverbs.
         1. Job’s laments: 3, 6, 7, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16-17 (Gillingham 227)
         2. hymns by Job’s friends: 5, 11, [227] 26, 36, 37 (Gillingham 227-28)
         3. hymns by Job: 9, 10, 12 (Gillingham 228)
         4. longer wisdom poems: Job 28, 38-42; Prov 3, 8 (Gillingham 228)
         5. “It is probable that this association took place later in Israel’s liturgical life, probably in restoration times.” (Gillingham 228)
      2. wisdom psalms
         1. “Didactic passages may be found in several other psalm types (e. g. 25:8-14; 32:8ff.; 34:11-22, noting also the acrostic form; 40:4ff.; 62:11ff.; and 102:23-8) . . .” (Gillingham 219)
         2. “. . . we may note here the didactic passages in laments such as Pss. 25:8-14; 31:24-5; and thanksgivings such as Pss. 40:5-6; 92:7-9.” (Gillingham 228)
         3. “. . . wisdom poetry offers no consistent form whatsoever.” (Gillingham 228)
            1. “Several psalms use the acrostic form (e. g. 37, 112, 119) but by no means all.” (Gillingham 228)
            2. “Some incorporate hymnic elements (e. g. 112:1-6; 127:3-5).” (Gillingham 228)
            3. “Most are actually not so much prayer-forms, set as addresses to God, but are rather more like poetic homilies, addressing the congregation.” (Gillingham 228)
            4. “They are discernible on account of their style—their use of comparison, admonition, and proverbial sayings (‘blessed . . .’; ‘better . . .’: see 1:1; 32:1; 34:8) . . .” (Gillingham 228)
            5. They are discernible “also because of their content—

“their concern with ordinary affairs such as piety at work (127:1; 128:1, 2)

“and family life (127, 128),

“and the prosperity of the wicked alongside retributive justice (37, 49, 73, 112),

“and the transience of life (73)

“as well as God’s knowledge of every detail of it (139).” (Gillingham 228)

* + - * 1. “On occasions their mood is orthodox (e. g. 127, 128, 139) and on others more radical and questioning (37, 49, 73). Their orientation is more towards the problems of life itself, rather than the issues of liturgy.” (Gillingham 228)
      1. wisdom poems and liturgy
         1. “Many scholars believe the wisdom psalms were not even used in the cult, but rather served as reflective and didactic poetry (alongside Proverbs and Job) in wisdom schools.” (Gillingham 228)
         2. However, “some sort of later cultic setting seems probable.” (Gillingham 228)

“Psalm 49 [see 49:1-3, 12] is a good example of this, and the attendant audience could just as easily be the congregation assembled for worship (we are reminded here of the prophetic call to listen and obey) as a private school of wisdom . . .” (Gillingham 228)

“The cultic orientation of wisdom is apparent in three other psalms which each focus on the meditation of the law as a means to blessing and wholeness of life: these are Pss. 1, 19B, and 119, known as ‘Torah psalms’.” (Gillingham 229)

“Psalm 1 starts with the classic wisdom motif ‘Blessed . . .’ and introduces into the Psalter the theme of reflective and personal piety.” (Gillingham 229)

“Psalm 19B is a ‘Torah psalm’ added to the creation psalm in praise of the sun: these together reflect on two sorts of order and harmony—creation and the law—in the world.” (Gillingham 229)

“Psalm 119, an acrostic psalm, is almost certainly a literary rather than liturgical composition. Every verse of the psalm contains at least one of ten terms used for the law (for example, commandment; statute; word; judgement; testimony; precept; way) and the psalm as a whole is a complex construction. Like Ps. 1, this is another example of private contemplative piety . . .” (Gillingham 229)

1. **summary of psalm forms** (Gillingham 231)
   1. hymns (total = 32)
      1. general hymns
         1. “creation hymns” (Gillingham 254): 8, 19:1-6, 29, 33, 104 (= 5)
         2. narrative hymns: 78, l05 (historical psalms), 114, 135, 136 (= 5)
         3. Hallel hymns: 146, 147, 148, 149, 150 (= 5) (also Hallel psalms: 104-106, 111-118, 135—Gillingham 241)
         4. other: 100, 103, 111, 113, 117, 145 (= 6)
      2. Zion hymns: 46, 48, 76, 87, 122 (= 5) (pp. 212 and 251 add 84)
      3. kingship hymns: 47, 93, 96, 97, 98, 99 (= 6)
   2. laments (= 56)
      1. individual laments: 3, 5, 6, 7, 12, 13, 17, 22, 25, 26, 28, 31, 35, 36, 38, 39, 42-3, 51, 54, 55, 56, 57, 59, 61, 63, 64, 69, 70, 71, 86, 88, 102, 109, 120, 130, 140, 141, 142, 143 (= 40)
      2. communal laments: 44, 60, 74, 77, 79, 80, 82, 83, 85, 90, 94, 106, 108, 123, 126, 137 (= 16)
   3. other forms (= 63)
      1. royal psalms: 2, 18, 20, 21, 45, 72, 89, 101, 110, 132, 144 (= 11) (pp. 220, 221, 231 include 101; pp. 251, 254 do not)
      2. thanksgivings
         1. individual thanksgivings: 9-10, 30, 32, 34, 40, 41, 92, 107, 116, 138 (= 11)
         2. communal thanksgivings: 65, 66, 67, 68, 118, 124 (= 6)
      3. psalms of confidence
         1. individual psalms of confidence: 4, 11, 16, 23, 27, 62, 84, 91, 121, 131 (= 10) (p. 65 says 91 is a prophetic exhortation) (pp. 212 and 251 say 84 is a Zion hymn)
         2. communal psalms of confidence: 115, 125, 129, 133 (= 4)
      4. liturgies: 15, 24, 134 (= 3) (134 is not included on p. 254)
      5. prophetic exhortations: 14, 50, 52, 53, 58, 75, 81, 95 (= 8) (p. 65 says 91 is a prophetic exhortation) (p. 254 adds 82 [see communal laments]) (p. 251 calls these “prophetic oracles”)
      6. didactic psalms: 1, 19:7-14, 37, 49, 73, 112, 119, 127, 128, 139 (= 10) (Gillingham 231)
2. **addendum**: **later groupings by** “**form**”
   1. The seven penitential psalms in Christian tradition are 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 145. (See: McKay, J.W., and J.W. Rogerson. *Psalms 1-50*. Cambridge Bible Commentary. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1977. 144.) This of course is a grouping not so much by “form” as by content.
   2. The fifteen gradual psalms in Christian tradition are 120-134. (See: *The Holy Bible Translated from the Latin Vulgate, Diligently Compared with the Hebrew, Greek, and Other Editions in Divers Languages*. *Douay Version*. Light of the World Edition. New York: Douay Bible House, 1954.) They are the same as the song of ascents (each has “song of ascents” in its superscription).
   3. Christian tradition singles out “fourteen canticles” for special liturgical singing, besides the psalms: Exod 15, Deut 32, 1 Sam 2, Isa 26, Isa 38, Dan 3 (including the Prayer of Az­ariah and the Song of the Three Young Men), Jon 2, Hab 3, Luke 1:68-79, Luke 1:46-55, Luke 2:29-32, the (apocryphal) Prayer of Manasseh, and the *Gloria in excelsis Deo* (said at Masses). (Gillingham 50)

## Summary of Psalm Forms

Gillingham, S[usan] E. *The Poems and Psalms of the Hebrew Bible*. Oxford Bible Series. Oxford: OUP, 1994.

1. **hymns** (total = 32)
   1. general hymns
      1. “creation hymns” (Gillingham 254): 8, 19:1-6, 29, 33, 104 (= 5)
      2. narrative hymns: 78, 105 (historical psalms),[[1]](#footnote-1) 114, 135, 136 (= 5)
      3. Hallel hymns: 146, 147, 148, 149, 150 (= 5) (also Hallel psalms: 104-106, 111-118, 135—Gillingham 241)
      4. other: 100, 103, 111, 113, 117, 145 (= 6)
   2. Zion hymns: 46, 48, 76, 87, 122 (= 5)
   3. kingship hymns: 47, 93, 96, 97, 98, 99 (= 6)
2. **laments** (= 56)
   1. individual laments: 3, 5, 6, 7, 12, 13, 17, 22, 25, 26, 28, 31, 35, 36, 38, 39, 42-3, 51, 54, 55, 56, 57, 59, 61, 63, 64, 69, 70, 71, 86, 88, 102, 109, 120, 130, 140, 141, 142, 143 (= 40)
   2. communal laments: 44, 60, 74, 77, 79, 80, 82, 83, 85, 90, 94, 106, 108, 123, 126, 137 (= 16)
3. **other forms** (= 63)
   1. royal psalms: 2, 18, 20, 21, 45, 72, 89, 101, 110, 132, 144 (= 11) (101 not included on pp. 251, 254)
   2. thanksgivings
      1. individual thanksgivings: 9-10, 30, 32, 34, 40, 41, 92, 107, 116, 138 (= 11)
      2. communal thanksgivings: 65, 66, 67, 68, 118, 124 (= 6)
   3. psalms of confidence
      1. individual psalms of confidence: 4, 11, 16, 23, 27, 62, 84, 91, 121, 131 (= 10)
      2. communal psalms of confidence: 115, 125, 129, 133 (= 4)
   4. liturgies: 15, 24, 134 (= 3) (134 not included on p. 254)
   5. prophetic exhortations: 14, 50, 52, 53, 58, 75, 81, 95 (= 8) (p. 254 adds 82 [see communal laments])
   6. didactic psalms: 1, 19:7-14, 37, 49, 73, 112, 119, 127, 128, 139 (= 10) (Gillingham 231)

## Psalms and Parallelism

Gillingham, S[usan] E. *The Poems and Psalms of the Hebrew Bible*. Oxford Bible Series. Oxford: OUP, 1994.

Lichtheim, Miriam. “The Instruction Addressed to King Merikare.” *Ancient Egyptian Literature*: *A Book of Readings*. Vol. 1: *The Old and Middle Kingdoms*. 3 vols. Berkeley: U of California P, 1973. 96-109.

1. **introduction**
   1. parallelism and translation: Hebrew’s “poetic form consists mainly of balanced expressions of thought which make it relatively easy to translate into line-forms, thus allowing its inner coherence to remain intact. [13] . . . one feature of Hebrew poetry is the way its essence (the binary balancing of ideas) can be retained in translation. . . . this essence is still retained when the Hebrew is presented in English in prose style.” (Gillingham 13, 18)
   2. “By creating similar images with different words, the intensification of meaning is achieved.” (Gillingham 69)
   3. “The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate that the adaptation of parallelism in Hebrew verse is no more a rigid convention than is the use of metre.” (Gillingham 69)
   4. Sometimes, “Instead of moving from the subordinate clause to the main clause, the poet repeats the subordinate clause twice, and similarly twice repeats the main idea. Psalm 114 is a good example. The formula would be AA BB:

A When Israel went forth from Egypt,

A the house of Jacob from a people of strange language,

B Judah became his sanctuary,

##### B Israel his dominion. (vv. 1-2) [69]

The sense is delayed, and consequently the emphasis is placed on the last of the four cola [singular is “colon,” which is Greek for “line”—Hahn].” (Gillingham 69-70)

* 1. “. . . a similar effect of delay is [achieved] by repeating the subordinate-clause-main-clause formula twice . . . AB AB . . .:

A When Israel went forth from Egypt,

B Judah became his sanctuary;

A the house of Jacob from a people of strange language,

B Israel became his dominion.

In both cases, we may note . . . a tension (A) and a resolution (B).” (Gillingham 70)

1. **theories about parallelism and Hebrew poetry**
   1. Robert Lowth
      1. Robert Lowth delivered 34 lectures on biblical poetry (5 on Psalms) in Latin at Oxford in 1741 (published, 1753; English, 1839). He “perceived that Hebrew poetry [had] . . . parallelism. This particular and distinctively Semitic way of thinking was a feature which (as we have seen) enabled Hebrew poetry to be translated into other languages, without destroying its essence . . . Stephen Prickett summarizes Lowth’s position as follows: “Whereas contemporary European verse, which relied heavily on the essentially untranslatable auditory effects of alliteration, assonance, rhyme, and metre, was extremely difficult to render in another language with any real equivalence of tone and feeling, Hebrew poetry was almost all translatable. (*Words and the Word*, 42.)”“ (Gillingham 73)
      2. “Lowth proposed . . . synonymous parallelism, where the same idea is repeated in a different way; antithetic parallelism, where the idea is presented in a contrasting way; and synthetic parallelism, where two ideas together comprise one greater idea—without the repetition of ‘A’ and ‘B’. . . . The third type . . . Lowth broke up into a further five categories . . .” (Gillingham 73)
      3. Speaking of Egyptian literature, Lichtheim (1: 98) refers to “parallelism in its several forms, such as similarities, elaborations, and contrasts.” Perhaps these are the same as synonymous, synthetic, and anthetic parallelism, respectively.
      4. “T.H. Robinson’s book *The Poetry of the Old Testament* is a clear development of Lowth’s views. Robinson also assumed that the sense expressed through the parallelism is of more importance than is the sound expressed through the rhythm, and he gave further attention to Lowth’s more vague third category of ‘synthetic parallelism’: . . . “a fundamental principle of Hebrew verse form [is]: Every verse must consist of at least two ‘members’, the second of which must, more or less completely, satisfy the expectation raised by the first. (p. 21.)” (Gillingham 74)
      5. “Stephen Geller (*Parallelism in Early Biblical Poetry*) also accepts Lowth’s basic categorization . . .” (Gillingham 74)
   2. “However, several scholars have questioned parallelism . . .” (Gillingham 74)
      1. Just as David Noel Freedman (*Pottery*, *Poetry and Prophecy*, 1980) would replace meter with syllable counting (see “counting syllables” under “meter”), so he would replace parallelism with syllable counting. (Gillingham 75)
      2. James Kugel
         1. “The most sustained critique of parallelism as a criterion for determining poetry is that of James Kugel [in] *The Idea of Biblical Poetry* . . . the creating of poetic images is an art, not a science, and frequently involves a flexibility (for example, the use of just one line, or of three and four, rather than two) which results in as many exceptions as there are conventions. Kugel is probably right to see parallelism less as one particular method used by Hebrew poets than as an adaptable rhetorical device used for ‘seconding’ or ‘closing’ poetic units.” (Gillingham 75)
         2. Kugel’s “most interesting example, because it is so familiar, is Psalm 23. Although clear parallelism is apparent in verse 2, the other verses have less convincing evidence [75] . . . how little parallelism there really is. The unequal length of the lines, thus creating an irregularity in the sound as well as the sense, and the difficulty in knowing whether the lines should be divided further to make tricola (e. g. vv. 2, 3, 5) further confuse the issue.” (Gillingham 76)
            1. “Psalm 23[‘s] metre varies between 3:2 (vv. 1-3) and 2:2 (v. 4) and 3:2 (vv. 5-6).” (Gillingham 63)
            2. Pss 23 and 122 “demonstrate a complete breakdown in [190] parallelism throughout . . .” (Gillingham 190-191)
         3. “Kugel offers . . . other psalms. Psalm 122 . . . shows how the versification (itself a classification dating from after the time of the Masoretes, and not therefore an intrinsic part of the poetry) often runs counter to the division on the basis of parallelism . . .” (Gillingham 76)
         4. “As well as refuting parallelism as a clear criterion of poetry, Kugel shows how confused the issue is by offering several examples from prose accounts which suggest it.” (Gillingham 77)
         5. “The case is clear: [77] . . . parallelism is as common a feature in prose as it is an inconsistent feature in poetry. It is no surprise that Kugel concludes that all that can be said about parallelism is that it pertains to a seconding, or an intensifying, of the meaning, which does not create a clear criterion for identifying poetry.” (Gillingham 78)
         6. “. . . when we add to this the likelihood that the Hebrew poet (as any poet) is most probably seeking to achieve new possibilities within the bounds of formal conventions, we can be less confident still in assuming we know how to define Hebrew verse.” (Gillingham 78)
2. **applying theories of parallelism to the texts**
   1. introduction: Gillingham’s “‘three-in-one’ definition of parallelism” (Gillingham 83)
      1. “. . . *parallelism is of one type only*—a seconding of two lines A and B, used either in terms of straightforward repetition (Lowth’s synonymous parallelism) or contrasting opposites (Lowth’s antithetical parallelism). [This] avoids Lowth’s third and more vague category of synthetic (or incomplete) parallelism.” (Gillingham 78)
      2. “On the other hand, there are nuances within this one structure which suggest at least *three variations of thought*.” (Gillingham 78)
   2. first variation
      1. “The *first variation* of parallelism is where ‘A’ is interchangeable with ‘B’ [A = B] [78] . . . [This includes] both synonymous parallelism (A is the same as B) and antithetic parallelism (A is the opposite of B).” (Gillingham 78-79)
   3. second variation
      1. “The *second variation* is where A is expressed as the most important idea, and B is a qualification of it [A > B], completing more fully the thought expressed in the preceding line. Again, this is achieved either by repetition and echo, or by comparison and contrast, and is a modification of the category of so-called synthetic or incomplete parallelism. It is sometimes a movement from the general (colon A) to the specific (colon B); at other times it may be a movement from the literal (A) to the figurative (B).” (Gillingham 80)
      2. “An intriguing example is the use of numbers:

If Cain is avenged sevenfold,

truly Lamech seventy-sevenfold. (Gen. 4:24)

Three things are too wonderful for me;

four I do not understand. (Prov. 30:18)” (Gillingham 80)

* + 1. “Mostly this variation is achieved by a heightening or focusing of phrases, giving the impression of greater precision:

I made the earth,

and created man upon it:

[word-pairs are: “made” and “created,” “earth” and “man”]

it was my hands that stretched out the heavens,

and I commanded all their host.

[word-pairs are: “my” and “I,” “stretched out” and “commanded,” “heavens” and “host”] (Isa. 45:12) [80]

They have made his land a waste:

his cities are in ruins, without inhabitant.

[word-pairs are: “land” and “cities,” “waste” and “ruins”] (Jer. 2:15)” (Gillingham 80-81)

* 1. third variation
     1. “The *third variation* is where . . . B is seen not only to complement but also to complete A. B is thus given more importance than A [A < B]. This can again be achieved either by way of repetition or contrast. It is thus the converse of our second variation, and so it too is a modification of synthetic/incomplete parallelism. An interesting example is from Isaiah 40:3:

In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord,

make straight in the desert a highway for our God.” (Gillingham 81)

* + 1. “Within this variation there is some evidence of what has been called ‘staircase parallelism’, whereby the ideas proceed in steps. Jeremiah 31:21 (‘Return, O Virgin Israel, return to these your cities’) and Psalm 77:17 (‘When the waters saw you, God, when the waters saw you they trembled’) are illustrations of this device. A more developed example is found in Judges 5, the song of war attributed to Deborah . . .

Lord, when thou didst go forth from Se’ir,

when thou didst march from the region of Edom,

the earth trembled,

and the heavens dropped,

yea, the clouds dropped water.” (Gillingham 81)

* 1. concluding comment: “parallelism can be studied better in short sayings (of between two and four line-forms) rather than in lengthy passages.” (Gillingham 83)

1. **parallelism in Jesus**’ **sayings**
   1. introduction
      1. “. . . any reading of parallelism must take into account an oral [82] tradition. . . . Hebrew poetry . . . was probably composed to be heard rather than to be read.” (Gillingham 82-83) [But most proverbs in Proverbs, for example, were literary creations.—Hahn]
      2. “. . . the poetic aphorisms attributed to Jesus [confirm] the ‘three-in-one’ definition of parallelism . . . only the Synoptic Gospels have been used, and not the Gospel of John . . .” (Gillingham 83)
      3. Many “were probably spoken first in Aramaic, not Hebrew. [But parallelism] is translatable into the Greek of the New Testament and so through to our English translation, thus providing a good example of the way that parallelism, in its simplest form, transcends language.” (Gillingham 83)
   2. “sayings which can be classified as A = B (straightforward repetition or contrast)” (Gillingham 84; examples are 84-85)
      1. Matt 5:42, “Give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you.”
      2. Matt 11:30, “For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”
      3. Markk 3:24-25, “If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. 25And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand.”
      4. Mark 10:38, “Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?”
      5. Mark 13:24-25, “the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, 25and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.”
      6. Luke 6:27-28, “Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, 28bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.”
      7. Luke 6:37-38, “Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; 38give, and it will be given to you.”
      8. Luke 15:32, “this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.”
      9. Luke 16:10, “Whoever is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and whoever is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much.”
   3. “sayings which can be classified as A > B (where A is the dominant thought and B fills it out)” (Gillingham 85; examples are 85-86)
      1. Matt 6:12, “And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.”
      2. Matt 7:7-8, “Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. 8For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.”
      3. Matt 7:17, “In the same way, every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit.”
      4. Mark 2:27, “The sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the sabbath . . .”
      5. Luke 12:48, “From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required; and from the one to whom much has been entrusted, even more will be demanded.”
      6. Luke 12:49-50, “I came to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! 50I have a baptism with which to be baptized, and what stress I am under until it is completed!”
      7. Luke 18:14, “I tell you, this man went down to his home justified rather than the other; for all who exalt themselves will be humbled, but all who humble themselves will be exalted.”
   4. “sayings which can be classified as A < B (where the second line takes the main emphasis in the saying)” (Gillingham 86; examples are 86-87)
      1. “We may note here that this form of expression (*a minori ad maius*, ‘from the lesser to the greater’) was developed also in the Rabbinical tradition (linked with a rabbi named Hillel) in the first century ce.” (Gillingham 86)
      2. Matt 7:11, “If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him!”
      3. Matt 8:20, “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.”
      4. Matt 10:32-33, “Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven; 33but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven.”
      5. Matt 15:11, “it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but it is what comes out of the mouth that defiles.”
      6. Luke 9:24, “For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will save it.”
   5. “One interesting observation here is the way that Mark and Luke in particular disrupt the parallelism with additional phrases . . . (e. g. Mark 8:35; 10:27; 14:7; and Luke 12:33 (cf. Matt. 6:19-20); Luke 13:24 (cf. Matt. 7:13, 14) [*sic*]. This practice seems to indicate a theological expansion . . .” (Gillingham 87)
2. **conclusions**
   1. “. . . parallelism, as a device to make an aphorism more memorable and repeatable, is a common feature throughout Semitic thinking (whether in Ugaritic, Hebrew, or Aramaic). Furthermore, the ‘one-in-three’ feature (A = B; A > B; A < B) proposed earlier fits not only the Hebrew poetry of the Old Testament but also the Aramaic poetry of the New . . .” (Gillingham 87)
   2. Parallelism “is not so much a fixed technique as a creative art. It is not so much used for its own sake, as to evoke a response . . .” (Gillingham 87)
   3. “. . . Semitic poetry was composed as much to be taught (in recitation) or sung (in cantillation) as it was to be read and studied. Thus, although a literary appraisal is vital in attending to the formal issues, such as genre, style, structure, and syntax, there are nevertheless other aspects of poetic appreciation for which literary analysis alone is an inadequate tool. A more intuitive and [87] imaginative approach is required if we are to take seriously the performative quality of biblical poetry in its various social and cultural life-settings.” (Gillingham 87-88)

## Poetic Devices in the Psalms: Semantic Devices:

## Formulaic and Figurative Language

1. **formulaic language**
   1. “For Mowinckel, formulaic language is . . . good evidence of the cultic background of the psalms: . . . “Imagery and phraseology are often the stereotyped ones . . . they are not primarily meant to be personal effusions, but are . . . ritual lyrics.” (*The Psalms in Israel*’*s Worship*, i. 30-1.)” (Gillingham 202)
   2. “Similarly, M. Tsevat, in *A Study of the Language of the Biblical Psalms*, offers . . . one hundred and fifty examples . . . of expressions which occur three or more times in the psalms but nowhere else in the Bible.” (Gillingham 202)
   3. In “*Oral Formulaic Language in the Biblical Psalms*, R.B. Culley examines almost two hundred formulaic expressions, and concludes that at least twenty-six psalms are up to 40 per cent formulaic.” (Gillingham 202)
   4. Culley “clarifies those psalms which best fit a formulaic category. Six of his examples are hymns: Ps. 100 (35 per cent); Ps. 111 (27 per cent); Ps. 135 (57 per cent—in part due to correspondences with Ps. 115); Ps. 96 (65 per cent—in vv. 1, 2, 3, 4, 7-9, 10, 11, 12); Ps. 97 (42 per cent in vv. 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 12); and Ps. 98 (50 per cent—in vv. 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9).” (Gillingham 202)
   5. “Most of the other examples are from laments, or lament forms within composite psalms: these include Ps. 79 (33 per cent—the only communal lament); and in individual laments, Pss. 6 (48 per cent—in vv. 2, 3, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11); 28 (26 per cent); 31 (40 per cent); 35 (24 per cent); 54 [202] (53 per cent—in vv. 3, 4, 5, 8); 61 (35 per cent); 71 (36 per cent); 86 (49 per cent—in vv. 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16); 120 (21 per cent); 142 (65 per cent—in vv. 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8); and 143 (60 per cent—in vv. 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12); in lament forms in other psalms, examples include Ps. 27:7-14 (40 per cent); Ps. 9:2-15 (42 per cent); and Ps. 40:13-18 (50 per cent, due in part to correspondences with Ps. 35).” (Gillingham 202-203)
   6. “The formulaic language of psalmody might be seen to fall into six distinct categories.” (Gillingham 203)
      1. “First are the *descriptions of the psalmist*’*s enemies* . . .” (Gillingham 203)
         1. “. . . they are referred to frequently as ‘workers of iniquity’ (??*po* ‘*alê* ‘*awen* is a term which may be connected with the casting of spells, as in sorcery) as in Pss. 6:8; 28:3; 59:2; and 141:4.” (Gillingham 203)
         2. “The enemies are also referred to as beasts: cf. Pss. 7:2; 10:9; 22:13; 35:17; 57:4; and 58: 6 . . .” (Gillingham 203)
         3. “The enemies are also referred to . . . as liars, as in Pss. 10:7; 12:2; 27:2; 36:3; 41:7; 52:4; 55:9; 59:3; and 69:4 . . .” (Gillingham 203)
         4. “The enemies are also referred to . . . as schemers, as in Pss. 14:6; 52:2; 31:13; and 140:4 . . .” (Gillingham 203)
         5. “The enemies are also referred to . . . as false witnesses, as in Pss. 27:12; 35:11; and 64:5 . . .” (Gillingham 203)
         6. “The enemies are also referred to . . . as persecutors, as in Pss. 7:1; 17:10; 35:2; 56:6; and 143:3 . . .” (Gillingham 203)
         7. “The enemies are also referred to . . . as murderers, as in Pss. 38:12; 40:14; 59:3; 69:21; 70:2; and 94:21.” (Gillingham 203)
      2. “A second category of formulaic language is that of the *descriptions of the psalmist*’*s plight*.” (Gillingham 203)
         1. “Sometimes this is expressed in actual physical terms, such as weeping (Pss. 6:6; 88:9; 102:9), aching (Pss. 6:2; 22:14-15; 31:10; 38:3; 63:1; 69:2; 109:23-4; 116:3; 141:3), and groaning (Pss. 22:1; 32:3-4; 38:8ff.; 102:5).” (Gillingham 203)
         2. “At other times it is expressed in more metaphorical imagery, such as being caught in the snares of death (Pss. 13:3; 18:4, 5; 28:1; 30:9; 40:2; 55:4; 88:3; 102:23) and drowning in deep waters (Pss. 18:16; 32:6; 42:7; 69:1ff.; 88:7).” (Gillingham 203)
      3. “A third category is that of the *addresses to God in complaint or praise* . . .” (Gillingham 203)
         1. “. . . sometimes these occur in calls upon God’s name (Pss. 38:21; 52:9; 57:2; 66:2; 75:1; 143:11) . . .” (Gillingham 203)
         2. “. . . sometimes these occur in . . . thanksgivings for refuge and protection (Pss. 3:3; 9:9; 16:5; 18:2, 46; 27:5; 31:2; 32:7; 59:9; 61:2-3; 62:2; 144:2) . . .” (Gillingham 203)
         3. “. . . sometimes these occur in . . . pleas for God to hear (Pss. 3:7; 7:6; 9:9; 10:12; 17:13; 44:23; 59:4) . . .” (Gillingham 203)
         4. “. . . sometimes these occur in . . . praise for God’s steadfast love (Pss. 17:7; 21:7; 25:10; 42:8; 62:11; 63:3; 69:16; 89:2; 138:8).” (Gillingham 203)
      4. “Three further categories are also discernible, although here [203] many of the expressions occur more frequently elsewhere.” (Gillingham 203-204)
         1. “The first is *instructional advice*, which is associated also with the teaching in wisdom and law: phrases such as ‘speaking the truth’, ‘seeking God’, ‘doing no evil’, ‘fearing the LORD’ [*sic*], ‘trusting’ and ‘waiting upon’ God, ‘considering the poor’, are common.” (Gillingham 204)
         2. “Another type is of *descriptions about God*’*s theophany*. Much of this takes up the mythological and archetypal imagery found in hymns from Babylon and Canaan: examples include the earth reeling and shaking, God’s appearing in thunder, on the clouds, in thick darkness, with lightnings, through the seas and deep, God fighting for his people, and his dwelling on his holy mountain.” (Gillingham 204)
         3. “A final category concerns the *descriptions of Yahweh*’*s judgement*. Many of these are also used by the prophets; for example, God sitting in the heavens, judging the peoples, seated in his holy temple, looking down from heaven, ruling over the nations, delivering Zion, maintaining the cause of the afflicted, and executing justice for the needy.” (Gillingham 204)
2. **figurative language**
   1. “Within these categories, formulaic expressions appropriate the language of metaphor and simile.” (Gillingham 204)
   2. “God is addressed in impersonal terms, such as rock (18:2, 31), fortress, refuge, defence, stronghold, dwelling-place, habitation, and shield (3:3; 18:30, 35) (cf. Pss. 7:10; 18:35; 27:1; 31:2, 4, 20; 32:7; 43:2; 52:7; 59:11; 61:4; 71:3; 84:11; 91:1, 2; 114:2; 115:9, 10, 11; 144:2).” (Gillingham 204)
   3. “He is also portrayed more personally as king (47:8; 93:1; 96:10; 97:1; 99:1), shepherd (23:1; 80:2), farmer (80:8, 12), craftsman (8:4), father (68:5; 89:26; l03:13), warrior (68:1-2, 21-3; 89:10), and mother (131:2).” (Gillingham 204) For God as mother, see also:
      1. Ps 27:10, “If my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will take me up.”
      2. Ps 131:2, “I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a weaned child with its mother; my soul is like the weaned child that is with me.”
      3. Isa 49:15, “Can a woman forget her nursing child, or show no compassion for the child of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you.”
      4. Isa 66:13, “As a mother comforts her child, so I will comfort you; you shall be comforted in Jerusalem.”
   4. “The sufferings expressed in the laments are similarly rich in figurative language. For example, not only is the animal kingdom used to refer to the enemies (not least in the curses), but the psalmists often express their own sufferings in animal images—the worm (22:6), the owl (102:6-7), the deer (42:1), and the grasshopper (109:23).” (Gillingham 204)
   5. “Perhaps most striking is the use of metaphor (often culled from mythological motifs of other cultures of the ancient Near East) to personify creation: the mountains are called upon to help and to bear witness (68:15-16); the floods clap their hands (98:8); the mountains skip like rams (114:4); the sun comes out like a bridegroom (19:6). These examples (also used with striking skill in the prophets, especially in second Isaiah) offer a sense of the ‘animation’ of creation responding in praise before God.” (Gillingham 204)
3. **conclusions**
   1. “. . . formulaic and figurative expressions [are often] the same, as may be seen above . . .” (Gillingham 205)
   2. “Both formulaic and figurative expressions . . . offer the poet two important ways of using language.” (Gillingham 205)
      1. “On the one hand, such expressions are sufficiently general and ambiguous to be used in a typical and archetypal way: they thus allow the psalm repeated use.” (Gillingham 205)
      2. “Yet on the other hand, these expressions are an important vehicle for the psalmist’s particular situation of distress or joy. Through the particular and the ‘autobiographical’, personal appropriation is possible. There are not many specific allusions in the psalms, but where they occur, they are usually also couched in formulaic and figurative language, for this becomes a means of structuring a situation of chaos and ordering the particular pain. Examples from the communal laments include Pss. 74:4-8, 9; 79:1-4; 83:5-8, 9-12; and 137:1-3; from the individual laments, Pss. 22:7-8, 16-18; 31:6, 11-13; 35:11-16; 42:4-6; 51:4, 10-12; 55:12-15, 20-1; 69:7-8, 9-12, 21, 22; 71:6, 9, 18; 120:2, 5-7; and 141:5-6; and from other individual psalms, Pss. 16:4; 27:7-10; 40:6-8; and 41:8-9.” (Gillingham 205)

## Poetic Devices in the Psalms: Semantic Devices:

## Word Pairs and Chiasm

Gillingham, S[usan] E. *The Poems and Psalms of the Hebrew Bible*. Oxford Bible Series. Oxford: OUP, 1994.

Roland E. Murphy, O.Carm. *The Tree of Life: An Exploration of Biblical Wisdom Literature*. Anchor Bible Reference Library. New York: Doubleday, 1990.

1. **introduction**: “The poetic devices with a concern for the balance of sense [include] word-pairs . . . the balance of ideas into line-forms . . . and the organizing of line-forms into different sorts of chiasmus or intensification of ideas within the poem as a whole . . .” (Gillingham 198)
2. **word pairs**
   1. “Some combinations are so frequent that they are called “word-pairs,” such as “wise / fool,” or “mouth / tongue.”” (Murphy, *Tree of Life* 6)
   2. Ps 114:1-2,

“When *Israel* went forth from *Egypt*

*the house of Jacob* from *a people of strange language*

*Judah* became his *sanctuary*

*Israel* his *dominion*.” (Gillingham 198)

* 1. Watson (*Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 128-44) offers an interesting classification of the different types of word-pairs . . .” (Gillingham 199)
  2. “He suggests that word-pairs gave the poet assistance in composing verse . . .; that their reiteration enabled the audience to follow the meaning better through the process of repetition or expansion; and that the word-pairs enable the poem to cohere together in some semantic relation throughout.” (Gillingham 199)
  3. “Hence the greater the experimentation with word-pairs, the greater unity within the poem as a whole. Alter (*The Art of Biblical Poetry*, 62-84) sees this as a purposeful process of ‘intensification’ used by the Hebrew poets: it is a form of thinking and imaging by way of ‘binary’ thinking, sometimes using elaborate and complex comparisons, in which the underlying image occurs repeatedly in different ways. The same ideas are reinforced through a type of merismus, whereby smaller parts are referred to instead of the greater whole: for example, ‘earth and waters’ or ‘land and sea’ rather than ‘world’ or ‘creation’ or ‘cosmos’.” (Gillingham 199)
  4. Ps 13 “is a good example . . . of word-pairs:

v. 1 How long O Lord? Wilt thou *forget* me for ever?

How long wilt thou *hide thy face* from me?

v. 2 How long must I bear *pain* in my *soul*,

and have *sorrow* in my *heart* all the day?

v. 3 Consider and *answer* *me*, O Lord my God;

*lighten* *my eyes*, lest I sleep the sleep of death;

v. 4 lest my *enemy say*, ‘I have prevailed over him’;

lest my *foes rejoice* because I am shaken.

v. 5 But *I have trusted* in thy *steadfast love*;

*my heart* shall *rejoice* in thy *salvation*. [italics added—Hahn]

We may also note the threefold ‘how long’ in vv. 1-2, the threefold repetition in the imperatives of v. 3, the twice-repeated ‘lest’ in v. 4, and the final resolution of trust in v. 5: ‘But I . . .’. We may note also the play on the word ‘rejoice’, used of the enemies in v. 4, in v. 5 by the psalmist addressing God.” (Gillingham 200)

* 1. gender in word pairs
     1. Other word-pairs were “chosen more on account of their balance of sense than on account of gender.” But “In some instances the matching is most precise, to the extent that symmetry in the word-pairing affects even the genders of the nouns in each colon. Watson offers several illustrations of this—for example, of two masculine nouns (A) followed by two feminine nouns (B), as in Job 10:12:

Thou hast granted me life (m.) and steadfast love (m.)

and thy care (f.) has preserved my spirit (f.)

Another illustration is of a feminine then masculine noun (A) followed by a feminine then masculine noun (B), as in Isa. 62:1:

. . . her vindication (f.) goes forth as brightness (m.),

and her salvation (f.) as a burning torch (m.)” (Gillingham 79)

* + 1. “There are several permutations of this pairing—for example, a chiasmic symmetry whereby the masculine and feminine/­masculine and feminine [*sic*], or the masculine and feminine/­feminine and masculine are set in pairs.” (Gillingham 79)

1. **chiasm**
   1. “. . . a discernible series of ideas . . . leads up to a climax, which then is inverted so that the ideas follow one another in a reverse way, so that the ending of the psalm matches its beginning.” (Gillingham 201)
   2. Examples: Pss 7, 15, 29, 30, 51, 59, 72, 95:1-7, 105:1-11, 136:10-15, 137, and 139 are good examples. (Gillingham 201)

## Psalms and Meter

Fix 3. a. 1)

1. **theories of Hebrew meter**
   1. Meter is a “more rigid form of rhythm . . .” (Gillingham 51)
   2. Church Fathers
      1. those who held that scripture is metrical
         1. Origen of Alexandria (c ad 185-c 254) “was convinced that the psalms were trimeter and tetrameter, and believed that the [Septuagint] Greek translators were mistaken to create two metrical lines from one single verse, broken only by a caesura.” (Gillingham 52)
         2. Eusebius of Caesarea (c ad 260-c 340) “was concerned to defend and promote the Christian faith in a pagan world . . . [Psalmists] too were therefore inspired, he believed, to write in heroic metre—’hexameters . . . and also verses in trimeter and tetrameter lines’.” (Gillingham 52)
         3. Jerome (c ad 342-420) “observed that, on the whole, Hebrew poetry was usually composed . . . of hexameters, with dactyls (a metrical foot comprising one long and two short syllables) and spondees (a metrical foot with two long syllables), but also with interpolations of other verse-feet.” (Gillingham 52)
      2. those who held that scripture is not metrical
         1. Gregory of Nyssa (c ad 335-394) said “that Hebrew poetry had no resemblance to classical Hellenistic metre because its source of inspiration was qualitatively different.” (Gillingham 52)
      3. “Either it was assumed that Greek (metrical) poetry was of the highest worth, and it was thus held that Hebrew poetry had appropriated the same conventions (including metre) . . . [Or] Hebrew poetry was distinctive, since its source of inspiration was different . . .” (Gillingham 52)
   3. modern theories
      1. accentual theories
         1. “. . . the Renaissance writers on poetry, such as Wyatt, Surrey, Sidney, Donne, and Milton, . . . supposed [Hebrew poetry] followed the same poetic conventions as did Greek and Roman classical poetry.” (Gillingham 13)
         2. “. . . much of the debate concerning the metric classification of poetry developed near the end of the nineteenth century in Germany. For example, in the late 1870s, J. Ley proposed that a stress accent was evident in the parallel line-forms, and scanned the lines with assumptions that they would follow hexameters, tetrameters, pentameters, and so on.” (Gillingham 53)
         3. “In the 1880s this was developed further by K. Budde: working through the book of Lamentations, he observed that the first ‘parallel line’ was longer than the second line; the first line usually had three stresses (occasionally four), and the second line had two stresses (sometimes three). This produced a somewhat ‘limping’ sound, and because it was used in the prayers of lament, Budde called this 3:2 line a lament-like metre (Hebrew: ??*qina*). (A subsequent problem has been that this 3:2 metre has since been found in many other texts which offer no suggestion of a lament form, and many lament forms do not use the 3:2 but rather a 3:3 stress.)” (Gillingham 53)
         4. “Budde’s views were developed in the 1890s by another German, E. Sievers, who was already an expert in the metrics of Old English and German poetry. Sievers [concluded] that the line-form in Hebrew consisted basically of two unstressed syllables followed by one stressed syllable. This system—called *anapaestic metre*—. . . bears some resemblance to the dactyl, being transliterated as ??~ ~ - . . . (two short syllables and one long, stressed syllable). According to Sievers, anapaestic metre is the key criterion for determining Hebrew poetry.” (Gillingham 54)
         5. “By contrast, G. Bickell, also writing in German in the 1890s, proposed a system influenced by his particular research on Syriac poetry. . . . The usual form was ~ - | ~ - | ~ - . . . known as iambic metre. . . . ??- ~ | - ~ | - ~ . . . *trochaic metre* . . . was a less consistent feature in Hebrew verse.” (Gillingham 54)
         6. “Bickell’s view has been developed in the twentieth century by G. Hölscher and S. Mowinckel. . . . the line-forms were classified in terms of iambic hexameters, iambic pentameters, and so on . . . Mowinckel held that the poets [54] consciously chose one primary formula, namely the 4:4 or 3:3 stress over two line-forms. For scholars like Mowinckel, this numerical classification was essential because it supported further the theory that Hebrew poetry was composed by professional liturgical experts . . .” (Gillingham 54-55)
      2. quantitative theories
         1. Other scholars “by contrast emphasize . . . the *quantitative* features . . . Most scholars who focus on the quantitative features have been influenced by Ugaritic poetry. Assuming that the ideal in Ugaritic poetry was an equal number of syllables in each line, . . . scholars have proposed that the same method could apply to Hebrew poetry as well. Thus, instead of counting the *accents* . . ., each *syllable* is counted instead. . . . one is left with all sorts of questions about irregularities. A further difficulty is that Ugaritic scholars (such as de Moor) have argued convincingly that Ugaritic poetry has no regular metre at all—the balanced lines being not so much concerned with the sound as with the sense. The problem here is that we know very little about the vocalization of Ugaritic . . .” (Gillingham 55)
         2. *counting syllables*
            1. “An enthusiast for syllable-counting is D.N. Freedman [55] . . . (for example in *Pottery*, *Poetry and Prophecy* [1980]) . . . This is not to say that the poets numbered their words and syllables . . . they wrote with an intuition which was already deeply ingrained in their poetic consciousness. (Hence Freedman also side-steps the issue of irregularities, for this is part of the poet’s creative and flexible use of regular poetic conventions.)” (Gillingham 56) “Freedman’s alternative is his supposedly more rigorous, objective, and statistical method in identifying Hebrew poetry—that of counting syllables to determine patterns between one line-form and another.” (Gillingham 75)
            2. “This view is also applied in some detail by M. Dahood, another Ugaritic scholar, in his three-volume commentary on the book of Psalms. The interest in symmetry and word-pairs (an interest which we have already noted in Ugaritic poetry) is everywhere apparent.” (Gillingham 56)
         3. *counting words*: “The problem with symmetry, as with any metrical theory, is that it is apt to become too rigid a system. This is all too evident in further attempts to count words rather than accented syllables (so, Kosmala). The difficulty lies in ascertaining exactly what constitutes a ‘word’ in Hebrew—do words joined together by the ??*maqqep* (rather like our hyphen) make up one word or two? Do the monosyllables such as *lo*’ (‘not’) and ??*ki* (‘for’, ‘because’) serve as one isolated word, or are they connected with what follows them? The decisions on word-counting again require a number of assumptions before one starts.” (Gillingham 56)
         4. *counting letters*: “The difficulties seem to be compounded when instead of counting ‘words’, one counts letters to ascertain some quantitative uniformity (so, Loretz). . . . . . . [And] The problem is compounded when one notes the appeal to the emendation of poetic texts for metrical (rather than syntactical) reasons.” (Gillingham 56)
         5. *no meter*: “other scholars have abandoned altogether the search for a consistent metrical system. Two scholars in particular have popularized this more negative view—the one [56] (J. Kugel) following a phonetic and semantic approach, and the other (M. O’Connor) a grammatical and syntactic one.” (Gillingham 56-57)
            1. “For O’Connor, ‘No consensus has ever been reached in the matter of Hebrew meter because there is none’ (*Hebrew Verse Structure*, 138). O’Connor offers six *constraints* for the determining of Hebrew poetry, none of which is metrical: these consist mainly of the number of verbs and dependent clauses in each line-form.” (Gillingham 57)
            2. Kugel grants that “‘lines’ . . . are roughly equal in length in a given passage of poetry . . . [but] the approximate regularity of biblical songs does not correspond to any metrical system.” (*The Idea of Biblical Poetry*, 297-8.)” (Gillingham 57)
      3. conclusions
         1. Watson notes that “metrical patterns are never maintained for more than a few verses at a stretch, if even that” (*Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 92).” (Gillingham 57)
         2. Though “We no longer know the exact pronunciation, nor even where the accents fell [57] . . . Nevertheless, [the] following survey within the Psalter shows that we have to account for some regular tonic accent or rhythmic stress in Hebrew poetry in many instances.” (Gillingham 57-58)
         3. Although hymns are often in 3:3 meter and laments in 3:2, few psalms “conform to any one clear metrical pattern.” (Gillingham 190)
2. **Hebrew meters**
   1. 3:3
      1. “The method I have used here is . . . to seek out line-forms, usually on the basis of some parallelism . . .; second, to determine where syllable-stresses are most likely to fall in each composite word-unit in the Hebrew; third, to count how many of these syllable-stresses are found in one line-form.” (Gillingham 58)
      2. “For example, for Psalm 117, the shortest psalm in the Psalter, the English translation is set out so that it follows as closely as possible Hebrew construct-words (often called ‘units’); it is clear that each unit has some sort of primary stress, usually on the ultimate, but often on the penultimate syllable in the unit, as is indicated below:

/ / /

Praise the-Lord all-nations!

/ / /

??hallu et-’adonay kol-goyim

/ / /

Extol-him all-peoples!

/ / /

??sabbehuhu kol-ha’ummim (v. 1)

/ / /

For great towards-us [is] his-steadfast-love

/ / /

??ki gabar ‘alenu hasdo [58]

/ / /

and-the-faithfulness-of-the-Lord [endures] for ever

/ / /

??we’emet-’adonay le’olam (v. 2)” (Gillingham 58-59)

Each verse has “a 3:3 pattern. The fact that this 3:3 pattern could be seen as *six* accents for each verse is why scholars have called this hexameter; however, the uneven distribution of the accents should at the very least raise a question about this term.” (Gillingham 59)

* + 1. “This 3:3 accentual rhythm is used frequently in the psalms, particularly in psalms of praise, such as Ps. 117 above. The most consistent evidence is found, for example, in Pss. 33, 103, 114, 147, 148, 149, and 150. It may also be observed with some regularity in parts of Gen. 49:1-28 (Jacob’s blessing, parts of which possibly come from the time of David); in Num. 21:14-15 (described as ancient ‘war poetry’); in Num. 21:16-17 (possibly from a ‘drinking-song’), and also in parts of Deut. 32:1-47 and 33:1-29. The 3:3 pattern is also frequently used in the wisdom literature—for example, in Proverbs, and in much of the poetry in Job:

/ / /

(Shall)-man than-God be-[more]-righteous . . .

/ / /

or-than-his-maker be-[more]-pure a-man? . . . (Job 4:17)” (Gillingham 59)

* + 1. “It is possible to ascertain this same rhythm even in some of the narrative literature—for example, in the prose prayers.” (Gillingham 59)
  1. 4:4
     1. “Another common pattern is 4:4. Psalm 46 is interesting, not least because vv. 3, 7, and 11 (two of which form a refrain) are in the 3:3 stress, and by contrast vv. 1-2, 4-6, and 8-10 are in 4:4. For example: [59]

/ / / /

God is-in-her-midst she-shall-not-be-shaken

/ / / /

He-will-help-her God at-the-break-of the-morning . . . (Ps. 46:6)” (Gillingham 59-60)

* + 1. “Outside the Psalter, poetry with a 4:4 pattern is found in parts of Exodus 15 and in many of the sayings in Proverbs.” (Gillingham 60)
  1. 2:2
     1. “A rhythm related to [4:4], and often difficult to distinguish from it, is 2:2. When set out in line-forms, it is more brisk—what some scholars have called a ‘marching rhythm’. It is not surprising that it occurs in the ancient war poetry of Israel (cf. Judg. 5 and 1 Sam. 1:19ff.), because it has a simple and dramatic binary form. It is a frequent device used by the prophets, often interspersed with the 3:2 rhythm for dramatic effect. We have already used Isa. 1:16-17 in another context, but the terse 2:2 beat is evident even in the English:

/ /

Cease to-do-evil

/ /

learn to-do-good

/ /

seek justice

/ /

correct oppression

/ /

defend the-fatherless

/ /

plead for-the-widow

It is possible to lengthen the above line-forms in such a way as to effect a 2 x 4:4 instead of an 8 x 2:2 pattern of stress. The classification is perhaps more intuitive than objective; the staccato and terse style fits the contents better than a lengthier, more rounded [60] 4:4 metre.” (Gillingham 60-61)

* + 1. In Ps 29, “the repetition seems to echo the ‘voice of the Lord’ in its sevenfold cry in vv. 3-9, almost imitating the claps of thunder:

/ /

v. 3: The-voice-of-the-Lord . . .

/ /

[is] upon-the-waters . . .

/ /

The-God-of-glory . . .

/ /

thunders . . .

/ /

The Lord [is] above . . .

/ /

many waters . . .

/ /

v. 4: The-voice-of-the-Lord . . .

/ /

(is) full-of-power . . .

. . . verse 3 works well as a tripartite 2:2:2 . . . which would be impossible to effect with 4:4.” (Gillingham 61)

* + 1. “A 2:2:2 [61] pattern is also found in Ps. 91:3 (concerning the threat of a deadly pestilence). It is found several times in the prophets (often in the so-called prose sections, for example in 2 Sam. 7 and in Isa. 8[*sic*, sc. “7”]:14, the Immanuel saying.) The 2:2 rhythm is by no means an inflexible pattern.” (Gillingham 61-62)
  1. 3:3:3
     1. “Similarly, the 3:3 pattern is also developed into a 3:3:3 rhythm. We have noted Ps. 24:7 . . .:

/ / /

Lift-up O-gates your-heads,

/ / /

and-be-lifted-up, O-doors ancient

/ / /

and-shall-come-in [the]-King of-glory.

Pss. 60:8; 77:16-19; 103:20; and much of Pss. 99 and 100 use this 3:3:3 pattern. All these examples celebrate (in one way or another) the rule of God in history, a tenet which almost certainly would have been celebrated in liturgy. It may be that this 3:3:3 pattern was used at a cultic festival which celebrated God’s kingship over the entire earth.” (Gillingham 62)

* 1. 3:2
     1. “. . . the 3:2 rhythm [occurs] throughout much of Lamentations. There is little doubt that this rhythm was used (although not exclusively) to echo the mood of lament, whereby the lack of a third matching accent in the second line brought out a sense of unfulfilled hopes . . .:

/ / /

Fallen, no-more to-rise

/ /

(is)-the-virgin Israel . . .” (Gillingham 62)

* + 1. “This 3:2 rhythm is a common motif in the psalms of lament, a clear example being Ps. 5:1-2:

/ / /

my-words give-ear-to, o Lord

/ /

give-heed-to my-groaning. [62]

/ / /

Hearken to-the-sound-of my-cry

/ /

my-king and-my-God.” (Gillingham 62-63)

* + 1. In “the individual lament psalms, the clearest examples [are] Pss. 28, 35, 36, 40, 57, and 70. Interestingly, this 3:2 pattern is found in some part of every psalm in one particular collection, namely Pss. 120-34, the Psalms of Ascent—with the exception of Ps. 132. Psalm 23 provides another interesting example, in that its metre varies between 3:2 (vv. 1-3) and 2:2 (v. 4) and 3:2 (vv. 5-6). Psalm 55 offers a similar pattern, being mainly in 3:2, with v. 6 in 2:2, as does Ps. 84, also mainly in 3:2, with v. 3 as 2:2 and v. 12 as 2:3.” (Gillingham 63)
  1. other meters
     1. 4:3 e. g., 141:4
     2. 3:4 e. g., 4:3, 17:3, 18:7
     3. 2:3 Ps 84 and “frequently elsewhere” (e. g., Isa 40:3b) (Gillingham 63)
  2. “. . . counting of tonal accents in the Hebrew is fraught with difficulties; for example, we cannot be sure every time whether . . . the ??*shewa*, transliterated as a vowel above the line . . . is vocal or silent . . . we cannot always be sure whether compound word-units, expanded by prefixes and suffixes, suggest two accents rather than one; we cannot be sure whether the ??*maqqep* (the hyphen-line) always causes the accent to fall later in a word-unit; nor can we be sure whether the monosyllables count as a [63] separate accent on their own, or whether they allow the stress to fall on the following word. Furthermore, other evidence which weighs against over-sys­tem­at­iz­ing is the paucity of strophic forms (whereby line-forms have a consistent enough . . . rhythmic pattern [to] create . . . a ‘stanza’). Only very rarely is there clear evidence of strophes, and these are usually created by the use of refrains (e. g. Pss. 42-3, 57) or by the use of an alphabetic/acrostic device (as in parts of Lamentations) rather than by the build-up of regular metrical units. It would appear that there are few clear strophic formations because repeated line-forms which create strophes simply do not extend clearly throughout the whole of a poem.” (Gillingham 63-64)

1. **summary of meters in Psalms**
   1. hymns
      1. general hymns (Gillingham 64-65) (general hymns listed here exactly match Gillingham’s list on p. 231)
         1. 33, 103, 114, 117, 147, 148, 149, 150 are generally 3:3. (“There are exceptions, such as Pss. 33:10, 12; 114:7; 148:8, 149:1, 9, and 150:6.”)
         2. 100, l04, 111, 136, 146 “overall . . . follow some similar pattern.”
         3. others
            1. 8 “has some 2:2 and 3:3 patterns . . .”
            2. 29 is 2:2 and 2:2:2, but “has many textual corruptions . . .” [65]
            3. 113 and 135 “borrow widely from other psalms . . .”
            4. 145 “has two halves and two different rhythms.”
      2. historical psalms
         1. 78 and 105 “conform overall to a 3:3 pattern.”
         2. But 78:21, 32, 55 are 3:3:3;

78: 6, 7, 8, 20, 28, 45 “are altogether different”;

and 105:1, 11, 15 vary from 3:3.

* + 1. Zion hymns (Gillingham 65)
       1. “The Zion hymns offer little consistency in their patterns.”
       2. 46 “has no regular metre.”
       3. 48 “has a 3:3 rhythm (except for vv. 1-2) . . .”
       4. 76 “follows overall a 3:2 pattern (apart from v. 4-5 and 11).”
       5. 87 “is irregular due to various textual dislocations.”
       6. 122 “is irregular, with some evidence of 3:2, vv. 1, 8, 9, vv. 2, 3, 4, and vv. 5, 6, 7 all being different.”
    2. kingship hymns (Gillingham 65)
       1. 47 “has many variations, probably for liturgical effect . . .”
       2. 93 “has a 2:2 pattern in four short lines, then 3:3 in a single line . . .”
       3. 96 “is irregular and full of stylized forms used in other hymns . . .”
       4. 97, 98 “offer some evidence of the 3:3 pattern . . . (although even here 97:1, 2, 8, and 10 and 98:2-3 are different).”
       5. 99 “has irregularities due to textual disorders.”
  1. individual laments (Gillingham 66-67)
     1. 3:2
        1. “. . . the 3:2 pattern is by no means always used.” [66]
        2. 5
        3. 7, 17, 35, 64, 71, 140, 141 are generally 3:2, “but there are irregularities due to textual dislocations . . .”
        4. 28 (except 9)
        5. 36 (“although the second part is 3:3”)
        6. 40:13ff.
        7. 57—1-5 are 3:3, 6-11 are 3:2
        8. 70 [67]
     2. 3:3 [66]
        1. 6 (except 2, 4, 8)
        2. 25 (except 1, 15)
        3. 26 (except 1)
        4. 38
        5. 51 (except 1, 11 particularly)
        6. 56 (except for the refrain in 4, 10-11)
        7. 59 (except 6, 12, 13, 14)
        8. 63, 69
        9. 88 (except 5)
        10. 102
        11. 142 (except 6)
     3. 4:4: Ps 12 [66]
     4. others: in 13, 22, 31, 39, 42, 43, 54, 61, 73, 86, 109, 120, 130, 143 “only two or three verses together suggest any pattern.” This may be because they’re composite, because they have textual problems, or because of “the troubled mind of the suppliant.” [67]
  2. communal laments (Gillingham 65-66)
     1. Only 123 is generally 3:2.
     2. 44, 60, 80, 82, 83, 85, 90, 94, 106 “are mainly 3:3, although several verses in each of these break the pattern (cf. Pss. 44:21; 60:6-8, 9; 80:9; 82:5, 8; 83:6, 17; 90:2; 94:9, 12, 17, and 23).”
     3. 74 is 2:2 (except 6-7 and 20).
     4. 77 is generally 3:3 in 1-15 and 3:3:3 in 16-20.
     5. 79 “does not sustain any pattern for more than three verses . . .”
     6. 108:1-5 (= 57:7-11) are 3:2 [65]; 108:6-13 (= 60:5-12) are mainly 3:3.
     7. 123 is generally 3:2.
     8. 126 is generally 2:2:2, with some 3:2.
     9. 137 “seems to deny any pattern at all.”
  3. royal psalms (Gillingham 66)
     1. 2 is 3:3 “but with many variations (vv. 5, 7, 8, and 12).”
     2. 18, 20, and 132 are generally 3:3.
     3. 21 is 2:2 in 1-6 and 3:3 in 7-13, “with other variations.”
     4. 45 is generally 4:4:4.
     5. 72 and 144 have “no regular pattern whatsoever.”
     6. 89 is generally 4:4 in the first half and 3:3 in the second half, though “38ff. in the third part are irregular.” (Probably part 1 is 1-18, part 2 is 19-37, and part 3 is 38-52.)
     7. 102 is generally 3:2. (Gillingham classifies 101, not 102, as a royal psalm on p. 231. Since 102 is described above as an individual lament with 3:3 meter, surely 101 is meant here.)
     8. (Gillingham classifies 110 as a royal psalm on p. 231, but does not discuss it here.)
  4. individual thanksgivings (Gillingham 67)
     1. 9-10, 40, and 41 “have variable patterns; they may be composite, and there are dislocations in the text.” (Above, 40:13ff are said to be 3:2.)
     2. 30 “suggests 2:2 and 3:3 together.”
     3. 32 “shows little pattern, with textual difficulties.”
     4. 34, 92 (except 9 is 3:3:3) are generally 3:3.
     5. 116 “has no one pattern [and] textual problems occur in vv. 10-19.”
     6. 138 is generally 3:3 (“with some uncertainties in some verses”).
  5. communal thanksgivings (Gillingham 66)
     1. 65 “changes between 3:2 and 3:3.”
     2. 66 and 67 have some 3:3 but also exceptions.
     3. 68 “is hard to classify because of its textual corruptions and its fragmentary quotations.”
     4. 107 is generally 3:3 (“although the refrains in vv. 6, 13, 19, and 28 are different”).
     5. 118 and 124 “are mainly irregular.”
  6. individual psalms of confidence (Gillingham 67)
     1. 4 is 4:4 (except 1).
     2. 11 is generally 2:2.
     3. 16 “is difficult to analyse, because of additional half-lines which break up what could be a 2:2 pattern.”
     4. 23 “has a 3:2 and 2:2 pattern . . .”
     5. 27 “is a composite psalm, with a corrupt text in its second part, and no regular metre throughout.”
     6. 33 is 3:3 (except 3, 7, 8).
     7. 62 seems “composite, . . . with no regularity . . .”
     8. 84 is generally 3:2.
     9. 121 has “no consistent pattern, changing every two verses.”
     10. 131 is 3:2 (except 2).
  7. communal psalms of confidence (Gillingham 66)
     1. These have no consistent pattern.
     2. 115 is generally 3:3.
     3. 125 is very irregular.
     4. 129 is generally 3:2.
     5. 133 (only three verses) differs in verses 1 and 2.
  8. liturgies (Gillingham 65)
     1. “The liturgies are full of different patterns, probably because they served some dramatic purpose within the rituals of the cult.”
     2. 15 is 3:2 “in the antiphonal sections, but the rest is variable.”
     3. 24:1-6 “is quite different from 24:7-10.”
     4. 134 (only 3 verses) “is variable and [probably] composite, with different metres in the introductory exhortations and the following response.”
  9. prophetic exhortations (Gillingham 65)
     1. 14, 52, and 53 are generally 3:2.
     2. 50, 91, and 95 are generally 3:3. (On p. 231 Gillingham classifies 91 as an individual psalm of confidence, not a prophetic exhortation.)
     3. 58 is generally 4:3, “but with variations (in vv. 4 and 8).”
     4. 75 is generally 3:3, “apart from vv. 1, 7, and 8*b*.”
     5. 81 “has some 3:3 metre, but with many textual difficulties (e. g. vv. 5*c*-6; 10*c*-11).”
  10. wisdom psalms (Gillingham 66)
      1. 1 has no consistent meter.
      2. 19:1-6 is generally 4:4, and 19:7-14 is generally 3:2, “although there are exceptions (vv. 4 and 6 appear to be 3:3).”
      3. 37 “is 3:3, with variations.”
      4. 49 is generally 3:3, “broken by textual difficulties and abrupt changes in subject-matter.”
      5. (Gillingham classifies 73 and 112 as wisdom psalms on p. 231 but does not discuss them here.)
      6. 119 is generally 3:2, “with several changes, often due to scribal emendations.”
      7. 127:1-2 is 3:3, 127:3-5 is 3:2.
      8. 128:1-4 is generally 3:2 (5 is 3:3:2).
      9. 139 has no consistent meter.
  11. summary of the summary
      1. hymns
         1. general hymns 3:3 (21) not 3:3 (5)
         2. historical psalms 3:3 (2)
         3. kingship hymns 3:3 (2) not 3:3 (4)
         4. Zion hymns 3:3 (1) not 3:3 (4)
      2. individual laments 3:3 (12) 3:2 (10) 3:2+3:3 (1), 3:3+3:2 (1), 4:4 (1)variable (14)
      3. communal laments 3:3 (10) 3:2 (1) 2:2 (1), 2:2:2 (1) variable (2)
      4. royal psalms 3:3 (4) 3:2 (1) 2:2+3:3 (1),4:4:4 (1),4:4+3:3 (1) variable (2)
      5. individual thanksgivings 3:3 (3) 2:2/3:3 (1) variable (6)
      6. communal thanksgivings 3:3 (3) 3:3/3:2 (1) variable (3)
      7. individual psalms of confidence 3:3 (1) 3:2 (1) 3:2/2:2 (1), 4:4 (1) variable (4)
      8. communal psalms of confidence 3:3 (1) 3:2 (1) variable (2)
      9. liturgies “full of different patterns”
      10. prophetic exhortations 3:3 (5) 3:2 (3) 4:3 (1)
      11. wisdom psalms 3:3 (2) 3:2 (2) 4:4+3:2 (2), 3:3+3:2 (1) variable (2)
      12. totals: 3:3 = 67 3:2 = 21 mixed patterns = 14 variable = 48

1. **conclusions**
   1. “In summary, . . . the fixed nature of the metre of the psalms (for example, Mowinckel’s 4:4 claim) does not fit the evidence . . .” (Gillingham 67)
   2. But the above totals at the end of the summary show that the standard meter of the psalms is primarily 3:3, secondarily 3:2.
   3. Gillingham’s assertion (190) that laments are often 3:2 is true, but they are as often 3:3.
   4. “. . . the fact that the psalmists composed with a concern [197] for the *sound* of their poems [e. g., alliteration, assonance, rhyme] may well suggest that there may be a greater adherence to metre than we might suppose; our problem is that we do not have all the rules to assess metre, and in addition, where the psalm is corrupt or composite, any discernible metrical pattern has broken down.” (Gillingham 197-98)

## Poetic Devices in the Psalms:

## Phonetic Devices

??

1. **introduction**
   1. “Chapter 2 established twelve specific criteria for ascertaining Hebrew poetry: at least three of these were in part phonetic”: rhyme; [191] repetition, “a similar phrase . . . reiterated at the beginning or ending”; and tricola, “to create a dramatic emphasis . . .” (Gillingham 191-192)
   2. “Equally important in the psalms are variations of *plays on words*.” (Gillingham 192)
      1. “There are at least five particular aspects of such word-play:
         1. “*assonance* (a form of vowel repetition);[[2]](#footnote-2)
         2. “*alliteration* (a form of consonant repetition);[[3]](#footnote-3)
         3. “*onomatopoeia* (where the sound of a word imitates its meaning);
         4. “*homonymy* (where words which are identical in sound are used with different meanings); and
         5. “*polysemy* (whereby the same word is used with several meanings).” (Gillingham 192)
      2. example: “In Isa. 5, the word-play was twofold—the two similar-sounding words ??*mishpat* (justice) and ??*mishpah* (bloodshed) were set in contrast to each other, as also the pair ??*sedaqa* (righteousness) and ??*se‘aqa* (cry).” (Gillingham 192)

A and he looked for justice,

B but behold, bloodshed: [14]

A for righteousness,

B but behold, a cry!” (Gillingham 14-15)

“. . . the balance of sound is between justice (??mishpat) and bloodshed (??mishpah) and between righteousness (??sedaqa) and cry (??se‘aqa). A deeper meaning thus becomes evident in perceiving the balance of sound alongside the balance of sense: when justice is replaced (i. e. covered) by bloodshed, then the cry must be replaced (i. e. vindicated) by righteousness.” (Gillingham 15)

* + 1. “One example is found in Ps. 93:4:

mightier than the thunders of many waters

??miqqolôt mayim rabb*îm*

mightier than the waves of the sea

??‘addîr*îm* mishberê y*am*

The Lord on high is mighty!

??‘addîr bammar*ôm* ’adonay

* + 1. Some assonance can be seen in the repetition of the vowel sounds such as *îm*; ??*am*; *ôm* . . .” (Gillingham 192)
    2. “Alliteration is seen in the repeated use of the consonants m, r, and y.” (Gillingham 192)
       1. “Onomatopoeia is also evident; the sounds imitate the thundering of the waves and the roaring of the waters.” (Gillingham 192)
    3. “The preceding verse (Ps. 93:3) offers similar interesting features: [192]

The floods have lifted up, O Lord,

??n*ashû* neh*arôt* ’adonay

the floods have lifted up their voice,

??n*ashû* neh*arôt* q*ôlam*

the floods lift up their roaring

??yish’û neh*arôt* d*okyam* . . .” (Gillingham 193-194)

* + - 1. “The assonance is evident in the different combination of vowel sounds—for example, the ??a-û, and the a-ô, and the ô-a evident in each line.” (Gillingham 194)
      2. “The alliteration is in the repeated ‘n’ sound in the first two lines.” (Gillingham 194)
      3. “Onomatopoiea is discernible in the sonorous vowel sounds imitating the waves and waters. The ‘s’ sound in the first word of each line might suggest the crashing of the surf.” (Gillingham 194)
      4. “There is also some use of end-rhyme in the *am* in the second and third lines, which suggests the continuous pounding of the waves on the shore.” (Gillingham 192-193)
    1. “. . . onomatopoeia might be seen in Ps. 140:3, where the ??‘sh’ sounds are used to imitate the hissing of the serpents:

###### They make their tongue sharp as a serpent’s

??shanenû leshônam kemô-nahash

and under their lips is the poison of vipers.

??hamat ‘akshub tahat shepatêymô.” (Gillingham 194)

* + 1. “Psalm 5:9 offers several examples of homonymy, one of which is clear even in translation. There is a pun on the word ??*qirbam* (= ‘their heart’, from the root q-r-b) alongside a similar-sounding word ??*qeber* (= ‘open sepulchre’, from the root q-b-r):

their heart is destruction,

??*qirbam* hawwôt

their throat is an open sepulchre,

??*qeber*-patôah geronam . . .” (Gillingham 195)

* 1. Rhyme “is not as common a device in Hebrew poetry as we might expect. It is usually created by the use of the suffixes at the end of the lines: although in themselves these need not be a deliberate use of rhyme, the phonetic effect is nevertheless apparent.” (Gillingham 195)
     1. “. . . *refrains* show how [phonetic devices] can extend over into the larger unit of the psalm, moving beyond two, three, or four line-forms (which create the stanzas) into larger groupings (forming strophes).” (Gillingham 195) Psalms with refrains are: 8, 39, 42, 43, 46, 49, 56, 57, 59, 67, 80, 99, 118, 136. (Gillingham 195-196)
     2. “Psalm 8 is a good example of this, with the refrain in vv. 1 and 9

O Lord, our Lord,

how majestic is thy name in all the earth!” (Gillingham 195)

* + 1. “The refrain in Ps. 118:1 and 29

O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;

for his steadfast love endures for ever! [195]

works in the same way.” (Gillingham 195-196)

* + 1. In Ps 136, “the refrain ‘for his steadfast love endures for ever’ is found in every half-verse.” (Gillingham 196)
    2. Pss 49, 57, and 99 “all have two refrains (and hence two stanzas, one at the beginning and one after the first refrain) . . .” (Gillingham 196)
    3. Pss 42, 43, and 46 each have “three refrains (and hence three stanzas) . . .” (Gillingham 196)
    4. Pss 59 and 80 have “four refrains (and hence four stanzas).” (Gillingham 196)
    5. Pss 39, 56, and 67 have “two refrains, but with three stanzas, and hence no concluding refrain.”
    6. The refrains in Pss 8, 46, 67, 118, and 136 are unvarying; “those in Pss. 39, 42-3, 49, 57, and 59 occur with minor variations, whilst those in Pss. 56, 80, and 99 have considerable variations (Ps. 99 being in tricola form).” (Gillingham 196)
    7. “The refrains give each of these psalms a more ordered structure, not only by way of division into stanzas but also through the repetition of sound.” (Gillingham 196)
    8. Refrains “suggest antiphonal responses from the congregation. Nowhere is this more in evidence than in 2 Chr. 5:13-14, where the refrain from Ps. 136 is clearly assumed to be part of the congregational response.” (Gillingham 196) 2 Chr 5:13-14, “It was the duty of the trumpeters and singers to make themselves heard in unison in praise and thanksgiving to the Lord, and when the song was raised, with trumpets and cymbals and other musical instruments, in praise to the Lord, “For he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever,” the house, the house of the Lord, was filled with a cloud, 14so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud; for the glory of the Lord filled the house of God.”
  1. acrostics
     1. An acrostic poem has “the first letter in each line following a sequence, usually alphabetic.” (Gillingham 196)
     2. “Sometimes these alphabetic patterns occur between one single line-form and another (as in Pss. 111 and 112), sometimes they occur . . . between one full verse and the next (as in Pss. 25 and 37), and sometimes they are found between every three verses (e. g. Lam. 1).” (Gillingham 196)
     3. Ps 119
        1. “In Ps. 119 the pattern is in the use of the same letter at the beginning of a line, repeated eight times in succession, followed by the eightfold use of the next letter of the alphabet creating another stanza.” (Gillingham 196)
        2. “Psalm 119 uses the full alphabet of twenty-two letters, with each letter repeated eight times in an eight-line stanza, so that the acrostic is 8 x 22 = 176 verses.” (Gillingham 197)
     4. In Ps 37, each couplet begins with a successive letter. (Gillingham 196-197)
     5. “We might ask whether these were phonetic devices at all: were they intended for the ear, or more for the eye? Some would argue that it requires the written page to make full sense of the alphabetic patterns, but the trained listening ear would easily also pick up the repeated use of the same letter at the beginning of each line, as in Ps. 119.” (Gillingham 197)
     6. “. . . the more complicated [acrostic forms] were probably composed for literary rather than liturgical purposes.” (Gillingham 197)
        1. “These might include Pss. 111 and 112, which both use the full alphabet.” (Gillingham 197)
        2. “Psalm 145 is similar, although this has one verse out of alphabetic sequence, so that the acrostic in the middle of the psalm runs as m-l-k, rather than k-l-m: this seems to be deliberate, for the word *melek* means king, and the psalm celebrates the kingship of God.” (Gillingham 197)
        3. “Psalm 25 is also a complete acrostic, with forty-four lines: its unity is also created by various key words occurring throughout.” (Gillingham 197)
        4. “Similarly, Ps. 34 has a clear, recurring pattern.” (Gillingham 197)
     7. “There are various psalms which do not complete the acrostic device from beginning to end. One example is Pss. 9-10. Psalm 9 starts with the first letter, ??*aleph*, and ends with the second to the last letter, ??*resh*; Ps. 10 starts with the tenth letter, *lamed,* but ends on the last letter, ??*tet.* Several letters are missing, but it does seem that there is a linking alphabetic structure between the two psalms, which have undergone several disruptions through the process of transmission.” (Gillingham 197)

1. **conclusions**
   1. “. . . many of the above devices are also to be found in other ancient Near Eastern literature, for example, that of Babylon and Canaan, whose poetry was also conveyed in an oral context. Hence we can confirm again that psalmody was associated with a setting-in-life more than with a setting-in-literature.” (Gillingham 198)
   2. “. . . these same phonetic devices were employed also by the prophets, whose message . . . was in part conveyed orally.” (Gillingham 198)

# The Growth of

# the Book of Psalms

## Dating the Psalms

Get Akhenaten’s Egyptian Hymn to Aton.

1. **introduction**
   1. Exact dates are impossible, especially for laments, thanksgivings, and psalms of confidence. (Gillingham 253)
   2. In the survey below, Gillingham gives rough dates for only 106 psalms.
2. **period of the judges**
   1. Some non-psalmic hymn fragments “may be traced back as early as settlement times (e. g. Exod. 15; Judg. 5) . . .” (Gillingham 208)
   2. pre-monarchical hymns?
      1. Some date Pss 19:1-6, 29, 68, and l04 to pre-1000 bc because of “ancient Near Eastern correspondences” [213], i. e., “Canaanite borrowings” [252]. (Gillingham 213, 252)
      2. “ancient Near Eastern correspondences with the hymns of praise”
         1. In Ps 19, “two hymns have been later placed together: 19A (vv. 1-6) is an independent hymn praising God’s order through nature, and 19B (vv. 7-13, 14) is a separate hymn celebrating God’s order by his giving of the law. [209] Part of Ps. 19A (vv. 4*c*-6) is a hymn of praise to the sun; the imagery here (of the sun as a bridegroom emerging out of a ‘tabernacle’, or ‘marriage tent’ to circle the earth in the daylight hours) has many associations with Babylonian hymns praising the sun-god Shamesh (the Hebrew word for sun, ??*shemesh,* suggests further affinities), who was also known as the ‘lordly hero’ or the ‘strong man’ (cf. v. 5). The difference in the Hebrew hymn is that praise is offered to God as Creator of the sun, rather than to the sun itself.” (Gillingham 209-210)
         2. Ps 29 “echoes an ancient Canaanite hymn to Ba‘l-Hadad, the weather-god. This psalm celebrates God as Creator through his power and majesty expressed in the storm; the imagery, of the sevenfold voice of God coming through the clouds, and the references to the cedars of Lebanon and Sirion (from which the temple of Ba‘l was built) echo the same ideas as the Canaanite hymn.” (Gillingham 209)
         3. Ps 104 “has several correspondences (very clearly in vv. 20-30) with the Egyptian Hymn to Aton (the sun-god), which is attributed to Pharaoh Akhenaten, who in the fourteenth century bce established a new monotheistic cult in Egypt which worshipped only the sun-disc. The difference in Ps. 104 is that God’s providence extends beyond the daylight hours: Israel’s God rules over the night as well.” (Gillingham 210)
      3. Gillingham considers 19:1-6, 29, 68, and l04 to be monarchical. (Gillingham 252)
         1. “. . . *other hymns* (29, 68)” reflect the Solomonic temple. (Gillingham 253)
         2. Since “the few hymns in the first part of the Psalter” (8, 29, 33, 46, 47, 48, 76, 68—p. 208) have similarities to hymns from elsewhere in the Near East, they “may well be earlier than the exile.” (Gillingham 209)
3. **pre-exilic (monarchical)** (42 psalms are mentioned)
   1. “We may . . . propose a *terminus a quo* for the composition of biblical psalmody from the time of the first Temple in the tenth century bce . . .” (Gillingham 252)
   2. Some hymn fragments outside Psalms “may be traced back . . . into the time of the monarchy (e. g. Deut. 32; Hab. 3; also the hymns of Zion in Isa. 2 and Mic. 4) . . .” (Gillingham 208)
   3. *Royal psalms* (2, 18, 20, 21, 45, 72, 89, 110, 132, 144) reflect the Davidic monarchy.
   4. *Zion hymns* (46, 48, 76, 84, 87, 122) reflect the Solomonic temple. (On p. 231, 84 is an individual psalm of confidence.) “They appear to borrow from early Canaanite mythology,
      1. “concerning the deity’s dwelling on a mountain [e. g., 48:2],
      2. “with rivers of healing flowing through the city (Ps. 46:4),
      3. “and the appearing of the deity to protect his people and judge the nations (Pss. 46:6; 48:8; 76:8-9).” (Gillingham 251)
      4. “The ‘Zion hymns’ probably were known during the time of the monarchy: during the time of exile, these hymns were apparently sung in the hope of some return . . .” (Gillingham 213)
   5. *Liturgies* (15, 24) reflect the Solomonic temple. (Gillingham 253)
   6. *psalms of northern provenance*
      1. These are mostly in the Asaph collection. (Asaph psalms are 50, 73-83; four are mentioned here.)
      2. They “contain mythological details about God in a heavenly council of divine beings (Ps. 82:1, 6-7) . . .” (Gillingham 251)
      3. They contain “older tribal traditions about land-possession (Ps. 83:2ff.).” (Gillingham 251)
      4. Several “contain prophetic oracles (Pss. 50:5ff.; 81:6ff.).” (Gillingham 251)
   7. “*The Nation and the Land*” (Gillingham 253)
      1. individual
         1. laments (7, 12, 51, 61, 140, 141)
         2. thanksgivings (30, 40, 41)
         3. psalms of confidence (23)
      2. community thanksgivings (65, 66, 67, 118)
   8. “*The Ministry of the Prophets*: psalms with oracles” (Gillingham 253)
      1. the royal psalms
      2. also 50, 75, 81, 82, 95 (Gillingham p. 231 adds 14, 52, 53, 58, 95 as prophetic oracles and does not include 82.)
   9. *salvation-history psalms* (78 [the other historical psalm, 105, is exilic], 114, 135, 136)
      1. “Psalm 78 . . . suggests a preexilic date when the Solomonic Temple was still standing (v. 69) and when the concern with the fate of the northern kingdom was still an issue (v. 67).” (Gillingham 211)
      2. 114, 135, 136 “may well reflect a situation before the restoration, when Israel became increasingly conscious of her own particular history.” (Gillingham 211)
4. **exilic** (Gillingham p. 253 dates this period 587-520 bc) (34 psalms are mentioned)
   1. Some hymn fragments outside Psalms “may be traced back [to] the time of the exile (e. g. the doxologies in Amos, and the hymns of creation in Isa. 40-55).” (Gillingham 208)
   2. “*No Monarchy*: ‘kingship’ hymns (47, 93-9) and ‘creation’ hymns (19A, 104)” (Gillingham 253)
      1. “The kingship hymns . . . could reflect the turbulent times of the monarchy, as they also could the days of the exile, when all that remained of the hope in kingship was the rule of God above . . .” (Gillingham 212)
      2. Why include 19:1-6 and 104 here? Gillingham has already argued for a date during the monarchy (see above).
   3. “*No Temple*: laments on Zion (Pss. 74, 77, 79, 137).” (Gillingham 254)
   4. “*No Nation*: laments of the community (44, 60, 123, 126) and of the individual (13, 17, 22, 31, 35, 42-3, 54, 55, etc.)” (Gillingham 254) (The list of individual laments on p. 231 has 40 psalms. Thirteen are mentioned here. Of those not mentioned here, 7, 12, 51, 61, 140, 141 were dated to the monarchy above; and 25, 26, 39, 69 will be dated to the post-exilic period below. The remaining individual laments mentioned on p. 231 but not on p. 254 are: 3, 5, 6, 28, 36, 38, 56, 57, 59, 63, 64, 70, 71, 86, 88, 102, 109, 120, 130, 142, 143.)
   5. “*The Ministry of the Prophets*: psalms of ‘salvation-history’ (78, 105, 107)” (Gillingham 254)
      1. Gillingham has already included 78 as pre-exilic: see above.
      2. “Psalm 105 . . . suggests a knowledge of the priestly account in Genesis-Exodus, and may thus be much later than Ps. 78.” (Gillingham 211)
   6. Four psalms probably refer to the crisis “between 597 and 587 bce . . .” (Gillingham 252)
      1. 79 refers to “the desolation of the land . . .”
      2. 74 refers to “the destruction of the sanctuary . . .”
      3. 89:38ff refers to “the end of the monarchy . . .” (Gillingham has dated 89, as a royal psalm, to the monarchy above.)
      4. 137 refers to “the life of exile in Babylon . . .”
   7. Ps 130 (“Out of the depths”) was “most likely composed during this period of exile . . .” See Anderson, *Understanding the Old Testament* 378. (Scotto 167 n. 11)
5. **post-exilic** (Gillingham 252) (30 psalms are mentioned)
   1. “*Theocracy*: adaptation of royal and kingship” psalms (Gillingham 254)
   2. “*Second Temple*: individual songs at temple (25, 84, 116, 138) and hymns of praise (8, 33, 100, 103, 111, 117, 135, 136, 145-50)” (Gillingham 254) (Gillingham already classified 84 among the pre-exilic Zion hymns and 135-136 among the pre-exilic salvation-history psalms.)
   3. “*Persian (then Greek) Rule*: adaptation of earlier communal psalms for future hope” (Gillingham 254)
   4. “Hymnody was also used in the late restoration period, as seen in the Chronicler (?fourth century bce: see 1 Chr. 16) and the wisdom literature (e. g. Prov. 8, 30; and Job 28 . . .).” (Gillingham 208)
   5. wisdom concerns (Gillingham 252)
      1. “*Decline of Prophecy*: influence of wisdom and Torah piety (1, 19[:7-14], 37, 49, 73, 112, 119, 127, 128, 129)” (Gillingham 254)
      2. theodicy (“the prosperity of the wicked and the suffering of the righteous”): 49 and 73
      3. the transience of life: 39 and 90
      4. keeping the Torah: 1, 19, and 119. [Some psalms (1, 19:7-14, 119, etc.) “possess a central theme dedicated to meditation upon and delight in the Torah. Most likely, they were composed in later, post-exilic times, at a period when the synagogue began to exert increasing influence upon Judaic worship.” (Scotto 11)]
      5. a “more spiritualized and internalized attitude to cultic ritual”
         1. “. . . the offering of ‘thanksgiving’ is no longer that of sacrifice (as in Pss. 66:13-15; 107:22; 116:17) . . .” (Above, 66 is dated to the monarchy, 107 to the exile, and 116 to the post-exilic period.)
         2. Instead, it is “the inner attitude of heart (Pss. 26:6-7; 69:30-1).”
6. **late post-exilic**
   1. Biblical psalmody ended “around the late Persian period. . . . There is evidence of Aramaic influence [but no] Greek influence . . .” (Gillingham 252)
   2. “. . . Maccabean psalms (a view upheld by the majority of scholars at the beginning of the twentieth century) is now less compelling.” (Gillingham 252)
      1. See the comments on formation of Psalms in “Growth of Psalms.”
      2. But “The hymnic language used to speak of God’s kingship within Dan. [2:20-3; 4:3; 6:26-7; 7] points also to the use of hymnody as late as the second century bce.” (Gillingham 208)
      3. Also, “samples [of lyric poetry] are to be found in . . . the panegyric of Judas Maccabaeus, 1 M 3:3-9, and of his brother Simon, 1 M 14:4-15 . . .” (*New Jerusalem Bible* 809)
   3. Still, “We may therefore propose [a] *terminus ad quem* for the actual composition of the latest psalms [252] (although not necessarily the final arrangement) as before the Greek period . . .” (Gillingham 252-253)
7. **conclusion**: some of the psalms “may well belong to the early monarchy [c 1020-922 bc]; several may well pertain to the time of the divided kingdom [c 922-587 bc]; and many more clearly come from the time of the exile and restoration [587 and later].” (Gillingham 208) So the psalms, arranged by date, form a triangle: from few at the top, to some in the middle, to many at the base.

## The Growth of Psalms

Gillingham, S[usan] E. *The Poems and Psalms of the Hebrew Bible*. Oxford Bible Series. Oxford: OUP, 1994.

1. **introduction**: the superscriptions indicate collections that were compiled to create the book of Psalms. (Gillingham 238)
2. **Pss 3-41**
   1. largest collection
   2. Each is “a psalm of David.” (Two exceptions: 10 (but it’s the second half of 9) and 33 (a later addition?)).
   3. 3-41 was a finished collection by the time of the LXX (100s bc): in the LXX 9-10 are united, and 33 has a Davidic superscription.
   4. The psalms are in no discernible order.
   5. They are mostly individual laments. Exceptions:
      1. hymns (8, 19, 29, 33)
      2. liturgies (15, 24)
   6. smaller groupings by content
      1. 3-5: “laments against enemy oppression” (Gillingham 238)
      2. 18, 20-21: royal psalms
      3. 26-28: “laments of one unjustly accused” (Gillingham 238)
      4. 38-41: laments in illness
3. **Pss 42-89**
   1. second largest collection
   2. divine names in 3-41 and 42-89
      1. 3-41: “Yahweh” > 270 times, “Elohim” < 50.
      2. 42-83: “Yahweh” > 40 times, “Elohim” > 240.
      3. 84-89: “Yahweh” 31 times, “Elohim” 7.
      4. So “42-83 is often called the ‘Elohistic Psalter’ within the collection overall.” (Gillingham 238)
      5. duplicate psalms
         1. 14:2, 4, 7: “Yahweh”; 53:2, 4, 6: “Elohim”
         2. 40:13-17a: “Yahweh” (17b, “Elohim”); 70:1-5 (except 1b and 5b): “Elohim”
         3. Exod 20:2: “Yahweh”; Ps 50:7: “‘Yahweh’ is changed to ‘Elohim’” (Gillingham 239)
         4. Num 10:35 and Judg. 5:4-5: “Yahweh”; Ps 68:1, 7, 8: “‘Yahweh’ is changed to ‘Elohim’” (Gillingham 239)
      6. “The collectors clearly had their own reasons for limiting the use of the more particular Israelite term for God, preferring ‘Elohim’ instead.” (Gillingham 239)
   3. smaller collections in the Elohistic Psalter (42-83)
      1. 42-49: “the sons of Korah” (a guild of Temple singers)
         1. These “are mainly preoccupied with the theme of God’s protective presence in Jerusalem—a pre-exilic theme, the subject of the attention of the eighth- and seventh-century prophets such as Micah, Isaiah, and Jeremiah.” (Gillingham 239)
         2. But Gillingham classifies as Zion hymns only 46, 48, 76, 87, 122.
         3. Perhaps “the psalms of Korah came from the pre-exilic Jerusalem cult . . .” (Gillingham 239)
      2. 51-72: a “Davidic” collection. “The concluding verse [72:20], ‘The prayers of David, the son of Jesse, are ended’, probably referred to this collection, not the earlier Davidic collection [3-41] as well.” (Gillingham 239)
      3. 50, 73-83: “the sons of Asaph” (a guild of Temple singers)
         1. These refer “to the tribes of the northern kingdom . . .” (Gillingham 239)
         2. They “are more concerned with God’s judgement, whether on Israel or on her enemies . . .” (Gillingham 239)
         3. There are “several instances of the use of oracular material . . .” (Gillingham 239)
         4. They make “greater use of the Exodus and settlement traditions.” (Gillingham 239)
         5. Perhaps they “came from prophetic circles in a northern provenance.” (Gillingham 239)
      4. 84-89 is an appendix.
         1. 84-85, 87-88 are Korahite psalms.
         2. 84-85, 87-88 generally use “Yahweh.”
      5. “The lack of evidence of the Korahite and Asaphite guilds of singers before the writing of the Chronicler (e. g. ‘sons of Asaph’; 1 Chr. 25:1ff.; 2 Chr. 5:12; 29:13; 35:15) suggests that the actual collecting together of these psalms under their particular superscriptions was a post-exilic process.” (Gillingham 239)
   4. “. . . single psalms [were] added to these collections as ‘frames’.” (Gillingham 239) (See also 244, “other psalms [were] brought in to ‘frame’ the collections . . .”) But the only psalms in 3-89 that she has not mentioned are:
      1. 86 is a psalm “of David.”
      2. 89 is a psalm of “Ethan the Ezrahite.”
4. **Pss 120-134** (each a “song of ascents”)
   1. “Song of ascents” (??*shîr ha(la)-ma‘alôt*) could mean
      1. the “ascent” of pilgrims to Jerusalem (this is most likely)
      2. going up the temple steps
      3. the return from exile
      4. “the ‘graded rhythm’ within each psalm” (Gillingham 241)
      5. a “‘sequence’ of songs, whereby the ending of one psalm is linked to the beginning of another.” (Gillingham 241)
   2. The common theme is trusting God.
   3. Since “‘bless’, ‘keep’, ‘be gracious’, and ‘peace’ occur throughout several psalms,” they may have been edited according to the Aharonic blessing (Num 6:24-26, “The Lord bless you and keep you; | 25the Lord make his face to shine upon you, | and be gracious to you; | 26the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace”). (Gillingham 241)
5. **Pss 90-150**
   1. A “scattered Davidic collection” is discernible by the superscription, “to David”: 101, 103, 108-110, 138-145 (13 psalms). (Gillingham 241)
   2. Another collection is discernible by the theme of praising Yahweh’s kingship: 93, 95-99.
      1. On 231 Gillingham classifies as kingship hymns 47, 93, 96, 97, 98, 99: no 95.
      2. But on 244 she refers to “the collection of kingship hymns in 93, 95-9. . .”
   3. Another scattered collection is discernible by *hallel,* “the word used for the praise of God”: 104-106, 111-118, 135, 146-150 (17 psalms). They are called “the ‘Alleluia’ (‘Praise God’) psalms.” (Gillingham 241)
6. **five “books” in Psalms**
   1. Four doxologies (literally, “words of praise”) divide Psalms into five sections, called “books.”
   2. The doxologies are:
      1. Ps 41:13
         1. “Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, | from everlasting to everlasting. Amen and Amen.”
         2. concludes underlying Davidic collection 3-41
      2. Ps 72:18-19
         1. “Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, | who alone does wondrous things. | 19Blessed be his glorious name forever; | may his glory fill the whole earth. Amen and Amen.”
         2. concludes the underlying Davidic collection 51-72
      3. Ps 89:52
         1. “Blessed be the Lord forever. | Amen and Amen.”
         2. concludes the underlying Elohistic Psalter 42-83 + appendix 84-89
      4. Ps 106:48
         1. “Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, | from everlasting to everlasting. | And let all the people say, “Amen.” | Praise the Lord!”
         2. cuts through the underlying collection of scattered Davidic and Hallel psalms
   3. The resulting books are:
      1. Book 1: Pss 1-41
      2. Book 2: 42-72
      3. Book 3: 73-89
      4. Book 4: 90-106
      5. Book 5: 107-150
   4. The first three doxologies conclude sub-collections within Psalms (see below); the fourth cuts through a sub-collection. (Gillingham 241)
   5. date: “This last doxology is also found in 1 Chr. 16:36; it may indicate that the doxologies were fixed by the time of the Chronicler in about the fourth century bce.” (Gillingham 242)
   6. purpose
      1. “The effect of the doxologies is to separate the Psalter into five books (although, as we have noted, the last one cuts across an existing collection). This creates the structure of the ‘Five Books of the Psalms of David’ rather like that of the ‘Five Books of the Laws of Moses’.” (Gillingham 242)
      2. “It could also be that this fivefold structure enabled the psalms to be used in the synagogue lectionary alongside the readings of the law, but the evidence for this is inconclusive.” (Gillingham 242)
7. **growth of the entire book**
   1. “It is likely . . . that the first three books evolved first; the psalms in this section almost all have headings (or multiple headings), reflecting a different process from that in Books Four and Five, where the greater proportion of psalms are without headings.” (Gillingham 242)
   2. “It is also possible that the first edition of the Psalter began with Pss. 1 and 2 (added later to 3-41), and ended at Ps. 119. This would give the Psalter a wisdom/Torah introduction (Ps. 1) and conclusion (Ps. 119), thus illustrating its reflective/didactic use at that time.” (Gillingham 242)
   3. “The addition of the Songs of Ascent (Pss. 120-34) and the inclusion of other Hallel psalms and Davidic psalms, with the creation of a doxology after Ps. 106, thus in time resulted in five clear books.” (Gillingham 242)
   4. a summary of the growth of Psalms

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Book 1:  1, 2  3-41 (David)  Book 2:  42-49 (Korah)  50 (Asaph)  51-72 (David)  Book 3:  73-83 (Asaph)  84-85 (Korah)  86 (“of David”)  87-88 (Korah)  89 (“of Ethan the Ezrahite”) | Book 4:  90, 91, 92  93, 95-99 (kingship)  94  100  101 (*David*)  102  103 (*David*)  104-106 (Hallel)  Book 5:  107  *108-110* (*David*)  111-118 (Hallel)  119  120-134 (Ascents)  135 (Hallel)  136, 137  *138-145* (*David*)  146-150 (Hallel) |

* 1. So eight earlier collections can be discerned in Psalms:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| three different David collections  3-41  51-72  101, 103, 108-110, 138-145  a Korah collection  42-49  84-85  87-88  an Asaph collection  50  73-83 | a kingship collection  93, 95-99  a Hallel collection  104-106, 111-118, 135, 146-150  an Ascents collection  120-134  (This leaves fourteen “insertion psalms” [p. 244]: 1, 2, 86, 89, 90, 91, 92, 94, 100, 102, 107, 119, 136, 137) |

three David collections—in Books

1

2

4-5

Korah—2 (and end of 3)

Asaph—3

kingship—4

Hallel—4-5

Ascents—5

1. **formation of the canonical book**
   1. “The fact that the LXX at least uses the same number and the same order of psalms indicates that the Hebrew text itself (albeit not the superscriptions) was in some final form by this time.” (Gillingham 252)
      1. Nickelsburg dates the LXX to 250-50 bc. (Nickelsburg, George W.E. *Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishnah*: *A Historical and Literary Introduction*. 1981. 2nd ed. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005. 192.)
      2. But the Torah was translated first (c. 250-200 bc). That Psalms was an especially important book suggests that it would have been translated soon after. Its inclusion in the LXX, then, suggests a *terminus ad quem* (latest possible date) for Psalms of about 200.
   2. “The use of Ps. 79:2-3 in 1 Macc. 17 may be [an] indication of the use of the Psalter in different Jewish communities by the time of the second century bce.” (Gillingham 252)
      1. Nickelsburg dates 1 Maccabees to 103-76 bc. (Nickelsburg 103)
   3. Dead Sea Scrolls
      1. “. . . psalms scrolls in [Qumran] Cave 4 reveal that Books One and Two of the Psalter were on the whole in the same form and order as in the Hebrew Psalter.” (Gillingham 252)
      2. “11 QPsb contains many psalms in Books One to Three, and most of these follow the order of the MT.” (Gillingham 260)
      3. Nickelsburg dates the Dead Sea Scrolls from 250 bc-ad 68. (Nickelsburg 119)
   4. “. . . the Psalter received its final formation at the hands of the staff of the second Temple of Jerusalem . . .” (Bernard Anderson, *Understanding the OT* 467. L.H. Vincent, “The Temple of Jerusalem,” *Guide to the Bible* 87-90.) (Scotto 10)
2. **composite psalms**
   1. “Many of the single psalms are also likely to be composite works; as the editors/­com­pil­ers drew more psalms into the collections, it seems that they often added parts to existing psalms. . . . What was happening to the Psalter on the larger scale, in terms of various psalms being linked up, and other psalms being brought in to ‘frame’ the collections, would have happened also on the smaller scale, with individual psalms being similarly adapted . . .” (Gillingham 244)
   2. Ps 19 is composite: 1-6 are a creation hymn, 7-14 extol the law.
   3. Ps 108 reconstructs 57:1-11 and 60:5-12.
   4. 18 and 144 suggest borrowing between them.
   5. 115 and 135 suggest borrowing between them.
   6. expansions in individual laments: 22:23-31 and 51:18-19 “suggest additions, concerned more with the affairs of rebuilding the community.” (Gillingham 244)
3. **placement of psalm forms in Psalms**
   1. Individual laments are almost all in the three Davidic collections: 3-41, 51-72, 138-145. (Exceptions: 42-43, 86, 88, 102, l09, 120, 130.)
   2. Communal laments are almost all the Asaph collection (74, 77, 79, 80, 82, 83). (Exceptions: 44, 60, 85, 90, 94, l06, l08, 123, 126, 137.)
   3. “By contrast, the hymns of praise occur mostly after Ps. 90. Hymns often conclude the collections: Ps. 100 follows Pss. 93, 95-9; Ps. 118 concludes the Hallel psalms; Ps. 134, the Songs of Ascents; and Ps. 145, the Davidic collection.” (Gillingham 244)
   4. “. . . the *individual* psalms cluster at the beginning of the Psalter, within Books One and Two; and the *corporate* psalms are found more towards the end of the Psalter, some in Book Three, but especially in Books Four and Five. Consequently, the laments and prayers [“the *tepillôt* (prayers),” 245] are found predominantly in Books One to Three (Pss. 1-89), whilst the hymns and praises [“the *tehillîm* (hymns),” 245] are found almost entirely within Books Four to Five (Pss. 90-150). . . . perhaps the psychological move [is] from prayer to praise, a progression found also in many single psalms . . . within the Psalter as a whole.” (Gillingham 245)

## Twentieth-Century Study

## of the Relations Between Psalms

1. **introduction**
   1. “Rather than concentrating on individual psalms, these final chapters will examine the Psalter as a whole . . .” (Gillingham 232)
   2. There are “two different but complementary approaches in understanding the Psalter as a whole.” (Gillingham 237)
2. **liturgical approach**
   1. “. . . since the beginning of the twentieth century, the predominant view of scholars (in the main from Germany and Scandinavia) has been that the compilation of the Psalter was shaped by its liturgical use in the second Temple.” (Gillingham 232)
      1. “The Greek and the Hebrew both imply clear liturgical use.” (Gillingham 233)
         1. The book’s title in Hebrew manuscripts is *seper tehillîm* (“book of praises”) or, less often, *seper tepillôt* (“book of prayers”). (Gillingham 233)
         2. The title in Greek manuscripts is *psalmoi* (“hymns”) or *psalterion* (“songs to stringed accompaniment”). (Gillingham 232-233)
      2. “. . . ongoing liturgical use [in] both the Jewish and Christian tradition” indicate earlier liturgical use. (Gillingham 233)
3. **literary approach**
   1. introduction
      1. Another “approach has been popularized in the main by American scholars over the last twenty years . . .” (Gillingham 233)
         1. American: B. S. Childs, G. H. Wilson, W. Brueggemann, J. C. McCann. (Gillingham 233)
         2. German: J. Reindl, K. Seybold. (Gillingham 233)
         3. French: P. Auffret. (Gillingham 233)
      2. “. . . this approach looks at the Psalter from its endpoint—from its final, ‘received’ shape. The emphasis is hence more upon the Psalter as ‘canonical literature’ . . .” (Gillingham 233)
         1. “. . . the Psalter is to be read as a whole, rather than sung or prayed as smaller parts . . .” (Gillingham 233)
         2. “. . . it is to be read as an intricately woven anthology of poems, brought together . . . predominantly for didactic, theological purposes.” (Gillingham 233)
         3. “The collectors and editors responsible for the shaping of the Psalter are no longer seen to be Temple priests or Levitical singers, but rather scribes, part of Israel’s broader wisdom tradition . . .” (Gillingham 233)
         4. “. . . this process of reading the Psalter as a whole is still very much in its earliest stage, the most influential works having been published since the mid-1980s . . .” (Gillingham 235)
   2. examples
      1. “overarching structures in collections” (Gillingham 235)
         1. P. Auffret “has shown how Psalms 15-24, 120-34, and 135-8 each have inner structural connections, and each collection forms a balanced chiasmus. For example, in the collection Pss. 15-24, Pss. 15 and 24 focus on the blessings of keeping the Torah, as also does the mid-point psalm, Ps. 19; Pss. 16 and 23 are balanced as psalms of trust; Pss. 17 and 22 as laments; and Pss. 18 and 20-1 as royal psalms. (See *La Sagesse a bâti sa maison* (1982).) The unity imposed upon the collection is as much literary and theological as it is liturgical.” (Gillingham 234)
         2. K. Seybold
            1. Seybold “assesses Pss. 120-34 (a collection known as ‘the Psalms of Ascents’) and proposes that these psalms were composed away from Jerusalem, in outlying rural sanctuaries. As a collection, these psalms have been heavily redacted by editors, who inserted the several Zion/Temple motifs at the beginnings and endings of various compositions. In this way they could be adapted for pilgrims going up to Jerusalem. The collection is hence a coherent whole, with a Zion ideology superimposed. (See *Die Wallfahrtpsalmen* (1978).) In this case, the literary/theological and the liturgical aspects are part of the same process.” (Gillingham 234)
            2. Pss 120-134 “could have been composed in outlying sanctuaries and were once peripheral to the Jerusalem cult, but were brought together in later times for use in second Temple liturgy.” (Gillingham 241)
         3. M. D. Goulder (*The Psalms of the Sons of Korah* (1982)) “takes the fourth book of the Psalter (Pss. 90-106) and proposes that this is another self-contained collection, adapted so that one psalm could be read each night and morning at the eight-day autumnal Festival of Tabernacles. . . . much of the theory is again hypothetical . . .” (Gillingham 234)
         4. “J. C. McCann, writing a chapter in a seminal book in this area, *The Shape and Shaping of the Psalter* (1993), looks at the third book in the Psalter (Pss. 73-89) and again finds a purposeful structure: prayers of lament alternate with hymns of hope throughout the entire collection, with the alternation often occurring in one composite psalm. McCann claims this pattern has been superimposed [234] on the collection by one who was wrestling with the unanswered questions about theodicy after the experience of the exile and return.” (Gillingham 234-235)
      2. “linkages between one psalm and its neighbour” (Gillingham 235)
         1. “. . . the best example is that of catchwords, which frequently occur at the end of one psalm and the beginning of another, forming a system known as ‘concatenation’. An American scholar, J. P. Brennan, has appropriated this within the whole of the fifth book of the Psalter (Pss. 107-50), as well as in a smaller collection of Pss. 1-10. For example, Pss. 7:17; 8:1; and 9:2-3, each on the praise of God’s majesty, suggest the use of concatenation.” (Gillingham 235)
         2. The German scholar C. Barth “has worked on Book One (Pss. 1-41) and found word-pairs and sequences of word-patterns occurring repeatedly throughout this collection, again suggesting a coherent superimposed unity.” (Gillingham 235)
         3. The German scholar W. Zimmerli “has focused on twenty pairs of psalms which are believed to have such close literary relations as to be termed ‘twin psalms’ (‘Zwillingspsalmen’). For example, Pss. 9-10, 20-1, 42-3, 50-1, 65-6, 105-6, 111-12, and 135-6 are seen to have been linked together as part of a deliberate editorial process, each being full of doublets and catchwords, and have been intentionally set side by side as a commentary of one on the other.” (Gillingham 235)
      3. “the Psalter in its entirety” (Gillingham 235)
         1. G. H. Wilson, *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter* (1985)
            1. “. . . the same editorial activity is evident in other hymnic collections from the ancient Near East (for example, as early as Sumerian hymnic literature in the third millennium bce in Mesopotamia and as late as in Qumran hymnody in the second century bce).” (Gillingham 235)
            2. “Wilson proposes that Books One to Three of the [235] Psalter (i. e. Pss. 1-41, 42-72, 73-89) have many explicit indicators of the same editorial arranging, whilst Books Four and Five (Pss. 90-106, 107-50) have less evidence of this.” (Gillingham 235-236)
            3. “He notes how Pss. 2, 72, and 89, all ‘royal psalms’, are set at the ‘seams’ of Books One to Three, and each gives prominence to and expresses confidence in the covenant between God and the Davidic king; the preponderance of psalms headed ‘to David’ within these three books further bears witness to this royal promise in one way or another. However, Ps. 89 ends with a cry of dereliction: “How long, O Lord?” . . . (Ps. 89: 49) This suggests the dissolution of the monarchy, as the covenant with David has been broken.” (Gillingham 236)
            4. “Hence Book Four (Pss. 90-106) is a response to this tension: the emphasis instead is now on God as King—an everlasting reign which cannot be broken. Book Five (Pss. 107-50) follows this theme by exhorting reliance and trust in God alone: the paean of praise in Pss. 145-50 is to God’s eternal kingship.” (Gillingham 236)
            5. “Wilson concludes that whilst the time-conditioned royal themes predominate in the first eighty-nine psalms, more general didactic themes are evident in Pss. 90-150. The psalms which come at the ‘seams’ of Books Four and Five (i. e. Pss. 90-1, 106, 145) could be termed wisdom psalms. Wilson suggests that the overall theological-literary editorial activity of the entire Psalter is thus due to the work of the ‘wise’ incorporating Books One to Three with Books Four and Five.” (Gillingham 236)
            6. “Although in some ways this study concentrates too much on specific psalms (not least those supposedly at the ‘seams’ of the books), it offers many refreshing insights concerning the shaping of the Psalter.” (Gillingham 236)
         2. W. Brueggemann “comments on the first and last psalms—those which ‘frame’ the entire Psalter. In an article entitled ‘Bounded by Obedience and Praise: The Psalms as Canon’, he notes that the Psalter moves from the wisdom-type theme of obedience to the Torah (Ps. 1) towards the hymnic expression of praise which focuses on God alone (Ps. [236] 150). However, this movement is not one uninterrupted progression of thought: the other 148 psalms move through various stages of lament and complaint. Psalm 73 (at the mid-point), with its theme of the transience of life, is a clear protest at the simplicities of faith which may be couched either in an unthinking ‘Torah-piety’ or in superficial ‘hymnic praise’. . . . the concern for keeping the law and the didactic overtones [suggest editing by] the ‘wise’, rather than Temple singers.” (Gillingham 237)
      4. conclusions
         1. Psalms “should be seen not only in a liturgical light as a hymn/prayer-book but also from a literary perspective as an anthology of religious poetry.” (Gillingham 237)
         2. But, “whether one credits the final editorial activity to the work of the Temple priests (taking the hymn/prayer-book model as paramount) or to the work of the wise (taking the poetic anthology model as most important), one is still left with the impression that the Temple personnel of the late restoration period worked with great exactitude in compiling the various smaller collections into larger units. This interconnecting process was as much influenced by liturgical concerns as it was by literary ones.” (See the discussion of “The Growth of Psalms.”) (Gillingham 237)

## Psalms and Text Criticism

VanderKam, *Dead Sea Scrolls Today* 138 bot needs to be added (search for 138).

1. **introduction**: text criticism means establishing the original wording of a document.
2. **lines**
   1. Some Hebrew manuscripts “run on continuously in prose form” (including 11QPs and psalm texts from Masada). (Gillingham 259)
   2. In other Hebrew MSS, lines accord with “clusters of words . . .” (Gillingham 259)
   3. In the Masoretic Text (c ad 800-1000), “Psalms, Proverbs, Song of Solomon, Job, Lamentations, and some of the twelve minor prophets are presented in entirety in poetic form . . .” (Gillingham 19)
   4. The versions mostly break the psalms into lines, but the lines vary in length due to “changes of syntax and sound between one language and another.” (Gillingham 259)
3. **Hebrew**
   1. Qumran (the Dead Sea Scrolls)
      1. Over 30 texts of Psalms (and commentaries on it) were found in eight caves. [259] These are “by far the most extensive finds”: [260] there are at least 25 texts of Deuteronomy, 18 of Isaiah, 14 of Exodus, etc. (Gillingham 259-260) (James VanderKam, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Today* 138-139, says 36 of Pss, 29 of Deut, 21 of Isa, 17 of Exod.)
      2. “Eighteen manuscripts were discovered in Cave 4. These have all been dated within the first two centuries bce. An interesting feature in one scroll (4 QPsa) is the combination of Pss. 38 and 71 as one psalm. Another scroll, 4 QPsb, includes Pss. 91-118; although Pss. 104-11 are absent, the rest follow the Masoretic order.” (Gillingham 260)
      3. “The most significant finds have been in Cave 11 [whose five main scrolls date from ad 1-100].” (Gillingham 260) “. . . the mid-first century a.d. [is] the date of the first Cave 11 Psalms scroll [11QPsa] . . .” (VanderKam, *Dead Sea Scrolls* 139)
      4. In 11QPsa, “mainly containing Books Four and Five of the Psalter, the order is entirely different from the MT.” (Gillingham 260)
         1. Pss 106-108 and 110-117 are missing. (Gillingham 260)
         2. Thirteen psalms are in a different sequence: Pss 109, 118, 147, 146, 148, 119, 145, 139, 93, 133, 144, 140, 134. (Gillingham 260)
         3. Ps 145 has “a refrain after each verse: ‘Blessed be God, and bless his name for ever.’” (Gillingham 260)
         4. “The most consistent correspondence with the MT is in the Songs of Ascents (Pss. 120-34), where at least the first thirteen follow the same order.” (Gillingham 260)
         5. “Another intriguing feature is the insertion of several other psalmic texts: 2 Sam. 23:1-7 is included [VanderKam says only 23:7, pp. 137, 138], as also is Ps. 151 (in a longer form A, and a fragment, B) and 154, 155, and Sir. 51:13ff [VanderKam: 51:13-20b, 30]. Editorial additions also include ‘The Apostrophe to Zion’, ‘The Hymn to the Creator’, and ‘Davidic Compositions’.” (Gillingham 260)
      5. The many differences between 11QPsa and the MT show that at Qumran, “as late as the first century ce, its [Psalms’] final form was by no means fixed. Two alternatives are possible.” (Gillingham 260)
         1. “Perhaps the findings are a liturgical collection, a separate tradition ‘in honour of David’ derived from an already fixed canon . . . [1 Chr 16] combines in a different order Pss. 105, 95, and 106 for its own liturgical (and theological) purposes.” (Thus P. Skehan.) (Gillingham 260)
         2. Perhaps “the Qumran scrolls indicate that the Psalter was not finally established in any community until the beginning of the second century ce.” (Thus J. A. Sanders, G. H. Wilson.) (Gillingham 260-261)
         3. VanderKam, *Dead Sea Scrolls Today* 138 bot.
   2. early rabbinic writings: the text is already “like that of the MT.” (Gillingham 263)
   3. Masoretic text (MT)
      1. “The text of the final form of the Hebrew Psalter which is used in our English translations dates from copies made by a group of scholars known as the Masoretes (so called because they were responsible for consolidating the traditions behind the text of the Old Testament: these traditions were called *massorôt*). These were rabbis from Tiberias, Galilee, who worked in the ninth and tenth centuries ce . . .” (Gillingham 256)
      2. That was “over a thousand years later than the time when the Psalter became canonical, as a fixed form within the Hebrew Scriptures. It goes without saying that the Hebrew text during this millennium must have undergone a process of change. One has only to compare duplicate psalms such as 14 and 53; 40:12-16 and 70; 108 and 57:7-11 along with 60:5-12; and Ps. 18 and 2 Sam. 22, to find evidence of a number of variations which existed even in the same Hebrew texts.” (Gillingham 256)
      3. The earliest MSS (manuscripts) of Psalms in the Masoretic text date from the 800s ad. (Gillingham 259)
      4. “Two manuscripts of the Masoretic Text (MT)—the Aleppo Codex (c. 930 ce) and the Leningrad Codex (c. 1008 ce)—form the basis of printed Hebrew editions today.” (Gillingham 256)
      5. *te’amîm*
         1. “The Masoretes were responsible for consolidating further the texts themselves, in terms of punctuation, vowel points, and accentuation. With respect to the psalms, a particular system was added to the whole of Psalms—Job—Proverbs, delineating lines of poetry by giving it a distinctive type of accenting (the ??*te’amîm* . . .).” (Gillingham 256)
         2. “The fact that the ??*te’amîm* were used in different ways in the book of Psalms, in Proverbs, and in Job from how they were in the prose sections of the rest of the Bible indicates at the very least some distinctive features of this poetry.” (Gillingham 47)
         3. “. . . that musical accompaniment to psalmody was essentially rhythmic and accentual . . . may be seen in the use of the sigla known as ??*te’amîm:* . . .” (Gillingham 46)
         4. “. . . these may originally have been an accentual form of punctuation . . . Initially they served as pauses written into the text—a way of learning the sense by listening to the sound—for the purpose of reading aloud and learning by heart. It could have been partly to enable children to learn the sacred text of Scripture. (An obvious contemporary analogy is the way nursery rhymes are taught to children.)” (Gillingham 46)
         5. But “they could have been developed by the Masoretes by the ninth century ce as some form of musical notation, indicating different tones and different pitches for singing.” (Gillingham 46)
         6. “What is clear from the tradition of the Masoretes is that whatever [46] the initial reason behind the use of the ??*te’amîm,* the signs and accents developed in an increasingly complicated way which went far beyond the needs of parsing and understanding: it is more than plausible that they eventually produced a musical system.” (Gillingham 46-47)
         7. “The system was applied most rigorously, so that poetic texts which occur in the prose narratives have different ??*te’amîm* from the poetry of the psalms: for example, Ps. 18 has a different system from its counterpart in 2 Sam. 22, and Ps. 105:1-15 is different from its parallel text in 1 Chr. 16:8-22.” (Gillingham 47)
4. **versions** (early translations)
   1. Syriac: the *Peshitto* (“simple” version) was translated for Christians already in the first century ad, “using the pre-Masoretic, unvocalized Hebrew text.” (Gillingham 257)
   2. Greek: the Septuagint (LXX)
      1. “The LXX version of the Old Testament, from the second century bce, is so called because of the number of seventy or so [256] scholars from Alexandria, Egypt, alleged to have been employed to work on it.” (Gillingham 256-257)
      2. “This version is understood either to be a reliable translation (so, A. Rahlfs), or a less precise interpretation (so, P. Kahle).” (Gillingham 257)
      3. The LXX “includes several literalisms in the psalmic superscriptions and also in the psalms themselves, suggesting some failure in understanding archaisms which had faded out of use.” (Gillingham 257)
      4. The LXX “was used by the first (Greek-speaking) Christians, and most of the psalms quoted in the New Testament are taken from the LXX.” (Gillingham 257)
      5. “. . . other Greek editions of the Psalter appeared by the end of the second century ce:
         1. “that of Aquila, closer to the Hebrew text;
         2. “that of Theodotian, closer to the LXX;
         3. “and that of Symmachus, considered to be best of the three.” (Gillingham 257)
      6. The earliest extant manuscripts of Psalms are not in Hebrew but in Greek.
         1. The earliest Greek MSS (manuscripts) date from the 100s ad. (Gillingham 259)
         2. 300s ad: Codex Vaticanus (B) lacks Pss 105:27-137:6, but Codex Sinaiticus (S) has all of Psalms. (Gillingham 257)
         3. 400s ad: Codex Alexandrinus (A) lacks Pss 49:20-79:11. (Gillingham 257)
   3. Latin
      1. The oldest Latin translation (100s ad) is from the LXX, not the Hebrew. (Gillingham 257)
      2. The earliest Latin MSS date from the 300s ad. (Gillingham 259)
      3. “It was one of several sources used by Jerome (late 300s) in his three translations of Psalms. His third translation is closest to the Hebrew Psalter, but his second translation (the “Gallican Psalter”) became part of the Latin Bible (the Vulgate (V)). (Gillingham 257)

# Psalms as Prayers

## The Authors of the Psalms

Gillingham, S[usan] E. *The Poems and Psalms of the Hebrew Bible*. Oxford Bible Series. Oxford: OUP, 1994.

1. **introduction**
   1. The psalms are “ambiguous because they are devoid of a particular context . . .” (Gillingham 177)
   2. T.H. Robinson (*The People and the Book* 175): “for the most part internal evidence—the tone, language and theological outlook of the individual poems—is practically the only criterion on which critical judgements can be based, and it leaves the door wide open for subjectivity.” (Gillingham 177)
   3. “. . . theories regarding not only the purpose of the psalms but also the identity of the psalmists [abound] . . . Since the early part of the nineteenth century, five emphases have emerged . . .” (Gillingham 173)
2. **individual poets** (1820s on)
   1. “The psalmists are . . . individual poets, reflecting on their experiences of life . . .” (Gillingham 181)
   2. “. . . a type of personal autobiography was assumed from the allusions within a psalm.” (Gillingham 174)
   3. The interpreters agreed with exegesis prior to c. 1800 “that the psalmists were writing out of personal circumstances—in sickness, exile, defeat, . . . recovery from illness [etc.].” (Gillingham 175)
   4. So who were these “individual poets”?
      1. “the Davidic king” (exegesis before 1800 had said “David”) (Gillingham 175)
      2. “a prophet or cultic official in the court of the king” (Gillingham 175)
      3. “scribes or wisdom writers working in the post-exilic period” (Gillingham 175)
      4. various individuals in the Maccabean period (Gillingham 175)
3. **poets serving the community** (1880s on)
   1. The psalms are “representative expressions of the experiences of the entire community. . . . the ‘I’ form is read in a representative, corporate light.” (Gillingham 176)
      1. The psalms are “corporate biographies by representative poets.” (Gillingham 176)
      2. The psalmists “wrote only on behalf of their people, in good times and bad.” (Gillingham 181)
   2. The psalms were associated with political and national events (military victory or defeat). (Gillingham 176)
4. **liturgical poets serving the royal cultus** (1920s on)
   1. Hermann Gunkel “associated [the psalms] with liturgy, in other words, with the affairs of the Temple cult and its festival worship.” (Gillingham 177)
   2. Sigmund Mowinckel
      1. Sigmund Mowinckel became “convinced that well over half of the Psalter could be loosely termed ‘royal psalms’, written for the king to use at an annual festival.” This festival was a New Year’s festival, in autumn, celebrated in Israel much as it was in Babylonia: it celebrated God’s imposing order on chaos, God’s protection from foreign nations, and the relation between God’s kingship and the king’s kingship.) (Gillingham 180)
      2. “. . . the psalmists are, quite simply, professional poets, gifted in the conventions of liturgy, working for the king in the royal cult.” (Gillingham 181)
   3. “. . . the psalmists were not only gifted poets but also gifted dramatists. They were highly capable of writing poetry to be performed publicly in liturgy.” (Gillingham 184)
5. **liturgical poets serving a private cultus** (1960s on)
   1. “. . . other scholars . . . redefined the meaning of the cult, so that it . . . was in part attached to the Temple, but also to outlying local sanctuaries, and catered for the needs of individuals rather than for the entire nation. Furthermore, instead of this cult presupposing a pre-exilic setting (in that it involved the court of the king), . . . it pertained not only to pre-exilic local sanctuaries but also to post-exilic synagogue-type communities. The psalmists are still seen as professional poets, composing ritual texts. However, instead of these being used only [184] for public annual festivals, [the psalmists] also composed poetry which served as prayers for individuals . . .” (Gillingham 184-185)
   2. “. . . the category of individual lament cannot be subsumed (as proposed by Mowinckel) into a more public enthronement festival, on the grounds that the ‘I’ is a poetic means of [185] personi­fying the cultic community. It is more than likely that, on the analogy of our own hymn-books and prayer-books, we can suppose the psalmists wrote for various kinds of cultic occasions—public and private—for use at all times in the liturgical year . . .” (Gillingham 185-186)
   3. Isa 38:9 (“A writing of King Hezekiah of Judah, after he had been sick and had recovered from his sickness”) immediately precedes a psalm. (Gillingham 249)
6. **poets of life**
   1. “The previous four emphases were each concerned with ‘historicizing’ or ‘particularizing’ the psalms [186] . . . as ancient texts, with a relevance only to the liturgical life of ancient Israel.” (Gillingham 186-187)
   2. “. . . any alternative reading should . . . allow for the way in which a poem resonates with meaning beyond its original one.” (Gillingham 187)
   3. “Scholars who have attempted to write a ‘theology’ of the psalms have recognized and even partly overcome this problem . . . H.-J. Kraus’s *Theology of the Psalms* (1979; tr. 1986) is a good example of the work of a scholar with a predominantly cult-historical bias who nevertheless wrestles with the problem of the ‘life-centredness’ of the poetry . . .” (Gillingham 187)
   4. Claus Westermann, “from the 1950s, has written several books and articles on this issue [187] . . . According to Westermann, the psalms are not only important literary poems about the individual or the nation (as presupposed in the historical-critical approaches); nor are they simply cultic texts applicable only to a pre-exilic cult (as understood in the cult-functional interpretations); they are also examples of prayerful reflection on life, and as such, they represent the two basic experiences of prayer—praise and lament.” (Gillingham 188)
   5. “The American scholar W. Brueggemann maintains a similar view. Taking up terms used by a French scholar, Paul Ricoeur, Brueggemann classifies the psalms according to ‘the flow of human life’ which is evident in each of them. Instead of Westermann’s two poles of human experience, Brueggemann proposes three: first, poems of disorientation (mainly the laments, where the experience is of loss and oppression); second, poems of reorientation (mainly the thanksgivings, where the experience is of restoration and recovery); third, poems of orientation (the hymns, which centre on wholeness and well-being in the presence of God). Even where the psalmists have included more than one life-experience in a single psalm, one overall theme usually predominates. In his *Message of the Psalms* (1984), Brueggemann seeks . . . the meaning of the poetry in a life-setting which is relevant also today.” (Gillingham 188)

## Interpretation of Psalms

1. **introduction**: early interpreters of Psalms mostly see them as (a) Davidic and (b) prophetic.
2. **Qumran**
   1. 11QPs “names David as [261] the composer of 3,600 hymns and songs . . . [It] ends: ‘All these he uttered *through prophecy* which was given him from before the Most High.’” (Gillingham 261-62)
   2. “The ??*pesher* (meaning commentary) on particular psalms brings out this interpretation most clearly. 4 Q 171, on Ps. 37, for example, reveals that the community thought itself to be living ‘in the last days’, so that David’s words are prophecies now fulfilled in the ‘community of the poor’. To illustrate:

“‘The wicked borrows and does not repay, but the righteous is generous and gives. Truly, those whom He [blesses shall possess] the land, but those whom He curses [shall be cut off].’ (37:21-2)

“Interpreted, this concerns the congregation of the Poor, who [shall possess] the whole world as an inheritance. They shall possess the High Mountain of Israel [for ever], and shall enjoy [everlasting] delights in His sanctuary. [But those who] shall be cut off, they are the violent [of the nations and] the wicked of Israel: they shall be cut off and blotted out for ever. (‘Commentary on Psalms’ (4 Q 171), in Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, 291-3.)

“This [is] Davidic/prophetic interpretation . . .” (Gillingham 262)

1. **rabbinic writings**
   1. In “The greatest Rabbinic commentary on the psalms, *Midrash Tehillîm* [ad 200-1300] . . ., the psalms are given a Davidic orientation as part of their *historical* [263] exegesis; and second, they are given a prophetic orientation, as prayers now fulfilled in the life of the present community, as part of the *contemporary* exegesis.” (Gillingham 263-264)
   2. “For example, in the ??*midrash* (meaning ‘interpretation’) on Ps. 2, a verse is taken as of David’s time, and related to other verses from the law and prophets to give it a historical orientation. The fulfilment theme follows: the promises once made to the king (vv. 7, 8) are now to be fulfilled in the life of the people (they, like the king, are adopted ‘sons of God’) yet await ultimate fulfilment through a coming Messiah.” (Gillingham 264)
2. **New Testament**
   1. Davidic/prophetic interpretation is also found in early Christian exegesis. In the New Testament, “the Psalter is used more than any other book for a prophetic purpose (Isaiah, Deuteronomy, and Exodus are also used very frequently, but well over a third of the 360 OT references are from Psalms).” (Gillingham 264)
   2. The royal psalms after the exile “would either have been democratized, whereby the people identified themselves with God’s promise once made to the king; or they would have become part of a future idealized [figure] . . . the royal psalms in particular have been viewed [as messianic prophecies].” (Gillingham 222)
   3. The obvious difference between rabbinic and Christian interpretation is Christ: for Christians, “David, the royal figure whose life encompassed both suffering and victory, . . . is but a type, prefiguring Christ.” (Gillingham 265)
   4. In early Christian interpretation a “psalm is no longer fundamentally about David, but about Christ . . .” (Gillingham 265)
   5. “. . . the psalms are now [265] *prayers of Christ*. The Gospel writers show in some detail how the psalms were indeed prayers of Christ, not least in the last day of his life . . .” (Gillingham 265)
      1. Matt 26:24//Luke 24:25 cites Ps 41:9 at the Last Supper. (Gillingham 266)
      2. Matt 26:30//Mark 14:26 “implies the singing of some of the Passover Hallel (from Pss. 113-15) before the ascent to Olivet . . .” (Gillingham 266)
      3. Matt. 26:38//Mark 14:34 “refers to Ps. 42:3, 11-43:5 as part of the prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane . . .” (Gillingham 266)
      4. John 19:28 (“I thirst”) “takes up expressions of suffering found, for example, in Pss. 22:15 and 69:21 . . .” (Gillingham 266)
      5. Matt 27:46//Mark 15:34 is the cry of dereliction: “My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?” (Ps 22:1). (Gillingham 266)
      6. Luke 23:46 is the cry of commitment: “Into your hand I commit my spirit” (Ps 31:5).
   6. The psalms “are also *prayers to Christ*.” (Gillingham 266)
      1. “He is ‘the LORD’ [*sic*] referred to in Ps. 110:1 [“The Lord says to my lord, “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool””]—in a paradoxical sense, the giver of the promises once made to David as well as the recipient of them. In this way, the metaphorical language used to describe the God of Israel in the psalms now becomes transferred to Christ himself.” (Gillingham 266)
      2. “He is the King, the Judge, the Redeemer of his people, the Deliverer, the Protector, the Teacher; and when the psalmists address God as their Rock, Fortress, Shepherd, Way, Truth, and Life—these now become focused towards Christ.” (Gillingham 266)
      3. “One example from the psalms may be found in the use of Pss. 42-3. Contrasting images of water (thirsting, and drowning) are particularly vivid in the first half of the psalm. The suppliant appeals first to God who, in metaphorical terms, quenches thirst in a dry and parched land (vv. 1-3): this makes an ideal focus for Christian interpretation, for Jesus Christ, according to John, is the ‘living water’ (John 4:13-15; 7:37). The same suppliant speaks later to God who sets his steadfast love on him, even when ‘the thunder of the cataracts’ and ‘waves and billows’ threaten (vv. 7-8). A Christian interpretation, using the story of Jesus according to Mark 4:35-41, would recall that during [266] the storm on the lake, Jesus rebukes the wind and says to the sea, ‘Peace, be still.’ This represents a theological approach to the psalms, in that it moves from the metaphorical imagery in the poetry to the literal fulfilment of the metaphor in the narratives in the Gospel stories.” (Gillingham 266-267)
   7. “The psalms are now *prophecies about Christ*.” (Gillingham 267)
      1. example: Ps 16. Acts 2:14-36 “is a speech of Peter, establishing that the resurrection of Christ was foretold in the Hebrew Scriptures.” Verses 25-28 quote Ps 16:8-11; verse 27 says, “For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One experience corruption.” Verse 29 continues, “Fellow Israelites, I may say to you confidently of our ancestor David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. 30Since he was a prophet, he knew that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would put one of his descendants on his throne [this quotes Ps 132:11, which refers to 2 Sam 7:12-16]. 31Foreseeing this, David spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, saying, ‘He was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh experience corruption.’ 32This Jesus God raised up, and of that all of us are witnesses.”
         1. Note that “It is assumed that these are David’s words [264] . . .: the psalms are prayers composed by David in 1000 bce . . .” (Gillingham 264-265)
         2. Note too “the unmistakable prophetic emphasis . . . The psalms possess a certain promissory element, and because the interpreters (from Jewish and Christian traditions alike) believed they were living in the ‘last days’, they also believed that the promises to David were about to be fulfilled—for example, promises about the breaking-in of a new kingdom of God’s rule on earth, promises of inheriting the land, of defeat of the enemies, of victory through suffering . . .” (Gillingham 265)
      2. “The promises to David are indeed fulfilled in these ‘the latter days’. This prophetic emphasis is achieved by taking two dominant themes in the psalms . . .” (Gillingham 267)
      3. “The first theme is that of royal victory, and is usually found in the hymnic forms. This theme anticipates the bringing in of the Kingdom (Kingship) of God.” (Gillingham 267)
         1. The kingship hymns are used in this connection. (Gillingham 267)
         2. Also, “the royal psalms become the obvious focus of attention in this respect, and Pss. 2, 10, and 118 in particular are used in this way.” (Gillingham 267)
            1. “The royal decree in Ps. 2:7 ‘You are my son, this day have I begotten you’ becomes part of a different sort of decree spoken both at the baptism and transfiguration of Christ: ‘This is my Beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.’” (Gillingham 267)
            2. Ps 110:1

“. . . this was originally a psalm inviting the king to ascend to his throne. Through an oracle, God promises him victory: “The Lord says to my lord: ‘Sit at my right hand, till I make your enemies your footstool’” . . . This is now seen to be God’s conferment of victory on Christ . . .” (Gillingham 265)

In the New Testament, 110:1 is found in Matt 22:41-46; Mark 12:35-37; Luke 20:41-44; Acts 2:34-35; Heb 1:13, 10:12-13. (Gillingham 265)

“. . . in confrontation with the Pharisees, Ps. 110:1 (‘The LORD [*sic*] says to my lord, sit at my right hand . . .’) is used to show that Christ is the speaker, whose royal, God-given authority surpasses that of David.” (Gillingham 267)

* + - * 1. “The most graphic example is found in Ps. 118, in part implying a thanksgiving song to be offered by the king after some national victory. [On] Palm Sunday, the Gospel writers use this psalm to depict Christ as the coming deliverer [Matt 21:9 = Ps 118:22, 26] . . .” (Gillingham 267)
    1. “. . . a second theme is found in another group of psalms, mainly lament in form, whose main concern is that of *human suffering and despair*. A number of psalms used in this way in the Passion narratives . . . include Pss. 22 and 69.” (Gillingham 268)
       1. “. . . the mockery of the onlookers at the crucifixion, the casting of lots for Christ’s robe, and the offering of vinegar for drink are all supported by references from these two psalms (Pss. 22:7, 8, 18 and 69:21; cf. Matt. 27:39, 43 and John 19:24, also Matt. 27:34).” (Gillingham 268)
       2. “The most evocative examples are the cries of anguish from the cross, taking up the prayers of distress in the psalms, and hence showing Christ identifying with the pain of humankind . . .” (Gillingham 268)
    2. victory through suffering
       1. “. . . the psalms of ‘royal victory’ and the psalms of ‘human suffering’ necessarily complement one another: Jesus achieves a kingdom not through power of military victory for his people but through the pain of suffering with his people.” (Gillingham 268)
       2. “. . . poetry in the prophets was used along the same lines: the ‘songs from the royal court’ in Isa. 9 and Isa. 11 are used in the Christian tradition to take up the ‘royal victory’ theme, and the Songs of the Servant in Isa. 42, and 53 in particular, are used to serve as part of the suffering theme.” (Gillingham 268)

1. **later Christianity** develop into full hdt: use Smalley.
   1. Origen (ad 180-254), Augustine (354-430), and Aquinas (1225-1274) “have contributed much on an allegorical and typological Christianized reading of the psalms, looking at them not only in terms of prayers and prophecies, but also as poems with a profound theological content.” (Gillingham 269)
   2. “. . . Luther (who wrote commentaries and works on the psalms between 1513 and 1533) and Calvin (who in 1557 also published a sizeable commentary on the psalms) similarly viewed the psalms . . . in typological and allegorical terms.” (Gillingham 269)
2. “**towards a theological interpretation of Psalms**” (Gillingham 270)
   1. introduction: over the period in which the psalms were written, “Several vast cultural changes are evident: the movement from monarchy to theocracy; the change from the influence of prophecy (at the royal court) to the influence of ‘the wise’ and the scribes of the law; and the growing questions of theodicy, represented in the change in the people from nationhood to vassaldom. True, the human responses at times of sickness, death, loss of friends, slander, persecution, exile, good or bad harvest, and military defeat or victory would have been a constant, and the expressions of faith or despair, couched in the traditional language of the cult, similarly provided a continuity; but the vast changes . . . resulted in various paradoxical beliefs [which] might be classified under six broad headings.” (Gillingham 270)
   2. diversity in Psalms
      1. “the *God of Israel* [and] the *God of all nations*” (Gillingham 270)
         1. “This tension is between . . . nationalism and universalism, or exclusivism and inclusivism . . .” (Gillingham 270)
         2. “The royal psalms, the Zion hymns, and the historical psalms all testify to the more nationalistic concerns: Pss. 2, 18 (royal psalms), 46, 48 (Zion hymns), and 78 and 105 (historical psalms) are all good examples. There is a good deal of patriotic pride in these psalms . . . which has often created difficulties of appropriation when set within other, non-Jewish cultural contexts.” (Gillingham 270)
         3. “This [is offset by] psalms which speak of God’s cosmic rule, and of his concern for all creation and hence for all nations. The kingship psalms (e. g. Pss. 47 and 93) and the hymns of praise (e. g. Pss. 8 and 104) are good examples . . .” (Gillingham 270)
      2. “the *God of the powerful*—in other words, the kings, priests, and prophets—[and] the *God of the powerless*—the oppressed, . . . those termed frequently in the psalms ‘the poor and needy’ and ‘the saints’ and ‘the righteous’” (Gillingham 271)
         1. The “royal psalms (e. g. 45, 72, 110) are examples of the first category . . .” (Gillingham 271)
         2. “. . . the communal and individual laments and the wisdom psalms (i. e. often the later post-exilic psalms) bear witness to the second type (e. g. Pss. 86, 109, 140, 37). This second emphasis [is relevant] in liberation theology and feminist theology. If this concern for freedom and justice is set alongside that for warfare and power, it may be seen as another expression of the tension between the exclusivist and inclusivist views of the nature of God, this time expressed within the community of Israel.” (Gillingham 271)
      3. “what ‘pleases’ God: . . . *cultic worship* [or] *inner devotion*” (Gillingham 271)
         1. “. . . these are differences in emphasis, and need not be diametrically opposed.” (Gillingham 271)
         2. “. . . the royal psalms and liturgies [refer to] ritual, sacrifice, processions, and festal occasions (e. g. Pss. 68, 118, 132).” (Gillingham 271)
         3. “By contrast, the individual laments and thanksgivings and the wisdom psalms put greater store . . . on ethical obedience. Relevant psalms include Pss. 26, 32, 51, and 139 . . .” (Gillingham 271)
         4. “. . . Pss. 15 and 24, for example, combine [271] both” emphases. (Gillingham 271-272)
      4. “a *God of judgement* [and] a *God of salvation*” (Gillingham 272)
         1. “The judgement motif is mostly found in the lament form, where the experience of distress is seen as permitted, if not caused, by God, and where the judgement is either accepted as deserved (in which case, the lament form also includes some confession of sin) or fought against as undeserved (in which case, the psalm includes a long protest of innocence). Psalms 74, 77, and 89 all testify to the judgement of God; the confessions and protests interestingly mix in each.” (Gillingham 272)
         2. “The motif of God as one who saves and redeems is the common theme of the thanksgivings (e. g. Ps. 40) and hymns (e. g. Ps. 100).” (Gillingham 272)
      5. “the *God of the living* [and] the *God of the dead*” (Gillingham 272)
         1. “. . . blessings and rewards are to be found in this life alone [272] . . . The result is seen in the vindictive curses found in many laments [e. g., 109, 137] and wisdom psalms [e. g., 37], which cry out for justice to be done . . .” (Gillingham 272-273)
         2. “. . . a few psalms appear to move beyond this earth-bound belief: God’s power extends beyond the grave, for he can indeed ‘redeem’ from ‘the pit’ [e. g., Pss 88:4-5, 11; 49:15] . . .” (Gillingham 273)
      6. “the *God of the individual* and the *God of the community*.” (Gillingham 273)
         1. “The God of warfare, of the affairs of the royal court, and of the official Temple cult (seen e. g. in Pss. 44, 66, 121) can be very different from the God of personal and domestic affairs (compare Pss. 3, 4, 42-3, 54, 55). Official theology and private devotion are indeed complementary, but they each focus on different attributes of God and of his activity in the world.” (Gillingham 273)
         2. “The ‘Davidic’ titles help in part to bridge this gap, for they unite together the two concerns of the public (royal) figure with the personal (human) details . . .” (Gillingham 273)
   3. unity in Psalms
      1. One can minimize the differences and focus on a unifying theology. (Gillingham 274)
      2. “One unifying [theme] could be . . . *God’s covenant with David*, inaugurated (Pss. 1-72), broken (Pss. 73-89), and restored (Pss. 90-150). This is explored in the works of J. H. Walton and G. H. Wilson.” (Gillingham 274)
      3. “A different [theme is] the *everlasting kingship of God*, first . . . through the reigning king, and developed in the later psalms [as] God’s heavenly rule. This is basically the view of B. S. Childs. It is also shared by H.-J. Kraus, but . . . here, the movement of thought within the Psalter would be from expressions of God’s presence in the earthly city, [to] his presence more universally in the whole of creation.” (Gillingham 274)
      4. Psalms is a “*witness to the distinctive monotheistic faith of Israel*: this view is proposed by J. Day (see *Psalms*, pp. 123-5).” (Gillingham 274)
      5. C. Westermann: “the Psalter’s unity is in its movement *from lament* (basically found in Books One to Three) *towards praise* (expressed mainly in Books Four and Five) . . .” (Gillingham 274)
      6. W. Brueggemann: “the Psalter’s unity is its movement *from the Torah-Psalms*, which affirm a relationship with God through obedience to the law (Ps. 1), *to the Hymns*, which live in that relationship, expressing it in terms of praise of God (Ps. 150).” (Gillingham 274)
      7. “According to G.T. Sheppard, its unity lies in its being a *didactic guide to righteousness*; similarly, K. Seybold understands the theology of the Psalter to cohere in its being a *reflective guide to prayer and right living*.” (Gillingham 275)
      8. “In brief, the Psalter has not arisen out of any self-conscious creation of systematic doctrine; it has emerged from the experiences of life and of liturgy, and has been shaped dynamically by the various literary and theological concerns of the collectors and editors: hence its theological tensions, and its paradoxical views of life and God.” (Gillingham 275)

## Imprecatory Psalms (lEVIE)

Levie, Jean, SJ. *The Bible*, *Word of God in Words of Men*. Trans. S.H. Treman. New York: P.J. Kenedy and Sons, n.d. (*imprimatur*, 1961). (French: *La Bible*, *Parole Humaine et Message de Dieu*. Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1958.) Trans. © is Geoffrey Chapman.

[Note on terminology: The “imprecatory psalms” are sometimes called the “comminatory psalms.” “Imprecate” means “to invoke evil upon, curse,” and “comminatory” means “cursing, denouncing.” (Do not confuse “imprecatory psalms” with “impetratory psalms”: impetrate” means “to entreat.”)]

The comminatory psalms calling down the vengeance of Yahweh upon the enemies of the nation or the personal enemies of the psalmist, are often singularly disconcerting and disturbing to the priest as he says his breviary.[[4]](#footnote-4)12

I need not dwell here on the psalms in which the psalmist asks for the defeat of the enemies of his country, a necessary consequence of the victory of Israel, but I shall confine myself to a few examples characterized more particularly by the spirit of revenge, especially personal revenge: 57. 7-11 (‘The just shall rejoice when he shall see the revenge; he shall wash his hands in the blood of the sinner’; [*sic*] 77. 24 (the same image and, in addition; ‘the tongues of thy dogs be red with the same’); 78. 23-9 (with very violent curses such as: ‘Add iniquity upon their iniquity; and let them not come into thy justice.’); [*sic*] 108. 6-19 (a series of curses against a personal enemy, his wife, his children, etc.); 136. 7-9 with the appalling ‘Blessed he that shall take and dash thy little ones against the rock’); see also Jeremias 18. 21-3, against those who have plotted against the prophet.

The difficulty is certainly diminished if we draw attention to the fact that there often underlies these prayers for punitive action on God’s part a very acute sense of God’s justice, which renders to every man according to his works. This is very forcibly expressed in the terrible psalm 108. 6-19, quoted above. The man whom the [239] psalmist curses ‘remembered not to show mercy’, he ‘loved cursing, and it shall come unto him’; ‘May it (cursing) be unto him like a garment which covereth him’, etc. In ‘the then still incomplete state of the progressive divine revelation granted to Israel, heaven hardly occurred to the psalmist as the means whereby Yahweh’s true justice might be made manifest. It seemed to them that divine justice should be exercised in the punishment of evil men here on earth. The genuine solution can only come from two essential points in Jesus’s revelation. It is in the light of eternity on the one hand, and of God as the God of love and mercy and wanting us to be like him, on the other (Luke 6. 36; 1 John 3. 11, 14. 16-19, 23; 4. 7-11), that Christ definitively corrects the inadequacies of the Old Testament. To these points I shall return later. . . . [240]

The fundamental principle of a solution seems to lie in a clear understanding of the *progressive character* of Old Testament revelation taken to its ultimate logical conclusions. God freely chose for himself a given people in its own concrete social and ethnic environment and whose moral and religious level was no higher than that of the surrounding peoples. The directives he was to give them would have to be adapted to the ancestral customs of this people, to its under­standing and to its spontaneous moral reactions. It is not surprising that the beginnings are obviously very humble and that the move­ment towards a higher level is very slow, as is any collective change in a whole nation. The divine work in Israel is essentially the moral and religious education of the nation towards an increasingly inward and an increasingly profound moral monotheism, towards an in­creasingly higher concept of the nature of the covenant between Yahweh and his people, a concept that could one day develop into that of the Church as the mystical body of the incarnate Word. This education was slow and difficult. It had to be realized not in [241] some ideal race of men, not in stained-glass window saints, but in a very real race of men as sin had made them and continued to shape them, a race swept along by its passions and often in revolt against the voice of the Lord.

It would be a great mistake to imagine that each of Yahweh’s commands in the Old Testament was given in a definitive way and at the definitive moral level of the New Testament. Our Lord himself laid down a principle of the greatest importance for our present purpose, when he said in Matt. 19. 8: ‘Because Moses by reason of the hardness of your heart permitted you to put away your wives.’ He therefore teaches us that in the Old Testament there were laws which were represented at the time—and rightly—as coming through Moses from God, as having divine authority and yet which were conditioned by the hardness of men’s hearts. There is then in certain laws belonging to the moral Code of the Old Testament an adaptation permitted by God in view of human weakness. The progressive character of Old Testament revelation as a stage on the way to a higher level, is still more clearly emphasized in Matt. 5. 21-48 where Jesus takes the moral formulas of the Old Testament one by one: ‘Thou shalt not kill . . . Thou shalt not commit adultery . . . whosoever shall put away his wife . . . an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth’ and shows how inadequate they are for salvation and how they need either additional teaching or a downright alteration of the former doctrine, even though they had been promulgated in the name of Yahweh. The proposition that there was an adaptation and an act of condescension on God’s part in view of the lower moral level of the chosen people is by no means a new one invented in the twentieth century. Fr Pinard de la Boullaye[[5]](#footnote-5)14 in a very thought-provoking article published in *RSR* IX, 1919, pp. 197-221, pointed out that applications of this argument of a divine act of condescension (*sunkatabasis*) are found in the earliest ecclesiastical writers, the Fathers of the Church: St Justin, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, St Athanasius, St Cyril of Alexandria, St John Chrysostom, St Gregory Nazianzen, etc. In the moral and religious education of the Jewish people we find the same process at work as in the soul of a sinner when the grace which is leading him to the point [242] of conversion exercises a moral and religious attraction. God gives him grace but at the level of his moral mediocrity, at the level of his passions, while calling him to something better and then to some­thing better still, until he comes to the fullness of the light.

We can obtain a clear view of the education of the people of Israel through progressive revelation by insisting on its two essential characteristics: God’s loving call, and man’s response faithfully adhered to. A. Gelin in an excellent popular article; ‘Morale et Ancien Testament’ (in the review *Catéchistes*, No. 15, third quarter 1953, pp. 133-7)[[6]](#footnote-6)15 gives an excellent account of this idea (p. 135):

This education operated in a unique moral climate, the climate of the Covenant, God’s offer of love and his call to fidelity. ‘Biblical man’ unlike ‘Greek man’ does not work out his own personal integration and his own social stability, he hears a call from on high. God speaks (Hebr. 1. 1) and his word is both a revelation of himself and a moral statement. The religion of Sinai implies the moral Law, and the essence of the biblical message is moral monotheism. God expects an answer and hence human life become [*sic*] a drama. Men either consent to ‘know’ God (the word is essential), or else frustrate God’s action by a concrete attitude of refusal.

Thus it is possible to understand that fidelity to moral mono­theism, fidelity to Yahweh the one only God, is for Israel the primor­dial obligation, the essential mission. To abandon Yahweh for the Baals, for strange gods, is the capital crime; to prevent the worship of Yahweh from contamination by the Canaanite cults is the chief preoccupation of the leaders of the people. If then the divine command to be faithful to Yahweh above all else finds concrete expression and realization in the context of ancestral customs, in methods of waging war that contradict the Christian ideal with their executions and punishments revolting to us so, it is men’s ‘hardness [243] of heart’ at that epoch which subjected the divine command to such limitations. An order fundamentally divine has been applied and interpreted by men. We may openly condemn today the way in which God’s orders were carried out in those days, while understanding and recognizing Yahweh’s overall guidance of the people of Israel towards moral monotheism. We shall not then be astonished to find that, at a later period of Israel’s history, a prophet like Osee condemns the acts of Yahvist zeal committed by Jehu with all the cruelty characteristic of a usurping general. Once again, the Old Testament revelation was a progressive one which will reach its final term in Christ.

As I have already said in connection with the comminatory psalms, it is only in the light of certain essential truths on which religion was based by Christ (truths which were partially elaborated during the last centuries of the Old Testament): an eternity beyond this world, the constant expectation of which dominates the whole moral teaching of Jesus; the love of God, our Father, for us each and all, made manifest in the Incarnation and the Redemption; the duty of mutual love among men, modelled upon, and sharing in the gratuitous love of God for us: it is in the light of these truths finally revealed that the problems incompletely stated in the Old Testament find their resolution: the problem of the divine punish­ment of human acts, which we have no longer to envisage as neces­sarily taking place on earth; the duty of charity applying to all men without exception, enemies as well as friends, Gentiles and Samari­tans as well as Jews (cf. the plain teaching of the parable of the Good Samaritan, the enemy of Israel, proposed to the Jews by Jesus as a model of charity; cf. also the whole doctrine of St Paul on the equality of Jews and pagans in relation to the call to faith); the duty of fundamental sincerity (‘Let your speech be yea, yea: no, no . . .’, Malt. 5. 37), in imitation of God’s sincerity (cf. St Paul, 2 Cor. 1. 17-20). The duties regarding marriage and chastity are founded on and defined by Christ’s revelation. The abolition of divorce, for instance, and the holiness of marriage are made clear by the converging lessons of Matt. 5. 31-2; 19. 3-6; 1 Cor. 7. 10-11; Eph. 5. 22-3.

The great moral lesson to be drawn from the Old Testament would appear to be founded above all on the principle of this progressive education of the people of Israel by God, who had chosen [244] them for his own. From the moral point of view, the Old Testament teaches us that there was a slow movement towards better things from century to century; it teaches the idea of one only God, the source of the moral life, and this idea grows deeper and deeper from the revelation on Sinai and through the prophets, preparing men increasingly to acquire that sense of God’s Fatherhood which was to become an experienced reality with the coming of the Son; the idea of the Covenant, maintained in spite of Israel’s unfaithfulness and so showing the gratuitous nature of God’s love, destined too to reach its consummation in the doctrines of grace and redemption; the formation and progress of the idea of the Reign of Yahweh and of the Messias as bringing this Reign into being.[[7]](#footnote-7)16

This effort to come to a better understanding of the evolution of Israel’s ideas, the growth of her messianic hope and God’s plan as realized in the Old Testament, the effort also to replace the old minute analyses of the moral difficulties by these broad views, all this seems to us to mark a great progress in the study of the Old Testament.[[8]](#footnote-8)17

It is time to bring this chapter to an end. We may sum it up as follows—God speaks to us through men. He has willed that the difficult stages of the people of Israel’s slow progress towards that Israel of God into which it was destined to be absorbed should be shown to us in all their stark reality. The Christian religion is, in the first place, a fact, an *event*. This event can only be perfectly understood against the background of its historical preparation throughout the centuries. Christ, the centre of the divine plan of salvation, entered history from the moment Abraham made his act of faith, Abraham who had so little understanding of the mean­ing and the scope of Yahweh’s blessing promised to him and his descendants. The men of Israel were taken by God in their native barbarism, they answered his call at the level of their habits, customs and their psychology, and these were still often of a gross nature. Yet, obedient and believing in their own rough way, the men of Israel were to move towards the climate of Christianity. God willed that this progress from the shadows to the light, from a world of [245] egoism to Christian charity, should be manifested in all its human truth. If we look at this movement in its final outcome, which is Christ, the divine work will be revealed to us as growing more luminous century by century within the field of human actions with all their weaknesses. This preparation for Christ throughout history helps us to understand the Christ who has come. For cen­turies, God was drawing nearer to men, through his revelations, through the activity of his human envoys, through the flow of events, through facts which were types of things to come, until the day when his incarnate Word, the living Word of the Godhead, came to our earth to give meaning to all that was past, all that is present, and all that is to come.

## Imprecatory Psalms (Little)

Little, Vilma G. *The Sacrifice of Praise: An Introduction to the Meaning and Use of the Divine Office*. New York: P.J. Kenedy and Sons, 1957.

The Unpopular Psalms

Certain psalms do not, at first sight, appear to fit in with what has been said above. They are the so-named ‘impreca­tory psalms’ in which the psalmist in fierce, impassioned language calls down God’s vengeance upon his enemies. These imprecations are to be found principally in Ps. 68 (Thursday at matins), Ps. 108 (Saturday at none), and Ps. 136 (Thursday at vespers).

Take for instance Ps. 68: *Salvum me fac, Deus*. This is one of the great messianic prophecies of Christ’s Passion and Resurrection. It is quoted three times in this sense in the New Testament by St Peter, St John and St Paul, which fact alone must commend it to our serious consideration. In it we listen to the voice of the psalmist describing the pitiful state to which he has been brought by the malice of his enemies. He feels himself like a drowning man, the waters already sweeping over his head: [45]

Save me, O God:

for the waters have entered into my very soul.

I am sunk deep in the mire:

where there is no foothold.

I am come into deep waters:

and the floods have overwhelmed me.

I am wearied out with my crying:

My throat is dried up.

Mine eyes fail:

while I look for my God.

Then after a touching plea to God to rescue him from the inhuman foes that surround him the reader is suddenly startled beyond measure by the following vindictive passage:

Let their table before them become as a snare:

a trap for themselves and their friends.

Let their eyes be darkened that they see not:

and let their limbs be smitten with palsy.

Pour out thy indignation upon them:

let thy wrathful anger consume them.

Let their encampment be laid waste:

their tents be uninhabited.

For they have persecuted him whom thou hast smitten:

and to the pain of his wounds have added a fresh sting.

Add thou up their iniquities, guilt upon guilt:

let them have no share in thy merciful justice.

May they be blotted out of the book of the living:

and not be inscribed among the just.[[9]](#footnote-9)1 [46]

Truly terrible words! To one who comes upon them unprepared they may be the occasion of great perplexity and distress of mind. They produce an uneasy feeling that senti­ments such as these are out of harmony with the spirit of the gospel and should surely have no place in the Christian wor­ship of God. Such uneasiness is not entirely modern. St Chry­sostom, commenting on Ps. 108, says: ‘There are words in it which, at first hearing, cause very deep pain and confusion to those who will not think attentively.’ (*In Ps.* 108.)

This comment points the way out of the difficulty. The psalms, like all the rest of holy Scripture, reveal their full meaning only in the light of the Christian revelation. Since the Church retains these and other similar passages in her liturgy they must be inspired by the Holy Spirit, and useful for our instruction. Attentive thought therefore will provide a rea­sonable explanation. The objection that such imprecations are of the spirit of the old dispensation and have no parallel in the gospel is soon disposed of. The second great commandment of the Mosaic law: *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself* sums up all the Old Testament teaching on this subject. See in particular Levit. 19, 17; Exod. 23, 4-5; Prov. 24, 17 and 25, 21. On the other hand the New Testament contains maledictions as fierce as any of those objected to in the psalter. See, for example, Acts 18, 6; Apoc. 22, 11 and Our Lord’s own terrible denunciations of the scribes and pharisees recorded in St Matthew 23, 23-36.

That objection removed, the next step is to distinguish in the psalter imprecations the basic thought itself from the highly coloured oriental language in which it is embodied. Further we must not lose sight of the fact that the Hebrew mind was concrete, unable to envisage the sin apart from the sinner.

Having thus cleared the ground we shall look for the key [47] to the solution of the difficulty that remains in that God­-centredness of the psalmist which makes him see all things and events from God’s standpoint, keeps him vividly conscious of the age-old conflict ever raging between good and evil. We shall then realize that these terrible imprecations are not the outcome of personal animosity but the expression of a burning indignation against all that opposes the divine prero­gatives; not the effect of imperfect charity towards fellow-creatures but the logical result of a true notion of Justice towards God, a justice involving sanctions and, if need be, penalties. For no individual has either the right or the power to forgive the enemies of another, above all when that other is God. Thus what at first appears as a vice is seen finally to be a virtue.

It is evident also that in many places beneath the appearance of an imprecation lies hidden a prophecy of what must in­evitably happen to the sinner who persists to the end in his revolt against God. St Chrysostom points this out in the com­mentary quoted above: *Prophetia est sub specie imprecationis*.

When we view all such passages under this dual aspect, either as predictions, or as expressing an impersonal God-centred desire that God’s cause may be vindicated by the removal of all evil from the face of the earth, it would seem that the substantial difficulty disappears. There still remains however for certain minds the question how best to apply these psalms when reciting them in the office so that they may be the genuine expression of one’s own prayer, *ut mens nostra concordet voci nostrae*.

Here the Church, in her rite of baptism, gives us a helpful clue. In the exorcisms commanding the devil to go out from the soul about to be admitted into her fold, we can sense in the words uttered her deep emotion of loathing and detesta­tion: *Tu maledicte diabole; maledicte damnate*. There we are [48] shown the *Caput inimicorum nostrorum*: the chief of our enemies, against whom no violence nor hatred can be repre­hensible. And it will be a precious gain for us if the enlightened use of the maledictions contained in the psalter can help our modem minds to recapture the ancient understanding of evil, not as a vague force let loose in the universe, but as a power­ful, personal intelligence, never at rest, ever plotting against God and his Christ, ever sending forth his well-trained legions to lie in wait and attack the people of Jahvè. Then the violence of the psalmist’s language no longer surprises us and we sud­denly realize that our own—perhaps our only—personal en­counter with this enemy is first to come to grips with the fifth column he has stealthily contrived to established [*sic*] within the very citadel of our soul, our task not to cease from the fight till we have ruthlessly exterminated those most danger­ous enemies of God and his Church that are our own evil tendencies and habits.

‘That man is blest’, says St Benedict in the prologue to his Rule, ‘who seizes the malignant Evil One and casts him forth *who takes all his little ones as soon as they are born* (i. e. his evil suggestions) *and shatters them to pieces on the Rock that is Christ*.’ (Allusion to the last verse of Ps. 136.) Understood in this light most of us find that the imprecatory psalms, far from being a stumbling-block to devotion, are on the con­trary a valuable aid and stimulus in the daily warfare against the Evil One. [49]

## Imprecatory Psalms (Anderson)

Anderson, Bernhard W. *Out of the Depths*: *The Psalms Speak for Us Today*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970, 1974.

*The Cry for Vindication*

. . . psalmists—like the prophet Jeremiah in his laments (see especially Jer. 20:7-12)—cry out to God for vindication and even [60] pray for vengeance against the enemies, whoever they are. A number of these psalms are often called “im­precatory” or “cursing” psalms (Pss. 35, 59, 69, 70, 109, 137, 140; and in the category of community laments Pss. 12, 58, 83 strike the same note). Two of these psalms—Psalm 69 and, especially, Psalm 109—are very difficult to use in Christian worship. It is often said that the language of these psalms is sub-Christian, having no place in the “new age” governed by the command­ment of the Sermon on the Mount, “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” (Matt. 5:44). For many people the magnificent 139th Psalm is ruined by the thought expressed in verses 19-22 (“Do I not hate them that hate thee, O Yahweh? . . . I hate them with perfect hatred.”). The most conspicuous example of imprecation is the closing passage of Psalm 137, a folk song which cried out for vengeance against the Baby­lonians who destroyed the nation Judah in 587 b.c. and the Edomites who assisted them in the sack of Jeru­salem (cf. Obadiah 10-14).

Remember, O Yahweh against the Edomites

the day of Jerusalem,

how they said, “Rase it, rase it!

Down to its foundations!”

O daughter of Babylon, you devastator!

Happy shall he be who requltes you

with what you have done to us!

Happy shall he be who takes your little ones

and dashes them against the rock!

—Psalm 137:7-9

It is surely a debatable question as to whether the church should retain the whole Psalter in its worship, including these troublesome passages, or whether the Psalter should be censored at those points which seem [61] to be inconsistent with God’s revelation in Jesus Christ. It would be interesting to check the responsive readings included in modern hymnals or books of worship, to see the degree to which the Psalms have been edited for Christian worship. Before this question is answered too quickly, however, the voice of contemporary theologians should be heard. Dietrich Bonhoeffer advocated the daily use, especially in our morning and evening devotions, of *all* the psalms. It was his view that we should not “pick and choose” for “otherwise we dishonor God by pre­suming to know better than he what we should pray.” Similarly Christoph Barth objects to the “impropriety” of omitting certain passages which offend us (e. g., Ps. 104:35 or Ps. 139:19-22) and insists: “It is impossible to have the Psalter without its reference to the godless enemies.”[[10]](#footnote-10)6

Now, it can readily be admitted that the laments of the Psalter are raised from the depths of human anxiety, from which the emotions of bitterness and hatred often well up. The Psalter, like the Old Testament as a whole, is “of the earth, earthy.” All the moods and passions of human life find expression here. The Psalms do not point to a trans-historical world of pure ideals—the good, the true, and the beautiful; rather, they are concerned with the historical scene of change, struggle, and suffering where God meets men and lays his claim upon them. Psalm 137, quoted above, comes out of a situation of historical struggle where a small people found itself overwhelmed by the massed might of an empire and was suddenly deprived of everything held precious. The church cannot automatically join in this psalm. Yet we must remind ourselves that Psalm 137 has found many parallels in modern life, for instance, during World War II when the pride of France was violated by Hitler’s armies, or when brave little Finland was overrun by Russian forces. The question is whether these all too [62] human cries have a place in man’s speech to God.

We have noticed that the laments use a stylized lan­guage which was capable of being reinterpreted in the ever-new situations in which the worshiping community found itself. In describing the enemies in this traditional language, with its monotonous and exaggerated epithets, the psalmists were not calling for a personal fight; rather, they were concerned about the adversaries of the cause of God. Indeed, there is a strong tendency to as­sociate the enemies with the powers of chaos who have opposed God’s purpose from the time of creation and on. This helps us to understand why the psalmists think of the enemies (“the wicked,” “the godless,” “the workers of evil”) as *God*’*s enemies* who, as such, are to be hated. “The imagery being mythological,” writes Helmer Ring­gren, “the enemies are taken to be more than human; they become the representatives of all evil forces that threaten life and order in the world”—the order which the Creator continues to uphold against all the threaten­ing powers of chaos.[[11]](#footnote-11)7

The Gospels of the New Testament portray man’s dis­tress as arising from the threat of demonic powers, or­ganized—according to the language of the myth—into an oppressive empire under the rule of Satan. According to this imaginative way of thinking, man’s problem is not just the frustration that arises out of his own per­sonal life; rather, he experiences the threat of evil powers which are external to him, which affect him in the society in which he lives, and which may seduce him in a time of testing (temptation). In the Lord’s Prayer we are taught to pray: “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil (the Evil One).” We can understand the intention of this language in our time when people, perhaps more than any other period of human history, find themselves to be victims of structures of power, of antagonisms or prejudices embodied in social customs [63] and behavior, of tremendous social forces or “isms” be­fore which the individual feels helpless. Thus, in the last century, the laments of Negro spirituals expressed “one continual cry”[[12]](#footnote-12)8 against oppressive pharaohs, and more recently a similar sense of frustration has found expression in the folk songs of young “prophets with guitars.” The psalmists’ cry for vindication may be closer to our lives than we realize. Man cries out for justice in the social structures of human society—a jus­tice which would somehow give corporate expression to love.

*The Vengeance That Is God*’*s*

In trying to answer the questions raised by “the psalms of vengeance” several things must be kept in mind. First, it is important to consider how biblical lan­guage is used, that is, the syntax within which words like “avenge, vengeance” function. It is too bad that these words are translated from the Hebrew by English words which in our thought-world have a negative con­notation. No one wants to be regarded as “vengeful” and therefore it hardly seems right to apply the term to God! However, the Hebrew verb *naqam* [vindicate] has the basic meaning of “save” in the Old Testament, as it had in other ancient literature, and therefore can be used in exactly the same sense as the Hebrew verb *yasha*’ from which the noun “salvation” comes. The language pre­supposes the view that God has entered into covenant relation with his people and within the terms of that relationship he acts as Judge or Vindicator to defend and uphold justice. Therefore his subjects, within the terms of the covenant, appeal to the Suzerain for help, vindication, “salvation.” When considered in this light, it is understandable that “*naqam* [to vindicate] is the sole prerogative of God.”[[13]](#footnote-13)9 And this is precisely what we read in the New Testament: [64]

*Beloved*, *never avenge yourselves*, *but leave it to the wrath of God*; *for it is written*, “*Vengeance is mine*, *I will repay*, *says the Lord*.”

—*Romans 12*:*19* (*echoing Deut*. *32*:*35*)

*See also Hebrews 10*:*30*

In view of this, it is doubtful whether these psalms should be described as “imprecatory” or cursing psalms. In the ancient world, as in some undeveloped societies today, it was believed that the word spoken in curse released a power, or spell, which was automatically ef­fective. (Remember the story in Numbers 22-24 about the diviner Balaam whom Balak, the king of Moab, em­ployed to destroy Israel with the power of the curse.) As long as one believed in the power of “verbal ven­geance,” prayer was unnecessary.

*The distinctiveness of the curse lies in the fact that it is aimed* directly, *without any detour via God*, *at the one it is meant to hit*. *A curse is a word of power which the swearer released without recourse to God*.[[14]](#footnote-14)10

The Psalter, it is true, contains traces of ancient curse formulas (e. g., Ps. 58:6-9) which probably were de­pendent upon traditional language used in cultic cere­monies of covenant renewal; but no longer are they curses in the proper sense. They are really prayers to God who obtains vindication in his own way and in his own time.

Another thing to consider is that the Old Testament Psalms wrestle with the problems of human existence within the context of this life—the “three score years and ten” of Psalm 90:10. Lacking the eschatological horizon of the New Testament, they concentrate on the problems of life now with a fierce and passionate [65] intensity. The psalmists do not take seriously the possibility that the imbalances of life will somehow be cor­rected in another form of existence beyond our historical experience. God’s dealings with men are confined to this earthly life. For them, as for many modern people, death is the final limitation; accordingly, the answers to the question of existence must be found now. They thirst for God in the present, and seek the satisfaction of that thirst in the historical arena. In the New Testa­ment, of course, this barrier is broken through. There the good news rings out that in Jesus Christ, God has conquered the power of death and has thrown open the door into the future. But this victory is only a foretaste of the final consummation when God’s action as Judge (Vindicator) will take place. Thus the parable about the unrighteous judge, to whom a widow came persistently with the plea “Vindicate me against my adversary,” ends with the interpretation:

*And will not God vindicate his elect*, *who cry to him day and night*? *Will he delay long over them*? *I tell you*, *he will vindicate them speedily*. *Nevertheless*, *when the Son of man comes*, *will he find faith on earth*?

—*Luke 18*:*7-8*

The Christian church reads the psalmists’ cries for vindi­cation in the larger context of the whole Bible which reaches a climax with the announcement that the Vin­dicator has already responded to his people’s cries in Jesus Christ. The New Testament witnesses that Christ has experienced man’s cry “out of the depths.” Not only does Christ pray with us in all human suffering but he enables men to have a confidence which makes them “more than conquerors” (Rom. 8:31-39). [66]

# Psalms as Songs

# after the Old Testament

## Psalms in Later Liturgy

1. **Jewish liturgy**
   1. By the second century ad, Psalms was being used “alongside other liturgical material: examples include the ‘Prayer of 18 Benedictions’ and the *Shema* (from Deut. 6 and 11).” (Gillingham 262)
   2. “From the fourth century ce, an interesting development took place among some Jewish groups of poets in Palestine. Some time after the Roman Emperor Justinian (ce 483-565) passed a law forbidding Jews any kind of scriptural exegesis in their synagogues, the ??*piyyutim* (liturgical poets), recognizing the distinctive inspiration of the sacred text, produced an alternative form of poetry. Partly in an attempt to circumvent the law with different ‘poetic’ forms of exegesis, partly in response to the drying-up of the creative aspects of the poetry and liturgy within Rabbinic Judaism itself, and partly as a way of demonstrating that the Hebrew tongue could express itself in the acclaimed inspirational poetic modes of the Greeks, these poets (also called ??*paytanim*) and singers (??*hazannim*) wrote poetry which could be sung or chanted to music. The tunes [47] were probably based upon the ancient traditions, and the melodies and rhythms still survive today, particularly among Yemenite and Bukharan Jews. The most creative period in this respect was between the fourth and sixth centuries ce, under Byzantine rule. The purpose of the ??*piyyutim* was initially liturgical, providing new prayers and hymns for sabbaths and holy days. By the medieval period their influence had spread through Italy into central and eastern Europe, and had developed into a most complicated system of metre, line-forms, and end-rhymes. Although this developed into ‘art for art’s sake’, with metre, parallelism, rhyme, and strophic formations becoming techniques in themselves, it is nevertheless self-evident that there always had been a close link between poetry and music within the Jewish tradition.” (Gillingham 47-48)
2. **Christian liturgy**
   1. By the second century ad, “psalmody became a central part of the liturgy of the Church. The psalms enabled the early Church to recall its roots in the more ancient traditions of Judaism . . . the Psalter became the hymn-book of the Church. At the end of the second century, Tertullian speaks of the Sunday vigil service, where the psalms are interspersed with prayers, preaching, and blessings.” (Gillingham 268)
   2. “By the fourth century, John [268] Chrysostom speaks of the vigils of the Church ‘with David first, last and midst—in funeral solemnities, in convents of virgins, in the desert . . .’” (Gillingham 268-269)
   3. “By the sixth century, the Canonical Hours of Prayer, taken by the Western Church from the East, refers to eight daily offices, with the psalms central in each.” (Gillingham 269)
   4. Gregorian chant
      1. “. . . what is most commonly known as plainsong [is] a form of melodic and tonic singing of the psalms and other canticles from Scripture. This form of singing also had antecedents in the second century ce, being refined and popularized under Pope Gregory the Great (590-604) so that it became known as Gregorian plainchant. Although the linguistic medium was Latin, not Hebrew, the formative musical influence was more that of the East than the West. Today many scholars agree that the roots of plainsong lie in the Jewish tradition of singing poetry. (For example, A. Sendrey, in *Music in Ancient Israel* (pp. 230ff.), offers several comparisons between extant Gregorian chants and ancient Jewish songs from the psalms, Lamentations, and priestly blessings.) Its free but regular rhythm places plainsong more within an oriental than an occidental culture: in both Hebrew poetry and Latin plainsong the accent is natural, and the rhythm flows easily with the speech forms in such a way that the words are brought to life through the resonance of the rhythm and the purity of the melody. Although in Latin the stress is obviously different, falling usually on the penultimate or the prepenultimate syllable, the word-accents in plainsong follow a similar pattern to the Hebrew: there is no evidence of a predetermined qualitative metre, for the rhythm is varied and flexible, being more like ‘singing-speech’.” (Gillingham 48)
      2. “This differentiates plainsong entirely from Greek poetry in the Western tradition, where the sound and sense conventions are more rigid. Plainsong not only follows more closely the free rhythm of speech, but several other characteristics also confirm that it has a stronger affinity to the music of the East than to that of the West. There is no time signature; this would predetermine the beat and might force the words into unacceptable accents. There is no harmony; the tonic chant is found only in the one melodic line, to bring out the sense of the words as ‘plainly’ (or ‘purely’) as possible. Instead of modern notation, the form is of square notes on a *four*-line stave, and there is no key signature as such: the placing of the doh-clef . . . and the fah-clef . . . freely on the stave causes the pitch to be relative rather than absolute, in order to suit a range of voices. The music falls into an eight-tonal pattern which has many correspondences with the melodic modes in Hebrew (some would see evidence of this, for example, in the eight-line stanzas in Ps. 119, or the sevenfold ‘voice of God’ with the eighth as a response in Ps. 29). Furthermore, the [Hebrew] binary presentation of the ideas, is one of the characteristic features in plainsong: the first half of the verse is the ‘ascent’ (the first recit and cadence), leading to the pause between the two halves (the mediant), and the second half of the verse is the ‘descent’ (the second recit and cadence). . . . In *The Interpretation of Plainchant*, A. Robertson writes: “. . . free rhythm . . . alone can make long stretches of unaccompanied melody acceptable to the ear. With accents occurring at absolutely regular intervals, as in measured music, plainchant would become as square as its notation and intolerable to listen to. (p. 16.)” (Gillingham 49)
      3. “. . . like Latin, with its *legato* accent, the English language has also been found to be an appropriate vehicle for plainsong. (Contemporary *Gelineau* music, from the 1950s in France, has provided the same enhancement of biblical poetry through the use of what has been called ‘sprung rhythm’—a feature which has been developed more recently in English, using a type of tonic chant which is distinctive from but related to plainsong; see, for example, A. Robertson, *Music of the Catholic Church*, 51ff.).” (Gillingham 50)
      4. “. . . it is more difficult (though not impossible) to sing continuous prose than it is poetry, for the latter has the more distinctive potential of being broken into corresponding lines with some audible rhythm. . . .” (Gillingham 50)
   5. “. . . Herbert, Wesley, Watts, Wyatt, Vaughan, Milton, Lyte, Keble, and Tate and Brady, have all brought new patterns of psalmody into hymnody.” (Gillingham 269) Expand into a full handout.

## The Liturgy of the Hours

*Outline*:

1. introduction

2. natural religion

3. pre-Christian Judaism

a. daily burnt offerings

b. synagogue service

c. set times of prayer in post-exilic Judaism

4. ad 30-100

a. Jesus

b. public prayer after Jesus

5. 200s

6. 300s

a. the cathedral office

b. the monastic office

c. merger of the cathedral and monastic offices

7. 400s-500s

a. development of parishes

b. lay participation in the office

c. recitation of the seven canonical hours in the basilicas

8. 500s: Benedict and Gregory

a. Benedict of Nursia

b. Gregory the Great and Gregorian chant

9. 600s-700s

a. uniformity of the office

b. demise of the cathedral office

c. monasticization of the office

d. clerical obligation to say the office

10. 800s-1000s

a. the Carolingian renaissance

e. complexity of the office

11. formation of the breviary

12. from Trent to the modern liturgical movement

13. from the modern liturgical movement to Vatican Council II

14. Vatican II and the reform of the Divine Office

15. post-conciliar documents on the reform of the liturgy of the hours

16. implementing the liturgy of the hours in the parish

Introduction

1. **the liturgy of the hours in the Church**
   1. “. . . the Divine Office is not simply a peripheral or optional activity of the Church, but it is rightly considered to be among the first duties of the entire Church [*General Instruction on the Liturgy of the Hours* [1971] 1]. [viii] . . . Next to the Eucharist itself, it is the Liturgy of the Hours which provides the most efficacious means for achieving both the glorification of God and the sanctification of men.” (Scotto viii-ix)
   2. “. . . the Church insists upon the necessity of the communal dimension of this prayer . . .” (Scotto ix)
2. **natural religion**
   1. Praying at set times of the day (especially morning and evening) springs from a natural religious instinct. (Scotto 4)
   2. “. . . spontaneity and right intention are essential to an expression of true prayer, [but] we can also affirm the necessity of some type of ordered expression in worship . . .” (Scotto 4)

Pre-Christian Judaism

1. **the daily burnt offerings** (“holocaust” [completely burnt offering] or “perpetual [*tamid*] sacrifice”)
   1. Unlike “other sacrifices, the holocaust was wholly destroyed by fire and none of it was eaten either by the priest or by the victim’s donor.” (Scotto 5)
   2. Exod 29:38-42 and Num 28:1-8 command sacrifice in the temple at Jerusalem, every morning and evening, of a year-old, unblemished, male lamb, with flour and olive oil (and incense, Exod 30:7-8). Lev 1 gives details for the ceremonies.
   3. The temple was God’s chosen dwelling. Deut 12:11, “you shall bring everything that I command you to the place that the Lord your God will choose as a dwelling for his name: your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and your donations . . .”
   4. “The morning holocaust was offered between dawn and sunrise signaling a reawakening of life and activity; and the evening sacrifice was offered between sunset and dark, signaling the close of one day and the beginning of another.” (Scotto 5)
   5. The biblical “accounts do not provide us with the actual prayer formulas to be used during the offering of the sacrifices. However, sacrifices in Judaism were . . . accompanied by prayer.” (Scotto 6) “. . . prayer formulas [are] found in every religious ritual throughout the world.” (Castelot 2.725)
   6. chanters
      1. “There were official chanters in Solomon’s Temple from the beginning . . .” (Castelot 2.725) Amos 5:23 (c 750 bc) refers to singing hymns to instrumental accompaniment: “Take away from me the noise of your songs; I will not listen to the melody of your harps.”
      2. “. . . the importance of [the chanters] grew steadily until, in the post-exilic Temple, [they] enjoyed great prestige.” 2 Chr 5:11-13, “all the priests who were present had sanctified themselves, without regard to their divisions, 12and all the levitical singers, Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun, their sons and kindred, arrayed in fine linen, with cymbals, harps, and lyres, stood east of the altar with one hundred twenty priests who were trumpeters . . . 13It was the duty of the trumpeters and singers to make themselves heard in unison in praise and thanksgiving to the Lord, [and] the song was raised, with trumpets and cymbals and other musical instruments, in praise to the Lord . . .”
   7. Psalms was “The official hymnbook of the new Temple . . .” (Castelot 2.725)
      1. “Internal evidence strongly points to [the] cultic origin and use of most of the psalms. The frequent allusions to Jerusalem, to the Temple, to the sanctuary, to God’s mountain, to his abode, to his footstool and to the holy feasts indicate that, in one way or another, a great number of psalms originated in relationship with the Temple.” (Scotto 11)
         1. Some psalms were sung to accompany a sacrificial service (20:3, 26:5, 27:6, 66:13-15, 81:1-2, 107:22, 116:17). (Scotto 6)
         2. Others indicate less definitely that they were sung in the temple (48:9, 65:1,4, 95:1-2,6, 96:8, 118:19-27, 134, 135). (Scotto 6)
      2. “Biblical prayer was therefore intimately bound up with cult . . .” (Scotto 6)
   8. With the destruction of the temple in 587 bc came separation from Jerusalem in the exile. But the prophets assured the people that God could still be approached, aside from the temple. (Scotto 6-7)
      1. Jer 29:12-14, “when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. 13When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart, 14I will let you find me . . .”
      2. Ezek 11:16, “though I scattered them among the countries, yet I have been a sanctuary to them for a little while in the countries where they have gone.”
2. **the pre-Christian synagogue service**
   1. “. . . the seeds of [the liturgy of the hours] were initially embedded in the soil of Judaic communal prayer as exemplified primarily in the Synagogue services.” (Scotto 4)
   2. Synagogues—”small groups [to] receive instruction in their scriptural traditions and to pray together”—probably began around the exile (587-539 bc). But as Bernard Anderson points out (*Understanding the Old Testament*, 2nd ed. [Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1966] 378): “There is no evidence, however, that there were any organized local assemblies. All that can be safely said is that the later synagogues which came to be scattered throughout the countries of the dispersion, arose in response to a need that was first experienced during the Exile, when Jews were separated from their land and their Temple.” (Scotto 7)
   3. “It is most likely that elements from the Temple services were incorporated into the synagogue after the destruction of the Temple.” (Scotto 170 n. 42)
   4. “. . . the daily Synagogue service was composed of two principal elements, namely, the reading of Scripture and Prayer.” (Scotto 8)
      1. readings from the torah and the prophets
         1. “The establishment of the practice of reading the Torah publicly before the people is credited to Ezra according to Neh. 8:18.” (Scotto 168 n. 19) Neh 8:18, “day by day, from the first day to the last day, he read from the book of the law of God.”
         2. “. . . the reading of portions of the Pentateuch and the Prophets in the Synagogue service [was] not only on Sabbaths and other holy days, but at other prescribed times as well. These readings were followed by an explanatory exposition which assumed a homiletic character and which was meant to promote the absorption of the Law into the very heart and soul of the attending [8] community which remained passive throughout the service.” (Scotto 8-9)
      2. prayer
         1. “Eventually, prayers were added to the service composed of extracts from the Torah as well as from other edifying texts. This additional element of prayer was composed of two principal parts: a) the *shema*, and b) the *tefillah* or the *amidah*.” [9] “The *shema* and the *amidah* have always formed the two chief elements of Jewish daily morning and evening prayer.” [168 n. 20] (Scotto 9, 168 n. 20)
         2. *shemah* (“Listen!”)
            1. The *shemah* is Deut 6:4-5 (or Deut 6:4-9). The word means “Listen!” and is the first word of the passage.

Deut 6:4-5, “Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. 5You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.”

Deut 6:6-9, “Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. 7Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. 8Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead, 9and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”

* + - * 1. “. . . the *shema* was in reality more of a creed than a prayer . . .” (Scotto 9)
        2. The *shema* “was probably the traditional summons with which in the old days the assembly for worship of the tribes, the *Qahal*, was opened.” (Scotto 9)
        3. “. . . not only does rabbinical literature attest to the fact that in its fuller form (Dt. 6:4-9), it was used as an integral part of the Temple liturgy, but also that it eventually was adopted from the Temple into the Synagogue liturgy.” (Scotto 9)
        4. Jews prayed the *shemah* twice a day. [9] Probably Deut 6:7b (“when you lie down and when you rise”) “gave rise to the custom of beginning and ending each day with the confession of the one God. It became a general Jewish practice in pre-Christian times, wherein all men and boys beginning with their twelfth birthday, were required to recite it regularly.” [168 n. 22] (Scotto 9, 168 n. 22)
      1. *tefillah* (or *amidah* or *Shemoneh Esreh*)
         1. This was “the prayer *par excellence* of the Synagogue liturgy.” (Scotto 10)
         2. The *tefillah* “was always known as the *amidah* (standing) since the congregation always stood for its recitation.” (Scotto 169 n. 25)
         3. “It was composed principally of rabbinical texts which took the form of blessings or benedictions, adding a further name to this prayer, the *Shemoneh Esreh*, or the Eighteen Blessings.” (Scotto 10)
         4. “The benedictions themselves seem to belong to different periods of composition, however, most of them seem to be substantially attributable to pre-Christian times with a few marked exceptions.” (Scotto 10)
         5. The *Shemoneh Esreh* was “composed essentially of three separate groups of prayers or benedictions (*berakoth*) . . .” (Scotto 10)

“The first and last groups respectively, were oriented to the offering of praise and thanksgiving to Yahweh, lauding and thanking him for his majesty, for his justice, for his mighty works of creation, and for his special benevolence and protection toward his Chosen People throughout the course of salvation history as exemplified in their deliverance from bondage in Egypt. The doxology which ended each prayer further emphasized the element of praise. Both of these groups of prayers were invariable and were recited daily . . .” (Scotto 10)

“. . . the intermediate group of blessings . . . consisted of petitionary prayers originally not of a fixed character, but were left to be formed spontaneously by the individual leader . . . Eventually even these variable prayers became themselves fixed in form.” (Scotto 10)

A less prominent element of the *Shemoneh Esreh* “was a corporate sense of sinfulness expressed through a liturgical confession and a plea for forgiveness.” (Scotto 10)

* + - 1. psalms
         1. “Accompanying these prayers was the singing of various psalms and canticles at least most likely at the Sabbath Assembly.” (Scotto 10)
         2. “That the psalms . . . became part of the pre-Christian Synagogue service while Temple and synagogue coexisted, seems to be a well accepted opinion.” [11] For example, “It is fairly certain that the *Hallel* [Pss 104-106, 111-118, 135, 146-150], consisting of psalms of thanksgiving [169] sung on certain festivals, was an ancient element of the synagogue service.” (Scotto 11, 169-170 n. 37)
  1. “The leader of the local community usually assumed the role of the president of the synagogue, and presided at all the meetings. [He] opened the services and . . . pronounced the formulas of benediction. He was also the first to read the Sacred Scriptures although one of the Scribes usually [11] offered an explanation of the sacred texts. In general, the leader presided over the entire performance of the liturgical rites, which were closed with his concluding prayers. The other ministers or officers of worship were selected from among the other male members of the community.” [12] “The prerogative of preaching on the Sacred Scriptures eventually was opened to any male person present in the assembly who wished to offer a few words of exhortation [Matt 4:23; Luke 4:4; Acts 13:5].” [170 n. 40] (Scotto 11-12, 170 n. 40)
  2. “With the development of Synagogue prayer services a new cult comes to light in the Judaic religion, a cult in which the sacrifice of blood and burnt offerings was replaced by a sacrifice of praise in prayer. “The liturgy was more democratic, more independent of the priesthood and the laity played an important part in it. The synagogue plunged Jewish life deep in prayer.” (Hamman, *Prayer* 70) (Scotto 12)

1. **set times of prayer in post-exilic Judaism**
   1. Ps 4 has traditionally been seen as an evening prayer. (4:4, 8, “When you are disturbed, do not sin; ponder it on your beds, and be silent. . . . 8I will both lie down and sleep in peace; for you alone, O Lord, make me lie down in safety.”)
   2. Ps 5 has traditionally been seen as a morning prayer. (5:3, 7, “O Lord, in the morning you hear my voice; in the morning I plead my case to you, and watch. . . . 7I, through the abundance of your steadfast love, will enter your house, I will bow down toward your holy temple in awe of you.”)
   3. Ps 55:17 suggests that Jews prayed in the evening, in the morning, and at noon. (“Evening and morning and at noon I utter my complaint and moan, and he will hear my voice.”)
   4. Judith prayed at the time of the evening sacrifice of incense in the temple. (9:1b, “At the very time when the evening incense was being offered in the house of God in Jerusalem, Judith cried out to the Lord . . .”)
   5. Daniel prayed three times a day. (6:10, “he continued to go to his house, which had windows in its upper room open toward Jerusalem, and to get down on his knees three times a day to pray to his God and praise him . . .”)
   6. morning and evening synagogue services
      1. In Jesus’ day “only two services were held each day in the Temple, in the morning and in the evening.” (Scotto 170 n. 44)
      2. Synagogue services throughout Palestine “were closely linked to . . . the daily services offered in the [12] Temple . . .” (Scotto 12-13)
      3. C. W. Dugmore (*The Influence of the Synagogue upon the Divine Office* [Westminster: Faith Press, 1964] 43-44): “the great centers of the infant Church [were] among the larger towns . . . Daily services of prayer, morning and evening, would almost certainly be held in the synagogues at Jerusalem, Caesarea, Antioch and Rome.” (Scotto 14)
   7. the Dead Sea Scrolls: the “Hymn Book of the Qumran community (first century b.c. [Gaster, Hymn 11, 182]) . . . mentions the daily exercise of prayer in the morning, about noon, and in the evening. In addition, [it] speaks of three additional prayer times during the night.” (Weiser 19)

The Early Church

1. **ad 30-100**
   1. Jesus
      1. Jesus had love and respect for temple. (Matt 8:4, 12:6-8, 23:16-24; Mark 11:15-17) (Scotto 14)
      2. He frequently attended synagogue services. (Matt 4:23, 9:35, 12:9, 13:54; Mark 1:21-22,39, 3:1, 6:2; Luke 4:15-27,44, 6:6, 13:10; John 6:59; 18:20) (Scotto 14)
      3. Prayer was “present in every element of his teaching.” (See Jeremias, *Prayers of Jesus* 72-78.) (Scotto 14)
   2. public prayer after Jesus
      1. Early “Christians prayed continuously both privately and communally after the example and teaching of Jesus Christ.” (Matt 18:19-20; Luke 18:1-2; Acts 1:14; 2:1, 42-47; Eph 6:18-20) (Scotto 15)
      2. They continued Jewish prayer customs.
         1. “. . . the Temple continued to play a prominent role in the religious lives of these first Christians.” (Luke 24:52-53; Acts 2:46; 3:1; 21:26-27; 22:17) (Scotto 15)
         2. “Similarly the synagogue most certainly remained an important religious institution in their lives . . .” (See Paul in Acts: 6:9-10; 9:20; 13:5, 14-15; 15:21; 17:2, 10, 17; 18:4, 19, 26; 19:8.) (Scotto 15)
         3. In addition to temple and synagogue services, “early Christians also seem to have observed the traditional hours of Jewish prayer which they customarily prayed thrice daily at the prescribed times.” (Scotto 16)
            1. Acts 3:1, 10:3,30 attest to “prayer at three in the afternoon . . .” (Scotto 171 n. 56)
            2. “These prayers comprised a fusion of the recitation of the *shema* twice a day, both in the morning and evening, with the praying of the *tefillah*, or Eighteen Benedictions, three times a day, in the morning, afternoon, and evening.” (Scotto 16)
      3. But a unique Christian cult also existed. (Mark 1:35; 6:46-48; 14:32-42; Luke 5:16; 6:12; 9:18,28; Acts 10:9; 12:5, 12; 16:25; 2 Cor 6:5; 11:27; Eph 6:18.) (Scotto 16)
         1. It principally “revolved around the Eucharistic cult . . .” (Acts 2:42, 46; 20:7-11; 1 Cor 11:17-34; 14:26-40.) (Scotto 16)
         2. “But it also involved other periods dedicated to . . . prayer which differed from the traditional Jewish patterns of prayer, not only in form but also in time and place. [Early Christian communities held] informal, communal prayer services at various times in private homes during which they praised God [Acts 1:12-14, 24-25; 2:1-2.; 4:23-24; 12:12; 13:1-3; 18:7-8] . . . [Like] synagogal prayers, these cultic reunions of Christians also contained elements of praise and thanksgiving through the singing of psalms, hymns, and spiritual canticles [Acts 2:47; 4:24-25; Eph 5:19; Col 3:16; 1 Cor 14:26], as well as the teaching and preaching [Acts 20:7-8; 28-23; 31; 1 Cor 14:26-27].” (See also John 4:23; Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-35; Rom 8:26; 1 Cor 14:26-33.) (Scotto 16)
      4. With the exclusion of Jewish Christians from the synagogues c ad 90, “Christ now becomes the new Temple [John 2:13-22; Heb 5:1-4; 6:19-20; 7:18-19; 9:1-10], and Christian prayer begins to take on a stronger Christocentric orientation.” (Scotto 17)
      5. The *Didache* 8.2 (c ad 70-100) told Christians “to recite the Lord’s Prayer three times a day.” Perhaps the Lord’s Prayer was “a substitute for the three daily Jewish prayers composed of the *shema*, the *Shemone Esreh* or Eighteen Benedictions, and the *Kaddish*, the ancient Aramaic doxology [thus Jeremias, *Prayers* 78-81] . . .” (Scotto 17)
2. **200s**
   1. Tertullian (c ad 200)
      1. *De oratione*: “With regard to the time, the outward observance of certain hours will not be without profit. I refer to those hours of community prayer which mark the main divisions of the day, namely, the third, sixth, and ninth, which you may find were in established use in the Scriptures. . . . Although these incidents simply happen without any precept for observing these hours, it would be good to establish some precedent which would make the admonition to pray a binding force to wrest us violently at times from our business, as by a law, to such an obligation, just as we read it was certainly also observed by Daniel according to the discipline of Israel [Dan 6:11], that we pray no less than three times a day, as debtors to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Of course, we are expecting the appropriate prayers, which are due without any admonition at the approach of dawn and evening.” (Scotto 18)
         1. This passage refers to “the third, sixth, and ninth” hours, commonly known as terce, sext, and none. It refers to “incidents” in scripture which “established” their use. Perhaps Tertullian means these:
            1. terce (the third hour, 9 a.m.): Acts 2:15, “these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o’clock in the morning.”
            2. sext (the sixth hour, noon): Acts 10:9, “About noon the next day, as they [three men from Cornelius] were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray.”
            3. none (the ninth hour, 3 p.m.): Acts 3:1, “One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, at three o’clock in the afternoon.”
         2. “Although the hours for prayer in the synagogue were three [Dan 6:10, “he [got] down on his knees three times a day to pray”; Ps 55:17, “Evening and morning and at noon I utter my complaint and moan, and he will hear my voice”], there is no way to verify that they corresponded to the Christian hours of Terce, Sext, and None.” [173 n. 89] Terce, sext, and none probably were not “based on any corresponding times of prayer in Judaism. . . . [Probably they] simply formed the normal divisions of the day in the Roman world.” [21] (Scotto 21, 173 n. 89)
         3. “. . . the principal prayer hours of morning and evening [are] obligatory for all Christians (*legitimae orationes*), while he considered the outward observance of the lesser hours of Terce, Sext, and None as profitable and consequently almost obligatory as well (*quasi lege*).” (Scotto 18)
      2. “In addition to these three common hours and the two basic hours at the beginning of light and of the night, [in *Ad Uxorem*] Tertullian mentions a sixth hour within the context of a question put to Christian women concerning their pagan husbands. “Will not your rising in the night to pray be [18] interpreted to be some act of magic?” This would, therefore, seem to constitute a midnight hour of prayer.” (Scotto 18-19)
   2. Hippolytus, the *Apostolic Tradition* (c ad 215)
      1. Hippolytus “indicates the observance of seven hours of prayer . . .” (Scotto 19)
      2. morning prayer (*not* Eucharist, which is discussed in *Apostolic Tradition* ch. 36)
         1. *Apostolic Tradition* 39: “let the deacons and presbyters assemble daily . . . unless sickness prevents them. When all have assembled, they shall instruct those who are in the church, and after having also prayed, let each one go about his own business.” (Scotto 19)
         2. *Apostolic Tradition* 41: “let every faithful man and woman when they rise from sleep at dawn, before they undertake any work, wash their hands and pray to God, and so let them go to their work. But if there should be an instruction in the word, let each one prefer to go there, considering that it is God whom he hears speaking by the mouth of him who instructs. For he who prays with the Church will be able to avoid all the evils of that day. The God-fearing man should consider it a great loss if he does not go to the place in which they give instruction, and especially if he knows how to read. . . . And if there is a day on which there is no instruction let each one at home take a holy book and read in it sufficiently what seems profitable.” (Scotto 19)
      3. terce (*Apostolic Tradition* 41): “If you are in your own home, pray at the third hour and praise God. If you are elsewhere at that moment, pray in your own heart. Because at this hour Christ was seen nailed upon the tree.” (Mark 15:25) (Scotto 20)
      4. sext (*Apostolic Tradition* 41): “Pray as well on the sixth hour. Because when Christ was nailed to the wood of the cross, the daylight was suspended and a great darkness came upon the land.” (Mark 15:33; Luke 23:44; Matt 27:45) (Scotto 20)
      5. none (*Apostolic Tradition* 41): “Let there also be full prayer and praise at the ninth hour. . . . At that hour, therefore, Christ was pierced in his side and shed forth both water and blood.” (John 19:34) (Scotto 20)
      6. nighttime prayer: the *Apostolic Tradition* “recommends prayer before retiring, and thereafter two times during the night, once at midnight and again at cockcrow . . .” (Scotto 20)
         1. *Apostolic Tradition* 41: “Pray also before retiring for the night. But at about midnight rise and wash your hands with water and pray. And if you have a wife, both of you pray together; but if she is not yet baptized, go apart into another room and pray and return again to your bed. And be not slothful to pray. . . . It is necessary for the following reason to pray at this hour. . . . Because the ancients who handed on the tradition to us have taught us that in this hour all creation pauses for a brief moment to praise the Lord. And at cockcrow, likewise rise (and pray). Because at that hour of cockcrow, the children of Israel denied Christ, who we have known by faith.” (Scotto 20)
         2. “While prayer in the evening before retiring is enjoined, nothing is said about any public assembly at that hour outside of the reference [in *Apostolic Tradition* 25] to the *lucenarium* [*sic*]. Hippolytus gives evidence that the common liturgical evening meal (agape) was introduced by [172] the blessing of light [*luchnikon*, *lucernarium*], and responsorial psalmody; the people sang Alleluia in response. The introductory *lucernarium* has all but disappeared from the Roman rite, remaining most prominently in the Easter Vigil service. In the East it has survived . . .” (Scotto 172-173 n. 86)
   3. Origen, *Homilia in Genesim* (d. ad 254): “. . . Origen affirms that daily prayer services were held in the Church of Alexandria characterized by the reading of Sacred Scripture, instruction and prayer.” (Scotto 21)
   4. Cyprian, *De oratione Dominica* (d. ad 258)
      1. Christians must pray early in the morning so that, he says, “the Lord’s resurrection may be celebrated by morning prayer.” (Scotto 19)
      2. He also says “that the third, sixth, and ninth hours are hours which should be designated for prayer by all Christians.” (Scotto 19)
      3. Likewise, he says, “at the sunsetting and at the decline of day of necessity we must pray again.” (Scotto 19)
   5. prime and compline
      1. “Very early Completorium was separated from Vespers and served as a form of evening prayer. . . . Finally, another period of prayer, Prime, was inserted between Laudes and Tierce, thus completing the seven Canonical Hours of the later breviary.” (Bihlmeyer 1.337) “. . . a short prayer on rising and lying down—Prime and Compline.” (Scotto 28)
      2. Weiser dates the introduction of prime and compline much later: “About the year 500 there appeared in the monasteries two additional prayer hours: the Prime (first hour, six o’clock in the morning) and the Compline (*completa*: finished, before retiring at midnight).” (Weiser 20)
   6. the seven canonical hours
      1. *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* (3d ed.) defines “lauds” as “The service of prayers following the matins and constituting with them the first of the seven canonical hours.”
      2. So the seven canonical hours were: matins and lauds (counted as one), prime, terce, sext, none, vespers, and compline.
      3. In their fully developed forms (i. e., in monasteries after about 1200), matins took the longest to recite: “from an hour to an hour and a half.” (Eberhardt 1.297) Lauds and vespers took about a half hour (Frend 882); prime and compline were briefer; and the “little” hours (terce, sext, and none) took only “about six minutes . . .” (Little 128)
   7. At any rate, c ad 250, we find the following hours of daily prayer (see Weiser 19):

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| (current name:) | latin name | latin etymology | later name | roman time | (in our time:) |
| office of readings | *vigilia* | *vigilia* (wakefulness, a watch) | matins | night watch | midnight |
| morning prayer | *matutinum* | *matutina* (morning) | lauds (*laudare*, “praise”) | cockcrow | dawn, first light |
| prime | *prime* | *prime* (first) | prime | the first hour | sunrise, 6 a.m. |
| terce | *tertia* | *tertia* (third) | terce | the third hour | 9 a.m. |
| sext | *sexta* | *sexta* (sixth) | sext | the sixth hour | 12 p.m. |
| none | *nona* | *nona* (ninth) | none | the ninth hour | 3 p.m. |
| evening prayer | *lucerisarium* or *lucernarium* | *lucerna* (lamp) (i. e., the prayer when the lamps are lit) | vespers (*vesper*, “evening”) | dusk | 6-8 p.m. |
| compline | *completorium* | *complere* (fill out) | compline | bedtime | 8 p.m. |

“**Twilight** is that evening period of waning light from the time of sunset to dark, often termed dusk. Morning twilight, a time of increasing light, is called **dawn**. The source of this light is the Sun shining on the atmosphere above the observer. Twilight is a time of very slowly changing sky illumination with no abrupt variations. Nevertheless, there are 3 commonly accepted divisions in this smooth continuum defined by the distance the Sun lies below the astronomical horizon: civil twilight, nautical twilight, and astronomical twilight. The **astronomical horizon** is that great circle lying 90° from the zenith, the point directly over the observer’s head. Twilight ends in the evening or begins in the morning at a particular time. Nominally, evening events are repeated in reverse order in the morning. **Civil twilight** is the time from the moment of sunset, when the Sun’s apparent upper edge is just at the horizon, until the center of the Sun is 6° directly below the horizon. In many states, this is the time in the evening when automobile headlights must be turned on, not to see better, but to be seen by other drivers. After this time, a newspaper becomes increasingly difficult to read in the absence of artificial light. **Nautical twilight** ends when the Sun’s center is 12° below the horizon. By this time in the evening, the bright stars used by navigators have appeared, and the horizon may still be seen. After this time, the horizon is more difficult to perceive, preventing navigators from sighting stars. **Astronomical twilight** ends in the evening when the Sun is 18° below the horizon and the sky is dark enough, at least away from the Sun’s location, to allow astronomical work to proceed. Sunlight, however, is still shining on the higher levels of the atmosphere from the observer’s zenith to the horizon toward the Sun. Although not named as a period of twilight, when the Sun is 24° below the horizon, no part of the observer’s atmosphere, even toward the Sun, receives any sunlight. In the tropics, the Sun moves nearly vertically, accomplishing its 6°, 12°, or 18° depression very quickly. In the polar regions, the Sun’s diurnal motion may actually be nearly along the horizon, prolonging the twilight period or even not permitting darkness to fall at all. In mid-latitudes, civil twilight may last about a half hour; nautical, an hour; and astronomers can go to work in about 90 minutes.” (*The World Almanac and Book of Facts 1997*)

* 1. Were these prayers, in the 200s, public or private?
     1. Bihlmeyer seems to assume they were *private* until the 500s. Speaking of the 400s, he says, “Not only the clergy and monks took part in this form of prayer [the divine office], but from the sixth century, the laity, too, attended, at least for Matins and Vespers, since in many churches the Eucharistic service was not held on week days . . .” (Bihlmeyer 1.337)

(Scotto sees the establishment of morning and evening prayer as being *before* the development of the other hours; Bihlmeyer sees the predominance of morning and evening prayer as emerging *after* the development of most of the hours. Crichton agrees with Bihlmeyer: “By the end of the fifth century, morning and evening prayer emerged as the two focal points of this daily church Office in which both clergy and laity actively participated.” [J. D. Crichton, *Christian Celebration*—*The Prayer of the Church* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1976) 40] [Scotto 30])

* + 1. Weiser seems to assume they were *private* in the 200s. He says that they were “hours of daily private prayer” and that only in the 300s were “two of these exercises [lauds and vespers] . . . held in church.” But then he adds (citing Tertullian, *On Prayer* 28), “The faithful were not strictly obliged to attend, but from ancient reports we know that they thronged the churches in good numbers . . .” This suggests that the prayer services were public already in the 200s. (Weiser 19)
    2. Scotto assumes morning and evening prayer were *public* in the 200s, while terce, sext, and none became public in the 300s. Morning and evening prayer “were the two Hours in which the people participated freely in varying numbers while the other Hours, such as Terce, Sext, and None played little part in public worship at least until the fourth century.” (Scotto 174 n. 110)
    3. It is “the stronger assumption that most likely by [c ad 200] there were daily prayer services in both North Africa and Rome which the faithful were expected to attend.” (Scotto 21)
       1. Though Tertullian “recommends the observance of the lesser hours, and simply takes for granted morning and evening prayer as an established part of every Christian’s daily prayer life, he does not reveal to us whether he is speaking about private or public prayer.” (Scotto 21)
       2. Hippolytus refers to public morning prayer, though his references to terce, sext, none, and evening prayer are ambiguous. (Scotto 21)
       3. Origen refers to public prayer services, but does not elaborate. (Scotto 21)
       4. “. . . while recommending [lauds, terce, sext, none, and vespers], Cyprian asserts that prayer is public and common.” (Scotto 21)

1. **300s**
   1. introduction
      1. before and after ad 313
         1. Before Christianity was legalized in ad 313, “Christians had gathered publicly in their own homes and churches [but] had been considerably restricted both socially and culturally . . .” (Scotto 22)
         2. In 313 “Constantine issued the so-called Edict of Toleration which granted Christians full freedom of religion and worship.” (Scotto 22)
         3. “Now with the official patronage of the Emperor Constantine, coupled with the endowment of numerous basilicas throughout the empire, the Church’s life and worship experienced a new period of growth and development.” (Scotto 22)
      2. From “the cathedral or parochial “Office” [there evolved] present day Lauds and Vespers . . .” (Scotto 24)
      3. “These liturgies were, under the new circumstances, appropriately solemn and impressive liturgies . . .” (Scotto 23)
   2. the cathedral office (morning and evening prayers, with laity present)
      1. general references to public prayer in the 300s
         1. Eusebius of Caesarea (c 263-339): “in God’s churches throughout the world hymns, praises, and truly divine delights are arranged in his honor at the morning sunrise and in the evening . . .” (Scotto 22)
         2. Epiphanius, bishop of Salamis (c 315-403): “morning praises and prayers are continuously celebrated in the universal Church as well as evening psalms and prayers.” (Scotto 23)
         3. John Chrysostom (c 347-407): “every day there are prayers both in the evening and the morning . . .” (Scotto 23)
      2. the *Apostolic Constitutions* (c ad 380)
         1. This was “an ancient Church Order . . . a manual of disciplinary and liturgical regulations . . .” (Scotto 23)
         2. *Apostolic Constitutions*: “When you instruct the people, O Bishop, command and exhort them to make it a practice to come daily to the church in the morning and in the evening, and on no account to cease doing so, but to assemble together continually . . . [Do not] give preference to the necessities of this life [23] over the word of God; but assemble yourselves everyday, morning and evening, singing psalms and praying in the Lord’s house, in the morning saying the sixty-second psalm, and in the evening the one-hundred and fortieth psalm. Hasten to the church, therefore, with great desire and alacrity on the day of the Sabbath, and also on the day of the resurrection of the Lord, that is Sunday . . .” (Scotto 23-24)
      3. Egeria, *Diary of a Journey* (c 381-384)
         1. “A noble Roman lady from southern Gaul, a nun by the name of Aetheria (Sylvia) [in English, usually “Egeria”] . . . made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land about 395” and kept a diary of her travels. (Weiser 20) (Scotto dates her pilgrimage to c 381-384.)
         2. She describes the morning and evening services “as they were held in Jerusalem . . . in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre (Anastasis) . . .” (Weiser 20)
         3. Egeria, *Diary of a Journey*: “All the doors of the Anastasis are opened before cock-crow each day, and the “monazontes and parthenae” as they call them here, come in, and also some lay men and women, at least those who are willing to wake at such an early hour. From then until daybreak they join in singing the refrains to the hymns, psalms, and antiphons. There is a prayer between each of the [24] hymns, since there are two or three presbyters and deacons each day by rota, who are there with the monazontes and say the prayers between all the hymns and antiphons. As soon as dawn comes, they start the Morning Hymns, and the Bishop with his clergy comes and joins them. He goes straight into the cave . . . Again at midday everyone comes into the Anastasis and says psalms and antiphons until a message is sent to the Bishop. Again he enters. . . . At three o’clock they do once more what they did at midday, but at four o’clock they have Lychnicon, as they call it, or in our language, Lucernare.” (Scotto 24-25) (Scotto [24] says that “These prayers were continued [from] four o’clock and on till dusk.”)
         4. Egeria tells also “how the many children present spontaneously cried “Kyrie eleison” in answer to the deacon’s reading of commemorations.” (Weiser 20)
         5. “As to exactly who the *monazontes* and *parthenai* may be, we have no clear evidence. However, since Egeria does distinguish them from ordinary lay people, whom she refers to as secular men and women, it seems that they [174] were most likely ascetics or *ferventes*. While Egeria uses different words to describe people who have set themselves apart from the world for religious motives, her vocabulary is too confused to make it possible for us to distinguish with any great precision the exact meaning attached to the various technical terms she employs.” (Scotto 174-175 n. 111)
         6. Egeria describes “a well organized local liturgy of prayer wherein the faithful gathered daily for an established program of prayer together with their bishop and clergy. This program included the practice of *monazontes*, *parthenae* and dedicated laity coming day after day before dawn, to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem to begin their prayers. . . . Most conspicuous in these daily offices were the morning and evening prayers since they were celebrated with greater solemnity and since more people were accustomed to participate, namely, the bishop, his clergy and the community of the faithful.” (Scotto 24)
         7. “. . . the principal elements of this “cathedral” Office. The Christians gathered together in a public place to celebrate morning and evening prayers. While the bishop and his clergy did not initially participate in the service, they did enter in procession sometime during the liturgy to perform a specific function, namely, to officiate at the prayers and blessings. During the morning prayer service the people gathered to offer praise and thanksgiving to God for his mercy, while in the evening prayer service they assumed a penitential spirit asking God’s forgiveness for the failings of the day. Psalms were not selected numerically but according to the spirit and purpose of the particular hour. For morning prayer the community usually recited Psalm 62 (63) and Psalms 148-150, and in the evening service Psalms 116 (117), 129 (130) and 141 (142). It is also evident that other antiphons and hymns were chanted but unfortunately we have no record of these. Both hours were then concluded with a litany of the catechumens, other prayers and a dismissal.” (Scotto 25)
      4. conclusions
         1. The cathedral or ecclesial office “was the principal means used by the early Church to assemble publicly in order to give communal praise and thanksgiving to God especially at these principal hours of morning and evening.” (Scotto 25)
         2. Dugmore (*Influence* 51): “The special importance attached to these times of prayer is best explained on the hypothesis that they represent the tradition of the primitive Church at Jerusalem, derived directly from synagogue practice and [25] continued . . . until they became incorporated in the monastic Hours of Prayer sometime in the fourth century.” (Scotto 25-26)
         3. “Both the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* [1963] and the *General Instruction on the Liturgy of the Hours* [1971] place great emphasis upon the fact that Morning and Evening Prayer are the two most important Offices of the day [*SC* 100; *IGLH* 37]. In effect, this is a reaffirmation [139] of the ancient cathedral Office, when aside from the Eucharist itself, these two Hours represented the principal daily and communal public prayer of the ancient Church.” (Scotto 139-140)
   3. the monastic office (monks alone)
      1. development of monasticism
         1. “More and more disillusioned people fled the world in order to live lives of greater isolation and of almost exclusive dedication to prayer. Throughout the fourth century this movement grew steadily and eventually gave rise to the formation of communities of like-minded individuals. Thus through their renunciation of the world, family and possessions, these communities could then devote their entire lives to the pursuit of spiritual perfection and to prayer in a way which was impossible for Christians still living in the world, including the clergy.” A. Schememann (*Introduction to Liturgical Theology* [London: Faith Press, 1966] 107): “. . . “prayer itself now became the sole undertaking replacing all other tasks.” (Scotto 27)
         2. c ad 271: Anthony (c 250-356 [106 years]) in Egypt founds the eremetical (hermit) tradition. He withdraws to the Egyptian desert to pray, memorize scriptures, do penance, and practice self-denial (e. g., fasting). (Holmes 42)
         3. c 320: Pachomius (290-346) in Egypt founds the cenobitical tradition (monks living in community under an abbot). [42] Penance and self-denial were not as ascetical; far greater numbers joined. They prayed in common, chanted psalms, read the scriptures, and, “when a visiting priest was present,” celebrated the Eucharist. (Holmes 43) “His disciples became so numerous that before his death he governed eight houses [“thirty or forty monks under a rector”], besides the convents for women . . .” (Eberhardt 1)
         4. Eastern monasticism spread thanks to Hilarion of Gaza (291-371), Ephraem of Syria (306-373), and Basil the Great of Caesarea in Cappadocia (329-379) (“father of Eastern monasticism,” he “regulated the monks’ day [with] set time to liturgical prayer, meditative reading and manual labour”). (Holmes 43)
         5. Western monasticism spread thanks to Athanasius of Alexandria (293-373, through his biography of his master Anthony of Egypt), Martin of Tours (c 360: first monastery in Gaul, at Ligugé), Jerome (c 380-385, popularized monasticism in Rome; later founds a monastery at Bethlehem), Augustine (c 400: makes the church in Hippo semi-monastic), and John Cassian (415: establishes monasteries at Marseilles and Lerins). So before Benedict (the “father of Western monasticism”) “there were many examples of monastic life in the West . . . although numbers were smaller than in the East . . .” (Holmes 44)
      2. Egeria’s evidence
         1. Egeria “makes us aware of the presence of the *monazontes* and *parthenae* at the daily liturgical offices conducted at the Anastasis. While these “monks” and “virgins” or “nuns” were most likely ascetics or *ferventes*, . . . their constant presence at the daily prayer services, as well as her description of the well organized, ample and fairly formal liturgical celebrations conducted daily throughout the week is very significant. [She alerts us to] a new “monastic” type current of prayer and spirituality . . .” (Scotto 26)
            1. “. . . the weekday nighttime vigils [were] attended by the *monazontes* alone, outside of the solemn Sunday vigil which was attended by the entire Christian community . . .” (Scotto 26)
            2. “. . . daily, public prayer services in the early morning, [i. e.,] at cock-crow, [were] attended by the ascetics and *ferventes* with some dedicated secular lay men and women . . .” (Scotto 26)
            3. And there were “services at the third, sixth, and ninth hours . . .” (Scotto 26)
         2. “. . . the relatively simple pattern of worship previously celebrated by the ordinary clergy and laity was now being strongly influenced into a more expansive and formalized structure due to the particular needs of the growing number of ascetics and *ferventes* who apparently used the same parochial church edifices for their own daily worship.” (Scotto 26)
         3. “Generally characteristic of these early “monastic” communities was the praying of the entire psalter “in course” over a prescribed period of time, and nocturnal prayer composed of fixed psalms, hymns, and various prayers, which were initiated at cockcrow, and which were terminated in the early hours of the morning when the traditional morning prayers began.” (Scotto 27)
         4. “. . . the first generations of monks had either privately or together, recited the Psalms, and occasionally large numbers participated; but in their life of retirement from the world, little attention was given to the Church’s public worship.” (Leclerq 288)
         5. “From the beginnings of monastic life, the daily hours were kept by the monks in common, the psalms and many other prayers being chanted or recited in alternating groups (choir).” (Weiser 20)
         6. “Concurrent with the emergence and spread of monasticism, there [28] occurred a gradual, almost universal growth within the Church of a twofold rhythm of liturgical prayer”: the cathedral office and the monastic office. (Scotto 27-28)
            1. H. Dalmais (*Introduction to the Liturgy*, trans. R. Capel [Baltimore, MD: Helicon, 1961] 144): “The whole Christian community was called together for the morning and evening offices, for the vigils of great feasts and sometimes for the Sunday vigil. The monasteries kept a daily vigil and in the course of the day performed liturgical prayer at Terce, Sext, and None, adding almost everywhere a short prayer on rising and lying down—Prime and Compline.” (Scotto 28)
            2. There were “The gatherings of bishops with their clergy and the faithful throughout the fourth and fifth centuries in both the East and West”; [175] and there were ““monastic” communities, in both East and West, . . . celebrating in common, with far greater frequency and regularity, a full cursus of liturgical prayer.” (See Cassian, *De Coenobiorum Institutis* 2, 3.) (Scotto 175-176 n. 124)
   4. merger of the cathedral and monastic offices
      1. “Throughout the fourth and fifth centuries, these two rhythms of prayer began to come together and intermingle. [This led] to the merger of the cathedral and monastic rites into a twofold rite of public prayer within the Church.” (Scotto 28)
      2. “. . . the privileged site of Jerusalem seems to have been an ideal milieu for the introduction of the early monastic influence into the life of the local church . . .” (Scotto 28)
      3. “. . . the type of monks such as the *monazontes* and *ascetae* of Jerusalem . . ., the monks who were serving the Roman basilicas, or the *ferventes* or *devoti* of those monasteries of the Frankish kingdom [31] . . . should not be thought of as expressive of the fully formed monastic communities and monasteries of the later ages.” [177 n. 143] (Scotto 31, 177 n. 143)
      4. “This type of monk . . . made liturgical prayer rather than asceticism the basis of their particular devotion and consequently exerted a strong influence upon the formation of the Divine Office in the parish churches. It is to these monks, and more particularly to those of the Roman basilicas, that we can credit the establishment of the complete framework of the daily Hours and the [31] assignment of particular psalms to certain Offices. This, however, does not affirm the existence of a general uniformity in the celebration of the Hours. In fact, in the West, there was no such uniformity at least down to the ninth century.” (Scotto 31-32)
      5. “Within this period the people continued to come to church to pray the morning and evening Offices as often as they could with their bishops and clergy [Chrysostom (d. 407), *Homilia IV de Anna*], but because of practical limitations on their time and in the face of a general liturgical decline, the continuous and more comprehensive recitation of the Office was ensured in the cathedrals and greater churches by these various groups of monks [Jungmann, *Pastoral Liturgy* 151-157]. However, while the stability and content of prayer was undoubtedly improved in many regards, a certain trend began to develop which would eventually cause a decided shift from the parishes to the monasteries as the centers of liturgical celebration.” (Scotto 32)
      6. Around 1000, “there would eventually rise in the West a single, mixed tradition which would come to be known as the urban-monastic tradition.” See “900-1200” below. (Scotto 28)
2. **400s-500s**
   1. development of parishes
      1. In the 400s, “clerics belonged to the clergy of a definite church presided over by a resident bishop.” (Scotto 28)
      2. By c ad 400, “In the greater city centers of Christendom the Hours were distributed among the principal churches while in smaller towns they were not celebrated at all. At the same time not all clerics participated in the entire Office but took turns according to episcopal directions.” (Scotto 176 n. 127)
      3. In the 500s, “secondary churches began to spring up around the cathedral church in order to meet the pastoral needs of a growing Christian community. This development initially took place only in a relatively few city centers, principal among which was Rome, since at this time Christianity remained essentially urban with only a very gradual spreading into the countryside.” (Scotto 29) “The spread of Christianity [brought] about the establishment of urban parishes around the *ecclesia senior*, afterwards the creation of rural parishes, and the construction of basilicas over the tombs of martyrs . . .” (Salmon 107)
      4. “. . . the office was then [ad 400-800] the prayer of each local church, celebrated by the clerics who were in its service.” (Salmon 108)
   2. lay participation in the office
      1. Egeria described the Jerusalem liturgy of c 380, “in which the participation of the clergy and at least the devout laity, in both morning and evening prayer, was a customary practice.” (Scotto 29)
      2. “In Milan the participation of the people in these prayer services is clearly referred to by St. Ambrose (c. 339-397), when he exhorts his people to faithfully attend these liturgical celebrations since they have been apparently negligent in doing so. [*Expositio in Psalmum 118*:] “. . . early in the morning hasten to church offering your first pious prayers, and afterwards if material necessities call you, do not forget to say: “Early in the morning my eyes reminded me to meditate upon your words,” and then you can start your work. How joyful it is to start the day with hymns and songs from the beatitudes which you read in the Gospel!”“ (See Jungmann, *Pastoral Liturgy* 122-157.) (Scotto 30)
      3. Augustine (354-430)
         1. In the *Confessions* 5.9 he described his mother, Monica, “going to church daily both in the morning and in the evening that she might hear God in his word and he might hear her in her prayers.” (Scotto 30)
         2. In *De civitate Dei* “He also refers to the devotion of the entire community as daily they recite prayers and sing hymns and psalms in common . . .” (Scotto 30)
         3. In *Enarratio in Psalmum 66* he says of the zealous Christian that, like an ant, he “runs daily to the church of God, to pray, to listen to the lesson, to sing the hymn and to ruminate on what he had heard.” “This testifies clearly to the use of readings as well as psalms as was also evident in the Office at Milan in the time of Ambrose.” (Scotto 30)
      4. While these morning and evening prayers “seemed to assume the presence of the clergy they were, nevertheless, geared primarily for the people’s participation and were consequently comparatively short consisting of psalms, reading (homily), hymns, intercessions, and concluding prayers.” (Scotto 30)
   3. recitation of the seven canonical hours in the basilicas
      1. “In Rome, . . . by as early as [c 450], “monasticism” was already exerting a powerful influence upon local worship through the building of basilica convents, the duty of whose resident “monks” was to sing the Office in its full monastic cycle in the neighboring basilica.” (Jungmann, *Pastoral liturgy* 154) (Scotto 28)
      2. “. . . praying all the hours, from Vigils to evening [33] Compline, within the course of a single day” became common in the 400s. (Scotto 33-34)
      3. As early as 450, “long before Benedict’s time, there were already existing in Rome convents staffed by “monks” whose principal duty was to sing the Office in its full monastic cycle within the basilicas to which they were attached, thereby ensuring the celebration of a full monastic Office within these churches.” (Scotto 34)

The Middle Ages

1. **500s: Benedict and Gregory**
   1. St. Benedict of Nursia (c 480-c 547)
      1. The Benedictine divine office adopted from the monks attached to basilicas the practice of praying all the hours, matins to compline, each day. [33] But “the Benedictine Office [introduced] several new monastic elements into the Office such as the opening versicles, responses and hymns.” (Scotto 34)
      2. Benedict “stood for moderation: twelve Psalms a night, and the whole Psalter each week. [150 psalms ÷ 7 days = 22½ psalms / day.] He had enriched the monastic office with non-biblical texts which some churches were using in the celebration of the cult, like the hymns he called “Ambrosian.” He had emphasized the great value of this common prayer, the details of which were almost entirely determined by St. Benedict in his *Rule*. Yet in his *Rule*, the divine office is not among the occupations requiring the most time.” (Leclerq 288)
      3. “The monk’s chief duty was the *opus Dei*, chanting of the liturgical offices . . . The order of the day was arranged around these services. Dom Cuthbert Butler would reconstruct this order as follows [*Benedictine Monasticism* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1924) 275-290]: after seven to eight hours of unbroken sleep—save in summer when a siesta compensated—the monk began Matins about 1:45 to 2:30. This office occupied from an hour to an hour and a half. After an interval devoted to reflection and chant practice, Lauds began about 5:00 to 5:45. Spiritual reading occupied the monks until Prime at 6:30 to 7:30 according to the season. The monk’s day was punctuated by the “little hours” of Terce, Sext, and None. Vespers was said at evening, and after a public reading of a conference, the monk said Compline for night prayers and retired to rest. On Sundays, the offices and readings were prolonged in place of manual work, and a conventual Mass was sung. Soon, if not from the beginning, the full ceremonial of solemn Mass was observed daily.” (Eberhardt 1.297)
      4. “The hours varied according to season. In mid-March, for example, the average day would start at 2 a.m. when Vigils or the night office would be said. An hour’s meditation or reading of Scripture would follow. Lauds would be said at first light and Prime at sunrise around 6 a.m. There would be more meditation and reading until the time for Terce at 9. Between 9:15 and 4 p.m. there would be work in the fields broken at Sext which was said at noon. After work there would be Vespers at 4:30, the single (meatless) meal of the day at 5, and Compline at 5:45. The monks then would retire for rest and rise early to begin the new round at 2 a.m. the next morning. The Eucharist would be celebrated on Sundays and holy days. In the shorter days of winter the monks would have more rest, but in the summer less. It was a severe but not impossible regime and, as has often been pointed out, on a material level it corresponded to the standard of life of an Italian peasant of the day, to which was added a considerable degree of security and a sense of ordered purpose. There was to be nothing harsh or severe [882] (*nihil asperum*, *nihil grave*), but a balance between prayer, reading, and manual work . . .” (Frend 882-883)
   2. Gregory the Great (pope 590-604; a Benedictine) and Gregorian chant
      1. Gregorian chant
         1. “Chant originated from the early custom of singing psalms and hymns during divine service . . . Naturally in the early Church all singing in connection with religious worship was homophonic.” (Bihlmeyer 1.336)
         2. “In the Eastern Church the cantores (ψάλται) constituted one of the minor orders . . .” (Bihlmeyer 1.336)
         3. “Pope Sylvester is said to have established a special school for chanters at Rome about 330.” (Bihlmeyer 1.336)
         4. “During the liturgical reforms singing was further developed and encouraged.” [336] “Liturgical *reforms* in the West are ascribed to popes *Damasus* (366-384), *Gelasius* (492-496), *Gregory I* (590-604) and to *St*. *Ambrose* of Milan († 397).” (Bihlmeyer 1.336, 1.330 n. 1)
         5. “Somewhat later, *Ambrose* of Milan, who, like Hilary, wrote many beautiful hymns . . . created a special liturgical chant, based on ancient Greek music (cantus Ambrosianus), which combined melody with rhythmic accent.” (Bihlmeyer 1.336)
         6. “The schola cantorum which *Gregory* the Great founded became the model for all other such institutions. He is credited, with good reason, with being [336] the one who gave to liturgical chant the fixed form which came to be known as cantus Gregorianus, Romanus, firmus, choralis; and is said to have composed many new melodies. In order to preserve these melodies, a method of writing music in numbers was employed.” (Bihlmeyer 1.336-337)
            1. “Before his time, in the west, the verses of the psalms were chanted straight through in monotone without any break or inflexion, receiving only a slight melodic cadence at the end of each verse. The great liturgical reformer, whose sole aim was to bring the poetical and musical inspiration of the original Hebrew into harmony with the rhythm of the Latin text, introduced (and possibly, though not certainly, composed) what we now know as the Gregorian [56] Psalm Tones.” (Little 56-57)
            2. “Gregory was well equipped for this work: he had received an excellent education in science, philosophy and music. As papal legate he had spent seven years at Constantinople at the time when the famous *schola cantorum* founded by the Emperor Justinian was at the height of its splendour. He had thus ample opportunities to study the theory and practice of a more ancient Eastern type of music.” (Little 56 n. 1)
            3. “Choral psalmody as practised in the public worship of the Church since the time of St Gregory the Great—alternate verses, each consisting of two responsive clauses separated by an interval of silence—is designed to make evident even to untrained ears the fundamental principle of Hebrew poetry now known as parallelism.” (Little 52)
      2. Gregory and the spread of the Roman office
         1. “Pope Gregory the Great (590-604) played a singularly important role in [spreading the Roman form of the office]. As an ardent promoter of Benedictine monasticism, he employed the Benedictine monks as his principal emissaries in the evangelization of the rest of Europe, and thereby helped to spread the Roman liturgy throughout the Western world.” (Scotto 34)
         2. For example, in 596, he “sent Augustine (of Canterbury) along with forty monks to evangelize England. . . . [Thus] the Roman liturgy, and the Office in particular, became firmly established in England.” (Scotto 34)
2. **700s-800s**
   1. uniformity of the office
      1. “. . . in the West, there was no [uniformity in the divine office] at least down to the ninth century. Initially, each monastery basilica or group of monks continued to celebrate their own particular cursus of prayer. Eventually, however, . . . there would evolve a greater uniformity of observance, as for instance in the Roman basilica monasteries. . . . [Till about the 700s] there still was no uniform Office celebrated throughout the Church of the West, for the great church centers in Italy, Gaul, and Spain continued to retain their own essential traditions, [32] books, and ordering of the Office.” (Scotto 32-33)
      2. But “the essential elements . . . of the divine office had been settled before the monastic revival of the Carolingian period [under Benedict of Aniane, c 815 (lived 751-821)] . . .” (Leclerq 294)
   2. demise of the cathedral office
      1. “. . . through the sixth, seventh, or eighth centuries . . . the local clergy attached to the cathedrals and other prominent churches, continued the traditional practice of the daily recitation of morning and evening prayers together with the people, and on certain occasions the observance of the nocturnal Vigils. These Hours were very much part of the public prayer services of the church and not private devotions.” (Scotto 32)
      2. But between 600 and 800 “the *Matutinum* and *Lucernarium* gradually disappeared. The *Matutinum* was replaced by the introduction of daily Mass in the morning, and the *Lucernarium* was dropped because the faithful, especially in the northern countries, did not know Latin and were unable to take part.” (Weiser 21)
   3. “monasticisation” of the office (Scotto 33)
      1. From c 400-800 “the daily chanting of the Office in the Roman basilicas [and] many of the great churches outside of Rome, became more and more shaped by the monastic tradition. As the monastic presence grew with the increased number of monasteries and monks, in and around Rome for instance, their influence upon the parish Office became more and more pronounced. While initially participating along with the clergy and laity in the celebration of the morning and evening Hours in the parish church, they continued to recite their expanded monastic cursus of prayer within their own oratories. But this situation eventually helped to influence the local church communities to incorporate a program of prayer which more closely approached the more elaborate and fully developed monastic cursus. Although the fervor and magnificence of the monastic Offices contributed much toward attracting the faithful and causing the clergy to imitate the monks, to the degree that this was practical and possible, this process did not take place without protest. The clerics of Rome, for instance, resisted the imposition of the obligation to celebrate Vigils. However, as an increasing number of monks were elected bishops, they tended to introduce monastic usages into their dioceses such as the inclusion of the Hours of Terce, Sext, and None each day in the Cathedral Office.” (Scotto 33)
      2. “The Benedictines in particular exerted a singular influence toward this monasticisation of the Office.” (Scotto 33)
      3. “Although well-known from the sixth century there is no conclusive evidence to affirm that all the monasteries of Rome exclusively adopted the Benedictine rule, at least not before the influence of Cluny [founded 910] in the tenth century.” (Salmon 105)
      4. “Initially affected by the liturgical practice of the Roman church, their own prayer order now found its way back into the monasteries of Rome and in turn effected its own unique influence. Eventually this new order of prayer was adopted by the Roman basilicas and even the Vatican basilica itself, and through the testimony of the many pilgrims and monks who came through Rome, it gradually spread itself throughout the West.” [33] “This process was a very slow one . . . in Italy and Gaul . . . for a long time it continued to compete with Columban usages which it [177] eventually ousted.” (Scotto 33, 177-178 n. 157)
      5. After Gregory the Great sent Augustine of Canterbury with forty monks to evangelize England in 594, “the Roman liturgy, and the Office in particular, became firmly established in England.” (Scotto 34)
      6. “In the late seventh and early eighth centuries a similar mission sent back to the continent from England proved to be equally influential in establishing the same Roman Office throughout the continent. St. Boniface (680-754), an English Benedictine monk, known as the Apostle of Germany, was especially effective in helping to spread the Roman liturgy and Office in all the countries north of the Alps. This movement, known on the continent as the “reform” [34] of St. Boniface, served as a prelude to the Carolingian “renaissance.”“ (Scotto 34)
      7. But up to the early 800s, “the complete Office was celebrated solely in the basilicas of Rome, in those churches which had “monasteries” attached to them, and in those abbeys following the rules of Saint Columban, Saint Benedict or others who possessed a full cursus of prayer.” (Scotto 178 n. 165)
      8. “. . . the decisive influence the Benedictine reform had upon the Office was in eventually effecting the imposition of the solemn and daily celebration of the full monastic Office upon the resident clergy of all churches and parishes.” (Scotto 34)
      9. “For some centuries the *Opus Divinum* (Divine Work), as the Office used to be called, remained almost exclusively a task of monks, while the secular clergy continued to perform the two traditional public services (*Matutinum* and *Lucernarium*) together with their congregations in church. From the eighth century, however, the recital of the whole Divine Office in common was also introduced among the secular clergy, who had started to live a community life in most places and were called *Canonici* (canons), from the canonical rules they followed.” (Weiser 20)
   4. clerical obligation to say the office
      1. Church “leaders began to consider the celebration of the Office as an obligation incumbent upon themselves and their clergy.” (Scotto 31)
      2. In 528 “the Emperor Justinian issued a decree in which he commanded the local clergy to participate in the Vigils as well as in Lauds and Vespers under pain of expulsion from the clerical ranks.” (Scotto 31)
      3. “. . . in Rome itself, in a document [*Liber diurnus III*] dating from [c 600], we learn of an oath taken by suburbicarian bishops on the occasion of their consecration promising the Pope that together with their clergy they would be faithful to the celebration of the daily vigil. The necessity for such an oath seems to indicate the presence of some problems with the constancy of the Roman clergy in the celebration of the Vigils.” (Scotto 31)
      4. “Apparently the same problem existed in Spain and Gaul and consequently throughout the sixth century the church authorities in all these territories were obliged to issue a number of canons [Council of Agde (ad 506), Council of Tarragone (516), Council of Braga II (563)] wherein they insisted that the clergy participate in the recitation of the Office as in the past. . . . Unfortunately, however, despite these strong directives the negligence of the bishops and the clergy toward the liturgical life of their churches gradually became more prevalent as the bishops became increasingly involved in politics and the administration of their extensive domains.” (Scotto 31)
      5. In the Carolingian renaissance of the early 800s, “while the obligation for all monks to the choral recitation of the entire Office already had been forcefully and precisely laid down by rule and sanction, the same obligation became gradually imposed upon the secular clergy as well.” [35] “. . . the obligation for the celebration of the daily Office . . . was made formal and explicit by the Council of Aix-la-Chapelle” (ad 816). (Scotto 35, 178 n. 171)
3. **800-1100**
   1. the Carolingian renaissance (751-987)
      1. Pepin III (Pepin the Short), king of the Franks 751-768, “most likely under the influence of the Anglo-Saxon monks, sought to effectively establish the Roman rite in all of Gaul.” (Scotto 35)
      2. “This same goal was shared and carried to fulfillment by his son, the Emperor Charlemagne. Concerning the Roman Office, it was he who was responsible for the issuance of many decrees which sought to ensure its daily celebration in all the churches of the empire. Throughout this period of liturgical reform, therefore, thanks to the Benedictine influence, it became the general practice to celebrate daily the Roman Office in all the collegiate churches and chapels of the empire, just as it was celebrated in the imperial chapel at Aix-la-Chapelle.” [35] “. . . the obligation for the celebration of the daily Office . . . was made formal and explicit by the Council of Aix-la-Chapelle” (ad 816). (Scotto 35, 178 n. 171)
      3. “With the flowering of the Carolingian renaissance through the ninth century, the Romanization of the liturgy and Benedictine reform arrived at their logical climax with the high standard of monastic observance exemplified in the congregation at Cluny, whose decisive influence upon the liturgical worship of the Church would be felt throughout the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries.” (Scotto 35)
   2. increasing complexity of the office
      1. Benedict himself “was an innovator since he had introduced into monastic liturgy the “Ambrosian hymns,” amongst others. The tendency to embellish the divine service with new texts, and especially poetic texts, continued to manifest itself everywhere. [291] . . . This proliferation of texts whose purpose was to embellish other texts could, of course, give rise to dangers . . .” (Leclerq 291, 294)
      2. In Benedict’s *Rule* “the divine office is not among the occupations requiring the most time. [But] the role played by the liturgy in the monastic life tended to grow, and Benedict of Aniane ratified this evolution. From then on, the monks’ life, in this respect, bore a great resemblance to that of canons who performed the services of the cult in the cathedral churches. From the ninth to the twelfth century, monastic liturgy continued to grow richer and developed to the point where, in certain localities, it accounted for almost the entire day.” [288] “. . . it was during the great monastic centuries, from the ninth to the twelfth that the minor texts were established, such as the formulas for the benedictions of the lessons, the absolutions, and all the accessory pieces which enriched the primary texts of the liturgy.” [294] (Leclerq 288, 294)
      3. The Roman liturgy “soon became encumbered with supplemental practices and local customs eventually representing a heterogeneous mixture with little conformity to the original liturgy of Rome. The work of Amalar of Metz (c. 780-850/1) is especially indicative of this trend. It is this “Gallicanized” liturgy with its reshaped, mixed Frankish-Roman Office which in the tenth century makes its way back to Rome and influences the liturgical practices of the Eternal City itself.” [35] “However, in the eleventh century, the Office celebrated by the Pope and his court in the Papal Chapel remained substantially the old, Roman monastic Office.” (Scotto 35, 178 n. 176)
      4. “At this time the Church at Rome was experiencing a general liturgical decline which adversely affected the celebration of the Divine Office as it continued to grow in volume and complexity becoming more and more of a burden to the secular clergy.” (See Abelard, “Epistle 10.”) (Scotto 35)
      5. Beginning c 950 “a difference in practice grew up and was maintained between the two regions whose predominating points of view are symbolized by the names of Gorze and Cluny. In the beginning, less time was allotted to the office [at Cluny]. But monastic life everywhere remained marked by its great esteem for public worship. The monks’ entire life was led under the sign of the liturgy, in rhythm with its hours, its seasons and its feasts . . .” (Leclerq 288)
      6. In the 1000s and 1100s, “several new Offices were added to the full monastic cursus, such as the Office of the Dead and that of the Blessed Virgin Mary, as well as the seven penitential psalms [6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 145], the fifteen gradual psalms [120-134], the Litany of the Saints, and a host of other prayers and rubrical elements.” (Scotto 36)
      7. “The Cistercians [founded ad 1098] inaugurated a reaction, almost a revolution, when they reinstated the pure and simple liturgy in which biblical texts play the predominant part. Still, not a few of their number prefer solemn masses to austere psalmody.” (Leclerq 294)
      8. Pope Gregory VII (1073-1085) initiated reforms, but his “efforts did little to rectify the situation . . . the sad condition of the Roman liturgy persisted throughout the following century.” (Scotto 36)
4. **1200-1500**
   1. the urban-monastic office
      1. “. . . the distinction between the ecclesial and monastic Offices now was no longer apparent. . . . there continued to exist certain divergences [but] they were relatively peripheral . . .” (Scotto 36)
      2. “With the advent of the urban-monastic Office, and with the imposed obligation not only upon monks but upon the secular clergy as well, the choral recitation of the Office becomes essentially a matter for monks and clerics with the laity becoming less and less involved.” (Scotto 36)
      3. “. . . all too often the Hours would be entirely recited in a block, at a particularly convenient time of the day . . .” (Scotto 83)
   2. lay participation
      1. “Throughout this period of history there was a growing separation occurring between the official liturgical activities of the Church and the worshiping community of the faithful. . . . one of the principal reasons was this monasticisation of the Office and its continued development through the many accretions . . . into an elaborate and complicated prayer of excessive length. While this trend toward growth and elaboration had been initiated as early as the eighth century, in a very gradual and inconsistent manner it continued up into the eleventh century as exemplified in the community at Cluny. Under the definitive influence of Cluny, not only did the Office grow to excessive length, but the splendor and solemnity of its celebration was greatly increased . . .” (Scotto 36)
   3. the breviary
      1. The papacy of Innocent III (1198-1216) initiated “a new period of liturgical renaissance, witnessed in part by the compilation of the Office of the Papal Curia. Substantially retaining the characteristics of the old Roman monastic Office, this “new” Office was marked by a much greater simplicity and austerity of style than the Romano-Frankish Office now firmly established in the Roman basilicas and was therefore much better suited to the needs of the times. Eventually, since most likely it had become part of the liturgy of the cathedral of Assisi, and also because of very practical considerations, the Franciscan Order adopted this convenient and relatively easy-to-carry liturgical book, or breviary, which was in use at the papal court. Carrying their breviaries with them wherever they traveled, these itinerant preachers were instrumental in spreading this Office throughout Europe, the East, and Africa as well.” (Scotto 37)
      2. “While initially this Papal Office was an improvement over the complex and disproportionately lengthy Romano-Frankish Office and consequently was well received everywhere, eventually it too . . . proved to be unsatisfactory in properly meeting the contemporary spiritual needs of both clergy and laity.” (Scotto 37)
      3. The liturgy of the hours “became commonly known as the breviary, or priest’s daily prayer book, in effect the exclusive, and principally private prerogative of the clergy and religious.” [vii] “With the advent of the Breviary in the twelfth century, . . . private recitation of the Office facilitated the eventual transformation of this one-time communal act of worship into a private prayer book for the clergy.” (Scotto vii, 38)
      4. In the 1200s, “when the secular clergy for the greater part had ceased to live in community, the *private* recitation of the Divine Office was enjoined as a daily duty on each clergyman, starting with the order of the subdeaconate. This law is still in force [*Code of Canon Law* 135]. The private recital is not necessarily bound to the official hours, but the whole Office must be performed every day. In the monasteries the Office is still chanted in common, as of old, and at appointed hours [*Code of Canon Law* 610].” (Weiser 20) “Its daily celebration is required as a sacred obligation by men in holy orders and by men and women religious who have professed solemn vows.” (Foy 210)
   4. books of hours
      1. “Book of Hours, small prayer book for private devotions, produced chiefly in the 14th and 15th centuries in France and the Low Countries. Lavishly illuminated, it usually contained prayers for the canonical hours and other occasions, as well as a calendar . . .” (*The Encarta 98 Desk Encyclopedia*, “Book of Hours”)
      2. Between 600 and 800 “the *Matutinum* and *Lucernarium* gradually disappeared. . . . There was, however, a great desire on the part of the people to keep the official prayer hours with appropriate private devotions of their own. This desire, encouraged by the authorities of the Church, gave rise to a wealth of *horaria* (hour books, “prymers,” *Stundenbücher*), which were in use all through the Middle Ages. They contained psalms, selections from the liturgical texts, and many other prayers of private origin. As the original “hours” in the ancient Church had usually been connected with particular commemorations of the mysteries of Christ’s life and especially of His Passion, these medieval hour books also devoted each part of their daily reading to a certain event of the Saviour’s life and Passion. Great indulgences were granted by the popes for this pious exercise of daily hours in honor of the redemptive suffering of Christ.” (Weiser 21)
      3. “However, the books could serve only people who mastered the art of reading, and they were a minority in those days. People who could not read, and among them especially the lay brothers in the monasteries, substituted for the written texts a certain number of familiar prayer formulas which they knew by heart. Thus, for instance, one hundred and fifty Ave Marias were substituted for the one hundred and fifty psalms, and the mysteries of Christ’s life (taken from ancient responsories) were inserted in the Hail Marys. It was in this way that the rosary gradually developed during the High Middle Ages. Saint Dominic (1221) is credited with the spreading of this particular exercise among the lay population of Italy.” (Weiser 21)
      4. “Originating in the fourteenth century and continuing to proliferate until the mid-twentieth century were a variety of Books of Hours for the laity and for lay religious. Essentially these books contained such prayers as the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Office of the Dead, the Gradual and the Seven Penitential Psalms, the Litany of the Saints, and other such popular devotional prayers. Though in their own right these prayers were certainly praiseworthy, they were not really the canonical Office . . . [But] since the laity were being more and more effectively cut off from active and communal participation in the official prayer of the Church, these devotions did serve to bridge the gap which had developed between the prayer life of the faithful and the official prayer life of the Church.” (Scotto 40)

The Modern Period

1. **1500-1900**
   1. “. . . the Divine Office had grown into so elaborate a prayer that from [1500] to the Council of Trent (1545-1563), it became the object of almost continual reform. . . . Before the Council of Trent, the Spanish Cardinal Francisco de Quinonez (d. 1540) was commissioned by Pope Clement VII (1523-1534) to restore the Office as far as possible to its ancient form, said restoration to be characterized by a simplification of the Office, a return to the Fathers of the Church, and a greater degree of historical accuracy. In undertaking this reform the principal intention of Cardinal Quinonez was to revise the Hours so that they could more easily be recited privately by those clerics who were very involved in the pastoral ministry. In essence this revision “treated the Office, at least in practice, as a private prayer; in contrast to the Catholic idea of worship, it stressed the doctrinal end of the Office at the expense of that of divine praise . . .” [Lechner and Eisenhofer, *Liturgy of the Roman Rite* 445] Hence the view of the Office as primarily a personal obligation for religious and secular clergy is now given even further impetus. While initially the breviary of Cardinal Quinonez enjoyed great success, eventually the radical nature of this reform began to attract increasing opposition from the clergy.” (Scotto 38)
   2. Trent’s *Breviarium Romanum* (1568)
      1. “In answer to the growing criticism among churchmen over the structure of this revised breviary further reforms were initiated by the Council of Trent which would eventually culminate in the revised breviary of 1568.” (Scotto 38)
      2. “The object of a special commission appointed by Pope Paul IV (1555-1565), was not to compose a new breviary, but to restore the old breviary of the Roman Curia, which was then still in use, to its original [38] form, always keeping in mind the contemporary needs of the Church.” (Scotto 38-39)
      3. “In the resultant reformed *Breviarium Romanum* promulgated by Pope Pius V (1566-1572) in 1568, “the fact that the breviary is a public prayer is heavily stressed, and the difference between public (choral) and private recitation almost entirely eliminated.”“ (Lechner and Eisenhofer, *Liturgy of the Roman Rite* 446) (Scotto 39)
   3. Latin
      1. “. . . the Council Fathers outrightly rejected the petition of certain reformers requesting that for doctrinal reasons the Church abandon further use of the Latin language in public worship and resort to the vernacular languages. Therefore, . . . the common Christian worshiper was still to be denied his rightful role of full, active participation . . .” (Scotto 39)
      2. “A great degree of this attitude on the part of the council fathers could be accounted for by the very complex and perilous times in which the Church found herself due to the Protestant Reformation.” (Scotto 180 n. 203)
      3. Latin “proved to be a most formidable obstacle to . . . participation by the laity, a large portion of whom were uneducated. [40] . . . the liturgy had become . . . almost completely incomprehensible to the Christian communities in general. . . . the East had essentially undergone a like process of alienation albeit to a lesser degree.” (Scotto 40-41)
      4. Pope Clement XI (1700-1721), in the papal bull *Unigenitus* (September 8, 1713) “rejected the eighty-sixth proposition of Quesnel . . .” Quesnel had said: “To deprive the common people of the consolation of combining their own prayers with those of the whole Church is a usage repugnant to the practice of the Apostles and to the designs of God.” (Scotto 41)
      5. Pope Pius VI (1775-1799), on August 28, 1794, “condemned article sixty-six of the Synod of Pistoia [by saying:] “The use of the vernacular in liturgical prayers is false and foothardy . . .” (Scotto 41)
   4. Yet “parochial celebration of the Office managed to survive in varying degrees throughout Europe. . . . these services were generally well attended, especially for Matins sung before Mass and for Vespers on Sundays and Holy Days.” (Scotto 39)
   5. Ignatius Loyola (1491/5-1556)
      1. Loyola “recommended the Office highly as a very special form of prayer.” In *The Spiritual Exercises* he said, “We ought to praise the frequent hearing of Mass, the singing of hymns, psalmody, the long prayers whether in the church or outside; likewise, the Hours arranged at fixed times for the whole Divine Office, for every kind of prayer, and for the canonical Hours.” (Scotto 39)
      2. “Yet when founded in 1540 the Society of Jesus did not have the obligation of communal recitation of the Divine Office, a fact which would have been unthinkable at an earlier period of time such as at the [39] foundation of the Franciscans or Dominicans.” (Both were founded in the early 1200s.) (Scotto 39-40)
   6. Francis de Sales (1567-1622)
      1. “Likewise St. Francis de Sales in *The Introduction to the Devout Life* urged Philothea: “Besides this (meditation and Mass) Philothea, you should assist at the Office of the Hours and of Vespers on feast days and Sundays, as far as it is convenient for you to do so; because these days are dedicated to God, there is ever more good and consolation in the public offices of the Church than in what is done individually, God having so ordained that what is done in common should be preferred to every kind of individual action.”“ (Scotto 40)
   7. 1600-1900
      1. In the 1600s there were “reforms of the Roman Breviary by Popes Clement VIII (1592-1605), Urban VIII (1623-1644), and Clement X (1669-1676), [but] these reforms were not of great consequence . . .” (Scotto 40)
      2. From the *Breviarium Romanum* of 1568 “to the time of Pope Pius X (1903-1914) no significant change was effected in the breviary . . .” (Scotto 41)
      3. “Protestant congregations kept the use of traditional hour books (with ancient liturgical texts) alive for quite some time. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, however, both among Catholics and Protestants, a new kind of prayer book, containing instruction, meditation, litanies, prayers for “special occasions” like confession, communion, morning, and evening, gradually supplanted the psalters and hour books; thus the ancient devotion of daily hours became lost and forgotten in the minds of most modern Christians.” (Weiser 22)
2. **from the modern liturgical movement to Vatican Council II**
   1. introduction
      1. “It was only with the advent of the modern liturgical movement, and the first initiatives of Pope Pius X, with their eventual culmination in the convocation of the Second Vatican Council in 1964, that truly significant reform, related to the Divine Office as a prayer for all the People of God, was effected.” (Scotto 41)
      2. “The present century has borne witness to two trends evolving in Catholic thought concerning the Liturgy of the Hours.” (Scotto 43)
         1. “The first and by far the most prevalent trend has been that which has sought to [make the office] a more accessible and rewarding experience for the clergy, many of whom had great difficulties with the obligation of its private recitation.” (Scotto 43)
         2. “The second trend . . . seeks to reestablish the Liturgy of the Hours as the public, communal prayer for all the People of God.” (Scotto 43)
   2. the modern liturgical movement
      1. liturgical reforms of Pope St. Pius X (1903-1914)
         1. Pius X had “an astute and sensitive pastoral judgment . . .” (Scotto 44)
         2. 1903: Pius X’s motu proprio, *The Restoration of Church Music* (*Tra le solecitudini*) (*ASS* 36:329-339) “. . . he firmly delineated the rules for the use of chant and sacred music . . .” But he also “pleaded for the restoration of the true role of the faithful in the liturgical worship of the Church.” (Scotto 44)
         3. 1905: the Sacred Conciliar Congregation’s decree, *Sacra Tridentina Synodus* urged daily reception of the Eucharist. (*ASS* 38:400-406) (Scotto 44-45)
         4. July 1911: “the Pope established a commission for the purpose of attempting to restore some order once again to the Breviary.” (Scotto 45)
            1. J. H. Miller (*Fundamentals of the Liturgy* [Notre Dame, IN: Fides, 1959] 325): “The two major disorders caused by the many feasts with special Offices were that the Psalter was seldom recited in its entirety and the Scriptural readings, too, were often excluded. And so the same old problem of reconciling the rights of temporal and sanctoral cycles had to be faced. The commission set two objectives before itself: (a) to make the ferial [weekday] Office once again functional, and (b) to maintain the feasts of the saints.” (Scotto 45)
            2. The resulting office mixed the two cycles by redistributing of the psalms throughout the hours and by increasing the dignity of the scriptures and of Sunday. (Scotto 45)
            3. “. . . there seemed to be no awareness on the part of the commission concerning the question of the active participation of the laity in this prayer . . .” (Scotto 45)
            4. Also, “the rubrics still remained too numerous and complicated. They continued the heavy rubrical tradition and the mentality that all ought to be meticulously predisposed and everything tacitly fixed. There was no indication at all of the atmosphere of freedom and variety which marked the ancient liturgy.” (Scotto 45)
         5. November 1911: Pius X’s apostolic constitution *The New Arrangement of the Psalter in the Roman Breviary* (*Divino afflatu*) (AAS 3:633-638) (Scotto 45)
            1. This officially promulgated the reformed breviary. (Scotto 45)
            2. It “announced future plans for a more ample revision of the Office.” [45] This never occurred, since the pope died in 1914. (Scotto 45-46)
         6. conclusions
            1. Pius X’s reform efforts had little immediate effect. (Scotto 46)
            2. But they “helped to lead the way toward an eventual rediscovery of the liturgy as true prayer.” (Scotto 46)
      2. the Belgian liturgical movement
         1. Dom Lambert Beauduin, a Benedictine, was “inspired by the liturgical incentives of Pope Pius X . . .” (Scotto 46)
         2. In 1909, Beauduin proposed a liturgical renewal. “The central idea of this program was to have all the faithful live a common spiritual life nourished by the official worship of Holy Mother Church.” (Scotto 47)
            1. “This was to be effected through a translation of the Roman Missal and its promotion among the faithful as their principal prayer book . . .” (Scotto 47)
            2. There would also be a “promotion of Gregorian chant, with an attendant spiritual and liturgical formation of choirs, through retreats in liturgical centers such as Benedictine monasteries.” (Scotto 47)
            3. For the divine office, he wanted “to reestablish the [47] Vespers and Compline of Sunday, and to give to these services a place second only to that of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. . . . through the recitation of Compline as evening prayer, and through attendance at the parochial recitation of Vespers the piety of the faithful could be more fully and actively integrated into the Christian mysteries. Toward this end he very strongly advocated the restoration of earlier liturgical traditions in Christian homes.” (Scotto 48)
            4. “. . . he very wisely realized that unless the clergy was first convinced of the spiritual power of the liturgy, any hopes of applying these principles to the lives of the faithful would inevitably end in failure.” (Scotto 48)
         3. “. . . these ideas became disseminated principally through the publication of a small people’s missal published in fascicles, followed by a review entitled *La Vie liturgique*, published at [Beauduin’s monastery,] Mont-Cesar, Louvain in 1910. . . . These [publications were] supported by the establishment at Mont-Cesar of the conferences of the *Semaines liturgiques*.” (Scotto 48)
      3. the German-Austrian liturgical movement
         1. In Germany after World War I, “the liturgical movement at first centered upon the monasteries of Beuron and Maria-Laach. . . . Under the inspired leadership and profound historical insights of such outstanding men as Abbot Ildephonse Herwegen (1874-1946), Dom Odo Casel (1886-1948), and Romano Guardini (1885-1968), to mention but a few, the movement was given great substance and impetus.” (Scotto 49)
         2. “Eventually, complemented by the predominantly pastoral characteristics of the school of Klosterneuberg in Austria, under the very able direction of Pius Parsch (1884-1954), the German movement tended to more closely identify with that of Belgium.” (Scotto 49)
      4. Liturgical renewal “soon spread from Belgium and Germany and throughout the rest of Europe. [49] . . . That this movement had awakened popular interest in the newly rediscovered view of the liturgy was clearly attested to by the increased demand on the part of the faithful for greater knowledge and involvement in liturgical matters.” (Scotto 49-50)
      5. 1928: Pius XI’s apostolic constitution, *The Liturgy and Gregorian Chant* (*Divini Cultus*). This “reaffirmed the true role of the faithful in the liturgical worship of the Church.” E. g.: “It is most important that when the faithful assist at the sacred ceremonies, or when pious sodalities take part with the clergy in a procession, they should not be merely detached and silent spectators, but, filled with a deep sense of the beauty of the liturgy, should sing alternately with the clergy or the choir, as it is prescribed. Let the clergy . . . [instruct] the people in the liturgy and in music, as being matters closely associated with Christian doctrine.” (*AAS* 21 [1929] 39-40) (Scotto 50)
      6. Pius XII
         1. The liturgical movement “began to attract the official recognition and support of the Holy See itself. Aware and wary of the many diversified aspects of this movement, Pope Pius XII sought to give it a more unified and positive direction.” (Scotto 51)
         2. 1943: encyclical letter, *The Mystical Body of Christ* (*Mystici Corporis*) (*AAS* 35:193-248). Though using broad terms, the pope did “affirm that the liturgy was both expressive and constitutive of the Church itself.” (Scotto 51)
         3. 1945: motu proprio, *The Use of the New Latin Version of the Psalms in the Divine Office* (*In cotidianis precibus*) (*AAS* 37:65-67)
            1. “. . . we trust that henceforth all may derive from the performance of the Divine Office ever greater light, grace and consolation . . .” (*AAS* 37:67)
            2. “. . . examples of sanctity . . . appear so resplendently in the psalms . . .” (*AAS* 37:67)
            3. To “sentiments of divine love, strenuous courage and loving contrition . . ., in the reading of the psalms, the Holy Spirit invites us.” (*AAS* 37:67)
         4. “. . . the terrible destruction, pain, and sorrow left in the wake of [the Second World War] caused the [50] Church to meditatively reexamine and reevaluate its role in the world. [It was] Convinced of the need to renew itself . . .” (Scotto 50-51)
         5. 1947: encyclical on the liturgy, *Mediator Dei* (*AAS* 39:521-595)
            1. Pius wanted “to transform the liturgical movement into an officially recognized movement of the Church . . .” (Scotto 52)
            2. “Generally positive in tone, it does, however, contain many negative elements as well, no doubt reflecting some of the unrest caused by the liturgical movement in various areas of the Church’s life.” (Scotto 52)
            3. “Being the first encyclical completely devoted to the liturgy, it provided the liturgical movement with a new and decisive impetus, representing [as B. Neunheuser put it,] “the first official recognition of the value of the liturgical movement on the level of the universal Church, becoming in fact, in this way, the ‘magna carta’ of the renewal which it intended to effect.”“ (Scotto 52)
            4. *Mediator Dei* “provides us with an excellent working definition of the liturgy”: “In every liturgical action, therefore, the Church has her divine Founder present with her: Christ is present in the august Sacrifice of the altar both in the person of His minister and above all under the Eucharistic species. He is present in the Sacraments, infusing into them the power which makes them ready instruments of sanctification. He is present finally in the prayer of praise and petition we direct to God, as it is written: “Where there are two or three gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them” (Mt. 18:20). The sacred liturgy is consequently the public worship which our Redeemer as Head of the Church renders to the Father as well as the worship which the community of the faithful renders to its Founder, and through Him to the Heavenly Father. It is, in short, the integral public worship rendered by the Mystical Body of Christ in the entirety of its Head and members.” (*AAS* 39:528-529) (Scotto 53)
            5. “. . . the Pope speaks specifically about the Divine Office as the prayer of the Mystical Body of Christ but seemingly only when recited by the official ministers of the Church on behalf of all the faithful . . .” *Mediator Dei* ch. 3: “The Divine Office is the prayer of the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, offered to God in the name and on behalf of all Christians, when recited by priests and other ministers of the Church and by religious who are deputed by the Church for this.” (Scotto 54)
            6. “Further along, however, the Holy Father does address himself to the question of the active participation of the faithful at least in Vespers sung on feast-days.” *AAS* 39:575-576: “In an earlier age, these canonical prayers were attended by many of the faithful: but this gradually ceased, and, as we have already said, their recitation at present is the duty only of the clergy and of religious. The laity have no obligation in this matter. Still, it is greatly to be desired that they participate in reciting or chanting Vespers sung in their own parish on feast days. We earnestly exhort you, Venerable Brethren, to see that this pious practice is kept up, and that wherever it has ceased you restore it if possible. . . . Sundays and Holydays, then, must be made holy by divine worship, which gives homage to God and heavenly food to the soul. Although the Church only commands the faithful to abstain from servile work and attend Mass and does not make it obligatory to attend evening devotions, still she desires this . . .” (Scotto 54)
            7. But “the Office would continue to be prayed in a language, namely Latin, which would effectively prevent any widespread and meaningful participation on the part of the faithful.” [54] “. . . permission for the use of the vernacular was extended to certain areas of the liturgy which were left unspecified [*AAS* 39:545].” (Scotto 54, 78)
         6. 1953: Pius XII’s apostolic constitution, *The New Discipline for the Eucharistic Feast* (*AAS* 45 [1953] 15-24)
         7. March 1955: the Sacred Congregation of Rites’s decree, *The Reduction of the Rubrics to a Simpler Form* (*AAS* 47 [1955] 218-219) was “inspired by the pastoral motive of simplifying the recitation of the Divine Office for the priest overly burdened with the many and varied duties of his parish ministry.” (Scotto 55)
         8. November 1955: the Sacred Congregation of Rites’s decree and instruction, *The Restoration of the Holy Week Order* (AAS 47 [1955] 838-847)
         9. 1956: Pius XII’s *Allocution to the First international Congress of Pastoral Liturgy at Assisi-Rome*
            1. “With the convocation of this significant congress the modern liturgical movement seemed to have achieved its greatest degree of official recognition and approbation within the Church.” (Scotto 56)
            2. *AAS* 48 [1956] 713-714: “Everything which is offered to them [the laity], the graces of the sacrifice of the altar, the sacraments and sacramentals, they receive not in a passive manner in allowing them simply to flow into them, but in collaborating in them with their whole will and all their powers, and especially in participating in the liturgical offices or at least in following their unfolding with fervor. [55] . . . The contributions which the hierarchy and the faithful bring to the liturgy are not added as two separate entities, but represent the collaboration of members of the same organism which acts as a single living unit. The pastors and the flock, the teaching Church and the Church which is taught, form but one and the same Body of Christ. . . . It is in this unity that the Church prays, offers sacrifice, sanctifies itself, so that it can be asserted with good reason that the liturgy is the work of the whole Church.” (Scotto 55-56)
         10. 1958: the Sacred Congregation of Rites’s instruction, *Sacred Music and the Sacred Liturgy* (*De musica sacra*) (*AAS* 50:630-663) “emphasized (p. 646) that the singing of Vespers on Sundays and feast days was not to fall into disuse because of the newly introduced evening Masses.” (Scotto 181 n. 30)
         11. conclusions
             1. “The modern liturgical movement pointed to the liturgy as the principal means by which these needs [spiritual renewal and adaptation to a radically changing world] could be effectively met. Urged on by this irrepressible need for reform, the Church, nevertheless, demonstrated great reluctance in actually implementing many of these important theological and pastoral initiatives.” (Scotto 56)
             2. “As far as the celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours was concerned, little was actually accomplished in promoting the idea of once again restoring this prayer to the faithful. Despite the pastoral principles so beautifully and consistently promoted by the popes most closely identified with the modern liturgical movement, Pope Pius X and Pope Pius XII, the communal recitation of the Divine Office on the parish level became more and more a very rare exception rather than the rule.” (Scotto 56)
3. **Vatican II and the reform of the divine office**
   1. (English translations of Vatican II documents are from: Flannery, A., ed. *Vatican Council II*: *The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*. Dublin: Dominican Publications, 1975.)
   2. January 25, 1959: Pope John XXIII announces the convocation of the Second Vatican Council (*AAS* 51 [1959] 68). “. . . this council was to clarify and renew the mission of the Church in the modern world and was to be predominantly pastoral in character.” (Scotto 57)
   3. June 5, 1960: John XXIII appoints “among others a new Pontifical Liturgical Commission to prepare the ground for the coming council.” (Scotto 57)
   4. December 4, 1963: Paul VI promulgates *The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*)
      1. “In contrast to the other commissions established by the Pope, the Liturgical Commission dealt with questions which had already been much discussed and clearly formulated . . . Consequently, it was not surprising that the liturgical schema became the first document to be discussed . . .” (Scotto 57) It was “the first [document] issued by the Council . . .” (Foy 210) Never before had an ecumenical council published a liturgical document first. (Scotto 57)
      2. “The professed goals of the Council [are said in *SC* 1 to be,] to strive to impart an ever-increasing vigor to the Christian life, to adapt changeable institutions more suitably to contemporary human needs, to foster unity among all Christians and to work tirelessly for the spread of the Gospel . . .” (Scotto 70)
      3. “. . . reforms actually effected [included] the granting of permission for the reception of communion under both species, concelebration, and the liturgical use of the vernacular language . . .” (Scotto 58)
      4. The document “had as its principal purpose the reformation and promotion of the Roman liturgy. . . . Upon examination it becomes abundantly clear that the Council Fathers’ chief concern was the prayer of the People of God.” (Scotto 70)
      5. “. . . liturgical actions are not merely the [85] private actions of persons duly delegated by the Church, nor are they actions which pertain to the clergy alone, but in effect [as *SC* 26 says,] “they are the celebrations of all the holy People, reunited and organized under the authority of the bishops, not only in a juridical fashion but in a sacramental manner.” . . . in principle, all liturgical celebrations are seen as essentially celebrations of all the People of God.” (Scotto 85-86)
      6. “. . . in the liturgy the praise and adoration rendered to God the Father by the People of God in, with, and through Christ, as a community of faith, becomes the most sacred action which the Mystical Body of Christ, the Church, can possibly perform [*SC* 7].” (Scotto 71)
      7. *SC* 10: “From the liturgy, therefore, and especially from the Eucharist, as from a fountain, grace is channeled into us; and the sanctification of men in Christ and the glorification of God, to which all other activities of the Church are directed as toward their goal, are most powerfully achieved . . .” (*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* 10) (Foy 210)
      8. *SC* 10: the liturgy is “the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; and the fount from which all her power flows.” (Scotto 71)
      9. *SC* 14: “Mother Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to that full, conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy, and to which the Christian people . . . have a right and obligation by reason of their baptism. In the restoration and promotion of the sacred liturgy the full and active participation by all the people is the aim to be considered before all else, for it is the primary and indispensable source from which the faithful are to derive the true Christian spirit.” (Scotto 72)
         1. “The reference to the full participation of the faithful in the liturgy as the primary and indispensable source from which they are to derive the true Christian spirit is a phrase which the Council has borrowed directly from Pope Pius X’s famous motu proprio *Tra le sollecitudini* which Dom Lambert Beauduin had adopted as the watchword of the Belgian liturgical movement. “Now while he had been repeatedly accused of inflating and perverting the meaning of that sentence, the Council makes his interpretation its own in the most uncompromising way.”“ (Louis Bouyer, *The Revised Liturgy*: *A Doctrinal Commentary of the Conciliar Constitution on the Liturgy* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1965) 91-92) (Scotto 73)
      10. *SC* 21: “the liturgy is made up of unchangeable elements divinely instituted, and of elements subject to change. These latter not only may be changed but ought to be changed with the passage of time, if they have suffered from the intrusion of anything out of harmony with the inner nature of the liturgy or have become less suitable. In this restoration both texts and rites should be drawn up so as to express more clearly the holy things which they signify. The Christian people, as far as is possible, should be able to understand them with ease and take part in them fully, actively, and as a community.” (Scotto 74)
      11. The constitution recommends “community oriented services in preference over those that are performed privately and individually when the very nature of the service does not preclude communal participation [*SC* 27].” (Scotto 75)
      12. “. . . the laity discharge a genuine liturgical function when participating in the divine liturgy. Whether they act as servers, lectors, commentators or members of the choir, they are exercising a real liturgical ministry to which they are entitled through the Church’s commission [*SC* 29].” (Scotto 76)
      13. The liturgy “possesses a didactic and pastoral role as well. Being primarily dedicated to the Church’s worship of the Divine Majesty, the liturgy is also a school of faith for the People of God wherein God speaks to his people and they respond to him in word and prayer. Together with these visible elements the Church through signs also seeks to convey the teaching of the invisible things of God [*SC* 33].” (Scotto 77)
      14. “. . . rites should be characterized by their brevity, clarity, and simplicity so that they may be more readily understood, and in order that the faithful may participate in them as easily and as fully as possible [*SC* 34].” (Scotto 77)
      15. use of Latin
          1. *SC* 36.1: “the use of the Latin language, with due respect to particular law, is to be preserved in the Latin rites . . .” (Scotto 77) See Little (90): “the delicate and ethereal character of the liturgical Latin rhythm can never be exactly rendered into English.”
          2. *SC* 36.2: “But since the use of the vernacular, whether in the Mass, the administration of the sacraments or in other parts of the liturgy, may frequently be of great advantage to the people, a wider use may be made of it, especially in readings, directives and in some prayers and chants.” (Scotto 78)
          3. Here is “implicit admittance by the Constitution of the principle that in reality the vernacular is not excluded from any part of the liturgy.” (Scotto 78)
      16. “. . . in contrast to rigid uniformity the liturgy will always [admit] cultural elements which prove to “harmonize with its true and authentic spirit.” [*SC* 37] [79] “Throughout Chapter III the Constitution calls for an adaptation of [80] sacraments and sacramentals to the unique pastoral needs of the faithful.” (Scotto 79-81)
      17. Chapter 4 “deals specifically with the Divine Office . . .” (Scotto 81)
          1. *SC* 84: “the Divine Office . . . is the very prayer which Christ himself, together with his Body, addresses to the Father.” (Foy 210) It is “the official public prayer of the Church . . .” (Scotto 83)
          2. *SC* 85: “Hence all who perform this service are not only fulfilling a duty of the Church, but also are sharing in the greatest honor accorded to Christ’s spouse, for by offering these praises to God they are standing before God’s throne in the name of the Church their Mother.” (Foy 210)
          3. “. . . reciting this prayer . . . is to be done “by priests and others deputed to it by the Church, or by the faithful praying together with a priest in the approved form [*SC* 84]” . . . [The Constitution stresses] leadership of the clergy for the office to enjoy official status. Whether or not this prayer would be considered an official prayer of the Church when engaged in by the laity alone, is not specifically answered . . .” (Scotto 82)
          4. “Seeking to have the Divine Office truly fulfill its purpose of sanctifying the entire day, the Constitution insists upon a general revision of the Office with “Lauds as morning prayer, and Vespers as evening prayer [*SC* 89],” viewed as axial to the entire celebration of the Hours. While the Hours of Compline, Matins, Terce, Sext, and None are to be retained, but revised, the Hour of Prime is to be suppressed [*SC* 89].” (Scotto 82)
          5. “. . . all are urged to pray the Office with greater devotion abetted through an improved understanding “of the liturgy and of the Bible, especially of the psalms [*SC* 90].”“ (Scotto 83)
          6. In *SC* 92, the Council called for (Scotto’s words):
             1. “a revision of the psalter”
             2. “the psalms distributed over a longer period of time than one week”
             3. “both psalms and hymns being rendered linguistically capable of being sung”
             4. “a richer selection of readings from the Sacred Scriptures, from the Fathers, Doctors, and ecclesiastical writers”
             5. “historical authenticity in all biographical material dealing with the saints” (Scotto 83)
          7. “The treasury of hymns used in the Office is to be revised and expanded in order to guarantee a more intelligent, facile, and varied participation on the part of all those involved [*SC* 93].” (Scotto 83)
          8. “Manifesting an appreciation of the ancient cathedral Office, the Constitution recommends that pastors of souls be conscientious in promoting the chief Hours of prayer, and to see to it that especially Vespers be communally celebrated in church on Sundays and on the more solemn feasts of the liturgical year [*SC* 100].” (Scotto 84)
          9. “. . . the laity are encouraged as well to recite the Divine Office, not only with the priests, but also among themselves, or even individually [*SC* 100] . . .” (Scotto 84)
          10. In chapter 4, “while the clergy had obviously benefitted greatly, the laity had not fared as well. The principal preoccupation of this Chapter seems to be with the celebration of the Office by clergy, religious, and other canonical groups.
      18. conclusions
          1. *summary of SC*’*s general reform recommendations*: “the Constitution on the whole has provided the opening and the incentive by which the Church could once again rediscover and recover the essential role of the laity in the celebration of the Divine Office. The revisions called for in the structure of the Office, helping to make it more understandable, more spiritually rewarding and easier for participation [*SC* 88, 94]; the new, though cautious openings given to the use of the vernacular in the Divine Office [*SC* 36, 101]; the recommendation that parish priests join with the entire parish community for the common recitation of the Divine Office on Sundays and more solemn feasts [*SC* 100]; the overall insistence upon the need for the full, active and conscious participation of the faithful in all liturgical celebrations; the adaptation of rites and texts to the faithful as far as is possible [*SC* 21]; and finally the encouragement given to the development of a true sense of community within the local Church [*SC* 26, 42]; all of these initiatives have been very positive steps taken toward the achievement of a fuller and more meaningful integration of the laity into the public prayer life of the Church.” (Scotto 87)
          2. *summary of SC*’*s practical reform recommendations*: “The entire reform embraced a restoration of the traditional hours of prayer as a sanctification of the entire day [*SC* 88]; with Lauds and Vespers celebrated as the principal Hours around which the entire Office revolves [*SC* 89a]. Maintaining Compline as an ideal prayer to mark the close of the day [*SC* 89b], the Council proposed that the Hour of Matins be composed of fewer psalms, longer readings and be so adapted that it may be celebrated at any hour of the day [*SC* 89c]. While suppressing the Hour of Prime [*SC* 89d], the Hours of Terce, Sext, and None [89] were adapted more equitably to the pastoral needs of the day [*SC* 89e].” The reform also spread the psalms over four weeks [*SC* 91] and proposed an enriched lectionary of biblical and nonbiblical readings [*SC* 92].” (Scotto 89-90)
          3. *a remaining inconsistency in SC*: “Although there is a recommendation that the laity be encouraged to recite the Divine Office not only with the clergy, but also among themselves, or even individually [*SC* 100], it would seem [86] . . . that without sacerdotal leadership, the authentic participation of the laity in the official prayer of the Church would at best be questionable. . . . presumably, the prayer of a group of lay people who decide to recite some part of the Office . . . without the benefit of sacerdotal leadership, would seem to be considered as not being an authentic part of the official prayer of the Church. This seems to be foreign . . . to much of what the Constitution itself has declared so forcefully.” (Scotto 86-87)
   5. 1964: Paul VI promulgates *The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* (*Lumen Gentium*)
      1. In *Mediator Dei* Pius XII had underscored the relationship between the Church and liturgy “by basing his definition of the liturgy upon the concept of the Church as developed in his earlier encyclical, *Mystici Corporis*. . . . the liturgy provided the means by which the true nature of this new vision of the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ would be given vital, concrete expression . . . in the action of the worshiping community of faith.” (Scotto 59)
      2. “Being very pastorally oriented, the Constitution begins with the notion of the Church, not in juridical terms of structure and government, but as a community of believers to whom God gratuitously communicates himself in love. . . . The entire document highlights in very strong terms the innate dignity and responsibility of the lay-Christian in the modern day Church as he shares with all clergy and religious in the overall task of witness, ministry, and fellowship.” (Scotto 59)
      3. “It is significant that the chapter entitled *The People of God* (Chapter II) precedes the chapter on *The Hierarchical Structure of the Church* (Chapter III) since it reflects a particular understanding of the Church by the council fathers. [This was] Couched in strong biblical terms, the concept of the Church as the People of God . . .” (Scotto 59) 1 Pet 2:9, “you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.”
      4. *LG* 10: “Though they differ essentially and not only in degree, the common priesthood of the faithful and the ministerial or hierarchical priesthood are nonetheless ordered one to another; each in its own proper way shares in the one priesthood of Christ.” (Scotto 61)
      5. “Christ’s office as High-Priest is to offer sacrifice, worship, and praise to the Father. Through their regeneration in baptism and through their anointing in the Holy Spirit the People of God are consecrated into the messianic mission of Christ, therefore into his [60] priesthood [*LG* 10]. As such, they consequently share, to a degree, in Christ’s mission as High-Priest and also must offer, in their own way, praise, worship, and adoration to the Father. Thus the laity . . . offer up this priestly work most clearly and efficaciously in liturgy . . .” (Scotto 60-61)
   6. November 1965: Paul VI promulgates *The Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity* (*Apostolicam Actuositatem*)
      1. This “marked the very first time in the history of the Church that a theme expressly dealing with the laity became the subject of conciliar deliberations.” (Scotto 64)
      2. “. . . most of its principles are already contained in [64] one way or another in these other documents and, more importantly, it is essentially based upon the theology of the Church as developed in *The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, primarily in Chapter II on the People of God and Chapter IV on the laity.” (Scotto 64-65)
      3. *AA* 3: “If they are consecrated a kingly priesthood and holy nation (1 Pt. 2:4-10), it is in order that they may in their actions offer spiritual sacrifices and bear witness to Christ all the world over.” (Scotto 65)
      4. “Drawing strength from their active participation in the liturgical life of the Church they will be better able to contribute to the building up of the Body of Christ in the world [*AA* 10].” (Scotto 66)
   7. December 1965: Pope Paul VI promulgates *The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* (*Gaudium et Spes*)
      1. “. . . this lengthy document seems to consist essentially of a synthesis of Catholic thought on social teaching, especially as reflected [66] in the social encyclicals promulgated from the pontificates of Pope Leo XIII (*Rerum Novarum*, 1891), to that of Pope Paul VI (*Populorum Progressio*, 1967) . . .” (Scotto 66-67)
      2. “There is great stress placed upon the promotion of the common good [*GS* 26], the dignity of man [*GS* 27, 28, 29], and the need for corporate action in order to truly promote the fellowship of service and to restore all things in Christ [*GS* 31, 32].” (Scotto 68)
      3. “. . . while the liturgy may not exhaust all the Church’s activity, nevertheless, it is the fountain from which all the Church’s life draws its power and nourishment [*SC* 9, 10].” (Scotto 68)
4. **post-conciliar documents on the reform of the liturgy of the hours**
   1. preparatory work
      1. 1964: Paul VI’s motu proprio, *Sacram Liturgiam*, creates a commission called the *Consilium ad exsequendam Constitutionem de Sacra Liturgia*. The *Consilium* entrusted reform of the divine office “to a special group of international liturgical experts under the title of *Coestus IX*.” (Scotto 90)
      2. 1969: the *Congregatio pro cultu divino* replaces the *Consilium* and *Coestus IX*. [90] “Thus the former Congregation of Rites was now divided into two separate congregations: the Congregation for Divine Worship—*Congregatio Cultu Divino*, and the Congregation for Saintly Causes—*Congregatio Causis Sanctorum*.” (Scotto 90, 188 n. 15)
   2. 1970: *The Apostolic Constitution on the Breviary* (*Laudis Canticum*) (*AAS* 63 (1971) 527-535)
      1. *AAS* 63:529: “Since the Office is the prayer of the whole People of God, it has been drawn up and prepared in such a way that not only ecclesiastics but also religious and even lay-people can take part in it. By introducing various forms of celebration, the attempt has been made to meet the specific requirements of persons of different order and degree. The prayer can be adapted to the different communities that celebrate the Liturgy of the Hours, according to their condition and vocation.” (Scotto 99)
      2. “Having abolished the former weekly cycle, the psalter is now to be distributed over a longer period of time, namely four weeks, excluding those few psalms and verses which are rather difficult to understand and to adapt to celebration in the vernacular. Moreover, in order to further enhance the spiritual richness of the two principal Hours, certain new canticles from the Old Testament have been introduced into Lauds, while other canticles from the New Testament have been introduced into Vespers [*SC* 91; *AAS* 63:530]. Obviously these changes will not only prove to be a help to the clergy but will prove to be even more beneficial to the participation of the laity who, in general, are relatively uneducated in the theological and historical meanings of the psalms, and who would most certainly be praying the Office in the vernacular.” (Scotto 100)
   3. 1971: *The General Instruction on the Liturgy of the Hours* (*Institutio Generalis de Liturgia Horarum*)
      1. “There is no mention made here to the effect that the validity or full efficacy of this prayer as the official prayer of the Church, is contingent upon sacerdotal presence. On the contrary, it states quite clearly that whenever the faithful come together, and this could constitute the laity alone, to pray the Liturgy of the Hours together with one heart and mind in word and song, then it is the Church of Christ that is made manifest in this local community of believers and worshipers and their celebration is fully and authentically liturgical with everything that this implies [*IGLH* 22].” (Scotto 108)
      2. *IGLH* 23: “Pastors of souls should see to it that the faithful are invited and helped by requisite instruction to celebrate the chief Hours in common, especially on Sundays and feasts. They should teach them to draw sincere prayer from their participation and so help them to understand the psalms in a Christian way that they may gradually come to use and appreciate the prayer of the Church more fully.” (Scotto 108)
      3. *IGLH* 27: “Whenever groups of laity are gathered and whatever the reason which has brought them together, such as prayer or the apostolate, they are encouraged to recite the Church’s Office, by celebrating part of the Liturgy of the Hours. For they should learn to adore God the Father in spirit and in truth especially through liturgical worship; they must remember that by public worship and prayer they can have an impact on all men and contribute to the salvation of the whole world.” (Scotto 109)
      4. *IGLH* 27: “Finally, it is fitting that the family, as the domestic sanctuary of the [109] Church, should not only offer common prayer to God but also say certain parts of the Liturgy of the Hours, in this way uniting themselves more closely to the Church.” (Scotto 109-110)
      5. “. . . in the prayer life of the entire Christian community, outside of the Eucharist itself, these two Hours [lauds and vespers] are to be given the highest priority, with a special recommendation for their celebration among those living a common life.” (Scotto 111)
      6. Chapter 2 part 3 changes the name of “matins” to “the Office of Readings, formerly known as Matins . . .” (Scotto 112)
      7. “Commenting upon the Hour of Compline the General Instruction views it as the ideal prayer for the Christian to recite before retiring for a night’s rest.’37 This would seem to be most appropriate as a concluding bedtime prayer not only for the various groups of clergy, religious, or other sacred ministers but for the laity as well, especially as a family unit [*IGLH* 27]. The option of being able to substitute the Sunday psalms for the other psalms on weekdays is a further incentive facilitating the use of this prayer, perhaps when traveling or whenever books may not be available, since it would permit the possibility of celebrating Compline by memory [*IGLH* 88].” (Scotto 113)
      8. the *General Instruction* on Psalms
         1. *IGLH* 43 discusses “the disposition of the psalms . . .” (Scotto 111)
         2. “At the beginning of Chapter III, the General Instruction treats of the psalms and their close relationship to Christian prayer. There is no doubt that the psalms have always maintained a very prominent place within Christian prayer and this is most assuredly true of the Liturgy of the Hours, both in the past, and in the present reform as well. The Church has always viewed these inspired songs as especially conducive to fruitful prayer [*IGLH* 100]. [See Louis Bouyer, *The Meaning of Sacred Scripture* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 1958) 224-241.] However, despite their obvious beauty and power, they are not easy for modern man to understand and translate into personal prayer [*IGLH* 101]. [See Rembert G. Weakland, “The Divine Office and Contemporary Man,” *Worship* 43 (1969) 214-218.] This is most especially true for the average [113] lay-person who has not had the benefit of theological training. Therefore, despite the undeniable presence of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of those who choose to use these inspired songs sincerely as personal prayer, it would be extremely presumptuous to expect these psalms to truly become effective and fruitful means for personal prayer without at least the benefit of a thorough catechesis. Hence the Instruction recommends “more intensive biblical instruction” in the meaning and use of the psalms as personal prayer [*IGLH* 102].” Since the psalms were originally composed as poetic songs of praise, they retain that essential quality despite their translation through the ages into various languages. This fundamental musical quality inherent in the psalms should continue to determine the way in which they may be prayed properly, whether in choir or privately.” (Scotto 113-114)
         3. “Although the text of a psalm may be praiseworthy in itself, certainly when sung it is far more inspirational and effective in moving the participants to a greater degree of contact with the original spirit of the composer as well as facilitating a fuller, more prayerful response to the movements of the Holy Spirit. Modern man certainly needs this type of assistance to foster a greater degree of devotion in his prayer life [*IGLH* 108, 104].” (Scotto 114)
         4. “There are times when, despite the best of intentions, the psalms will still present difficulties to those who seek to use them as prayer. Much will depend upon the degree of understanding which the reader possesses concerning the literary genre of the psalm, his awareness of the intentions of the sacred author and the meaning which he wished to impart to the psalm, as well as the circumstances under which the psalm was composed [*IGLH* 105, 106]. Obviously this presents a very real problem for the average layperson and reemphasizes the absolute need for a good, thorough catechesis on the psalms being made available to all the faithful.” (Scotto 114)
         5. “The participant must learn to enter into the literal spirit of the psalm being prayed, joining his own sentiments to those of the psalmist, finding therein a bridge from the past to the present. Although divided by time and culture, there are certain invariables which proceed from the very nature of man and which therefore remain essentially unchanged down through the ages [*IGLH* 107]. We must [114] remember that when praying the psalms in the Liturgy of the Hours, we do not do so in a selfish, individualistic manner, even though we may be praying the Office privately, but we do so as a member of the entire praying Church, the Body of Christ and in the name of Christ himself. Therefore, in the celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours our own personal feelings and preferences should be sublimated to the particular emotion expressed by the psalmist, and which the Church wishes to convey at this particular time [*IGLH* 108].” (Scotto 114-115)
         6. “Ultimately, we must learn to Christianize the psalms, to find Christ in them, and through them to pray with him, in him and to him [*IGLH* 109].” (Scotto 115)
            1. “To help the faithful accomplish this particular purpose, the Church offers three specific aids, “namely the headings, the short quotations from the New Testament or the Fathers, and especially the antiphons [*IGLH* 110].”“ (Scotto 115)

“While the headings are not actually recited as part of the Office, they do afford the reader with further assistance in arriving at an intelligent understanding of the importance and meaning of a particular psalm in the Christian life.” (Scotto 115)

“. . . even more valuable in this regard are the short quotations from the New Testament or the Fathers found before each psalm which help to “promote prayer in the light of the new revelation [*IGLH* 111].” . . . at certain times, these short quotations or phrases may even be used in place of the antiphon itself [*IGLH* 114].” (Scotto 115)

“As the General Instruction explains, the antiphons are meant to underline the particular sense of the psalm, to help turn the psalm into personal prayer, and to give a special emphasis to a psalm under changing circumstances, especially for the great seasons and feasts [*IGLH* 113-120].” (Scotto 115)

* + - 1. distribution of the psalms
         1. The *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* recommended redistribution of the psalms [*SC* 91]. (Scotto 116)
         2. In response, “the General Instruction has specified that the psalms will now be distributed over a four week cycle with the more important psalms being repeated more frequently [*IGLH* 126].” (See J. Tarruel, “La nouvelle destribution du Psautier dans Ia Liturgia Horarum,” *Ephemerides Liturgicae* 87 (1973) 325-382.) (Scotto 116)
         3. “In turn, the Hours of Lauds, Vespers, and Compline will have psalms which will reflect more faithfully the spirit and tone of their respective hours [*IGLH* 126]. Since both Lauds and Vespers have been designed for public celebration with the people, the psalms used for these Hours have been carefully selected because of their marked suitability for such a purpose [*IGLH* 127]. Throughout the Hours, there has been an effort to have the psalms correspond as faithfully as possible with the spirit of the Office of the day, as well as with the particular liturgical season which they reflect [*IGLH* 129-130, 134].” (Scotto 116)
      2. omission of psalms
         1. “. . . certain psalm verses have been passed over in silence . . .” [116] “The particular psalm verses omitted have been indicated at the begin-fling of the psalm, for example: The Office of Readings, Friday, First Week of Ordinary Time, Psalm 34, verses 4-9 have been omitted.” (Scotto 116, 193 n. 160)
         2. “. . . three entire psalms have been omitted from the psalter [*IGLH* 131].” (Scotto 116)

“The three psalms omitted from the psalter are: Ps. 57, 82, 108.” (Scotto 193 n. 160)

“This was done because of their violent and deprecatory character [*IGLH* 131]. . . . While the present reform of the Office has attempted to remain as far as possible in harmony with tradition, it realizes that it must adapt itself to the needs of our own day and age, being always conscious to allow for the full, active participation of the faithful. Certainly this action becomes all the more valid when we consider the practical difficulties involved in the use of these psalms in the vernacular. Having come to praise God in the Hours, such verses and psalms proclaimed aloud during the communal celebration could prove to be offensive to many causing the possible alienation of the faithful from the Liturgy of the Hours [*IGLH* 131].” (See A. M. Roguet, in *The Liturgy of the Hours*: *The General Instruction on the Reform of the Breviary*, trans. P. Coughlan and P. Purdue [London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1974] 116-117.) (Scotto 116)

* + - * 1. “Rather than prolong the reading of the Divine Office unnecessarily, psalms of greater length have been divided and allocated to the same [116] Hour to be read over several days. In this manner, they may be recited in their entirety by those people, most likely lay people, who do not usually celebrate other Hours [*IGLH* 132].” (Scotto 116-117)
        2. “. . . throughout this entire section not only are we made aware of the many real and formidable obstacles to the use of the psalms as fruitful personal prayer, but we are also made aware of the Church’s constant belief in their validity as prayer and her concern that every effort be undertaken to make them as pastorally effective as possible. Therefore, the Church continues to use them as the inspired nucleus of her official prayer, the Liturgy of the Hours [*IGLH* 100-102].” (Scotto 117)
        3. Thomas Merton (*Praying the Psalms* [Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1955] 5): “She recommends the psalms to her priests, her monks, her nuns, and even to her lay people, in order that they may have the mind of Christ, in order that they may develop an interior life which is truly the life of their Mother, the Church. It is by singing the psalms, by meditating on them, loving them, using them in all the incidents of our spiritual life, that we enable ourselves to enter more deeply into that active participation of the liturgy which is the key to the deepest and truest interior life. If we really come to know and love the psalms, we will enter into the Church’s own experience in divine things. We will begin to know God as we ought. And that is why the Church believes the psalms are the best possible way of praising God.” (Scotto 117)
    1. OT and NT songs
       1. “The addition of a great number of canticles both from the Old and New Testaments into the sequence of the psalms in the reformed Office should prove to be helpful as well in rendering the Office more pastorally effective. This is especially true concerning the New Testament Canticles included in the Hour of Vespers, for this should help the people to see more clearly the Christian message and spirit of the Hour, and also should facilitate transforming the Office into personal prayer. However, all of the canticles, both from the Old Testament, with their applied Christian understanding, and from the New Testament, are poems of spiritual value traditionally revered by the Church, and, consequently, should never be considered as merely supplementary to the course of the psalms, but complementary to their appreciation and understanding [*IGLH* 136-139].” (Scotto 117)
  1. publication of the revised Liturgy of the Hours
     1. “. . . an approved experimental version made its appearance on the scene. Originating in France [*Prière du Temps*, *Présent*, *Nouvel Office* (Mame: Desclée, 1969)], it was soon translated into English [Great Britain: *The Prayer of the Church* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1970; America: *The Prayer of Christians* (New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1971)] and enjoyed instant success . . .” (Scotto 91)
     2. “The master Latin text [of the revised Liturgy of the Hours] was published in 1971 . . .” (Foy 210) “. . . the four-volume Latin edition of the Liturgy of the Hours, 1970-1971.” [91] “*Liturgia Horarum Iuxta Ritum Romanum* (Rome: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanus, 1971).” (Scotto 91, 188 n. 22)
     3. English translations were:
        1. in Great Britain: *The Divine Office*: *The Liturgy of the Hours According to the Roman Rite* (London: William Collins, 1973-1974). (Scotto 188 n. 23)
        2. in America: *The Liturgy of the Hours According to the Roman Rite*, 4 vols. (New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1975-1976). (Scotto 188 n. 23, 198 n. 61)
     4. “In the United States there have been five individual versions of the one volume official edition of the Liturgy of the Hours published with the contents of each volume varying according to the choice of the individual publisher. They are as follows:
        1. “Catholic Book Publishing Company, (two editions), New York, 1976. [*Christian Prayer*: *The Liturgy of the Hours*. Trans. International Commission on English in the Liturgy. New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1976 (rpt. 1985).] [Scripture translations are *NAB*; psalms translations are: *The Psalms*: *A New Translation*. London: Wm. Collins, Sons; New York: Collins World; Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1963.]
        2. “Daughters of St. Paul, Boston, 1976.
        3. “Helicon Press, Baltimore, 1976.
        4. “The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, 1976.” (Scotto 198 n. 62)
     5. “Nov. 27, 1977, was set by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the National Conference of Catholic Bishops as the effective date for exclusive use in liturgical worship of the translation of the Latin text of the Liturgy of the Hours approved by the International Committee on English in the Liturgy.” (Foy 221)
     6. “The revised Liturgy of the Hours consists of:

• Office of Readings, for reflection on the word of God. The principal parts are three psalms, biblical and non-biblical readings.

• Morning and Evening Prayer, called the “hinges” of the Liturgy of the Hours. The principal parts are a hymn, two psalms, an Old or New Testament canticle, a brief biblical reading, Zechariah’s canticle (the *Benedictus*, morning) or Mary’s canticle (the *Magnificat*, evening), responsories, intercessions and a concluding prayer.

• Daytime Prayer. The principal parts are a hymn, three psalms, a brief biblical reading and one of three concluding prayers corresponding to the time at which the prayer is offered (midmorning, midday, midafternoon).

• Night Prayer. The principal parts are one or two psalms, a brief biblical reading, Simeon’s canticle (*Nunc Dimittis*), a concluding prayer and an antiphon in honor of Mary.” (Foy 210)

* + 1. “In the revised Liturgy of the Hours, the hours are shorter than they had been, with greater textual variety, meditation aids, and provision for intervals of silence and meditation. The psalms are distributed over a four-week period instead of a week; some psalms, entirely or in part, are not included. Additional canticles from the Old and New Testaments are assigned for Morning and Evening Prayer. Additional scriptural texts have been added and variously arranged for greater internal unity, correspondence to readings at Mass, and relevance to events and themes of salvation history. Readings include some of the best material from the Fathers of the Church and other authors, and improved selections on the lives of the saints.” (Foy 210-211)
  1. objections to the reformed liturgy of the hours
     1. first objection
        1. “All too often we hear the standard objections voiced repeatedly that although this reformed prayer may be ideal for use in religious communities, to attempt to reestablish the praying of the Hours on the parish level and to have it become something acceptable and valuable to the faithful would not only be impractical but futile as well.” (Scotto 131)
           1. “Many pastors claim that they have enough problems trying to get their people to come to Mass each Sunday and that expecting them to come to morning and evening prayer as well is unreal.” (Scotto 131)
           2. “. . . while many pastors have indeed taken the initiative in this matter by introducing the Liturgy of the Hours to their people as effectively as possible, the vast majority have not.” (Scotto 138)
           3. “Over the past three years we have had the opportunity to question many pastors and parish priests on this matter and . . . the negative responses at this point of the study were by far the most prevalent.” (Scotto 197 n. 23)
           4. “However, while the new Liturgy of the Hours is certainly a most precious liturgical treasure, it remains extremely difficult to envision how this exceedingly rich and complicated prayer can ever be totally employed in the worship of the parish community on a regular basis except by a select minority.” (Scotto 139)
        2. “Such objections not only display an obvious disregard of the historical reality, but they also tend to ignore the signs of the times as the Church interprets them for her people. . . . it was precisely in the parishes that the Liturgy of the Hours originated and flourished for centuries; [and] it was particularly in the cathedral parishes where both clergy and laity actively participated in the communal celebration of the Daily Office consisting of morning and evening prayer. . . . And despite the eventual clericalisation and monasticisation of the cathedral Office, the faithful continued to participate, . . . principally Matins before Mass and afternoon Vespers, down through the ages until relatively recent times.” (Scotto 131)
        3. “Both the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* [1963] and the *General Instruction on the Liturgy of the Hours* [1971] place great emphasis upon the fact that Morning and Evening Prayer are the two most important Offices of the day [*SC* 100; *IGLH* 37]. In effect, this is a reaffirmation [139] of the ancient cathedral Office, when aside from the Eucharist itself, these two Hours represented the principal daily and communal public prayer of the ancient Church. . . . therefore, it seems that Morning and Evening Prayer should be restored once again to their original roles as ecclesiastical offices and consequently adapted as much as possible toward meaningful communal celebration with the laity. The entire cursus of seven Hours, while not totally excluded from the daily public participation of the laity, should be considered as the exception and certainly not the rule. There are those particular occasions when these prayers can be effectively employed within the Christian community . . . But for the present, we are convinced that for Christians of today, with all the complexities of modern life, it would hardly be realistic to ask any more of them than that they once again reaffirm the practice of the cathedral Office in their lives by praying regularly, publicly, and communally, in the morning and in the evening.” (Scotto 139-140)
     2. second objection
        1. “Others “have expressed skepticism that the Liturgy of the Hours, in its presently revised form, can be pastorally effective in this capacity. The crux of their criticism rests upon the opinion that the reformed Hours continue to represent an essentially monastic and not a cathedral Office, and are consequently much better suited to be used for private devotion than as an expression of the communal, public worship of the faithful. By far the most widespread and most serious of the reasons offered for arriving at this conclusion are the use of the *recitatio continua* of the psalter, or the monastic principle of the recitation of the entire psalter “in course,” and the *lectio continua* of the rest of the sacred scriptures, which practices must presume upon the presence of the worshiper at every daily Office in order for it to make sense. As far as public worship involving the laity is concerned, this arrangement is considered to be a totally unrealistic one.” [132] W. J. Grisbrooke, “A Contemporary Liturgical Problem: The Divine Office and Public Worship,” *Studia Liturgica* 8 (1971-1972) 129-168; 9 (1973) 3-18, 18-106. (Scotto 132, 197 n. 33)
        2. But “the intention of the Church in promoting the celebration of the Hours for all the faithful is principally centered upon the use of the chief Hours of Lauds and Vespers, “the two hinges upon which the daily Office turns,” and the Hours which reflect most clearly the ancient cathedral Office [*IGLH* 37]. Recognized as the Hours of the highest importance, full and active participation in their public and communal celebration is strongly encouraged for all the faithful [*IGLH* 26, 40; *SC* 100].” [133] “Outside of Compline, the other Hours such as those of Readings, Terce, Sext, and None, can realistically be considered as the [197] exception and not the rule for daily, communal and public use by the laity.” (Scotto 133, 197-198 n. 39)
        3. “Although the reformers have maintained the traditional monastic pattern of psalmody for the Office as a whole, they have also done everything possible to ensure that the psalms would be truly prayed rather than merely recited [*IGLH* 110-125]. However, relative to the principal Hours of Lauds and Vespers, despite the rule of praying the psalms “in course,” specific psalms have been chosen primarily for their suitability to the basic meaning of these Hours and to their public celebration with the people [*IGLH* 42-43, 126-127]. This is also true for the Hour of Compline seen as the ideal bedtime prayer for all Christians [*IGLH* 88, 128].” (Scotto 133)
     3. third objection
        1. “. . . there are those who feel that the very preponderance of psalms in themselves presents one of the principal difficulties with the Office and that people today find the psalter to be increasingly difficult to use as a form of Christian prayer.” E. g., Rembert Weakland, “The Divine Office and Contemporary Man,” *Worship* 43 (1969) 215-216. (Scotto 133)
        2. “The psalms, as the inspired word of God, have always been among the principal sources of prayer for the Christian community and as such have embedded themselves deeply into the entire tradition of the Church’s prayer life. Although the psalms unquestionably need to be explained and understood in order to be most properly and effectively used as prayer in the Divine Office, they should not be neglected or casually abandoned unless every effort has first been made to implement the recommendations of the General Instruction proposed precisely for this very purpose [*IGLH* 101-125]. While perhaps they could possibly be couched to a greater degree in the idiom of contemporary man, we can only talk about actually substituting some other prayers in place of the psalms when another form of prayer is available which is better suited to serve the needs of modern man, while at the same time maintaining the qualities of deep spirituality, poetic beauty and genuine prayerfulness so magnificently charterized [*sic*] by the psalms. Up to this point in time it seems that no such prayer has yet been composed or found. Therefore, despite the very real problem surrounding the effective use of the psalms in the revised Office, they still represent a most venerable form of Christian prayer which has proven itself to be of the greatest value for the spiritual enrichment and edification of the praying community of faith down through the ages. “From the very beginning they have had the power to raise men’s minds to God, to evoke in them holy and wholesome thoughts, to help them give thanks in time of favor, and to bring consolation and constancy in adversity [*IGLH* 100].”“ (Scotto 134)
     4. fourth objection
        1. “. . . there is the objection that the present office is excessively formalistic . . .” (Scotto 135)
        2. But “the Liturgy of the Hours does provide a workable, stable structure which is necessary for any prayer which ordinarily is going to be used for public, communal worship on a regular basis.” (Scotto 135)
        3. “The Church has repeatedly expressed her confidence in the ability of this salutary prayer to serve contemporary man in a most significant manner. . . . the glorified and risen Christ could continue to be authentically encountered throughout [136] the Hours as an extension of the Eucharist, and as a true sacrifice of praise, thereby sanctifying the entire day of the Christian in prayer [*IGLH* 10, 12, 13, 15]. While the Church encourages private and spontaneous forms of prayer and sees them as necessary in the life of the Christian, rarely are these forms of prayer able to integrate an individual or community of believers into the liturgical cycle of the mystery of Christ in the Church Year [*IGLH* 6, 7, 9] . . .” (Scotto 136-137)
        4. Still, the objection has some justification.
           1. “. . . the reformed Office seems to be a mixture of the [135] older and newer traditions—cathedral and monastic . . .” (Scotto 135-136)
           2. “While this attempt [the reformed office] seems to have been quite successful in relationship to the needs of the clergy, it does not seem to be quite as successful relative to the needs and the participation of the laity. . . . the very multiplicity of elements of mixed literary forms make this prayer, most particularly Lauds and Vespers, a rather difficult one for easy adoption by the laity.” (Scotto 136)

1. **implementing the liturgy of the hours in the parish**
   1. “The General Instruction informs us that “a cantor or cantors should begin the antiphons, psalms, and other songs [*IGLH* 260],” while the manner in which the psalms are sung can be varied according to the norms of nn. 121-125 [*IGLH* 279]. While the faithful are encouraged to sing the Hours as “the form which best accords with the nature of this prayer [*IGLH* 268], they should sing only those parts which they are capable of singing without placing an undue strain or burden upon their resources and patience [*IGLH* 273]. The cantor can do much to ensure the success of any such sung celebration of the Hours by leading and supporting the faithful to the extent that they may need his assistance, and by establishing a certain harmony of listening and responding between himself and the faithful. However, the cantor should never assume so great a musical responsibility that the role of the faithful is overly curtailed.” (Scotto 146)
   2. a simple form of the liturgy of the hours for parish use
      1. introduction: “Because of the complexity, variability and expense of the present form of the revised Liturgy of the Hours, it would seem both practical and realistic to initiate the celebration of the principal Hours of Lauds and Vespers on the parish level in a much more simplified and uninvolved manner. Therefore, initially the order of celebration should be kept simple, with a more or less standard format, while at the same time adhering to the essential thrust and structure of the official Office [*IGLH* 33]. This can be accomplished by fully utilizing those recommendations of the General Instruction which permit and encourage adaptation of the Liturgy of the Hours to the particular needs of the Christian community in their public worship. Eventually, once the community becomes well-adapted to this order of celebration, perhaps a more elaborate format may be introduced.” (Scotto 158)
      2. structure of the parish office
         1. “The structure of this parish Office should more closely emulate the ancient cathedral Office of the Church. Therefore, after the introductory verse and response invoking God’s help and blessing [*IGLH* 34], the following basic order of service should be followed: [158]
            1. “*The Opening Hymn*: This hymn could be taken from any authorized source provided that it suits the spirit of the Hour, season, or feast. It is recommended that it be sung. Therefore, both text and music should always be made available [*IGLH* 42, 178].
            2. “*The Antiphons*: An antiphon is said, or sung at the beginning of each psalm and may be repeated at the conclusion of the psalm [*IGLH* 123].
            3. “*The Psalms*: The psalms, and the Old and New Testament canticles, may be recited or sung in various ways; either with alternate verses or strophes recited or sung by two choirs or two separate groups of the congregation, or in responsorial fashion, that is with the choir, or the entire body of the faithful, answering the cantor, who sings or recites the psalms, with a simple refrain [*IGLH* 121, 122, 260].
            4. “*The Readings*: These readings from Sacred Scripture should be proclaimed from a suitably prominent position by a well-qualified lector, or some other delegated person [*IGLH* 259]. Other appropriate readings may be used as well, but only to supplement and never to substitute for the scriptures. Although the service is to be kept simple, it is recommended that, especially in celebrations with the people, a longer selection from the sacred scriptures be read and that a brief commentary or homily be given [*IGLH* 46, 47, 248, 249, 251]. The readings, or homily, should be followed by a period of meditative silence [*IGLH* 48].
            5. “*The Gospel Canticle*: These canticles are expressive of the entire community’s praise and thanksgiving for its redemption. At morning prayer this includes the Canticle of Zechariah, or the Benedictus (Lk. 1:68-79); while at evening prayer the Canticle of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Magnificat (Lk. 1:46-55), is used [*IGLH* 50, 138, 261, 266].
            6. “*The Intercessions*: These are prayers of petition, intercession, and thanksgiving offered up for everyone. At morning prayer they are characterized by a spirit of offering and consecration of the entire day to God; while at evening prayer they are characterized by a spirit of petition and thanksgiving, with a special final intention for all the faithful departed [*IGLH* 51, 179-193].
            7. “*The Lord*’*s Prayer*: Made sacred by tradition, this model prayer [159] serves as a most fitting conclusion to the worshiping community’s celebration of morning and evening prayer. It is recommended that it be sung standing [*IGLH* 52, 194-196].
            8. “*The Concluding Prayer*, *Final Blessing*, *and Dismissal*: A concluding prayer brings to completion the celebration of the Hours. This summary prayer, as well as the final blessing and dismissal, traditionally pertain to the priest or deacon. However, if both should be absent, another form of dismissal which does not imply authority may be employed by one of the faithful. This final blessing and dismissal by the leader calls down God’s blessing upon the praying community and sends it forth in hope, joy, and confidence under his protective power [*IGLH* 53-54, 197-200].” (Scotto 158-160)
      3. practicalities
         1. “It now devolves upon priests and religious to be conscious and appreciative of this restoration of the Divine Office and to promote it as a prayer of the whole Church, rather than have it remain as the official prayer of a select few.” (Scotto 42)
         2. “A simple, inexpensive Office could be drawn up from the above structure for use on the parish level which would involve a minimal amount of material and expense. Since, as we have already noted, the opening hymn may be taken from any authorized source [*IGLH* 42, 178], use can be made of those church hymnals already available for parochial use. Because the antiphons need not be repeated after each psalm [*IGLH* 113, 123], they could be recited or intoned by a cantor or by some other designated person [*IGLH* 260]. Ideally, the readings should be *listened to*, therefore, since they will be proclaimed by the lector, it would be best not to place a copy of them in the hands of the worshiping community [*IGLH* 259]. Both parts of the intercessions may be recited by the priest or minister and need only involve the faithful to the point of repeating an invariable response after each intercession, or to simply pause in silence [*IGLH* 193]. The Lord’s Prayer is well-known to everyone and can certainly be recited from memory, while the concluding prayer, final blessing, and dismissal pertain to the priest or minister [*IGLH* 54, 197]. Therefore, at least initially, all that the people would need would be an economical copy of the psalter properly arranged according to the Hours, a copy of the Old and New Testament Canticles used in Lauds and Vespers, and a copy of the *Benedictus* and the *Magnificat*, in order to be able to participate fully and actively in the celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours.” (Scotto 160)
         3. “In planning for any communal celebration of the Hours, it is essential that the praying community be made to feel as comfortable [160] and as familiar as possible with what they are going to be doing. If the faithful come to the service knowing little or nothing of what to expect, this could lead to uneasiness, embarrassment, and discouragement, and could very well vitiate all the good efforts previously expended in the proper preparation. It is essential, therefore, that they have a clear indication of exactly what is expected of them at each point of the celebration. This objective could be effected in various ways. Prior to the actual initiation of the Office, the order of service should be distributed to the entire assembly. This would include all of those directives necessary for the full and active participation of the people including the proper posture. All of this could be printed on a simple card and enclosed in the people’s copy of the psalms and canticles. As a further help it could also be printed in the parish bulletin. All other variable information such as hymn numbers, could be posted in church where all could clearly see it, or announced verbally just before the service.” (Scotto 160-161)
         4. “It is also important that the people be exhorted to be present in church at least five minutes before the scheduled time for the Hour in order that some more proximate preparation or instruction may be actively shared in. This will allow the community time to adjust to any last minute changes or announcements and will also offer the opportunity for a brief but very valuable practice during which the hymns and any other sung portions of the Office may be quickly rehearsed. But the people must not only be impressed with the need for punctuality, but primarily for their presence and active participation as elements vital to the support of the community and the ultimate success of the celebration. The clergy themselves can give the best example in this regard. Tardiness can lead to rushing, confusion, and frustration and can consequently destroy the atmosphere necessary for fruitful prayer, while absenteeism can weaken the very structure of community which is so essential to this communal gathering for prayer.” (Scotto 161)
         5. “Finally, once the praying community is gathered in church and ready to begin the service, allow a brief period of silence so that everyone may become recollected and properly disposed for this encounter with the Lord [*IGLH* 202].” (Scotto 161)
         6. “There are many publications presently available which are able to provide any parish community with a wide variety of musical settings for hymns, psalms, and canticles.” (Scotto 150)
            1. Lucien Deiss, *Biblical Hymns and Psalms*, 2 vols. (Cincinnati, OH: World Library of Sacred Music Publications, 1965-1970). (Scotto 199 n. 66, 201 n. 116)
            2. J. Gelineau, *The Grail Gelineau Psalter* (Chicago: G. I. A. Publications, 1963). (Scotto 199 n. 66, 201 n. 116)
            3. S. Somerville, *Psalms for Singing*, 2 vols. (Cincinnati, OH: World Library of Sacred Music Publications, 1960). (Scotto 201-202 n. 116)
            4. W.G. Storey, F.C. Quinn, and D.F. Wright, eds., *Morning Praise and Evensong*: *A Liturgy of the Hours in Musical Setting* (Notre Dame, IN: Fides, 1973). (Scotto 202 n. 116)
            5. R.A. Kiefer, ed., *The Catholic Liturgy Book* (Baltimore, MD: Helicon, 1975). (Scotto 202 n. 116)
            6. *Christian Prayer*: *The Liturgy of the Hours*, *Organ Accompaniment* (Washington, DC: International Commission on English in the Liturgy, 1978). (Scotto 202 n. 116)
         7. “. . . probably the most complete and up-to-date, reliable study of the Psalms in English is L. Sabourin’s *The Psalms*—*Their Origin and Meaning* (New York: Alba House, 1974). On a [192] much simpler and practical level see M. H. Shepherd Jr., *The Psalms in Christian Worship*—*A Practical Guide* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1976).” (Scotto 192-193 n. 144)

## The Cycle of Psalms in the New Divine Office

*Christian Prayer*: *The Liturgy of the Hours*. Trans. International Commission on English in the Liturgy. New York: Catholic Book, 1976. Rpt. 1985.

Psalm numbers in *Christian Prayer* are the same as in the nrsv. But *verse* numbers occasionally differ; when they do, nrsv verse numbers are in square brackets—e. g., “[1-8]” (see the second row in the first table below). Also, a tilde (~) means “not” (as in symbolic logic). So “(~ 6),” for example, means the psalm as recited in *Christian Prayer* omits verse 6. Not just verses omitted from the middle but also verses missing from the end of a psalm are listed after a tilde. This means you can always infer how many verses a psalm has: “110:1-5, 7 (~ 6),” for example, means Ps 110 has no verses beyond 7.

Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Week* | *Day* | *Morning Prayer* | *Evening Prayer* |
| 1 | Sunday | 63:2-9 [1-8] (~ 10-12 [9-11])  149:1-9 | (called “Sunday evening prayer II”)  110:1-5, 7 (~ 6)  114:1-8 |
| 1 | Monday | 5:2-10, 12-13 [1-9, 11-12] (~ [10])  29:1-11 | 11:1-7  15:1-5 |
| 1 | Tuesday | 24:1-10  33:1-22 | 20:1-9  21:2-8, 14 [1-7, 13] (~ [8-12]) |
| 1 | Wednesday | 36:1-12  47:1-9 | 27:1-6  27:7-14 |
| 1 | Thursday | 57:1-11  48:1-14 | 30:1-12  32:1-11 |
| 1 | Friday | 51:1-19  100:1-5 | 41:1-13  46:1-11 |
| 1 | Saturday | 119:145-152 (~ 1-144, 153-176)  117:1-2 | (called “Sunday evening prayer I”)  141:1-9 (~ 10)  142:1-7 |
| 2 | Sunday | 118:1-29  150:1-6 | (called “Sunday evening prayer II”)  110:1-5, 7 (~ 6)  115:1-18 |
| 2 | Monday | 42:1-11  19A = 19:1-6 | 45:1-9  45:10-17 |
| 2 | Tuesday | 43:1-5  65:1-13 | 49:1-12  49:13-20 |
| 2 | Wednesday | 77:1-20  97:1-12 | 62:1-12  67:1-7 |
| 2 | Thursday | 80:1-19  81:1-16 | 72:1-11  72:12-20 |
| 2 | Friday | 51:1-19  147:12-20 (~ 1-11) | 116:1-9 (~ 10-19)  121:1-8 |
| 2 | Saturday | 92:1-15  8:1-9 | (called “Sunday evening prayer I”)  119:105-112  16:1-11 |
| 3 | Sunday | 93:1-5  148:1-14 | (called “Sunday evening prayer II”)  110:1-5, 7 (~ 6)  111:1-10 |
| 3 | Monday | 84:1-12  96:1-13 | 123:1-4  124:1-8 |
| 3 | Tuesday | 85:1-13  67:1-7 | 125:1-5  131:1-3 |
| 3 | Wednesday | 86:1-17  98:1-9 | 126:1-6  127:1-5 |
| 3 | Thursday | 87:1-7  99:1-9 | 132:1-10  132:11-18 |
| 3 | Friday | 51:1-19  100:1-5 | 135:1-12  135:13-21 |
| 3 | Saturday | 119:145-152 (~ 1-144, 153-176)  117:1-2 | (called “Sunday evening prayer I”)  113:1-9  116:10-19 (says “116”!) (~ 1-9) |
| 4 | Sunday | 118:1-29  150:1-6 | (called “Sunday evening prayer II”)  110:1-5, 7 (~ 6)  112:1-10 |
| 4 | Monday | 90:1-17  135:1-12 (~ 13-21) | 136:1-9  136:10-26 |
| 4 | Tuesday | 101:1-8  144:1-10 (~ 11-15) | 137:1-6 (~ 7-9)  138:1-8 |
| 4 | Wednesday | 108:1-13  146:1-10 | 139:1-12  139:13-18, 23-24 (~ 19-22) |
| 4 | Thursday | 143:1-11 (~ 12)  147:1-11 (~ 12-20) | 144:1-8  144:9-15 |
| 4 | Friday | 51:1-19  147:12-20 | 145:1-13a  145:13b-21 |
| 4 | Saturday | 92:1-15  8:1-9 | (called “Sunday evening prayer I”)  122:1-9  130:1-8 |

Daytime Prayer, Night Prayer

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| *Day* | *Daytime* (*Current Psalmody*)1 | *Nighttime* |
| Sunday | 118:1-9  118:10-18  118:19-29 | (called “Sunday evening prayer II”)  91:1-16 |
| Monday | 19B = 19:7-14  7:1-9  7:10-17 | 86:1-17 |
| Tuesday | 119:1-8  13:1-6  14:1-7 | 143:1-11 (~ 12) |
| Wednesday | 119:9-16  17:1-9a  17:9b-15 | 31:1-6 [1-5] (~ [6-24])  130:1-8 |
| Thursday | 119:17-24  25:1-11  25:12-22 | 16:1-11 |
| Friday | 119:25-32  26:1-12  28:1-3, 6-9 (~ 4-5) | 88:1-18 |
| Saturday | 119:33-40  34:1-10  34:11-22 | (called “Sunday evening prayer I”)  4:1-8  134:1-3 |
| *Time* | *Daytime* (*Complementary Psalmody*)1 | *Other Psalms in the Breviary*: |
| mid-  morning | 120:1-7  121:1-8  122:1-9 | *Holy Saturday*, *Morning Prayer*:  64:1-10  *Ordinary of the Liturgy of the Hours*, *Invitatory*:  95:1-11  *Office for the Dead*:  40:2-14, 17-18 [1-13, 16-17] (~ [14-15])  70:1-5 |
| mid-  day | 123:1-4  124:1-8  125:1-5 |
| mid-  afternoon | 126:1-6  127:1-5  128:1-6 |

1 Daytime Prayer: “Two psalmodies are given: the one is current; the other is complementary. The current psalmody is comprised of three psalms or three selections from psalms. The complementary psalmody is made up of invariable psalms, chosen from those which are called gradual psalms . . . Those who say only one of the three hours use the current psalmody. Those who say several hours use the current psalmody for one hour; in the other hours they use the complementary psalmody.” (*Christian Prayer* 994)

(Complete psalms that are not in the present-day Liturgy of the Hours: 1, 2, 3, 6, 9, 10, 12, 18, 22, 23, 35, 37, 38, 39, 44, 50, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 58, 59, 60, 61, 66, 68, 69, 71, 73, 74, 75, 76, 78, 79, 82, 83, 89, 94, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 109, 129, 133, 140 [49 total].

Pieces of psalms that are not in the present-day Liturgy of the Hours: 5:10; 21:8-12; 28:4-5; 31:6-24; 40:14-15; 63:9-11; 110:6; 119:41-104, 113-144, 153-176; 137:7-9; 139:19-22; 141:10; 143:12.)

# Commentary

## Commentary on Psalms

Murphy, Roland E., O.Carm. “Psalms.” *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*. Ed. Raymond E. Brown, SS, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, SJ, and Roland E. Murphy, O.Carm. 2 vols. in 1. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1968. 1.569-602. (Numbers at the beginnings of paragraphs denote sections; sections 1-18 are introductory.)

**19** **Ps 1**. A post-exilic wisdom Ps, which has been prefixed to the collection as an introduction; in one of the variant readings to Acts 13:33, Ps 2 is called the first Ps. Structure: 1-3, the just man; 4-5, the godless; 6, the two ways. **1**. A congratulatory formula, “Happy . . .” is typical of the wisdom style; here, the characteristics of the just man are defined negatively: keeping away from bad companions. **2**. Positively, he is constantly and joyfully occupied with study and observance of the Torah, the expression of the divine will. **3**. Positively, his well-being can be compared to a fruitful tree (Jer 17:7-8; Ps 92:13-15), a common comparison in the ancient Orient (Amen-em-ope, *ANET* 422); the bracketed line in 3e is a gloss formed on the pattern of Jos 1:8. **4-5**. In sharp contrast are the wicked—”chaff,” the lighter, useless, parts of wheat that are blown free as the wheat is sifted on a breezy mound. What “judgment” is meant? Either one at the end time, or more probably an effective judgment in this world (cf. E. Arbez, *CBQ* 7 [1945] 398-404). In this world, the judgment would be the exclusion of the sinner from the company and fate of the just. **6**. The biblical sense of “way” as manner of life is apparent (cf. F. Nötscher, *Gotteswege und Menschenwege in der Bibel und in Qumran* [Bonn, 1958]); the just will prosper whereas the wicked will be punished. One should avoid an excessively legalistic interpretation of Ps 1; the ideal held out is one of joyful loyalty and dedication.

**20** **Ps 2**. A royal (messianic) Ps, composed on the occasion or possibly on the anniversary of the king’s accession to the throne in Jerusalem. Structure: 1-3, description of nations in revolt; 4-6, Yahweh’s answer; 7-9, the divine oracle proclaiming the king’s legitimacy and firm rule; 10-12, admonition to rulers to heed Yahweh’s will. This poem was more probably recited by a court poet. **1-3**. The revolt against the holy person of the king (“anointed”) is also against Yahweh. Revolutions were frequent with the accession of a new king, and one might see here a borrowing of Oriental court style, as far as Jerusalem is concerned; at most, only minor lands like Edom could be among the revolutionaries. In the post-exilic period, this revolt could be reinterpreted in an eschatological sense. **4-6**. The “folly” of revolt is clear from the description of the God of the world, whose reaction is vividly described. Yahweh has “set up” (i. e., consecrated) his own king on his “holy mountain”—a move neither appreciated nor understood by the nations. **7-9**. The “decree” () is now recognized to be, after the analogy of the Egyptian royal ritual, a written document of legitimation or protocol, authenticating the king (cf. G. von Rad, *GesSt* 205-13). It seems to be announced by the king himself. The sonship is adoptive and not mythological, as in Egypt, and not unlike the divine sonship of Mesopotamian kings, except that the Israelite notion is rooted in the divine promise made to David in 2 Sm 7. Firm world dominion is assured this king—another echo of foreign court style, but meaningful in the light of the Israelite belief that Yahweh rules the world and has his own designs for the Davidic dynasty. **10-12**. The ultimatum given to the kings of the earth is in the wisdom style: Give heed!

**21** **Ps 3**. An individual lament attributed to David (as are Pss 3-41). Structure: 2-4, the complaint; 5-7, trustful affirmation of help from God; 8-9, appeal and acknowledgment. Some scholars argue that the author must be a king; others modify this theory and think that it is an individual Israelite who uses phrases that may have been originally part of royal laments (the result of the so-called democratization). **2-4**. Addressed directly to God, with the “how,” typical of lament. Trust in Yahweh for salvation is the key motif (3, 8-9); hence, the Lord is his protection (“shield”) and also the cause of his dignity (, “glory”). **5-7**. The theme of trust is continued; he is certain of a hearing from Yahweh. The metaphor in 7 is that of a soldier surrounded by a hostile army. **8**. The plea for help is followed by the certainty of being heard (esp. if translated, “for you have struck . . .”). Many scholars postulate an oracle from a priest or a cult prophet at this point to explain the certainty in Pss of lament. **9**. The invocation upon the community suggests that the prayer was originally by the king, their representative.

**22** **Ps 4**. An individual lament, which is practically a Ps of trust. Structure: 2, appeal; 3-6, admonition to enemies; 7-9, contrast between impatience and confidence. The life setting cannot be determined in detail, although some (H. Schmidt) regard this Ps as a prayer of someone falsely accused who spends the night in the Temple. **2**. *O my just God*: Lit., “God of my justice,” i. e., the one who must, by saving him, declare him just. The psalmist has regularly experienced the saving intervention of Yahweh in the past (“relieve,” lit., “created room for me”). **3**. *men of rank*: Probably his enemies (in the MT they are asked, “How long will my glory be dishonored?”). A relatively mild admonition follows: He appeals confidently to Yahweh’s treatment of him, from which they should draw a lesson: reverence, sacrifice, and trust. It is not certain if they are persecuting him or if they are deserting Yahweh; “falsehood” in 3 can indicate idols, as well as calumny. **7**. *many*: Those who lack the confidence of the psalmist; their murmuring is quoted. **8-9**. For the third time (2, 4) he refers to his own experience: His “gladness” is greater than the joy of the harvest festival (“grain” and “wine”). This song is similar to Ps 3, but it need not be joined with it, as some urge. The spirit of the poem is reflected in passages like Is 50:8-9 and Rom 8:34.

**23** **Ps 5**. An individual lament. Structure: 2-4, the cry for help, uttered in the Temple in the morning; 5-7, Yahweh will not tolerate sinners in the Temple [576] (motif of certainty of being heard); 8-11, by God’s favor the psalmist can enter the Temple, and he asks that Yahweh guide him in trials and punish the deceitful enemies; 12-13, confident prayer for the just. The life setting can be that of a man who ministers in the Temple and who begs the Lord for triumph over enemies who are trying to oust him (prayer of one unjustly accused, H. Schmidt). **4c.** Lit., “at dawn I prepare [my sacrifice] for you and I wait”; perhaps an oracle from a priest would be given in answer. **5bc.** The sinful are excluded from the sacral area (cf. the “entrance” torah of Pss 14:2-5; 23:3-6)—such is the basis of the psalmist’s hope; he seems to be a Temple minister whom others are trying to get rid of. **8**. A confident statement of the service he hopes to render, as a “kindness” from Yahweh. **9**. A request for such help from God in his service of him, which will defeat the machinations of his enemies. **10**. *throat*: Compared to an “open grave” because words of calumny and corruption come forth from it. **11**. A request for just punishment of his enemies who must also be hateful (6) to God. **12**. *your name*: You, since the name is the person (cf. Pss 69:37; 119:132). **13**. The certainty of having the protection of Yahweh conies through here.

**24** **Ps 6**. An individual lament, one of the seven penitential Pss. Structure: 2-4, complaint and cry for help; 5-6, plea and reason for Yahweh to intervene; 7-9, description of grief designed to move God to intervene; 9-11, Yahweh “has heard” his prayer, thus putting his enemies in confusion. **2**. Apparently a stereotyped formula (Ps 38:2; Jer 10:24), in which God’s fatherly love is expressed anthropomorphically. **3**. A request that his sickness (in OT thought a sign of sin, or God’s punishment for sin) be healed. **4**. *soul*: As often in OT, it is the person. **5-6**. Two reasons why Yahweh should intervene: his  (kindness); the fact that after death man has no contact with him in Sheol (“nether world”; cf. Is 38:18; Pss 88:11-13; 115:16-17;  Aspects OT Thought, 77:170). Hence, Yahweh owes it to himself not to allow the psalmist to die. **8**. The role of the “foes” is never clearly indicated; at the least, they are triumphant over the suffering they think he deserves. **9-11**. Whence comes the astonishing certainty that “the Lord has heard”? Either these words are recited in the Temple after the psalmist recovered or’ they are a reaction to the deliverance promised in an oracle of a priest. On the “evildoers” (),  11 and 18 above.

**25** **Ps 7**. An individual lament and a good example of the type called “prayer of one unjustly accused” (H. Schmidt). The life setting seems to be that of a man who, persecuted by enemies, takes refuge in the Temple and proclaims his innocence; he calls upon the Lord, as a just judge, for aid. Structure: 2-3, plea for help and deliverance from pursuers; 4-6, protestation of innocence in the form of a purificatory oath; 7-10, an appeal to Yahweh, the just one (set aside as a separate Ps by Duhm, Podechard, etc.); 11-14, Yahweh is a savior, but he punishes the unjust; 15-18, a description of how the evil man will be entrapped by his own evil. **1**. *plaintive song*: , an obscure term. *Cush the Benjaminite*: Unknown. **4-6**. The casuistic style (if, then) is typical of the purificatory oath (cf. Jb 31). *I who spared*: Others translate,”[if] I pillaged.” **7-10**. The appeal is to Yahweh, “enthroned” (on the Ark), judge of “nations,” to rise and “do justice,” i. e., vindicate the psalmist by defeating his enemies. The imperatives in 7 derive from the old battle cry in which the Ark played a role (Nm 10:35-36). As Kraus remarks, the answer expected would be something like Ps 12:6. The atmosphere of world judgment in 8 does not indicate an eschatological reference; it is merely a description of the judge from whom he is seeking justice. The motif of innocence, another aspect of the oath in 4-6, appears in 9; such protestations can be found in ancient Babylonian prayers. **13**. The CCD has, with most of the ancient versions, “God” as subject; some modern critics prefer to understand the wicked man (described also in 15-17) as the subject. **15-17**. These metaphors are familiar in OT (cf. Jb 15:35; Is 59:4; Prv 26:27; Ps 9:16; Ob 15; Ps 28:4): conception that fails to bring forth; falling into the hole one has dug; evil recoiling on one’s own head. **18**. An announcement of thanksgiving (sacrifice), which the psalmist will offer.

**26** **Ps 8**. A hymn of praise of God as creator (4-5) and of man as the head of creation (6-9). Structure: The two themes are placed in the framework of community praise (2-3, 10; note the refrain). **2**. The MT of 2-3 is uncertain; “name” and “majesty” are synonymous with God himself, who is “exalted” above all that he has made. **3**. *praise*: Lit., “strength”; the general idea of the CCD is that God’s power is the more evident because of the modest means (*babes*) he uses. Others take “strength” as a fortress God constructs against his enemies (powers of chaos?). **4**. *I*: A Temple singer, who is astounded by the contrast between God’s majesty and his “care” (5) for man, to whom he has subjected all creation (6-9; cf. Gn 1:26-28). **6**. *angels*: Lit., “elohim” beings, the members of the heavenly court. The reflected divine glory is seen in man (Gn 1); Heb 2:5-9 transposes this idea to the new creation in Christ.

**27** **Pss 9-10**. A thanksgiving song and a lament, in an imperfect alphabetic pattern of very loose structure. Praise is proclaimed in the Temple (9:15) by one who acknowledges his own deliverance (9:4, 14) and who develops the themes of God’s judgment and reign over the peoples (9:5-12, 18-21; 10:16). But there remains the scandal of the arrogant wicked (10:1-11, where the style of the individual lament is employed). Let God intervene and save the poor from them. The (LXX, Vg) pattern of one Ps is better than the MT. The uncertainty in interpretation comes from the vagueness (“enemies,” “judgment,” “wicked man”), and from the sequence of thanksgiving, lament. It is hard to escape Mowinckel’s contention that Pss such as this “I-Psalm” are really royal songs in which the king is associated with the people (*The Psalms I*, 76-78). **13**. *avenger of blood*: Yahweh. *afflicted*: Hebr  (, and cf. 10:17). This term has been variously interpreted in Pss: an Israelite “party” devoted to Yahweh (A. Rahlfs); the spiritually proficient (A. Causse); those who suffer at the hands of conjurers (S. Mowinckel, H. Birkeland). A summary of various views is given by Castellino (*op*. *cit*., 254-63;  11 above). At the least, the term suggests faithful, pious Israelites who are being oppressed. **14**. *gates of death*: The metaphor comes from the conception of Sheol as a (prison) house with gates. **10:4**. The inaction of God amounts to his nonexistence.

**28** **Ps 11**. Song (not a prayer) of trust, by one who takes refuge in the Temple with Yahweh (1, 4), and refuses to follow the advice of his friends to flee (1-3). **2**. Perhaps these are metaphors for calumny (cf. 64:4-5). **3**. Flight is the only solution in a chaotic, lawless situation. **4-7**. Yahweh’s justice is the reason for the psalmist’s trust. *allotted cup*: Of wrath (cf. Jer 51:17; Lam 4:21). *see his face*: Encounter with Yahweh in the Temple worship (cf. 17:15; 27:4; etc.).

**29** **Ps 12**. A liturgy of lament, which expresses trust in Yahweh’s word (6) for deliverance from the wicked. The psalmist seems to voice the prayer of the community (2-5), which speaks in 7-9. Structure: 2-3, cry for help and description of deceit; 4-5, wish; 6, a [577] divine oracle, which (7-9) inspires a confident response from the community. **3**. *double heart*: Lit., “with a heart and heart,” i. e., duplicity (cf. Jas 1:8). **6**. Rather than merely a summary statement of Yahweh’s assurance of help, it is probably a cultic oracle pronounced by a priest (cf. Pss 2:7; 32:8; etc.; and Begrich, *op*. *cit*. 81-92). **7**. The words of the Lord are “refined,” i. e., no trace of falsity. **8**. The community is confident that the prayer is heard.

**30** **Ps 13**. An individual lament. Structure: 2-4, complaint and request; 5-6, confident promise of thanksgiving. The psalmist is tortured more by abandonment by God than by any sickness. **2-3**. *how long*?: A question typical of the lament. **4**. *light* . . .: The strength and will to live (Ps 19:9). **5**. *enemy*: Those who think his misfortune justifies their accusations against God. To induce Yahweh to intervene, he uses the motif of trust in his “kindness,” and he holds out the prospect of singing his praises in thanksgiving.

**31** **Ps 14 (= Ps 53).** A lament that has been preserved in two slightly different forms. Structure: 1-3, a complaint about “fools”; 4-6, but God is with the just; 7, request. **1**. A practical, not theoretical, atheism is ascribed to the “fool,” i. e., the evil man. **4**. The question is a complaint concerning the activities of the “evildoers” (; see comment on 6:9). **6**. *you*: The evildoers. **7**. out *of Zion*: In contrast to 2, where Yahweh is in “heaven,” this may indicate a gloss (but cf. Ps 20:3, 7) that requests a renewal (, “to restore the well-being,” does not necessarily refer to return from exile) perhaps in the post-exilic period.

**32** **Ps 15**. A liturgy Ps of entrance (cf. 24:2; Is 33:13-16), pronounced antiphonally on the occasion of (pilgrims’) entering the Temple. Structure: 1, a question addressed to Yahweh by one who enters the Temple; 2-5, an answer (the “entrance” torah) given by a cult minister. **1**. *tent*: The Temple, referred to by the old amphictyonic term for the Tabernacle. **2-4**. A description of the deserving man—his total justice and sincerity, which includes his attitude to his neighbor, especially in matters of justice.

**33** **Ps 16**. A Ps of trust. Structure: 2-6, a meditation on his relationship to Yahweh and his separation from idolators; 7-11, trust in Yahweh who saves him from death. **1**. *refuge*: Perhaps in the Temple (Ps 61:5). **2**. Yahweh as the supreme “good” is an operative idea in the development of the OT concept of immortality. **3-4**. Text uncertain; the CCD expresses the psalmist’s affection for the “holy ones” (elsewhere almost always used of members of the heavenly court) among the people, and his aversion to idolatry. **5-6**. The terms, “portion . . . inheritance,” are reminiscent of the partition of Palestine under Joshua (Jos 14:1ff.), and the inheritance allotted to Levites (Nm 18:20). A Levite might be the author, but the metaphors are “spiritualized” here as Von Rad (op. *cit*., 241-43) has pointed out. They bespeak a deep sense of presence and communion (8-9) with God, which prevails over death (10). **10**. Does this verse refer to deliverance from impending or sudden death and restoration to the divine companionship in this life, or to deliverance from “corruption” after death, i. e. immortality? Scholars are divided in opinion. The word “corruption” translates Hebr  as the LXX did (), but it could be rendered simply “pit,” a synonym for the nether world. It seems best to respect, with A. Weiser, the author’s vagueness, and to understand his words as indicating a conquest of death without any further specification. The NT applies 8-11 in a fuller sense to Christ’s resurrection (Acts 2:25-31; 13:34-37). The apostles naturally rallied to the LXX version of , a meaning that the word seems to have in the Qumran scrolls (cf. R. E. Murphy in *Bib* 39 [1958] 61-68). **11**. *path to life*: Correct moral conduct is the meaning of the phrase in the wisdom literature (cf. Prv 2:19; 15:24; 5:6; 6:23; the Egyptian parallels are discussed by B. Couroyer in *RB* 56 [1949] 412-32). The evaluation of God’s “presence” is noteworthy.

**34** **Ps 17**. A lament of an individual unjustly accused (10-12). Structure: 1-5, a cry to Yahweh, with affirmation of innocence; 6-9a, request; 9b-12, a description of his accusers; 13-15, prayer for deliverance and vengeance, with certainty of being heard. **2**. *from you*: He expects some form of God’s just judgment, such as an oracle. **3**. He probably spends the “night” in the Temple, awaiting the answer upon awakening from sleep (cf. 15 and Ps 5:4). Kraus suggests that what we have here is Temple incubation, as though the thoughts of man in sleep can no longer be hidden. **4**. His very integrity demands this affirmation of innocence. **6-12**. The tenderness of Yahweh’s “kindness,” in contrast to the “cruel hearts” of his enemies, is one of the themes he employs to gain a reply from God. The metaphors in 8 betray his deep trust in God; the “wings” are an allusion to the wings of the cherubim over the Ark on which Yahweh is enthroned. **11-12**. *lions*: A frequent symbol for enemies in Pss (7:3; 10:9; 22:22; etc.).

**35** **Ps 18**. A royal Ps of thanksgiving for victory over enemies; a parallel recension is found in 2 Sm 22. The life setting is perhaps the Temple (7) where the king gives thanks for a battle victory; the prayer might possibly go back to the time of David (cf. F. M. Cross and N. Freedman, *JBL* 72 [1953] 15-34 for critical translation with notes on archaisms and Ugaritic allusions). Structure: 2-4, hymnic introduction; 5-31, the first description, in terms of a theophany, of his desperate plight and Yahweh’s intervention to save him because of his loyalty; 32-49, a second description, more concrete, of the marvelous deliverance in battle by the God who trained the king. **3**. *rock*: A natural symbol of safety and strength (although some, e. g., Kraus, see here an allusion to the old Jerusalem tradition about the “holy rock” that came to be applied to Yahweh). *horn*: A frequent symbol of strength in the OT. **5-6**. *breakers* . . . *snares*: These metaphors derive from the ancient myths concerning Sheol, the watery abyss that “hunts” man; the psalmist describes himself as in the “nether world,” which is more a condition than a place. **7**. A succinct description of distress, prayer, and deliverance (the latter described in the theophany of 8-20). **8-16**. A graphic description, which borrows the usual literary dress of OT theophany (e. g., Ex 19; Hab 3:4ff.); the enumeration of the cataclysmic phenomena (earthquake, storm, lightning) serves to actualize the Sinai theophany. **11**. Yahweh rides on the “cherub” (see comment on Ps 68:5). In 16, the creation myth is again (5-6) the background for Yahweh’s control of the sea. **17-20**. The psalmist is delivered from the “deep waters,” here explained as his “foes.” **21-31**. The question is: Why does God help the psalmist (and all who are “lowly” and “take refuge in him”)? The answer is succinctly expressed in 26-27, and the ways of the just man are described in 21-25; hence, every just man, whether he be king or “lowly,” can rely upon the protection (28-31) of Yahweh, who is “light” (source of strength) to the psalmist’s “lamp.” **32-35**. An expression of confidence in God; this passage begins the second part of the poem, which describes the concrete circumstances of battle in which God fights for the king. The fact that his enemies cried out to the Lord seems to indicate that they were Jews, but the “foreigners” of 45 suggest that they are non-Israelites who have been completely subdued; the references are probably to a series of battles. **47-51**. Acknowledgment [578] and praise of Yahweh for his “kindness” () to the king, the “anointed” par excellence. *the Lord live*!: The Israelite form of an old cultic formula reflected in Am 8:14, and perhaps in the Ugaritic formula, “Aliyan Baal lives” (*UM* 49:III, 8-9; *ANET* 140).

**36** **Ps 19**. A hymn of praise, which unites two themes (perhaps originally separate Pss): 2-7, God’s glory in the heavens; 8-15, the wonder of his Law. One may conveniently explain the connection in that the Law reveals God’s will, while his glory is spoken throughout nature (cf. Pss 1, 8, 119). **2**. The beauty of the “heavens” is itself a hymn in praise of God. **3-5**. A development of how the “heavens declare.” The CCD means that the praise is continuous, “day” and “night,” and everywhere. But others (RSV, etc.) understand 3 to mean that no sound is audible. Then, paradoxically, the message is heard everywhere (v. 4), even though it is not voiced. **5-7**. The marvel of the “sun,” which is merely God’s handiwork. It is compared to a “groom” (coming forth from the “chamber” where the sun rests for the night) and to a soldier-giant, in its course. **8-10**. Praise of the Law: Each verse relates a characteristic, followed by a good effect. The Torah, as embodied in the Pentateuch, is the expression of God’s will for Israel; the synonyms are “decree,” “precepts,” etc. **9**. *enlightening the eye*: Giving health and well-being. **12-15**. The conclusion is the author’s personal reaction: loyalty to the Law, even if there are “unknown faults” (e. g., Lv 5:2-4; Ps 90:8). The Bible frequently refers to God’s role in keeping man from sin (cf. Is 63:17; Jer 10:13; and the NT “Our Father” prayer). **15**. His very Ps is to be accepted as a sacrifice, obtaining God’s “favor” (cf. Pss 104:34; 119:108). It is worth emphasizing that the attitude to the Law in this Ps is characterized by joy and appreciation (cf. Pss 1, 119).

**37** **Ps 20**. A royal Ps, a liturgical prayer that the king be victorious. Structure: 2-6, request; 7-10, certainty that Yahweh has granted the request, which is repeated in 10. The Ps is part of the Temple liturgy, spoken by several (6, 10) and also by an individual (7). The name of God echoes through this Ps (2, 6, 8). **2**. The “name” is a surrogate for Yahweh himself, whose name, in deuteronomic theology, resides in Jerusalem. Hence, he gives help “from Zion” (3) as well as from “his holy heaven” (7). **4**. *your holocaust*: The sacrifice that was accompanied by this Ps. **6**. A promise is given to celebrate his coming victory. **7**. *I know* . . .: An oracle assuring victory is perhaps presupposed by this change of mood. **8**. The antithesis between reliance upon human powers and reliance upon God is a frequent OT theme (1 Sm 17:45; Is 31:3).

**38** **Ps 21**. A royal Ps that forms part of a liturgy of thanksgiving. Structure: 2-8, thanksgiving to God for the blessings given to the king (probably rendered by a Temple minister); 9-14, the community expresses good wishes to the king for a victory over his enemies—a fitting prayer on the occasion of a royal accession or its anniversary (cf. 4). **2**. *strength*: Cf. 14; God’s power has secured the “victory.” **3-5**. The only concrete reason given for thanksgiving is the granting of the king’s request for “life,” which is to be understood in the full sense of prosperity and well-being. Verses like these illustrate the sacral, superhuman, aspect of Israelite kingship. **9-13**. A direct address to the king by a choir (14) that promises to offer thanksgiving when Yahweh shows his “might” and “strength” (cf. also 2).

**39** **Ps 22**. An individual lament (2-22) and thanksgiving (23-32). Two literary types are combined in one Ps, pronounced by an individual who has already experienced deliverance and now offers his sacrifice (26-27). The triumphant affirmation of 23-32 is more than the usual “certainty of having been heard.” Hence, 2-22 must be the complaint he made in his suffering. The individual is a private worshiper (rather than a king participating in a ritual, as some modern commentators urge), who suffered from physical pain and from enemies; but the descriptions of his plight are highly metaphorical. Structure: 2-22, the complaint, with repeated requests, descriptions of suffering, and expressions of confidence (4-6; 10-11); 23-32, thanksgiving, in which the community is invited to share (23-27) and worldwide worship of Yahweh is proclaimed. **2**. *my God*: An invocation that implies reliance upon Yahweh for help; but its repetition suggests the dire situation of the abandoned one. **4-6**. The basis of his trust is Yahweh’s presence in the Temple and his deliverance of Israel in the past salvation history. **8**. *parted lips*: Lips parted in a wide, sneering, manner. **9**. This quotation, typical of his enemies, reflects the disbelief that one who suffers could be other than a sinner. *if he loves him*: Probably, if God loves him. **10-11**. After the complaint, another (cf. 4-6) affirmation of trust. **13**. *Bashan*: East of the Sea of Galilee in Transjordan, noted for its strong bulls (Am 4:1), which symbolize his enemies. **15-16**. Apparently a description of a mortal, feverish malady. **17**. *pierced*: A conjectural meaning, supported partly by some ancient versions, but it remains doubtful, even if it is better than the MT (“like a lion”). The verse is not quoted in the NT. **19**. These actions indicate that his enemies regard his death as certain. **20-23**. The renewed appeal exemplifies the wide range of metaphors that describe his suffering: “sword,” “dog,” “lion,” “bull.” **23-27**. A sharp transition to a thanksgiving ceremony with “brethren” (23, 26) in the Temple, where he fulfills his “vows” in gratitude for deliverance. The mood of these verses hardly permits one to think that he is merely “anticipating” deliverance. They describe an actual thanksgiving: acknowledgment of Yahweh as rescuer (24-26); participation in a sacrificial banquet in which the lowly share (27). **28-29**. The universalism is reminiscent of the enthronement Pss (47, 93, etc.), which describe Yahweh as king; it is unexpected here, although not out of place in an acknowledgment. **20**. *all who sleep* . . . *who go down* . . .: Because one does not normally worship Yahweh from Sheol (Pss 6:6; 90:11-13), these phrases probably indicate “mortal men.” *to him my soul shall live*: A conjectural translation; the MT is uncertain. He seems to contrast the prolongation of his life with the death others have incurred. **31**. Yahweh’s “justice,” i. e., the deliverance of the psalmist, is to be told to future generations. This Ps (2, 8, 9, 16, 19) is utilized frequently in the NT passion narratives—and with true insight. It is not a prediction, but a presentation of an exemplary suffering and deliverance (cf. the Suffering Servant of Is 53) that was fulfilled in a transcendent manner in Jesus.

**40** **Ps 23**. A Ps of trust, structured in two parts: 1-4, God as shepherd; 5-6, God as host. E. Vogt (*Bib* 34 [1953] 195-211) has argued that the occasion is the thanksgiving meal of one who has been unjustly accused; one may agree that 5-6 at least indicate a thanksgiving ceremony. **1**. Yahweh as a shepherd is a frequent theme, in the OT (Ps 79:13; Is 40:11; Ez 34:15 ff: etc.) and in the NT (Jn 10:11-18). The ancient Orient generally conceived of the king as shepherd, and Shamash is described as shepherding all who live (*ANET* 387). **2-4**. The vivid metaphors derived from shepherding cover all the contingencies of human life—e. g., the “rod” for hostile. beings, the “staff” for sure guidance. **5**. This picture of God as table host, probably at a sacrificial meal in the Temple, is all the more impressive because it is “in the sight of my foes.” **6**. In contrast to his former enemies, “goodness” and “kindness” now pursue him. It has been [579] inferred that he is perhaps a Levite, dwelling in the Temple, but a sense of God’s presence may be all that he intends to convey.

**41** **Ps 24**. A processional hymn, with an “entrance” torah (cf. Ps 15). Structure: 1-2, praise of the creator; 3-6, the entrance torah, question and answer; 7-10, the procession (with antiphonal response) of the king of glory into the Temple. Various feasts have been urged as the life setting of this Ps—e. g., the enthronement festival of the New Year (S. Mowinckel)—but there is no sure answer. **1**. *fullness*: All that the earth contains. **2**. The reason for Yahweh’s dominion is his creative power, which conquered the “seas” and “rivers”—a motif frequent in the so-called enthronement Pss. The marvel of the created world is its firmness, although it rests on that unruly enemy the Lord tamed in the creative act, the “seas”; the earth was conceived as resting on pillars in the abyss (Ps 75:4). **3**. The question asks for an instruction, or torah. **4**. There are four requisites: freedom from bribery; purity of heart (i. e., a clean conscience, especially as regards neighbors); aversion from idols (“what is vain”); and, finally, one should not have harmed others by lying oaths. **5**. The “reward” is the “blessing” (), a full, prosperous life. **7**. The address to the “gates” is uttered by the pilgrims and the question in 8 comes from within the Temple. The pilgrims identify the “king of glory” in terms traditionally associated with the Ark (cf. 1 Sm 4:3-4); he is “Yahweh” , the Lord of hosts (10), the war hero of Israel. The spirit of this Ps matches the description in the inaugural vision of Isaiah (6:1-6).

**42** **Ps 25**. An individual lament in acrostic style. The psalmist is a sinner (7) who is hated by enemies; he prays for deliverance and guidance. Structure: 1-7, a series of requests, with themes to induce Yahweh to intervene (3, 6-7); 8-15, a teaching about the “way” (8) and fear of the Lord (12); 16-21, another series of requests for help, followed in 22 by an apparent addition referring to the community. **4**. Although the poem is a complaint, the key idea is “your ways,” which the author asks to know and to observe; this concept is taken up again in 8-15, in which a strong wisdom influence can be seen, especially 12-14. **10**. *kindness and constancy*:  are the characteristics of the covenant relationship (cf. 14). **12**. Lit., “Who is the man who fears the Lord?” This type of question is found in the entrance torah of Pss 15:1; 24:3. **16-21**. There is found here an unusual mixture of request and expressions of trust. **22**. This verse is certainly an addition because it introduces a prayer for Israel and because it is outside the alphabetical sequence that structures the Ps. When a poem goes beyond 22 (the number of letters in the Hebr alphabet), the standard practice is to begin the next (and last) line with  (as here, and cf. Ps 34:23 and the observations of P. W. Skehan in *CBQ* 23 [1961] 127).

**43** **Ps 26**. An individual lament by one who has been unjustly accused. Structure: 1-2, request for justice; 3-8, affirmation of innocence, request for deliverance, and certainty of being heard. The typical life setting for such a prayer is aptly described in 1 Kgs 8:31-32. **2**. This request should be taken seriously; he is asking for a judgment that will be shown before men by the test he is ready to undergo. **3-8**. Following the positive statement of virtue are the denials in 4-5 a sort of purificatory oath (cf. Jb 31), the ritual of which seems to be described in 6-7; the *Lavabo* prayer of the Roman rite Mass uses these verses. The “thanks” () is the proclamation of Yahweh’s judgments (“wondrous deeds”). **9**. Let him not be destroyed, as “sinners” are. **11**. *redeem*: Save from the death that is the lot of the sinner; perhaps he refers in 10b to the venality of his judges. **12**. Sure of Yahweh’s intervention, he promises a thanksgiving sacrifice in the Temple that he loves (8). Affirmations of righteousness (3-8, and frequently in Pss) should be understood as a legitimate denial of guilt, not as an arrogant claim of self-justification (cf. 11b;  18 above).

**44** **Ps 27**. An individual lament. Structure: 1-6, poem of trust in God for protection; 7-14, the complaint, ending with certainty of being heard (13), and oracle of encouragement. Although many scholars (Podechard, Weiser) claim that two Pss have been combined here, a certain unity can be recognized: Trust is a characteristic of the lament, and in both parts there is mention of enemies (2, 12). He could have expressed his confidence and desire for the “shelter of his tent” (5-6) before he succeeded in making his lament in the Temple. **2**. *devour* . . .: Destroy completely. **3**. The metaphor is taken from military experience; the victorious spirit of confidence is reminiscent of Rom 8:32-39. **4**. This single desire is also expressed in Ps 23:6. **6**. He is confident enough to vow that one day he will offer thanksgiving for his deliverance from his “enemies.” **7-10**. The insistent requests for “pity,” are still colored by his trust (10). **8**. The MT is not clear. **12**. The enemies are identified for the first time: “false witnesses.” **13**. The CCD correctly expresses the thought, but in the MT the anacoluthon is striking: “If I were not certain that I should see . . .!” *land of the living*: The present world, as opposed to Sheol (cf. Ps 52:7). **14**. This is best taken as an oracle of deliverance addressed to the psalmist.

**45** **Ps 28**. An individual lament. Structure: 1-2, invocation and plea; 3-5, punishment for the wicked; 6-7, certainty that Yahweh has heard; 8-9, acknowledgment of Yahweh ind prayer for the king and people. This prayer is uttered in the Temple (2) by one who is perhaps sick and tormented by the wicked. **1-2**. *pit*: A frequent synonym for the nether world (Ps 30:4, etc.); he is close to death as he addresses God at the Holy of Holies. **3-4**. Let Yahweh punish those who are truly guilty. **5**. The wicked do not recognize God’s just rule (“deeds . . . work”) on earth. **6-7**. *he has heard*: This sudden change from pleading may best be explained by presupposing (cf. 6:9-10) that he has received in reply a favorable response from the priest; hence, he now praises the Lord. **8**. He generalizes his experience as applicable to the people of God whom Yahweh protects. The reference to the”annointed,” or king, is not enough to classify this Ps as a royal Ps.

**46** **Ps 29**. A hymn with many Ugaritic echoes (for references, see F. M. Cross, *BASOR* 117 [1950] 19-21) extolling the power of God the king in the storms of nature. Its precise life setting is hard to determine (naturally, it is associated with the enthronement feast by Mowinckel), but the Canaanite flavor is undeniable. The climactic or “staircase” parallelism (abc-a«b«d) is typical of Ugaritic verse, and several expressions can be duplicated from Ugaritic poetry. Hence many scholars think that it is an adaptation of an “ancient Canaanite Baal hymn” (Cross); if so, it has been radically reinterpreted. It is not possible to determine the antiphonal pattern that may have structured this song. **1**. *sons of God*: The members of the heavenly court (cf. Ps 8:6) who serve Yahweh are commanded to give glory (cf. 9b). **2**. *in holy attire*: Perhaps better, “when he appears in holiness” (cf. Ugaritic ). **3**. The voice is “thunder,” a figurative expression used also in Ugaritic literature (*UM* 51:5, 70; cf. Ps 68:34; Jb 28:26). The “waters” are the same as the”*flood*” in 10—i. e., the waters above the firmament (Gn 1:7) where God dwells. **6**. Lebanon and Sirion (the Phoenician name for Mt. Hermon; cf. Dt 3:9) are in parallelism, as also at Ugarit (*UM* 51:6, 18-19). *leap*: Tremble. **7**. *fiery flames*: Lightning (cf. Ps 18:9). [580] **8**. Kadesh, a “wilderness” in the area of Lebanon, seems to be mentioned in the Keret epic (*UM* 125:7, 108), which some understand as a reference to Kadesh-barnea. **9**. Others translate, “makes the hinds calve and hastens the birth of kids”—a description of the fright the storm causes among the animals. **9b-10.** Yahweh is “enthroned” as king in his “temple” () above the firmament and is honored because of the “glory” that his power manifests. **11**. The Lord is associated with Israel, “his people.”

**47** **Ps 30**. A thanksgiving song of an individual. The title associates it with the dedication () of the Temple in 164 bc (cf. 1 Mc 4:35-59). Structure: 2, praise of Yahweh for having saved him from death; 3-4, the story of his experience; 5-6, invitation to bystanders to praise the Lord and to learn from this event; 7-12, a more explicit description of his trouble and deliverance, ending with praise of Yahweh. **2**. His “enemies” would “rejoice” in that his misfortune proves he is one stricken by God. **5-6**. The thanksgiving song regularly appeals to bystanders to associate themselves in the praise of God, and it frequently becomes didactic, as in the expressive lesson of 6. **7-11**. The psalmist goes back over his problem to the days of his overconfidence, and relives it, repeating his prayer (9-11). **10**. As in Ps 6:6, there is reflected here the belief that in Sheol there is no contact with Yahweh, no praise is offered to him; hence God should preserve his life. There is perhaps the nuance that in Sheol it would not be the Lord’s faithfulness that would be rehearsed! **12**. A graphic picture of his restoration; sacred “dancing” was known in Israel (2 Sm 6:16).

**48** **Ps 31**. A thanksgiving song, by one who has been delivered from his afflictions (sickness, persecution), and who praises God in the Temple. Structure: 2-9, a typical complaint, with strong overtones of trust; 10-19, similar to 2-9, although some consider 10-25 a separate Ps; 20-25, the thanksgiving begins as the author acknowledges deliverance and “teaches” (24-25) those present with him. **2-4a.** Cf. Ps 71:1-3. **4**. The metaphors applied to Yahweh are natural enough without necessarily belonging to the ancient cult tradition of Jerusalem; (cf. Ps 18:3). **5**. The “snare” (of the hunter) symbolizes the opposition, perhaps unjust accusations (12, 18-19), of his enemies. **6**. *spirit*: Breath of life (Gn 2:7; Ps 104:29-30). Jesus used the first line of this verse as his prayer on Calvary (Lk 23:46). **8**. The aspect of thanksgiving is best brought out by translating “because” instead of “when.” **10**. In a second phase (cf. Pss 18, 29, 102), the author returns to his description of his distress in words that suggest mortal sickness. But it also appears that perhaps his enemies would utterly destroy him by false witness (cf. 14 and Jer 20:10). **13**. *the unremembered dead*: An apt metaphor, in view of the limited knowledge of the next life in the OT (cf. 18). **16**. *destiny*: Lit., “times,” which has suggested that the Hebr concept of time is “filled time,” periods filled with something. **17**. The emphasis on God’s “face” (rendered in 21 by “presence”) is noteworthy. Weiser’s commentary emphasizes this aspect of theophany, or the experience of God, in the Pss. **20**. The thanksgiving begins in hymnic style and is followed by a testimony before fellow men (24-25), which is typical of this type of Ps. **22**. *fotified*: “Besieged” is perhaps better as a metaphor for his situation. But the text is changed by many to “in a time of distress.” On the basis of Pss such as 31, P. Bonnard has written *Le Psautier selon Jérémie* (Paris, 1960), but it is not easy to establish the dependence of these Pss upon Jeremiah; this particular Ps, it must be admitted, does seem to echo the “confessions” of the Prophet.

**49** **Ps 32**. Although this is usually classified as a thanksgiving Ps, perhaps it is better considered as a wisdom Ps. The wisdom elements (1-2, 8-11) serve as a wrapper for a thanksgiving testimony (3-7) that is directly addressed to God. The testimony exists only for the lesson that the author wants to communicate (“for this shall every man pray to you,” v. 6; cf. Murphy in VTSup 9, 162). Structure: 1-2, macarism formula, a reflection on his past experience; 3-7, a description of this experience with the lesson that flows from it; 8-9, teaching and admonition; 9-10, a contrast between the faithful and the wicked, with a command to rejoice. **1-2**. *The*  formula is frequent in wisdom literature as a classic form of moral exhortation. These verses are not to be read in the light of the theology of the scholastics and the reformers; they tell us nothing about the intrinsic nature of justification. The phrases “cover” and “impure” are anthropomorphic descriptions of God’s forgiveness, and they are frequent in the OT. Verses 1-2 are the conclusion to which the psalmist has come and the lesson that he inculcates. **3-5**. *as long as* . . .: His suffering finally led him to the realization of his sin, and led him to “speak,” acknowledging it (5); thus, his admission of sin brings pardon. **6-7**. *for this*: Refers to his experience, which becomes a lesson for those whom he would instruct. *deep waters*: Symbolic of death (Ps 18:5-6, 17). **8-9**. He speaks as a sage (Kraus would make this a divine oracle communicated through the priest). The advice in 9bc is not clear; the CCD can be understood as urging a willing submission to Yahweh lest he be forced to violent treatment. **10**. After indicating the benefits of confession and pardon, he has a word about the wicked, in contrast to “him who trusts.” This Ps is the second of the traditional seven penitential Pss.

**50** **Ps 33**. A hymn of praise of Yahweh for his creative Word and his control of history. Structure: 1-3, hymnic introduction, inviting the just to repent; 4-9, the Word of God; 10-12, God’s plan; 13-19, God’s supervision of mankind; 20-22, an expression of confidence and a prayer. The life setting in the liturgy cannot be exactly defined; it should be noted that the poem has 22 lines, but without acrostic sequence. **4-9**. The poet passes from a general consideration of the divine Word and action to the power of the Word in creation ( Aspects OT Thought, 77:45-46). God’s easy dominion, is illustrated by 7: The waters above the firmament (Gn 1:7) are gathered as easily as in a “flask.” **11**. His “plan” means his control of history. **13-19**. Nothing escapes God’s “eyes” and he governs accordingly; he is the only savior for Israel (for 16-17, cf. Ps 20:8).

**51** **Ps 34**. A wisdom Ps, although it is widely classified as a Ps of thanksgiving. It is alphabetical (cf. S. Holm-Nielsen in *ST* 14 [1960] 1-53, on acrostic Pss) and is filled with typical maxims in favor of the just against the wicked (13-22). The testimony in 5-7, which suggests a thanksgiving Ps, is really didactic in character. The reference to 1 Sm 21:10-15 in the Ps title as the life setting is unconvincing. Structure: 2-4, hymnic introduction that anticipates the lesson to be announced (“the lowly will hear me . . .”); 5-11, a brief mention of deliverance (5), which develops into didactic exhortation to trust and to fear the Lord; 12-22, the psalmist appears as a sage, inculcating typical wisdom lessons; 23, the *Pe* verse (it begins with that consonant) is a didactic device to arrive at a 22-23 line acrostic poem spelling out the root  (meaning “to teach”; see comment on Ps 25:22). **3**. The  (humble) are the dedicated, committed Yahwists, who hence have a claim to Yahweh’s help (cf. Ps 10); the term does not designate the virtue of humility. **5**. A succinct description of deliverance (to which 7 is parallel) that serves as a springboard into the wisdom teaching. **8**. *angel of the Lord*: The metaphor is one of a divine messenger at the head of an army that surrounds [581] and protects (cf. Ex 14:19; Jos 5:14; etc.). **9-11**. *taste* . . .: In the context, it does not refer to inner spiritual sweetness but to the concrete goods, which God gives “to those who fear him.” *holy ones*: Perhaps the only time (but cf. Ps 16:3) in the OT that  stands for humans; usually “holy ones” designates the members of the heavenly court. The motive of material retribution in these verses, it should be remembered, as extended to the poor (19-20), and it is not the same is current materialism, for it includes union with God and what might be called, with Cardinal Newman, a sacramental view of the universe. **12-22**. The psalmist has become a wisdom teacher (in the style of Prv 1:7; 5:7; etc.) inculcating “fear of the Lord” and offering “life” (explained by prosperous days); for a literal Egyptian parallel to 13, see B. Couroyer, *RB* 57 ([1950] 174 ff.). The rest of the teachings deal with admonitions and statements of retribution. Although the doctrine of retribution follows the optimistic trend of wisdom tradition, there is a recognition that suffering is part of the lot of the justbut Yahweh “watches over.” The  verse (23) takes up an idea (“guilt”) from 22.

**52** **Ps 35**. An individual lament by one who has been unjustly accused (7, 11, 15, 20-21). Structure: 1-6, invocation of Yahweh for aid and for punishment of enemies; 7-12, description of enemies and renewed appeal; 13-16, ingratitude of his opponents; 17-28, confident request and promise of sacrifice. **3**. *salvation*: The Lord saves him from the injustice he complains of; the line has the ring of an oracle. **4-6**. These wishes express his desire to see God fulfill justice. *angel of the Lord*: See comment on 34:8. **8**. A wish that his enemies be hoisted on their own petard (cf. Ps 7:15-17). **9-10**. These confident assurances alternate with complaints. **11-16**. The “unjust witnesses” have accused the psalmist not only without cause but also despite his genuine charity toward them. The last line of 13 is vague. The CCD makes it parallel to 13b; it may be a wish that the prayer he offered for them be taken back and returned to himself. **18**. A vow to offer thanks, characteristic of laments (cf. 28). **22**. *have seen*: In contrast to the calumnious words of his accusers in 21. **24**. The appeal to God’s “justice” is basic for understanding the point of view of the OT man (cf. 4-6, 25-27). His enemies and his friends are vividly contrasted.

**53** **Ps 36**. An individual lament by one who is dismayed at the persecutions he suffers, but who trusts in the covenant loyalty (; 6, 8, 11) of God. Structure: 2-5, the evildoing of the wicked; 6-10, the joy of God’s protection; 11-13, a prayer for protection against the wicked. So understood, the Ps can be taken as a unit rather than as a composite. **2**. *sin speaks*: A bold personification of sin as ruling in a man. **3**. He convinces himself that God will not punish him. However, the MT of 2-3 is obscure. **6**. *kindness* . . . *faithfulness*: God’s covenant loyalty and reliability. **7**. *the mountains of God*: A kind of superlative-the highest mountains in contrast to the “deep.” **8-9**. God’s covenant loyalty provides “refuge” in the Temple (“your house”). **10**. *your light*: Cf. Pss 4:7; 31:17; 89:16; etc. This is the light of Yahweh’s face (encounter with him in the liturgy). When the Lord’s face shines it dispenses good and enables men to “see light,” i. e., to live (Ps 49:20). **11-13**. The request and certainty of being heard are typical in the conclusion of a lament.

**54** **Ps 37**. A wisdom Ps in alphabetical form (in this acrostic, there are two full lines to a letter). There is no clear structure; the poem is made up of warnings (1-2) and admonitions (3-4) supported by promises of happiness, in which the lot of the good and that of the wicked are described. The author passes as an elder sage (25, 35-36), who recognizes the danger that a youth may be enticed from wisdom by what he sees (“Be not vexed . . .”). His optimism makes him a champion of the traditional view of retribution. God must punish evil and reward goodness—naturally, in this life. Judgment may be slow, but it shall surely come. **2**. *grass*: Symbolic of the short duration of prosperity that the evil may experience. This common metaphor (Is 40:7) is taken from the rapid desiccation in Palestine caused by the sirocco or the sun. **6**. The idea is that by his intervention (blessings), Yahweh will make manifest the integrity of the man who trusts in him. **9**. *possess the land*: A motif throughout the poem (3, 11, 22, 29, 34). The phrase has the overtones of the divine promise fulfilled for Israel (Gn 12:1), and it is given fuller meaning in the Beatitudes of Jesus. **12-15**. A description of the wicked man and his unsuccessful persecution of the just. **16**. This idea is frequent in the wisdom teaching (Prv 15:16; 16:8; cf. Eccl 5:9). **22**. Illustrates the power of cursing and blessing in the ancient world ( Aspects OT Thought, 77:40-43). **25-26**. A remarkable example of rigid holding to the traditional wisdom doctrine. **27**. *forever*: As elsewhere in the OT, the meaning is “indefinitely,” but the idea is capable of expansion into a life that is immortal (Wis) and eternal (Jn). **30-31**. This close association of wisdom and Law is found in Sir 24:22; Bar 4:1; etc. **34**. *you shall look on*: Not as vindictive as it sounds; the point is that the just will witness God’s justice at work. **35-36**. The prosperity of the wicked is transitory and unsubstantial. On this Ps, Kraus comments rightly that it is not a statement that justice exists; rather, it bears witness to Yahweh’s intervention in human life. The poet does not call for faith in a just order, but for trust in Yahweh.

**55** **Ps 38**. An individual lament by one who is sick, sinful, and persecuted; it is the third of the penitential Pss. Structure: 2-5, a plea, with acknowledgment that his sorrow is a punishment for sin; 6-13, a description of sickness and a reaction of neighbors; 14-17, confidence that Yahweh will answer him; 18-23, themes to induce Yahweh to act, and a final plea. **2**. Yahweh’s “anger” is inferred from the psalmist’s misery (cf. Ps 6:2). **3-13**. The description is similar to that of Job; he is afflicted with “sores” (4, 6, 8); he goes about “in mourning” (7), separated from men (12) who would, of course, regard him as one punished by God for his crimes. **14-17**. His “deaf” and “dumb” attitude proves his trust in Yahweh alone, whose answer he expects—a motif to induce God to intervene. **20**. *undeserved*: Apparently there was a group that went beyond what was just in condemning him, even to obstruct his conversion (21).

**56** **Ps 39**. An individual lament, in a highly original form, by one who has been afflicted with sickness and the accompanying disdain of his enemies and whose life is almost spent (5). Structure: 2-4, a lively description of a resolution he had once taken to control his tongue; 5-7, the complaint; 8-9, an appeal for deliverance; 10-14, the request continues, with motifs as to why Yahweh should intervene. **2**. The psalmist made an effort not to complain about Yahweh’s harsh treatment (10), particularly when the wicked man might turn the complaint against God; but he could not hold it in. This description of how this complaint was born is unusual. **5-7**. He wants to unravel the mystery of a life that must end with death (when will it come?); in 6-7 he holds up the brevity and vanity of human life as a motif for God’s mercy (unless, with Castellino, we regard these verses as the divine answer to the question in 5). This theme is common in the wisdom literature (Jb 7:6ff.; Eccl 2:18ff. Sir 14:15). *span*: Lit., “palm,” the measurement of four fingers (cf. Jer 52:21), the width of the palm. **9**. The [582] implication is that his enemies consider him condemned because of his “sins.” **10**. He begins to persuade Yahweh to have pity on him, and he refers to his resolution in 2-3 (unless 10 is to be translated by the pres. tense; then it is a new resolution); he is bold enough to remind Yahweh that it was his “doing.” **12**. *like a cobweb*: Lit., “like a moth” (whose destructive power regarding clothes is a symbol of Yahweh’s power over man). **13**. The psalmist does not have time to wait, and he applies to his possession of life the metaphors that are used of the patriarchs’ possession of the promised land (“wayfarer,” or alien; “pilgrim,” or tenant). **14**. With his plea, cf. Jb 7:19. It is no small virtue of this Ps that it ends on a dark note, even though he trusts in Yahweh.

**57** **Ps 40**. A thanksgiving Ps and an individual lament. More probably it is composed of two separate Pss: 2-11 (or 2-12, with 13 being a transition to 14-18), and 12-18 (or perhaps 14-18, which is also to be found in Ps 70:2-6). For some scholars (e. g., Weiser) 40A (2-11) is a thanksgiving for past deliverance, which is supposed to serve as an introduction to the lament of 40B (12-18); hence, the whole prayer would be a unit. Structure of 40A: 2-4, the story of how Yahweh delivered the psalmist from the pit (power of Sheol); 5-6, a beatitude formula with recommendation to trust, and a testimony to God’s deeds before those who are present in the Temple; 7-11, the psalmist’s “sacrifice” of thanksgiving and proclamation of the deliverance wrought by the Lord. **2-3**. Yahweh responded to his firm hope by delivering him from the power of death, symbolized by the “pit” and “swamp” that characterize the nether world. **4**. The “new song” is the present Ps of thanksgiving, which has been inspired by Yahweh’s saving act; perhaps it is also new in the sense that it replaces the old “cry” of 2. It is to be a testimony before the “many” (cf. “us” in 6). **6**. The deliverance is connected with God’s wondrous deeds of salvation history—a further reason for the trust that is urged in 5. **7-11**. Although a Ps such as this accompanies a sacrifice, the psalmist says that God prefers obedience to any type (four kinds are mentioned) of sacrifice. This emphasis should be interpreted like similar prophetic statements on sacrifice (Am 5:21ff.; Is 1:10ff. etc.); it singles out dedication and commitment as the only adequate responses to God without rejecting the principle of sacrifice (cf. De Vaux, *AI* 454-56). *written scroll*: The Law or the expression of God’s will, which is also within his “heart.” Hence, he proclaims in a testimony Yahweh’s “justice”—his fidelity in delivering his Servant—on the occasion of a feast before a “vast assembly.” In Heb 10:5-9, the LXX of 6-8 is applied to the Messiah, as though the lines were addressed by the Son to the Father. As indicated above, 12-13 can be taken with 14-18; these will be discussed in Ps 70, a doublet form, which circulated independently.

**58** **Ps 41**. A thanksgiving Ps by one who has recovered from sickness (9). Structure: 2-4, a beatitude formula: 5-11, a flashback on his distress (mortal sickness, enemies) and his prayer at that time; 12-13, acknowledgment of Yahweh’s help; 14, doxology. **2-4**. This assurance of blessing for the one who cares for the poor is a didactic element, often found in a thanksgiving song. **6-10**. He recalls vividly the hostile comment and wishes of his enemies, even of an intimate “friend” (lit., “the man of my peace”). **11**. *repay them*: This desire for vengeance is frequent in OT complaints; God’s justice is not to remain inactive. **13**. His recognition of his “integrity” does not exclude sinfulness (5; cf. Ps 38:18-20). **14**. The doxology is a later addition, and it closes the Davidic collection (Pss 3-41).

**59** **Pss 42-43**. An individual lament; the two Pss were originally a single poem (cf. , besides the refrain, 42:10 and 43:2, and note the absence of a title for Ps 43). The psalmist is at the sources of the Jordan near Mt. Hermon (42:7), where he utters this complaint, filled with yearning for Zion. Structure: three strophes, each ending in a refrain. **42:2-3**. *as the hind*: The comparison, known also in Ugaritic (cf. *UM* 67:1, 17), stresses his yearning to be present in the Temple before (“behold the face of”) God. *living God*: Yahweh is the source and the fullness of life for him (cf. 9). **4**. His grief, apparently caused by nothing more than absence from Jerusalem, is increased by those (Gentiles? cf. Pss 79:10; 114:1) who ridicule his reliance upon Yahweh. **5**. The memories of his role in the Jerusalem liturgy are both a consolation and a torment to him now. **6**. The refrain (42:12; 43:5) is full of confidence that he will return. **7**. The complaint continues, specifying Mt. *Mizar* (“the small mountain”) in the foothills of Mt. Hermon near the Jordan sources as his residence. **8**. The “roar” expresses his despair and it is suggested by the cataracts of the Jordan and the “deep” (), i. e., the powers of chaos, which threaten him. **9**. Yahweh’s continual  toward him is met by “song” and “prayer,” which are concretely expressed in the complaint in 10-12—abandonment, ridicule, and pain. **43:1**. An appeal to Yahweh to intervene against his enemies who are now more clearly described as “faithless,” “impious.” **3**. *light* . . . *fidelity*: Personified, as though members of Yahweh’s entourage. **4**. The lament usually includes a vow to give “thanks” in the Temple. The Roman rite appropriately uses the second half (43:1ff.) of this Ps, which is so replete with motifs from the songs of Zion, for the opening of the Mass prayers at the foot of the altar. The poem is a pure expression of yearning for God, with no expectation of reward or other benefit.

**60** **Ps 44**. A lament of the community. Structure: 2-4, the introduction rehearses God’s saving acts in the past; 5-9, trust should be the response of Israel; 10-17, a description of the present distress; 18-23, protestations of fidelity and trust; 24-27, a bold plea. The life setting is some national catastrophe that we can no longer specify; an individual, probably a king, speaks in 5, 7, and 16, representing the people. **2-4**. Oral tradition handed down the victorious “deeds” of past salvation history; these had been performed by Yahweh alone without help from Israel. **5**. *victories*: Lit., “salvations”; it is clear that a military figure (the king) leads the prayer (cf. Ps 18:33-40). **10-17**. *you* . . . *you*: Yahweh is the one responsible for their plight, which seems to have involved exile (12) for some, but no precise date can be given to the Ps. **18-23**. In contrast to the theme of 1-2 Kgs, Israel is pictured here as faithful and loyal to the “covenant” (18-20). In a lament we may expect to find such an idealization—what Mowinckel calls “the innocence of motivation” (*The Psalms I*, 206). **20**. *place of misery*: Thus in the LXX; the MT has “place of jackals,” i. e., uninhabited wilderness. **23**. *for your sake*: Israel’s suffering is a martyrdom, a bearing witness—a motif to move God to intervene. **24**. *awake*: A bold metaphor, and this is the only time God is explicitly said to “sleep.” There is no good reason to hold that this is a Maccabean Ps, as some Fathers and modern commentators have thought.

**61** **Ps 45**. A royal Ps, composed on the occasion of the marriage of an Israelite king to a foreign princess (11-13)—a unique situation in the Psalter. Any attempt to identify the king and queen (e. g., a Tyrian princess betrothed to a king of the northern kingdom) is very problematical. Neither can the allegorical interpretation (God, or the messiah, and Israel) be sustained (but cf. R. Tournay in VTSup 9 [1963] 168-212). Structure: 2, introduction by court poet; 3-10, praise of the king [583] for his comeliness, virtue, warlike ability; 11-12, allocution to the bride, urging her to wifely devotion; 13-16, a description of her apparel and the procession; 17-18, concluding remarks, addressed to the king. **2**. The tone and style suggest the work of a court poet, a distinguished person who addresses the bride as “daughter.” **3-6**. The admirable qualities of the king—beauty,” “majesty,” “justice,”—remind us of the sacral character of the Israelite monarch; his warlike qualities are also emphasized. **7**. *your throne*, O *God*: As the CCD stands, “God” () must be addressed to the king. He is called an “elohim,” or superhuman being, just as David was compared to a messenger of elohim (2 Sm 14:17ff.), or David’s house to elohim (Zech 12:8), and perhaps just as the members of the heavenly court are called the sons of elohim. Elohim would not connote divinity in a metaphysical sense but a realm of being higher than that of an ordinary mortal. Because of the king’s anointing and relationship to Yahweh, he is considered a sacral person, something “divine.” This appellation is unique in the OT, and various other translations have been proposed, e. g., “Your throne is a divine throne”; for other attempts to rewrite this verse, see the commentaries and the summary in P. King (A *Study of Psalm* 45(44) [Rome, 1959] 73-84). **8**. *God*, *your God*: Before the Elohistic recension this phrase would have been “Yahweh, your God.” **9-10**. A vivid description of the wedding preparations and cortege; the queen is decorated with gold from Ophir (either in S Arabia or E Africa; cf. 1 Kgs 10:11, 22). **11-12**. The instructions to the queen suggest that she is of foreign extraction. **13**. *city*: Lit., “daughter,” and some would construe the text as indicating that the queen is a Tyrian princess. **14-16**. Her beauty and the retinue that proceeds into the “palace” are described. **17**. Good wishes for the king: May the union be fruitful and prosperous—an allusion to the importance of the continuation of the royal dynasty. **18**. The final flourish is an illustration of typical court style.

**62** **Ps 46**. A hymn of praise, or song of Zion, which was the inspiration of Luther’s “Ein’ feste Burg ist unser Gott” (Englished by T. Carlyle, “A safe stronghold our God is still”). There is a clear structure of three strophes, each ending in a refrain: With God as a refuge, there is nothing to fear (4, 8, 12). The second strophe singles out God’s presence in Zion, which preserves it from the nations; in the third strophe, the congregation is invited to consider Yahweh’s deeds, and his oracle of supremacy (11) is quoted. The precise life setting in the liturgy (e. g., Yahweh’s enthronement, as proposed by Mowinckel) cannot be defined. Even should there be a borrowing of the old Canaanite traditions—a point not easily proved by Kraus—the reason behind the Zion tradition is Yahweh. The eschatological interpretation of Gunkel and others needs more evidence. **3-4**. Neither earthquake nor the unruly power of chaos (“waters”) can counterbalance the presence (which is at the same time a defense) of the “Lord of hosts.” **5**. The stream, in contrast to the waters, is symbolic of God’s presence (cf. “waters of Shiloah” in Is 8:6). **6**. *dawn*: Perhaps a reference to the answer given to prayer after a night in the Temple (cf. Pss 5:4; 17:3, 15; 90:14). **9**. *deeds*: These are described specifically in 10. **11**. This verse has the appearance of a salvation oracle uttered by a priest or prophet in Yahweh’s name.

**63** **Ps 47**. A hymn of praise, one of the Pss (cf. 93, 95-100) associated with the alleged feast of Yahweh’s enthronement ( 6and 9 above; cf. Mowinckel, *The Psalms I*, 118-30). Scholars are divided as to the interpretation of this type of Ps: historical (Podechard); eschatological (Gunkel); and cultic (Mowinckel). The kingship of Yahweh is clearly the central idea, whatever be the precise life setting. Structure: 2-6, all peoples are invited to praise the Lord, the supreme king who has chosen Israel; 7-10, Yahweh is enthroned and receives the praise of all. **2**. *all peoples*: This universalism follows upon the Lord’s prerogative as supreme ruler (cf. 8-9) and creator. **3**. *Most High*:  is the common ancient Semitic designation of the chief god, which was appropriated by Israel for Yahweh (cf. R. Lack in *CBQ* 24 [1961] 44-64). **4-5**. The proof of Yahweh’s dominion is drawn from the salvation history: the conquest of Palestine (“our inheritance”) for Israel. **6**. *mounts*: This term () strongly suggests a cultic rite in which the Ark would have been carried in procession (cf. Ps 132; 2 Sm 6:15) and installed in the Temple. *trumpet blasts*: Characteristic of royal enthronement (2 Sm 15:10; 2 Kgs 9:13) and also of the Feast of Tabernacles (Ps 81:4; Nm 29:1). **8-10**. Further theological basis for the celebration of Yahweh’s kingship is related. *God reigns*: It can also be translated as “Yahweh has become king”—a cry of acclamation similar to that used for Israelite kings (2 Sm 15:10; 1 Kgs 1:11; 2 Kgs 9:13). It need not imply that Yahweh was not considered as king before; rather, his, eternal kingship is actualized in the liturgy. *princes*: It is possible that representatives of other nations could have shared in the liturgical celebration. *guardians*: Lit. “shields”; the parallelism in Pss 84:10; 89:19 shows that the term designates kings or nobles. (For a treatment of this Ps, cf. A. R. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel* [Cardiff 1955].)

**64** **Ps 48**. A hymn of praise, or song of Zion. Structure: 2-4, glorification of the “city of our God”; 5-8, report of a siege and its failure; 9-12, proclamation of God’s justice and praise to the world; 13-15, invitation to admire the city. The life setting, apart from the reference to the Temple in 10, depends on the interpretation of 5-8; the siege of Jerusalem could be real (Sennacherib in 701?) or merely a theme of invincibility. Like other songs of Zion, the hymnic introduction is lacking. **3**. *his holy mountain*: (Ps 2:6.) Because Jerusalem has been chosen by Yahweh as his residence, no claims can be too extravagant. *the recesses of the north*: Originally Mt. Saphon (the later Mt. Casius, today’s Jebel Aqra, N of Ras Shamra), the residence of the Canaanite pantheon, comparable to Mt. Olympus of the Greeks. It was appropriated by Israel for the holy mountain of Zion (cf. Is 14:13; W. F. Albright in *Fest*. *A*. *Bertholet* [Tbingen, 1950]). *the great king*: Used also of the great Mesopotamian monarchs (). The invincibility flows from Yahweh’s presence (Ps 46:5, 8); this verse leads into the description of the unsuccessful siege in 5-8, in which the enemies are made to quake because they “see” (Yahweh? just as the waters in Ps 77:17 [cf. Ps 114:4] saw God and shuddered?). *the ships of Tarshish*: Large, seagoing ships capable of voyaging to Tarshish (Tartessus in Spain?). *wind from the east*: Suggests the Phoenicians, not the Israelites, whose only port was S at Ezion-geber. **9-10**. perhaps an antiphonal response to the description in 5-8, which is something the people “have seen” and the “temple” is indicated as the place where they are, meditating on his “kindness” (). **11**. The “justice” of Yahweh is, as often in the OT, his saving intervention, the judgments (12) against Zion’s enemies (Ps 97:8). **13**. Those present are invited to go about the city and admire its strength, which is ultimately Yahweh (15, “such is our God”). The Hebr text ends with , “concerning [or against] death” (read by the LXX as “forever”). The CCD omits it as belonging originally to the title of Ps 49.

**65** **Ps 49**. A wisdom Ps, preoccupied with the problem of retribution; it begins in the style of Dame [584] Wisdom preaching in the streets (Prv 8), and the author proclaims  (wisdom). Structure: 2-5, solemn introduction; 6-13, the triumph of the wicked is transitory because their riches are of no avail; 14-21, and also because of their fate (contrasted with the fate of the psalmist in 16). **2-3**. The breadth of this audience suggests that the author has something truly important to say, and he presents it as wisdom teaching in 4-5. As in Prv 1:6, “proverb” and “riddle” are in parallelism; the psalmist assumes the stature of a prophet who sets his inspired message to music (2 Kgs 3:15). **6-7**. The problem: Should one fear the wicked, who “trust in their wealth”? **8-10**. Man cannot bribe death no matter how wealthy he is. **11**. The reference to the “wise men” is to be understood from the viewpoint of the psalmist; even these die, and how much more the “senseless,” because “you can’t take it with you.” Death is the great leveler for all. **12**. The irony is that the rich who would “remain alive always” (10) are forever in “tombs”; in this stupidity they resemble the “beasts” (13). **14-15**. The end of the wicked: Their riches are replaced by the “nether world.” The text of 15 is hopelessly corrupt; the general idea is a description of Sheol and  (death personified). The CCD translation has retained, with the MT, “the upright rule over them,” but it is not certain. **16**. A key verse, although Gunkel and others claim it is a gloss. Two interpretations are possible: Yahweh saves the psalmist from (premature or threatening) death (the “power of the nether world”; cf. Barth, *Die Errettung*; *vom Tode* 158 ff.); Yahweh delivers him from Sheol by “receiving” him into his own presence—an intimation of immortality. Two factors argue in favor of the second view. The use of  (receive) seems a deliberate allusion to the story of Enoch (Gn 5:21) and to Elijah (2 Kgs 2:9-10; see also Ps 73:24). Then too, 16 seems to be in contrast to 8: The rich man could not “redeem himself” or bribe God—that very God who has the power will “redeem” the psalmist. **17-21**. Words of consolation that take up the ideas of 6-12; 19b is the self-satisfied judgment that the wealthy man passes upon himself. There is an implicit contrast between the one who is received (16) and the one “who shall never more see light” (20). The refrain of 13 is picked up in 21, with a deliberate change that suggests the wisdom teaching (“prudence”), which the psalmist consciously proclaims.

**66** **Ps 50**. A (prophetic) liturgy. Structure: 1-6, introduction in the style of theophany: Yahweh comes to summon his faithful; 7-15, the first discourse of Yahweh concerning sacrifice; 16-23, a second discourse on true obedience. The cultic life setting is obvious, but not all agree on the precise feast. Mowinckel holds for the enthronement; Weiser and Von Rad suggest a covenant renewal, such as the Feast of Tabernacles, which seems more probable (cf. 5). **1**. *God*: Lit., “God, God” (, ; cf. Jos 22:22). **2**. Suggests a liturgical appearance (“shines forth”) at Zion, with the usual events that accompany a theophany; the “trial” of his covenanted people is witnessed by “heavens” and “earth” as frequently in the OT (Dt 31:23; Is 1:2). **7-15**. Probably a prophet speaks in the name of Yahweh, the covenant God (“your God”), regulating proper liturgical worship. As both Catholic and Protestant exegetes now agree, it is not a total condemnation and rejection of sacrificial worship as such. Rather, the point is that sacrifices can neither control God nor force him into a corner, for his are “all the animals.” Let not the people think they are being rebuked for the number of their sacrifices (8). But he has no need of sacrifices; after all, he does not, “eat” or “drink.” He is independent of all things, for they belong to him. What is commanded? “*Praise as your sacrifice*” (14)—i. e., the personal involvement and commitment in the liturgical sacrifice (). **16-17**. The second discourse condemns the insincerity of the “wicked man” (although 16 is dropped by Podechard and others). Three of the Commandments are explicitly indicated in 18-19; theft, adultery, and calumny. **21**. *I am like yourself*: So God would be, if he were not to intervene and “correct” evil men. **22-23**. A threat and a reminder that they are to continue the sacrificial system, but in a sincere fashion (cf. 14 with 23); the “right way” leads to “salvation” (cf. Prv 15:8).

**67** **Ps 51**. An individual lament, in sorrow for sin. Ps 51 is the fourth and the most famous of the penitential Pss. There is no indication that it was uttered by David after his sin with Bathsheba (cf. title). Perhaps the most striking emphasis is placed on the awfulness of sin itself; the author cannot rest until it is forgiven. (For details, cf. E. Dalglish, *Psalm Fifty-One in the Light of Ancient Near Eastern Patternism* [Leiden, 1962].) Structure: 3-4, appeal for mercy; 5-8, confession of sinfulness; 9-14, request for cleansing, for heart and spirit; 15-19, a vow and assurance of special sacrifice; 20-21, a prayer for Jerusalem. Life setting: The prayer is composed by a sinner, who feels the weight of his sins more than his sickness (10); one may detect in 19 the influence of Jeremiah (spirit) and the prophets (sacrifice of a contrite heart). **3-4**. The entire complaint (9, 12-15) is permeated with the desire to be completely purified of sin (cf. metaphors, wash,” etc.). **6**. The quotation marks in the CCD indicate that this verse is his acknowledgment of his sin as an offence against God (not just against man). He proclaims his wrongdoing as a justification of God’s sentence against him. **7**. He goes further and professes his deep-rooted sinfulness (in the sense of Gn 8:21, not in the sense of the doctrine of Original Sin, which is a matter of later revelation). **8**. *sincerity of heart*: Lit., “fidelity in that which is secret”—the depths of his being. **9**. *hyssop*: A metaphor taken from the ritual cleansing effected by sprinkling blood or water by means of the branches of this bush. **10**. *bones* . . . *crushed*: Apparently implies bodily sickness. **12**. *create*:  The technical term that designates an action proper to God (Gn 1:1); purification is a work that only God and not ritual can achieve. **13**. *holy spirit*: God’s action in man, which saves him and keeps him faithful (cf. Is 63:8-14). He is asking for what Jeremiah and Ezekiel said about the new covenant and the new spirit (Jer 24:7; 31:33; Ez 36:25ff.). **15**.*teach*: A vow to proclaim publicly his experience (in the  sacrifice? cf. 17-18) and thus lead sinners back to God. **16**. *blood guilt*: Lit., “bloods,” i. e., blood poured out, or murder. Because he is hardly a murderer, it may be that he fears someone will slay him; perhaps the word should be rendered “death.” **18-19**. An unusual idea, influenced by prophetic teaching: He himself, contrite, is the victim. **20-21**. Probably a later addition (after 587) and partly a corrective to the bold idea in 19.

**68** **Ps 52**. An individual lament(?). The Ps has been classified in divers ways: trust (Podechard); lament (Gunkel); sapiential (Castellino); thanksgiving (Schmidt); or a composite work (Kraus). Structure: 3-6, an indictment, in prophetic style, of the evil man; 7, a threat; 8-11, the reaction of the just man. The application of this Ps to Doeg (who denounced, but did not lie) in the title is contradicted by the mention of the Temple (10). **3-6**. The indictment is leveled against those who are crass enough to boast of their evil-doing. **7**. Such an evil person is a scandal; the law of temporal retribution demands punishment by God. **8-9**. This is a stereotyped picture in the OT, but more often the unjust ridicules the just; now the tables are turned. **10**. In contrast to the lot of the wicked (7), the author shall flourish like a tree (Jer 11:16). **11**. A vow to offer a thanksgiving [585] sacrifice, and with it, to “proclaim” Yahweh before the congregation.

**69** **Ps 53**. See comment on Ps 14; this poem is a variant form. The only significant difference is 53:6 (= 14:5, 6), but the “besiegers” cannot be identified.

**70** **Ps 54**. An individual lament. The structure is typical of the lament: 3-5, a cry for help against godless enemies; 6-9, an expression of trust, a plea, and a vow to offer sacrifice. **3**. *name*: As elsewhere in the OT, it is a surrogate for God himself; it stands here in parallelism to “might.” **6**. A motif of trust. **8**. *freely*: Lit., “with a free-will offering”; the  was a spontaneous offering over and above what was prescribed.

**71** **Ps 55**. An individual lament. Although some (Kraus, Gunkel) argue that this Ps is a composite work, it can be interpreted as a unit (Podechard, Weiser). The life setting is the suffering of persecution by wicked people, among them a very close friend; the psalmist prays to be delivered and to see divine punishment visited upon them. Structure: 2-3, a cry for help; 3-8, a description of distress; 10-12, a request that God may remedy the evil that is abroad; 13-15, his bosom friend has become his worst enemy; 16-24, a confident request that death will be the punishment of the evil whereas the psalmist will be saved by God (16-24). **8**. The “wilderness” would at least provide respite and “shelter” from persecution and anguish. **10-12**. It is not clear how the “evil” in the “city” involves the psalmist (but cf. 19). **14**. The betrayal by his “bosom friend” (whose action may be described in 21-22) is particularly bitter. **16**. Perhaps an allusion to the revolt in the desert by Korah and others (Nm 16:31ff.). **18**. These are the three periods in the day that are specified for prayer (Dn 6:11). **23**. *your care*: Addressed to one person; either the psalmist is addressing himself, or one of the Temple personnel speaks to him (Pss 28:4; 37:5). The poem closes on a note of serene confidence.

**72** **Ps 56**. An individual lament. Structure: 2-3, a cry for help against enemies; 4-5, expression of trust; 6-12, complaint, request, and confidence; 13-14, a vow of thanksgiving for deliverance. It is not possible to determine precisely the machinations of the “enemy.” **4**. This remarkable “trust” in God is enough to dispel fear. **5**. *flesh*: In the OT, it designates mankind, with the connotation of man’s weakness, as opposed to spirit (cf. Is 40:6). **9**. The metaphors “tears,” “flask,” and “book” express God’s intimate and kindly notice of his suffering. **10**. *with me*: Perhaps better read “for me.” **13**. A vow to offer thanksgiving is characteristic of the lament. **14**. This Ps illustrates how broad is the sphere of “*death*” in the OT world of thought, and it ends on the customary note of certainty (“you have rescued me”), which seems to grow naturally out of his great confidence (5, 10-12).

**73** **Ps 57**. An individual lament. The poem ends in a thanksgiving (8-12) that also appears in Ps 108:2-6; for the transition of lament to thanksgiving, see also Pss 23, 42, 57. Structure: 2, a cry for pity; 3-6, a description of his situation (calumny) ending in refrain (6, 12); 7-12, despite the plots of enemies (7), he gives thanks to God for deliverance. **2**. The “refuge” in God may be not merely spiritual consolation but the right of asylum in the Temple, where he has been unjustly accused by his enemies (5, 7-9), and where he wakes at “dawn” (9) to give thanks (Schmidt). **7**. The CCD translation understands this verse as a general observation (cf. Pss 7:16; 9:15-16); other translations insist on the past tense. In the latter case, there is more here than mere certainty of having been heard; his enemies have been undone, and he has been delievereda clear motif of a thanksgiving song. **8-12**. See Ps 108:2-6, which differs only slightly; in both cases, these lines may be a borrowing from a third source. **9**. *wake the dawn*: There are many parallels to this idea, from the  of Ovid (. 11. 597), to Shakespeare and modern poets. **10**. The reference to the “nations” and “people” does not necessarily mean that the author is in the Diaspora; the presence of foreigners or the thought of the Lord’s universal dominion could account for this aspect, which is not unusual in statements of praise (Pss 9:12; 119:46). **12**. The refrain (cf. 6) refers to Yahweh’s position above the firmament, and, corresponding to his power in the heavens, it is the “glory” due him.

**74** **Ps 58**. A lament. Structure: 2-3, an address to the “gods”; 4-6, description of wickedness; 7-10, imprecations; 11-12, conclusion concerning temporal retribution. For the proper understanding of the poem, the role of the “gods”—i. e., the members of the heavenly court—in governing the world is to be assumed (cf. Dt 4:20). They are derelict in their duty; hence they are excoriated. **1**. *gods*: They are not human judges, but the sons of God” who assist Yahweh in governing the world. rt would be better, therefore, to read “O Gods” instead of the “like gods” of the CCD (cf. Ps 82:1). *men of rank*: Lit., “sons of man” (); this line is better translated, “and judge fairly the sons of men?” **3**. The answer to the question is now given; the “gods” are guilty. **4**. *wicked*: The tools used by the gods; they spew “poison” and they fail to heed admonition, like a “stubborn” snake that will not listen to the snake charmer. **7**. It is God who will punish the wicked (“their teeth” does not refer to the gods). **9**. *snail*: The Hebr word is doubtful in meaning. The “melting snail” in the CCD refers to the empty shells of dead snails, which presumably have wasted away, if one judges from the trail they leave after them. **10**. Any translation of this verse is uncertain. **11**. The bloodthirsty touch is deliberate exaggeration (cf. Jb 29:6). **12**. The traditional Israelite view of temporal retribution is reflected here; the “gods” may fail in the realm of justice, but not Yahweh.

**75** **Ps 59**. An individual lament. The psalmist has been accused unjustly, and he awaits God’s intervention (at dawn? cf. 17 and Pss 17:15; 57:9). Structure: 2-3, a cry for rescue; 4-5, his situation is that “mighty men” attack him without cause; 5-6, a call for action; 7-11, a complaint about the enemy and an expression of trust; 11-14, complaint and request; 15-18, complaint, and confident certainty that his prayer will be heard. **3**. *evildoers*: On this term, 11and 18 above. **4**. The affirmation of innocence is frequent in laments (Ps 7:4-6; etc.). **5**. A direct appeal to the Lord as , the ruler and judge of all (cf. enthronement Pss); from this point of view, the reference to nations (6, 9, 14) can be understood. On the other hand, Mowinckel sees here a reason to interpret it as a royal Ps, uttered by the king against his enemies (cf. *The Psalms I*, 226). **7**. This refrain is found again in 15, just as 10-11a are almost repeated in 18. **17**. In his confidence he vows to offer the thanksgiving sacrifice.

**76** **Ps 60**. A (liturgy) lament of the nation. Despite the title, which connects the Ps with David’s wars (2 Sm 8), the precise occasion escapes us. A serious defeat, perhaps in Edom (11), has prompted this lament, and the oracle (8-10) is offered as an encouraging reply in which the divine ownership of Canaan is affirmed. Structure: 3-7, an appeal and description of the distress; 8-10, the oracle of promise; 11-14, a complaint, and confident request. **4**. The “country” is compared to a house shaken by earthquake. **5**. *stupefying wine*: Not the “cup of wrath” but a drink that weakens and causes one to fall (Jer 25:15-16; Is 51:17). **8-10**. In this cultic oracle, given by priest or prophet, Yahweh is presented as a victorious warrior distributing booty. All of Canaan and [586] Transjordan belong to him, just as they were once divided and distributed under Joshua. It could possibly be an older oracle that is applied to the present defeat; Kraus and Podechard argue that it dates after 721 and is a promise of repossessing the northern kingdom. *valley of Succoth*: The lower stretch of the Jabbok Valley to Tell Deir Alla. *washbowl*: An allusion to the Dead Sea and an indication that Moab is to perform menial tasks. *set my shoe*: In the sense of “throw my shoe”—a symbol of taking possession (cf. Ru 4:7). **11**. An individual (the king?) asks a question, and it does not express much confidence in the oracle (cf. 12). *fotified city*: Perhaps Bozrah, the capital of Edom. **13-14**. The community expresses a confident request. Ps 60:7-14 is repeated in the artificial poem, Ps 108:7-14.

**77** **Ps 61**. An individual lament. The classification is difficult; Weiser takes it as a thanksgiving prayer; others consider it to be a royal Ps (cf. 7-8); Podechard argues that the desire to be restored to the Temple (5, 9)

indicates that it is the prayer of a Levite. Structure: 2-3, invocation; 3-5, a confident prayer that he may dwell with Yahweh in the Temple; 6-9, he is certain that his prayer has been heard and offers a prayer for the king. **3-5**. *earth*’*s end*: Not a mere metaphor (against Weiser); he is far from Jerusalem—hence his desire for the “shelter” of the Temple (“your wings” in 5, a frequent metaphor, as in Ps 57:2). **6**. This expresses the usual certainty that his prayer has been heard. **7-9**. Why is the prayer for the king mentioned here? Kraus argues that it is not a later addition (Gunkel) but merely part of the plea in a lament, and he points to similar requests on behalf of the king in Akkadian prayers (cf. Falkenstein and Von, Soden, *op*. *cit*., 237, 239).

**78** **Ps 62**. A Ps of trust. Structure: 2-8, an affirmation of trust in God, despite attacks of his enemies; 9-13, a testimony, characteristic of a thanksgiving Ps. The poem emphasizes the Lord as the “only” (notice the repetition) one in whom to trust. **2**. The refrain in 2-3, 6-7 uses metaphors frequent in Pss (18:3; 46:8, 12). **4**. Addressed to his (hypocritical, 5) enemies, but the situation is not described. **9-11**. He turns to the assembly present (in the Temple) and urges them to imitate his trust (9); in the style of a wisdom teacher he describes the vanity of man and human power. **12-13**. He seems to paraphrase the oracle that he has received from God and that is the basis of his trust; the oracle is expressed in the numerical style (x; x + 1) that is frequent in the wisdom books (Prv 6:16-17; 30:15ff.). The union of “power” and “kindness” (covenant loyalty) is characteristic of Yahweh, and this fact lies behind his just treatment of man.

**79** **Ps 63**. An individual lament. The psalmist is filled with nostalgia and a strong desire to return to the Temple (Pss 42-43). David (cf. the title) never seems to have had for Saul the sentiments expressed in 10-11. Structure: 2-3, a yearning to be with God; 4-9, a description of what service in the Temple means to him; 10-11, imprecations against enemies; 12, a prayer for the king and for the faithful. **2-4**. A delicate and fervent desire expressed for the encounter with God “in the sanctuary” (cf. Pss 27:4; 42:2-3), “a greater good than life.” **4-9**. A description of his hopes and his actual experiences in the Temple; the lines express well his sense of intimate union with God. **11**. He envisions his enemies as sentenced to death and left without burial (hence, “the prey of jackals”). **12**. The reference to the “king” need not be an addition, nor does it necessarily indicate a royal Ps (cf. 61:7).

**80** **Ps 64**. An individual lament. The psalmist describes the machinations of his enemies and expresses his confidence that God will punish them and will care for the just man. Structure: 2-3, a cry for help; 4-7 the activities of his enemies; 8-9, God’s intervention; 10-11, the acknowledgment of Yahweh as refuge. **2-7**. His enemies calumniate him, for which “swords” and “arrows” are common metaphors—e. g., Ps 57:5. **8-10**. Is God’s intervention in the past, so that this Ps is really of thanksgiving (so Weiser and Kraus), or in the future, and hence described here as timeless? The CCD translation favors the second alternative. The punishment (8-9, “arrows”) is appropriate to the sins of the evildoers (4, “arrows”). **11**. This verse has the appearance of a lesson” addressed to those who hear this prayer.

**81** **Ps 65**. A hymn of praise. God is praised (not thanked) as one who pardons and blesses, as creator, and as the one who bestows rain and fertility on the land. Structure: 2-5, the gifts that Yahweh’s presence in Zion secures for his people; 6-9, Yahweh as savior and creator; 10-14, Yahweh, the source of fertility. **2-4**. A vivid, but simple, description of the mercy that the sinner may expect. **5**. *the man you choose*: The phrase suggests that it is a privilege to approach Yahweh in the Temple. **6**. The universalism expressed here and in 9 is noteworthy; it refers to more than the Israelites of the Diaspora, and it derives from the Lord’s status as creator (cf. the enthronement Pss). **8**. In the Israelite concept of creation, God keeps chaos at bay (Ps 89:10-11). **10**. *watercourses*: The water above the firmament, the source of rain. **12**. *paths*: Lit., “wagon-wheel tracks,” left by Yahweh.” as he travels, fructifying the earth. **10-14**. Possibly an original harvest song incorporated into this hymn; it is hardly enough to determine the literary type as a harvest thanksgiving song (cf. Ps 67).

**82** **Ps 66**. A mixed type: A hymn of praise and, thanksgiving for national deliverance (1-12) and a thanksgiving by an individual (13-20). There is no convincing explanation of the relationship between 1-12 and 13-20. It is not clear that 1-12 are a sort of choral prelude to 13-20 (Gunkel) or that the individual in 13-20 is a king who speaks for the “we” of 1-12 (the “king-Ego” style of Mowinckel). And it always remains possible that two separate Pss have been joined. Structure: 2-4, an invitation to praise God; 5-7, the praise is motivated by his works, especially at the Exodus; 8-12, the invitation is renewed and allusion is made to God’s testing of Israel; 13-15, a declaration of an individual that he will offer sacrifice; 16-20, a testimony addressed to God-fearing bystanders about God’s kind intervention. **6**. The reference is to God’s saving action in the crossing of the Red Sea and the Jordan. **7**. God’s world-wide rule is the reason why “nations” and “peoples” (8; cf. 2, 4) can be urged to praise him. **9-12**. These lines acknowledge Yahweh’s deliverance of Israel from some trial, presumably the Exodus experiences alluded to in 6. **13**. A thanksgiving song of an individual, accompanying a sacrifice (15), begins here. **16**. Preaching to bystanders (the “testimony”) is a characteristic part of a thanksgiving Ps.

**83** **Ps 67**. A national thanksgiving Ps (?). The classification is not clear; the poem may be taken as a request for blessings (2, 8) or as a national thanksgiving for a good harvest (7). The remarkable thing in the Ps is how God’s blessings on Israel are taken to be a sign of his salvation for the nations (3). Hence, the nations (whom he rules, 5) should praise God (2-6); if they are to share in the blessings, they must “fear him” (8). The structure is determined by the refrain (sung by the congregation?) in 4 and 6. **2**. This line is modeled on the priestly blessing of Aaron (cf. Nm 6:24-26). **3**. *your way*: The divine manner of dealing with men—blessings for those who “fear” him. **5**. This verse recalls the theme of Yahweh as just ruler of the world (cf. Pss 96:10; 99:4). [587]

**84** **Ps 68**. A hymn of praise(?). This obscure Ps is difficult to classify; it has been called a collection of incipits, or opening lines of various songs (W. F. Albright in *HUCA* 23 [1950-51] 1-39), in “eschatological hymn” (Gunkel), and a song of enthronement (Mowinckel). The hymn betrays no particular structure, and in many places the translation must remain uncertain. It is perhaps best understood as part of a liturgy that commemorates Yahweh’s saving deeds of the past, and that accompanies procession and enthronement in the Jerusalem Temple. **2**. A comparison with Nm 10:3 suggests that the Ark is being carried in procession. **5**. *cloud-rider*: An epithet of Baal, frequently found in the Ugaritic texts (E. *ANET* 138), that is also applied to Yahweh (Dt 33:26; Pss 18:11; 68:34). **8-11**. Apparently a summary of the salvation history from the Exodus to the Conquest. Rain is associated with Sinai also in Jgs 5:4-5. The bracketed line in the CCD suggests a gloss, although Albright insists on the translation, “the one of Sinai.” **12-15**. An Israelite victory over “kings” at Zalmon (in Bashan) is achieved by the “Almighty.” The “dove” is perhaps Israel or else is a notable piece of booty taken in battle (the dove was sacred to Ishtar). **16-19**. *mountains of Bashan*: Serve as a contrast to Zion; they are addressed poetically as though they were jealous of Jerusalem. The Lord’s advance “to the sanctuary” suggests that this verse is sung as the Ark is carried in procession. It seems as though Yahweh’s transferral from Sinai to Jerusalem is being commemorated. Yahweh is portrayed as a conqueror who has “ascended on high”—i. e., entered his Temple and received homage from his captives. **20-24**. The Lord is acclaimed as a “saving God” who “controls” life and death. The oracle in 23-24 indicates that none can escape him (cf. Am 9:3) and that Israel shall conquer “ (24). **25-28**. A procession “into the sanctuary” is described; it is not known why these specific tribes are mentioned. *Israel*’*s wellspring*: Designates the family or stock of the people (cf. Ps 87:6-7). **29-32**. Gifts are to be brought to Yahweh in Jerusalem from the “nations”: (Egypt is the “beast of the reeds”). **33-36**. This hymn urges “kingdoms” to acknowledge Yahweh, enthroned “in his sanctuary.”

**85** **Ps 69**. An individual lament. Cries for help and descriptions of misery alternate through 2-30, followed by a vow to offer thanksgiving and expressions of confidence. He is sick (27, 30) unto death (2-3) and persecuted by enemies as a thief (4-5) and as one smitten, by God (9-10, 19-20). With Ps 22, this prayer is most frequently quoted in the NT in relation to Christ’s suffering. Like Ps 22, it can be regarded as a description of the exemplary suffering of an innocent man who relies upon God for deliverance—eminently applicable to the Son of Man. **2-3**. *water*, *swamp*, *depths*: Synonyms for the nether world (cf. 15-16) where he finds himself (Sheol is a state rather than a place). **6-7**. Despite his sinfulness (6), he regards his situation as unjust and he appeals to God to change it for the sake of “those who seek you,” who will otherwise be scandalized at the suffering of a man who is a martyr (10-11). **15-16**. For the imagery, see comment on 2-3. **17**. *in your kindness*: As in 14, he appeals to the Lord’s **22**. The “food” and “drink” may refer to the practice of giving a meal to unfortunates, but they gave him “gall” and “vinegar.” **23-29**. A series of violent imprecations follows—if God is the just judge, let him act! **23**. *table*: Perhaps the reference is to their sacrifices. **28**. *attain to your reward*: Lit., “come into your justice,” as though God’s justice were a “safe” and blessed area. **29**. The names of the “just”, are presumably inscribed in the figurative Book of the Living (cf. Pss 40:8; 139:16; Ex 32:32). **31**. He vows to praise God in “song,” which he considers more pleasing than material sacrifices (cf. Ps 40:7). **33-35**. The lesson that the “lowly ones” are to derive from his deliverance. **36-37**. Perhaps an addition, although the author could easily pass from the individual to the group; it presupposes the destruction of the kingdom of Judah (587).

**86** **Ps 70**. An individual lament, almost identical with Ps 40:14-18. It may have been an independent poem originally. The description of the psalmist’s distress is very vague. He is persecuted by enemies who seek his life (3-4), and he seems to contrast himself (“afflicted, “poor,” 6) with those who “seek” God (5). But his trust is in the Lord as his “help” and “deliverer.”

**87** **Ps 71**. An individual lament. The so-called anthological style characterizes the composition; it is made up of several expressions borrowed from other Pss (cf. Pss 31:2-4; 22:10-11). This is the prayer of a sick, persecuted old man who in the past experienced God’s protection; now he overcomes his fear with prayer and hope. Structure: 1-8, a plea to be delivered from enemies, and expressions of trust, concluding with a vow to praise God; 9-16, a complaint about his enemy, concluding with a vow to praise; 17-24, plea and expressions of trust, concluding with a vow to praise God. There is a fairly consistent alternating of request, confidence, and motifs of trust and vow; the Ps ends with the certainty that God has heard him (23-24). **2-3**. Cf. Ps 31:2-4. **5-6**. For this motif, see Ps 22:10-11. **7**. *portent*: One on whom God’s anger has been poured out (cf. 11 and also Dt 28:46 for  as a portent and object of God’s wrath). **9**. As in 18, he alleges his “old age” as a reason for Yahweh to intervene (cf. Is 46:4). **12**. His appeal is in vivid contrast to the words of his enemies in 11. **15**. *their extent*: The many individual acts of God’s “justice” and “salvation” (note the parallelism, as in Dt-Is) are meant. Perhaps these embrace all the salvation history, as the *magnalia Dei* (“mighty works,” 16) of the next verse suggest.

**88** **Ps 72**. A royal Ps, probably composed on the occasion of the coronation of a new king in Jerusalem. The king is undoubtedly a descendant of David (but hardly the “Solomon” of the title), and the dynastic oracle of 2 Sm 7 forms the basis of the high hopes held out for this ruler: justice, peace, life forever, and worldwide rule. The courtly style, which Gunkel, Gressmann, and others stress, is to be found here, but it is not merely an imitation of foreign courts. The justification lies in the divine plans for the Davidic dynasty. The king’s reign is described in “messianic” language; the currently reigning king is viewed in the light of the hopes centered in the dynasty ( 15 above). In the designs of God, Jesus fulfilled the royal ideals in a transcendent manner. Structure (cf. P. W. Skehan in *Bib* 40 [1959] 168-74): There are five strophes with four full lines of (Hebr) verse: 1-4, a prayer that God grant the king justice for his office; 5-8, the king’s rule is to be unlimited in time and space; 9-11, the king’s dealings with foreign nations; 12-15, his dealings with his own people; 16-17, wishes for the prosperity, long life, and universal blessings for the king. **1**. The parallelism indicates that the “king” is of royal lineage, not a usurper; he is to be given the divine gift of “justice” for his rule. For the ideal of a just king in the ancient world, cf. the prologue and epilogue to the Code of Hammurabi (*ANET* 164, 177-78). **3**. The prosperity attendant upon the king’s just rule is described in hyperbole (cf. Is 32:15-20). **4**. The just judgments are concretely described; 4c overloads the line and is probably a dittography of the first word in 5. **6-7**. The beneficent effects of the reign are described here. *8*. Cf. Zech 9:10; the world-wide rule seems to extend from the Mediterranean Sea to the Persian Gulf (or simply the waters that surround the earth?), and from the Euphrates [588] (the “River”) to the “ends of the earth,” i. e., the islands in the Mediterranean; cf. Adad-nirari’s boast, as a parallel to this court style (*ANET* 281). **9**. The phraseology is also in Mi 7:17 and Is 49:23 and in the Amarna tablets. **10**. Rulers from the far west and the far south will give “tribute.” **12-15**. Because of his justice to the “poor,” the king will be beloved of his subjects. **17**. There seems to be a clear allusion to Gn 12:3 and other passages where Abraham is said to be a source of blessing for all nations. **18-19**. The collection of the Second Book of the Pss (cf. Ps 41:14) ends with this doxology, and 20 probably indicates the close of a collection of Davidic Pss (Pss 5 1-70).

**89** **Ps 73**. A thanksgiving Ps. Many (Podechard, Castellino) classify this Ps as a wisdom Ps on the basis of content, but the form suggests that it is properly a thanksgiving song. The psalmist describes the crisis he has experienced but only after stating his conclusion about God’s goodness (1, which is given in detail in 23-27), and he concludes with an avowal of thanksgiving (28cd). This prayer is unquestionably one of the most sublime and beautiful in the OT. Structure: 1-3, the conclusion he finally reached after being scandalized by the prosperity of the wicked; 4-12, the success and the sins of the wicked are described; 13-17, the crisis that he underwent; 18-23, the fate of the wicked; 23-28, the fate of the good. **1**. The comforting conclusion, reached after his crisis, is now proclaimed in praise of God (cf. Ps 106:1). **2**. *almost*: The rest of the Ps relates how close he came to giving up his faith. **9**. Lit., “they set their mouths in heaven”, perhaps speaking blasphemously against God or “in place of” God. **10**. The CCD (doubtfully) takes this verse is a blasphemy against God uttered by the wicked. **13**. *washing*: Probably the liturgical act of purification (e. g. Dt 21:6). **17**. *sanctuary*: The Jerusalem Temple, not the mysteries of God” (Vg). *final destiny*: Lit., “after[wards],” Hebr  This destiny is described in 18-20 as “slippery road,” “suddenly desolate”; it is to be understood in the sense of the traditional “end” of sinners, according to the wisdom teachers. **20**. The text is uncertain; the CCD suggests that the injustices perpetrated by sinners will seem like a “dream” after God rises to judge. **23-28**. Present the psalmist’s insight into the lot of the just, such as himself, and he finds it in companionship with God (25, 26, 28); it is his “good.” Does 24 indicate that this association with God goes beyond death, “in glory”? Many argue that it does, citing the use of the technical term  (so Elijah, 2 Kgs 2:1ff.; and Enoch, Gn 5:24 [cf. Ps 49:16] were “taken”) and also the use of the term “glory” (). If the author does not mean life beyond death, the solution to his crisis is not apparent. Others argue that these lines merely indicate his deliverance from evil and impending death (cf. Barth, *Die Errettung vom Tode* 161-63). However, it seems more probable that the author had some insight into a contact with God that is destined to perdure. **28**. *I shall declare*: The characteristic vow of thanksgiving (cf. 1).

**90** **Ps 74**. A lament of the community, on the occasion of a destruction of the Temple. The structure follows the typical framework of the communal lament (cf. C. Westermann, *op*. *cit*.; *CBQ* 21 [1959] 87): 1-11, a complaint and description of the situation, with motifs to induce Yahweh to intervene; 12-29, a hymn praising God’s power in creation (12-17), to which other motifs for intervention and a final plea are added. **1**. *why*: The question is typical in a lament (cf. 10). **2**. Such terms as “your flock,” “inheritance” are highly nuanced and are intended to move God to action. **3**. There is no certainty as to the date of this devastation of the “sanctuary”—but that of 587 is more probable than that by Antiochus in 167. **5**. The text is uncertain, but some kind of damage to the Temple is described. **9**. *deeds on our behalf*: Lit. “our signs”; these are not military symbols, but God’s, saving actions, such as “prophet.” **12**. *saving deeds*: Creation is considered one of these. **13-14**. A typical description of creation in terms of the mythical primordial battle between Yahweh and chaos, personified in “dragons” and “Leviathan” (for Ugaritic and other biblical parallels, cf. J. L. McKenzie, *TS* 11 [1950] 275-82). The double perspective of creation and Exodus (cf. also 2) echoes in these lines. **18**. Here begins a series of motifs to induce Yahweh to act, culminating in the final appeal (22-23).

**91** **Ps 75**. A “liturgy”(?). The classification is very uncertain. The poem acknowledges God as the inexorable judge of the wicked on earth. The life setting is also difficult to ascertain. Scholars have suggested various occasions: a prophetic liturgy portraying eschatological judgment (Gunkel); enthronement festival song (Mowinckel). A liturgical background may be presupposed. Structure: 2, hymnic introduction; 3-5, divine oracle; 6-9, admonition; 10-11, praise proclaimed by an individual. **2**. *wondrous deeds*: In this context, they are the Lord’s just judgments upon malefactors. **3-4**. The divine oracle announces that the just judge, who holds the earth firm on its “pillars,” will judge when he sees fit; the creator is also the judge. **5-6**. On the strength of the oracle, a priest (?) warns the wicked not to rebel against God. **7**. A deliberate anacoluthon occurs here; one must supply “does salvation [or judgement] come.” **8-9**. God alone is “judge.” The “cup” (of wrath) is a frequent OT metaphor (Is 51:17; Jer 25:15) **10**. A priest (?, cf. 5) announces “praise,” and judgment of the “wicked” and “just.” **11**. Perhaps the MT “I will break off” should be changed to the third person (God).

**92** **Ps 76**. A hymn of praise, or song of Zion (cf. Pss 46, 48). Structure: 2-4, acknowledgment of Yahweh as inhabiting and protecting Zion; 4-10, a description of his victory at Zion; 11-13, praise of Yahweh by Israel and the nations. The interpretation is again problematical: Is the battle (4-10) an historical, eschatological, or cultic event? It seems more probable that the Lord’s saving deeds are actualized in the liturgy—not without a certain orientation toward the future (10-13). **3**. *Salem*: Apparently an older name of Jerusalem (Gn 14:18). **4**. This is more a generalization about Zion’s inviolability than a reference to a particular battle; the description continues through 10, with the theophany described in 5. **5**. *everlasting mountains*: A correction of the MT in the light of Hab 3:6; the Lord is pictured is coming from his heavenly residence, striding upon the mountains of the earth (Am 4:13). **6**. *sleep*: Not necessarily death but the torpor and daze (cf. “stilled” in 6) with which God renders his enemies impotent, as in Is 29:10. **11**. *Edom* . . . *Hamath* . . .: The MT, preserved by the RSV and others, does not make much sense; the correction in the CCD affects merely the vowels, not the consonants. The two peoples, S and N, are mentioned here as honoring the Lord, just as in 12 all are invited to “make vows” to Yahweh.

**93** **Ps 77**. An individual lament (2-11) and a hymn of praise (14-21). Even if the hymn is an addition, in any case it is a supplement to 12-13, which serve as a transition. The psalmist laments over the sad situation of his people, abandoned by God—an unusual subject for an individual lament—and he then derives some consolation from the memory of the salvation history of the past, which he ponders and relates. **2-8**. After a long description of his misery and brooding, he finally reveals the cause: Yahweh has abandoned his people. **3**. *by night*: Not indicative of sleeplessness; he is probably in the Temple overnight, a custom indicated in many Pss, e. g. 17:3. **6-7**. The burden of his thoughts about years [589] “long past” is revealed in 15-21; they heighten the mystery of the apparent rejection of Israel. **11**. The text is uncertain; the change of the “right hand” means that the Lord who once revealed himself as a saving God has now rejected Israel; the salvation history (cf. the use of “right hand” in Ps 78:54) has been reversed. **14-16**. A hymns begins, recalling the Exodus events (16). *your way is holy*: God’s dealings are mysterious, different (not holy in the ethical sense; cf. Ex 15:11). *sons of Jacob and Joseph*: The “people” rescued from Egypt (cf. Ps 81:5-6). **17**. A different meter begins here (an older Ps?) and the Red Sea crossing is described in terms of a victory over the primordial “waters” by the God of “thunder” and “lightning” (18-19) who comes through the “sea” (20; cf. Hab 3:15) without leaving a trace. **21**. The more traditional description of the event.

**94** **Ps 78**. An historical Ps (cf. Pss 105-6) in hymn style, showing considerable wisdom influence. Structure: 1-8, introduction; 9-31, the disloyalty of God’s people, disobedience and the wonders in the desert; 32-39, Israel’s continual infidelity; 40-55, the Exodus from Egypt; 56-64, the conquest and troubles from Philistines; 65-72, Yahweh’s intervention and choice of Zion and David. Because the psalmist addresses the people directly and is anxious to teach them, a life setting in some liturgical feast at the Temple is plausible (cf. a similar survey of salvation history from Qumran in 1QS 1:18-24). The influence of Dt, stressed by H. Junker (*Bib* 34 [1953] 487-500), is also likely. The fact that the poem ends with David’s reign does not, however, prove its date. O. Eissfeldt has argued, by comparison with Dt 32 and the absence of any reference to the divided monarchy, that is was written before 930 (cf. review in *CBQ* 22 [1960] 88-90). **1-4**. The introduction is composed in wisdom style (cf. Prv 3:1; 5:1); history is used as a lesson, as can be seen from a constant refrain (17, 32, 40, 56). **5**. The “law” referred to is in Ex 10:2; Dt 4:9; the handing down of the sacred traditions was a consistent practice (Dt 32:7). **6-8**. The purpose of instructing “sons yet to be born” is also the purpose of this Ps. The somber note of Israel’s characteristic infidelity is sounded in 8. **9**. The reference to Ephraim, the most important tribe in the north, interrupts the context and cannot be satisfactorily explained. **12**. *Zoan*: Tanis, in the Nile Delta, the Hyksos capital, which is not mentioned in the Exodus narrative. In 13-16 is a description of the traditional events associated with the crossing of the Red Sea and the traversing of the “desert” (pillar of “cloud,” miraculous “water,” etc.). In 17, Israel’s rebellion is noted and an extended description of the miracles in the desert (quail and manna, without any particular sequence) begins. The “mighty” (25, ) are the members of the heavenly court, whence the “heavenly bread” was thought to come (cf. Wis 16:20). The episode of Kibroth-hattaavah (Nm 11:34) is dramatically described in 30-36; 33 refers to the death of the disobedient Israelites during the 40-year sojourn; 34 echoes the sequence of sin-penitence-deliverance in the deuteronomic theology of Jgs 2:10ff. A very free presentation of the plagues is found in 40-55; only seven (44, blood; 45, flies and frogs; 46, locust; 47, hail (and frost!); 50 plague; 51, first-born) are mentioned, and not in the order of Ex. The series culminates in the conquest of the “holy land” (54-56). In 56-64, the reverses of the Philistine wars (capturing of the Ark and the destruction of Shiloh) are explained by Israel’s infidelity. There are two bold expressions in 65-66: the awakening of the Lord and his striking the Philistines *in posteriora* (cf. 1 Sm 5:6-12). The choice in 67-70 of Zion and David (over Ephraim in the north) is a theme dear to the Deuteronomist school (1 Kgs 8:15-16). In contrast to other surveys of salvation history (e. g., Pss 105, 136), this Ps includes Zion and David as the culminating events.

**95** **Ps 79**. A lament of the community over the destruction of the Temple (587? certainly not Maccabean times). Structure: 1-4, the complaint; 5-10, several pleas with motifs to move God to intervene; 11-13, final plea, and confident vow of thanksgiving. **2-3**. There is a wild, deliberately exaggerated tone in this description, which is taken up in 1 Mc 7:17. The lack of burial was felt to be a terrible plight (Dt 28:26). **5**. *jealousy*: A basic attribute of the “intolerant” Yahweh who is punishing his people. **9-10**. There is no attempt to escape their own guilt, but the “nations” are described so as to move Yahweh to intervene. **12**. *in their bosoms*: The reason for this metaphorical expression is the ample folds of the outer garment, which served as a receptacle for good or for bad (Lk 6:38).

**96** **Ps 80**. A lament of the community. The occasion and date cannot be determined, despite the many theories that have been advanced; the indications in 2 have not yet been understood. The refrain (4, 8, 20) is oddly absent in 12 and 16. Structure: 2-4, a cry for help; 5-8, the present evils are contrasted with the past (9-12); 13-16, an appeal; 17-20, a wish and confident protestation of faithfulness. **1**. *shepherd*: Cf. Gn 48:15; 49:24; Ps 77:21. **2**. The mention of the northern tribes (except Benjamin!) suggests perhaps the troubles of 734-721 or the period of Josiah as the occasion of the prayer. Yahweh was conceived as invisibly enthroned “upon the cherubim,” the mythical winged figures, half-human and half-animal, associated with the Ark. **4**. *restore*: Does not necessarily presuppose the Exile; for the beneficent effects of the “face” of Yahweh, see Ps 31:17. **9**. *vine*: For the figure, see Hos 10:1; Is 5:1-7; Jer 2:2; Ez 17. The reference here is to the Exodus and Conquest. **11**. *cedars of God*: Giant trees that, like “mountains of God” (36:7) are God’s work, not man’s. **12**. *sea*: The Mediterranean. *river*: The Euphrates. **13**. The vines were usually protected by “walls” (Is 5:5) as a guard against humans or beasts. **15-16**. This touching plea is calculated to move God; the line bracketed in the CCD seems to be an accidental duplication of 18b. **18**. The prayer is for the king who sits at Yahweh’s “right hand” (Ps 110:1) and who here receives the unusual appellative, “son of man” (no relation to Dn 7).

**97** **Ps 81**. A prophetic liturgy. Jewish tradition associates this Ps with the Feast of Tabernacles, and Mowinckel points out the similarity to Ps 95, hence including it in the enthronement Pss. Structure: 2-6, hymn (exhortation to rejoice and the reason); 6-17, an oracle delivered by a prophet, calling for obedience. **4-6**. The solemn feast has been identified with both Passover and Tabernacles; at any rate, it is commanded by God since the Exodus. Tabernacles is probably the occasion; cf. Lv 23:24, 34, the blowing of the “trumpet” on the “solemn feast.” **6**. *I*: A priest or prophet relates the message, speaking in God’s name. **7-8**. Yahweh freed Israel from slavery (the “basket” is for carrying clay bricks, as at the time of the Exodus), and he appeared “in thunder” at Sinai. The saving acts are a prelude to the proclamation of the (First) Commandment in 10-11. **12-17**. The lesson to be learned: Israel disobeyed, but if only she “would hear,” then she would prosper.

**98** **Ps 82**. A”prophetic” Ps(?). The classification is not clear (see also Ps 58). In a courtroom scene, God accuses the *elohim* beings of injustice and lays down the law to them. There is no hope of their conversion; they will die. (On this Ps see G. E. Wright, *The Old Testament Against Its Environment* [London, 1950] 30-41; A. Gonzalez in *VT* 13 [1963] 293-309; and R. T. O’Callaghan in *CBQ* 15 [1953] 311-14 for the Canaanite background.) [590] Structure: 1, the introduction portrays God in judgment; 2-4, God questions the judges and warns them; 5-7, he judges them unworthy; 8, a plea that God judge the earth. **1**. *in the midst of the gods*: The scene is the heavenly court, as in 1 Kgs 22:19; Jb 1:6ff.; Ps 89:6-8; etc. The concept of the “gods,” or superhuman beings, in Yahweh’s entourage has a Canaanite counterpart in the “assembly of the gods” in Ugarit (e. g., *UM* 51: III, 14; *ANET* 132) and in Mesopotamia. Israel adapted this world of thought to Yahwism. Here, the *elohim* beings are condemned for their unjust supervision of earthly affairs (2-4). One answer to evil in this world was to lay the responsibility upon these beings. **3-4**. The classes mentioned in these lines were those who were usually oppressed, as noted often in the OT. **5**. The divine beings seem to be incorrigible. The result of injustice is that the very “foundations of the earth are shaken” (for this relationship between justice and foundations, cf. Pss 96:10; 75:3-4; Is 24:1-6). **6-7**. By divine judgment they shall “die,” “fall.” The motif of the fall of the “gods” (cf. also Ez 28:17; Is 14:15) is borrowed from Canaanite myths (cf. p. Grelot in *RHR* 149 [1956] 18-48). The judgment implies responsibility for the injustices of 2-4; obviously, the “gods” cannot be human judges for their punishment is to die “like men.” The use Jesus makes of 6 (Jn 10:34) is conditioned by the contemporary understanding of his audience. **8**. The appeal to Yahweh may be proclaimed by the congregation—a call to activate the condemnation rehearsed in 2-7.

**99** **Ps 83**. A lament of the community. Despite the nations mentioned in 7-9, the specific life setting escapes us; it is tempting to consider these references as symbolic of hostile powers arrayed against Israel. Structure: 2-9, a cry for help against enemy nations; 10-19, God is asked to intervene, as he did with his saving acts in the past. **4**. *whom you protect*: A typical motif, designed to move Yahweh to intervene. **5**. *Israel*: The tribal federation or amphictyony, not the northern kingdom. **7-8**. All these peoples are neighbors of Israel; the Hagrites inhabited the southern desert with Ishmaelites; Gebal was in the mountain country S of the Dead Sea near Petra. The entire list is a free poetic composition that allows no historical inferences. However, the absence of Babylon suggests a date before 612. **10-12**. The examples are taken from early salvation history: The Kishon River and En-dor were the scenes of victory (cf. Jgs 4-8). **14**. *leaves in a whirlwind*: Lit., “a wild artichoke plant,” that rolls into a ball and is driven by the wind. **15-19**. *fire* . . . *flame*: Terms of comparison for the destruction of the emeny; their defeat will make them acknowledge Yahweh as the Most High.

**100** **Ps 84**. A hymn in praise of the Temple, a song of Zion. It is best understood as the song of a pilgrim approaching and entering Zion or the Temple on a feast such as Tabernacles. Structure: 2-4, the desire for the sanctuary; 5-8, the “beatitudes” of those who dwell there; 9-13, the prayer for the king, and expression of desire to dwell in the sanctuary. **2**. For this love of the Temple, cf. Pss 42-43; 48:3-4; etc. **4**. The birds nesting, perhaps in the Temple area, become a symbol of the security enjoyed by those who are around the “altars.” **7-8**. A description of the pilgrim’s journey. The MT is uncertain; the CCD indicates that even the “arid valley” becomes a “spring,” owing to the “early rain,” i. e., the first rains after the long, dry summer. For the theme of watering the desert, cf. Is 35:6ff.; 41:18ff. *from strength to strength*: Renewing their strength, the people finally arrive at the Temple to “see” God—this bold expression was softened by the Masoretes to mean “to be seen by” or “appear before.” **9-10**. The prayer for the king (“anointed”) indicates a pre-exilic date; the king is called “our shield,” as protector of the people, and the channel of divine power and blessings. **11**. Cf. Ps 27:4. The comparison of the “wicked” is unexpected, but it can underline the fact that only the faithful, and not the wicked, enjoy God’s nearness (as indicated in 12),**12**. Nowhere else in the OT is God explicitly called “sun”. (rendered “battlement” by some); in combination with shield (cf. also 10), it symbolizes God as the bestower of blessings.

**101** **Ps 85**. A lament of the community, to which a divine oracle is given in answer. The situation and date cannot be established, although it is clear that the whole nation is suffering, is dead (6). Structure: 2-4, Yahweh’s goodness to Israel; 5-8, a prayer for “life” and “salvation” in the present circumstances; 9-14, a prophet proclaims the blessings that Yahweh will impart. **2-4**. These lines can be interpreted of a past event (return from Exile; so Kraus and many others), or of a future, eschatological, deliverance (Gunkel, who understands the verbs as proph. pf.)—not to mention the background of the alleged New Year feast (a prayer for a prosperous New Year in v. 13?), as argued by Mowinckel. The reference to the return from Exile seems more probable (cf. Ps 126). To “restore the well-being” means to bring back one’s former prosperity, without necessarily connoting the catastrophe of the Exile (cf. Pss 53:7; 126:2). **5-8**. The complaint presupposes that Israel’s present situation is an unhappy one (such as Is 59:9ff.; Hag 1:5ff.?); hence, the request for “life,” “kindness,” and “salvation.” **9-10**. *I will hear*: A prophet (cf. Ps 81:6) speaks and summarizes the divine oracle he has received: “peace,” the meaning of which is spelled out by “salvation” and “glory” (cf. Is 60:2). **11-12**. The blessings are personified (Is 58:8; 59:14-15) as in 14, and they are probably to be given an eschatological, messianic reference. **14**. *and salvation*: A conjectural emendation of the MT which reads, “and shall make his footsteps a way”—a reading retained by the RSV. The parallelism with “justice” lends support to the conjecture, and “salvation” seems to be the theme of the entire Ps (cf.  in 5, 8, 10).

**102** **Ps 86**. An individual lament. The psalmist seems to be persecuted (14), perhaps unjustly accused, and he looks for a sign from the Lord that will confound his enemies (17). The structure is loose because of numerous borrowings from other Pss: 1-7, a cry for help; 8-10, a hymn of praise; 11-17, a renewed appeal with motifs of confidence (15) and thanksgiving (12-13), and a return to the request (16-17). **1**. Cf. Pss 102:3; 40:18. **2**. Cf. Ps 25:20. **3**. Cf. Ps 57:2-3. The use of the term Lord (Adonai, not Yahweh) is characteristic of this Ps. **4**. Cf. Pss 51:14 and 25:1. **5**. Cf. Ps 130:4. **8**. This ancient formula (Ex 15:11) came to be understood in a totally monotheistic sense, as in this poem. **11**. *walk in your truth*: Cf. Ps 25:4-5; if he observes the Lord’s command, he is protected by the Lord’s “truth” or his fidelity to his covenant with man. **12-13**. A vow to offer thanksgiving, with expression of certainty that his prayer has been heard. **14**. It is not clear how the wicked threaten his very life; cf. Ps 54:5. **15**. An old formula is expressed here (cf. Ex 34:6; Ps 103:8). **16**. *son of your handmaid*: A servant born in his master’s house belongs to the master (Ex 21:1ff.); hence, this term is one of total devotion designed to move God to pity (cf. Ps 116:16). **17**. The “proof” may be a providential intervention of Yahweh, or a legal judgment in his favor.

**103** **Ps 87**. A hymn of praise, or song of Zion, on the occasion of an undetermined feast. The text is uncertain, but the CCD translation is more sober in its treatment of the MT than the hypothetical reconstructions offered by many commentators. **2**. Yahweh’s choice of [591] Zion, a key fact in the OT, becomes the basis for the universalism that appears in this song. **4**. *I tell*: The speaker is more likely a Temple minister who speaks in the name of Yahweh rather than the poet himself. God recognizes Egypt (lit., “Rahab,” the name for the ocean monster [Ps 89:11], which came to be applied to Egypt) and Babylon, those two great areas of the Fertile Crescent, among his worshipers. Interpreters vary in understanding this verse of converted Gentiles or of Jews of the Diaspora. Probably the latter is meant, and 4-6 go on to celebrate Zion as the mother of all (Jews), no matter where they are born. *when they are enrolled*: The reference is to an official list of citizens, which Yahweh is assumed to possess. **7**. *in festive dance*: Dancing was part of the Israelite liturgy (cf. Ps 30:12; 149:3). *my home*: Lit., “my sources.”

**104** **Ps 88**. An individual lament, by one who is mortally sick and has been abandoned by his friends and, it would almost appear, by God. Even though he cannot understand, he still has the faith and courage to appeal to the Lord. The absence of the motifs of trust and certainty of being heard, so typical of the lament, is conspicuous. Structure: 2-3, a cry for help; 4-9, the complaint; 10-13, a renewed plea, with the “argument from Sheol” as a motif; 14-19, the final plea, even in the perspective of being abandoned by all. **1**. *by day* . . . *by night*: Continually, as the parallelism indicates. **3**. *nether world*: He is in danger of death (cf. Ps 20:1, etc.), and in Sheol the “shades” (11) are “cut off” (6) from Yahweh,—whence the motif of praising God is used in 11-13—God should keep him alive so as to praise him (cf. Ps 6:6). **7-8**. *abyss* . . . *billows*: These metaphors derive from the OT understanding of Sheol (cf. Barth, *Die Errettung vom Tode*, 14-19). No other Ps describes Sheol as frequently as this one (“pit,” and in 12, , rendered in the CCD those who have perished”). It is remarkable that this prayer ends on the grim note of abandonment (“darkness,” 19).

**105** **Ps 89**. A lament of the community, as it stands (39-52!). But it is a mixed composition; the lament is preceded by a hymn in praise of God (2-19) and an oracle concerning the Davidic dynasty (20-38). The one who prays seems to be identified with the king (“my life,” 48; “anointed,” 52; and cf. 2, 19). But the precise life setting is not easy to establish. There is no proof of a cultic “humiliation” of the reigning king, and an historical occasion (Josiah?) is perhaps the best supposition. **2**. *the favors of the Lord*: These are the actions in history by which Yahweh has shown his covenant love (Ps 107:43; Is 63:7), in particular the dynastic oracle to David (3-5). (On this oracle, cf. McKenzie, *op*. *cit*., 275-82 and H. van den Bussche in *ETL* 24 [1948] 354-94.) **6**. *the assembly of the holy ones*: See the comment on Ps 82 concerning the heavenly court. **10-11**. For the mythological allusions in this version of creation, see the comment on Ps 74:13-14. Like Leviathan (Ps 73:14; Is 27:1; and cf. also Is 51:9-10), Rahab is a monster personifying the powers of chaos. **13**. If “north” and “south” are really proper names parallel to Tabor and Hermon, we can identify north as Mt. Saphon, the mount or assembly of the Canaanite pantheon (Ps 48:3; Is 14:13), but there is no Mt. Yamin (south) that we know of. **16**. *the joyful shout*: Hebrew  is conspicuously associated with procession (of the Ark, cf. 2 Sm 6:15). **19**. For the parallelism of “shield” and “king,” see 84:10. It is not easy to imagine that 2-19 would have been written by the same author or, at least, by one in the same situation as 39-52. **20**. In place of the CCD “of a stripling . . .” read  for : “I have placed the diadem upon the champion”; for the ceremony, see De Vaux, *AI* 103. **21-38**. An expanded version of 1 Sm 7; they highlight royal prerogatives: anointing (21), divine protection (22), victory (23-26), adoptive sonship (27-28), personal and dynastic security (23-26). However, 31-38 show that punishment of an unfaithful descendant of David is still within the framework of Yahweh’s eternal “covenant” with David, which he will not “violate” (35). **39-46**. The complaint begins here and is developed in detail; Yahweh is accused of having “renounced the covenant” with the descendant of David. **47-52**. The motifs characteristic of the lament, and designed to move the Lord to take pity on the king, appear: “how long?” shortness of life, the “ancient favors,” the “insults.” **53**. A doxology finishes the Third Book of Pss (cf. 41:14; 72:18-19).

**106** **Ps 90**. A lament of the community (but pronounced by an individual), for which no specific occasion can bc found. The complaints are general (life is short and troubled), and the poem shows the influence of the wisdom movement. Structure: 1-12, the complaint: God’s eternity contrasted with the fleeting and troubled life of man; 13-17, a request for God’s intervention. **2**. The eternity of God is emphasized to point up the contrast with man’s brief span. **3**. The sentence of death is a reversal of the creative act of Gn 2:7. **4**. The point is the brevity of time for God, exemplified by the sensation of “yesterday” and the night “watch.” **5**. Although the MT is obscure, the brevity of life is the theme. **7-8**. The reason for the shortness of life is God’s anger and man’s iniquities. The “biblical” age for man is three score and ten or, at the outside, 80 years, but these years have little to show. **11**. The question finds an answer in 12; the wise man “knows.” The prayer is that we may truly appreciate how brief “our days” are and thus obtain “wisdom” (), or fear of the Lord. For the wisdom traits in 8-12, cf. Jb 4:17-21. **13**. The spirit of this request (13-17) is less somber than 1-12. **14**. at *daybreak*: This imagery may result from the sequence, light after darkness (cf. Ps 30:6). **15**. These “years” cannot be specified. **16**. The parallelism of “work” and “glory” suggests a powerful intervention of the Lord in favor of his people. **17**. The bracketed line in 17c is a dittography of 17b.

**107** **Ps 91**. A Ps of trust, with markedly didactic intent. Structure: 1-2, an address to one who takes refuge in God, perhaps asylum in the Temple; 3-12, the protection that Yahweh affords; 14-16, a divine oracle, assuring salvation. **2**. The command to “trust” in Yahweh is strengthened by the following examples of the Lord’s saving protection (note the metaphors in 4). **5-6**. The hostile powers described here are probably demonic in origin (night demons, sun rays, etc.). The LXX and Vg translation of “plague at noon” gave rise to the “noon-day devil” (cf. J. de Fraine in *Bib* 40 [1959] 238-49, and in De Langhe, *op*. *cit*., 89-106, esp. 102-4).

The four crises indicated for night, morning, evening (“darkness”), and noon balance against the four animals of 13. Such trials will not affect the man who is protected by God. **7**. The metaphor of pestilence (rather than war) continues in the felling of thousands. **8-10**. An affirmation of the “traditional” theory of retribution. **11**. The work of God’s angels is well illustrated by Gn 24:7; Tb; Mt 4:6. The metaphor in 12 (quoted in Mt 4:6) is derived from the rocky roads in Palestine. **14-16**. This divine oracle confirms the teaching proclaimed in the Ps.

To acknowledge the “name” of the Lord means probably to invoke him by name for help (cf. 15).

**108** **Ps 92**. A song of thanksgiving, although it is preoccupied with moral retribution. The psalmist has experienced Yahweh’s fidelity (3), and he has seen the defeat of his enemies (10-12). Structure: 1-5, introduction in hymnic style, praising Yahweh for his deeds; 6-9, praise of God’s deeds and thoughts, which his enemies understand not; 10-12, Yahweh’s treatment of the psalmist’s enemies; 13-16, comparison of the prosperity [592] of the just to a fruitful tree. **1**. According to the Mishnah, this Ps was sung in the Temple with the libation of the morning sacrifice (cf. Ex 29:39-40). **2**. The parallelism between Yahweh ind the “name” is noteworthy. **3**. The indications of time refer to the periods of the daily sacrifice. **4**. For details concerning these instruments, see J. Murray in *VD* 32 (1954) 84-89. **5**. The reasons for praising are introduced, and these refer to God’s government, the destruction of evildoers, and the victory of the just, as developed in the rest of the Ps. **7**. The fool’s lick of understanding is a perennial wisdom theme (Prv 12:1). **8-9**. Typical wisdom teaching follows: The prosperity of sinners is deceptive: they will perish. The “eternal’ destruction” does not carry the implications of later, Christian, revelation. **10**. This line seems to be an adaptation of a Canaanite praise of Baal, as indicated in Ugaritic: “Behold, your enemies, O Baal; Behold, your enemies you shall smite; Behold, you will vanquish your foes” (*UM* 68:8; *ANET* 131). There is the same “staircase” parallelism and the same ideas. **11**. Yahweh has given him the strength (symbolized by “horn”) of a wild bull and cause for joy (symbolized by anointing with “rich oil”). **12**. It is characteristic of the OT law of retribution that the just man will witness the fall of his foes (Pss 37:34; 91:8). **13**. The comparison to a tree is frequently made to indicate the prosperity of the just (Pss 1:3; 37:35; Jer 17:8). The general idea of the Ps is expressed in 16 praise of God’s just government of the world.

**109** **Ps 93**. A hymn of praise, commemorating Yahweh as king ( 6and 9 above); see comment on Ps 47 concerning enthronement Pss. Structure: 1-2, acclamation of Yahweh as eternal king and creator; 3-4, even, the waters of chaos bow to his power; 5, the conclusion acknowledges his decrees (the Torah). **1**. *the Lord is king*: The cry of enthronement does not preclude his kingship from being eternal (cf. Ps 47). *world*: The reference to creation is a consistent feature in the enthronement Pss. The firmness of creation accords with Yahweh’s eternal and firm “throne” (2). **3-4**. *floods*: The waters of chaos, which could possibly destroy creation, are held in check by divine power (cf. O. Kaiser, *Die mythische Bedeutung des Meeres in ¿gypten*, *Ugarit und Israel* [BZAW 79; Berlin, 1959]). **5**. *decrees*: The Law; this verse at least suggests the Feast of Tabernacles as a possible life setting (cf. Dt 31:10ff.).

**110** **Ps 94**. A lament, of both an individual and a community; violence and injustice are threatening the community (1-15; cf. Pss 14 and 53), and an individual makes this fact his cause for complaint (16-23). Hence, one need not distinguish two separate Pss. Structure: 1-7, a complaint about oppression within Israel; 8-11, an admonition to the fools, in the wisdom style; 12-15, a blessing pronounced upon the just and Israel, because God will intervene; 16-23, an individual complaint, with marked emphasis on trust and on certainty that Yahweh will hear him. **1**. *God of vengeance*: The proper nuance is indicated by the parallel in 2. **3-7**. The complaint is characterized by the typical formula, “How long . . .?” and by the description of the situation. The “evildoers” oppress the defenseless (cf. 16). **8-11**. A reply to the charge of the wicked (7) that Yahweh does not know what is going on. He does “hear” and “see” all, and he will punish. **12-15**. More wisdom teaching, this time concerning the man who keeps the Law; retribution shall surely follow, for Yahweh “will not cast off his people”. (Ex 19:5; 1 Sm 12:22). **16-19**. The psalmist makes this cause his own and speaks in his own name, asking for help because his own experience in the past has been marked by Yahweh’s sustaining “kindness.” **20-23**. He sees clearly that corruption in the human “tribunal” is totally opposed to God, and he is confident that the Lord will intervene to punish.

**111** **Ps 95**. A hymn of praise, commemorating Yahweh as king (see comment on Pss 47, 93;  6and 9 above). The liturgical character of this hymn, which resembles Ps 81, is very marked; Gunkel classifies it as a prophetic liturgy on the basis of the oracle in 9-10. Structure: 1-5, an exhortation to praise Yahweh as king and creator; 6-7, exhortation to worship the God of Israel; 7-10, a prophetic admonition against obstinacy and disobedience (cf. Hab 3:7-11). **3**. *above all the gods*: This comparison does not imply effective reality for other gods (cf. Ps 96:4). **4-5**. Yahweh’s kingship stems from his creative power (cf. 93:3-4). **6-7**. The invitation to “come” (into the court of the Temple for worship) is motivated by the great events of salvation history, the covenant that “made” (cf. Is 43:1) Israel. **8**. *today*: As in Dt (30:11-20), this verse indicates an actualization or re-presentation of some aspect of the old salvation history. *harden not*: Probably spoken by a prophet (cf. Pss 50, 81, 85), who uses the examples of rebellion in the desert (Meribah, Massah; cf. Ex 17:1ff.; Nm 20:1ff.). **11**. *rest*: Originally it was the possession of the promised land; in this context, it has the overtones of peace with God; the precise reason for the admonition in the Ps remains unknown. This Ps is used for the *invitatorium* in Matins of the Roman Breviary.

**112** **Ps 96**. A hymn of praise, commemorating Yahweh as king (see comment on Pss 47, 93, 95). In 1 Chr 16, this song is inserted in the context of David’s bringing the Ark to the Jerusalem Tabernacle. There is a noticeable similarity to Is (40:10; 44:23; 49:13). Structure: 1-6, Israel is invited to sing of God’s incomparable majesty and creative power; 7-10, an invitation to the nations to bring tribute and to worship God as king and creator; 11-13, an invitation to creation to rejoice in the Lord’s dominion. **1**. *new song*: So-called because it commemorates a new evidence of God’s rule; the divine supremacy is to be acknowledged in liturgical worship. Note the Ugaritic abc-a«b«d pattern (and “staircase” parallelism in 7-8). **2**. *his salvation*: The saving deeds of old, which are now being rehearsed. **4**. Cf. Ps 95:3. **5**. *things of naught*: Lit., “zeros” (), a favorite term of Isaiah (2:8; 10:10; etc.); the ineffectiveness of the gods is contrasted with Yahweh’s creative power. **6**. The personification of divine attributes in the entourage of the deity is found also in Mesopotamian hymns (cf. Falkenstein and Von Soden, *op*. *cit*., 222, 320; Ps 89:15). *his sanctuary*: Probably the Temple. **7-9**. Cf. Ps 29:1-2. **10**. Israel is commanded to say, “The Lord is king”—the characteristic cry of the enthronement Pss; the kingship is shown in creation (from of old) and in rule of the world. Some OL and LXX manuscripts added “from the tree, in a reference to the crucifixion of Christ (cf. “regnavit a ligno Deus” of the *Vexilla regis* hymn). **13**. *he comes*: The coming of the Lord is the actualization of his reign in the cult, which represents and celebrates his rule in the world.

**113** **Ps 97**. A hymn of praise, commemorating Yahweh as king (cf. Pss 47, 93, 95, 96). Structure: 1, proclamation of Yahweh as king in majesty; 3-6, description of a theophany; 7-9, the effects produced by God’s reign; 10-12, application to the faithful. **1**. Cf. Is 49:13; 42:10ff. **2-6**. The typical theophanic traits are exploited here (cf. Jgs 5:4ff.; Dt 33:2ff.; Is 30:27ff. Hab 3:4ff.; Ps 18:8ff.): “fire,” “lightning,” “melting” of “mountains.” This cataclysm is witnessed by “all peoples.” **7-9**. The reaction of idolators and their gods is contrasted with that of Judah; God’s “judgments” (i. e., his instruction) bring shame to the former, joy to the latter. *Most High*: See comment on 47:3. **10-12**. An [593] assurance of Yahweh’s beneficent protection for the “faithful” and “just.”

**114** **Ps 98**. A hymn of praise, commemorating Yahweh as king; it shows great similarity to Ps 96 and to Dt-Is. Structure: 1-3, invitation to praise Yahweh on account of salvation; 4-9, invitation to the world and nature to praise the king who is coming to rule. **1**. *new song*: Cf. 96:1; the emphasis here is on the saving “victory” Yahweh has wrought by his “arm” (Is 51:9; 52:10; 59:16). **2**. The parallelism between “salvation” and “justice” is typical of Dt-Is (cf. 45:8, 21). **3**. The victory has been achieved because Yahweh “remembered” his covenant with his people (cf. Ps 106:44-46). *all the ends of the earth*: Again, universality is characteristic of this celebration of Yahweh’s kingship. When Deutero-Isaiah says almost the same thing in Is 40:5, he is referring to the end of the Exile, which is a pledge of the messianic era. **4-9**. An extended hymnic invitation to lands and to nature to sing, rejoice, and offer praise “before the King” because he “comes” (cf. comment on 96:13).

**115** **Ps 99**. A hymn of praise, commemorating Yahweh as king. In contrast to the other enthronement Pss (47, 93, 95-98), there are no similarities to Dt-Is, and more emphasis is put on Yahweh’s relation to his own people (not the world). Structure: The “Sanctus” refrain in 3, 5, and 9 divides the poem: 1-3, let the peoples worship Yahweh, enthroned and awesome; 4-5, Yahweh’s justice is the motif for worship; 6-9, another motif is God’s relationship with his ministers. **1-3**. A description of the “great” and “high” God invisibly enthroned on the Ark between the “cherubim,” his half-man and half-animal bodyguard (cf. Ps 80:2). **4-5**. The “justice” and “judgment” of Yahweh refer here to the covenant and Torah. *footstool*: The Ark. **6-9**. It is difficult to say why these three heroes are singled out; perhaps they represent priests and prophets, interceding for the people. **7**. Cf. Ex 19:9; 33:9-10 for the “cloud”; in 1 Sm 7:7-10 God speaks to Samuel from the Ark (with which the “pillar of cloud” seems later to be associated; cf. 1 Kgs 8:10-12). **8**. *to them*: The reference is now to the Israelites.

**116** **Ps 100**. A hymn of praise, composed for a procession to the Temple. The note of joy is emphatic and characteristic. **3**. The reason why God is to be praised is the covenant relationship, expressed in the Dt formula, “the Lord is God” (Dt 4:35, 39). **4**. The exhortation to enter the Temple is probably spoken by the priests; the purpose of the visit is thanksgiving and praise. This Ps is often associated with the enthronement Pss, although there is no mention of Yahweh’s kingship.

**117** **Ps 101**. A royal Ps, spoken by the king, concerning the norm of life that he follows in his office. It is plausible that such a declaration (*Frstenspiegel* or *miroir des rois*) would have been made upon accession to the throne or in some other ritual. Structure: 1-2, introduction; 2-8, the norm of life. **1**. *kindness and judgment*: The  and  of the Lord, demonstrated in giving him the kingship (cf. Ps 72:1). **2**. *when* . . .?: Apparently this question is a prayer expressing his desire for God’s help (cf. Ex 20:24; 2 Sm 6:9). **3-8**. Present the picture of an ideal king—his sincere and earnest resolve of personal integrity, his refusal to tolerate evil men in his government, his solicitude for “the faithful of the land,” his just exercise of judgment (“each morning,” the time for such administration; 2 Sm. 15:2).

**118** **Ps 102**. An individual lament. However, the form is unusual in that hymnic (13-18) and prophetic (14, 19-23) elements are incorporated into an individual complaint. Structure: 2-12, the complaint of an individual; 13-19, a hymn praising Yahweh as the rebuilder of Zion; 19-23, a prophecy that the Lord shall intervene; 24-27, a final plea (24-25); and a song of praise (26-29). The transition to Zion and restoration has caused great variation in the exegesis of this Ps. It is a natural development (cf. Lam 2:11-17) or the result of the incorporation of another Ps? If we take it as a unit, the psalmist describes himself as mortally sick and then turns confidently to God, more concerned with the fate of his people than with his own destiny. This is the fifth of the so-called penitential Pss. **2-3**. These lines are an echo of other Pss (cf. 39:13; 27:9; 69:18; etc.). **4-6**. He seems to suffer from fever and emaciation, and his spirit is afflicted by the proximity of death. **7-8**. The comparison with “owl” and “sparrow” underlines his loneliness and desolation. **9**. *make a curse of me*: His fate is wished on people as a curse. **10**. *ashes*: The conventional sign of mourning in the OT. **12**. *lengthening shadow*: The evening (of life) approaches. He is close to death, although still “in the midst of my days” (25). **13**. In contrast to his ephemeral existence (12) is the eternity of God, which he now acknowledges. God’s eternity forms the perspective for the restoration that is his desire. **14-18**. The description of Zion serves as a sort of motif of consolation for the poet. The exilic period is the presupposition of this passage, which is filled with confidence and hope. **19-23**. The psalmist becomes prophet as he wishes his description of Yahweh’s successful intervention recorded as proof to the “generation to come.” The restoration will be realized with a conversion of “peoples” and “kingdoms” (Is 2:2ff.). **24-25**. The theme of complaint reappears—the proximity of death, although he is still in the prime of life. **26-28**. As in 12-13, there is another contrast between creation and God’s timeless permanence. God is eternal, outlasting “earth” and “heavens,” which he changes “like clothing” when it is worn out (the CCD “and they are changed” keeps the play on words of the MT; the sense is that they wear out). **29**. The final verse comes back to his hope for Israel; something of God’s permanence is attached to his “servants’ posterity.”

**119** **Ps 103**. A thanksgiving Ps of deep, religious sensitivity. However, it could be just as easily termed a hymn of praise; it is a simple and beautiful reaction to God’s goodness. Structure: 1-5, a hymnlike acknowledgment of Yahweh’s goodness, which has been shown to him in the past; 6-18, a description of the Lord’s treatment of Israel (the change to pl. suggests a choir); 19-22, a conclusion in hymn style. **1-2**. The hymnlike exhortation to one’s self (“soul”) is also found in Ps 104:1. **3-5**. Although he speaks to the community, he doubtless reflects his own personal experiences. The verses are addressed to himself (“your” in sing. in opposition to the pl. in 6ff.). Yahweh is a saving God, who forgives man’s sin and blesses him with good things. The “eagle” is a symbol of perennial youthful vigor (Is 40:3). **6-10**. From the concrete acts of “justice” in the salvation history the author goes to the universal attributes of God (8) that are revealed by such history—expressed in the theological formula of Ex 34:6. The paradox in 10 is noteworthy; “God’s grace is greater than man’s sin” is Weiser’s apt comment. **11-18**. The comparisons (cf. Is 55:8-19) come to a climax in the love of a “father” (13), which is rooted in God’s creation of man: “he remembers that we are dust.” There is a beautiful contrast between man’s brevity (“grass,” cf. Is 40:7-8) and the enduring “kindness” and “justice” of God toward those who “keep his covenant.” It is such lines as these that give the lie to the popular travesty of the OT as a testament of fear. **19-22**. The closing hymn calls upon the heavenly court, all creation, and the poet himself to praise God. [594]

**120** **Ps 104**. A hymn of praise of God as creator; one of the most remarkable songs in the Psalter. Structure: 1-4, praise of God in the heavenly palace; 5-9, God as tamer of the ocean; 10-18, the provider of rain and well-being; 19-23, the regulator of light and darkness; 24-26, God’s creatures in the sea; 27-30, God the sustainer of life; 31-35, conclusion. The similarity of this beautiful song to Akhenaton’s “hymn to the Sun” has often been noted. If any dependence exists (e. g., 19-23; cf. *ANET* 370), it is largely indirect and relatively insignificant in view of the essentially Yahwistic theology embodied in the poem. There are references to the typically Israelite understanding of creation as it came to be expressed in Gn 1. The life setting of the Ps (e. g., the New Year feast of Mowinckel) cannot be determined. **2-3**. The comparison of “light” to a “cloak” is easily understood if light is viewed as a “thing” as in ancient Israel. God was thought to dwell in a “palace” above the firmament (Gn 1:6-8) and to ride on the “clouds” (Ps 68:5). **4**. *flaming fire*: Lightning, and the “winds” are merely to do God’s bidding. **5**. The firmness of the earth results from a “foundation” (cf. Jb 38:4-6). **6-9**. Another description of creation is given in traditional mythological terms:  (“ocean”) and the “waters” covered earth in chaos, and the Lord brought order out of this chaos by his “thunder” (his voice), and the waters found their “place” in the “valleys” (8 is variously translated). God’s continuous creation is implied in 9. **10-18**. The unruly, chaotic waters have now the mission of giving “drink” to creation, and making the earth produce good things for all creatures. A beautiful scene is evoked by beasts, birds, bread, wine, oil, goats, and man. **19-23**. A quaint picture is given here: Night is for “beasts” (note that lions’ “roar” is interpreted as a prayer to God for food) to work and prowl, and day is for “man” to do his work. It is worth noting that in the Egyptian hymn the sun god retires at night when evil powers take over (*ANET* 370a), but in the Ps the Lord hears the beasts pray for food. **26**. *Leviathan*: The mythical sea monster (Is 27:1; cf. *BA* 11 [1948] 61-68), a mere plaything. Another translation could be “to make sport in it” (i. e., the sea). **27-30**. Besides feeding them, God keeps creatures alive by his creative “breath” (“spirit,” ); the picture derives from Gn 1-2. God breathes and creatures live; when he stops breathing, they die. This lively creation poem underlines the Hebr concept of the world as a continuing event, a continuous creation (not a Gk , Aspects OT Thought, 77:48). **31**. It is characteristic that he speaks of God’s joy in his creation; but he is not unmindful of the mysterious and majestic aspect of this God, whose mere glance or touch is cataclysmic! **35**. The imprecation against sinners does not lessen the power of this poem; it must be judged from his deep appreciation of God’s justice, which he desires to see manifested in the very world he made.

**121** **Ps 105**. An historical Ps (cf. Pss 78, 105) in hymnic style. Structure: 1-6, an invitation to Israel to proclaim God’s wondrous deeds; 7-11, the covenant with the patriarchs; 12-15, protection of the patriarchs; 16-22, the story of Joseph; 23-38, the Exodus from Egypt; 39-43, the marvels in the desert; 44-55, conclusion. This rehearsal of the salvation history follows the traditional sequence of the liturgical credo (Dt 26:1-9, although Sinai is mentioned), and it probably has a cultic life setting for its origin, as suggested by its later use in 1 Chr 16:8ff. **1-3**. The introduction is an explicit invitation to worshipers in the Temple (who “seek the Lord”) to acknowledge Yahweh’s saving deeds. **6**. Both the saving “deeds” and the condemning “judgments” are to be found in the song. **7-11**. *covenant*: It is emphasized rather than the promises to the patriarchs (but note the promise to the patriarchs of the “land” in 11). **12-15**. A brief summary of the “wandering” of the patriarchs; the term “anointed” for the patriarchs (15) is not in the Gn tradition. **16-22**. The divine initiative (“He”) in the Joseph story (and throughout the entire poem, in fact) is emphasized. Joseph’s “prediction” refers to the interpretation of the dreams in prison. (For the “wisdom” (22) aspects of the Joseph story, cf. Von Rad, *GesSt* 272-80.) **28-38**. The sequence of the ten plagues is different from the Ex account: 9,1,2,4,3,7,8,10, with no mention of the fifth or sixth plague. **42**. The provision in the desert results from the “word” (covenant) to Abraham. **44-45**. The conclusion on the “statutes” and “laws” ties in Sinai with the events of sacred history; obedience to the laws is gratitude for salvation.

**122** **Ps 106**. An historical Ps, conceived in terms of a national lament (cf. 105). Structure: 1-5, the summons to praise God and a prayer for Israel’s prosperity; 6-46, the confession of sins, present and past, against the background of the Exodus tradition (7-12), greed for quail (13-15), Dathan and Abiram (16-18), the golden calf (19-23), the desert murmuring (24-27), Baal of Peor (28-31), Meribah (32-33), the conquest (34-39), the judges (40-46); 47, the conclusion, a prayer for restoration. In this exilic Ps, history is not used for a recital of praise but as an expression of sorrow (as 6 indicates). The spirit and mood of a lament move through the historical periods as the author emphasizes disobedient and faithless aspects of Israel. Weiser has pointed to the sequence of praise-confession in the Qumran “manual of discipline”; this sequence is seen also here and in Ps 105. **2**. The question is an idiom, which implies that God’s “mighty deeds” cannot be adequately praised by man. The “beatitude” of 3 is unexpected; but perhaps it is only the just man who can or should praise God. **4-5**. In a request that is characteristic of the lament, he asks for a repetition in the present of the “saving help,” which he is about to rehearse (cf. 47). The confession of sin (5de) begins the recital. **7-12**. Follow Ex 14-15, but somewhat freely, e. g., there is no mention in Ex of rebellion at the Red Sea. **13**. *counsel*: May be derived from Is 5:19; Ps 108:11, etc., rather than from the Ex tradition. **19**. *Horeb*: The deuteronomic name for Sinai; the Ps shows the general influence of Dt. The murmuring in the desert (24-27) is associated with the Exile in 27, and the present Exile is an appropriate punishment for those who “despised” the land (24). **32**. Cf. Dt 32:51; the strange fate of Moses is merely referred to, but in such a way as to be a source of blame for the people. **34**. The failure to “exterminate” the Canaanites is disobedience to the commands in Dt 7:1ff.; 20:16ff. **37**. Child sacrifice was considered to be in honor of “demons” (cf. demons in Dt 32:17). **40-46**. These verses reflect the Deuteronomist theology of Jgs. **47**. Israel is in exile, but the previous recital, ending on the note of God’s kindness (45-46), gives reason to hope for salvation. **48**. A doxology, which closes the Fourth Book of Pss.

**123** **Ps 107**. A thanksgiving liturgy. 33-43, hymnic in style, are probably a later addition. Structure: 1-3, an invitation to the redeemed to thank God; they form four groups: those who made their way out of a desert where they were lost (4-9); prisoners who have been freed (10-16); sick who have been cured (17-22); sea voyagers who have been rescued (23-32); 33-43, a hymn praising God for the blessings on the (restored) community. The refrain in 6 and 8, 13 and 15, 19 and 21, 28 and 31 is clearly recognizable and points to a thanksgiving sacrifice in the Temple as the life setting. But it is not clear if this action is collective (Gunkel) or an [595] introduction to the individual sacrifices (Kraus). **1**. Standard summons to praise (1 Chr 16:34; Ps 106:1; the lines were probably recited antiphonally; cf. Ps 11:1). **2-3**. *redeemed* . . . *gathered*: A clear reference to a community restored from exile, although the following groups of redeemed were not necessarily exiles; hence, these verses may be a post-exilic addition, or rereading. **4-9**. The desert wanderers were saved by Yahweh’s ; the particular incident is unknown. But this and also the “prisoner” theme that follows could easily be applied to the post-exilic community. **10-16**. We do not know why these prisoners had been jailed “in darkness” and “in chains,” but the applicability to the Exile is obvious. **17-22**. The usual connection between sinfulness and sickness is affirmed clearly in 17. **20**. *he sent forth his word*: The word of the oracle (given by the priest?) assuring a cure. **23-32**. A summons to the seafarers, who saw his “wonders in the abyss,” i. e., Yahweh’s battle with chaos, the sea, which he “hushed”; the theme of continuous creation (cf. Ps 104) underlies the description. **33-43**. This addition is reminiscent of Dt-Is (Is 35:7; 41:18; 50:2), and the whole is designed to portray the blessings bestowed upon the post-exilic community. However, God’s actions refer to no specific events. Rather, his timeless actions (39-40) are described and praised. Thus, in 37 no particular “city” is meant; the idea is that Yahweh has made it possible for the people to live together. **43**. A wisdom saying, urging the people to comprehend the many acts of Yahweh’s covenant love.

**124** **Ps 108**. A composite Ps, made up of 57:8-12 and 60:7-14. Hence, a thanksgiving song (1-6) with a plea for deliverance (7), and a divine oracle (8-10), ending in a plea for help (11-14). See comments on Pss 57 and 60.

**125** **Ps 109**. An individual lament. Structure: 1-5, a complaint against calumny of enemies; 6-19, a series of curses; 20-31, a request that God punish his enemies but bless the psalmist, with motifs why God should intervene (23-26), and a vow to offer thanksgiving (30). This so-called cursing Ps (cf. 6-19) has been interpreted as the words of the author against his enemies. Rather, they should be understood as the curses of his enemies against him: The subject is singular (thus refers to the author); the enemies are always described in the plural (1-5, 21-31); the author’s curse is given in 29 (see also the comment on 20-21). With this prayer, the persecuted man tries to offset the curses (6-19) directed against him by his enemies. It appears from 16 that he is accused of having persecuted the poor unto death; hence, he turns to the Lord for help. **1-5**. The attack and the injustice of his enemies are clearly described; they repay him “evil for good.” **6-7**. *accuser*: (Hebr ) Apparently delegated to secure the condemnation of the psalmist (7). The curses begin in 8ff., presumably uttered by the enemies. This interpretation implies that 16 is the specific accusation leveled against the psalmist. **18**. The picture of cursing as a “robe” (cf. 29) or like oil” is not merely metaphor; the state of being totally cursed seems to be the idea—the words of the curse permeate the accursed. **20**. The CCD translation indicates that the psalmist wishes these curses to recoil upon his enemies, who uttered them, but the verse may be merely a summary sentence indicating that the previous curses are the work of those who would harm him. **21**. A change in tone and emphasis is indicated by “but do you . . .”—a contrast with what his enemies intend. A series of motifs to move Yahweh to pity begins (wretchedness, age, ridicule). **29**. *you* . . . *have*, *I done this*: Explain “your hand,” but the reference is obscure. What has Yahweh done? Is he the reason why the poor (16) died? Rather, it is Yahweh who has delivered the psalmist. **30**. He expresses a vow to offer thanksgiving for his deliverance.

**126** **Ps 110**. A royal Ps. Both the text (especially 3) and the meaning are a moot question. Structure: 1-3, introduction and oracle; 4, introduction and oracle; 5-7, description of the victory of the king(?). The life setting would seem to be the day of coronation, when the prerogatives of the Judean king are enunciated in oracles. (For the messianism, see comments on Pss 2, 72;  15 above). **1**. *the Lord said to my lord*: “Yahweh said to my master [the king].” A court poet proclaims in oracle given to the king by God. The purpose of Mt 22:41-45, in which the Davidic authorship (taken for granted by Jesus’ audience) is simply presupposed, is to suggest the mystery of his person: How superior to David, how transcendent must be the Messiah! *sit* . . .: This command suggests the enthronement of the new king in a place of honor, the very “right hand” of God. Kingship in Israel is a sacral institution established by God. Fittingly, victory over his “enemies” is promised. The image of the footstool is owing to the courtly style derived from ancient Near Eastern practice (cf. Jos 10:24). **2**. Yahweh is described as holding the royal scepter and commanding the king. **3**. The MT is corrupt, and any translation is problematical. The CCD follows the evidence of the ancient versions, which emphasize the (mysterious?) birth of the king; he is the (adopted) son of God. (cf. Ps 2:7). *daystar*: The morning star (Is 14:12). (For a discussion and bibliography, see J. Coppens in *ETL* 32 [1956] 5-23.) **4**. In a second oracle the royal priestly prerogatives are associated with the ancient Jerusalem traditions of Melchizedek (Gn 14:18); the king is, as it were, the successor to Melchizedek in his royal and priestly function. *according to*: “On the model of.” (For a summary of interpretation of Melchizedek, see J. Fitzmyer in *CBQ* 25 [1963] 305-21.) **5-7**. The presence of Yahweh at the king’s “right hand” insures the victories in which the warlike activities of God are described. The reference in 7 is obscure perhaps it pictures Yahweh (rather than the king) as a weary warrior refreshing; himself after battle.

**127** **Ps 111**. A hymn of praise, written in acrostic style; the half-lines begin with successive letters of the Hebr alphabet. There are many echoes of biblical phrases (the so-called anthological composition). So pronounced is the influence of wisdom teaching that many classify it as a wisdom Ps. Indeed, it looks as if Pss 111-12 are a pair, intended to match; if 112 is wisdom, then 111 is the wise man’s hymn of praise—teaching by example. Nevertheless, despite the didactic strain, this Ps is a hymn. Structure: 1, hymnic introduction; 2-9, the reason for praising Yahweh—the greatness of his works; 10, a wisdom ending. **1**. *alleluia*: Lit., “praise Yah.” A sort of title, as in 112. The hymn is intoned in the worshiping community, and stress is laid upon inner appreciation (“with all my heart”; Dt 6:4, and notice the emphasis on “delights” in 2). **2-3**. *works*: Events of salvation history, the “renown” (i. e., liturgical remembrance) of which is continued in the worshiping community, as in this Ps. **5**. *food*: Refers to the tradition of manna and quail in the desert. **6**. *inheritance*: Palestine. **7-9**. After the mention of the saving acts comes the praise of the Torah, and 9 is a summary statement of salvation and covenant. Verse 10 is a wisdom tag line; “who live by it,” lit., “who do them,” i. e., the Commandments. It is worth noting that in this Ps, salvation history has been appropriated and inculcated by wisdom teachers.

**128** **Ps 112**. A wisdom Ps. Written in acrostic style, as is Ps 111, it portrays the ideal wise man who would utter such hymns as 111; thus, 111-12 belong [596] together. There is no particular structure but merely typical wisdom sayings, which describe the just, God-fearing man, and which reflect Prv and other wisdom books. **1**. *commands*: Those of the Torah (cf. Ps 1); observance is the practical expression of “fearing the Lord.” **2-3**. These rewards are typical of those promised by the wisdom writers; with 3, compare 111:3, 9. **4**. The subject of “dawns” is the wise man. **7**. *evil report*: Should be understood in the sense of “bad news.” **8**. *till he looks down*: He will eventually witness their downfall. **9**. *horn*: A symbol of strength and power in the OT. **10**. The description of the “wicked man” is in contrast to 1-9, and it is characteristic of OT ideas of retribution.

**129** **Ps 113**. A hymn of praise. Structure: 1-3, a summons to servants to praise the Lord; 4-6, exaltation of Yahweh; 7-9, a proclamation of the good deeds of God. **1**. *alleluia*: The superscription has led to the designation of Pss 112-17 as the Hallel, or the Egyptian Hallel, to differentiate it from 146-50, also called the Hallel. The Great Hallel designates Pss 120-36 (songs of ascents), or 135-36, or just 136. **2**. *servants of the Lord*: Priests or Levites probably, but it can also mean the congregation. **3**. *from the rising* . . .: An ancient Near Eastern formula. **7-9**. These lines stand in happy contrast to 4-6, for they portray the exalted Lord acting kindly with the lowly and unfortunate in this world. His majesty does not exclude his mercy. The MT ends with alleluia, which the CCD, following the LXX, places as the superscription of Ps 114.

**130** **Ps 114**. A hymn of praise, which is joined to Ps 115 in LXX and Vg. The usual hymnic introduction is lacking. The poem recalls vividly the saving deeds of the Exodus; the association of the two crossings, Red Sea and Jordan, appears already in Jos 4:23-24. **1**. *people of alien tongue*: A stereotyped phrase for a hostile nation (Is 28:11; 33:19; Jer 5:15). **2**. The parallelism between Judah and Israel appears deliberate; Judah is Israel, after the destruction of the northern kingdom. And this later development is read back into the time of the Exodus. **3**. *the sea beheld*: Yahweh, who appeared (cf. the reference to his “face” in 7); then it “fled” without a fight! The background of the bold figure is the myth of the battle between a god and the sea (cf. *ANET* 130-31 and Hab 3:8; Pss 77:17; 104:7). **4**. The “mountains” may be a reference to Sinai. **5-7**. The answer to the questions is the presence of the Lord (7), who worked the desert marvels described in 8 (Ex 17:6; Nm 20:11). But instead of a flat answer in 7, the poet issues a command. Cosmic effects accompany the theophany in the tradition of the Sinai experience.

**131** **Ps 115**. A choir song of Temple liturgy, distinct from Ps 114. Structure: 1-3, a motif from a lament; 4-8, a hymnic satire about idols; 9-18, a series of antiphons, affirming trust in, and praise of, God. **1**. The implicit request will be realized by Yahweh alone, who acts “for his name’s sake” (Ez 20), not by Israel. It is impossible to determine the situation that called forth these lines. **2**. The ridicule of the “pagans” is answered in 3: Yahweh cannot be forced to prove he is God; he is free to act as he pleases. **4-8**. A satire against dead idols in the style of Jer 10:3ff.; Is 44:9ff.; etc.; also a reply to 2. **9**. The first line should be understood as a summons to trust, whereas the second is the reply. *house of Israel*: The congregation. The same pattern holds for 10, where “house of Aaron” indicates priests, and for 11, where “those who fear the Lord” are probably the proselytes (cf. Ps 118:1-4). **12-15**. Blessings are spoken by the priests. **16-18**. A hymnic conclusion, in which the “three-story” concept—heaven, earth, and nether world—is neatly indicated.

**132** **Ps 116**. A thanksgiving Ps, divided into Pss 114-15 in the LXX and Vg. The life setting is in the Temple (19) where one who has been delivered—a from dire distress (“death,” 3) fulfills his “vows” (14, 18) with a “sacrifice of thanksgiving” (), accompanied by this Ps. Structure: 1-2, the psalmist acknowledges that Yahweh “has heard”; 3-4, a description of the prayer uttered during distress; 5-9, a lesson (for the bystanders at the sacrifice) how Yahweh “keeps the little ones,” as exemplified by the psalmist; 10-11, he looks back on his reactions before Yahweh saved him; 12-19, he acknowledges Yahweh as rescuer, as he offers the sacrifice that was vowed. **1**. *I love*: Thanksgiving Pss usually begin with an expression of praise. **3**. See comment on Ps 18:5. **4**. To “call upon the name” is to invoke Yahweh’s help, but in 13 and 17 it indicates the proclamation of his name in thanksgiving. **5-6**. The didactic tendency of the acknowledgment of Yahweh is exemplified here; the psalmist teaches a lesson to those present. **8**. On such literal statements as this, see Barth, *Die Errettung vom Tode*, 143). There is more than poetry or metaphor here; death is a power that asserts its grip on man by sickness, etc. **9**. The phraseology is capable of fuller meaning: life with God. **10**. In a second phrase he recalls his trust in God alone, when he was afflicted. **13**. *cup of my salvation*: A cup that saves (in contrast to the cup of God’s wrath, Is 51:17ff.), and perhaps a libation is implied. This verse is appropriately used in the Mass of the Roman rite before Communion. **14**. *my vows*: He had vowed to perform the sacrifice he is now offering. **15**. The meaning is that Yahweh will not let his “faithful ones” die; they are too “precious” to lose. **16**. *son of your handmaid*: The houseborn slave, who has absolutely no rights (cf. Ps 86:16).

**133** **Ps 117**. A hymn of praise. The structure is a model of hymn style: the summons to praise, followed by the reason for it. The appeal to “nations” to praise Yahweh for his “kindness” and “fidelity” (Ex 34:6) toward Israel is striking, but when Gentiles are invited to praise the Lord in the enthronement Pss, the reasons are based on his qualities as creator and also as savior of Israel. There is no need to associate this short prayer with Pss 116 or 118, as some Hebr manuscripts do, nor to regard it as a liturgical prelude to a festival hymn (Weiser).

**134** **Ps 118**. A thanksgiving liturgy. This Ps has received many varying interpretations. As a whole, it is thanksgiving liturgy, which is structured in three main sections: 1-4, a thanksgiving song divided between several choruses (Israel, Aaron, God-fearers); 5-14, a thanksgiving song of an individual, that has affinity to the so-called gate or entrance liturgies (Pss 15, 24) and in which a victory song (15-18) is to be found; 22-29, a proclamation and summons of a processional. It is tempting to understand the “I” as the king, who heads a public thanksgiving and procession to the Temple. Jewish tradition associated the poem with the Feast of Tabernacles. **1-4**. The whole community is addressed in 1, and in 2-4 a summons is issued to each of three groups (also mentioned in that order in 115:9-11). **5**. If the “I” is the king, he is not the one who addressed the groups in 1-4. He begins here a thanksgiving Ps in which he expresses his great trust in the Lord (6-9), who has “set him free” from his “foes.” There is a certain sapiential style (“it is better . . .”) to his acknowledgment of Yahweh as the rescuer and in his recommendation of trust in God. **10**. *all the nations*: These are not identified; once more, he begins to describe his distress and the Lord’s saving intervention. There seem to be echoes of the royal Pss (18:29-30, 36-39; 27:3). **15**. *shout of victory*: Thus begins the victory song, which has been [597] incorporated into the prayer; it associates the psalmist’s salvation with that of the community (“tents of the just”). *right hand*: God’s instrument of victory (cf. Skehan, *CBQ* 25 [1963] 94-110). **17**. *I shall not die*: Physical death is meant, and a full life on earth is implied. **18**. *chastised*: Reflects a view of suffering that is similar to Prv 3:11f. **19-20**. *gates of justice*: The gates of the Temple, where the justice of the one who enters is questioned (Pss 15:1ff.; 24:3 ff.) and through which only “the just shall enter.” A similar concept of the Temple gates exists in Mesopotamian literature (cf. Kraus, op. *cit*.). **22**. *the stone*: A symbol of the psalmist, who has just related the story of his distress, and of the restoration by the Lord. These lines must be spoken by those (“our eyes”) who accompany him to the Temple to offer thanksgiving. The NT interpretation (Mt 21:42; Acts 4:11) sees a more eminent fulfillment in Christ. **24**. *day the Lord has made*: The day of his saving intervention. **25**. *grant salvation*: The equivalent is “hosanna!” **26-27**. *blessed* . . .: These lines fit into the gate or entrance liturgy. **27a.** A kind of confession or “credo.” **27bc.** A command given to the community to execute a procession “to the horns of the altar.” **28**. The psalmist begins again, and in 29 he repeats the opening verse.

**135** **Ps 119**. An acrostic poem; each of the eight verses of the first strophe (aleph) begins with the first letter of the Hebr alphabet; each verse of the second strophe (beth) begins with the second letter; and so on for all 22 letters of the alphabet. The classification is not easy (wisdom?), and it seems best to recognize that it is *sui generis*. It is a Torah Ps (Kraus), which is a composite of several types (hymn, lament), and influenced by various movements (deuteronomic school, wisdom writers, anthological composition). The entire work is in praise of the Law, and the joys to be found in keeping it. It is not “legalism” but a love and desire for the word of God in Israel’s Law, which is the expression of the Lord’s revelation of himself and his will for man. In almost every verse, a synonym for the Torah is to be found: decrees, ways, precepts, statutes, commands, ordinances, promises. There is no logical progression of thought in the Ps. **10-11**. The intensity of Dt appears in many verses, as here and 17, 18, etc. **14**. The note of joy in observance of the Law is mentioned throughout (cf. 24, 35, 47, etc.); the comparison with “riches” is characteristic of the sages’ doctrine. **19**. *wayfarer*: The Hebr  is one who has no claim to possession of territory; the meaning is spiritualized here to indicate one for whom Yahweh alone is the only claim; he asks not for land but to know the Lord’s commands (20). **22-23**. Motifs from the individual lament appear often, as here, and in 28, 42, 61, 81-88. **36-37**. His true reward is not the “gain” of this world but the delight that fidelity brings. **40**. The full implications of this idea (cf. 37, 50, etc., for life is a consistent theme in this Ps) will be drawn by a later writer: Justice is immortal (Wis 1:15). **48**. *lift up my hands*: In a gesture of prayer. **49-56**. This strophe is characterized by motifs of a lament; the exile in 54 is metaphorical (cf. 19). **57**. my *part*: See comment on Ps 16:5. **83**. *leathern flask*: Because wine or water “bottles” were frequently leather, they would become brittle in the warmth of a home. **85**. The second line can be translated: “they who do not follow your law.” **89**. Cf. Is 40:8 and Ps 89:3. **96**. The thought is obscure; perhaps he recognizes that his “fulfillment” of God’s “command” falls far short of what it should be. **120**. The realistic tone of this formula of “fear of the Lord” is unusual. **131**. The psalmist is fed with the “commands” of God. **147-48**. Through the night he awaits God’s “words.” **150-51**. Note the contrast between “far” and near.” **159**. See v. 40. **162**. The metaphor of rich spoil is to suggest only his rejoicing. **164**. *seven times*: As often in the OT, it indicates an indefinite number.

**136** **Ps 120**. An individual lament by one who is beset with calumnious enemies in a hostile area. Structure: 1-2, a call for help; 3-4, an imprecation against the enemy; 5-7, a description of his unhappy situation. **1**. *song of ascents*: ( 5 above.) It would be better to translate 1b as “to answer me.” The CCD translates the MT, which, as vocalized, indicates a thanksgiving Ps. A change of one vowel would yield “to answer me.” If it is a thanksgiving song, 2-7 would have to be interpreted as a flash-back. **3**. *with more besides*: Derived from a common formula of cursing: “May the Lord do such and such, and add more” (cf. 1 Sm 3:17; 14:44; 25:22). **4**. *brushwood*: The broom plant, which provides intense heat. **5-7**. *Meshech*: The name of an ancient people of NE Asia Minor. *Kedar*: A N Arabian desert tribe. Inasmuch as these two places are so far apart, it is likely that they are metaphorical for “barbarians.” The “*long*” residence among them has been unhappy.

**137** **Ps 121**. A Ps of trust. The prayer is too vague to enable us to reconstruct the life setting with any certainty. Kraus inclines to see it as a pilgrim’s departure ceremony from the Temple (cf. 7). Gunkel (with emendations in the text) considers it as a question and answer between pilgrim and priest. The note of trust in God for help and protection dominates the poem. Structure: 1-2, a question and answer; 3-8, an address to the psalmist. **1**. Depending upon the interpretation, the “mountains” designate Jerusalem (and as such it anticipates 2) or, possibly, the surrounding hills on which the pagan sanctuaries were located. In the latter case, the proclamation in 2 would be a rejection of these sanctuaries. **2**. This reply seems to be given by the psalmist himself (rather than by a priest). **3-8**. Addressed to the psalmist, presumably by a priest. The possibility of sunstroke in Palestine is real, and many superstitions about the effect of the moon (6) exist. The poem affirms trust in God as creator, ever vigilant guardian, refuge, and guide.

**138** **Ps 122**. A song of Zion, on the occasion of a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Structure: 1-2, reactions at the start and finish of a pilgrimage; 4-5, praise of Zion; 6-9, prayers for Jerusalem. **1-3**. On his arrival (3) he. recalls the joy with which he first heard the invitation to make the pilgrimage to the Temple (1). In 3, he expresses his admiration for the holy city. **4-5**. He describes the religious significance of Jerusalem, the place of worship for the “tribes” (once David had transferred the Ark there), and the place of “judgment” (cf. 1 Kgs 7:7). **6-9**. His prayers for Jerusalem are centered upon “peace”: her complete prosperity (Hebr , which can be taken as part of the name, Jerusalem; here, *nomen est omen*).

**139** **Ps 123**. A lament of the community, which probably reflects an exilic or post-exilic attitude (3-4). **1-2**. These lines are spoken by a representative of the community. The comparison with the “eyes” of servants is especially fine; as one looks to the largesse that comes from the “hands” of a master, so Israel looks to Yahweh for “pity.” **3-4**. The complaint voiced by the community is very general; one cannot be sure if the oppressors are foreign or Jewish.

**140** **Ps 124**. A thanksgiving song of the community. **1-5**. A vivid, repetitious expression of what would have been, “had not the Lord been with us.” The metaphors (“swallow alive,” “waters,” “snare”) are too vague to allow conclusions about the precise dangers. The “torrents” are an echo of the myth of unruly chaos (cf. Ps 130:1). **6-8**. Thanksgiving and acknowledgment of Yahweh’s deliverance are offered by the community. [598] The “fowlers’ snare” was a wooden instrument with nets triggered to capture the prey.

**141** **Ps 125**. A national Ps of trust. **1-2**. There are two comparisons: “those who trust” are as immovable as “Zion”; Yahweh’s protection of his “people” is like that of the “mountains round about Jerusalem.” **3**. The basis for the hope is that for the sake of the “just” “wickedness” must disappear. The “scepter” could refer to internal as well as external oppression. **4-5**. A prayer is offered for the “good,” and an imprecation is pronounced upon those who side with the “evildoers.” The poem, like 128:6, concludes with a prayer for Israel’s prosperity (cf. Ps 122:8).

**142** **Ps 126**. A lament of the community. Structure: 1-3, an historical survey; 4-6, a prayer for restoration. This liturgical song can be understood as a prayer during the first years of the return from Babylon (cf. Hag, Zech), although the request in 4 remains vague. **1-3**. The reference is to the end of the Exile. The return could hardly be believed (“like men dreaming”) at first. And then both the “nations” and Israel acknowledged the *magnalia Dei*. Some scholars (Gunkel) interpret 1-3 as an announcement of future deliverance. **4**. This request indicates that the return was not all that it had been envisioned to be. In the poet’s own time, Yahweh’s continuing intervention is needed. The comparison to the wadies in the Negeb (“torrents”) bears on the transformation undergone by the dry, caked valley, once water courses through it. **5-6**. A consoling, proverblike [*sic*] saying (perhaps uttered by a priest?). The mourning associated with sowing may hark back to the symbolism of the death of the fertility god (Baal, Osiris), although this background has nothing to do with the meaning here.

**143** **Ps 127**. A wisdom Ps. Structure: 1-2, without the Lord’s help, human activity is futile; 3-5, the good fortune of being father to many sons. Originally these were probably independent poems, but the two sayings are complementary, if “house” is understood of founding a family. **1**. A vivid comparison: Unless Yahweh is builder and guardian, man’s toil is “in vain.” **2**. Yahweh is the giver of every gift, no matter the effort made by man; this is expressed paradoxically in the contrast between hard work and “sleep.” God gives as he pleases. **4**. *arrows*: A symbol of the protection that sons” provide for a family, as specified in 5; in the judicial processes that take place at the “gate” of the city, the many sons will support their father.

**144** **Ps 128**. A wisdom Ps. It is composed of a beatitude formula (which continues in the 2nd pers.) and a blessing (1-4, 5-6). **1**. Fear of the Lord is spelled out by the parallelism, “walk in his ways”; this practical service brings the rewards promised in 2-4, where the ideal picture of family life is depicted—prosperity and a large progeny. The description of the rewards is meant to be an exhortation to fear the Lord. **5-6**. Present a blessing from Yahweh (pronounced by a priest?) that points to the basis of Jewish happiness—”the prosperity of Jerusalem”; the solidarity of the individual with the community lies behind this blessing.

**145** **Ps 129**. A lament of the community. After referring to Israel’s sad history of oppression and deliverance (from Exodus to Exile?), the psalmist asks for punishment of her enemies. **1-2**. The history of Israel’s oppression is compared to that of a man who has somehow survived. *let Israel say*: May indicate a liturgical recital by an individual (“me”) who represents the community. **3**. Israel was not merely used as a beast of burden (4), but she was herself plowed up. **4**. *cords*: Those belonging to the yoke placed upon Israel. **6-7**. The grass that happened to grow on the roofs of beaten earth has no root and cannot last; it cannot even be harvested. **8**. Blessing, such as that of the harvesters (Ru 2:4), will be absent from the enemies (who have been compared to unharvested grass in 7).

**146** **Ps 130**. An individual lament. Structure: 1-2, a cry for forgiveness; 3-4, trust is adduced as a motif for mercy; 5-6, an affirmation of confidence; 6-7, an exhortation to the community. Greatly distressed by his sinfulness, the psalmist humbly and trustfully requests forgiveness for both himself and the community (8). But if one might possibly understand the perfect tense in 1, 5, 6 as past time, it could be a thanksgiving song for deliverance from sin, in which the psalmist associates the bystanders and the people in God’s mercy (e. g., Weiser). This Ps is one (the sixth) of the traditional seven penitential Pss. **1**. *depths*: Chaos and the sphere of death and the nether world, away from God. **3**. This poignant question underlines God’s “forgiveness,” which is his gift to those who fear him (“that you may be revered”). **5**. *word*: Perhaps the oracle of the priest, indicating forgiveness. **6-7**. The comparison to the watch of “sentinels” is expressive. The admonition to Israel is also a confident claim that she will be redeemed.

**147** **Ps 131**. A Ps of trust. The writer is one of the “Anawim” ( 11 above), a just man who offers his loyalty and modest achievement to God, grateful for the security and satisfaction that he finds in him. **2**. This tender comparison to “a weaned child” speaks volumes about his attitude. **3**. As in 130:7, an appeal is made to Israel.

**148** **Ps 132**. A royal Ps. The liturgical character of this Ps is clear, even if the precise feast is disputed (New Year for Mowinckel; the choice of Zion for Kraus; a “constituent part of the covenant festival” for Weiser). The key ideas are evident from the structure: 1-5, a prayer for David because of his care for the Lord’s dwelling; 6-10, a description of the procession of the Ark; 11-13, the Lord’s promise of an eternal dynasty; 14-18; the Lord’s eternal choice of Zion. **1-5**. Reflect an imaginative, expanded version of the events in 2 Sm 7; no record exists of David’s “vow” or renunciation of sleep. The lines are presumably spoken by a priest or cultic official. Yahweh is the “mighty one of Jacob,” the God of the amphictyony. **6**. *we*: Apparently a choir interrupts and recreates the story of the recovery of the Ark by David. Whatever the precise explanation of “Ephrathah,” its association with Bethlehem suggests that in David’s home town he and his followers heard of the existence of the Ark “in the fields of Jaar,” i. e. Kiriath-jearim. The exhortation in 7 indicates a cultic re-enactment of the event in which the liturgical cry of 8-10 (cf. 2 Chr 6:41-42!) fits very well. Yahweh “advances,” enthroned on the Ark (footstool), borne by “priests,” as the “faithful ones shout merrily,” and a direct prayer (10) for the “anointed” descendant of David is voiced. **11-13**. In the second part of the poem, Yahweh’s oath corresponds to David’s (2-5). The dynastic oracle of 2 Sm 7 his become an oath (as in Ps 89:4): The dynasty shall be eternal, provided the descendants keep the “covenant” (of Sinai, in which the Davidic covenant [Ps 89:4; Is 55:3] is included), and the “decrees” (of legitimization? cf. De Vaux, *AI* 103, on ). **14-18**. A description of the blessings that flow from Yahweh’s choice of Zion. The “horn” is David’s strength, his descendants, and so also, in parallelism, is the “lamp.”

**149** **Ps 133**. A wisdom Ps(?). The classification is difficult; it praises brotherly unity, without specifying within a family or a larger group. **2**. The picture is akin to Ps 23:5; the “head” is anointed generously, and the oil runs down the “beard.” The allusion seems to be to the anointing of the high priest (Aaron). **3**. The unity is compared to the beneficent Hermon dew. Inasmuch as no geographical possibility links this image with Zion, it [599] must be understood as a metaphorical allusion. *comes down*: The same verb as “runs down” in 2 (), which characterizes this poem. *life forever*: To be understood in the OT perspective of no real life after death; hence, it designates the full blessings of this life.

**150** **Ps 134**. A hymn of praise, exhorting priests (“servants of the Lord”) to “bless” the Lord in the “night” worship. Their reply, akin to the priestly blessing of Nm 6:24, is in 3.

**151** **Ps 135**. A hymn of praise. The life setting is the Temple (1-2) on the occasion of some feast (covenant renewal?). Structure: 1-4, introduction; 5-7, praise of God as creator; 8-14, God’s work in the Exodus and Conquest; 15-18, the vanity of idols; 19-21, conclusion. Many of the verses are repeated from other parts of the Bible in the style of the so-called anthological composition. It is noteworthy that there is no mention of the Sinai covenant (cf. the liturgical confessions of Dt 26:1-9, etc.). **1**. *servants*: Normally priests, as in Ps 134:1, but it can apply to the community (cf. 19). **4**. The reason for the praise is the choice of Israel (cf. Ex 19:5; Dt 7:6). **5-7**. *I know*: More detailed reasons for praise now follow (proclaimed by an individual on behalf of the community): God’s freedom and creative activity, with allusion to the conquest of chaos and to his control of the elements. **8-12**. In the list of plagues, the Conquest, and the gift of the land, the Red Sea is curiously absent. **15-18**. Virtually identical with Ps 115:4-8. **19-21**. An invitation to bless the Lord (see comment on Ps 115:9-11).

**152** **Ps 136**. A hymn of praise in the form of a litany. Often called the Great Hallel. Structure (cf. Ps 135): 1-3, introduction; 4-9, creation; 10-22, Exodus, wilderness, and Conquest; 23-26, conclusion. The song is designed for antiphonal rendering: The first line is proclaimed by a soloist; the second line is a refrain by the congregation. **4-9**. The cosmological picture is much the same as that of Gn 1. As in the Pentateuch, creation serves as a prelude to the salvation history (cf. Von Rad, *op*. *cit*., 136-47). **13-15**. Unlike Ps 135, the events of the Red Sea are commemorated. **17-22**. These lines are almost the same (without refrain) as Ps 135:10-12. **23-24**. These verses could be understood of the period of the judges as much as of the Exile. The conclusion in 26 returns to the introduction (1-3), as often in the hymns.

**153** **Ps 137**. A lament of the community. Structure: 1-3, a flash-back to earlier experiences in the Exile; 4-6, an imprecation on one who would forget Jerusalem; 7-9, an imprecation on the destroyers of Jerusalem. **1**. *streams of Babylon*: Countless irrigation canals from the Tigris and Euphrates watered the Babylonian plain. It is hard to escape the impression that these are personal memories that are being recalled; if so, the prayer is to be dated in the Exile. Kraus argues that the poet recalls liturgical commemoration of the destruction of Jerusalem**3**. The request of the “captors” here fulfills the same function as the frequent question motif in the lament: “Where is your God?” (e. g., Ps 79:10). The “songs of Zion” has been adopted as a literary classification of Pss 76, 84, etc. **4**. The question implies that the “foreign” land is unclean as well as hostile. **5-6**. While delivering this imprecation, he is at the same time singing a song of Zion! The reference to “hand” and “tongue” is in view of harp and song. *be forgotten*: So MT; a slight change of consonants yields “dry up,” a reading preferred by some scholars. **7**. Edom ravaged Judah with the fall of Jerusalem (Lam 4:21; Ob 8, 15). **9**. This brutal practice was an accepted part of ancient warfare (Hos 10:14; 14:1; Na 3:10), and it is merely a bold cliche; for the usual horrors of war ( 18 above).

**154** **Ps 138**. A thanksgiving Ps. Structure: 1-3, thanksgiving for deliverance; 4-6, a hymn proclaiming universal recognition of God; 7-8, expression of trust and acknowledgment. **1**. *angels*: Hebr , “God” or “gods.” It could stand for the members of the heavenly court or “angels,” or there may be an allusion to Yahweh as incomparable among the gods (Ps 86:8; Ex 15:11). **2**. *temple*: Here the thanksgiving liturgy takes place. **3**. A summary statement of the saving act. **4-6**. This idealistic and enthusiastic universalism is characteristic also of other Pss (22:28-30; 47:2; and the enthronement Pss).

**155** **Ps 139**. The classification is difficult: a hymn, or a sapiential consideration of God’s active presence, or the prayer of an accused man (19ff.)? If the correspondence between 1 and 23-24 is granted (Yahweh *has* probed) with Kraus, we can recognize a thanksgiving Ps. He thinks the life setting is the same as that of the cultic doxologies, in which one glorified God for his judgment in intervening to justify the author. Weiser remarks appropriately that “the poet does not shape his thoughts impersonally in abstract theological definitions, but develops them in the sphere of his personal experience of the reality of God.” The “I-Thou” character of this Ps makes it one of the most personal and beautiful expressions in the OT.

Structure: 1-6, praise of God for his marvelous knowledge of the poet; 7-12, the impossibility of escaping from Yahweh; 13-18, praise of the Lord as all-knowing creator; 19-24, a plea to see God’s justice and to remain faithful. **1**. *probed*: Full of trust and admiration, he approaches Yahweh, the omniscient God, who “knows” his loyalty (cf. 23-24). This intimate knowledge moves him to praise, and he develops the theme of omnipresence in the following lines. **2**. *sit* . . . *stand*: The Semitic idiom states opposites to express completeness—hence, “at all times.” **4**. The poet communicates his own astonishment at God’s involvement with him. **5**. No matter where he turns, the Lord confronts him. **8**. *heavens*: Were the psalmist, like Elijah, to be taken up, or were he to sink to the “nether world” like Korah and Dothan, he could not escape the Lord. **9-10**. *wings*: The speed with which the dawn comes will not suffice to escape the “hand” of God. **8**. With this verse Kraus compares an Amarna letter to the Pharaoh: “Whether we go up to heaven or go down to the underworld, our head is in your hands.” **13**. *formed me*: God’s creative activity is the basic reason for the omniscience, which has been described. **14**. *soul*: The person. **15**. *in the depths of the earth*: The womb is meant, but the phrase may originally have reflected the story of man being made from the earth (Gn 2:7). **16**. *book*: God is thought to have the name of everyone inscribed in a book (cf. Pss 56:9; 69:29). **17-18**. *with you*: An expressive indication of God’s transcendence; were it possible to grasp his thoughts (Is 55:8), there would still be God himself to reckon with. **19-20**. There is an abrupt transition to this personal problem. The “wicked” are those who persecute him (by forcing him to disloyalty to Yahweh?; cf. “your foes”); he wants to see God’s justice demonstrated. **21-22**. His “hatred” is directed against them because they hate Yahweh; it is a sort of declaration of loyalty—God’s enemies are his enemies. Little apology is needed for this verse; although one may admit that the OT does not have the extended horizon of the Sermon on the Mount, it does not exclude the NT development (where there is more emphasis on conversion and the identity of the Christian with Christ). The fact remains that as sinners, the enemies of God are worthy of his rejection. **23-24**. *probe*: He asks for a decision from Yahweh that will show he is in the right [600] and that his loyalty will remain; should he waver, Yahweh is to “lead” him back.

**156** **Ps 140**. An individual lament. The poet is beset by calumnies of wicked men, but the description is entirely too eneral to permit of specific conclusions (cf. Ps 64). Structure: 2-4, a cry for help against the tongues of evil men; 5-8, a plea, complaint, and expression of trust; 9-11, a plea for God’s judgment on the wicked; 12-14. certainty that the prayer has been heard. **4**. For similar metaphors, see Pss 52:4; 58:5; 64:4. **6**. The metaphor is that of a hunter laying a trap, as in Pss 9:16; 64:6 (see comment on 124:7). **10**. The MT is uncertain; the CCD describes the attitude of the wicked in 10a. **11**. *burning coals*: See Prv 25:21-22. For the ramifications of this metaphor, cf. K. Stendhal (*Harv TR* 55 [1962] 343-55). **12-14**. The lament ends, as usual, on a note of confidence: The wicked cannot prevail against the just.

**157** **Ps 141**. An individual lament. Structure: 1-2, a cry for help; 3-7, a prayer not to be led astray by the wicked, who will be judged; 8-10, a trustful prayer. **2**. Here, prayer is considered the equivalent of sacrifice. **4-5**. His real fear is to be seduced by the wicked (cf. Ps 84:11); hence, any discipline from the just man can be only beneficial. **6-7**. The MT is uncertain and obscure; the sequence of ideas seems to call for the punishment and judgment of the wicked.

**158** **Ps 142**. An individual lament, which is characterized by simplicity, humility, and trust. Structure: 2-4, a trustful appeal to God; 4-5, the complaint; 6-8, a request and vow to give thanks. The psalmist is in prison (8) because of his persecutors, and he looks forward to God’s intervention. **5**. In this moment of crisis he is encouraged by the fact that God knows his “path” of life. **6**. In view of 5, the Lord is his sole “refuge,” his “portion” (the prerogative of the Levites-for whom Yahweh was the “portion”-is his; cf. Nm 18:21). Verse 8 contains the vow to offer thanksgiving, and it refers to the participation of the “just” (whose trust in God will have presumably been strengthened by the deliverance) on this happy occasion.

**159** **Ps 143**. An individual lament; the seventh penitential Ps, which echoes the phraseology of earlier Pss. The author is a man oppressed by enemies, but he nevertheless trusts in God for deliverance. Structure: 1-2, a cry for mercy; 3-6, a description of his affliction; 7-9, repeated appeals; 10-12, confident requests. **1-2**. The appeal is to God’s fidelity and saving intervention; he admits his sinfulness and throws himself upon the grace of God. God’s “justice” is to be understood here as the divine ability and will to save him. **3**. *the dark*: The ominous realm or sphere of death, which threatens him even though he lives. **5**. A review of God’s saving acts in the “days of old” is a consolation and also a motif to move Yahweh to intervene. **8**. at *dawn*: As often in Pss, the time when God answers. **10**. This plea is typical of the sincerity that characterizes the prayer (cf. Ps 51:12-13).

**160** **Ps 144**. The classification is difficult. The Ps is an echo of other Pss, especially Ps 18 (a model?), and it has elements of both the lament and the thanksgiving. It may even be called a royal Ps (cf. 10). Structure: 1-2, thanksgiving for victory; 3-7, the motif of man’s frailty and a plea for deliverance; 9-11, vow of thanksgiving and refrain; 12-15, a communal prayer for prosperity. A slightly varying refrain occurs in 7-8 and in 11. The prayer (especially 12-15) is best understood in the light of the role the king has in bringing prosperity to his people (cf. Ps 72:2-14). **1-2**. Cf. 18:2, 35, 47. **3**. Cf. 8:5. **4**. Cf. 39:6; 102:12. **5**. Compare this request for a theophany with Ps 18:10, 15, 17. **7**. *waters*: As so frequently in Pss (e. g., 18:5), they symbolize the powers of chaos and death. **10**. The royal background of the Ps is clearly indicated (cf. 18:51). **12-15**. These blessings (children, food, cattle and flocks, peace) are to be associated with the king through whom God communicates them (although Gunkel considers these lines to constitute a separate Ps).

**161** **Ps 145**. A hymn of praise. The acrostic pattern (aleph, beth, etc.) is perhaps the reason why other Pss are echoed in it-but without injuring the movement and beauty. Structure: 1-4, hymnic introduction (by an individual, throughout); 5-9, commemoration of God’s deeds and goodness; 10-20, universal praise of God as king, provider, savior; 21, conclusion. **2**. Cf. Ps 48:2. **3**. Cf. Ps 96:4. **5-6**. *works* . . . *deeds*: Refer to creation and salvation history. **8**. Cf. Ex 34:6, and J. Scharbert in *Bib* 38 (1957) 130-50. **13-14**. The poet changes from second to third person. **15-16**. The beneficent providence of God reflected in these lines has made them a popular prayer (especially at meals) in Christian tradition.

**162** **Ps 146**. A hymn of praise, or perhaps a thanksgiving. Structure: 1-2, a hymnic introduction (by an individual, throughout); 3-4, admonition on the vanity of trusting in man; 5-10, hymnic development of Yahweh as creator and savior-the reason for trusting in him (5). This poem inaugurates the last group of alleluia Pss (see comment on Ps 113). **1-2**. Cf. Ps 104:1, 33. **3-4**. This admonition, characteristic of thanksgiving songs, points up the contrast to 5-10, where Yahweh is praised as one to be trusted in every crisis. The “princes” are probably to be understood as powerful and rich leaders rather than as members of the royal family. **5-10**. This stirring catalogue of divine attributes is typically concrete and exemplifies the manner in which the men of the OT conceived of Yahweh.

**163** **Ps 147**. This hymn of praise is divided into three strophes by an invitation to sound the praises of God: 1-6, praise of the Lord as restorer of Israel and as creator; 7-11, God’s providential direction of nature; 12-20, God’s power over nature and his care for Zion and Israel. For some of the ideas in this Ps, see Pss 33, 104, and Is 40-66. **2**. The reference is probably to the end of the Exile. **3**. Cf. Is 61:1. **4**. Cf. Is 40:26. **5**. References to Yahweh’s “wisdom” are relatively late in the OT. **8-11**. The acknowledgment of the Lord’s blessings is followed in 10-11 by wisdom considerations (cf. Prv 21:31). **15**. The creative “word” of Yahweh is to be found in Is 55:10-12; Gn 1; Ps 33:6. Here the word is a messenger that does his will and works in nature (the poet betrays real feeling for nature in the following lines). **16-18**. A description of winter and spring in Palestine. **19**. Another aspect of the “word” of Yahweh: His “ordinances” are for Israel alone (cf. Dt 4:7-8).

**164** **Ps 148**. A hymn of praise. Structure: 1-6, the heavens are invited to praise the Lord (reason in 5-6); 7-14, the creatures of earth, especially man, are invited to praise God (reason in 13-14). The poem is related to the *Benedicite*, or Song of the Three Children, in Dn 3:52-90 (Gk text). In both, the influence of the catalogues of natural phenomena (*Listenwissenschaft*) as found in the *Onomasticon of Amen-em-ope* can be felt (cf. Von Rad, *GesSt* 262-71); other OT examples are Jb 28; Sir 43. The series-heaven, sun, moon, stars, etc.-is virtually the same in all, owing to the common “scientific” tradition. **4**. The “heavens of heavens” is over the firmament where the “waters above” (Gn 1:6-8) were stored. **7**. In contrast to 4, the chaotic “depths” are now summoned. **8**. *fire*: Lightning. **11-12**. There is even a certain hierarchy in human levels.

**165** **Ps 149**. A hymn of praise. Structure: 1-4, an invitation to praise the Lord for his love of Israel; [601] 5-9, a description of the participants in the warlike mood of the hymn. It is not possible to associate this song with a specific historical event. Rather than referring to an eschatological battle, it is best understood as a cultic celebration (cf. 5-6) of victory. **1**. *new song*: Perhaps in imitation of Pss 96:1; 98:1, the enthronement Pss. **4**. The reason for praise: victory for the “lowly,” i. e. Israel. **6-9**. Saved by Yahweh, the faithful execute a victory ritual. *written sentence*: The book of Yahweh’s decrees (Jb 13:26; Is 65:6), in this case, judgment.

**166** **Ps 150**. A hymn of praise, which is almost entirely a hymnic introduction, answering the questions, where (1), why (2), and how (3-5). **1**. The heavenly’ sanctuary” is meant, as the parallelism suggests. **3-5**. On these musical instruments, see Murray (*op*. *cit*., 84-89) and O. Sellers (*BA* 4 [1941] 33-47). [602]

## Social Justice in the Prophets

Scott, R.B.Y. *The Relevance of the Prophets*. 1944. Rev. ed. New York: London: Collier Macmillan; New York: Macmillan, 1968.

1. Yahweh “is the Great Ally of the wronged and dispos­sessed.” (Scott *Relevance* 185) Isa 3:15, “What do you mean by crushing my people, by grinding the face of the poor? says the Lord God of hosts.”
2. “The weight of denunciation falls upon the chief beneficiaries of the existing system: the king and those who exercise authority; fat priests, greedy profes­sional prophets and parasitic “wise men”; those who live in luxury heedless of the destitute at their door, heartless creditors, sumptuous householders, greedy land-owners.” (Scott *Relevance* 181)
   1. Isa 3:1-3, “the Sovereign, the Lord of hosts, is taking away from Jerusalem and from Judah support and staff—all support of bread, and all support of water—2warrior and soldier, judge and prophet, diviner and elder, 3captain of fifty and dignitary, counselor and skillful magician and expert enchanter.”
   2. Isa 3:13-15, “The Lord rises to argue his case; he stands to judge the peoples. 14The Lord enters into judgment with the elders and princes of his people: It is you who have devoured the vineyard; the spoil of the poor is in your houses. 15What do you mean by crushing my people, by grinding the face of the poor? says the Lord God of hosts.”
   3. Hos 4:4-6, “with you is my contention, O priest. 5You shall stumble by day; the prophet also shall stumble with you by night, and I will destroy your mother. 6My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because you have rejected knowledge, I reject you from being a priest to me. And since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.”
   4. Hos 5:1, “Hear this, O priests! Give heed, O house of Israel! Listen, O house of the king! For the judgment pertains to you; for you have been a snare at Mizpah, and a net spread upon Tabor . . .”
   5. Amos 4:1, “Hear this word, you cows of Bashan who are on Mount Samaria, who oppress the poor, who crush the needy, who say to their husbands, “Bring something to drink!””
   6. Amos 6:1-7, “Alas for those who are at ease in Zion, and for those who feel secure on Mount Samaria, the notables of the first of the nations, to whom the house of Israel resorts! 2Cross over to Calneh, and see; from there go to Hamath the great; then go down to Gath of the Philistines. Are you better than these kingdoms? Or is your territory greater than their territory, 3O you that put far away the evil day, and bring near a reign of violence? 4Alas for those who lie on beds of ivory, and lounge on their couches, and eat lambs from the flock, and calves from the stall; 5who sing idle songs to the sound of the harp, and like David improvise on instruments of music; 6who drink wine from bowls, and anoint themselves with the finest oils, but are not grieved over the ruin of Joseph! 7Therefore they shall now be the first to go into exile, and the revelry of the loungers shall pass away.”
   7. Micah 3:5-6, “Thus says the Lord concerning the prophets who lead my people astray, who cry “Peace” when they have something to eat, but declare war against those who put nothing into their mouths. 6Therefore it shall be night to you, without vision, and darkness to you, without revelation. The sun shall go down upon the prophets, and the day shall be black over them . . .”
   8. Micah 3:11, “Its rulers give judgment for a bribe, its priests teach for a price, its prophets give oracles for money; yet they lean upon the Lord and say, “Surely the Lord is with us! No harm shall come upon us.””
3. “On the political side, the ethics of Yahwism would invest with authority rulers who are instruments of social justice, and who “maintain the right” in the commu­nity of their neighbors. As Jesus long afterwards expressed it: “The so-called rulers of the nations dominate them, and their great men tyrannize over them; but it is not to be so among you” [Mark 10:42-43].” (Scott *Relevance* 189)
4. “But with anger against the oppressors and pity for the victims the prophets combine rebuke of popular apathy and degeneracy.” (Scott *Relevance* 182)
   1. Isa 1:10, “Hear the word of the Lord, you rulers of Sodom! Listen to the teaching of our God, you people of Gomorrah!”
   2. Isa 9:16, “those who led this people led them astray, and those who were led by them were left in confusion.”
   3. Hosea 4:9, “it shall be like people, like priest; I will punish them for their ways, and repay them for their deeds.”

## God’s “Righteousness” and “Loving-kindness”

McKenzie, John L., SJ. “Aspects of Old Testament Thought.” *Jerome Biblical Commentary*. Ed. Raymond E. Brown, SS, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, SJ, and Roland E. Murphy, O.Carm. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1968. 2.736-67.

righteousness (*sedaqa*)

1. *Sedaqa* is sometimes translated “justice.”
   1. It is translated as Yahweh’s “justice” or a human judge’s “justice.”
   2. But “justice” means objective, universal justice; and there is no such concept in the Old Testament.
2. The usual translation is “righteousness.”
   1. *Sedaqa’s* primary meaning is: one declared innocent in court (or one who has a claim vindicated).
   2. From this primary meaning, others derive.
      1. in early texts
         1. A “righteous claim” was simply my claim.
         2. A “righteous judge” was simply a judge who ruled in my favor.
      2. in later texts
         1. A “righteous person” is one who his innocent (or who has a just claim).
         2. A “righteous judge” is one who awards the verdict to the righteous person.
      3. *sedaqa* and non-human objects
         1. A “righteous path” is one that leads in the right direction. (Ps 23:3, “He leads me in right paths for his name’s sake.”)
         2. A “righteous sacrifice” is one that follows the correct ritual prescriptions. (Deut 33:19, “they offer the right sacrifices . . .”)
         3. A “righteous weight” is an accurate weight. (Lev 19:36, “You shall have honest balances, honest weights, an honest ephah, and an honest hin . . .”)
3. Yahweh’s righteousness
   1. In early texts, Yahweh’s “righteousness” simply meant his loyalty to the covenant with Israel.
      1. The earliest use is in the “Song of Deborah.” (Judg 5:11, “To the sound of musicians at the watering places, there they repeat the triumphs of the Lord, the triumphs of his peasantry in Israel.”)
         1. Yahweh’s “righteous acts” (“triumphs”) are saving Israel.
         2. Simply siding with Israel makes Yahweh righteous when he acts.
         3. Yahweh’s righteousness is (mainly) a saving attribute: salvation.
      2. So in early use, “righteous­ness” means abiding by covenant stipulations, no more.
   2. In its later sense, God’s “righteousness” is universal.
      1. Here “righteousness” is a more objective concept of justice.
         1. This later sense arose because Israel saw itself condemned (through the prophets, the Babylonian exile, etc.).
         2. The later sense also arose because Israel saw Yahweh’s righteousness as rooted in the divine reality itself.
            1. Yahweh cannot act unrighteously.
            2. If he could, there would be no genuine righteousness at all.
   3. “steadfast love”
      1. *Hesed* is “kinship love” but applies to non-kinship love as well.
         1. “*Hesed* is a normal part of good human relations, but it has its proper place within members of a group, even if the association is as temporary as the relation of host and guest. *Hesed* is a kindness that is above and beyond the minimum duties imposed by the association . . .” (McKenzie § 95)
         2. God shows *hesed* in initiating and maintaining his covenants.
      2. *´Emet* is “faithfulness,” Yahweh’s attribute that fulfills his covenant and promises.
      3. *Hesed* + *´emet* yields the frequent phrase, “steadfast love.”

loving-kindness (*hesed*)

1. “*hesed*”
   1. The traditional translation “mercy” goes back to the Greek and Latin Bibles.
   2. “Loving-kindness” is better but still inadequate.
   3. In common use, *hesed* means “kinship love,” or “kinship loving-kindness.”
      1. Its proper place is within a group, even if the group temporary (e.g., host and guest).
      2. It is a normal part of good human relations.
      3. Here *hesed* means kindness above and beyond minimum duties (good relations require more than minimum duties).
2. *Hesed* is often associated with
   1. “faithfulness” (*´emet* or *´emuna*)
   2. “judgment”: loving-kindness in the judge is his readiness to save
   3. “salvation” (a frequent association)
   4. “Righteousness,” “loving-kindness,” and “faithfulness” are attributes of
      1. the ideal ruler (Isa 16:5, “then a throne shall be established in steadfast love in the tent of David, and on it shall sit in faithfulness a ruler who seeks justice and is swift to do what is right”)
      2. the ideal husband (Hos 2:19, “I will take you for my wife in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love, and in mercy”)
      3. Together, the three attributes result in the will to save.
   5. “covenant” (the most frequent association)
      1. *Hesed* caused God to create the covenant. (Isa 55:3, “I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David.”)
      2. But in turn, the fruit of the covenant is *hesed*.
         1. Exod 20:5-6, “. . . I the Lord your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me, 6but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments.”
         2. Exod 34:6, “The Lord passed before him [Moses], and proclaimed, “The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness . . .””
      3. A breach of covenant would be reason for Yahweh to withdraw his *hesed*.
         1. But it would be out of character for him to do so.
         2. His loving-kindness is more enduring than human good will.
      4. *Hesed* is a forgiv­ing attitude to which Israel can appeal when it sins. (Exod 34:6, “merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness . . .”)
3. *hesed* and history
   1. *Hesed* is “the movement of the will of Yahweh that initiates and continues the history of Israel . . .” (McKenzie 1301)
   2. “Indeed, the entire history of the encounter of Israel with Yahweh—and this is the history of Israel—can be summed up as one act of covenant love [*hesed*].” (McKenzie 1301)
4. *hesed* as God’s key motive
   1. *Hesed* “is the dominating motive of the acts of Yahweh; it gives singleness of purpose and ulti­mate intelligibility to his dealings, including anger and judgment. More than any other attribute, this love is the attribute that gives Yahweh personal identity; it is the key to understanding his character.” (McKenzie 1301)

## 101 Instances of “Steadfast Love” in Psalms

*The first fourteen instances*:

Ps 5:7, “But I, through the abundance of your steadfast love, will enter your house, I will bow down toward your holy temple in awe of you.”

Ps 6:4, “Turn, O Lord, save my life; deliver me for the sake of your steadfast love.”

Ps 13:5, “But I trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation.”

Ps 17:7, “Wondrously show your steadfast love, O savior of those who seek refuge from their adversaries at your right hand.”

Ps 18:50, “Great triumphs he gives to his king, and shows steadfast love to his anointed, to David and his descendants forever.”

Ps 21:7, “For the king trusts in the Lord, and through the steadfast love of the Most High he shall not be moved.”

Ps 25:6-7, “Be mindful of your mercy, O Lord, and of your steadfast love, for they have been from of old. 7Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to your steadfast love remember me, for your goodness' sake, O Lord!”

Ps 25:10, “All the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness, for those who keep his covenant and his decrees.”

Ps 26:3, “For your steadfast love is before my eyes, and I walk in faithfulness to you.”

Ps 31:7, “I will exult and rejoice in your steadfast love, because you have seen my affliction; you have taken heed of my adversities . . .”

Ps 31:16, “Let your face shine upon your servant; save me in your steadfast love.”

Ps 31:21, “Blessed be the Lord, for he has wondrously shown his steadfast love to me when I was beset as a city under siege.”

Ps 32:10, “Many are the torments of the wicked, but steadfast love surrounds those who trust in the Lord.”

[*Other instances are*: Pss 33:5, 18, 22; 36:5, 7, 10; 40:10-11; 42:8; 44:26; 48:9; 51:1; 52:8; 57:3, 10; 59:10, 16-17; 61:7; 62:12; 63:3; 66:20; 69:13, 16; 77:8; 85:7, 10; 86:5, 13, 15; 88:11; 89:1-2, 14, 24, 28, 33, 49; 90:14; 92:2; 94:18; 98:3; 100:5; 103:4, 8, 11, 17; 106:1, 7, 45; 107:1, 8, 15, 21, 31, 43; 108:4; 109:21, 26; 115:1; 117:2; 118:1-4, 29; 119:41, 64, 76, 88, 124, 149, 159; 130:7; 136:1-26; 138:2, 8; 143:8, 12; 145:8; 147:11.]

# Appendices

## The Numbering of the Psalms and Their Verses

“Latin Psalters.” *Wikipedia*. 28 Nov. 2015. 29 Nov. 2015. Web.

1. **divisions between psalms**
   1. Qumran
      1. “. . . of the thirty-one copies of the Psalter which were found (mainly copies from Ps. 101 onwards in Cave 11, named 11 QPsa) several scrolls contained psalms written in a continuous script, running on from one psalm to another . . .” (Gillingham 33)
      2. “. . . examples from Cave 4 at Qumran (4 QPsa), probably dating from the Hasmonean period (104-37 bce), also show selected psalms (Pss. 6-7, 31, 32, 35-6, 38, 71, 53-4, 66-7, 69) in a similar continuous script—with Ps. 71 inexplicably following 38.” (Gillingham 33)
      3. “. . . another find in Cave 4 of Qumran (called 4 QPsb), probably from the Herodian period (37 bce-?100 ce), also containing several psalms (e. g. Pss. 91-4, 99-100, 102-3, 112-16, 118) shows by contrast an arrangement of clear verse form . . .” (Gillingham 33)
   2. early rabbinic writings: though the text is like the Masoretic text, [262] there is “free adaptation for liturgical purposes: a Rabbinic text *Berakhôt* 9*b*-10*a* reveals that the number of psalms is not 150, but 147, by the conjoining of Pss. 1-2, 114-15, and 117-18, probably for more convenient lectionary readings.” (Gillingham 262-263)
   3. In the versions (ancient translations) there is no “uniform system dividing one psalm from another.” (Gillingham 258)
   4. “The LXX unites Pss 9-10 and 114-115, but splits Pss 116 and 147, therefore still containing 150 psalms.” (Gillingham 258)
   5. “From Ps 10 to Ps 148 the numbering of the Hebrew Bible (adopted here) is one figure ahead of the Greek and the Vulgate, which join 9 and 10 and also 114 and 115, but divide both 116 and 147 into two.” (*New Jerusalem Bible* 809)
   6. In the other versions, “psalms with no headings are frequently combined with their neighbour: these include Pss. 1-2; 9-10; 42-3; 70-1; 93-4; 94-5; l04-5; 114-15; and 116-17. The result of splitting and uniting psalms is that some manuscripts have only 148 psalms, whilst others, nearly 170. . . . more recent intertextual approaches to the Psalter, which see one psalm in relation to others [have] older precedents than one might imagine.” (Gillingham 258)
   7. conclusions: there are two principal traditions for enumerating psalms and their verses.
      1. *the Hebrew/Jewish/Protestant tradition:* since Luther opted to follow the Hebrew Bible rather than the Vulgate in his translation of the Bible into German (NT, ad 1522; OT, ad 1536), his Bible, and Protestant Bibles since, follow the Hebrew numbering.
      2. *the Septuagint/Vulgate/Catholic tradition:* the Greek Septuagint translation of the Hebrew scriptures (c. 200 bc) was the basis for the Latin Vulgate translation of the psalms (c. ad 400). Since Catholic Bibles until the 1940s based themselves on the Vulgate, the numbering of whole psalms and of psalm verses in Catholic Bibles followed the Septuagint/Vulgate tradition. (In English, the usual Catholic translation was for centuries the Douay-Rheims-Challoner version.) In 1943, however, Pope Pius XII, in the encyclical *Divino Afflante Spiritu*, encouraged translations from the original languages; now Catholic Bibles use the numberings of the Hebrew tradition (an exception is the New American Bible).
2. **psalm and verse numberings compared**
   1. the numbers of whole psalms
      1. The Hebrew tradition and the Vulgate tradition differ in these ways:
         1. Heb. Pss 1-8 = Vg. 1-8 (so Heb. 1-8 are the same as Vg.)
         2. Heb. Pss 9-10 = Vg. 9 (so Heb. 11-114 are one number higher than Vg.)
         3. Heb. 114-115 = Vg. 113 (so Heb. 115-116A are two numbers higher than Vg.)
         4. Heb. 116 = Vg. 114-115 (so Heb. 116B-147A are one number higher than Vg.)
         5. Heb. 147 = Vg. 146-147 (so Heb. 147B-150 are the same as Vg.)
      2. “In 1969, a new psalter was published which translated the Masoretic text . . . The 1969 psalter deviates from the previous versions in that it follows the Masoretic numbering of the psalms, rather than the Septuagint enumeration. It is the psalter used in the edition of the Roman Office published in 1986.” (“Latin Psalters”)
      3. All modern translations of Psalms—nrsv, njb, nab, etc.—use the Hebrew numberings.
   2. the numbers of verses within psalms
      1. The Hebrew Bible does not assign a verse number to psalm superscriptions, but the Vulgate does. The Vulgate either makes the superscription a separate verse (occasionally two verses: Hebrew Pss 51, 52, 55, 61), or it includes the superscription as the first part of the first verse, the second part being the opening of the actual psalm text.
      2. In the following table, “\*” means that in the Vulgate, the superscription of a psalm is verse 1 or verses 1-2; that is why the number of verses in the Vulgate enumeration is one or two verses higher than in the Hebrew.
      3. In the table, “†” means that the superscription is the first part of the first verse; that is why the number of verses in the Vulgate is the same as in the Hebrew.
      4. In the table, Vulgate psalms that lack either \* or † have no superscription.
      5. Among modern Catholic translations, njb has adopted the Hebrew verse numberings; nab follows the Vulgate verse numberings.
   3. To find psalms easily in the table, the number usually given a psalm today—the Hebrew-tradition number—is in bold.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| heb. | Vg. | heb. | Vg. | heb. | Vg. | heb. | Vg. |
| **1**:1-6 | 1:1-6 | **41**:1-13 | 40:1-14\* | **81**:1-16 | 80:1-17\* | **121**:1-8 | 120:1-8† |
| **2**:1-12 | 2:1-111 | **42**7:1-11 | 41:1-12\* | **82**:1-8 | 81:1-8† | **122**:1-9 | 121:1-9† |
| **3**:1-8 | 3:1-9\* | **43**:1-5 | 42:1-5 | **83**:1-18 | 82:1-19\* | **123**:1-4 | 122:1-4† |
| **4**:1-8 | 4:1-9\* | **44**:1-26 | 43:1-27\* | **84**:1-12 | 83:1-13\* | **124**:1-8 | 123:1-8† |
| **5**:1-12 | 5:1-13\* | **45**:1-17 | 44:1-18\* | **85**:1-13 | 84:1-14\* | **125**:1-5 | 124:1-5† |
| **6**:1-10 | 6:1-11\*2 | **46**:1-11 | 45:1-12\* | **86**:1-178 | 85:1-17† | **126**:1-6 | 125:1-6† |
| **7**:1-17 | 7:1-18\* | **47**:1-9 | 46:1-10\* | **87**:1-7 | 86:1-7† | **127**:1-5 | 126:1-5† |
| **8**:1-9 | 8:1-10\* | **48**:1-14 | 47:1-15\* | **88**:1-18 | 87:1-19\* | **128**:1-6 | 127:1-6† |
| **9**:1-20 | 93:1-39\*4 | **49**:1-20 | 48:1-21\* | **89**:1-52 | 88:1-53\* | **129**:1-8 | 128:1-8† |
| **10**:1-18 |  | **50**:1-23 | 49:1-23† | **90**:1-17 | 89:1-17† | **130**:1-8 | 129:1-8† |
| **11**:1-7 | 10:1-8\*5 | **51**:1-19 | 50:1-21\* | **91**:1-16 | 90:1-16 | **131**:1-3 | 130:1-3† |
| **12**:1-8 | 11:1-9\* | **52**:1-9 | 51:1-11\* | **92**:1-15 | 91:1-16\* | **132**:1-18 | 131:1-18† |
| **13**:1-66 | 12:1-6\* | **53**:1-6 | 52:1-7\* | **93**:1-5 | 92:1-5 | **133**:1-3 | 132:1-3† |
| **14**:1-7 | 13:1-7† | **54**:1-7 | 53:1-9\* | **94**:1-23 | 93:1-23 | **134**:1-3 | 133:1-3† |
| **15**:1-5 | 14:1-5† | **55**:1-23 | 54:1-24\* | **95**:1-11 | 94:1-11 | **135**:1-21 | 134:1-21† |
| **16**:1-11 | 15:1-11† | **56**:1-13 | 55:1-14\* | **96**:1-13 | 95:1-13 | **136**:1-26 | 135:1-26 |
| **17**:1-15 | 16:1-15† | **57**:1-11 | 56:1-12\* | **97**:1-12 | 96:1-12 | **137**:1-9 | 136:1-9 |
| **18**:1-50 | 17:1-51\* | **58**:1-11 | 57:1-12\* | **98**:1-9 | 97:1-9 | **138**:1-8 | 137:1-8† |
| **19**:1-14 | 18:1-15\* | **59**:1-17 | 58:1-18\* | **99**:1-9 | 98:1-9 | **139**:1-24 | 138:1-24† |
| **20**:1-9 | 19:1-10\* | **60**:1-12 | 59:1-14\* | **100**:1-5 | 99:1-5† | **140**:1-13 | 139:1-14\* |
| **21**:1-13 | 20:1-14\* | **61**:1-8 | 60:1-9\* | **101**:1-8 | 100:1-8† | **141**:1-10 | 140:1-10† |
| **22**:1-31 | 21:1-32\* | **62**:1-12 | 61:1-13\* | **102**:1-28 | 101:1-29\* | **142**:1-7 | 141:1-8\* |
| **23**:1-6 | 22:1-6† | **63**:1-11 | 62:1-12\* | **103**:1-22 | 102:1-22† | **143**:1-12 | 142:1-12† |
| **24**:1-10 | 23:1-10† | **64**:1-10 | 63:1-11\* | **104**:1-35 | 103:1-35 | **144**:1-15 | 143:1-15† |
| **25**:1-22 | 24:1-22† | **65**:1-13 | 64:1-14\* | **105**:1-45 | 104:1-45 | **145**:1-21 | 144:1-21† |
| **26**:1-12 | 25:1-12† | **66**:1-20 | 65:1-20† | **106**:1-48 | 105:1-48† | **146**:1-10 | 145:1-10† |
| **27**:1-14 | 26:1-14† | **67**:1-7 | 66:1-8\* | **107**:1-43 | 106:1-43 | **147**:1-20 | 146:1-11†  147:1-9 |
| **28**:1-9 | 27:1-9† | **68**:1-35 | 67:1-36\* | **108**:1-13 | 107:1-14\* | **148**:1-14 | 148:1-14† |
| **29**:1-11 | 28:1-11† | **69**:1-36 | 68:1-37\* | **109**:1-31 | 108:1-31† | **149**:1-9 | 149:1-9† |
| **30**:1-12 | 29:1-13\* | **70**:1-5 | 69:1-6\* | **110**:1-7 | 109:1-7† | **150**:1-6 | 150:1-6† |
| **31**:1-24 | 30:1-25\* | **71**:1-24 | 70:1-24 | **111**:1-10 | 110:1-10† |  |  |
| **32**:1-11 | 31:1-11† | **72**:1-20 | 71:1-20† | **112**:1-10 | 111:1-10† |  |  |
| **33**:1-22 | 32:1-22 | **73**:1-28 | 72:1-28† | **113**:1-9 | 112:1-9† |  |  |
| **34**:1-22 | 33:1-23\* | **74**:1-23 | 73:1-23† | **114**:1-8 | 113:1-26 |  |  |
| **35**:1-28 | 34:1-28† | **75**:1-10 | 74:1-11\* | **115**:18 |  |  |  |
| **36**:1-12 | 35:1-13\* | **76**:1-12 | 75:1-13\* | **116**:1-19 | 114:1-9  115:1-10 |  |  |
| **37**:1-40 | 36:1-40† | **77**:1-20 | 76:1-21\* | **117**:1-2 | 116:1-2 |  |  |
| **38**:1-22 | 37:1-23\* | **78**:1-72 | 77:1-72† | **118**:1-29 | 117:1-29 |  |  |
| **39**:1-13 | 38:1-14\* | **79**:1-13 | 78:1-13† | **119**:1-176 | 118:1-176 |  |  |
| **40**:1-17 | 39:1-18\* | **80**:1-19 | 79:1-20\* | **120**:1-7 | 119:1-7† |  |  |

1 nrsv 2:11-12 = nab 2:11.

2 nrsv 6:5-6 = nab 6:6.

3 nrsv 9 and 10 are in njb and nab enumerated “Psalm 9-10.”

4 In 9-10, njb enumerates verses 1-20 (= Ps 9), then a new series, verses 1-18 (= Ps 10). nab enumerates verses 1-21 (verse 1 is the superscription), then verses 1-18.

5 Douay 10:1-8\* = nab 10:1-8†.

6 nrsv 13:5-6 = njb 13:5.

7 nrsv 42 and 43 are in njb enumerated “Psalm 42-43” and in nab, “Psalms 42-43.”

8 nrsv 86:17 = njb 86:17-18.

Here on is hidden.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **1**:1-6 | 1:1-6 | **41**:1-13 | 40:1-14\* | **81**:1-16 | 80:1-17\* | **121**:1-8 | *120:1-8*† |
| **2**:1-12 | 2:1-111 | **42**7:1-11 | 41:1-12\* | **82**:1-8 | 81:1-8† | **122**:1-9 | *121:1-9*† |
| **3**:1-8 | 3:1-9\* | **43**:1-5 | *42:1-5* | **83**:1-18 | 82:1-19\* | **123**:1-4 | *122:1-4*† |
| **4**:1-8 | *4:1-9\** | **44**:1-26 | *43:1-27*\* | **84**:1-12 | 83:1-13\* | **124**:1-8 | *123:1-8*† |
| **5**:1-12 | 5:1-13\* | **45**:1-17 | 44:1-18\* | **85**:1-13 | 84:1-14\* | **125**:1-5 | *124:1-5*† |
| **6**:1-10 | *6:1-11\**2 | **46**:1-11 | 45:1-12\* | **86**:1-178 | 85:1-17† | **126**:1-6 | *125:1-6*† |
| **7**:1-17 | 7:1-18\* | **47**:1-9 | 46:1-10\* | **87**:1-7 | 86:1-7† | **127**:1-5 | *126:1-5*† |
| **8**:1-9 | 8:1-10\* | **48**:1-14 | 47:1-15\* | **88**:1-18 | 87:1-19\* | **128**:1-6 | *127:1-6*† |
| **9**:1-20 | 93:1-39\*4 | **49**:1-20 | 48:1-21\* | **89**:1-52 | 88:1-53\* | **129**:1-8 | *128:1-8*† |
| **10**:1-18 |  | **50**:1-23 | 49:1-23† | **90**:1-17 | 89:1-17† | **130**:1-8 | *129:1-8*† |
| **11**:1-7 | *10:1-8\**5 | **51**:1-19 | 50:1-21\* | **91**:1-16 | *90:1-16* | **131**:1-3 | *130:1-3*† |
| **12**:1-8 | 11:1-9\* | **52**:1-9 | 51:1-11\* | **92**:1-15 | 91:1-16\* | **132**:1-18 | *131:1-18*† |
| **13**:1-66 | *12:1-6*\* | **53**:1-6 | *52:1-7*\* | **93**:1-5 | *92:1-5* | **133**:1-3 | *132:1-3*† |
| **14**:1-7 | 13:1-7† | **54**:1-7 | 53:1-9\* | **94**:1-23 | *93:1-23* | **134**:1-3 | *133:1-3*† |
| **15**:1-5 | 14:1-5† | **55**:1-23 | 54:1-24\* | **95**:1-11 | *94:1-11* | **135**:1-21 | *134:1-21*† |
| **16**:1-11 | 15:1-11† | **56**:1-13 | *55:1-14*\* | **96**:1-13 | *95:1-13* | **136**:1-26 | *135:1-26* |
| **17**:1-15 | 16:1-15† | **57**:1-11 | 56:1-12\* | **97**:1-12 | *96:1-12* | **137**:1-9 | *136:1-9* |
| **18**:1-50 | 17:1-51\* | **58**:1-11 | 57:1-12\* | **98**:1-9 | *97:1-9* | **138**:1-8 | *137:1-8*† |
| **19**:1-14 | 18:1-15\* | **59**:1-17 | 58:1-18\* | **99**:1-9 | *98:1-9* | **139**:1-24 | 138:1-24† |
| **20**:1-9 | *19:1-10*\* | **60**:1-12 | 59:1-14\* | **100**:1-5 | *99:1-5*† | **140**:1-13 | 139:1-14\* |
| **21**:1-13 | 20:1-14\* | **61**:1-8 | 60:1-9\* | **101**:1-8 | 100:1-8† | **141**:1-10 | *140:1-10*† |
| **22**:1-31 | 21:1-32\* | **62**:1-12 | 61:1-13\* | **102**:1-28 | 101:1-29\* | **142**:1-7 | 141:1-8\* |
| **23**:1-6 | 22:1-6† | **63**:1-11 | 62:1-12\* | **103**:1-22 | 102:1-22† | **143**:1-12 | 142:1-12† |
| **24**:1-10 | 23:1-10† | **64**:1-10 | 63:1-11\* | **104**:1-35 | *103:1-35* | **144**:1-15 | *143:1-15*† |
| **25**:1-22 | 24:1-22† | **65**:1-13 | 64:1-14\* | **105**:1-45 | *104:1-45* | **145**:1-21 | *144:1-21*† |
| **26**:1-12 | 25:1-12† | **66**:1-20 | 65:1-20† | **106**:1-48 | *105:1-48*† | **146**:1-10 | *145:1-10*† |
| **27**:1-14 | 26:1-14† | **67**:1-7 | 66:1-8\* | **107**:1-43 | *106:1-43* | **147**:1-20 | *146:1-11*†  *147:1-9* |
| **28**:1-9 | 27:1-9† | **68**:1-35 | 67:1-36\* | **108**:1-13 | 107:1-14\* | **148**:1-14 | *148:1-14*† |
| **29**:1-11 | *28:1-11*† | **69**:1-36 | 68:1-37\* | **109**:1-31 | *108:1-31*† | **149**:1-9 | *149:1-9*† |
| **30**:1-12 | 29:1-13\* | **70**:1-5 | 69:1-6\* | **110**:1-7 | 109:1-7† | **150**:1-6 | *150:1-6*† |
| **31**:1-24 | 30:1-25\* | **71**:1-24 | *70:1-24* | **111**:1-10 | *110:1-10*† |  |  |
| **32**:1-11 | 31:1-11† | **72**:1-20 | *71:1-20*† | **112**:1-10 | *111:1-10*† |  |  |
| **33**:1-22 | *32:1-22* | **73**:1-28 | 72:1-28† | **113**:1-9 | *112:1-9*† |  |  |
| **34**:1-22 | 33:1-23\* | **74**:1-23 | 73:1-23† | **114**:1-8 | *113:1-26* |  |  |
| **35**:1-28 | 34:1-28† | **75**:1-10 | 74:1-11\* | ***115****:18* |  |  |  |
| **36**:1-12 | 35:1-13\* | **76**:1-12 | 75:1-13\* | **116**:1-19 | *114:1-9*  *115:1-10* |  |  |
| **37**:1-40 | 36:1-40† | **77**:1-20 | 76:1-21\* | **117**:1-2 | *116:1-2* |  |  |
| **38**:1-22 | 37:1-23\* | **78**:1-72 | 77:1-72† | **118**:1-29 | *117:1-29* |  |  |
| **39**:1-13 | 38:1-14\* | **79**:1-13 | 78:1-13† | **119**:1-176 | *118:1-176* |  |  |
| **40**:1-17 | 39:1-18\* | **80**:1-19 | 79:1-20\* | **120**:1-7 | *119:1-7*† |  |  |

## The Psalms: A Summary Chart

*Date:* “jgs.” is the period of the judges (1220-1020 bc); “pre.” is pre-exilic (before 587); “exile” is the Babylonian exile (587-539); “post.” is post-exilic (after 539). *Form:* “i.” is “individual”; “c.” is “communal”; “hist’l.” is “historical”; “proph. exhort.” is “prophetic exhortation.” *Meter:* “variable” means regular meter is hard to discern. The cause may be textual corruptions, borrowings from other psalms, a composite psalm, a dramatic purpose in the ritual, or a troubled state of mind.

| ***No.*** | ***Date*** | ***Contents*** | ***Collection*** | ***Form*** | ***Meter*** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **1** | post. | happy the man | insertion ps. | wisdom psalm | variable |
| **2** | pre. | this day I have begotten you | insertion ps. | royal psalm | 3:3 |
| **3** |  | I lie down in peace | David I | i. lament |  |
| **4** |  | however angry, do no wrong | David I | i. confidence | 4:4 |
| **5** |  | in the morning you will hear me | David I | i. lament | 3:2 |
| **6** |  | set my soul free | David I | i. lament | 3:3 |
| **7** | pre. | God has ordered justice | David I | i. lament | 3:2 |
| **8** | post. | the work of Your fingers | David I | creation hymn | 3:3 and 2:2 |
| **9** |  | You have rebuked the nations | David I | i. thanksgiving | variable |
| **10** |  | the wicked man is obsessed | David I | i. thanksgiving | variable |
| **11** |  | flee to the mountains like a bird | David I | i. confidence | 2:2 |
| **12** | pre. | loyalty is no more | David I | i. lament | 4:4 |
| **13** | exile | how long, O Lord? | David I | i. lament | variable |
| **14** | pre. | “there is no God” | David I | proph. exhort. | 3:2 |
| **15** | pre. | the man of blameless life | David I | liturgy | variable (an-  tiphons=3:2) |
| **16** |  | at night wisdom comes | David I | i. confidence | variable |
| **17** | exile | no mind to evil | David I | i. lament | 3:2 |
| **18** | pre. | the earth heaved and quaked | David I | royal psalm | 3:3 |
| **19:**  **1-6** | pre.  (jgs.?) | the heavens proclaim the glory  (praise of God’s order in creation; 4c-6 = the sun) | David I | creation hymn | 4:4 |
| **19:**  **7-14** | post. | praise of God’s order in the Law | David I | wisdom psalm | 3:2 |
| **20** | pre. | the Lord grant all you ask | David I | royal psalm | 3:3 |
| **21** | pre. | the king rejoices in your might | David I | royal psalm | 1-6 = 2:2,  7-13 = 3:3 |
| **22** | exile | why have you forsaken me? | David I | i. lament | variable |
| **23** | pre. | the Lord is my shepherd | David I | i. confidence | 3:2 and 2:2 |
| **24** | pre. | the earth is the Lord’s | David I | liturgy | variable |
| **25** | post. | God teaches the humble his ways | David I | i. lament | 3:3 |
| **26** | post. | I live without reproach | David I | i. lament | 3:3 |
| **27** |  | the Lord is my light | David I | i. confidence | variable |
| **28** |  | do not drag me away | David I | i. lament | 3:2 |
| **29** | pre.  (jgs.?) | the voice of the Lord  (God’s power in the storm) | David I | creation hymn | 2:2 and 2:2:2 |
| **30** | pre. | joy comes in the morning | David I | i. thanksgiving | 2:2 and 3:3 |
| **31** | exile | into your hands I commend my spirit | David I | i. lament | variable |
| **32** |  | happy the man whose sin is forgiven | David I | i. thanksgiving | variable |
| **33** | post. | he spoke, and it stood forth | David I | creation hymn | 3:3 |
| **34** |  | the angel of the Lord is on guard | David I | i. thanksgiving | 3:3 |
| **35** | exile | grasp shield and buckler | David I | i. lament | 3:2 |
| **36** |  | sin whispers to the wick­ed | David I | i. lament | 1st ½ = 3:2,  2d ½ = 3:3 |
| **37** | post. | do not strive to outdo evildoers | David I | wisdom psalm | 3:3 |
| **38** |  | there is no wholesome flesh in me | David I | i. lament | 3:3 |
| **39** |  | I will muzzle my mouth | David I | i. lament | variable |
| **40** | pre. | your purposes are all for our good | David I | i. thanksgiving | 40:13ff.=3:2 |
| **41** | pre. | all visit to gather bad news | David I | i. thanksgiving | variable |
| **42** | exile | as a hind longs for running streams | Korah | i. lament | variable |
| **43** | exile | I will wait for God | Korah | i. lament | variable |
| **44** | exile | hurled before the enemy | Korah | c. lament | 3:3 |
| **45** | pre. | a princess at your side | Korah | royal psalm | 4:4:4 |
| **46** | pre. | God is in that city | Korah | Zion hymn | variable |
| **47** | pre.?  exile? | the Lord goes up to trum­pets | Korah | kingship hymn | variable |
| **48** | pre. | the earth’s joy is Zion’s hill | Korah | Zion hymn | 3:3 |
| **49** | post. | no man can ever ransom himself | Korah | wisdom psalm | 3:3 |
| **50** | pre. | shall I eat the flesh of bulls? | Asaph | proph. exhort. | 3:3 |
| **51** | pre. | my sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit | David II | i. lament | 3:3 |
| **52** | pre. | your tongue is sharp as a razor | David II | proph. exhort. | 3:2 |
| **53** | pre. | “there is no God” | David II | proph. exhort. | 3:2 |
| **54** | exile | save me by the power of your name | David II | i. lament | variable |
| **55** | exile | Oh that I had the wings of a dove | David II | i. lament |  |
| **56** |  | store every tear in your flask | David II | i. lament | 3:3 |
| **57** |  | let your glory shine over earth | David II | i. lament | 1-5 = 3:3,  6-11 = 3:2 |
| **58** | pre. | rulers, are your judg­­ments just? | David II | proph. exhort. | 4:3 |
| **59** |  | villains run wild like dogs | David II | i. lament | 3:3 |
| **60** | exile | you go not forth with our armies | David II | c. lament | 3:3 |
| **61** | pre. | from the end of the earth I call | David II | i. lament | variable |
| **62** |  | my heart waits silently for God | David II | i. confidence | variable |
| **63** |  | I seek you early | David II | i. lament | 3:3 |
| **64** |  | God’s arrow shoots them down | David II | i. lament | 3:2 |
| **65** | pre. | the valleys break into song | David II | c. thanksgiving | 3:3 and 3:2 |
| **66** | pre. | God’s tremendous dealings with man | David II | c. thanksgiving | 3:3 |
| **67** | pre. | God make his face shine upon us | David II | c. thanksgiving | 3:3 |
| **68** | pre.  (jgs.?) | a dove’s wings sheathed in silver | David II | c. thanksgiving | variable |
| **69** | post. | vinegar when I was thirsty | David II | i. lament | 3:3 |
| **70** |  | I am poor and needy | David II | i. lament | 3:2 |
| **71** |  | when old age comes | David II | i. lament | 3:2 |
| **72** | pre. | endow the king with your justice | David II | royal psalm | variable |
| **73** | post. | sinners roused my envy | Asaph | wisdom psalm | variable |
| **74** | exile | your enemies filled the holy place | Asaph | c. lament | 2:2 |
| **75** | pre. | no power can raise a man up | Asaph | proph. exhort. | 3:3 |
| **76** | pre. | in Judah God is known | Asaph | Zion hymn | 3:2 |
| **77** | exile | does his arm hang powerless? | Asaph | c. lament | 1-15 = 3:3,  16-20=3:3:3 |
| **78** | pre.?  exile? | his wonderful acts | Asaph | narr. hymn  (hist’l. psalm) | 3:3 |
| **79** | exile | Jerusalem in ruins | Asaph | c. lament | variable |
| **80** |  | take thought for this vine | Asaph | c. lament | 3:3 |
| **81** | pre. | blow the horn for the full moon | Asaph | proph. exhort. | 3:3 |
| **82** | pre. | judgment against the gods | Asaph | c. lament?  proph. exhort.? | 3:3 |
| **83** | pre. | your enemies make a league | Asaph | c. lament | 3:3 |
| **84** | pre.?  post.? | how dear is your dwelling-place | Korah | Zion hymn?  i. confidence? | 3:2 |
| **85** |  | justice and peace join hands | Korah | c. lament | 3:3 |
| **86** |  | no god is like you | insertion ps. | i. lament | variable |
| **87** | pre. | Zion a mother of every race | Korah | Zion hymn | variable |
| **88** |  | like the slain who sleep | Korah | i. lament | 3:3 |
| **89** | pre.?  exile? | David my servant | insertion ps. | royal psalm | 1-18 = 4:4,  19-37 = 3:3,  38-52 varies |
| **90** | post. | you turn man back to dust | insertion ps. | c. lament | 3:3 |
| **91** |  | the noonday devil; an els guard | insertion ps. | i. confidence | 3:3 |
| **92** |  | how fathomless your thoughts | insertion ps. | i. thanksgiving | 3:3 |
| **93** | pre.?  exile? | the ocean lifts pounding waves | kingship | kingship hymn | stanza = 2:2 x 4, 3:3 x 1 |
| **94** | pre.?  exile? | he that planted the ear can hear | insertion ps. | c. lament | 3:3 |
| **95** | pre. | they shall never enter my rest | kingship | proph. exhort. | 3:3 |
| **96** | pre.?  exile? | ascribe to the Lord glory and might | kingship | kingship hymn | variable |
| **97** | pre.?  exile? | the Lord is king | kingship | kingship hymn | 3:3 |
| **98** | pre.?  exile? | rivers clap their hands | kingship | kingship hymn | 3:3 |
| **99** | pre.?  exile? | the Lord is king | kingship | kingship hymn | variable |
| **100** | post. | enter his gates | insertion ps. | hymn | 3:3 |
| **101** |  | rid the Lord’s city of evil men | David III | royal psalm? | 3:2 |
| **102** |  | like an owl that lives among ruins | insertion ps. | i. lament | 3:3 |
| **103** | post. | his love high as heaven | David III | hymn | 3:3 |
| **104** | pre.  (jgs.?) | you fixed the earth’s foundation | Hallel | creation hymn | 3:3 |
| **105** | exile | make his deeds known | Hallel | narr. hymn  (hist’l. psalm) | 3:3 |
| **106** |  | his mighty acts | Hallel | c. lament | 3:3 |
| **107** | exile | those redeemed by the Lord | insertion ps. | i. thanksgiving | 3:3 (refrain  varies) |
| **108** |  | help against the enemy | David III | c. lament | 1-5 = 3:2,  6-13 = 3:3 |
| **109** |  | the Lord requite my accusers | David III | i. lament | variable |
| **110** | pre. | the Lord said to my Lord | David III | royal psalm |  |
| **111** | post. | praise the Lord with good men | Hallel | hymn | 3:3 |
| **112** | post. | happy the man who fears the Lord | Hallel | wisdom psalm |  |
| **113** |  | he deigns to look down so low | Hallel | hymn | variable |
| **114** | pre. | dance, O earth | Hallel | narr. hymn | 3:3 |
| **115** |  | not to us ascribe the glory | Hallel | c. confidence | 3:3 |
| **116** | post. | I love the Lord, he has heard | Hallel | i. thanksgiving | variable |
| **117** | post. | his strong protecting love | Hallel | hymn | 3:3 |
| **118** | pre. | the stone the builders rejected | Hallel | c. thanksgiving | variable |
| **119** | post. | your law | insertion ps. | wisdom psalm | 3:2 |
| **120** |  | I sought peace | Ascents | i. lament | variable |
| **121** |  | help comes only from the Lord | Ascents | i. confidence | variable |
| **122** | pre. | I rejoiced when they said to me | Ascents | Zion hymn | variable |
| **123** | exile | I lift my eyes to you | Ascents | c. lament | 3:2 |
| **124** |  | they would have swal­lowed us | Ascents | c. thanksgiving | variable |
| **125** |  | those who trust are like Zion | Ascents | c. confidence | variable |
| **126** | exile | bringing home the sheaves | Ascents | c. lament | 2:2:2 (with  some 3:2) |
| **127** | post. | unless the Lord build the house | Ascents | wisdom psalm | 1-2 = 3:3,  3-5 = 3:2 |
| **128** | post. | your wife like a fruitful vine | Ascents | wisdom psalm | 1-4 = 3:2,  5 = 3:3:2 |
| **129** | post. | enemies like grass on the roof | Ascents | c. confidence | 3:2 |
| **130** |  | out of the depths I cry to you | Ascents | i. lament | variable |
| **131** |  | I am not busy with great matters | Ascents | i. confidence | 3:2 |
| **132** | pre. | I will renew the line of David | Ascents | royal psalm | 3:3 |
| **133** |  | how pleasant for brothers | Ascents | c. confidence | variable |
| **134** |  | bless the Lord, all you servants | Ascents | liturgy | variable |
| **135** | pre.?  post.? | whatever God pleases, that he does | Hallel | narr. hymn | variable |
| **136** | pre.?  post.? | his love endures forever | insertion ps. | narr. hymn | 3:3 |
| **137** | exile | by the rivers of Babylon | insertion ps. | c. lament | variable |
| **138** | post. | the Lord will accomplish his purpose | David III | i. thanksgiving | 3:3 |
| **139** |  | you have examined and know me | David III | wisdom psalm | variable |
| **140** | pre. | rescue me, Lord, from evil men | David III | i. lament | 3:2 |
| **141** | pre. | let my prayer be like incense | David III | i. lament | 3:2 |
| **142** |  | you are all I have in the land | David III | i. lament | 3:3 |
| **143** |  | to you I offer all my heart | David III | i. lament | variable |
| **144** | pre. | he puts nations under my feet | David III | royal psalm | variable |
| **145** | post. | his care rests on his creatures | David III | hymn | 2 halves and  2 meters |
| **146** | post. | the Lord deals out justice | Hallel | Hallel hymn | 3:3 |
| **147** | post. | the Lord is rebuilding Jerusalem | Hallel | Hallel hymn | 3:3 |
| **148** | post. | praise him, all his host | Hallel | Hallel hymn | 3:3 |
| **149** | post. | let Israel rejoice in his maker | Hallel | Hallel hymn | 3:3 |
| **150** | post. | praise him with clash of cymbals | Hallel | Hallel hymn | 3:3 |

## Reading the Psalms Every One or Two Weeks

To read the psalms every week, consider the following schedule:

Sunday Pss 1-27 *total verses:* 359

Monday 28-48 (Hebrew numbering) 349

Tuesday 49-71 352

Wednesday 72-89 378

Thursday 90-107 364

Friday 108-119 332

Saturday 120-150 326

*grand total:* 2460

By adhering to this schedule, you can read the psalms through fourteen

times in one semester.

To read the psalms every two weeks, consider the following schedule:

Sunday Pss 1-17 *total verses:* 179

Monday 18-27 (Hebrew numbering) 181

Tuesday 28-36 191

Wednesday 38-49 178

Thursday 50-62 171

Friday 63-72 181

Saturday 73-79 178

Sunday 80-89 180

Monday 90-102 171

Tuesday 103-107 193

Wednesday 108-118 156

Thursday 119 176

Friday 120-138 165

Saturday 139-150 161

*grand total:* 2460

By adhering to this schedule, you can read the psalms through seven times

in one semester.

Nothing less than several straight-through readings will give comprehen-

sive familiarity.

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1. Also, Ps 106 is “An historical Ps, conceived in terms of a national lament . . .” (Murphy, Roland. “Psalms.” *Jerome Biblical Commentary.* 2 vols. in 1. Ed. Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and Roland E. Murphy. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1968. 1.595.) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. “Assonance. 1. Resemblance of sound, especially of the vowel sounds in words, as in: *“that dolphin-torn, that gong-tormented sea”* (William Butler Yeats). 2. The repetition of identical or similar vowel sounds, especially in stressed syllables, with changes in the intervening consonants, as in the phrase *tilting at windmills*.”

   “Consonance. 1. Agreement; harmony; accord. 2. a. Close correspondence of sounds. b. The repetition of consonants or of a consonant pattern, especially at the ends of words, as in *blank* and *think* or *strong* and *string*.” [*The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*. 3d ed. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1996.] [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. “The repetition of the same consonant sounds or of different vowel sounds at the beginning of words or in stressed syllables, as in *“on scrolls of silver snowy sentences”* (Hart Crane).” [*The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*. 3d ed. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1996.] [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. 12 See the list of these psalms in an article by M. Van Imschoot, in the *Coll. Gand*., 1940, pp. 89-93 together with various very useful remarks about them. The author divides these psalms into two groups: those which ask God to cause suffering to Israel’s enemies: ps. [*sic*] 78. 6, 12; 82. 10. [*sic*] 19; 128. 5-8; to the enemies of the psalmist: ps. 5.11; 6. 11; 7.10, 16; 9. 12; 27. 4; 30. 19; 34. 4-6; 39. 15; 53. 7; 57. 7-11; 68. ps. 23-9; 108. 6-19; 138. 19; 139. 9-12; 140. 10; 142. 12. Cf. also H. Junker, ‘Das theologische Problem der Fluchpsalmen,’ Trier, *Pastor bonus*, 51, 5-6, p.71 seq. [239 n. 12] [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. 14 His article was planned from the point of view of the history of religions with the title: ‘Les infiltrations païennes dans l’Ancienne Loi d’après les Pères de l’Église’ and with the sub-title: ‘La Thèse de la Condescendance’. [242 n. 14] [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. 15 The author refers the reader to his own book: *Problèmes d’Ancien Testament*: Paris-Lyon, Vitte, 1952, 110. p., third section: ‘Morale et Ancien Testament’, pp. 71-92. Cf. by the same author: *Les Idées maîtresses de l’Ancien Testament*, Lectio divina, 2, Paris, Éditions du Cerf, 1948, 88 p. Cf. also the article: ‘De inferioritate morali Veteris Testamenti,’ by H. Kruse, S. J., in *Verbum Domini*, vol. 2, 1950, pp. 77-88. [243 n. 15] [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. 16 Cf. ‘La crise de l’Ancien Testament’, in *NRT*, 1929, pp. 181-39, third part: ‘Ce que doit être l’enseignement Catholique de l’Ancien Testament’ and in the book: *L’Ancien Testament et les Chrétiens*: ‘A la lumière de l’encyclique *Divino afflante Spiritu*’, pp. 99-105. [245 n. 16] [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. 17 Cf. the books mentioned above: Catholic, p. 191-5; Protestant, pp. 121-2. [245 n. 17] [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. 1 Except where otherwise stated all translations are by the author. [46 n. 1] [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. 6 Bonhoeffer’s view is expressed by John Godsey in *The Theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960; © W.L. Jenkins, 1960), p. 191. Christoph Barth expresses Bonhoeffer’s view in his discussion of the “wicked enemies” in *Introduction to the Psalms*, [Scribner Studies in Biblical Interpretation (New York: Chas. Scribner’s Sons, 1966)] p. 43. [180 n. 6] [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. 7 Helmer Ringgren, *The Faith of the Psalmists*, [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1963] p. 45 (see also pp. 44-46). This theme is discussed in Bernhard W. Anderson, *Creation versus Chaos* (New York: Association Press, 1967); see especially chap. 5 on “Creation and Conflict.” [180 n. 7] [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. 8 This phrase is quoted by James H. Smylie in his article, “On Jesus, Pharaoh, and the Chosen People: Martin Luther King as Biblical Interpreter and Humanist,” *Interpretation*, XXIV, 1 (Jamuary 1970), p. 78. [180 n. 8] [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. 9 G. Ernest Wright, “Reflections concerning Old Testament Theology,” in *Studia Biblica et Semitica*, edited by Theodore C. Vriezen (The Netherlands: H. Veenman en Zonen, 1966), p. 387. [180 n. 9] [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. 10 Claus Westermann, *A Thousand Years and a Day* (Philadelphia: Fortress Preess, 1962), p. 268. See also Helmer Ringgren, *The Faith of the Psalmists*, pp. 31-32. [180 n. 10] [↑](#footnote-ref-14)