
Mapping the Psalms
Week 2: Psalm 1 & 2 – The Beginning
Wednesday Night Church Fall 2024 Series

Sept 11: 1.Kickoff-Intro Pr. R
 Sept 18: 2.
 Sept 25: 3.
 Oct 2: 4.
 Oct 9: 5.
 Oct 16: 6.

Oct 23: 7.
 Oct 30: 8
 Nov 6: 9.
 Nov 13: 10
 Nov 20: 11.
 Nov 27: Thanksgiving Svc

Dec 4: Advent
 Dec 11: WNC Christmas Party
 Dec 18: Campus Worship
 Dec 25: Christmas: No WNC

The Psalms were read and spoken and sung, and must be approached with full sensitivity to the kind of literature they are: lyric poetry.

Witherington, B., III. (2017). *Psalms Old and New: Exegesis, Intertextuality, and Hermeneutics* (pp. xiii – 50). Fortress Press.

When we allow Psalms to be Psalms...

- It strips us bare.
- It is the nakedness of the human heart being expressed to our Almighty Creator.
- CAN I DO THIS?
- Can I approach Psalms this way?

[i.e. Pr. Robin’s testimony of PS27]

From Pr. Robin: **This week:** Figure out some colors for your legend! Start in the Psalms, make it a point to share an encouragement from Psalms with someone in your life. Throw your Psalm on our WhatsApp with the emojis that describe. Have FUN!

Next week: Bring your Bibles, notebooks, bring your MAP!

Mapping Psalms
The Beginning: Psalm 1 & Psalm 2



And now David being freed of wars and dangers, and enjoying for the future a profound peace, composed songs and hymns to God of various meters; some he made in trimeters, and some in pentameters.

—**Josephus, Ant. 7.305**

Witherington, B., III. (2017). *Psalms Old and New: Exegesis, Intertextuality, and Hermeneutics* (pp. xiii – 50). Fortress Press.

The Psalter is the book of all saints, and everyone, whatever his situation may be, finds psalms and words in it that fit his situation and apply to his case so exactly that it seems they were put in this way only for his sake. **HOW** do I know: **WHEN IT BECOMES PERSONAL**

—**Martin Luther**

Witherington, B., III. (2017). *Psalms Old and New: Exegesis, Intertextuality, and Hermeneutics* (pp. xiii – 50). Fortress Press.

Psalm 1 sings of the *choice* between two ways that each of us has to make;

Psalm 2 unveils the cosmic confrontation which that choice reflects.

Wilcock, M. (2001). *The Message of Psalms: Songs for the People of God* (J. A. Motyer, Ed.; Vol. 1, p. 19). Inter-Varsity Press.



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BOOK I (Psalms 1–41)

A preamble to the Psalter

PSALM 1 (Neh.13:3 ?? -)

Author: Unknown

Category: Wisdom

Title: **The Way of the Righteous and the End of the Ungodly**

Check our understanding – 3 first words: Blessed the man

Challenge our assumptions – two at the end

Psalm 1 NKJV	Psalm 1 CEB
<p>1 Blessed <i>is</i> the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly[wicked], Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; ² But his delight <i>is</i> in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates[ponders by talking to himself] day and night. ³ He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper. ⁴ The ungodly <i>are</i> not so, But <i>are</i> like the chaff which the wind drives away. ⁵ Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. ⁶ For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the ungodly shall perish.</p>	<p>The truly happy person doesn't follow wicked advice, doesn't stand on the road of sinners, and doesn't sit with the disrespectful. ² Instead of doing those things, these persons love the Lord's Instruction, and they recite God's Instruction day and night! ³ They are like a tree replanted by streams of water, which bears fruit at just the right time and whose leaves don't fade. Whatever they do succeeds. ⁴ That's not true for the wicked! They are like dust that the wind blows away. ⁵ And that's why the wicked will have no standing in the court of justice— neither will sinners in the assembly of the righteous. ⁶ The Lord is intimately acquainted with the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked is destroyed.</p>

VS.1 Blessed *is* the man

- **What** does BLESSED mean?



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Endowed with divine favor and protection

Favored; fortunate; lucky; privileged; select; happy; joyful; joyous; blissful; glad; enviable

Antonym: Wretched

WHY Blessed? as the opening words of this collection of prayers?

Why not: Obedient? Loving? Sanctified? Servant?

Blessed is the man

‘man’ here includes both genders,

Wilcock, M. (2001). [*The Message of Psalms: Songs for the People of God*](#) (J. A. Motyer, Ed.; Vol. 1, p. 20). Inter-Varsity Press.

- Man = Human

The first question here is the modern one of inclusive language. For many centuries the English word ‘man’ has been both gender-specific (meaning male) and generic (meaning human),

Wilcock, M. (2001). [*The Message of Psalms: Songs for the People of God*](#) (J. A. Motyer, Ed.; Vol. 1, p. 20). Inter-Varsity Press.

VS.1 Who walks **not in the counsel of the ungodly[wicked],**

- The “not” means **what?**

Why is the Psalmist singing about what a person DOES NOT DO?

Is this pride? Me better than you?

To Define:

To state or describe exactly the nature, scope, or meaning of.

Similar: Explain; expound; interpret; elucidate; explicate; clarify; give the meaning of; **put into words;**

Mark out the boundary or limits of.


Determine; establish; fix; specify; designate; mark out; mark off; **set the boundaries/limits of**

Biblical Faith looks like....

Biblical Faith does not look like...

The Psalms express joy, awe, doubt, confidence, anger, praise. They do so with heartfelt emotion. But behind all of them is a definite theology, which is clear as to what is and what is not acceptable. Wilcock, M. (2001). [*The Message of Psalms: Songs for the People of God*](#) (J. A. Motyer, Ed.; Vol. 1, p. 20). Inter-Varsity Press.

VS.1


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Blessed *is* the **man**

Who walks **not** in the counsel of the ungodly[wicked],

VS.1 Nor stands in the path of sinners, = ?

Path = Directional system

Sinners =

VS.1 Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; = ?

Seat = Part of, sitting with

Scornful =

the feeling or belief that someone or something is [worthless](#) or [despicable](#); contempt.

"I do not wish to become the object of scorn"

Similar: contempt; derision; disdain; mockery; sneering; scoffing

Opposite: admiration; respect

To feel or express [contempt](#) or [derision](#) for.

Similar: deride; be contemptuous about; hold in contempt; treat with contempt; look down on; mock; jeer at; laugh at; disparage; slight; dismiss; cock a snook at; spit on

There is so much to the blessed life of loving our God that I can best define it by what it is NOT.

VS.2 does....

² But his **delight** *is* in the law of the Lord,

And in His law he **meditates**[ponders by talking to himself] day and night.

does....Delight

Great pleasure, happiness, joy, gratification, excitement, bliss

does...Meditates

think deeply or focus one's mind for a period of time

Similar: contemplate; think about; consider; ponder; reflect; ruminate

VS.3 Results of what one does/does not:

³ He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water,

That brings forth its fruit in its season,

Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper.



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VS.4 Results of being ungodly:

⁴ The ungodly *are* not so,

Ungodly actions = ?

But *are* like the chaff which the wind drives away.
 the husks of corn or other seed separated by winnowing or threshing.

Similar: husks; hulls

- chopped hay and straw used as fodder.
- worthless things; trash.

Similar: refuse; waste; garbage; discarded matter; dregs; rubbish

VS.5 Judgement

⁵ Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment,

When we ask **what is pictured** in verse 5, it may well be in the first instance an Israelite community met for the day-to-day administration of justice, where bad people have no right to officiate.

Before God’s judgment seat, it is a question not of whether the wicked man should himself stand up as counsel or witness, **but of whether his case will stand up**, when he is the prisoner in the dock. Wilcock, M. (2001). *The Message of Psalms: Songs for the People of God* (J. A. Motyer, Ed.; Vol. 1, p. 20). Inter-Varsity Press.

VS.5 Assembly

Nor sinners in the **congregation/assembly** of the righteous.

The Church:

The question of what that implies needs a fuller answer. Two Hebrew terms are used here and in Deuteronomy 4:10 (‘Assemble the people before me to hear my words’).

Between them they shape the true notion of what the church is:

the Lord’s people belonging, relating, and actually meeting together in the Lord’s presence, listening and responding to him—not a building, not an ordained priesthood, not a denomination or organization,

But where Christ’s two or three
 In His name gathered are;

or, indeed, his two or three hundred, or even the countless myriads which come together in the heavenly Jerusalem.

Even the most individualistic of the psalmists would recognize that **God’s concern for him personally is bound up with God’s promises to that great assembly**, ‘the blessed company of all faithful people’. **All their poetry is to be read in the light of this. Throughout Psalm 1**



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***righteous and wicked* are plurals; both our present experience and our future destiny (v. 6) depend on which of the two companies each of us belongs to, not in name only but (as *the way implies*) in practice.**

Wilcock, M. (2001). *The Message of Psalms: Songs for the People of God* (J. A. Motyer, Ed.; Vol. 1, pp. 19–22). Inter-Varsity Press.

VS.6 Final Results

⁶ For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the ungodly shall perish

Where:

When:

Would this knowledge of “the Lord knows” help us?

PSALM 2 (1 Chr 17:27)

Author: David

Category: Messianic (some list as Royal)

Title: The Messiah’s Triumph and Kingdom

- Is Psalm 2 part of Psalm 1?

From the earliest times the unity of Psalms 1 and 2 has been accepted on the authority of the apostles themselves.

- **Clement of Alexandria** accepts this in several passages.
- **Justin Martyr** (early apologist) In a letter to the Emperor Antoninus Pius, refers to Psalms 1 and 2 as one psalm in his discussion of the incident in Acts 4:23–29 when the believers “came to their own company” and joined in singing Ps. 2:1–2.
- **Origen** reiterates their unity, although he had before him two Hebrew manuscripts, one in which the psalms are separated, and another in which they are written as a single song.
- **Tertullian** (c. 200 C.E.) also affirmed their unity
- **Hilary of Poitiers** begins by admitting “the majority of us” (scholars) are uncertain...He puts the onus on the Septuagint translators for separating them, while he alleges the apostle Peter unites them. The apostle is a Hebrew speaking to Hebrews who, according to Hilary, do not separate the two psalms. The Septuagint translators, he argues, were translating from Hebrew into a Greek culture.
- **Augustine of Hippo** makes no reference to the issue of the unity of Psalms 1 and 2, but simply proceeds with his homily.
- **Cassiodorus** notes that just as four Gospels all harmonize into one Gospel, so too, both Psalms 1 and 2 are psalms of David.
- **Erasmus** neatly interprets Psalm 1 as the preface to the Psalter and the next one as “Psalm 1.” He places it as the first in the collection.



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Psalm 2

MT – Masoretic Text

Before the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the oldest Hebrew manuscripts of the Bible were the Masoretic texts, dating to the 9th century CE. The biblical manuscripts found among the Dead Sea Scrolls push that date back a whole millennium, to the 2nd century BCE

Masoretic text, (from [Hebrew](#) *masoreth*, “tradition”), traditional Hebrew text of the Jewish [Bible](#), meticulously assembled and [codified](#), and supplied with diacritical marks to enable correct pronunciation. This monumental work was begun around the 6th century AD and completed in the 10th by scholars at Talmudic academies in [Babylonia](#) and Palestine, in an effort to reproduce, as far as possible, the original text of the Hebrew [Old Testament](#). Their intention was not to interpret the meaning of the Scriptures but to transmit to future generations the authentic Word of God. To this end they gathered manuscripts and whatever oral traditions were available to them.

ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA

LXX

Septuagint, the earliest [extant](#) (existing, not destroyed) Greek translation of the [Old Testament](#) from the original Hebrew. The Septuagint was presumably made for the Jewish [community](#) in Egypt when Greek was the common language throughout the region. Analysis of the language has established that the [Torah](#), or Pentateuch (the first five books of the Old Testament), was translated near the middle of the 3rd century BCE and that the rest of the Old Testament was translated in the 2nd century BCE.

ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA

MT Psalm 2 MT (the Masoretic Text)	LXX Psalm 2 LXX (the Septuagint text)
1 Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain?	1 Why did nations grow insolent, and peoples contemplate vain things?
2 The kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together against the Lord and against his anointed, saying,	2 The kings of the earth stood side by side, and the rulers gathered together, against the Lord and against his anointed,
	<i>Interlude on strings</i>
3 “Let us break their chains and throw off their shackles.”	3 “Let us burst their bonds asunder and cast their yoke from us.”



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4 The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them.	4 He who resides in the heavens will laugh at them, and the Lord will mock them.
5 He rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath, saying,	5 Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and in his anger he will trouble them.
6 “I have installed my king on Zion, my holy mountain.”	6 “But I was established king by him, on Zion, his holy mountain,
7 I will proclaim the Lord’s decree: He said to me, “You are my son; today I have become your father.	7 by proclaiming the Lord’s ordinance: The Lord said to me, ‘My son you are; today I have begotten you.
8 Ask me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession.	8 Ask of me, and I will give you nations as your heritage, and as your possession the ends of the earth.
9 You will break them with a rod of iron; you will dash them to pieces like pottery.”	9 You shall shepherd them with an iron rod; like a potter’s vessel you will shatter them.’ ”
10 Therefore, you kings, be wise; be warned, you rulers of the earth.	10 And now, O kings, be sensible; be instructed, all you who judge the earth.
11 Serve the Lord with fear and celebrate his rule with trembling.	11 Be subject to the Lord with fear, and rejoice in him with trembling.
12 Kiss his son, or he will be angry and your way will lead to your destruction, for his wrath can flare up in a moment.	12 Seize upon instruction, lest the Lord be angry, and you will perish from the righteous way, when his anger quickly blazes out.
Blessed are all who take refuge in him	Happy are all who trust in him

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WHAT IS GOING ON IN 1 CHRONICLES 17

b. Request for God to confirm his promises (17:23–27). Two requests emerge in the latter part of the prayer. The first is that God’s ‘word’ (NRSV, RSV) *promise* (NIV, GNB) should *be established for ever* (v. 23). David recognizes that the giving of the promise and its future depend on God, though from now on its success or otherwise will be bound up with the faith and obedience shown by David’s descendants. The Davidic covenant is usually described in this chapter as the *word/promise* (vv. 3, 23; cf. v. 6), but it is also called *this great thing* (v. 19), ‘this good thing’ (v. 26, NRSV, RSV), and what God has *revealed* (v. 25; cf. v. 15). Verse 23 contains a good example of prayer not always changing the circumstances but the attitude of the person who prays—‘Do what you said’ (GNB) or *Do as you promised* (NIV) is in direct opposition to Nathan’s original advice to the king (*Do whatever you have in mind*, v. 2).

The second request is that God’s *name* (‘fame’, GNB, REB, NEB) *will be magnified for ever* (v. 24, NRSV, RSV). David has shown understandable human interest in the implications of the divine word for himself and his *house* (vv. 16–19, 23), but the prayer concludes, as the next will begin (29:10–13), with a concern for God’s honour. The greatness of God’s *name* through both ‘houses’ is in the end more important to David than the promise of a great name for himself (cf. v. 8).

Finally, these requests are based on the confidence that God has already begun to answer David’s prayer. God’s covenant promise is twice seen as evidence of God’s blessing, and this is the real ground of hope that the blessing will not be lost in the future (*You have been pleased to bless ..., you ... have blessed*, v. 27—the note of past blessing is much stronger than in 2 Sam. 7:29). The last phrase of verse 27, which now refers to Yahweh rather than to David’s house, should probably be translated, ‘For you, O Yahweh, have blessed and you are blessed for ever’, against EVV. Ultimately God alone is to be praised.¹

Psalm 2 1 Chr 17:27

Author: David

Category: Messianic (also shown as Royal)

Title: The Messiah’s Triumph and Kingdom

Psalm 2 NKJV	Psalm 2 CEB
Why do the nations[Gentiles] rage[throng tumultuously], And the people plot a vain[worthless or empty] thing? ² The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together, Against the Lord and against His Anointed[Messiah], <i>saying</i> , ³ “Let us break Their bonds in pieces And cast away Their cords from us.”	Why do the nations rant? Why do the peoples rave uselessly? ² The earth’s rulers take their stand; the leaders scheme together against the Lord and against his anointed one. ³ “Come!” they say. “We will tear off their ropes and throw off their chains!”

¹ Selman, M. J. (1994). [1 Chronicles: An Introduction and Commentary](#) (Vol. 10, pp. 190–191). InterVarsity Press.



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<p>⁴ He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; The Lord shall hold them in derision. ⁵ Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, And distress them in His deep displeasure: ⁶ "Yet I have set^[installed] My King On My holy hill of Zion." ⁷ "I will declare the decree: The Lord has said to Me, 'You <i>are</i> My Son, Today I have begotten You. ⁸ Ask of Me, and I will give <i>You</i> The nations <i>for</i> Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth <i>for</i> Your possession. ⁹ You shall break^[rule(cf. Rev. 2:27)] them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel.' " ¹⁰ Now therefore, be wise, O kings; Be instructed, you judges of the earth. ¹¹ Serve the Lord with fear, And rejoice with trembling. ¹² Kiss^[embrace discipline, receive instruction] the Son, lest He be angry, And you perish <i>in</i> the way, When His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed <i>are</i> all those who put their trust in Him.</p>	<p>⁴ The one who rules in heaven laughs; my Lord makes fun of them. ⁵ But then God speaks to them angrily; then he terrifies them with his fury: ⁶ "I hereby appoint my king on Zion, my holy mountain!" ⁷ I will announce the Lord's decision: He said to me, "You are my son, today I have become your father. ⁸ Just ask me, and I will make the nations your possession; the far corners of the earth will be your property. ⁹ You will smash them with an iron rod; you will shatter them like a pottery jar." ¹⁰ So kings, wise up! Be warned, you rulers of the earth! ¹¹ Serve the Lord reverently— trembling, ¹² kiss his feet^[a] or else he will become angry, and your way will be destroyed because his anger ignites in an instant. But all who take refuge in the Lord are truly happy!</p>
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It is not hard to see why the two should have been bracketed as a joint preamble to the whole book. The pairing begins and ends with definitions of those who are *blessed* (1:1; 2:12). Within it, the **private world** of the first psalm opens out into the **public world of the second**; the personal is followed by the cosmic; in airport terminology, one is 'domestic' and the other 'international'. Psalm 1 talks the everyday language of wisdom books like Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, while Psalm 2, raising its eyes to world affairs beyond the control of ordinary people, speaks as the books of the prophets do of a great God in control behind the scenes. Wilcock, M. (2001). [*The Message of Psalms: Songs for the People of God*](#) (J. A. Motyer, Ed.; Vol. 1, pp. 22–24). Inter-Varsity Press.



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Paul quotes this Psalm:

Acts 13:33

³³ He has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus. As it was written in the second psalm, *You are my son; today I have become your Father* **CEB**

God has fulfilled this for us their children, in that He has raised up Jesus. As it is also written in the second Psalm:

‘You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.’ **NKJV**

Corresponding Occasion in O.T.:

1 Chr 17:27

²⁷ Now You have been pleased to bless the house of Your servant, that it may continue before You forever; for You have blessed it, O Lord, and it shall be blessed forever.”

NKJV

²⁷ *So now willingly bless your servant’s dynasty so that it might continue forever before you, because you, Lord God, have promised. Let your servant’s dynasty be blessed forever by your blessing.* **CEB**

Psalm 2 NKJV

What the rebels say:

Why do the nations[Gentiles] rage[throng tumultuously],
 And the people plot a vain[worthless or empty] thing?
² The kings of the earth set themselves,
 And the rulers take counsel together,
 Against the Lord and against
 His Anointed[Messiah], *saying*,
³ “Let us break Their bonds in pieces
 And cast away Their cords from us.”

Why do the nations rant?
 Why do the peoples rave uselessly?
² The earth’s rulers take their stand;
 the leaders scheme together
 against the Lord and
 against his anointed one.
³ “Come!” they say.
 “We will tear off their ropes
 and throw off their chains!”

- **A** possible situation or an actual one?
- **H**umanity(Kings) – yes. Rulers = Entities?

How do we respond to the knowledge that we are not in charge?
 (Resentment. Disbelief. Lip service...)

What the Lord says:

⁴ He who sits in the heavens shall laugh;
 The Lord shall hold them in derision.
⁵ Then He shall speak to them in His wrath,
 And distress them in His deep displeasure:
⁶ “Yet I have set[installed] My King
 On My holy hill of Zion.”

⁴ The one who rules in heaven laughs;
 my Lord makes fun of them.
⁵ But then God speaks to them angrily;
 then he terrifies them with his fury:



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⁶ "I hereby appoint my King on Zion, my holy mountain!"

What is God doing?
 Is He mocking us?
 How would you define this response?

The *I* is emphatic, and the tone must be one of cold anger: 'You may conspire and rebel, but *I*, you see, have already decided who shall finally rule in your world. I have spoken, and there's an end of it.' Wilcock, M. (2001). *The Message of Psalms: Songs for the People of God* (J. A. Motyer, Ed.; Vol. 1, pp. 22–24). Inter-Varsity Press.

What the King says:

⁷ "I will declare the decree:
 The Lord has said to Me,
 'You *are* My Son,
 Today I have begotten You.
⁸ Ask of Me, and I will give *You*
 The nations *for* Your inheritance,
 And the ends of the earth *for* Your
 possession.
⁹ You shall break[*rule*(cf. [Rev. 2:27](#))]
 them with a rod of iron;
 You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's
 vessel.' "

⁷ I will announce the Lord's decision:
 He said to me, "You are my Son,
 today I have become your Father.
⁸ Just ask Me,
 and I will make the nations Your
 possession;
 the far corners of the earth will be
 Your property.
⁹ You will smash them with an iron rod;
 you will shatter them like a pottery
 jar."

Rev 2:27 'He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels'—

The King is: saying. declaring. announcing.....

Why must it be announced?

Is this a reminder?

And as is shown by the three references to these verses in Revelation, his own people, the church, share in the worldwide spread of his kingdom's authority—a just contrast to the pretensions and final downfall of the powers of this world.
 Wilcock, M. (2001). *The Message of Psalms: Songs for the People of God* (J. A. Motyer, Ed.; Vol. 1, pp. 22–24). Inter-Varsity Press.



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What the psalmist says:

¹⁰ Now therefore, be wise, O kings;
 Be instructed, you judges of the earth.
¹¹ Serve the Lord with fear,
 And rejoice with trembling.
¹² Kiss[embrace discipline, receive instruction] the
 Son, lest
 He be angry,
 And you perish *in* the way,
 When His wrath is kindled but a little.
 Blessed *are* all those who put their trust in
 Him.

¹⁰ So kings, wise up!
 Be warned, you rulers of the earth!
¹¹ Serve the Lord reverently—
 trembling, ¹² kiss his feet^{12a}
 or else he will become angry,
 and your way will be destroyed
 because his anger ignites in an
 instant.
 But all who take refuge in the Lord are
 truly happy!

What questions arise in you as your read this FIRST official Psalm in the Psalter?

Why is this Psalm so fierce?

Why as the official first Psalm?

What after the intro Psalm 1?

- Wrath of God
- Fear
- Destruction
- Threats
- **Balanced by Psalm 1.**

WHAT does this communicate? (imagine it is a new hit song on the radio...you hear it over and over and over...what message are you deciphering?)

Kiss the Son is only one suggested translation of the much-debated text of verse 12a. If it is correct, it repeats in this last section the partnership between God and his Anointed, his King, his Son, which has appeared in each of the first three sections. Old Testament people might honour each successive king of Israel with the kiss of homage; their book of praises is now in our hands, and with it we may honour King Jesus with a like reverence and love
 Wilcock, M. (2001). *The Message of Psalms: Songs for the People of God* (J. A. Motyer, Ed.; Vol. 1, pp. 22–24). Inter-Varsity Press.



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Communal Close in Prayer of a Psalm:

Authors of the Psalms

According to the titles, some of the named psalm authors are: David (73 times), Asaph (12 times), the sons of Korah (11 times), Solomon (2 times), Jeduthun (4 times), and Heman, Etan, and Moses (1 time each).²

Closing:

“The Psalter is the prayer book of Jesus Christ in the truest sense of the word. He prayed the Psalter and now it has become his prayer for all time.... We understand how the Psalter can be prayer to God and yet God’s own Word, precisely because here we encounter the praying Christ... because those who pray the psalms are joining in with the prayer of Jesus Christ, their prayer reaches the ears of God. Christ has become their intercessor.”

—Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Ways to Read the Psalms

Reading the Bible does not require advanced studies, but we should understand that there are different ways to read the Bible that produce different results. Reading devotionally, theologically, and communally are three different manners with three different goals.

Reading Devotionally


Reading devotionally has the goal of deepening and enriching our relationship with God, individually and as a group. It is the time when we tell God what is in our hearts and minds, and when we pay attention to what God has in mind for each of us. It is a time for loving communication between God and us.

Reading devotionally means reading prayerfully. Some people combine their reading with their prayer. The psalms are ideal for this type of devotional reading. Choose a psalm, for example, Psalm 23. And, as you read it, use the words of the psalm to pray to God:

“The Lord is my shepherd . . .” You, Lord, are my shepherd. “I lack nothing . . .” Thank you, God, that I lack nothing; for you have given me all that I need . . . And so on.

An important part of a devotional reading is memorization. For hundreds of years, believers have memorized the Scriptures, especially the psalms. Memorization is a tool that God uses to speak to us. When we are grasped by sorrow, despair, anguish, fear, or temptation, all of those memorized verses will come back to us. God speaks to us through them in unexpected ways. They become anchors for our wandering minds and hearts. The words of God dwell in our minds and hearts, shaping and transforming us: “I remembered my songs in the night. My heart meditated and my spirit asked . . .” (Ps. 77:6).

² (2013). [Psalms](#). Rose Publishing.


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Reading Theologically

With in-depth study of the Scriptures, we attempt to understand the larger historical, literary, and theological connections and ramifications of a text or book of the Bible. It is an important intellectual activity with a helpful role in the life of the church.

The importance of in-depth Scripture reading is clear every Sunday when pastors preach. Their insights and wisdom come from a careful and deep study of the Scriptures. However, this type of Bible reading is not only for pastors or scholars. All Christians must learn how to examine the Scriptures deeply and carefully. Good study will open new windows and understandings about the Word, God, and the world. The two main reasons for honing our in-depth Bible study skills are:

1. The Holy Spirit can more easily transform our minds and hearts in deep, powerful ways.
2. We can recognize when truth is distorted, twisted, or denied.

Reading the Bible theologically means that we pay attention, to whatever degree possible for each of us, to the history, the literature, and the theology of the book and the text we are studying. With the aid of other tools, you should also learn some history of and about the events the Bible describes. This history study will give you a context for understanding the biblical writings. Learn to pay attention to the literary side of the Scriptures—in the case of the psalms, its poetry.

We can begin to make theological connections. What does the text teach us about God, about humanity, about the world? Are there any theological connections with other parts of the Scripture? How do we read that particular psalm in light of Christ's cross and his resurrection? Are there any connections between the teachings of the psalm and that of the New Testament?

Reading Communally

Reading in groups can enhance our understanding and foster spiritual communion with others. Two ways the psalms have been used in community are in prayers and in songs. For most of the history of the church, the psalms have been part of worship services, shaped the prayers of communities, and transformed people by providing the vocabulary of faith through hymns.

Singing the psalms shapes the spiritual life of God's people, and the act of singing involves our whole beings: it forces us to be fully attentive, engages us with others singing around us, captures and transforms our emotions, and makes our bodies (voice, eyes, breathing, and body posture) full participants. Singing the psalms is a discipline too valuable for the church to forget or ignore.³

³ (2013). [*Psalms*](#). Rose Publishing.



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