

Waltke, Psalms, Session 14, Resources from Notebooklm

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Study Guide, 4) Briefing Document, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Waltke, Psalms, Session 14, Petition Psalms, Psalm 3, biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This lecture by Dr. Bruce Waltke analyzes Psalm 3, a petition psalm, within its historical and literary context. He explores different approaches to interpreting the Psalms, highlighting four main categories: hymns, petitions, songs of trust, and instructional psalms. Waltke examines the structure of petition psalms, focusing on their elements of lament, confidence, petition, and praise. He connects Psalm 3 to King David's experience during Absalom's rebellion, enriching its theological meaning. Finally, he emphasizes the psalm's enduring relevance for the church throughout history.

2. 19-minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Waltke's, Psalms, Session 11 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Psalms → Waltke).



Waltke_Psalms_Session14_PetitionPsalm

3. Briefing Document

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided excerpts of Dr. Bruce Waltke's lecture on Psalm 3:

Briefing Document: Dr. Bruce Waltke on Psalm 3

I. Introduction and Purpose of the Lecture

- **Spiritual Understanding of Scripture:** Dr. Waltke emphasizes the need for the Holy Spirit to transform words into character. He states, "Your Holy Spirit will take these words, spiritual words from your text, and transform them into our character. Transform them so that we become more like our precious Savior, Jesus Christ." This highlights the importance of not just intellectual understanding but also spiritual transformation through the scriptures.
- **Doxological Theology:** He sees the Psalms as a "doxology of theology," where people voiced their faith and celebrated God. He encourages the audience to engage with the Psalms by hearing their praises, petitions, and instructions.
- **Historical and Form-Critical Approaches:** Waltke outlines his methodology of studying the Psalms by employing both historical approaches (understanding the context and origin) and form-critical approaches (identifying types and forms of Psalms such as hymns, petitions, songs of trust, instruction).

II. Types of Psalms

- **Four Main Categories:** Waltke identifies four primary types of Psalms:
- **Hymns:** Celebrate God's attributes and sublimity (e.g., eternity, omnipotence, faithfulness). These are usually presented in the context of the temple.
- **Petitions (Lament Psalms):** Express distress and cry out to God for deliverance. The Psalmist turns directly to God, as "to turn anywhere else in distress is sin because you're dependent upon something other than God."
- **Songs of Trust and Grateful Praise:** Thank God for specific deliverances. They focus on God's action in the life of the person or community.
- **Instruction Psalms:** Provide wisdom and guidance (e.g., Psalm 1, which talks about blessing in rejecting the counsel of the wicked).
- **Distinct Motifs:Praise Psalms:** Feature a call to praise, a cause for praise (theological basis).

- **Petition Psalms:** Have a direct address to God, a lament section, a transition to confidence, a prayer with renewed confidence, and a conclusion with either absolute certainty of the answer or, as clarified later, a confidence in God's character even if the outcome is uncertain.
- **Doxological Nature of Petitions:** Petitions are always rooted in praise and faith in God, even in distress, which distinguishes them from the lamentations in Job, which lacks praise until the end.

III. Imprecatory Psalms

- **Problematic Prayers:** Many petition Psalms (35 out of 50) go beyond asking for deliverance and request God to punish enemies, which can be offensive to modern Christians due to their apparent contradiction with Jesus's teachings.
- **Importance of Justice:** These imprecatory prayers, however, are crucial for sound doctrine by assuring us of a God of justice and a clear distinction between right and wrong. They are rooted in firm faith in God.
- **Inappropriateness for the Current Dispensation:** Despite their doctrinal value, Waltke suggests that imprecatory prayers are generally inappropriate for Christians, who should focus on ultimate justice through faith in the final judgment, rather than requesting immediate punishment.

IV. Analysis of Psalm 3

- **Structure of a Petition Psalm:** Waltke identifies the typical elements:
- **Address:** Direct address to God (e.g., "Oh I AM").
- **Lament:** Honest expression of distress (verses 1-2 in Psalm 3, focusing on enemies rising up and the claim that God will not deliver him). "How many are my foes? Many rise up against me. Many are saying of me, 'God will not deliver him.'"
- **Confidence:** Transition from lament to a statement of trust in God (verses 3-6 in Psalm 3, emphasizing God as a shield and source of glory) "But you, I AM, are a shield around me; you are my glory, the one who lifts up my head." "I lay down and slept; I awoke, because I AM sustains me."
- **Petition:** Specific request to God (verse 7 in Psalm 3, asking for deliverance and punishment of enemies), "Arise, I Am! Deliver me, my God! Strike all my enemies on the cheek; break the teeth of the wicked!"

- **Conclusion:** Praise to God and a wish for others (verses 8 in Psalm 3, stating that deliverance comes from the Lord and asking for blessing on God's people).
"Deliverance belongs to I AM; your blessing be on your people!"
- **Humility and Dependence:** Petition Psalms express deep humility and dependence on God.
- **Wish for Others:** They typically end with a wish for the blessing of God's people.
- **Psalm 3 as a Royal Psalm:** He argues that Psalm 3 is specifically by and about a king, not an average person. He points to lines like "the one who lifts up my head" (Verse 3) and "I do not fear the tens of thousands of troops" (Verse 6) as evidence of a royal perspective.
- **Historical Context:** Waltke emphasizes the importance of reading the superscript, which indicates Psalm 3 was written when David fled from his son Absalom. He refers back to 2 Samuel 14-18 to understand the gravity of the situation.
- **Typological Reading:** Waltke connects David's experience to Jesus. He notes that the early church saw Psalm 3:5 ("I lay down and slept; I awoke again, for the Lord sustained me") as a direct connection to Jesus' death and resurrection. "In the early church, a cross country came directly to Jesus. They saw in that Jesus in death, I'm going to lie down, go to sleep. But I awoke at Easter. Good Friday, he lay down in death."
- **Means and Dependence on God:** The narrative surrounding David's flight highlights that while trusting in God, he also uses human means (e.g., setting up a spy network with Zadok and Hushai). This is shown in the story of David's flight, where divine providence (Hushai's presence) and human action (David's strategic decisions) work together. As Waltke puts it, "Faith works."

V. Key Takeaways

- The Psalms are a rich theological resource that should be read through both historical and form-critical lenses.
- Petition Psalms are characterized by honesty, humility, and confidence in God, even in times of deep distress.
- Imprecatory prayers are necessary for understanding God's justice but not necessarily appropriate for Christian practice today.

- Psalm 3 provides a powerful example of trusting in God while also utilizing human means. "It may take more faith to go on to the knife of a doctor than to lie on your bed and say, I trust in God."
- Understanding the historical context (such as the Absalom revolt) and the typology of scripture enhances one's interpretation and appreciation of the Psalms.

VI. Further Points for Reflection

- The interplay between divine sovereignty and human action in prayer.
- The role of faith in both spiritual and practical matters.
- The significance of the historical and cultural context in interpreting biblical texts.
- The importance of understanding the different forms and purposes of the Psalms.

This document summarizes the core ideas from the lecture excerpts. It highlights how Dr. Waltke's analysis of Psalm 3 emphasizes a holistic approach to reading the scriptures, combining historical context, theological principles, and spiritual insights.

4. Psalms Study Guide: Waltke, Psalms, Session 14, Petition Psalms--Psalm 3

Psalms Study Guide: Petition Psalms and Psalm 3

Quiz

Instructions: Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. According to Waltke, what is necessary for the words of teaching to reach our human spirit and transform our character?
2. What are the four basic kinds of Psalms identified by Waltke?
3. What are the primary motifs found within a petition Psalm?
4. How does the confidence section function in the structure of a petition Psalm?
5. What was Waltke's initial hesitation about the conclusion of petition Psalms, and how did he resolve it?
6. According to Waltke, why are imprecatory prayers important for sound doctrine, despite being inappropriate for the current Christian dispensation?
7. What are the three key aspects of petitions that Waltke identifies beyond the complaint in the text?
8. What is the historical context provided by the superscript for Psalm 3?
9. What is the significance of David's ability to sleep in Psalm 3?
10. How does Psalm 3 conclude, and what does that teach about the nature of prayer?

Answer Key

1. Waltke states that for the words of teaching to reach our human spirit and transform our character, they must be conjoined with the Holy Spirit. The Spirit takes the words and transforms them to make us more like Christ.
2. Waltke identifies four kinds of Psalms: hymns (celebrating God's attributes), petitions (cries for deliverance in distress), songs of trust and grateful praise (thanking God for specific answers), and instruction Psalms (commending a way of life).

3. The primary motifs of a petition Psalm include a direct address to God, a lament section expressing honest complaints, a confidence section where the mood shifts to trust in God, and the petition itself with a conclusion.
4. The confidence section in a petition Psalm functions as a transition from complaint to trust in God. It reaffirms the psalmist's faith and dependence on God, setting the stage for the petition with renewed confidence.
5. Waltke's initial hesitation was that petition Psalms don't always end with absolute certainty that prayers will be answered exactly as asked. He resolved that we can have absolute confidence in God, even if that confidence does not lead to an answer exactly as requested.
6. Imprecatory prayers, though unsuitable for the Christian dispensation, are necessary for sound doctrine because they affirm God's justice, his distinction between right and wrong, and that God will ultimately bring justice at the final judgment when Christ returns.
7. Beyond the complaint, petitions always have a doxological quality, expressing praise even in distress. They also express humility, emphasizing the psalmist's dependence on God, and often end with a wish for blessing on others, especially the king's people.
8. The superscript of Psalm 3 identifies it as a Psalm of David during the time he fled from his son, Absalom. This gives the psalm a historical context of betrayal, rebellion and David's exile.
9. David's ability to sleep in Psalm 3 signifies his profound trust in God amid intense distress and danger. It contrasts with the fear and mistrust of the ancient world, demonstrating David's firm belief that God sustains him.
10. Psalm 3 concludes with a praise statement ("deliverance belongs to I Am") and a wish for blessing on God's people. This emphasizes that deliverance comes from God alone and that prayer should lead to a desire for communal blessing.

Essay Questions

Instructions: Respond to the following prompts in essay format.

1. Discuss the significance of the different types of Psalms (hymns, petitions, songs of praise, instruction) in relation to their various functions within the book of Psalms.
2. Analyze the theological implications of Waltke's distinction between absolute confidence in God and absolute confidence that God will answer prayer in a specific way.
3. Evaluate the role and significance of the historical context provided by superscripts in understanding the Psalms, using Psalm 3 as an example.
4. Explore how the structural elements of a petition Psalm (address, lament, confidence, petition, conclusion) contribute to its theological message and function as a form of prayer.
5. Compare and contrast Waltke's approach to imprecatory prayers with other scholarly perspectives on the subject.

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Doxology:** An expression of praise to God, often found within prayers and Psalms. Waltke notes that even petition Psalms are always doxological.
- **Form Criticism:** A method of biblical analysis that studies the literary forms or genres of biblical texts, such as hymns, laments, and wisdom sayings. This is a method employed by Waltke when looking at the Psalms.
- **Imprecatory Psalms:** Psalms that express a desire for God to bring judgment and punishment upon one's enemies.
- **Inclusio:** A literary device in which a word, phrase, or theme is repeated at the beginning and end of a section of text, creating a frame or bracket. This is used in Psalm 3 to emphasize deliverance from God.
- **Parallelism:** A characteristic of Hebrew poetry in which two or more lines of a verse are related to each other in terms of their meaning, often through repetition, contrast, or completion. This is one of the basic tenants of Hebrew poetry, according to Waltke.
- **Petition Psalm:** A type of Psalm that includes a cry for help or deliverance in a time of distress. Waltke focuses on this form in this lecture.
- **Superscript:** The title or heading of a Psalm, often providing historical or contextual information. It is an important method used to understand Psalms.
- **Typology:** A method of biblical interpretation in which events, persons, or institutions of the Old Testament are seen as foreshadowing or prefiguring similar events, persons, or institutions in the New Testament. Waltke uses David as a "type" for Christ in his understanding of the Psalms.

5. FAQ on Themes from Dr. Bruce Waltke's Psalms Lecture

FAQ on Psalms based on Dr. Bruce Waltke's Lecture

- **What are the four main categories of Psalms discussed, and what distinguishes them?**
- Dr. Waltke identifies four main types of Psalms: hymns, petitions, songs of trust/grateful praise, and instruction Psalms. Hymns celebrate God's inherent attributes and acts. Petition Psalms are cries to God from a place of distress, seeking intervention. Songs of trust and grateful praise acknowledge specific instances of God's deliverance. Instruction Psalms, exemplified by Psalm 1, provide ethical teachings and guidance, focusing on behavior and its consequences, rather than praise, petition or thanksgiving. Each type serves a distinct purpose in the Psalter.
- **How are Petition Psalms structured, and what key elements do they typically contain?**
- Petition Psalms generally follow a pattern: they start with a direct address to God, followed by a lament where the Psalmist expresses their distress and the situations they are facing, then they transition into a confidence section where they express their trust in God, followed by a petition where they ask for deliverance, often including imprecatory elements (seeking punishment for enemies), and finally, a conclusion with praise and often a wish for others, particularly God's people. This structure reflects a movement from despair to hope and trust in God's deliverance.
- **What is the significance of the "imprecatory" elements found in some petition Psalms, and how should Christians understand them?**
- Imprecatory elements, where the Psalmist asks God to punish their enemies, are present in many petition Psalms. Dr. Waltke explains that these are not expressions of personal vengeance but assertions of God's justice and the distinction between right and wrong. While these prayers are foundational for understanding God's justice and were acceptable for the historical context of the Old Testament, they are not typically appropriate for New Testament believers under grace, who are called to love their enemies and seek justice in God's final judgment rather than immediate retribution.

- **What is the difference between having confidence in God and confidence that he will answer a specific prayer in the exact way we desire?**
- Dr. Waltke emphasizes the distinction between confidence in God, which is the bedrock of faith, and the specific answer to prayers we might desire. While the Psalmist expresses absolute faith in God, they also acknowledge that God's response may not always align with their immediate desires. The Psalmist does not always express absolute certainty that a prayer will be answered in the exact way they expect, but rather confidence that the Lord will hear and respond according to his wisdom and will, similar to Jesus' prayer, "not my will, but your will be done."
- **How does Psalm 3 exemplify the structure of a petition psalm, and what is the context in which it was written?**
- Psalm 3, identified as a petition psalm, follows the typical pattern. It begins with a lament expressing distress and enemies' actions, shifts into confidence in God as a protector and sustainer, offers a petition for deliverance and retribution against enemies (but not death), and concludes with praise for deliverance and a wish for God's blessing on his people. The historical context, detailed in 2 Samuel, is David's flight from his son Absalom, who was trying to usurp the throne, which is why it is significant that the psalm is both the prayer of a king but also a man suffering due to injustice and betrayal.
- **What does Dr. Waltke mean by "faith works", and how does it relate to the use of means and dependence on God?**
- Dr. Waltke uses the phrase "faith works" to indicate that dependence on God does not exclude human action, planning, and strategy. While faith is essential, it is not passive. It should motivate action, recognizing that God often works through means. In David's situation, he relied on God through prayer, but also used human wisdom and resources (like a spy network and military strategy) as part of God's plan. The narrative provides a view of God's providence where divine intervention and human agency work together.
- **How does the historical context provided by the superscription of a psalm and its relation to other biblical texts aid in its interpretation?**
- The superscriptions and historical contexts provide crucial background information that aids in interpreting a psalm. The superscription of Psalm 3 informs readers that it was written by David while fleeing his son Absalom, linking

it to specific events in 2 Samuel. This historical context enriches understanding and highlights themes of betrayal, injustice, faith, and divine deliverance, making the psalm relatable to similar experiences in the reader's life. Ignoring this context can lead to misinterpretations and a loss of the rich theological depth of the psalm.

- **What significance does Dr. Waltke place on the community in the context of the Psalms and what is the importance of wishing good things for others in prayer?**
- Dr. Waltke stresses the importance of the communal aspect of the Psalms, emphasizing that while the Psalmist often addresses God from a place of personal need, the intention and outcome of their prayer extends beyond themselves. They wish for the blessing of God's people. The idea is that prayers are not solely for individual benefit but should also seek the well-being of others. This perspective reinforces the collective identity and responsibility of believers as God's people.