

“OT Survey: Psalms”  
(Lesson One: It’s Role in the Covenant)

I. Introduction.

A. Review.

1. We began with Biblical principles of interpretation.
  - a. Should be interpreted with original audience in mind.
    - (i) Written in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek.
    - (ii) Into a Jewish culture, ranging from about 2000 to 4000 years ago.
    - (iii) What would they have heard?
  - b. Should be interpreted according to its genre.
    - (i) Bible contains different kinds of literature: historical narrative, poetic, prophetic, parabolic, didactic, and epistolary.
    - (ii) Each contains differing levels of literary devices, such as metaphors, similes, types, symbols, images, figures of speech, idioms, etc.
    - (iii) What do the words mean in these contexts?
  - c. Scripture should interpret Scripture.
    - (i) Use the clearer passages to interpret more obscure.
    - (ii) Scripture must agree with itself: historically, doctrinally, and ethically.
    - (iii) Interpret it in its own context: first in its sentence, then paragraph, then chapter, book and place in the covenant.
    - (iv) What does the Bible say as a whole?
2. We then began surveying the books of the OT.
  - a. Genesis: The beginning of the world to the descent of Israel into Egypt.
  - b. Exodus: God’s redemption of His people from Egypt.
  - c. Leviticus: Institution of the ceremonial system.
  - d. Numbers: Israel in the wilderness.
  - e. Deuteronomy: Preparation for entering the Promised Land.
  - f. Joshua: Conquest of Canaan.
  - g. Judges: Results of anarchy and preparation for a king.
  - h. Ruth: History of David’s line: a picture of redemption.
  - i. 1 & 2 Samuel: A king after God’s own heart.
  - j. 1 & 2 Kings: Failure of the kings to rule righteously, to the captivity.
  - k. 1 & 2 Chronicles: Failure of the kings of Judah, to the captivity.
  - l. Ezra: Return to the land, rebuilding the temple.
  - m. Nehemiah: Return to the land, rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem.
  - n. Esther: Deliverance of the Jews in captivity.
  - o. Job: God’s sovereignty in suffering.

B. Preview.

1. We come now to the book of Psalms.
  - a. The Psalms are songs of worship.
  - b. There are different kinds: lamentations, confessions of sin, pleas for help, imprecations, praise and thanksgivings, and didactic.

2. This morning, we're going to consider its role in the covenant God made with His church.
  - a. The Bible is a covenant document.
    - (i) God relates to man through covenant.
    - (ii) The Bible contains His covenant and its progress.
  - b. The book of Psalms in the covenant.
    - (i) The Lord requires worship from His people.
    - (ii) The psalms provide expressions of worship, praise and adoration.

## II. The Psalms in the Covenant.

### A. The Covenantal Structure of the Bible.

1. The Bible appears to follow the form of second millennium B. C., Suzerainty Treaties.
  - a. The Suzerain Treaty had five parts:
    - (i) Preamble: identifying the Suzerain or lord of the covenant.
    - (ii) Historic Prologue: explaining what the Suzerain did to ingratiate or obligate the vassal/servant.
    - (iii) Stipulations: Commandments/requirements.
    - (iv) Sanctions: Blessings for obedience, punishments for disobedience.
    - (v) Disposition: Where to place the covenant document, and how often to read it.
  - b. Every part of the Bible fits into one of these categories. For example:
    - (i) Genesis: identifies God and His gracious dealings with Israel.
    - (ii) Exodus 20:1-17: commandments or stipulations, interwoven with sanctions.
    - (iii) Proverbs: a book on applying the stipulations.
    - (iv) Deuteronomy 27-28: blessing and curse sanctions.
    - (v) 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles: historic prologue and witness document against Israel's unfaithfulness.
    - (vi) Major and Minor Prophets: prosecution of lawsuit and curse sanctions against unfaithful Israel and promise of blessing sanctions through One covenantally faithful.

### B. The Place of Psalms in the Covenant.

1. One requirement (stipulation) of the Suzerain of Israel was praise.
  - a. "You shall fear *only* the Lord your God; and you shall worship Him and swear by His name" (Deu. 6:13).
  - b. Jesus quoted this verse against Satan in opposing false worship (Luke 4:8).
2. The psalms are used to fulfill that stipulation.
  - a. They are full of expressions of praise.
  - b. They reveal God more fully.
  - c. Many are prophetic in nature.
  - d. But because they are inspired expressions that come from the heart of the godly during times of temptation, trial, persecution and triumph, they are tremendously encouraging to help us express our hearts to God to fulfill our own obligation to praise Him.
  - e. Next week, we'll consider samples of the different types of psalms and how they reveal the Messiah who was to come.