



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond V27 N7 February 16, 2025

PSALMS: CELEBRATING CHRIST IN GOD'S HYMNBOOK

"Introduction to the Psalms"

THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

Bible Study

I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

"For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart."

Hebrews 4:12



What must I know about the book of Psalms?



It has been suggested that people have different "love languages." The same might be said regarding spiritual disciplines, with some preferring corporate disciplines like group worship, listening to sermons, and involvement in biblical community and with others preferring individual disciplines like prayer/solitude/silence, journaling, and fasting. It appears, too, that they give priority to different ones during different stages in their spiritual journey. Interestingly, Bible reading and study is one discipline that is beneficial throughout that journey. Understanding what one reads depends in part on understanding what is being read. Knowing who the author and original readers are is helpful, as is knowing the literary form and literary features of what is being read. Having a good study Bible is indispensable; the *NIV Study Bible* is one example, but there are others. Before reading the book of Psalms, reading the introduction to the book in the *NIV Study Bible* would be helpful. The following is a brief summary of selected portions of that introduction.

Title. The title "Psalms" is from the Greek translation of the Hebrew OT called the Septuagint (LXX). The Torah, the first five books, were likely completed near the middle of the 3rd century B.C., while the rest were completed by the middle of 2nd century B.C. The terms "Psalms" and "Psalter" referred to stringed instruments (such as the harp, lyre and lute), then to songs sung with their accompaniment.

Collection, Arrangement, and Date. The book of Psalms is a collection of collections. Many collections likely preceded our final compilation of Psalms. The formation of the Psalter probably began in the days of Solomon or perhaps earlier when temple liturgy began to take shape. "Additional collections expressly referred to in the present Psalter titles are: (1) the songs and/or psalms 'of the Sons of Korah' (Pss 42-49, 84-85, 87-88), (2) the psalms and/or songs 'of Asaph' (Pss 50; 73-83) and (3) the songs 'of ascent' (Pss 120-

34). In its final form the Psalter was divided into five Books (Pss 1-41; 42-72; 73-89; 90-106; 107-150), each of which was provided with a concluding doxology (see Pss 41:13; 72:18-19; 89:52; 106:48; 150). The first two divisions were likely pre-exilic. The division of the remaining psalms into three Books, thus attaining the number five, was probably in imitation of the five books of Moses" (842).

Authorship and Titles (or Superscriptions). Superscriptions are headings to all but 34 of the psalms. See the superscription to Psalm 6, "For the director of music. With stringed instruments. According to Sheminith. A psalm of David." While ancient—many are preexilic—and generally reliable, scholars generally do not consider them part of the inspired biblical text. Various kinds of information are contained in them, e.g., "(1) author, (2) name of collection, (3) type of psalm, (4) musical notations, (5) liturgical notations, and (6) brief indications of occasion for composition" (842). Superscriptions that refer to the historical setting for the psalm—fourteen psalms have them—frequently place the psalm in the history recorded in 1 and 2 Samuel (see Allan P. Ross, "Psalms," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament*, 783). But the occasion is often difficult to identify with certainty (cf. Ps 3).

Clearly, many authors contributed psalms to the book—including David. However, the Hebrew term (the *lamed* preposition) meaning "belonging to" that can indicate authorship can also mean "for the use of" or "dedicated to." And so, "As for Davidic authorship, there can be little doubt that the Psalter contains psalms composed by that noted singer and musician and that there was at one time a 'Davidic' psalter. This, however, may have also included psalms written concerning David, or concerning one of the later Davidic kings, or even psalms written in the manner of those he authored" (843). The term "Sela," which occurs in 39 psalms, is most likely a liturgical notation calling for a brief musical interlude or congregational response.

Read Psalm 113:1-9*Praise the LORD.**Praise the LORD, you his servants;**praise the name of the LORD.**2 Let the name of the LORD be praised,**both now and forevermore.**3 From the rising of the sun to the place where it sets,**the name of the LORD is to be praised.**4 The LORD is exalted over all the nations,**his glory above the heavens.**5 Who is like the LORD our God,**the One who sits enthroned on high,**6 who stoops down to look**on the heavens and the earth?**7 He raises the poor from the dust**and lifts the needy from the ash heap;**8 he seats them with princes,**with the princes of his people.**9 He settles the childless woman in her home**as a happy mother of children.**Praise the LORD.*

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Highlight the opening and closing lines in vv. 1 and 9 respectively.
- Mark the double-space between vv. 1a and 1b; 3 and 4; 6 and 7; 9a and 9b.
- Underline "Praise the LORD" and "Praise the name of the LORD" in v. 1b.
- Bracket "Let the name of the LORD be praised" in v. 2 and "the name of the LORD is to be praised" in v. 3.
- Underline "The LORD" and "his glory" and double underline "over all the nations" and "above the heavens" in v. 4.
- Circle "sits enthroned" in v. 5 and "stoops down" in v. 6.
- Circle "raises" and "lifts," underline "poor" and "needy," and double underline "dust" and "ash heap" in v. 7.
- Circle "childless woman" in v. 9.

What one word would you use to describe the **TONE** of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What one thing do you not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the **THEME** of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about _____."



DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. What do you notice about how Psalm 113 begins and ends?
 2. In the NIV translation, double-spaces are found between a number of verses in this psalm. What do these double-spaces indicate? Explain.
 3. The NIV divides the body of the psalm (vv. 1b-9a) into three parts: 1b-3; 4-6; 7-9a. If you were to outline the psalm, what would you call the first part (vv. 1b-3) and why?
 4. What kind of *parallelism* do you find in verse 1 (see commentary) and what makes you think so?
 5. What kind of *parallelism* do you find in verses 2 and 3, and what makes you think so?
 6. What would you call the second part (vv. 4-6) and why?
 7. Identify any figurative language you find in the second part.
 8. What would you call the third part (vv. 7-9) and why?
 9. Identify any emotive language you find in the third part.
 10. **Discussion:** Review the various types of psalms (see commentary) and identify the type Psalm 113.
-

Commentary On The Text

Recognizing the various types of psalms by their distinguishing features aids in interpretation. It would be nice to find a consensus regarding the number of types, their descriptions, and distinctive characteristics, but unfortunately, none exists. For example, the *NIV Study Bible* in its “Introduction” to the book of Psalms, identifies thirteen types (844), while Allen P. Ross, in his “Introduction” to the book, identifies eight types (“Psalms,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament*, 785-86). To make matters a little more confusing, the two authors label the types a bit differently, as do other scholars. The following are the major types identified by Ross.

Individual laments, which correspond to prayers for help out of distress. Structurally, they include 1) an introductory cry to God, followed by 2) a lament, 3) a confession of trust, 4) a petition, and 5) a concluding vow or expression of praise to God (e.g., Pss 3, 6, 13, 22, 42).

National laments, which follow the same pattern as the laments of individuals but are usually shorter. Each psalm addresses a national crisis that causes people to approach God together with their lament (e.g., Pss 44, 74, 79, 80, 83, 90).

Thanksgiving psalms, which include five elements: 1) a proclamation to praise God; 2) a summary of what God has done; 3) a report of the psalmist’s deliverance; 4) a renewed vow of praise; and 5) direct praise to God (e.g., Pss 21, 30, 32, 34, 40, 66).

Descriptive praise psalms (hymns), which offer direct praise to God. They follow a slightly different pattern: 1) a *call to praise*, is followed by 2) *the cause to praise*, and concludes with 3) *a new exhortation to praise God* (e.g., Pss 33, 36, 105, 111, 113, 117, 135).

Other psalm types include: *wisdom psalms*, *pilgrim psalms*, *royal psalms*, and *enthronement psalms*. Features that may be present in *wisdom psalms* include “better” sayings (Ps 119:72), numerical sayings (Ps 62:11-12a), admonitions to “sons” (Ps 34:11), blessing formulas (Ps 1:1), and contrasts between the righteous and the wicked (Pss 1:6; 49). *Pilgrim psalms* all have the heading, “A song of ascents,” most likely with reference to Israel “going up” to Jerusalem for one of the three annual festivals—Passover, Pentecost, Feast of Tabernacles (1Sa 1:3; Ps 122:4; Isa 30:29; see also Ex 23:17; Ps 42:4). *Royal psalms*, refer to some high point in the king’s life, such as his coronation (Ps 2), wedding (Ps 45), or going forth into battle (Pss 20; 144). Finally, *enthronement psalms* are characterized by the expression “the LORD reigns” (Pss 93; 96-97; 99), the LORD is

“the great King” (Pss 47; 95), or the LORD “comes to judge” (Ps 98). “Though something may be said for the enthronement psalms signifying characteristics of the reign of God at various stages, the fullest meaning of the terminology used pertains to the messianic kingdom” (Ross, 786).

Understanding Hebrew poetry’s most distinctive feature also aids in interpretation. “Hebrew poetry lacks rhyme and regular meter. Its most distinctive and pervasive feature is *parallelism*. Most poetic lines are composed of two (sometimes three) balanced segments . . . The second segment either echoes (*synonymous parallelism*) the first, contrasts (*antithetic parallelism*), or syntactically completes (*synthetic parallelism*) the first” (*NIV Study Bible*, 846, italics added). What’s more, there are different kinds of the *synonymous* and *synthetic* types. *Synonymous parallelism* can be *identical* (each element is synonymous) (Ps 24:1); *similar* (each element is similar) (Ps 19:2); *incomplete* (the second element of the previous line is repeated) (Jer 17:9); *continued* (the second element is repeated and built upon) (Ps 24:5). *Synthetic parallelism* can be *completion* (completes a thought) (Ps 2:6); *comparison* (draws an analogy) (Pr 15:17); *reason* (gives a reason) (Pr 26:4); *conceptual* (uses a theme element) (Ps 1:1). Two less frequently used types, *climactic* (builds on the same word or phrase) (Pr 29:1) and *emblematic* (makes use of simile or metaphor) (Ps 42:1; Pr 25:25) (see “Types of Hebrew Parallelism,” *NIV Study Bible*, 859).

One final observation is in order. Certain psalms are alphabetically arranged as *acrostics*, each verse beginning with a different letter of the Hebrew alphabet in consecutive order (e.g., Pss 9-10, 25, 34, 37, 111-112, 145). “This style is also used in Psalm 119 where each of the eight verses in each of the 22 sections begins with the same letter” (Ross, 781). In the NIV each section of Psalm 119 is headed by a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet—*Aleph*, *Beth*, *Gimel*, *Daleth*, *He*, and so on.

Regarding Psalm 113, one author writes: “The psalmist called on all the Lord’s servants everywhere to praise God because even though He is exalted on high He lowers Himself to exalt the oppressed . . . Psalms 113-118 form the *Hallel*, a collection of songs sung at the great festivals of Israel—Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles—as well as on other holy days. At Passover, for example, Psalms 113-114 were sung before the meal, and 115-118 after it” (Ross, 875).

Word Studies/Notes

vv. 1, 9 **Praise the LORD** The psalm opens and closes by calling readers to praise the LORD.

vv. 1a and 1b; 3 and 4;
6 and 7; 9a and 9b The NIV uses a double-space to indicate structure by marking divisions in the psalm. Psalm 113 opens and closes with "Praise the LORD." It contains three other parts: A Call to Praise (vv. 1b-3) and A Cause for Praise (vv. 4-9a) that contains two reasons to praise the LORD (vv. 4-6 and 7-9a).

v. 1b **Praise the LORD . . .** Verse 1b provides an example of *synonymous* parallelism—"praise the LORD you . . ." (opening line); "you praise . . . the LORD" (parallel line).

vv. 2, 3 **Let the name . . .** These verses provide examples of *synthetic* parallelism where the second line completes the thought of the first in each verse. Interestingly, the second line of verse 2, referring to *time* ("now and forevermore"), is similar to the first line of verse 3, referring to *space* ("from rising of the sun to the place where it sets"). What's more, the last line of verse 3 repeats the idea of the first line of verse 2.

v. 4 **LORD, exalted, nations . . .** This verse contains an excellent example of *synonymous* parallelism.

v. 6 **sits, stoops down** Lyric poetry, e.g., the psalms, makes frequent use of *figurative* and *emotive* language. This verse uses *anthropomorphisms* to describe the LORD. He has no physical body, so he neither *sits* nor *stoops down*.

v. 7 **raises, poor, dust** This verse provides another example of *synonymous* parallelism: raises/lifts; poor/needy; dust/ash heap.

v. 9 **childless woman** "In Israel's history several barren women were given children (e.g., Sarah, Rachel, Hannah). To the Israelites, this was a mark of God's gracious blessing" (Allan P. Ross, "Psalms," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament*, 875).



APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL POINT OF THE LESSON

Bible study requires a modicum of biblical literacy, that is, knowing the author, original readers, and literary form, as well as literary features of what is being read.

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The “Living Questions” are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?
2. What does this passage teach me about myself?
3. What does this passage lead me to do?



PARENT CONNECTION

We all have that one friend that's a prayer warrior. For me it's Kim. She is the first person to say, "Let's stop and pray about this." With an uncanny ability to pray about what I don't even recognize is on my heart, she's the first person I reach out to when I need someone to stand in the gap for me. Somehow, she's able to turn a despondent plea for intervention or guidance into a praise recognizing God's sovereignty and holiness. Her prayers are poetry, beautifully worded because they are often God's very words. From helping kids learn how to pray to encouraging married couples to pray with and for each other, teaching others the art of prayer is a passion of hers. Many children struggle to pray both silently and out loud. They don't want to sound silly or "mess up" their words, or they just don't know how to pray because they've never done it. Kim encourages parents to help their kids learn to become faithful prayer warriors by starting small and simple. Allow your kids to pray at bedtime or over a meal. Let them know there's no right or wrong way to pray when our heart is turned toward God. Have them stop and ask God for help finding those missing shoes that you need to get out the door. If they see a special leaf or rock, encourage them to praise God for His creativity. When they mess up, help them understand the reassurance of confession. As we study the Psalms, use God's words to help your children understand the deepening relationship we can have with our Savior through prayer.

What Does The Bible Say?

Read Introduction to the Psalms.
1. What are the two parts of the Bible? In what part do you find the book of Psalms?
2. Skim through Psalms. What authors do you see mentioned?
3. Look through Psalm 119, the longest psalm. Write Psalm 119: 1-8 in your own words.

What Do You Think?

As you're looking through Psalms, what do you notice? Are there words you don't know? Can you imagine the Psalms as songs that were once sung? Record any thoughts you have about Psalms.

What Do You Do?

Starting with the letter A, and taking turns to complete the alphabet, have each family member praise God for something that begins with their letter. (A - I praise God for all our modern appliances. B - I thank God for basketball. Etc.)

CORE COMPETENCY: Bible Study

I read the Bible to know who God is and what He wants from my life.

MEMORY VERSE: Psalm 19:14

*"May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight,
Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer."*

KidPIX COUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRAL Kids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.
Questions: kids@wearecentral.org

_____ I completed my Bible Study
_____ I memorized this week's verse
_____ I brought my Bible to church
_____ I brought a friend



CHILD'S NAME

GRADE

PARENT SIGNATURE

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CENTRAL BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)

I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

Humanity (John 3:16)

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12)

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)

I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)

I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



CENTRAL VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15)

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)

I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)

I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)

I choose to esteem others above myself.



CENTRAL PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)

I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)

I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)

I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)

I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)

I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Tom Bulick (M.A. in Educational Leadership, Eastern Michigan University, Th.M. in Old Testament, and Ph.D. in Bible Exposition, Dallas Theological Seminary). For more than forty years, Tom has served as pastor, faculty member, and administrator. Tom was Vice President for Student Life and Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Trinity Western University (Vancouver, B.C.) from 1986 to 1998 and Spiritual Formation Pastor at Central Bible Church (Fort Worth, TX) from 1998 to 2022. He and his wife Ruth have one son, Zach.

Stephanie Thomas (B.B.A University of Texas at Arlington). Stephanie is married to James and they have five children: Elijah, Levi, Bo, Ella and Simon. Stephanie has attended Central Bible Church for more than 20 years, has been on staff since 2014, and now serves as Children's Minister.

The Scrolls Bible Study is a spiritual growth resource of Central Bible Church, Fort Worth, Texas.

© 2025 Central Bible Church.

Material researched, written and supervised by Dr. Tom Bulick. All Scripture referenced from the New International Version unless otherwise noted. This resource is freely distributed and may be copied without permission.



**CENTRAL
BIBLE CHURCH**

8001 Anderson Boulevard
Fort Worth, Texas 76120
817-274-1315
wearecentral.org

OUR MISSION

Making God known by making disciples who are changed by God to change their world.