

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CATHOLIC CHAPLAINS
“Using Selected Psalms for Spiritual Support and Pastoral Presence”

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Thursdays, June 23 and June 30, 2011
12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m. Central Time

SESSION ONE: JUNE 23, 2011

A General Introduction to the Book of Psalms, Part 1

An initial comment: referring to God / using God’s name . . .

A. Where found

Jewish Bibles
Christian Bibles

B. An Anthology of diverse material, broadly termed hymns

Categories 1 (Categories 2 –a different set of categories, next week)

Hymns	8, 19, 33, 66, etc.
Enthronement Hymns	29, 47, 93, 95-99
Songs of Zion	46, 48, 76, 84, etc.
Laments	
Individual	3-7, 9-10, 13-14, etc.
Community	12, 44, 58, 60, etc. [137, also Sacred history]
Wisdom Psalms	1, 19, 36-37, 49, etc.
Liturgies	15, 24, 50, 68, etc.

(Sources: *New Oxford Annotated Bible* [NRSV], Bruce M. Metzger and Roland E. Murphy, eds. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 674; (Source: Lawrence Boadt, *Reading the Old Testament: An Introduction*, New York and Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 1984), 282)

C. Who (did not) write the Psalms

David
 3-9, 11-32, but problems with 30 (and 137)

Moses

Asaph

Solomon

Korah

D. INTERACTIVE DISCUSSION WITH GROUP

Using the full psalm
Using only PART of a psalm
One on ones; group setting

E. STUDY: A LAMENT PSALM

Which translation / why: New Revised Standard Version - NRSV

An initial comment: referring to God / using God's name . . .

In Judaism there is a tradition of not using God's "personal" name . . . which in the Hebrew is represented by the Hebrew letters *Yud Hey Vav Hey*.

People handle this in many ways. Variations: LORD, the LORD; *HaShem* [the Name]; the Hebrew word, *Adonai*; the English letters YHVH or YHWH; Yahveh/Yahweh; the term, Eternal, the Eternal; God, [God].

The problem with LORD is that it is a male term, as in Lord and Lady.
I shall substitute [God] for LORD, or the LORD; and [God] for he or his.

This makes for some wording which sounds a bit forced, but it avoids both using the term LORD or one of God's personal names.

INTERACTIVE DISCUSSION WITH GROUP

Using the FULL psalm

23, 121, 133, 134

Using only PART of a psalm

23, 137

One on ones; group setting

STUDY: A LAMENT PSALM

Psalm 6

[Prayer for Recovery from Grave Illness]

- (1) To the leader: with stringed instruments [instrumental music]; according to The Sheminith. A Psalm of David.
- ¹(2) O [God] do not rebuke me in your anger,
or discipline me in your wrath.
- ²(3) Be gracious to me, O [God] for I am languishing;
O [God], heal me, for my bones are shaking with terror.
- ³(4) My soul also is struck with terror,
while you, O [God]—how long?
- ⁴(5) Turn, O [God], save my life;
deliver me for the sake of your steadfast love.
- ⁵(6) For in death there is no remembrance of you;
in Sheol who can give you praise?

- 6 (7) I am weary with my moaning;
every night I flood my bed with tears;
I drench my couch with my weeping.
- 7(8) My eyes waste away because of grief;
they grow weak because of all my foes.
- 8 (9) Depart from me, all you workers of evil,
for [God] has heard the sound of my weeping.
- 9 (10) [God] has heard my supplication;
[God] accepts my prayer.
- 10 (11) All my enemies shall be ashamed and struck with terror;
they shall turn back, and in a moment be put to shame.

Source: New Revised Standard Version (Revised by DJZ)

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SESSION TWO: JUNE 30, 2011

A General Introduction to the Book of Psalms, Part 2

A. Categories 2

Songs of Trust 11, 16, 23, 27, etc.
Thanksgivings 18, 30, 32, 34, etc.
Sacred History 78, 105-106, 135-137
Royal Psalms 2, 18, 20-21, 45, etc.

[Penitential 6, 32, 38, 51, etc. (Boadt, 290)]

B. Divisions of the book of Psalms

Psalms 1-41; 42-72; 73-89; 90-106; and 107-150
(Probably to mimic five books of the Torah)

C. Features

Acrostics
Superscriptions
A dedicatory statement, or explanation
Group/individual/how to be recited (musical instrument)
Selah

D. Psalms are spoken in an individual voice; or in a group voice

E. STUDY: Psalm characteristics

With Proverbs and Job, one of longest books

**Hebrew poetry:
Metaphor, Simile
Parallelism
Repetition**

F. STUDY: A HEALING PSALM

Biblical poetry is marked by the use of the employment of a fondness for alphabetical acrostics, metaphor and simile, parallelism, and repetition.

METAPHOR

Psalm 23:1

[God] is my shepherd, I shall not want.

SIMILE

Psalm 42:1 [2H]

As a deer longs for flowing streams,
so my soul longs for you, O God.

PARALLELISM

Synonymous: theme repeats

Psalm 83:14

As fire consumes the forest, as the flame sets the mountains
ablaze

Antithetic: theme contrasted

Psalm 90:6

In the morning it flourishes and is renewed;
in the evening it fades and withers.

Synthetic: carries on idea

Psalm 2:6

I have set my ruler on Zion, my holy hill.

Chiastic: A, B, B', A'

Psalm 6:8-10 (9-11 H)

^{8 (9)} Depart from me, all you workers of evil,
for [God] has heard the sound of my weeping.

⁹⁽¹⁰⁾ [God] has heard my supplication;
[God] accepts my prayer.

¹⁰⁽¹¹⁾ All my enemies shall be ashamed and struck with
terror; they shall turn back, and in a moment be put to shame.

Stair-like: builds on a theme [Also, REPETITION]

Psalm 29:1-5

- 1 Ascribe to [God], O heavenly beings,
ascribe to [God] glory and strength.
- 2 Ascribe to [God] the glory of [God's] name;
worship [God] in holy splendor.
- 3 The voice of [God] is over the waters;
the God of glory thunders,
[God], over mighty waters.
- 4 The voice of [God] is powerful;
the voice of [God] is full of majesty.
- 5 The voice of [God] breaks the cedars;
[God] breaks the cedars of Lebanon.

Source: W. O. E. Oesterley., *The Psalms*, London: SPCK, 1962.

STUDY: A HEALING PSALM

Psalm 30

[Thanksgiving for Recovery from Grave Illness]

- (1) A Psalm. A Song at the dedication of the temple [or, the house]. Of David.
- 1(2) I will extol you, [God], for you have drawn me up,
and did not let my foes rejoice over me.
- 2(3) O [God] my God, I cried to you for help,
and you have healed me.
- 3(4) O [God], you brought up my soul from Sheol,
restored me to life from among those gone down to the Pit.
- 4(5) Sing praises to [God], O you [God's] faithful ones,
and give thanks to [God's] holy name.
- 5(6) For [God's] anger is but for a moment;
[God's] favor is for a lifetime.
Weeping may linger for the night,
but joy comes with the morning.
- 6(7) As for me, I said in my prosperity,
"I shall never be moved."
- 7(8) By your favor, O [God],
you had established me as a strong mountain;
you hid your face;
I was dismayed.
- 8(9) To you, O [God], I cried,
and to [God] I made supplication:
- 9(10) "What profit is there in my death,
if I go down to the Pit?
Will the dust praise you?
Will it tell of your faithfulness?"
- 10(11) Hear, O [God], and be gracious to me!
O [God], be my helper!"
- 11(12) You have turned my mourning into dancing;
you have taken off my sackcloth
and clothed me with joy,
- 12(13) so that my soul may praise you and not be silent.
O [God] my God, I will give thanks to you forever.

Source: New Revised Standard Version (revised by DJZ)