

Psalms 18-04-05

This is Thursday, the 5th of April, 2018, and we begin our study tonight of the Book of Psalms. This is the hymnal for the nation of Israel, a collection of songs that we will endeavor to sample, if not completely cover. There are 150 psalms, and I don't know if I have enough years left in my life to cover them all, but we will certainly cover a representative number of them.

Some of these we have covered in previous studies, especially on Sunday morning where we would take one for our scripture reading and spend a little time on it, usually the whole first session, and then come back after the break and actually get back to Genesis or Job or whatever it might have been. But we're going to take a formal look at the Book of Psalms tonight. Let's take a moment as we begin to go to the Lord in prayer and ask His blessing on our fellowship.

Father, we're so grateful for the many ways You express Your grace, Your faithfulness and Your love toward us through the Lord Jesus Christ in sustaining us and challenging us and giving us opportunities to grow. We thank You for our challenges even as we thank You for our blessings, and we pray that tonight as we look at this portion of Your Word that Your Holy Spirit will teach us and minister it to each heart in a way that will be meaningful and helpful and accomplish Your goal in leaving us on this earth and will ultimately reflect the glory and praise of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. We pray these things in His name, Amen.

The Book of Psalms. When I was a tiny child, one of the first things I remember learning about the Bible is that if you open it in the middle, you'll hit the Psalms. And that's often true, unless maybe you have a Thompson chain reference.

There's so much study material in the back that I sometimes end up in the Song of Solomon or Isaiah when I split that one in the middle. But in a normal, uncomplicated Bible, right about in the middle, you find the Book of Psalms. The name that we have for it comes from the Greek word *psalmoi*, which starts with a psi, a P-S-I.

Psalmoi, which is of course a plural, the O-I tells you that in Greek, and it basically means songs. The Hebrew before that is *mizmor*, or the equivalent of that, M-I-Z-M-O-R. And *mizmor* is the term found in the title, if you will, for 57 of the Psalms, which is over a third of them have *mizmor* in their ascription or in their title line.

And yet the name of the book in the Hebrew Bible is not the *mizmorim* or the *mizmorot*. It is instead *sefer tehillim*. *Sefer* means book, we get the word cipher from this loosely, but it's S-E-P-H-E-R, *sefer*, and then *tehillim*, which is T-E-H-I-L-L-I-M.

Tehillim are praise songs, and they have as their theme glorifying, praising, and thanking God. And it's actually a bit of a misnomer because the Psalms are much more diverse than this, and most of them are not really songs of praise, although they will include praise. So really our title is a good one, The Psalms, which is spiritually themed songs for our purpose.

We say the book of Psalms, but it is actually five books. For many of you this will be a review, and I'm going to go through it rather quickly. But this is a collection of five distinct books.

These five books have been recognized since before the time of Christ in their standard divisions. And the first book is Psalms 1-41. That's Book 1, Psalms 1-41.

Book 2 is Psalms 42-72. Book 3 is Psalms 73-89, kind of a small one right there in the middle. You can kind of think of it as the spine of a book.

You've got two books on the front cover, then the spine. Of course, they didn't have books when this was done, they were all scrolls. So this is purely an invention of modern times.

But it's really kind of the shortest, Psalms 73-89. Then Book 4 is Psalms 90-106, also kind of a short one there. And then Psalms 107-150, that's Book 5. So the reason I point this out is, these books indicate to us how the book of Psalms came into being, really.

Because it was an editorial process. This is a collection of songs. Unlike most of the books of the Bible, it was not composed at a sitting.

This is true of other books, by the way. The Proverbs were collected. Many of the historical books, the longer ones, seem to have been the process of editorial gathering of records from various places and putting them together.

But there's a very clear editorial process at work in our book of Psalms. We get the idea that these books were more or less assembled and then joined. One of the reasons we know this, just as an example, is the language that is used changes.

Just as one example, do you remember the J-E-P-D theory that the Germans came up with at the end of the 1800s? J-E-P-D stands, of course, Germans can't say Y. They turn all their Y's into a J. So your shirt's not yellow, it's jello. But Germans don't have a Y, they have a J. So Yahweh becomes Jah-veh, because they can't say W either. So the Y turns into a J, the W turns into a V, and then you throw in an extra syllable, and you get Jehovah instead of Yahweh, for complicated reasons.

But the names of God, the J-E-P-D theory, which was the Yahwist, the J. He supposedly had a hand in writing parts of the Old Testament. And then the E is the Elohist, the one who uses Elohim to refer to God. So J-E-P-D, the P is the priestly redactor who has an interest in trying to get everybody excited about the temple and the priests and all of their thing.

And then D is the Deuteronomist who wants to go back and fill in parts of the law that he didn't think were adequate. All of this is a fiction, an invention of the Germans who had nothing better to do. When they quit doing this, they started world wars and things.

But back in the late 1800s, this is what they were doing. They were massacring the interpretation of the Bible. So J-E-P-D, but the first two letters, J and E, refer to the appellations

of God, the Lord, which is the Tetragrammaton, Y-H-W-H, or what they called Yahweh.

Well, there is a legitimate need to look and see which word is referring to the Lord. Interestingly, in Book 1 of the Psalms, God is referred to as the Lord 272 times. Yahweh occurs, the Tetragrammaton occurs 272 times in Psalms 1-41.

Elohim occurs 15 times. Yahweh 272, Elohim 15. When you get to the second book, what are the chapters for the second book? 42-72? There, Yahweh occurs 30 times, Elohim occurs 164 times.

So the balance greatly shifts. And it tells you that these songs were probably composed and collected at a different time. When God's covenant name, Yahweh, the one that God gave Moses at Sinai, that basically is a variation on, who shall I say is sending me? I Am is sending you.

And Yahweh is a variation on the verb to be. Yeh is I Am in Hebrew, and Yahweh is a variation on that. So it tells us that there is certainly some sort of a shift in emphasis from the use of God's covenant name, which you would expect might be in the earlier days of David, and the majority of Book 1 is composed of Psalms of David.

And then later on you have Psalms composed by others. So this is just one of many ways, and I'm not going to go into all the details, because we are going to cover Psalm 1 tonight. And so we're going to have introduction and Psalm 1 in the next 30 minutes or so.

Lord willing, and I stay on course. But that's just an example. There are many other ways that scholars have figured out kind of where these, and the ancient scribes figured out this is where these books divide.

And so there is evidence of the collection process. Also, because of this, there is some repetition in the book of Psalms. For example, and you can label this repetition in the book.

Psalm 14 is Psalm 53. The same Psalm occurs twice, but you notice one of them is in Book 1 and one of them is in Book 2. And you get the idea that Book 2 was collected without real close scrutiny of Book 1. And so here's a duplicate song that's in both books. So 14 equals 53.

Psalm 40, beginning at verse 13 to the end. And to the end, you know the scholarly abbreviation for that, or the editorial one is FF. You say Psalm 40, 13, FF, which means following and following.

But Psalm 43, 13, FF equals Psalm 70. So that last portion of Psalm 40 is Psalm 70. Psalm 57, verses 7 through 11.

And then tack on Psalm 60, verse 5. That gives you Psalm 108. But you'll notice that these things span books. Every time you find a repetition, it's in a different book.

It's another evidence of the collection process. And God has given us these clues so that we understand it. Now, why would this be important? It bears on the doctrines of inspiration and

inerrancy and so on, that God has used both named authors and unknown editors to compile His Word.

And we don't have to shy away from it. We don't have to pretend that we don't know it. It shouldn't shake our confidence in its inspiration or in its value to us for faith and practice.

People will say, well, this is a mistake. Somebody messed up that there's a duplication. No, there's not.

And we'll take a look at why. For example, you have Psalm 14 repeated as Psalm 53 and the rest of these. God always has a reason for what He does.

And we've seen innumerable times that if something is repeated, you need to take a close look at it. God doesn't repeat Himself for no good reason. But no problems here with inerrancy or with inspiration.

It's just an interesting feature of the book that God chose to bring it into being via a collection process. There are, and I'll just run through this quickly, but in Book 3, you have 11 Psalms by Asaph. And of course, we figure that these books are more or less in their order chronologically.

They would get tacked on as they were compiled and added. So the later parts of the Book of Psalms are probably later in composition or later in collection. Because in Book 3, we have 11 by Asaph.

We have 4 by Korah. We have 1 by Ethan. And we have 1 by David.

And it's interesting that there's 1 by David because we are told in Psalm 86 there in Book 3 is by David. But we are told that in Psalm 72, which as you know is the end of Book 2, the very last line there says, The prayers of David are ended. And so you think, well, they figured that they had collected all of the Psalms that David wrote.

And he said, that's all we've got. The prayers of David are ended. All of them are in here.

Well, Book 3, they found another one. And so they stuck it in, Psalm 86. And by the way, both the ascriptions and the superscriptions are sort of deuterocanonical in the minds of most interpreters.

When it says that this was written right after David put Goliath's head in his tent and so on, we respect those. We know for a fact that these are very ancient ascriptions. But I wouldn't die for the titles the way I would die for the content.

And the same thing with the prayers of David are ended. This seems to be a scribal or an editorial comment. And it has value.

And it helps us. But we treat it with a little bit different level of authority than we do the words

of the song itself. And everybody has done this.

Everybody acknowledges it. Everybody agrees they are to be respected. But if there was any part of the Bible that I wasn't going to bleed in the middle of the Colosseum for, it would be these titles.

They often seem to be appropriate to the content and so on. And you can understand why they would be there, whether they're for real put there or not. I think the ones where it says, to the choir director and so on, those are probably original.

When David says, to the choir director, there's no reason not to think that he wrote this and gave it to the choir master and said, I want the whole nation to learn this song. Anyway, book three, those are its features. Book four, we have two more by David.

So these things would be unearthed. Somebody would find an old copy of a Levite's scrap of parchment or something that he was singing off of. And they would say, well, this needs to be in the handle.

And so they tried to find and preserve these. And in book four, we have a psalm by Moses. And there are two psalms by Moses, one in book four, and we find another one.

Maybe that's the only one by Moses. There are four in book four that have a heading, but no author is given. Then in book five, we have 14 more by David, one by Solomon, and the remainder of them are nameless.

So there's 150 total, unless you're Greek. If you're Greek and you've got a Septuagint, a few of the psalms are divided differently. And they end one early and then number it differently.

And so if you have a Septuagint, the LXX, there are 151 psalms in there. This is interesting only because most of the early church for their Old Testament had the Septuagint. So 150 seems like a nice round number, but the Greeks didn't seem to be impressed by that, and they ended up with 151.

The grouping of psalms is also conscious within the books. Sometimes they are grouped by the author. You'll find the Davidic psalms tend to be grouped together.

Sometimes by a similar theme. If it's a Thanksgiving theme or a lament or an appeal for help in a time of trouble, you might find several of those grouped together. Sometimes a contrast.

One will be praise for deliverance right after one of an appeal for help. But you can tell that there has been conscious grouping done, just like in our modern hymnals. You look at your Baptist hymnal and they'll put the Easter hymns together, the Christmas hymns together, and the Thanksgiving and contemplation and prayer and things tend to be grouped together.

It's the same in the ancient Hebrew hymnal. But most often the psalms, and this is something you can't really see as well in English, but they will be grouped because of similar words and

phrases that occur, and this will be a string or a thread that runs through several psalms, is that there will be a term. It may or may not be thematic, but one of them seems to have reminded somebody of another.

And so they will be grouped in the same way. I was thinking, because we have the word walk in Psalm 1 tonight, and I was thinking, well, when walk has a particular meaning, where does that occur in the New Testament? Well, you immediately think of Ephesians, walk worthy of your calling. You think of John, walk in the light as he is in the light.

Well, this occurred in the minds of the editors. They knew these songs, and it tells us that the people who put these together knew them. They were probably Levites, they were probably some of the choir directors, and they put these together perhaps as hymnal scrolls for the Levites who sang.

But somebody who was intimately acquainted with the contents edited these together, collected the scattered songs, and put them together, remembering the words, is the suggestion. There are some terms that are sort of unique to the Psalms, and we don't really know exactly what they mean. The most famous of these is probably *selah*, S-E-L-A-H.

We don't know what that means. But it occurs at places where you would imagine there might be maybe a musical interlude where the instrumentalists play and the singers stop, so that you can reflect on the words that you just heard. It seems to, in some way, it could also be like a colon in our sheet music says, go back and do that again.

It could be, repeat what you just sang. In whatever form, though, it does seem to suggest that what has just been said needs to be emphasized or reflected on or repeated, thought about. This is true of all of Scripture, but these seem to be special emphasis of some sort.

The root of *selah*, by the way, *selah* means to lift up. And there's also a school of thought that says that the music was supposed to reach a crescendo at that point, and that everybody was supposed to go full voice. If you've ever been to a vocal majority concert, and when they reach a certain point and all of them just open their throats and blast their voices in the same direction, it just rattles the rafters.

Well, it's possible *selah*, from the root to lift up, may mean, it's either to lift it up for study and observation, it may mean lift up your scroll and go back to the beginning, or it might mean crescendo or a climax of some sort. But we don't really know. Similarly, speculation has been rife on what's the difference between a *miktam* and a *maskil*, and some of the other terms that are used.

And we can gather what they mean based on where they are applied, but it's really kind of a guess. We'll talk about that when we hit some of the *miktams* and the *maskils*. Some of the ascriptions seem to be the tune to which it was set.

So you have information at the beginning, such as, to Mut Labayne, Mut is death and Labayne

is the sun, ben, you know, ben her, son of her. So Mut Labayne is the death of the sun. And this seems to have been, you would imagine, maybe a plaintive or melancholy sounding tune, and these words were evidently or possibly set to that.

Again, it's a guess. Same thing with Deer of the Dawn and a few others like that. They seem to have been tune names.

Sheminith is another one. For example, Psalm 12. And the root of this has the idea of something that is number eight or the eighth.

And it may have been the eighth tune we taught you when you came into the Levite choir, or why it would be eighth. Eighth is interesting because the number eight is the number of new birth, that's circumcised on the eighth day, the leper let back into fellowship with the rest of the nation on the eighth day, and so on. So there might be an idea there.

But we sort of speculate on these, and it's another reason why we generally are not as concerned with parsing the exact meaning of these ascriptions, because many of them are quite difficult at this remote distance. There has been a lot of attempt to try to classify the Psalms. This goes all the way back to the scribes, the ancient rabbis, and so on.

But in the more modern days, Martin Luther basically classified the Psalms in five ways. So we're moving now from attributes of the book to ways that they have been interpreted. And this is going to be really brief.

Luther threw them into five shoeboxes. He said there are Psalms that are prophecies of Christ. That's number one.

Of course, you can imagine those. My God, my God, why has thou forsaken me? Your Psalm 21, 22, long in there. So prophecies of Christ.

Secondly, doctrinal Psalms that teach truth about God and His grace and His provision and His watch care, His treatment of the enemies of His people and His blessing of the righteous and so on. So prophecies of Christ, number one. Doctrinal, number two.

Psalms of comfort. You can imagine Psalm 23 would be the first one in that list. Fourth, those that are prayers.

Of course, prayer is a broad category. You can have prayers for all different kinds of things. And then finally, Thanksgiving, giving of thanks.

Hermann Gunkel. That's a German Hermann with two Ns on the end. Hermann Gunkel.

He was one of the guys that created, established, promulgated, and popularized form criticism. And this goes back to your JEPD days. He lived from 1862 to 1932.

But he was one of the seminal German scholars. And he really put out a lot of wonderful work.

But form criticism is, we can gain insight into the scripture not only by what it says, but how it says it.

And so Gunkel established what has become the most widespread way of interpreting the Psalms. He did many other things. But his classification of the Psalms has pretty much become standard.

This is what I was taught in seminary exclusively. And he put them in seven categories. Number one, hymns, which are just pretty much praise songs.

Number two, enthronement Psalms. Psalms that talk about the Lord's anointed, and Him sitting on His throne, and ruling the nations, and this sort of thing. Enthronement Psalms.

Number three, national lament. The entire nation is contrite before the Lord, and mourning because we hanged our harps on the willows, and so on. These sadness at a national level Psalms.

Number four is royal Psalms that talk about the king and his household. Number five, Psalms of individual lament. This would be Psalm 51 perhaps.

Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean, and so on. Number six, individual thanksgiving. An individual thanking God rather than the nation coming before God in corporate worship.

And then seven was the grab bag. It was other. And into this he threw blessing and cursing Psalms, pilgrimage, we're on the road, songs of ascents and things like that, songs of victory, songs of thanksgiving, songs of legend, and songs of law.

He had six subcategories. That's Gunkel. But I only cover that to tell you that if you go to almost any commentary, popular or scholarly, and start looking at Psalms, you will probably find this classification.

If it's been written in the last 130 years, it's probably got Gunkel's classification. When you go to any particular Psalm, they will say, well, this is a song of individual lament, or this is a song of enthronement, or whatever. Well, that all traces back to Gunkel.

He is the architect of that. Now, our final point of introduction, what is the nature of Hebrew poetry? And it's really easy. Hebrew poetry doesn't rely on meter.

It's not like iambic pentameter. You know, ba-dum, ba-dum, ba-dum, ba-dum, ba-dum, ba-dum, ba-dum. That's pentameter.

Where you have accented syllables. It doesn't rely on rhyme. It doesn't rely on line length.

It is strictly thought parallelism. This is the only thing anybody's ever been able to figure out about Hebrew poetry. But you can always tell that you're in poetry because there will be what they call two lines.

Once in a while, three lines. Lines in scholarly parlance are called sticks. S-T-I-C-H, S-T-I-C-H-S.

So, what do you think a distich is? Or a distich. What does di mean? Two, right? What would be a tristich? Depending on who you talk to. Three lines.

Hebrew poetry is parallelism, almost always in two lines, once in a while in three lines. And it is parallelism of three kinds. It is either synonymous, meaning a line says a thing and the next line says the same thing, but it says it in a different way.

It somehow restates it, usually with a little bit different perspective. Secondly, and this would be a synonymous distich. Synonymous.

Second line is synonymous with the first line. The second one is synthetic. And when you synthesize, you put something together, right? You build.

So, the first line says something and the second line builds on it. Synthetic. You have to have that foundation before you can put this other one on.

You know, the workman lays the brick, but the roofer puts on the shingle. You know, that would be synthetic. And then finally, you have antithetic.

You know, the way of the righteous will prosper, but the way of the wicked will perish. And it's opposite. That's it.

That's Hebrew poetry in a nutshell. You had just finished a whole semester of Hebrew poetry in ten minutes. There are other things we could talk about.

There are some common themes that run through many, many of the Psalms. The theme of the wicked, evil men, evildoers. Obviously, there is a contrast between the people of God and the faithful people of God versus the unbelievers and the faithless people of God.

And so, when you encounter these common themes like evildoers or, you know, fret not thyself because of evil men and this sort of thing, or the way of the wicked, we have to figure out what kind of wicked is being spoken of. But it frequently occurs, and there are different vocabulary terms that get mashed in English under evildoers and wicked. And we're going to see that this evening in Psalm 1. We've got three different words for bad guys in Psalm 1. And then they will be opposed to or in contrast to or enemies of the righteous.

Well, what does it take to be righteous? That's an important question to ask. You also occasionally, and causing great difficulty for some, I have no trouble with this whatsoever, but some people are concerned because there are imprecatory psalms where the psalmist will call down the wrath of God on the heads of evildoers, wicked, bad guys, nefarious enemies. They are imprecatory.

And some people say, well, how can it be inspired scripture to call down the wrath of God on somebody? Well, if there is a wrath of God, and God is going to aim it at people, and you are in

harmony with God's thinking and God's sentiment toward sin and evil, then with great caution and great humility and great care, you may ask God to go ahead and do that. I personally am very reluctant to enter into those realms because you can get judged with the judgment with which you are trying to judge somebody else, and I don't want God saying, well, you know, since you mentioned it, there's a few things you need imprecation for. But there are, for example, Psalm 35, which is in Book 1, Psalm 69, which is in Book 2, and Psalm 109, which is in Book 5, are imprecatory psalms.

They are unabashed calls to God to rain down fire and brimstone on somebody. A few final notes of introduction. The text of our psalms, by and large, is pretty good.

You remember 1 Samuel was kind of like a moth-eaten text in some places. Somebody sent the Criswell Foundation some bulletins from the First Baptist Church of Chickasha, Oklahoma from 1938 and 1939. There were half a dozen of them, and this is when Dr. W.A. Criswell, that was his first pastorate out of seminary, before he went to Muskogee and then went on to First Baptist Dallas where he became legendary.

Well, this is his first pastorate, and there are six of these bulletins, and so the lady graciously sent them to us. She ran across them in an old album that didn't even belong to her, but she thought, well, somebody might want these, and I said, why sure. So she sent them.

We sent her a little thank you. But I was looking at those, and they have, in certain places, been eaten away, and I was interested that there was a list of people that were notable in the church for doing something, and there was one name in particular where it said Mr. J.B., and it's almost as though the worm had been directed to remove his last name. And I thought, boy, that reminds me of old, the guy in Ruth, you know, Piloni Almoni there, where his name is, it was just excised by this wormhole, and there were wormholes in various other places, but that was the only thing that was totally unreadable was this guy's name.

And I thought, wow, you know, that's pretty specific. But our text in the Psalms is not of that nature. You got that idea in 1 Samuel.

There were a lot of textual issues that we had to... God always preserves enough information that we can figure out what we need to know. But Psalms is not disturbed in that way. You will many times find somebody saying that various portions of Scripture, and especially the Psalms, are derivative, that they depend on other ancient literature, and any scholar that's familiar with Babylonian and Egyptian and other songs and hymns will tell you that what's remarkable is not any similarity that you might think you find between songs devoted to these gods of the pagans versus the Psalms, but how different the Psalms are.

Israelite poetry and these songs are unique in the annals of the ancient Near East. Nothing else is like them. I wrote down just a few details.

There's a song that they found dedicated to Marduk, the Babylonian god Marduk. And they say,

here's a sacrifice we've offered. Be appeased.

Here's something else we have done. Be appeased. And be appeased in this one song occurs 16 times.

There's a song dedicated to the Egyptian god Ammon. It's got 600 lines. And it is so repetitive that there was instructions to the Egyptian priests, when you sing this song, skip down to line 300, and then skip down to line 600, and just sing those.

Because the intervening 299 verses are so repetitive, we just can't get through it. You're going to put everybody to sleep. So Ishtar, there's a song, and one scholar said, in this song to Ishtar, there is a wearisome enumeration of attributes that extends to over 25 repetitions.

So they kept talking about Ishtar's attributes 25 times in a row. The same attributes. And so they were repetitious.

Remember in the New Testament, Jesus accuses the Pharisees of this meaningless repetition. Well, this was rife in the Gentile and pagan worship in the ancient Near East. And you don't find that in the Psalms.

Where there is repetition, it is extremely meaningful. And we'll see a few of the Psalms, you can think of some in Book 5, where I will give thanks to the Lord, is repeated after each Psalm. But this is a feature that we'll discuss at that time.

So, enough of that. Let's move now to Psalm 1. That is our introduction to the book. You know a little bit about poetry, you know about what to expect, you know what to do with the vocabulary.

Psalm 1. Let's read it. It's only six verses. Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful.

But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night. 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. The ungodly are not so, but are like the chaff which the wind drives away.

Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish. You'll see some of the themes we mentioned that are going to permeate the book of Psalms.

The ungodly, the wicked versus the righteous. And the introduction could not be more apropos to the entire collection. And there's a reason why this is the opening song.

If you open a lot of hymnals, at least the ones I'm familiar with, you'll find the doxology is hymn number one. Because that's what the whole book is dedicated to, is praising God from whom all blessings flow. So, let's begin here.

Blessed is the man. We start with a word here that is actually a plural construct. Construct is not as important as the plural.

This is actually happinesses. And most of the time in the Old Testament when you find blessed, it is this word. It pretty much only occurs in the construct plural.

Plural in Hebrew is emphatic. This is why Elohim, which we translate as the singular God, is plural. Because it emphasizes and greatly stresses the concept.

So, blessed, this is really blessings to, or blessings upon. What we're going to see here in this psalm is going to be in contrast to what we're going to see in Psalm 2. Because these first two psalms, this one is going to talk about God's law. You see that in verse 2. His delight is in the law of the Lord.

And that word law is Torah, as we'll see. Psalm 2 is going to really focus on the other part of what existed in this day, which is the prophetic word. What builds on the law.

And there's a sense in which there's a synthetic relationship between Psalm 1 and Psalm 2. Psalm 1 lays a foundation and Psalm 2 is going to build on it. So as we go through Psalm 1, the reason I bring this up is, watch for this foundation being laid. The foundation is the law and the superstructure is going to be the prophets.

The prophets don't mean much if you haven't already got the law under your belt. So that's what we're looking at here. So, we know that, by the way, that Psalm 2 was written by David, even though when you look at the beginning of it, it doesn't say a Psalm of David, does it? You know how we know that Psalm 2 was written by David? You can just make a quick note.

Acts 4, verse 25. Acts 4, verse 25. Tells us that David wrote Psalm 2. But, we're in Psalm 1. So, the intensity here is expressed in blessed.

This is greatly blessed. Greatly blessed. It's actually a superlative.

Most blessed or most blessings will fall upon. Then we have the man. And, of course, this is the one.

We understand this. People seem to feel like they need to change pronouns and things in the modern day. But we understand that this is the one.

This is man or woman, anyone. Now we're going to get three things that are not done. We're going to get a triad of negative things.

You would think, well, what is the key to happiness? Somebody that lives a long time, they say, well, what's your secret to long life? And somebody that looks happy, what's your secret of happiness? Well, you typically expect somebody to give you a positive answer. Well, I drink prune juice, or I run a half a mile a day, or it's a fifth in the evening right before I go to bed, or whatever. But here, happiness, greatest happiness, the greatest joy is upon somebody who

does not do these three things.

And these three things are in sort of an ascending order. And the idea here is, because of these three things, is that it's sort of a complete, you know, three is the number of completion or perfection in the Bible. And this means, this is something that you don't do anywhere at any time.

It's sort of exclusive. Because he's going to give three types of sinner, and he's going to give three types of sin that's implicit in the kind of name that they have, and three places where they commit this sin. And the idea here is, these are three places that we stay out of at all times, and three types of sin that we avoid at all times.

It's comprehensive. These three verbs are going to be perfect verbs. And a perfect in Hebrew sums up the concept completely.

These are prohibited at all times and in all circumstances. Number one. The one who walks not.

And in Hebrew, I'm going to give you the word order. Most blessings upon the man that does not walk in the counsel of the ungodly. Pretty close to what you have in your English.

Does not walk. This walk is halak, H-A-L-A-K. And this is walk in the sense of lifestyle.

You think about Ephesians 4.1. Walk worthy of the calling. You think about 1 John 1.7. If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship. Remember? Walk, in Greek, it's peripateo.

And peripateo is used just dozens of times in the New Testament to mean lifestyle. So this is a lifestyle. Your walk, we have that phrase, your Christian walk, your Christian life or lifestyle.

So the one who does not walk means this is not any part of the lifestyle. In the counsel. This is ba-atsat.

Atsat isn't really counsel in terms of advice. This word means plans. And it also means principles.

Plans and principles are equally good translations. Your lifestyle does not involve, does not incorporate the kind of planning. And planning, of course, is always toward a goal, right? So your lifestyle does not have the goals of these people.

And it doesn't follow the principles that they use to achieve those goals. Plans and principles. Does not walk in the plans and principles.

And Hebrew is such an intense kind of expression that sometimes you have to use two English words to get it across. In the Hebrew mind, when you would say this word, say ba-atsat, they knew right away what you're talking about. It's all of this.

We have to use two words to get it across. Plans and principles of the ungodly. Ungodly here,

this is the reshaim.

The verb from which this noun is taken means to loose or to be loose. It means to not be governed. To be unreliable.

A loose cartwheel would come off. A loose bridle would slip away. Something that's loose is going to come off and fail.

And fail for a specific reason. It isn't governed. It's not disciplined.

It isn't attached like it should be. It's not joined the way that it should be. And of course the people of God in Israel were supposed to be joined to the Lord God.

And the disjoined, the loose, are here translated ungodly. But this is a specific kind of ungodliness. You're not attached to God's law.

You're not attached to God's word. You're not attached to God himself. You don't take the covenant seriously.

If a woman is married but she's a loose woman, how does she treat her covenant of marriage? That's the idea here. This is loose in the sense of commitment. This is loose in the sense of being governed by godly principles.

So, most blessed is the one that doesn't have a lifestyle that incorporates the plans and principles of these ungodly people in the sense of being ungoverned and unattached to the things of God. They're living a different life for a different reason. Now, the second part of the verse in English says, nor stands.

But in Hebrew it says, and in the way of sinners does not stand. So, there's a symmetry here where the verbs are on the outside. So, the walking, the lifestyle is on the outside of these loose people's plans and principles.

And then, in the way of sinners, and the way here is derek, D-E-R-E-K. And this is the standard word for a path. You know, there was an actress married to a director named John Derek, and his name, you know, comes from a Jewish derivative because Derek is a Hebrew word and it means way, street, path.

So, and in the path of sinners. But this is a different word here. This is not our loose, reshaim, ungodly people.

These sinners are the kataim, C-H-A-T-A-I-M, kataim. And this is sin in the sense of missing the mark. You may have heard this before.

Sometimes there are different words for sin. And there is a target you're supposed to hit, but you miss it. There's a line you're supposed to stay inside, but you step outside it, or you color outside it, or you dwell outside it.

You're not where you're supposed to be. There's a place to be. You're not in it.

There is, and so this path that they're walking is a path you're not supposed to be in. You're walking in the path. I noticed in Claremore when we moved back here there was a new feature in town.

I'm noticing they moved the post office. I like to never found the post office. Mom had to tell me where it was because I went to the old post office.

It's a completely different thing. It looks like the post office, but they don't take letters there. Well, another thing they've done in town is when you get, there are so many trains going through Claremore.

I've heard people now, they call it train-more. And you get delayed almost any time you try to drive through town. But as you approach the train tracks now on J.M. Davis or some of the other streets, there's a concrete buttress with all these little poles sticking up in the middle.

And when I first drove through town, I looked at that and I thought, well, what is that for? Well, the first time I got there when there was a train coming and the little arms came down, well, that's to keep people from swerving and going around, you know, weaving their way like an S around the arms before they raise because people will. They think, well, this arm's down too long. I don't see a train.

I'm just going to go around it. That is the way of the ones who don't stay in the lines. And they've utterly prevented it.

And this is what we should do mentally. We should put up these concrete buttresses with the little lines and stay in the street we're supposed to be in. Khataim are those who will, have you ever seen people when traffic is stacked up and they'll just pass you on the right, pass you on the shoulder, or even in the dirt because their need to get somewhere is so much bigger than all the rest of us.

And so they will go, the signs say merge left, merge left, you know, lane narrows, you know, merge, merge, merge now, state law, merge now. And they just go right around and there's a steady stream of people getting in front of you and you just seem like you're going backwards. These are khataim.

These are the people who do not stay in the lines. Their self-interest supersedes all borders and all boundaries. It's the kind of sin.

Well, and they've got a path. You can see there's ruts around certain places. There are people who will leave the turnpike.

I see ruts that leave the turnpike and go to somebody's house. I don't know what they do at the gate. Maybe there's another place where they get back off again.

But there are some pretty well-worn ruts. If you look along the side of the turnpike and it disappears behind some fence and somebody's, that's the way of the sinners. And you're greatly blessed if you do not abide in that way, if you do not dwell or remain or stand.

This is the verb *amad*. In the derrick of these line crossers, you do not stay. This is the verb *amad*, A-M-A-D.

And it has the idea of taking a stand, of agreeing and saying, well, I think this is okay. I think this is right. I think they've got a point here.

It ought to change. It ought to be different. It has the idea of something that is being confirmed, to confirm or to appoint.

You know, we talk about judges that are appointed and confirmed. Well, that's what *amad* has the idea of. It talks about stability.

There is a fixation idea in it. So you don't get fixed into the place where you're lawless, you're a line crosser. That's the idea of *amad*.

Now the third phrase, and this is our third perfect tense verb, you don't *halak*, perfect tense, in the plans and procedures of the ungodly. You don't take up a position and be committed and abide and be fixed with these line crossers, nor, and again, the verb is going to follow this now, nor in the seat of the scornful sit. And sit is the last word in the verse.

So we keep swapping where the verb is. Nor in the seat of the scornful, actually it's in the seat of the scornful, does not sit. And the idea here is the scornful, these are scoffers.

If you go back to Genesis 13, 13, and it's the initial story of Abraham and his nephew Lot, and Lot decides he's going to go down to Sodom. But if you look at Genesis 13, 13, this word scoffers is used. And it characterized the men of Sodom.

It said they were wicked scoffers. And it has the idea of speaking with forked tongue. Because this word is also used for interpreters and for ambassadors who talk at a certain level, but they're saying something different than what was originally said.

Now it can be legitimate if you're an interpreter. You're going to say something that the person you're interpreting did not say. Hopefully the meaning is going to come across.

But it's used in the Bible to designate those who interpret into another language. And it is also used for ambassadors who are going to take the king's words and speak it in another language to the king of another domain. But you get the idea here that scoffing is to make light of.

You get the idea that this is sarcasm. The sarcastic. The wittily derisive is the idea here.

This scoffing isn't just belittling in a ham-fisted fashion. This is really self-congratulatory derision. And you can read this on the web in a lot of places where there's piling on some

political figure or some Christian who dares to enter the realm of science.

Michael Behe and some of these that have published. And the witty derision and the, well we all know better than that, this really sarcastic vilification and belittling in a very caustic way. That's what this word means.

And to sit in their seat has the idea of fellowship. Sitting in an assembly. To sit in the ancient world meant you're sitting with other people.

Remember when Jesus had the disciples take the 5,000 and the 4,000 and the 5,000 he had them sit in groups of 50? They would sit together. And so this is your place of conversation. You regularly converse.

And you're in harmony with. And you join in the piling on. And you don't want to be the out person.

You don't want to be the one that is the victim. You want to be one of the scoffers, not the scoffee. So greatly blessed is the person who in the perfect tense, these things that always happen.

These are ubiquitous. They are in every generation. They are in every culture, every civilization.

That's what the perfect tense means. They always exist. And the one who is most blessed is the one who does not walk in the plans and principles of the loose.

He doesn't take up a stand in the way of the sinners, the line crossers. Nor does he assemble and sit down and fellowship and converse at length with these derisive, biting critics. But, verse two.

And this is not, many times the conversative is just a wow, which can also mean and, or, but, now, then. It can be translated in a lot of different ways. We have a very strong adversative.

This is not just the simple wow here that begins verse two. This is the word keim. It's the strong adversative in Hebrew.

By sharp contrast, the opposite. As far away from this as you can get. But.

This is but in capital letters. But, in the Torah, in the law, and I said again, this is the foundation here. In the Torah, he takes delight.

And this is Yahweh. Remember I said in the first book of Psalms we find the Lord, the Tetragrammaton, far more frequently than later on. But.

In the law of the Lord is his delight. And this is kepetz. Remember when we looked at the last words of David and we saw this word kepetz, C-H-E-P-E-T-Z, kepetz.

Well, that's what we have here. But, literally this says, but the law of the Lord is his delight. And

kepetz, this is your life's dream.

This is your ambition. This is your, in French, you know, your raison d'etre. Thankfully I didn't take French.

Sadly, I think we're like an eighth French in my generation. And I butcher that language freely and proudly. Anyway, this is his delight.

This is more than just, oh, isn't that delightful. This is your aim, your goal. Nothing makes you happier than this.

The Torah of Yahweh is his delight. And in his Torah, capital H, does he meditate. And the verb here is yegeh, Y-E-H-G-E-H.

Sounds like Cherokee, yegeh. But yegeh is a word that means to moan. It means to hum.

It means to mumble. It means to make some sort of almost non-understandable utterance. Why would it say that? In his law, does he, he's repeating it to himself.

He's reading it to himself. Remember I told you in the ancient world, the idea of reading silently was unknown. It wasn't until the days of Augustine and after that people began to read without moving their lips and without speaking out loud.

Reading was always verbal. And so when somebody is, if they have a copy, they might be reading it. But he's reciting it to himself.

He's repeating it to himself. In his law, he's mumbling it. He's moaning it.

He's uttering it. He's saying it to himself day and night. It's coming out of his lips day and night.

He's thinking about it. Not continuously, but frequently. Remember when we translate pray without ceasing? And our pastor when I was younger said, pray with the frequency of a hacking cough.

If you've had the flu lately, you know what that hacking cough is like. Well, that's the idea here. In his law, he's reciting it to himself.

He comes upon an occasion, and God will not suffer the righteous to be moved. In everything give thanks. This is the will of God.

Parts of God's law, parts of God's truth just come out your lips during the day. And if you wake up in the night, I will sing songs in the night. When I consider the stars and the work of God's hands, what is man that you're mindful of him.

All through your circumstances, day and night, the word of God is escaping your lips. That's what yeget means. It's almost onomopoeitic.

It's coming forth from you. You're responding to what you see and what you hear with the word of God, with the law of God. Day and night.

That's verse 2. Notice this is the positive. One positive negates the three negatives. The three things you do not do.

What you do is the word of God is in your heart, in your mind, and in your mouth. All day and all night. All of your waking moments.

So then Psalm 3 is going to give us a comparison, a figure. He shall be. The Hiyeh.

Remember I told you Hiyeh and so on are variations from which God's name is taken, the verb from which God's name is taken. He shall be. Hiyeh.

Like a tree. Planted by the rivers of water. What's interesting here is, and I'll just go through this real quickly, but the word planted is shatul.

S-H-A-T-U-L. This is the word that literally means transplanted. And I find that very significant.

He's going to be like a tree. It might have been out here, we were talking the other day about cactus. I found a cactus out on the impact area and different people tried to grow it.

I killed my cactus. But I took my cactus out of a dry, parched area of the impact area of Fort Sill where it was doing beautifully. And I brought it in and tried to care for it and it died.

But I transplanted it. Well, if you're in a dry and thirsty land and you get transplanted next to water, this is the means of thriving. So he will be like a tree transplanted by.

And then the rivers, there's an ancient name, Peleg. Remember in the Genesis genealogies, there's Peleg and Riu and some other guys, P-E-L-E-G. Well, that's this word.

And this is plural, so it's Palgay. But the rivers of Mayim, of water, but these rivers are also something, this word in its root means to cut. Peleg means to cut or to divide.

Remember Peleg was named because in his days the earth was divided? Well, that's what his name means, to divide. And you get the idea that this is maybe an artificial waterway or a canal or something that has been provided at a spot. So here's this waterway that has either cut itself naturally or it has been cut as an irrigation channel.

And then this tree has been put there. And the implication here is that God has both provided the waterway and transplanted the tree, when you're talking about the man. He will be like a transplanted tree by water that has been provided because it has been cut into the ground that brings forth his fruit in his season.

Each tree is different. Trees have seasons. Some bloom and fruit at one part of the year.

Others bloom and fruit at a different part. You know, barley and wheat don't fruit and ripen at

the same time. And different fruit trees.

But because your tree may ripen and bloom and fruit at one time and some other person, maybe in their life God matures them and brings them to a point of fruitfulness and production in a different area at a different time, this discourages us from trying to compare ourselves one to another. If you're an olive and somebody else is an apple, you shouldn't be saying, well, look at all those apples. How come I'm not full of apples? Well, you're an olive tree.

You're a different kind of thing. His fruit in his season. It's fruit in its season.

It's identical in Hebrew either way. His leaf will not wither. And notice in the closing part of that verse you leave the figure.

All that he does will prosper. You're back to talking about the man. He's like a tree that is transplanted next to this well-established source of water.

And he will bring forth his fruit in his time. God will work in that individual tree to make it fruitful when it's supposed to fruit. And then you step out of the figure.

All that he does will prosper. But prosper here isn't the idea that, well, if I'm doing anything and it's not prospering, I don't qualify. Something's wrong.

I'm not the godly. I'm not the righteous. I'm not the faithful.

I must be falling apart in one of those three areas because I did a thing and it didn't prosper. This notion of prosperity here in this particular word has the idea that you are blessed and you are a blessing. This doesn't mean that every doghouse you build is going to survive the tree that falls.

This doesn't mean that every project you undertake is going to succeed. It doesn't mean that every business that you invest in is going to make you money. It doesn't mean that every plant you plant is going to live and not die.

This word, *salach*, T-S-A-L-A-C-H, means to push through. It's used for something that penetrates. It's going to push through the opposition.

It's going to meet and overcome resistance. It's going to succeed in the ultimate sense of what is your purpose. If your purpose is just to make money, you can't go claim this verse and say, well, look, I invested in this company and it went belly up.

This is in God's economy. You will meet with resistance. You will advance.

You will push through it. You will get past it. You'll come out on the other side as you should.

In whatever you undertake, you will push through to the finish. But it has the idea of penetrate. This is like a spear penetrating a shield or some opposing obstacle.

So that's verse three. My computer is extremely slow tonight. So then in verse four, it says, the ungodly are not so.

Now, you see that word ungodly? That's the same one we had up at the beginning. The counsel of the ungodly, the loose. These loose, ungoverned, unattached, uncommitted ones are not so.

They're like the chaff which the wind drives away. Now, you'd say, well, the figure in the previous verse was a tree. So why don't we have a withered up dry, like the fig tree that Jesus withered up.

But it's an even bigger contrast. Not only, they're not even a tree. They're like the husks that get blown away by the wind.

These loose ones. They never were a tree to begin with. The best they were is a shell over what's really good and they've been threshed, they've been heisted into the wind and they're blown away.

Chaff in the ancient world was always a product of winnowing and it was either so much of it that it was in a pile and it was burned or it was just let to fly and was seen no more as an entity. It blew away and was gone. And this is the figure here.

They're like the chaff which the wind drives away. Therefore, verse five, the ungodly, and once again, you have this same word for the reshaim, the loose, the unstable, the unsteady, the unreliable, the ungoverned. It was used for abnormality in Hebrew.

But on this account, the ungodly will not stand his ground in the judgment. And what judgment is it? This is the ultimate and final judgment. So, you get the idea and it says after that, the beginning of this verse five, therefore, comprises two different words in Hebrew which is al-kain and it means therefore, after that.

This is the end time judgment. This is the final judgment. The ungodly will not stand in the judgment.

The reshaim will not stand. Nor the sinners, the line crossers, this is your kataim again, in the assembly, this is the seated area, of the righteous. So, there's going to be a righteous assembly.

Notice, remember the blessed man is the one who doesn't sit in the assembly of the scorners. Well, these guys will not be able to go to the assembly of the righteous. And the final statement here, the Lord, Yahweh, knows the derek, the way, of the righteous.

But the way, the derek again, of the ungodly, which is the loose ones, will perish. Will perish. And you get the idea that this perishing is permanent.

It is the equivalent of the Greek word apolia. This is to go away and not come back. So, the exhortation here, it means to be annihilated.

To be ruined in the sense of never being useful again. Wiped out. So, what is our conclusion here from Psalm 1? It is the beginning of the book, and it establishes one of the large themes of the book, which is the contrast between what the wicked and what the sinner does, versus what the righteous and the faithful do.

And the ultimate outcome of those two paths, those ways, that derek. And God is paying attention. And in the ultimate verse here of this song, what are you left with? When you think about the last line, the Lord knows.

And it is the final judgment where there is restitution, where there is rectification, where there is justice. It may not seem so now. Why do the wicked prosper? Why are the righteous bringing up the rear when it comes to various short-term analyses? The Lord knows.

So, you go back to the beginning, and sort of a symmetry there. Great blessing is upon the ones that the Lord knows. The Lord knows the way of the righteous, and the way of the righteous does not incorporate those three hazards.

Instead, His delight, and that word delight that I mentioned, that muttering and moaning and thinking about, is also in contrast to the first three verbs, because it's an imperfect, which is ongoing. He is continually doing this, and then day and night emphasizes it. Both the verb and the day and night emphasize this pattern of life.

So, it's a wonderful exhortation to us, and encouragement to us, because it is just as true today as it was in the days when it was written, and incorporated into the book of Psalms. And it's a great introduction to some of the kinds of teaching that we are going to glean from this particular collection of inspired thoughts collected in the hymnal of ancient Israel. Let's close here in a word of prayer.

Father, we thank You for the truth of Your Word. We thank You for the presence and power of Your Holy Spirit to incorporate it into our thinking and into our lives, and give us the ability to live in its light. We pray that we can do so, and that as a result, the glory of the Lord Jesus will be reflected in us and through us, outward to the world that is searching and so in need of relationship with You, and being joined to You, and committed to the way that leads to prosperity, that leads to life, and that leads to a future with You when the Lord Jesus returns.

We pray all these things in Jesus' name. Amen.