

Theme: The book of Psalms is purposefully structured, and this helps us to understand the meaning of the book.

I. Intro – A Series on the Psalms

A. Quotes about the Psalms

1. Luther – bible in one book
2. Calvin – anatomy of the soul
3. Augustine learned prayer here

B. Overview of series

1. Begin with intro to give structure, message
2. Will give overview of various types of Psalms
3. Talk about how to use Psalms in our walk

C. Today: structure of the book

1. Most of us think there is no structure!
2. Psalms are not randomly thrown together
3. Not every Psalm, but there is a flow
4. This structure helps us understand Psalms

II. The Grand Structure: Five Books

A. The book broken down into 5 books

1. 1-41; 42-72; 73-89; 90-106; 107-150

2. Doxology ends (41:13; 72:18-19; 89:52; 106:48; 145-150)

B. These 5 books point us to the Torah

1. Midrash Tehillim – Relation
2. Recognized by most commentators – D&L
3. Psalm 1 – intro to Book - points to Torah
4. Psalm 119 – longest in book - points to Torah
5. Psalms teaches us how to pray/live Torah

III. The Grand Theme: Praise the Lord

A. Praise is the Message of the title

1. English – from **ΨΑΛΜΟΣ** and פָּלַח - pluck/sing
2. Hebrew title - תְּהִלָּה - praises
3. תְּהִלָּה – 57 titles (3-6); פָּלַח – 1 title (145); 30x in all

B. Praises rather than Lamentations?

1. Lamentations already taken! (joke)
2. Praise is dominant note – Futato
3. Yet far more laments than praise psalms!
4. Why the book of praises?

C. Praise is the Message of the Book

1. The book moves from Lamentation to praise
 - a. Book begins with laments (3,4,5,6,7,10,12,13)
 - b. Book ends with praise (145-150)
 - c. Each sub-book ends with praise (see above)
2. Lamentation Psalms - from lament to praise
 - a. Begin with a great cry (Psalm 22:1-2)
 - b. End with great praise (Psalm 22:22-23)

IV. Conclusion & Summary

A. The Psalms teach us to look to God's Word

1. They correspond to Torah – God's instruction
2. To understand worship – look to Word
3. To live life – look to Word
4. When life is inscrutable – look to Word
5. To know God – look to Word

B. The Psalms teach us about worship

1. Worship includes all emotions (Futato)
2. There is a place for laments!

3. However, praise is dominant note (Futato)

4. Worship normally ends with praise

The Structure of the Book of Psalms

Psalm 150

October 5, 2003

Response: Doxology OR That's Why We Praise Him

Benediction: 2 Corinthians 13:14

The book of Psalms is “a little Bible, and the summary of the Old Testament.” Martin Luther, quoted in Dillard & Longman, 227.

The Psalter is “the anatomy of all the parts of the soul, for not an affection will anyone find in himself whose image is not reflected in this mirror. All the griefs, sorrows, fears, misgivings, hopes, cares, anxieties, in short all the disquieting emotions with which the minds of men are wont to be agitated, the Holy Spirit hath here pictured exactly.” John Calvin – in Childs, 523.

The Psalms “summed up, for Augustine, the one true way in which every human being should talk to God, as this had been shown by King David at his prayers. Impassioned, insistent, even downright argumentative, the words of David were those of the one, divinely inspired master of prayer known to Augustine.” – Peter Brown, Intro to Augustine’s *Confessions*, xii.

13 Praise be to the LORD, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Amen and Amen. Psalm 41:13

18 Praise be to the LORD God, the God of Israel, who alone does marvelous deeds. 19 Praise be to his glorious name forever; may the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and Amen. Psalm 72:18-19

52 Praise be to the LORD forever! Amen and Amen. Psalm 89:52

48 Praise be to the LORD, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Let all the people say, “Amen!” Praise the LORD. Psalm 106:48

“Moses gave Israel the five books, and David gave Israel the five books of Psalms” – Midrash Tehillim – quoted in Mays, 15.

The fivefold division [of the book of Psalms] is an attempt to mirror the fivefold Pentateuch. Dillard and Longman, *An Intro to the OT*, 226.

Praise is the dominant note not only in this final song but also of the Book of Psalms as a whole. Futato, *Transformed by Praise*, 3.

O LORD, how many are my foes! How many rise up against me! Psalm 3:1

Answer me when I call to you, O my righteous God. Give me relief from my distress; be merciful to me and hear my prayer. Psalm 4:1

Give ear to my words, O LORD, consider my sighing. 2 Listen to my cry for help, my King and my God, for to you I pray. Psalm 5:1-2

O LORD, do not rebuke me in your anger or discipline me in your wrath. 2 Be merciful to me, LORD, for I am faint; O LORD, heal me, for my bones are in agony. 3 My soul is in anguish. How long, O LORD, how long? Psalm 6:1-3

O LORD my God, I take refuge in you; save and deliver me from all who pursue me, 2 or they will tear me like a lion and rip me to pieces with no one to rescue me. Psalm 7:1-2

1 Why, O LORD, do you stand far off? Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble? Psalm 10:1

Help, LORD, for the godly are no more; the faithful have vanished from among men. Psalm 12:1

How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? 2 How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and every day have sorrow in my heart? How long will my enemy triumph over me? Psalm 13:1-2

I will exalt you, my God the King; I will praise your name for ever and ever. Psalm 145:1

1 Praise the LORD. Praise the LORD, O my soul. 2 I will praise the LORD all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live. Psalm 146:1-2

1 Praise the LORD. How good it is to sing praises to our God, how pleasant and fitting to praise him! Psalm 147:1

1 Praise the LORD. Praise the LORD from the heavens, praise him in the heights above. Psalm 148:1

1 Praise the LORD. Sing to the LORD a new song, his praise in the assembly of the saints. Psalm 149:1

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from the words of my groaning? 2 O my God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer, by night, and am not silent. Psalm 22:1-2

22 I will declare your name to my brothers; in the congregation I will praise you. 23 You who fear the LORD, praise him! All you descendants of Jacob, honor him! Revere him, all you descendants of Israel! Psalm 22:22-23

“The Book of Psalms also teaches us about balance and emphasis in our worship. It teaches us that it is appropriate for our worship to provide us with opportunities to express all of life’s experiences: the lamentation and the praise, the negative and the positive.” Futato, 14-15

“The overall shape of the book [of Psalms] teaches us that our worship is to be doxological. This means that the dominant and perhaps even the final note of our worship is ordinarily to be praise.” Futato, 14