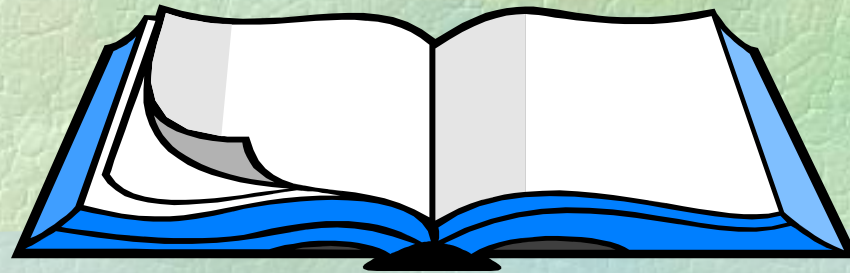


How To Read The Bible



For All Its Worth!

Goals For This Class

- To give a basic approach to understanding the biblical text
- To examine historical methods of interpretation
- To consider other methods of interpretation
- To promote unity of shared understanding
- To relate elders' views on interpretation

Not Goals For This Class

- To ensure everybody believes what I do
- To ensure everybody believes the same thing
- To debate controversial passages of scripture
- To negate or endorse any particular interpretative approach
- To confuse, frustrate, or agitate truthseekers

Understanding Psalms



Introduction to Psalms

- Psalms are *from* people *to* God
- Help us express ourselves to God
- Help us to consider His ways
- As with the Prophets, in Psalms we must understand their nature, types, forms, and function

The Nature of Psalms

- Psalms as poetry
 - Hebrew poetry is addressed to the mind through the heart
 - Psalms are specifically musical poems
 - Vocabulary of poetry is purposefully metaphorical

Poetry in Psalms

- Synonymous parallelism
- Antithetical parallelism
- Synthetic parallelism

Psalm 19:1

¹The heavens declare the glory of God;
the skies proclaim the work of his hands.
Day after day they pour forth speech;
night after night they display knowledge.

(NIV)

The Nature of Psalms

- Psalms as literature
 - There are several different *types* of Psalms
 - Psalms are also characterized by their *form*
 - Each type of Psalms has an intended *function*
 - There are various *patterns* within a Psalm
 - Each Psalm should be read as a literary unit

Use of Psalms in Ancient Israel

- Functional songs composed for worship
- Remarkably applicable for *all* ages
- Commonly used as worship aids during sacrifice
- Collected into five books (1-41, 42-72, 73-89, 90-106, 107-150)
- Written by multiple authors

The Types of Psalms

- Laments (3, 22, 31, 12, 44, 80)
- Thanksgiving psalms (65, 67, 18, 30)
- Hymns of praise (66, 100, 33, 103)
- Salvation history psalms (78, 105, 106)
- Psalms of celebration and affirmation (50, 2, 24, 46)
- Wisdom psalms (36, 49, 128)
- Songs of trust (11, 27, 121)

Exegesis of Laments

- Address
- Complaint
- Trust
- Deliverance
- Assurance
- Praise

Example of a Lament

¹O Lord, how many are my foes!

How many rise up against me!

²Many are saying of me,

“God will not deliver him.”

³But you are a shield around me, O Lord,

my Glorious One, who lifts up my head.

⁴To the Lord I cry aloud,

and he answers me from his holy hill.

⁵I lie down and sleep;

I wake again, because the Lord sustains me.

Example of a Lament

⁶I will not fear the tens of thousands
drawn up against me on every side.

⁷Arise, O Lord!

Deliver me, O my God!

For you have struck all my enemies on the jaw;
you have broken the teeth of the wicked.

⁸From the Lord comes deliverance.

May your blessings be on your people.

Psalm 3 (NIV)

Exegesis of Thanksgiving Psalms

- Introduction
- Distress
- Appeal
- Deliverance
- Testimony

Example of a Thanksgiving Psalm

¹I will praise you, O Lord, with all my heart;
before the “gods” I will sing your praise.

²I will bow down before your holy temple
and will praise your name

for your love and your faithfulness,

for you have exalted above all things

your name and your word

³When I called you, you answered me;

you made me bold and stouthearted.

Example of a Thanksgiving Psalm

⁴May all the kings of the earth praise you, O Lord,
when they hear the words of your mouth.

⁵May they sing of the ways of the Lord,
for the glory of the Lord is great.

Example of a Thanksgiving Psalm

⁶Though the Lord is on high, he looks upon the lowly,
but the proud he knows from afar.

⁷Though I walk in the midst of trouble,
you preserve my life:

you stretch out your hand against the anger of my foes,
with your right hand you save me.

⁸The Lord will fulfill his purpose for me;
your love, O Lord, endures forever--
do not abandon the works of your hands.

Imprecatory Psalms

- Verbalizations of anger at others to God
- We can't deny our negative thoughts
- “Be angry but not to sin” Psalm 4:4
- Imprecatory psalms harness our anger and help us to express it
- Virtually always found in laments

Example of an Imprecatory Psalm

⁷Remember, O Lord, what the Edomites did
on the day Jerusalem fell.

“Tear it down,” they cried,
“tear it down to its foundations.”

⁸O Daughter of Babylon, doomed to destruction,
happy is he who repays you
for what you have done to us--

⁹he who seizes your infants
and dashes them against the rocks.

Hermeneutics in the Psalms

- How do words spoken *to* God function for us as words *from* God?
- Opportunities to speak to God in words He inspired others to speak to Him in the past
- Three basic benefits of the Psalms
 - a guide to worship
 - demonstrate how we can relate honestly to God
 - demonstrate importance of reflection and meditation

Questions or Comments?



Next Week:

Wisdom Literature