

Psalms: “Songs and Poetry”

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By Angela Lee



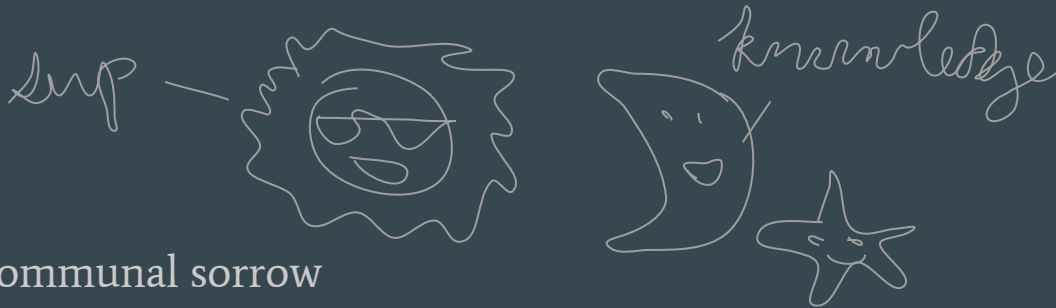
Overview

- Three types of Psalms (traditionally):
 - 1) Hymns (praise)
 - 2) Elegies/laments (sorrows)
 - 3) Didactic poems (teachings)
- Songs/poetry that convey human emotions
- Shows Israelites' perception of God
- Often reference God's sovereignty over nature
 - Not personified as forces of nature, but the master of them
- Personal, deep relationships with God
 - Affirmations with God's covenants
- Elements are lost in translation

Afflictions (Lament)	3-5, 7, 11, 13, 16, 17, 22, 26-28, 31, 35, 41-44, 54-57, 59-64, 69-71, 74, 77, 79, 80, 83, 84, 86, 88, 89, 94, 102, 109, 120, 123, 129, 137, 140-143	Prayers for God's deliverance and for comfort when everything seems to be going wrong.
Didactic	1, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 17, 24, 25, 32, 34, 36, 37, 39, 49, 50, 52, 53, 58, 73, 75, 82, 84, 90, 91, 92, 94, 101, 112, 119, 121, 125, 127, 128, 131, 133	Psalms intended to teach.
Imprecatory	5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 25, 28, 31, 35, 40, 54, 55, 56, 58, 59, 68, 69, 70, 71, 79, 83, 94, 109, 119, 129, 137, 139, 140, 143, 144	Prayers of a man for vengeance on his enemies.
Intercessional	20, 67, 112, 122, 132, 134, 144	Prayers requesting favor for another.
Messianic	2, 16, 67, 68, 69, 72, 93, 96, 97, 98, 99, 110, 118	Psalms that contain references to Christ.
Penitential	6, 25, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143	Psalms that deal with sin and forgiveness.
Praise	8, 19, 24, 29, 33, 47, 50, 65, 66, 76, 77, 93, 95, 96, 97, 99, 104, 111, 113, 114, 115, 134, 139, 147, 148, 150	Psalms of Praise to God.
Prophetic	2, 16, 22, 40, 45, 68, 69, 72, 87, 97, 110, 118	Psalms regarding the coming Messiah.
Thanksgiving	8, 9, 18, 19, 21, 23, 29, 30, 32, 34, 36, 40, 41, 46, 48, 65, 66, 68, 75, 76, 81, 85, 91, 98, 100, 103-108, 111, 116, 117, 118, 121, 124, 126, 129, 135, 136, 138, 144, 145, 146, 149	Praise God for His graciousness and show gratitude for the blessings He gives.
Pilgrimage & Ascent	43, 46, 48, 76, 84, 87, 120, 134	Songs of worship for pilgrims. They express celebration and reverence.
Royal	2, 18, 20, 21, 45, 72, 89, 101, 110, 132, 144	Proclaims the reign of the earthly king and the heavenly King. Illustrates the need to make the Lord the master in our daily lives.
Enthronement	47, 93, 96, 99	Describes God's sovereign rule and affirms His position as a powerful Creator and sovereign Lord.
Wisdom	1, 37, 119	Guides us to the path of righteousness. Shows us to seek God's will and direction.

Marion, Lisa. Listing of Psalms. *dailyPAX with Lisa Marion*, 19 April 2017, dailypax.com/p-is-for-psalms/.

Terms



- Elegies/laments: personal and/or communal sorrow
- Parallelism: When the text has corresponding structure, language, or content
 - Ex. of echo) Psalm 19:1 — “The heavens are telling the glory of God; / and the firmament proclaims his handiwork”
 - Ex. of extension/inversion) Psalm 19:2 — “Day to day pours forth speech, / and night to night declares knowledge”
- Chiasm: Inverts the structure of a text, creating a mirror image rather than an echo
 - Form of parallelism
 - Ex) Psalm 124:7 — “We have escaped like a bird / from the snare of the fowlers; / the snare is broken, / and we have escaped.”



Summary (Hymns)



- Praising God's love, power, dominion, righteousness, justice, creations
- Affirmation of loyalty and faith
- Nature imagery/references to heaven
- Thanksgiving for God's mercy and unbroken promises
- Happiness and joy achieved through God
- Healing, strength, and guidance through God
- Key words:
 - "Steadfast love," "rejoice," "praise," "my rock/redeemer"

Psalms 150

¹ Praise the LORD!

Praise God in his sanctuary;
praise him in his mighty firmament!^a

² Praise him for his mighty deeds;
praise him according to his surpassing
greatness!

³ Praise him with trumpet sound;
praise him with lute and harp!

⁴ Praise him with tambourine and dance;
praise him with strings and pipe!

⁵ Praise him with clanging cymbals;
praise him with loud clashing cymbals!

⁶ Let everything that breathes praise the
LORD!

Praise the LORD!



Summary (Elegies/Laments)



- Shows personal relationship with God through woes
- Discontent with life/God's absence, but still shows unwavering loyalty to him
- Addresses God's strength, but also where humanity feels he has failed them
- Asking for mercy
- Forgiveness, repentance, or path toward righteousness
- Righteous vs. Wicked
- References enemies or a longing for homecoming
- Finding solace through God and/or his creations
- Key words:
 - "Deliverance," "mercy," "oppressed," anything with distress or contempt

Psalm 3

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

¹O LORD, how many are my foes!

Many are rising against me;

²many are saying to me,

"There is no help for you^b in God."

Selah

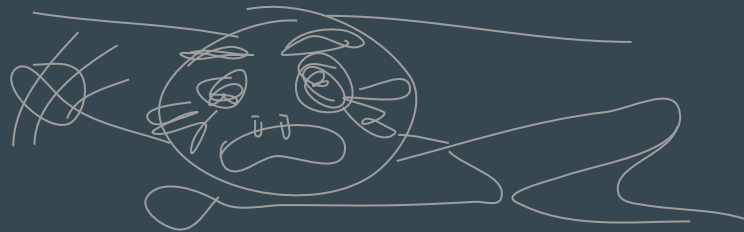
⁷Rise up, O LORD!

Deliver me, O my God!

For you strike all my enemies on the cheek;
you break the teeth of the wicked.

⁸Deliverance belongs to the LORD;
may your blessing be on your people!

Selah



Summary (Didactic Poems)



- God as the path toward prosperity; wicked perish
- Believers are just as eternal as God
- Warning people (kings, Israel, etc) to fear God
- Talking about God's capabilities (comfort, destruction, mercy, etc)
- God is consistent, humanity is not
- Omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence of God
- AKA all-power, all-knowing, all-existing
- Key words:
- "Follow," "everlasting"



Psalm 1

¹Happy are those
who do not follow the advice of the
wicked,
or take the path that sinners tread,
or sit in the seat of scoffers;
²but their delight is in the law of the
LORD,
and on his law they meditate day and
night.

⁴The wicked are not so,
but are like chaff that the wind drives
away.
⁵Therefore the wicked will not stand in
the judgment,
nor sinners in the congregation of the
righteous;
⁶for the LORD watches over the way of the
righteous,
but the way of the wicked will perish.

References



- Pink Floyd, “Sheep”: “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want / He makes me down to lie / Through pastures green / He leadeth me the silent waters by / With bright knives he releaseth my soul”
- Ironical statement; ‘herd mentality’ and exploitation
- Coolio, “Gangsta’s Paradise”: “As I walk through the valley of the shadow of death / I take a look at my life and realize there’s nothin’ left”
- “Darkest valley,” “valley of death,” “shadow of death,” “valley of the shadow of death”
- Co-opts verse 4 to lament gang life

Psalm 23

A Psalm of David.

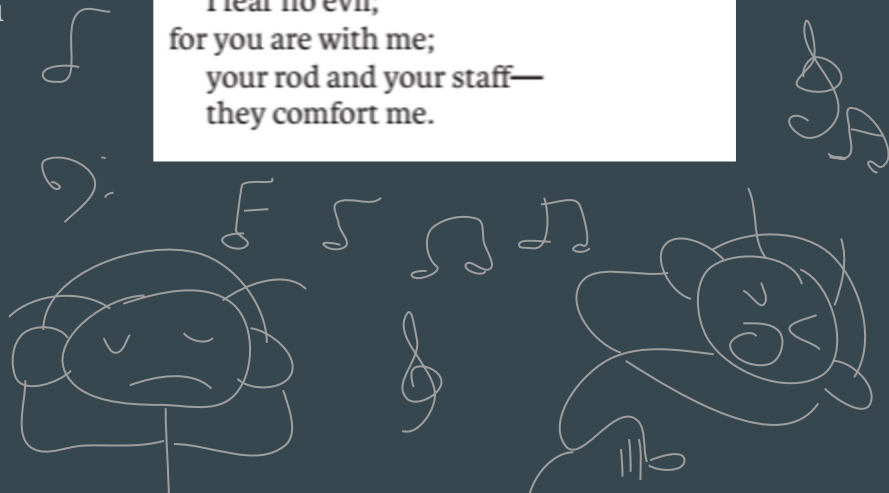
¹The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.

²He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters;^j

³he restores my soul.^k
He leads me in right paths^l
for his name’s sake.

⁴Even though I walk through the darkest
valley,^m

I fear no evil;
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff—
they comfort me.



Gregorio Allegri: “Miserere, Mei Deus”

- Psalm 51: David repents after the Prophet Nathan confronts him about Bathsheba
- The “Neck Verse”
 - ... because it literally saved people’s necks
- Benefit of Clergy (Middle Ages)
 - Exempted clergy members from having secular trial (aka no execution)
 - Must pass literacy test to claim you are part of clergy
 - Literacy tests required one to recite the first verse of Psalm 51
 - People memorized Psalm 51 and lied about their literacy to escape execution



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T-vTvFrS2s8>

