Introduction to the Psalms
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N.B.   The references to authors in this *Introduction to the Psalms* are to their works listed in this bibliography. When two or more works by the same author are quoted, the source is identified by the abbreviations indicated above. Books or articles cited only occasionally are not all listed in this bibliography, and, of course, not all those listed are directly cited.

The Place of the Psalter in the Old Testament

The Old Testament has traditionally been divided into three sections: the תּוֹרָה (the *Torah*, the Law); the נְבִיאִים (the *Nebhiim*, the Prophets); and the כְּתוּבִים (the *Kethubhim*, the Writings), the so-called Hagiographa. The Psalms belong to the last group.

The New Testament recognizes no distinction among the canonical books of the Old Testament with respect to their inspiration or authority. Cf. 2 Tm 3:16; Mt 4:4,6,15f; Mt 22:41-46; 24:15; Lk 24:44; Ac 2:25-31.

The Massoretes arranged the *Kethubhim* in the Hebrew Bible in four groups:

1. Poetry: Psalms, Proverbs, Job
2. The Five Megilloth (Rolls): Canticles, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther
3. Prophecy: Daniel
4. History: Ezra, Nehemiah, Chronicles

The Book of Daniel was probably grouped with the *Kethubhim* instead of with the *Nebhiim* because its author was a statesman rather than a prophet in the strict sense of the word. David, too, "the sweet Psalmist of Israel" (2 Sm 23:1), though called a prophet in the New Testament (Ac 2:30), was not a prophet by profession but a warrior and king. Hence, his writings, together with those of the other Psalmists, are classified with the *Kethubhim*.

On one occasion when Jesus cited a passage from the Psalms, He asked, "Is it not written in your law?" On 10:34). From this we see that the name "Law', was applied to the whole Old Testament. Again, all of the books of the Old Testament might be designated by the term "the Law and the Prophets" (Mt 5:17; 7:12).

The *Kethubhim* were eventually separated from the *Nebhiim*, probably in the interest of liturgical reading. The technical term "Writings" was not applied to them, however, until long after they were assembled as a separate corpus. No special name is given to them in the New Testament, but they are included in the expression "all the Scriptures" (Lk 24-27,44), a term which designates those writings given by inspiration of God.

Some suppose that when Jesus refers to the Psalms in Lk 24:44, He is using this term to designate the *Kethubhim* in their entirety. Those holding this view believe that because the Psalter was traditionally placed at the head of this group of writings, its name was popularly given to the whole third division. While this must be recognized as a possibility, the explanation given by Edward J. Young is more satisfactory. He writes:

> Christ singled out the book of Psalms, it would appear, not so much because it was the best known and most influential book of the third division, but rather because in the Psalms there were many predictions about himself. This was the Christological book, par excellence, of the third division of the Old Testament canon.
>
> Most of the books of this third division do not contain direct messianic prophecies. Hence, if Christ had used a technical designation to indicate this third division, he would probably have weakened his argument to a certain extent. But by the reference to the Psalms he directs the minds of his hearers immediately to that particular book in which occur the greater number of references to himself.
>
> This does not necessarily mean that he did not make reference to the messianic prophecies which appear, for example, in the book of Daniel. Nor does it mean that the third division of the canon was not yet complete. It would appear, rather, that by his language Christ set the seal of his approval upon the books of the Old Testament which were in use among the Jews of his day, and that this Old Testament consisted of three definite divisions, the Law, the Prophets, and a third division which as yet had probably not received any technical designation. (*The Infallible Word*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1946, pp 61-62).

Luke 11:50,51 shows that the O.T. canon of Jesus' day was the same as ours, beginning with Genesis and ending with 2 Chronicles: " ... that the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation: from the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple" (2 Chr 24:20,21).

Hebrew manuscripts of the German class arrange the *Kethubhim* in the following order: Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Canticles, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Chronicles. Spanish codices place Canticles before Psalms. The Talmud places Ruth before Psalms since Ruth was an ancestress of David. English versions follow the order of the Vulgate, which is based, with some variations, on the LXX: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, etc.

The Title of the Psalter

The usual name for the Book of Psalms is סֵפֶר תְּהִלִּים or simply תְּהִלִּים. This masculine plural is a rabbinical, Talmudic form. The regular plural of תְּהִלָּה is, of course, תְּהִלּוֹת. תְּהִלָּה means "a song of praise." It is formed by prefixing ת to the verb root הלל, which means "to praise in sacred song." The masculine form is not found in the Psalter.

The title of the book is not part of the original text. The only Psalm that has the individual title תְּהִלָּה is Ps 145. The Aramaic title of the Psalter is תְּהִלִּין.

Tehillim is a most appropriate title for the Psalter. Praise and thanksgiving are its keynote. It proclaims the glory of God throughout, even in the supplicatory and penitential Psalms. Contemplating that glory, the inspired writers lift up their voices in thankful hymns of praise.

In Ps 72:20 the name תְּפִלּוֹת is applied to the preceding group of Psalms. תְּפִלָּה meaning "prayer," appears as the title of individual Psalms in the following instances: Pss 17, 86, 90, 102, 142. Ultimately the term *tehillim* prevailed, however, as a title for the entire book.

The LXX introduced the term ψαλμοί as a title for the Psalter. It appears in the New Testament in Lk 24:44. βίβλος ψαλμῶν is also used (Lk 20:42; Ac 1:20). Ψαλμός means "the music of a stringed instrument," or more generally, "a song sung to the music of a stringed instrument." It is a translation of מִזְמוֹר, which is used as an individual title for 57 Psalms (e.g. Ps 3;4). מִזְמוֹר, meaning "a song," "poem," or "hymn," is a noun formed from the stem זמר, which means "to trim" or "to prune." In the Piel (זִמֵּר) it means either "to sing" (Ps 9:12) or "to play a musical instrument" (Ps 33:2). מִזְמוֹר, a more technical form for זָמִיר or זִמְרָה and indicates a poem with trimmed, measured lines and strophes used in public worship.

In the Alexandrine text of the LXX the title ψαλτήριον appears. Like ψαλμοί this word is derived from the verb ψάλλειν, "to sing (to the accompaniment of a harp)." The expression ἐν Δαυίδ in He 4:7 seems to be a title of the Psalter reflecting popular usage.

Additional Names of Individual Psalms

Both שִׁיר and שִׁירָה occur (e.g., Ps 96:1; 18:1). Both forms denote "a song," a lyric poem for singing on joyous occasions.

מִכְתָּם is a word of uncertain meaning that appears in the title of Pss 16;56-60. It may possibly be derived from כֶּתֶם, "gold." If so, it would seem to mean "a choice piece," "a gem," "a jewel." Luther translates it, *ein gulden Kleinod*. These Psalms are, indeed, artistic in form and choice in content. The LXX renders it with στηλογραφία, "an inscription on a tablet," and the Vulgate with *tituli inscriptio*. The NIV transliterates it: *miktam*.

מַשְׂכִּיל appears in the titles of 13 Psalms (viz., Pss 32, 42-45, 52-55, 74, 78, 88, 89, 142). Derived from the root שׂכל, which in the Hiphil means "to consider," "to contemplate," it signifies "a meditation,"

"instruction," "a didactic poem." The LXX translates it συνέσεως or εἰς σύνεσιν, the Vulgate with *intellectus* or *ad intellectum*; Luther with *Unterweisung*; NIV: *maskil*.

שִׁגָּיוֹן, a word of uncertain meaning, occurs only once in the Psalter (Ps 7:1), but appears also in Hab 3:1. Suggested meanings are "an ecstatic song," "a dirge," "a dithyramb" (a poem written in a wild, irregular strain, or speech delivered in an impassioned manner). The root may be שָׁגָה, which means "to err." Some scholars connect it with the Syriac root, *saggî*, "to sing," others with the Assyrian *sãgû* "to lament." The LXX renders it with ψαλμός; the Vulgate with *erratio*; Luther with *Unschuld;* NIV: *shiggaion*.

שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת or שִׁיר לַמַּעֲלוֹת appears as the title of Psalms 120-134. The LXX translates this with ᾠδὴ τῶν ἀναβαθμῶν, the Vulgate with *canticum graduum,* Luther with *ein Lied im hoehern Chor,* the KJV with "a song of degrees," the NIV with "a song of ascents." The original meaning is unclear. Various explanations have been offered, generally along the following lines:

1) According to an old Jewish tradition (Mishnah: Middoth 2:5) this refers to the semicircular flight of 15 steps in the temple leading from the court of the women to the court of the men from which, supposedly, these Psalms were chanted. The superscriptions ascribe four of them to David, however, which means that they antedate the Solomonic temple.
Cuthbert C. Keet in *A Study of the Psalms of Ascents* (Greenwood, S.C.: Attic Press, 1969), p. 2, translates the Mishnic passage: "Fifteen steps led up from within it" (i.e., the Court of the Women) "to the Court of the Israelites, corresponding to the fifteen Songs of Ascents in the Psalms, and upon them the Levites used to sing." He remarks: "It is obvious that this passage provides no explanation of the Hebrew superscription."
2) The expression may indicate the metrical construction of these Psalms. It is alleged that they evince a stair-like parallelism, the thought advancing by interlocking or progressive steps (Gesenius, Delitzsch, Zorn). Ps 121 is cited as an example. Others in this group do not show this characteristic at all, however (e.g., Ps 125; 133).
3) The ascent referred to is that of pilgrims going up to Jerusalem for worship (cf Ps 122:1-3). "Going up to Jerusalem" became a common expression for such pilgrimages (cf Lk 2:42). This explanation seems the most plausible. The suggestion that these Psalms were composed on the return from the exile in Babylon is excluded by the Davidic authorship of some of them.

The Authenticity of the Superscriptions

Superscriptions or titles are attached to 116 Psalms. Those without them are called "orphan Psalms" The superscriptions give various kinds of information such as the author, the historical background, the content, the type, or the liturgical use of the Psalm. Some are musical directions. The meaning of some of the words in the superscriptions is obscure.

The authenticity of the superscriptions must be recognized. The Massoretes regarded them as part of the original text. The fact that the LXX has them shows that they antedate the third century B.C. The LXX and Syriac versions of the superscriptions differ occasionally, however, from the MT, reflecting later, deviant traditions or opinions.

It is often asserted that the superscriptions were added by later editors long after the original composition of' the Psalms. Briggs claims, "The titles certainly came from the hands of editors" (I, p. LVIII). His is an arbitrary dictum without any foundation either in or outside the text.

Similar views are expressed by Leupold: "The fact that they do not belong to the text every student of Hebrew has long known" (p 6). Perowne insists: "The inscriptions of the Psalms are like the subscriptions to the Epistles of the New Testament. They are not of any necessary authority, and their value must be weighed and tested by the usual critical processes" (1, 103). Dahood is somewhat more cautious. "The historical significance

of these superscriptions is still a matter of dispute" (1, 16). Christoph Barth ridicules their authenticity: "The headings to the psalms, then, which prove David as the author—with exact biographical details!-- cannot have been written before the third century B.C." (p 63).

Many reputable scholars, on the other hand, recognize them as genuine and trustworthy. Robert Dick Wilson points to the analogy of the Sumerian and Babylonian psalms:

> Since many of these originated before the time of Abraham, they are of especial interest in their bearing on the subject of the heading of the psalms, because they show that long before the time of David it was natural and common to have such headings. To be sure, the Sumerian psalms have in subscription what the Hebrew psalms and Horace's odes have in superscription; but, we find that the purpose was the same in both. For the Sumerian hymns sometimes mention the name of the author, the musical instrument employed as accompaniment, the tune to which it was to be sung, or the collection to which it belonged, the kind of musical composition, the god in whose worship the psalm was sung, and the purpose of the psalm ("The Headings of the Psalms" in *The Princeton Theological Review*, XXIV,1, Jan. 1926, p 33).

Examples of Egyptian and other Near Eastern religious poetry to which superscriptions or subscriptions are attached will be found in Pritchard, ANET, pp 365ff. The ancient custom of beginning a letter with the name of the writer and other pertinent information is familiar to Bible students from the Epistles of the New Testament.

Wilson also points out, "That headings were customary in Hebrew poetry outside the psalter is evident all through the Old Testament" (*ibid.*). He cites the following examples: Ex 15:1,20; Dt 31:30; 33:1; Jdg 5:1; 1 Sm 2:1; 2 Sm 1:17; 22:1; Jon 2:2; Hab 3:1; Pr 1:1; 10:1; 25:1; 30:1; 31:1; Sol 1:1. He draws attention to the fact that such information as the occasion and authorship are plainly given for the poems or psalms in Gn 49; Is 5; 12: 38, and elsewhere.

In his book *A Scientific Investigation of the Old Testament* Wilson offers these additional arguments for the authenticity of the Psalmic superscriptions:

> It is hardly to be supposed that the writer of these headings would have made his work absurd by making statements that his contemporaries would have known to be untrue. Whether the headings are all trustworthy, or not, it is absurd to suppose that the writers of them would have attributed so many of the Psalms to pre-captivity authors, when their contemporaries must have known that the whole body of Psalms had arisen after the fall of the first temple, had such actually been the case (p 197).
> As to the text of the headings of the Psalms, the evidence of the manuscripts and versions goes to show that they are not merely substantially the same as they were in the third century B.C., but that most of them must even then have been hoary with age. Even when the Septuagint version was made, the meanings of many of the terms used in the headings were already unknown, and the significance of many words and phrases had passed out of mind (p 198).

Edward J. Young of Westminster Theological Seminary writes:

> The titles aid in the understanding of the Psalm, and there is no objective reason for denying their value as a witness. If the Psalms had been composed at a much later date, it is difficult to see why such titles would have been added . . . If the titles were merely made up of whole cloth by "pious" and "devout" editors of a post-exilic age, why did not these editors compose titles for all the Psalms? The fact that there are orphan Psalms (i.e., without titles) is in itself an evidence of the value and antiquity of the titles. (IOT, pp 300-301).

In his book *Psalm 139* Young comments on this matter:

> The headings of the Psalms are very old and there is not sufficient reason for refusing to accept their trustworthiness. At the same time, the meanings of the headings are often obscure, and this in itself argues for their antiquity (p 7).

Wilhelm Moeller in his *Einleitung in das Alte Testament* discusses the question at length. He makes the following points:

> The trustworthiness of the superscriptions is supported first of all by the fact that a systematic pattern is not followed: all 150 Psalms are not simply ascribed to David. Furthermore, the fact that David was a poet and singer of Psalms and that he deserves a great deal of credit for arranging the music of the worship services is attested by the *historical records* (1 Sm 16:18,23; 18:10; 19:9; 2 Sm 6:5,21; 1 Chr 13:8; 15:16-24; 16:4-36,41f; 23:5; 25; 2 Chr 23:18; 29:25,30; Ezr 3:10; Neh 12:24) as well as by the pieces of Davidic poetry reproduced in 2 Sm (1:17-27; 22; 23:1-7). Amos 5:23 indicates that singing in the temple was continued, and Amos 6:5 is an important testimony concerning David's talents and activity in this area. In Mt 22:41-46 Jesus bases His argument on the Davidic authorship of Ps 110.
> There is the additional evidence of the *contents* of the Psalms. It was mentioned above that the enemies in the Psalms are not to be understood as merely figurative, but as an actual source of trouble for the poet. That was true of David (cf 1 Sm 18-27; 2 Sm 15-18; 20; 22). Furthermore, in David's opponents political and religious motives run together just as they do in the enemies in the Psalms (cf, e.g., 2 Sm 16:7f,18). If one assumes, as is almost universally the case today, that these Psalms were not composed by David but by a large circle of religious persons at the most diverse times, it is inconceivable how those many individuals came to suffer so at the hands of so many enemies (pp 181-182, translated).

Chalmers Martin defends the trustworthiness of the superscriptions in his article "The Inscriptions of the Psalms" in *The Presbyterian and Reformed Review* (XI, 1900, pp 638-653).

Cyrus Gordon of Brandeis University, writing in *Christianity Today* (Vol. 14:13, March 27, 1970, p 7) scores the *New English Bible* for omitting the superscriptions:

> The NEB has omitted the original Hebrew "headings—prefixed to many of the Psalms" because "all are of doubtful value" (p XIV). This attitude reflects a negative facet of higher criticism that has less and less to recommend it as our sources from the Bible world increase in number and importance. As illustrated above, Psalm 68 (ascribed to David in the Hebrew heading) is replete with pre-Davidic material. It is not up to the translator to omit parts of the original text because he leans toward a school that deprecates them as spurious. The whole tenor of the discoveries is to vindicate the original sources against the theories that would downgrade them.

Ludwig Fuerbringer in his *Introduction to the Old Testament* reminds us, as Wilson did, that Scripture itself provides evidence for the authenticity of the superscriptions:

> These titles were probably placed there by the holy authors themselves, as was the Jewish custom, 2 Sam. 1,17.18; chap. 23:1, Is. 38,9; Hab. 3,1 (also compare Ps. 18,1 with 2 Sam. 22, 1); and without sufficient grounds, therefore, they are by modern critics declared to be untrustworthy (p. 58).

Lillegard reviews the question of the authenticity of the titles and concludes: "Together with the majority of Christian scholars, therefore, we hold firmly that the superscriptions of the Psalms are genuine" (p 4).

As a final testimony we cite the remarks of Gleason L. Archer, Jr., who in his book *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction* (p 428) supports the reliability of the Hebrew Psalm titles with the following arguments, among others:

> It is impossible to explain how any "later rabbis" would have ventured to attach titles of this sort to psalms whose text does not clearly reflect the situations in David's life which are assigned as settings for the compositions. Many of the titles contain allusions to incidents in David's career of which we have no other knowledge. For example, in Psalm 60 biographical details appear concerning battles fought with Aram-naharaim, Aramzobah and Edom which are not recorded at all in the books of Samuel. As Wilhelm Moeller points out (GATE 273), the supplemental details constitute a powerful argument for the antiquity of the psalm title itself. A later editor would never have ventured to manufacture new details not contained in the books of Samuel or Chronicles. It is also significant that several of the "orphan" psalms (that is, psalms that bear no title) teem with historical allusions and references to recent events or contemporary situations which would have furnished ample ground for later rabbinical conjecture.

The Old Testament as such, accordingly, verifies the authenticity of the superscriptions. In 2 Sm 22:1ff we have a Psalm quoted (Ps 18)—together with its heading!—in the narrative of a historical book. In addition, outside the Book of Psalms such headings are repeatedly attached to prayers and hymns.

The conclusive argument for the reliability and authenticity of the superscriptions is the testimony of our Savior Himself. If David did not write Ps 110, as the superscription states and as Jesus testifies in Mt 22:43, then Jesus is a liar and neither the Son of God nor our Savior.

There is, therefore, no reason for not considering the superscriptions of the Psalms as part of the inspired text. The furious attacks of higher critics on the superscriptions stem not from solid textual, historical, or archaeological evidence, but from sheer blind, historical-critical prejudice!

Authorship

The superscriptions indicate the authorship for 100 of the Psalms as follows:

1	by Moses: Ps 90.
73	by David: Pss 3-9; 11-32; 34-41.; 51-6 - 5; 68-70; 86; 101; 103; 108-110; 122; 124; 131; 133; 138-145.
2	by Solomon: Pss 72; 127.
12	by Asaph: Pss 50; 73-83.
11	by the Sons of Korah: Pss 42; 44-49; 84; 85; 87; 88.
1	by Heman the Ezrahite: Ps 88. (Note that this Psalm is also designated as one of those by the Sons of Korah!)
1	by Ethan, or Jeduthun: Ps 89.

The poetic and musical talents of Moses are attested in Ex 15:1-19; Dt 31: 30-32:43; 33:1-29.

David's renown as a poet is indicated in 2 Sm 23:1, where he is called "the sweet psalmist of Israel." Further evidence of his musical ability and his interest and concern in beautifying the services in the house of the Lord with instrumental and vocal music is apparent from 1 Sm 16:17f; 18:10; 2 Sm 1:17-27; 3:33f; 6:5; 22; 23:1-7; 1 Chr 16:4,7,37,41; 23:5; 2 Chr 23:18; 29:25-30; Ne 12:36; Am 6:5.

Solomon according to 1 Kgs 4:32 wrote 3000 proverbs and 1005 songs. There is some question about his authorship of Pss 72 and 127. The problem is whether *le* in the captions should be translated "by" or "for." The style of these Psalms and especially the use of *le* in other superscriptions support the translation "by." We consider them to be Solomonic.

Asaph was a contemporary of David. He founded the guild of Asaphite singers, who are listed among the exiles returning from Babylon (Ne 7:44) and who played cymbals when the foundation of the second temple was laid (EZr 3:10). Asaph was a descendant of Levi's son Gershom (1 Chr 6:39-43).

The Sons of Korah are probably descendants of the Korah mentioned in Nu 16: 1ff, who rebelled against Moses. According to Nu 26:11 Korah's children did not die with him. Levi had three sons, Gershom, Kohath, and Merari (Ex 6:16), each of whom   was a forefather of men who wrote Psalms. Korah was a descendant of Levi, the line of descent being: Levi - Kohath - Izhar - Korah. In 1 Chr 9:19 and 26: 19 the Korahites are mentioned As being porters or gatekeepers of the tabernacle. In 2 Chr 20:19 they appear as singers before Jehoshaphat, the fourth king of Judah (870-848 B.C.).

Zorn believes that the Psalms by the Sons of Korah were written by David for presentation by the Sons of Korah (p 187). This is refuted by Hengstenberg, however, who makes the point in his discussion of Ps 42 that Heman is named as the writer of Ps 88, a Korahite Psalm. While it is possible that in the case of the Korahite Psalms *le* is to be translated "for," since it is hard to imagine that a group of men collaborated in composing a Psalm, it may be that among the sons of Korah one man wrote some Psalms, another others, and still another others, etc. The names of the individual authors were not usually preserved, however, or they wished to remain anonymous.

Moeller (Einleitung, p 184) suggests that the Sons of Korah may have been contemporaries of Heman, especially his children and grandchildren (1 Chr 25), although, as mentioned above, 2 Chr 20:19 also refers to temple singers in the days of Jehoshaphat as "children of the Korahites." Others are perhaps those mentioned in 1 Chr 15:18.

Kretzmann believes that the Korahite Psalms were written by the Sons of Korah (O.T. II, 101f). Luther, too holds to the authorship of these Psalms by the Sons of Korah. He writes regarding Ps 45 (Am Ed., 12:201):

> These are the authors of the lyric .... The psalms they composed are very joyous and most delightful and are plainly wedding lyrics. Therefore I believe the descendants of Korah were especially chosen for God's worship that there might also be poets of sacred things among God's people, to sing together and compose hymns for the honor and glory of God .... More than the others, however, the sons of Korah sang especially of Christ; but they sang in a different way from David - under the allegory of marriage.

Starke writes (p 6, translated):

> Eleven Psalms are ascribed to the Sons of Korah, namely Pss 42; 44-49; 84; 85; 87; 88. Some take these to be merely singers of these Psalms because it is difficult to understand how more than one person could have composed a Psalm. Others, however, take them to be the composers themselves, or at least that one of the descendants of the sons of Korah composed such a Psalm. This question can not be definitely settled, but that is not necessary. It is enough to know that these Psalms too are of divine origin.

Psalm 88 has a double caption. Heman, its author, according to 1 Chr 6:33 was one of the Sons of Korah. Hence the author of this Psalm is identified both by name and as a member of this group of singers. He was a grandson of Samuel and a descendant of Levi's son Kohath.

Ethan was a descendant of Merari (1 Chr 6:44). He is probably the same man as Jeduthun (compare 1 Chr 15:16,17 with 16:41f; 25:3, and the superscriptions of Pss 39; 62; 77, where he is identified as "the chief Musician.")

Some believe the Heman and Ethan were two of the five brothers famous for their wisdom who belonged to the tribe of Judah and who are mentioned in 1 Kgs 4:31 and 1 Chr 2:6 (Kretzmann, Zorn, Berkeley Bible, *ad loc.*). This is a possibility although it seems preferable to regard them as David's musicians because of their close connection with Asaph, another Psalm writer (1 Chr 15:16-19). Starke sums up the problem as follows (p 1015, translated):

Holy Scripture mentions two pious and renowned men by the name of Heman, who are of necessity two different persons since they have two different genealogies. One is a descendant of Zerah, the son of Judah (1 Chr 2:4,6). The other is a Levite from the family of the Kohathites, and a grandson of Samuel. He was one of the three conductors whom David appointed for the service music (1 Chr 6:18f; 15:17; 25:1). The commentators are not agreed on which one is referred to here. Some attribute it to the first, and ascribe the following Psalm, Ps 89, to his brother Ethan. Their reason is that Ps 90 is ascribed to Moses, and therefore these two, being older, were placed ahead of Ps 90. We agree with the view that Heman was the musical director in David's time.

Oswald T. Allis believes that Heman and Ethan, the Levite singers, are identical with the Judean sons of Zerah by those names. He holds that "the name Ezrahite was given to these Levites because, while of Levitical descent, they had been adopted into the Judean clan of Zerah among which they lived, since the Levites had no tribal allotments" (*The Old Testament: Its Claim and Critics*, Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1972, p 307). This suggestion is certainly a possible solution of the difficulty.

Asaph, Heman, and Ethan were associated with David in arranging the services in the tabernacle. They were appointed to lead the singing when David brought the ark to Zion (1 Chr 15:16-19) and to lead the orchestra (1 Chr 25:1-6). The orchestra numbered 4000 players (1 Chr 23:5). These were probably divided into smaller ensembles which took turns in playing for public worship. The singers were arranged into 24 courses, with 12 in each course (1 Chr 25:7-31). Three bands or guilds of singers traced their descent from Asaph, Heman, and Ethan (1 Chr 25; Ne 12:27-29,45f).

Authorship is indicated in the superscriptions by the so-called *le auctoris*. While *le* may be translated "for" as well as "by" the point made by Hans-Joachim Kraus (I, p XX) is well taken when he notes that in Ps 3:1; 7:1; 18:1; 34:1; 51:1; 52:1f; 54:1f; 56:1; 57:1; 59:1; 60:1f; 63:1; 142:1 the connection between the circumstances described and the expression *ledawid* is so close that it is impossible to understand *le* as anything other than a *le auctoris*. Gesenius-Kautzsch, 129c, states that "the introduction of the author, poet, etc., by this *Lamed auctoris* is the customary idiom also in the other Semitic dialects, especially in Arabic." Matthew 22:43 indicates also that לְדָוִד in the superscription of Ps 110 indicates authorship.

T.K. Cheyne in his book *The Origin of the Psalter* (1889) explained the phrase *ledawid* as meaning "belonging to the collection of Davidic Psalms," "belonging to the hymnbook of David." In other words, the whole hymnbook is called David's but the actual individual authors are unknown. It would be passing strange, however, for the collection to be called David's if he himself wrote only a few, or perhaps even none, of the Psalms in it. There is, furthermore, no parallel for the translation "belonging to the hymnbook of."

Others translate *ledawid* "dedicated to David," or "with respect to David." McCullough, who holds "that the authors are unknown," is an example (cf. *The Interpreter's Bible, Psalms*, pp8, 10). As indicated above, however, the captions frequently give very specific information regarding the situation in the author's life which prompted him to write a particular Psalm (Pss 3; 7; 18; etc.). Furthermore, 2 Sm 22 not only reproduces Ps 18 but names David as the author and describes the historical circumstances that led to the composition of the hymn. Similarly 1 Chr 16:7-22 reproduces Ps 105:1-15; 1 Chr 16:23-33 reproduces Ps 96; and 1 Chr 16:

34-36 reproduces Ps 106:1,47,48. The Chronicler names David as the author of these three Psalms, which in the superscriptions are anonymous.

There are 50 anonymous Psalms. Some of these are, clearly Davidic however, as just indicated. Compare also Ps 2:1,2 with Ac 4:25,26 and Ps 95 with He 4:7. It is an unwarranted assumption to conclude, however, that all anonymous Psalms were written by David. Anonymous Psalms are not to be confused with "orphan Psalms," the name given by the Talmudists to those that have no superscription.

Higher critics raise numerous objections against the authorship of David and the other writers named in the captions. They disagree among themselves, however, on which Psalms, if any, were written by David. Franz Delitzsch accepts 44 Psalms as Davidic; F.W. Schultz, 17; Hitzig, 14: Koenig, 12; Ewald,. 11; Riehm, 10; Baethgen, one (and that one was supposedly reworked by an editor); Cornill, "at the most the fragment Ps 24:7-10"; Wellhausen, Cheyne, Duhm, and Gunkel: NONE! Weiser says, "None of the names appearing in the titles are those of the real authors; the Psalms were originally anonymous" (p 281).

The objections of the critics are based on the claim that the language and content of the Psalms prove that they could not have been written by David and the other authors named. Thus it is alleged that words that occur infrequently in the Old Testament but do recur in later Hebrew literature (the Talmud and Midrash) are evidence of the late composition of the OT passage in which such words of supposedly late origin appear. So-called Aramaisms are cited as proof of a late date.Psalms which address the king directly or speak of him in the third person allegedly cannot be by David (e.g., Pss 20; 21; 61; 63; 110). Some Psalms supposedly imply that the temple had already been built (e.g., Ps 5:7; 27:4, where the word הֵיכָל temple, appears).

The critics' arguments that "late" words and Aramaisms are an indication of a late date have been effectively demolished by the careful studies of Robert Dick Wilson (*A Scientific Investigation of the Old Testament*, pp 125ff) and by the evidence of the 15th century Ugaritic literature from Ras Shamra. Archer devotes a whole chapter to the subject "Late Words and Aramaisms as Criteria for Source Division" (pp 125ff). He makes the following points, among others:

There are a good three thousand words in the Old Testament which occur less than six times; fifteen hundred of them occur but once *(hapax legomena).* But this by no means indicates that they were uncommon in all other levels of Hebrew communication apart from the Bible itself. Mere fortuity may account for their infrequency in the Scriptures....Every new discovery of ancient Canaanite and Aramaic inscriptions brings to light words which had hitherto been known only from [extra-Biblical] documents centuries later in origin ....
The architects of the Documentary Hypothesis assumed that the presence of an Aramaic word in a Biblical text was an indication of post-Exilic origin ....That this intermingling of Canaanite and Aramaic was of very early origin is indicated by the Ugaritic literature of fifteenth century Ras Shamra .... The Genesis record makes it clear that Aramaic influences were at work in Hebrew from its earliest stages ....
In the period between the Conquest and the reign of Saul (1400-1000 B.C.) the contacts with Aramaic-speaking-peoples were doubtless minimal, but with the extension of Hebrew power under David and Solomon to the borders of Hamath and the west bank of the Euphrates, there must have been a rich exchange of cultural influences and linguistic contacts with Aramaic Damascus, Hadrach, Zobah, and Hamath ....
A great number of Hebrew words which they have classified as Aramaisms turn out, on closer examination, to have a very good claim to the status of authentic Hebrew words, or else to be derivable from Phoenician, Babylonian or Arabic dialects, rather than from Aramaic.

With reference to David's use of the third person when speaking of his official capacity, Young answers the critics' argument by observing the this "is far more effective and self-effacing than would be the 1st person pronoun" (IOT, p 303). Neither does the use of the second person necessarily exclude Davidic authorship.

Regarding David's use of the words הֵיכָל, קֹדֶשׁ, בֵּת יהוה, and אֱלֹהִים, which, supposedly, are references to the Solomonic temple, Moeller notes (p 182) that the Mosaic tabernacle is called "the holy place" (קֹדֶשׁ) in, for example, Ex 28:43; 29:30, and "the house of the Lord" in Jos 6:24. The tabernacle at Shiloh is called "the house of God" (Jdg 18:31), "the house of the Lord" (1 Sm 1:7), and "the temple" (הֵיכָל) in 1 Sm 1:9; 3-3. When David employed these expressions in the Psalms, therefore, he was undoubtedly referring to the tabernacle. (Note also that the tent, אֹהֶל, which David set up for the ark in Jerusalem, 2 Sm 6:17, is called בֵּת יהוה in 2 Sm 12:20.) Furthermore, the place of worship which in Ps 27:4 is called בֵּת יהוה and is designated in the following verse as a booth (סֻכָּה) and tent (אֹהֶל), terms that were never applied to Solomon's temple.

Wilson shows the unreasonableness of the critics' position when he writes (*A Scientific Investigation*, p 195f):

> We know that the ancient Egyptians had numerous hymns to Amon and other gods and that the Assyrians and Babylonians, and even the Sumerians before them, delighted in singing psalms of praise and penitence as a part of their ritual of worship. These hymns in all cases were accompanied by instrumental music. Some of the Sumerian, Babylonian, and Egyptian hymns were current in writing for hundreds, or even thousands, of years before the time of Solomon; and some musical instruments had existed for the same length of time. Are we to suppose that the Hebrews alone among the nations of antiquity had no vocal and instrumental music in their temple services? The critics maintain that poetry is the earliest form of expression of a people's thoughts and history. Many of them assert that the song of Deborah antedates all other literary productions in the Bible. Most of them will admit that David composed the lament over Saul and Jonathan.
> But they draw the line at his Psalms of praise and penitence. Why? Because it suits their theory that the Psalms were prepared for use in the second temple.

For us the question of Davidic authorship of many of the Psalms is settled definitely by the clear, unambiguous testimony of Jesus, our Savior, and of His apostles. Cf. Mt 22:43-45; Ac 1:16-20; 2:25-35; 4:25-26; Ro 4:6-8; 11:9f; He 4:7. David's fame as a Psalmist surely did not rest on his authorship of only a few Psalms. He must have written a great many. The LXX names David as the author of two Psalms (67; 71) which are not ascribed to him by the Massoretic text. Undoubtedly this information belonged to Jewish tradition, but it is not part of the inspired text. Jerome believed that all Psalms for which no author is mentioned were written by the author of the preceding Psalm for which an author is named. Origen attributed Psalms 91-100 to Moses, an untenable hypothesis in the light of 1 Chr 16:23-33, where Ps 96 is identified as being by David.

The Dating of the Psalms

Some key dates in the history of Israel are:

2167 B.C.	Birth of Abraham
2092	Call of Abraham
1877	Jacob goes to Egypt
1447	The Exodus
1011-971	David's reign
971-931	Solomon's reign
722	Fall of Samaria (Northern Kingdom)
701	Sennacherib besieges Jerusalem
612	Fall of Nineveh (Assyria)

606	Beginning of the Babylonian Captivity
586	Fall of Jerusalem (Nebuchadnezzar)
539	Fall of Babylon (Cyrus)
536	Return of the first exiles
400	Completion of O.T. (Malachi)

The question of when the Psalms were written is closely linked with that of the authenticity of the superscriptions. Since the trustworthiness of the superscriptions has been established, there can be no question that Ps 90 was written by Moses sometime after 1447 B.C., the date of the Exodus, and before the entry into Canaan 40 years later. The majority of the Psalms stem from the time of David, whose reign is dated 1011-971 B.C., and Solomon, who occupied the throne from 971-931 B.C. Only Ps 137 can definitely be assigned to the time of the Exile. In addition Ps 126 may possibly, though not necessarily, be post-exilic, originating in that case about 500 B.C.

Psalms 74, 79, and 83 are considered to be exilic by the majority of commentators because they describe the desolation of God's sanctuary. If they are actually exilic, the name of Asaph in the superscriptions will have to be understood in the sense of one of the descendants of Asaph. If, however, Asaph, David's contemporary, wrote them, as we believe he did, two explanations of the contents are possible. The first is that the descriptions may be prophetic instead of historical. Is 13-23; 29; Jr 17-20; Am 5 and many other prophecies would constitute parallels. The second is that the devastation and desolation of God's sanctuaries took place during the days of Saul and the early years of David. Moeller (p 183f) points out that Ps 83:12 contains a thought similar to that of Pss 74 and 79, but the Chaldeans are not mentioned among the enemies named in Ps 83:6ff. Most of those named do appear, however, in David's time (cf. e.g., 2 Sm 8; 1 Chr 18). The reference to Amalek and Assyria in Ps 83 makes a Maccabean dating for this Psalm impossible. Ps 79 is also clearly pre-Maccabean. 1 Macc 7:17 quotes Ps 79:2,3 11 ... just as he said who wrote, The flesh and blood of your saints they scattered around Jerusalem, and they have no one to bury them." 1 Maccabees would hardly quote this passage as a prophecy then being fulfilled if Ps 79 had been written in the Maccabean period. Ps 74 obviously originated in the same time frame as Ps 79 and 83. The term מוֹעֲדֵי־אֵל (meeting places of God) in Ps 74:8 has reference then, not to the synagogues of the Maccabean period, but to places where God revealed Himself and which then became places of worship. The plural points to ancient times and is appropriate only to the time between the rejection of Shiloh (1 Sm 4) and the dedication of Solomon's temple. In the interval there were a number of sites where the Lord revealed Himself and where He was worshiped, such as Rama (I Sm 9:12ff), Bethel (1 Sm 10:3), Gilgal (1 Sm 10:8 etc.), the tabernacle at Jerusalem (2 Sm 6:17), the old tabernacle at Gibeon (1 Chr 16:39ff; 21:29; 2 Chr 1:3ff), and the threshingfloor of Ornan (1 Chr 21:28). The absence of prophetic revelations (Ps 74:9) could be analogous to 1 Sm 3:1; 14:37; 28:6,15.

The time between the Exile and the birth of Christ is generally divided into four periods:

1. The Persian period, 550-330 B.C.
2. The Greek period, 330-167 B.C.
3. The Maccabean period, 167-63 B.C.
4. The Roman period, 63-

Wellhausen and his followers, men like Cornill, Olshausen, Duhm, Cheyne, and others, placed many Psalms into the Maccabean period. Robert Pfeiffer of Harvard in his *Introduction to the Old Testament* (New York: Harper, 1948) claims, "Most of the poems in our Psalter originated in the period 400-200 (practically all in the period 500-100)" (p 632).

Many non-canonical Psalms, such as the *Psalms of Solomon*, were indeed written in the Maccabean period. But there are no canonical Maccabean Psalms since the Psalter was completed about 400 B.C., long before the time of the Maccabees. Neither is the language or content indicative of a Maccabean origin. Those

who hold to a post-exilic dating for the majority of the Psalms are misled by their false assumption that Israel's religion underwent an evolutionary development. Their hypothesis that the Law was written later than the prophets, and the Psalms later than both of them is without any basis in Scripture or history. It is nothing less than a figment of their fertile imagination.

Wellhausen and his school maintained that the question is not whether there are any post-exilic Psalms, but whether there are any pre-exilic Psalms. This position has been rejected by most contemporary critics, however. It is now admitted that a Maccabean dating is untenable. Oesterley, for example, says, "It is difficult to believe that any of the psalms are Maccabean" (*A Fresh Approach to the Psalms*, p 54).

Dahood candidly states (Vol. I, p XXX):

The tendency in recent years to assign earlier rather than later dates to the composition of the psalms comports with the evidence of the Ras Shamra texts .... These considerations thus point to a pre-Exilic date for most of the psalms, and not a few of them (e.g., Pss 11, XVI, XVIII, LX, LXVIII, LXXXII, CVII, CX) may well have been composed in the Davidic period.

Artur Weiser, similarly, admits "that the majority of the psalms came into existence in the pre-exilic period of Israel's history" (p 91). He calls the hypothesis of Maccabean Psalms in the Psalter "altogether improbable" and suggests that "many a theory alleging the dependence of certain psalms on Deutero-Isaiah or on priestly writings needs to be corrected." He adds, "Still more doubtful are the attempts to adduce indirect evidence for the post-exilic origin of a psalm from the universal picture provided by the course taken by the history of ideas and the history of religion" (p 92).

Aage Bentzen in his *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Copenhagen: Gads, 1949) writes:

The result of the investigations carried on since the beginning of the twentieth century must however be that we have to leave behind us the a priori presupposition that the Psalms were post-Exilic. Psalmody was known in Israel from its earliest days (11, 167).

Robert Dick Wilson makes the pertinent observation (*A Scientific Investigation*, p 200):

A striking and almost convincing testimony for the early date of most of the psalms lies in the fact that, except in a very few cases, we find no definite allusions in them to events or persons later than the time of Solomon.

That religious poetry, similar in its external features to the Psalms, is an ancient form of literature the existence of Babylonian and Egyptian "Psalms" patently demonstrates. Why should not Moses, then, who was "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds" (Ac 7:22), have cast his inspired words in this familiar literary form? (For examples of Babylonian, Egyptian, and other Near Eastern "parallels" to the Psalms see George A. Barton, *Archaeology and the Bible* [Philadelphia: American Sunday School Union, 1937] pp 497-505; Oesterley, *A Fresh Approach to the Psalms*, pp 1-35 - beware, however, of his theory of borrowing on the part of the Hebrews from their pagan neighbors and of a mythological element in the Psalms; Pritchard, ANET.).

The vast difference that exists between the Psalms of Holy Writ and pagan poetry is readily apparent. Occasional similarities, especially in descriptions of nature, are not surprising. Stories of creation, of the overthrow of an evil spirit, of a catastrophic flood, and the like in pagan mythology point to a dim recollection about the origin of the world and of sin as well as the Noachian deluge and the transmission of this in a perverted form. That word patterns and even thought patterns should be the common heritage of people living side by side in the Near East and carrying on a lively exchange, sometimes in peaceful commerce and then again in protracted warfare, is only natural. But similar words, word patterns, and thought patterns take on an

entirely different sense and purpose when they are employed under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost by His chosen penmen to reveal to despairing sinners God's saving truth. How thankful we ought to be for the revelation and preservation of that truth in the Holy Scriptures!

The Divisions and Compilation of the Psalter

It is obvious that the Psalms have been arranged into five books on the analogy of the Five Books of Moses. Each book concludes with a doxology. These divisions are:

Book I	- Pss 1-41	(The doxology:	Ps 41:13)
Book II	- Pss 42-72	(The doxology:	Ps 72:18,19)
Book III	- Pss 73-89	(The doxology:	Ps 89:52)
Book IV	- Pss 90-106	(The doxology:	Ps 106:48)
Book V	- Pss 101-150	(The doxology:	Ps 150 in its entirety)

In addition, Book 11 ends with the colophon in Ps 72:20, "The prayers of David, the son of Jesse, are ended." This notation and the frequent expression in the superscriptions, לַמְנַצֵּחַ suggest that the gathering of individual Psalms into a collection began even in David's time. This was in response evidently to the need for such material for use in public worship. Originally, perhaps, the first collection contained only Davidic Psalms. The order does not appear to be chronological, however. It would be difficult to show, as Archer points out, that the Psalms of Book 1 were composed early in David's career while those of the later books came from his old age. Psalms 32 and 51, for example, are obviously from the same period in his life as Psalm 6.

From 2 Chr 29:30 it is evident that collections of David's and Asaph's Psalms were in existence in Hezekiah's time (716-687 B.C.). Proverbs 25:1 shows that "men of Hezekiah, king of Judah, copied out" portions of Scripture as part of his reform program. Some of the work of collecting and publishing may also have been carried on in connection with Josiah's revival (ca. 620 B.C.).

Our present collection is, however, without doubt the result of a later undertaking and was probably supervised by one man at one time. We may deduce this from the grouping of Psalms according to certain principles, e.g., those by one author (Pss 3ff by David; 42ff by the Sons of Korah; 73-83 by Asaph); those of the same type (Pss 52ff - *Maschil*; 56ff - *Michtam*; 120ff - Songs of Ascent); those with a similar content (Pss 95ff; 145ff); those that show a preference either for *Yahweh* or *Elohim* as a name for God. The explanation for this variation escapes us. We can only take note of it. The frequency of the use of these names in the five books of the Psalter is shown in the following table:

	Number of Occurrences	
	Yahweh	*Elohim*
Book I	273	15
Book II	30	164
Book III	44	43
Book IV	103	--
Book V	236	7

Jerome believed that Ezra was the editor. Others think of Nehemiah because of the statement in 2 Macc 2:13, "The same thing was related also in the records and memoirs about Nehemiah, and that he founded a library and collected the books about the kings and the prophets, and the words of David, and royal letters about sacred gifts." This report would not, however, rule out the possibility that Ezra might well have been the one who did the actual work under the direction of Nehemiah. Young agrees with Jerome that "probably Ezra was the final editor of the entire collection" (IOT, p 306). This is also our view.

The number of Psalms ascribed to David in the captions is as follows:

Book I   37 (Pss 3-9; 11-32; 34-41)
Book II   18 (Pss 51-65; 68-70)
Book III   1 (Ps 86)
Book IV   2 (Pss 101; 103)
Book V   15 (Pss 108-110; 122; 124; 131; 133; 138-145)

Some Psalms are duplicated in different, books of the Psalter, viz., Ps 14 and 53; 40:13-17 and 70:1-5; 57:7-11 and 108:1-5; 60:5-12 and 108:6-13. The reasons for this are obscure.

Numbering of the Psalms

The OT Psalter contains 150 Psalms. The LXX combines Ps 9 and 10 into one. It makes one Psalm also out of 114 and 115, but it divides both 116 and 147 into two songs each. Thus the numbering of the Psalms in the LXX from 9:22 through 146:11 does not correspond to the MT. The Vulgate follows the numbering of the LXX.

The LXX has a supernumerary or pseudepigraphic Psalm which it identifies as follows: Οὗτος ὁ ψαλμὸς ἰδιόγραφος εἰς Δαυὶδ καὶ ἔξωθεν τοῦἀριθμοῦ, ὅτε ἐμονομάχησεν τῷ Γωλιάδ. Thus it has a total of 151 Psalms. The Hebrew original of Ps 151 (or is it perhaps a Hebrew translation of a Greek original?) has been discovered in Qumran Cave 11 (See J.A. Sanders, *The Dead Sea Psalms Scroll*). Like the OT Apocrypha, which are also found in the LXX, this pseudepigraphic Psalm belongs to the traditions of the Jews. It is not, however, inspired, even as the Apocrypha are not God's inspired Word.

Psalm 1 is introductory to the whole Psalter. It is not numbered in some Hebrew manuscripts nor in some codices of the LXX. Many rabbis and fathers combined it with Ps 2. *Berachoth* (9b), for example, regards the two as a unit. In the Greek text of Acts 13:33 a variant reading has "in the first Psalm" for the better attested "in the second Psalm," indicating again that some regarded the first two Psalms as a unit.

The following table will be helpful for the purpose of comparison:

Hebrew and English	LXX and Vulgate
1 – 8	1 - 8
9 - 10	9
11 - 113	10 - 112
114 - 115	113
116:1-9	114
116:10-19	115
117 - 146	116 - 145
147: 1-11	146
147:12-20	147
148 - 150	148 – 150

Poetic Structure

Hebrew poetry is distinctive both as to its outer form and its inner spirit or spiritual content. It has pleased the Holy Spirit to clothe the most sublime, divine truths in a highly artistic poetic form. In the Psalms, then, we are privileged to encounter and experience the ultimate in art - beauty of the highest order in both content and form. Here is a rich feast designed to satisfy the hunger of the human soul in every respect!

1. Parallelism of Members

The outstanding characteristic of the outward form of Hebrew poetry is the so-called parallelism of members. This name was given to this poetic device by Bishop Robert Lowth of England in 1753. It refers to a poetic pattern in which a thought or phrase in one member of a series is balanced by a corresponding thought or phrase in another member of the series. Three chief types of parallelism are distinguished:

A. *Synonymous parallelism*: The second member expresses in different words a thought that is almost identical to that in the first member. E.g., Ps 2:4, "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; "The Lord shall have them in derision." See also Ps 2:2,10; 6:1,9; 7:13,14; 15:1; 19:7-9; 37:1.

B. *Antithetic parallelism*: The second member is opposite in meaning to the first. E.g., Ps 1:6, "For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous; "But the way of the ungodly shall perish." See also Ps 20:7,8; 32:10; 37:9,17; 147:6.

C. *Synthetic parallelism*: The second member expresses a progression, advancing the thought found in the first member. E.g., Ps 14:2, "The Lord looketh down from heaven upon the children of men, "To see if there were any that did understand and seek God." See also Ps 3:4; 23:6; 40:1-3; 90:12,14.

Some scholars distinguish various forms of synthetic parallelism. For example: Climactic: Ps 29:1 Question and answer: Ps 119:9 Comparison: Ps 118:8 Contrast (antithetic and progressive): Ps 118:18 Conditional: Ps 127:1 Purpose: Ps 34:16 Interlocking or stair-like: Ps 136:21-22; 29

Not only stichs (portions of a line), but also lines as well as groups of lines and strophes may be placed into a parallel relation to each other. The various types of parallelism do not appear in any regular order. The poet uses them as he pleases.

Parallelism is seldom perfectly regular. It is regular when the thought expressed in the second member corresponds to that in the first member in all details (e.g., in the subject, predicate, and object with all their modifiers).For example:

Regular:	Ps 19:2	"Day unto day uttereth speech
		"And night unto night sheweth knowledge."
	Ps 19:7	"The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul;
		"The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple."
Irregular:	Ps 26:8	"Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house,
		"And the place where thine honor dwelleth."

(Notice that the verb must be supplied in the second member and that the object has a modifying clause.)

Careful noting of the parallelism is not only helpful, but extremely important for the exegesis of a passage.

Meter or Rhythm

Hebrew poetry does not strive for rhyme, though occasionally it occurs as a form of poetic ornamentation. It does appear, however, to have a kind of rhythmic pattern or meter, although this has been the subject of a lively debate for years. Whatever rhythm there is results from a pattern of stresses or accents. It does not depend, as in Greek or Latin meter, on the measured rise and fall of a certain number of long and short

syllables (as in the dactyl, anapest, iamb, trochee, or spondee). Hebrew poetry disregards the sequence of naturally long and short syllables.

It is futile to look for consistency or rigidity in the rhythmical pattern of a Hebrew poem. It appears that the Hebrew poets did not permit themselves to be bound in these external matters by any rules governing their art. When the poetic form might become a shackle, the Holy Spirit speaking through the inspired poets simply breaks the schematic pattern and speaks as He will (cf, for example, the omission of certain letters in some of the alphabetic Psalms, e.g., Ps 9; 10).

Edward J. Young states (IOT, 295): "It does not seem possible to discover any consistent metrical system." Delitzsch declared many years ago, "The early Hebrew poetry has neither rhyme nor meter" (*Psalms*, I:23). Unger, on the other hand, holds that "Hebrew poetry is rhythmical but not strictly metrical, in the sense of adhering to hard-and-fast rules governing balanced numbers of accented and unaccented syllables" (*Introductory Guide*, p 366). There is, of course, an obvious difference between Hebrew poetry and prose. G.D. Young has made a thorough study of Ugaritic poetry from Ras Shamra. This can help to shed light on the question of rhythm in Hebrew poetry because Ugaritic is a Canaanite dialect closely related to Hebrew, because it contains many expressions which occur in the Psalms, and because it dates back to the days of Moses. Archer (p 421f) quotes Young's findings:

> The repetition required for poetic expression is here not accentual or syllabic, but is simply the very beautiful repetition of ideas in parallel form .... The idea that meter is found in this poetry is, we feel, an illusion resulting from the observable facts of parallelism and the Semitic morphology.

In his *Ugaritic Textbook*, *Grammar* (Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1965, p 131ff) Cyrus Gordon agrees with Young's conclusions. He writes:

> The essential feature of the poetry is the repetition of meaning in parallel form…Poetic effect may be obtained by the mere listing of parallel items: "thy clouds, thy wind, thy m(?), thy rains." However, the paralleled unit is generically longer than a single word. Thus there may be two words to each unit …. "there is no fat, there is no bone." .... The most frequent length of the paralleled unit is perhaps three accented words: ..."and depart, king, from my house; be distant, Krt, from my court!"...There may be more than three stressed words to the paralleled unit .... Parallelism is the main factor; approximate metric length is the corollary, so to speak.

Liberal commentators in the past have been very prone to suggest conjectural emendations of the text in order to make it conform to their preconceived notions of what the meter demands. From what we now know about Hebrew poetry, to make meter the criterion for the genuineness of a text is a wholly irresponsible undertaking. Edward J. Young says (IOT, p 295):

> The Hebrew text must never be emended merely in order to fit it into a certain metrical scheme. In other words metrical considerations are not sufficient to serve as criteria for textual criticism. This fact cannot be sufficiently stressed.

Cyrus Gordon, similarly, declares (U.T.G., 131):

> The poets of the ancient Near East (e.g., Acc., Ug., Heb., Eg.) did not know of exact meter. Therefore emendations *metri causa* are pure whimsy. The evidence can be found in G.D. Young's treatment of the subject in JNES 9, 1950, 124-133.

Since the views among scholars on how a Psalm is to be read may be quite diverse, their metrical analysis may also vary considerably. There is no uniformity among them on terminology either. We shall use the following:

Stich: the smallest metrical unit, consisting of 2,3, or 4 stresses
Line: a group of 2 or more stichs (occasionally a single stich comprises a line).
Couplet: a pair of lines
Strophe or Stanza: a group of two or more lines comprising a unit of thought.

The term *meter* then means the arrangement of accented words or the pattern of stresses in a poem. The following observations will be helpful:

- Only the stressed syllable in a word is counted.
- Unstressed syllables may occur without limit.
- Words of 4 or more syllables, however, usually have a secondary accent which is counted in the measures. This is occasionally true of words of 3 syllables.
- Words connected by a *maqqeph* usually count as a single word, especially if the first word is a monosyllable.
- Monosyllables are rarely accented, unless they stand in an emphatic position.
- A *caesura* is a pause separating the two parts of a line.
- In *balanced rhythm* both parts (stichs) of a line are equal:
  $$- - - - / - - - - \quad (4 + 4)$$
  Or: $\quad - - - / - - - \quad (3 + 3)$
  Or: $\quad - - / - - \quad (2 + 2)$

- In a *Qinah line* (so named by Budde because of its frequency in Lamentations; קִינָה means "mournful song," cf Jr 7:29) the two stichs are unequal in length. Usually the first part is longer, the second stich shorter, but occasionally for variety the order may be reversed. This is sometimes also called a limping or echo line.
  $$- - / - - - \quad (3 + 2) \quad or \quad - - - / - - - - \quad (4 + 3)$$
  Or: $\quad - - - / - - \quad (2 + 3) \quad or \quad - - - - / - - - \quad (3 + 4)$
- An example, in English, is found in Ps 19:8:
  "The <u>law</u> of the <u>Lord</u> is <u>perfect</u> / <u>converting</u> the <u>soul</u>." (3 + 2)
- The *caesura* is as easily located in Hebrew as in English.

Gordon makes the following observations on the rhythmic patterns found (U.T.G., p 133):

The stichoi tend to be grouped in twos and threes, though there is no hard and fast minimum .... The final stichos of a verse is sometimes different from (i.e., longer than) the other(s) so that it has a climactic effect. A stichos may parallel part of the preceding stichos, at the same time adding a new element; the type a-b-c/a-b-d is common. A stichos may duplicate in expanded form the meaning of only part of the preceding stichos. These principles are exemplified in the following verse, which may be analyzed as a-b-c/a'-b-d/d' with the approximate metric length 3/3/3:
   "I met Aliyn Ba'l,
   I made him like a lamb in my mouth,
   like a lambkin in my jaws."

A variety of approximate metric lengths may be observed, such as 2/2; 3/2; (3/2)/(3/2); (2/2)/(3/3)/3.

The following are some examples:

A 3+3 line (trimeter): Ps 2:1 לָמָּה רָגְשׁוּ גוֹיִם וּלְאֻמִּים יֶהְגּוּ־רִיק

  -    -   -   / -   -   -

A 4+4 line (tetrameter): Ps 21:2 יְהוָה בְּעָזְּךָ יִשְׂמַח־מֶלֶךְ וּבִישׁוּעָתְךָ מַה־יָּגֶיל מְאֹד׃

  -    -   -   / -   -   -   -

A 3+2 line (*Qinah*): Ps 14:1a אָמַר נָבָל בְּלִבּוֹ אֵין אֱלֹהִים

  -    -   / -   -   -

Psalm 23, as the printing in the Bardtke text shows, is to be scanned as follows:

V 1,2,3:   4+3, 3+2, 3+2
V 4:   2+2+2, 2+2+2
V 5:   3+2, 3+2
V 6:   3+2, 3+2

Strophes or Stanzas

Frequently lines are grouped into larger units called strophes or stanzas. In some cases these are clearly indicated by the content of the Psalm. Thus Ps 1, for example, has two strophes, vss 1-3 and 4-6. Sometimes the strophic divisions are indicated by a refrain. Ps 42 and 43, for instance, have a refrain in 42:5,11 and 43:5. The acrostic pattern may also mark the strophic divisions, as in Ps 119. The length of the strophes is frequently irregular. Strophes may be synonymously, antithetically, or synthetically parallel to one another. Many modern versions print the Psalms as poetry, indicating the strophes, Comparing one of these with the Bardtke Hebrew text will lead to a deeper appreciation of the poetic beauty of the Psalms.

Chiasm

This poetic device takes its name from the form of the Greek letter Chi. It involves a crossing of terms or ideas. Thus the second stich may begin with the concluding thought of the first stich and end with the initial thought of the first stich according to the pattern: a - b; b - a. For example, Ps 91:13 "Thou shalt tread upon the lion and the adder; The young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under foot." See also Ps 1:1 and 91:10 for a chiasm of nouns and verbs.

Acrostic Structure

The acrostic principle is the pattern of beginning each stich, line, couplet, or strophe with a succeeding letter of the alphabet. This is not always carried through consistently. The alphabetic Psalms are 9-10; 25; 34; 37; 111; 112; 119; 145.

Poetic Usage

As in English poetry, archaic, poetic, or foreign words and forms may be used. The appendix in Dahood, *The Psalms*, Vol. III, offers a very complete listing of poetic variants. Koenig, *Die Psalmen* (pp 6-9), and Leupold, *Exposition* (pp. 14f), also treat this matter. The following usages are especially noteworthy:

- The article is not used consistently.
- זֶה serves as a relative pronoun; also זוֹ and זוּ.
- מוֹ serves as a verbal suffix for the simple ם.
    - E.g., Ps 2:5b, יְבַהֲלֵם for יְבַהֲלֵמוֹ
- תְ serves as a fem. abs. ending for הְ
    - E.g., Ps 108:13, עֶזְרָה for עֶזְרָת
- Old case endings are retained:
    - The nominative וּ may become וֹ
        - E.g., Ps 50:10, חַיְתוֹ for הַיַּת. But cf. GK, 90a.
    - The genitive: יְ
        - E.g., Ps 110:4, דִּבְרָתִי for דִּבְרַת
    - Accusative הָ is used as a nominative.
        - E.g., Ps 63:8, עֶזְרָתָה
- Older, more resonant nominal suffixes appear:
    - כִי for ךְ
        - E.g., Ps 103:3, עֲוֹנֵכִי for עֲוֹנֵךְ
    - יְיהוּ for יוֹ
        - E.g., Job 24:23, עֵינֵיהוּ for עֵינָיו
        - (Note also the Aramaic וֹהִי in Ps 116:12 תַּגְמוּלוֹהִי)
    - מוֹ for םְ
        - E.g., Ps 17:10, חֶלְבָּמוֹ for חֶלְבָּם
    - מוֹ for הֶם
        - E.g., Ps 17:10 פִּימוֹ for פִּיהֶם
    - ימוֹ for יהֶם
        - E.g. Ps 2:3, מוֹסְרוֹתֵימוֹ for מוֹסְרוֹתֵיהֶם
    - בַּל is frequently used for the negative.
- Lengthened forms of prepositions are common:
    - מִנִּי for מִן
    - בְּמוֹ for בְּ
    - כְּמוֹ for כְּ
    - לְמוֹ for לְ
    - אֱלֵי for אֶל
    - עֲדֵי for עַד
    - עֲלֵי for עַל
- The use of אַף for גַּם will be noted.

- The article may be omitted when a noun is used as a definite noun. *Waw* in *waw* consecutive may be separated from its verb by several other words. Some words tend toward the Aramaic form, e.g., אֱנוֹשׁ (Aramaic: אֱנָשׁ) for אִישׁ.

Figures of Speech

Recognizing figures of speech is of vital importance in exegesis. An exhaustive discussion will be found in the book *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible* by Ethelbert W. Bullinger (Reprint: Grand Rapids: Baker, 1968). We list here only a few of the more common figures:

- *Simile*: A comparison is indicated by means of a distinctive particle (like, as, etc.).
  - Ps 1:4, "The ungodly are not so: but are *like the chaff* which the wind driveth away."
  - Ps 42:1, "*As the hart* panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee."
- *Metaphor*: A comparison is made directly without the use of a particle to indicate it.
  - Ps 22:16, "For *dogs* have compassed me; the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me."
- *Metonymy*: One word is used for another that suggests it.
  - Ps 147:10, "He delighteth not in the strength of the horse; he taketh not pleasure in the *legs* of a man."
- *Synecdoche*: A form of metonymy in which a part is named for the whole person or thing.
  - Ps 51:8, "Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the *bones* which thou hast broken may rejoice."
- *Litotes*: A strong form of expression by a denial of its opposite.
  - Ps 22:11, "Be *not far* from me; for trouble is near."
- *Personification*: The actions of living persons are ascribed to inanimate things.
  - Ps 19:2, "Day unto day *uttereth speech,* and night unto night *sheweth knowledge."*
  - Ps 85:10, "Mercy and truth *are met together;* righteousness and peace *have kissed* each other."
- *Anthropomorphism*: A human form is ascribed to God.
  - Ps 34:18, "Behold, *the eye of the Lord is* upon them that fear him."
- *Anthropopathism*: Human emotions are ascribed to God.
  - Ps 106:45, "And he remembered for them his covenant, and *repented* according to the multitude of his mercies."

Musical Notations

לַמְנַצֵּחַ

This term is found in the superscription of 55 Psalms as well as in Hab 3:19. It is derived from the stem נצח, which is not used in the Qal. The Piel נִצַּח occurs in Ezr. 3:8; 1 Chr 23:4; 2 Chr 2:1,17; and 34:12,13 in the sense "to act as overseer, superintendent, director," either in building or repairing the temple or in the ministry in the temple. It appears also in 1 Chr 15:21. Here the context (vss. 16-21) informs us that six directors were set over some musicians, eight over others, and Heman, Asaph, and Ethan over them all, leading with cymbals. Koehler-Baumgartner states that the meaning of לְנַצֵּחַ in v 21 is "unexplained." The KJV translates it "to excel"; Luther, *vorzusingen;* the RSV and NASB, "to lead"; the NEB, "to play"; the Jerusalem Bible, "giving the beat"; H-J. Kraus, *musizieren;* and NIV, "for the director of music."

The Piel pt. מְנַצֵּחַ with לְ might possibly mean "for musical presentation" (cf. Luther's translation, *vorzusingen)*. It seems better, however, to render it with the KJV, RSV, NASB, and others: "to the chief musician," "to the choirmaster," "for the choir director."

The LXX translates it with εἰς τὸ τέλος, taking it as a late form for לָנֶצַח. Eusebius and Theodoret explain this as meaning to the end of the world. The Targums (Aramaic version) render it "to sing in the liturgy," taking it as the Aramaic infinitive, which would denote that it is to be used in the liturgy perpetually. Aquila, Symmachus, Theodotion, and Jerome render it "for the victor" or "for victory," probably in a Messianic sense. Young believes that "it seems best to admit that we do not know the meaning of the term" (IOT, 308). On the basis of 1 Chr 15:16-21 we are inclined to agree with Leupold's explanation, however (p 9):

> The author of the psalm, usually David, put the psalm into the hands of the choirmaster with the intent and purpose that he might rehearse it with the Levitical choirs and so introduce it to Israel for public worship.

Other musical directions are attached to 29 Psalms. They are of various kinds.

Designations of Tone or Melody

It is assumed that these are references to some well-known song, now lost. The initial words of the song are preceded by עַל or אֶל sometimes pointed as a negative, אַל.

אַל־תַּשְׁחֵת occurs in the superscriptions of Pss 57; 58; 59; 75. The KJV and NASB merely transliterate it. The RSV renders it, "According to Do Not Destroy"; the Jerusalem Bible, "Tune: 'Do Not Destroy'"; Luther, *dasz er nicht umkaeme;* NIV, "To [the tune of] 'Do Not Destroy.'" There may be an allusion to the prayer of Moses in Dt 9:26. Young says (IOT, 309), "We must acknowledge that we do not understand the precise force of this phrase."

עַל־יוֹנַת אֵלֶם רְחֹקִים occurs in Ps 56:1. Again the KJV and NASB simply transliterate this. The RSV has "According to the Dove on the Far-off Terebinths"; the Jerusalem Bible, "Tune: 'Dove of the distant gods'"; Luther, *von der stummen Taube unter den Fremden;* NIV, "To [the tune of] 'A Dove on Distant Oaks.'" The MT means literally, "According to the dove of muteness among distant ones." Some change the pointing from *elem* to *elim* (gods or terebinths). The meaning of the expression remains obscure.

עַל־שֹׁשַׁנִּים (Ps 45:1; 69:1) and אֶל־שֹׁשַׁנִּים עֵדוּת (Ps 60:1; 80:1) again are probably references to familiar tunes. Luther translates the former *von den Rosen,* and the latter *von einem gueldenen Rosenspann zu lehren.* The KJV and NASB transliterate. The Jerusalem Bible has, "Tune: 'The decree is a lily.'" Briggs suggests, "My testimony is a beautiful anemone." *Shushan* means "lily" and *eduth* "testimony" or "decree." The NIV for Ps 60:1 reads: "To [the tune of] 'The lily of the covenant.'" The view that the reference is to a musical instrument shaped like a lily cannot be proved. H-J. Kraus says, "It is very difficult to understand the catch-words in the superscriptions correctly" (p XXVIII).

עַל־מָחֲלַת in Ps 53:1 and עַל־מָחֲלַת לְעַנּוֹת in Ps 88:1 are transliterated by the KJV, RSV, NASB, and NIV. Luther renders them *im Chor umeiriander (vorzusingen)* and *von der Schwachheit der Elenden,* respectively. The Jerusalem Bible has "in sickness" and "in sickness or suffering." The LXX renders the longer expression ὑπὲρ Μαελὲθ τοῦ ἀποκριθῆναι, taking the first word as a proper name and the second as the infinitive construct of עלה, "to answer." It may be derived from the root חלה, "to be wounded, sick," and ענה, "to suffer affliction." It may indicate, therefore, that the Psalm is to be sung to a mournful tune.

עַל־אַיֶּלֶת הַשַּׁחַר (Ps 22:1) is transliterated by the KJV and NASB. Luther has *von der Hinden, die fruehe gejagt wird,* a reference to the content of the Psalm, which leads one to think of a hind hunted to death in the early morning. The RSV, "According to The Hind of the Dawn," and the Jerusalem Bible, "To the 'Doe of the Dawn,'" take the reference to be to a melody, as does the NIV.

עַל־הַגִּתִּית occurs in the superscriptions of Ps 8; 81; 84. The KJV, NASB, and Luther understand this to be a musical instrument, the Gittith. The Targums refer it to "the harp which David brought from Gath." The RSV supposes it to be a tune. The Jerusalem Bible does not commit itself: "On the ... of Gath."   (Note: "Possibly the harp, or a Philistine melody"). The LXX has ὑπὲρ τῶν ληνῶν and the Vulgate, *pro torcularibus,* "for the winepresses," (reading גִּתּוֹת) indicating that these Psalms were to be sung to the tune of some well-known vintage song. The NIV has: "According to *gittith*."

עַל־יְדוּתוּן (Ps 62:1 and 77:1) may be translated "according to Jeduthun," meaning that the Psalm was to be rendered according to Jeduthun's music. לִידִיתוּן in Ps 39:1 means "to Jeduthun" or "for Jeduthun," indicating that the Psalm was either dedicated to him or turned over to him for presentation. As previously explained, Jeduthun was David's famous choirmaster, who is mentioned in 1 Chr 16: 41 and elsewhere.

עַלְמוּת לַבֵּן (Ps 9:1) is transliterated by the KJV, NASB, and RSV. Luther renders it *von der schoenen Jugend.* The JB has "For oboe and harp" with the note, "Translation uncertain." It may either refer to a tune, "Death to the son," (so the NIV) or possibly be a corruption of the term *alamoth* discussed below. The latter would indicate that it was to be sung by youthful voices.

Designation of Higher or Lower Voices (?)

עַל־עֲלָמוֹת (Ps 46:1) is assumed by some interpreters on the basis of 1 Chr 15:20 to refer to a maiden-like kind of singing, perhaps a falsetto male voice, or possibly the tenor voice. Girls and women, of course, did not sing in the temple choir. Many conjectures have been made: KJV, "Upon *Alamoth*" (an instrument?); NIV and RSV, "According to *Alamoth*" (a tune?); NASB, "set to *Alamoth*"; Luther, *von der Jugend* (to be sung by young men?); JB, "For oboe." A.Z. Idelsohn writes, *"Alamoth* seems to have been a double-flute. The name bears a similarity to the Greek *Elymos*" (*Jewish Music in Its Historical Development*, New York: Schocken, 1967, p 13). He believes it originated in Assyria and that the name may come from the Assyrian word *elamu,* "confronting," a term usually employed for two bodies close together and yet parted. This fits the structure of the double-pipe as seen on the ancient bas reliefs. Young, however, says, "Its exact meaning is not known" (IOT, 308). Koehler-Baumgartner agrees, as does H-J. Kraus, who observes, "All these attempts at interpretation are very uncertain" (p XXVIII).

עַל־הַשְּׁמִינִית occurs in the Psalter only in Ps 6:1 and 12:1. The LXX translates it with ὑπὲρ τῆς ὀγδόης, "on the octave," and the Vulgate, *pro octava.* Luther has *Auf acht Saiten;* JB, "For the octochord," the NASB, "upon an eight-stringed lyre"; the NIV, "According to *sheminith*." Briggs, citing 1 Chr 15:21, refers it to the lower octave or bass voice and declares, "The opinion of some that it refers to an instrument of eight strings is ... without support in the OT" (p LXXVII). Nevertheless, Kraus still takes it to refer to an instrument, and Koehler-Baumgartner likewise, though with a question mark. Dahood, on the other hand, understands both the LXX and the Vulgate to refer to the bass voice. Young frankly states, "Its meaning is not known" (p 308).

Designations of Musical Instruments

A thorough discussion of this subject is offered by Walter E. Buszin in his article "Religious Music Among the Jews," *CTM*, July-Aug., 1968, p 422ff. See also Oesterley, pp 91-122, and Idelsohn, pp 3-22. Pictures will be found in Pritchard, ANEP, pp 61-66; Douglas, *New Bible Dictionary,* sub "Musical Instruments"; and *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, sub "Musical Instruments." Three types of musical instruments were used in Israel:

Stringed instruments

נְגִינוֹת, meaning "stringed instruments," is a term that covers various instruments of this kind. It is found in the superscriptions of Ps 4; 6; 54; 55; 67; 76; where it is used with the בְּ of accompaniment, and in Ps 61:1, where it is used with עַל. The root נגן means in the Piel, "to play on stringed instruments" (such as the lyre and the harp). The participle נֹגְנִים denotes "players on stringed instruments" (Ps 68:26).

מִנִּים "stringed instruments," is also a general term (Ps 150:4).

נֵבֶל is a harp (e.g., Ps 150:3). כִּנּוֹר is a lyre (e.g., Ps 150:3). Buszin explains: "While the *nebal* was a large harp played with the fingers, the *kinnor* was a small harp or lyre plucked with a plectrum." The number of strings varied on both instruments.

Wind instruments

שׁוֹפָר denotes a curved horn, a ram's horn (Ps 150:3).

חֲצֹצְרָה is the straight trumpet (Ps 98:6). Those mentioned in Numbers 10:1-10 were made of silver. At the dedication of Solomon's Temple 120 were used (2 Chr 5:12).

נְחִילוֹת designated by K-B as "an unexplained hymnical or musical term," may be derived from חלל and signify "a flute" (Ps 5:1).

חָלִיל is a reed pipe, a large pipe (Is 5:12).

עוּגָב (Ps 150:4) is a word variously translated: K-B, "long flute"; Buszin, "small pipe or flute"; Briggs, "small organ"; Cornill, "bagpipe." Kraus describes it as a long flute, without a mouthpiece, that was played by blowing over the edge of the upper aperture. Idelsohn says that at the time of the Second Temple it was called *Abbub,* meaning hollow reed. "It was small and of fine reed, and had a sweet tone" (*Jewish Music*, p 11). The NIV renders it "flute."

Percussion instruments

תֹּף designates the timbrel, tabret, tambourine, or drum.

צֶלְצְלִים are cymbals. There were two types (Ps 150:5): צִלְצְלֵי־שָׁמַע, smaller cymbals with a higher pitch, played by striking them together vertically; and צִלְצְלֵי תְרוּעָה, larger cymbals with a loud, lower-pitched sound, played by striking them together horizontally.

We have no record whatsoever as to the tunes, scales, or rhythm employed. "In Israel music was seemingly taught and preserved in oral tradition only, as is the custom in the Orient to the present day" (Idelsohn, p 18). If only there had been some means of recording or preserving for future generations the music to which David's Psalms were sung!

Selah (סֶלָה)

This word, which occurs 71 times in 39 Psalms in the MT and only three times elsewhere in the OT (Hab 3:3,9,13), poses a problem for interpreters. In the LXX it appears 92 times, in the Psalter of Solomon twice, and twice in the Jewish Benedictions. It usually stands at the end of a verse, but occasionally, as in Ps 55:20 and 57:5, in the middle.

The LXX translates it with διάψαλμα, meaning "an interlude," Aquila (ca. 200A.D.) with ἀεί, representing עוֹלָם. According to Briggs, "both of these renderings depend on the same usage, regarded from different points of view. The former indicates an interlude at which the benediction should be sung, and the Ps concluded for that particular service. The latter gives the last word of the benediction as an abbreviation for the benediction itself" (I, LXXXV)

Briggs derives it from the root סלל, "to lift up," meaning "to lift up the voice in praise," and reads the form as the Qal imperative. Ps 68:5 uses סלל in this way. Gesenius derives it from סלל, meaning "to rest, be

quiet," and understands it to indicate a pause. Following this interpretation, the JB translates: "Pause." Others trace it back to סלה, meaning "to separate," and suggest the rendering, "a section."

The Vulgate simply omits the Selahs; it does not translate them. Jerome translates Selah with *semper* or *iugiter,* "perpetually." In a letter to Marcella he compares it with the use of *Amen* or *Shalom* to mark the end of a passage and confirm its contents (Briggs).

Some (e.g., Ewald, Koenig) take it as a call for a crescendo in the musical accompaniment (trumpet blasts with strings), others as a directive to the singers to sing louder, and still others as a signal for the continuation of the music by the instruments while the singing stops. R. Stieb believes that, like a *de capo* mark, it directs the reader to lift up his eyes and repeat what precedes. Starke prefers the explanation, "weigh and consider this carefully," deriving it from סלה, "to value" (Job 28:16,19). Young says, "The meaning is not known" (IOT, p 308), and Dahood agrees, "A liturgical direction: its meaning and etymology still elude scholars."

Assuming that the LXX and late Judaism had a correct understanding of the term because of their continued use of it, it is likely that Selah calls for a musical interlude, either by the instruments or by the choir.

Special Occasions Mentioned in the Superscriptions

שִׁיר־חֲנֻכַּת הַבַּיִת in Ps 30:1 indicates that this is a song composed by David to be sung at the dedication of a house. What house is meant is a matter of dispute. Some take it to be David's palace of cedar, which according to 1 Chr 14:1f he built and undoubtedly dedicated as prescribed in Dt 20:5. On the basis of the content of the Psalm, some believe it may have been written for the reconsecration of David's palace after it was desecrated by Absalom (2 Sm 16:22). Others think that David wrote it in advance for the dedication of the temple that would be built by Solomon, or that he composed it for the consecration of the place on Moriah where the temple was later built (2 Sm 24:25; 2 Chr 3:1). The Targums add to the word "house" the explanation, "of the sanctuary." According to various rabbis this Psalm was sung whenever the temple was rebuilt or enlarged, as well as at the annual feast of the dedication mentioned in Jn 10:22, which was instituted by Judas Maccabaeus in 165 B.C. and which commemorated the cleansing and rededication of the temple after its profanation by Antiochus Epiphanes. This festival, called *Chanukah,* lasted eight days beginning with the 25th of Chisleu (about the middle of December) and was observed by illuminating the houses. This accounts for its being known as the Festival of the Lights. The exact significance of the phrase in Ps 30 remains undetermined. The NIV has, "For the dedication of the temple."

לְהַזְכִּיר is attached to Pss 38 and 70. The KJV translates this, "to bring to remembrance"; Luther, *zum Gedaechtnis;* NASB, "for a memorial"; RSV, "for the memorial offering"; JB, "in commemoration"; NIV, "a petition." It is the Hiphil inf. of זכר. The phrase may be understood in a general way, as a reminder to the Lord that He is a merciful God. David turns to Him therefore and pleads for mercy, deliverance, and help. Others believe it is a reference to the אַזְכָּרָה, that part of the מִנְחָה, the grain offering, which was burned with incense (Lv 2:2,9; 6:15; Nu 5:26). It is thought that these Psalms were sung in connection with the *Azkarah.* Again, no conclusive solution can be given to the problem presented by this expression.

לְיוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת designates Ps 92 "for the Sabbath day." According to the LXX, Ps 24 is appointed for Sunday, Ps 48 for Monday, Ps 94 for Wednesday, and Ps 93 for Friday.

לְתוֹדָה is found only in the superscription of Ps 100. It is used with מִזְמוֹר, and the combined expression is rendered by the KJV, "A Psalm of Praise"; by Luther, *Dankpsalm;* NASB, "A Psalm for thanksgiving," with the marginal note, "thank offering". RSV "A Psalm for the thankoffering"; JB, "For thanksgiving"; NIV, "For giving thanks." The RSV and the NASB margin reflect the fact that some rabbis connect this Psalm with the thankoffering, זֶבַח הַתּוֹדָה, of Lv 7:12. It was probably written for a special occasion for thanksgiving. Starke, who considers it to be a Psalm by David, regards it as an encouragement to the Jews to praise God for the

blessings of salvation. He observes that since it was written under the influence of the Spirit of prophecy, it clearly shows that true praise centers in the spiritual blessings which are ours through the Messiah.

Hallels

הַלְלוּיָה, pointed by others הַלְלוּ־יָה, is a Piel in which the Dages forte has dropped away (G-K, 10g). It means, "Praise Yah!" It occurs 24 times in the Psalms and in its Greek form four times in Revelation (19:1,3,4,6). Luther retained the Hebrew word in his translation. It is a word which the Christian church has taken over from the Jews as an expression of encouragement to praise God.

Hallelujah appears at the close of Ps 104; 105; 115; 116; 117; at the beginning of Ps 111; 112; at both the beginning and end of Ps 106; 113; 135; 146; 147; 148; 149; 150; and in the body of Ps 135 (v 3). The LXX has it also at the beginning of Ps 105; 107; 114; 116; 118; 119; 136.. Briggs thinks that in the case of Ps 105; 107; 114; 116; 117; 136 it was detached by error from the beginning of the Psalm and attached to the close of the preceding Psalm.

In the MT we have therefore the following Hallels in the Psalter: 104-107; 111-117; 135-136; 146-150. In addition to these, Pss 118 and 119 were regarded as Hallels in later usage, and finally also Pss 120-134

Pss 104-106 form a trilogy: 104 deals with creation, 105 with the early history of Israel, 106 with the Exodus. Pss 111 and 112 are complementary to each other in content and alphabetic in structure.

According to Jewish liturgical usage, Pss 113-118 comprise the Hallel of the Great Feasts. At the Passover Pss 113-114 were sung at the beginning of the supper and 115-118 toward the end of the meal. Ps 136 was known as the ordinary Great Hallel. Traditionally, this was sung at the close of the Passover meal (Mt 26:30; Mk 14:26). See Joh. Ylvisaker, *The Gospels* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1932), p 648ff for a description of the Passover ritual. In later times the whole group, Pss 119-136, was called the Great Hallel.

Types of Psalms

General Categories

The classification of the Psalms into various types has engaged the interest of students of the Psalter through the ages. The seven known as the "Penitential Psalms" have been recognized as a group since the days of Origen (d. 254 A.D.). These seven are Pss 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143.

Luther classified the Psalms according to five types:

1) Messianic Psalms *(Weissagungen von Christo);*
2) Didactic Psalms *(Lehrpsalten) ;*
3) Comfort Psalms *(Trostpsalmen);*
4) Supplicatory Psalms *(Betpsalmen);*
5) Thanksgiving Psalms *(Dankpsalmen)*

Luther's classification is a useful and practical division, though one may at times differ with him on the classification of a particular Psalm.

Examples of didactic or doctrinal Psalms are 1, 14, 15, and 53, which treat of the godly and the ungodly among men; 19 and 119, which deal with God's Word; 39, 49, and 90, which speak of the brevity and vanity of life; and 139, which contemplates God's gracious providence. Some of these Psalms Luther lists under a different category. He considers Ps 139, for example, to be a Thanksgiving Psalm.

Examples of Comfort Psalms in Luther's classification are Pss 4, 37, 91, and 121. As Supplicatory Psalms he lists, among many, Pss 3, 6, 38, 137, and 143. Typical Thanksgiving Psalms are 103, 104, 136, 145-150.

Because of the rapid ebb and flow of thoughts in many of the Psalms, it is often impossible to make a strict classification. It may seem surprising, for example, that Luther classifies Pss 32 and 51 as Didactic Psalms. His reason is the fact that they teach in great depth the doctrines of sin and grace. They could, however, with equal justice be considered as Supplicatory or Comfort Psalms. Psalms like 96, 98, and 100, which have a strong note of thanksgiving, are classed as Prophetic or Messianic Psalms by Luther - and with good reason. Guilt and confession, joy and thankfulness, petition and praise, fear and hope, anxiety and quiet confidence tumble headlong over one another as the Psalmists pour out their heart to the Lord, just as such emotions surge back and forth in the soul of every child of God.

Messianic Psalms

Although Christ and His Gospel are to be found in every Psalm, those that treat specifically and in detail of the Messiah's person, work, and kingdom are called Messianic Psalms. Examples are Pss 2, 8, 16, 22 (the so-called Holy of Holies of the Psalter), 23, 24, 40, 41, 45, 47, 68, 69, 72, 87, 89, 110, and 118. These Messianic Psalms have been of special significance to the people of God in OT as well as in NT times. They were the wellspring of faith and hope for those who looked for redemption in Israel, even as they are the foundation of the believer's assurance and joy today.

Higher critics do not recognize the Messianic Psalms as being prophetic of Christ. Prejudiced by their refusal to admit the fact, or even the possibility, of divine prophecy and by their assumption of the purely human origin of the Scriptures, they regard the Messiah-King of Ps 2 and many other Messianic Psalms strictly as references to a reigning Hebrew king. Scores of NT passages assure us, however, that the Psalms predict in detail the coming of the Savior of the world and the establishment of His kingdom in grace and glory. Jesus Himself expressly said, "All things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me" (Lk 24:44). He urges, "Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me" (Jn 5:39).

Christoph Barth, to cite one-critic's views as an example, in his *Introduction to the Psalms* disapproves of the classification of some Psalms as Messianic. He writes (p 26):

> It is widely held that the witness to the Messiah who was to come is manifestly clear in the royal psalms - and in particular Pss II, XLV, LXXII, LXXXIX, CX, CXXXII - because they do not speak so much of the historical kings as of a prince who is to bring salvation at the end of time, that is, of the 'Messiah.' This separate treatment of certain psalms, however, is unacceptable, because it involves the denial or neglect of their original historical significance. It is true that the royal psalms were read and interpreted in a 'messianic' sense by the Jewish community - and even more by the early Church. But the same is also true of the other psalms almost without exception.

Barth objects to the distinction between "Messianic" and "non-Messianic" Psalms. Since every Psalm relates in some way to Christ, one would, to be sure, hardly call any Psalm non-Messianic; and such terminology is not generally used by conservative scholars. But why can one not apply the term "Messianic" to those Psalms that contain direct, rectilinear prophecies of Christ, which find their fulfillment in no one else but Christ? Barth disregards the fact that in these Psalms assertions are made concerning the Messiah-King which in no sense apply to David, to Solomon, or to any other earthly king. Only the kingdom of Christ, for example, is eternal and universal (Ps 72:5, 8, 11). Only Jesus of Nazareth suffered the torments and gained the glory depicted in Ps 22. Yet Barth argues (p65f):

> It is a well-known fact that neither the name Jesus nor His title *Christ* occur in the psalms. However late the date of the completion of the Psalter is set, it is bound to have taken place in pre-Christian times, when no one could know anything of Jesus of Nazareth. The title Christ

(and the corresponding Hebrew term *mashiach,* transcribed in Greek as *Messias)* was in fact used in the Psalter for the 'anointed' kings of Israel and Judah, but it does not occur on a single occasion with the full significance which it came to carry in late Jewish writings and in the New Testament. Thus Jesus Christ is apparently unknown in the Book of Psalms.

One wonders how Barth can so blithely ignore Ps 2:2, for example, which ex pressly mentions the Lord's Anointed, the Messiah, and which Acts 4:24-30 clearly identifies as being prophetic of Jesus. One wonders also, were the ancient Jews reading something into this Psalm that was not there when Rashi, quoted by Cohen, states, "Our Rabbis expound it as relating to king Messiah"? See also *The Midrash on Psalms*, translated by William G. Braude (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), Vol. 1, pp 37,41.

Barth admits that for the apostles and the early Christian church "the essential message of the Psalter - as of the rest of the Old Testament - is a witness to Jesus Christ" (p 66). He speaks of the "seemingly arbitrary way in which the New Testament writers read and expounded the Psalter" *(ibid.).* He is forced to concede, however, that "the Apostles are convinced that not merely a few isolated words, but the whole context which they represent, taken in what to the best of their knowledge was its proper meaning, speaks of Jesus, the Messiah" (p 69).

After making such highly critical and absolute statements, Barth startles -and confuses - the reader by apparently granting that the Psalms were prophetic of Jesus after all, though in a qualified sense. While denying that they "predicted or foretold His life - in broad outline or even in specific detail." he says (p off):

> Actually, they speak of the history and reality of *Israel ....* After the conclusion of Jesus' earthly life and work, however, it was suddenly recognized that they had something else to say. Along with their witness to the -history and reality of Israel, they bore, and still bear, witness to the life and work of *Jesus.* They show that Jesus and Israel belong together, and that their respective histories cannot be understood apart from each other. This they do by making evident the close and essential similarity between the history of Israel and the life of Jesus, showing that they are in fact one and the same: it is the story of God's dwelling with His people, or to put it the other way round, the dwelling of this people with their God. This story, and this story alone, is brought to its conclusion, 'to its fulfillment,' with the life and work of Jesus.

We have quoted Barth at length so as not to misrepresent him. Regardless of what he says, however, we know from Ps 1:10,11 that the OT prophets recognized that the Spirit of Christ which was in them was testifying beforehand "the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." Though they did not understand the details of the manner or the time of the fulfillment of their prophecies, David and the other Psalmists did realize that the Holy Spirit was revealing astonishing promises and prophecies about the coming Savior through them (Ac 2: 29-31). They themselves studied these revelations with keen interest. To suggest that the apostles of the NT read things into these Psalms that had not been intended by the Holy Ghost at the time when He inspired the Psalmists in their writing is not only sheer nonsense but bold-faced blasphemy. It is true, however, that in the bright light of the fulfillment, the far-reaching import of many a direct or typical prophecy became more readily apparent. Augustine's comment is deservedly famous: *"Novum testamentum in vetere latet; vetus testamentum in novo patet."*

Rudolph Thiel remarks:

> The prophetic meaning of the Psalms was for Luther, "The foundation of all else, the light and authority, source and beginning." For Christ alone is the meaning, content, and goal of all Scripture - Christ, who sets his gospel over against the law of Moses, Christ, "The Jacob's ladder

to the knowledge of God" (*Luther*, translated by Gustav K. Wiencke; Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1955, p 142).

The distinction between direct or rectilinear and typical prophecy is one that the interpreter must bear in mind. Direct Messianic prophecies are those which find their fulfillment in the Messiah and in no one else. Examples are Pss 22, 40, 45, 72, etc. Typical prophecies are those which refer to the Messiah by way of some type. David in his person, for example, was a type of the Messiah (Eze 34:23,24). What happened to David when he was betrayed by his friend Ahithophel is a typical prophecy of the betrayal of Jesus by Judas, one of the Twelve (Ps 41:9; Jn 13:18). So also the nation Israel as such was a type of Christ (Ho 11:1; Mt 2:15). At the same time Israel is also representative of God's people in the NT. Israel's experiences, such as its deliverance from slavery and its entrance into the Promised Land, are typical of the travail and triumph of the Christ's church, of Zion in a spiritual sense (Ga 3:7; Rm 11:26; He 12:22,23; Ps 2:6; 48).

There are in the OT Messianic prophecies also which find their complete and final fulfillment in Christ but which have, in addition, an earlier, intermediate, partial fulfillment. For example, in 2 Sm 7:1-16 (p.p., 1 Chr 17:1-15) the Lord tells David that he will set up his "seed" after him and that "he shall build an house" for the Lord's name. The Lord also promises that He "will establish the throne of his kingdom forever" (cf. also Ps 89:3, 4, 27-29, 36-37). From 1 Kgs 5:5; 8:20; 1 Chr 22:9, 10; and 2 Chr 6:8-10 we see that this promise was fulfilled in part when Solomon built a temple for the Lord. But Solomon's temple of wood and stone was a type and symbol of the spiritual temple, the church, which is built   by Christ as God's eternal dwelling place (Nu 12:7; Mt 16:18; 1 Cor 3:16, 17; 6:19; 2 Cor 6:16; Eph 2:19-22; 1 Tm 3:15; He 3:6; Rev 21:2,3).

As Hengstenberg points *out (Christology of the Old Testament*, Mac Dill AFB, Florida: Mac Donald, n.d., Vol. 1, p 98):

In the first two phases of the temple of Solomon [viz.,as it was built by Solomon and then, after the Exile, rebuilt by Zerubbabel, being completed in 516 B.C.], the house consists in the first instance of ordinary stones, although, even-there, the spiritual is concealed behind the material; but in its third phase, the material is altogether thrown off, and the house is entirely spiritual - consisting of living stones, 1 Pet 2:5.

The eternal duration of the kingdom and the house or family which God promised to build for David (2 Sm 7:11, 13, 16 ; 1 Chr 17:10) finds its ultimate, perfect fulfillment in Christ's spiritual kingdom, of which "there shall be no end," as Gabriel told Mary (Lk 1:32,33). Solomon and his successors in David's line sat on David's throne in fulfillment of God's promise, but it was the wonderful promise that the Messiah was to come from his family that filled David with such amazement and awe and that prompted him to praise God in a joyous hymn of thanksgiving (2 Sm 7: 18-29; 1 Chr 17:16-27). David recognized that God was revealing to him what was to happen not only in the immediate, but also in the distant future (2 Sm 7:19, 25, 29). He understood that the one who was to come from his loins as his Seed would also be the very Son of God (2 Sm 7:14; 1 Chr 17:13; Ps 2:7; 110:1; Mt 22:41-46; Ac 2:29-31; He 1:5; cf. also Ps 89:26,27). Hengstenberg's whole discussion of this key Messianic prophecy is deserving of careful study (op. cit., 1, 91-107; cf also his comments on 2 Sm 23:1-7 on pp 107-112).

These three types of Messianic prophecies may be represented diagramatically as follows:

Rectilinear Prophecy

Prophecy --->Fulfillment in Christ
Example: Ps 22:18 The division of   Mt 27:35 The soldiers divide Jesus'
     the Messiah's garments   clothes

Typical Prophecy

Typical Event or Person-- >The Antitype in Christ
Example: 2 Sm 15:31; Ps 41:9   Jn 13:18 Judas betrays Jesus
      Ahithophel betrays David

Intermediately Fulfilled Prophecy

Prophecy ---------------------------------->Partial Fulfillment------- >Complete Fulfillment in Christ
Example: 2 Sm 7:13   1 Kgs 5:5; 8:20;   Mt 16:18;
    David's Seed   1 Chr 22:9,10;   Lk 1:32,33 Christ
    will build the   2 Chr 6:8-10   builds His
    Lord's House   Solomon   Church
                               builds the
                               Temple

The Imprecatory Psalms

A special problem arises with respect to the so-called Imprecatory Psalms. Included in these are Pss 35; 40:14,15; 55; 56; 58; 59; 69; 79; 83; 109; 137:7-9; 139:19-22. Many misunderstand these imprecations and denounce them as indicative of a morality inferior to that of the NT with Jesus' injunction, "Love your enemies" (Mt 5:44). They are said to evince a sub-Christian, or at least a pre Christian, spirit. Perowne's comments are typical when he states (1,65): "The imprecations in the Psalms, though springing from a righteous zeal for the glory of God, and not from any mere thirst of personal revenge, still are not such as a Christian can lawfully, in their natural sense, use now."

John L. McKenzie, S.J., of Notre Dame, writing on "The Values of the Old Testament" in *Concilium, Theology in an Age of Renewal* (Vol. 30, p 21f; New York: Paulist Press, 1964-), expresses a similar stricture of these Psalms and other such sections of the Old Testament:

> One does not need to read much of the Old Testament to learn that the Christian ideal of love of one's enemies does not seem to be mentioned, and that a very common type of hatred is often expressed. More than this, God himself is often identified with the Israelites' hatred of their enemies. This has been an acute problem for Christian interpreters since the early Church, and the antithesis between Old and New Testament here is so apparent that no solutions have been satisfactory. The holy war, with its total annihilation of enemies and imprecations uttered in several psalms together with the threats against foreign peoples put in the mouth of God, cannot be combined with Christian love.

Note Leupold's approval (p 506) of similar remarks by Maclaren.

It is not possible to enter into a full discussion of this question here. Suffice it to indicate a few pertinent points that demonstrate the untenability of the criticism leveled against these Psalms. In the first place, these imprecations, too, belong to God's Word. Since we have in the Psalter prayers which God Himself has taught us to pray, we may and should pray these imprecations also. The suggestion that there is a different standard of morality in the NT from that of the OT has its roots in the false premise of the evolutionistic development of Israel's religion. It violates the unity of Scripture and conflicts with the immutability of God's holy will.

The criticism of these Psalms stems also from a thoroughgoing misunderstanding of Jesus and His teaching. He did not preach a spineless, syrupy, sentimental love theology. He was not tolerant toward sin. He preached the Law in all its severity. He did not coddle the enemies of God and His Word. He denounced them in no uncertain terms (Mt 23). He taught us to pray, "Thy will be done." As Luther explains, this is a prayer that God would break every evil will and counsel and hinder whatever would not let us hallow the name of God nor

let His kingdom come. In the fierce struggle between Christ and Satan, and between Christ's people and the devil's minions (Gn 3:15), every true believer must and will take a definite stand. There can be no middle ground. Those on the Lord's side will fervently pray for the victory of the church over all its foes. Ps 139:21,22 expresses the underlying idea in these passages: "Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? ... I count them mine enemies." OT parallels to the imprecations in these Psalms are found in Jr 18:18-23; 20:10-13 and similar passages. NT parallels are found in Ga 1:8,9; 1 Cor 16:22; 1 Tm 1:20; Re 6:10. Ps 83:16,18 clearly demonstrates that these imprecations are not expressions of sinful human vindictiveness. They have a salutary, God-pleasing objective. In reality, they are a forceful preaching of the Law, proclaiming God's righteous wrath on those who do not turn from their malice toward God and His people. Their ultimate purpose is the glory of God. Finally, not to be overlooked is the Messianic element in some of these Psalms such as 69 and 109. In these instances David utters these imprecations by divine inspiration as the mouthpiece of Christ. For a thorough treatment of the question see Henry Hammann, "*Die sogenannten Rachepsalmen,*" *Lehre und Wehre,* 1924, pp 225-230; 292-303; Howard Osgood, "Dashing the Little Ones against the Rock," *Princeton Theological Review*, 1 (1903), pp 23-27; Chalmers Martin, "The Imprecations in the Psalms," *Princeton Theological Review*, 1 (1903), pp 537-553; Johannes Vos, "The Ethical Problem of the Imprecatory Psalms," *Westminster Theological Journal*, IV, pp 123-128; J.T. Mueller, "The Imprecatory Psalms," *CTM*, 12 (1941), pp 470-472; Raymond Surburg, "The Interpretation of the Imprecatory Psalms," *The Springfielder* (Vol. XXXIX, No. 3) December 1975, pp 88-102.

Gunkel's *Gattungsforschung*

Herman Gunkel (1862-1932), the father of form criticism *(Formgeschichte),* exerted a profound influence on the higher critical school of OT study. Gunkel tried to determine the type or literary genre *(Gattung)* of each Psalm by observing its formal characteristics, style, terminology, and rhetorical features. This kind of supposedly scientific analysis was called *Gattungsforschung,* a term which means literally "type research."

Once Gunkel thought he had discovered the genre of a Psalm, he next attempted to ascertain its origin in an assumed pre-literary stage of formulation. The factors in Israel's life and worship that produced the Psalm long before it was ever written down were designated the *Sitz im Leben* (its basis or setting in life). Discounting, of course, the information given in the superscriptions, Gunkel tried to determine the historical background, the *Sitz im Leben,* of each Psalm strictly on the basis of its content and according to a preconceived scheme of Israel's religious history. All of this purportedly scientific and scholarly work, which filled several ponderous volumes, was carried on under ground rules that excluded the principle that Scripture interprets Scripture. In its place the principles of evolution and rationalism were given free rein. Gunkel's method of research called for a vivid imagination, strong doses of conjecture and wild flights of fancy.

Long-before Gunkel arrived on the scene serious students of the Bible recognized the importance of knowing as much as possible about the historical background of a writing if it is to be interpreted correctly. They also realized the importance of recognizing the various literary types one finds in the Bible. Is a particular piece of writing prose or poetry? Is it a song or a sermon, a parable or a letter, history or some other type of literature? Is it to be understood literally or figuratively? All of these matters are essential elements in the historical-grammatical method of interpretation. Gunkel's approach, on the other hand, is that of the historical-critical method. The latter is the hermeneutic of those who regard the sacred Scriptures not as the verbally inspired and inerrant Word of God, but as a purely human literary work, the flawed and faulty fallible word of fallible men.

One of Gunkel's practices, however, that can profitably be imitated by all who study the Scriptures in their original languages is reported by James Muilenburg, the author of the introduction to Gunkel's book *The Psalms, A Form-Critical Introduction*. He informs us that Gunkel "knew how to *listen* to a text, and always

insisted that it be read aloud in order that the reader might the better discern its movement and direction, its rhythm and assonance, its key words and accents" (p IV).

As a result of his investigation, Gunkel concluded that the earliest Psalms were cult songs composed for public worship. These, he believed, were handed down orally and committed to writing in the Exile period or later. Individual songs which pious poets composed for their own use were a subsequent development. Gunkel's elaborate theories are summarized in the booklet referred to above, *The Psalms, A Form-Critical Introduction*. He claimed that he had discovered five principal varieties of Psalms:

1) Hymns;
2) Laments of the Community;
3) Royal Psalms;
4) Individual Laments;
5) Individual Songs of Thanksgiving.

The Hymns are songs of praise to God intended for the choral part of the services in the temple (e.g., Pss 8, 19, 29, 33). The Laments of the Community arose out of national calamities. In them the nation presents its cause to God and asks for His help (e.g., Pss 44,74, 79). The Royal Psalms are concerned with "a reigning Hebrew king" (e.g., Pss 2, 18, 20, 21, 45, 72, 101, 110, 132, 144:1-11). The Individual Laments are the cry of an individual to God for help in trying circumstances (e.g., Pss 3, 5, 6, 7, 13). Examples of the type described as Individual Songs of Thanksgiving are Pss 30, 32, and 34. Conspicuous by their absence in Gunkel's classification are the Messianic Psalms!

In addition to his basic groups, Gunkel detected a number of sub-classes or minor types:

1) Enthronement Songs (e.g., Pss 47, 93);
2) Psalms of Confidence (e.g., Pss 4, 11, 16, 23);
3) Wisdom Poetry (e.g., Pss 1, 37, 49);
4) Liturgies, which were intended for cultic use (e.g., Pss 42-43, 46);
5) Prophetic Liturgies, which are liturgical poems containing oracles in prophetic style (e.g., Pss 12, 75);
6) Mixed Poems (e.g., Pss 9-10, 40, 78).

Mowinckel's Theories

One of Gunkel's students, Sigmund Mowinckel of Norway, carried Gunkel's work forward and developed his ideas further. Mowinckel published a two-volume work, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, in which he claimed that nearly all the Psalms were cultic in origin, that is, that they were composed by the priests for Israel's temple worship. He argued that about 43 of them belong to the class known as "Enthronement Songs." The assumption was that on New Year's Day there was an annual celebration of Yahweh's enthronement as the universal king, comparable to the New Year's festival in Babylon, and that many of the Psalms originated in connection with this ceremony. A full description of the Babylonian festival and a thorough refutation of the theory that it had a counterpart in Israel will be found in Edward J. Young's *The Book of Isaiah* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Vol. 1, Appendix III, pp 494-499).

We can draw attention here to only one or two of the dozen reasons why Young rejects Mowinckel's claims. Reacting to Mowinckel's argument that the enthronement of Yahweh was an aspect of the Feast of Tabernacles, Young replies:

Is there any mention or allusion to this particular aspect of the Feast of Tabernacles? To this we would reply with an emphatic negative, and our reply involves the question of exegesis. We

cannot agree with the specific interpretation of the individual Psalms where Mowinckel believes that he finds the necessary allusions, references and indications.

With respect to the interpretation Mowinckel and his followers give to the Messianic Psalms, Young declares:

Von Rad's interpretation of the enthronement festival is based upon the assumption that the Psalms, such as the second Psalm, are not speaking primarily of the Messiah, but merely of what was customarily done in the case of the Davidic kings. Such an interpretation, we believe, is without warrant. For these reasons, we are constrained to reject the view that a festival of enthronement was held in ancient Israel.

K.A. Kitchen of the University of Liverpool in his book, *Ancient Orient and Old Testament* (Chicago: Intervarsity, 1966) likewise rejects Mowinckel's supposed festival for the enthronement of Yahweh. He writes (pp 102f):

There is no proper (i.e., explicit) evidence in the Old Testament for this at all. No such major festival features among the-feasts and rituals of the pentateuchal writings; the historical books know of passovers and renewals of covenant on significant occasions, but not of Enthronement or New Year celebrations.

Kitchen labels the suggestion that there was such a New Year's feast during the time of the monarchy "purely a speculation" and declares that it is "of no value at present." With respect to Mowinckel's exegesis of certain Psalms to support his theory, Kitchen writes (p 103f):

The phrase *YHWH malak* in certain Psalms [eg., Ps 93:1], despite assertions to the contrary, means simply "YHWH reigns" (or, " ... exercises kingship"), and not "YHWH has become king" (implying enthronement) as partisans of the theory have held. No adequate reason has been offered why Israel should import and celebrate an entirely alien type of festival from distant Babylon, and so far Canaan has failed to yield indisputable evidence for assumed intermediary forms.

Many higher critics today are themselves rather critical of Mowinckel's hypothesis. Typical of their attitude are the remarks of W. Stewart McCullough in *The Interpreter's Bible* (p 7):

[Mowinckel's] thesis was that on the New Year's Day in Israel there was an annual celebration of the Lord's enthronement as the universal king, and that many psalms are to be regarded as having originated about the New Year celebration.
In actual fact we know almost nothing about the New Year celebration in Old Testament times, and the theory that it was marked by a ritual drama (comparable to the New Year's festival in Babylon) is highly speculative. Moreover, while much of Israel's popular religion must have moved on a fairly primitive level, the idea that the Hebrew God could in any real sense be enthroned annually was poor theology, and could hardly have been seriously held by the nation's religious leaders. At the most there may have been some public recognition on New Year's Day of the Lord's sovereign power. To suppose that a large proportion of the extant psalms in Israel should have had their origin in this connection is quite improbable.

Norman H. Snaith in his book *The Jewish New Year Festival* (London: SPCK, 1947) carefully analyzes Mowinckel's claims and declares (p 195): "No theory has ever received such a measure of general approbation with so little critical examination." Though one can not agree with Snaith's critical assumptions regarding the Old Testament, one must recognize the validity of his rejection of Mowinckel's theories concerning the Coronation or Enthronement Psalms (p 196):

> Our charge is that the whole of Mowinckel's position in respect of these Coronation Psalms has been built up independently of any definite evidence either from the Old Testament or from Jewish sources generally.

Snaith also points out that Mowinckel "makes no attempt to date either his psalms or his Babylonian material, and seems to assume that any evidence from Mesopotamia of whatever date is equally at his disposal for any period of Hebrew history" (p 210). He is highly critical, and properly so, of the modern theory of the origin of religion, which assumes that the "development of religion can be paralleled all the world over, and that all people have passed through similar stages of development" (*ibid.*)

Finally, it is to be noted that H-J. Kraus, one of the most recent commentators on the Psalms, also rejects the supposition that there was such an annual festival of Yahweh's enthronement in ancient Israel (1, 201-205).

It is regrettable that so much time and ink must be spent in refuting fanciful fantasies such as Mowinckel's, but even more regrettable is the fact that so many are deceived by such pseudo-scientific, pseudo-scholarly nonsense.

Luther and the Psalms

Luther's Appreciation of the Psalter

Luther repeatedly expressed his deep appreciation and love for this book of the Bible. Typical statements of his are the following:

> Every Christian ought to know the Psalms as well as he knows his five fingers. Then the four evangelists will also be understood properly (St. L., XXII: 781).

> What is the Psalter but prayer and praise to God, that is, a book of hymns? ... In this book the dear Holy Spirit supplies us with words and thoughts for our prayers and petitions to our heavenly Father (St. L., IV: 215).

> The Psalter ought to be a precious and beloved book, if for no other reason than this: it promises Christ's death and resurrection so clearly and pictures his kingdom and the condition and nature of all Christendom it might well be called a little Bible. In it is comprehended most beautifully and briefly everything that is in the entire Bible. It is really a fine enchiridion or handbook. In fact, I have a notion that the Holy Spirit wanted to take the trouble himself to compile a short Bible and book of examples of all Christendom or all saints, so that anyone who could not read the whole Bible would here have anyway almost an entire summary of it, comprised in one little book (Am. Ed., 35:254).

> Where does one find finer words of joy than in the psalms of praise and thanksgiving? There you look into the hearts of all the saints, as into fair and pleasant gardens, yes, as into heaven itself. There you see what fine and pleasant flowers of the heart spring up from all sorts of fair and happy thoughts toward God, because of his blessings. On the other hand, where do you find deeper, more sorrowful, more pitiful words of sadness than in the psalms of lamentation? There

again you look into the hearts of all the saints, as into death, yes, as into hell itself. How gloomy and dark it is there, with all kinds of troubled forebodings about the wrath of God! So, too, when they speak of fear and hope, they use such words that no painter could so depict for you fear or hope, and no Cicero or other orator so portray them (Am. Ed., 35:255f).

The Psalter is the book of all saints; and everyone, in whatever situation he may be, finds in that situation psalms and words that fit his case, that suit him as if they were put there just for his sake, so that he could not put it better himself, or find or wish for anything better.
In a word, if you would see the holy Christian Church painted in living color and shape, comprehended in one little picture, then take up the Psalter. There you have a fine, bright, pure mirror that will show you what Christendom is. Indeed you will find in it also yourself and the true *gnothi seauton,* as well as God himself and all creatures (Am. Ed., 35:256f).

Luther's Lectures on the Psalter

Luther was made a doctor of theology by the University of Wittenberg on October 19, 1512. As Staupitz's successor, he now had the responsibility to lecture on the Holy Scriptures. He decided to take up the Psalms and began to prepare himself for the task. Luther held his first lecture on this book of the Bible on August 16, 1513, in the lectorium of the Black Cloister at 6:00 a.m. He met his classes twice a week, on Mondays and Fridays, at this early hour. This series of lectures was brought to a close on October 21, 1515.

In these lectures Luther followed the traditional practice of his day of finding a fourfold meaning in the text:

1) The literal sense, or literal-prophetic, according to which the text was interpreted to refer to Christ (e.g., in Ps 31:1 the words "Deliver me in thy righteousness" are a prayer of Christ);
2) The allegorical sense, relating the text to the church (e.g., in Ps 31:1 Christ prays for the members of His body as its Head);
3) The tropological sense, applying the text to the individual believer (e.g., the words of Ps 31:1 are also the individual's prayer);
4) The anagogical sense, relating the text to the eschatological end of all things (e.g., Ps 31:1 refers also to our final salvation in the kingdom of glory).

Later, of course, Luther abandoned this artificial scheme of exegesis and insisted that Scripture must be interpreted according to the literal, or historical-grammatical, sense. (See his comments in his Genesis commentary, Am. Ed., 1:231-234; 2:150-164.)

Luther had the printer in the Augustinian monastery in Wittenberg, Johann Gruenenberg, print the Latin text of the Psalms with a large space between the lines and a wide margin on each page. He prepared for his lectures by inserting interlinear and marginal notes in his own copy. The notes between the lines *(glossae)* explained individual words and phrases. The notes in the margins *(scholiae)* explained the general thought. In the classroom, he dictated these notes to the students, each of whom he had furnished with a printed copy of the text like his own. Difficult words he repeated or pronounced slowly syllable by syllable.

In preparing for his lectures Luther used the works of commentators ranging from Augustine (d. 430) and Cassiodorus (d. ca. 570) to Nicholas of Lyra (d. 1340) and Paul of Burges (d. 1425). He frequently cites the French humanist Lefevre d' Etaples (Faber Stapulensis), who published a commentary on the Psalms in 1509. At this time Luther used the Vulgate, not the Hebrew, as a basis for his exegesis.

Many scholars believe that Luther discovered the evangelical meaning of the term "righteousness" while preparing these lectures. As he worked through the first 30 Psalms, he regarded *iustitia* as God's punitive righteousness, according to which He condemns and threatens with death all who transgress His holy law. But when he came to Ps 31:1 with its prayer, "Deliver me in thy righteousness," he became aware that *iustitia* must

have another meaning. Turning to Paul's Epistle to the Romans, Luther centered his attention especially on Ro 1:16,17. Suddenly it became clear to him that the righteousness of God which is revealed in the Gospel is a justifying righteousness which God gives the sinner. Through faith the righteousness of Christ, complete forgiveness, and eternal life become the sinner's own. *Iustus ex fide vivit.*

This discovery has been termed Luther's "Tower Experience" because, according to a Table Talk of 1532, it occurred in the tower of the Black Cloister in Wittenberg, where Luther had his study. As Luther recalls it,

> The words "righteous" and "righteousness of God" struck my conscience like lightning. When I heard them I was exceedingly terrified. If God is righteous [I thought], he must punish. But when by God's grace I pondered, in the tower and heated room of this building, over the words, "he who through faith is righteous shall live" [Rom. 1-17] and "the righteousness of God" [Rom. 3:21], I soon came to the conclusion that if we, as righteous men, ought to live from faith and if the righteousness of God should contributed to the salvation of all who believe, then salvation won't be our merit but God's mercy. My spirit was thereby cheered. For it's by the righteousness of God that we're justified and saved through Christ. These words [which had before terrified me] now became more pleasing to me. The Holy Spirit unveiled the Scriptures for me in this tower (Am. Ed., 54:193f).

In another Table Talk of 1538 Luther refers to this episode again (Am. Ed., 54:308f), and in the Preface to his Latin Writings, written in 1545, he once more recalls that momentous event in his life:

> Meanwhile, I had already during that year [1519, when Luther made the pact with Miltitz at Altenburg that he would drop the controversy if his opponents would do the same] returned to interpret the Psalter anew. I had confidence in the fact that I was more skilful, after I had lectured in the university on St. Paul's epistles to the Romans, to the Galatians, and the one to the Hebrews. I had indeed been captivated with an extraordinary ardor for understanding Paul in the Epistle to the Romans. But up till then it was not the cold blood about the heart, but a single word in Chapter 1 [:17], "In it the righteousness of God is revealed," that had stood in my way. For I hated that word "righteousness of God," which according to the use and custom of all the teachers, I had been taught to understand philosophically regarding the formal or active righteousness, as they called it, with which God is righteous and punishes the unrighteous sinner. Though I lived as a monk without reproach, I felt that I was a sinner before God with an extremely disturbed conscience. I could not believe that he was placated by my satisfaction. I did not love, yes, I hated the righteous God who punishes sinners, and secretly, if not blasphemously, certainly murmuring greatly, I was angry with God, and said, "As if, indeed, it is not enough, that miserable sinners, eternally lost through original sin, are crushed by every kind of calamity by the law of the decalogue, without having God add pain to pain by the gospel and also by the gospel threatening us with his righteousness and wrath!" Thus I raged with a fierce and troubled conscience. Nevertheless, I beat importunately upon Paul at that place, most ardently desiring to know what St. Paul wanted.
> At last, by the mercy of God, meditating day and night, I gave heed to the context of the words, namely, "In it the righteousness of God is revealed, as it is written, 'He who through faith is righteous shall live.'" There I began to understand that the righteousness of God is that by which the righteous lives by a gift of God, namely by faith. And this is the meaning: the righteousness of God is revealed by the gospel, namely, the passive righteousness with which merciful God justifies us by faith, as it is written, "He who through faith is righteous shall live." Here I felt that I was altogether born again and had entered paradise itself through open gates. There a totally

other face of the entire Scripture showed itself to me. Thereupon I ran through the Scriptures from memory. I also found in other terms an analogy, as the work of God, that is, what God does in us, the power of God, with which he makes us strong, the wisdom of God, with which he makes us wise, the strength of God, the salvation of God, the glory of God.

And I extolled my sweetest word with a love as great as the hatred with which I had before hated the word "righteousness of God." Thus that place in Paul was for me truly the gate to paradise. Later I read Augustine's *The Spirit and the Letter*, where contrary to hope I found that he, too, interpreted God's righteousness in a similar way, as the righteousness with which God clothes us when he justifies us. Although this was heretofore said imperfectly and he did not explain all things concerning imputation clearly, it nevertheless was pleasing that God's righteousness with which we are justified was taught. Armed more fully with these thoughts, I began a second time to interpret the Psalter. And the work would have grown into a large commentary, if I had not again been compelled to leave the work begun, because Emperor Charles V in the following year convened the diet of Worms (Am. Ed., 34:336-338).

A large literature has been generated by the lively debate of scholars regarding the exact date of this "Tower Experience." Some place it as early as 1511, 1512, or 1513, others in 1514, and still others in 1518 or 1519. The late dating is based on an interpretation of what Luther says in 1545. Those favoring the earlier date base their argument on the theology that appears in the lectures of 1513-15 and either assume that Luther was confused in later years about the actual sequence of events or interpret his remarks differently. The date 1514 is widely accepted, but Saarnivaara and Green argue persuasively for 1518. For some further reading on this question see:

Bainton, Roland H., *Here I Stand* (New York, Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1950), pp 60-67.
Boehmer, Heinrich, *Luther in the Light of Recent Research* (New York: Christian Herald, 1916),
       pp 83-85.
Boehmer, Heinrich, *Road to Reformation* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1946), pp 87-117.
Green, Lowell, How Melanchthon Helped Luther Discover the Gospel (Fallbrook, Cal.:
              Verdict Publications, 1980).
Heick, Otto W., "The Just Shall Live by Faith," *Concordia Theological Monthly*, XLIII:9
       (October, 1972), pp 579-590.
Plass, Ewald, *What Luther Says* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1959), Vol. III, pp1225ff.
Preus, H., "From Luther to Paul," *Luther Theological Seminary Review* (October, 1967), pp 23f.
Ritter, Gerhard, *Luther: His Life and Work* (New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, 1963), pp
       50f.
Rupp, Gordon, *Luther's Progress to the Diet of Worms*, 1521 (Chicago: Wilcox & Follett, 1951),
       pp 36-47.
Rupp, Gordon, *The Righteousness of God* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1953), pp 121-137.
Saarnivaara, Uuras, *Luther Discovers the Gospel* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1951), pp 48f, 92ff.
Schwiebert, E.G., *Luther and His Times* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1950), pp 285ff.

That Luther's new insight is not reflected immediately in all its ramifications in all of his theological activity should not be surprising. He had to struggle to rethink and to reevaluate his entire theological heritage in the light of his new understanding. In his popular biography of Luther, *Here I Stand* Roland Bainton writes (p 68):

Luther's new insights contained already the marrow of his mature theology. The salient ideas were present in the lectures on Psalms and Romans from 1513 to 1516. What came after was but

commentary and sharpening to obviate misconstruction. The center about which all the petals clustered was the affirmation of the forgiveness of sins through the utterly unmerited grace of God made possible by the cross of Christ.

Wilhelm Pauck in his introduction to *Luther: Lectures on Romans* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961) explains Luther's development in this way (p XXXVIII):

Those interpreters of Luther are probably correct who assume that he achieved the decisive insight before he took up the letter to the Romans. Luther himself gives support to their thesis, not only by his remark (in the Preface) that after his rediscovery he read Augustine's *On the Spirit and the Letter* (for, in the lectures on Romans, he shows himself acquainted with this treatise), but also by the whole manner of theologizing that he displays in the earlier lectures on The Psalms.
It should not surprise anyone that in the *Dictata super Psalmos* as well as in the lectures on Romans, Luther is speaking as a man who still is feeling his way toward a theological position of his own. This agrees with his own interpretation of himself as one who *scribendo et docendo profecit* (made progress while he wrote and taught).

Among those who accept the early dating for Luther's rediscovery of the Gospel there is a difference of opinion as to whether he was working on Psalm 31 or 71 at the time. It was Luther's method to begin his treatment of a Psalm with an "argument" or summary. The argument for Ps 31 reads: *De modo vere poenitendi, quod ex nullis operibus peccata remittuntur, sed sola misericordia dei non imputantis.* The words *ex nullis operibus* are truly remarkable, especially when one considers that Luther had been steeped in Catholic theology throughout his years of training.

Schwiebert, Rupp, and others think that Luther's comments from Ps 31 onward do not yet reflect a fundamental change, but that those following Ps 71 do. Whatever the historical facts in this matter may be, Rupp is right, however, when he observes, "It has been said, with but slight exaggeration, that the whole of the later Luther may be found in the lectures on the Psalms" (*Luther's Progress to the Diet of Worms*, 1521, p 39).

In 1517 Luther published a German interpretation of the Seven Penitential Psalms, a popular work for the lay Christian. In it he says little of justification by faith and still retains such Catholic terminology as *gratia infusa.*

In 1519 he began a second series of lectures on the Psalms. These, as was indicated in his own account of 1545, continued till 1521. Now he used the Hebrew text as a basis for his discussion. This series, more scholarly than the first, covered the first 21 Psalms and was also published.

Still another exegetical treatment, covering the first 25 Psalms, was published by Luther in 1530.

Luther had begun his study of Hebrew soon after Reuchlin's *Rudimenta* was published in 1506. Luther was then still in Erfurt. He is said to have visited a Jewish physician while he was in Rome (1510-11) in order to perfect his knowledge of Hebrew. It is hard to tell how much of Luther's reference to the Hebrew in his early Psalms lectures is based on his own study of the original and how much on helps such as Jerome's Latin translation of the Psalms. Kooiman says that in 1513 "Luther scarcely knew a word of either Hebrew or Greek" (*Luther and the Bible*, p 28). He began the study of Greek with the help of John Lang, who was professor of Greek at Wittenberg from 1512 to 1516. When Melanchthon came to Wittenberg in August of 1518 Luther attended his lectures on Homer "in order to become a Greek" (Kooiman, p 73).

Reuchlin's Hebrew text of the seven penitential Psalms appeared in 1512, and in the summer of 1513 Luther referred to it in the scholia to Psalm 4. Luther used this text as a basis for his *Sieben Buszpsalmen* of 1517, In 1516 the first edition of a complete Hebrew Psalter appeared in Germany, and John Lang sent Luther a copy. Luther was a pioneer in using the latest tools available to scholars for biblical research.

Luther's Use of the Psalms in Private and Public Worship

It was a rule of the monasteries in Luther's day to pray through the whole Psalter every 15 days. Perhaps it was his resulting familiarity with the Psalms which he had long known by heart, that induced Luther to begin his exegetical lectures with this book.

Luther drew heavily on the Psalms when he himself began to write poems and hymns. He composed 57 poems in all, 42 of which were spiritual hymns. Some of these were original works, while others were revisions of old hymns.

It was Luther's desire to provide congregations with an opportunity to sing in the services. He began writing poetry in 1523. His first effort was a poem written in memory of the first two martyrs of the Lutheran Church, It is a ballad that begins with the words, "O sing unto the Lord a new song," words which occur in Ps 96:1; 98:1, and elsewhere in the Psalter. The church of the Reformation did indeed sing a *shir chadash,* a new song. This poem also drew on the words of Ps 116:10. A portion of it has become a hymn, "Flung to the Heedless Winds" (The Lutheran Hymnal, # 259).

Luther's first hymn intended for congregational singing was "Dear Christians, One and All, Rejoice" (TLH, #387). Composed in 1523, it utilized Ps 33:1; 40:17; and 118:24. In the same year Luther paraphrased in poetic form for congregational use Pss 12, 14, 67, 128, and 130. "A Mighty Fortress," based on Ps 46, is believed by some scholars to have been written in 1527, by others in 1529.

At his death on February 18, 1546, Luther prayed the words of Ps 31:5, "Into thine hand I commit my spirit." His last words reportedly were, *"Ich fahr dahin in Fried und Freuden,"* a recasting of Simeon's hymn in Luke 2:29-32, which is based on Ps 90:5. At Luther's funeral the congregation sang his hymn *Aus tiefer Not schrei ich zu dir ,* "From Depths of Woe I cry to Thee" (TLH, #329).

The following hymns by Luther which are based on Psalms appear in *The Lutheran Hymnal*:

260	-	Ps 12 -	"O Lord, Look Down from Heaven, Behold"
262	-	Ps 46 -	"A Mighty Fortress"
267	-	Ps 124 -	"If God Had Not Been on Our Side"
313	-	Ps 118 -	"O Lord, We Praise Thee" (Stanzas 2 and 3 by Luther)
329	-	Ps 130 -	"From Depths of Woe"
500	-	Ps 67 -	"May God Bestow on Us His Grace"

The pattern set by Luther in drawing on the Psalms for inspiration in writing hymns has been followed by many others. According to *The Handbook to the Lutheran Hymnal* (p 609), 175 hymns in *The Lutheran Hymnal* are based on Psalms. In addition, there are countless quotations and allusions in other hymns.

Thus the Psalter continues to this day to serve God's people in their personal and public worship. The Old Testament believers called it the *Sepher tehillim;* for the New Testament church it is likewise "The Book of Praises." We can be certain that it will continue to serve God's purpose in giving it to His people until He translates them to the realms of glory and transforms their songs of praise into an eternal, celestial Hallelujah.

Outline of Psalm 22
by Prof. Aug. Pieper

[Quartalschrift Jan. 1905, p 35f; Translated by Wilbert Gawrisch]

The opinion is widespread that no definite outline is to be found in the individual books and parts of the Scriptures. The very opposite is true; everywhere an outline corresponding to the subject matter is obvious. The poetic parts of Scripture, in particular, excel in a clear, logical line of thought; and the Psalms, even the alphabetic ones, are no exception. The principle of Hebrew poetry, the parallelism of members, according to

which the individual lines of a verse and the individual smaller or larger verse groups are arranged in a synonymous, antithetic, or synthetic relationship to one another, is in itself a guarantee of this.

The 22nd Psalm does not have a more detailed outline than the rest of the Psalms. We want to show by way of example here in the first part, however, that the logical arrangement of the thoughts extends to the smallest detail. The second part we have outlined only according to its larger thought patterns.

The *theme* is in the superscription: *The Doe of the Dawn*. Stripped of its figurative language it is: *The Lord's Agony in Death and Joy in Deliverance*. If one understands it from the point of view presented in the exposition as the expression of His spiritual state in the hour before and after the favorable turn of His suffering, one will have to formulate it something like this: *The Fervent Prayer of the Savior in the Hour When God Forsook Him and Then Again Embraced Him*. Under this theme the two chief parts, vv. 2-22 and 23-32, naturally fall into place as:

1. His lament while forsaken;
2. His song of thanksgiving after His Deliverance.

The plan in detail is as follows:

The Savior's Great Prayer in the Hour when the Judgment of God Comes on Him for Our Redemption

I. His heart-rending lament upon being forsaken by God, vv. 2-22.

   A. He presents His having been forsaken by God as an incomprehensible fact, vv. 2-11.
      1. It is a fact, vv. 2-3
         a. He says it is: You have forsaken me, v. 2a
         b. He describes His forsakenness, vv. 2b-3
            1) He cries, but no help comes to Him, v. 2b
            2) He calls incessantly but receives no answer, v. 3
      2. It is incomprehensible, vv. 4-11
         a. For You are the Holy One, vv. 4-6
            1) As such You are praised by Israel, v. 4b
            2) As such You manifested Yourself to the fathers, vv. 5-6
         b. But to me You now appear otherwise, vv. 7-9
            1) You do not regard me as a man, but as a worm, v. 7a
            2) You abandon me to mockery, vv. 7b-9
               a) To disdain in the heart, v. 7b
               b) To scornful gestures, v. 8
               c) To derisive talk, v. 9
         c. But You ought to deal with me above all as the Holy One, vv. 10-11
            1) By Your special decree and act I was born a man, v. 10a
            2) From my earliest youth You taught me to trust in You, v. 10b
            3) You took me up from my mother's womb when no one else received me, v. 11a
            4) From my childhood until now You have shown Yourself to be my God, v. 11b

Transition: How can You forsake me in this way? V. 12 forms the transition to the second half of this part, bringing to a close the discussion of the riddle with the plea for deliverance and introducing the following with the assertion that the distress is pressing Him hard, and there is no helper.

B. He describes His personal condition of distress at having been forsaken by God as having become serious in the extreme, vv. 13-19.

    1. First description (Emphasis on the inner distress), vv. 13-16

        a. My enemies have encircled me (outward trouble), vv. 13,14

            1) They are many, v. 13a

            2) They are strong, v. 13b

            3) They are enraged, v. 14

        b. My life ebbs away (inner distress), vv. 15,16

            1) I have lost control of my members, v. 15b

            2) My courage has melted away, v. 15c

            3) My strength is dried up, v. 16a,b

            4) You are laying me into the dust of death, v. 16c

    2. Second description (Emphasis on the outward trouble), vv. 17-19

        a. Those who have encircled me are utterly wicked, v. 17a,b

        b. They do their worst to me, vv. 17c-19

            1) They lacerate my hands and feet, v. 17c

            2) My worst pain is their greatest delight, v. 18

            3) They treat me as one already dead by dividing my clothes, v. 19

C. He addresses Himself to His-God with a fervent appeal for deliverance, vv. 20-22.

    1.* Asking His *God* to come to His aid, v. 20 (Who?)

        a. The Lord, "Jehovah," the God of the Covenant, whose faithfulness still stands firm, v. 20a

        b. The Mighty One, who even in this trouble is still able to help, v. 20b

    2. Asking Him to come to His aid *effectively*, vv. 20-21 (How?)

        a. Coming to His side, v. 20a

        b. Coming with haste, v. 20b

        c. Forcefully snatching Him from danger, v. 21a

    3. Asking Him to rescue Him *from death*, vv. 21-22 (from what?)

        a. From death inflicted by dogs, v. 21

        b. From death inflicted by the lion, v. 22a

        c. From death inflicted by bulls, v. 22b

Transition: The transition to the second chief part is effected here by the perfect form of the final verb in v. 22.

II. His song of thanksgiving for the help He has received, vv. 23-32.

A. He solemnly promises in thankful praise to glorify God's Name in Israel, vv. 23-27.

    1. He wishes to praise Him publicly in the congregation, v. 23

    2. He wishes to summon all of God's people to give glory to Him, v. 24

    3. He wishes to relate to them what the Lord has done for Him, v. 25

    4. He wishes to pay His vows before the whole congregation and make them to share in the fruits of His redemption, in order that they may praise God and have everlasting life, vv. 26,27

B. The heathen, too, He wants to induce to glorify God, vv. 28-32.

    1. The whole world is to experience God's salvation, be converted, and worship God, v. 28.

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* In agitated forms of prayer such as this the words do not as a rule follow the order of a single point of view, but are mingled together according to various principles of division. We are dividing here according to the subject matter.

a. Because as it is He reigns over them according to His power, v. 29a
b. Because He desires to reign over them now according to His grace, v. 29b
2. All classes of men on earth are to share in His grace, v. 30
3. Without interruption throughout all ages a seed will serve Him and praise His Name, v. 31
4. To succeeding generations they will pass on the righteousness which God bestows—that He alone has done and has accomplished everything, v. 32

Homiletical Note: It is self-evident that a great many sermon outlines can easily be derived and assembled from this outline. Nevertheless, one will do well not to break up the Psalm into parts that are too small. We would advise making six sermons of it.

I.   Vv. 1-3, in other words, what is included in the outline under I, A, l. This could serve as the basis for the first part of the sermon, while in a second added part one would treat the practical significance of Christ's being forsaken by God for our salvation.
II.   Vv. 4-11, everything in the outline included under I, A, 2; again stressing its importance for us from various angles.
III.   Vv. 13-19, outline 1,B,l & 2.
IV.   Vv. 20-22, outline 1,C,1,2,3.
V.   Vv. 23-27.
VI.   Vv. 28-32.