

Types of Psalms

- It is possible to group psalms into 7 different categories
 - They sometimes overlap
 - Some have subcategories

Laments

- This is the largest group of psalms with more than 60
- Either express or presuppose deep trust in YHWH
 - Help a person express struggles, suffering, or disappointment to the Lord
- Communal laments (Examples: Ps. 3; 22; 31; 39; 42; 57; 71; 88; 120; 139; 142)
- Individual Laments (Examples: Ps. 12; 44; 80; 94; 137)
- Laments express with a deep, honest fervor the distress that people felt
- By carefully examining all the lament psalms, scholars have been able to isolate 6 elements that appear in one way or another in virtually all of them
 - The list below is their typical order
 - 1. Address: The psalmist identifies the Lord as the one to whom the psalm is prayed
 - 2. Complaint: The psalmist pours out a complaint honestly and forcefully, identifying what the trouble is and why God's help is being sought
 - 3. Trust: The psalmist immediately expresses trust in God, which serves as the presuppositional basis for his complaint
 - 4. Deliverance: The psalmist cries out to God for deliverance from the situation described in the complaint
 - 5. Assurance: The psalmist expresses the assurance that God will deliver
 - 6. Praise: The psalmist offers praise, thanking and honoring God for the blessings of the past, present, and/or future
- Fee has a treatment of Ps. 3 under the heading An Exegetical Sampling

Thanksgiving Psalms

- Express joy to the Lord because:
 - Something has gone well
 - Circumstances are good
 - People have reason to render thanks to God for His faithfulness, protection, and benefits
- They help us to express gratitude to God
- They concentrate on appreciation for past mercies
- Individual: 10 total (Ps. 18; 30; 32; 34; 40; 66; 92; 116; 118; 138)
- Communal: 6 total (Ps. 65; 67; 75; 107; 124; 136)
- They typically have 5 structural elements, the order of which may vary considerably:
 - Introduction: Here the psalmist's testimony of how God has helped is summarized
 - Distress: The situation from which God gave deliverance is portrayed
 - Appeal: The psalmist reiterates the appeal that has been made to God
 - Deliverance: The deliverance God provided is described
 - Testimony: A word of praise for God's mercy is given
- Fee has a treatment of Ps. 138 under the heading An Exegetical Sampling

Hymns of Praise

- Unlike Thanksgiving psalms, these are not focused on specific references or circumstances
- Center on praise to God for:
 - Who He is
 - His greatness
 - His love and care for the whole earth
 - And His people in particular
- Praising God:
 - as Creator (8; 19; 104; 148)
 - as protector & benefactor of Israel (Ps. 66; 100; 111; 114; 149)
 - as Lord of history (Ps. 33; 103; 113; 117; 145-147)

Salvation-History Psalms

- These focus on reviewing God's saving work among the people of Israel
 - Deliverance from bondage in Egypt
 - Establishing Israel as a people
- 5 Total: Ps. 78; 105; 106; 135; 136
 - They have different purpose such as celebration, thanksgiving, warning, etc.

Psalms of Celebration & Affirmation

- This category is made of several types
- Covenant Renewal liturgies (Ps. 50 & 81)
 - Designed to lead God's people to a renewal of the covenant first given on Mt. Sinai through Moses
- Davidic Covenant psalms (Ps. 89 & 132)
 - Praise the importance of God's choice of the lineage of David
 - They lay a background for Jesus' messianic ministry
- Royal Psalms (Ps. 2; 18; 20; 21; 45; 72; 101; 110; 144)
 - Focus on God's work through Israel's kings to provide stability and protection
 - Ps. 18 is a royal thanksgiving psalm
 - Ps. 144 is a royal lament
- Enthronement Psalms (Ps. 24; 29; 47; 93; 95-99)
 - Likely used to celebrate the enthronement of the king in ancient Israel
 - May have been used annually
 - Also may represent YHWH's enthronement as King
- Songs of Zion (Ps. 46; 48; 76; 84; 87; 122)
 - Celebrate Jerusalem as the place representing God's presence among His people
 - Also may reflect the eternal New Jerusalem

Wisdom Psalms

- Praises the merits of wisdom
- 8 total: Ps. 36; 37; 49; 112; 127; 128; 133
 - Ps. 8 also praises wisdom

Songs of Trust

- Center their attention on the fact that God can be trusted, regardless of our circumstances
- 10 total: Ps. 11; 16; 23; 27; 62; 63; 91; 121; 125; 131