

Syllabus

Music is the universal language. This seems to mean that music transcends the mundane matters of language and culture. There is truth to this, though music is very much a part of cultural expression. Songs depend on a particular language for expression, but they also have a remarkably transcendent quality; songs are often sung in a language most of the audience does not understand. Songs use imagery, symbolism, and metaphor to provide for the powerful expression of human emotion. Translation often can hardly be adequate. Songs also transcend the situation of the author and his circumstance; the message is readily reapplied to new situations, over long periods of time, and in new situations. So we readily sing “A Mighty Fortress is our God” with considerable appreciation, even though the song is over 400 years old and is translated from another language. Music and song endure as they adapt to changing times and cultures.

The psalms of the Bible will be studied by keeping these aspects of song in mind. The emphasis will be on types and uses of psalms, and the faith and hope they express. Notice will be taken of the evidences for the reapplication of songs and their use in worship as evidenced in scripture.

Required Texts

Tremper Longman III, *How to Read the Psalms*, Inter-Varsity Press, 1988.

John Goldingay, *Psalms*, 3 vols., Baker Academic, 2006-2008.

Course Requirements

Students are to review the commentary by Goldingay for all psalms studied in class. All written work is to be submitted no later than eight weeks after the completion of the course.

1. Hebrew Poetry (3 pages; 10%)

Read Longman, *How to Read the Psalms*, pages 89-122. Explain parallelism in Hebrew poetry, giving some examples. Contrast the difference between poetry and prose, including ways in which poetry uses images and metaphor. Show how poetry must be read differently than prose to understand its message.

2. The Psalter (3 pages; 10%)

Read Longman, *How to Read the Psalms*, pages 11-85. Give a description of the Psalter,

including something of the process of how it came to be formed. Describe the different kinds of psalms found in the Psalter.

3. Genre of Psalms (10 pages, 40%)

Select a group of approximately 5 psalms that share similar characteristics. Psalms are mostly praise and lament, but within these general categories there are various other more specific groups (e.g. wisdom, confession, kingship, etc.). Use the commentary by Goldingay to help you identify a group of related psalms. They should be related by common structural elements, purpose and function. Compare these psalms; show how familiarity with their common form helps to appreciate the distinct aspect of each psalm.

4. Theology of Psalms (10 pages, 40%)

The psalms are confessions. Select one of the theological topics listed by Goldingay (pp. 70-78). Choose approximately 5 psalms that have a particular affinity within the particular theological topic chosen. Do an exposition of each of these psalms showing how they complement each other to develop the theological theme.

Course Outline

1. The Hebrew Psalter
 - 1.1 The Canonical Form of the Psalter (41, 72, 89, 106)
 - 1.2 The Introduction to the Psalter (1-2)
2. Hebrew Poetry
 - 2.1 Parallelism
 - 2.2 Present Knowledge of Rhythm
 - 2.3 Techniques in Hebrew Poetry
3. Classification of Hebrew Songs
 - 3.1 The Value and Limitations of Form Criticism
 - 3.2 The Structure of Basic Psalm Types
4. Psalms to Live By
 - 4.1 The Dignity and Nature of Human Life (8, 90).
 - 4.2 Perspectives for Life in this World (49, 73).
5. Psalms of Penitence and Forgiveness (6, 38, 51, 32).

- 6. Psalms of Hope (23, 16).
- 7. Psalms of Worship
 - 7.1 Desire for Worship (42-43; 84).
 - 7.2 Psalms of Ascent (120-134)
- 8. Psalms of the Faith of Israel.
 - 8.1 Psalms of Redemption (77-78, 105-106, 114, 135-136).
 - 8.2 Royal Psalms (72, 89, 110).
 - 8.3 Enthronement Psalms (47, 93, 96-99).
- 9. Psalms Fulfilled in Christ
 - 9.1 The Obedience of Christ (Psalm 40).
 - 9.2 The Death of Christ (Psalm 22).
 - 9.3 The Gifts of Christ (Psalm 68).

Select Bibliography

The following bibliography provides an introduction to the Psalms, naming a few important works that may direct one into the vast bibliography available for the psalms. B. S. Childs in *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* provides a list of bibliographical surveys as well as a select bibliography on secondary literature. Further literature on specific psalms studied will be provided in the class notes.

1. Commentaries

- F. Delitzsch, BC, 1871.
- C. A. Briggs, ICC, 1906-7.
- H. Gunkel, HKAT, 1926.
- H. C. Leupold, 1959.
- J. H. Eaton, IVP, 1967.
- M. Dahood, AB, 1966-70.
- H. J. Kraus, BK, 1972.
- A. A. Anderson, NCB, 1972.
- D. Kidner, TOTC, 1975.
- G. A. F. Knight, DSB, 1982.
- D. M. Williams, CC, 1986, 1989.

2. Hebrew Poetry

2.1 Monographs

Alter, Robert. *The Art of Biblical Poetry*. New York: Basic Books, 1985.

Collins, T. *Line Forms in Hebrew Poetry*. Rome: Pontifical Biblical, 1978.

Geller, Stephen A. *Parallelism in Early Biblical Poetry*, HSM 20, 1979.

Gray, G. B. *The Forms of Hebrew Poetry, with Prolegomenon by D. N. Freedman*. Jerusalem: KTAV, 1972.

Kugel, James L. *The Idea of Biblical Poetry*, Yale University Press, 1981.

O'Conner, M. *Hebrew Verse Structure*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1980.

Watson, W.G.E. *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, JSOTSup 26, 1984.

2.2 Articles

Baker, A. "Parallelism: England's Contribution to Biblical Studies." *CBQ* 35 (1973) 429-440.

Craigie, P. "The Poetry of Ugarit and Israel," *TB* 22 (1971) 3-31.

Geller, Stephan A. "Theory and Method in the Study of Biblical Poetry." *JQR* 73 (1982) 65-77.

Kugel, James L. "Some Thoughts on Future Research into Biblical Style: Addenda to The Idea of Biblical Poetry." *JSOT* 28 (1984) 107-117.

Landy, Francis. "Poetics and Parallelism: Some Comments on James Kugel's The Idea of Biblical Poetry." *JSOT* 28 (1984) 61-87.

Miller, Patrick D. Jr. "Meter, Parallelism, and Tropes: The Search for Poetic Style." *JSOT* 28 (1984) 99-106.

Stek, J. "The Stylistics of Hebrew Poetry," *Calvin Theological Journal* 9 (1974) 15-30.

Watson, Wilfred G. E. "A Review of Kugel's The Idea of Biblical Poetry." *JSOT* 28 (1984) 89-98.

3. Form Criticism

3.1 Monographs

Bellinger, W. H. *Psalmody and Prophecy*, JSOTSup 27, 1984.

Gunkel, H. *The Psalms: A Form Critical Introduction*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967.

Langhe, R. de. *Le Psautier. Ses origines. Ses problemes litteraires. Son influence (Orientalia et Biblica Lovaniensia 4)*. Louvain: Universite de Louvain/Institut Orientaliste, 1962.

Mowinckel, S. *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*. 2 Vols. New York: Abingdon Press, 1967.

Westerman, C. *The Praise of God in the Psalms*. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981.

3.2 Articles

Childs, B. S. "Reflections on the Modern Study of the Psalms." In *The Mighty Acts of God. In Memoriam G.E. Wright*, 377-88. Edited by F.M. Cross. Garden City, N.Y., 1976.

Clines, D.J.A. "Psalm Research since 1955: I. The Psalms and the Cult." *TB* 18 (1967)103-25; "II. The Literary Genres" *TB* 20 (1969) 105-25.

Johnson, A.R. "The Psalms." In *The Old Testament and Modern Study*, 162-209. Edited by H. H. Rowley. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1951.

Longman, Tremper III. "Form Criticism, Recent Developments in Genre Theory, and the Evangelical." *WTJ* 47 (1985) 46-67.

_____. "Psalm 98: A Divine Warrior Victory Song." *JETS* 27 (1984) 267-274.

Murphy, R. "A Consideration of the Classification 'Wisdom Psalms,'" *VTSup* 9 (1962) 156-167.

Wevers, John. Wm. "A Study in the Form Criticism of Individual Complaint Psalms." *VT* 6 (1956) 80-96.

4. The Psalter

Day, J. *Psalms. Old Testament Guides*. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990.

Flint, P. W. *The Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls and the Book of Psalms. Studies in the Texts of the Desert of Judah* 17. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1997.

Wilson, Gerald Henry. *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter*. SBL Dissertation Series 76. Chico, California: Scholars Press, 1985.

5. Doctrine in the Psalms

Alexander, D. "The Old Testament View of Life After Death." *Themelios* 11/2 (1986) 41-46.

Burns, J.S. "The Mythology of Death in the Old Testament." *SJT* 26 (1973) 327-40.

Eaton, John. *Kingship and the Psalms*. London: SCM Press, 1976.

Fischer, B. "Zum Problem einer christlichen Interpretation der Psalmen." *TRevT* 61 (1971) 5-12.

Harmon, A.M. Aspects of Paul's Use of the Psalms. *WTJ* 32 (1969) 1-23.

Howard, David M. Jr. "The Case for Kingship in the Old Testament Narrative Books and the Psalms." *TJ* 9 NS (1988) 19-35.

Kraus, H.J. *Theologie der Psalmen*. *BKAT* 15/3. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1979.

Lewis, C. S. *Reflections in the Psalms*. London: Geoffrey Blas, 1958.

Smick, E. "The Bearing of New Philological Data on the Subjects of Resurrection and Immortality in the Old Testament." *WTJ* 31 (1968) 12-21.

Thordarson, T.K. "The Mythic Dimension. Hermeneutical Remarks on the Language of the Psalter." *VT* 24 (1974) 212-40.

Westermann, C. *The Psalms: Structure, Content & Message*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1980.

6. Psalms in Liturgy

Holladay, William L. *The Psalms through Three Thousand Years: Prayerbook of a Cloud of Witnesses*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996.

Hustad, Donald P. "Christian Worship from the Second Century through the Reformation." In *Jubilate! Church Music in the Evangelical Tradition*, pp. 95-119. Carol Stream: Hope Publishing Company, 1981.