

## Thanksgiving Psalms

Most Thanksgiving Psalms are thanksgiving from one individual.

Only four psalms are Thanksgiving of the community, so we will just lump them all into one category – Thanksgiving Psalms.

Remembering that the Psalms were poetry, the poetic structure of thanksgiving psalms will have similar and defining characteristics.

1. They often have an expanded or lengthy introduction declaring their intention to thank God.
2. They then recount their troubles (so are similar in laments)
3. They recount their calling upon God
4. They recount their deliverance
5. They proclaim God's deliverance to others.
6. They often end with the announcement of a Thank Offering.

In fact – the word in the Psalms we often translate as thanksgiving was the same word for thank-offering, so many of these Thanksgiving Psalms were sort of a individual liturgy for their thank offering.

The four psalms we call Communal thanksgiving psalms were used in communal services of thank offering.

There are nearly 20 Thanksgiving psalms and they tend to be lengthy, we will look at several.

### Psalm 18

Psalm 18 is lengthy as it actually includes two independent hymns of thanksgiving. You can also find this psalm in 2 Samuel 22.

It is attributed to David, but many scholars think it was written after David's time.  
Doesn't matter.

It begins with introductory praise.

Psalm 18:1 – I love you, LORD, my strength.

<sup>2</sup>The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer;  
my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge,  
my shield and the horn (which was a symbol of power)  
of my salvation, my stronghold.

<sup>3</sup>I called to the LORD, who is worthy of praise,  
and I have been saved from my enemies.

Next he recounts his troubles and his calling upon the Lord.

VV. 4 – The cords of death entangled me;  
the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me.

<sup>5</sup>The cords of the grave coiled around me;  
the snares of death confronted me.

<sup>6</sup>In my distress I called to the LORD;  
I cried to my God for help.

From his temple he heard my voice;  
my cry came before him, into his ears.

Next he will recount his deliverance.

VV. 7 – The earth trembled and quaked,  
and the foundations of the mountains shook;  
they trembled because he was angry.

<sup>8</sup>Smoke rose from his nostrils;  
consuming fire came from his mouth,  
burning coals blazed out of it.

<sup>9</sup>He parted the heavens and came down;  
dark clouds were under his feet.

<sup>10</sup>He mounted the cherubim and flew;  
he soared on the wings of the wind.

- <sup>11</sup> He made darkness his covering, his canopy around him—  
the dark rain clouds of the sky.
- <sup>12</sup> Out of the brightness of his presence clouds advanced,  
with hailstones and bolts of lightning.
- <sup>13</sup> The LORD thundered from heaven;  
the voice of the Most High resounded.
- <sup>14</sup> He shot his arrows and scattered the enemy,  
with great bolts of lightning he routed them.
- <sup>15</sup> The valleys of the sea were exposed  
and the foundations of the earth laid bare  
at your rebuke, LORD,  
at the blast of breath from your nostrils.
- <sup>16</sup> He reached down from on high and took hold of me;  
he drew me out of deep waters.
- <sup>17</sup> He rescued me from my powerful enemy,  
from my foes, who were too strong for me.
- <sup>18</sup> They confronted me in the day of my disaster,  
but the LORD was my support.
- <sup>19</sup> He brought me out into a spacious place;  
he rescued me because he delighted in me.

Next, before he proclaims to others, he gives his lessons learned.

- VV. 20 – The LORD has dealt with me according to my righteousness;  
according to the cleanness of my hands he has rewarded me.
- <sup>21</sup> For I have kept the ways of the LORD;  
I am not guilty of turning from my God.
- <sup>22</sup> All his laws are before me;  
I have not turned away from his decrees.
- <sup>23</sup> I have been blameless before him  
and have kept myself from sin.
- <sup>24</sup> The LORD has rewarded me according to my righteousness,  
according to the cleanness of my hands in his sight.

Next is his proclamation to others.

- VV. 25 – To the faithful you show yourself faithful,  
to the blameless you show yourself blameless,  
<sup>26</sup> to the pure you show yourself pure,

but to the devious you show yourself shrewd.  
<sup>27</sup> You save the humble  
but bring low those whose eyes are haughty.  
<sup>28</sup> You, LORD, keep my lamp burning;  
my God turns my darkness into light.  
<sup>29</sup> With your help I can advance against a troop;  
with my God I can scale a wall.  
<sup>30</sup> As for God, his way is perfect:  
The LORD's word is flawless;  
he shields all who take refuge in him.

The second half of the Psalm is another Thanksgiving Psalm, let's move on.

#### Psalm 34

**The title says:** Of David. When he pretended to be insane before Abimelek, who drove him away, and he left.

Those events are recorded in 1 Samuel 21:10-15, but nothing in this psalm actually refers back to that event.

This is most likely not a Psalm of David for it is an acrostic, each line beginning with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet in order. Acrostic's came much later in Israel's history.

It begins with a summons to lift up the name of the Lord.

Psalm 34:1 – I will extol the LORD at all times;  
his praise will always be on my lips.  
<sup>2</sup> I will glory in the LORD;  
let the afflicted hear and rejoice.  
<sup>3</sup> Glorify the LORD with me;  
let us exalt his name together.

Next the psalmist gives his testimony.

Psalm 34:4 – I sought the LORD, and he answered me;  
he delivered me from all my fears.  
<sup>5</sup> Those who look to him are radiant;  
their faces are never covered with shame.

<sup>6</sup> *This poor man called, and the LORD heard him;  
he saved him out of all his troubles.*

<sup>7</sup> The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him,  
and he delivers them.

Verse 6 may have referred back to the story of King David.

Also, an angel of the Lord encamping around them, as mentioned in verse 7, is often interpreted as a guardian angel. However, often when a Jew wrote an angel of the Lord, they meant God's Spirit.

No way to tell for sure what the intent was here.

Next we have a proclamation to others of God's goodness.

Psalm 34:8 – Taste and see that the LORD is good;  
blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.

<sup>9</sup> Fear the LORD, you his holy people (*saints*),  
for those who fear him lack nothing.

<sup>10</sup> The lions may grow weak and hungry (lions meaning unfaithful ones),  
but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing.

The psalmist continues his proclamation, but it takes on the form of wisdom poetry for a few verses.

Psalm 34:11 – Come, my children, listen to me;  
I will teach you the fear of the LORD.

<sup>12</sup> Whoever of you loves life  
and desires to see many good days,

<sup>13</sup> keep your tongue from evil  
and your lips from telling lies.

<sup>14</sup> Turn from evil and do good;  
seek peace and pursue it.

The psalm continues with God's care of God's servants, and doesn't end with more personal thanksgivings.

Psalm 34:15 – The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous,  
and his ears are attentive to their cry;  
<sup>16</sup> but the face of the LORD is against those who do evil,  
to blot out their name from the earth.  
<sup>17</sup> The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears them;  
he delivers them from all their troubles.  
<sup>18</sup> The LORD is close to the brokenhearted  
and saves those who are crushed in spirit.  
<sup>19</sup> The righteous person may have many troubles,  
but the LORD delivers him from them all;  
<sup>20</sup> he protects all his bones,  
not one of them will be broken.  
<sup>21</sup> Evil will slay the wicked;  
the foes of the righteous will be condemned.  
<sup>22</sup> The LORD will rescue his servants;  
no one who takes refuge in him will be condemned.

Now we'll look at Psalm 92.

We don't know who wrote it, and it's not in the title.

It was written to be used in worship, and the title does indicate that it was not for special festivals, but for the Sabbath.

Psalm 92:1 – It is good to praise the LORD  
and make music to your name, O Most High,  
<sup>2</sup> proclaiming your love in the morning  
and your faithfulness at night,

The morning and night would refer to the temple services, for they had both morning and evening Sabbath observances.

**Psalm 92:3** – to the music of the ten-stringed lyre  
and the melody of the harp.

This verse is translated in several different ways.

Lutes, lyres – regardless, musical instruments were part of the Sabbath observance.

Psalm 92:4 – For you make me glad by your deeds, LORD;  
I sing for joy at what your hands have done.

The KJV has – “I will triumph in the works of thy hands” – not the best translation.  
The older manuscripts have “I will sing for joy”. It may have been that when KJV was written, triumph indicated singing.

Sing for joy ...

Psalm 92:5 – How great are your works, LORD,  
how profound your thoughts!

<sup>6</sup> Senseless people do not know,  
fools do not understand,

<sup>7</sup> that though the wicked spring up like grass  
and all evildoers flourish,  
they will be destroyed forever.

<sup>8</sup> But you, LORD, are forever exalted.

<sup>9</sup> For surely your enemies, LORD,  
surely your enemies will perish;  
all evildoers will be scattered.

<sup>10</sup> You have exalted my horn (strength) like that of a wild ox;  
fine oils have been poured on me.

<sup>11</sup> My eyes have seen the defeat of my adversaries;  
my ears have heard the rout of my wicked foes.

Psalm 92:12 – The righteous will flourish like a palm tree, (known for longevity in that area)

they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon;  
<sup>13</sup> planted in the house of the LORD,  
they will flourish in the courts of our God.

<sup>14</sup> They will still bear fruit in old age,  
they will stay fresh and green, (full of sap)

<sup>15</sup> proclaiming, “The LORD is upright;  
he is my Rock, and there is no wickedness in him.”

Next we will look at one of the more familiar thanksgiving psalms.

Psalm 118 is an individual thanksgiving psalm, but was used at various festivals, so many people may have been reciting it at the same time, but not quite.

Those used by many at the same time, it has I, Me, My occurring.

Protestant Reformer Martin Luther said of this psalm: “This is the psalm that I love for it has often served me well and has helped me out of grave troubles, when neither emperors, kings, wise men, clever men, nor saints could have helped me.”

It’s an old Psalm, probably dating to around the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC.

It begins with a call to give thanks.

Psalm 118:1 – Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;  
his love endures forever.

<sup>2</sup> Let Israel say:

“His love endures forever.”

<sup>3</sup> Let the house of Aaron say:

“His love endures forever.”

<sup>4</sup> Let those who fear the LORD say:

“His love endures forever.”

Next we have verses about how the Lord answered.

Psalm 118:5 – When hard pressed, I cried to the LORD;  
he brought me into a spacious place.

<sup>6</sup> The LORD is with me; I will not be afraid.

What can mere mortals do to me?

<sup>7</sup> The LORD is with me; he is my helper.

I look in triumph on my enemies.

<sup>8</sup> It is better to take refuge in the LORD  
than to trust in humans.

<sup>9</sup> It is better to take refuge in the LORD  
than to trust in princes.



Next we have God giving victory over the enemies.

Psalm 118:10 – All the nations surrounded me,  
but in the name of the LORD I cut them down.

<sup>11</sup> They surrounded me on every side,  
but in the name of the LORD I cut them down.

<sup>12</sup> They swarmed around me like bees,  
but they were consumed as quickly as burning thorns;  
in the name of the LORD I cut them down.

<sup>13</sup> I was pushed back and about to fall,  
but the LORD helped me.

<sup>14</sup> The LORD is my strength and my defense<sup>[a]</sup>;  
he has become my salvation.

Next a call to righteous living.

Psalm 118:15 – Shouts of joy and victory  
resound in the tents of the righteous:

“The LORD’s right hand has done mighty things!

<sup>16</sup> The LORD’s right hand is lifted high;  
the LORD’s right hand has done mighty things!”

<sup>17</sup> I will not die but live,  
and will proclaim what the LORD has done.

<sup>18</sup> The LORD has chastened me severely,  
but he has not given me over to death.

<sup>19</sup> Open for me the gates of the righteous;  
I will enter and give thanks to the LORD.

<sup>20</sup> This is the gate of the LORD  
through which the righteous may enter.

<sup>21</sup> I will give you thanks, for you answered me;  
you have become my salvation.

Verse 19 says to open the gates of the righteous – this signified entrance into the Temple, which one had to be right with God to enter. Of course, by making the proper sacrifice, one could become right with God (at least until the next time they sinned).

Psalm 118:22 – The stone the builders rejected  
has become the cornerstone;  
<sup>23</sup> the LORD has done this,  
and it is marvelous in our eyes.  
<sup>24</sup> The LORD has done it this very day;  
let us rejoice today and be glad.  
<sup>25</sup> LORD, save us!  
LORD, grant us success!  
<sup>26</sup> Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD.  
From the house of the LORD we bless you.  
<sup>27</sup> The LORD is God,  
and he has made his light shine on us.  
With boughs in hand, join in the festal procession  
up to the horns of the altar.

Verse 22 – “The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.” Was quoted by Jesus in Matthew, Mark & Luke.

Also used by Peter in Acts 4, in 1 Peter 2, and Paul uses it in Ephesians 2.

Verse 25 – Lord, Save us – Hosanna.

Verse 27 – ‘festal procession up to the horns of the altar.’  
Explain horns on an altar.

Also, this may indicate that this psalm was part of the feast of Tabernacles.

It ends with a doxology, repeating the first verse.

VV. 28 – You are my God, and I will praise you;  
you are my God, and I will exalt you.  
<sup>29</sup> Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;  
his love endures forever.

Next we will look at Psalm 138.

Psalm 138:1 – I will praise you, LORD, with all my heart;  
before the “gods” I will sing your praise.

Before the gods – some older translations have this as angels.  
It may have been that at the time of this writing they still believed in the existence of other gods.

However, this says a Psalm of David.

If it is of David, then he was referring to God’s heavenly court, and angels would have been a decent translation.

Psalm 138:2 – I will bow down toward your holy temple  
and will praise your name  
for your unfailing love and your faithfulness,  
for you have so exalted your solemn decree  
that it surpasses your fame.

<sup>3</sup>When I called, you answered me;  
you greatly emboldened me.

Something that we will look at next in the Communal Thanksgiving Psalms is the idea of evangelism. I’ll talk more about that in a minute, but we see something of that in this psalm.

Psalm 138:4 – May all the kings of the earth praise you, LORD,  
when they hear what you have decreed.

<sup>5</sup>May they sing of the ways of the LORD,  
for the glory of the LORD is great.

<sup>6</sup>Though the LORD is exalted, he looks kindly on the lowly;  
though lofty, he sees/knows them from afar.

The concluding strophe, or verse, is reminiscent of Psalm 23.

Psalm 138:7 – Though 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.  
<sup>8</sup>The LORD will vindicate me;  
your love, LORD, endures forever—  
do not abandon the works of your hands.

Let's look at some of the Community/Communal Thanksgivings.

The first one we will look at is Psalm 67. A short Psalm, it was to be sung at their Harvest Festival – Feast of Tabernacles.

Feast of Tabernacles – also called Booths – was/is celebrated in late September to late October. It lasts 7 days. October 1-7 this year, so get ready!

Psalm 67:1 – May God be gracious to us and bless us  
and make his face shine on us—  
<sup>2</sup>so that your ways may be known on earth,  
your salvation among all nations.

Verse one comes from the priestly benediction of Numbers 6:23-26.  
But verse 2 has in it something that – until the Christian movement, which was a Jewish movement – had been all but forgotten among most Jews –

So that all the earth may know – so that your salvation may be known.

You may not think of worship in this way, but worship is supposed to prepare us to be evangelistic. We want God's salvation to be known amongst all the nations – literally all the peoples.

Psalm 67:3 – May the peoples praise you, God;  
may all the peoples praise you.  
<sup>4</sup>May the nations be glad and sing for joy,  
for you rule the peoples with equity  
and guide the nations of the earth.

<sup>5</sup> May the peoples praise you, God;  
may all the peoples praise you.

The thought behind this psalm is simple – God blessed them so much, they wanted the world – other people – to see their blessings.

Now, remember something that Eric spoke of last Sunday – hubris.  
Hubris means extreme pride – to the point of arrogance.

What happened before the days of Jesus, of which the prophets and Jesus taught to correct – is that our relationship – our blessings from God – are not given because we are special, but so that we will share the blessings of God with others.

This goes back to Genesis 12 when God blesses Abraham and tells him that all people are to be blessed by his descendants.

So, this psalm – if we want to interpret it into our lives – is not about the harvest of crops but the harvest of joy and peace in our lives.

We praise God for this harvest, and pray that we will show the world our spiritual harvest.

Psalm 67:6 – The land yields its harvest;  
God, our God, blesses us.

<sup>7</sup> May God bless us still,  
so that all the ends of the earth will fear/know him.

Next we will look at Psalm 124.

Psalm 124 is a Psalm of accents – a pilgrimage psalm. It may have been associated with the feast of Tabernacles in that that feast was a time of pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

Psalm 124 is an communal thanksgiving that recognizes what the Lord has done to deliver God's people from the assaults of the enemy.

We really don't know the story behind this thanksgiving.

Psalm 124:1 – If the LORD had not been on our side—

let Israel say—

<sup>2</sup> if the LORD had not been on our side

when people attacked us,

<sup>3</sup> they would have swallowed us alive

when their anger flared against us;

<sup>4</sup> the flood would have engulfed us,

the torrent would have swept over us,

<sup>5</sup> the raging waters

would have swept us away.

This Psalm was used as a liturgy. The first verse would have been sung by the priest – the words “Let Israel Say” was the signal for the congregation or the choir to take up singing the rest of the psalm.

Psalm 124:6 – Praise be to the LORD, (Blessed Be The Lord)

who has not let us be torn by their teeth.

<sup>7</sup> We have escaped like a bird

from the fowler's snare;

the snare has been broken,

and we have escaped.

**V. 8** – Our help is in the name of the LORD,  
the Maker of heaven and earth.

## Royal Psalms

Next we will look at Royal Psalms, sometimes called enthronement psalms. Royal Psalms have their own defining characteristics.

1. They praise the king
2. They affirm Yahweh's favor of the king
3. They offer prayers for the king
4. They portray the king as righteous.

Royal psalms tend to be the oldest psalms, dating before the kingdoms became divided.

Royal Psalms were performed at court festivities. Some of them observed special occasions such as victory over an enemy, or a healing from an illness.

Christians throughout the centuries, and especially modern times and in our own country where we value the separation of church and state – have wondered –

Why do we read Psalms to celebrate an earthly king?

Many – through the lens of Christianity – read many of these Royal Psalms as prophecy about our Messiah. I'm not saying that this is wrong, but it was not what they were written for. These psalms celebrated their worldly king.

Which is strange given the fact that God commanded them not to have kings.

The first Royal Psalm we will look at is Psalm 2.

Psalm 2 is a royal psalm, but no title is given, so we really don't know it's origins – or date. However, scholars agree that it is before the exile.

In the first strophe – or verse – there seems to be some kind of uprising afoot that is directed against the nation.

Psalm 2:1 – Why do the nations conspire/rage  
and the peoples plot in vain?  
<sup>2</sup>The kings of the earth rise up  
and the rulers band together  
against the LORD and against his anointed, saying,  
<sup>3</sup>“Let us break their chains  
and throw off their shackles.”

It may have been that this psalm was written following the death of a strong king. It was not uncommon in those days that the smaller kingdoms controlled by a strong king would revolt following the king's death.

This may be the case here – but verse two states that the revolt goes further – and can be interpreted prophetically – against the Lord and against his anointed.

The next stanza moves to God's heavenly court.

Psalm 2:4 – The One enthroned in heaven laughs;  
the Lord scoffs at them.  
<sup>5</sup>He rebukes them in his anger  
and terrifies them in his wrath, saying,  
<sup>6</sup>“I have installed my king  
on Zion, my holy mountain.”

In the next stanza the king speaks, and speaks the prophecy given to him by God.

Psalm 2:7 – I will proclaim the LORD's decree:  
He said to me, “You are my son;  
today I have become your father.  
<sup>8</sup>Ask me,  
and I will make the nations your inheritance,  
the ends of the earth your possession.  
<sup>9</sup>You will break them with a rod of iron;  
you will dash them to pieces like pottery.”

Verse 7 are the words used in ancient days in a legal adoption. They are used here to show God's favor upon the king.



In the concluding stanza, the attention is once again turned towards those who would conspire against the king.

Psalm 2:10 – Therefore, you kings, be wise;  
be warned, you rulers of the earth.

<sup>11</sup> Serve the LORD with fear  
and celebrate his rule with trembling.

<sup>12</sup> Kiss his son, or he will be angry  
and your way will lead to your destruction,  
for his wrath can flare up in a moment.  
Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

Psalm 21.

Psalm 21 is divided into two parts. The first part directed towards the Lord, and the second part directed towards the king.

The title says a psalm of David, and it probably was – or at least written during his reign.

In the first part – directed towards the Lord, we read of the Lord's goodness towards the king.

Psalm 21:1 – The king rejoices in your strength, LORD.

How great is his joy in the victories you give!

<sup>2</sup> You have granted him his heart's desire  
and have not withheld the request of his lips.

<sup>3</sup> You came to greet him with rich blessings  
and placed a crown of pure gold on his head.

<sup>4</sup> He asked you for life, and you gave it to him—  
length of days, for ever and ever.

<sup>5</sup> Through the victories you gave, his glory is great;  
you have bestowed on him splendor and majesty.

<sup>6</sup> Surely you have granted him unending blessings  
and made him glad with the joy of your presence.

<sup>7</sup> For the king trusts in the LORD;

through the unfailing love of the Most High  
he will not be shaken.

In verse 4 it says – forever and ever.  
Just as 40 meant a long time – forever and ever meant many years.

In the second stanza the king is promised victory over his foes.  
Verse 8 says – your hand will find out – in older translations.  
Newer translations have – your hand will lay hold of – which is what the ancient Hebrew  
meant.

Psalm 21:8 – Your hand will lay hold on all your enemies;  
your right hand will seize your foes.

<sup>9</sup>When you appear for battle,  
you will burn them up as in a blazing furnace.

The LORD will swallow them up in his wrath,  
and his fire will consume them.

<sup>10</sup>You will destroy their descendants from the earth,  
their posterity from mankind.

<sup>11</sup>Though they plot evil against you  
and devise wicked schemes, they cannot succeed.

<sup>12</sup>You will make them turn their backs  
when you aim at them with drawn bow.

Since victory can only come from the Lord, the psalms end with a prayer.

**Psalm 21:13** – Be exalted in your strength, LORD;  
we will sing and praise your might.

It's easy to read messianic prophecy into these psalms.

Psalm 45.

**Next we go to Psalm 45, and its title reads: For the director of music. To the tune of  
“Lilies.” Of the Sons of Korah. A *maskil* A wedding song.**

The occasion of this psalm is a royal wedding – the wedding of a king to a foreign princess. This was done for political reasons.

We are not certain for which particular king and princess this was written for. A number of scholars say it is for Solomon – and considering the number of wives that he had, that’s a fairly good guess.

But other kings and dates have been given, so we cannot say with certainty.

Some have claimed that the king in this verse is the Messiah and the bride is Israel, or the church.

Psalm 45:1 – My heart is stirred by a noble theme  
as I recite my verses for the king;  
my tongue is the pen of a skillful writer.

In the Hebrew, very strong language is used here to depict deep emotions.  
Literally – my hearts boils or seethes – not in a negative sense, but depicting deep emotion.

“As I recite my verses” – Literally – As I work for the king.  
This was written by someone with access to the king. Perhaps he was commissioned to write for the king, or for the wedding.

Psalm 45:2 – You are the most excellent of men  
and your lips have been anointed with grace,  
since God has blessed you forever.

<sup>3</sup> Gird your sword on your side, you mighty one;  
clothe yourself with splendor and majesty.

<sup>4</sup> In your majesty ride forth victoriously  
in the cause of truth, humility and justice;  
let your right hand achieve awesome deeds.

<sup>5</sup> Let your sharp arrows pierce the hearts of the king’s enemies;  
let the nations fall beneath your feet.

Justice and righteousness are characteristics of the king, and of God, and are reflected in the following verses.

Psalm 45:6 – Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever;  
a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom.

<sup>7</sup> You love righteousness and hate wickedness;  
therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions  
by anointing you with the oil of joy.

<sup>8</sup> All your robes are fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia (an oil from the bark of a cassia tree, from south Arabia);  
from palaces adorned with ivory  
the music of the strings makes you glad.

<sup>9</sup> Daughters of kings are among your honored women;  
at your right hand is the royal bride in gold of Ophir.

Next, the psalmist offers the bride some advice.

Psalm 45:10 – Listen, daughter, and pay careful attention:  
Forget your people and your father's house.

<sup>11</sup> Let the king be enthralled by your beauty;  
honor him, for he is your lord.

<sup>12</sup> The city of Tyre will come with a gift,  
people of wealth will seek your favor.

Next we have the Royal Procession.

Psalm 45:13 – All glorious is the princess within her chamber;  
her gown is interwoven with gold.

<sup>14</sup> In embroidered garments she is led to the king;  
her virgin companions follow her—  
those brought to be with her.

<sup>15</sup> Led in with joy and gladness,  
they enter the palace of the king.

Concluding remarks.

Psalm 45:16 – Your sons will take the place of your fathers;  
you will make them princes throughout the land.

<sup>17</sup> I will perpetuate your memory through all generations;  
therefore the nations will praise you for ever and ever.

Psalm 72.

The title of Psalm 72 says ‘Of Solomon’, and probably is. It is one of only two (127) in the psalms written by Solomon.

Historically, Psalm 72 was used on festive occasions such as their New Year, the king's birthday, or some royal anniversary.

Like much of our own poems, there is hyperbole, but also some great truths for then, and now.

Namely – the king lives under the scrutiny of God, and if the king rules with justice and righteousness, then the people will prosper.

The king's duty to the poor is stressed in this psalm.

It is easy to read Messianic prophecy in this psalm. By the tie of Jesus, even the Jews viewed this psalm as messianic prophecy.

It begins with a prayer that the king will be just and compassionate.

Psalm 72:1 – Endow the king with your justice, O God,  
the royal son with your righteousness.

<sup>2</sup> May he judge your people in righteousness,  
your afflicted ones with justice.

<sup>3</sup> May the mountains bring prosperity/peace/well-being to the people,  
the hills the fruit of righteousness.

<sup>4</sup> May he defend the afflicted among the people  
and save the children of the needy;  
may he crush the oppressor.

Next is a prayer that the king would have a long and benevolent reign.

Psalm 72:5 – May he endure as long as the sun,  
as long as the moon, through all generations.

<sup>6</sup> May he be like rain falling on a mown field,  
like showers watering the earth.

<sup>7</sup> In his days may the righteous flourish  
and prosperity abound till the moon is no more.

Next is a prayer that the king would have a worldly dominion.

Psalm 72:8 – May he rule from sea to sea (Mediterranean to the Red Sea)  
and from the River (Euphrates) to the ends of the earth.

<sup>9</sup> May the desert tribes bow before him  
and his enemies lick the dust.

<sup>10</sup> May the kings of Tarshish (Often Spain, but literally meant a land far away) and of  
distant shores (isles)  
bring tribute to him.

May the kings of Sheba (modern Yemen) and Seba (northwest Arabia)  
present him gifts.

<sup>11</sup> May all kings bow down to him  
and all nations serve him.

<sup>12</sup> For he will deliver the needy who cry out,  
the afflicted who have no one to help.

<sup>13</sup> He will take pity on the weak and the needy  
and save the needy from death.

<sup>14</sup> He will rescue them from oppression and violence,  
for precious is their blood in his sight.

Next prayer for the king's prosperity.

Psalm 72:15 – Long may he live!  
May gold from Sheba be given him.

May people ever pray for him  
and bless him all day long.

<sup>16</sup> May grain abound throughout the land;  
on the tops of the hills may it sway.

May the crops flourish like Lebanon  
and thrive like the grass of the field.

<sup>17</sup> May his name endure forever;  
may it (his name, not fame, same word as in the line above) continue as long as the sun.

Then all nations will be blessed through him,<sup>[d]</sup>  
and they will call him blessed.

<sup>18</sup> Praise be to the LORD God, the God of Israel,  
who alone does marvelous deeds.

<sup>19</sup> Praise be to his glorious name forever;  
may the whole earth be filled with his glory.

Amen and Amen.

<sup>20</sup> This concludes the prayers of David son of Jesse.

Scholars are not sure what to make of this last verse, for the title says it is a psalm of Solomon.

It was not uncommon to write in someone else's name.

Psalm 101.

The title says a Psalm of David, and probably is.

Psalm 15 states the moral code for a citizen of Zion/Israel.

Psalm 101 is often called Psalm 15's counterpart, for this psalm states the moral code for those set in authority.

This psalm was probably written for coronations and royal anniversary's.

It opens with the king's – or other royal person's – commitment before the Lord.

Psalm 101:1 – I will sing of your love and justice;  
to you, LORD, I will sing praise.

<sup>2</sup> I will be careful to lead a blameless life—  
when will you come to me?

Verse 1 has love, or steadfast love. This was the ancient Hebrew word – hessed. Hessed meant – God has blessed me, and I will bless others in return.

Next the code for the king's personal life.

Psalm 101:2c – I will conduct the affairs of my house  
with a blameless heart.

<sup>3</sup> I will not look with approval  
on anything that is vile.

I hate what faithless people do;  
I will have no part in it.

<sup>4</sup> The perverse of heart shall be far from me;  
I will have nothing to do with what is evil.

Next the code for the king's relationship with his subjects.

Psalm 101:5 – Whoever slanders their neighbor in secret,  
I will put to silence;  
whoever has haughty eyes and a proud heart,  
I will not tolerate.

<sup>6</sup> My eyes will be on the faithful in the land,  
that they may dwell with me;  
the one whose walk is blameless  
will minister to me.

<sup>7</sup> No one who practices deceit  
will dwell in my house;  
no one who speaks falsely  
will stand in my presence.

<sup>8</sup> Every morning I will put to silence  
all the wicked in the land;  
I will cut off every evildoer  
from the city of the LORD.

Psalm 110.

Psalm 110 is an old Psalm. The phraseology suggest a date of the 9<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> century BC. There are some scholars who maintain that it is not that old, and was written as a messianic prophecy.

Giving it more credence as a messianic psalm is that Jesus quotes from this psalm when defending who he is.



No reason why it can't be both. While the OT people believed they were God's chosen, they most likely had no idea that what they were chosen for was to point to, and usher in, the Savior of the entire world.

It was written for the enthronement – coronation – of a king.

Psalm 110:1 – The LORD says to my lord:

“Sit at my right hand  
until I make your enemies  
a footstool for your feet.”

<sup>2</sup> The LORD will extend your mighty scepter from Zion, saying,  
“Rule in the midst of your enemies!”

<sup>3</sup> Your troops will be willing  
on your day of battle.

Arrayed in holy splendor,  
your young men will come to you  
like dew from the morning's womb.

<sup>4</sup> The LORD has sworn  
and will not change his mind:

“You are a priest forever,  
in the order of Melchizedek.”

A couple of things to note.

First, Jesus quotes this psalm in Matthew 22.

Matthew 22:41 – While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them,

<sup>42</sup> “What do you think about the Messiah? Whose son is he?”

“The son of David,” they replied.

<sup>43</sup> He said to them, “How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls him ‘Lord’?

For he says,

<sup>44</sup> “The Lord said to my Lord:

“Sit at my right hand  
until I put your enemies  
under your feet.””

<sup>45</sup> If then David calls him ‘Lord,’ how can he be his son?” <sup>46</sup> No one could say a word in reply, and from that day on no one dared to ask him any more questions.

While Son of David is a title for Jesus used by some, Jesus implies that he is David's Lord, not son.

Second – you are a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek.

To understand what this means, let's look at Genesis 14:17ff.

Genesis 14:17 – After Abram returned from defeating Kedorlaomer and the kings allied with him, the king of Sodom came out to meet him in the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley).

18 Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High, 19 and he blessed Abram, saying,

"Blessed be Abram by God Most High,  
Creator of heaven and earth.

20 And blessed be God Most High,  
who delivered your enemies into your hand."  
Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything.

Melchizedek – who is he?

He is introduced as the priest king of Salem - that is? Jerusalem.

V. 18 says Mel was a priest of God Most High -- The term was another ancient name for God, translated from El Elyon.

Mel was a priest of God Most High.

Only after receiving the fullness of God's revelation is Mel interpreted as something other than another king.

So, let's consider some things about Melchizedek.

One thing making Melchizedek unique is he is both a king and a priest. History shows how dangerous it is to combine religious and civic authority. God forbade the kings of Israel to be priests and the priests to be kings (In 2 Chronicles 26:16-26, King Uzziah tried to do the work of priest, and God struck him with leprosy), but here is an exception.

And Melchizedek is the **priest of God Most High**. *El Elyon* means "Highest God," like saying "Supreme Being." We should never settle for a "higher power"; we should serve the *Highest Power*.

Melchizedek serves Abram **bread and wine**. Perhaps he even served them in a manner looking forward to our redeeming sacrifice, as the bread and wine of Passover and the Lord's table look at our redeeming sacrifice, Jesus Christ.

Though Melchizedek seems like an obscure figure, he figures to be a very important Old Testament person. We have him here in Psalm 110.

Hebrews chapters 5 through 7 makes a great deal of this idea.

**Hebrews 7:1** – This Melchizedek was king of Salem and priest of God Most High. He met Abraham returning from the defeat of the kings and blessed him,<sup>2</sup> and Abraham gave him a tenth of everything. First, his name means "king of righteousness"; then also, "king of Salem" means

"king of peace." <sup>3</sup>Without father or mother, without genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life, like the Son of God he remains a priest forever.

Because of this passage, some have thought Melchizedek is actually a pre-Bethlehem appearance of Jesus.

"The question cannot be said to be settled completely . . . otherwise, the identity of Melchizedek would have been agreed on by Bible scholars long ago." (Morris) But we can, at the very least, say he was a remarkable type or picture of Jesus.

Abram gives unto the Lord, through Melchizedek, a **tithe of all**. This refers to one tenth of his *assets*, not his *income*.

So, Mel has been interpreted through the lens of Christianity as either Jesus, or a foreshadowing of Jesus.

What did the ancient Jew think of Mel?

Most likely that he simply represented the first of the great kings of Jerusalem. Like comparing a politician to a founding father.

Psalm 110:5 – The Lord is at your right hand;  
he will crush kings on the day of his wrath.

<sup>6</sup> He will judge the nations, heaping up the dead  
and crushing the rulers of the whole earth.

<sup>7</sup> He will drink from a brook along the way,  
and so he will lift his head high.

Psalm 132.

In our study of the different types of psalms, we have encountered each week at least one Psalm of ascents. These were pilgrimage psalms, and our last psalm for tonight is a psalm of ascents, Psalm 132.

It is a liturgical psalm, shared by those who had made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem. It remembers the events of David bringing the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem. Being a psalm remembering David, it is a royal psalm.

This is an old psalm, written before the exile.

It opens with prayers for the House of David – David’s line.

It was a processional.

The words look back to the time when the ark was lost, and David vowed to bring it back to Jerusalem. 1 and 2 Samuel.

Psalm 132:1 – LORD, remember David  
and all his self-denial.

<sup>2</sup> He swore an oath to the LORD,  
he made a vow to the Mighty One of Jacob:

<sup>3</sup> “I will not enter my house  
or go to my bed,

<sup>4</sup> I will allow no sleep to my eyes  
or slumber to my eyelids,

<sup>5</sup> till I find a place for the LORD,  
a dwelling for the Mighty One of Jacob.”

Often the processional would include a reenactment of the search for the ark, and it’s discovery. In the following verses they search for it, find it, and prepare to bring it back to its rightful place.

**Psalm 132:6** – We heard it in Ephrathah,  
we came upon it in the fields of Jaar:<sup>[a]</sup>

<sup>7</sup> “Let us go to his dwelling place,  
let us worship at his footstool, saying,

<sup>8</sup> ‘Arise, LORD, and come to your resting place,  
you and the ark of your might.

<sup>9</sup> May your priests be clothed with your righteousness;  
may your faithful people sing for joy.’”

<sup>10</sup> For the sake of your servant David,  
do not reject your anointed one.

The rest of the psalm shares the Lord's purpose for David and for Zion/Israel. Christian interpretation can certainly see prophecy in these verses.

Psalm 132:11 – The LORD swore an oath to David,  
a sure oath he will not revoke:

“One of your own descendants  
I will place on your throne.

<sup>12</sup> If your sons keep my covenant  
and the statutes I teach them,  
then their sons will sit  
on your throne for ever and ever.”

<sup>13</sup> For the LORD has chosen Zion,  
he has desired it for his dwelling, saying,

<sup>14</sup> “This is my resting place for ever and ever;  
here I will sit enthroned, for I have desired it.

<sup>15</sup> I will bless her with abundant provisions;  
her poor I will satisfy with food.

<sup>16</sup> I will clothe her priests with salvation,  
and her faithful people will ever sing for joy.

<sup>17</sup> “Here I will make a horn<sup>[b]</sup> grow for David  
and set up a lamp for my anointed one.

<sup>18</sup> I will clothe his enemies with shame,  
but his head will be adorned with a radiant crown.”

Over the past 6 classes we have looked at: Wisdom Psalms; Hymns of Praise; Communal Laments; Individual Laments; Thanksgiving Psalms, and lastly we look at Royal Psalms.

Tonight, as we wrap up our study of the Book of Psalms, we will look at two types of psalms that are fairly similar.  
Enthronement Psalms and Songs of Zion.

Royal Psalms were songs celebrating their earthly king. Enthronement Psalms, and Songs of Zion, celebrate Yahweh.

We will begin with Enthronement Psalms.

Like other types of psalms, they have their defining characteristics.

1. They often begin with the words – Yahweh has become king/The Lord is king.
2. They have many calls to rejoice.
3. They briefly refer to Yahweh’s deeds, depicted as having just taken place.
4. Describe Yahweh’s reign in the world.
5. Present the idea of a coming kingdom.

### Psalm 47

Psalm 47 begins with a brief call to rejoice, then an affirmation that Yahweh is the king over all of the earth – not just Israel, but all of creation.

Psalm 47:1 – Clap your hands, all you nations;  
shout to God with cries of joy.

<sup>2</sup>For the LORD Most High is awesome,  
the great King over all the earth.

<sup>3</sup>He subdued nations under us,  
peoples under our feet.

<sup>4</sup>He chose our inheritance for us,  
the pride of Jacob (referring to the land – Israel), whom he loved.

Verse 5 says that God has gone up – or ascended. The thought was that as a king goes up to his palace, which was usually on the highest part of capital, so God goes up to God’s temple.

Psalm 47:5 – God has ascended/gone up amid shouts of joy,  
the LORD amid the sounding of trumpets.

<sup>6</sup>Sing praises to God, sing praises;  
sing praises to our King, sing praises.

<sup>7</sup>For God is the King of all the earth;  
sing to him a psalm of praise.

Psalm 47:8 – God reigns over the nations;  
God is seated on his holy throne.

<sup>9</sup>The nobles of the nations assemble  
as the people of the God of Abraham,  
for the kings of the earth belong to God;  
he is greatly exalted.

Fairly simple psalm – short and simply states that Yahweh – Lord – is king of all the world. Nations/peoples.

Next we go to another short Psalm, Psalm 93.

Like most of the Enthronement Psalms, this was traditionally sung during their New Year's celebrations. Contrary to much Jewish worship, and what we think about New Year's celebration, theirs were rather somber.

They would sing this as they processed into the Temple symbolically setting Yahweh on the throne.

These Psalms may have been written in response to a pagan ritual of the tribes of the people in that area, who would worship various gods at the beginning of their calendar year (there were no standard calendars).

These new year's rituals began very early in Israel's history – after settling in the promised land – and continued after the exile.

Psalm 93:1 – The LORD reigns/literally The Lord has become king (solemn), he is robed in majesty;

the LORD is robed in majesty and armed with strength;  
indeed, the world is established, firm and secure.

<sup>2</sup>Your throne was established long ago;  
you are from all eternity.



Psalm 93:3 – The seas/floods have lifted up, LORD,  
the seas have lifted up their voice;  
the seas have lifted up their pounding waves.

<sup>4</sup> Mightier than the thunder of the great waters,  
mightier than the breakers of the sea—  
the LORD on high is mighty.

<sup>5</sup> Your statutes, LORD, stand firm;  
holiness adorns your house  
for endless days.

Psalm 96.

Like Psalm 93, this Psalm was sung on the New Year's celebrations.

It actually contains three separate hymns.

It is believed that this psalm was written after the time of the exile.

Psalm 96:1 – Sing to the LORD a new song;  
sing to the LORD, all the earth.

<sup>2</sup> Sing to the LORD, praise his name;  
proclaim his salvation day after day.

<sup>3</sup> Declare his glory among the nations,  
his marvelous deeds among all peoples.

<sup>4</sup> For great is the LORD and most worthy of praise;  
he is to be feared above all gods.

<sup>5</sup> For all the gods of the nations are idols,  
but the LORD made the heavens.

<sup>6</sup> Splendor and majesty are before him;  
strength and glory are in his sanctuary.

Verse 2 says proclaim or tell of his salvation. As Christians we interpret this differently, but the thought in those days was to tell of Yahweh's victory.

Verse 3 has marvelous deeds – these are the acts of creation, which we have in verses 5-6.

As is characteristic of enthronement psalms, there is a summons to the whole earth.

Psalm 96:7 – Ascribe to the LORD, all you families of nations,  
ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.

<sup>8</sup> Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;  
bring an offering and come into his courts.

<sup>9</sup> Worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness;  
tremble before him, all the earth.

As in all enthronement psalms, we have a proclamation that Yahweh reigns.

Psalm 96:10 – Say among the nations, “The LORD reigns.”

The world is firmly established, it cannot be moved;  
he will judge the peoples with equity.

<sup>11</sup> Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad;  
let the sea resound, and all that is in it.

<sup>12</sup> Let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them;  
let all the trees of the forest sing for joy.

<sup>13</sup> Let all creation rejoice before the LORD, for he comes,  
he comes to judge the earth.

He will judge the world in righteousness  
and the peoples in his faithfulness.

Psalm 97.

Unlike most of the other enthronement psalms, Psalm 97 was not used in New year’s festivals, but instead is eschatological in nature. Eschatological is a theological term that means it looks to the future, in particular it looks to the end of the present age.

Psalm 97:1 – The LORD reigns, let the earth be glad;  
let the distant shores rejoice.

<sup>2</sup> Clouds and thick darkness surround him;  
righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne.

<sup>3</sup> Fire goes before him  
and consumes his foes on every side.

<sup>4</sup> His lightning lights up the world;  
the earth sees and trembles.

<sup>5</sup>The mountains melt like wax before the LORD,  
before the Lord of all the earth.

<sup>6</sup>The heavens proclaim his righteousness,  
and all peoples see his glory.

There are part of this psalm that are taken from other Psalms, and some parts that were taken from various religious services.

Verse 7 is taken from a very old statement of faith that the Jews recited as early as the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC.

Psalm 97:7 - All who worship *images* are put to shame,  
those who boast in idols—  
worship him, all you gods!

<sup>8</sup>Zion hears and rejoices  
and the villages of Judah are glad  
because of your judgments, LORD.

<sup>9</sup>For you, LORD, are the Most High over all the earth;  
you are exalted far above all gods.

The word images in verse 7 was a word that meant shapes cut from wood, stone or metal. The KJV adds graven to the word to give it a better understanding.

Psalm 97:10 – Let those who love the LORD hate evil,  
for he guards the lives of his faithful ones  
and delivers them from the hand of the wicked.

<sup>11</sup>Light shines on the righteous  
and joy on the upright in heart.

<sup>12</sup>Rejoice in the LORD, you who are righteous,  
and praise his holy name.

Psalm 99.

Psalm 99 is a liturgy, and would be led by a priest and the people or the choir would sing the response. It was used for temple services.  
Though it wasn't a New Year's festival psalm, it has the same characteristics.

It begins with ...

Psalm 99:1 – The LORD reigns,  
let the nations/peoples tremble;  
he sits enthroned between the cherubim,  
let the earth shake.

<sup>2</sup> Great is the LORD in Zion;  
he is exalted over *all the nations/peoples*.

<sup>3</sup> Let them praise your great and awesome name—  
he is holy.

Peoples & nations – we find both words used throughout the psalms, and in particular in enthronement psalms. Sometimes it is translated as peoples, sometimes nations. It is the same Hebrew word. Modern translators seem to use two different translations (peoples & nations) as they think fits best.

Psalm 99:4 – The King is mighty, *he loves justice*—  
you have established equity;  
in Jacob you have done  
what is just and right.  
<sup>5</sup> Exalt the LORD our God  
and worship at his footstool;  
he is holy.

Loving justice is a theme we will find throughout the prophets, especially the *minor prophets*.

Verse 5 says to worship at his footstool – this referred to the temple.

Psalm 99:6 – Moses and Aaron were among his priests, (interestingly, this is the only place in the OT that Moses was called a priest)

Samuel was among those who called on his name;  
they called on the LORD

and he answered them.

<sup>7</sup> He spoke to them from the pillar of cloud; (to Moses & Aaron)  
they kept his statutes and the decrees he gave them.

<sup>8</sup> LORD our God,  
you answered them;  
you were to Israel a *forgiving God*,  
though you punished their misdeeds.

<sup>9</sup> Exalt the LORD our God  
and worship at his holy mountain,  
for the LORD our God is holy.

### Songs of Zion

A few of the Psalms are classified as Songs of Zion.

Such Psalms praise Yahweh (and God, using other names than Yahweh) by praising Jerusalem, focusing on the temple.

They tended to be eschatological – they looked to Israel’s future significance.

Psalm 46.

**Note the title – For the director of music. Of the Sons of Korah. According to *alamoth*. A song.**

Alamoth most likely a musical term.

This Psalm is believed to be Martin Luther’s inspiration for the great hymn – A Mighty Fortress is our God.

Psalm 46:1 – *God* is our refuge and strength,  
an ever-present help in trouble.

<sup>2</sup> Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way (be dissolved)  
and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,

<sup>3</sup> though its waters roar and foam  
and the mountains quake with their surging.

Verse one says refuge & strength. The word strength literally was tower, which doesn’t make sense to us. Martin Luther said God was a bulwark never failing. Luther knew his Hebrew!

A Bulwark was a defense, a strong tower.

Psalm 46:4 – There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,  
the holy place where the Most High dwells.

<sup>5</sup> God is within her, she will not fall;  
God will help her at break of day.

<sup>6</sup> Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall;  
he lifts his voice, the earth melts.

<sup>7</sup> The LORD Almighty is with us;  
the God of Jacob is our fortress.

The river in verse 4 has often been interpreted to be the river of life – or the river of living waters. Of course, many Christians see this as prophecy pointing to Jesus, who offers us living water.

The final verses look to Yahweh’s destruction of his enemies. These verses look forward to what God will do.

Psalm 46:8 – Come and see what the *LORD* has done,  
the desolations he has brought on the earth.

<sup>9</sup> He makes wars cease  
to the ends of the earth.

He breaks the bow and shatters the spear;  
he burns the shields/chariots with fire.

<sup>10</sup> He says, “Be still, and know that I am God;  
I will be exalted among the nations,  
I will be exalted in the earth.”

<sup>11</sup> The LORD Almighty is with us;  
the God of Jacob is our fortress.

Psalm 48.

This psalm is an expression of the feelings of worshippers who have made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

There is no call to worship as we saw in enthronement psalms. The singers of this psalm were already worshipping.

In this psalm we see a directed focus on the city of Jerusalem.

Psalm 48:1 – Great is the LORD, and most worthy of praise,  
in the city of our God, his holy mountain (Jerusalem).

<sup>2</sup> Beautiful in its loftiness,  
the joy of the whole earth,  
like the heights of Zaphon is Mount Zion,  
the city of the Great King.

<sup>3</sup> God is in her citadels;  
he has shown himself to be her fortress.

Zaphon was a sacred mountain for the Canaanites.

The following verses speak of Zion's deliverance from their enemies.  
Thanking God for what has taken place in and through the city of Jerusalem throughout  
the ages.

Psalm 48:4 – When the kings joined forces,  
when they advanced together,

<sup>5</sup> they saw her and were astounded;  
they fled in terror.

<sup>6</sup> Trembling seized them there,  
pain like that of a woman in labor.

<sup>7</sup> You destroyed them like *ships of Tarshish*  
shattered by an east wind.

<sup>8</sup> As we have heard,  
so we have seen  
in the city of the LORD Almighty,  
in the city of our God:

God makes her secure  
forever.

The closing verses praise God for God's unfailing love.

Psalm 48:9 – Within your temple, O God,  
we meditate on your unfailing love.

<sup>10</sup> Like your name, O God,  
your praise reaches to the ends of the earth;

your right hand is filled with righteousness.  
<sup>11</sup> Mount Zion rejoices,  
the villages of Judah are glad  
because of your judgments.  
<sup>12</sup> Walk about Zion, go around her,  
count her towers,  
<sup>13</sup> consider well her ramparts,  
view her citadels,  
that you may tell of them  
to the next generation.  
<sup>14</sup> For this God is our God for ever and ever;  
he will be our guide even to the end.

Psalm 76.

Psalm 76 is most likely one of the older Psalms of Zion. The psalm may be celebrating the defeat of Sennacherib. Sennacherib was a king of ancient Assyria who attacked and laid siege to several cities in Israel. King Hezekiah defeated Sennacherib in 701 BC.

Psalm 76:1 – God is renowned in Judah;  
in Israel his name is great.  
<sup>2</sup> His tent is in Salem,  
his dwelling place in Zion.  
<sup>3</sup> There he broke the flashing arrows,  
the shields and the swords, the weapons of war.

At the time this was written, Judah & Israel were synonymous, no divided kingdom yet.

This Psalm and a couple of places in Genesis are the only places where Jerusalem is called Salem. Same place.

The next strophe – or stanza – tells of the defeat of Zion's enemies.

Psalm 76:4 – You are radiant with light,  
more majestic than mountains rich with game.  
<sup>5</sup> The valiant lie plundered,  
they sleep their last sleep;



not one of the warriors  
can lift his hands.

<sup>6</sup> At your rebuke, God of Jacob,  
both horse and chariot lie still.

Next are some verses about God's judgment.

Unlike a Christian view of a final judgment, this was an ongoing judgment.

Psalm 76:7 – It is you alone who are to be feared.

Who can stand before you when you are angry?

<sup>8</sup> From heaven you pronounced judgment,  
and the land feared and was quiet—

<sup>9</sup> when you, God, rose up to judge,  
to save all the afflicted of the land.

<sup>10</sup> Surely your wrath against mankind brings you praise,  
and the survivors of your wrath are restrained.

Because of God's judgment, fulfill your vows to the Lord.

Psalm 76:11 – Make vows to the LORD your God and fulfill them;

let all the neighboring lands  
bring gifts to the One to be feared.

<sup>12</sup> He breaks the spirit of rulers;  
he is feared by the kings of the earth.

Psalm 87.

Psalm 87 is clearly a song of Zion, but it is also the most corrupted psalm we have.

What does that mean? The ancient Hebrew uses some very obscure words and phrases, and this psalm has been interpreted in many different ways by Hebrew scholars.

What we do know is that it praises Zion, and God's Holy Mountain – Jerusalem.

Psalm 87:1 – He has founded his city on the holy mountain.

<sup>2</sup>The LORD loves the gates of Zion  
more than all the other dwellings of Jacob.

The dwelling places of Jacob – Any place where Israelites dwell. Primarily in the promised land, but in later times came to represent the Jews scattered around the Mediterranean basin.

Psalm 87:3 – Glorious things are said of you,  
city of God:

<sup>4</sup>“I will record Rahab (refers to Egypt) and Babylon  
among those who acknowledge me—  
Philistia too, and Tyre, along with Cush (Ethiopia)—  
and will say, ‘This one was born in Zion.’”

<sup>5</sup>Indeed, of Zion it will be said,  
“This one and that one were born in her,  
and the Most High himself will establish her.”

<sup>6</sup>The LORD will write in the register of the peoples:  
“This one was born in Zion.”

There is much differing of opinions of the translation of verses 3 – 6.  
Basically it is saying that the people of God will be recorded as being born in Zion even though they were physically born in other areas.  
For example – a child of God will be called one born in Zion.

Psalm 87:7 – As they make music they will sing,  
“All my fountains are in you.”

It may say singers & dancers – or as they sing and dance. The one word in the Hebrew referred to both.

Fountains or springs is a symbol for the source of life and joy.

Psalm 122.

The final Psalm we look at is a Psalm of ascents – a pilgrim psalm. We have had pilgrim songs for most all types of psalms. This pilgrim song was a bit different. While it is called a psalm of ascents – ascended up to Jerusalem, or up the temple steps – it was actually a pilgrim song as they left Jerusalem.

As they left the Holy city, they would pray for the peace of the city.

This was one of the last psalms to be written, so was after the time of the exile.

Psalm 122:1 – I rejoiced with those who said to me,  
“Let us go to the house of the LORD.”

<sup>2</sup> Our feet are standing  
in your gates, Jerusalem.

They were recalling the joy of being invited to join the pilgrimage. Traveling was risky and dangerous business, so they went in groups.

Verse 2 recalled the relief when they finally made it.

Psalm 122:3 – Jerusalem is built like a city  
that is closely compacted together.

<sup>4</sup> That is where the tribes go up—  
the tribes of the LORD—  
to praise the name of the LORD  
according to the statute given to Israel.

<sup>5</sup> There stand the thrones for judgment,  
the thrones of the house of David.

I’m reading from the NIV, which has in verse 3 – a city that is closely compacted together. Others may have bound firmly together. Most people did not live in cities, and most had never seen a city like Jerusalem. It made a big impression – everyone living next to one another – compacted – firmly together.

But the compact may have also referred to the unity of the people within the city.

As they leave the city, they pray for the peace & prosperity of Jerusalem

Psalm 122:6 – Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:

“May those who love you be secure.

<sup>7</sup> May there be peace within your walls  
and security within your citadels.”

<sup>8</sup> For the sake of my family and friends,  
I will say, “Peace be within you.”

<sup>9</sup> For the sake of the house of the LORD our God,  
I will seek your prosperity.

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