

Roman governor conducted judicial business during his tours through the province. Assize towns benefited from the regular influx of litigants, traders, and entertainers attracted by the presence of the governor; a vivid, if satirical picture of the animated scene is drawn by the orator Dio Chrysostom, "golden mouthed," who was a native of Prusa (*Or.* 35.15–17). Of interest to biblical scholars is the 5th-century bishop Synesius' report that Dio referred to the Essenes of Palestine in favorable terms. It would be unwise to assume any great significance in this reference for the history of Judaism or Christianity in Asia Minor. The traditions of popular Hellenistic philosophy on which Dio drew included a certain superficial taste for "barbarian" (i.e., non-Greek) wisdom. So we find Dio in his surviving speeches referring favorably to Scythian morals, to the Brahmins and the Magi, and telling a philosophical myth with a Persian setting (*Or.* 35.22; 36.39–60; 49.7; 69.6).

A brilliant light is shed on the political life of Prusa during the time of Trajan by the political speeches of Dio of Prusa (ca. 40–after 110) and by some of the correspondence of Pliny and Trajan, when the former was governor of Bithynia (109–11; *Ep.* 10.17A, 17B, 23–24, 58, 70–71 deal with the affairs of Prusa). Like most Greek cities, Prusa enjoyed a measure of local autonomy under the supervision of the Roman authorities. Local government was largely in the hands of the wealthy civic aristocracy, who were expected to contribute liberally from their personal resources to public life. The evidence of inscriptions and of Dio and Pliny shows that Prusa's constitution followed the pattern set for Bithynia by the *lex Pompeia*: there was a city council, with (probably) a property qualification for membership, and a college of magistrates presided over by a chief magistrate (*protos archon*; Dörner PW 23.1: 1071–86; Sherwin-White 1966: 720; Ameling 1984). The speeches of Dio and the letters of Pliny illustrate the danger of civic ambitions leading to rash expenditure on prestige public projects. The evidence is presented and discussed by Jones (1978) and Sheppard (1984).

The hot springs were noted for the fact that the water required no cooling before being used for bathing. There was a cult of Asclepius, Hygieia ("Health"), and the Nymphs at the springs (Robert 1946: 93–102). Prusa was the home of two noted doctors of the Roman world: Asclepiades (1st century B.C.), who specialized in water and wine cures, and C. Calpurnius Asclepiades, active in the time of Trajan.

The prosperity of Roman Prusa was founded on the combination of the rich arable land and olive groves of the coastal plain with the timber resources of Ulu Dag. Peace and prosperity were, however, rudely shattered when Prusa was plundered by the Goths in 256. There is little evidence for the later history of Greco-Roman Prusa. A bishop is attested from 325 (until 1712). During the 5th century a number of Huns were settled in the area. In 1236 the city fell to Orhan Gazi, the second Sultan of the Ottoman dynasty, who made it his capital. Today the tombs and mosques of the early Ottoman sultans are the principal monuments of the town of Bursa.

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PSALMS, BOOK OF. The book of Psalms is unique in the Bible because it is a collection of literature of prayer, praise, and meditation. If the Bible's narrative materials relate what God has done and the prophetic literature reports what God has said, the Psalms present the response of the people to the acts and words of God. As a book of the people, the book of Psalms has been especially valued for both public worship and private devotion among Jews and Christians alike. It has also been the focal point of much scholarly research. For useful summaries of the major trends and positions in this research (and related bibliography), see Clements 1976: 76–98; and Hayes 1979: 139–43, 285–317.

- A. The Name
 B. The Text
 1. The Dead Sea Psalms Scroll
 2. The Hebrew *Tehillim*
 3. The Greek Psalter
 C. The Origin and Function of the Psalms
 1. The Psalms as Response
 2. The Psalter as Worship Book
 3. The Psalter as Scripture
 D. The Book and the Books
 1. The Beginning and Ending
 2. The Five Books
 3. The Titles
 E. The Poetry of the Psalms
 1. Balance or Parallelism
 2. Other Relationships between A and B
 3. Repetition
 4. Alphabetic Acrostics
 5. Metaphors and Similes for God
 6. Metaphors and Similes for People
 F. Types of Psalms
 1. Laments or Prayers
 2. Hymns or Songs of Praise
 3. Songs of Thanksgiving
 4. Royal Psalms
 5. Songs of Zion
 6. Liturgies
 7. Wisdom and Torah Psalms
 G. Theological Themes
 1. "The Teaching of the Lord Is His Delight"
 2. "O Lord, My Rock and My Redeemer"
 3. "What God Is Great Like Our God?"
 4. "Human Beings Are Like the Beasts That Perish"
 5. "I Have Set My King on Zion"

A. The Name

The English title "Psalms" is derived from the Greek *psalmoi*, "songs of praise," by way of the Latin *Liber Psalmorum*, "book of psalms." Among ancient Greek manuscripts of the OT, *psalmoi* appears in Codex Vaticanus as a title for the book. Codex Sinaiticus has no title, though "psalms of David" appears at the end. Codex Alexandrinus has as the title for the book *psalterion*, the name of a stringed instrument and the basis for the English "psalter"; *psalmoi* appears at the conclusion. The noun *psalmos* is found often in titles to the psalms, as in "psalm of David." The noun comes from the Greek verb *psallo* meaning "sing (to the accompaniment of a harp)" (BAGD, 899), as in the references to David in 1 Sam 16:16, 17, 23 or to the minstrel in 2 Kgs 3:15.

The NT refers to the three-part division of the Hebrew Bible, speaking of "the law of Moses and the prophets and psalms" (Luke 24:44), with "psalms" representing the as yet incomplete third division; note also reference to the "Book of Psalms" in Luke 20:42.

The oldest Hebrew manuscripts do not have a title for the collection as a whole. The note at the end of Book II, Ps 72:20, says, "The prayers (*tehillot*) of David, the son of Jesse, are ended," thus designating the foregoing psalms as "prayers." In rabbinic and later literature, the book is called *Sefer Tehillim*, "book of praises," or simply *Tillim*. The noun *tehillim*, "praises," is derived from the Hebrew root *hll*, "praise." That root also appears in "hallelujah" ("praise Yah," or "Yahweh"), found only in the Psalter, always at the beginning or ending of psalms (104:35; 106:1, 48; 113:1, 9; 146–50, beginning and end of each; etc.).

The noun "praise" occurs often in the psalms: "He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise (*tehillá*) to our God" (40:3; also 22:25; 33:1; 34:1; 48:10, etc.). Psalm 145 is the only psalm to be designated a *tehillá* in the title, translated "Song of Praise."

Of the 206 occurrences of *hll*, "praise," in the OT (146 verbal, 60 nominal), about two-thirds are in the psalms or in phrases taken from the psalms (*THAT*, 493). Because the collection of psalms contains so many expressions of praise to God, it became known as "praises" or "Tehillim."

The two names preserved in the Hebrew tradition, "prayers" (*tehillá*) and "songs of praise" (*tehillim*), may be taken as representing two fundamental types of psalms: prayers in time of need, or laments, and songs of praise, or hymns.

B. The Text

1. The Dead Sea Psalms Scroll. Some 30 texts containing portions of the Psalter have been found at Qumran near the Dead Sea since the discovery of the scrolls there in 1947 (in Caves 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, and 11). Three psalm texts have been found at other sites (parts of Psalms 15 and 16 found S of En Gedi in 1960; parts of Psalms 81 through 85 and Psalm 150 at Masada between 1963 and 1965; Sanders 1967: 145–46). In addition, the caves have yielded four commentary texts containing portions of psalms.

The most dramatic find is the Psalms Scroll from Cave 11. Discovered in 1956, it was unrolled by James Sanders in 1961 and published by him in 1965 and 1967. Sanders

dates the scroll to around A.D. 50. It is made of five sheets of leather sewn to a length of almost 13 feet and is presently 6 to 7 inches wide; originally its width was 9 or 10 inches, making it about the same width as the Isaiah Scroll from Cave 1. The scroll contains all or parts of 41 canonical psalms from Books IV and V of the Psalter, beginning with Psalm 101; as well as 2 Sam 23:1–7; four noncanonical psalms (151A, B; 154; 155; and Sir 51:13ff.); and four other nonbiblical works (Plea for Deliverance, Apostrophe to Zion, Hymn to the Creator, and David's Compositions; these are interspersed in the book at a variety of places).

The psalms appear to have been popular at Qumran. "There were undoubtedly more copies of psalms in the Qumran library than of any other biblical writing. . . ." (Sanders 1967: 9). The text of the psalms recovered thus far, says Sanders, is in close agreement with the standard Ben Asher manuscripts (Leningradensis and the Aleppo Codex), with most of the variations matters of orthography. An exception is Psalm 145, in which every verse has a refrain, "Blessed be the Lord and blessed be his name for ever and ever." The superscription to 145 reads *tehillá*, "prayer," instead of *tehillá*, "song of praise" (RSV); the psalm also has a subscript reading "This is for a memorial. . . ." (Sanders 1967: 64–67). The ordering of the psalms in this scroll differs from that of the MT (Sanders 1967: 10, 16).

2. The Hebrew Tehillim (Songs of Praise). The critical edition of the Hebrew text of Psalms found in *BHS* is based upon the MT as represented by Codex Leningradensis (B19A or L), dated in 1008 C.E. and identified in the colophon as a production of the Ben Asher family (Würthwein 1979: 168).

The basis for a new critical edition of the Hebrew Bible being prepared at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem is the Aleppo Codex, so named because though it was originally in Jerusalem, it was moved to Cairo and then to Aleppo in Syria. Again a Ben Asher manuscript, it is dated from the first half of the 10th century. The manuscript lacks Pss 15:1–25:2. For progress reports, see *Textus: Annual of the Hebrew University Bible Project*; the publication of Psalms has not yet appeared.

3. The Greek Psalter. The Greek OT or Septuagint (LXX) was produced by the Jewish community in Alexandria, Egypt, during the first half of the 3d century B.C. Intended for Hellenistic Jews, this translation was immediately accessible to Greek-speaking gentiles as well and eventually became the OT for the Christian movement. Because of the popularity of the psalms, there are many more Greek manuscripts of that book available than of any other Old Testament book (Rahlfs 1967: 61). As the LXX became more and more the Bible for Christians, it lost popularity in the Jewish community.

The convenient edition of Alfred Rahlfs, *Septuaginta*, is based mainly on the three oldest major Greek manuscripts, all of which include both OT and NT. Codex Vaticanus (B) is a 4th-century manuscript; Pss 105:27–137:6 were lacking but were added in the 15th century. Codex Sinaiticus (S) is another 4th-century manuscript, containing the entire Psalter. Codex Alexandrinus (A) is a 5th-century manuscript, lacking Pss 49:20–79:11.

Each of these three includes Psalm 151, in which David

celebrates victory over Goliath. While this psalm is not in the Hebrew Bible, it is among those noncanonical pieces included in the Dead Sea Psalms Scroll. All three manuscripts have a superscription identifying the psalm as an addition to the 150 canonical psalms: "This psalm is ascribed to David and is outside the number. . . ." Codex S has a subscript reading "the 151 psalms of David." The subscript to A reads "the 150 psalms and one ascribed." B has no subscript.

The numbering of the psalms in the Greek OT differs from the Hebrew. The following table indicates the differences:

MT (also RSV)	LXX
Psalms 1-8	Psalms 1-8
9-10	9
11-113	10-112
114-15	113
116:1-9	114
116:10-19	115
117-46	116-45
147:1-11	146
147:12-20	147
148-50	148-50
	151

As Christians transmitted the text of the Greek OT, a number of interpolations began to appear in the text. One example: in Rom 3:10-18, Paul uses parts of Ps 14:1-3 as well as Pss 5:9; 140:3; 10:7; and 36:1 to support his argument that all are sinners. In LXX Psalm 13 (Heb 14), manuscripts B and S insert precisely these quotations from other psalms in v 3. Thus, Christians enriched their Greek OT by adding this chain of quotations (see Rahlfs 1967: 30-32, for further examples).

C. The Origin and Function of the Psalms

The psalms originated in the midst of Israel's life and have continued to function in the lives of both Jews and Christians as a hymnbook for worship and a prayer book for devotion.

1. **The Psalms as Response.** Psalms 1 and 2 provide an introduction to the Psalter (see D below). The psalms that follow offer clues to the way in which the psalms originated.

These psalms are addressed to God, as is clear from reading the opening lines of Psalms 3-10: "O Lord . . ." (Psalm 3), "Answer me when I call, O God" (Psalm 4), "Give ear to my words, O Lord" (Psalm 5), etc. They address God in response to a crisis, such as being ill (Psalm 6) or being surrounded by enemies who may make false accusations (Psalms 3; 4; 5; 7; 9:10). The same crises brought on by illness (31; 32; 38; 39; 41; 51; 88; 102), enemies (17; 23; 26; 27; 57; 63), or the distress of sin (40; 51; 130) appear throughout the psalter. Such prayers in times of crisis are commonly called "laments," since one of the constant elements in these psalms is a complaint or lament, against God in "thou" form ("But thou, O Lord—how long?" 6:3), concerning oneself in "I" form (" . . . for I am languishing," 6:2), or concerning others in "they" form ("for there is no truth in their mouth . . ." 5:9). These

first laments in the Psalter voice an individual's complaint and cry for help. The superscription to Psalm 102 describes the situation that gave rise to such prayers of the individual in times of crisis: "A prayer of one afflicted, when he is faint and pours out his complaint before the Lord" (see E.1 below).

The entire community may cry out for help: "Do thou, O Lord, protect us. . ." (Ps 12:7). The Community Laments (see E.1 below) provide clues to the situation giving rise to these prayers. The people may have experienced a defeat (44:9-16), or the temple and the city of Jerusalem have been devastated (74:4-8; 79:1), or they may be suffering at the hands of enemies (80:6; 12-13) or in exile in Babylon (137).

Psalms also arise out of good times, the psalmist responding to a situation of experiencing blessing. Psalm 8 celebrates God's work as Creator, addressing God with general words of praise, "O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is thy name in all the earth!" Such psalms are designated as "hymns." Psalm 30 expresses praise and thanks to God for a specific act, in this case for healing in answer to prayer (vv 1-3). Psalms of this type may be called Thanksgiving Psalms (see E.3 below).

Other psalms arose out of particular occasions. The Royal Psalms were composed for use in connection with events in the life of a king (see E.4 below). Several psalms were produced to suit liturgical needs, providing the script for a procession around the city (Psalm 48) or for the offering of sacrifices (Psalm 66; see E.6 below). More than two dozen "Wisdom Psalms" (see E.7 below) offer short observations growing out of life's experiences (Psalms 127, 128) or longer reflections on the great problems of life (37, 73); or they may commend Torah (instruction) and its study (1; 19; 119). The alphabetical acrostic psalms were built on the pattern of the Hebrew alphabet, probably both to facilitate memorization and also for the sheer delight of producing such a work (see E.4 below).

In sum, the psalms arose out of the midst of Israel's life in the presence of God, responding to good times and bad, providing words for the celebrations of the community, and offering guidance and reflection on the opportunities and problems of life.

2. **The Psalter as Worship Book.** Since the Psalter is not a manual providing directions for those leading worship but a collection of hymns, prayers, and poems for the people, the settings for these psalms in worship and other occasions must be inferred from the psalms themselves.

The hymns (see E.2 below) suggest congregational worship utilizing vocal and instrumental music and marked by exuberance and creativity (the "new song"; Ps 33:1-3). They often begin with a call to praise in the imperative plural, "Praise the Lord" (Heb "Hallelujah"; 33:1; 111:1; 113:1; 146-50), thus assuming the presence of a community. Ps 111:1 makes the congregational context for praise explicit: "Praise the Lord. I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart, in the company of the upright, in the congregation" (cf. 149:1; 150:1). The praise that takes place in connection with these psalms was lively, involving singing and shouting (33:3), dancing (149:3; 150:4), and the use of string, wind, and percussion instruments (33:1-3; 149:3; 150). The forms of worship change, with the community called to update its materials in a manner

appropriate for new times (33:1; 96:1; 98:1; 149:1). Those engaged in praise may be standing in the temple (135:1-2), even for a service of worship at night (134). Praise came from different groups within the assembled congregation (135:19-20). The repeated refrain of Psalm 136 suggests a worship leading calling out or chanting the first part of each line and the congregation responding with "for his steadfast love endures forever." The rubric, "let Israel now say" (124:1; 129:1), again calls the gathered people to respond.

Some psalms were used as liturgies (see E.6 below), with actions accompanying the words of the psalm. Psalm 66 functioned in connection with the making of an offering (66:13-15). Psalms 48 and probably 132 were associated with processions; the latter would fit a reenactment of David's bringing the ark into the city (2 Samuel 6). Pss 24:7, 9 and 118:19-20 suggest a procession passing through the temple gates, with participants carrying branches (118:27). Ceremonial washings are suggested by 26:6 and perhaps 51:7 (cf. Num 19:18). Psalms 15 and 24 apparently functioned as entrance liturgies, the worshiper about to enter the temple area asking a question and a priest or temple official responding with the answer (15:1-5; 24:3-6; cf. Mic 6:6-8). Various attempts have been made to reconstruct liturgies and entire festivals on the basis of the psalms, but such reconstructions remain notoriously hypothetical.

The "Songs of Ascents" or "Pilgrimage Psalms" (120-34) seem to have been used as a collection especially designed for those "going up" (122:4; the root is the same as "ascents" in the titles) to Jerusalem for one of the regularly occurring festivals (Deut 16:16-17). They fit a broad pattern of anticipating the journey (122:1), setting out (121), joyful arrival (133), and concluding evening worship (134).

At one time the Community Laments (see E.1 below) functioned as part of community services of prayer and fasting, called the "fast" (*sôm*; Joel 1:14). These were gatherings convened at times of national emergency such as a military crisis (2 Chronicles 20) or natural disasters such as drought and famine or plague (Joel 1; cf. the listing in 1 Kgs 8:33-40). A picture of these services can be pieced together: the entire community was assembled, including the children and the newly married (Joel 1:14; 2:15-16; 2 Chr 20:13). The extremity of the emergency was demonstrated by the destruction of beauty: clothing was torn or removed (Joel 2:12; Isa 32:11), the hair was cut off, the people wept and mourned (Isa 15:2-3; 22:12), even gashed themselves (Hos 7:14), rolling in dust (Mic 1:10), putting on sackcloth, and rolling in ashes (Jer 6:26). While these Community Lament psalms grew out of times of specific national need, their continued use indicates that they were appropriated and adapted for other sorts of situations.

The Individual Laments (see E.1 below) arose out of a variety of personal crises and must have continued to function in a great variety of life situations. Childless Hannah poured out her heart in the sanctuary at Shiloh; her prayers probably used the language of the individual laments. The priest says to Hannah, "Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant your petition. . ." which may account for the abrupt change of mood in many of the laments (1

Samuel 1; cf. the change from Ps 13:5 to Ps 13:6). Hezekiah's prayer for his sickbed suggests another obvious setting for these prayers (Isaiah 38; cf. the psalms associated with illness as listed above).

The book of *4 Maccabees*, written sometime between A.D. 20 and 54, concludes with a scene suggesting how the psalms were used in the setting of the family. In the last words of the mother who had lost her seven sons in persecution (2 Maccabees 7), she recalls her late husband, saying to her remaining children, "A happy man was he, who lived out his life with good children . . . while he was still with you, he taught you the law and prophets. . . . He sang to you psalms of the psalmist David, who said, 'Many are the afflictions of the righteous'" (*4 Macc.* 18:9-10, 15).

Gerstenberger (1988) has suggested that there were a variety of occasions when family and friends came together and utilized the psalms. These would include not only the events of birth, marriage, and death, but also special gatherings at times of illness and sorrow and joy and thanksgiving. The laments, he suggests, were used at times of crisis in the circle of family and caring friends, under the direction of a ritual expert. Gerstenberger has compared these groups to contemporary group therapy movements under the direction of an expert in such processes. His work is a reminder that people's lives are lived not only as individuals or in congregations, but also in the world of the small group of family and friends.

Again, these occasional services cannot be reconstructed with certainty. But there is enough evidence in the OT to suggest that the prayers and songs of praise found in the Psalter were not confined to the sanctuary. The psalms came out of a variety of situations from the midst of the life of the people; it is reasonable to assume that they also functioned in a variety of life situations.

3. **The Psalter as Scripture.** The psalms are now in the form of a book, called the "Psalter" since the time of the Greek translations. Recent studies have demonstrated that this book has been carefully shaped and edited (see D below). That editing placed Psalm 1 at the beginning in order to suggest another way in which this collection is intended to function.

The first picture that appears in the Psalter is that of a tree, planted by a river, flourishing, yielding fruit (1:3). Used as a comparison, this is an image of a human life that is deeply rooted and marked by productivity, prosperity, and beauty. The reader asks: How could one attain to such a life? The answer is explicit: by meditating, both day and night, on the Torah of the Lord. The verb *hâgâh*, translated "meditate" (v 2), is also used for the growling of a lion as he enjoys his prey (Isa 31:4); the sense here is of the sound made as one studies the Lord's instruction in Scripture. This psalm thus suggests that the way to the kind of life symbolized by the tree involves delighting in and meditating upon Torah, here referring to the Lord's instruction that follows in the Psalter.

A second psalm with a concern for Torah—Psalm 19 (cf. v 7, translated "law")—also refers to meditation, asking that such reflecting and speaking be acceptable in the Lord's sight (19:14).

Finally, Psalm 119 offers a lengthy treatise which speaks of the Lord's Torah as a delight (v 92), of loving Torah (vv 97, 113, 163, 165), and of mediating (Heb *šab*, synony-

mous with *hāgāh* in 77:13—RSV 12) upon it all day (v 97). The psalm commends reflection upon God's precepts (v 15), statutes (vv 23, 48), works (v 27), and promises (v 148). It seems likely that the two Torah psalms, 1 and 119, once framed an early version of the Psalter (see D.2 below; see also Westermann 1981: 253). In any case, both suggest a particular use of the psalms of which they are a part. These ancient psalms of Israel are not only hymns and prayers to be sung and prayed at a place of public worship; they are also Scripture, designed to nurture the piety of the people in devotion and meditation.

D. The Book and the Books

The Psalter in its present form consists of 150 psalms divided into five books. Editorial work included the collecting and arranging of the individual psalms, the division into books, and the supplying of superscriptions or titles for 116 of the psalms.

1. **The Beginning and Ending.** The editors of the psalter placed Psalms 1 and 2 at the beginning as an introduction to the collection as a whole. These two psalms may be considered together: neither has a title; they are framed by the "blessed" formulas in 1:1 and 2:11 (the formula in 2:11 may be a contribution of the editor); and they are linked by the catchword *hāgāh*, translated "meditate" in 1:2 and "plot" in 2:1. In Acts 13:33, the 6th-century Greek Codex D as well as a number of other witnesses introduce Paul's citation of Ps 2:7 with "as also it is written in the first psalm," thus indicating either that Psalms 1 and 2 were considered as one psalm, or that there was a Psalter in existence in which the present Psalm 2 was the first psalm.

As noted above (C.3), Psalm 1 functions as an invitation to meditate upon the psalms which follow. While Psalm 1 has its focus on the individual ("Blessed is the man. . ."), the focus of Psalm 2 is international because it speaks of the nations, their kings, and the Lord's anointed king on Mt. Zion in Jerusalem. Since a psalm like 137 assumed the Exile in Babylon, the final editing of the Psalter had to have taken place sometime after 587 B.C. With the time of the Monarchy past, Royal Psalms (see F.4 below) such as Psalm 2 were no longer applicable to an actual king; nevertheless, they were collected and continued to be used, providing the seedbed out of which grew the hope for a new anointed one (2:2), or in Hebrew, a "messiah."

These two introductory psalms thus suggest a reading of the Psalter for individual edification and also within an international context which included hope for a future king to take up rule from Mt. Zion.

After this introduction the Psalter begins with a series of five psalms of lament of the individual (3-7); the bulk of Book I (Psalms 1-41) consists of further Individual Laments. Moving toward the end of Book IV (Psalms 90-106), the sound of praise dominates with the Kingship of the Lord Psalms (93; 95-99) and in a series of hymns (103-6). With the beginning of Book V (Psalms 107-50) praise continues, up to Psalm 119 (109 is an exception); and the Psalter concludes with five psalms of praise, each framed with "Praise the Lord" ("Hallelujah"). Thus one can speak of a broad movement in the Psalter as a whole from lament to praise.

2. **The Five Books.** The Psalter is divided into five "Books" (Psalms 1-41; 42-72; 73-89; 90-106; 107-50).

According to the Talmud, this is to correspond with the five part division of the Pentateuch: "Moses gave Israel the five books, and David gave Israel the five books of the Psalms" (*Midrash Tehillim* on Psalm 1). Each Book ends with a doxology, probably not an original part of the final psalm in each book, but an insertion made in the final editing (Pss 41:13; 72:20; 89:52; 106:48). Psalm 150 provides a concluding doxology for Book V and for the Psalter as a whole.

Book I is made up almost entirely of Psalms associated with David in the titles. Psalms 1 and 2 are introductory. Psalm 10 has no title because it is linked with Psalm 9 by a broken alphabetic acrostic pattern (see E.4 below). This leaves only Psalm 33, which, though not having a Davidic superscription, has clear links with Psalm 32: *BHS* indicates that some Heb mss join the two psalms; 32:11 and 33:1 are linked by "righteous" and "upright," and Psalm 33 may be regarded as carrying out the exhortation of 32:11 (Wilson 1985: 174-76). The majority of these are psalms of the individual; exceptions include 19 and 29, which are hymns; 24, which is a liturgy; and 12, which is a lament giving voice to the hurts of the community (v 7).

Within Book II Psalms 42-49 are identified with the "Sons of Korah," members of a musical guild (2 Chr 20:19; cf. also the Korah psalms 84-85; 87-88). Psalms 42-83 (extending into Book III) are called the "Elohistic Psalter" because of a preference for the divine name "Elohim" (RSV, "God") in contrast to "Yahweh." A comparison with psalms that have near duplicates elsewhere in the Psalter is instructive. Psalm 53 is almost identical with Psalm 14, but note the replacement of "Yahweh" in 14:2, 4, 7 by "Elohim" in 53:2, 4, 6. Psalm 40 (13-17) is almost the same as Psalm 70; the situation in comparing these two is more complicated. "Yahweh" of 40:13a, 16 is replaced by "Elohim" in 70:1a, 4; but "Yahweh" of 40:13b remains as "Yahweh" in 70:1b, while "Elohim" of 40:17b is replaced by "Yahweh" in 70:5b. In general, however, Psalms 42-83 exhibit a marked preference for "Elohim," in comparison with the remainder of the Psalter. (In the 41 psalms of Book I, Yahweh appears about 275 times, Elohim 50 times. In the 42 psalms of the Elohistic Psalter, Yahweh occurs 43 times and Elohim just under 240 times. In Psalms 84-150, Yahweh again predominates.) The production of this "Elohistic Psalter" suggests an editor preparing a collection of psalms for use in the temple at a time when the name Yahweh was being used less frequently and was being replaced by the more general "Elohim." Book II ends with a collection of Davidic psalms (51-65; 68-70; 71 is untitled; as was the case with 33, *BHS* indicates that many Heb mss link it with the preceding psalm and that the LXX associates it with David). The note at the end of Psalm 72, "The prayers of David, the son of Jesse, are ended," indicates that a Davidic collection once ended at this point.

This seems to be an editorial comment, since the title of Psalm 72 associates it with Solomon and since 72 comes to a definite ending in vv 18-19. The fact that Book II includes duplicates of psalms in Book I (cf. 53 and 14, 70 and 40:13-17) might suggest that these two books once had a separate existence. However, it is possible that 72:20 once referred to the contents of both Books I and II, where the majority of Davidic psalms (55 out of the 73 so titled) are concentrated.

Book III (73-89) contains only 17 psalms. Most of the Community Laments (see F.1 below) are gathered here; these include 74, 79, 80, 83, 85 (the others are Psalms 44 and probably 12). The majority of these psalms are associated with Asaph in the titles (73-83; 50 is the only other Asaph psalm), referring to a musician from the tribe of Levi who was appointed by David to provide music when the ark was brought to Jerusalem (1 Chr 6:39; 15:17-19; 16:4-6) and who was present at the dedication of Solomon's temple (2 Chr 5:12). Asaph's family was still active in music at the time of Josiah in the 7th century B.C. (2 Chr 35:15) and also at the time of Nehemiah and Ezra in the 5th century, furnishing trumpet players when the wall was rebuilt (Neh 12:35) and instrumental music when the foundation of the Second Temple was complete (Ezra 3:10).

Book IV (90-106) also consists of 17 psalms. Here are gathered 6 of the 7 psalms that declare Yahweh's kingship (93; 95-99). Other devices link psalms together: 103 and 104 both have "Bless the Lord, O my soul" at beginning and end; 105 and 106 both recite God's mighty acts in Israel's history, though with different emphases; and both begin with "O give thanks to the Lord" and end with "Praise the Lord." Principles of arrangement here are thus thematic grouping and similarity of beginnings and endings. Book IV ends with a series of hymns (103-6), the last one framed by "Praise the Lord" ("Hallelujah").

Book V (107-50) is the largest of the five books, with 44 psalms. Davidic psalms are grouped at the beginning (108-10) and toward the end (138-45). The unique Psalm 119, an acrostic with eight lines for each letter of the Hebrew alphabet, is included here. Linked to Psalm 1 with the Torah theme, it may have concluded an early form of the Psalter. Psalms 120-34 are a collection of "Songs of Ascent" (see C.2 above). Psalms 140-43 constitute a final series of Individual Laments. Book V concludes the Psalter with a series of five "Praise the Lord" or "Hallelujah" psalms, which may be viewed as carrying out the resolution of 146:21 (Wilson 1985: 193-94).

In conclusion, the locations of two types of psalms may be noted. Royal Psalms are scattered throughout the Psalter, especially at the beginning and ending of books. Psalm 2 introduces the whole Psalter and Book I; Psalm 72 ends Book II; Book III ends with Psalm 89. At the time of the final composition of the Psalter, the monarchy had long been an institution of the past. These Royal Psalms, distributed throughout the Psalter, serve to keep alive the picture of the ideal king, or "anointed" (messiah; cf. 2:2; 45:7; see G.5 below).

Psalms framed with "Hallelujah" appear at strategic places. They may close a book (106) and the Psalter itself (146-50) or come at the conclusion of a collection of psalms (Psalm 100, after the Kingship of the Lord Psalms, 93 and 95-99; and Psalm 135, after 120-34). In several instances a psalm framed by "Praise the Lord" is followed by a psalm beginning "O give thanks" (106 and 107; 117 and 118; 135 and 136).

3. **The Titles.** One hundred and sixteen of the 150 psalms have superscriptions or titles in the Hebrew text, ranging from one word (98) to a lengthy comment (18). The 34 psalms that do not have titles are distributed as follows:

Book I: Psalms 1, 2, 10, and 33.

Book II: Psalms 43 and 71.

Book III: all have titles.

Book IV: Psalms 91, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 99, 104, 105, and 106.

Book V: Psalms 107, 111-19, 135-137, and 146-50.

Psalms 10 and 43 do not have titles because they are linked to the preceding psalms either by an alphabetical acrostic pattern (10) or by a refrain (43). Psalms 33 and 71 may lack titles because they are thematically linked to the psalms preceding them. The first two psalms themselves function as something of a "superscription" to the entire Psalter. Psalms 111-13, 117, 135, 146-50 all begin with the imperative "Praise the Lord," which also may serve as a title. In sum almost all of the psalms in Books I-III are titled; the great majority of untitled psalms are found in Books IV (10 psalms) and V (18 psalms).

Much of the information in these titles consists of specialized musical terms which are no longer understood (for discussion, see Kraus 1988: 21-32). However, other types of information are also communicated.

The title for Psalm 6 may be taken as an example, indicating these various types of information.

(a) "To the choirmaster: with stringed instruments; according to The Sheminith." Here are *directions for musical performance, addressed to the musical director*. The phrase "to the choirmaster" (JPS, "for the leader") occurs in initial position in more than a third of the psalms. Associated with the notion of overseeing ("oversight," Ezra 3:8, 9), it is understood to refer to the director of the choir. Reference may be made to the instruments to be used: "with stringed instruments" (4, 6, 54, 55, 61, 67, 76; cf. 1 Sam 16:16, 23, where the related verb refers to playing with the hand). Other instruments are sometimes referred to: the RSV translates "for the flutes" in Psalm 5, but the Hebrew is not certain; and the expression, "according to The Sheminith" (Psalms 6, 12) means literally, "according to/on the eighth," possibly referring either to the eighth musical pattern or to an eight-string instrument.

Though the matter is debated, some of these musical directions may refer to melodies, such as "according to The Gittith" (8, 81, 84), "according to The Hind of the Dawn" (22), "according to Lilies" (45, 69, 80), "according to The Dove on Far-Off Terebinths" (56), "according to Mahalath" (53, 88), "according to Do Not Destroy" (57-59, 75), "According to Muth-labben" (9), "according to Alamoth" (46), and "according to Mahalath Leannoth" (88) are unexplained. Often the Greek translators did not understand these terms and simply transliterated them; this same approach is taken in many instances by the JPS translators.

Two technical terms appearing not in the titles but in the course of the psalms are also unexplained. The meaning of *higgaion* in 9:16 is unknown; it occurs in 19:14 with the sense "meditation" and in 92:3, translated "melody." Finally, the meaning of "selah," which occurs 71 times in 39 psalms (also in Hab 3:3, 9, 13) remains unexplained. The Greek, where it occurs 92 times, translates it as *diapsalma*, which means an instrumental interlude (see Kraus 1988: 27-29).

(b) "A psalm" indicates the *type of composition*. The He-

brew *mizmor* was translated in the Greek Bible as *psalms* and has thus given the name to the book. *Mizmor* occurs a total of 57 times and only in psalm titles. In 36 instances it refers to a "psalm of David." Only in Psalm 98 does it stand alone.

Other types of compositions indicated in the psalm titles include the following: "Song" (*šir*) occurs in 30 titles, 13 times with *mizmor* (30, 48, etc.); the term may also be used of secular songs (Isa 23:16). In the title of Psalm 45 *šir yēdūdōt* means "love song." "A Song of Ascents" (lit. "for goings up") is the title for each of Psalms 120–34, most likely referring to the "going up" to Jerusalem for festivals (cf. 122:4), and thus suggesting a translation such as "Pilgrimage Psalm." "Song of Praise" translating *tēhillā* occurs in Psalm 145; the plural form provides the Hebrew title for the Psalter. It occurs only here as a title but within psalms at 22:25; 33:1; 34:1; etc. "Prayer" translating *tēpillā* is found in the titles of Psalms 17, 86, 90, 102, 142 (and Habakkuk 3); also in the plural form in 72:20.

Several terms are not understood and are thus left untranslated. *Miktām* occurs 6 times, always "of David" (16; 56–60). *Masikil* occurs 13 times, always associated with a proper name and probably meaning "skilled or artistic piece" (cf. 2 Chr 30:22)—Psalms 32, 42, 44, 45, 52–55, 74, 78, 88, 89, 142; it occurs once within a psalm, translated "psalm" (47:7). *Shiggaion* occurs in Psalm 7 and (in the plural) in the heading for Habakkuk 3.

(c) The title may also associate the psalm with an individual or group, in the case of Psalm 6, "of David." In these cases the Hebrew preposition *lē-* appears with the name; since that preposition can mean "to," "for," "of," or "belonging to," the sense of the title is not always clear. The preposition *lē* occurs in the expressions "to the choirmaster" (RSV) or "for the leader" (JPS) in 55 psalms, and in these cases it does not indicate authorship.

In the Hebrew text, 73 psalms include in the title, "l'David." In 13 instances (3, 7, 18, 34, 51, 52, 54, 56, 57, 59, 60, 63, 142) the title associates the psalm with an event in David's life. In Psalm 18, the extended note identifies David as the author, "A Psalm of David, the servant of the Lord, who addressed the words of this song to the Lord . . ." Since all of these events are recorded in 1–2 Samuel, these notes appear to have been provided by someone searching for an appropriate setting for the psalm in the life of David as known from the biblical account, thereby attributing authorship to him.

The biblical tradition depicts David as a composer of psalms (2 Sam 1:17), as a musician (1 Sam 16:16–23; cf. Ps 151:2, "My hands made a harp, my fingers fashioned a lyre"), and as the "sweet singer of Israel" (2 Sam 23:1); since the 13 psalms associated biographically with David point to David as an author, it would seem that authorship is the intent of the expression in many cases. But because the meaning of the preposition is ambiguous, it is not possible to identify specific psalms with David as author. As the psalm tradition develops, the tendency is to ascribe more and more psalms to David; thus the LXX associates (Hebrew/RSV numbers) Psalms 33, 43, 71, 91, 93–99, 104, and 137 with David (though omitting mention of David in the titles of 122 and 124), for a total of 85 Davidic psalms. The Talmud thinks of him as the author of the psalms, just as Moses was author of the Pentateuch (*Midrash Tehil-*

līm on Ps 1:2). An insert near the end of the Dead Sea Psalms Scroll says:

And David, the son of Jesse, was wise, and a light like the light of the sun, and literate, and discerning and perfect in all his ways before God and men. And the Lord gave him a discerning and enlightened spirit. And he wrote 3600 psalms; and songs to sing before the altar over the whole-burnt perpetual offering every day, for all the days of the year, 364; and for the offering of the Sabbaths, 52 songs; and for the offering of the New Moons and for all the Solemn Assemblies and for the Day of Atonement, 30 songs. And all the songs that he composed were 446, and songs for making music over the stricken, 4. And the total was 4050. All these he composed through prophecy which was given him from before the Most High (column xxvii, 2–11; Sanders 1967: 137)

Further individuals associated with psalms are Solomon (72 and 127), Heman (88), Ethan (89), Moses (90), and Jeduthun, one of David's musicians (39, 62, and 77; 1 Chr 25:1–2; 2 Chr 5:12).

(d) Other psalm titles include suggestions for the use of the psalm. In surveying these examples, it becomes apparent that the titles are part of the history of the interpretation and use of the psalms. The content of Psalm 30, for example, identifies it as suited for an individual giving thanks after experiencing healing; the title, however, suggests its use as "A Song at the dedication of the Temple." Psalms 38 and 70 are designated "for the memorial offering," Psalm 92 as "A Song for the Sabbath" (in the GK translation, Psalm 24 is designated for Sunday, 94 for Wednesday, and 93 for Friday) and Psalm 100 "for the thank offering." The title to Psalm 60 includes the comment, "to be taught" (JPS; RSV, "for instruction"); cf. Deut 31:19; and 2 Sam 1:18).

In sum, while the psalm titles were not parts of the original psalms, they provide important clues to the history of the interpretation of the psalms and to their use in the lives of the people both individually and in the community.

E. The Poetry of the Psalms

The chief characteristic of Hebrew poetry in the Bible is balance or symmetry, commonly called parallelism. Biblical poetry is also marked by the use of repetition, a fondness for alphabetical acrostics, and the employment of metaphor and simile.

1. **Balance or Parallelism.** A line of Hebrew poetry is made up of two parts or cola (singular colon) which may be designated A and B. For example:

- (A) When Israel went forth from Egypt,
(B) the house of Jacob from a people of strange language, (114:1)

In this example, "Israel" is balanced by "house of Jacob" and "Egypt" by "a people of strange language." Since the balancing words and phrases are synonymous and since the two cola parallel one another in meaning, this is called "synonymous parallelism." The book of Psalms, and in-

deed the entire Hebrew Bible, is full of this kind of synonymous parallelism (e.g., Ps 4:2–6; 8:4; 19:1–2; 24:1–3; etc.). See also PARALLELISM.

Parallelism or balancing may extend to more than two cola, with whole lines balancing one another:

- (A + B) The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart;
(A' + B') the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes (19:8; cf. vv 7, 9).

In the examples given, the ordering of the words in the balancing cola is the same. In Ps 114:1 "Israel . . . Egypt" is balanced by "house of Jacob . . . people of strange language." This order may be represented as A + B balanced by A' + B'. The order may also fall into a chiasmic pattern, where A + B is balanced by B' + A' (cf. "When the going gets tough, the tough get going"). For example:

- (A + B) His mischief returns upon his own head,
(B' + A') and on his own pate his violence descends (7:16).

- (A + B) Praise the Lord with the lyre,
(B' + A') with the ten-stringed harp make melody to him (my trans., 33:2; cf. also 137:5–6).

It is also possible that B may stand over against A, stating its opposite or standing in contrast to it. This is called antithetic parallelism:

- (A) The wicked borrows, and cannot pay back,
(B) but the righteous is generous and gives;
(A) for those blessed by the Lord shall possess the land,
(B) but those cursed by him shall be cut off (37:21–22; cf. 1:6; 20:8; 32:10, etc.).

Antithetic parallelism is especially characteristic of proverbial literature (e.g., Prov 10:1–12; Eccl 8:4; 10:2, 12).

Kugel has suggested that the most general way to describe the relationship between A and B in examples such as these is the formula, "A is so, and what's more, B." He proposes a metaphor drawn from parliamentary procedure to understand the relationship between B and A; A is stated, and B then has an emphatic "seconding" character (1981: 51).

2. **Other Relationships between A and B.** The cola A and B may relate to one another in a number of other ways:

A makes a statement, B provides a reason:

- (A) Blessed be the Lord!
(B) for he has heard the voice of my supplications (28:6).

A makes a statement; B balances with a question:

- (A) For in death there is no remembrance of thee;
(B) in Sheol who can give thee praise? (6:5).

A asks a question; B gives an answer:

- (A) How can a young man keep his way pure?
(B) By guarding it according to thy word (119:9).

A makes a statement; B balances with a quotation:

- (A) I had said in my alarm,
(B) "I am driven far from thy sight" (31:22).

A sets forth something "better than" B:

- (A) Better is a little that the righteous has
(B) than the abundance of many wicked (37:16; cf. 118–8–9; 119:72; also Proverbs).

A varies; B repeats:

- (A) O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good,
(B) for his steadfast love endures forever.
(A) O give thanks to the God of gods,
(B) for his steadfast love endures forever (136:1–2 and throughout).

A makes a statement with an abstract noun; B sharpens the focus with a concrete noun:

- (A) Therefore the Lord has recompensed me according to my righteousness,
(B) according to the cleanness of my hands in his sight (18:24).

A states the whole; B balances with a part which stands for the whole (synecdoche):

- (A) For thou dost deliver a humble people;
(B) but the haughty eyes thou dost bring down (18:27).

A and B name two terms which mark boundaries in order to designate a totality (merismus):

- (A) The sun shall not smite you by day,
(B) nor the moon by night (121:6).

A may provide a simile, B balancing with the reality:

- (A) As a father pities his children,
(B) so the Lord pities those who fear him (103:13; cf. 103:11–12; 42:1).

3. **Repetition.** The psalms utilize a variety of forms of repetition. A psalm may begin with a repetition, for the sake of emphasis:

My God, my God, why has thou forsaken me? (22:1).

A repetition may conclude a psalm for the same reason:

Wait for the Lord;
be strong, and let your heart take courage;
yea, wait for the Lord! (27:14).

The same word may stand at the beginning of a succession of cola, again for the sake of emphasis:

Surely every man stands as a mere breath!
Surely man goes about as a shadow!
Surely for nought are they in turmoil. . . . (39:5–6).

An entire colon may be emphasized through repetition:

My soul waits for the Lord
more than watchmen for the morning,
more than watchmen for the morning (130:6).

This emphasis may take the form of a refrain (42:5, 11; 43:5; 46:7, 11; 49:12, 20; 56:4, 11; 57:5, 11; 59:6, 14; 59:9, 17; 67:3, 5; 99:5, 9; 107:8, 15, 21, 31).

A thematically central expression may recur throughout a psalm, such as the sevenfold occurrence of “the voice of the Lord” in Psalm 29.

The same statement may begin and end the psalm, tying the whole together (the *inclusio*, or inclusion), as in Pss 8:1, 9; 118:1, 29; note also “Praise the Lord” in Psalms 106, 113, 117, 146–150; and how the “blessed” formula in 1:1 and 2:11 links these two psalms together as an introduction to the Psalter.

In Ps 118:2–4 (cf. also 135–19–20), an initial colon A grows longer with each repetition, while coupled with a B colon that remains constant:

- (A) Let Israel say,
- (B) “His steadfast love endures for ever.”
- (A) Let the house of Aaron say,
- (B) “His steadfast love endures for ever.”
- (A) Let those who fear the Lord say,
- (B) “His steadfast love endures for ever.”

In Ps 118:10–12, three A cola play upon the word “surround” and grow successively longer while the B colon again remains the same:

- (A) All nations surrounded me;
- (B) in the name of the Lord I cut them off!
- (A) They surrounded me, surrounded me on every side;
- (B) in the name of the Lord I cut them off!
- (A) They surrounded me like bees, they blazed like a fire of thorns;
- (B) in the name of the Lord I cut them off!

Note also the threefold repetition with variation of “the right hand of the Lord does valiantly/exalted” (118:15–16).

Repetition may serve a liturgical purpose. The opening words of a psalm are sounded, followed by a call for the congregation to join in; and the initial words are stated again:

- If it had not been the Lord who was on our side,
let Israel now say—
- if it had not been the Lord who was on our side (124:1–2; cf. 129:1–2).

4. Alphabetic Acrostics. A number of psalms are constructed on an acrostic pattern, the initial letters of each line following the order of the Hebrew alphabet. The clearest examples are Psalms 25, 34, 111, 112, and 145. Psalms 9 and 10 together constitute a broken acrostic with some of the letters of the alphabet missing. Psalm 119 is unique, an acrostic with eight lines built on each of the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet, for a total of 176 lines. The acrostic form was probably chosen as an aid for memorization (cf. Prov 31:10–31, an alphabetical acrostic in praise of a good wife; in later Jewish tradition, recited by a husband to a wife), though it may also have been used out of pleasure at the challenge of preparing such a composition. See also ACROSTIC.

5. Metaphors and Similes for God. A *metaphor* lets one reality stand for another, as in “the Lord is my shepherd” (23:1). A *simile* is a comparison using “like” or “as,” for example, “my heart is like wax” (22:14).

The Psalter is rich in metaphors for God. Most frequent are those that portray God as a place of refuge, shelter, or protection. “Rock” as metaphor for God appears 21 times, translating Heb *sār* and *selā*. These are most often in expressions of trust in God. The word *māšgāb*, which has the root sense of “being high” or “inaccessible,” occurs thirteen times, translated as “stronghold,” “refuge,” “defense,” or “fortress.” The word “fortress” also translates *māšuddā*, always occurring with other metaphors (18:2; 31:2, 3; 71:3; 91:2; 114:2). “Refuge,” *mašeh*, which has the sense of shelter from storm and rain (Isa 4:6) or from the sun (Judg 9:15), is used as a metaphor for God eleven times in the Psalms. The Heb *mā’ōz* is also translated as “refuge,” “stronghold” (27:1; 31:2, 4; 37:39; 43:2; 52:7); the sense of “protection” is clear from the expression “*mā’ōz* of my head” or “helmet” in Ps 60:7. God is named “hiding place,” “cover,” “shelter” (Heb *šēter*) in Ps 27:5; 31:20; 32:7; 61:4; 91:1; 119:114. The Lord is called a “dwelling place” (90:1), “habitation” (91:9), and “rock of refuge” (71:3), all translating *mā’ōn*. The sense of *mānās*, “refuge” (59:16; 142:4), is a place of escape. Related to these examples that portray the Lord as protection is the picture of the Lord as “shield” (3:3; 7:10; 18:2; 18:30, 35; 28:7; 33:20; 59:11; 84:11; 115:9, 10, 11; 119:114; 144:2), always in expressions of trust. The extraordinary number of such examples indicates that those praying these psalms were a people hurting, looking to their God for help.

God is portrayed as “king” in many psalms. The expressions “God reigns” and “the Lord reigns” occur as part of the Kingship of the Lord Psalms in 47:8; 93:1; 96:10; 97:1; 99:1; cf. 146:10. If one adds references to the Lord’s throne (9:4, 7; 47:8; 89:14; 93:2; 103:19), it is apparent that “king” is a central metaphor for God in the psalms. God as “judge” also occurs many times.

A number of metaphors and similes appear less frequently. The Lord is “shepherd” for the individual (23:1; 119:176) or for the people as a whole (28:9; 80:1). The people may be portrayed as a “flock,” implying the picture of shepherd for the Lord (74:1; 77:20; 78:52; 79:13; 95:7; 100:3). The Lord is a farmer caring for a vineyard (80:8–12) or feeding livestock (145:15–16). The Lord may be called “my portion,” the sense being that the Lord is like a share or portion of land that one inherits (16:5; 73:26; 119:57; 142:5); closely related is the picture of the Lord

as “my cup,” i.e., my share (16:5). The Lord is a “sun” (84:11). The Lord as “father” occurs in 68:5; 89:26; and in the simile of 103:13. The Lord is a warrior (68:1–2, 11, 17, 21–23; 89:10) using nations as needed (60:7–8). The Lord may even be compared to a person awaking from a hangover (78:65).

The Songs of Ascent (120–34) are rich in imagery. The Lord is keeper and provider of shade (Psalm 121), builder and watchman (127:1), master and mistress (123:2), like a nursing mother (131:2), or like the mountains providing protection around Jerusalem (125:2).

In some instances the metaphor is implied by the action of the subject. The Lord is an archer (7:12–13; 18:14; 21:12; 38:2) firing lightning bolts as arrows (77:17; 144:6). The Lord is a bird whose wings provide protection (17:8; 36:7; 57:1; 61:4; 63:7; 91:4), a builder (102:25; 104:5), a host (23:5), a knitter (139:13), even a moth (39:11).

6. Metaphors and Similes for People. Much of the imagery for people comes from agricultural life. The person who delights in meditating on Scripture is like a tree, firmly rooted and productive (1:3). The righteous are like the palm or cedar, flourishing and productive even in old age (92:12–14). A family is blessed with a wife who is like a fruitful vine and children sprouting up like olive shoots around the table (128:3; in 127:4–5 children are called arrows in a quiver, affording protection to their parents). The psalmist trusting in God’s love is “like a green olive tree” (52:8). Psalm 144 asks for God’s blessing, including the wish that children “in their youth be like plants full grown” (144:12). The picture of God’s people as a vine is developed in 80:8–13 (cf. 44:2).

The relationship of the individual to God may be described in terms of a sheep and a shepherd (23:1–4; 119:176); more frequently the whole people is described as a flock of sheep (28:9; 74:1; 77:20; 78:52; 79:13; 80:1; 95:7; 100:3) or even as sheep ready for slaughter (44:11, 22).

The fellowship of believers is as pleasant as an abundance of expensive perfume or the cooling morning dew (133).

The complaint section of the laments is rich in figurative language. The one suffering may use comparisons from animal life, calling himself a worm (22:6) or comparing his situation to a vulture of the wilderness, an owl of the waste places, or a lonely bird on the housetop (102:6–7). His longing for the Lord’s deliverance is more than the longing of a night watchman for the morning (130:6); it is like the thirst of a person about to faint (63:1), of a deer yearning for flowing streams (42:1), or of a parched land needing water (143:6). The present situation of the people is like that of a dry creek in the Negeb (126:4). The psalmist describes his personal distress as being poured out like water, having a heart like wax, with his strength dried up like a potsherd (22:14–15). He is shriveled up like a dried out wineskin (119:83), broken like a pot (31:12), lonely as a person who is deaf and dumb (38:13–14). His life is passing away like a shadow that disappears at sundown, or it will vanish as quickly as a grasshopper that is shaken away (109:23). He may portray himself as drowning (69:1–2, 14–15; 88:7, 17). In several instances the psalmists lament the brevity of life, comparing people to grass or a flower (90:5–6; 102:11; 103:15–16, in a

Thanksgiving Psalm); human life is a mere breath or a shadow (39:5–6; 102:11; 144:4), or a puff of smoke (102:3). The length of life is a mere handbreadth (39:5); a statement comparing the brevity of human life to that of the beasts becomes a repeated element in a Wisdom Psalm (49:12; 20). The Lord punishing the people made their days vanish like a breath (78:33), but their very impermanence was a ground for the Lord’s mercy (78:39). The psalmist declares that he is not a permanent resident but a guest, a sojourner (39:12; 119:19).

Finally, we note the metaphors and similes that the psalmists use for the wicked person or the enemy. The wicked sprout up like grass (92:7; in contrast to the righteous who are like palm or cedar trees, 92:12–13). But they are in reality as impermanent as grass (37:2, 20), like chaff, dust, or the mire of the streets (1:4; 18:42). They are as transitory as a dream (73:20). They are like trappers, setting snares for the righteous (141:9; 142:3). They wear curses like clothing (109:18). Especially frequent is the comparison of the wicked to the lion (7:2; 10:9; 17:12; 22:13, 21; 35:17; 57:4). They may also be compared to bulls (22:12), dogs (22:16, 20; 59:6–7, 14–15), the wild ox (22:21), wild beasts (74:19), a boar (80:13), a serpent (58:4; 140:3), even bees or a blazing fire (118:12). Their tongue is like a razor (52:2) or a sword (64:3); their words are like arrows (64:3). One day they shall be shattered like a smashed rock (141:7).

The language in curses against the enemy is especially colorful: “May these lions have their teeth broken and be defanged” (58:6). “May they disappear, like water running away, like grass trodden down, like a snail disappearing into the slime, or a birth that is aborted” (58:6–8). “May they be as impermanent as smoke or wax before a fire” (68:2), or “as grass on a roof” (129:6). “May they be blown away like whirling dust and chaff” (83:13). “Let them be like a forest consumed by a fire” (83:14–15), “like dung ground into the earth” (83:10). “May their name be blotted out of the book of the living” (69:28). “May dishonor and shame be their clothing” (109:29).

The variety and vividness of the imagery in the Psalter are evidence of the lively imagination that animates this poetry.

F. Types of Psalms

The psalms originated as Israel’s response to the acts and words of God and, in fact, to what the psalmists saw as God’s inaction and silence. As such, they reflect the polar experiences of human life: joy and sorrow. Joy brought before God is praise; sorrow is taken to the Lord in the form of the lament. With this, the fundamental themes running through the Psalter—praise and lament—are identified (Westermann 1981).

As literature that arose out of the varied situations of human life, the psalms are as varied as human experience itself and cannot all be neatly categorized. Nevertheless, those coming from similar situations have similar features and can be profitably considered as a group. Lines of classification cannot always be firmly drawn, for example, between a “lament” and a “psalm of trust.” (In the categories below, a psalm number in parentheses indicates that the psalm only partially fits in that category.)

1. Laments or Prayers (Heb *šepilla*). The Community

Laments arose from times of national crisis. These include Psalms 12, 44, 60, 74, 79, 80, 83, 85, 90, 94, (108), 123, (129), and 137; five of these are gathered in Book III (73–89). The typical elements in the community lament include:

- the *address* (simply "O God" in 44:1; 80:1–2);
- the *complaint* in three forms, where the subject of the verb is "we" (44:22, 25), "they" (i.e., the enemy; 80:12b–13, 16a) or "thou" (i.e., God; 44:9–14; 80:4–6a; 12a);
- the *request for help* addressed to God (44:23, 26; 80:1a, 2b, 3, 7, 14–15, 17, 19);
- the *affirmation of trust* in God, which may take the form of recalling the Lord's previous saving acts (44:1–7; 80:8–11);
- a *vow to praise God* when the crisis has passed (44:8; 80:18).

Specific psalms can be considered against the background of this pattern of typical elements: Psalm 79 develops the *request* at length (vv 6–12), while Psalm 74 extends the *they-complaint* (vv 4–8). The *affirmation of trust* is developed in 74:12–17; it can so dominate a psalm that the entire psalm can be considered a Community Psalm of Trust: 125, (126). Psalm 60 adds a divine oracle to the typical elements (vv 6–8).

The Individual Laments arise from a variety of situations of individual crisis. Included in this category are:

- Book I: 3–7; 9–10; 13; (14); 17; 22; 25; 26; 28; 31; 35; (36); 38; (39); 40:11–17; 41;
- Book II: 42–43; 51; (52); (53); 54–59; 61; 64; 69; 70; 71;
- Book III: 77; 86; 88;
- Book IV: 102;
- Book V: 109; 120; 130; 140–43.

Like the Communal Laments, the typical elements in the Individual Lament are:

- the *address* (13:1, "O Lord"; 22:1, "My God, my God");
- the *complaint* in three forms, with the subject "I" (13:2a; 22:2, 6, 14–15, 17a), "thou" (13:1; 22:1), or "they" (13:2c; 22:7–8, 12–13, 16, 17b–18);
- the *request for help* (13:3–4; 22:11, 19–21);
- the *affirmation of trust* (13:5; 22:3–5, 9–10);
- the *vow to praise God* when the crisis is past (13:6; 22:22–31).

When the *affirmation of trust* dominates, the psalm may be called an Individual Psalm of Trust: 11; 16; 23; 27; 62; 63; 131.

2. Hymns or Songs of Praise (Heb *šēhillā*). Included here are Psalms 8; 19:1–6; 29; 33; 47; 65; 66:1–12; 78; 93; 95–100; 103–6; 111; 113; 114; 117; 134; 135; 136; 145–50.

Many of these hymns begin with a *call to praise* in the imperative plural, summoning the assembled community to praise the Lord (33:1–3; 66:1–4; 100:1–3a; 105:1–6; 111:1; 113:1–3; 117:1; 135:1–3; 136:1a; 146–50). This

imperative makes clear the congregational setting for these psalms. Following the call to praise (113:1–3; 117:1) are *reasons* for the praise (113:4–6; 117:2), which may include God's might and majesty (113:4–5) as well as God's mercy in caring for individual persons (113:6–9).

The theme of God's might as a reason for praise is developed in those psalms which place particular emphasis on the work of God the Creator (8; 19A; 104; 148; cf. 139) or on God's acts in history (78, 105, 106). A number of psalms celebrate God's work in both nature and history (33; 65; 66; 114; 135; 136; 146; 147).

Some psalms are dominated by the imperative call to praise. Psalms 146–50 are each framed with the plural imperative, "Praise the Lord!" The imperative to praise completely controls Psalms 148 and, especially, 150.

The hymns extolling the Kingship of the Lord ("Enthronement Psalms") describe the Lord as King (47; 93; 95–99); a number of these include the declaration, "The Lord reigns" (93:1; 96:10; 97:1; 99:1).

3. Songs of Thanksgiving (Heb *tōdā*). Included here are Psalms 18; 30; 32; (34); 40:1–10; 66:13–20; 92; 116; 118; and 138. These psalms originated as a grateful response to God for a specific act of deliverance, such as healing from illness (30; 32; 116), which may be a physical manifestation of unforgiven sin (32), or deliverance from enemies (18; 92; 118; 138), or simply rescue from trouble (66:14). The title to Psalm 18 indicates how the origin of that particular psalm was understood at the time of the Psalter's editing: "A Psalm of David the servant of the Lord, who addressed the words of this song to the Lord on the day when the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul."

These psalms assume the presence of the congregation, which is gathered either for worship (30:4–5; 34:5, 8, 9; 118:1–4, 24, 29) or for instruction (32:8–11; 34:11–14) and who hear the story of the deliverance (40:9–10; 66:16–19). There are hints indicating how these psalms were used in worship: 118:19–29 assumes a procession, while 66:13–15 and 116:12–19 point to a thank offering accompanying the psalm. In Psalm 138 the worshipper is in the outer court of the temple (v 2).

At the heart of these psalms is the *story of the deliverance*, summarized briefly, "O Lord my God, I cried to thee for help, and thou hast healed me" (30:2; cf. 18:3; 34:4, 6; 40:1–2; 66:19; 92:4; 116:1–2; 118:5; 138:3) and often expanded (18:4–19, 31–45; 30:6–11; 32:3–5; 66:16–19; 92:10–11; 116:3–4, 6–9, 16; 118:10–18).

A psalm of this type has been called a *tōdā*, Hebrew for "thanksgiving" (116:17). The related verb, *yādāh*, occurs frequently in these psalms and is variously translated: 18:49 (RSV "extol"); 30:4 (RSV "give thanks"); 30:9 and 138:4 (RSV "praise"); 32:5 (RSV "confess"); 30:12; 92:1; 118:1, 19, 21, 28, 29; 138:1, 2, (all RSV "give thanks" or "thank," but JPS "praise"). Westermann has argued that the verb *yādāh* should be translated "praise" (cf. JPS) rather than "thank," and on that basis prefers to classify these psalms as "narrative praise of the individual" (1981/25–30; 1989).

A number of psalms express the praise and thanks of the community or groups within the community for God's blessings or for specific acts of deliverance. These may be described as Community Thanksgiving Psalms (Crüse-

mann argues against such a category; 1969: 155–209). Psalm 67 expresses thanks for the blessing of a good harvest (vv 6–7). Psalm 75 gives thanks for "wondrous deeds" (v 1). Psalm 107 tells four stories of deliverance which are the basis for a refrain calling for thanksgiving (vv 4–9, 10–16, 17–22, 23–32). Psalm 124 again tells a story of deliverance, summarized in the doubled "we have escaped" of v 7. Psalm 136 begins with the triple imperative "O give thanks. . . ." (vv 1–3) and continues by reciting God's mighty acts in creation (vv 4–9) and in history (vv 10–25) as a basis for the refrain of every verse, "for his steadfast love endures forever."

4. Royal Psalms. These are psalms composed for an event connected with the life of the king. Included are Psalms 2; 18; 20; 21; 45; 72; 89; 101; 110; 132; and 144:1–11. Psalm 45 was written for a royal wedding. Psalm 2 was intended for a king's coronation, a time when the vassal nations would be considering rebellion (vv 1–3). Psalm 18 is a royal thanksgiving, in which the king expresses gratitude for a victory in battle (vv 6–19, 31–45). Psalm 20 is a prayer for the king's victory before battle; Psalm 21 gives thanks for answered prayers (vv 1–7) and promises future victories (vv 8–12). Psalm 72 is a prayer for the king, probably at the time of his coronation or at its anniversary. Psalm 89 is a lament, a prayer for deliverance from enemies. In Psalm 101 the king promises to rule with loyalty and justice. Psalm 110 again fits a coronation setting. Psalm 132 recalls the divine choice of the Davidic line (vv 11–12, 17–18) and of Zion (vv 13–16). In Ps 114:1–11 the king prays for victory.

These psalms originated during the period of the Monarchy and functioned during that period. After the fall of Jerusalem in 587 B.C., they took on another significance, projecting into the future a description of an ideal king to come (see G.5 below).

5. Songs of Zion. A number of psalms celebrate the Lord's choice of Mt. Zion in Jerusalem as the earthly center of the Lord's presence. These Songs of Zion (for this title, see 137:3) include 46, 48, 76, 84, 87, and 122 (cf. also 132:13). These psalms declare the Lord's presence in Jerusalem (46:7, 11), which is the city of God (46:4–5; 48:8; 76:2; 87:1–3), where beautiful Mt. Zion is located (48:1–3). Ps 48:12–14 suggest a procession around the city walls. Psalm 84 expresses the thoughts of one longing to visit the temple, where even the sparrows find refuge (vv 1–4; cf. v 10); Psalm 122 expresses the joy of a pilgrimage to the city and prays for the peace of Jerusalem.

6. Liturgies. Psalms designed for antiphonal dialogue or which associate liturgical action with the words of the psalm are called Liturgies. Here may be included Psalms 15, 24, 50, (68), 81, (82), 95, 115, 132. Psalm 15 appears to have functioned as a liturgy for entrance into the temple area, with the worshipper asking the question in v 1, "O Lord, who shall sojourn in thy tent?" and the priest responding with the answer in vv 2–5, "He who walks blamelessly, and does what is right. . . ." Psalm 24 is similar, with the worshipper's question in v 3, "Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord?" and the answer in vv 4–6, "He who has clean hands and a pure heart. . . ." Like Psalm 48, this psalm appears to be associated with a procession, probably including the ark. Those outside the temple area make the request, "Lift up your heads, O gates. . . that the King of

glory may come in." Those inside respond with the question, "Who is this King of glory?" and the first group replies, "The Lord, strong and mighty. . ." (vv 7–8). The same exchange is then repeated in vv 9–10.

Three psalms include extensive words from the Lord delivered in liturgical settings. Psalm 50 assumes a ceremony renewing the covenant (vv 5, 16). After a description announcing God's presence, including a word from God delivered by a cultic official gathering the covenant people (v 5), there are further words from God calling for genuine prayer and thanksgiving, instead of a mechanical offering of sacrifices (vv 7–15, 16b–23). The ceremony must have included a recitation of the covenant requirements (as v 16 suggests). Ps 81:1–3 is suited to a worship setting on a "feast day." The main part of the psalm consists of words from the Lord delivered by the proper official, here reminding Israel what the Lord has done (vv 6–7, 10a), recalling their past disobedience (vv 11–12), and calling for new loyalty and obedience (vv 9, 13). Psalm 95 appears to be connected with a procession (vv 1–2) which culminates in bowing before the Lord (v 6). Once again, a divine word spoken by a cultic official calls for obedience (7b–11).

Psalm 68 refers to "solemn processions," described in vv 24–27, while Psalm 82 depicts a legal process where God pronounces judgment on the gods making up the "divine council."

Psalm 115 assumes a variety of voices. One voice (or group) asks the question in vv 1–2, and another answers with vv 3–8; three groups are exhorted and then respond in vv 9–11; the psalm concludes with a word of blessing (14–15) and praise (16–18).

Psalm 118 appears to have been connected with a ceremony entering into the temple area (vv 19–20, 26–27). Psalm 132 may have been used in connection with a procession reenacting David's bringing of the ark (v 8) to Jerusalem and thus celebrating the Lord's choice of David (v 11; cf. the Royal Psalms) and of Zion (v 13; cf. the Songs of Zion).

As one of the "Pilgrimage Psalms," Psalm 121 appears to have been used as a liturgy for travelers, with those going on a journey reciting vv 1–2 and those remaining at home speaking the words of encouragement and blessing in vv 3–8.

7. Wisdom and Torah Psalms. Included here are Psalms 37, 49, 73, 112, 127, 128, 133, and Psalms 1, 19, and 119. One does not hear the tones of either lament or praise in the Wisdom Psalms; for the most part, they are not even addressed to God. Rather, they offer reflections on the possibilities and the problems of life before God and advice on how best to live that life. In so doing, they are linked with the biblical Wisdom Literature (Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes). Wisdom Literature in the Bible is represented by two basic kinds of materials: the short saying (as found in Proverbs and Ecclesiastes) and the longer, reflective essay or drama (Ecclesiastes, Job). Both types are represented in the psalms.

Psalms 127, 128, and 133 are each made up of short sayings, reflecting on such everyday themes as piety and daily work (127:1; 128:1–2), the balance between work and rest (127:2), and the blessings of life together as a family (127:3–5; 128) and as a community of believers (133).

Psalm 37 (an acrostic) presents the thoughts of an older person (v 25) to one who is discouraged because of the apparent triumphs of the wrongdoers. Psalm 73 deals with the same theme, now in the words of one who had almost lost faith because of the prosperity of the wicked (vv 2–13); this psalm concludes with words of trust and praise addressed to God (vv 21–28). Psalm 49 offers a meditation (v 3) on wealth and wisdom. Psalm 112 is again acrostic, reflecting on the blessings of those who fear the Lord and the emptiness of the lives of the wicked.

Closely related are the Torah Psalms, which focus on the importance of instruction or *tôrâ* (Psalms 1: 19; 119) in the life of piety. Psalm 1 introduces the entire Psalter by commending meditation on the teaching of the Lord as the way to the blessed life, here imaged by a tree, deeply rooted and prospering. Psalm 19 is likewise identified as a meditation (v 14). The first part is a hymnlike affirmation of God the Creator, and the second part revels in the desirability of the Lord's instruction (*tôrâ*, testimony, precepts, etc.), described as "sweeter than honey." The acrostic Psalm 119 is unique in the literature of the Bible. After the introduction (vv 1–3) it addresses the Lord, praying for insight into the wonders of the Lord's teaching (v 18). Again, it commends meditation and reflection on the Lord's works (v 27), statutes (v 48), promises (v 148), and instruction (*tôrâ*, vv 97–105). Such meditation is a joy (vv 97, 103) and furnishes direction for the walk of the believer, pictured as a sojourner on this earth (vv 1, 19, 35, 105), even as a sheep who has lost its way (v 176).

G. Theological Themes

What do these psalms say about God, God and people, and God and the universe?

1. "The Teaching of the Lord is His Delight." Psalms 1 and 2 provide an introduction to the Psalter as a whole. Psalm 1 speaks of meditating on the "torah of the Lord." The Hebrew *hâgâh*, translated "meditate," denotes the contented growing of a lion anticipating a feast after prey has been captured (Isa 31:4), the cooing of a dove (Isa 38:14), or the rumbling of thunder (Job 37:2). The notion in Psalm 1 is the sound one of reading, studying, and pondering the instruction of the Lord as written down in Scripture; since the book of Psalms is being introduced, the reference is to reading and reflecting on the psalms. This sort of meditation takes place "day and night" (cf. 63:6). The modern equivalent would be to speak of "theological reflection" upon Scripture.

This reading and reflecting is described as a delight (Ps 1:2), using the same vocabulary as that employed to describe the delight of a lover with a beloved (Gen 34:19) or the preciousness of jewels (Isa 54:12). Other Torah Psalms also refer to the joy of the study of Scripture. Psalm 19 speaks of Torah, the Lord's written instruction, as "sweeter also than honey, and drippings of the honeycomb" (vv 7, 10). Psalm 119 says, "O, how I love thy Torah! It is my meditation all the day" (v 97) (Luther catches the spirit of this delight in the study of Scripture in his comments on Psalm 1:

It is the mode and nature of all who love, to chatter, sing, think, compose, and frolic freely about what they love and to enjoy hearing about it. Therefore this lover,

this blessed man, has his love, the Law of God, always in his mouth, always in his heart and, if possible, always in his ear (*Luther's Works* 14: 297–98).

The person who takes such delight in the study of Scripture—here the Psalms—is compared to a sturdy and productive tree, planted by a river (1:3).

The images evoked by Psalm 2 are in sharp contrast. The first psalm suggests individual meditation on the teachings of the Lord; the second uses the same verb, *hâgâh*, in reference to the plotting and conspiring of nations against the Lord and the Lord's chosen king. This second psalm makes an abrupt move from the world of private individual meditation into that of public international intrigue. Psalm 2 suggests that the devout and delightful study described in Psalm 1 takes place in a world where "the nations so furiously rage together," where their armies dash one another to pieces like weapons of iron smashing clay pots (v 9). But this is also a world where the Lord is ruling through the Lord's anointed or messiah (v 2), and where the oppressed may find refuge with the Lord (2:12).

Taken together, these psalms set the tone and suggest the direction for reflection on the psalms that follow. Those who engage in such meditation will find joy in so doing, and will be well nourished and productive, like trees planted by the riverside. But this theological reflection is not done in isolation. It takes place in the context of a world where nations plot and engage in war, a world, nevertheless, ruled by the Lord and where those who are hurting can find refuge in God.

Consideration of these two introductory psalms suggests a procedure for organizing theological reflection on the psalms that follow. First, what theological themes are introduced in other psalms that speak of meditation on the Lord and the Lord's teaching (such as Psalms 19, 77 and 49)? What do the psalms say about God and the individual (Psalm 1)? Then, what do they say about God and God's people in the context of the nations of the world (Psalm 2)? What do the psalms say about the problems of those who are seeking refuge and who are suffering (2:12)? And finally, what about the Lord's anointed or messiah (Psalm 2)?

2. "O Lord, My Rock and My Redeemer." Psalm 19 offers the results of meditation (v 14) upon the work of God in creation (vv 1–6) and upon the revelation of God in torah or Scripture (vv 7–13). The one who has been considering these things concludes with a prayer naming the Lord, "my rock and my redeemer" (v 14). These two metaphors suggest two assertions about God that run throughout the Psalter, especially the psalms of lament, trust, and thanksgiving: God protects and provides security for the individual, and God delivers those who are hurting from situations of crisis.

The final line of Ps 2:12, "Blessed are all who take refuge in him," links with 1:1 but also points ahead to the psalms which follow. Those needing refuge are those who are experiencing crisis. The Psalter begins with a gathering of prayers of individuals in such times of crisis, so that the bulk of Book I consists of Individual Laments. Individual Laments continue through the Psalter so that they

make up about one-third of the psalms, forming the backbone of the Psalter.

What do these laments (and the closely related Psalms of Trust) assert or assume about God? A good number of them portray God with pictures that denote security for a person in a situation of distress. The largest single group of metaphors and similes describing God are in this category (see E.5 above). The psalmist asserts that God is a rock, a place of safety and security (18:2, 31, 46; 19:14); or he may pray that God be such a place of security (31:2). In a number of instances, several similar figures are clustered together, describing God as rock, fortress, shield, horn of salvation, stronghold (18:2) or as refuge, rock of refuge, fortress, and rock (71:1–3). To be "set . . . high upon a rock" means to be in a place of security and hiding; it is God who provides such a place (27:5). Common to these variations on the theme of God as rock is the trustworthiness of God; in 91:2 God is addressed as refuge and fortress and then the statement is made, "my God in whom I trust." There are more metaphors and similes in this broad category than in any other, primarily because the Psalter contains such a large collection of prayers coming from individuals who are in a situation of crisis and who need a person to help and a place where they can find security.

The Psalms of Trust (see F.1 above) speak of the Lord with a variety of imagery. The Lord is the place where the hurting take refuge (11:1; 16:1; cf. 2:12). The Lord is a shepherd who guides and comforts his sheep or a gracious host who provides a banquet in the midst of danger (Psalm 23). The Lord is a rock, refuge, and fortress (62:2, 6–7), or like a mother providing peace and safety for a nursing child (Psalm 131). The Lord is even compared to a bird, under whose wings the faithful can find both security and joy (63:7).

These psalms assert that the Lord provides security, but they also describe the Lord as one who rescues from distress; in metaphorical language, the Lord is rock but also redeemer (19:14). The laments describe a variety of situations of distress: those praying may be ill (Psalms 61; 32; 102) or lonely (102:7), harassed by enemies making false accusations (3; 4; 5; 7) or plagued by sin (40; 51; 130; see C.1 above). The "request for help" sections of the individual laments pray for deliverance out of such situations. When deliverance comes, the psalms of praise and thanksgiving tell the congregation the story of what God has done (30:2; 34:4) and invite them to discover God's goodness (34:8) and to join in singing God's praises (30:4–5; see F.3 above for further references).

3. "What God Is Great Like Our God?" Psalm 77 also makes reference to meditating upon the deeds of the Lord or, in modern terms, to "theological reflection." In this instance the reflection is done during a time of great personal difficulty, so that the psalmist can even ask, "Has God forgotten to be gracious?" (v 9). In thinking about what God has done, this psalmist makes a number of assertions which are central to the theology of the Psalter. First, the God of Israel is incomparable: "What god is great like our God?" he asks (v 13). Second, this God has rescued the people of Israel from bondage in Egypt, leading them through the sea and through the wilderness (vv 15, 19–20). Finally, this God also has control over

nature, turning back the sea, sending rain, thunder, lightning, and earthquake (vv 16–18). In other words, the psalmist speaks of God as unique, as acting in the history of nations, and also as active in the events of nature. These themes are played upon throughout the Psalter, especially in the hymns (see F.2 above).

The most explicit OT statements declaring the Lord to be the only God are found in Isaiah 40–44 (44:6–8; 45:5–7; etc.). A number of statements in the Kingship of the Lord Psalms, however, point in the same direction, declaring that the Lord is king over the whole earth (47:2, 7, 8; 95:3–5; 97:1–5; 99:2) and over heaven and earth (103:19–22), that other gods are mere idols (96:4–5), and the Lord will judge the whole earth (96:13; 98:9).

These hymns celebrate what the Lord has done in Israel's history, telling "to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might" (78:4). They center on the events of the Exodus and leading through the wilderness (78; 105; 106; cf. also Psalms 75; 107; and 124, which give thanks for specific acts of deliverance). The Kingship of the Lord Psalms cited above assert that the Lord rules over all the nations and is active in their histories as well; note also other references to the Lord judging the nations, such as 7:8; 9:8, 19; 58:11; 82:8. Some of the hymns celebrate the Lord's mighty acts in both history and in nature, including God's work in creation (33; 65; 66; 114; 135; 136; 146; 147).

God's work in creation is the theme of another group of hymns. The psalmists are astonished at the universe, "the work of thy fingers" (8:3), calling the attention of the witness of the created order to the Creator (19:1–6), reveling in the wonders of this earth (104), marveling at the forming of an individual person (139:13–18), and calling upon everything that breathes to join in praise to God (148; 150). These hymns praise God not only for creating the world and the universe, but also for maintaining and blessing that world (e.g., Psalm 104; cf. also Psalms 65 and 67, giving thanks for a good harvest and for blessings).

4. "Human Beings Are Like the Beasts That Perish." Psalm 49 is another psalm explicitly offering the results of "theological reflection," this time identified as "the meditation of my heart" (v 3). This and other Wisdom Psalms deal with the great mysteries of life and death. These reflections are here offered to rich and poor alike (v 2). The writer of this psalm is being persecuted by certain persons who are wealthy (vv 5–6). Consideration of this situation leads to two conclusions. First, the wealthy cannot buy eternal life (vv 7–9) nor will they take their wealth with them after death (v 17); they will die, like all human beings, even those who are wise (vv 10, 18–19). Second comes a more comprehensive conclusion, repeated as a refrain: human beings cannot survive their splendor but are like the beasts that perish (vv 12, 20). There is, however, a word of hope: if humans cannot ransom themselves from death's power, God can and will do so (v 15).

Other wisdom psalms also reflect on life's mysteries. Psalm 37 is addressed from the perspective of age and experience (v 25) to those disturbed by the prosperity of the wicked (v 1). Such prosperity is only temporary (vv 10, 12–13, 17, 35–36), and the wicked will soon come to an end (vv 2, 9, 20, 38). In the meantime, those bothered by

the inequalities of life should not worry but be patient (vv 1, 7, 8, 34) and find their security with the Lord (vv 39–40). Psalm 73 also deals with the problem of the success of the wicked, telling in an autobiographical fashion of one who had almost slipped away from the community of the faithful because of that problem (vv 1–14; note vv 2, 13). The psalmist kept the problem to himself, though it wore away at him (vv 15–16). In his ordinary attendance at community worship (v 17), he gained perspective and understanding, even the assurance that he was still with God and would always be so (vv 23–26). Finally, the psalmist claims God as his refuge and promises to continue to tell of what God has done (v 28). Wisdom Psalms also comment on the blessings of life in the midst of the community of worshippers (Psalm 133) and of family (127; 128).

5. "I Have Set My King on Zion." The theme of the Lord's anointed or messiah is introduced early in the Psalter, with Ps 2:2. Forming a double-psalm introduction to the Psalter, Psalm 2 is closely linked to Psalm 1, which speaks about theological reflection or meditation.

Psalm 2 is the first of the Royal Psalms, scattered throughout the Psalter. During the time of the Monarchy, these psalms functioned in connection with events in the life of the king. They articulate some extravagant hopes for the monarch. He is described as the Lord's son (2:7) and firstborn (89:27), from the line of David (89:20–37; 132:11–12; 144:9–10). He will be victorious in battle (21:7–12; 132:18; 144:10–11) and rule the nations of the earth (2:7–9; 72:8–11). Psalm 72 prays that the king might rule with justice and righteousness (vv 1–4, 7), which means special concern for the poor (vv 12–14); that he might bring prosperity and peace (vv 3 and 7, both translating Heb *šālôm*); and that he might rule forever (v 5; cf. 45:6). Ps 110:1 describes the king ("my lord") as seated at the right hand of Yahweh, victorious over all enemies, also identifying him as a priest (v 4). Many of these psalms speak of the king as being "anointed" (45:7; 89:20) or as the "anointed" (2:2; 18:50; 20:6; 89:38, 51; 132:10, 17).

After 587 B.C., there were no more kings in Jerusalem; nevertheless, the extravagant hopes articulated in these psalms remained and were projected into the future, describing an ideal anointed one, a messiah, who would finally bring about righteousness, justice, and *šālôm*. In this way these Royal Psalms became the seedbed out of which grew Israel's messianic hope. The prophets picked up these messianic themes and developed them (Isa 9:1–7; 11:1–10; Jer 23:1–8; Micah 5:2–6; Zech 9:9–10); and the NT declares that these promises find their fulfillment in Jesus of Nazareth, naming him the anointed one or (from the Greek *Christos*) the Christ (Matt 16:13–20; Mark 8:27–30; Luke 9:18–22; etc.).

Thus, the book of Psalms sounds the major theological themes that run throughout the OT and carry over into the NT. Luther perhaps understood this when he wrote the following as the introduction to his translation of the Psalms in his German Bible:

[The Psalter] might well be called a little Bible. In it is comprehended most beautifully and briefly everything that is in the entire Bible. It is really a fine enchainment or handbook. In fact, I have a notion that the Holy Spirit

wanted to take the trouble himself to compile a short Bible and book of examples of all Christendom or all saints, so that anyone who could not read the whole Bible would here have anyway almost an entire summary of it, comprised in one little book (*Luther's Works* 35:254).

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PSALMS, SYRIAC (APOCRYPHAL). The Syriac Apocryphal Psalms are found numbered consecutively from 151 to 155—subsequent to the canonical psalms—in a 12th-century Nestorian manuscript of the Psalter in Syriac. In all later Syriac mss where all five psalms appear together, these psalms are found in an order different from that of the oldest extant manuscript: 151 (also designated as Psalm I), 154 (II), 155 (III), 152 (IV), and 153 (V). These psalms are also found as filler material between parts one and two of *The Book of Discipline*, a theological treatise by Bishop Elijah, a Syrian church father who lived during the first half of the 10th century C.E. Three of these psalms (151, 154, and 155) are also found in the Psalms Scroll from Qumran Cave 11 (11QP^s). Additionally, Psalm 151 is found in Greek, Latin, Coptic, Arabic, Armenian, and Ethiopic versions.

Psalm 151 is found in Hebrew (11QP^s) as two separate psalms known as 151A and 151B. The Psalms Scroll is badly damaged where 151B is found, so that all that is left is the heading, half of verse 1, and a few letters of verse 2. The Greek and Syriac verses 6 and 7 seem to correspond in theme to the heading of 151B; however, Psalm 151B was probably much longer than these two Syriac and Greek verses indicate. Psalm 151 in the later versions is dependent on the Greek. The Greek is an obvious conflation and condensation of the Hebrew 151A and 151B, so that

it portrays a drastic change in the text of the Hebrew. This change probably occurred in the Hebrew version.

Psalm 151A has undergone considerable controversy as to its translation and theology. Two verses of Hebrew 151A are absent from the Syriac and the Greek versions. Some scholars posit that these lines were intentionally edited from the original work because of Orphic influences. From this perspective the translation proclaims that the hills and the mountains do not witness to God, a nonbiblical statement. Other scholars view the psalm as being very biblical in style and theology. In this view, the psalm forms a chiasmus in structure and theme, which provides a key to its translation and interpretation. The disputed verses are thus read: "Do not the mountains bear witness to me," or "O, that the mountains would bear witness to me." It is an autobiographical psalm relating the praise of David after his election as king over Israel. The Greek and Syriac versions are not completely coherent. This psalm could be dated to the 6th century B.C.E., or earlier, on stylistic grounds; but it contains certain phrases which suggest a later date.

Psalm 152, an individual lament, and Psalm 153, a thanksgiving hymn, are both chiasmus, and relate the cries and thanks, respectively, of the psalmist upon the crisis of and deliverance from the threat of death. The psalms imitate the autobiographical style of Psalm 151A and deal heavily with the themes of death and rendering thanks. The psalms may have had Hebrew originals, but most likely, they were originally composed in Syriac imitating the Hebrew style. Therefore, they can be dated much later than Psalm 151A.

Psalm 154 could have been originally two independent psalms (a call to worship and a thanksgiving hymn) which were combined together by a redactor. If this is the case, a remarkable cohesiveness existed between the two psalms, enabling them to form a final psalm with a significant degree of internal integrity. Some scholars argue for the unity of the composition of Psalm 154. If this is the case, the author took great care to compose a psalm which easily could have been two individual psalms of integrity. It is possible that an editor composed a second psalm around or within a preexisting psalm. This alternative allows for the integrity of an individual smaller composition without relegating the unifying elements to chance. In this psalm, "Wisdom" is personified, and the faithful praise of God is exhorted. Although the psalm contains no elements unique to Qumran, several phrases and themes are congruent with Qumranic ideas. The psalm may be Proto-Essenen in origin. This psalm probably arose in the second quarter of the 2d century B.C.E.

Some scholars argue that Psalm 155 is the combination of two smaller psalms. Within the psalm is found an alphabetic acrostic from *he* to *pe*. According to this view, the original acrostic portion from *'alep* to *he* was mutilated and then inserted into another psalm. Other scholars provide a convincing argument for a unified psalm and argue that the acrostic can be seen from *'alep* to *he* with minor reconstructions of the text, if one views the first stanza as containing shorter metrical units. The psalm contains three stanzas, which move from staccato cries for deliverance in the first stanza to the repentant desire of the psalmist to be taught God's ways in the second stanza.

The third stanza is a thanksgiving praise to God for the deliverance sought in section one, and experienced in section two. The psalm is biblical in style and theology and is difficult to date. This psalm probably arose during the 2d century B.C.E.

These psalms and their presence within the Psalms Scroll (11QP^s) have been significant for the discussion of the formation of the Psalter canon. Some scholars view the Qumran Psalms Scroll as evidence of the slow formation and canonization of the last third of the Psalter. Others see the scroll as an example of an early hymnbook or liturgical Psalter which existed apart from the history of the Psalter formation. The psalms are also significant for determining characteristics of late Jewish psalmody. During this period the breakdown in conventional psalm forms can be seen, and the use of borrowed biblical materials is evident. Traditional structuring devices were still in use, such as the alphabetic acrostic and chiasmus.

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PSALTER. See PSALMS, BOOK OF.

PSEUDEPIGRAPHIA, OT. A modern collection of ancient writings that are essential reading for an understanding of early Judaism (ca. 250 B.C.E. to 200 C.E.) and of Christian origins. Many of these documents were compiled or composed by Jews, while others were written by Jews but eventually were expanded or rewritten by Christians. A few seem to have been composed by Christians who depended with varying degrees on pre-70 Jewish documents or oral traditions. Almost always the Pseudepigrapha are influenced by the so-called OT: many supply revelations reputed to have been received by persons prominent in the OT; others are rewritten versions or expansions of biblical narratives; some are psalms that are occasionally modeled on the Davidic Psalter; and a few are compositions shaped by Jewish Wisdom Literature. Although these writings were composed long after Abraham, Moses, David, Solomon, Jeremiah, Isaiah, Ezra, and other famous men, they were often intentionally but incorrectly (pseudepigraphically) attributed to one of them.

Copies of *Jubilees*, *1 Enoch*, and the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* were found among the Dead Sea Scrolls. These fragments enable us for the first time to date these and related documents with some assurance. *Jubilees* and *1 Enoch* clearly predate 70 C.E. The *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* in its Greek and Armenian recensions is clearly Christian, but early Semitic fragments of some testaments show that at least portions of this document are Jewish.