

Psalms

Psalm 1:1-150:6

By Phil Kayser at Dominion Covenant Church on 2019-07-15

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I. Fun facts about Psalms

We have come to the book of Psalms. And let me start by giving you a few fun facts about this book. 1. Psalm 119 is the longest chapter in the Bible, containing 176 verses. 2. Psalm 117 is the shortest chapter, containing only two verses. So the Psalms contain both the longest and shortest chapters in the Bible. 3. Psalm 117 is also the middle chapter of the whole Bible out of a total of 1,189 chapters. 4. Psalm 118:8 is the absolute center of the Bible. It states, “It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man.” What a great verse for our day and age.¹ 5. Did you know that there are duplicate Psalms? A lot of people don’t realize that. Psalms 14 and 53 are word-for-word identical descriptions of fallen mankind. And there is a reason why those duplications are needed in each of books one and two. They are structurally important for understanding those books. Likewise all of Psalm 108 is included as part of Psalm 60, and all of Psalm 70 is included as part of Psalm 40.

And there are other fun statistics that we won’t go over that are listed on the bottom of page 4 of your handouts.

II. The Psalms as a Christ-centered compendium of all theology

I hope I can present this book in such a way that you come to really appreciate it. Martin Luther called the Psalter “a little Bible, and the summary of the Old Testament.”² And he called it that because it covers virtually every subject found in Genesis through Malachi. Athanasius went further and said that it was “An epitome of the whole Scriptures,” and Basil called it “A compendium of all theology.”³ Were they exaggerating? Most scholars don’t think so. E. S. McKittrick says, “...in the Psalter we find concentrated all the truths which are elsewhere elaborated and enforced in all the divine Word. It thus possesses an internal completeness not found in

1 My mistake. Apparently Psalm 103:1-2 are the middle two verses in the KJV.

2 As quoted in R. C. Sproul, ed., *The Reformation Study Bible: English Standard Version (2015 Edition)* (Orlando, FL: Reformation Trust, 2015), 828.

3 As quoted in the introduction to John Calvin and James Anderson, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, vol. 1 (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2010), vii.

any other single book in the inspired volume.”⁴ Thomas Scott said, “There is nothing in true religion – doctrinal, experimental, and practical – but will present itself to our attention whilst we meditate upon the Psalms.”⁵

If you take a look at the first page of your outlines, on the last line of each book-summary you will see that I have listed the Psalms that have typically been identified as the Messianic Psalms pointing to Jesus. These are Psalms that all Evangelicals agree are clearly Messianic. But you will notice in parenthesis that the New Testament quotes numerous other Psalms as clearly referring to Jesus. Why are they are not labeled Messianic? They should be. I agree with those scholars who include at least those Psalms in their list of Messianic Psalms. After all, the New Testament is an inspired interpreter. Hebrews 1 clearly says “But to the Son He says,” (v. 8) and then he quotes three Psalms, one of which is Psalm 102. So Psalm 102 is by inspiration lumped in with the other Messianic Psalms quoted in that chapter.

But the more you dig into the Psalms, the more you realize that even those verses do not adequately capture all the Messianic Psalms. For example, it is impossible to read Psalm 72 without seeing Jesus the Messiah all through it. Any commentary will show you that. Yet it is never quoted in the New Testament. Psalm 72 should be seen as a Messianic Psalm that prophecies the glories of His kingdom.

So how do you tell what is Messianic and what is not? Well, there are structural clues that link Psalms together thematically. For example, there are couplet Psalms that are structured together in a way where they speak of the same subject. So if one of those is Messianic, then the other is Messianic. Likewise, there are chiasmic groupings of Psalms where the sides parallel each other. And a number of books have been written on these structural features that help us to interpret the Psalms. My absolute favorite is O. Palmer Robertson’s book, *The Flow of the Psalms*.⁶ The guy is a genius in the way he uncovers the beautiful structures in the book. His analysis of book five is probably the weakest section of his book, but even that has helpful stuff in it.

He is one of many authors who show that Psalms 1 and 2 are a couplet that form the introduction to the whole Psalter, and both point to the same man. Thus, when Psalm 1 says, “Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel

4 <http://www.westminsterconfession.org/worship/christ-in-the-psalms.php>

5 As quoted by William Sommerville, *The Exclusive Claims of David’s Psalms* (Prince Williams Street: Barnes & Company, 1855), p. 180.

6 O. Palmer Robertson, *The Flow of the Psalms: Discovering their Structure and Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 2015).

of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scorner,” etc, it does not use the Hebrew word adam for this man, which would refer to any human or humanity as a whole. Rather, it uses the word ish with an article, which refers to a specific male. Fletcher points out that no human, however godly, has ever matched up to what this Psalm calls for. He says,

However, when one reads Ps 1 through a christological lens, Jesus is “the man” (ha ish), and only in him does this psalm find its ultimate expression. He is the man who is devoted to and delights in God’s torah with a teachable spirit. Only Christ exhibits preeminent discipleship as he learns how to best live life by meditating on God’s torah and calling others to follow his example. Put differently, Jesus, the model disciple, calls all people to be his disciples, to pattern his routine.⁷

So Psalm 1 does apply to us, but we can only achieve the call of that Psalm by union with THE MAN, Jesus, who will be more fully described in the second pillar of the introduction - Psalm 2. Those two belong together. They interpret each other. All of the Psalter stands on those two pillars.

And there are other Psalms that simply do not fit us in isolation from Jesus. For example, Psalm 24 asks, “who may ascend into the hill of Yehowah? Or who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart...” and he goes on to describe other characteristics that speak of perfection. How do we approach heaven perfectly? It is only through Jesus, the one human who had an absolutely perfect heart and absolutely clean hands. And the way the Psalter is structured, it has already hinted that this conclusion would be necessary. Psalm 14 tells us that no human has clean hands and a pure heart. Instead, it describes humanity in these words:

1 They are corrupt, They have done abominable works, There is none who does good. 2 The LORD looks down from heaven upon the children of men, To see if there are any who understand, who seek God. 3 They have all turned aside, They have together become corrupt; There is none who does good, No, not one.

This means that the only way that Psalm 24 can be fulfilled is through the Messiah. He is the Man with clean hands and a pure heart, and by union with Him we too can approach heaven as perfect. It is important that we learn to see all the Psalms as reflecting Jesus in some way. He bears the sins of His body, the church, and confesses those sins in some of these Psalms. He redeems His body, the church, and brings the church to God’s holy hill in worship.

Richard Belcher,⁸ Daniel Fletcher,⁹ and many other Reformed scholars show

7 Fletcher, Daniel H.. Psalms of Christ: The Messiah in Non-Messianic Psalms (p. 23). Wipf & Stock, an Imprint of Wipf and Stock Publishers. Kindle Edition.

8 Richard P. Belcher, Jr., The Messiah and the Psalms: Preaching Christ from all the Psalms (Fearn, United Kingdom: Christian Focus Publications, 2006)

9 Daniel H. Fletcher, Psalms of Christ: The Messiah in Non-Messianic Psalms (Eugene, OR: Wipf &

that every single Psalm was written with a Christological focus and they prove (I think quite clearly) that the New Testament itself calls us to see the Psalms through the lens of Christ - every Psalm. Hebrews 1 says that Jesus sings those Psalms in the midst of the church as the head and the representative of that church. So there is a sense in which the entire Psalter is Christological; richly Christological.

But there are certain Psalms that people stumble over when they think of Jesus praying them. For example, can Jesus really pray Psalm 40:12? It says, "For innumerable evils have surrounded me; my iniquities have overtaken me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of my head; therefore my heart fails me." Well, if you look at the list of Messianic Psalms on page 1 under Book One you will see that everyone sees Psalm 40 as one of the official Messianic Psalms, so yes, He must be able to say that. He said it because He bore the sins of His people and was indeed overwhelmed with those sins in the Garden of Gethsemane - sins that were more numerous than the hairs of His head. He as head is united to the body, the church, and as such confesses those sins. One scholar asked,

How is it possible that you and I and Jesus Christ can pray the Psalms at the same time? ... In the Psalms, the Son of God who became man, and who carried all the weakness of the human race in his own flesh, pours out the heart of all humanity before God, stands in our place, and prays for us. He has known torment, pain, guilt and death deeper than we have.... It is really our prayer, but since he knows us better than we know ourselves, and since the things he accomplished for us he accomplished as a man, it's also really his prayer, and it can only become our prayer because it is ultimately his prayer.

The only quibble I would have with that scholar is that it is not all humanity, but the church that Jesus represents. We are united with Jesus and Jesus is united with us. That's how He could pray the Psalms in the synagogue and how He continues to sing them through the church today. So this scholar concludes with this question: "Who prays the Psalms, then?" He says that David prays them, Jesus Christ prays them, and you and I pray them.

Hopefully you are getting a feel for how we approach the Psalter Christologically. There are good books like Daniel Fletcher's book, *Psalms of Christ: The Messiah in Non-Messianic Psalms* (I love that title) or books like James E. Adams' book, *War Psalms of the Prince of Peace*,¹⁰ that go into much more detail on how to consciously sing these Psalms in union with Jesus.

But let me finish this section by showing that the Psalter contains a much more detailed biography of Jesus than any other Old Testament book. This

Stock, 2018)

10 James E. Adams, *War Psalms of the Prince of Peace: Lessons from the Imprecatory Psalms* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 2016)

will just be a bare bones introduction to what the Psalms say. Starting in eternity past, His eternal Sonship is affirmed in Psalm 2 where Jesus says, “Yehowah said unto Me, You are My Son...” and in Psalm 45 and other Psalms where the Son’s eternal Godhead is affirmed (v. 6). His incarnation is foretold in Psalm 40 where the Son said, “a body You prepared for Me.” Unlike other humans that are described in Psalm 58:3 as being “estranged [from God] from the womb” and as being sinners from the time of conception, Jesus is different. Psalm 22 and Psalm 71 both say that Jesus trusted God in the womb and had perfect fellowship with God in the womb. Psalm 22 goes on to prophetically have Jesus say, “my Mother bore Me,” but only speaks of a heavenly Father, not an earthly father. His was a unique birth. Hebrews 1:6 says that Psalm 97:7 commands all the angels to worship Jesus the moment He would be born into the world. And in Luke 2 we see that the angels obeyed that command. Again that shows that this is a different child - He is a divine Person who remarkably identifies with us in conception, in the womb, in birth, in toddlerhood and teen years, and in His adult years. Though He is presented as the Son of God in Psalms like Psalm 2, Psalms 8 and 80 speak of Him as the Son of Man - Christ’s favorite title, also used in Daniel. I want to read at length an abbreviated biography of Jesus by E. S. McKittrick so that you can get a little bit of a feel for how Christological this book really is. He says,

All the usual names applied to Him in the New Testament are given in the Psalms, except the name Jesus, and it is given frequently in substance, if not in form...

What does he mean by “in substance”? Well, Jesus’ title of Christ/Messiah/Anointed one is used in 12 Psalms¹¹ and there are 31 Psalms that have Yehoshua (the Hebrew form of Jesus, which means salvation).¹²

Anyway, continuing to read:

His trust in God and obedience to Him are beautifully set forth in the whole of the Eighteenth Psalm; His moral beauty in the Forty-Fifth – “Thou art fairer than the children of men”; likewise His anointing of the Holy Spirit – “Grace is poured into Thy lips.” His life of self-sacrifice is shown from the Sixty-Ninth Psalm by the Apostle Paul, “For Christ also pleased not Himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached Thee fell on Me.” In this Psalm we have His passionate devotion to God’s service – “The zeal of Thine house hath eaten Me up.” His taking sinners into union with Himself – a truth which underlies the whole Psalter – is stated in the Twenty-Second, as interpreted in the Epistle to the Hebrews – “I will declare Thy name unto My brethren.” His rejection is mentioned in the Sixty-Ninth – “I am become a stranger unto My

11 The title of Messiah or anointed is used in Psalm 2:2; Psalm 18:50; Psalm 20:6; Psalm 28:8; Psalm 45:7 (verbal variant); Psalm 84:9; Psalm 89:20 (verbal variant); Psalm 89:38; Psalm 89:51; Psalm 105:15; Psalm 132:10; Psalm 132:17.

12 Psalm 3:8; 9:14; 13:5; 14:7; 20:5; 21:1, 5; 35:9; 38:22; 40:10, 16; 50:23; 51:14; 53:6; 62:1, 2, 6; 68:19; 69:29; 70:4; 71:15; 74:12; 78:22; 88:1; 89:26; 91:16; 96:2; 98:2, 3; 106:4; 116:13; 118:14, 15, 21; 119:41, 81, 123, 155, 166, 174; 140:7; 144:10; 149:4.

brethren, and an alien unto My mother's children"; "They that hate Me without cause are more than the hairs of My head." His triumphal entry into Jerusalem was foreshadowed in the Eighth Psalm – "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast Thou established strength," and in the One Hundred and Eighteenth – "Blessed be He that cometh in the name of Jehovah." The conspiracy of His foes against Him is in the Thirty-First – "They took counsel together against Me, they devised to take away My life." His betrayal by one of the Twelve is foretold in the Forty-First, as He Himself pointed out – "He that eateth My bread lifted up his heel against Me." The manner of His death is foretold in the Twenty-Second – "They pierced My hands and My feet." Even the disposition of His clothes is mentioned – "They part my garments among them, and upon My vesture do they cast lots." His cry of desertion was in the opening words of this Psalm, in which they are followed by a most accurate and pathetic description of the whole crucifixion scene. The Sixty-Ninth adds another line to the dark picture – "They gave Me also gall for My food; and in My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink." That His bones should not be broken, as were those hanging on either side of Him, is predicted in the Thirty-Fourth, as applied in John's Gospel – "A bone of Him shall not be broken." His dying words were from the Thirty-First – "Into Thy hands I commend My spirit." His resurrection is foretold in the Sixteenth, as cited in Peter's sermon at Pentecost – "Thou wilt not leave My soul unto Hades, neither wilt Thou give Thy Holy One to see corruption." His ascension, also, is mentioned – "Thou hast ascended on high"; "God is gone up with a shout, Jehovah with the sound of a trumpet." His kingdom and its ultimate triumph are described in the familiar Seventy-Second Psalm, and His coming in judgment in the Fiftieth and the Ninety-Eighth – "Our God cometh, and doth not keep silence"; "He calleth to the heavens above, and to the earth, that He may judge His people"; "For He cometh to judge the earth; He will judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with equity."

In these revelations of Jesus in the Psalter there is this advantage over all others – He speaks mainly in the first person, and tells us His own feelings while working and suffering and dying for our redemption. And these revelations are chiefly in the past tense, as if to indicate that they were intended more for the gospel age than for that in which they were written.¹³

Much more could be said about Jesus, but I thought it was such a marvelous summary that I should read that description verbatim.

But not only is the Psalter a theologically rich book containing every doctrine of the Bible, but it is also a prayer book, a medicine chest that brings healing to our soul, an arsenal of imprecatory weapons that can be used against Satan, and a volume that expresses our longings, fears, joys, doubts, and other emotions in such a way that it convinces us that God understands us and He cares. And it resolves those emotions in worship. It's a worship book.

III. The structure of the book of Psalms

But what I have found most intriguing is the inspired order and arrangement

¹³ <http://www.westminsterconfession.org/worship/christ-in-the-psalms.php>

of the Psalms. And I am going to use the diagrams on pages 2-4 to guide you in seeing the beautiful structure of the book. It is crystal clear that the Psalms were arranged topically, not chronologically. How do I know that? Let me give you two of several reasons:

First, take a look at the title of Psalm 90. The inspired title says, “A prayer of Moses the man of God.” Well, Moses died 365 years before David was even born, yet most of David’s Psalms were written before Psalm 90. They are out of chronological order. Psalm 90 was very deliberately put at the beginning of Book Four. And we will later see that it is for a reason.

But David’s own Psalms are deliberately put out of order even within each book. Look at Psalm 72:20. That verse says, “The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.” That tells us that Psalm 72 was the last Psalm that David wrote. But look at the inspired title of Psalm 86. It says, “A prayer of David.” Psalm 101, 103, 108, 110, and several other later Psalms were also written by David. So David’s last Psalm was placed earlier in the book than a number of the Psalms that he had written earlier in his life. And it is out of order for a reason - a very good reason. I am so glad that God put these Psalms in the order they are in. The Psalter was topically arranged by Ezra the prophet. Likewise, Psalm 51 was written 8 years after the events of the very next Psalm of David, Psalm 52. So Psalm 52 was written before Psalm 51.

So these and many other clues are given by God to make it crystal clear that God arranged the Psalter thematically, not in the order that they were written. And it was all done through the inspiration of God through the prophet Ezra. The order we have in the Psalter is God’s intended order for the New Covenant times. And 1 Peter 1:11-12 is quite explicit that the canonical structure was put together for the New Covenant age, not for their age. Why? Because it prefigures the kingdom of Christ so well.

So what is the topical arrangement? How does each Psalm relate to the Psalter as a whole? What kind of flow does this Psalm book have? O. Palmer Robertson’s book, *The Flow of the Psalms*, is probably the standard work showing the order and arrangement that Ezra the prophet gave to the Psalter by inspiration. There are other books that have built upon that and added to that, but nothing yet that has replaced it. It is fascinating. And I puzzled and puzzled as to how I could communicate this fascinating order and arrangement and finally came to the conclusion that I can’t do it justice. You just need to read the book. This is an advertisement for O. Palmer Robertson’s book, *The Flow of the Psalms*.

But let me at least introduce you to it. Book One is the confrontation between David and His enemies and foreshadows the confrontation between Jesus and the world when He came into the world. Book Two is a book on missions to the nations and gives David's goal that all nations will eventually sing praises to Yehowah. But David foreshadows Jesus giving the great Commission of discipling the nations in New Testament times. Book Three is labeled "Devastation" by Robertson, and it deals primarily with the destruction of the temple, Israel's exile, the temporary victory of God's enemies over the church, and pleading with God to restore this backslidden church and to bring victory to the church once again. In terms of Christ's redemptive kingdom, it foreshadows the Great Tribulation of the church, the Great Apostasy, and the subsequent casting away of Israel in AD 70. Book Four begins with the restoration of the church, more missions, and maturation of the church over a long period of time. And book five deals with the non-stop victory of Christ's kingdom until there is a fullness of the nations worshipping God after Christ has completely won the war, leading to a crescendo of praise and Hallelujah's in the last five Psalms of the Psalter. So that is a broad overview of where the Psalter is going.

But the details of the structure within each section also help us to interpret groupings of Psalms. People have recognized Psalms 20-24 as a set of kingship Psalms, where both Yehowah and Messiah are described as Kings over all the earth. But the abcba structure clearly shows Psalm 22 to be the heart or center or peak of that chiasm. Robertson calls these fun groupings pyramid Psalms because they rise up to a peak and then go down from that peak. And you will see some examples of large pyramid groupings beautifully illustrated in the first graphic of Book One on the second page of your handouts.

So your handout shows the broader structure, but Robertson points out that there are mini-pyramids with peaks within that structure that aren't shown in your chart. So Psalms 20-24 form their own internal chiasm. And because Psalm 22 is the center or peak, it is the key to interpreting that group of kingship Psalms. Psalm 22 shows how God's kingship and Messiah's kingship will be over all. The first half of Psalm 22 shows us the cross in vivid detail, beginning with Christ's cry of agony on the cross - "My God, My God, why have You forsake Me." And the second half of Psalm 22 shows what flows from the resurrection of Jesus and His victory over death. It shows a growth of the church and of the worldwide kingdom until all the world is incorporated into Messiah's kingdom. So the structure of that mini-kingship set shows that the cross and the resurrection are the key to Christ's

kingdom success. It will not be imposed by the sword. It will organically grow through the Gospel.

Let me give you another example of how structure interprets the meaning. There are numerous couplets, where two Psalms are tightly linked together, with each side of the couplet being needed to interpret the other. For example, there are three places where a Law Psalm (sometimes called a Torah Psalm) is tightly coupled with a Messianic Psalm. We've already seen that Psalms 1 and 2 are that way. But so are Psalms 18 & 19 and 118 & 119. That latter one surprised me, but Robertson and others definitely prove that they are linked. So the structural design of those couplets shows that each side of the couplet is needed to interpret the other. So Robertson comments on the significance of the three couplets of Torah Psalms with Messiah Psalms. He says,

As a consequence of this threefold coupling of a Torah psalm with a messianic psalm, the principal point is repeated three times over in the Psalter: both Torah and Messiah are essential for God's people. Law cannot function properly in the life of God's people without Messiah, and Messiah can be properly appreciated only in the context of the Lord's law. Law and gospel must be joined together if God's people are to experience the full "blessed" condition that comes from the Lord (Pss. 1:1; 2:12; 119:1-2).¹⁴

Let me give you one more example, this time of how the structure of Psalms helps to interpret the meaning of the Psalms around them. Acrostic Psalms are sprinkled throughout the Psalter, but they are not sprinkled haphazardly. You see beautiful arrangements of other kinds of Psalms on either side of these Acrostic Psalms in perfect symmetry. And we won't have time to get into those fancier details. But suffice it to say that these Acrostic Psalms are boundary markers that help to interpret the related Psalms. I'll just give one example of how two acrostic Psalms do this. Quoting from Robertson.

These acrostic psalms function in a variety of ways. Being carefully spaced, they divide these two largest books of the Psalter into smaller sections. Often they provide structural framework for the books... Acrostic Psalms 34 and 37 bracket four psalms of the innocent sufferer (Pss. 34-37). These four psalms are then followed immediately by four psalms of the guilty sufferer (Pss. 38-41). As a consequence, a pastor who is aware of the bracketing function of acrostic Psalms 34 and 37 could be significantly helped in counseling persons struggling with either innocence or guilt in response to their suffering.¹⁵

I know some of this is a bit technical. But believe me, there is much more technical stuff in that book. I am barely introducing you to these ideas - just enough so that you can come to appreciate the fact that even the ordering of

14 Robertson, O. Palmer. *The Flow of the Psalms: Discovering Their Structure and Theology* (Kindle Locations 4447-4451). P&R Publishing. Kindle Edition.

15 Robertson, O. Palmer. *The Flow of the Psalms: Discovering Their Structure and Theology* (Kindle Locations 1873-1878). P&R Publishing. Kindle Edition.

the Psalms is inspired and important to understand.

But the overall flow of the book is what I want to finish this sermon with. I already gave you a brief overview of the book, but let me spend the rest of this sermon giving you the broad arrangement of Psalms 1-150.

There is an introduction and there is a conclusion. Psalms 1 & 2 are two pillars that all by themselves introduce most of the major themes of the book. And as those themes are unfolded within the Psalter they provide more and more appreciation for the grace of God's kingdom ushering into more and more wonder and amazement and praise until there is a veritable Hallelujah chorus in the last five chapters of the Psalter. So two Psalms form the introduction. Five Psalms form the conclusion.

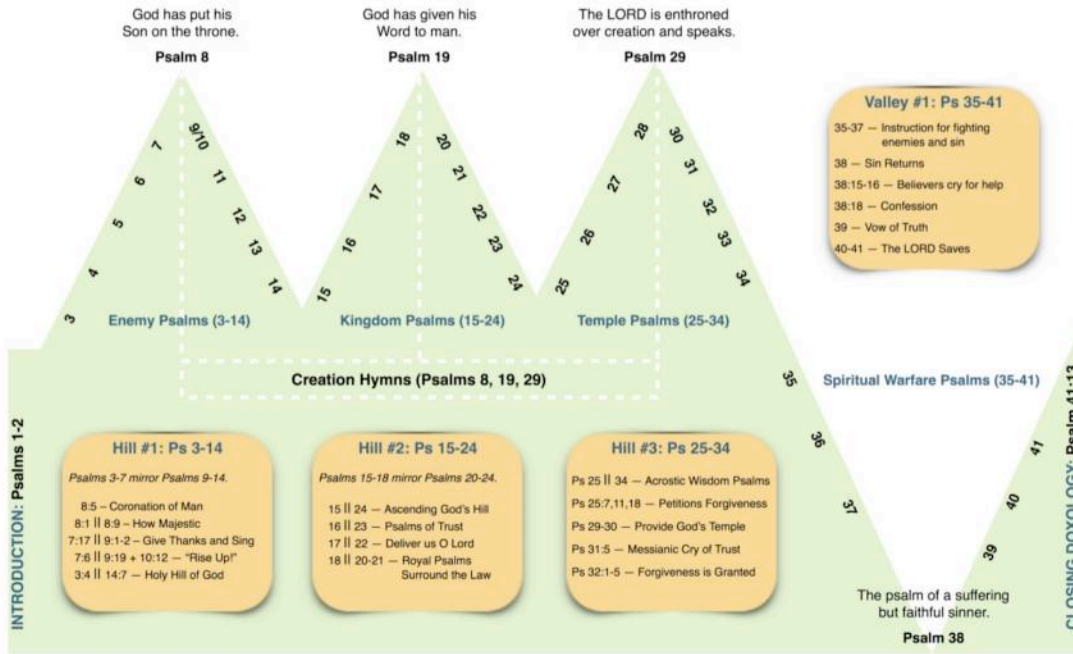
In the introduction, Psalm 1 introduces us to the two streams of mankind - unbelievers who are only united to the first man, Adam, and believers who are united to the perfect Man, Jesus. Psalm 2 then introduces us to the warfare between those two camps, and prophecies that Jesus will eventually conquer all enemies and put them under His feet. So they clue us into the fact that this is the trajectory that the whole Psalter is going to go. And it is only going to go there because of the Messiah that is at the heart of Psalms 1 & 2.

Book One as a whole shows the fallen nature of mankind and of creation and of the inevitable conflict that was set in motion between the seed of the woman and the seed of Satan in Genesis 3:15. And by the way, you will see from the analysis of Book One on page 1 that Book One has a lot of the themes of Genesis in it. Even the ancient Jews recognized that each of the five books of the Psalter correspond to the five books of Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible).

Book 1: Psalms 1-41

Yahweh will save David and establish his throne in Zion.

Book 1: Psalms 1-41
Author: David
Overview: Passing through great affliction and enemy opposition, David is exalted as God's King. He seeks refuge in God and becomes God's vice-regent, reigning from Zion.



Book One corresponds to Genesis, and if you look at the diagram of Book One on page 2 (that's the first green graphic there), you will see three pyramid formations of Psalms. These are series of parallel Psalms that lead to a peak. And at the top of each peak you will see the three creation Psalms - Psalms 8, 19, and 29. Those three creation psalms present the fallen creation of Genesis, but a creation that is still being carefully preserved by God for a coming redemption. Though the author of that chart drew it from the perspective of the anointed David ("anointed" means Messiah, so David is a small "m" messiah) David stands as a type of Christ, and so this book ultimately points to the Second David, Jesus who will deal with this messed up creation.

And I want you to note the progression on that first chart on page 2 of the major groupings within Book One. It progresses from enemy psalms in Psalms 3-14, to kingdom Psalms in Psalms 15-24, to Temple Psalms in Psalms 25-34. This then leads to spiritual warfare Psalms in the rest of the book. So how can we engage successfully in spiritual warfare with God's imprecatory Psalms? We can't oppose Satan as unbelievers. The seven sons of Sceva tried that in Acts 19 and were utterly unsuccessful. Only as we

ourselves are transformed from enemies (that's the first section) into citizens of Christ's kingdom who submit to His rule (next section) and who worship in His holy temple (the next section) can we have power over the devil and war with the imprecatory Psalms. That's the flow of Book One.

And I will point out that the chart of Book One that is at the top of page 2 only highlights a few of the intricately interweaving structural features of Book One, but at least the chart clearly shows what Messiah would face. He faced enemies just as David faced enemies. The word "enemies" is the key word in Book One. Many study Bibles say that "man" is the key word, but while "man" does appear 47 times, it appears 134 times elsewhere in the book and does not define what kind of man Christ confronts. That is the true key. Book One presents fallen man at enmity with God. That's the message of Genesis - fallen man in need of a Messiah. And that's the message of Book One of the Psalter - fallen man in need of a Messiah. Jesus came into the world and the world did not receive Him. As Robertson notes,

No fewer than thirty of the forty-one psalms that constitute Book I make specific reference to these enemies of the psalmist. Of the remaining eleven psalms, three imply the presence of enemies (Pss. 15, 16, 20), and five refer to death (Pss. 16, 23, 30, 33, 39) ...¹⁶

That means that 38 of the 41 Psalms in Book One are focused on the hatred and opposition that Christ's enemies gave to Him. Yet there is a Messiah and there is a remnant of those who are faithful to God. And though there is pain, there is clearly faith in God's victory as this book progresses. So the book ends with a doxology of faith in Psalm 41:13, which says, "Blessed be the LORD God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting! Amen and Amen." It is giving that doxology of faith, not because things look better, but because the Messiah is guaranteed to win despite the fact that He is surrounded by enemies and starts his kingdom with small numbers.

And by the way, all five books of the Psalter end with a special doxology of praise to God and faith in God. In the RPCNA Psalter, a song is devoted to each doxology, and they are well worth learning.

But Book Two is the book of longing. It repeatedly states David's longing for the expansion of God's kingdom. We are not Pessimillennialists who are content to be a defeated minority. We long for the growth of Christ's kingdom. Robertson points out that though enemies are present in Book Two and though there are ups and downs and struggles in Book Two, that there is a progression in God's kingdom that is clearly evident.

¹⁶ Robertson, O. Palmer. *The Flow of the Psalms: Discovering Their Structure and Theology* (Kindle Locations 1558-1560). P&R Publishing. Kindle Edition.

This is a book where David communicates directly with his enemies and calls upon God to make the nations of the world His nations. And he says that all nations shall praise God. That itself is a statement of faith - that Christ will be worshiped and praised among all nations. It is a missions book. Those Psalms of the nations worshiping are a big part of John Piper's book on missions and worship. They are marvelous statements of faith. Can we have that faith when all around us are enemies? Yes, if we will have the theology of the Psalter.

But though the subject of missions and the Great Commission is highlighted in Book Two, Book Two is only the beginning of missions where David rules in the midst His enemies just as Jesus began His rule reigning in the midst of His enemies. There is a flow that is developing.

Now I said that Book Two is a book of longing. Let me explain that. Since the kingdom is not where it should be, the whole of Book Two is noted for longing - longing for God and for His kingdom to be manifested. It begins with longing in Psalm 42.

As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God...

And Book Two ends with longing for God's glory to be manifested. The final doxology of this book says,

18 Blessed be the LORD God, the God of Israel, Who only does wondrous things! 19 And blessed be His glorious name forever! And let the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen and Amen.

That longing should capture our heart - that the whole earth would be filled with God's glory. But there are longings for our own sanctification in this book as well. And there are longings for the maturity of the church. The key chapter is Psalm 63, which not only speaks of the redemption that the Messiah will bring, but of a deep longing for God that is placed in the hearts of all who have been redeemed. Let me read that Psalm.

Psa. 63:0 A Psalm of David when he was in the wilderness of Judah.

Psa. 63:1 O God, You are my God; Early will I seek You; My soul thirsts for You; My flesh longs for You In a dry and thirsty land Where there is no water. 2 So I have looked for You in the sanctuary, To see Your power and Your glory. 3 Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, My lips shall praise You. 4 Thus I will bless You while I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name. 5 My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, And my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips. 6 When I remember You on my bed, I meditate on You in the night watches. 7 Because You have been my help, Therefore in the shadow of Your wings I will rejoice. 8 My soul follows close behind You; Your right hand upholds me. 9 But those who seek my life, to destroy it, Shall go into the lower parts of the earth. 10 They shall fall by the sword; They shall be a portion for jackals. 11 But the king shall rejoice in God; Everyone who swears by Him shall

glory; But the mouth of those who speak lies shall be stopped.

Book 2: Psalms 42-72

Elohim will raise up David's Son for the nations.

Book 2: Psalms 42-72

Author(s): Sons of Korah, Asaph, David, and Solomon
Overview: Beginning with God's royal covenant with David, Book 2 dips into the trials of David's later life. Eventually, God rescues him and establishes Solomon on the throne.

Psalms 42-49	Psalms 50-53	Psalms 54-60	Psalms 61-67	Psalms 68-72
<i>Seven Psalms from Korah's Sons</i>	<i>A Psalm by Asaph and Three David Psalms</i>	<i>Seven David Psalms</i>	<i>Seven David Psalms</i>	<i>Three David Psalms and a Psalm for Solomon</i>
God's King ends lament and brings joy to Zion.	A rebuke of sin and prayer for salvation.	Prayers seeking judgment against the nations.	Prayers for salvation, and salvation of nations.	The Throne of David passes to Solomon.
Songs of Lament 42-43* – Individual 44 – Community	A Rebuke from Zion 50 – YHWH speaks	Seven Enemies of David** 54 – The Ziphites 55 – Betrayal from a friend 56 – The Philistines 57 – Saul 58 – Unjust Rulers 59 – Saul's Henchmen 60 – Distant Enemies	Cries for Salvation 61 62 63	Review of God's Faithfulness 68 – God saves, the nations praise 69
Covenant & Kingdom 45 – Marriage 46 – The King of the Hill	Three Kinds of Sinners 51 Covenant Breakers 52 Wicked Enemy 53* The Fool	** Adapted from O. Palmer Robertson, <i>The Flow of the Psalms</i>	God Saves 64 – God Intervenes (v.7)	70/71 – David Ages and Dies
Songs of Zion 47 48 49			Salvation for the Nations 65 66 Let the Nations Praise! 67	A Psalm for Solomon 72
<small>*In some ancient manuscripts, Psalms 42-43 were one continuous psalm. See the refrain 42:5-6a, 42:11, and 43:5.</small>	<small>*Psalm 53 is an intentional repeat of Psalm 14 in its entirety. The only difference is the shift from YHWH to Elohim.</small>			

From YHWH to Elohim

Book 1	Book 2
YHWH: 278	YHWH: 32
Elohim: 48	Elohim: 198

David's Rule is for the Nations
2 Samuel 7:19

The Messiah in Book 2 of Psalms

From Glory	... To Suffering	... To Greater Glory
Psalm 45	Psalm 69	Psalm 72
vv. 6-8a	v. 9 (John 2:17) v. 21 (John 19:28)	vv. 8-11

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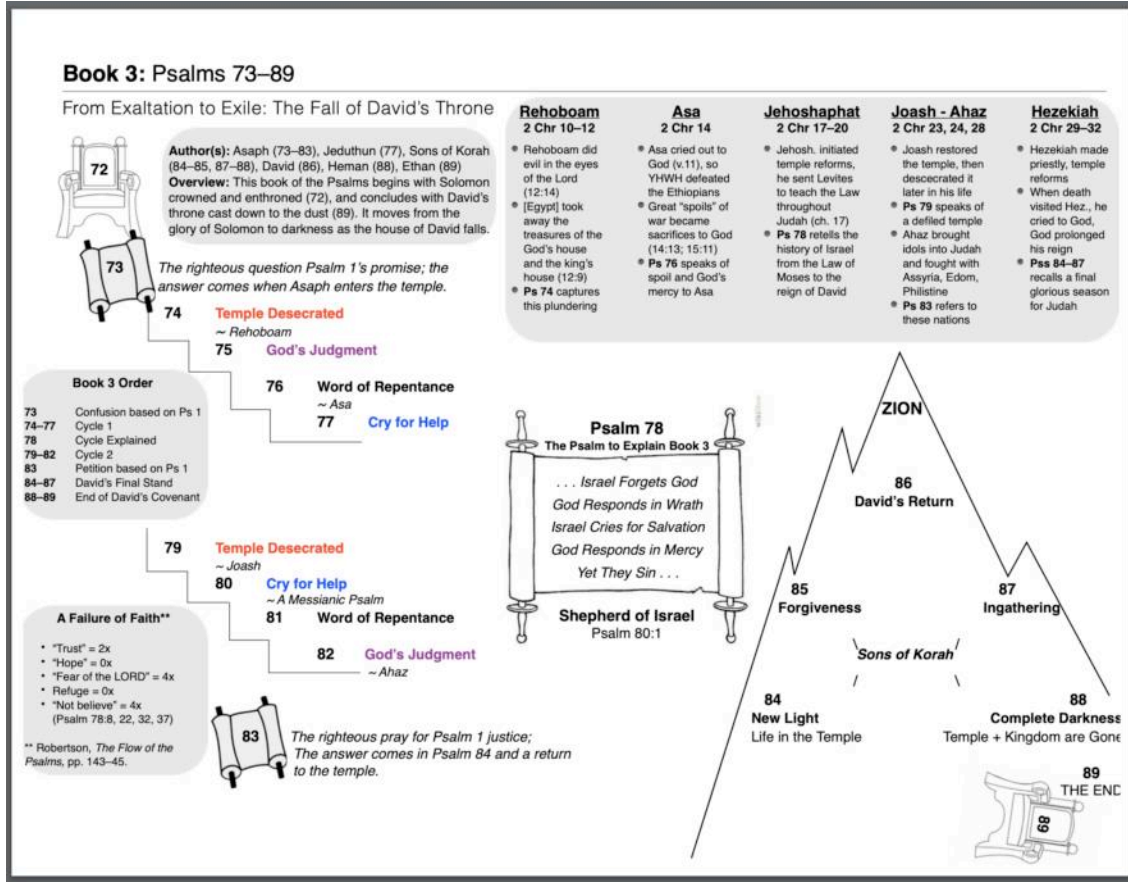
If you look at the Book Two diagram at the bottom of page 2, you will see a long list of the enemies that David must conquer and those enemies stand as types of the nations that Jesus must conquer with the Great Commission. If I were preaching through Book Two as a series, I would use this chart to show progression that constantly needs to be made during this stage of Christ's kingdom.

But though there is much work that needs to be done, Psalm 72 anticipates a time when Christ's kingdom will extend from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth. It is giving a road-map of what must be done just as Jesus gave the road-map in the Great Commission of what must be done - that all nations must be made disciples fully obeying the Scriptures. So Psalm 72 is a glorious promise that Christ will eventually conquer all enemies and fill this world with His shalom. But at this point it is still a statement of faith concerning the future. It has not yet been accomplished.

Robertson calls Book Two "Communication" - it represents communication of the Gospel to the ends of the earth. I call it "Missions." And though all of Psalm 72 is a glorious statement of faith, the doxology at the end of the Psalm is fabulous. I've already read it, but let me read it again. Psalm 72:18-

18 Blessed be the LORD God, the God of Israel, Who only does wondrous things! 19 And blessed be His glorious name forever! And let the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen and Amen.

Book Three, which is Psalms 73-89, is patterned after the major themes in Leviticus. So it is no surprise to find this book deals with sin, holiness, fellowship broken and fellowship restored and expressed in worship. But Robertson points out that this book focuses on lack of faith and devastation to the kingdom. The original context for many of these Psalms was the Babylonian destruction of the temple (which is also a Levitical theme) and the casting of Israel into the nations.



That devastation is displayed in the two graphics of Book Three that are found on page 3. Look especially at the second graphic at the bottom of page 3. Note the box at the bottom left of the graphic that is titled "A Failure of Faith." Faith and hope are almost missing; not completely missing, but almost. At the middle left of the graphic you can see two examples of the temple desecrated. Psalm 74 deals with the desecration of the temple under Rehoboam, Psalm 75 then shows judgment that follows, Psalm 76 then gives a word of repentance, and Psalm 77 is a cry for help. That is a logical

progression. Then that pattern is repeated in Psalms 79-82, but in reverse order. If that author is correct, then the heart of that pyramid is Psalm 78, which explains the reasons why this devastation had happened. And it clearly gives those reasons.

But Robertson shows another pyramid structure that is more technical and is based on literary and poetic parallels. So we have overlapping and interweaving structures that are very hard graph. Maybe I will do it sometime, but I certainly didn't have the time to do it this week. The pyramid that Robertson talks about is not on that chart, but it makes Psalm 80 to be the heart of the whole of Book Three. He says,

This special collection of seven psalms underscores the theme of the nation's devastation by reporting the destruction of the southern kingdom by Babylon in 586 B.C. (Ps. 79) and the destruction of the northern kingdom by Assyria in 722 B.C. (Ps. 80). At the same time, two messianic figures emerge as potential deliverers of these two national entities of God's people. A son of David and a son of Joseph will serve as Israel's deliverer (Ps. 78:65-66, 70-72; cf. Pss. 89:35-37; 80:1-2, 15, 17).¹⁷

So applying this book to Messiah's kingdom, I see this as relating especially to the last days leading up to AD 70. The years between AD 30 and AD 70 involved worldwide growth of the church throughout every nation of the world (as Colossians and several other books show). But it was also the time of the greatest apostasy of the church and the greatest persecutions of the church in world history. It was also the time when the temple was forever destroyed and the Jews exiled. These were very discouraging times; times of devastation. And I'm sure the church of that era could relate to some of the Psalms in this book. Book Three contains some of the most depressing Psalms in the Psalter. But people who have gone through enormous loss, or who see apostasy in the church in our own day, can appreciate Psalm 88, the Psalm of Heman the Ezrahite. They can appreciate Psalm 89, which has more faith, but still is depressing in the second half. Robertson calls this book the Book of Devastation. In the original context, it pointed to the time of exile period. But it was not as if it was without hope. There are still promises of a future renovation that would be possible.

What made that future renovation possible? Psalm 80, which is at the very center of this book, explains that it depends upon the Man of God's right hand - Jesus. Look at the repeated refrain in Psalm 80. Verse 3 says, "Restore us, O God; cause Your face to shine, and we shall be saved!" And he uses almost the same words to beg for restoration in verses 7, 14, and 19. How will God restore the church after the Great Apostasy of the first

¹⁷ Robertson, O. Palmer. *The Flow of the Psalms: Discovering Their Structure and Theology* (Kindle Locations 2815-2820). P&R Publishing. Kindle Edition.

century? Verse 17 tells us, “Let Your hand be upon the man of Your right hand, upon the son of man whom You made strong for Yourself.” Robertson has some fantastic material to show how Jesus fulfills this verse. I won’t get into that. But Psalm 80 is the key Psalm.

Where the key word for Book Two was deliverance or redemption (just as it was in Exodus), the key word for Book Three is the sanctuary, which fits in with the fellowship and worship that is lost and restored regularly in Leviticus. In the original context, the sanctuary had been destroyed and Israel longed for God’s courts.

But this book is appropriate for any period of devastation to an individual, family, or church. It refocuses on God. Even the most depressing Psalm (Psalm 88) which on first reading doesn’t seem to have any hope, has hope because in his anguish he at least cried out to God. The very act of crying out to God is a sign of faith. And the final doxology in Psalm 89:52 shows where the focus of our hearts should be if we are truly restored to fellowship and holiness: “Blessed be the LORD forevermore! Amen and Amen.” A God-centered focus is restored.

Book Four, which is Psalms 90-106, is patterned after the major themes in Numbers. I don’t have a graphic that was adequate for this book, so hopefully I can orally guide you through it. This book begins with the wandering of Psalm 90, moving to the conflict in the next Psalms, and the rejuvenation of the kingdom in the remainder of the book. Robertson calls this the Book of Maturation of the kingdom after exile. If you think of Book Three as exile, Book Four is the infant beginnings of the church after that exile, but with a confidence that Christ is King in the kingship Psalms of Psalms 75-76, 93, and 95-99. This book is full of those Kingship Psalms.

But if this book relates to Numbers, it is no surprise that this book starts with Psalm 90. Psalm 90 was written at the end of the forty years of wandering just as the kingdom era was about to begin, so Psalm 90 is feeling grief over the wasted years of desert wandering, but is anticipating the rejuvenation of God’s kingdom that is about to happen. Whether you think of the rejuvenation of the kingdom under Joshua in Canaan or the rejuvenation of the kingdom in Israel under Ezra after the exile was finished, they both point forward to the rejuvenation of the kingdom after AD 70, when a re-conquest of the world could once again begin.

But this is a book that shows us that Messiah’s kingship continues despite devastation and it grows despite lack of faith in the previous section. The kingship Psalms in this book give faith to God’s people in the midst of

difficulties. They guarantee that His kingdom will win as long as God remains close to us as our King rather than casting us off. And the book focuses the faith of God's people upon the Lord in the final doxology in Psalm 106:48.

Blessed be the LORD God of Israel From everlasting to everlasting! And let all the people say, "Amen!" Praise the LORD!

Book 5: Psalms 107–150

Author(s): David (108–110, 122, 124, 131, 133, 138–145), Solomon (127)
 Overview: At last, a son of David will rule righteously on his father's throne. From the ingathering of the exiles, to the arrival of the Son, to the exaltation of his throne, and final spiritual battle, Jesus Christ will lead his people to infinite praise.

Psalms of Praise: The Son of David is David's Lord

107	108–110	111–117	118–119	120–134	135–137	138–145	146–150
Ingathering Introduction	A New David Arrives	Egyptian Hallel 3 — 1 — 3	Crown & Covenant	Songs of Ascent 7 — 1 — 7	Worship & War	David's Final Victory	Infinite Praise

Ps 107

- The ingathering of the exiles (107:1-3) answers the plea of Ps 106:47.
- Four kinds of exiles are delivered when God hears their cry; this redemption leads to jubilant praise.

Ps 108–110

- Three David Psalms
- "Right hand" permeates - 108:6; 109:5, 31; 110:1, 5
- Psalms 108, 109 speak of David's enemies.
- Psalm 110 introduces the son of David who is David's Lord.

Ps 111–117

- 3 Hallel Psalms (111–13)
- 1 Psalm about Egypt (114)
- 3 Hallel Psalms (115–117)
- Ps 111–17 respond to Ps 110; their praise is not ultimate but remains outside Zion. (116:19).

Ps 118–119

- 3rd King-Torah Pair (1–2, 18–19, 118–119)
- 118 – The priest-king who defeats enemies in Ps 110 now brings New Covenant.
- 119 – The New Covenant creates a delight in the Law of the Lord unlike anything before.

What's 'in the air' of Book 5?*

- Headed** – "His steadfast love endures forever" (107:1; 118:1, 29; 26x in Ps 136)
- Ingathering** – Like the Prophets (Isa 11:10–12; 66:18–21; Jer 31:8–11; Ezek 20:34–41), Book 5 gathers God's people from the nations (107:3).
- A New David** – Receives the throne (110), enjoys a new temple (132), and defeats his enemies (108–10, 138–45).
- Hallelujah!** – "Praise" is prominent in Book 5 unlike other books, but there is also escalation. Psalms 111–17 praise YHWH incompletely from outside of Jerusalem (cf. 116:19); Psalms 146–50 praise YHWH endlessly (40x in 5 Psa) within Zion.

The Shaping in Book 5**

- Four Acrostic Psalms – Psalms 111, 112, 119, 145 are all acrostic.
- Psalm 108 is a combination of Psalms 57 and 60, only 108 omits all the struggles David faced with his enemies.
- Psalm 144 is a collection of previous Psalms.
 - vv. 1–2 = 18:34 v. 7 = 40:1–2
 - v. 3 = 8:4 v. 9 = 96:1
 - vv. 5–6 = 104:32 v. 12 = 128
- Psalm 145 – the last David Psalm is his only psalm of praise; the placement is intentional.

** cf. O. P. Robertson, *The Flow of the Psalms*, pp. 183–237.

Exile 121 – Help for the journey
 120 – Sojourning outside Israel

Temple 127 – The Lord has built his house (=temple).
 126 – The return to Zion is like a dream come true.
 125 – Security is found in Zion
 124 – Thanksgiving
 123 – Trust in God
 122 – Entering Jerusalem

The Songs of Ascent (Psa 120–134)

- Centers on the Lord's Temple – Solomon's Psalm is central.
- The name of the LORD (YHWH) is perfectly distributed — 24x (1st 7 songs); 24x (2nd 7 songs).
- On both sides of Solomon's psalm (127) are two psalms of David (122, 124 & 131, 133).
- Elements of the Aaronic Blessing (Numbers 6:24–26) are distributed throughout.
- Fifteen songs may correspond to fifteen steps in Temple (m. Suk. 5.4; t. Suk. 4.7–9).
- The ascension corresponds to the entrance of God's people into God's place

Exaltation 134 – Final Blessing
 133 – North & South Unite
 132 – God established David's house.
 131 – Israel is contented in the Lord.
 130 – Forgiveness is granted to God's people.
 129 – YHWH cut off the enemies of Zion.
 128 – Blessings come to the covenant keeper.

Pss 146–150

- Every psalm begins and ends with "Praise the Lord!"; "praise" is called for over 40x.
- All creation is reconciled to God; the Maker is now enthroned in Zion.
- The laments of Books 1–2 have been replaced by infinite praise.

Pss 138–145

- The final 8 Psalms of David. Ps 145 is David's only praise psalm.
- In them, the presence of enemies returns (e.g., 138:7; 139:19–22; 140:9–11; 141:8–10; 143:9; 145:20) and warfare must again take place.
- David's throne is finally established bringing infinite praise.

Pss 135–137

- Another abbreviated round of praise (135), thanksgiving (136)
- In response the establishment of David's house (132) and access to God's presence, Psa 135–36 worship YHWH.
- Worship is followed by warfare, as Ps 137 remembers the pain of exile.

Book five, which is Psalms 107-150, is patterned after the major themes in Deuteronomy. Just as Deuteronomy calls people to faithfulness to God's covenant, book five of the Psalms calls people to faithfulness to God's covenant law, covenant grace, and covenant King. Psalm 119 is the key chapter, which outlines the sufficiency and power of God's Word for the Messiah's New Covenant Kingdom. His law is perfect, gracious, wise, transformational, and sufficient for every facet of life and godliness. Though most list the last verse of Psalm 150 as the final doxology, "Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD!" most scholars see the last five Psalms as forming a thunderous conclusion of Hallelujah choruses.

But it is what leads up to those Hallelujah choruses that explains the Hallelujah's. Robertson doesn't get into this very well, but I think the chart in your outlines does. Robertson is an Amillennialist, so he labels this

section “Consummation.” But it is anything but Consummation. It is the progress of history to the total and complete fulfillment of the Great Commission - every nation a Christian nation singing praises to God.

Psalm 110 begins this progress, saying about Jesus, “He shall judge among the nations.” Psalm 111:6 says, “He has declared to His people the power of His works, in giving them the heritage of the nations.” We are going all-out here - all nations as our heritage. Psalm 113 says that God is sufficient for this task because “The LORD is high above all nations, His glory above the heavens.” Psalm 117:1 insists that we should aim for nothing less than this in our missions - “Praise the LORD, all you Gentiles! Laud Him, all you peoples! That should be our goal - 100% of the people of 100% of the nations praising God. Though Psalm 118 again affirms that”All nations surrounded me,” Christ goes on to say, “But in the name of the LORD I will destroy them.” But destruction of the nations with His iron rod is not the only thing Jesus does. He also saves the nations. Psalm 126:2 - “Then they said among the nations, the LORD has done great things for them.” So it is par excellence the Book of Christ’s victory in history, not just on the final day of consummation.

And I think if I explain the beginning Psalms of Book Five, the lights will go on for why I say this. Look at the last blue chart on page 4. If you look at the column of blue boxes on the left, you will see that Psalms 107-119 describe the foundations for Christ’s universal kingdom to be established so that all nations are disciplined. Psalm 107 deals with the ingathering of the Jews into the church. Psalms 108-109 describe once again the enemies that must be destroyed by Christ in the next Psalm - Psalm 110. Psalm 110 is quoted in the New Testament more than any other Psalm, and it is used to guarantee that all enemies will progressively be put under Christ’s feet - all without exception.

And the book of Esther ties in with Psalms 113-118, all of which were composed by Mordecai the prophet. After the magnificent reversal that we saw in my sermon on Esther, it says that many Gentiles became Jews, and Mordecai the prophet goes on to set up the feast of Purim, a feast that foreshadows the salvation of Israel, and after Israel’s salvation, even greater blessing to every nation of the world. Purim and Israel’s salvation is tightly connected to those Psalms. So these foundational Psalms are describing something yet future to us - a time after the conversion of Israel. Then Psalm 119 gives the laws of the kingdom that will characterize the final stages of Christ’s kingdom. So all of the Psalms in that left-hand column of blue boxes are the foundational Psalms for Book Five that explain the restoration

of Israel, the Messianic King and the character of His kingdom.

But look at the progressive stair-steps in the largest blue graphic in the Book Five chart. At the bottom it starts with the songs of ascent, to the Psalms of warfare, of worship, to exaltation, leading to the Greater David's victory, leading to infinite praise in Psalms 146-150. God's creation was made to bring such glory and praise to God. God's redemption was achieved to restore such glory and praise to God.

And the whole Psalter is a book of books that inspires God's people to promote the exaltation of God in the earth. If we are in a time of apostasy, the least we can do is to long for that exaltation. If we are in a time of relative good, the Psalms encourage us to keep pressing toward our upward call in Christ Jesus individually, as a family, as a church, and even to press this world to know God more until the world is full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the ocean beds. Christ's kingdom will not end until all nations fall down before God, serve Him, and give Him the kind of Hallelujah praises that the last five Psalms give.

And I will end this sermon simply by reading the final Psalm. And as I do so, imagine billions of people worldwide eventually obeying its call, and glad-heartedly giving their praise to their Redeemer-King.

Psa. 150:1 Praise the LORD! Praise God in His sanctuary; Praise Him in His mighty firmament! 2 Praise Him for His mighty acts; Praise Him according to His excellent greatness! 3 Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet; Praise Him with the lute and harp! 4 Praise Him with the timbrel and dance; Praise Him with stringed instruments and flutes! 5 Praise Him with loud cymbals; Praise Him with clashing cymbals! 6 Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD!

And all God's people said? Amen. Let's pray.