

Dr. Bruce Waltke, Psalms, Lecture 1

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This is Dr. Bruce Waltke in his teaching on the book of Psalms. This is session number one, Introduction, Survey of Approaches.

Let us begin with prayer together. Father, give us the grace to take our shoes off our feet as we step onto most holy ground. We're about to step into your holy word and into the words of your people who celebrated you and prayed to you for over a thousand years from the time of Moses down and beyond the exile. Their words to you, their praise to you, their petitions have become your word to us.

We cannot make you talk. Our exegesis is totally inadequate. You must speak to us.

We depend upon you. In your great grace, you were pleased to reveal yourself, your heart, your purposes, your character, and what you're up to in history. You gave it to us in inspired Scriptures, totally trustworthy, so that we would have a sure word of prophecy from you.

You completed that circle of revelation by giving us your Spirit who helps to illuminate your word. And we know that without the enlightenment of the Spirit, we are dark within. We cannot see.

Thank you that we have the Holy Spirit that opened our eyes, that enabled us within Scripture to see the Son in whom you are well pleased. May we delight in him as we read words from your people and ultimately from yourself that speak of him. Our sufficiency, Father, is not of ourselves.

We take what you've given us, what tools you've given us, but our real sufficiency is of you. And we praise you for it. Each one will be hearing these lectures differently.

Your word is unchanging and has a definite meaning, but it will be heard differently by different people. The rich will be sobered. The poor will be consoled.

The lowly will be comforted and the high will be warned. It meets us all differently. No teacher is sufficient to meet that need.

Only you can. Father, we do not barge into your presence or into the heart of anyone unless we're clothed in your Spirit. May it be your word to us. We respond in Christ's name. Amen. All right.

It's a delight to be with you and share the book of Psalms. I began to have my first serious interest in the Psalms back in 1958, when I was teaching exegesis at Dallas Theological Seminary. Exegesis means two Greek words, ex out of ago, lead.

So, it means to lead out of the text, what the inspired author intended his text to mean. It's the opposite of that exegesis where we read into the text what we want it to mean. We are submissive to the word.

We allow the word to come out of the text to us. So, I taught exegesis, helping students to read the text appropriately, but to read a text appropriately, I have to read it holistically. The sum is always greater than the parts and the parts have meaning within a whole.

So therefore, to teach any book in truth, you really can't just teach a portion of the book. You have to read the entire book and then you can go back and understand the individual portion. That's difficult to do, especially in the Old Testament where you're dealing with 50 some chapters in Genesis.

In the Pentateuch you're dealing with multiple chapters. So, I thought, well, how can I teach exegesis in small portions? So, they could see it holistically and then understand the parts. It came to me that the best text for teaching exegesis was the book of Psalms because they're about anywhere from Psalm 117, you have three verses up until Psalm 119 and you have eight times 22, 176 is it? I'm not a mathematician.

My checkbook never balances, but in any case, they're different lengths. But the average length would be about 10 verses, I think. So therefore, it was an ideal book for teaching exegesis.

Of course, it's such warm, and rich, that speaks to our deepest emotions, our anguish, and yet also our joy, exuberant joy. So, it runs the whole gamut. Every emotion you may experience is going to be expressed in this book.

So, it just seemed an ideal book for teaching exegesis. My next major encounter with the book was in 1968 at Dallas again. At Dallas, they had four times a year, they would bring in what they thought was an outstanding expositor of a given book.

Those were the best two weeks for me, every semester, two weeks in the spring, and fall, two weeks in the spring. They would bring in wonderful Godly men and very competent in exposition. Exposition is the counterpart of exegesis.

Exposition is to set it forth. And so, it's one thing to bring out of the text. It's another dimension when you have to put it forth in a palatable manner, so people can eat it and enjoy it.

So, the exegete is like the farmer who has to bring the weed out of the field, but the expositor has to grind it and make it into bread and make it attractive. And so that you want to eat it. So that's the difference between exegesis and exposition.

And anyway, in 1968, they asked me to do the exposition, which is a whole other dimension, but I thoroughly enjoyed it. And as a result of that, now I had to read everything on Psalms. And so I began to be aware that fundamentally scholars were coming at the book in different directions.

So, the lectures were basically different approaches to the Psalms. And I'm still going to be, even today, that's basically how we're going to come to the Psalms. We're going to be looking at different approaches to the Psalms.

So then also I worked on the committee responsible for the New International Version. And so therefore, because I worked on the Psalms, I was always constantly being put in the Psalms when it was time for the translation of the Psalms. So, it was kind of a little bit of my floor.

There were other men much more competent than I. And I learned one thing about the NIV, you learn a lot from it. It's like a great seminar and you learn from one another. So, it's a unique opportunity for the translator.

And then I periodically taught the Psalms in different contexts. And now I'm writing commentary on the Psalms and I have the great privilege of working with Professor Houston. Professor Houston was a lecturer in history at Oxford University.

And so, we have worked together. I said, taught him I wanted to write a commentary on the Psalms. He says, well, you need the historical, whole historical interpretation, what the church has said about it.

Well, I'm not a church historian. So, I said to him, well, I'm not competent to do church history. And so, I said, would you collaborate with me and you write church history and tell us what the history of interpretation is?

So, our book on the Psalms as Christian worship is a combination. He gives the voice of the church up until the Enlightenment, and I give the voice of the psalmist. So we have the voice of the text and then we have the voice of the history of how the church has understood the Psalms.

So, it's been a wonderful camaraderie to work together with him. I've learned volumes and to me, the Middle Ages and all back there was just not my fort at all. Not now either, but I have a better awareness thanks to my good friend, Professor Houston.

Then we put out another book, *The Psalms as Christian Lament*. And now we're working together on a third book, *The Psalms as Christian Wisdom and Praise*. So that's where we're presently working.

Right now, I'm working with the great honor for the biblical training. I'm very thankful to Bill for giving me this privilege for teaching and extending the ministry. It's just a delight to collaborate with my good friend, Bill Mount.

So, I'm very delighted to be a part of this process. You should have in hand your notes, as I said, and we're on the very first page, I think. No, it's actually page two.

We have there the syllabus. I begin with a bit about the course description. Basically, I'm beginning by saying that of all the books of the Old Testament, the Psalms is the most popular with the Christian community.

The law is most popular with popular, the Torah is the most popular with the Jewish community. But the book of Psalms is the most popular with the Christian community. And you could see that by the way, publishers will publish when they publish just the New Testament, very often they will include within it, the books of Psalms and Proverbs.

It's very normal publishing and publishers don't publish unless there's an audience to read them. So therefore, I think I'm on fairly solid ground to make a judgment that it is probably the most popular book within the Christian community. It gives expression to every emotion from wrenching anguish, to protest against God.

I'll be very honest, where is God's justice when they're suffering unjustly, when the wicked seem to have the upper hand? They don't conceal that problem with which we all wrestle. They give expression to their pain.

They talk about the absence of God, in distress, where are you, God? And even Christ on the cross gives expression to it. My God, my God, why did you abandon me? And he went through that same sensation. He was tempted in every point as we are.

And if you're tempted on occasion and you say, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Know that our Lord has experienced that same experience without sin. And so, it expresses all these emotions that we have. And not only because it's published, but also, I would say it's the most often quoted book in the New Testament.

It's quoted maybe over about 250 times. There can be some debate about where you have allusions and you don't have allusions. What amazes me is that the biblical writers were not formally educated.

They were not scribes. And yet they had such control of Scripture that they were able to use it so deftly, sometimes very exegetical, very what it depended, but often very creatively and using it for new situations. These fishermen had this kind of knowledge.

It just astounded the scribes, the lawyers, and the educated in the rabbinical circles. Where did these men get this knowledge from? And of course, it goes back to the Holy Spirit, but the Holy Spirit uses what was already, uses often what's there. I think they must have memorized the Scriptures.

So, they were just simple lay people without a formal education that spent their lives in the Psalms, piously. Therefore, they can breathe the Psalms when they pray, when they sing, like in the book of Revelation, when John hears the angel singing, he really is hearing like the book of Psalms. They're very similar.

Mary's Magnificat, for example, and they just pick it up. Paul says in Romans 8, we are counted as sheep for the slaughter. Where did that come from? Psalm 44.

And they can just pick out, it's just part of their warp and the weft and woof of their, what is it? Warp and weft or whatever it is. It was just part of their fabric that these Psalms were part of and I think that's true of most of the people listening to these lectures that they've been in the Psalms for years. And often almost everybody knows Psalm 23, right? It's one of the most famous texts in the world.

It's no longer than your little finger on a page, but it transforms a whole life. It's amazing. Such a little text could do so.

It's that powerful. I often say people say that one picture is worth a thousand words. I will say six verses of Psalm 23 is better than a whole gallery of pictures for what it can do for us.

It's very powerful. I honestly believe Jesus memorized the Psalms. I've known people who have memorized the Psalms.

As I put in the notes, I just gave one quote from Marilyn Cooper, the latest book that I've read on the Psalms is the Oxford Handbook of the Psalms. It's got some good essays. It's got a lot of, I don't think very helpful essays and it costs about a hundred dollars.

So I don't know that. It's okay. I'm not here to critique it.

But anyway, I quote it there for you. He says that this is in the first paragraph, early Christian schools, especially monastic schools, introduced young initiates to the study of Scripture through the Psalms and selected New Testament text. Once admitted to

the monastery, the neophyte had to commit Psalms to memory and recite them while performing his daily chores.

So, they committed to memory and then throughout the day as they worked, they would recite the Psalms and that would just become part of their character. In the early church to be a bishop, you had to memorize the entire book of Psalms so that you could examine the priest to make sure he knew the book of Psalms. So, they actually memorized the book.

I've been teaching for you. I haven't done that, but it gives you some idea of the importance of this book within the history of the Christian church. So, it's the first book ever printed on the Gutenberg printing press.

One of the first books that are always translated. So it is, I think I'm fair in saying, it's the most popular book within the Christian community. We are privileged to be studying and we're part of a 2000-year history.

So, we're not de novo. We are part of a community, a history of study. And we're participating in the same spiritual food that has nourished the church for 2000 years.

This has been the spiritual food that has made the church what the church should be. What we more imbibed in it, we're preaching more biblical and less therapeutic. I see a lot of preaching today being therapeutic and psychological.

It aims to make people happy, but it doesn't make people holy. If we had more of the Bible and exposition, we would have a holy church and not, I think a little bit too lackadaisical church, more disciplined in our approach. So, then the second paragraph, I'm talking about the complexity.

However, of all the books of the Old Testament, I would suggest it's the most difficult because it's written over almost a thousand years. The oldest psalm is Psalm 90, which is by Moses, the man of God. So that goes back somewhere around 1300.

Some psalms come from after the exile. In fact, Psalm 137 speaks about when they were in Babylon and the tormentors said, Sing us one of the songs of Zion. We're going to see that that's a distinct kind of psalm.

There are about five or so psalms that are songs of Zion. They say, Sing us one of those psalms, the songs of Zion, which celebrate how great Zion is. And there they are exiles and their temple is in ruin.

Their king, his crown is rolling in the dust. They're just mocking these people who profess to worship God. So, it extends all the way.

In fact, the evidence from Qumran suggests, and this is a bit debatable, that it reached its final form fixed with no rival ways of grouping at about the time of the beginning of the Christian era before that, about the time of Jesus. Now that's a great extension. I think it was myself fixed before that, but that would be determinist from anybody's viewpoint.

But my point is this is over a long period of time. There are all kinds of material in it. There's the person who takes the Babylonian babies and bashes them upon the rocks.

That's difficult stuff in the Christian community. How do you understand that? It's very complex with all their emotion. How do you understand the real honest expression? My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? That doesn't fit Christian theology very well.

That I'm always with you. I'll never forsake you. And yet they're saying you have forsaken me.

So, it's a very complex book. It's not easy, therefore. You're in a seminary now.

So, you have to deal with hard academic questions. This is not a church. I have to address the real issues of this book.

Did David really author the Psalms? In my community, you could scarcely be hired in a reputable university if you said David wrote the Psalms. There's a definite prejudice. I mean, if you have a conservative viewpoint towards Scripture, there's no openness.

So, I'm speaking to an academic community as well as to the church. But you have to handle the hard questions that are being raised and that our seminarians are being taught. I think it's one of the reasons that the pulpit is not more vital because you come out of the seminary, you can't go through a coal mine, you can't go into a coal mine in a white suit and come out without black on you.

I think it's very hard to go through most of our seminaries and universities without being blackened to some extent. Maybe I've been blackened to some extent. Thank God for the blood of the Lamb that makes us white as snow.

But it's a difficult book in many ways. So, we have to ask the hard questions. Another difficulty I have with the book, with teaching it is that when you talk about God, there's something inauthentic.

It seems to me, it's very difficult for me to talk about God. He's my Lord. The only appropriate way of speaking of God is in you, O Lord, second person, not the third person.

Because when I talk about God, I tend to distance God from us. You tend to put yourself almost above I'm talking about God. That's an awesome concept.

How do you do that? It bothers me. Yet as in theology, you have to do that. So I always feel a little bit inauthentic.

I wish I could speak and write the way Augustine did in the Confessions. He never talked about God. It was always you, O Lord.

He always talked to God in the second person. He's unique. So my genre is academic and it tends toward the scientific.

So, we must be aware of that problem so that we're always coming back to the you, O God, to a personal relationship. One time I taught the book of Psalms at Victoria University in BC with secular students. I began by saying, I know we're all used to the scientific approach that you look at an object, you hypothesize about it, and you test it out.

But it's an object out here that you talk about, scientifically explore, and try to validate your hypothesis. I said, if we do that with the book of Psalms, we will destroy the very purpose of the book because we will have made it so we cannot hear God. What we did was I asked the student to come up to the front of the room and stand in the corner.

The rule of the game was that you cannot talk to the student and he cannot talk to you. You're not even sure he's a person. So now all we can do is talk about the student, and observe what we see.

So they began that way. Then after a few minutes, they began to realize they had put themselves into the position. They could never know that person.

They were coming at it the wrong way. I can't come to know you by talking about you. I have to listen to you.

I have to come with spirit to you. I have to come with some sympathy. If I don't come with sympathy, then I'm going to misread whatever you say.

I find that sometimes when people don't like my position, what I thought was totally innocent, they bastardize it and make it the opposite of what I intended it to be. Sort

of like the movie, *The Blind Side*. Remember where this family in Mississippi took in this black student and they meant kindness.

It was truly a Christian act. Then the social case worker came along and said, they're just using you and poisoned his mind. They're only entertaining you so that you will be a great star on the Mississippi football team.

They're not really interested in you. They're interested in the team. Judge their motives and poison that young man's mind.

It took a while. And at the end of the movie, this black student, a horrific person, he identifies with the family. And he said that's my family.

It was a great movie. But my point is, if you start questioning the motives of David and he's just using God, he's an upstart, usurper to the throne, you're going to totally misread him. Many academics read him that way.

They come with a hermeneutics of suspicion to quote from Paul Ricoeur, that you have to approach the text with some suspicion. So that's kind of some of the stuff I'm talking about, a lot more than I'm having the notes here. But that's what we got there.

Now, if you have any questions, write them down and then we're going to have a break and we'll entertain the questions at that point. The second part of the syllabus, I talk about what are the objectives of the course. You can kind of hear some of the objectives of the course.

Paul says, you know, a famous verse, 2 Timothy 3.16, that all Scripture is inspired of God. And then he tells us what its purpose is. All Scripture is inspired of God and is profitable for doctrine, truth, and doctrine.

And that would be the truth. It's profitable to know who God is, doctrine. It's for the servant of God.

It's profitable that you know who you are as a servant of God. So, it's a knowledge of yourself. It's a knowledge of God.

And also, those two are, as Calvin well understood, the double knowledge that as you know yourself, you know, God, and as you know God, you know yourself. The more you know God, the better to know yourself, the better to know yourself and how sinful you are, and the better you understand the holiness of God. Well, at any rate, it's for doctrine and the Psalms are for doctrine.

And it has a lot to say about God, a lot. And what's interesting, what you have here is you don't have the doctrine of God from an apostle. You don't have a doctrine of God from a prophet or Moses.

You have the doctrine of God as the people of God understood in the book of Psalms. This is where the church is, if you please, where the people of God are and what they understand about God. And it's right within their whole fabric of thinking.

So, the point of this is to know God, to know who we are. And one of the things that really will come through of who we are is that we are in contradiction to the wicked. It's a black-and-white between those who depend upon God and those who depend upon themselves.

And we'll see that we are defined by our dependence, our meekness, our childlikeness, our dependence. Now, I don't know the average person thinks of him or herself that way as a totally dependent person, but that's what will come through in the book. So, it's profitable to understand ourselves.

And it's profitable. Therefore, when you understand the truth, then that rebukes you because we all fall far short of what reality is. We all live in irreality.

We're all a bit insane, some more than others because we're not living in truth, the reality of God. When you're not living in the reality of God, you're somewhat insane. You're looking at the world through the wrong eyes.

Well, anyway, so then, but it doesn't leave us there. It corrects us and instructs us that we might produce all righteousness and we'll become the salt and light of the earth. So that is the function of Scripture.

And it's certainly the function of the Psalms. Now it may surprise you, that is not the real objective of my course is to teach theology. That would be a different course.

I've taught biblical theology of different books, but I'm not doing that. I'm not giving teaching biblical theology of the book of Psalms. I'm doing something different, something more preliminary to that so that you can become the theologian.

And what I'm trying to do is to give you glasses to read the Psalm authentically. So you can understand the Psalms better and therefore your theology is more authentic and more solid. So, you have to have something more fundamental.

The method must precede to get the right results. You have to have the right method. And that's why we're going to be trying out different approaches to the Psalm that have been used over the years.

And when I taught the course in 1968, that's what came through to me. As I read the literature, people were coming at it in different ways some of it good, some of it bad. I was gleaning what I thought was good.

And so we're going to be looking at that in the course. There's a wonderful saying by Adele Berlin at the University of Maryland. She said you don't know what a text means until you know how it means.

And we're going to be learning how it means. Let me, one of the approaches is called the rhetorical approach, the poetics. This is very dramatic.

This would be outside the psalm. If you would turn in your notes to 303 of your 352 pages. So as I recall, it was on page 303.

I'll get there. I won't get there ahead of you, fortunately. Let's see, page two here.

Yeah. On page 303, under the rhetorical approach, I'm trying to share part of that approach is to understand how the literature is structured. The biblical writers did not structure their material in the same way we normally do today.

We normally structure on a very linear path that this A, B follows A and on down the line. Much of biblical literature follows a different structure. It goes A, B, C, D, maybe, and then it escalates it.

And then you go back A', B', C', D'. That's a very common pattern. Unless you have that lens that's what they're doing.

You don't figure out what's going on here. We just said that, but they've said it more intensely. It's just the way they do.

That's called alternating parallelism. There's another kind, and that is called chiasm. But now that's really an in thing these days, a chiasm.

A chiasm is from the Greek letter chi, it has a cross to it. A chiasm is your concept of words go the A word or the A thought, and then followed by a B word or B thought, and then C and D. Then it goes to an X and then you go back and you get a D' and you go back to this thought just before the X, D' and then you go back to C' that matches C and you go back to B that matches B' and so forth. And that's a common, very common.

We're just learning that. It's all through all the ancient and recent literature. It's the vogue thing in academia today.

A third pattern is not the chiasm, but what I call concentric. It's sometimes not separated, but I think it should be. And that's where you go A, B, C, C', B', A'.

So, there's no X. So, you can think of it in terms of water. If you want to understand concentric in the way I would use the terms, it's sometimes used this way. It's my way of putting it really.

You can think of it as a tide, tide in, tide out, A, B, C, C', B', A'. You could think of chiasmic parallelism as throwing a rock into a pond. You throw the rock into the pond and all the waves ripple out and the wave at the left end of your lake matches the wave at the right end of the lake and they all ripple out.

And then you've got the rock in the middle. That's the X. The alternating parallelism, I think of waves and the tide. So, the wave comes in and then a bigger wave comes in.

That's alternating parallelism. Now that's used in the Psalms and those are different kinds of structures. We're going to have to point them out as we turn to different kinds of Psalms.

But to illustrate it, here's alternating parallelism on page 303. I used the parallelism of Elijah's experience at Mount Horeb. Remember he was fleeing from Jezebel.

He goes down to Mount Horeb and he wants, I think, a revelation from God and the difficulties to find himself. So, he goes back to where Moses got a revelation from God. He's in the cave there, perhaps the same cave Moses was in when God passed by.

And so he begins by saying, the story begins on page 303. This is 1 Kings 19. A. the setting at the cave and the word of God came, followed by the Lord's question.

What are you doing here, Elijah? C. He now answers, I have been very zealous for the Lord my God and they want to take my life away. D. Then the Lord said, E. Now comes the wind. Remember the theophany, the wind ripping apart the rocks and the trees.

And we're told the Lord was not in the wind. Then it comes an earthquake that shakes the earth and destroys, you know, the terrain, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. Then comes a fire, but the Lord is not in the fire.

And then we get a sound and an oxymoron, a sound of sheer silence. It was so silent you could hear it. I think we've all been in places where it's so silent you can hear it.

So now notice what happens. Now comes the alternating parallelism. Now we've got A. setting at the cave and a voice came, followed by B. question.

What are you doing here, Elijah? C. the answer, I have been very zealous for the Lord of hosts and so forth. And now they try to take my life away. Then the Lord said, everything's exactly the same.

But now we get the parallel. Instead of the wind, we have Hazel who brings destruction. Instead of the earthquake, we have Jehu who killed off the whole house of Baal and brought death.

And the next one is Elijah who called the bears down on 42 children, for example. And it makes it clear what he's up to. And he says, Hazel kills, Jehu kills, Elijah kills.

What's the parallel? So, the parallel to the wind is Hazel. The parallel to the earthquake is Jehu. The parallel to the fire is Elijah.

What's the parallel to the sheer silence? The 7,000 that didn't bow and need to bail. You couldn't hear them. See, once you understand that, now everybody's wondering what's the sheer silence? And everybody interprets it any which way, but it's not authentic because they don't know how to read the text.

You don't know what a text means until you know how it means. That's a famous saying. And this is extreme when you get into it.

But one of the things we're going to touch upon is the rhetorical approach. Let me give you an illustration of a chiasmic parallelism from outside the psalm. We're going to see all this in the Psalms, but here's chiasmic parallelism.

This is in the story of Solomon, the biography of Solomon in the first 11 chapters of Kings. This course, of course, assumes some fundamental knowledge about the Bible and the book of Psalms does too. The superscripts assume you know the history.

I mean, you shouldn't be in this course if you don't know anything about the Old Testament. This is a bit more advanced. I mean, it's all profitable.

It's like what Augustine said that the Bible is shallow enough for a child to wade in it deep enough for an elephant to drown in it. So, anyway, but try, notice this chiasmic parallelism. This is in the biography of Solomon in 1 Kings 1 through 11.

And what I'll do here is I'll match A and A prime immediately. Okay. Here's the prayer.

Here's how it starts in first Kings 1 through 2.12. A prophet intervenes in the royal succession and you have Nathan, who's putting Solomon on the throne instead of

Adonijah. Then notice, jumping to the next page, A prime, how it ends. A prophet determines the royal succession.

That's in chapter 11, 26 through 43. So, it begins with a prophet putting a king on the throne. It ends with a prophet taking the king off the throne and putting somebody else on the throne.

That's how it ends. So, I think you can see A and A prime match each other. Notice B, Solomon eliminates the threat to enmity and the threat to his security.

And so, he removes Joab, he removes Adonijah, everyone who was in the coalition and very legitimately because they each condemned themselves. The son of Saul, Shimei, for example, his rule was you had to stay in the city. You couldn't go elsewhere.

And then a slave runs away down to Southeast Judah and he leaves the city, which shows, first of all, he doesn't obey the king. It shows he's a no-good man because a slave doesn't run away from a good master. He's a cruel man.

So, it gives you an insight into it. But the point is, he removes all the threats and the end of the chapter says, and so his throne was established. Now the counterpart to that is B prime.

Yahweh raises up threats to Solomon's security. He raises up Jeroboam, for example. He raises up the Syrian kings and he raises up everybody who's against Solomon.

So, it's a total reversal. So you had the prophet put him on the throne. You have a prophet taking him off the throne.

You have eliminated threats. Now you have new threats matching each other. Now you get C, you have the early promise of Solomon's reign, everybody under his own vine and his own fig tree.

C prime, the tragic failure of Solomon's reign. And he doesn't deal wisely with his allies and so forth. Then you have D, Solomon uses his gift for the people.

D prime, this gift of wisdom. D prime, the tragic failure of Solomon's reign. It becomes self-absorbed.

He becomes richer and richer and he's totally self-absorbed and losing his kingdom as a result. Then you have E, preparations for building the temple and that's matched by Solomon. E prime, Solomon dedicates the temple but won by God.

Then you have F, Solomon builds the temple. Then you have F prime, Solomon furnishes the temple through Hiram, the coppersmith. Notice the pivot.

Solomon builds rival buildings. Then he built a palace for Pharaoh's daughter. He built a magnificent judgment hall called the Forest of Lebanon.

It had so much cedar in it. He built his own house, but he stopped building the temple. It's right in the middle of the building of the temple.

So, he's building the temple and then he stops. Now he starts building his own mansion and palaces. That's his downfall.

That's the pivot. Otherwise, if you don't understand, you don't have this lens on to understand Chiasm, you say, what's this all about in the middle of chapter seven? And all of a sudden, if you understand it, it's the most crucial section of this passage, which seems irrelevant when you first read it. So, what I'm saying is you don't know how a text means, what a text means, until you know what it means.

That's what I'm concerned about. I want to help you to know how it means. That's preliminary to doing any theology.

Then you can do your own theology when I hopefully can give you some lenses and make credible the traditional positions of the church. So, it's somewhat apologetic because I don't agree with most of academia. I think they're leading the novitiates, the new seminary students down a false path and hurting the church.

So that's what we'll be doing. That's what we're looking at. So, what are those approaches? That's the objective.

I want you to understand the approaches that we're going to be using. One of them is the historical approach. That's the traditional approach.

We have to ask when the NIV translates, of David, is that the best translation or should it be by David? Of David is a fudge translation. Almost all translations do it without making a decision about it. But it's LeDavid.

It can mean either belonging to David or of David or some way it's open or it can mean by David. I'm going to investigate, the historical approach. What difference does it make whether it's grounded in history or not? What does that all have to do with Jesus? So those are the questions I have to ask.

We're going to look at the historical approach. The second approach we're going to be using is what's called the form-critical approach. The form-critical approach distinguishes groups to Psalms according to their different types.

So basically, you have three major types of Psalms. You have subdivisions of them, but you have hymns, songs of praise. It's in the hymns, the songs of praise, that we get the doctrine of God primarily because there they celebrate his attributes and they celebrate his two things, his acts of creation and in history and his faithfulness to his people.

So we'll look at that, the hymns, the doctrine of God. We'll also look at, in Form Criticism, we'll look at petitions, prayers. And there, for example, you can do just what you can get theologically.

For example, there's no petition without praise. All petitions are doxological. There's only one exception in Psalm 88, it's called the black sheep of the Psalter.

Why is it that Job could protest, wish I was never born, and call into question God's justice? And God rebukes him and he has to repent. And the psalmist does exactly the same thing. And God is pleased.

What's the difference? The difference is Job had no praise. A petition without praise is not acceptable. It's an expression of unbelief.

And once you start understanding the point, you see, you have to know how it means to know what it means. And once you understand there's a distinct form here, then you're in a position to compare all these Psalms and compare it with other Scripture. But that's the kind of thing I'm trying to give you lenses to see so that you can understand.

So, you understand it's doxological. When you study them as a group, you also learn they're communal. They almost all end with a wish, not just for me, but for the whole world, for the whole community, that I will be part of a witness to the entire world for what the Lord has done to me.

And when we share our testimonies, we encourage one another and we share the gospel that way. And that's how the gospel has gone on. So, they are doxological, I would say, they are communal.

And they're highly, highly humble because what they're doing is taking the imprecatory Psalms. They will not take matters into their own hands. They depend upon God.

The righteous are dependent upon God and they stand opposed to the person who avenges himself. Now keep in mind here what happens all too often people take what's meant for the people of God and apply it to the state. And that's a big error.

It will destroy the state. The symbol of the church is the cross. The symbol for the state in Romans 13 is the sword.

And you have to keep those ethics distinct. I'm talking about the church. I'm not talking about the world.

I'm talking about the church. The world is a different story. That's its own discussion again.

So, I'm saying, I began by saying it will give us doctrines about God. And I said, it will give us doctrine about saints. That's an important distinction.

And that's what Paul said, so that the man of God, the saint of God may be equipped to every good work. And the Scriptures were written for the church, for our edification, so that we can be good salt and light for the world. So that's something what we get into Form Criticism.

I'm trying to help you to see why we get into these things because later on we get into the farce and all the details, we can lose a big picture of where we are and what we're doing. A third approach we're going to use is the liturgical that the Psalms were sung at the temple. How do we understand that? How did the temple function? How did it speak? What's its symbolism? And so we're going to be looking at the temple and we're going to be looking at the processions of Israel as they're reflected in the Psalms.

So, we're going to be in the temple and understand what's going on in the temple and describe that temple a bit. Sometimes it's very paradisiacal. I think that's a word for the word paradise in an adjectival form of it.

All right. So, we'll be looking at the liturgical approach. And then the one I gave you earlier from the parallel, the structures, that's the rhetorical approach.

Now we're going to be using the rhetorical approach all the way through the course when I deal with individual Psalms. So, I'm not going to have to, I'll just summarize the material there. In almost everything I've written, like the commentary on Psalms or my Old Testament theology, almost everywhere, I lay out right at the beginning, the rhetorical approach.

So, people know where I'm coming from and how I'm reading the text. My real objective, say, when I wrote the Genesis commentary, my real objective was that the reader would learn how to read. So I begin every section with that rhetorical approach.

So you'll know how to read. That was the intention at any rate. Then we will have the eschatological messianic approach.

That is how do these Psalms speak of Jesus. He said they all speak of him. He opened up to them on the Emmaus Road.

He opened up to them in the book of Psalms. We're going to be looking at that. How do they, this is part of the complexity.

How do we understand it's history for David, and yet it's also speaking of Jesus? So that those things have to be grappled with in an authentic way. So you can see where we're going.

And finally, we're going to ask ourselves, it's called redaction criticism, but we're going to ask ourselves, how was the whole book put together? What was the redaction? What's the editing? Why is it in five books and how are these Psalms connected in any way? Or is it just a willy-nilly collection with no meaning to it? I will argue there is meaning, but this is at the very, this is the edge of scholarship today. Where we are is understanding the editing of the book. I think you could see if we go through the Psalms this way, you're going to have some idea of the content of the Psalm.

I'm not going to say this is Psalm 1, Psalm 2, Psalm 3. That would not be my approach. My approach is a little bit more, I hope, sophisticated than that. Now, what we're going to do is we're going to look at these different forms.

We're going to look at Psalms broadly in each case. So, you get a total picture and then I will zero in on a particular Psalm because the truth is what we really enjoy is the Psalm itself. I'm going to be sure every lecture we're going to get back and actually do a Psalm because that's, we just, nothing anyone could say can match the text itself.

So, let's just enjoy the text as we go along. So that's the objective of what I'm up to, where we're going. I hope you enjoy the ride with me.

I enjoy it. I learn every time on this tour through the Psalms. There's your calendar where we're going.

This is the introduction to the course. The next lecture is on hermeneutics. It's critical that you read the text with a pure heart in the right way.

Most academia does not read it through the lens of a pure theological heart. They'll talk about ethics, but that's fundamental that you have to. So many errors in academia is because they come with wrong presuppositions to the text.

So, I think it's worthy of a lecture to talk about what do you think about Scripture? And the truth is, if you read, for example, the brilliant, brilliant scholar, Walter Brueggemann, very popular today. Walter is just a brilliant guy, but I don't know what his doctrine of Scripture is. He never lays it out on a table.

The truth is, I don't think he has one. I don't think he has a doctrine of Scripture. He has so much good stuff, but I want to know where you're coming from.

Is it the word of God? Isn't it the word of God? How do you look at this book? Normally that is not addressed and it causes a lot of confusion. We're going to be looking at Gunkel. He's one of the greatest scholars.

He's the one that is the father form of criticism. He has so much data, it overwhelms you. You know who the psalmist is, the righteous? He says it's a primitive religion.

What he means is he's got a psychological problem. He's paranoid and the enemies are in his head. He does all this research and ends up, he's a psychic problem.

That's the righteous. He never says it quite, but that's what he is saying. And I'll quote it.

So, it reminds me of the Mona Lisa, the greatest painting. At least people know something about it. It's the most famous painting, renowned.

If you've gone over to the Louvre, you hardly can get into the room with the Mona Lisa. It's packed with people. Everybody's concerned about her quixotic, enigmatic smile.

How do you explain that smile? And so, I was reading articles on how to explain that smile. One lady said I understand it. It's the smile of my little girl when she pees in the bathtub.

I mean, you mean trashing a picture. That really trashes it. That's how she saw it.

So, I'm saying Herman Riggs is crucial to how you see this material. So that's my second lecture is on hermeneutics, but it's legitimate for any book you were going to study in the Bible. And then you could say, we're moving then into the historical approach and then we'll do a psalm.

And then even after the introduction, I'm going to do a Psalm 1 and we'll always be interspersing it with psalms. And as you go through there, you could see the different kinds of psalms we'll be looking at, different approaches we'll be looking at. And I'm saying, we're going to look at a broad approach and then do a specific psalm.

This is Dr. Bruce Waltke in his teaching on the book of Psalms. This is session number one, Introduction, Survey of Approaches.