

Dr. Bruce Waltke, Psalms, Lecture 11

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This is Dr. Bruce Waltke and his teaching on the book of Psalms. This is session number 11, Petitionary Psalms, Psalm 92.

So, let's begin with a prayer. Father, thank you that you asked us to come boldly into your presence. We stand amazed at your grace, that we who are in ourselves so sinful, we sin against you in thought, word, and deed by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with, we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.

We have not loved you with a whole heart. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. We ask you to have mercy on us and to forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Strengthen us in all goodness by the power of the Holy Spirit, and keep us in the way of eternal life. With that prayer, we can come boldly into your presence because we know we are forgiven and we know that the Holy Spirit is with us. By your grace, you pronounced us righteous with white robes in Jesus.

And by the Spirit, you are transforming us into his image. We thank you for the means of grace that you've given to us, prayer, the church, and your Holy Scriptures among others. So, Lord, we are particularly thankful in this course for your Holy Scriptures, for they represent your very presence with us, breathed out by your Holy Spirit.

Thank you for the Spirit that emboldens and disseminates your word. Thank you for Bill Mounce, and for BiblicalTraining and for this opportunity to minister your word. We come with true thanksgiving on our lips.

And at the same time, a true sense of our inadequacy in ourselves. And we ask you to give us the faith to trust your enablement and empowerment. We pray this because you taught us to pray in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. In his name we pray. Amen.

All right. We're in the, I think the about up to the 10th lecture. This course is to introduce us to the book of Psalms. Our approach is, our aim is that we might understand the book better. We may enter more accurately into the mind of the psalmist.

So, we have from the history of the study of the psalm, we have chosen 10 approaches to the study. Our aim is not to teach the theology of the psalm as such,

though we certainly do that. Our aim is not specifically to address the spiritual life, which are the two main aims of the church.

Our aim is to interpret the scripture as best we can from where we are. We have concluded there are five approaches to the Psalms that begin to open them up in more depth and more clarity for us. We consider one approach was the historical approach.

There was the form of critical approach. There's a liturgical approach, a rhetorical approach, and looking at it, what is sometimes called redaction criticism of how it's all edited and put together. We spent a day on the historical approach and we learned from that and defended Davidic authorship.

But the point was that the eye of the psalm is the king and that we can think of the book of Psalms as a royal hymn book. It's all about the king. The king is praying and they're praying for the king.

So that we saw in the pilgrimage psalm, when they go to get up to the temple, what do they pray for? They pray for the anointed, that is for the king. And so that throughout this, Gunkel had identified 10 royal psalms, because they mentioned the king, but it just permeates the psalter. When you understand it is the king in prayer and he hands it over to the director of music so that we all begin to sing with the king.

This lays a solid foundation for the New Testament interpretation of the psalms that they speak of our Lord Jesus Christ because he's the son of David. So, they are a picture of his career, of his prayers. I'm convinced that our Lord Jesus Christ had memorized the book of Psalms.

They were constantly upon his lips, even upon the cross when he said, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? That's Psalm 22. Into your hands, I commit my spirit. It's from this psalm.

So, all the way through, it's just part of his vocabulary. And he said that they spoke of him to the disciples on the Emmaus Road. And he said, why didn't you understand that the sufferings and the glory that followed the sufferings were speaking of me, but their eyes had to be opened to it.

And so, we're trying to establish it exegetically, but ultimately it's the work of the Spirit when we're able to really see our Lord Jesus Christ in his psalms. So, I think you could see the value of that historical approach. It just gives you a totally new insight, at least it was for me, into the Psalter.

The second approach is the tradition. The traditional approach was by David and put it into the life of David, but it wasn't really, well, in the early church it did. They spoke of how they saw it as a typology of Christ.

They did see it in Christ. The form critical approach that throughout histories, the people who have handled the word of God recognized there were different kinds of psalms, but it was never really done in a scientific way of really looking at all the psalms and thinking about what their forms were. And really Gunkel did the work on this.

I'm not one who can judge his own spiritual life, but some of the things he says are very problematic, let's put it that way. But he certainly opened my eyes that the psalms fall into distinct types. It's a very good way to approach the entire Psalter is to understand that they fall into different categories, into different groups.

He identified five different types. He identified psalms of praise and these were the hymns. He isolated from that the royal psalms.

That was another type of hymn, royal psalms or tense psalms. Then there were the lament, complaint, or petition psalms that we're going to be looking at today. There were communal laments for him and there were songs of thanksgiving.

After I had read Gunkel, when I was taught a course at Dallas, it was one of the Bible exposition courses. I was reading through as much literature as I could. I was reading through Gunkel.

I was reading at the same time, the book of Chronicles. To my amazement, I read 1 Chronicles 16.4 where David appointed the Levites to minister at the temple, the heskir, which I would translate to petition, the hadot to give thanks, the halal to give praise. So, there were three of the forms that Gunkel had analyzed empirically just out of the text.

Here the chronicler, the inspired historian is saying there are three kinds of psalms, petition, praise, and thanksgiving. The royal psalms I had concluded was an illegitimate category because that not just the ten psalms have mentioned the king, as I said earlier. So, it has biblical warranty to think of the psalms in these three categories.

Yesterday, in particular, we were looking at hymns of praise, of hymns. Our methodology is having identified the form is to, or the hymns, then I would narrow myself down to one or two specific psalms that fell into that category to give us a taste of that kind of a psalm. So, broadly speaking, what we looked at was the hymns and we consider such things as their motifs.

They have certain elements to them. It's very simple with the hymn. It's a call to praise and it's a cause for praise.

It is a concluding, usually a hallelujah, a new call to praise. So, we looked at these motifs and then we examined them more closely. We were thinking about the call to praise and we raised such things as God is so narcissistic.

He has to tell us to praise him and we can be offended by that. So, we thought about, well, how do we understand that side of that sort of call to praise and other elements we considered. In the cause for praise, that's where we really learn the theology of the Psalms and in their call to praise and their doxologies to praise, they enumerate the sublime attributes of God, his incommunicable attributes and his communicable attributes.

His incommunicable attributes being his aseity, that is from his self, he's dependent upon nothing and everything is dependent upon him. We ourselves are dependent upon him as we saw, our very breath is dependent upon him. He's eternal, he's omniscient, he's omnipresent.

They're giving voice to this and praise to God. We noticed that therefore it becomes a doxological theology, namely that their praise to God comes back to us, their words to God come back to us as the word of God to us. So, we're learning theology through their words of praise to God, teaching, just celebrating God and what they know about God.

God uses it as part of his inspired Scripture and speaks to us. It's a wonderful way to learn theology. Then having considered the motifs and thought about them and other things, we also thought about the performance who actually is singing these Psalms.

We went through that and we noticed among other things that God wants only, he wants hymns only from those who are righteous, which are those who depend upon him and show that dependence upon him and being like him and showing love to other people. That song on the lips of sinners is an abomination to him. I think I sometimes hear in some music, gospel music and the lives of the people who are singing it.

I'm not the judge, but I wonder about how pleasing that is to God or is it an abomination to him? I think we ought to be circumspect about those we listen to who are singing gospel songs and so forth, but he wants it from the lips of the pious. So we talked about performance and you could see the value of this kind of investigation. We're now up to the second major type, which is, no, then what happens is we said there were two kinds of praise.

There were praises of God that celebrate his attributes and celebrate his, what the theologians call, heilsgeschichte, which means salvation history and not only salvation history, but the interpreted salvation history. It deals with the creation. It deals with the exodus.

It deals with the conquest and the settlement of the land. What's interesting is there's not much reference to history after the time of David. It's really that period of the exodus and the conquest that they celebrate in the historical record.

So, you have these general songs of praise, and then you have what is known as Thanksgiving songs. These are where God acted specifically in the life of the psalmist. He had prayed for something, maybe even made a promise of a sacrificial offering, a vow of word and sacrifice to God.

God answered the prayer and these become specific. We call these somewhat of a misnomer. We call them Thanksgiving songs.

In the NIV, we call them grateful praise because the Hebrew word Thanksgiving is not equivalent to the English word Thanksgiving. We said that in English Thanksgiving is when I go up to you and I say, thank you. There's nothing like that in Hebrew.

Thanksgiving is when I tell everybody else about you and I celebrate you. I praise publicly. Thanksgiving is something public, not private.

So, it is grateful praise that we tell others what God has done for us, his salvation for us. That's psalms of grateful praise. In that case, we hadn't yet done a psalm of grateful praise.

For the hymns, we did two psalms. We did, first of all, Psalm 100. That was in the first hour where you have in the book of Common Prayer it reads, be joyful in the Lord all you lands.

We thought about that. What does it mean by the nations? Be joyful in the Lord, all you lands, serve the Lord with gladness. Come before him with the song.

Know this, that the Lord himself is God. He himself has made us. We are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

And then having made that confession that God, the God of Israel is the Lord, having made that confession and that the mediatorial kingdom is the people of God, that we are his people and that you celebrate our God with us. Having made those two confessions, knowing that, then it says, now enter his courts with praise and be thankful and call upon his name for the Lord is good. His mercy is everlasting.

His faithfulness endures from age to age. So, we looked at Psalm 100 and also we took another hour to look at the great hymn of Psalm 8, O Lord, O Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth. We begin today though, with a song of grateful praise.

This is now on page, let's see here, I've got to, this is page 105. We're going to look at Psalm 92. We'll spend a bit of time on that.

I suggest you either have a Bible in front of you, or you have my translation in front of you. So, you can constantly look back because what we do here is we go through the psalm now, word by word. Meditate.

In other words, we're told in Psalm 1 to meditate upon the law of the Lord. What we're doing now, we are meditating on the word of God. We meditate on it word by word as we go through it.

Okay. Let's begin then with the translation, a psalm. We said a psalm means it is a song sung to the accompaniment of a stringed instrument.

So, we're told it's a song. So, it was originally, it was to be sung and it was sung along with a musical accompaniment. In this particular case, it was for the Sabbath day.

So, this would have been sung at a, well, we'll talk about a little bit more. According to the Talmud, it was sung with a particular offering in the temple and it was for the Sabbath day. There's no reason to think this is not part of the original text that it belongs already in the first temple period when they would sing this psalm in the temple on the Sabbath, the Sabbath day.

I call upon your name, Most High, to proclaim in the morning your unfailing love and your reliability during the night, upon the ten-stringed lute, and upon the soft sounds with the lyre. Surely you, I Am, cause me to rejoice in your deeds. I shout cries of joy for the works of your hands.

How great are your works, I Am. Your thoughts are exceedingly, literally deep, or profound. A British person does not know, a fool does not understand this.

When the wicked flourished like grass and all evildoers blossomed, it led to their being exterminated forever. For you are on high forever, I Am. For look, your enemies, I Am.

For look, your enemies perish. All evildoers are scattered. You exalted my horn like a wild ox, which I rubbed with rich olive oil.

And my eyes gazed in triumph at those who tried to ambush me. My ears will hear of the destruction of the wicked who attacked me. A righteous person flourishes like a palm tree.

He or she grows like a cedar of Lebanon planted in the house of I Am. In the courts of our God, they flourish. They will still thrive in old age.

They will be full of sap and thick with leaves. Proclaiming that I Am is upright, my rock in whom there is no injustice." Professor Husen and I are writing a third commentary, a historical commentary in which he traces through the voice of the church throughout church history for 2000 years. I try to give the voice of the psalmist.

This is one of the Psalms that we're going to be treating in our third volume. The first volume was on the Psalms as Christian worship. We weren't expecting to write any other more, but God seemed to be pleased to use it.

So, we put out a second volume, the Psalms as Christian lament. Now we're going to put out a third volume, the Psalms as Christian wisdom and Christian worship. This is a psalm of praise, a Thanksgiving song.

So last fall I worked on this psalm as part of the commentary. So that's where the notes are coming from. The reason I mentioned that you may have noticed there were some little different translations and those translations are going to be in the commentary.

I'll defend those translations in the commentary. But you know that actually, as I say to students, all translations are faithful and adequate. None is perfect.

By faithful, I mean, they all try to be true to the original text and they're adequate. All of them are adequate in the sense that you understand the message. In other words, adequate means someone, a student one time asked me, did anybody understand the prophets? I answered, well, enough to kill them.

They communicated something, it's adequate. So adequate means it's enough for us to communicate and talk with one another, but no translation is perfect. And we're always just, as I say, the memory of the church gets sharper with age that due to the excavations and archeological artifacts and our knowledge of the Semitic languages, which were never available to Luther or Calvin, we have a much more precise knowledge of God's word.

It's a responsibility of a person like me, who's called to be, I didn't even know seminaries existed when it started out. It's coming upon me to stay current with

what's going on in scholarship and make sure I'm reflecting that in my commentary work. But that's what I do.

I'm the little toe in the shoe and we need somebody doing this. And so that's what God called me to do in his vineyard. So, I kind of root around the basics of it, the whole thing.

Okay. So, we'll defend it there. Now we are going on page 106.

I talk about the form of the psalm and you have to understand it's poetry. We said there were three things that characterize poetry. One is the fundamental thing is parallelism.

You say a line and then you say a related line to it. Every verse is in the form of a parallelism. So, it is good, verse one, it is good to give grateful praise.

The parallel to that is to sing praise to I Am. Parallel to that is to your name, which is I Am, Most High. And you can see it's a related statement, but it's not the same.

If you think about it, he's talking to the congregation. It is good to give grateful praise to I Am. He's talking about I Am.

And then suddenly he switches to sing your name, Most High. And you can see the change that he's in the congregation, in the liturgy, and he's addressing the congregation and God is part of the congregation. And then he addresses specifically Yahweh, whose name means I Am, the eternal one.

And so, and it says to I Am, and then it is your name. And then the key to the psalm is going to be in the central line of verse eight, for you are on high forever, I Am. And he signals that out right at the very beginning, Most High.

And anyway, that's parallelism. That was my point there. And it's full of figures of speech.

It's very imaginative. Another characteristic of poetry is it's full of figures of speech and you have to be aware of it. So, for example, in the psalm, the wicked flourish like grass, but the righteous flourish like palm trees and the cedars of Lebanon.

See how powerful that can be. The grass grows quickly and quickly dies. But the palm tree and the cedars of Lebanon, they grow tall and they seem to live forever.

So, it's filled with that kind of figurative language that calls upon us to reflect upon these figures of speech. Suddenly, when you think, if you reflect on it, that's a helpful contrast, at least for me. So, it's poetry and it's very terse.

So, the verses are like snapshots, like a slideshow. It's not like prose, which is like a moving picture. You have to think about how are these verses related to one another and how the stanzas are related to one another.

So, it's in poetry and it's worthwhile recognizing that. Secondly, it's a psalm. We already talked about that.

More specifically, it's a song of grateful praise. It seems to have kind of two introductions to it. First of all, he seems to be talking to the congregation and talking generally, it is good to give grateful praise to I Am.

Instead of a call to praise, he makes a declaration and it's good to praise. Then he gives the general to proclaim two general attributes, your unfailing love and your reliability in verse two. But it becomes specific in verse four.

He talks about how the I AM, and he's going to praise. He's going to praise God for a specific thing. Surely you, I Am, cause me to rejoice in your deeds.

I shout cries of joy for the works of your hands. And again, the parallelism, you have deeds, what God does and the works is what his hands produce. But he's going to shout cries of joy for the works of your hands.

In this particular case, in verses 10 and 11, he tells us what God did. Verse 10, you exalted my horn like a wild ox, which I rubbed with rich olive oil. And my eyes gazed in triumph at those who tried to ambush me.

And my ears will hear of the destruction of the wicked who attacked me. So there was a specific illustration where he was being attacked by the enemy. He doesn't specify it, but he was in a crisis and he's now likened to a wild ox with horns.

God had, he exalted his horn above his enemies and he triumphed over them. It's very terse, but you can get the picture. Who is exalted whose horns are like a wild ox and the horns are rubbed with rich olive oil.

And I gazed in triumph at those who tried to ambush me. This is not just any ordinary individual. It's very fitting for a warrior, for a king.

And what fits is not said to be by David, but certainly about a king, it seems to me, who's gone to battle and he's been victorious. Now he returns to the temple and he composes a psalm for all the people to sing. He's going to address a particular problem as we'll see.

The particular problem is how do you understand the prosperity of the wicked? And that's what he's addressing in verse 7. And he says, a prudish person doesn't know, a fool does not understand it. When the wicked flourish like grass and all evil do is blossom, it led to the being exterminated forever. It was God of God's whole plan.

So that's the Song of Grateful Praise. I talked one on page 106, these two forms of the introduction. And then on page 107, top of the page, I talked about as being a narrative that recounts the saving acts, my eyes gazed in triumph at those who tried to ambush me.

And what he does is, eventually he goes from this particular triumph in verses 10 and 11 to a universal truth that God, when the wicked prosper, is part of the plan that's going to lead to their extermination. And it's going to lead to the universal, the victory over evil will lead to the universal prosperity of the righteous with which the psalm ends. I take it that the number four on page 107, that the, I'm using here the German words, because that's what's used in the academic literature, the setting in life, I take it is the temple.

And that this playing of music and so forth all seems to be in verses two and three to proclaim in the morning. He's proclaiming it and he's doing it upon a 10-stringed lute. Where does that take place? It seems to me pretty clear.

This is taking place in the temple and it's taking place in the temple on the Sabbath day, on the seventh day of the week. And it's being sung in conjunction with some sacrifice at the same time. So, we're now entering into a more liturgical approach in our understanding of the psalm.

I give you some bibliography there. So, the psalm's content points to its temple setting. It's addressed to the congregation, verse 1a, and then addresses God.

Then notice in verse 13, what happens? He assumes he's part of a community. Verse 13, planted in the house of I Am in the courts of, and now note, our God, they flourish. So now the individual who conquered is part of a community and the whole community is joining with him in the prayer.

So, all of that makes the most sense to me. If I imagine myself in the temple with the king, with the righteous who are celebrating together with him in the courts of the Lord. He refers, I say, to temple instruments.

For the Sabbath day, it's somewhat debatable, but according to the Mishnah, part of the Talmud, the Levitical choir in the second temple chanted a psalm each day of the week. Successively on Sunday, they sang 24, on Monday, 48, Tuesday, 82, and so forth. And you could see 92 is the seventh day when they would sing this psalm, but that's a Jewish tradition.

There's no reason that page 108 on to number three, I agree with Alter, there's no reason to think this doesn't go back to the first temple. Now Alter will not say David or so forth. We don't know, but he's saying this can go back or before the exile when they had a temple and the first temple.

So, we're looking at a hymn that the church has sung for well over 2,500 years. We're not reading something that hasn't been known. This has been part, I'm sure the disciples sang it, Jesus sang it, Chrysostom sang it.

All the great church fathers throughout the Carolingian period and all the way through, they were singing this psalm and reflecting upon it. We're just part of a Catholic church, a universal church. I think it's wonderful to think of ourselves, of the community of saints for over 2,500 years.

We're still singing this psalm, which is a proof of God's unfailing love. He preserves his people. But of all the difficulties the church has been through and betrayed from within, attacked from without, liberalism rotting in some aspects.

We're still here and we will be here. God will not be defeated. The last word is not death.

The last word is life. The last word isn't a shovel of dirt in our face. The last word is a triumphant resurrected body.

That's the promise of God. He has a terrific track record to prove it. Okay.

I also noticed by way of anticipation that we've already said that it's a royal psalm. It's not by King David. I assume it probably would have had a superscription.

I don't know, but it's by some godly king. It's eschatological. That is to say, it's looking forward to the ultimate triumph of the righteous and their ultimate being like trees.

Immortality has not yet really been brought to light. We'll see this later. Immortality is brought to light in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

The best the Old Testament can do is they can liken it to a tree that's as it represents the tree as full of sap within and thick with leaves, vibrant without. That's where it leaves the image with a very living longevity of the tree. So, it's on the trajectory to eternal life, but we haven't reached the full clarity of day in the New Testament anymore.

Then we get the full clarity of the Trinity until the New Testament. So, it infers it, but not quite explicitly states it in this psalm among other things. But in any case, this is a type of Christ and the ultimate triumph is when he conquers death.

That's the ultimate triumph. But it was so interpreted by the Jewish interpreters, which surprised me. This is the Targum.

The Targum is an Aramaic translation, a little bit from before the time of Jesus. It's a paraphrase in that they don't try to be word for word. It's very interpretive.

Look how they interpret the crucial line, for you are on high forever I am. Here's what they say. This is in the Targum.

This is their translation. But you are high and supreme in this age, O Lord, and you are high and supreme in the age to come. It was forever.

Therefore, it's not only this age but in the age to come. They inferred that, I think, very legitimately. So, it's also looking to the eschaton.

Again, commenting on the Sabbath, this is a psalm for the future, for the day that is completely Shabbat for all eternity. So, they understood it as a reference to the future and eternity when we enter our final rest. That's in the oldest Jewish interpretation that we have.

You can see the New Testament is coming out of that kind of a context and it refers it with all truth to our precious Savior, Jesus Christ. So, I say in number three, the historic king and his report of victory typified Jesus Christ and his victory over Satan, sin, and death. The universal covenant community identifies itself with this king.

I'm going to skip the setting in the book and jump to page 109. I'll just notice a few things by way of rhetoric. Rhetoric is how it's put together.

The idea of rhetoric is that you can enter into the message of the psalm. So, they use all kinds of structures and different devices to aesthetics and also to help us dig into the psalm. It seems to have a chiasmic structure.

It begins with praise and it ends with praise. In fact, it uses the same words. It begins with praise with the psalmist calling upon the congregation to praise.

So, you have in verse two, to proclaim in the morning, your unfailing love and all the way through, I will rejoice in your deeds. So, the first four verses are about praise. The last four verses, verses 12 through 15, also deal with the flourishing of the righteous.

The point of it is they're flourishing. The reason they're flourishing is that they might bring praise to God. So, you have at the end, proclaiming the righteous, the king and his people.

They're all proclaiming that I am, is upright. He's without a flaw. He's absolutely just.

So, it begins with praise. It ends with praise. The king praises I am, verses one through four, and the righteous and the king and the people praise I am at the end in verses 12 through 15.

In verses, this should be five and six. He praises God for the praises for God's great work and profound thoughts. That's verse five.

That's how great are your works and your calculated plans behind it. That is what God did, the thoughts are considered calculated thoughts. It isn't something on the spur of the moment.

The prosperity of the wicked for the moment was all part of God's plan. So, he says for God's great works and profound thoughts. Parallel to that is the king rejoices in his victory.

That are the great works. In other words, what is the great work he has in mind? Generally, but more specifically, it was his work of victory. Notice in verse seven and verse nine, all evildoers are eliminated.

All evildoers are perished. Compare verse seven and verse nine and see the similarity. You might just look at the way it's laid out on the page.

I'm not looking at the translation. Notice both are a tricolon. We talked about that in poetry, tricolon.

There are three lines there. Only seven and nine have three lines. Notice the similarity, verse 7b, all evildoers.

Notice verse nine, all evildoers. In verse seven, all evildoers, they blossom and they perish. Now all evildoers are scattered.

So, you have verse seven, all evildoers, verse going back to my notes on page 109. C and C prime are all evildoers perish. You can see they balance off to one another.

So, what's the pivot? It's a central line all by itself. Only four words in the Hebrew text. The center line is, for you are on high forever I am.

It's about God and he is over all. He's on high in space and forever in time. He's over all in space and he's forever in time.

He is the exalted one behind it all. Now that center line is crucial because elsewhere it's the king who eliminates the enemy. It's very careful to word that the king is the one whom God is using to destroy the enemy.

But he wants to make it clear that behind the whole thing is God's plan. He's on high and he's impregnable and he will be victorious. So, result of that, you could see then, so I develop all that in the lines that follow.

Page 110, I tried to show a chiasmic structure from praise to praise, from works to victory, evildoers perish, evildoers perish. Then the pivot God on high is exalted. What I'm really doing here is I'm giving you lenses by which to read the Psalms.

I don't think the average English reader is aware of chiasm. He doesn't expect it. He isn't aware.

We're used to linear thinking, A, B, C, D, D, and narrative like that. That's what we're used to. We're not used to this way of thinking, but this is normative throughout the ancient Near Eastern poetry.

It's this kind of chiasm and alternating structures. It doesn't go along linearly as we expect in English. There's a catch, as I said, there's a catch word with the proclaiming of praise, verse two, an inclusio rather.

By inclusio, we mean a beginning. In the end, we saw it in spades in Psalm 8, O Lord, O Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth. That's the first verse, O Lord, O Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth.

That's the last verse. We call that an inclusio, an envelope. It makes it a package.

So this proclaiming praise, proclaiming praise is on the ends of it. The center of it is the praise, you are on high forever. Oh, I am.

I won't develop the catchwords. It's a little bit too difficult. So, then there are, with that central line, we're now in a position to say there are two stanzas around the central line, two large units, verses one through seven and verses nine through 16.

I don't think it's an accident that there are seven verses in each half, one through seven, nine through 16. You can see the symmetry of this whole thing, the balance of it. Once you begin to enter with the lenses of rhetoric, you begin to see how the poem, we call it poetics, which means how it's put together.

So, we study now, and this is a fairly new approach within academia. We are now within academia studying how things are poetic, and how they're put together. It's a fairly new discipline.

In the older commentaries, you're not going to read what I just shared with you. I'm coming to it because I've been helped by some more recent scholarship to begin to look at the Psalms in this way. So when I went to Harvard, for example, this was unknown.

I knew all the source criticism. I knew where the documents were, but I really didn't know how to put it all together necessarily. But as I say, we're all in more refinement.

It isn't that we were wrong. It was just that we can do better. As academia goes along, the better part of academics, and it bothers me that the church is anti-intellectual.

The church basically looks down upon this kind of scholarship and they're missing out on the richness. I think they're doing violence to God's word. So they joke about academia and academia is so important for our understanding better the word of God.

You don't hear that very often, but it's true. Okay. Now there are two stanzas and it's interesting, two halves.

It's interesting that the first half falls into if I could use stanzas, of four verses and then three verses. You notice the praise in verses one through four, and then how awesome are your works and so forth in God's plan is in three verses, five through seven. Then you turn around and though it's a separate page, then you get three verses of what God did matching the three of five through seven.

Now three verses, nine through 11, and then you get four verses of praise at the end. So, you've got three, four, make seven, three, four, three, make seven, three, four, make seven. And the name of I Am is used seven times.

Three in the first half, three in the second half, and once on the central line. Is that accidental? I don't think so. Not when you get used to these poets, they're brilliant.

This is just brilliant, wonderful. For me, it's so aesthetic and exciting and it entices me to learn more. I just love feeding on it, thinking about it.

It's a way of meditating on God's word. It's a delight. I made a mistake in the translation.

So, you won't see the seven and that is in verse 13. It should be planted in the house of I Am. And then it will work.

But I made a mistake there. Okay. Now, so what do we have then? Let's look at the psalm.

And what we're doing here is we're looking at our suit, our jacket, whatever it is. We're looking at it before we put it on so that we feel comfortable in it. So make sure.

So, here's the outline of the psalm. Then the logic of the psalm is we begin with this introduction and it refers to tireless praise for God's word, day and night, tireless praise for God's work. It falls, as I said, into two halves.

The first introduction, is corporate praise for I Am sublimities, and the second introduction of personal praise for God's work. Notice the first introduction. Notice how that develops.

Look at verses 1, 2, and 3. It says, it is good to give grateful praise, that's word, to I Am. And then comes the music to sing praise to your name. So, one is verbal words and the other one is in a song, you've got music.

So, I'm thinking about parallelism. I say in parallelism, you think what's similar and what's different. The one is to give grateful praise.

The second one is to sing it. Notice what happens then in verse 2, you have the words. In verse 3, you have the music.

So, verse 2 modifies 1A and verse 3 modifies 1B. So, you have, it is good to give grateful praise to I Am. What is that? To proclaim in the morning your unfailing love and your reliability during the night.

Those are the words we are proclaiming. But then to sing it upon verse 3, upon the 10-stringed lute, upon the soft sounds with the lyre. He develops the words and then he develops the music.

It's worth our while to meditate on what's going on here that we're now doing. Then we call that figure of speech in verse 2, morning and night, we call that a merism, M-E-R-I-S-M, which means what's like day and night, which would mean all in time, summer and winter, springtime and harvest, and so forth. These are called merisms and merismus, the full word is M-E-R-I-S-M-U-S, merismus, which is the statement of opposites, which means totality.

That's why I headed the section, Tireless Praise. This would be done in the temple where they had priests ministering day and night. This psalm could be sung day and night, continuously, all the time in tireless praise.

So, you could say, we're meditating upon the Psalms. We're meditating on what's going on, thinking about them. You don't rush through it.

This is not a quick read. Now we have the greatness of God's work and thoughts. We have that in a summary statement in verse five, how great are your works, what he does, and then the thoughts behind them.

What he's saying is God's thoughts are deep. They're not accessible to everybody. When something is deep, it means it's inaccessible.

The fool cannot access this truth. That's what he's going to say. The brutish don't understand.

Fools don't get it. God deliberately conceals it from the fool. He can't see it.

He deliberately hides it from the person who has no faith and no dependence upon him. They don't have the spirit to understand it. I think so.

I think that much of preaching today is therapy preaching. They're not really interested in deep doctrine. I don't know if I'm answering your question, but I think that's part of it.

Frankly, as you can see, this kind of study takes real work. It takes time. The average pastor doesn't have time for it.

That's part of the problem. I think we need to free pastors up so they have more time because we expect the pastor to do everything. It takes time to reflect upon God's word.

But I write commentaries in order to help the pastor who has, I mean, to my mind, the pastor is the Marines. He's out there on the battlefield all the time, confronting all kinds of problems. So I have great respect for the pastor, but I do think we need a more solid exposition of God's word and so forth.

But that's what God called me to do is help pastors to understand better. When I go to church, the priest at my church asked me to teach a Sunday school class. At this age, I'm asking myself, how can I best use my time? I think I can best use my time writing for all pastors rather than teaching a Sunday school class.

Sunday class is good. It's necessary, but I'm not convinced that's the best use of my time. So we all have to face priorities along the way.

So, the greatness of God's word, summary statement, and then he begins, see he says, how great and how profound. Then he develops that fools don't understand it. What he's teaching is the wicked prosper to be eliminated.

So he grants the wicked prosper, but all evildoers are going to be eliminated. The center line, as we have seen, is God is on high forever. Then he develops after the center line, the second stanza, he goes back to that.

All evildoers will be eliminated. He says, God's enemies will perish and he's going to do it through his king. The king is victorious over evildoers.

The last stanza is the righteous flourish in the temple, proclaiming God's justice. A, the righteous flourish in the temple and they flourish in old age, proclaiming God's justice forever, bringing praise to God. And as I said yesterday in the lecture, God elected us to give him praise.

We made the startling statement that if we didn't give praise, God would die. We've made the comment that God couldn't die. But if nobody knows there's a God, he doesn't exist.

If nobody talks about him, and that's what the press is trying to do. They're trying to kill God because they never talk about God. Everything is secular.

If you don't talk about God, you don't give him any praise. He's not known. For all practical purposes, if he's not known, he ceases to exist.

We pointed out that that can't be because God doesn't depend upon us. He elects us. The stones would cry out, but he's not going to use stones.

He's going to elect his people. There's always someone here to give him praise so that all know that he is there. The point of it all is we are here to praise God, to make him known that God is alive in the community.

That's our responsibility. Okay. Now that was all part of the preliminary.

Now we're ready to look at the psalm. I'll do this real fast. All right.

We've already covered some of the main points, I think. So, we have the psalm. We don't have to say more about that, thankfully.

Page 112. Here we talked about the introduction of the tireless praise for God and the two introductions. I don't need to say more about that.

I do think it would be useful to comment on the word, it is good. To reflect, what do we mean when it is good? There are two aspects to it. It deals with substance and it deals with style.

It signifies, I say, beneficial in substance, by which I mean, what is good advances and enriches life. Praising God advances life, as we've seen, and enriches life. We're fully alive to what's going on.

It's beautiful in style. It is attractive. Those are the two ideas of good.

It's substantive in substance to advance life and benefit life. It is attractive and pleasing. I'm hoping that as I work with the psalm, you find it attractive and pleasing as well as being enriching to your life.

It is good. So, I hope that we are validating what is being claimed here by God's grace. I'll skip the rest of it.

Then we'll elaborate on the words of praise. We already commented on much of that on page 114, the elaboration of the music of praise. We already touched on that.

Then on verse four, now we come to his own introduction. I don't think we need to make much comment there. We've commented on that and now we're on page 115.

This deals with verses five through seven, the greatness of God's works and thoughts. I think basically we've commented upon much of what is there. Now you have it all in writing and you can go back and look at it as you want to reflect upon it.

So, I won't spend more time on that. And page 116 talking about the deep and profound. I'll just read one sentence there on 116.

As the wicked, this is the second line on page 116, as the wicked go to great depths to hide their plans from I Am, that's Isaiah 29.15. God goes to great depths to hide his plans from fools. So they don't understand because they don't have a heart to understand. It says, Paul, all the depths of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how unsearchable are his judgments and his paths beyond tracing out.

And that lays the foundations for the psalm. Back to page 116, the fools do not understand. And basically this psalm is dealing with the problem of evil and why do the wicked prosper? They prosper in order that God might triumph and demonstrate his power and triumph over them.

Without contrast, we don't understand, but God shows himself with all of his power, with all of his holiness, by allowing the wicked to prosper for a moment and then to shatter it. Without that contrast, we wouldn't know the greatness of God. And that's part of his thoughts and his plans.

The wicked don't realize that, that they're being set up to be destroyed. And the psalm is by his own experience of his own victory over the enemy. Of course, that's a type of Christ's victory, as we've been saying.

We could pause and just think about that one concept that you just said. That's exactly right. I mean, just think about the bad things that good people go through also.

That's the, and when we get to the petition section, most psalms are lament more than any other, which is to say, lament, distress, and difficulty is normative for the righteous. It is normative to be in difficulty for the glory of God. That he might triumph and that we might be developed spiritually.

And then we will go and say the Hebrew definition of thanksgiving, which is to go and say the works of the Lord. Right. That's right.

And we'll proclaim his praise and we will celebrate that righteousness triumphs because I get so weary at the evil and it just weighs you down. And this assures me, that God will smash all of this pretension, delusion, wickedness, lying, and deceit. As we talked last night, coveting, all of that evil and junk, it's all going to be smashed and God will get all the glory.

And that's why we need the difficulties of life. So, God will get the glory as he brings us through the stresses and traumas of life. It's all part of his profound thoughts.

The believer understands that. The pious, the dependent understand it. The fool can't understand it, doesn't believe it.

So, we have the fools who don't understand. And then we have in verse 7, the flourishing of the wicked is to be led to their extermination. Just one point on page 118, led to their being exterminated.

This is at the end of verse 7, they're being led to being exterminated. The word exterminated, this *shamat* is the Hebrew, is always used of a human agent. That is always by humans that they are banned and put aside.

And all the way through, God is using a human agent and it is the king. That's why the center line is so important that behind it all is the Lord is on high. He's superintending this all.

It's all part of his great works and his profound thoughts that are behind the whole thing. I think what we should do is take a break here, Bill. All right.

Well, I think we should take a break. I'll tell you what, I'll change my mind. Let's continue with this.

It's all on there. Let's continue. Bill, we're going to continue.

Yeah. I've got to finish the psalm. I've got to change my mind.

I'm going to finish the psalm. Do you know how hard that is in post-production to handle? It's not hard at all. I just do a really, that's why we do cameras.

Okay. All right. We're into the second stanza.

I figured we should finish the psalm. So, let's finish the psalm. Okay.

This is our usual class, isn't it? All right. We're on page 119 and all evildoers are eliminated and God's enemies perish. We talked about that.

I just want to talk about the word scattered on the end of verse 9, all evildoers are scattered. This is now on page 120 of your notes. Scattered means they're all broken apart.

I give you different ways the word is used. One of the ways it is used is of the cubs of the lioness are scattered. What's the point of that? The cubs of the lioness are scattered.

I think the point is when a community of cubs is broken up, it cannot reproduce itself. So also when the community of evildoers is scattered, it cannot reproduce its thoughts, words, and deeds to the next generation. I think that's the point.

It's broken up. So, it can't reproduce. It has no future.

Then two under the stanza is the king's victorious over his adversaries. We talked first of all about the king's great strength. Then the king sees and hears the rout of his enemies.

This is in verse 10, his great strength, you exalted my horn like a wild ox. God is behind him. But then note, he participates enthusiastically in it, which I rubbed with rich olive oil.

In other words, God exalted him, but he enthusiastically embraces his calling and risked his life. So, I rubbed my horns to make them gleaming and more effective. That was on page 121.

It's interesting in verse 12 when he says, my eyes gazed in triumph at those who tried to ambush me. My ears will hear of their destruction. Notice he sees it immediately that he's been victorious.

But the idea that it will continue, the reputation of this victory will continue into the future. My ears will hear, which assumes others are now declaring it and giving, recounting this great victory that he has. So he saw it, but he anticipates in the future he's going to hear others talking about it.

I think that's the picture of Christ at the resurrection. He experienced it. It's interesting.

He himself heard others talking about it. We are still talking about it everywhere in the world forever as a Psalm 22. What a victory.

Now we're up to 12 through 15 on page 122. After the destruction of the wicked, the righteous now are flourishing. After the victory of Christ, we too can flourish.

So, we have in 12 through 15, the righteous flourish and they proclaim, I Am is upright. The flourishing and praise of the righteous occurs in conjunction with the king's eliminating wrongdoers. So, the righteous flourish in the temple.

In A under that, we're told in verse 13, they flourish like a palm tree. They grow like the cedar of Lebanon. So, we're left, this is evocative language.

What do you think when you hear a simile that the wicked are like grass that comes up overnight and they perish and the righteous are like palm trees that grow to be about 90 to 100, 60 to 90 feet, seven stories high. The cedar of Lebanon, the highest tree in that world, 120 feet high, like a 12-story building. So, what do you think about it? Be interested.

What do you think about what does that evoke? This kind of imagery is evocative. So, we ask ourselves, what does that evoke in our imagination to think of ourselves as palm trees and cedars of Lebanon? So, I suggest what it means to me. It means of regal stature.

We're a royal priesthood. These are the trees that tower over all the other trees. In a sense, they rule.

They're stately and they're extreme value. The date palm tree produces anywhere from 300 to 600 pounds of fruit. The cedar tree was highly, highly prized.

The kings of Israel and of Judah sold their souls so they could build their houses out of cedar wood. This was the most highly prized tree. So it's of great, great value.

Those are some of the ideas that I have about the tree. I've put down four things, page 123. They are stately and regal in appearance.

The palm tree sustains human life. It provided food in the form of dates and its sap could be used as a sweetener for baking wine. When it has attained its full size, it bears from 300 to 400, in some instances, even as many as 600 pounds of fruit.

Another point we're going to develop is that it demands, both trees demand an abundant supply of water. So do the righteous. We demand an abundant supply of spiritual food to prosper.

When people neglect the house of God for their work, they shrivel. They don't have the right food, neglect our daily time in the Word and we shrivel. We need constant spiritual food and so forth.

It's longevity. These trees live, and we'll see that later on, the palm tree lives to be about 200 years of age. The seed of Lebanon is so fertile that seeds that are 5,000 years old still germinate.

Can you imagine that? I think that's all involved in this, for me, in this imagery. Of course, here's the value of reading a book like *Images of the Bible* by Reichen and Longman. It's a very valuable book to have in your library, the *Images of the Bible*.

They give you a lot of this data to enrich it. Notice that it says, he or she, the righteous, they grow. And that means to increase, it's used of the increases of riches and entails an increase here of righteousness and life.

The increase is so great that they become, and this should be like the cedars of Lebanon. And I give you the data, which may be over 120 feet tall, excels in beauty, height, value, fertility, and longevity. And I give you some of that data out of the dictionary.

This is on note 144. It's the *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*. I commend that book to your library.

So, the A in verse 13, that is, they flourish like the palm tree and the cedar tree. And now we're told they're planted in the temple. What are we talking about? They're planted in the courts of the Lord.

But it's imagery, but do palm trees normally grow in the temple and the cedar of Lebanon grow in the temple? What are we talking about? And I think he's likening it to the Garden of Eden, the Paradisical Garden, where in paradise, in the beginning, the first temple is the Garden of Eden. The temple is where God dwells. The first temple was a garden where he walked with Adam and Eve in the garden.

It was a mountain. It says so in Ezekiel 28, that Satan was on the mountain of God. The text assumes it because there was a river that flowed through the garden.

It was such a rich, abundant supply of water that after it went through the garden, it broke apart into four headwaters and four rivers that are pictured in that story as fructifying the entire earth. So, you have this water coming through the garden. I think this is how the temple is being pictured as a garden.

I gave you in Psalm 1, if you look at page 125, I show you a temple from how it was pictured in Assyrian relief from Ashurbanipal. On the top of the mountain, you see the temple. You see the pillars of the temple.

In front of it, you see a little pavilion and that is the king inside of it. The king is in prayer. Then notice at the corner of the temple, there is a river.

It's flowing down through a garden at a 45-degree angle. Off the river are streams of water as in Psalm 1, canals of water. It is watering the entire area around the temple.

It looks to me like those are palm trees growing in the garden. I think that is the picture in the psalmist's mind of the temple. It's his imagery.

This is his picture, like a Garden of Eden a river flowing through it and streams of water coming off it. We are like trees in the garden. In other words, the trees are flourishing, literally.

They're flourishing because they're being supplied with an abundant supply of water coming out of the temple. It's a picture of us that we flourish in the presence of God at the temple of God. We are being supplied as in Psalm 1, and his delight is in the law of the Lord.

In his law, he meditates day and night and he will become like a channel of water. So, in other words, we are in this temple garden and we're planted in an abundant supply of water. It's a picture of our spiritual life.

We find our spiritual life in the temple of the Lord, where we hear the word of God. We sing the praises of God. It's our source of life.

Therefore, we flourish in the garden. What's interesting is that the palm tree and the cedar tree cannot grow together normally. The palm tree is in the hot area and you see it on the oasis.

It gets its water from deep roots in the oasis and towers in the midst of this arid scenery. There is the palm tree, as I picture it, in the oasis. It's hot.

It's a low country. The cedar of Lebanon is on the high mountains and is cold. They are diversely opposite and yet both are in the temple of the Lord.

Does that not speak of the ecumenicity of the church? Of all sorts of people make up the righteous in the temple of the Lord, all drinking from the same fountain. It's a marvelous imagery in the temple of the Lord, thriving and prospering. Those are some of the ideas that I'm developing here for you.

I give you the data about the water from the Old Testament, from the passage of Scripture. Then finally in verses 14 and 15, they flourish in old age and proclaim God is upright. First of all, the righteous flourish in old age.

That's why I give you the data of the length of life of these trees. They still thrive in old age and they will be full of sap, the figure of internal health and well-being and thick with leaves, the figure of external health and vitality like that of Moses, and so forth. What are they doing then? They are proclaiming I am is upright and just.

That's what they're proclaiming. I do comment on the word proclaiming that I Am is upright and on page 128, I comment on the word upright. Literally, I suggest that, well, the data tells me it means to be straight without a curve or a bend.

It means to be level without a bump. In other words, it's absolutely straight. It's flawless is the idea to be upright is to be flawless without a bump, without a curve, without a bend.

That's God. That's behind the whole thing. So figuratively, it means flawlessly just and moral according to Torah ethics.

I'll let the rest of the comments stand there. And then I talk about, there should be a space here on page 128 and it's in italics, but it needs a space. You see my rock and I comment on the figure of the rock, my rock.

It means it's perviously solid. You can't break it. It's solid, absolutely solid.

And therefore it speaks of safety, securities, and salvation. You can't penetrate it. You're perfectly secure with this rock, who's my savior.

Well, that's the psalm. Now we finished it. This is a proclamation.

You can't break it. The poetry is the theology of it. I hope you, I read that and I said, bless God he called me to do this.