

BIBLE SURVEY: OT WISDOM

WEEK 3: PSALMS II

INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

- In this 6-week series, we are going to go through the Old Testament wisdom and poetry books.
- Our schedule for the next 6 weeks will be:
 - November 13th: Introduction and Job
 - November 20th: Psalms part 1
 - **November 27th: Psalms part 2**
 - December 4th: Proverbs
 - December 11th: Ecclesiastes
 - December 18th: Song of Solomon

IMPRECATORY PSALMS¹

- **Imprecatory Psalms are musical poems where the Psalmist requests that God bring judgment upon his adversaries.** Not all imprecatory psalms are completely filled with curses. Some contain elements of curse and other material such as blessings, appeal, adoration, worship, and more.
- A list of the imprecatory Psalms is **5, 17, 28, 35, 40, 55, 59, 70, 71, 79, 80, 94, 129, 137, 139, 140.**
- Some might say that the imprecatory Psalms stand in contradiction to the words of Christ, who tells us to love our enemies.
- **The imprecations of the psalmists stand in agreement with the judgment of God upon evildoers.** But when Jesus tells us to love our enemies, he is speaking of what we, as Christians, are supposed to do. The psalmists spoke of God's righteous judgment in the Old Testament context. But in the New Testament context, it is not the time of God's judgment. Instead, it is the time of redemption and in that redemption, we are to love our enemies.
- "It is important to recall the theological principles that underlie such psalms. These include: **(1)** the principle that vengeance belongs to God (Deut. 32:35; Ps. 94:1) that excludes personal retaliation and necessitates appeal to God to punish the wicked (cp. Rom. 12:19); **(2)** the principle that God's righteousness demands

¹ <https://carm.org/about-the-bible/what-are-the-imprecatory-psalms/>

judgment on the wicked (Pss. 5:6; 11:5–6); (3) the principle that God’s covenant love for the people of God necessitates intervention on their part (Pss. 5:7; 59:10, 16–17); and (4) the principle of prayer that believers trust God with all their thoughts and desires.”²

- Psalm 137 “By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down and wept, when we remembered Zion. ²Upon the willows in the midst of it we hung our harps. ³For there our captors demanded of us songs, and our tormentor’s mirth, saying, ‘Sing us one of the songs of Zion.’ ⁴How can we sing the LORD’S song in a foreign land? ⁵If I forget you, O Jerusalem, may my right hand forget her skill. ⁶May my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth if I do not remember you if I do not exalt Jerusalem above my chief joy. ⁷**Remember, O LORD, against the sons of Edom the day of Jerusalem, who said, ‘Raze it, raze it to its very foundation.’** ⁸**O daughter of Babylon, you devastated one, how blessed will be the one who repays you with the recompense with which you have repaid us.** ⁹**How blessed will be the one who seizes and dashes your little ones against the rock.”**
- This psalm needs no title to announce that its origin was the Babylonian exile. Every line of it is alive with pain, whose intensity grows with each strophe to the appalling climax.³
- Psalm 137 is a passionate song that thematically focuses on two different kinds of remembrance.⁴
- 1A. It focuses on a *human kind of remembrance of past and present pain* (vv. 1-6)
 - 1B. The realities of past and present pain (v. 1)
 - 2B. The responses to past and present pain (vv. 2-6)
 - 1C. The reluctance of the community (vv. 2-4)
 - 1D. This reluctance is displayed (v. 2)
 - 2D. This reluctance is documented (v. 3)
 - 3D. This reluctance is defended (v. 4)
 - 2C. The resolves of the psalmist (vv. 5-6)
 - 1D. Revealed by the self-curse of his playing ability (v. 5)
 - 2D. Revealed by the self-curse of his singing ability (v. 6)
- 2A. It finally focuses on a *divine kind of remembrance of future payback* (vv. 7-9)
 - 1B. The prayer for payback (v. 7a)
 - 2B. The parties for payback (vv. 7b-8)
 - 1C. The Edomites (v. 7b)
 - 2C. The Babylonians (v. 8)
 - 3B. The precedent for payback (*i.e., both by practice and prophecy*) (v. 9).

² Brand, Chad, Charles Draper, etc *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003.

³ Derek Kidner, *Psalms 73–150: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 16, 495.

⁴ George Zemek *Road Maps for the Psalms*, Psalm 138.

MESSIANIC PSALMS

- The book of Psalms is a collection of inspired songs used in worship of God, and many of them foretell the coming of the Messiah and predict events that were fulfilled in the life of Jesus Christ. **In total, twenty-five different psalms (one out of every six psalms) include at least one messianic prophecy.** Messianic psalms are quoted in eleven New Testament books, especially the gospels and the book of Acts.⁵
- A Messianic Psalm is any Psalm that is in large part about the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus was Israel's Messiah, which is translated Christ in the N.T. – their anointed Deliverer and Savior (John 1:41; 4:25). **There are about 15 psalms that are strongly Messianic:** 2, 8, 16, 22, 40, 41, 45, 68, 69, 89, 91, 102, 109, 110, 118.⁶
- There are not a large number of messianic psalms. They include Psalms 2, 22, 45, 72, and 110, plus a few others, but these mostly only contain messianic elements while other parts of them are apparently about the earthly king who was reigning at that time.
 - By contrast, Psalm 110 is entirely about a divine king who has been installed at the right hand of God in heaven and who is presently engaged in extending his spiritual rule throughout the whole earth. It tells us that this divine Messiah is also a **priest**, performing priestly functions, and that additionally he is a **judge** who at the end of time will execute a final judgment on the nations and rulers of this earth.⁷
- **Why is there confusion about how many Psalms are Messianic?**
- There are a number of psalms which speak of the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. They are called Messianic psalms obviously because they speak of the Messiah. The question may be asked: “How can we recognize a Messianic psalm?” **The answer would be: where there is a reference to the Messiah in a psalm, and it is applied to Christ and expounded in the New Testament. Sometimes a whole psalm applies to Christ, e.g., Psalm 22. Sometimes a paragraph, e.g., Psalm 40:6-10. Sometimes several verses, e.g., Psalm 69:4, 9, 21. Sometimes a single verse, e.g., Psalm 41:9.**⁸
- Nowhere in the Psalter does so much hang on the familiar title A Psalm of David as it does here; nor is the authorship of any other psalm quite so emphatically endorsed in other parts of Scripture. To amputate this opening phrase, or to allow it no reference to the authorship of the psalm, is to be at odds with the New Testament, which finds King David's acknowledgment of his 'Lord' highly significant. For while other psalms share with this one the exalted language which points beyond the reigning king to the Messiah, here alone the king himself does homage to this personage—thereby settling two important questions: whether

⁵ <https://www.gotquestions.org/Psalms-Jesus-Christ.html>

⁶ <https://letgodbetruer.com/bible-topics/index/christ/messianic-psalms/>

⁷ James Montgomery Boice, *Psalms 107–150: An Expositional Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 892–893.

⁸ <https://plymouthbrethren.org/article/11672>

the perfect king was someone to come, or simply the present ruler idealized; and whether the one to come would be merely man at his best, or more than this.⁹

- Psalm 110 “A Psalm of David. The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at My right hand Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet." The LORD will stretch forth Your strong scepter from Zion, saying, "Rule in the midst of Your enemies." Your people will volunteer freely in the day of Your power; In holy array, from the womb of the dawn, Your youth are to You as the dew. The LORD has sworn and will not change His mind, "You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek. "The Lord is at Your right hand; He will shatter kings in the day of His wrath. He will judge among the nations, He will fill them with corpses, He will shatter the chief men over a broad country. He will drink from the brook by the wayside; Therefore He will lift up His head.”
- Psalm 110 is also known as the **Royal Psalm** for how it elevates Christ as King.
- **110:1–7** This psalm contains one of the most exalted prophetic portions of Scripture presenting Jesus Christ as both a holy king and a royal High-Priest—something that no human monarch of Israel ever experienced.
- It, along with **Ps 118**, is by far the most quoted psalm in the NT (Mt 22:44; 26:64; Mk 12:36; 14:62; Lk 20:42, 43; 22:69; Ac 2:34, 35; Heb 1:13; 5:6; 7:17, 21; 10:13). While portraying the perfect king, the perfect High-Priest, and the perfect government, **Ps 110** declares Christ’s current role in heaven as the resurrected Savior (110:1) and His future role on earth as the reigning Monarch (110:2–7).
- This psalm is decidedly messianic and millennial in content. Jesus Christ (Mt 22:43, 44) verifies the Davidic authorship. The exact occasion of this psalm is unknown, but it could easily have been associated with God’s declaration of the Davidic Covenant in **2Sa 7:4–17**.¹⁰
- How does **Psalm 110** talk about the coming Messiah? What are three titles we can find?
- Verses 1-3 _____
- Verse 4 _____
- Verses 5-7 _____

⁹ Derek Kidner, *Psalms 73–150: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 16, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1975), 426–427.

¹⁰ John F. MacArthur Jr., *The MacArthur Study Bible*: NASB. (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2006), Ps 110:1–7.

PENITENT PSALMS

- There are seven penitential psalms: Psalms 6; 32; 38; 51; 102; 130; and 143. In each, the author acknowledges or confesses his trespass before the Lord and recognizes his need for God's favor and forgiveness. The penitential psalms make fitting prayers for the repentant sinner.¹¹
- From as early as the time of Origen (AD 184—253) and Augustine (AD 354—430), the penitential psalms were set apart for liturgical use in the Christian church for the confession of sin and repentance. Medieval Pope Innocent III (AD 1161—1216) ordered that the penitential psalms be recited during Lent and Holy Week. The Roman Breviary, an ancient service book of the priests of the Roman Catholic Church, provided a special place for the penitential psalms. Likewise, the Church of England's Book of Common Prayer designates the penitential psalms as appropriate for use on Ash Wednesday and in other Lenten prayer services.
- Psalm 130 "Out of the depths I have cried to You, O LORD. ²Lord, hear my voice! Let Your ears be attentive To the voice of my supplications. ³If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? ⁴But there is forgiveness with You, That You may be feared. ⁵I wait for the LORD, my soul does wait, And in His word do I hope. ⁶My soul waits for the Lord More than the watchmen for the morning; Indeed, more than the watchmen for the morning. ⁷O Israel, hope in the LORD; For with the LORD there is lovingkindness, ⁸And with Him is abundant redemption. And He will redeem Israel From all his iniquities."
- Nearly overwhelmed with the realities of human sin and divine salvation, the psalmist wrestles with these issues in two adjacent arenas.¹²
- **1A.** He first wrestles with them in the _____personal arena_____ (vv. 1-6)
 - **1B**_____ (vv. 1-2)
 - **2B**_____ (vv. 3-4)
 - **1C**_____ (v. 3)
 - **2C**_____ (v. 4)
 - **3B**_____ (vv. 5-6)
- **2A.** He finally wrestles with them in the _____corporate arena_____ (vv. 7-8)
 - **1B**_____ (v. 7a)
 - **2B**_____ (vv. 7b-8)
 - **1C**_____ (v. 7b, c)
 - **2C**_____ (v. 8)

¹¹ <https://www.gotquestions.org/penitential-psalms.html>

¹² George Zemek *Road Maps for the Psalms*, Psalm 130.

STRUCTURE OF PSALMS

- There are many different tools and writing styles used to make points in the Psalms.¹³
- A chiasm (also called a chiasmus) is a literary device in which a sequence of ideas is presented and then repeated in reverse order. The result is a “mirror” effect as the ideas are “reflected” back in a passage.
 - Each idea is connected to its “reflection” by a repeated word, often in a related form. The term chiasm comes from the Greek letter chi, which looks like our letter X. Chiastic pattern is also called “ring structure.”
- The structure of a chiasm is usually expressed through a series of letters, each letter representing a new idea. For example, the structure ABBA refers to two ideas (A and B) repeated in reverse order (B and A).
 - Often, a chiasm includes another idea in the middle of the repetition: ABXBA. In this structure, the two ideas (A and B) are repeated in reverse order, but a third idea is inserted before the repetition (X). By virtue of its position, the insertion is emphasized.

Chiastic Structure

- **Psalm 100:1-5**
 - **1A:** Verse 1, A Psalm for thanksgiving, Shout joyfully to the LORD all the earth;
 - **1B:** Verse 2a, Serve the LORD with gladness;
 - **1C:** Verse 2b, Come before Him with joyful singing;
 - **CENTRAL AXIS:** Verse 3, “Know that the LORD Himself is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; We are His people and the sheep of His pasture;”
 - **2C:** Verse 4a, Enter His gates with thanksgiving; and His courts with praise
 - **2B:** Verse 4b, Give thanks to Him, bless His name;
- **2A:** Verse 5, For the LORD is good; His lovingkindness is everlasting and His faithfulness to all generations.
- The Central point is that the Lord is God, He made us, we are His people of His pasture.
- C are paired: come before His presence and enter His gates with singing and with thanksgiving!
- B are paired: in that we are glad in Him and thankful in Him for the same reason; and out of that gladness and thanksgiving, comes our service to Him by which we bless His name.
- A are paired: reveal the reason that all the earth must shout joyfully before the LORD: He is good, and His mercy and truth is everlasting!

¹³ <https://www.gotquestions.org/chiasm-chiastic.html>

- **Psalm 67** “God be gracious to us and bless us and cause His face to shine upon us-- Selah. ²That Your way may be known on the earth, Your salvation among all nations. ³Let the peoples praise You, O God; Let all the peoples praise You. ⁴Let the nations be glad and sing for joy; For You will judge the peoples with uprightness And guide the nations on the earth. Selah. ⁵Let the peoples praise You, O God; Let all the peoples praise You. ⁶The earth has yielded its produce; God, our God, blesses us. ⁷God blesses us, That all the ends of the earth may fear Him.”

- **A** _____
 - **B** _____
 - **C** _____
 - **D** _____
 - **E** _____
 - **D** _____
 - **C** _____
 - **B** _____
- **A** _____