

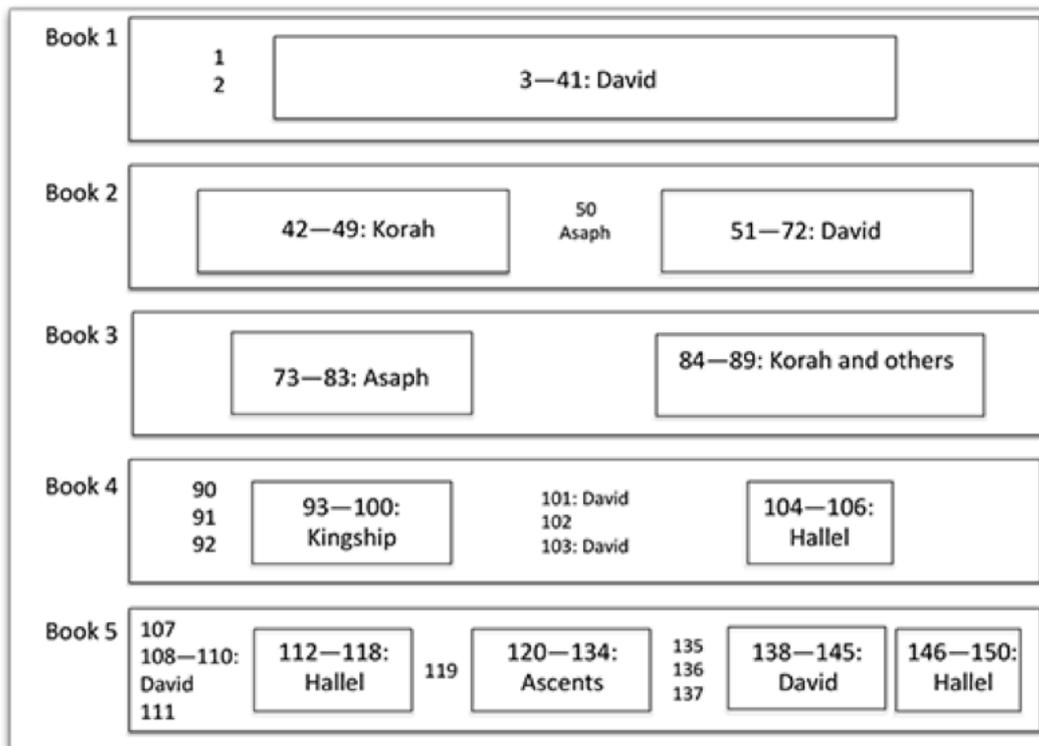
The Psalms

Psalm 1

Sequence

- The Layout of the Psalter again
- Psalm 1
- Wisdom Psalms
- Noticing things (Parallelism, imagery, Old Testament links)
- Layout of Psalm 1
- Old Testament echoes
- New Testament resonances
- The Portico of the Psalter
- Jesus Christ the apple tree

The Layout of the Psalter again



Psalm 1 (New Jerusalem Bible)

- Ps 1:1 How blessed is anyone
 who rejects the advice of the wicked
 and does not take a stand in the path that sinners tread,
 nor a seat in company with cynics,
- 2 but who delights in the law of Yahweh
 and murmurs his law day and night.
- Ps 1:3 Such a one is like a tree planted near streams;
 it bears fruit in season
 and its leaves never wither,
 and every project succeeds.
- 4 How different the wicked, how different!
- 5 Just like chaff blown around by the wind
 the wicked will not stand firm at the Judgement

6 nor sinners in the gathering of the upright.
For Yahweh watches over the path of the upright,
but the path of the wicked is doomed.

Wisdom Psalms

- These psalms refer specifically to God's torah or "instruction/law" (1; 19; 119).
- Psalm 119, the lengthiest psalm, is singularly devoted to the efficacy of divinely established instruction.
- Instruction is also what the didactic psalms provide: they function to instruct the reader about life before God.
- Diverse though they are, such psalms include at least 32; 34; 37; 49; 73; and (111) 112, if not others.
- All either adopt a tone of didactic prescription at some point in the psalm (e.g., 32:9; 34:12-15; 37:8; 49:16-17) or provide a profile of virtuous conduct or appropriated wisdom (e.g., 73; 112).

Ps 25:0 Of David

1 **ADORATION** I offer, Yahweh, **2** to you, my God.
BUT in my trust in you do not put me to shame,
let not my enemies gloat over me.

3 **CALLING** to you, none shall ever be put to shame,
but shame is theirs who groundlessly break faith.

4 **DIRECT** me in your ways, Yahweh, and teach me your paths.

5 **ENCOURAGE** me to walk in your truth
and teach me since you are the God who saves me.

FOR my hope is in you all day long— [7c] such is your generosity, Yahweh.

6 **GOODNESS** and faithful love have been yours for ever, Yahweh,
do not forget them.

7 **HOLD** not my youthful sins against me,
but remember me as your faithful love dictates.

8 **INTEGRITY** and generosity are marks of Yahweh
for he brings sinners back to the path.

9 **JUDICIOUSLY** he guides the humble, instructing the poor in his way.

10 **KINDNESS** unfailing and constancy mark all Yahweh's paths,
for those who keep his covenant and his decrees.

11 **LET** my sin, great though it is, be forgiven, Yahweh, for the sake of your name.

12 **MEN** who respect Yahweh, what of them?
He teaches them the way they must choose.

13 **NEIGHBOURS** to happiness will they live, and their children inherit the land.

14 **ONLY** those who fear Yahweh have his secret and his covenant,
for their understanding.

15 **PERMANENTLY** my eyes are on Yahweh, for he will free my feet from the snare.

16 **QUICK**, turn to me, pity me, alone and wretched as I am!

17 **RELIEVE** the distress of my heart, bring me out of my constraint.

18 **SPARE** a glance for my misery and pain, take all my sins away.

19 **TAKE** note how countless are my enemies, how violent their hatred for me.

20 **UNLESS** you guard me and rescue me I shall be put to shame,
for you are my refuge.

21 **VIRTUE** and integrity be my protection, for my hope, Yahweh, is in you.

22 Ransom Israel, O God, from all its troubles.

Psalm 1 (Jewish Publication Society)

- Ps 1:1 Happy is the man
 who has not followed the counsel of the wicked,
 or taken the path of sinners,
 or joined the company of the insolent;
- 2 rather, the teaching of the LORD is his delight,
 and he studies that teaching day and night.
- 3 He is like a tree planted beside streams of water,
 which yields its fruit in season,
 whose foliage never fades,
 and whatever bit produces thrives.
- 4 Not so the wicked;
 rather, they are like chaff that wind blows away.
- 5 Therefore the wicked will not survive judgment,
 nor will sinners, in the assembly of the righteous.
- 6 For the LORD cherishes the way of the righteous,
 but the way of the wicked is doomed.

- Parallelism
- Imagery / metaphors
- Old Testament links

Layout of Psalm 1

I: *the just mind and his way* (vv. 1-3)
 Thematic declaration (v. 1a)
 Negatively x 3 (v. 1b-d)
 Positively x 2 (v. 2)
 Symbolically (x 4) (v. 3)

II: *the evil and his way* (vv. 4-6)
 Thematic declaration (v. 4a)
 Negatively x 3 (vv. 4b-5)

Concluding contrast (v. 6)

Symbolism: the two ways

Jer 21:8 “But tell the people of Jerusalem that the LORD says, ‘I will give you a choice between two courses of action. One will result in life; the other will result in death.

Prov 1:10 My child, if sinners try to entice you, do not consent! 15 My child, do not go down their way, withhold yourself from their path;

Prov 4:18 But the path of the righteous is like the bright morning light, growing brighter and brighter until full day. **19** The way of the wicked is like gloomy darkness; they do not know what causes them to stumble.

Deut 30:15 “Look! I have set before you today life and prosperity on the one hand, and death and disaster on the other. **19** Today I invoke heaven and earth as a witness against you that I have set life and death, blessing and curse, before you. Therefore choose life so that you and your descendants may live!

Symbolism: trees

Ps 37:35 I have seen ruthless evil men growing in influence, like a green tree grows in its native soil.

Ps 52:8 But I am like a flourishing olive tree in the house of God; I continually trust in God’s loyal love.

Ps 92:12 The godly grow like a palm tree; they grow high like a cedar in Lebanon. **13** Planted in the LORD’s house, they grow in the courts of our God. **14** They bear fruit even when they are old; they are filled with vitality and have many leaves.

Jer 17:7 My blessing is on those people who trust in me, who put their confidence in me. **8** They will be like a tree planted near a stream whose roots spread out toward the water. It has nothing to fear when the heat comes. Its leaves are always green. It has no need to be concerned in a year of drought. It does not stop bearing fruit.

Symbolism: chaff

Job 21:18 How often are they like straw before the wind, and like chaff swept away by a whirlwind?

Ps 35:5 May they be like wind-driven chaff, as the LORD’s angel attacks them!

Isa 33:11 You conceive straw, you give birth to chaff; your breath is a fire that destroys you.

Jer 4:11 “At that time the people of Judah and Jerusalem will be told, ‘A scorching wind will sweep down from the hilltops in the desert on my dear people. It will not be a gentle breeze for winnowing the grain and blowing away the chaff.

Hos 13:3 Therefore they will disappear like the morning mist, like early morning dew that evaporates, like chaff that is blown away from a threshing floor, like smoke that disappears through an open window.

Symbolism: blessedness

Ps 84:4 How blessed are those who live in your temple and praise you continually! 5 How blessed are those who find their strength in you, and long to travel the roads that lead to your temple!

Ps 84:12 O LORD who rules over all, how blessed are those who trust in you!

Ps 89:15 How blessed are the people who worship you! O LORD, they experience your favour.

Ps 94:12 How blessed is the one whom you instruct, O LORD, the one whom you teach from your law...

Ps 106:3 How blessed are those who promote justice, and do what is right all the time!

Ps 119:1 How blessed are those whose actions are blameless, who obey the law of the LORD. **2** How blessed are those who observe his rules, and seek him with all their heart...

Symbolism: other layers

1. *Judgment*

Harvest is a natural language for judgment — the time of sorting the grain and the chaff.

2. *Stable / unstable*

Tree planted, with water v. chaff, wind

3. *Cosmic*

Earth, air, water (fire is missing)

4. *Temporal*

Day, night, seasons

5. *Agricultural*

Planting, fruit, leaves, chaff

6. *Individual and the group*

The just is alone at the start, but at the end, there is an assembly of the righteous; the evil person has company at the start, but not at the end.

New Testament resonances

Matt 5:1 When he saw the crowds, he went up the mountain. After he sat down his disciples came to him. **2** Then he began to teach them by saying:

3 “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to them.

4 “Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

5 “Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

6 “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.

7 “Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

8 “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

9 “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the children of God.

10 “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to them.

11 “Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you and say all kinds of evil things about you falsely on account of me. **12** Rejoice and be glad because your reward is great in heaven, for they persecuted the prophets before you in the same way.

Matt 7:13 “Enter through the narrow gate, because the gate is wide and the way is spacious that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. **14** But the gate is narrow and the way is difficult that leads to life, and there are few who find it.

Matt 7:24 “Everyone who hears these words of mine and does them is like a wise man who built his house on rock. **25** The rain fell, the flood came, and the winds beat against that house, but it did not collapse because it had been founded on rock. **26** Everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. **27** The rain fell, the flood came, and the winds beat against that house, and it collapsed; it was utterly destroyed!”

Acts 9:2 and requested letters from him to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any who belonged to the **Way**, either men or women, he could bring them as prisoners to Jerusalem.

Acts 16:17 She followed behind Paul and us and kept crying out, “These men are servants of the Most High God, who are proclaiming to you the **way** of salvation.”

Acts 18:25 He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and with great enthusiasm he spoke and taught accurately the facts about Jesus, although he knew only the baptism of John. **26** He began to speak out fearlessly in the synagogue, but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained the **way** of God to him more accurately.

Acts 19:23 At that time a great disturbance took place concerning the **Way**.

The Portico of the Psalter

- Ps 1:1 **Happy** is the man
who has not **followed** the **counsel** of the wicked, (lit. Walked in)
or taken the **path** of sinners,
or joined the **company** of the insolent;
- 2 **rather**, the **teaching** of the LORD is his **delight**,
and he **studies** that **teaching** day and night.
- 3 He is like a tree **planted** beside streams of water,
which yields its fruit in **season**,
whose foliage never fades,
and whatever bit produces thrives.
- 4 **Not so** the wicked;
rather, they are like **chaff** that **wind** blows away.
- 5 Therefore the wicked will not **survive judgment**, (lit. Stand)
nor will **sinners**, in the **assembly of the righteous**.
- 6 For the LORD **cherishes** the **way** of the righteous,
but the **way** of the wicked is **doomed**.

Jesus Christ the Apple Tree

1. The tree of life my soul hath seen,
Laden with fruit and always green:
The trees of nature fruitless be
Compared with Christ the apple tree.
2. His beauty doth all things excel:
By faith I know, but ne'er can tell
The glory which I now can see
In Jesus Christ the apple tree.
3. For happiness I long have sought,
And pleasure dearly I have bought:
I missed of all; but now I see
'Tis found in Christ the apple tree.
4. I'm weary with my former toil,
Here I will sit and rest awhile:
Under the shadow I will be,
Of Jesus Christ the apple tree.
5. This fruit doth make my soul to thrive,
It keeps my dying faith alive;
Which makes my soul in haste to be
With Jesus Christ the apple tree.

Conversation