

I. Psalms...an Introduction

Psalm 1

The WAY To Be Blessed

Psalm 1

An Introduction to the Book of Psalms

Notes...

What? What do we learn in this text?

Chapters 1 and 2 are intended to be read together:

- Psalm 1:1 begins with the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet; Psalm 2:12 closes with the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet. (See Psalm 119: the sections are divided by the letters of the Hebrew alphabet; Ps. 119 also has echoes of Ps. 1).
- The first line of Ps. 1 opens with the word “blessed”; the last line of Ps. 2 also opens with the word “blessed”.
- Psalm 1 is about learning the Law of God (Torah/first five books of the Bible which are the foundations of God’s people; Psalm 2 is about the Kingdom of God, the inheritance of God’s people).
- Psalm 1:2 tells us to meditate on God’s law; Ps. 2 uses the same Hebrew word, translated as “plot”, in defiance against God.
- Psalm 1 describes the “way” of the righteous, versus the “way” of the wicked; Ps. 2:12 uses the same word, “way” of those opposed to the LORD.

What do we learn about the righteous person (vv. 1-3)... ?

What do we learn about...

the “wicked” (4X - vv. 1, 4, 5, 6) - the “sinner” (vv. 1, 5) - the mocker (v.1)?

“wicked”: *res aim* | 1:1; 28:3; 92:7]

- Begins with an illustration (v. 4) - “chaff - which is blown away by the wind during winnowing”. God’s judgment is like a farmer harvesting his crop!
- Life’s outcome for the “wicked/sinners” (v. 5)
 - they will not stand in the judgment
 - they will not stand in the assembly of the righteous

So what?

- The righteous prosper (v. 3); the wicked perish (v. 6).

Now what? How do we apply this text?

Introduction to the Psalms

O.T. Jewish Scriptures...

“The Psalms as Windows into Israel’s Faith”¹ (see “Extended Quote #1)

1. **Law** (5 books of Moses)
2. **Prophets** (history of Israel after crossing the Jordan; Joshua - Chronicles, Major & Minor Prophets)
3. **Writings** (poetic/Wisdom: 5 books: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs)

Psalms: *Divided into Five Books* (probably reflecting 5 books of Moses)

1: Ps. 1-41; **2:** 42-72; **3:** 73-89; **4:** 90-106; **5:** 107-150 – *note the concluding doxologies...*

A. Conclusion of Bk. 1

Ps. 41:13 – “Praise be to the LORD, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Amen and amen.”

B. Conclusion of Bk. 2

Ps. 72:18-20 – “Praise be to the LORD God, the God of Israel, who alone does marvelous deeds. Praise be to his glorious name forever; may the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and amen. This concludes the prayers of David son of Jesse.”

C. Conclusion of Bk. 3

Ps. 89:52 – “Praise be to the LORD forever! Amen and amen.”

D. Conclusion of Bk. 4

Ps. 106:48 – “Praise be to the LORD, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Let all the people say, ‘Amen!’ Praise the LORD.

E. Conclusion of Bk. 5

Ps. 106:1, 6 – “Praise the LORD....Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD.

“...most likely, the editor(s) of the second and final stages of the book (which included Books 4–5 intentionally imposed a fivefold division in order to emphasize the centrality of the Torah.

¹ Willem VanGemeren. *Psalms*. In *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, Revised Edition; Vol. 5. Tremper Longman III & David E. Garland (General Editors). Grand Rapids, MI. 2008. p. 23.

“The Torah is thus the encompassing principle of faith in the Psalter the essence of Hebrew piety. It is the broad theological context within which all of the other emphases can be understood.”²

Names of God in Psalms

Allen Ross³:

Bk. 1 - LORD *Yahweh* (YHWH) 278 times; God (*EI*) 15 times

Bk. 2 - LORD *Yahweh* (YHWH) 30 times; God (*EI*) 164 times

Bk's 2 & 3 (together) - LORD *Yahweh* (YHWH) 75 times; God (*EI*) 208 times

Bk. 4 & 5 - LORD: *Yahweh* (YHWH) 339 times; God (*EI*) 9 times

Willem VanGemeren⁴:

“the LORD” – (*Yahweh*) - almost 700 times; of which *Yah* - 43 times

“God” – *Elohim*, (365); *EI* (79); *Eloah* (4)

“the Lord” – *Adonai* (54)

“Most High” – *Elyon* (22); Most High – *Shaddai* (2 – 68:14; 91:1)

“LORD Almighty/LORD of Hosts” – *Yahweh Sabaoth* (15)

“Melchizedek, the priest-king of Salem, served *EI Elyon*...whom Melchizedek knew as ‘Creator of heaven and earth’ (Gen 14:19)...Israel believed that only *Yahweh* is *EI Elyon* (‘God Most High’, cf. Gen 14:22)...Whatever they may say about *Elyon* is completely adapted to the bounds of revelation from Sinai: ‘For you, O LORD, are the Most High [*Elyon*] over all the earth; you are exalted far above all gods’ (Ps. 97:9)...’. ‘Let them know that you, whose name is the LORD – that you alone are the Most High [*Elyon*] over all the earth’ (83:18).”⁵

Blocks of material:

- “Preface” (?) - Psalm 1, no title or authorial attribution
- Prayers of David:
 - 75 (73) psalms with David’s name in sub-title
 - N.T. attributes Ps. 2 to David (Acts 4:25) & Ps. 95 (Hebrews 4:7)
 - Ps. 72 (conclusion of Book 2): “This concludes the prayers of David, son of Jesse”

² C. Hassell Bullock. *Encountering the Book of Psalms (Encountering Biblical Studies): A Literary and Theological Introduction. 2nd Edition.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001, 2018. Kindle, 2018. Loc. 1334.

³ Allen P. Ross. *A Commentary on The Psalms, Volume 1 (1-41).* Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic. 2011.

⁴ Ibid.p. 41.

⁵ VanGemeren, p. 152.

But note:

- 1) a dozen psalms in Bk. 2 precede “Psalms of David’s” “conclusion” at 72:20;
 - 2) 18 more psalms of David follow 72:20;
 - 3) Books 1 and 2 (Ps’s. 1-72) probably two separate compilations of material, to which other psalms were added. e.g. two (2) psalms in Book 2 (53, 70) are near exact duplicates of psalms in Book 1.
- Book 5: Davidic psalms – 108-110; 138-145
 - “Sons of Korah: Book 2 - Ps’s 42-49
 - psalms of Asaph: Book 3 - Ps’s 73-83, preceded by Ps. 50
 - 55 psalms designated “for the choirmaster”
 - Kingship psalms: 93 - 100
 - “Egyptian Hallel [“praise”]: 113 - 118; sung at Passover (see Mark 14:26)
 - Songs of Ascents: 120-134 (reference to pilgrimage)
 - Final “Hallel”: 146-150; all begin and end with “Hallelujah)

Name of the book (of Psalms)

- Hebrew [MT]: *Tehillim* (praises)
 - Hebrew Bible: title is “Book of Praises”, abbreviated to “Praises” [see Nehemiah 12:46, at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem].

“Because the collection [of the psalms] includes such a variety of psalms, no one term would adequately summarize them all, but no title could be more fitting for this collection, of which praise and thanksgiving are predominant characteristics, and which ends with the repetition of *hallelû-Yāh* in increasing intensity (Pss. 145-150).⁶
 - Related to verb “to praise”, used in with temple service [1 Chron. 16:1-6, esp. v. 4]⁷
- Greek [LXX] - (pl.): *Psalmoi*; (sing.) *psalmos*, translation of Hebrew *mizmor* (in many Psalm titles) - this title is used in N.T. – Luke 20:42; Acts 1:20

“Normally the psalmists do not examine the anatomy of praise in any kind of detail – they just do it. But there are thankfully those occasions when they take a close look at the form of praising God. Psalm 22:3 declares that the holy God is enthroned (Hebrew ‘sitting’ or ‘inhabiting’) on the praises of Israel. That means that our praises become the royal throne for God, and there he sits to reign. Our praises are like the cherubim who support God’s throne....he takes up residence in our praises. That is how close he is!...This truth is only a few short steps from the doctrine of the incarnation.”⁸

“It may very well be, given the exclusive use of ‘hallelujah’ in Books 4 and 5 of the Psalter, and, outside of that, only in Revelation 19, that this praise imperative (praise Yah, the

⁶ Ross, p. 51

⁷ *ibid*, p. 39

⁸ Bullock, *Encountering the Book of Psalms*. Loc 3238.

shortened form of YaHWeh) was introduced into temple worship as the summative acclamation of God.”⁹

Attributed authors:

- Moses - Ps. 90
- David - 73 psalms attributed or dedicated to David; 14 linked to episodes in his life, usually of persecution (3, 7, 18, 30, 34, 51, 52, 54, 56, 57, 59, 60, 63, 142).
To quote Kidner: “these are psalms straight from life: from the battlefield or ‘the cave’, not from the sanctuary or the cultic drama. But the musical directions and the allusions to ‘the choirmaster’...show that they were collected, and where necessary adapted, for use in worship.” (Kidner, *Psalms 1-72*, p. 30)
- Solomon - 72; 127
- Asaph - 50; 73-83 (1 Chronicles 6:31-32, 39); music ministry leader at the “Tent of Meeting” - when the Ark was brought to Jerusalem by David); and King David’s planning for the ministry at the Temple, to be built by Solomon (1 Chronicles 25:1-2, 6b-9)
- sons of Korah - 42-49; 84; 85; 87; 88 (gatekeeper at Tabernacle, “guarding the entrance to the dwelling of the LORD”; 1 Chronicles 9:18b, ff.)

Categories of psalms:

- *Gratitude* (expressions of thanks to God) & *Praise* (exuberance and awe of God) - see especially Psalms 145 - 150; psalms dominated by language of “you”
- *Lament & Complaint* (cries for help in midst of desperate need) - see Psalm 77, esp. vv. 1-3; both deeply personal as well as encompassing the community. Ps. 44
- *Messianic* – “predictions or foreshadowings of the Christ”¹⁰; 15 psalms cited by the New Testament.
 - a. The anointed King – one who leaves the limitations of local kings behind

Psalm 2: the LORD and his Anointed One; the One enthroned in heaven; the Lord; ‘I have installed my King on Zion, my holy hill’; the decree of the LORD: ‘You are my Son, today I have become your Father’; “serve the Lord with fear...Kiss the Son, lest he be angry”.

“Anointed”: Hebrew - *māšīah*; Aramaic form - transliterated in Greek as *messias*, or translated as *christos* (Messiah, Christ).

Psalm 110: (“a psalm of David): co-regency with God (vv. 1, 2, 4)

Psalm 45: “For the director of music. To the tune of ‘Lilies’. Of the sons of Korah. A *maskil*. A wedding song.” v.2 – “God has blessed you forever.” v. 6 – “Your throne, O God, will last forever and ever; a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom.” v. 7 – God, your God, has set you above

⁹ *ibid.* Loc 3285

¹⁰ Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1-72*. Downers Grove, IL:60515-1426. p. 32.

your companions.” Note esp. v. 17: “I will perpetuate your memory through all generations; therefore the nations will praise you forever and ever.” (cf. the worship of the nations gathered around the throne in Revelation.

- director of music (or choirmaster):
- the tune of ‘Lilies’
- “of the sons of Korah: rebelled against Moses and Aaron (Deut. 26:9b-11). Some of his descendants became doorkeepers and guardians at the Temple (1 Chronicles 9:17; Psalm 84:10); others became singers and musicians in the Temple choir (1 Chronicles 6:31, 33, 39,44).
- *maskil*: comes from a verb meaning to make wise/prudent, to have success/skill.
- a wedding song; suggesting three levels: 1) used at any wedding; 2) a royal wedding in Israel; 3) “the wedding supper of the Lamb” (see also Ephesians 5:25-33, 2:6; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Rev. 19:6-10)

b. ‘My son’

Psalm 2:7: “I will proclaim the decree of the Lord: He said to me, ‘You are my Son; Today I have become your Father’.” [antecedents: “Israel is my son, my firstborn” (Exod 4:22); God’s promise to David about Solomon: “I will be his father, and he shall be my son” (2 Sam 7:14)].

Psalm 89:27: “I will also appoint him my firstborn, the most exalted of the kings of the earth.” See also Deut 28:1, and Rev. 1:5 - “...Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and ruler of the kings of the earth.”

Hebrews 1:13 - “To what angel has he ever said, ‘Sit at my right hand.’” F.F. Bruce: “The most exalted angels are those whose privilege it is to ‘stand in the presence of God’ like Gabriel (Luke 1:19), but none of them has ever been invited to sit before Him, still less to sit in the place of unique honor at his right hand.”¹¹

c. ‘God’

Hebrews 1:8-9: “But about the Son he says...” and quotes Psalm 45:6-7.

Hebrews 1:6: “And again, when he brings his first-born into the world, he says, ‘Let all God’s angels worship him.’” See Psalm 97:7.

Hebrews 1:10-12: “He [i.e. God] also says, ‘In the beginning, O Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands...” See Psalm 102:25-27.

Ephesians 4:8-10: See Psalm 68:18 [“that you, O Lord God, might dwell there.”] The ascent of the Lord God on high is attributed to Jesus’ ascension.

¹¹ F.F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (New London Commentary, Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1964), p. 24; quoted in Kidner, Psalm 1-72, p. 34.

d. 'suffering servant'

Psalms 69:17; 86:2, 4, 16: (See Derek Kidner¹²) "This is not a distinctive title in the Psalter, although David tends to use it when he is in distress...and the expression 'the servant of the Lord' occurs in the headings of two Davidic psalms (18 and 36). We use it here as a convenient pointer to the role of the innocent sufferer, which strongly colours the portrait in which Jesus recognized himself in the Psalter."

- *Songs of Ascents* (Pss 120 – 134; 15 psalms)
 1. The Mishnah notes that 15 steps led up from Court of the Women to the Court of the Israelites, which corresponds "to the fifteen songs Song of Ascents in the Psalms, and upon them the levites used to sing".¹³
 2. Kidner suggests that probably the reference is to pilgrimage *up* [Jerusalem the highest city geographically in Judea] to Jerusalem [three times each year¹⁴], "or the processional ascent of 'the hill of the Lord (cf. Isa. 30:29)".¹⁵
 3. "These fifteen psalms were likely sung, possibly in sequence, by Hebrew pilgrims as they went up to Jerusalem to the great worship festivals....But the ascent was not only literal, it was also a metaphor: the trip to Jerusalem acted out a life lived upward toward God, an existence that advanced from one level to another in developing maturity. What Paul described as "the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:14).¹⁶
- **Titles of Psalms¹⁷**
 - **Types...**
 1. "Psalm" – 57 psalms; technical term for songs accompanied by a (stringed) instrument
 2. "Song" – in 30 Psalm titles
 3. "Contemplative Poem" – 13 Psalm titles; meditation, connects to verb "skillful"
 4. "An Inscribed Poem" – 6 Psalm titles; possibly a song of atonement
 5. "Prayer" – 5 Psalms, a song including prayer and praise

¹² Kidner, *Psalms 1-72*. Note also Quotes, below.

¹³ Eugene H. Peterson, *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction: Discipleship in an Instant Society*. InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove IL. p. 14.

¹⁴ Kidner, *Psalms 1-72*. p. 58.

¹⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁶ Peterson, *A Long Obedience*, p. 14. Three festivals: Passover (in Spring); Pentecost (in early Summer); Tabernacles (in Autumn).

¹⁷ Ross, *Commentary...Vol 1*. pp. 47-48.

6. "Praise" - only in Ps. 145, the first of the closing doxology (Pss. 145 -150)
7. "Song of Loves" (literally in the plural) – Psalm 45, royal wedding
8. "Lamentation" – only in Ps. 7, possibly a reference to variation in the structure

• **Functions**

1. "For the Sabbath Day" – Ps. 92
 2. "For Thanksgiving" – Ps. 100
 3. "To Remind" – Pss. 38, 70
 4. "A Song for Dedication of the House" – Ps. 30
 5. "A Song of Ascents" – Pss. 120 -134 (see above)
 6. "For Instruction", or "To Teach" – Ps. 60 (cf. Deut. 31:19; 2 Sam. 1:18)¹⁸
- **Songs** of David from his life-experiences (3, 7, 18, 30, 34, 51, 52, 54, 56, 57, 59, 60, 63, 142)
3. "A psalm of David. When he fled from his son, Absalom"
 7. "A *shiggaion* [literary or musical term] of David, which he sang to the LORD concerning Cush, a Benjamite."
 18. "Of David the servant of the LORD. He sang to the LORD the words of this song when the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul. He said: ..."
 30. "A psalm. A song. For the dedication of the temple. Of David."
 34. "Of David. When he pretended to be insane before Abimelech, who drove him away, and he left."
 51. "A psalm of David. When the prophet Nathan came to him after David had committed adultery with Bathsheba."
 52. "A *maskil* [from verb; "to make wise/prudent"] of David. When Doeg the Edomite had gone to Saul and told him: 'David has gone to the house of Ahimelec'."
 54. "A *maskil* of David. When the Ziphites [see 1 Sam 23:19; 26:1] had gone to Saul and said, 'Is not David hiding among us?'"
 56. "Of David. A *miktam* [a literary or musical term]. When the Philistines had seized him in Gath."
 57. "To the tune of 'Do not Destroy.' A *miktam*. When he had fled from Saul into the cave [1 Sam 22:1; 24:3]."

¹⁸ *ibid.* p. 49

59. “To the tune of ‘Do not Destroy.’ A *miktam*. Of David. A *miktam*. When Saul had sent men to watch David’s house in order to kill him.”
60. “To the tune of ‘The Lily of the Covenant.’ A *miktam* of David. For teaching. When he fought Aram Naharaim [Arameans of northwest Mesopotamiad] and Aram Zobah [Arameans of central Syria], and when Joab returned and struck down twelve thousand Edomites in the Valley of Salt [2 Samuel 8:13]
63. “A psalm of David when he was in the Desert of Judah.”
142. “A maskil of David. When he was in the cave [1 Sam 22:1; 24:3]. A prayer.”
- **Prayers** of David [see Psalm 72:20]
 - Probably an older collection of David’s prayers in difficulty.¹⁹
 - Title of Psalms 17, 86, 90, 102, 142.
 - “Prayer, in its widest sense, includes the cycle of prayer and thanksgiving (see 1 Sam 2:1; Habakuk 3:1).²⁰

¹⁹ Ross, *Commentary...Vol 1*. p. 40

²⁰ *ibid*.

II. Theology of Psalms: Sovereignty of the LORD

The Psalms and *the* King

QUESTION: *Most of us do not live under the rule of national, political kings. What do the Psalms have to teach the contemporary people of God in today's world?*

- A. Over all of God's Creation...
 - 1. Through the ages
 - a. "the present [evil] age" (Eph 1:21; cf. Ps. 2:2)
 - b. "the age to come"
 - 2. In God's "New Creation"
 - a. Genesis 1, 2; Rev 21, 22
 - b. Romans 8:18-21
 - 3. Over all peoples
 - a. The "people of God"
 - b. The nations of the earth
 - 4. Over the created order
- B. Over all humanity... "the breath of God"
 - 1. At creation (Gen 2:7)
 - 2. At Pentecost (John 20:22; Acts 2:1-4)
- C. In the Psalms²¹
 - 1. Enthronement Psalms
 - a. "the LORD reigns"
 - b. "prophetic; eschatological"
 - 2. Royal Psalms
 - a. Rule of God on earth is through his "son" (see Ps 2)
 - b. Emphasis on God's covenant people, and their king as God's "son"
 - c. Eschatological hope (Ps 110 - titled "of David", but note reference to "the LORD says to my Lord" - apostolic use of this psalm)²².

Ross: "These royal psalms also have an eschatological meaning. They are not direct prophecy (with the exception perhaps of Ps. 110), but typological ... applicable to the Israelite kings, but they find their full meaning in the Messiah.

²¹ VanGemeren, Psalms, pp. 157-160

²² *ibid*, p. 813: Matt 22:41-45 (Mk 12:35ff; Lk 20:41ff); Acts 2:34-36; 1 Cor 15:25; Eph 1:20; Col 3:1; Heb 1:13; 5:5-6; 7:15-21, 8:1; 10:12-13; 12:2)

Therefore, they are the most frequently used Psalms in the teaching of the New Testament.”²³

3. Thanksgiving/Praise Psalms
 - a. People of God responses to the evidence of God’s rule.
 - b. The LORD’S answers to prayers for deliverance, victory, forgiveness...
 - c. Psalms expressing confidence in God during this life, as a part of God’s ultimate rule over all of life and the created order.
4. Hymns
 - a. In praise of God’s greatness *and* grace (Psalm 113:4-6 - “The LORD is exalted over all the nations...stoops down to look on the heavens and the earth.”
 - b. “The one who sits enthroned on high...raises the poor...lifts the needy...settles the barren woman” (vv. 5, 7-8)

Ross: “The common theme of hymns is that the Lord is over all things, evaluating, judging, saving, because he created all things (Psalm 33).”²⁴

5. Wisdom and Torah Psalms
 - a. Things are not as they often appear. The righteous suffer; the wicked prosper. Wisdom is needed to discern Truth.
 - b. Living by God’s Law means submitting to God’s rule (Ps. 119).
6. Lament Psalms
 - a. Sometimes known as “imprecatory” psalms, or cries for God’s vengeance.
 - b. If the cause for lament is one’s own sin, confession is needed (Ps. 32).
 - c. If the cause for lament is the fault of others, justice is required (Ps. 22)
 - d. God is known as our...Rock, Fortress, Shepherd, Tower, Refuge and Keeper.

²³ Ross, *Commentary...Vol 1*. pp 157-58

²⁴ Ross, *Commentary...Vol 1*. p. 58

The Psalms and the Kingdom

QUESTION: *Most of us do not live under the rule of national, political kings. What do the Psalms have to teach the contemporary people of God in today's world? How do we incorporate them into our personal and communal worship?*

A. A short, Jewish history lesson...

1. Jewish "nation" understood themselves as "the people of God", descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Jacob's name was changed to "Israel" (two Hebrew words for "wrestle" and God "el") [Gen 32:22-30; 35:9-10]
2. In the "Pentateuch" - the Torah/Books of Moses - we see Moses speaking God's Law to God's people...
 - a. Moses tells them that when they enter and settle in the land God has promised to them, they will ask for a king, like the nations around them [Deut 17:14ff.]. But the king must be from among God's people; he must write for himself on a scroll a copy of the law, and he is to read it "all the days of his life. [vv. 18-19].
 - b. Moses also tells them that God will "*raise up...a prophet like me* [Moses] from among your own brothers" [18:22].
3. Samuel was called by God to be a prophet [1 Sam 3:19-4:1a] and judge in Israel [1 Sam 7:15-17]. When Samuel was old, he appointed his two sons to be Israel's judges, but they "did not walk in [Samuel's ways]. They turned aside after dishonest gain...accepted bribes and perverted justice" [1 Sam 8:3]. The elders of Israel came to Samuel and demanded he "appoint a king to lead...as all the other nations have" [8:4-5]. Samuel did not like the idea; he spoke with God, who replied: "Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king" [8:7-8].
4. Saul was anointed and appointed as king [1 Sam 10], served for 42 years [13:1], but eventually was rejected by God [15:10], and commissioned to anoint David, son of Jesse as king of Israel [16:1-13]. Saul eventually commits suicide [1 Sam 31], and David, in turn is anointed king over the descendants of Judah (2 Sam 2:1-7); finally over all of Israel [2 Sam 5:1-5]. After 40 years he is succeeded by his son, Solomon [1 Kings 2:1-4, 10-12], who builds the Temple in Jerusalem. God appears to Solomon and warns him of the "disaster" that will occur if he or his sons turn away from God to serve other gods [9:1-9; cf. 11:4-13].
5. And so it happened! [1 Kings 11:41-12:24]. Judah & Benjamin/King Rehoboam in Jerusalem (southern kingdom); Israel/10 tribes in Samaria (northern kingdom).
6. Israel (Samaria) – 19 kings (evil); 931 B.C.–722 B.C; carried into captivity by Assyria.
7. Judah (Jerusalem) – 19 kings (mixed, evil & reformers); 931 B.C.–586 B.C; carried into captivity by Babylon; Solomon's temple destroyed.

8. Exile (490 Years)

Date(s) - B.C.	Empire(s)	Israel (Samaria)	Judah (Jerusalem)
745	Assyria	Assyria dominated all smaller “states” to west, including Israel and Judah	
735		Syria & Israel rebelled against Assyria	Judah refused to join coalition; turned to Assyria for help; became subservient to Assyria
722		Israel rebelled but defeated by Assyria, destroyed <u>Samaria, deported population</u>	
705	regional revolt against Assyria		King Hezekiah joined Egypt against Assyria, defeated
687			Manasseh, King of Judah; vassal of Assyria, adopted their religion
640		Josiah, 8 years old, became king. At age 16+ he began major religious reforms (629)	
627			Jeremiah called as a prophet
612	Babylonia (Nebuchadnezzar)		
609	competing world powers: Assyria, Egypt, Babylon		Josiah killed in battle with Egypt
597	Babylon		Defeated Judah, 1st Deportation
587		<u>Jerusalem and Temple destroyed by fire after 18 month siege; 2nd Deportation – EXILE</u>	
586	Babylon invaded Egypt		
539	Belshazzar - last king of Babylon; defeated by Cyrus of Persia	Persian Empire extended from Egypt to Syria to India	Judea
519	Artaxerxes	Allowed Ezra to return to Jerusalem, Nehemiah to repair walls of Jerusalem	
330	Alexander–Macedonia/ Greece		
63	Pompey - Rome	Romans named Antipater, Procurator of Judea. ca. 37 Antipater’s son Herod (the Great) was named “king of the Jews” by Rome.	

B. Jeremiah & Daniel: Prophets of Exile

1. Jeremiah 29: Letter to the exiles, especially v. 10-14. “Seventy Years” [25:11-12; 29:10]. See also ch’s 30 & 31
2. Daniel 9...visions while in the service of “Darius the Mede”
 - a. Daniel’s prayer - invocation, confession & intercession (9:4-16; 17-19)
 - b. Gabriel’s message: (9:20-27) - “seventy *sevens*” (or “*weeks*”; either in Hebrew)

Literal (490 years); or figural (‘seven’ and ‘seventy’ numbers of completeness [see Matthew 18:22–Peter, about forgiveness]. “Seventy sevens”: a time-scale [see Leviticus 25:8-12 – seven sabbaths of years (49 years) followed by the 50th year of Jubilee, when land rests and everyone returns home].

- c. Matthew 1:1-17: “A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham.”
 1. 14 generations from Abraham to David; 14 from David to Exile; 14 from Exile to the “Christ”/Messiah.
 2. $14 \times 3 =$ “six sevens – with Jesus we get the seventh seven. He is the jubilee in person.”²⁵

C. Return from, and post-Exile

1. Messianic expectations after the exile: most Jews believed they were still in exile, back in their land but always under the dominion of foreign, pagan kings: Babylon, Persia, Egypt, Greece, now Rome.²⁶

“Nowhere in the so-called post-exilic literature is there any passage corresponding to 1 Kings 8:10ff., according to which, when Solomon’s temple had been finished, ‘a cloud filled the house of YHWH, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud; for the glory of YHWH filled the house of YHWH’. Instead, Israel clung to the promises that one day the Shekinah, the glorious presence of her god, would return at last.”²⁷

2. Salvation, divine rescue, did mean simply personal salvation, forgiveness of individual sins, going to heaven when you die. Salvation/rescue meant God’s people living under the rule of God himself.²⁸

²⁵ N. T. Wright. *How God Became King: The Forgotten Story of the Gospels*. Harper One, New York, 2012. p. 71.

²⁶ See extended quote, #5

²⁷ N.T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*. Fortress Press. Minneapolis, MN. 1992. p. 269. READ: 52:7-10; Ezekiel 43:1-2, 4-5, 7; see also Nehemiah 9:36ff.

²⁸ “In Israel’s scriptures, the reason Israel’s story matters is that “the creator of the world has chosen and called Israel to be the people through whom he will redeem the world.” *ibid.* p. 73

D. “The Hope of Israel”²⁹ – Coming of the Messiah (Israel’s King) – and the Kingdom of God.

1. Apocalyptic Literature in the Bible

- a. Visions, sometimes including interpretations of the vision
- b. Divine revelations: “apocalyptic” – from the Greek, meaning “revelation”
- c. Cosmic imagery: not necessarily literal, but expressing that which is beyond “literal” description.
- d. Contexts of Apocalyptic³⁰
 - 1) Personal: actual experiences of “divinely given” visions
 - 2) Social deprivation, literature of the powerless, in coded language, e.g. how things will be after armed political overthrow of the current government
 - 3) Use of imagery, e.g., from nature - “tree of life”, architecture - “New Jerusalem”, to describe an expected historical age that lies ahead

Daniel 7:1-8: “Sea” represents evil, chaos. “Beasts” represent kingdoms and/or kings (v. 17ff., esp. see vv. 23-24) fourth “beast”, a kingdom; and “ten horns”, ten kings)

2. Eschatology

E. A story from the early church: Peter’s message to the Jews, “astonished” by the miracle of healing of the man crippled from birth [Acts 3].

1. Peter ties the miracle to “the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers” [v. 13] “in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth” [vv. 6, 16-2x]
2. He speaks of Jesus as: 1) God’s servant [v. 13, 25]; 2) the Holy and Righteous One [v. 14]; 3) the author of life [v. 15]; “raised...from the dead” [vv. 15, 26; cf. “raise up a prophet like Moses”]; God’s Christ – Gk. *crastos*, Heb. *messiah* – [vv., 18, 20]; Jesus [v. 20]; a prophet [v. 20] – see A.2.b above.
3. Peter also references Samuel who “have foretold these days” [v. 24]; and Abraham again, who was promised that “Through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed” [v. 25].

F. How does this relate to the Psalms and the Kingdom?

²⁹ Borrowed from N.T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, p. 280. The following discussion – Apocalyptic and Eschatology – (unless otherwise noted) is based on Wright, ch. 10,

³⁰ *ibid.* pp. 286-289

The Psalms and Worship

Worshiping the LORD God Almighty

- I. Introduction to worship
 - II. What the Bible says about worship
 - III. What Christians do when they worship
 - IV. Leading worshipers in the church
-

Introduction to worship

William Temple: “Worship is the supreme and only indispensable activity of the Christian church. It alone will endure, like the love for God which it expresses, into heaven, when all other activities of the church will have passed away....Worship is the submission of all of our nature to God. It is the quickening of conscience by His holiness; the nourishment of mind with His truth; the purifying of imagination by His beauty; the opening of the heart to His love; the surrender of will to His purpose - and all of this is gathered up in adoration, the most selfless emotion of which our nature is capable and therefore the chief remedy for that self-centeredness which is our original sin and the source of all actual sin.”

Kathleen Norris: “*Worship is primary theology.*” If we want to know what we think about God—and what we think about God is the truest test of what we think about ourselves—then we need to look at **who**, **why** and **whether** we worship.

David Peterson, *Engaging with God*: “Engaging with God on the terms that he proposes and in the manner that he makes possible...Honoring, serving and respecting God; abandoning any loyalty or devotion that hinders an exclusive relationship with him. Expressing faith through obedience and adoration as a lifestyle orientation.

Isaiah: 33:[5] “The LORD is exalted, for he dwells on high; he will fill Zion with justice and righteousness. He will be the sure foundation for you times, a rich store of salvation and wisdom and knowledge; the *fear* of the LORD is the key for this treasure. [17] “Your eyes will see the king in his beauty.... [20] Look upon Zion, the city of our festivals; your eyes will see Jerusalem, a peaceful abode, a tent that will not be moved; its stakes will never be pulled up, nor any of its ropes broken. There the LORD will be our Mighty One.... [22] For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king, it is he who will save us.”

Primary activities of the church:

1. Worship. All nations, all of creation, gathered around the throne of God.
2. Witness: by word (what we say) & deed (what we do); telling and showing people that God loves them. Mission.
3. Word: teaching the Bible - the story of God's creation and new creation. Discipleship.

Biblical language for worship:

1. Honoring God – *proskynein*... 'to worship' as an act of homage.
 - g. Greek literature: lit., 'to kiss towards', i.e., casting oneself on the ground as a total bodily gesture of respect before someone great, kissing his feet, hem of his garment, or the ground.
 - h. LXX uses *proskynein* to translate (170X) Hebrew word meaning 'to bend oneself over at the waist' generally an expression of awe and submission to God.
 - i. Response to disclosures of God's power and grace; sometimes associated with praise.
2. Serving God devotion to God as a pattern of life.
 - a. *latreuein*, 'to serve', generally through sacrifice or ritual.
 - b. *douleuein*, 'to serve as a slave', expressing wholehearted commitment to God through religious activity.
 - c. *leitourgein*, 'to minister in religious ceremony', (liturgy).
 - d. *diakonein*, 'to serve' fellow human beings as expression of service to God.
2. Respecting God *phoboun*, 'fear', or reverence, of God.
 - a. Faithfulness to the covenant demands of God—synonymous with true religion.
 - b. Keep his commandments, obey his voice, walk in his ways, turn away from evil, and serve God.
 - c. Worship as lifestyle.
3. Spiritual sacrifices [Romans 12:1]
 - a. Spiritual worship emphasizes the inward aspects of worship; insufficient account of the role of bodily activity in worship
 - b. Rational worship emphasis on mind and moral purity; worship as reason and ethics.
 - c. Understanding worship (so Peterson) "service rendered by those who truly understand the gospel and its implications".
4. Practical holiness cf., the context of Romans 12–15
 - a. Effective ministry within the body of Christ serving and maintaining unity.
 - b. Maintaining love and forgiveness to those outside the Christian community.

- c. Right relationships with ruling authorities.
- d. Lifestyle regard for Christ's return.
- e. Worship as proclamation of the gospel message, cf. Rom. 15:16,17.
- f. Worship in the gathered congregation Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 14:26; 16:2.
- g. Focal point of the wider worship in lifestyle through public proclamation, prayer and praise.
- h. Exercise of loving ministry as sign of Spirit's transforming power.
- i. Building up of the body of Christ (Eph. 4) ... unity and maturity in the faith.

What the Bible teaches about worship

A. Worship in Israel *vis-a-vis* worship in the Church

1. Discontinuity vs. continuity
2. Selective anointing of the Holy Spirit on individuals vs. outpouring of the Spirit on all who believe in Jesus
3. Tabernacle in wilderness & in Israel, the Temple in Jerusalem vs. the gathered people of God in N.T. cities

B. Key Biblical words used for worship

1. “Fear God” – does not mean being afraid of God, but acknowledging God as Lord and King – Exodus 3:6; 19:16; 20:18-19; I Peter 1:17, 2:17
2. “Honor God” - an outward expression of an inward submission (e.g. bodily posture of bowing before the Lord)
Psalm 95:6-7; Matt. 2:11; I Corinthians 14:24-25; Revelation 4:10-11, 5:14
3. “Serve God”
 - a. Serve God through sacrifice or ritual
 - b. Genesis 15 & 22; Exodus 3:12 (s.a. 3:18, 5:1, 5:3); Joshua 24:14-24*; Romans 12:1
 - c. To minister in a religious ceremony
 - d. 2 Chronicles 31:2; Romans 15:16 (note: Romans 15:26 - “share” - and 2 Cor. 9:12 - “service” - both translated this same Greek verb.
 - e. To serve God whole-heartedly (as a slave)
 - f. I Chronicles 25:6; 2 Chronicles 30:8; Romans 6:16-23
 - g. To serve other people as an expression of service to God – 1 Corinthians 3:5

C. What difference does worshiping God make in our lives?

1. Motivated to worship by the mercies of God - our response to His initiative
2. Engage in worship [Romans 12:1-8]
 - a. Present our bodies (v. 1)
 - b. Renew our minds (v. 2)
 - c. Explore God’s will (v. 2)
 - d. Recognize our worth (v. 3)
 - e. Exercise our gifts (vss. 4-8)
3. Transformed by worship [Romans 15:5-7, 15-17]

What Christians do when they worship

- A. Personal worship (Exodus 33:12; Isaiah 6:1-8; Ezekiel 1:1- 28; Revelation 1:9-18)
 3. Prayer (Daniel 9:3-4, 17-19; Matthew 6:5-15; Mark 6:46; I Corinthians 14:13ff.)
 4. Confession: personal & corporate
 5. Adoration: exaltation & praise
 6. Supplication: personal & communal
 7. Thanksgiving & obedience
- B. Gathered worship in community (Romans 16:3-5 - 5 house churches; I Corinthians 14:26-40; 16:2 - see also Acts 20:7; Hebrews 10:25)
 1. **Gather together** as God's people (Acts 2:42-47) for **orderly worship** (I Cor. 14:40) and **strengthening the church** (I Cor. 14:26)
 - a. Apostolic teaching - who were/are the apostles?
 - Twelve
 - Those who had seen the risen Jesus
 - Missionaries
 - Included women - Priscilla, Junia
 - b. Fellowship
 - c. Breaking of bread (Lord's Supper - see 1 Cor. 11:23)
 - d. Prayer
 - e. Giving
 - f. Evangelistic lifestyle
 2. Sing praises to God "True theology is a theology that sings!" - expression of joy. (see I Chronicles 15:7ff. - after David recaptured the Ark of God from the Philistines and brought it back to Jerusalem) - found in Psalms 96, 105, 106
 - a. "Give thanks..."
 - b. "make known [among the nations]"
 - c. "Sing...praise...tell of his wonderful acts"
 - d. "glory in his name"
 - e. "let your hearts rejoice"
 - f. "Look to the LORD"
 - g. "seek his face"
 - h. "remember...wonders, miracles, judgments"
 - i. "Sing to the LORD all the earth" (v. 23)
 - j. declare his glory among the nations...his deeds
 - k. great is the LORD, worthy of praise
 - l. feared above all gods

- m. the gods of the nations are idols
 - n. spender and majesty
 - o. strength and joy
 - p. ascribe glory to the LORD
 - q. bring and offering
 - r. [this beautiful refrain:] “worship the LORD in the splendor of His holiness”
 - s. **all of creation worship!** (vv. 30-33)
 - tremble all the earth
 - the world is firmly established (by its Creator)
 - let the heavens rejoice
 - let the earth be glad
 - let the sea resound
 - let the fields be jubilant
 - the trees of the forest will sing for joy before the LORD
 - he comes to judge the earth
 - t. give thanks, the LORD is good
 - u. his love endures forever
 - v. glory in his praise
 - w. “praise be the LORD, the God of Israel”
 - x. “Then all the people said, ‘Amen’, and ‘Praise the LORD’.”
3. David’s appointment of musicians and singers for the Temple (I Chronicles 25)
4. David’s & the peoples’ gifts for the Temple, built by Solomon (I Chronicles 29)
- C. Suggestions for the church today...
- 1. Dance - expressive, joyful, before the Lord
 - 2. Prayer: confession, thanksgiving, intercession: congregational & wider community
 - 3. Discipline (I Cor. 5 - sexual morality; I Cor. 14 - sexual immorality/incest)
 - 4. Present offerings to the Lord (Acts 2; Romans 15; 2 Corinthians 8, 9; Phil. 4:10ff.)
 - 5. Hear testimonies about God’s faithfulness
 - 6. Present stories from the church’s engagement in mission
 - 7. Witness baptisms
 - 8. Welcome new members (Acts 2)
 - 9. Share in the Lord’s Supper/Communion
 - 10. Read Scriptures/tell the Bible’s stories
 - 11. Preach a message from Scripture; teach how to apply it to our lives as God’s people
 - 12. Hear from and respond to the Lord

13. Involve the young people and children

14. ...???

D. Lifestyle worship (Deuteronomy 10:12-13; Matthew 5-7 “Sermon on the Mount”; Matt. 22:34-40, “Love God, love your neighbor as yourself”; Romans 12; Hebrews 13:15-16)

Application: Plan a service order for a worship service. Involve members with different gifts to discover, develop and strengthen their gifts. Leading worshipers in the church (Ezekiel 34).

Random Thoughts from the Bible about Leadership in the Church

Leadership in the church is completely counter-cultural to leadership in the world: in business, in politics, in voluntary or other social and cultural organizations. Church leadership is “leadership from the knees”, leadership from below. The NT model is that of the slave in the household; that of Jesus washing the disciples feet (John 13); or the humility of the cross (Philippians 2). It is the servant leadership Jesus described in Mark 10:41ff.

The NT is more descriptive than prescriptive about structures of church leadership. There are indications of development in the NT: appointment of “deacons” in Acts 6; appointment of elders on Paul’s missionary journeys (see Acts 14:23), or by his apostolic designate Titus (Titus 1:5); a variety of references to house church leaders (Phoebe, Priscilla & Aquila in Romans 15; Philemon); matters of character and vague references to function in the Pastorals. Key: adaptability, flexibility.

When Paul writes Timothy about problem leaders (elders?) in Ephesus, he says relatively little about *what* elders/overseers/deacons *do* (directing, protecting, teaching, serving); he says much more about *who* they *are* (spiritual maturity and moral character). Remember that these are/were new, young churches.

NT uses three principal words to describe church leaders: overseers (*episkopoi*), elders (*presbyteroi*) and pastors/shepherds (*poimen*). These words are used in the same passages to describe the same people (Acts 20; 1 Peter 5). In church history these words have been used to define three forms of church government: Episcopal and Roman Catholic (led by bishops); Presbyterian and Reformed churches (led by elders); Congregational (led by pastors called by members). Note: Gordon Fee reminds us that we should be wary of prescribing definitive models of leadership when all three - Episcopal, Presbyterian, and Congregational - have come out of the same Pastoral epistles.

NT describes church leaders as working in a collegial manner. Paul always works as a member of a team, which coincides with his emphasis on the church as a body, with individual members having different gifts for the common good. References to elders in the NT are always in the plural; there is no instance of a church with a single leader (until the advent of bishops in the post-NT church). Gordon Fee reminds us that authority in church leadership is exercised by apostolic gift; Timothy and Titus are apostolic designates of Paul.

References to administration/leadership are well-down the list of spiritual gifts in all four lists in Paul (Romans 12; 1 Corinthians 12 - twice; Ephesians 4). Ephesians 4 seems to describe leadership gifts: (1) apostles; (2) prophets; (3) evangelists; (4) pastor-teachers. Their objective is “to prepare God’s people for works of service” (v. 12). [Should a leadership/teaching team in a church have all four gifts present?]

Elders are to work hard: 1 Thessalonians 5:12 - “respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord”; 1 Timothy 5:17 - “The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching” (NASB). How does the Holy Spirit lead the church?

Acts 20:22 [Miletus, to the Ephesian elders]: “And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me.”

Acts 21:4 [Tyre, with the disciples there]: “Through the Spirit they urged Paul not to go on to Jerusalem. But when our time was up, we left and continued on our way. Acts 21: 11: [Caesarea, at the home of Philip the evangelist, with four daughters who prophesied] “a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. Coming over to us, he took Paul’s belt, tied his own hands and feet with it and said, ‘The Holy Spirit says, “In this way the Jews of Jerusalem will bind the owner of this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles”.’ When we heard this, we and the people there pleaded with Paul not to go to Jerusalem.”

John 4:8 “The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.”

- out of a filling of the Spirit
- listening to the voice of the Spirit
- understanding the desires of the Spirit
- heeding the warnings of the Spirit
- being encouraged by the Spirit
- catching the wind of the Spirit

III. Teaching & Preaching the Psalms

Chapters: 1 – 2 – 19 – 24 – 51 – 91 – 121 – 145

O.T. Jewish Scriptures

1 Introduction to the Psalms

2 The Anointed King

19 Skies & Scriptures

24 Worship

51

91

145

IV. Extended Quotes

Chapters: 1 – 2 – 19 – 24 – 51 – 91 – 121 – 145 Extended Quotes

1. “In the 150 psalms the Holy Spirit has given us more than a book of Israel’s prayer and praise. The book of Psalms is a cross section of God’s revelation to Israel and of Israel’s response in faith to the Lord.
“The psalms mirror the faith of Israel. In them we receive windows that enable us to look out on our brothers and sisters in the faith of more than twenty-five hundred years ago. They invite us to experience how God’s people in the past related to him. They witness to the glory of Zion, to the Davidic covenant, to the fidelity of God, to the exodus and conquest traditions, to God the Creator-Redeemer-King, and to Yahweh as the Divine Warrior. We see an interplay of many different motifs and emphases, which, when isolated, help us to understand better the OT as a whole and its bearing on the NT.
“The book of Psalms is God’s prescription for a complacent church, because through it he reveals how great, wonderful magnificent, wise and utterly awe-inspiring he is.³¹ If God’s people before the incarnation could have such a faith in the Lord—a witness to his greatness and readiness to help—how much more should this be true of twenty-first-century Christians. The book of Psalms can revolutionize our devotional life, our family patterns, and the fellowship and witness of the church of Jesus Christ.”³²
2. “...the festivals in Israel...were kept ‘that you may remember the day when you came out of Egypt’, and ‘remember that you were a slave in Egypt’ (Deut. 16:3, 12), and ‘that your generations may know that I made them ... dwell in booths when I brought them out of ... Egypt’ (Lev. 23:43). This is the language of conscious, rational response, not mystical experience. And in case we should think this is an accident of language, it is borne out by the altered form in which the Passover was to be kept after the unrepeatable first occasion. The festival was henceforth unmistakably a commemoration – not a means of making a past event ‘effective in the present...for never again was the protective blood to be daubed on the lintel and doorposts. That feature had been the crux of the Passover in Egypt; its abolition was as eloquent as the cry, ‘It is finished’.”³³
3. “Most of our Lord’s references to the psalms are in fact to this element [the suffering, innocent sufferer] in them; indeed the tragic Psalm 69 is the New Testament’s largest quarry of quotations and allusions to Christ in the whole collection, six or seven different verses or phrases being drawn from it to interpret his cross and passion. From this psalm and its companions (notably 22, 35, 40, 41, 109, 118) the Gospels, Acts and Epistles find their most telling words to highlight such matters as his reforming zeal (69:9a), his deliberate self-offering (40:6-8), his experience of isolation (69:8), betrayal, hatred and rejection (41:9; 69:4; 35:19; 118:32), his suffering of reproach (69:9b), mockery (22:7ff.; 69:21), stripping (22:18) and, it may be, nailing (22:16). They treat many of these explicitly as prophecies fulfilled; indeed Peter tells us that in Psalm 16 David, ‘being a prophet...foresaw and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ’ (Acts 2:30ff.). In Acts 1:16-20 and Romans 11:9f. the

³¹ See Arvid S. Kapelrud, “Tradition and Worship,” in *Tradition and Theology in the Old Testament*, ed. Douglas A. Knight (Fortress, 1977), 101-24.

³² VanGemeren, *Psalms*, p. 23.

³³ Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1-72*. Downers Grove, IL:60515-1426. p. 19.

apostles also show us predictions of the fate of Judas (109:8; cf. 69:25) and of unbelieving Israel (69:22f.). Jesus himself, on the cross, found words in the Psalms for his darkest hour and for his last breath (22:1; 31:5).”³⁴

4. “The difficulties which have been felt over these biographical notes are general as well as particular. In general, we may find it hard to understand how a polished work of art, such as the acrostic Psalm 34, could come into being in a life-and-death emergency; or we may notice that the thought of such psalms often ranges further afield than the named situation itself. To both these points it may of course be enough to reply that we are dealing with the products of no ordinary talent, and, further, of divine inspiration, both of which are highly relevant factors; but since God does not gratuitously multiply miracles, the truth may be that it was the nucleus of the psalm – some germinal phrase or sequence – which came to David in the crisis itself, to be developed later as he pondered and re-lived the incident. A further point of growth can occasionally be seen, as in the last two verses of Psalm 51, when David’s experience was appropriated as Israel’s own, and their prayer or praise grafted on to his – a response which provides an object-lesson to subsequent uses of the Psalter.”³⁵
5. “This belief in Israel’s election, expressed in [their] covenantal theology...was itself part of the cause of a second-order problem, which loomed large...[in the ‘inter-testamental period]. If the creator had entered into a covenant with this particular nation, then why were they not ruling the world as his chosen people should? If the world had been made for Israel’s sake, why was she still suffering? What was the creator and covenant god now up to? And, within this, a further question: what should Israel be doing in the present to hasten the time when he would act on her behalf? How should one, how could one, be a faithful Jew in the time of present distress, in the time of puzzling delay?...This problem gives way to the second level of covenant purpose. If the first level has to do with the divine intention to remake and restore the whole world, through Israel, the level deals with his intention to remake and restore Israel herself.”³⁶

³⁴ *ibid.* p. 36.

³⁵ *ibid.* p. 59.

³⁶ N.T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God.* p. 268.