

THE PSALMS



Rev. Thomas N. Reeder, Jr.

Table of Contents

- I. **Introduction**
- II. **The Torah:** Ps 1, 19, 119
- III. **Psalms in the Old Testament:** Ps 104; 106 (78, 105,); 136
- IV. **Psalms in the New Testament (Part 1):** Luke 1:46-55, Magnificat; Luke 1:68-79, Zechariah's benedictus; Psalm 115-118 (May have been the sung by Jesus and the disciples in Matthew 26:30)
- V. **Psalms in the New Testament (Part 2):** Luke 24:44-47: Ps 110; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; James 5:13
- VI. **The Messianic Psalms, Royalty:** Luke 24:44-47: Ps 2 || Matthew 3:17; Ps 16 || Acts 2:31; 13:35
- VI. **The Messianic Psalms, The Suffering Servant:** Luke 24:44-47: Ps 22; 34; 69
- VII. **Psalms of Deliverance and Salvation:** Ps 3, 20, 116, 118
- VIII. **Imprecatory Psalms:** Ps: 35, 83; 109
- IX. **Penitential/Lament Psalms:** Ps 32, 51, 130
- X. **Psalms of Thanksgiving:** Ps 30, 103, 145
- XI. **Hallelujah' Psalms:** Ps 106; 111-113; 115-117; 135; 146-150

I. Introduction

The Psalter ought to be a precious and beloved book, if for no other reason than this: it promises Christ's death and resurrection so clearly—and pictures his kingdom and the condition and nature of all Christendom—that it 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 enchiridion 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.¹ (Luther)

Psalm: Literally means, “song of praise” (from the Greek)

Psalms and the Old Testament: Torah, Prophets, Writings
Psalms and the New Testament

Division of the Book of Psalms

Part I	1-41	Concluding doxology, Ps 41:13
Part II	42-72	Concluding doxology, Ps 72:18-19
Part III	73-89	Concluding doxology, Ps 89:52
Part IV	90-106	Concluding doxology, Ps 106:48
Part V	107-150	Concluding doxology, Ps 150 (also for entire Psalter)

Characteristics of the Psalms

Parallelism: Similarity/Contrast (see Ps 1:5, 6)
Acrostics: Ps 119, 8, 34, 37
Structure

The Psalms and Worship

Divine Worship: Introit, Psalm of the Day, Gradual, Verse, ‘Create in Me’
(Ps 51:10-12)
Matins: Venite [‘Come’] (Ps 95:1-7)
Evening Prayer: ‘Let my prayer rise’ (Ps 141)

*⁴⁴ Then Jesus said to them, "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me." ⁴⁵ And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. ⁴⁶ Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, ⁴⁷ "and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.
(Luke 24:44-47)*

¹Luther, M. (1999, c1960). *Vol. 35: Luther's works, vol. 35 : Word and Sacrament I* (J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald & H. T. Lehmann, Ed.). Luther's Works (Vol. 35, Page 254). Philadelphia: Fortress Press.

²Quotes

3168 The Psalter a Daily Companion

It is proper for every Christian who would pray and be devout to let the Psalter be his book. And no doubt it would be well if every Christian used it so diligently and became so well acquainted with it as to know it by heart, word for word, and constantly to have it on his tongue whenever called on to say or to do something. Then he could thence draw and adduce from it a passage, like a proverb fitting the case. (E 63, 33 — SL 14, 24)

3169 A Mirror We should never lay aside the Book of Psalms but should constantly view ourselves in it, as in a mirror; for we cannot appreciate its great glory unless we read it with diligence. (W-T 3, No. 3416 —SL 22, 1992, No. 1842)

² Plass, Ewald (ed). *What Luther Says*. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959, p1000.

II. **The Torah:** Ps 1, 19, 119

Torah (also see p6): Literally means, 'Law' or 'Instruction'/'Teaching'

1) Refers to the first five books of the Old Testament (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy)

2) Refers to the 'Law of God'

Narrow/Specific sense: The Ten Commandments

Broad/General sense: The Word of God (i.e. Law & Gospel)

- What is 'the Law' in the narrow sense? Romans 3:20
- What is 'the Gospel' in the narrow sense? Romans 3:21-26
- Why is the distinction between Law & Gospel important and necessary? James 2:10-11; Romans 4:5-8; 5:1

Ps 1

- What distinctions does the Psalmist make in Psalm 1? How are the consequences?
- What might this Psalm indicate about the Psalms that follow?
- Note: In verse two, the word 'law' is used. In the Hebrew, the word is 'Torah'. How does one rightly 'delight' in God's Law? Is it at all possible without faith in Christ? See Romans 3:20; 7:22; Galatians 3:22-29
- What is the difference between the wicked and the righteous? What is their delight? In whom do they place their hope and confidence?

Ps 19

- Note the 'division' between v1-6 and the verses that follow. What is the difference between natural knowledge of God and revealed knowledge of God?
- What does God's 'law' (TORAH) do? Does God's law convert the soul? See Romans 3:20. How does faith come? Romans 10:17

Ps 119

Structure: An acrostic. Each section (totaling 21) consists of eight verses, beginning with the same letter. The letters represent the letters of the Hebrew alphabet (totaling 22).

The difference in the above numbers has to do with one letter that is printed the same, but having a different sound (וּ/וֹ).

- Read 1-8 (⌘)
- What are some similarities of Ps 119 with Ps 1?
- How is one to understand the 'walking in the law (TORAH) of the Lord' (v1), keeping 'His testimonies' & seeking 'Him with the whole heart' (v2), and doing 'no iniquity' (v3)? See Romans 7:18; 1 John 1:8-10; John 15:3-5; 1 John 2:1-2, 3-5, 28-29; 3:4-9

The Psalms

References to ‘Torah’ in the Book of Psalms (Note: In English versions of the Bible, the word used for Torah is Law.)

Ps. 1:2	Ps. 105:45	Ps. 119:61	Ps. 119:126
Ps. 19:8	Ps. 119:1	Ps. 119:70	Ps. 119:136
Ps. 37:31	Ps. 119:18	Ps. 119:72	Ps. 119:142
Ps. 40:9	Ps. 119:29	Ps. 119:77	Ps. 119:150
Ps. 78:1	Ps. 119:34	Ps. 119:85	Ps. 119:153
Ps. 78:5	Ps. 119:44	Ps. 119:92	Ps. 119:163
Ps. 78:10	Ps. 119:51	Ps. 119:97	Ps. 119:165
Ps. 89:31	Ps. 119:53	Ps. 119:109	Ps. 119:174
Ps. 94:12	Ps. 119:55	Ps. 119:113	

Luther's Preface to the Psalter (continued)

³ Other books make much ado about the works of the saints, but say very little about their words. The Psalter is a gem in this respect. It gives forth so sweet a fragrance when one reads it because it relates not only the works of the saints, but also their words, how they spoke with God and prayed, and still speak and pray. Compared to the Psalter, the other legends and examples present to us nothing but mere silent saints; the Psalter, however, pictures for us real, living, active saints.

Compared to a speaking man, a silent one is simply to be regarded as a half-dead man; and there is no mightier or nobler work of man than speech. For it is by speech, more than by his shape or by any other work, that man is most distinguished from other animals. By the carver's art even a block of wood can have the shape of a man; and an animal can see, hear, smell, sing, walk, stand, eat, drink, fast, thirst—and suffer from hunger, frost, and a hard bed—as well as a man.

Moreover the Psalter does more than this. It presents to us not the simple, ordinary speech of the saints, but the best of their language, that which they used when they talked with God himself in great earnestness and on the most important matters. Thus the Psalter lays before us not only their words instead of their deeds, but their very hearts and the inmost treasure of their souls, so we can look down to the foundation and source of their words and deeds. We can look into their hearts and see what kind of thoughts they had, how their hearts were disposed, and how they acted in all kinds of situations, in danger and in need. The legends and examples, which speak only of the deeds and miracles of the saints, do not and cannot do this, for I cannot know how a man's heart is, even though I see or hear of many great deeds that he does. And just as I would rather hear what a saint says than see the deeds he does, so I would far rather see his heart, and the treasure in his soul, than hear his words. And this the Psalter gives us most abundantly concerning the saints, so that we can be certain of how their hearts were toward God and of the words they spoke to God and every man.

³Luther, M. (1999, c1960). *Vol. 35: Luther's works, vol. 35 : Word and Sacrament I* (J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald & H. T. Lehmann, Ed.). Luther's Works (Vol. 35, Page 254-255). Philadelphia: Fortress Press.

III. **Psalms in the Old Testament:** Ps 104; 106 (105, 78); 136

Ps 104: Creation (Genesis 1-2)

- With what words does the Psalmist begin and conclude this Psalm?
- For what reason might these words begin and conclude this Psalm? See also Ps 139:14.
- What purpose does the creation serve? v10-11, 13, 14-15; 27-30

Ps 106 (105, 78): God and Israel

- How does the Psalmist begin and conclude Ps 106?
- For what reason might these words begin and conclude this Psalm?
- What does the Psalmist speak of in this Psalm? v6, 43-45 (v7-12, 13-15, 16-18, 19-23, 24-27, 28-31, 32-33, 34-42)
- Read Psalm 34:4, 17-18, 22

Ps 136 (106:1; 107:1; 118:1, 29): The Psalms and Worship

Read 1 Chronicles 16:1-2, 7-8; 2 Chronicles 5:1-14; 7:1-3, 6; Ezra 3:10-11

- What is the context of these passages? What is going on?
- Note the refrains: 1 Chr. 16:34; 2 Chr. 5:13; 2 Chr. 7:3; Ezr. 3:11
- When are these spoken/sang?
- Now look at Ps 136 and note the common refrain throughout the Psalm. What might this suggest about how the Psalms were used in general? (See also Ps. 106:1; 107:1; 118:1; 118:29; 136:1)

The Psalms

⁴ The 104th psalm is a psalm of thanks for all the works that God had accomplished in heaven and on earth, beyond those done for us here on earth. He has surely ordered all things according to a wise plan to produce works, fruits, and crops. The psalmist recounts these one after the other: the heavens - full of light and outstretched as a tapestry without posts or rafters; the clouds - an arch without foundation or pillar; the wind flying without wings; the angels going and coming, appearing like a wind or a flame.

“Thus sings the psalmist. He finds his desires and joy in the creations of God, which are so wonderfully made and so beautifully ordered together. But who pays attention to this or sees that this is so? Only faith and the Spirit

⁵The 106th psalm is a psalm of thanks in which the psalmist acknowledges all the sins that the people of Israel had committed against God, by which they had made themselves unworthy for all his grace and blessings. Therefore it says constantly that God has done all these things for his name’s sake and for the remembrance of his covenant. Moses also says this (Deut. 9:6), therefore they cannot glory in themselves except in His grace alone - as we also can have no other glory.

⁴ Cameron, Bruce A. (trans.) *Psalms: With Introductions by Martin Luther*. St. Louis: CPH, 1993, p133-134.

⁵ *Ibid*, p137.

The Psalms

IV. Psalms in the New Testament (Part 1): Luke 1:46-55, Magnificat; Luke 1:68-79, Zechariah's benedictus; Psalm 115-118 (May have been the sung by Jesus and the disciples in Matthew 26:30)

Luke 1:46-55, Magnificat
(For verses 46-53, read 1 Samuel 2:1-10)



- How is the Magnificat similar to 1 Samuel 2:1-10 with reference to context and words? How is it dissimilar?
- Though 'Mary's Song' is not word for word from a particular Psalm, note the wording and how the various Psalms are used:

⁴⁶ Ps 34:2, 3

⁴⁷ Ps 18:46*

⁴⁸ Ps 138:6*

⁴⁹ Ps 71:19*; 111:9*

⁵⁰ Ps 103:17*

⁵¹ Ps 98:1*

⁵³ Ps: 107:9*

⁵⁴ Ps 98:3*

- Of whom does Mary speak and why? What is the context?
- Does Mary indicate anything in this text that she saw herself as deserving of serving as an intercessor between man and Jesus? (Roman Catholicism) What do her words indicate about how Mary saw herself?
- How might the Magnificat help us to understand how the Psalms might be used (Understood)? Discuss.

Luke 1:68-79, Zechariah's benedictus (Blessed/Praise Be)

- Like Mary's Song above, various Psalms occur throughout Zechariah's Song:

⁶⁸ Ps 72:18; 111:9*

⁶⁹ Ps 18:2*

⁷² Ps 105:8, 9*; 106:45*

⁷⁹ Ps 107:14

- Of whom does Zechariah speak and why? What is the context?
- How might Zechariah's Benedictus help us to understand how the Psalms might be used (Understood)? Discuss.

Psalm 115-118 (May have been the sung by Jesus and the disciples in Matthew 26:30)

⁶ 47. *And my spirit rejoices in God, my Savior.*

We have seen what is meant by “spirit”; it is that which lays hold by faith on things incomprehensible. Mary, therefore, calls God her Savior, or her Salvation, even though she neither saw nor felt that this was so, but trusted in sure confidence that He was her Savior and her Salvation. This faith came to her through the work God had done within her. And, truly, she sets things in their proper order when she calls God her Lord before calling Him her Savior, and when she calls Him her Savior before recounting His works. Thereby she teaches us to love and praise God for Himself alone, and in the right order, and not selfishly to seek anything at His hands. This is done when one praises God because He is good, regards only His bare goodness, and finds his joy and pleasure in that alone. That is a lofty, pure, and tender mode of loving and praising God and well becomes this Virgins high and tender spirit.

⁷ 48. *For He has regarded the low estate of His handmaiden. For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed.*

In Scriptural usage, “to humble” means “to bring down,” or “to bring to naught.” Hence, in the Scriptures, Christians are frequently called poor, afflicted, despised.¹⁰ Thus, in Psalm 116:10: “I am greatly afflicted”—that is, humbled. Humility, therefore, is nothing else than a disregarded, despised, and lowly estate, such as that of men who are poor, sick, hungry, thirsty, in prison, suffering, and dying. Such was Job in his afflictions, David when he was thrust out of his kingdom, and Christ as well as all Christians, in their distresses. Those are the depths of which we said above¹¹ that God’s eyes look only into them, but men’s only to the heights, namely, to that which is splendid and glorious and makes a brave show. Therefore in the Scriptures (Zech. 12:4) Jerusalem is called a city upon which God’s eyes are open—that is to say, Christendom lies in the depths and is despised by the world; therefore God regards her, and His eyes are always fixed upon her, as He says in Psalm 32:8: “I will fix my eyes upon you.”

St. Paul also says in 1 Corinthians 1:27, 28: “God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise. God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong. God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are.” In this way He turns the world with all its wisdom and power into foolishness and gives us another wisdom and power. Since, then, it is His manner to regard things that are in the depths and disregarded, I have rendered the word “humility” with “nothingness” or “low estate.” This, therefore, is what Mary means: “God has regarded me, a poor, despised, and lowly maiden, though He might have found a rich, renowned, noble, and mighty queen, the daughter of princes and great lords. He might have found the daughter of Annas or of Caiaphas, who held the highest position in the land. But He let His pure and gracious eyes light on me and used so poor and despised a maiden, in order that no one might glory in His presence, as though he were worthy of this, and that I must acknowledge it all to be pure grace and goodness and not at all my merit or worthiness.”

⁶Luther, M. (1999, c1956). *Vol. 21: Luther's works, vol. 21 : The Sermon on the Mount and the Magnificat* (J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald & H. T. Lehmann, Ed.). Luther's Works (Lk 1:47). Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House.

⁷Ibid., Lk 1:49.

The Psalms

V. **Psalms in the New Testament (Part 2):** Luke 24:44-47: Ps 110
Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; James 5:13

⁴⁴ Then He (Jesus) said to them, "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me." ⁴⁵ And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. (Luke 24:44-45)

- What does the above text from St Luke tell us about the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms? Of whom did (do) they speak? How might this influence/affect how the Old Testament (i.e. The Psalms) is read? How might Jesus' words influence the reading of the Old Testament by Christians today? Discuss.
- Of what books do the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms refer?

Psalm 110

- Read Ps 110. According to the 'subtitle', who wrote the Psalm?
- In verse 1, what is the difference between the two words 'Lord'? Discuss.
- Concerning Melchizedek, see Genesis 14:18; Hebrews 5:1-10; 7:1-28
- This Psalm speaks of Kingship and priesthood. Discuss how Jesus is King and Priest.

Note: Psalm 110 is one of the most frequently quoted Psalms in the New Testament (esp. v1):

<u>Ps 110:1</u>	<u>Ps 110:4</u>
1) Mt 22:44, Mk 12:36, Lk 20:42-43	Hebrews 5:6 Hebrews 7:17, 21
2) Mt 26:64, Mk 14:62, Lk 22:69 see also Mt 24:30; & Dan 7:13-14; Eph 1:19-23; Col 3:1	
3) Acts 2:34-36	
4) Heb 1:13	

- In the above readings, esp. of 110:1, what is the respective context of each? How is Jesus using the Psalm in the Gospels? How is Peter using the Psalm in the Pentecost sermon? How is the writer of Hebrews using the Psalm? What is the significance? What is being said/revealed about Jesus?

References to 'The Psalms' in the Epistles: Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; James 5:13

⁸ The 110th psalm is a prophecy of Christ, that he shall be an eternal king and priest, indeed true God, sitting at the right hand of God, and that he would be glorified and recognized. In the entire Scripture there is nothing like this psalm. It would be right to acknowledge it as the chief confirmation of the Christian faith. For nowhere else is Christ prophesied with such clear, plain words as a priest and an eternal priest. It is prophesied as well that the priesthood of Aaron would be abolished. This psalm is yet again and more splendidly extolled in the epistle to the Hebrews. It is indeed a shame that such a psalm is not more richly extolled by Christians.

⁹ “THIS is a true and exalted psalm, the main one to deal with our dear Lord Jesus Christ. Here, as nowhere else in the Old Testament Scriptures, we find a clear and powerful description of His person—who He is, namely, both David’s promised Son according to the flesh and God’s eternal Son, as well as the eternal King and Priest—and of His resurrection, ascension, and entire kingdom.¹ For this reason it is quite right and fitting always to use or to sing this psalm on the feasts of the Lord Christ, such as Easter, Ascension Day, and the Day of Pentecost.² Both Christ and His apostles often cite this psalm in the New Testament Scriptures because it serves as the most conclusive basis and confirmation of the article of faith regarding Christ’s person and His spiritual kingdom and righteousness.³

But especially do we have here a clear prophecy and description of how He is to be the only King and Lord promised to this people, and especially to David, as well as a Priest eternal, through whom all the world is to be blessed and reconciled with God. This was promised to Abraham. The priest Melchizedek was Christ’s type or symbol. The entire Levitical priesthood points to Him and indicates that He would be a King and Priest entirely different from those of the past or future. Certainly there is no one about whom we have a similar statement of prophecy and praise, nor a direct prophetic quotation from God’s own mouth whereby He is consecrated and crowned, as we find in the beginning of this psalm: “The Lord said.”

Surely it is marvelously enlightening that the holy prophet David is able to speak with superb certainty about matters which were to happen much later. Although none of us could speak of them with the same authority, we believe them now as events which have happened. The power, clarity, and succinctness of his words very nearly exceed those of the apostles. To grasp such high, inconceivable, and inscrutable mysteries of the Divine Majesty with words, not to mention the brevity and power of their phrasing—mysteries which the Gospel was to disclose later—this is neither human nor within the power of a small spirit. Especially is this true in view of the fact that this took place long before the event, when there was still no sign of a beginning, no miraculous works, and when public preaching was neither seen nor heard. However, by faith David clings so firmly to that which he neither sees nor understands with his reason that he speaks of it with utter certainty, as though he were seeing the event take place before his very eyes. David talks to himself, possessed by a joyous and happy spirit, as one whose heart burns and overflows with joy toward the Lord Christ, waiting in faith for Him who, according to the promise, was to be born of him.”

⁸ Cameron, Bruce A. (trans.) *Psalms: With Introductions by Martin Luther*. St. Louis: CPH, 1993, p144-145.

⁹Luther, M. (1999, c1956). *Vol. 13: Luther's works, vol. 13 : Selected Psalms II* (J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald & H. T. Lehmann, Ed.). Luther's Works (Ps 110:1). Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House.

The Psalms

VI. The Messianic Psalms, Royalty: Luke 24:44-47: Ps 2 || Matthew 3:17; Ps 16 || Acts 2:31; 13:35

⁴⁴ Then He (Jesus) said to them, "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me." ⁴⁵ And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. (Luke 24:44-45)

Psalm 2

- Read Mathew 3:13-17. Generally, what is going on? What did the voice say in v17? Whose voice was it? Why is this significant? What does this say of Jesus?
- Compare Matthew 3:13-17 with Mathew 17:1-13. What similarities and comparisons do you see between the two, with regard to voice, appearance, voice, etc.? (note esp. the words spoken from the voice in both passages.)
- Read Psalm 2. Note esp. verses 6 and 7. How might these verses correspond to Matthew 3 and 17 referenced above. (See also Isaiah 42:1; Deuteronomy 18:15)

Psalm 16

- Read Acts 2:22-36 and 13:15-39, and Psalm 16. How is Psalm 16:8-11 used in Acts 2 (v25-28)? Note also the use of Psalm 110:1 in Acts 2:34-35. How is Psalm 16:10 used in Acts 13:35? Note also the use of Psalm 2:7 in Acts 13:33.
- What does Peter's and Paul's use of Psalms (here and elsewhere) show concerning how the Psalms are to be understood? Of whom do they speak?

The Psalms

*Psalm 2

Psalm 2 is a prophecy of Christ, that he would suffer and through his suffering become King and Lord of the whole world. Within this psalm stands a warning against the world's kings and lords: if, instead of honoring and serving this king, they seek to persecute and blot him out, they shall perish. This psalm also contains the promise that those who believe in him will be blessed.

This psalm flows from the first commandment, in which God promises to be our God, who will help us in every trouble and will work all good for us - just as he has, through Christ, delivered us from sin, death, and hell and brought us to eternal life. This blessing is what we pray for in the second petition of the Our Father: that his kingdom come. (p8)

Psalm 16

The 16th psalm is a prophecy of the suffering and resurrection of Christ, as the apostles themselves powerfully indicate (Acts 2:25 and 13:35). It clearly gives witness that Christ has discarded as idolatry the old law with its sacrifices and worship and has chosen other saints and another people to be his heirs. It belongs to the first, second, and third commandments, for it announces the new praise, work, Word, and worship that would come into the world in Christ, after the old worship. It is in the first and second petitions. (p22)

* *Psalms with Introductions by Luther*, 1993. CPH.

VI. The Messianic Psalms, The Suffering Servant: Luke 24:44-47: Ps 22; 34; 41; 69

⁴⁴ Then He (Jesus) said to them, "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me." ⁴⁵ And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. (Luke 24:44-45)

Psalms 22, 34, 41, 69

- Read the selected Psalms.
- How does the Psalmist describe his troubles? What kind of troubles does the Psalmist speak of? Who are the ones who trouble him?
- Is the Psalmist without hope? Do these Psalms have a 'bad' ending or a 'good one'? Do they end on a negative note or a positive one? Why/How?
- How does the Psalmist 'sound like' Jesus?

Note the following Psalm references and compare them with the New Testament with reference to Jesus. How are these referenced of Jesus? What might this mean?

Psalm 22

- 1 Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34
- 6-8 Matthew 16:21; Matthew 27:39-44
- 16 John 20:25
- 17 Luke 23:25
- 18 Matthew 27:35; John 19:24
- 31 Luke 24:44

Psalm 34:

- 20 -- John 19:32-36

Psalm 41

- 9 Matthew 26:23; Luke 22:21; John 13:18

Psalm 69

- 8 John 7:5
- 9 John 2:17
- 21 Matthew 27:34; John 19:19

The Psalms

*Psalm 22

The 22nd psalm is a prophecy of the suffering and resurrection of Christ and of the Gospel, which the entire world shall hear and receive. Beyond all other texts, it clearly shows Christ's torment on the cross, that he was pierced hand and foot and his limbs stretched out so that his bones could have been counted. Nowhere in the other prophets can one find so clear a description. It is indeed one of the chief psalms. It belongs in the first commandment, for it promises a new worship of God. It is in the first and second petitions. (p30)

Psalm 69

The 69th psalm is a psalm of prayer in the person of Christ as he spoke on the cross in his suffering. He confesses in our place and laments for his crucifiers and slanderers, who, in his great thirst, gave him gall and vinegar to drink. (So clearly and openly he speaks of his suffering to come.) Then he prophecies of the horrible delusion, hardness of heart, and ultimate defeat of the Jews, which has all come about, as we can still see and sorrow over.

Finally, he announces also the new worship. He says, 'I will praise God and glorify him with thanksgiving.' This worship shall put an end to the old, for it pleases God better than all bulls and the best offerings one can provide, as the psalm here says. (89-90)

* *Psalms with Introductions by Luther*, 1993. CPH.

VII. Psalms of Deliverance and Salvation: Ps 3, 20, 116, 118

- In reading the selected Psalms, note ‘the thought’ expressed throughout. How does the Psalm begin? What does the Psalmist reveal about his situation (and ours)? What does the Psalm say about deliverance and salvation? Who are these from?
- Note: Psalm 116:12-14, 17-19
 What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits to me? I will offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving and will call on the name of the Lord. I will take the cup of salvation and will call on the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows to the Lord now in the presence of all his people, in the courts of the Lord’s house, in the midst of you, O Jerusalem. (Offertory, ‘What Shall I Render to the Lord’: Lutheran Worship, Divine Service II, 1st & 2nd Setting, with Holy Communion)

Salvation/deliverance

ישועה (Jesus)-Matthew 1:21

Ps. 3:3	Ps. 22:2	Ps. 62:2	Ps. 80:3	Ps. 118:14
Ps. 3:9	Ps. 28:8	Ps. 62:3	Ps. 88:2	Ps. 118:15
Ps. 9:15	Ps. 35:3	Ps. 62:7	Ps. 89:27	Ps. 118:21
Ps. 13:6	Ps. 35:9	Ps. 67:3	Ps. 91:16	Ps. 119:123
Ps. 14:7	Ps. 42:6	Ps. 68:20	Ps. 96:2	Ps. 119:155
Ps. 18:51	Ps. 42:12	Ps. 69:30	Ps. 98:2	Ps. 119:166
Ps. 20:6	Ps. 43:5	Ps. 70:5	Ps. 98:3	Ps. 119:174
Ps. 21:2	Ps. 44:5	Ps. 74:12	Ps. 106:4	Ps. 140:8
Ps. 21:6	Ps. 53:7	Ps. 78:22	Ps. 116:13	Ps. 149:4

Save

Verb form of the above, ישועה

Ps. 3:8	Ps. 20:7	Ps. 36:7	Ps. 65:6	Ps. 85:5	Ps. 108:7
Ps. 6:5	Ps. 20:10	Ps. 37:40	Ps. 69:2	Ps. 85:8	Ps. 109:26
Ps. 7:2	Ps. 22:22	Ps. 44:4	Ps. 69:14	Ps. 85:10	Ps. 109:31
Ps. 7:11	Ps. 24:5	Ps. 44:7	Ps. 69:36	Ps. 86:2	Ps. 116:6
Ps. 12:2	Ps. 25:5	Ps. 44:8	Ps. 71:2	Ps. 86:16	Ps. 118:25
Ps. 12:6	Ps. 27:1	Ps. 50:23	Ps. 71:3	Ps. 95:1	Ps. 119:94
Ps. 17:7	Ps. 27:9	Ps. 51:14	Ps. 72:4	Ps. 98:1	Ps. 119:117
Ps. 18:3	Ps. 28:9	Ps. 54:3	Ps. 72:13	Ps. 106:8	Ps. 119:146
Ps. 18:4	Ps. 31:3	Ps. 55:17	Ps. 76:10	Ps. 106:10	Ps. 132:16
Ps. 18:28	Ps. 31:17	Ps. 57:4	Ps. 79:9	Ps. 106:21	Ps. 138:7
Ps. 18:36	Ps. 33:16	Ps. 59:3	Ps. 80:4	Ps. 106:47	Ps. 145:19
Ps. 18:42	Ps. 34:7	Ps. 60:7	Ps. 80:8	Ps. 107:13	
Ps. 18:47	Ps. 34:19	Ps. 62:8	Ps. 80:20	Ps. 107:19	

*Psalm 116

The 116th psalm is a psalm of thanks in which the psalmist is joyful and gives thanks that God has heard his prayer and has rescued him from the distress of death and the anguish of hell. Like several other psalms, it speaks of the deep spiritual affliction, of which few people know.

He also laments in this psalm that things are so bad, yet he confesses his faith and the truth of God. He calls all human holiness, virtue, and confidence only falsehood and emptiness. This the world will not and cannot hear nor tolerate. Thus it comes that the godly suffer, tremble, and fear all kinds of misfortune.

But despite all, he is comforted by this, that God's Word is true and will only motivate us the more: 'They give me to drink from the cup of their wrath. All right, then I will take the cup of grace and salvation and drink myself spiritually drunk and (through preaching) pour out from this cup on those who will drink with me and who draw their grace from the Word.' This is our cup, and with this cup we will worship God and praise his name. We will fulfill our vows, namely the first commandment, that we receive him as one God and praise him as the only God worthy to preach and to be called upon. You find here also that giving thanks, preaching, and confessing God's name before all people is the true worship of God. (149-150)

The Seventh Petition (Luther's Small Catechism)

But deliver us from evil.

What does this mean?

We pray in this petition, in summary, that our Father in heaven would rescue us from every evil of body and soul, possessions and reputation, and finally, when our last hour comes, give us a blessed end, and graciously take us from this valley of sorrow to Himself in heaven.

Explanation to the 2nd Article of the Apostles' Creed (Luther's Small Catechism)

I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord. Who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death, that I may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true.

* *Psalms with Introductions by Luther*, 1993. CPH.

The Psalms

VIII. Imprecatory Psalms: Ps: 35, 83, 109

Psalm 35

- Read verses 1-6. What prayer is the Psalmist making with reference to the Lord and himself?
- In verse 8, what is the Psalmist praying for with reference to those who 'seek' his life (v4)?
- For what reason does the Psalmist give for rejoicing in v9-10?

Psalm 83

- Read verses 1-8. What is the Psalmist declaring before the Lord? What are his 'enemies' doing?
- Read verses 9-18. What is the Psalmist asking God to do (v13-18)? See also Judges 7 (For v9).

Psalm 109

- Read verses 1-5. Why does the Psalmist say what he does in verse 1? For what reason does the Psalmist pray what he does in the following verses?
- Note verses 21-31. On whom is the Psalmist trusting? Why? v21, 26, 31

Discussion

- Having read the above, how are the Psalmist's words to be understood in light of Matthew 5:44? Does the Psalmist seem to contradict the words of Jesus in Luke 23:24 or of Stephen in Acts 7:59-60?
- Is it Christian to pray for the judgement upon the wicked and the unjust? Why or why not? Genesis 12:3; Isaiah 5:20-23. See also Matthew 23 & Luke 6:24-26. From whose 'seed' are the wicked and the unjust? John 8:42-47; Matthew 3:7; 12:34 (Genesis 3:15)
- The wicked who persecute the righteous, are they only persecuting the Christian, or really, another? Luke 10:16. How might this help to understand prayers against the wicked?

The Third Petition
(Luther's Small Catechism)

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

What does this mean?

The good and gracious will of God is done even without our prayer, but we pray in this petition that it may be done among us also.

How is God's will done?

God's will is done when he breaks and hinders every evil plan and purpose of the devil, the world, and our sinful nature, which do not want us to hallow God's name or let His kingdom come; and when He strengthens and keeps us firm in His Word and faith until we die. This is His good and gracious will.

The Psalms

¹⁰Imprecatory psalms: Psalms that call upon God to destroy the enemies of God's people, also referred to as psalms of cursing or vengeance. Imprecatory psalms are disturbing or even repulsive to some modern readers (e.g., Ps 137:9: "Happy shall they be who take your [Babylonian] little ones and dash them against the rock"). Some people excise these verses by omitting them in their reading or use of the Psalms, especially in worship, or argue that they have been superseded by the NT's call to love one's enemies. Others see these psalms as honest expressions of deep emotions and argue that as prayers to God, they allow the psalmist to give over his or her anger to God. In this latter view, God will deal with the enemies in his justice and mercy, so the possibility exists for reconciliation and restoration.

*Psalm 109

The 109th psalm is psalm of prayer, prayed in the person of Christ against Judas, his betrayer, and against the Jews, his crucifiers.

[From Luther's commentary on four psalms of comfort:] In Acts 1:20, ST. Peter applied this psalm to Judas when they were selecting Matthias to replace him. He did not mean to say that psalm speaks only about Judas...

The psalm begins with Judas and then extends to everyone of Judas' ilk, to all schismatics and persecutors of the Word of Christ; for they always slander the truth and persecute the genuine Christians. (Luther's Works, American Edition 14:257)

[From Luther's lectures on Gen. 39:13-15:] Christ himself complains of these matters in Ps 109:2...For thus the enemies of the truth are accustomed to obscure, traduce, and corrupt the fruits and gains of the Gospel and of salvation among simple and godly hearers...[These enemies] adorn themselves with false and counterfeit praises; but they defame us, in order to make us more obnoxious to those who are strangers to our doctrine. (Luther's Works, American Edition 7:92)

¹⁰ Patzia, Arthur G. & Petrotta, Anthony J. Pocket Dictionary of Biblical Studies. Illinois: Intersarsity Press. 2002, p62

* *Psalms with Introductions by Luther*, 1993. CPH.

The Psalms

IX. **Penitential/Lament Psalms:** Ps 32, 51, 130

Psalm 32

- Read v1-2. Who is the one who is blessed before God? How does this come about, by man's doing or by God's? How does St. Paul use these verses in Romans 4:(1-4)5-8.
- From where is forgiveness to be found? Psalm 130:3-4. Forgiveness of what? Psalm 51:5; Genesis 8:21
- Can anyone 'hide' his/her sin from God? Why or why not? See Genesis 3:7-11; Psalm 44:21; 94:9, 11; 139:1-4, 7; Proverbs 5:21; 15:3; Luke 16:15; Hebrews 4:13; 1 John 3:20
- What do v3-4 have to do with v5? What had the Psalmist 'kept silent' (NIV) about? How does this apply to us? Note also the use of v5 in some of our liturgies (p5 & 15 in The Lutheran Hymnal [TLH]).
- Read v10. Around who does the Lord's unfailing love surround, the one who 'tries to do good', the one who thinks himself as righteous, or the one who trusts not in himself, but in God? v1-2.

Psalm 51

- For background of this Psalm, review the account of King David, Bathsheba, and her husband, Uriah the Hittite: 2 Samuel 11-12:23.
- Who does David say that he sinned against, v4? Who do we?
- Read v16-17. How is this different than what man thinks is 'good and acceptable' to God? Isaiah 55:8; Luke 16:15; 2 Corinthians 7:10; James 4:6-10
- In some Lutheran liturgies, v10-11 are sung as an offertory. How might the placement of these verses be understood in light of v16-17?
- Verse 15 is also used in Lutheran liturgies (i.e. Matins, Vespers, Morning Prayer (Lutheran Worship)). What might its placement at the beginning of these services indicate concerning worship?

Psalm 130

- Why does the Psalmist in v5-6 'wait for the Lord'? See v8.
- Upon what does he put his hope?
- How is one to understand this Psalm? What does it reveal about the true child of God? What kind of 'help' does the Christian seek from God? v2, 7-8.

The Psalms

*Psalm 32

The 32nd psalm is an exemplary psalm of instruction which teaches us what sin is, how one might be freed from it and be righteous before God. For our reason does not know what sin is and tries to make satisfaction for it with works. But the psalmist says that even saints are sinners. They cannot become holy or blessed except by confessing themselves as sinners before God, knowing that they are regarded as righteous only from the grace of God, apart from any service or work.

In short, our righteousness is called (in plain language) the forgiveness of our sins. Or, as it says here: “sins not counted,” “sins covered,” “sins not to be seen.” Here stand the clear plain words: all the saints are sinners and remain sinners. But they are holy because God in his grace neither sees nor counts these sins, but forgets, forgives, and covers them. There is thus no distinction between the saints and the nonsaints. They are sinners alike and all sin daily, only that the sins of the holy are not counted but covered; and the sins of the unholy are not covered but counted. One wound has a healing dressing on it and is bandaged; the other wound is open and unbandaged. Nevertheless, both of them are truly wounded, truly sinners, concerning which we in our books in other places have abundantly borne witness. (42)

Psalm 51

Psalm 51 is one of the foremost of the psalms of instruction. In it David truly teaches us what sin is, where it comes from, what damage it does - and how one may be freed from it. In this psalm, as nowhere else, it is clearly shown that sin is an inheritance, born in us, and that no works can help us against it, only God's grace and forgiveness. Through his Spirit, he creates us new again, as a new person, a new creation. Otherwise, says David, sin with its terror and despair is so mighty that it even crushes the bones, until God's grace comes to our comfort.

Afterwards, when by grace and the Spirit we have again become new, then we can not only learn how to praise but actually thank and praise God - yes, even suffer and bear the cross. All of this David calls true sacrifice and worship. He rejects all other sacrifices which the raving saints bring. He prays at the end that God might build up and preserve the city of Jerusalem to such sacrifices and worship. (69)

Psalm 130

The 130th psalm is a psalm of prayer which comes from the genuine davidic devotion and understanding. It confesses that before God no one is righteous, nor may he become righteous by his own work and righteousness, but rather, only through grace and forgiveness of sins, which God has promised. He relies on this promise and Word and comforts himself. He exhorts all of Israel that they should do the same and learn that with God is a throne of grace and redemption. Through him alone and no way else shall Israel be freed of sins, that is, “through forgiveness” (without which there is no grace) become righteous and blessed. Apart from this, he truly would be in the depths and would never stand before God. (168)

Look! The true master and doctor of the Holy Scriptures is the one who understands what this means: the seed of the woman shall tread on the head of the serpent (Gen 3:15), and through this seed all the nations of the world shall be blessed (Gen. 12:3). Therefore he places both a promise and a prophecy of Christ in this verse: “He will redeem Israel from all his sins.” Upon this verse, and from it, comes the entire psalm. (168)

* *Psalms with Introductions by Luther*, 1993. CPH.

X. **Psalms of Thanksgiving:** Ps 30, 103, 145

*Psalm 30

The 30th psalm is a psalm of thanks in which the psalmist gives thanks that God has redeemed him from the high spiritual afflictions of the devil, which are sadness, depression, terror, despair, doubt, the perils of death, and similar poisonous, fiery darts of the devil. Nevertheless, at the same time he has the comfort that God is only angry for the blink of an eye and does not desire nor will our death or distress but desires rather to see us live and be joyful. This psalm belongs in the second commandment and in the first petition. (39)

Psalm 103

Psalm 103 is a psalm of thanks, beautifully and lovingly made, in which the psalmist thanks God for all his goodness, namely, forgiveness of sins, making a sound body and soul, giving us enough of all sorts of goods, making us joyful and confident, delivering us from enemies and distress. In short, he thanks God that he is a gracious, compassionate, and loving Father toward us, though we are frail and unsteady creatures. God does not deal with us according to our sins, but according to his gracious goodness to us, who acknowledge him and keep his covenant. That is, we believe in him and gladly will be godly and neither arrogant nor stiff necked in our holiness and righteousness (which would indeed be a striving directly contrary to the covenant, especially the first commandment).

This all comes to pass in Christ, who for this reason was promised and now is come, whose kingdom reigns over all. For at the end, where he calls on the angels, mighty ones, servants hosts, to give him praise and let his Word be heard, I am of the opinion that the psalm is speaking of Christ and his apostles, Gospel, and church - where such grace rules; for what we need and what saves us all comes to pass in Christ and not outside of him. (132)

Psalm 145

The 145th psalm is a psalm of thanks for the kingdom of Christ, which was to come. It strongly urges the high, exalted work of praising God and glorifying his power and kingdom. For Christ's kingdom and power are hidden under the cross. If the cross were not extolled through preaching, teaching, and confession, who could have ever thought of it, to say nothing of knowing it? But such is his kingdom and power, that he aided the fallen, called the needy to himself, made sinners godly, and brought the dead to life. Yes, he is the one who gives food to all, who hears the call of his saints, does what they desire, protects them. (186)

* *Psalms with Introductions by Luther*, 1993. CPH.

XI. **Hallelujah' Psalms:** Ps 106; 111-113; 115-117; 135; 146-150

*Psalm 106

The 106th psalm is a psalm of thanks in which the psalmist acknowledges all the sins that the people of Israel had committed against God, by which they had made themselves unworthy for all his grace and blessings. Therefore it says constantly that God has done all these things for his name's sake and for the remembrance of his covenant. Moses also says this (Deut. 9:6), therefore they cannot glory in themselves except in His grace alone-as we also can have no other glory. (137)

Psalm 115

The 115th psalm is a psalm of thanks in which God is praised that he is the true helping God. All other gods are vain idols that cannot help us. Therefore we pray in verse 1, "Not to us, O Lord..." that is, do not look at how religious and respectable we are. Lest you no longer help us, and we become like the heathen, a people without God, or again, as those who have a helpless god, as they accuse us. But rather look to your glory and to your name, that are called and reputed to be a true living God abundant in help. (148)

Psalm 147

The 147th psalm is psalm of thanks for various kindnesses and mighty works of God - first, towards Israel and Jerusalem, then to all who thirst. He gives rain and water to all creatures and does not let the least little bird go hungry, even the most useless raven. How much more then shall he care for us, especially those who trust in his goodness and not in human strength or horses? But above all, to Jerusalem, where his Word and his dwelling are, he gives peace, grain, and all they need. For Jerusalem and Israel have the advantage that they have God's Word or do not heed it. These people cannot see any work or wonder of God, though they enjoy them daily with their five senses, root in them, and devour them like swine. For they did not know God, because they do not hear or pay attention to his Word.

Psalm 150

The 150th psalm is a psalm of thanks written first of all for the people of Israel to praise God. For them his sanctuary - the firmament of his might, that is, his dwelling place, heaven, and castle - was in Jerusalem. Here also he showed his might with miracles and received the string music and the songs of the Jews, with which their praise and worship was accompanied. But for the Christian, preaching and the Gospel are our string music and worship.

Note that all psalms of thanks are noting but promises for the poor, troubled conscience, saying as much as this: God is gracious and gladly forgives all sins and will give all comfort, so that we may find all blessings and comfort in him. Therefore this is openly a psalm of thanks and, at the same time, secretly a psalm of comfort - yes, even a psalm of instruction and a prophecy. All in one, it proclaims God's grace and teaches us to trust and believe in him. To this, may the same merciful God help us - our King and Lord, Jesus Christ, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit is praised forever. Amen. (191-192)

* *Psalms with Introductions by Luther*, 1993. CPH.