

How to Read the Psalms

Psalm

In Hebrew the word is Tehillim which means “praises or songs of praise”

In Greek it's the word Psalmos which means “to strike or pluck an instrument”

In English we transliterate as Psalms which means “a sacred song, poem or hymn”

The Jewish Scriptures (Tanakh)

The Law	The Prophets	The Writings
Torah (Pentateuch)	Former Prophets	Poetry
Genesis	Joshua	Psalms
Exodus	Judges	Proverbs
Leviticus	Samuel (1 & 2)	Job
Numbers	Kings (1 & 2)	
Deuteronomy		Five Rolls
	Latter Prophets	Song of Songs
	Isaiah	Ruth
	Jeremiah	Lamentations
	Ezekiel	Esther
	The Twelve (Minor Prophets)	Ecclesiastes
		Historical
		Daniel
		Ezra-Nehemiah
		Chronicles (1 & 2)

OLD TESTAMENT

THE LAW

Genesis
Exodus
Leviticus

Numbers
Deuteronomy

HISTORY

Joshua	2 Samuel	2 Chronicles
Judges	1 Kings	Ezra
Ruth	2 Kings	Nehemiah
1 Samuel	1 Chronicles	Esther

WISDOM LITERATURE

Job
Psalms
Proverbs

Ecclesiastes
Song of Songs

MAJOR PROPHETS

Isaiah
Jeremiah
Lamentations
Ezekiel
Daniel

MINOR PROPHETS

Hosea	Nahem
Joel	Habakkuk
Amos	Zephaniah
Obadiah	Haggai
Jonah	Zechariah
Micah	Malachi

Sanctification

1 Thessalonians 4:3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality

Psalms 141:1-4 Lord, I call upon You; hurry to me! Listen to my voice when I call to You! 2 May my prayer be counted as incense before You; The raising of my hands as the evening offering. 3 Set a guard, Lord, over my mouth; Keep watch over the door of my lips. 4 Do not incline my heart to any evil thing, To practice deeds of wickedness With people who do wrong; And may I not taste their delicacies.

Poetic Books

Job teaches us how to view suffering.

Proverbs teaches us how to view wisdom and foolishness in life.

Ecclesiastes teaches us how to view God's purpose in life because apart from him everything is vanity.

Song of Solomon teaches us how to view marriage.

Main Focus for Today

1. Keys to reading the Psalms
2. Why and who thought this book was important
3. How the book is structured

Hebrew Parallelism

- Synonymous Parallelism
 - Psalm 1:2 But his delight is in the Law of the Lord, And on His Law he meditates day and night.
- Antithetical Parallelism
 - Psalm 1:6 For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the wicked will perish.
- Stair Like Parallelism
 - Psalm 1:1 Blessed is the person who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!

Proverbs 29:18

Proverbs 29:18 Where there is no **vision**, the people will **perish**

Proverbs 29:18

Proverbs 29:18 Where there is no **vision**, the people will **perish**, But happy is one who keeps the Law.

The Psalms Importance

How is the Book of Psalms
Structured?

Breakdown of the Psalms

- Introduction – Chapters 1 and 2
- Middle Section – Chapters 3-145
- Conclusion – Chapters 146-150

Chapters 1 and 2 - Introduction

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

Focus of the Introduction

- The Word of God
- Submitting to the Lordship of the Messiah

Chapters 3-145 - The Middle

- Divided into 5 books
- Theology woven into praise and lament
- Every major doctrine
- Peter at Pentecost
- Jesus' life
- Upward trajectory to praise worthy conclusion

Chapters 146-150 - The Conclusion

- 146 opens with Hallelujah and to put your trust in the Lord. The chapter ends with the Lord will reign forever...Hallelujah.
- 147 opens again with Hallelujah. Goes on to say the lord heals the broken hearted and binds up wounds. He lifts up the humble and casts the wicked to the ground. The chapter ends with Hallelujah
- 148 opens again with Hallelujah and how everything is to praise him...the sun, the moon, the stars, the angels, the heavens, the sea creatures, kings, princes, rulers and all the people. The chapter then ends with Hallelujah.
- 149 opens again with Hallelujah and a new song we sing to the Lord. He adorns the humble with salvation and executes judgment on the nations. It ends with Hallelujah.

Chapters 146-150 - The Conclusion

Psalm 150:1-6 Hallelujah! Praise God in his sanctuary. Praise him in his mighty expanse. 2 Praise him for his powerful acts; praise him for his abundant greatness. 3 Praise him with the blast of a ram's horn; praise him with harp and lyre. 4 Praise him with tambourine and dance; praise him with strings and flute. 5 Praise him with resounding cymbals; praise him with clashing cymbals. 6 Let everything that breathes Hallelujah. Hallelujah!

Chapters 146-150 - The Conclusion

Revelation 19:1 says After these things I heard something like a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, “Hallelujah! Salvation, glory, and power belong to our God

Chapters 146-150 - The Conclusion

Revelation 19:1-6 After these things I heard something like a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, “**Hallelujah!** Salvation, glory, and power belong to our God, 2 because His judgments are true and righteous; for He has judged the great prostitute who was corrupting the earth with her sexual immorality, and He has avenged the blood of His bond-servants on her.” 3 And a second time they said, “**Hallelujah!** Her smoke rises forever and ever.” 4 And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sits on the throne, saying, “Amen. **Hallelujah!**” 5 And a voice came from the throne, saying, “Give praise to our God, all you His bond-servants, you who fear Him, the small and the great.” 6 Then I heard something like the voice of a great multitude and like the sound of many waters, and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, saying, “**Hallelujah!** For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns.

Chapters 146-150 - The Conclusion

Luke 21:25-28 There will be signs in the sun and moon and stars, and on the earth distress among nations, in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves, 26 people fainting from fear and the expectation of the things that are coming upon the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 27 And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. What does he say at the end? Verse 28 But when these things begin to take place, **straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.**"

The Big Picture

- Psalms 1-2
 - Focus on the Word of God
 - Submit to the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Psalms 3-145
 - Emotion behind our obedience
 - Upward trajectory from lament to praise
- Psalms 146-150
 - Keep our eyes on the conclusion
 - Our redemption is drawing near

Athanasius

The Psalms have a unique place in the Bible because most of the Scripture speaks to us, while the Psalms **speaks for us.**